

ate cutting instrument. No where, however, was this visible. It was evident to Gerald that assistance had been afforded from some one within the cabin, and who that some one was, he scarcely doubted. With this impression fully formed, he re-entered from the prison, and standing near the curtained berth occupied by the daughters of the Governor, questioned as to whether they were aware that his prisoner Desborough had escaped. Both expressed surprise in so natural a manner, that Gerald knew not what to think, but when they added that they had not heard the slightest noise—nor had spoken themselves, nor heard others speak, confessing moreover ignorance that the lamp even had been extinguished, he felt suspicion converted into certainty. It was impossible, he conceived, that a door, which stood only two paces from the bed, could be locked and unlocked without their hearing it—neither was it probable that Desborough would have thought of thus needlessly securing the place of his late detention. Such an idea might occur to the aider, but not to the fugitive himself, to whom every moment must be of the highest importance. Who then could have assisted him? Not Major Montgomerie, for he slept in the after part of the cabin—not Miss Montgomerie, for she was upon deck—Moreover, had not one of those, he had so much reason to suspect, interceded for the fellow, only on the preceding day.

Such was the reasoning of Gerald, as he passed rapidly in review the several probabilities—but, although annoyed beyond measure at the escape of the villain, and incapable of believing other than that the daughters of the Governor had connived thereat, his was too gallant a nature to make such a charge, even by implication, against them. He was aware of the strong spirit of nationality existing every where among subjects of the United States, and he had no doubt, that in liberating their countryman, they had acted under an erroneous impression of duty. Although extremely angry he made no comment whatever on the subject, but contenting himself with wishing his charge a less than usually cordial good night, left them to their repose, and once more quitted the cabin.

During the whole of this examination, Miss Montgomerie had continued on deck. Gerald found her leaning over the gangway, at which he had left her, gazing intently on the water, through which the schooner was now gliding at an increased rate. From the moment of his being compelled to quit her side, to inquire into the cause of Sambo's exclamation and rapidly succeeding fall, he had not had an opportunity of again approaching her. Feeling that some apology was due, he hastened to make one; but, vexed and irritated as he was at the escape of the settler, his disappointment imparted to his manner a degree of restraint, and there was less of ardor in his address than he had latterly been in the

habit of exhibiting. Miss Montgomerie remarked it, and sighed.

"I have been reflecting," she said, "on the little dependance that is to be placed upon the most flattering illusions of human existence—and here are you come to afford me a painful and veritable illustration of my theory."

"How, dearest Matilda! what mean you?" asked the officer, again warmed into tenderness by the presence of the fascinating being.

"Can you ask, Gerald?" and her voice assumed a tone of melancholy reproach—"recall but your manner—your language—your devotedness of soul, not an hour since—compare these with your present coldness, and then wonder that I should have reason for regret, if you can."

"Nay, Matilda, that coldness arose not from any change in my feelings towards yourself—I was piqued, disappointed, even angry, at the extraordinary escape of my prisoner, and could not sufficiently play the hypocrite to disguise my annoyance."

"Yet, what had I to do with the man's escape, that his offence should be visited upon me?" she demanded, quickly.

"Can you not find some excuse for my vexation, knowing, as you do, that the wretch was a vile assassin—a man whose hands have been imbrued in the blood of my own father?"

"Was he not acquitted of the charge?"

"He was—but only from lack of evidence to convict; yet, although acquitted by the law, not surer is fate than that he is an assassin."

"You hold assassins in great horror," remarked the American, thoughtfully—"you are right—it is but natural."

"In horror, said you?—aye, in such loathing, that language can supply no term to express it."

"And yet, you once attempted an assassination yourself. Nay, do not start, and look the image of astonishment. Have you not told me that you fired into the hut, on the night of your mysterious adventure? What right had you, if we argue the question on its real merit, to attempt the life of a being who had never injured you?"

"What right, Matilda?—every right, human and divine. I sought but to save a victim from the hands of a midnight murderer."

"And, to effect this, scrupled not to become a midnight murderer yourself!"

"And is it thus you interpret my conduct, Matilda?"—the voice of Gerald spoke bitter reproach—"can you compare the act of that man with mine, and hold me no more blameless than himself?"

"Nay, I did not say I blamed you," she returned, gaily—"but the fact is, you had left me so long to ruminate here alone, that I have fallen into a mood argumentative, or philosophical—whichever you may be pleased to term it, and I am willing to maintain my position, that you might, by possibility, have been