

XIV.

THE POLE.

It was near the close of day that a travelling calèche, coming from Rome, was seen approaching at full gallop towards Mola di Gaeta. The road leading to the inn is rocky and narrow; on one side is an orange grove, extending to the sea; on the other, an old Roman wall, overgrown by blossoming shrubs, enormous aloes, floating tangles of vines, and a thousand species of parasite plants peculiar to the South. Scarcely had the calèche entered this defile, when the careless postillion drove one of the wheels over a protruding ledge of rock, and overturned it; and, in the next moment, a crowd of people came running to the spot. Not one of them, however, thought of relieving the traveller within the fallen vehicle; but, with violent gestures and loud outcries, began to examine what damage the calèche had sustained, and what profit they might derive from it. The wheelwright declared every wheel was shattered; the carpenter that the shafts were splintered; whilst the blacksmith, passing and repassing under the carriage, tugged at every clamp and screw and nail, with all the violence necessary to ensure himself a handsome job. The traveller it contained having quietly disengaged himself from various cloaks, books, and maps, now slowly descended, and for a moment the busy crowd forgot their restlessness, to gaze upon the noble figure of the stranger. He seemed to be scarcely two-and-twenty. In stature he was tall, and his form was moulded in such

perfect proportions, that it presented a rare combination of youthful lightness and manly strength. His countenance, had you taken from it its deep thoughtfulness and its expression of calm intrepid bravery, might have belonged to the most lovely woman, so transparently blooming was his complexion, so regular his features, so blond and luxuriant his hair. Of all those present, he seemed the least concerned at the accident; he neither looked at the calèche, nor paid any attention to the offers of service that were screamed from a dozen mouths; but, drawing out his watch, asked his servant if the carriage was broken.

“Pann,¹ the shafts are snapped, two of the springs are injured, and the linch-pin has flown.”

“How long will it take to repair them?”

“Twenty-four hours.”

“It is now four o'clock. See that everything be in order again by to-morrow's daybreak.”

“Pann, with these lazy Italians, I fear it will be impossible”—

“Ya paswalam,”² replied the traveller coldly, but decidedly. “Pay what you will, but let all be ready for the hour I have mentioned.”

Without another word, he walked towards the inn, followed by the crowd, teasing for alms. A few seconds ago they had all been active and healthy beings, so full of employment they could not afford to mend his calèche unless tempted by some extraordinary reward; now the men declared themselves cripples and invalids, the children were orphans, the women helpless widows, and they would all die of hunger if his Eccellenza did not bestow a few *grani*. “What a tedious race!” exclaimed the traveller, casting a handful of coins upon the ground, which caused a general scramble, and enabled him to proceed unmolested. At the inn new torments awaited

¹ My Lord, in Polish.

² I will it, in Polish.

him ; a fresh crowd, composed of the landlord, the landlady, and their waiters and hostlers, gathered round, and assailed him with innumerable questions. The landlord hoped none of his limbs were broken, and begged him to consider himself master of the house ; the waiters desired to know at what hour he would sup, what fare he chose, how long he intended to stay, where he came from, whither he was going ; and the landlady led him, ostentatiously, through all the rooms of the inn, expatiating endlessly upon the peculiar and indescribable advantages of each. Ineffably weary of their officiousness, the traveller at last traversed a long and spacious hall, and took refuge in a balcony that looked upon the bay of Gaeta.

The inn is built upon the site of Cicero's Villa. Beneath the balcony, and on each side, along the whole curve of the bay, stretched a thick grove of orange-trees, which sloped down to the very verge of the Mediterranean. Balls of golden fruit, and blossoms faint with odour, and fair as stars, studded this amphitheatre of dark foliage ; and at its extremity the liquid light of the waves pierced the glossy leaves, mingling their blue splendour with earth's green paradise. Every rock and mountain glowed with a purple hue, so intense and soft, they resembled violet vapours dissolving into the pale radiance of the evening sky. Far away in the deep broad flood of the ocean rose the two mountain islands of Ischia and Procida, between which Vesuvius thrust in his jagged form, and his floating banner of snow-white smoke. The solitary heaven was without sun or moon, without a star or cloud, but smiled in that tender vestal light which speaks of eternal, immutable peace.

It would be difficult to define the feelings of the traveller as he gazed on this scene : his countenance, uplifted to heaven, was animated with a profound and impassioned melancholy, with an expression of an earnest

and fervid pleading against some vast and inevitable wrong. He was thinking of his country; and whilst he contrasted its ruined villages and devastated fields with the splendour and glow of the fair land before him, was breathing inwardly a passionate appeal against that blind and cruel destiny which had consigned Poland to the desolating influence of Russian despotism. His reverie was interrupted by the sound of a female voice singing in Polish among the orange trees at his feet. The singer was invisible; but the sweetness of her voice, and the singular reference of the words (the following prose translation conveys their meaning) to the thoughts of his own mind, filled the traveller with surprise:—

“When thou gazest upon the azure heaven, so mighty in its calm, do not say, O bright enchantment, hast thou no pity, that thou dawnest thus in unattainable loveliness upon my world-wearied eyes.

“When the southern wind softly breathes, do not say reproachfully, Thy cradle is the ether of the morning sun, thou drinkest the odorous essence of myrtle and lemon blossoms; thou shouldst bear upon thy wings all sweet emotions, all soft desires; why bringest thou then no healing to the anguish I endure?

“Neither in the dark hour, when thou thinkest upon thy country and thy friends, say not with grief, They are lost! They are not! Say rather with joy, They were illustrious! and it is bliss to know that they have been!”

It were wise in me to obey thy lesson, sweet songstress, thought the traveller; and revolving in his mind the singularity of the serenade, he continued to gaze upon the trees below. There was no rustling amid their branches, no sound which told a human being was concealed beneath their foliage; nothing was heard beyond the almost imperceptible breathings of the evening air. Did such things exist anywhere but in the imagination of the poet? He could almost have believed that the

spirit of that divine scene had assumed a human voice and human words to soothe his melancholy, so floating and airy had been the strain, so deep the silence that succeeded it. One moment more, and there arose from the same spot cries for help uttered in Italian, and shrieks of distress so piercing, they made the traveller fly with the speed of lightning through the great hall, down the staircase into the garden. The first object that met his eyes was the figure of a girl about sixteen, her one arm tightly embracing the stem of a tree, her other angrily repelling a young man who was endeavouring to drag her away.

"I will not go with you—I love you no longer, Giorgio—and go with you, I will not," shrieked the girl, in tones of mingled violence and fear.

"You must—you shall," retorted her aggressor in a voice of thunder.

"I have found you again, and I won't be duped by your fooleries, Marietta.—And who are you, and who begged you to interfere?" added he, turning fiercely upon the traveller, whose strong grasp had torn him from Marietta.

"An officer, as it should seem by your dress;—be pleased to know that I am also an officer, and risk my displeasure no further."

"No officer would ill-treat a defenceless girl," the Pole replied with quiet contempt.

At this taunt Giorgio quivered with rage. His features, handsome and regular as those of Italians generally are, became quite distorted. His hands with convulsive movements sought about his breast for the dagger that was concealed there, his dark flashing eyes fixed intently at the same time upon his adversary, as if he hoped the fiendish spirit that burned within them might previously annihilate him.

"Be on your guard—he is a perfect wretch," cried Marietta, rushing towards her protector.

The arrival of several servants from the inn dispelled all idea of present danger: they dragged off Giorgio, telling him that, although the girl was his sister, he had no right to separate her from the *corps d'opera*, with whom she was travelling through Gaeta.

"*E vero è verissimo*," cried Marietta with joyful triumph.

"What is it to him if I like my liberty, and prefer wandering about, singing here and there."

"Marietta! beware! dare not to speak ill of me!" screamed the retiring Giorgio, looking back over his shoulder, and accompanying his words with a look of such frightful menace as completely subdued his sister.

She watched in anxious silence till he had disappeared, and then, with affectionate humility and a graceful quickness that allowed not of its prevention, knelt lightly down, and pressed the stranger's hand to her lips.

"You have more than repaid me for the song I sang to you," she said, rising and leading the way to the inn; "and, if you like it, I will sing others to you whilst you sup."

"Are you a Pole?" inquired the traveller.

"A fine demand! how can I be a Pole? Did you not say yourself there was no longer any such country as Poland?"

"I? not that I recollect."

"If you did not say it, confess at least that you thought it. The Poles are all become Russians, and for nothing in the world, Signor, would I be a Russian. Why in all their language they have no word that expresses *honour*.¹ No! rather than be a Russian, much as I hate it, I would go with Giorgio."

"Are you an Italian?"

"No—not exactly."

"What are you, then?"

¹ This is true. The Russian language is without that word.

“Um! I am what I am; who can be more! But, Signor, one thing I must beg of you, do not ask me any questions about myself, nor any about Giorgio. I will sing to you, talk to you, wait upon you—anything of that kind you please, but I will not answer questions on those subjects.”

Seating herself upon a stool, in a dark corner of the traveller's apartment, as far removed as possible from him, and all other interruptions, Marietta passed the evening in playing on her guitar and singing. She was a most accomplished singer, possessing and managing all the intricacies of the art with perfect ease, but this scarcely excited admiration in comparison with the natural beauty of her voice. There was a profound melancholy in its intense sweetness, that dissolved the soul of the traveller in grief. All that was dear to him in the memory of the past,—the joys of home and childhood, the tenderness and truth of his first friendships, the glow of patriotism; every cherished hour, every endeared spot, all that he had loved, and all that he had lost upon earth, seemed again to live and again to fade, as he listened to her strains. Without paying any attention to him, and apparently without any effort to herself, she breathed forth melody after melody for her own pleasure, like some lone nightingale, that, in a home of green leaves, sings to cheer its solitude with sweet sounds. Her countenance and figure would have been beautiful had they been more fully developed. They resembled those sketches of a great artist in which there are only a few lightly-traced lines, but those so full of spirit and meaning, that you easily imagine what a masterpiece it would have been when finished.

The first visit of our traveller, on arriving, next day, at Naples was to the Princess Dashkoff. She was a Russian lady, whose high birth, immense wealth, and talents for intrigue, had procured for her the intimacy of

half the crowned heads of Europe, and had made her all-powerful at the Court of St. Petersburg. Detesting the cold barbarism of her native country, she had established herself at Naples, in a splendid mansion, near the Strada Nuova; and affecting an extravagant admiration for Italy, by her munificent patronage of the arts and artists, and by perpetual exhibitions of her own skill, in drawing and singing, dancing and acting, had obtained the name of the Corinna of the North. Her *salon* was the evening resort of the wise, the idle, the witty, and the dissipated. Not to know Corinna was to be yourself unknown; and not to frequent her *conversazioni* was, as far as society was concerned, to be banished from all that was fashionable or delightful in Naples.

It was the hour of evening reception. The Pole burned with impatience to speak to the Princess, for on her influence, at Petersburg, depended the fate of his only brother. A splendid suite of apartments, blazing with lights, crowded with company, lay open before him; without allowing himself to be announced, he entered them. When a highly imaginative mind is absorbed by some master feeling, all opposing contrasts, all glowing extremes, serve but to add depth and intensity to that feeling. The festal scene of marble columns garlanded by roses, the walls of Venetian mirror, reflecting the light of innumerable tapers, and the forms of lovely women and gay youths floating in the mazy dance, seemed to him deceitful shows that veiled some frightful sorrow; and with eager, rapid steps, as if borne along by the impulse of his own thoughts, he hurried past them. Scarcely knowing how he had arrived there, he at length found himself standing beside the Princess, in a marble colonnade, open above to the moonlight and the stars of heaven, and admitting at its sides the odours of the blossoming almond trees of the adjacent gardens.

“Ladislav!” exclaimed the lady, starting; “is it possible—to see you here almost exceeds belief.”

After remaining some moments in deep silence, collecting and arranging his thoughts, the Pole replied. A conversation ensued, in so low a voice as to be only audible to themselves; from their attitudes and gestures it might be inferred that Ladislav was relating some tale of deep anguish, mixed with solemn and impressive adjurations, to which the Princess listened with a consenting tranquillizing sympathy.

They issued from the recess, walked up the colonnade, and entered a small temple that terminated it. From the centre of its airy dome hung a lighted alabaster lamp of a boat-like shape, beneath which a youthful female was seated alone sketching a range of moonlight hills that appeared between the columns. “Idalie,” said the Princess, “I have brought you a new subject for your pencil—and such a subject, my love—one whose fame has already made him dear to your imagination; no less a person than the hero of Ostrolenka¹ and the Vistula. So call up one of those brightest, happiest moods of your genius, in which all succeeds to you, and enrich my album with his likeness,” spreading it before her.

It is difficult to refuse any request to a person who has just granted us an important favour. Ladislav

¹ At Ostrolenka, the Russian and Polish armies were in sight of one another. The destruction of the Poles seemed inevitable; not expecting the attack, their lines were not formed, and the Russians were triple in number, and advancing in the most perfect order. In this emergency, three hundred students from the University of Warsaw drew hastily up in a body, and, devoting themselves willingly to death, marched forward to meet the onset of the enemy. They were headed by a young man, who distinguished himself by the most exalted courage, and was the only one of their numbers who escaped. He stationed his band in a small wood that lay directly in the path of the Russians, and checked their progress for the space of three hours. Every tree of that wood now waves above a patriot's grave. In the meantime the Polish army formed, bore down, and gained a brilliant victory.

suffered himself to be seated, and as soon as the Princess had quitted them, the gloom which had shadowed his brow at the names of Ostrolenka and the Vistula vanished. The surpassing beauty of the young artist would have changed the heaviest penance into a pleasure. She was lovely as one of Raffaelle's Madonnas; and, like them, there was a silent beauty in her presence that struck the most superficial beholder with astonishment and satisfaction. Her hair, of a golden and burnished brown (the colour of the autumnal foliage illuminated by the setting sun), fell in gauzy wavings round her face, throat, and shoulders. Her small, clear forehead, gleaming with gentle thought; her curved, soft, and rosy lips; the delicate moulding of the lower part of the face, expressing purity and integrity of nature, were all perfectly Grecian. Her hazel eyes, with their arched lids and dark arrowy lashes, pierced the soul with their full and thrilling softness. She was clad in long and graceful drapery, white as snow; but, pure as this garment was, it seemed a rude disguise to the resplendent softness of the limbs it enfolded. The delicate light that gleamed from the alabaster lamp above them was a faint simile of the ineffable spirit of love that burned within Idalie's fair, transparent frame; and the one trembling, shining star of evening that palpitates responsively to happy lovers, never seemed more divine or more beloved than she did to Ladislas, as she sat there, now fixing a timid but attentive gaze upon his countenance, and then dropping it upon the paper before her. And not alone for Ladislas was this hour the dawn of passionate love. The same spell was felt in the heart of Idalie. One moment their eyes met and glanced upon each other, the look of exalted, eternal love—mute, blessed, and inexpressible. Their lids fell and were raised no more. Rapture thrilled their breasts and swelled their full hearts; for, motionless, and in deep silence, as if every outward faculty were absorbed

in reverence, they continued, each inwardly knowing, hearing, seeing nothing but the divine influence and attraction of the other.

I know not if the portrait was finished. I believe it was not. Noiselessly Idalie arose and departed to seek the Princess, and Ladislas followed. "Who is that lovely being?" inquired an English traveller some time afterward, pointing out Idalie from a group of ladies.

"A Polish girl—a protégée of mine," was the reply of the Princess; "a daughter of one of Kosciusko's unfortunate followers, who died here, poor and unknown. She has a great genius for drawing and painting, but she is so different in her nature from the generality of people, that I am afraid she will never get on in the world. All the family are wild and strange. There is a brother who they say is a complete ruffian; brave as a Pole and as unprincipled as an Italian! a villain quite varnished in picturesque, like one of your Lord Byron's corsairs and gjaours. Then there is a younger sister; the most uncontrollable little creature, who chose to pretend my house was insupportable, and ran away into Calabria or Campagna, and set up as a *prima donna*. But these, to be sure, are the children of a second wife, an Italian; and Idalie, I must confess, has none of their lawlessness, but is remarkably gentle and steady."

Disgusted with this heartless conversation, which disturbed his ecstasy, Ladislas hastily quitted the Dashkoff palace, and entered the Villa Reale, whose embowering trees promised solitude. Not one straggler of the gay crowds that frequent this luxurious garden from morning till midnight was now to be seen. With its straight walks buried in gloom and shadow; its stone fountains of sleeping water; its marble statues, its heaven-pointing obelisks, and its midnight air, it was silent as a deserted oratory, when the last strain of the vesper hymn has died away, the last taper has ceased to burn, the last censer

has been flung, and both priests and worshippers have departed. Ladislas cast himself upon a stone seat in the ilex grove that skirts the margin of the bay. "I dreamt not of love," he exclaimed; "I sought her not! I had renounced life and all its train of raptures, hopes, and joys. Cold, and void of every wish, the shadow of death lay upon my heart; suddenly she stood before me, lovely as an angel that heralds departed spirits to the kingdom of eternal bliss. Fearless, but mild, she poured the magic of her gaze upon my soul. I speak the word of the hour. She shall be mine—or I will die!"

Reclining in the ilex grove, Ladislas passed the remaining hours of that too short night, entranced in bliss, as if the bright form of his beloved were still shining beside him. Gradually every beauty of the wondrous and far-famed Bay of Naples impressed itself upon his attention. The broad and beamless moon sinking behind the tall elms of Posilippo; the broken starlight on the surface of the waves—their rippling sound as they broke at his feet; Sorrento's purple promontory, and the gentle wind that blew from it; the solitary grandeur of Capri's mountain-island rising out of the middle of the bay, a colossal sphinx guarding two baths of azure light; Vesuvius breathing its smoke, and flame, and sparks, in the cloudless ether;—all became mingled in inexplicable harmony with his new-born passion, and were indelibly associated with his recollection of that night.

The next morning Idalie was sketching in the Villa Reale. She had seated herself on the outside of a shady alley. Two persons passed behind her, and the childish petulant voice of one of them drew her attention. That voice, so sweet even in its impatience, certainly belonged to her fugitive sister. "It is she!" exclaimed Idalie, gliding swift as thought between the trees, and folding the speaker to her bosom. "Marietta—my

dear little Marietta! at last you are come back again. *Cattivella!* now promise to stay with me. You know not how miserable I have been about you."

"No! I cannot promise anything of the kind," replied Marietta, playing with the ribands of her guitar. "I choose to have my liberty."

Idalie's arms sunk, and her eyes were cast upon the ground when she heard the cold and decided tone in which this refusal was pronounced. On raising the latter, they glanced upon the companion of her sister, and were filled with unconquerable emotion at discovering Ladislas, the elected of her heart.

"I met your sister here a few minutes ago," explained he, partaking her feelings; "and having been so fortunate the other day as to render her a slight service"—

"Oh yes," interrupted Marietta; "I sung for him a whole evening at Gaeta. It was a curious adventure. His carriage was overturned close to the inn. I had arrived there half an hour before, and was walking in an orange grove near the spot, and saw the accident happen, and heard him speak in Polish to his servant. My heart beat with joy. He looked wondrous melancholy. I thought it must be about his country, so I crept as softly as a mouse among the trees under his balcony, and sung him a salve-song in Polish. I improvised it on the spur of the moment. I do not very well recollect it, but it was about azure heavens, southern winds, myrtle and lemon blossoms, and the illustrious unfortunate; and it ought to have pleased him. Just as I had finished, out starts our blessed brother, Giorgio, from the inn, and began one of his most terrific bothers. Imagine how frightened I was, for I thought he was gone to Sicily with his regiment. However, they got him away, and I followed this stranger into his room, and sang to him the rest of the evening. All my best songs,—the '*Mio ben quando verrà,*' '*Nina pazza per Amore,*' the '*All' armi*' of Generali;

the 'Dolce cara patria,' from *Tancredi*; the 'Deh calma,' from *Otello*,—all my whole stock I assure you." Thus rattled on Marietta; and then, as if her quick eye had already discovered the secret of their attachment, she added, with an arch smile, "but don't be frightened, Idalie, though his eyes filled with tears whilst I sung, as yours often do, not a word of praise did the Sarmatian bestow on me."

"Then return and live with me, dear Marietta, and I will praise you as much, and more than you desire."

"*Santa Maria del Piè di Grotta!* What a tiresome person you are, Idalie. When you have got an idea into your head, an earthquake would not get it out again. Have I not told you that I will not. If you knew the motive you would approve my resolution. I said I liked my liberty, and so forth; but that was not the reason of my flight. I do not choose to have anything to do with Giorgio and the Princess; for, believe me, dearest Idalie, disgraceful as my present mode of life seems to you, it is innocence itself compared with the crimes they were leading me into."

"Some suspicion of this did once cross my mind," her sister replied with a sigh, "but I rejected it as too horrible. Dear child, think no more about them. Do you not know that I have left the Princess' house, and am living by myself in a little pavilion far up on the Strada Nuova. There you need not fear their molestations."

"Is not Giorgio then with you?"

"No; I have not seen him for some time. I doubt if he be in Naples."

"So Messer Giorgio, you have deceived me again. But I might have known that, for he never speaks a word of truth. Be assured, however, he is in Naples, for I caught a glimpse of him this morning, mounting the hill that leads to the barracks at Pizzofalcone, and he

is as intimate with the Princess as ever, though she pretends to disown him. As for me, I am engaged at San Carlos; the writing is signed and sealed, and cannot be broken without forfeiting a heavy sum of money; otherwise I should be happy to live peacefully with you; for you know not, Idalie, all I have had to suffer; how sad and ill-treated I have been! how often pinched with want and hunger; and worse than that, when Giorgio takes it into his head to pursue me, and plants himself in the pit, fixing his horrible looks upon me as I sing! how many times I have rushed out of the theatre, and spent the nights in the great wide Maremma, beset by robbers, buffaloes, and wild boars, till I was almost mad with fear and bewilderment. There is a curse upon our family, I think. Did not our father once live in a splendid castle of his own, with a hundred retainers to wait upon him; and do you remember the miserable garret in which he died? But I cannot stay any longer. I am wanted at the rehearsal: so, farewell, dearest Idalie. Be you at least happy, and leave me to fulfil the evil destiny that hangs over our race."

"No! no!" exclaimed Ladislas, "that must not be—the writing must be cancelled,"—and then, with the affection and unreserve of a brother, he entered into their sentiments; with sweet and persuasive arguments overcame their scruples of receiving a pecuniary obligation from him; and finally, taking Marietta by the hand, led her away to San Carlos, in order to cancel her engagement.

And in another hour it was cancelled. Marietta was once more free and joyful; and, affectionate as old friends, the three met again in the little pavilion, which was Idalie's home. It stood alone in a myrtle wood on the last of the green promontories which form the Strada Nuova, and separate the Bay of Naples from the Bay of Baia,—a lonely hermitage secluded from the noise and

turmoil of the city, whose only visitors were the faint winds of morning and evening, the smiles of the fair Italian heaven, its wandering clouds, and, perchance, a solitary bird. From every part of the building you could see the Baian Ocean sparkling breathlessly beneath the sun; through the windows and the columns of the portico you beheld the mountains of the distant coast shining on, hour after hour, like amethysts in a thrilling vapour of purple transparent light, so ardent yet halcyon, so bright and unreal, a poet would have chosen it to emblem the radiant atmosphere that glows around elysian isles of eternal peace and joy. Marietta soon left the building to join some fisher boys who were dancing the tarantella upon the beach below. Idalie took her drawing, which was her daily employment, and furnished her the means of subsistence, and Ladislas sat by her side. There was no sound of rolling carriages, no tramp of men and horse, no distant singing, no one speaking near; the wind awoke no rustling amid the leaves of the myrtle wood, and the wave died without a murmur on the shore. Ladislas' deep but melodious voice alone broke the crystal silence of the noonday air. Italy was around him, robed in two splendours of blue and green; but he was an exile, and the recollections of his native land thronged into his memory. During the three months it had taken him to effect his escape from Warsaw to Naples, his lips had been closed in silence, whilst his mind had been wrapt in the gloom of the dreadful images that haunted it. In Idalie's countenance there was that expression of innocence and sublimity of soul, of purity and strength, that excited the warmest admiration, and inspired sudden and deep confidence. She looked like some supernatural being that walks through the world, untouched by its corruptions; like one that unconsciously, yet with delight, confers pleasure and peace; and Ladislas felt that, in speaking to her of the dark sorrows of his country, they

would lose their mortal weight and be resolved into beauty, by her sympathy. In glowing terms he described the heroic struggle of Poland for liberty; the triumph and exultation that had filled every bosom during the few months they were free; the hardships and privations they had endured, the deeds of daring bravery of the men, the heroism it had awakened in the women; and then its fall—the return of the Russians; the horrible character of Russian despotism, its sternness and deceit, its pride and selfish ignorance; the loss of public and private integrity, the disbelief of good, the blighted, hopeless, joyless life endured by those whom it crushes beneath its servitude.

Thus passed the hours of the forenoon. Then Ladislas fixing his eyes upon the coast of Baia, and expressing at the same time his impatience to visit that ancient resort of heroes and of emperors, Idalie led the way by a small path down the hill to the beach. There they found a skiff, and, unmooring it from its rocky haven, embarked in it. It had been sweet to mark the passage of that light bark freighted with these happy lovers, when borne by its sails it swept through the little ocean-channel that lies between the beaked promontories of the mainland and the closing cliffs of the island of Nisida; and when with gentler motion it glided into the open expanse of the Bay of Baia, and cut its way through the translucent water, above the ruins of temples and palaces overgrown by seaweed, on which the rays of the sun were playing, creating a thousand rainbow hues, that varied with every wave that flowed over them. In all that plane of blue light it was the only moving thing; and as if it had been the child of the ocean that bore it, and the sun that looked down on it, it sped gaily along in their smiles past the fortress where Brutus and Cassius sought shelter after the death of Cæsar; past the temples of Jupiter and Neptune; by the ruins of that castle in which three Romans once

portioned out the world between them, to the Cumean hill that enshadows the beloved Linternum of Scipio Africanus, and in which he died. The whole of this coast is a paradise of natural beauty, investing with its own loveliness the time-eaten wrecks with which it is strewn; the mouldering past is mingled with the vivid present; ruin and grey annihilation are decked in eternal spring. The woody windings of the shore reveal, in their deep recesses, the gleaming marble fragments of the abodes of ancient heroes; the verdurous hues of the promontories mingle with the upright columns of shattered temples, or clothe, with nature's voluptuous bloom, the pale funereal urns of departed gods; whilst the foliage and the inland fountains, and the breaking waves upon the shore, were murmuring around their woven minstrelsy of love and joy. Earth, sea, and sky blazed like three gods, with tranquil but animated loveliness; with a splendour that did not dazzle—with a richness that could not satiate. The air on that beautiful warm coast was as a field of fragrance; the refreshing sea-breeze seemed to blow from Paradise, quickening the senses, and bringing to them the odour of a thousand unknown blossoms. "What world is this?" exclaimed Ladislas in a tone of rapture that nearly answered its own question. "I could imagine I had entered an enchanted garden; four heavens surround me,—the one above; the pure element beneath me with its waves that shine and tremble as stars; the adorned earth that hangs over it; and the heaven of delight they create within my breast. 'Morning is here a rose, day a tulip, night a lily; evening is, like morning, again a rose, and life seems a choral-hymn of beautiful and glowing sentiments, that I go singing to myself as I wander along this perpetual path of flowers.'"

It was night ere they again reached the pavilion. It stood dark and deserted in the clear moonshine; the door was locked. After calling and knocking repeatedly

without obtaining any answer, it became evident that Marietta had quitted the dwelling. In the first moment of surprise which this occurrence occasioned, they had not observed a written sheet of paper, of a large size, which lay unfolded and placed directly before the door, as if to attract attention. Idalie took it up and read the following lines, traced by Marietta :—

“Oh, Idalie! but a few hours ago, how calm and secure we were in happiness—now danger and perhaps destruction is our portion. One chance yet remains; the moment you get this, persuade—not only persuade—but compel that adorable stranger to fly instantly from Naples. He is not safe here an instant longer. Do not doubt what I say, or his life may be the forfeit. How can I impress this on your mind. I would not willingly betray any one, but how else can I save him? Giorgio has been here. Oh! the frightful violence of that man. He raved like an insane person, and let fall such dark and bloody hints as opened worlds of horror to me. I am gone to discover what I can. I know his haunts, and his associates, and shall soon find out if there be any truth in what he threatens. I could not await your return, neither dare I leave the pavilion open. Who knows if, in the interval between my departure and your return, an assassin might not conceal himself within; and your first welcome be, to see the stranger fall lifeless at your feet. His every step is watched by spies armed for his destruction. I know not what to do—and yet it seems to me that my going may possibly avert the catastrophe.

“MARIETTA.”

Ladislav listened to these lines unmoved; but the effect they produced on Idalie was dreadful. She gave implicit credence to them, and every word sounded as a knell. She lost all presence of mind; every reflection

that might have taught her to avert the stroke she so much dreaded, was swallowed up in anguish, as if the deed that was to be consummated were already done. What task can be more difficult than to describe the overwhelming agony which heavy and unexpected misery produces. To have lived the day that Idalie had just lived—a day in which all the beauty of existence had been unveiled to its very depths ; to have dreamt, as she had done, a dream of love that steeped her soul in divine and almost uncommunicable joy ; and now to sink from this pinnacle of happiness into a black and lampless cavern, the habitation of death, whose spectral form and chilling spirit was felt through all the air ! This is but a feeble metaphor of the sudden transition from rapture to misery which Idalie experienced. She looked upon Ladislas, and beheld him bright and full of life ; the roseate hues of health upon his cheek, his eyes beaming with peaceful joy, his noble countenance varying not in the least from that imperturbable self-possession which was its habitual expression. And as her imagination made present to her the fatal moment, when beneath the dagger of the assassin this adored being should sink bleeding, wounded, and then be for ever lost in death, her blood rushed to her heart, a deadly pause ensued, from which she awoke in a bewildering mist of horror. Ladislas beheld her excess of emotion with pain, in which, however, all was not pain, for it was blended with that triumphant exultation that a lover ever feels when he for the first time becomes assured that he is beloved by the object of his love with an affection tender and intense as his own.

As soon as Idalie recovered some presence of mind, with passionate supplications she entreated Ladislas to leave her, to fly this solitary spot, and to seek safety amid the crowded streets of Naples. He would not hear of this ; he gently remonstrated with her upon the

unreasonableness of her terrors, urging how little probable it was that his passing *rencontre* with Giorgio at Gaeta could have awakened in him such a deadly spirit of revenge as Marietta represented. He viewed the whole thing lightly, attributing it either to the vivacity of Marietta's imagination, which had made her attach a monstrous import to some angry expressions of her brother, or looking upon it as a merry device which she had contrived in order to frighten them; and tranquillized Idalie by assurances that they would shortly see her wild sister return laughing, and full of glee at the success of her plot. In this expectation two hours passed away, but still no Marietta appeared, and it had grown too late to seek another shelter without exposing Idalie to the slander of evil-minded people. They passed the rest of the night therefore in the portico, Idalie sometimes pale and breathless, with recurring fears, and sometimes calm and happy, as Ladislas poured forth his tale of passionate love. His feelings, on the contrary, were pure and unalloyed. Where Idalie was, there was the whole universe to him; where she was not, there was only a formless void. He had an insatiable thirst for her presence, which only grew intenser with the enjoyment of its own desire; and he blessed the fortunate occurrence that prolonged his bliss during hours which otherwise would have been spent pining in absence from her. No other considerations intruded. Blessings kindled within his eyes as he gazed upon that lovely countenance and faultless form, and angels might have envied his happiness.

Morning came, bright and serene; the sun arose, the ocean and the mountains again resumed their magic splendour; the myrtle woods and every minuter bloom of the garden shone out beneath the sun, and the whole earth was a happy form made perfect by the power of light. They recollected that they had promised to join

the Princess Dashkhoff, and a large party of her friends, at eight o'clock, in an excursion to Pæstum. The point of meeting was the shore of the Villa Reale, where the numerous guests were to embark in a steamer which had been engaged for the occasion. In Idalie's present homeless and uncertain condition, this plan offered some advantages. It would enable them to pass the day in each other's society under the auspices of the Princess, and it was to be hoped that on their return the mystery of Marietta's disappearance would be unravelled, and Idalie find her home once more open to her. They had scarcely settled to go, ere one of those horse calessini which ply in the streets of Naples was seen coming towards them. Its driver, a ragged boy, sat on the shaft, singing as he drove; another urchin, all in tatters, stood as lacquey behind, and between them sat Marietta; the paleness of fear was on her cheeks, and her eyes had the staggered, affrighted look of one who has gazed upon some appalling horror. She hastily descended, and bade the calessino retire to some distance, and await further orders.

"Why is he yet here?" said she to her sister. "You foolish, blind Idalie, why did you not mind my letter?—too proud, I suppose, to obey any but yourself; but mark, you would not hear my warnings—we shall lose him, and you will feel them in your heart's core." She then, with all the violent gesticulation of an Italian, threw herself at the feet of Ladislas, and with a countenance that expressed her own full conviction in what she said, besought him to fly instantly, not only from Naples, but from Italy, for his life would never be safe in that land of assassins and traitors. With ontreaties almost as violent as her own, Ladislas and Idalie urged her to explain, but this only threw her into a new frenzy; she declared the peril was too urgent to admit of explanation—every moment was precious—another hour's stay in Naples would be his death.

The situation of Ladislav was a curious one. He had served in the Russian campaigns against Persia and Turkey, and had been there daily exposed to the chances of destruction; in the late struggle between Poland and Russia, he had performed actions of such determined and daring bravery as had made his name a glory to his countrymen, and a terror to their enemies. In all these exploits he had devoted himself so unreservedly to death, that his escape was considered as a miraculous interposition of Heaven. It was not to be expected that this Mars in a human form, this Achilles who had braved death in a thousand shapes, should now consent to fly before the uplifted finger and visionary warnings of a dream-sick girl; for such Marietta appeared to him to be. He pitied her sufferings, endeavoured to soothe her, but asserted he had seen no reason that could induce him to quit Naples.

A full quarter of an hour elapsed before an explanation could be wrung from Marietta. The chaos that reigned in her mind may easily be imagined. She had become possessed of a secret which involved the life of two persons. Ladislav refused to save himself unless she revealed what might place her brother's life in jeopardy. Whichever way she looked, destruction closed the view. Nature had bestowed on her a heart exquisitely alive to the sufferings of others; a mind quick in perceiving the nicest lines of moral rectitude, and strenuous in endeavouring to act up to its perceptions. Any deviations in her conduct from these principles had been the work of a fate that, strong and fierce as a tempest, had bent down her weak youth like a reed beneath its force. She had once loved Giorgio; he had played with and caressed her in infancy—with the fond patronage of an elder brother had procured her the only indulgences her orphaned childhood had ever known. Fraternal love called loudly on her not to endanger his life; gratitude as loudly

called on her not to allow her benefactor to become his victim. This last idea was too horrible to be endured. The present moment is ever all-powerful with the young, and Marietta related what she knew.

Well might the poor child be wild and disordered. She had passed the night in the catacombs of San Gennaro, under Capo di Monte. In these subterranean galleries were held the nightly meetings of the band of desperate *bravi* of whom Giorgio was in secret the chief. The entrance to the catacombs is in a deserted vineyard, and is overgrown by huge aloes; rooted in stones and sharp rocks, they lift their thorny leaves above the opening, and conceal it effectually. A solitary fig-tree that grows near renders the spot easily recognisable by those already acquainted with the secret. The catacombs themselves are wide winding caves, the burial-place of the dead of past ages. Piles of human bones, white and bleached by time, are heaped along the rocky sides of these caverns. In one of these walks, whilst they were friends, Giorgio had shown the place to Marietta. In those days he feared not to entrust his mysterious way of life to her; for although in all common concerns she was wild and untractable, yet in all that touched the interests of those few whom she loved, Marietta was silent and reserved as Epicharis herself. The menaces Giorgio let fall in his visit on the preceding forenoon had excited her highest alarm, and she determined, at any risk, to learn the extent of the danger that hung over the stranger. After waiting in vain for Idalie's return till the close of evening, she had hastened to Capo di Monte, entered the catacombs alone, and, concealed behind a pile of bones, had awaited the arrival of the confederates. They assembled at midnight. Their first subject of consultation was the stranger. Giorgio acquainted them with his history, which he told them had been communicated to him that very morning by a Russian lady of high rank, who had

likewise charged him with the business he had to unfold to them. He described Ladislas as a fugitive, unprotected by any Government; he bore about his person certain papers which had been found in the palace of Warsaw, and were the confidential communications of the Russian Autocrat to his brother the Viceroy of Poland, and were of such a nature as to rouse all Europe against their writer. These papers had been entrusted to Ladislas, whose intention was to proceed to Paris and publish them there. Private business, however, of the greatest importance, had forced him to visit Naples first. The Russian Government had traced him to Naples, and had empowered a certain Russian lady to take any step, or go any lengths, in order to obtain these papers from Ladislas. This lady had made Giorgio her emissary; her name he carefully concealed, but Marietta averred, from his description, that it could be no other than the Princess Dashkoff. After much consulting among the band, the assassination of the Pole had been decided upon. This seemed to be the only sure method; for he carried the papers ever about his person, was distinguished for his bravery, and if openly attacked would resist to the last. Giorgio was no stickler in the means he employed, and told his companions he had the less reason to be so in this case, as he had received assurances from the highest quarter that his crime should go unpunished, and the reward be enormous. Ladislas was almost unknown in Naples; the Government would not interest itself for a fugitive, without passport, country or name; and what friends had he here to inquire into the circumstances of his destruction, or to interest themselves to avenge it?

Such was Marietta's tale, and Ladislas instantly acknowledged the necessity of flight. He was too well acquainted with Russian perfidy to doubt that even a lady of a rank so distinguished as the Princess Dashkoff might be induced to undertake as foul a task as that attributed to

her by Marietta. The worldly and artificial manners of this lady, in an Italian or a French-woman, would only have resulted from habits of intrigue ; but a Russian, unaccustomed to look on human life as sacred, taught by the Government of her own country that cruelty and treachery are venial offences, wholly destitute of a sense of honour, concealed, under such an exterior, vices the most odious, and a callousness to guilt unknown in more civilised lands. Ladislas knew this ; and he knew that the badness of the Neapolitan Government afforded scope for crime, which could not exist elsewhere ; and he felt that on every account it were better to withdraw himself immediately from the scene of danger.

While musing on these things, Idalie's beseeching eyes were eloquent in imploring him to fly. He consented ; but a condition was annexed to his consent, that Idalie should share his flight. He urged his suit with fervour. It were easy for them on a very brief notice to seek the young lady's confessor, induce him to bestow on them the nuptial benediction, and thus to sanctify their departure together. Marietta seconded the lover's entreaties, and Idalie, blushing and confused, could only reply,—

“My accompanying you would but increase your danger, and facilitate the bravo's means of tracing you. How could I get a passport ? How leave this place ?”

“I have a plan for all,” replied Ladislas ; and he then related that the *Sully* steam-packet lay in the harbour of Naples, ready to sail on the shortest notice ; he would engage that for their conveyance, and so speedily bid adieu to the shores of Naples, and all its perils.

“But that boat,” exclaimed Idalie, “is the very one engaged by the Princess for the excursion to Pæstum.”

This, for a time, seemed to disarrange their schemes, but they considered that no danger could happen to Ladislas while one of a party of pleasure with the Princess, who from this act of his would be quite unsus-

picious of his intended departure. At night, upon their return from Pæstum, when the rest of the party should have disembarked at Naples, Ladislas and Idalie would remain on board, and the vessel immediately commence its voyage for France. This plan thus assumed a very feasible appearance, while Ladislas, in accents of fond reproach, asked Idalie wherefore she refused to share his fortunes, and accompany him in his journey; and Marietta, clapping her hands exclaimed, "She consents! she consents! Do not ask any more, she has already yielded. We will all return to Naples. Ladislas shall go immediately to seek out the captain of the *Sully*, and arrange all with him; while, without loss of time, we will proceed to the convent of Father Basil, and get everything ready by the time Ladislas shall join us, which must be with as much speed as he can contrive."

Idalie silently acquiesced in this arrangement, and Ladislas kissed her hand with warm and overflowing gratitude. They now contrived to stow themselves in the little calessino, and as they proceeded on their way, Ladislas said: "We seem to have forgotten the future destiny of our dear Marietta all this time. The friendless condition in which we shall leave her fills me with anxiety. She is the preserver of my life, and we are both under the deepest obligations to her. What shall you do, Marietta, when we are gone?"

"Fear not for me," exclaimed the wild girl; "it is necessary I should remain behind to arrange those things which Idalie's sudden departure will leave in sad disorder; but you will see me soon in Paris, for how can I exist apart from my sister?"

When near to Naples, Ladislas alighted from the calessino, and directed his steps towards the port, while the fair girls proceeded on their way to the convent. What the bashful, conscious Idalie would have done without her sister's help, it is difficult to guess. Marietta

busied herself about all; won over the priest to the sudden marriage, contrived to put up articles of dress for the fair bride's journey, and thinking of everything, seemed the guardian angel of the lovers. Ladislas arrived at the convent; he had been successful with the master of the steam-packet, and all was prepared. Marietta heard this from his own lips, and carried the happy news to Idalie. He did not see her till they met at the altar, where, kneeling before the venerable priest, they were united for ever. And now time, as it sped on, gave them no moment to indulge their various and overpowering feelings. Idalie embraced her sister again and again, and entreating her to join them speedily in Paris, made her promise to write, and then, escorted by her husband, proceeded to the *Sully*, on board of which most of the party were already assembled.

The steamer proceeded on its course. Farewell to Naples!—that elysian city, as the poet justly calls it; that favourite of sea and land and sky. The hills that surround it smooth their rugged summits, and descend into gentle slopes and opening defiles, to receive its buildings and habitations. Temples, domes, and marble palaces are ranged round the crescent form of the bay, and above them arise dark masses, and wooded clefts, and fair gardens, whose trees are ever vernal. Before it the mighty sea binds its wild streams, and smoothes them into gentlest waves, as they kiss the silver, pebbly shore, and linger with dulcet murmur around the deep-based promontories. The sky—who has not heard of the Italian sky?—one intense diffusion, one serene omnipresence, for ever smiling above the boundless sea, and for ever bending in azure mirth over the flowing outlines of the distant mountains.

They first passed Castel-a-Mare, and then the abrupt promontories on which Sorrento and ancient Amalfi are situated. The sublimity and intense loveliness of the

scone wrapt in delight each bosom. The hills, covered with ilex, dark laurel, and bright-leaved myrtle, were mirrored in the pellucid waves, which the lower branches caressed and kissed as the winds waved them. Behind arose other hills, also covered with wood; and, more distant, forming the grand background, was sketched the huge ridge of lofty Apennines. Still proceeding on their way to Pæstum, they exchanged the rocky beach for a low and dreary shore. The dusky mountains retired inland, and leaving a waste—the abode of malaria, and the haunt of robbers—the landscape assumed a gloomy magnificence, in place of the romantic and picturesque loveliness which had before charmed their eyes. Ladislas leaned from the side of the vessel, and gazed upon the beauty of nature with sentiments too disturbed for happiness. He was annoyed by the unpropitious presence of the idle and the gay. He saw Idalie in the midst of them, and did not even wish to join her while thus situated. He shrank into himself, and tried, forgetting the immediate discomforts of his position, to think only of that paradise into which love had led him, to compensate for his patriotic sorrows. He strove patiently to endure the tedious hours of this never-ending day, during which he must play a false part, and see his bride engaged by others. While his attention was thus occupied, the voice of the Princess Dashkoff startled him, and, looking up, he wondered how a face that seemed so bland, and a voice that spoke so fair, could hide so much wickedness and deceit. As the hours passed on, his situation became irksome in the extreme. Once or twice he drew near Idalie, and tried to disengage her from the crowd; but each time he saw the Princess watching him stealthily, while his young bride, with feminine prudence, avoided every opportunity of conversing apart with him. Ladislas could ill endure this. He began to fancy that he had a thousand things to say, and that their mutual safety

depended on his being able to communicate them to her. He wrote a few lines hastily on the back of a letter with a pencil, conjuring her to find some means of affording him a few minutes' conversation, and telling her that if this could not be done before, he should take occasion, while the rest of the company were otherwise occupied, to steal from them that evening to the larger temple, and there await her joining him, for that everything depended on his being able to speak to her. He scarcely knew what he meant as he wrote this; but, driven by contradiction and impatience, and desirous of learning exactly how she meant to conduct herself on the Princess's disembarking at Naples, it seemed to him of the last importance that his request should be complied with. He was folding the paper when the Princess was at his side, and addressed him.

“A sonnet, Count Ladislas; surely a poetic imagination inspires you; may I not see it?”

And she held out her hand. Taken unaware, Ladislas darted at her a look which made her step back trembling and in surprise. Was she discovered? The idea was fraught with terror. But Ladislas, perceiving the indiscretion of his conduct, masked his sensations with a smile, and replied: “They are words of a Polish song, which I wish Idalie to translate for the amusement of your friends;” and, stepping forward, he gave Idalie the paper, and made his request. All pressed to know what the song was. Idalie glanced at the writing, and, changing colour, was scarcely able to command her voice to make such an excuse as was rendered necessary. She said that it required time and thought, and that she could not at that moment comply; then crushing the paper between her trembling fingers, began confusedly to talk of something else. The company interchanged smiles, but even the Princess only suspected some lover-like compliment to her protégée.

"Nay," she said, "we must at least know the subject of these verses. What is it? tell us, I entreat you."

"Treachery," said Ladislas, unable to control his feelings. The Princess became ashy pale; all her self-possession fled, and she turned from the searching glance of the Pole with sickness of heart.

They were now drawing near their destination. Idalie, grasping the paper, longed to read it before they should reach the shore. She tried to recede from the party, and Ladislas, watching her movements, in order to facilitate her designs, entered into conversation with the Princess. He had effectually roused her fears and her curiosity; and she eagerly seized the opportunity which he offered her of conversing with him, endeavouring to find out whether he indeed suspected anything, or whether her own guilty conscience suggested the alarm with which his strange expression had filled her. Ladislas thus contrived to engross her entire attention, and led her insensibly towards the stern of the vessel; and as they leant over its side, and gazed on the waters beneath, Idalie was effectually relieved from all observation. She now disengaged herself from the rest of the party, and, walking forward, read the lines pencilled by Ladislas. Then, terrified by the secret they contained, she tore the paper, as if fearful that its contents might be guessed, and was about to throw the fragments into the sea, when she perceived the position of the Princess and Ladislas, and was aware that the lady's quick eye would soon discern the floating scraps as the boat passed on. Idalie feared the least shadow of danger, so she retreated from the vessel's side, but still anxious to get rid of the perilous papers, she determined to throw them into the hold. She approached it, and looked down. Had the form of a serpent met her eye, she had not been more horror-struck. A shriek hovered on her lips, but with a strong effort she repressed it, and, staggering on, leant against the mast,

trembling and aghast. She could not be deceived ; it was Giorgio's dark and scowling eye that she had encountered—his sinister countenance, upturned, could not be mistaken. Was danger, then, so near, so pressing, or so inevitable ? How could she convey the fatal intelligence to her husband, and put him on his guard ? She remembered his written request, with which she had previously determined in prudence not to comply. But it would now afford her an opportunity, should no other offer, of informing him whom she had seen.

Thus perfidy, hate, and fear possessed the hearts of these human beings, who, had a cursory observer seen them as they glided over that sea of beauty, beneath the azure heaven, along that enchanted shore, attended by every luxury, waited on by every obvious blessing of life—he would have imagined that they had been selected from the world for the enjoyment of perfect happiness. But sunny sky and laughing sea appeared to Idalie only as the haunt and resort of tigers and serpents ; a dark mist seemed to blot the splendour of the sky, as the guilty souls of her fellow-creatures cast their deforming shadows over its brightness.

They had now arrived close on the low shore, and horses and two or three light open carriages were at the water's edge to convey them to the temples. They landed. Ladislas presented himself to hand Idalie across the plank from the vessel to the beach. "Yes?"—he asked her in a voice of entreaty, as he pressed her hand. She softly returned the pressure, and the word "Beware" trembled on her lips, when the young Englishman who had before admired her, and had endeavoured to engross her attention the whole day, was again at her side, to tell her that the Princess was waiting for her in her carriage, and entreated her not to delay.

The party proceeded to where those glorious relics stand, between the mountains and the sea, rising from

the waste and barren soil, alone on the wide and dusky shore. A few sheep grazed at the base of the columns, and two or three wild-eyed men, clothed in garments of undressed sheepskin, loitered about. Exclamations of wonder and delight burst from all, while Ladislas, stealing away to the more distant ruin, gladly escaped from the crowd, to indulge in lonely reverie. "What is man in his highest glory!" he thought. "Had we burst the bonds of Poland; and had she, in her freedom, emulated the magical achievements of Greece; nevertheless when time, with insidious serpent windings, had dragged its length through a few more centuries, the monuments we had erected would have fallen like these, and our monuments—a new Pæstum—have existed merely to excite idle wonder and frivolous curiosity!"

Ladislas was certainly in no good humour while he thus vented his spleen; but was annoyed by two circumstances, sufficient to irritate a young philosopher: he beheld a scene, whose majestic beauty filled his soul with sensibility and awe, in the midst of a crowd of pretenders, more intent on the prospect of their picnic dinner, than on regarding the glories of art; and he saw his bride, surrounded by strangers, engrossed by their conversation and flattery, and unable to interchange one word or look of confidence with him. He sighed for the hours passed under the portico of Idalie's solitary pavilion, and the near prospect of their voyage did not reconcile him to the present; for his soul was disturbed by the necessity of interchanging courtesies with his enemy, and haunted by images of treacherous attempts, from which his valour could not protect him.

It had been arranged that the party should dine at the archbishop's palace, and not embark again until ten o'clock, when the moon would rise. After a couple of hours spent among the ruins, the servants informed them that their repast was ready; it was now nearly six o'clock,

and after they had dined, more than two hours must elapse before they could depart. Night had fallen on the landscape, and the darkness did not invite even the most romantic to wander again among the ruins; the Princess, eager to provide for the amusement of her guests, contrived to discover a violin, a flute, and a pipe, and with the assistance of this music, which in the hands of Italian rustics was as true to time and expression as if Weippert himself had presided, they commenced dancing. Idalie's hand was sought by the Englishman; she looked round the room, Ladislav was not there; he had doubtless repaired to the temple to wait for her, and ignorant of the presence of Giorgio, wholly unsuspecting, and off his guard, to what dangers might he not be exposed? Her blood ran cold at the thought; she decidedly refused to dance, and perceiving the Princess whirling round in a waltz, she hastily quitted the house, and hurried along over the grass towards the ruins. When she first emerged into the night, the scene seemed wrapped in impenetrable darkness, but the stars shed their faint rays, and in a few moments she began to distinguish objects, and as she drew near the temple, she saw a man's form moving slowly among the columns; she did not doubt that it was her husband, wrapped in his cloak, awaiting her. She was hurrying towards him, when, leaning against one of the pillars, she saw Ladislav himself, and the other, at the same moment, exchanging his stealthy pace for a tiger-like spring. She saw a dagger flashing in his hand; she darted forward to arrest his arm, and the blow descended on her. With a faint shriek, she fell on the earth, when Ladislav turned and closed with the assassin; a mortal struggle ensued; already had Ladislav wrested the poignard from his grasp, when the villain drew another knife. Ladislav warded off the blow, and plunged his own stiletto in the bravo's breast; he fell to earth with a heavy groan, and then

the silence of the tomb rested on the scene ; the white robe of Idalie, who lay fainting on the ground, directed Ladislas to her side. He raised her up in speechless agony, as he beheld the blood which stained her dress ; but by this time she had recovered from her swoon ; she assured him her wound was slight, that it was nothing ; but again sank into his arms insensible. In a moment his plan was formed ; ever eager and impetuous, he executed it ere any second thought could change it. He had before resolved not to rejoin the party in the archbishop's palace, but after his interview with Idalie, to hasten on board the steamboat ; he had therefore ordered his horse to be saddled, had led it to the temple, and fastened it to one of the columns. He lifted the senseless Idalie carefully in his arms, mounted his horse, and turning his steps from the lighted and noisy palace, wound his way to the lonely shore, where he found the captain and his crew already preparing for their homeward voyage. With their help Idalie was taken on board, and Ladislas gave orders for the instant heaving of the anchor, and their immediate departure. The captain asked for the rest of the company. "They return by land," said Ladislas. As he spoke the words, he felt a slight sensation of remorse, remembering the difficulty they would have to get there ; and how, during the darkness of night, they might fear to proceed on their journey on a tract of country infested by banditti ; but the senseless and pale form of Idalie dissipated these thoughts : to arrive at Naples, to procure assistance for her, and then if, as he hoped, her wound was slight, to continue their voyage before the Princess Dashkoff's return, were motives too paramount to allow him to hesitate. The captain of the *Sully* asked no more questions ; the anchor was weighed ; and in the silver light of the moon, they stood off from the shore, and made their swift way back to Naples. They had not gone far before the care

of Ladislas revived his fair bride. Her wound was in her arm, and had merely grazed the skin. Terror for her husband, horror for the mortal strife which had endangered his life, had caused her to faint more than pain or loss of blood. She bound up her own arm; and then, as there appeared no necessity for medical aid, Ladislas revoked his orders for returning to Naples, but stretching out at once to sea, they began their voyage to Marseilles.

Meanwhile, during a pause in the dance, the absence of Ladislas and Idalie was observed by the feasters in the archbishop's palace. It excited some few sarcasms, which as it continued grew more bitter. The Princess Dashkoff joined in these, and yet she could not repress the disquietude of her heart. Had Ladislas alone been absent, her knowledge of the presence of Giorgio, and his designs, had sufficiently explained its cause and its duration to her; but that Idalie also should not be found might bring a witness to the crime committed, and discover her own guilty share in the deed of blood perpetrated at her instigation. At length the rising of the moon announced the hour when they were to repair to the shore. The horses and carriages were brought to the door, and then it was found that the steed of Ladislas was missing.

“But the Signora Idalie, had she not provided herself with a palfrey?” asked the Englishman, sneering. They were now about to mount, when it was proposed to take a last look of the temples by moonlight. The Princess opposed this, but vainly; her conscience made her voice faint, and took from her the usual decision of her manner; so she walked on silently, half fearful that her foot might strike against some object of terror, and at every word spoken by the party, anticipating an exclamation of horror; the fitful moonbeams seemed to disclose here and there ghastly countenances and mangled limbs, and the dew of night appeared to her excited imagination as the slippery moisture of the life-blood of her victim.

They had scarcely entered the temple, when a peasant brought the news that the steamboat was gone ;—he led Ladislas' horse, who had put the bridle into the man's hands on embarking ; and the fellow declared that the fainting Idalie was his companion. Terror at the prospect of their dark ride, indignation at the selfish proceeding of the lovers, raised every voice against them ; and the Princess, whom conscience had before made the most silent, hearing that the Pole was alive and safe, was now loudest and most bitter in her remarks. As they were thus all gathered together in dismay, debating what was to be done, and the Princess Dashkoff in no gentle terms railing at the impropriety and ingratitude of Idalie's behaviour, and declaring that Poles alone could conduct themselves with such mingled deceit and baseness, a figure all bloody arose from the ground at her feet, and as the moon cast its pale rays on his yet paler countenance, she recognised Giorgio. The ladies shrieked, the men rushed towards him, while the Princess, desiring the earth to open and swallow her, stood transfixed, as by a spell, gazing on the dying man in terror and despair.

“ He has escaped, lady,” said Giorgio ; “ Ladislas has escaped your plots, and I am become their victim.” He fell as he spoke these words, and when the Englishman drew near to raise, and if possible assist him, he found that life had entirely flown.

Thus ended the adventures of the Pole at Naples. The Princess returned in her calèche alone, for none would bear her company ; the next day she left Naples, and was on her way to Russia, where her crime was unknown, except to those who had been accomplices in it. Marietta spread the intelligence of her sister's marriage, and thus entirely cleared Idalie's fair fame ; and quitting Italy soon after, joined the happy Ladislas and his bride at Paris.