

of quitting the apartment, when the marchese, interposing between her and the door, said, "Stay but a moment, Bianca, and hear my resolve. I am a ruined and desperate man. Your wealth alone can save me, and I will halt at no means to make it mine. To-morrow night, I repeat, you are the bride of my son, or a prisoner for the rest of your days. Now go to your chamber, and make your election."

Bianca rushed from the room, and sought her own apartment, where, flinging herself upon the bosom of her cousin Emilia, she gave vent to the tears which pride had repressed in the presence of her tyrant guardian, and acquainted her with the doom which had been pronounced against her. Emilia was giddy and thoughtless, but she was wanting neither in feeling nor spirit; and thus her words of condolence with her cousin, were mingled with expressions of the deepest indignation against her unmanly persecutor.

That night was a sleepless night to the two cousins, who rose from their beds unrefreshed and sad.

"Emilia!" exclaimed Bianca, "you will think me weak and credulous; but we have twice proved the power of our mysterious guest. I will test it the third time;" and as she spoke she took the sprig of myrtle from a vase in which she had deposited it, and placed it on her bosom.

The day wore on; evening approached, and then, with every moment, fled a portion of the hope,—vague it is true,—which had sustained her. To add to her perplexity and grief, there came a message from the marchese, expressive of his expectation that she would attire herself in her bridal dress within half an hour of sunset.

"O, Emilia!" cried the girl, her spirit giving way under the weight of her sorrow. "I am lost, lost!—abandoned by Heaven and by man!"

"Heaven abandons not the innocent!" exclaimed a voice, as the door opened and disclosed to them the welcome sight of Rolandi. "Did the ivy fail thee, that thou shouldst distrust the myrtle?" he continued. "Behold!—I am here!"

The gravity that was wont to mark his countenance, relaxed into a benevolent expression as he spoke; and, Bianca, reassured by his presence, explained to him the strait in which she was placed.

"Trust me," responded the stranger, "yet a little while, and all may still be well. Do as thou art bidden;—array thyself as a bride, and obey the summons to the altar, inasmuch as resistance will only provoke insult and outrage from those who will not hesitate to drag thee thither;—but when there,—be firm. And now, for a brief season, farewell. Matters of import require my presence elsewhere; but trust one whose tongue knows not the pollution of a lie, I will be with thee in the hour of trial."

The hour appointed for the bridal ceremony arrived, and Francesco, with the grin of a satyr, presented himself to conduct Bianca to the altar of the castle chapel. The fair girl shrank from the pollution of his touch, and sought the more welcome support of her cousin, Emilia; while the self-elected bridegroom, having no alternative but to walk by their side, looked as amiable as an alighting before breakfast.

On entering the chapel, they found the priest at the altar, by the side of which were the marchese and the whole of his guests. Bianca suffered herself to be conducted by her uncle to the altar; but when there, she protested firmly and solemnly against the violence which had been offered to her inclination, and appealed to the assembly for protection.

Alas! of those to whom that appeal was made, the majority had long since been deaf to the voice of honour; while those who were not utterly lost to a sense of shame, felt that they were too few to venture on remonstrance with any chance of success. There was one, however, who wanted neither the heart to feel nor the courage to denounce the atrocity of the proceeding.

"Marchese!" exclaimed Lorenzo, rushing between Bianca and her uncle, "think not that I will tamely witness the profanation you would perpetrate." As he spoke he laid his hand upon the hilt of his sword; but the marchese had been prepared for the interruption, and before Lorenzo could draw his weapon, he was seized from behind by two of the other's myrmidons, who dragged him from the chapel.

Bianca again implored the protection of the bystanders; but the marchese, as with a look of triumph he marked on their countenances the effect of her appeal, exclaimed, "Infatuated girl! you might as well call for succour upon the bones of your dead ancestors which lie crumbling beneath you. You are beyond the reach of human aid. Listen then to me for the last time. There is the altar, and there the portal which, once closed upon you, you will never pass again."

As he spoke the last words, he pointed to an arched door, closing the entrance to a passage leading to the western turret, which had been used in former years as a place of confinement, and, according to tradition, had been the scene of many foul and murderous deeds.

"Lady," resumed the marchese, "we wait your election,—the altar or the dungeon?"

"The dungeon!—nay, death itself would be bliss compared

with the fate to which such a marriage would consign me!" replied, or rather shrieked the wretched girl.

"The dungeon be it then," was the rejoinder of the marchese. "Away with her!"

In obedience to his mandate, two of his satellites advanced towards Bianca for the purpose of removing her, when Emilia rushed forward, and flinging herself upon the neck of her cousin, exclaimed, "Bianca, they shall not part us! As we have lived, so will we die—together."

Her feeble resistance, however, availed little against the strength of those who knew no law but their tyrant's will, and the cousins were soon parted. Bianca was dragged towards the fatal portal; the door was flung open, and though it was yet day-light, disclosed a cavern as dark as Erebus. "A torch there!" exclaimed the marchese, who stepped forward to receive one at the hands of an attendant, and then led the way to the mouth of the passage; into which, however, he had scarcely set his foot, when, to the consternation of himself and his followers, the glare of the torch was reflected by the weapons of a large body of men armed to the teeth.

"Treason!" exclaimed the marchese, as he dropped the torch and fell back upon his party.

"Thou hast well said," was the rejoinder of one who emerged suddenly from the gloom, and in whom Bianca instantly recognised Rolandi.

"The duke! the duke!" was the simultaneous exclamation of the marchese and his adherents; while the individual whom they thus rightly designated, advanced and caught the sinking girl in his arms, whispering, "Said I not sooth? Bianca?" Then turning towards the dark portal, he added, "Advance, guards, and do your duty."

The marchese and his party, however, stopped not to try conclusions with a body of men infinitely superior in number and arms to themselves, and therefore rushed precipitately from the chapel. "Fools!" exclaimed the duke, as he watched the retreat of the traitorous band, "ye but rush from Charybdis upon Scylla."

Leaving the duke to conduct his charge to her apartment, whither Emilia had already been conveyed, in a state almost of insensibility, by some of the female domestics, we will return to Lorenzo. The tumult consequent upon the sudden appearance of the ducal troops had reached his ears in his chamber, to which he had been forced; and having soon ascertained the position of affairs, and fearing that, innocent though he was, he should share the fate of his guilty associates, he rushed off with the view of securing a steed for his flight; but finding that he could not accomplish his object without the hazard of being cut to pieces, he retraced his steps in the hope of concealing himself until the fury of the melee had somewhat abated. Unluckily, in the hurry of his retreat he stumbled over the body of one of the slain, and before he could regain his legs, the sword of one of the duke's troopers was raised above his head. At the very instant, however, that death appeared inevitable, the soldier dropped his weapon, exclaiming, "Thank the gloves in your cap, fair sir, that you are not cloven to the chine; the duke spares your life, but if you would remain safe, you must follow me to his presence."

Lorenzo had the wisdom to take the hint, and, after a few minutes' delay, he was admitted to an audience of the duke; who had but ill succeeded in calming Emilia's apprehension for the safety of her lover, by assuring her that the gloves, which she had prevailed on him to wear in the manner described, would protect him. "There," exclaimed his highness, as Lorenzo entered, with somewhat of the air of a culprit, "said I not that he was safe?" Then, turning to Lorenzo, he added, in a somewhat graver tone, "As for you, young gentleman, I acquit you of any participation in this plot; but you appear to have read to marvellously little profit the fable of the bird that had its neck wrung for being found in suspicious company."

The duke's explanation of the circumstances which had enabled him so successfully to enact the wizard guest, was a very simple one. He owed much to the connivance of Alberto, who had formerly held a humble post about the ducal court, and through whom he had been kept informed of the state of affairs at the castle before his visit, which, though having the appearance of accident, was part of the duke's plan. The apparently mysterious influence exercised by him over the bandit chief was referable to the fact of the latter having been, ere he fell from his "high estate," a friend and companion of the duke; and his highness, well knowing the other's disposition, had rightly calculated on his being overawed when confronted by his sovereign. The conveyance of the two letters and their accompaniments to the toilettes of the ladies, was effected through the instrumentality of Alberto; and it is unnecessary to add that the duke was only feigning sleep when the gloves were won.

The mystery of the ivy leaf was explained by the circumstance of the duke having had, through Alberto and other sources, cognizance of the marchese's plot in all its details and ramifications, and it having come to the knowledge of his highness, that a friend of Vincentio about the court had promised, in the event of his participation in his father's plot being discovered, to warn him of his

danger by sending him an ivy leaf,—the emblem of ruin. With regard to the sprig of myrtle, the duke had arranged with Alberto, that when he perceived it in Bianca's bosom, he should instantly communicate the circumstance to his highness, who had provided the means of constant and rapid intercourse between them. The subsequent admission of the duke to the castle, and finally of the ducal troops, was also contrived by Alberto, who was intimately acquainted with the subterranean outlets of the place.

The duke's stay at the castle after the events which we have narrated, was short; but in the course of it, and one or two subsequent visits, he succeeded in convincing Bianca of the superiority of the ducal palace as a residence, to the castle; where she therefore shortly afterwards took up her abode, as the partner of his honours and his love.

Emilia and Lorenzo followed the matrimonial example. The gloves were highly prized, laid up in lavender, and transmitted to their posterity as a heirloom; although history does not inform us whether Emilia ever explained to her liege lord the manner of their acquisition. It is said, however, that the duke was wont to look very significantly at her, whenever the gloves were alluded to.

THE CHRISTIAN BATTLE CALL.—"Every thing calls upon you my christian brethren to take up arms in the cause of Him who died for you: and now he who stands amongst you as the bearer of the standard, unfurls it in the midst of the sacramental host of God's elect; and he tells you to come forth and rank yourselves to the full extent of your power, and go into the fields of conflict, to the battle of the mighty powers of the universe. My christian friends, we are anxious, transcendently anxious, that you should perform your commission, feeling as we do, in the powerful language of a departed minister, "that the Spirit of God must evangelize the church before the church can evangelize the world." I address you, young and old, as the disciples of the cross; and I would use the words of poesy, to which the music of many a drawing-room has sounded, which the lips of many a beauty have uttered, and at which, moreover, the heart of many a listener has thrilled—"Go where glory awaits you!" Not the glory of the warrior's battle, which is a scene of confused noise, and of garments rolled in blood;—not the glory of seeking to trample on the rights of nations, and cementing your monuments of fame with the blood of the slaughtered, and with the tears of the widow and the orphan;—not the glory of ruling in the empire of depravity, and sealing the doom and eternal perdition of your fellow-men. "Go where glory awaits you!" The glory of ransoming enthralled and enslaved spirits;—the glory of planting trees of righteousness in place of the poison-trees of sin;—the glory of striking off the fetters of the enslaved, bringing forth the captives into the glorious liberty of the children of God, producing the joy of the angels over multitudes of sinners brought to repentance, and hastening the coming of the period when the children of the earth, with one acclaim, shall celebrate the arrival of the liberty wherewith Christ hath made them free. "Go where glory awaits you!"—And if you die, you will fall—to use the phrase employed by modern warriors—alas, how desecrated and abused!—you will die "covered with glory." A glory beyond the reach of mortality will await you; for "they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever." —James Parsons.

DOMESTIC LIFE.—Pleasure is to woman what the sun is to the flower; if moderately enjoyed, it beautifies, it refreshes and it improves; if immoderately, it withers, deteriorates and destroys. But the duties of domestic life, exercised, as they must be, in retirement, and calling forth all the sensibilities of the female, are, perhaps, as necessary to the full development of her charms, as the shade and the shower are to the rose, confirming its beauty, and increasing its fragrance.

THE ANGEL'S BIDDING.

Brother, come up—oh leave the earth
And all its sordid cares awhile,
And reassert thy heavenly birth,
Where all creation's glories smile—
O hither come!

Brother, come up—our skies are fair,
No clouds come o'er the face of day,
No storms deform the balmy air
That loves around our hills to play—
O hither come!

Brother, come up!—the flowers bloom
In earth's fair garden, fade and die,
But here they wait their soft perfume,
Thro' heaven's sweet vale to rise,
O hither come!

Brother, come up—! earth still lures
The heart that loves a changing scene—
Be thine the realms that still endure,
In beauty perfect and serene.
O hither come!