

saints, to give ear unto our oath ; and our hearts bore witness unto it. And Laurentio again went away—none knew whither.

“ About two months thereafter, the plague broke out in the city, and the destruction was very great. Friend shunned friend ; and the son fled from his subdued and perishing father.— The streets were deserted, and all kept within their own houses ; save at the dead of night, when the pest carts went round to gather together the corpses of those who had died during the day. And the rumbling of the carts sounded dismally through the empty streets ; and the bells that announced their coming, struck awe into the hearts of all, and despair into those of the dying. As they approached the door of each house they sounded upon a bell three times, and called out with a loud voice, ‘ bring out your dead.’ And then those who had dead brought them out, with their faces muffled, and their mouths stopped with medicated cloths ; and the dead were carried away, and they were taken to the pits without the city, prepared for their reception.— The earth was then thrown in upon them, and all was done in haste, in silence and in darkness. The time was very awful.

“ In the wickedness of my heart, I wished that my husband might die, that I might be wedded to Laurentio Gonsalvi ; but the plague fell upon the houses all around, where it was dreaded, and passed over ours, where it was prayed for. Yes ! prayed for. I dared to breathe to Heaven this prayer of hell ! I prayed that the plague might strike upon my husband, and that he might die.

“ But time waned, and he was still untouched ; and I feared that the plague would pass away, and leave him whole.

“ One night, as I lay by his side, I was revolving these hopes and fears and wishes in my mind. I looked upon him as he lay in all the helplessness of profound repose. He slept so soundly and quietly, that his

slumbers were even slumbers of death. ‘ Would, oh, would that, it were !’ I ejaculated ; and then I added to myself, it is but one blow ! and I looked around. The night lamp shone upon a golden bodkin, with which I always braided my hair. It had been given me in earlier and happier days, by Laurentio, and whatever dress I wore, that bodkin still withheld my hair. It now lay upon the toilet, where I had placed it when I had undressed. ‘ It is but one blow,’ repeated I to myself, or rather the evil one suggested to me. I arose from the bed and seized the bodkin. I approached the Count,— I knelt with one knee upon the bed, and buried the bodkin in his side up to the eye ! He gave one groan, and strove to rise ; but the blood spouted forth like a fountain. He became weak,—struck again ;—he fell back ; a few seconds and he was dead !

“ Oh, the horror that I felt at the moment, when I beheld my victim dead before me ! Ages of pain passed over me at that instant. He would have been good to me, but I spurned him ; I thrust back his proffered kindness with every mark of loathing and contempt ; and now I had murdered him ! I knelt and prayed for succour and support ; but I recollected what my last prayer had been, and I found it impossible to utter a word. I took up my rosary to repeat my usual prayers ; but blood had spurted on the beads, and caused them to slip from my hold. ‘ Yes,’ I exclaimed, ‘ yes, indeed, his blood has risen between me and Heaven !’

“ To conceal what I had done was my next object. I hid as well as I could, every thing that was stained with blood ;—covered the body with the clothes, and went out of the chamber at break of day to spread a report that the Count had been taken with the plague, and to seek for medicines. I well knew that none of our domestics would be too ready to face this danger ; and when I declared my intention of watching by