

prize so long coveted, even whilst in the possession of another, was about to become her own, and insensibly the remembrance of her unfortunate and generous benefactress intruded on her mind. She recollected that she had assisted to array her for her marriage. How brightly beautiful—how radiant with love and hope, she looked that evening when St. Amante led her to the altar. A pang of remorse pierced the soul of the supplanter of her rights, as she reflected that the heart that had then beaten so tumultuously, beat no longer; but was cold and pulseless, and hushed for ever—and that her false lips had added their cruel weight to the calumnies that had consigned her to an early and unhallowed grave. She thought, too, of that time when Donna Victoria Toledo had singled her, a poor and penniless orphan, from the world, and had preferred her company to those of her own high born and noble mates. She recalled the numerous instances of her generous friendship, and sighed as she retraced those early days when she was proud of the noble lady's notice, and grateful for her attachment. Ah! little did she think that the time would ever come, when she would join to destroy and stab that trusting bosom. So bitter were her feelings, that in these moments of remorse she half determined to reject the hand of St. Amante, and avow her guilt; but at that instant she heard the voice of him she loved, and her mad affection prevailed over her repentance, as the deadly upas tree is said to poison and wither every herb and flower that springs in its vicinity. He came to lead her to the chapel; and she remembered her sin no more.

The chapel was splendidly illuminated and decorated; the wealth of many a plundered shrine adorned the altar, and the sacred walls were hung with trophies taken from the Spaniards. Carved and gilded altar screens, images of saints, and scriptural paintings, suits of armour and flags and ensigns of various nations, were strangely blended and intermingled in a place dedicated to the worship of the Supreme Ruler of the universe. The altar was brilliantly lighted up and crowned with flowers, and the jasper columns that supported it, were entwined with garlands of the most varied hues the western isles could offer; and above the gorgeous painted windows, floated in full and ample drapery the flag of a Spanish frigate St. Amante had captured under the very guns of Porto Bello; and its massy folds were so arranged as to fall on either side the pillars without injuring the effect of the altar piece, or impeding the light.

The priest and his servitors stood ready to receive the bridal pair, when, attended by a small

party, they entered the chapel. Love shone in the eyes of the fair Almeria; but no answering expression of gladness could be traced in the downcast ones of her lord. Did the remembrance of her who had there received his plighted vows, intrude upon his mind? Did her image rise before his mental vision, lovely as when she forsook the splendours of her father's court, to share his heart and rude island home? Almeria marked, with secret inquietude, his melancholy and abstracted mien; and Hector Montbelliard observed it too, though with very different feelings.

The priest commenced the sacred rite, and St. Amante began to utter in a firm tone the vow of lasting love and fidelity, when his voice suddenly died away in imperfect murmurs, his stately figure trembled with violent emotion, and he turned his glaring eyeballs with a wild expression of horror towards one side of the altar. All present followed the direction of his glance, and beheld the well known form of the Spanish lady leaning against one of the pillars that supported the altar, and holding up her wedding ring to the view of the bridegroom.

The shriek of the bride was echoed by the terrified females, and was followed by a deep sigh from the spectre, and a still deeper groan from St. Amante. Once the apparition unclosed its lips, as if it was about to reveal the cause of its inquietude and perturbed wanderings, when another cry broke from the guilty and terror stricken Almeria, as she sank on the pavement in convulsive fits; and in the confusion that followed, the spirit vanished.

Twice the miserable and guilty bride essayed to speak, and twice her accents were choked by the spasms that writhed her frame, and distorted her features out of the very form of humanity. Once she gasped out the name of Victoria Toledo, and St. Amante bent to catch the meaning of her words; but a glance from the powerful eye of Montbelliard, rivetted her attention as the serpent is said to fascinate the senses of its victims before it springs upon them; and she shrouded her face in the bosom of the pirate chief, and impatiently motioned to him to leave the chapel. He paid no regard to her signs, and her impatience of his presence increased the convulsions that threatened to annihilate her frame. She lost the power of speech; and the ashy hue of her complexion, and ghastly fixture of her eyes, contrasted fearfully with her splendid diamonds and bridal attire.

The priest hastened to administer extreme unction to the expiring and agonized bride; but her glazing eyes and distorted features betrayed