

THE LITERARY GARLAND.

VOL. III.

OCTOBER, 1845.

No. 10.

THE PEARL-FISHER:

A TALE OF THE BUCCANEERS.

FROM THE FRENCH OF EMMANUEL GONZALEZ.

BY EDMOND HUGOMONT.

LII.

SELF-SACRIFICE.

JOACHIM was in despair at not having been able to speak to Donna Carmen. All his thoughts were concentrated in her, and a pang shot through his heart whenever he remembered that death was about to separate them. Even the endeavours of his uncle to rouse and cheer him, seemed irksome to him.

"The son of Bernard de Cossé ought to await his doom with calmness," said the Leopard to him at last.

"If I might have seen and spoken to her once more," replied Joachim. "I could have met death without quailing in the slightest. But her image is constantly before me; my thoughts are constantly occupied with her. Yes! this noble, generous girl, is the sole passion of my life. The air is not more necessary to my lungs, than the recollection of her is to my heart."

"Come, Joachim!" urged the Leopard; "meet your fate with the fortitude becoming a brave buccaneer!"

"Alas! my uncle!" replied the young man, with a melancholy smile; "this prison contains only the most miserable part of myself; all that is active and vigorous of my mind, wanders, spite of itself, around that charming countenance, pale with suffering and sorrow—those eyes which have shed their pearly tears over me—that mouth, whose sweet words have poured such consolation o'er my heart, under all the harshness of poor Michel le Basque. Oh! when I think that I shall never see her more, that my heart shall soon cease to beat for her, it seems to me almost as if such thoughts inspired me with the fear of death."

"Unhappy boy! darrest thou to speak thus before me?" said the Leopard, sternly.

"Oh! fear nothing, uncle!" continued Joachim, sadly. "It is not Donna Carmen who will make me a coward—she for whose sake I would have marched through a city in flames. But at times I cannot help believing that I am not yet to die; even the last malignant words of Fray Eusebio sounded in my ears like a prediction of good fortune."

"You had better take some repose, my lad!" replied the buccaneer, gently. "Sleep will calm the agitation of mind which now troubles thee."

"Yes! I am agitated," returned Joachim; "for I expect and hope—what? I know not. Life, liberty, Carmen—all these, perchance! Oh! my brain reels; I nu—I must be mad!"

And the unhappy young man burst into a loud, wild laugh.

"The heat is intolerable here," said the Leopard, remarking with uneasiness the thick sweat that rained down from his nephew's forehead.

"Ah!" exclaimed the latter, as he went to catch a breath of fresh air at the small cross-barred window; "how torturing is such confinement, when doubt and hope have found their way into the heart! The blood rushes through my veins like fire. My mouth is parched with thirst!"

"I have still something in my gourd, Joachim!" said the buccaneer, his countenance suddenly lighted up.

Whilst Joachim, absorbed in reverie, was gazing through the grating, the Leopard hastily poured into the gourd a few drops from the silver flask he had received from Carmen, and then held it towards him with a trembling hand. The buccaneer shuddered as the young man raised it to his lips. Perhaps he had in his haste poured out too much of the opium, and the draught might be fatal; but it was now too late to remedy it, and he awaited the event with anxiety.