

trate before a painting of the Virgin, poured out in bitter agony her secret soul. The blended hues of twilight fell like a rich mantle around her person, illuminating her upturned face, and radiating like a crown of glory from her brow, investing her with such unearthly radiance, that Guiseppe gazed upon her with tender awe, almost persuaded he beheld in the angelic being before him, a celestial visitant, supplicating for mercy on the sins of frail and erring humanity.

Her brief and earnest petition ended, she rose, and drawing a letter from her bosom, approached the window, and stood in the rosy light to read its contents. That letter was his own—filled with burning words of passion, and blotted as he wrote, with tears of love and of despair. He now saw hers fall fast upon the sheet, he saw her press it in an agony of tender sorrow to her lips, and then, hiding it in her bosom, sink upon a seat, and weep convulsively. It was a sight to unman the stoutest heart, and to one that loved and suffered like Guiseppe's, the firm resolve of prudence was at once forgotten. Love, deep, ardent, grateful, devoted, triumphed over every other thought, and springing from the obscurity in which he stood, he cast himself with passionate words for pardon, at the feet of the weeping girl. With a faint shriek she sprang swiftly to her feet, and overcome by surprise and shame, was turning to fly, when he gently caught her robe, and raising his pleading eyes to her blushing face, murmured in earnest tones:

"Leave me not, sweetest *Ianthé*, now that my cruel destiny for a moment relents, in granting me yet to behold thee, whom I knew not if I was ever more to see."

He felt her hand tremble violently in his as he spoke, and he could perceive that she still wept, as faintly struggling to depart, she stood in silence, with her averted face bowed down upon her hands.

"Thou desirest to go from me," he said, sadly, "and wherefore, then, should I seek to detain thee—wherefore, since with vain presumption I have misinterpreted the true source of thy emotion?"

He released her hand, and rising, stood erect before her as, he said this, but lifting up her face, she cast upon him a look of soft reproach, so full of tenderness and grief, that again he knelt at her feet, and sealed his lips in speechless ecstasy upon her gently yielded hand.

"Thou lovest me, and I am blest," he murmured, after a minute's expressive pause. "Yes," he continued, "though seas and mountains separate us, my exile shall be solaced by the sweet assurance written in thine eyes, that in thy heart I have a place, unshared by any other."

"Ah! wherefore rejoice at this!" she said. "It were sad enough to part as friends, but now, —" and with a quivering lip she paused, and subdued by tenderness and grief, bright tears chased each other in silence down her cheeks.

"Alas! that it must be so," said Guiseppe; "but is there no alternative? May we not hope? though I had well nigh bidden hope farewell, when with a despairing heart, and tears of deepest agony, I wrote thee my adieu. It should have been my last, last word of parting: and so it would have proved, but for this meeting, unlooked for, and unsought; but ah! I may not add unwelcome! And now, sweet *Ianthé*, now that thou knowest all my love, and somewhat of my wretchedness, I pray that thou wilt suffer one faint star of hope to linger in my dark horizon, guiding me onward with its cheering ray to achieve a name, which when hereafter I shall aspire to link it with that thou bestest, may not even in the estimation of thy proud relatives, cast upon thee one shade of shame, or of dishonour."

"Ah! were it for me to bid thy star of hope beam undimmed in the heavens, never, oh! never should its rays be shorn of their brightness," said the soft voice of *Ianthé* with low and trembling utterance, yet breathing in its passionate tones the very soul of tenderness. "But, alas! I cannot hide from thee, nor from myself," she continued, pursuing the same figurative mode of expression, "that dark clouds hover over and threaten to obscure it, and if now we part, before we meet again, its light will be quenched, in a night of hopeless gloom and sorrow."

"Sayest thou so, my beloved? Ah, yes! let my lips utter the language of my soul in thus addressing thee," he said. "But if this doom indeed impends over us; God forbid that we should part. Vainly I believed that I could yield thee up forever—that I could go forth from the place made blessed by thy presence, and live on through weary years of absence, sustained only by the memory of thy beauty and thy love. But now that I gaze on thee again—that I listen to thy gentle voice—that I see thine eyes beaming on me with love and pity, I feel how weak are my resolves—mere ropes of sand which the strong waves of passion scatter into fragments and destroy. Suffer me, then, to remain near thee, and banquet daily on the smiles, whose sweetness is my life's elixir, since, if exiled, without a hope of return, from thy dear presence, I must pine and die, like a plant cut off from the sun's light and warmth, in whose genial influence it grew rejoicingly and bright."

"And it were better even so," said *Ianthé*, with trembling earnestness: "better for thee, by