

— Beautiful Virgin, mother of God, what will become of us ?

— Cursed, a thousand times cursed be your mother, who avaricious and wicked, has by her obstinacy forced me into the precipice !

— Stop in the name of heaven, Renzo ! speak not so of my mother. Alas ! she thought she was doing for the best. Come, let us sit here, I will tell you the dream I had during the night, I am sure it will revive your courage.

The young girl then related to him, how she had seen, after a wreck, the beautiful Madonna, mother of God, open to them the gates of paradise, and unite their hands in sign of alliance, promising them an eternal beatitude in the celestial abodes to make them forget all the evils they had endured on earth.

The young man listened with avidity to these details which accorded so well with his own sentiments.

— I know it, I know it, Tonia ! it is only in heaven that we shall be happy.

Renzo sat with his arms crossed on his breast and his head bent forward like a man buried in thought, he kept silence for some time. Tonia observed him attentively, and caught the tears as they flowed from her lover's eyes.

The sun was high in the horizon, when a mountaineer, who was laying at some paces from the young couple, though unperceived, saw them direct their steps towards the holy chapel of the Madonna, situated at a short distance : it was at the moment when the divine sacrifice was being celebrated. Renzo and Tonia devoutly confessed, took the sacrament of communion, and were seen to touch each other's forehead and breast with a drop of the holy oil that burns before the image of the Madonna, a certain sign that a vow had just been made by them, but the object of which was not known until some time after.

Love had exalted the imagination of these unfortunates, and misfortune finished by deranging their heads. They had promis-