CORINNE;

OR,

ITALY.

BY

MADAME DE STAËL.

Translated by

ISABEL HILL.



Fielding. Greatbatch.

View of Coppet, the Residence of Madame de Staël.

LONDON:
RICHARD BENTLEY,
[SUCCESSOR TO HENRY COLBURN]
CUMMING, DUBLIN—BELL & BRADFUTE, EDINBURGH.
GALIGNANI, PARIS.
1833.

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L. E. L.

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CORINNE;

OR,

ITALY.

—"Udrallo il bel paese,
Ch' Apennin parte, e 'l mar circonda e l'Alpe."
PETRARCA.

BY

MADAME DE STAËL

TRANSLATED BY ISABEL HILL;

WITH

METRICAL VERSIONS OF THE ODES BY L. E. LANDON

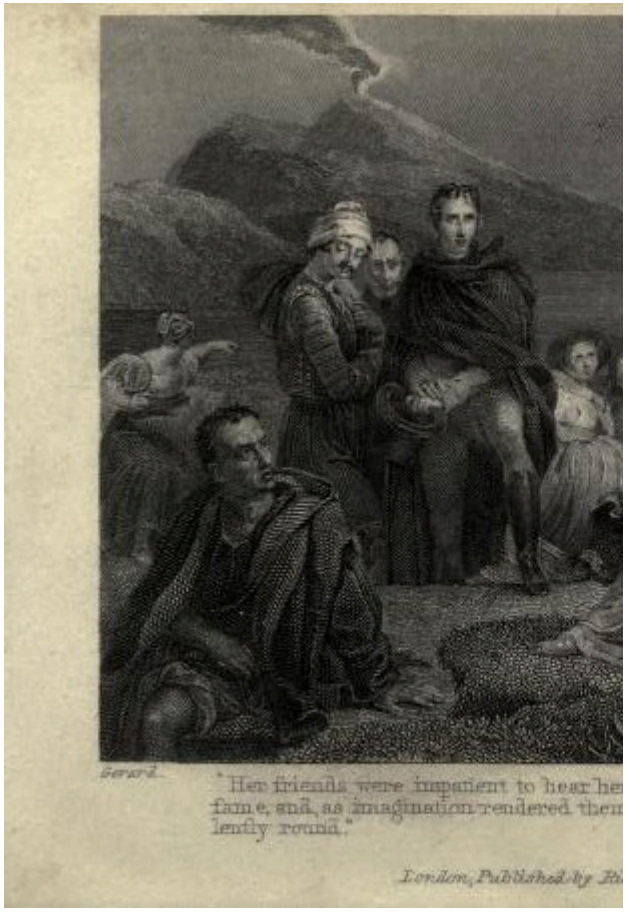
LONDON:

RICHARD BENTLEY, NEW BURLINGTON STREET,

(SUCCESSOR TO HENRY COLBURN).

1833

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Translator's Preface.

Whatever defects may exist in my attempt at rendering "Corinne" into English, be it remembered, that *we* have many words for one meaning—in French there are several significations for the same word. Repetition, an elegance in French, is a barbarism in English. Thus I had to contend with a tautology almost unmanageable, and even a reiteration of the same sentiments. Sentences, harmonious in French, lost all agreeable cadence, until entirely reconstructed. Madame de Staël's diffuse manner obliged me also to transpose pretty freely. I found, in so doing, many self-contradictions, some of which I could not efface. Her boldness of condensation, too, and love of vague, mysterious sublimity, often left me in doubt as to what might be hidden beneath the dazzling veil of her eloquence. It may appear profanation to have altered a syllable; but, having been accustomed to consult the taste of my own country, I could not outrage it by being more literal. I have taken the liberty of making British peasants and children speak their native idiom, and have added a few explanatory notes; occasionally availing myself of quotations from more recent authorities than that of the Baroness. Lest I should unconsciously have committed any great mistake, be it known that the printers of her "eighth corrected and revised edition" gave Corinne a *military* instead of a literary career, and made the Roman mob throw handfuls of *bon mots* into the carriages during the carnival.

Miss Landon had kindly undertaken to render the lyric portions of the work; but we feared for awhile, that our own Improvisatrice would be prevented by circumstances from gracing the volume by her name. I, therefore, translated Corinne's compositions into *rhyme*. Only one of my essays, however, "The

Fragment of Corinne's Thoughts," was required. I am conscious of its imperfect regularity; but, having no poetical reputation at stake, I throw myself on the mercy of my judges.

ISABEL HILL.

6, CECIL STREET, STRAND.

MADAME DE STAËL.

Madame de Staël—Her Infancy and Education—Her Marriage—Her Personal Appearance—The Revolution—Her First Meeting and Conversation with Bonaparte—Interview with Josephine—Her Portrait and Character—Her Repartees—Exile—Delphine—Auguste de Staël and Napoleon—Private Theatricals—Corinne—Police Interference—Travels in Foreign Countries—Her Illness and Death—Effect of Napoleon's Persecution upon the Literary Position of Madame de Staël.

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Jacques Necker, the father of Madame de Staël, a Genevese and a Protestant, was at the birth of his daughter Annie-Louise-Germaine Necker, in 1766, a clerk in a banking-house at Paris. He had married M'lle Curchod, a Swiss like himself, and who had, some years before, been the object of the first and last love of Gibbon the historian. Madame Necker undertook the education of Louise, plied her with books and tasks, and introduced her, even in infancy, to her own circle of brilliant and accomplished men. "At the age of eleven," writes a lady who was at the time her companion, "she spoke with a warmth and facility which were already eloquent. In society she

talked but little, but so animated was her face that she appeared to converse with all. Every guest at her mother's house addressed her with some compliment or polite speech; she replied with ease and grace." She was encouraged to write, and her youthful productions were read in public, and some of them were even printed. This process of education, while it rendered the subject of it rather brilliant than profound, and encouraged vanity and a love of display, broke down her health, and the physicians ordered her to retire to the country, and to renounce all mental application. Her mother, disappointed and discouraged, ceased to take the same interest in her talents and progress; this indifference led Louise to attach herself more closely to her father, and developed in her what became through life her ruling passion—filial affection.

In 1776, Necker, who had in the meantime become the partner of his late employer, and had attracted attention by an essay on the corn laws, was considered by the masses as the only person capable of saving the country from bankruptcy. He was, therefore, appointed to control the finances, being the first Protestant who had held office since the revocation of the Edict of Nantes. One of his acts, five years afterward, having excited clamor among the royalists, an anonymous pamphlet appeared, in which his defence was warmly espoused and the propriety of his conduct successfully asserted. Necker detected his daughter's style in this production, and she acknowledged its authorship, being then fifteen years old. Necker resigned office, and retreated with his family to Coppet, on the borders of the Lake of Geneva.

Madame de Genlis saw M'lle Necker for the first

time, when the latter was sixteen. She thus speaks of her in her memoirs: "This young lady was not pretty; her manner was very animated, and she talked a great deal, too much indeed, though always with wit and discernment. I remember that I read one of my juvenile plays to Madame Necker, her daughter being present. I cannot describe the enthusiasm and the demonstrations of M'lle Louise, while I was reading. She wept, she uttered exclamations at every page, and constantly kissed my hands. Her mother had done wrong in allowing her to pass three-quarters of her time with the throng of wits who continually surrounded her, and who held dissertations with her upon love and the passions."[1]

At the age of twenty, Louise married Baron de Staël-Holstein, the Swedish ambassador at the court of France. She sought neither a lover nor a friend in her husband; she treated marriage as a convenience, and became a wife in order to obtain that liberty and independence which were denied her as a young lady. She required that her husband should be noble and a Protestant, and as in addition to these essentials Baron de Staël was an agreeable and an honorable man, and engaged never to compel her to follow him to Sweden, she consented to marry him. In the same year, 1786, a failure of the crops, and the consequent distress of the poorer classes, compelled the king to recall Necker to the administration of the finances.

Madame de Staël is thus described, at the age of twenty-five, by a writer who, to justify the peculiar and oriental extravagance of his style, assumed the character of a Greek poet: "Zulmé advances; her large dark eyes sparkle with genius; her hair, black as ebony, falls on her shoulders in wavy ringlets; her

features are more striking than delicate, and express superiority to her sex. 'There she is,' all exclaim when she appears, and at once become breathless. When she sings, she extemporizes the words of her song, the ecstasy of improvisation animates her face, and holds the audience in rapt attention. When the song ceases, she talks of the great truths of nature, the immortality of the soul, the love of liberty, of the fascination and danger of the passions. Her features meanwhile wear an expression superior to beauty; her physiognomy is full of play and variety. When she ceases, a murmur of approbation thrills through the room; she looks down modestly; her long lashes sink over her flashing eyes, and the sun is clouded over."

The Revolution now advanced with rapid steps. Necker, whose capabilities as a financier have been generally acknowledged, was totally deficient in the higher qualities of the statesman. He sought to assume a middle position between the court and the people, but failing of success, was in consequence dismissed on the 11th of July, 1789. Paris rose in insurrection when this event became known, and on the 14th, the Bastille was in the hands of the people. The king was forced to send an order to recall Necker, who had left the country; this overtook him at Frankfort. "What a period of happiness," writes Madame de Staël, "was our journey back to Paris! I do not believe that a similar ovation was ever extended to a man not the sovereign of the country. Women, afar off in the fields, threw themselves on their knees, as the carriage passed: the most prominent citizens acted as postilions, and in many towns people detached the horses and dragged the carriage themselves. Oh, nothing can equal the emotions of a woman who hears the name of a

beloved parent repeated with eulogy by a whole people!" This triumph was of short duration. In a little more than a year, Necker, who had opposed some of the more radical measures of reform in the National Assembly, lost the confidence of the people, resigned, and again withdrew to Switzerland. He was now accompanied by the revilings and maledictions of the populace, and even narrowly escaped with his life.

Madame de Staël remained at Paris, and speedily became involved in the intrigues of the day. Her salon was the rendezvous of the royalists and Girondins, and the scene of ardent political discussions. In the midst of the sanguinary excesses of '92, she fearlessly used her influence to shelter and save her friends. She took them to her own house, which, being the residence of an ambassador, she presumed would be inviolable. But one night the police appeared at the gate, and required that the doors be opened for a rigid search. Madame de Staël met them at the threshold, spoke to them of the rights of ambassadors and of the vengeance of Sweden, and by dint of wit, argument and intrepidity, persuaded them to abandon their designs. She was soon compelled to flee, however, and take refuge with her father at Coppet. Here she wrote and published an appeal in behalf of Marie Antoinette, and "Reflections on the Peace of 1783." The fall of Robespierre, in July, 1794, enabled her to return to Paris, whither she hastened, upon the news of his execution.

Her residence in the capital formed an event in the annals of society at that period. The most distinguished foreigners and the best men in France flocked around her. She gave her influence to the

government of the Directory, being desirous of the establishment of some guaranty for the preservation of order and of individual security.

"Madame de Staël," says de Goncourt, "was a man of genius as early as the year 1795. It was by her hand, that France signed a treaty of alliance with existing institutions, and for a period accepted the Directory. Who obtained her the victory? Herself, with the aid of a friend who was the scribe of her dictation, the aid-de-camp and the notary-public of her thought, Benjamin Constant. The daughter of Necker forbade France to recall its line of kings: she retained the republic: she condemned the throne. She agitated victoriously in behalf of the maintenance of the representative system. The human right of victory was equivalent, with her, to the divine right of birth."[2]

The appearance of Bonaparte upon the stage of action produced a violent change in her life, pursuits and pleasures. She disliked and distrusted him from the first, and her drawing-room became an opposition club, or, as Napoleon himself described it, an arsenal of hostility. He, in turn, was vexed at her intellectual supremacy, and dreaded her influence. They first met at a ball given to Josephine, toward the close of the year 1797. She had long hunted him from place to place, for she was desirous of subjecting him, if possible, to the fascinations of her conversation, and he, avoiding the interview with consummate address, had always escaped her importunities. At the ball in question, he saw retreat to be impossible, and boldly seated himself in a vacant chair by her side. The following conversation, attributed to them, contains, in a concise form, the best of the authenticated sallies and repartees

perpetrated by the illustrious interlocutors. After the usual preliminaries, the dialogue proceeded thus:

MADAME DE STAËL. Madame Bonaparte is a charming lady.

BONAPARTE. Any compliment passing through your lips, madame, acquires additional value.

ST. Ah! then you appreciate my opinion and my approbation? But you have doubted my capacity, you have thought me frivolous; nevertheless, my studies in diplomacy, in the history of courts——

BON. I implore Madame de Staël not to drag the Graces to the pillory of politics.

ST. I assure you, General, that your mythological compliment is totally lost upon me: I should prefer that you judge me worthy to talk reason with you.

BON. The right of your sex is to make us lose our reason: do not despise so excellent a privilege.

ST. General, I beg of you not to play with me as with a doll: I desire to be treated as a man.

BON. Then you would like to have me put on petticoats.

ST.—TO A GENTLEMAN INTERRUPTING HER.—Sir, be good enough to understand that I desire no assistance, though certainly my adversary is sufficiently powerful to render assistance necessary.

BON. Madame, it was to my aid that he was coming; my danger appalls him, and he was seeking to relieve me.

ST. In any case, I owe him small thanks for his tardy aid, since you confess that my victory seemed certain. He is a true friend, however; he stands by those he likes, even in their absence, when, usually,

friendship slumbers.

BON. In that, friendship imitates its cousin—love.

ST.—NERVING HERSELF FOR AN EFFORT.—By what means, General, can an ordinary woman, without literary reputation, without superior genius, be sustained in the affection of a man she loves when separated from him by distance or a period of years? Memory, reduced to recalling her charms only, becomes gradually dim, and at last forgets, especially when the lover is a great man. But when the latter has had the good fortune to meet with a strong-minded woman, one worthy of sharing his laurels, and herself enjoying a high reputation, then the distance of time and space disappears, for it is the renown of both which serves as messenger between them, and it is through the hundred mouths of fame that each receives intelligence of the other.

BON. Madame, in what chapter of the work you are about to publish shall we read this brilliant passage?

ST. It has been the constant illusion of my soul.

BON. Ah, I understand; it is your hobby, after the manner of Sterne. So you are seeking the philosopher's stone?

ST. One would think, to hear you talk, that it is impossible to find it.

BON. There are two illusions in this world, though both flow from the same error; that of physical and that of moral alchemy. This idealistic philosophy leads to an abyss.

ST. One, nevertheless, which wit and sagacity may illumine with the rays of genius to its inmost recesses. Do you never build castles in the air, General? Do you never go and dwell in them? Do

you never dream, to charm away the monotony of life?

BON. I leave dreams to sleep, and retain reason for my waking hours.

ST. Then you can never be either amused or surprised! You have a scouting party stationed to watch that outpost, the imagination?

BON. Wisdom counsels me to do so, and makes it my duty.

ST.—AFTER A MOMENT'S REFLECTION.—General, who, in your opinion, is the greatest of women?

BON. She who bears the most children.[3]

Madame de Staël turned slightly pale at this reply, and said no more. The General rose, bowed, and quitted the room. Both carried away from the interview the elements of mutual dislike and food for a life-long hostility. "Doubtless," says Lacretelle, "this last question was suggested by the vanity of the inquirer." And Bonaparte, eager to deprive the lady of the tribute she expected in his reply, made answer as we have described. "Certainly," adds Lacretelle, "it was impossible to rebuff a courtesy with greater rudeness and less discernment, for Madame de Staël was one of the powers of the day."[4]

One evening, early in the Consulate, Josephine met Madame de Staël at the house of Madame de Montesson. Bonaparte was to come somewhat later. Josephine, knowing his aversion for her, or fearing her seductions if she were successful in obtaining his attention, received her, as she advanced, in a manner so markedly cold, if not rude, that Madame de Staël recoiled without speaking, and retreated to the extremity of the room, where she dropped into a

chair.

She remained for some time apart and alone. The pretty women took a malicious pleasure in the mortification of one of their own sex, while the gentlemen indulged in impertinent and unmanly remarks. At this moment, a young girl of extreme beauty and light airy step, with blond hair and blue eyes, and dressed entirely in white, left the group that had collected in the vicinity of Josephine, crossed the salon, and sat down by Madame de Staël. The latter, whose heart was as quick as her wit was ready, said to her, "You are as good as you are beautiful, my child."

"In what, pray, madame?" asked the young lady.

"In what?" returned Madame de Staël. "You ask me why I think you as kind as you are fair? Because you crossed this immense and deserted salon to come and sit by me. Upon my word, you are more courageous than I should have been."

"And yet, madame, I am naturally so timid that I should not dare to tell you my fears and trepidation: you would laugh at me, I am sure."

"Laugh at you!" exclaimed Madame de Staël, with moistened eyes and trembling voice; "laugh at you! never! never! I am your sister, henceforth, my dear, dear young friend! Will you tell me your Christian name?"

"Delphine, madame."

"Delphine! What a pretty name! I am very glad of it, for it will suit my purpose exactly. You must know, love, that I am writing a novel; and I mean it to bear your name. You shall be its god-mother; and you will find something in it which will remind you of to-day

and of our acquaintance."

Madame de Staël kept her promise, and the passage in the novel of Delphine, in which the heroine, abandoned, is under similar circumstances relieved and sustained by Madame de R., was written in commemoration of this little domestic scene.[5]

Bonaparte soon entered the room, and ignorant of the treatment Madame de Staël had undergone from Josephine, accosted her graciously, and indeed took evident pains to restrain, during their conversation, his intuitive dislike of the petticoat politician.

Madame de Staël was now at the apogee of her talent and influence. Her conversation was not what is usually understood by the term. She did not require so much an interlocutor as a listener. Her improvisations were long and sustained pleas, if her object was to convince, or discursive though brilliant harangues, if she sought to display her wealth of thought and of words. Those that were accustomed to her ways rarely answered her, even if, in the heat of argument, she addressed them a question; well aware that it was rather to operate a diversion than to elicit a reply. She required the excitement of an audience, and her eloquence became richer and more rapid as the circle of her listeners widened. She preferred contradiction and dissent to a blind acceptance of her opinions, and the surest method of pleasing her was to adduce arguments that she might refute them, and which might suggest in her mind new trains of ideas. Controversy was her peculiar element, and she sometimes resorted to the charlatanical process of advocating two opposite opinions on the same occasion, in order to show the flexibility of her mind and the pliancy of her logic. In the season of foliage, she invariably carried in her

hand a twig of poplar, which, when talking, she would turn and twist between her fingers; the crackling of this, she said, stimulated her brain. During the season when the poplar produces no leaves, she substituted for the twig a piece of rolled paper with which she was forced to be content, till the return of verdure. In winter, her flatterers and admirers always had a supply of these papers prepared, and presented her a quantity, on her arrival at a fête or a conversazione, that she might select her sceptre for the evening.[6] The famous twig of poplar is introduced in Gérard's portrait of Madame de Staël.[7]

She was never handsome, and without the extraordinary depth and brilliancy of her eyes, would have been a plain, if not an ugly woman. Her nose and mouth were homely, and only redeemed by her ever-varying expression. Her complexion was rough, her form massive rather than graceful, and indicated indolence rather than vivacity. Her hands were beautiful, and ill-natured people asserted that the poplar twig was a mere pretext for keeping them constantly in view. She dressed at all times without taste, and this defect became more conspicuous as she advanced in years, for at the age of forty-five she wore the colors and ornaments which would befit a young lady of twenty. Her coiffure was usually a turban, though this was not the prevailing fashion. Her partisans denied that there was any exaggeration in her toilet, though they allowed that she sought to be picturesque rather than fashionable.

Biography has preserved examples almost innumerable of the readiness of her wit and the profundity of her observation. The love of truth was one of her prominent characteristics. "I saw," she said

"that Bonaparte was declining, when he no longer sought for the truth." She held long arguments on equality, and said on one occasion, "I would not refuse the opinion of the lowest of my domestics, if the slightest of my own impressions tended to justify his." Her respect for justice and moderation was evinced in her reply to the remark of a Bourbon after Napoleon's fall, to the effect that Bonaparte had neither talent nor courage: "It is degrading France and Europe too much, sir, to pretend that for fifteen years they have been subject to a simpleton and a poltroon!" She despised affectation, and said that she could not converse with an affected man or woman on account of the constant interruptions of a tedious third person—their unnatural and affected character. Of individuals accustomed to exaggerate, she said: "To put 100 for 10, why, there's no imagination in that." Her faith was sincere and unostentatious, and she would remark, after listening to lofty metaphysical discourses, "Well, I like the Lord's Prayer better than that." One of her best replies was made to Canning, in the Tuileries, after the exile of Napoleon: "Well, Madame de Staël, we have conquered you French, you see!" "If you have, sir, it was because you had the Russians and the whole continent on your side. Give us a tête-à-tête, and you will see!"

Madame de Staël's conduct as a wife was not irreproachable. Talleyrand was one of the first, though by no means the last, of her lovers. It was after his rupture with Madame de Staël that he entered upon his liaison with Madame Grandt, and it was this circumstance that led Madame de Staël to ask him the most unfortunate question of her life, for it gave him the opportunity of making the most comprehensive reply of his: "If Madame Grandt and I

were to fall into the water, Talleyrand," she inquired, "which of us would you save first?" "Oh, madame," returned the minister, "YOU SWIM SO WELL!" She was revenged on him by drawing—though not very delicately—his character as a diplomatist: "He is so double-faced," she said, "that if you kick him behind, he will smile in front."

Bonaparte, early in the Consulate, sought through his brother Joseph, to attach Madame de Staël to his government; he might have done so, had he cared to conciliate her by expressing, or even feigning, deference to her talents and opinions. But he did not pursue the negotiation, and she continued her political discussions at her house, devoting her days to intrigues, and her evenings to epigrams; until Bonaparte, whose patience was exhausted, and who did not consider his power as yet fully established, directed his minister of police to banish her from Paris. She was ordered not to return within forty leagues of the city. He is said to have remarked, "I leave the whole world open to Madame de Staël, except Paris; that I reserve to myself." It was urged, too, that she had small claims to consideration; she was, though born in France, hardly a Frenchwoman, being the daughter of a Swiss and the wife of a Swede.

During a period of years, Madame de Staël remained under the ban of Bonaparte's displeasure, though, during a short interval, the intercessions of her father obtained permission for her to inhabit the capital. In 1803, she published her "Delphine," a work so immoral in its tendency that it incurred the censure of the critics and the public, and compelled the authoress to put forth a species of apology, which in its turn was considered lame and inconclusive. The

character of Madame de Vernon, in "Delphine," was said to have been intended for Talleyrand, clothed in female garb.

Unable to endure the deprivation of her Parisian friends, Madame de Staël soon established herself at the distance of thirty miles from Paris. Bonaparte was told that her residence was crowded with visitors from the capital. "She affects," he said, "to speak neither of public affairs nor of me; yet it invariably happens that every one comes out of her house less attached to me than when he went in." An order for her departure was soon served upon her, and she set forth upon a pilgrimage through Germany.

In the last week of December, 1807, Napoleon, returning from Italy, stopped at the post-house of Chambéry, in Sardinia, for a fresh relay of horses. He was told that a young man of seventeen years, named Auguste de Staël, desired to speak with him. "What have I to do with these refugees of Geneva?" said Napoleon, tartly. He ordered him to be admitted, however. "Where is your mother?" said Napoleon, opening the conversation. "She is at Vienna, sire." "Ah, she must be satisfied now; she will have fine opportunities for learning German." "Sire, your majesty cannot suppose that my mother can be satisfied anywhere, separated from her friends and driven from her country. If your majesty would condescend to glance at these private letters, written by my mother, you would see, sire, what unhappiness her exile causes her." "Oh, pooh! that's the way with your mother. I do not say she is a bad woman; but her mind is insubordinate and rebellious. She was brought up in the chaos of a falling monarchy, and of a revolution running riot,

and it has turned her head. If I were to allow her to return, six months would not pass before I should be obliged to shut her up in Bedlam, or put her under lock and key at the Temple. I should be sorry to do it, for it would make scandal, and injure me in public opinion. Tell your mother my mind is made up. As long as I live, she shall not again set foot in Paris."

"Sire, I am so sure that my mother would conduct herself with propriety that I pray you to grant her a trial, if it be only for six weeks." "It cannot be. She would make herself the standard-bearer of the faubourg St. Germain. She would receive visits, would return them, would make witticisms, and do a thousand follies. No, young man, no." "Will your majesty allow a son to inquire the cause of this hostility to his mother? I have been told it was the last work of my grandfather; I can assure your majesty that my mother had no hand in it." "Certainly, that book had its effect. Your grandfather was an idealist, an old maniac; at sixty years of age, to attempt to overturn my constitution and to replace it by one of his! An economist, indeed! A man who dreams financial schemes and could hardly perform the duties of a village tax-gatherer decently! Robespierre and Danton have done less harm to France than M. Necker. Your grandfather is the cause of the saturnalia which have desolated France. Upon his head be all the blood of the Revolution!" "Sire, I trust that posterity will speak more favorably of him. During his administration, he was compared with Sully and Colbert, and I trust to the justice of posterity." "Posterity will perhaps not speak of him at all," returned Napoleon.

"You are young, M. de Staël," he added, changing his tone, and taking the petitioner familiarly by the ear.

"Your frankness pleases me: I like to see a son plead the cause of his mother. She confided to you a difficult mission, and you have discharged it with intelligence. I cannot give you false hopes, so I do not conceal from you that you will obtain nothing whatever. I'll have none of your mother in the city where I dwell. Women should knit stockings, and not talk politics." As Napoleon rode away from Chambéry, he said to Duroc, "Was I not rather hard with that young man? After all, I am glad of it. The thing is settled once for all. France is no place for the family of Necker."[8]

During the absence of Madame de Staël in Germany, her father died, and she hastened to return to Coppet. She collected and published his writings, and appended to them a biographical memoir. She cherished his memory with a passion bordering on monomania, which led her, whenever she saw an old man in affliction, to seek to alleviate his sorrows. She often said, upon hearing good news, "I owe this to the intercessions of my father."

She found it difficult satisfactorily to occupy her leisure. She used to say that she would prefer living on two thousand francs a year in the Rue Jean Pain Mollet at Paris, to spending one hundred thousand at Geneva. But she made no effort to obtain a recall, at least by imposing restraint upon her tongue. Knowing that she was surrounded by spies, and that her bitter allusions to Napoleon were reported at the Tuileries, she continued to exhaust her wit upon the acts of his government, and upon the tyranny of him whom she called "Robespierre on horseback."

Amateur theatricals, upon a diminutive stage built for the purpose, afforded some amusement to the exile of Coppet. The audiences were principally

French residents at Geneva, whose ambition to be able to boast of their admission into Madame de Staël's intimacy, induced them to travel the wearisome road which separated the two places. While waiting for the lamps to be lighted, they ate bread and chocolate in the dark—this being the traditional lunch that a Frenchman carries in his pocket. On one occasion, the performance was Racine's tragedy of Andromaque. Madame de Staël played Hermione effectively, it would seem, but with a redundancy of gesture that somewhat marred the illusion. Madame Récamier acted Andromaque, the interesting widow; but the critics were so absorbed in the contemplation of her wondrous beauty that they have left little record of her histrionic ability. The characters of Oreste, Pylade and Pyrrhus were performed by M. de Labéboyère, Benjamin Constant and Sismondi, the historian. The two latter were very amusing, it appears, though the play being a tragedy, mirth could hardly have been the effect they desired to produce. Benjamin Constant, whose gestures were very broad and sweeping, once carried away a Grecian temple with the palm of his hand; Sismondi gave infinite zest to the representation by the purity of his Genevese accent. The prompter was M. Schlegel, the poet, critic and historian. His strong German pronunciation rendered him at best an inefficient assistant, for the actor, whose memory was treacherous, often failed to recognize the missing line, in the husky and guttural suggestions of the author of "Lucinde."

The health of Madame de Staël was now declining, and in order to recruit it she undertook a journey through Italy. On her return, she published "Corinne," a poetic description of the peninsula, in the form of a novel. Though deficient in construction

and dramatic power, it possesses the highest merit as a work delineating character and descriptive of scenery, and inculcates a pure morality. Incident and plot form its least attractive features; its eloquent rhapsodies upon love, religion, virtue, nature, history and poetry, have given it an enduring place in literature. She now took up her abode at the required distance from Paris, at Chaumont-sur-Loire, where she inhabited the chateau already famous as the residence of Diane de Poitiers, Catherine de Medicis, and Nostradamus the soothsayer, and at this time in the possession of one of her most attached friends. She here wrote and prepared for the press a work on the habits, character and literature of the Germans. The manuscript was laid before the censors at Paris, who expunged certain passages, and then authorized its publication. This was in 1810.

Ten thousand copies had been already printed, when the whole edition was seized at the publishers', by gendarmes sent by Savary, the minister of police. Madame de Staël was ordered to quit France in eight days. She withdrew again to Coppet, from whence she opened a correspondence with Savary upon this arbitrary, and indeed illegal, proceeding. She had been given to understand that the motive for the suppression was her omission to mention the name of Napoleon in connection with Germany, where his armies had lately made him conspicuous. She wrote to Savary that she did not see how she could have introduced the Emperor and his "soldiery" into a purely literary work. To this Savary replied that she was misinformed upon the motive which had actuated him, and that her exile was the natural consequence of her conduct for years past. "We are not so reduced in France," he added, "as to seek for models among the nations which you admire. Your

book is not French, and the air of France does not suit you." This impertinent letter was prefixed to the first edition of "Germany" published in London, in 1813.

During her residence at Coppet, Madame de Staël, now a widow and forty-two years of age, became acquainted with M. de Rocca, a French officer. She felt an interest in him even before she saw him, for he was said to be young, noble and brave; what was a still more attractive feature, he was wounded and an invalid. They first met in a public ball-room. She was dressed, it appears, in a gaudy and unbecoming style, and was followed from point to point by a train of admirers and flatterers. "Is that the famous woman?" said de Rocca. "She is very plain, and I abhor such continual aiming at effect." She spoke to him, expressed sympathy for his condition, and speedily effected a complete revolution in his opinions. From a caviller he became an admirer, and from an admirer a suitor. They were privately married, and the secret was carefully kept until the reading of her will, after her death, for she felt that the match was an ill-assorted one, and could hardly fail to excite ridicule. Besides, she was unwilling to change her name, "as it belonged to Europe," to quote her own words to De Rocca.

The tyranny to which she was subjected at the period of this marriage, by Napoleon, became annoying and perplexing. She was not only exiled from France, but warned not to go further than six miles from Coppet. Mathieu de Montmorency was exiled for visiting her, as was also Madame Récamier, as has already been narrated. M. Schlegel, who aided her in the education of her three children, was compelled to leave her. She was seized with the gloomiest

apprehensions, and resolved to escape from the sphere of Napoleon's power. The prefect of Geneva was instructed, from Paris, to suggest to Madame de Staël a means of recovering the sovereign's good graces—the publication of some loyal stanzas upon the birth of Napoleon's heir. "Tell those that sent you," she replied, "that I have no wishes in connection with the King of Rome, except the desire that his mother get him a healthy wet-nurse."

She now passed her time in studying the map of Europe, in choosing an asylum, and in devising a route by which to get to it. She at last departed for England, which she approached through Russia and Sweden. Once beyond French influence, she was treated with the highest consideration and the warmest cordiality. Among the distinguished men admitted to her intimacy, Lord Byron held the first place, and she often gave him advice both upon his conduct and his verse. It was now that she published her "Germany," She had the deep satisfaction of seeing her reputation as a critic and delineator of national manners elevated by it to the highest point.

She welcomed with delight the overthrow and abdication of Napoleon, and at once returned to Paris, where she attached herself to the party advocating a representative government under Louis XVIII. The restored sovereign caused the royal treasury to pay to her family the two million francs due M. Necker at his retirement from office—a measure of justice to which Napoleon would never consent. During the Hundred Days she retired to Switzerland, totally weaned from all interest in public life. Her health began to fail, and she still further weakened it by the use of opium. She devoted herself closely to the composition of her last

work, the "French Revolution," which now ranks as one of the most philosophical, though perhaps not the most impartial, histories of that period. Her sleepless nights she spent in prayer; she became gentle, patient and devout. "I think I know," she said, in her last moments, "what the passage from life to death is. I am convinced the goodness of God makes it easy; our thoughts become indistinct, and the pain is not great." She died with perfect composure, in 1817, in the fifty-first year of her age. Her husband, who was devotedly attached to her, survived her but a few months.

Madame de Staël was the most distinguished authoress of her time. As a woman, she was always independent and sincere, and her faults—vanity and an uncontrollable thirst for applause—may easily be pardoned in view of her many talents. Napoleon could have won her to his government at any moment, had he chosen to do so. It is perhaps fortunate for literature that she was compelled to live in isolation, as neither "Corinne" nor "Germany" would have been written had she been able to reside in Paris, instead of travelling to occupy her exile. It is a singular and not unfair commentary upon Napoleon's reign, that its most remarkable literary celebrity—in point of mere chronology—owed her supremacy to his persecution; and it is a permissible inference, that had his government preferred to foster and cherish her genius, Madame de Staël would have been known to posterity as little more than a precocious child, a brilliant conversationalist, an unsexed woman, and a factious politician.

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[1] Mém. de Madame de Genlis, 92.

[2] Soc. Franç. sous le Directoire, 298.

[3] Napoléon et ses Contemporains, i. 229.

[4] Lac. Rév. Française, ii. 140.

[5] Vide "Delphine," vol. ii. 386.

[6] Ducrest, Mém. de Joséphine, 23.

[7] It is from a copy of this portrait, by Gérard, in the Historical Gallery of Versailles, that the most accurate likenesses of Madame de Staël are taken.

[8] Bour. viii. 101.

CORINNE

BOOK I.

OSWALD.

CHAPTER I.

In the year 1794, Oswald, Lord Nevil, a Scotch nobleman, left Edinburgh to pass the winter in Italy. [1] He possessed a noble and handsome person, a fine mind, a great name, an independent fortune; but his health was impaired; and the physicians, fearing that his lungs were affected, prescribed the air of the south. He followed their advice, though with little interest in his own recovery, hoping, at least, to find

some amusement in the varied objects he was about to behold. The heaviest of all afflictions, the loss of a father, was the cause of his malady. The remorse inspired by scrupulous delicacy still more embittered his regret, and haunted his imagination. Such sufferings we readily convince ourselves that we deserve, for violent griefs extend their influence even over the realms of conscience. At five-and-twenty he was tired of life; he judged the future by the past, and no longer relished the illusions of the heart. No one could be more devoted to the service of his friends; yet not even the good he effected gave him one sensation of pleasure. He constantly sacrificed his tastes to those of others; but this generosity alone, far from proving a total forgetfulness of self, may often be attributed to a degree of melancholy, which renders a man careless of his own doom. The indifferent considered this mood extremely graceful; but those who loved him felt that he employed himself for the happiness of others, like a man who hoped for none; and they almost repined at receiving felicity from one on whom they could never bestow it. His natural disposition was versatile, sensitive, and impassioned; uniting all the qualities which could excite himself or others; but misfortune and repentance had rendered him timid, and he thought to disarm, by exacting nothing from fate. He trusted to find, in a firm adherence to his duties, and a renouncement of all enjoyments, a security against the sorrows which had distracted him. Nothing in the world seemed worth the risk of these pangs; but while we are still capable of feeling them, to what kind of life can we fly for shelter?

Lord Nevil flattered himself that he should quit Scotland without regret, as he had remained there without pleasure; but the dangerous dreams of

imaginative minds are not thus fulfilled; he was sensible of the ties which bound him to the scene of his miseries, the home of his father. There were rooms he could not approach without a shudder, and yet, when he had resolved to fly them, he felt more alone than ever. A barren dearth seized on his heart; he could no longer weep; no more recall those little local associations which had so deeply melted him; his recollections had less of life; they belonged not to the things that surrounded him. He did not think the less of those he mourned, but it became more difficult to conjure back their presence. Sometimes, too, he reproached himself for abandoning the place where his father had dwelt. "Who knows," would he sigh, "if the shades of the dead follow the objects of their affection? They may not be permitted to wander beyond the spots where their ashes repose! Perhaps, at this moment, is my father deploring my absence, powerless to recall me. Alas! may not a host of wild events have persuaded him that I have betrayed his tenderness, turned rebel to my country, to his will, and all that is sacred on earth?"

These remembrances occasioned him such insupportable despair, that, far from daring to confide them to any one, he dreaded to sound their depths himself; so easy is it, out of our own reflections, to create irreparable evils!

It costs added pain to leave one's country, when one must cross the sea. There is such solemnity in a pilgrimage, the first steps of which are on the ocean. It seems as if a gulf were opening behind you, and your return becoming impossible; besides, the sight of the main always profoundly impresses us, as the image of that infinitude which perpetually attracts the soul, and in which thought ever feels herself lost.

Oswald, leaning near the helm, his eyes fixed on the waves, appeared perfectly calm. Pride and diffidence generally prevented his betraying his emotions even before his friends; but sad feelings struggled within. He thought on the time when that spectacle animated his youth with a desire to buffet the tides, and measure his strength with theirs.

"Why," he bitterly mused, "why thus constantly yield to meditation? There is such rapture in active life! in those violent exercises that make us feel the energy of existence! then death itself may appear glorious; at least it is sudden, and not preceded by decay; but that death which finds us without being bravely sought—that gloomy death which steals from you, in a night, all you held dear, which mocks your regrets, repulses your embrace, and pitilessly opposes to your desire the eternal laws of time and nature—that death inspires a kind of contempt for human destiny, for the powerlessness of grief, and all the vain efforts that wreck themselves against necessity."

Such were the torturing sentiments which characterized the wretchedness of his state. The vivacity of youth was united with the thoughts of another age; such as might well have occupied the mind of his father in his last hours; but Oswald tinted the melancholy contemplations of age with the ardor of five-and-twenty. He was weary of everything; yet, nevertheless, lamented his lost content, as if its visions still lingered.

This inconsistency, entirely at variance with the will of nature (which has placed the conclusion and the gradation of things in their rightful course), disordered the depths of his soul; but his manners were ever sweet and harmonious; nay, his grief, far from injuring his temper, taught him a still greater

degree of consideration and gentleness for others.

Twice or thrice in the voyage from Harwich to Emden the sea threatened stormily. Nevil directed the sailors, reassured the passengers; and while, toiling himself, he for a moment took the pilot's place, there was a vigour and address in what he did, which could not be regarded as the simple effect of personal strength and activity, for mind pervaded it all.

When they were about to part, all on board crowded round him to take leave, thanking him for a thousand good offices, which he had forgotten: sometimes it was a child that he had nursed so long; more frequently, some old man whose steps he had supported while the wind rocked the vessel. Such an absence of personal feeling was scarcely ever known. His voyage had passed without his having devoted a moment to himself; he gave up his time to others, in melancholy benevolence. And now the whole crew cried, with one voice, "God bless you, my Lord! we wish you better."

Yet Oswald had not once complained; and the persons of a higher class, who had crossed with him, said not a word on this subject; but the common people, in whom their superiors rarely confide, are wont to detect the truth without the aid of words; they pity you when you suffer, though ignorant of the cause; and their spontaneous sympathy is unmixed with either censure or advice.

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[1] Neither of these names is Scotch. We are not informed whether the hero's Christian name is Oswald, or Nevil his family one, as well as his title. He signs the former to his letters, and constantly calls himself an

Englishman.—TRANSLATOR.

CHAPTER II.

Travelling, say what we will, is one of the saddest pleasures in life. If you ever feel at ease in a strange place, it is because you have begun to make it your home; but to traverse unknown lands, to hear a language which you hardly comprehend, to look on faces unconnected with either your past or future, this is solitude without repose or dignity; for the hurry to arrive where no one awaits you, that agitation whose sole cause is curiosity, lessens you in your own esteem, while, ere new objects can become old, they have bound you by some sweet links of sentiment and habit.

Oswald felt his despondency redoubled in crossing Germany to reach Italy, obliged by war to avoid France and its frontiers, as well as the troops, who rendered the roads impassable. This necessity for attending to detail, and taking, almost every instant, a new resolution, was utterly insufferable. His health, instead of improving, often obliged him to stop, while he longed to arrive at some other place, or at least to fly from where he was. He took the least possible care of his constitution; accusing himself as culpable, with but too great severity. If he wished still to live, it was but for the defence of his country.

"My native land," would he sigh—"has it not a parental right over me? but I want power to serve it usefully. I must not offer it the feeble existence which I drag towards the sun, to beg of him some principle of life, that may struggle against my woes.

None but a father could receive me thus, and love me the more, the more I was deserted by nature and by fate."

He had flattered himself that a continual change of external objects would somewhat divert his fancy from its usual routine; but he could not, at first, realize this effect. It were better, after any great loss, to familiarize ourselves afresh with all that had surrounded us, accustom ourselves to the old familiar faces, to the house in which we had lived, and the daily duties which we ought to resume; each of these efforts jars fearfully on the heart; but nothing multiplies them like an absence.

Oswald's only pleasure was exploring the Tyrol, on a horse which he had brought from Scotland, and who climbed the hills at a gallop. The astonished peasants began by shrieking with fright, as they saw him borne along the precipice's edge, and ended by chapping their hands in admiration of his dexterity grace, and courage. He loved the sense of danger. It reconciled him for the instant with that life which he thus seemed to regain, and which it would have been easy to lose.

CHAPTER III.

At Inspruck, where he stayed for some time, in the house of a banker, Oswald was much interested by the history of Count d'Erfeuil, a French emigrant, who had sustained the total loss of an immense fortune with perfect serenity. By his musical talents he had maintained himself and an aged uncle, over whom he watched till the good man's death,

constantly refusing the pecuniary aid which had been pressed on him. He had displayed the most brilliant valor—that of France—during the war, and an unchangeable gayety in the midst of reverses. He was anxious to visit Rome, that he might find a relative, whose heir he expected to become; and wished for a companion, or rather a friend, with whom to make the journey agreeably.

Lord Nevil's saddest recollections were attached to France; yet he was exempt from the prejudices which divided the two nations. One Frenchman had been his intimate friend, in whom he had found a union of the most estimable qualities. He therefore offered, through the narrator of Count d'Erfeuil's story, to take this noble and unfortunate young man with him to Italy. The banker in an hour informed him that his proposal was gratefully accepted. Oswald rejoiced in rendering this service to another, though it cost him much to resign his seclusion; and his reserve suffered greatly at the prospect of finding himself thus thrown on the society of a man he did not know.

He shortly received a visit of thanks from the Count, who possessed an elegant manner, ready politeness, and good taste; from the first appearing perfectly at his ease. Every one, on seeing him, wondered at what he had undergone; for he bore his lot with a courage approaching to forgetfulness. There was a liveliness in his conversation truly admirable, while he spoke of his own misfortunes; though less so, it must be owned, when extended to other subjects.

"I am greatly obliged to your Lordship," said he, "for transporting me from Germany, of which I am tired to death."—"And yet," replied Nevil, "you are universally beloved and respected here."—"I have friends, indeed, whom I shall sincerely regret; for in

this country one meets none but the best of people; only I don't know a word of German; and you will confess that it were a long and tedious task to learn it. Since I had the ill-luck to lose my uncle, I have not known what to do with my leisure; while I had to attend on him, that filled up my time; but now the four-and-twenty hours hang heavily on my hands."—"The delicacy of your conduct towards your kinsman, Count," said Nevil, "has impressed me with the deepest regard for you."—"I did no more than my duty. Poor man! he had lavished his favors on my childhood. I could never have left him, had he lived to be a hundred; but 'tis well for him that he's gone; 'twere well for me to be with him," he added, laughing, "for I've little to hope in this world. I did my best, during the war, to get killed; but since fate would spare me, I must live on as I may."—"I shall congratulate myself on coming hither," answered Nevil, "should you do well in Rome; and if ——"—"Oh, Heaven!" interrupted d'Erfeuil, "I do well enough everywhere; while we are young and cheerful, all things find their level. 'Tis neither from books nor from meditation that I have acquired my philosophy, but from being used to the world and its mishaps; nay, you see, my Lord, I have some reason for trusting to chance, since I owe to it the opportunity of travelling with you." The Count then agreed on the hour for setting forth next day, and, with a graceful bow, departed. After the mere interchange of civilities with which their journey commenced, Oswald remained silent for some hours; but perceiving that this fatigued his fellow-traveller, he asked him if he anticipated much pleasure in their Italian tour. "Oh," replied the Count, "I know what to expect, and don't look forward to the least amusement. A friend of mine passed six months

there, and tells me that there is not a French province without a better theatre, and more agreeable society than Rome; but in that ancient capital of the world I shall be sure to find some of my countrymen to chat with; and that is all I require."—"Then you have not been tempted to learn Italian?"—"No, that was never included in the plan of my studies," he answered, with so serious an air, that one might have thought him expressing a resolution founded on the gravest motives. "The fact is," he continued, "that I like no people but the English and the French. Men must be proud, like you, or wits, like ourselves; all the rest is mere imitation." Oswald said nothing. A few moments afterwards the Count renewed the conversation by sallies of vivacity and humor, in which he played on words most ingeniously; but neither what he saw or what he felt was his theme. His discourse sprang not from within, nor from without; but, steering clear alike of reflection and imagination, found its subjects in the superficial traits of society. He named twenty persons in France and England, inquiring if Lord Nevil knew them; and relating as many pointed anecdotes, as if, in his opinion, the only language for a man of taste was the gossip of good company. Nevil pondered for some time on this singular combination of courage and frivolity, this contempt of misfortune, which would have been so heroic if it had cost more effort, instead of springing from the same source which rendered him incapable of deep affections. "An Englishman," thought he, "would have been overwhelmed by similar circumstances. Whence does this Frenchman derive his fortitude, yet pliancy of character? Does he rightly understand the art of living? I deem myself his superior, yet am I not ill and wretched? Does his trifling course accord better

than mine with the fleetness of life? Must one fly from thought as from a foe, instead of yielding all the soul to its power?" In vain he thought to clear these doubts; he could call no aid from his own intellectual region, whose best qualities were even more ungovernable than its defects.

The Count gave none of his attention to Italy, and rendered it almost impossible for Oswald to be entertained by it. D'Erfeuil turned from his friend's admiration of a fine country, and sense of its picturesque charm; our invalid listened as oft as he could to the sound of the winds, or the murmur of the waves; the voice of nature did more for his mind than sketches of coteries held at the foot of the Alps, among ruins, or on the banks of the sea. His own grief would have been less an obstacle to the pleasure he might have tasted than was the mirth of d'Erfeuil. The regrets of a feeling heart may harmonize with a contemplation of nature and an enjoyment of the fine arts; but frivolity, under whatever form it appears, deprives attention of its power, thought of its originality, and sentiment of its depth. One strange effect of the Count's levity, was its inspiring Nevil with diffidence in all their affairs together.

The most reasoning characters are often the easiest abashed. The giddy embarrass and overawe the contemplative; and the being who calls himself happy appears wiser than he who suffers. D'Erfeuil was every way mild, obliging, and free; serious only in his self-love, and worthy to be liked as much as he could like another; that is, as a good companion in pleasure and in peril, but one who knew not how to participate in pain. He wearied of Oswald's melancholy; and, as well from the goodness of his

heart as from taste, he strove to dissipate it. "What would you have?" he often said. "Are you not young, rich, and well, if you choose? you are but fancy-sick. I have lost all, and know not what will become of me; yet I enjoy life as if I possessed every earthly blessing."—"Your courage is as rare as it is honorable," replied Nevil; "but the reverses you have known wound less than do the sorrows of the heart."—"The sorrows of the heart! ay, true, they must be the worst of all; but still you must console yourself; for a sensible man ought to banish from his mind whatever can be of no service to himself or others. Are we not placed here below to be useful first, and consequently happy? My dear Nevil, let us hold by that faith."

All this was rational enough, in the usual sense of the word; for d'Erfeuil was, in most respects, a clear-headed man. The impassioned are far more liable to weakness, than the fickle; but, instead of his mode of thinking securing the confidence of Nevil, he would fain have assured the Count that he was the happiest of human beings, to escape the infliction of his attempts at comfort. Nevertheless, d'Erfeuil became strongly attached to Lord Nevil. His resignation and simplicity, his modesty and pride, created respect irresistibly. The Count was perplexed by Oswald's external composure, and taxed his memory for all the grave maxims, which in childhood he had heard from his old relations, in order to try their effect upon his friend; and, astonished at failing to vanquish his apparent coldness, he asked himself, "Am I not good-natured, frank, brave, and popular in society? What do I want, then, to make an impression on this man? May there not be some misunderstanding between us, arising, perhaps, from his not sufficiently understanding French?"

CHAPTER IV.

An unforeseen circumstance much increased the sensations of deference which d'Erfeuil felt towards his travelling companion. Lord Nevil's state of health obliged him to stop some days at Ancona. Mount and main conspired to beautify its site; and the crowd of Greeks, orientally seated at work before the shops, the varied costumes of the Levant, to be met with in the streets, give the town an original and interesting air. Civilization tends to render all men alike, in appearance if not in reality; yet fancy may find pleasure in characteristic national distinctions.

Men only resemble each other when sophisticated by sordid or fashionable life; whatever is natural admits of variety. There is a slight gratification, at least for the eyes, in that diversity of dress, which seems to promise us experience in equally novel ways of feeling and of judgement. The Greek, Catholic, and Jewish forms of worship exist peaceably together in Ancona. Their ceremonies are strongly contrasted; but the same sigh of distress, the same petition for support, ascends to Heaven from all.

The Catholic church stands on a height that overlooks the main, the lash of whose tides frequently blends with the chant of the priests. Within, the edifice is loaded by ornaments of indifferent taste; but, pausing beneath the portico, the soul delights to recall its purest of emotions—religion—while gazing at that superb spectacle, the sea, on which man never left his trace. He may plough the earth, and cut his way through mountains, or contract rivers into canals, for the transport of his merchandise; but if his fleets for a

moment furrow the ocean, its waves as instantly efface this slight mark of servitude, and it again appears such as it was on the first day of its creation. [1]

Lord Nevil had decided to start for Rome on the morrow, when he heard, during the night, a terrific cry from the streets, and hastening from his hotel to learn the cause, beheld a conflagration which, beginning at the port, spread from house to house towards the top of the town. The flames were reflected afar off in the sea; the wind, increasing their violence, agitated their images on the waves, which mirrored in a thousand shapes the blood-red features of a lurid fire. The inhabitants, having no engine in good repair,[2] hurriedly bore forth what succor they could; above their shouts was heard a clank of chains, as the slaves from the galleys toiled to save the city which served them for a prison. The various people of the Levant, whom commerce had drawn to Ancona, betrayed their dread by the stupor of their looks. The merchants, at sight of their blazing stores, lost all presence of mind. Trembling for fortune as much as for life, the generality of men were scared from that zealous enthusiasm which suggests resources in emergency.

The shouts of sailors have ever something dreary in their sound; fear now rendered them still more appalling. The mariners of the Adriatic were clad in peculiar red and brown hoods, from which peeped their animated Italian faces, under every expression of dismay. The natives, lying on the earth, covered their heads with their cloaks, as if nothing remained for them to do but to exclude the sight of their calamity. Reckless fury and blind submission reigned alternately, but no one evinced that coolness which redoubles our means and our strength.

Oswald remembered that there were two English vessels in the harbor; the pumps of both were in perfect order; he ran to the Captain's house, and put off with him in a boat, to fetch them. Those who witnessed this exclaimed to him, "Ah, you foreigners do well to leave our unhappy town!"—"We shall soon return," said Oswald. They did not believe him, till he came back, and placed one of the pumps in front of the house nearest to the port, the other before that which blazed in the centre of the street. Count d'Erfeuil exposed his life with gay and careless daring. The English sailors and Lord Nevil's servants came to his aid, for the populace remained motionless, scarcely understanding what these strangers meant to do, and without the slightest faith in their success. The bells rung from all sides; the priests formed processions; weeping females threw themselves before their sculptured saints; but no one thought on the natural powers which God has given man for his own defence. Nevertheless, when they perceived the fortunate effects of Oswald's activity—the flames extinguished, and their homes preserved—rapture succeeded astonishment; they pressed around him, and kissed his hand with such ardent eagerness, that he was obliged by feigned displeasure to drive them from him, lest they should impede the rapid succession of necessary orders for saving the town. Every one ranked himself beneath Oswald's command; for, in trivial as in great events, where danger is, firmness will find its rightful station; and while men strongly fear, they cease to feel jealousy. Amid the general tumult, Nevil now distinguished shrieks more horrible than aught he had previously heard, as if from the other extremity of the town. He inquired their source; and was told that they proceeded from the Jews' quarter. The officer of

police was accustomed to close its gates every evening; the fire gained on it, and the occupants could not escape. Oswald shuddered at the thought, and bade them instantly open the barriers; but the women, who heard him, flung themselves at his feet, exclaiming, "Oh, our good angel! you must be aware that it is certainly on their account we have endured this visitation; it is they who bring us ill fortune; and if you set them free, all the water of the ocean will never quench these flames." They entreated him to let the Jews be burnt with as much persuasive eloquence as if they had been petitioning for an act of mercy. Not that they were by nature cruel, but that their superstitious fancies were forcibly struck by a great disaster. Oswald with difficulty contained his indignation at hearing a prayer so revolting. He sent four English sailors, with hatchets, to cut down the gate which confined these helpless men, who instantly spread themselves about the town, rushing to their merchandise, through the flames, with that greediness of wealth, which impresses us so painfully, when it drives men to brave even death; as if human beings, in the present state of society, had nothing to do with the simple gift of life. There was now but one house, at the upper part of the town, where the fire mocked all efforts to subdue it. So little interest had been shown in this abode, that the sailors, believing it vacant, had carried their pumps towards the port. Oswald himself, stunned by the calls for aid around him, had almost disregarded it. The conflagration had not been early communicated to this place, but it had made great progress there. He demanded so earnestly what the dwelling was, that at last a man informed him—the hospital for maniacs! Overwhelmed by these tidings, he looked in vain for his assistants, or Count d'Erfeuil; as vainly

did he call on the inhabitants; they were employed in taking care of their property, and deemed it ridiculous to risk their lives for the sake of men who were all incurably mad. "It will be no one's fault if they die, but a blessing to themselves and families," was the general opinion; but while they expressed it, Oswald strode rapidly towards the building, and even those who blamed involuntarily followed him. On reaching the house, he saw, at the only window not surrounded by flame, the unconscious creatures, looking on, with that heart-rending laughter which proves either an ignorance of all life's sad realities, or such deep-seated despair as disarms death's most frightful aspect of its power. An indefinite chill seized him at this sight. In the severest period of his own distress he had felt as if his reason were deserting him; and, since then, never looked on insanity without the most painful sympathy. He secured a ladder which he found near, placed it against the wall, ascended through the flames, and entered by its window, the room where the unfortunate lunatics were assembled. Their derangement was sufficiently harmless to justify their freedom within doors; only one was chained. Fortunately the floor was not consumed, and Oswald's appearance in the midst of these degraded beings had all the effect of enchantment; at first, they obeyed him without resistance. He bade them descend before him, one after the other, by the ladder, which might in a few seconds be destroyed. The first of them complied in silence, so entirely had Oswald's looks and tones subdued him. Another, heedless of the danger in which the least delay must involve Oswald and himself, was inclined to rebel; the people, alive to all the horrors of the situation, called on Lord Nevil to come down, and leave the

senseless wretches to escape as they could; but their deliverer would listen to nothing that could defeat his generous enterprise. Of the six patients found in the hospital, five were already safe. The only one remaining was the youth who had been fettered to the wall. Oswald loosened his irons, and bade him take the same course as his companions; but, on feeling himself at liberty, after two years of bondage, he sprung about the room with frantic delight, which, however, gave place to fury, when Oswald desired him to get out of the window. But finding persuasion fruitless, and seeing that the fatal element was fast extending its ravages, he clasped the struggling maniac in his arms; and, while the smoke prevented his seeing where to step, leaped from the last bars of the ladder, giving the rescued man, who still contended with his benefactor, into the hands of persons whom he charged to guard him carefully.

Oswald, with his locks disordered, and his countenance sweetly, yet proudly animated by the perils he had braved, struck the gazing crowd with an almost fanatical admiration; the women, particularly, expressed themselves in that fanciful language, the universal gift of Italy, which often lends a dignity to the address of her humblest children. They cast themselves on their knees before him, crying—"Assuredly, thou art St. Michael, the patron of Ancona. Show us thy wings, yet do not fly, save to the top of our cathedral, where all may see and pray to thee!"—"My child is ill; oh, cure him!" said one.—"Where," added another, "is my husband, who has been absent so many years? tell me!" Oswald was longing to escape, when d'Erfeuil, joining him, pressed his hand. "Dear Nevil!" he began, "could you share nothing with your friend? 'twas cruel to keep all the glory to yourself."—"Help

me from this place!" returned Oswald, in a low voice. A moment's darkness favoured their flight, and both hastened in search of post-horses. Sweet as was the first sense of the good he had just effected, with whom could he partake it, now that his best friend was no more? So wretched is the orphan that felicity and care alike remind him of his heart's solitude. What substitute has life for the affection born with us? for that mental intercourse, that kindred sympathy, that friendship, formed by Heaven to exist but between parent and child? We may love again; but the happiness of confiding the whole soul to another—that we can never regain.

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[1] Lord Byron translated this paragraph in the fourth canto of Childe Harold, but without acknowledging whence the ideas were borrowed:—

"Roll on, thou deep and dark blue ocean—roll!
Ten thousand fleets sweep over thee in vain;
Man marks the earth with ruin—his control
Stops with the shore;—upon the wat'ry plain
The wrecks are all thy deed, nor doth remain
A shadow of man's ravage. * *
* * * * *

Time writes no wrinkle on thine azure brow—
Such as creation's dawn beheld, thou rollest now."
Such as creation's dawn beheld, thou rollest now."
See stanzas 179 and 182.—TR.

[2] Ancona is not much better supplied to this day.

CHAPTER V.

Oswald sped to Rome, over the marches of Ancona, and the Papal State, without remarking or interesting himself in anything. Besides its melancholy, his disposition had a natural indolence, from which it could only be roused by some strong passion. His taste was not yet developed; he had lived but in England and France;[1] in the latter, society is everything; in the former, political interests nearly absorb all others. His mind, concentrated in his griefs, could not yet solace itself in the wonders of nature, or the works of art.

D'Erfeuil, running through every town, with the Guide-Book in his hand, had the double pleasure of making away with his time, and of assuring himself that there was nothing to see worthy the praise of any one who had been in France. This *nil admirari* of his discouraged Oswald, who was also somewhat prepossessed against Italy and Italians. He could not yet penetrate the mystery of the people or their country—a mystery that must be solved rather by imagination than by that spirit of judgment which an English education particularly matures.

The Italians are more remarkable for what they have been, and might be, than for what they are. The wastes that surround Rome, as if the earth, fatigued by glory, disdained to become productive, are but uncultivated and neglected lands to the utilitarian. Oswald, accustomed from his childhood to a love of order and public prosperity, received, at first, an unfavorable impression in crossing such abandoned plains as approaches to the former queen of cities. Looking on it with the eye of an enlightened patriot, he censured the idle inhabitants and their rulers.

The Count d'Erfeuil regarded it as a man of the world; and thus the one from reason, and the other from levity, remained dead to the effect which the Campagna produces on a mind filled by a regretful memory of those natural beauties and splendid misfortunes, which invest this country with an indescribable charm. The Count uttered the most comic lamentations over the environs of Rome. "What!" said he, "no villas? no equipages? nothing to announce the neighborhood of a great city? Good God, how dull!" The same pride with which the natives of the coast had pointed out the sea, and the Neapolitans showed their Vesuvius, now transported the postilions, who exclaimed, "Look! that is the cupola of St. Peter's."—"One might take it for the dome of the Invalides!" cried d'Erfeuil. This comparison, rather national than just, destroyed the sensation which Oswald might have received, in first beholding that magnificent wonder of man's creation.

They entered Rome, neither on a fair day, nor a lovely night, but on a dark and misty evening, which dimmed and confused every object before them. They crossed the Tiber without observing it; passed through the Porto del Popolo, which led them at once to the Corso, the largest street of modern Rome, but that which possesses the least originality of feature, as being the one which most resembles those of other European towns.

The streets were crowded; puppet-shows and mountebanks formed groups round the base of Antoninus's pillar. Oswald's attention was caught by these objects, and the name of Rome forgotten. He felt that deep isolation which presses on the heart, when we enter a foreign scene, and look on a multitude to whom our existence is unknown, and

who have not one interest in common with us. These reflections, so saddening to all men, are doubly so to the English, who are accustomed to live among themselves, and find it difficult to blend with the manners of other lands. In Rome, that vast caravansary, all is foreign, even the Romans, who seem to live there, not like its possessors, but like pilgrims who repose among its ruins.[2] Oppressed by laboring thoughts, Oswald shut himself in his room, instead of exploring the city; little dreaming that the country he had entered beneath such a sense of dejection would soon become the mine of so many new ideas and enjoyments.

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[1] This alludes to a previous tour; in his present one, Oswald has not approached France. His longest stay was in Germany.—TR.

[2] This observation is made in a letter on Rome, by M. Humboldt, brother to the celebrated traveller, and Prussian minister at Rome; a gentleman whose writings and conversation alike do honor to his learning and originality.

BOOK II.

CORINNE AT THE CAPITOL.

CHAPTER I.

Oswald awoke in Rome. The dazzling sun of Italy

met his first gaze, and his soul was penetrated with sensations of love and gratitude for that heaven, which seemed to smile on him in these glorious beams. He heard the bells of numerous churches ringing, discharges of cannon from various distances, as if announcing some high solemnity. He inquired the cause, and was informed that the most celebrated female was about that morning to be crowned at the capitol—Corinne, the poet and improvisatrice, one of the loveliest women of Rome. He asked some questions respecting this ceremony, hallowed by the names of Petrarch and of Tasso; every reply he received warmly excited his curiosity.

There can be nothing more hostile to the habits and opinions of an Englishman, than any great publicity given to the career of a woman. But the enthusiasm with which all imaginative talents inspire the Italians, infects, at least for the time, even strangers, who forget prejudice itself among people so lively in the expression of their sentiments.

The common populace of Rome discuss their statues, pictures, monuments, and antiquities, with much taste; and literary merit, carried to a certain height, becomes with them a national interest.

On going forth into the public resorts, Oswald found that the streets, through which Corinne was to pass, had been adorned for her reception. The herd, who generally throng but the path of fortune or of power, were almost in a tumult of eagerness to look on one whose soul was her only distinction. In the present state of the Italians, the glory of the fine arts is all their fate allows them; and they appreciate genius of that order with a vivacity which might raise up a host of great men, if applause could suffice to produce them—if a hardy life, strong interest, and an

independent station were not the food required to nourish thought.

Oswald walked the streets of Rome, awaiting the arrival of Corinne; he heard her named every instant; every one related, some new trait, proving that she united all the talents most captivating to the fancy. One asserted that her voice was the most touching in Italy; another, that, in tragic acting, she had no peer; a third, that she danced like a nymph, and drew with equal grace and invention—all said that no one had ever written or extemporized verses so sweet, and that, in daily conversation, she displayed alternately an ease and an eloquence which fascinated all who heard her. They disputed as to which part of Italy had given her birth; some earnestly contending that she must be a Roman, or she could not speak the language with such purity. Her family name was unknown. Her first work, which had appeared five years since, bore but that of Corinne. No one could tell where she had lived, nor what she had been before that period; and she was now nearly six-and-twenty. Such mystery and publicity, united in the fate of a female of whom every one spoke, yet whose real name no one knew, appeared, to Nevil as among the wonders of the land he came to see. He would have judged such a woman very severely in England; but he applied not *her* social etiquettes to Italy; and the crowning of Corinne awoke in his breast the same sensation which he would have felt on reading an adventure of Ariosto's.

A burst of exquisite melody preceded the approach of the triumphal procession. How thrilling is each event that is heralded by music! A great number of Roman nobles, and not a few foreigners, came first. "Behold her retinue of admirers!" said one.—"Yes," replied

another; "she receives a whole world's homage, but accords her preference to none. She is rich, independent; it is even believed, from her noble air, that she is a lady of high birth, who wishes to remain unknown."—"A divinity veiled in clouds," concluded a third. Oswald looked on the man who spoke thus; everything betokened him a person of the humblest class; but the natives of the South converse as naturally in poetic phrases, as if they imbibed them with the air, or were inspired by the sun.

At last four spotless steeds appeared in the midst of the crowd drawing an antiquely-shaped car, besides which walked a maiden band in snowy vestments. Wherever Corinne passed, perfumes were thrown upon the air; the windows, decked with flowers and scarlet hangings, were peopled by gazers, who shouted, "Long live Corinne! Glory to beauty and to genius!"

This emotion was general; but, to partake it, one must lay aside English reserve and French raillery; Nevil could not yield to the spirit of the scene, till he beheld Corinne.

Attired like Domenichino's Sibyl, an Indian shawl was twined among her lustrous black curls, a blue drapery fell over her robe of virgin white, and her whole costume was picturesque, without sufficiently varying from modern usage to appear tainted by affectation. Her attitude was noble and modest; it might, indeed, be perceived that she was content to be admired; yet a timid air blended with her joy, and seemed to ask pardon for her triumph. The expression of her features, her eyes, her smile, created a solicitude in her favor, and made Lord Nevil her friend even before any more ardent sentiment subdued him. Her arms were

transcendently beautiful; her figure tall, and, as we frequently see among the Grecian statues, rather robust—energetically characteristic of youth and happiness. There was something inspired in her air; yet the very manner in which she bowed her thanks for the applause she received, betrayed a natural disposition sweetly contrasting the pomp of her extraordinary situation. She gave you at the same instant the idea of a priestess of Apollo advancing towards his temple, and of a woman born to fulfil the usual duties of life with perfect simplicity—in truth, her every gesture elicited not more wondering conjecture, than it conciliated sympathy and affection. The nearer she approached the Capitol, so fruitful in classic associations, the more these admiring tributes increased; the raptures of the Romans, the clearness of their sky, and, above all, Corinne herself, took electric effect on Oswald. He had often, in his own land, seen statesmen drawn in triumph by the people, but this was the first time that he had ever witnessed the tender of such honors to a woman illustrious only in mind. Her car of victory cost no fellow-mortal's tear; nor terror, nor regret could check his admiration for those fairest gifts of nature—creative fancy, sensibility, and reason. These new ideas so intensely occupied him, that he noticed none of the long-famed spots over which Corinne proceeded. At the foot of the steps leading to the capitol, the car stopped, and all her friends rushed to offer their hands; she took that of Prince Castel Forte, the nobleman most esteemed in Rome for his talents and character. Every one approved her choice. She ascended to the capitol, whose imposing majesty seemed graciously to welcome the light footsteps of woman. The instruments sounded with fresh vigor, the cannon

shook the air, and the all-conquering Sibyl entered the palace prepared for her reception.

In the centre of the hall stood the senator who was to crown Corinne, surrounded by his brothers in office; on one side, all the cardinals and most distinguished ladies of Rome; on the other, the members of the Academy; while the opposite extremity was filled by some portion of the multitude who had followed Corinne. The chair destined for her was placed a step lower than that of the senator. Ere seating herself in presence of that august assembly, she complied with the custom of bending one knee to the earth; the gentle dignity of this action filled Oswald's eyes with tears, to his own surprise; but, in the midst of all this success, it seemed as if the looks of Corinne implored the protection of a friend, with which no woman, however superior, can dispense; and he thought how delicious it were to be the stay of her, whose sensitiveness alone could render such a prop necessary. As soon as Corinne was seated, the Roman poets recited the odes and sonnets composed for this occasion; all praised her to the highest; but in styles that described her no more than they would have done any other woman of genius. The same mythological images and allusions must have been addressed to such beings from the days of Sappho to our own. Already Nevil disliked this kind of incense for her; he fancied that he could that moment have drawn a truer, a more finished portrait; such, indeed, as could have belonged to no one but Corinne.

CHAPTER II.

Prince Castel Forte now took up the discourse, in a manner which riveted the attention of his audience. He was a man of fifty, with a measured address and commanding carriage. The assurance which Nevil had received, that he was but the friend of Corinne, enabled him to listen with unqualified delight to what, without such safeguard, he could not, even thus early, have heard, save with a confused sense of jealousy.

The Prince read some pages of unpretending prose, singularly fitted, notwithstanding, to display the spirit of Corinne. He pointed out the particular merit of her works as partly derived from her profound study of foreign literature, teaching her to unite the graphic descriptions of the South, with that observant knowledge of the human heart which appears the inheritance of those whose country offers fewer objects of external beauty. He lauded her graceful gayety, that, free from ironical satire, seemed to spring but from the freshness of her fancy. He strove to speak of her tenderness; but it was easily to be seen that personal regret mingled with this theme. He touched on the difficulty for a woman so endowed to meet, in real life, with any object resembling the ideal image clad in the hues of her own heart; then contented himself by depicting the impassioned feelings which kindled her poetry—her art of seizing on the most touching charms of nature, the deepest emotions of the soul. He complimented the originality of her expression, which, arising from her own peculiar turn of thought, constituted an involuntary spell, untarnished by the slightest cloud of mannerism. He spoke of her eloquence as of a resistless power, which must transport most those who possessed the best sense and the truest susceptibility. "Corinne," said he, "is doubtless more

celebrated than any other of our countrywomen; and yet it is only her friends who can describe her. The qualities of the soul, if real, always require to be guessed; fame, as well as obscurity, might prevent their detection, if some congenial sympathy came not to our aid." He dilated on her talent as an improvisatrice, as distinct from everything which had been known by that name in Italy. "It is not only attributable," he continued, "to the fertility of her mind, but to her deep enthusiasm for all generous sentiments; she cannot pronounce a word that recalls them, but that inexhaustible source of thought overflows at her lips in strains ever pure and harmonious; her poetry is intellectual music, such as alone can embody the fleeting and delicate reveries of the heart." He extolled the conversation of Corinne, as one who had tasted all its delights. "There," he said, "is united all that is natural, fanciful, just, sublime, powerful, and sweet, to vary the mental banquet every instant; it is what Petrarch termed—

Il parlar che nell' anima si sente'—

a language which is felt to the heart's core, and must possess much of the vaunted Oriental magic which has been given by the ancients to Cleopatra. The scenes I have visited with her, the lays we have heard together, the pictures she has shown me, the books she has taught me to enjoy, compose my universe. In all these is some spark of her life; and were I forced to dwell afar from her, I would, at least, surround myself with them, though certain to seek in vain for her radiant traces amongst them, when once she had departed."

"Yes!" he cried, as his glance accidentally fell upon Oswald; "look on Corinne, if you may pass your days

with her—if that twofold existence can be long secured to you; but behold her not, if you must be condemned to leave her. Vainly would you seek, however long you might survive, the creative spirit which multiplied in partaking all your thoughts and feelings; you would never find it more!"

Oswald shuddered at these words; his eyes were fixed on Corinne, who listened with an agitation self-love cannot produce; it belongs only to humility and to gratitude. Castel Forte resumed the address, which a momentary weakness had suspended. He spoke of Corinne as a painter and a musician; of her declamation and her dancing. "In all these exertions," he said, "she is still herself—confined to no one mode, nor rule—but expressing, in various languages, the enchantments of Art and Imagination. I cannot flatter myself on having faithfully represented one of whom it is impossible to form an idea till she herself is known; but her presence is left to Rome, as among the chief blessings beneath its brilliant sky. Corinne is the link that binds her friends to each other. She is the motive, the interest of our lives; we rely on her worth, pride in her genius, and say to the sons of other lands, 'Look on the personation of our own fair Italy. She is what we might be, if freed from the ignorance, envy, discord, and sloth, to which fate has reduced us.' We love to contemplate her, as a rare production of our climate, and our fine arts; a relic of the past, a prophetess of the future; and when strangers, pitiless of the faults born of our misfortunes, insult the country whence have arisen the planets that illumed all Europe, still we but say to them, 'Look upon Corinne.' Yes; we will follow in her track, and be such men as she is a woman; if, indeed, men can, like women, make worlds in their own hearts; if our moral

temperaments, necessarily dependent on social obligations and exterior circumstances, could, like hers, owe all their light to the glorious touch of poesy!"

The instant the Prince ceased to speak, was followed by an unanimous outbreak of admiration, even from the leaders of the State, although the discourse had ended by an indirect censure on the present situation of Italy; so true it is, that there men practise a degree of liberality, which, though it extends not to any improvement of their institutions, readily pardons superior minds for a mild dissent from existing prejudices. Castel Forte was a man of high repute in Rome. He spoke with a sagacity remarkable among a people usually wiser in actions than in words. He had not, in the affairs of life, that ability which often distinguishes an Italian; but he shrunk not from the fatigue of thinking, as his happy countrymen were wont to do; trusting to arrive at all truths by intuition, even as their soil bears fruit, unaided, save by the favor of heaven.

CHAPTER III.

Corinne rose, as the Prince finished his oration. She thanked him by an inclination of the head, which diffidently betrayed her sense of having been praised in a strain after her own heart. It was the custom for a poet, crowned at the capitol, to extemporize or recite in verse, ere receiving the destined bays. Corinne sent for her chosen instrument, the lyre, more antique in form, and simpler in sound, than the harp; while tuning it, she was oppressed by so

violent a tremor, that her voice trembled as she asked what theme she was to attempt. "The glory and welfare of Italy!" cried all near her. "Ah, yes!" she exclaimed, already sustained by her own talents; "the glory and welfare of Italy!" Then, animated by her love of country, she breathed forth thoughts to which prose or another language can do but imperfect justice.

CHANT OF CORINNE AT THE CAPITOL.[1]

Cradle of Letters! Mistress of the World!
Soil of the Sun! Italia! I salute thee!
How oft the human race have worn thy yoke,
The vessels of thine arms, thine arts, thy sky!

Olympus for Ausonia once was left,
And by a god. Of such a land are born
Dreams of the golden time, for there man looks
Too happy to suppose him criminal.

By genius Rome subdued the world, then reign'd
A queen by liberty. The Roman mind
Set its own stamp upon the universe;
And, when barbarian hordes whelm'd Italy,
Then darkness was entire upon the earth.

Italia reappear'd, and with her rose
Treasures divine, brought by the wandering Greeks;
To her were then reveal'd the laws of

Heaven.
Her daring children made discovery
Of a new hemisphere: Queen still, she held
Thought's sceptre; but that laurel'd sceptre made
Ungrateful subjects.

Imagination gave her back the world
Which she had lost. Painters and poets shaped
Earth and Olympus, and a heaven and hell.
Her animating fire, by Genius kept,
Far better guarded than the Pagan god's,
Found not in Europe a Prometheus
To bear it from her.

And wherefore am I at the capitol?
Why should my lowly brow receive the crown
Which Petrarch wore? which yet suspended hangs
Where Tasso's funeral cypress mournful waves:
Why? oh, my countrymen! but that you love
Glory so well that you repay its search
Almost like its success.

Now, if you love that glory which too oft
Chooses its victims from its vanquishers,
Those which itself has crown'd; think, and be proud
Of days which saw the perish'd Arts reborn.
Your Dante! Homer of the Christian age,

The sacred poet of Faith's mysteries—
Hero of thought—whose gloomy genius plunged
In Styx, and pierced to hell; and whose deep soul
Was like the abyss it fathom'd.

Italia! as she was in days of power
Revived in Dante: such a spirit stirr'd
In old republics: bard and warrior too,
He lit the fire of action 'mid the dead,
Till e'en his shadows had more vigorous life
Than real existence; still were they pursued
By earthly memories; passions without aim
Gnaw'd at their heart, still fever'd by the past;
Yet less irrevocable seem'd that past,
Than their eternal future.

Methinks that Dante, banish'd his own soil,
Bore to imagined worlds his actual grief,
Ever his shades inquire the things of life,
And ask'd the poet of his native land;
And from his exile did he paint a hell.
In his eyes Florence set her stamp on all;
The ancient dead seem'd Tuscans like himself:
Not that his power was bounded, but his strength;
And his great mind forced all the universe
Within the circle of its thought.

A mystic chain of circles and of spheres
Led him from Hell to Purgatory; thence
From Purgatory into Paradise:
Faithful historian of his glorious dream,
He fills with light the regions most obscure;
The world created in his triple song
Is brilliant, and complete, and animate,
Like a new planet seen within the sky.

All upon earth doth change to poetry
Beneath his voice: the objects, the ideas,
The laws, and all the strange phenomena,
Seem like a new Olympus with new gods —
Fancy's mythology—which disappears
Like Pagan creeds at sight of Paradise,
That sea of light, radiant with shining stars,
And love, and virtue.

The magic words of our most noble bard
Are like the prism of the universe;—
Her marvels there reflect themselves, divide,
And recreate her wonders; sounds paint hues,
And colors melt in harmony. The rhyme—
Sounding or strange, and rapid or prolong'd—
That charm of genius, triumph of high art;
Poetry's divination, which reveals
All nature's secrets, such as influence
The heart of man.

From this great work did Dante hope the

end
Of his long exile: and he call'd on Fame
To be his mediator; but he died
Too soon to reap the laurels of his land.
Thus wastes the transitory life of man
In adverse fortunes; and it glory wins,
If some chance tide, more happy, floats to shore.
The grave is in the port; and destiny,
In thousand shapes, heralds the close of life
By a return of happiness.

Thus the ill-fated Tasso, whom your praise,
O Romans! 'mid his wrongs, could yet console—
The beautiful, the chivalric, the brave,
Dreaming the deeds, feeling the love he sung—
With awe and gratitude approached your walls,
As did his heroes to Jerusalem.
They named the day to crown him; but its eve
Death bade him to his feast, the terrible!
The Heaven is jealous of the earth; and calls
Its favorites from the stormy waves of time.

'T was in an age more happy and more free
Than Tasso's, that, like Dante, Petrarch sang:
Brave poet of Italian liberty.

Elsewhere they know him only by his love:
Here memories more severe, aye, consecrate
His sacred name; his country could inspire
E'en more than Laura.

His vigils gave antiquity new life;
Imagination was no obstacle
To his deep studies; that creative power
Conquer'd the future, and reveal'd the past.
He proved how knowledge lends invention aid;
And more original his genius seem'd,
When, like the powers eternal, it could be
Present in every time.

Our laughing climate, and our air serene
Inspired our Ariosto: after war,
Our many long and cruel wars, he came
Like to a rainbow; varied and as bright
As that glad messenger of summer hours.
His light, sweet gayety is like nature's smile,
And not the irony of man.

Raffaële, Galileo, Angelo,
Pergolese; you! intrepid voyagers,
Greedy of other lands, though Nature never
Could yield ye one more lovely than your own;
Come ye, and to our poets join your fame:
Artists, and sages, and philosophers,
Ye are, like them, the children of a sun

Which kindles valor, concentrates the mind,
Develops fancy, each one in its turn;
Which lulls content, and seems to promise all,
Or make us all forget.

Know ye the land where orange-trees are blooming
Where all heaven's rays are fertile, and with love!
Have you inhaled these perfumes, luxury!
In air already so fragrant and so soft?
Now, answer, strangers; Nature, in your home,
Is she as generous or as beautiful?

Not only with vine-leaves and ears of corn
Is nature dress'd, but 'neath the feet of man,
As at a sovereign's feet, she scatters flowers
And sweet and useless plants, which, born to please,
Disdain to serve.

Here pleasures delicate, by nature nurst—
Felt by a people who deserve to feel;—
The simplest food suffices for their wants.
What though her fountains flow with purple wine
From the abundant soil, they drink them not!
They love their sky, their arts, their monuments;
Their land, the ancient, and yet bright

with springs;
Brilliant society; refined delight:
Coarse pleasures, fitting to a savage race,
Suit not with them.

Here the sensation blends with the idea;
Life ever draws from the same fountain-head;
The soul, like air, expands o'er earth and heaven.
Here Genius feels at ease; its reveries
Are here so gentle; its unrest is soothed:
For one lost aim a thousand dreams are given,
And nature cherishes, if man oppress;
A gentle hand consoles, and binds the wound:
E'en for the griefs that haunt the stricken heart,
Is comfort here: by admiration fill'd,
For God, all goodness; taught to penetrate
The secret of his love; not thy brief days—
Mysterious heralds of eternity—
But in the fertile and majestic breast
Of the immortal universe!

Corinne was interrupted for some moments by impetuous applause. Oswald alone joined not in the noisy transport around him. He had bowed his head on his hand, when Corinne said——

"E'en for the sorrows of the stricken heart
Is comfort here:"

he had not raised it since. Corinne observed him; and from his features, the color of his hair, his dress, his height—indeed, from his whole appearance—

recognised him as English. She was struck by the mourning which he wore, and his melancholy countenance. His gaze, then fixed upon herself, seemed gently to reproach her: she entered into his thoughts, and felt a wish to sympathize with him, by speaking of happiness with less reliance, and consecrating some few verses to Death in the midst of a festival. With this intention, she again took up her lyre; a few prolonged and touching tones silenced the assemblage, while thus she continued: ——

Yet there are griefs which our consoling sky
May not efface; but where will grief convey
Noble and soft impressions to the soul,
As it does here?

Elsewhere the living cannot find them space
For all their hurrying paths, and ardent hopes;
And deserts, ruins, vacant palaces,
Leave a vast vacancy to shadows;—Rome,
Is she not now the country of the tomb?

The Coliseum, and the obelisks—
The wonders brought from Egypt and from Greece—
From the extremity of time, here met,
From Romulus to Leo—all are here,
Greatness attracting greatness, that one place
Might garner all that man could screen from time;
All consecrate to funeral monuments.

Our idle life is scarcely here perceived:
The silence of the living to the dead
Is homage: they endure, but we decay.

The dead alone are honor'd, and alone
Recorded still;—our destinies obscure
Contrast the glories of our ancestors;
Our present life leaves but the past entire,
And deep the quiet around memory:
Our trophies are the work of those no more:
Genius itself ranks 'mid th' illustrious dead.

It is Rome's secret charm to reconcile
Imagination with our long last sleep.
We are resign'd ourselves, and suffer less
For those we love. The people of the South
Paint closing life in hues less terrible
Than do the gloomy nations of the North:
The sun, like glory, even warms the grave.

The chill, the solitude of sepulchres
'Neath our fair sky, beside our funeral urns
So numerous, less haunt the frighted soul.
We deem they wait for us, yon shadowy crowd:
And from our silent city's loneliness
Down to the subterranean one below
It is a gentle passage.

The edge of grief is blunted thus, and turn'd
Not by a harden'd heart, a wither'd soul,
But by a yet more perfect harmony—
An air more fragrant—blending with our

life.
We yield ourselves to Nature with less fear
—
Nature whose great Creator said of old—
"The lilies of the vale, lo! they toil not,
And neither do they spin:
Yet the great Solomon, in all his glory,
Was not arrayed like one of these."
Was not arrayed like one of these."

Oswald was so enchanted by these stanzas, that he testified his transport with a vehemence unequalled by the Romans themselves; in sooth, it was to him, rather than to her countrymen, that the second improvisation of Corinne had been addressed. The generality of Italians read poetry with a kind of monotonous chant, that destroys all effect.[2] In vain the words vary, the impression is ever the same; because the accent is unchanged; but Corinne recited with a mobility of tone which increased the charm of its sustained harmony. It was like listening to different airs, all played on the same celestial organ.

A language so stately and sonorous, breathed by so gentle and affecting a voice, awakened a very novel sensation in the mind of Oswald. The natural beauties of the English tongue are all melancholy; tinted by clouds, and tuned by lashing waves; but Italian, among sounds, may be compared to scarlet among colors; its words ring like clarions of victory, and glow with all the bliss a delicious clime can shower on human hearts. When, therefore, Italian is spoken by a faltering tongue, its splendor melts, its concentrated force causes an agitation resistless as unforeseen. The intents of nature seem defeated, her bounties useless or repulsed; and the expression of

sorrow in the midst of enjoyment, surprises, touches us more deeply, than would despair itself, if sung in those northern languages, which it seems to have inspired.

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[1] For the translation of this Ode, the proprietor of the Standard Novels is indebted to the pen of Miss L. E. Landon.

[2] An exception must be made in favor of Monti, who reads verse as well as he writes it. There can be few greater dramatic treats than to hear him recite the episode of Ugolino—of Francesca, or the death of Clorinda.

CHAPTER IV.

The senator took the crown of bays and myrtle he was to place on the brow of Corinne. She removed the shawl which had bound the ebon curls that now fell about her shoulders, and advanced with an air of pleased thankfulness, which she strove not to dissemble. Again she knelt; but not in trepidation, as at first. She had just spoken, had filled her soul with godlike images; enthusiasm had surmounted timidity; she was no longer the shrinking maid, but the inspired vestal who exultingly devoted herself to the worship of Genius.

When the chaplet was set upon her head, the musicians sent forth one of those triumphant airs which so powerfully exalt the soul. The clash of cymbals, and the flourish of trumpets, overwhelmed Corinne afresh; her eyes filled, she sunk on a seat, and covered her face. Oswald rushed from the

crowd, and made a few steps towards her, but an uncontrollable embarrassment kept him silent. Corinne, taking care that he should not detect her, looked on him for some time; and when Prince Castel Forte took her hand to lead her from the capitol, she yielded in abstraction, frequently turning, on various pretexts, to gaze again on Oswald. He followed her; and as she descended the steps, one of these gestures displaced her crown, which Oswald hastily raised, and presenting it, said in Italian a few words, implying that humble mortals lay at the feet of their deities the crowns they dare not place upon their brows.[1] What was his astonishment when Corinne thanked him in English, with that insular accent which can scarce ever be acquired on the Continent; he remained motionless, till, feeling himself almost faint, he leaned against one of the basaltic lions that stand at the foot of the staircase. Corinne gazed on him again, forcibly struck by his emotion; but they led her to her car, and the whole crowd had disappeared, long ere Oswald recovered his presence of mind. Till now, he had been enchanted as with a most attractive foreigner; but that English intonation had brought back all the recollections of his country, and, as it were, naturalized in his heart the charms of Corinne. Was she English? Had she not passed many years of her life in England? He could not guess; but it was impossible that study alone could have taught her to speak thus. She must have lived in the same country with himself.

Who could tell, but that their families might have been related? perhaps he had even seen her in his childhood. There is often in the heart some innate image of the beings we are to love that lends to our first sight of them almost an air of recognition. Oswald had believed the Italians, though

impassioned, too vacillating for deep or constant affection. Already had the words of Corinne given him a totally distinct view of their character. What then must he feel should he thus at once revive the remembrance of his home, and receive a new-born life, for future enjoyment, without being weaned from the past? In the midst of these reveries he found himself on the bridge of St. Angelo, which leads to the castle of that name, or rather to Adrian's tomb, which has been converted into a fortress. The silence of the scene, the pale waves of the Tiber, the moonbeams that lit up the statues, till they appeared like pallid phantoms, steadfastly watching the current of time, by which they could be influenced no more; all these objects recalled him to his habitual train of thought; he laid his hand on his breast, and felt the portrait of his father, which he always wore; he drew it forth, and gazed on it, while the cause of the felicity he had just enjoyed but too strongly reminded him of all that long since had tempted his rebellion against his parent.

"Ever haunting memory!" he cried, with revived remorse, "too wronged and too forgiving friend! could I have believed myself capable of feeling so much pleasure thus soon after thy loss? but it is not thine indulgent spirit which rebukes me; thou wouldst have me happy in spite of my faults; or may I not mistake thy mandates now uttered from above, I, who misunderstood them while thou wert yet on earth?"

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[1] Lord Nevil must have alluded to the beautiful lines of Propertius,—

"Ut caput in magnis ubi non est ponere signis;
Ponitur hic imos antè corona pedes."

BOOK III.

CORINNE.

CHAPTER I.

The Count d'Erfeuil had been present at the capitol, and called the next day on Lord Nevil, saying, "My dear Oswald, would you like me to take you to Corinne's this evening?"—"How?" interrupted Oswald, eagerly, "do you know her?"—"Not I; but so famous a person is always gratified by a desire to see her; and I Wrote this morning for her permission to visit her house to-night, with you."—"I could have wished," replied Oswald, blushing, "that you had not named me thus without my consent."—"You should rather thank me for having spared you so many tedious formalities. Instead of going to an ambassador, who would have led you to a cardinal, who might have taken you to a lady, who, perhaps, could have introduced you to Corinne, I shall present you, you will present me, and we shall both be very well received."—"I am less confident than you; and, doubtless, it is but rational to conclude that so hasty a request must have displeased her."—"Not at all, I assure you, she is too sensible a girl, as her polite reply may prove."—"Has she then answered you? What had you said, my dear Count?"—"Ah! 'my dear Count,' is it?" laughed d'Erfeuil, "you melt apace, now you know that she has answered me; but I like you too well not to forgive all that. I humbly confess, then, that my note spoke more of myself than of you,

and that hers gives your lordship's name precedence; but then, you know, I'm never jealous of my friends."—"Nay," returned Nevil, "it is not in vanity to expect that either of us can render ourselves agreeable to her. All I seek is sometimes to enjoy the society of so wondrous a being. This evening, then, since you have so arranged it."—"You will go with me?"—"Why, yes," rejoined Nevil, in visible confusion.—"Why, then, all this regret at what I've done? though 'tis but just to leave you the honour of being more reserved than I, always provided that you lose nothing by it. She's really a delightful person, this Corinne! with a vast deal of ease and cleverness. I could not very well make out what she talked of, but, I'll wager you, she speaks French; we can decide that to-night. She leads a strange life. Young, free, and wealthy, yet no one knows whether she has any lovers or no. It seems plain that at present she favors no one; that she should never have met, in this country, with a man worthy of her, don't astonish me in the least." D'Erfeuil ran on some time, in this kind of chat, without any interruption from Oswald. He said nothing which could exactly be called coarse, yet his light matter-of-fact manner, on a topic so interesting, clashed with the delicacy of his companion. There is a refinement which even wit and knowledge of the world cannot teach their votaries, who often wound the heart, without violating perfect politeness. Lord Nevil was much disturbed during the day in thinking over the visit of the evening; but he did his utmost to banish his disquieting presentiments, and strove to persuade himself that he might indulge a pleasing idea, without permitting it to decide his fate. False hope! the heart can receive no bliss from that which it knows must prove evanescent. Accompanied by the

Count, he arrived at the house of Corinne, which was situated a little beyond the castle of St. Angelo, commanding a view of the Tiber. Its interior was ornamented with the most perfect elegance. The hall embellished by casts of the Niobe, Laöcoon, Venus de Medicis, and dying Gladiator; while in the sitting-room usually occupied by Corinne, he found but books, musical instruments, and simple furniture, arranged for the easy conversation of a domestic circle. Corinne was not there when he entered; and, while waiting for her, he anxiously explored the apartment, remarking in its every detail a happy combination of the best French, Italian, and English attributes; a taste for society, a love of letters, and a zeal for the fine arts. Corinne at last appeared; though ever picturesque, she was attired without the least research. She wore some antique cameos in her hair, and round her throat a band of coral. Natural and familiar as she was among her friends, they still recognised the divinity of the capitol. She bowed first to Count d'Erfeuil, though looking at his friend; then, as if repenting this insincerity, advanced towards Oswald, and twice repeated "Lord Nevil!" as if that name was associated in her mind with some affecting reminiscence. At last she said a few words in Italian on his obliging restoration of her crown. Oswald endeavored to express his admiration, and gently complained of her no longer addressing him in English. "Am I a greater stranger than I was yesterday?" he said.—"Certainly not," she replied; "but when one has been accustomed for many years of one's life to speak two or three different languages, one chooses that which will best express what one desires to say."—"Surely," he cried, "English is your native tongue—that which you speak to your friends."—"I am an Italian," interrupted Corinne.

"Forgive me, my Lord! but I think I perceive in you the national importance which so often characterizes your countrymen. Here we are more lowly, neither self-complacent, like the French, nor proud of ourselves, like the English. A little indulgence suffices us from strangers; and we have the great fault of wanting, as individuals, that dignity which we are not allowed as a people; but when you know us, you may find some traces of our ancient greatness, such as, though few and half effaced, might be restored by happier times. I shall now and then speak to you in English, but Italian is more dear to me. I have suffered much," she added, sighing, "that I might live in Italy." D'Erfeuil here gallantly upbraided her for conversing in languages of which he was entirely ignorant. "In mercy, fair Corinne," he said, "speak French; you are truly worthy to do so." She smiled at this compliment, and granted its request, with ease, with purity, but with an English accent. Nevil and the Count were equally astonished; but the latter, who believed that he might say what he pleased, provided he did so with a grace, imagining that impoliteness dwelt not in matter but in manner, put the direct question to Corinne, on the reason of this singularity. She seemed at first somewhat uneasy, beneath this sudden interrogation; then recovering herself, said, "It seems, monsieur, that I must have learned French of an English person." He renewed his attack with earnest gayety. Corinne became more confused, and at last said, gravely, "During the four years that I lived in Rome, monsieur, none even of the friends most interested in me have ever inquired into my fate; they understood, from the first, that it was painful for me to speak of it." This check silenced the Count; but Corinne feared that she had hurt him; and, as he seemed so intimate

with Lord Nevil, she dreaded still more, without confessing it to herself, that he might speak unfavorably of her to his companion, and therefore took sufficient pains in atoning to him. The Prince Castel Forte now arrived, with many of their mutual acquaintance, men of lively and amiable minds, of kind and courteous manners, so easily animated by the conversation of others, so capable of appreciating all that deserved approval, that they made the best listeners possible. The Italians are usually too indolent to display in society, or often in any way, the wit they really possess. The generality of them cultivate not, even in seclusion, the intellectual faculties of their natures; but they revel in the mental delights which find them without any trouble of their own. Corinne had all a Frenchwoman's sense of the ridiculous, and evinced it with all the fancy of an Italian; but she mingled in both such sweetness of temper that nothing appeared preconcerted or hostile —for, in most things, it is coldness which offends; while vivacity, on the contrary, has almost invariably an air of good-nature. Oswald found in Corinne a grace which he had never before met.

A terrible event of his life was associated with recollections of a very lovely and gifted Frenchwoman; but Corinne in no way resembled her. Every creature's best seemed united in the conversation he now partook. Ingeniously and rapidly as she twined its flowers, nothing was frivolous, nothing incomplete; such was her depth of feeling, and knowledge of the world, that he felt borne away, and lost in wonder, at qualities so contrasted. He asked himself, if it was from an all-embracing sensibility, or from a forgetfulness of each mood, as a new one succeeded, that she fled, almost in the same instant, "from grave to gay, from lively

to severe," from learning that might have instructed men, to the coquetry of a woman who amused herself with making conquests; yet, in this very coquetry, there was such perfect nobleness, that it exacted as much respect as the most scrupulous reserve. The Prince Castel Forte, and all her other guests, paid her the most assiduous and delicate attention. The habitual homage with which they surrounded her gave the air of a fête to every day of her life. She was happy in being beloved, just as one is happy to breathe in a gentle clime, to hear harmonious sounds, and receive, in fact, none but agreeable impressions. Her lively and fluctuating countenance betrayed each emotion of her heart; but the deep and serious sentiment of love was not yet painted there. Oswald gazed on her in silence; his presence animated and inspired her with a wish to please. Nevertheless, she sometimes checked herself, in the midst of her most brilliant sallies, astonished at his external composure, and doubting whether he might not secretly blame her, or if his English notions could permit him to approve such success in a woman. He was, however, too fascinated to remember his former opinions on the obscurity which best becomes a female; but he asked himself, who could ever become dear to her? What single object could ever concentrate so many rays, or take captive a spirit gifted with such glorious wings? In truth, he was alike dazzled and distressed: nay, though, as she took leave, she politely invited him to visit her again, a whole day elapsed without his going to her house, restrained by a species of terror at the feeling which excited him. Sometimes he compared it with the fatal error of his early youth; but instantly rejected such comparison. *Then* it was by treacherous arts he had been subdued; and who

could doubt the truth, the honor of Corinne? Were her spells those of poetry or of magic? Was she a Sappho or an Armida? It was impossible to decide. Yet it was evident, that not society, but Heaven itself, had formed this extraordinary being, whose mind was as inimitable as her character was unfeigned. "Oh, my father!" he sighed, "had you known Corinne, what would you have thought of her?"

CHAPTER II.

The Count d'Erfeuil called on Lord Nevil, as usual, next morning; and, censuring him for not having visited Corinne the preceding night, said gaily, "You would have been delighted if you had."—"And why?" asked his friend.—"Because yesterday gave me the most satisfactory assurance that you have extremely interested her."—"Still this levity? Do you not know that I neither can nor will endure it?"—"What you call levity is rather the readiness of my observation: have I the less reason, because my reason is active? You were formed to grace those blest patriarchal days when man had five centuries to live; but I warn you that we have retrenched four of them at least."—"Be it so! And what may you have discovered by these quickly matured observations of yours?"—"That Corinne is in love with you. Last evening when I went to her house, I was well enough received, of course; but her eyes were fixed on the door, to look whether you followed me. She attempted to speak of something else; but, as she happens to be a mighty natural young person, she presently, in all simplicity, asked why you were not with me?—I said because you would not come, and

that you were a gloomy, eccentric animal: I'll spare you whatever I might have further said in your praise. 'He is pensive,' remarked Corinne; doubtless he has lost some one who was dear to him: for whom is he mourning?'—'His father, madame, though it is more than a year since his death; and, as the law of nature obliges us to survive our relations, I conclude that some more private cause exists for his long and settled melancholy.'—'Oh,' exclaimed she, 'I am far from thinking that griefs apparently the same act alike on all. The father of your friend, and your friend himself, were not, perhaps, men of the common order. I am greatly inclined to think so.' Her voice was so sweet, dear Oswald, as she uttered these words!"—"And are these all your proofs of her interest in me?"—"Why truly, with half of them T should make sure of being beloved; but since you will have better, you shall. I kept the strongest to come last. The Prince Castel Forte related the whole of your adventure at Ancona, without knowing that it was of you he spoke. He told the story with much *fire*, as far as I could judge, thanks to the two Italian lessons I have taken; but there are so many French words in all foreign languages, that one understands them, without the fatigue of learning. Besides, Corinne's face explained what I should not else have comprehended. 'Twas so easy to read the agitation of her heart: she would scarcely breathe, for fear of losing a single word; when she inquired if the name of this Englishman was known, her anxiety was such, that I could very well estimate the dread she suffered, lest any other name than yours should be pronounced in reply. Castel Forte confessed his ignorance; and Corinne, turning eagerly to me, cried, 'Am I not right, monsieur? was it not Lord Nevil?'—'Yes, madame,' said I, and then she melted

into tears. She had not wept during the history: what was there in the name of its hero more affecting than the recital itself!"—"She wept?" repeated Oswald. "Ah, why was I not there?" then instantly checking himself, he cast down his eyes, and his manly face expressed the most delicate timidity. He hurriedly resumed the topic, lest d'Erfeuil should impair his sacred joy by one comment. "If the adventure at Ancona be worth the telling, its honor belongs to you, also, my dear Count."—"They certainly did speak of a most engaging Frenchman, who was with you, my Lord," rejoined d'Erfeuil, laughing; "but no one, save myself, paid any attention to that parenthesis. The lovely Corinne prefers you, doubtless believing that you would prove more faithful than I—this may not be the case—you may even cost her more pains than I should have done; but your very romantic women love trouble, therefore you will suit her exactly." Nevil smarted beneath each word; but what could he say? D'Erfeuil never argued; nay, he could not even listen with sufficient attention to alter his opinions: once uttered, he cared no more about them, and the best plan was to forget them, if possible, as quickly as he did himself.

CHAPTER III.

That evening Oswald reached the house of Corinne with entirely new sensations. He fancied that he might be expected. How entrancing that first beam of intelligence between one's self and the being we adore! ere memory contends the heart with hope, ere the eloquence of words has sought to depict our

feelings. There is, in these first hours of love, some indefinite and mysterious charm, more fleeting, but more heavenly than even happiness itself.

Oswald found Corinne alone; this abashed him much. He could have gazed on her in the midst of her friends; but would fain have been in some way convinced of her preference, ere thus suddenly engaged in an interview which might chill her manner towards him; and, in that expectation, his own address became cold from very embarrassment. Whether she detected this, or that similar feelings made her desire to remove his restraint, she speedily inquired if he had yet seen any of the antiquities of Rome. "No."—"Then, how were you employed yesterday?" she asked, with a smile. "I passed the day at home. Since I came hither, I have seen but you, madame, or remained alone." She wished to speak of his conduct at Ancona, and began: "I learned last night—" here she paused, and then said, "but I will talk of that when our party has joined us." Lord Nevil had a dignity which intimidated Corinne; besides, she feared, in alluding to his noble behaviour, that she should betray too much emotion, and trusted to feel less before witnesses. Oswald was deeply touched by this reserve, and by the frankness with which she, unconsciously, disclosed its motive; but the more oppressed he became, the less could he explain himself. He hastily rose, and went to the window; then remembering that this action must be unintelligible to Corinne, he returned to his seat, without speaking; and, though she had more confidence than himself, his diffidence proved so contagious, that, to cover her abstraction, she ran her fingers over her harp and struck a few unconnected chords; these melodious sounds, though they increased the emotion of Oswald, lent him a slight

degree of firmness. He dared to look on her; and who could do so, without being struck by the divine inspiration inthroned in her eyes? Reassured by the mildness which veiled their splendor, he might have spoken, had not Prince Castel Forte that instant entered the room. It, was not without a pang that he beheld Nevil *tête-à-tête* with Corinne; but he was accustomed to conceal his sensations; and that habit, which an Italian often unites with the most vehement passions, in him was rather the result of lassitude and natural gentleness. He had resigned the hope of being the first object of Corinne's regard; he was no longer young. He had just the wit, taste, and fancy, which varies, without disturbing one's existence; and felt it so needful for his life to pass every evening with Corinne, that, had she married, he would have conjured her husband to let him continue this routine; on which condition it would not have cost him much regret to see her united with another. The heart's disappointments are not, in Italy, aggravated by those of vanity. You meet some men jealous enough to stab their rivals, others sufficiently modest to accept the second place in the esteem of a woman whose company they enjoy; but you seldom find those who, rather than appear rejected, deny themselves the pleasure of keeping up a blameless intimacy. The dominion of society over self-love is scarcely known in the land. The Count d'Erfeuil and Corinne's wonted guests having assembled, the conversation turned on the talent for improvisation, which she had so gloriously displayed at the capitol; and she was asked what she thought of it herself. "It is so rare a thing," said Castel Forte, "to find a person at once susceptible of enthusiasm, and capable of analysis; endowed as an artist, yet gifted with so much self-knowledge, that we ought to implore her

revelation of her own secret."—"The faculty of extemporizing," returned Corinne, "is not more extraordinary in southern tongues, than senatorial eloquence or lively repartee in other languages. I should even say that, unfortunately, it is easier for us to breathe impromptu verse than to speak well in prose, from which poetry differs so widely, that the first stanza, by their mere expressions, remove the poet from the sphere of his auditors, and thus command attention. It is not only to the sweetness of Italian, but to the emphatic vibration of its syllables, that we should attribute the influence of poetry amongst us. Italian has a musical charm, which confers delight by the very sound of its words, almost independent of ideas, though nearly all those words are so graphic, that they paint their own significations on the mind; you feel that but in the midst of the arts, and beneath a beauteous sky, could a language so melodious and highly colored, have had birth. It is, therefore, easier in Italy than anywhere else to mislead by speeches, unaided by depth or novelty of thought. Poetry, like all the fine arts, captivates the senses as much as the mind. Nevertheless, I venture to assert, that I never act the improvisatrice, unless beneath some real feeling, or some image which I believe original. I hope that I rely less than others on our bewitching tongue; on which, indeed, one may prelude at random, and bestow a vivid pleasure, solely by the charm of rhythm and of harmony."—"You think, then," said one of her friends, "that this genius for spontaneous verse does injury to our literature? I thought so too, till I heard you, who have entirety reversed my decision."—"I have said," returned Corinne, "that from this facility and abundance must result a vast quantity of indifferent poems; but I rejoice that such

fruitfulness should exist in Italy, as I do to see our plains covered with a thousand superfluous productions. I pride in this bounty of Heaven. Above all, I love to find improvisatores among the common people; it shows that imagination of theirs which is hidden in all other circumstances, and only develops itself amongst us. It gives a poetic air to the humblest ranks of society, and spares us from the disgust we cannot help feeling, against what is vulgar in all classes. When our Sicilians, while rowing the traveller in their barks, lend their graceful dialect to an endearing welcome, or sing him a kind and long farewell, one might dream that the pure sea-breeze acted on man as on an Eolian harp; and that the one, like the other, echoed but the voice of nature. Another reason why I set this value on our talent for improvisation is, that it appears one which could not possibly survive among a community disposed to ridicule. Poets, who risk this perilous enterprise, require all the good-humor of a country in which men love to amuse themselves, without criticizing what amuses them. A single sneer would suffice to banish the presence of mind necessary for rapid and uninterrupted composition. Your heroes must warm with you, and their plaudits must be your inspiration."—"But, madame," said Oswald, who, till now, had gazed in silence on Corinne, "to which class of your poems do you give the preference—those that are the works of reflection, or such as were instantaneously inspired?"—"My Lord," replied Corinne, with a look of gentle deference, "I will make you my judge; but if you bid me examine my own heart, I should say that improvisation is, to me, like animated converse. I do not confine myself to such or such subjects, but yield to whatever produces that degree of interest in my hearers which most infects

myself; and it is to my friends that I owe the greater portion of my talent in this line. Sometimes, while they speak on the noble questions that involve the moral condition of man—the aim and end of his duties here—mine impassioned excitement carries me beyond myself; teaches me to find in nature, and mine own heart, such daring truths, and forcible expressions, as solitary meditation could never have engendered. Mine enthusiasm, then, seems supernatural: a spirit speaks within me far greater than mine own; it often happens that I abandon the measure of verse to explain my thoughts in prose. Sometimes I quote the most applicable passages from the poets of other lands. Those divine apostrophes are mine, while my soul is filled by their import. Sometimes my lyre, by a simple national air, may complete the effect which flies from the control of words. In truth, I feel myself a poet, less when a happy choice of rhymes, of syllables, of figures, may dazzle my auditors, than when my spirit soars disdainful of all selfish baseness; when godlike deeds appear most easy to me, 'tis then my verse is at its best. I am, indeed, a poet while I admire or hate, not by my personal feelings, nor in mine own cause, but for the sake of human dignity, and the glory of the world!" Corinne, now perceiving how far she had been borne away, blushed, and, turning to Lord Nevil, said: "You see I cannot touch on any of the themes that affect me, without that kind of thrill which is the source of ideal beauty in the arts, of religion in the recluse, generosity in heroes, and disinterestedness among men. Pardon me, my Lord; such a woman little resembles those of your country."—"Who *can* resemble *you*?" replied Oswald; "and who shall make laws for a being so peculiar?"

The Count d'Erfeuil was actually spell-bound;

without understanding all she said, her gestures, voice, and manner, charmed him. It was the first time that any, save French graces, had moved him thus. But, to say truth, the popularity of Corinne aided and sanctioned his judgment; so that he might rave of her without relinquishing his convenient habit of being guided by the opinion of others. As they left the house together, he said to his friend: "Confess, now, dear Oswald, that I have some merit in not paying my court to so delightful a person."—"But," replied Nevil, "they say that she is difficult to please."—"They say, but I don't believe it. A single woman, who leads the life of an artist, can't be difficult to please." Nevil's feelings were wounded by this remark; but whether d'Erfeuil saw it not, or was resolved to follow the bent of his own inclinations, he continued, "Not but, if I could believe in any woman's virtue, I should trust hers above all. She has certainly a thousand times more ardor than were required in your country, or even in mine, to create doubts of a lady's cruelty; yet she is a creature of such superior tact and information, that the ordinary rules for judging her sex cannot be applied to her. Would you believe it? I find her manners imposing; they overawe me in spite of her careless affability. I wished yesterday, merely out of gratitude for her interest in you, to hazard a few words on my own account; such as make what way they can; if they are listened to, so much the better; if not, why that may be luckier still; but Corinne looked on me coldly, and I was altogether disconcerted. Is it not absurd to feel out of countenance before an Italian, a poet, an—everything that ought to put a man at his ease?"—"Her name is unknown," replied Nevil, "but her behavior assures us that she is highly born."—"Nay, 'tis only the fashion of romance to

conceal one's nobility;—in real life, people tell everything that can do themselves credit, and even a little more than the truth."—"Yes, in some societies, where they think but of the effect produced on others; but here, where life is more domestic, here there may be secrets, which only he who marries Corinne should seek to fathom."—"Marry Corinne!" replied d'Erfeuil, laughing vehemently, "such a notion never entered my head. My dear Nevil, if you will commit extravagances, let them be such as are not irreparable. In marriage, one should consult nothing but convenience and decorum. You think me frivolous; nevertheless, I'll bet you that my conduct shall be more rational than your own."—"I don't doubt it," returned Nevil, without another word; for how could he tell the Count that there is often much selfishness in frivolity? or that vanity never leads a man towards the error of sacrificing himself for another? Triflers are very capable of cleverly directing their own affairs; for, in all that may be called the science of policy, in private as in public life, men oftener succeed by the absence of certain qualities than by any which they possess.

A deficiency of enthusiasm, opinions, and sensibility, is a negative treasure, on which, with but slight abilities, rank and fortune may easily be acquired or maintained. The jests of d'Erfeuil had pained Lord Nevil much; he condemned them, but still they haunted him most importunately.

BOOK IV

ROME.

CHAPTER I.

The next fortnight Oswald devoted exclusively to the society of Corinne. He never left his house but to visit her. He saw, he sought no more; and, without speaking of his love, he made her sensible of it every hour in the day. She was accustomed to the lively and flattering tributes of the Italians; but the lordly deportment and apparent coldness of Oswald, through which his tenderness of heart so often broke, in spite of himself, exercised a far greater power o'er her imagination. He never related a generous deed or a tale of misfortune, but his eyes filled, though he always strove to hide this weakness. It was long since she had felt such respect as that which he awakened. No genius, however distinguished, could have astonished her; but elevation of character acted deeply on her mind. Oswald added to this an elegance which pervaded the most trivial actions of his life, and contrasted strongly with the negligent familiarity of the Roman nobles. Although some of his tastes were uncongenial to her own, their mutual understanding was wonderful. They read each other's hearts in the lightest alteration of countenance. Habituated to the most tempestuous demonstrations of passion, this proud retiring attachment, continually proved, though never confessed, shed a new interest over her life. She felt as if surrounded by a purer, sweeter atmosphere; and every moment brought with it a sense of happiness in which she revelled, without seeking to define.

One morning Prince Castel Forte came to her, evidently dispirited. She asked the cause. "This Scot," sighed he, "is weaning your affection from us, and who knows but he may even carry you far hence?" Corinne was mute for some moments, and then

replied, "I protest to you he has never said he loves me."—"You know it, nevertheless; he speaks to you by his life, and his very silence is but an artful plan to attract your notice. What, indeed, can any one say to you that you have not already heard? What kind of praise have you not been offered? But there is something veiled and reined in about the character of Lord Nevil, which will never permit you to judge it wholly as you do ours. You are the most easily known person in the world; but it is just because you voluntarily show yourself as you are, that reserve and mystery both please and govern you. The unknown, be it what it may, has a greater ascendency over you, than all the professions which could be tendered by man." Corinne smiled. "You think then, dear Prince," she said, "that my heart is ungrateful, and my fancy capricious? I believe, however, that Lord Nevil evinces qualities too remarkable for me to flatter myself as their discoverer."—"I allow," rejoined Castel Forte, "that he is high-minded, intelligent, even sensitive, and melancholy above all; but I am much deceived if his pursuits have the least affinity with yours. You cannot perceive this, so thoroughly is he influenced by your presence; but your empire would not last were he absent from you. Obstacles would fatigue a mind warped by the griefs he has undergone, by discouragements which must have impaired the energy of his resolutions; besides, you know what slaves are the generality of English to the manners and habits of their country." These words recalled to the mind of Corinne the painful events of her early years. She sighed, and spoke not; but in the evening she again beheld her lover, and all that remained as the effect of the Prince's counsel was a desire so to enamour Nevil of the varied beauties with which

Italy is blest, that he would make it his home for life. With this design she wrote him the following letter. The free life led at Rome excused her, and, much as she might be reproached with a too rash degree of candor, she well knew how to preserve a modest dignity, even in her most independent proceedings.

"TO LORD NEVIL.

"Dec. 15, 1794.

"I know not, my Lord, if you will think me too self-confident, or if you can do justice to my motives. I heard you say that you had not yet explored Rome, that you knew nothing either of the *chefs-d'œuvres* of our fine arts, or the antique ruins that teach us history by imagination and sentiment. I conceive the idea of daring to propose myself as your guide through the mazes of long-gone years. Doubtless Rome can boast of many men whose profound erudition might be far more useful; but if I succeed in endearing to you an abode towards which I have always felt so imperiously drawn, your own studies will complete what my imperfect sketches may begin.

"Many foreigners come hither, as they go to London or Paris, seeking but the dissipation of a great city; and if it were not treason to confess themselves weary of Rome, I believe the greatest part of them would do

so. But it is equally true, that here may be found a charm of which none could ever sate. Will you pardon me, my Lord, for wishing that this charm may be known to you? It is true that you must forget all the political relations of the world; but when they are not linked with our sacred duties, they do but freeze the heart. It is necessary also to renounce what is elsewhere called the pleasures of society; but do they not too frequently wither up the mind? One tastes in Rome a life at once secluded and enlivened, which liberally matures in our breasts whatever Heaven hath planted there.

"Once more, my Lord, pardon this love for my country, which makes me long to know it beloved by a man like yourself; and do not judge with English severity the pledges of good-will that an Italian believes it her right to bestow, without losing anything in her own eyes or in yours.

"CORINNE."

In vain would Oswald have concealed from himself his ecstasy at receiving this letter; it opened to him glimpses of a future all peace and joy, enthusiasm, love and wisdom;—all that is most divine in the soul of man seemed blended in the enchanting project of exploring Rome with Corinne. He considered—he hesitated no more; but instantly started for her house, and, on his way, looked up to heaven, basking

in its rays, for life was no longer a burden. Regret and fear were lost behind the golden clouds of hope; his heart so long oppressed with sadness, throbbed and bounded with delight; he knew that such a state could not last; but even his sense of its fleetness lent this fever of felicity but a more active force.

"You are come!" cried Corinne, as he entered. "Ah, thank you!" She offered her hand: he pressed it to his lips, with a tenderness unqualified by that afflicting tremor which so often mingled with his happiness, and embittered the presence of those he loved the most. An intimacy had commenced between them since they had last parted, established by the letter of Corinne; both were content, and felt towards one another the sweetest gratitude. "This morning, then," said Corinne, "I will show you the Pantheon and St. Peter's. I trusted," she added, smilingly, "that you would not refuse to make the tour of Rome with me; so my horses are ready. I expected you—you are here—all is well—let us go."—"Wondrous creature!" exclaimed Oswald. "Who then are you? Whence do you derive charms so contrasted, that each might well exclude the others?—feeling gayety, depth, wildness, modesty! Art thou an illusion? an unearthly blessing for those who meet thee?"—"Ah! if I have but power to do you any service," she answered, "believe not that I will ever renounce it."—"Take heed," replied he, seizing her hand with emotion; "be careful of what benefit you confer on me. For two years an iron grasp has pressed upon my heart. If I feel some relief while breathing your sweet air, what will become of me when thrown back on mine own fate? What shall I be then?"—"Let us leave that to time and chance," interrupted Corinne: "They will decide whether the impression of an hour shall last beyond its day. If our souls commune, our

mutual affection will not be fugitive: be that as it may, let us admire together all that can elevate our minds; we shall thus, at least, secure some happy moments." So saying, she descended. Nevil followed her, astonished at her reply: it seemed that she admitted the possibility of a momentary liking for him, yet he fancied that he perceived a fickleness in her manner, which piqued him even to pain; and Corinne, as if she guessed this, said, when they were seated in her carriage, "I do not think the heart is so constituted that it must either feel no love at all, or the most unconquerable passion. There are early symptoms which may vanish before self-examination. We flatter, we deceive ourselves; and the very enthusiasm of which we are susceptible, if it renders the enchantment more rapid, may also bring the reaction promptly."—"You have reflected much upon this sentiment, madame," observed Oswald, with bitterness. Corinne blushed, and was silent for some moments, then said, with a striking union of frankness and dignity, "I suppose no woman of heart ever reached the age of twenty-six without having known the illusions of love; but if never to have been happy, never to have met an object worthy of her full affection, is a claim on sympathy, I have a right to yours." The words, the accent of Corinne, somewhat dispersed the clouds that gathered over Nevil's thoughts; yet he said to himself: "She is a most seducing creature, but—an Italian. This is not a shrinking, innocent heart, even to itself unknown such as, I doubt not, beats in the bosom of the English girl to whom my father destined me."

Lucy Edgarmond was the daughter of his parent's best friend; but too young, when he left England, for him to marry her, or even foresee what she might one day become.[1]

CHAPTER II.

Oswald and Corinne went first to the Pantheon, now called Santa Maria of the Rotunda. Throughout Italy the Catholic hath been the Pagan's heir; but this is the only antique temple in Rome which has been preserved entire; the only one wherein we may behold, unimpaired, the architecture of the ancients, and the peculiar character of their worship.

Here they paused to admire the portico and its supporting columns. Corinne bade Oswald to observe that this building was constructed in such a manner as made it appear much larger than it was. "St. Peter's," she said, "produces an opposite effect: you will, at first, think it less vast than it is in reality. The deception, so favorable to the Pantheon, proceeds, it is conceived, from the great space between the pillars, and from the air playing so freely within; but still more from the absence of ornament, with which St. Peter's is overcharged. Even thus did antique poetry design but the massive features of a theme, leaving the reader's fancy to supply the detail: in all affairs we moderns say and do too much. This fane was consecrated by Agrippa, the favourite of Augustus, to his friend, or rather, his master, who, however, had the humility to refuse this dedication; and Agrippa was reduced to the necessity of devoting it to all the gods of Olympus, and of substituting their power for that of one earthly idol. On the top of the Pantheon stood a car, in which were placed the statues of Augustus and Agrippa. On each side of the portico similar effigies were displayed, in other attitudes; and over the front of the temple is still legible: "Consecrated by Agrippa." Augustus gave his name to the age in which he lived, by rendering it an era in the progress of human intellect. From the

chefs-d'œuvres of his cotemporaries emanated the rays that formed a circling halo round his brow. He knew how to honor men of letters in his own day; and posterity, therefore, honors him. Let us enter the temple: it is said that the light which streams in from above was considered the emblem of a divinity superior to the highest divinities. The heathens ever loved symbolical images; our language, indeed, seems to accord better with religion, than with common parlance. The rain often falls on the marbles of this court, but the sunshine succeeds to efface it. What a serene, yet festal air is here! The Pagans deified life, as the Christians sanctify death; such is the distinction between the two faiths; but Catholicism here is far less gloomy than in the north, as you will observe when we visit St. Peter's. In the sanctuary of the Pantheon the busts of our most celebrated artists decorate the niches once filled by ideal gods. Since the empire of the Cæsars, we have scarce ever boasted any political independence; consequently, you will find no statesmen, no heroes here. Genius constitutes our only fame; but do you not think, my Lord, that a people, who thus revere the talents still left amongst them, must deserve a nobler destiny?"—"I believe," replied Oswald, "that nations generally deserve their own fates, be they what they will."—"That is severe! but, perhaps, by living in Italy, your heart may soften towards the fair land which nature has adorned like a victim for sacrifice. At least remember, that the dearest hope the lovers of glory cherish is that of obtaining a place here. I have already chosen mine," she added, pointing to a niche, still vacant. "Oswald, who knows but you may one day return to this spot, when my bust——". "Hold!" interrupted he; "can you, resplendent in youth and beauty, talk thus to one

whom misfortune even now is bending towards the grave?"—"Ah!" exclaimed Corinne, "the storm may in a moment dash down flowers that yet shall raise their heads again. Oswald, dear Oswald! why are you not happy?"—"Never ask me," he replied; "you have your secrets, and I mine: let us respect our mutual silence. You know not what I should suffer, if forced to relate my distresses." Corinne said no more; but her steps, as she left the temple, became slow, and her looks more pensive.

She paused beneath the portico. "There," she said, "stood a porphyry urn of great beauty, now removed to St. John Lateran; it contained the ashes of Agrippa, which were deposited at the foot of the statue he had erected to himself. The ancients lavished such art on sweetening the idea of destruction, that they succeeded in banishing all its most dreary and alarming traits. There was such magnificence in their tombs, that the contrast between the nothingness of death and the splendors of life was less felt. It is certain, too, that the hope of another world was far less vivid amongst them than it is with Christians. They were obliged to contest with death, the principal which we fearlessly confide to the bosom of our eternal Father."

Oswald sighed, and spoke not; melancholy ideas have many charms, when we are not deeply miserable; but while grief, in all its cruelty, reigns over the breast, we cannot hear, without a shudder, words which, of old, excited but reveries not more sad than soothing.

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[1] In the original, Lucile Edgermond: but as neither of these names are English, and the latter capable of a very ignoble pronunciation, I have taken the liberty to alter both.—TR.

CHAPTER III.

In going to St. Peter's, they crossed the bridge of St. Angelo on foot. "It was here," said Oswald, "that, on my way from the Capitol, I, for the first time, mused long on Corinne."—"I do not flatter myself," she rejoined, "that I owe a friend to my coronation; yet, in toiling for celebrity, I have ever wished that it might make me beloved; were it not useless, at least to a woman, without such expectation?"—"Let us stay here awhile," said Oswald. "Can bygone centuries afford me one remembrance equal to that of the day on which I beheld you first?"—"I may err," answered Corinne, "but I think persons become most endeared to each other while participating in the admiration of works which speak to the soul by their true grandeur. Those of Rome are neither cold nor mute; conceived as they were by genius, and hallowed by memorable events. Nay, perhaps, Oswald, one could not better learn to love a man like yourself than by enjoying with him the noble beauties of the universe."—"But I," returned Oswald, "while gazing listening beside you, need the presence of no other wonder." Corinne thanked him by a gracious smile. Pausing before the castle of St. Angelo, she pursued: "This is one of the most original exteriors among all our edifices: the tomb of Adrian, fortified by the Goths, bearing a double character

from its successive uses. Built for the dead, an impenetrable circle inclosed it; yet the living have added more hostile defences, which contrast strongly with the silent and noble inutility of a funeral monument. You see, at the top, the bronze figure of an angel with a naked sword;[1] within are prisons, famed for ingenious torture. All the epochs of Roman history, from the days of Adrian to our own, are associated with this site. Belisarius defended it against the Goths; and, with a barbarism scarce inferior to their own, hurled on them the beauteous statues that adorned the interior. Crescentius, Arnault de Brescia, and Nicolas Rienzi,[2] those friends of Roman liberty, who so oft mistook her memories for her hopes, long defied their foes from this imperial tomb. I love each stone connected with so many glorious feats. I applaud the master of the world's luxurious taste—a magnificent tomb. There is something great in the man who, while possessing all the pomps and pleasures of the world, fears not to employ his mind so long in preparations for his death. Moral ideas and disinterested sentiments must fill the soul that, in any way, outsteps the boundaries of life. Thus far ought the pillars in front of St. Peter's to extend; such was the superb plan of Michael Angelo, which he trusted his survivors would complete; but the men of our days think not of posterity. When once enthusiasm has been turned into ridicule, all is defeated, except wealth and power."—"It is for you to regenerate it," cried Nevil. "Who ever experienced such happiness as I now taste? Rome shown me by you! interpreted by imagination and genius! What a world, when animated by sentiment, without which the world itself were but a desert![3] Ah, Corinne! what is to follow these the sweetest days that my fate and heart

e'er granted me?"—"All sincere affections come direct from Heaven," she answered, meekly. "Why, Oswald, should it not protect what it inspires? It is for Heaven to dispose of us both."

At last they beheld St. Peter's; the greatest edifice ever erected by man; even the Egyptian Pyramids are its inferiors in height. "Perhaps," said Corinne, "I ought to have shown you the grandest of our temples last; but that is not my system. It appears to me that, to perfect a sense of the fine arts, one should begin by contemplating the objects which awaken the deepest and most lively admiration. This, once felt, reveals a new sphere of thought, and renders us capable of loving and judging whatever may, even in an humbler quality, revive the first impression we received. All cautious and mystified attempts at producing a strong effect are against my taste. We do not arrive at the sublime by degrees, for infinite distances separate it even from the beautiful."

Oswald felt the most extraordinary sensations when standing in front of St. Peter's. It was the first time the effort of man had affected him like a marvel of nature. It is the only work of art on the face of the globe that possesses the same species of majesty which characterizes those of creation. Corinne enjoyed his astonishment. "I have selected," she said, "a day when the sun is in all his splendor; still reserving for you a yet more holy rapture, that of beholding St. Peter's by moonlight; but I wished you first to be present at this most brilliant spectacle—the genius of man bedecked in the magnificence of nature."

The square of St. Peter's is surrounded by pillars, which appear light from a distance, but massive as you draw nearer; the sloping ascent towards the

porch adds to the effect produced. An obelisk, of eighty feet in height, which looks scarce raised above the earth, in presence of the cupola, stands in the centre. The mere form of an obelisk is pleasing to the fancy; it loses itself in air, as if guiding the thoughts of man towards heaven. This was brought from Egypt to adorn the baths of Caligula, and afterwards removed by Sextus V. to the foot of St. Peter's, beside which this contemporary of many ages creates not one sentiment of awe. Man feels himself so perishable that he bows before the presence of immutability. At some distance, on each side of the obelisk, are two fountains, whose waters, perpetually gushing upwards, fall again in abundant cascades. Their murmurs, such as we are wont to hear in wild and rural scenes, lend a strange charm to this spot, yet one that harmonizes with the stilling influence of that august cathedral. Painting and sculpture, whether representing the human form, or other natural objects, awaken clear and intelligible images; but a perfect piece of architecture kindles that aimless reverie, which bears the soul we know not whither. The ripple of water well accords with this vague deep sense; it is uniform, as the edifice is regular. "Eternal motion and eternal rest," seem here united, defying even time, who has no more sullied the source of those pure springs than shaken the base of that commanding temple. These sheaves of liquid silver dash themselves into spray so fine, that on sunny days the light will form them into little rainbows, tinted with all the iris hues of the prism. "Stop here a moment," said Corinne to Nevil, who was already beneath the portico; "pause, ere you unveil the sanctuary; does not your heart throb as you approach it, as if anticipating some solemn event?" She raised the curtain, and held it back for

Nevil to pass, with such a grace that his first look was on her, and for some seconds he could observe nothing else; yet he entered the interior, and soon, beneath its immense arches, was filled by a piety so profound that love alone no longer sufficed to occupy his breast. He walked slowly beside Corinne; both were mute; there everything commands silence; for the least sound is re-echoed so far, that no discourse seems worthy to be thus repeated, in such an almost eternal abode. Even prayer, the accent of distress, springing from whatever feeble voice, reverberates deeply through its vastness; and when we hear, from far, the trembling steps of age on the fair marble, watered by so many tears, man becomes imposing from the very infirmities that subject his divine spirit to so much of woe; and we feel that Christianity, the creed of suffering, contains the true secret which should direct our pilgrimage on earth. Corinne broke on the meditations of Oswald, saying, "You must have remarked that the Gothic churches of England and Germany have a far more gloomy character than this. Northern Catholicism has in it something mystic; ours speaks to the imagination by external objects. Michael Angelo, on beholding this dome from the Pantheon, exclaimed, 'I have built it in the air!'—indeed, St. Peter's is as a temple based upon a church; its interior weds the ancient and modern faiths in the mind; I frequently wander hither to regain the composure my spirit sometimes loses. The sight of such a building is like a ceaseless, changeless melody, here awaiting to console all who seek it; and, among our national claims to glory, let me rank the courage, patience, and disinterestedness of the chiefs of our church, who have, for so many years, devoted such treasures to the completion of an edifice which its founders could not expect to enjoy.

[4] It is rendering a service to the moral public, bestowing on a nation a monument emblematic of such noble and generous desires."—"Yes," replied Oswald, "here art is grand, and genius inventive; but how is the real dignity of man sustained? How weak are the generality of Italian governments, yet how do they enslave."—"Other nations," interrupted Corinne, "have borne the yoke, like ourselves, and without like power to conceive a better fate,

'Servi siam si, ma servi ognor frementi.'

'We are slaves, indeed, but forever chafing beneath our bonds,' said Alfieri, the boldest of our modern writers. With such soul for the fine arts, may not our character one day equal our genius? But look at these statues on the tombs, these mosaics—laborious and faithful copies from the *chefs-d'œuvres* of our great masters. I never examine St. Peter's in detail, because I am grieved to find that its multiplied adornments somewhat impair the beauty of the whole. Yet well may the best works of human hands seem superfluous here. This is a world of itself; a refuge from both heat and cold; it hath a season of its own, perennial spring, which the atmosphere without can never affect. A subterranean church is built beneath; the popes, and many foreign princes, are buried there—Christine, who abdicated her realm; the Stuarts, whose dynasty was overthrown. Rome, so long an asylum for the exile, is she not herself dethroned? Her aspect consoles sovereigns despoiled like her. Yes, cities fall, whole empires disappear, and man becomes unworthy of his name. Stand here, Nevil! near the altar, beneath the centre of the dome, you perceive, through these iron gratings, the church of the dead, which lies beneath our feet, and, on raising your eyes, they can scarcely

pierce to the summit of this arch; do you not feel as if a huge abyss was opening over your head? Everything which extends beyond a certain proportion must cause that limited creature, man, uncontrollable dismay. What we know is as inexplicable as the unknown; we have so reconciled ourselves to habitual darkness, that any new mystery alarms and confounds us.

"The whole church is embellished by antique marbles, who know more than we do of vanished centuries. There is the statue of Jupiter converted into St. Peter, by the glory which has been set upon its head. The general expression of the place perfectly characterizes a mixture of obscure dogmas and sumptuous ceremonies; a mine of sad ideas, but such as may be soothingly applied; severe doctrines, capable of mild interpretation: Christian theology and Pagan images; in fact, the most admirable union of all the majestic splendors which man can give to his worship of the Divinity. Tombs decked by the arts can scarcely represent death as a formidable enemy: we do not, indeed, like the ancients, carve sports and dances on the sarcophagus: but thought is diverted from the bier by works that tell of immortality even from the altar of death. Thus animated, we feel not that freezing silence which constantly watches over a northern sepulchre."—"It is doubtless the purpose with us," said Oswald, "to surround death with appropriate gloom: ere we were enlightened by Christianity, such was our mythologic bias. Ossian called around the tomb funereal chants, such as here you would fain forget. I know not if I should wish that your fair sky may so far change my mood."

"Yet think not," said Corinne, "that we are either fickle or frivolous; we have too little vanity:

indolence may yield our lives some intervals of oblivion, but they can neither sate nor wither up the heart; unfortunately we are often scared from this repose by passions more terrible than those of habitually active minds." They were now at the door. "One more glance!" said Nevil. "See how insignificant is man in the presence of devotion, while we shrink even before its material emblem: behold what duration man can give to his achievements, while his own date is so brief that he soon survives but in his fame. This temple is an image of infinitude; there are no bounds for the sentiments to which it gives birth; the hosts of past and future years it suggests for speculation. On leaving it we seem quitting a world of heavenly thought for one of common interests; exchanging religion and eternity for the trivial pursuits of time."

Corinne pointed out the bas-reliefs, from Ovid's Metamorphoses, on the doors. "We shame not," she said, "in the pagan trophies which art has hallowed. The wonders of genius always awaken holy feelings in the soul, and we pay homage to Christianity in tribute of all the best works that other faiths have inspired." Oswald smiled at this explanation. "Believe me, my Lord," continued Corinne, "there is much sincerity among people of lively fancy. To-morrow, if you like, I will take you to the Capitol, and I trust I have many such days in store for you; but—when they are over—must you depart?" She checked herself, fearing that she had said too much. "No, Corinne," cried Oswald, "I cannot renounce this gleam of bliss, which my guardian angel seems to shower on me from above."

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[1] A Frenchman commanded the castle of St.

Angelo during the last war; and when summoned by the Neapolitans to surrender, replied, that he would do so when the bronze angel sheathed his sword.

[2] These facts are found in "A history of the Italian Republics, during the Middle Ages," by M. Simonde, of Geneva; an author of profound sagacity, equally conscientious and energetic.

[3] "Eine Weitz zwar bist du, o Rom! doch ohne die Liebe Ware die Welt nicht die Welt, ware denn Rom aucht nicht Rom," says Goethe, the poet and Philosopher, of all our modern men of letters the most remarkable for imagination.

[4] It is said that the building of St. Peter's was one of the principal causes of the Reformation; as it cost the popes so much, that they multiplied the sale of indulgences.

CHAPTER IV.

The next day Oswald and Corinne set forth with more confidence and calmness. They were friends, and began to say *we*. Ah, how affecting is that *we*, pronounced by love! What a timid, yet ardent confession does it breathe. "We go to the Capitol, then?" said Corinne.—"Yes, *we* will!" replied Oswald, and his voice told all in those simple words; so full of gentle tenderness was his accent. "From the top of the Capitol, such as it is now," said Corinne, "we can clearly see the Seven Hills; we will go over them all in succession; there is not one but teems with historical recollections." They took what was formerly called the sacred or triumphant road.

—"Your car passed this way," said Oswald. "It did," answered Corinne: such venerable dust might have wondered at my presumption; but since the Roman republic, so many a guilty track hath been imprinted on this road, that the respect it once demanded is decreased." She led him to the stairs of the present Capitol; the entrance to the original one was by the Forum. "I wish," she said, "that these steps were the same which Scipio ascended; when, repulsing calumny by glorious deeds, he went to offer thanks in the temple for the victories he had won; but the new staircase and Capitol were built on the ruins of the old, to receive the peaceful magistrate who now monopolizes the high sounding title of Roman senator, which once extorted reverence from the whole universe. We have but names here now. Yet their classic euphony always creates a thrill of mingled pleasure and regret. I asked a poor woman, whom I met the other day, where she lived. 'On the Tarpeian Rock,' she answered. These words, stripped as they are of all that once attached to them, still exert some power over the fancy." They stopped to observe the two basaltic lions at the foot of the stairs.[1] They came from Egypt, whose sculptors much more faithfully transmitted the forms of animals than that of man. The physiognomy of these lions has all the stern tranquillity, the strength in repose, which we find described by Dante.

"A Guisa di leon—quando si posa."

Not far from thence is a mutilated Roman statue, which the moderns have placed there, unconscious that they thus display a striking symbol of Rome as it is. This figure has neither head nor feet; but the trunk and drapery that remain have still the beauty of antiquity. At the top of the stairs are two colossal

statues, thought to represent Castor and Pollux; then come the trophies of Marius; then the two columns which served to measure the Roman empire; lastly the statue of Marcus Aurelius, calm and beautiful amid contending memories. Thus the heroic age is personated by these colossal shapes, the republic by the lions, the civil wars by Marius, and the imperial day by Aurelius.

To the right and left of the modern Capitol two churches have been erected, on the ruins of temples to Jupiter Feretrius and Capitolinus. In front of the vestibule is a fountain, over which the geniuses of the Tiber and the Nile are represented as presiding, as does the she-wolf of Romulus. The name of the Tiber is never pronounced like that of an inglorious stream; it is a proud pleasure for a Roman but to say, "Come to the Tiber's banks! Let us cross the Tiber!" In breathing such words he seems to invoke the spirit of history, and reanimate the dead.

Going to the Capitol by the way of the Forum, you find, to your right, the Mamertine prisons, constructed by Ancus Martius for ordinary criminals; but excavated by Servius Tullius into far more cruel dungeons for state culprits; as if they merit not most mercy, who err from a zealous fidelity to what they believe their duty. Jugurtha, and the friends of Catiline, perished in these cells; it is even said that St. Peter and St. Paul were confined there. On the other side of the Capitol is the Tarpeian Rock, at the foot of which now stands the Hospital of Consolation, as if the severe spirit of antiquity, and the sweet one of Christianity, defying time, here met, as visibly to the eye as to the mind. When Oswald and Corinne had gained the top of the Capitol, she showed him the Seven Hills, and the city, bounded

first by Mount Palatinus, then by the walls of Servius Tullius, which inclose the hills, and by those of Aurelian, which still surround the greatest part of Rome. Corinne repeated verses of Tibullus and Propertius, that glorify the weak commencement of what became the mistress of the world.[2] Mount Palatinus once contained all Rome; but soon did the imperial palace fill the space that had sufficed for a nation. A poet of Nero's day made this epigram:—

> "Roma domus fiet. Veios migrate, Quirites;
> Si non et Veios occupat ista domus."

'Rome will soon be but one house. Go to Veios, citizens! if you can be sure that this house will not include even Veios itself.' The Seven Hills are far less lofty now than when they deserved the title of steep mountains; modern Rome being forty feet higher than its predecessor, and the valleys which separated them almost filled up by ruins; but what is still more strange, two heaps of shattered vases have formed new hills, Cestario and Testacio. Thus, in time, the very refuse of civilization levels the rock with the plain, effacing, in the moral as in the material world, all the pleasing inequalities of nature.

Three other hills, Janiculum, Vaticanus, and Mario, not comprised in the famous seven, give so picturesque an air to Rome; and afford such magnificent views from her interior, as perhaps no other city can command. There is so remarkable a mixture of ruins and new buildings, of fair fields and desert wastes, that one may contemplate Rome on all sides, and ever find fresh beauties.

Oswald could not weary of feasting his gaze from the elevated point to which Corinne had led him. The study of history can never act on us like the sight of that scene itself. The eye reigns all powerfully over

the soul. He now believed in the old Romans, as if he had lived amongst them. Mental recollections are acquired by reading; those of imagination are born of more immediate impressions, such as give life to thought, and seem to render us the witnesses of what we learn. Doubtless we are annoyed by the modern dwellings which intrude on these wrecks, yet a portico beside some humble roof, columns between which the little windows of a church peep out, or a tomb that serves for the abode of a rustic family, so blends the grand with the simple, and affords us so many agreeable discoveries, as to keep up continual interest. Everything is common-place and prosaic in the generality of European towns; and Rome, more frequently than any other, presents the sad aspect of misery and degradation; but all at once some broken column, or half-effaced bas-relief, or a few stones, bound together by indestructible cement, will remind you that there is in man an eternal power, a divine spark, which he ought never to weary of fanning in his own breast, and reluming in those of others. The Forum, whose narrow inclosure has been the scene of so many wondrous events, is a striking proof of man's moral greatness. When in the latter days of Rome, the world was subjected to inglorious rulers, centuries passed from which history could scarce extract a single feat. This Forum, the heart of a circumscribed town, whose natives fought around it against the invaders of its territories—this Forum, by the recollections it retraces, has been the theme of genius in every age. Eternal honors to the brave and free, who thus vanquish even the hearts of posterity!

Corinne observed to Nevil that there were but few vestiges left of the republic, or of the regal day which preceded it. The aqueducts and subterranean canals are the only luxuries remaining, while of aught more

useful we have but a few tombs and brick temples. Not till after the fall of Sicily did the Romans adopt the use of marble; but it is enough to survey the spots on which great actions have been performed; we experience that indefinite emotion to which we may attribute the pious zeal of pilgrims. Celebrated countries of all kinds, even when despoiled of their great men and great works, exert a power over the imagination. That which would once have attracted the eye exists no more; but the charm of memory still survives.

The Forum now retains no trace of that famed tribunal whence the people were ruled by the force of eloquence. There still exist three pillars of a temple to Jupiter Tonans, raised by Augustus, because a thunderbolt had fallen near him there, without injury. There is, too, the triumphal arch erected by the Senate to requite the exploits of Septimus Severus. The names of his two sons, Caracalla and Geta, were inscribed on its front; but as Caracalla assassinated his brother, his name was erased; some marks of the letters are yet visible. Farther off is a temple to Faustina, a monument of the weakness of Marcus Aurelius. A temple to Venus, which, in the republican era, was consecrated to Pallas, and, at a little distance, the relics of another, dedicated to the sun and moon, by the emperor Adrian, who was so jealous of the Greek architect Apollodorus, that he put him to death for censuring its proportion. On the other side are seen the remains of buildings devoted to higher and purer aims. The columns of one believed to be that of Jupiter Stator, forbidding the Romans ever to fly before their enemies—the last pillar of the temple to Jupiter Custos, placed, it is said, near the gulf into which Curtius threw himself—and some belonging either to

the Temple of Concord or to that of Victory. Perhaps this resistless people confounded the two ideas, believing that they could only attain true peace by subduing the universe. At the extremity of Mount Palatinus stands an arch celebrating Titus's conquest at Jerusalem. It is asserted that no Jews will ever pass beneath it; and the little path they take to avoid it is pointed out. We will hope, for the credit of the Jews, that this anecdote is true; such enduring recollections well become the long-suffering. Not far from hence is the arch of Constantine, embellished by some bas-reliefs, taken from the Forum, in the time of Trajan, by the Christians, who resolved thus to deck the monument of the Founder of Peace. The arts, at this period, were already on the wane, and thefts from the past deified new achievements.

The triumphal gates still seen in Rome perpetuated, as much as man could do, the respect paid to glory. There were places for musicians at their summits; so that the hero, as he passed, might be intoxicated at once by melody and praise, tasting, at the same moment, all that can exalt the spirit.

In front of these arches are the ruins of the Temple to Peace built by Vespasian. It was so adorned by bronze and gold within, that when it was consumed by fire, streams of fused metal ran even to the Forum. Finally, the Coliseum, loveliest ruin of Rome! terminates the circle in which all the epochs of history seem collected for comparison. Those stones, now bereft, of marble and of gilding, once formed the arena in which the gladiators contended with ferocious beasts. Thus were the Romans amused and duped, by strong excitements, while their natural feelings were denied due power. There were two entrances to the Coliseum; the one devoted to the

conquerors, the other that through which they carried the dead. "*Sana vivaria, sandapilaria*." Strange scorn of humanity! to decide beforehand the life or death of man, for mere pastime. Titus, the best of emperors, dedicated the Coliseum to the Roman people; and its very ruins bear so admirable a stamp of genius, that one is tempted to deceive one's self on the nature of true greatness, and grant to the triumphs of art the praise which is due but to spectacles that tell of generous institutions. Oswald's enthusiasm equalled not that of Corinne, while beholding these four galleries, rising one above the other, in proud decay, inspiring at once respect and tenderness: he saw but the luxury of rulers, the blood of slaves, and was almost prejudiced against the arts, for thus lavishing their gifts, indifferent as to the purposes to which they were applied. Corinne attempted to combat this mood. "Do not," she said, "let your principles of justice interfere with a contemplation like this. I have told you that these objects would rather remind you of Italian taste and elegance than of Roman virtue; but do you not trace some moral grandeur in the gigantic splendor that succeeded it? The very degradation of the Roman is imposing; while mourning for liberty they strewed the earth with wonders; and ideal beauty sought to solace man for the real dignity he had lost. Look on these immense baths, open to all who wished to taste of oriental voluptuousness; these circles wherein elephants once battled with tigers; these aqueducts, which could instantaneously convert the areas into lakes, where galleys raced in their turn, or crocodiles filled the space just occupied by lions. Such was the luxury of the Romans, when luxury was their pride. These obelisks, brought from Egypt, torn from the African's shade to decorate the sepulchres of

Romans! Can all this be considered useless, as the pomp of Asiatic despots? No, you behold the genius of Rome, the victor of the world, attired by the arts! There is something superhuman and poetical in this magnificence, which makes one forget both its origin and its aim."

The eloquence of Corinne excited without convincing Oswald. He sought a moral sentiment in all things, and the magic of art could never satisfy him without it. Corinne now recollected that, in this same arena, the persecuted Christians had fallen victims to their constancy; she pointed out the altars erected to their ashes, and the path towards the cross which the penitents trod beneath the ruins of mundane greatness; she asked him if the dust of martyrs said nothing to his heart. "Yes," he cried, "deeply do I revere the power of soul and will over distress and death: a sacrifice, be it what it may, is more arduous, more commendable than all the efforts of genius. Exalted imagination may work miracles; but it is only when we immolate self to principle that we are truly virtuous. Then alone does a celestial power subdue the mortal in our breasts." These pure and noble words disturbed Corinne: she gazed on Nevil, then cast down her eyes; and though at the same time he took her hand, and pressed it to his heart, she trembled to think that such a man might devote himself or others to despair, in his adherence to the opinions or duties of which he might make choice.

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[1] Mineralogists affirm that these lions are not basaltic, because the volcanic stone now so called was never found in Egypt; but as Pliny and Winckleman (the historian of the arts) both give them that name, I avail myself of its primitive acceptation.

[2] Carpite nunc, tauri, de septem collibus herbas
Dum licet, hic magnæ jam locus urbis erit.
TIBULLUS.

Hoc quodcumque vides, hospes quàm maxima Roma est
Ante Phrygem Ænean collis et herba fuit, &c.
PROPERTIUS.

CHAPTER V.

Corinne and Nevil employed two days in wandering over the Seven Hills. The Romans formerly held a fête in their honor: it is one of Rome's original beauties to be thus embraced, and patriotism naturally loved to celebrate such a peculiarity. Oswald and Corinne having already viewed the Capitoline Hill recommenced their course at Mount Palatinus. The palace of the Cæsars, called the Golden Palace, once occupied it entirely. Augustus, Tiberius, Caligula, and Nero, built its four sides: a heap of stones, overgrown with shrubs, is all that now remains. Nature reclaimed her empire over the works of man; and her fair flowers atone for the fall of a palace. In the regal and republican eras, grandly as towered their public buildings, private houses were extremely small and simple. Cicero, Hortensius, and the Grachii, dwelt on this eminence, which hardly sufficed, in the decline of Rome, for the abode of a single man. In the latter ages the nation was but a nameless mass, designated solely by the eras of its masters. The laurels of war and that of the arts cultivated by peace, which were planted at the gate of Augustus, have both disappeared. Some of Livia's

baths are left. You are shown the places wherein were set the precious stones, then lavished on walls or ceilings, and paintings of which the colors are still fresh: their delicacy rendering this yet more surprising. If it be true that Livia caused the death of Augustus, it was in one of these chambers that the outrage must have been conceived. How often may his gaze have been arrested by these pictures, whose tasteful garlands still survive? The master of the world betrayed in his nearest affections! what thought his old age of life and its vain pomps? Did he reflect on his glory, or its victims? Hoped he or feared a future world? Might not the last thought, which reveals all to man, stray back to these halls, the scenes of his past power?[1]

Mount Aventinus affords more traces of Rome's early day than any of its sister hills. Exactly facing the palace constructed by Tiberius is seen a wreck of the temple to Liberty, built by the father of the Grachii; and at the foot of this ascent stood that dedicated to the Fortune of Men, by Servius Tullius, to thank the gods that, though born a slave, he had become a king. Without the walls of Rome another edifice rose to the Fortune of woman, commemorating the influence exerted by Venturia over Coriolanus.

Opposite to Mount Aventinus is Mount Janiculum, on which Porsenna marshalled his army. It was in front of this hill that Horatius Cocles cut away the bridge, which led to Rome: its foundations still exist. On the banks of the stream was built a brick arch, simple as the action it recalled was great. In the midst of the Tiber floated an island formed of the wheat sheaves gathered from the fields of Tarquin; the Romans forbearing to use them, in the belief that they were charged with evil fate. It would be

difficult, in our own day, to call down on any treasure a curse of sufficient efficacy to scare men from its participation.

On Mount Aventinus were temples both to patrician and plebeian chastity: at the foot of the hill the Temple of Vesta still remains, almost entire, though the inundations of the Tiber have often threatened to destroy it. Not far thence are vestiges of a prison for debt, where the well-known instance of filial piety is said to have occurred; here, too, Clœlia and her companions were confined by Porsenna, and swam across the river to rejoin the Romans. Mount Aventinus indemnifies the mind for all the painful recollections the other hills awake; and its aspect is as beauteous as its memories are sweet. The banks at its foot were called the Lovely Strand (*pulchrum littus*). Thither the orators of Rome walked from the Forum: there Cæsar and Pompey met like simple citizens, and sought to conciliate Cicero, whose independent eloquence was of more weight than even the power of their armies. Poetry also has embellished this spot: it was there that Virgil placed the cave of Cacus; and Rome, so great in history, is still greater by the heroic fictions with which her fabulous origin has been decked. In returning from Mount Aventinus, you see the house of Nicolas Rienzi, who vainly strove to restore the spirit of antiquity in modern days.

Mount Cœlius is remarkable for the remains of a pretorian encampment, and that of the foreign troops: on the ruins of the latter was found an inscription: "To the Holy Genius of the Foreign Camp." Holy, indeed, to those whose power it sustained! What is left of these barracks proves that they were built like cloisters; or, rather, that cloisters

were formed after their model.

Esquilinus was called the "Poet's Hill;" Mæcenas, Horace, Propertius, and Tibullus having all houses there. Near this are the ruins of the baths of Trajan and Titus. It is believed that Raphael copied his arabesques from the frescoes of the latter: here, too, was the Laöcoon discovered. The freshness of water is so acceptable in fervid climes, that their natives love to collect all that can pamper the senses in the chambers where they bathe. Thus, by the light of lamps, did the Romans gaze on the *chefs-d'œuvres* of painting and sculpture; for it appears from the construction of these buildings that day never entered them: they were sheltered from the noontide rays, so piercing here as fully to deserve the title of Apollo's darts. Yet the extreme precautions taken by the ancients might induce a supposition that the climate was more burning then than now. In the baths of Caracalla were the Farnese Hercules, the Flora, and the group of Circe. Near Ostia, in the baths of Nero, was found the Apollo Belvidere. Can we look on that noble figure and conceive Nero destitute of *all* generous sentiments?

The baths and circusses are the only places of public amusement that have left their vestige. Though the ruins of Marcellus's theatre still exist, Pliny relates that three hundred and sixty marble pillars, and three thousand statues, were placed in a theatre incapable of lasting many days. The Romans, however, soon built with a solidity that defied the earthquake's shock: too soon they wasted like pains on edifices which they destroyed themselves when the fêtes held in them were concluded; thus, in every sense sported they with time. They had not the Grecian's mania for dramatic representations: the

fine arts then flourished at Rome only in the works of Greece; and Roman grandeur consisted rather in colossal architecture than in efforts of imagination. The gigantic wonders thus produced bore a very dignified stamp, no longer of liberty, but that of power still. The districts devoted to the public baths were called provinces, and united all the varied establishments to be found in a whole country. The great circus so nearly touched the imperial palace, that Nero, from his window, could give a signal for the commencement of the games. This circus was large enough to contain three hundred thousand people. Almost the whole nation might be amused at the same moment; and these immense festivals might be considered as popular institutions, which assembled for mere pleasure those who formerly united for glory. Mounts Quirinalis and Viminalis are so near each other that it is not easy to distinguish them apart. There stood the houses of Sallust and of Pompey. There, too, in the present day, does the pope reside. One cannot take a single step in Rome, without contrasting its present and its past. But one learns to view the events of one's own time the more calmly far noting the eternal fluctuations that mark the history of man; and one feels ashamed to repine, in the presence, as it were, of so many centuries, who have all overthrown the achievements of their predecessors. Around, and on the Seven Hills, are seen a multitude of spires and obelisks, the columns of Trajan and of Antoninus, the tower of Conti, whence, it is said, Nero overlooked the conflagration of Rome, and the dome of St. Peter's lording it over the highest. The air seems peopled by these heaven-aspiring fanes, as if an aerial city soared majestic above that of the earth. In re-entering Rome, Corinne led Oswald beneath the portico of the tender and

suffering Octavia; they then crossed the road along which the infamous Tullia drove over the body of her father: they beheld, in the distance, the temple raised by Agrippina in honor of Claudius, whom she had caused to be poisoned; finally, they passed the tomb of Augustus, the inclosure around which now serves as an arena for animal combats.

"I have led you rapidly," said Corinne, "over a few footprints of ancient history; but you can appreciate the pleasure which may be found in researches at once sage and poetic, addressing the fancy as well as the reason. There are many distinguished men in Rome whose sole occupation is that of discovering new links between our ruins and our history." "I know no study which could interest me more," replied Nevil, "if I felt my mind sufficiently composed for it. Such erudition is far more animated than that we acquire from books: we seem to revive what we unveil; and the past appears to rise from the dust which concealed it." "Doubtless," said Corinne, "this passion for antiquity is no idle prejudice. We live in an age when self-interest seems the ruling principle of all men; what sympathy, what enthusiasm, can ever be its result? Is it not sweeter to dream over the days of self-devotion and heroic sacrifice, which might once have existed, nay, of which the earth still bears such honorable traces?"

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[1] Augustus expired at Nola, on his way to the waters of Brunduoium, which were prescribed him. He left Rome in a dying state.

CHAPTER VI.

Corinne secretly flattered herself that she had captivated the heart of Oswald; yet knowing his severe reserve, dared not fully betray the interest he inspired, prompt as she was by nature to confess her feelings. Perhaps she even thought that while speaking on subjects foreign to their love, the very voice might disclose their mutual affection; a silent avowal be expressed in their looks, or in that veiled and melancholy language which so deeply penetrates the soul.

One morning, while she was preparing to continue their researches, she received from him an almost ceremonious note, saying that indisposition would confine him to his house for some days. A sad disquietude seized the heart of Corinne: at first, she feared that he was dangerously ill; but Count d'Erfeuil, who called in the evening, informed her that it was but one of those nervous attacks to which Nevil was so subject, and during which he would converse with nobody. "He won't even see *me*!" added the count. The words displeased Corinne; but she took care to hide her anger from its object, as he alone could bring her tidings of his friend. She therefore continued to question him, trusting that a person so giddy, at least in appearance, would tell her all he knew. But whether he wished to hide, beneath an air of mystery, the fact that Nevil had confided nothing, or whether he believed it more honourable to thwart her wishes than to grant them, he met her ardent curiosity by imperturbable silence. She, who had always gained such an ascendency over those with whom she spoke, could not understand why her persuasive powers should fail with him. She did not know that self-love is the most inflexible quality in the world. Where was then her resource for learning what passed in the heart of

Oswald? Should she write to him? A letter requires such caution; and the loveliest attribute of her nature was its impulsive sincerity. Three days passed, and still he came not. She suffered the most cruel agitation. "What have I done," she thought, "to dissever him from me? I have not committed the error so formidable in England, so pardonable in Italy; I never told him that I loved. Even if he guesses it, why should he esteem me the less?" Oswald avoided Corinne merely because he but too strongly felt the power of her charms. Although he had not given his word to marry Lucy Edgarmond, he knew that such had been his father's wish, and desired to conform with it. Corinne was not known by her real name: she had for many years led a life far too independent for him to hope that a union with her would have obtained the approbation of his parent, and he felt that it was not by such a step he could expiate his early offences. He purposed to leave Rome, and write Corinne an explanation of the motives which enforced such resolution; but not feeling strength for this, he limited his exertions to a forbearance from visiting her; and this sacrifice soon appeared the most painful of the two.

Corinne was struck by the idea that she should see him no more; that he would fly without bidding her adieu. She expected every instant to hear of his departure; and terror so aggravated her sensations, that the vulture talons of passion seized at once on her heart; and its peace, its liberty, crouched beneath them. Unable to rest in the house where Oswald came not, she wandered in the gardens of Rome, hoping to meet him; she had at least some chance of seeing him, and best supported the hours during which she trusted to this expectation.

Her ardent fancy, the source of her talents, was unhappily blended with such natural feeling, that it now constituted her wretchedness. The evening of the fourth day's absence the moon shone clearly over Rome, which, in the silence of night, looks lovely, as if it were inhabited but by the spirits of the great. Corinne, on her way from the house of a female friend, left her carriage, and, oppressed with grief, seated herself beside the fount of Trevi, whose abundant cascade falls in the centre of Rome, and seems the life of that tranquil scene. Whenever its flow is suspended, all appears stagnation. In other cities it is the roll of carriages that the ear requires; in Rome it is the murmur of this immense fountain, which seems the indispensable accompaniment of the dreamy life led there. Its water is so pure, that it has for many ages been named the Virgin Spring. The form of Corinne was now reflected on its surface. Oswald, who had paused there at the same moment, beheld the enchanting countenance of his love thus mirrored in the wave: at first, it affected him so strangely that he believed himself gazing on her phantom, as his imagination had often conjured up that of his father: he leaned forward, in order to see it more plainly, and his own features appeared beside those of Corinne. She recognised them, shrieked, rushed towards him and seized his arm, as if she feared he would again escape; but scarcely had she yielded to this too impetuous impulse, ere, remembering the character of Lord Nevil, she blushed, her hand dropped, and with the other she covered her face to hide her tears.

"Corinne! dear Corinne!" he cried, "has then my absence pained you?"—"Yes," she replied, "you must have known it would. Why then inflict such pangs on me? Have I deserved to suffer thus for you?"—"No,

no," he answered; "but if I cannot deem myself free—if my heart be filled by regret and fear, why should I involve you in its tortures? Why?"—"It is too late to ask," interrupted Corinne; "grief is already in my breast; bear with me!"—"Grief!" repeated Oswald; "in the midst of so brilliant a career, with so lively a genius!"—"Hold," she said, "you know me not. Of all my faculties, the most powerful is that of suffering. I was formed for happiness; my nature is confiding and animated; but sorrow excites me to a degree that threatens my reason, nay, my life. Be careful of me! My gay versatility serves me but in appearance: within my soul is an abyss of despair, which I can only avoid by preserving myself from love." Corinne spoke with an expression which vividly affected Oswald. "I will come to you to-morrow, rely on it, Corinne," he said. "Swear it!" she exclaimed, with an eagerness which she strove in vain to disguise. "I do," he answered, and departed.

BOOK V.

THE TOMBS, CHURCHES, AND PALACES.

CHAPTER I.

The next day Oswald and Corinne met in great embarrassment. She could no longer depend on the love she had inspired. He was dissatisfied with himself, and felt his own weakness rebel against the tyranny of his sentiments. Both sought to avoid the

subject of their mutual affection. "To-day," said Corinne, "I proposed a somewhat solemn excursion, but one which will be sure to interest you; let us visit the last asylums of those who lived among the edifices we have seen in ruins."—"You have guessed what would most suit my present disposition," said Oswald, in so sad a tone, that she dared not speak again for some moments; then gaining courage from her desire to soothe and entertain him, she added: "You know, my Lord, that among the ancients, far from the sight of tombs discouraging the living, they were placed in the high road, to kindle emulation; the young were thus constantly reminded of the illustrious dead, who seemed silently to bid them imitate their glories."—"Ah!" sighed Oswald, "how I envy those whose regrets are unstained by remorse."—"Talk *you* of remorse?" she cried; "then it is but one virtue the more, the scruples of a heart whose exalted delicacy——" He interrupted her. "Corinne! Corinne! do not approach that theme; in your blest land gloomy thoughts are exhaled by the brightness of heaven; but with us grief buries itself in the depths of the soul, and shatters its strength forever."—"You do me injustice," she replied. "I have told you that, capable as I am of enjoyment, I should suffer more than you, if——" she paused, and changed the subject; continuing, "My only wish, my Lord, is to divert your mind for awhile. I ask no more." The meekness of this reply touched Oswald's heart; and, as he marked the melancholy beauty of those eyes, usually so full of fire, he reproached himself with having thus depressed a spirit so framed for sweet and joyous impressions; he would fain have restored them; but Corinne's uncertainty of his intentions, as to his stay or departure, entirely disordered her accustomed serenity.

She led him through the gates to the old Appian Way, whose traces are marked in the heart of the country by ruins on the right and left, for many miles beyond the walls. The Romans did not permit the dead to be buried within the city. None but the emperors were there interred, except one citizen named Publius Biblius, who was thus recompensed for his humble virtues; such as, indeed, his contemporaries were most inclined to honor.

To reach the Appian Way you leave Rome by the gate of St. Sebastian, formerly called the Capena Gate. The first tombs you then find, Cicero assures us, are those of Metellus, of Scipio, and Servilius. The tomb of the Scipio family was found here, and afterwards removed to the Vatican. It is almost sacrilege to displace such ashes. Imagination is more nearly allied to morality than is believed, and ought not to be offended. Among so many tombs names must be strewn at random; there is no way of deciding to which such or such title belongs; but this very uncertainty prevents our looking on any of them with indifference. It was in such that the peasants made their homes; for the Romans consecrated quite space enough to the urns of their illustrious fellow-citizens. They had not that principle of utility which, for the sake of cultivating a few feet of ground the more, lays waste the vast domain of feeling and of thought. At some distance from the Appian Way is a temple raised by the republic to Honor and to Virtue; another to the god who caused the return of Hannibal. There, too, is the fountain of Egeria; where in solitude Numa conversed with Conscience, the divinity of the good. No monument of guilt invades the repose of these great beings; the earth around is sacred to the memory of worth. The noblest thoughts may reign there undisturbed. The aspect of the

country near Rome is remarkably peculiar; it is but a desert, as boasting neither trees nor houses; but the ground is covered with wild shrubs ceaselessly renewed by energetic vegetation. The parasitic tribes creep round the tombs, and decorate the ruins, as if in honor of their dead. Proud nature, conscious that no Cincinnatus now guides the plough that furrows her breast, there repulses the care of man, and produces plants which she permits not to serve the living. These uncultivated plains may, indeed, displease those who speculate on the earth's capacity for supplying human wants; but the pensive mind, more occupied by thoughts of death than of life, loves to contemplate the Campagna, on which present time has imprinted no trace; it cherishes the dead, and fondly covers them with useless flowers, that bask beneath the sun, but never aspire above the ashes which they appear to caress. Oswald admitted that in such a scene a calm might be regained that could be enjoyed nowhere beside. The soul is there less wounded by images of sorrow; it seems to partake, with those now no more, the charm of that air, that sunlight, and that verdure. Corinne drew some hope from observing the effect thus taken on him; she wished not to efface the just regret owed to the loss of his father; but regret itself is capable of sweets, with which we should try to familiarize those who have tasted but its bitterness, for that is the only blessing we can confer on them.

"Let us rest," said Corinne, "before this tomb, which remains almost entire: it is not that of a celebrated man, but of a young girl, Cecilia Metella, to whom her father raised it."—"Happy the children," sighed Oswald, "who die on the bosom that gave them life: for them even death must lose its sting."—"Ay," replied Corinne, with emotion, "happy those who are

not orphans. But look! arms are sculptured here: the daughters of heroes had a right to bear the trophies of their sires: fair union of innocence and valor! There is an elegy, by Propertius, which, better than any other writing of antiquity, describes the dignity of woman among the Romans; a dignity more pure and more commanding than even that which she enjoyed during the age of chivalry. Cornelia, dying in her youth, addresses to her husband a consolatory farewell, whose every word breathes her tender respect for all that is sacred in the ties of nature. The noble pride of a blameless life is well depicted in the majestic Latin; in poetry august and severe as the masters of the world. 'Yes,' says Cornelia, 'no stain has sullied my career, from the hour when Hymen's torch was kindled, even to that which lights my funeral pyre. I have lived spotless between two flames.'[1] What an admirable expression! what a sublime image! How enviable the woman who preserves this perfect unity in her fate, and carries but one remembrance to the grave! That were enough for one life." As she ceased, her eyes filled with tears. A cruel suspicion seized the heart of Oswald. "Corinne," he cried, "has your delicate mind aught with which to reproach you? If I could offer you myself, should I not have rivals in the past? Could I pride in my choice? Might not jealousy disturb my delight?"—"I am free," replied Corinne, "and love you as I never loved before. What would you have? Must I confess, that, ere I knew you, I might have deceived myself as to the interest with which others inspired me? Is there no divinity in man's heart for the errors which, beneath such illusions, might have been committed?" A modest glow overspread her face. Oswald shuddered, but was silent. There was such timid penitence in the

looks of Corinne, that he could not rigorously judge one whom a ray from heaven seemed descending to absolve. He pressed her hand to his heart, and knelt before her, without uttering a promise, indeed, but with a glance of love which left her all to hope. "Let us form no plan for years to come," she said: "the happiest hours of life are those benevolently granted us by chance: it is not here, in the midst of tombs, that we should trust much to the future."—"No," cried Nevil; "I believe in no future that can part us: four days of absence have but too well convinced me that I now exist but for you." Corinne made no reply, but religiously hoarded these precious words in her heart: she always feared, in prolonging a conversation on the only subject of her thoughts, lest Oswald should declare his intentions before a longer habit of being with her rendered separation impossible. She often designedly directed his attention to exterior objects, like the sultana in the Arabian tales, who sought by a thousand varied stories to captivate her beloved, and defer his decision of her fate, till certain that her wit must prove victorious.

[1] Viximus insignes inter utramque facem. PROPERTIUS.

CHAPTER II.

Not far from the Appian Way is seen the Columbarium, where slaves are buried with their lords; where the same tomb contains all who dwelt beneath the protection of one master or mistress. The

women devoted to the care of Livia's beauty, who contended with time for the preservation of her charms, are placed in small urns beside her. The noble and ignoble there repose in equal silence. At a little distance is the field wherein vestals, unfaithful to their vows were interred alive; a singular example of fanaticism in a religion naturally so tolerant.

"I shall not take you to the catacombs," said Corinne, "though, by a strange chance, they lie beneath the Appian Way, tombs upon tombs! But that asylum of persecuted Christians is so gloomy and terrible, that I cannot resolve to revisit it. It has not the touching melancholy which one breathes in open wilds; it is a dungeon near a sepulchre—the tortures of existence beside the horrors of death. Doubtless one must admire men who, by the mere force of enthusiasm, could support that subterranean life—forever banished from the sun; but the soul is too ill at ease in such a scene to be benefited by it. Man is a part of creation, and finds his own moral harmony in that of the universe; in the habitual order of fate, violent exceptions may astonish, but they create too much terror to be of service. Let us rather seek the pyramid of Cestius, around which all Protestants who die here find charitable graves."—"Yes," returned Oswald, "many a countryman of mine is amongst them. Let us go there; in one sense at least, perhaps, I shall never leave you." Corinne's hand trembled on his arm. He continued, "Yet I am much better since I have known you." Her countenance resumed its wonted air of tender joy.

Cestius presided over the Roman sports. His name is not found in history, but rendered famous by his tomb. The massive pyramid that inclosed him defends his death from the oblivion which has

utterly effaced his life. Aurelian, fearing that this pyramid would be used but as a fortress from whence to attack the city, had it surrounded by walls which still exist, not as useless ruins, but as the actual boundaries of modern Rome. It is said that pyramids were formed in imitation of the flames that rose from funeral pyres. Certainly their mysterious shape attracts the eye, and gives a picturesque character to all the views of which they constitute a part.

In front of this pyramid is Mount Testacio, beneath which are several cool grottoes, where fêtes are held in the summer. If, at a distance, the revellers see pines and cypresses shading their smiling land and recalling a solemn consciousness of death, this contrast produces the same effect with the lines which Horace has written in the midst of verses teeming with earthly enjoyment:—

> ------"Moriture Delli,
> * * * *
> Linquenda tellus, et domus, et placens
> Uxor."

'Dellius, remember thou must die—leaving the world, thy home, and gentle wife,' The ancients acknowledged this in their very voluptuousness; even love and festivity reminded them of it, and joy seemed heightened by a sense of its brevity.

Oswald and Corinne returned by the side of the Tiber; formerly covered with vessels, and banked by palaces. Of yore, even its inundations were regarded as omens. It was then the prophetic, the tutelar divinity of Rome.[1] It may now be said to flow among phantoms, so livid is its hue—so deep its loneliness. The finest statues and other works of art were thrown into the Tiber, and are hidden beneath

its tides. Who knows but that, in search of them, the river may at last be driven from its bed? But, while we muse on efforts of human genius that lie, perhaps, beneath us, and that some eye, more piercing than our own, may yet see through these waves, we feel that awe which, in Rome, is constantly reviving in various forms, and giving the mind companions in those physical objects which are elsewhere dumb.

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[1] Plin. Hist. Nat., 1, 3. Tiberis, quam libet magnorum navium ex Italo mari capax, rerum in toto orbe nascentium mercator placidissimus, pluribus probè solus quam cæteri in omnibus terris amnes, accolitur, aspiciturque villis. Nullique fluviorum minus licet, inclusis utrinque lateribus: nec tamen ipse pugnat, quanquam creber ac subitis incrementis, et nusquam magis aquis quam in ipsa urbe stagnantibus. Quin imo vates intelligitur potius ac monitur, auctu semper religiosus verius quam sævus.

CHAPTER III.

Raphael said that modern Rome was almost entirely built from the ruins of the ancient city; Pliny had talked of the "eternal walls," which are still seen amid the works of latter times. Nearly all the buildings bear the stamp of history, teaching you to compare the physiognomies of different ages. From the days of the Etruscans—a people senior to the Romans themselves, resembling the Egyptians in the solidity and eccentricity of their designs—down to

the time of Bernini, an artist, as guilty of mannerism as were the Italian poets of the seventeenth century, one may trace the progress of the human mind, in the characters of the arts, the buildings, and ruins. The Middle Ages and the brilliant day of the De Medici, reappearing in their works, it is but to study the past in the present, to penetrate the secrets of all time. It is believed that Rome had formerly a mystic name, known but to few. The city has still spells, into which we require initiation. It is not simply an assemblage of dwellings; it is a chronicle of the world, represented by figurative emblems. Corinne agreed with Nevil, that they would now explore modern Rome, reserving for another opportunity its admirable collection of pictures and statues. Perhaps, without confessing it to herself, she wished to defer these sights as long as possible: for who has ever left Rome, without looking on the Apollo Belvidere and the paintings of Raphael? This security, weak as it was, that Oswald would not yet depart, was everything to her. Where is their pride? some may ask, who would retain those they love by any other motive than that of affection. I know not—but, the more we love, the less we rely on our own power; and, whatever be the cause which secures us the presence of the object dear to us, it is accepted with gratitude. There is often much vanity in a certain species of pride; and if women, as generally admired as Corinne, have one real advantage, it is the right to exult rather in what they feel than in what they inspire.

Corinne and Nevil recommenced their excursions, by visiting the most remarkable among the numerous churches of Rome. They are all adorned by magnificent antiquities; but these festal ornaments, torn from pagan temples, have here a strange, wild

effect. Granite and porphyry pillars are so plentiful, that they are lavished as if almost valueless. At St. John Lateran, famed for the councils that have been held in it, so great is the quantity of marble columns, that many of them are covered with cement, to form pilasters; thus indifferent has this profusion of riches rendered its possessors. Some of these pillars belonged to the Tomb of Adrian, others to the Capitol; some still bear the forms of the geese which preserved the Romans; others have Gothic and even Arabesque embellishments. The urn of Agrippa contains the ashes of a pope. The dead of one generation give place to the dead of another, and tombs here as often change their occupants as the abodes of the living. Near St. John Lateran are the holy stairs, brought, it is said, from Jerusalem, and which no one ascends but on his knees; as Claudius, and even Cæsar, mounted those which led to the temple of Jupiter Capitolinus. Beside St. John's is the front where Constantine is supposed to have been baptized. In the centre of this ground is an obelisk, perhaps the most ancient work of art in the world—contemporary with the Trojan war—so respected, even by the barbarous Cambyses, that he put a stop to the conflagration of a city in its honor; and, for its sake, a king pledged the life of his only son. The Romans brought it from the heart of Egypt by miracle. They turned the Nile from his course that it might be found, and carried to the sea. This obelisk is still covered with hieroglyphics, which have kept their secret for centuries, and defy the sages of to-day to decipher signs that might reveal the annals of India and of Egypt—the antiquities of antiquity! The wondrous charm of Rome consists not only in the real beauty of her monuments, but in the interest they excite; the material for thinking they suggest;

the speculations which grow, every day, the stronger from each new study.

One of the most singular churches in Rome is St. Paul's: its exterior is that of an ill-built barn; yet it is bedecked within by eighty pillars of such exquisite material and proportion, that they are believed to have been transported from an Athenian temple, described by Pausanias. If Cicero said, in his day, "we are surrounded by vestiges of history," what would he say now? Columns, statues, and pictures are so prodigally crowded in the churches of modern Rome, that, in St. Agnes's, bas-reliefs, turned face downwards, serve to pave a staircase, no one troubling himself to ascertain what they might represent. How astonishing a spectacle were ancient Rome, had its treasures been left where they were found! The immortal city, nearly as it was of yore, were still before us: but could the men of our day dare to enter it? The palaces of the Roman lords are vast in the extreme, and often display much architectural grace; but their interiors are rarely arranged by good taste. They have none of those elegant apartments invented elsewhere for the perfect enjoyment of social life. Superb galleries, hung with the *chefs-d'œuvres* of the tenth Leo's age are abandoned to the gaze of strangers, by their lazy proprietors, who retire to their own obscure little chambers, dead to the pomp of their ancestors, as were *they* to the austere virtues of the Roman republic. The country-houses give one a still greater idea of solitude, and of their owners' carelessness amid the loveliest scenes of nature. One walks immense gardens, doubting if they have a master; the grass grows in every path, yet in these very alleys are the trees cut into shapes, after the fantastic mode that once reigned in France. Strange inconsistency!

this neglect of essentials, and affectation in what is useless! Most Italian towns, indeed, surprise us with this mania, in a people who have constantly beneath their eyes such models of noble simplicity. They prefer glitter to convenience; and in every way betray the advantages and disadvantages of not habitually mixing with society. Their luxury is rather that of fancy than of comfort. Isolated among themselves, they dread not that spirit of ridicule, which, in truth, seldom penetrates the interior of Roman abodes. Contrasting this with what they appear from without, one might say that they were rather built to dazzle the peasantry than for the reception of friends.

After having shown Oswald the churches and the palaces, Corinne led him to the Villa Melini, whose lonely garden is ornamented solely by majestic trees. From thence is seen afar the chain of the Apennines, tinted by the transparent air, against which their outlines are defined most picturesquely. Oswald and Corinne rested for some time, to taste the charms of heaven and the tranquillity of nature. No one who has not dwelt in southern climes can form an idea of this stirless silence, unbroken by the lightest zephyr. The tenderest blades of herbage remain perfectly motionless; even the animals partake this noontide lassitude. You hear no hum of insects, no chirp of grasshoppers, no song of birds; nothing is agitated, all sleeps, till storm or passion waken that natural vehemence which impetuously rushes from this profound repose. The Roman garden possesses a great number of evergreens, that, during winter, add to the illusion which the mild air creates. The tufted tops of pines, so close to each other that they form a kind of plain in the air, have a charming effect from any eminence; trees of inferior stature are sheltered

by this verdant arch. Only two palms are to be found in the Monks' Gardens: one is on a height; it may be seen from some distance always with pleasure. In returning towards the city, this image of a meridian more burning than that of Italy awakens a host of agreeable sensations.

"Do you not find," said Corinne, "that nature here gives birth to reveries elsewhere unknown? She is as intimate with the heart of man as if the Creator made her the interpretress between his creatures and himself."—"I feel all this," replied Oswald; "yet it may be but your melting influence which renders me so susceptible. You reveal to me emotions which exterior objects may create." I lived but in my heart; you have revived my imagination. But the magic of the universe, which you teach me to appreciate, will never offer me aught lovelier than your looks, more touching than your voice."—"May the feeling I kindle in your breast to-day," said Corinne, "last as long as my life; or, at least, may my life last no longer than your love!" They finished their tour of Rome by the Villa Borghese. In no Roman palace or garden are the splendors of nature and art collected so tastefully. Every kind of tree, superb waterfalls, with an incredible blending of statues, vases, and sarcophagi, here reanimate the mythology of the land. Naiads recline beside the streams, nymphs start from thickets worthy of such guests. Tombs repose beneath Elysian shades; Esculapius stands in the centre of an island; Venus appears gliding from a bower. Ovid and Virgil might wander here, and believe themselves still in the Augustan age. The great works of sculpture, which grace this scene, give it a charm forever new. Through its trees may be descried the city, St. Peter's, the Campagna, and those long arcades, ruins of aqueducts, which

formerly conducted many a mountain stream into old Rome. There is everything that can mingle purity with pleasure, and promise perfect happiness: but if you ask why this delicious spot is not inhabited, you will be told, that the *cattiva aria*, or bad air, prevents its being occupied in summer. This enemy, each year, besieges Rome more and more closely—its most charming abodes are deserted perforce. Doubtless the want of trees is one cause; and therefore did the Romans dedicate their woods to goddesses, that they might be respected by the people: yet have numberless forests been felled in our own times. What can now be so sanctified that avarice will forbear its devastation? This *malaria* is the scourge of Rome, and often threatens its whole population; yet, perhaps, it adds to the effect produced by the lovely gardens to be found within the boundaries. Its malignant power is betrayed by no external sign: you respire an air that seems pure; the earth is fertile; a delicious freshness atones in the evening for the heat of the day; and all this is death!

"I love such invisible danger," said Oswald, "veiled as it is in delight. If death, as I believe, be but a call to happier life, why should not the perfume of flowers, the shade of fine trees, and the breath of eve be charged to remind us of our fate? Of course, government ought, in every way, to watch over human life; but nature has secrets which imagination only can penetrate; and I easily conceive that neither natives nor foreigners find anything to disgust them in the perils which belong to the sweetest seasons of the year."

BOOK VI.

ON ITALIAN CHARACTER AND MANNERS.

CHAPTER I.

Oswald's irresolution, augmented by misfortunes, taught him to fear every irrevocable engagement. He dared not ask Corinne her name or story, though his love for her grew each day more strong; he could not look on her without emotion; hardly, in the midst of society, quit her side for an instant; she said not a word he did not feel, nor expressed a sentiment, sad or gay, that was not reflected in his face. Yet, loving, admiring her as he did, he forgot not how little such a wife would accord with English habits; how much she differed from the idea his father formed of the woman it would become him to marry; all he said to Corinne was restrained by the disquiet these reflections caused him. She perceived this but too plainly; yet so much would it have cost her to break with him, that she lent herself to whatever could prevent a decisive explanation; and, never possessing much forethought, revelled in the present, such as it was, not dreaming of the inevitable future. She entirely secluded herself from the world in this devotion to him; but, at last, hurt by his silence on their prospects, she resolved to accept a pressing invitation to a ball. Nothing is more common, in Rome, than for persons to leave and return to society by fits; there is so little gossip in Italy, that people do what they like, without comment, at least without obstacle, in affairs either of love or ambition.

Foreigners are as safe as natives in this rendezvous of Europeans. When Nevil learned that Corinne was going to a ball, he was out of humor; for some time he had fancied that he detected in her a melancholy sympathetic with his own; yet suddenly she appeared to think of nothing but dancing (in which she so much excelled), and the eclat of a fête. Corinne was not frivolous; but, feeling every day more subdued by love, she wished to combat its force. She knew by experience that reflection and forbearance have less power over impassioned characters than dissipation; and she thought that, if unable to triumph over herself as she ought, the next best step were to do as she could. When Nevil censured her intentions, she replied, "I want to ascertain whether what formerly pleased can still amuse me, or whether my regard for you is to absorb every other interest of my life."—"You would fain cease to love me," he said. "Not so," she replied; "but it is only in domestic life that it can be agreeable to feel one's self lorded over by a single affection. To me, who need my wit and genius to sustain the reputation of the life I have adopted, it is a great misfortune to love as I love you."—"You will not sacrifice your glory to me, then?" cried Oswald.—"Of what importance were it to you," she replied, "if I did? Since we are not destined for each other, I must not forever destroy the kind of happiness with which I ought to content myself." Lord Nevil said nothing; conscious that he could not now speak without explaining his designs; and, in truth, he was ignorant of them himself. He sighed, and reluctantly followed Corinne to the ball. It was the first time, since his loss, that he had gone to such an assembly. Its tumult so oppressed him that he remained for some period in a hall beside the dancing-room, with his head reclined upon his hand;

not even wishing to see Corinne dance. All music, even if its occasion be a gay one, renders us pensive. The Count d'Erfeuil arrived, enchanted with the crowd and amusements, which once more reminded him of France. "I've done my best," he said, "to interest myself in their vaunted ruins, but I see nothing in them; 'tis a mere prejudice, this fuss about rubbish covered with briers! I shall speak my mind when I return to France; for it is high time that the farce should be ended. There is not a single building of to-day in good repair, that is not worth all these trunks of pillars, and mouldy bas-reliefs, which can only be admired through the spectacles of pedantry. A rapture which one must purchase by study cannot be very vivid in itself. One needs not spoil one's complexion over musty books, to appreciate the sights of Paris."

Lord Nevil was silent, and d'Erfeuil questioned him on his opinion of Rome. "A ball is not the place for serious conversation," said Oswald; "and you know that I can afford you no other."—"Mighty fine," replied the Count. "I own I am gayer than you; but who can say that I am not wiser too? Trust me, there is much philosophy in taking the world as it goes."—"Perhaps you are right," answered Oswald; "but, as you are what you are by nature, and not by reflection, your manner of living can belong to no one but yourself."

D'Erfeuil now heard the name of Corinne from the ball-room, and went to learn what was doing there. Nevil followed him to the door, and saw the handsome Neapolitan Prince Amalfi soliciting her to dance the Tarantula with him. All her friends joined in this request. She waited for no importunity, but promised with a readiness which astonished

d'Erfeuil, accustomed as he was to the refusals with which it is the fashion to precede consent. In Italy these airs are unknown; there, every one is simple enough to believe that he cannot better please society than by promptly fulfilling whatever it requires. Corinne would have introduced this natural manner, if she had not found it there. The dress she had assumed was light and elegant. Her locks were confined by a silken fillet, and her eyes expressed an animation which rendered her more attractive than ever. Oswald was uneasy; displeased with his own subjection to charms whose existence he was inclined to deplore, as, far from wishing to gratify him, it was almost in order to escape from his power that Corinne shone forth thus enchantingly; yet, who could resist her seducing grace? Even in scorn she would have been still triumphant; but scorn was not in her disposition. She perceived her lover; and blushed, as she bestowed on him one of her sweetest smiles. The Prince Amalfi accompanied himself with castanets. Corinne saluted the assembly with both hands; then, turning, took the tambourine, which her partner presented to her, and she beat time as she danced. Her gestures displayed that easy union of modesty and voluptuousness, such as must have so awed the Indians when the Bayardères—poets of the dance—depicted the various passions by characteristic attitudes. Corinne was so well acquainted with antique painting and sculpture, that her positions were so many studies for the votaries of art. Now she held her tambourine above her head; sometimes advanced it with one hand, while the other ran over its little bells with a dexterous rapidity that brought to mind the girls of Herculaneum.[1] This was not French dancing, remarkable for the difficulty of its steps; it was a

movement more allied to fancy and to sentiment. The air to which she danced, pleased alternately by its softness and its precision. Corinne as thoroughly infected the spectators with her own sensations as she did while extemporizing poetry, playing on her lyre, or designing an expressive group. Everything was language for her. The musicians, in gazing on her, felt all the genius of their art; and every witness of this magic was electrified by impassioned joy, transported into an ideal world, there to dream of bliss unknown below.

There is a part of the Neapolitan dance where the heroine kneels, while the hero marches round her, like a conqueror. How dignified looked Corinne at that moment! What a sovereign she was on her knees! and when she rose, clashing her airy tambourine, she appeared animated by such enthusiasm of youthful beauty, that one might have thought she needed no life but her own to make her happy. Alas, it was not thus! though Oswald feared it, and sighed as if her every success separated her farther from him. When the Prince, in his turn knelt to Corinne, she, if possible, surpassed herself. Twice or thrice she fled round him, her sandalled feet skimming the floor with the speed of lightning; and when shaking her tambourine above his head with one hand, she signed with the other for him to rise, every man present was tempted to prostrate himself before her, except Lord Nevil, who drew back some paces, and d'Erfeuil, who made a step or two forwards, in order to compliment Corinne. The Italians gave way to what they felt, without one fear of making themselves remarkable. They were not like men so accustomed to society, and the self-love which it excites, as to think on the effect they might produce; they are never to be turned from their

pleasures by vanity, nor from their purposes by applause.

Corinne, charmed with the result of her attempt, thanked her friends with amiable simplicity. She was satisfied, and permitted her content to be seen, with childlike candor; her greatest desire was to get through the crowd to the door, against which Oswald was leaning. She reached it at last, and paused for him to speak. "Corinne," he said, endeavoring to conceal both his delight and his distress, "you have extorted universal homage: but is there, among all your adorers, one brave, one trusty friend; one protector for life? or can the clamors of flattery suffice a soul like yours?"

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[1] The dancing of Madame Récamier gave me the idea which I endeavored to express. This celebrated beauty, in the midst of afflictions, displayed so touching a resignation, so total a forgetfulness of self, that her moral qualities seem as extraordinary as her personal grace.

CHAPTER II.

The press of company prevented Corinne's reply: they were going to supper; and each *cavaliér servénte* hastened to seat himself beside his lady. A fair stranger arrived and found no room; yet not a man, save Oswald and d'Erfeuil, rose to offer her his place. Not that the Romans were either rude or selfish; but they believed that their honor depended on their never quitting their post of duty. Some, unable to gain seats, leaned behind their mistresses' chairs,

ready to obey the slightest sign. The females spoke but to their lovers: strangers wandered in vain around a circle where no one had a word to spare them; for Italian women are ignorant of that coquetry which renders a love affair nothing more than the triumph of self-conceit; they wish to please no eyes save those that are dear to them. The mind is never misled before the heart. The most abrupt commencements are often followed by sincere devotion, and even by lasting constancy. Infidelity is more censured in man than in woman. Three or four men, beneath different titles, may follow the same beauty, who takes them with her everywhere, sometimes without troubling herself to name them to the master of the house which receives the party. One is the favorite; another aspires to be so; a third calls himself the sufferer (*il patíto*); though disdained, he is permitted to be of use; all the rivals live peaceably together. It is only among the common people that you still hear of the stiletto; but the whole country presents a wild mixture of simpleness and of vice, dissimulation and truth, good-nature and revenge, strength and weakness; justifying the remark, that the best of these qualities may be found among those who will do nothing for vanity; the worst among such as will do anything for interest; whether the interest of love, of avarice, or ambition. Distinctions of rank are generally disregarded in Italy. It is not from stoicism, but from heedless familiarity, that men are here insensible to aristocratic prejudices; constituting themselves judges of no one, they admit everybody. After supper they sat down to play; some of the women at hazard, others chose silent whist; and not a word was now uttered in the apartment, so noisy just before. The people of the south often run thus quickly from the

extreme of agitation to that of repose; it is one of the peculiarities of their character, that indolence is succeeded by activity: indeed, in all respects they are the last men on whose merits or defects we ought to decide at first sight; so contrasted are the qualities they unite; the creatures all prudence to-day may be all audacity to-morrow. They are often apathetic, from just having made, or preparing to make, some great exertion. In fact, they waste not one energy of their minds on society, but hoard them till called forth by strong events. At this assembly many persons lost enormous sums, without the slightest change of countenance; yet the same beings could not have related a trivial anecdote without the most lively and expressive gesticulation. But when the passions have attained a certain degree of violence, they shrink from sight and veil themselves in silence.

Nevil could not surmount the bitter feelings this ball engendered; he believed that the Italians had weaned his love from him at least for a time. He was very wretched; yet his pride prevented his evincing aught beyond a contempt for the tributes offered her. When asked to play he refused, as did Corinne, who beckoned him to sit beside her; he feared to compromise her name by passing a whole evening alone with her before the eyes of the world. "Be at ease on that head," she replied; "no one thinks about us. Here no established etiquette exacts respect; a kindly politeness is all that is required; no one wishes to annoy or to be annoyed. 'Tis true that we have not here what in England is called liberty; but our social independence is perfect."—"That is," said Oswald, "that no reverence is paid to appearances."—"At least, here is no hypocrisy," she answered. —"Rochefoucault says: 'The least among the defects of a woman of gallantry is that of being one;' but

whatever be the faults of Italian women, deceit does not conceal them; and if marriage vows are not held sufficiently sacred, they are broken by mutual consent."—"It is not sincerity that causes this kind of frankness," replied Oswald, "but indifference to public opinion. I brought hither an introduction to a princess, and gave it to the servant I had hired here, who said to me: 'Ah, sir, just now, this will do no service, the princess sees no one; she is *innamoráta*.' Thus was the fact of a lady's being in love proclaimed like any other domestic affair. Nor is this publicity excused by fidelity to one passion: many attachments succeed each other, all equally known. Women have so little mystery in these ties, that they speak of them with less embarrassment than *our* brides could talk of their husbands. It is not easy to believe that any deep or refined affection can exist with this shameless fickleness. Though nothing is thought of but love, here can be no romance: adventures are so rapid, and so open, that nothing is left to be developed; and, justly to describe the general method of arranging these things, one ought to begin and end in the first chapter. Corinne, pardon me if I give you pain. You are an Italian; that should disarm me: but one reason why you are thus incomparable is, that you unite the best characteristics of our different nations. I know not where you were educated, but you certainly cannot have passed all your life here: perhaps, it was in England. Ah, if so, how could you leave that sanctuary of all that is modest, for a land where not only virtue, but love itself is so little understood! It may be breathed in the air, but does it reach the heart? The poetry, here, in which love plays so great a part, is full of brilliant pictures, indeed; but where will you find the melancholy tenderness of our

bards? What have you to compare with the parting of Jaffier and Belvidera, with Romeo and Juliet, or with the lines in Thomson's Spring, depicting the happiness of wedded life? Is there any such life in Italy? and, without homefelt felicity, how can love exist? Is not happiness the aim of the heart, as pleasure is that of the senses? Would not all young and lovely women be alike to us, did not mental qualities decide our preference? What then, do these qualities teach us to crave? an intercourse of thought and feeling, permanent and undivided! This is what *we* mean by marriage. Illegitimate love, when, unhappily, it does occur among us, is still but the reflex of marriage. The same comfort is sought abroad which cannot be found at home; and even infidelity in England is more moral than Italian matrimony."

This severity so afflicted Corinne that she rose, her eyes filled with tears, and hurried home. Oswald was in despair at having offended her; but the irritation this ball had dealt him, found a channel in the censure he had just pronounced. He followed her; but she would not see him. Next morning he made another attempt; but her door was still closed. This was out of character in Corinne; but she was so dismayed by his opinion of her countrywomen, that she resolved, if possible, to conceal her affection from him forever. Oswald, on his part, was confirmed by this unusual conduct in the discontent that unlucky fête had engendered; he was excited to struggle against the sentiment whose empire he dreaded. His principles were strict.

Corinne's manners sometimes evinced a too universal wish to please; her conduct and carriage were noble and reserved; but her opinions were over-indulgent.

In fact, though dazzled and enervated, something still combatted his weakness. Such a state often embitters our language; we are displeased with ourselves and others; we suffer so much, that we long to brave the worst at once, and, by open war, ascertain which of our two formidable emotions is to triumph. It was in this mood that he wrote to Corinne. He knew his letter was angry and unbecoming; yet a confusion of impulses urged him to send it. He was so miserable in his present situation, that he longed, at any price, for some change; and was reckless how his doubts were answered, so that they came to a termination. A rumor brought him by Count d'Erfeuil, though he believed it not, contributed, perhaps, to render his style still more unkind. It was said that Corinne was about to marry Prince Amalfi. Oswald well knew that she did not love this man, and ought to have been sure that the report sprung merely from her having danced with him; but he persuaded himself that she had received Amalfi when denied to him; therefore, though too proud to confess his personal jealousy, he vented it on the people in whose favor he knew her to be so prepossessed.

CHAPTER III.

"TO CORINNE.

"January 24, 1795.

"You refuse to see me; you are offended by my last conversation, and, no doubt, intend henceforth to

admit none but your countrymen, and thus expiate your recent deviation from that rule. Yet, far from repenting the sincerity with which I spoke to *you*, whom, perhaps chimerically, I would fain consider an Englishwoman, I will dare to say, still more plainly, that you can preserve neither your own dignity nor your own peace, by choosing a husband from your present society. I know not one Italian who deserves you; not one who could honor you by his alliance, whatever were the *title* he had to bestow. The men are far less estimable here than the women, to whose errors they add worse of their own. Would you persuade me that these sons of the South, who so carefully avoid all trouble, and live but for enjoyment, can be capable of love? Did you not, last month, see at the Opera a man who had not eight days before lost a wife he was said to adore? The memory of the dead, the thought of death itself, is here, as much as possible, thrown aside. Funeral ceremonies are performed by the priests, as the duties of love are fulfilled by *cavaliéres servéntes*. Custom has prescribed all rites beforehand: regret and enthusiasm are nothing. But what, above all, must be destructive to love, is the fact that your men cannot be

respected; women give them no credit for submission, because they found them originally weak, and destitute of all serious employment. It is requisite, for the perfection of natural and social order, that men should protect, and women be protected; but by guardians adoring the weakness they defend, and worshipping the gentle divinity which, like the Penates of the ancients, calls down good fortune on the house. Here one might almost say that woman is the sultan, and men her seraglio; it is they who have most pliancy and softness. An Italian proverb says: 'Who knows not how to feign, knows not how to live,' Is not that a feminine maxim? but where you have neither military glory nor free institutions, how should men acquire strength and majesty of mind? Their wit degenerates into a kind of cleverness, with which they play the game of life like a match at chess, wherein success is everything. All that remains of their love for antiquity consists in exaggerated expressions and external grandeur; but, beside this baseless greatness, you often find the most vulgar tastes, the most miserably neglected homes. Is this, then, Corinne, the country you prefer? Is its boisterous applause so essential to you, that

> every other kind of destiny would seem dull, compared with these re-echoing *brávos?* Who could hope to make you happy, in tearing you from this tumult? You are an incomprehensible person: deep in feeling, superficial in taste; independent by pride of soul, enslaved by a desire for dissipation; capable of loving but one, yet requiring the notice of all the world. You are a sorceress, who alternately disturb and reassure me; who, when most sublime, can at once descend from the region where you reign alone, to lose yourself among the herd. Corinne, Corinne! in loving you, it is impossible to avoid fearing and doubting too.
> OSWALD."

Indignant as Corinne felt at Nevil's antipathy to her country, she was relieved by guessing that the fête, and her refusal to speak with him, had ruffled his temper. She hesitated, or believed herself hesitating, for some time, as to the line of conduct she ought to pursue. Love made her sigh for his presence: yet she could not brook his supposing that she wished to be his wife; though in fortune, at least, his equal, and no way beneath him in name, if she deigned to reveal it. The uncontrolled life she had chosen, might have given her some aversion to marriage; and, certainly, had not her attachment blinded her to all the pangs she must endure in espousing an Englishman, and renouncing Italy, she would have repulsed such an idea with disdain. A woman may forget her pride in all that concerns the heart: but when worldly interest

appears the obstacle to inclinations; when the person beloved can be accused of sacrificing himself in his union, she can no longer abandon herself to her feelings before him. Corinne, however, unable to break with her lover, trusted that she still might meet him, yet conceal her affection. It was in this belief that she determined on replying only to his accusations of the Italians, and reasoning on them as if interested by no other subject. Perhaps the best way in which such a woman can regain her coldness and her dignity, is that of entrenching herself in the fortress of her mental superiority.

"TO LORD NEVIL.

"Jan. 25, 1795.

"If your letter concerned no one but me, my Lord, I should not attempt to justify myself. My character is so easily known, that he who cannot comprehend it intuitively, would not be enlightened by any explanation I could give. The virtuous reserve of Englishwomen, and the more artful graces of the French, often conceal one half of what passes in their bosoms; and what you are pleased to call magic in me, is nothing but an unconstrained disposition, which permits my varying, my inconsistent thoughts to be heard, without my taking the pains of bringing them into tune. Such harmony is nearly always factitious; for most genuine characters are heedlessly confiding. But it is not of myself that I would

speak to you; it is of the unfortunate nation which you attack so cruelly. Can my regard for my friends have instilled this bitter malignity? You know me too well to be jealous of them: nor have I the vanity to suppose that any such sentiment has rendered you thus unjust. You say but what all foreigners say of the Italians, what must strike every one at first; but you should look deeper ere you thus sentence a people once so great. Whence came it that, in the Roman day, they were the most military in the world; during the republics of the Middle Ages, the most tenacious of their freedom; and, in the sixteenth century, the most illustrious for literature, science, and the arts? Has not Italy pursued fame in every shape? If it be lost to her now, blame her political situation; since, in other circumstances, she showed herself so unlike all she is. I may be wrong, but the faults of the Italians only enhance my pity for their fate. Strangers, from time to time, have conquered and distracted this fair land, the object of their perpetual ambition; yet strangers forever reproach her natives with the defects inevitable to a vanquished race.

"Europe owes her learning, her accomplishments, to the Italians; and, having turned their own gifts

against them, would gladly deny them the only glory left to a people deprived of martial power and public liberty. It is true that governments form the characters of nations; and, in Italy herself, you will find remarkable distinctions between the inhabitants of different states. The Piedmontese, who once formed a small national corps, have a more warlike spirit than the rest. The Florentines, who have mostly possessed either freedom or liberal rulers, are well-educated and well-mannered. The Venetians and the Genoese evince a capacity for politics, because they have a republican aristocracy. The Milanese are more sincere, thanks to their long intercourse with northern nations. The Neapolitans are prompt to rebel, having for ages lived beneath an imperfect government, but still one of their own. The Roman nobles have nothing to do, either diplomatic or military, and may well remain idly ignorant; but the ecclesiastics, whose career is definite, have faculties far more developed; and, as the papal law observes no distinction of birth, but is purely elective in its ordinance of the clergy, the result is, a species of liberality, not in ideas, but in habits, which renders Rome the most agreeable abode for those who have

neither power nor emulation for sustaining a part in the world. The people of the South are more easily modified by existing institutions than those of the North. This clime induces a languor favorable to resignation, and nature offers enough to console man for the advantages society denies. Undoubtedly, there is much corruption in Italy: its civilization is far from refinement. There is a savage wilderness beneath Italian cunning; it is that of a hunter lying in wait for his prey. Indolent people easily become sly and shifting; their natural gentleness serves to hide even a fit of rage; for it is by our habitual manner that an accidental change of feeling may be best concealed. Yet Italians have both truth and constancy in their private connections. Interest may sway them, but not pride. Here is no ceremony, no fashion; none of the little everyday tricks for creating a sensation. The usual sources of artifice and of envy exist not here. Foes and rivals are deceived by those who consider themselves at war with them; but, while in peace, they act with honesty and candor. This is the very cause of your complaint. Our women hear of nothing but love; they live in an atmosphere of seduction and

dangerous example; yet their frankness lends an innocence to gallantry itself. They have no fear of ridicule: many are so ignorant that they cannot even write, and confess it without scruple. They engage a *Paglietto* to answer letters for them, which he does on paper large enough for a petition; but among the better classes you see professors from the academies in their black scarfs, giving lessons publicly. If you are inclined to laugh at them, they ask you: 'Is there any harm in understanding Greek, or living by our own exertions? How can you deride so matter-of-course a proceeding?' Dare I, my Lord, touch on a more delicate subject?—the reason why our men so seldom display a military spirit. They readily expose their lives for love or hate: in such causes, the wounds given and received neither astonish nor alarm their witnesses. Fearless of death, when natural passions command them to defy it; they still, I must confess, value life above the political interests which slightly affect those who can scarcely be said to have a country. Chivalrous honor has little influence over a people among whom the opinions that nourish it are dead; naturally enough, in such a disorganization of public affairs, women gain a great ascendency;

perhaps too much so for them to respect or admire their lovers, who, nevertheless, treat them with the most delicate devotion. Domestic virtue constitutes the welfare and the pride of Englishwomen; but on no land, where love dispenses with its sacred bonds, is the happiness of women watched over as in Italy. If our men cannot make a moral code for immorality, they are at least just and generous in their participation of cares and duties. They consider themselves more culpable than their mistresses when they break their chains: they know that women make the heaviest sacrifice; and believe that, before the tribunal of the heart, the greatest criminals are those who have done most wrong. Men err from selfishness; women, because they are weak. Where society is at once vigorous and corrupt, that is, most merciless to the faults that are followed by the worst misfortunes, women of course are used with more severity; but where we have no established etiquettes, natural charity has a greater power. Spite all that has been said of Italian perfidy, I will assert that there is as much real good-nature here as in any other country of the world; and that, slandered as it is by strangers, they will nowhere meet with a kinder reception. Italians are reproached as

flatterers; it is with no premeditated plan, but in mere eagerness to please, that they lavish expressions of affection, not often belied by their conduct. Would they be ever-faithful friends, if called on to prove so in danger or adversity?—A very small number, I allow, might be capable of such friendship; but it is not to Italy alone that this observation is applicable. I have previously admitted their Oriental indolence. Yet the very women, who appear like so many beauties of a harem, may surprise you by traits of generosity or of revenge: as for the men, give them but an object, and, in six months, you might find that they would have learned and understood whatever was required of them; but, while they are untaught, why should females be instructed? An Italian girl would soon become worthy of an intelligent husband, provided that she loved him; but in a country where all great interests are suppressed, a careless repose is more noble than a vain agitation about trifles. Literature itself must languish, where thoughts are not renewed by vigorous and varied action. Yet in what land have arts and letters been more worshipped? History shows us, that the popes, princes, and people have at all times

done homage to distinguished painters, sculptors, poets, and other writers.[1] This zeal was, I own, my Lord, one of the first motives which attached me to this country. I did not find here those seared imaginations, that discouraging spirit, nor that despotic mediocrity, which, elsewhere, can so soon stifle innate ability. Here a felicitous phrase takes fire, as it were, among its auditors. As genius is the gift which ranks highest among us, it inevitably excites much envy. Peregolese was assassinated: Giorgione wore a cuirass, when obliged to paint in any public place; but the violent jealousy to which talent gives birth here, is such as in other realms is created by power; it seeks not to depreciate the object it can hate, or even kill, from the very fanaticism of admiration. Finally, when we see so much life in a circle so contracted, in the midst of so many obstacles and oppressions, we can hardly forbear from a vivid solicitude for those who respire with such avidity the little air that fancy breathes through the boundaries which confine them. These are so limited, that men of our day can rarely acquire the pride and firmness which mark those of freer and more military states. I will even confess, if you desire it, my Lord, that such a

> national character must inspire a woman with more enthusiasm; but is it not possible that a man may be brave, honorable, nay, unite all the attributes which can teach us to love, without possessing those that might promise us content?
> "CORINNE."

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[1] Mr. Roscoe, author of the "History of the Medici," has since published that of Leo X., which recounts the proofs of admiring esteem given by the princes and people of Italy to men of letters; impartially adding, that many of the popes have emulated this liberality.

CHAPTER IV.

This letter revived all Oswald's remorse at having even thought of detaching himself from his love. The commanding intellectual mildness of its reproof affected him deeply. A superiority so vast, so real, yet so simple, appeared to him out of all ordinary rule. He was never insensible that this was not the tender creature his fancy had chosen for the partner of his life: all he remembered of Lucy Edgarmond, at twelve years of age, better accorded with that ideal. But who could be compared with Corinne? She was a miracle formed by nature, in his behalf, he dared believe; since he might flatter himself that he was dear to her. Yet what would be his prospects if he declared his inclination to make her his wife? Such, he thought, would be his decision; yet the idea that her past life had not been entirely irreproachable,

and that such a union would assuredly have been condemned by his father, again overwhelmed him with painful anxiety. He was not so subdued by grief as he had been ere he met Corinne; but he no longer felt the calm which may accompany repentance, when a whole life is devoted to expiate our faults. Formerly, he did not fear yielding to his saddest memories, but now he dreaded the meditations which revealed to him the secrets of his heart. He was preparing to seek Corinne, to thank her for her letter, and obtain pardon for his own, when his apartment was suddenly entered by Mr. Edgarmond, the young Lucy's near relation.

This gentleman had lived chiefly on his estate in Wales; he possessed just the principles and the prejudice that serve to keep things as they are; and this is an advantage where things are as well arranged as human reason permits. In such a case, the partisans of established order, even though stubbornly bigoted to their own ways of thinking, deserve to be regarded as rational and enlightened men.

Lord Nevil shuddered as this name was announced. All the past seemed to rise before him in an instant; and his next idea was, that Lady Edgarmond, the mother of Lucy, had charged her kinsman with reproaches. This thought restored his self-command; he received his countryman with excessive coldness; though not a single aim of the good man's journey concerned our hero. He was travelling for his health, exercising himself in the chase, and drinking "Success to King George and old England!" He was one of the best fellows in the world, with more wit and education than would have been supposed; ultra-English, even on points where it would have been

advisable to be less so; keeping up, in all countries, the habit of his own, and avoiding their natives, not from contempt, but a reluctance to speak in foreign tongues, and a timidity which, at the age of fifty, rendered him extremely shy of new acquaintance.

"I am delighted to see you," he said to Nevil. "I go to Naples in a fortnight: shall I find you there? I wish I may! having but little time to stay in Italy, as my regiment embarks shortly." "Your regiment!" repeated Oswald, coloring, not that he had forgotten that, having a year's leave of absence, his presence would not be so soon required; but he blushed to think that Corinne might banish even duty from his mind. "Your corps," continued Mr. Edgarmond, "will leave you more leisure for the quiet necessary to restore your strength. Just before I left England, I saw a little cousin of mine in whom you are interested: she is a charming girl! and, by the time you return, next year, I don't doubt that she will be the finest woman in England." Nevil was silent, and Mr. Edgarmond too. For some time after this, they addressed each other very laconically, though with kind politeness, and the guest rose to depart; but, turning from the door, said, abruptly, "Apropos, my Lord, you can do me a favor, I am told that you know the celebrated Corinne; and, though I generally shrink from foreigners, I am really curious to see her." "I will ask her permission to take you to her house, then," replied Oswald. "Do, I beg: let me see her, some day when she extemporises, dances, and sings." "Corinne," returned Nevil, "does not thus display her accomplishments before strangers: she is every way your equal and mine." "Forgive my mistake," cried his friend; "but as she is merely called Corinne, and, at six-and-twenty, lives unprotected by any one of her family, I thought that she subsisted by her

talents, and might gladly seize any opportunity of making them known." "Her fortune is independent," replied Oswald, hastily; "her mind still more so." Mr. Edgarmond regretted that he had mentioned her, seeing that the topic interested Lord Nevil.

No people on earth deal more considerately with true affections than do the English. He departed; Oswald remained alone, exclaiming to himself: "I ought to marry Corinne! I must secure her against future misinterpretation. I will offer her the little I can, rank and name, in return for the felicity which she alone can grant me." In this mood, full of hope and love, he hastened to her house: yet, by a natural impulse of diffidence, began by reassuring himself with conversation on indifferent themes: among them was the request of Mr. Edgarmond. She was evidently discomposed by that name, and, in a trembling voice, refused his visit. Oswald was greatly astonished. "I should have thought that with you, who receive so much company," he said, "the title of *my* friend would be no motive for exclusion."—"Do not be offended, my Lord," she said; "believe me, I must have powerful reasons for denying any wish of yours."—"Will you tell me those reasons?" he asked. "Impossible!" she answered. "Be it so, then," he articulated. The vehemence of his feelings checked his speech; he would have left her, but Corinne, through her tears, exclaimed in English: "For God's sake stay, if you would not break my heart!"

These words and accents thrilled Nevil to the soul; he reseated himself at some distance from her, leaning his head against an alabaster vase, and murmuring: "Cruel woman! you see I love you, and am twenty times a day ready to offer you my hand; yet you will not tell me who you are, Corinne! Tell me

now!"—"Oswald," she sighed, "you know not how you pain me: were I rash enough to obey, you would cease to love me."—"Great God!" he cried, "what have you to reveal?"—"Nothing that renders me unworthy of you: but do not exact it. Some day, perhaps, when you love me better—if—ah! I know not what I say—you shall know all, but do not abandon me unheard. Promise it in the name of your now sainted father!"

"Name him not!" raved Oswald. "Know you if he would unite or part us? If you believe he would consent, say so, and I shall surmount this anguish. I will one day tell you the sad story of my life; but now, behold the state to which you have reduced me!"

Cold dews stood on his pale brow; his trembling lips could utter no more. Corinne seated herself beside him; and, holding his hands in hers tenderly, recalled him to himself. "My dear Oswald?" she said, ask Mr. Edgarmond if he was ever in Northumberland; or, at least, if he has been there only within the last five years: if so, you may bring him hither." Oswald gazed fixedly on her; she cast down her eyes in silence. "I will do what you desire," he said, and departed. Secluded in his chamber, he exhausted his conjectures on the secrets of Corinne. It appeared evident that she had passed some time in England, and that her family name must be known there! but what was her motive for concealment, and why had she left his country? He was convinced that no stain could attach to her life; but he feared that a combination of circumstances might have made her seem blamable in the eyes of others. He was armed against the disapprobation of every country save England. The memory of his father was so entwined

with that of his native land, that each sentiment strengthened the other. Oswald learned from Edgarmond that he had visited Northumberland for the first time a year ago; and therefore promised to introduce him at Corinne's that evening. He was the first to arrive there, in order to warn her against the misconceptions of his friend, and beg her, by a cold reserve of manner, to show him how much he was deceived.

"If you permit me," she observed, "I would rather treat him as I do every one else. If he wishes to hear the improvisatrice, he shall; I will show myself to him such as I am; for I think he will as easily perceive my rightful pride through this simple conduct, as if I behaved with an affected constraint."—"You are right, Corinne," said Oswald: "how wrong were he who would attempt to change you from your admirable self!" The rest of the party now joined them. Nevil placed himself near his love, with an added air of deference, rather to command that of others than to satisfy himself; he had soon the joy of finding this effort needless! She captivated Edgarmond, not only by her charms and conversation, but by inspiring that esteem which sterling characters, however contrasted, naturally feel for each other; and when he ventured on asking her to extemporise for him, he aspired to this honor with the most revering earnestness. She consented without delay; for she knew how to give her favors a value beyond that of difficult attainment. She was anxious to please the countryman of Nevil—a man whose report of her ought to have some weight—but these thoughts occasioned her so sudden a tremor, that she knew not how to begin. Oswald, grieved that she should not shine her best before an Englishman, turned away his eyes, in obvious

embarrassment; and Corinne, thinking of no one but himself, lost all her presence of mind; nor ideas, nor even words, were at her call; and, suddenly giving up the attempt, she said to Mr. Edgarmond, "Forgive me, sir; fear robs me of all power. 'Tis the first time, my friends know, that I was ever thus beside myself; but," she added, with a sigh, "it may not be the last."

Till now, Oswald had seen her genius triumph over her affections; but now feeling had entirely subdued her mind; yet so identified was he with her glory, that he suffered beneath this failure, instead of enjoying it. Certain, however, that she would excel on a future interview with his friend, he gave himself up to the sweet pledge of his own power which he had just received; and the image of his beloved reigned more securely in his heart than ever.

BOOK VII.

ITALIAN LITERATURE.

CHAPTER I.

Lord Nevil was very desirous that Mr. Edgarmond should partake the conversation of Corinne, which far surpassed her improvised verses. On the following day, the same party assembled at her house; and, to elicit her remarks, he turned the discourse on Italian literature, provoking her natural vivacity by affirming that England could boast a greater number of true poets than Italy. "In the first

place," said Corinne, "foreigners usually know none but our first-rate poets: Dante, Petrarch, Ariosto, Guarini, Tasso, and Metastasio; but we have many others, such as Chiabrera, Guidi, Filicaja, and Parini, without reckoning Sannazer Politian, who wrote in Latin. All their verses are harmoniously colored; all more or less knew how to introduce the wonders of nature and art into their verbal pictures. Doubtless they want the melancholy grandeur of *your* bards, and their knowledge of the human heart; but does not this kind of superiority become the philosopher better than the poet? The brilliant melody of our language is rather adapted to describe external objects than abstract meditation; it is more competent to depict fury than sadness; for reflection calls for metaphysical expressions; while revenge excites the fancy, and banishes the thought of grief. Cesarotti has translated Ossian in the most elegant manner: but in reading him, we feel that his words are in themselves too joyous for the gloomy ideas they would recall; we yield to the charm of our soft phrases, as to the murmur of waves or the tints of flowers. What more would you exact of poetry? If you ask the nightingale the meaning of his song, he can explain but by recommencing it; we can only appreciate its music by giving way to the impression it makes on us. Our measured lines, with rapid terminations, composed of two brief syllables, glide along as their name (*Sdruccioli*) denotes, sometimes imitating the light steps of a dance; sometimes, with graver tone, realizing the tumult of a tempest, or the clash of arms. Our poetry is a wonder of imagination: you ought not in it to seek for every species of pleasure."—"I admit," returned Nevil, "that you account as well as possible for the beauties and defects of your national poetry; but when these

faults, without these graces, are found in prose, how can you defend it? what is but vague in the one becomes unmeaning in the other. The crowd of common ideas, that your poets embellish by melody and by figures, is served up cold in your prose, with the most fatiguing pertinacity. The greatest portion of your present prose writers use a language so declamatory, so diffuse, so abounding in superlatives, that one would think they all dealt out the same accepted phrases by word of command, or by a kind of convention. Their style is a tissue, a piece of mosaic. They possess in its highest degree the art of inflating an idea, or frothing up a sentiment; one is tempted to ask them a similar question to that put by the negress to the Frenchwoman, in the days of hoop-petticoats, 'Pray, Madam, is all *that* yourself?' Now, how much is real, beneath this pomp of words, which one true expression might dissipate like an idle dream?"—"You forget," interrupted Corinne, "first Machiavel and Boccaccio, then Gravina, Filangieri, and even, in our own days, Cesarotti, Verri, Bettinelli, and many others, who knew both how to write and how to think.[1] I agree with you, that, for the last century or two, unhappy circumstances having deprived Italy of her independence, all zeal for truth has been so lost, that it is often impossible to speak it in any way. The result is, a habit of resting content with words, and never daring to approach a thought. Authors, too sure that they can effect no change in the state of things, write but to show their wit—the surest way of soon concluding with no wit at all; for it is only by directing our efforts to a nobly useful aim that we can augment our stock of ideas. When writers can do nothing for the welfare of their country; when, indeed, their

means constitute their end; from leading to no better, they double in a thousand windings, without advancing one step. The Italians are afraid of new ideas, rather because they are indolent than from literary servility. By nature they have much originality; but they give themselves no time to reflect. Their eloquence, so vivid in conversation, chills as they work; besides this, the Southerns feel hampered by prose, and can only express themselves fully in verse. It is not thus with French literature," added Corinne to d'Erfeuil: "your prose writers are often more poetical than your versifiers."—"That is a truth established by classic authorities," replied the Count. "Bossuet, La Bruyére, Montesquieu, and Buffon can never be surpassed; especially the first two, who belonged to the age of Louis XIV.; they are perfect models for all to imitate who can;—a hint as important to foreigners as to ourselves."—"I can hardly think," returned Corinne, "that it were desirable for distinct countries to lose their peculiarities; and I dare to tell you, Count, that, in your own land, the national orthodoxy which opposes all felicitous innovations must render your literature very barren. Genius is essentially creative; it bears the character of the individual who possesses it. Nature, who permits no two leaves to be exactly alike, has given a still greater diversity to human minds. Imitation, then, is a double murder; for it deprives both copy and original of their primitive existence."—"Would you wish *us*," asked d'Erfeuil, "to admit such Gothic barbarisms as Young's 'Night Thoughts,' or the Spanish and Italian *Concetti*? What would become of our tasteful and elegant style after such a mixture?" The Prince Castel Forte now remarked: "I think that we all are in want of each other's aid. The literature of every country offers a

new sphere of ideas to those familiar with it. Charles V. said: 'The man who understands four languages is worth four men,' What that great Genius applied to politics is as true in the state of letters. Most foreigners understand French; their views, therefore, are more extended than those of Frenchmen, who know no language but their own. Why do they not oftener learn other tongues? They would preserve what distinguishes themselves, and might acquire some things in which they still are wanting."

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[1] Cesarotti, Verri, and Bettinelli, three modern authors, have instilled more thought into Italian prose than has been bestowed on it for many years.

CHAPTER II.

"You will confess, at least," replied the Count, "that there is one department in which *we* have nothing to learn from any one. Our theatre is decidedly the first in Europe. I cannot suppose that the English themselves would think of placing their Shakspeare above us."—"Pardon me, they do think of it," answered Mr. Edgarmond; and, having said this, resumed his previous silence. "Oh!" exclaimed the Count, with civil contempt; "let every man think as he pleases; but I persist in believing that, without presumption, we may call ourselves the highest of all dramatic artists. As for the Italians, if I may speak frankly, they are in doubt whether there is such an art in the world. Music is everything with them; the piece nothing: if a second act possesses a better *scena*

than the first, they begin with that; nay, they will play portions of different operas on the same night, and between them an act from some prose comedy, containing nothing but moral sentences, such as our ancestors turned over to the use of other countries, as worn too threadbare for their own. Your famed musicians do what they will with your poets. One won't sing a certain air, unless the word *Felicità* be introduced; the tenor demands his *Tomba*; a third can't shake unless be upon *Catene*. The poor poet must do his best to harmonize these varied tastes with his dramatic situations. Nor is this the worst: some of them will not deign to walk on the stage; they must appear surrounded by clouds, or descend from the top of a palace staircase, in order to give their entrance due effect. Let an air be sung in ever so tender or so furious a passage, the actor must needs bow his thanks for the applause it draws down. In Semiramis, the other night, the spectre of Ninus paid his respects to the pit with an obsequiousness quite neutralizing the awe his costume should have created. In Italy, the theatre is looked on merely as a rendezvous, where you need listen to nothing but the songs and the ballet. I may well say they *listen* to the ballet, for they are never quiet till after its commencement; in itself it is the *chef-d'œuvre* of bad taste; I know not what there is to amuse in your ballet beyond its absurdity. I have seen Gengis Khan, clothed in ermine and magnanimity, give up his crown to the child of his conquered rival, and lift him into the air upon his foot, a new way of raising a monarch to the throne; I have seen the self-devotion of Curtius, in three acts, full of divertissements. The hero, dressed like an Arcadian shepherd, had a long dance with his mistress, ere he mounted a real horse upon the stage,

and threw himself into a fiery gulf, lined with orange satin and gold paper. In fact l have seen an abridgement of the Roman history, turned into ballets, from Romulus down to Cæsar."—"All that is very true," mildly replied the Prince of Castel Forte; "but you speak only of our Opera, which is in no country considered the dramatic theatre."—"Oh, it is still worse when they represent tragedies, or dramas not included under the head of those with *happy catastrophes*; they crowd more horrors into five acts than human imagination ever conceived. In one of these pieces a lover kills his mistress' brother, and burns her brains before the audience. The fourth act is occupied by the funeral, and ere the fifth begins, the lover, with the utmost composure, gives out the next night's harlequinade; then resumes his character, in order to end the play by shooting himself. The tragedians are perfect counterparts of the cold exaggerations in which they perform, committing the greatest atrocities with the most exemplary indifference. If an actor becomes impassioned, he is called a preacher, so much more emotion is betrayed in the pulpit than on the stage; and it is lucky that these heroes are so peacefully pathetic, since as there is nothing interesting in your plays, the more fuss they made, the more ridiculous they would become: it were well if they were divertingly so; but it is all too monotonous to laugh at. Italy has neither tragedy nor comedy; the only drama truly her own is the harlequinade. A thievish, cowardly glutton; an amorous or avaricious old dupe of a guardian, are the materials. You will own that such inventions cost no very great efforts, and that the 'Tartuffe' and the 'Misanthrope' called for some exertion of genius." This attack displeased the Italians, though they laughed at it. In conversation

the Count preferred displaying his wit to his good-humor. Natural benevolence prompted his actions, but self-love his words. Castel Forte and others longed to refute his accusations, but they thought the cause would be better defended by Corinne; and as they rarely sought to shine themselves, they were content, after citing such names as Maffei, Metastasio, Goldoni, Alfieri, and Monti, with begging her to answer Monsieur d'Erfeuil. Corinne agreed with him that the Italians had no national theatre; but she sought to prove that circumstances, and not want of talent, had caused this deficiency. "Comedy," she said, "as depending on observation of manners, can only exist in a country accustomed to a great varied population. Italy is animated by violent passions or effeminate enjoyments. Such passions give birth to crimes that confound all shades of character. But that ideal comedy, which suits all times, all countries, was invented here. Harlequin, pantaloon, and clown are to be found in every piece of that description. Everywhere they have rather masks than faces; that is, they wear the physiognomy of their class, and not of individuals. Doubtless our modern authors found these parts all made to their hands, like the pawns of a chess-board; but these fantastic creations, which, from one end of Europe to the other, still amuse not only children, but men whom fancy renders childish, surely give the Italians some claim on the art of comedy. Observation of the human heart is an inexhaustible source of literature; but nations rather romantic than reflective yield themselves more readily to the delirium of joy than to philosophic satire. Something of sadness lurks beneath the pleasantry founded on a knowledge of mankind: the most truly inoffensive gayety is that which is purely imaginative. Not that Italians do not

shrewdly study those with whom they are concerned. They detect the most private thoughts, as subtly as others; but they are not wont to make a literary use of the acuteness which marks their conduct. Perhaps they are reluctant to generalize and to publish their discoveries. Prudence may forbid their wasting on mere plays what may serve to guide their behavior, or converting into witty fictions that which they find so useful in real life. Nevertheless, Machiavel, who has made known all the secrets of criminal policy, may serve to show of what terrible sagacity the Italian mind is capable. Goldoni, who lived in Venice, where society is at its best, introduced more observation into his work than is commonly found. Yet his numerous comedies want variety both of character and situation. They seem modelled, not on life, but on the generality of theatrical pieces. Irony is not the true character of Italian wit. It is Ariosto, and not Molière, who can amuse us here. Gozzi, the rival of Goldoni, had much more irregular originality. He gave himself up freely to his genius; mingling buffoonery with magic, imitating nothing in nature, but dealing with those fairy chimeras that bear the mind beyond the boundaries of this world. He had a prodigious success in his day, and perhaps is the best specimen of Italian comic fancy; but, to ascertain what our tragedy and comedy might become, they must be allowed a theatre, and a company. A host of small towns dissipate the few resources that might be collected. That division of states, usually so favorable to public welfare, is destructive of it here. We want a centre of light and power, to pierce the mists of surrounding prejudice. The authority of a government would be a blessing, if it contended with the ignorance of men, isolated among themselves, in separate provinces, and, by

awakening emulation, gave life to a people now content with a dream."

These and other discussions were spiritedly put forth by Corinne; she equally understood the art of that light and rapid style, which insists on nothing; in her wish to please, adopting each by turns, though frequently abandoning herself to the talent which had rendered her so celebrated as an improvisatrice. Often did she call on Castel Forte to support her opinions by his own; but she spoke so well, that all her auditors listened with delight, and could not have endured an interruption. Mr. Edgarmond, above all, could never have wearied of seeing and hearing her: he hardly dared explain to himself the admiration she excited; and whispered some words of praise, trusting that she would understand, without obliging him to repeat them. He felt, however, so anxious to hear her sentiments on tragedy, that, in spite of his timidity, he risked the question. "Madame," he said, "it appears to me that tragedies are what your literature wants most. I think that yours come less near an equality with our own, than children do to men; for childish sensibility, if light, is genuine; while your serious dramas are so stilted and unnatural, that they stifle all emotion. Am I not right, my Lord?" he added, turning his eyes towards Nevil, with an appeal for assistance, and astonished at himself for having dared to say so much before so large a party.—"I think just as you do," returned Oswald: "Metastasio, whom they vaunt as the bard of love, gives that passion the same coloring in all countries and situations. His songs, indeed, abound with grace, harmony, and lyric beauty, especially when detached from the dramas to which they belong; but it is impossible for us, whose Shakspeare is indisputably the poet who has most

profoundly fathomed the depths of human passions, to bear with the fond pairs who fill nearly all the scenes of Metastasio, and, whether called Achilles or Thyrsis, Brutus or Corilas, all sing in the same strain, the martyrdom they endure, and depict, as a species of insipid idiotcy, the most stormy impulse that can wreck the heart of man. It is with real respect for Alfieri that I venture a few comments on his works, their aim is so noble! The sentiments of the author so well accord with the life of the man, that his tragedies ought always to be praised as so many great actions, even though they may be criticized in a literary sense. It strikes me, that some of them have a monotony in their vigor, as Metastasio's have in their sweetness. Alfieri gives us such a profusion of energy and worth, or such an exaggeration of violence and guilt, that it is impossible to recognize one human being among his heroes. Men are never either so vile or so generous as he describes them. The object is to contrast vice with virtue; but these contrasts lack the gradations of truth. If tyrants were obliged to put up with half he makes their victims say to their faces, one would really feel tempted to pity them. In the tragedy of 'Octavia,' this outrage of probability is most apparent. Seneca lectures Nero, as if the one were the bravest, and the other the most patient of men. The master of the world allows himself to be insulted, and put in a rage, scene after scene, as if it were not in his own power to end all this by a single word. It is certain, that, in these continual dialogues, Seneca utters maxims which one might pride to hear in a harangue or read in a dissertation; but is this the way to give an idea of tyranny?—instead of investing it with terror, to set it up as a block against which to tilt with wordy weapons! Had Shakspeare represented Nero

surrounded by trembling slaves, who scarce dared answer the most indifferent question, himself vainly endeavoring to appear at ease, and Seneca at his side, composing the Apology for Agrippina's murder, would not our horror have been a thousand times more great? and, for one reflection made by the author, would not millions have arisen, in the spectator's mind, from the silent rhetoric of so true a picture?" Oswald might have spoken much longer ere Corinne would have interrupted him, so fascinated was she by the sound of his voice, and the turn of his expressions. Scarce could she remove her gaze from his countenance, even when he ceased to speak; then, as her friends eagerly asked what she thought of Italian tragedy, she answered by addressing herself to Nevil.—"My lord, I so entirely agree with you, that it is not as a disputant I reply; but to make some exceptions to your, perhaps, too general rules. It is true that Metastasio is rather a lyric than a dramatic poet; and that he depicts love rather as one of the fine arts that embellish life, than as the secret source of our deepest joys and sorrows. Although our poetry has been chiefly devoted to love, I will hazard the assertion that we have more truth and power in our portraitures of every other passion. For amatory themes, a kind of conventional style has been formed amongst us; and poets are inspired by what they have read, not by their own feelings. Love as it is in Italy, bears not the slightest resemblance to love such as our authors describe.

"I know but one romance, the 'Fiammetta' of Boccaccio, in which the passion is attired in its truly national colors. Italian love is a deep and rapid impression, more frequently betrayed by the silent ardor of our deeds, than by ingenious and highly wrought language. Our literature, in general, bears

but a faint stamp of our manners. We are too humbly modest to found tragedies on our own history, or fill them with our own emotions.[1] Alfieri, by a singular chance, was transplanted from antiquity into modern times. He was born for action; yet permitted but to write: his style resented this restraint. He wished by a literary road to reach a political goal; a noble one, but such as spoils all works of fancy. He was impatient of living among learned writers and enlightened readers, who, nevertheless, cared for nothing serious; but amused themselves with madrigals and nouvellettes. Alfieri sought to give his tragedies a more austere character. He retrenched everything that could interfere with the interest of his dialogue; as if determined to make his countrymen do penance for their natural vivacity. Yet he was much admired: because he was truly great, and because the inhabitants of Rome applaud all praise bestowed on the ancient Romans, as if it belonged to themselves. They are amateurs of virtue, as of the pictures their galleries possess; but Alfieri has not created anything that may be called the Italian drama; that is, a school of tragedy, in which a merit peculiar to Italy may be found. He has not even characterized the manners of the times and countries he selected. His 'Pazzi,' 'Virginia,' and 'Philip II.' are replete with powerful and elevated thought; but you everywhere find the impress of Alfieri, not that of the scene nor of the period assumed. Widely as he differs from all French authors in most respects, he resembles them in the habit of painting every subject he touches with the hues of his own mind." At this allusion, d'Erfeuil observed: "It would be impossible for *us* to brook on *our* stage either the insignificance of the Grecians, or the monstrosities of Shakspeare. The French have too

much taste. Our drama stands alone for elegance and delicacy: to introduce anything foreign, were to plunge us into barbarism."—"You would as soon think of surrounding France with the great wall of China!" said Corinne, smiling: "yet the rare beauties of your tragic authors would be better developed, if you would sometimes permit others besides Frenchmen to appear in their scenes. But we, poor Italians, would lose much, by confining ourselves to rules that must confer on us less honor than constraint. The national character ought to form the national theatre. We love the fine arts, music, scenery, even pantomime; all, in fact, that strikes our senses, how, then, can a drama, of which eloquence is the best charm, content us? In vain did Alfieri strive to reduce us to this; he himself felt that his system was too rigorous.[2] His 'Saul,' Maffei's 'Merope,' Monti's 'Aristodemus,' above all, the poetry of Dante (though he never wrote a tragedy), seem to give the best notion of what the dramatic art might become here. In 'Merope' the action is simple, but the language glorious; why should such style be interdicted in our plays? Verse becomes so magnificent in Italian, that we ought to be the last people to renounce its beauty. Alfieri, who, when he pleased, could excel in every way, has in his 'Saul' made superb use of lyric poetry; and, indeed, music itself might there be very happily introduced; not to interrupt the dialogue, but to calm the fury of the king, by the harp of David. We possess such delicious music, as may well inebriate all mental power; we ought, therefore, instead of separating, to unite these attributes; not by making our heroes sing, which destroys their dignity, but by choruses, like those of the ancients, connected by natural links with the main situation, as often happens in real life. Far from

rendering the Italian drama less imaginative, I think we ought in every way to increase the illusive pleasure of the audience. Our lively taste for music, ballet and spectacle, is a proof of powerful fancy, and a necessity to interest ourselves incessantly, even in thus sporting with serious images, instead of rendering them more severe than they need be, as did Alfieri. We think it our duty to applaud whatever is grave and majestic, but soon return to our natural tastes; and are satisfied with any tragedy, so it be embellished by that variety which the English and Spaniards so highly appreciate. Monti's 'Aristodemus' partakes the terrible pathos of Dante; and has surely a just title to our pride. Dante, so versatile a master-spirit, possessed a tragic genius, which would have produced a grand effect, if he could have adapted it to the stage: he knew how to set before the eye whatever passed in the soul; he made us not only feel but look upon despair. Had he written plays, they must have affected young and old, the many as well as the few. Dramatic literature must be in some way popular; a whole nation constitute its judges."—"Since the time of Dante," said Oswald, "Italy has played a great political part—ere it can boast a national tragic school, great events must call forth, in real life, the emotions which become the stage. Of all literary *chefs-d'œuvres*, a tragedy most thoroughly belongs to a whole people: the author's genius is matured by the public spirit of his audience; by the government and manners of his country; by all, in fact, which recurs each day to the mind, forming the moral being, even as the air we breathe invigorates our physical life. The Spaniards, whom you resemble in climate and in creed, have nevertheless, far more dramatic talent. Their pieces are drawn from their history, their chivalry, and

religious faith; they are original and animated. Their success in this way may restore them to their former fame as a nation; but how can we found in Italy a style of tragedy which she has never possessed?"—"I have better hopes, my Lord," returned Corinne, "from the soaring spirits that are among us, though unfavored as yet by circumstances; but what we most need is histrionic ability. Affected language induces false declamation; yet there is no tongue in which a great actor could evince more potency than in our own; for melodious sounds lend an added charm to just accentuation, without robbing it of its force."—"If you would convince us of this," interrupted Castel Forte, "do so, by giving us the inexpressible pleasure of seeing you in tragedy; you surely consider your foreign friends worthy of witnessing the talent which you monopolize in Italy; and in which (as your own soul is peculiarly expressed in it) you can have no superior on earth." Corinne secretly desired to perform before Oswald, and thus appear to the best advantage; but she could not consent without his approval: her looks requested it. He understood them; and, ambitious that she should charm Mr. Edgarmond in a manner which her yesterday's timidity had prevented, he joined his solicitations to those of her other guests. She hesitated no longer.—"Well, then," she said to Castel Forte, "we will, if you please, accomplish a long-formed scheme of mine, that of playing my translation of 'Romeo and Juliet.'"—"What!" exclaimed Edgarmond, "Do you understand English and love Shakspeare?"—"As a friend," she replied. —"And you will play Juliet in Italian? and I shall hear you? and you, too, dear Nevil! How happy you will be!" Then, instantly repenting his indiscretion, he blushed. The blush of delicacy and kindness is at

all ages interesting.—"How happy we shall be," he added with embarrassment, "if we may be present at such a mental banquet!"

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[1] Giovanni Pindemonte has published a series of dramas founded on Italian history; a most praiseworthy enterprise. The name of Pindemonte is also ennobled by Hippolito, one of Italy's sweetest modern poets.

[2] Alfieri's posthumous works have been printed. It will be seen, by the eccentric experiment which he tried on his tragedy of Abel, that he himself thought his style too austere, and that the stage required entertainments of greater fancy and variety.

CHAPTER III.

All was arranged in a few days; parts distributed, the night fixed on, and the palace of a relative of Prince Castel Forte devoted to the representation. Oswald felt at once disquiet and delight; he enjoyed Corinne's success, by anticipation; but even thus grew jealous, beforehand, of no one man in particular, but of the public, who would witness an excellence of which he felt as if he alone had a right to be aware. He would have had Corinne reserve her charms for him, and appear to others as timid as an Englishwoman. However distinguished a man may be, he rarely feels unqualified pleasure in the superiority of a woman. If he does not love her, his self-esteem takes offence; if he does, his heart is oppressed by it. Beside Corinne, Oswald was rather intoxicated than happy: the admiration she excited increased his passion, without giving stability to his intents. She was a phenomenon every day new; but the very wonder she inspired seemed to lessen his hopes of domestic tranquillity. She was,

notwithstanding, so gentle, so easy to live with, that she might have been beloved for her lowliest attributes, independent of all others; yet it was by these others that she had become remarkable. Lord Nevil, with all his advantages, thought himself beneath her, and doubted the duration of their attachment. In vain did she make herself his slave: the conqueror was too much in awe of his captive queen to enjoy his realm in peace. Some hours before the performance, Nevil led her to the house of the Princess, where the theatre had been fitted up. The sun shone beautifully; and at one of the staircase windows, which commanded a view of Rome and the Campagna, he paused a moment, saying: "Behold, how heaven itself lights you to victory!"—"It is to you, who point out its favor, that I owe such protection, then," she replied. "Tell me," he added, "do the pure emotions kindled by the sweetness of nature suffice to please you? Remember, this is a very different air from that you will respire in the tumultuous hall which soon will re-echo your name?"—"Oswald," she said, "if I obtain applause, will it not be because *you* hear it that it may touch my heart? If I display any talent, is it not my love for you that inspires me? Poetry, religion, all enthusiastic feelings, are in harmony with nature; and while gazing on the azure sky, while yielding to the reverie it creates, I understand better than ever the sentiments of Juliet, I become more worthy of Romeo."—"Yes, thou art worthy of him, celestial creature!" cried Nevil: "this jealous wish to be alone with thee in the universe, is, I own, a weakness. Go! receive the homage of the world! but be thy love, which is more divine even than thy genius, directed to none but me!" They parted, and Oswald took his place, awaiting her appearance on the stage. In

Verona, the tomb of Romeo and Juliet is still shown. Shakspeare has written this play with truly southern fancy; at once impassioned and vivacious; triumphant in delight; and rushing from voluptuous felicity to despair and death. Its sudden love, we feel, from the first, will never be effaced; for the force of nature, beneath a burning clime, and not habitual fickleness, gives it birth. The sun is not capricious, though the vegetation be rapid; and Shakspeare, better than any other foreign poet, knew how to seize the national character of Italy—that fertility of mind which invents a thousand varied expressions for the same emotion; that Oriental eloquence which borrows images from all nature, to clothe the sensations of young hearts. In Ossian, one chord constantly replies to the thrill of sensibility; but in Shakspeare nothing is cold nor same. A sunbeam divided and reflected in a thousand varied ways, produces endlessly multiplied tints, all telling of the light and heat from whence they are derived. Thus "Romeo and Juliet," translated into Italian, seems but resuming its own mother-tongue.

The first meeting of the lovers is at a ball given by the Capulets, mortal enemies of the Montagues. Corinne was charmingly attired, her tresses mixed with gems and flowers; and at first sight scarce appeared herself: her voice, however, was soon recognised, as was her face, though now almost deified by poetic fire. Unanimous applause rang through the house as she appeared. Her first look discovered Oswald, and rested on him, sparkling with hope and love. The gazers' hearts beat with rapture and with fear, as if beholding happiness too great to last on earth. But was it for Corinne to realize such a presentiment? When Romeo drew near, to whisper his sense of her grace and beauty, in

lines so glowing in English, so magnificent in Italian, the spectators, transported at being thus interpreted, fully entered into the passion whose hasty dawn appeared more than excusable. Oswald became all uneasiness; he felt as if every man was ready to proclaim her an angel among women, to challenge him on what he felt for her, to dispute his rights, and tear her from his arms. A dazzling cloud passed before his eyes; he feared that he should faint, and concealed himself behind a pillar. Corinne's eyes anxiously sought him, and with so deep a tone did she pronounce—

> "Too early seen unknown, and known too late!"

that he trembled as if she applied these words to their personal situation. He renewed his gaze on her dignified and natural gestures, her countenance which spoke more than words could tell, those mysteries of the heart which must ever remain inexplicable and yet forever decide our fate. The accents, the looks, the least movements of a truly sensitive actor, reveal the depths of the human breast. The ideal of the fine arts always mingles with these revelations; the harmony of verse and the charm of attitude lending to passion the grace and majesty it so often wants in real life—it is here seen through the medium of imagination, without losing aught of its truth.

In the second act, Juliet has an interview with Romeo from a balcony in her garden. Of all Corinne's ornaments, none but the flowers were left; and even they were scarce visible, as the theatre was faintly illumined in imitation of moonlight, and the countenance of the fond Italian veiled in tender gloom. Her voice sounded still more sweetly than it

had done amid the splendors of the fête. Her hand, raised towards the stars, seemed invoking them, as alone worthy of her confidence; and when she repeated, "Oh, Romeo, Romeo!" certain as Oswald felt that it was of him she thought, he was jealous that any other name than his own should be breathed by tones so delicious. She sat in front of the balcony; the actor who played Romeo was somewhat in the shade; all the glances of Corinne fell on her beloved, as she spoke those entrancing lines:—

"In truth, fair Montague! I am too fond,
And therefore thou mayst think my 'havior light;
But trust me, gentleman, I'll prove more true
Than those who have more cunning to be strange."

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"Therefore—pardon me!"

At those words, "pardon me!" for loving, for letting thee know it—so tender an appeal filled the eyes of Corinne, such respect for her lover, such pride in her "fair Montague," that Oswald raised his head, and believed himself the monarch of the world, since he reigned over a heart inclosing all the treasures of love and life. Corinne, perceiving the effect this took on him, became doubly animated by that heartfelt enthusiasm, which, of itself can work such miracles; and when, at the approach of day, Juliet fancies that she hears the lark, the signal for Romeo's departure, [1] the accents of Corinne acquired a superhuman power; they told of love, indeed, but a religious mystery was now mingled with it; recollections of heaven—a presage of returning thither—the celestial

grief of a soul exiled on earth, and soon to be reclaimed by its diviner home. Ah, how happy was Corinne, while playing so noble a part before the lover of her choice! How few lives can bear a comparison with one such night! Had Oswald himself been the Romeo, her pleasure could not have been so complete. She would have longed to break through the greatest poet's verse, and speak after her own heart; or perhaps the diffidence of love would have enchained her genius; truth carried to such a height would have destroyed illusion; but how sweet was the consciousness of his presence, while she was influenced by the exalted impulses which poetry alone can awaken, giving us all the excitement, without the anguish, of reality; while the affections she portrayed were neither wholly personal nor entirely abstract, but seemed saying to her Oswald. "Behold, how capable I am of loving!" It was impossible for her to be perfectly at ease in her own situation. Passion and modesty alternately impelled and restrained her, now piquing her pride, now enforcing its submission; but thus to display her perfections without arrogance, to unite sensibility with the calm it so often disturbs; to live a moment in the sweetest dreams of the heart—such was the pure delight of Corinne while acting Juliet. To this was united all her pleasure in the applause she won; and her looks seemed laying her success at the feet of him whose acceptance was worth all fame, and who preferred her glory to his own. Yes, for that hour, Corinne, thou wert enviable! tasting, at the price of thy repose, the ectasies for which, till then, thou hadst vainly sighed, and must henceforth forever deplore.

Juliet secretly becomes the wife of Romeo. Her parents command her to espouse another, and she

obtains from a friar a sleeping-draught, which gives her the appearance of death. Corinne's trembling step and altered voice; her looks, now wild, now dejected, betrayed the struggles of love and fear; the terrible image of being borne alive to the tomb of her ancestors, and the brave fidelity which bade her young soul triumph over so natural a dread. Once she raised her eyes to heaven, with an ardent petition for that aid with which no human being can dispense; at another time Oswald fancied that she spread her arms towards him; he longed to fly to her aid; he rose in a kind of delirium, then sank on his seat, recalled to himself by the surprise of those around him; but his agitation was too strong to be concealed. In the fifth act, Romeo, believing Juliet dead, bears her from the tomb. Corinne was clad in white, her black locks dishevelled, her head gracefully resting on his bosom; but with an air of death so sadly true, that Oswald's heart was torn by contending sensations. He could not bear to see her in another's embrace; he shuddered at the sight of her inanimate beauty, and felt, like Romeo, that cruel union of despair and love, voluptuousness and death, which renders this scene the most heart-rending on the stage. At last, when Juliet wakes in the grave, beside which her lover has just sacrificed himself, her first words beneath those funeral vaults partake not of the fear they might occasion, but she cries:—

"Where is my lord? Where is my Romeo?"

Nevil replied but by a groan; and was hurried by Mr. Edgarmond out of the theatre. At the conclusion of the piece, Corinne was overpowered by fatigue and excitement. Oswald was the first to seek her room, where, still in the shroud of Juliet, she lay half-

swooning in the arms of her women. In the excess of his dismay, he could no longer distinguish fiction from reality; but, throwing himself at her feet, exclaimed:—

> "Eyes, look your last! Arms take your last embrace!"

Corinne, whose senses still wandered, shrieked: "Great God! what say you? Would you leave me!"—"No, no, I swear!" he cried. At that instant a crowd of admiring friends broke in upon them; she anxiously desired to hear what he had meant to say, but they were not left alone together for an instant, and could not speak to each other again that evening.

Never had any drama produced such an effect in Italy. The Romans extolled the piece, the translation, and the actress; asserting that this was the tragedy which represented them to the life, and gave an added value to their language, by eloquence at once inspired and natural. Corinne received all these eulogiums with gracious sweetness; but her soul hung on these brief words: "I swear!" believing that they contained the secret of her destiny.

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[1] Corinne's translation deviated widely from the original. Minor points I have presumed to reconcile, but this I must leave as I find, though the two parting scenes in Romeo and Juliet are so dissimilar, that it is difficult to guess how they could become confused in such a mind as Madame de Staël's; or why she should have omitted all mention of Tybalt's death, and Romeo's banishment.—TR.

BOOK VIII.

THE STATUES AND PICTURES.

CHAPTER I.

After such an evening, Oswald could not close his eyes all night. He had never been so near sacrificing everything to Corinne. He wished not even to learn her secret, until he had solemnly consecrated his life to her service; all indecision seemed banished, as he mentally composed the letter which he intended to write the next morning; but this resolved and happy confidence was not of long duration. His thoughts again strayed towards the past, reminding him that he had loved before; and though far less than he adored Corinne, nay, an object not to be compared with her, he had then been hurried into rashness that broke his father's heart. "How know I," he cried, "that he does not once more fear his son may forget his duty to his native land? Oh thou, the best friend I can ever call mine own!" he continued to the miniature of his parent, "I can no longer hear thy voice, yet teach me by that silent look, still—still so powerful over me, how I should act, that thou mayest gaze from heaven with some satisfaction on thy son. Yet, yet remember the thirst for happiness which consumes humanity; be but as indulgent in thy celestial home, as late thou wert on earth. I should become more worthy of thee, were my heart content; did I live with that angelic creature, had I the honor of protecting—saving such a woman! Save her?" he added, suddenly, "and from what? from the

life she loves; a life of triumph, flattery, and freedom?" This reflection of his own scared him as if it had been spoken by the spirit of his sire. In situations like Oswald's, who has not felt that secret superstition which makes us regard our thoughts and sufferings as warnings from on high? Ah, what struggles beset the soul susceptible alike of passion and of conscience! He paced his chamber in cruel agitation; sometimes pausing to gaze on the soft and lovely moonlight of Italy. Nature's fair smile may render us resigned to everything but suspense. Day rose on his—and when d'Erfeuil and Edgarmond entered his room, so much had one night changed him, that both were alarmed for his health. The Count first broke silence. "I must confess," he said, "that I was charmed last evening. What a pity that such capabilities should be wasted on a woman of fortune! were Corinne but poor, free as she is, she might take to the stage, and be the glory of Italy." Oswald was grieved by this speech; yet knew not how to show it; for such was d'Erfeuil's peculiarity, that one could not legitimately object to aught he said, however great the pain and anger he awakened. It is only for feeling hearts to practise reciprocal indulgence. Self-love, so sensitive in its own cause, has rarely any sympathy to spare for others. Mr. Edgarmond spoke of Corinne in the most pleasing manner; and Nevil replied in English, to defend this theme from the uncongenial comments of d'Erfeuil, who exclaimed, "So, it seems, I am one too many here; well, I'll to the lady; she must be longing for my opinion of her Juliet. I have a few hints to give her, for future improvement; they relate merely to detail, but details do much towards a whole; and she is really so astonishing a woman, that I shall neglect nothing that can bring her to perfection. Indeed," he

added, confidentially addressing Nevil, "I must encourage her to play frequently; it is the surest way of catching some foreigner of rank. You and I, dear Oswald, are too accustomed to fine girls for any *one* of them to lead us into such an absurdity; but a German prince, now, or a Spanish grandee—who knows? eh?" At these words Oswald started up, beside himself; and there is no telling what might have occurred had the Count guessed his impulse; but he was so satisfied with his own concluding remark, that he tripped from the room, without a suspicion of having offended Lord Nevil; had he dreamed of such a thing, he would assuredly have remained where he was, though he liked Oswald as well as he could like any one; but his undaunted valor contributed, still more than his conceit, to veil his defects from himself. With so much delicacy in all affairs of honor, he could not believe himself deficient in that of feeling; and having good right to consider himself brave and gentlemanly, he never calculated on any deeper qualities than his own. Not one cause of Oswald's agitation had escaped the eye of Edgarmond. As soon as they were alone, he said: "My dear Nevil, good-bye! I'm off for Naples."—"So soon?" exclaimed his friend. "Yes, it is not good for me to stay here; for even at fifty, I am not sure that I should not go mad for Corinne."—"And what then?"—"Why then, such a woman is not fit to live in Wales; believe me, dear Oswald, none but English wives will do for England. It is not for me to advise, and I scarce need say that I shall never allude *there* to what I have seen *here*; but Corinne, all-charming as she is, makes me think, with Walpole, 'Of what use would she be in a house? Now the house is everything with us, you know, at least to our wives. Can you fancy your lovely Italian remaining quietly

at home, while fox-hunts or debates took you abroad? or leaving you at your wine, to make tea against your rising from table? Dear Oswald, the domestic worth of our women you will never find elsewhere. Here men have nothing to do but to please the ladies; therefore, the more agreeable they find them, the better; but with us, where men lead active lives, the women should bloom in the shade; to which it were a thousand pities if Corinne were condemned. I would place her on the English throne, not beneath my humble roof. My Lord! I knew your mother, whom your respected father so much regretted; just such a woman will be my young cousin; and that is the wife I would choose, were I still of an age to be beloved. Farewell, my dear Nevil; do not take what I have said amiss, for no one can admire Corinne more than I do; nay, perhaps, at your years, I should not be able to give up the hope of winning her." He pressed his young friend's hand very cordially, and left him, ere Oswald could utter a word; but Edgarmond understood the cause of this silence, and, content with the grasp which replied to his, was glad to conclude a conversation which had cost him no slight pain. The only portion of what he had said that reached the heart of Oswald, was the mention of his mother, and the deep affection his father felt for her. She had died ere their child was fourteen; yet he reveringly recalled the retiring virtues of her character. "Madman that I am!" he cried, "I desired to know what kind of wife my father had destined me, and I am answered by the image of his own, whom he adored. What would I more, then? why deceive myself? why pretend an ignorance of what he would think now, could I yet consult him?" Still, it was with terror that he thought of returning to Corinne, without giving her a confirmation of the

sentiments he had testified. The tumult of his breast became at last so uncontrollable, that it occasioned a recurrence of the distressing accident against which he now believed his lungs secure. One may imagine the frightful scene—his alarmed domestics calling for help, as he lay silently hoping that death would end his sorrow. "If I could die, once more looking on Corinne," he thought, "once more called her Romeo." A few tears fell from his eyes, the first that any grief, save the loss of his father, had cost him since that event. He wrote a melancholy line accounting for his absence, to Corinne. She had began the day with fond delusive hopes. Believing herself loved, she was content; for she knew not very clearly what more on earth she wished. A thousand circumstances blended the thought of marrying Oswald with fear; and, as her nature was the present's slave, too heedless of the future, the day which was to load her with such care, rose like the purest, calmest of her life. On receiving his note, how were her feelings changed! She deemed him in great danger, and instantly, on foot, crossed the then crowded Corso, entering his abode before all the eyes of Rome. She had not given herself time to think, but walked so rapidly, that when she reached his chamber she could neither speak nor breathe. He comprehended all she had risked for his sake, and overrated the consequences of an act which in England would have ruined a woman's fame, especially if unwed: transported by generosity and gratitude, he raised himself, weak as he was, pressed her to his heart, and murmured, "Dear love! leave thee? now that thou hast compromised thyself?—no, no!—let my reparation ——" She read his thought, and gently withdrawing from his arms, first ascertained that he was better than she had expected, then said gravely: "You

mistake, my Lord! in coming to you I have done no more than the greatest number of women in Rome would have done in my place. Here, you know none but me. I heard you were ill; it is my duty to nurse you. Ceremony should be obeyed, indeed, when it sacrifices but one's self, yet ought to yield before the higher feelings due to the grief or danger of a friend. What would be the lot of a woman, if the same laws which permitted her to love forbade her to indulge the resistless impulse of flying to the aid of those most dear to her? I repeat, my Lord, fear nothing for me! My age and talents give me the freedoms of a married female. I do not conceal from my friends that I am here. I know not if they blame me for loving you, but surely, as I do, they cannot blame my devotion to you now." This sincere and natural reply filled Oswald's heart with most contrasted emotions: touched as he was by its delicacy, he was half disappointed. He would have found a pretext in her peril—a necessity for terminating his own doubts. He mused with displeasure on Italian liberty, which prolonged them thus, by permitting him so much favor, without imposing any bonds in return. He wished that honor had commanded him to follow inclination. These troublous thoughts caused him a severe relapse. Corinne, though suffering the most intense anxiety, lavished the fondest cares on his revival. Towards evening he was still more oppressed; she knelt beside his couch, supporting his head upon her bosom, though far more pitiable than himself. Oft as he gazed on her, did a look of rapture break through all his pangs. "Corinne," he whispered, "here are some papers—you shall read to me—written by my father on Death. Think not," he added, as he marked her dismay, "that I believe myself dying; but whenever I am ill I reperuse these

consolations, and seem again to hear them from his lips; besides, my dearest, I wish you to know what a man he was; you will the better comprehend my regret, his empire over me—all that I will some day confide to you." Corinne took the papers, which Oswald always carried about him, and with a faltering voice began——

"Oh, ye just! beloved of the Lord! ye speak of death without a fear; to you it is but a change of homes; and this ye leave may be the least of all. Innumerable worlds that shine through yon infinitude of space! unknown communities of His creatures—children! strewn through the firmament, ranged beneath its concave, let our praises rise with yours! We know not your condition, nor your share of God's free bounty; but in thinking over life and death, the past, the future, we participate in the interests of all intelligent, all sentient beings, however distant be their dwelling-places. Assembled spheres! wide-scattered families! ye sing with us, Glory to the Lord of heaven! the King of earth! the Spirit of the universe! whose will transforms sterility to harvest, darkness to light, and death to life eternal. Assuredly the end of the just man deserves our envy; but few of us, or of our sires before us, have looked on such a death. Where is he who shall meet the eye of Omnipotence unawed? Where is he who hath loved God without once wavering? Who served him from his youth up, and, in his age, finds nothing to remember with remorse? Where is the man, in all his actions moral, who has not been led by flattery, or scared by slander? So rare a model were worthy of imitation; but where exists it? If such be amongst us, how ought our respect to follow him! Let us beg to be present at his death, as at the loveliest of human spectacles. Take courage, and surround the bed,

whence he will rise no more! He knows it, yet is all serene: a heavenly halo seems to crown his brow. He says, with the Apostle, 'I know in whom I have believed;' and this reliance, as his strength decays, lights up his features still. Already he beholds his celestial home, yet unforgetful of the one he leaves. He is God's own; but turns not stoically from ties that lent a charm to his past life. His faithful partner, by the law of nature, will be the first to follow him. He dries her tears, and tells her they shall meet in heaven! even there unable to expect felicity without her. Next, he reminds her of the happy days that they have led together; not to afflict the heart of such dear friend, but to increase their mutual confidence in their Lord's pardoning grace. The tender love he ever bore his life's companion now seeks to soften her regrets; to bid her revel in the sweet idea that their two beings grew from the same stem; and that this union may prove one defence, one guarantee the more, against the terrors of that dark futurity wherein God's pity is the sole refuge of our startled thoughts. But how conceive the thousand feelings that pierce a constant heart, when one vast solitude appears before it? and all the interests that have filled past years are vanishing forever? O thou, who must survive this second self, Heaven lent for thy support! who was thine all, and whose looks now bid thee a sad adieu! thou wilt not shrink from laying thy hand upon the fainting heart, whose latest pulse, after the death of words, speaks it thine own. Shall we then blame you if you wish your dust might mingle? All-gracious Deity! awaken them together. Or, if but one deserves thy favoring call to number with the elect, let but the other learn these blissful tidings; read them in angel light one fleeting instant, and he will sink resigned back to perpetual gloom.

Perhaps I err in this essay to paint the last hours of such a man, who sees the advancing strides of death, and feels that he must part from all he holds most dear. He struggles for a momentary strength, that his last words may serve to instruct his children. 'Fear not,' he says, 'to watch your sire's release, to lose your oldest friend; it is by God's ordinance he goes before you, from a world into which he came the first. He would fain teach you courage, though he weeps to say farewell: he could have wished to stay and aid you longer, by experience to have led you some steps further on the way surrounded by such perils for your youth; but life has no defence against its Giver's mandate. You will proceed alone in a wide world, where I shall be no more. May you abundantly reap all the blessings that Providence has sown there! But never forget that this world is a land through which we only journey to our home. Let us hope to meet again. May our Father accept the sacrifice I tender, in your cause, of all my vows and tears! Cling to religion! Trust its promises! Love it, as the last link betwixt child and parent; betwixt life and death! Draw near me, that I may see you still. The benediction of an humble Christian rest with you all!' He dies! Angels, receive his soul, and leave us here the memory of his deeds, his faith, his chastened hope."[1]

The emotions of Oswald and Corinne had frequently interrupted their progress: at last they were obliged to give up the attempt. She trembled lest he should harm himself by weeping, unconscious that her tears flowed fast as his. "Yes," sobbed Nevil; "yes, sweetest friend of my bosom, the floods of our hearts have mingled; you have mourned with me that guardian saint whose last embrace yet thrills my breast, whose noble countenance I still behold. Perhaps he has

chosen thee for my solace."—"No, no," exclaimed Corinne; "he did not think me worthy."—"What say you?" interrupted Oswald; and, alarmed lest she had betrayed herself, she replied: "He might not have thought me worthy of you." This slight change of phrase dissipated his uneasiness, and he fearlessly continued speaking of his father. The physicians arrived, and slightly reassured him; but absolutely forbade his attempting to converse, until his internal hurt was healed. Six whole days passed, during which Corinne never left him. With gentle firmness she enjoined his silence, yet contrived to vary the hours by reading, music, and sometimes by a sportive dialogue, in which she sustained both parts; serious or gay, it was for his sake that she supported herself, veiling beneath a thousand graceful arts the solicitude which consumed her; she was never off her guard for an instant. She perceived what Oswald suffered, almost before himself: the courage he assumed deceived her not: she did, indeed, "anticipate the asking eye," while her chief endeavor was that of diverting his mind, as much as possible, from the value of these tender offices. If he turned pale, the rose fled from her lip, and her hand trembled as she brought him a restorative: even then would she smile through her tears, and press his hand to her heart, as if she would fain have added her stock of life to his. At last her efforts succeeded: he recovered. "Corinne," he said, as soon as permitted to speak, "why has not my friend Edgarmond witnessed your conduct? he would have seen that you are not less good than great; that domestic life with you would be a perpetual enchantment; that you differ from our women only in adding charms to virtue. It is too much! here ends the combat that so nearly reduced me to the grave.

Corinne! you, who conceal your own secrets, shall hear all mine, and pronounce our doom."—"Our doom," she replied, "if you feel as I do, is—not to part; yet believe me, till now, at least, I have never dared to wish myself your wife: the scheme of my existence is entirely disordered by the love that every day enslaves me more and more; yet I know not if we ought to marry."—"Corinne," he cried, "do you despise me for having hesitated? Can you attribute my delay to contemptible motives? Have you not guessed that the deep remorse to which I have been for two years a prey alone has been the cause?"—"I know it," she answered. "Had I suspected you of considerations foreign to those of the heart, you would not have been dear to me. But life, I know, belongs not all to love; habit and memory weave such nets around us that even passion cannot quite destroy: broken for a moment, they will grow again, as the ivy clasps the oak. My dear Oswald! let us give no epoch of life more than it requires. At this, it is essential to me that you leave me not. The dread of a sudden separation incessantly pursues me. You are a stranger here; no ties detain you: if once you go, all is over; nothing will be left to me of you, but my own grief. Nature, the arts, poetry, all that I have shared with you, lately, alas! with you alone, will speak no longer to my soul! I never wake without trembling. I ask the fair day if it has still a right to shine; if you, the sun of my being, are near me yet? Oswald, remove this fear, and I will not look beyond the present's sweet security."—"You know," replied he, "that no Englishman should renounce his country: war may recall me."—"O God!" she cried, "would you prepare my mind?" Her limbs quivered, as if at the approach of the most terrific danger. "If it be even so," she added, "take me with you—as your wife—

your slave!" Then suddenly regaining her spirits, she continued: "Oswald, you will never depart without warning me? Never! will you? Listen! in no country is a criminal led to torture without being allowed some hours to collect his thoughts. It must not be by letter: you will come yourself, to tell me, to hear me, ere you fly? How! you hesitate to grant my prayer?" "No," returned he, "you wish it; and I swear, if my departure be necessary, I will apprise you of it, and that moment shall decide our fate." She left him.

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[1] I have allowed myself to borrow some passages from a discourse on death, which may be found in "The Course of Religious Morals," by M. Necker. Another work of his, "The Importance of Religious Opinions," had a more brilliant success, and is sometimes confused with this, which appeared when public interest was distracted by political events; but I dare affirm, that "The Course of Religious Morals" is my father's most eloquent production. No statesman, I believe, ever before composed volumes for the Christian pulpit; and this kind of writing, from a man who had so much to do with men, shows a knowledge of the human heart, and the indulgence that knowledge inspires. It appears that, in two respects, these Essays are completely original. A religious man is usually a recluse. Men of the world are seldom religious. Where, then, shall we find united such observation of life, and such elevation of soul, that looks beyond it? I should say, fearless of finding my opinion attributed to partiality, that this book is one of the first among those which console the feeling heart, and interest the reflective mind, on the great questions which are incessantly agitating them both.

CHAPTER II.

Corinne now carefully avoided all explanations. She wished to render her lover's life as calm as possible. Their every interview had tended to convince her that the disclosure of what she had been, and sacrificed, was but too likely to make an unfavorable impression; she, therefore, sought again to interest him in the still unseen wonders of Rome, and thus retard the instant that must clear all doubts. Such a situation would be insupportable beneath any other feeling than love, which sheds such spells over every minute, that, though still desiring some indefinite futurity, we receive a day as a century of joy, and pain, so full of sensations and ideas is each succeeding morrow. Love is the emblem of eternity: it confounds all notion of time: effaces all memory of a beginning, all fear of an end: we fancy that we have always possessed what we love, so difficult is it to imagine how we could have lived without it. The more terrible separation seems, the less probable it becomes: like death, it is an evil we rather name than believe, as if the inevitable were impossible. Corinne, who, in her innocent artifice for varying Oswald's amusements, had hitherto reserved the statues and paintings, now proposed taking him to see them, as his health was sufficiently re-established.—"It is shameful," she said, with a smile, "that you should be still so ignorant; therefore to-morrow we will commence our tour through the galleries and museums."—"As you will," replied Nevil; "but, indeed, Corinne, you want not the aid of such resources to keep me with you; on the contrary, I make a sacrifice to obey you, in turning my gaze to

any other object, be it what it may."

They went first to the Vatican, that palace of sculpture, where the human form shines deified by paganism, as are the virtues by Christianity. In those silent halls are assembled gods and heroes; while beauty, in eternal sleep, looks as if dreaming of herself were the sole pleasure she required. As we contemplate these admirable forms and features, the design of the Divinity, in creating man, seems revealed by the noble person he has deigned to bestow on him. The soul is elevated by hopes full of chaste enthusiasm; for beauty is a portion of the universe, which, beneath whatever guise presented, awakes religion in the heart of man. What poetry invests a face where the most sublime expression is fixed forever, where the grandest thoughts are enshrined in images so worthy of them! Sometimes an ancient sculptor completed but one statue in his life; that constituted his history. He daily added to its perfection: if he loved or was beloved; if he derived fresh ideas from art or nature, they served but to embellish the features of this idol. He translated into looks all the feelings of his soul. Grief, in the present state of society so cold and oppressive, then actually ennobled its victim; indeed, to this day the being who has not suffered can never have thought or felt. But the ancients dignified grief by heroic composure, a sense of their own strength, developed by their public freedom. The loveliest Grecian statues were mostly expressive of repose. The Laöcoon and the Niobe are among the few stamped by sorrow; but it is the vengeance of Heaven, and not human passion, that they both recall. The moral being was so well organized of old, the air circulated so freely in those manly chests, and political order so harmonized with such faculties, that those times scarce ever, like our

own, produced discontented men. Subtle as were the ideas then discovered, the arts were furnished with none but those primitive affections which alone can be typified by eternal marble. Hardly can a trace of melancholy be found on their statues. A head of Apollo, in the Justinian palace, and one of the dying Alexander, indeed, betray both thoughtfulness and pain; but they belonged to the period of Grecian slavery, which banished the tranquil pride that usually pervaded both their sculpture and their poetry. Thought, unfed from without, preys on itself, digging up and analyzing its own treasures; but it has not the creative power which happiness alone can give. Even the antique sarcophagii of the Vatican teem but with martial or joyous images; the commemoration of an active life they thought the best homage they could pay the dead—nothing weakened or discouraged the living. Emulation was the reigning principle in art as in policy; there was room for all the virtues, as for all the talents. The vulgar prided in the ability to admire, and genius was worshipped even by those who could not aspire to its palm. Grecian religion was not, like Christianity, the solace of misery, the wealth of the poor, the future of the dying: it required glory and triumph; it formed the apotheosis of man. In this perishable creed, even beauty was a dogma; artists, called on to represent base or ferocious passions, shielded the human form from degradation by blending it with the animal, as in the satyrs and centaurs. On the contrary, when seeking to realize an unusual sublimity, they united the charms of both sexes; as in the warlike Minerva, and the Apollo Musagets; felicitous propinquity of vigor and sweetness, without which neither quality can attain perfection! Corinne delayed Oswald some time

before the sleeping figures that adorn the tombs, in the manner most favorable to their art. She observed that statues representing an action suspended at its height, an impulse suddenly checked, create, sometimes, a painful astonishment; but an attitude of complete repose offers an image that thoroughly accords with the influence of southern skies. The arts there seem but the peaceful spectators of nature; and genius itself, which agitates a northern breast, there appears but one harmony the more. Oswald and Corinne entered the court in which the sculptured animals are assembled with the statue of Tiberius in the midst of them: this arrangement was made without premeditation; the creatures seemed to have ranged themselves around their master. Another such hall contains the gloomy works of the Egyptians, resembling mummies more that men. This people, as much as possible, assimilated life with death, and lent no animation to their human effigies; that province of art appeared to them inaccessible. About the porticos of this museum each step presents new wonders; vases, altars, ornaments of all kinds, surround the Apollo, the Laöcoon, and the Muses. Here may one learn to appreciate Homer and Sophocles, attaining a knowledge of antiquity that cannot be elsewhere acquired. Amid these porticos are fountains, whose incessant flow gently reminds you of past hours; it is two thousand years since the artists of these *chefs-d'œuvres* existed. But the most melancholy sights here are the broken statues, the torso of Hercules, heads separated from their trunks; the foot of a Jupiter, which it is supposed must have belonged to the largest and most symmetrical statue ever known. One sees the battle-field whereon Time contended with Glory; these mutilated limbs attesting the tyrant's victory, and our own losses.

After leaving the Vatican, Corinne led Oswald to the colossal figures on Monte Cavallo, said to be those of Castor and Pollux. Each of these heroes governs a foaming steed with one hand: this struggle of man with brute, like all the works of the ancients, finely exemplifying the physical powers of human nature, which had then a dignity it no longer possesses. Bodily exercises are generally abandoned to our common people; personal vigor, in the antique, appeared so intimately connected with the moral qualities of those who lived in the heart of war, a war of single combats, that generosity, fierceness, command, and height of stature, seemed inseparable, ere intellectual religion had throned man's potency in his soul. As the gods wore our shape, every attribute appears symbolical: the "brawns of Hercules" suggest no recollections of vulgar life, but of divine, almighty will, clothed in supernatural grandeur.

Corinne and Oswald finished their day by visiting the studio of the great Canova. The statues gained much from being seen by torchlight, as the ancients must have thought, who placed them in their Thermes, inaccessible to the day. A deeper shade thus softens the brilliant uniformity of the marble: its pallor looks more like that of life. At that time Canova had just achieved an exquisite figure, intended for a tomb; it represented Grief leaning on a Lion. Corinne detected a resemblance to Nevil, with which the artist himself was struck. Our Englishman turned away his head, to avoid this kind of attention, whispering to his beloved: "Corinne, I believed myself condemned to this eternal grief ere I met you, who have so changed me, that sometimes hope, and always a delicious agitation, pervades the heart that ought to be devoted to regret."

CHAPTER III.

In painting, the wealth of Rome surpasses that of the rest of the world. Only one point of discussion can exist on the effect which her pictures produce—does the nature of the subjects selected by Italy's great masters admit the varied originality of passion which painting can express? The difference of opinion between Oswald and Corinne on this point, as on others, sprung but from the difference of their countries and creeds. Corinne affirmed that Scripture subjects were those most favorable to the painter; that sculpture was the Pagan's art, and painting the Christian's; that Michael Angelo, the painter of the Old, and Raphael, that of the New Testament, must have been gifted with sensibility profound as that of Shakspeare or Racine. "Sculpture," she said, "can present but a simple or energetic life to the eye, while painting displays the mysteries of retirement and resignation, and makes the immortal spirit speak through the fleeting colors. Historical facts, or incidents drawn from the poets, are rarely picturesque. One had need, in order to understand them, to keep up the custom of writing the speeches of their personages on ribbons rolling from their mouths. But religious pieces are instantly comprehended by the whole world; and our attention is not turned from the art, in order to divine their meaning.

"The generality of modern painters are too theatrical. They bear the stamp of an age in which the unity of existence and natural way of life, familiar to Andrew Mantegne, Perugin, and Leonardo da Vinci, is entirely forgotten. To this antique repose *they* were

wont to add the depth of feeling which marks Christianity. For this I admire the compositions of Raphael, especially in his early works. All the figures tend towards the main object, without being elaborately grouped to create a sensation—this honesty in the arts, as in all things else, characterizes true genius; for speculations on success usually destroy enthusiasm. There is a rhetoric in painting as in poetry; and those who have it not seek to veil the defect in brilliant but illusive auxiliaries, rich costume, remarkable postures, while an unpretending virgin, with her infant at her breast, an old man attending the mass of Bolsena, a young one leaning on his staff, in the school of Athens, or Saint Cecilia raising her eyes to heaven, by the mere force of expression, act most powerfully on the mind. These natural beauties grow on us each day, while of works done for effect our first sight is always the most striking."[1] Corinne fortified these reflections by another—it was the impossibility of our sympathizing with the mythology of the Greeks and Romans, or inventing on their ground. "We may imitate them by study," she said; "but the wings of genius cannot be restrained to flights for which learning and memory are so indispensable, and wherein it can but copy books or statues. Now, in pictures alluding to our own history and faith, the painter is personally inspired; feeling what he depicts, retracing what he has seen, he draws from the life. Portraitures of piety are mental blessings that no others could replace; as they assure us that the artist's genius was animated by the holy zeal which alone can support us against the disgusts of life and the injustice of man."

Oswald could not, in all respects, agree with her; he was almost scandalized at seeing that Michael

Angelo had attempted to represent the Deity himself in mortal shape; he did not think that we should dare embody Him; and could scarcely call up one thought sufficiently ethereal thus to ascend towards the Supreme Being, though he felt that images of this kind, in painting, always leave us much to desire. He believed, with Corinne, that religious meditation is the most heartfelt sentiment we can experience, and that which supplies a painter with the grandest physiognomical mysteries; but as religion represses all movements of the heart to which she has not given birth, the faces of saints and martyrs cannot be much varied. Humility, so lovely in the sight of Heaven, weakens the energy of earthly passion, and necessarily monotonizes the generality of scriptural subjects. When the terrible Angelo dealt with them, he almost changed their spirit, giving to his prophets that formidable air more suitable to heathen gods than to saints. Oft, too, like Dante, he mixed Pagan attributes with those of Christianity. One of the most affecting truths in its early establishment is the lowly station of the apostles who preached it, the slavery of the Jews, so long depositaries of the promise that announced the Saviour. This contrast between insignificance of means and greatness of result is morally beautiful. Yet in painting, where means alone can be displayed, Christian subjects must needs prove less attractive than those derived from the times of heroic fable. Of all arts, none save music can be purely religious. Painting cannot be content with an expression indefinite as that of sound. It is true that a happy combination of colors, and of *clair-obscure*, is harmony to the eye; but as it shows us life, it should give forth life's strong and varied passions. Undoubtedly, such passages of history ought to be selected as are too well known to be unintelligible:

facts must flash on us from canvas, for all the pleasures the fine arts bestow are thus immediate; but with this equality provided, historical pictures have the advantage of diversified situation and sentiments. Nevil asserted, too, that a preference should be given to scenes from tragedies, or the most touching poetic fictions, so that all the pleasures of imagination might thus unite. Corinne contended against this opinion, seducing as it was; convinced that the encroachment of one art upon another would be mutually injurious. For sculpture loses by attempting the groups that belong to painting; painting, by aspiring to dramatic animation. The arts are limited, not in their powers but in their means. Genius seeks not to vanquish the fitness of things which its glory consists in guessing. "You, my dear Oswald," said Corinne, "love not the arts for themselves, but as they accord with your own feelings; you are moved merely when they remind you of your heart's afflictions. Music and poetry better suit such a disposition than those which speak to the eye, however ideally; they can but please or interest us while our minds are calm and our fancy is free. We need not the gayety which society confers in order to enjoy them, but the composure born of soft and radiant climes. We ought, in the arts that represent exterior objects, to feel the universal harmony of nature, which, while we are distressed, we have not within ourselves."—"I know not," answered Oswald, "if I have sought food for my sorrows in the arts, but at least I am sure that I cannot endure their reminding me of physical suffering. My strongest objection against Scripture pictures is the pain I feel in looking on blood and tortures, however exalted the faith of their victims. Philoctetus is, perhaps, the only tragic subject in

which such agonies can be admitted; but with how much of poetry are his cruel pangs invested! They are caused by the darts of Hercules; and surely the son of Esculapius can cure them. His wounds are so associated with the moral resentment they stir in that pierced breast, that they can excite no symptom of disgust. But the *Possessed*, in Raphael's 'Transfiguration' is disagreeable and undignified. We would fain discover the charm or grief, or fancy it like the melancholy of prosperity. It is the ideal of human fate that ought to appear. Nothing is more revolting than ensanguined gashes or muscular convulsions. In such pictures we at once miss and dread to find exactitude of imitation. What pleasure could such attempted fidelity bestow? it is always either more horrible or less lovely than nature herself."—"You are right, my Lord," said Corinne, "in wishing that these blots should be effaced from Christian pictures; they are unnecessary. Nevertheless, allow that soul-felt genius can triumph over them all. Look on the death of St. Jerome, by Dominichino; that venerable frame is livid, emaciated; but life eternal fills his aspect; and the miseries of the world are here collected but to melt before the hallowed rays of devotion. Yet, dear Oswald, though I am not wholly of your mind, I wish to show you that even in differing, we have always some analogy. I have attempted a realization of your ideal in the gallery to which my brothers in art have contributed, and where I have sketched a few designs myself; you shall see the advantages and defects of the styles you prefer in my house at Tivoli. The weather is fine; shall we go there to-morrow?"—"My love, can you doubt my reply?" he exclaimed. "Have I another blessing in the world but you? The life I have too much freed from other occupations is now

filled by the felicity of seeing and of hearing my Corinne!"

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[1] From a journal called "Europe," I have derived many valuable observations on painting—an inexhaustible subject for their author, M. Frederic Schlegel, and for German reasoners in general.

CHAPTER IV.

Oswald himself drove the four horses that drew them next day towards Tivoli; he delighted in their rapid course, which seemed to lend fresh vivacity to the sense of existence—an impression so sweet when enjoyed beside those we love. He was careful, even to fear, least the slightest accident should befall his charge—that protecting air is such a link betwixt man and woman! Corinne, though less easily alarmed than the rest of her sex, observed his solicitude with such pleasure as made her almost wish she could be frightened, that she might claim the reassurances of Oswald. What gave him so great an ascendency over her, was the occasional unexpected contrasts with himself, that lent a peculiar charm to his whole manner. Every one admired his mind and person; but both were particularly interesting to a woman at once thus constant and versatile. Though occupied by nothing but Corinne, this same interest perpetually assumed a new character: sometimes reserve predominated; then he abandoned himself to his passion; anon, he was perfectly amiable and content; as probably, by a

gloomy bitterness, betrayed the sincerity of his distress. Agitated at heart, he strove to appear serene, and left her to guess the secrets of his bosom. This kept her curiosity forever on the alert. His very faults set off his merits; and no man, however agreeable, who was devoid of these contradictions and inconsistencies, could thus have captivated Corinne: she was subdued by her fear of him. He reigned in her heart by a good and by an evil power —by his own qualities, and by the anxiety their ill-regulated state inspired. There was no safety in the happiness he bestowed. This, perhaps, accounts for the exaltation of her love; she might not have thus adored aught she did not fear to lose. A mind of ardent yet delicate sensibility may weary of all save a being whose own, forever in motion, appears like a heaven, now clear and smiling, now lapped in threatening clouds. Oswald, ever truly, deeply attached, was not the less often on the brink of abjuring the object of his tenderness, because long habit had persuaded him that he could find nothing but remorse in the too vivid feelings of his breast.

On their way to Tivoli, they passed the ruins of Adrian's palace, and the immense garden that surrounded it. Here were collected the rarest productions of the realms conquered by Rome. There are still seen the scattered stones called Egypt, India, and Asia. Further off is the retreat where Zenobia ended her days. The queen of Palmyra sustained not, in adversity, the greatness of her doom: she knew neither how to die for glory, like a man; nor how, like a woman, to die rather than betray her friend. At last they beheld Tivoli, once the abode of Brutus, Augustus, Mæcenas, Catullus, but, above all, Horace, whose verses have immortalized these scenes. Corinne's villa stood near the loud cascade of

Teverone. On the top of the hill, facing her garden, was the Sibyl's temple. The ancients, by building these fanes on heights like this, suggested the due superiority of religion over all other pursuits. They bid you "look from nature up to nature's God," and tell of the gratitude that successive generations have paid to Heaven. The landscape, seen from whatever point, includes this its central ornament. Such ruins remind one not of the work of man. They harmonize with the fair trees and lonely torrent, that emblem of the years which have made them what they are. The most beauteous land, that awoke no memory of great events, were uninteresting, compared with every spot that history sanctifies. What place could more appropriately have been selected as the home of Corinne than that consecrated to the Sibyl, a woman divinely inspired? The house was charming; decked in all the elegance of modern taste, yet evidently by a classic hand. You saw that its mistress understood felicity in its highest signification; that which implies all that can ennoble, while it excites our minds. A sighing melody now stole on Oswald's ear, as if the nodding flowers and waving shrubs thus lent a voice to nature. Corinne informed him that it proceeded from the Eolian harps, which she had hung in her grottos, adding music to the perfume of the air. Her lover was entranced. "Corinne," he cried, throwing himself at her feet, "till to-day I have censured mine own bliss beside thee; but now I feel as if the prayers of mine offended parent had won me all this favor; the chaste repose I here enjoy tells me that I am pardoned. Fearlessly, then, unite thy fate with mine; there is no danger now!"—"Well," she replied, "let us not disturb this peace by naming Fate. Why strive to gain more than she ever grants? Why seek for change while we are happy?" He was hurt by this reply. He

thought she should have understood his readiness to confide, to promise, all. This evasion, then, offended and afflicted him: he appreciated not the delicacy which forbade Corinne to profit by his weakness. Where we really love, we often dread more than we desire the solemn moment that exchanges hope for certainty. Oswald, however, concluded that, much as she loved him, she preferred her independence, and therefore shunned an indissoluble tie. Irritated by this mistake, he followed her to the gallery in frigid silence. She guessed his mood, but knew his pride too well to tell him so; yet, with a vague design of soothing him, she lent even to general and indifferent topics the softest tones of affection.

Her gallery was composed of historical, poetic, religious subjects, and landscapes. None of them contained any great number of figures. Crowded pictures are, doubtless, arduous tasks; but their beauties are mostly either too confused or too detailed. Unity of interest, that vital principle of art, as of all things, is necessarily frittered away. The first picture represented Brutus, sitting lost in thought, at the foot of the statue of Rome, while slaves bore by the dead bodies of the sons he had condemned; on the other side, their mother and sisters stood in frantic despair, fortunately excused, by their sex, from that courage which sacrifices the affections. The situation of Brutus beneath the statue of Rome tells all. But how, without explanation, can we know that this *is* Brutus, or that, those are his children, whom he himself has sentenced? and yet the event cannot be better set forth by any painting. Rome fills its background, as yet unornamented as a city, grand only as the country that could inspire such heroism. "Once hear the name," said Corrine, "and doubtless your whole soul is given up to it; otherwise might

not uncertainty have converted a pleasure which ought to be so plain and so easy into an abstruse enigma? I chose the subject, as recalling the most terrible deed a patriot ever dared. The next is Marius, taken by one of the Cimbri, who cannot resolve to kill so great a man. Marius, indeed, is an imposing figure; the costume and physiognomy of the Cimbri leader extremely picturesque; it marks the second era of Rome, when laws were no more, but when genius still exerted a vast control. Next come the days in which glory led but to misfortune and insult. The third picture is Belisarius, bearing his young guide, who had expired while asking alms for him; thus is the blind hero recompensed by his master; and in the world he vanquished hath no better office than that of carrying to the grave the sad remains of yon poor boy, his only faithful friend. Since the old school, I have seen no truer figure than that; the painter, like the poet, has loaded him with all kinds of miseries—too many, it may be, for compassion. But what tells us that it is Belisarius? what fidelity to history is exacted both of artist and spectator! a fidelity, by the way, often ruinous to the beautiful. In Brutus, we look on virtues that resemble crime; in Marius on fame causing but distress; in Belisarius, on services requited by the blackest persecution. Near these I have hung two pictures that console the oppressed spirit by reminding it of the piety that can cheer the broken heart, when all around is bondage. The first is Albano's infant Christ asleep on the cross. Does not that stainless, smiling face convince us that heavenly faith hath naught to fear from grief or death? The following one is Titian's Jesus bending under the weight of the cross. His mother on her knees before him—what a proof of reverence for the undeserved oppressions suffered by

her Divine Son! What a look of resignation is his! yet what an air of pain, and therefore sympathy, with us! That is the best of all my pictures; to that I turn my eyes with rapture inexhaustible; and now come my dramatic *chefs-d'œuvre*, drawn from the works of four great poets. There is the meeting of Dido and Æneas in the Elysian fields; her indignant shade avoids him; rejoicing to be freed from the fond heart which yet would throb at his approach. The vaporous color of the phantoms and the pale scenes around them, contrast the air of life in Æneas, and the Sibyl who conducts him; but in these attempts the bard's description must far transcend all that the pencil reaches; in this, of the dying Clorinda, our tears are claimed by the remembered lines of Tasso, where she pardons the beloved Tancred, who has just dealt her the mortal wound. Painting inevitably sinks beneath poetry, when devoted to themes that great authors have already treated. One glance back at their words effaces all before us. Their favorite situations gain force from impassioned eloquence; while picturesque effect is most favored by moments of repose, worthy to be indefinitely prolonged, and too perfect for the eye ever to weary of their grace. Your terrific Shakspeare, my Lord, afforded the ensuing subject. The invincible Macbeth, about to fight Macduff, learns that the witches have equivocated with him; that Birnam wood is coming to Dunsinane, and that his adversary was *not* of woman born, but 'untimely ripped' from his dying mother.[1] Macbeth is subdued by his fate, not by his foe; his desperate hand still grasps its glaive, certain that he must fall, yet to the last, opposing human strength against the might of demons. There is a world of fury and of troubled energy in that countenance—but how many of the poet's beauties do we lose! Can we paint Macbeth

hurried into crime by the dreams of ambition, conjured up by the powers of sorcery? How express a terror compatible with intrepidity; how characterize the superstition that oppresses him? the ignoble credulity, which, even while he feels such scorn of life, forces on him such horror of death! Doubtless the human face is the grandest of all mysteries; yet fixed on canvas, it can hardly tell of more than one sensation; no struggle, no successive contrasts accessible to dramatic art, can painting give, as neither time nor motion exists for her.

"Racine's Phedra forms the fourth picture. Hippolitus, in all the beauty of youth and innocence, repulses the perfidious accusations of his step-mother. The heroic Theseus still protects his guilty wife, whom his conquering arms surround. Phedra's visage is agitated by impulses that we freeze to look on; and her remorseless nurse encourages her in guilt. Hippolitus is here even more lovely than in Racine; more like to Meleager, as no love for Aricia here seems to mingle with his tameless virtue. But could Phedra have supported her falsehood in such a presence? No, she must have fallen at his feet; a vindictive woman may injure him she loves in absence, but, while she looks on him, that love must triumph. The poet never brings them together after she has slandered him. The painter was obliged to oppose them to each other; but is not the distinction between the picturesque and the poetical proved by the fact, that verses copied from paintings are worth all the paintings that have imitated poetry? Fancy must ever precede reason, as it does in the growth of the human mind."

While Corinne spoke thus, she had frequently paused, hoping that Oswald would add his remarks;

but, as she made any feeling observation, he would merely sigh and turn away his head, to conceal his present disposition towards sadness. Corinne, at last discouraged by this silence, sat down and hid her face in her hands. Oswald hastily paced the apartment, and was just about to give way to his emotions, when, with a sudden check of pride, he turned towards the pictures, as if expecting her to finish the account of them. She had great hope in the last; and making an effort to compose herself, rose, saying: "My Lord, there remain but three landscapes for me to show you; two possess some interest. I do not like rural scenes that bear no allusion to fable or history; they are insipid as the idols of our poets. I prefer Salvator Rosa's style here, which gives you rocks, torrents, and trees, with not even the wing of a bird visible to remind you of life! The absence of man, in the midst of nature, excites profound reflections. What is this deserted scene, so vainly beautiful, whose mysterious charms address but the eye of their Creator? Here, on the contrary, history and poesy are happily united in a landscape.[2] This represents the moment when Cincinnatus is invited by the consuls to quit his plough, and take command of the Roman armies. All the luxury of the south is seen in this picture—abundant vegetation, burning sky, and an universal air of joy, that pervades even the aspects of the plants. See what a contrast is beside it. The son of Cairbar sleep upon his father's tomb. Three nights he awaited the bard, who comes to honor the dead. His form is beheld afar, he descends the mountain's side. On the cloud floats the shade of the chief. The land is hoary with ice; and the trees, as the rude winds war on their lifeless and withered arms, strew their sear leaves to the gale, and herald the course of the storm." Oswald, till now,

had cherished his resentment; but at the sight of this picture, the tomb of his father, the mountains of Scotland rose to his view, and his eyes filled with tears. Corinne took her harp, and sung one of those simple Scotch ballads whose notes seem fit to be borne on the wailing breeze. It was the soldier's farewell to his country and his love, in which recurred that most melodious and expressive of English phrases, "No more."[3] Corinne pronounced it so touchingly, that Oswald could resist no longer; and they wept together. "Ah, Corinne!" he cried, "does then my country affect your heart? Could you go with me to the land peopled by my recollections? Would you there be the worthy partner of my life, as you are here its enchantress?"—"I believe I could," she answered, "for I love you."—"In the name of love and piety then, have no more secrets from me."—"Your will shall be obeyed, Oswald; I promise it on one condition, that you ask not its fulfilment before the termination of our approaching religious solemnities. Is not the support of Heaven more than ever necessary at the moment which must decide my fate?"—"Corinne," he said, "if thy fate depends on me it shall no longer be a sad one."—"You think so," she rejoined; "but I have no such confidence, therefore indulge my weakness." Oswald sighed, without granting or refusing the delay she asked. "Let us return to Rome now," she added. "I should tell you all in this solitude; and if what I have to say must drive you from me—need it be so soon? Come, Oswald; you may revisit this scene when my ashes repose here." Melted and agitated, he obeyed. On their road they scarcely spoke a word, but now and then exchanged looks of affection; yet a heavy melancholy oppressed them both, as they re-entered Rome.

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[1] From a journal called "Europe," I have derived many valuable observations on painting—an inexhaustible subject for their author, M. Frederic Schlegel, and for German reasoners in general.

[2] Madame de Staël says: "Macbeth apprend que l'oracle des sorcières s'est accompli; que le forêt de Birnam paraît s'avancer vers Dunsinane; et qu'il se bat avec un homme *né* depuis la mort de sa mère."

"Ludicrous perversion of the author's meaning!" The points Shakspeare intended to impress were, that "the weird women," "juggling fiends, who palter with us in a double sense," had promised their victim success and life *till* events which he naturally conceived impossible, but which they knew *would* occur. —TR.

[3] I presume the "Adieu to Lochaber," though in that it is "nae mair."—TR.

BOOK IX.

ON THE CARNIVAL, AND ITALIAN MUSIC.

CHAPTER I.

The last day of the carnival is the gayest in the year. The Roman populace carry their rage for amusements to a perfect fever, unexampled elsewhere. The whole town is disguised; the very gazers from its windows are masked. This begins

regularly to the appointed day, neither public nor private affairs interfering with its indulgence. Then may one judge of the imagination possessed by the herd. Italian sounds sweetly even from their mouths. Alfieri said that he went to the market of Florence to learn good Italian. Rome has the same advantage; and, perhaps, these are the only cities of which all the natives speak so well that the mind is feasted at every corner of the streets. The kind of gayety that shines through their harlequinades is often found in the most uneducated men; and during this festival, while exaggeration and caricature are fair play, the most comic scenes perpetually recur. Often a grotesque gravity contrasts the usually vivacious Italian manner, as if their strange dresses conferred an unnatural dignity on the wearers. Sometimes they evince so surprising a knowledge of mythology, in the travesties they assume, that one might suppose them still believers in its fictions. Most frequently, however, they ridicule the various ranks of society with a pleasantry truly original: the nation is now a thousand times more distinguished by its sports than by its history. Italian lends itself so easily to all kinds of playfulness, that it needs but a slight inflection of voice, a little difference of termination, lengthening or diminishing the words, to change the entire meaning of a sentence. The language comes with a peculiar grace from the lips of childhood. The innocence of that age, and the natural archness of the southern tongue, exquisitely contrast each other. [1] One may almost call it a language that talks of itself, and always seems more witty than its speakers.

There is neither splendor nor taste in the carnival: its universal tumult assimilates it in the fancy with the bacchanalian orgies; but in the fancy only; for the Romans are generally sober and serious enough—the

last days of this fête excepted. The one makes such varied and sudden discoveries in their character, as have contributed to give them a reputation for cunning. Doubtless, there is a great habit of feigning among people who have borne so many yokes; but we must not always attribute their rapid changes of manner to dissimulation. Inflammable imagination is as oft its cause. Reasoners may readily foresee their own actions; but all that belongs to fancy is unexpected: she overleaps gradations; a trifle may wound her, or that which ought to move her most be past by with indifference; she's her own world, and in it there is no calculating effects by causes. For instance, we wonder what entertainment the Roman nobles find in driving from one end of the Corso to the other for hours together, every day in the year, yet nothing breaks in on this custom. Among the masks, too, may be found wandering victims to ennui, packed up in the drollest of dresses, sad harlequins, and silent clowns, who satisfy their carnival conscience by merely seeking to divert themselves. In Rome, they have one assumption that nowhere else exists—maskers, who, in their own persons, copy the antique statues, and from a distance perfectly realize their beauty. Many of the women are losers by renouncing this disguise. Nevertheless, to behold life imitating motionless marble, however gracefully, strikes one with fear. The carriages of the great and gay throng the streets; but the charm of these festivities is their saturnalian confusion: all classes are mingled; the gravest magistrates ride among the masks with almost official assiduity. All the windows are decorated, and all the world out of doors: the pleasure of the populace consists not in their spectacles nor their feasts; they commit no excess, but revel solely in the

delight of mixing freely with their betters, who, on their parts, are as diverted at finding themselves thrown among those beneath them. Only the refined and delicate pleasures that spring from research and education can build up barriers between different ranks. Italy, as hath been said, is more distinguished by universal talent than by its cultivation among the aristocracy. Therefore, during the carnival, all minds and all manners blend: the shouting crowds, that indiscriminately shower their bonbons on the passers-by, confound the whole nation pell-mell, as if no social order remained. Corinne and Nevil arrived in the midst of this uproar: at first it stunned them; for nothing appears stranger than such activity of noisy enjoyment, while the soul is pensively retired within herself. They stopped in the Piazza del Popolo, to ascend the amphitheatre near the obelisk, thence to overlook the horse-racing: as they alighted from their calash, the Count d'Erfeuil perceived them, and took Oswald aside, saying: "How can you show yourself thus publicly returning from the country with Corinne? You will commit her, and then what can you do?" "I think I shall not commit her," returned he, "by showing my affection; if I do, I shall be but too happy, in the devotion of my life"—"Happy!" interrupted d'Erfeuil, "don't believe it! one can only be happy in becoming situations. Society, do what we will, has a great influence; and what society would disapprove ought never to be attempted." "Then," replied Oswald, "our own thoughts and feelings are to guide us less than the words of others. If it were our duty thus constantly to follow the million, what need has any individual with a heart or a soul? Providence might have spared us from such superfluities."—"Very philosophical," replied the Count; "but such maxims ruin a man; and

when love is over, he is left to the censure of the world. Flighty as you think me, I would not risk it, on any account. We may allow ourselves the little freedoms and good-natured jests of independent thinkers, but in our actions such liberties become serious."—"And are not love and happiness serious considerations?" asked Nevil. "That is nothing to the purpose: there are certain established forms which you cannot brave without passing for an eccentric; for a man—in fact—you understand me—unlike other men." Lord Nevil smiled, and without either pain or displeasure rallied d'Erfeuil on his frivolous severity: he rejoiced to feel, for the first time, that on a subject which had cost him so much, the Count's advice had not the slightest power. Corinne guessed what had past, but Oswald's smile restored her composure; and this conversation tended but to put them both in spirits for the fête. Nevil expected to see a race like those of England; but was surprised to learn that small Barbary steeds were about to make the contest of speed without riders. This is a very favorite sport with the Romans.

When it was about to commence, the crowd ranged themselves on each side of the street. The Place, lately so thronged, was emptied in a minute: every one hurried to the stands which surrounded the obelisks; while a multitude of black heads and eyes were turned towards the barrier from which the barbs were to start. They appeared, without bridle or saddle, their backs covered by bright-hued stuffs: they were led by well-dressed grooms, passionately interested in their success. As the animals reach the barrier, their eagerness for release is almost uncontrollable: they rear, neigh, and paw the earth, as if impatient for the glory they are about to win, without the aid or guidance of man. Their prancing,

and the rapturous cry of "Room, room!" as the barrier falls, have a perfectly theatrical effect. The grooms are all voice and gesture, as long as their steeds remain in sight; the creatures are as jealous as mankind of one another; the sparks fly beneath their feet; their manes float wildly on the breeze; and such is their desire to reach the goal, that some have fallen there dead. To look on these free things, all animated by personal passion, is astounding—as if one beheld Thought itself flying in that fine shape. The crowd break their ranks as the horses pass, and follow them in tumult. The Venetian palace ends the race; then may be heard exclamations of disappointment from those whose horses have been beaten; while he whose darling has deserved the greatest prize throws himself on his knees before the victor, thanking and recommending him to St. Anthony,[2] patron of the brute creation, with an enthusiasm as seriously felt as it is comically expressed. The races usually conclude the day. Then begins another kind of amusement, less attractive, but equally loud. The windows are illuminated; the guards leave their posts, to share the general joy. Every one carries a little torch, called *moccolo*, and every one tries to extinguish his neighbour's, repeating the word "*ammazare*" (kill), with formidable vivacity. "Kill the fair princess! let the Lord Abbot be killed!" The multitude, reassured by the interdiction of horses and carriages at that hour, pour forth from every quarter: all is turmoil and clamor; yet, as night advances, this ceases by degrees; the deepest silence succeeds. The remembrance of this evening is like that of a confused vision, which, for awhile, changed every dreamer's existence, and made the people forget their toil, the learned their studies, and the nobles their

sloth.[3]

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[1] I asked a little Tuscan girl which was the prettiest, her sister or herself. "Ah," she replied, "the best face is mine."

[2] An Italian postilion, beholding his horse expire, prayed for him, crying, "St. Anthony, have pity on his soul!"

[3] The reader who wishes to know more of the Roman Carnival, should read the charming description of Goethe; a picture faithful as it is animated.

CHAPTER II.

Oswald, since his misfortunes, had never regained sufficient courage voluntarily to hear music. He dreaded those ravishing sounds, so agreeable to melancholy, but which prove so truly injurious while we are weighed down by real calamities. Music revives the recollections it would appease. When Corinne sang, Oswald listened to the words she pronounced; gazed on her expressive features, and thought of nothing but her. Yet if, of an evening, in the streets, he heard many voices united to sing the sweet airs of celebrated composers, as is often the case in Italy, though inclined to pause, he soon withdrew, alarmed by the strong yet indefinite emotion which renewed his sorrows. But a concert was about to be given at the theatre of Rome, concentrating the talents of the first singers in Italy. Corinne asked Nevil to accompany her thither: he consented, hoping that her presence would soften all

the pangs he must endure. On entering her box, she was immediately recognized; and a remembrance of her coronation, adding to the interest she usually created, all parts of the house resounded with applause, and cries of "*Viva Corinne!*" The musicians themselves, electrified by this unanimous sensation, sent forth strains of victory; for triumph, of whatever kind, awakens in our recollection "the pomp and circumstance of glorious war." Corinne was much moved by these testimonies of admiring affection. The indescribable impression always made by a human mass, simultaneously expressing the same sentiment, so deeply touched her heart, that she could not restrain her tears; her bosom heaved beneath her dress; and Oswald, with a sense of pique, whispered, "You must not, Madame, be torn from such success; it outvalues love, since it makes your heart beat thus;" he then retired to the back of the box, without waiting for her answer. In one instant had he swept away all the pleasure which she had owed to a reception prized most because he was its witness.

Those who have not heard Italian singing can form no idea of music. The human voice is soft and sweet as the flowers and skies. This charm was made but for such a clime: each reflect the other. The world is the work of a single thought, expressed in a thousand different ways. The Italians have ever devotedly loved music. Dante, in his Purgatory, meets the best singer of his day, and asks him for one of his delicious airs. The entranced spirits forget themselves as they hear it, until their guardian recalls them to the truth. The Christians, like the Pagans, believe the empire of music to extend beyond the grave: of all the fine arts, none act so immediately upon the soul: the others direct it

towards such or such ideas: but this alone addresses the very source of life, and transforms the whole being at once, humanly speaking, as Divine Grace is said to change the heart. Among all our presentiments of futurity, those to which melody gives birth are not the least worthy of reverence. Even the mirth excited by buffo singing is not vulgar, but fanciful; beneath it lie poetic reveries, such as spoken wit never yet created. Music is so volatile a pleasure—we are so sensible that it escapes from us even as we enjoy it—that it always leaves a tender impression on the mind; yet, when expressive of grief, it sheds gentleness even over despair. The heart beats more quickly to its regular measure, and, reminding us of life's brevity, bids us enjoy what we can: the silent void is filled; you feel within yourself the active energies that fear no obstacle from without. Music doubles our computation of our own faculties, and makes us feel capable of the noblest efforts; teaches us to march towards death with enthusiasm, and is happily powerless to explain any base or artful sentiment. Music lifts from the breast the weight it so often feels beneath serious affections, and which we take for the heaviness of life, so habitual is its pressure: we hang on such pure sounds till we seem to discover the secrets of the Eternal, and penetrate the mysteries of nature: no words can explain this; for words but copy primitive sensations, as prose translators follow poetry. Looks alone resemble its effect: the long look of love, that gradually sinks into the breast, till one's eyes fall, unable to support so vast a bliss, lest this ray from another's soul should consume us.

The admirable union of two voices perfectly in tune produces an ecstasy that cannot be prolonged without pain: it is a blessing too great for humanity,

which vibrates like an instrument broken beneath too perfect a harmony. Oswald had remained perversely apart from Corinne during the first act of the concert; but when the duets began in low voices, accompanied by the notes of clarionets and hautboys, purer even than their own, Corinne veiled her face, absorbed by emotion; she wept without suffering, and loved without dread; the image of Oswald was in her bosom; but a host of thoughts wandered too far to be distinct, even to herself. It is said that a prophet, in one moment, explored seven regions of heaven. Whoever can thus conceive the all which an instant may contain must have heard sweet music beside the object of his love. Oswald felt its power; his resentment decreased; the tenderness of Corinne explained and justified everything; he drew near her; she heard him breathing close by, at the most enchanting period of this celestial harmony: it was too much; the most pathetic tragedy could not have so overwhelmed her as did the sense of *their* both being equally penetrated by the same sounds, at the same instant: each fresh tone exalted the consciousness. The words sung were nothing; now and then allusions to love and death induced some recollection; but oftener did music alone suggest and realize the formless wish, as doth some pure and tranquil star, wherein we seem to see the image of all we could desire on earth. "Let us go," sighed Corinne: "I feel fainting."—"What is it, love?" asked Oswald, anxiously: "you are pale. Come into the air with me." They went together: her strength returned, as she leaned upon his arm; and she faltered forth, "Dear Oswald, I am about to leave you for eight days."—"What say you?" he cried.—"Every year," she answered, "I spend Passion week in a convent, to prepare for Easter." Oswald could not oppose, aware

that most of the Roman ladies devoted themselves to pious severities at that time, even if careless of religion during the rest of the year; but he remembered that Corinne's faith and his own were not the same: they could not pray together. "Why are you not my countrywoman?" he exclaimed. "Our souls have but one country," she replied.—"True," he said; "yet I cannot the less feel everything that divides us." And this coming absence so dismayed him, that neither to Corinne, nor the friends who now joined them, could he speak another word that evening.

CHAPTER III.

Oswald called at Corinne's house early next day, in some uneasiness: her maid gave him a note, announcing her mistress's retirement to the convent that morning, and that she could not see him till after Good Friday. She confessed that she had not the courage to tell him the whole of this truth the night before. Oswald was struck as by an unexpected blow. The house in which he had always found Corinne now appeared sadly alone; her harp, books, drawings, all her household gods were there, but she was gone. A shudder crept through his veins; he thought on the chamber of his father, and sunk upon a seat. "It may be," he cried, "that I shall live to lose her too—that animated mind, that warm heart, that form so brilliantly fresh; the bolt may strike, and the tomb of youth is mute as that of age. What an illusion, then, is happiness! Inflexible Time, who watches ever o'er his prey, may tear it from us in a moment. Corinne! Corinne! why didst thou leave

me? Thy magic alone can still my memory: dazzled by the hours of rapture passed with thee—but now—I am alone. I am again my wretched, wretched self!" He called upon Corinne with a desperation disproportionate to such brief absence, but attributable to the habitual anguish of his heart. The maid, Thérésina, heard his groans, and gratified by this regret for her mistress, re-entered, saying, "My Lord, for your consolation, I will even betray a secret of my lady's: I hope she will forgive me. Come to her bedroom, and you shall see your own portrait!"—"My portrait!" he repeated.—"Yes; she drew it from memory, and has risen, for the last week, at five in the morning, to have it finished before she went to the convent." The likeness was very strong, and painted with perfect grace. This pledge, indeed, consoled him; facing it was an exquisite Madonna, before which Corinne had formed her oratory. This "love and religion mingled," exists in Italy under circumstances far more extraordinary; for the image of Oswald was associated but with the purest hopes of his adorer.

Yet thus to place it near so divine an emblem, and to prepare herself for a convent by a week of such occupation, were traits that rather characterized Corinne's country than herself. Italian women are devout from sensibility, not principle; and nothing was more hostile to Oswald's opinions than their manner of thinking on this subject; yet how could he blame Corinne, while receiving so touching a proof of her affection? His looks strayed tenderly through this chamber, where he now stood for the first time. At the head of the bed he beheld the miniature of an aged man, evidently not an Italian; two bracelets hung near it, one formed by braids of black and of silver hair, the other of beautifully fair tresses, that,

by a strange chance, reminded him of Lucy Edgarmond's, which he had attentively remarked three years since. Oswald did not speak; but Thérésina, as if to banish any jealous suspicion, told him, "that during the eleven years she had lived with her lady she had always seen these bracelets, which she knew contained the hair of Corinne's father, mother, and sister."—"Eleven years!" cries Oswald, "you were then——" he checked himself, blushing at the question he had begun, and precipitately left the house that he might escape further temptation. He frequently turned back to gaze on the windows, and when he lost sight of them he felt all the misery of solitude. That evening he went to an assembly, in search of something to divert his thoughts; for in grief, as joy, reverie can only be indulged by those at peace with themselves; but society was insupportable: he was more than ever convinced that for him Corinne alone had lent it charms, by the void which her absence rendered it now. He attempted to chat with the ladies, who replied by those insipid phrases, which, explaining nothing, are so convenient for those who have something to conceal. He saw groups of men, who, by their voices and gestures, seemed warmly discussing some important topic: he drew near, and found the matter of their discourse as despicable as its manner. He mused over this causeless, aimless vivacity, so frequently found in large parties;—though Italian mediocrity is a good sort of animal enough, with but little jealous vanity, much regard for superior minds, and, if fatiguing them by dulness, at least never wounding them by pretence. Such was the society that, a few days since, Oswald had found so interesting. The slight obstacles which it opposed to his conversation with Corinne; her anxiety to be near him, as soon as she had been

sufficiently polite to others; the intelligence existing between them on subjects suggested by their company; her pride, in speaking before him, to whom she indirectly addressed remarks, he alone could fully understand. All this had varied his evenings: every part of these same halls brought back the pleasant hours which had persuaded him that there might be some amusement even at an assembly. "Oh!" he sighed, as he left it, "here, as elsewhere, she alone can give us life; let me fly rather to some desert spot till she returns. I shall less sadly feel her absence, where naught is near me that resembles pleasure."

BOOK X.

PASSION WEEK.

CHAPTER I.

Oswald passed next day in the gardens of the monasteries; going first to that of the Carthusians, and paused, ere he entered, to examine two Egyptian lions at a little distance from its gate. There is something in their physiognomy belonging neither to animals nor to man: it is as if two heathen gods had been represented in this shape. Chartreux is built on the ruins of Diocletian's baths; and its church is adorned by the granite pillars which were found there. The monks show this place with much zeal: they belong to the world but by their interest in its

ruins. Their way of life presupposes either very limited minds or the most exalted piety. The monotony of their routine recalls that celebrated line —

> "Time o'er wrecked worlds sleeps motionless."

Their life seems but to be employed in contemplating death. Quickness of thought, in so uniform an existence, would be the crudest of tortures. In the midst of the cloister stand two cypresses, whose heavy blackness the wind can scarcely stir. Near them is an almost unheard fountain, slow and chary; —-fit hour-glass for a seclusion in which time glides so noiselessly. Sometimes the moon's pale glimmer penetrates these shades—its absence or return forming quite an event; and yet these monks might have found all the activity of war insufficient for their spirits, had they been used to it. What an inexhaustible field for conjecture we find in the combinations of human destiny! What habits are thrust on us by chance, forming each individual's world and history. To know another perfectly, would cost the study of a life. What, then, is meant by knowledge of mankind? Governed they may be by each other, but understood by God alone.

Oswald went next to the monastery of Bonaventure, built on the ruins of Nero's palace: and where so many crimes had reigned remorselessly, poor friars, tormented by conscientious scruples, doom themselves to fasts and stripes for the least omission of duty. "Our only hope," said one, "is, that when we die, our faults will not have exceeded our penances." Nevil, as he entered, stumbled over a trap, and asked its purpose. "It is through that we are interred," answered one of the youngest, already a prey to the

bad air. The natives of the South fear death so much, that it is wondrous to find there these perpetual mementoes: yet nature is often fascinated by what she dreads; and such an intoxication fills the soul exclusively. The antique sarcophagus of a child serves as the fountain of this institution. The boasted palm of Rome is the only tree of its garden; but the monks pay no attention to external objects. Their rigorous discipline allows them no mental liberty; their downcast eyes and stealthy pace show that they have forgotten the use of freewill, and abdicated the government of self—an empire which may well be called a 'heritage of woe!' This retreat, however, acted but feebly on the mind of Oswald. Imagination revolts at so manifest a desire to remind it of death in every possible way. When such remembrancers are unexpected, when nature, and not man, suggests them, the impression is far more salutary. Oswald grew calmer as he strayed through the garden of San Giovanni et Paulo, whose brethren are subjected to exercises less austere. Their dwelling lords over all the ruins of old Rome. What a site for such asylum! The recluse consoles himself for his nothingness, in contemplating the wrecks of ages past away. Oswald walked long beneath the shady trees, so rare in Italy: sometimes they intercepted his view of the city, only to augment the pleasure of his next glimpse at it. All the steeples now sounded the *Ave Maria*—

> * * * "squilla de lontano
> Che paja il giorno pianger, che si muore."—DANTE.

"The bell from far mourneth the dying day." The evening prayer serves to mark all time. "I will meet you an hour before, or an hour after Ave Maria," say the Italians, so devoutly are the eras of night and day

distinguished. Oswald then enjoyed the spectacle of sunset, as the luminary sank slowly amid ruins, and seemed submitting to decline, even like the works of man. This brought back all his wonted thoughts. The image of Corinne appeared too promising, too hopeful, for such a moment. His soul sought for its father's, in the home of heavenly spirits. This animated the clouds on which he gazed, and lent them the sublime aspect of his immortal friend: he trusted that his prayers at last might call down some beneficent pity, resembling a good father's benediction.

CHAPTER II.

Oswald, in his anxiety to study the religion of the country, resolved to hear some of its preachers, during Passion week. He counted the days that must elapse ere his reunion with Corinne; while she was away, he could endure no imaginative researches He forgave his own happiness while beside her; but all that charmed him then would have redoubled the pangs of his exile.

It is at night, and by half-extinguished tapers, that the preachers, at this period, hold forth. All the women are in black, to commemorate the death of Jesus: there is something very affecting in these yearly weeds, that have been renewed for so many centuries. One enters the noble churches with true emotion; their tombs prepare us for serious thought, but the preacher too often dissipates all this in an instant. His pulpit is a somewhat long tribunal, from one end to the other of which he walks, with a

strangely mechanical agitation. He fails not to start with some phrase to which, at the end of the sentence, he returns like a pendulum; though, by his impassioned gestures, you would think him very likely to forget it: but this is a systematic fury, "a fit of regular and voluntary distraction," often seen in Italy, and indicating none but superficial or artificial feelings. A crucifix is hung in the pulpit; the preacher takes it down, kisses, presses it in his arms, and then hangs it up again, with perfect coolness, as soon as the pathetic passage is got through. Another method for producing effect is pulling off and putting on his cap, with inconceivable rapidity. One of these men attacked Voltaire and Rousseau on the skepticism of the age. He threw his cap into the middle of the rostrum, as the representative of Jean Jacques, and then cried: "Now, philosopher of Geneva, what have you to say against my arguments?" He was silent for some seconds, as if expecting a reply; but, as the cap said nothing, he replaced it on his head, and terminated the discourse by adding: "Well, since I've convinced you, let us say no more about it." These uncouth scenes are frequent in Rome, where real pulpit oratory is extremely rare. Religion is there respected as an all-powerful law; its ceremonies captivate the senses; but its preachers deal less in morals than in dogmas that never reach the heart. Eloquence, in this, as in many other branches of literature, is there devoted to common-places, that can neither describe nor explain. A new thought raises a kind of rebellion in minds at once so ardent and so languid, that they need uniformity to calm them; and love it for the repose it brings. There is an etiquette in these sermons, by which words take precedence of ideas; and this order would be deranged, if the preacher spoke from his own heart,

or searched his soul for what he ought to say. Christian philosophy, which finds analogies between religion and humanity, is as little understood in Italy, as philosophy of every other sort. To speculate on religion is deemed almost as scandalous as scheming against it; so wedded are all men to mere forms and old usages. The worship of the Virgin is particularly dear to southern people; it seems allied to all that is most chaste and tender in their love of woman; but every preacher treats this subject with the same exaggerated rhetoric, unconscious that his gestures perpetually turn it into ridicule. There is scarcely to be heard, from one Italian pulpit, a single specimen of correct accent, or natural delivery.

Oswald fled from this most fatiguing of inflictions—that of affected vehemence—and sought the Coliseum, where a Capuchin was to preach in the open air, at the foot of an altar, in the centre of the inclosure which marks the road to the cross. What a theme were this arena, where martyrs succeeded gladiators: but there was no hope of hearing it dilated on by the poor Capuchin, who knew nothing of the history of man, save in his own life. Without, however, coming there to hear his bad sermon, Oswald felt interested by the objects around him. The congregation was principally composed of the Camaldoline fraternity, at that time attired in gray gowns that covered both head and body, leaving but two little openings for the eyes, and having a most ghostly air. Their unseen faces were prostrated to the earth; they beat their breasts; and when their preacher threw himself on his knees, crying: "Mercy and pity!" they followed his example. As this appeal from wretchedness to compassion, from Earth to Heaven, echoed through the classic porticos, it was impossible not to experience a deeply pious feeling

in the soul's inmost sanctuary. Oswald shuddered; he remained standing, that he might not pretend to a faith which was not his own; yet it cost him an effort to forbear from this fellowship with mortals, whoever they were, thus humbling themselves before their God; for, does not an invocation to heavenly sympathy equally become us all?

The people were struck by his noble and foreign aspect, but not displeased with his omitting to join them; for no men on earth can be more tolerant than the Romans. They are accustomed to persons who come among them but as sight-seers; and, either from pride or indolence, never seek to make strangers participate in their opinions. It is a still more extraordinary fact, that, at this period especially, there are many who take on themselves the strictest punishments; yet, while the scourge is in their hands, the church-door is still open, and every stranger welcome to enter as usual. They do nothing for the sake of being looked at, nor are they frightened from anything because they happen to be seen; they proceed towards their own aims, or pleasures, without knowing that there is such a thing as vanity, whose only aim and pleasure consists in the applause of others.

CHAPTER III.

Much has been said of Passion week in Rome. A number of foreigners arrive during Lent, to enjoy this spectacle; and as the music at the Sixtine Chapel, and the illumination of St. Peter's, are *unique* of their kind, they naturally attract much curiosity, which is

not always satisfied. The dinner served by the Pope to the twelve representatives of the Apostles, whose feet he bathes, must recall solemn ideas; yet a thousand inevitable circumstances often destroy their dignity. All the contributors to these customs are not equally absorbed by devotion; ceremonies so oft repeated become mechanical to most of their agents; the young priests hurry over the service with a dexterous activity anything but imposing. All the mysteries that should veil religion are dissipated, by the attention we cannot help giving to the manner in which each performs his function. The avidity of the one party for the meat set before them, the indifference of the other to their prayers and genuflections, deprive the whole of its due sublimity.

The ancient costumes still worn by the ecclesiastics ill accord with their modern heads. The bearded Patriarch of the Greek Church is the most venerable figure left for such offices. The old fashion, too, of men courteseying like women, is dangerous to decorum. The past and the present, indeed, rather jostle than harmonize; little care is taken to strike the imagination, and none to prevent its being distracted. A worship so brilliantly majestic in its externals is certainly well fitted to elevate the soul; but more caution should be observed, lest its ceremonies degenerate into plays, in which the actors get by rote what they have to do, and at what time; when to pray, when to have done praying; when to kneel, and when to rise. Court rules introduced at church restrain that soaring elasticity which alone can give man hope of drawing near his Maker.

The generality of foreigners observe this; yet few Romans but yearly find fresh pleasure in these sacred

fêtes. It is a peculiarity in Italian character, that versatility of taste leads not to inconstancy; and that vivacity removes all necessity for truth; it deems everything more grand, more beautiful than reality. The Italians, patient and persevering even in their amusements, let imagination embellish what they possess, instead of bidding them crave what they have not; and as elsewhere vanity teaches men to seem fastidious, in Italy, warmth of temperament makes it a pleasure to admire.

After all the Romans had said to Nevil of their Passion week, he had expected much more than he had found. He sighed for the august simplicity of the English Church, and returned home discontented with himself, for not having been affected by that which he ought to have felt. In such cases we fancy that the soul is withered, and fear that we have lost that enthusiasm, without which reason itself would serve but to disgust us with life.

CHAPTER IV.

Good Friday restored all the religious emotions of Lord Nevil; he was about to regain Corinne—the sweet hopes of love blended with that piety, from which nothing save the factitious career of the world can entirely wean us. He sought the Sixtine Chapel, to hear the far-famed *Miserére*. It was yet light enough for him to see the pictures of Michael Angelo —the Day of Judgment, treated by a genius worthy so terrible a subject. Dante had infected this painter with the bad taste of representing mythological beings in the presence of Christ; but it is chiefly as

demons that he has characterized these Pagan creations. Beneath the arches of the roof are seen the prophets and heathen priestesses, called as witnesses by the Christians (*teste David cum Sibylla*); a host of angels surround them. The roof is painted as if to bring heaven nearer to us; but that heaven is gloomy and repulsive. Day scarcely penetrates the windows, which throw on the pictures more shadows than beams. This dimness, too, enlarges the already commanding figures of Michael Angelo. The funereal perfume of incense fills the aisles, and every sensation prepares us for that deeper one which awaits the touch of music. While Oswald was lost in these reflections, he beheld Corinne, whom he had not expected yet to see, enter that part of the chapel devoted to females, and separated by a grating from the rest. She was in black; pale with abstinence, and so tremulous, as she perceived him, that she was obliged to support herself by the balustrade. At this moment the *Miserére* commenced. Voices well practised in this pure and antique chant rose from an unseen gallery; every instant rendered the chapel darker. The music seemed to float in the air; no longer in the voluptuously impassioned strains which the lovers had heard together a week since, but such as seemed bidding them renounce all earthly things. Corinne knelt before the grate. Oswald himself was forgotten. At such a moment she would have loved to die. If the separation of soul and body were but pangless; if an angel would bear away thought and feeling on his wings—divine sparks, that shall return to their source—death would be then the heart's spontaneous act, an ardent prayer most mercifully granted. The verses of this psalm are sung alternately, and in very contrasted styles. The heavenly harmony of one is answered by murmured

recitative, heavy and even harsh, like the reply of worldings to the appeal of sensibility, or the realities of life defeating the vows of generous souls: when the soft choir reply, hope springs again, again to be frozen by that dreary sound which inspires not terror, but utter discouragement; yet the last burst, most reassuring of all, leaves just the stainless and exquisite sensation in the soul which we would pray to be accorded when we die. The lights are extinguished; night advances; the pictures gleam like prophetic phantoms through the dusk; the deepest silence reigns: speech would be insupportable in this state of self-communion; every one steals slowly away, reluctant to resume the vulgar interests of the world.

Corinne followed the procession to St. Peter's, as yet illumined but by a cross of fire: this type of grief shining alone through the immense obscure, fair image of Christianity amid the shades of life! A wan light falls over the statues on the tombs. The living, who throng these arches, appear but pigmies, compared with the effigies of the dead. Around the cross is a space cleared, where the Pope, arrayed in white, with all the cardinals behind him, prostrate themselves to the earth, and remain nearly half an hour profoundly mute. None hear what they request; but they are old, going before us towards the tomb, whither we must follow. Grant us, O God! the grace so to ennoble age, that the last days of life may be the first of immortality. Corinne, too, the young and lovely Corinne, knelt near the priests; the mild light weakened not the lustre of her eyes. Oswald looked on her as an entrancing picture, as well as an adored woman. Her orison concluded, she rose; her lover dared not approach, revering the meditations in which he believed her still plunged; but she came to

him, with all the rapture of reunion;—happiness was so shed over her every action, that she received the greetings of her friends with unwonted gayety. St. Peters, indeed, had suddenly become a public promenade, where every one made appointments of business or of pleasure. Oswald was astonished at this power of running from one extreme to another; and, much as he rejoiced in the vivacity of Corinne, he felt surprised at her thus instantly banishing all traces of her late emotions. He could not conceive how this glorious edifice, on so solemn a day, could be converted into the *Café* of Rome, where people meet for amusement; and seeing Corinne encircled by admirers, to whom she chatted cheerfully, as if no longer conscious where she stood, he felt some mistrust as to the levity of which she might be capable. She read his thoughts, and hastily breaking from her party, took his arm to walk the church with him, saying: "I have never spoken to you of my religious sentiments; let me do so now; perhaps I may thus disperse the clouds I see rising in your mind."

CHAPTER V.

"The difference of our creeds, my dear Oswald," continued Corinne, "is the cause of the unspoken displeasure you cannot prevent me from detecting. Your faith is serious and severe, ours lively and tender. It is generally believed that my church is the most rigorous; it may be so, in a country where struggles exist between the two; but here we have no doctrinal dissensions. England has experienced many. The result is, that Catholicism here has taken

an indulgent character, such as it cannot have where Reformation is armed against it. Our religion, like that of the ancients, animates the arts, inspires the poets, and makes part of all the joys of life; while yours, established in a country where reason predominates over fancy, is stamped with a moral sternness that will never be effaced. Ours calls on us in the name of love; yours in that of duty. Your principles are liberal; our dogmas bigoted; yet our orthodox despotism has some fellowship with private circumstances; and your religious liberty exacts respect for its own laws, without any exception. It is true that our monastics undergo sad hardships, but they choose them freely; their state is a mysterious engagement between God and man. Among the secular Catholics here, love, hope, and faith are the chief virtues, all announcing, all bestowing, peace. Far from our priests forbidding us to rejoice, they tell us that we thus evince our gratitude for the gifts of Heaven. They enjoin us to practise charity and repentance, as proofs of our respect for our faith, and our desire to please its Founder; but they refuse us not the absolution we zealously implore; and the errors of the heart meet here a mercy elsewhere denied. Did not our Saviour tell the Magdalene that much should be pardoned to the greatness of her love? As fair a sky as ours echoed these words: shall we then despair of our Creator's pity?"—"Corinne," returned Nevil, "how can I combat arguments so sweet, so needful to me? and yet I must. It is not for a day I love Corinne; to her I look for a long futurity of content and virtue. The purest religion is that which sacrifices passion to duty, as a continual homage to the Supreme Being. A moral life is the best offering. We degrade the Creator by attributing to him a wish that tends not towards our intellectual

perfection. Paternity, that godlike symbol of faultless sway, seeks but to render its children better and happier. How, then, suppose that God demands of man actions that have not the welfare of man for their object? what confused notions spring from the habit of attaching more importance to religious ceremonies than to active worth! You know that it is just after Passion week the greatest number of murders are committed in Rome. The long fast has, in more senses than one, put its votaries in possession of funds, and they spend the treasures of their penitence in assassinations. The most disgusting criminal here scruples to eat meat on Fridays; convinced that the greatest of crimes were that of disobeying the ordinances of the Church: all conscience is lavished on that point; as if the Divinity were like one of this world's rulers, who prefers flattering submission to faithful service. Is this courtier-like behavior to be substituted for the respect we owe the Eternal, as the source and the recompense of a forbearing and spotless life? The external demonstrations of Italian Catholicism excuse the soul from all interior piety. The spectacle over, the feeling ends—the duty is done; no one remains, as with us, long occupied by thoughts born of strict and sincere self-examination."

"You are severe, my dear Oswald," said Corinne; "this is not the first time I have remarked it. If religion consists but in morality, how is it superior to philosophy and reason? And what piety could we truly feel, if our principal end was that of stifling all the feelings of the heart? The Stoics knew almost as much as ourselves of austere self-denials; but something more due to Christianity is the enthusiasm which weds it with all the affections of the soul—the power of loving and sympathizing. It is the most

indulgent worship, which best favors the flight of our spirits towards Heaven. What means the parable of the Prodigal Son, if not, that true love of God is preferred even above the most exact fulfilment of duty? He quitted the paternal roof; his brother remained beneath it. He had plunged into all the pleasures of the world; his brother had never, for an instant, broken the regularity of domestic life; but the wanderer returned, all tears and his beloved father received him with rejoicing! Ah! doubtless, among the mysteries of nature, *love* is all that is left us of our heavenly heritage! Our very virtues are often too constitutional for us always to comprehend what is right, or what is the secret impulse that directs us. I ask my God to teach me to adore him. I feel the effect of my petition by the tears I shed. But, to sustain this disposition, religious exercises are more necessary than you may think; a constant intercourse with the Divinity; daily habits that have no connection with the interests of life, but belong solely to the invisible world. External objects are of great assistance to piety. The soul would fall back upon herself, if music and the arts reanimated not that poetic genius, which is also the genius of religion. The vulgarest man, while he prays, suffers, or trusts in Heaven, would express himself like Milton, Homer, or Tasso, if education had clothed his thoughts in words. There are but two distinct classes of men born—those who feel enthusiasm, and those who deride it; all the rest is the work of society. One class have no words for their sentiments; the other know what they ought to say to hide the void of their hearts; but the stream flowed from the rock at the command of Heaven; even so gush forth true talent, true religion, true love. The pomp of our worship; those pictures of kneeling saints, whose

looks express continual prayer; those statues placed on tombs, as if to awaken one day with the dead; our churches, with their lofty aisles—all seem intimately connected with devout ideas. I love this splendid homage, made by man to that which promises him neither fortune nor power; which neither rewards nor punishes, save by the feelings it inspires; I grow proud of my kind, as I recognize something so disinterested. The magnificence of religion cannot be too much increased. I love this prodigality of terrestrial gifts to another world; offerings from time to eternity; sufficient for the morrow are the cares required by human economy. Oh! how I love what would be useless waste, were life nothing better than a career of toil for despicable gain! if this earth be but our road to heaven, what can we do better than so elevate our souls that they feel the Infinite, the Invisible, the Eternal, in the midst of the limits that surround them? Jesus permitted a weak, and, perhaps, repentant woman, to steep his head in precious balms, saying to those who bade her turn them to more profitable use; 'Why trouble ye the woman? the poor ye have always with ye, but me ye have not always.' Alas! whatever is good or sublime on this earth is ours but for awhile; we have it not always. Age, infirmities, and death soon sully the heavenly dewdrop that only rests on flowers. Dear Oswald, let us, then, blend love, religion, genius, sunshine, odors, music, and poetry. There is no Atheism but cold selfish baseness. Christ has said: 'When two or three are gathered together in my name, I will be amongst them;' and what, O God! *is* assembling in thy name, if we do not so while enjoying the charms of nature, therein praising and thanking thee for our life; above all, when some other heart, created by thy hands, responds entirely

to our own?"

So celestial an inspiration animated the countenance of Corinne, that Oswald could scarce refrain from falling at her feet in that august temple. He was long silent, delightedly musing over her words, and reading their meaning in her looks: he could not, however, abandon a cause so dear to him as that he had undertaken; therefore resumed: "Corinne, hear a few words more from your friend: his heart is not seared; no, no, believe me, if I require austerity of principle and action, it is because it gives our feelings depth and duration; if I look for reason in religion—that is, if I reject contradictory dogmas, and human means for affecting the soul—it is because I see the Divinity in reason as in enthusiasm; if I cannot allow man to be deprived of any of his faculties, it is because they are all scarce sufficient for his comprehension of the truths, revealed to him as much by mental reflection as by heartfelt instinct —the existence of a God, and the immortality of the soul. To these solemn thoughts, so entwined with virtue, what can be added, that, in fact, belongs to them? The poetic zeal to which you lend so many attractions, is not, I dare assert, the most salutary kind of devotion! Corinne, how can it prepare us for the innumerable sacrifices that duty exacts? It has no revelation, save in its own impulses; while its future destiny is seen but through clouds. Now we, to whom Christianity renders it clear and positive, may deem such a sensation our reward, but cannot make it our sole guide. You describe the existence of the blest, not that of mortals; a religious life is a combat, not a hymn. If we were not sent here to repress our own and others' evil inclinations, there would, as you say, be no distinctions save between apathetic and ardent minds. But man is more harsh and rugged

than you think him; rational piety and imperious duty alone can check his proud excesses. Whatever you may think of exterior pomp, and numerous ceremonies, dearest! the contemplation of the universe and its Author, will ever be the only worship which so fills the heart that self-knowledge can find in it nothing either idle or absurd. The dogmas that wound my reason, also chill my enthusiasm. Doubtless, the world is in itself an incomprehensible mystery, and he were most unwise who refused to believe whatever he could not explain; but contradictions are always the work of man. The secrets of God are beyond our mental powers, but not opposed to them. A German philosopher has said: 'I know but two lovely things in the universe—the starry sky above our heads, and the sense of duty within our hearts.' In sooth, all the wonders of creation are included in these. Far from a simple religion withering the heart, I used to think, ere I knew you, Corinne, that such alone could concentrate and perpetuate its affections. I have witnessed the most austere purity of conduct from a man of inexhaustible tenderness. I have seen it preserve, in age, a virgin innocence which the storms of passion must else have blighted. Repentance is assuredly commendable, and I, more than most men, had need rely on its efficacy; but repeated penitence wearies the soul; it is a sentiment that can but once regenerate us. Redemption accomplished, cannot be renewed; accustomed to the attempt, we lose the strength of love; for it requires strength of mind to love God constantly. I object to the splendid forms which here act so powerfully on the fancy, because I would have imagination modest and retiring, like the heart: emotions extorted from it, are always less forcible than those that spring spontaneously. In the

Cevennes, I heard a Protestant minister preach one eve among the mountains: he addressed the tombs of the Frenchmen, banished by their brothers, and promised their friends that they should meet them in a better world: a virtuous life, he said, would secure that blessing, adding, 'Do good to man, that God may heal the wounds within your breasts!' He wondered at the inflexibility with which the creature of a day dared treat his fellow-worm; and spoke of that terrible death, which all conceive, but none fully expound. In short, he said naught that was not touching, true, and perfectly in harmony with nature. The distant cataract, the sparkling starlight, seemed expressing the same thoughts in other ways. There was the magnificence of nature, the only one whose spectacles offend not the unfortunate; and this imposing simplicity affected the soul as it was never affected by the most brilliant of ceremonies."

On Easter Sunday, Oswald and Corinne went to the Place of St. Peter's, to see the Pope, from the highest balcony of the church, call down Heaven's blessing on the earth: as he pronounced *Urbi et orbi*—on the city and the world—the people knelt, and our lovers felt all creeds alike. Religion links men with each other, unless self-love and fanaticism render it a cause of jealousy and hate. To pray together, in whatever tongue or ritual, is the most tender brotherhood of hope and sympathy that men can contract in this life.

CHAPTER VI.

Easter was over, yet Corinne spoke not of

accomplishing her promise, by confiding her history to Nevil. Hurt by this silence, he one day told her that he intended paying a visit to their vaunted Naples. She understood his feelings, and proposed to make the journey with him; hoping to escape the avowal he expected from her, by giving him a proof of love which ought to be so satisfactory: besides, she thought that he would not take her with him, unless he designed to become hers for life. Her anxious looks supplicated a favorable reply. He could not resist, though surprised at the simplicity with which she made this offer; yet he hesitated for some time, till, seeing her bosom throb, and her eyes fill, he consented, without considering the importance of such a resolution. Corinne was overwhelmed with joy: at that moment she implicitly relied on his fidelity. The day was fixed, and the sweet perspective of travelling together banished every other idea. Not an arrangement they made for this purpose but was a source of pleasure. Happy mood! in which every detail of life derives a charm from some fond hope. Too soon comes the time when each hour fatigues; when each morning costs us an effort, to support our walking, and drag on the day to its close. As Nevil left Corinne, in order to prepare everything for their departure, the Count d'Erfeuil called on her, and learned her plan. "You cannot think of it!" he said: "make a tour with a man who has not even promised to be your husband! what will become of you if he turns deserter?"—"I should become," replied she, "but what I must be, in any situation, if he ceased to love me, the most unhappy person in the world."—"Yes; but if you had done nothing to compromise your name, you would still remain yourself."—"Myself!" she repeated, "when the best feelings of my soul were blighted, and my heart broken?"—"The public would

not guess that; and with a little caution you might preserve its opinion."—"And why humor that opinion, unless it were to gain one merit the more in the eyes of love?"—"We may cease to love," answered the Count, "but we do not cease to live in need of society."—"If I could think," she exclaimed, "that the day would come when Oswald's affections were no longer mine all, I should have ceased to love already. What is love, if it can calculate and provide against its own decay? No; like devotion, it dissipates all other interests, and delights in an entire sacrifice of self."—"And can a person of your mind turn her brain with such nonsense?" asked d'Erfeuil: "it is certainly to the advantage of us men, that women think as you do; but *you* must not lose your superiority; it ought to be in some way useful."—"Useful!" cried Corinne; "Oh! I shall owe it enough, if it teaches me the better to appreciate the tender generosity of Nevil."—"Nevil is like other men," rejoined the Count; "he will return to his country, resume his career there, and be reasonable at last; you will expose your reputation most imprudently by going to Naples with him."—"I know not his intentions," she answered; "and, perhaps, it would have been better to have reflected ere I loved him; but now—what matters one sacrifice more? Does not my life depend on his love? Indeed, I feel some solace in leaving myself without one resource; there never is any for wounded hearts, but the world may sometimes think that such remains; and I love to know that even in this respect my misfortune would be complete, if Nevil abandoned me."—"And does he know how far you commit yourself for his sake?"—"No; I have taken great pains, as he is but imperfectly acquainted with the customs of this country, to exaggerate the liberty it permits. Give me your word that you will say

nothing to him on this head. I wish him to be ever free; he cannot constitute my felicity by giving up any portion of his own. His love is the flower of my life; and neither his delicacy nor his goodness could reanimate it, if once faded. I conjure you, then, dear Count, leave me to my fate. Nothing that you know of the heart's affections can suit my case: all you say is right, and very applicable to ordinary persons and situations; but you innocently do me great wrong in judging me by the common herd, for whom there are so many maxims ready made. I enjoy, I suffer, in my own way, and it is of me alone that those should think who seek to influence my welfare." The self-love of d'Erfeuil was a little stung by the futility of his advice; and, by the mark of preference shown to Nevil, he knew that he himself was not dear to Corinne, and that Oswald was; yet that all this should be so publicly evinced was somewhat disagreeable to him. The success of any man, with any woman, is apt to displease even his best friends. "I see I can do nothing here," he added; "but, when my words are fulfilled, you will remember me; meantime I shall leave Rome: without you and Nevil I should be ennuied to death. I shall surely see you both again in Italy or Scotland; for I have taken a fancy to travel, while waiting for better things. Forgive my counsel, charming Corinne, and ever depend on my devotion to you." She thanked and parted from him with regret. She had known him at the same time with Oswald; that was a link she liked not to see broken; but she acted as she had told d'Erfeuil she should do. Some anxiety still troubled Oswald's joy: he would fain have obtained her secret, that he might be certain they were not to be separated by any invincible obstacle; but she declared she would explain nothing till they were at

Naples, and threw a veil over what might be said of the step she was taking. Oswald lent himself to this illusion: love, in a weak, uncertain character, deceives by halves, reason remains half clear, and present emotions decide which of the two halves shall become the whole. The mind of Nevil was singularly expansive and penetrating; yet he could only judge himself correctly in the past; his existing situation appeared to him ever in confusion. Susceptible alike of rashness and remorse, of passion and timidity, he was incapable of understanding his own state, until events had decided the combat. When the friends of Corinne were apprised of her plan they were greatly distressed, especially Prince Castel Forte, who resolved to follow her as soon as possible. He had not the vanity to oppose her accepted lover, but he could not support the frightful void left by the absence of his fair friend; he had no acquaintance whom he was not wont to meet at her house; he visited no other. The society she attracted round her must be dispersed by her departure, so wrecked that it would soon be impossible to restore it. He was little accustomed to live among his family; though extremely intelligent, study fatigued him; the day would have been too heavy but for his morn and evening visit to Corinne. She was going; he could but guess why; yet secretly promised himself to rejoin her, not like an exacting lover, but as one ever ready to console her, if unhappy, and who might have been but too sure that such a time would come. Corinne felt some melancholy in loosening all the ties of habit; the life she had led in Rome was agreeable to her; she was the centre round which circled all its celebrated artists and men of letters—perfect freedom had lent charms to her existence: what was she to be now? if destined to be Oswald's wife, he

would take her to England: how should she be received there? how restrain herself to a career so different from that of her last six years? These thoughts did but pass over her mind; love for Oswald effaced their light track. She saw him, heard him, and counted the hours but by his presence or absence. Who can refuse the happiness that seeks them? Corinne, of all women, was the least forethoughted; nor hope nor fear was made for her; her faith in the future was indistinct, and in this respect her fancy did her as little good as harm. The morning of her departure Castel Forte came to her, with tears in his eyes. "Will you return no more to Rome?" he asked.—"My God, yes!" she cried; "we shall be back in a month."—"But, if you wed Lord Nevil, you will leave Italy."—"Leave Italy!" she sighed.—"Yes; the country where we speak your language, and understand you so well; where you are so vividly admired; and for friends, Corinne, where will you be beloved as you are here? where find the arts, the thoughts that please you? Can a single attachment constitute your life? Do not language, customs, and manners, compose that love of country which inflicts such terrible grief on the exile?"—"What say you?" cried Corinne: "have I not experienced it? Did not that very grief decide my fate?" She looked sadly on the statues that decked her room; then on the Tiber, rolling beneath her windows; and the sky whose smile seemed inviting her to stay; but at that moment Oswald crossed the bridge of St. Angelo on horseback. "Here he is!" cried Corinne; she had scarcely said the words ere he was beside her. She ran before him, and both, impatient to set forth, took their places in the carriage; yet Corinne paid a kind adieu to Castel Forte; but it was lost among the shouts of postilions, the neighing of

horses, and all the bustle of departure—sometimes sad, sometimes intoxicating—just as fear or hope may be inspired by the new chances of coming destiny.

BOOK XI.

NAPLES, AND THE HERMITAGE OF ST. SALVADOR.

CHAPTER I.

Oswald was proud of bearing off his conquest; though usually disturbed in his enjoyments by reflections and regrets, he felt less so now: not that he was decided, but that he did not trouble himself to be so; he yielded to the course of events, hoping to be borne towards the haven of his wishes. They crossed the Campagna d'Albano, where still is shown the supposed tomb of the Horatii and Curatii.[1] They passed near the Lake of Nemi, and the sacred woods that surround it, where it is said Hippolitus was restored to life by Diana, who permitted no horses ever to enter it more, in remembrance of her young favorite's misfortune. Thus, in Italy, almost at every step, history and poetry add to the graces of nature, sweeten the memory of the past, and seem to preserve it in eternal youth. Oswald and Corinne next traversed the Pontine Marshes, fertile and pestilent at once, unenlivened by a single habitation. Squalid-looking men put to the horses, advising you

to keep awake while passing through this air, as sleep is ever the herald of death. Buffaloes, of the most stupid ferocity, draw the plough, which imprudent cultivators sometimes employ upon this fatal land; and the most brilliant sunshine lights up the whole. Unwholesome swamps in the north are indicated by their frightful aspects; but in the most dangerous countries of the south nature deceives the traveller by her serenest welcome. If it be true that slumber is so perilous on these fens, the drowsiness their heat produces adds still more to our sense of the perfidy around us. Nevil watched constantly over Corinne. When she languidly closed her eyes, or leaned her head on the shoulder of Thérésina, he awakened her with inexhaustible terror; and, silent as he was by nature, now found inexhaustible topics for conversation, ever new, to prevent her submitting for an instant to this murderous sleep. May we not forgive the heart of woman for the despairing regret with which it clings to the days when she was beloved? when her existence was so essential to that of another, that its every instant was protected by his arm? What isolation must succeed that delicious time! Happy they whom the sacred link of marriage gently leads from love to friendship, without one cruel moment having torn their hearts.

At last our voyagers arrived at Terracina, on the coast bordering the kingdom of Naples. There the south indeed begins, and receives the stranger in its full magnificence. The *Campagna Felicé* seems separated from the rest of Europe, not only by the sea, but by the destructive land which must be crossed to reach it. It is as if nature wished to keep her loveliest secret, and therefore rendered the road to it so hazardous. Not far from Terracina is the promontory chosen by poets as the abode of Circea,

behind rises Mount Anxur, where Theodoric, king of the Goths, built one of his strongest castles. There are few traces of these invading barbarians left, and those, being mere works of destruction, are confounded with the works of time. The northern nations have not given Italy that warlike aspect which Germany retains. It seems as if the soft earth of Ausonia could not keep the fortifications and citadels that bristle through northern snows. Rarely is a Gothic edifice or feudal castle to be found here. The antique Romans still reign over the memory even of their conquerors. The whole of the mountain above Terracina is covered with orange and lemon trees, that delicately embalm the air. Nothing in our own climes resemble the effect of this perfume: it is like that of some exquisite melody, exciting and inebriating talent into poetry. The aloes and large-leaved cactus that abound here remind one of Africa's gigantic vegetation, almost fearfully; they seem belonging to a realm of tyranny and violence. Everything is strange as another world, known but by the songs of antique bards, who, in all their lays, evinced more imagination than truth. As they entered Terracina, the children threw into Corinne's carriage immense heaps of flowers, gathered by the wayside, or on the hills, and strewn at random, so confident are they in the prodigality of nature. The wagons that bring the harvest from the fields are daily garlanded with roses: one sees and hears, besides these smiling pictures, the waves that rage unlashed by storms against the rocks, eternal barriers that chafe the ocean's pride.

"E non udite ancor come risuona
Il roco ed alto fremito marino?"

"And hear you not still how resounds

The hoarse and deep roar of the sea?"

This endless motion, this aimless strength, renewed eternally, Whose cause and termination are alike unknown to us, draws us to the shore whence so grand a spectacle may be seen, till we feel a fearful desire to rush into its waves, and stun our thoughts amid their tumultuous voices.

Towards evening all is calm. Corinne and Nevil wandered slowly forth: they stepped on flowers, and scattered their sweets as they pressed them. The nightingale rests on the rose-bushes, and blends the purest music with the richest scents. All nature's charms seem mutually attracted; but the most entrancing and inexpressible of all is the mildness of the air. In contemplating a fine northern view, the climate always qualifies our pleasure. Like false notes in a concert, the petty sensations of cold and damp distract attention; but in approaching Naples you breathe so freely, feel such perfect ease; with such bounteous friendship does nature welcome you, that nothing impairs your delight. Man's every relation, in our lands, is with society: in warm climates his affections overflow among exterior objects. It is not that the south has not its melancholy—in what scenes can human destiny fail to awaken it?—but here it is unmixed with discontent or anxiety. Elsewhere life, such as it is, suffices not the faculties of man: here those faculties suffice not for a life whose superabundance of sensation induce a pensive indolence, for which those who feel it can scarce account.

During the night the fire-flies fill the air: one might suppose that the burning earth thus let her flames escape in light: these insects wanton through the trees, sometimes pitching on their leaves; and as the

wind waves them, the uncertain gleam of these little stars is varied in a thousand ways. The sand also contains a number of small ferruginous stones, that shine through it, as if earth cherished in her breast the last rays of the vivifying sun. Everywhere is united a life and a repose that satisfy at once all the wishes of existence.

Corinne yielded to the charm of such a night with heartfelt joy. Oswald could not conceal his emotion. Often he pressed her hand to his heart, then withdrew, returned, retired again, in respect for her who ought to be the companion of his life. She thought not of her danger: such was her esteem for him, that, had he demanded the gift of her entire being, she would not have doubted that such prayer was but a solemn vow to make her his wife; she was glad, however, that he triumphed over himself, and honored her by the sacrifice: her soul was so replete with love and happiness, that she could not form another wish. Oswald was far from this calm: fired by her beauty, he once embraced her knees with violence, and seemed to have lost all empire over his passion; but Corinne looked on him with so sweet a fear, as if confessing his power, in entreating him not to abuse it, that this humble defence extorted more reverence than any other could have done. They saw reflected in the wave a torch which some unknown hand bore along the beach, to a rendezvous at a neighboring house. "He goes to his love," said Oswald; "and for me the happiness of this day will soon be over." Corinne's eyes, then raised to heaven, were filled with tears. Oswald, fearing he had offended her, fell at her feet, begging her to pardon the love which hurried him away. She gave him her hand, proposing their return together. "Oswald," she said, "you will, I am assured, respect her you love;

you know that the simplest request of yours would be resistless: it is you, then, who must answer for me; you, who would refuse me for your wife, if you had rendered me unworthy to be so."—"Well," said Oswald, "since you know the cruel potency of your will over my heart, whence, whence this sadness?"—"Alas!" she replied, "I had told myself that my last moments passed with you were the happiest of my life; and, as I looked gratefully to heaven, I know not by what chance a childish superstition came back upon my mind. The moon was hid by a cloud of fatal aspect. I have always found the sky either paternal or angry; and I tell you, Oswald, that to-night it condemns our love."—"Dearest," cried he, "the only auguries are good or evil actions; and have I not this evening immolated my most ardent desires to virtue?"—"It is well," added Corinne: "if you are not involved in this presage, it may be that the stormy heaven menaces but myself."

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[1] There is an exquisite account of the Lake Albano, in a collection of poems by Madame Brunn (formerly Munter), one of the most talented and imaginative women of her country.

CHAPTER II.

They arrived at Naples by day, amid its immense population of animated idlers. They first crossed the Strada del Toledo, and saw the Lazzaroni lying on the pavement, or crouching in the wicker works that serve them for dwellings night and day; this savage state, blending with civilization, has a very original air. There are many among these men who know not even their own names; who come to confession anonymously, because they cannot tell what to call the offenders. There is a subterranean grotto, where thousands of Lazzaroni pass their lives, merely going at noon to look on the sun, and sleeping during the rest of the day, while their wives spin. In climates where food and raiment are so cheap, it requires a very active government to spread sufficient national emulation; material subsistence is so easy there that they dispense with the industry requisite elsewhere for our daily bread. Idleness and ignorance, combined with the volcanic air they imbibe, must produce ferocity when the passions are excited; yet these people are no worse than others; they have imagination which might prove the parent of disinterested action, and lead to good results, did their political and religious institutions set them good examples.

The Calabrese march towards the fields they cultivate with a musician at their head, to whose tunes they occasionally dance, by way of variety. Every year is held, near Naples, a fête to our Lady of the Grotto, at which the girls dance to the sound of tambourines and castanets; and they often make it a clause in their marriage contracts, that their husbands shall take them annually to this fête. There was an actor of eighty, who for sixty years diverted the Neapolitans, in their national part of Polichinello. What immortality does the soul deserve which has thus long employed the body? The people of Naples know no good but pleasure; yet even such taste is preferable to barren selfishness. It is true that they love money inordinately; if you ask your way in the streets, the man addressed holds out his hand as soon as he has pointed—they are often too lazy for words; but their love of gold is not that of the miser: they spend as they receive it. If coin were introduced among savages, they would demand it in the same way. What the Neapolitans want most is a sense of dignity. They perform generous and benevolent actions rather from impulse than principle. Their theories are worth nothing; and public opinion has no influence over them; but, if any here escape this moral anarchy, their conduct is more admirable than might be found elsewhere, since nothing in their exterior circumstances is favorable to virtue. Nor laws nor manners are there to reward or punish. The good are the more heroic, as they are not the more sought or better considered for their pains. With some honorable exceptions, the highest class is very like the lowest; the mind is as little cultivated in the one as in the other. Dress makes the only difference. But, in the midst of all this, there is at bottom a natural cleverness and aptitude, which shows us

what such a nation might become if the government devoted its powers to their mental and moral improvement. As there is little education, one finds more originality of character than of wit; but the distinguished men of this country, such as the Abbé Galiani and Caraccioli, possessed, it is said, both pleasantry and reflection—rare union, without which either pedantry or frivolity must prevent men from knowing the true value of things. In some respects the Neapolitans are quite uncivilized; but their vulgarity is not like that of others; their very grossness strikes the imagination. We feel that the African shore is near us. There is something Numidian in the wild cries we hear from all sides. The brown faces, and dresses of red or purple stuff, whose strong colors catch the eye, those ragged cloaks, draped so artistically give something picturesque to the populace, in whom, elsewhere we can but mark the steps of civilization. A certain taste for ornament is here found, contrasted with a total want of all that is useful. The shops are decked with fruit and flowers; some of them have a holy day look, that belongs neither to private plenty nor public felicity; but solely to vivacious fancy, which fain would feast the eye at any rate. The mild clime permits all kinds of laborers to work in the streets. Tailors there make clothes, and cooks pastry—these household tasks performed out of doors much augment the action of the scene. Songs, dances, and noisy sports accompany this spectacle. There never was a country in which the difference between amusement and happiness might be more clearly felt; yet leave the interior for the quays, look on the sea, and Vesuvius, and you forget all that you know of the natives. Oswald and Corinne reached Naples while the eruption still lasted. By day it sent forth

but a black smoke, which might be confounded with the clouds; but in the evening, going to the balcony of their abode, they received a most unexpected shock. A flood of fire rolled down to the seas, its flaming waves imitating the rapid succession and indefatigable movement of the ocean's billows. It might be said that nature, though dividing herself into different elements, preserved some traces of her single and primitive design. This phenomenon really makes the heart palpitate. We are so familiarized with the works of heaven, that we scarcely notice them with any new sensation in our prosaic realms; But the wonder which the universe ought to inspire, is suddenly renewed at the sight of a miracle like this; our whole being is agitated by its Maker's power, from which our social connections have turned our thoughts so long; we feel that man is not the world's chief mystery; that a strength independent of his own at once threatens and protects him by a law to him unknown. Oswald and Corinne promised themselves the pleasure of ascending Vesuvius, and felt an added delight in thinking of the danger they thus should brave together.

CHAPTER III.

There was at that time in the harbor an English ship of war, where divine service was performed every Sunday. The captain and other English persons then at Naples invited Lord Nevil to attend on the morrow. He promised; but while thinking whether he should take Corinne, or how she could be presented to his countrywomen, he was tortured by anxiety. As

he walked with her near the port next day, and was about to advise her not to go on board this vessel, a boat neared the shore, rowed by ten sailors, dressed in white, wearing black velvet caps, with the Leopard embroidered on them in silver. A young officer stepped on shore, and entreated Corinne to let him take her to the ship, calling her "Lady Nevil." At that name she blushed, and cast down her eyes. Oswald hesitated a moment, then said in English, "Come, my dear:" she obeyed. The sound of the waves made her thoughtful, as did the silence of the well-disciplined crew, who without one superfluous word or gesture, rapidly winged their bark over the element they had so often traversed. Corinne dared not ask Nevil what she was to anticipate; she strove to guess his projects, never hitting on what, at all times, was most probable that he had *none*, but let himself be borne away by every new occurrence. For a moment, she imagined that he was leading her to a Church of England chaplain, to make her his wife; this thought alarmed more than it gratified her. She felt about to leave Italy for England, where she had suffered so much; the severity of its manners returned to her mind, and not even love could triumph over her fear. How she would in other circumstances have wondered at these fleeting ideas! She mounted the vessel's side; it was arranged with the most careful neatness. Nothing was heard from its deck but the commands of the captain. Subordination and serious regularity here reigned, as emblems of liberty and order, in contrast with the impassioned turmoil of Naples. Oswald eagerly watched the impression this made on Corinne, yet he was often diverted from his attention by the love he bore his country. There is no second country for an Englishman, except a ship and the sea. Oswald joined

the Britons on board to ask the news, and talk politics. Corinne stood beside some English females who had come to hear prayers. They were surrounded by children, beautiful as day, but timid like their mothers, and not a word was spoken before the stranger. This restraint was sad enough for Corinne; she looked towards fair Naples, thought of its flowery shore, its lively habits, and sighed. Happily, Oswald heard her not; on the contrary, seeing her seated among his sisters, as it were, her dark eyelashes cast down like their light ones, and in every way conforming with their customs, he felt a thrill of joy. Vainly does an Englishman take a temporary pleasure among foreign scenes and people; his heart invariably flies back to his first impressions. If you find him sailing from the antipodes, and ask whither he is going, he answers, "home," if it is towards England that he steers. His vows, his sentiments, at whatever distance he may be, are always turned towards her.[1] They went below for divine service. Corinne perceived that her first conjecture was unfounded, and that Nevil's intentions were less solemn than she supposed; then she reproached herself for having feared, and again felt all the embarrassment of her situation; for every one present believed her the wife of Lord Nevil, and she could say nothing either to confirm or to destroy this idea. Oswald suffered as cruelly. Such faults as weakness and irresolution are never detected by their possessor, for whom they take new names from each fresh circumstance; sometimes he tells himself that prudence, sometimes that delicacy defers the moment of action, and prolongs his suspense. Corinne, in spite of her painful thoughts, was deeply impressed by all she witnessed. Nothing speaks more directly to the soul than divine service on board ship,

for which the noble simplicity of the Reformed Church seems particularly adapted. A young man acted as chaplain, with a firm, sweet voice; his face bespoke a purity of soul; he stood "severe in youthful beauty," a type of the religion fit to be preached amidst the risks of war. At certain periods the English minister pronounced prayers, the last words of which were repeated by the whole assembly; these confused, yet softened tones, coming from various distances, reanimated the interest of the whole. Sailors and officers alike knelt to the words, "Lord, have mercy upon us!" The captain's cutlass hung by his side, suggesting the glorious union of humility before God, and courage among men, which renders the devotion of warriors so affecting. While all these brave fellows addressed the God of Hosts, the sea was seen through the ports; the light sound of its now peaceful waves was audible, as if to say, "Your prayers are heard." The chaplain concluded with a petition peculiar to English sailors: "And may God grant us the grace to defend our happy constitution abroad, and to find, on our return, domestic peace at home." What grandeur is contained in these simple words! The preparatory and continual study which the navy demands, the life led in those warlike and floating cloisters, the uniformity of their grave toils, is seldom interrupted, save by danger or death. Nevertheless, sailors often behave with extreme gentleness and pity towards women and children, if thrown on their care; one is the more touched by this, from knowing the heedless coolness with which they expose their lives in battle, and on the main where the presence of man seems something supernatural. Nevil and Corinne were again rowed on shore; they gazed on Naples, built like an amphitheatre, thence to look on the spectacle of

nature.

As Corinne's foot touched the shore, she could not check a sentiment of joy: had Oswald guessed this, he would have felt displeased, perhaps excusably; yet such displeasure would have been unjust, for he was passionately beloved, though the thought of his country always forced on his adorer the memory of events which had rendered her miserable. Her fancy was changeful: talent, especially in a woman, creates a zest for variety that the deepest passion cannot entirely supply. A monotonous life, even in the bosom of content, dismays a mind so constituted: without a breeze to fill our sails we may always hug the shore; but imagination will stray, be sensibility never so faithful, at least till misfortune slays these trifling impulses, and leaves us but one thought, one only sorrow.

Oswald attributed the reverie of Corinne solely to the awkward situation of her having been called Lady Nevil: he blamed himself for not extricating her from it, and feared that she might suspect him of levity. He therefore began the long-desired explanation, by offering to relate his own history. "I shall speak first," he said, "and your confidence will follow mine?"—"Doubtless it ought," replied Corinne, trembling; "you wish it—at what day—what hour? when you have spoken, I will tell all."—"How sadly you are agitated!" said Oswald. "Will you always fear me thus, nor ever learn to trust my heart?"—"It must be," she answered: "I have written it, and if you insist —to-morrow——"—"To-morrow we go to Vesuvius: you shall teach me to admire it; and on our way, if I have strength enough, I will give you the story of my own doom: that shall precede yours, I am resolved."—"Well," replied Corinne, "you give me to-

morrow: I thank you for that one day more. Who can tell if, when I have opened my heart to you, you will remain the same? How can I help trembling beneath such doubt?"

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[1] Who that has one beloved object absent for any considerable space of time, can read this tribute from a foreigner without tears of pride and rapture, at the consciousness that whoever is left behind, though little valued while near, gains a sad importance as part of that home, that England, to which the dear one must long to return? The natives of great continents may love their birth-places as well as we do ours; but it cannot be in the same manner.—TR.

CHAPTER IV.

Our lovers commenced their route by the ruins of Pompeii. Both were silent, for the decisive moment now drew nigh; and the vague hope so long enjoyed, so accordant with the clime, was about to give place to yet unknown reality. Pompeii is the most curious ruin of antiquity. In Rome, one hardly finds any wrecks, save those of public works, associated with the political changes of bygone centuries. In Pompeii, you retrace the private life of the ancients. The volcano which buried it in ashes preserved it from decay. No edifices, exposed to the air, could thus have lasted. Pictures and bronzes keep their primal beauty, while all domestic implements remain in overawing perfection. The amphoras are still decked for the morrow's festival. The flour that was to have been kneaded into cakes is yet there: the

remains of a female are adorned for this interrupted fête, her fleshless arm no longer filling the jewelled bracelet that yet hangs about it. Nowhere else can one behold such proofs of death's abrupt invasion. The track of wheels is visible in the streets; and the stone-work of the wells bears the marks of the cords that had worn away their edges by degrees. On the walls of the guard-room are seen the ill-formed letters and rudely-sketched figures which the soldiers had scrawled to beguile their time, while time himself was striding to devour them. When, from the midst of the cross-roads, you see all sides of the town, nearly as it existed of yore, you seem to expect that some one will come from these masterless dwellings: this appearance of life renders the eternal silence of the place still more appalling. Most of the houses are built of lava—and fresh lava destroyed them. The epochs of the world are counted from fall to fall. The thoughts of human beings, toiling by the light that consumed them, fills the breast with melancholy. How long it is since man first lived, suffered, and died! Where can we find the thoughts of the departed? do they still float around these ruins? or are they gathered forever to the heaven of immortality? A few scorched manuscripts, which were partly unrolled at Portici, are all that is left us of these victims to earthquake and volcano. But in drawing near such relics we dread to breathe, lest we should scatter with their dust the noble ideas perhaps impressed on it. The public buildings, even of Pompeii, which was one of the smallest Italian towns, are very handsome. The splendor of the ancients seemed always intended for the general good. Their private houses are small, and decked but by a taste for the fine arts. Their interiors possess agreeable pictures and tasteful mosaic pavements; on

many of them, near the door-sill, is inlet the word *Salve*. This salutation was not surely one of simple politeness, but an invitation to hospitality. The rooms are remarkably narrow, with no windows towards the street, nearly all of them opening into a portico, or the marble court round which the rooms are constructed: in its centre is a simply elegant cistern. It is evident that the inhabitants lived chiefly in the open air, and even received their friends there. Nothing can give a more luxurious idea of life than a climate which throws man into the bosom of nature. Society must have meant something very different in such habits from what it is where the cold confines men within doors. We better appreciate the dialogues of Plato, while beholding the porticos beneath which the ancients passed half of their day. They were incessantly animated by the beauteous sky. Social order, they conceived, was not the barren combination of fraud and force, but a happy union of institutions that excite the faculties, and develop the mind, making man's object the perfection of himself and his fellow-creatures. Antiquity inspires insatiable curiosity. The learned, employed solely on collections of names, which they call history, were surely devoid of all imagination. But to penetrate the past, interrogate the human heart through many ages; to seize on a fact in a word, and on the manners or character of a nation in a fact; to re-enter the most distant time, in order to conceive how the earth looked in its youth, and in what way men supported the life which civilization has since rendered so complicated; this were a continual effort of imagination, whose guesses discover secrets that study and reflection cannot reveal. Such occupation was particularly attractive to Nevil, who often told Corinne that, if he had not nobler interests to serve

in his own land, he could not endure to live away from this. We should, at least, regret the glory we cannot obtain. Forgetfulness alone degrades the soul, which can ever take refuge in the past, when deprived of a present purpose.

Leaving Pompeii they proceeded to Portici, whose inhabitants beset them with loud cries of "Come and see the mountain!" thus they designate Vesuvius. Has it need of name? It is their glory, their country is celebrated as the shrine of this marvel. Oswald begged Corinne to ascend in a sort of palanquin to the Hermitage of St. Salvadore, which is half-way up, and the usual resting-place for travellers. He rode by her side to overlook her bearers; and the more his heart filled with the generous sentiments such scenes inspire, the more he adored Corinne. The country at the foot of Vesuvius is the most fertile and best cultivated of the kingdom most favored by Heaven in all Europe. The celebrated *Lacryma Christi* vine flourishes beside land totally devastated by lava, as if nature here made a last effort, and resolved to perish in her richest array. As you ascend, you turn to gaze on Naples, and on the fair land around it—the sea sparkles in the sun as if strewn with jewels; but all the splendors of creation are extinguished by degrees, as you enter the region of ashes and of smoke, that announces your approach to the volcano. The iron waves of other years have traced their large black furrows in the soil. At a certain height, birds are no longer seen; further on, plants become very scarce; then, even insects find no nourishment. At last, all life disappears; you enter the realm of death, and the slain earth's dust alone slips beneath your unassured feet.

"Nè greggi, nè armenti

Guida bifolco mai, guida pastore."

"Never doth swain nor cowboy thither lead the flocks or herds."

A hermit lives betwixt the confines of life and death. One tree, the last farewell to vegetation, stands before his door, and beneath the shade of its pale foliage are travellers wont to await the night ere they renew their course; for during the day the fires and lava, so fierce when the sun is set, look dark beneath his splendor. This metamorphose is in itself a glorious sight, which every eve renews the wonder that a continual glare might weaken. The solitude of this spot gave Oswald strength to reveal his secrets; and, wishing to encourage the confidence of Corinne, he said: "You would fain read your unhappy lover to the depth of his soul. Well, I will confess all. My wounds will reopen, I feel it; but in the presence of immutable nature ought one to fear the changes time can bring?"

BOOK XII

HISTORY OF LORD NEVIL.

CHAPTER I.

"I was educated in my paternal home, with a tenderness and virtue that I admire the more, the more I know of mankind. I have never loved any one more profoundly than I loved my father; yet I think,

had I then known as I now do, how alone his character stood in the world, my affection would have been still more devoted. I remember a thousand traits in his life that seemed to me quite simple, because he found them so, and that melt me into tears now I can appreciate their worth. Self-reproach on our conduct to a dear object who is no more, gives an idea of what eternal torments would be, if Divine mercy deigned not to soothe our griefs. I was calmly happy with my father, but wished to travel ere I entered the army. There is, in my country, a noble career open for eloquence; but I am even yet so timid, that it would be painful for me to speak in public; therefore I preferred a military life, and certain danger, to possible disgust; my self-love is in all respects more susceptible than ambitious. Men become giants when they blame me, and pigmies when they praise. I wished to visit France, where the revolution had just begun, which, old as was the race of man, professed to recommence the history of the world. My father was somewhat prepossessed against Paris, which he had seen during the last years of Louis XV.; and could hardly conceive how coteries were to change into a nation, pretence into virtue, or vanity into enthusiasm. Yet he consented to my wishes, for he feared to exact anything, and felt embarrassed by his own authority, unless duty commanded him to exert it, lest it might impair the truth, the purity, of voluntary affection; and above all, he lived on being loved. In the beginning of 1791, when I had completed my twenty-first year, he gave me six months' leave of absence; and I departed to make acquaintance with the nation so near in neighborhood, so contrasted in habits, to my own. Methought I should never love it. I had all the prejudices of English pride and gravity. I feared the

French raillery against all that is tender and serious. I detested that art of repelling impulse and disenchanting love. The foundation of this vaunted gayety appeared to me a sad one, for it wounded the sentiments I most cherished. I had not then met any really great Frenchmen, such as unite the noblest qualities with the most charming manners. I was astonished at the free simplicity which reigned in Parisian parties. The most important interests were discussed without either frivolity or pedantry, as if the highest thoughts had become the patrimony of conversation, and that the revolution of the whole world would but render the society of Paris more delightful. I found men of superior talents and education animated by the desire to please, even more than the wish to be useful; seeking the suffrages of the *salon* after those of the senate, and living in female society rather to be applauded than beloved.

"Everything in Paris is well combined with reference to external happiness. There is no restraint in the minutiæ of life; selfishness is at heart, but not in appearance; active interests occupy you every day, without much benefit, indeed, but certainly without the least tedium. A quickness of conception enables men to express and comprehend by a word what would elsewhere require a long explanation. An imitative spirit, which must, indeed, oppose all *true* independence, gives their intercourse an accordant complaisance, nowhere to be found besides; in short, an easy manner of diversifying life and warding off reflection, without discarding the charms of intellect. To all these means of turning the brain, I must add their spectacles, and you will have some idea of the most social city in the world. I almost start at breathing its name in this hermitage, in the midst of

a desert, and under impressions the extreme reverse of those which active population create; but I owe you a description of that place, and the effect it took upon myself. Can you believe, Corinne, gloomy and discouraged as you have known me, that I permitted myself to be seduced by this spirited whirlpool? I was pleased at having not a moment of *ennui*; it would have been well if I could have deadened my power of suffering, capable as I was of love. If I may judge by myself, I should say that a thoughtful and sensitive being may weary of his own intensity; and that which woos him from himself awhile does him a service. It is by raising me above myself, that you, Corinne, have dissipated my natural melancholy; it was by depreciating my real value, that a woman of whom I shall have soon to speak benumbed my internal sadness. Yet though I was infected by Parisian tastes, they would not long have detained me, had I not conciliated the friendship of a man, the perfect model of French character in its old loyalty, of French mind in its new cultivation. I shall not, my love, tell you the real names of the persons I must mention; you will understand why, when you have heard me to the end. Count Raimond, then, was of the most illustrious birth; he inherited all the chivalrous pride of his ancestors, and his reason adopted more philosophic ideas whenever they commanded a personal sacrifice; he had not mixed actively in the revolution, but loved what was virtuous in either party. Courage and gratitude on one side, zeal for liberty on the other: whatever was disinterested pleased him; the cause of all the oppressed seemed just to him; and this generosity was heightened by his perfect negligence of his own life. Not that he was altogether unhappy, but his mind was so contrasted with general society, that the

pain he had daily felt there detached him from it entirely. I was so fortunate as to interest him; he sought to vanquish my natural reserve; and, for this purpose, embellished our friendship by little artifices perfectly romantic: he knew of no obstacles to his doing a great service or a slight favor: he designed to settle for six months of the year in England, to be near me; and I could hardly prevent his sharing with me the whole of his possessions. 'I have but a sister,' he said, 'married richly, so I am free to do what I please with my fortune. Besides, this revolution will turn out ill, and I may be killed; let me then enjoy what I have in looking on it as yours,' Alas! the noble Raimond but too well foresaw his destiny.

"When man is capable of self-knowledge, he is rarely deceived as to his own fate; and presentiment is oft but judgment in disguise. Sincere even to imprudence, Raimond 'wore his heart upon his sleeve:' such a character was new to me; in England, the treasures of the mind are not thus exposed; we have even a habit of doubting those who display them; but the expansive bounty of my friend afforded me enjoyments at once ready and secure. I had no suspicion of his qualities, even though I knew them all at our first meeting. I felt no timidity with him; nay, what was better, he put me at ease with myself. Such was the amiable Frenchman for whom I felt the friendship of a brother in arms, which we experience but in youth, ere we acquire one sentiment of rivalry—ere the unreturning wheels of time have furrowed the partitions betwixt the present and the future.

"One day Count Raimond said to me: 'My sister is a widow. I confess, I am not sorry for it. I never liked the match. She accepted the hand of a dying old

man, when we were both of us poor; for what I have has but lately been bequeathed to me. Yet, at the time, I opposed this union as much as possible. I would have no mercenary calculations prompt our acts, least of all the most important one of life; still, she has behaved in an exemplary manner to the husband she never loved: that is nothing in the eyes of the world. Now that she is free, she will return to my abode. You will see her: she is very pleasing in the main, and you English like to make discoveries; for my part, I love to read all in the face at once. Yet your manner, dear Oswald, never vexes me; but from that of my sister I feel a slight restraint.'

"Madame d'Arbigny arrived; I was presented to her. In features she resembled her brother, and even in voice; but in both there was a more retiring caution: her countenance was very agreeable, her figure all grace and faultless elegance. She said not a word that was unbecoming; failed in no species of attention; and, without exaggerated politeness, flattered self-love by an address which showed with what she was pleased, but never committed her. She expressed herself, on tender subjects, as if seeking to hide the feelings of her heart. This so reminded me of my own countrywomen, that I was attracted by it; methought, indeed, that she too often betrayed what she pretended to conceal, and that chance did not afford so many occasions for melting moments as she passed off for involuntary. This reflection, however, flitted but lightly over my mind; for what I felt beside her was both novel and delightful. I had never been flattered by any one. In England, we feel both love and friendship deeply; yet the art of insinuating ourselves into favor by bribing the vanity of others is little known. Madame d'Arbigny hung on my every word I do not think that she guessed all I might

become; but she revealed me to myself by a thousand minute observations, the discernment of which amazed me. Sometimes I thought her voice and language too studiously sweet; but her resemblance to the frankest of men banished these notions, and bound me to confide in her. One day I mentioned to him the effect this likeness had on me. He thanked me; then, after a moment's pause, said: 'Yet our characters are not congenial.' He was silent; but these words, and many other circumstances, have since convinced me that he did not wish to see his sister my wife: that she designed to be so, I detected not for awhile. My days glided on without a care: she was always of my opinion. If I began a subject, she agreed with it, ere explained; yet, with all this meekness, her power over my actions was most despotic: she had a way of saying, 'Surely, you intend to do so and so;' or, 'You certainly cannot think of such a step as that.' I feared that I should lose her esteem by disappointing her expectations. Yet, Corinne, believe me—for I thought so ere I met you —it was not love I felt. I had never told her that I loved her, and was not sure whether such a daughter-in-law would suit my father; he had not anticipated my marrying a Frenchwoman, and I could do nothing without his consent. My silence, I believe, displeased the lady; for she had now and then fits of ill-temper—she called them low spirits, and attributed them to very affecting causes, though her countenance, if for a moment off her guard, wore a most irritated aspect. I fancied that these little inequalities might arise from our intercourse, with which I was not satisfied myself; for it does one more harm to love by halves than to love with all one's heart.

"Raimond and I never spoke of his sister: it was the

first constraint that subsisted between us: but Madame d'Arbigny had conjured me not to make her the theme of my conversations with her brother; and, seeing me astonished at this request, added: 'I know not if you think with me, but I can endure no third person, not even an intimate friend, to interfere with my regard for another. I love the secrecy of affection.' The explanation pleased me, and I obeyed. At this time a letter arrived from my father, recalling me to Scotland. The half year had rolled by; France was everyday more disturbed; and he deemed it unsafe for a foreigner to remain there. This pained me much, though I felt its justice. I longed to see him again, yet could not tear myself from the Count and Madame d'Arbigny without regret. I sought her instantly, showed her the letter, and, while she read it, was too absorbed by sadness to mark the impression it made. I was merely sensible that she said something to secure my delay; bade me write word that I was ill, and so *tack away* from my father's commands. I remember that was the phrase she used. I was about to reply that my departure was fixed for the morrow, when Raimond entered the room, and, hearing the state of the case, declared, with the utmost promptitude, that I ought to obey my parent without hesitation. I was struck by this rapid decision, expecting to have been pressed to stay. I would have resisted my own reluctance, but I did not like to have my purposed triumph talked of as a matter of course. For a moment I misinterpreted my friend: he perceived it, and took my hand, saying: 'In three months I shall visit England; why, then, should I keep you here? I have my reasons,' he added, in a whisper; but his sister heard him, and said, hastily, that he was right, that no Englishman ought to be involved in the dangers of the revolution. I now

know it was not to *such* peril that the Count alluded; but he neither contradicted nor confirmed her explanation. I was going, and he did not think it necessary to tell more. 'If I could be useful to my native land, I should stay here,' he said; 'but you see it is no longer France; the principles for which I loved it are destroyed. I may regret this soil, but shall regain my country when I breathe the same air with you.'

"How was I moved by this touching assurance of true friendship! How far above his sister ranked Count Raimond at that moment in my heart. She guessed it; and the same evening appeared in quite a new character. Some guests arrived; she did the honors admirably; spoke of my departure as if it were in her eyes the most uninteresting occurrence. I had previously remarked, that she set a price on her preference, which prevented her ever letting others witness the favor she accorded me: but now this was too much. I was so hurt by her indifference, that I resolved to take leave before the party, and not remain alone with her one instant. She heard me ask her brother to let me see him in the morning, ere I started; and, coming to us, told me aloud that she must charge me with a letter for a friend of hers in England; then added, hastily, and in a low voice, 'You regret—you speak but to my brother: would you break my heart, by flying thus?' In an instant she stepped back, and reseated herself among her visitants. I was agitated by her words, and should have stayed as she desired, but that Raimond, taking my arm, led me to his own room. When the company had dispersed, we suddenly heard strange sounds from Madame d'Arbigny's apartment: he took no notice of them; but I forced him to ascertain their cause. We were told that she was very ill. I would

have flown to her: but the Count obstinately forbade. 'Let us have no scene!' he said; 'in these affairs, women are best left to themselves.' I could not comprehend this want of feeling for a sister, so contrasted with his invariable kindness to me; and I left him in an embarassment which somewhat chilled my farewell. Ah! had I known the delicacy which would fain have baffled the captivations of a woman he did not believe formed to make me happy, could I have foreseen the events which were to separate us forever, my adieu would have better satisfied his soul and mine own."

CHAPTER II.

Oswald ceased for some minutes. Corinne had listened so tremblingly that she too was silent, fearful of retarding the moment when he would renew his narrative.—"I should have been happy," he continued, "had my acquaintance with Madame d'Arbigny ended there—had I never more set foot in France. But fate, or, rather perhaps my own weakness, has poisoned my life forever. Yes, dearest love! even beside you. I passed a year in Scotland with my father: our mutual tenderness daily increased. I was admitted into the sanctuary of that heavenly spirit; and, in the friendship that united us, tasted all the consanguine sympathies whose mysterious links belong to our whole being. I received most affectionate letters from Raimond, recounting the difficulties he found in transferring his property, so as to join me; but his perseverance in that aim was unwearied. I loved him for it; but what friend could I compare with my father? The

reverence I felt for him never checked my confidence. I put my faith in his words as in those of an oracle; and the unfortunate indecision of my character was suspended while he spoke. 'Heaven has formed us for a love of what is venerable,' says an English author. My father knew not, could not know, to what degree I loved him; and my fatal conduct might well have taught him to doubt whether I loved him at all. Yet he pitied me, while dying, for the grief his loss would inflict. Ah, Corinne! I draw near the recital of my woes; lend my courage thy support, for in truth I need it"—"My dear friend," she answered, "be it some solace that you unveil your nobly sensitive heart before the being who most admires and loves you in the world." Nevil proceeded: "He sent me to London on business; and I left him without one warning fear, though never to see him again. He was more endearing than ever in our last conversation: it is said that the souls of the just, like flowers, breathe their richest balms at the approach of night. He embraced me with tears, saying, that at his age all partings were solemn; but I believed his life like mine: our souls understood each other so well; and I was too young to think upon his age. The fears and the confidence of strong affection are alike inexplicable: he accompanied me to the door of that old hall which I have since beheld desert and devastated, like my own heart. I had been but a week in London, when I received the cruel letter of which I remember every word: 'Yesterday, the 10th of August, my brother was massacred at the Tuileries, while defending his king. I am proscribed, and forced to fly, to hide from my persecutors. Raimond had taken all my fortune, with his own, to settle in England. Have you yet received it? or know you whom he trusted to remit it? I had but one line

from him, written when the chateau was attacked, bidding me only apply to you, and I should know all. If you could come hither and remove me, you might save my life. The English still travel France in safety; but I cannot obtain a passport under my own name. If the sister of your hapless friend sufficiently interests you, my retreat may be learned at Paris of my relation, Monsieur Maltigues: but should you generously wish to aid me, lose not a moment; for it is said that war will shortly be declared between our two countries.' Imagine the effect this took on me! my friend murdered, his sister in despair, their fortune, she said, in my hands, though I had not received the least tidings of it; add to these circumstances, Madame d'Arbigny's danger, and belief that I could preserve her; it was impossible to hesitate. I sent a messenger to my father with her letter, and my promise to return in a fortnight; then set forth instantly. By the most distressing chance the man fell ill on the way, and my second letter, from Dover, reached my father before the first. Thus he knew of my flight, ere informed of its motives; and ere the explanation came, had taken an alarm which could not be dissipated. I arrived at Paris in three days, and found that Madame d'Arbigny had retired to a provincial town sixty leagues off; thither I followed her. We were both much agitated at meeting. She appeared more lovely in her distress than I had ever thought her—less artificial, less restrained. We wept together for her noble brother, and distracted country. I anxiously inquired as to her fortune. She told me that she had no news of it; but in a few days I learned that the banker to whom Count Raimond confided it, had returned it to him; and, what was more singular, a merchant of the town in which we were, who told me this by chance,

assured me that Madame d'Arbigny never needed to have felt a moment's doubt of its safety. I could not understand this; went to ask her what it meant; and found M. Maltigues, who, with the readiest coolness, informed me that he had just brought from Paris intelligence of the banker's return, as, not having heard of him for a month, they had thought he was gone to England.[1] She confirmed her kinsman's statements, and I believed them; but, since, have recollected her pretexts for not showing me the note from Raimond, mentioned in her letter, and am now convinced that the whole was but a stratagem to secure me. It is certain that, as she was rich, no interested motives blended with her scheme; but her great fault lay in using address where love alone was required, and dissimulating when candor would better have served the cause of her sentimental enterprise: she loved me as much as those can love, who preconcert not only their actions but their feelings, and conduct an affair of the heart with the policy of a state intrigue. I formerly declared that I would never marry without my father's approval; yet I could not forbear betraying the transports her beauty and sadness excited. Her plan being to make me captive at any price, she let me perceive that she was not thoroughly resolved on repulsing my wishes. As I now retrace what passed between us, I am assured that she hesitated from motives quite independent of love and virtue; nay, that their apparent struggles were but her own secret deliberations. I was constantly alone with her; and my delicacy could not long resist the temptation. She imposed on me all the duties, in yielding me all the rights of a husband; yet displayed more remorse, perhaps, than she really felt; and thus so bound me to her, that I would fain have taken her to England,

and implored my father's consent to our union; but she refused to quit France, unless as my wife. There she was wise, indeed; but, well knowing my filial resolutions, she erred in the means she used to retain me in spite mine every duty. When the war broke out, my desire to leave France became stronger, and her obstacles to it multiplied. She could obtain no passport; and if I went alone, her reputation would be ruined; nay, she should be doubly suspected, for her correspondence with me. This woman, so mild, so equable, in general, then gave way to a despair which perfectly overwhelmed me. She employed her wit and graces to please, her grief to intimidate me. Perhaps women are wrong in commanding by tears, enslaving by the strength of their weakness; yet, when they fear not to exert this weapon, it is nearly always victorious, at least for awhile. Doubtless, love is weakened by this sort of usurpation; and the power of tears, too frequently exerted, chills the imagination; but, at that time, there were a thousand excuses for them in France. Madame d'Arbigny's health, too, seemed daily to decrease: another terrible instrument of female tyranny is illness. Those who have not, like you, Corinne, a just reliance on their minds, or are not, like Englishwomen, so proudly modest that feigning is impossible, have always recourse to art; and the best we can then hope of them is that their deceit is caused by a real attachment. A third party was now blended with our connection,[2] Monsieur Maltigues. She pleased him; he asked nothing better than to marry her; though a speculative immorality rendered him indifferent to everything. He loved intrigue as a game, even while not interested in the stake; and seconded Madame d'Arbigny's designs on me, ready to desert this plot if occasion served for accomplishing his own. He was a

man against whom I felt a singular repugnance; though scarcely thirty, his manners and person were remarkably hackneyed. In England, where we are accused of coldness, I never met anything comparable with the seriousness of his demeanor on entering a room. I should never have taken him for a Frenchman, if he had not possessed some taste and pleasantry, with a love of talking very extraordinary in a man who seemed sated of the world, and who carried that disposition to a system. He pretended that he was born a sensitive enthusiast, but that the knowledge of mankind he owed to the revolution had undeceived him. He perceived, he said, that there was nothing good on earth, save fortune, or power, or both; and that fine qualities must give way to circumstances. He practised on this theory cleverly enough; his only mistake lay in proclaiming it; but though he had not the national wish to please, he nevertheless desired to create some sensation, and that rendered him thus imprudent: he differed in these respects from Madame d'Arbigny, who sought to attain her end without betraying herself, or seeking to shine, even in her errors. What was most strange in these two persons is, that the ardent one could keep her secret, while the insensible knew not how to hold his tongue. Such as he was, Maltigues had a great ascendency over his relative; either he guessed it, or she told him all; for even from her habitual wariness, she required, now and then, to take breath, as it were, by an indiscretion. If Maltigues looked on her severely, she was always disturbed; if he seemed discontented, she would take him aside to ask the reason; if he went away angry, she almost instantly shut herself up to write to him. I explained this to myself from the fact of his having known her from her childhood; he had managed her

affairs since she had lost all nearer ties; but the chief cause was her project, which I discovered too late, of marrying him, if I left her; for at no price would she pass for a deserted woman. Such a resolution might make you believe that she loved me not; yet love alone could have induced her preference: but through life she could mix calculation even with passion, and the factitious pretences of society with her natural feelings. She wept when she was agitated, but she could also weep because that was the way to express emotion. She was happy in being loved, because she loved, but also because it did her honor before the world. She had right impulses while left to herself, but could only enjoy them when they were rendered profitable to her self-love. She was a person formed for and by 'good company,' and made that false use even of truth itself, which is so often found in a country where a zeal for producing effect, by certain sentiments, is much stronger than the sentiments themselves. It was long since I had heard from my father, the war having cut off all communication. At last, chance favored the arrival of a letter,[3] in which he adjured me to return, in the name of my duty and his affection; at the same time declaring that, if I married Madame d'Arbigny, I should cause him the most fatal sorrow; begging me, at least, to decide on nothing until I had heard his advice. I replied to him instantly, giving my word of honor that I would shortly do as he required. Madame d'Arbigny tried, first prayers, then despondence, to detain me; and finding these fail, resorted to a fresh stratagem; but how could I then suspect it? She came to me one morning pale and dishevelled, threw herself into my arms as if dying with terror, and besought me to protect her. The order, she said, was come for her arrest, as sister to

Count Raimond, and I must find her some asylum from her pursuers; at this time women, indeed, were not spared, and all kinds of horrors appeared probable. I took her to a merchant devoted to my interest, and hoped to save her, as only Maltigues shared the secret of her retreat. In such a situation, how could I avoid feeling a lively interest in her fate? how separate myself from her? how say: 'You depend on my support, and I withdraw it?' Nevertheless, my father's image continually haunted me, and I took many occasions to intreat her leave for setting forth alone; but she threatened to give herself up to the assassins if I quitted her, and twice, at noonday, rushed from the house in a frantic state that overwhelmed me with grief and fear. I followed, vainly conjuring her to return; fortunately it happened (unless by conspiracy) that each time we were met by Maltigues, who brought her back with reproaches on her rashness. Of course, I resigned myself to stay, and wrote to my father, accounting, as well as I could, for my conduct; though I blushed at being in France, amid the outrages then acting there, while that country, too, was at war with my own. Maltigues often rallied me on my scruples; but, clever as he was, he did not perceive the effect of his jests, which revived all the feelings he sought to extinguish. Madame d'Arbigny, however, remarked this; but she had no influence over her kinsman, who was often decided by caprice, if self-interest was absent. She relapsed into her griefs, both real and assumed, to melt me; and was never more attractive than while fainting at my feet; for she knew how to heighten her beauty as well as her other charms, and wedded each to some emotion in order to subdue me. Thus did I live, ever anxious, ever vacillating, trembling when I received no letter from my father,

still more wretched when I did; enchained by my infatuation for Madame d'Arbigny, still more dreading her violence; for, by a strange inconsistency, though the gentlest, and often the gayest of women, habitually she was the most terrible person in a scene. She wished to bind me both by pleasure and by fear, and thus always transformed her nature to her use. One day, in September, 1793, more than a year after my coming to France, I had a brief letter from my father; but its few words were so afflicting, that I must spare myself their repetition, Corinne; it would too much unman me. He was already ill, though he did not say so; his pride and delicacy forbade; but his letter breathed so much distress, both on account of my absence, and of my possible marriage, that, while reading it, I wondered how I could have been so long blind to the misfortunes with which I was menaced. I was now, however, sufficiently awakened to hesitate no more, and went to Madame d'Arbigny, perfectly decided to take leave of her. She perceived this, and at once retiring within herself, rose, saying: 'Before you go, you ought to be informed of a secret which I blush to avow. If you abandon me, it is not *me* alone you kill. The fruit of my guilty love will perish with me.' Nothing can describe my sensations; that new, that sacred duty, absorbed my whole soul, and made me more submissively her slave than ever. I would have married her at once, but for the ruinous consequences that must have befallen me, as an Englishman, in then and there giving my name to the civil authorities. I deferred our union, therefore, till we could fly to England, and determined never to leave my victim till then. At first, this calmed her; but she soon renewed her complaints against me, for not braving all impediments to make her my wife. I

should shortly have bent to her will, for I had fallen into the deepest melancholy, and passed whole days alone, without power to move—a prey to an idea which I never confessed to myself, though its persecution was incessant. I had a forboding of my father's illness, which I considered a weakness unworthy of belief. My reason was so bewildered by the shock my mistress had dealt me, that I now combated my sense of duty as a passion; and that which I might have then thought my passion, tormented me as a duty. Madame d'Arbigny was perpetually writing me entreaties to visit her; at last I went, but did not speak on the subject which gave her such rights over me: indeed, she now less frequently alluded to it herself than I expected; but my sufferings were too great for me to remark that at the time. Once, when I had kept my house for three days, writing twenty letters to my father, and tearing them all, M. Maltigues, who seldom sought me, came, deputed by his cousin, to tear me from my solitude. Though little interested in the success of his embassy, as you will discover, he entered before I had time to conceal that my face was bathed in tears. 'What is the use of all this, my dear boy?' he said; 'either leave my cousin, or marry her. The one step is as good as the other, each being conclusive.'—'There are situations in life,' replied I, 'where even by sacrificing one's self, one may not be able to fulfil every duty.'—'That is, there ought to be no such sacrifice,' he added. 'I know of no circumstances in which it is necessary; with a little address, one may back out of anything. Management is the queen of the world.'—'I covet no such ability,' said I; 'but at least would wish, in resigning myself to unhappiness, to afflict no one that I love.'—'Have nothing to do, then, with the intricate work they call love; it is a

sickness of the soul. I am attacked by it at times, like any one else; but when it so happens, I tell myself that it shall soon be over, and always keep my word.' Seeking to deal, like himself, with generalities—for I neither could nor would confide in him—I answered: 'Do what we will with love, we cannot banish honor and virtue, that often oppose our inclination.'—'If you mean, by honor, the necessity for fighting when insulted, there can be no doubt on that head; but, in other respects, what interest have we in allowing ourselves to be perplexed by a thousand fastidious chimeras?'—'Interest!' I repeated; 'that is not the word in question.'—'To speak seriously,' he returned, 'there are few men who have a clear view of this subject. I know they formerly talked of honorable misfortunes, and glorious falls; but now that all men are persecuted, knaves as well as those by courtesy called honest, the only difference is between the birds who are trapped, and those who escape.'—'I know of other distinctions,' I replied, 'where prosperity is despised, and misfortune honored by the good.'—'Show me the good, though,' he said, 'whose courageous esteem would console you for your own destruction. On the contrary, the self-elected virtuous are those who excuse you if happy, and love you if powerful. It is very fine in you, no doubt, to repent thwarting a father, who ought no longer to meddle with your affairs; yet, do anything rather than linger where you may lose your life in a thousand ways. For my part, whatever happens to me, I would, at any price, spare, my friends the sight of my sufferings, and myself their long faces of condolence.'—'In my opinion,' interrupted I, 'the aim of an honest man's life is not the happiness which serves only himself, but the virtue which is useful to others.'—'Virtue!' exclaimed Maltigues, 'virtue——'

he hesitated for a moment, then, with more decision, continued; 'that's a language for the vulgar, that even priests cannot talk between themselves without laughing. There are good souls whom certain harmonious words still move; for their sakes let the tune be played: all the poetry that they call conscience and devotion was invented to console those who cannot get on in the world, like the *de profundis* that is sung for the dead, The living and the prosperous are by no means ambitious of like homage.' I was so irritated that I could not help saying, haughtily, 'I shall be sorry, sir, when I have a right in the house of Madame d'Arbigny, if she persists in receiving a man who thinks and speaks as you do.'—'When that time comes,' he answered, 'you may act as you please; but if my cousin is led by me, she will never marry a man who looks forward in such affright to his union with her. I have always, as she can tell you, censured her folly, and the means she has wasted on an object so little worth her trouble,' At these words, which their accent rendered still more insulting, I made him a sign to follow me; and, on our way, it is but justice to tell you that he continued to develop his system with the greatest possible coolness: he might be no more in a few minutes, yet said not one serious, one feeling word. 'If I had been addicted to all the absurdities of other young men,' he pursued, 'would not what I have seen in my own country have cured me? When has your scrupulousness done you any good?'—'I agree with you,' said I, 'that in your country, at present, it is of less utility than elsewhere; but in time, or beyond time, each man has his reward,'—'Oh, if you include Heaven in your calculations——'—'And And why not? One or other of us, perhaps, will soon know what it means.'—'If I die,' he laughed forth, 'I am sure

I shall know nothing about it; if you are killed, you won't come back to enlighten me.' I now remembered that I had taken no precautions for informing my father of my probable fate, or making over to Madame d'Arbigny part of my fortune, on which I thought she had claims. We drew near Maltigues's house, and I asked leave to write two letters there: he assented. As we resumed our route, I gave them to him, and recommended Madame d'Arbigny to him, as to a friend of hers on whom I could rely. This proof of confidence touched him; for, be it observed, to the glory of honesty, that the most candid profligates are much flattered if they chance to receive a mark of esteem; our relative position, too, was grave enough to have affected even him; but as he would not for worlds have had me guess this, he said jestingly, though I believe prompted by deeper feelings: 'You are a good fellow, my dear Nevil; I'd fain do something generous by you; it may bring me luck, as they say; and truly generosity is so babyish a quality, that it ought to be better paid in Heaven than on earth. But ere I serve you, our conditions must be made plain, say what I will—we fight, nevertheless.' I returned a disdainful consent, for I thought such preface unnecessary. Maltigues proceeded, in his cold, careless way: 'Madame d'Arbigny does not suit you; you are in no way congenial; your father would be in despair if you made such a match, and you would run mad at having distressed him; therefore it would be better, if I live, that I should marry the lady; if you kill me, still better that she should marry another; for my cousin is so highly sagacious, even while in love, that she never fails to provide against the chance of being loved no longer. All this you will learn by her letters. I bequeath them to you: here is the key of my desk. I

have been her intimate ever since she was born; and you know that, mysterious as she is, she has no secrets with me—little dreaming that I should ever tell; it is true I feel no impulse hurry me on, but I do not attach much importance to these things; and I think that we men may say what we like to each other about women. Also, if I die, it is to her bright eyes that I shall owe such accident; and though I am quite ready to die for her, with a good grace, I am not too obliged by the situation in which her double intrigue has placed me; for the rest, it is not quite sure that you will kill me.' So saying, as we were now beyond the town, he drew his sword, and stood upon his guard. He had spoken with singular vivacity. I was confounded by what I had heard. The approach of danger, instead of agitating, animated him; and I knew not whether he had betrayed the truth, or invented a falsehood out of revenge. In this suspense I was very careful of his life; he was not so adroit a swordsman as myself; ten times might I have run him through the breast, but I contented myself with slightly wounding and disarming him; he seemed sensible of this. I led him to his own house, and brought him back to the conversation which our duel had interrupted. He then said: 'I am vexed at having so treated my cousin; but peril is like wine, it gets into one's head; yet, I can now excuse myself; it rested with you to kill me, and you spared my life; you could not be happy with her, she is too cunning; now to me that is nothing; for, charmed as I am both with her mind and person, she can never do anything to my disadvantage, and we shall be of service to each other when marriage makes a common interest. But you are romantic, and would be her dupe, therefore I cannot refuse the letters I promised you—read them, start for England, and do not worry

yourself too much as to Madame d'Arbiguy's regrets. She will weep, because she loves you, but she will soon be comforted; she is too rational a woman to be long unhappy, or, above all, to appear so. In three months she shall be Madame de Maltigues.' All that he told me was proved true by her correspondence with him. I felt convinced that her blushing confession was a falsity, used but to force me into marriage. This was the basest imposition she had practised on me. She certainly loved me, for she even told Maltigues so; yet flattered him with such art, left him so much to hope, and studied to please him in a character so contrasted from that she had ever worn for me, that it was impossible to doubt her intention of marrying him, if her union with me was prevented. Such was the woman, Corinne, who had forever wrecked the peace of my heart and conscience. I wrote to her ere I departed, and saw her no more. As Maltigues predicted, I have since heard that she became his wife. But I was far from having tasted the bitterest drop that awaited me. I hoped to obtain my father's pardon; sure that, when I told him how I had been misled, he would love me the more, the more pitiable I became. After above a month's journey, by night and day, I crossed Germany, and arrived in England, full of confidence in the inexhaustible bounty of paternal love. Corinne, I had scarce landed, when a public paper informed me that my father was no more. Twenty months have passed since that moment, yet it is ever present, like a pursuing phantom. The letters that formed the words: 'Lord Nevil has just expired,' are written in flames, to which those of the volcano before us are nothing. I heard that he died of grief at my absence in France; fearing that I should renounce my military career, that I should marry a woman of whom he had

an indifferent opinion, and settle in a country at war with my own, entirely forfeiting my reputation as an Englishman. Corinne, Corinne! am I not a parricide? Tell me."—"No," she cried, "no; you are only unfortunate; your generosity involved you. I respect as much as I love you; judge yourself by my heart; make that your conscience! Your grief distracts you: believe one who loves you from no illusion—it is because you are the best, the most affectionate of men, that I adore you."—"Corinne," said Oswald, "these tributes are not due to me; though, perhaps, I am less guilty than I think; my father pardoned me before he died. I found the last address he wrote me full of tenderness. A letter from me had reached him, somewhat to my justification; but the evil was done; his heart was broken. When I returned to the Hall, his old servants thronged round me; I repulsed their consolations, and accused myself to them. I knelt at his tomb, swearing, if time for atonement yet were left me, that I would never marry without his consent. Alas! I promised to one who was no more; what now availed my ravings? I ought, at least, to consider them as engagements to do nothing which he would have disapproved had he lived. Corinne, dear love! why are you thus depressed? He might command me to renounce a woman who owed to her own artifice the power she exerted over me; but the most sincere, natural, and generous of her sex, for whom I feel my first true love, which purifies instead of misguiding my soul, why should a heavenly being wish to separate me from her?

"On entering my father's room, I saw his cloak, his footstool, and his sword still in their wonted stations, though his place was vacant, and I called on him in vain. This memento of his thoughts alone replied. You already know a part of it," Oswald added, giving

the manuscript to Corinne. "Read what he wrote on the Duty of Children to their Parents: your sweet voice, perhaps, may familarize me with the words." She thus obeyed:——

"Ah, how slight a cause will teach self-mistrust to a father or mother in the decline of life! They are easily taught that they are no longer wanted on earth. What use can they believe themselves to you, who no longer ask their advice! ye live but in the present; ye are wedded to it by your passions, and all that belongs not to that present appears to you superannuated;—ye are so much occupied by your young hearts and minds, that, making your own day your point of history, the eternal resemblances between men and their times escape your attention. The authority of experience seems but a vain fiction, formed for the credulity of age, as the last enjoyment of its self-love. What an error is this!

"That vast theatre, the world, changes not its actors: it is always man who appears there, though he varies; and as all his changes depend on some great passion, whose circle hath long and oft been trod, it would be strange, if in the little combinations of private life, experience, the science of the past, were not the plenteous source of useful instruction. Honor your fathers and mothers, then! respect them, if but for the sake of their bygone reign, the time of which they were the only rulers—if but for the years forever lost, whose reverent seal is imprinted on their brows. Know your duty, presumptuous children, impatient to walk alone on the path of life. They will leave you, do not fear, though so tardy in yielding you place: that father, whose discourses are still tainted by unwelcome severity; that mother, whose age imposes on you such tedious cares. They

will go, those watchful guardians of your childhood, these zealous protectors of your youth, they will depart, and you will seek in vain for better friends: when they are lost, they will wear new aspects; for time, which makes the living old before our eyes, renews their youth when death has torn them away. Time then lends them a might unknown before: we see them in our visions of eternity, wherein there is no age, as there are no gradations; and if they have left virtuous memories behind, we adorn them with a ray from heaven: our thoughts follow them to the home of the elect; we see them in scenes of felicity, and, beside the bright beams of which we form their glory, the light of our own best days, our own most dazzling triumphs, is extinguished."[4] "Corinne!" cried Nevil, almost heart-broken, "think you it was against me he breathed that eloquent complaint?"—"No, no," she replied: "remember how he loved you, and believed in your affection. I am of opinion that these reflections were written long ere you committed the faults with which you reproach yourself. Listen rather to these thoughts on indulgence, that I find some pages later: 'We go through life surrounded by snares and with unsteady steps; our senses are seduced by deceptive allurements; our imaginations mislead us by a false glare; our reason itself each day receives but from experience the degree of light and confidence for that day required. So many dangers for so much weakness; so many varied interests with such limited foresight and capacity; in sooth, so many things unknown, and so short a life, show us the high rank we should give to indulgence among the social virtues. Alas! where is the man exempt from foibles, who can look back on his life without regret and remorse? He must be a stranger to the agitations of

timidity, and never can have examined his own heart in the solitude of conscience.'[5]

"These," said Corinne, "are the words your father addresses to you from above."—"True," sighed Oswald, "consoling angel! how you cheer me; yet could I but have see him for a moment, ere he died—could I have said how unworthy of him I felt myself, and been believed, I should not tremble like the guiltiest of mankind. I should not evince the vacillation of conduct and gloom of soul which can promise happiness to no one. Courage must be born of conscience; how then should it triumph over her? Even now, as the darkness closes in, methinks I see, in yon cloud, the thunderbolt that is armed against me. Corinne, Corinne! comfort your unhappy lover, or leave me on the earth, which, perhaps, will open at my cries, and let me descend to the abode of death."[6]

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[1] This is the less clear for being literal. I cannot comprehend how the banker's return should concern Madame d'Arbigny, if he had previously restored Raimond's fortune; nor who possessed it.—TR.

[2] The lady's professed aversion to a third party in her attachments seems unaccountably reversed.—TR.

[3] Frequent *unexplained chances* favor subsequent letters; indeed, the correspondence henceforth seems to proceed as easily as if the countries had been at peace.—TR.

[4] Discourse "On the duty of Children to their Parents," by M. Necker. See first note.**

[5] On Indulgence. The same.

[6] Lord Nevil does not inform us whether he

entered the army before he visited France, or during his year's residence in Scotland, ere he returned thither. Between his father's death and his departure for Italy, he had surely as little time as health for the military duties even of a mess-table.—TR.

BOOK XIII.

VESUVIUS, AND THE CAMPAGNA OF NAPLES.

CHAPTER I.

Lord Nevil remained long exhausted after the trying recital which had thrilled him to the soul. Corinne gently strove to revive him. The river of flame which fell from Vesuvius fearfully excited his imagination. She availed herself of this, in order to draw him from his own recollections, and begged him to walk with her on the banks of once inflamed lava. The ground they crossed glowed beneath their steps, and seemed to warm them from a spot so hostile to all life. Man could not here call himself "lord of the creation;" it seemed escaping from his tyranny by suicide. The torrent of fire is of a dusky hue, yet when it lights a vine, or any other tree, it sends forth a clear bright blaze; but the lava itself is of that lurid tint, which might represent infernal fire; it rolls on with a crackling sound, that alarms the more from its slightness—cunning seems joined with strength; thus

secretly steals the tiger to his prey. This cataract, though so deliberate, loses not a moment; if it encounter a high wall, or anything that opposes its progress, it heaps against the obstacle its black and bituminous flood, and buries it beneath burning waves. Its course is not so rapid but that men may fly before it; but like Time, it overtakes the old or the imprudent, who, from its silent approach, think to escape without exertion. Its brightness is such that earth is reflected in the sky, which appears lapped in perpetual lightning; this, too, is mirrored by the sea, and all nature clothed in their threefold fires. The wind is heard, and its effect perceived, as it forms a whirlpool of flame round the gulf whence the lava issues; one trembles to guess at what is passing in the bosom of the earth, whose fury shakes the ground beneath our steps. The rocks about the source of this flood are covered with pitch and sulphur, whose colors, indeed, might suit the home of fiends—a livid green, a tawny brown, and an ensanguined red, form just that dissonance to the eye of which the ear were sensible, if pierced by the harsh cries of witches, conjuring down the moon from heaven. All that is near the volcano bears so supernal an aspect, that doubtless the poets thence drew their portraitures of hell. There we may conceive how man was first persuaded that a power of evil existed to thwart the designs of Providence. Well may one ask, in such a scene, if mercy alone presides over the phenomena of creation; or if some hidden principle forces natures, like her sons, into ferocity? "Corinne," sighed Nevil, "is it not from hence that sorrow comes? Does the angel of death take wing from yon summit? If I beheld not thy heavenly face, I should lose all memory of the charms with which the Eternal has adorned the earth; yet this spectacle, frightful as it is,

overawes me less than conscience. All perils may be braved; but how can the dead absolve us for the wrongs we did them living? Never, never. Ah, Corinne! what need of fires like these? The wheel that turns incessantly, the stream that tempts and flies, the stone that rolls back the more we would impel it on—these are but feeble images of that dread thought, the impossible, the irreparable!" A deep silence now reigned around Oswald and Corinne; their very guides were far behind; and near the crater naught was heard save the hissing of its fires; suddenly, however, one sound from the city reached even this region—the chime of bells, perhaps announcing a death, perhaps a birth, it mattered not—most welcome was it to our travellers. "Dear Oswald," said Corinne, "let us leave this desert, and return to the living world. *Other* mountains raise us above terrestrial life, and bring us nearer Heaven, but here nature seems treated as a criminal, and condemned no more to taste the beneficent breath of her Creator. This is no sojourn for the good—let us descend." An abundant shower fell as they sought the plain, threatening each instant to extinguish their torches: the Lazzaroni accompanied them with yells that might alarm any one who knew not that such was their constant custom. These men are sometimes agitated by a superfluity of life, with which they know not what to do, uniting equal degrees of violence and sloth. Their physiognomy, more marked, than their characters, seem to indicate a kind of vivacity in which neither mind nor heart are at all concerned. Oswald, uneasy lest the rain should hurt Corinne, and lest their lights should fail, was absorbed by this indefinite sense of her danger; and his tenderness by degrees restored that composure which had been disturbed by the confidence he had

made to her. They regained their carriage at the foot of the mountain, and stopped not at the ruins of Herculaneum, which are, as it were, buried afresh beneath the buildings of Portici. They arrived at Naples near midnight, and Corinne promised Nevil, as they took leave, to give him the history of her life on the morrow.

CHAPTER II.

The next morning Corinne resolved to impose on herself the effort she had promised: the intimate knowledge of Oswald's character which she had acquired redoubled her inquietude. She left her chamber, carrying what she had written in a trembling yet determined hand. She entered the sitting-room of their hotel. Oswald was there: he had just received letters from England. One of them lay on the mantel-piece: its direction caught her eye, and, with inexpressible anxiety, she asked from whom it came. "From Lady Edgarmond," replied Nevil.—"Do you correspond with her?" added Corinne.—"Her late lord was my father's friend," he said; "and since chance has introduced the subject, I will not conceal from you that they thought it might one day suit me to marry the daughter, Lucy."—"Great God!" cried Corinne, and sank, half fainting, on a seat.—"What means this?" demanded Oswald; "Corinne, what can you fear from one who loves you to idolatry? Had my parent's dying command been my union with Miss Edgarmond, I certainly should not now be free, and would have flown from your resistless spells; but he merely advised the match, writing me word that he could

form no judgment of Lucy's character, as she was still a child. I have seen her but once, when scarcely twelve years old. I made no arrangement with her mother; yet the indecision of my conduct, I own, has sprung solely from this wish of my father's. Ere I met you, I hoped for power to complete it, as a sort of expiation, and to prolong, beyond his death, the empire of his will; but you have triumphed over my whole being, and I now desire but your pardon for what must have appeared so weak and irresolute in my conduct. Corinne, we seldom entirely recover from such griefs as I have experienced: they blight our hopes, and instil a painful timidity of the future. Fate had so injured me, that even while she offered the greatest of earthly blessings I could not trust her: but these doubts are over, love: I am thine forever, assured that, had my father known thee, he would have chosen such a companion for my life."—"Hold!" wept forth Corinne: "I conjure you, speak not thus to me."—"Why," said Oswald, "why thus constantly oppose the pleasure I take in blending your image with his? thus wedding the two dearest and most sacred feelings of my heart?"—"You cannot," returned Corinne; "too well I know you cannot."—"Just Heaven! what have you to tell me, then? Give me that history of your life."—"I will; but let me beg a week's delay, only a week: what I have just learned obliges me to add a few particulars."—"How!" said Oswald, "what connection have you——"—"Do not exact my answer now," interrupted Corinne. "You will soon know all, and that, perhaps, will be the end, the dreaded end of my felicity; but ere it comes, let us explore together the Campagna of Naples, with minds still accessible to the charms of nature. In these fair scenes will I so celebrate the most solemn era of my life, that you

must cherish some memory of Corinne, such as she was, and might have ever been, had she not loved you, Oswald."—"Corinne, what mean these hints? You can have nothing to disclose which ought to chill my tender admiration; why then prolong the mystery that raises barriers between us?"—"Dear Oswald, 'tis my will: pardon me this last act of power: soon you alone will decide for us both. I shall hear my sentence from your lips, unmurmuringly, even if it be cruel; for I have on this earth nor love nor duty condemning me to live when you are lost." She withdrew, gently repulsing Oswald, who would fain have followed her.

CHAPTER III.

Corinne decided on giving a fête, united as the idea was with melancholy associations. She knew she must be judged as a poet, as an artist, ere she could be pardoned for the sacrifice of her rank, her family, her name, to her enthusiasm. Lord Nevil was indeed capable of appreciating genius, but, in his opinion, the relations of social life overruled all others; and the highest destiny of woman, nay of man too, he thought was accomplished, not by the exercise of intellectual faculties, but by the fulfilment of domestic duties. Remorse, in driving him from the false path in which he had strayed, fortified the moral principles innately his. The manners and habits of England, a country where such respect for law and duty exists, held, in many respects, a strict control over him. Indeed, the discouragement deep sorrows inculcate, teaches men to love that natural order which requires no new resolves, no decision

contrary to the circumstances marked for us by fate. Oswald's love for Corinne modified his every feeling; but love never wholly effaces the original character, which she perceived through the passion that now lorded over it; and, perhaps, his ruling charm consisted in the opposition of his character to his attachment, giving added value to every pledge of his love. But the hour drew nigh when the fleeting fears she had constantly banished, and which had but slightly disturbed her dream of joy, were to decide her fate. Her mind, formed for delight, accustomed to the various moods of poetry and talent, was wonder-struck at the sharp fixedness of grief; a shudder thrilled her heart, such as no woman long resigned to suffering ever knew. Yet, in the midst of the most torturing fears, she secretly prepared for the one more brilliant evening she might pass with Oswald. Fancy and feeling were thus romantically blended. She invited the English who were there, and some Neapolitans whose society pleased her. On the day chosen for this fête, whose morrow might destroy her happiness forever, a singular wildness animated her features, and lent them quite a new expression. Careless eyes might have mistaken it for that of joy; but her rapid and agitated movements, her looks that rested nowhere, proved but too plainly to Nevil the struggle in her heart. Vainly he strove to soothe her by tender protestations. "You shall repeat them two days hence, if you will," she said; "now these soft words but mock me." The carriages of Corinne's party arrived at the close of day, just as the sea-breeze refreshed the air, inviting man to the contemplation of nature. They went first to Virgil's tomb. It overlooks the bay of Naples; and such is the magnificent repose of this spot, that one is tempted to believe the bard himself

must have selected it. These simple words from his Georgies might have served him for epitaph:——

> "Illo Virgilium me tempore dulcis alebat Parthenope."
>
> "Then did the soft Parthenope receive me."

His ashes here repose, and attract universal homage —all, all that man on earth can steal from death. Petrarch set a laurel beside them—like its planter, it is dead. He alone was worthy to have left a lasting trace near such a grave. One feels disgust at the crowd of ignoble names traced by strangers on the walls about the urn; they trouble the peace of this classic solitude. Its present visitants left it in silence, musing over the images immortalized by the Mantuan. Blest intercourse between the past and future! which the art of writing perpetually renews. Shadow of death, what art thou? Man's thoughts survive; can he then be no more? Such contradiction is impossible. "Oswald," said Corinne, "these impressions are strange preparatives for a fête; yet," she added, with wild sublimity, "how many fêtes are held thus near the grave!"—"My life," he said, "whence all this secret dread? Confide in me; for six months have I owed you everything; perhaps have shed some pleasure over your path. Who then can err so impiously against happiness as to dash down the supreme bliss of soothing such a soul? it is much to feel one's self of use to the most humble mortal; but Corinne! to be her comfort! trust me, is a glory too delicious to renounce."—"I believe your promises," she said; "yet there are moments when something strange and new seizes the heart, and hurries it thus sadly." They passed through the Grotto of Pausilipo by torchlight, as indeed would have been the case at

noon; for it extends nearly a quarter of a league beneath the mountain; and in the centre, the light of day, admitted at either extremity, is scarcely visible. In this long vault the tramp of steeds and cries of their drivers resound so stunningly that they deaden all thought in the brain. Corinne's horses drew her carriage with astonishing rapidity; yet did she say: "Dear Nevil, how slowly we advance! pray hasten them."—"Why thus impatient?" he asked; "formerly, while we were together, you sought not to expedite time, but to enjoy it."—"Yet now," she said, "all must be decision; everything must come to an end; and I would hasten it, were it my death." On leaving the grotto, you feel a lively sensation at regaining daylight and the open country; such a country, too! What are so often missed in Italy, fine trees, here flourish in abundance. Italian earth is everywhere so spread with flowers that woods may better be dispensed with here than in most other lands. The heat at Naples is so great that, even in the shade, it is impossible to walk by day: but in the evening the sea and sky alike shed freshness through the transparent air; the mountains are so picturesque that painters love to select their landscapes from a country whose original charm can be explained by no comparison with other realms. "I lead ye," said Corinne, to those near her, "through the fair scene celebrated by the name of Baiæ; we will not pause there now, but gather its recollections into the moment when we reach the spot which sets them all before us." It was on the Cape of Micena that she had prepared her fête; nothing could be more tastefully arranged. Sailors, in habits of contrasted hues, and some Orientalists from a Levantine barque then in the port, danced with the peasant girls from Ischia and Procida, whose costume still preserves a Grecian

grace; sweet voices were heard singing from a distance; and instrumental music answered from behind the rocks. It was like echo echoed by sounds that lost themselves in the sea. The softness of the air animated all around—even Corinne herself. She was entreated to dance among the rustics; at first, she consented with pleasure; but scarcely had she begun, ere her forebodings rendered all amusement odious to her, and she withdrew to the extreme verge of the cape; thither Oswald followed, with others, who now begged her to extemporize in this lovely scene; her emotions were such that she permitted them to lead her towards the elevation on which they had placed her lyre, without power to comprehend what they expected.

CHAPTER IV.

Still, Corinne desired that Oswald should once more hear her, as on the day at the Capitol. If the talent with which Heaven had gifted her was about to be extinguished forever, she wished its last rays to shine on him she loved: these very fears afforded her the inspiration she required. Her friends were impatient to hear her. Even the common people knew her fame; and, as imagination rendered them judges of poetry, they closed silently round, their eager faces expressing the deepest attention. The moon arose; but the last beams of day still paled her light. From the top of the small hill that, standing over the sea, forms the Cape of Micena, Vesuvius is plainly seen, and the bay and isles that stud its bosom. With one consent, the friends of Corinne begged her to sing the memories that scene recalled. She tuned her lyre,

and began with a broken voice. Her look was beautiful; but one who knew her, as Oswald did, could there read the trouble of her soul. She strove, however, to restrain her feelings; and once more, if but for awhile, to soar above her personal situation.

CORINNE'S CHANT IN THE VICINITY OF NAPLES.

Ay, Nature, History, and Poesie,
Rival each other's greatness;—here the eye
Sweeps with a glance, all wonders and all time.
A dead volcano now, I see thy lake
Avernus, with the fear-inspiring waves,
Acheron, and Phlégeton boiling up
With subterranean flame: these are the streams
Of that old hell Æneas visited.

Fire, the devouring life which first creates
The world which it consumes, struck terror most
When least its laws were known.—Ah! Nature then
Reveal'd her secrets but to Poetry.

The town of Cuma and the Sibyl's cave,
The temple of Apollo mark'd this height;
Here is the wood where grew the bough of gold.
The country of the Æneid is around;
The fables genius consecrated here
Are memories whose traces still we seek.

A Triton has beneath these billows plunged
The daring Trojan, who in song defied

The sea divinities: still are the rocks
Hollow and sounding, such as Virgil told.
Imagination's truth is from its power:
Man's genius can create when nature's felt;
He copies when he deems that he invents.

Amid these masses, terrible and old,
Creation's witnesses, you see arise
A younger hill of the volcano born:
For here the earth is stormy as the sea,
But doth not, like the sea, peaceful return
Within its bounds: the heavy element,
Upshaken by the tremulous abyss,
Digs valleys, and rears mountains; while the waves,
Harden'd to stone, attest the storms which rend
Her depths; strike now upon the earth,
You hear the subterranean vault resound.
It is as if the ground on which we dwell
Were but a surface ready to unclose.
Naples! how doth thy country likeness bear
To human passions; fertile; sulphurous:
Its dangers and its pleasures both seem born
Of those inflamed volcanoes, which bestow
Upon the atmosphere so many charms,
Yet bid the thunder growl beneath our feet.

Pliny but studied nature that the more
He might love Italy; and call'd his land
The loveliest, when all other titles fail'd.
He sought for science as a warrior seeks

For conquest: it was from this very cape
He went to watch Vesuvius through the flames:
Those flames consumed him.

O Memory! noble power! thy reign is here.
Strange destiny, how thus, from age to age,
Doth man complain of that which he has lost.
Still do departed years, each in their turn,
Seem treasures of happiness gone by;
And while mind, joyful in its far advance,
Plunges amid the future, still the Soul
Seems to regret some other ancient home
To which it is drawn closer by the past.

We envy Roman grandeur—did they not
Envy their fathers' brave simplicity?
Once this voluptuous country they despised;
Its pleasures but subdued their enemies.
See, in the distance, Capua! she o'ercame
The warrior, whose firm soul resisted Rome
More time than did a world.

The Romans in their turn dwelt on these plains,
When strength of mind but only served to feel
More deeply shame and grief; effeminate
They sank without remorse. Yet Baiæ saw
The conquer'd sea give place to palaces:
Columns were dug from mountains rent in twain,

And the world's masters, now in their turn slaves,
Made nature subject to console themselves
That they were subject too.

And Cicero on this promontory died:
This Gaëta we see. Ah! no regard
Those triumvirs paid to posterity,
Robbing her of the thoughts yet unconceived
Of this great man: their crime continues still;
Committed against us was this offence.

Cicero 'neath the tyrant's dagger fell,
But Scipio, more unhappy, was exiled
With yet his country free. Beside this shore
He died; and still the ruins of his tomb
Retain the name, "Tower of my native land:"[1]
Touching allusion to the memory
Which haunted his great soul.

Marius found a refuge in yon marsh,[2]
to the Scipios' home. Thus in all time
Have nations persecuted their great men.
But they enskied them after death;[3] and heaven,
Where still the Romans deem'd they could command,
Received amid her planets Romulus,
Numa, and Cæsar; new and dazzling stars!
Mingling together in our erring gaze
The rays of glory and celestial light.

And not enough alone of misery,
The trace of crime is here. In yonder gulf behold
The isle of Capri, where at length old age
Disarm'd Tiberius; violent, yet worn;
Cruel, voluptuous; wearied e'en of crime,
He sought yet viler pleasures; as he were
Not low enough debased by tyranny.
And Agrippina's tomb is on these shores,
Facing the isle,[4] reared after Nero's death;
The murderer of his mother had proscribed
Even her ashes. Long at Baiæ he dwelt
Amid the memories of his many crimes.
What wretches fate here brings before our eyes!
Tiberius, Nero, on each other gaze.

The isles, volcano-born amid the sea,
Served at their birth the crimes of the old world.
The sorrowing exiles on these lonely rocks,
Watched 'mid the waves their native land afar,
Seeking to catch its perfumes in the air:
And often, a long exile worn away,
Sentence of sudden death arrived to show
They were remember'd by their enemies.

O Earth! all bathed with blood and tears, yet never
Hast thou ceased putting forth thy fruit and flowers;
And hast thou then no pity for mankind?

Can thy maternal breast receive again
Their dust, and yet not throb?
L. E. L.

Here Corinne paused for some moments. All her assembled hearers threw laurels and myrtle at her feet. The soft pure moonlight fell on her brow, and the breeze wantoned with her ringlets as if nature delighted to adorn her: she was so overpowered as she looked on the enchanting scene, and on Oswald, who shared this delicious eve with her, yet might not be thus near forever, that tears flowed from her eyes. Even the crowd, who had just applauded her so tumultuously, respected her emotion, and mutely awaited her words, which they trusted would make them participators in her feelings. She preluded for some time on her lyre, then, no longer dividing her song into stanzas, abandoned herself to the uninterrupted stream of verse.

Some memories of the heart, some women's manes
Yet ask your tears. 'Twas at this very place,
Massena,[5] that Cornelia kept till death
Her noble mourning; Agrippina too
Long wept Germanicus beside these shores.
At length the same assassin who deprived
Her of her husband found she was at last
Worthy to follow him. And yonder isle[6]
Saw Brutus and his Portia bid farewell.

Thus women loved of heroes have beheld
The object perish which they so adored.
Long time in vain they follow'd in their path;
There came the hour when they were

forced to part.
Portia destroy'd herself; Cornelia clasp'd
The sacred urn which answer'd not her cries;
And Agrippina, for how many years!
Vainly her husband's murderer defied.
And wander'd here the wretched ones, like ghosts
On wasted shores of the eternal stream,
Sighing to reach the other far-off land.
Did they not ask in their long solitude
Of silence, of all nature, of the sky,
Star-shining?—and from the deep sea, one sound,
One only tone of the beloved voice
They never more might hear.

Mysterious enthusiasm, Love!
The heart's supremest power;—which doth combine
Within itself religion, poetry,
And heroism. Love, what may befall
When destiny has bade us separate
From him who has the secret of our soul;
Who gave us the heart's life, celestial life.
What may befall when absence, or when death
Isolate woman on this earth?—She pines,
She sinks. How often have these rocks
Offer'd their cold support to the forlorn!
Those once worn in the heart;—those once sustain'd
Upon a hero's arm

Before you is Sorrento:—dwelling there
Was Tasso's sister, when the pilgrim came

Asking asylum 'gainst the prince unjust
From humble friends: long grief had almost quench'd
Reason's clear light, but genius still was left.
Yet kept he knowledge of the things divine,
When earthly images were all obscured.
Thus shrinking from the desert spread around.
Doth Genius wander through the world, and finds
No likeness to itself; no echo given
By Nature; and the common crowd but hold
As madness that desire of the rapt soul,
Which finds not in this world enough of air—
Of high enthusiasm, or of hope.
For Destiny compels exalted minds;—
The poet, whose imagination draws
Its power from loving and from suffering —
They are the vanish'd from another sphere.
For the Almighty goodness might not frame
All for the few—th' elect or the proscribed.
Why spoke the ancients with such awe of Fate?
What had this terrible Fate to do with them,
The common and the quiet, who pursue
The seasons, and still follow timidly
The beaten track of ordinary life?

But she, the priestess of the oracle,
Shook with the presence of the cruel power.
I know not what the involuntary force
That plunges Genius into misery.
Genius doth catch the music of the spheres,
Which mortal ear was never meant to know.
Genius can penetrate the mysteries
Of feeling, all unknown to other hearts;
A power hath entered in the inmost soul,
Whose presence may not be contained.

Sublime Creator of this lovely world,
Protect us: our exertions have no strength;
Our hope's a lie. Tumultuous tyranny
Our passions exercise, and neither leave
Repose nor liberty. What we may do
To-morrow may perhaps decide our fate.
We may have said but yesterday some word
Which may not be recalled. Still, when our mind
Is elevate with noblest thoughts, we feel
As on the height of some great edifice,
Giddiness blending all things in our sight;
But even there, woe! terrible woe! appears.
Not lost amid the clouds, it pierces through;
It flings the shades asunder; O my God!
What doth it herald to us?"
L. E. L.

At these words, a mortal paleness overspread her countenance; her eyes closed; and she would have

fallen to the earth, had not Oswald rushed to support her.

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[1] "La tour de la patrie." Patrie can scarce be rendered by a single word: "native land" perhaps best expresses the ancient*patria*.—L. E. L.

[2] Minturno.

[3] "Ils sont consolés par l'apothéose." This is the only instance in which I have not given, as nearly as possible, the English word that answered most exactly; but I confess one so long as "apotheosis" fairly baffled my efforts to get it into rhythm. It is curious to observe how many Pagan observances were grafted on the Roman Catholic worship. Canonization is but a Christian apotheosis, only the deceased turned into saints instead of gods.—L. E. L.

[4] Caprea.

[5] The retreat of Pompey

[6] Nisida.

CHAPTER V.

Corinne revived: the affecting interest of Oswald's look restored her to some composure. The Neapolitans were surprised at the gloomy character of her poetry, much as they admired it. They thought it the Muse's task to dissipate the cares of life, and not to explore their terrible secrets; but the English who were present seemed deeply touched. Their own melancholy, embellished by Italian imagination, delighted them. This lovely woman, whose features

seemed designed to depict felicity—this child of the sun, a prey to hidden grief—was like a flower, still fresh and brilliant, but within whose leaves may be seen the first dark impress of that withering blight which soon shall lay it low. The party embarked to return: the glowing calm of the hour made it a luxury to be upon the sea. Goëthe has described, in a delicious romance, the passion felt in warm climates, for the water. A nymph of the flood boasts to the fisherman the charms of her abode; invites him to taste its refreshment, and, by degrees, allures him to his death. This magic of the tide resembles that of the basilisk, which fascinates by fear. The wave rising gently afar, swelling, and hurrying as it nears the shore, is but a type of passion, that dawns in softness, but soon grows invincible. Corinne put back her tresses, that she might better enjoy the air: her countenance was thus more beautiful than ever. The musicians, who followed in another boat, poured forth enchantments that harmonized with the stars, the sea, and the sweet intoxication of an Italian evening. "Oh, my heart's love!" whispered Oswald, "can I ever forget this day, or ever enjoy a happier?" His eyes filled with tears. One of his most seductive attributes was this ready yet restrained sensibility, which so oft, in spite of him, bedewed his lids: at such moments he was irresistible: sometimes even in the midst of an endearing pleasantry, a melting thrill stole on his mirth, and lent it a new, a noble charm. "Alas!" returned Corinne, "I hope not for another day like this; but be it blest, at least, as the last such of my life, if forbidden to prove the dawn of more endearing bliss."

CHAPTER VI.

The weather changed ere they reached Naples: the heavens darkened, and the coming storm, already felt in the air, convulsed the waves, as if the sea sympathized with the sky. Oswald preceded Corinne, that he might see the flambeaux borne the more steadily before her. As they neared the quay, he saw some Lazzaroni assembled, crying "Poor creature! he cannot save himself! we must be patient."—"Of whom speak ye?" cried Nevil, impetuously.—"An old man," they replied, "who was bathing below there, not far from the mole; but the storm has risen: he is too weak to struggle with it." Oswald's first impulse was to plunge into the water; then, reflecting on the alarm he should cause Corinne, when she came, he offered all the money he had with him, promising to double it, for the man who would swim to this unfortunate being's assistance; but the Lazzaroni all refused, saying: "It cannot be, the danger is too fearful." At that moment the old man sunk. Oswald could hesitate no longer: he threw off his coat, and sprang into the sea, spite of its waves, that dashed above his head: he buffeted them bravely; seized the sufferer, who must have perished had he been a moment later, and brought him to the land; but the sudden chill and violent exertion so overwhelmed Lord Nevil, that he had scarcely seen his charge in safety, when he fell on the earth insensible, and so pallid, that the bystanders believed him a corpse.[1] It was then that the unconscious Corinne beheld the crowd, heard them cry, "He is dead," and would have drawn back in terror; when she saw one of the Englishmen who had accompanied her, break eagerly through the people: she made some steps to follow him; and the first object which met her eye was a

portion of Oswald's dress, lying on the bank. She seized it with desperation, believing it all that was left of her love; and when she saw him, lifeless as he appeared, she threw herself on his breast, in transport, and ardently pressed him to her heart: with what inexpressible rapture did she detect that *his* still beat, perhaps reanimated by her presence! "He lives!" she cried, "he lives!" and instantly regained a strength, a courage, such as his mere friends could scarcely equal. She sent for everything that could revive him: and herself applied these restoratives, supporting his fainting head upon her breast, and, though she wept over it, forgetting nothing, losing not a moment, nor permitting her grief to interrupt her cares. Oswald grew better, but resumed not yet the use of his senses. She had him carried to his hotel, and, kneeling beside him, bathed his brow with stimulating perfumes, calling on him in tones of impassioned tenderness that might have waked the dead. He opened his eyes, and pressed her hand. For the joy of such a moment might one not endure the tortures of demons? Poor human nature! We guess at infinitude but by suffering; and not a bliss in life can compensate the anguish of beholding those we love expire. "Cruel, cruel!" cried Corinne; "think what you have done!"—"Pardon," he replied, in a trembling voice. "Believe me, dearest, while I thought myself dying, I trembled but for thee." Exquisite expression of mutual love and confidence! Corinne, to her last day, could not recall those words without a fondness, which, while it lasted, taught her to forgive him all.

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[1] Mr. Elliot saved the life of an old Neapolitan in the manner attributed to Lord Nevil.

CHAPTER VII.

Oswald's next impulse was to thrust his hand into his bosom for his father's portrait; it was still there; but the water had left it scarcely recognizable; he was bitterly afflicted by this loss. "My God!" he cried, "dost thou deny me even his image?" Corinne besought his permission to restore it: he consented, without much hope; what then was his amaze when, on the third morning she brought it to him, not only repaired, but more faithful than ever! "Yes," cried Oswald, "you have divined his features and his look. This heavenly miracle decides you for my life's companion, since to you is thus revealed the memory of one who must forever dispose my fate. Here is the ring my father gave his wife—the sacred bond sincerely offered by the noblest, and accepted by the most constant of hearts. Let me transfer it from my hand to thine, and, while thou keepest it, be no longer free. I take this solemn oath, not knowing to whom, but in thy soul I trust, that tells me all: the events of your life, if springing from yourself, must needs be lofty as your character. If you have been the victim to an unworthy fate, thank Heaven I can repair it; therefore, my own Corinne, you owe your secrets to one whose promises precede your confidence."—"Oswald," she answered, "this delirium is the result of a mistake. I cannot accept your ring till I have undeceived you. An inspiration of the heart, you think, taught me your father's features: I ought to tell you that I have seen him often."—"Seen him! how? when? where? O God! who are you, then?"—"Here is your ring," returned Corinne, in a smothered tone.—"No," cried Oswald, after a moment's pause; "I swear never to wed another till you send back that ring. Forgive the tumult you have

raised within me; confused and half-forgotten thoughts afflict my mind."—"I see it," said Corinne; "and this shall end: already your accents and your words are changed. Perhaps when you have read my history, the horrid word adieu——"—"No, no," cried Nevil; "only from my death-bed—fear not that word till then." Corinne retired, and, in a few moments, Thérésina brought him the papers which he was now to read.

BOOK XIV.

HISTORY OF CORINNE.

CHAPTER I.

"Oswald, I begin with the avowal which must determine my fate. If, after reading it, you find it impossible to pardon, do not finish this letter, but reject and banish me; yet if, when you know the name and destiny I have renounced, all is not broken between us, what follows may then serve as my excuse.

"Lord Edgarmond was my father. I was born in Italy: his first wife was a Roman; and Lucy, whom they intended for your bride, is my sister, by an English lady—by my father's second marriage. Now, hear me! I lost my mother ere I was ten years old, and, as it was her dying wish that my education should be finished ere I went to England, I was confided to an aunt at Florence, with whom I lived till I was fifteen.

My tastes and talents were formed ere her death induced Lord Edgarmond to have me with him. He lived at a small town in Northumberland, which cannot, I suppose, give any idea of England; yet was all I knew of it for six years. My mother, from my infancy, impressed on me the misery of not living in Italy; my aunt had often added, that this fear of quitting her country had broken her heart. My good aunt herself was persuaded, too, that a Catholic would be condemned to perdition for settling in a Protestant country; and though I was not infected by this fear, the thought of going to England alarmed me much. I set forth with an inexplicable sense of sadness. The woman sent for me did not understand a word of Italian. I spoke it now and then to console my poor Thérésina, who had consented to follow me, though she wept incessantly at leaving her country; but I knew that I must unlearn the habit of breathing the sweet sounds so welcome even to foreigners, and, for me, associated with all the recollections of my childhood. I approached the north unable to comprehend the cause of my own changed and sombre sensations. It was five years since I had seen my father. I hardly recognized him when I reached his house. Methought his countenance was very grave; yet he received me with tenderness, and told me I was extremely like my mother. My half-sister, then three years of age, was brought to me: her skin was fairer, her silken curls more golden than I had ever seen before; we have hardly any such faces in Italy; she astonished and interested me from the first; that same day I cut off some of her ringlets for a bracelet, which I have preserved ever since. At last my step-mother appeared, and the impression made on me by her first look grew and deepened during the years I passed with her. Lady Edgarmond was

exclusively attached to her native country; and my father, whom she overruled, sacrificed a residence in London or Edinburgh to her wishes. She was a cold, dignified, silent person, whose eyes could turn affectionately on her child, but who usually wore so positive an air, that it appeared impossible to make her understand a new idea, or even one phrase to which she had not been accustomed. She met me politely, but I soon perceived that my whole manner amazed her, and that she proposed to change it, if she could. Not a word was said during dinner, though some neighbors had been invited. I was so tired of this silence, that, in the midst of our meal, I strove to converse a little with an old gentleman who sat beside me. I spoke English tolerably, as my father had taught me in childhood; but happening to cite some Italian poetry, purely delicate, in which there was some mention of love, my step-mother, who knew the language slightly, stared at me, blushed, and signed for the ladies, earlier than usual, to withdraw, prepare tea, and leave the men to themselves during the dessert.[1] I knew nothing of this custom, which 'would not be believed in Venice.'—Society agreeable without women!—For a moment I thought her ladyship so displeased that she could not remain in the same room with me; but I was reassured by her motioning me to follow, and never reverting to my fault during the three hours we passed in the drawing-room, waiting for the gentlemen. At supper, however, she told me, gently enough, that it was not usual in England for young ladies to talk; above all, they must never think of quoting poetry in which the name of love occurred. 'Miss Edgarmond,' she added, 'you must endeavor to forget all that belongs to Italy: it is to be wished that you had never known such a country.' I passed the

night in tears, my heart was oppressed. In the morning, I attempted to walk: there was so tremendous a fog that I could not see the sun, which at least would have reminded me of my own land; but I met my father, who said to me: 'My dear child, it is not here as in Italy; our women have no occupations save their domestic duties. Your talents may beguile your solitude, and you may win a husband who will pride in them; but in a country town like this, all that attracts attention excites envy, and you will never marry at all if it is thought that you have foreign manners. Here, every one must submit to the old prejudices of an obscure county. I passed twelve years in Italy with your mother: their memory is very dear to me. I was young then, and novelty delightful. I have now returned to my original situation, and am quite comfortable; a regular, perhaps rather a monotonous life, makes time pass unperceived; one must not combat the habits of a place in which one is established; we should be the sufferers if we did, for, in a scene like this, everything is known, everything repeated; there is no room for emulation, but sufficient for jealousy; and it is better to bear a little ennui than to be beset by wondering faces that every instant demand reasons for what you do.'—My dear Oswald, you can form no idea of my anguish while my father spoke thus. I remembered him all grace and vivacity, and I saw him stooping beneath the leaden mantle which Dante invented for hell, and which mediocrity throws over all who submit to her yoke. Enthusiasm for nature and the arts seemed vanishing from my sight; and my soul, like a useless flame, consumed myself, having no longer any food from without. As I was naturally mild, my step-mother had nothing to complain of in my behavior towards her; and for my

father, I loved him tenderly. A conversation with him was my only remaining pleasure; he was resigned, but he knew that he was so; while the generality of our country gentlemen drank, hunted, and slept, fancying such life the wisest and best in the world. Their content so perplexed me, that I asked myself if my *own* way of thinking was not a folly, and if this solid existence, which escaped grief, in avoiding thought and sentiment, was not far more enviable than mine. What would such a conviction have done for me? it must have taught me to deplore as a misfortune that genius which in Italy was regarded as a blessing from Heaven.

"Towards the close of autumn the pleasures of the chase frequently kept my father from home till midnight. During his absence I remained mostly in my own room, endeavoring to improve myself; this displeased Lady Edgarmond. 'What good will it do?' she said; 'will you be any the happier for it?' The words struck me with despair. What then is happiness, I thought, if it consist not in the development of our faculties? Might we not as well kill ourselves physically as morally? If I must stifle my mind, my soul, why preserve the miserable remains of life that would but agitate me in vain? But I was careful not to speak thus before my step-mother. I had essayed it once or twice, and her reply was, that women were made to manage their husbands' houses, and watch over the health of their children; all other accomplishments were dangerous, and the best advice she could give me was to hide those I possessed. This discourse, though so commonplace, was unanswerable; for enthusiasm is peculiarly dependent on encouragement, and withers like a flower beneath a dark or freezing sky. There is nothing easier than to assume a high moral air, while

condemning all the attributes of an elevated spirit. Duty, the noblest destination of man, may be distorted, like all other ideas, into an offensive weapon by which narrow minds silence their superiors as their foes. One would think, if believing them, that duty enjoined the sacrifice of all the qualities that confer distinction; that wit were a fault, requiring the expiation of our leading precisely the same lives with those who have none; but does duty prescribe like rules to all characters? Are not great thoughts and generous feelings debts due to the world, from all who are capable of paying them? Ought not every woman, like every man, to follow the bent of her own talents? Must we imitate the instinct of the bees, whose every succeeding swarm copies the last, without improvement or variety? No, Oswald; pardon the pride of your Corinne, I believed myself intended for a different career. Yet I feel myself submissive to those I love as the females then around me, who had neither judgment nor wishes of their own. If it pleased you to pass your days in the heart of Scotland, I should be happy to live and die with you; but far from abjuring imagination, it would teach me the better to enjoy nature, and the further the empire of my mind extended, the more glory should I feel in declaring you its lord.

"Lady Edgarmond was almost as importunate respecting my thoughts as my actions. It sufficed not that I led the same life as herself, it must be from the same motives; for she wished all the faculties she did not share to be looked on as diseases. We lived pretty near the sea; at night, the north wind whistled through the long corridors of our old castle; by day, even when we reunited, it was wondrously favorable to our silence. The weather was cold and damp; I could scarce ever leave the house with pleasure.

Nature, now, treated me with hostility, and deepened my regrets of her sweetness and benevolence in Italy. With the winter, we removed into the city, if so I may call a place without public buildings, theatre, music, or pictures.

"In the smallest Italian towns we have spectacles, improvisators, zeal for the fine arts, and a glorious sun; we feel that we live—but I almost forgot it in this assembly of gossips, this depository of disgusts, at once monotonous and varied. Births, deaths, and marriages, composed the history of our society; and these three events here differed not the least from what they are elsewhere. Figure to yourself what it must have been for me to be seated at a tea-table, many hours each day after dinner, with my step-mother's guests. These were the seven gravest women in Northumberland—two were old maids of fifty, timid as fifteen. One lady would say: 'My dear, do you think the water hot enough to pour on the tea?'—'My dear,' replied the other, 'I think it is too soon; the gentlemen are not ready yet.'—'Do you think they will sit late to-day, my dear?' says a third. —'I don't know,' answers a fourth; 'I believe the election takes place next week, so perhaps they are staying to talk over it.'—'No,' rejoins a fifth, 'I rather think they are occupied by the fox-hunt which occurred last week; there will be another on Monday; but for all that, I suppose they will come soon.'—'Ah! I hardly expect it,' sighs the sixth; and all again is silence.[2] The convents I had seen in Italy appeared all life to this; and I knew not what would become of me. Every quarter of an hour some voice was raised to ask an insipid question, which received a lukewarm reply; and ennui fell back with redoubled weight on these poor women, who must have thought themselves most miserable, had not habit

from infancy instructed them to endure it. At last the gentlemen came up; yet this long hoped for moment brought no great change. They continued their conversation round the fire; the ladies sat in the centre of the room distributing cups of tea; and, when the hour of departure arrived, each went home with her husband, ready for another day, differing from the last merely by its date on the almanac. I cannot yet conceive how my talent escaped a mortal chill. There is no denying that every case has two sides; every subject may be attacked or defended; we may plead the cause of life, yet much is to be said for death, or a state thus resembling it. Such was my situation. My voice was a sound either useless or troublesome to its hearers. I could not, as in London or Edinburgh, enjoy the society of learned men, who, with a taste for intellectual conversation, would have appreciated that of a foreigner, even if she did not quite conform with the strict etiquettes of their country. I sometimes passed whole days with Lady Edgarmond and her friends, without hearing one word that echoed either thought or feeling, or beholding one expressive gesture. I looked on the faces of young girls, fair, fresh, and beautiful, but perfectly immovable. Strange union of contrasts! All ages partook of the same amusements; they drank tea, and played whist;[3] women grew old in this routine here. Time was sure not to miss them; he well knew where they were to be found.

"An automaton might have filled my place, and could have done all that was expected of me. In England, as elsewhere, the divers interests that do honor to humanity worthily occupy the leisure of men, whatever their retirement; but what remained for women in this isolated corner of the earth? Among the ladies who visited us there were some not

deficient in mind, though they concealed it as a superfluity; and towards forty this slight impulse of the brain was benumbed like all the rest. Some of them I suspected, must, by reflection, have matured their natural abilities; sometimes a look or murmured accent told of thoughts that strayed from the beaten track; but the petty opinions, all-powerful in their own little sphere, repressed these inclinations. A woman was considered insane, or of doubtful virtue, if she ventured in any way to assert herself; and, what was worse than all these inconveniences, she could gain not one advantage by the attempt. At first, I endeavored to rouse this sleeping world. I proposed poetic readings and music, and a day was appointed for this purpose: but suddenly, one woman remembered that she had been three weeks invited to sup with her aunt; another, that she was in mourning for an old cousin she had never seen, and who had been dead for months; a third, that she had some domestic arrangements to make at home; all very reasonable; yet thus forever were intellectual pleasures rejected; and I so often heard them say, 'that cannot be done,' that, amid so many negations, *not to live* would have been to me the best of all. After some debates with myself I gave up my vain schemes, not that my father forbade them, he even enjoined his wife to cease tormenting me on my studies; but her insinuations, her stolen glances while I spoke, a thousand trivial hinderances, like the chains the Lilliputians wove round Gulliver, rendered it impossible for me to follow my own will; so I ended by doing as I saw others do, though dying of impatience and disgust. By the time I had passed four weary years thus, I really found, to my severe distress, that my mind grew dull, and, in spite of me, was filled by trifles. Where no interest is taken in

science, literature, and liberal pursuits, mere facts and insignificant criticisms necessarily become the themes of discourse; and minds, strangers alike to activity and meditation, become so limited as to render all intercourse with them at once tasteless and oppressive. There was no enjoyment near me save in a certain methodical regularity, whose desire was that of reducing all things to its own level; a constant grief to characters called by heaven to destinies of their own. The ill-will I innocently excited, joined with my sense of the void all around me, seemed to check even my breath. Envy is only to be borne where it is excited by admiration; but oh the misery of living where jealousy itself awakens no enthusiasm! where we are hated as if powerful, though in fact allowed less influence than the obscurest of our rivals. It is impossible simply to despise the opinions of the herd: they sink, in spite of us, into the heart, and lie waiting the moments when our own superiority has involved us in distress; then, then, even an apparently temperate '*Well?*' may prove the most insupportable word we can hear. In vain we tell ourselves, 'such a man is unworthy to judge me, such a woman is incapable of comprehending me:' the human face has great power over the human heart; and when we read there a secret disapprobation, it haunts us in defiance of our reason. The circle which surrounds you always hides the rest of the world: the smallest object close before your eyes intercepts their view of the sun. So is it with the set among whom we dwell: nor Europe nor posterity can render us insensible to the intrigues of our next door neighbor; and whoever would live happily in the cultivation of genius ought to be, above all things, cautious in the choice of his immediate mental atmosphere."

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[1] If this was Corinne's first English dinner, how did she know the *usual* time for retiring? —TR.

[2] What a flattering picture of female society, at the country-house of an intelligent English peer, not fifty years since!—TR.

[3] Spelt *wisk* in the original.—TR.

CHAPTER II.

My only amusement was the education of my half-sister: her mother did not wish her to learn music, but permitted me to teach her drawing and Italian. I am persuaded that she must still remember both; for I owe her the justice to say that she, even then, evinced great intelligence. Oswald, if it was for your happiness I toiled, I shall bless my efforts, even from the grave. I was now nearly twenty: my father wished me to marry, and here the sad fatality of my life began. Lord Nevil was his intimate friend, and it was yourself of whom he thought as my husband. Had we then met and loved, our fate would have been cloudless. I had heard such praises of you, that, whether from presentiment or pride, I was extremely flattered with the hope of being your wife. You were too young, for I was eighteen months your elder; but your love of study, they said, outstripped your age; and I formed so sweet an idea of passing my days with such a character as yours was described, that I forgot all my prejudices against the way of life usual to women in England. I knew, besides, that you would settle in Edinburgh or London; in either place I was secure of finding congenial friends. I said then,

as I think now, that all my wretchedness sprung from my being tied to a little town in the centre of a northern county. Great cities alone can suit those who deviate from hackneyed rules, if they design to live in society: as life is varied there, novelties are welcome; but where persons are content with a monotonous routine, they love not to be disturbed by the occasional diversion, which only shows them the tediousness of their every-day life. I am pleased to tell you, Oswald, though I had never seen you, that I looked forward with real anxiety to the arrival of your father, who was coming to pass a week with mine. The sentiment had then too little motive to have been aught less than a foreboding of my future. When I was presented to Lord Nevil, I desired, perhaps but too ardently, to please him; and did infinitely more than was required for success; displaying all my talents, dancing, singing, and extemporizing before him; my long imprisoned soul felt but too blest in breaking from its chain. Seven years of experience have calmed me. I am more accustomed to myself. I know how to wait. I have, perchance, less confidence in the kindness of others, less eagerness for their applause: indeed, it *is possible* that there was *then* something *strange* about me! We have so much fire and imprudence in early youth, one faces life with such vivacity! Mind, however distinguished, cannot supply the work of time; and though we may speak of the world as if we knew it, we never act up to our own views: there is a fever in our ideas that will not let our conduct conform with our reasonings. I believe, though not with *certainty*, that I appeared to Lord Nevil *somewhat* too wild; for though he treated me very amiably, yet, when he left my father, he said that, after due reflection, he thought his son too young for the marriage in

question. Oswald, what importance do you attach to this confession? I might suppress it, but I will not. Is it possible, however, that it will prove my condemnation? I am, I know, tamed now: and could your parent have witnessed my love for you, Oswald —you were dear to him—we should have been heard. My step-mother now formed a project for marrying me to the son of her eldest brother, Mr. Maclinson, who had an estate in our neighborhood. He was a man of thirty, rich, handsome, highly born, and of honorable character; but so thoroughly convinced of a husband's right to govern, and a wife's duty to obey, that a doubt on this subject would as much have shocked him as a question of his own integrity. The rumors of my eccentricity did not alarm him. His house was so ordered, the same things were every day performed there so punctually to the minute, that any change was impossible. The two old aunts who directed his establishment, the servants, the very horses, could not to-morrow have acted differently from yesterday; nay, the furniture which had served three generations, would have started of its own accord, had anything new approached it. The effects of my arrival, therefore, might well be defined. Habit there reigned so securely, that any little liberties I might have taken would but have beguiled a quarter of an hour once a week, without being of any further consequence. Mr. Maclinson was a good man, incapable of giving pain; yet had I spoken to him of the innumerable annoyances which may torment an active or a feeling mind, he would have merely thought that I had the vapors, and bade me mount my horse to take an airing. He desired to marry me, because he knew nothing about the wishes of imaginative beings, and admired without understanding me: had he but

guessed that I was a woman of genius, he might have feared that he could not please me; but no such anxiety ever entered his head. Judge my repugnance against such an union. I decidedly refused. My father supported me: his wife from this moment cherished the deepest resentment: she was a despot at heart, though timidity often prevented her explaining her will when it was not anticipated, she lost her temper; but if resisted, after she had made the effort of expressing it, she was the more unforgiving, for having been thus fruitlessly drawn from her wonted reserve. The whole town was loud in my blame. 'So proper a match, such a fortune, so estimable a man, of such a good family!' was the general cry. I strove to show them why this very proper match could not suit me, and sometimes made myself intelligible while speaking, but when I was gone, my words left no impression: former ideas returned; and these old acquaintance were the more welcome from having been a moment banished. One woman, much more mental than the rest, though she bowed to all their external forms, took me aside, when I had spoken with more than usual vivacity, and said a few words to me which I can never forget: 'You give yourself a great deal of trouble to no purpose, my dear: you cannot change the nature of things: a little northern town, unconnected with the world, uncivilized by arts or letters, must remain what it is. If you are doomed to live here, submit cheerfully; but leave it if you can: these are your only alternatives.' This was evidently so rational, that I felt a greater respect for her than for myself: with tastes like enough to my own, she knew how to resign herself beneath the lot which I found insupportable: with a love of poetry, she could judge better the stubbornness of man. I sought to know more of her, but in vain: her

thoughts wandered beyond her home, but her life was devoted to it. I even believe that she dreaded lest her intercourse with me should revive her natural superiority; for what could she have done with it there?

CHAPTER III.

"I might have passed my life in this deplorable situation had I not lost my father. A sudden accident deprived me of my protector, my friend—the only being who had understood me in that peopled desert. My despair was uncontrollable. I found myself without one support. I had no relation save my step-mother, with whom I was no more intimate now than on the day I met her first. She soon renewed the suit of Mr. Maclinson; and though she had no authority to command my marrying him, received no one else at her house, and plainly told me that she should countenance no other match. Not that she much loved her kinsman; but she thought me presumptuous in refusing him, and made his case her own, rather for the defence of mediocrity than from family pride. Every day my state grew more odious. I felt myself attacked by that home-sick yearning which renders exile more terrible than death. Imagination is displeased by each surrounding object —the country, climate, language, and customs: life as a whole, life in detail, each moment, each circumstance, has its sting; for one's own land inspires a thousand pleasures that we guess not till they are lost.

—— "'la favella, i ecstumi,

L'aria, i tronchi, il terren, le mura, il sassi.'

'"Tongue, manners, air, trees, earth, walls, every stone.'

says Metastasio. It is, indeed, a grief no more to look upon the scenes of childhood: the charm of their memory renews our youth, yet sweetens the thought of death. The tomb and cradle there repose in the same shade; while the years spent beneath stranger skies seem like branches without roots. The generation which preceded yours remembers not your birth; it is not the generation of *your* sires: a host of mutual interests exist between you and your countrymen, which cannot be understood by foreigners, to whom you must explain everything, instead of finding the initiated ease that bids your thoughts flow forth secure the moment you meet a compatriot. I could not remember without emotion, such amiable expressions as '*Cara, Carissima*.' I repeated them as I walked alone, in imitation of the kindly welcomes so contrasted with the greetings I now received. Every day I wandered into the fields. Of an evening, in Italy, I had been wont to hear rich music; but now the cawing of rooks alone resounded beneath the clouds. The fruits could scarcely ripen. I saw no vines: the languid flowers succeeded each other slowly; black pines covered the hills: an antique edifice, or even one fine picture, would have been a relief for which I should have sought thirty miles round in vain.[1] All was dull and sullen: the houses and their inhabitants served but to rob solitude of its poetic horrors. There was enough of commerce and of agriculture near for them to say: 'You ought to be content, you want for nothing.' Stupid, superficial judgment! The hearth of happiness or suffering is in our own breast's secret

sanctuary. At twenty-one, I had a right to my mother's fortune, and whatever my father had left me. Then did I first dream of returning to Italy, and devoting my life to the arts. This project so inebriated me with joy, that, at first, I could anticipate no objections; yet, as my feverish hope subsided, I feared to take an irreparable resolve, and thought on what my acquaintance might say, to a plan which, from appearing perfectly easy, now seemed utterly impracticable; yet the image of a life in the midst of antiquities and arts was detailed before my mind's eye with so many charms, that I felt a fresh disgust at my tiresome existence. My talent, which I had feared to lose, had increased by my constant study of English literature. The depth of thought and feeling which characterizes your poets had strengthened my mind without impairing my fancy. I therefore possessed the advantages of a double education and twofold nationalities. I remembered the approbation paid by a few good critics in Florence to my first poetical essays, and prided in the added success I might obtain; in sooth, I had great hopes of myself. And is not such the first, the noblest illusion of youth? Methought that I should be mistress of the universe, the moment I escaped the withering breath of vulgar malice; but when I thought of flying in secret, I felt awed by that opinion which swayed me much more in England than in Italy; for though I could not like the town where I resided, I respected, as a whole, the country of which it was a part. If my step-mother had deigned to take me to London or Edinburgh, if she had thought of marrying me to a man of mind, I should never have renounced my name, even for the sake of returning to my own country. In fact, severe as she was, I never could have found the strength to

alter my destiny, but for a multitude of circumstances which conspired to terminate my uncertainty. Thérésina is a Tuscan, and, though uneducated, she converses in those noble and melodious phrases that lend such grace to the discourse of our people. She was the only person with whom I spoke my own language; and this tie attached me to her. I often found her sad, and dared not ask why, not doubting that she, like myself, regretted our country. I knew that I should have been unable to restrain my own feelings, if excited by those of another. There are griefs that are ameliorated by communication; but imaginary ills augment if confined, above all, to a fellow-sufferer. A woe so sanctioned we no longer strive to combat. My poor Thérésina suddenly became seriously ill; and hearing her groan night and day, I determined to inquire the cause. Alas, she described exactly what I had felt myself. She had not reflected on the source of her pangs, and attached more importance to local circumstances and particular persons; but the sadness of the country, the insipidity of the town, the coldness of its natives, the constraint of their habits —she felt as I did, and cried incessantly: 'Oh, my native land! shall I never see you more?' yet added, that she would not leave me, in heart-breaking tones, unable to reconcile her love for me with her attachment to our fair skies and mother tongue. Nothing more affected my spirits than this reflex of my own feelings in a common mind, but one that had preserved the Italian taste and character in all its natural vivacity. I promised her that she should see her home again. 'With you?' she asked. I was silent: then she tore her hair, again declaring that she could never leave me, though looking ready to expire before my eyes as she said so. At last a promise that I

would return with her escaped me; and though spoken but to soothe her, the joyous faith she gave it rendered it solemnly binding. From that day she cultivated the intimacy of some traders in the town, and punctually informed me when any vessel sailed from the neighboring port for Genoa or Leghorn. I heard her, but said nothing: she imitated my silence; but her eyes filled with tears. My health suffered daily from the climate and anxiety. My mind requires gayety. I have often told you that grief would kill me. I struggle against it too much: to live beneath sorrow one must yield to it. I frequently returned to the idea which had so occupied me since my father's death; but I loved Lucy dearly; she was now nine years old; for six had I watched over her like a second mother. I thought, too, that, if I departed privately, I should injure my own reputation, and that the name of my sister might thus be sullied. This apprehension, for the time, banished all my schemes. One evening, however, when I was more than usually depressed, I found myself alone with Lady Edgarmond; and, after an hour's silence, took so sudden a distaste towards her imperturbable frigidity, that I began the conversation by lamenting the life I led, rather to force her to speak, than to achieve any other result; but as I grew animated, I represented the possibility of my leaving England forever. My step-mother was not at all alarmed; but with a dry indifference, which I shall never forget, replied; 'You are of age, Miss Edgarmond; your fortune is your own; you are the mistress of your conduct; but if you take any step which would dishonor you in the eyes of the world, you owe it to your family to change your name, and be reported dead.' This heartless scorn inspired me with such indignation, that for a while a desire for vengeance,

foreign to my nature, seized on my soul. That impulse left me; but the conviction that no one was interested in my welfare broke every link which, till then, had bound me to the house where I had seen my father. His wife certainly had never pleased me, save by her tenderness for Lucy. I believe that I must have conciliated her by the pains I had bestowed on her child; which, perhaps, rather excited her jealousy; for the more sacrifices she imposed on her other inclinations, the more passionately she indulged the sole affection she permitted herself. All that is quick and ardent in the human breast, mastered by her reason in her other connections, spoke from her countenance when anything concerned her daughter. At the height of my resentment, Thérésina came to me, in extreme emotion, with tidings that a ship had arrived from Leghorn, on board which were some traders whom she knew: 'the best people in the world,' she added, weeping; 'for they are all Italians, can speak nothing but Italian; in a week they sail again for Italy; and if madame is decided——'—'Return with them, my good Thérésina!' said I. 'No, madame; I would rather die here.' She left the room, and I mused over my duty to my step-mother. It was plain that she did not wish to have me with her; my influence over Lucy displeased her: she feared that the name I had gained there, as an extraordinary person, would, one day, interfere with the establishment of my sister: she had told me the secret of her heart, in desiring me to pass for dead; and this bitter advice, which had, at first, so shocked me, now appeared reasonable enough. 'Yes, doubtless I may pass for dead, where my existence is but a disturbed sleep,' said I. 'With nature, with the sun, the arts, I shall awaken, and the poor letters which compose my name, graven on an

idle tomb, will fill my station here as well as I.' These mental leaps towards liberty gave me not yet sufficient power for a decided aim. There are moments when we trust the force of our own wishes; others, in which the habitual order of things assumes a right to overrule all the sentiments of the soul. I was in a state of indecision which might have lasted forever, as nothing obliged me to take an active part; but on the Sunday following my conversation with Lady Edgarmond, I heard, towards evening, beneath my window, some Italians singing: they belonged to the ship from Leghorn. Thérésina had brought them to give me this agreeable surprise. I cannot express what I felt: a torrent of tears deluged my cheeks. All my recollections were revived: nothing recalls the past like music: it does more than depict, it conjures it back, like some beloved shape, veiled in mysterious melancholy. The musicians sung the delicious verses composed by Monti in his exile:——

> '"Bella Italia! amate sponde!
> Pur vi torno, a riveder,
> Trema in petto, e si confonde,
> L'alma oppressa dal piacer!'
>
> '"Beauteous Italia! beloved ever!
> Shall I behold thy shore again?
> Trembling—bewildered—my bonds I sever
> —
> Pleasure oppresses my heart and brain."'

In a kind of delirium, I felt for Italy all love can make one feel—desire, enthusiasm, regret. I was no longer mistress of myself; my whole soul was drawn towards my country: I yearned to see it, hear it, taste its breath; each throb of my heart was a call to my own smiling land. Were life offered to the dead, they

would not dash aside the stone that kept them in the tomb with more impatience than I felt to rush from all the gloom around me, and once more take possession of my fancy, my genius, and of nature. Yet, at that moment, my sensations were too confused for me to frame one settled idea. My step-mother entered my room, and begged that I would order them to cease singing, as it was scandalous on the Sabbath. I insisted that they were to embark on the morrow, and that it was six years since I had enjoyed such a pleasure. She would not hear me; but said that it behooved us, above all things, to respect the customs of the place in which we lived; then, from the window, bade her servants send my poor countrymen away. They departed, singing me, as they went, an adieu that pierced me to the heart. The measure of my temptation was full. Thérésina, at all hazards, had, unknown to me, made every preparation for my flight. Lucy had been away a week with a relative of her mother. The ashes of my father did not repose in the country-house we inhabited: he had ordered his tomb to be erected on his Scotch estate.[2] Enough: I set forth without warning my step-mother, but left a letter, apprising her of my plans. I started in one of those moments at which we give ourselves up to destiny, when anything appears preferable to servitude and insipidity; when youth inconsiderately trusts the future, and sees it, in the heavens, like a bright star that promises a happy lot.

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[1] Corinne should have rather lamented that she was not permitted to explore the country which contains Alnwick, Hexham, Tynemouth, Holy Isle, and so many other scenes dear to the lovers of antiquity, the fine arts, history, and nature.—TR.

[2] Did the authoress think it usual for the English to be buried in their own grounds, whether consecrated or not?—TR.

CHAPTER IV.

"More anxious thoughts attacked me as I lost sight of the English coast; but as I had not left there any strong attachment, I was soon consoled, on arriving at Leghorn, and reviewing the charms of Italy. I told no one my true name,[1] and took merely that of Corinne, which the history of a Grecian poetess, the friend of Pindar, had endeared to me.[2] My person was so changed that I was secure against recognition. I had lived so retired in Florence, that I had a right to anticipate my identity's remaining unknown in Rome. Lady Edgarmond wrote me word of her having spread the report that the physicians had prescribed a voyage to the south for my health, and that I had died on my passage. Her letter contained no comments. She remitted, with great exactness, my whole fortune, which was considerable; but wrote to me no more. Five years then elapsed ere I beheld you; during which I tasted much good fortune. My fame increased: the fine arts and literature afforded me even more delight in solitude than in my own success. I knew not, till I met you, the full power of

sentiment: my imagination sometimes colored and discolored my illusions without giving me great uneasiness. I had not yet been seized by any affection capable of overruling me. Admiration, respect, and love had not enchained all the faculties of my soul; I conceived more charms than I ever found, and remained superior to my own impressions. Do not insist on me describing to you how two men, whose passion for me is but too generally known, successively occupied my life, before I knew you. I outrage my own conviction in now reminding myself that any one, save you, could ever have interested me: on this subject I feel equal grief and repentance. I shall only tell you what you have already heard from my friends. My free life so much pleased me, that, after long irresolutions and painful scenes, I twice broke the ties which the necessity of loving had made me contract, and could not resolve to render them irrevocable. A German noble would have married and taken me to his own country. An Italian prince offered me a most brilliant establishment in Rome. The first pleased and inspired me with the highest esteem; but, in time, I perceived that he had few mental resources. When we were alone together, it cost me great trouble to sustain a conversation, and conceal from him his own deficiencies. I dared not display myself at my best for fear of embarrassing him. I foresaw that his regard for me must necessarily decrease when I should cease to manage him; and it is difficult, in such a case, to keep up one's enthusiasm: a woman's feeling for a man any way inferior to herself is rather pity than love; and the calculations, the reflections required by such a state, wither the celestial nature of an involuntary sentiment. The Italian prince was all grace and fertility of mind: he participated in my

tastes, and loved my way of life; but, on an important occasion, I remarked that he wanted energy, and that, in any difficulties, I should have to sustain and fortify him. There was an end of love—for women need support; and nothing chills them more than the necessity of affording it. Thus was I twice undeceived, not by faults or misfortunes, but by the spirit of observation, which detected what imagination had concealed. I believed myself destined never to love with the full power of my soul: sometimes this idea pained me; but more frequently I applauded my own freedom—fearing the capability of suffering that impassioned impulse which might threaten my happiness and my life. I always reassured myself in thinking that my judgment was not easily captivated, and that no man could answer my ideal of masculine mind and character. I hoped ever to escape the absolute power of love, by perceiving some defects in those who charmed me. I then knew not that there are faults which increase our passion by the inquietude they cause. Oswald! the melancholy indecision which discourages you—the severity of your opinions—troubles my repose, without decreasing my affection. I often think that it will never make me happy; but then it is always myself I judge, and not you. And now you know my history—my flight from England—my change of name—my heart's inconstancy: I have concealed nothing. Doubtless you think that fancy hath oft misled me; but, if society bound *us* not by chains from which men are free, what were there in my life which should prevent your loving me? Have I ever deceived? have I ever wronged any one? has my mind been seared by vulgar interests? Sincerity, good-will, and pride—does God ask more from an orphan alone in the world? Happy the

women who, in their early youth, meet those they ought to love forever; but do I the less deserve you for having known you too late? Yet, I assure you, my Lord, and you may trust my frankness, could I but pass my life near you, methinks, despite the loss of the greatest happiness and glory I can imagine; I would not be your wife. Perhaps such marriage were to you a sacrifice: you may one day regret the fair Lucy, my sister to whom your father destined you. She is twelve years my younger; her name is stainless as the first flower of spring; we should be obliged, in England, to revive mine, which is now as that of the dead. Lucy, I know, has a pure and gentle spirit; if I may judge from her childhood, she may become capable of understanding—loving you. Oswald, you are free. When you desire it, your ring shall be restored to you. Perhaps you wish to hear, ere you decide, what I shall suffer if you leave me. I know not: sometimes impetuous impulses arise within me, that overrule my reason: should I be to blame, then, if they rendered life insupportable? It is equally true that I have a great faculty of happiness; it interests me in everything: I converse with pleasure, and revel in the minds of others—in the friendship they show me—in all the wonders of art and nature, which affectation hath not stricken dead. But would it be in my power to live when I no longer saw you? it is for you to judge, Oswald: you know me better than I know myself. I am not responsible for what I may experience: it is he who plants the dagger should guess whether the wound is mortal; but if it were so, I should forgive you. My happiness entirely depends on the affection you have paid me for the last six months. I defy all your delicacy to blind me, were it in the least degree impaired. Banish from your mind all idea of duty. In love, I acknowledged no promises

no security: God alone can raise the flower which storms have blighted. A tone, a look, will be enough to tell me that your heart is not the same; and I shall detest all you may offer me instead of love—your love, that heavenly ray, my only glory! Be free, then, Nevil! now—ever—even if my husband; for, did you cease to love, my death would free you from bonds that else would be indissoluble. When you have read this, I would see you: my impatience will bring me to your side, and I shall read my fate at a glance; for grief is a rapid poison—and the heart, though weak, never mistakes the signal of irrevocable destiny.

"Adieu."

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[1] Her real Christian name is never divulged even to the reader.—TR.

[2] This name must not be confused with that of Corilla, an Italian improvisatrice. The Grecian Corinna was famed for lyric poetry. Pindar himself received lessons from her.

BOOK XV.

THE ADIEU TO ROME, AND JOURNEY TO VENICE.

CHAPTER I.

It was with deep emotion that Oswald read the narrative of Corinne: many and varied were the

confused thoughts that agitated him. Sometimes he felt hurt by the picture she drew of an English country, and despairingly exclaimed: "Such a woman could never be happy in domestic life!" then he pitied what she had suffered there, and could not but admire the simple frankness of her recital. He was jealous of the affection she had felt ere she met him; and the more he sought to hide this from himself, the more it tortured him; but above all was he afflicted by his father's part in her history. His anguish was such that, not knowing what he did, he rushed forth beneath the noonday sun, when the streets of Naples were deserted, and their inhabitants all secluded in the shade. He hurried at random towards Portici: the beams which fell on his brow at once excited and bewildered his ideas. Corinne, meanwhile, having waited for some hours, could no longer resist her desire to see him. She entered his room; he was not there: his absence at such a crisis, fearfully alarmed her. She saw her papers on the table, and doubted not that, after reading them, he had left her forever. Each moment's attempt at patience added to her distress; she walked the chamber hastily, then stopped, in fear of losing the least sound that might announce his return; at last, unable to control her anxiety, she descended to inquire if any one had seen Lord Nevil go out, and which way he went. The master of the inn replied: "Towards Portici;" adding, "that his Lordship surely would not walk far at such a dangerous period of the day." This terror, blending with so many others, determined Corinne to follow him, though her head: was undefended from the sun. The large white pavements of Naples, formed of lava, redoubling the light and heat, scorched and dazzled her as she walked. She did not intend going to Portici, yet advanced towards it with increasing

speed, meeting no one; for even the animals now shrunk from the ardors of the clime. Clouds of dust filled the air, with the slightest breeze, covering the fields, and concealing all appearance of verdant life. Every instant Corinne felt about to fall; not even a tree was near to support her. Reason reeled in this burning desert: a few steps more, and she might reach the royal palace, beneath whose porch she would find both shade and water; but her strength failed—she could no longer see her way—her head swam—a thousand flames, more vivid even than the blaze of day, danced before her eyes—an unrefreshing darkness suddenly succeeded them—a cruel thirst consumed her. One of the Lazzaroni, the only human creature expected to brave these fervid horrors, now came up; she prayed him to bring her a little water; but the man beholding so beautiful and elegant a woman alone, on foot, at such an hour, concluded that she must be insane, and ran from her in dismay. Fortunately, Oswald at this moment returned: the voice of Corinne reached his ear. He hastened towards her, as she was falling to the earth insensible, and bore her to the palace portico, where he called her back to life by the tenderest cares. As she recognized him, her senses still wandered, and she wildly exclaimed: "You promised never to depart without my consent! I may now appear unworthy of your love; but a promise, Oswald!"—"Corinne," he cried, "the thought of leaving you never entered my heart. I would only reflect on our fate; and wished to recover my spirits ere I saw you again."—"Well," she said, struggling to appear calm, "you have had time, during the long hours that might have cost my life; time enough—therefore speak! tell me what you have resolved!" Oswald, terrified at the accents, which betrayed her inmost feelings, knelt before her,

answering, "Corinne, my heart is unchanged; what have I learned that should dispel your enchantment? Only hear me;" and as she trembled still more violently, he added, with much earnestness: "Listen fearlessly to one who cannot live, and know thou art unhappy."—"Ah," she sighed, "it is of *my* happiness you speak; your own, then, no longer depends on me? Yet I repulse not your pity; for, at this moment, I have need of it: but think you I will live for that alone?"—"No, no, we will both live for love. I will return."—"Return!" interrupted Corinne, "Ah, you *do* go, then? What has happened? how is all changed since yesterday! hapless wretch that I am!"—"Dearest love," returned Oswald, "be composed; and let me, if I can, explain my meaning; it is better than you suppose, much better; but it is necessary, nevertheless, that I should ascertain my father's reasons for opposing our union seven years since: he never mentioned the subject to me; but his most intimate surviving friend, in England, must know his motives. If, as I believe, they sprung from unimportant circumstances, I can pardon your desertion of your father's land and mine; to so noble a country love may attach you yet, and bid you prefer homefelt peace, with its gentle and natural virtues, even to the fame of genius. I will hope everything, do everything; if my father decides against thee, Corinne, I will never be the husband of another, though then I cannot be thine." A cold dew stood on his brow: the effort he had made to speak thus cost him so much agony, that for some time Corinne could think of nothing but the sad state in which she beheld him. At last she took his hand, crying, "So, you return to England without me!" Oswald was silent. "Cruel!" she continued: "you say nothing to contradict my fears; they are just, then,

though even while saying so I cannot yet believe it."—"Thanks to your cares," answered Nevil, "I have regained the life so nearly lost: it belongs to my country during the war. If I can marry you, we part no more. I will restore you to your rank in England. If this too happy lot should be forbidden me, I shall return, with the peace, to Italy, stay with you long, and change your fate in nothing save in giving you one faithful friend the more."—"Not change my fate!" she repeated; "you, who have become my only interest in the world! to whom I owe the intoxicating draught which gives happiness or death? Yet tell me, at least, this parting, when must it be? How many days are left me?"—"Beloved!" he cried, pressing her to his heart, "I swear, that for three months I will not leave thee; not, perhaps, even then."—"Three months!" she burst forth; "am I to live so long? it is much, I did not hope so much. Come, I feel better. Three months?—what a futurity!" she added, with a mixture of joy and sadness, that profoundly affected Oswald, and both, in silence, entered the carriage which took them back to Naples.

CHAPTER II.

Castel Forte awaited them at the inn. A report had been circulated of their marriage: it greatly pained the Prince, yet he came to assure himself of the fact; to regain, as a friend, the society of his love, even if she were forever united to another. The state of dejection in which he beheld her, for the first time, occasioned him much uneasiness; but he dared not question her, as she seemed to avoid all conversation on this subject. There are situations in which we

dread to confide in any one; a single word, that we might say or hear, would suffice to dissipate the illusion that supports our life. The self-deceptions of impassioned sentiment have the peculiarity of humoring the heart, as we humor a friend whom we fear to afflict by the truth; thus, unconsciously, trust we our own griefs to the protection of our own pity.

Next day, Corinne, who was too natural a person to attempt producing an effect by her sorrows, strove to appear gay; believing that the best method of retaining Oswald was to seem as attractive as formerly. She, therefore, introduced some interesting topic; but suddenly her abstraction returned, her eyes wandered; the woman who had possessed the greatest possible faculty of address now hesitated in her choice of words, and sometimes used expressions that bore not the slightest reference to what she intended saying: then she would laugh at herself, though through tears; and Oswald, overwhelmed by the wreck he had made, would have sought to be alone with her, but she carefully denied him an opportunity.

"What would you learn from me?" she said one day, when for an instant, he insisted on speaking with her. "I regret myself—that is all! I had some pride in my talents. I loved success, glory. The praises, even of indifferent persons, were objects of my ambition; now I care for nothing; and it is not happiness that weans me from these vain pleasures, but a vast discouragement. I accuse not you; it springs from myself; perhaps I may yet triumph over it. Many things pass in the depths of the soul that we can neither foresee nor direct; but I do you justice, Oswald: I see you suffer for me. I sympathize with you, too; why should not pity bestow her gifts on us?

Alas! they might be offered to all who breathe, without proving very inapplicable."

Oswald, indeed, was not less wretched than Corinne. He loved her strongly; but her history had wounded his affections, his way of thinking. He seemed to perceive clearly that his father had prejudged everything for him; and that he could only wed Corinne in defiance of such warning; yet how resign her? His uncertainty was more painful than that which he hoped to terminate by a knowledge of her life. On her part, she had not wished that the tie of marriage should unite her to Oswald: so she could have been certain that he would never leave her, she would have wanted no more to render her content; but she knew him well enough to understand, that he could conceive no happiness save in domestic life; and would never abjure the design of marrying her, unless in ceasing to love. His departure for England appeared the signal for her death. She was aware how great an influence the manners and opinions of his country held over his mind. Vainly did he talk of passing his life with her in Italy; she doubted not that, once returned to his home, the thought of quitting it again would be odious to him. She felt that she owed her power to her charms; and what is that power in absence? What are the memories of imagination to a man encircled by all the realities of social order, the more imperious from being founded on pure and noble reason? Tormented by these reflections, Corinne strove to exert some power over her fondness. She tried to speak with Castel Forte on literature and the fine arts: but, if Oswald joined them, the dignity of his mien, the melancholy look which seemed to ask, "Why will you renounce me?" disconcerted all her attempts. Twenty times would she have told him, that his irresolution offended her,

and that she was decided to leave him; but she saw him now lean his head upon his hand, as if bending breathless beneath his sorrows; now musing beside the sea, or raising his eyes to heaven, at the sound of music; and these simple changes, whose magic was known but to herself, suddenly overthrew her determination. A look, an accent, a certain grace of gesture, reveals to love the nearest secrets of the soul; and, perhaps, a countenance, so apparently cold as Nevil's, can never be read, save by those to whom it is dearest. Impartiality guesses nothing, judges only by what is displayed. Corinne, in solitude, essayed a test which had succeeded when she had but believed that she loved. She taxed her spirit of observation (which was capable of detecting the slightest foibles) to represent Oswald beneath less seducing colors; but there was nothing about him less than noble, simple, and affecting. How then defeat the spell of so perfectly natural a mind? It is only affectation which can at once awaken the heart, astonished at ever having loved. Besides, there existed between Oswald and Corinne a singular, all-powerful sympathy. Their tastes were not the same; their opinions rarely accorded; yet in the centre of each soul dwelt kindred mysteries, drawn from one source; a secret likeness, that attests the same nature, however differently modified by external circumstances. Corinne, therefore, found, to her dismay, that she had but increased her passion, by thus minutely considering Oswald anew, even in her very struggle against his image. She invited Castel Forte to return to Rome with them. Nevil knew she did this to avoid being alone with him: he felt it sadly, but could not oppose. He was no longer persuaded that what he might offer Corinne would constitute her content; and this thought rendered

him timid. She, the while, had hoped that he *would* refuse the Prince's company. Their situation was no longer honest as of old; though as yet without actual dissimulation, restraint already troubled a regard, which for six months had daily conferred on them a bliss almost unqualified. Returning by Capua and Gaëta, scenes which she had so lately visited with such delight, Corinne felt that these beauties vainly called on her to reflect their smile. When such a sky fails to disperse the clouds of care, its laughing contrast but augments their gloom.

They arrived at Terracina on a deliciously refreshing eve. Corinne withdrew after supper. Oswald went forth, and his heart, like hers, led him towards the spot where they had rested on their way to Naples. He beheld her kneeling before the rock on which they sat; and, as he looked on the moon, saw that she was veiled by a cloud, as she had been two months since at that hour. Corinne, at his approach, rose, and pointing upwards, said: "Have I not reason to believe in omens? Is there not some compassion in that heaven? It warned me of the future; and to-night, you see, it mourns for me. Forget not, Oswald, to remark, if such a cloud passes not over the moon when I am dying."—"Corinne," he cried, "have I deserved that you should kill me? It were easily done: speak thus again, and you will see *how* easily—but for what crime? Your mode of thinking lifts you above the world's opinion: in your country it is not severe; and if it were, your genius could surmount it. Whatever happens, I will live near you; whence, then, this despair? If I cannot be your husband, without offence to the memory of one who reigns equally with yourself in my breast—do you not love me well enough to find some solace in the tender devotion of mine every instant? Have you not still

my ring—that sacred pledge?"—"I will return it, Oswald."—"Never!"—"Ah, yes; when you desire it, the ring itself will tell me. An old legend says that the diamond, more true than man, dims when the giver has betrayed our trust."[1]—"Corinne," said Oswald, "dare you speak such treason? your mind is lost; it no longer knows me."—"Pardon! oh, pardon me! in love like mine, the heart, Oswald, is gifted suddenly with most miraculous instincts; and its own sufferings become oracles. What portends, then, the heavy palpitation of *my* heart? Ah, love, I should not fear it, if it were but my knell!" She fled, precipitately, dreading to remain longer with him. She could not dally with her grief, but sought to break from it; yet it returned but the more violently for her repulse. The next day, as they crossed the Pontine Marsh, Oswald's care of her was even more scrupulous than before; she received it with the sweetest thankfulness: but there was something in her look that said: "Why will you not let me die?"

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[1] An old tradition supports the imaginative prejudice which persuaded Corinne that the diamond could forewarn its wearer of its giver's treachery. Frequent allusions are made to this legend by Spanish poets, in their peculiar manner. In one of Calderon's tragedies, Ferdinand, Prince of Portugal, prefers death in chains, before the crime of surrendering to a Moorish king the Christian city which his brother, King Edward, offers for his ransom. The Moor, enraged at this refusal, subjects the noble youth to the basest ignominy. Ferdinand, in reproof, reminds him that mercy and generosity are the truest characteristics of supreme power. He cites all that is royal in the universe—the lion, the

dolphin, the eagle, amid animals; and seeks even among plants and stones for traits of natural goodness, which have been attributed to those who lord it over the rest. Thus he says, the diamond, which resists the blow of steel, resolves itself to dust, that it may inform its master if treason threatens him. It is impossible to know whether this mode of considering all nature as connected with the destiny and sentiments of man is mathematically correct; but it is ever pleasing to imagination; and poetry, especially that of Spain, has owed it many great beauties. Calderon is only known to me by the German translation of Wihelm Schlegel; but this author, one of his own country's finest poets, has the art of transporting into his native language, with the rarest perfection, the poetic graces of Spanish, English, and Italian—giving a lively idea of the original, be it what it may.

*Note*TR.—Had Oswald's gift been his mother's wedding-ring, that incident would have been more affecting than so fanciful a fable.

CHAPTER III.

What a desert seems Rome, in going to it from Naples! Entering by the gate of St. John Lateran, you traverse but long, solitary streets; they please afresh after a little time: but, on just leaving a lively, dissipated population, it is melancholy to be thrown upon one's self, even were that self at ease. Besides this, Rome, towards the end of July, is a dangerous residence. The *malaria* renders many quarters uninhabitable; and the contagion often spreads through the whole city. This year, particularly, every

face bore the impress of apprehension. Corinne was met at her own door by a monk, who asked leave to bless her house against infection: she consented; and the priest walked through the rooms, sprinkling holy water, and repeating Latin prayers. Lord Nevil smiled at this ceremony—Corinne's heart melted over it. "I find indefinable charms," she said, "in all that is religious, or even superstitious, while nothing hostile nor intolerant blends with it. Divine aid is so needful, when our thoughts stray from the common path, that the highest minds most require superhuman care."—"Doubtless such want exists, but can it thus be satisfied?"—"I never refuse a prayer associated with my own, from whomsoever it is offered me."—"You are right," said Nevil, giving his purse to the old friar, who departed with benedictions on them both. When the friends of Corinne heard of her return, they flocked to see her: if any wondered that she was not Oswald's wife, none, at least, asked the reason: the pleasure of regaining her diverted them from every other thought. Corinne endeavored to appear unchanged; but she could not succeed. She revisited the works of art that once afforded her such vivid pleasure; but sorrow was the base of her every feeling now. At the Villa Borghese, or the tomb of Cecilia Metella, she no longer enjoyed that reverie on the instability of human blessings, which lends them a still more touching character. A fixed, despondent pensiveness absorbed her. Nature, who ever speaks to the heart vaguely, can do nothing for it when oppressed by real calamities. Oswald and Corinne were worse than unhappy; for actual misery oft causes such emotions as relieve the laden breast; and from the storm may burst a flash pointing the onward way: but mutual restraint, and fruitless efforts to escape pursuing recollections, made them

even discontented with one another. Indeed, how can we suffer thus, without accusing the being we love as the cause? True, a word, a look, suffices to efface our displeasure; but that look, that word, may not come when most expected, or most needful. Nothing in love can be premeditated; it is as a power divine, that thinks and feels within us, unswayed by our control.

A fever, more malignant than had been known in Rome for some years, now broke out suddenly. A young woman was attacked; her friends and family refused to fly, and perished with her. The next house experienced the same devastation. Every hour a holy fraternity, veiled in white, accompanied the dead to interment; themselves appearing like the ghosts of those they followed. The bodies, with their faces uncovered, are borne on a kind of litter. Over their feet is thrown a pall of gold or rose-colored satin; and children often unconsciously play with the cold hands of the corpse. This spectacle, at once terrific and familiar, is graced but by the monotonous murmur of a psalm, in which the accent of the human soul can scarce be recognized. One evening, when Oswald and Corinne were alone together, and he more depressed than usual by her altered manner, he heard, beneath the windows, these dreary sounds, announcing a funeral; he listened awhile in silence, and then said: "Perhaps to-morrow I may be seized by this same malady, against which there is no defence; you will then wish that you had said a few kind words to me on the day that may be my last. Corinne, death threatens us both closely. Are there not miseries enough in life, that we should thus mutually augment each other's?" Struck by the idea of his danger, she now entreated him to leave Rome instantly; he stubbornly refused: she then proposed

their going to Venice; to this he cheerfully assented: it was for her alone that he had trembled. Their departure was fixed for the second day from this; but on that morning, Oswald, who had not seen Corinne the night before, received a note, informing him that indispensable business obliged her to visit Florence; but that she should rejoin him at Venice in a fortnight; she begged him to take Ancona in his way, and gave him a seemingly important commission to execute for her there. Her style was more calm and considerate than he had found it since they left Naples. He believed her implicitly, and prepared for his journey; but, wishing once more to behold the dwelling of Corinne ere he left Rome, he went thither, found it shut up, and rapped at the door. An old woman appeared, told him that all the other servants had gone with her mistress, and would not answer another word to his numerous questions. He hastened to Prince Castel Forte, who was as surprised as himself at Corinne's abrupt retirement. Nevil, all anxiety, imagined that her agent at Tivoli must have received some instructions as to her affairs. He mounted his horse with a promptitude unusual to him, and, in extreme agitation, rode to her country house; its doors were open; he entered, passed some of the rooms without meeting any one, till he reached that of Corinne: though darkness reigned there, he saw her on her bed, with Thérésina alone beside her; he uttered a cry of recognition: it recalled her to consciousness: she raised herself, saying eagerly: "Do not come near me! I forbid you! I die if you do!"

Oswald felt as if his beloved were accusing him of some crime which she had all at once suspected: believing himself hated—scorned—he fell on his knees, with despairing submission which suggested

to Corinne the idea of profiting by this mistake, and she commanded him to leave her forever, as if he had in truth been guilty. Speechless with wonder, he would have obeyed, when Thérésina sobbed forth: "Oh, my Lord! will you, then, desert my dear lady? She has sent every one away, and would fain banish me too: for she has caught the infectious fever!" These words instantly explained the affecting stratagem of Corinne; and Oswald clasped her to his heart, with a transport of tenderness, such as he had never before experienced. In vain she repelled him; in vain she reproached Thérésina. Oswald bade the good creature withdraw, and lavished his tearful kisses on the face of his adored. "Now, now," he cried, "thou shalt not die without me: if the fatal poison be in thy veins, at least, thank Heaven, I breathe it in thine arms."—"Dear, cruel Oswald!" she sighed, "to what tortures you condemn me! O God! since he will not live without me, let not my better angel perish! no, save him, save him!" Here her strength was lost, and, for eight days, she remained in the greatest danger. In the midst of her delirium, she would cry: "Keep Oswald from me! let him not come here! never tell him where I am!" When her reason returned, she gazed on him, murmuring: "Oswald! in death as in life you are with me; we shall be reunited." When she perceived how pale he was, a deadly terror seized her, and she called to his aid the physicians, who had given her a strong proof of devotion in never having abandoned her. Oswald constantly held her burning hands in his, and finished the cup of which she had drunk; in fact, with such avidity did he share her perils, that she herself ceased at last to combat this passionate self-sacrifice. Leaning her head upon his arm, she resigned herself to his will. The beings who so love

that they feel the impossibility of living without each other, may well attain the noble and tender intimacy which puts all things in common, even death itself. [1] Happily, Lord Nevil did not take the disease through which he so carefully nursed Corinne. She recovered; but another malady penetrated yet deeper into her breast. The generosity of her lover, alas! redoubled the attachment she had borne him.

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[1] M. Dubreuil, a very skilful French physician, fell ill of a fatal distemper. His popularity filled the sick room with visitants. Calling to his intimate friend, M. Péméja, as eminent a man as himself, he said, "Send away all these people; you know my fever is contagious; no one but yourself ought to be with me now." Happy the friend who ever heard such words! Péméja died fifteen days after his heart's brother.

CHAPTER IV.

It was agreed that Neville and Corinne should visit Venice. They had relapsed into silence on their future prospects, but spoke of their affection more confidingly than ever: both avoided all topics that could disturb their present mutual peace. A day passed with *him* was to *her* such enjoyment! he seemed so to revel in her conversation; he followed her every impulse; studied her slightest wish, with so sustained an interest, that it appeared impossible he could bestow so much felicity without himself being happy. Corinne drew assurances of safety from the bliss she tasted. After some months of such habits we

believe them inseparable from our existence. Her agitation was calmed again, and her natural heedlessness of the future returned. Yet, on the eve of quitting Rome, she became extremely melancholy: this time she both hoped and feared that it was forever. The night before her departure, unable to sleep, she heard a troop of Romans singing in the moonlight. She could not resist her desire to follow them, and once more wander through that beloved scene. She dressed; and bidding her servants keep the carriage within sight of her, put on a veil, to avoid recognition, and at some distance, pursued the musicians. They paused on the bridge of St. Angelo, in front of Adrian's tomb: in such a spot music seems to express the vanities and splendors of the world. One might fancy one beheld in the air the imperial shade wondering to find no other trace left of his power on earth except a tomb. The band continued their walk, singing as they went, to the silent night, when the happy ought to sleep: their pure and gentle melodies seem designed to solace wakeful suffering. Drawn onward by this resistless spell, Corinne, insensible to fatigue, seemed winging her way along. They also sang before Antoninus's pillar, and then at Trajan's column: they saluted the obelisk of St. John Lateran. The ideal language of music worthily mates the ideal expression of works like these: enthusiasm reigns alone, while vulgar interests slumber. At last the singers departed, and left Corinne near the Coliseum: she wished to enter its inclosure and bid adieu to ancient Rome.

Those who have seen this place but by day cannot judge of the impression it may make. The sun of Italy should shine on festivals; but the moon is the light for ruins. Sometimes, through the openings of the amphitheatre, which seems towering to the clouds, a

portion of heaven's vault appears like a dark blue curtain. The plants that cling to the broken walls all wear the hues of night. The soul at once shudders and melts on finding itself alone with nature. One side of this edifice is much more fallen than the other; the two contemporaries make an unequal struggle against time. He fells the weakest; the other still resists, but soon must yield.

"Ye solemn scenes!" cried Corinne, "where, at this hour, no being breathes beside me—where but the echoes of my own voice answer me—how are the storms of passion calmed by nature, who thus peacefully permits so many generations to glide by! Has not the universe some better end than man? or are its marvels scattered here, merely to be reflected in his mind? Oswald! why do I love with such idolatry? why live but for the feelings of a day compared to the infinite hopes that unite us with divinity? My God! if it be true, as I believe, that we admire thee the more capable we are of reflection, make my own mind my refuge against my heart! The noble being whose gentle looks I can never forget is but a perishable mortal like myself. Among the stars there is eternal love, alone sufficing to a boundless heart." Corinne remained long in these ideas, and, at last, turned slowly towards her own abode; but, ere she re-entered it, she wished to await the dawn at St. Peter's, and from its dome take her last leave of all beneath. Her imagination represented this edifice as it must be, when, in its turn, a wreck—the theme of wonder for yet unborn ages. The columns, now erect, half bedded in earth; the porch dilapidated, with the Egyptian obelisk exulting over the decay of novelties, wrought for an earthly immortality. From the summit of St. Peter's Corinne beheld day rise over Rome, which, in its uncultivated Campagna, looks

like the oasis of a Libyan desert. Devastation is around it; but the multitude of spires and cupolas, over which St. Peter's rises, give a strange beauty to its aspect. This city may boast one peculiar charm: we love it as an animated being: its very ruins are as friends, from whom we cannot part without farewell.

Corinne addressed the Pantheon, St. Angelo's, and all the sites that once renewed the pleasures of her fancy. "Adieu!" she said, "land of remembrances! scenes where life depends not on events, nor on society; where enthusiasm refreshes itself through the eyes, and links the soul to each external object. I leave you, to follow Oswald, not knowing to what fate he may consign me. I prefer him to the independence which here afforded me such happy days. I may return to more; but for a broken heart and blighted mind, ye arts and monuments so oft invoked, while I was exiled beneath his stormy sky, ye could do nothing to console!"

She wept; yet thought not, for an instant, of letting Oswald depart without her. Resolutions springing from the heart we often justly blame, yet hesitate not to adopt. When passion masters a superior mind, it separates our judgment from our conduct, and need not cloud the one in order to overrule the other.

Corinne's black curls and veil floating on the breeze gave her so picturesque an air, that, as she left the church, the common people recognised and followed her to her carriage with the warmest testimonials of respect. She sighed again, at parting from a race so ardent and so graceful in their expressions of esteem. Nor was this all. She had to endure the regrets of her friends They devised fêtes in order to delay her departure: their poetical tributes strove in a thousand ways to convince her that she ought to stay; and

finally they accompanied her on horseback for twenty miles. She was extremely affected. Oswald cast down his eyes in confusion, reproaching himself for tearing her from so much delight, though he knew that an offer of remaining there would be more barbarous still. He appeared selfish in removing Corinne from Rome; yet he was not so; for the fear of afflicting her, by setting forth alone, had more weight with him than even the hope of retaining her presence. He knew not what he was about to do—saw nothing beyond Venice. He had written to inquire how soon his regiment would be actively employed in the war, and awaited a reply. Sometimes he thought of taking Corinne with him to England; yet instantly remembered that he should forever ruin her reputation by so doing, unless she were his wife; then he wished to soften the pangs of separation by a private marriage; but a moment afterwards gave up that plan also. "We can keep no secrets from the dead," he cried: "and what should I gain by making a mystery of a union prohibited by nothing but my worship of a tomb?" His mind, so weak in all that concerned his affections, was sadly agitated by contending sentiments. Corinne resigned herself to him, like a victim, exulting, amid her sorrows, in the sacrifices she made; while Oswald, responsible for the welfare of another, bound himself to her daily by new ties, without the power of yielding to them; and unhappy in his love as in his conscience, felt the presence of both but in their combats with each other.

When the friends of Corinne took leave, they commended her earnestly to his care; congratulated him on the love of so eminent a woman; their every word sounding like mockery and upbraiding. She felt this, and hastily concluded the trying scene; and

when, after turning from time to time to salute her, they were at last lost to her sight, she only said to her lover: "Oswald! I have now no one but you in the world!" How did he long to swear he would be hers! But frequent disappointments teach us to mistrust our own inclinations, and shrink even from the vows our hearts may prompt. Corinne read his thoughts, and delicately strove to fix his attention on the country through which they travelled.

CHAPTER V.

It was the beginning of September, and the weather super till they neared the Apennines, where they felt the approach of winter. A soft air is seldom united with the pleasure of looking on picturesque mountains. One evening, a terrible hurricane arose: the thickest darkness closed around them; and the horses, so wild there that they are even harnessed by stratagem, set off with inconceivable rapidity. Our lovers felt much excited by being thus hurried on together. "Ah!" cried Oswald, "if they could bear us from all I know on earth—if they could climb these hills, and dash into another life, where we should regain my father, who would receive and bless us, would you not go with me, beloved?" He pressed her vehemently to his bosom. Corinne, enamored as himself, replied: "Dispose of me as you will; chain me like a slave to your fate: had not the slaves of other days talents that soothed their masters? Such would I be to thee. But, Oswald, yet respect her who thus trusts thee: condemned by all the world, she must not blush to meet thine eye."—"No," he exclaimed, "I will lose all, or all obtain. I ought, I must either live

thy husband, or die in stifling the transports of my passion: but I will hope to be thine before the world, and glory in thy tenderness. Yet tell me, I conjure thee, have I not sunk in thine esteem by all these struggles? Canst thou believe thyself less dear than ever?" His accents were so sincere, that, for awhile, they gave her back her confidence, and the purest, sweetest rapture animated them both.

Meanwhile the horses stopped. Oswald alighted first. The cold sharp wind almost made him fancy himself landing in England: this freezing air was not like that of Italy, which bids young breasts forget all things save love. Oswald sank back into his gloom. Corinne, who knew the unsettled nature of his fancy, but too well guessed the cause. On the morrow they arrived at our Lady of Loretto, which stands upon an eminence, from whence is seen the Adriatic. While Oswald gave some orders for their journey, Corinne entered the church, where the image of the Virgin is inclosed in the choir of a small chapel, adorned with bas-reliefs. The marble pavement that surrounds the sanctuary is worn by pilgrim knees. Corinne, moved by these marks of prayer, knelt on the stones so often pressed by the unfortunate, and addressed the type of heavenly truth and sensibility. Oswald here found her bathed in tears. He did not understand how a woman of her mind could bow to the practices of the ignorant. She guessed this by his looks, and said: "Dear Oswald, are there not many moments when we dare not raise our hopes to the Supreme Being, or breathe to him the sorrows of our hearts? Is it not pleasing, then, to behold a woman as intercessor for our human weakness? She suffered on this earth, for she lived on it; to her I blush not to pray for you, when a petition to God himself would overawe me."—"I cannot always directly supplicate my

Maker," replied Oswald. "I, too, have my intercessor: the guardian angel of children is their father: and since mine has been in heaven, I have oft received an unexpected solace, aid, and composure, which I can but attribute to the miraculous protection whence I still hope to escape from my perplexities."—"I comprehend you," said Corinne, "and believe there is no one who has not some mysterious idea of his own destiny—one event which he has always dreaded, and which, though improbable, is sure to happen. The punishment of some fault, though it be impossible to trace the connection our misfortunes have with it, often strikes the imagination. From my childhood I trembled at the idea of living in England. Well; my inability to do so may be my worst regret; and on that point I feel there is something unconquerable in my fate, against which I struggle in vain. Every one conceives his life interiorly a contrast to what it seems we have a confused sense of some supernatural power, disguised in the form of external circumstance, while itself alone is the source of all our actions. Dear friend, minds capable of reasoning forever plunge into their own abyss, but always fail to fathom it."

Oswald, as he heard her speak thus, wondered to find that, while she was capable of such glowing sentiments, her judgment still could hover over them, like their presiding genius. "No," he frequently said to himself, "no other society on earth can satisfy the man who has possessed such a companion as this."

They entered Ancona at night, as he wished not to be recognized: in spite of his precautions, however, he was so; and the next morning all the inhabitants crowded about the house in which he stayed,

awaking Corinne by shouts of "Long live Lord Nevil, our benefactor!" She started, rose hastily, and mingled with the crowd, to hear their praises of the man she loved. Oswald, informed that the people were impatiently calling for him, was at last obliged to appear. He believed Corinne still slept: what was his astonishment at finding her already known and cherished by the grateful multitude, who entreated her to be their interpretress! Corinne's imagination—by turns her charm and her defect—delighted in extraordinary adventures. She thanked Lord Nevil, in the name of the people, with a grace so noble that the natives were in ectasies. Speaking for them, she said: "You preserved us—we owe you our lives!" But when she offered him the oak and laurel crown they had entwined, an indefinite timidity beset her: the enthusiastic populace prostrated themselves before him, and Corinne involuntarily bent her knee in tendering him the garland. Oswald was so overwhelmed at the sight, that he could no longer support this scene, nor the public homage of his beloved; but drew her away with him. She wept, and thanked the good inhabitants of Ancona, who followed them with blessings, as Oswald, hiding himself in his carriage, murmured: "Corinne at my feet! Corinne, in whose path I ought to kneel! Have I deserved this? Do you suspect me of such unworthy pride?"—"No, no," she said; "but I was suddenly seized with the respect a woman always feels for him she loves. To us, indeed, is external deference most directed; but in truth, in nature, it is the woman who reveres the being capable of defending her."

"Yes, I will be thy defender, to the last hour of my life!" he answered. "Heaven be my witness, such a genius shall not in vain seek a refuge in the harbor of my love!"—"Alas!" she sighed, "that love is all I need;

and what promise can secure it to me? No matter. I feel that you love me now better than ever: let us not trouble this return of affection."—"Return!" interrupted Oswald.—"I cannot retract the expression; but let us not seek to explain it;" and she made a gentle sign for Nevil to be silent.

CHAPTER VI.

For two days they proceeded on the shore of the Adriatic; but this sea, on the Romagnan side, has not the effect of the ocean, nor even of the Mediterranean. The high road winds close to its waves, and grass grows on its banks: it is not thus that we would represent the mighty realm of tempests. At Rimini and Cesena, you quit the classic scenes of history: their latest remembrancer is the Rubicon, which Cæsar passed to become the lord of Rome. Not far from hence is the republic of St. Marino, the last weak vestige of liberty, besides the spot on which was resolved the destruction of the world's chief republic. By degrees, you now advance towards a country very opposite in aspect to the Papal State. Bologna, Lombardy, the environs of Ferrara and Rovigo, are remarkable for beauty and cultivation—how unlike the poetic barrenness and decay that announce an approach to Rome, and tell of the terrible events that have occurred there!

You then quit what Sabran calls "black pines, the summer's mourning, but the winter's bravery," and the conical cypresses that remind one of obelisks, mountains, and the sea. Nature, like the traveller, now parts from the southern rays. At first, the

oranges are found no longer in the open air—they are succeeded by olives, whose pale and tender foliage might suit the bowers of the Elysian fields. Further on, even the olive disappears.

On entering Bologna's smiling plain, the vines garland the elms together, and the whole land is decked as for a festival. Corinne was sensible of the contrast between her present state of mind and the resplendent scene she now beheld.—"Ah, Oswald!" she sighed, "ought nature to spread such images of happiness before two friends perhaps about to lose each other?"—"No, Corinne—never! each day I feel less able to resign thee: that untiring gentleness unites the charm of habit with the love I bear thee. One lives as contentedly with you as if you were not the finest genius in the world, or, rather, because you are so; for real superiority confers a perfect goodness, that makes one's peace with one's self and all the world. What angry thoughts can live in such a presence?" They arrived at Ferrara, one of the saddest towns in Italy, vast and deserted. The few inhabitants found there, at distant intervals, loiter on slowly, as if secure of time for all they have to do. It is hard to conceive this the scene of that gay court sung both by Tasso and Ariosto; yet still are shown their manuscripts, with that also of the Pastor Fido. Ariosto knew how to live at ease here, amid courtiers; but the house is yet to be seen wherein they dared confine Tasso as a maniac. It is sad to read the various letters which he wrote, asking the death it was so long ere he obtained. Tasso was so peculiarly organised, that his talent became its owner's formidable foe. His genius dissected his own heart. He could not so have read the secrets of the soul if he had felt less sorrow. *The man who has not suffered*, says a prophet, *what does he know?* In some

respects, Corinne resembled him. She was more cheerful and more versatile, but her imagination required extreme government: far from assuaging any grief, it lent each pang fresh might. Nevil deceived himself if he believed her brilliant faculties could give her means of happiness apart from her affections. When genius is united with true feeling, our talents multiply our woes. We analyze, we make discoveries, and, the heart's urn of tears being exhaustless, the more we think the more we feel it flow.

CHAPTER VII.

They embarked for Venice on the Brenta. At each side they beheld its palaces, grand but dilapidated, like all Italian magnificence. They are too wildly ornamented to remind us of the antique: Venetian architecture betrays a commerce with the East: there is a blendure of the Gothic and Moresco that takes the eye, though it offends the taste. The poplar, regular almost as architecture itself, borders the canals. The sky's bright blue sets off the splendid verdure of the country, which owes its green to the abundant waters. Nature seems to wear these two colors in mere coquetry; and the vague beauty of the South is found no more. Venice astonishes more than it pleases at first sight: it looks a city under water: and one can scarce admire the ambition which disputed this space with the sea. The amphitheatre of Naples is built as if to welcome it; but on the flats of Venice, steeples appear, like masts, immovable in the midst of waves. In entering the city, one takes leave of vegetation; one sees not even a fly there: all

animals are banished; man alone remains to battle with the waves. In a city whose streets are all canals, the silence is profound—the dash of oars its only interruption. You cannot fancy yourself in the country, for you see no trees; nor in a town, for you hear no bustle; or even on board ship, for you make no way; but in a place which storms would convert into a prison—for there are times when you cannot leave the city, nor even your own house.

Many men in Venice never went from one quarter to another—never beheld St. Mark's—a horse or a tree were actual miracles to them. The black gondolas glide along like biers or cradles, the last and the first beds of human kind. At night, their dark color renders them invisible, and they are only traced by the reflection of the lights they carry—one might call them phantoms, guided by faint stars. In this abode all is mysterious—the government, the habits, love itself. Doubtless the heart and reason find much food when they can penetrate this secrecy, but strangers always feel the first impression singularly sad.

Corinne, who was a believer in presentiments, and now made presages of everything, said to Nevil: "Is not the melancholy that I feel on entering this place a proof that some great misfortune will befall me here?" As she said this, she heard three reports of cannon, from one of the Isles of the Lagune—she started, and inquired the cause of a gondolier—"It is a woman taking the veil," he said, "at one of those convents in the midst of the sea. The custom here is, that the moment such vow is uttered, the female throws the flowers she wore during the ceremony behind her, as a sign of her resigning the world, and the firing you have just heard announces this event." Corinne shuddered. Oswald felt her hand grow cold

in his, and saw a deathlike pallor overspread her face.—"My life!" he cried, "why give this importance to so simple a chance?"—"It is not simple," she replied. "I, too, have thrown the flowers of youth behind me."—"How! when I love thee more than ever? when my whole soul is thine?"—"The thunders of war," she continued, "elsewhere devoted to victory or death, here celebrate the obscure sacrifice of a maiden—an innocent employment for the arms that shake the world with terror: a solemn message from a resigned woman to those of her sisters who still contend with fate."

CHAPTER VIII.

The power of the Venetian government, during its latter years, has almost entirely consisted in the empire of habit and association of ideas. It once was formidably daring,—it has become lenient and timorous: hate of its past potency is easily revived, and easily subdued, by the thoughts that its might is over. The aristocracy woo the favour of the people, and yet by a kind of despotism, since they rather amuse than enlighten them; an agreeable state enough, while the common herd are afforded no pleasures that can brutify their minds, while the government watches over its subjects like a sultan over his harem, forbidding them to meddle with politics, or presume to form any judgment of existing authorities, but allowing them sufficient diversion, and not a little glory. The spoils of Constantinople enrich the churches; the standards of Cyprus and Candia float over the Piazza; the Corinthian horses delight the eye; and the winged lion of St. Mark's

appears the type of fame. The situation of the city rendering agriculture and the chase impossible, nothing is left for the Venetians but dissipation. Their dialect is soft and light as a zephyr. One can hardly conceive how the people who resisted the league of Cambray should speak so flexible a tongue: it is charming while expressive of graceful pleasantry, but suits not graver themes; verses on death, for instance, breathed in these delicate and almost infantine accents, sound more like the descriptions of poetic fable. The Venetians are the most intelligent men in Italy; they think more deeply, though with less ardent fancies than their southern countrymen; yet, for the most part, the women, though very agreeable, have acquired a sentimentality of language, which, without restraining their morals, merely lends their gallantry an air of affectation. There is more vanity, as there is more society, here, than in the rest of Italy. Where applause is quick and frequent, conceit calculates all debts instantaneously; knows what success is owed, and claims its due, without giving a minute's credit. Its bills must be paid at sight. Still, much originality may be found in Venice. Ladies of the highest rank receive visits in the *cafés*, and this strange confusion prevents their *salons* becoming the arenas of serious self-love. There yet remain here some ancient usages that evince a respect for their forefathers, and a certain youth of heart which tires not of the past, nor shrinks from melting recollections. The sight of the city itself is always sufficient to awaken a host of memories. The Piazza is crowded by blue tents, beneath which rest Turks, Greeks and Armenians, who sometimes also loll carelessly in open boats, with stands of flowers at their feet. St. Mark's, too, looks rather like a mosque than a Christian temple;

and its vicinity gives a true idea of the oriental indolence with which life is spent here, in drinking sherbet, and smoking perfumed pipes.

Men and women of quality never leave their houses, except in black mantles; while the gondolas are often winged along by rowers clad in white, with rose-colored sashes, as if holiday array were abandoned to the vulgar, while the nobility kept up a vow of perpetual mourning. In most European towns, authors are obliged carefully to avoid depicting the daily routine; for our customs, even in luxury, are rarely poetic; but in Venice nothing appears coarse; the canals, the boats, make pictures of the commonest events in life.

On the quay of the galleys you constantly encounter puppet shows, mountebanks, and story-tellers; the last are worthy of remark. It is usually some episode from Tasso or Ariosto which they relate in prose, to the great admiration of their hearers, who sit round the speaker half clad, and motionless with curiosity; from time to time they purchase glasses of water, as wine is bought elsewhere, and this refreshment is all they take for hours, so strongly are their minds interested. The narrator uses the most animating gestures; his voice is raised; he irritates himself; he grows pathetic; and yet one sees, all the while, that at heart he is perfectly unmoved. One might say to him, as did Sappho to the Circean nymph, who, in perfect sobriety, was assuming fury: "Bacchante—who art not drunk—what wouldst thou with me?" Yet the lively pantomime of the south does not appear quite artificial: it is a singular habit handed down from the Romans, and springing from quickness of disposition. A people so enslaved by pleasure may soon be alarmed by the dream of

power in which the Venetian government is veiled. Never are soldiers seen there. If even a drummer appears in their comedies they are all astonishment; yet a state inquisitor needs but to show himself to restore order among thirty thousand people, assembled for a public fête. It were well if this influence was derived from a respect for the laws; but it is fortified by terror of the secret means which may still be used to preserve the peace. The prisons are in the very palace of the Doge, above and below his apartments. The Lion's Mouth, into which all denunciations are thrown, is also here; the hall of trial is hung with black, and makes judgment appear anticipating condemnation.

The Bridge of Sighs leads from the palace to the state prison. In passing the canal, how oft were heard the cries of "Justice! Mercy!" in voices that could be no longer recognized. When a state criminal was sentenced, a bark removed him in the night, by a little gate that opens on the water: he was taken some distance from the city, to a part of the Lagune where fishing is prohibited, and there drowned: thus secrecy is perpetuated, even after death, not leaving the unhappy wretch a hope that his remains may inform those who loved him that he suffered, and is no more. When Lord Nevil and Corinne visited Venice, these executions had not taken place for nearly a century: but sufficient mystery still existed: and, though Oswald was the last man to interfere with the politics of foreign lands, he felt oppressed by this arbitrary power, from which there was no appeal, that seemed to hang over every head in Venice.

CHAPTER IX.

"You must not," said Corinne, "give way merely to the gloomy impressions which these silent proceedings have created; you ought also to observe the great qualities of this senate, which makes Venice a republic for nobles, and formerly inspired that aristocratic energy, the result of freedom, even though concentrated in the few. You will find them severe on one another, at least establishing, in their own breasts, the rights and virtues that should belong to all. You will see them as paternal towards their subjects as they can be, while merely considering that class of men with reference to physical prosperity. You will detect a great pride in the country which is their property, and an art of endearing it even to the people, whom they allow so few actual possessions there."

Corinne and Oswald visited the hall where the great council was then assembled. It is hung with portraits of the doges; on the space which would have been occupied by that of Faliero, who was beheaded as a traitor, is painted a black curtain, whereon is written the date and manner of his death. The regal magnificence of the other pictures adds to the effect of this ghastly pall. There is also a representation of the Last Judgment, another of the powerful emperor, Frederic Barbarossa, humbling himself to the Venetian senate. It was a fine idea, thus to unite all that can exalt pride upon earth, and bend it before Heaven.

They proceeded to the arsenal: before its gates are two Grecian lions, brought from Athens, to become the guardians of Venetian power. Motionless guardians, that defend but what they respect. This

repository is full of marine trophies. The famous ceremony of the doge's marriage with the Adriatic, in fact, all the institutions, here attest their gratitude to the sea: in this respect they resemble the English, and Nevil strongly felt the similarity. Corinne now led him to the tower called the Steeple of St. Mark's, though some paces from the church. Thence is seen the whole city of the waves, and the huge embankment which defends it from inundation. The coasts of Istria and Dalmatia are in the distance. "Behind the clouds, on this side, lies Greece," said Corinne: "is not that thought enough to stir the heart? There, still, are men of lively, ardent characters, victims to fate; yet destined, perhaps, some day, to resuscitate the ashes of their sires. It is always something for a land to *have* been great; its natives blush at least beneath degradation; while, in a country never consecrated to fame, the inhabitants do not even suspect that there can be a nobler doom than the obscure servility bequeathed to them by their fathers. Dalmatia, which was of yore occupied by so warlike a race, still preserves something of the savage. Its natives are so little aware of the changes wrought by fifteen centuries, that they still deem the Romans 'all-powerful;' yet they betray more modern knowledge, by calling the English 'the heroes of the sea,' because you have so often landed in their ports; but they know nothing about the rest of the world. I love all realms where, in the manners, customs, language, something original is left. Civilized life is so monotonous; you know its secrets in so short a time; I have already lived long enough for that."—"Living with you," said Nevil, "can we ever behold the end of new thoughts and sensations?"—"God grant that such may prove exhaustless!" she replied, continuing: "Let us give one

moment more to Dalmatia: when we descend from this height we shall still see the uncertain lines which mark that land, as indistinctly as a tender recollection in the memory of man. There are improvisatores among the Dalmatians as among the savages; they were found, too, with the Grecians, and almost always exist where there is much imagination, and little vanity. Natural talent turns rather to epigram, in countries where a fear of ridicule makes every man anxious to be the first who secures that weapon; but people thrown much with Nature feel a reverence for her that greatly nurtures fancy. 'Caverns are sacred,' say the Dalmatians; doubtless, thus expressing an indefinite terror of the old earth's secrets. Their poetry, Southerns though they be, resembles Ossian's; but there are only two ways of feeling the charms of nature. Men either animate and deify them, as did the ancients, beneath a thousand brilliant shapes, or, like the Scottish bards, yield to the melancholy fear inspired by the unknown. Since I met you, Oswald, this last manner has best pleased me. Formerly, I had vivacious hope enough to prefer a fearless enjoyment of smiling imagery."—"It is I, then," said Nevil, "who have withered the fair ideal, to which I owed the richest pleasures of my life."—"No, you are not in fault, but my own passion. Talent requires internal freedom, such as true love destroys."—"Ah! if you mean that your genius may lose its voice, and your heart but speak for me——" He could not proceed; the words promised more to his mind than he dared utter. Corinne guessed this, and would not answer, lest she should dissipate their present hopes. She felt herself beloved, and, used to live where men lose all for love, she was easily persuaded that Nevil could not leave her. At once ardent and indolent, she deemed a

danger past which was no longer mentioned. She lived as many others do; who have been long menaced by the same misfortune, and think it will never happen, merely because it has not done so yet.

The air of Venice, and the life led there, is singularly calculated for lulling the mind into security: the very boats, peacefully rocking to and fro, induce a languid reverie; now and then a gondolier on the Rialto sings a stanza from Tasso; one of his fellows answers him, by the next verse, from the extremity of the canal. The very antique music they employ is like church psalmody, and monotonous enough when near; but, on the evening breeze, it floats over the waters like the last beams of the sun; and, aided by the sentiment it expresses, in such a scene, it cannot be heard without a gentle pensiveness. Oswald and Corinne remained on the canals, side by side, for hours; often without a word; holding each other's hands, and yielding to the formless dreams inspired by love and nature.

BOOK XVI.

PARTING AND ABSENCE.

CHAPTER I.

As soon as Corinne's arrival was known in Venice, it excited the greatest curiosity. When she went to a *café* in the piazza of St. Mark, its galleries were crowded, for a moment's glimpse at her; and the best

society sought her with eager haste. She had once loved to produce this effect wherever she appeared, and naturally confessed that admiration had many charms for her. Genius inspires this thirst for fame: there is no blessing undesired by those to whom Heaven gave the means of winning it. Yet in her present situation she dreaded everything in opposition with the domestic habits so dear to Nevil. Corinne was blind to her own welfare, in attaching herself to a man likely rather to repress than to excite her talents; but it is easy to conceive why a woman, occupied by literature and the arts, should love the tastes that differed from her own. One is so often weary of one's self, that a resemblance of that self would never tempt affection, which requires a harmony of sentiment, but a contrast of character; many sympathies, but not unvaried congeniality. Nevil was supremely blessed with this double charm. His gentle ease and gracious manner could never sate, because his liability to clouds and storms kept up a constant interest. Although the depth and extent of his acquirements fitted him for any life, his political opinions and military bias inclined him rather to a career of arms than one of letters—the thought that action might be more poetical than even verse itself. He was superior to the success of his own mind, and spoke of it with much indifference. Corinne strove to please him by imitating this carelessness of literary glory; in order to grow more like the retiring females from whom English womanhood offers the best model. Yet the homage she received at Venice gave Oswald none but agreeable sensations. There was so much cordial good-breeding in the reception she met—the Venetians expressed the pleasure her conversation afforded them with such vivacity, that Oswald felt

proud of being dear to one so universally admired. He was no longer jealous of her celebrity, certain that she prized him far above it; and his own love increased by every tribute she elicited. He forgot England, and revelled in the Italian heedlessness of days to come. Corinne perceived this change; and her imprudent heart welcomed it, as if to last forever.

Italian is the only tongue whose dialects are almost languages of themselves. In that of each state books might be written distinct from the standard Italian; though only the Neapolitan, Sicilian, and Venetian dialects have yet the honor of being acknowledged; and that of Venice as the most original, most graceful of all. Corinne pronounced it charmingly; and the manner in which she sung some lively *barcaroles* proved that she could act comedy as well as tragedy. She was pressed to take a part in an opera which some of her new friends intended playing the next week. Since she had loved Oswald, she concealed this talent from him, not feeling sufficient peace of mind for its exercise, or, at other times, fearing that any outbreak of high spirits might be followed by misfortune; but now, with unwonted confidence, she consented, as he, too, joined in the request; and it was agreed that she should perform in a piece, like most of Gozzi's, composed of the most diverting fairy extravagances.[1] Truffaldin and Pantaloon, in these burlesques, often jostle the greatest monarchs of the earth. The marvellous furnishes them with jests, which, from their very order, cannot approach to low vulgarity. The Child of the Air, or Semiramis in her Youth, is a coquette, endowed by the celestials and infernals to subjugate the world; bred in a desert, like a savage, cunning as a sorceress, and imperious as a queen, she unites natural wildness with premeditated grace, and a warrior's courage with the

frivolity of a woman. The character demands a fund of fanciful drollery, which but the inspiration of the moment can bring to light.

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[1] Among the comic Italian authors who have described their country's manners, must be reckoned the Chevalier Rossi, a Roman, who singularly unites observation with satire.

CHAPTER II.

Fate sometimes has its own strange, cruel sport, repulsing our presuming familiarity. Oft, when we yield to hope, calculate on success, and trifle with our destiny, the sable thread is blending with its tissue, and the weird sisters dash down the airy fabrics we have reared.

It was now November; yet Corinne arose enchanted with her prospects. For the first act she chose a very picturesque costume: her hair, though dishevelled, was arranged with an evident design of pleasing; her light, fantastic garb gave her noble form a most mischievously attractive air. She reached the palace where she was to play. Every one but Oswald had arrived. She deferred the performance as long as possible, and began to be uneasy at his absence; when she came on the stage, however, she perceived him, though he sat in a remote part of the hall, and the pain of having waited redoubled her joy. She was inspired by gayety as she had been at the Capitol by enthusiasm. This drama blends song with speech, and even gives opportunities for extempore dialogue, of which Corinne availed herself to render the scene

more animated. She sung the *buffa* airs with peculiar elegance. Her gestures were at once comic and dignified. She extorted laughter, without ceasing to be imposing. Her talents, like her part, queened it over actors and spectators, pleasantly bantering both parties. Ah! who would not have wept over such a sight, could they have known that this bright armor but drew down the lightning, that this triumphant mirth would soon give place to bitter desolation? The applause was so continual, so judicious, that the rapture of the audience infected Corinne with that kind of delirium which pours a lethe over the past, and bids the future seem unclouded. Oswald had seen her represent the deepest woe, at a time when he still hoped to make her happy; he now beheld her breathing stainless joy, just as he had received tidings that might prove fatal to them both. Oft did he wish to take her from this scene of daring happiness, yet felt a sad pleasure in once more beholding that lovely countenance bedecked in smiles. At the conclusion, she appeared arrayed as an Amazonian queen, commanding men, almost the elements, by that reliance on her charms which beauty may preserve, unless she loves; then, then, no gift of nature or of fortune can reassure her spirit; but this crowned flirt, this fairy queen, miraculously blending rage with wit, carelessness with ambition, and conceit with despotism, seemed to rule over fate as over hearts; and when she ascended her throne she exacted the submission of her subjects with a smile, arch as it was arrogant. This was, perhaps, the moment of her life, from which both grief and fear seemed furthest banished; when suddenly she saw her lover bow his face on his hands to hide his tears. She trembled, and the curtain had not quite fallen, when, leaving her already hated throne, she rushed

into the next apartment. Thither he followed her; and when she marked his paleness, she was seized with such alarm that she was forced to lean against the wall for support. "Oswald," she said, "my God! what has happened?"—"I must start for England to-night," he said, forgetting that he ought not thus to have exposed her feelings.—"No, no!" she cried, clinging to him distractedly; "you cannot plunge me into such despair. How have I merited it? or—or—you mean that you will take me with you?"—"Let us leave this cruel crowd," he said: "come with me, Corinne." She followed him, not understanding aught addressed to her, answering at random; her gait and look so changed, that every one believed her struck with sudden illness.

CHAPTER III.

When they were in the gondola, she raved: "What you have made me feel is worse than death: be generous: throw me into these waves, that I may lose the sense which maddens me. Oswald, be brave: I have seen you do things that required more courage."—"Hold, hold!" he cried, "if you would not drive me to suicide. Hear me, when we have reached your house, and then pronounce our fate. In the name of Heaven be calm!" There was such misery in his accents that she was silent; but trembled so violently, that she could hardly walk up the stairs to her apartment. There she tore off her ornaments in dismay; and, as Lord Nevil saw *her* in this state, a few moments since so brilliant, he sank upon a seat in tears.—"Am I a barbarian?" he cried. "Corinne! Just Heaven! Corinne! do you not think me

so?"—"No," she said, "no, I cannot.—Have you not still that look which every day gives me fresh comfort? Oswald, your presence is a ray from heaven —can I then fear you?—not dare to read your eyes? but fall before you as before my murderer? Oh, Oswald! Oswald!" and she threw herself at his feet in supplication. "What do I see," he exclaimed, raising her vehemently, "would you dishonor me? Well, be it so. My regiment embarks in a month. I will remain, if you betray this all-commanding grief, but I shall not survive my shame."—"I ask you not to stay," she said; "but what harm can I do by following you!"—"We go to the West Indies, and no officer is allowed to take his wife."—"Well, well, at least let me go to England with you."—"My letters also tell me," answered he, "that reports concerning us are already in the papers there; that your identity is suspected; and your family, excited by Lady Edgarmond, refuses to meet or own you. Give me but time to reconcile them, to enforce your rights with your step-mother; for if I take you thither, and leave you, ere your name be cleared, you will endure all the severe opinions which I shall not be by to answer."—"Then you refuse me everything!" she said, and sank insensible to the earth, her forehead receiving a wound in the fall. Oswald shrieked at the sight. Thérésina entered in extreme alarm, and restored her mistress to animation; but when Corinne perceived, in an opposite mirror, her own pale and disfigured face—"Oswald," she sighed, "it was not thus I looked the day you met me first. I wore the crown of hope and fame, now blood and dust are on my brow; yet it is not for you to despise the state to which you have reduced me. Others may—but you cannot—you ought to pity me for loving thus—you must!"—"Stay," he cried, "that is too much;" and

signing for Thérésina to retire, he took Corinne in his arms, saying: "Do what thou wilt with me. I must submit to the decrees of Heaven. I cannot abandon thee in this distress, nor lead thee to England, before I have secured thee against the insults of that haughty woman. I will stay with thee. I cannot depart." These words recalled Corinne to herself, yet overwhelmed her with despair. She felt the necessity that weighed upon her, and with her head reclined, remained long silent.—"Dearest!" said Oswald, "let me hear thy voice. I have no other support—no other guide now."—"No," replied Corinne, "you must leave me," and a flood of tears evinced her comparative resignation—"My love," said Nevil, "I call to witness this portrait of my father, and you best know whether his name is sacred to me—I swear to it that my life is in thy power, if needful to thy happiness. At my return from the islands I will see if I cannot restore thee to thy due rank in thy father's country. If I fail, I will return to Italy, and live or die at thy feet."—"But the dangers you are about to brave," she rejoined.—"Fear not, I shall escape; or if I perish, unknown as I am, my memory will survive in thy heart; and when thou hearest my name, thou mayest say, perhaps with tearful eyes, 'I knew him once—he loved me!'"—"Ah, leave me!" she cried: "you are deceived by my apparent calm; to-morrow, when the sun rises, and I tell myself, 'I shall see *him* no more,' the thought may kill me; happy if it does."—"Why, Corinne, do you fear? is my solemn promise nothing? Can your heart doubt it?"—"No, I respect—too much not to believe you: it would cost me more to abjure mine admiration than my love. I look on you as an angelic being—the purest, noblest, that ever shone on earth. It is not alone your grace that captivates me, but the idea that so many virtues never before

united in one object, and that your heavenly look was only given to express them all. Far be it from me, then, to doubt your word. I should fly from the human face forever if Lord Nevil could deceive; but absence has so many perils, and that dreaded word adieu——"—"Have I not said, never—save from my death-bed?" demanded Oswald, with such emotion that Corinne, terrified for his health, strove to restrain her feelings, and became more pitiable than before. They then began to concert means of writing, and to speak on the certainty of rejoining each other. A year was the term fixed. Oswald securely believed that the expedition would not be longer away. Some time was left them still, and Corinne trusted to regain her strength; but when Oswald told her that the gondola would come for him at three in the morning, and she saw, by her dial, that the hour was not far distant, she shivered as if she were approaching the stake: her lover had every instant less resolution; and, Corinne, who had never seen his mastery over himself thus unmanned, was heart-broken at the sight of his great anguish. She consoled him, though she must have been a thousand times the most unhappy of the two.—"Listen!" she said: "when you are in London, fickle gallants will tell you that love-promises bind not your honor; that every Englishman has liked some Italian on his travels, and forgotten her on his return; that a few pleasant months ought to involve neither the giver nor the receiver; that at your age the color of your whole life cannot depend upon the temporary fascinations of a foreigner. Now this will seem right in the way of the world; but will you, who know the heart of which you made yourself the lord, find excuses in these sophisms for inflicting a mortal wound? Will barbarous jests from men of the day prevent your

hand's trembling as it drives the poniard through this breast?"—"Hush," said Oswald: "you know it is not your grief alone restrains me: but where could I find such bliss as I have owed to you? Who, in the universe, can understand me as you do? Corinne, you are the only woman who can feel or inspire true love, that harmonious intelligence of hearts and souls, which I shall never enjoy except with you. You know I am not fickle: I look on all things seriously; is it then against you only that I should belie my nature?"—"No," answered Corinne; "you would not treat my fond sincerity with scorn; it is not you, Oswald, who could remain insensible to my despair; but to you my step-mother will say all that can sully my past life. Spare me the task of telling you beforehand her pitiless remarks. Far from what talents I may boast disarming her, they are my greatest errors in her eyes. She cannot feel their charm, she only sees their danger: whatever is unlike the destiny she herself chose seems useless, if not culpable. The poetry of the heart to her appears but an impertinence, which usurps the right of depreciating common sense. It is in the name of virtues I respect as much as you do that she will condemn my character and fate. Oswald, she will call me unworthy of you."—"And how should I hear that?" interrupted he: "what virtues dare she rate above your generosity, your frankness? No, heavenly creature! be common minds judged by common rules; but shame befall the being you have loved who does not more revere than even adore you. Peerless in love and truth, Corinne! my firmness fails; if you sustain me not, I can never fly. It is from you I must receive the power to pain you."—"Well," said Corinne, "there are some seconds yet ere I must recommend myself to God, and beg he will enable

me to hear the hour of your departure strike. Oh, Oswald, we love each other with deep tenderness. I have intrusted you with all my secrets; the facts were nothing—but the most private feelings of my heart, you know them all. I have not a thought that is not wedded to thee: if I write aught in which my soul expands, thou art mine inspiration. I address myself to thee, as I shall my latest sigh. What, then, is my asylum if thou leavest me? The arts will retrace thine image, music thy voice. Genius, which formerly entranced my spirit, is nothing now but love, and unshared with thee must perish. Oh, God!" she added, raising her eyes to heaven, "deign but to hear me! Thou art not merciless to our noblest sorrows; take back my life when he has ceased to love: it will be then but suffering. He carries with him all my highest, softest feelings: if he permits the fire shrined in his breast to be extinguished, wherever I may be, my life, too, will be quenched. Great God! thou didst not frame me to outlive my better self, and what should I become in ceasing to esteem him? He ought to love me ever—I feel he ought—my affection should command his! Oh! heavenly Father! death or his love!"

As she concluded this prayer she turned to Oswald, and beheld him prostrated before her in strong convulsions: he repelled her cares, as if his reason were entirely lost. Corinne gently pressed his hand, repeating to him all he had said to her, assuring him that she relied on his return. Her words somewhat composed him; yet the nearer the hour of separation drew, the more impossible it seemed to part. "Why," he said, "should we not go to the altar and at once take our eternal oaths?" All the firmness, all the pride of Corinne, revived at these words. Oswald had told her that a woman's grief once before subdued him,

but his love had chilled with every sacrifice he made. After a moment's silence, she replied: "No, you must see your country and your friends before you adopt this resolution. I owe it now, my Lord, to the pangs of parting, and I will not accept it." He took her hand. "At least," he said, "I swear again my faith is bound to this ring; while you preserve it, never shall another attain a right over my actions; if you at last reject me, and send it back——"—"Cease," she interposed, "cease to talk of a fear you never felt; I cannot be the first to break our sacred tie, and almost blush to assure you of what you but too well know already." Meanwhile, the time advanced. Corinne turned pale at every sound. Nevil remained in speechless grief beside her; at last a light gleamed through the window, and the black, hearse-like gondola stopped before the door. Corinne uttered a scream of fright, and fell into Oswald's arms, crying: "They are here—adieu—leave me—all is over!"—"Oh God, oh my father!" he exclaimed; "what do ye exact of me?" He embraced and wept over his beloved, who continued: "Go! it must be done—go!"—"Let me call Thérésina," he said; "I cannot leave you thus alone."—"Alone!" she repeated: "shall I not be alone till you return?"—"I cannot quit this room; it is impossible," he articulated, with desperation. —"Well," said Corinne, "then it is I must give the signal. I will open the door; but when I have done so, spare me a few short instants."—"Yes, yes," he murmured, "let us be still together, though these cruel combats are even worse than absence." They now heard the boatmen calling up Lord Nevil's servants; one of whom soon tapped at the door, informing him that all was ready.—"All is ready," echoed Corinne, and knelt beside his father's portrait. Doubtless, her former life then passed in review

before her; she exaggerated every fault, and feared herself unworthy of Divine compassion, though far too wretched to exist without it. When she arose, she held forth her hand to Nevil, saying: "Now I can bid you farewell—a moment more, and, perhaps, I could not. May God protect your steps and mine—for I must need his care!" Oswald flung himself once more into her arms, trembling and pale like one prepared for torture, and left the room, where, perhaps, for the last time, he had loved, and felt himself beloved, as few have ever been, or ever can be.

When he disappeared, a horrid palpitation attacked Corinne; she could not breathe; everything she beheld looked unreal; objects seemed vanishing from her sight; the chamber tottering as from a shock of earthquake. For a quarter of an hour she heard the servants completing the preparations for this journey. *He* was still near; she might yet again behold him, speak to him once more; but she would not trust herself. Oswald lay almost senseless in the gondola. At last it rowed away: and at that moment, Corinne fled forth to recall him; but Thérésina stopped her. A heavy rain was falling, and a high wind arose; the house was now, indeed, shaken like a ship at sea, and Oswald had to cross the Lagune in such weather! Corinne descended, purposing to follow him, at least till he should land in safety; but it was so dark that not a single gondola was plying: she walked, in dreadful agitation, the narrow pavement that divides the houses from the water. The storm increased; she called upon the boatmen, who mistook her cries for those of some poor creature drowning—yet no one dared approach, the waves of the grand canal had swollen so formidably. Corinne remained till daybreak in this state; meanwhile the tempest ceased. One of the gondoliers

brought word from Oswald that he had crossed securely. That moment was almost a happy one; and it was some hours ere the unfortunate creature again felt the full weight of absence, or calculated the long days which but anxiety and grief might henceforth occupy.

CHAPTER IV.

During the first part of his journey, Oswald was frequently on the point of returning; but the motives for perseverance vanquished this desire. We make a solemn step towards the limits of Love's empire, after we have once disobeyed him—the dream of his resistlessness is over. On approaching England, all Oswald's homefelt recollections returned. The year he had passed abroad had no connection with any other era of his life. A glorious apparition had charmed his fancy, but could not change the tastes, the opinions, of which his existence had been, till then, composed. He regained *himself*; and though regret prevented his yet feeling any delight, his thoughts began to steady from the Italian intoxication which had unsettled them. No sooner had he landed, than his mind was struck with the ease, the order, the wealth, and industry he looked on; the habits and inclinations to which he was born waked with more force than ever.

In a land where men have so much dignity, and women so much virtue, where domestic peace is the basis of public welfare, Oswald could but remember Italy to pity her. He saw the stamp of human reason upon all things; he had lately found, in social life as

in state institutions, nothing but confusion, weakness, and ignorance. Painting and poetry gave place in his heart to freedom and to morals; and, much as he loved Corinne, he gently blamed her for wearying of a race so wise, so noble. Had he left her imaginative land for one of bare frivolity, he would have pined for it still; but now he exchanged the vague yearnings after romantic rapture, for pride in the truest blessings—security and independence. He returned to a career that suits man's mind—action that has an aim! Reverie may be the heritage of women, weak and resigned from their birth; but man would win what he desires: his courage irritates him against his fate, unless he can direct it by his will. In London, Oswald met his early friends: he heard that language so condensed in power, that it seems to imply more thoughts than it explains. Again he saw those serious countenances that kindle or that melt so suddenly, when deep affections triumph over their habit of reserve. He once more tasted the pleasure of making discoveries in the human heart, *there* by degrees revealed to the observant eye. He felt himself in his own land, and those who never left it know not by how many links it is endeared to them. The image of Corinne mingled with all these impressions; and the more reluctant he felt to leave his country, the more he wished to marry, and fix in Scotland with her. He was even impatient to embark that he might return the sooner; but the expedition was suspended, though still liable to be ordered abroad immediately. No officer, therefore, could dispose of his time even for a fortnight. Lord Nevil doubly felt his separation from Corinne, having neither leisure nor liberty to form or follow any decided plan. He passed six weeks in London, fretted by every moment thus lost to her. Finally, he resolved to beguile his

impatience by a short visit to Northumberland, and, by influencing Lady Edgarmond to recognize the daughter of her late Lord, contradict the report of her death, and the unfavorable insinuations of the papers: for he longed to tender her the rank and respect so thoroughly her due.

CHAPTER V.

Oswald reflected with emotion that he was about to behold the scene in which Corinne had passed so many years. He felt embarrassed by the necessity of informing Lady Edgarmond that he could not make Lucy his wife. The north of England, too, reminded him of Scotland, and the memory of his father was never absent from his mind.

When he reached Lady Edgarmond's estate, he was struck by the good taste which pervaded its grounds; and, as the mistress of the mansion was not ready to receive him, he walked awhile in the park: through its foliage he beheld a youthful and elegant figure reading with much attention. A beautiful fair curl, escaping from her bonnet, told him that this was Lucy, whom three years had improved from child to woman. He approached her, bowed, and forgetting where he was, would have imprinted a respectful kiss upon her hand, after the Italian mode; but the young lady drew back, and, blushing as she courtesied, replied, "I will inform my mother, sir, that you desire to see her." She withdrew, and Nevil remained awed by the modest air of that angelic face. Lucy had just entered her sixteenth year; her features were extremely delicate; she had a little

outgrown her strength, as might be judged by her gait and mutable complexion. Her blue eyes were so downcast that her countenance owed its chief attraction to these rapid changes of color, which alone betrayed her feelings. Oswald, since he had dwelt in the south, had never beheld this species of expression. He reproached himself for having accosted her with such familiarity; and, as he followed her to the castle, mused on the perfect innocence of a girl who had never left her mother, nor felt one emotion stronger than filial tenderness. Lady Edgarmond was alone when she received him. He had seen her twice, some years before, without any particular notice; but now he observed her carefully, comparing her with the descriptions of Corinne. He found them correct in many respects; yet he thought that he detected more sensibility than she had done, not being accustomed, like himself, to guess what such self-regulated physiognomies conceal. His first anxiety was on Corinne's account, and he began the conversation by praising Italy. "It is an amusing residence for men," returned Lady Edgarmond; "but I should be very sorry if any woman, in whom I felt an interest, could long be pleased with it."—"And yet," continued Oswald, already hurt by this insinuation, "I found there the most distinguished woman I ever met."—"Probably, as to mental attainments; but an honorable man seeks other qualities in the companion of his life."—"And he would find them!" he said, warmly: he might have made his meaning clear at once, but that Lucy entered, and said a few words apart to her mother, who replied aloud: "No, my dear, you cannot go to your cousin's to-day. Lord Nevil dines here." Lucy blushed, seated herself beside her mother, and took up her embroidery, from which she never raised

her eyes, nor did she utter a syllable. Nevil was almost angry: it was most probable that Lucy knew there had been some idea of their union: he remembered all Corinne had said on the probable effects of the severe education Lady Edgarmond would give her daughter. In England, young girls are usually more at liberty than married women: reason and morality alike favor their privileges; but Lady Edgarmond would have had all females thus rigorously secluded. Oswald could not, before Lucy, explain his intentions relative to Corinne; and Lady Edgarmond kept up a discourse on other subjects, with a firm and simple good sense, that extorted his deference. He would have combated her strict opinions, but he felt that if he used one word in a different acceptation from her own, she would form an opinion which nothing could efface; and he hesitated at this first step, so irreparable with a person who will make no individual exceptions, but judges everything by fixed and general rules. Dinner was announced; and Lucy offered her arm to Lady Edgarmond. Oswald then first discovered that his hostess walked with great difficulty. "I am suffering," she said, "from a painful, perhaps a fatal ailment." Lucy turned pale; and her mother resumed, with a more gentle cheerfulness: "My daughter's attention has once saved my life, and may preserve it long." Lucy bent her head, and when she raised it, her lashes were still wet with tears; yet she dared not even take her mother's hand: all had passed at the bottom of her heart; and she was only conscious of a stranger's presence, from the necessity of concealing her agitation. Oswald deeply felt this restraint of hers, and his mind, so lately thrilled by passionate eloquence, refreshed itself by contemplating so chastely simple a picture. Lucy seemed enveloped in

some immaculate veil, that sweetly baffled his speculations. During dinner she spared her mother from all fatigue—serving everything herself; and Nevil only heard her voice when she offered to help him; but these common-place courtesies were performed with such enchanting grace, that he asked himself how it was possible for such slight actions to betray so much soul. "One must have," he said to himself, "either the genius of Corinne, that surpasses all one could imagine, or this pure unconscious mystery, which leaves every man free to suppose whatever virtues he prefers."

The mother and daughter rose from table: he would have followed them; but her Ladyship adhered so scrupulously to old customs, that she begged he would wait till they sent to let him know the tea was ready. He joined them in a quarter of an hour. Most part of the evening passed without his having one opportunity of speaking to Lady Edgarmond as he designed. He was about to depart for the town, purposing to return on the morrow, when his hostess offered him a room in the castle. He accepted it without deliberation; but repented his readiness, on perceiving that it seemed to be taken as a proof of his inclination towards Lucy. This was but an additional motive for his renewing the conversation respecting Corinne. Lady Edgarmond proposed a turn in the garden. Oswald offered her his arm; she looked at him steadfastly, and then said: "That is right: I thank you." Lucy resigned her parent to Nevil, but timidly whispered, "Pray, my Lord, walk slowly!" He started at this first private intelligence with her: those pitying tones were just such as he might have expected from a being above all earthly passions. He did not think his sense of such a moment any treason to Corinne. They returned for

evening prayer, at which her Ladyship always assembled her household in the great hall. Most of them were very infirm, having served the fathers of Lord and Lady Edgarmond. Oswald was thus reminded of his paternal home. Every one knelt, except the matron, who, prevented by her lameness, listened with folded hands and downcast eyes in reverent silence. Lucy was on her knees beside her parent: it was her duty to read the service; a chapter of the Gospel, followed by a prayer adapted to domestic country life, composed by the mistress of the house: its somewhat austere expressions were contrasted by the soft voice that breathed them.

After blessing the king and country, the servants and the kindred of this family, Lucy tremblingly added, "Grant also, O God! that the young daughter of this house may live and die with soul unsullied by a single thought or feeling that conforms not with her duty; and that her mother, who must soon return to thee for judgment, may have some claim or pardon for her faults, in the virtues of her only child."

Lucy said this prayer daily; but now Oswald's presence so affected her, that tears, which she strove to conceal, flowed down her cheeks. He was touched with respectful tenderness, as he gazed on the almost infantine face, that looked as if it still remembered having dwelt in heaven. Its beauty, thus surrounded by age and decrepitude, was an image of divine commiseration. He reflected on her lonely life, deprived of all the pleasures, all the flatteries, due to her youth and charms: his soul melted towards her. The mother of Lucy, too, he found a person more severe to herself than to others. The limits of her mind might rather be attributed to the strength of her principles than to any natural deficiencies: the

asperity of her character was acquired from repressed impulses; and, as Corinne had said, her affection for her child gained force from this extreme control of all others.

By ten in the evening all was silent throughout the castle, and Oswald left to muse over his last few hours: he owned not to himself that Lucy had made an impression on his heart; perhaps, as yet, this was not the case; but in spite of the thousand attractions Corinne offered to his fancy, there was one class of ideas, wherein Lucy might have reigned more supremely than her sister. The image of domestic felicity suited better with a retreat in Northumberland than with a coronation at the Capitol; besides, he remembered which of these sisters his father had selected for him: but he loved Corinne, was beloved by her, had given her his faith, and therefore persisted in his intention of confiding this to Lady Edgarmond on the morrow. He fell asleep thinking of Italy, but still the form of Lucy flitted lightly before him. He awoke: when he slept again, the same dream returned; at last this ethereal shape seemed flying from him; he strove to detain her, and started up, as she disappeared, fearing her lost to him. The day had broken, and he left his room to enjoy a morning walk.

CHAPTER VI.

The sun was just risen. Oswald supposed that no one was yet stirring, till he perceived Lucy already drawing in a balcony. Her hair, not yet fastened, was waving in the gale: she looked so like his dream, that

for a moment he started, as if he had beheld a spirit; and though soon ashamed at having been so affected by such a natural circumstance, he remained for some time beneath her station, but she did not perceive him. As he pursued his walk, he wished more than ever for the presence that would have dissipated these half-formed impressions. Lucy was an enigma, which Corinne's genius could have solved; without her aid, it took a thousand changeful forms in his mind's eye. He re-entered the drawing-room, and found Lucy placing her morning's work in a little brown frame, facing her mother's tea-table. It was a white rose, on its leafy stalk, finished to perfection. "You draw, then?" he said.—"No, my Lord," she answered; "I merely copy the easiest flowers I can find: there is no master near us: the little I ever learned I owe to a sister who used to give me lessons." She sighed.—"And what is become of her?" asked Oswald.—"She is dead; but I shall always regret her."—He found that *she*, too had been deceived;[1] but her confession of regret evinced so amiable a disposition, that he felt more pleased, more affected, than before. Lucy was about to retire, remembering that she was alone with Lord Nevil, when Lady Edgarmond joined them. She looked on her daughter with surprise and displeasure, and motioned her to withdraw. This first informed Oswald that Lucy had done something very extraordinary, in remaining a few minutes with a man out of her mother's presence; and he was as much gratified as he would have been by a decided mark of preference under other auspices. Lady Edgarmond took her seat, and dismissed the servant who had supported her to the sofa. She was pale, and her lips trembled as she offered a cup of tea to Lord Nevil. These symptoms increased his own

embarrassment, yet, animated by zeal for her he loved, he began: "Lady Edgarmond, I have often in Italy seen a female particularly interesting to you."—"I cannot believe it," she answered, dryly: "no one there interests me."—"I should think that the daughter of your husband had some claim on your affection."—"If the daughter of my husband be indifferent to her duties and reputation, though I surely cannot wish her any ill, I shall be very glad to hear no more of her."—"But," said Oswald, quickly, "if the woman your Ladyship deserts is celebrated by the world for her great and varied talents, will you forever thus disdain her?"—"Not the less, sir, for the abilities that wean her from her rightful occupations. There are plenty of actresses, artists, and musicians, to amuse society: in our rank, a woman's only becoming station is that which devotes her to her husband and children."—"Madam," returned Oswald, "such talents cannot exist without an elevated character and a generous heart: do you censure them for extending the mind, and giving a more vast, more general influence to virtue itself?"—"Virtue!" she repeated, with a bitter smile; "I know not what you mean by the word, so applied. The virtue of a young woman, who flies from her father's home, establishes herself in Italy, leads the *freest* life, receives all kinds of homage, to say no worse, sets an example pernicious to others as to herself, abandoning her rank, her family, her name——"—"Madam," interrupted Oswald, "she sacrificed her name to you, and to your daughter, whom she feared to injure."—"She knew that she dishonored it, then," replied the step-mother.—"This is too much," said Oswald, violently: "Corinne Edgarmond will soon be Lady Nevil, and we shall then see if you blush to acknowledge the daughter of your Lord. You

confound with the vulgar herd a being gifted like no other woman—an angel of goodness, tender and diffident at heart, as she is sublime of soul. She may have had her faults, if that innate superiority that could not conform with common rules be one, but a single deed or word of hers might well efface them all. She will more honor the man she chooses to protect her than could the empress of a world."—"Be that man, then, my Lord!" said Lady Edgarmond, making an effort to restrain her feelings: "satirize me as narrow-minded; nothing you say can change me. I understand by morality, an exact observance of established rules; beyond which, fine qualities misapplied deserve at best but pity."—"The world would have been very sterile, my Lady," said Oswald, "had it always thoughts you do of genius and enthusiasm: human nature would have become a thing of mere formalities. But, not to continue this fruitless discussion, I will only ask, if you mean to acknowledge your daughter-in-law, when she is my wife?"—"Still less on that account," answered her Ladyship: "I owe your father's memory my exertions to prevent so fatal a union if I can."—"My father!" repeated Nevil, always agitated by that name.—"Are you ignorant," she continued, "that he refused her, ere she had committed any actual fault? foreseeing, with the perfect sagacity that so characterized him, what she would one day become?"—"How, madam! what more know you of this?"—"Your father's letter to Lord Edgarmond on the subject," interrupted the lady, "is in the hands of his old friend, Mr. Dickson. I sent it to him, when I heard of your connection with this Corinne, that you might read it on your return: it would not have become me to retain it." Oswald, after a few moments' silence, resumed: "I ask your Ladyship but for an act of justice, due to yourself,

that is, to receive your husband's daughter as she deserves."—"I *shall* not, in any way, my Lord, contribute to your misery. If her present nameless and unmatronized existence be an obstacle to your marrying her, God, and your father, forbid that I should remove it!"—"Madam," he exclaimed, "her misfortunes are but added chains that bind me to her."—"Well," replied Lady Edgarmond, with an impetuosity to which she would not have given way had not her own child been thus deprived of a suitable husband, "well, render yourself wretched, then! she will be so too: she hates this country, and never will comply with its manners: this is no theatre for the versatile talents you so prize, and which render her so fastidious. She will carry you back to Italy: you will forswear your friends and native land, for a lovely foreigner, I confess, but for one who could forget you, if you wished it. Those flighty brains are ever changeful: deep griefs were made for the women you deem so common-place, those who live but for their homes and families." This was, perhaps, the first time in her life that Lady Edgarmond had spoken on impulse: it shook her weakened nerves; and, as she ceased, she sank back, half fainting. Oswald rang loudly for help. Lucy ran in alarmed, hastened to revive her parent, and cast on Nevil an uneasy look, that seemed to say: "Is it you who have made mamma so ill?" He felt this deeply, and strove to atone by attentions to Lady Edgarmond; but she repulsed him coldly, blushing to think that she had seemed to pride but little in her girl, by betraying this anxiety to secure her a reluctant bridegroom. She bade Lucy leave them, and said calmly: "My Lord, at all events, I beg that you will consider yourself free. My daughter is so young, that she is no way concerned in the project formed

by your father and myself; but that being changed, it would be an indecorum for me to receive you until she is married." Nevil bowed.—"I will content myself, then," he said, "with writing to you on the fate of a person whom I can never desert."—"You are the master of that fate," concluded Lady Edgarmond, in a smothered voice; and Oswald departed. In riding down the avenue, he perceived, at a distance, the elegant figure of young Lucy. He checked his horse to look on her once more, and it appeared that she took the same direction with himself. The high road passed before a summer-house, at the end of the park; he saw her enter it, and went by with some reluctance, unable to discern her: he frequently turned his head, and, at a point from which the road was best commanded, observed a slight movement among the trees. He stopped; it ceased: uncertain whether he had guessed correctly, he proceeded, then abruptly rode back with the speed of lightning, as if he had dropped something by the way; there, indeed, he saw her, on the edge of the bank, and bowed respectfully: she drew down her veil, and hastily concealed herself in the thicket, forgetting that she thus tacitly avowed the motive which had brought her there. The poor child had never felt so guilty in her life; and far from thinking of simply returning his salute, she feared that she must have lost his good opinion by having been so forward. Oswald felt flattered by this blameless and timorous sincerity. "No one," thought he, "could be more candid than Corinne; but then, no one better knew herself or others. Lucy had all to learn. Yet this charm of the day, could it suffice for a life? this pretty ignorance cannot endure; and since we must penetrate the secrets of our own hearts at last, is not the candor which survives such examination worth

more than that which precedes it?" This comparison, he believed, was but an amusement to his mind, which could never occupy it more gravely.

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[1] A religious, moral, English gentlewoman propose a romantic falsehood, so likely to wreck its theme on the dangers against which Lady Edgarmond warned Corinne! This anti-national inconsistency neutralizes all the rest of Madame de Staël's intended satire.—TR.

CHAPTER VII.

Oswald proceeded to Scotland. The effect of Lucy's presence, the sentiment he still felt for Corinne, alike gave place to the emotions that awakened at the sight of scenes where he had dwelt with his father. He upbraided himself with the dissipations in which he had spent the last year; fearing that he was no longer worthy to re-enter the abode he now wished he had never quitted. Alas! after the loss of life's dearest object, how can we be content with ourselves, unless in perfect retirement? We cannot mix in society, without in some way neglecting our worship of the dead. In vain their memory reigns in the heart's core; we lend ourselves to the activity of the living, which banishes the thought of death as painful and unavailing. If solitude prolongs not our regrets, life, as it is, calls back the most feeling minds, renews their interests, their passions. This imperious necessity is one of the sad conditions of human nature; and although decreed by Providence, that man may support the idea of death, both for himself and others, yet often, in the midst of our

enjoyments, we feel remorse at being still capable of them, and seem to hear a resigned, affecting voice asking us: "Have you, whom I so loved, forgotten me?" Oswald felt not now the despair he had suffered on his first return home after his father's death, but a melancholy, deepened by his perceiving that time had accustomed every one else to the loss he still deplored. The servants no longer thought it their duty to speak of the late lord; his place in the rank of life was filled; children grow up as substitutes for their sires. Oswald shut himself in his father's room, for lonely meditation. "Oh, human destiny!" he sighed, "what wouldst thou have? so much life perish? so many thoughts expire? No, no, my only friend hears me, yet sees my tears, is present—our immortal spirits still commune. Oh, God! be thou my guide. Those iron souls, that seem immovable as nature's rocks, pity not the vacillations and repentance of the sensitive, the conscientious, who cannot take one step without the fear of straying from the right. They may bid duty lead them, but duty's self would vanish from their eyes, if *Thou* revealedst not the truth to their hearts."

In the evening Oswald roved through the favorite walks of his father. Who has not hoped, in the ardor of his prayers, that the one dear shade would reappear, and miracles be wrought by the force of love? Vain trust! beyond the tomb we can see nothing. These endless uncertainties occupy not the vulgar, but the nobler the mind the more incontrollably is it involved in speculations. While Oswald wandered thus absorbed, he did, indeed, behold a venerable man slowly advancing towards him. Such a sight at such a time and place, took a strong effect; but he soon recognized his father's friend, Mr. Dickson, and with an affection which he

never felt for him before.

CHAPTER VIII.

This gentleman in no way equalled the parent of Oswald, but he was with him at his death; and having been born in the same year, he seemed to linger behind but to carry Lord Nevil some tidings of his son. Oswald offered him his arm as they went up stairs; and felt a pleasure in paying attention to age, however little resembling that of his father. Mr. Dickson remembered Oswald's birth, and hesitated not to speak his mind on all that concerned his young friend, strongly reprimanding his connection with Corinne; but his weak arguments would have gained less ascendency over Oswald's mind than those of Lady Edgarmond, had he not handed him the letter to which she alluded. With considerable tremor he read as follows:—

> "Will you forgive me, my dear friend, if I propose a change of plan in the union of our families? My son is more than a year younger than your eldest daughter; will it not be better, therefore, that he should wait for the little Lucy? I might confine myself to the subject of age; but, as I knew Miss Edgarmond's when first I named my wishes, I should deem myself wanting in confidence, if I did not tell you my true reasons for desiring that this marriage may not take place. We have known each

other for twenty years, and may speak frankly of our children, especially while they are young enough to be improved by our opinions. Your daughter is a charming girl, but I seem to be gazing on one of those Grecian beauties, who, of old, enchanted and subdued the world. Do not be offended by this comparison. She can have received from you none but the purest principles; yet she certainly loves to produce an effect, and create a sensation: she has more genius than self-love; such talents as hers necessarily engender a taste for display; and I know no theatre that could suffice the activity of a spirit, whose impetuous fancy, and ardent feelings, break through each word she utters. She would inevitably wean my son from England; for such a woman could not be happy here: only Italy can content her. She must have that free life which is guided but by fantasy: our domestic country habits must thwart her every taste. A man born in this happy land ought to be in all things English, and fulfil the duties to which he is so fortunately called. In countries whose political institutions give men such honorable opportunities for public action, the women should bloom in the shade: can you expect so distinguished a person as your

daughter to be satisfied with such a lot? Take my advice. Marry her in Italy; her religion and manners suit that country. If my son should wed her, I am sure it would be from love, for no one can be more engaging: to please her, he would endeavor to introduce foreign customs into his establishment, and would soon lose his national character, those prejudices, if you please to call them so, which unite us with each other, and render us a body free but indissoluble, or which can only be broken up by the death of its last associate. My son could not be comfortable where his wife was unhappy: he is sensitive, even to weakness; and his expatriation, if I lived to see it, would render me most miserable; not merely as deprived of my son, but as knowing him lost to the glory of serving his native land. Is it worthy a mountaineer to drag on a useless life amid the pleasures of Italy? A Scot become the *cicisbeo* of his own wife, if not of some other man's? Neither the guide nor the prop of his family! I even rejoice that Oswald is now in France, and still unknown to a lady whose empire over him would be too great. I dare conjure you, my dear friend, should I die before his marriage, do not let him meet your eldest daughter until Lucy be of an

age to fix his affections. Let him learn my wishes, if requisite. I know he will respect them—the more if I should then be removed from this life. Give all your attention, I entreat you, to his union with Lucy. Child as she is, her features, look, and voice, all express the most endearing modesty. She will be a true Englishwoman, and may constitute the happiness of my boy. If I do not live to witness their felicity, I shall exult over it in heaven; and when we reunite there, my dear friend, our prayers and benedictions will protect our children still.

"Ever yours,

"NEVIL."

After reading this, Oswald remained silent, and left Mr. Dickson time to continue his long discourse without interruption. He admired the judgment of his friend, who, nevertheless, he said, was far from anticipating the reprehensible life Miss Edgarmond had since led: a marriage between Oswald and herself now, he added, would be an eternal insult to Lord Nevil's memory; who, it appeared, during his son's fatal residence in France, had passed a whole summer at Lady Edgarmond's, solacing himself by superintending the education of his favorite Lucy. In fact without either artifice or forbearance, Mr. Dickson attacked the heart of Oswald through all the avenues of sensibility. Thus everything conspired against the absent Corinne, who had no means, save letters, for reviving from time to time, the tenderness of Oswald. She had to contend with his love of

country, his filial remorse, the exhortation of his friends in favor of resolutions so easy to adopt, as they led him towards a budding, beauty, whose every charm seemed to harmonize with the calm, chaste hopes of a domestic lot.

BOOK XVII.

CORINNE IN SCOTLAND.

CHAPTER I.

Corinne, meanwhile, had settled in a villa on the Brenta: she could not quit the scenes in which she had last met Oswald—and also hoped that she should here receive her letters earlier than at Rome. Prince Castel Forte had written, begging leave to visit her; but she refused. The friendship existing between them commanded mutual confidence; and had he striven to detach her from her love—had he told her what she so often told herself—that absence must decrease Nevil's attachment, one inconsiderate word would have been a dagger to her heart. She wished to see no one; yet it is not easy to live alone, while the soul is ardent, and its situation unfortunate. The employments of solitude require peace of mind; if that be lost, forced gayety, however troublesome, is more serviceable than meditation. If we could trace madness to its source, we should surely find that it originated in the power of one single thought, which excluded all mental variety.

Corinne's imagination consumed herself, unless diverted by external excitement. What a life now succeeded that which she had led for nearly a year, with the man of her heart's choice forever with her, as her most appreciating companion, her tenderest friend, and fondest lover! Now, all was barren around and gloomy within her. The only interesting event was the arrival of a letter from *him*; and the irregularity of the post, during winter, every day tormented her with expectations, often disappointed. Each morning she walked on the banks of the canal, now covered by large-leaved water-lilies, watching for the black gondola, which she had learned to distinguish afar off. How did her heart beat, as she perceived it! Sometimes the messenger would answer: "No letters for you, madame," and carelessly proceeded to other matters, as if nothing were so simple as to have *no* letters; another time he would say: "Yes, madame, here are some." She ran over them all with a trembling hand: if the well-known characters of Oswald met not her eye, the day was terrible, the night sleepless the morrow redoubled her anxiety and suspense. "Surely," she thought, "he might write more frequently;" and her next letter reproached his silence. He justified himself; but his style had already lost some of its tenderness: instead of expressing his own solicitude, it seemed but attempting to dissipate hers. This change did not escape her: day and night would she reperuse a particular phrase, seeking some new interpretation on which to build a few days' composure. This state shattered her nerves: she became superstitious. Constantly occupied by the same fear, we may draw presages from everything. One day in every week she she went to Venice, for the purpose of receiving her letters some hours earlier: this merely varied the

tortures of waiting; and in a short time she conceived as great a horror for every object she encountered on her way, as if they had been the spectres of her own thoughts, reappearing clothed in the most dreadful aspects. Once, on entering the church of St. Mark, she remembered how, on her arrival in Venice, the idea had occurred to her that perhaps, ere she departed, Oswald would lead her thither to call her his in sight of Heaven. She gave way once more to this illusion; saw him approach the altar; heard him vow before his God to love her forever; they knelt together, and she received the nuptial crown. The organ, then playing, and the lights that shone through the aisle, gave life to her vision; and for a moment she felt not the cruel void of absence: but suddenly a dreary murmur succeeded—she turned, and beheld a bier brought into the church. She staggered; her sight almost failed; and from that moment she felt convinced that her love for Oswald would lead her but to the grave.

CHAPTER II.

Lord Nevil was now the most unhappy and irresolute of men. He must either break the heart of Corinne, or outrage the memory of his father. Cruel alternative! to escape which he called on death a thousand times a day. At last, he once more resorted to his habitual procrastination, telling himself that he would go to Venice, since he could not resolve to write Corinne the truth, and make her his judge; but then he daily expected that his regiment would embark. He was free from all engagement with Lucy. He believed it his duty not to marry Corinne; but in what other way

could he pass his life with her? Could he desert his country? or bring her to it, and ruin her fair name forever? He resolved to hide from her the obstacles which he had encountered from her step-mother, because he still hoped ultimately to surmount them. Manifold causes rendered his letters brief, or filled them with subjects remote from his future prospects. Any one, save Corinne, would have guessed all; but passion rendered her at once quick-sighted and credulous. In such a state, we see nothing in a natural manner: but discover what is concealed, while blind to that which should seem clearest. We cannot brook the idea of suffering so much without some extraordinary cause; we will not confess to ourselves that such despair may be produced by the simplest circumstances in life. Though Oswald pitied her, and blamed himself, his correspondence betrayed an irritation which it did not explain; wildly reproaching her for what he endured, as if she had not been far the most unfortunate. This tone deprived her of all mastery over herself. Her mind was disordered by the most fatal images: she could not believe that the being capable of writing with such abrupt and heartless bitterness was the same Oswald she had known so generous, so tender. She felt a resistless desire to see and speak with him once more. "Let me hear *him* tell me," she raved, "that it is he who thus mercilessly stabs her whose least pain once so strongly afflicted him; let him say so, and I submit: but some infernal power seems to inspire this language; it is not Oswald who writes thus to *me*. They have slandered me to him: some treachery must be exerted, or I could not be used thus." She adopted the resolution of going to Scotland, if we may so call the impulse of an imperious grief, which would fain alter its present situation at all hazards. She dared

not write nor speak to any one on this subject, still flattering herself that some fortunate change would prevent her acting on a plan, which, nevertheless, soothed her imagination, and forced her to look forward. To read was now impossible: music thrilled her to agony: and the charms of nature induced a reverie that redoubled her distress. This creature, once so animated, now passed whole days in motionless silence. Her internal pangs were but betrayed by a mortal paleness: her eyes were frequently fixed upon her watch, though she knew not why she should wish one hour to succeed another, since not one of them could bring her aught, save restless nights and despairing days.

One evening, she was informed that a female was earnestly requesting to see her: she consented; and the woman entered her presence dressed in black, and veiled, to conceal, as much as possible, a face deformed by the most frightful malady. Thus wronged by nature, she consoled herself by collecting alms for the poor; demanding them nobly, and with an affecting confidence of success. Corinne gave her a large sum, entreating her prayers in return. The poor being, resigned to her own fate, was astonished to behold a person so lovely, young, rich, and celebrated, a prey to sorrow. "My God, madame," she cried, "I would you were as calm as I!" What an address from such an object to the most brilliant woman in Italy! Alas! the power of love is too vast in souls like hers. Happy are they who consecrate to Heaven the sentiments no earthly ties can merit. That time was not yet come for poor Corinne; she still deceived herself, still sought for bliss; she prayed, indeed, but not submissively. Her peerless talents, the glory they had won, gave her too great an interest in herself. It is only by detaching our

hearts from all the world that we can renounce the thing we love. Every other sacrifice must precede this: life may be long a desert ere the fire that made it so is quenched. At last, in the midst of this sad indecision, Corinne received a letter from Oswald, telling her that his regiment would embark in six weeks, and that, as its colonel, he could not profit by this delay to visit Venice without injuring his reputation. There was but just time for Corinne to reach England, ere he must leave it, perhaps forever. This thought decided her; she was not ignorant of her own rashness; she judged herself more severely than any one else could. Pity her, then! What woman has a right to "cast the first stone" at the unfortunate sister, who justifies not her fault, hopes for no pleasure, but flies from one misfortune to another, as if driven on by persecuting spirits? Her letter to Castel Forte thus concludes: "Adieu, my faithful protector! Adieu, my friends in Rome! with whom I passed such joyous, easy days. It is done—all is over. Fate has stricken me. I feel the wound is mortal. I struggle still, but soon shall fall. I must see *him* again. I am not answerable for myself. A storm is in my breast such as I cannot govern; but I draw near the term at which all will cease. This is the last act of my history: it will end in penitence and death. Oh, wild confusion of the human heart! Even now, while I am obeying the will of passion, I see the shades of evening in the distance, I hear a voice divine that whispers me: 'Still these fond agitations, hapless wretch! the abode of endless rest awaits thee.' O God! grant me the presence of mine Oswald once more, but one last moment! The very memory of his features now is darkened by despair; but is there not something heavenly in his look? Did not the air become more pure, more brilliant, as he approached?

You, my friend, have seen him with me, have witnessed his kind cares, and the respect with which he inspired others for the woman of his choice. How can I live without him? Pardon my ingratitude: ought I thus to requite thy disinterested constancy? But I am no longer worthy any blessing; and might pass for insane, had I not still the miserable consciousness of mine own madness. Farewell, then—yes, farewell!"

CHAPTER III.

How pitiable is the feeling, delicate woman, who commits a great imprudence for a man whose love she knows inferior to her own! She has but herself to be her support. If she has risked repose and character to do some signal service for her idol, she may be envied. Sweet is the self-devotion that braves all danger to save a life that is dear to us, or solace the distress which rends a heart responsive to our own. But thus to travel unknown lands, to arrive without being expected, to blush before the one beloved, for the unasked proof thus given of his power—painful degradation! What would it be if we thus involved the happiness of others, and outraged our duty to more sacred bonds? Corinne was free. She sacrificed but her own peace and glory. Her conduct was irrational, indeed, but it could overcloud no destiny save hers.[1]

On landing in England, Corinne learned from the papers that Lord Nevil's departure was still delayed. She saw no society in London except the family of a banker, to whom she had been recommended *under a*

false name. He was interested in her at first sight, and enjoined his wife and daughter to pay her all the attentions in their power. She fell dangerously ill, and, for a fortnight, her new friends watched over her with the most tender care. She heard that Lord Nevil was in Scotland, but must shortly rejoin his regiment in London. She knew not how to announce herself, as she had not written to him respecting her intentions—indeed, Oswald had not received a letter from her for three months. He mentally accused her of infidelity, as if he had any right to complain. On his return to town, he went first to his agents, where he hoped to find letters from Italy: there were none; and, as he was musing over this silence, he encountered Mr. Edgarmond, who asked him for news of Corinne. "I hear nothing of her," he replied, irritably.—"That I can easily understand," added Edgarmond: "these Italians always forget a foreigner, once out of sight; one ought never to heed it; they would be too delightful if they united constancy with genius: it is but fair that our own women should have some advantage!" He squeezed Oswald's hand as he said this, and took leave, as he was just starting for Wales; but his few words had pierced their hearer's heart.—"I am wrong," he said, "to wish she should regret me, since I cannot constitute her happiness; but so soon to forget! This blights the past as well as the future."

Despite his father's will, he had resolved not to see Lucy more; and even scorned himself for the impression she had made on him. Condemned as he was to defeat the hopes of Corinne, he felt that, at least, he ought to preserve his heart's faith inviolately hers: no duty urged him to forfeit that. He renewed his solicitations in her cause, by letters to Lady Edgarmond, who did not even deign to answer

them: meanwhile, Mr. Dickson assured him that the only way of melting her to his wishes would be—marrying her daughter; whose establishment, she feared, Corinne might frustrate, if she resumed her name, and was received by her family. Fate had hitherto spared her the pang of suspecting Oswald's interest in her sister. Never was she herself more worthy of him than now. During her illness, the candid, simple beings by whom she was surrounded, had given her a sincere taste for English habits and manners. The few persons she saw were anything but distinguished, yet possessed an estimable strength, and justice of mind. Their affection for her was less professing than that to which she had been accustomed, but evinced with every opportunity by fresh good offices. The austerity of Lady Edgarmond, the tedium of a small country town, had cruelly misled her as to the kindness, the true nobility to be found in the country she had abandoned: unluckily, she now became attached to it under such circumstances, that it would have been better for her own peace had she never been untaught her dislike.

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[1] The Corinnes of this world care little how they pain the Castel Fortes. The mere esteem of such a man would have been worth even the love of twenty Oswalds.—TR.

CHAPTER IV.

The banker's family, who were forever studying how to prove their friendship, pressed Corinne to see Mrs. Siddons perform Isabella, in the Fatal Marriage, one

of the characters in which that great actress best displayed her admirable genius. Corinne refused for some time: at last, she remembered that Lord Nevil had often compared her manner of recitation with that of Mrs. Siddons: she was therefore anxious to see her, and thickly veiled, went to a small box, whence she could see all, herself unseen. She knew not if Oswald was in London, but feared to be recognized by any one who might have met her in Italy. The commanding beauty and deep sensibility of the heroine so riveted her attention, that, during the earliest acts, her eyes were never turned from the stage.

English declamation is better calculated than any other to touch the soul, especially when such fine talents give it all its power and originality. It is less artificial, less conventional than that of France. The impressions produced are more immediate—for thus would true despair express itself; the plots and versification of English dramas too are less remote from real life, and their effect more heart-rending. It requires far higher genius to become a great actor in France, so little liberty being left to individual manner, so much influence attached to general rules; [1] but in England you may risk anything, if inspired by nature. The long groans that appear ridiculous if described, make those shudder who hear them. Mrs. Siddons, the most nobly-mannered woman who ever adorned a theatre, lost none of her dignity by prostrating herself on the earth. There is no action but may become graceful, if prompted by an impulse which rises from the depths of the breast, and lords it over the mind which conceives it still more than over its witnesses. Various nations have their different styles of tragic acting, but the expression of grief is understood from one end of the world to the other;

and, from the savage to the king, there is some similarity between all men while they are really suffering.

Between the fourth and fifth acts, Corinne observed that all eyes were turned towards a box, in which she beheld Lady Edgarmond and her daughter; she could not doubt that it was Lucy, much as the last seven years had embellish her form. The death of a rich relation had obliged Lady Edgarmond to visit London, and settle the succession of his fortune. Lucy was more dressed than usual;[2] and it was long since so beauteous a girl had been seen, even in England, where the women are so lovely. Corinne felt a melancholy surprise: she thought it impossible for Oswald to resist that countenance. On comparing herself with her sister, she was so conscious of her own inferiority, that she exaggerated (if such exaggeration be possible) the charm of that fair complexion, those golden curls, and innocent blue eyes—that image of life's spring! She felt almost degraded in setting her own mental acquirements in competition with gifts thus lavished by Heaven itself. Suddenly, in an opposite box, she perceived Lord Nevil, whose gaze was fixed on Lucy. What a moment for Corinne! She once more beheld that face, for which she had so long searched her memory every instant, as if the image could be effaced—she beheld it again—absorbed by the beauty of another. Oswald could not guess the presence of Corinne; but if his eye had even wandered towards her, she might, from such a chance, have drawn a happy omen.

Mrs. Siddons reappeared, and Lord Nevil looked but on her. Corinne breathed again, trusting that mere curiosity had drawn his glance towards Lucy. The tragedy became every moment more affecting; and

the fair girl was bathed in tears, which she strove to conceal, by retiring to the back of her box. Nevil noticed this with increased interest. At last the dreadful instant came when Isabella, laughing at the fruitless efforts of those who would restrain her, stabs herself to the heart. That despairing laugh is the most difficult and powerful effect which tragic acting can produce; its bitter irony moves one to more than tears. How terrible must be the suffering that inspires so barbarous a joy, and in the sight of our own blood, feels the ferocious pleasure that one might experience when taking full revenge upon some savage foe. It was evident that Lucy's agitation had alarmed her mother, who turned anxiously towards her. Oswald rose, as if he would have flown to them; but he soon reseated himself, and Corinne felt some relief; yet she sighed; "My sister Lucy, once so dear to me, has a feeling heart; why should I then wish to deprive her of a blessing she may enjoy without impediment, without any sacrifice on Oswald's part?"

When the play concluded, Corinne stayed until the parties who were leaving the house had gone, that she might avoid recognition; she concealed herself near the door of her box, where she could see what passed near her. As soon as Lucy came out, a crowd assembled to look on her; and exclamations in praise of her beauty were heard from *all sides*, which greatly embarrassed her; the infirm Lady Edgarmond was ill able to brave the throng, despite the cares of her child, and the politeness shown them both; but they knew no one, therefore no gentleman dared accost them. Lord Nevil, seeing their situation, hastened to offer each an arm. Lucy, blushing and downcast, availed herself of this attention. They passed close by Corinne, whom Oswald little

suspected of witnessing a sight so painful: he was proud of thus escorting one of the handsomest girls in England through the numerous admirers who followed her steps.[3]

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[1] Talma, having passed some years in London, blended the charms of each country's tragic acting with admirable talent.

[2] If Englishwomen ever do go into public immediately after the death of a near relation, it must be in deep mourning. Corinne saw these wonders very plainly, considering that Lady Edgarmond and Lucy sat on the same side of the house with herself; which must have been the case, by her calling Oswald's an opposite box.—TR.

[3] If so scrupulous a person as Lady Edgarmond would take her daughter to a theatre without male protection, she could not, fortunately, have been exposed to *all* these annoyances. Our private boxes are few. Each side has its own passage and staircase. Oswald might make his way from one to the other; but if all the individuals on one side left the house as soon as the tragedy concluded, they could not, after quitting their boxes, be thus seen by the parties opposite. I have vainly endeavored to clear this obscurity.—TR.

CHAPTER V.

Corinne returned to her dwelling in cruel disquiet; not knowing what steps to take, how to apprise Nevil of her arrival, nor what to say in defence of her motives; for every instant lessened her confidence in his love: sometimes it seemed as if the man she sought to see again were some passionately beloved stranger, who could not even recognize her. She sent to his house the next evening, and was informed that

he had gone to Lady Edgarmond's; the same answer was brought her on the following day, with tidings that her ladyship was ill, and would return to Northumberland on her recovery. Corinne waited for her removal ere she let Oswald know she was in England. Every evening she walked by her step-mother's residence, and saw his carriage at its door. An inexpressible oppression seized on her heart: yet she daily persevered, and daily received the same shock. She erred, however, in supposing that Oswald was there as the suitor of Lucy.

As he led Lady Edgarmond to her carriage, after the play, she told him that Corinne was concerned in the will of their late kinsman; and begged that he would write to Italy on the arrangements made in the affair. As Oswald promised to call, he fancied he felt the hand of Lucy tremble. Corinne's silence persuaded him that he was no longer dear to her; and the emotion of this young girl gave him the idea that she was interested in him. Yet he thought not of breaking his promise to Corinne: the ring she held was a pledge that he would never marry another without her consent. He sought her step-mother next day, merely on her account; but Lady Edgarmond was so ill, and her daughter so uneasy at finding herself in London without another relative near her, without even knowing to what physician she should apply, that, in duty to the friends of his father, Oswald felt he ought to devote his time to their service. The cold, proud Lady Edgarmond had never softened so much as she did now; letting him visit her every day without his having said a word that could be construed into a proposal for her daughter, whose beauty, rank, and fortune rendered her one of the first matches in England. Since her appearance in public, her address had been eagerly inquired, and

her door besieged by the nobility; yet her mother went nowhere—received no one but Lord Nevil. Could he avoid feeling flattered by this silent and delicate generosity, which trusted him without conditions, without complaint? yet every time he went did he fear that his presence would be interpreted into an engagement. He would have ceased to go thither as soon as Corinne's business was settled, but that Lady Edgarmond underwent a relapse, more dangerous than her first attack; and had she died, Lucy would have had no friend beside her but himself. She had never breathed a word that could assure him of her preference; yet he fancied he detected it in the light but sudden changes of her cheek, the abrupt fall of her lashes, and the rapidity of her breathing. He studied her young heart with tender interest; and her reserve left him always uncertain as to the nature of her sentiments. The highest eloquence of passion cannot entirely satisfy the fancy; we desire something beyond it; and not finding that, must either cool or sate; while the faint light which we perceive through clouds, long keeps our curiosity in suspense, and seems to promise a whole future of new discoveries: this expectation is never gratified; for when we know what all this mystery hid, its charm is gone, and we awake to regret the candid impulses of a more animated character. How then can we prolong the heart's enchantment, since doubt and confidence, rapture and misery, alike destroy it in the end? These heavenly joys belong not to our fate; they never cross our path, save to remind us of our immortal origin and hopes.

Lady Edgarmond was better; and talked of departing, in two days, for her estate in Scotland, near that of Lord Nevil, whither he had purposed going before

the embarkation of his regiment: she anticipated his proposing to accompany her, but he said nothing. Lucy gazed on him in silence for a moment, then hastily rose, and went to the window: on some pretext Nevil shortly followed her, and fancied that her lids were wet with tears: he sighed, and the forgetfulness of which he had accused Corinne returning to his memory, he asked himself whether this young creature might not prove more capable of constant love? He wished to atone for the pain he had inflicted. It is delightful to rekindle smiles on a countenance so nearly infantine. Grief is out of place, where even reflection has yet left no trace. There was to be a review in Hyde Park on the morrow; he therefore entreated Lady Edgarmond to drive there with her daughter, and afterwards permit his taking a ride with Lucy beside her carriage. Miss Edgarmond had once said that she greatly wished to mount a horse, and looked at her mother with appealing submission: after a little deliberation, the invalid held out her wasting hand to Oswald, saying: "If you request it, my Lord, I consent." These words so alarmed him, that he would have abandoned his own proposal; but that Lucy, with a vivacity she had never before betrayed, took her mother's hand, and kissed it gratefully. He had not the courage to deprive an innocent being, who led so lonely a life, of an amusement she so much desired.

CHAPTER VI.

For a fortnight, Corinne had endured the severest anxiety; every morning she hesitated whether she should write to Oswald; every evening she had the

inexpressible grief of knowing that he was with Lucy. Her sufferings made her daily more timid: she blushed to think that he might not approve the step she had taken. "Perhaps," she often said, "all thought of Italy is banished from his breast: he no longer needs in woman a gifted mind or an impassioned heart; all that can please him now is the angelic beauty of sixteen, the fresh and diffident soul that consecrates to him its first emotions." Her imagination was so struck with the advantages of her young sister, that she was abashed, disarmed, depreciatingly disgusted with herself. Though not yet eight-and-twenty, she had already reached that era when women sadly distrust their power to please. Her pride and jealousy contending, made her defer from day to day the dreaded yet desired moment of her meeting with Oswald. She learned that his regiment would be reviewed, and resolved on being present. She thought it probable that Lucy would be there: if so, she would trust her own eyes to judge the state of Nevil's heart. At first, she thought of dressing herself with care, and suddenly appearing before him; but at her toilet, her black hair, her skin slightly embrowned by the Italian sun, her prominent features, all discouraged her. She remembered the ethereal aspect of her sister; and, throwing aside her rich array, assumed a black Venitian garb, covered her head and figure with the mantle worn in that country, and threw herself into a coach. In Hyde Park, she found groups of gentlemen, attired with simple elegance, escorting their fair and modest ladies. The virtues proper to each sex seemed thus to meet. Scarcely was she there ere she beheld Oswald at the head of his corps: its men looked up to him with confidence and devotion. The uniform lent him a more imposing air than usual, and he reined his

charger with perfectly graceful dexterity. The band played pieces of music at once proud and sweet, which seemed nobly enjoying the sacrifice of life: among them, "God save the King," so dear to English hearts; and Corinne exclaimed: "Respected land! which ought to be my own! why did I ever leave thee? What matters more or less of personal fame, amid so much true merit? and what glory could equal that of being called Lord Nevil's worthy wife?"

The martial instruments recalled to her mind the perils he must brave so soon. Unseen by him she gazed through her tears, sighing: "Oh, may he live, though it be not for me! My God! it is Oswald only I implore thee to preserve!" At this moment Lady Edgarmond's carriage drove up. Nevil bowed respectfully, and lowered the point of his sword. No one who looked on Lucy but admired her: Oswald's glances pierced the heart of Corinne: she knew their meaning well, for such had once been bent on her. The horses he had lent to Lady Edgarmond passed to and fro with exquisite speed, while the equipage of Corinne was drawn after these flying coursers almost as slowly as a hearse. "It was not thus," she thought, "that I approached the Capitol: no; he has dashed me from my car of triumph into an abyss of misery. I love him, and the joys of life are lost. I love him, and the gifts of nature fade. Pardon him, O my God! when I am gone." Oswald was now close to her vehicle. The Italian dress caught his eye, and he rode round, in hopes of beholding the face of this unknown. Her heart beat violently; and all her fear was that she should faint and be discovered; but she restrained her feelings; and Lord Nevil relinquished the idea which beset him. When the review was over, to avoid again attracting his attention, she alighted, and retired behind the trees, so as not to be

observed. Oswald then went up to Lady Edgarmond, and showed her a very gentle horse, which his servants had brought hither for Lucy: her mother bade him be very careful of her. He dismounted, and, hat in hand, conversed through the carriage door with so feeling an expression, that Corinne could attribute this regard for the mother to nothing less than an attachment for the daughter. Lucy left the carriage: a riding habit charmingly defined the elegant outline of her figure: she wore a black hat with white plumes—her fair silken locks floating airily about her smiling face. Oswald placed his hand as her step: she had expected this service from a domestic, and blushed at receiving it from him; but he insisted, and at last, she set her little foot in his hand, then sprung so lightly to her saddle, that she seemed one of those sylphid shapes which fancy paints in colors so delicate. *She set off at a gallop.* Oswald followed, never losing sight of her: once the horse made a false step: he instantly checked it, examining the bit and bridle with the most kind solicitude. Shortly afterwards the animal ran away. Oswald turned pale as death, spurring his own steed to an incredible fleetness; in a second he overtook that of Lucy, leaped from his seat, and threw himself before her. She shuddered in her turn lest she should harm him; but with one hand he seized her rein, supporting her with the other, as she gently leaned against him.

What more needed Corinne to convince her of Oswald's love for Lucy? Did she not see all the signs of interest which formerly he lavished on herself? Nay, to her eternal despair, did she not read in his eyes a more revering deference than he had ever shown to her? Twice she drew the ring from her finger, and was ready to break through the crowd,

that she might throw it at his feet: the hope of dying in this effort encouraged her resolution; but where is the woman, even born beneath a southern sky, who does not tremble at attracting the attention of a crowd? She was returning to her coach; and as she crossed a somewhat deserted walk, Oswald again noticed the black figure he before had seen; and it now made a stronger impression on him than at first: he attributed his emotion to remorse, at having, for the first time, felt his heart faithless to the image of Corinne; yet he resolved on starting for Scotland, as his regiment was not to embark for some time.

CHAPTER VII.

From this moment Corinne's reason was affected, and her strength decayed. She began a letter to Lord Nevil, full of bitter upbraidings, and then tore it up. "What avail reproaches?" she thought: "could love be the most pure, most generous of our sentiments, if it were not involuntary? Another face, another voice, command the secret of his heart: all is said that can be said." She began a new letter, depicting the monotony he would find in a union with Lucy; essayed to prove that, without a perfect harmony of soul and mind, no happiness could last; but she destroyed this paper more hastily than the other. "If he already knows not my opinions, I cannot teach him now," she said; "besides, ought I to speak thus of my sister? is she so greatly my inferior as I think? and, if she be, is it for me, who, like a mother, pressed her in childhood to my heart, to point out her deficiencies? no, no! we must not thus value our own inclinations above all price. This life, full as it is

of wishes, must have an end; and, even before death, meditation may wean us from its selfishness." Once more she resumed her pen, to tell but of her misery; yet, in expressing it, she felt such pity for herself, that her tears flowed over every word. "No," she said again, "I cannot send this: if he resisted it, I should hate him; if he yielded, how know I but it would be by a sacrifice? even after which he would be haunted by the memory of another. I had better see him, speak with him, and return his ring." She folded it in paper, on which she only wrote, "You are free;" and, putting it in her bosom, awaited the evening ere she could approach. In open day, she would have blushed before all she met; and yet she sought to anticipate the moment of his visit to Lady Edgarmond. At six o'clock, therefore, she set forth, trembling like a condemned criminal—we so much fear those we love, when once our confidence is lost. The object of a passionate affection is, in the eyes of woman, either her surest protector or most dreaded master. Corinne stopped her equipage at Lord Nevil's door, and in a hesitating voice asked the porter if he was at home; but the man replied: "My Lord set out for Scotland half an hour ago, madam." This intelligence pressed heavily on her heart: she had shrunk from the thought of meeting Oswald, but her soul had surmounted that inexpressible emotion. The effort was made: she believed herself about to hear his voice, and now must take some new resolution ere she could regain it; wait some days longer, and stoop to one step more. Yet, at all hazards, she must see him again; and the next day she departed for Scotland.

CHAPTER VIII.

Ere quitting London, Nevil again called on his agents; and, on finding no letter from Corinne, bitterly asked himself if he ought to give up the certainty of permanent domestic peace for one, who, perhaps, no longer remembered him. Yet he decided on writing once more to inquire the cause of this silence, and assure her that, till she sent back his ring, he would never be the husband of another. He completed his journey in a very gloomy mood, loving Lucy almost unconsciously; for he had, as yet, scarcely heard her speak twenty words—yet regretting Corinne, and the circumstances which separated him from her; by fits yielding to the innocent beauty of the one, and retracing the brilliant grace or sublime eloquence of the other. Had he but known that Corinne loved him better than ever, that she had quitted everything to follow him, he would never have seen Lucy more; but he believed himself forgotten, and told his heart that a cool manner might oft conceal deep feelings. He was deceived. Impassioned spirits must betray themselves a thousand ways: that which can *always* be controlled must needs be weak.

Another event added to his interest in Lucy. In returning to his estates, he passed so near her mother's, that curiosity urged him to visit it. He asked to be shown the room in which Miss Edgarmond usually studied: it was filled by remembrances of the time his father had passed there during his own absence in France. On the spot where, a few months before his death, the late Lord Nevil had given her lessons, Lucy had erected a marble pedestal, on which was graven, "To the memory of my second father." A book lay on the table. Oswald opened it, and found a collection of his

father's thoughts, who in the first page had written: "To her who has solaced me in my sorrows; the maid whose angelic soul will constitute the glory and happiness of her husband." With what emotion Oswald read these lines! in which the opinion of the revered dead was so warmly expressed. He interpreted Lucy's silence on this subject into a delicacy which feared to extort his vows by an idea of duty. "It was she, then," he cried, "who softened the pangs I dealt him; and shall I desert her while her mother is dying, and she has no comforter but myself? Ah, Corinne! brilliant and admired as thou art, thou dost not, like Lucy, stand in need of one devoted friend!" Alas! she was no longer brilliant, no longer admired, wandering from town to town, without overtaking the being for whom she had lost all, and whom she could not forget. She was taken ill at an inn, half-way between London and Edinburgh, and, in spite of all her efforts, unable to continue her journey. She often thought, during her long nights of suffering, that if she died there, none but Thérésina would know the name to inscribe upon her tomb. What a changed fate for the woman who could not leave her house in Italy without being followed by a host of worshippers! Why should one single feeling thus despoil a whole life? After a week of intense agony, she resumed her route: so many painful fears mingled with the hope of seeing Oswald, that her expectation was but a sad anxiety. She designed to rest a few hours on her father's land, where his tomb had been erected, never having been there since; indeed, she only spent one month on this estate with Lord Edgarmond, the happiest portion of her stay in England. These recollections inspired her with a wish to revisit their scene. She knew not that her step-mother was there already. Some miles from the

house, perceiving that a carriage had been overturned, she stopped her own, and saw an old gentleman extricated from that which had broken down, much alarmed by the shock. Corinne hurried to his assistance, and offered him a share of her conveyance to the neighboring town: he accepted it gratefully, announcing himself as Mr. Dickson: she remembered that Nevil had often mentioned that name, and directed the conversation to the only subject which interested her in life. Mr. Dickson was the most willing gossip in the world; and ignorant who his companion was, believed her an English lady, with no private interest in the questions she asked, therefore told her all he knew most minutely: her attentions had conciliated him; and, in return, he trusted that his confidence might entertain her. He described how he had informed Lord Nevil of his parent's wishes, and repeated an extract from the late Lord's letter, often exclaiming: "*He* expressly forbade Oswald's marriage with this Italian—and they cannot brave his will without insulting his memory." Mr. Dickson added, that Oswald loved Lucy, was beloved by her; that her mother strongly desired their union, but that this foreign engagement prevented it. "How!" said Corinne, striving to disguise her agitation: "do you think *that*the sole barrier to his happiness with Miss Edgarmond?"—"I am sure of it," he answered, delighted with her inquiries. "It is but three days since Lord Nevil said to me: 'If I were free, I would marry Lucy.'"—"If he were free!" sighed Corinne. At that moment, the carriage stopped at the hotel to which she had promised Mr. Dickson her escort. He thanked her, and begged to know where he might see her again. She wrung his hand, without power to speak, and left him. Late as it was, she resolved that evening to visit the grave of her father.

The disorder of her mind rendered this sacred pilgrimage more necessary than ever.

CHAPTER IX.

Lady Edgarmond had been two days on her estate, where, that night, she had invited all her neighbors and tenants; and there was Oswald with Lucy, when Corinne arrived. She saw many carriages in the avenue; and alighted on the spot where her father had once treated her with such tenderness. What a contrast between those days, when she had thought herself so unfortunate, and her present situation! Thus are we punished for our fancied woes, by real calamities, which but too well teach us what true sorrow means. Corinne bade her servant ask the cause of all this light and bustle. A domestic replied: "Lady Edgarmond gives a ball to-night; which my master, Lord Nevil, has opened with the heiress." Corinne shuddered; but a painful curiosity prompted her to approach the place where so much misery threatened her: and motioning for her people to withdraw, she entered the open gates alone; the obscurity permitted her to walk the park unseen. It was ten o'clock. Oswald had been Lucy's partner in those English country dances, which they recommence five or six times in the evening—the same gentleman always dancing with the same lady, and the greatest gravity sometimes reigning over this party of pleasure. Lucy danced nobly, but without vivacity. The feeling which absorbed her added to her natural seriousness. As the whole country was inquisitive to know whether she loved Oswald, the unusually observant looks she met, prevented her

ever raising her eyes to his; and her embarrassment was such, that she could scarcely hear or see anything. This deeply affected him at first; but as it never varied, he soon began to weary a little; and compared this long range of men and women, and their monotonous music, with the animated airs and graceful dances of Italy. These reflections plunged him into a reverie; and Corinne might yet have tasted some moments of happiness could she have guessed his thoughts; but, like a stranger on her paternal soil, alone, though so near the man she had hoped to call her husband, she roved at hazard through the dark walks of grounds she once might have deemed her own. The earth seemed failing beneath her feet; and the fever of despair alone supplied her with strength: perhaps she might meet Oswald in the garden, she thought, though scarce knowing what she now desired.

The mansion was built on an eminence; a river ran at its base; there were many trees on one bank; the other was formed of rocks, covered with briers. Corinne drew near the water, whose murmur blended with the distant music: the gay lamps were reflected on its surface; while the pale light of the moon alone irradiated the wilds on the opposite side. She thought of Hamlet, in which a spectre wanders round the festal palace. One step, and this forsaken woman might have found eternal oblivion. "To-morrow," she cried, "when he strays here with a band of joyous friends, if his triumphant steps encountered the remains of her who was once so dear to him, would he not suffer something like what I bear now? would not his grief avenge me? yet, no, no! it is not vengeance I would seek in death, only repose." Silently she contemplated this stream, flowing in rapid regularity; fair nature! better ordered than the

human soul. She remembered the day on which Nevil had saved the drowning man. "How good he was then!" she wept forth, "and may be still: why blame him for my woes? he may not guess them—perhaps if he could see me——" She determined, in the midst of this fête, to demand a moment's interview with Lord Nevil; and walked towards the house, under the impulse of a newly adopted decision, which succeeds to long uncertainty; but as she approached it, such a tremor seized her, that she was obliged to sit down on a stone bench which faced the windows. The throng of rustics, assembled to look in upon the dancers, prevented her being seen. Oswald, at this moment, came to a balcony, to breathe the fresh evening air. Some roses that grew there reminded him of Corinne's favorite perfume, and he started. This long entertainment tired him, accustomed as he had been to her good taste and intelligence: and he felt that it was only in domestic life he could find pleasure with such a companion as Lucy. All that in the least degree belonged to the world of poetry and the fine arts bade him regret Corinne. While he was in this mood, a fellow-guest joined him, and his adorer once more heard him speak. What inexplicable sensations are awakened by the voice we love! What a confusion of softness and of dread! There are impressions of such force, that our poor feeble nature is terrified at itself, while we experience them.

"Don't you think this a charming ball?" asked the gentleman.—"Yes," returned Oswald, abstractedly, "yes, indeed!" and he sighed. That sigh, that melancholy tone, thrilled Corinne's heart with joy. She thought herself secure of regaining his, of again being understood by him, and rose, precipitately, to bid a servant call Lord Nevil; had she obeyed her

inclination, how different had been the destiny of both! But at that instant Lucy came to the window; and seeing through the darkness of the garden a female simply drest in white, her curiosity was kindled. She leaned forward, and gazed attentively, believing that she recognized the features of her sister, who, she thought, had been for seven years dead. The terror this sight caused her was so great that she fainted. Every one hastened to her aid; Corinne could find no servant to bear her message, and withdrew into deeper shade, to avoid remark.

Lucy dared not disclose what had alarmed her; but as her mother had, from infancy, instilled into her mind the strongest sense of devotion, she was persuaded that the image of her sister had appeared, gliding before her to their father's tomb, as if to reproach her for holding a fête in that scene ere she had fulfilled her sacred duty to his honored dust: as soon as she was secure from observation, she left the ball. Corinne, astonished at seeing her alone in the garden, imagined that Oswald would soon follow her, and that perhaps he had besought a private meeting to obtain her leave for naming his suit to her mother. This thought kept her motionless; but she saw that Lucy bent her steps towards a small grove, which she well knew must lead to Lord Edgarmond's grave; and, accusing herself of not having earlier borne thither her own regrets, followed her sister at some distance, unseen. She soon perceived the black sarcophagus raised over the remains of their parent. Filial tenderness overpowered her; she supported herself against a tree. Lucy also paused, and bent her head respectfully. Corinne was ready to discover herself, and, in their father's name, demand her rank and her betrothed; but the fair girl made a few hurried steps towards the tomb, and the victim's

courage failed.

There is such timidity, even in the most impetuous female heart, that a trifle will restrain as a trifle can excite it. Lucy knelt, removed the garland which had bound her hair, and raised her eyes to heaven with an angelic appeal: her face was softly illumined by the moonbeams, and Corinne's heart melted with the purest generosity. She contemplated the chaste and pious expression of that almost childish visage, and remembered how she had watched over it in infancy: her own youth was waning, while Lucy had before her a long futurity, that ought not to be troubled by any recollections which she might shame at confessing, either before the world or to her own conscience. "If I accost her," thought Corinne, "that soul, so peaceful now, will be disturbed, perhaps, forever. I have already borne so much, that I can suffer on; but the innocent Lucy would pass, in a moment from perfect calm to the most cruel agitation. Can I, who have lulled her to sleep on my bosom, hurl her into the ocean of grief?" Love still combated this disinterested elevation of mind, when Lucy said aloud: "Pray for me, oh my father!" Corinne sunk on her knees, and mutely besought a paternal benediction on them both, with tears more stainless than those of love. Lucy audibly continued: "Dear sister, intercede for me in heaven! Friend of my childhood, protect me now!" How Corinne's bosom yearned towards her, as Lucy, with added fervor, resumed; "Pardon me, father, a brief forgetfulness, caused by the sentiment yourself commanded! I am not, sure, to blame for loving him you chose to be my husband. Achieve your work! Inspire him to select me as the partner of his life! I shall never be happy, save with him; but my fluttering heart shall not betray its secret. Oh, my God! My father, console

your child! render her worthy the esteem of *Oswald*!"—"Yes," whispered Corinne, "kind father, grant her prayer, and give your other child a peaceful grave!" Thus solemnly concluding the greatest effort of which her soul was capable, she took from her breast the paper which contained Oswald's ring, and rapidly withdrew. She felt that in sending this, without letting him know where she was, she should break all their ties, and yield him to her sister. In the presence of that tomb, she had been more conscious than ever of the obstacles which separated them: her own father, as well as Oswald's, seemed to condemn their love. Lucy appeared deserving of him; and Corinne, at least for the moment, was proud to sacrifice herself, that he might live at peace with his country, his family, and his own heart. The music which she heard from the house sustained her firmness: she saw an old blind man, seated at the foot of a tree to listen, and begged he would present her letter to one of the servants; thus she escaped the risk of Oswald's discovering who had brought it; for no one could have seen her give the paper, without being assured that it contained the fate of her whole life. Her looks, her shaking hand, her hollow voice, bespoke one of those awful moments, when destiny overrules us, and we act but as the slaves of that fatality which so long pursued us. Corinne watched the old man, led by his faithful dog, give her letter to a servant of Nevil's, who, by chance, was carrying others into the house. All things conspired to banish her last hope: she made a few steps towards the gate, turning her head to mark the servant's entrance. When she no longer saw him—when she was on the high road, the lights and music lost, a deathlike damp rose to her brow, a chill ran through her frame; she tottered on, but

nature refused the task, and she fell senseless by the way.

BOOK XVIII.

THE SOJOURN AT FLORENCE.

CHAPTER I.

Count D'Erfeuil, having passed some time in Switzerland, wearied of nature 'mid the Alps, as he had tired of the arts at Rome, and suddenly resolved to visit England. He had heard that he should find much depth of thought there, and woke one morning to the conviction of that being the very thing he wished to meet. This third search after pleasure had succeeded no better than its predecessors, but his regard for Nevil spurred him on; and he assured himself, another morning, that friendship was the greatest bliss on earth; therefore he went to Scotland. Not seeing Oswald at his home, but learning that he was gone to Lady Edgarmond's, the Count leaped on his horse to follow; so much did he believe that he longed to meet him. As he rode quickly on, he saw a female extended motionless upon the road, and instantly dismounted to assist her. What was his horror at recognizing, through their mortal paleness, the features of Corinne! With the liveliest sympathy he helped his servant to arrange some branches as a litter, intending to convey her to Lady Edgarmond's, when Thérésina, who till now had remained in her

mistress's carriage, alarmed at her absence, came to the spot, and, certain that no one but Lord Nevil could have reduced her lady to this stats, begged that she might be borne to the neighboring town. The Count followed her; and for eight days, during which she suffered all the delirium of fever, he never left her. Thus it was the frivolous man who proved faithful, while the man of sentiment was breaking her heart. This contrast struck Corinne, when she recovered her senses, and she thanked d'Erfeuil with great feeling: he replied by striving to console her, more capable of noble actions than of serious conversation. Corinne found him useful, but could not make him her friend. She strove to recall her reason, and think over what had passed; but it was long ere she could remember all she had done, and from what motive. Then, perhaps, she thought her sacrifice too great; and hoped, at least, to bid Lord Nevil a last adieu, ere she left England; but the day after she regained her faculties chance threw a newspaper in her way, which contained the following paragraph:——

"Lady Edgarmond has lately learned that her step-daughter, who she believed had died in Italy, is still enjoying great literary celebrity at Rome, under the name of Corinne. Her ladyship, much to her own honor, acknowledges the fair poet, and is desirous of sharing with her the fortune left by Lord Edgarmond's brother, who died in India. The marriage contract was yesterday signed, between his Lordship's youngest daughter (the only child of his widow) and Lord Nevil, who, on Sunday next, leads Miss Lucy Edgarmond to the altar."

Unfortunately, Corinne lost not her consciousness after reading this announcement; a sudden change

took place within her; all the interests of life were lost; she felt like one condemned to death, who had not known, till now, when her sentence would be executed; and from this moment the resignation of despair was the only sensation of her breast. D'Erfeuil entered her room, and, finding her even paler than while in her swoon, anxiously asked her the news. She replied gravely: "I am no longer ill; to-morrow is the Sabbath: I will go to Plymouth, and embark for Italy."—"I shall accompany you," he ardently returned. "I've nothing to detain me here, and shall be charmed at travelling with you."—"How truly good you are!" she said: "we ought not to judge from appearances." Then, after checking herself, added: "I accept your guidance to the seaport, because I am not sure of my own; but, once on board, the ship will bear me on, no matter in what state I may be." She signed for him to leave her, and wept long before her God, begging him to support her beneath this sorrow. Nothing was left of the impetuous Corinne. The active powers of her life were all exhausted; and this annihilation, for which she could scarcely account, restored her composure. Grief had subdued her. Sooner or later all rebellious heads must bow to the same yoke.

"It is to-day!" sighed Corinne, as she woke: "it is to-day!" and entered her carriage with d'Erfeuil. He questioned her, but she could not reply. They passed a church: she asked his leave to enter for a moment; then, kneeling before the altar, prayed for Oswald and for Lucy: but when she would have risen she staggered, and could not take one step without the support of Thérésina and the Count, who had followed her. All present made way for her, with every demonstration of pity. "I look very miserable, then?" she said: "the young and lovely, at this hour,

are leaving such a scene in triumph." The Count scarcely understood these words. Kind as he was, and much as he loved Corinne, he soon wearied of her sadness, and strove to draw her from it, as if we had only to say we *will* forget all woes of life, and *do so*. Sometimes he cried: "I told you how it would be." Strange mode of comforting; but such is the satisfaction which vanity tastes at the expense of misfortune. Corinne fruitlessly strove to conceal her sufferings; for we are ashamed of strong affections in the presence of the light-minded, and bashful in all feelings that must be explained ere comprehended—those secrets of the heart that can only be consoled by those who guess them, Corinne was displeased with herself, as not sufficiently grateful for the Count's devotion to her service; but in his looks, his words, his accents, there were so much which wandered in search of amusement, that she was often on the point of forgetting his generous actions, as he did himself. It is doubtless very magnanimous to set small price on our own good deeds, but that indifference, so admirable in itself, may be carried to an extreme which approaches an unfeeling levity.

Corinne, during her delirium, had betrayed nearly all her secrets—the papers had since apprised d'Erfeuil of the rest. He often wished to talk of what he called her *affairs*, but that word alone sufficed to freeze her confidence; and she entreated him to spare her the pain of breathing Lord Nevil's name. In parting with the Count, Corinne knew not how to express herself; for she was at once glad to anticipate being alone, and grieved to lose a man who had behaved so well towards her. She strove to thank him, but he begged her so naturally *not to speak of it*, that she obeyed: charging him to inform Lady Edgarmond that she refused the legacy of her uncle; and to do so, as if

she had sent this message from Italy; for she did not wish her step-mother to know she had been in England. "Nor Nevil?" asked the Count. "You may tell him soon, yes, *very* soon; my friends in Rome will let you know when."—"Take care of your health, at least," he added: "don't you know that *I* am uneasy about you?"—"Really!" she exclaimed, smiling, "not without cause, I believe." He offered her his arm to the vessel: at that moment she turned towards England, the country she must never more behold, where dwelt the sole object of her love and grief, and her eyes filled with the first *sad* tears she had ever shed in d'Erfeuil's presence. "Lovely Corinne!" he said, "forget that ingrate! think of the friends so tenderly attached to you, and recollect your own advantages with pleasure." She withdrew her hand from him, and stepped back some paces; then blaming herself for this reproof, gently returned to bid him adieu: but he, having perceived nothing of what passed in her mind, got into the boat with her; recommended her earnestly to the captain's care; busied himself most endearingly on all the details that could render her passage agreeable: and, when rowed ashore, waved his handkerchief to the ship as long as he could be seen. Corinne returned his salute. Alas! was *this* the friend on whose attentions she ought to have been thrown? Light loves last long; they are not tied so tight that they can break. They are obscured or brought to light by circumstances, while deep affections fly, never to return; and in their places leave but cureless wounds.

CHAPTER II.

A favorable breeze bore Corinne to Leghorn in less than a month: she suffered from fever the whole time; and her debility was such that grief of mind was confused with the pain of illness; nothing seemed now distinct. She hesitated, on landing, whether she should proceed to Rome, or no; but though her best friends awaited her, she felt an insurmountable repugnance to living in the scenes where she had known Oswald. She thought of that door through which he came to her twice every day; and the prospect of being there without him was too dreary. She decided on going to Florence; and believing that her life could not long resist her sorrows, thus intended to detach herself by degrees from the world, by living alone, far from those who loved her, from the city that witnessed her success, whose inhabitants would strive to reanimate her mind, expect her to appear what she had been, while her discouraged heart found every effort odious. In crossing fertile Tuscany, approaching flower-breathed Florence, Corinne felt but an added sadness. How dreadful the despair which such skies fail to calm! One must feel either love or religion, in order to appreciate nature; and she had lost the first of earthly blessings, without having yet recovered the peace which piety alone can afford the unfortunate. Tuscany, a well-cultivated, smiling land, strikes not the imagination as do the environs of Rome and Naples. The primitive institutions of its early inhabitants have been so effaced, that there scarcely remains one vestige of them; but another species of historic beauty exists in their stead—cities that bear the impress of the Middle Ages. At Sienna, the public square wherein the people assembled, the balcony from which their magistrate harangued them, must catch the least reflecting eye, as proofs

that *there* once flourished a democratic government. It is a real pleasure to hear the Tuscans, even of the lowest classes, speak; their fanciful phrases give one an idea of that Athenian Greek, which sounded like a perpetual melody. It is a strange sensation to believe one's self amid a people all equally educated, all elegant; such is the illusion which, for a moment, the purity of their language creates.

The sight of Florence recalls its history, previous to the Medicean sway. The palaces of its best families are built like fortresses: without, are still seen the iron rings, to which the standards of each party were attached. All things seem to have been more arranged for the support of individual powers, than for their union in a common cause. The city appears formed for civil war. There are towers attached to the Hall of Justice, whence the approach of the enemy could be discerned. Such were the feuds between certain houses, that you find dwellings inconveniently constructed, because their lords would not let them extend to the ground on which that of some foe had been pulled down. Here the Pazzi conspired against the De Medici; there the Guelfs assassinated the Ghibellines. The marks of struggling rivalry are everywhere visible, though but in senseless stones. Nothing is now left for any pretenders but an inglorious state, not worth disputing. The life led in Florence has become singularly monotonous: its natives walk every afternoon on the banks of the Arno, and every evening ask one another if they *have* been there. Corinne settled at a little distance from the town; and let Prince Castel Forte know this, in the only letter she had strength to write: such was her horror of all habitual actions, that even the fatigue of giving the slightest order redoubled her distress. She sometimes

passed her day in complete inactivity, retired to her pillow, rose again, opened a book, without the power to comprehend a line of it. Oft did she remain whole hours at her window; then would walk rapidly in her garden, cull its flowers, and seek to deaden her senses in their perfume; but the consciousness of life pursued her, like an unrelenting host: she strove in vain to calm the devouring faculty of thought, which no longer presented her with varied images; but one lone idea, armed with a thousand stings, that pierced her heart.

CHAPTER III.

An hour passed in St. Peter's had been wont to compose her; and Corinne hoped to find the same effect from visiting the churches of fair Florence. She walked beneath the fine trees of the river's bank, in a lovely eve of June. Roses embalmed the air, and every face expressed the general felicity from which she felt herself excluded; yet she unenvyingly blessed her God for his kind care of man. "I am an exception to universal order," she said; "there is happiness for every one but me: this power of suffering, beneath which I die, is then peculiar to myself. My God! wherefore was I selected for such a doom? May I not say, like thy Divine Son, 'Father, let this cup be taken from me?'" The active air of the inhabitants astonished her: since she had lost all interest in life, she knew not why others seemed occupied; and, slowly pacing the large stoned pavement of Florence, she forgot where she had designed to go. At last, she found herself before the far-famed gate of brass, sculptured by Ghiberti, for the front of St. John's,

which stands beside the cathedral. For some time she examined this stupendous work; where, wrought in bronze, the divers nations, though of minute proportions, are distinctly marked by their varied physiognomies; all of which express some thought of their artist. "What patience!" cried Corinne; "what respect for posterity! yet how few scrutinize these doors, through which so many daily pass, in heedlessness, ignorance, or disdain! How difficult it is to escape oblivion! how vast the power of death!"

In this cathedral was Julian de Medicis assassinated. Not far thence, in the church of St. Lorenzo, is shown the marble chapel, enriched with precious stones, where rise the tombs of that high family, and Michael Angelo's statues of Julian and Lorenzo: the latter, meditating vengeance on the murder of his brother, deserves the honor of having been called "*la pensée de Michel Angelo*!" At the feet of these figures are Aurora and Night. The awaking of the one is admirable; still more so is the other's sleep. A poet chose it for his theme, and concluded by saying: "Sound as is her slumber, she lives: if you believe not, wake her, she will speak." Angelo, who cultivated letters (without which imagination of all kinds must soon decay) replied:——

> "Grato m'è il sono, e più l'esser di sasso.
> Mentre che il danno e la vergogna dura,
> Non veder, non sentir m'è gran ventura,
> Perô non mi destar, deh parla basso!"

"It is well for me to sleep, still better to be stone; while shame and injustice last: not to see, not to hear, is a great blessing; therefore disturb me not! speak low!"

This great man was the only comparatively modern sculptor who neither gave the human figure the

beauty of the antique nor the affected air of our own day. You see the grave energy of the Middle Ages—its perseverance, its passions, but no ideal beauty. He was the genius of his own school; and imitated no one, not even the ancients. This tomb is in the church of Santa Croce. At his desire, it faces a window whence may be seen the dome built by Filippo Brunelleschi: as if his ashes would stir, even beneath the marble, at the sight of a cupola copied from that of St. Peter's. Santa Croce contains some of the most illustrious dead in Europe. Galileo, persecuted by man, for having discovered the secrets of the sky—Machiavel, who revealed the arts of crime rather as an observer than an actor; yet whose lessons are more available to the oppressors than, the oppressed—Aretino, who consecrated his days to mirth, and found nothing serious in life except its end—Boccaccio, whose laughing fancy resisted the united scourges of civil war and plague—a picture in honor of Dante, showing that the Florentines, who permitted him to perish in exile, were not the less vain of his glory,[1] with many other worthy names, and some celebrated in their own day, but echoing less forcibly from age to age, so that their sound is now almost unheard.[2] This church, adorned with noble recollections, rekindled the enthusiasm of Corinne, which the living had repressed. The silent presence of the great revived, for a moment, that emulation which once she felt for fame. She stepped more steadfastly, and the high thoughts of other days arose within her breast. Some young priests came slowly down the aisle, chanting in subdued tones: she asked the meaning of this ceremony. "We are praying for our dead," said one of them. "Right," thought Corinne; "your dead! well may you boast them; they are the only noble relics left ye. Ah! why

then, Oswald, have you stifled all the gifts Heaven granted me, with which I ought to excite the sympathy of kindred minds? O God!" she added, sinking on her knees, "it is not in vanity I dare entreat thee to give me back my talents: doubtless the lowly saints who lived and died for thee alone are greatest in thy sight; but there are different careers for mortals: genius, which illustrates our noblest virtues, devotes itself to generous humanity and truth, may trust to be received in some outer heaven." She cast her eyes to earth, and, on the stone where she had knelt, read this inscription:——

> "Alone I rose, alone I sank, I am alone e'en here."

"Ah!" cried Corinne, "that is mine answer. What should embolden me to toil? what pride can I ever feel? who would participate in my success, or interest himself in my defeats? Oh, I should need *his* look for my reward." Another epitaph fixed her attention, that of a youth, who says:—

> "Pity me not, if you can guess how many pangs the grave hath spared me."

How did those words wean her from life! amid the tumult of a city, this church opened to teach mankind the best of secrets, if they would learn: but no; they passed it by, and the miraculous forgetfulness of death kept all the world alive.

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[1] After the death of Dante, the Florentines, ashamed of having permitted him to perish far from his home, sent a deputation to the pope for his remains, interred at Ravenna. The pope

refused; rightly deeming that the land which had sheltered him in exile must have become his country, and deserved not to be thus robbed of the glory that shone around his tomb.

[2] Alfieri said, that it was in the church of Santa Croce he first felt a love for fame. The epitaph he composed for himself and the Countess d'Albani is most simply and affectingly expressive of long and perfect friendship.

CHAPTER IV.

The spring of feeling which had consoled Corinne for a few moments, led her next morning to the Gallery: she hoped to recover her taste, and draw some pleasure from her former pursuits. Even the fine arts are republican in Florence. Pictures and statues are shown at all hours, with the greatest ease. Well-informed men, paid by the government, like public functionaries, explain all these *chefs-d'œuvre*. This lingering respect for talent has ever pervaded Italy; particularly Florence, where the Medicii extorted pardon for their power over human actions, by the free scope they left for human minds. The common people love the arts, and blend this taste with their devotion, which is more regular in Tuscany than in any other Italian state; but they frequently confound mythologic figures with Scripture history. One of the guides used to show a Minerva as Judith, and an Apollo as David; adding, when he explained a *bas-relief*, which represented the fall of Troy, that "Cassandra was a good Christian." Many days may be

passed in the gallery ere half its beauties are known. Corinne went from one to the other, mortified at her own indifference and abstraction. The calm dignity which shines through the deep grief of Niobe, however, recalled her attention. In such a case, the countenance of a living mother would doubtless be more agitated; but the ideal arts preserve beauty even in despair; and what affects us most in works of genius, is not grief's self, but the soul's power o'er grief. Not far from this is a head of the dying Alexander. These two countenances afford rich material for thought. The conqueror looks astonished and indignant at not having achieved a victory even over nature. The anguish of maternal love is depicted on all the traits of Niobe: she presses her daughter to her heart with the most touching eagerness; her fine face bearing the stamp of that fatality which left the ancients no resource, even in religion. Niobe lifts her eyes to heaven, but without hope; for the gods themselves are her enemies.

On her return home, Corinne strove to reflect on what she had seen, and retrace her impressions, as she had formerly done; but her mental distraction was uncontrollable. How far was she now from the power of improvisation! In vain she sought for words, or wrote unmeaning ones, that dismayed her on perusal, as would the ravings of delirium. Incapable of turning her thoughts from her own situation, she then strove to describe it; but no longer could she command those universal sentiments that find echoes in all hearts. Hers were now but long unvaried wailings, like the cry of the night bird; her expressions were too impetuous, too unveiled—they were those of misery, not of talent. To write well, we require to feel truly, but not heart-breakingly. The best melancholy poetry is that inspired by a kind of

rapture, which still tells of mental strength and enjoyment. Real grief is a foe to intellectual fertility: it produces a gloomy agitation, that incessantly returns to the same point, like the knight who, pursued by an evil genius, sought a thousand roads for escape, yet always found himself at the spot from whence he started.

The state of Corinne's health completed the confusion of her mind. The following are a few of the reflections she wrote, while making a fruitless effort to become capable of a connected work.

CHAPTER V.

FRAGMENTS OF CORINNE'S THOUGHTS.

My genius lives no longer: I regret
Its death: I own I should have loved that yet
My lays had waked *his* sympathy; my name
Might still have reach'd him, heralded by fame.

I err'd by hoping that in his own land
The thoughts, the feelings—that our fate united—
The influence of habit could withstand—
Amid such scenes love's flower must soon be blighted.

There is so much to say 'gainst maid like me!
How futile must the only answer be!

"Such was her heart—her mind;" a poor reply
For hosts who know not what I was, nor why.

Yet are they wrong to fear superior mind,
The more it towers, more *morally* refined:
The more we know, the better we forgive;
Whoe'er feels deeply, feels for all who live.

How can two beings who confided all,
Whose converse was the spirit's griefs, its dangers,
And immortality, bear this swift fall,
Thus to each other become once more strangers?

What a mysterious sentiment is love!
Nothing, if not all other ties above—
Vying in faith with all that martyrs feel—
Or—colder than the simplest friendship's zeal.

This most involuntary sense on earth,
Doth heaven or mortal passion give it birth?
What storms it raises deep within the breast!
Must we obey, or combat such wild guest?

Talent should be a refuge; as when one[1]
Imprison'd to a cloister, art's true son,
Bequeath'd its walls such traces of his doom,
That genius glorified monastic gloom!

But he, though captive, suffer'd from without;
His bosom was not torn by dread or doubt;
When grief is there, all efforts lose their force,
The spring of comfort's poison'd from its source.

Sometimes I view myself as one apart,
Impartially, and pity my own heart;
Was I not mental, kind to others' pain,
Generous, and frank? Then why all this in vain?
Is the world really so vile, that charms
Like these but rob us of our needful arms?

'Tis pitiful! Spite all my youth hath shown,
Despite my glory, I shall die unknown;
Nor leave one proof of what I might have been.
Had I learnt happiness, or could defy
This all-devouring fever—men had seen
Me contemplate them from a station high.
Tracking the hidden links between yon heaven
And human nature; but the clue is riven.
How, how think freely, while each painful breath
But bids me feel the woe that weighs me down to death?

Oh! why would he forbear to render blest
A heart whose secret he alone possess'd?
To him—him only spoke my inmost soul!
'Tis easy to leave those chance may

control,
The common herd—but she who must admire,
Yet judge ere fancy kindles love's chaste fire,
Expansive as it is, to soul like hers,
There's but one object in the universe!

I learnt life from the poets; 'tis not thus;
Vainly they strive to change the truth, for us
Who live to wake from their soft dreams, and see
The barrenness of life's reality!

Remembering what I was but chafes my pride.
Why tell me I could charm, if not for love?
Why inspire confidence, to make me prove
But the more fearful anguish when it died?
Will he, in any other, meet more mind
Than was my own? a heart more true and kind?
No! but—congenial with heartlessness—
He will be *more* content in finding *less*.

In presence of the sun, or starry spheres,
To deserve love we need but to desire—
For love ennobles all that it endears;
Conscious of mutual worth, we look no higher.
But ah, society! where each must owe
His fate but to factitious joy or woe—
Where what is said of him becomes the test—

How soon it hardens e'en the trifler's breast.

Could men once meet, free from this false control,
How pure an air were breathed into the soul!
How would the mind, refresh'd by feelings true,
Teem with ideas natural and new!
E'en Nature's cruel; this praised face
Is fading: what avails it now
That still I pour affection's vow,
Without one look my prayer to grace?
These tear-dimm'd eyes no more express,
As once they might, my tenderness.

Within my bosom is a pain
No language ever can explain—
I have no strength for task like this;
Love, only love, could sound the abyss.

How happy men! in honor's strife
They burst the chains of hated life.
We hope no solace from the throng;
Our torture is to bear,
Stirless and mute, a lone life long,
The presence of Despair.
Sometimes, when listing music's tone,
It tells of powers so late mine own,
Song, dance, and poesie—I start,
As I could fly from this sad heart,
To joy again; a sudden chill
Reminds me that the world would say,
"Back, lingering ghost! it fits thee ill
To brave the living, and the day!"

I wish I now could find a spell
'Gainst misery in the crowd: 'twas well
To mix there once, lest solitude
Should bear my thoughts too far through fate,
My mind grew flexible, imbued
With gay impressions; 'tis too late;
Features and feelings fix for aye:
Smiles, fancies, graces! where are they?

Ah! if't were in a moment o'er,
Fain would I taste of hope once more!
But all is done: life can but be
A burning desert now to me;
The drop of water, like the river,
Sullied with bitterness forever,
A single day's enjoyment is
Impossible, as years of bliss.

Guilty towards me as I must deem
My love—compared with other men
What mindless things of art they seem!
How does he rise an angel then!—
E'en though his sword of flame consume
My life, and devastate my doom;
Heaven lends the one beloved his power
Thus to avenge each misspent hour.

'Tis not first love that must endure;
It springs but from the dreams of youth;
But if, with intellect mature,
We meet the mind long sought in vain,
Fancy is then subdued by truth,
And we have *reason* to complain.

"What maniacs!" the many cry,
"Are those for love who live or die!
As if, when such frail boon is reft,
A thousand blessings were not left!"

Enthusiasm, though the seed
Of every high heroic deed,
Each pious sacrifice—its lot
Is scorn, from those who feel it not.

All then is folly, if they will,
Save their own selfish care
Of mortal life; this nobler thrill
Is madness everywhere.

Alas! it is my worst distress
That *he* alone my thoughts could guess;
Too late and vainly may he find
That I alone could read *his* mind.

Mine own should thus be understood;
In friendship's varying degrees
Easy, yet difficult to please:
With cordial hours for all the good,
But with affection deep and true,
Which but for *one*, for *him* I knew.

Feeling and fancy, wit and reason,
Where now such union can I find,
Seek the world through—save his—whose treason
'Gainst love hath slain me? Oswald's mind
Blends all these charms; unless I dream'd
He was the wonder he but seem'd.
How, then, to others should I speak?
In whom confide? what subjects seek?

What end, aim, interest remains?
The sweetest joys, the bitterest pains,
Already known, what should I fear?
Or what expect? before me cast
A future changeless, wan, and drear,
As but the spectre of my past!

Why, why is happiness so brief?
Life's weeds so strong, its flowers so frail?
Is nature's natural order grief?
Unwonted pain soon finds relief
When its strange throes our frames assail
—
Joy to the soul's less usual: there
The habitual state is this despair.
How mutable the world appears
Where nothing lasts, but pain and tears![2]

Another life! another life
That is my hope! but still such force
Hath this we bear, that we demand
In heaven the same rebellious band
Of passions that *here* caused our strife.
The northern zealots paint the shade
Still hunting, with his hound and horse,
The phantom stag, through cloudy glade;
Yet dare we call such shapes unreal?
Naught here is sure save that Distress—
Whose power all suffer who can feel—
Keeps *her* unpitying promises!

I dream of immortality!
No more of that which man can give;
Once in the future did I live,
The present seem'd too old for me.[3]
All I now ask of Him on high,

Is, that my heart may never die!
Father! the offering and the shrine
A mortal spurns; with grace divine,
Deign to receive—'tis thine!—'tis thine!
I know my days will be but few;
That thought restores a sense of rest:
'Tis sweet to feel, as now I do,
Death draw Grief's barb from out my breast.

'Tis Superstition's sad retreat,
More than the home of pious trust;
Devotion to the blest is sweet.—
What gratitude to the All Just
Ought Oswald's wife to feel! O God, she must.

And yet misfortune oft improves,
Corrects us, teaches us to weigh
Our errors with our sufferings: they
Are wedded: we repent the loves
Of earth, when salutary time
And solitude inspires love more sublime.

'Tis this I need, ere yet I can fulfil
A tranquil voyage to life more tranquil still:—
What innocence is in the thoughts of those
About to leave this life of passion's woes!
The secret which not genius' self can share,
The enigma, may it be reveal'd to prayer?

May not some simple thought, by reverie
Full oft approach'd, disclose the mystery?

Vast as the efforts which the soul may make
They weary her in vain; she cannot take
This latest step; life must be still unknown
Till its last hour on earth be well-nigh flown I
'Tis time mine should repose; and who will sigh—
'Tis still, at last, the heart that beat so high!

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[1] Domenichino.

[2] "Ahi! null' altro che pianto al mondo dura."—PETRARCH.

[3] That idea is Dante's.

CHAPTER VI.

Prince Castel Forte quitted Rome, to settle near Corinne. She felt most grateful for this proof of friendship, and yet ashamed that she could not requite it, even by such conversation as of yore: now she was silent and abstracted; her failing health robbed her of all the strength required, even for a momentary triumph over her absorbing griefs. That interest, which the heart's courtesy inspires, she could still at times evince; but her desire to please was lost forever. Unhappy love freezes all our affections: our own souls grow inexplicable to us. More than we gained while we were happy, we lose by the reverse. That added life which made us enjoy nature, lent an enchantment to our intercourse with society; but the heart's vast hope once lost, existence

is impoverished, and all spontaneous impulses are paralyzed. Therefore, a thousand duties command women, and men still more, to respect and fear the passion they awaken, since it may devastate the mind as well as the heart.

Sometimes Castel Forte might speak for several minutes to Corinne without a reply, because she neither understood nor even heard him. When she did, her answers had none of that glowing animation once so remarkable; they merely dragged on the dialogue for a few seconds, and then she relapsed into silence. Sometimes, as she had done at Naples, she would smile in pity over her own failures. The amiable prince humored her on all her favorite topics. She would thank him, by pressing his hand, and once, after a walk on the banks of the Arno, began to jest with her accustomed grace: he gazed, and listened in glad surprise; but she abruptly broke off, and rushed from the room in tears. On returning, she said, gently: "Pardon me, my generous friend; I would fain make myself agreeable; it will not be: bear with me as I am." What most distressed him, was the shock her constitution had received: no immediate danger threatened her, yet it was impossible that she could live long, unless she regained some vigor. If she endeavored to speak on aught that concerned the soul, her wan tremor was painful to behold; and he strove to divert her from this strain. He ventured to talk of Oswald, and found that she took a perverse pleasure in the subject; but it left her so shaken, that he was obliged to interdict it. Castel Forte was a susceptible being: but not even the most magnanimous of men knows how to console the woman he has loved under the pangs thus inflicted by another. Some little self-love on his side, must aid her timidity, in preventing perfect

confidence. Besides, what would it avail? It can only be of service to those wounds which would cure themselves without it.

At this time the prince received a letter from Lord Nevil, replete with professions, which would have deeply affected Corinne: he mused for hours together on the propriety of showing it to her; but anticipating the violence of its effects on a creature so feeble, he forbore. Even while he was thus deliberating, another letter reached him, announcing his Lordship's departure for America. Castel Forte then decided on saying nothing to Corinne. Perhaps he erred: one of her greatest griefs was Nevil's silence; she scarce dared own it to herself: but though forever separated from him, one recollection, one regret, would have been very precious to her: as it was, he gave her, she thought, no opportunity of hearing his name, left her no excuse for breathing it. The sorrow, of which no one speaks to us, which gains no change from time, cuts deeper than reiterated blows; the good prince followed the usual maxim, which bids us do our utmost towards teaching a mourner to forget; but there is no oblivion for the imaginative: it were better to keep alive their memories, weary them of their tears, exhaust their sighs, and force them back upon themselves, that they may reconcentrate their own powers.

BOOK XIX.

OSWALD'S RETURN TO ITALY.

CHAPTER I.

Let us now return to the events which occurred in Scotland, after the sad fête at which Corinne made her self-sacrifice. Lord Nevil's servant carried his letters to the ball-room. Oswald retired to read them. He opened several which his agent had sent from London, little guessing that among them was one which would decide his fate; but when he beheld the writing of Corinne, and saw the ring, the words —"You are free!"—he felt at once the most cruel grief and the most furious irritation. He had not heard from her for two months, and now her silence was broken by this laconic decision. He remembered what Lady Edgarmond had said of her instability, and entered into all the step-dame's feeling against her; for he still loved enough to be unjust; forgetting how long he had renounced the idea of marrying her, how much Lucy had pleased him, he looked on himself as the blameless victim of an inconstant woman; perplexity and despair beset him; but over them both towered his proud soul, prompting him to rise superior to his wronger. This boasted pride rarely exists unless self-love predominates over affection. Had Nevil now valued Corinne as in their days at Rome and Naples, not all his "wrongs supposed" could have torn her from his heart.

Lady Edgarmond detected his distress. The fatal malady beneath which she labored increased her ardent interest in her daughter. She knew the poor child's heart, and feared that she had compromised her happiness forever; therefore, she seldom lost sight of Nevil, but read his secrets with that discernment which is deemed peculiar to our sex, but which belongs solely to the continual observance which a real interest teaches us. On the pretext of

transferring Corinne's inheritance, she besought Lord Nevil's company next morning, and shortly guessed that he was much dissatisfied; she flattered his resentment by the prospect of a noble vengeance, offering to recognize her husband's daughter. This sudden change amazed him; yet though its condition was unexplained, he comprehended it; and, in one of those moments in which we act more quickly than we can think, demanded Lucy's hand. Her mother, scarcely able to restrain her joy, so as not to say *yes* too hastily, consented; and he left her presence, bound by an engagement, which, when he made it, he had not dreamed of undertaking. While Lady Edgarmond prepared Lucy to receive him, he paced the garden in violent agitation, telling himself that she had merely pleased him, because he knew little of her, and that it was madness to found the happiness of his life on the charm of a mystery that must inevitably be dissipated. He then retraced his letters to Corinne, too plainly showing his internal struggles. "She's right!" he sighed: "I have not the courage fit to make her blest; but yet it should have cost her more to lose me—that cold brief line—yet who knows but her tears might have fallen on it!" His own burst forth in spite of him. These reveries hurried him on unconsciously so far, that he was long sought in vain by the servant, sent to tell him that Lady Edgarmond desired his return. Astonished at his own lack of eagerness, he obeyed. On re-entering the drawing-room, he found Lucy kneeling, her head reclined on the bosom of her parent, with a most touching grace. As she heard his footsteps, she raised her flowing eyes, and, extending her hand to him, said simply: "My Lord, I know you will not separate me from my mother." This innocent manner of announcing her consent much interested Oswald,

who, sinking on his knees, besought Lady Edgarmond's permission to imprint on that blushing forehead the first kiss which had ever awakened more than childlike emotions in the breast whose beauty less enchanted him than did its celestial modesty. The days which preceded that chosen for their marriage were spent in the needful arrangements. Lucy spoke more than usual; but all she said was so nobly natural, that Oswald loved and approved her every word, and yet he felt a void beside her. Their conversation consisted but of questions and answers; she neither started nor prolonged any subject: all went well: but without that exhaustless animation with which it is so difficult for those who have once enjoyed it to dispense. Lord Nevil thought of Corinne; but, as he no longer heard her named, hoped that her image would at last become merely an object of his vague regret. When Lucy learned from her mother that her sister still lived in Italy, she much wished to talk of her with Oswald, but Lady Edgarmond forbade; and the girl, habitually submissive, asked not the reason of this prohibition. On the morning of his marriage, the hapless Corinne haunted Nevil fearfully; but be addressed his father's spirit, confessing that it was to win *his* heavenly benediction, his son accomplished thus his will on earth. Reassured by those meditations, he sought his bride, reproaching himself for having allowed his thoughts to wander from her. A descending angel could not have chosen a face more fit than hers to give mortality a dream of heavenly virtue. At the altar, Lady Edgarmond was even more agitated than her daughter; for all-important steps alarm us the more, the greater our experience. Lucy was all hope; childhood still mingled with her youth, and blended joy with love.

In leaving the church she leaned timidly on Oswald's arm, as if to assure herself of his protection: he looked on her tenderly, feeling, at the bottom of his heart, a foe who menaced her repose, and from whom he had promised to defend her. Lady Edgarmond, on their return, said to her son-in-law: "My mind is easy. I have confided to you the happiness of my daughter; and have so short a time to live, that it is a comfort for me to think my place will be so well supplied." Lord Nevil was much affected by these words, and anxiously mused on the duties they imposed. A few days elapsed: Lucy had begun to meet her husband's eye with confidence, and make her mind known to him, when unlucky incidents disturbed the union commenced under these favorable auspices.

CHAPTER II.

Mr. Dickson paid his respects to the young couple, apologizing for not having been present at their marriage. He had been ill, he said, from the effects of a fall, though kindly assisted by the most charming woman in the world. Oswald, at this moment, was playing battledore and shuttlecock with Lucy, who was very graceful at this exercise. Her bridegroom gazed on her, and listened not to Mr. Dickson, who, at last, called to him from the other end of the room. "My Lord, the fair unknown, who came to my aid, had certainly heard much about you, for she asked me many questions concerning your fate."—"Whom do you mean?" said Nevil, continuing his game.—"A lovely creature, my Lord, although she looked changed by suffering, and could not speak of you

without emotion."[1] These words attracted Oswald's attention; but Lucy, perfectly unconcerned, joined her mother, who had just sent for her. Lord Nevil now asked Mr. Dickson what lady it was who had thus spoken of him. "I know not," he replied: "her accent proved her English, though I have rarely found so obliging and easy a person among our countrywomen. She took as much care of a poor old man like me as if she had been my own child: while I was beside her, I did not feel my bruises; but, my dear Oswald, have you been faithless here as well as in Italy? My beauteous benefactress trembled and turned pale at naming you."—"Just heaven!" exclaimed Nevil, "you said an Englishwoman?"—"Oh yes: you know foreigners never pronounce our language without a certain intonation."—"And her face?"—"The most expressive I ever saw, though fearfully pale and thin." This description suited not the bright Corinne; yet might she not have suffered much, if in England, and unable to find the being she sought? This dread fell suddenly on Oswald, who continued his questions with extreme uneasiness. Mr. Dickson replied that the lady conversed with an elegance which he had never before met, that the gentlest kindness spoke from her sad and languid eyes. "Did you notice their color?" asked Oswald. —"Magnificently dark!" The catechist trembled. "From time to time," continued Mr. Dickson, "she interrogated, or answered, me, and what she *did* say was delightful." He would have proceeded, but Lady Nevil, with her mother, rejoined them; and Oswald hastily retired, hoping soon again to find Mr. Dickson alone. Struck by his sadness, Lady Edgarmond sent Lucy away, that she might inquire its cause: her guest simply repeated what had passed. Terrified at anticipating the despair of Oswald, if he were

assured that Corinne had followed him to Scotland; foreseeing, too, that he would resume this topic, she instructed Mr. Dickson as to what she wished said to her son-in-law. Thus, the old gentleman only increased the anxiety it was too late to remove. Oswald now asked his servant if all the letters sent him within the last three weeks had come by post.[2] The man "believed they had," and was leaving the room; but, turning back, added, "I remember that, on the ball night, a blind man gave me one for your Lordship. I supposed it a petition for charity."—"I received none such: could you find this man?"—"Yes, my Lord, directly; he lives in the village."—"Go, bring him to me!" said Nevil; and, unable to wait patiently, walked out to meet him at the end of the avenue. "So, my friend," he said, "you brought a letter here for me, on the evening of the ball: who gave it to you?"—"My Lord, ye see I'm blind, how wad I ken?"—"Do you think it was a female?"—"Ech fine that, my Lord! for I hard weel eneuch that she was vera soft voiced, though I jaloused the while that she was greeting."—"And what did she say to you?"—"Oh, sir, she said, 'Gude auld man, gide this to Oswald's servant,' and there stopped, but syne she added, 'I mean Lord Nevil's.'"—"Ah, Corinne!" exclaimed Oswald, and grew so faint that he was forced to support himself on the poor creature's arm, who continued; "I was sitting under a tree just, and wished to do the leddy's bidding diract, but could scarce raise mysel, being auld the noo: weel, after giein me mair siller than I'd had for lang, she was that free she lent me her hand, puir thing! it trembled just as your Lordship's does this minute."—"Enough!" sighed Nevil. "Here, my good friend, as she gave you money, let me do so too; go, and pray for us both!" He withdrew.

From this moment a terrible agitation preyed on his mind: he made a thousand useless inquiries, unable to conceive the possibility of Corinne's having been in Scotland without seeking him. He formed various conjectures as to her motives; and, in spite of all his endeavors to conceal it, this affliction was evident to Lady Edgarmond, nay, even to Lucy. All was constraint and silence. At this time Oswald wrote first to Castel Forte. Had Corinne read that letter, it would much have softened her resentment.

Count d'Erfeuil joined the Nevils ere the Prince's reply arrived. He said no more of Corinne than was necessary, yet felt vexed at their not perceiving that he *had* an important secret in his power, though too discreet to betray it. His insinuations at first took no effect upon Oswald; but, when he detected that they referred to Corinne, he was all curiosity. The Count having brought him to this, defended his own trust pretty bravely; at last, however, his friend drew forth the whole truth. It was a pleasure for d'Erfeuil to relate how grateful Corinne had felt, and in what a wretched state he had found her; he ran on, without observing how he agonized Lord Nevil; his only object was that of being the hero of his own story; when he had ceased, he was much afflicted at the mischief he had done. Oswald had commanded himself till then, but suddenly became distracted with regret; accused himself as the most barbarous and ungrateful of men; raved of Corinne's devoted tenderness: her generosity at the very moment when she believed him most culpable. He contrasted this with the heartless fickleness by which he had requited her; incessantly repeating that no one ever loved him as she did; and that he should in some way be ultimately punished for his cruelty. He would have set forth to see her, if only for a day, an hour;

but Rome and Florence were already occupied by the French: his regiment was about to embark; he could not forfeit his own honor, nor break the heart of his wife: indeed, no faults he might now commit could repair the past; they would but add to the misery he *had* occasioned. The only hope that calmed him was derived from the dangers he was about to brave. In this mood he wrote again to Castel Forte, whose replies represented Corinne as sad, but resigned; his pride in her softened rather than exaggerated the truth. Oswald believed that he ought not to torture her by his regrets, after having so wronged her by his love—and left Britain with a sense of remorse which nearly rendered life insupportable.

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[1] Even had not Mr. Dickson been aware of Oswald's circumstances, such a speech before his bride would have been bad enough. It is unpardonable, as he knew so much.—TR.

[2] I wonder he had not observed that Corinne's bore no post-mark.—TR.

CHAPTER III.

Lucy was afflicted by his departure; yet his recent gloom had so increased her natural timidity, that she had never found courage to confide in him her hopes of becoming a mother; but left it for Lady Edgarmond to send these tidings after him. Nevil, unable to guess what passed in his wife's heart, had thought her farewell cold; compared her silent submission with the eloquence of Corinne, and hesitated not to believe that Lucy loved him but

feebly; yet, during his absence, scarcely could even the birth of their daughter divert her mind from his perils. Another grief was added to all this. D'Erfeuil spent a year in Scotland, strongly persuaded that he had not revealed the secret of Corinne's sojourn there; but he said so much that implied it, and found such difficulty, when conversation flagged, in avoiding the theme most interesting to Lady Nevil, that she at last learned the whole truth. Innocent as she was, it required even less art than she possessed to draw d'Erfeuil out upon a favorite subject. Lady Edgarmond was too ill to be present at these conversations; but when she questioned her daughter on the melancholy she detected, Lucy told all. Her mother spoke very severely on Corinne's pursuit of Oswald. Lucy was alternately jealous of her sister, and indignant against her husband, for deserting one to whom he had been so dear. She could not help trembling for her own peace, with a man who had thus wrecked that of another. She had ever cherished a grateful recollection of her early instructress, which now blended with sympathy: far from feeling flattered by Oswald's sacrifice, she was tormented by the idea that he had chosen her merely because her position in the world was more advantageous than that of Corinne. She remembered his hesitation before marriage, his sadness so soon after, and everything confirmed the cruel belief that her husband loved her not. Lady Edgarmond might have been of great service to her daughter, had she striven to calm her; but she too intolerantly anathematized all sentiments that deviated from the line of duty; nor dreamed of tenderly leading a wanderer back, thinking that the only way to awake conscience was by just resentment. She was mortified that so lovely a woman should be so ill appreciated; and

aggravated Lucy's fears, in order to excite her pride. Lady Nevil, more gentle and enlightened than her mother, could not rigorously follow such advice; yet her letters to Oswald were always far colder than her heart. Meanwhile he was distinguishing himself nobly, exposing his life, not merely in honorable enthusiasm, but in a positive love of peril. He appeared most gay when most actively employed, and would blush with pleasure when the tumult of battle commenced. At such moments a weight seemed lifted from his heart, and he could breathe with ease. The popularity he enjoyed among his fellow-soldiers animated the existence it could not render happy, and almost blinded him both to the past and the future. He grew accustomed to the lukewarm correspondence of his wife, whom he did not suppose offended with him. When he remembered her, it was as a being worthy of his protection, and whose mind he ought to spare from all deeply serious thoughts. But in those splendid tropic nights, that give so grand an idea of nature and its Author, the image of Corinne was often with him; yet, as both war and climate menaced his life each hour, he excused his lingering memory. At the approach of eternity, we forgive and hope to be forgiven. He thought but of the tears his death would cause her, not upon those his errors had extorted. It was natural he should think most of her; they had so often talked of immortality, and sounded every depth of solemn feeling: he fancied that he still conversed with her, while occupied by the great thoughts the spectacles of war invariably suggest. It was to Corinne he spoke in solitude, although he knew that she must sadly blame him. Despite absence, distance, time, and every change, they seemed to understand each other still.

At last his regiment was ordered home. The monotony of shipboard pleased him less than had the stir of arms. External excitement supplied some of the imaginative joys he owed to his intercourse with Corinne. He had not yet attempted to live calmly without her. The proofs of devotion his soldiers gave him somewhat beguiled the voyage; but even that interest failed on their landing in England.

CHAPTER IV.

Nevil had now to renew his acquaintance with his own family, after four years' separation. He arrived at Lady Edgarmond's castle in Northumberland. Lucy presented her child with as much diffidence as if she had deemed herself guilty. Her imagination had been so occupied by her sister, during the period of her maternal expectations, that little Juliet displayed the dark eyes and hair of Corinne. Her father, in wild agitation, pressed her to his heart; and from that instant, Lucy could not take unqualified delight in his affection for his daughter. The young wife was now nearly twenty. Her beauty had attained a dignity which inspired Nevil with respect. Lady Edgarmond was too infirm to leave her bed; yet, though this tried her temper, she received her son-in-law with satisfaction; having feared that she should die in his absence, and leave her daughter alone upon the world. Oswald, so long accustomed to a military career, found it very difficult to remain nearly all day in the chamber of an invalid, who received no one but himself and wife. Lucy dearly loved her lord; but, believing her affection unprized, concealed what she knew of his passion for Corinne,

and became more silent than ever. Mild as she was, her mother had so influenced her, that when Oswald hinted at the added charm she would gain by a little animation, she received this but as a proof that he still preferred her sister, and was too hurt to profit by it: he could not speak of the fine arts without occasioning her a sadness that repressed his enthusiasm. Had she been better taught, she would have treasured up his lightest word, that she might study how to please him. Lady Edgarmond evinced a growing distaste for all deviations from her habitual routine: her irritated nerves shrunk from every sound. She would have reduced life to a state of stagnation, as if the less to regret its loss: but, as few like to confess their personal motives for certain opinions, she supported hers on the general principles of exaggerated morality; and disenchanted life, by making sins of its least amusements—by opposing some duty to every employment which would have made to-day differ from yesterday or to-morrow. Lucy, duteous as she was, had so much flexibility of mind that she would have joined her husband in gently reasoning with this exacting austerity, had she not been persuaded that it was adopted merely to discountenance Oswald's Italian predilections. "You must struggle most perseveringly," would her mother say, "against any return of that dangerous infatuation." Lord Nevil had a great reverence for duty; but he understood it in a wider sense than that of Lady Edgarmond: tracing it to its source, he found that it might perfectly accord with natural inclination, instead of requiring perpetual combats and sacrifices. Virtue, he thought, far from rendering life a torture, contributes to the duration of its happiness, and may be considered as a sort of prescience granted "to man alone beneath the

heaven." Sometimes, in explaining these ideas, he yielded to the pleasure of quoting Corinne; but such language always offended his mother-in-law. New doctrines ever displease the old. They like to fancy that the world has been losing wisdom, instead of gaining it, since they were young. Lucy's heart instinctively detected the echoes of her sister's voice in the sentiments Oswald breathed with so much ardor. She would cast down her eyes to hide this consciousness; her husband, utterly unaware of it, attributed her apparent insensibility to want of comprehension; and not knowing where to seek congeniality sank into despondence. He wrote to Castel Forte for news of Corinne; but the war prevented the letter's arrival. His health suffered from the cold of England; and the physicians assured him that his chest would be again attacked, if he did not pass the winter in Italy. He told this to his wife and mother, adding, that the war between France and England must at present prevent his tour. "And when peace is concluded," said Lady Edgarmond, "I should hope, my Lord, that you would not think of returning to Italy."—"If his health depends on it," ventured Lucy, "he could not do better." Oswald expressed much gratitude for her kindness. Alas! his thanks but assured her of his love for another.

War ceased; and every time Oswald complained, Lucy's heart was divided between her dread of his departure for Italy, and her fondness, which overrated his indisposition. He attributed her doubt of the necessity for this voyage to selfishness: thus each wounded the other's feelings, because neither dared confess their own. All these interests were soon absorbed in the state of Lady Edgarmond, who was now speechless, and could only express herself by tears, or by the manner in which she pressed their

hands. Lucy was in despair. Oswald sat up every night with her. It was now December; and these cares were highly injurious to him, though they seemed much to gratify the sufferer, whose faults disappeared just as her agonies would have excused them. The approach of death stills all the tumults of soul from which most of our errors proceed. On her last night, she joined the hands of Oswald and Lucy, pressed them to her heart, and raised her eyes to heaven; no longer deploring the voice which could have added nothing to the impressiveness of that action—that look. In a few seconds she expired.

Lord Nevil, who had supported himself by great effort, for her sake, now became dangerously ill, and poor Lucy's distress was thus redoubled. In his delirium, he often named Corinne, and Italy, sighing: "Oh, for the southern sun! it is so cold in the north here: I shall never be warm again." When he recovered his senses, he was surprised at finding that Lucy had prepared everything for his voyage: she merely repeated the advice of his physicians, adding: "If you will permit it, I shall accompany you; and our child ought not to be parted from her parents."—"No, no, we will not part," he answered; "but if this journey would pain you, I renounce it."—"*That* will not pain me," she replied. Oswald took her hand, and gazed inquiringly on her: she would have explained herself; but the memory of her mother's advice, never to betray a sign of jealousy, reproved her, and she added: "You must be sure, my Lord, that my first object is the re-establishment of your health."—"You have a sister in Italy," continued he.—"I know it: have you any tidings of her?"—"Never, since I left for America."—"Well, my Lord, we shall learn all in Italy."—"Are you then interested in her still?"—"Yes: I have not forgotten the tenderness she showed my

childhood."—"We ought not to forget," sighed Nevil; and both again were silent. Oswald had too much delicacy to desire a renewal of his former ties with Corinne; but he thought that it would be sweet to die in Italy, after receiving her pardon and adieu. He little deemed that his delirium had betrayed him, and did injustice to the mind of his wife; because it had rather shown him the opinion of others than what she felt herself, he believed she loved him as much as she could love, but he knew nothing of her sensibility; at present, her pride disguised it; but, had she been perfectly happy, she would have thought it improper to avow a passionate affection even for her own husband; capable as she was of it, education had convinced her that it would be immodest to profess this feeling; but nothing could teach her to take pleasure in speaking of anything else.

CHAPTER V.

Oswald, disliking all recollections of France, crossed it very hastily. Lucy evinced neither wish nor will of any kind, but left it for him to decide everything. They reached the base of the mountains that separate Dauphiny from Savoy, and ascended the Pas des Echelles on foot: this road is dug in the rocks; its entrance resembles a deep cavern; it is dark throughout, even in the brightest days of summer. As yet, they found no snow; but autumn, the season of decay, was herself fast fading. The road was covered with dead leaves, borne to this region on the gale, from the distant trees. Thus they saw the wreck of nature without beholding any promise of her revival. The sight of the mountains charmed Lord Nevil:

while we live among plains, the earth seems only made to bear and nourish man; but in picturesque countries we see the impress of their Creator's power and genius; yet man is everywhere familiarized with nature: the roads he frames ascend the steep, or fathom the abyss; nothing is inaccessible to him, save the great mystery of his own being. In Morienne, the winter was more rigorously felt at every step: one might fancy one's self wending northward, in approaching Mont Cenis. Lucy, who had never travelled before, was alarmed at finding the ice render the horses' pace unsteady: she hid her fears, but reproached herself for having brought her little one with her: often doubting whether the resolve to do so had been purely moral, or whether the hope of growing dearer to Oswald, by constantly associating her image with that of their beloved child, had not deadened her to the risks Juliet would thus incur. Lucy was apt to perplex her mind with secret scruples of conscience; the more virtuous we are, the more this kind of fastidiousness increases: she had no resource, save in her long and silent prayers, which somewhat tranquillized her spirit. The landscape now took a more terrific character: the snow fell heavily on ground already covered with it. They seemed entering the Hell of Ice described by Dante. From the foot of the precipices to the mountain-tops, all varieties were concealed. The pines, now clothed in white, were mirrored in the winter like spectral trees. Oswald and Lucy gazed in silence; speech would have seemed presumptuous; nature was frozen into dumbness, and they were mute like her. Suddenly they perceived, on an immense extent of snow, a long file of darkly clad figures carrying a bier towards a church. These priests, the only living beings who broke this desert solitude, preserved their

wonted pace. The thought of death lent it a gravity which not even the bleakness of the air tempted them to forget. Here was the mourning of nature and of man for vegetable and for human life.

No color was left—that black, that white, thus united, struck the soul with awe. "What a sad omen!" sighed Lady Nevil.—"Lucy," interrupted Oswald, "trust me, it is not for you."—"Alas!" he thought, "it was not beneath such auspices I travelled with Corinne. Where is she now? may not these gloomy objects be but warnings of what I am to suffer?" Lucy's nerves were shaken by the terrors of her journey. This kind of fear is almost unknown to an intrepid man; and she mistook for carelessness of her, Oswald's ignorance of such alarm's possible existence. The common people, who have no better exercise for fancy, love to exaggerate all hazards, and delight in the effect they thus produce on their superiors. The inn-keepers, every winter, tell their guests wild tales of "*le Mont*," as if it were an immovable monster, guarding the vales that lead to the land of promise. They watch the weather for formidable symptoms, and beg all foreigners to avoid crossing Mont Cenis during *la tourmente*. This is a wind announced by a white cloud, spread like a sheet in the air, and by degrees covering the whole horizon. Lucy had gained all possible information, unknown to Nevil, who was too much occupied by the sensation of re-entering Italy to think on these reports. The possible end and aim of his pilgrimage agitated his wife still more than did the journey itself, and she judged everything unfavorably. In the morning of their ascent, several peasants beset her with forebodings; those hired to carry her up the mountain, however, assured her that there was nothing to apprehend: she looked at Nevil, and saw

that he laughed at these predictions; therefore, piqued by his security, she professed herself ready to depart. He knew not how much this resolution cost her, but mounted a horse and followed the litter which bore his wife and child. The way was easy, till they were about the centre of the flat which precedes the descent, when a violent hurricane arose. Drifts of snow blinded Lucy's bearers, and often hid Oswald from her view. The religious men who devote their lives to succor travellers on the Alps began to ring their alarm-bell; yet, though this sound proclaimed the neighborhood of benevolent pity, its rapid and heavy repetition seemed more expressive of dismay than assistance. Lucy hoped that Oswald would propose passing the night at this monastery; but, as she said nothing, he thought it best to hasten on, while daylight lasted. Lucy's bearers inquired, with some uneasiness, if she wished them to descend. "Yes," she said, "since my Lord does not oppose it." She erred in thus suppressing her feelings: the presence of her child would have excused them; but, while we love one by whom we cannot deem ourselves beloved, each instant brings its own sense of humiliation. Oswald remained on horseback, though that was the least safe method of descent, but he believed himself thus secure against losing sight of his wife and child. From the summit, Lucy looked down on the abrupt road which she would have taken for a precipice, had not steeps still more perpendicular been close at hand. She pressed her darling to her heart with strong emotion. Oswald observed this, and, quitting his saddle, joined the men who carried her litter. The graceful zeal with which he did this filled her eyes with tears; but, at that instant, the whirlwind rose so furiously that her bearers fell on their knees, exclaiming: "O God,

protect us!" Lucy regained her courage; and, raising herself, held Juliet towards Lord Nevil. "Take your child, my love!" she said. Oswald received it, answering: "And you too—-come, I can carry ye both!"—"No," she said, "only save *her!*!"—"Save!" he repeated: "is there any danger? Unhappy wretches—why did you not tell us?"—"They did," interrupted Lucy.—"And you concealed it from me? How have I merited is cruel reserve?" He wrapped his cloak round Juliet, and cast down his eyes in deep disquietude; but heaven most mercifully appeased the storm, and lent a ray which showed them the fertile plains of Piedmont. In another hour they arrived unharmed at Novalaise, the first Italian town after crossing Mont Cenis. On entering the inn, Lucy embraced her child, and returned her fervent thanks to God. Oswald leaned pensively near the fire, and, when she rose, held out his hand to her, saying: "You were alarmed then, love?"—"Yes, dear."—"Why would you go on?"—"You seemed impatient to proceed."—"Do you not know that, above all things, I dread exposing you to pain or danger?"—"It is for Juliet that they are to be dreaded," she replied, taking the little one on her lap to warm it, and twisting round her fingers the beautiful black curls that the snow had matted on that fair brow.[1] The mother and child formed so charming a picture, that Oswald gazed on them with tender admiration; but Lucy's silence discouraged the feeling which might else have led to a mutual understanding. They arrived at Turin, where the season was unusually severe. The vast apartments of Italy were destined to receive the sun. Their freshness in summer is most welcome; but, in the depth of winter, they seem cheerless deserts; and their possessors feel like pigmies in the abode of giants. The death of Alfieri

had just occasioned a general mourning among his proud countrymen. Nevil no longer recognized the gayety formerly so dear to him. The absence of her he loved disenchanted both nature and art: he sought intelligence of her, and learned that for five years she had published nothing, but lived in seclusion at Florence. He resolved on going thither; not to remain, and thus violate the affection he owed to Lucy, but to tell Corinne how ignorant he had been of her residence in Scotland. In crossing Lombardy, he sighed: "How beautiful this was, when all those elms were in full leaf, with vines linking them together!"—"How beautiful it was," thought Lucy, "while Corinne shared it with you!" A humid fog, such as oft arises in so well-watered a land, obscured their view of the country. During the night they heard the deluge of southern rain fall on, nay, through the roof, as if water was pursuing them with all the avidity of fire. Lucy sought in vain for the charm of Italy: it seemed that everything conspired to veil it in gloom for Oswald and herself.

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[1] Madame de Staël gave Lucy, at three years of age, hair long enough to make a bracelet. She was thinking of French children. The formal Edgarmonds were not more likely to deviate from the English fashion than to christen Nevil's daughter Juliette.—TR.

CHAPTER VI.

Since Lord Nevil had been in Italy, he had not spoken a word of the language; it even made him ill to hear it. On the evening of his arrival at Milan, he

heard a tap at the door, which was followed by the entrance of a man, whose dark and prominent face would have been expressive, if animated by natural enthusiasm: it wore an unvaryingly gracious smile, and a look that strove to be poetical. He stood at the door, improvising verses in praise of the group before him, but such as might have suited any other husband, wife, or child, just as truly; and so exaggerated, that the speaker seemed to think poetry *ought* to have no connection with truth. Oswald perceived that he was a Roman; yet, harmonious as were the sounds he uttered, the vehemence of his declamation served but to indicate more plainly the unmeaning insipidity of all he said. Nothing could be more painful for Oswald than to hear the Roman tongue thus spoken, for the first time after so long an interval; to see his dearest memories travestied, and feel his melancholy renewed by an object so ridiculous. Lucy guessed all this, and would have dismissed the improvisatore; but it was impossible to make him hear her: he paced the chamber all gesture and exclamation, heedless of the disgust he dealt his hearers, proceeding like a machine that could not stop till after a certain moment. At last that time arrived and Lucy paid him to depart. "Poetic language," said Oswald, "is so easily parodied here, that it ought to be forbidden all save those who are worthy to employ it."—"True," observed Lucy, perhaps a little too pointedly: "it is very disagreeable to be reminded of what you admire, by such a burlesque as we have just endured."—"Not so," he answered; "the contrast only makes me more deeply feel the power of genius. This same language, which may be so miserably degraded, became celestial poetry from the lips of Corinne—*your sister*." Lucy felt overwhelmed; he had not pronounced that *name*

to her before; the addition of *your sister* sounded as if conveying a reproach. She was half suffocated; and had she given way to her tears, this moment might have proved the sweetest in her life; but she restrained them, and the embarrassment between herself and husband became more painful than before. On the next day the sun broke forth, like an exile returning to his own land. The Nevils availed themselves of his brightness to visit Milan cathedral, the *chef-d'œuvre* of Gothic architecture: it is built in the form of a cross—fair, melancholy image in the midst of wealth. Lofty as it is, the ornaments are elaborate as those lavished on some minute object of admiration. What time and patience must it have cost! This perseverance towards the same aim is transmitted from age to age, and the human race, stable at least in thought, can leave us proofs of this, imperishable almost as thought itself. A Gothic building engenders true religion: it has been said that the popes have consecrated more wealth to the building of modern temples than devotion to the memory of old churches. The light, falling through colored glass, the singular forms of the architecture, unite to give a silent image of that infinite mystery which the soul forever feels, and never comprehends.

Lord and Lady Nevil left Milan when the earth was covered with snow. This is a sadder sight in Italy than elsewhere, because it is unusual: the natives lament bad weather as a public calamity. Oswald was vain of his favorite country, and angry that it would not smile its best for Lucy. They passed through Placenta, Parma, and Modena. The churches and palaces of each are too vast, in proportion to the number and fortune of the inhabitants: all seems arranged for the reception of the great, who as yet have but sent some of their retinue forward. On the

morning of their reaching Taro, the floods were thundering from the Alps and Apennines, with such frightful rapidity, that their roar scarce announced them ere they came. Bridges are hardly practicable over rivers that so often rise above the level of the plain. Oswald and Lucy found their course suddenly checked. All boats had been washed away by the current; and they were obliged to wait till the Italians, who never hurry themselves, chose to bring them back. The fog confounded the water with the sky; and the whole spectacle rather resembled the descriptions of Styx than the bounteous streams lent as refreshments to the burning south. Lucy, trembling lest the intense cold should hurt her child, bore it into a fisher's hut, in the centre of which a fire had been kindled, as is done in Russia.

"Where is your lovely Italy?" she asked Oswald, with a smile. "I know not when I shall regain her," he answered sadly. Approaching Parma, and all the cities on that road, they perceived from afar the flat-terraced roofs that give Italy so original an air. Churches and spires stand forth boldly amid these buildings; and, after seeing them, the northern-pointed roofs, so constructed to permit the snow to run off, create a very unpleasant sensation. Parma still preserves some fine pictures by Correggio. Oswald took Lucy to a church which, boasts a *fresco* of his *La Madonna della Scala*: while he drew the curtain from before it, Lucy raised Juliet in her arms, that she might better see the picture; and by chance their attitude was nearly the same with that of the Virgin and Child. Lucy had so much of the modest grace which Correggio loved to paint, that Oswald looked from the ideal to the real with surprise. As she noticed this her lids declined, and the resemblance became still more strong. Correggio is,

perhaps, the only painter who knew how to give downcast eyes an expression affecting as that of those raised to heaven. The veil he throws over such looks, far from decreasing their thoughtful tenderness, lends it the added charm of heavenly mystery. The Madonna is almost detached from the wall. A breath might blow its hues away; this fear gives it a melancholy interest: its adorers oft return to bid such fleeting beauty a fond farewell. As they left the church, Oswald said to Lucy, "A little while, and that picture will be no more! but its model is mine own forever." These soft words touched her heart: she pressed his hand, about to ask him if he could not trust her tenderness; but as when he spoke coldly her pride forbade complaint, so when his language made her blest, she dreaded to disturb that moment's peace, in an attempt to render it more durable. Thus always she found reasons for her silence, hoping that time, resignation, and gentleness, might bring at last the happy day which would disperse her apprehensions.

CHAPTER VII.

Lord Nevil's health improved, yet cruel anxiety still agitated his heart. He constantly sought tidings of Corinne; but everywhere heard the same report: how different from the strain in which *her* name had once been breathed! Could the man who had destroyed her peace and fame forgive himself? Travellers drawing near Bologna are attracted by two very high towers; the one, however, leans so obliquely as to create a sensation of alarm; vainly is it said to have been built so, and to have lasted thus for centuries;

its aspect is irresistibly oppressive. Bologna boasts a great number of highly-informed men; but the common people are disagreeable. Lucy listened for the melodious Italian, of which she had been told; but the Bolognese dialect painfully disappointed her. Nothing more harsh can exist in the north. They arrived at the height of the Carnival, and heard, both day and night, cries of joy that sounded like those of rage. A population like that of the Lazzaroni, eat and sleep beneath the numerous arcades that border the streets: during winter, they carry a little fire in an earthen vessel. In cold weather, no nightly music is heard in Italy: it is replaced in Bologna by a clamor truly alarming to foreigners. The manners of the populace are much more gross in some few southern states than can be found elsewhere. In-door life perfects social order: the heat that permits people to live thus in public engenders many savage habits.[1] Lord and Lady Nevil could not walk forth without being assailed by beggars, the scourge of Italy. As they passed the prisons, whose barred windows look upon the streets, the captives demanded alms with immoderate laughter. "It is not thus," said Lucy, "that our people show themselves the fellow-citizens of their betters. O, Oswald! can such a country please you?"—"Heaven forbid," he replied, "that I should ever forget my own! but when you have passed the Apennines you will hear the Tuscans—meet intellectual and animated beings, who, I hope, will render you less severe."

Italians, indeed must be judged according to circumstances. Sometimes the evil that has been spoken of them seems but true; at others, most unjust. All that has previously been described of their governments and religion proves that much may be asserted against them generally, yet that many

private virtues are to be found amongst them. The individuals chance throws on the acquaintance of our travellers decide their notions of the whole race; such judgment, of course, can find no basis in the public spirit of the country. Oswald and Lucy visited the collections of pictures that enrich Bologna. Among them was Domenichino's Sibyl; before which Nevil unconsciously lingered so long, that his wife at last dared ask him, if this beauty said more to his heart than Correggio's Madonna had done. He understood, and was amazed at so significant an appeal: after gazing on her for some time, he replied, "The Sibyl utters oracles no more: her beauty, like her genius, is gone; but the angelic features I admired in Correggio have lost none of their charms; and the unhappy wretch who so much wronged the one will never betray the other." He left the place, to conceal his agitation.

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[1] It was announced at Bologna that a solar eclipse would take place one day at two. The people flocked to see it; and, impatient at its delay, called on it to begin, as if it were an actor, who kept them waiting. At last it commenced; but, as the cloudy weather prevented its producing any great effect, they set up the most violent *hissings*, angry that the spectacle fell so far short of their expectations.

BOOK XX.

CONCLUSION.

CHAPTER I.

Oswald now, for the first time, comprehended that Lucy was aware of his affection for her sister, and deemed that her coolness might have sprung from secret disquietude: yet now he feared an explanation as much as she had done; and now she would have told him all, had he required it; but it would have cost him too much to speak of Corinne, just as he was about to rejoin her, especially with a person whose character he so imperfectly knew. They crossed the Apennines, and regained the sweet climate of Italy. The sea-breeze, so glowing in summer, now spread a gentle heat. The turf was green, the autumn hardly over, and yet the spring already peeping forth. The markets teemed with oranges and pomegranates. The Tuscan tongue was audible; and all Oswald's dearest memories revived, though now unmixed with hope. The mild air would have rendered Lucy confiding, had he encouraged her. Had a Corinne been with them, she would soon have learned their secrets; but the more congenial they were, in natural and national reserve, the less easy was it for them to break the ice which kept their hearts asunder.

CHAPTER II.

As soon as they arrived in Florence, Nevil wrote to Castel Forte; and in a few minutes the Prince came to him. It was some time ere either spoke; at last Nevil asked for Corinne. "I have none but sad news for you," said her friend: "she grows weaker every day; sees no one but myself, and can scarce attempt any

occupation; yet I think she has been calmer since we learned you were in Italy; though I cannot disguise from you, that at first her emotions on that intelligence caused her a relapse of fever. She has not told me her intentions, for I carefully avoid your name."—"Have the goodness, Prince," said Oswald, "to give her the letter I wrote you nearly five years since: it contained a detail of all the circumstances that prevented my hearing of her journey to Scotland before I married. When she has read it, ask her to receive me. I long to justify myself with her, if possible. Her esteem is essential to me, though I can no longer pretend to more."—"I will obey your desires, my Lord," said Castel Forte, "and wish that I may in any way be of service." Lady Nevil now entered the room. Oswald made her known to his friend. She met him coldly. He gazed on her with much attention, sighed, thought of Corinne, and took leave. Oswald followed him. "Lady Nevil is very beautiful," said the Prince: "so fresh and young! Alas! my poor love is no longer so; yet forget not, my Lord, that she was a brilliant creature when you saw her first."—"Forget!" exclaimed Oswald: "no, nor ever forgive myself." He could utter no more, and for the rest of the day was gloomily silent. Lucy sought not to disturb him: her forbearance was unlucky; for he only thought: "Had Corinne beheld me sad, she would have striven to console me." The next morning his anxiety early led him to Castel Forte. "Well!" he cried, "what says she?"—"That she will not see you," answered the Prince.—"And her motives?"—"I found her yesterday, in spite of her weakness, pacing the room all agitation, her paleness sometimes giving way to a vivid blush, that faded as suddenly as it rose. I told her your request: after some instants' silence, she said—if you exact from me her own

words: 'That man has done me too much wrong already; but the foe who threw me into prison, banished and proscribed me has not yet brought my spirit quite so low as he may think. I have suffered more than woman ever endured beside—alternate fondness and indignation making thought a perpetual torture. Oswald should remember that I once told him it would cost me more to renounce my admiration than my love. He has despoiled the object of my worship: he deceived me, voluntarily or otherwise—no matter: he is not what I believed him. He sported for nearly a year with my affection; and, when he ought to have defended me, when his actions should have proved he had a heart, how did he treat me? Can he boast of having made one generous sacrifice? No! he is happy now, possessing all the advantages best appreciated by the world. I am dying, let him leave me in peace!'"—"These words are very harsh," sighed Oswald.—"She is changed by suffering," admitted Castel Forte; "yet I have often found her so charitable, that, let me own, she has defended you against me."—"You think me unpardonable, then?"—"If you permit me to say so. The injuries we may do women hurt not us in public opinion. The fragile idol of to-day may be broken to-morrow, without finding one protector; for that very reason do I respect the sex, whose moral welfare can find its safety but in our bosoms. A mortal stab is punished by the law; but breaking a tender heart is a theme for jest. I would forgive murder by poniard soonest."—"Believe me," cried Nevil, "I, too, have been wretched—that is my sole extenuation; but formerly she would have listened to it, now it avails me nothing; yet I will write to her: I still believe, in spite of all that parts us, she may yet understand me."—"I will bear your letter, my Lord; but I entreat

you temper it well; you guess not what you are to her. Years can but deepen an impression, when no new idea has divided its empire. Would you know in what state she is at present? A fantasy, from which my prayers could not divert her, enables me to show you." He opened the door of another room; and Nevil first beheld a portrait of Corinne as she appeared in Juliet, on the night, of all others, when he felt most enamored of her. The confidence of happiness breathed from each feature. The memories of that festal time came back on Oswald's heart; but as he yielded to them, the Prince took his hand, drew aside a crape from another picture, and showed him Corinne, painted that same year, in the black dress, such as she had never abandoned since her return from England. Her lost lover recollected the figure which had passed him in the Park: but above all was he struck with the total change in her appearance. The long black lashes veiled her languid eyes, and threw a shadow over the tintless cheek: beneath was written this line, from the Pastor Fido:——

> "A pena si pudò dir: 'Questa fu rosa!'"
>
> "Scarcely can we now say: 'This was a rose!'"

"How!" cried Lord Nevil; "looks she like this?"—-"Within the last fortnight still worse," returned the Prince; and Oswald rushed from him, as if distracted.

CHAPTER III.

The unhappy man shut himself in his room. At the

dinner hour, Lucy, leading Juliet by the hand, tapped gently at his door; he opened it, saying: "Think not the worse of me, my dear, for begging that I may be left to myself to-day." His wife raised her child in her arms, and retired without a word. He now looked at the letter he had written to Corinne, and, bursting into tears exclaimed: "Shall I, then, make poor Lucy wretched too? What is my life worth, if it serves but to render all who love me miserable?"

Letter from Lord Nevil to Corinne.

"Were you not the most generous of human beings, what could I say to you, who might weigh me so low by reproaches, or still lower by your griefs? I have done such ill to her I loved, that I almost believe myself a monster. Am I, Corinne? I suffer so much, that I cannot think myself an utter barbarian! You know, when first I met you, I was a prey to despair, that nearly brought me to the grave: I sought not happiness, but struggled long against your attraction; even when it triumphed, presentiments of misfortune lingered still. Sometimes I believed you destined by my father to make me once more feel myself as well beloved as I had been by him; then did I fear to disobey his will, in marrying a foreigner. On my return to England, this sentiment prevailed, sanctioned as it was by parental authority. Had he still lived, I should have felt a right to combat it; but the

dead cannot hear us, and the irrevocable commands of those now powerless, possess a touching and a sacred force.—Once more surrounded by the ties of country, I met your sister, selected for me by my sire, and well according with my wish for a regular, a quiet life. My weakness makes me dread some kinds of agitation: my mind is easily seduced by new hopes; but my sick soul shrinks from resolves that interfere with its original habits or affections. Yet, Corinne, had I known you were in England, that proof of tenderness would have decided me. Ah! wherefore vaunt I what I would have done? Should we have been content? Am I capable of being so? Could I ever have chosen any one fate, without still pining after some other? When you restored my liberty, I fell into the common error, telling myself that so superior a woman might easily be estranged from me. Corinne, I have wounded your heart, I know; but I thought mine the only sacrifice: I deemed you would forget me. I cannot deny that Lucy is worthy of a still warmer attachment than I could give her; but since I learned your voyage to England, and the sorrow I had dealt you, my life has been a perpetual pain. I sought for death, certain that when you heard I was no more, you

would forgive me. Doubtless, you can oppose to this years of fidelity and regret, such as my ingratitude ill merits; yet think—a thousand complicated circumstances invade the constancy of man. Imagine, if possible, that I have neither given nor received felicity; that my heart has been lonely since I left you, scarce daring even to commune with itself; that the mother of my child, who has so many titles to my love, is a stranger to my history and feelings; in truth, that my habitual sadness has reduced me to the state from which your cares, Corinne once extracted me. If I have returned to Italy, not for my health (you cannot suspect me of any love for life), but to bid you farewell, can you refuse to see me but once more? I wish it, because I think that it would benefit you; my own sufferings less prompt this desire. What use were it that I am miserable, that a dreadful weight presses upon my heart, if I came hither without obtaining pardon from you? I ought to be unhappy, and am sure of being so; but I feel certain that you would be solaced, if you could think upon me as your friend, and read, in Oswald's looks and accents, how dear you are to the criminal whose fate is far more altered than his heart. I respect the ties I have formed, and love your

sister; but the human breast, wild and inconsistent as it is, can reconcile that tenderness with what I feel for you. I have nothing to say for myself that can be written; all I might explain would but condemn me; yet, if you saw me prostrate before you, through all my faults and duties, you would perceive what you are to me still, and that conversation would leave a balm for both. Our health is failing: Heaven may not accord us length of days. Let, then, whichever may be destined to precede the other, feel regretted by the dear friend left behind. The innocent alone deserve such joy: but may it not be granted to the guilty? Corinne, sublime soul! you who can read all hearts, guess what I cannot add, and comprehend me, as you used to do. Let me but see you; let my pallid lips touch your weak hand! It was not I alone who wrought this ruin. No; the same sentiment consumed us both: destiny struck two hearts, devoting one to crime; that one, Corinne, may not be the least pitiable."

Answer.

"If I required but to see and pardon you, I could not for an instant refuse. Why is it that I do not feel resentment, although the pangs you have caused me are so dreadful? I

must still love you, not *to hate*. Religion alone would not disarm me thus. There have been moments when my reason has left me; others, far sweeter, when I hoped to die before the day could end; and some in which I have doubted even virtue: you were to me its image here below: there was no guide for either my thoughts or feelings, when the same blow struck both my admiration and my love. What would have become of me without Heaven's help? Everything in this world was poisoned by your image: one sole asylum was left, and God received me. My strength decays, but not that supporting enthusiasm. I joy to think that the best aim in life is to become worthy of eternity: our bliss, our bane, alike tend to this purpose: and you were chosen to uproot the too strong hold I had on earth. Yet, when I saw your handwriting, learned that you were but on the other side of the river, a fearful tumult rose within me: incessantly was I obliged to tell myself, 'My sister is his wife.' To see you again appeared felicity: I will not deny that my heart, inebriated afresh, preferred these indefinite raptures to an age of calm: but Providence has not abandoned me in this peril. Are you not the husband of another? What then have I to say

to you? Is it for me to die in your arms? What would my conscience suffer, if I made no sacrifice? if I permitted myself another hour with you? I can only appear before my God with anything like confidence by renouncing it. This resolution may appease my soul. Such happiness as I felt while you loved me is not in harmony with our mortal state; it agitates us, because we feel its fleetness: but religious meditation, that aims at self-improvement, and refers every cause to duty, is a state of peace; and I know not what ravages the mere sound of your voice would make on the repose I believe I have regained. Why do you tell me that your health is impaired? Alas! I am no longer your nurse; but still, I suffer with you. May God bless and prolong your days, my Lord! Be happy, but be so through piety. A secret communion with Divinity gives us in ourselves the power of confiding to a being who consoles us: it makes two friends of one spirit. Do you still seek for what the world calls happiness? Where will you find more than my tenderness would have bestowed? Know you that in the deserts of the New World I should have blessed my lot had you permitted me to follow you? I could have served you like a slave, have

knelt before you as a heavenly being, had you but loved me truly. What have you done with so much faith? You have changed it into an affliction peerless as itself. Outrage me not, then, by one hope of happiness, except in prayer: let our thoughts meet in heaven! Yet when I feel myself about to die, perhaps I will be taken somewhere whence I may behold you pass. Assuredly, when my failing eyes can see no more, your image will be with me; but might not a recent review of your features render it more distinct? Deities of old were never present at the hour of death, so I forbid you mine; but I should like to see you perfectly when Oswald, Oswald! behold how weak I am, when abandoned to your recollection! Why has not Lucy sought me? Though she is your wife, she is still my sister. I have some kind and even generous things to tell her. And your child—I ought not to meet you; but you are surrounded by my family. Do they disown me still? or fear ye that poor little Juliet would be scared at seeing me? Ghost as I look, I yet could smile upon your daughter. Adieu, my Lord, adieu! Remember that I might call you brother. At least you will mourn for me externally, and, as a kinsman, follow my remains to Rome: let

them be borne by the road where my car passed; and pause upon the spot where you restored my crown. Yet no, I am wrong, Oswald: I could exact nothing that could afflict you, only one tear, and sometimes a fond look towards the heaven where I shall soon await you."

CHAPTER IV.

Many days elapsed ere Oswald could regain his composure: he avoided the presence of his wife, and passed whole hours on the banks of the river that separated him from Corinne; often tempted to plunge amid its waves, that they might bear his body to the abode he never must enter living. Amazed as he was at Corinne's wish to see her sister, he longed to gratify it; yet how introduce the subject? He saw that Lucy was hurt by his distress, and hoped that she would question him; but she forbore, merely expressing a desire to visit Rome or Naples: he always begged a brief delay, and Lucy, with cold dignity, was silent.

Oswald, at least, could secure Corinne the presence of his little daughter, and secretly bade the nurse take Juliet to her. He met them on their return, and asked the child how she had enjoyed her visit. She replied by an Italian phrase, and with an accent so resembling Corinne's that her father started. "Who taught you that, dear?" he asked.—"The lady," she replied.—"And how did she behave to you?"—"Oh, she kissed me, and cried; I don't know why; but it

made her worse, for she looks very ill, papa."—"Do you love her, darling?"—"That I do. I'll go to her every day. She has promised to teach me all she knows; and says, that she will make me grow like Corinne: what's that, pa? the lady did not tell me." Lord Nevil could not answer: he withdrew, to conceal his agitation, but bade the nurse take Juliet daily to Corinne. Perhaps he erred in disposing of his child without her mother's consent; but in a few days the young pupil's progress was astonishing: her masters for Italian and music were all amazed. Nothing had ever pained Lucy more than her sister's influence over Juliet's education. The child informed her that, ill as the lady seemed, she took great pains with her. Lucy's heart would have melted, could she have seen in all this anything but a design to win Nevil back. She was divided between the natural wish of being sole directress for her daughter, and self-reproach at the idea of withholding her from such valuable instructions. One day Oswald came in as Juliet was practising a music lesson. She held a lyre proportioned to her size; and her pretty arms fell into Corinne's own attitude so perfectly, that he felt gazing on the miniature copy of a fine picture, with the added grace of childish innocence. He could not speak, but sank, trembling, on a seat. Juliet then played the Scotch air which he had heard at Tivoli, before the design from Ossian; he listened breathlessly. Lucy, unseen, stole behind him: as Juliet ceased, her father took her on his knee, and said: "The lady on the banks of the Arno taught you this, did she not?"—"Yes, papa; but it hurt her very much: she was so ill while she taught me, that I begged her to leave off, but she would not. She made me promise to play you that tune every year, on a particular day, I believe it was the 17th of

November."—"My God!" cried Oswald bursting into tears. Lucy now stepped forward, and, taking Juliet by the hand, said, hastily: "My Lord, it is too much to rob me of my child's affection; that solace, at least, is due to my misfortunes." She retired. Oswald would have followed her, but was refused. At the dinner hour he was told that she had been out for some time, not saying where. He was fearfully alarmed at her absence; but she shortly returned, with a calm and gentle air, such as he little expected. He would now have confided in her, and gained her pardon by sincerity, but she replied: "Explanation, indeed, is needful to us both; yet, my dear Lord, permit me still to defer it: you will soon know my motives for this request." Her address, he perceived, was more animated than usual; and every day its warmth, its interest, increased. He could not understand this change: its cause is soon told. And that Lucy so long had hidden in her heart escaped in the brief reproach she made her husband; and, as usually happens to persons who suddenly break from their habitual character, she now ran into extremes, resolving to seek Corinne, and ask her if she had determined perpetually to disturb her wedded peace; but, as she arrived at her sister's door, her diffidence returned; nor would she have had courage to enter, had not the invalid, who saw her from a window, sent Thérésina to entreat her. Lucy ascended to the sick chamber, and all her anger vanished at sight of its occupant. The sisters embraced in tears. Corinne then set an example of frankness which it was impossible for Lucy not to follow. Such was that mind's ascendency over every one, that, in her presence, neither dissimulation nor constraint could be preserved. Pallor and weakness confirmed her assertion, that she had not long to live: this sad truth

added weight to her counsels. All Castel Forte had told her, and all she had guessed from Oswald's letters, proved that reserve and coldness separated the Nevils from each other. She entered very simply on this delicate subject: her perfect knowledge of the husband's character enabled her to point out why he required to find spontaneously in those he loved the confidence which he could not solicit, and to be received with cheerfulness proportioned to his own susceptibility of discouragement. She described her past self impartially, as if speaking of another, and showed how agreeable it must be for a man to find, united with moral conduct, that desire to please which is often inspired by a wish to atone for the loss of virtue. "Many women," she said, "have been beloved, not merely in spite of, but for the sake of their very errors; because they strove to extort a pardon by being ever agreeable, and having so much need of indulgence dared impose no laws on others. Therefore, dear sister, pride not in your perfections; let your charms consist in seeming to forget them; be Corinne and Lucy in one: nor let your own worth excuse to you a moment's neglect of your graces, nor your self-respect render your manners repulsive. Were your dignity ill founded, it might wound *him* less; for an over-exertion of certain rights chills the heart more than do unjust pretensions. Love delights in paying more than is due, where nothing is exacted." Lucy thanked her sister with much tenderness for the interest thus generously evinced in her welfare; and Corinne resumed: "If I were doomed to live, I might not be capable of it; but now my only selfish wish is, that Oswald should find some traces of my influence in you and in his child; nor ever taste one rapture that reminds him not of Corinne." Lady Nevil returned to her every day, and with the

most amiable delicacy, studied to resemble the being so dear to her Lord. His curiosity increased, as he remarked the fresh attractions she thus acquired: he knew that she must owe them to Corinne; yet Lucy having promised to keep the secret of their meetings, no explanation occurred. The sufferer proposed yet to see the wedded pair together, but not till she was assured that she had but a few moments to live; but she involved this plan in so much mystery, that Lucy knew not in what manner it was to be accomplished.

CHAPTER V.

Corinne desired to bid Nevil and Italy such a farewell as might recall the days on which her genius shone with its full splendor. A pardonable weakness. Love and glory were ever blended in her mind; and, at that moment when her heart was about to resign all earthly ties, she wished Oswald to feel, once more, that it was the greatest woman of her day he had destroyed—the woman who best knew how to love and think—whose brilliant success he had obscured in misery and death.

She had no longer the strength required by an improvisatrice; but in solitude, since Oswald's return, had resumed her zest for writing poetry; she therefore named a day for assembling in one of the galleries all who desired to hear her verses, begging Lucy to bring her husband; adding, "I feel I may demand this of you now." Oswald was fearfully agitated, wondering what subject she had chosen, and whether she would recite herself: the bare possibility of looking on her threw him into extreme

confusion. The morning came, and winter frowned on it with all the sternness of the north: the wind howled, the rain beat violently against the windows, and by an eccentricity more frequent in Italy than elsewhere, the thunder added a sense of dread to all this gloom. Oswald could not speak: everything around him increased the desolation of his soul. He entered the hall with Lucy: it was immensely crowded. In an obscure recess was placed a sofa, whereon Corinne was to recline, being too ill to read her own verses. Dreading to show herself, changed as she was, she had chosen those means of seeing Oswald unseen. As soon as she knew that he was there, she veiled her face, and was supported to this couch; from time to time staying to take breath, as if that short space had been a painful journey: the last steps of life are ever slow and difficult. Seating herself, her eyes sought Oswald, found him, and involuntarily starting up, she spread her arms; but instantly fell back, turning away her face, like Dido when she met Æneas in a world which human passions should not penetrate. Castel Forte detained Lord Nevil, who now, utterly beside himself, would have flown to fall at her feet: the Prince reminded him of the respect he owed Corinne before the world. [1]

A young girl, dressed in white, and crowned with flowers, now appeared on the stage which had been erected. Her meek and peaceful face touchingly contrasting the sentiments she was about to breathe; it was Corinne's taste, which thus mingled something sweet with thoughts in themselves too dreary. Music nobly and affecting prepared the auditors. The hapless Oswald could not tear his eyes from Corinne: she was to him as an apparition that haunts a night of fever: it was through his own deep sighs that he

heard the death-song of the swan, which the woman he had so much wronged addressed to his heart.

THE LAST SONG OF CORINNE.

Take ye my solemn farewell! O, my friends,
Already night is darkening on my eyes;—
But is not heaven most beautiful by night?
Thousands of stars shine in the kindling sky,
Which is an azure desert during day.
Thus do the gathering of eternal shades
Reveal innumerable thoughts, half lost
In the full daylight of prosperity.
But weaken'd is the voice which might instruct;
The soul retires within itself, and seeks
To gather round itself its failing fire.

From my first days of youth, my inward hope
Was to do honor to the Roman name;
That name at which the startled heart yet beats.
Ye have allow'd me fame, O generous land!
Ye banished not a woman from the shrine!
Ye do not sacrifice immortal gifts
To passing jealousies, Ye who still yield
Applause to Genius in its daring flight;
Victor without the vanquished—Conqueror,
Yet without spoil;—who, from eternity,
Draws riches for all time.

Nature and Life! with what deep

confidence
Ye did inspire me! I deem'd all grief arose
For what we did not feel, or think enough:
And that we might, even on this our earth,
Beforehand taste that heavenly happiness,
Which is—but length in our enthusiasm,
But constancy in love.

No, I repent it not, this generous faith;
No, that caused not the bitter tears I've shed,
Watering the dust which doth await me now.
I had accomplish'd all my destiny—
I had been worthy all the gifts of Heaven,
If I had only vow'd my sounding lyre
To celebrate that goodness all divine,
Made manifest throughout the universe.

And thou, my God!—Oh, thou wilt not reject
The offering of the mind; for poetry,
Its homage is religious, and the wings
Of thought but serve to draw more near to thee.

Religion has no limits, and no bonds;—
The vast, the infinite, and the eternal,
Never from her may Genius separate.
Imagination from its earliest flight,
Past o'er the bounds of life: and the sublime
Is the reflection of divinity.

Alas! my God, had I loved only thee;[2]
If I had raised my head aloft in heaven—

From passionate affections shelter'd there,
I had not now been crush'd before my time—
Phantoms had not displaced my brilliant dreams
Unhappy one, if yet my genius lives,
I only know it by my strength of grief:
Under the features of an enemy
I recognize it now.

Farewell, my birthplace! farewell, my own land!
Farewell, remembrances of infancy,
Farewell! Ah, what have ye to do with death?
And ye who in my writings may have found
Feelings, whose echo was within your soul,
Oh, friends of mine—where'er ye be—farewell!
Corinne has suffer'd much—but suffer'd not
In an unworthy cause: she has not lost
At least her claim on pity.

Beautiful Italy! it is in vain
To promise me your loveliness; my heart
Is worn and wasted; what can ye avail?
"Would ye revive my hopes, to edge my griefs!
Would ye recall my happiness, and thus
Make me revolt against my fate?

Meekly I do submit myself. Oh, ye
Who may survive me—when the spring

returns,
Remember how I loved its loveliness!
How oft I sung its perfume and its air.
I pray you sometimes to recall a line
From out my songs—my soul is written there:
But fatal Muses, love and misery,

Taught my best poetry.

When the designs of mighty Providence
Are work'd in us, internal music marks
The coming of the angel of the grave:
Nor fearful, nor yet terrible he spreads
His white wings; and, though compass'd by night,
A thousand omens tell of his approach.

If the wind murmurs, then they seem to hear
His voice; and when night falls, the shadows round
Seem the dark foldings of his sweeping robe.
At noon, when life sees only the clear sky,
Feels only the bright sun, the fated one
Whom Death hath called, upon the distance marks
The heavy shade is so soon to shroud
All nature from their eyes.

Youth, hope, emotions of the heart—ye all
Are now no more. Far from me—vain regrets;
If I can yet obtain some falling tears,
If I can yet believe myself beloved,

It is because I am about to die.
Could I recall my fleeting life—that life,
Soon would it turn upon me all its stings.

And Rome! Rome, where my ashes will be borne!
Thou who hast seen so many die, forgive,
If, with a trembling step, I join the shades,
The multitude of your illustrious dead!
Forgive me for my pity of myself.[3]
Feelings, and noble thoughts, such thoughts perchance
As might have yielded fruit—expire with me.
Of all the powers of mind which nature gave,
The power of suffering has been the sole one,
Which I have used to its extent.

It matters not.—I do obey.—Whate'er
May be the mighty mystery of death,
That mystery at least must give repose.
Ye do not answer me, ye silent tombs!
Merciful God, thou dost not answer me!
I made my choice on earth, and now my heart
Has no asylum. Ye decide for me,
And such a destiny is best.
L. E. L.

Thus ended the last song of Corinne. The hall resounded with deep, sad murmurs of applause. Lord Nevil could not support the violence of his emotion, but fell senseless to the ground. Corinne, beholding him in this condition, would have flown to him, but her strength failed as she attempted to rise. She was

borne home, and from that hour no hopes were entertained of saving her. Lucy hastened to her, so afflicted by her husband's grief, that she threw herself at her sister's feet, imploring her to admit him; but Corinne refused. "I forgive him," she said, "for having broken my heart. Men know not what they do; society persuades them that it is sport to fill a heart with rapture, and then consign it to despair; but God's free grace has given me back composure. The sight of Oswald would revive sensations that ill befit a death-bed. Religion only possesses the secret clue through this terrific labyrinth. I pardon the being I so loved," she continued, with a failing voice; "may he be happy with you! but when in his turn he is called on to die, then may he recollect the poor Corinne. She will watch over him, if Heaven permits; for those never cease to love, whose love has had the strength to cost them life."

Oswald stood at her door, sometimes about to enter, spite her prohibition, sometimes motionless with sorrow. Lucy passed from one to the other, like an angel of peace, between despair and death. One evening Corinne appeared more easy, and the parents went for a short time to their child, whom they had not seen for three days. During their absence the dying woman performed all the duties of religion; then said to the reverend man who received her last solemn confession: "Now, father, you know my fate. Judge me! I have never taken vengeance on my foes; the griefs of others never asked my sympathy in vain; my faults sprung but from passions not guilty in themselves, though human pride and weakness led them to excess and error. Think you, my father—you who have so much longer experience than I—that God will pardon me?"—"Yes, child, I hope so; is not your heart now wholly his?"—"I

believe it, father; take away this portrait, it is Oswald's; lay on my breast the image of Him who descended to this life—not for the powerful, nor the inspired, but for the sufferer, the dying; they need his mercy." She then perceived Castel Forte, who wept beside her bed, and holding out her hand to him, exclaimed: "My friend! you only are beside me now. I lived for love; yet, but for you, should die alone." Her tears fell as she spoke, yet she added: "There is no help for such a moment; friends can but follow us to the brink; there begin thoughts too deep, too troubled, to be confided." She begged they would remove her to a sofa, whence she could gaze upon the sky. Lucy now came to her side; and the unhappy Oswald, following his wife, fell at the feet of Corinne, who would have spoken to him, but her voice failed: she raised her eyes to Heaven; the moon was covered with just such a cloud as they had seen on their way to Naples. Corinne pointed to it with a dying hand—one sigh—and that hand sank powerless.

Oswald fell into such distraction that Lucy trembled for his life. He followed the funeral pomp to Rome; then retired to Tivoli, where he remained long, without seeing even his wife and child. At last, duty and affection restored him to them; they returned to England. Lord Nevil's domestic life became most exemplary: but did he ever pardon his past conduct? Could the approving world console him? After the fate he had enjoyed, could he content himself with common life? I know not: nor will I, on that head, either absolve or condemn him.

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[1] Not a word of what he owed his wife.—TR.

[2] "Had I but served my God with half the zeal," &c.—*Wolsey*.(SHAKSPEARE.)

[3] "J'a pitié de moi-même."—CORNEILLE.

THE END.

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