

blackest motive ; they had only valued Pierrot as a tool ; and having no farther use for his active services after that night, it was their intention to make him serviceable as a victim, by flying themselves, and leaving him behind to be seized by public justice, so themselves to elude its pursuit. This connexion with them, who would, of course, be suspected, and the weakness of his character, which would make him at once own his guilt, would bring down upon him the vengeance of the law, which would thus be less eager in its search after them. Such were the fiendish feelings of his companions for him ; such, in other words, is the friendship of the wicked !

The terrible menace of the ruffians was uttered with such rage, and yet in so determined a tone, that with Pierrot's experience of their character, he saw it was made in earnest, and would be unscrupulously carried into execution. His resolution failed him : the thought of all his past neglect and cruel abandonment of those whom in his secret heart he still loved, and actually revered, rushed upon him. Must he in the end prove their death—their murderer in some sort ? He could not bear to think it ; and in an agony of contending feelings, and with a protest to heaven, he chose what he thought the lesser curse, and consented to accompany his tyrants.

Time urged, for they had lost much of the night in this contention ; but still it wanted some hours to day, and the robbers durst not now put off their enterprise. Silent and sullen they reached the church-door, and it was agreed that one should stay outside with the mule, and keep watch, while the leader with Pierrot should enter, and bring out the spoil.

They found the door unlocked ; but this did not surprise them ; for no one in the neighbourhood ever dreamt of the possibility of sacrilege. Cautiously and silently they opened it and entered in. Both paused upon the threshold, as if overawed ; even the hardened robber seemed afraid to advance. So deeply still and silent was that lonely sanctuary, that Pierrot could actually hear his heart beat against his side, as it throbbed in remorse and fear. The flame of the lamp was burning bright and clear, and the holy place basked in its tempered radiance. Never, in his days of virtue, had it looked to him more sacred, more venerable, or more lovely, than it did on the night of his basest treachery ? Never did the silver and jewels of the altar beam more joyously, never did the saints from the walls look down upon him more softly, never did the image over the altar seem to gaze upon him with a sweeter, blander smile, than now that his mind was bent on sacrilege ! ' Ah, Judas ! ' they all seemed to say to him in words of soft reproof, ' wilt thou betray the Spouse of the Son of Man with a kiss ? ' He could not bear the sight, and he cast his eyes upon the ground ; and there he thought he saw his infant child, as she lay seven years before on the steps before him, slumbering once more the sleep of health, and himself kneeling in quiet gratitude beside her.

Yes, every thing around him looked to him now just as it did then—all except his own breast ; alas ! how changed was that ! He flung the vision, by a formidable effort, from his imagination, and raised his eyes ; and in doing so, encountered the steady gaze of the lamp, which shed all this beauty and mysterious charm on every object. What the eye of a man—the light of his body—is to his other features, even that did the pure solitary flame of the sanctuary's lamp appear to Pierrot's mind : it was its eye, through which it looked keenly, yet mildly upon him ; as if to see whether or no he would have heart to do his wicked deed. Whatever spell there is in the human eye to arrest the murderer's stroke, or the savage beast's assault ; that same power did this eye of the Sanctuary exercise over his soul ; it charmed and fixed him immoveable to the spot ; not all the promises or threats of earth would have influenced him to attempt a crime, so long as it beamed upon him. Nay, to his sight, it was a superhuman intelligence that darted from it ; they were rays that penetrated into his bosom and pried into his heart, that came towards him from it ; they had a voice, that spoke, they had a point that pierced, though tenderly. However the beams might play around objects beyond and around, and dance and linger on their way, to him they came direct and rigid, and swift as arrows from a bow, cutting through the darkness between, and not enlightening it, but leaving it darkness still. Yes, it seemed to him as an angel's gaze ; the look of the heavenly Watchman deputed to keep ward, and pay homage there, during the silent hours of night ; the Guardian of the sacred treasure, but whose power was only to milden, to soften, but not to strike or to destroy. And even thus did that light more subdue him and make him coward. Sooner would he have faced, it seemed to him, a seraph brandishing a sword of fire, or angels with scourges in their hands, than this noiseless and harmless protector of the Sanctuary and its treasures. Is not grace about to triumph in him ?

This succession of thoughts and feelings in Pierrot's mind, occupied in reality but a few moments ; but these were quite enough to tire the patience of his companion, who, though clearly overawed, had not the same associations to work, nor the same heart to be worked on, as Pierrot. He soon broke in on the reverie which held him entranced, and shaking him by the arm, said in a whisper—yes, the ruffian durst not speak in that light, in a higher tone :

' Come, come, comrade, we are losing time, let us begin.'

' I cannot,' said Pierrot, in the same voice, ' I dare not.'

' Nonsense ! ' gruffly urged the robber ; ' are you a child ? Remember your promise. To work, then, at once.'

' I will not,' replied his poor victim. ' Not for