Marie; or, The Fugitive! A Romance of Mount Benedict

J. H. Ingraham

Table of Contents

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CHAPTER I.

The autumnal moon had already been risen a full hour, as a horseman drew rein upon the summit of a hill which commanded a prospect of the domes and towers of the city towards which he was journeying. He paused a moment as he attained the brow of the eminence over which his road wound, to survey the scene spread out before him.

Less than a league distant towered `The City of the Three Hills,' its spires glittering like needles in the moon's beams, and a thousand windows reflecting its golden radiance: for the moon is always golden in the autumnal months. Between the horseman and the city were fields and villas, gardens and pleasant lawns; and farther on beyond these lay shining like a silvery lake the waters of the Charles river, which, with those of the Western bay, clasped the Metropolis in a belt of sparkling waves.

The long dark lines of the numerous bridges, with their ranges of lights, communicating with the city, stretched before his gaze, with the broad green sweep of the encircling shores extending away to the right in the direction of Brooklyn and Roxbury. Immediately before him the view opened towards the harbor, with its black ships dotting the moonlit waters, and the islands breaking, here and there, the gleaming surface of the beauteous Bay.

Nearer still, tall, silent and grand, rose skyward the grey obelisk which marks to all time the spot where the Eagle of Freedom first unfolded her blood stained pinions. He gazed awhile on this object as it stood in its lonely grandeur, casting its shadow far across the city at its feet, and reflected how peaceful now was all the scene, aforetime over which rolled the roar of battle, the shouts of warriors, the smoke of conflagration.

He then turned himself in his saddle to enjoy a moment the beauty of the inland scene of woods and meadows, and cottages half hid in trees, and villa es with their white mansions glancing in the moonlight like edifices of alabaster. Grand and imposing, though seen indistinctly through the hazy sheen of the soft October atmosphere, the walls of the venerable University were just visible above the noble groves in which they were embosomed.

All around him was still. There was a balmy stillness in the air, and a repose in the hour which was congenial to his feelings; and he sat a few moments in his saddle both to rest his steed as well as to enjoy the loveliness of the scene. At his left on the north side of the way, a grove of maples grew close to the road and hid his view in that direction; but as he saw the wood was not deep, and a path led through it to the open eminence which he could see glimmering through the vistas between the tall black trunks, he resolved to turn in and see what view presented itself in that quarter; for he thought he caught glimpse of a ruin.

`And if it be a ruin, i'faith;' said he gaily, `I must needs go and look at it; for ruins are full rare sights for a traveler in these lands. It needs only a ruin to complete the varied beauty of the fair moonlit landscape that surrounds this height. Domes and towers, spires and roofs, waters and isles, woodlands and lawns, villas and monuments, hills and lakes seen in the glorious light of an autumn moon, as if through a veil of intermingled threads of silver and gold, all these I have beheld, all this has charmed my sight and gladdened with a calm soothing joy the depths of my soul. Now all that remains is a ruin by moonlight, if yonder be a ruin.'

The next moment the horseman had turned from the road and was cantering along through the woodland in the path, which soon terminated, and brought him upon an open space, a little higher in elevation than the road from which he had come.

On reaching the field he saw with an exclamation of surprise at the discovery, a vast, imposing ruin, covering as it seemed in the indistinct view of night, the summit of a hill still beyond that from which he beheld it.—The base of the ruin was lying in shadow, but the stern outlines of its jagged walls were boldly and sharply defined against the sky.

He remained a few moments viewing it from the spot where he was, and then dismounting he secured his horse to a hedge that enclosed the field he was in, and crossing it descended the hill and traversing the interspace of the vale below he, in a few minutes, stood upon the height crowned by the ruin, the discovery of which, from the road, had awakened his curiosity.

The eminence which it occupied was even more commanding than that which he had left and embraced not only all the wide and beautiful scenes he had beheld from that, but also a noble prospect to the North, which had been concealed from him before by the wood.

`This ruin must have been placed here for the picturesque,' he said, after observing it awhile in silence; `for, from whichsoever point this wide landscape of city and country is viewed, this must form a striking and prominent feature.'

He walked slowly along the noble front, the moon shining full upon it and lighting up with the distinctness of noon day the architectural details of its lofty facade; the broken angles rising boldly into the air and overhanging themselves as if each instant about to fall. The crumbling door−ways yawning wide and blackened with smoke, the charred architraves and half−burnt columns, told him, as he walked slowly along the overgrown lawn before it, that fire had been one of the instruments of the devastation. The edifice was still majestic in its ruins, and spoke eloquently, in its silence, of former state and dignity. The moon beams streamed brightly through the numerous gaping crevices of the arched windows in the tall walls, and leaving portions in the blackest shadow it brought other parts out full into its brightest radiance, silvering a sharp point of the ruin at one angle and leaving a cavernous passage beneath it unillumined by a single ray; exposing in the cloisters a single column, shining like snow, while it failed to penetrate the remoter depths of the cloistered archway.

The ruins of the chief edifice, remarkable and interesting as they were, did not alone attract his curiosity. It was excited by discovering near it, half overgrown with wild vines, those of a small chapel, in which were traces of an altar; its top lying in fragments on the ground. A moonbeam fell through the roof and resting in a bright bar of light upon it, he reverently lifted his cap, for, by the radiance, he beheld upon it the fragment of a crucifix, the pedestal and a part of the feet only remaining.

He remained standing with his head bared a few moments, gazing upon the spot with sad feelings—wonder and melancholy mingled in his emotions. He, for awhile, imagined himself once more in Europe, once more gazing by the light of an Italian moon uponthe religious ruins of that olden land, where cathedrals, like the worshippers in them, grow old and crumble to dust, from which they sprung, majestic and venerable, and sacred still, even in their decay.

All around him was a scene of desolation. The garden walls around had fallen, or been thrown down by violence, and the pleasant walks were grown up with grass, and the toad with his hoarse night cry, and the lizard moving in his shining and noiseless track, were now the only living things seen there. Close by him, half−hidden beneath dark vines, he saw that there was a tomb also. This, at least, he thought had escaped the melancholy fate which had fallen on all he beheld; but, to his surprise, as he put aside the tangled and matted tendrils, with which Nature would fain conceal what accident or human passions had left exposed, he beheld the portals of the house of death broken down, the marble bands of the tomb shivered, its walls wrested from their foundations, as if by some terrible convulsion, and its dark womb sacriligiously open to the eye of the day. While he remained gazing in and wondering still more what could have been the instrument of devastation which had not left sacred even the sealed habitations of the dead, a whitish object upon the ground grew gradually into form, and outline to his eye. Suspecting its nature he drew aside the shrubbery so as to let the moon−light fall upon it, when he saw that it was the skeleton of a human hand. He stooped and raised it from the ground, and reverently laid it upon the broken pedestal of the crucifix on the shattered altar, saying, as he did so,

`In the resurrection Christ, at whose feet I leave thee, shall raise thee up with the body wherever it lieth, be it in the deep sea or upon the green earth! For this corruption must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality! '

`Thou hast spoken well, my son,' said a voice so near, that it caused him to start back a step. As he looked he saw advancing from behind the altar, a man in a monk's cowl and gown; the cowl being thrown back, leaving his head bare. The light in which he stood was so exceedingly dim that the traveller could not discern his face. He saw, however, that he was a man of a dignified presence, and the sound of his voice, though sad, was pleasing to the ear and singularly impressive in its tones. The travellller though astonished and not a little moved at first, neither felt alarm nor cherished a suspicion of personal danger at this abrupt encounter of a stranger in such a place at such an hour. The blood bounded a little quicker for a moment or too through his

veins, but as the monk came farther into the light, he replied firmly—

`I was not prepared, sir, from the desolation around me, to encounter a human being here! Is there, then, any portion of this ruin inhabited, reverend father, for such I see that you are from your dress?'

`No, my son! There dwells no longer in this holy spot any of those who once inhabited it!' answered the monk in a voice at once melancholy and serene.

`Why do I find you here, father? From thus encountering one like you, in such a place, and from the character of these ruins, am I right in supposing these are the relics of a religious house; for I discover what I did not before notice the fragment of a gigantic gilt cross lying across that broken fountain in the court?'

`You are right, my son. This melancholly spot is all that remains of a noble edifice dedicated to piety and benevolence. You stand, my son, upon Mont St. Benedict, and around you, dark and stern in their desolation, are the ruins of the Convent of St. Ursula!'

The traveller remained silent and seemed thoughtful, while the priest closely observed his face as if expecting to see surprise visible upon it at this announcement. At length he said,

`The ruins of Convents I have often seen in the old world, father, but they were the hallowed and peaceful relics of Time, which, as he slowly crumbled the marble and stone into dust, he flung over the gradual desolation garlands of ivy, and with moss and soft grasses rounded every angle and lined every crevice; so that though no longer a majestic pile lifting its walls and towers and graceful pinnacles to Heaven a proud manifestation of man's skill and a nobler one of his piety, yet it was an imposing and picturesque ruin; and while it no longer resounded with prayers and anthems, it no less inspired the humble heart with solemn reflections and healthful admonitions upon the perishable nature of all things earthly. But here all I behold is stern and savage. The emotions these frowning and harsh ruins excite are painful rather than pleasing. They bear the marks of violence and fire, and instead of being the work of gentle Time, seem to be the forced desecration of ruthless hands.'

`Thou hast spoken truly, my son. In telling thee where thou wert, supposing thee to be a stranger to the spot, I believed I had only to give the name to awaken the memories in your mind of what has occurred on this spot. You speak of Europe, and perhaps the news of the deed of violence which razed this Convent reached not your ears; though its cry went up to God, and its report swept over the land, grieving every true Catholic's spirit, and startling even the Protestant millions of the nation. Nay, the tale thrilled through the Catholic heart of Europe and filled Rome with astonishment!'

`Now thou hast mentioned it so particularly, father,' said the young traveller, gazing with admiration and deep respect upon the noble outlines of the monk's face as he stood now in the full light of the moon, his features animated with holy indignation; `now thou hast named it thus particularly, I do recollect the circumstances. Did it not occur in the summer of 1834? I was in Italy at the time and recollect hearing of the event even there! Your words recall the circumstances, though faintly. These then are the ruins of that Convent!' added he gazing around upon the gloomy walls with a new interest and new emotions. `Were it not so late, reverend father, I would ask you briefly to relate to me the particular causes which led to this melancholy event.'

`You shall know, my son, if you have leisure to read a manuscript which I have in my possession written by a young priest who is now no more. This manuscript is in the shape of a romance; but it will, while it amuses you, convey to you in an agreeable garb, the principal features of an event that,' added the monk, elevating his voice and speaking as if he were an inspired prophet of his church, `has sown the seed of a Roman Catholic harvest in this great land! From the dust of these ruins, from the thousand fragments of this altar shall be upbuilded for every stone that has been thrown down, a Convent, for every fragment of this altar a cathedral. For the thousand wicked men who levelled these walls shall a hundred thousand good men give their strength to the uprearing vast temples on whose summits shall tower the deserted cross!'

The monk ceased speaking a moment and then kneeling before the altar, he pressed his lips to the sacred feet of the crucifix and then uplifting his face towards the deep blue Heavens visible through the broken roof, he added, in the deep voice of faith:

`Thou, Lord Jesus, will do it in thy time.' He then rose and turning to the traveller said—

`Son, I was kneeling behind the altar praying for this thing, for the prayers of the children of the church, put up *here*, will be upon these ruins as dew and rain upon the dry grass, and bring ere long the harvest of our

hopes! I saw thy act, and I heard thy words as thou didst decently lay the hand of the dead upon the altar. I saw that thou wert a son of the church and my heart opened towards thee! To satisfy thy curiosity will give me satisfaction. Come with me. I live not far distant; thou canst see not half a mile off beyond the edge of the wood the white walls of my cottage gleaming from among the trees.'

`I have a horse near that woodland, father,' answered the young man; `I will get him—and overtake you ere you make the road.'

The traveller then left the ruin in the direction he had approached it, and mounting his horse soon overtook the monk, who had taken a shorter path to the highway.

The Manuscript obtained by the traveller from the monk, how obtained from the former by us being a mystery, will be presented to the reader in the next chapter, under the title of

CHAPTER II. THE FLIGHT.

There is, in the beautiful suburbs of Boston, a region of country more beautiful than any other portion of the elegant environs of this northern capital.— It lies towards the South West and within two or three leagues only of the metropolis. It is a region of villas, of garden joined to garden, of lawn bordering on lawn, of grove mingling with grove. In every quarter towards which the eye is turned are seen the gothic roofs of stone cottages, or the tall Corinthian architraves of more imposing edifices lifting themselves above the green trees, or adorning some graceful hill−side, or crowning proudly some noble eminence. This peculiar scene embraces full a wide league in length and breadth: a picturesque and rural confusion of groves and gardens, lakelet and lawns, porticoes and verandahs, turrets and pavilions. The grounds of each villa not only meet like continuous ranges of the same domain, but pathways and gates afford free communication from one to the other, so that on all sides are visible smooth walks, open or shady, winding in every direction through dell and dale, over the green, sunny hill−side, and amid the shadowy woodlands.— Besides these there run through this region of rural luxury and opulent repose, gravelled carriage−ways, branching out from the high−way, which winds in a serpentine course through the very bosom of this pleasant scene.

The dwellers in this fair region were, and still are, chiefly retired statesmen and merchants who had withdrawn hither to enjoy the fragrance of those flowers of life, the existence of which, in the world of action, they had known only by the thorns. There were, besides, one or two English gentlemen of fortune and family who had chosen in this paradise an abiding place, and two or three opulent planters from South Carolina and Louisiana had also erected beautiful mansions here and dwelt in them, transferring to their northern home all the graceful elegancies of domestic life which are studied with such care and known and loved so well in the homes of the `Sunny South.'

It was about nine o'clock on a lovely starry evening in July, that two persons might have been seen emerging from one of the by−paths which wound along a green hedge−way bordering the grounds of one of the most beautiful of all the estates occupying the region we have just described. The glow of the golden west still lingered far up the sky and gave more light thanthe stars, so that objects were seen with distinctness though without much boldness of outline.— The white fronts of the villas around could be faintly discerned glancing amid the foliage which surrounded them, and here and there a light, sparkling like a star that had fallen, among the woodlands, indicated where a mansion was hidden.

It was a soft, rich summer's night, with a quiet atmosphere laden with the fragrance of flowers and shrubs. The katy−did thrummed his shrill toned guitar in the trees and hedge−rows, the fire−fly shot athwart the shadows of their path, and low above their heads would swoop the fearless whip−poor−will, almost touching their persons with his long speckled wing.

The path along which they moved was narrow and ran parallel and close beside the crossing−road which led towards the villa from which they were coming. As one of the party was mounted, and as they seemed to move with great caution and stillness, the one on horseback stooping low so as not to be seen from the avenue on the other side of the hedge, it looked as if this anxiety to avoid the usual carriage way, proceeded from fear of pursnit. They continued on until the hedge terminated at the great gate−way of the avenue close upon the high−way. There they stopped under the branches of a wide−spread oak which flung its gigantic arms across the stone arch above the gate. In the very angle of the hedge in contact with one of the massive pillars of the arch was visible a small foot−way gate which opened from the path out into the high−road at the very point where the carriage way also turned into it. At this gate the party stopped and the individual on foot, after taking a careful survey up the avenue and down the road by thrusting his head underneath the gate, rose to his feet and said in a whisper.

`De road am clear, young misses. Dar no body in de way; and now if I can manage to get Browny out froo dis litty gate ve is in de pike safe as a brack bird under the harrar. It mitey narrer gate, Miss Marie, an' old Browny he orful fat; but if he condescen' squeeze a leety bit he get froo clare!'

`Then I had best alight, Moses,' said a low, richly−keyed voice, in sweet and singular contrast to the African gutterals of Moses.

`P'raps misses better,' answered Moses, in a patronizing tone; `but debbel! wat am dat?' he cried, as a night hawk disturbed in its perch, swept past his head, with a fierce shrieking cry.

`It is but a bird, with which the hedges and woodlands are full,' answered the young girl, for such her voice and the faint outline of her person, seen dimly in shaded nook where they were, showed her to be. `Are you quite sure the way is free?' she asked with trembling anxiety, yet in a voice that indicated decision and boldness of heart for whatever might be before her.

Moses got down on his hands and knees again, and looked up and down the road and listened, while the young female lightly sprang to the ground and taking the horse by the bit to hold him, eagerly bent her head also to listen.

`I does'nt hear notin', Mamselle; but dat are tree toad ober dar in de hickory tree keep up sich a talkin', and he hab a berry bad cold at dat, I kant hear perticklerly: but it am my `pinion dey aint nobody comin'.'

`Then open the gate and let us go quickly on our way. I dont fear pursuit yet; but I do not wish any one to discover my flight, nor give any one a clue to my way. The most I dread, and for which I came this way by the hedge, is meeting the Count!'

`I know dat misses, mity well,' answered the black, in a zealous, faithful tone; `I knows you doesnt nor I noder! But p'raps he wont be out to−night it am so late!'

`He was coming out to−night to join my father in a morning's ride over to see the battle−ground at Lexington, and I do not wish to meet him on the way. He might not recognize me yet, if he looked at all, he would know Brouny.'

`Dat he would, Mamselle Marie. De Count al'ays tell a critter agen he seed 'um onct!'

`Hark! There is a sound up the road!' she said placing her hand upon the shoulder of the black man to caution him to silence. `It is a horseman!'

`Dat am fac,' missis! He come full gallop!'

`It must be he—for thus he rides!'

`See, Brouny prick him left ear up and shake him right one, Missis Marie!— Dat am de vay de knowin beast al'ays do ven he hear 'quaintance comin'. Dat am de Count's horse and Brouny 'cognise him footstep!'

Through the interstices in the hedge they saw the horseman dashing up at full speed and when they expected to see him turn into the gate, he galloped by and soon was lost to the eye and ear in the distance.

`You were mistaken, Moses!'

`Dat I was, Mamselle, and so was Brouny, too, bad as me!' answered the black with emphasis. `Dat wasn't de Count sure, coz he al'ays ride um brack horse and dat vas a gray one! Hark, missis. Dare anodder. I hear um on de pike. Don't open de gate yet; but jist slink back, coz it may be he dis time; and dar am Brouny sniffin' his nose jiss ef he vos sniffin' a 'quaintance. Dis am de Count dis time and no mistake, missis,' added Moses drawing back his head quickly as this second horseman came up at a top speed trot. He had hardly spoken when the rider came abreast of them; spurred through the gate and disappeared at a round trot up the avenue. `Dat was him, missis,' ejaculated Moses, taking breath.

`Yes,' answered the young girl, as if relieved from an apprehension; `and now we have nothing to do but to get into the road and advance at as rapid a rate as we can.'

`Dat will be mity fast, Mamselle Marie if you lets Brouny go off of his own head, for he's jiss chock filled wid oats I giv him for dis special casion. Jiss step back a leetle step, missis, and I open de gate and see if I get de horse froo it. Dar! He froo, sure enuff, but it am been a mity tight squeeze, Missis. Now you jiss put your leety foot in my hand and I springs you up again jiss like a squirl heppin' from de ground up top ob de fence.'

The young girl placed a foot—a very small and elegantly shaped one shod in a closely fitting French boot—in her black attendant's broad palm and bounded lightly into the saddle.

`Now I am seated, Moses. Where is your horse?'

`I rid old Croppy jiss arter sun−down ober by de ole bridge half a mile `yond and hitch um under it wid him bridle. He waiten' dar now, I reckon if nobody aint steal 'em.'

`Let us go on as rapidly as possible! I may be missed and pursued.'

`Ah, missis, I wishes young master Frank was here to protect you, den I'm bressed if dar is any ting you hab to be 'feared ob! Master Frank be brab as um lion and lub you like um—like um *lamb*.'

The maiden sighed and saying briefly, `Onward!' put her well−fed brownmare to her best paces. `I will wait at the bridge till you come up! Here I am not safe a moment.'

She then cantered lightly forward while Moses ran along by the side of the horse at a speed of foot his appearance did not promise. They were met by a carriage and a single chaise but no one noticed them and in a little while they reached the bridge, a low one−arched structure spanning a narrow rivulet.

`Here am Crop fast sleep wid him nose on de cold stone,' called out Moses from beneath the bridge.

`Do not delay, Moses, but mount and ride after me,' commanded his mistress in a firm tone; and the same instant Moses heard the clatter of the mare's slender hoofs upon the loose planks of the bridge. He mounted the back of the old horse and clambering up the bank soon crossed the bridge in pursuit, and to do Croppy justice, he showed wind and speed, both, however, being greatly assisted by the heels and a certain cudgel appertaining to Moses.

They rode on about a league in a Northeasterly direction, sometimes winding through intervales, sometimes ascending hills over which the high−way wound, from the summit of which a very distant view of the lights of the metropolis were visible, sparkling like minute stars gleaming through a dark cloud on the horizon, which the city resembled.

At length they reached a point where a road branched from the pike in a more Easterly direction. Without hesitation the young girl took this and followed closely by her attendent rode on, at the same rapid rate at which she had pressed her horse the four miles she had come.

`Missis whar is you gwoin'?' at length asked Moses as he leaned forward on Croppy's neck, who managed with a great outlay of his fore−legs and stratagem of his neck to keep his nose within five inches of Brouny's tail all the way along; `Misses whar is you gwoin'?'

`You shall know soon, Moses?'

`Yis, I dare say I shall, missis! I does'nt ax for myself only for Croppy.— He jiss keeps up coz I holds him up wid my heels druv in his sides. If I luff 'um go he souse rite down and den I'm up, missis! I ant axed no question's afore! I gets your mare; I rides Croppy under de bridge and tell him wait dare for me; I gets ebbery ting ready you axes me; I keeps dark as de bottom ob a boot−leg; and I comes wid you, coz you say you want to runaway from dis black Count. Now, missis, whar am you gwoin?'

The young girl made no reply but continued to dash on in the same spirited manner for a few hundred yards farther, until a gentle rise in the road gave them an extensive night view before them. The landscape was dark and wide, yet there was sufficient light from the stars to determine, with tolerable accuracy, the nigher features. Those more distant were blent with the hazy darkness of the distance, relieved here and there by a light gleaming from some cottage home. On reaching this point of view she reined up for the first time since leaving the old bridge and gazed off upon the dim prospect, as if in seach of some object. On her right, away over woodland, meadow and water, was visible still, the dark, lamp−glittering City of the Three Hills, and after surveying it a moment she said, in that peculiarly rich voice we before alluded to,

`I am not yet at the point I thought I had reached, Moses. We have a full half league yet to ride. Come, and then you shall be at liberty to return.'

`Croppy hab brace him two fore−feet on de groun', hab head 'tween em, hab lay back him ear on um neck, and say he don't go no furder dis way, Mamselle Marie.'

`I cannot delay for Croppy, Moses,' she said very firmly. `You must press him forward.'

`I hab press him forward, and press him in de side and queese him rib in, and debbel a bit he say vill he move. Dar! you see dat, Missis!' cried Moses suddenly, in a tone of indignation and surprise; `you see dat caper?'

The fair fugitive checked her horse and looked around, and beheld the obstinate old horse quietly laid down in the middle of the road under Moses, who was standing up like a colossus astride him.

`You must leave him and come with me! Or, no—I will ride forward at the speed I am compelled to go and as I only brought you with me to take back the horses, I will leave my horse tied about halt a league further on in the edge of a wood which crowns the first hill!'

`But who—what, Missis—whar'll you go?' cried Moses. `You aint gwoine to leab Moses!'

`Yes,' she answered, touched by his plaintive tones; `I do not wish you should know where I go, as you may be questioned, and if you know you may perhaps inform.'

`Neber, Missis, neber. Massa will cut out my tongue, but I'm bressed for ebber and ebber if I tell.'

`I know you will be faithful as you can be, Moses; but I cannot let you accompany me any further than the wood I speak of. There we must separate, you to return with the horses and have them both in their stalls, and yourself in your bed before dawn.'

`But, Missis, I luv you too much to leab you: who hab you to stan by you but old Moses, 'cept massa Frank, and he aint comed yet from Sout' Carolina. Whar shall I tell mass' Frank you gone, when he come to marry you? Oh, Missis, dis brake massa Frank im heart, and Mose brack heart break too.'

`Well, Moses, you may keep by me until I get to the wood. Then return peaceably if you love me, though if you knew all — but I cannot speak now of what is pressing so upon my soul. Come and keep by my saddle if your horse refuse to travel! I will ride slower to accommodate you!'

`You are good and kind to de poor niggar, my beautiful Missis,' answered Moses, with a voice husky with emotion. `If you goes off I hopes you'll come back soon's mass' Frank has killed dat debbel Count what you run way from. I mean tell mass' Frank, and bress my brack soul if I dont run de bullet, for Massa Frank shoot him! Den you come back and marry, Massa Frank, and old Mose dance at de weddin! Croppy, you demmur brute get up and travel, or I'm bressed uv I dont leff you here in de road all alone, for de bears to eat ye up, and I guess when dey gets dere teef in yer meat you'll wish you was a streakin'it nine mile an hour, an' old Mose across your carcass. Come, dont you see as Missis is waitin'?'

But neither the persuasions, nor the cuffs nor even the well−bestowed kicks of the indignant African upon his old favorite could prevail upon him to stir out of his comfortable bed in the thick dust of the road, and leaving him with bitter reproaches, Moses followed the impatient maiden, and taking hold of the horn of her saddle, trotted by her side as she rode along at an easy canter.

`You must say nothing to Frank, Moses, to irritate him against the Count de Rosselau! and I command you not to mention to him that you knew anything of my flight or which way I took. This, also, be sure you keep from my father!'

`Massa Frank will kill him sure, Miss Marie,' said Moses stoutly.

`No, he will learn from me all ere he can reach here. Be faithful and discreet, Moses, and you will best please me.'

`I'll do any ting, missis, for you—but—'

`Leave my saddle free. We are pursued,' she cried, smartly striking her mare with her whip and bounding away; while at the same moment came the clatter of horse's hoofs behind.

`I b'leive it am dat debbil Croppy comin', missis, sure as I was born wid a brack skin,' cried Moses, letting go the saddle and turning to stop his steed, for it was Croppy sure enough.

`Ah, you gray rascal; ah, you coward, you glad enuff come on when you finds Mose leff you all lone by yourself! you brack conscience scare you. Now stop and let me ride you, old hypocrite.'

Croppy suffered Moses to catch him by the bridle; and the African without delay threw himself across his back, which he had no sooner fairly crossed than down crouched Croppy in the road leaving his astonished rider standing above him like a pair of compasses.

The fugitive, his mistress, seeing him seize upon and mount his horse pressed forward supposing he was following. In a few minutes the sound of her horse's hoofs ceased to vibrate on the ear of the unhappy and hapless Moses, who still remained standing astride his crouching charger immoveable as a statue in bronze. If his fist had been of bronze that would have been the last hour of Croppy's life; for dealing him a blow, strengthened by mingled an ger and grief, in the skull, he left him and started on foot after his mistress. He had not gone one hundred yards before he heard Croppy coming up at a slapping pace after him. He made an effort to arrest his course as he passed him but in vain, he dashed snorting by and was soon out of sight in the direction taken by Brouny.

When, at length, Moses reached the wood indicated by his mistress, he found Croppy standing quietly with his head resting over Brouny's neck, who was fastened with the bridle to the first tree of the grove within a few feet of the road; yet the place was so concealed as not to be discovered without being sought. Here, indeed, Moses found his horses, but his mistress had disappeared; and after hastily mounting Brouny and galloping in every direction to discover her, Croppy cantering perseveringly close behind at his heels all the way, he sadly turned the mare's head homeward; and ere midnight he reached the villa he had left a few hours

before in company with the youthful fugitive, whose subsequent adventures will form the remaining chapters of our story.

CHAPTER III. THE CHAPEL.

The Fugitive on alighting and securing her horse at the entrance of the woodlands, lingered an instant to listen and gaze up the road to ascertain if her faithful black was approaching, when, finding all still, she lightly ascended a path leading over the hill through the densest part of the grove. She moved forward with a steady step as if she had before traversed it, although the faint star−light breaking through the opening above her head gave her but an imperfect outline of the way.

At length she reached the top of the wooded ascent and found herself upon a green knoll with but one or two old oaks growing upon it, and a wide expanse of view around her. Before her on a hill opposite could be faintly seen by her the dark body of some huge building with turrets and bastions.

`This is the place, she said, as the irregular outline of the object met her eyes; `I began to fear for a moment that I was wandering, it seems so much farther by night than in the day. `Yonder then is my *home!* There is to be my refuge from the—; but I will not utter what my thoughts shudder to dwell upon! This night I bury the past forever, and henceforth have no affections, no hopes, no wishes but for the world beyond the stars.'

As she spoke she folded her clasped hands together upon her bosom, and lifting her eyes towards the glittering skies stood a moment as if in silent worship.

`My path lies around this oak to the right and so across the glen,' she said advancing and preparing to descend the hill; `it seems different in its features now from what it did when I have rode it before! Alas! how little did I think when I so often took this road and followed these woodland paths in my morning rides on horseback I should find my knowledge of such use to me now! Alas, how little did I anticipate the dreadful circumstances which have compelled me to−night to be a fugitive where I have so often rode for pleasure, with a happy heart and joyous hopes! rode, too, with *him* by my rein, his every look dwelling on mine with the tenderness of adoring love,—but I must *forget!* I may net dwell on this theme! I shall go mad! Before me is my tomb, let me hasten to the sepulchre and when I cross its friendly threshold let me leave the world, and all I have so loved in it, behind me forever.'

She descended the hill−side by a green sward pathway, and proceeded very nearly in the direction taken by the horseman, after leaving his horse tied to the hedge, when he went to examine more nearly the ruins. The convent was not now, however, a ruin, but its walls and towers rose proudly, crowning an imposing appearance, the summit of Mont Benedict. Slowly the fugitive maiden toiled up the ascent, and soon reaching an avenue that led to the main portal, she followed it until she came in front of the entrance. Here she paused.— Her heart throbbed wildly. She was compelled to lean for support against one of the stone buttresses of the gate in the wall which environed the edifice. She looked up and shuddered, as she surveyed its dark line of walls in the shadows of which she found herself already embraced. Along the whole sombre front, there was not a single ray of light visible. Silence and a sort of stern repose reigned.

`Courage, poor heart! `Thou must not shrink now,' she said, in a deep whisper! `Thou hast no more to do with throbbing for the world! Here is thy home till heaven's portals open to thee a better!'

She looked for some means, a bell or a knocker, to draw the attention of the portress when, to her surprise, the gate yielded to the pressureof her hand, and she found herself within the outer wall of the convent enclosure. As she passed through she thought she discovered a small group of men advancing up the hill−side, and instinctively she turned the massive key and bolted the gate, as if she would shut out the world she fled from. Paths, bordered with shrubbery and shade trees, were around her, and at a distance to the right, she saw the twinkling of a light amid the interstices of the foliage. She was now setisfied she heard low voices of men outside the gate, and trembling from apprehension of pursuit, she turned aside from the great portal which was immediately before her, and entered a narrow, winding gravel−path which led in the direction of the light. With a soft, trembling half−hesitating tread, the young girl approached the spot whence the beam shone forth. As she came nearer, she saw a small chapel half−embowered in trees, and through a small trellised window beheld an altar, upon which burned two wax candles before a small silver crucifix. With reverential awe, she advanced nearer the sacred spot, and discovering by the side of the window a door partly open, she entered, and seeing that the chapel was quite unoccupied, knelt before the altar.

For a few moments she remained with her forehead prostrate upon the marble step and her face buried in her hand, while some deep and heavy grief seemed to agitate her whole frame. At length her emotion ceased and she raised her face. It was calm yet still tearful, and as she fixed her dark beautiful eyes on the image of her crucified Redeemer, a smile of hope and peace passed over her face like a sunny beam through an April cloud. The rays of the candles upon the altar fell upon her features revealing a countenance youthful and of extraordinary loveliness. Her age could not have been more than eighteen or nineteen, and her figure of just and exquisite proportions was developed with faultless outline. She was habited in black without any ornaments save a small cross of pearls that reposed upon the gentle cradle of her heaving bosom. When she entered the chapel she had let fall from her head a plain straw hat which with the veil now hungadown her shoulders.

How pure, how gentle, yet how sad the expression of her lovely countenance uplifted to the crucifix in love and faith, that strong love and faith which the heart sends forth in sorrow! In it could be read profound despair struggling with the great hopes that lift up the desponding. There was no passion—on bitterness—all was submission—but broken hearted submission—to some dreadful destiny that had befallen her.

That she was the daughter of the Roman Church was evident from her devotion before this altar; and that her home was in sunnier climes than this which now found her a fugitive, was plain from the rich olive tint of her soft skin, the glorious splendor of her large dark eyes, the raven blackness of her hair. As she kneeled there, with her tear−glittering eyes uplifted to the cross, a personification of feminine loveliness, chastened grief and holy submission, a person stood on the threshold of the chapel gazing upon her with looks of surprise and awe as if she had beheld a living Madonna bending before the altar.

The person was a female of great dignity of appearance and although advanced beyond the period when female charms command admiration in themselves, she still retained traces of remarkable personal beauty. Her costume was dark and plain and there was nothing to distinguish her as the lady superior of the Convent, save her ladylike and commanding presence. She stood gazing upon the lovely maiden with an expression at once of surprise, benignity and curiosity.

The fair girl after fixing her eyes for some moments upon the crucifix as if in silent prayer pressed her lips to its feet and bathed them with a fresh out−break of grievous tears.

`All, *all* must be given up!' she cried with the most touching accents of grief. `His noble love—his fond affection—all the sweet hope of my heart of hearts! All must be given up—and buried in oblivion! It will break his heart! Were I, alone, the sufferer, perhaps I would bear it alone; but my bosom bleeds for thee, my noble Bertrand! How wilt thou bear it? But thou canst never know the truth! Oh, Mary Mother! sustain him! I pray not for myself—for soon I feel I shall be with thee in peace! Now,' she said rising from her knees, as the Convent clock tolled twelve in its low tower; `let me gather firmness to carry out my purpose. Let me dry these tears and still this tumultuous heart Soon, very soon, it will cease throbbing altogether and then Heaven, sweet Heaven, will make me to forget my inheritance upon earth!'

She turned to leave the chapel and beheld the lady Superior standing in the door and regarding her with a look of pity and benevolence. On beholding, her Marie started back a step, but the next moment won by her gentle aspect, she rushed forward and cast herself at her feet.

`Nay, daughter, not at my feet but against my heart,' said she, in a voice, kind and maternal in its tones. `I have heard thy heart's utterance of its woes, when you thought, at this midnight hour, no eye but thy Saviour, and his blessed mother were upon thee!'

`I am very unhappy, mother, and seek here an asylum from the world,' said Marie, in a sweet, low voice, suffering the kind lady Superior to raise her up, when laying her face upon her sustaining arm, she hung there like a fragile vine that has found support for its wandering tendrils.

`Thou shalt have it here, daughter,' answered the lady with emotion; `here thou shalt be at peace!'

`Peace I hope not for, holy mother! I come here for a brief refuge till death, with gentle hand, shall open to me the gates of everlasting peace!'

`Come with me, my child,' said the Lady Superior, struck with her wonderful loveliness, and moved by her despairing grief. `Come with me, and I will give thee shelter which, for unhappy ones like thee, this sacred retreat was provided. How hast thou found entrance here, my child? I came hither, as I am wont of late at this hour, to pray for the protection of our holy privileges and the disarming of the rage of the protestants against

our religion and even against us, for the times are full of evil, child, and dark menances have reached our ears, even in this sacred retreat, of violence meditated!'

The Lady Superior spoke with scornful severity, and then after a moment's silence as if reflecting upon the evils she spoke of, she repeated her question of the young fugitive.

`I came hither to find refuge, noble mother, and as a fugitive. The place whence I came, ask not of me, nor my motives in coming hither! Give no one knowledge of my retreat if I should be sought for. I come with a faithful attendant, whom I took leave of not far distant and came hither alone. I had, before, passed the convent and knew its paths. On reaching the gate I found it ajar and entered.'

`Found the convent gate ajar?' repeated the lady Superior, with surprise and alarm. `Then have we a traitor among us!'

I thought I saw four or five men near as I passed through the gate, and fearing, as I still do, that they might be pursuers, I, with a great effort, turned the lock and thus secured a barrier between me and them. After I had got in I distinctly heard their voices, and to escape being seen even through the bars of the gate I turned aside to the chapel where you discovered me!'

`Your presence of mind, child, has doubtless saved us from some evil,' answered the Lady Superior, speaking in a tone as if relieved in a degree from apprehensions of danger. `Come with me towards the gate, and let me discover if it is indeed secured; though, alas, if the passions of our enemies should break out, little would bolts of iron and bars of oak or pillars of stone avail, unless our strength lay in the arm of the Almighty. Nay—then child, if you shrink from going, take that walk to the convent portal, and I will meet you there in a moment and go in with you.'

Thus speaking the Lady Superior took her way in the direction of the chief gate of the walls which she cautiously approached concealed by the shrubbery. She came close to it, with a beating heart, yet a courageous spirit, for courage and firmness were called for, as she distinctly heard the subdued voices of men. As she came where she could look through the gate, she saw plainly, six men standing on the outside. Their words were audible to her ear.

`What shall now be done?' asked one, in a tone of disappointment.

`It is plain she has deceived us, or has been prevented from coming out. Their suspicions are already awakened in the convent, and it is likely that new precautions will be used. Perhaps the doors are all locked, or her intentions may be suspected and she is afraid to act.'

`It defeats all our plan, finding the gate fast when we had the pledge that it should be left open,' said a young man, whose figure was hid by a large cloak, speaking in a tone of one who had authority among them. `My betrothed bride must be rescued; and if not to−night it must be to−morrow night.'

`To−morrow night then,' responded two or three voices. `It is plain we can do nothing now as our way is bound up.'

`Unless we break down the gate,' said a low voice, that sounded like that of a man who ventures a bold suggestion by way of feeling the pulse of his companions.'

`It *might* be done and shall be done,' answered the young man in the cloak, in an imperative tone, `if we cannot carry out our purpose and effect our object in this way.'

`Why not to−night as well as at another time?' said the voice which suggested breaking in the gate.

`We are not prepared to−night. We are not strong enough for this. *If* this thing is to be done, we must have more men.'

`*If* it be done, let it be done by the people,' deeply responded one who had not yet spoken. `*When* it is done let the place be sacked, and its walls levelled of the ground.'

`Amen,' responded every voice, like the voice of one man.

The men then turned from the gate and slowly took their way down the hill, their forms and their voice lost in the distance, leaving the Lady Superior overcome with the most lively apprehensions of evil about to befal the sacred retreat over which she presided.

`Now have we need, indeed, holy mother of the Crucified One, of thy intercession and power;' she cried, crossing herself, and elevating her eyes to heaven; `the storm that has so long been brewing is lowering to discharge its volume of popular fury upon our devoted heads. But still I trust in the Great Protector of the

Church that these evils shall be averted, and that the unruly passions of men shall redound to his glory. I will see that this beauteous dove which has flown hither for shelter, perhaps from the storm brewing without in the agitated world, is cared for, and then I will to prayer; for prayer hath turned aside rivers, and discomfited armed hosts.'

On reaching the portal she found the lovely fugitive shrinking beneath the arched way, as if she had not been sure that it was the lady Superior's step.

`Enter with me, child, and as this door closes upon the world behind thee, may a door be opened in thy heart for the entrance of peace and heavenly repose.'

`Thanks, holy mother, thanks for this kind wish,' answered Marie, as leaning on the hand of the lady Superior, she passed with her beneath the portal, the door of which, she opened with a small pass key she carried with her. Marie found herself, when the door closed, in a large, lofty vestibule, without any other furniture than a bench against the wall, which was visible by the dim rays shed from a bronzed lamp that hung from the centre of the ceiling, flinging beneath a circle of dark shadow. Crossing this place to a door partly open at its extremity, they passed the portress asleep in a wide−chair, a missallying upon her lap, her head resting upon her breast. `Arouse thee Teresa,' said the Superior, touching her upon the forehead with her fore−finger; `this is no time to sleep in the fold when the lion and the wolf are prowling without. Up and be wakeful on thy post; and if thou hearest ought unusual give me notice, for there is danger menacing us, unless God please avert it. And see then, let no one forth without my leave.'

`What danger dost thou dread, noble lady?' asked Marie as they traversed the corridor heyond slowly, for her step was weak and faltering and the lady superior accommodated hers to suit it. `What evil is this you speak of?'

`Hast thou not known? Art thou ignorant of the rumors that agitate the community without?' she asked, fixing her large piercing eyes upon the face of her lovely guest, yet with an expression of kindly surprise; `thou hast come far not to have felt the breath of the tempest upon thy cheek.'

`I have come from a retired home, mother! I know nothing save that this house is a place of refuge for the unfortunate—an asylum from the storms of life!'

`It should be, it should be, my child. But I will not distress thee with what may deepen thy sorrow! God brought thee not hither, from whatever evil thou hast flown, to cast thee forth again! Thy presence has strengthened my confidence that all will yet be well. Here, my child, enter with me this chamber! It is mine and till the morrow shall be thine also, when I will have prepared for thee a small room that adjoins it!

As the lady superior spoke she opened a door leading from the corridor into a neat apartment furnished plainly yet with an air of taste. A few religious volumes upon a hanging shelf, a crucifix upon a small writing table placed beneath a closely curtained window−recess, a few stuffed chairs, a settee and a couch without hangings, completed the furniture, with the addition of three or four fine old paintings of heads of the saints and apostles hung upon the plain walls. Upon the table, which was covered with a black velvet cloth there stood burning before the crucifix a small silver lamp of unique shape and very richly chased. An open book lay upon a chair, on which was a rosary of black beads alternated with gold ones.

`Now my dear child take that chair—it is easiest for you and you seem very weary!' Marie obeyed her, silently pressing her hands in grateful acknowledgement of her kindness. `Here you shall have an asylum, whatever be your griefs. We ask no questions of those who seek refuge here; it is enough that they require asylum. Sin can never have caused your flight from the world, sweet child, for innocence and truth are written upon your face! Nay—you look distressed! I will not speak to you upon the subject again! If you wish, by and by, to reveal to me your griefs, you will find in me a sympathising listener. Here, for the present, I will leave you, for I have duties to call me away,' she said as a quick step along the corridor was followed by alow rap outside the door.

`My noble friend and mother,' said Marie, seizing both her hands and bathing them with sudden tears, `I ought to repay your kindness by opening to you my heart! But I cannot now—I cannot *now!* It would break it to talk of events now! Soon, perhaps, I shall be more composed! Then you shall freely have my confidence! Yet I feel I shall ever shrink from the task!'

`Confess then, only to her—the Blessed Mary Virgin—whose sympathy will be yours, for she knows all your sorrows,' said the lady superior gazing upon the countenance of the young girl which, in some past

happier hour, she saw must have been as proud and spiritedly noble with animation and intelligence as now it was sad and touchingly gentle in its tearful beauty. She felt the deepest interest in her, and ignorant of the cause of her unhappiness she felt deeply for the woe of one so youthful and fitted by nature and education to adorn the most refined circles of the world, from which she had fled to hide herself forever.

`Mother,' said she, `by and by, perhaps to *you*, but not *now!*—possibly never! Here,' and she drew from her girdle a heavy silk purse, `here are jewels, that, should I linger life out here to three−score, would thrice cover the Convent's expenditures for me. Take all for it and the church and let me bury myself from the world! But my heart tells me that few days only shall I trespass on your goodness.'

`Ere long I will be with thee, sweet daughter of sorrow,' said the lady superior without particularly replying to her words and lying the purse of jew els, unopened, upon the table by the side of the crucifix, `I will speedily return to you! Seek repose upon the couch and in prayer and the exercise of faith seek consolation from your Father in Heaven!'

Thus speaking, the lady superior opened the door of the room and confronted the portress.

`What hath happened, Teresa?'

`The gate bell hath rung thrice in rapid succession!'

`It is the Reverend Father then. But stay! I will precede thee and see if it he not a foe!'

She advanced at a firm, dignified step along the dimly illumined corridor and opening the door looked forth. A voice immediately addressed her from the gate.

`It is his Reverence,' she said with a tone of satisfaction. `I will open the outer gate in person. `Are you alone, Reverend Father?'

`Alone, and with pressing news! I am rejoiced to find thy gates secured so well, when I expected to find them thrown wide by treachery within the walls!'

`I am glad of thy presence, Reverend Sir, for what I have seen and heard this night, together with your words, fills me with the deepest alarm. Enter the lodge and let me hear what new evil menaces us!'

As she spoke she turned the key and a man of commanding appearance, in the garb of a Romish priest, entered the avenue and proceeded with her towards the porter's lodge—his step, as his voice had been, quick and agitated.

CHAPTER IV. The Traitress.

`Now what hast thou of fearful import to narrate, reverend father?' asked the lady superior as they entered the lodge; `for some strange event alone would have brought your reverence hither at this hour of the night!'

The priest looked around and seeing the portress present bade her depart and close the vestibule door. He then paced up and down the lodge for two or three times with thoughtful and troubled looks. The bronzed swinging−lamp which hung above his head sent the strength of its light aslant upon his massive intellectually shaped forehead, and defined the bold and noble outline of his profile with singular effect. He was a man tall in stature, with black hair and brows, dark complexion and an aquiline nose. His eyes were deep set, vivid in their glances and full of intelligence. He was dressed in black and over all wore a plain undress priest's frock, with skirts reaching nearly to his feet and girded at the waist by a belt of black leather. In one hand he held a broad brimmed clerical hat, the other was thrust between the folds of the breast of his frock or cassok.

The lady−superior watched his face with painful interest and expectation.— Suddenly he paused in his walk and turned fixedly towards her.

`Sister, the tables are turned upon us, he said in a tone of keen irony; `in Europe we persecuted the Protestant! in America the Protestant persecutes us! Nay, turn not so pale! All may yet go well and the Church may—aye *will*—be the victor. But I must tell you that we must be prepared.'

`What has occurred?'

`I will tell thee what has brought me hither at midnight,' he said, his dark Milesian countenance lighting up with indignant emotion. `Thou hast no need to be reminded of those false rumors that have gone abroad and turned the Protestant world upside down, that we have detained here a novice against her will. Nor need we speak of the answer we returned to their suspicious and unauthorized interference?'

`You have no need, brother,' responded the lady−superior in an agitated yet proud tone. `I have again and again assured those persons who have called at the gate, that the nun they suppose forcibly detained here, remained voluntarily; nay, she even went to the grate and told them so in person! Yet what more is required—for from what I have heard and seen to−night, as well as from your presence here, I suspect the public rage is working itself to a head to burst in some shape upon us! What now menaces?'

`The answers given by you are not satisfactory to these jealous protestants who seek motives for our overthrow.'

`But will they not believe the novice?'

`They whisper that she answered by compulsion! They even dare to say that she was threatened with torture and a dungeon if she dared answer otherwise.'

`Monstrous calumny.'

`Nay, more, some do say that with regard to this novice it may be true; but loud and fierce whispers fly that there lies in the convent's dungeons still another novice whose fate has just come to light, who is secreted here after having endured foul wrong, lest she should expose the unhallowed doings of your order to the eye of the world.'

`Dungeons of the Convent! A novice secreted! The unhallowed doings of our order!' repeated the lady−Superior aghast. `You do but jest with my fear.'

`This is no time nor occasion for passing jests, sister,' answered the priest.— `What I say is too true.'

`And such rumors fill men's mouths?'

`They do.'

`And are believed?'

`Most firmly!'

`Then Christ be our defence!'

`Amen!' answered the priest. `I tell thee, these idle rumors are working upon the masses like winds upon the surface of the ocean; at first it gently stirs ite bosom, then, by and by, lashes it to foam!'

`God protect us from the surges of a popular fury,' cried the lady−Superior clasping her hands together.

`But what more is on thy mind? I see thou art yet to speak.'

`Hearing of these fresh whisperings abroad from some faithful sons of the church, I at first disbelieved them; but as others followed on the heels of these I resolved to go forth and mingle with the multitude and hear what men said. I crossed the bridge from the metropolisere I fell in with any concourse of people. Approaching them, favored by a cloak belonging to a youth who accompanied me, and who now watches without the convent till I rejoin him, I was enabled to hear what rumors are rife.'

`And they were these you have named?'

`They were, and idle as they were, they were upheaving the very mass like an earthquake in its first throes!'

`Tis dreadful. How will all this end? We have no way of convincing the people but by throwing open the convent to their research; and ere I consent to this I will let the storm burst and overwhelm me in its vortex.' This resolution was uttered with dignity and decision.

`You speak as becomes a Catholic daughter of the church and your high position, sister. What will be the issue is known only to Heaven! Men say that there will be a popular appeal made to the civil authorities, and that they will visit you, and, in the name of the law of the common wealth, command you to open wide your door to this Protestant investigation.'

`Said men so?'

`They did.'

`Never will the gate of a religious house of St. Ursula he opened to be thus desecrated! The abbess of the convent St. Mari in France a century ago, refusd to open her doors to the king, and he dared not cross the sacred threshold by force when he would have taken from its refuge his own brother's child! In her conduct I have an example, brother,' she continued with an imposing elevation of manner, `which I shall imitate, if the law of this land, where all faiths are declared free, dare to invade the sanctuaries of a true church.'

`You will do right, sister,' calmly responded the Priest. `This movement is agitated by our enemies. The movers of it are those whose hostility to our religion is deeper than reverence for the laws. It is a movement directed against the very foundation of our American Roman church and must be resisted firmly in the outset. Once yield to their infamous outcry, `open your convent doors to the public eye!' and in a few weeks every religious house in the land would be desecrated! There is a spirit abroad which we must meet and overpower, looking to him for strength, who for eighteen centuries has been with his church.'

`I have no fears of the great issue; but in one or more instances lawless violence may have the sway: and *we* brother, may be ordained to fall its martys! '

`The event, as I have said, is in God's hand! But what have you heard to−night to which you but a little while since alluded? It may relate to that which particularly brought me hither at this hour?'

The lady superior then briefly detailed to him the conversation she had overheard without the walls, in connection with the fact that, by some means, the gate had been left unlocked. She informed him, also, of the entrance of the fugitive who had providentially turned the key and so prevented the success of a plan, formed with the agency of some one within the convent, to gain access to the interior. The priest heard her through and then said,

`It was this very event which brought me here. That fugitive you speak of is the traitress!'

`A traitress? impossible, brother!'

`Hear me and then judge!'

`But it was through her turning the key which she found in the lock of the open door that these men were kept out! How could she be both friend and traitress.

`How know you certainly that she did not first unlock the gate, and discovering your approach, unlock it and deceive you by an artful ruse.'

`She must have found it unlocked or how could she have entered?'

`Hear me and then judge. After I had gathered all the rumors that were flying among the people in reference to the convent and this supposed incarcerated novice, I was leaving the populous part of the town for the purpose of going home to address you a note to caution you to keep your gates and doors carefully closed for a few days, neither admitting nor letting any one forth; but to suspend for the present all communication with the town; which caution I now give, sister, in person. On my way, my young friend, the lay brother Edmund suggested that you ought to be notified without delay, and suggested that instead of

waiting until I reached home, as it was already late, that I should enter a small tavern and call for paper and write the note with a pencil, he at the same time offering to be the bearer.'

`The peril must have been conceived by him to be very imminent,' said the lady−superior with emotion

`It doubtless was and is,' answered the priest. `I did as he suggested. The tap−room was thronged with people, wild, excited and vociferous. The convent was the theme of their words. To avoid the pressure of the crowd the landlord, who was a Protestant Irishman, invited me to go behind the bar to a desk at the extremity. As I took out my pencil he came up to me and said, in an under tone,

`Please yer reverence, I have a brother and a sister who are Catolics and for their sake I have a regard for the religion. Please draw your cap [for I had this cloth cap besides Edmund's cloak to conceal my face and person,' added the priest, pulling a cap from the folds of his cassock] please draw your cap lower over your eyes for fear they'll see who ye are; for its a chance but they lay hands on your reverence, and there'd be blood shed, for there's Catolics in the house I know as well as Protestants.'

I thanked the man and did as he suggested. While I was waiting I heard conversation in the room next to the bar. A small wicket window opened from the position where I stood, directly into it, and as there was a broken pane of glass, and a curtain only intervening, every word clearly reached my ear, notwithstanding the confusion of voices and sounds that filled the tap−room.— Without going into the details of what I listened to, and which induced me to come in person and see you instead of addressing you a note. I will briefly state what was said. There were at least five or more men from the various voices, but as the window was guarded by a curtain I did not see them at all. The facts I gathered were these. It seems that the novice who has been the cause of so much popular feeling from the supposition she was detained here, has a lover who was of the party in the conversation overheard by me. He declared that it was false that she was here voluntarily, and that she had written the most touching letters to him to fly to her rescue.'

`Can this be possible?'

`So he said. The novice has doubtless done something of the kind; for I heard him read extracts from at least two letters which he represented to be from her.'

`And what were their contents?'

`Such as to confirm and strengthen public rumor.'

`Can it be possible that this novice is thus false?'

`Do you believe she was ever true, sister?'

`How mean you?'

`That novice hath neither part nor parcel with us, nor hath she had from the beginning.'

`Which do you mean?'

`She who has fanned the present breeze.'

`There are two—nay three whose names are in the world's mouths. Nay you say it whispers we have a fourth in a dungeon.' This last sentence was uttered with haughty scorn.

`She of them I mean who wears the silver crucifix. I believe her to have come here as a spy.'

`A spy?'

`For none other purpose. Such from the beginning has been her character, and such she will prove to be.'

`I know her to be wilful.'

`She is more than wilful, she is artful. Beware of her. No matter what may be the consequences in prospect of any developments she may make, by to−morrow's sun rise send her forth from the convent; and then perhaps this tempest may be stayed.'

`It shall be done. But she is not the only, nor the chief mover, I fear.'

`I know that well. If the world thunder at the gates and demand them, let them go.'

`But these are here for an asylum from a stern world!'

`True, and the stern world would have them. It is in vain to try and protect them. More than this, they may be parties against us! Let them go to the world, sister; but never suffer the world to cross the consecrated threshold of this religious abode with its unhallowed footstep! There is more I have yet to say. I overheard these men swear to each other that this night they would enter this convent and release the three novices whom rumour says are here unwillingly detained. They swore by oaths, most solemn and fearful to utter, to

effect this; and I learned that to open the gates they had a partner here!

`A partner in their conspiracy?'

Yes. A young girl who was to seek asylum here in the name of Charity, and then, while all reposed secure, she was to open wide the gates and let this band of men in!'

`What terrible danger and imminent peril we have been saved from by this lovely fugitive entering as she did. It is too true, we must have had a traitor here who indeed unlocked the gate, but an angel closed it again, ere mischief came of it!'

`The traitress and your angel were the same, I conceive, sister. Has there been any other fugitive here of late?'

`No. Yes! there has been another here—a poor young Protestant girl.'

`When?' quickly and eagerly demanded the priest.

Yesterday afternoon A very fair young girl with blue eyes. She came in rags and offered strawberries to sell through the grate. Touched by her beauty and pitying her poverty, for her apparel was scarce decent, the nun Teresa invited her in and while the novices bought her berries, she clad her with becoming decency. Suddenly in the lodge she fell down ill and was removed to the sick room by my order. She seemed in great suffering all night, but this morning appeared better.'

`Is she still ill?'

`She was quite herself at vespers, and—'

`Where is she now?'

`Sleeping in the chamber with the nun Magdalene!'

`Go and see, if you please, for I have my doubts, This girl must be the one who was to seek asylum here for Charity's sake!'

The suspicions of the lady−superior were now vividly aroused. She hastened from the v stibule and the priest heard her retiring steps echoing along the distint corridor. He continued to stand a few moments where she had left him, his head bent towards the ground, his lips compressed and his whole manner profoundly thoughtful. He was running over in his mind the series of extraordinary events which, like an overwhelining tide turned from its natural channel seemed directing its furious course towards the walls of the ill−fated convent menacing its ruin.

`The young girl? What of her? Thou hast not found her,' said the priest, advancing towards the door, as his ear caught the quick returning foottall of the lady−superier, and thus questioning her as he marked her pale and troubled countenance.

`She has disappeared. The impress of her figure remains upon the couch where she lay down, but she is not to be found!'

`Then she it was who opened the gate, I am now persuaded!'

`I could not suspect the lovely fugitive,' said the lady superior relieved, with all her alarm and trouble at this discovery, rejoiced to clear her young protege from the suspicion which the priest had fastened upon her. `Brother, these are dangerous times when treason dares thus to penetrate the sanctuaries of the Church.'

`Take heed that thy beautiful fugitive is not also a traitor! No one must be trusted!'

The countenance of the lady superior fell at this caution.

`If she be false then there is no truth in the human expression,' she answered sadly.

`Let me see this maiden. At such times as this extraordinary precautions for safety should be taken. I will question her!' and the priest strode with a positive step towards the door leading from the vestibule.

`Nay, Reverend Father! The maiden has here sought sanctuary and I have pledged it to her. Her seclusion and privacy must not be intruded on even by thee! I will be answerable for her good faith!'

`How know you but that to−morrow, ere noon, half the city may not be knocking at the gates demanding thee to deliver her up, denouncing thee as having seduced her to this retreat to secure her salvation and jewels—for thus do these people use there free words of us! How know you that she has not been sent here as an emissary of the multitude that on the morrow they may have her name for a watch−word, and her beauty and forced tears to rouse those who are not in the plot! Cast her forth!' added the priest lifting his voice and sternly repeating his command.

`No, brother, no! I will see that she does not have the power to do mischief while here, and I will leave the fearful alternative you hint at to God; for I have sheltered her in his mercy's name. If ever innocence and truth were impressed in angelic lines upon a human countenance they are stamped upon the lovely lineaments of this gentle sufferer!'

`Be it as thou wilt, sister! I pray that it turn out not as I fear. Now having warned thee I leave thee to guard well with bolts and bars, and what is stronger than these, with fervent prayer, thy sacred abode! I trust that this tumultuous upheaving of the waves may subside without overdashing the bulwarks of the public peace!'

`It is to be hoped so,' answered the lady superior fervently.

`I have now done my duty. After what I heard I hastened hither to give you information of the tendency of popular feeling and to caution you. There is no doubt but that the party you heard at the gate was that I overheard in the inner room of the honest protestant's tavern; for they had time to come here, as I, on hearing their plan delayed to address a note to the civic magistrate, and another to the head captain of the Police informing them of the proposed attempt at violence.'

`To neither of which communications has any attention been paid,' said the lady−superior in a severe tone of reproach.

`Doubtless these officers, knowing the strength of the feeling against us hesitate to act!'

`Then God is our trust and the shield of our defence—'

`As he shall, also, be the arm of his Church's vengeance if evil happen but to a single stone of its foundation,' responded the priest in a tone of decision, and an expression of elevated faith lighting up his dark intellectual features.

In a few moments he took leave of the lady, who in person closed the gate and locked and barred it after him; then returning into the lodge, the door of which she also firmly secured, she hastened to the chamber where she had left the fugitive, whom she found fast aslee upon the couch, a bright tear, like two tremulous diamonds, glittering on the long fringes of each eye−lid.

CHAPTER V. The Discovery.

We now change the scene of our story to the villa from which the fugitive had taken her flight. It is a stately mansion surrounded by a light verandah and embosomed in trees. It was characterized by an air of opulenee and taste, and had much the appearance of the residence of a Carolina Planter. A pleasant lawn intersected by gravelled avenues and walks stretched before the front, and on either side of the graceful portico stood statues of marble—a Diana and a Naiad exquisitely sculptured. A light shone through the rich crimson curtains of a bow window, casting a bright red tint upon the foliage of the Indian acacias and orange trees that stood in large vases beneath it, and nearly screening it from view.

We will enter this mansion of luxury and elegant retirement. The stately hall is adorned with paintings from the old Italian and Spanish schools, and statues from the chisel of Thorwaldsen and Canova, busts from the hand of Bracket and Powers adorned niches and crowned pedestals. There is a costly girandola in the hall but it is unlighted. The hall receives its light from an open door at the right, which leads into the apartment from which shone forth the crimson rays. There is no sound. All is still as in the house of death!

We will enter the room from which the beams of a solar lamp are emitted into the dim and shadowy hall. It is a room partly library, partly drawing room. Two of its sides are lined from floor to ceiling with elegant cases, gorgeous with golden−backed volumes. The whole air of the apartment speaks of wealth and ease and the refinements of educated taste. Upon a table of roseveined marble, which stands near the bow window, are visible manifestations of a female's presence, a small kid glove looking as if recently withdrawn from the hand; a toilet for sewing; ivory needles for German netting, and an album on which was the name `Marie de Heywode.'

The room was occupied by a gentleman about fifty years of age. He had just risen from a French *lounge* which was placed near an escritoire at which he had been writing. He now walked the room with a slow and meditative step. His person was of the middle height, compact and manly. His air and bearing were those of a high−bred and polished man of the world. His face was singularly handsome, and his dark hair, scarcely touched with the silver of time, curled freely upon his well shaped head and fell in careless masses over his forehead and about his temples. An expression of decision marked his character as a man of resolution, but at the present time this feature was modified by a settled expression of melancholly and the troubled aspect of one ill at case in his mind; for the outward exhibitions of wealth do not always exempt their possessor from hours of wretchedness. He was dressed in a suit of black, over which was thrown a brown silk dressing robe.

He continued to walk up and down his apartment, at intervals pausing near the window to listen, and again stopping and gazing earnestly and sadly into an apartment that opened from the farther extremity of the library, as if he would go in, yet was restrained by some secret feeling. Suddenly he entered it as if under an impulse—as if conquering a dread! The room was hung with black from ceiling to floor. In the centre of this sable hall stood a coffin covered with a pall. At the head of the coffin was an altar clad in black velvet upon which burned seven tall wax candles encircling a crucifix of alabaster. Save the coffin and its pall, the altar and its crucifix and burning candles, the room was without furniture.

He advanced a pace into the room and then hesitated—stood still and gazed upon the coffin. His face was pale as marble, and grief and stern displeasure were strongly mingled in the aspect of his countenance as he surveyed the pall. He approached and with one hand slowly turned back the covering from the face of the dead and gazed upon it!

How beautiful, even in death, was that countenance reposing beneath his eyes. It was that of a lovely woman scarce thirty−six years of age. Her profile, as the candles cast their mingled beams upon it seemed faultless, noble yet feminine. Her hair and brows and eyelashes were as black as the hue of the raven's wing. The exquisite beauty and finish of her mouth and chin were incomparable. Her complexion was of a pure olive and must, in life, have been of that rich brunette shade which warms under the sun of southern Italy.

`Coldly beautiful!' he said as he gazed with tenderness yet speaking still in a tone of reproof. `Thou art still, even in death, without compare! Well may I gaze upon thee, Marguerita! Though thou hast done a great

evil, I cannot be angry with thee while I look upon thy corpse! I loved thee, oh, how passionately! Thou art gone and this happiness is only left me—to gaze on thee and recall into those marble lineaments life and love and intelligence. Never will those eyes gaze on mine with gentle affection and passionate tenderness. Lost—lost! thou art forever lost to me!'

He covered his face with his hands and remained a few moments in this attitude of grief, when the quick sound of a horse's feet reached his ear.

`He comes! Now for action and duplicity. This evil thou hast done, Marguerita, shall be healed, and then I will forgive thy memory! Oh, hadst thou known and felt the wrong thou wert doing thy lips would have been sealeu in silence as now they are sealed. But 'tis done! Take my forgiveness! Tho' *hers* I shall never have! Farewell, Marguerita! To−morrow thou shalt be laid in the tomb beneath the tree thy own hanos planted!'

He pressed his lips to the forehead of the dead and then passing with a noiseless tread from the room he closed the door, turned the key and placed it in his pocket. As he seated himself to recover composure, a black footman threw aside the hall door and announced M. Rosselau.

`You are welcome, Monsieur Count,' said Colonel de Heywode rising.

`I should have been here earlier, but was detained by some letters which I received just before leaving my hotel and which I had to answer!'

`You are quite in time, Monsieur,' said Colonel de Heywode, speaking with a dignity that was natural to him and which was now enhanced by secret sorrow.

`Ah, you appear sad, my friend!' said the nobleman seating himself on an ottoman, after throwing down his cap, whip and gloves. `To−morrow we will take an early ride on horseback over to the battle−ground and you will feel better! I sent for you, not knowing but that we might ride together in the morning, as you have so often expressed a desire to see the spot where the first resistance of the American Provincials to British oppression took place; I wished most, however, to have an opportunity to see you privately upon a subject dear to you. My orders to send for you were given openly to mislead others who heard me as to my motives.'

`What are these motives?' asked the nobleman regarding him with surprise. `You allude to one dear to me! None so dear as the lovely Marie! Do you speak of her?'

`I am aware, Monsieur, of your often expressed attachment to my daughter. That she is pleased with you I am assured. Aside from the accomplishments of your person, your rank and wealth should make any young lady feel honored in winning your regards!'

`You do me infinite honor, Colonel,' said the French noble bowing and smiling. `The alliance I seek with your family, no less nobly descended than mine, confers honor rather upon me! That I love Marie with great devotion I confess. But it is with difficulty I can persuade her to regard me with any degree of condescension.'

Here M. Rosselau gently stroked his moustache and appeared as if he imagined himself looking into a mirror with no little satisfaction at what he saw reflected from its imaginary surface. He was a tall, slender young foreigner, with a stylish exterior, a haughty, cold expression and an aspect in which the lower passions were delineated with no little depth. He had title and fortune; and having met with the beauteous Marie de Heywode a few weeks previous at Saratoga, he had attached himself to their touring party, and returned with them as far as Boston, where taking his lodgings at the Tremont, he almost daily rode out to the villa. Rosselau was a man too sensual to experience any thing of that elevated and pure love with which such a person as Marie de Heywode should be loved. Her heart, already engaged to one in all respects her equal in generosity of character, intelligence and position in society, she shrunk from the bold and heartless attentions of one who, enamored only with her beauty with an eye too, perhaps to her vast fortune, was unable to appreciate the richer wealth of her heart and mind.

`My daughter is yet young, my good Count,' said Colonel de Heywode with a faint effort to smile, while he felt deeply displeased at the part of repugnance to which the Count alluded; `and, perhaps, she has not quite got over an attachment of an early date, and some three or four years continuance, formed ere we left Charleston for a young gentleman there; the son of an eminent patriot, General Bertrand.'

`General Bertrand!'

`You are thinking of Bertrand of France. We have had also a General Bertrand in South Carolina; I believe a remote connection of the French Marshal; for you are aware, I believe, that most of our best families are of

French stock!'

`Your appearance sir, is certainly like that of a Frenchman,' said the Count bowing, as if conveying a particular compliment to his host.

`The young Bertrand has nothing objectionable save his poverty. His father died poor, leaving him dependent upon an aunt; and he has now nothing but his pay as a junior lieutenant in the navy. I have, also, other reasons why this alliance is not congenial to my feelings; and it was, in part, to remove Marie from his influences, for it was natural to conceive that he sought her wealth quite as much as her person, that three years since I purchased this estate and removed hither. That she still has thought of him I am aware from circumstances that have this summer come to my knowledge. Still I am persuaded, now that she knows her union with him to be hopeless, that she will consent to become your wife.'

Well might Colonel de Heywode say he had reasons for believing her still attached to Frank Edward Bertrand! He well knew that she had kept up a correspondence with him, which he not only suffered but permitted, knowing they were affianced to each other! for he had no positive objections to Frank, notwithstanding his deficiency in a fortune, and had looked forward to his marriage, until the Count formed his daughter's acquaintance at the Springs, when his ambition for this nobler alliance induced him at once to forbid her again thinking of her lover, accompanying it with the command to receive submissively and with outward gratification the attentions of the Count de Rosselau. It was not, Colonel de Heywode well knew, to remove his child from the influences of Frank's society, that he came to the north to dwell! Bertrand was the most of his time at sea, and rarely met her to influence her. The motives which led him to quit the south were very different from these as shall be made to appear.

`I do not object to a little difficulty in winning so fair a prize,' said the Count gaily. `If she love me not now she will love me as a bride. It shall be my part to make her forget that, save de Rosselau, there is another man on the earth! Where is now the beautiful Countess that is to be—whom I am to move Paris with in admiration of her charms when I return? I am most happy, Colonel, in obtaining your favor and consent. Pray let me see for a few happy minutes her who is my heart's idol, and I will not be long in gaining hers. I will dazzle her imagination with the splendor of the scenes to which I shall take her! talk to her eloquently of the magnificence of the court and the gaiety of the world of Paris! Captivate her fancy with accounts of the sensation her beauty will create, of the homage she will receive, of the power she will wield, of the envy she will excite, of the perfect happiness and pleasure that is in store for her.'

Colonel de Heywode could not altogether control a smile of peculiar irony as he rose up and replied,

`It is late, but I will seek my daughter. An hour since she retired to her room saying she should be engaged in writing, and should probably be up late. I would rather this interview should take place *to−night*,' he added impressively, with extraordinary emphasis on the last word.

He crossed the room to leave it, and was laying his hand on the door which led into the chamber of the dead, when he started back with a shudder and a slight exclamation of horror. He had evidently forgotten for the moment that the room was thus occupied.

`You are ill, sir!' said de Rosselau, hearing the cry, and witnessing his sudden paleness.

`No. It is nothing. Be seated, my dear Count, I will soon return.'

He then left the apartment by the hall door. On entering the hall he traversed it to its utmost extremity, and opened a door which led into a rotunda or vestibule, from which four doors gave access to as many rooms. One of these to the right he gained by ascending three steps to an alcove, which was also closed by a glass door, across which, on the inner side was drawn in thick folds a needle wrought muslin curtain. At this door he tapped and listened for a reply. He tapped again and bent his ear for an answer. All within was still.'

`She sleeps. Yet there is a light within. Marie! Daughter!' he said, the first time kindly, the second time with a tone of authority.

There was no sound—no movement responding to his call.

`She sleeps heavily. If she has retired I will not disturb her. To−morrow, the Count shall have his interview.'

He turned away from the door descended the three steps into the centre of the rotunda and then paused. Thoughts of past, very recently passed, events rushed upon his mind. He recollected how they had parted two hours before, she in tears, he with angry menaces. His suspicions were awakened, for he was alive to every

motive she had for flight. Scarcely had he conceived the suspicion that she had flown from his roof and his power, ere he was once more before her boudoir. He called again loudly, and waiting an instant only for a response, he shattered the glass with his hand and drew aside the muslin drapery. The interior of her boudoir was all visible to his observation! The table and desk at which she had been writing, with the pen she had used! the chair partly moved back as she had got out of it! Nay even a letter which she had written was lying upon the silver−edged escritoire. The door of her sleeping apartment was partly open and he could see that the snowy pillows of the bed were un−pressed.

`Marie!'

His voice penetrated the chamber but was unanswered. With a strong effort he pressed the lock from its fastenings and entered the boudoir, and with a quick step crossed it into the chamber. She was not to be seen! The Venetian window which opened upon the trellised verandah was partly raised and his heart misgave him as the dreadful truth forced itself irresistibly upon his mind! *She had flown!*

He stood a moment fixed to the spot! His brow darkened with the terrible emotion of wrathful displeasure that filled his soul. To realize the truth seemed impossible. He started from his attitude of inaction and began to search the apartments. The fact that he had found the door locked and the window up were conclusive that her egress must have been by stealth and with the intention of evading the fate which he had ordained for her.

There was, however, a deeper motive than the fear of de Rosselau which prompted the flight of our lovely and unhappy fugitive. This motive she had given to the faithful black, Moses, as a sufficient one for his comprehension; but the reader will see that this was but an inferior and secondary cause for her conduct; though to avoid a union so detestable as that proposed to her by her father, would, no other motive being present, have been a sufficient ground for her flight. What the true cause was we shall know by and bye, when all the smpathies of our nature, we feel assuted, will be freely poured into the bosom of the lovely and self−sacrincing Marie, to the noble generosity of whose character we shall then find language inadequate to do justice.

When convinced that his daughter had flown, he resolved at once to take measures for her recovery. Only two hours before she had left him; yet, perhaps, she had been that two hours gone! His first step was to search the house, which he did rapidly and in person, without giving the alarm. He then returned to her room and rung the bell for her maid who could give him no account of her, save that she had dismissed her an hour and a half before, saying she should want her no more that night. He then sent for all the servants and questioned them, but no one knew any thing of this mysterious flight.

`Where is Moses?' he asked, missing him. `He is in his bed; he said he was sick, Master,' answered the footman.

`Go and see! Nay—hold! wait till I read this!' he cried, his eyes resting upon the letter that lay on the escritoire and which he had not again thought of, but now caught up seeing it was address to him. The blaeks stood around with looks of wonder and fear while he tore it open and read as follows:

Nine o'clock, August 6th, 1834. My Father:

I have decided on my course. Flight is my only safety.— Farewell forever! Do not attempt to seek out my retreat! It will be in vain. I fly to bury my woe in the grave—my infamy from the eyes of the world—to save the honor and spare the sacrifice of a noble heart and love devoted as it is pure! For my sake spare him and be kind, I do not ask your forgiveness for I feel that I am the only one wronged!—wronged, alas—how deeply wronged! Blame not *her!* She but did a duty sacred and imperative! Censure not— curse not as I have heard thee curse the insensible dead! Deep is the injury that thou hast done, irreparable and which naught but death can heal. To this I fly, not seeking it by my own hand, oh, no! my poor breaking heart will soon bring it me! Farewell.

Marie.

The father read this letter and as he read his features grew rigid and each letter seemed to his blood−shot gaze letters of fire burning into his brain. Grief anger, remorse, a hundred conflicting feelings agitated his soul. Without a word farther to his trembling servants he rushed from the room and to the stables. As he anticipated he found the stall which was wont to hold his daughter's private horse empty. Calling aloud to have his horse saddled he hastened to the Count who still remained in the library ignorant of what had

transpired.

She has flown, Count! Mount and ride! She is well mounted and we must use the spur! Follow with torches to the gate.'

The next moment both gentlemen were in their saddles and dashing down the avenue. Here the Colonel dismounted to examine the foot prints for the marks of Browny's shoes and discovering them turning to the left, he uttered an exclamation of pleasure and sprung into his saddle again.

`Now de Rosselau overtake her you or I this night and to−morrow she shall be thy wedded wife!'

`En evant, Messeuirs!' shouted de Rousselau; and the two horsemen took the turnpike north at full gallop.

By continuing the pike they passed the cross−road into which the fair fugitive had turned, and rode onward a dozen miles without any signs or traces of her passage. At length, at day break, after traversing other roads and making numerous inquiries, they returned to the villa, Rosselau furious at his discomfiture and Colonel de Heywode depressed, broken down and more in sorrow than in anger.

CHAPTER VI. The Pacquet.

It was on the evening of Alice de Heywode's flight a few moments after the sun had gone down that an American frigate dropped anchor off the Battery, in the harbor of New York, and in a few minutes afterwards a boat put from her to the shore. Three officers landed at the Battery, one of them Captain of the frigate, the other two were lieutenants.

`Well, my dear Bertrand,' said the captain as they stopped at the Battery gate a moment, at the foot of Broadway, as if about to separate there, `well my dear Bertrand, go to your hotel and read your letters and then come round to my house and give me the rest of the evening; for I dare say we shall have quite a party, for my wife sets all the bells ringing when I get home!'

`Thank you, my dear Captain, I will try to see you; if not I will be round in the morning' answered the lieutenant, a young man of about five or six and twenty, with a very handsome face and a noble, almost princely bearing: and evidently from the absence of all restraint and reserve between them, notwithstanding their difference in naval rank, there was a close friendship between the junior and senior officer.

`Do come when you will, you will be always welcome,' replied the captain getting into a coach which had been hailed and brought to by one of his men, for two accompanied him carrying yalises, and packages. It drove off rapidly while Bertrand, taking the arm of the other officer, walked at an earnest pace up Broadway.

`You must be expecting letters from some faire ladye, Frank, from the way you pay ont foot−rope,' said his companion laughingly, a man about forty−four years of age, with a bold, brown visage, and looking every inch the sailor.

`I have some very dear friends from whom I have not heard for some time. I expected, you know, to have come into New York at first in the frigate; but as we made Norfolk instead, I wrote to New York (where I had desired all letters to be directed) for any letters there to be forwarded to Norfolk. But as the frigate sailed immediately the very day after my letter went, and we have had a quick run round, I am in hopes I shall be able to anticipate my instructions and stop my letters! They were to he to the care of the City Hotel, and in three minutes I shall know whether I am in time.'

`There must be a lady in the case. But you are young yet, and this eagerness is excusable. When you get to be on the first soundings t'oher side of forty and find the leadsman sing out that the sands of time are `grey mixed with black,' you will be less impatient. But here we are, my dear boy, at the old City; and she holds to her anchor here with her old six tiers of ports and her red sides, just as she did when I last took my departnre, ten months ago. Come let us board her and know the news!'

`All is right!' cried Bertrand as he held up letters in his hand after having applied at the office, received them and returned to his friend ere he had fairly got into the hotel.

`That's hearty, and good news I hope!' answered Lieutenant Benson. `No infernal black seals, I see!'

`No; and all good news, I am sure. Excuse me! I have ordered a room and must go to it and read them.'

`By all means, my dear boy. I'll meanwhile, just cruise about the lower decks here and see if I can fall in with any craft I know.'

Bertrand hastened to his room, locked his door, and throwing himself into a chair by the table, selected from the five letters which he held two, one being quite a thick and voluminous looking epistle, the handwriting of which he well knew, and pressing both letters warmly, passionately, adoringly to his lips, while his manly eyes were filled with the tears of a pure and noble affection, he gazed with affectionate interest upon the directions which *her own hund had penned!*

`Sweet Marie! Oh, how good to write! One letter from you is worth all others I could receive did they contain offers of thrones; for a throne in thy heart is to me dearer than any on earth! Now what shall I hear! What shall I learn? It is three months since I got your last letter at Gibraltar, and that had then been two months written! What have you to tell me, sweet Marie! I have to tell thee of my own advancement, and this will make thee happy, for it will pave the way sooner for our union! I tremble while I hold the letter! My fingers refuse to break the seal. What painful foreboding comes over me. There is a difference in the writing!

The one with the earliest postmark is written, save a slight unsteadiness towards the last, in her usual beautiful hand, quiet and elegant, and the other as if with hurried and trembling haste! Nay— I will not torment myself with nervous conjecture! All I can fear is that her father may object to our union for some two or three years yet, and this objection we can remove I dare say between us. I will end this suspense!'

The lover then broke the seal and with an eagerness equal to his late delay, he opened the first letter and read as follows: `Elmwood, − *August 1st, 1834.* My Dear Bertrand:

I address you at New York as you desired me in your letter from Mahon. For that kind letter I send you my warmest thanks. It is like yourself and breathes that noble affection which has made you the idol of my heart. The days, weeks and months seem very long for I count them by the throbbings of my heart, which is my only measure of time while you are absent from me I think my father is now reconciled to our union, and I heard him speak with great commendation and a sort of pride, that gratified me very much, of your courage and noble forgetfulness of self, in saving the lives of the three English officers and that of those of the Prince and Princess di Luzzi, in the squall which struck their boat after it left the frigate for the shore.— The papers are full of it, though *you* make no mention of it yourself. This, too, is so like you. I cannot be too grateful to Heaven for your preservation at such a time of imminent peril and confusion, and also for placing it in your power to do so noble an act; for your fame and praises are *mine*, dear Bertrand!

I had written thus far when my father came in closing the door, approached me with a very grave look and asked me to whom I was writing? I answered, for I conceal nothing from him concerning you, hide nothing from him in relation to our mutual attachment, I answered by placing what I had written in his hand. He saw to whom it was addressed, and then without reading a line replaced it upon the escritoire before me and took my hand in his! I need not say, dear Bertrand, I could not anticipate what was to be the nature of this interview; for I apprehended it from what has already occurred within the house Now—dont be jealous, Edward—for I am about to tell you that which will vex you, though you will not be vexed with *me*. I did think of finishing my letter to you before my father entered without alluding to this painful subject—but it has now assumed too serious an aspect to be treated with indifference, and moreover *your* presence may correct every thing, and save me from domestic persecution that has fairly commenced.

There was introduced to my father while we were at Saratoga a month ago, a French gentleman, the Count and Baron de Rosselau, as he styled himself on his card. My father presented him soon after to me, and be chose to devote himself to me from that moment every opportunity that unfortunately placed me in his society. He was by no means a man to please a lady; for though elegant in his manners, he was a consummate fop, and the expression of his face was the index of a heart without purity, of a character without generosity. In a word, he looked like a bad—very bad man, as I have no question that he is. Instead of receiving his attentions and being dazzled by his titles, I shrunk from him and avoided his presence in every way until my father interposed his authority and commanded me to treat him not only with civility but to receive with pleasure his attentions.

Do not harbor one dark doubt of my truth and love to you, Bertrand. Your loved image, your dear memory, I only kept the closer in my heart of hearts. My love for you became more sacred and I firmly refused to obey my father's commands! Finding me resolute he ceased to urge me, but in every way afterwards sought opportunities to have me under Rosselau's protection. He would quite neglect to hand me into dinner till Rosselau, seeing me standing alone, would press his services. He would suddenly desert me on some pretence, when promenading the galleries, and the next instant Rosselau would be at my side. I tried to show him, by my conduct and words, that his attentions were disagreable; but confident in the support of my father, he continued to persecute me, until at length, I firmly made up my mind that if my father did not leave the Springs the next day, I would run away from him and return home. This determination I made known to my father—with a spirit that confounded him; and he was under the necessity of giving me his consent to go.

We departed the next day although our residence had not been but a week there, but *not* for home. Our destination was Niagara! I cared little whither we went so that I saw no more of the hateful and persecuting de Rosselau.— The very next day he joined us at Rochester and attached himself to our party. I treated him with cool indifference and regarded his words and his presence no more than as if I had neither ears to hear his folsome flatteries, nor eyes to be conscious of his vicinity. I mortified him so openly before others by this studied reserve that after a day at Saratoga he took his leave; and I trusted I should see no more of him.

To my surprize, after he was gone, I did not receive from my father that severe censure upon my conduct that I was tremblingly anticipating; on the contrary he was chereful and seemed to quite forget that I had displeased him, or that there was such a person as the `Count Baron Rosseleau' in the world I soon recovered my spirits and health, which were sadly suffering, as doubtless my father had discovered, and after three days sojourn at Niagara, he proposed that we should journey homeward. This proposition I assented to gladly; for I felt that there I should have a retreat sacred from the intrusion of my titled and persevering persecutor. But I was mistaken, Edward, as you will see! But be patient and spare your feelings till you hear all. I had been at home but four days when father informed me he should have a friend from town to dine, and desired me to `look and appear my best, for *it was his particular desire his friend should find his visit very agreeable*. Perhaps you already anticipate who this `friend' was, Bertrand. But I did not, not harboring the least cuspicion that de Rosselau was in this part of the country. On my entrance to the drawing room just before dinner was announced, I thought I should sink through the floor on beholding Baron de Rosselau! Nothing but my spirited indignation kept me from losing my self possession. My father's eye was bent sternly upon me, and I bowed coldly and repeated the terms of welcome, but without noticing the hand de Rosselau would have extended to grasp mine.

How I got through dinner I have no recollection. I returned from the table as soon as I could, and flying to my room burst into a paroxysm of tears! Oh, how I wisned you were present then, dear Bertrand that we might fly together I cared not whither so it were *with you!*

The young officer sprung from his seat at this passage of the letter, and gave utterance to an execration of the deepest tone, while pity and sympathy for her he so fondly loved, and from whom, at *such* a time, of all others, he was away, was strongly expressed in his excited features.

`Madness! This is unendurable! I have no patience to complete this letter! I feel as if I could fly to him this moment. Poor Marie! Noble and true Marie! If that de Rosselau does not answer for all this—but, *patience*. I must read more and know all before I can stir a step! Oh, that I could embrace the contents of the remainder of the letter at a glance of thought.'

He sat down and compressing his lips forced a calmness he could not feel, and resumed the narration of the persecuted maiden.

—`I did not leave my room till the next morning, nothwithstanding my father came repeatedly at the door to summon me; but pleading illness I refused to admit him or obey his commands. He threatened me; but I would gladly have been locked up in the darkest and loneliest room of the villa than have met de Rosselau. But believing in the morning that he had gone, for I had been told so by my maid, I went out to breakfast. I found him standing with my father in the breakfast−room. My first impulse was to fly. My next and best was to remain and chill him by my manner. I had before found this most successful, and I now assumed this bearing; and during breakfast I neither saw nor heard him speak. His chair might as well have been empty, for I took no notice that any one occupied it. My father was very angry and the breakfast passed off gloomily; but I felt that I was the victorious one.

Directly after breakfast the count left, and a few moments afterwards one of the servants handed me a note from him written in French, which I copy, for I would you should understand all and know all that has transpired in the fullest manner, my noble Bestrand.'

`Has the villain *dared* to address Marie a note?' cried the lover with a darkning brow. `But I must have patience. Let me read and see what insolence I have more to chastise.' Madamoiselle,

`I beg you will not refuse to read with your beautiful eyes (*Bertrand*. The devil confound him!) the few profound sentiments of my heart, I have the honor to give expression to in consideration of the deep passion I entertain for you. Be assured, Madamoisille, that it has never been my felicitous fate to meet with one of your divine sex who has succeded in imprisoning my heart so completely as you have done! Yes, admirable Marie! (the foul fiend take him!) I have had but one thought since I beheld you, and that is to make myself agreeable to you, that I may win that cruel heart which already has captivated mine. I assure you I have taken no offence at your proud and cold indifference, but on the contrary, your coldness has increased the flame of my devotion! May I hope that my sincerity may meet at least with some degree of grace from you, for you are too beautiful to be a tyrant! (I'll make him eat this letter!) It is my highest ambition to make you the Countess de Rosselau, a rank to which some of the haughtiest beauties I say it without vanity, of dear enchanting Paris

have aspired to in vain! At your feet, where I have already laid my heart, I am desirous of laying the honors of my name and rank. Your father's consent I have been so fortunate as to obtain, and I only await your condescension to my suit, trusting that I shall not have sued in vain. Your devoted and humble lover, who kisses your hand with the profoundest adoration,

LOUIS FRANCOIS, PAUL DE ROSSELAU. Count Verrier and Baron Rosselau.

When the young officer had ended the perusal of this epistle, he sat a moment with his fiery glance fixed upon the signature.

`That Count Verrier has sealed his own fate as I am a living man! We have met before now; and well do I know the villain. Verrier! It is the same name and is the same wretch that I chastised with the flat of my sword at a ball at the British Ambassador's at Naples, for picking up the glove of the daughter of the Commodore as she hung on my arm, and pressing it to his lip before returning it. We have now a new account to adjust; but for Marie's sake, I trust she has not been persecuted by the attentious of such a villain. But let me hear all that the dear girl says:'

`I took no notice of this note, Bertrand, and indeed should have sent it back unopened, but I wished to know what it was he had to say, and to ascertain, if possible, how far this persecution was to be carried; for I had made up my mind to escape from it by flight, I knew not whither, if he should continue it.

After I had read the note my father came in, and asked me my decision. I told him *naively* I was not free to act without *your* consent, for I was plighted to you: that if he or the Baron would wait until you returned from sea, or would write to you and get your consent, I would then think upon the matter. This reply angered my father; and then I very firmly told him, that were I *free*, pertectly free, the Baron would be the *last* man who would be successful in engaging my affections; that he was very disagreeable to me, and `that if I could be wicked enough to hate any body, *I should hate* him.'

I hoped this would settle the matter; and for some days I heard no more of the subject of de Rosselau, though he twice or thrice visited the house and dined with my father; but I did not see him, nor did my father send any message to me to leave my room.

I therefore believed that the war was at an end; and daily hoping for your return I began to be at peace and experience a sense of security. Under this feeling I began this letter to you, and had written but the first twenty lines when my father came in, as I already have said, asked me to whom I was writing, and on my handing him the letter returned it to me again without reading it.

Now I will proceed to tell you what he said to me, having deferred doing so to acquaint you first with the occurrences which had previous to this transpired. These occurrences you have now had fully communicated to you, and now you shall hear the result of this last important interview between me and my father!'

Bertrand's impatience would hardly permit him to wait the word for word communication; he felt something still more painful to his feelings was probably coming, and he more than once rose with the letter in his hand as if about to crush it into his pocket, and without hearing more fly to know the worst! But reflection enabled him to control these fiery impulses, and summoning all his patience, he prepared to finish the letter.

CHAPTER VII. Bertrand at his Hotel—The letter continued.

Bertrand having, with a great effort of self−control, succeeded in repressing his impatience once more resumed the perusal of Marie's communication:

`What I am now to add, my dear Edward,' said the maiden in her letter, will show you how fully matured was the conspiracy against my happiness and peace, planned between my misguided father and this unfeeling Baron de Rosselau. After he had entered my room, and locked the door as I have already said in the beginning of my letter, he sat for a few moments in silence as if not knowing in what way to open the subject upon his mind. At length he raised his eyes and said,

`Marie, I have come here to speak with you touching my friend and guest, the Count Verrier de Rosselau. I need not tell you that he is deeply enamored with your beauty and intelligence; for this he has declared to you as well by words as by his attention. I know you have taken it into your head to dislike or else to pretend to dislike him. This is I believe, or am willing to believe, mere coquetry to humble him still more at your feet; for this is the triumph of your success! (Perhaps it is, Bertrand, with those we do not love,' added Marie in parenthesis; `but have I ever humbled or sought to humble *you*, dear Edward, at my feet? Oh, no! but rather to lift you to my heart, rather to rest my head upon your bosom!) After my father had said that much he paused and looked at me fixedly. Seeing that I remained silent he went on:

`If this is coquetry, it is my wish that you put an end to it, and receive the attentions of de Rosselau with frankness!—if it is dislike, and a desire to act contrary to my intentions respecting you, I command you to *obey* me, and to accept the addresses of a man who truly loves you, and whose rank and wealth are in themselves sufficient to command your consent.'

`I am not coquetting with the Count de Rosselau, sir,' I answered firmly; `I have too much respect for myself, as well as too little for him to condescend to any such acts, I thought, sir, I had very clearly proved to you my unconquerable repugnance to the addresses of the French nobleman. If I have not, sir, I now assure you with all the decision I can command, that it is my unalterable determination never to give this baron one shadow of encouragement; nay, I reject unqualifiedly his proposals, and I beg, sir, that from me you will communicate to him this decision.'

I spoke respectfully as became a daughter, but I spoke with a resolution that surprised my father. He looked at me fixedly a moment. His eyes darkened in their expression, and his cheek grew suddenly pale. I trembled; for I knew the violence of his passions when awakened.

`And this is your decision,' he at length said in a deliberate tone, speaking in a hoarse whisper, that told me how deeply he was moved.

`It is, sir!'

`And you are willing to abide by the decision you have come to?'

`Yes, my father. You know that I have no heart to give the baron. That is Bertrand's.'

`Bertrand shall never call you his wife, so help me Heaven,' was his fierce rejoinder. `He is a young officer on pay, and without name or fortune. Rosselau is a noble, a man of distinction, who has the entree into Emperors' courts, whose wealth will afford you every luxury, whose rank open to you the saloons of princes.'

`I know that Bertrand is poor, but I love Bertrand and my love ennobles and enriches him; and I had rather have a place in his manly heart than in the proudest saloon of Europe's kings.'

It was thus I replied, dear Edward, for I spoke from my heart; and I know you will forgive me for writing you what I said; but I wish you to know all so that you may know how to act; for *you* are my only trust now, this side of Heaven!

`If you persist in this decision you shall have a place in the lowest cell of a convent,' he answered with deep displeasure.

`I am in your power, my dear father,' I answered submissively; I would rather be an inmate of a dungeon than an inmate of the palace of de Rosselau.'

`You then refuse to wed him?'

`I do sir.'

`Then you shall have your wish. If you wed not de Rosselau neither shall you wed Edward Bertrand. Now take your choice, either a Convent or de Rosselau.

`I prefer the Convent,' I answered as firmly as I could, though my heart was breaking and my eyes ready to gush with tears; for I knew well the determined purpose of my father and that he would not hesitate to punish me as he had threatened.

He walked to the window and looked forth for a moment. He then returned and took my hand and said kindly—

`Marie, I do not wish to lose my child forever. You are very dear to me. It is because I know that your union with Baron de Rosselau will be of great advantage to you in society and the world that I urge it. This is a world of rank, of wealth and appearance. Your union with M. de Rosselau will secure to you all those advantages I wish you to enjoy. Forget this childish attachment for a young seaman who has only his courage and his sword, and be wise, and yield to my wishes. I will settle on you the morning of your marriage with the baron one hundred thousand dollars. With him you will be happy, envied, honored and caressed.'

`I shall never be de Rosselau's bride,' was my firm response. `I would rather be Bertrand's wife, though he have nothing but his courage and his sword, than the wife of Rosselau were he heir to the French throne.'

When I had thus spoken, my father cast my hand from him and said,

`Then do I make you repent in sorrow for this madness and obstinate folly, be assured. I will give you three days to decide. At the end of three days you must consent to become the Countess de Rosselau or an inmate of a Convent. '

Thus speaking, and casting upon me a look of the severest displeasure, my father left me. I at first gave myself up to tears—tears of unhappiness and grief and anger all mingled. I was angry at de Rosselau, grieved at my father's resentment and tyranny, unhappy at the prospect of your own suffering at losing me; yet I looked not upon myself as my own, so much as that I am *yours*, Edward.'

`Three days,' exclaimed Bertrand, almost paralized by the terrible events he was obtaining knowledge of through her letter, `then she is now in a convent, for this letter has been written full twenty. Merciful God, sustain me under this heavy blow. But this is no time for grief, but for action But let me hurry to read this fatal letter to the close. Noble, faithful, persecuted girl'

`After half an hour's weeping for you as well as for me, dear Bertrand, I resolved I would write to you the whole that had transpired, knowing that you were soon to be back from the Mediterranean, and hoping that my letter may find you in New York in time for you to fly to rescue from a two fold danger her who lives only for you. I have, therefore, been sitting up half the night writing the foregoing, while my father believes that I sleep. Two days more remain. Vague ideas of flight enter my mind—but I ask myself whither shall I fly? How should I escape from my father's careful watch, or the no less watchful scrutiny of de Rosselau' I shall soon decide upon something. I will close my long letter now, for the morning dawns, and my father will soon be here to unlock my door and ask me if I have changed my mind and am ready for the sacrifice. I shall secretly despatch this letter to the office by my faithful servant Moses. I will not seal it till I can send it away, and will add a postscript telling you what I decide upon. Your devoted,

MARIE. `Decide upon? What can she decide upon?' asked Edward, as he glanced at the postscript, with doubt and misgiving of what it might contain. `But this will tell me.' `P. S.—Four o'clock, P. M.

`I have come to the determination to fly. De Rosselau is still an inmate of the house, and my father has compelled me to meet him at dinner. I cannot endure this tyranny any longer. I, therefore, shall make an effort to escape to−night. I have also decided where to go. There is a poor woman who resides in a very retired spot not far from here with whom I can be safe until I hear from you or see you. She lives at the foot of the hill, called Berry Hill, about a quarter of a mile from the grave−yard of the village. Her name is Bray; the house is without paint, browned by age. No one ever visits her and the place would be unsuspected by my father as affording me shelter. I have called at her house in my rides on horseback for a glass of water, and talked with her and given her money and otherwise aided her; she is, therefore, my friend, and I know will be faithful. *There* you will find me. I shall fly to−night. It is my only alternative, for I begin to fear from my father's

manner and some hints he has thrown out, that he will endeavor to *compel* me to marry de Rosselau at the expiration of the three days time.'

I had sealed this letter when, just at sundown, I saw a carriage drive up to the door and a lady dressed in deep mourning and closely veiled alighted and entered. The elegance of her form and the air of graceful ease which characterised all her motions led me to believe that she was youthful and beautiful.— I ran over in my mind all of my female friends, who are, however, very few, but could fix upon none of them as likely to be my visitor; for that the visit was paid to me I had no doubt. As I was locked in my room (for my father has kept me a prisoner since his decision) I could not go out to ascertain, and was compelled to wait until I was sent for. I heard my father's step in the hall, then his voice in a tone of strange surprise. Then I heard the door of the library close and all was silent. De Rosselau I knew had gone out on horseback, and that my father was alone, I was satisfied, after listening a few moments, during which the low hum of voices reached me along the verandah coming from the open library window at the other end into mine, that the visit was to my father. She has been here ten minutes! It has suddenly flashed upon my mind that it is some lady of the Convent of Mont St. Benedict, which is but a few miles distant, and that I am the subject of their interview. The carriage is a plain equipage without any mark to designate the person who came in it. I begin to tremble; for to go to a Convent is to be separated from you. I therefore resolve without delay to fly. I close this letter in haste and will send it to the office in the metropolis from the widow Brag's where I now fly for shelter. I can escape by means of my window, and as it is twilight I shall be favored by the growing obscurity.

Farewell, Bertrand, until we meet at my place of refuge.

Marie.'

When the young lieutenant had come to the close, he thrust the letter into his coat pocket with the others that were unopened, and with but one thought upon his mind he hastened from his room, took a hurried leave of his friend Benson, and in five minutes more was in a carriage on his way to the New Haven boat which was to leave within a few minutes. He reached it in time and felt a weight thrown off his heart as he found himself borne rapidly over the water in the direction of the `City of Elms.' On arriving there at nine o'clock at night, he took the Boston mail stage directly through. He was the only passenger; and as the day dawned, he recollected the letters which he had not yet opened, and to which under his excitement he had not given a thought until now; for while on board the steamer he had done nothing but pace up and down the deck under the burning thoughts which the letter he had just read had kindled.

As the dawn began slowly to redden the eastern horizon, and the darkness that had enveloped the scenery around him fled before the approach of morning, he drew forth the letters. There were four of them; one from his mother, as he knew by the hand writing; another from a friend, and another in a hand−writing that he believed to be that of Colonel de Heywode. The fourth letter as we have already said was one from Marie of a later date than that he had perused. He tore open the latter, as he saw its date to be only four days back, and then as if not having courage to learn what she had communicated lest he should hear news more evil than he could bear, he broke the seal of that he thought to be from Colonel de Heywode; for that he should write him he regarded a very extraordinary circumstance; and as he knew that his letter also must throw some light on what he feared, yet panted to know, he hesitated to read it and come to the knowledge; for he felt impressed that in some way the fate of Marie had been decided, and that he should find in what manner by those letters. His superscription was large and bold and had a defying air; while hers he saw trembled in every curve.

`I will read his first. I will know the worst from him, rather from Marie!' he said as he completed the unfolding it. `Sir:

I shall make no apology for this communication. I address you upon a subject of the deepest interest to me. I am not ignorant of your aspirations to the hand and fortune of my daughter; nor am I ignorant that you have been successful in inspiring in her bosom a temporary regard for you. Whatever may have been my former forbearance in suffering this attachment to go on unchecked, circumstances, not at all affecting your character, sir, render it necessary that I request you to terminate all further views in relation to a union with her. This is her desire as well as my own; and it is not therefore necessary to inform you that all letters which you may have the imprudence to address to her will be returned, and that my doors will be closed to any visits that have Marie for their object.

I have the pleasure of informing you that my daughter is betrothed to a gentleman every way worthy of her in rank, wealth and position in society, the Count Baron de Rosselau, and that this union will take place in all probability in a very few days; I therefore write you that if this letter should find you in New York, you may be saved the trouble and *expense* of making the visit here, which I learn you have had in contemplation. I am, sir, With due respect, Your obedient servant,

R. de Heywode.

When Bertrand had ended this letter he saw at once its falsehood and bearing; for it was dated the day before that which had been written him by Marie.

`I see it all. In intrigning for the elevation of his child, he has forgot the integrity of a gentleman. How miserable, if I can be more wretched than I am, this letter would have made me had I not noticed its anterior date, or had I opened it at the hotel before I opened and read that of dear Marie's. For once, Colonel de Heywode, your deception is unavailing; for *I know* under your daughter's own hand that your letter is false. Thus would he sacrifice his child! Brave, noble, true Marie! Oh, that I had thy foe and persecuter, this baron, in my power! But patience. We shall yet meet! He shall yet answer for all this to me Now, dear Marie, with trembling hands I open this other letter of so recent date—written twenty days after thy last—twenty−one days after thy father's false missile.'

CHAPTER VIII. The Stranger−Guest.

The letter which Bertrand now opened, with a throbbing pulse and a pain ful foreboding of evil to her he loved, to his surprise begun thus: `To Mr. Francis Edward Bertrand. −

Sir,—'

`What can this mean?' he exclaimed in astonishment. `Marie to address me *thus*. This is certainly her hand−writing, and at the end of it' (and here he rapidly ran over the pages of the letter to the close) and here is her signature `Marie.' What can this mean? It is signed simply `Marie' without one word of affection. Nay. It is `your unfortunate and lost, *Marie*.' What fearful news have I now to hear. She can be lost to me only by being the wife of this baron Can it——Oh, can it be possible that she has——but I will not drive myself mad by anticipation. I will hasten to learn the worst.'

`Sir,—It is with emotions which I know not how to express—alas, I know not how to say what I have to divulge. It breaks my heart to address you so formally as I have begun my letter. My heart is not equal to the task it has schooled itself to. `Dear Bertrand' would flow from my pen if I dared thus to address you. But how shall I ever again bestow upon you a title so endearing. Oh, Edward, I am all unworthy to address you in any way. But for this once forgive me if I let my heart speak; for I cannot coldly write to one in whom my soul—my very being is wrapped up.

`What shall I say to you. How shall I begin. If I begin I know not if I shall have the courage to end the fearful narration. While I write my eyes swim—my brain whirls—my reason wanders.

My last letter closed with my resolution to fly at once. I had delayed but a few moments to collect a few little articles together, and had already raised the windows to escape, for my father had contented himself with locking my door, when I heard high voices approaching my door. One was my father's and it was raised to a menacing key—the other was that of a female. Surprised I arrested my flight. The next moment the voices ceased apparently close to my door, and then the lock was turned and father entered.

I saw at a glance that something of a most extraordinary nature had disturbed him; something more than a suspicion of my intention for at the first I believed that it was this that was bringing him to my room.

Never did I behold such an expression of countenance as his, as I looked at him. It caused me to shudder.

He closed the door and coming towards me said—

`Prepare instantly to go with me.'

`Wither?' I asked fearfully.

`Not to the Convent now. But do not delay. You have to fly from a greater evil than any you fear.'

At this moment the door, at which my father had been anxiously turning his eyes as if fearing an interruption, was struck with emphasis, and a thrilling voice cried—

`Robert, oh, Robert, harm her not—fly not with her and I swear to do whatever you dictate.'

`Go back to the library. Did you not promise but now you would be peaceful. '

`But I heard you bid her go with you! Fly not. Take her not away. Let me—'

`Cease woman,' cried my father almost ferociously as he opened the door and exposed to my view an extremely beautiful woman, her hair dishevelled, her features animated with wild grief, her attitude excited and imploring. I never beheld so beautiful yet so painfully interesting a creature. She did not appear to be more than eight and twenty, and was in deep mourning. Oh how, all at once my heart went out towards her with love and sympathy and hope. There was something in her looks that seemed to me to belong to some of the faces of the lovely beings I have seen in the dreams of my childhood.

I stood spell−bound gazing upon her with deep wonder. When she beheld me her arms went forth from her bosom as if to embrace and clasp me closely to it. I never had such emotions in my life. My father stood and eyed her closely and terribly. He caught her eye and then I saw him lift his finger menacingly and heard him whisper harshly,

`Beware.'

She shrunk from his gaze and I could see she trembled. But her eyes turned from him only to rest upon me with the tenderest curiosity and affectionate interest that melted my soul and caused tears to start into my eyes.

Who could this darkly beautiful lady be, over whom my father had such a mysterious power?' I asked myself. She made a movement towards me.

`Beware,' repeated my father a second time; and again she quailed before his glance.

`This, my daughter, is a person who has come to bear to you a piece of news, that may perhaps both grieve and rouse your indignation. I wished to broach it gently to you, but she, as you have seen, would rush in and make all known at any risk. You will now retire,' he said to her, keeping his eyes steadily as he had done while speaking, upon her, `and I will make known to my child that which so nearly interests her.'

There was something in my father's words and manner that made me fear. He looked as if instigated and possessed fully by an evil spirit. Something instinctively whispered to me that not one word he had said was true; and that the female knew it was not true, but feared to gainsay it. He opened the door for her and she slowly left the chamber bestowing secretly upon me a look of the sweetest affection. Oh, how I felt for her and yearned to know what fearful mystery surrounded her: to know how she was thus under my father's power. He left the chamber with her. He accompanied her through the hall to the library, and then returned to me.

`We like to have had a scene, my daughter, said my father with a torced smile as he re−entered.

`Who is that beautiful stranger, sir?' I asked in my anxiety.

`She is a Southern lady. Her father was an officer I believe. I have seen her before in Charleston.'

`Then that is where I have seen her,' I answered quickly; `for her features are familiar to me, but vaguely recollected like faces seen in dreams.'

`Did you ever see her before?' demanded my father with extraordinary emotion'

`I think I must have seen her, sir.'

`Then you are not certain?' he asked with the close look of an inquisitor.

`No, sir.'

`She is, as I said, a Charleston lady. The rumor of your proposed union (for all the world,' said my father, have it) with the baron de Rosselau, has brought her here.'

`The world, sir, are to be disappointed,' I answered not a little vexed and mortified to know that through de Rosselau and my father it had probably gone abroad that I was to be wedded to the baron.' What interest had the lady in the matter?' I asked haughtily `Is she a prior claimant for the Count's hand?'

`No, *not* for the Count's but for the hand of one *less* honorable. Can you guess?' added my father with a peculiar significance.

`No, sir.'

`She having heard then that you were sought for in marriage by the Count de Rosselau, but that you refused to give him a final answer—'

`I have given him a final answer, sir,' I interrupted.

`Here me,' cried my father sternly—`I do but give what she heard. This rumor then coming to her that you delayed a final answer because you felt that the young officer, Edward Bertrand held a claim upon you, and the lady, being a friend of Count de Rosselau and seeking his happiness as well as your own, has kindly taken the trouble to pay a visit here purposely to inform you that you need not suffer any bonds of engagement to Mr. Bertrand to influence you, as she is already, herself, privately married to him.'

Was ever such infamous slander and falsehood invented by the devil himself? ' cried Edward with a vehemence, that caused the coachman to draw in his horses and call back to the coach−window to inquire `if the gentleman inside wanted anything.'

`Nothing—nothing,' answered Edward, recalled to himself; and governing his emotion he continued to read—

`The story so base and false,' said Marie in continuation, did not produce upon me any other effect than scorn and pity for those who could stoop to invent it. Had she brought intelligence that you were dead, Edward, I should have believed it; but I never could believe that you were false.'

`Noble Marie,' ejaculated Bertrand, warmly pressing those words to his lips.

`My father saw the effect was lost upon me. He saw that my confidence in you was stronger than my credulity.

`You do not believe it?' he said.

`No, sir,' I answered firmly. `The woman is an impostor. (God forgive me, for what I said; but I knew not *all then!*')

`Yes, I dare say she is,' he answered readily. `I have no doubt of it. I thought it best to let you know. At any rate you see she is your enemy, and you will, therefore, not permit her to speak with you.'

There was something, I know not what, that led me to suspect he *feared* to have her speak to me—something that produced in my resolution an entirely opposite effect from what he intended. I recalled her looks of fear—her glances of tender interest—her expression of sorrow—her evident fear of my father and his power over her, and I made up my mind that she was a victim of his tyranny as well as I; that she had sought him for other purposes and objects than that he had fabricated to my ears, and that she was my friend rather than my enemy. I did not, however, expose the secret judgment of my mind to my father, but merely answered quietly—

`I thank you, sir, for your caution. Will she remain here till morning?'

`Yes—perhaps longer,' he answered hesitating. I have some business touching property in the South I wish to speak with her about, and besides I wish to question her more fully in relation to this matter of Bertrand's.'

`Of that, sir, I am now quite well satisfied,' I answered.

`I doubt if she is married to him, but I have no question but that she is betrothed to him; and that Bertrand has rendered himself, therein, unworthy of you.'

`Let her tell me this herself, and I can then judge,' I answered.

`My word must be sufficient for you,' he answered; and then adding, `I trust you will now let no further hopes of this young man deter you from giving your consent to marry de Rosselau.'

`I do not believe Bertrand to be false, sir.'

`Who do you think this woman is, then? What motive other than this has brought her, a stranger to you?' he asked angrily.

`That, sir, you can best answer, perhaps; I cannot,' I replied.

`It is well you cannot,' I heard him murmur as he left the room.

`Mistress Marie,' said my maid, coming in as my father left, and trembling as she spoke; `do you know that lady in mourning what came in de coach half hour ago.'

`Well, what?' I asked eagerly.

`She has been weeping in de library while master in here; and afore when she first came and he saw her in de hall—soon as he saw her lift her veil he grew black in de face and curse her so wicked. But she take his hand and say something and cry, and den he go into de library wid her. And den I hear him scold her, and hear her sob, and three time, Missy Marie, I hear him say he kill her, she no go right away. Den I hear him swear and den she say something 'bout you, and den he tell her she must keep some secret or he shoot her on de spot. Den little while he come out and go to your room and de strange lady follow wringing her hands and he cursing her to keep quiet.'

This narration of the girl's aroused my curiosity and awakened my interest in the mysterious stranger, who for some end my father had represented as my rival and enemy; neither of which did I believe; for I *could not* believe you false; and it was difficult to regard as my foe one, who in looking upon me had poured from her eyes into my soul a flood of the most extraordinary affection— which found a strange echo in the deepest recesses of my being. No, I could not believe such an one false and hostile. It was easier to believe that she was a victim of my father's tyranny, and acted by his commands. That night, I retired late; for much thinking kept me up. I had just laid down filled with a restless curiosity to know who she could be, for she was still an inmate of the house and, as my maid informed, had been ordered by my father to occupy the chamber over mine. I could hear her step as she moved to and fro across the floor in ceaseless motion, hour after hour, and this kept me from sleeping. I resolved that I would not leave the house till I had had an interview with and learned precisely why she came on this extraordinary visit. My maid had informed me that she took her tea in the library alone, whither my father had ordered it, and that he himself had escorted her to the door of her chamber, left her with a severe threat that was not understood, and locking the door upon her returned to the

library. I had, as I have said, just laid down, when I heard a horse led up to the door. Looking out secretly I saw my father mount him and ride away at a rapid pace down the avenue. I now resolved to embrace the opportunity to see this stranger; for as he had gone on horseback I knew that he would be away perhaps for an hour or a much longer time. I herefore hastily dressed myself, and went to my door. But my father had not forgotten his care of me, and it was locked on the outside, I and my maid being locked in. I was about to go to the window, raise it and leave that way and get into the house, if possible from without, and so to the stranger's room; and I had sent my servant Jennette out by the window to see if the house could be entered that way, when I was startled by a low knock at my door. My blood run cold in my veins. I trembled with a strange feeling of alarm. I knew it must be the stranger, for it was the touch of a light hand.

I began to fear the stranger. My mind was suddenly filled with apprehensions of some great evil of which she was to be the instrument. I shrunk from the door, and stood transfixed without daring to speak, and painfully listening. The knock was repeated. I grew bolder and answered as firmly as I could.

`Who seeks admittance?'

`One who would embrace this moment of freedom to speak to you,' answered a voice of singular sweetness of cadence, but earnest and thrilling.

`I cannot open to you, if I would,' I answered. `If perhaps you find a key on the outside you may enter!' was my response in a resolute tone; for I was now deeply interested to have speech with this mysterious person.

`It is in the lock,' was the reply.

The key turned slowly and felt as if it was turning in my very heart, so wrought up were my feelings at the prospect of seeing and speaking with her. A lamp was burning upon my toilet table and reflected in the mirror threw a two−fold brilliancy over the room. The door openod and it fell full upon her person. She was still in black, but her raven hair was now bound up, and her countenance was more composed, yet no less beautiful than when I before beheld her enter with my father. She was paler and sadder. She fixed her eyes on me steadily—tears came into them—she sprung forward and knelt at my feet—caught my hand and bathed it with tears and covered it with kisses. Half terrified, I shrieked, I believe, broke from her and retreated to the opposite side of the room. She rose from the floor, folded her hands humbly. Oh, *so* humbly upon her bosom, and looked so sad and tearful that I could have wept when I heard her say—

`Yes, fly me, lovely one. It is thus I deserve to be shunned by thee. Alas, alas! for me there is no love—no love.'

I approached her—I took her hand—I spoke gently to her—I led her to a seat and sat by her. She would have knelt to me again, but I embraced her and bade her tell me her sorrow, and wherefore she had come hither, and what it was on her heart she would reveal to me.

She made no reply for a few moments; but sat gazing fondly into my face, as I have seen young mothers bend their eyes of affectionate pride upon the faces of their first born. She then rose, and crossing the room, secured the door, and returning to me, took my hand in hers and said—but Edward, I cannot write further. My pen refuses to express the words of shame and dishonor I feel it my duty to write. Spare me—at present—another time−−soon—perhaps in a few days I shall be able to write. Only know this—that it is the *last* letter you will ever get from me from my father's house. Events have transpired—the story of that mysterious woman—the tearful destiny that is mine to fear—all render it necessary for your honor and happiness that you should *forget me!* To−night I fly—not from de Rosselau—not from my father's tyranny—but from myself—from you—from the world. Within three hours I fly from hence leaving no trace of my flight. It is sixteen days since that night when she told me her tale! Sixteen days during which I have been part of the time wild with delirium. Part of this letter was written before then—part since! I will, when, I reach the asylum I am about to seek once more, write you and explain what now my mind refuses to dictate! Till then, farewell—farewell forever!' Your unhappy and lost,

Marie

CHAPTER IX. The Journey.

The letter left an inscrutable painful mystery. Bertrand's disappointment and anxiety almost drove him mad. `Why had she closed her communication so abruptly. What fearful thing had she to reveal? What evil had befallen her? Why should she subscribe herself wretched and lost!'

These and a hundred other inquiries rushed through his mind as the stage, its speed quickened by his earnest appeals and offers of reward to the coachman, rolled swiftly on. The idea that she had been forced into a marriage with the Baron de Rosselau was uppermost in his mind; but if so how could he account for certain expressions in the letter showing her deep love for him.

`No, it would not be that Marie would ever wed this man!' he said very positively; `she should have died first by her own hand! What then, if I reject this horrible idea, what then has occurred—what great evil has befallen her?'

In vain attempts to resolve this question to the satisfaction of his own mind, he passed the day of travel. As the stage approached Boston he learned from the driver that it would pass along the tunpike part the very gate−way leading to the avenue of Colonel de Heywode's villa.

This intelligence filled him with joy; as it would bring him sooner to the knowledge of her fate, and he resolved to leave the stage there and let it take his baggage on into town. The moon was about half an hour high as, on descending a hill, the `Vale of Eden' was visible with its numerous villas, gardens, groves and sparkling brooks. In ten minutes afterwards the coach was traversing the turnpike before described as passing through this beautiful scene, and along which Marie had escaped northward three nights before

`I will not go on so far as the avenue gate but alight here,' said Bertrand, as the stage entered a woodland that bounded Colonel de Heywode's estate. `And now, my good driver,' he said handing him his purse, take this for your good speed. And I want another favor of you. I have some business before me which requiries secrecy. Will you lend me your white coat with the dozen capes, your brown broad brimmed hat, and your gloves and whip. In exchange I leave you my cloak, cap, gloves, and this money, till I see you again at the stage office in the city.'

`You seem to be a nice gentleman, sir, and I am willing to oblige you,' answered the coachman, preparing to make the exchange. `Some love affair I reckon, sir, from the way you have wanted to push ahead, and some words I overheard you talking aloud to yourself! I don't care for your cloak and other things, sir, unless you want me to take them into Boston!

`I do,' answered Bertrand as he alighted.

In a few minutes the young officer was completely disguised as a stagecoachman.

`Now, if I don't feel like gettin' inside myself, sir, and lettin' you take the box, for bless me, if you don't look like a regular coachee, begging your pardon, sir! Vell, I wishes you success; but I hopes you wont get into no out and outer scrape in them coverin's, coz the name of `Bill Rowley's, writ on em all inside, and I don't want to be `sponsible for my fixins when I is'nt in 'em!'

Bertrand promised him that they should not bring any discredit upon him; and hastened on his way first towards the cottage of widow Bray, hoping faintly, that he might find Marie there; for he was satisfied that she had fled to some refuge directly after closing the letter he had last read.

The driver putting on an old `weather−coat' that lay upon his box, and mounting his `storm−cap' instead of the articles he had doffed to oblige his passenger, once more drove on, satisfied that if he never beheld his apparel again, he had their full value in the purse which he held safely in his pocket.

Bertrand had been two years before on a visit to Marie a few days, and he was familiar with the grounds about the estate; for he and the maiden had often travsrsed them on foot and in the saddle He knew the position of the cottage and soon reached it by a path through the wood. It was dark, silent and seemed deserted. He knocked at the door and was answered from within by the voice of the good dame.

`It is a friend—rise and let me speak with you,' he called to her.

The good dame, who had nothing to fear in her poverty from the cupidity of thieves, rose, struck a light

and opened the door.

`Oh, you are a stage−man,' she exclaimed as the light fell upon his costume; `have you upset or is any thing the matter?'

`No, madam;' answered Bertrand, entering; and closing the door behind him, he said, `I am here to ask you if you know whether Miss de Heywode is still at home! She is a friend of yours, I believe!'

`Miss Marie, is indeed my friend, sir! But for her bounty I should have been in the alms−house. All these comforts are her gifts. But, ah! sir, you ask me a sad question! She is not at home! She disappeared three nights ago very suddenly, and no one has been able to find any clue to where she went!'

`She has then escaped,' ejaculated Edward with a feeling both of relief and alarm; for if she had escaped he felt she could not have been made de Rosselau's wife! But he quickly asked, trembling to hear—

`Do you know if she was married.'

`Married! Lord love you, no, Mr. Coachman? You mean to that Frenchified Count.'

`Yes.'

`Why that is what she run away from, is my opinion. She'll never marry but one person, and that is the young officer as was here to see her two years ago and used to ride about and walk about with her! I've heard her speak of him with tears of love in her eyes; for she used to come and talk with me, and told me at times much of her young heart.'

`Then she is escaped indeed, if she has escaped from him,' said Bertrand, forcibly.

`Yes she is escaped; and I didn't know of it till the Colonel came ridin' up here yesterday noon, to ask me if she wasn't here, or if I hadn't seen her! and they got down and searched all through my house but didn't discover her; though, if she wanted shelter with me, I would hide her if I had to lose my life keeping her from bein' found!'

`You are a faithful good woman. I see I can trust you! I am not what you think. These garments are only borrowed! I am the young officer who was here two years ago. If you look at me closely and also at my uniform under this box−coat you will recognise me, perhaps.'

`Yes, lord love you, and so it is the very face and the very gold on the coat. And what a pity that Miss Marie is gone.'

`I got a letter from her saying she was about to fly from home. I have hastened hither and have but just arrived in the stage that passed a few minutes ago on the turnpike. Before going to the villa I came here, because she wrote me that possibly she might seek refuge with you. But she has not so.'

`No, sir; and I am very sorry, because, poor dear, she will soon be found, and I could have kept her safe hid, I know That Count and her father will have to answer for this,' she said with anger. `She told me when she was last here, how she wished you were here to free her, and that if her father pressed the marriage she should escape from it in one way or another. And poor sweet! she has gone and nobody knows whither.'

`Are you sure that nothing else has occurred to drive her away? Nothing besides dread of this union with the Frenchman?' asked Bertrand, recalling the painful evil, which had closed, as well as begun, her last letter to him.

`Nothing, as I have heard, sir. Wasn't that enough, 'deed?'

`Yes, it was,' answered Bertrand with bitter emphasis. `Poor Marie! Where are you now wandering. What pillow shelters your head. What roof covers you.'

`Do not give way to despair, young sir. God is over all and the good will be protected from the wicked. That is my faith.'

`And a very strong and proper faith it is. Can you give me *no* clue, my dear madam?'

`No, sir, pity's me I cant.'

At this moment a hand was heard moving the latch without and the door slowly opened, and in peeped the wooly head and sable countenance of Moses the African. The widow who had started back with a half cry of terror recovered her self−possession on recognising him to be the old servant of Colonel Heywode whom she had often seen accompany his young mistress as bearer of her bounties.

`It is nobody but uncle Moses sir,' she said, seeing the young officer regard him with curiosity, and with a look of surprise, at his stealthy mode of entering the hut.

`I recognize him, now,' answered Bertrand, with an expression of pleasure. `I am your old friend,

lieutenant Bertrand, Moses?'

`But am you massa Frank, sure?' answered Moses, who on seeing the supposed coachman, had been half disposed to retreat. His face wore a look of alarm as he entered, and he seemed to be in apprehension of some danger from without; and as he answered, he bolted the door and stood against it.

`What is that for, master Moses?' asked the dame.

`To keep out any body dat want Mose,' he answered with signs of fear, and in a trembling tone. `Dar be no place for Mose up to de villy, missy Bray!' he said, shaking his head. `Ah massa Frank, 'tis you for sartain! I wish you come sooner!'

`What has just occurred?' demanded Edward.

`Master's gone stark mad and goes 'bout with a pistol cursin' orful! He shot him favorite horse dead, and den dere's been a funeral!'

`A funeral?' exclaimed Bertrand and the dame in one breath.

`Yes, massa; and dat is no place for dis nigger no longer; so he come here for hide little while, and morrow he go orf. Now Miss Marie has really escaped? ' asked Edward with deep and painful interest, and putting this question in hopes of drawing more from him touching her flight.

`It am true, massa. She wait for young massa Frank Bertrand come from ober de sea and marry her, but he no come in time; and her father say she must marry de Count, and so she get out ob her winder and escape in de night from de villy! Den massa he take on like mad when he know it, and de Count he swear, and dey ride dis way and dat, and for two, three days they done notin' but ride after her; and now massa has shot his horse and he swear he kill ebery individual 'bout de place; and 'specially old Mose, coz he spec me know whar missy Mary gone! De Count am gone orf to Boston, and massa hab de house to hisself, now de corpse is buried!'

`What corpse?' demanded Bertrand, with surprise and curiosity.

`Why dat ov de strange woman! no body know who she whar! She come dere 'bout three week ago in a town carriage jest at dark, and hab some dreadful scene wid master in his lib'ry. Massa know'd who she was, but no body else didn't. Well, she stay dar most three week, massa keepin' her lock up in her room and nobody neber see her nor speak to her; massa he carry her all her viittels and dar she stay; and he all time lookin' awful out ob his eyes when anybody look at him. Well, she die three day ago, and when she die nobody wid her but master. We hear her groan but nobody dars'nt stir; coz massa say if any ob de servants' go to her room he kill em dead!'

`This is a most extraordinary affair," said Bertram, who had no difficulty in identifying this person with the female alluded to by Marie in her letter. `Go on Moses, I would hear all you know.'

Moses, after listening with his ear at the door, to be sure than no one was approaching the cottage, then resumed:

`After she die, master make de women lay her out in de dinin' hall, and he had it hung wid black and keep de key. No body go in dere but hissef! Dat night after she die, Missy Marie get out ob de window and 'scape. Dis mornin' massa had a grave dug under some tree by de brook and after dark came to night he had de coffin carried there by four of de servants. De coffin hab a brack cloth over um, and massa, dressed in brack, walk behind it. He makee me carry a candle, and when de men lower de coffin in de grave he gave each of dem two candles and tell em light em by mine. Den he put de seben candles round de grave and tell us all go 'way. Den we go, but I stop good way off and see him kneel down and hear him talk as if he was prayin'! By and be he came back to the house and tell me go fill up de grave. I and Peter went mazin' frightened, but we darsn't disbey master, and when we got to de grave de candles was gone and de coffin laying silent and dark in de bottom. We soon covered it up, and jist as I had got through, one ob de farm people came and tell me master was mad—had shot him horse dead—walked about wid a loaden pistol and swear he kill me when I come in, coz he spec' I know whar Miss Marie be!'

`And *do* you know?' demanded Bertrand, who had listened with surprise at the foregoing narrative of Moses.

`True as de lord, massa Frank, I don't. I see her ony to de wood whar she leab her hosse; and dis I tell my wife Dinah, and I spose she tell some order one, and oder one tell anoder and so massa guess dat dis nigger know.'

`What wood? what do you know? what did you tell your wife Dinah?' demanded Bertrand with animation.

`I tell Dinah when she ax me so much I no able to say no, I tell her, coz she promise she keep 'em secret, I tell her—'

`What did you tell her?' cried Edward with impatience.

`How tedious he is,' exclaimed the dame.

`I tell Dinah, dat after Miss Marie get out ob de window, I go meet her wid her favorite horse, Browny, at de outside ob de garden gate in de field; and she get on and I lead him down de hedge to de pike and dere we gets through and she goes galloping up de pike, which we run after to cotch my horse what I leff tied under de bridge!'

`Then you were with Marie when she made her escape, Moses?' cried Bertrand taking the old man's hands in his; `for mercy's sake go on and let me know all! What bridge? when was this? At what hour? When did she go? Where is she now?'

`Lor' bress my soul, massa Frank. You knock de poor nigger ober and ober wid so many 'terrogations one a top ob de oder and all comin in a heap. De bridge where I leff my horse am de old bridge whar you used to catch trout,'

`And she crossed this bridge northward.'

`Yes, massa. A'ter I'd found my nag I mounted him and galloped a'ter her, and if she didn't lead Croppy a race he nebber know'd what gallopin' on four legs was afore in his born days.'

`How far, and where did she ride? what hour was it?'

`It was about nine o'clock, and star−light coz the moon wasn't riz so early three nights ago.'

`It was three nights ago?'

`Yes, massa Frank. Last night am one, de night afore am two, and de night afore dat am three.'

`That is four nights instead of three.'

`It will be four nights to−morrow mornin, massa; dis night aint gone yet.— Nigger know how to count sure.'

`And where did she ride to?'

`Well she kept on de pike about haff an hour or may be less, till you come to the road that turns off north east, that road you once rode with her when you went to see the Cambridge colleges.'

`I remember it. It is full four or five miles along the pike to it. And in this side road how far did you go?'

`About three miles when Croppy guv out, lay down in de road and swear he no gallop no furder. Mistress then tell me she ony want me to go two miles furder to bring back Brounny and say she rode on and fasten him to a tree at de foot ob beach−nut hill. So she rode on, and den I went on after her, and den Croppy he come too and gallop past me; and when I come to de foot ob de hill I find Brounny tied and Croppy standin' by him, but I neber seed nothin' ob young missus. I holler, and I look ebery whar and I ride on a mile, and I see nothin' ob her. So I took Croppy back, coz she told me I must do so, and put him in de stable and get to bed afore ma sa could know nothin' about it.— Dat am all Mose know, massa Frank, and all he tell Dinah; and if massa Heywode kill me dis am all me know 'bout it sure as de Bible.'

Bertrand had listened to this narrative with an interest that can moe easily be imagined by the reader than described. Although it did not give him a clue to her place of refuge, it relieved his mind by dissipating much of the uncertainty and mystery which enveloped her flight. He, also, hoped to be able by this description of the course taken by her, to be able yet to ascertain where she had sought refuge.

`Will you go with me, Moses, if I will protect you?'

`Yes, massa Frank.'

`Will you show just where your young mistress left her horse?'

`Yes; for I know de tree in de dark.'

`Then come with me. At the first Inn I will obtain a conveyance of some kind, for it is far for you to go on foot, and I am too impatient to walk.'

Taking leave of the good dame, and promising to give her intelligence if he should hear from the fair fugitive, and receiving from her a promise in return, that if she heard of Marie she would at once give him information at a place in town the number of which he left with her, he bade her good night, and followed by Moses, took his way in the direction of the turnpike.

CHAPTER X. The Convent.

It was nearly midnight when Bertrand reached the wood at the entrance of which Moses told him the lovely fugitive had secured her horse, and at which point she had disappeared. He and Moses were both on horseback.

`Dis am de very tree, Massa Frank,' said Moses, dismounting and placing his hand emphatically against the trunk.

`How far it is from here into Boston?' asked Bertrand, after surveying the place closely.

`It 'bout four mile, p'raps not so much, p'raps it mout be litty bit ober,' answered Moses. `But she no go to town, coz if she wos I cotch up with her sure, Massa Frank, coz dat was de fuss road I go looking after her on, soon as I get the hosses.'

`I will examine this place accurately by daylight, survey the country round from the top of the hill, see what roads lead from this point and then make my search; for I shall not let myself rest until I obtain some trace of her,' added Edward with firmness.

`I hope we find her, Massa Frank; but I 'fraid we nebber see her agen! She tell me not to look ater her, coz it would be unpossible to find her.'

Bertrand made no reply. He remained walking vp and down before the tree in a little patch of moonlight that found its way to the ground through the branches above him. All around him was still. Not a sound disturbed the woodland stillness of the midnight hour. Bertrand was revolving in his mind the events that had transpired, and endeavoring to come to some conclusion as to the place which Marie would be most likely to choose for a refuge.

Suddenly he was conscious of a shout of human voices borne through the air to his ears, apparently from a great distance.

`Did you hear dat, Massa Frank?' exclaimed Moses starting to his feet, for he had thrown himself upon the ground to indulge in a nap.

`Yes. There it is repeated and more distinctly. It is the shout of a multitude! What can it mean?'

`It werry 'markable, massa! P'raps it massa Haywood comin' arter dis Moses!

`Dont be alarmed! The voices are in another direction—apparently over this hill and beyond it! Let us hasten to the summit?'

`Mounting, and putting spurs to their horses they galloped to the top of the hill; and Bertrand seeing the side path which led to the highest elevation, and the same which Marie had taken four nights before, he entered it and dashed on to the top, the voices of the multitude growing louder and more imposing in their volume as he advanced. He soon emerged in the open space, described in the first chapter of this story, from which he had a full moonlight view of the convent upon the summit of Mount Benedict over against him. The edifice stood stately and beautiful in the moon−beams, and a holy calm seemed to surround and rest upon it. But to the right of the sacred edifice farther down the hill he beheld a vast black moving mass of human beings, from the bosom of which ever and anon up rose the fierce shouts that had reached Bertrand's ears beyond the woodland. He reined in his horse, and stood gazing upon the hill and listening to the appalling cries with amazement. The dark masses moved onward and upward like a huge billow, and went roaring as it rolled towards the convent like the surges of the ocean.

Some of the men he saw bore torches which were waved above their heads uttering shouts and fierce cries that were undistinguishable from his position.

`What can all this mean?' he exclaimed turning to Moses as if possibly he might explain.

`Why dat am impossible to say, massa Frank,' answered Moses who looked quite terrified at the scene before him; but you knows dat is de Convent; and I hear say t' oder day dat dere was a mity great quarrel tween de town people and the Catolic's bout a young 'ooman as dey say was stole by em and 'locked up in dere; and p'raps dis is de people wot is gwine to let her out; coz I stinctly hearn one voice say jiss now,

`Down wid de gate!'

`Is it possible that this outrage can be meditated? I heard nothing of this quarrel; but I have been at sea! It impossible that this ferocious multitude are bent on the destruction of that beautiful and hallowed structure, that seems so calmly reposing, as if unconsious of the tempestuous waves of human passion about to break against its walls. Hark! what savage cries! Follow me or remain here, as you will, Moses; I must go there. There needs one at least who is not mad at such a scene as this is likely to be! Some one to save and protect the innocent—for doobtless that building, so fearfully menaced by that that rolling onward mass, contains females−−the young and unprotected, the old and infirm.

`Me nebber stay behind you, Massa Frank,' answered Moses stoutly.

But his reply did not reach Bertrand's ears, who had put spurs to his horse and dashed down the hill and across the intervale. As he ascended Mount Benediet, the shouts of the mob filled the air, and when he came upon the level of the hill, the gates were already assailed, and men with stones were dashing in the windows of the convent and others hurling blazing torches through the openings into the interior. The walls were encompassed with people and cries of the most terrific and sanguinary character rose on all sides. Being mounted, Bertrand, who had but one thought, and thnt was of protecting the inmates whom he could see flying from window to window, filling the air with shrieks, spurred his horse round to the rear, as the crowd was so dense in front as to render approach to the entrance they were battering down altogether impossible. Giving his horse the rein he galloped around the walls to the rear, while the shouts of the assailants, the thunder of their blows upon the gate, the constant ringing of the convent bell, and the cries of the inmates fell upon his ears.

On reaching the rear he saw the garden door thrown open and several females rush wildly forth.

`Nay—flee not from me, I am here to protect you!' called out Bertrand, as some of them would have turned back. Haste to some shelter. There is a house across the field which you had best try to reach. Are there any within that I can aid? Are all alarmed?'

`I fear not, sir,' answered Teresa, the portress, whom the reader has already before seen; there are many sleeping in the different rooms—but the lady−Superior is behind alarming and collecting them all.'

`Fly you with these young girls to yonder house. I will see what I can do within; for in a few minutes the convent will be in flames and the mob in possession. '

Teresa shrieked and gathering her young charges, full twenty in number, about her, took the way across the fields. Leaping from his horse and throwing the rein to Moses, Bertrand hastened through the gardens and entered the court of the convent. It was filled with females.

`Are all assembled here, my dear madam?' he asked of the lady−Superior whose dignified appearance at once declared her rank.

`All, sir. We have then a friend among all these foes,' she exclaimed.

`Yes. I am here to do what I can to save you and yours, before the mob enter. You have no time to lose. The cornice of the wing and the tower are already in flames; and in another moment the gate will give way.'

`Were it not for these I would here remain and meet the storm and perish,' answered the lady−Superior firmly.

`Do not hesitate. Through the gardens and to the house in the valley. The other party have fled in that direction. Haste, and if anything can be done to save the edifice after you are gone in safety, I will do it.'

`Heaven will not forget your goodness, sir,' answered the lady−Superior as she retired with the rest of the youthful family under her protection. She had not reached the outlet of the garden, when the gate yielded, and the mob rushed in like a torrent. Armed with torches they flew to all parts of the edifice and kindled it in a hundred different places at once. In a few minutes the red flames shot their forked tongues high above the roofs and towers, and illuminated the landscape far and wide. Wildly the convent bell, rang by an aged nun who remainded, sounded to and fro the alarm, and the bells of the town answered back from every steeple; but it seemed more like the merry peal of rejoicing than the stirring fire alarm which rouse all men from deep sleep and moves them to fly to protect and to save. None came now but to gaze from a distance in wonder and awe, and some perhaps with sorrow, or to rush onward to aid in the work of destruction.

Bertrand confronted the mob and made an eloquent appeal to them within hearing of his voice in behalf of religion, humanity and order. He was not listened to, and even ferocious looking men with blackened faces pressed upon him with threats of violence. Every where over the edifice, in the gardens and chapel the mob

dispersed seeking what to destroy, as if fearing the fire would not do its work. Driven from one wing by the flames and dense smoke they would retreat to another. Sickened with the scene and his bosom burning with anger and shame for his country, and melting with pity for the unfortunates who had been driven forth at midnight, from the sacred covert that was now tumbling into ruins around him, he mounted his horse on the outside and rode over to see how the unprotected victims of popular fury, ignorance and guilt were sheltered.

`It is then *all* in ruins, sir,' said the lady−Superior to him gazing from the door of the dwelling to which he had ridden up.

`I fear no portion of it will escape their vengeance,' answered Bertrand.

`Are you a son of the church, sir?' she asked fixing her eyes upon him with grateful interest.

`No, lady, not of the Roman church, but of humanity.'

`The Protestants have forgotten that they are Christians, and have made themselves do the deeds of savages. Bless thee, Mary Mother, that thou hast taken to thee one lovely child ere this storm burst. Bless thee that dear Marie was sheltered by thee ere the refuge she sought was destroyed by the ruthless violence of men.'

`Whom do yon mean, lady? You have mentioned a name—though a common one—yet which I cannot hear without emotion.'

`I mean, son, a fair sweet maiden of scarcely eighteen summers, who four nights since sought an asylum with me in yonder Convent around which our enemies are now gathered and above which rise, instead of the voice of prayer, the shouts of blasphemy.'

`Did a young girl, called Marie, seek asylum with you four nights since?' demanded Bertrand, hardly believing that he heard aright, or that it could be he had found the beloved fugitive at last.

`Yes, my son. She came and asked me for shelter in the name of charity and love. I was instantly struck with her beauty and an expression of intense suffering. She asked me to give her an asylum from the evils of the world without, and not betray her to any one who sought her there. She told me it was her wish to pass her life in penitence and prayer; but adding that she felt she should live but a few days. In my hand she deposited jewels of great value, which she told me were lawfully hers, but which she desired to bestow upon the church. The day after I received her, I visited her to learn her history for I was deeply interested in her. But she communicated to me nothing save her name.'

`And that?'

`Marie de Heywode.'

`Oh, madam, go—go on. I listen with my heart.'

`That night she sent for me saying she was ill and wished to see me. I found her writing; and also in a high fever. I took her pen away and told her she must lie down. `I shall soon rest, dear mother,' she said with a heavenly smile; `I shall soon lie down and rest.' I understood her and wept. `I have finished what I wished to write. Let me seal it and you may direct it,' she said, `and when I am gone to my rest I wish you to send it to whom it is addressed.'

`And to whom was it addressed?' asked Bertrand, scarcely able to artiulate.

`To Mr. Bertrand, an officer in the navy.'

`Dear—dear Marie. And what more—what more'—he gasped. `Oh, tell me not she is dead,' he almost shrieked. `Tell me not my beautiful and noble Marie—my beloved and idolized one is dead. Say not that she died?'

`Alas, sir, she died yesterday morning in my arms'

`Dead. Marie, dead,' he repeated with agony unspeakable.

`Yea, my son. But earth in losing a child has given to Heaven a seraph. Do not mourn over one whose life here would have been one of tears and sorrow.'

`Died yesterday morning. Then she is not yet entombed. I must behold her even in death. Where have you laid he?' her asked almost wild with grief.

`She was taken into the chapel; and after vesper's mass for the dead was said over her; and the body, when we learned that the Convent was to be assailed and that we must fly, I had placed in the crypt, beneath the altar, all wreathed with flowers and robed in white as it was; for we did not intend to bury it until to−morrow after vespers.'

`And the body of Marie is now in the crypt beneath the altar in the chapel?' said Bertrand with deep emotion.

`Yes, my son.'

Without another word Bertrand dashed his spurs into his horse's flanks and flew like the wind back to the Convent, which now presented a fearful but magnificent spectacle rolling upward from a Mælstrom of roaring flame, vast clouds of lurid smoke, charged with myriads of sparks that filled all the sky and shed wide and far a baleful glare. As he approached the scene of conflagration, the red light shining upon the faces and figures of the fierce men around, made them look like demons.

Blinded by his tears and with his heart nearly breaking, his lips firmly compressed to control his great sorrow, Bertrand at length reached the garden wall, and throwing himself to the ground hastened in the direction of the chapel.— Each step as he approached it, he felt he was pressing upon ground doubly hallowed by holding the remains of Marie. He passed the burial place, in the gardens, which he found broken open and desecrated by the sacriligious multitude, who seemed to take a pride in dehumanizing themselves. The chapel was broken open, and men were over−turning the altar with levers as he entered it; while others had even dared to profane the sacred image of the cross by hurling it to the ground and breaking it in fragments with stones cast upon i.

`Hold, monsters! Do you call yourselves Christian men?' cried Bertrand, in a voice that made every man start. `That cross, if it be upon the Roman altar, which is the object of your vengeance, is no less the sign of your salvation. Are you become heathens, that you spare not even the holy and hallowed. Stand back! Go forth! Do you not fear the roof of this sacred temple may fall and crush you in sudden judgment!'

One by one the men withdrew, not one replying—not one offering to delay. There was a majesty and power in Bertrand's deep grief and holy indignation combined, that awed them, conscious as they were of guilt, and enforced obedience. He stood alone within the chapel. Close by his feet was a slab with a ring affixed to it which opened into the crypt. A fragment of the shattered cross was upon it which he removed. He then stooped, and with a strong arm lifted the slab. The crypt was shallow, being but two steps below the pavement, and about three feet in deptn. The glare from the crackling flames around, shone broadly into the vault. Bertrand kelt down and bowed his head low to the very earth and wept like a child. He then raised her head and gazed fixedly upon the sweet face before him. Calm, beautiful, like an angel sleeping, she lay before him arrayed in her vestal robes with a crown of white flowers yet unfaded and fragrant about her temples.

He stooped and kissed the lips and brow. He spoke not! His tears flowed no longer. His grief had become too deep for expression.

A loud shout rose from the court of the convent and at the same instant the tower fell with a crash that jarred the earth; and at the same instant the chapel gnited.

`This is no place for thee, Maria, even when thou art dead!' he said, with bitter woe. `I will bear thee to a quieter resting place than this. Though dead thou art dear to me still! I will bear thee hence and find thee a place where thou canst rest in peace and I can weep over thee.'

As he spoke he bent down and raised the body of her who was so dear to him in his arms, and coveriag it with a shawl which one of the nuns had dropped in her flight, he hastened from the chapel and took his way along the avenues of the garden, half of the time enveloped in the dark clouds of smoke that rolled along the ground from the subterranean chambers of the convent. On reaching the gate he found the faithful Moses with the horses. Seeing him bearing off through the smoke some burden, and believing it to be treasures, several of the mob set out a shout and followed him. He was already in his saddle, the body of the lovely girl hanging across his left arm. A man sprung forward to seize the bit, but Bertrand rode over him hurling him to the ground and the next moment was descending the hill closely followed by the African, and soon disappeared in the wood land beyond the summit of the other eminence.

Here terminates the story of the young priest as we have it in the manuscript to which reference was made at the conclusion of our first chapter.

The reverend author without doubt has communicated therein all that he knew in reference to the events which he has described; and knowing nothing of Bertrand or of events that followed his departure from the burning ruins, he has with this incident ended his romance.

We have had, however, the privilege of access to circumstances of a subsequent date, and as they will

serve to throw light upon the mystery which led the unhappy Marie to fly to the Convent for an asylum, as well as upon that enveloping the beautiful stranger−guest, we shall, as in duty bound to our readers, shortly give them another story developing and unfolding every thing that the young priest has left in obscurity. THE END