

in a short period the approaching nuptials of the king were publicly announced.

Let us turn now to the gentle victim of these priestly machinations. Chatrya, with her eyes intently fixed upon the king, sat listening to the oath which he was repeating. The fatal words of separation from herself fell upon her ear without, at first, producing any surprise or emotion. She concluded that she had not heard the words aright, or that something would presently follow to explain or qualify them. She had seen Goroyen the very evening before, and his manner at that time suggested nothing less than an intention of parting from her. As the oath, however, concluded without anything which could relieve her alarm, her heart gradually sank within her; a heaviness crept over her feelings which she could not dissipate. The mere imagination of being alienated from her lover, her only support and comfort, made her sick in spirit. She sank into a dreary reverie, till the heartless noise of the dispersing assembly aroused her to her lonely fears; she had nothing else to do but make her way home, and wait until some intelligence could reach her from the king. A cheerless walk was it for poor Chatrya to reach her home; the gladness of her soul was dead within her; for her, "the splendour in the grass, the glory in the flower," was gone: the desolate hue of her own thoughts, seemed spread over the landscape, and everything, once bright and genial, seemed now frieze-clothed in dismal gloom. She reached her father's house, and there lingered out the heavy, hungry hours, till the time arrived at which she had been accustomed to meet Goroyen at his lodge. She then set out with something of hope but none of dread, to take that path she had so often trod in gaiety and joy; one who had seen her hasty step would not have thought "how ill was about her heart." She gained the lodge, but it was closed and silent. While she was standing upon the steps in the deep disquietude of her heavy disappointment, she heard a sound of footsteps on the adjoining path, and her bosom heaved with anxious expectation; but a carelessly whistled song which presently smote upon her ears, showed that it was only a passing ploughman. How that whistling jarred upon her feelings! She walked down from the door, and paused in front of the lodge. As she looked up at the building she was sure she saw Goroyen peeping at her from behind one of the curtains. She threw out her hand with delight, and called to him that she saw him plainly enough; but the object did not move, and upon changing her position she perceived that she had been deceived by the shadow cast by one of the trees. The iron of cruel anguish entered into her soul. She walked around the lodge, and into the road which was near it, feeling as if she should fall to the earth. She listened to the dropping of twigs among the leaves, till she seemed as solitary as if she were standing in a desert. Occasionally a dog ran contentedly along, engaging attention as he passed by, and then leaving her more hopelessly alone. But to the griefs and the joys of life Time is alike relentless: and the "cloud of night" descended drearily around her path, "as if she had not sought a lover." She resolved to wait just so many minutes longer, and then, if Goroyen did not appear, to retrace her steps as she had come. The time was nearly past, when a flash of hope was again kindled in her breast. She distinctly heard the tread of a rapid horseman in the forest; she was sure it was the king, and was almost resolved to go home before he came, in order to punish him for his neglect. The sound grew louder and louder, and not a doubt remained in her heart. She walked back to the door of the lodge, sighing for very excess of joy, and picturing the pleasure that soon awaited her. Tracing, in fancy, the scene of their first meeting, she forgot for awhile to observe that the sound of footsteps was no longer audible. Surprised, at length, at the long delay, she paused her breath in sudden alarm to listen for the noise—but nothing was to be heard. She ran back to the road, and "e'en with the very scrutiny of her soul," she listened for his coming. She heard in a moment the faint sound of a horse's hoofs upon the hill which wound along the edge of the forest. It was manifest that the horseman had passed round the wood. She heaved one long and burdened breath, and sank into deep and utter despair. A stone seemed to lie upon her heart. She tried to weep, but could not. Sorrow rested on her spirit with the hopeless weight of guilt.

On the following day Chatrya again came to the lodge, and again returned home, but on the third her strength was not sufficient to bear her from her door. She was soon seized with a violent, malignant fever; she became delirious, and her ravings disclosed the dishonorable connection with Goroyen. Chastity, among the Samides was the first of virtues; no pardon was granted or allowance made for any who erred. The father of Chatrya, a stern and proud hearted man, renounced his daughter at once; the moment that she was sufficiently recovered to walk, he gave her a purse of gold, and turned her from his house. Destroyed in character, ruined in health, broken in spirit, without anything to vary the dull desolation of unpitied desertion, except the stings of regret, and the pangs of conscience, Chatrya went forth from the house of her childhood. Incapable of judging of her course, she wandered on till she reached a cottage, inhabited by a woman, who bore the reputation of a sorceress. She tottered into the

house, and sank upon the floor. The hag, who perceived her condition, poured forth a torrent of abusive and irritating language, which wrung Chatrya to the very soul. The old woman was, however, pacified by the sight of gold, and consented to receive the unhappy girl as a lodger. Before long she gave birth to a child, and the companionship of the little creature relieved her sorrows. From him she might hope for sympathy and kindness: she would have something to love, and some one she might care for.

She was one night pressing her infant to her bosom, and shaping some faint plans of future comfort, when her child was seized with one of those sudden difficulties of breathing, which so often assail their tender lives. The mother rose to procure something from another part of the room, and when she again laid her hand upon her child, it no longer breathed. In the silent solitude of midnight she stood a childless woman.

For Chatrya there remained no farther hope; she was stripped of the last promise of consolation; her health forbade her to leave her bed: and she was doomed to lie daily exposed to the taunts of the harsh woman who attended her, and to the goadings of her own tortured mind. What a be wondered that her temper gave way, or that her spirit became harsh and malignant? "Distress," says the wise Duke of Newcastle, "sours the mind of even the best of men." There seemed to remain nothing for her but "to curse God and die." From the weary load of despair her only relief was—hate.

Meanwhile, to her road of suffering and shame, Godari had been running his parallel courses of villainy and deceit. He had converted the lodge to his own use, and put the money of the king in his pocket. Farther than to desert her, he cared not to persecute her; leaving it to the ban-dogs of Poverty and Infamy to haunt her down the precipice of woe. Well knowing that to one of her condition, life was agony and circumstances was grief, he dismissed his revengeful thoughts toward her from his memory, and thought no more about her. But his malignant spirit towards the king was not yet exhausted, nor was his ambition yet sufficiently gratified. By the laws of the country none but males were allowed to ascend the throne, and on failure of the blood relations of the reigning king, his male connexions by marriage succeeded. No male relations of Goroyen survived; and it was manifest to Godari that if the queen were now dead without issue, he would himself be the heir presumptive of the throne. To place upon his brow the envied coronet of sovereignty, it was only necessary that the king and queen should cease to live. Accordingly, this remorseless friend and brother resolved speedily to destroy both of them. An accident, ere long, presented a means which promised success.

The king was one day riding alone some distance from the city, when he met a woman in the road, whose miserable appearance so much affected him that he stopped to make some enquiries as to her condition. She was sallow and wrinkled, though apparently not with age; her hair was floating carelessly in the wind; and her tattered garments barely protected her from the cold. Goroyen addressed some questions to her, and his penetrating eye discovered, as he looked more closely at her, that this abject person was no other than the object of his former love—Chatrya.

Shocked at such a result of misery to others from his own conduct, he demanded if she had not received the benefits of the provision which he had directed Godari to make for her, and learned with inexpressible indignation that the malignant priest had intercepted his intended kindness, and left the object of it to perish in desertion. Goroyen explained to Chatrya all the circumstances of the case—spoke to her with kindness and regard—a language that had long ceased to greet her ears—declared to her that his love had never failed, and assured her nothing should hereafter be wanting that should contribute to her happiness.

"It is too late," said Chatrya. "There remains no happiness, and but little time, for me on earth. It is a comfort for me to know that you did not purposely turn me over to neglect and want. The things of earth no longer interest me, but I will not die until that cold and selfish priest has tasted the dregs of the cup of vengeance."

When Goroyen reached the palace, he sent for Godari.

"I have seen Chatrya," said he, pale with excessive rage. "What have you to say?"

"Simply to enquire," said Godari, coldly, "whether she was as miserable as she deserves to be?"

"You admit, then, the villainy which stands charged against you?" said Goroyen, gasping for breath.

"And only regret," said Godari, "that part of the suffering it produced did not light upon her accursed lover."

"Leave me," roared the king.

The instant that the king had mentioned his having seen Chatrya, Godari knew that he had him in his power. He might defy his vengeance, for an easy calculation of time assured him that he could destroy the king sooner than the king could punish him. The mode which he proposed was briefly this:—In the river of Cavery, near to the temple in which he officiated, there was a fall of water above sixty feet in height. On one side of the cascade there rose a huge lip of rock, about eighty feet above the upper bed of the stream. It happened that Godari, in ram-

bling recently among the rocks that stood piled around this eminence, had clambered up to the very summit of the ridge. On the top of the great rock he discovered a crevice or niche, which was open towards the direction in which the stream was flowing, but hidden for a long distance by higher projections, from any observer on the shores. He was standing in this niche and looking down upon the horrid chasm of waters below, when he observed that a little platform of stone, which had been carved out ages before by a superstitionist, upon the lowest level of the water, was directly below a huge piece of rock that lay loose upon the top of the eminence where he stood, and so singularly balanced that a very slight motion would suffice to cast it down. This platform had been used for a long time as a standing-place for persons who were required to bathe their heads in the falling waters of the sacred river Cavery, in expiation of certain crimes, as required by the sect of Seva. The strictness of the order had been so much relaxed of late, that an instance of this sort of purification had not occurred for many years; but Godari as he examined the place could not help remarking, with the fertile invention of a scheming villain, that if any one were standing on that platform, the precipitation of this great stone upon their heads, would be a mode of destroying them, as beautiful as it would be safe and efficacious. Of this "gained knowledge" he now determined to make use for the removal of the King.

As soon, therefore, as he went from his presence, he hastened to the archives of the temple, and took down a volume of the institutes of the religion of Seva. He turned over the leaves until he found a blank space upon one of the places large enough to contain a couple of written sentences. Imitating with admirable skill the chirography, in which the rest of the book was written, he inserted a paragraph to this effect among the rules of the order: That if any King, after taking the oath to abstain from holding any verbal communication with a Samide, should by accident or design hold any conversation with one, he should, the moment the fault was discovered, burn incense in the temple for two days, and then, together with his queen, perform the usual ablution on the platform on the Cavery, before transacting any other business. As soon as Godari had finished the writing he took the book, and proceeded to the room of the high priest, and laid the passage before him. He informed him that the king had been holding communication with a woman of the forbidden race: and calling his attention to the peculiarly strong language of the injunction in question, suggested to him the propriety of now putting it in force.

The venerable priest, with a placid smile, read the sentence alluded to by Godari, and applauding the learning of his young friend for discovering a passage in the sacred institutes which he confessed had escaped him, he directed the usual deputation to wait upon the king with an order to appear at the temple. This direction Godari obeyed, with the substitution of sending for going; and having done all that was requisite, retired to his chamber to make his reflections.

"A most fortunate thing, this of the king's meeting with Chatrya!" said he to himself when he was alone. "In the first place it enables me to disappoint both of them in their plan of taking vengeance upon me. In the second place, it gives me a much earlier chance than I should otherwise have had, of sweeping the throne and placing myself upon it. This deputation will soon reach the palace, and from its arrival, all business there is suspended. The only precaution I have to take is to keep clear of all the services of this occasion."

Goroyen gave a respectful reception to the officers, and consented at once to the course which was proposed. He laid aside the intention of proceeding against Godari, until the ceremony was over, and went at once to the temple to commence the burning of incense.

The crisis was now approaching. The third day of the ceremonies, the day appointed for the purification of the king and queen on the platform in the river, had arrived. Before the earliest dawn, Godari had risen and gained the rock which was to be the scene of his operations. He ascertained that the stone, which he was to cast down, would alight directly upon the platform, and that even after it had fallen he would be entirely invisible from all those spots that would probably be occupied by spectators. There was no danger of his being interrupted or discovered, for the elevation in which he was hidden was usually called "The inaccessible;" and as it was directly above the place where the king and queen were to stand, no one would think of occupying it on this occasion. The niche or step on which he stood was pretty narrow, and hung directly over the deepest part of the stream, at a height of an hundred and forty feet. As he supported himself against the sides of the rocks which rose around him, he could just discern, under the bubbled surface of the pool beneath, the sharp top of a yellow rock.

Godari counted the hours in his perilous situation, until the time appointed for the ceremony arrived. At an early period in the day numbers began to collect along the contiguous shores; he heard their movements and their voices. At length a shout from the multitude announced the coming of the royal couple. Godari, by leaning over a little, saw them pass directly under his feet, and gain the platform, where they were again hidden from his view.