

pangs of jealousy ; not that he believed his friend would interfere and dispute with him the possession of the gem which he had discovered, and over which he internally claimed a right of property, but he was oppressed with an uneasy sentiment of future ill, and tormented with a diffidence as to his own powers of pleasing, that made him say adieu to Marie and her father with cold gratitude—that seemed afterwards to them, and to him when reflection came, sheer ingratitude.

When he had completely recovered his strength, he recovered also to a certain extent his serenity of mind. Bartuccio was often with him, and never mentioned the subject of Marie. One day, therefore, in a state of mingled hope and love, he resolved to pay a visit to his kind host ; and set out on foot. The day was sunny ; the landscape, though rugged, beautiful with light ; a balmy breeze played gently on his cheek. The intoxication of returning strength filled him with confidence and joy. He met the old doctor herborising a little way from his house, and saluted him so cordially, that a hearty shake of the hand was added to the cold bow with which he was at first received. Giustiniani understood a little of botany, and pleased the old man by his questions and remarks. They walked slowly towards the house together. When they reached it, M. Brivard quietly remarked : “ You will find my daughter in the garden,” and went in with the treasures he had collected. The young man’s heart bounded with joy. Now was the time. He would throw himself at once at Marie’s feet, confess the turbulent passion she had excited, and receive from her lips his sentence of happiness, or—No, he would not consider the alternative ; and with bounding step and eager eye, he ran over the garden, beneath the orange and the myrtle trees until he reached a little arbour at the other extremity.

What he saw might well plunge him at once into despair. Marie had just heard and approved the love of Bartuccio, who had clasped her, not unwilling, to his breast. Their moment of joy was brief, for in another instant Bartuccio was on the ground, with Giustiniani’s knee upon his breast, and a bright poniard glittered in the air. “ Spare him—spare him ! ” cried the unfortunate girl, sinking on her knees. The accepted lover struggled in vain in the grasp of his frenzied rival, who, however, forbore to strike. “ Swear Marie,” he said, “ by your mother’s memory, that you will not marry him for five years, and I will give him a respite for so long.” She swore with earnestness ; and the next moment, Giustiniani had broken through the hedge, and was rushing frantically towards Santa Maddalena.

When he recovered from his confusion, Bartuccio, who, from his physical inferiority, had been reduced to a passive part in this scene, endeavoured to persuade Marie that she had taken an absurd oath, which she was not bound to abide by ; but M. Brivard, though he had approved his daughter’s choice, knew well the Corsican character, and decreed that, for the present, at least, all talk of marriage should be set aside. In vain Bartuccio pleaded the rights of an accepted lover. The old man became more obstinate, and not only insisted that his daughter should abide by her promise, but hinted that if any attempt were

made to oppose his decision, he would at once leave the country.

As may well be imagined, Bartuccio returned to the city with feelings of bitter hatred against his former friend ; and it is probable that wounded pride worked upon him as violently as disappointed passion. He was heard by several persons to utter vows of vengeance—rarely meaningless in that uncivilised island—and few were surprised when next day the news spread that Giustiniani had disappeared. Public opinion at once pointed to Bartuccio as the murderer. He was arrested, and a careful investigation was instituted ; but nothing either to exculpate or inculpate him transpired, and after some months of imprisonment, he was liberated.

Five years elapsed. During the first half of the period, Bartuccio, was coldly received by both M. Brivard and his daughter, although he strenuously protested his innocence. Time, however, worked in his favour, and he at length assumed the position of a betrothed lover, so that no one was surprised when, at the expiration of the appointed time, the marriage took place. Many wondered indeed why, since Giustiniani had disappeared, and was probably dead, any regard was paid to the extorted promise, whilst all augured well of the union which was preceded by so signal an instance of good faith. The observant, indeed, noticed that throughout the ceremony, Bartuccio was absent and uneasy—looking round anxiously, over the crowd assembled, from time to time. “ He is afraid to see the ghost of Giustiniani,” whispered an imprudent bystander. The bridegroom caught the last word, and starting as if he had received a stab, cried : “ Where, where ? ” No one answered ; and the ceremony proceeded in ominous gloom.

Next day, Bartuccio and his young wife, accompanied by M. Brivard, left Santa Maddalena without saying whether they were going ; and the good people of the town made many strange surmises on the subject. In a week or so, however, a vessel being wrecked in the Straits, furnished fresh matter of conversation ; and all these circumstances became utterly forgotten, except by a few. “ But this drama was as yet crowned by no catastrophe,” said the officer, “ and all laws of harmony would be violated if it ended here.” “ Are you, then, inventing ? ” inquired I. “ Not at all,” he replied : “ but destiny is a greater tragedian than Shakspeare, and prepares *dénouements* with superior skill.” I listened with increased interest.

The day after the departure of the married couple, a small boat with a shoulder-of-mutton sail left the little harbour of Santa Maddalena a couple of hours before sunset, and with a smart breeze on its quarter, went bravely out across the Straits. Some folks who were accustomed to see this manœuvre had, it is true, shouted out to the only man on board, warning him that rough weather was promised ; but he paid no heed, and continued on his way. If I were writing a romance, if, indeed, I had any reasonable space, I would keep up the excitement of curiosity for some time, describe a variety of terrific adventures unknown to seamen, and wonderful escapes comprehensible only by landmen, and thus make a subordinate hero of the bold navigator. But I