

"But I have no second," said Don Juan, "and I am come to request you will perform that office for me." The nun started at the appeal; this confidence in her courage sent a thrill through her heart. But a cloud suddenly passed her brow—a thought had come between her and her friend—she frowned as she looked at Don Juan with suspicion—she thought he wanted to betray her.

"Why fight beyond the walls, and at such an hour?" said she, fixing upon his countenance those eyes which always sparkled with a flame of the darkest ferocity. Don Juan made no reply. From her look and the tone of her voice, he had guessed her suspicions.

"Alonzo!" he said at length, "since you refuse your services, I will go unattended; for I have confidence in no one but you."

"I will go; I will attend you!" cried Catalina.

The clock of the convent had just struck ten, when Don Juan came to fetch her. Both were wrapped in large brown capes, under which they carried their swords, whilst the *sombrero* concealed their faces.

"These preparations would be more necessary at any other time," observed Catalina, as they both continually stumbled from the darkness of the night.

The moon had not yet risen; the sky was overcast, the weather stormy, and not a star to be seen. They found Juan's adversary, with his second, waiting for them. He who was to fight with Don Juan was a knight of St. Jago named Don Francisco de Rojas. The moment he perceived them coming towards him, he advanced to the skirt of the wood, took off his cloak and *sombrero*, and, addressing Don Juan, observed that all reconciliation between them being impossible, they had better not waste in useless words the time which might be more advantageously employed in the work of vengeance. Don Juan bowed in silent acquiescence, drew his sword, and the combat began. Meanwhile, the two seconds on the skirt of the wood, and close to the combatants, took care of the capes and *somberos*, concealing, however their faces from each other, which Catalina was most anxious to do. They would perhaps have quitted each other without recognition, had not Catalina on seeing Don Juan receive a wound and stagger, cried out. "That was the blow of a base and cowardly traitor!"

"Thou liest!" replied the second of Don Francisco de Rojas.

Catalina approached the stranger with her dagger in her hand: in an instant two blades of steel sparkled in the shade; and the silence of the forest, which had been interrupted by the strife of the two principals only, was broken in upon by a deadly combat, arising from no other cause than the insatiable thirst of a woman for blood. Scarcely were the hostile weapons opposed to each other, ere Don Francisco's friend fell, mortally wounded. He asked for a priest. On hearing the agonized cry of her victim, Catalina's heart became vulnerable for the first time. She thought she knew the voice; and, leaning over the dying man, she recognized, by the uncertain light of the moon, which had just risen, features which struck her with remorse.

"Who are you then?" she asked, as if reproaching her victim with the crime she had just committed.

"Captain Michael de Eraso," replied the dying man. The unhappy woman had killed her brother.

BASHFULNESS.—There are two distinct sorts of what we call bashfulness; this, the awkwardness of a body, which a few steps into the world convert into the pertness of a coxcomb; that, a consciousness, which the most delicate feelings produce, and the most extensive knowledge cannot always remove.

LOVE.—There is something soothing and delightful in the recollection of a pure-minded woman's affection; it is the oasis in the desert of a worldly man's life, to which his feelings turn for refreshment, when wearied with the unhalloved passion of this work-a-day world.

THE PAST.—Past time is the sepulchre of generations that are gone; we should respect it, but we should not wish to bury ourselves and live in it.

THE CHANGING WORLD.

By Mrs. Hale.

How the world's aspect changes!—doth it change?

Or are those changes in the eye that gazes?

Mark the light hearted boy—all earth is strange

And new, but lovely: and he laughs and praises,

And makes his life a holiday, nor dreams

His bounding foot will ever press the thorn:

The world he treads as fair and softened seems

As far off mountains robed in hues of morn.

There comes a change—when youth with burning thought,

Roams o'er the sunny fields in search of roses;

And he may pluck them but they're dearly bought,

For every step some blasted scene discloses—

And the flowers wither ere the wreath is twin'd—

Haste! seize another—'twill be all the same;

His flowers he scatters to the passing wind,

Sighs and confesses, "Pleasure's but a name!"

There comes a change—when manhood walks abroad;

He seeks no roses, let the frail things wither;

The path he chooses, mighty men have trod,

And on he rushes, scarcely heeding whither;

But shining dust is scattered o'er the ground,

He stoops to grasp it and is bowed forever!

Though heaven's transcendent glories beam around,

The mind intent on gold regards them never.

There comes a change—when age, with sunken eye,

Hath lost his vision, and the mists have gathered;

Then life's dark shadows o'er the cold world lie—

No spring can blossom when the heart is withered;

And all is worthless—even gold grows dim—

But, dying mortal, turn and look above thee!

There see Hope's star still burns, to guide to Him,

Who from the throne of Heaven hath stooped to love thee!

A SCENE DURING THE PLAGUE IN MILAN, 1630.

Translated from "*I Promessi Sposi*" of Manzoni.

Through the very heart of this frightful desolation, Renzo made his way; nor paused, till uncertain which of two roads to take. He was about to turn down the one indicated to him, when there issued from it a horrible confusion of sounds, above which was clearly distinguishable the sharp, appealing tinkle which preceded the pest carts; he shuddered, yet went on, with difficulty threading his way through the street broad as it was. Three of these horrible vehicles followed one upon another, and now stopped. The scene which followed might not inaptly be compared to a corn market; there was a hurrying to and fro of persons and burdens, sacks filled and emptied of their contents. **Monatti* hurrying into the houses, others coming out, tottering beneath the burdens they carried on their shoulders, which they deposited with little precaution on one or the other of the carts; some in their red liveries, others without this insignia, and a still greater number distinguished by one more revolting, with jerkins and plumes of various colors, as if to denote that this fearful public calamity were to them a festival. From window to window there issued at each moment a sepulchral sound, which scarce resembled the human voice, though it articulated "*Ina Monatti!*" then with a sound yet more sinister there arose above the sad wailing, a sharp voice in reply "*adess' adesso!*" With these there mingled heart-rending lamentations, and entreaties to make speed, to which the *Monatti* replied with impatient oaths. Renzo pursued his way endeavouring to bestow no more attention on the obstacles in his path, than was necessary to avoid stumbling over them; till, at length, his shrinking gaze fixed on a sight of peculiar and touching misery—a sight which, whilst it prompted, rived, the soul to contemplate. He stood transfixed to the spot as it were spell bound. Down the steps of one of the largest houses, there descended a graceful female form,

*Thus were denominated the men to whom was assigned the laborious and perilous task of removing dead bodies from the houses, the roads, and the Lazaretto to the pit which formed one vast tomb for rich and poor; as well as to conduct those suffering under the disease to the Lazaretto, and superintend the burning of infected apparel.

her appearance denoted that if the first bloom of youth had passed, its prime had not. On her sweet countenance were traces of loveliness faded and obscured, but not destroyed—of cruel suffering and mortal languor; yet withal, there shone pre-eminent that beauty, at once soft and majestic, so peculiar to Lombardy. She moved towards the convoy, her step was slow and painful, but not unsteady—her eyes were free from tears, but bore evidence of having shed so many that their source was dried up; there was in her grief a something tranquil and profound which indicated a soul keenly sensible to, yet fully competent to struggle with it. Yet was it not her appearance only which, in the midst of so much misery pointed her out as an object of peculiar commiseration and wakened on her behalf the feeling which had been weakened or extinguished in almost every heart. She held in her arms a little girl about the age of nine—dead, but attired with the most scrupulous nicety; her flaxen locks were minutely parted on her forehead; her robe was of the finest texture and dazzlingly white: in short, one might have fancied that the tender hand of a mother had arrayed her for some fête which had long been promised, and was now accorded as a reward. Neither was she held in a reclining posture but upright as in life, with her little cold breast supported against the one which had nourished her infancy. One might have thought she slept, were it not for the little hand, white and rigid as marble, which hung so heavily, so inanimately by her side; for the little hand which rested on its mother's shoulder with an abandonment which betokened the slumber of death—yes, she who so tenderly supported the little unconscious being was her mother! did not the resemblance between those two lovely, pallid faces attest the fact, the anguish of the one which still bore faint evidence of life, must have uncontestedly proved it! A turpid *Monatto* advanced, and extended his hand to relieve her of her burden; yet, was there an involuntary hesitation in his manner, a sort of tender respect. The mother shrank back but betrayed neither displeasure nor disdain.

"No," she exclaimed in a soft low voice, "I, myself must lay her on her bier: take this," and she placed a well-filled purse in the hand which the *Monatto* extended; "promise me," she continued, "promise me that you will not remove the most trifling article from this precious form, that you will not suffer any one else to do so; but lay her in her grave just as she now is."

The *Monatto* placed his right hand on his breast, then with obsequious civility, the result of the ne'er till then felt emotions which subdued his hardened nature, rather than of the unexpected boon he had received, busied himself in clearing a space on the cart for the little corpse. The mother imprinted a long kiss on her child's brow, and laid her softly down, as though on a bed to sleep; she then arranged her snowy garment in graceful folds around her. "Farewell, my Cecilia," she murmured, "repose in peace! ere another day has dawned we shall follow thee, and then we shall all be together for ever; meanwhile, pray for us, and I will pray for the other dear ones who have gone before!—farewell! She then carefully spread a coverlet of fine white linen over the rigid little form, and turning to the *Monatto* addressed him in a voice yet more low and unearthly; "*Monatto*," she said, "you will repass at Vespers forget not to enter, and ascend to the front chamber on the right of the first floor, you will then have to take me, and not me only, my last earthly treasure is dying also."

Thus saying, she returned slowly into the house, and in an instant after appeared on the balcony holding in her arms her youngest darling, still breathing it is true, but with the stamp of death on its little face. Pressing the little sufferer to her breast, and trying to hush its mournful wailings, the still youthful mother stood contemplating the unworthy obsequies of her first-born, till the pest cart moved on and was finally lost to sight. Then she too, disappeared, and with an expiring effort of strength, she laid her infant on the bed, stretched herself beside it, and breathed out her pure soul at the same moment its little spirit also winged its flight to realms supernal.

Ladies Companion.