

The men approached to obey the order of their chief, and though they struggled hard to free themselves from their merciless foes, Francis and Malcolm were overpowered by superior numbers, and thrust into the loathsome den. The entrance was secured, too firmly for them to cherish even a hope of removing the barrier which shut them within a living tomb; the banditti retired, and they were left alone with the former victims of the robber chief. Francis sunk down on the hard floor of the cavern, and burying his face in his hands, gave way to the strong emotions which wrung his soul. It seemed to him that endurance had reached its climax, and he only wished for the boon of death, to end his sufferings, and yet he shuddered when he remembered that it must now be near. Every thing else, even his love for Isabella was forgotten, in the horror which he felt of his situation; yes he even forgot that another shared his fate, until his ear caught the sound of a falling body, followed by an exclamation of impatience, and the dreadful stench which pervaded the cavern was at the same moment increased to an almost insufferable degree. "Malcolm!" he cried, "Malcolm, where art thou? and what has happened? tell me quickly!"

"Well!" answered the voice of his friend from another part of the cavern, "I thought while thou wert playing the child, and weeping over our hopeless adventure, I would reconnoitre a little, and see what the chances were of either undermining the mountain, and setting ourselves free, or finding a snug corner to house in, but unluckily I tumbled over some poor wretch who for want of Christian burial, is lying in my path, and I fell to the ground; but although I did not much relish the brotherly embrace I gave my new acquaintance, yet I have now regained my feet, but I regret to say that thus far my researches are rather unsatisfactory!"

"And you will probably continue to find them so!—what hope alas! remains for us now? Are we not immured in this sepulchre of the former victims of the robber Rodolphe? and do not the decaying forms around us preclude the faintest hope? No! from this place we will go forth no more, and why not at once resign each hope, and in humility await our coming fate?"

"Avaunt, with such ghostly council! Why, desperate as the case now seems, I have not the most distant thought of regarding this place as my future home! Why man, I have a gentle lady-love, who, doubtless, long ere now, hath chided my long tarrying; and, in truth, I would much like to feel the gentle influence of her beaming smiles, nor for the world would I have spo-

ken of this weakness, but that you have announced your intention of playing the hermit in this pleasant cell, and, consequently, cannot betray me!"

Francis was silent. He could not comprehend the firmness of mind, or rather, the determined disregard of circumstances, which characterized his friend. Long and intimately as he had known him, he felt that he was a stranger to the giant power of his mind, and he could not but look forward to the time, which he felt would now of necessity soon arrive, when nature must sink beneath the pressure of wasting want; and much he wondered if Malcolm would retain his firmness, even to the last. But his reverie was broken by Malcolm, who exclaimed:

"Now, was there ever so graceless a fellow as this Rodolphe? Why, the creature has kept our harps to himself, while I will venture to say, not one of his ruffian band could personate the minstrel! but for want of other employ, I will even sing you a song!" And at the next moment, the cavern resounded with thrilling notes.

And what were the feelings of the young Scotsman, as while his voice gave utterance to the merry air, his mind fixed on the dreadful fate of himself and his friend. Perhaps the thoughts of the despairing Francis were not more bitter than his own. He, the son of affluence, with a name, to which he added the hero's honors, and life with all its enticing pleasures just opened before him, to be cut off, he felt, was dreadful indeed! And then he thought of all the anguish of his parents, as they mourned his uncertain fate, and perhaps, went down in their brokenheartedness to their graves. Nor was his promised bride, the lovely Antoinette d'Auvergne, forgotten in this dread hour. He saw the beautiful fabric of domestic happiness, which, despite his pretended indifference to the power of love he had formed, even during his first visit to Avignon, dashed to the ground, and he feared that his beautiful Antoinette might suffer deeply for his sake. But to cheer the despairing heart of Francis, who sank down beneath the dreadful blow, he, with a giant effort put down his own anguish, and pretended to indulge a hope that they might yet be free and happy. Had it not been for him, Francis had returned to France, after he learned that Isabella had been borne away from the mountain cottage, and he felt that to sacrifice his feelings, to cheer his hapless friend, was but a slight return for having led him on to ruin. Of Isabella, he hardly dared to think, for now, no hope of her restoration to home and happiness remained. 'Twas true, Gustavus