

succeeded the painful recognition of the existence of some mystery which I was totally unable to fathom. I began to labour under the greatest agony of mind; but this was little in comparison with what I afterwards suffered in both mind and body. However, I will not anticipate the terrible scene.

All this was the work of a moment; and after a brief consultation on the part of my captors, I was raised from the floor and conveyed through a back way, with which they seemed to be intimately acquainted, and, having been placed carefully in the bottom of a close carriage, was driven rapidly away,—in what direction I could not in the least divine. While lying in this painful and contracted position I endeavoured to cry aloud, or break the cords which confined my hands and feet; but my mouth had been firmly secured by a thick, strong bandage, and my exertions to free my limbs only caused the cords to sink deeper into my flesh and increased the painfulness of my situation. My mysterious attendants uttered not a word; the rattling of the carriage wheels over the stones of the street was the only sound that disturbed the silence of night; and my mind became more and more a prey to the agonies of doubt and suspense.

At length the carriage, which seemed to have gone a circuitous route, left the streets, as I knew by the cessation of the sound of the wheels upon the pavement, and in a moment abruptly stopped. My eyes were immediately blinded; and despite of the struggling, which I still vainly continued, I was borne hastily away a short distance, into what I thought, in my fright, to be the basement of a house, and again deposited upon the floor. The bandage was now removed from my eyes, and I had no difficulty in recognizing amongst the men who surrounded me, some of the crew of the barge which lay moored in the harbour.

This instant appeared to me the crisis of my adventure, and I awaited, trembling with fear, the execution of their purpose. But to my surprise, without exchanging a word, they left me alone to the conflicting thoughts and pains produced by my confinement.

I tried in vain to conjure up some reason for such an extraordinary proceeding. Could it be that a party of freebooters, infesting some district of the country, had preconcerted a plan of seizing upon certain of the citizens for the purpose of extorting money for their restoration? The conjecture certainly seemed plausible in itself; but in such case would they choose one but little known, whose disappearance would cause little notice in a populous city? The improbability of such a purpose in obtaining possession of my person, threw me into a much greater agitation of mind and quickened my increasing despair.