

ters in piety and love had knelt round her grave, mingling their prayers with tears, half of sorrow for her death, half of sympathy for her present bliss; then each hung her white garland on it, until it became a trophy of white blossoms, and so they all departed in prayer and religious resignation. The bereaved parents alone remained on the spot where their all of earthly joy was buried. Long and fervently that mother prayed! Now she cast her eyes to Heaven, as if there she could trace the flight of her child to bliss! and now she cast them to the earth, as nature would have its way, and her heart was wrung with sad thoughts of the coffin and the worm, and all that makes death horrible to the mind of man. What a contrast those mourners made, each weeping over an object apparently equally dear to both. It was religion and its absence—frenzied sorrow, and silent resignation—the madness of proud despair and the tranquillity of humble hope. The mother's heart was torn with anguish, but supported by an innate sense of religion, which whispered sweet thoughts of the happiness of her child, and hopes of a future union with her. But the father, his face was of despair, earthly despair—the despair of having lost one most dear, without the chance of ever beholding her again. For him there was no hope in God, no belief in the immortality of the soul,—annihilation was written on his brow; and too surely did he seem to think, that all yet remaining of the bright child of his household was mingling for ever in the dust at his feet. The Cross was before him and he turned not to it for consolation or for prayer: Heaven was above him; he raised not his wistful glances thither: but with the strong grasp of despair he

clutched some fading flowers from the grave, and gazed upon it with a fixed and downward look, as if he still sought to pierce through its awful gloom, and there, and there alone, had thought or hoped to behold his child. For this man religion existed not and God himself was as nothing in his eyes. The thought made me shudder and I turned aside. A slight shriek woke me from my reverie; I turned again, I beheld him with frantic eagerness trying to tear aside the earth that veiled his child from his sight. The woman had been roused by this action of madness, and with tears entreated him to desist from his purpose. He heeded her not, and was actually making some progress in his mad design, when she saw me and brought me to assist in calming him. I did what I could: it would have been idle to talk to this man of religion, or of its consolation, but I kept my eyes upon him, and talked for a long time, quietly endeavouring to lead his mind from the subject that engrossed it; and when he seemed calmer, I advised him to retire, adding that he could return later, when there would be fewer spectators of his sorrow.

“Yes, yes!” sobbed the poor woman. “In the calm evening, dear Pierre; that was the hour our Marie loved.”

These words seemed to strike him; he rose, and suffered us, for he was utterly exhausted by the violence of his grief, to lead him to his home. Once there, he retired to an inner chamber; his wife would have followed him, but I advised her to suffer this solitary indulgence of his sorrow. She complied, and gently thanked me for my kindness.

“But for your kindness,” she said, in a tone of deep feeling, “he would have succeeded in —” The idea was too horrible, and she broke off suddenly.