

THE
MIDNIGHT ASSASSIN :
OR
CONFESSION
OF THE
MONK RINALDI.
CONTAINING
A COMPLETE HISTORY
OF HIS
Diabolical Machinations and unparalleled Ferocity.
TOGETHER WITH
A CIRCUMSTANTIAL ACCOUNT OF THAT
SCOURGE OF MANKIND
THE INQUISITION;
WITH THE MANNER OF BRINGING TO TRIAL THOSE UNFORTUNATE BEING
WHO ARE AT ITS DISPOSAL.

“ What is this secret sin, this untold tale,
“ That art cannot extract, nor penance cleanse?”

Mysterious Mother

THE SECOND EDITION.

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BEFORE entering at large into our history, it will be necessary to say a few words on the manner by which it was obtained.—Some English gentlemen happening to make an excursion not far from the environs of Naples, about forty years ago, beheld a magnificent portico, the beauty of which led them to investigate the interior of the building; the church was called *Santa Maria del Pianto*, a very antient convent of the *Black Crucifix*. While standing at the portico, a person, impressive in his appearance, and lost in his own reflections, startled by the sound of their steps, quickly stole towards a door of the building, and disappeared. His tall thin figure, pale complexion, ferocious eye, and face half concealed under a long cloke, excited their attention, and, on entering the church, nobody was to be seen but a friar, who come from an adjoining convent to answer the questions of inquisitive strangers.

After regarding the simplicity and solemnity of the structure, as they were returning, the same mysterious person was observed, and the friar was questioned about his appearance; the interrogated replied calmly—“ that man is an assassin !”

The Englishman upon this expressed his astonishment that he was at liberty, but was informed that he had taken refuge within the walls of the convent; and, strange as it must seem to a British reader, was told that the superstitious crowd brought him food, for the church laws protected him.—“ Dreadful !” exclaimed the Englishman, “ assassination to remain unpunished !” —“ If these crimes were to be punished as with you,” replied his Italian friend, “ the country would suffer much in its population :—but have you attentively viewed yonder gloomy confessional, on the left of the aisle ?”

His friend now observed a confessional of dark heavy wood, the same where the assassin had recently entered.—It had a black canopy, with an elevated chair for the confessor; on either side was a gloomy and terrific closet, with steps leading to a grated partition, in which the penitent, kneeling, confessed the weight of his crimes. While the Englishman, shuddering, observed the frightful spot, his friend remarked that the appearance and entry of the assassin into the confessional reminded him of a story which he had received in manuscript, related to a confession made at that dreadful place, and which he promised to lend whenever his friend had leisure to read it.

“ I thought confessions were never divulged by the priest to whom they were made,” replied the Englishman.

“ Just so,” replied the Italian; “ but a command from a higher power can dispense with this law. The narrative was written by a student at Padua, who, becoming master of the facts from public report, committed them to writing for my perusal.”

After once more inspecting the awful confessional, they quitted the church, leaving the assassin in it, who was stealing from that room of terrors across the choir, and seemed equally happy with them at the separation.

On returning home, the Englishman received the manuscript, containing the following narrative.

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OF all the modest, dignified, and enchanting females who paid their devotions in the church of San Lorenzo, at Naples, Amanda Lusigni was the most attracting. The melody of her voice corresponded with the grace and delicacy of her figure, and the tones, which with exquisite expression she uttered, led to a farther anxiety to inspect the countenance whence they proceeded. Attractions like these were not lost on the heart of Giovanni di Sardo, who, happening to enter the church at the time she was present, remained during the whole of the morning service absorbed in the contemplation of this veiled terrestrial divinity. At length she quitted the church, leaning on the arm of an elderly lady, who appeared to be her mother.

Di Sardo followed the pair, who pursued their route homeward without delay. Fearful that his bashful distance might prevent the object of which he most wished to obtain, he advanced more closely, and overtook them on the Terrazo Nuovo, leading to the Gran Corsa. His timidity prevented his forming any excuse by which he might obtain a view of the lady's features; this object however was effected by the following accident:—In descending the last steps of the Terrazo, the elderly lady stumbled, and Amanda withdrew her hands from the veil to save her aunt. A breeze kindly blew it aside, and gave Di Sardo an opportunity of beholding a face more beautiful than he had yet dared to conceive. In a moment after, her eyes rencountred those of Di Sardo, and, conscious of the effect, she replaced the veil. Di Sardo now seized the opportunity to assist the old lady, who, being somewhat hurt, accepted his arm, and they walked to her residence together, which consisted of a small but elegant house, beautifully situated on an eminence that commanded, amidst cultivated and picturesque scenery, a view of the beautiful bay of Naples.

On reaching the gate, the old lady thanked him for his civility, but did not invite him to enter. Vexed and disappointed, he looked at Amanda, and, at the moment, his charge a second time bid him good day, he requested permission to enquire after her health, which, though reluctantly granted, was compensated by Amanda cautiously thanking him for the care he had taken of her aunt. Full of the object he had seen and heard, he descended to the shore, pleased with being near her; and, in the anxiety of hope, he lingered several hours on the beach, his eyes fixed on the balcony of the house, which he vainly hoped the sea breeze might induce her to occupy.

With a mixture of pain and pleasure he returned in the evening to his father's palace at Naples. His mother, the Marchioness di Sardo, observed his unusual pensiveness, and sought without effect to gratify her curiosity—a delay that only stimulated her to a more artful enquiry.

Giovanni di Sardo was the only son of the Marquis di Sardo, of one of the most antient families in Naples, and highly esteemed at court. His pride of birth at once dignified and disgraced him: it was his vice and his virtue.—The mother of Di Sardo, of a family equally antient, was extremely jealous of her importance; but her pride did not extend to her morals. Fierce and vindictive, crafty and patient in stratagem and revenge, she loved her son rather as the last of two illustrious houses, who was to re-unite the honour of both, than with the fondness of a mother.

Giovanni resembled his father in disposition more than his mother: he was ingenuous, irascible, and easily appeased. In the day following that on which he had seen Amanda at Villa Altieri, he knocked at the gate, and was admitted to the old lady's presence. She answered very circumspectly the enquiries he made about her niece, who, he hoped, would every moment enter the room, which, from some silk-work lying on the table, she seemed but to have recently quitted. No young lady, however, appeared; nor as he passed through the garden did there exist one glimpse of Amanda.

In his enquiries he learned that Amanda was an orphan, of a deceased but illustrious house, living with her aunt Bonetta; to which might have been added, (though a secret almost

to every one,) that the niece supported her aunt by embroidering silks, which were sold to the nuns in a neighbouring convent, who disposed of them again to great advantage. Di Sardo little thought that a beautiful robe of his mother's was worked by Amanda; or that some copies from the antique, which ornamented the palace of Di Sardo, were of her drawing. Amanda, by her industry, was the support of her aunt's declining years. Her mother died when she was too young to remember her, from which period the aunt and niece had interchanged the affections of mother and daughter.

Di Sardo returned in the evening to Villa Altieri, dissatisfied with the indecisive intelligence he had learned. The Marchioness held an assembly in the evening, at which a favorite composer, whom she patronized, was to perform. The nobility were to decide on the relative merits of this performer and a rival candidate; Di Sardo was therefore detained to a late hour to arrange the performance and select the music. The moment, however, he could depart unobserved, he muffled himself in his cloke, and hastened to Villa Altieri, which lay a little west of the city. The night had far advanced before he thought of gaining admittance into the gardens; and, when he had made his way through the thick shrubs, which served as its boundary, to the portico of the villa, it was midnight. The groans of Mount Vesuvius and the sounds of the waves were the only interruptions to the awful silence that reigned, till a chaunting of deep voices swelled into a requiem, and then died away. He had heard the same strain once before, and a few notes, again wafted on the bosom of the air, brought to his memory the melody he had heard Amanda utter in the church of San Lorenzo. Overcome by the recollection, he wandered over the garden to the other side of the villa, and heard Amanda herself performing the midnight hymn to the Virgin, accompanied by her lute, which she exquisitely touched. A light led him to a lattice which had been opened to admit the cool air; and here he beheld Amanda in her apartment. Viewing her devotional look, her loose tresses, her unveiled countenance, and elegant drapery, he stood entranced, equally fearful of losing the opportunity, or intruding on her retirement at so sacred an hour. While he stood hesitating, she joined her voice to the melody of the lute, and pronounced his name! Di Sardo, unable to resist the swell of delight, appeared before her! She stood motionless for a moment; a deadly paleness succeeded; and, hastily shutting the lattice, she disappeared. After staying some time longer in the garden, he repaced his melancholy way back to Naples.

Emerging from the dark arch of a ruin, a person, habited as a monk, with his face shrouded by his cowl, informed him that his steps were watched, and bade Di Sardo beware of revisiting Altieri! Di Sardo drew his sword, but the stranger had instantly disappeared. Having reached home, tortured with a thousand jealous and vague apprehensions, he learned that the Marchioness had enquired for him, but had gone to rest. His father, who had been attending the King on an excursion, reached home after his son, and expressed his displeasure at that time only in his looks.—Figuring to himself the irreconcilable displeasure of his father and mother, he traversed his room all night, and the morning found him as distracted as the previous hours.—Determined to tender himself to Amanda, yet uncertain whether she would approve him, or he had a rival, he unbosomed himself to his faithful friend Amici, who, though little qualified for an adviser, gave him his unreserved opinion. He proposed to serenade Amanda, maintaining, that, if she remained invisible, it would mark her displeasure; to which Di Sardo objected, that such means were below his passion and delicacy. Amici laughed at his romantic ideas, and it was at length agreed to adventure a serenade on the following night. Concealing their faces, their musical instruments, and themselves, under their clokes, they proceeded to Altieri. Just through the arch before-mentioned they met the stranger who had alarmed Di Sardo the previous night.—“Your fate hands over you,” said the unknown, “if you dare to go to Altieri!”—“What fate?” said Di Sardo. “Spite of the ominous monk,” (who had disappeared from their search,) “I will proceed! spite of rivals or bravos, I will go to Altieri!” When they had passed unmolested into the garden, Di Sardo

reproached Amici with his idle fears of assassination. Having reached the orangery, they prepared their instruments for serenade. The stillness of the night was interrupted by distant murmurs, but these proceeded from the multitude who were surveying a brilliant firework given in honor of one of the princes' birth days, at a villa on the western side of the bay.

As Amici was admiring the beauty of the scene, they thought they heard a rustling in the leaves behind them: Di Sardo demanded who passed, but no answer was returned. Amici now renewed his friendly remonstrance on the danger, which so much incensed Di Sardo, that he threatened him with his resentment; but the heart of the latter as quickly acknowledged his error, and asked forgiveness. In the mean time, as Amanda did not appear at the balcony to behold the fire-work, they took a new station under the balcony that overhung the lattice, where Di Sardo had stood the preceding night. Here they opened a vocal and instrumental duet; but all the enthusiasm of tender expression neither made Amanda appear at the balcony nor the lattice. When the serenade pause, Amici though he heard distant whispers, which Di Sardo attributed only to the confused murmur of the gazing multitude on the shore. The musicians now placed themselves in the front of the portico with as little success as before; and, after waiting an hour, they quitted the gardens, Di Sardo almost frantic with despair, and vowing to make the mysterious stranger unfold his dark and pithy warnings! Amici was alarmed by the vehemence with which his friend uttered this last resolution. They proceeded till they reached the arch, which was suspended between two rocky cliffs, on one of which was a ruined Roman fort: the other was overshadowed by tall pines and thickset oaks. As they entered the gloom of the deep archway, Amici advised his friend to remove from the shade into the more open road; but this Di Sardo opposed as exposing themselves to observation. Di Sardo now took post in the reeds of the arch, near a flight of steps that ascended through the rock to the fortress. His friend took his station by his side.

After some conversation on the superstitious fears which Amici entertained of the reality of this gliding monk, and some resolutions on the part of Di Sardo to openly attack the disguised stranger, while they stood watching, Amici saw a tall figure plant itself at the entrance of the arch, discernable at that time from the twilight. Di Sardo's eyes were fixed on the road to Naples, till Amici seized his friend's arm, and directed his attention to the gliding form, supposed to be that of the Monk, which now disappeared in the gloom of the arch. Di Sardo, urged by his impatience, started from his concealment, and with arms extended demanded who was there?—Amici drew his sword, and Di Sardo promised security to the fugitive if he would declare himself, but no answer was returned.—“Somebody certainly has just passed,” whispered Amici; “I think the sound of steps seems to mount the stairs of the fortress.”—“We will follow!” cried Di Sardo.—Amici remonstrated, while Di Sardo swore he would mount alone, for it was the Monk himself who had ascended. His friend, ashamed of desertion in danger, following up the rugged steps; and, having reaching the summit, found himself on the top of a ruined arch, once fortified, that commanded the defile each way. It led to a watch-tower on the opposite cliff, amongst the remains of massy walls and thick pines, forming a line of communication between the two outposts. Amici here looked in vain for his friend; nothing heard his call but Echo! He next entered the immense walls of the ruined citadel with as little success, from the darkness of which he removed into the open air, calling on Di Sardo! While inspecting the ruinous mass before him, Di Sardo rushed from a door-way of the fortification with his sword drawn. Amici sprang to meet him, and to make inquiries. “Ask no questions,” said Di Sardo, “but let us leave this mysterious place.”—They descended; and, as they hastily passed on to Naples, Amici demanded if he had not seen and secured the Monk. “All is perplexity,” replied Di Sardo; “but the business rests not here. To-morrow night I will return with a torch, and satisfy my doubts of the stranger's mysterious appearance!”—Amici urged that it would be more prudent to go by daylight, rather than

tempt the mercy of midnight robbers; but Di Sardo insisted that the gloom of the recess and the hour of the Monk's appearance made their midnight return necessary. Amici withheld his consent to this second expedition till the following evening; after which, having arrived at the gates of the palace of Di Sardo, they separated.

Di Sardo, failing in receiving an explanation of the Monk's interdiction, determined the following morning to pay a visit to Signora Bonetta, and disclose his pretensions. He was ushered into the same room, where, with enthusiastic pleasure, he had gazed from the garden on Amanda. He took up her lute tremblingly, and its chords reminded him of her exquisite voice. A masterly drawing of a dancing nymph from Herculaneum lay on the stand, and he observed that this was one of a set which hung round the room, and corresponded with some that decorated his father's cabinet, the only copies, it was thought, permitted to be extant from the Royal Museum.—The figure of Signora Bonetta was not the most impressive; and, when she appeared, it was some time before Di Sardo could explain the business of his visit, and request her interference in his favour.—“ I know too well,” replied Signora Bonetta, “ the haughty character of the Marquis and Marchioness Di Sardo to suppose the proposal is known or agreeable to them;—but learn, Signor, that Amanda Lusigni, if their inferior in rank, is their equal in pride.”

Di Sardo, above deception, confessed the real situation of his parental views, and pleaded his affection with such energy, that Signora Bonetta thought proper not wholly to reject his suit, though she gave him but little encouragement. Her reflection on the instability of her own life, the necessity of an inquiry into the character of Amanda's suitor, and the protection she would enjoy with a kind husband and a man of honor; these weighty considerations tended much to relax the rigid detestation of clandestine connexions. Di Sardo took his leave with permission to renew his visit, but ignorant whether he had a rival or not. Little encouraged by his interview, he passed the arch without seeing the stranger, and when he reached home, his fixed resolution of renewing the gloomy search at midnight was frustrated by his mother requiring him to attend her to Portici that evening.—Here he remained all the following day, and, on his return to Naples, a note from Amici brought a refusal to accompany him to the fortress.—Di Sardo, therefore, till he could obtain a companion, determined to visit only Altieri, and, taking his lute, arrived there at an earlier hour than usual. The sun had been set about an hour, and twilight was sinking into night. A light, in a small pavilion of the orangery, attracted his attention, and, concealed behind the leaves which encircled it, he beheld Amanda thoughtfully absorbed, and holding her lute. The recollection, that when he last saw her she had pronounced his name, induced him to hesitate no longer, and he was about to discover himself when she spoke.—“ O Di Sardo, how does the prejudice of family pride destroy our peace! but my soul is too noble to enter a family averse to receive me!”—Amanda then sounded her lute to the same air which Di Sardo had heard her play on a former night; in the rapturous ebullition of his feelings, at the first stanza, he replied to her with his lute and voice. Amanda, conscious of the sounds, had nearly fainted with surprise, and was about to retire, when he implored her to stay for a few moments.—“ It is impossible!” said Amanda. “ Let me but hear you approve me!” said Di Sardo, “ that the name you so recently mentioned is not hateful!”—“ Oh, forget that I ever uttered it! forget you have ever heard it from me!”—“ Forget the solace of my solitary hours! Oh! never!” “ I must fly, Signor; I cannot forgive myself for what has passed!” and a glance of tenderness irradiated her brow as she rushed from the pavilion, and left Di Sardo, as it were, looking for her in the bowers of Paradise. Arrived at Naples, without once thinking of his monkish monitor, he took the advantage of his father and mother's absence to indulge his rapturous feelings.—All night he traversed his room, composing a letter to Amanda, and it was only by the time the domestics had risen he had completed one to his satisfaction, which was dispatched by a trusty messenger.—A summons from his father, requesting his attendance,

now abstracted him from the delightful reveries he had been enjoying. His father sternly charged him with pursuing an amour derogatory to the honour of his family, and himself: he then mentioned the name of Amanda Lusigni, and stated the report, that, by her artifices, she had inveigled him to be her devoted suitor. Di Sardo confessed that he had not reached to the glory of bearing that name: "You must instantly dismiss her!" exclaimed his father; "Reject her, and I will adduce proofs of her former character which will sink her in your opinion, and stagger the most enthusiastic faith."—"By my honour and sacred word," cried Di Sardo, "Amanda is innocent of guilt! so void of blemish, she is worthy of becoming my wife!"—"Your wife!" exclaimed the Marquis, with a disdainful and angry look: "let but this event take place, and I disclaim you for ever!"—"Cruel dictator!" said Di Sardo, "but I will support the honour of our house by protecting, not persecuting, injured goodness.—Pardon me, my Lord, but there are duties which are stronger than the injunction of a rigid parent!"—Here the dialogue closed, each being mutually inflamed, and each determined to adhere to his threatened purpose.—What a reverse had a few minutes precipitated Di Sardo into! He loved his father, and he adored Amanda, whose insulted character he determined to avenge on the head of the original defamer, as soon as the discovery could be made. From the Marchioness he expected reproaches more severe even than those of the Marquis.—If he were accused of sullyng Amanda's fame, it became his duty to vindicate it—to seek out the slanderer; and here the words of the Marquis forcibly struck him. How could he have been informed of his nightly visits to Villa Altieri, if the disguised stranger had not imparted the communication? Yet his friendly warnings checked this supposition; and, while he acquitted *him* of acting the character of an informer, he determined the more assiduously to pursue the calumniator of himself and Amanda.—During these events, Signora Bonetta had informed her niece of the young nobleman's proposal. She had learned the situation of her heart on the evening when Di Sardo had surprised Amanda in her apartment, and had her suspicion confirmed by the receipt of his energetic letter on the following morning: yet, though she approved of his suit, the delicacy of Amanda presented obstacles to a clandestine union which her aunt saw it necessary to overcome. Di Sardo passed the remainder of the day in concerting the plan for discovering the defamer, and in the evening went to Altieri, not concealedly, but openly, where Signora Bonetta received him cordially. After staying some time, without seeing Amanda, he returned home with a heart lighter than he set out; on his arrival his mother sent for him into her closet: her anger was less violent than that of the Marquis, and they parted unconvinced by each other's arguments; but the calmness of her tongue, when her son expected such an excess of rage, served only to conceal the darker purpose of her heart. In the Dominican convent of the San Spirito, at Naples, lived a monk, named Rinaldi. An impenetrable veil was spread over his family and connexions.—A gloomy pride marked his character, and his severe penances and solitary habits were conceived to be the effect either of a spirit pressed upon by misfortune, or some gnawing torture of conscience. In his manners he was reserved; and at certain times he would abscond none knew whither, notwithstanding his steps had been watched. The elder brothers said, he had more genius than learning; that he loved sophisticated argument, and doubted the truth of every thing. He was disliked by his associates, and loved by no one.—In his figure, he was ungracefully tall and slender, and there was something terrific in his air, as he walked along in the black sable garments of his order. His cowl shaded a face, which bore the features of the darker passions: his glaring and ferocious eye, and the livid paleness of his face, struck an observer with the penetration of the one, and the mortality of the other. This man was the confessor of the Marchioness di Sardo; with him she consulted, and they laid their gloomy purposes together, to effect their general end. Di Sardo met the confessor as he quitted his mother's apartment; the Monk looked with a holy meekness; but the penetrating eye of Di Sardo read the presentiment of what the religious monster was preparing for him. Di Sardo, since the last visit to Altieri, felt no longer

any reserve at going thither; and after several weeks attendance, Amanda, yielding to the remonstrances of her aunt, and rejecting her own delicate scruples, admitted Di Sardo as her acknowledged admirer. One evening, as the latter sat with Amanda and Bonetta in the pavilion where he had received the decisive token of his fair one's regard, he pleaded with unusual earnestness for a very speedy marriage; Bonetta seconded his wish from the conviction that the tide of her life was ebbing fast, and a desire to see that event take place before her death. Amanda burst into tears at the declaration, while Di Sardo and Bonetta urged their wish more strenuously.—“ I feel,” said the old lady, “ that my end is approaching: though the separation is keen, where affection has been cemented like Amanda's and mine, I feel it less, when I bequeath to you, Di Sardo, the legacy of my child. She will not deny the last request I shall ever make. She could not bear to see me die unhappy!” As she faltered out these last words, she gave Amanda's hand to Di Sardo, who, with eyes lifted up to heaven, vowed to make her happiness his delight, and that henceforward he would consider and defend her as his wife, though the hallowed rites had not been performed. Amanda, amidst a shower of affectionate tears, consented that the nuptials should be performed soon, but deferred fixing the day till he returned on the following evening. With a heart light as air, Di Sardo returned to Naples; and found on his entering the palace, that the Marquis had given an order for his son to attend him in his cabinet; Di Sardo knew the subject, and reluctantly obeyed.—“ I understand,” said his father, raising his vindictive eyes from the floor, “ that you still continue your visits to the unhappy young woman, who was the subject of our former conversation!”——“ Unhappy!” exclaimed Di Sardo; “ neither she nor I is unhappy!”——“ I am sincerely attached to her, and will for ever remain so!”—The Marquis then informed his son, that his opposition arose from the most correct and convincing proofs of her baseness; but as Di Sardo could not obtain from his father the author of those calumnies, the conversation terminated in the most unfriendly manner. On the following morning, Di Sardo returned to Altieri, to learn if Bonetta had fixed the nuptial day. On his way, as he passed into the shades of the well-known arch, a voice arrested his attention: it was that of the Monk, whose figure passed before him.—“ Go no farther,” it said solemnly, “ for death is at Altieri!”——The stranger disappeared before he could recover himself. Di Sardo pursued the figure into the gloom of the place, but no answer was made to his earnest questions. The only death that struck his imagination was that of Amanda—it occurred to him that she was murdered; he saw her in the agonies of resistance, calling upon him to shield her from the arm of the assassin!—He flew to Altieri, and, pressed with the horrible apprehension, it was some time before he could open a private gate of the garden, of which he had received the key. The house appeared deserted; he listened and heard the sound of that recitative which is performed as the requiem of the dying. After repeatedly knocking, the old housekeeper appeared. “ Alas! alas! she is dead, gone for ever!” exclaimed the ancient domestic: “ Well yesterday, and fled to heaven to day!”——“ Is she dead!” exclaimed Di Sardo, staggering to a pillar in the hall.—“ Where,—where,—how did she die?—Tell me all! Lead me to her apartment! Refuse me, and I will force my way there!” Annetta, alarmed at his disordered look, conducted him.—Approaching the bed of death, he beheld his beloved Amanda weeping over the sad remains of her aunt. It is needless to state, that joy was mingled with his sorrow, or that he employed every soothing consideration to alleviate the grief of the lovely mourner.—From some private conversation with Annetta, he learned that Signora Bonetta's death was sudden; and, from her appearance after the awful event had taken place, there was room to suspect she had been poisoned! Di Sardo hastily demanded if any one had been at the villa, and was answered, “ none but Signor Gallio, a cousin of my lady's, yourself, and a sister of the convent, near yon rocks, who comes for the silks my young lady embroiders: it is three weeks ago that she was here, since which indeed we have had the fisherman, the gardener, and a number of other persons, with provisions.”——“ Three weeks! strange indeed!”

said Di Sardo, musing: “but you must be silent, and contrive to let me inspect the deceased’s countenance when Amanda is not present.”—He now quitted Altieri, meditating on all that had transpired during this eventful morning: and, for the first time, he resolved the mysterious warnings he had received from the Monk into the person of Rinaldi; yet he thought their tones of voice, form, and height, were different: if they were not the same, the one might be an agent of the other, for the prophecy of death at Altieri, and the suddenness of that event there, implied a chain of cause and effect. Fired with this belief, he determined to discover the truth, to meet the slanderer of Amanda, and compel the confessor, or his agent, to reveal the mystery of such conduct.—The circumstances of Signora Bonetta’s death perpetually recurred to his mind. Wholly at a loss to account for the motive of poisoning one so harmless as the old lady, he took his course there towards midnight, at the time appointed with Annetta, and when Amanda had retired to rest. Determined to employ medical assistance in ascertaining the fact, he appointed a physician to meet him at Altieri.—Before the visit, however, he wished to see the Marchioness, and ask her some questions relative to Rinaldi, whom he found with her in her closet. They were engaged so deeply in conversation that Di Sardo for a few moments had time to contemplate the features of the confessor. Rinaldo saluted Di Sardo as he advanced with a contemptuous firmness, while the Marchioness received him with a frown, which immediately relaxed into a smile; the smile, however, was more unpleasant than the frown, because it indicated treachery. The holy father began a general conversation, in which Di Sardo said little, being occupied in determining the identity of the stranger with the Monk before him; the result was that he still remained undecided in his opinion. Recollecting that the stranger’s monkish habit and Rinaldi’s seemed of the same order, he determined to obtain, by questions, the knowledge which his visual investigation denied him. For this purpose, he noticed some drawings of ruins which ornamented the cabinet of the Marchioness, and alluded to the fortress of Paluzzi, the deep arch under which, overshadowed by towering fortifications and ponderous trees he observed required nothing to finish the gloomy picture but the addition of lawless banditti waiting for the unsuspecting traveller, or the long black garb of a friar lurking about the ruins. The confessor felt the personality of the last remark, and he lamented that banditti and monks were coupled together.—“To be brief,” said Di Sardo, “I have observed a monk stalk there at midnight, in stature and habit like yourself: and, if I again reconnoitre him, I will tell him truths shall make him tremble.”—“There are many brethren resemble each other,” said the confessor: “but the brothers of the Black Crucifix, clothed in sackcloth, with a death’s head on their garment, the peculiar symbol of their order, could not have escaped your observation. It could not be therefore one of them whom you have seen.”—A confusion which now appeared in the features of Rinaldi induced Di Sardo to regard him sternly; and he replied, “It may not be one of that order, but I think it is now certain to whom I may attribute my injuries. The secret adviser, the informer, who steals into the bosom of a family to ruin its repose,—the base calumniator of innocence, stands revealed in the same person.” “By this pointed manner,” said Rinaldi, “I am led to suppose, that you mean to brand me with these ignominious titles: but, if you apply them only to the author of your injuries, they wound not me; I am satisfied that he should feel your resentment!”—The cheerful complacency which accompanied this affectation of innocence rushed into the heart of Di Sardo, and he felt shocked at his indecorous conduct to a man of Rinaldi’s age and sacred character. He had just done apologizing for his rash and unpremeditated disrespect, when the Marchioness entered, and saw the agitation that hung on his brow. She questioned him on the cause of his emotion, but Di Sardo, telling her that he would leave his faults to the honour and clemency of the holy father, quitted the room.—The artful Monk then detailed the affront he had received, without the smallest palliation; and, as the Marchioness’s anger rose, he meekly spoke of the intemperance of head-strong youth, and the best means of saving the young man from ruin

and unavailing repentance. Their conference, at length, terminated in a resolution to act for his interest by more effectual means than remonstrances. When the evening arrived, Di Sardo met the physician, and they proceeded to Altieri together. Annetta, who was waiting in the portico, led them to the chamber where the corpse was laid out.—Her presence being improper, they dismissed her, and Di Sardo took the lamp. As the light glared on the cadaverous visage, he scarcely recognised it for the same countenance which the evening before had committed the happiness of her niece to his care. Di Sardo looked at the black tints that overspread the face of the deceased, and then regarded that of the physician, who stood absorbed in thought, and reserved in manner. Di Sardo saw he read the physician's opinion in his own.—“If you think the deceased poisoned,” said the physician, “we dissent.—Though circumstances appear unfavourable, it would be hazarding much to coincide in your opinion, where many other causes might have operated to produce a similar effect.”—Di Sardo, willing to believe that her death was natural, enquired no farther, but departed. Taking a last farewell of his valuable friend, he bent his way towards Naples, and was admitted into his father's mansion by a confidential domestic.

Amanda lost the reflection of her own situation in the grief that overwhelmed her heart for the death of her aunt, who was to be interred in the convent of *Santa Maria della Pietà*. After the funeral rites were concluded, the Lady-abbess mingled her consolations with entreaties that Amanda would make the convent her present asylum. This was congenial to her wish; and, before she retired, it was agreed that she would be received as a boarder. Her chief motive in returning to Altieri was to meet Di Sardo, whom she now considered as her lover, her guardian, and the representative of her departed aunt. At their interview it was agreed that he should visit her in the parlour of the convent; and, when decorum should no longer prevent it, Amanda promised to yield her hand.—Meanwhile the deep impression made by the nightly visitations of the Monk, (if such it were,) the suddenness of his departure, and the solemn event verified in his last warning, determined Di Sardo to walk again to the fearful region of shadows and darkness, and revisit at midnight the fortress of Paluzzi, carrying torches into its inmost recesses. His friend having prudently declined any farther adventure, he determined to take his own servant Lupo with him.—On the evening previously to Amanda's departure for La Pietà, Di Sardo went to bid her adieu.—During the interview, a thousand fearful conjectures assailed him. “Amanda,” said he, “these growing fears seem to threaten me with an eternal separation! O Amanda, if you go to the convent of La Pietà, let it be only to visit its altar.”—Amanda reproached him with the idleness of his fears; and remarked, that such a parting seemed rather an everlasting adieu than that of a few days.—At length they separated with many tears, and he left Villa Altieri with a boding heart. The time being yet too early to suit his enquiry at Paluzzi, he returned to Naples.—Amanda was busily employed the following day in the melancholy office of preparing to leave Villa Altieri. She was mournfully taking leave of her favorite apartments, when she was alarmed by a knocking at the portico, and in the next moment heard the screams of Annetta in the hall.—Amanda hastened to her assistance, and was herself instantly seized by three men, masked and muffled up in clokes, who held her arms, and bore her through the garden. The fright locked up her powers; and, when she recovered them, she found herself in a carriage moving with great rapidity, and in the grasp of the same men, who she believed had forced her from Altieri. The carriage continued its progress during the whole night; and, as the morning advanced, the blinds were let down to admit a little air. She now perceived that two men only disguised in clokes, were in the carriage. About noon they stopped at a post-house, and received refreshment without alighting; after which they again went forward. Oppressed with the intolerable heat, Amanda requested the blinds might be lowered; which being complied with, she for the first time had a glimpse of a mountainous and rude country that seemed to have bestowed all its softer and more nutritious productions on the richer plains

below. Towards twilight they entered a long narrow defile; crossing which, a river descended from the rocky falls, and stayed their direct progress. The road then wound upwards among the cliffs, and became pendant over the water below, presenting a terrific view to the fearful traveller. It finally conducted to a narrow bridge thrown across the chasm of two stupendous cliffs, defended only by a rail, and tottering among the clouds. Amanda in passing it even forgot her misfortunes, and felt pleasure and gratitude in descending among the wild scenery of the opposite side, hidden among which, at a considerable distance, appeared the spires and terrace of the monastery of San Stefano, the place where her journey was to conclude.—At the foot of the mountain they alighted, and one of her companions, leaving her, proceeded towards the monastery, after having examined some papers with his comrade. Amanda waited nearly half an hour on the turfy slope before the chapel; during which, the deep, solemn, and holy, peels of the vesper-service of the monks induced her to hope that pity would be the companion of religious harmony. At length two monks, dressed in grey stuff, descended from the monastery, and entered into private conversation with her companion, whose voice she now heard for the first time; and, though but faintly, she marked it well. The other ruffian did not appear, but Amanda thought one of the friars resembled him in height and bulk, and a certain awkwardness which the disguised habit of the absent villain but ill concealed. The friars, having received Amanda into their charge, conducted her to their secluded and extensive edifice. Here they entered, crossing a large court to the north wing. They rung a bell, and a nun appeared, by whom Amanda was conducted to the parlour of the Lady Abbess, who addressed her abruptly. “ I understand you are the young person from Naples, sent here to know yourself and your duties; till this period arrive, I shall punctually fulfil the troublesome office my regard for a noble family induced me to undertake.” Amanda in an instance conceived whence her misfortunes had originated, and demanded with firmness by whose will she was there, and by what right she was detained a prisoner. The Abbess informed her that humility and contrition were most becoming in her situation, and would best extenuate error: at the same time she bid her withdraw. “ True,” replied Amanda, in a dignified manner: “ and the virtues you recommend I leave for that purpose to my oppressors.”—She was then conducted to a cell rather than a chamber; in which a mattress, a chair, and a table, with a crucifix and prayer-book, composed all its furniture. There in her melancholy apartment she canvased over the rapid events which had followed each other. She thought of Di Sardo’s situation with the keenest feelings: then submitted to her present situation from the too-sanguine hope that his haughty family would be soon reconciled to their unalterable union. Her pride then reproached her with endeavouring to enter clandestinely into that noble house, and she resolved to abandon the ambitious pursuit. Abandon whom!—Di Sardo!—Renounce him at the expense of their future happiness, for the prejudice of a tyrannical family!—Impossible!—In short, love triumphed, and she only feared that Di Sardo would remain for ever ignorant of her monastic retreat.

Di Sardo, meanwhile, ignorant of what had occurred at Villa Altieri, repaired with his servant Lupo, a courageous and humourous fellow, to Paluzzi. It had struck the hour of midnight by the chime of the Convent of the Black Crucifix when they entered the archway by torch-light, which they concealed in one of the hollow cliffs bordering the road, that the centinels might watch more securely in darkness.—Lupo had proceeded to the middle of a tale relative to the Convent del Pianto, when a rustling sound passed him, and the voice of the Monk was recognised in these words: “ The time is past! you are too late! she departed an hour ago!—beware of your footsteps!”—Di Sardo sprung suddenly to the figure, while Lupo fired his pistol, and ran for the torch. In a moment, Lupo appeared with it, and exclaimed, “ Signor, I saw the skirt of his garment ascend those steps in the rock!”—They rushed to the top of the fortification, Di Sardo holding the torch; when Lupo thought he saw a shadowy figure traverse the dusky arches beyond the citadel. They arrived at the door where Amici had

before seen his friend come from, and her Di Sardo hesitated. "Through this door," said Lupo, "I saw it just now pass!" Di Sardo, drawing his sword, resigned the torch to his servant, and they proceeded through a long stone passage, clotted with blood, which ended in a stair-case leading to vaults below. Di Sardo, remembering the light he had before seen there, faltered for a moment in his purpose. As he was proceeding, Lupo pointed his attention to a tall figure standing in the distant gloom, at the extremity of the avenue near the staircase. When he reached it, however, the figure was gone, and nothing responded to his voice but the lengthened echoes of subterraneous chambers. Lupo, descending the steps, again called out, "There it is, Signor! It now flits through the door that opens to the vaults!"—Di Sardo pursued and entered the spacious chamber where he had formerly descended. The creaking of a heavy hinge, on which a door in the wall slowly opened and closed again, excited their observation, and Di Sardo sprung towards it. It was unfastened, and as he entered he bid Lupo keep watch at the entrance. Di Sardo entered the second vault, yet nothing appeared. There was no aperture for escape; and the casement, near the roof, was strongly grated. "If this spirit, or whatever it be," said Lupo, "will not have an interview with us, let us e'en quit it, and leave this dismal place!"—Scarcely had he spoken these words, when the door closed upon them with a clap that thundered through all the vaults. They hastened to open its massy pannels, but their efforts were ineffectual. Di Sardo, in examining the walls, found in a corner of the vault an object that alarmed him for his own fate:—with horror they viewed a garment covered in blood!—"It moves!" cried Lupo.—On inspection, however, it appeared to conceal only the other remains of dress, stained also as well as the floor with gore. On a close examination, Di Sardo, with the point of his sword, lifted up some black drapery, part of the habiliment of a monk, the vest and scapulary of which were rent and crimsoned with the sanguine fluid. He started at the discovery, as if he had identified the apparition which had so often tempted his credulity.

Lupo and his master, after having loudly vociferated for help through the grated window, and again attempted the door, laid themselves on the ground, oppressed with an agony of thought. Lupo even forgot for a while his own anxiety in that of his master, and endeavoured to perform the office of a comforter. Mentioning the Convent del Pianto, it seemed connected with the monk who had so recently hinted at the fate of Amanda. Di Sardo, therefore, seating himself by Lupo, desired him to relate the story which he had commenced under the archway.

"Just after the vesper-bell had tolled, on the vigil of San Marco, a person, so muffled up as to be wholly unknown, placed himself on the steps of one of the boxes near the confessional chair, which, from the gloom of the aisle, relieved only by one feeble lamp, is as darksome as this dungeon. The stranger's groans resounded through the wing, and were poured into the ear of Amata, the grand penitentiary of the order of the Black Crucifix at the Santa del Pianto. He bade the penitent be more calm, and take comfort; but, as the confession proceeded, he stood in need of that counsel himself, for he quitted the chair in haste, and, before he reached the cloisters, fell into strong convulsions. On recovering himself, he gave orders that the penitent should be detained, if he were still in the church; he described him as a tall figure, habited in the dress of a white friar, and such a one had been seen gliding swiftly towards the door of the convent. The porter, however, on being interrogated, said that no person in a long white habit had either entered or gone out through the gate that evening: upon which the fathers maintained he must be within the walls; but their search proved like ours, Signor; it was all to no purpose."—"This must certainly be the Monk!" exclaimed Di Sardo. "The same mystery attends each!"—A dying feeble groan interrupted his proceeding. Lupo heard it; but, imagining it was only the wind, he continued: "From the period of this strange confession, Father Amato has never properly recovered. Hence some have supposed, the confession related to himself; but several remarkable circumstances contradict this

opinion; About a month after this event, one evening, when the monks had retired”——The murmuring of voices here interrupted the narration. The whispering returned at intervals, but whence it proceeded they would not tell. Lupo urging that it was better trusting to the consequences of a discovery than being starved to death, Di Sardo and he loudly vociferated for assistance. No answer was returned, and even the sounds they had before heard died wholly away. They now laid down and sunk to sleep, having abandoned every hope of relief till the morning light.

During four days after Amanda’s arrival at San Stefano, she was not permitted to leave her room. On the fifth, the Abbess, imagining perhaps her spirit was reduced by confinement and scanty food, summoned her to her parlour.—After an elaborate discourse on the great virtues and preventive care of the Marchioness, the Superior informed her that she submitted two conditions for her acceptance: the one to accept the veil; the other to take that person for her husband whom the Lady di Sardo should select. Amanda informed the Abbess that any hesitation to decide on these points was unnecessary; that she rejected each of the alternatives; and added, that the sentiment, which bids us revere mild and beneficent laws, requires us also to reject the counsel of those who violate them—Amanda was indignantly ordered back to her cell, where she pensively reviewed what had passed, and approved her frank conduct.

On the fifth evening, she was permitted to attend vespers at the chapel, situated in a beautiful garden, and was placed among the novices. One among the voices of the choir awakened her attention. Its melancholy modulation seemed particularly to give force to the chaunt which the nun uttered. The sound sweetly stole from a remote part of the gallery, and under the slanting rays of a lamp she discovered the pious nun, whose languid features, as she threw back her veil, struck her with a beauty equal to her voice. Amanda thought she observed more of despair in her countenance than calm resignation; she imagined there were some traits of congeniality in their disposition, and resolved the first opportunity to accost her.—On the following evening, Amanda again attended vespers, and beheld Helena (the name of the nun) kneeling beneath the lamp, in private orison, before the service had begun. She approached her, but the nun dropped her veil—a reproof to the intruder to withdraw. When the service concluded, Amanda was passed unnoticed, and she returned dejected to her cell. Her reverie was however soon after interrupted by the appearance of Helena, who unlocked the door and entered:—they embraced.—“ You have my pity,” said Helena; “ you were designed for other bliss than that of these cloisters; I will visit you when it is possible; I will be your counsellor; but, if my visits be short, do not think it unkind.”—The friends parted after a short interview; and on the following morning, Amanda found the door of her cell had not been closed.—The cell opened into a short passage, at the end of which a door obstructed her farther progress. On the side, however, she perceived a narrow staircase, which conducted to the room of a lofty turret, projecting from an angle of the convent over the walls. Here she beheld a landscape spread below that enchanted her heart: on the left lay the dreadful defile she had traversed, whose falling waters murmured like distant thunder. The sublimity of the scene had drawn her attention from the things created to the Great Creator, when she heard a key turning in a door of the passage. On descending, she found the rigid sister in her cell whose department it was to lock her up; she had brought Amanda her breakfast, and, after cautioning her against prying beyond the passage, she secured the door and withdrew.

For several days it was impossible to have any communication with the friendly nun; on the fifth morning, however, Helena came with breakfast to her cell; her expressive features anticipated the intelligence she was about to communicate. “ I come,” said Helena, “ by the order of the Abbess, to prepare you for the vows.—Since you reject the husband proposed, you are to accept the veil; and, contrary to the customary form, the ceremony of taking the

black veil is to follow directly that of the white one.”—“ I reject them both!” exclaimed Amanda.—“ I cannot condemn your resolution,” said Helena; “ doubtless you have friends and relations whose society is dear to you; pardon me, my love, but what is your name?”—“ My name is Amanda Lusigni.”——“ What!” said the nun, with an air of peculiar interest, “ What! Amanda Lu——”—“ Amanda Lusigni,” rejoined her companion; “ let me ask, do you know any one of that name?”—“ None,” replied the sister; “ but your features much resemble those of a lost and dear friend!” The sister was much agitated, and rose to go: “ I will soften,” said she, “ the harshness of your refusal to the vindictive Abbess, and endeavour to avert the direful consequences of her wrath; in the mean time the door of your cell shall be left open, that you may visit the turret; and I will send you some books and drawing-instruments.”— Amanda mounted to her lofty retreat on the departure of her friend, and was summoned at noon from her scenic chamber by a sister from the Abbess, who gave her permission to dine with the novices, and was to conduct her to their table. Amanda, little pleased with being exposed to the impertinent manners of her companions, returned, for the first time, with eagerness to her cell.—The sister who reconducted her, having seen that the door at the end of the gallery passage was secure, left Amanda’s unfastened, who immediately ascended to her turret, and was delighted with sister Helena’s attention with providing her with a chair and table, and the promised articles of amusement. Here she sat reading, lost in the scope of imagination, till the vesper-bell rung for prayers. When the service had concluded, Helena walked with Amanda in the garden of the convent, but carefully avoided any conversation on the subject which most interested her,—the refusal given to the Abbess. They afterwards adjourned to Amanda’s cell, where Helena informed her friend that the Abbess had determined to proceed to extremities, if she continued refractory. “ Such extremities,” said the nun, “ that you cannot comprehend, nor I dare explain! Imagination cannot depict the horrors of——Oh! how willingly I would I save you from the evils preparing!—and let me impress it upon you, that the only chance of escape is by abandoning the appearance of resistance! By temporizing, you may obtain the usual time of preparation for taking the veil; during which, some unforeseen event may arise to rescue you:—but hark! the bell announces the assembly of the nuns in the Abbess’s apartment, where I dare not be absent; good night, sister, and reflect, I most earnestly conjure you, that your adverse decision will prove the most solemn and fatal act of your life.”—They now separated, and Amanda was lost in conjecturing what could be the dreadful issue of her refusal.

The indefatigable Di Sardo and his man Lupo, after passing the night in the subterraneous chamber of the fortress of Paluzzi, awoke in terror, and found the flambeau had expired.—After having traversed every part of the chamber to find an exit, Lupo had sat dejectedly down by the side of his master, lamenting the probability of their dying with hunger. A long silence succeeded, which Lupo suddenly broke, by exclaiming, “ Signor, look yonder!—behold a ray of light shines through the door of the vault!”—Scarcely could they believe their senses, conscious, as they were, that they had not heard its massy bolts withdrawn. Lupo threw it widely open, and they darted through the courts of the fortress into open day, without observing any object to interrupt their progress. Di Sardo’s anxiety concerning the situation of affairs at Altiery, augmented by the monkish warning, determined him to proceed there without delay. On entering the garden he was surprised to find the lower lattices open at such an early hour.—As he advanced to the hall, the piteous cries of Annetta, bound to the pillar, demanded his instant assistance; and from whom he learned the dreadful intelligence, that her mistress had been carried off by two ruffians, while two others had bound and watched over her till their prize was secured. Di Sardo, the more he reasoned upon the late events, was more convinced of the cause whence they originated. He saw clearly that Amanda had been trepanned by the order of his family, and that he had been decoyed to the fort of Paluzzi to prevent his interference in the scheme. The monk he resolved into father

Rinaldi, the secret adviser of his mother; yet, he could not reconcile the inconsistency of his appearing at the fortress in the habit he usually wore: at any rate he determined to have separate interviews with the Marquis and Marchioness; and, if he failed of obtaining intelligence of Amanda's retreat, to closely interrogate the holy father Renaldi.—Di Sardo threw himself at the feet of the first, and rose perfectly convinced that his father was ignorant of the flight of Amanda. The appeal of his mother produced no information beyond his conviction of her hypocrisy, and that to father Rinaldi was productive of as little, but it was more eventful. Having repaired to the convent of San Spirito, he inquired for the holy father, and was directed to his chamber, where lay several instruments of torture, a crucifix, and other religious articles. He was not in his room, and Di Sardo again returned to the porter, who said he must be in the church, or garden, for he had not passed the gate during the morning. “Did he pass yester evening?” said Di Sardo impatiently. “Yes,” replied the porter, “but he returned to vespers; it is contrary to the rules of our order to sleep out, and he is too pious to infringe them.—Go, Signor, you will doubtless find him at his devotion in the church.” Here in the gloomy aisle of the church, fixed as a statue, he traced the gaunt figure of Rinaldi, and, looking under the cowl, he addressed him:—“Father, this place is too sacred to discourse of the business between us.” Rinaldi took no notice of him. Where is Amanda Lusigni?” vociferated Di Sardo.—“I know you to be the predictor of Bonetta's death, the form which has decoyed me to the fortress of Paluzzi, the author of all my miseries. Wretch! where is Amanda? Tell me, or I will unmask your hypocrisy to the brotherhood!”—During this impetuous address, several monks had entered, before whom he again proceeded: “Speak, thou villain, nor think to shroud your turpitude in silence!—Do you know the Convent del Pianto—the confessional of the Black Crucifix!” “Away with him to the Father abbot!” cried some enraged priests: “Let him undergo the severest punishment, for daring to insult one of the most holy of our society during an act of penance.” “Away, thou sacrilegious boy!” exclaimed Rinaldi, with a look of terror and contempt.—“Thou shalt tremble for the consequence of thy daring impiety.” Di Sardo, perceiving it dangerous to stay longer, burst from the surrounding monks, and escaped through the church door into the street. When he reached home, Lupo had obtained no intelligence of Amanda's route; in the evening Di Sardo strayed down by the sea shore, whence the late residence of his lost Amanda appeared above the cliff. Some fishermen, engaged in conversation, took little notice of Di Sardo, who heard one of the narrators busily detailing the account of his releasing Annetta from the pillar. This awakened all his attention, and he eagerly demanded, if they knew what road the carriage had taken.—No one knew; but one of the Lazaroni recollected a coach passing through Bracelli early the same morning, with the blinds drawn up, at a time when the heat was insupportable!—The hunt was sufficient for Di Sardo, and the following morning he and his man set out for Bracelli.

While the father Rinaldi was exposing to the Marchioness the enormity of Di Sardo's public insult on his sacred character in the church of San Spirito, and thirsting for an exemplary revenge, the Marquis was lamenting the lengthened absence of his son, whom he dearly loved;—a crime which was sufficient to exclude him from the future consultation of the Marchioness and her confessor in the affairs of his family. During these new plans at home, Di Sardo was wandering from place to place without success.—From Bracelli he proceeded to Morgagni, where he lost every trace of her farther progress, as the road divided itself into several directions; he took one of these from chance, and after traversing some of the wild tracts of the Appenines, on the seventh day he was bewildered in the woods of Rugieri.—The solemn swell of a vocal chorus warned the travellers that a convent was near; but instead of a convent they discovered a party of pilgrims, going to pay their devotion at a shrine in a Carmelite convent. When Di Sardo understood that this shrine was in a convent partly inhabited by nuns, he determined to accompany them, and set forward with the

pilgrims on foot, the Father director riding Di Sardo's horse.—During the night the holy pilgrims told many a facetious story; but when they came in sight of the village, at the foot of the mountain on which was the sacred shrine, the leader dismounted, and the party fell into a procession of two and two, singing loud strains of melancholy music. Another night passed, during which, by the means of Lupo and a ducat, Di Sardo procured the habit of one of the pilgrims, and at an early hour they again set forward. Having reached the gate of the convent, he entered the church, and followed some devotees through the side aisle to a court, overhung by a tremendous rock, containing the shrine of our Lady of Mount Carmel. Here Di Sardo kneeled to avoid singularity, and remained till the loud organ peal announced the mass was begun. Unable to endure the pregnant feelings which the harmonic sounds excited, he was about to leave the church, when the tolling of a bell, like the knell of death, arrested his footsteps.—It struck at intervals between the feminine voices of the nuns, and the louder tones of the monks.—At the altar a pall of black velvet lay on its steps, and the choir strewed with flowers and palm branches.—Amidst the pomp every where displayed, the Abbess, dressed in her pontifical robes, advanced, followed by the nuns and the novices, carrying burning tapers.—The ceremony was the profession of a nun, and Di Sardo eagerly asked her name.—A friar pointed out the interesting object, but could not resolve his question.—The Father Abbot began with an exhortation, after which followed a solemn hymn; during its progress, Di Sardo though he now traced the votary.—He listened, and was almost certain he heard the same sound which had captivated his ear in the church of San Lorenzo; at length he was relieved from his anxiety by the holy father withdrawing the white veil in the act of putting the black one.—He saw it was not Amanda!—When this ceremony had concluded, it was followed by another, called a noviciation:—a young woman was led between two nuns to the altar, and the priest withdrew her veil.—“I protest,” said the voice—Di Sardo rushed forward; it was Amanda herself!—who, stretching out her hands towards him, fell overcome into the arms of Helena. When the confusion had subsided, during which the lovers had interchanges mutual expressions of fidelity, the Abbess ordered the young stranger to attend her in the parlour of the convent.—Di Sardo patiently listened to a long discourse on the goodness of the Marchioness, and a defence of the steps she had taken, but when Amanda was threatened with the punishment which her rejection of the vows had subjected her to, his fury and contempt rose to its zenith. To his keen reproaches she only answered by severer menaces and denunciation. He left her apartment to apply to the Father Abbot, but he was timid, and refused to intermeddle in the affairs of the Abbess.—In short, there appeared no resource, but that which he detested—stratagem. However delicacy might object to the imprudent step, to Amanda there existed no prospect of escape but through the medium of Di Sardo,—and even that hope was nipped almost as soon as formed. In the evening with extreme anxiety she waited for the visit of Helena, who came to inform her of Di Sardo's departure, and condole with her on her situation. So much sympathy even excited the surprise of Amanda, who was oppressed with the melancholy of her friend. When the latter withdrew, Amanda retired to her turret. to see and to listen to the wild music of the mountainous foliage. As she sat she heard a reed so sweetly sounded, it played an air so familiar to her ear, so expressive, that in a transport of joy she exclaimed, “the musician is Di Sardo!” and they interchanged signs together as he stood on the brow of an almost inaccessible cliff below.

Here the lovers arranged a plan for an escape, and the means were principally effected by Lupo.—He had bribed one of the lay brothers, who had informed him of the turret, and promised to admit Di Sardo in a pilgrim's habit that evening, on which the Lady Abbess gave a grand collation to the Father Abbot and the priests; a few strangers of distinction were to be admitted, and the nuns were to perform a concert. The entertainments were to be chiefly conducted in the outer apartments, while the Abbess with her select friends had a table in an inner room. Di Sardo, therefore, relying on security in the pilgrim's disguise, intreated

Amanda, as she valued her liberty, to meet him at the appointed time and place. Having lingered on the rock till the darkness made it dangerous to descend, they separated, and Amanda returned to her cell, to contemplate the subject of her escape. Her meditation was soon interrupted by the presence of Helena, whose boding countenance excited immediate alarm. “Your conduct this morning,” said Helena, “is to be punished with imprisonment in the stone chamber of our convent, the place assigned for the sisters guilty of any heinous offence.—There the unfortunate sufferer never receives a reprieve, but languishes on brand and water till life sinks under the gloomy pressure.—It is the chamber of death! One instance of this dreadful rigour had occurred within my memory.—The wretched victim languished during two years on her bed of straw, and now lies at peace in the convent-garden! Tomorrow is the day of your sacrifice, which, but for the festival of this evening, would have been now carried into execution!” Amanda could only utter a groan, while the generous Helena made her offers of assistance, and offered to share the malevolence of the Abbess with her, if they were discovered. Encouraged by such exalted conduct, she laid open to Helena the plan of Di Sardo that evening; who promised to procure a nun’s veil for her, under which there would be no danger of detection. In the mean time she advised her to write a few lines to Di Sardo, on the urgency of her circumstances, and present it to him unobserved through the grating. A chime sounded to summon the nuns to the concert-room, and the friends separated. the one to secure the veil, and the other to invite Di Sardo.

Amanda, wrapping herself in Helena’s veil, descended to the music room, where she mingled with the nuns who were assembled within the grate; at the outside of which, with the monks and pilgrims, were several strangers in the usual dress of the country, but she did not perceive any one who bore the least resemblance to Di Sardo; she conceived, if he were present, her nun’s veil would as effectually conceal her from him as from the Lady Abbess. It therefore became necessary to withdraw it for a moment at the grate, though aware this expedient must expose her to the observation of strangers.—The Abbess, however, passed on, without discovering her, and having conversed a short time with the Father Abbot, took her chair; the performance was then opened with several grand and impressive airs, which rescued Amanda for a moment from a sense of danger, and she resigned herself to the surrounding awful scene. In a vaulted apartments, lighted by innumerable tapers, were assembled about fifty nuns, who, in the habit of their order, appeared with graceful plainness; their beauty and delicacy of deportment were contrasted by the austere majesty of the Lady Abbess, who was seated on an elevated chair, separate from the audience, and seemed the empress of the scene.—Near the holy Father, who, and his attendant monks, were arranged without the screen of wire-work, were placed the strangers of distinction, in rich Neapolitan habits, whose elegance and gay colouring were well opposed to the dark drapery of the ecclesiastics. In the back ground stood several pilgrims whose looks were less cheerful and more sedate than when on the road the preceding day. Amanda looked repeatedly towards this part of the chamber, but could not discern Di Sardo; and, though she had placed herself near the grate, had not sufficient resolution, before so many strangers, to withdraw her veil. At the conclusion of the concert, he not having been observed by Amanda, she withdrew to the apartment where a collation was spread for the Abbess and her guests, who soon after made their appearance—but, on looking towards the grate, she perceived that a stranger in the habit of a pilgrim, his face partly wrapped in his cloke, appeared to be a spectator rather than a partaker of the feast. The Abbess, being engaged in conversation with the ladies around her, afforded Amanda an opportunity of securely approaching the place where the stranger stood, whom she conceived to be Di Sardo; and having reached the grate, ventured, for an instance, to lift up her veil.—The person, uncovering his face, thanked her for her condescension, and she perceived he was not Di Sardo! Much disappointed, she was retiring hastily, when, with

quick steps, another stranger approached, who, on drawing aside his cloke, she discovered to be Di Sardo himself.

Amanda, perceiving that she was known, did not raise her veil, but advanced a few steps towards the gate, where Di Sardo had placed a paper, but he had retired among the crowd before she could venture to present her own billet:—stepping forward to secure his letter, a nun quickly approached the spot where he had laid it, whose garment wafted it from the place where it had been partly concealed; and on seeing the nun's foot rest on the paper, her apprehensions were disguised with difficulty. She was however soon relieved from her pain, by the sister gently pushing it aside, without examining it.—Amanda imagining she was observed, did not presume to touch the billet, for, whenever she offered to look round, the eyes of the Abbess seemed pointed towards her.

The collation being concluded, and the assembly broken up, Amanda once more ventured to the grate in order to secure the paper; and, concealing it in her robe, hardly dared to enquire by a quick glance whether any one had noticed her; she would instantly have retired to peruse its contents, but the Abbess immediately left the room; and, on looking around for the nun, Amanda perceived she had quitted the apartment. It now behoved her to follow in the Abbess's train; and, as she approached Helena, she gave a signal, and passed on to her cell; having arrived at which, and secured the door, she seated herself to read Di Sardo's letter, when, in her haste in turning over the paper, the lamp dropt from her hand, and was extinguished. Her distress now nearly reached despair.—It was totally impossible for her to venture forth for a light, as it would have betrayed she was no longer a prisoner, consequently she would have been closely confined, and Helena must have suffered from a discovery of the favour she had granted. Her whole dependence now rested on the arrival of Helena, ere it was too late to practise Di Sardo's instructions. Often did she turn about the eventful paper, conscious of having in her hand the information, on a timely knowledge of which her existence depended, without being able to understand it. After waiting a considerable time in agonising suspense, she heard approaching footsteps; presently after a gleam of light appeared from the passage, and Amanda beheld her friend; she hastily took the lamp from the nun, and perusing Di Sardo's note, was apprised, that brother Thomo was waiting without the gate of the garden, where Di Sardo intended to meet him, to convey her immediately wherever she thought proper.

Amanda, greatly agitated, gave the paper to Helena, and desired she would advise her how to proceed: an hour and a half had now elapsed since Di Sardo had said that success depended on expedition. The kind Helena, having read the billet, was ready to brave danger to effect the deliverance of her friend. After a long pause, Helena said, “In every avenue of the convent we are sure to meet some of the nuns; but, as my veil hitherto protected you, I trust it will still assist your purpose. It will be necessary, however, to pass through the refectory, where the sisters, who did not partake of the collation, are met at supper, and will continue so till they are called to the chapel by the first mattin. If we stay till then, I apprehend, it will be of no use to go at all.” On hearing this, Amanda entreated that not another minute might be lost, and they instantly quitted the cell.

As they descended to the refectory, several sisters passed them, but did not particularly notice Amanda.—The Abbess, who had been overlooking the nuns at supper, and not seeing Helena, had enquired after her, now met them at the door.—Amanda endeavoured to elude observation, and retreated a little to let the Superior pass; but Helena was compelled to answer her summons. After unveiling herself, she was permitted to proceed, and Amanda, having joined in the crowd, thus escaped detection, and followed Helena through the refectory, till she reached an opposite door. As they were opening the gate that led into the garden, a sister enquired if they had heard the mattin bell, seeing they were proceeding towards the chapel.—Helena prudently answered the question, and they were permitted to

pass. They accordingly proceeded till they arrived at the gate; where Helena conceived it prudent to ascertain who it was without, and to receive an answer to the signal Di Sardo had proposed, ere they made themselves known.—She then struck upon the wood, and voices were heard from without, but no reply was heard to the nun's signal. "We are betrayed!" said Amanda in a low voice, "but I will know the worst at once," when, repeating the signal, it was answered by three raps upon the gate; a key was now heard to grate in the lock; and on the door opening, two persons presented themselves, muffled up in their garments. Amanda was retreating, when a well-known voice recalled her, and she saw Di Sardo by the light of half-hooded lamp which Thomo held. "O heaven," he exclaimed, "is it possible you are again my own! If you could but know what I have endured this last hour!" Then observing Helena, he drew back, till Amanda informed him of her great obligations to the nun who had so generously assisted her.

"We have no time to lose," uttered Thomo sullenly; "we have tarried too long already, as you will find probably." "Farewell, dear Amanda!" said Helena, weeping on her bosom; "farewel, my tender friend! remember the Convent della Pieta!" "You ought to have settled this business within," said Thomo: "we have been waiting nearly two hours already for you." As Di Sardo gently disengaged Amanda from the nun, he said, "Ah! do I then only hold the second place in your heart?" They then bade adieu to Helena, and quitted the gate.

"As it is moonlight," observed Di Sardo to Thomo, "your lamp is of no use, and may betray us." "Signor," replied Thomo, "we shall find it of service in the church, and in many of the avenues we have to pass, for I dare not lead you through the gates." "Lead on, then," said Di Sardo, and they had nearly reached a cypress walk that extended to the church. As they entered the gloomy walk, Di Sardo enquired of the father if he was sure none of the brothers were doing penance at the shrines in their way.—"What, on a festival, Signor!" said Thomo; "they are more likely, by this time, to be taking away the garments." Di Sardo wished much to avoid the church, but the father assured him it was impossible: on entering they unhooded their lamp, for the tapers at the shrines had expired; none were left, except at the high altar. Having crossed to a side door that communicated with the rock which enshrined the image of *our Lady of Carmel*, a sudden glare of tapers from the cave alarmed the fugitives; when Thomo advancing, assured them there was no person within, but the light they saw proceeded from tapers which burned always around the shrine. A little recovered by this explanation, they followed into the cave, at the farthest end of which appeared a small door; and on Thomo's opening it, they perceived a narrow winding passage. Di Sardo stopped, and enquired whither the father was leading them. "To the place of your *destination*," replied Thomo,—an answer that did not satisfy Di Sardo. "If your purpose is evil," he said, "pause an instant, or your life shall answer for your treachery." The brother's countenance darkening at this speech, he replied, "Of what service would my death be to you? Are you aware that every brother would rise to revenge it?"—"I know only that I will make sure of one traitor, if there be one; and, since you know this, proceed." They then followed through the gloomy passage, but, ere they had reached its extremity, they distinctly heard music. Amanda eagerly enquired whence those sounds proceeded; the brother informed them from the cave they had just left. "It is now midnight," said Thomo; "quicken your pace, as I expect every moment to be called." While they hastily advanced, the matten-bell solemnly struck, which was the signal for Thomo to attend; they then passed on with the utmost speed till arrived at a door, which, standing a little open, afforded them an opportunity of taking a glimpse of a chamber, which was duskily lighted.

Di Sardo being alarmed at the light, enquired if any person was in the chamber. Thomo gave an equivocal answer, and pointed to an arched gate that terminated the avenue; but, on preparing to unlock the door, it refused to yield.—"I fear we are betrayed," said the brother coolly; "the second lock is shut; I have only the key of the first." Di Sardo in a

resolute tone replied, “ We *are* betrayed; but I understand by whom; tremble at my vengeance, and consider whether it is your interest now to intercept us.” “ I swear by our holy saint,” answered Thomo, “ I am totally ignorant how this could have happened; I fear whoever has passed now has been led hither by suspicion of your flight.”

Di Sardo, greatly enraged, replied to the father, “ Either unclose the gate, or prepare for the worst.” Amanda endeavoured to calm the indignation of Di Sardo, and to persuade Thomo to unfasten the gate: they exerted their utmost efforts, but it was immovable. Thomo, however, seemingly did not despair of effecting their escape, but observed they would be compelled to remain in the avenue all night, and perhaps the next day; it was then determined that he should conduct them back to the chamber they had before seen, and for a considerable time after his departure they were not without hope; but, finding he did not return, their situation became terrible.—The description which Helena had given of the prison where the nun had languished and expired exactly corresponded with this chamber, whose cold and earthy air was like that of a sepulchre. The furniture consisted only of a table, a bench, and the lamp, which dimly shewed the apartment.—She frequently looked round the apartment, in search of some object which might contradict or confirm her suspicion that this was the death-room of the unfortunate nun. At length, in a remote corner of the chamber, she perceived a mattress of straw; and, while Di Sardo requested her to explain the horror she betrayed, they distinctly heard a hollow sigh near them. Presently all was still. In a short time after it was again repeated.—Di Sardo, then, taking up the lamp and stepping forward, exclaimed, “ If you are in sorrow speak! from fellow-sufferers you will meet with sympathy; but, if your designs are evil, tremble, for you shall find I am desperate.” Still no answer was returned, and he proceeded to the opposite side, where there was a small door in the rock; immediately he heard a low sound as of a person in prayer, and, on opening the door gently, beheld a figure in the attitude of kneeling before a crucifix. On rising, he discovered the silver temples and pale features of an aged monk; an unaffected surprise appeared in his air; but Di Sardo at first feared to answer his enquiries, till the father hinted to him that an explanation was necessary even to his own safety.—Encouraged by his manner, Di Sardo confided to the friar an account of his embarrassment; but, on telling him how long Thomo had been absent, and stating that the gate of the avenue was secured by a double lock, he replied, “ My children, you are betrayed!” This intelligence overwhelmed Amanda with fears: the friar then, addressing her, observed that he remembered to have seen her in the church the same morning; I recollect too,” said he, “ you protested against the vows you were brought thither to seal: were you aware of the consequence of such a step?” “ I had only a choice of evils,” replied Amanda. Di Sardo endeavoured to sooth her, and earnestly intreated the friar to employ the critical moment to save them, which he at last consented to do, and desired they would immediately follow him. On arriving at the door, the good old man applied the key; the locks suddenly gave way, and the gate opened upon the mountains. Amanda and Di Sardo had hardly a moment to bid him “ farewell,” ere he closed the door, and they descended cautiously among the cliffs, where they found Lupo with horses; they then instantly mounted, and took the road towards Naples, it being Amanda’s intention to take refuge in the convent Della Pietà. They soon arrived within sight of the Alpine bridge, on which they observed several people approaching towards them; these proved to be pilgrims, who, after the usual salutations, permitted them to pass on; they had now crossed it, and, fearing they might meet with fresh obstacles, they quitted the high road to Naples, and took the one that led towards Aquila. By the dawn of the morning they found themselves near a shepherd’s cabin, and a venerable man advanced to meet them; Amanda, overcome with fatigue, requested he would permit her for a short time to rest in his hut, which he readily consented to, and left them to procure some milk, honey, and dried figs, for their breakfasts, which he quickly returned with, and placed before them.

They then seated themselves and partook of the repast, but Thomo, whose curiosity had led him forth, suddenly returned, and apprized them he had just seen two Carmelites, who greatly resembled those they met near the bridge they had passed.—“Call our host directly,” said Di Sardo, and, on the good shepherd entering, he entreated those friars might not know what guests he had; the old man assented, and instantly quitted them. Various were the conjectures of the party respecting the Carmelites; and, after waiting a considerable time, the shepherd returned, saying they had entirely escaped this vigilance, and supposed they must have taken a different road from that which led to the cottage; they then took leave of their kind host, and with difficulty prevailed on him to accept any recompense for his trouble; the shepherd gave them the necessary directions respecting the road, and they pursued their journey.

As they travelled forward, the whole lake of Celano, with its vast circle of mountains, burst at once upon their view: the travellers stopped to admire the scene, and to give their horses rest. Di Sardo pointed out to Amanda the gigantic Velino in the north, a barren mountain between Rome and Naples; they then journeyed on, and reached the town of Celano before the evening closed; here Di Sardo was requested by Amanda to enquire for a convent where she might be lodged for the night; accordingly he left her at the inn with Thomo for her guard, and proceeded on his search. He was informed that, on the bank of the lake, there was a convent of the Urselines, remarkable for their hospitality to strangers; he soon returned with this information to Amanda, and they immediately set off. The travellers now entered the town, which consisted of one straggling street along the margin of the lake; and, having enquired for the Urseline convent, were directed to its gates. Amanda was kindly received by the abbess, who also recommended Di Sardo to a neighbouring society of Benedictines, where he also found a hospitable reception.—He determined on the following morning to urge all his reasons and entreaties for an immediate marriage; and among the brothers of the Benedictines he had little doubt of prevailing with one to solemnize the nuptials.

In the mean while the Marquis Di Sardo was under the greatest uneasiness respecting his son; and the Marchioness was fearful that the abode of Amanda might be discovered. Her temper had been much irritated by her son’s conduct, and she was contemplating his behaviour, when a courier from the Abbess of San Stefano informed her of the flight of Amanda with Di Sardo; she immediately acquainted the Marquis of their elopement, and dispatched a messenger for Rinaldi, to consult with him in her chapel, what steps were best to be taken. In the evening he came; he too had heard of Amanda’s escape, and that she was married to Di Sardo. After a long pause, Rinaldi, gloomily, yet secretly pleased, told her there was only one way in which she could extricate her house from disgrace. The Marchioness eagerly asked what he alluded to, and desired him to speak low; the father replied, Amanda was not immortal; and the few years that might have been allotted her she deserved to forfeit; “this,” said he, “would restore the honour of an illustrious house.”

The Monk allowed there was some hazard in the accomplishment of her death; but at the same time observed, “My zeal for your family is also beyond calculation;” stating artfully that there was a lone dwelling on the beach in the province of Aquila, inhabited by one man—“*I know him!*” “And would you trust him, father?” said the Marchioness.—“Aye, lady, with the life of this girl!—Daughter, I have reason to know him.”—“Name your reasons, father.” “No matter!” said Rinaldi, in a stifled voice;—“she dies!” “By *his* hands?” asked the Marchioness, with strong emotion: “think once more, father!”—After a moment’s pause the Monk added, with displeasure, “Can you suppose, that I, myself”——“Well,” said the Marchioness, “avoid violence if possible, but let her die quickly.” As she said this, she chanced to cast her eyes upon an inscription over a confessional, where appeared in black letters these awful words, “*God hears thee!*” Her countenance changed, but Rinaldi did not

observe her emotion, being too much engaged with his own thoughts; at last, addressing the Marchioness, he said, "In the dwelling I alluded to, there is a secret door, leading to the sea, through which her body shall be conveyed to the shore, when darkness covers it, and plunged amidst the waves." The Marchioness finding her spirits disordered, hastily bid him good-night, but told him ere they parted. "We will converse on this business at a future time:" she then quitted the cloister, and the Monk departed by another door.

While the Marchioness and the Monk were meditating conspiracies against Amanda, she was still in the convent on the lake of Celano. Di Sardo represented their present dangers, and claimed the promise of her hand; she readily admitted the sacredness of the pledge which had been formerly given; and, before he retired from the convent, he obtained her consent to consult with an aged Benedictine, whom he had engaged in interest, at what hour the marriage might be solemnized with least observation. He was told the first hour after sun-set. When the ceremony was over, the fugitives were to embark in a vessel, and, crossing the lake, proceed towards Naples. At the hour appointed Di Sardo led Amanda to the chapel; on entering which, as her eyes glanced over a casement, she distinguished a face laid close to the glass, seemingly observing what was passing; they were then met by the priest, who soon after took his station at the altar, and opened his book. He had already begun the ceremony, when a noise from without alarmed Amanda, who presently perceived a man of gigantic stature, accompanied by several other persons, enter a door at a remote corner of the chapel. The priest, observing them, enquired, "What sacrilegious foot-steps thus rudely violate this holy place?" The tall figure who preceded the rest, said, in a loud voice, "You, Giovanni di Sardo, of Naples, and you, Amanda Lusigni, of Villa Altieri, we summon you to surrender in the name of the most holy Inquisition!" at the same time presenting his black scroll to the priest. "There!" said he, "Read, and be satisfied!" The priest on examination announced it to be a true instrument of arrestation from the *Holy Office*. "Unhappy young man," said the priest, "it is too true; you are summoned by that awful power to answer for your crime."—Di Sardo eagerly enquired what crime he was accused of?"—"I did not think you had been thus hardened in guilt," replied the priest—"Falsehood!" retorted Di Sardo—"Forbear, forbear!" said the priest, seizing his arm, "Know you not the punishment you incur for resistance, together with the partner of your guilt, who now lies senseless at your feet?" Di Sardo's rage and indignation was now raised to the highest pitch.—"Rash young man! does not the very veil she wears betray your guilt?"—You have stolen a nun from her convent," said the chief officer, "and must answer for you crime." Di Sardo then observed, for the first time, that Amanda was still shrouded in Helena's veil, which, in the hurry of her departure, she had forgotten to leave with the recluse. Di Sardo now saw the wide circumference of the snare that was spread around him; he fancied, too, that he perceived the hand of Rinaldi employed in it; with conviction, he stood aghast, and gazed in silent anguish on Amanda, who stretched forth her helpless hands, supplicating him to save her. At the sound of her voice, he bade the ruffians depart, or prepare for his fury: in an instant they all drew their swords, a fierce combat ensued, and Di Sardo, with his faithful servant, was wounded, and at length disarmed. Amanda, who had been withheld from throwing herself between the combatants, now observing that Di Sardo was wounded, renewed her efforts for liberty, but they proved ineffectual. In panting accents Di Sardo called upon the old priest to protect her. "I dare not oppose the orders of the Inquisition," replied the Benedictine; "it is death to resist them"—"Death!" exclaimed Amanda, "death!" "Aye, lady, too surely so!"—"O Amanda," cried Di Sardo, frantic with grief, "must I then abandon you for ever!" The thought re-animated him with momentary strength; he burst from the grasp of the officials, and once more clasped her to his bosom, who, unable to speak, wept with the anguish of a breaking heart, as her head sunk upon his shoulder. Two ruffians then seized Amanda, and bore her away from the

chapel, while the rest bound the bleeding Di Sardo, and conveyed him to the Benedictine convent, together with the wounded Lupo.

The wounds of Di Sardo and his servant were pronounced by the Benedictine, who has examined and dressed them, to be not dangerous, and those of one of the ruffians were declared doubtful; but, as soon as the former were a little recovered, they were compelled to begin their journey. They were placed in the same carriage, and accompanied by two officers, who prevented all intercourse or conjecture as to the immediate occasion of their misfortune. Lupo, indeed, now and then hazarded a surmise, and did not scruple to affirm, that the Abbess of San Stefano was their chief enemy.—“Your abbesses,” says he, “are as cunning as inquisitors, and would rather send a man to the devil than send him no where.” Di Sardo, alarmed for the consequences which honest Lupo might be drawing on himself, insisted on his silence, and was obeyed. The officers, mean while, never spoke, but were observant of all that Lupo said. They travelled the whole night, stopping only to change horses; at every post-house, Di Sardo looked for a carriage that might enclose Amanda, but none, nor any sound of wheels, told him that she followed. At the dawn of the morning he perceived the dome of St. Peter appearing faintly over the plains that surround Rome, and was told, that he was going to the prisons of the Inquisition in that city. He now saw that the guard was changed, and likewise noticed that their conduct was more temperate; but their countenances expressed a darker cruelty, mingled with a sly demureness, and a solemn self-importance, that announced them at once as belonging to the Inquisition; he was now inclined to believe, that a stratagem had enthralled him, and that, for the first time, he was in the custody of the *Holy Office*.

The carriage having reached the walls of their prison, they followed its bendings to a considerable extent; they then passed what seemed to be the principal entrance, from the grandeur of its portal, and the gigantic loftiness of the towers that rose over it; and soon after the vehicle stopped at an arch-way in the walls, strongly barricadoed. One of the escort alighted, and, having struck upon the bars, a folding door within was opened, and a man bearing a torch appeared behind the barricado, who immediately unlocked the iron gate; the prisoners then quitted the coach, and passed with the two officials beneath the arch. Having entered one of the passages, Di Sardo perceived a person clothed in black, who bore a lighted taper, crossing silently the remote perspective; and he understood too well from his habit that he was a member of the dreadful tribunal; the stranger then, pointing with his taper along another avenue, passed away. Di Sardo followed him with his eyes, till a door at the extremity of the passage opened, and he saw the Inquisitor enter the apartment, whence a great light proceeded, and where several other figures, habited like himself, appeared waiting to receive him. The prisoners rested here for a short time, and a person soon after advanced, who appeared to be the jailor, into whose hands Di Sardo and Lupo were delivered; one of the officials crossed the hall, and ascended a wide stair-case, while the other, with the jailor and the guard, remained below, as if awaiting his return. A long interval elapsed, during which several Inquisitors, in their long black robes, issued from time to time from the passages, and crossed the hall to other avenues; they eyed the prisoners with curiosity, but without pity, and their visages seemed stamped with the character of demons. At length the chief officer descended the stair-case, and immediately ordered Di Sardo to follow him; Lupo was proceeding with his master, but was kept back by a guard, and told he was to be disposed of in a different way, Di Sardo then followed the officer up the stair-case, and, having passed through the gallery to an antichamber, was delivered into the custody of some persons in waiting; his conductor then disappeared beyond a folding door, that led to an inner apartment. Over this door was an inscription in Hebrew characters, traced in blood colour.—Dante’s inscription, on the entrance of the infernal regions, would have been suitable to a place, where every circumstance and feature seemed to say, “*Hope, that come to all, comes not here!*” The officer soon after appeared, and, having beckoned Di Sardo to advance,

uncovered his head, and bared his arms. He then led him forward through the folding door into a spacious and lofty apartment, where only two persons were visible, habited in black; the one, by his piercing eye and extraordinary physiognomy, seemed to be an Inquisitor, and wore on his head a kind of black turban, which increased the natural ferocity of his countenance; the other was uncovered, and his arms bared to the elbows. At the lower end of the room, suspended from an arch in the wall, was a dark curtain, but whether it veiled a window or shrouded some object or person, necessary to the designs of the Inquisitor, there were little means of judging. The Inquisitor called on Di Sardo to advance, and, when he had reached the table, put a book into his hands, and bad him to swear to reveal the truth, and keep for ever secret whatever he might see or hear in the apartment. Di Sardo hesitated to obey, till a second command, in a stern voice from the Inquisitor, obliged him to put the book to his lips. As he accidentally threw his eyes upon the curtain, he thought it moved, and almost started in expectation of seeing an accuser as malicious as Rinaldi steal from behind it.

The oath was then administered, and the Inquisitor asked whether he understood the nature of the accusation on which he had been arrested. "The order of my arrestation informed me," replied Di Sardo, "I had stolen a nun from her sanctuary." "You confess it then," said the Inquisitor, after the pause of a moment, and making a signal to the secretary, who immediately noted Di Sardo's words. "I solemnly deny it," replied Di Sardo; "the accusation is false and malicious." "Recollect yourself," said the Inquisitor sternly, "and confess the truth.—Where were you arrested?" "At the chapel of San Sebastian, on the lake of Celano." "You are sure it was not at the village of Legano, on the high road between Celano and Rome?" Di Sardo then recollected the place where the guard was changed, and he mentioned the circumstance. The Secretary was then ordered to note down these occurrences, as well as the names of Amanda and Lupo, who were arrested with him at the above place. The Inquisitor, after a moment's silence, added, "Were you ever in the church of the Spirito Santo, at Naples?" Di Sardo requested to know the name of his accuser before he answered the question, but was told he had no right to demand any thing in that place; the name of the informer was always kept sacred from the knowledge of the accused. "I now perceive," said Di Sardo, "that it avails me nothing to be guiltless; a single enemy is sufficient to accomplish my destruction." "You have an enemy then?" observed the Inquisitor.—Di Sardo was too well convinced that he had one, but there was no sufficient proof, as to the person of the enemy, to justify him in asserting that it was Rinaldi. The Inquisitor then bade him to consider of the admonition he had received; and prepare either to confess on the morrow, or to undergo the question; at the same time desiring the officer to receive his prisoner, and see that his orders were obeyed.—Di Sardo was then conducted back by the official from the apartment.

Amanda, in the interim, was carried from the chapel of San Sebastian, and placed upon a horse on waiting, guarded by the two men who had seized her, who immediately commenced a journey, which continued with little interruption during two nights and days. On the evening of the second day they approached a forest, spreading over the many-rising steeps of the Garganus. Amanda had travelled for some miles through the forest, when she perceived her approach to the sea; her guards only now and then uttering to each other a question.—She now ventured to ask how much farther she was to go. "You have not far to go now," replied one of the guards surlily; "you will soon be at the end of your journey, and at rest." They descended to the shore, and presently came to a dwelling which stood near the margin of the sea; the guards shouted with all their might, which was answered by a rough voice from within, and presently the door of the porch was unbarred, and opened by a man, whose ferocious countenance and wild look occasioned Amanda to conjecture, that she brought thither to be assassinated: horror chilled all her frame, and her senses forsook her. On recovering, she found herself surrounded by the guard and the stranger, who looked upon

each other, hesitated, and asked her to partake of some refreshment; but Amanda, having declined the invitation with as good a grace as she could assume, obtained leave to withdraw. The master of the dwelling, whom the guard called Lipari, taking the lamp, conducted her to a chamber, where pointing to a miserable mattress on the floor, told her it was there she was to repose. In a few minutes, he returned with a cup of sour wine and a slice of bread; and, being somewhat soothed by this attention, she did not think proper to refuse. Lipari then quitted the room, and the door was again barred. Left once more alone, she tried to overcome apprehension by prayer; and after offering up her vespers with a fervent heart, she became more confiding and composed. The people below sat till a late hour, but at last she imagined they had either left the apartment, or fallen asleep there.—Doubt did not long deceive her, for while she yet listened, she heard footsteps approach her door, and low whisperings of their voices. Not a word, however, distinctly reached her, till, as one of them was departing, another called out in a half-whisper, “ It is below on the table, in my girdle; make haste.” The man came back, and said something in a lower voice, to which the other replied, “ She sleeps;” or Amanda was deceived by the hissing consonants of some other words. They then descended the stairs, and the roaring of the sea was alone heard in their stead. Happily for Amanda’s peace, she knew not that her chamber had a door, so contrived as to open without sound, but which assassins might enter at any hour of the night; but she continued watchful till the morning dawn, when she returned to the mattress; where anxiety at length yielded to her weariness, and she obtained a short repose.—After a few hours profound sleep, she was awakened by a loud noise at the door of her chamber; and the undrawing of iron bolts convinced her of the approach of Lipari, who brought her some breakfast, consisting of an oaten cake and a bason of milk. Some time had elapsed before she remembered that he had brought the refreshment she so much required; but, as she now lifted it to her lips, a horrible suspicion arrested her hand; it was not, however, before she had swallowed a small quantity of the milk; the look of her keeper had made her conclude that poison was infused in this liquid; and she feared even to taste of the oaten cake; since Lipari had offered it. All day Amanda either leaned against the bars of her window, lost in reverie, or she listened for some sound from within the house that might assist her conjectures as to the number of persons below, or what might be passing there; but remembering she had left the greatest part of her milk, she poured it through the bars of her window: she then ventured to take a slight repose on her mattress, but was soon disturbed by a noise at her door; she distinctly heard one bar gently undrawn, and then another; and presently the face of Lipari presented itself from behind it. Without immediately entering, he threw a glance round the chamber, and, perceiving Amanda lying on the mattress, ventured towards it with quick and unequal steps; his countenance expressed the consciousness of guilt.—When he was within a few paces, Amanda raised herself, and he started back, as if a sudden spectre had crossed him; but quickly recovering himself said, “ You have had no dinner; I forgot you; but supper will soon be ready, and you may walk upon the beach till then, if you will.” Amanda gladly accepted his offer, and they descended to the lower part of the house, no person appearing but her conductor; Lipari then pointed towards the west, and said she might walk that way. Amanda therefore bent her course towards the “ many-sounding waves,” followed at a short distance by Lipari.—It was a lowering evening, and the sea was dark and swelling; and, as she moved farther on, she perceived a Monk walking silently beneath the dark rocks that overbrowed the beach. As she drew near, he viewed her askance, without lifting his head, and passed by. Amanda paused, and determined, when he should be at some distance, to endeavour to make her way to the hamlet which she discovered before her; but turning back to see Lipari observed her, he was not within sight: she therefore hastened forward, though fearful of being pursued; again looked back, and saw the Monk conversing with Lipari, who soon noticed her rapid progress, and called on her to stop, in a voice that echoed among the rocks. She looked

hopelessly at the distant cottages, and slackened her pace.—The Monk then came up with her, and in a voice stifled by emotion, said, “Whither go you, and who are you?” “I am an unhappy orphan,” replied Amanda, sighing deeply: “If you have compassion, pity my distress!” “Who and what is it you fear?” Said the Monk:—“I fear even for my life,” replied Amanda with hesitation. The frown with which the former now regarded Amanda was so terrific, that she shrunk tremblingly back; and an apprehension of the immediate and terrible vengeance which such an agent seemed about to accomplish subdued her senses, and she sunk upon the beach.

As Rinaldi gazed upon her helpless and faded form, his heart at first seemed sensible to some touch of pity, but, recollecting his mission, all sense of compassion was banished from his breast. “What!” Said he, “shall the weakness of a girl subdue the resolution of a man!” He had a dagger concealed beneath his Monks’s habit, but he hesitated to use it, the blood which it might spill would be observed by the peasants of the neighbouring hamlet, and might lead to discovery. It would be safer, he considered, and easier, to lay Amanda, senseless as she was, in the waves; their coldness would recal her to life only at the moment before they would suffocate her. As he stooped to lift her, she moved, and his resolution was subdued; he then abruptly left her, and retired among the rocks that led towards the house. She now renewed all her efforts to sustain herself till she could reach the hamlet, but had proceeded only a few paces when Lipari appeared swiftly approaching, who soon overtook her, and led her back to her prison; and, when she heard the fatal door again barred upon her, she thought she should never more quit the walls of that gloomy mansion with life. Rinaldi, after dispatching Lipari to Amanda, strictly commanded him not to approach his chamber till he should be summoned. He then threw himself into a chair, and remained for a considerable time lost in thought, at the very instant when his heart reproached him with the crime he had meditated; he regretted the ambitious views he must relinquish if he failed to perpetrate it, and regarded himself with some degree of contempt for having hitherto hesitated on the subject.

The Count Baretti, for such had formerly been the title of the confessor, was the younger son of an ancient family, who resided in the duchy of Milan, on such estates of their ancestors as the Italian wars of a former century had left them. The portion which he received at the death of his father was not large, and he disdained to acknowledge an inferiority of fortune to those with whom he considered himself equal in rank; he therefore withdrew from the eyes of his neighbours, unwilling to submit his altered circumstances to their observation. Concerning several years of his life, from this period, nothing was generally known; and, when he was next discovered, it was in the Spirito Santo convent at Naples, in the habit of a monk, and under the assumed name of Rinaldi. He had been some time Confessor to the Marchioness di Sardo, when the conduct of her son awakened his hopes, by shewing him, that he might render himself not only useful but necessary to her, by his councils. He perceived that her passions were strong, and her judgment weak; at length he so completely insinuated himself into her confidence, as to obtain a promise of an office of high dignity in the church, which she had sufficient influence to obtain; the condition was that of preserving the honour of the family, which she was careful to make him understand could be secured only by the death of Amanda. Lipari, as has already been hinted, was a former confidant of the Confessor, who knew too truly, from experience, that he could be trusted. The night was far advanced when he summoned Lipari to his chamber to instruct him in his office; after he had bolted the door by which the man had entered, he said in a low voice, “It is late; go, therefore, to her chamber; be certain that she sleeps.—Take this,” he added, “and this,” giving him a dagger and a large cloke.—“You know how you are to use them.” Lipari hid the poniard in his bosom, and moved with a loitering step towards the door. “Dispatch!” said the Confessor, “why do you linger?” “I cannot say I like this business, Signor,” said Lipari

surlily; “ I know not why I should always do the most, and be paid the least.”—“ Sordid villain!” exclaimed Rinaldi, “ you are not satisfied then!”—“ It is too little,” replied Lipari; “ besides, what harm has she done to me?”—“ What harm had others done you! you forget that I know you, you forget the past.”—“ No, Signor, the bloody hand is always before me! and often of a night, when the sea roars, and storms shake the house, *they* have come, all gashed as I left them, and stood before my bed! I have got up, and ran out upon the shore for safety!”—“ Give me the dagger, then,” said the Confessor; Lipari resigned the stiletto, and threw the cloke over his arm. Rinaldi, on ascending, was reminded he had no lamp, he therefore took the one from Lipari, and proceeded till he reached Amanda’s door, which he softly opened, and, on approaching the bed, her gentle breathings informed him that she slept. He searched for the dagger, and it was some time before his trembling hand could disengage it from the folds of his garment; but, having done so, he prepared to strike; when, drawing aside the lawn from her bosom, some new cause of horror seemed to seize all his frame.—He observed a miniature which had lain beneath the lawn that he withdrew, and, forgetting, in his impatience to know the truth, the imprudence of discovering himself at this hour of the night with a dagger, he called loudly, “ Awake! awake! say, what is your name? speak quickly!” Amanda, aroused by his voice, and starting from her mattress, threw herself at his feet, supplicating for mercy—“ Have pity, holy father!” exclaimed she, clasping her hands in agony. “ Father!” interrupted Rinaldi; “ why are you thus terrified?—tell me whose portrait that is?” Amanda lifted it, gazed upon it for a moment, and then, pressing it to her lips, said, “ This was my father; but, alas! he is dead! or I should not now want a protector.—“ Your father!” replied the Monk, in a hollow voice, “ and his name!”—“ It is sacred,” answered Amanda, “ for he was unfortunate! and I have promised to conceal it.”—“ On your life, I charge you tell it.” The fury of his manner compelled the trembling Amanda to reveal the secret; “ his name then,” said she, “ was Baretta!” Rinaldi groaned and turned away, but, presently returning, demanded the place of his residence. “ It was far from hence,” she replied; but he insisted on having an unequivocal answer, and she reluctantly gave one. Rinaldi, greatly agitated, said in a faltering voice, “ Unhappy child!—behold your more unhappy father!”—“ My father!” exclaimed the astonished Amanda.—“ Why do you reproach me with those looks?” said the conscious Rinaldi.—“ Reproach you!—reproach my father!” repeated Amanda. “ *Why* should I reproach my father?”—“ *Why!*” exclaimed Rinaldi, starting from his seat, “ O ye sacred powers!” As he moved, he stumbled over the dagger at his foot, and he pushed it aside, unobserved by Amanda. In the first tumult of her thoughts, she had not had the leisure to dwell upon the singularity of Rinaldi’s visiting her at this deep hour; but now, recollecting herself, she eagerly enquired of him why he came at this time. “ This is past midnight, father,” said she; “ you may judge then how anxious I am to learn what motive led you to my chamber at this lonely hour?” Rinaldi made no reply—“ Did you come to warn me of danger?”—she continued, “ had you discovered the cruel designs of Lipari?” Rinaldi, in a hurried manner, desired her to name the subject no more, and, sighing heavily, turned to a distant part of the room. At length she cautiously asked how she might venture to believe a circumstance so surprising, and reminded him that he had not yet disclosed his reason for admitting the belief. He accordingly mentioned some circumstances concerning Amanda’s family, that proved him at least to be intimately acquainted with it, and which she believed were the only known to Bonetta and herself. He then desired her to compose herself, assuring her she should be removed from this house on the following day, and be restored to her home; he abruptly left the chamber, and returned to his own, not to sleep, but to abandon himself to the agonies of remorse and horror.

Amanda, when Rinaldi had left her, recollected all the particulars which he had revealed concerning her family; and comparing them with such as she heard from Bonetta, she perceived nothing that was contradictory between the two accounts. Her thoughts then

glanced back involuntarily to the scene of the preceding evening on the sea-shore, and the image of her father appeared in each, in the terrible character of an agent of the Marchioness di Sardo; while she soothed herself with this reflection, she perceived on the floor the point of a dagger, peeping from beneath the curtain; she took the instrument, and gazed upon it aghast and trembling; for a moment a suspicion of the real motive of Rinaldi's visit glanced upon her mind, but it was only for an instant; she readily believed that Lipari alone had meditated her destruction; and that Rinaldi, having discovered the ruffian's design, had rushed into the chamber to save a stranger, and had unconsciously rescued his own daughter, when the portrait at her bosom informed him of the truth. Meanwhile, Rinaldi, shut up in his chamber, was agitated by his feelings of a very opposite nature. In pursuing Amanda at the criminal instigation of the Marchioness Di Sardo, it appeared that he had been persecuting his own child. Every step that he had taken, with a view of gratifying his ambition, was retrograde; and, while he had been wickedly intent on serving the Marchioness and himself, by preventing the marriage of Giovanni and Amanda, he had been barbarously counteracting his own fortune. He, therefore, determined to adopt a different line of conduct, and endeavour to promote what he had before been striving to prevent. The first steps, however, necessary to be taken, were those that might release Di Sardo from the Inquisition, the tremendous prison into which Rinaldi had caused him to be thrown; but there appeared so many difficulties in the accomplishment of this affair, that he resolved to postpone it for the present; and that hour having arrived when he should prepare for departure, he released Lipari from the chamber, and desired him to procure horses from the neighbouring hamlet. He then repaired to Amanda's apartment, and desired her to get ready to depart. Lipari soon returned with the horses; and, after partaking of a slight breakfast, they set forward with Lipari for their guide. Amanda, on finding he was to be their conductor, began to be greatly alarmed, but Rinaldi assured her she had nothing to fear. They travelled a considerable distance without scarcely exchanging a word; when Rinaldi, as if awakening from a deep reverie, abruptly mentioned Di Sardo.—Amanda's spirits fluttered with impatience to learn his exact situation, and she inquired respecting it.—“I am no stranger to your attachment,” said Rinaldi, evading the question; “but I wish to be informed where you first met.”—Amanda said that she had first seen Di Sardo when attending her aunt from the church of San Lorenzo. The conversation was then interrupted by Lipari telling them they were approaching the town of Zanti. They soon after reached it; and Lipari led the way to a cabin, in which the few persons who passed this road were usually entertained. After taking some refreshment, Lipari was dispatched to examine the post-horses and to procure a lay-habit for the confessor. During his absence, Rinaldi inquired of his host for a guide to conduct them through that part of the forest which remained to be traversed, as he wished to dismiss Lipari. Meanwhile, the latter returned without having succeeded in his commission, as no lay-habit could be procured that suited Rinaldi. The host then left them, and presently returned with a guide to conduct the travellers through the forest-road. Lipari then received his dismissal, and he departed with sullen reluctance and evident ill-will.—It was afternoon before the travellers proceeded, Rinaldi having calculated that they could easily reach the town ere the close of the evening. The same thoughtful silence that existed at the beginning of their journey he still preserved, till they arrived near the town at which they meant to pass the night. Soon after supper they retired to rest; and Rinaldi having procured a lay-habit, by the morning dawn they pursued their journey, conducted by the same guide. Rinaldi was more communicative this day than on the preceding one. He conversed with Amanda on a design he had formed of sending her to a convent, till a proper time should arrive to acknowledge her for his daughter. Amanda mentioned that of Della Pietà; but, though he listened, he came to no determination on that head. Her thoughts were too much occupied by her future prospects to give leisure for present fears, or to regard the obscure, dangerous, and deserted, road they were travelling. Towards

evening, the guide pointed out the grey walls of an elegant but ruined edifice; and which, from the air of desolation it betrayed, seemed to be uninhabited. Here, Rinaldi, seeing a person cross the road to it, determined to ascertain if they could procure any refreshment. They proceeded along a gloomy avenue till, lost in obscurity, they observed a distant glimmering light, to which they directed their steps, and, through an arch just opposite, entered the court of the villa. Here the elegant colonade, the marble hall which lead to a suite of rooms, and all the chambers of the villa, were desolated and abandoned. Finding that farther progress was useless, they returned to a shade of palm-trees planted in the outer court, under whose umbrage they seated themselves, and partook of the remains of the repast deposited in the wallet of their guide.—“ This place has not suffered by time,” said Rinaldi, “ The partial ruins we every where see must have been occasioned by some shocks of an earthquake. Do you know the history of this place, friend?”—“ I shall never forget the earthquake that destroyed it, signor,” said the guide.—“ I was then about seventeen. The Baron di Lodi lived here at that time, and he has never been heard of since. He had committed crimes sufficient to terrify the devil even, and therefore no one regretted him.”—“ The Baron di Lodi!” exclaimed Rinaldi; while Amanda demanded if any other person suffered.—“ I will tell you all, signora. It was at midnight when the great shock came, and the family were in bed. Now the Baron’s chamber was in an old tower, which we wondered at, when there was such fine rooms in the new villa. There is one of the windows of the old chamber yet to be seen, and the door-case too; but the roof, the door, and the floor, have, as you see, all fallen. There slept the baron; and, under the heap of ruins, signora, lie the remains of the chamber and the wicked baron together.” Amanda was surveying the ruined pile, when her emotion was a second time excited by a person gliding in the perspective of the avenue, whose figure and countenance were those of Lipari. Rinaldi immediately, followed by the peasant, rushed forward into the avenue to ascertain the truth. Amanda, fearful of the danger of assassination, loudly called to him to return. Travelling a suite of apartments beyond the hall, she entered a passage leading to a large chamber. Here the sound of fire arms, revolving through the avenue, Amanda was about to go there, when a footstep, the footstep of Lipari! filled her with horror as it glided across the floor where she stood, placed in a recess of the wall. He sculked to the opposite side, crossed the court, and entered the avenue; whence it occurred to Amanda has was gone to assassinate the Confessor. The voice of the latter was now heard; and, while Amanda called to him to beware of Lipari, a pistol was fired. A groan succeeded, which approached nearer and nearer, and in a moment a figure, covered with blood, passed into the court. Feeling predominating over horror, Amanda hastened from the chamber, but Rinaldi was no where to be seen. As she turned towards the avenue, however, a track of blood conducted her to a narrow passage, leading to the foot of the tower. She hesitated before she proceeded farther, and suddenly heard quick steps advancing up the grand avenue, and her name loudly repeated by Rinaldi.—“ Have you seen any one pass?” said he, as he drew near to his daughter.—“ Yes,” she replied; “ and I feared it was yourself, for he was wounded.”—“ Which way did he go?” inquired Rinaldi eagerly; “ wounded did you say?”—“ Yes, indeed,” replied Amanda, “ he was wounded! Think what I should suffer if you were wounded! O spare, then, yourself and him!”—“ What! spare an assassin!” said Rinaldi.—“ Assassin!” exclaimed Amanda. “ Did he ever attempt *your* life?”—“ No, not *my* life,” answered Rinaldi; “ but let me pass to find him.”—“ No, my father! pity him for this time, perhaps he has at *some time* pitied others.”—You do not know *whom* you pity!” exclaimed her father; and they abruptly quitted the court, traversing the avenue till they reached their guide, who was waiting with the horses. Rinaldi knew that Amanda was important of the commission on which Lipari had been employed against her life, and his relenting conduct towards the innocent victim had induced Rinaldi to spare him; therefore, having wounded him, he now trusted that he had met his fate.—The travellers

mounted their horses, and galloped on till a steep ascent compelled them to relax their speed. As they walked their horses, Rinaldi inquired very minutely into the farther particulars of the villa they had left, and who had been lost of its other inhabitants. "The falling of the old tower," said the guide, "gave them timely warning to quit, before two other shocks followed. Not one suffered except the Baron. The Baroness was a good soul, and luckily died many years before. He had also a daughter, who would have lived too long, but for the earthquake which gave her liberty." The Confessor now asked what distance they were from the inn, and if the blunderbuss was charged. "Not far from the inn," said the peasant; "but, if you knew as much as I do of the man left behind at the villa, signor, you would put in a treble charge. He knows me, and I know something of every one's affairs; for, bad deeds will out, signor. When the people first heard the report about the man, it was so shocking, they they determined———" "I have no curiosity on this subject, and desire to hear not more relative to it," said the Confessor sternly.—"I beg pardon," said the man; "I did not think it concerned you."—"Attend to your business," rejoined Rinaldi, "and let me have none of your conjectures in future!"—This put an end to the conversation, and excited the curiosity of Amanda, who, from the conduct and manner of her father, conceived there existed more connection with Lipari than she had at first imagined.—After descending a hollow, they entered a town, in which a fair was holding in the market place. The Confessor beheld the motley scene with ill humour, and bade his guide lead to the best inn. The guide attended but little to his directions; and, recovering his volubility at the sight of the fair, said "Well, signor, you think nothing of the old ruinous palace where we had such a race after the man that would not murder us; but this fine fair has put all this out of your head: for all that, perhaps you would like to hear the rest of the story I was going to tell you when you snapped me up short.—You must hear the story, signor.—Do but see there, signor, at that punchinello and that juggler; look at his tricks! how quick he has turned a monk into a devil!" "Hold your peace," exclaimed the enraged Confesor, "and lead us to the inn.—As they passed, a crowd, at the foot of a platform, stayed their progress: they were performing a tragedy; ridiculous enough indeed to excite laughter. And from which the Monk has turned away his eyes, when the guide seized his arm, in the vehemence of surprise, and cried, "Look, signor, behold the villain!—See! he has murdered his own daughter!!!"—The feelings of Rinaldi, at this instant, agitated his whole frame.—Amanda was congratulating herself on having a protecting father, so different to the ill fated Virginia, when she turned her eyes on his countenance, and perceived the strange emotions of his soul.—Stung to the heart, the Confessor cruelly spurred his horse, and they reached the inn without further interruption.—The peasant, vexed at the ill usage of his beast, vowed it should have best food and sraw the place afforded, and Amanda rewarded the humane resolution by giving the guide the only ducat she had left.

Rinaldi passed the night without sleep, revolving in his mind the conduct of the peasant toward him. There was a simplicity in his manner which ill accorded with the pointed events he had compelled the Confessor to notice. He wished to ascertain what he knew, if possible, without suspicion; after which, if he knew too much, his death would secure the secret.—At night, the Confessor called the peasant in to give him his discharge, and bid him beware of Lipari in returning; "though perhaps," added he, "your report of him is erroneous, yet there seems to be something wonderful in the history you talked of."—"It is a long story," rejoined the peasant, "but now you are a little more civil I do not mind giving it you."—This man came all of a sudden in that house at the sea-side, nobody knows how; and the place has been shut up ever since the Baron and this man were connected. There is no doubt of their connection, because the Baron and he were two of the greatest villains existing.—Why, signor, do you look at me so!—Believe me, the Baron himself could not have looked worse, if I had told him the same."—"Do not be so tedious," said the Confessor, in a churlish tone.—"To begin with the story then, signor, one dismal night in November,

Matto Thonio, a fisherman, who lived in our town when I was a boy, had been fishing: it turned out stormy and dark; and, making the best of his way home along shore, he and his fish mistook the path.—As the rain beat heard, and the surge threatened to wash him away, he took shelter under some high rocks, where he lay snug. Presently he spied a dark lantern, and then a man, moving along the beach with a load on his back in a sack, which he pitched on a piece of the rock close to where he was concealed. Old Matto thought of robbers directly, and that the sack contained the booty: but, while he was wishing to know what was inside, the man staggered away with his load, and Matto lost him. The storm having abated, the old fisherman crept out, and soon repented of it; for, the tempest came on more violently than before, and there was no shelter to be had. In this quandary, he saw a light at a distance, and made up to the house where it was. He knocked twice, and nobody came; but, leaning close to the door to shelter off the rain, it opened of itself, and in he went. There he wandered about in the dark, till he found a room with some embers not quite extinguished on the hearth. Presently after, as he stood warming himself, a man with a light entered, and Matto asked him for shelter. The man turned quite pale, and Matto thought he might be turned out, so he presented him with some fine fish. This was a good scheme for Matto; for, the man laid some wood on the fire to dress the fish, and then it was that Matto conceived he was the same man he had seen on the beach; but, when he spied the sack in the corner, he was quite sure.—Now this man——” — “ This man was doubtless Lipari,” said the Confessor; “ and the house on the sea-shore the same you mentioned before!”—Shrewdly guessed,” said the guide significantly; “ though, to say the truth, I thought I need not tell you that.—Well, to proceed.—Presently, Lipari went out of the room to get a plate for the fish, and took care to take the light with him. Now, thinks Mattor, the fire-light will shew what is in the sack, and so the opportunity must not be lost. He raised it up, signor, but he could not hold it, so down it fell upon the floor. A rich prize, though he, as he untied the string that fastened its mouth, and opened the cloth a little way. Signor, what do you think he felt?—Dead flesh!—He saw the face of a corpse, signor!—Ah! poor Matto was almost a corpse himself with the fright. He looked—as pale as you do now, signor! Fearing, however, the consequences, he made his escape before the man returned, regardless of the storm or any other danger, but shortly after was taken ill. Now, the strangest part of the story, which is yet only half finished, lies here, and it did so terrify me, and made my hair so stand an end, when——” — “ I will listen no longer,” said the Confessor, “ to this old man’s brainless tale. Here is your money, and you may depart.”—“ Signor,” replied the guide, “ if you did not know the story, you would never go without hearing it; so there is an end, signor.”—“ Mark me!” said Rinaldi, “ Though no credit is due to your idle history, I think this same Lipari to be some desperado, who may attempt your life as you return by the villa. In addition therefore to your fire-arms, I give you this stiletto.” The guide would have refused the dagger, but the arguments and look of Rinaldi forced him not to return it; and, when he quitted the room, he desired him to send in the landlord, as he meant to proceed immediately for Rome. This, however, was only a deception on the part of Rinaldi, who proceeded for several hours on the road to Naples, and at length reached a large town, where he dined. Here Rinaldi inquired what convents were in the vicinity, a subject which alarmed Amanda, who earnestly represented to her father that it would be more safe to suffer her to return to Villa Altieri, and enter La Pieta, than to place her in any convent ever so remote, where it would be necessary for him to introduce her. One objection only rested to this plan, the danger of being traced by the Marchioness di Sardo, whose inveterate disposition would proceed to cruel extremities on such a discovery. This, however, was counterbalanced by the consideration that the convent was large, and that the Abbess and the sisters were not indifferent to Amanda’s happiness and security.—As the carriage drew near Naples, and the Bay unfolded itself to her view, how affecting, how overwhelming, were her sensations!—Every object reminded her of di Sardo and past

happiness! and the Confessor read in her countenance the feelings that were within.—To avoid notice, the carriage reached Villa Altieri at the close of evening. Annetta, the old housekeeper, directly appeared at the gate, and received her young lady with the warmest affection.—The Confessor alighted, and entered the house for the purpose of re-assuming his monk's habit: he informed Amanda that he should see her no more till a proper opportunity presented itself of acknowledging her for his daughter; that, in the mean time, he should perhaps write to her, and she might address him, under a fictitious name, at a place remote from his convent; he bade her, as she valued every thing dear to her, not to disclose the secret of her birth, and to retire the following day to La Pieta.—Bidding her farewell, he repaired to the dominican convent of San Spirito, and entered as a brother returned from a distant pilgrimage.

The Marchioness was at her magnificent villa, situated on the Bay of Naples, where the Confessor went to pay his first visit. When introduced to her, he shuddered as he took the extended hand of the willing murderer of his child. Some introductory flatteries followed, after which a pause of some minutes ensued. The Marchioness dreaded to ask if Amanda's death remained unaccomplished, and the father shrunk from an avowal of the disappointment—He was meditating on the way of introducing her noble family, when the impatient Marchioness commenced the discourse:—“ Tell me, father of consolation,” said she, “ is the cause of my misery removed?—Relieve me from suspense!—You hesitate!—Tell me, have you accomplished the deed? Is she sacrificed to the debt of justice?” The Marchioness saw the countenance of Rinaldi torn by a variety of passions, and again repeated the question with vehemence. “ She is spared!” said Rinaldi, “ and you have nothing to apprehend!”—“ Spared!” exclaimed the Marchioness, “ spared and nothing to apprehend!—What enigma is this, father?” “ No enigma, lady, but plain fact, at which we should rejoice; for the honour of your son is secured, and—a horrid sacrifice prevented!”—Rinaldi then unfolded some particulars relative to Amanda's family, artfully concealing their proximity to himself, and ventured to hope that the unhappiness of her son would be relieved, by finally permitting the nuptials with an object who was now known to be worthy his alliance. He added, that, when he believed the contrary, he opposed their marriage; but his prejudices were removed, and trusted the Marchioness's good sense would no longer persecute Di Sardo. The Marchioness without condescending to reply either to his argument or remonstrance, inquired whether Ananda had any suspicion of the design with which she was carried into the forest of Garganus, or conceived the identity of her prosecutor.—To this the Monk cautiously replied in the negative, and was again asked how she was disposed of. He parried this question by turning the discourse to Di Sardo, without hinting at his real situation in the Inquisition. Neither the Marchioness nor Marquis doubted that *he* was in pursuit of Amanda; the latter of whom, from affection, had dispatched persons in search of him. Before the Confessor, however, finished his visit, the Marchioness again reverted to the actual residence of Amanda; but the keen Confessor affirmed that Amanda's asylum was hidden from every one but himself, and lay at a great distance from Naples, at a place he fictitiously named. After a general conversation they parted, the Confessor determined, without her knowledge or consent, to effect the marriage she detested; and the Marchioness as resolved to withdraw imperceptibly her confidence from the father, and obtain a more confidential agent. Agreeably to her father's injunction, Amanda entered the convent of La Pieta, where she found herself esteemed and kindly treated. The convent was enchantingly situated, and its grounds were laid out by art and nature in melancholy splendour: here could she muse upon Di Sardo's uncertain fate, and shrink with horror from her relationship to Rinaldi, from whom day after day elapsed without receiving any letter. The Marchioness presented an insuperable bar to her union with Di Sardo: her character had been sufficiently developed in the late events to detest her, but what would have been her suffering had she suspected that her father

was the author of them! From this knowledge, however, as well Di Sardo's real situation, she was spared; and hence awaited, in hopeful uncertainty, the issues of futurity.

While the late events had been passing in the Garganus and at Naples, Di Sardo and his servant remained imprisoned in different chambers of the Inquisition; and, when they were separately examined, the Inquisitors were astonished at the behaviour of Lupo, who maintained his master's innocence with an indignation of honesty such as they had probably never experienced before.—They employed every art to induce Di Sardo to confess his crimes, and draw from him a discovery of others, carefully avoiding to inform him of the accusation on which he was arrested: this, however, he understood from the officials in the chapel of San Sebastian, as well as the Benedictines, was for having carried off a nun. At the end of his second examination, he was threatened with the torture, and dismissed again to prison.—On the way to his dreadful abode, a person passed him in one of the avenues, whose figure and air convinced him it was the same prophetic monk who had haunted the ruins of Paluzzi. Before Di Sardo could recover his surprise, he had disappeared, and he in vain intreated his guard to let him pursue the stranger. As they proceeded along the avenue, a half-stifled groan sometimes swelled upon the ear; Di Sardo shuddered, “They come from the dungeon of torture,” said the guard: “we bring prisoners to this spot to hear these groans, that they may know what they are to suffer!”—After several days, Di Sardo was summoned to another examination, and dismissed as before. On the fourth time of attendance at the table of the holy-office, after a period of four weeks, an unusual solemnity appeared in the proceedings—As no proof of Di Sardo's innocence had been obtained, he was ordered to be put to the question within three hours, and removed to his cell. About midnight the door was unbarred by two men, habited in black; who, without speaking, threw over him a singular kind of mantle and led him from his cell to a large gloomy chamber, the walls of which were hung with black, and illuminated only by a glimmering lamp.—Instruments of torture encumbered his feet, and dreadful forms slunk by him to the music of groans and dying murmurs.—A bell now sounded, and his conductors hurried him to the remote part of this extensive cavern of death. There he perceived the grand vicar, the advocate, and an ordinary Inquisitor, seated under a black canopy, who appeared to preside as directors of the torturers. At some distance from the tribunal stood a large iron frame, probably a rack, beside which was placed a coffin. As the door of a vault on the side opened, the piercing throw of some mangled being rushed upon the ear, and petrified the senses. In this court of the infernal regions, Di Sardo was now called upon by the Grand Inquisitor to confess, and avoid the sufferings that awaited him.—“I am innocent of crime,” said Di Sardo, firmly.—“If, to escape these terrific preparations, I were to confess myself guilty, would your rack alter the nature of truth; would heaven find me guilty because suffering had supplied the place of evidence! The consequence therefore of your tortures be upon your own heads!”—The Grand Vicar listened attentively, but the Inquisitor made a signal for the officers to prepare for the question. In this interval, the mysterious stranger of Paluzzi stalked across the chamber, and disappeared at a door leading to the farther vaults. Di Sardo's inquiries concerning him were prevented by the officers, who bound him with strong cords, and threw a black garment over his whole figure, which prevented his observing what was preparing. In this state, the Inquisitor again interrogated him:—“Did you ever insult a catholic minister in the church of San Spirito at Naples?”—While he was performing an act of holy penance, which he was compelled to leave unfinished!” added a hollow voice.—Di Sardo started at the sound, for it was the voice of the monk of Paluzzi!—It repeated, “Where did you first see Amanda Lusigni? Why did you not attend to the warning voice of Paluzzi?”—“I was warned by the voice that now speaks,” said Di Sardo. “You it was who foretold Signora Bonetta's death; you are the Father Rinaldi, my enemy, my accuser, whom I confess to have insulted in the church of Santo Spirito, for the wrongs done to Amanda Lusigni!”—“Who has interrogated the prisoner,”

said the Grand Vicar, "that he answers to questions which no one asks?"—A confused noise succeeded; and, when it subsided, the Monk's voice was heard again:—"Thus much I declare," it said, speaking to Di Sardo, "I am not the father Rinaldi!" Di Sardo doubted of what he had just before asserted, and earnestly addressed the mysterious stranger to reveal his name and the motives for his previous conduct!—"Who is this among us?" said the Grand Vicar;—but no answer was returned; and, after a considerable time had elapsed, the veil was ordered to be taken from Di Sardo's eyes, and he was reconducted to his cell. There, stretched upon his floor of straw, he weighed the identity of the figure at Paluzzi with the father Rinaldi, and ended his inquiry in doubt and perplexity. He slept from midnight, and dreamed that the stranger haunted him; that he lifted up his cowl, and displayed a countenance he had never beheld before. The figure then drew a poinard from the fold of his garment, and pointed with an awful frown to the spots which discoloured the blade.—He awoke with terror! But how dreadfully was his alarm increased, when he perceived the reality of the vision standing before him!—The stranger advanced, and presented to him the countenance he had before seen in his dream.—"You are spared for this night," said the stranger; "ask no questions, but answer me. Do you know Father Rinaldi?"—"I have known him these two years," replied Di Sardo; "he was my mother's confessor."—"Have you ever heard any thing of his extraordinary life?" said the stranger?—"Never!" replied Di Sardo; and the story Lupu had told at the ruins of Paluzzi rushed upon his memory. "Never heard of a confession made in the church of the Santa Maria del Pianto? Never heard the he had a wife!—a brother!"—"I have heard of the confession," said Di Sardo; "but know nothing of the latter."—"Never heard that he was guilty of—murder!!!"—"Never, never!" said the terrified Di Sardo.—"To morrow-night, when you are before the court, in the chamber of torture, if you are asked about Father Rinaldi, say that he has for fifteen years lived as a Dominican friar in the convent of Spirito Santo, at Naples. If asked, who he is, reply Vincenzo Count di Pontolo: and, if asked the motive of his disguise, refer them to the Confessional of the Black Crucifix, at Santa Maria del Pianto; and bid them summon one Father Amato di Vallero, the grand penitentiary of that society, to divulge the confession made before him, April 24, 1754, at the place before mentioned. I shall be present (though perhaps not visible) as a dreadful witness."—"If you know these things," said Di Sardo, "and love justice, why do not you summon father Amato?—First let me ask who are you?"—"You shall know me thereafter," said the stranger, as he drew a dagger from his garment! "Mark the spots on it!" said he; "this blood would have saved yours!—Here is truth!—To-morrow-night you shall meet me in the chambers of death!"—In a moment the awful stranger disappeared, and Di Sardo was lost in the profundity of what he had seen, till the centinel appeared with his meal of bread and water.—Di Sardo anxiously asked him the name and condition of the stranger who had recently left him; but, to his astonishment, the man denied any person having passed the door! and they separated without coming to any explanation of the mysterious visitor.—The following night, Di Sardo was conducted to the tribunal of horrors, his eyes veiled, and summoned to answer to what he knew of the Monk Rinaldi.—"I know no crime in him," said Di Sardo.—"Why do not you summon the father Amato?" said the hollow voice of the midnight visitor! "Remember my words!"—"Arrest that person!" exclaimed Di Sardo.—"It is the voice of my informer! It spoke low, and seemed close by me!"—It was unheard by the court, who declared it to be an act of cunning or frenzy in the prisoner; and, at the same time, demanded of him what information he had received. Di Sardo then stated the order of summons which the stranger had commanded him to make to the court, and protested that he had no charge to lay against Father Amato, or any other person.—The attention of the court was, for a while, occupied in discovering the mysterious stranger, and Di Sardo was unveiled that he might ascertain him.—He fixed upon one that resembled him in figure, and he called upon the Inquisition to order him to be uncovered: in the mean

time, he heard the voice of the Monk, saying, "Who calls?" but knew not whence it proceeded.—When the cowl of the man he had fixed upon was lifted up, he saw it was not the countenance of the stranger, though he recognised the face somewhere. This led to an investigation of the last night's nocturnal visitor, and the court ordered the centinels to attend, who attested that they had suffered no one to pass into Di Sardo's cell.—He was then re-conducted to his prison.

Rinaldi and Amato were arrested in consequence of citations from the Holy Office. The former was on his way to Rome, with the intention of endeavouring to liberate Di Sardo, and unsuspecting of anything that could materially affect himself.—For the first time, Rinaldi and Amato were confronted in the hall of justice; and an order was issued for the attendance of Di Sardo, who, having identified the person of Rinaldi, Amato, the grand penitentiary, was called upon to reveal the confession made on the eve of San Marco.—The deposition was as follows: "It was on the eve of San Marco, in the year 1754, that I was alarmed by the groans of a person in the box on the left of the confessional, where I was sitting, engaged in the duties of my office.—I endeavoured to hold out hopes of mercy to the penitent, whose heart seemed bursting with a secret, the recollection of which petrifies me with the same horror, holy fathers, it will do you.—He was in the habit of a white friar, and his form resembled that of the father Rinaldi, who now stands before me; I cannot swear to him.—I did not then see his face, but his voice I shall never forget, nor the confession!"—Here the grand penitentiary was too much agitated to proceed; after a short fine he continued: "Holy father, the penitent then spake thus: "I have been through life the slave of dreadful passions; to me the authors of horrible excesses!—I had once a brother!—that brother—alas! had a wife—she was beautiful and virtuous!—I loved her, and—I despaired!—My despair led me to a dreadful deed!—My brother died!"—"Here," said Amato, "I trembled as I listened! my lips were sealed.—The penitent proceeded: "My brother died at a distance from home:—died! did I say, father?—I was his murderer!"—"The words sunk into my heart," said Amato; "and the penitent, after a violent agitation, went on.—"I so conducted the affair of my brother's death, that his widow never suspected the cause.—After the usual time of mourning, I proposed myself, and was rejected!—I then caused her to be removed from her house; and, under the terror of my threats, she consented to our union.—But happiness and conscience were flown for ever!—She despised me! and, as I began to suspect that jealousy occasioned her disdain, I soon pitched upon a gentleman who, I fancied, loved my wife!—I thought their affection was mutual; and that she spoke of him with delight only to lighten up the flame of madness more strongly!—One fatal evening I approached the apartment where they sat, and heard his voice as if supplicating; I ascended to the lattice, and overlooked the traitor, who was on his knee before her!—Whether he saw me, or suspected something, I know not, but she rose from her chair.—Without hesitation I seized my stiletto, rushed into the room, and aimed a blow at the villain's heart.—He, however, shunned it, and escaped into the garden, while her bosom received the fatal poniard." Here Amato's voice faltered:—"Think, holy fathers," said he, "what were my feelings at that moment!—I was the lover of that lady, and she was virtuous!"—"Was she innocent?" exclaimed Rinaldi; and his agitation even interrupted the business of the whole court.—"This resembles the voice of the penitent!" exclaimed Amato; "but to proceed:—On the discovery of the murderer, I quitted the confessional; my senses left me; and, before I recovered them, he had escaped, nor can I assert he is the same."—"Can you recollect the Count di Pontolo in the person of Rinaldi?" asked the Grand Inquisitor.—"I know well," replied Amato, "that the penitent is the same with the Count, but that Rinaldi is he I cannot affirm."—"But I dare affirm it!" said another voice, and Di Sardo beheld the mysterious stranger advancing, his cowl now thrown back, and an air of menace overspreading his ghastly features.—The Monk trembled! and the stranger, advancing to him, demanded if he knew him. "Know thee!" feebly uttered Rinaldi.—"Dost thou know this

bloody dagger ?” said the stranger.—“ Behold thy brother's blood on it!—Shall I declare myself!”—Rinaldi's courage forsook him, and he sunk at the foot of his accuser. “ This is the person,” said Di Sardo, “ who visited me in prison:—the dagger is the same he then displayed. It was he who bid me summon the penitent and Amato.”——“ Holy father,” said Rinaldi, when he had recovered himself, “ the accuser is an imposter, and was once my friend!—It is his perfidy which now affects me!—His name is Petro di Ximeni: we first lived together in the convent of San Angiolo, and since that in the Spirito Santo, of which he is a brother. The cause of his enmity I can readily explain; I had promised to assist him preferment through the medium of a friend; that friend disappointed me, and hence I am to attribute this unjust accusation.”——“ But for what services was this promised preferment offered?” said the Inquisitor.—“ For services inestimable to me,” replied Rinaldi: “ though they cost Ximeni little, they were to me consolation and comfort.” “ There is an inconsistency in this defence,” said the Inquisitor; for it appears that the ingratitude was your's, not your accuser's.”

The Grand Vicar then spoke: “ The evidence of father Rinaldi is in part false, for his accuser is not a monk of the Spirito Santo, but a servant of our most holy Inquisition.—“ Reverend father,” rejoined Rinaldi, “ your assertion astonishes me!—Ximeni a servant of the Inquisition!—But, as you doubt my veracity, demand of Signor Di Sardo, if he has not lately, and often, seen my accuser at Naples, in the habit of the monks of San Spirito?” Di Sardo confessed he had seen him at the ruins of Paluzzi; and then requested the tribunal to require of the accused the means by which he became acquainted with the mysterious visits there, and if he had no interest in them? Rinaldi, after some hesitation, said, “ Since it is necessary for your satisfaction I should explain more fully my intimacy with Ximeni, I will confess that he was my agent in preserving the dignity of an ancient house at Naples, the family of Di Sardo, who now stands before you.”—The Inquisitor, turning to Ximeni, addressed him, and demanded what proofs he had to bring that Rinaldi and Vincenzo Count di Pontolo were the same, and the perpetrator of the murder of his wife and brother.—To the first, the interrogated replied “ I have his oral confession; to the last, the confession of the dying assassin, taken down and attested by myself and a priest of Rome, only a few weeks ago.”——“ The confession of the assassin,” replied the Inquisitor, “ proves the Count to have instigated the murder, but does not prove Rinaldi to be the Count. Father Amato has proved that the Count di Pontolo confessed to him on the eve of San Marco, but he cannot affirm it was Rinaldi who made the confession.” “ Reverend father,” replied the Monk Ximeni, “ this is what I am about to explain:—I attended Rinaldi that evening to the church of Santa Maria del Pianto, at the exact hour, and in the habit of a white friar, as stated in Amato's evidence. Within a few weeks after he quitted the convent of white friars, and came to that of Spirito Santo, where I was. When he returned from the confession, I waited for him without the walls, and marked the dreadful agitation of his mind. The circumstance of Father Amato, quitting the confessional chair with horror, had spread a report; and when I questioned Rinaldi on the cause the following day, he extorted from me an oath never to reveal his visit to the Santa del Pianto. This is the motive which has formerly induced him to attach me to his interest; since this, I have quitted the convent of San Spirito, and entered the service of this most Holy Office. Nor would the present accusation have been brought forward now, but for the death and confession of the assassin.” The Court, having ordered the Roman priest to be summoned, broke up its sitting, and ordered the trial to proceed on the following night. The meeting of the Inquisition, according to adjournment, assumed for the last time a more awful solemnity than before. The habits of the judges were more flowing, and their turbans much larger than usual. Every attendant was clad in black, and dim lamps illuminated the gloomy scene. When the witnesses were called over, Di Sardo answered to his name, and instantly heard the voice of Lupo exclaiming, “ It is my dear master! it is my dear master!” In a

moment he fell at his feet, clasping his knees, and blessing heaven for letting him once more see his dear master. After his joy had subsided a little, the business of the Court proceeded, and the Roman priest was produced, who testified the truth of the dying confession of Lipari. The confession contained the following facts: It appeared that about the year 1743, the late Count di Pontolo had taken a journey to Greece, and that his younger brother, then called the Count Baretti, (but now the Monk Rinaldi,) by his extravagance, at length tired out the patience of the Count, who refused him farther aid. Hence sprang his first hatred; and, during his absence, becoming enamoured of his wife, he determined to perpetrate the deed which should put him into possession at once of property and beauty. For this purpose he employed Lipari, who took a small habitation on the shore of the Adriatic, and resided there; this was the dwelling to which Amanda had afterwards been carried. Rinaldi acquainted his agent from time to time with the movements of the Count; and it was in the wood of the Garganus that Lipari and his comrade overtook him. Concealed behind the bushes, they fired at and then stabbed their victim: the guide escaped. The body was buried on the spot; but for his greater security, Lipari afterwards removed it in a sack to his own house by night, and buried it under the floor. Rinaldi then contrived a plausible pretext of his brother being shipwrecked, and it was universally credited. Lipari had afterwards followed Rinaldi to Rome, to extort money from him, whither the latter had deceptively told him he was gone, while he was travelling for Naples. Lipari had reached the villa Di Lodi on his way, when he took shelter in the ruins from the observation of the Confessor, who wounded him by a pistol-shot, and hoped he had killed him; the other, however, reached Rome in great agony on foot, and there died from a fever brought on by fatigue. It will be remembered that, when the Confessor parted with his arch guide, he forced him to take a stiletto; this instrument was tipped with poison, and given with the double view of killing Lipari if he rencountred him, or destroying the peasant himself, if he should get a scratch with it, as the Confessor suspected he was known to him. But, if Rinaldi had been shocked at the confession of the assassin, he was infinitely more so when a new witness appeared, a servant who had lived with him after the death of his brother. He testified to the murder of the Countess, her burial, and Rinaldi's immediate flight after the inhuman perpetration. The farther evidence of this witness carried such strong conviction with it, that the tribunal pronounced sentence of death upon Rinaldi for the murder of his brother, considering the charge which related to the Monk's wife as immaterial. The emotion of Rinaldi disappeared when his fate became certain; and, as he was conducted from the Court, and passed Di Sardo, he exclaimed, "In me you have murdered the father of Amanda Lusigni!" Di Sardo started with amazement; and, during a few minutes conversation, learned the relationship between Amanda and Rinaldi, and that the former was in the convent of Santa della Pieta.

While these events were passing at Rome, Amanda's mind was occupied with doubt arising from the silence of Di Sardo and her father. One evening she had entered a long avenue of trees, one of her favourite walks, lying behind the convent, when she heard footsteps approach, and distinguished a voice that she recollected to have heard with delight before. In the next moment she beheld Helena, the dear nun of San Stefano; who, incensed at the tyrannical conduct of the Abbess, had obtained an order for removal to the convent of Della Pieta. Happy in each other's society, their days were days of mutual communication and endearment. The presence of Amanda's old servant Annetta, however, one day announced ill news. Her slow manner excited much alarm in Amanda's mind; which the sequel as readily dispelled, when she learned that the Marchioness was dead. Just as the old female had finished her narration; Helena entered. They regarded each other with the most interesting curiosity!—"Surely," exclaimed Helena, "I remember the features of Annetta Tessi!—Can it be possible!"—While Annetta seemed to recover the weakened powers of recollection, Helena eagerly demanded of her who Amanda was. "It is! it is my Lady

Helena!" now exclaimed Annetta. "O my lady, how came you here?"—Amanda suddenly found herself pressed to the bosom of Helena, and eagerly asked what new discovery this was. "It is but lately I have found my father," said she; "and by what tender appellation am I to call you?"—"Your father!" exclaimed Helena: "No, *my child*; *thy* father is in the grave." "It is my mother then whom I see!" rejoined Amanda: "when will these discoveries end?" When the ebullitions of joy had subsided, Annetta related the particulars of Lady Helena's sister's death, the good Signora Bonetta. The conversation after this reverted to Amanda's father, and she produced the miniature which Rinaldi had claimed as his own. "This detested portrait is not the Count di Pontolo, your parent," said Helena. "No, it is the likeness of his cruel brother, my second husband.—Oh! Preserve me! protect me from his sight!" When her spirits were more calm, Lady Helena related the particulars of her preservation, which were only known to herself. It may be recollected that Rinaldi left his house immediately after the supposed murder of the Countess. The wound not proving mortal, the latter, instigated by the atrocity of the deed, determined to seclude herself in the convent of San Stefano. In the mean time, the report of her death was confirmed by a public funeral. After some time had elapsed, Bonetta withdrew from Villa di Pontolo to that of Altieri. At this period, Amanda was not two years old: the daughter of Rinaldi was scarcely as many months, and she died before the year concluded. Hence the Confessor, ignorant of the latter event, had mistaken Amanda for his own child, and to which mistake his own portrait, found by Amanda in the cabinet of Bonetta after her decease, had corroborated; as she affirmed it was that of her father, having observed it encircled with the title of Count di Pontolo. The abruptness of the death of Bonetta had prevented the mother and daughter being known to each other, even when they afterwards accidentally met, as Bonetta had added Lusigni to the name of Amanda, the better to conceal her from Rinaldi, her uncle. The old domestic Annetta, not being in the secret, had believed the report of Helena's death; and, though she knew Amanda to be the daughter of the Countess, they would have remained ignorant of each other, if the latter had not recognised the features of her ancient servant.

Though Rinaldi and Bonetta were both resident near Naples, they remained unknown to each other from their secluded retreats. Bonetta had expended her little property in the purchase of the Villa of Altieri, and Amanda supplied their wants by the excellent productions of her needle and pencil. Helena received information of Amanda's health from her sister Bonetta, till the period nearly of her arrival at San Stefano, where she was struck with her resemblance to the Count di Pontolo, but never conceived she was her daughter.

The Marchioness, previous to her death, sent for a Confessor, and unburthened her conscience, hoping to receive in return an alleviation of her despair. This Confessor was a man of sense and humanity; and, when he perfectly understood the story of Amanda and Di Sardo, he affirmed the only hope of forgiveness for the horrid act she had meditated, as well as for the unmerited sufferings she had occasioned, rested upon her utmost exertions to make those now happy whom so lately she had contributed to render miserable. Conscience had already given her the same lesson; and, now that she was sinking to that state which levels all distinctions, and her pride was so humbled as no longer to oppose her ideas of reconciliation to their union, she became as anxious to promote it as she had ever been to prevent it. She, therefore, sent for the Marquis; and, disclosing to him the arts she had practised, without, however, confessing the full extent of her intended crimes, she made it her dying request that he would consent to the happiness of his son.

The Marquis, however shocked at this discovery of the duplicity and cruelty of his wife, neither felt her terror for the future nor remorse for the past, sufficiently to overcome his objection to the rank of Amanda; and he resisted all her importunities, till the anguish of her last hours threw aside every consideration but that of affording her relief. He then gave a solemn promise in the presence of the Confessor, that he would not in any way farther

obstruct the marriage of Di Sardo and Amanda, if the former should still retain his attachment to her. This promise satisfied the Marchioness, and she died with some degree of resignation.

Hitherto the search set on foot for Di Sardo had proved fruitless, and the Marquis began to fear he was dead; when the family was alarmed one night by the arrival of Lupo; who, before he would answer any of the numerous questions put to him by the domestics, loudly demanded admittance to the Marquis: "I must see my Lord Marquis directly," said he: "he will not be angry when he knows the occasion."—He was accordingly introduced, and appeared before the Marquis haggard, ragged, and covered with dirt; such a figure, at an hour so unseasonable, seemed to indicate some dreadful news of Di Sardo, and he had scarcely power to inquire for him. Lupo, however, rendered questions unnecessary; for, without any circumlocution or preface, he immediately informed him that his master Di Sardo was in the prison of the Inquisition at Rome; if, indeed, they had not put an end to him before that time. "Yes, my lord," said Lupo, "I have just got out myself; for, they would not let me be with Signor Di Sardo, so it was of no use to stay there any longer. Yet it was hard matter with me to go away, and leave my dear master within those dismal walls; and nothing should have persuaded me to do so, but that I hoped, when your Lordship knew where your son was, you might be able to get him out. But there is not a minute to be lost, my lord; for, when once a gentleman has got within the claws of those Inquisitors, there is no knowing how soon they may take it in their heads to tear him in pieces.—Shall I order horses for Rome, my lord? I am ready to set off again directly."

The suddenness of such intelligence concerning an only son might have agitated stronger nerves than those of the Marquis; and so much was he shocked by it, that he could not immediately determine how to proceed, or give any answer to Lupo's repeated questions. When, however, he became sufficiently recollected to make further inquiry into the situation of Di Sardo, he perceived the necessity of an immediate journey; but first it would be prudent to consult with some friends, whose connections at Rome might be a means of greatly facilitating the important purpose which led him thither, and this could not be done till the following morning.—Yet he gave orders that preparation should be made for his setting out at a moment's notice; and, having listened to as full an account as Lupo could give of the past and present circumstances of Di Sardo, he dismissed him to repose for the remainder of the night.

The rank of the Marquis, and the influence he was known to possess at the Court of Naples, were circumstances that promised to have weight with the Holy Office, and to procure Di Sardo a quick release. The applications, however, which were made to the Inquisitors were not so soon replied to as the wishes of the Marquis had expected. He was a fortnight in that city before he was even permitted to visit his son. In this interview, affection predominated on both sides over all remembrances of the past. The condition of Di Sardo; his faded appearance, to which the wounds he had received at Celano, and from which he was scarcely recovered, had contributed; and his situation in a melancholy and terrible prison; were circumstances that awakened all the tenderness of the father: his errors were forgiven, and the Marquis felt disposed to consent to all that would restore him to happiness, could he but be restored to liberty.

Di Sardo, when informed of his mother's death, shed tears of sorrow and remorse for having occasioned her so much uneasiness. The unreasonableness of her claims was forgotten, and her faults were extenuated. Happily indeed for his peace, the extent of her criminal designs he had never understood; and, when he learned that her dying request had been intended to promote his happiness, the consciousness of having cruelly interrupted her's occasioned him severe anguish; and he was obliged to recollect her former conduct toward Amanda at San Stefano, before he could become reconciled to himself.

Three weeks had now elapsed since the Marquis's arrival at Rome, and not any

decisive answer was returned by the Inquisition to this application, when he and Di Sardo received a summons to attend Rinaldi in his dungeon. To meet him, who had been the cause of so much trouble to his family, was painful to the Marquis; but he did not object to the interview.—At the appointed hour he went to the chamber of Di Sardo; and, attended by two officials, they passed on to that of Rinaldi. While they waited at the door of the prison-rooms, till the bars and bolts were unfastened, the agitation which Di Sardo had suffered, on receiving the summons, returned with redoubled force, now that he was once more going to behold that wretched man who had declared himself to be the father of Amanda.—The Marquis suffered emotions of a different nature, and with his reluctance to see Rinaldi was mingled a degree of curiosity as to the event which had occasioned this summons.

The door being thrown open, the officials entered first, and the Marquis and Di Sardo, on following, found the Confessor lying on a mattress. He did not rise to receive them; but, as he bowed his head, his countenance, upon which the little light that entered his dungeon gleamed, seemed more than usually ghastly; his eyes were hollow, and his shrunk features appeared as if death had already seized them.—Di Sardo, on perceiving them, groaned, and averted his face; but, soon recovering himself, he approached the mattress.

“I wish to see Father Ximeni,” said Rinaldi; “let him be called:” then raising his eyes, and staring as if on vacancy, he exclaimed.—“Who is he that glides along in yonder gloom?”—“It is I, Father Ximeni,” said the Monk, “ready to attend you.”—After Rinaldi had pointed out the latter as the agent of his villainies, he declared himself to be the anonymous accuser who had caused Di Sardo to be arrested by the Holy Office, and that the charge of heresy he had laid against him was false and malicious.—He then confessed that he had forged the order by which he had had him first arrested for carrying of a nun; and that he might get Amanda into his own power.—When he was asked the motives why he had not claimed her as his daughter, and how he first made the discovery of his relationship, he was silent, apparently overwhelmed by the poignant recollection.—These depositions were taken down by a secretary present, and Di Sardo beheld himself cleared from every imputation by the man whose villainy had thrown him into the Inquisition.

During this declaration, Ximeni stood gazing on him with the fury and countenance of a demon—Di Sardo beheld in him the form and features of the Monk of Paluzzi; and, remembering the bloody garment he had met in that fortress, he inquired concerning it, as well as the cause of Bonetta’s death.—Of the latter, the Confessor declared he was wholly innocent, but his agent Ximeni could explain respecting the garments.—“They were mine!” said Ximeni. “One night, when I warned you to avoid Altieri, you pursued, and a pistol was fired at me by a person with you: I then retreated faster than you followed, and deposited my clotted habit where you found it. You heard my groans, but knew not whence they proceeded. The people in the fort, placed there to confine you during the night Amanda was carried off, afterwards procured me another habit and relief for my wound.” Di Sardo now inquired if the centinels had betrayed their trust, when Ximeni visited him in the cell of the Inquisition. “As a servant of the Inquisition I am bound to conceal its secrets,” he replied. “Know, young man,” added Rinaldi, “that it has dreadful secrets! Every cell contains a private entrance, by which the ministers of death may pass unnoticed to their victims, and this villain Ximeni, my agent, is one of those murderous summoners! But, mark me, his office has been short, and his earthly task is almost done!” A smile of ghastly satisfaction now overspread the face of the convulsed speaker, whose succeeding pangs shewed he was in the agonies of death. Ximeni looked at him in derision, apparently unable to comprehend the Confessor’s last portentous speech. In a moment after, however, he caught the arm of a by-stander, and shewed that he was about to participate in the horrors of his enemy. In the glare of Rinaldi’s dying eyes he read the sentence of his fate: a cold shivering seized his frame, and he fell to the ground! Medical assistance was immediately sought for and obtained. When the physician entered,

and beheld the Confessor and Ximeni, he declared they were both poisoned!—The latter died before even an antidote could be administered! “Is he at length gone?” said Rinaldi, as he recovered a little; “then I have destroyed him who would have destroyed me, and have escaped an ignominious death. The poison I carried always with me in the fold of my vest, and is the same I used to dip my poniard in.—It is——” The Inquisitor present then asked how he had administered it to Ximeni. He waited for an answer; but a livid corpse was all that remained of the once-terrible Rinaldi!

An order followed this event for the liberation of Di Sardo, the joy of which was heightened by the presence of Lupo, who hugged his master in a transport of joy. In a few days after, the Marquis and his son set off for Naples; and the latter presented himself at the grate of the convent of Della Pietà; and, in the next moment, Amanda and her faithful Di Sardo embraced, and repaid, by an extacy of bliss, the excess of perils they had endured. Some time was spent in relating the various events of which each were ignorant. Di Sardo was in the height of satisfaction at learning the real parentage of Amanda, when Helena entered, and was announced as her mother. The general joy was imparted to the Marquis, who, having satisfied himself of the nobility of the relict of the Count di Pontolo, promised no longer to withstand the dying request of his wife and the wish of his son.

On the twenty-seventh of April, the day on which Amanda completed her eighteenth year, the nuptials were solemnized in the church of the Santa Maria della Pietà, in the presence of the Marquis and Amanda's mother. As Amanda advanced through the church, and recollected, that on a former occasion she had met Di Sardo at the altar, while the scenes of San Stefano rose fast to her memory, the happy character of those which her present situation opposed to them drew tears of joy and gratitude to her eyes. Then, irresolute, desolate, surrounded by strangers, and ensnared by enemies, she had believed she saw Di Sardo for the last time:—now, supported by the presence of a beloved parent, and by the willing approbation of the person who had so strenuously opposed her, they were met to part no more: and, as the recollection of her being carried from the chapel glanced upon her mind,—that moment when she had called upon him for succour, supplicated even to hear his voice once more, and when a blank silence, which, as she believed, was that of death, had succeeded;—as the anguish of that moment was now remembered, Amanda became more than ever sensible of the happiness of the present.

As a testimony of esteem, Lupo attended the marriage, and experienced a joy equal to that of his master. An elegant fête followed this event, at the villa of the Marquis; and the festivity of the numerous guests triumphed over the diabolical machinations of monkish villainy, and loaded the happy Di Sardo and his lady with their congratulations and blessings!

FINIS.

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