

and I agreed to embark in one of the passage-boats which descend the Rhone, he for Valence, and I for Avignon. We met with pleasure upon the deck of this vessel, and he had recovered his gaiety. I was now better acquainted with him, and had received from him more circumstantial details about his fortune and his prospects of future happiness. He was really one of the most fortunate men of his age, and his expectations were of the highest and most brilliant kind.

The navigation of the Rhone is disagreeable at this season of the year ; the sources whence this river is supplied are already frozen, and its waters are consequently low. Our great and unwieldy boat grounded so often, that on the second day we were obliged to sleep at a gloomy and wretched inn at Pomier. The kitchen was the only public room, and by the dim light of its iron lamp, the first thing we discovered in a corner, were the flashing eye-balls of the little dead woman.

" I cannot stand this, said Maurice ; " I had much rather return and sleep in the boat. Had I known she would have chosen this conveyance, I certainly should have gone by land." On saying this, he left the house, and a moment after, I perceived that the young girl was also absent. The tobacco-smoke soon forced me to take a walk in the open air until the repast, which the host and hostess were pleased to call a supper, was ready.

I bent my footsteps towards the Rhine, whose waters I heard gently murmuring under the beams of the moon, which heavy clouds driven by a wind in the upper regions of the atmosphere now and then overcast. In the midst of a willow grove, I thought I perceived M. Maurice, and near him a small figure in white.

" Why how is this ! " thought I ; he cannot have taken to the death's head, and made an appointment with her. At all events, I shall quiz him."

A dark cloud now passed across the moon, and I saw him no more ; but I heard a loud laugh, and the name of Ursula pronounced, and immediately a splash as of a heavy body falling in-