

THE  
CAVERN OF HORRORS;  
OR,  
MISERIES OF MIRANDA:  
*A NEAPOLITAN TALE.*

----- Were all the streams that wind  
Their mazy progress to the main,  
To cleanse this odious stain, in one combin'd,  
The streams combin'd would flow in vain!  
POTTER'S ÆSCHYLUS

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## CAVERN OF HORRORS.

GIRALMO FORO was a celebrated vender of ice, snow, and fruit in the city of Naples. His fiery and gloomy temper held absolute sway over his wife Barca and his eldest daughter Bellana. This was fully exemplified in not suffering them to partake of the hilarity which then filled the town of Naples, on account of the accession of Philip of Anjou to the Spanish and Neapolitan thrones, as well as its being the festival of the holy week. While tumult and joy absorbed the cupidity of the most thirsty, Giralmo attended to the demands of his customers, and rigidly kept the females at home. Barca lived in hope that fate would at some time abate her confinement, and it very opportunely happened at this juncture that Giralmo was suddenly called from Naples by his agent, who superintended a large reservoir of snow he kept at a considerable distance.

He departed in such haste that he had scarcely time to utter his usual quantity of oaths and menaces to his family, if they failed during his short absence in their duty. To secure themselves from any surprize or deception, Bellana was sent by her mother to follow their tyrant. Having veiled herself, she continued behind him till he arrived at the Fontana Fonseca; where he was joined by two men, whose dress was much superior to their mien.—As he suddenly turned round and walked towards home, he passed Bellana, who distinguished a sentence which signified that his absence would be continued through the whole of the festival. Bellana hurried back by a different way, and found to the joy of her mother and herself that he had not returned.

The next day came, and Giralmo did not appear; they therefore no longer doubted of his departure, and, while Barca indulged in the long-forbidden visits of her neighbours, Bellana accepted the invitation of her young female friends, to occupy a situation where the pageantry of the day might be seen to advantage. In the mean time the shop was committed to the care of an old sour woman, the mother of Giralmo; and Bellana's youngest sister was taken from a convent to supply her place. The conduct of Giralmo towards this girl accorded little with his apparent disposition.—Although fond of money, he paid a considerable sum that she might remain in the pious abode where his fancy had placed her. He had never beheld her from the moment of her entering it, and once with horrid imprecations rejected a request his wife made, that she might be at home to lessen her own fatigue. Bellana preferred her own situation to that of her sister, admired as she was, in spite of the tyranny of Giralmo. His wife, who had learned to counteract force by fraud, without any scruple now went to the convent, and in the name of her husband demanded Miranda, announcing that she would not return to the convent that night. No objection being made by the Superior, Barca received into her charge a fine tall girl, who in grateful terms hailed her as her mother; and blessed her for the indulgence of taking her for the first time home, and permitting her to see her father.

Her mother gave a hasty answer to the latter expectation, being wholly occupied as they walked along in contemplating the alteration in the person and stature of Miranda during the last six months of her seventeenth year. As they proceeded, they were accosted by Joanna Troppano, an old friend, who first enquired if they were going to view the procession of San Januarius, at the house of Francisco Rodello; and then asked who the fine young lady was she had with her. "It is my youngest daughter," said Barca; "I am going to take her home till her brutal father returns. If you will step aside you shall see her charming countenance—perhaps it may be for the last time. "Thank heaven," replied her friend, "his unnatural conduct cannot stop her growth nor

warp her shape! When they had reached a place free from observation, Barca unveiled her daughter, whose beautiful jet-black eyes were suffused with tears, at the intelligence of her father's unjustifiable malevolence.

Joanna regarded Miranda with so much earnestness, that she gave opportunity to a young man, attended by two servants in liveries, to approach, who passed them under the colonade where they stood. Miranda immediately snatched her veil from her mother, and replaced it; while Joanna, rejoicing that she had given the young intruder a rare shove, requested that Miranda might enjoy the pleasures of the festivity, and see the procession pass as well as herself, that she might not be ignorant of what all the world would be talking of. Miranda was then conducted to the house of Francisco Rodello, where she hoped to see her sister, and learn from her the cause of her father's unnatural conduct: but Bellana was out with another party, and Miranda found herself in a very irksome situation, from the rude manners and vulgar taciturnity of such women and men as Joanna and Francisco Rodello, who was a vender of maccaroni to the principal houses around Naples.

Educated in the company of girls superior in condition to herself, who were related to most of the nobility in Naples, Miranda beheld with disgust the rude gallantries of Marca and Paola, the two sons of Rodello. After Barca had dragged her daughter to see the procession and the Viceroy, to which she was equally indifferent, at the close of the day they returned to the shop, which was found in a complete state of confusion.—Bernice, Giralmo's mother, could not supply the demand for fruit from the garden, the boy Dromo having, like his mistress, run to see the pageantry. Bellana was almost an equal stranger with herself to the business; and, to add to the general disaster, a cargo of snow, designed for the best customers, was run down in the bay of Naples. In this dilemma, Barca dispatched Miranda to the garden with the lad, to gather fruit; and she was hurried away without having yet embraced her sister. She felt uncomfortable as she traversed the street, crowded with strangers, come to see the spectacles; and, with much satisfaction quitting the city, reached the little habitation situated in the midst of her father's fruit-grounds. In her progress she beheld with delight the Bay of Naples, its ships, and the orange and lemon groves through which she passed, so different to the frowning Monte di Somma, which overtopped the tall trees of her convent. During the night she vainly endeavoured to forget in sleep the occurrences of the past day, though she was to rise early the next morning to urge the labourers to collect and dispatch the cargo required, which was usually sent to town in the market boat of Giralmo, but had been delayed on the preceding day from the want of assistance.

Miranda rose early the next morning to fulfil her task of gathering fruit, but the warmth of the sun-beams, and the rude observations of the peasant girls on her beauty, drove her to take shelter in the shade of the house, whence she watched the progress of the labourers. At the hour the market boat usually returned, Miranda expected to see her sister, whom she had not beheld for six months; but her hopes were disappointed, and all the message she received was an order to expedite another cargo of fruit. In contempt of the meridian heat, she chose to see that it was executed; and, as she stood by the side of the boat, while her father's people were loading it, a cavalier on horseback approached; he viewed her with admiration, and stopped his horse to contemplate her at leisure: she retired immediately to the house, and was surprised to find the stranger following her, attended by Felix, the director of the garden, who introduced him as the Major Domo of his Excellenza the Signor Marchese del Ponto, who had brought an order from

his illustrious Padrone. At the sound of the Marchese's name, Miranda recollected that his daughter was one of the most distinguished inmates of the Carmelites. The Major Domo at length with great gravity took his leave of Miranda, with a promise that her father should serve the Marchese del Ponto. She acknowledged with thankfulness this instance of his good will, while she inwardly detested his affected patronage.

"How much," thought she, "would the imperious Doria del Ponto exult, if she saw me receiving the idle compliments of her father's domestic!—Ah, cruel parents, why did you place me where my birth is but a theme of scorn and reproach!—Where are the affectionate caresses which the children of other parents receive!—Alas! there are none for Miranda!—Yet here I can weep unseen by my generous Juliana Felicia, and unchecked by my angry Superior."

Having indulged herself in grief for some time, she at length became composed; and, instead of being confined to her cell after sun-set, she inhaled the moonlight breeze in a grove of citron trees. At an early hour she assisted in placing the fruit in baskets for the carriage, which she performed with great dexterity, instructed by Felix, who would gladly have exchanged old Bernice for her. The next day again brought the Major Domo, who repeated his compliments in a more solemn strain than at the previous interview; and considered the silence of the embarrassed Miranda as a tacit approbation of his visit. Before he withdrew, he had almost resolved to demand the loveliest girl in Naples of Giralmo, who was supposed to be a man of considerable property. The latter, in the mean time, returned home at a very improvident hour for his wife, who had not time to send any of the family to re-conduct Miranda to the convent; and was obliged to request her friend Joanna Troppano to assist her, and convey the unlucky girl to her asylum.—She undertook the friendly charge, and cautioned Felix to keep the secret, of which Barca was not very uneasy, as she knew her husband seldom spoke to the labourers, who hated and avoided him.

At the gate she met the Major Domo, who was quitting it.—Joanna, with that officiousness which characterised her, enquired if he had any orders; and, on learning that he had given them to the fair Miranda, she very frankly told him every thing about her, and that she was going to conduct her to the Carmelite Nunnery. "Then," said Signor Papillo, "I am going to the same spot, and I will escort you and your fair companion to the monastery." Miranda however did not approve of the honour which Bernice, her grandmother, announced she was to have; she started at the unexpected return of Signor Papillo, and threw her veil over her face to hide her tears, when she learned that she was to depart without seeing her sister. Joanna accounted for her grief by an exposure of her father's rigid character, and the necessity of her return to the convent. Miranda observed that she had no repugnance to that abode; upon which Joanna cautioned her not to set her affections on any young man, seeing that Giralmo would not part with a ducat to marry off her sister, who might otherwise have made a conquest of Marco or Paolo Rodello. She then suggested the propriety of an immediate departure, for fear of the revenge of Giralmo, if he discovered his daughter's absence.

Their progress was uninterrupted till they reached the Strada Toleda, which was extremely crowded with carriages and passengers. Passing on in haste, Papillo suddenly made way for a Cavalier, whom Joanna knew to be the same with him she had rudely saluted under the colonade, and who had observed Miranda at that time with some attention. He demanded of

Papillo where he was going. "With your permission, Signor illustrissimo Napolo di Logano," replied he, with a profound bow, "I am going to conduct the young person to the Carmelite Nuns, if my Lord—" "The Carmelites!" exclaimed Napolo; "I have just come from there, and having omitted something I meant to say to my cousin Doria: tell her I shall be at the grate to-morrow morning, before the great mass is performed; but yet," added he, turning to Miranda, "if you, Signora, would kindly convey the message to my cousin, I should rest assured it would reach her."

Miranda was silent:—she saw the message would lead to an explanation of the way in which she obtained it.—Joanna's volubility instantly demanded why she did not answer the noble Cavalier, and proceeded to explain the situation of Miranda. "If she be unfortunate," said Napolo, tenderly, "I, or my friends, would do any thing to alleviate her unhappiness.—But Don Carlos, I see, is coming this way, and I must join him.—Will you, Signora," addressing Miranda, "permit me to see you to-morrow, with Doria, at the grate?" "Oh no!" exclaimed Miranda; "Then," resumed he, as he turned to meet the Spaniard, "let me know how I can serve you!"

As they walked on, Papillo explained to them that Signor Napolo was nephew to the Marchese del Ponto, and was a very amiable young nobleman, but too regardless of his grand descent, because it has not been well ascertained, if his father——. Miranda here interrupted him by remarking that, as they were at the gate of the convent, it only remained for her to thank him for his attention. "But what must I say to this young nobleman from you?" exclaimed Papillo. Joanna without hesitation answered, that, "As Miranda Foro was the most beautiful, sweet tempered, and virtuous girl within many miles, if he would serve her he must marry her." The Major had just started back, and declared the impossibility of conveying such a presumptuous message to his illustrious Maestro, when the convent door opened, and Miranda had only time to express her lively sense of the generous offer of Signor Napolo. With a light step and heavy heart she traversed the cloisters, and found in the garden the haughty Doria, and her noble agreeable friend Louisiana Ludini. "Tell us," said the latter, "all you have seen and enjoyed while Doria and I have been shut up here, because our fathers chose to have their Palazzi full of Spanish cavaliers."

Miranda informed her that, having been sent to her father's garden, she could not gratify her curiosity, which drew a contemptuous remark from the disdainful Doria.—Miranda then delivered the message from Signor Napolo, and Doria demanded how long it was since she had received it from the porter. "It arrived," said Miranda, "just as I entered the convent." Doria turned from her, and left the trembling Miranda, who felt an equal satisfaction and fear at the evasion she had used.

The following day when they met at dinner, Louisiana smiled at Miranda in such an arch manner as to induce a belief that her little artifice had been discovered.—In the evening this sprightly girl came to her in the garden, and presented her a billet from Napolo di Logano. The eager questions of Louisiana to know where she had seen Napolo, and if she did not think him the handsomest of all the Cavaliers at the festival, drew all the story from Miranda, who rejoiced that he had chosen her for his ambassadress, rather than the imperious Doria. Louisiana then opened the billet, and read the following lines. "Your silence to the Major Domo has distressed me beyond expression. Ah! may that dear countenance, I shall never forget, be unclouded by

grief, when my better genius shall again bless me with its view!—I am ignorant of your name, nor will I insert mine for fear that any interception may add to the mortification I would zealously alleviate.—*The Cavalier of the Strada Toleda.*” “ Ah!” said Louisiana, “he has seen your face, but no matter; your must write him a pretty letter, and I will deliver it, to receive no doubt another in return.—You must not however tell his cousin Doria, whom he has not seen for three months before.—But come, you must write an answer, that I may watch an opportunity of delivering it, without raising any suspicion in the bosom of Doria, whom, though I love her well, I wished on the summit of Monte di Somma, when she interrupted Napolo from entering into conversation about his lovely Miranda Foro.” Miranda however declined any written communication as improper and too bold, and only requested that she would verbally inform him, that, however he might generously wish to remove her sorrows, he could only effectually do it by infusing into her father’s heart an affection for his unfortunate child.—The next morning when Louisiana returned from the grate, after the visit of Napolo, Miranda observed that she looked vexed and disconcerted. Unable to account for it, she waited with anxiety till the evening, when Louisiana informed her of the melancholy regret of Napolo in not receiving a billet; that he was going that evening with his uncle to Messina, and would not return for a week.—Their conversation was interrupted by the presence of Doria, who appeared much offended at her speaking with Foro’s daughter; in a few days after which Louisiana was taken from the convent by her family, who were leaving Naples for a trip to Madrid.—Nothing more being heard from Napolo, and the cruelty of her father laying heavily on Miranda’s mind, she became pensive and melancholy, nor could the kind attentions of the amiable nun, Santa Lora, and her friend Juliana Felicia, efface her griefs from recollection. The Superior at length perceived it, and, attributing her reserve to sullenness and insolence, informed Giralmo that it was her pleasure he should remove his daughter from the convent. —As there was no appeal from this, Giralmo swore that she should not come home, but another convent should receive her on the day she quitted that which had sheltered her for thirteen years. As he would not suffer either his wife or Bellana to fetch Miranda, Joanna was dispatched to the nunnery at the appointed time, who was to deliver her for a day or two into the custody of his friend Francisco Rodello, till a proper monastery could be found. Joanna therefore appeared alone at the grate, and Miranda, with weeping eyes and a heart full of regret at the place she was going to leave, was delivered up.—Just before this her friend the Madre Santa Lora had been confined to her cell from illness, to whom she was denied any admission.—Nor would she have been able to have procured an interview with her young friend Juliana Felicia, if the latter had not briskly accosted her as she passed the cloister, and, while she placed in her hand a necklace of pearls as a token of remembrance, assured Miranda of her continued friendship and esteem.—They were separated before Miranda could hardly reply, by the voice of a nun seeking Juliana.—Arrived at the gate, the portiere put a letter privately into the hand of Miranda, which she hastily deposited in her bosom, on observing the address was in the hand writing of Napolo—a conduct highly necessary with such a gossip as Joanna.—In their conversation as they walked on, Joanna related that Signor Napolo di Logano had been to her house to get a letter sent to the convent, and that, finding the old Major Domo had a mind for Miranda, he had menaced him with death, whence the Major had in turn threatened her that he would disclose all to the Marchese. “And now,” said Joanna, “as I told the generous Napolo where you was coming to when you left the convent, he will no doubt be with you. He gave me this purse of ducats for your sake, and that is enough to make us both love and respect him!”—Miranda however did not receive this intelligence with that feeling which her informant expected, who, quite mistaking the cause, which arose from disgust at the manners and

company of the Rodellos, promised her that instead of two days, she would so contrive that she might stay a week without the knowledge of her brutish father.

Lisetta, the wife of Rodello, received Miranda with a haughty display of compassion, to which was added the rough welcome of her younger son Marco, who happened to be at home.— It appeared that Napolo had been there to enquire for his friend Joanna, and was to return in an hour, which intelligence was sufficient to draw from the latter an explanation of who he was and what Miranda was to be, if things continued in the train she had placed them. Fortunately however for the mind of the young lady, Napolo did not return that evening, and her conductress reluctantly returned home. Rodello and his son Paolo came in to supper, from whose society she retired with much satisfaction to her chamber. Here, seated on the bed, she drew from her bosom the necklace of her friend Juliana, and moistened it with her tears; after which she opened the secreted billet from Napolo. It stated that he had found out the residence of Joanna Troppano, and, after renewing professions of the warmest and most disinterested friendship, solicited an interview with her at the house of Rodello. The contents were pleasing to Miranda, but she declined at present any other friendship than that of Santa Lora and Juliana. The following morning brought Joanna to visit her charge, and wait for the visit of Signor Napolo, whose absence exposed the good woman to the satire of the Rodello family, and left her nothing else to do than to convey Foro's daughter to the convent. The next day she returned full of merriment at the proposal of marriage which Marco had been making to old Foro in favour of his daughter Miranda, who had not only threatened to break his head for the intention, but was going that afternoon to see if she was placed in the Benedictine convent, as he had ordered. No time therefore being to be lost, Miranda took leave of the Rodellos, and departed with Joanna for her new and gloomy residence, which lay in the suburbs of the town. In their way Joanna informed her that she had yesterday received a note from Napolo accounting for his absence, and promising to be with her the following day. When Miranda had entered the convent, she found the manner, the dress, and comforts, of her abode infinitely inferior to that of the Carmelites. At night she was conducted to a small and dirty cell, and on the following day, her wardrobe arrived, in turning over which she found a note from her friend Juliana. It was as follows:—"My dear Miranda will readily perceive that I have inserted this letter in her trunk by stratagem.—I wished to inform you of the jealousy and hatred of Doria del Ponto, who is piqued at the neglect of her cousin Napolo, and has not failed to say many ill-natured things against you. I now write to request that you will not marry any one whom you do not like, and to renew my offers of protection when I have a house and fortune at my disposal.—Juliana Felicia."

Joanna in a few days visited the convent, to pay a part of Miranda's pension in advance; and informed her that the Major Domo Papillo had made proposals for an union to her father, who had treated him with little more ceremony than Marco, though the application was supported by the recommendation of the Marchese del Ponto himself. Joanna then adverted to the absence of Napolo, which had been effected by the artifice of Papillo, while she was at the house of Rodello. Regardless of the austere nun who attended at Miranda's elbow, she produced a letter, which, as she held out to her in her hand, the officious recluse seized, stating that all letters were ordered by the Superior to be first submitted to her inspection, particularly those of the daughter of Foro. Joanna then left the convent in anger at this behaviour, and Miranda was lectured by the Superior for carrying on a forbidden correspondence, the detained offspring of which never afterwards appeared to her view.

A young woman, of a noble family and amiable manners, soon selected out Miranda as a friend; and their congenial minds passed many hours of delight together.—At length the time arrived when Christina, in compliance with the bigotry of her family, was to take the veil, and a grand day was fixed for the ceremony. The chapel was crowded with spectators at the appointed time, and the poor victim so much excited the tears and sobs of her friend Miranda, that the latter was led from the chapel to her cell by the order of the Superior. Here at night she was visited by a lay sister, who opened the door softly, and produced a paper which she said must be destroyed immediately it was read, for it came from a young Cavalier who had been watching her all the time she was in the chapel, and against whom she heard the Madre Santa Maria say the sisterhood had been cautioned. While Miranda hesitated at taking it, a footstep was heard in the passage, which induced the lay sister to throw it down and retire, saying, that, if she did not like to inspect it, the Superior might.—Unfortunately she had not time to conceal it before the nun who presided over the boarders entered, and, seizing it, carried it to the Superior. The next morning she was conducted before the abbess, who exhibited three charges against her, in having endeavoured to persuade Christina to refuse the veil, in holding a correspondence with a libertine, and in endeavouring to corrupt the fidelity of the lay sister.—The reply Miranda made to these charges was wholly overruled by the Superior, who descanted largely on the protection which she little merited, of the pious and generous Marchese del Ponto, who, from the representations of his daughter Doria, compassionated her destiny, and was ready either to pay a sum of money for her admission to take the veil, or give up the same sum as a marriage portion, if she would espouse a young man in her own situation of life, who was inclined to take her. The Superior bid her determine before the morrow upon either of these proposals, or abide the consequences of a disgraceful expulsion.—Miranda then returned to her cell, conducted by a nun, in whose countenance she traced a look of pity; and would have entered into a defence of herself, but her attendant, waving it for the present, promised soon to see her again, and quitted her with a benediction. Here Miranda thought upon the friendship of Doria del Ponto and her father, as mentioned by the Superior; she wished to compare it with the letter of Juliana; and, opening the coffer for that purpose, found that during her absence it had been pillaged of the letters of Napolo and her friend, with the necklace. The fears she felt however at the loss of these were suspended for a time in the summons of the Superior on the following day, to know Miranda's decision.—She was seated in state, surrounded by half a dozen of the sisterhood; her rigid manner appalled the culprit, who in silence awaited her interrogation. "What is your determination?" said the Superior.—"I must yield to your intention of dismissing me," said Miranda, "since I have innocently excited your displeasure.—And as to the proposals of the Marchese I decline them."—"Foolish girl," exclaimed the Superior, "since I have observed your improper correspondence, I have ordered your coffer to be searched, whence these letters and this necklace have been taken, the latter of which, from its value I suspect to be purloined.—Tomorrow your father shall take you away, and in the mean time I shall enquire respecting this bauble." Miranda then was ordered back to her cell, where her supper was brought by Santa Magdalena, who in a friendly manner informed her that the Superior had sent to the Carmelite convent, where the boarder to whom the pearls belonged was unfortunately absent; but her companions declared that she had told them her necklace was lost; hence both the Superior and the Carmelites were much irritated. "So," said Santa Magdalena, "as I possess great interest with the portiere, and heartily pity you, I will, if you please, favour your escape!" "Heaven forbid I should fly when I am innocent!" said Miranda. "No, good Magdalena, if you will convey a letter to Signora Juliana Felicia, now with her aunt, the Countessa Donatia, you will indeed serve me!"



The nun promised her endeavour, and departed.—Miranda scarcely slept all night, and arose at the dawn from her uneasy bed. She had but just dressed herself, when she saw a paper pushed under the door into the room. “Who is there?” said Miranda! “It is your friend Christina,” replied a voice. “Read the contents, and destroy it. Farewell.” The note advised her not to trust the faithless Magdalena, who acted as an agent to induce her to leave the convent without her father’s consent, whereby she would fall into the Marchese’s power; and farther advised her neither to fear the threats of the Superior, nor trust any of the sisterhood.

She wept at the prospect before her till the deceitful Magdalena brought in her breakfast. “Have you considered of the escape I proposed to you last night?” said the nun.—“The Superior of the Carmelites has sent to desire you may undergo a judicial punishment. To avoid this, therefore, I have told your situation to your friend Joanna, who attended at the grate this morning, and it has been concerted between us, that I shall assist your escape, and she will secrete you till the anger of the two Superiors abates. A person will wait, on the outside of the Convent, and conduct you to your asylum.” “Never,” replied Miranda firmly, “will I quit the abode my father has chosen for me!” “Then I leave you to the fate you invite!” said Magdalena, as she retired with a spiteful aspect. No other visitor came till night, when a nun entered her cell without light, and informed her that her father waited for her at the grate, as the Superior had consented to her escape, and would send her wardrobe home on the morrow.

Miranda, in the surprise, suffered herself to be conducted to the portiere, who, unlocking the gates, almost forced her through them.—Close under the wall stood two dark figures, who, instantly rushing forward, seized her, enveloped her in a cloke, and carried her alternately in their arms.—Her terror having thrown her into a fainting fit, it was some time before she recovered, and when she opened her eyes, and gazed wildly on the features of Francisco Rodello, and his son Paolo, she involuntarily shrieked!—They hurried their unfortunate prisoner on till they entered a large and gloomy avenue. Suddenly Rodello stopped, and hallooed to some invisible being, but no answer was returned. Miranda’s heart sunk with terror; and, falling at the feet of the father, she entreated his mercy.—“Bring her along!” said Rodello; “that Abdallah must have mistaken the signal!”

Paolo obeyed, and after dragging her a quarter of an hour longer, Rodello again called out, and a confused shouting and discordant cries rung in the ears of Miranda, through a long vault. “Curse their Moorish throats!” exclaimed Rodello, listening. “By St. Pietro, it is Morazan, and his crew!—This, Paolo, is your doing!—but, by this stiletto, Morazan shall not purchase her!—No, my word is passed to Abdallah; and if you do not hide her in a niche till they are gone by, by the holy cross you shall never more behold the light of the sun!” Paolo then deposited Miranda in a recess of the rocky wall, and hastened to meet the party so unwelcome to Rodello.

Miranda, for a time, lay insensible upon a pile of ruinous stones and mortar, till the loud voices of the dreaded set recalled her fleeting senses to witness their transactions.—Through a chink of the wall she could observe them accurately by their lighted torches; their hands and faces seemed entirely black, and their visages filled her with horror; they were seated cross-legged in a circular form, and all drank from leathern bottles most voraciously, except one, who often directed his eyes to the spot where Miranda was concealed. Rodello observed him, and pushed the bottle about; after which Morazan said to him, “Now, Christian, as you cannot assist

us in carrying our contraband merchandise to the brigantine, remember that you bring the woman you promised to-morrow night.—The price is sixty ducats you know.” Morazan then conducted Rodello and his son to the entrance of the vaults, much against their inclination.

Miranda, who saw the dreadful precipice on which she stood, determined to quit her retreat, fearful the party might return, and take her captive in it. Climbing therefore over the ruins, she guided herself by the side of the rock, till she entered the excavated chamber, and stood on one of the bottles of the party, which turned round, and threw her down; before she could rise, a light approached from the avenue by which Rodello and his son had gone out. She entered therefore into a deep niche, and stumbled over a kind of coffin, behind which she now hid herself as a place of the greatest security. The light of the torch displayed to her the horrors of her situation, which was between two coffins, while a third at her feet, broken and disjointed, disclosed the broken bones it was meant to preserve.—Morazan, who bore the light, suddenly stopped, and looking at the niche with a keen gaze, struck his sabre three times on the rocky ground, with a force that seemed supernatural, and uttered certain words that sounded like an incantation. In a few seconds he again struck the earth, and drew sparks from its flinty face. The same words were repeated, and suddenly the coffin at her left hand shook, its lid rose up, and fell upon the face and form of Miranda, while the tenant of the tomb, habited in black, and veiled, quitted it, and moved towards Morazan, extending a lean and shrivelled hand; this the apparition pointed to Miranda, who, fixed in horror, gazed wildly on the figure, till, in a few seconds, the whole scene vanished, and lightnings, screams, and infernal imprecations ensued. Overcome with terror, Miranda sunk into a swoon.—She lay in this state till the shouting of her name awakened her.—“Miranda Foro,” exclaimed a voice, “if you are in this place, advance, and meet your friends, who will protect you from the power of villainy.”

Miranda was too much exhausted to reply, and before she could recover herself, she heard the same voice repeat its regret and disappointment, and the party passed on toward the sea-shore. After an interval of some length, Rodello advanced, holding a torch in one hand, and his stiletto in the other, which with his arm and face, were covered with blood. Raising the weapon in a menacing manner, Miranda shrieked and fainted. “Ha!” exclaimed he, “art thou here!—Then, Signor Cavalier, you have missed your aim!—Come out, and let me see if you will escape me now, or if Paolo and his protector Morazan dare relieve you !”

He then wiped his dagger, and putting it into his belt, he seized her, and dragged her till they reached the far end of the avenue, where he set down his load, and blew a loud and shrill horn three times. She now heard a distant sound of voices and steps approaching, and quite exhausted, awaited the close of her existence. Rodello then dragged her to another avenue, and, making a motion to enjoin silence, held the point of the dagger to her throat.—A whistle, now blown, was answered in the same manner, and Rodello said, “Now you shall see how you will like a sea voyage to Tunis, where lives my friend the Moor Abdallah. Signor Napolo may be quite easy on your account, since I shall deliver you safe, and receive a hundred or two of ducats in return. But, as I must go back to Naples in an hour, and you to the Isle of Capri, you must quicken your pace a little.”

“Tell me,” cried Miranda, “does my father participate in my cruel destiny!”—“No, no,” answered Rodello, “no one shares the Marchese’s bounty with me, nor Abdallah’s reward!”

They had almost reached the sea-shore, and the broad day-light shone fully on them, when five strange and ill-favoured men surrounded her, who hurried her into a small vessel that lay under the cliff, and immediately put to sea.—The bark being unladen, they made a quick voyage to the isle of Capri, where the men landed her in safety.—She was then conducted to the top of a promontory, in the island, by the party, who entered a dark, ruined, and miserable building; in one of the vaults of which appeared an old decrepid female. “Here,” said one of them, “take care of this girl till sun-set, and I shall leave Jeromo with you, that you may not sell her, as you did the Sicilian lady.” “Vile wretches you are!” exclaimed the old female—“but it will come home to you one of these days. Where did this lady come from?”—“Why, if you must know,” replied he, “out of the Catacombs of Naples!” Miranda felt a new horror at the mention of the place where she had passed the night while the old beldame led her in, and the party went away, leaving Jeromo, as they said, to watch the keeper.

In the apartment of the old female Miranda lay down on a bed of leaves, and, her strength being exhausted, slept refreshingly till noon, when she partook of some bread and fruit. Jeromo, who had awoke, and offered Miranda some wine, again falling fast asleep, she endeavoured to soften her guardian, who reminded her that Jeromo had placed himself at the entrance of the door, and that it was not worth her while, for *nothing*, to expose herself to the vengeance of that villain Rodello. Miranda did not understand the hint, and wept bitterly. In the conversation which ensued, the old woman said she knew Giralmo Foro, the fruiterer, very well, and hinted that he was even concerned in the sale of her. After Miranda had related the cruel manner in which her father had ever treated her, she was asked if she had any money or trinkets wherewith to bribe Jeromo.—She had nothing, and without it the old woman stated no means were left of touching his hard and unbending heart. Jeromo now taking a walk on the promontory, the old hag said, “I would willingly assist your escape, merely from a hatred to Rodello, of a long standing. Here I am forced to live half the year for that cursed fellow’s profit, and to bury myself underground when any strangers, from curiosity, come to view the building. It is not eighteen months since Rodello murdered an old hermit here, who slept on the very bed you did, for fear he might discover their trade to the viceroy,”

Jeromo here interrupted any further conversation, by coming to tell them that Rodello had arrived in the vessel, and would be with them in a few minutes. When the tyrant entered, he seized the shuddering Miranda by the arm, and led her down the rock, ordering the old woman to follow, whom he called by the name of Servilla. They were soon placed in the cabin of the bark, and, after an hour’s sail, they were landed at twilight, and taken to a fisherman’s hut, on a small and barren island.—Her persecutor, observing her tears, compelled her to drink some wine, and even allowed Servilla to partake of it. A discordant shout, and a clashing of oars, now drew from Rodello an exclamation that Abdallah was coming, who directly after entered with some of his crew. He was a tall and very dark man, with a severe, yet not ferocious countenance. His dress and arms were in the Turkish stile, and in his manner he expressed a profound contempt of Rodello and his people. At his elbow stood a renegado Spaniard and a negro, whose diabolical looks might vie with each other. Abdallah having ordered a liberal sum to be paid to Rodello, Miranda was surrendered up, and Servilla with her.

Rodello, then turning to Miranda, said, “Henceforward, Miranda Foro, you will learn to know, that such husbands as Signor Napolo di Logano are not destined for you. Remember too,

that, if by a miracle you should ever return to Naples, the vengeance of the Marchese del Ponto, who has thus revenged the affront cast upon his daughter, can be again exerted; and cloistered avarice, as in the present case, be made subservient to your punishment." Abdallah, observing the agitation of Miranda during this address, cut it short, and conducted his prisoner to the Moorish vessel, which was quickly rowed out to sea.—The renegado conducted Miranda to the cabin, where Abdallah directed him to console her, which he did in Italian, and urged various arguments for her submission to that which was irremediable. The wind which had hitherto been unfavourable, now veered about, and the crew hoisted sail; but it increased with such violence, that all the canvas was taken in, and, not being able to clear the Neapolitan coast, they rowed at midnight into an inlet on the western shore of the island of Capri.

Here they all landed, and were conducted by moonlight a short distance from the shore, to a cavern, the descent to which was by easy and natural gradations in the rock. They had just kindled a fire to dry the wet garments of the females, and check the cold air, when Abdallah and the Spaniard started up and rushed out; the latter exclaiming—"A signal from the brigantine!" In a few minutes the renegado returned with fury in his aspect, and armed with a sword and pistol.—"Speak not a word," exclaimed he to the females, "or you die!"—Several steps directly after approached the cave, and a voice exclaimed, "Miranda Foro, art thou here?"—"Follow me!" exclaimed another voice. The Spaniard, seeing all was discovered, drew his pistol, and presented it to the head of Miranda, who fell senseless at his feet.

The party, who had rushed in as Miranda fell, now ran to assist her, during which her assassin made his escape.—The negro was taken prisoner, after being desperately wounded. It was not long before Miranda recovered, and they found the pistol, from being damp, had missed fire.—She was then removed into a small saloon, and beheld standing near her a young cavalier of elegant mien, whose countenance betrayed the emotion he felt for her safety.—"Oh! save me!" exclaimed Miranda, observing Marco approach from behind.—"He is your friend," said the Cavalier; "you owe your deliverance to his honesty; and I am Vicenza, a friend, related to the Marchese del Ponto!"—At the latter name Miranda uttered incoherent ravings till she was exhausted, and sunk into a refreshing slumber.—When she awoke, she found herself in a neat apartment, and Servilla still with her. Having arisen, she beheld a beautiful cultivated prospect through the lattices, and conceived that she was in Tunis.

As she looked in the garden below, a young man, earnestly gazing at her, caught her eye. "His dress," said Miranda, "is Neapolitan; where then can I be?"—Shortly after the young man entered, and congratulated her on finding her fever and intellects so much better. He assured her that she was in the island of Capri, at the cottage of a worthy woman; that Abdallah was no more, and that Rodello should repent his villainy. "But the Marchese?" said Miranda, tremblingly. "Nor shall you fear him," said the stranger. "My name is Vicenza Bonati, your friend; I wish for no other title, and, to prove it, I shall lodge you in a secure retreat in Sicily. You are not yet safe at Naples, for the Benedictines, to screen themselves, report that you voluntarily fled; your father believes it, and, if he did not, he must submit to the power of the tyrannical Marchese."

Miranda, having expressed her gratitude to her unknown deliverer, retired to rest, assisted by Teresa, a woman appointed to attend her. She slept till evening, when Vicenza had her

awakened, and made her assume the disguise of a peasant girl, while he was habited as one of the same class. "We must instantly leave Capri," said Vicenza; and conducted her through the garden to the sea-side, where a man, disguised as a peasant, spoke a few words to her conductor, and then led the way to the vessel. After a voyage of a day and a half, they landed near Palermo, to which place Vicenza dispatched his servant for a horse.—While they awaited his return, seated under a cluster of olive trees, Miranda earnestly intreated Vicenza to inform her by what means he had come to her assistance, and learned with rapture, that it was through her friend the amiable Juliana Felicia, assisted by Marco and Joanna Troppano.

The servant having returned with a horse, Miranda was placed on it, and conducted to a small habitation, situated at the Monte Reale. A good looking woman, named Helena, welcomed her, to whom Vicenza gave a caution to mind what he had said; then, bidding farewell to Miranda, he said, "I shall leave my servant to be at your disposal till I return from Messina, which will be in three days.—Your security depends on not being discovered by any one coming from Palermo or Messina, as the Marchese has agents at both these places." He then departed, and Miranda was led over the grounds and house by her hostess, whose interesting and affable manner soon won the mind of the young refugee.

When a general conversation had strengthened their confidence, Helena requested Miranda's story, which she related, and concluded with an assurance to her friend, that she would be happy in living with her, if she could but see her mother and sister occasionally, or know that her father's hatred had abated. From Helena, she learned in return, that her patroness was named Claudia Farnesa, before her marriage; that the merciless winds had driven that lady into the hands of a corsair of Tripoly, as she was passing from Naples to Messina; she had at that time one lovely boy, who was fortunately left at Messina with the aunt of his mother, under whom I then acted as one of the domestics. Her husband, who was then in Spain, on his return to Messina, left his palace, and went on board an armed galley, either to redeem her by force or purchase; since which, as he has never revisited his native land, his illustrious family supposed him to have perished. "The aunt," continued Helena, "dying, left me a small provision, and I married some time after to the Secretary of the Marchesa del Ponto; he died in two years, leaving me with a little boy, whom the Signor Napolo has taken under his protection. Thus, I have retired here with a little property to end my days." "I hope," said Miranda, "that the Signor Napolo does not come here." "He has been here," said Helena; "but, since he has caused you so much distress already, I will endeavour to persuade him to absent himself." In a short time after, Vicenza entered, and addressed Miranda,—“Charming lady, I have returned as quick as possible with what intelligence I could gain. The Marchese disowns the villainy of Rodello, who fled from Naples on the discovery of his connexion with the corsairs of Tunis. Your father is anxious to find you, for he has employed both Papillo and Marco Rodello for that purpose; and has promised to bestow you upon the one who shall convey you back to him at Naples; but Joanna thinks he only means to immure you for life, where you can never be discovered. Your mother informed Joanna of it, that she might tell me; but, rely upon it, your happiness and security are my first care.”

Vicenza rose abruptly from the repast, and walked before the cottage door, where he was accosted soon after by a gay young cavalier, who insisted on seeing the wonderful Miranda.—Vicenza declaring that she was not there, it produced a quarrel, and the parties suddenly

disappeared.—At midnight they had not returned, and the next day was passed by Miranda and Helena in the greatest unhappiness. At night Roberto revisited the cottage to inform Helena that his master durst not approach it, lest he should be watched; and to request that she and her young guest would remove to Termini, on the sea coast, whither he was to conduct them.—Miranda eagerly asked if any ill had befallen him, and was informed that he had fought a duel with his friend, in which he had escaped with a slight wound, while his antagonist was severely hurt; and therefore, fearful he might disclose the cause of the quarrel, had conjured them to leave the cottage.

They set forward immediately, in a little vehicle, accompanied by Roberto on horseback; and at dawn of day, having but two miles further to travel, they entered a little wood, on the northern side of which stood an elegant villa, which Roberto said belonged to a friend of his master's, now absent at Florence, and at which his aunt was housekeeper. While Helena opposed the proposal of Roberto to stay and take some refreshment, the guide drove them to an out-residence of the domestics.—Roberto knocked, but no one answering, he said he would seek his aunt in the principal building.—In half an hour he returned, his looks pale and ghastly, exclaiming that the villa had been pillaged. After they had recovered their surprise and terror, they entered the mansion in search of his aunt, who they feared might be murdered. — The furniture in the lower apartments was in the greatest confusion, and on ascending to the upper ones, where the same disorder reigned, Miranda pointed to the door of a closet, and asked what it contained. Roberto opened it, and started back, while the females stood immoveably fixed, in the fear and expectation of something terrific.—A heavy step was then heard in the closet, and a gloomy, fierce, and vengeful, figure advanced to the opened door way, and looked menacingly at them.—Streams of blood tinged his garments, and in his hand he held a dagger.—Having fixed his eye on Miranda, he advanced step by step till he drew close to her unshrinking form—he raised his arm to strike,—hesitated—let fall the sanguinary weapon and fled. She heard him step under the window, and make to the sea shore.—After listening a little while, and finding all quiet, Roberto again approached the closet and, on looking, exclaimed that his aunt was murdered! Miranda and Helena both uttered a shriek, and, regardless of danger, flew to the unfortunate woman: on inspecting the body, they found that she was only faint from loss of blood, and instantly dispatched Roberto for a surgeon.—“The villain has missed his aim,” cried the wounded person, just raising her eyes; “but where is Stoffano?” It afterwards appeared that he was the gardener, who lay also bound in his apartments over the stables.

Roberto having returned with two female assistants, the house was placed in order, and Dame Bonetta put to bed; from whom they learned that the mansion had been robbed by villains in the night, and who, notwithstanding they had forced open the strong iron cabinet, had left uninspected the principal repository of medals and jewels; after which they had left her for dead. The surgeon, on his arrival, declared that Bonetta's wounds were of little consequence; and undertook himself to represent the whole affair to the Luogotenente Criminale, and that the proper officers of justice might be informed of the transaction, in order to pursue the criminals.—As this step would immediately destroy the secrecy of Miranda's situation, it was agreed that she should assume a false name, and pass as Bonetta's daughter, when the officers of justice came to inspect the evidences of the fact.

This scheme was practised with success, and they had scarcely retired when Vicenza entered. Anxious for Miranda's safety, and disregarding his wound, which now bled profusely, he had followed her to the villa, and was alarmed by the peasants' tales of the midnight robbery and murder. When Vicenza had congratulated them on their present safety, he expressed a wish to converse with Miranda and Helena in the garden. Here he announced his intention of returning them in a few days to Helena's little abode; and said that he had visited his fiery antagonist, who had agreed to conceal the place of Miranda's retreat. Having made his acknowledgements to Helena for her care of Miranda, the latter replied, "Signor Illustrissimo, I desire no recompence for what I have done; her comfort will constitute my own; and, Signor, if I might say what I thought, this child would rather enter some convent at Monte Reale, where I could place her, as my niece, in security.—But, Signor, I could not consent to advance the interest of my beloved child, by deceiving the unwary and innocent." Vicenza appeared lost in a reverie, but at length regarding Miranda, he said to her, "Have you no recollection of Napolo di Logano?" "No, Signor," replied Miranda; "I was too much in anguish when I excited his attention to remark his person; yet, my secret acknowledgments are due to him for his generous pity." "If," returned Vicenza, "he were to visit this place, and unbosom the interest he has ever felt in your happiness, how would Miranda receive him?" Miranda said her conduct should be guided by the prudence of Helena; who replied, that her advice would be to enter a convent, till Napolo had shewn his regard by ceasing to pursue her; after which her father might receive her with the sentiments of a parent. "Would to heaven," said Miranda, "that you had been my mother!" After a little more conversation, Vicenza withdrew to Termini, to hear what reports were in circulation.

As the night advanced, the sick Bonetta was fearful the villains might return; and, to satisfy her, Stoffano and Roberto armed themselves, added to which came the Signor Vicenza with five or six guards,—an attention which much pleased Miranda. Every thing remaining tranquil, the guard was dismissed the next day by Vicenza, who remained at the villa. When Miranda and Helena were alone, the former requested an explanation of the speech of Helena, which stated that she could not consent to advance the interest of her beloved child, by deceiving the unwary and innocent." "The Signor Vicenza will explain this," replied Helena; "and, if he do not, I will: until then no harm shall happen to you, for I would not purchase the reflection of my own conscience for all the wealth the Signor di Logano is worth!" "The manner in which you and Signor Vicenza have mentioned that Cavalier, has given me some alarm," returned Miranda; "tell me then, does Signor Napolo direct the actions of your friend Vicenza, or has the latter sought and liberated me at the request of my dear Juliana?" "Whatever you may think," said Helena, "of both these Cavaliers, remember always the lectures of the Carmelite Nun."

At this moment Roberto came in, and informed them that his master had dismissed the guard from Termini, that they need no longer confine themselves to their apartment, and that he wished to speak with Miranda in the garden.—Helena proposed to visit Bonetta, whose friendship might be of service to her, while Miranda descended to the interview with Vicenza, who hastened to meet her, and, drawing towards a grove that intercepted the scorching sunbeams, he hesitatingly asked her what Helena had said to her, and if she had questioned the rectitude of his designs? Miranda said that Helena had refused to satisfy her interrogations; and Vicenza eagerly asked what questions she had demanded. Miranda was silent, and the conversation being renewed by Vicenza, she was so much charmed with her society, that she did not perceive the lapse of time till Helena came to require her attendance in the house, where

Bonetta had enquired several times for her.—When they were with the housekeeper, Helena asked if Vicenza had disclosed any particulars; and on her replying in the negative, Helena shook her head, and bid her take care of herself; at the same time remarking that she was fearful she had forgotten the Carmelite's lectures while she was conversing with Vicenza. "I did indeed," said Miranda, "but I will mind what you say in future." At this juncture Roberto rushed in, and said that he had seen three or four lurking fellows at the entrance of the wood.—"Run," said Miranda, "and tell the Cavalier, lest they may way-lay him in the grove." Roberto immediately flew to his master, and found him safe; to satisfy Miranda he sent for the guard from Termini, and determined himself to watch the whole night, in company with Stoffano and Roberto. The night however passed over without any interruption, and the guard was again dismissed by Vicenza, who went to enquire after their repose; and, finding they had not breakfasted, he invited himself to partake it with them, against the inclination of Helena.

Vicenza informed Miranda that he had brought a quantity of books for her amusement to the cottage, and hoped she would not give credence to the idle report of lurking robbers, when there appeared to be no foundation for it.—Helena replied, that the report had not been ill-founded; and conveyed some sarcastic remarks on the passions and virtues of young Cavaliers.—"Ah, my moralizing Helena," said Vicenza, "you shall no longer insinuate aught against me, for to-morrow Miranda shall judge if I am capable of deceiving her for any evil purpose; till when I hope Vicenza's intentions will be treated with indulgence." Helena then led her away, leaving him to reflect with considerable vexation upon her teasing scruples.

Vicenza after this requested to see the invalid, and, though Helena did not approve of the interview, for fear of some plot with Bonetta, she could not prevent it without irritating the young Cavalier. As she sat ruminating, and Miranda was indulging in reflection at the window, inhaling the fresh breeze of evening, she saw a cloud of smoke overtop the grove that divided the servants' apartments from the principal building.—"The offices are on fire!" exclaimed Helena, "and Stoffano and his fellow-servant were sleeping there but a few minutes ago!" Miranda darted through the opened lattice, and flew across the terrace to save them, fearful lest, exhausted by two nights watching, they might perish in the flames. She had to cross an angle of the grove, and was just in view of the flaming building, when three men crossed her path, one of them exclaimed, "It is her!" Upon which the others seized her, and bidding her as she regarded her life be silent, tied a handkerchief over her eyes and bound her hands.

After Miranda had been hurried a considerable way, she distinguished other voices and steps.—The dashing of the billows informed her she was at the sea side, whence she was lifted into a bark. The man who seemed to command then ordered that her mouth should be sufficiently unbound to answer the questions he was about to put to her. A solemn silence ensued, and the same voice demanded in a stern manner her and her father's name, and the reason why she left the retreat he had placed her in. "I was betrayed," said she, "into the power of Rodello!" "Tortures rack the villain!" exclaimed the other.—"Next tell me who released you from him, and why you have merited the indignation of the Marchese del Ponto and your father?"—"It was the Cavalier Vicenza Bonati who released me," replied Miranda; "and in answer to the last question, I have not intentionally offended either. The commander was disputing the veracity of what she said, when one of the crew exclaimed, "A sail!" and orders were given for rowing within musket shot of the stranger, to ascertain if they were strong enough



to capture her. Miranda's head was again enveloped, and she was ordered to lie down in the stern of the boat for safety. As they drew near the rowing ceased; a sudden pause ensued, followed by the thundering of cannon, and a thick smoke that almost suffocated her. In struggling she had loosened the bandage from her eyes, and saw it was an engagement with a galliot, the crew of which were Algerines, and in colour resembled demons.—As the barks ran foul of each other, the crew of the galliot boarded, and the scene of carnage, shrieks, and groans, suspended the appalled senses of Miranda, till the jarring tumult again recovered her, when the engagement ceased and the party rowed off.

She was now enquired after, and her head again concealed in a covering, ignorant of her destination, and who had her in custody. Towards morning her fatigue had brought on a deep sleep, from which she awoke not till she was raised out of the boat, and the same voice ordered her to be carried to the hut, and given to the care of Servilla.—As they proceeded, Miranda intreated him to let her escape. “Suffer you to escape!—Aye, and have Giralmo's dagger in my throat!” replied the man. “What, is my father here?” “Close at our heels,” replied the man; “did you not know his voice, or did you think, that, wounded as he is, he would lie broiling in the boat.” Miranda's astonishment at being so near her father, and at his being wounded in carrying her away, seemed like the interference of Providence to whose guidance she resolved to submit without repining.

Having arrived at Servilla's cottage, into whose custody Miranda was given, the former remarked that she did not so soon expect to meet her again, after her flight with her young Cavalier. “But, Giralmo,” added she, “who was always a bold fellow, is coming here to have his hurts dressed, and he will tell me what to do with you; so now, follow me, and mind your steps, as your pretty eyes are blinded.” She then led her away, and fastened her in a little room, where Miranda was occupied in reflections on the unparental conduct of her father, in not making himself known, and exposing her life to the danger of an engagement.—What would Vicenza think of her flight, at the time he was about to enter upon his exculpation from Helena's surmises? While she was lost in a labyrinth of thought, Servilla entered, unbound her eyes and hands, and invited her to supper; “which,” said she, “we shall enjoy uninterrupted, for your father and friends are gone; and as to the villain Rodello, he is safe in Barbary, sheltering himself there from punishment,—a wicked wretch to sell me to a black Pagan!”

When they sat down to supper, Servilla resumed her conversation.—“You must tell me what has happened to you since we parted last.—With the ducats I had of your young Cavalier, I went to Naples, where I had not been for many a day before.—There I sought out Giralmo, and set him about seeking out you.—Your sister Bellana is in love with Marco Rodello, who has now got his father's shop, and is in love with you, swearing at the young Cavalier for carrying you off.” Miranda interrupted her by asking what part of the country she was in. “You are not in Sicily,” replied the old woman, “though you will not stay here long: but you will not go home, nor to a convent.—The Marchese del Ponto is still on the look-out for you, and your father is at his wit's end to know what to do with you; determined rather to set fire to every nunnery in the country, than you should enter another.”

At night, when Miranda laid down on her miserable couch, these last words of Servilla struck her with much force; and she thought that some agency from that quarter had set fire to

the villa. The agitation of Miranda's mind prevented her repose, and when she arose in the morning she gave evident signs of approaching illness.—A fever and delirium followed, in which the figure of the assassin, who had wounded Bonetta in the fatal closet, perpetually haunted her. As her strength returned, she overcame these frightful images; and perceived that Servilla had called in a little girl named Rosetta, to assist in waiting upon her. One morning as she sat pensively at the entrance of the cottage, her new attendant ran in doors, and brought a book, which she knew to be the one Helena always carried with her in remembrance of her lady.—“I have stolen the book,” said Rosetta, “from where Servilla placed it; and there is no harm in that, for she took it from your pocket when you were ill, and shewed it to your father, who has been here three times.—Dear me, what horrid words he made use of when he opened the book, and saw the bit of old writing in the beginning!

The voice of Servilla here interrupted the conversation, and they went into the house to take their repast.—Miranda continued to amend, and her mind was agitated only now and then by a wish that she had not been snatched away before Vicenza had cleared himself from Helena's suspicions. Six weeks passed away in this state, which was rendered less irksome by the lively sallies of the little Rosetta; and, when the latter said she was to leave the cottage, Miranda submitted to the decree with regret, and obtained permission of her keeper to accompany her to the top of the neighbouring hill, on her way.—Here they parted, and Miranda, fatigued and exhausted, bent her footsteps back. She seated herself on a turf at the door, and heard Servilla conversing with a visitor, whose voice she recognised to be that of her cruel father. “Now,” said Miranda, “will I speak to my father, and prostrate myself before him!” She rushed into the room to effect her filial purpose,—but the instant her eyes encountered his, she receded with horror and antipathy.—She beheld the features of a robber!—a murderer, whose hands, and the dagger he held, were discoloured with human gore, which streamed down his garments.—The assassin of the closet at the villa burst into her mind, and she fainted at the feet of Giralmo Foro! When she had sufficiently recovered to hear his voice, in thundering accents he addressed her thus:—“Wretched miscreant, attend to me!—I am ruined by your accursed conduct, in your escape from the convent and your intrigue with that foolish boy!—If Napolo di Logano do not stop the tongue of that prating Bonetta, and I in consequence find myself pursued by the hell-hounds of justice, this dagger shall be plunged into your heart—and thus much for my revenge!—But woe to you both if I am denounced!—You shall now remain in my own power, and sail with me this night for Naples.” He then departed, charging Servilla to watch the young parricide till his return, and prepare herself for the voyage

The shock which Miranda sustained from this first interview with her father for some time threw her into a state of stupefaction; till Servilla summoned her to pack up her apparel, in doing which the book of Helena presented itself, and she involuntarily kissed it. Servilla eagerly snatched the volume, and asked inquisitively whose it was, and how she obtained it, since the original possessor had been dead seventeen years, or as good as dead. “I had it of Helena,” said Miranda, “and she was living when I left Sicily.”—“Well,” replied Servilla, “I will hear all about this Helena another time; at present we shall be scarcely ready against your father comes.—It is well you do not belong to Rodello, for that villain would murder all his family for a ducat; and, whatever you may think, your father is better than him; the pickle you saw him in, which so frightened you, was fairly gained in capturing a sloop, laden with oil and wine, belonging to the Archbishop of Palermo.” When Servilla ceased, Miranda asked her to return the book, which

was refused.

Giralmo came not himself in the evening, but sent some of his crew to conduct Miranda and her companion, with their baggage, to the vessel. They descended to the cabin without being noticed by Giralmo, who lay reclined upon a folded sail near the foremast. While Servilla adjusted herself to sleep, the young voyager tremblingly thought on the threats of her father, who had denounced vengeance on the head of herself and Napolo, if he were brought in danger of justice, then she glanced at the conduct of the generous Vicenza, and was lamenting the guilty stock from whence she herself sprung, when a burst of loud voices from the crew interrupted her reveries; the disturbance had scarcely subsided, when a dreadful and fiery glare illuminated the whole cabin, which awakened Servilla. In her fright she exclaimed, that the vessel was on fire; a mistake which arose only from a violent eruption of Strombolo at that instant: pursuing their course till night-fall of the next day, the summit of Monte di Somma appeared, and it drew tears from Miranda at the recollection that well-known object produced.

The bark anchored by moon light close to land, and, on a signal being given, a small boat, containing only one man, issued from a cavity of the rocks, and rowed to the vessel, into which Giralmo, his daughter, and Servilla, entered, and were landed at the entrance of a cavern, against which the billows dashed. Giralmo, who preceded them, unlocked a massy grating, where the roof descended very low; beyond which they advanced for some minutes, and at length gained a large space at the extremity of the cavern. A torch being lighted, some packages were seen strewed on the ground, on which her conductor seated her.—This, she thought, was to be her dreadful abode, till her father's threat could be executed, and she listened with motionless attention to the following conversation:—

“How often has he been there?” said Giralmo.—“Twice,” replied the man; “and he says he must see you; for, upon certain conditions, you have nothing to fear.”—“If his conditions,” said Giralmo, “suit me, I may consider of them; if not, this girl, on whom he has fixed his foolish fancy, must forfeit her life for his perfidy!—That babbling woman Bonetta too must be delivered into my hands, or I shall never be in safety; without he consents to this, I will not treat with him.”—Miranda, not doubting these sentences applied to herself, in her agitation exclaimed, “that if she did innocently perish, justice would follow the guilty author of her death!”—Giralmo was advancing to her with malignant fury in his looks, when the other man stopped him, and whispered something in his ear which ameliorated his anger, and his rage subsided into curses.—The man and he then retired, locking the grate. In a few minutes Giralmo returned:—“Tell me,” said he, “who were the man and woman who accompanied you, when the sight of your face first cursed me?”—Miranda, seeing the danger of such a confession, resolutely answered that she could not tell. “Know,” said he, “that Napolo has no power to avenge your death here: consider well your situation, and communicate my wish to Servilla.”—Giralmo then retired to the vessel, and returned with one of the crew laden with provisions, whom he locked with them in the grating, and then withdrew.

Servilla now opened a door, hitherto unobserved, and conducted Miranda into a chamber with two beds, the entrance of which bolted on the inside. “Here, take the light,” said the hag, “and be careful of it, for I do not desire to behold such another sight as I once saw here!”—“Ah I how,” thought Miranda, “shall I beguile the tedious hours in this dreadful tomb!”

The next day, as she was taking the lamp from a stone on which she had placed it, something white appeared beyond it, which proved to be an open book. Behind it lay several others, but hearing Servilla call for the light, to go into the warehouse, she hurried the book into her pocket. Miranda now went to her sleeping chamber, to endeavour to read the book by the light of a chain lamp, suspended from the ceiling. On the title appeared a name, written so small, that it was illegible by the feeble light; and, thinking the other books might inform her better, she determined to feel her way to the dark recess, not being able to take down the fastened lamp. Again she lifted the book to the lamp, and made out the name of Valoria; there were other names, but all illegible. Miranda had just secreted the book, when Servilla entered, and, observing her confusion, said, "Come, I must not leave you alone with the light. Follow me, and you shall see your father's storehouse."

She then conducted Miranda to the warehouse, which seemed well stocked with various kinds of merchandise and warlike stores. Miranda felt shocked at such a nefarious acquisition of property on the part of her father, and her indignation was heightened by contrasting his sordidness to his family with his liberality to the companions of his pillage. Miranda, on regaining the sleeping room, again examined her little prize, and to her former discovery added the name of Maria L.—Her anxiety to recover the other books now induced her to venture in the dark to the cave where they laid, and she succeeded in bringing the remaining five volumes, which she kissed as the legacy of Valoria. Indeed it now struck her forcibly that the hint Servilla had dropped was true, and that the latter had been a duenna to some other unfortunate in her own situation.—As it was necessary to find a hidden place for the books, she laid them behind a projection of the rock, near the opening of the recess.

The two first she examined conveyed no information beyond the name in the first book; and she was going to change them for the other three, when Servilla entered, to obtain the intelligence which Giralmo had ordered Miranda to tell her. In vain did the old hag ask the names and particulars of the man and woman, her friends at the Villa della Rocca. Miranda resisted her intreaties, and defied her father's dagger to extract the secret from her. Her keeper then went muttering away, and out of spite extinguished the lamp, leaving her to cogitate till supper time in the dark. This meal, wretched as it was, was rendered more uncomfortable by the bickering between Servilla and the piratical sailor whom Giralmo had left there as a guard, who repined heavily at his being caged up, while his companions were getting plunder; and, from spite to Servilla, he took the part of Miranda against her father.

The next day so far softened her rigid duenna, as to obtain a light in the lamp, by the help of which, when the other left her, she examined the uninspected books, the first of which disclosed the name she so much wished to learn, Valoria Maria Ludini, and under it a date of seventeen years back. "Good heavens!" exclaimed Miranda, "would I had courage to ask her fate of Servilla, and where she ended her days!—By the name she should be a relation of the Louisiana Ludini, the friend of Doria del Ponto." The second volume contained nothing important, but the third she recollected with some emotion: it was the same author, and bound in the same manner as that which she had received from Helena, bearing the name of her patronness Claudia Farnesa, and which had been snatched from her by Servilla.—Knowing that the latter had never entered the recess whence she had drawn these books, how came it there? It was evidently the first volume, which Helena had stated to be lost many years back; and she

secretly hoped, from her having been so eagerly questioned as to Helena's name and residence, that that good woman was still secure.

Her reflections were interrupted by Servilla, who came to inform her that her father meant to be with her in the evening, and that she had better answer her enquiries, if she wished to survive till the following morning: Miranda finding it in vain to interest Servilla to soften the heart of her father, retired to the chamber, to reflect on her situation, and she determined not to give up her friend Helena, especially as her subsequent security was in no wise the price of that information, fatigue of mind brought on the balmy restorative of sleep; from which, after some refreshing hours, she was awakened by Servilla, who came to inform her that her father had not come, and that she meant to go to bed. The next day was passed in conjecture, between Servilla and their guard, upon the cause of Giralmo's detention.

The following morning brought not the dreaded visitor, and a general alarm ensued, fearful that, if he were lost or captured at sea, they might perish with hunger, from their inability to force the iron grating of the cavern; a danger which Servilla had once before been in fear of. As Miranda sat near the lamp, endeavouring to read one of the volumes, a sudden rattling of chains, and the loud creaking of the grated gate, attracted her attention to the door of her own apartment, whence she heard the screams of Servilla, and a confusion of voices.—In a moment after a party of armed men rushed in, bearing the body of a bleeding man, heavily fettered. “Look up,” said the leader, to the dying prisoner, while he seized the arm of Miranda, “inform us if this be the daughter of the villain Giralmo Foro, and if she be privy to his piracies and murders!” “She is!” said the fainting wretch, who had scarcely called for succour before he closed his eyes for ever.—The manacles were now removed from the dead man to the guard in the cavern, whose rage, at finding himself betrayed by his former comrade, had induced him to give him the wound of which he died.

The words of the deceased having been taken down by one of the party, the inhabitants of the cave, with whatever was in it, were conveyed to Naples. In their progress through the city, the mob collected to execrate the prisoners. Miranda, silent and woe struck, passed on, and having no veil to cover her, let fall her beautiful tresses, which effectually hid her dejected countenance and feelings. A brutal voice from one of the guards, called out to uncover her, but no hand was found base enough to do it, except one—it was that of Vicenza.—Miranda turned round, and, uttering a deep sigh as she saw him, fell senseless to the ground.

When her recollection returned, she found herself in a dark apartment, with grated windows; a morose woman seemed to be her attendant, and, among the various persons who surrounded her, stood two Cavaliers, of a noble mien, who regarded her with a fixed attention. One of these having ordered the room to be cleared, asked his brother, when all but themselves had retired, if he wished to question her, or have her dismissed.—Miranda, observing a look of pity, in the eyes of the Cavalier addressed, threw herself at his feet, and burst into tears; but he, with a frantic regard, pushed her from him, rushed to the door, and instantly disappeared. His brother, after ordering Miranda to be taken care of, as she had hurt herself in the fall, retired.

The woman then conducted her, by the Marchese del Ponto's order, to her gaoler, who led her to a dark dungeon, and locked the door. Spite of the hardness of her couch, sleep visited

her, and invigorated her mind. The next visit he paid, he brought some bread and water, and she was pleased to see by the light of his lamp that the dungeon was large and level. The gaoler entered some hours after, and ordered her to follow him to their Excellenza.—She here beheld the brothers again, who bid the keeper retire, and one of them, Henrico, spoke to her.—“Speak!” said he to Miranda; “why do you not speak?” “Signor,” said she, “if the miserable Miranda has offended you, satiate your vengeance, that your pity may succeed.” “Miranda!” exclaimed Signor Henrico—“this is not your name!—O viper, base, degenerate! is it thus you have preserved my honour, and repaid my love—you, on whom I could for ever gaze with delight.”

“Where were you born?” asked the Marchese; “who is your mother, where did you meet the Signor Napolo!” Miranda replied to these questions in detail, and related how her mother had raised her veil in the street as Napolo passed!—“Tell me,” said Henrico, “where did that unfortunate after this hide her head?” “She lived,” replied Miranda, in the house of my father.” Henrico hastily unsheathed his sword, and would have sacrificed her to the frenzy that seized him, if the Marchese had not wrested the weapon from him.—The noise having brought the keeper to the door, the Marchese bid him re-conduct Miranda to the dungeon, who was totally at a loss to account for the violent emotions of Signor Henrico.

The next day she was accommodated with a mattress and a lamp, and received a visit from the Marchese del Ponto alone. “You told me,” said the Marchese to her, “that your mother lived in the house of Giralmo, and that she visited you at the Carmelites, do you know that this is false?” Miranda asserted that she had ever been taught to believe so, and that every person at the Carmelites knew that she had visited her at the Convent, though not often. She then at the Marchese’s request detailed her history, and continued till she came to that part which related to her deliverance by Vicenza. “What motives do you ascribe to him for that service?” said the Marchese, with an angry and scornful look, since you confess you knew him not.”—Miranda replied, “that he informed her he had acted thus at the desire of the young Juliana Felicia, her friend when in the Carmelite convent.” “Her influence,” said the Marchese, is no doubt unbounded, since she means to honour him with her hand; but this exploit so sincerely proves his obedience to her wishes, that—” A sudden faintness, which overcame Miranda, stopped the continuation of the Marchese’s speech, and when she recovered, he pointed to the book Miranda had been reading, and flew into a rage when she informed him that it was the gift of Vicenza. “Say rather,” said he, “that Napolo has weakly lavished the memorials of his beloved mother upon a shameless pretender to truth!”—With this reproach he darted from her, and she was conducted to her dungeon. In the evening the Marchese sent her the following billet:—

“I have found all you have said false, and I see you no more. Signor Vicenza disclaims the knowledge of your name, only from its infamy. My nephew Napolo admits he sent you the book, which, with several others, you pretend to have found in your father’s piratical retreat. The Signora Juliana renounces you, for endeavouring to vilify her lover, and forbids you in future to use her name to your inventions, which, if you do, you will force me, as the friend of the Countess Donati, to bring down the doom suspended over your head. “MARCHESE DEL PONTO.”

The cautions of Helena and Santa Valoria rushed upon her mind as she wept at reading this portentous note. From this moment she expected nothing from the justice of mankind, since

she was renounced by Juliana, and deceived by her favoured Vicenza; hence she awaited her fate with resignation.

On the second day after this incident, the gaoler informed her that he had permission to grant her any moderate indulgence in her confinement; which was farther extended in a few days, by the sufferance of walking for an hour in a kind of area, surrounded by high walls and the building of her prison.—A fortnight passed in this ameliorated state, in which time she had fruitlessly endeavoured to overcome the taciturnity of her gaoler.—One day, while taking her usual walk, and thinking that perhaps her father had suffered at Naples the reward of his crimes, a loud and piercing sigh startled her.—Miranda looked round, and observed some loop holes, high in the massy wall, whence she concluded the sound must issue! The appearance of her keeper prevented her that day from addressing the unknown prisoner, but on the morrow she called to the wretched object: but no answer was returned, and prudence prevented her from being too hazardous in speaking —Miranda now found her cell daily rendered more comfortable, by every necessary and many elegant improvements, and she blessed the secret benefactor who thus reconciled her to life.—Twelve days passed in this manner, and at length brought the day of her birth, in which she completed her seventeenth year.

Her usual attendant on this morning led in a woman, past the middle age, and of a prepossessing appearance, who announced to her the pleasing intelligence, that she was come to remove her to a more desirable situation. Miranda blessed her for the grateful intelligence, and asked if she might be allowed to enquire who was her benefactor, and whether her father lived. “Of the first hereafter,” replied the stranger. “With respect to the last, Barca Foro and her daughter are confined for life:—your father—but of him spare the recital.—To-night I am to conduct you to my residence at a considerable distance from Naples, and you are to renounce the name of Foro for ever, if you would accept your liberty on these conditions!”—Miranda embraced her visitor in terms of acknowledgment, and saw her depart till the evening with regret.

After midnight the woman re-appeared, and found Miranda at prayers on her knees—who arose, and extended her hand to her, asking, at the same time, if she might not take the books with her which had cheered her solitude?—Bianca said they should be sent after her, and then led the way to a carriage that waited outside the prison, into which they entered, and drove off. Miranda had not time to enquire respecting the prisoner, whose sigh had so interested her, and whom she left with a tear of helpless pity. As they proceeded, Bianca told her that Signor Henrico, brother to the Marchese, though he had treated her so roughly, was now her best friend; that he had then mistaken the object of his vengeance:—“And,” added Bianca, if you know the fatal story, keep it in your bosom, nor agitate Henrico with it, who now waits at my present residence to behold you for the last time. He has watched you every morning when you walked in the court of your prison, and I have seen him weep with tenderness for you.” “I am ignorant of what fatal story you allude to,” replied Miranda. “Then it will be well to remain so,” replied Bianca. “If he questions you, let me, if possible, reply, as it may augment his compassion.”

Arrived at their destination, Miranda was led by her new friend into a commodious apartment, in which were some lights burning. Several hours elapsed before Henrico entered, followed by Bianca.—After a long pause, during which Miranda’s anxiety had thrown a sickly

hue over her countenance, he said, as he looked at her, "She appears ill, but I hope the pure air into which she is going will reestablish her health.—By what name is she called?"—Miranda was silent, and Bianca replied that she would readily adopt any appellation he should choose. Henrico then signified that it was too late to begin the journey, and permitted it to be postponed till the morrow evening, that Miranda, he said, might obtain that repose which he feared he had for ever lost!—After gazing passionately on her for a few moments, he retired, and she was conducted to bed. When she arose, the morning sun awakened in her the feelings of gratitude at her amended condition, and she ventured to lament to Bianca her ignorance of the events which had led her into such eventful vicissitudes. Bianca promised to relate the hidden causes when they were at a distance from Naples.

The bustle of that great city had no charms for Miranda; but Bianca could not avoid noticing a grand cavalcade of carriages, which the woman of the house informed her was on account of the nuptials of a young lady, Juliana Felicia, niece to the Countess Donati, who had opposed the match; but the bride appealing to the Viceroy, who was distantly related to the young Cavalier, her husband, the marriage was effected. Miranda uttered a fervent prayer for the happiness of her friend Juliana; after which, Bianca left her for a short time, and when she returned, brought word that they must set off that evening, and that no further interview with the Chevalier del Ponto would take place.—At night a guard, ordered to attend then in the journey, came to conduct them to the carriage, and every thing being ready, they drove from Naples with great velocity. Bianca then stated, that they were going to the Duchy of Spoleto, in which place she had lived fourteen years, a period made happy by the good and generous Henrico.—Bianca after this fell into a slumber, and left her companion to reflect on the asylum which Juliana had once promised her when she was married; from whose courtesy she was hastily retiring, leaving an imprisoned mother and sister behind her.

They arrived at Francolisi on the next day, and the following morning made the delightful plain of Foligno, in the middle of which was a retreat of the Cavalier del Ponto's, the abode of Bianca. The guard having conducted them safely to their retreat, with a zeal and tenderness that did him the highest credit, said he should hasten back to satisfy the anxiety of his master.—Miranda returned his farewell, with the most grateful acknowledgments; to which the man made no reply, but turning to Bianca, with a tear glistening in his eye, exclaimed, as he quitted the room, "She is innocent, and I would die to prove it!"—"Ah!" cried Miranda, "tell me, my good friend, what imports this speech?" "Not now," replied Bianca; "it is a long story, and when I begin, I shall not rest till the whole is told." Miranda was now presented by Bianca as the offspring of her deceased daughter to the inmates of the mansion, who consisted of two female servants, an old man, and a lad.—They were struck with admiration at the fine person and stature of Miranda, and the supposed parent was highly complimented on the recovery of such a granddaughter, sent by Providence, as it were, to be the comfort of her declining years.

When the prating group had retired, Bianca said, "Now, my child, I must instruct you in the story you are to tell these good people. Our Padrone directs that you still bear the name of Miranda: and you are to recollect that your mother (my daughter) and father died in your infancy; and that the lady whom she served placed you in a convent, as no relation claimed you, and I was at that time far from Naples.—Your patroness, being very fond of you, never enquired to whom you belonged till her last illness, in consequence of which you were restored to my



arms, with a legacy of five hundred ducats for your portion.—Our Padrone also bestows the same sum upon you.” “Ah, how generous!” exclaimed Miranda; “yet is it not strange, that, while he thus protects me, he leaves my imprisoned mother and sister unnoticed?” “We will retire, my dear, to-morrow to the pavilion,” replied Bianca; “in that retreat I will satisfy your curiosity, as the Chevalier del Ponto has not forbidden it. In the mean time you must ingratiate yourself with old Carolo and Theresa, who already begin to love you.”

The remainder of the day was occupied in shewing Miranda her apartments, her wardrobe, and library, in which were the books she was so much attached to. The next afternoon Bianca and Miranda retired to the pavilion, which was placed in an almond grove, and where no one could approach without being observed. Being seated, Bianca began: “My dear child, you must know that I was once a handsome young woman,—so I married, and had a daughter, and lived with my husband on an estate of the Lidini family, near Bojana. I had scarcely recovered from my lying-in, when the Count and Countess came to the Bojana palace, and I was chosen as a nurse for her young daughter, as sweet a child as ever blessed a mother.—I remained in the family, and my girl was the play-fellow of her young mistress,—a very happy thing for me, as my husband died in two years after. The next grief I suffered was in parting with my young charge, Lady Valoria Maria, who was taken to Naples, whither my daughter accompanied her; and I only saw them four times in twelve years.

“When my darling Valoria had attained her sixteenth year, her father died, and was followed by the Countess in six months after. The estate then falling into another branch of the family, I refused to quit the service of my young lady, and sought her at the villa of her uncle, father of the present Count Ludini, then living at Pausilypus.—By her I was received with affection, but her aunt refused my request, and my kind Valoria, who loved me better than my own daughter, maintained her poor nurse till I was taken into a Neapolitan family as first cameriera. Soon after this my ill-advised girl, seduced by a domestic of the Count, fled from her mistress. I hastened to the villa, and found it but too true!—My Valoria mingled her tears with mine, and putting some money in my hand, bade me seek the poor culprit, and, if she were married, assure her that she would give her husband a portion to set him up in trade. I knelt and prayed heaven to bless her, but my prayers were not heard.

“Never can I forget her many acts of kindness; never shall her offspring want a mother while I have breath; and, if she did what was wrong, to heaven is she accountable!—but, for me, I will ever bless her, ever nourish her orphan, and love it as I did her!” She then threw her arms round the neck of Miranda, exclaiming, “You are that dear orphan, and I will while I live protect the offspring of her who has protected me!” Miranda, overcome at the sudden intelligence, fainted; and, when she recovered, Bianca would have delayed the continuation of her story, but she requested her to proceed.—“I will, my child,” replied the good old woman. “When I returned to Naples, my guilty daughter was no where to be found, and a year passed without hearing of her. At the end of that time, I learned a bad account still, that she would not come near me, lest I should reproach or ill-treat her. The lady Valoria however comforted me, and always looked on me with a placid countenance, which concealed from my bosom the trouble she endured from the tyranny of her uncle. At this time I accompanied the family I served to Rome; and at the end of six months returned to Naples.

“Alas! I found Valoria had flown, and, notwithstanding it was said that she was married to Henrico del Ponto, had eloped with a low fellow, with Giralmo Foro, who was then called Nazarra, and who had been indebted for his life to her husband. Alas, my Valoria is no more, and my daughter is lost to shame and honour!—But to proceed.—I flew to Henrico’s chamber, demanded Valoria, and rashly accused him of indulging strong suspicions and murderous revenge. My agitation threw me into a fever, in which he generously took care of me, and has since placed me in this asylum, from which I have never strayed till he recalled me to Naples on your account.—Till within these few weeks I would have died in asserting your mother’s innocence; but, alas! it is but too certainly implicated.—Nazarra, when on the rack and almost expiring, swore that you were the child of Valoria, and that he was your father!—But he is now no more; and I will be your mother, your comforter!”

Seeing Teresa approach, Bianca went to meet her, and gave Miranda an opportunity of pouring out her soul. Her mother’s name was written in the books found in the cave, and an innate conviction made her exclaim, “Dear Valoria, lost mother, something assures me thou art guiltless!” Her aching heart and swollen eyes were visible to the kind Bianca when she returned; and the latter entered into a tender expostulation with her on the necessity of banishing regret, which availed nothing, but rather abated their domestic hilarity. A month had elapsed at the Casa Bianca, in which Miranda had become the idol of the little set it contained, when one day a courier arrived to inform them that Signor Henrico was coming. “What can his arrival import?” exclaimed Miranda. “Never mind,” replied Bianca; “he cannot act ungenerously; but, should he, no disgrace nor misfortune shall separate me from you!” In two days after Henrico arrived, attended only by his servant, Bernardo. Miranda retired to her chamber, where she was found by Bianca, who answered to her young charge’s eager enquiries, that she had not been asked for, nor did the Cavalier look out of humour. A message now came for her to attend her lord in the open lattice under the trees, where she found him. “Tell me,” said he, “is the poor unfortunate recovered from the effect of her long imprisonment?” “Yes, thank heaven,” exclaimed Bianca, “and she is more than ever——” “Hold!” cried he, hastily: “Go!—but be discreet!” Bianca flew to inform Miranda of his kind enquiry, and she thanked heaven and Bianca for such goodness. She then proposed that they should descend to their usual sitting room, to avoid any remarks from the servants; which fortunately lay on that side of the house the Padrone never occupied.

Two days passed without a word from Henrico relative to the female he so generously protected; but at the end of that time Bianca was summoned to the favourite saloon.—“I should like to know,” said the Signor, “how she spends her time?—There is a young man too, I see, at work in the garden—now, though I can rely on old Carolo and Roberto, yet——” “Ah, Signor illustrissimo,” replied Bianca, “her time is ever well-spent; and as to the young man, who is old Carolo’s grandson, her prudence and noble mind remove every apprehension.” “You appear fond of her,” said Henrico. “If she be amiable, I may have higher prospects for her, and would not have her ally herself in my household!” “She is indeed amiable, and it would be a pity to *debase* herself.” “Debase herself!” exclaimed Henrico, and he bid Bianca leave him.—Too late she perceived her ill timed allusion to the low birth of Miranda’s father, and determined to conceal from her Henrico’s future views of her settlement.

Bianca for several days watched the young gardener; but, convinced of the ingenuousness of her beloved charge, she soon discontinued this practice. The health of Henrico in the mean

time sensibly declined, and spread melancholy through the house. while Miranda, convinced that her presence obstructed his recovery, determined to throw herself at his feet for a moment, and then fly him for ever.—On the other hand she was withheld by the fear of such a shock rendering him worse; it might sink him to the grave, and separate her from her loving Bianca. Miranda often ventured to a station pointed out by Theresa, where she could see Henrico, pale and emaciated, walk up and down the grove unobserved.

One day as she watched his return. from the saloon, she was alarmed by a rustling in the trees behind her.—She turned round with terror, and beheld the enraged and vindictive countenance of Vicenza before her!—After some moments of silent amazement, his voice, once so gentle, burst upon her.—“Wretched girl, did you think the mountains that incircle this retreat could hide you from my view!—O, infamous and unfortunate!”—“Unfortunate indeed!” exclaimed Miranda. “If you are so sensible of this,” said Vicenza, “let me conduct you hence, where Henrico shall never more behold you!” “If I leave him, he will die,” said Miranda; “yet I will go, I will cast off his protection, dear as it is to me; but I must see him once more, and avow to him what pangs my absence will cost me!”

As she was quitting him to return to the house, Vicenza seized her arm! “This is all artifice;” he exclaimed: “no longer shall Henrico del Ponto degrade himself by fostering such a base inmate.—Leave then this place, and I will yet listen to your beguiling accents!” He then forcibly laid hold of her, and her screams subsided into a fainting fit: when she had recovered, she found herself in the protection of Henrico, who, assisted by Bianca, led her to the saloon, and, placing her on a couch, exclaimed, “Dear unfortunate Miranda, revive!—From this moment I will no longer controul my feelings.—Valoria, look down, and behold me clasp thy still dear cherished image to my heart!” “Miranda, look upon thy father!” exclaimed Bianca, eagerly. “Yes,” rejoined he, “I will be a friend and a father to her.” “And will you——ah! will you forgive my——.” “I have forgiven her,” rejoined he, “and if her spirit hovers near me, I call it to witness the sincerity with which I take her orphan to my bosom!” He then embraced Miranda, and she bedewed his hand with her tears, adding that her future conduct should be directed only to one point, the happiness of her venerated benefactor!

After this Miranda related the unexpected and astonishing visit of Vicenza; and was desired by her protector not to venture abroad while there was any reason to apprehend the rash young man might lurk about the grounds. The Signor then left them, and the happy Bianca overwhelmed Miranda with congratulations on her flattering situation with Henrico. Miranda however was wholly unable to fathom the cause by which Vicenza, the husband of Juliana, had found out her retreat, as well as his motives for such a visit, and she left it to time to unravel the mystery. From this time Miranda’s fate took a more pleasing turn, and Henrico found in her society his health and spirits renewed. All the household shared in the amended appearance of their master and favourite, whose birth Bianca now stated to them was not that of her granddaughter, but an illegitimate child of the Signor Henrico’s.

After a week had elapsed, Henrico learned that Vicenza had left the country abruptly on the day he had surprized Miranda. In the frequent dialogues between Henrico and Miranda, as they wandered among the natural beauties which surrounded Casa Bianca, he asked if there were any one in Naples she would wish to see again. “Yes,” replied Miranda; “there is the wife of

Vicenza,—my once generous Juliana; but now she despises and contemns me.” “Not so,” replied Henrico; “she loved and exculpated you when the darkest cloud obscured your fortune: she interceded with my brother to interest himself in your behalf, and first announced your virtues to me.—Her husband is a most sensible worthy man, and well deserves her.” Henrico earnestly regarded the countenance of Miranda, in pronouncing this last sentence, and then sunk into a reverie, which, she not caring to interrupt, the subject of Vicenza’s virtues or faults was never revived again; a certain mystery hung about such an opposition of character, but it imported little, since she had learned that Signora Vicenza was still her friend. They passed the winter at Casa Bianca, during which Henrico’s affection for Miranda increased, and his wonted vivacity began to return.—Naples, and the barbarity of Vicenza there, were almost forgotten in the happiness of Henrico, when an unforeseen accident disturbed the repose of Miranda.—As Henrico and herself were returning at noon from one of their accustomed rambles, Roberto came to tell his master of the arrival of the Cavalier Napolo di Logano.—“You must retire privately to your apartment,” said Henrico; “Bianca will there tell you my further wishes.—Farewell, till I get rid of this importunate young man.”

In about an hour after Miranda had entered the house, Bianca visited her. “My dear young lady,” said she, “you are once more a prisoner; truly, you must keep close till Napolo chooses to return to Naples or Sicily, for there is no knowing if he will set out the next hour, or stay till he makes the Padrone give up to him.” “Give up what to him?” exclaimed Miranda: “Oh! nothing,” replied Bianca; “only Roberto says he has been teasing his good uncle about you—that is all.” Bianca then left her, and Theresa informed Miranda in the evening, that Signor Napolo was taken ill, and advice had been sent for to Naples. When the Padrone next met her, he stated that he had family reasons for discouraging the unhappy predilection that young man still entertained for her. “My brother,” said he, “has other views for the Cavalier Napolo; nor should I be willing, were the Marchese propitious to his wishes, to see you liable to reproach from the memory of—But, retire to your chamber, my love, and fear no abatement in my regard.” The Signor Napolo’s illness terminated in a violent fever, from which he at length gradually recovered after its crisis, and thus replaced Miranda in a state of seclusion.

Henrico had dispatched a message to his brother, with an account of Napolo’s illness; and no answer arriving from the Marchese, it excited much surprise, and his expected visit was looked for with some apprehension. Mean time Napolo, though recovered, lingered at Casa Bianca, endeavouring to corrupt the fidelity of the domestics, to carry a letter or introduce him to Miranda; but he was unsuccessful.—He then attempted to get one day to her apartment, the knowledge of which so enraged his uncle, that he peremptorily bid him depart. Napolo solicited only for five minutes conversation with Miranda; but this was rejected, and he fixed his departure for the following morning. Not long after, as Miranda was sitting in her own room, with the lattices closed, the glass of her window was broken; she arose, and discovered the figure of a man in the branches of a tree opposite the chamber.—It was Vicenza, who invited her to stay; but the terrified Miranda fled away screaming, and her alarm soon brought in Henrico, who instantly exclaimed, on learning the cause of Miranda’s terror, that the conduct of Vicenza was past endurance! He then retired, and returned in a short time after; “You are now my companion again,” said he: “Napolo has unexpectedly gone to Naples; and Vicenza, who has withdrawn, no longer shall give us any uneasiness, for I have planted centinels in different parts of the ground to watch him in future: and now, my Miranda, let us enjoy our rambles while the season permits

them." Miranda was delighted with this intelligence, and invited her noble friend one day to take a walk into the adjacent valley. "O how pleasing is this scene!" exclaimed Miranda; "and how delightful the cool shade of those fine jessamines in the hollow of that rock." "By the glow of heat on your cheek," said Henrico, "I propose you should enter there, and enjoy its refreshing shade, while I go to yon shepherd boy, and, while he takes home the flowers you have gathered, I will watch his flock."

Having tied up her flowers, Henrico walked on, while Miranda entered the cave, the entrance of which was beautifully overhung with flowers and foliage. In this bower she fearlessly entered, and found herself suddenly seized by some person, whose voice she recognized; and, turning round in extreme terror, exclaimed, "Vicenza!" "Not Vicenza," exclaimed she; "but Napolo di Logano!" "Di Logano!" exclaimed she; "you are Vicenza!—Release me, Signor!" "Not till I have obtained your forgiveness;" exclaimed he; "at Capri you shrunk from my *real* name with dread and alarm: you did not then recollect me, and spoke of Napolo as your enemy; hence I borrowed the name of a friend, by which alone you have known me.—Alas! I have sullied that name in your eyes, and I throw it off!" While Miranda was intreating him to leave her, Henrico, entered the recess, and observing Napolo, exclaimed, "O villain, disturber of our peace, have you then foiled me!" Henrico in a rage drew his sword, and Napolo, exposing his bosom, bid him strike. "Forgive me," returned Henrico, as he extended his hand to him, "for an indignity I disavow.—But do not urge me to declare, if she listens to you, she forfeits my esteem for ever!" "Alas! why are you so inexorable to the Napolo you once loved?" demanded Di Logano. "Because," replied he, "I thought you abhorred pleasure purchased at the expence of another's pain—if you are still virtuous, I shall continue to love you." "Enough!" cried he; "I go.—Adieu, my cruel uncle; Miranda, adieu!"—He then rushed back into the cave, and Henrico returned with Miranda to Casa Bianca. Roberto was immediately dispatched to take care of the imprudent Napolo, but when he arrived at the recess, the latter had quitted it. Miranda's mind was agitated by the strange incoherency of conduct which had been attached to the name of Vicenza—under which she had experienced the greatest kindness and the most public disgrace, when her face was exposed to the rude populace of Naples, as the criminal accomplice of her father. On the other hand Henrico regretted that he had stimulated the forbearance of Napolo, and exhibited him in a virtuous light to Miranda, the recollection of whose accursed father renewed his keen regrets at the unfortunate error of Valoria, his wife.

The servant whom Henrico had dispatched to the Marchese now returned, having pursued him from place to place till he traced him back to Naples, where he had delivered his letter; and, after two days delay, had received the answer he returned with to his Signor. This answer much discomposed Henrico; it stated that he hoped he would preserve his nephew, Napolo, the descendant of two illustrious houses, from the fascination of this artful girl, who had so much imposed upon himself; and that he should come to Casa Bianca for two or three weeks, with his daughter Doria, if his brother still had a tender interest in the happiness of his niece. The subject of the letter, and the reflections levelled at Miranda, were extremely painful to Henrico; and, after a sleepless night, he announced the unwelcome approach of the Marchesa and Doria del Ponto to Miranda, who earnestly requested he would conceal her from their presence and contempt. Henrico proposed to take her to Fermo, a small place by the sea-side; but when Miranda reflected on the pain that would follow a separation from him, she would have declined this offer, but her kind protector over-ruled her scruples on his account; and the next morning

was fixed for her departure, under the care of Bianca and Roberto. During the journey, Bianca entertained her with drawing comparisons between Henrico and the Marchesa, in favour of the former, and assuring Miranda that if she were her Padrone's own child, she could not be more esteemed by him. After they had crossed the lofty and snow-topped Appenines, they entered a country the reverse of the delightful plain of Foligno. About half a league from Fermo, and not so far from the sea-shore, they arrived at their little mansion, the owners of which, previously informed by Roberto, ran out to welcome their new guests. The family consisted of a fisherman, his wife, and three children, who were loud in their praises of Signor Henrico; after the young lady had recovered her fatigue a little, the good woman conducted her to the pavilion which the Signor had built and inhabited during two years, at various intervals.—It was nearly surrounded by a semi-circular mountain, and its entrance was through a vineyard belonging to Rossano, the fisherman. This was to be the residence of their new guests while they staid, and Miranda in a few days found no other want than the presence of her benefactor. Bianca learned from Rossano the following account of himself:—"Fourteen years back I carried on the same trade, and lived on the same spot I do now.—I was partner with my wife's brother, and one night we were driven out to sea and picked up by a Turkish rover, who was not long after attacked by a Venetian Galley, in which engagement I was re-captured and my brother killed. I was landed at Ancona, a ruined man, possessed of nothing but the smiles of my wife, to whom I hastened. My grief attracted the notice of a worthy gentleman, going the same road; this was no other than the Signor Henrico del Ponto, who accompanied me home, and from whose bounty I have had my barks, my nets, and all my comforts restored as you see, and to which every friend of the worthy Signor is heartily welcome."—His tale being finished, they returned to rest, and the next day the fisherman's wife, Sorella, sent one of her boys to conduct Miranda to the top of the tall cliff, which commanded a view of the Adriatic. The prospect reminded Miranda of the painful transactions which she had been a partaker of, but the lad soon called her attention to his father's boats, returning laden with fish, which was to be sold at Fermo, the following morning early, and drew from Miranda's mind a comparison between the ill-gotten wealth of Foro, and the honest undisguised employment of Rossano. She had often wished to be acquainted with the means by which Signor Napolo had discovered her father's retreat, and prevented her from feeling his rage, if he were in danger of being punished. This, and the difficulties Henrico had experienced in withdrawing her from Naples, were all known to Bianca, but the latter rejected every attempt at discovery. More than three weeks had now elapsed without hearing from her kind protector, and the anxiety of Miranda became depicted in her countenance. Her melancholy at length increased so much, that Roberto, under the excuse of business at Fermo, set off for Casa Bianca. The attentions of the family were exerted to amuse her, and Bianca became almost as low-spirited as her mistress, for whom she had a warmth of affection nearly equal to that of Henrico. Miranda was in a reverie, when one day Bianca ran to her, and entreated that she would go to the cabin, and share in the joy of Rossano, who had assisted a boat in getting to shore, which contained a lady and two Christian slaves, who had made their escape from Turkish slavery.

When Miranda entered the lady's apartment she was kneeling, in the act of returning thanks for her escape.—The air of the stranger was impressive and noble, and as her habit was Turkish, Miranda doubted if she should be understood.—The lady however replied to Miranda's welcome in Italian, and in an impressive manner asked her name and who were her parents?—"I am an unfortunate," replied Miranda; "and as for my father, alas! he is no more!"—Miranda now intreated that her dignified guest would remove with her to the pavilion, while her attendants

should be accommodated in the fisherman's hut.—When they reached the pavilion, Bianca not being present, Miranda undertook the friendly task of assisting the lady to disrobe, previously to her taking repose.—Miranda found her curiosity much excited by the conversation of the stranger, who stated that she had anxious and fearful enquiries to make about her family—about the connexions so dear to her soul, whom she yet hoped existed, to gild the decline of her life!—Having retired to rest, Miranda retired to her favourite walk, and was there joined by Bianca, who had been collecting the particulars of Don Lopez and Samio, the lady's two companions.—“Whence come they?” said Miranda. “From Greece,” replied Bianca, “where they have been slaves. The Spaniard, Don Lopez, had not seen Christian ground for seventeen years; the lady has been a captive still longer; but Samio lost his liberty very lately, and it is to his contrivance they owe their freedom.”—This was all Bianca knew of the lady; and, after some consultation, they returned to the pavilion, to await her rising.

The repose of the stranger was short, and when she awoke, she informed Miranda, that the joy which had filled her bosom at finding herself safe from the Turkish tyrants had subsided into the most lively anxiety for her long unseen kindred, awakened by the ties of a mother and a wife.—She then eagerly demanded the name of her young friend, and if she knew ought of the family of Del Ponto, at Naples.—Miranda had just related her name, when Signor Henrico entered the apartment. “My child! my Miranda!” said he, “Roberto has alarmed me for your health, and I have flown to relieve your uneasiness!”

“He knows me not!” exclaimed the stranger. “Can years of sorrow then have made Henrico forget the voice of Claudia?”—Henrico regarded her for a moment, and then rushed into her extended arms, exclaiming, “Gracious Heaven! it is my sister, my Claudia, whom we have mourned so long!” After the first transports had subsided, Miranda was observed stealing from the room, fearful of the shame of her mother being exposed to the sister of her benefactor; but Claudia called her back, assured her of her affection, and asked if she could be mistaken in the resemblance of her features?—Miranda was silent; and, while Bianca endeavoured to raise her sinking spirits, Claudia turned to Henrico, and demanded if the Marchesa del Ponto, and her son, her Napolo, were still living.—Henrico answered in the affirmative, and assured her that her excellent Napolo should be immediately sent for; after which they would proceed to Casa Bianca, where his brother Eugenio and Doria, whom she had left an infant, then were.—Claudia's husband had perished in endeavouring to rescue her from captivity.

“And now,” said Henrico, leading Miranda to Claudia, “let me claim your love and pity for this dear unfortunate orphan.” “Yes;” replied Claudia, “I solemnly vowed this to your Valoria, at the fatal hour when she died, in giving birth to your daughter.—The earnest prayers of that dear victim are thus heard; for I behold *your* child under your protection.”—“That dear *victim!*” exclaimed Henrico, with an aspect of horror. “*My* child too!—Alas! alas! you know not that this girl is the daughter of Nazarra!”—“Infatuated and cruel Henrico!” replied Claudia, what tale is this?—Valoria died to preserve her child to you; and do you calumniate both by a false stigma?—Miranda now sprung from the floor, on which she had fallen, and exclaimed that she was happy! Henrico looked wild; and, drawing his sword, affirmed there was but one way left of avenging his turpitude in disowning his innocent child and wife! Miranda threw herself into his arms, as he was going to strike; his sword dropped, and he pressed her to his bosom.

“The peaceful spirit of Valoria,” said the Marchesa di Logano, “rejects such a rash atonement. Protect your daughter, and thus shew you still love her mother! Alas! when Valoria and I quitted Naples, after she fled from the tyranny of her uncle, who could have foreseen the destiny that awaited us?—Previously to her flight, she entrusted the infamous Nazarra with a letter for you, subjoining her motives, the principal one of which was her pregnancy with Miranda.—When we are more collected, I will relate the whole story; in the mean time let us talk not of the villain Nazarra, but hope he has suffered the reward of his infamy; and I shall request you to dispatch a trusty messenger to my Napoli, whom I have not beheld for eighteen long years!” Henrico immediately sent the faithful Roberto away, and gave orders for preparing to remove to Casa Bianca, which place he was to take in his way, and leave a note for the Marchesa del Ponto to prepare him for the events so unexpected.

The Marchesa di Logano now introduced her companions to the Signor Henrico.—“These Chevaliers,” said she, “have been my friends and deliverers:—as such embrace them.” Don Lopez started and looked disordered.—After a pause, he said, “Behold, in me, Signor, the struggles of a wounded conscience. When Valoria Ludini preferred your suit to mine, I trampled on honour and humanity! I assisted Nazarra in completing your misery: but I did not then know he was so deep a villain, or think that Henrico had claims upon her I loved, which no human power could conceal. Finding myself a dupe to his villainy, I threatened his life if he concealed from me the place where he had hidden Valoria; but he sold me to slavery; and, as an atonement for my crime, I will dedicate my life to prayer and solitude. I am anxious to make reparation for the fault I have long ago committed, and will immediately sign an attestation before any tribunal, affirming, that a daughter was born to the house of Del Ponto, in a cavern upon the Neapolitan coast; this Nazarra himself confessed; but how that daughter will be identified, must be left to Providence, unless the spirit of Valoria could rise from the dead.—Farewell, Signor, and Miranda, you, whose tender years have been blighted through my misdeeds. I will relieve you now from the presence of one so odious.” Don Lopez then suddenly withdrew, and Claudia enlarged upon the future importance of this discovery to Miranda.

Henrico, when Don Lopez had retired, recovered himself, and stated, that he could ill suppress his personal resentment, at the Don’s persecution of Valoria, in which he had availed himself of the power of her uncle the Count Ludini.—The other companion of the Marchesa was now admitted to the friendship of Henrico, and was recognised by him to be a person formerly known to the Marchesa and himself as the Count di Burgos. On the following day, the party set off for Casa Bianca, and took leave of all the fisherman’s family; but Don Lopez could not be traced any where, which created some uneasiness, as it was feared he meant to evade the promised confession. As Henrico approached his brother, he felt his agitation at the coming interview increase: he knew the rigid and unblemished ideas he entertained of family honour, which he conceived might be tarnished by captivity, and Miranda’s familiarity with such a man as Foro.

The Marchesa met the carriage at the door, and received his sister with emotions of joy; but he passed Miranda unnoticed. Secretly displeased, Henrico now introduced her to Doria as his own daughter, and the orphan of his late wife, of the family of Ludini, who received her with a marked indifference. The Marchesa had retired to a separate apartment with his sister, who related to him her history, and wholly exculpated Valoria from the crime with which Don Lopez



and Nazarra had stained her memory: but his flinty bosom advised Claudia to enter a convent, since her dignity had been sullied by being the slave of a Mahometan merchant, and therefore could no longer appear as a daughter of the house of Farnesa, or the widow of the noble Di Logano.

Claudia rejected his advice with contempt; and, when he declared that he would never own Miranda Foro for his niece, the tale of whose birth was not adapted to his faith, her indignation broke out into a keen defiance of his power, which drove the Marchesa from the room. Miranda shortly after experienced the same renunciation on the part of the Marchesa, and flew to her father and Claudia for consolation.

The comfort and tranquillity of the family were now in some measure restored by the hasty departure of their noble guests, and Claudia became occupied by her anxiety to see her son, of whom Henrico and Miranda spoke with a reserve that alarmed her. The mystery, however, was soon solved by Bianca, who related his partiality for the supposed daughter of Foro, and the opposition of Eugenio, who had intended him for his daughter Doria. Claudia would have immediately joined their hands; but would the family of his father suffer their union while the Marchese refused her claim to his blood!—The defection of Don Lopez was now deeply regretted by Claudia and Henrico, who had sent Roberto in search of him to Fermo.—Ten days had passed since Roberto set off; and Napolo had not yet appeared; and Claudia determined, if he did not come within another week, to go to Naples, and see if he were detained by the barbarous Eugenio till her own fate was decided upon. In the mean time the Count di Burgos departed for Spain, and left them with the tenderest regrets. Napolo not appearing at the limited time, Henrico and Miranda prepared to accompany Claudia, whose impatience brooked no longer delay. On the road to Spoleto, they met a domestic of Napolo, who announced that his master was not half a league behind, and that he had rode forward to announce his coming.

In ten minutes they saw the Cavalier galloping up to them. Miranda inwardly said, this is Vicenza, while his uncle cried out, “Here is Di Logano!” and Claudia fainted.—When she recovered, her son pressed her closely to his bosom, and assured her of his unalterable affections. He also asked forgiveness of Miranda for his follies, and stated that the good Helena would visit his mother in a few days; he had communicated the intelligence to her, which he had received from the Count di Burgos, to whom he had flown for particulars on hearing the report of his escape. It appeared extraordinary that Napolo had not received the information from Roberto, for whose long absence they could not account. The party having reached Casa Bianca in safety, Claudia retired to converse with her Son, while Henrico explained to Miranda the uneasiness he felt at the passion Di Logano still shewed by his looks he possessed for her rather than Doria del Ponto.

Miranda promised to avoid him as much as possible.—In a few minutes after which Claudia led in her son, whose attentive conduct to Miranda gave her the most uneasy sensations. The next day Henrico requested his sister to relate the history of this unfortunate Valoria, and she commenced in this manner:—“When you, my brother, was attending the dying moments of our uncle Augusto, the Count Ludini eagerly pressed the suit of Don Lopez de Marnos with our hapless Valoria. The situation of my poor friend, privately married to you, had detained me in Naples much longer than I intended, as I wished to be at Messina with my infant Napolo. My

correspondence with Valoria was soon checked, for Count Ludini forbid all communication with our family, as you, Henrico, was the obstacle to Don Lopez's marriage with his niece, which much displeased Eugenio, who however soon forgot his resentment in the acquisition of a good estate, which fell to him from the death of the Duke of Palma.—Meantime the villain Nazarra employed the life you had preserved in conspiring against your happiness.—He undertook to convey your letter to Valoria, and perform the same office for me, by means of a girl who had lived with the Countessa Ludini, and who, although she had left the house, still had free ingress. Alas, I had no suspicion of fraud, and freely settled a plan with Valoria, (whose pregnant situation could not much longer be concealed,) for her escape to Sicily. Our letters were all inspected by Nazarra and Don Lopez, who aided her flight, and with the artful girl Loretta, joined me on board the vessel I had hired.

“The presence of Nazarra, accompanied with a horrible look of triumph as he left the cabin, alarmed me. In a short time after a brigantine corsair hove in sight, and, notwithstanding we were well armed, Nazarra talked of surrender. I flew to the deck and animated my men, but what could valour do against treachery! Nazarra set fire to our vessel, and in the confusion we were all captured, except our brave defenders, who were left to perish in the wreck. The inanimate Valoria was placed in the cabin with me, where Nazarra soon after descended, and informed me that we were wholly in his power; at the same time giving orders to steer for the cavernous retreat on the sea shore.—Here we arrived, and were placed in that dreadful abode, with Loretta, and an old woman for our attendants. Valoria, when her calmness had returned, demanded of Nazarra if you were not to share her solitude. “No,” replied the monster, “you shall never behold him more!” Even Nazarra was shocked at her cries, and begged me to console her:—I, who was racked with mental torture at the loss of husband, child, and brother. “Tell my Henrico,” said Valoria, “that in dying I am his; and if my dear infant survive me, restore it to his paternal arms!” After this she relapsed in to phrenzy, in which she continued till a few days before Miranda was born.

“When I demanded the motive which induced our tyrant to confine us, he unblushingly avowed it.” “I know it,” replied Henrico; “he avowed it to me in prison, and when he dared traduce the virtue of an angel, I became furious, and plunged my sword into his breast.—But my suspicion of Valoria's infidelity still remained.—Her flight with him—a letter of affection, in her writing, in which that plan was settled, but not addressed to me; with other circumstances I then thought indubitable, have misled me.” “The inquiries,” continued Claudia, “which Valoria made for you, ever threw the tyrant into a rage. He had allowed us a few books, which Valoria highly prizing, saved in a small box from our vessel when burning.” “Ah, those books,” said Henrico, “confirmed my suspicions when they were produced by Miranda.—They contained my hand writing in a few lines I had addressed to her; and, being found in the retreat of Nazarra, my senses almost failed me!”

“We had lived in our hated prison,” proceeded Claudia, “nearly three months, when the crisis of Valoria's fate arrived. From the repentant Loretta I learned that Nazarra was the father of a child then at her breast; and that his promises of marriage and threats had induced her to promote his views. She stated her fears at the ungovernable passion of Nazarra for Valoria, when she had completely recovered from her lying-in. A fortnight after the the birth of Miranda, I heard the grating which closed up the mouth of our cave unlocked, and Nazarra entered the place

where Valoria was rocking her child to repose.—She started on beholding him, and uttered a faint scream—“Hark! cried she, “my dear babe, your father calls!—He bids me come away!” A fit of phrensy had seized her, which continued five nights, and at last proved fatal. Exhausted with watching, I left her to the care of the old woman, who imprudently left her; when the dear sufferer rose from her couch, and taking the lamp set fire to her bed; and, from the oil spilled on her clothes, neither Nazarra nor his man could extinguish the flame, till it had nearly consumed her. I hurried her into another apartment, and the melancholy sufferer had but few minutes of reason, amidst seven hours of acute torment, before she expired. During this small interval, she summoned me to her, and said, as she pressed my hand, “My sister, let this dear infant be called Miranda, the name which my Henrico addressed me by in our secret correspondence.—Give him my babe, all that remains on earth of his Valoria!—Do you, my sister, rear her helpless infancy, and teach her the beauty of virtue.”—I had just time to assure her of an eternal friendship for her Miranda, when she expired in my arms.

“Nazarra, who was now savage and gloomy in his temper, swore that, as he had esteemed Valoria, so should her last request be fulfilled, and the infant be sent to the convent of the White Carmelites at Naples, which I had named, where she was to remain ten years, after she had attained her fourth year.—He allowed me to address a billet to one of the superior sisters, claiming her protection for Miranda Foro.—This billet he promised to deliver. I then interceded that the infant might see her father; but, with dreadful imprecations on your head, he refused, because it might prove a source of comfort to you! The body of Valoria was taken in a splendid coffin to a boat, but where it went, I believe, is only known to Servilla, the old woman.”—“Six months ago,” exclaimed Miranda, “she was alive, and I was in that cave.—If she still exists——” “The villain stabbed her,” interrupted Henrico, “as he stood at the bar of justice, and his motive is now too well explained. Proceed, Claudia.”

“I soon found,” she resumed, “the dreadful extent of his tyranny; for he sold me to a Tunisian Corsair, who again sold me to a Turk, on the point of returning to his native land, with whom I remained seventeen years, without passing the walls that enclosed me. Jaffa after this period removed to a place on the sea shore, a few leagues north of Chimære, having obtained an appointment as inspector of duties on the coast. One day, as I was contemplating the waves which divided me from my native land, a Grecian girl came to request I would interpret between her companions and a young European slave, who had scaled their park wall. This introduced me to Samio, who was a Sicilian; and when I next saw him, he informed me that he had spoken to a Spaniard, Don Lopez, who, having heard what he had said of the Neapolitan Lady, had sworn to liberate her; and as Jaffa was now absent for a few days, the plan of my escape was finally settled.—Their joint efforts the next night loosened a long boat from the side of a vessel; and, by the help of Samio and a ladder of ropes, I scaled the walls, and was conducted to our little vessel. We set sail; and my friendly companions, after having toiled till their hope and strength failed, at last came in sight of the fishing boats of Rossano, whose assistance placed me again on my native land, and revived the blessings of once more beholding my family and friends!”

Here the Marchesa ceased; and when the first effusion of thanks were past, she asked Miranda if she recollected the person of Loretta, to which she replied in the negative.—“My sister,” said Henrico, “may converse with Barca Foro, and thus ascertain if she is the Loretta before mentioned.” The long absence of Roberto now occasioning some uneasiness, a removal

from Naples was proposed when Claudia had sufficiently recovered to undertake the journey.— On the following day arrived the good Helena, who clung to the knees of the Marchesa with the liveliest emotions of joy, and was in turn welcomed by her and Miranda with an equal warmth. “Ah,” said Helena, “your sudden disappearance cost me and the Signor Napolo many a sigh; and when, as I believe, the villain Foro set fire to the Villa della Rocca, and you were missing, he passed many a day and night in discovering you; at last to behold you so *unexpectedly*, at Naples.—Oh! what he felt when he told me of it.”

The Marchesa put a close to the conversation, which was beginning to renew unpleasant remembrances, by desiring Miranda to present Helena to old Carolo and Theresa. In the course of the day Miranda sought Helena, and asked if Bonetta still lived at the Villa della Rocca. “No,” replied the good woman: “she afterwards went to Naples in the same vessel that conveyed Napolo, after he had traversed all Sicily in search of you.” It was Bonetta who discovered that Giralmo was one of the plunderers of the Villa; for Napolo had requested her to frequent his fruit shop, and it was not many days before she saw him enter. He started, and, after gazing at her a minute, rushed out again. “What ails my husband!” exclaimed Barca, his wife:—“but never mind, as he has been away so long together lately, I wish he would never return to embitter my life!” Bonetta, convinced it was he who had taken you from the villa, hastened to the Signor Napolo, who, after enjoining her to silence, went the following day to the house of Foro, and asked to see him. The answer he received was that he might not be at home for a month or more. As he was returning disheartened, an ill looking fellow accosted him; “Signor,” said he, “I have a private message for your ear.—The fellow you have been seeking is in another place.”—They retired to a private nook under a convent wall. “If you value the life of Foro’s daughter, said the man, “you must stop the mouth of that woman who was at his shop the day before: nay, if you would avert, his dagger from her heart, you must deliver the old witch to me, dead or alive!”

Napolo, though he could not immediately undertake this, swore in the mean time Bonetta should be silent, and exacted an oath from the villain with respect to your safety. At the end of seven or eight days, Foro, relying on the promises of the young Cavalier, came to the rendezvous himself, well attended, to induce Napolo to confess who the man and woman were who accompanied you to the villa—for Roberto and I were both marked for death. Fortunately I was at my cottage, and Roberto had been sent out of the way for fear of Foro or his gang. However, Roberto, having found out by accident that you had lived some weeks at Nicatera, hastened to Naples; and learning that Napolo often trusted himself in the hands of such a set of villains, he without hesitation gave private information to the officers of justice, and they were all captured near the Bay of Naples.

Roberto after this went to the Marchese, and told him what had been done; who immediately set out to his nephew, then shut up in his palace; and, finding him ignorant of the capture of Foro, desired him to escort his cousin Doria, to Pozzuolo, where Signor Henrico lay ill: mean time the Marchese traced out where you had been placed.—Napolo, pleased when he arrived at his uncle’s, to find his illness a mistake, set off for Naples the following day; the carriage being stopped by the croud, as it drove through the city, he saw you pass as a criminal; and, to ascertain the truth, he alighted from his carriage, rushed through the people, and, pulling aside your long flowing hair, you fell senseless into his arms. The gaolers then carried you away, and overwhelmed him with consternation—a fever ensued, and his only comfort was that,

through the intercession of Henrico, you had been leniently treated, and that he meant to protect you. Napolo appeared after this to have given you up, nor would he see his uncle Henrico, who then learned from Roberto the mistake you were still in respecting the real name of your cousin, which had made the Marchese say you had invented a tale to deceive him. After this Napolo suddenly left Naples and came to Sicily, and then I heard all this I have related.—Ah, Signora, the young Cavalier was more unhappy than you can imagine.”

Here the entrance of the Marchesa closed Helena’s account.—The inferences Miranda drew from Helena’s story were highly in favour of Napolo.—She comprehended every part of his conduct, which had appeared before cruel and obscure, and in some measure regretted the promise she had made her father not to see him privately: her duty nevertheless overcoming her inclination, in the evening she followed her father to the saloon, and presented him with a billet, Napolo had sent privately by the hand of old Carolo. After reading it attentively, and thanking her for her confidence, he told her she might attend to the appointment, and he would join her. Miranda looked at him with surprise, and her father proceeded to explain his motives. “Tomorrow evening, my child,” said he, “I hope the Marchesa will accompany us on the way to Naples, where my brother must acknowledge you as a daughter of the house of Del Ponto, or we separate for ever! At present, therefore, till this be effected, and your claims are admitted by the Ludini family, he must learn to think only of you as his cousin.”

Miranda then left her father to meet Napolo in the grove. The reserve she manifested to his tender entreaties, drew from him the most warm expressions of regard; and Miranda could not help confessing that the Marchese’s refusal to acknowledge her legitimacy, was the cause of his cold reception, in compliance with her father’s request. While they conversed, Henrico entered the grove, and Napolo immediately addressed him upon the cruelty with which he regarded his affection for Miranda. “I have very solid objections to your suit, said Henrico. “There is your long-projected marriage with Doria; and, while Eugenio considers Miranda as the bar to his long-cherished designs, I fear she will have no justice from him.—When, however, I present to Miranda the youth whom I select as her husband, and she approve my choice, you may then, Napolo, regret you did not make a voluntary sacrifice of your inclination.” Miranda would have withdrawn, but her cousin prevented her. “Say,” exclaimed he, “when your father presents this favoured youth, will you forget Napolo di Logano.” At this juncture the Marchesa joined them, and eagerly asked the cause of their seeming anxieties. “Claudia,” said her brother, “your Napolo is inconsiderate; he has much pained the heart of this dear girl. Take him hence while I endeavour to calm her agitation.” The youth then retired with his mother, and Henrico conducted Miranda to her apartment, convinced of the deep impression Napolo had made in her gentle heart.—Before Henrico quitted Foligno, he dispatched a servant to the habitation of the fisherman, to enquire if Don Lopez had been heard of; but the reply being unfavourable, with regret he saw he must rely on the single evidence of the Marchesa to establish Miranda’s claim, unless he could meet with any of the accomplices of Foro, or that the wife of Nazarra should prove to be the Loretta mentioned by his sister; but many circumstances seemed to contradict this, though Miranda had stated that Loretta had a daughter older than herself. The disappearance of Roberto, too, gave him much inquietude, who was one of the witnesses of his marriage with Valoria.

No obstacle occurring to prevent their projected removal from Casa Bianca, they set off

in the evening, with Napolo and the Marchesa for Naples. When the party had arrived at Pozzuolo, near to Naples, Henrico signified a wish that Napolo should take his mother to his own palace in that city, until he could bring the Marchesa del Ponto over to the interests of Miranda.—Claudia urged the necessity of this, and her son quitted his uncle with infinite regret, which Miranda somewhat softened by the declaration that she should eternally be sensible of his generous attachments. It now occurred to the Marchesa, that if the Madre Santa Lora were living, and had the letter she addressed to her, which Nazarra had promised to deliver with Miranda to the Carmelites, it might be a strong evidence in her favour; she therefore asked Miranda if she knew whether this obligation had ever been performed? Miranda recollected that the Madre Santa Lora, who had ever been her friend, had inquired of her the place whence she came, and where she was nursed, neither of which Miranda knew. It was plain, however, that the billet had been delivered to Claudia's friend, whom Miranda expressed a wish to visit in her convent, under the care of Claudia. Henrico agreed to accompany them, to thank the Santa Lora for her former protection of the once-friendless Miranda, and promised her an interview with Juliana Felicia at his own house.

Miranda felt considerable pain when they entered Naples, and came in sight of the convent from which she had been driven with ignominy. Upon enquiry for the Superior, they learned that the Madre Santa Lora was raised to that high station, and the Marchesa del Ponto sent in her name. While they waited for an answer, Henrico said he would visit his brother, and endeavour to gain admittance to the place where the wife of Nazarra was confined; after which he would return to the convent.—The sincere joys of friendship were visible on the Madre's countenance, when she recognized her old intimate Claudia Farnesa, who warmly thanked her for the child she had so beneficently protected at her request.—They then adjourned to the Madre's own apartment, where Claudia unfolded her story, and the Madre recollected that she had the identical note given at the time of Miranda's admission. The Signor Henrico was now announced at the grate, and they quitted the interior of the convent to join him. The Superior produced the letter delivered to her by Foro. "Alas!" exclaimed Henrico, "what does it avail, since the wife of that villain maintains that Miranda is *her* daughter. I was not admitted to see her, but my brother Eugenio has already questioned her, who is now more unreasonable than at Casa Bianca." The Superior promised to use her influence with her brother the Prince di Nuovi, and it was proposed that Henrico should visit the convent the next day to know the result of her visit, as introductory to Henrico's explaining the whole business.—Before leaving the convent, Miranda would have exculpated herself from the charge of the necklace, but Santa Lora would not permit it, as she said her friend Juliana, who often visited her, was ever her zealous defender, and whom with Henrico's permission, she should very soon embrace.

After agreeing to meet the Superior's brother at the convent, they separated, as the Marchesa wished to return to Pozzuolo.—Observing that Henrico seemed thoughtful, the Marchesa enquired if her brother Eugenio had not expressed any desire to see her again, and, upon learning his indifference, she determined immediately to repair to her son's house in Naples, and pass the Palace del Ponto as the mansion of a stranger; independent of her brother's disapprobation, she determined to declare to the nobility and her friends the birth of Miranda, and her own unfortunate story.—When the Marchesa came in sight of the Palace del Ponto, she wept; and on the arrival of the carriage in the court yard of her son, the domestics came around, welcoming their widowed long-lost mistress with every testimony of joy.—Napolo flew to

embrace his mother, and, seeing Miranda, he interceded that she might not depart that day, which, at the request of Claudia, Henrico granted. "The interest (said she) the Prince di Nuovi has with the Viceroy has invigorated my hopes.—Miranda shall appear at the palace of the Viceroy as my niece and Henrico's daughter, nor shall she be subject to disdain because she is disowned by the Marchese."—Miranda and her father in the evening departed to their own villa at Pozzuolo.

The following day brought the Prince di Nuovi and the young Count di Burgos, whom Miranda could hardly recognize for the Samio, worn with anxiety and toil, whom she had seen at Casa Bianca. Considering him as the rival of Napolo, Miranda received him coldly. Henrico took an opportunity to inform her that a reconciliation had taken place with his brother, through the Count di Burgos's testimony of Don Lopez's confession to him, and that tomorrow she was to be introduced to the Marchese. The Prince the next day was highly charmed with the manners of Miranda, and announced that Juliana was to be at the convent of his sister to-morrow, to receive the pleasure of embracing her long-lost friend; after which he would introduce her to the Princess.

The Prince returned the same evening, but Di Burgos did not depart till the next day, when he accompanied Miranda and her father to Naples; and, when they parted, received the most friendly welcome to renew his visit at Pozzuolo. When the carriage stopped at the Carmelite Convent, the equipage of Signora Vicenza was already at the gate.—He then retired to his brother's, and left Miranda to the care of her Superior, who conducted her to her beloved Juliana, and participated in their mutual demonstrations of joy.—Miranda, at her friend's request, retraced the events which had happened since their separation. A nun now entered to announce that Henrico was at the grate. Taking leave of the Superior, Juliana accompanied Miranda to her father, and interceded that her young friend might remain a few days with her, which Henrico consented to, when she had been properly recognized by her own family.

Miranda having taken leave of Juliana, the carriage drove to the Marchese's, to effect the interview she so much dreaded. Her uncle received her as the Signora Miranda del Ponto, with a studied coldness—his daughter did not make her appearance. After some unimportant conversation, he turned suddenly to Miranda, and congratulated her on the conquest she had made of the Count di Burgos, who, he was happy to inform her, had obtained the joint consent of her father and himself; he therefore looked upon her assent as a natural consequence. Miranda was with difficulty able to support herself, and wholly unable to reply. Henrico saw her distress, and his indignation was just rising, when Napolo rushed into the room.—"Rejoice, my Miranda!" he exclaimed; "let all be happy!—The wife of Foro is found to be that very Loretta to whom you were delivered at the death of the Signora Valoria.—Don Lopez too is in Naples, and brings from the Spanish court an approbation of the claims of Miranda del Ponto, and an acknowledgment from the Count Ludini.—The Viceroy has admitted these papers, and shewn them to all the nobility.—What plea can you now urge, Henrico, for refusing me your lovely Miranda?" "None!" replied he, firmly: "Claudia may now wait upon her cousin when she wishes to see her, and marry Di Burgos instead of Miranda!"

Eugenio rushed out of the room, foaming with rage, and Henrico presented to Napolo the hand he had so long coveted. Napolo threw himself at the feet of his uncle, and Miranda could

only give utterance to her joy by alternately embracing her father and lover. Napolo then informed them that her friends, with the Superior of the Carmelites, were waiting at the Palace di Nuovi to congratulate her, and thither they repaired without delay. The Prince conducted her from the carriage to an apartment where she found the Marchesa di Logano, whose joy, almost equalled that of her son, and who willingly undertook the charge of being in every respect the mother of Miranda. The Prince di Nuovi afterwards led Miranda into the public apartments, and introduced her to his daughter, surrounded by the most distinguished personages of Naples.

At the close of the day Miranda and her father took up their residence with the Marchesa and the enraptured Napolo, to whose palace the Signora del Ponto was also invited. The servant who had carried the letter, unconscious of the relationship of Bianca and the widow of Foro, told the household at Pozzuolo the circumstances which had occasioned so much joy at the Palace di Logano. The poor old Bianca fainted at the news, and then set out for Naples, to implore forgiveness for her daughter Loretta. Henrico received her with kindness, and informed her that both Loretta and Bellana, her daughter, would be released on the morrow at the intercession of Miranda. Scarcely had Bianca retired when another penitent appeared; this was Don Lopez di Marnos, who brought from Spain the authenticated instrument of the Count Ludini, acknowledging the legitimacy of Miranda's birth and claims to the name of her father and inheritance of her mother, "It was to obtain this," said Don Lopez, "that I left the cabin of Rossano, upon hearing from the Marchesa di Logano that the child of Henrico was rejected from a cruel stigma. Learning that my former friend, the Count di Ludini, was dead, and that his son was at Madrid, I followed him there; but he basely refused to refund the fortune of his injured relative, or admit the legality of her daughter's birth: fortunately however, among the servants I discovered one whom I had seen acting as an agent of Nazarra, and I caused him to be arrested.—This fellow confessed that he was present at the birth of a female child, (a daughter of Henrico's by a private marriage,) three months after, but he knew not if the child existed. This intelligence, added to that of the Marchesa di Logano, had compelled the Count Ludini to sign the acknowledgment before withholden. I have gained much of my information in the catacombs, which I knew was the general rendezvous of Nazarra and his accomplices. I will detail this at another opportunity, but at present the Viceroy waits to congratulate the Marchesa upon her liberation from captivity."

This ceremony being past, Napolo assumed the title of his father, the Marchese di Logano; and his dwelling for several days was crowded with congratulatory visits of distinction. The Miranda del Ponto retired indignantly to Sicily, with his proud daughter: while the Count di Burgos, learning that Miranda was unfriendly to his suit, hastily quitted Naples. No obstruction now appearing to the alliance of Napolo and Miranda, it was settled that it should take place at Casa Bianca; previously to which, however, Henrico wished to converse with the repentant Loretta about the place where the remains of Valoria had been deposited; and Miranda expressed a desire to assure the daughter of her valued Bianca of her forgiveness. She had retired to the Benedictine nunnery, whither Henrico and his daughter unaccompanied directed their course. Loretta, in a few minutes after their enquiry, appeared at the grate in the habit of her order: she testified the keenest remorse at the injuries she had done to Henrico and Miranda; and answered his queries by saying that the remains of Valoria lay near the sepulchre of 'St. Proculus, in the catacombs of Naples. "Tell me," said Henrico, "where were the first years of my child passed?" "In Calabria, with me," replied Loretta; "and when Nazarra saw I was as fond of the child as my



own, he came to the secluded hut where I lived, and expressed great fondness for the child for the sake of Valoria, promising that if I would pass for its mother, and let it go to the Carmelite convent, he would marry me, change his name to Foro, and live in a respectable manner at Naples. This he performed, but the oath of secrecy I had sworn on the holy cross, added to his suspicious and rigid treatment, made the lives of myself and Bellana, my daughter, quite miserable. He had kept the writing of the Signora Marchesa, which he preserved, scratching out only some part which contradicted the child being his. His hatred to you, Signor, made him resolve that you should never know the pleasure of being father to such an angel, and from that time I seldom saw her. His tyranny and fear lest I should betray his secret increased daily; but I was quite ignorant of the continuance of his piratical villainy, after our coming to Naples. He prevented me from making any enquiry respecting my mother, but his own he brought from Sicily, and she is since dead.”

Having finished their business at the convent, they entered their carriage, and, as it passed slowly under the wall of a monastery, flanked on each side by thick and gloomy trees, Henrico observed the pale countenance and feeble frame of a man whom he thought he recognised.—In a moment the weary traveller was assaulted by a lurking assassin, who had the audacity to stab him within sight of the carriage, from which Henrico immediately darted to the aid of the wounded man. Three villains now rushed from behind the trees, and attacked him with their naked swords. Miranda screamed, and fainted, for his death seemed inevitable. The traveller mean time, although wounded, raised himself up, and, drawing a pistol from his bosom, levelled it at the assassin who pressed the hardest on his defender. The bullet, true to its aim, killed the villain on the spot; Henrico’s servant coming up, and disabling another of the assailants, the rest fled with execrations of fury and disappointment. Henrico now ran to the carriage, where he found his daughter was safe, though the driver had disappeared: while he recovered her from her insensibility, the people who assembled assisted the wounded unfortunate, and secured the bravo. Henrico and his daughter then went to return their thanks to the traveller, who looked up, and cried, “It is my dear master! the saviour of my life!” “Roberto!” exclaimed Henrico; “Alas, how changed you are, so thin and feeble!” He was instantly removed by Henrico’s order, in a litter, to the Palace di Logano; and the prisoner was taken to gaol, where he persisted in being silent.

“I can inform you, Signor,” said Roberto, “of his design, and the haunts of his companions.—Their intent was to take, dead or alive, the Signor Napolo their secret leader is Rodello, who continues to infest the country.”—The carriage had not proceeded far, when Napolo met it, having heard the rumour of Miranda’s danger. When they reached his palace, Miranda was consigned to the care of the Marchesa; and Henrico, with his nephew, went to the Luogo-tenente, and demanded a guard, to assist in searching the catacombs, and a large cave near that of Pausilipus, where the accomplices of Rodello frequented.

The Marchese del Ponto, when he heard the danger to which his brother had been exposed, also set off with an escort to assist in the caption. Meanwhile, the greatest uneasiness reigned in the bosoms of the noble female residents whom Henrico had left at his nephew’s palace; they dispatched their servants to obtain intelligence of the termination of the meditated attack on Rodello and his crew; but they returned unsuccessful. At midnight, however, a tumult in the court-yard announced that their friends had returned and captured the banditti.

“Suffer me,” said Vicenza, turning to Miranda and the Marchesa, “to congratulate you on the destruction of a nest of villains, who will never more disturb your felicity.” Henrico was extremely affected when he learned that his faithful servant had been delirious during his absence.—“Had the poor fellow,” said he, “retained his senses, you would have had less anxiety on our account.—The officers of justice had learned of Roberto the resort of the villains; and, as they sometimes went near the cave of Pausilipus, our party was directed to watch there, while they were in fact taken by the military in the woods of Cassia, about an hour ago: the outlaws, to secure better terms, delivered up their leader.”

Henrico and Vicenza after this went to the house of the Luogo-tenente, to learn whatever was yet unknown of the story.—In a short time they returned, accompanied by the Spaniard, Don Lopez di Marnos. —Henrico introduced him as a repentant man, anxiously wishing for Miranda’s forgiveness, before he retired in solitude from the world, and by whose means the banditti in the wood of La Cassia had been discovered. “I have another expiation to make,” said Don Lopez; “I will take you to the tomb of Valoria, and you shall there see the proofs of affinity between that departed saint and this lady.”

The following morning was appointed for the journey, and Miranda was to accompany her father, followed by Napolo, who trembled at the prospect of her revisiting the catacombs of Naples, where she had once been bartered to Turkish tyranny; he determined to follow her privately, for fear of a second treachery. They waited impatiently some time for the appearance of Don Lopez, who, with a haggard and pale countenance, at length appeared to conduct them. Napolo, ever on the watch, perceived part of the handle of a stiletto under his vest, and would have persuaded his uncle not to go, but he was resolute. They departed, followed by Napolo at a small distance, with four servants well armed.

Having entered the catacombs, Don Lopez presented a torch to Henrico, and took another himself, suggesting, that, when the wrongs Valoria had endured were about to be avenged, the presence of the servants should be dispensed with.—Don Lopez then led the way to the sepulchre of St. Proculus; and, bending to the earth within a few yards of it, pointed out some mosaic work, on which laid a stone with the cross on it. “Behold the sacred spot where she is entombed!” exclaimed Don Lopez. After Miranda and her father had shed a tribute of tears on her remains, Henrico demanded if he were certain this spot contained his Valoria.—“You shall hear,” replied Don Lopez. “Nazarra betrayed me from this place to captivity, and when I returned, and heard the story of Miranda’s doubtful birth, I disguised myself, and watched in the tombs till an opportunity occurred of seizing one of Nazarra’s confederates.—The man I took was an enemy of the house of Del Ponto; and on my solemn promise that I would effect the destruction of the Marchese, he offered me his services. He then sought for one who had been an inhabitant of the cave with Valoria.—Having detached them both from the service of Rodello, I unfolded my plan of carrying them to Spain, where they testified the claims of Miranda. They had dug the grave of Valoria, and showed me her remains on this spot ere we departed; at which time I was reminded of my oath.

“Duty to society has made me inform against a nest of villains, and induced me to expiate my crime on the tomb of her, in whose early death I assisted!” Saying thus, he drew the stiletto, and plunged it in his bosom, falling lifeless on the grave of Valoria. The screams of Miranda

brought Napolo with his domestics, to whom he consigned the body of Don Lopez. After their terror had subsided, they re-entered the carriages, and returned to the Palace di Logano, where their friends anxiously expected them, and to whom Napolo related the fatal suicide. The body was conveyed to Spain, and a statement given to the officers of justice of the manner of his death. The corpse of Valoria was afterwards buried in the convent of the Carmelites, by the desire of the Superior.

Roberto was now sufficiently recovered to explain the cause of his long detention. "I arrived," said he, "safely in Naples, and there was soon after accosted by a meagre man, who proved to be Don Lopez.—His questions about the Ludini family alarmed me, and I resolved to watch him narrowly.—Finding that he had engaged a vessel to transport himself and two of Nazarra's gang to Spain, I contrived to be taken on board the same, thinking it was only a feint on his part.—Thus I was compelled to sail to Spain. By ingratiating myself with them on the voyage, I learned their haunts and practices. Don Lopez set off for Madrid with the banditti, while I took shipping to return immediately to my master.

Being taken ill of a fever, I was landed at Procita, and carried to a little inn. When somewhat recovered, I walked one day to an adjoining wood, and, lying down in the shade, fell asleep. At midnight I was awakened by the conversation of three men near me, one of whom called the other Rodello.—They discoursed upon the most effectual plan of murdering the whole house of Del Ponto; but nothing was decided on but the death of Napolo.

"When they separated I returned to the house, and related to my landlady what I had seen, who told it to the person who came in the next, and whom by his discourse I discovered to be one of the robbers. I immediately embarked for Naples, seeing he regarded me in a pointed manner; but the villain followed me close, and would have dispatched me under the convent-wall, but for the friendly arm of my dear master."

Roberto having finished his story, and received the warmest thanks for his conduct, the whole party set off for Rome by land, to forward the dispensation which Napolo thought his uncle Del Ponto would endeavour to retard.—The conversation in their journey was upon former scenes; and Miranda explained some of those things which had till now appeared dark. Hence it was known that the old woman, who had hidden herself in the catacombs from observation, was the agent of the Moor, and, informing him where Miranda had sheltered herself, the lurking Rodello dashed the light out of the hand of Morazan, and killed her with his dagger, which occasioned the confusion that ensued; the voice too, which had called to Miranda Foro to come forth was that of Napolo.

On the arrival of the party at Rome, the dispensation was obtained, and they returned to Casa Bianca, where the marriage was celebrated, and every one rewarded who had been instrumental in promoting the general happiness. In a short time after the nuptials, the Marchese del Ponto condescended to seek a reconciliation; but his haughty daughter retired to a convent. Louisiana Ludini too, on the death of her father, joined the Marchese di Logano, her former friend, and was married to Di Burgos. Finding that Bellana retained her original partiality for Marco Rodello, who had become a good citizen from the punishment inflicted on his father and brother, Miranda gave them a portion, and Loretta left the convent to live with them.—Joanna

Troppano also tasted of her liberality, and had the liberty of enjoying her volubility without restraint, which was amply exemplified in concerting the business of the young folks' marriage, and in procuring a small annuity for Barca and herself from Miranda. Her principal amusement consisted, for some time, in watching the discomfited Major domo Papillo, and teasing him with the passion he once professed for her benefactress; nor did she take less credit to herself for the happy termination of this eventful history, since she always maintained to all the gossips she could collect together, that her meeting Barca when coming from the convent with Miranda had induced her mother to take off the veil, and thus make herself one of the primary, if not the principal instruments in the Marchese di Logano's subsequent happiness.

*FINIS.*

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