

VOLUME III

CHAPTER I

The crickets sing, and Man's o'er-laboured sense  
Repairs itself by rest: Our Tarquin thus  
Did softly press the rushes, ere He wakened  
The chastity He wounded--Cytherea,  
How bravely thou becom'st thy bed! Fresh Lily!  
And whiter than the sheets!

Cymbeline.

All the researches of the Marquis de las Cisternas proved vain:  
Agnes was lost to him for ever. Despair produced so violent an  
effect upon his constitution, that the consequence was a long and  
severe illness. This prevented him from visiting Elvira as He  
had intended; and She being ignorant of the cause of his neglect,  
it gave her no trifling uneasiness. His Sister's death had  
prevented Lorenzo from communicating to his Uncle his designs  
respecting Antonia: The injunctions of her Mother forbad his  
presenting himself to her without the Duke's consent; and as She  
heard no more of him or his proposals, Elvira conjectured that He  
had either met with a better match, or had been commanded to give

up all thoughts of her Daughter. Every day made her more uneasy respecting Antonia's fate: While She retained the Abbot's protection, She bore with fortitude the disappointment of her hopes with regard to Lorenzo and the Marquis. That resource now failed her. She was convinced that Ambrosio had meditated her Daughter's ruin: And when She reflected that her death would leave Antonia friendless and unprotected in a world so base, so perfidious and depraved, her heart swelled with the bitterness of apprehension. At such times She would sit for hours gazing upon the lovely Girl; and seeming to listen to her innocent prattle, while in reality her thoughts dwelt upon the sorrows into which a moment would suffice to plunge her. Then She would clasp her in her arms suddenly, lean her head upon her Daughter's bosom, and bedew it with her tears.

An event was in preparation which, had She known it, would have relieved her from her inquietude. Lorenzo now waited only for a favourable opportunity to inform the Duke of his intended marriage: However, a circumstance which occurred at this period, obliged him to delay his explanation for a few days longer.

Don Raymond's malady seemed to gain ground. Lorenzo was constantly at his bedside, and treated him with a tenderness

truly fraternal. Both the cause and effects of the disorder were highly afflicting to the Brother of Agnes: yet Theodore's grief was scarcely less sincere. That amiable Boy quitted not his Master for a moment, and put every means in practice to console and alleviate his sufferings. The Marquis had conceived so rooted an affection for his deceased Mistress, that it was evident to all that He never could survive her loss: Nothing could have prevented him from sinking under his grief but the persuasion of her being still alive, and in need of his assistance. Though convinced of its falsehood, his Attendants encouraged him in a belief which formed his only comfort. He was assured daily that fresh perquisitions were making respecting the fate of Agnes: Stories were invented recounting the various attempts made to get admittance into the Convent; and circumstances were related which, though they did not promise her absolute recovery, at least were sufficient to keep his hopes alive. The Marquis constantly fell into the most terrible excess of passion when informed of the failure of these supposed attempts. Still He would not credit that the succeeding ones would have the same fate, but flattered himself that the next would prove more fortunate.

Theodore was the only one who exerted himself to realize his

Master's Chimoeras. He was eternally busied in planning schemes for entering the Convent, or at least of obtaining from the Nuns some intelligence of Agnes. To execute these schemes was the only inducement which could prevail on him to quit Don Raymond. He became a very Proteus, changing his shape every day; but all his metamorphoses were to very little purpose: He regularly returned to the Palace de las Cisternas without any intelligence to confirm his Master's hopes. One day He took it into his head to disguise himself as a Beggar. He put a patch over his left eye, took his Guitar in hand, and posted himself at the Gate of the Convent.

'If Agnes is really confined in the Convent,' thought He, 'and hears my voice, She will recollect it, and possibly may find means to let me know that She is here.'

With this idea He mingled with a crowd of Beggars who assembled daily at the Gate of St. Clare to receive Soup, which the Nuns were accustomed to distribute at twelve o'clock. All were provided with jugs or bowls to carry it away; But as Theodore had no utensil of this kind, He begged leave to eat his portion at the Convent door. This was granted without difficulty: His sweet voice, and in spite of his patched eye, his engaging

countenance, won the heart of the good old Porteress, who, aided by a Lay-Sister, was busied in serving to each his Mess.

Theodore was bad to stay till the Others should depart, and promised that his request should then be granted. The Youth desired no better, since it was not to eat Soup that He presented himself at the Convent. He thanked the Porteress for her permission, retired from the Door, and seating himself upon a large stone, amused himself in tuning his Guitar while the Beggars were served.

As soon as the Crowd was gone, Theodore was beckoned to the Gate, and desired to come in. He obeyed with infinite readiness, but affected great respect at passing the hallowed Threshold, and to be much daunted by the presence of the Reverend Ladies. His feigned timidity flattered the vanity of the Nuns, who endeavoured to reassure him. The Porteress took him into her awn little Parlour: In the meanwhile, the Lay-Sister went to the Kitchen, and soon returned with a double portion of Soup, of better quality than what was given to the Beggars. His Hostess added some fruits and confections from her own private store, and Both encouraged the Youth to dine heartily. To all these attentions He replied with much seeming gratitude, and abundance of blessings upon his benefactresses. While He ate, the Nuns

admired the delicacy of his features, the beauty of his hair, and the sweetness and grace which accompanied all his actions. They lamented to each other in whispers, that so charming a Youth should be exposed to the seductions of the World, and agreed, that He would be a worthy Pillar of the Catholic Church. They concluded their conference by resolving that Heaven would be rendered a real service if they entreated the Prioress to intercede with Ambrosio for the Beggar's admission into the order of Capuchins.

This being determined, the Porteress, who was a person of great influence in the Convent, posted away in all haste to the Domina's Cell. Here She made so flaming a narrative of Theodore's merits that the old Lady grew curious to see him. Accordingly, the Porteress was commissioned to convey him to the Parlour grate. In the interim, the supposed Beggar was sifting the Lay-Sister with respect to the fate of Agnes: Her evidence only corroborated the Domina's assertions. She said that Agnes had been taken ill on returning from confession, had never quitted her bed from that moment, and that She had herself been present at the Funeral. She even attested having seen her dead body, and assisted with her own hands in adjusting it upon the Bier. This account discouraged Theodore: Yet as He had pushed

the adventure so far, He resolved to witness its conclusion.

The Porteress now returned, and ordered him to follow her. He obeyed, and was conducted into the Parlour, where the Lady Prioress was already posted at the Grate. The Nuns surrounded her, who all flocked with eagerness to a scene which promised some diversion. Theodore saluted them with profound respect, and his presence had the power to smooth for a moment even the stern brow of the Superior. She asked several questions respecting his Parents, his religion, and what had reduced him to a state of Beggary. To these demands his answers were perfectly satisfactory and perfectly false. He was then asked his opinion of a monastic life: He replied in terms of high estimation and respect for it. Upon this, the Prioress told him that his obtaining an entrance into a religious order was not impossible; that her recommendation would not permit his poverty to be an obstacle, and that if She found him deserving it, He might depend in future upon her protection. Theodore assured her that to merit her favour would be his highest ambition; and having ordered him to return next day, when She would talk with him further, the Domina quitted the Parlour.

The Nuns, whom respect for the Superior had till then kept

silent, now crowded all together to the Grate, and assailed the Youth with a multitude of questions. He had already examined each with attention: Alas! Agnes was not amongst them. The Nuns heaped question upon question so thickly that it was scarcely possible for him to reply. One asked where He was born, since his accent declared him to be a Foreigner: Another wanted to know, why He wore a patch upon his left eye: Sister Helena enquired whether He had not a Sister like him, because She should like such a Companion; and Sister Rachael was fully persuaded that the Brother would be the pleasanter Companion of the Two. Theodore amused himself with retailing to the credulous Nuns for truths all the strange stories which his imagination could invent. He related to them his supposed adventures, and penetrated every Auditor with astonishment, while He talked of Giants, Savages, Ship-wrecks, and Islands inhabited

'By Anthropophagi, and Men whose heads

Do grow beneath their shoulders,'

With many other circumstances to the full as remarkable. He said, that He was born in Terra Incognita, was educated at an Hottentot University, and had past two years among the Americans of Silesia.

'For what regards the loss of my eye' said He, 'it was a just punishment upon me for disrespect to the Virgin, when I made my second pilgrimage to Loretto. I stood near the Altar in the miraculous Chapel: The Monks were proceeding to array the Statue in her best apparel. The Pilgrims were ordered to close their eyes during this ceremony: But though by nature extremely religious, curiosity was too powerful. At the moment . . . . I shall penetrate you with horror, reverend Ladies, when I reveal my crime! . . . . At the moment that the Monks were changing her shift, I ventured to open my left eye, and gave a little peep towards the Statue. That look was my last! The Glory which surrounded the Virgin was too great to be supported. I hastily shut my sacrilegious eye, and never have been able to unclose it since!'

At the relation of this miracle the Nuns all crossed themselves, and promised to intercede with the blessed Virgin for the recovery of his sight. They expressed their wonder at the extent of his travels, and at the strange adventures which He had met with at so early an age. They now remarked his Guitar, and enquired whether he was an adept in Music. He replied with modesty that it was not for him to decide upon his talents, but

requested permission to appeal to them as Judges. This was granted without difficulty.

'But at least,' said the old Porteress, 'take care not to sing any thing profane.'

'You may depend upon my discretion,' replied Theodore: 'You shall hear how dangerous it is for young Women to abandon themselves to their passions, illustrated by the adventure of a Damsel who fell suddenly in love with an unknown Knight.'

'But is the adventure true?' enquired the Porteress.

'Every word of it. It happened in Denmark, and the Heroine was thought so beautiful that She was known by no other name but that of "the lovely Maid".'

'In Denmark, say you?' mumbled an old Nun; 'Are not the People all Blacks in Denmark?'

'By no means, reverend Lady; They are of a delicate pea-green with flame-coloured hair and whiskers.'

'Mother of God! Pea-green?' exclaimed Sister Helena; 'Oh! 'tis impossible!'

'Impossible?' said the Porteress with a look of contempt and exultation: 'Not at all: When I was a young Woman, I remember seeing several of them myself.'

Theodore now put his instrument in proper order. He had read the story of a King of England whose prison was discovered by a Minstrel; and He hoped that the same scheme would enable him to discover Agnes, should She be in the Convent. He chose a Ballad which She had taught him herself in the Castle of Lindenberg: She might possibly catch the sound, and He hoped to hear her replying to some of the Stanzas. His Guitar was now in tune, and He prepared to strike it.

'But before I begin,' said He 'it is necessary to inform you, Ladies, that this same Denmark is terribly infested by Sorcerers, Witches, and Evil Spirits. Every element possesses its appropriate Daemons. The Woods are haunted by a malignant power, called "the Erl- or Oak-King:" He it is who blights the Trees, spoils the Harvest, and commands the Imps and Goblins: He appears in the form of an old Man of majestic figure, with a

golden Crown and long white beard: His principal amusement is to entice young Children from their Parents, and as soon as He gets them into his Cave, He tears them into a thousand pieces--The Rivers are governed by another Fiend, called "the Water-King:" His province is to agitate the deep, occasion ship-wrecks, and drag the drowning Sailors beneath the waves: He wears the appearance of a Warrior, and employs himself in luring young Virgins into his snare: What He does with them, when He catches them in the water, Reverend Ladies, I leave for you to imagine--"The Fire-King" seems to be a Man all formed of flames: He raises the Meteors and wandering lights which beguile Travellers into ponds and marshes, and He directs the lightning where it may do most mischief--The last of these elementary Daemons is called "the Cloud-King;" His figure is that of a beautiful Youth, and He is distinguished by two large sable Wings: Though his outside is so enchanting, He is not a bit better disposed than the Others: He is continually employed in raising Storms, tearing up Forests by the roots, and blowing Castles and Convents about the ears of their Inhabitants. The First has a Daughter, who is Queen of the Elves and Fairies; The Second has a Mother, who is a powerful Enchantress: Neither of these Ladies are worth more than the Gentlemen: I do not remember to have heard any family assigned to the two other

Daemons, but at present I have no business with any of them  
except the Fiend of the Waters. He is the Hero of my Ballad; but  
I thought it necessary before I began, to give you some account  
of his proceedings--'

Theodore then played a short symphony; After which, stretching  
his voice to its utmost extent to facilitate its reaching the ear  
of Agnes, He sang the following Stanzas.

#### THE WATER-KING

#### A DANISH BALLAD

With gentle murmur flowed the Tide,  
While by the fragrant flowery side  
The lovely Maid with carols gay  
To Mary's Church pursued her way.

The Water-Fiend's malignant eye  
Along the Banks beheld her hie;  
Straight to his Mother-witch He sped,  
And thus in suppliant accents said:

'Oh! Mother! Mother! now advise,  
How I may yonder Maid surprize:  
Oh! Mother! Mother! Now explain,  
How I may yonder Maid obtain.'

The Witch She gave him armour white;  
She formed him like a gallant Knight;  
Of water clear next made her hand  
A Steed, whose housings were of sand.

The Water-King then swift He went;  
To Mary's Church his steps He bent:  
He bound his Courser to the Door,  
And paced the Church-yard three times four.

His Courser to the door bound He,  
And paced the Church-yard four time three:  
Then hastened up the Aisle, where all  
The People flocked, both great and small.

The Priest said, as the Knight drew near,  
'And wherefore comes the white Chief here?'  
The lovely Maid She smiled aside;

'Oh! would I were the white Chief's Bride!'

He stept o'er Benches one and two;

'Oh! lovely Maid, I die for You!'

He stept o'er Benches two and three;

'Oh! lovely Maiden, go with me!'

Then sweet She smiled, the lovely Maid,

And while She gave her hand, She said,

'Betide me joy, betide me woe,

O'er Hill, o'er dale, with thee I go.'

The Priest their hands together joins:

They dance, while clear the moon-beam shines;

And little thinks the Maiden bright,

Her Partner is the Water-spright.

Oh! had some spirit deigned to sing,

'Your Partner is the Water-King!'

The Maid had fear and hate confest,

And cursed the hand which then She prest.

But nothing giving cause to think,

How near She strayed to danger's brink,  
Still on She went, and hand in hand  
The Lovers reached the yellow sand.

'Ascend this Steed with me, my Dear;  
We needs must cross the streamlet here;  
Ride boldly in; It is not deep;  
The winds are hushed, the billows sleep.'

Thus spoke the Water-King. The Maid  
Her Traitor-Bride-groom's wish obeyed:  
And soon She saw the Courser lave  
Delighted in his parent wave.

'Stop! Stop! my Love! The waters blue  
E'en now my shrinking foot bedew!  
'Oh! lay aside your fears, sweet Heart!  
We now have reached the deepest part.'

'Stop! Stop! my Love! For now I see  
The waters rise above my knee.'  
'Oh! lay aside your fears, sweet Heart!  
We now have reached the deepest part.'

'Stop! Stop! for God's sake, stop! For Oh!

The waters o'er my bosom flow!--

Scarce was the word pronounced, when Knight

And Courser vanished from her sight.

She shrieks, but shrieks in vain; for high

The wild winds rising dull the cry;

The Fiend exults; The Billows dash,

And o'er their hapless Victim wash.

Three times while struggling with the stream,

The lovely Maid was heard to scream;

But when the Tempest's rage was o'er,

The lovely Maid was seen no more.

Warned by this Tale, ye Damsels fair,

To whom you give your love beware!

Believe not every handsome Knight,

And dance not with the Water-Spright!

The Youth ceased to sing. The Nuns were delighted with the

sweetness of his voice and masterly manner of touching the  
Instrument: But however acceptable this applause would have been  
at any other time, at present it was insipid to Theodore. His  
artifice had not succeeded. He paused in vain between the  
Stanzas: No voice replied to his, and He abandoned the hope of  
equalling Blondel.

The Convent Bell now warned the Nuns that it was time to  
assemble in the Refectory. They were obliged to quit the Grate;  
They thanked the Youth for the entertainment which his Music had  
afforded them, and charged him to return the next day. This He  
promised: The Nuns, to give him the greater inclination to keep  
his word, told him that He might always depend upon the Convent  
for his meals, and each of them made him some little present.  
One gave him a box of sweetmeats; Another, an Agnus Dei; Some  
brought reliques of Saints, waxen Images, and consecrated  
Crosses; and Others presented him with pieces of those works in  
which the Religious excel, such as embroidery, artificial  
flowers, lace, and needlework. All these He was advised to  
sell, in order to put himself into better case; and He was  
assured that it would be easy to dispose of them, since the  
Spaniards hold the performances of the Nuns in high estimation.  
Having received these gifts with seeming respect and gratitude,

He remarked that, having no Basket, He knew not how to convey them away. Several of the Nuns were hastening in search of one, when they were stopped by the return of an elderly Woman, whom Theodore had not till then observed: Her mild countenance, and respectable air prejudiced him immediately in her favour.

'Hah!' said the Porteress; 'Here comes the Mother St. Ursula with a Basket.'

The Nun approached the Grate, and presented the Basket to Theodore: It was of willow, lined with blue satin, and upon the four sides were painted scenes from the legend of St. Genevieve.

'Here is my gift,' said She, as She gave it into his hand; 'Good Youth, despise it not; Though its value seems insignificant, it has many hidden virtues.'

She accompanied these words with an expressive look. It was not lost upon Theodore; In receiving the present, He drew as near the Grate as possible.

'Agnes!' She whispered in a voice scarcely intelligible.

Theodore, however, caught the sound: He concluded that some

mystery was concealed in the Basket, and his heart beat with impatience and joy. At this moment the Domina returned. Her air was gloomy and frowning, and She looked if possible more stern than ever.

'Mother St. Ursula, I would speak with you in private.'

The Nun changed colour, and was evidently disconcerted.

'With me?' She replied in a faltering voice.

The Domina motioned that She must follow her, and retired. The Mother St. Ursula obeyed her; Soon after, the Refectory Bell ringing a second time, the Nuns quitted the Grate, and Theodore was left at liberty to carry off his prize. Delighted that at length He had obtained some intelligence for the Marquis, He flew rather than ran, till He reached the Hotel de las Cisternas. In a few minutes He stood by his Master's Bed with the Basket in his hand. Lorenzo was in the chamber, endeavouring to reconcile his Friend to a misfortune which He felt himself but too severely. Theodore related his adventure, and the hopes which had been created by the Mother St. Ursula's gift. The Marquis started from

his pillow: That fire which since the death of Agnes had been extinguished, now revived in his bosom, and his eyes sparkled with the eagerness of expectation. The emotions which Lorenzo's countenance betrayed, were scarcely weaker, and He waited with inexpressible impatience for the solution of this mystery.

Raymond caught the basket from the hands of his Page: He emptied the contents upon the bed, and examined them with minute attention. He hoped that a letter would be found at the bottom; Nothing of the kind appeared. The search was resumed, and still with no better success. At length Don Raymond observed that one corner of the blue satin lining was unripped; He tore it open hastily, and drew forth a small scrap of paper neither folded or sealed. It was addressed to the Marquis de las Cisternas, and the contents were as follows.

Having recognised your Page, I venture to send these few lines. Procure an order from the Cardinal-Duke for seizing my Person, and that of the Domina; But let it not be executed till Friday at midnight. It is the Festival of St. Clare: There will be a procession of Nuns by torch-light, and I shall be among them. Beware not to let your intention be known: Should a syllable be dropt to excite the Domina's suspicions, you will never hear of me more. Be cautious, if you prize the memory of Agnes, and wish

to punish her Assassins. I have that to tell, will freeze your blood with horror. St. Ursula.

No sooner had the Marquis read the note than He fell back upon his pillow deprived of sense or motion. The hope failed him which till now had supported his existence; and these lines convinced him but too positively that Agnes was indeed no more. Lorenzo felt this circumstance less forcibly, since it had always been his idea that his Sister had perished by unfair means. When He found by the Mother St. Ursula's letter how true were his suspicions, the confirmation excited no other sentiment in his bosom than a wish to punish the Murderers as they deserved. It was no easy task to recall the Marquis to himself. As soon as He recovered his speech, He broke out into execrations against the Assassins of his Beloved, and vowed to take upon them a signal vengeance. He continued to rave and torment himself with impotent passion till his constitution, enfeebled by grief and illness, could support itself no longer, and He relapsed into insensibility. His melancholy situation sincerely affected Lorenzo, who would willingly have remained in the apartment of his Friend; But other cares now demanded his presence. It was necessary to procure the order for seizing the Prioress of St. Clare. For this purpose, having committed Raymond to the care of

the best Physicians in Madrid, He quitted the Hotel de las Cisternas, and bent his course towards the Palace of the Cardinal-Duke.

His disappointment was excessive, when He found that affairs of State had obliged the Cardinal to set out for a distant Province.

It wanted but five to Friday: Yet by travelling day and night, He hoped to return in time for the Pilgrimage of St. Clare. In this He succeeded. He found the Cardinal-Duke; and represented to him the supposed culpability of the Prioress, as also the violent effects which it had produced upon Don Raymond. He could have used no argument so forcible as this last. Of all his Nephews, the Marquis was the only one to whom the Cardinal-Duke was sincerely attached: He perfectly doated upon him, and the Prioress could have committed no greater crime in his eyes than to have endangered the life of the Marquis. Consequently, He granted the order of arrest without difficulty: He also gave Lorenzo a letter to a principal Officer of the Inquisition, desiring him to see his mandate executed. Furnished with these papers, Medina hastened back to Madrid, which He reached on the Friday a few hours before dark. He found the Marquis somewhat easier, but so weak and exhausted that without great exertion He

could neither speak or more. Having past an hour by his Bedside, Lorenzo left him to communicate his design to his Uncle, as also to give Don Ramirez de Mello the Cardinal's letter. The First was petrified with horror when He learnt the fate of his unhappy Niece: He encouraged Lorenzo to punish her Assassins, and engaged to accompany him at night to St. Clare's Convent. Don Ramirez promised his firmest support, and selected a band of trusty Archers to prevent opposition on the part of the Populace.

But while Lorenzo was anxious to unmask one religious Hypocrite, He was unconscious of the sorrows prepared for him by Another. Aided by Matilda's infernal Agents, Ambrosio had resolved upon the innocent Antonia's ruin. The moment destined to be so fatal to her arrived. She had taken leave of her Mother for the night.

As She kissed her, She felt an unusual despondency infuse itself into her bosom. She left her, and returned to her instantly, threw herself into her maternal arms, and bathed her cheek with tears: She felt uneasy at quitting her, and a secret presentiment assured her that never must they meet again. Elvira observed, and tried to laugh her out of this childish prejudice: She chid her mildly for encouraging such ungrounded sadness, and warned her how dangerous it was to encourage such ideas.

To all her remonstrances She received no other answer than,

'Mother! Dear Mother! Oh! would to God, it were Morning!'

Elvira, whose inquietude respecting her Daughter was a great obstacle to her perfect reestablishment, was still labouring under the effects of her late severe illness. She was this Evening more than usually indisposed, and retired to bed before her accustomed hour. Antonia withdrew from her Mother's chamber with regret, and till the Door closed, kept her eyes fixed upon her with melancholy expression. She retired to her own apartment; Her heart was filled with bitterness: It seemed to her that all her prospects were blasted, and the world contained nothing for which it was worth existing. She sank into a Chair, reclined her head upon her arm, and gazed upon the floor with a vacant stare, while the most gloomy images floated before her fancy. She was still in this state of insensibility when She was disturbed by hearing a strain of soft Music breathed beneath her window. She rose, drew near the Casement, and opened it to hear it more distinctly. Having thrown her veil over her face, She ventured to look out. By the light of the Moon She perceived several Men below with Guitars and Lutes in their hands; and at a

little distance from them stood Another wrapped in his cloak, whose stature and appearance bore a strong resemblance to Lorenzo's. She was not deceived in this conjecture. It was indeed Lorenzo himself, who bound by his word not to present himself to Antonia without his Uncle's consent, endeavoured by occasional Serenades, to convince his Mistress that his attachment still existed. His stratagem had not the desired effect. Antonia was far from supposing that this nightly music was intended as a compliment to her: She was too modest to think herself worthy such attentions; and concluding them to be addressed to some neighbouring Lady, She grieved to find that they were offered by Lorenzo.

The air which was played, was plaintive and melodious. It accorded with the state of Antonia's mind, and She listened with pleasure. After a symphony of some length, it was succeeded by the sound of voices, and Antonia distinguished the following words.

## SERENADE

Chorus

Oh! Breathe in gentle strain, my Lyre!  
'Tis here that Beauty loves to rest:  
Describe the pangs of fond desire,  
Which rend a faithful Lover's breast.

Song

In every heart to find a Slave,  
In every Soul to fix his reign,  
In bonds to lead the wise and brave,  
And make the Captives kiss his chain,  
Such is the power of Love, and Oh!  
I grieve so well Love's power to know.

In sighs to pass the live-long day,  
To taste a short and broken sleep,  
For one dear Object far away,  
All others scorned, to watch and weep,  
Such are the pains of Love, and Oh!  
I grieve so well Love's pains to know!

To read consent in virgin eyes,  
To press the lip ne'er prest till then

To hear the sigh of transport rise,  
And kiss, and kiss, and kiss again,  
Such are thy pleasures, Love, But Oh!  
When shall my heart thy pleasures know?

Chorus

Now hush, my Lyre! My voice be still!  
Sleep, gentle Maid! May fond desire  
With amorous thoughts thy visions fill,  
Though still my voice, and hushed my Lyre.

The Music ceased: The Performers dispersed, and silence prevailed through the Street. Antonia quitted the window with regret: She as usual recommended herself to the protection of St. Rosolia, said her accustomed prayers, and retired to bed. Sleep was not long absent, and his presence relieved her from her terrors and inquietude

It was almost two o'clock before the lustful Monk ventured to bend his steps towards Antonia's dwelling. It has been already mentioned that the Abbey was at no great distance from the Strada di San Iago. He reached the House unobserved. Here He

stopped, and hesitated for a moment. He reflected on the enormity of the crime, the consequences of a discovery, and the probability, after what had passed, of Elvira's suspecting him to be her Daughter's Ravisher: On the other hand it was suggested that She could do no more than suspect; that no proofs of his guilt could be produced; that it would seem impossible for the rape to have been committed without Antonia's knowing when, where, or by whom; and finally, He believed that his fame was too firmly established to be shaken by the unsupported accusations of two unknown Women. This latter argument was perfectly false: He knew not how uncertain is the air of popular applause, and that a moment suffices to make him today the detestation of the world, who yesterday was its Idol. The result of the Monk's deliberations was that He should proceed in his enterprize. He ascended the steps leading to the House. No sooner did He touch the door with the silver Myrtle, than it flew open, and presented him with a free passage. He entered, and the door closed after him of its own accord.

Guided by the moonbeams, He proceeded up the Staircase with slow and cautious steps. He looked round him every moment with apprehension and anxiety. He saw a Spy in every shadow, and heard a voice in every murmur of the night breeze. Consciousness

of the guilty business on which He was employed appalled his heart, and rendered it more timid than a Woman's. Yet still He proceeded. He reached the door of Antonia's chamber. He stopped, and listened. All was hushed within. The total silence persuaded him that his intended Victim was retired to rest, and He ventured to lift up the Latch. The door was fastened, and resisted his efforts: But no sooner was it touched by the Talisman, than the Bolt flew back. The Ravisher stepped on, and found himself in the chamber, where slept the innocent Girl, unconscious how dangerous a Visitor was drawing near her Couch. The door closed after him, and the Bolt shot again into its fastening.

Ambrosio advanced with precaution. He took care that not a board should creak under his foot, and held in his breath as He approached the Bed. His first attention was to perform the magic ceremony, as Matilda had charged him: He breathed thrice upon the silver Myrtle, pronounced over it Antonia's name, and laid it upon her pillow. The effects which it had already produced permitted not his doubting its success in prolonging the slumbers of his devoted Mistress. No sooner was the enchantment performed than He considered her to be absolutely in his power, and his eyes flamed with lust and impatience. He now ventured to

cast a glance upon the sleeping Beauty. A single Lamp, burning before the Statue of St. Rosolia, shed a faint light through the room, and permitted him to examine all the charms of the lovely Object before him. The heat of the weather had obliged her to throw off part of the Bed-cloathes: Those which still covered her, Ambrosio's insolent hand hastened to remove. She lay with her cheek reclining upon one ivory arm; The Other rested on the side of the Bed with graceful indolence. A few tresses of her hair had escaped from beneath the Muslin which confined the rest, and fell carelessly over her bosom, as it heaved with slow and regular suspiration. The warm air had spread her cheek with higher colour than usual. A smile inexpressibly sweet played round her ripe and coral lips, from which every now and then escaped a gentle sigh or an half-pronounced sentence. An air of enchanting innocence and candour pervaded her whole form; and there was a sort of modesty in her very nakedness which added fresh stings to the desires of the lustful Monk.

He remained for some moments devouring those charms with his eyes which soon were to be subjected to his ill-regulated passions. Her mouth half-opened seemed to solicit a kiss: He bent over her; he joined his lips to hers, and drew in the fragrance of her breath with rapture. This momentary pleasure

increased his longing for still greater. His desires were raised to that frantic height by which Brutes are agitated. He resolved not to delay for one instant longer the accomplishment of his wishes, and hastily proceeded to tear off those garments which impeded the gratification of his lust.

'Gracious God!' exclaimed a voice behind him; 'Am I not deceived?

Is not this an illusion?'

Terror, confusion, and disappointment accompanied these words, as they struck Ambrosio's hearing. He started, and turned towards it. Elvira stood at the door of the chamber, and regarded the Monk with looks of surprize and detestation.

A frightful dream had represented to her Antonia on the verge of a precipice. She saw her trembling on the brink: Every moment seemed to threaten her fall, and She heard her exclaim with shrieks, 'Save me, Mother! Save me!--Yet a moment, and it will be too late!' Elvira woke in terror. The vision had made too strong an impression upon her mind, to permit her resting till assured of her Daughter's safety. She hastily started from her Bed, threw on a loose night-gown, and passing through the Closet

in which slept the Waiting-woman, She reached Antonia's chamber just in time to rescue her from the grasp of the Ravisher.

His shame and her amazement seemed to have petrified into Statues both Elvira and the Monk: They remained gazing upon each other in silence. The Lady was the first to recover herself.

'It is no dream!' She cried; 'It is really Ambrosio, who stands before me! It is the Man whom Madrid esteems a Saint, that I find at this late hour near the Couch of my unhappy Child! Monster of Hypocrisy! I already suspected your designs, but forbore your accusation in pity to human frailty. Silence would now be criminal: The whole City shall be informed of your incontinence. I will unmask you, Villain, and convince the Church what a Viper She cherishes in her bosom.'

Pale and confused the baffled Culprit stood trembling before her.

He would fain have extenuated his offence, but could find no apology for his conduct: He could produce nothing but broken sentences, and excuses which contradicted each other. Elvira was too justly incensed to grant the pardon which He requested. She protested that She would raise the neighbourhood, and make him an

example to all future Hypocrites. Then hastening to the Bed, She called to Antonia to wake; and finding that her voice had no effect, She took her arm, and raised her forcibly from the pillow. The charm operated too powerfully. Antonia remained insensible, and on being released by her Mother, sank back upon the pillow.

'This slumber cannot be natural!' cried the amazed Elvira, whose indignation increased with every moment. 'Some mystery is concealed in it; But tremble, Hypocrite; all your villainy shall soon be unravelled! Help! Help!' She exclaimed aloud; 'Within there! Flora! Flora!'

'Hear me for one moment, Lady!' cried the Monk, restored to himself by the urgency of the danger; 'By all that is sacred and holy, I swear that your Daughter's honour is still unviolated. Forgive my transgression! Spare me the shame of a discovery, and permit me to regain the Abbey undisturbed. Grant me this request in mercy! I promise not only that Antonia shall be secure from me in future, but that the rest of my life shall prove . . . .!'

Elvira interrupted him abruptly.

'Antonia secure from you? I will secure her! You shall betray no longer the confidence of Parents! Your iniquity shall be unveiled to the public eye: All Madrid shall shudder at your perfidy, your hypocrisy and incontinence. What Ho! there! Flora! Flora, I say!'

While She spoke thus, the remembrance of Agnes struck upon his mind. Thus had She sued to him for mercy, and thus had He refused her prayer! It was now his turn to suffer, and He could not but acknowledge that his punishment was just. In the meanwhile Elvira continued to call Flora to her assistance; but her voice was so choaked with passion that the Servant, who was buried in profound slumber, was insensible to all her cries: Elvira dared not go towards the Closet in which Flora slept, lest the Monk should take that opportunity to escape. Such indeed was his intention: He trusted that could He reach the Abbey unobserved by any other than Elvira, her single testimony would not suffice to ruin a reputation so well established as his was in Madrid. With this idea He gathered up such garments as He had already thrown off, and hastened towards the Door. Elvira was aware of his design; She followed him, and ere He could draw back the bolt, seized him by the arm, and detained him.

'Attempt not to fly!' said She; 'You quit not this room without Witnesses of your guilt.'

Ambrosio struggled in vain to disengage himself. Elvira quitted not her hold, but redoubled her cries for succour. The Friar's danger grew more urgent. He expected every moment to hear people assembling at her voice; And worked up to madness by the approach of ruin, He adopted a resolution equally desperate and savage. Turning round suddenly, with one hand He grasped Elvira's throat so as to prevent her continuing her clamour, and with the other, dashing her violently upon the ground, He dragged her towards the Bed. Confused by this unexpected attack, She scarcely had power to strive at forcing herself from his grasp: While the Monk, snatching the pillow from beneath her Daughter's head, covering with it Elvira's face, and pressing his knee upon her stomach with all his strength, endeavoured to put an end to her existence. He succeeded but too well. Her natural strength increased by the excess of anguish, long did the Sufferer struggle to disengage herself, but in vain. The Monk continued to kneel upon her breast, witnessed without mercy the convulsive trembling of her limbs beneath him, and sustained with inhuman firmness the spectacle of her agonies, when soul and body were on the point of separating. Those agonies at length were over. She

ceased to struggle for life. The Monk took off the pillow, and gazed upon her. Her face was covered with a frightful blackness:

Her limbs moved no more; The blood was chilled in her veins; Her heart had forgotten to beat, and her hands were stiff and frozen.

Ambrosio beheld before him that once noble and majestic form, now become a Corse, cold, senseless and disgusting.

This horrible act was no sooner perpetrated, than the Friar beheld the enormity of his crime. A cold dew flowed over his limbs; his eyes closed; He staggered to a chair, and sank into it almost as lifeless as the Unfortunate who lay extended at his feet. From this state He was roused by the necessity of flight, and the danger of being found in Antonia's apartment. He had no desire to profit by the execution of his crime. Antonia now appeared to him an object of disgust. A deadly cold had usurped the place of that warmth which glowed in his bosom: No ideas offered themselves to his mind but those of death and guilt, of present shame and future punishment. Agitated by remorse and fear He prepared for flight: Yet his terrors did not so completely master his recollection, as to prevent his taking the precautions necessary for his safety. He replaced the pillow

upon the bed, gathered up his garments, and with the fatal  
Talisman in his hand, bent his unsteady steps towards the door.  
Bewildered by fear, He fancied that his flight was opposed by  
Legions of Phantoms; Wherever He turned, the disfigured Corse  
seemed to lie in his passage, and it was long before He succeeded  
in reaching the door. The enchanted Myrtle produced its former  
effect. The door opened, and He hastened down the staircase.  
He entered the Abbey unobserved, and having shut himself into his  
Cell, He abandoned his soul to the tortures of unavailing  
remorse, and terrors of impending detection.