

moonlit path through the valley, when, on arriving at the spot before described, where the glen contracts, and the foliage thickens into obscurity, he cleared with one desperate leap, one of the well-known rivulets which field their tributary streams to the Nera.

Suddenly a hideous cry or croak, which he soon perceived to proceed from a toad he must have unwittingly have crushed or hurt beneath his tread, assailed his ear. He hurried onwards with a species of indefinable terror and loathing, the hoarse croak of the wounded animal still pursuing him, until the inharmonious sounds were lost in the distance, and he remained once more the clear open pathway which conducted him to the high road. Here let us pause, and leave Valentino to pursue his solitary route.

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Days, weeks, months, rolled away in all their summer brightness.

"Oh! not for mortal tear,
Doth nature deviate from her calm career,
Nor is the earth less laughing, or less fair,
Though breaking hearts its gladness may not share."

Theresa, after a lingering fever, at length revived, but to the withering consciousness of faithful love and blighted affections.

Long did she look in feverish anxiety for her lover's promised return, and when, from the threatening nature of her disease, they were obliged to make known to her his actual departure for Rome, a fearful foreboding seemed to steal over her hopes. To one who had never strayed beyond the confines of her native village, the idea of distance appears almost immeasurable, and return equally precarious. Not that in her truth and simplicity she doubted one moment his oft-repeated vows of affection; these she fondly cherished, until the last cold blast of adversity snatched them rudely from her bosom. Twice, indeed, ere the mellow rays of autumn had ceased to linger amidst their favourite bowers, had she received news of Valentino, but to the fond and affectionate heart of poor Theresa, his letters breathed little of earthly hope or consolation; fraught with the cruel retrospect of the past, she could discover no sunny ray, or sweet and shadowy perspective (even more dear than present bliss,) for the future.

Was it, indeed, possible that man, the creature of interest and ambition, could forget, amid the influence of light companions and ambitious hopes, a love so pure and disinterested, a being so tender and confiding? Alas!

neglect soon gave way to indifference, and indifference to forgetfulness. Theresa, thoughtful and pensive, lingered through many a solitary winter hour, with her rosary and crucifix, amid their favourite haunts, her heart yet more desolate than the seared leaf and withered flowers which lay scattered beneath her feet; for they were drooping but to bloom again in renewed and vernal brightness, but—

"When shall spring visit the mouldering urn,
Oh! when shall it dawn on the night of the grave?"

A continued cough, and other symptoms of wasting disease were now making rapid inroads on the delicate form of poor Theresa; and her father, heart-broken, at length resolved to write, unknown to her, to a distant relative at Rome, intreating him to acquaint Valentino with her state, and to request his immediate presence if he wished to see her alive. But what was the old man's indignation when his relative acquainted him that Valentino had been despatched on a mission of considerable emolument with another artist of some notability for Sicily, and that, on his return at the expiration of four months, he was, if successful, to marry his master's only daughter, with which alliance he would obtain, not only a valuable stipend, but a post of emolument and importance.

The intelligence was indeed stunning to the subdued heart of poor Theresa, who, throwing herself in her old father's arms, sank into a swoon so long and death-like that he believed he held in his trembling grasp but the cold remains of his greatest earthly treasure. Gradually, however, consciousness returned, but a rapid increase of fever and feebleness soon laid her prostrate on the suffering couch, and reduced her small remaining strength. Like the drooping roses in the little flower-vase by her bed-side, shedding day by day their cherished leaves before her eyes, she gently and almost imperceptibly closed her fading eyes on the sorrowing scenes of time, to realize, we may hope, those untutored yet devout aspirations which, however fettered by the grovelling chains of superstition, were built, like the rainbow of Almighty Mercy, amid the unfading joys of eternity.



BEAUTY gains little, and homeliness and deformity lose much, by gaudy attire. Lysander knew this was in part true, and refused the rich garments that the tyrant Dionysius proffered to his daughters, saying, "That they were fit only to make unhappy faces more remarkable."