

enmity against the companion of your cradle—your only brother!

“‘And even if it is, mother,’ I bitterly replied, ‘whom does that injure—who suffers from it? No one. I swear to you, before high heaven, that my brother’s life, name and person, shall be ever sacred at my hands. Leave me, then, at least, the miserable revenge of thought.’

“Her tears still flowed fast as ever, and to soothe her, I made her a promise,—a promise I never intended to fulfill,—that, at the end of a year, which I would spend in travelling, I would return. It was all that her prayers and agonized entreaties could obtain from me, and though I kissed her again and again, exhausted every term of endearment and tenderness to console her, received her blessing on bended knee, I remained firm to my first intention; and early the following morning, without seeing Florestan, who was still in his apartment, I bade farewell to my home, inwardly registering an oath, that I would never dwell beneath its roof whilst it sheltered him. I travelled with all the rapidity and secrecy possible, and late on the evening of the third day, arrived at the small village of —, at which we were to change horses. It was a terrible night, and notwithstanding the wretched appearance of the one inn the place contained, and my own maniacal desire to bid farewell to England as soon as possible, I resolved to put up there till morning. I was shewn into the ‘best room,’ which contained neither book nor picture to counteract the gloomy appearance of the elemental warfare without, or the equally fierce tempest raging within my own breast. Like a caged lion I paced the narrow room, half resolved at times to brave the fury of the storm and pursue my journey; but the remonstrances of my servant, and the asseverations of the host, who swore to me that no fresh horses could be procured that night to replace our own jaded animals, rendered that impossible. Approaching the fire, I rested my arm on the mantel-piece and gazed moodily into the flames. Its sparkling, pleasant cheerfulness, reminded me strangely of home, and I thought of my mother, till tears rained down from my eyes and fell hissing on the hearth at my feet. That holy thought, however, brought no gentle influences in its train, it softened not the bitterness of the feelings I entertained for the once loved companion of my boyhood. Alas! It seemed as if heaven, in punishment of my blind attachment to the vice I had never sought to curb, had at length delivered me up completely to its unholy influence. I recalled Florestan; but it was to brand him as my scourge, my persecutor—as the enemy who had degraded me from my standard

as a man, who had exiled me from home, country, and the mother I worshipped. Each succeeding thought became bitterer, until I had again lashed myself up to passionate wrath, when the door suddenly opened, and a tall stranger, enveloped in a cloak, which was completely saturated with rain, entered. He silently advanced to the fire-place, from which I slightly drew back to make way for him, turned towards me, and after a moment’s pause, threw back his cloak. It was my brother. Involuntarily I recoiled from him, and my feelings must have been plainly depicted in my countenance, for he sadly exclaimed:

“‘Unforgiving still, Edgar! What can I say—what can I do to atone for my fault?’

“‘Avoid me, as I have avoided you,’ was my cruel reply. ‘We will then avert from the future the scenes that have branded the past!’

“His lip quivered, and after a moment’s silence, he rejoined:

“‘Would to God that you had returned my blow, insulted, outraged me! ‘Twould all have been over now. Oh! upbraid, reproach me as you will; but, do not, Edgar, do not forsake your happy home—the mother, whose pride, whose favorite you are, and, and—yes, I will say it, sneer as you will, the brother who loves you as he loves none else.’

“To this passionate appeal I rejoined with a cold, withering smile, ‘Well might you caution me not to sneer; you have said enough to move me to it. Let it pass, however. I will but tell you, that I have sworn before heaven, Florestan, that the same roof shall never again shelter us both. Desist, then, from importunities that have no more weight with me than the murmuring of the winds.’

“His cheek, till then deeply flushed, grew deadly pale, and he murmured in a low tone:

“‘Well; be it so. I had not thought your resentment had gone so far; yet it will not prevent me from accomplishing, to the end, the purpose that brought me here,—the promise I have made my mother. Edgar,’ and he drew nearer, fixing, as he spoke, his dark thrilling eyes on my face, ‘once, already, have I humbled myself before you, in the presence, too, of all those who had been witnesses to the offence you have visited with so implacable a resentment. Undeterred by your stern refusal, I have followed you from home; and now again do I stand in your presence, an humble suppliant for your forgiveness. I know that I have wronged and outraged you; but surely, my remorse, my self-abnegation, have expiated my boyish fault! I conjure you, then, by the memory of our boyhood’s affection, our later fraternal love, by the name of the mother we both honor