

reward it. Yet compassion, not love, was the motive that induced him to offer his hand to Almeria; for Montbelliard assured him that the unhappy lady was pining with a hopeless and unrequited attachment for him. St. Amande observed her narrowly, and her blushes and tremors, whenever he spoke to her, convinced him that his friend's conjectures were well founded; and he resolved to offer her his hand, as soon as he returned from an enterprise he meditated against Porto Bello.

Almeria received an intimation to this effect from Montbelliard; she till then had fancied that the intelligence would make her perfectly happy; but she soon discovered her mistake, for the event she so ardently desired, as it drew near, filled her with remorse—the stings of conscience incessantly pierced her guilty bosom, and her slumbers were haunted by the image of her injured friend. Yet her mad affection for St. Amande prevailed over these self-upbraidings. She could not resolve to renounce the reward of her evil deeds, and resign the man she loved; and she tried to still the mental tortures she endured, by painting in her own mind the sweets of domestic happiness, and the pride and pleasure she should feel in calling the pirate chief of Tortuga her own; and hope again prevailed over her fears. She knew not that death would be the guest of her bridal, and that her punishment would follow fast upon the consummation of her crime.

CHAPTER VIII.

"And the wild sparkle of his eye seemed caught
From high, and lightened with electric thought;
Though its black orb, those long low lashes fringe,
Had tempered with a melancholy tinge,
Yet, less of sorrow than of pride was there,
Or, if 'twere grief, a grief that none should share."

BYRON.

A MOTLEY group, composed of various nations, assembled on the beach to hail the return of the victorious St. Amande and his associates, from the conquest of the wealthy town of Porto Bello,—and a wild swell of voices united in a rude chorus of gratulation and praise, as the Buccaneer chief landed, loaded with spoil, and attended by a number of Indians, whose fetters he had broken, and whom he had invited to share his island home.

This tribute of affection found its way even to his melancholy bosom—a proud joy lighted up his eye—a long, long absent feeling of gladness entered his soul as his ear drank in those martial and triumphant sounds. He felt that he was beloved by his followers—trusted by them; and this

simple proof of their regard was more valuable than all the gold and jewels he had won. Suddenly the lofty expression of exultation faded from his brow, and his bounding heart became still as death, for, mingling its sweet clear tones with that rude harmony, arose the voice of her, whose harmonious breath he deemed was long since hushed for ever. The gay scene vanished from his sight; he no longer saw the mixed and motley multitude that surrounded him, or heard the joyous shout of the feathered Indian, and bold Buccaneer. A lonely spot—a cliff whose base was worn by the ceaseless swell of the billows, seemed to rise before his eyes. A fair shrinking form stood on the verge of that dizzy height, struggling with the ruffian who appeared to impel her towards the edge of the precipice. Her frantic scream, and the sweep of the wind over the deep, deep water, were the only sounds that met his ear! Unconsciously he covered his face, and echoed that cry!

"What ails thee, Henri?" whispered Montbelliard, in an admonitory tone; and the sound of his voice dispelled the vision fancy had created from the mind of the pirate.

"A sudden pang," was his brief reply, as with a powerful effort he mastered his emotion, and averted his eyes from Montbelliard, to avoid meeting his penetrating look, and half sarcastic smile.

At that moment, St. Amande caught the glance of a black youth, whose large, lustrous, melancholy dark eye, was rivetted upon his face with a searching, and at the same time a watchful expression. Angry and indignant as he felt at this daring scrutiny, there was something in the boy's countenance, that not only disarmed his wrath, but attracted him to look again. A nameless spell lurked beneath the long fringes that shaded those liquid orbs, that completely fascinated his attention, and charmed away his displeasure. Even the black veil that covered his fine features could not rob them of the palm of beauty, and the dark ringlets that escaped from under his snowy turban, might have rendered the most lovely lady proud.

"Hector, who is that youth," asked St. Amande. "Surely I have seen such features before now!"

"A captive I brought from Porto Bello. I found him in the church, and spared him from the slaughter, for which favor he seems most grateful. 'Tis a pretty youth, more fitting for a lady's page, than our rude way of life. He comes from the east—speaks many tongues with ease—touches a lute with skill, and sings most sweetly. Yet, with all these gifts, I think the boy is crazed, for