

"Guido, but one of that great master's best—bright with the glow of his unrivalled genius."

At these words, the young artist clasped his hands convulsively together, his eyes kindled with intense light, and the flush of a noble joy crimsoned his before pale cheek. "Thank God!" he fervently ejaculated; then, bending his head upon his folded arms, he yielded for a brief space to the long subdued, but now overwhelming emotions of his heart. It was the most exciting, and agitating moment of his life—to have had the work of his pencil mistaken by no mean judges, for that of Guido's! What a proud triumph had he achieved! and in the joy of such an issue to his almost hopeless efforts, the image of her, the lovely and beloved, who had impelled him to exertion, for one instant faded from his thoughts, lost in the resplendent blaze that seemed to light up with glory the long unfolding vista of futurity. Yet, but for one moment did he remain dazzled by this vision, and then, more pure, more beautiful than ever—rose to his view, that "bright particular star" which his soul loved—his own, forever!—won by the efforts of a noble and untiring genius.

The kind Roussard sympathized in the emotions of his young friend, and expressed his feelings with a warmth that sensibly touched the artist.

"So far thou hast done well," he said, "thy picture is pronounced a Guido, and occupies, as such a treasure of art should, the most conspicuous place in the princely gallery of the Count De Clairville. But as yet, thou art gladdened only with the hope of the reward thou covetest—moreover, Pierre, thou art young and thoughtless, and carest not enough for the more substantial profits of thy art, or ere this thou wouldst have spoken of the gold which I won for thee from the old connoisseur, in payment for thy work."

"I care not for that! why should I, when I have won what is a thousand-fold dearer to me than would be the garnered wealth of Midas; so, my kind friend, let what thou hast in keeping abide with thee—I have more than enough for my present wants, and if at any time I have need, I will not fail to apply to thee for a loan."

"A loan, forsooth! nay, foolish boy, take what is thine own and be chary of it, for all thy pictures may not prove Guidos, and how art thou to furnish silks and velvets for thy dainty Rosalie, if thou art already so lavish of thy gains. Thank the saints! I am not called to barter my gold for such gauds, and in the way of my honest calling, I can take back from those who aforesaid have played the usurer with my necessities, loose coins enow to furnish golden collars for my dogs, and glittering cages for my birds, if I chance to want them,"—and, speaking thus, he moved towards an ebony cabinet, which, unlocking, he drew forth a bag of gold, and return-

ing to the table, poured out the glittering coin before the astonished eyes of the artist.

"This is all thine," he said, "two thousand crowns paid to me for thee, by the purchaser of thy Magdalen—a goodly sum, and it comes, I am bold to say, not an hour too soon for thy wants, however thou mayest affect to despise it."

"And though my need of it were ten times greater than it is,—nay, though I were reduced to my last florin, yet would I not take that which in reality belongs to another," said the young man, pushing aside the shining heap, while a glow of noble pride mantled on his cheek. "The Count owes me not a sum like this—it was no Guido that I painted for him, and not yet are the efforts of my pencil worthy to bring me in wealth like a flood—let the gold remain with thee, good friend, till he learns the name of the artist whom he is to remunerate, and then if he will but give me his daughter —"

"Nonsense, Mignard," interposed the broker,—"if, as the Count thinks, thou hast painted like Guido, this sum is thy just due, and no more, and after all, it is but a drop in the ocean of his boundless wealth."

"Well, at least, good Roussard, keep it in store for me till the Count shall have learned that his precious Magdalen is the work of the despised Mignard—let him gloat upon his fancied treasure for awhile, and then shall the name of the true artist be whispered in his ear, with words which thou sayest he will never dare gainsay."

"But how wilt thou force him to believe that thou art the author of the piece in his possession?"

"I have provided for that—do thou but set in motion a doubt as to the true origin of the painting, which shall be sure to reach his ears—and if he is stirred by it, as he will be, and ask for proof, let him send for me, and he shall have that, which would silence the most incredulous."

"I see thou hast a plot to unravel; but it matters not—I will serve thee as best I may in the affair, not only for thy own sake, but because I owe this old Count a grudge, which I am glad in some measure to repay. Thou knowest, Pierre, that I was in my youth the victim of perfidy; but I have never told thee that it was this false De Clairville who bribed my betrothed wife, the mother of thy pretty Rosalie, from her parents. She was as sweet and gentle as thy mistress, and if she was for a time dazzled by her rich suitor's wealth, and submitted with but faint resistance to parental authority, I have reason to think she soon repented her obedience, and that she died as true to me in heart, as on the day when she first pledged those vows of love, which, to the unhappiness of both, she too soon, and fatally violated."

Roussard turned away to hide his unwonted emotion, but quickly recovering himself, "You now know," he resumed, "why I have so long lived a