

she replied to me, 'but Emilia then lived, though her health was shattered, and her spirit broken. She is now *religieuse*, in the convent of Catharine, of the order of Saint Augustine, under the name of sister Helena.'

" 'And her father—her excellent mother—and my friend Manfredi Zeno—what has become of them? Speak, my dear Bianca; speak, I conjure you.'

" 'The signor Morosoni and his lady, are now no more. The father of Emilia died four years since, and the Signor Beatrice shortly afterwards followed him to the tomb. As for Signor Manfredi, it is three years since he quitted Venice, to go to Vienna, and he had not returned at my departure. But you, sir, where have you been all these years? We all believed you dead; and Emilia, especially, thought you had perished.'

" 'I recounted the main particulars of my adventures to Bianca, and announced to her my determination to return to Venice. 'According to all probability, I shall not be able to see Emilia,' I said to her. 'I desire only that she should know of my destiny, and that my last sigh should be breathed near the walls of her living tomb.'

" 'In return, Bianca gave me a brief detail of the most prominent incidents of her life. After the fatal event which drove me from Venice, she had espoused Stefano, my valet. The kindness of my father had placed them in comfortable circumstances, but Stefano being persuaded to embark his little all in some commercial speculation, where he lost it, had now gone, in the service of an English nobleman, to France, but was expected shortly to return. In the meantime Bianca resided with his lady, in a villa in the neighbourhood of Milan.

" 'This fortunate rencontre appeared to me as a happy presage. It was, alas! a last delusion, and I indulged it freely. I begged Bianca to accept of some few pieces of gold I was able to bestow, and consulting my inclinations more than my strength, for my health was in no way completely established, I departed next day for Venice. In the meantime I had taken the precaution to assume a false name, knowing the danger I incurred by appearing in a city where the sentence of death was against me. On nearing its banks, you may judge of my feelings, as the towers and turrets of the adriatic queen burst upon me. After many years of exile, I had returned to the land of my fathers. Those only who have had the calamity to suffer banishment, can tell of the strange joy that takes possession of the heart—of the burnings,

throbbings—hopes and anxieties, which intoxicate and bewilder the soul. I will not express the boundless bursting happiness that rushed throughout me, as the gondola struck against the shore of the place which held my all of life.

" 'It was at the close of day that I sprang ashore in the square of Saint Marc. So lost was I in my feelings, that when the attendants requested where I should be conducted, I made no reply, and it was only after a repetition of the question that I remembered my situation, and told them it was, to me, alike indifferent. Being conducted to the hotel, I found myself so weak, that it was necessary for me to be supported to bed, but alas, repose was denied to me. Agitated by a thousand feelings, towards midnight I arose, and leaving the hotel, determined to await the dawn, under the walls of Saint Catharine. To effect this I had to pass the dwelling of my father. This was, to me, a new trial. I knelt upon the threshold, kissed the very ground with transport, and abandoned myself to the luxury of tears.

" 'Alas!' cried I, 'behold my paternal dwelling, now the home of the stranger.' At this moment a servant coming to the gate, and thinking that I meditated some nefarious design, spurned me from the place. I arose: my heart was bursting. I could not speak, but rushed from the spot in an agony of grief.

" 'I now repaired to the convent, where dwelt Emilia. As it is usual for all churches to open at the break of day, I fondly hoped that by entering thus early, before any of the inhabitants were present, I might get near to the walls of her monastic prison, and by some lucky chance be discovered to her. I entered the temple of Heaven, a universal silence reigned around, the only light came from the tapers of the altar, and the images seemed to glare angrily upon me, as if conscious of my unholy design. I found, however, that the gates leading from the aisle of the church to the monastery, were closed, and all hope of access denied me. Thus frustrated, I leaned against a pillar, with my eyes fixed upon the entrance to the living grave of my love. Not a being came to disturb the silence of the moment; not a sound was heard save the dashing of the waves against the banks of the canal, near to which stood the convent. The moon shone pale and melancholy through the windows.—I was sunk in a revery of deep reflection—the world was forgotten to me. I seemed to have passed from existence, to another and a better sphere, when suddenly the bell pro-