

THE POLE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "FRANKENSTEIN."

Concluded from page 119.

LADISLAS listened to these lines unmoved ; but the effect they produced on Idalie was dreadful. She gave implicit credence to them, and every word sounded as a knell. She lost all presence of mind ; every reflection that might have taught her to avert the stroke she so much dreaded, was swallowed up in anguish, as if the deed that was to be consummated was already done. What task can be more difficult than to describe the overwhelming agony which heavy and unexpected misery produces. To have lived the day that Idalie had just lived—a day in which all the beauty of existence had been unveiled to its very depths ; to have dreamt as she had done, a dream of love that steeped her soul in divine, and almost uncommunicable joy ; and now to sink from this pinnacle of happiness into a black and lampless cavern, the habitation of death, whose spectral form and chilling spirit was felt through all the air ! This is but a feeble metaphor of the sudden transition from rapture to misery, which Idalie experienced. She looked upon Ladislas, and beheld him bright and full of life ; the roscate hues of health upon his cheek, his eyes beaming with peaceful joy his noble countenance varying not in the least from that imperturbable and godlike self-possession which was its habitual expression. And as her imagination made present to her the fatal moment, when beneath the dagger of the assassin this adored being should sink bleeding, wounded, and then be ever lost in death, her blood rushed to her heart, a deadly pause ensued, from which she awoke in a bewildered mist of horror. The still air and quiet moonshine to her seemed brooding mischief ; a thousand shadows that proceeded from no one, but were the creatures of her distressed brain, flitted around, and filled the empty space of the portico. Poor Idalie ! an eternity of bliss would have been dearly bought at the price of that moment's overwhelming anguish ! Ladislas beheld her excess of emotion with pain, in which, however, all was not pain, for it was blended with that triumphant exultation, that a lover ever feels when he for the first time becomes assured that he is