

VOLUME II

CHAPTER I

Avaunt! and quit my sight! Let the Earth hide thee!

Thy bones are marrowless, thy blood is cold!

Thou hast no speculation in those eyes

Which Thou dost glare with! Hence, horrible shadow!

Unreal mockery hence!

Macbeth.

Continuation of the History of Don Raymond.

My journey was uncommonly agreeable: I found the Baron a Man of some sense, but little knowledge of the world. He had past a great part of his life without stirring beyond the precincts of his own domains, and consequently his manners were far from being the most polished: But He was hearty, good-humoured, and friendly. His attention to me was all that I could wish, and I had every reason to be satisfied with his behaviour. His ruling passion was Hunting, which He had brought himself to consider as a serious occupation; and when talking over some remarkable chace, He treated the subject with as much gravity as it had

been a Battle on which the fate of two kingdoms was depending. I happened to be a tolerable Sportsman: Soon after my arrival at Lindenberg I gave some proofs of my dexterity. The Baron immediately marked me down for a Man of Genius, and vowed to me an eternal friendship.

That friendship was become to me by no means indifferent. At the Castle of Lindenberg I beheld for the first time your Sister, the lovely Agnes. For me whose heart was unoccupied, and who grieved at the void, to see her and to love her were the same. I found in Agnes all that was requisite to secure my affection. She was then scarcely sixteen; Her person light and elegant was already formed; She possessed several talents in perfection, particularly those of Music and drawing: Her character was gay, open, and good-humoured; and the graceful simplicity of her dress and manners formed an advantageous contrast to the art and studied Coquetry of the Parisian Dames, whom I had just quitted. From the moment that I beheld her, I felt the most lively interest in her fate. I made many enquiries respecting her of the Baroness.

'She is my Niece,' replied that Lady; 'You are still ignorant, Don Alphonso, that I am your Countrywoman. I am Sister to the Duke of Medina Celi: Agnes is the Daughter of my second Brother,

Don Gaston: She has been destined to the Convent from her cradle, and will soon make her profession at Madrid.'

(Here Lorenzo interrupted the Marquis by an exclamation of surprise.

'Intended for the Convent from her cradle?' said He; 'By heaven, this is the first word that I ever heard of such a design!'

'I believe it, my dear Lorenzo,' answered Don Raymond; 'But you must listen to me with patience. You will not be less surprised, when I relate some particulars of your family still unknown to you, and which I have learnt from the mouth of Agnes herself.'

He then resumed his narrative as follows.)

You cannot but be aware that your Parents were unfortunately Slaves to the grossest superstition: When this foible was called into play, their every other sentiment, their every other passion yielded to its irresistible strength. While She was big with Agnes, your Mother was seized by a dangerous illness, and given over by her Physicians. In this situation, Donna Inesilla vowed, that if She recovered from her malady, the Child then living in

her bosom if a Girl should be dedicated to St. Clare, if a Boy to St. Benedict. Her prayers were heard; She got rid of her complaint; Agnes entered the world alive, and was immediately destined to the service of St. Clare.

Don Gaston readily chimed in with his Lady's wishes: But knowing the sentiments of the Duke, his Brother, respecting a Monastic life, it was determined that your Sister's destination should be carefully concealed from him. The better to guard the secret, it was resolved that Agnes should accompany her Aunt, Donna Rodolpha into Germany, whither that Lady was on the point of following her new-married Husband, Baron Lindenberg. On her arrival at that Estate, the young Agnes was put into a Convent, situated but a few miles from the Castle. The Nuns to whom her education was confided performed their charge with exactitude: They made her a perfect Mistress of many talents, and strove to infuse into her mind a taste for the retirement and tranquil pleasures of a Convent. But a secret instinct made the young Recluse sensible that She was not born for solitude: In all the freedom of youth and gaiety, She scrupled not to treat as ridiculous many ceremonies which the Nuns regarded with awe; and She was never more happy than when her lively imagination inspired her with some scheme to plague the stiff Lady Abbess, or the ugly ill-

tempered old Porteress. She looked with disgust upon the prospect before her: However no alternative was offered to her, and She submitted to the decree of her Parents, though not without secret repining.

That repugnance She had not art enough to conceal long: Don Gaston was informed of it. Alarmed, Lorenzo, lest your affection for her should oppose itself to his projects, and lest you should positively object to your Sister's misery, He resolved to keep the whole affair from YOUR knowledge as well as the Duke's, till the sacrifice should be consummated. The season of her taking the veil was fixed for the time when you should be upon your travels: In the meanwhile no hint was dropped of Donna Inesilla's fatal vow. Your Sister was never permitted to know your direction. All your letters were read before She received them, and those parts effaced, which were likely to nourish her inclination for the world: Her answers were dictated either by her Aunt, or by Dame Cunegonda, her Governess. These particulars I learnt partly from Agnes, partly from the Baroness herself.

I immediately determined upon rescuing this lovely Girl from a fate so contrary to her inclinations, and ill-suited to her merit. I endeavoured to ingratiate myself into her favour: I

boasted of my friendship and intimacy with you. She listened to me with avidity; She seemed to devour my words while I spoke in your praise, and her eyes thanked me for my affection to her Brother. My constant and unremitting attention at length gained me her heart, and with difficulty I obliged her to confess that She loved me. When however, I proposed her quitting the Castle of Lindenberg, She rejected the idea in positive terms.

'Be generous, Alphonso,' She said; 'You possess my heart, but use not the gift ignobly. Employ not your ascendancy over me in persuading me to take a step, at which I should hereafter have to blush. I am young and deserted: My Brother, my only Friend, is separated from me, and my other Relations act with me as my Enemies. Take pity on my unprotected situation. Instead of seducing me to an action which would cover me with shame, strive rather to gain the affections of those who govern me. The Baron esteems you. My Aunt, to others ever harsh proud and contemptuous, remembers that you rescued her from the hands of Murderers, and wears with you alone the appearance of kindness and benignity. Try then your influence over my Guardians. If they consent to our union my hand is yours: From your account of my Brother, I cannot doubt your obtaining his approbation: And when they find the impossibility of executing their design, I

trust that my Parents will excuse my disobedience, and expiate by some other sacrifice my Mother's fatal vow.'

From the first moment that I beheld Agnes, I had endeavoured to conciliate the favour of her Relations. Authorised by the confession of her regard, I redoubled my exertions. My principal Battery was directed against the Baroness; It was easy to discover that her word was law in the Castle: Her Husband paid her the most absolute submission, and considered her as a superior Being. She was about forty: In her youth She had been a Beauty; But her charms had been upon that large scale which can but ill sustain the shock of years: However She still possessed some remains of them. Her understanding was strong and excellent when not obscured by prejudice, which unluckily was but seldom the case. Her passions were violent: She spared no pains to gratify them, and pursued with unremitting vengeance those who opposed themselves to her wishes. The warmest of Friends, the most inveterate of Enemies, such was the Baroness Lindenberg.

I laboured incessantly to please her: Unluckily I succeeded but too well. She seemed gratified by my attention, and treated me with a distinction accorded by her to no one else. One of my daily occupations was reading to her for several hours: Those

hours I should much rather have past with Agnes; But as I was conscious that complaisance for her Aunt would advance our union, I submitted with a good grace to the penance imposed upon me. Donna Rodolpha's Library was principally composed of old Spanish Romances: These were her favourite studies, and once a day one of these unmerciful Volumes was put regularly into my hands. I read the wearisome adventures of 'Perceforest,' 'Tirante the White,' 'Palmerin of England,' and 'the Knight of the Sun,' till the Book was on the point of falling from my hands through Ennui. However, the increasing pleasure which the Baroness seemed to take in my society, encouraged me to persevere; and latterly She showed for me a partiality so marked, that Agnes advised me to seize the first opportunity of declaring our mutual passion to her Aunt.

One Evening, I was alone with Donna Rodolpha in her own apartment. As our readings generally treated of love, Agnes was never permitted to assist at them. I was just congratulating myself on having finished 'The Loves of Tristan and the Queen Iseult----'

'Ah! The Unfortunates!' cried the Baroness; 'How say you, Segnor? Do you think it possible for Man to feel an attachment

so disinterested and sincere?'

'I cannot doubt it,' replied I; 'My own heart furnishes me with the certainty. Ah! Donna Rodolpha, might I but hope for your approbation of my love! Might I but confess the name of my Mistress without incurring your resentment!'

She interrupted me.

'Suppose, I were to spare you that confession? Suppose I were to acknowledge that the object of your desires is not unknown to me? Suppose I were to say that She returns your affection, and laments not less sincerely than yourself the unhappy vows which separate her from you?'

'Ah! Donna Rodolpha!' I exclaimed, throwing myself upon my knees before her, and pressing her hand to my lips, 'You have discovered my secret! What is your decision? Must I despair, or may I reckon upon your favour?'

She withdrew not the hand which I held; But She turned from me, and covered her face with the other.

'How can I refuse it you?' She replied; 'Ah! Don Alphonso, I have long perceived to whom your attentions were directed, but till now I perceived not the impression which they made upon my heart.

At length I can no longer hide my weakness either from myself or from you. I yield to the violence of my passion, and own that I adore you! For three long months I stifled my desires; But grown stronger by resistance, I submit to their impetuosity. Pride, fear, and honour, respect for myself, and my engagements to the Baron, all are vanquished. I sacrifice them to my love for you, and it still seems to me that I pay too mean a price for your possession.'

She paused for an answer.--Judge, my Lorenzo, what must have been my confusion at this discovery. I at once saw all the magnitude of this obstacle, which I had raised myself to my happiness. The Baroness had placed those attentions to her own account, which I had merely paid her for the sake of Agnes: And the strength of her expressions, the looks which accompanied them, and my knowledge of her revengeful disposition made me tremble for myself and my Beloved. I was silent for some minutes. I knew not how to reply to her declaration: I could only resolve to clear up the mistake without delay, and for the present to

conceal from her knowledge the name of my Mistress. No sooner had She avowed her passion than the transports which before were evident in my features gave place to consternation and constraint. I dropped her hand, and rose from my knees. The change in my countenance did not escape her observation.

'What means this silence?' said She in a trembling voice; 'Where is that joy which you led me to expect?'

'Forgive me, Signora,' I answered, 'if what necessity forces from me should seem harsh and ungrateful: To encourage you in an error, which, however it may flatter myself, must prove to you the source of disappointment, would make me appear criminal in every eye. Honour obliges me to inform you that you have mistaken for the solicitude of Love what was only the attention of Friendship. The latter sentiment is that which I wished to excite in your bosom: To entertain a warmer, respect for you forbids me, and gratitude for the Baron's generous treatment. Perhaps these reasons would not be sufficient to shield me from your attractions, were it not that my affections are already bestowed upon another. You have charms, Signora, which might captivate the most insensible; No heart unoccupied could resist them. Happy is it for me that mine is no longer in my

possession; or I should have to reproach myself for ever with having violated the Laws of Hospitality. Recollect yourself, noble Lady; Recollect what is owed by you to honour, by me to the Baron, and replace by esteem and friendship those sentiments which I never can return.'

The Baroness turned pale at this unexpected and positive declaration: She doubted whether She slept or woke. At length recovering from her surprise, consternation gave place to rage, and the blood rushed back into her cheeks with violence.

'Villain!' She cried; 'Monster of deceit! Thus is the avowal of my love received? Is it thus that. . . . But no, no! It cannot, it shall not be! Alphonso, behold me at your feet! Be witness of my despair! Look with pity on a Woman who loves you with sincere affection! She who possesses your heart, how has She merited such a treasure? What sacrifice has She made to you?

What raises her above Rodolpha?'

I endeavoured to lift her from her Knees.

'For God's sake, Segnora, restrain these transports: They

disgrace yourself and me. Your exclamations may be heard, and your secret divulged to your Attendants. I see that my presence only irritates you: permit me to retire.'

I prepared to quit the apartment: The Baroness caught me suddenly by the arm.

'And who is this happy Rival?' said She in a menacing tone; 'I will know her name, and WHEN I know it. . . . ! She is someone in my power; You entreated my favour, my protection! Let me but find her, let me but know who dares to rob me of your heart, and She shall suffer every torment which jealousy and disappointment can inflict! Who is She? Answer me this moment. Hope not to conceal her from my vengeance! Spies shall be set over you; every step, every look shall be watched; Your eyes will discover my Rival; I shall know her, and when She is found, tremble, Alphonso for her and for yourself!'

As She uttered these last words her fury mounted to such a pitch as to stop her powers of respiration. She panted, groaned, and at length fainted away. As She was falling I caught her in my arms, and placed her upon a Sopha. Then hastening to the door, I summoned her Women to her assistance; I committed her to their

care, and seized the opportunity of escaping.

Agitated and confused beyond expression I bent my steps towards the Garden. The benignity with which the Baroness had listened to me at first raised my hopes to the highest pitch: I imagined her to have perceived my attachment for her Niece, and to approve of it. Extreme was my disappointment at understanding the true purport of her discourse. I knew not what course to take: The superstition of the Parents of Agnes, aided by her Aunt's unfortunate passion, seemed to oppose such obstacles to our union as were almost insurmountable.

As I past by a low parlour, whose windows looked into the Garden, through the door which stood half open I observed Agnes seated at a Table. She was occupied in drawing, and several unfinished sketches were scattered round her. I entered, still undetermined whether I should acquaint her with the declaration of the Baroness.

'Oh! is it only you?' said She, raising her head; 'You are no Stranger, and I shall continue my occupation without ceremony. Take a Chair, and seat yourself by me.'

I obeyed, and placed myself near the Table. Unconscious what I was doing, and totally occupied by the scene which had just passed, I took up some of the drawings, and cast my eye over them. One of the subjects struck me from its singularity. It represented the great Hall of the Castle of Lindenberg. A door conducting to a narrow staircase stood half open. In the foreground appeared a Groupe of figures, placed in the most grotesque attitudes; Terror was expressed upon every countenance.

Here was One upon his knees with his eyes cast up to heaven, and praying most devoutly; There Another was creeping away upon all fours. Some hid their faces in their cloaks or the laps of their Companions; Some had concealed themselves beneath a Table, on which the remnants of a feast were visible; While Others with gaping mouths and eyes wide-stretched pointed to a Figure, supposed to have created this disturbance. It represented a Female of more than human stature, clothed in the habit of some religious order. Her face was veiled; On her arm hung a chaplet of beads; Her dress was in several places stained with the blood which trickled from a wound upon her bosom. In one hand She held a Lamp, in the other a large Knife, and She seemed advancing towards the iron gates of the Hall.

'What does this mean, Agnes?' said I; 'Is this some invention of your own?'

She cast her eye upon the drawing.

'Oh! no,' She replied; ' 'Tis the invention of much wiser heads than mine. But can you possibly have lived at Lindenberg for three whole Months without hearing of the Bleeding Nun?'

'You are the first, who ever mentioned the name to me. Pray, who may the Lady be?'

'That is more than I can pretend to tell you. All my knowledge of her History comes from an old tradition in this family, which has been handed down from Father to Son, and is firmly credited throughout the Baron's domains. Nay, the Baron believes it himself; and as for my Aunt who has a natural turn for the marvellous, She would sooner doubt the veracity of the Bible, than of the Bleeding Nun. Shall I tell you this History?'

I answered that She would oblige me much by relating it: She resumed her drawing, and then proceeded as follows in a tone of burlesqued gravity.

'It is surprising that in all the Chronicles of past times, this remarkable Personage is never once mentioned. Fain would I recount to you her life; But unluckily till after her death She was never known to have existed. Then first did She think it necessary to make some noise in the world, and with that intention She made bold to seize upon the Castle of Lindenberg. Having a good taste, She took up her abode in the best room of the House: and once established there, She began to amuse herself by knocking about the tables and chairs in the middle of the night. Perhaps She was a bad Sleeper, but this I have never been able to ascertain. According to the tradition, this entertainment commenced about a Century ago. It was accompanied with shrieking, howling, groaning, swearing, and many other agreeable noises of the same kind. But though one particular room was more especially honoured with her visits, She did not entirely confine herself to it. She occasionally ventured into the old Galleries, paced up and down the spacious Halls, or sometimes stopping at the doors of the Chambers, She wept and wailed there to the universal terror of the Inhabitants. In these nocturnal excursions She was seen by different People, who all describe her appearance as you behold it here, traced by the hand of her unworthy Historian.'

The singularity of this account insensibly engaged my attention.

'Did She never speak to those who met her?' said I.

'Not She. The specimens indeed, which She gave nightly of her talents for conversation, were by no means inviting. Sometimes the Castle rung with oaths and execrations: A Moment after She repeated her Paternoster: Now She howled out the most horrible blasphemies, and then chaunted De Profundis, as orderly as if still in the Choir. In short She seemed a mighty capricious Being: But whether She prayed or cursed, whether She was impious or devout, She always contrived to terrify her Auditors out of their senses. The Castle became scarcely habitable; and its Lord was so frightened by these midnight Revels, that one fine morning He was found dead in his bed. This success seemed to please the Nun mightily, for now She made more noise than ever. But the next Baron proved too cunning for her. He made his appearance with a celebrated Exorciser in his hand, who feared not to shut himself up for a night in the haunted Chamber. There it seems that He had an hard battle with the Ghost, before She would promise to be quiet. She was obstinate, but He was more so, and at length She consented to let the Inhabitants of the Castle take

a good night's rest. For some time after no news was heard of her. But at the end of five years the Exorciser died, and then the Nun ventured to peep abroad again. However, She was now grown much more tractable and well-behaved. She walked about in silence, and never made her appearance above once in five years. This custom, if you will believe the Baron, She still continues. He is fully persuaded, that on the fifth of May of every fifth year, as soon as the Clock strikes One, the Door of the haunted Chamber opens. (Observe, that this room has been shut up for near a Century.) Then out walks the Ghostly Nun with her Lamp and dagger: She descends the staircase of the Eastern Tower; and crosses the great Hall! On that night the Porter always leaves the Gates of the Castle open, out of respect to the Apparition: Not that this is thought by any means necessary, since She could easily whip through the Keyhole if She chose it; But merely out of politeness, and to prevent her from making her exit in a way so derogatory to the dignity of her Ghost-ship.'

'And whither does She go on quitting the Castle?'

'To Heaven, I hope; But if She does, the place certainly is not to her taste, for She always returns after an hour's absence.

The Lady then retires to her chamber, and is quiet for another

five years.'

'And you believe this, Agnes?'

'How can you ask such a question? No, no, Alphonso! I have too much reason to lament superstition's influence to be its Victim myself. However I must not avow my incredulity to the Baroness: She entertains not a doubt of the truth of this History. As to Dame Cunegonda, my Governess, She protests that fifteen years ago She saw the Spectre with her own eyes. She related to me one evening how She and several other Domestics had been terrified while at Supper by the appearance of the Bleeding Nun, as the Ghost is called in the Castle: 'Tis from her account that I drew this sketch, and you may be certain that Cunegonda was not omitted. There She is! I shall never forget what a passion She was in, and how ugly She looked while She scolded me for having made her picture so like herself!'

Here She pointed to a burlesque figure of an old Woman in an attitude of terror.

In spite of the melancholy which oppressed me, I could not help smiling at the playful imagination of Agnes: She had perfectly

preserved Dame Cunegonda's resemblance, but had so much exaggerated every fault, and rendered every feature so irresistibly laughable, that I could easily conceive the Duenna's anger.

'The figure is admirable, my dear Agnes! I knew not that you possessed such talents for the ridiculous.'

'Stay a moment,' She replied; 'I will show you a figure still more ridiculous than Dame Cunegonda's. If it pleases you, you may dispose of it as seems best to yourself.'

She rose, and went to a Cabinet at some little distance.

Unlocking a drawer, She took out a small case, which She opened, and presented to me.

'Do you know the resemblance?' said She smiling.

It was her own.

Transported at the gift, I pressed the portrait to my lips with passion: I threw myself at her feet, and declared my gratitude in the warmest and most affectionate terms. She listened to me

with complaisance, and assured me that She shared my sentiments: When suddenly She uttered a loud shriek, disengaged the hand which I held, and flew from the room by a door which opened to the Garden. Amazed at this abrupt departure, I rose hastily from my knees. I beheld with confusion the Baroness standing near me glowing with jealousy, and almost choaked with rage. On recovering from her swoon, She had tortured her imagination to discover her concealed Rival. No one appeared to deserve her suspicions more than Agnes. She immediately hastened to find her Niece, tax her with encouraging my addresses, and assure herself whether her conjectures were well-grounded. Unfortunately She had already seen enough to need no other confirmation. She arrived at the door of the room at the precise moment, when Agnes gave me her Portrait. She heard me profess an everlasting attachment to her Rival, and saw me kneeling at her feet. She advanced to separate us; We were too much occupied by each other to perceive her approach, and were not aware of it, till Agnes beheld her standing by my side.

Rage on the part of Donna Rodolpha, embarrassment on mine, for some time kept us both silent. The Lady recovered herself first.

'My suspicions then were just,' said She; 'The Coquetry of my

Niece has triumphed, and 'tis to her that I am sacrificed. In one respect however I am fortunate: I shall not be the only one who laments a disappointed passion. You too shall know, what it is to love without hope! I daily expect orders for restoring Agnes to her Parents. Immediately upon her arrival in Spain, She will take the veil, and place an insuperable barrier to your union. You may spare your supplications.' She continued, perceiving me on the point of speaking; 'My resolution is fixed and immoveable. Your Mistress shall remain a close Prisoner in her chamber till She exchanges this Castle for the Cloister. Solitude will perhaps recall her to a sense of her duty: But to prevent your opposing that wished event, I must inform you, Don Alphonso, that your presence here is no longer agreeable either to the Baron or Myself. It was not to talk nonsense to my Niece that your Relations sent you to Germany: Your business was to travel, and I should be sorry to impede any longer so excellent a design. Farewell, Segnor; Remember, that tomorrow morning we meet for the last time.'

Having said this, She darted upon me a look of pride, contempt, and malice, and quitted the apartment. I also retired to mine, and consumed the night in planning the means of rescuing Agnes from the power of her tyrannical Aunt.

After the positive declaration of its Mistress, it was impossible for me to make a longer stay at the Castle of Lindenberg.

Accordingly I the next day announced my immediate departure. The Baron declared that it gave him sincere pain; and He expressed himself in my favour so warmly, that I endeavoured to win him over to my interest. Scarcely had I mentioned the name of Agnes when He stopped me short, and said, that it was totally out of his power to interfere in the business. I saw that it was in vain to argue; The Baroness governed her Husband with despotic sway, and I easily perceived that She had prejudiced him against the match. Agnes did not appear: I entreated permission to take leave of her, but my prayer was rejected. I was obliged to depart without seeing her.

At quitting him the Baron shook my hand affectionately, and assured me that as soon as his Niece was gone, I might consider his House as my own.

'Farewell, Don Alphonso!' said the Baroness, and stretched out her hand to me.

I took it, and offered to carry it to my lips. She prevented me.

Her Husband was at the other end of the room, and out of hearing.

'Take care of yourself,' She continued; 'My love is become hatred, and my wounded pride shall not be unatoned. Go where you will, my vengeance shall follow you!'

She accompanied these words with a look sufficient to make me tremble. I answered not, but hastened to quit the Castle.

As my Chaise drove out of the Court, I looked up to the windows of your Sister's chamber. Nobody was to be seen there: I threw myself back despondent in my Carriage. I was attended by no other servants than a Frenchman whom I had hired at Strasbourg in Stephano's room, and my little Page whom I before mentioned to you. The fidelity, intelligence, and good temper of Theodore had already made him dear to me; But He now prepared to lay an obligation on me, which made me look upon him as a Guardian Genius. Scarcely had we proceeded half a mile from the Castle, when He rode up to the Chaise-door.

'Take courage, Segnor!' said He in Spanish, which He had already learnt to speak with fluency and correctness. 'While you were

with the Baron, I watched the moment when Dame Cunegonda was below stairs, and mounted into the chamber over that of Donna Agnes. I sang as loud as I could a little German air well-known to her, hoping that She would recollect my voice. I was not disappointed, for I soon heard her window open. I hastened to let down a string with which I had provided myself: Upon hearing the casement closed again, I drew up the string, and fastened to it I found this scrap of paper.'

He then presented me with a small note addressed to me. I opened it with impatience: It contained the following words written in pencil:

Conceal yourself for the next fortnight in some neighbouring Village. My Aunt will believe you to have quitted Lindenberg, and I shall be restored to liberty. I will be in the West Pavilion at twelve on the night of the thirtieth. Fail not to be there, and we shall have an opportunity of concerting our future plans. Adieu. Agnes.

At perusing these lines my transports exceeded all bounds; Neither did I set any to the expressions of gratitude which I heaped upon Theodore. In fact his address and attention merited

my warmest praise. You will readily believe that I had not entrusted him with my passion for Agnes; But the arch Youth had too much discernment not to discover my secret, and too much discretion not to conceal his knowledge of it. He observed in silence what was going on, nor strove to make himself an Agent in the business till my interests required his interference. I equally admired his judgment, his penetration, his address, and his fidelity. This was not the first occasion in which I had found him of infinite use, and I was every day more convinced of his quickness and capacity. During my short stay at Strasbourg, He had applied himself diligently to learning the rudiments of Spanish: He continued to study it, and with so much success that He spoke it with the same facility as his native language. He past the greatest part of his time in reading; He had acquired much information for his Age; and united the advantages of a lively countenance and prepossessing figure to an excellent understanding and the very best of hearts. He is now fifteen; He is still in my service, and when you see him, I am sure that He will please you. But excuse this digression: I return to the subject which I quitted.

I obeyed the instructions of Agnes. I proceeded to Munich. There I left my Chaise under the care of Lucas, my French

Servant, and then returned on Horseback to a small Village about four miles distant from the Castle of Lindenberg. Upon arriving there a story was related to the Host at whose Inn I descended, which prevented his wondering at my making so long a stay in his House. The old Man fortunately was credulous and incurious: He believed all I said, and sought to know no more than what I thought proper to tell him. Nobody was with me but Theodore; Both were disguised, and as we kept ourselves close, we were not suspected to be other than what we seemed. In this manner the fortnight passed away. During that time I had the pleasing conviction that Agnes was once more at liberty. She past through the Village with Dame Cunegonda: She seemed in health and spirits, and talked to her Companion without any appearance of constraint.

'Who are those Ladies?' said I to my Host, as the Carriage past.

'Baron Lindenberg's Niece with her Governess,' He replied; 'She goes regularly every Friday to the Convent of St. Catharine, in which She was brought up, and which is situated about a mile from hence.'

You may be certain that I waited with impatience for the ensuing

Friday. I again beheld my lovely Mistress. She cast her eyes upon me, as She passed the Inn-door. A blush which overspread her cheek told me that in spite of my disguise I had been recognised. I bowed profoundly. She returned the compliment by a slight inclination of the head as if made to one inferior, and looked another way till the Carriage was out of sight.

The long-expected, long-wished for night arrived. It was calm, and the Moon was at the full. As soon as the Clock struck eleven I hastened to my appointment, determined not to be too late. Theodore had provided a Ladder; I ascended the Garden wall without difficulty; The Page followed me, and drew the Ladder after us. I posted myself in the West Pavilion, and waited impatiently for the approach of Agnes. Every breeze that whispered, every leaf that fell, I believed to be her footstep, and hastened to meet her. Thus was I obliged to pass a full hour, every minute of which appeared to me an age. The Castle Bell at length tolled twelve, and scarcely could I believe the night to be no further advanced. Another quarter of an hour elapsed, and I heard the light foot of my Mistress approaching the Pavilion with precaution. I flew to receive her, and conducted her to a seat. I threw myself at her feet, and was expressing my joy at seeing her, when She thus interrupted me.

'We have no time to lose, Alphonso: The moments are precious, for though no more a Prisoner, Cunegonda watches my every step. An express is arrived from my Father; I must depart immediately for Madrid, and 'tis with difficulty that I have obtained a week's delay. The superstition of my Parents, supported by the representations of my cruel Aunt, leaves me no hope of softening them to compassion. In this dilemma I have resolved to commit myself to your honour: God grant that you may never give me cause to repent my resolution! Flight is my only resource from the horrors of a Convent, and my imprudence must be excused by the urgency of the danger. Now listen to the plan by which I hope to effect my escape.

'We are now at the thirtieth of April. On the fifth day from this the Visionary Nun is expected to appear. In my last visit to the Convent I provided myself with a dress proper for the character: A Friend, whom I have left there and to whom I made no scruple to confide my secret, readily consented to supply me with a religious habit. Provide a carriage, and be with it at a little distance from the great Gate of the Castle. As soon as the Clock strikes 'one,' I shall quit my chamber, drest in the same apparel as the Ghost is supposed to wear. Whoever meets me

will be too much terrified to oppose my escape. I shall easily reach the door, and throw myself under your protection. Thus far success is certain: But Oh! Alphonso, should you deceive me! Should you despise my imprudence and reward it with ingratitude, the World will not hold a Being more wretched than myself! I feel all the dangers to which I shall be exposed. I feel that I am giving you a right to treat me with levity: But I rely upon your love, upon your honour! The step which I am on the point of taking, will incense my Relations against me: Should you desert me, should you betray the trust reposed in you, I shall have no friend to punish your insult, or support my cause. On yourself alone rests all my hope, and if your own heart does not plead in my behalf, I am undone for ever!"

The tone in which She pronounced these words was so touching, that in spite of my joy at receiving her promise to follow me, I could not help being affected. I also repined in secret at not having taken the precaution to provide a Carriage at the Village, in which case I might have carried off Agnes that very night. Such an attempt was now impracticable: Neither Carriage or Horses were to be procured nearer than Munich, which was distant from Lindenberg two good days journey. I was therefore obliged to chime in with her plan, which in truth seemed well arranged:

Her disguise would secure her from being stopped in quitting the Castle, and would enable her to step into the Carriage at the very Gate without difficulty or losing time.

Agnes reclined her head mournfully upon my shoulder, and by the light of the Moon I saw tears flowing down her cheek. I strove to dissipate her melancholy, and encouraged her to look forward to the prospect of happiness. I protested in the most solemn terms that her virtue and innocence would be safe in my keeping, and that till the church had made her my lawful Wife, her honour should be held by me as sacred as a Sister's. I told her that my first care should be to find you out, Lorenzo, and reconcile you to our union; and I was continuing to speak in the same strain, when a noise without alarmed me. Suddenly the door of the Pavilion was thrown open, and Cunegonda stood before us. She had heard Agnes steal out of her chamber, followed her into the Garden, and perceived her entering the Pavilion. Favoured by the Trees which shaded it, and unperceived by Theodore who waited at a little distance, She had approached in silence, and overheard our whole conversation.

'Admirable!' cried Cunegonda in a voice shrill with passion, while Agnes uttered a loud shriek; 'By St. Barbara, young Lady,

you have an excellent invention! You must personate the Bleeding Nun, truly? What impiety! What incredulity! Marry, I have a good mind to let you pursue your plan: When the real Ghost met you, I warrant, you would be in a pretty condition! Don Alphonso, you ought to be ashamed of yourself for seducing a young ignorant Creature to leave her family and Friends: However, for this time at least I shall mar your wicked designs. The noble Lady shall be informed of the whole affair, and Agnes must defer playing the Spectre till a better opportunity. Farewell, Segnor-- Donna Agnes, let me have the honour of conducting your Ghost-ship back to your apartment.'

She approached the Sopha on which her trembling Pupil was seated, took her by the hand, and prepared to lead her from the Pavilion.

I detained her, and strove by entreaties, soothing, promises, and flattery to win her to my party: But finding all that I could say of no avail, I abandoned the vain attempt.

'Your obstinacy must be its own punishment,' said I; 'But one resource remains to save Agnes and myself, and I shall not hesitate to employ it.'

Terrified at this menace, She again endeavoured to quit the Pavilion; But I seized her by the wrist, and detained her forcibly. At the same moment Theodore, who had followed her into the room, closed the door, and prevented her escape. I took the veil of Agnes: I threw it round the Duenna's head, who uttered such piercing shrieks that in spite of our distance from the Castle, I dreaded their being heard. At length I succeeded in gagging her so compleatly that She could not produce a single sound. Theodore and myself with some difficulty next contrived to bind her hands and feet with our handkerchiefs; And I advised Agnes to regain her chamber with all diligence. I promised that no harm should happen to Cunegonda, bad her remember that on the fifth of May I should be in waiting at the Great Gate of the Castle, and took of her an affectionate farewell. Trembling and uneasy She had scarce power enough to signify her consent to my plans, and fled back to her apartment in disorder and confusion.

In the meanwhile Theodore assisted me in carrying off my antiquated Prize. She was hoisted over the wall, placed before me upon my Horse like a Portmanteau, and I galloped away with her from the Castle of Lindenberg. The unlucky Duenna never had made a more disagreeable journey in her life: She was jolted and shaken till She was become little more than an animated Mummy;

not to mention her fright when we waded through a small River through which it was necessary to pass in order to regain the Village. Before we reached the Inn, I had already determined how to dispose of the troublesome Cunegonda. We entered the Street in which the Inn stood, and while the page knocked, I waited at a little distance. The Landlord opened the door with a Lamp in his hand.

'Give me the light!' said Theodore; 'My Master is coming.'

He snatched the Lamp hastily, and purposely let it fall upon the ground: The Landlord returned to the Kitchen to re-light the Lamp, leaving the door open. I profited by the obscurity, sprang from my Horse with Cunegonda in my arms, darted up stairs, reached my chamber unperceived, and unlocking the door of a spacious Closet, stowed her within it, and then turned the Key. The Landlord and Theodore soon after appeared with lights: The Former expressed himself a little surprised at my returning so late, but asked no impertinent questions. He soon quitted the room, and left me to exult in the success of my undertaking.

I immediately paid a visit to my Prisoner. I strove to persuade her submitting with patience to her temporary confinement. My

attempt was unsuccessful. Unable to speak or move, She expressed her fury by her looks, and except at meals I never dared to unbind her, or release her from the Gag. At such times I stood over her with a drawn sword, and protested, that if She uttered a single cry, I would plunge it in her bosom. As soon as She had done eating, the Gag was replaced. I was conscious that this proceeding was cruel, and could only be justified by the urgency of circumstances: As to Theodore, He had no scruples upon the subject. Cunegonda's captivity entertained him beyond measure. During his abode in the Castle, a continual warfare had been carried on between him and the Duenna; and now that He found his Enemy so absolutely in his power, He triumphed without mercy. He seemed to think of nothing but how to find out new means of plaguing her: Sometimes He affected to pity her misfortune, then laughed at, abused, and mimicked her; He played her a thousand tricks, each more provoking than the other, and amused himself by telling her that her elopement must have occasioned much surprise at the Baron's. This was in fact the case. No one except Agnes could imagine what was become of Dame Cunegonda: Every hole and corner was searched for her; The Ponds were dragged, and the Woods underwent a thorough examination. Still no Dame Cunegonda made her appearance. Agnes kept the secret, and I kept the Duenna: The Baroness, therefore, remained in

total ignorance respecting the old Woman's fate, but suspected her to have perished by suicide. Thus past away five days, during which I had prepared every thing necessary for my enterprise. On quitting Agnes, I had made it my first business to dispatch a Peasant with a letter to Lucas at Munich, ordering him to take care that a Coach and four should arrive about ten o'clock on the fifth of May at the Village of Rosenwald. He obeyed my instructions punctually: The Equipage arrived at the time appointed. As the period of her Lady's elopement drew nearer, Cunegonda's rage increased. I verily believe that spight and passion would have killed her, had I not luckily discovered her prepossession in favour of Cherry Brandy. With this favourite liquor She was plentifully supplied, and Theodore always remaining to guard her, the Gag was occasionally removed. The liquor seemed to have a wonderful effect in softening the acrimony of her nature; and her confinement not admitting of any other amusement, She got drunk regularly once a day just by way of passing the time.

The fifth of May arrived, a period by me never to be forgotten! Before the Clock struck twelve, I betook myself to the scene of action. Theodore followed me on horseback. I concealed the Carriage in a spacious Cavern of the Hill, on whose brow the

Castle was situated: This Cavern was of considerable depth, and among the peasants was known by the name of Lindenberg Hole. The night was calm and beautiful: The Moonbeams fell upon the antient Towers of the Castle, and shed upon their summits a silver light. All was still around me: Nothing was to be heard except the night breeze sighing among the leaves, the distant barking of Village Dogs, or the Owl who had established herself in a nook of the deserted Eastern Turret. I heard her melancholy shriek, and looked upwards. She sat upon the ridge of a window, which I recognized to be that of the haunted Room. This brought to my remembrance the story of the Bleeding Nun, and I sighed while I reflected on the influence of superstition and weakness of human reason. Suddenly I heard a faint chorus steal upon the silence of the night.

'What can occasion that noise, Theodore?'

'A Stranger of distinction,' replied He, 'passed through the Village today in his way to the Castle: He is reported to be the Father of Donna Agnes. Doubtless, the Baron has given an entertainment to celebrate his arrival.'

The Castle Bell announced the hour of midnight: This was the

usual signal for the family to retire to Bed. Soon after I perceived lights in the Castle moving backwards and forwards in different directions. I conjectured the company to be separating. I could hear the heavy doors grate as they opened with difficulty, and as they closed again the rotten Casements rattled in their frames. The chamber of Agnes was on the other side of the Castle. I trembled lest She should have failed in obtaining the Key of the haunted Room: Through this it was necessary for her to pass in order to reach the narrow Staircase by which the Ghost was supposed to descend into the great Hall. Agitated by this apprehension, I kept my eyes constantly fixed upon the window, where I hoped to perceive the friendly glare of a Lamp borne by Agnes. I now heard the massy Gates unbarred. By the candle in his hand I distinguished old Conrad, the Porter. He set the Portal doors wide open, and retired. The lights in the Castle gradually disappeared, and at length the whole Building was wrapt in darkness.

While I sat upon a broken ridge of the Hill, the stillness of the scene inspired me with melancholy ideas not altogether unpleasing. The Castle which stood full in my sight, formed an object equally awful and picturesque. Its ponderous Walls tinged by the moon with solemn brightness, its old and partly-ruined

Towers lifting themselves into the clouds and seeming to frown on the plains around them, its lofty battlements overgrown with ivy, and folding Gates expanding in honour of the Visionary Inhabitant, made me sensible of a sad and reverential horror.

Yet did not these sensations occupy me so fully, as to prevent me from witnessing with impatience the slow progress of time. I approached the Castle, and ventured to walk round it. A few rays of light still glimmered in the chamber of Agnes. I observed them with joy. I was still gazing upon them, when I perceived a figure draw near the window, and the Curtain was carefully closed to conceal the Lamp which burned there. Convinced by this observation that Agnes had not abandoned our plan, I returned with a light heart to my former station.

The half-hour struck! The three-quarters struck! My bosom beat high with hope and expectation. At length the wished-for sound was heard. The Bell tolled 'One,' and the Mansion echoed with the noise loud and solemn. I looked up to the Casement of the haunted Chamber. Scarcely had five minutes elapsed, when the expected light appeared. I was now close to the Tower. The window was not so far from the Ground but that I fancied I perceived a female figure with a Lamp in her hand moving slowly along the Apartment. The light soon faded away, and all was

again dark and gloomy.

Occasional gleams of brightness darted from the Staircase windows as the lovely Ghost past by them. I traced the light through the Hall: It reached the Portal, and at length I beheld Agnes pass through the folding gates. She was habited exactly as She had described the Spectre. A chaplet of Beads hung upon her arm; her head was enveloped in a long white veil; Her Nun's dress was stained with blood, and She had taken care to provide herself with a Lamp and dagger. She advanced towards the spot where I stood. I flew to meet her, and clasped her in my arms.

'Agnes!' said I while I pressed her to my bosom,

Agnes! Agnes! Thou art mine!

Agnes! Agnes! I am thine!

In my veins while blood shall roll,

Thou art mine!

I am thine!

Thine my body! Thine my soul!

Terrified and breathless She was unable to speak: She dropt her Lamp and dagger, and sank upon my bosom in silence. I raised her in my arms, and conveyed her to the Carriage. Theodore remained

behind in order to release Dame Cunegonda. I also charged him with a letter to the Baroness explaining the whole affair, and entreating her good offices in reconciling Don Gaston to my union with his Daughter. I discovered to her my real name: I proved to her that my birth and expectations justified my pretending to her Niece, and assured her, though it was out of my power to return her love, that I would strive unceasingly to obtain her esteem and friendship.

I stepped into the Carriage, where Agnes was already seated. Theodore closed the door, and the Postillions drove away. At first I was delighted with the rapidity of our progress; But as soon as we were in no danger of pursuit, I called to the Drivers, and bad them moderate their pace. They strove in vain to obey me. The Horses refused to answer the rein, and continued to rush on with astonishing swiftness. The Postillions redoubled their efforts to stop them, but by kicking and plunging the Beasts soon released themselves from this restraint. Uttering a loud shriek, the Drivers were hurled upon the ground. Immediately thick clouds obscured the sky: The winds howled around us, the lightning flashed, and the Thunder roared tremendously. Never did I behold so frightful a Tempest! Terrified by the jar of contending elements, the Horses seemed every moment to increase

their speed. Nothing could interrupt their career; They dragged the Carriage through Hedges and Ditches, dashed down the most dangerous precipices, and seemed to vie in swiftness with the rapidity of the winds.

All this while my Companion lay motionless in my arms. Truly alarmed by the magnitude of the danger, I was in vain attempting to recall her to her senses; when a loud crash announced, that a stop was put to our progress in the most disagreeable manner. The Carriage was shattered to pieces. In falling I struck my temple against a flint. The pain of the wound, the violence of the shock, and apprehension for the safety of Agnes combined to overpower me so completely, that my senses forsook me, and I lay without animation on the ground.

I probably remained for some time in this situation, since when I opened my eyes, it was broad daylight. Several Peasants were standing round me, and seemed disputing whether my recovery was possible. I spoke German tolerably well. As soon as I could utter an articulate sound, I enquired after Agnes. What was my surprise and distress, when assured by the Peasants, that nobody had been seen answering the description which I gave of her! They told me that in going to their daily labour they had been

alarmed by observing the fragments of my Carriage, and by hearing the groans of an Horse, the only one of the four which remained alive: The other Three lay dead by my side. Nobody was near me when they came up, and much time had been lost, before they succeeded in recovering me. Uneasy beyond expression respecting the fate of my Companion, I besought the Peasants to disperse themselves in search of her: I described her dress, and promised immense rewards to whoever brought me any intelligence. As for myself, it was impossible for me to join in the pursuit: I had broken two of my ribs in the fall: My arm being dislocated hung useless by my side; and my left leg was shattered so terribly, that I never expected to recover its use.

The Peasants complied with my request: All left me except Four, who made a litter of boughs and prepared to convey me to the neighbouring Town. I enquired its name. It proved to be Ratisbon, and I could scarcely persuade myself that I had travelled to such a distance in a single night. I told the Countrymen that at one o'clock that morning I had past through the Village of Rosenwald. They shook their heads wistfully, and made signs to each other that I must certainly be delirious. I was conveyed to a decent Inn and immediately put to bed. A Physician was sent for, who set my arm with success. He then

examined my other hurts, and told me that I need be under no apprehension of the consequences of any of them; But ordered me to keep myself quiet, and be prepared for a tedious and painful cure. I answered him that if He hoped to keep me quiet, He must first endeavour to procure me some news of a Lady who had quitted Rosenwald in my company the night before, and had been with me at the moment when the Coach broke down. He smiled, and only replied by advising me to make myself easy, for that all proper care should be taken of me. As He quitted me, the Hostess met him at the door of the room.

'The Gentleman is not quite in his right senses;' I heard him say to her in a low voice; ' 'Tis the natural consequence of his fall, but that will soon be over.'

One after another the Peasants returned to the Inn, and informed me that no traces had been discovered of my unfortunate Mistress.

Uneasiness now became despair. I entreated them to renew their search in the most urgent terms, doubling the promises which I had already made them. My wild and frantic manner confirmed the bye-standers in the idea of my being delirious. No signs of the Lady having appeared, they believed her to be a creature

fabricated by my over-heated brain, and paid no attention to my entreaties. However, the Hostess assured me that a fresh enquiry should be made, but I found afterwards that her promise was only given to quiet me. No further steps were taken in the business.

Though my Baggage was left at Munich under the care of my French Servant, having prepared myself for a long journey, my purse was amply furnished: Besides my equipage proved me to be of distinction, and in consequence all possible attention was paid me at the Inn. The day passed away: Still no news arrived of Agnes. The anxiety of fear now gave place to despondency. I ceased to rave about her and was plunged in the depth of melancholy reflections. Perceiving me to be silent and tranquil, my Attendants believed my delirium to have abated, and that my malady had taken a favourable turn. According to the Physician's order I swallowed a composing medicine; and as soon as the night shut in, my attendants withdrew and left me to repose.

That repose I wooed in vain. The agitation of my bosom chased away sleep. Restless in my mind, in spite of the fatigue of my body, I continued to toss about from side to side, till the Clock in a neighbouring Steeple struck 'One.' As I listened to the mournful hollow sound, and heard it die away in the wind, I felt

a sudden chillness spread itself over my body. I shuddered without knowing wherefore; Cold dews poured down my forehead, and my hair stood bristling with alarm. Suddenly I heard slow and heavy steps ascending the staircase. By an involuntary movement I started up in my bed, and drew back the curtain. A single rush-light which glimmered upon the hearth shed a faint gleam through the apartment, which was hung with tapestry. The door was thrown open with violence. A figure entered, and drew near my Bed with solemn measured steps. With trembling apprehension I examined this midnight Visitor. God Almighty! It was the Bleeding Nun! It was my lost Companion! Her face was still veiled, but She no longer held her Lamp and dagger. She lifted up her veil slowly. What a sight presented itself to my startled eyes! I beheld before me an animated Corse. Her countenance was long and haggard; Her cheeks and lips were bloodless; The paleness of death was spread over her features, and her eyeballs fixed stedfastly upon me were lustreless and hollow.

I gazed upon the Spectre with horror too great to be described. My blood was frozen in my veins. I would have called for aid, but the sound expired ere it could pass my lips. My nerves were bound up in impotence, and I remained in the same attitude inanimate as a Statue.

The visionary Nun looked upon me for some minutes in silence:
There was something petrifying in her regard. At length in a low
sepulchral voice She pronounced the following words.

"Raymond! Raymond! Thou art mine!

Raymond! Raymond! I am thine!

In thy veins while blood shall roll,

I am thine!

Thou art mine!

Mine thy body! Mine thy soul!----"

Breathless with fear, I listened while She repeated my own
expressions. The Apparition seated herself opposite to me at the
foot of the Bed, and was silent. Her eyes were fixed earnestly
upon mine: They seemed endowed with the property of the
Rattlesnake's, for I strove in vain to look off her. My eyes
were fascinated, and I had not the power of withdrawing them from
the Spectre's.

In this attitude She remained for a whole long hour without
speaking or moving; nor was I able to do either. At length the
Clock struck two. The Apparition rose from her seat, and

approached the side of the bed. She grasped with her icy fingers my hand which hung lifeless upon the Coverture, and pressing her cold lips to mine, again repeated,

"Raymond! Raymond! Thou art mine!

Raymond! Raymond!

I am thine! &c.----"

She then dropped my hand, quitted the chamber with slow steps, and the Door closed after her. Till that moment the faculties of my body had been all suspended; Those of my mind had alone been waking. The charm now ceased to operate: The blood which had been frozen in my veins rushed back to my heart with violence: I uttered a deep groan, and sank lifeless upon my pillow.

The adjoining room was only separated from mine by a thin partition: It was occupied by the Host and his Wife: The Former was roused by my groan, and immediately hastened to my chamber: The Hostess soon followed him. With some difficulty they succeeded in restoring me to my senses, and immediately sent for the Physician, who arrived in all diligence. He declared my fever to be very much increased, and that if I continued to suffer such violent agitation, He would not take upon him to

ensure my life. Some medicines which He gave me in some degree tranquillized my spirits. I fell into a sort of slumber towards daybreak; But fearful dreams prevented me from deriving any benefit from my repose. Agnes and the Bleeding Nun presented themselves by turns to my fancy, and combined to harass and torment me. I awoke fatigued and unrefreshed. My fever seemed rather augmented than diminished; The agitation of my mind impeded my fractured bones from knitting: I had frequent fainting fits, and during the whole day the Physician judged it expedient not to quit me for two hours together.

The singularity of my adventure made me determine to conceal it from every one, since I could not expect that a circumstance so strange should gain credit. I was very uneasy about Agnes. I knew not what She would think at not finding me at the rendezvous, and dreaded her entertaining suspicions of my fidelity. However, I depended upon Theodore's discretion, and trusted that my letter to the Baroness would convince her of the rectitude of my intentions. These considerations somewhat lightened my inquietude upon her account: But the impression left upon my mind by my nocturnal Visitor grew stronger with every succeeding moment. The night drew near; I dreaded its arrival. Yet I strove to persuade myself that the Ghost would

appear no more, and at all events I desired that a Servant might sit up in my chamber.

The fatigue of my body from not having slept on the former night, co-operating with the strong opiates administered to me in profusion, at length procured me that repose of which I was so much in need. I sank into a profound and tranquil slumber, and had already slept for some hours, when the neighbouring Clock roused me by striking 'One'. Its sound brought with it to my memory all the horrors of the night before. The same cold shivering seized me. I started up in my bed, and perceived the Servant fast asleep in an armed-Chair near me. I called him by his name: He made no answer. I shook him forcibly by the arm, and strove in vain to wake him. He was perfectly insensible to my efforts. I now heard the heavy steps ascending the staircase; The Door was thrown open, and again the Bleeding Nun stood before me. Once more my limbs were chained in second infancy. Once more I heard those fatal words repeated,

"Raymond! Raymond! Thou art mine!

Raymond! Raymond! I am thine! &c.----"

The scene which had shocked me so sensibly on the former night,

was again presented. The Spectre again pressed her lips to mine, again touched me with her rotting fingers, and as on her first appearance, quitted the chamber as soon as the Clock told 'Two.'

Even night was this repeated. Far from growing accustomed to the Ghost, every succeeding visit inspired me with greater horror.

Her idea pursued me continually, and I became the prey of habitual melancholy. The constant agitation of my mind naturally retarded the re-establishment of my health. Several months elapsed before I was able to quit my bed; and when at length I was moved to a Sopha, I was so faint, spiritless, and emaciated, that I could not cross the room without assistance. The looks of my Attendants sufficiently denoted the little hope, which they entertained of my recovery. The profound sadness, which oppressed me without remission made the Physician consider me to be an Hypochondriac. The cause of my distress I carefully concealed in my own bosom, for I knew that no one could give me relief: The Ghost was not even visible to any eye but mine. I had frequently caused Attendants to sit up in my room: But the moment that the Clock struck 'One,' irresistible slumber seized them, nor left them till the departure of the Ghost.

You may be surprized that during this time I made no enquiries

after your Sister. Theodore, who with difficulty had discovered my abode, had quieted my apprehensions for her safety: At the same time He convinced me that all attempts to release her from captivity must be fruitless till I should be in a condition to return to Spain. The particulars of her adventure which I shall now relate to you, were partly communicated to me by Theodore, and partly by Agnes herself.

On the fatal night when her elopement was to have taken place, accident had not permitted her to quit her chamber at the appointed time. At length She ventured into the haunted room, descended the staircase leading into the Hall, found the Gates open as She expected, and left the Castle unobserved. What was her surprize at not finding me ready to receive her! She examined the Cavern, ranged through every Alley of the neighbouring wood, and passed two full hours in this fruitless enquiry. She could discover no traces either of me or of the Carriage. Alarmed and disappointed, her only resource was to return to the Castle before the Baroness missed her: But here She found herself in a fresh embarrassment. The Bell had already tolled 'Two:' The Ghostly hour was past, and the careful Porter had locked the folding gates. After much irresolution She ventured to knock softly. Luckily for her, Conrad was still

awake: He heard the noise and rose, murmuring at being called up a second time. No sooner had He opened one of the Doors, and beheld the supposed Apparition waiting there for admittance, than He uttered a loud cry, and sank upon his knees. Agnes profited by his terror. She glided by him, flew to her own apartment, and having thrown off her Spectre's trappings, retired to bed endeavouring in vain to account for my disappearing.

In the mean while Theodore having seen my Carriage drive off with the false Agnes, returned joyfully to the Village. The next morning He released Cunegonda from her confinement, and accompanied her to the Castle. There He found the Baron, his Lady, and Don Gaston, disputing together upon the Porter's relation. All of them agreed in believing the existence of Spectres: But the Latter contended, that for a Ghost to knock for admittance was a proceeding till then unwitnessed, and totally incompatible with the immaterial nature of a Spirit. They were still discussing this subject when the Page appeared with Cunegonda and cleared up the mystery. On hearing his deposition, it was agreed unanimously that the Agnes whom Theodore had seen step into my Carriage must have been the Bleeding Nun, and that the Ghost who had terrified Conrad was no other than Don Gaston's Daughter.

The first surprize which this discovery occasioned being over, the Baroness resolved to make it of use in persuading her Niece to take the veil. Fearing lest so advantageous an establishment for his Daughter should induce Don Gaston to renounce his resolution, She suppressed my letter, and continued to represent me as a needy unknown Adventurer. A childish vanity had led me to conceal my real name even from my Mistress; I wished to be loved for myself, not for being the Son and Heir of the Marquis de las Cisternas. The consequence was that my rank was known to no one in the Castle except the Baroness, and She took good care to confine the knowledge to her own breast. Don Gaston having approved his Sister's design, Agnes was summoned to appear before them. She was taxed with having meditated an elopement, obliged to make a full confession, and was amazed at the gentleness with which it was received: But what was her affliction, when informed that the failure of her project must be attributed to me! Cunegonda, tutored by the Baroness, told her that when I released her, I had desired her to inform her Lady that our connexion was at an end, that the whole affair was occasioned by a false report, and that it by no means suited my circumstances to marry a Woman without fortune or expectations.

To this account my sudden disappearing gave but too great an air of probability. Theodore, who could have contradicted the story, by Donna Rodolpha's order was kept out of her sight: What proved a still greater confirmation of my being an Impostor, was the arrival of a letter from yourself declaring that you had no sort of acquaintance with Alphonso d'Alvarada. These seeming proofs of my perfidy, aided by the artful insinuations of her Aunt, by Cunegonda's flattery, and her Father's threats and anger, entirely conquered your Sister's repugnance to a Convent. Incensed at my behaviour, and disgusted with the world in general, She consented to receive the veil. She past another Month at the Castle of Lindenberg, during which my non-appearance confirmed her in her resolution, and then accompanied Don Gaston into Spain. Theodore was now set at liberty. He hastened to Munich, where I had promised to let him hear from me; But finding from Lucas that I had never arrived there, He pursued his search with indefatigable perseverance, and at length succeeded in rejoining me at Ratisbon.

So much was I altered, that scarcely could He recollect my features: The distress visible upon his sufficiently testified how lively was the interest which He felt for me. The society of this amiable Boy, whom I had always considered rather as a

Companion than a Servant, was now my only comfort. His conversation was gay yet sensible, and his observations shrewd and entertaining: He had picked up much more knowledge than is usual at his Age: But what rendered him most agreeable to me, was his having a delightful voice, and some skill in Music. He had also acquired some taste in poetry, and even ventured sometimes to write verses himself. He occasionally composed little Ballads in Spanish, his compositions were but indifferent, I must confess; yet they were pleasing to me from their novelty, and hearing him sing them to his guitar was the only amusement, which I was capable of receiving. Theodore perceived well enough that something preyed upon my mind; But as I concealed the cause of my grief even from him, Respect would not permit him to pry into my secrets.

One Evening I was lying upon my Sopha, plunged in reflections very far from agreeable: Theodore amused himself by observing from the window a Battle between two Postillions, who were quarrelling in the Inn-yard.

'Ha! Ha!' cried He suddenly; 'Yonder is the Great Mogul.'

'Who?' said I.

'Only a Man who made me a strange speech at Munich.'

'What was the purport of it?'

'Now you put me in mind of it, Segnor, it was a kind of message to you; but truly it was not worth delivering. I believe the Fellow to be mad, for my part. When I came to Munich in search of you, I found him living at 'The King of the Romans,' and the Host gave me an odd account of him. By his accent He is supposed to be a Foreigner, but of what Country nobody can tell. He seemed to have no acquaintance in the Town, spoke very seldom, and never was seen to smile. He had neither Servants or Baggage; But his Purse seemed well-furnished, and He did much good in the Town. Some supposed him to be an Arabian Astrologer, Others to be a Travelling Mountebank, and many declared that He was Doctor Faustus, whom the Devil had sent back to Germany. The Landlord, however told me, that He had the best reasons to believe him to be the Great Mogul incognito.'

'But the strange speech, Theodore.'

'True, I had almost forgotten the speech: Indeed for that

matter, it would not have been a great loss if I had forgotten it altogether. You are to know, Segnor, that while I was enquiring about you of the Landlord, this Stranger passed by. He stopped, and looked at me earnestly. 'Youth!' said He in a solemn voice, 'He whom you seek, has found that which He would fain lose. My hand alone can dry up the blood: Bid your Master wish for me when the Clock strikes, 'One.'

'How?' cried I, starting from my Sopha. (The words which Theodore had repeated, seemed to imply the Stranger's knowledge of my secret) 'Fly to him, my Boy! Entreat him to grant me one moment's conversation!'

Theodore was surprised at the vivacity of my manner: However, He asked no questions, but hastened to obey me. I waited his return impatiently. But a short space of time had elapsed when He again appeared and ushered the expected Guest into my chamber. He was a Man of majestic presence: His countenance was strongly marked, and his eyes were large, black, and sparkling: Yet there was a something in his look which, the moment that I saw him, inspired me with a secret awe, not to say horror. He was drest plainly, his hair was unpowdered, and a band of black velvet which encircled his forehead spread over his features an additional

gloom. His countenance wore the marks of profound melancholy; his step was slow, and his manner grave, stately, and solemn.

He saluted me with politeness; and having replied to the usual compliments of introduction, He motioned to Theodore to quit the chamber. The Page instantly withdrew.

'I know your business,' said He, without giving me time to speak.

'I have the power of releasing you from your nightly Visitor; But this cannot be done before Sunday. On the hour when the Sabbath Morning breaks, Spirits of darkness have least influence over Mortals. After Saturday the Nun shall visit you no more.'

'May I not enquire,' said I, 'by what means you are in possession of a secret which I have carefully concealed from the knowledge of everyone?'

'How can I be ignorant of your distress, when their cause at this moment stands beside you?'

I started. The Stranger continued.

'Though to you only visible for one hour in the twenty-four, neither day or night does She ever quit you; Nor will She ever quit you till you have granted her request.'

'And what is that request?'

'That She must herself explain: It lies not in my knowledge.

Wait with patience for the night of Saturday: All shall be then cleared up.'

I dared not press him further. He soon after changed the conversation and talked of various matters. He named People who had ceased to exist for many Centuries, and yet with whom He appeared to have been personally acquainted. I could not mention a Country however distant which He had not visited, nor could I sufficiently admire the extent and variety of his information.

I remarked to him that having travelled, seen, and known so much, must have given him infinite pleasure. He shook his head mournfully.

'No one,' He replied, 'is adequate to comprehending the misery of my lot! Fate obliges me to be constantly in movement: I am not permitted to pass more than a fortnight in the same place. I

have no Friend in the world, and from the restlessness of my destiny I never can acquire one. Fain would I lay down my miserable life, for I envy those who enjoy the quiet of the Grave: But Death eludes me, and flies from my embrace. In vain do I throw myself in the way of danger. I plunge into the Ocean; The Waves throw me back with abhorrence upon the shore: I rush into fire; The flames recoil at my approach: I oppose myself to the fury of Banditti; Their swords become blunted, and break against my breast: The hungry Tiger shudders at my approach, and the Alligator flies from a Monster more horrible than itself. God has set his seal upon me, and all his Creatures respect this fatal mark!

He put his hand to the velvet, which was bound round his forehead. There was in his eyes an expression of fury, despair, and malevolence, that struck horror to my very soul. An involuntary convulsion made me shudder. The Stranger perceived it.

'Such is the curse imposed on me,' he continued: 'I am doomed to inspire all who look on me with terror and detestation. You already feel the influence of the charm, and with every succeeding moment will feel it more. I will not add to your

sufferings by my presence. Farewell till Saturday. As soon as the Clock strikes twelve, expect me at your chamber door.'

Having said this He departed, leaving me in astonishment at the mysterious turn of his manner and conversation.

His assurances that I should soon be relieved from the Apparition's visits produced a good effect upon my constitution. Theodore, whom I rather treated as an adopted Child than a Domestic, was surprized at his return to observe the amendment in my looks. He congratulated me on this symptom of returning health, and declared himself delighted at my having received so much benefit from my conference with the Great Mogul. Upon enquiry I found that the Stranger had already past eight days in Ratisbon: According to his own account, therefore, He was only to remain there six days longer. Saturday was still at the distance of Three. Oh! with what impatience did I expect its arrival! In the interim, the Bleeding Nun continued her nocturnal visits; But hoping soon to be released from them altogether, the effects which they produced on me became less violent than before.

The wished-for night arrived. To avoid creating suspicion I

retired to bed at my usual hour: But as soon as my Attendants had left me, I dressed myself again, and prepared for the Stranger's reception. He entered my room upon the turn of midnight. A small Chest was in his hand, which He placed near the Stove. He saluted me without speaking; I returned the compliment, observing an equal silence. He then opened his Chest. The first thing which He produced was a small wooden Crucifix: He sank upon his knees, gazed upon it mournfully, and cast his eyes towards heaven. He seemed to be praying devoutly. At length He bowed his head respectfully, kissed the Crucifix thrice, and quitted his kneeling posture. He next drew from the Chest a covered Goblet: With the liquor which it contained, and which appeared to be blood, He sprinkled the floor, and then dipping in it one end of the Crucifix, He described a circle in the middle of the room. Round about this He placed various reliques, skulls, thigh-bones &c; I observed, that He disposed them all in the forms of Crosses. Lastly He took out a large Bible, and beckoned me to follow him into the Circle. I obeyed.

'Be cautious not to utter a syllable!' whispered the Stranger;
'Step not out of the circle, and as you love yourself, dare not to look upon my face!'

Holding the Crucifix in one hand, the Bible in the other, He seemed to read with profound attention. The Clock struck 'One!' As usual I heard the Spectre's steps upon the Staircase: But I was not seized with the accustomed shivering. I waited her approach with confidence. She entered the room, drew near the Circle, and stopped. The Stranger muttered some words, to me unintelligible. Then raising his head from the Book, and extending the Crucifix towards the Ghost, He pronounced in a voice distinct and solemn,

'Beatrice! Beatrice! Beatrice!'

'What wouldst Thou?' replied the Apparition in a hollow faltering tone.

'What disturbs thy sleep? Why dost thou afflict and torture this Youth? How can rest be restored to thy unquiet Spirit?'

'I dare not tell!--I must not tell!--Fain would I repose in my Grave, but stern commands force me to prolong my punishment!'

'Knowest Thou this blood? Knowest Thou in whose veins it flowed?'

Beatrice! Beatrice! In his name I charge thee to answer me!

'I dare not disobey my taskers.'

'Darest Thou disobey Me?'

He spoke in a commanding tone, and drew the sable band from his forehead. In spite of his injunctions to the contrary,

Curiosity would not suffer me to keep my eyes off his face: I raised them, and beheld a burning Cross impressed upon his brow.

For the horror with which this object inspired me I cannot account, but I never felt its equal! My senses left me for some moments; A mysterious dread overcame my courage, and had not the Exorciser caught my hand, I should have fallen out of the Circle.

When I recovered myself, I perceived that the burning Cross had produced an effect no less violent upon the Spectre. Her countenance expressed reverence, and horror, and her visionary limbs were shaken by fear.

'Yes!' She said at length; 'I tremble at that mark!-- respect it!--I obey you! Know then, that my bones lie still unburied: They rot in the obscurity of Lindenberg Hole. None but this

Youth has the right of consigning them to the Grave. His own lips have made over to me his body and his soul: Never will I give back his promise, never shall He know a night devoid of terror, unless He engages to collect my mouldering bones, and deposit them in the family vault of his Andalusian Castle. Then let thirty Masses be said for the repose of my Spirit, and I trouble this world no more. Now let me depart! Those flames are scorching!

He let the hand drop slowly which held the Crucifix, and which till then He had pointed towards her. The apparition bowed her head, and her form melted into air. The Exorciser led me out of the Circle. He replaced the Bible &c. in the Chest, and then addressed himself to me, who stood near him speechless from astonishment.

'Don Raymond, you have heard the conditions on which repose is promised you. Be it your business to fulfil them to the letter. For me nothing more remains than to clear up the darkness still spread over the Spectre's History, and inform you that when living, Beatrice bore the name of las Cisternas. She was the great Aunt of your Grandfather: In quality of your relation, her ashes demand respect from you, though the enormity of her

crimes must excite your abhorrence. The nature of those crimes no one is more capable of explaining to you than myself: I was personally acquainted with the holy Man who proscribed her nocturnal riots in the Castle of Lindenberg, and I hold this narrative from his own lips.

Beatrice de las Cisternas took the veil at an early age, not by her own choice, but at the express command of her Parents. She was then too young to regret the pleasures of which her profession deprived her: But no sooner did her warm and voluptuous character begin to be developed than She abandoned herself freely to the impulse of her passions, and seized the first opportunity to procure their gratification. This opportunity was at length presented, after many obstacles which only added new force to her desires. She contrived to elope from the Convent, and fled to Germany with the Baron Lindenberg. She lived at his Castle several months as his avowed Concubine: All Bavaria was scandalized by her impudent and abandoned conduct. Her feasts vied in luxury with Cleopatra's, and Lindenberg became the Theatre of the most unbridled debauchery. Not satisfied with displaying the incontinence of a Prostitute, She professed herself an Atheist: She took every opportunity to scoff at her monastic vows, and loaded with ridicule the most sacred

ceremonies of Religion.

'Possessed of a character so depraved, She did not long confine her affections to one object. Soon after her arrival at the Castle, the Baron's younger Brother attracted her notice by his strong-marked features, gigantic Stature, and Herculean limbs. She was not of an humour to keep her inclinations long unknown; But She found in Otto von Lindenberg her equal in depravity. He returned her passion just sufficiently to increase it; and when He had worked it up to the desired pitch, He fixed the price of his love at his Brother's murder. The Wretch consented to this horrible agreement. A night was pitched upon for perpetrating the deed. Otto, who resided on a small Estate a few miles distant from the Castle, promised that at One in the morning He would be waiting for her at Lindenberg Hole; that He would bring with him a party of chosen Friends, by whose aid He doubted not being able to make himself Master of the Castle; and that his next step should be the uniting her hand to his. It was this last promise, which overruled every scruple of Beatrice, since in spite of his affection for her, the Baron had declared positively that He never would make her his Wife.

'The fatal night arrived. The Baron slept in the arms of his

perfidious Mistress, when the Castle-Bell struck 'One.'

Immediately Beatrice drew a dagger from underneath the pillow, and plunged it in her Paramour's heart. The Baron uttered a single dreadful groan, and expired. The Murderess quitted her bed hastily, took a Lamp in one hand, in the other the bloody dagger, and bent her course towards the cavern. The Porter dared not to refuse opening the Gates to one more dreaded in the Castle than its Master. Beatrice reached Lindenberg Hole unopposed, where according to promise She found Otto waiting for her. He received and listened to her narrative with transport: But ere She had time to ask why He came unaccompanied, He convinced her that He wished for no witnesses to their interview. Anxious to conceal his share in the murder, and to free himself from a Woman, whose violent and atrocious character made him tremble with reason for his own safety, He had resolved on the destruction of his wretched Agent. Rushing upon her suddenly, He wrested the dagger from her hand: He plunged it still reeking with his Brother's blood in her bosom, and put an end to her existence by repeated blows.

'Otto now succeeded to the Barony of Lindenberg. The murder was attributed solely to the fugitive Nun, and no one suspected him to have persuaded her to the action. But though his crime was

unpunished by Man, God's justice permitted him not to enjoy in peace his blood-stained honours. Her bones lying still unburied in the Cave, the restless soul of Beatrice continued to inhabit the Castle. Drest in her religious habit in memory of her vows broken to heaven, furnished with the dagger which had drank the blood of her Paramour, and holding the Lamp which had guided her flying steps, every night did She stand before the Bed of Otto.

The most dreadful confusion reigned through the Castle; The vaulted chambers resounded with shrieks and groans; And the Spectre, as She ranged along the antique Galleries, uttered an incoherent mixture of prayers and blasphemies. Otto was unable to withstand the shock which He felt at this fearful Vision:

Its horror increased with every succeeding appearance: His alarm at length became so insupportable that his heart burst, and one morning He was found in his bed totally deprived of warmth and animation. His death did not put an end to the nocturnal riots.

The bones of Beatrice continued to lie unburied, and her Ghost continued to haunt the Castle.

The domains of Lindenberg now fell to a distant Relation. But terrified by the accounts given him of the Bleeding Nun (So was the Spectre called by the multitude), the new Baron called to his assistance a celebrated Exorciser. This holy Man succeeded in

obliging her to temporary repose; But though She discovered to him her history, He was not permitted to reveal it to others, or cause her skeleton to be removed to hallowed ground. That Office was reserved for you, and till your coming, her Ghost was doomed to wander about the Castle and lament the crime which She had there committed. However, the Exorciser obliged her to silence during his lifetime. So long as He existed, the haunted chamber was shut up, and the Spectre was invisible. At his death which happened in five years after, She again appeared, but only once on every fifth year, on the same day and at the same hour when She plunged her Knife in the heart of her sleeping Lover: She then visited the Cavern which held her mouldering skeleton, returned to the Castle as soon as the Clock struck 'Two,' and was seen no more till the next five years had elapsed.

'She was doomed to suffer during the space of a Century. That period is past. Nothing now remains but to consign to the Grave the ashes of Beatrice. I have been the means of releasing you from your visionary Tormentor; and amidst all the sorrows which oppress me, to think that I have been of use to you, is some consolation. Youth, farewell! May the Ghost of your Relation enjoy that rest in the Tomb, which the Almighty's vengeance has denied to me for ever!'

Here the Stranger prepared to quit the apartment.

'Stay yet one moment!' said I; 'You have satisfied my curiosity with regard to the Spectre, but you leave me in prey to yet greater respecting yourself. Deign to inform me, to whom I am under such real obligations. You mention circumstances long past, and persons long dead: You were personally acquainted with the Exorciser, who by your own account has been deceased near a Century. How am I to account for this? What means that burning Cross upon your forehead, and why did the sight of it strike such horror to my soul?'

On these points He for some time refused to satisfy me. At length overcome by my entreaties, He consented to clear up the whole, on condition that I would defer his explanation till the next day. With this request I was obliged to comply, and He left me. In the Morning my first care was to enquire after the mysterious Stranger. Conceive my disappointment when informed that He had already quitted Ratisbon. I dispatched messengers in pursuit of him but in vain. No traces of the Fugitive were discovered. Since that moment I never have heard any more of him, and 'tis most probable that I never shall.'

(Lorenzo here interrupted his Friend's narrative.

'How?' said He; 'You have never discovered who He was, or even formed a guess?'

'Pardon me,' replied the Marquis; 'When I related this adventure to my Uncle, the Cardinal-Duke, He told me that He had no doubt of this singular Man's being the celebrated Character known universally by the name of 'the wandering Jew.' His not being permitted to pass more than fourteen days on the same spot, the burning Cross impressed upon his forehead, the effect which it produced upon the Beholders, and many other circumstances give this supposition the colour of truth. The Cardinal is fully persuaded of it; and for my own part I am inclined to adopt the only solution which offers itself to this riddle. I return to the narrative from which I have digressed.')

From this period I recovered my health so rapidly as to astonish my Physicians. The Bleeding Nun appeared no more, and I was soon able to set out for Lindenberg. The Baron received me with open arms. I confided to him the sequel of my adventure; and He was not a little pleased to find that his Mansion would be no longer

troubled with the Phantom's quiennial visits. I was sorry to perceive that absence had not weakened Donna Rodolpha's imprudent passion. In a private conversation which I had with her during my short stay at the Castle, She renewed her attempts to persuade me to return her affection. Regarding her as the primary cause of all my sufferings, I entertained for her no other sentiment than disgust. The Skeleton of Beatrice was found in the place which She had mentioned. This being all that I sought at Lindenberg, I hastened to quit the Baron's domains, equally anxious to perform the obsequies of the murdered Nun, and escape the importunity of a Woman whom I detested. I departed, followed by Donna Rodolpha's menaces that my contempt should not be long unpunished.

I now bent my course towards Spain with all diligence. Lucas with my Baggage had joined me during my abode at Lindenberg. I arrived in my native Country without any accident, and immediately proceeded to my Father's Castle in Andalusia. The remains of Beatrice were deposited in the family vault, all due ceremonies performed, and the number of Masses said which She had required. Nothing now hindered me from employing all my endeavours to discover the retreat of Agnes. The Baroness had assured me that her Niece had already taken the veil: This

intelligence I suspected to have been forged by jealousy, and hoped to find my Mistress still at liberty to accept my hand. I enquired after her family; I found that before her Daughter could reach Madrid, Donna Inesilla was no more: You, my dear Lorenzo, were said to be abroad, but where I could not discover: Your Father was in a distant Province on a visit to the Duke de Medina, and as to Agnes, no one could or would inform me what was become of her. Theodore, according to promise, had returned to Strasbourg, where He found his Grandfather dead, and Marguerite in possession of his fortune. All her persuasions to remain with her were fruitless: He quitted her a second time, and followed me to Madrid. He exerted himself to the utmost in forwarding my search: But our united endeavours were unattended by success. The retreat, which concealed Agnes remained an impenetrable mystery, and I began to abandon all hopes of recovering her.

About eight months ago I was returning to my Hotel in a melancholy humour, having past the evening at the Play-House. The Night was dark, and I was unaccompanied. Plunged in reflections which were far from being agreeable, I perceived not that three Men had followed me from the Theatre; till, on turning into an unfrequented Street, they all attacked me at the same time with the utmost fury. I sprang back a few paces, drew my

sword, and threw my cloak over my left arm. The obscurity of the night was in my favour. For the most part the blows of the Assassins, being aimed at random, failed to touch me. I at length was fortunate enough to lay one of my Adversaries at my feet; But before this I had already received so many wounds, and was so warmly pressed, that my destruction would have been inevitable, had not the clashing of swords called a Cavalier to my assistance. He ran towards me with his sword drawn: Several Domestics followed him with torches. His arrival made the combat equal: Yet would not the Bravoës abandon their design till the Servants were on the point of joining us. They then fled away, and we lost them in the obscurity.

The Stranger now addressed himself to me with politeness, and enquired whether I was wounded. Faint with the loss of blood, I could scarcely thank him for his seasonable aid, and entreat him to let some of his Servants convey me to the Hotel de las Cisternas. I no sooner mentioned the name than He profest himself an acquaintance of my Father's, and declared that He would not permit my being transported to such a distance before my wounds had been examined. He added that his House was hard by, and begged me to accompany him thither. His manner was so earnest, that I could not reject his offer, and leaning upon his

arm, a few minutes brought me to the Porch of a magnificent Hotel.

On entering the House, an old grey-headed Domestic came to welcome my Conductor: He enquired when the Duke, his Master, meant to quit the Country, and was answered that He would remain there yet some months. My Deliverer then desired the family Surgeon to be summoned without delay. His orders were obeyed. I was seated upon a Sopha in a noble apartment; and my wounds being examined, they were declared to be very slight. The Surgeon, however, advised me not to expose myself to the night air; and the Stranger pressed me so earnestly to take a bed in his House, that I consented to remain where I was for the present.

Being now left alone with my Deliverer, I took the opportunity of thanking him in more express terms, than I had done hitherto:

But He begged me to be silent upon the subject.

'I esteem myself happy,' said He, 'in having had it in my power to render you this little service; and I shall think myself eternally obliged to my Daughter for detaining me so late at the Convent of St. Clare. The high esteem in which I have ever held

the Marquis de las Cisternas, though accident has not permitted our being so intimate as I could wish, makes me rejoice in the opportunity of making his Son's acquaintance. I am certain that my Brother in whose House you now are, will lament his not being at Madrid to receive you himself: But in the Duke's absence I am Master of the family, and may assure you in his name, that every thing in the Hotel de Medina is perfectly at your disposal.'

Conceive my surprize, Lorenzo, at discovering in the person of my Preserver Don Gaston de Medina: It was only to be equalled by my secret satisfaction at the assurance that Agnes inhabited the Convent of St. Clare. This latter sensation was not a little weakened, when in answer to my seemingly indifferent questions He told me that his Daughter had really taken the veil. I suffered not my grief at this circumstance to take root in my mind: I flattered myself with the idea that my Uncle's credit at the Court of Rome would remove this obstacle, and that without difficulty I should obtain for my Mistress a dispensation from her vows. Buoyed up with this hope I calmed the uneasiness of my bosom; and I redoubled my endeavours to appear grateful for the attention and pleased with the society of Don Gaston.

A Domestic now entered the room, and informed me that the Bravo

whom I had wounded discovered some signs of life. I desired that He might be carried to my Father's Hotel, and that as soon as He recovered his voice, I would examine him respecting his reasons for attempting my life. I was answered that He was already able to speak, though with difficulty: Don Gaston's curiosity made him press me to interrogate the Assassin in his presence, but this curiosity I was by no means inclined to gratify. One reason was, that doubting from whence the blow came, I was unwilling to place before Don Gaston's eyes the guilt of a Sister: Another was, that I feared to be recognized for Alphonso d'Alvarada, and precautions taken in consequence to keep me from the sight of Agnes. To avow my passion for his Daughter, and endeavour to make him enter into my schemes, what I knew of Don Gaston's character convinced me would be an imprudent step: and considering it to be essential that He should know me for no other than the Conde de las Cisternas, I was determined not to let him hear the Bravo's confession. I insinuated to him, that as I suspected a Lady to be concerned in the Business, whose name might accidentally escape from the Assassin, it was necessary for me to examine the Man in private. Don Gaston's delicacy would not permit his urging the point any longer, and in consequence the Bravo was conveyed to my Hotel.

The next Morning I took leave of my Host, who was to return to the Duke on the same day. My wounds had been so trifling that, except being obliged to wear my arm in a sling for a short time, I felt no inconvenience from the night's adventure. The Surgeon who examined the Bravo's wound declared it to be mortal: He had just time to confess that He had been instigated to murder me by the revengeful Donna Rodolpha, and expired in a few minutes after.

All my thoughts were now bent upon getting to the speech of my lovely Nun. Theodore set himself to work, and for this time with better success. He attacked the Gardener of St. Clare so forcibly with bribes and promises that the Old Man was entirely gained over to my interests; and it was settled that I should be introduced into the Convent in the character of his Assistant. The plan was put into execution without delay. Disguised in a common habit, and a black patch covering one of my eyes, I was presented to the Lady Prioress, who condescended to approve of the Gardener's choice. I immediately entered upon my employment. Botany having been a favourite study with me, I was by no means at a loss in my new station. For some days I continued to work in the Convent Garden without meeting the Object of my disguise: On the fourth Morning I was more successful. I heard the voice

of Agnes, and was speeding towards the sound, when the sight of the Domina stopped me. I drew back with caution, and concealed myself behind a thick clump of Trees.

The Prioress advanced and seated herself with Agnes on a Bench at no great distance. I heard her in an angry tone blame her Companion's continual melancholy: She told her that to weep the loss of any Lover in her situation was a crime; But that to weep the loss of a faithless one was folly and absurdity in the extreme. Agnes replied in so low a voice that I could not distinguish her words, but I perceived that She used terms of gentleness and submission. The conversation was interrupted by the arrival of a young Pensioner who informed the Domina that She was waited for in the Parlour. The old Lady rose, kissed the cheek of Agnes, and retired. The newcomer remained. Agnes spoke much to her in praise of somebody whom I could not make out, but her Auditor seemed highly delighted, and interested by the conversation. The Nun showed her several letters; the Other perused them with evident pleasure, obtained permission to copy them, and withdrew for that purpose to my great satisfaction.

No sooner was She out of sight, than I quitted my concealment. Fearing to alarm my lovely Mistress, I drew near her gently,

intending to discover myself by degrees. But who for a moment can deceive the eyes of love? She raised her head at my approach, and recognised me in spite of my disguise at a single glance. She rose hastily from her seat with an exclamation of surprize, and attempted to retire; But I followed her, detained her, and entreated to be heard. Persuaded of my falsehood She refused to listen to me, and ordered me positively to quit the Garden. It was now my turn to refuse. I protested that however dangerous might be the consequences, I would not leave her till She had heard my justification. I assured her that She had been deceived by the artifices of her Relations; that I could convince her beyond the power of doubt that my passion had been pure and disinterested; and I asked her what should induce me to seek her in the Convent, were I influenced by the selfish motives which my Enemies had ascribed to me.

My prayers, my arguments, and vows not to quit her, till She had promised to listen to me, united to her fears lest the Nuns should see me with her, to her natural curiosity, and to the affection which She still felt for me in spite of my supposed desertion, at length prevailed. She told me that to grant my request at that moment was impossible; But She engaged to be in the same spot at eleven that night, and to converse with me for

the last time. Having obtained this promise I released her hand, and She fled back with rapidity towards the Convent.

I communicated my success to my Ally, the old Gardener: He pointed out an hiding place where I might shelter myself till night without fear of a discovery. Thither I betook myself at the hour when I ought to have retired with my supposed Master, and waited impatiently for the appointed time. The chillness of the night was in my favour, since it kept the other Nuns confined to their Cells. Agnes alone was insensible of the inclemency of the Air, and before eleven joined me at the spot which had witnessed our former interview. Secure from interruption, I related to her the true cause of my disappearing on the fatal fifth of May. She was evidently much affected by my narrative: When it was concluded, She confessed the injustice of her suspicions, and blamed herself for having taken the veil through despair at my ingratitude.

'But now it is too late to repine!' She added; 'The die is thrown: I have pronounced my vows, and dedicated myself to the service of heaven. I am sensible, how ill I am calculated for a Convent. My disgust at a monastic life increases daily: Ennui and discontent are my constant Companions; and I will not conceal

from you that the passion which I formerly felt for one so near being my Husband is not yet extinguished in my bosom. But we must part! Insuperable Barriers divide us from each other, and on this side the Grave we must never meet again!

I now exerted myself to prove that our union was not so impossible as She seemed to think it. I vaunted to her the Cardinal-Duke of Lerma's influence at the Court of Rome: I assured her that I should easily obtain a dispensation from her vows; and I doubted not but Don Gaston would coincide with my views, when informed of my real name and long attachment. Agnes replied that since I encouraged such an hope, I could know but little of her Father. Liberal and kind in every other respect, Superstition formed the only stain upon his character. Upon this head He was inflexible; He sacrificed his dearest interests to his scruples, and would consider it an insult to suppose him capable of authorising his daughter to break her vows to heaven.

'But suppose,' said I interrupting her; 'Suppose that He should disapprove of our union; Let him remain ignorant of my proceedings, till I have rescued you from the prison in which you are now confined. Once my Wife, you are free from his authority: I need from him no pecuniary assistance; and when He

sees his resentment to be unavailing, He will doubtless restore you to his favour. But let the worst happen; Should Don Gaston be irreconcilable, my Relations will vie with each other in making you forget his loss: and you will find in my Father a substitute for the Parent of whom I shall deprive you.'

'Don Raymond,' replied Agnes in a firm and resolute voice, 'I love my Father: He has treated me harshly in this one instance; but I have received from him in every other so many proofs of love that his affection is become necessary to my existence.

Were I to quit the Convent, He never would forgive me; nor can I think that on his deathbed He would leave me his curse, without shuddering at the very idea. Besides, I am conscious myself, that my vows are binding: Wilfully did I contract my engagement with heaven; I cannot break it without a crime. Then banish from your mind the idea of our being ever united. I am devoted to religion; and however I may grieve at our separation, I would oppose obstacles myself, to what I feel would render me guilty.'

I strove to overrule these ill-grounded scruples: We were still disputing upon the subject, when the Convent Bell summoned the Nuns to Matins. Agnes was obliged to attend them; But She left me not till I had compelled her to promise that on the following

night She would be at the same place at the same hour. These meetings continued for several Weeks uninterrupted; and 'tis now, Lorenzo, that I must implore your indulgence. Reflect upon our situation, our youth, our long attachment: Weigh all the circumstances which attended our assignations, and you will confess the temptation to have been irresistible; you will even pardon me when I acknowledge, that in an unguarded moment, the honour of Agnes was sacrificed to my passion.'

(Lorenzo's eyes sparkled with fury: A deep crimson spread itself over his face. He started from his seat, and attempted to draw his sword. The Marquis was aware of his movement, and caught his hand: He pressed it affectionately.

'My Friend! My Brother! Hear me to the conclusion! Till then restrain your passion, and be at least convinced, that if what I have related is criminal, the blame must fall upon me, and not upon your Sister.'

Lorenzo suffered himself to be prevailed upon by Don Raymond's entreaties. He resumed his place, and listened to the rest of the narrative with a gloomy and impatient countenance. The Marquis thus continued.)

'Scarcely was the first burst of passion past when Agnes, recovering herself, started from my arms with horror. She called me infamous Seducer, loaded me with the bitterest reproaches, and beat her bosom in all the wildness of delirium. Ashamed of my imprudence, I with difficulty found words to excuse myself. I endeavoured to console her; I threw myself at her feet, and entreated her forgiveness. She forced her hand from me, which I had taken, and would have prest to my lips.

'Touch me not!' She cried with a violence which terrified me; 'Monster of perfidy and ingratitude, how have I been deceived in you! I looked upon you as my Friend, my Protector: I trusted myself in your hands with confidence, and relying upon your honour, thought that mine ran no risque. And 'tis by you, whom I adored, that I am covered with infamy! 'Tis by you that I have been seduced into breaking my vows to God, that I am reduced to a level with the basest of my sex! Shame upon you, Villain, you shall never see me more!'

She started from the Bank on which She was seated. I endeavoured to detain her; But She disengaged herself from me with violence, and took refuge in the Convent.

I retired, filled with confusion and inquietude. The next morning I failed not as usual to appear in the Garden; but Agnes was no where to be seen. At night I waited for her at the place where we generally met; I found no better success. Several days and nights passed away in the same manner. At length I saw my offended Mistress cross the walk on whose borders I was working: She was accompanied by the same young Pensioner, on whose arm She seemed from weakness obliged to support herself. She looked upon me for a moment, but instantly turned her head away. I waited her return; But She passed on to the Convent without paying any attention to me, or the penitent looks with which I implored her forgiveness.

As soon as the Nuns were retired, the old Gardener joined me with a sorrowful air.

'Segnor,' said He, 'it grieves me to say, that I can be no longer of use to you. The Lady whom you used to meet has just assured me that if I admitted you again into the Garden, She would discover the whole business to the Lady Prioress. She bade me tell you also, that your presence was an insult, and that if you still possess the least respect for her, you will never attempt

to see her more. Excuse me then for informing you that I can favour your disguise no longer. Should the Prioress be acquainted with my conduct, She might not be contented with dismissing me her service: Out of revenge She might accuse me of having profaned the Convent, and cause me to be thrown into the Prisons of the Inquisition.'

Fruitless were my attempts to conquer his resolution. He denied me all future entrance into the Garden, and Agnes persevered in neither letting me see or hear from her. In about a fortnight after, a violent illness which had seized my Father obliged me to set out for Andalusia. I hastened thither, and as I imagined, found the Marquis at the point of death. Though on its first appearance his complaint was declared mortal, He lingered out several Months; during which my attendance upon him during his malady, and the occupation of settling his affairs after his decease, permitted not my quitting Andalusia. Within these four days I returned to Madrid, and on arriving at my Hotel, I there found this letter waiting for me.

(Here the Marquis unlocked the drawer of a Cabinet: He took out a folded paper, which He presented to his Auditor. Lorenzo opened it, and recognised his Sister's hand. The Contents were as

follows.

Into what an abyss of misery have you plunged me! Raymond, you force me to become as criminal as yourself. I had resolved never to see you more; if possible, to forget you; If not, only to remember you with hate. A Being for whom I already feel a Mother's tenderness, solicits me to pardon my Seducer, and apply to his love for the means of preservation. Raymond, your child lives in my bosom. I tremble at the vengeance of the Prioress; I tremble much for myself, yet more for the innocent Creature whose existence depends upon mine. Both of us are lost, should my situation be discovered. Advise me then what steps to take, but seek not to see me. The Gardener, who undertakes to deliver this, is dismissed, and we have nothing to hope from that quarter: The Man engaged in his place is of incorruptible fidelity. The best means of conveying to me your answer, is by concealing it under the great Statue of St. Francis, which stands in the Capuchin Cathedral. Thither I go every Thursday to confession, and shall easily have an opportunity of securing your letter. I hear that you are now absent from Madrid; Need I entreat you to write the very moment of your return? I will not think it. Ah! Raymond! Mine is a cruel situation! Deceived by my nearest Relations, compelled to embrace a profession the

duties of which I am ill-calculated to perform, conscious of the sanctity of those duties, and seduced into violating them by One whom I least suspected of perfidy, I am now obliged by circumstances to chuse between death and perjury. Woman's timidity, and maternal affection, permit me not to balance in the choice. I feel all the guilt into which I plunge myself, when I yield to the plan which you before proposed to me. My poor Father's death which has taken place since we met, has removed one obstacle. He sleeps in his grave, and I no longer dread his anger. But from the anger of God, Oh! Raymond! who shall shield me? Who can protect me against my conscience, against myself? I dare not dwell upon these thoughts; They will drive me mad. I have taken my resolution: Procure a dispensation from my vows; I am ready to fly with you. Write to me, my Husband! Tell me, that absence has not abated your love, tell me that you will rescue from death your unborn Child, and its unhappy Mother. I live in all the agonies of terror: Every eye which is fixed upon me seems to read my secret and my shame. And you are the cause of those agonies! Oh! When my heart first loved you, how little did it suspect you of making it feel such pangs!

Agnes.

Having perused the letter, Lorenzo restored it in silence. The

Marquis replaced it in the Cabinet, and then proceeded.)

'Excessive was my joy at reading this intelligence so earnestly-desired, so little expected. My plan was soon arranged. When Don Gaston discovered to me his Daughter's retreat, I entertained no doubt of her readiness to quit the Convent: I had, therefore, entrusted the Cardinal-Duke of Lerma with the whole affair, who immediately busied himself in obtaining the necessary Bull. Fortunately I had afterwards neglected to stop his proceedings. Not long since I received a letter from him, stating that He expected daily to receive the order from the Court of Rome. Upon this I would willingly have relied: But the Cardinal wrote me word, that I must find some means of conveying Agnes out of the Convent, unknown to the Prioress. He doubted not but this Latter would be much incensed by losing a Person of such high rank from her society, and consider the renunciation of Agnes as an insult to her House. He represented her as a Woman of a violent and revengeful character, capable of proceeding to the greatest extremities. It was therefore to be feared, lest by confining Agnes in the Convent She should frustrate my hopes, and render the Pope's mandate unavailing. Influenced by this consideration, I resolved to carry off my Mistress, and conceal her till the arrival of the

expected Bull in the Cardinal-Duke's Estate. He approved of my design, and profest himself ready to give a shelter to the Fugitive. I next caused the new Gardener of St. Clare to be seized privately, and confined in my Hotel. By this means I became Master of the Key to the Garden door, and I had now nothing more to do than prepare Agnes for the elopement. This was done by the letter, which you saw me deliver this Evening. I told her in it, that I should be ready to receive her at twelve tomorrow night, that I had secured the Key of the Garden, and that She might depend upon a speedy release.

You have now, Lorenzo, heard the whole of my long narrative. I have nothing to say in my excuse, save that my intentions towards your Sister have been ever the most honourable: That it has always been, and still is my design to make her my Wife: And that I trust, when you consider these circumstances, our youth, and our attachment, you will not only forgive our momentary lapse from virtue, but will aid me in repairing my faults to Agnes, and securing a lawful title to her person and her heart.