

1-1-1805

Father Innocent, Abbot of the Capuchins; Or, the Crimes of Cloisters

Unknown

Follow this and additional works at: http://epublications.marquette.edu/english_gothic



Part of the [Literature in English, British Isles Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Father Innocent, Abbot of the Capuchins; Or, the Crimes of Cloisters. London: Tegg and Castleman, c. 1805.

FATHER INNOCENT,

ABBOT OF THE

CAPUCHINS;

OR,

THE CRIMES OF CLOISTERS.

Great Heav'n, how frail thy Creature Man is made,
How by himself insensibly betray'd!
In his own Strength unhappily secure,
Too little cautious of th' adverse Pow'r.

PRIOR.

London :

PRINTED FOR TEGG AND CASTLEMAN,
At the Eccentric Book Warehouse,

NO. 122, ST. JOHN'S STREET, WEST SMITHFIELD,

J. Belcher, Birmingham; B. Sellick, Bristol; T. Troughton, Liverpool; J. Mitchell, Newcastle; C. Brown, North Street, Edinburgh; Peck, Lower Ousegate, York; T. Binns, Leeds; J. Dingle, Bury; Edmund's; T. Brown, Bath; B. Dugdale, Dublin; M. Swindels, Manchester; J. Raw and J. Bush, Ipswich; J. Booth, Norwich; and Collins and Fellows, Salisbury; and G. Wilkins, Derby.

Printed by T. Plummer, Seething-Lane, Tower-Street.

FATHER INNOCENT;

OR, THE

CRIMES OF CLOISTERS.

SINCE the pious and popular Father Innocent had condescended to preach in the church of the Capuchins, not a seat was to be had, after the doors had been a few minutes opened. One day, when Innocent was to lecture on a particular subject, the audience were particularly numerous; not a corner was vacant; not a seat but was occupied; nay, the very statues of the angels and saints, not excepting the Holy Virgin, herself, were compelled to support some of the younger part of the hearers on their wings and shoulders. Such was the state of the church, when Dame Drusilla and her niece Ambrosia entered, and the former continued to press forward, notwithstanding the exclamations of "What rudeness! Where would they come to! what a shame to crowd in such a manner!" and the like. Notwithstanding this, the old woman obstinately continued, and with a pair of pointed elbows made way for Ambrosia, who followed with some timidity. When Drusilla had got within a short distance of the pulpit, her next concern was to obtain a seat, but nobody seeming disposed to offer one, she cried aloud to her niece, "I believe we must return, my dear, for the heat is insupportable, and nobody seems inclined to give us a seat, or make room for us." This strong hint was not lost on two cavaliers, who occupied stools close by, and were leaning with their backs against a pillar a short distance from the pulpit. They looked round, on hearing this appeal to their politeness, but seeing that the speaker was a little ordinary squinting old woman, they renewed their con-

versation, which was suddenly interrupted by the sweet tones of a voice, that issued from the young person who accompanied her. "By all means," said the latter, "let us return, Drusilla. The heat and the crowd are both too much for me!" The delivery, and elegance of her figure, excited their curiosity; they wished to see her face, but this was concealed by a thick veil, which in struggling through the crowd had been drawn sufficiently on one side to discover a most enchanting neck, down which her long fair hair sported in ringlets to her waist.—Her dress was straw coloured, and reached just low enough to shew a foot of the most exact and delicate proportion. To this enchanting female the youngest cavalier now politely offered his seat, while his companion did the same to the elder lady. Don Antonio next whispered a few words in his friend's ear, who took the hint, and when the ladies had seated themselves, he endeavoured to draw off the good Dame's attention from her lovely charge.

"I suppose," said Antonio, "you are a stranger in Madrid; it is impossible that such beauty can have been long here, and have escaped my observation." The young lady replied with some hesitation, that she had not been long in Madrid. "If you make a stay," said Antonio, "I should esteem myself happy in contributing to make your time agreeable. My family has some interest at court, and I should be obliged by the permission of rendering you any service." The lady said nothing, but answered by a bow.—After a pause of a few minutes, he resumed, "Being a stranger here, you are perhaps unacquainted with the custom of not wearing the veil; permit me therefore to remove it." "I do not unveil in public, Signor," said the young lady. "But why not?" said Drusilla, sharply: you see it is the custom here: besides, do you not see that I have unveiled, and if I have, surely you may.—Nobody, I warrant, will run away with your face, therefore, no longer do as they do in Murcia, but as the people of fashion do at Madrid, or the Signor must take it off for you!"—Her face was silent, but made no farther opposition to Don Antonio, who removed the gauze, and discovered the head of a Venus, replete with every trait of sweetness and sensibility;—her lips, her mild blue eyes, and her full-formed neck, were objects of delight to the eye. Her age was about fifteen; her modesty was as tender as her age, for, whenever her eyes met Antonio's, she drop-

ped them hastily upon her rosary, and began hastily to tell her beads.—Drusilla thought it was proper to apologize for her ignorance of the world, by saying that she had been brought up in an old castle in Murcia, with her mother only, who was not remarkable for her sense, though her own sister. “That is remarkable!” exclaimed Don Olmas, “It is indeed!” continued Drusilla. “Yet she had not the less luck for all that. A young nobleman took it in his fancy that Leonora was pretty—that was indeed a fancy—but never mind it. This young nobleman fell in love with and married her unknown to his father; at the end of three years the Marquis learned the news, to his sore displeasure. He then posted away to Cordova, determined to seize Leonora, and make away with her. The married pair however had made away with themselves, for they had just before embarked for the Indies. When he returned, he raved like a madman, threw my father into prison, and took my sister’s little boy home, who died soon after, I suppose, from bad treatment. Oh! he was as violent as a Turk, for would you think it, when I attempted to pacify him, he called me an old witch, and wished that to punish the Count, my sister might be as ugly as I was.” “I make no doubt,” said Don Olmas, “that the Count would willingly have changed one sister for the other; I think I should!”—“O Signor, your politeness is very great,” said Drusilla: “but I am glad he did not have me. A fine business my sister made of it at last, for after thirteen years basking in the Indies, her husband died, and she returned to Spain, penniless and unfriended. This Ambrosia was then but an infant, and her only remaining child.

“She found her father in law had married again, and his second wife had produced him a son, who is reported to be a fine youth.—The old Marquis refused my sister and her child, and in consideration of never more being troubled with any application, he assigned her a small portion, and leave to inhabit his old Murcian castle, which had fallen to decay since his eldest son left it. My sister accepted the proposal. She retired to Murcia, and has remained there till within the last month.” “And now for the cause which has brought her to Madrid?” said Antonio. Alas!” said Drusilla, “her father in law being lately dead, the steward of his Murcian estates has refused to pay her portion any

longer. With the view of requesting the continuance of her income from the son, she has come to Madrid; and as the girl has a pretty face, I advised Leonora to send her with the petition, but she would not hear of such a thing." "What is the name of the young nobleman?" said Antonio. "The Marquis Langara," replied Drusilla. Don Antonio replied that he knew the Marquis to be a very worthy man, and if he had the lovely Ambrosia's permission, he would be her advocate with him. Ambrosia raised her blue expressive eyes to thank him, but said nothing; which drew upon her a rebuke from her aunt, for not saying a word for the number of civil things that had been said to her. The conversation after this turned upon the preacher, of whose fame and abilities Drusilla had never heard.

"Undoubtedly Signor," said Drusilla, "his origin is of noble extraction." "Who this miracle of piety is," said Antonio, "is unknown. The late Superior of the Capuchins found him while yet an infant at the abbey door, and brought him up. All attempts to discover who placed him there were vain, and the child himself could give no account of his parents. No one has ever appeared to claim him, and the monks who find much favour to their establishment from respect to him, have not hesitated to publish that he is a present to them from the Virgin. He is now thirty years old, every hour of which has been passed in seclusion and mortification of the flesh. 'Tis only within this three weeks he has quitted the walls, and this only to deliver a discourse every Thursday, in this cathedral, which all Madrid assembles to hear."

Scarcely had Antonio done speaking, when a murmur ran through the church, and announced the preacher's entrance.—His port was noble; his nose aquiline, and his eyes black and sparkling.—His features collectively made a face of great strength and beauty. Tranquillity reigned upon his smooth unwrinkled forehead, and his pale delicate cheeks bespoke a man resigned to heaven; a certain severity, however, in his look, inspired universal awe, and few could sustain the glance of his penetrating eye. Such was the monk, surnamed "The Holy Man!" Ambrosia was struck with his appearance, and the sound of his voice, as he preached, penetrated to her soul, while he declaimed, in awful terms, against the vices of humanity, and described the punishments reserved for them in a future state. The

discourse was of a considerable length, but when finished, every one seemed to think it too soon concluded. As he moved from the pulpit, every one pressed near even to touch the hem of his garment, while he devoutly kept his eyes fixed upwards, and his arms folded over his breast as he passed to the abbey door, where he again bestowed his benediction, and the monks waited to receive him. Ambrosia's eyes followed him with anxiety, and as the door closed, she seemed to feel as if something had escaped essential to her happiness.—“He is separated from the world,” thought she, “and perhaps I shall never see him more!”—Ambrosia was so filled with admiration of the Monk, that she eagerly seized the opportunity of speaking of him, and praised him with great warmth.

Antonio smiled at her expressions, and suggested that her heart, full of simplicity and sensibility, took every thing by appearances, but time would correct her inexperience, and discover to her the baseness and hypocrisy of mankind. Ambrosia replied that the misfortunes of her parents had already placed before her eyes too many examples of perfidy; but she trusted, from his character, doctrine, and appearance, that Innocent was an exemption to the vices, nay, foibles of human nature. Antonio replied that malevolence had not yet been able to affix a stain upon his character. “Dearest aunt,” said Ambrosia, “do intreat my mother to choose him for our confessor; he is so pious and good, that ———” “I shall do no such thing,” replied Drusilla. “I see so much sternness and severity in his manner, that I am sure I should never have courage to avow half my peccadilloes, and then what a condition should I be in!”

Don Olmas said that he thought her judgement was perfectly correct, and then adverting to the crowd being nearly gone, asked if he and his friend might be permitted to attend them home. Drusilla, in the true spirit of coquetry, declined the honour, from the great fear she had of a lecture from her sister. Don Olmas insisted, but the good dame requested him, if he loved her, not to press his suit any farther at that time: but he should hear from her where to be found; to which, having satisfactorily replied, the ancient dame extended her shrivelled hand for Olmas to salute, which her supposed admirer embraced with so much forced willingness, that Antonio was ready to burst

with laughter. Ambrosia, who followed in silence, turned back just as they had reached the porch, and cast an expressive look at Antonio, who bowed his head, which being returned, the parties separated.

Don Olmas could not avoid joking with his friend about the awkward predicament in which he had placed him with Drusilla, to favour his own schemes upon Ambrosia.—Antonio confessed, that his mistress, the old lady, was not the most inviting female in the creation, but she seemed to make amends for this by the warmth of that passion she had conceived for him. “However you may find yourself affected towards her,” continued Antonio, “you may rely upon it I shall solicit you to carry your amour still farther, for I cannot express to you how much I am charmed with Ambrosia.—My uncle, the Duke of Segovia, has some time back signified his wishes to see me married, I have till now eluded his hint, but this girl ——” “Is no more than the daughter of an honest tradesman,” said Olmas; “and therefore your uncle would never permit such a degradation.” “You forget my friend,” said Antonio, “that she is the daughter of the late Marquis di Langara; so much for her nobility; and then as to wealth, I shall have enough for both; and I am certain, from what I have seen of the Marquis di Langara, that he will acknowledge Ambrosia for his niece. With so much sensibility, and so fine a person, I see in her every requisite to make me a wife.” Don Olmas objected to his knowing any thing about her mental accomplishments at such an early acquaintance, and proposed that they should change the subject, and retire to the Comedy.

Antonio stated that it was out of his power, as he had only arrived last night at Madrid, and intended then to pay a visit to his sister, at her convent in the street where they then were, whither he was going when the throng, pressing into the cathedral to hear Innocent, induced him to enter with them. Don Olmas expressed some astonishment at his having immured her in a convent, but Antonio assured him that, notwithstanding half her portion, consisting of ten thousand pistoles, had reverted to himself, her taking the veil had met with his entire disapprobation, nor had the consideration of her property influenced his disapprobation of her voluntary sacrifice.

As the night was now fast advancing, Don Olmas took leave of his friend; first assuring him, that, whenever he wanted him to appear in the capacity of a lover to the old harridan, he might command him. Antonio remained in the cathedral; the melancholy that stole over his mind at Ambrosia's absence fixed him to the spot, and the faint moon beams shining through the windows, encouraged him to indulge his reverie, he sat down upon a seat near him, and gave way to the illusions of fancy. Sleep insensibly crept over his senses, and he dreamt that he was still in the church of the Capuchins, which was illuminated with a profusion of silver lamps, accompanied by the swelling tones of the organ, and the melodious voices of distant choristers: the altar, decked with bridal trophies, seemed only to want the bride, who was discovered standing at the upper end of it, arrayed in snowy vestments, and blushing with all the charms of virgin modesty. In the person of this beautiful maid he thought he discovered that of Ambrosia, and he stood gazing with rapture on her, when suddenly a door that opened into the abbey unclosed, and amidst a procession of monks, he saw the pious Innocent advance to the place where Ambrosia stood, and demand where the bridegroom was.—Ambrosia directed an eye of inquiry round the church.—Antonio thought he advanced involuntarily; she saw him, and a look of pleasure shone upon her countenance: she beckoned to him to advance, while he, pleased with her attention, threw himself at her feet, and she exclaimed, "Here he is!—this is the bridegroom!"—She moved forward to throw herself into his arms, but, before he could clasp her to his bosom, a gigantic unknown swarthy figure rushed in between them: on his forehead was written in legible characters, "Hypocrisy!" The shrieks of Ambrosia did not prevent the monster from seizing his victim; and, springing upon the altar with her, he almost stifled her with his odious caresses.—Antonio flew to extricate her, but as he put his hand on the ravisher, a sudden burst of thunder shook the cathedral; it seemed cracking from its base: the lamps went out, the monks disappeared, the altar became an abyss, where sulphureous flames arose. The monster, with a terrible cry, precipitated himself into it, and in his descent attempted to drag Ambrosia with him; but she suddenly became invigorated with supernatural powers, and extricated herself from his

embraces. In the struggle he retained her white robe, but instantly a wing of splendour spread itself from either of Ambrosia's arms, and darting upwards, she cried to Antonio, "My love, we shall meet above!" The roof of the cathedral opened to admit her flight, and celestial music seemed to float in the air, as she disappeared in a blaze of refulgence, too strong for mortal sight. He sunk upon the ground, and when he awoke, he found the church illuminated: for a while Antonio could not persuade himself but he was still in an illusion; at length he was convinced that the lamps had been lighted during his dream, and the music he heard was that of the monks celebrating vespers in the Abbey chapel.

Antonio now rose, and was bending his way out, when he observed the shadow of a man moving along the opposite wall. He was wrapped up in a cloak, and seemed to look cautiously round, that he might escape observation, and this circumstance inducing Antonio to look with the more curiosity, he placed himself in the deep shade of a column, where he saw the stranger advance, till he came to the colossal statue of St. Francis, where he hastily drew a letter from his garment, and deposited it at the foot of the image. Then retiring with precipitation, the stranger concealed himself in a part of the church, at a considerable distance from that in which the image stood. Antonio felt his curiosity very strongly excited by the stranger waiting to see the issue of his letter, and he determined to stay as long as the unknown did, planting himself behind the statue of St. Francis.

While he was waiting, Don Olmas strayed into the church, and Don Antonio joined him. Olmas informed him that he had returned, understanding that the Prioress of St. Clare, and her whole train of nuns, were coming there to confess to the Father Innocent, who on no account would stir out of his own precincts; and the Prioress, the better to save her flock from the gaze of impure eyes, had chosen to come in the dusk of the evening, and was to enter through the Abbey door. The portress of St. Clare had just given him the information, that the nuns were not to be veiled, out of respect to the saint to whom the chapel is dedicated, which had induced him to pay a visit to the Abbey. Scarcely had Don Olmas done speaking, when the Domina of St. Clare appeared, followed by a long proces-

sion of nuns. The prioress, with great reverence, crossed her hand upon her bosom, and made a profound obeisance as she passed the statue of St. Francis, the patron of the cathedral. The nuns followed the example, and several passed on without creating any particular interest in the minds of Antonio; at length one of the sisterhood, in bending at the shrine, happened to drop her rosary, in picking up which she drew the letter with great dexterity from the foot of the image, placed it in her bosom, and joined the procession. A lamp that shone full in the face of the nun shewed to the astonished eyes of Antonio the features of Bertha, his sister! "It is some clandestine proceeding with my sister," said Antonio in a low voice, "and no doubt this is the spark concerned; but I shall call him to an account before we quit this place."

Antonio and Olmas then hastened to the door of the church, whither the stranger, having seen the object of his visit received by the recluse to whom it was addressed, immediately withdrew. On seeing Antonio obstructing his way, he endeavoured to conceal his face, and pass on; but the former exclaimed, "I have observed, you Signor, and insist upon knowing who you are, and what are the contents of your letter." The answer of the stranger was as haughty as that of Antonio was peremptory, and the swords of the disputants were in an instant unsheathed.—Several passes had been exchanged before Don Olmas prudently beat down their weapons, and called upon Segovia to remember the consequences of shedding blood upon consecrated ground. The stranger withdrew his sword, and exclaimed "Segovia!—What, do I then behold Antonio, and does he not recollect Marcos di Langara!" Marcos was going to take his hand, but Antonio drew back.—"Marquis," said he, "at the moment when I thought you far from Madrid, I behold you engaged in a clandestine correspondence with my sister, whose affections—" "Are mine, and have ever been so," replied Marcos.—"But this is not a place to talk on affairs, so without any farther delay retire with me to the Palace di Langara, where I am at present incognito, under the name of plain Juan Perez." The two noblemen instantly withdrew, and hastened with all speed to the Marquis's residence.

When aunt Drusilla and her niece reached the outside of the church door, the former began a panegyric on the

behaviour of their two gallants ; and thought that something good might come of Antonio's attention to her niece ; but as to Don Olmas, he was the most polite, well-bred, and discerning cavalier she had ever met with, and she was almost resolved to break the vow she had made never to marry, that he might not lay it too much to heart. Certain she was that when she unveiled, it had taken no small effect upon him, and when she extended her hand to him to salute, if ever real love was expressed on any countenance, it was on that of the Condé Olmas. Ambrosia, who thought very differently from her aunt, let her continue this delightful theme till they reached home, where a crowd, gathered before the door, prevented them from approaching. While endeavouring to learn what had drawn these people together, the crowd formed itself into a circle, and now Ambrosia perceived in the midst of it a woman of remarkable stature, who used many extravagant gestures, and whirled herself round with much velocity. Her dress consisted of pieces whimsically arranged, and diversified in colour : on her head was a kind of turban, decorated with leaves : her complexion was a deep olive ; her eyes looked wild, and in her hand she bore a long black rod, with which she traced circles and enigmatical characters in the sand, dancing at intervals with much frantic violence. " Surely that woman is mad ! " said Ambrosia. " Neither foolish nor mad," replied the aunt, " but knavish.—She is a vagabond Gipsy, who goes about telling fortunes ; that is, telling lies, and pilfering money from the more industrious. If I were king of Spain they should all be burnt."

This kind speech was said sufficiently loud for the Gipsy to hear, who pierced through the crowd, and having thrice saluted them in the eastern style, requested the young lady to extend her hand, that she might tell her fortune. Ambrosia, after some little objection from her aunt, was permitted to hear what the woman had to say ; but as she was presenting her hand, her aunt drew it back, and observed that she would have her own fortune told 'first, for which purpose she put some money into the hand of the Gipsy.—The woman, after looking at her palm, replied, " Old lady, your fortune may be read in your wrinkles. You have had at least fifty years over your head, and these are so many admonitions to you to bestow your time in a better manner than in ogling, painting, and patching ; and your money

also in purchasing a place in heaven by deeds of charity.—You have spent all your life to catch a husband, and you will die little better than an old maid. This is your fortune." As soon as the Gipsy had done, some of the hard words bestowed upon her were passed from one to another among the crowd, till Drusilla was almost choked with passion, and vociferated back the advice she had received. The fortuneteller then turned from her with a contemptuous smile, and took the hand of Ambrosia, which she gazed on for some time with a mingled expression of pity and astonishment, and pronounced her doom in the following words: "This beautiful palm discovers a mind benevolent and kind; and would foretell that you were destined to make some worthy Signor happy, did not this line discover that destruction is hovering over you, from the artful machinations of a character which the voice of slander has not yet sullied.—Remember what I say; that, when you meet with one who is more virtuous than belongs to human nature; one who, free from crime, condemns the foibles of men as heinous sins; then think that your fate draws nigh, and look for endless bliss in a better world than this!" Having said this, the Gipsy again whirled herself round, and then hastened out of the street, the crowd following her. Drusilla entered Leonora's door very much dissatisfied with what she had heard, and Ambrosia was much affected by the predictions of the fortuneteller; but these in a short time wore off, and the adventure was no more remembered.

The monks having attended their abbot to the door of his cell, he dismissed them with the semblance of the most profound humility. He now gave loose to the indulgence of his vanity, and he viewed the admiration which attended him as an earnest of future grandeur. He looked round the world, and saw no one who, like himself, had passed the ordeal of youth without a stain upon his conscience.—Religion could not boast his equal.—Who preached with such effect, and was loaded with such benedictions as himself! Yet he felt a check while he thus exulted: he recollected he was but a man; and that he was now about to be tempted in his continency. The most noble and fair dames of Madrid selected him for their confessor: the seductions of luxury and passion would attack him; and if he should meet with a female as beautiful as the Madona he then

raised his eyes to, what struggles might not ensue! Before the monk hung a picture of the Virgin, which for two years had been the object of his delight and admiration. "Ah," thought he, "if fate should throw in my way the resemblance of this enchanting divinity, if such a resemblance can exist, could I view such charms with the coldness of a statue? Fool that I am!—how does my admiration of this picture carry me away, and hurry me into ideal criminal joys! Away, ye impure notions, incompatible with my sacred character, I abjure ye!—Innocent is superior to temptation. No! it is not the picture I adore: it is the divinity only! Are not the passions all dead in my bosom, and am I not superior to the frailty of man?—Fear not, then, Innocent: thy virtue is an invincible barrier to human defects."

This reverie was here interrupted by a gentle tap at his cell; the monk demanded who was there, and being told it was only Philario, he bid him enter. The youth had a small basket in his hand, which he placed upon the table, and then said, that he had come to intreat his prayers for a friend who was dangerously ill, assured that his intercession must be efficacious. The father replied, that he might command him in any thing, and asked him what he had in the basket. "A few of those flowers," replied Philario, "with which I have observed you most pleased; with your leave, holy father, I will dispose them round the cell."—Philario then placed them in small vases round the room, while the abbot remarked that he had not seen him at church that evening. Philario replied that he had attended, and had never but once heard him with greater delight, and that was when he preached on the sudden illness of the superior. "This," said the holy father, "is now two years ago. I did not know you at that time, Philario." "Ah, father," replied Philario, "that day has been the date on which have commenced all my sufferings, and which yet form the pain and pleasure of my life. I have abandoned the world and all its delights for ever to enjoy your friendship and your affection. Deprive me not of these, or I must perish in despair." "My son," said the abbot, "I have given you no cause to fear such a change. You speak of sufferings: if it be in my power to relieve them—" "It is only in your power; yet I must speak no farther. Were I to avow more you would hate me, would drive me from

your presence with reproach and scorn.—But, hark, the bell rings for vespers. Father, your benediction, before I leave you !”—The abbot gave him his blessing, and as the eager youth started from the ground, he pressed the abbot's hand to his lips, and quitted the apartment. Soon after the priest descended to vespers, much surprised at the mystery of the youth's behaviour. Philario was a young novice belonging to the monastery, who in three months intended to make his profession. The melancholy, the retirement, and voluntary seclusion of this youth from the world, excited the wonder of the fraternity. He always went with his face quite shrouded in his cowl, and looking downwards; hence his features were known to none. Philario was the only name he went by in the monastery: a stranger, in a rich equipage, had deposited the necessary sums for his reception among the monkhood, and on the following day had left him with them. Since that time Philario had never mentioned any particulars of himself; but, though he answered their civilities with sweetness, he carefully avoided all society with them. But there was one exception to this practice. The abbot's company was the zenith of happiness to him, for then he was sprightly, witty, and entertaining: the abbot soon forgot his severity when he was present, taught him with pleasure several sciences, and felt for him all the affection of a parent. Sometimes he indeed wished to see his face, but his rule of self-denial did not permit him to transgress even in this particular.

Vespers being over, the monks retired to their respective cells. Innocent alone remained in the chapel, seated in the confessional chair, to receive the nuns of St. Clare. They were all confessed, regularly, till the beautiful nun Bertha presented herself: as she bent down, a letter fell from her bosom, and she was retiring unconscious of her loss, when the monk picked it up, and was about to restore it to her, as his eye caught the first words of it, “All is ready for your escape, my dear Bertha!” Innocent started, and Bertha stepped up to him on seeing the letter in his hand, and made an attempt to regain it; but the abbot held it fast, and said he must read it. Bertha uttered a shriek, and exclaimed, “Then am I lost indeed!” clasping her hands wildly together. The letter was the plan of an escape at twelve the following night with her lover, the urgent mo-

tive for which was assigned to be the tender acknowledgment that she was far advanced in pregnancy by him.—“This letter,” said the monk, “I shall give to the prioress.” Bertha, in the accents and grasp of despair, hung upon his sable garments, and invoked him to pity her youth, her feminine weakness, and her frailty. She entered briefly into the causes and cruelties which had first separated her from Don Langara, the man of her heart, and had since reunited them, too fatally, in the garden of St. Clare, where he had privately visited her after dark for some time past. She prayed him to save her from an inevitable doom, and return her the letter. The father replied, that neither heaven nor he knew any pity for such impure wretches as herself; and that clemency would be a crime in such turpitude as her’s. Could he see St. Clare’s monastery a nursery for prostitution, and not punish the prostitute! After saying much more, he concluded with calling out the prioress, to whom he related the crime of the nun Bertha, and consigned her to her domination.

While the prioress perused the letter, her eyes flashed fire and indignation: that such a crime should be committed in her convent was dreadful; but, that it should come to the ears of Father Innocent, the immaculate abbot, whom she of all others wished to impress with a strong idea of the well-ordered regularity of her house, was most unpardonable, and called for exemplary vengeance. Under this feeling, the unfortunate Bertha was hurried from the chapel to the convent, there to undergo all the diabolical rage of the abbess, in which deplorable state we must for the present leave her. Innocent had not listened to the strong pleadings of Bertha without emotion: he thought he had treated this unfortunate with too great severity, and sought the prioress, to whom he ventured to pronounce some words in favour of the criminal. “Speak not of mitigation of punishment, father,” said the prioress. “So far removed from this will be my plan of correction, that I shall revive the long neglected and severe rules of our order. Bertha shall feel them to the very letter. Holy father, farewell!” She then hastened out of the room, and left the abbot not quite satisfied with his feeble opposition to the tyranny of the prioress. To dissipate the displeasing reflection, upon quitting the chapel, he descended to the abbey garden. This beautiful spot possessed all that art

could lend to nature. Fountains cooled the air, while flowers perfumed it. The moon serenely shone upon the foliage and the streams that issued from the jets of water. In the bosom of a sequestered grove of tall trees stood a rustic grotto, formed in imitation of a hermitage. Seats of turf were placed inside, and natural cascades murmured round it from the rock above. To this tranquil retreat the monk with conscious dignity bent his steps, but stopped on seeing some one lying on its banks in a melancholy posture. The moon beams shewed him Philario, who burst out into an apostrophe, "O misanthropy! how happy wouldst thou make me!" "A strange idea that," said Innocent, as he entered the grotto. "Ah, you here, father?" said Philario, at the same time drawing his cowl hastily over his face. "You must not indulge such notions," said the father.—"Man was born for society, and he can never forget the world wholly, nor bear to be altogether forgotten by it.—Whatever causes may drive the misanthropist to solitude, it also compels him soon to repent of it. When the violence of his passion has abated, he looks round, and finds himself alone and unregarded in the universe. The love of society returns; the beauties of nature become insipid, because he has no one near to listen to his admiration of them. When he returns to his cell at evening, no one waits there to welcome him: he lays himself down upon his couch dissatisfied and cheerless, and rises the next morning to toil through the same creeping gloomy day."

"This doctrine from you, father," said Philario, "sounds to me very extraordinary.—In a life of solitude, and such a life as yours, what joys would not the duties of religion afford!—The soul's calm sunshine —" "More of fancy than of truth in this," replied the monk. "After having spent many hours in prayer and solitude, a new pleasure awaits me at meeting my brethren for the evening; and in this I place the excellence of a monastic institution: it secludes men from vice, promotes the pure worship of the Supreme Being, and permits him to enjoy the blessings of society. Believe me, Philario, the life of the hermit is not to be compared with the one you enjoy. If you hate mankind, you can here indulge in seclusion, and yet enjoy the society of the best of men!" "This it is that causes my torment," said Philario. "Had I never heard the name

of virtue, and never have seen it practised in these walls, it would have been happy for me!"—"The conclusion then is," replied the abbot, somewhat surprised, "that if you had never seen these walls, you would never have seen me. Is this your wish?" "It is," exclaimed Philario, grasping the friar's hand with a frantic air. "I would to heaven that this might be the last time of seeing and recollecting you!" The youth at these words flew from the grotto, and left Innocent somewhat alarmed for the sanity of his mind; in a few minutes after Philario returned, and seated himself pensively by the side of Innocent, while a tear trickled down his cheek. The monk sat observing him, and a silence of some minutes was interrupted by the melodious notes of the nightingale. "Just as I now sit," said Philario, "did my sister once, listening to the nightingale during the last unhappy month of her life.—Poor Sabina, she sank beneath the oppression of her sorrows early in life, and now sleeps in the grave." "What were those sorrows?" said the monk. "Such as you have no pity for, father," said Philario; "because you have never felt that sentiment which consumed her. She loved unfortunately a man endowed with every perfection of body and soul.—Her love proved her bane, because it was blasted. His virtues and his talents might have warmed the most insensible. No wonder then my sister dared to love—and not to hope." "But why not dare to hope?" said the father. "Father, before he knew her, Jeralmo had plighted his vows to a fair and most heavenly bride. But yet Sabina loved him even for the sake of his wife. Unable to live from his presence, she one morning eloped from her father's house, and arrayed in humble weeds offered herself as a domestic to the consort of her beloved lord, and was accepted. She was ever attentive to please him, and her civilities soon was seen by her master, who distinguished Sabina above the other members of his household." "Did not her parents seek for her all this time?" enquired Innocent. "She discovered herself before they found her," replied Philario. "Her love, too big for concealment, at last declared itself; she sought not for the possession of his person, but a share in his heart. But he doated so much on his wife, that he had no pity for Sabina. She was driven from his presence, and returned to her father's in despair, where in a few months after she died of a broken heart." "Her fate was cruel and severe!" exclaimed the father. "Do you pity her—do you think that he

was cruel?" "I do from my heart," replied the Father. "Oh! then, holy father, pity me!" cried the novice eagerly. "My sister had a friend who shared her sorrows with her; my troubles are greater, for I have no friend to share mine."

Innocent took Philario's hand, and tenderly asked him, "if he had ever treated him other than as a child of his own:—he conjured the youth not to think him clothed with the austerity of a monk, though he wore the habit, but to unburthen his mind in his bosom. "When my secret is told," said Philario, "you will abhor me, and in making you my confidant, I shall lose your esteem." The monk assured him, that he had long felt his happiness insensibly interwoven with Philario's; and that in making him a confidant he would swear never to reveal it. "Swear then," said Philario, "whatever may be my secret, you will not compel me to quit the monastery till my noviciate expire." "I swear by the Holy Virgin, and her immaculate Son, to perform all this!" said the priest kneeling. "Know then," continued the novice, "that I am—O father, I tremble with dread and apprehension—(and at the same time he threw himself at the friar's feet, and pressed his hand eagerly) know, father, that I am a woman!" The abbot started; the feigned Philario lay on the ground. They stood for some minutes chained to the same attitudes, till the monk rushed from the grotto, and hastened towards the abbey. The suppliant flew after him, arrested his progress, threw herself at his feet, and Innocent in vain strove to disentangle himself from her grasp. "If you fly me," she cried, "you abandon me to despair! For a moment listen!—My sister's story is that of myself! I am Sabina—you are her beloved!" The monk stood gazing on her with astonishment, while she continued her explanation. "Think not, Innocent, Sabina has a wish to draw you from the path of virtue. The passion she feels for you is love, not licentiousness; a few moments of conversation will convince you I may possess your compassion without a trespass on your vows." Here Sabina seated herself, and the abbot involuntarily placed himself beside her. "I spring," continued she, "from a chief of the noble house of Doranges, who died while I was an infant, and left me sole possessor of his immense possessions. All the young and wealthy of Madrid sought me in marriage, but no one succeeded in gaining my affections. I was brought up under an uncle of the most solid judgement and profound erudition,

Having naturally a quick genius, he took pleasure in instructing me, and I not only made great progress in general learning, but what is called occult, and which lies under censure from the blindness of superstition: but while my guardian thus instructed me, he did not neglect to point out the moral beauty of religion: he taught me to love the virtuous, and I have but obeyed him too well. The vice and ignorance of our Spanish youth, with acquirements like mine, now became disgusting to me. I rejected every offer with disdain, and my heart had no master till chance conducted me to the cathedral of the Capuchins. There I first saw you; there I first heard you preach, the superior being absent from illness. I retired from the church glowing with admiration and love!—You became the idol of my heart. The reports of your mode of life, piety, and continence riveted my chains. I attended the cathedral day after day in expectation of hearing you again, but you remained secluded within its walls. The night was more friendly to me than the day; it brought dreams to my imagination, in which I was present with you, and received your vows of eternal amity and holy lessons of virtue. Time only increasing the strength of my passion, I became melancholy; and to dissipate my increasing malady, I assumed the disguise in which you now see me, was received into the monastery, and succeeded in gaining your esteem. Possessed of this, I felt, if ever your friendship should be withdrawn, I could not survive its loss.—I resolved therefore not to leave the discovery of my sex to chance, but confess the whole to you; your clemency will pardon it, and then I shall still be permitted to admire your virtues while living, and sleep in the same grave with you when dead!"

Various feelings arose in the mind of the monk; he felt that he ought to reply with austerity to her boldness and insult of his order; but on the other side his vanity was flattered by the praises bestowed on his eloquence, and the consideration that a young beautiful girl had for his sake forsaken the world, and sacrificed every other passion for the love of him. As he recovered from his confusion, he became strongly sensible of the impropriety of Sabina remaining in the abbey after this avowal of her sex. He drew away the hand which she had hitherto pressed between her ivory fingers, and said that it was impossible he could grant permission for her to remain with the brotherhood, or ever reply

himself to her affection. The risk of her sex being discovered was too great, and he might be exposed to a temptation that might in the end endanger his own sanctity. "Forget then that I am a woman," said Sabina: "Consider me only as an unfortunate, whose happiness depends on your protection. Innocent, I shall not seduce you from the paths of purity. I esteem you because you are a saint; forsake that character, and I forsake you. I am incapable of seducing your stoical virtue into error; it is established on a base too firm for my poor allurements to shake it.—No, Innocent, thy example shall be my conduct: reject me not therefore, nor violate the sacred promise you have made to let me stay." "Not for myself," replied the monk, "do I fear, after thirty years spent in mortification and penance, but for yourself, since your remaining in the abbey would only produce the most fatal consequences. Your passions will overleap your reason; every moment we pass together will encourage you to false conclusions of the purity of my esteem. I believe you have hitherto acted on the purest motives; but though you are blind to your danger, it is my duty to direct you in the right path. I must reject your prayer; you must quit this place tomorrow." Impossible!" exclaimed Sabina, "You cannot have the cruelty to reject me now?" "The laws of our order," replied the monk, "forbid your stay. If I conceal you, I am perjured. You must go; there is no alternative." As he said these words, he rose to retreat towards the monastery, but Sabina followed, and uttering a loud shriek detained him. He endeavoured to disengage himself, and casting her from him, bid her depart on the morrow.—"Barbarian, then," exclaimed Sabina, "one resource only is left to ease my despair." As she said this, she hastily drew a dagger, and rending open her vestment, she placed the point against her naked bosom. "Hold, desperate maid!" cried the father: "whither would you precipitate yourself? Do you not know that suicide is the greatest of crimes?" "Tell me, then, Innocent, that you will conceal my story; that I shall remain your friend and companion, or this dagger shall drink my blood!" Again the dagger was lifted, and as the point seemed to enter the flesh, the monk caught her arm. "Hold!" cried he in an agitated manner; "Stay, thou enchantress; stay, for my destruction!" Saying this, he rushed from the place, hastened to the monastery, and regaining his cell, threw himself upon his

couch, distracted, irresolute, and confused. He debated in his own mind on what conduct he ought to pursue; prudence and religion required that Sabina should quit the abbey; but on the other hand his vanity was excited by what she had endured for him; he had passed many hours of delight in the society of Philario; besides which, as Sabina was wealthy, she might essentially benefit the abbey. The more he reasoned, the stronger was his assurance that there was no danger in suffering her to stay; she had only sought to gain his esteem; she had never realized her charms, nor had he even at that moment seen her face perfectly, though from what little he had seen, both that and her person seemed to be very lovely.

This last idea planted itself so strongly in his bosom, that he became alarmed at indulging the sentiment; and starting from his couch, he knelt before the beautiful Madona, and prayed her aid to stifle such culpable emotions. He awoke from sleep the next morning with a more unclouded view of his real state. If Sabina had in one hour produced such a change in his austerity, what might not repeated interviews effect? He began to feel that he was not proof against temptation, and that his only security lay in removing her from the abbey without delay. He quitted his cell, fully resolved to carry this into effect; at mornins, his thoughts were occupied only by terrestrial objects. The service over, he repaired to the hermitage, where he doubted not Sabina would come to seek him. He was right; she soon after entered with a timid air, and the monk, who had been collecting all his strength, bid her be seated, and attend to what he had to say. "Influenced," said he, "by our mutual happiness, I feel that to preserve it, we must never meet again. My dear Philario, still let me call you by that innocent name! I feel our separation is unavoidable. If you stay here I cannot treat you with indifference; Sabina, it must be so—tomorrow you depart!" "Where then shall I find truth, religion, conscience," exclaimed Sabina, "if such be your determination! You swore yesterday I should not quit the monastery before my noviciate expired, and to day you would be guilty of perjury." "I will respect my oath," said Innocent, yet, when I detail to you the embarrassments in which your presence will involve me, will you not absolve me from it? A discovery of your sex, and my knowledge of it, would destroy my honour, peace, and reputation at the same instant. If

you go, these will be preserved ; if you stay, they will be sacrificed on the altar of your charms !—My bosom will become the prey of wild desires, which, once gratified, happiness here and hereafter vanish together. To yourself then I apply for protection against myself. Fly then from these walls, if you would preserve me.”—“This is an appeal,” replied Sabina, “of the most cruel kind : you refer it to my will, and, alas ! I have no will but your’s. Take back then, dear Innocent, the promise you have made me. This day I will quit the convent, and repair to the abbess of a convent in Estremadura ; there will I shut myself up for ever ! Yet, tell me, father, will you not sometimes think on me,—and shall I not bear some token of your regard, to inourn over in my solitary cell ?” “You shall, dear Sabina,” said the monk ; “but what shall I give you ?” “Any remembrance—one of those flowers is all I ask,” said Sabina, (pointing to a rose bush at the door of the grotto.) “Worn next my heart, it shall wither on the bosom that pines for thee.” The friar, much affected, walked from the hermitage to the rose bush, and stooped to gather one. Suddenly he started back, and let the flower fall with a piercing cry. Sabina anxiously flew to learn the cause of his distress. “A serpent has stung me !” he feebly articulated. “The venom is mortal—already it spreads——” Here the pain of the wound overcame him ; his senses forsook him, and he fell inanimate into the arms of Sabina. The latter by loud cries summoned the monks to her assistance, by whose help Innocent was carried to the abbey, and put to bed. The remedies administered restored him to life, but not to his senses. Such was his delirium, that four of the brotherhood could scarcely keep him in his bed.

Father Medjos, the acting physician, immediately attended, and, on probing the wounds, shook his head mournfully. A greenish hue tinged the point of his instrument, which he declared proceeded from the mortal bite of the *cientiperedo* and would not permit him to exist longer than three days. “Can no remedy be found ?” exclaimed Philario and the monks. “None,” replied Medjos. “I know of no means of extracting the poison. Herbs will relieve the pain, but the venom will gradually spread through the mass of blood, till he fall a victim to its virulence.”—At this declaration the grief was universal, and the monks all withdrew to pray. Philario alone remained in the cell,

Medjos having committed Innocent to his particular care.—The Monk, overcome by his violent exertions, fell into a profound sleep; in which state Father Medjos found him when he returned to inspect the wound: this he did rather from a wish not to be thought neglectful of his duty, than any hope he entertained of favourable symptoms; but, what was his astonishment, when he found the inflammation had wholly subsided; that his instrument came out pure and unsullied, and a trace of the wound scarcely remained on the skin!"

This was instantly told to the monks, who as suddenly resolved it into a miracle performed by St. Francis in his favour. Their vociferation at length waked Innocent's slumbers, who told him of the wonderful interposition of heaven in his favour. Innocent now ailed nothing, except feeling a little languid; Father Medjos then administered a strengthening medicine, and advising him to be kept quiet, left the Abbot and Philario in the room together.—The latter was seated on the side of the bed, her head bending down, and enveloped in her cowl. "Ah," said the Monk, "do I still see you here?—A miracle has saved me from the grave, and I am convinced that heaven sent that serpent to punish—" Sabina put her hand before his lips, and gaily said, "Father, I have received an unexpected pleasure, which must be only known to you and myself.—I could tell you now, but as Father Medjos has forbidden you to talk for this two days, and I am appointed your nurse, you are not to disobey me.—As you do not seem at present much inclined to sleep, I will endeavour to amuse you with my harp." "I did not suppose you understood music," said Innocent.—"You shall hear," said Sabina gaily, and stepped out for her harp, which she soon returned with. Having tuned it, she preluded some movements with exquisite taste and rapidity, till she changed into a slow and plaintive measure.

The Monk was enchanted: he felt his pain subside, and a soft melancholy steal through his bosom; but when she sung a strain upon love, he wondered how such sounds could be produced by any but angels. The songstress sat at a little distance, hanging over her harp in an easy and graceful position; her cowl had fallen more back than usual, and discovered a chin and lips ripe and melting. Her long sleeves were drawn above her elbow, the more easily to facilitate her execution, and discovered an arm of the most

perfect symmetry and whiteness. Innocent dared not to look at her: he closed his eyes, but strove in vain to banish her from intellectual vision: there her beauties all danced before him; his vows relaxed their strong hold; he struggled with desire, and shuddered when he beheld how deep was the precipice before him. Matilda ceased to sing. Dreading the influence of her charms, Innocent remained with his eyes closed, and offered up his prayers to St. Francis to assist him in this dangerous trial. Sabina rose from her seat, approached the bed softly, and for some minutes gazed upon him attentively. "He sleeps!" said she; "now will I gaze upon him, and mix his breath with mine. He fears my seducing him to the violation of his vows.—It was but yesterday, but a few short hours have passed since he was dear to him, and my heart was satisfied. He now looks on me with suspicion. O you, who are my saint, my idol, in two days my heart will be unveiled to you. Had you known my feelings when I beheld you in agony, you would now pity me, and be convinced that my love is pure and disinterested." As she said this, a tear fell from her cheek, upon that of Innocent. Sabina softly said, "Ah! I have disturbed him!" and drew back a little, but the friar still seemed buried in repose.

"How pure, how excellent she is!" the friar inwardly thought: "if I am thus sensible of pity, what would be the effect of love!" Sabina had now quitted her seat, and sat with her face turned from him, resting on her harp, and looking up at the picture which hung opposite the bed. In this position, Innocent ventured to look at her, while she thus addressed the beautiful Madona. "Happy blessed image, to thee are all his prayers offered; on thee is all his admiration bestowed! Had I known him ere his vows were pronounced, Innocent and happiness might have been mine! With what fervour does he address this insensible picture!—but 'tis the divinity, not the mere woman which he admires! Oh! that I could hear one of the tender expressions addressed to me which he pours forth to this Madona. Perhaps he may one day acknowledge that he feels some pity for me, and if he had not been affirmed to the church, I might have been his. When I am dying, he may venture to confess thus much, without infringing his vows, and so soften the pain of dissolution."

The Abbot lost not a word of this speech : he raised himself involuntarily from his pillow, and in an affectionate manner pronounced the name of Sabina ! Sabina started, and in turning hastily round, her cowl fell from her head, and her features were fully disclosed — The Monk beheld with astonishment the perfect likeness of his admired Madonna ! — He uttered an expression of surprise, and sunk back upon his pillow, doubting whether the beautiful object before him was human.

The first action of Sabina, on recovering herself, was to conceal her features ; she then addressed the friar in a faltering manner. “ Yes, Innocent, in Sabina you see the original of your adored Madona. After I conceived my unfortunate passion, it occurred to me to send you my picture. The best portrait painter of Madrid drew it, and the likeness was excellent : I sent it to the Capuchin abbey for sale, and you bought it of a Jew, who was my emissary. It was pleasure to my ears, when I was told you had placed it in your cell, and addressed your supplications to it. Since that I have been an eye witness of the transports which its beauty excited ; but I never sought to inflame your passions by displaying the charms of the original. I became your companion and friend, and such should I have remained if I had not been tormented by the fear of a discovery ; let me then still remain your Philario ; let the few hours of life which remain to me be passed in your presence ! Speak, and tell me that I may stay ! ”

“ I can decide on nothing at present,” replied the Monk ; “ your declaration has confounded me ! — My heart forebodes the consequences of your stay. — Our separation must take place, at farthest on the third day from this time. — Two days will be sufficient to prepare the brethren for your departure, and on the third — ” “ On the third,” said Sabina, looking at him wildly, and seizing his hand, “ on the third, father, we must part for ever ! ” — Sabina then hurried out, and left Innocent alarmed at the emphatical expression of her last words. The Monk’s bosom became the theatre of various passions ; he drew inferences favourable to the strength of his own virtue, and even if that gave way, relied upon security in the innocence and purity of Sabina. Father Medjos permitted his patient to quit his chamber next day ; he slept well that night, and the next morning excused himself from appearing at matins, the first time he

had ever neglected this duty. He rose late, and had no opportunity of speaking to Sabina, his cell being crowded with monks to congratulate him on his recovery. After dinner, while the monks enjoyed their siesta in the garden, the Abbot bent his steps to the hermitage, whither, directed by a glance of his eye, Sabina followed. They entered the grotto, and their conversation was general, both avoiding the subject which most interested them. Sabina spoke faintly, and at length declaring she was unwell, begged leave to retire.

The Abbot accompanied her to the door of her cell, and then told her that she might continue the partner of his solitude, so long as it should be agreeable to herself. "Alas! father," she said, waving her hand mournfully, "your compassion comes too late; we must separate for ever: my doom is fixed: yet believe I am grateful for the pity you have shewed to an unfortunate." Innocent observed that she looked pale, and spoke with the accent of illness: he proposed sending Father Medjos to her, but Sabina declined his interference as useless, and bidding the father remember her in his prayers, she closed the door of her cell. The Abbot immediately dispatched the medical father to Philario, but he refused his aid, and returned to inform Innocent, who retired to his couch, but not to sleep: he thought upon Sabina's beauty and affection, and the happiness he could have enjoyed with her, if unrestrained by monastic fetters: he shuddered at the void her absence would make in his bosom, and was wishing that he was at liberty in the world he had quitted, when a lay brother knocked at the door of his cell, as the convent bell tolled two, and, on being admitted, said, that the young Philario was lying at the point of death, and earnestly wished to see him. "Where is Father Medjos?" exclaimed the Abbot. "His art can do nothing," replied the lay brother: "he has seen him, and suspects he is poisoned!" "Ah!" said the Abbot, "poisoned! then are my fears true!"

As he said this he flew to the cell, where, surrounded by the monks and Father Medjos, lay Philario, who was refusing the medicine administered, and saying, that his malady was not in the reach of physical skill. On seeing Innocent, he desired the brethren to leave him, as he had much to commune on with that holy man in private. The frater-

nity directly retired, and the Abbot demanded if she had sacrificed herself to her imprudence! "Father," replied Sabina, "I glory in the sacrifice I have made.—A life is preserved more dear to me than my own. I am poisoned with the venom that once circulated in your veins!" "Astonishment!" exclaimed the Abbot. "This," added she, "I had resolved never to reveal but on the bed of death; that hour is now come. When you received the bite of the cientepe-doro, the physician declared you must die without the poison could be extracted. But one way was left, and I eagerly embraced it. I loosened the bandage from your hand, and drew out the poison with my lips. My death is the consequence, and I willingly submit."

The Abbot was almost frantic, and demanded in terms of terror, if there were no hope, if she had no means of life still left! "I have the means, my only friend!" replied Sabina; "but to employ them is dangerous and dreadful. Life would be purchased at too dear a rate, unless it were to enjoy it with you!" "Live then for me, Sabina!" he exclaimed: "We will forget the distinctions of sex, and consider each other as brother and friend. Thus, Sabina, shall you live for the sake of Innocent." "Ah, Innocent," replied Sabina, "I once thought thus, but now the film has been cleared from my eyes. I once loved you for your virtues; I now doat on your person. I am become a mere woman, a prey to the most wild passions. If I live, Innocent, your virtue, your reputation, all that you value, is lost. Look at my cheeks, irradiated with warmth, my eyes sparkling with fire, and read there the desires that fill my breast!—Consider what I ask, and say I must not live." "What do I hear?" exclaimed the Abbot. "Are these the sentiments of Sabina!" He made a movement as if to quit his seat; but Sabina, uttering a loud cry, threw her arms round the friar to detain him. "Leave me not, father, at this critical time.—In a few hours I shall be no more, and free from this disgraceful passion." "What shall I say?" cried the Abbot. "I must resist—but yet live, Sabina, continue to live!" "You bid me live," said Sabina,—"but for what?—to become the agent of Satan, to destroy both you and myself? Look at this bosom, father: it is yet the seat of honour and chastity; to-morrow, if it beats, it will fall a prey to the darkest crimes. Oh, let me then die, before I forfeit the esteem of the virtuous!" Nothing more

was said. The hour was night; all was silence: the fine figure of Sabina was illuminated by a solitary lamp. A beautiful woman lay at his mercy—one who had preserved his life, and whose death rested upon his decision. A thousand struggles and desires rent his bosom;—Nature was too weak for the struggle;—he yielded to the delusion of the moment; and broke his faith with heaven!—The next step was to break it with man.—His better angel gave a shriek, flew away, and quitted him for ever!

It was late before Antonio had heard the history of his friend the Marquis di Langara, in which the former found himself not only much interested from respect to his sister and her lover, but anxious to extricate her from the domination of the Prioress, as well from the pregnant situation she was in, as the dreadful punishment which might ensue.—On reaching the hotel di Segovia, Antonio's first care was to enquire for letters: several were waiting for him, but that which he sought for most was not amongst them. Drusilla had not been able to write that evening; but, such was her impatience to secure the heart of Don Olmas, on which she flattered herself she had made a strong impression, that she did not let another day pass without informing him of her residence.

On her entering Leonora's apartment, she was eager to tell how much she had interested some handsome cavalier, whose friend had promised to plead Ambrosia's cause with the Marquis di Langara. Leonora saw much impropriety in thus making strangers acquainted with their private business, and observed with still more apprehension, that a blush overspread her daughter's cheek when the name of the Cavalier Antonio was mentioned. Her mother perceived the emotions which filled her young bosom, when he was made the subject of conversation; in consequence, she insisted on Drusilla breaking her promise to the strange nobleman by letter. Ambrosia gave a deep sigh at this resolution, which Drusilla determined not to obey, attributing her sister's spleen to envy, at seeing her in favour with such a capital Signor. Without imparting her design to any one, she dispatched the following note to Antonio, which he received as soon as he awoke in the morning.

“By this time, Signor Antonio must certainly think the word of Drusilla is not to be taken: but, as I am a virgin,

I could not write according to promise yesterday. My sister is an odd kind of woman, for she received very coldly your kind wish to visit her, but she is jealous of me; she immediately felt some alarm when I told her that your friend had paid me a little attention. However, I am sensible of the kindness of your offers; and what is more, such is my desire to behold again the amiable Don Olmas, that I cannot write such a letter as my sister desired me. I have stolen a moment to inform you, that we lodge in the Strada di San Jago, next door to the Barber's, Miguel Collido. You must enquire for Donna Leonora Falda, which is her maiden name. At eight this evening you will find us at home, but be sure to say nothing of this letter.—Tell the Condé d'Olmas I blush.—But tell him his presence will be very agreeable to the sensitive

“DRUSILLA.”

Antonio intended to take Olmas with him, but not being able to discover his retreat, he went alone, to the great mortification of Drusilla. The servant, not knowing any thing to the contrary, Antonio was introduced, and Leonora read in Ambrosia's countenance certain tokens of fear and delight. The prudent mother, at one glance over the person of Antonio, saw he must prove a dangerous guest for her daughter, and resolved to treat him with that cold respect which should induce him to think that his future visits would not be agreeable. On his entrance, he found Leonora lying on a sofa indisposed, Ambrosia at her embroidery frame, and Drusilla sitting like a shepherdess. Antonio had expected to find in Leonora an honest homely woman, but a single look convinced him that her countenance and person, though now clouded by sorrow, had once been of distinguished beauty; he saw the features of Ambrosia in the mother, and easily excused the imprudence of the late Count di Langara. Leonora desired Antonio to be seated, while Ambrosia received him with a simple reverence, and continued her work, her cheek suffused with blushes. Drusilla sat for some time with cast down eyes, till not finding Don Olmas enter, she interrupted Antonio, who was just beginning to deliver the message of the Marquis di Langara, by asking after his friend. Antonio replied that a friend's sudden illness had obstructed him from paying her his respects, but he would throw himself at her feet the moment of his return. Leonora looked at the Ca-

valier with censure in her eye; and the falsehood did not even pass current on Drusilla, who rose, and retired in dudgeon to her own apartment.

Antonio now hastened to repair the fault he had committed, and related the conversation he had had with the Marquis; who had promised to acknowledge her for his brother's widow, and had commissioned him to wait on her till he could himself pay her his respects in person. This intelligence relieved the heart of Leonora from a load which had heavily oppressed it: the fatherless Ambrosia would now find a protector. She was profuse in her thanks to Antonio, and when he rose to depart, she reluctantly granted his request of occasionally calling to enquire after her health. When Antonio was gone, a silence of some minutes took place, which Leonora at length broke by observing that Antonio was a charming young man, and asking if he had sat long near her in the cathedral yesterday. Ambrosia said that he had given her his seat, and had been very obliging the whole time. "Then how strange it is," said Leonora, "that you should not have mentioned his name. If Drusilla had not spoken of his readiness to undertake our cause, I should not have known he had been in existence.—You, perhaps, thought him not agreeable; for my own part, I think him a most interesting young man; but your taste and mine may differ."

"Dear mother," replied the daughter, "I do not think him disagreeable!—I must be blind, if his kindness yesterday and his merits could have escaped me. He seems to unite every perfection in his mind and person, and I doubt whether Madrid can produce his equal." "This makes it the more surprising," said Leonora, "that you should have observed such a silence respecting him." "Indeed," said Ambrosia, "I was on the point of mentioning him a thousand times, but, when I would have pronounced his name, I wanted courage to execute my purpose; but, though I spoke not of him, I did not think of him the less." "That I believe," said her mother. "To me, however, it is very clear why you were so diffident. You felt that your heart nourished a sentiment which I should disapprove. Now, my sweet girl, attend to me.—I have read the emotions in your bosom; you are as yet too ill skilled in concealing them from my attentive eye. This Antonio has made an impression on your heart, and he is not less enamoured of

you. But bad consequences must follow, such disproportionate circumstances. You are poor and friendless: Antonio is heir to the Duke of Segovia Lermos. If he means honourably, his uncle will never consent to your union, and, without his consent, never will I. By fatal experience, I know the evil attending the woman who marries into a family unwilling to receive her. Your heart is young, and doubtless has received a strong impression: but when once convinced, that that impression ought to be obliterated, I can rely upon your prudence, to act in conformity to my will." Ambrosia kissed her hand, and promised implicit obedience.

The mother continued: "The first thing towards effecting this is to prohibit Antonio's visits. Such is the service he has rendered me that I cannot forbid them positively: but, If I judge rightly of the generosity of his character, he will discontinue them without taking offence, when I frankly confess to him my reasons. This will be the most prudent way, do you not think so, Ambrosia!" Ambrosia said yes, but not without some regret. Her mother kissed her, and then retired to bed: her daughter did the same; and thought of her lover till she went to sleep.

Antonio, when he quitted Leonora, hastened to rejoin the Marquis. This was the night in which the elopement of Bertha was to be effected. Previous some months to this, the Marquis, who had remained in Madrid incog. had procured an entrance into the convent by bribing the old gardener, who suffered him to attend there occasionally disguised as his labourer. This continued, till the interviews of Bertha and the Marquis became uniformly every evening, and in an unguarded moment the honour of Bertha was forfeited. Immediately the moment of passion was over, remorse and horror succeeded. She drove the Marquis from her presence, and threatened the old gardener with the vengeance of the Prioress if he suffered the deception to be carried on any longer. In consequence of this, the Marquis saw no more of Bertha, who in the mean time took the vows. But the fatal discovery at length came: Bertha found herself pregnant, and contrived means to convey a letter to the Marquis, announcing her situation, and entreating him by their mutual love to extricate her from the direful consequences that must ensue. The answer he was to return was to be placed under the foot of the statue of

St. Francis, which she could get easily on the evenings when she came to confess before the Abbot Innocent in the Abbey. This hiding place was the more necessary, as the old gardener had been discharged, and one of an inflexible character put into his place. Several letters had passed in this manner between Bertha and the Marquis, and that one which Antonio had seen his friend place at the foot of St. Francis, and which was the means of bringing them together, contained the plan for Bertha's elopement on the following night.

The Marquis had made himself master of the key of the garden, having seized the person of the gardener by the means of his agents, whom he intended to detain till the elopement was effected. Every thing being ready, Antonio and Langara, at twelve at night, took a coach and four to the garden wall of the convent. Don Marcos drew out his key, and entering the garden, they waited some time in expectation of seeing Bertha; but after staying till it became unsafe to stay any longer, they were forced to retire, totally incapable of forming an idea why their plan had failed. The cause of this has been before shewn in Bertha having dropped the letter which contained the fatal scheme, and which had been delivered by the Abbot to the Prioress. The latter, wisely wishing to conceal the disgrace in which her convent might be involved, contented herself with confining Bertha, and let the headstrong brother and lover wait in the garden till they were tired, when she was certain they would retire home without creating any alarm.

The next morning Antonio went to the convent, and requested to see his sister, but this the Prioress said was not at present practicable, as she had been very ill since the last night of confession, and continued so. Though Antonio did not much accredit this story, he returned the next morning, and received an answer that she was worse than the day before. Antonio and the Marquis were both convinced that their plan had been discovered, but in what way they had no clue to penetrate. There was little apprehension that she was ill; the only distress that Langara experienced was the way to extricate her from the fangs of the Prioress. Fortunately at this time arrived a bull from the Pope, which had been procured through the interest of the Cardinal Duke of Parma, a distant relation of the Marquis's, and to whom he had written to procure this instru-

ment some months before. It gave Bertha's brother the power to remove her without delay to the Palace di Segovia, and he determined to put it in force on the following day.

Antonio had a little leisure to devote to Ambrosia, and he repeated his visit to Donna Leonora at the same hour as before. When he was announced, her daughter retired with Drusilla, and on his entrance Leonora was alone.—She received him with more courtesy than before, and desiring him to be seated on the sofa near her, she thus opened that business which had been previously agreed on between her and Ambrosia. “The services which you have rendered me with the Marquis are of a nature that lay me under the deepest obligation: yet, while I am fully sensible of their weight, I am compelled to take a step for the interest of my beloved Ambrosia, which to your eye may savour of ingratitude. I feel that I am verging to the grave; nor can it be long before my daughter will be left without parents, and should she lose the protection of the Langara family, without friends. Her charms are equal to her innocence; both contribute to render her an object of seduction. You are friendly, are amiable, Don Antonio, and Ambrosia's heart warmly acknowledges the favours you have conferred. I fear your presence here may encourage her to cherish hopes that may never be realized, and will unfit her for her humble station in life. The principles of gratitude make you a welcome visitor here, but the fears of a fond doing mother must make me lament the necessity of rejecting your acquaintance. By complying with my request, you will augment the esteem I already feel for you.” “I am pleased with your frankness,” said Antonio. But I yet hope the reasons I have to urge will induce you to change your resolution.—I wish to receive your daughter's hand only at the altar. It is true my father's death has left but little in my possession; but I have expectations that may entitle me to the daughter of the late Condé di Langara.” “Ah, Don Antonio,” said Leonora, “you forget in that pompous title the humility of my origin. You overlook that I have passed fourteen years abandoned by my husband's friends, and neglected by my own relations.—My allowance being discontinued by my father-in-law's death, I have been reduced to the very brink of want, and must

have famished if my sister, who, with all her foibles, possesses a benevolent heart, had not aided me with the little fortune her father left her, and persuaded me to visit Madrid, supporting me and my child since our quitting Murcia. Consider then Ambrosia only by her relations on the mother's side, as the grand-daughter of a poor honest tradesman, and you will see the impossibility of her being a fit person to unite with the nephew and heir of the mighty Duke di Segovia!" To this Antonio replied, that the Duke di Segovia was too liberal to be his enemy on this head; and even if he were, his parents being dead, he had only to consult his own happiness, which, with his own little fortune and the hand of Ambrosia, he would not exchange for his uncle's dukedom without her.

"Ah!" replied Leonora, "you are young and impassioned; but experience has taught me, that unequal alliances are very rarely happy. I married the Condé di Langara against his father's will, and a father's curse always pursued him. Driven from his presence, poverty soon overtook us; and when the warmth of love was cooled by distress, my husband reproached me with being his destruction, and the cause of leaving his father's house. It is true these cruel words were uttered when he was desponding, and always followed by a deep contrition for his unjustifiable severity. Without your uncle's consent, therefore, Ambrosia never can be your's."—"If he refuses his consent," replied Antonio, "it is but quitting Spain. The fortune I have can be easily realised, and with that and Ambrosia, the Indian islands will afford a secure retreat, and all that is needful to happiness."—"Romantic visionary!" exclaimed Leonora; "my husband thought the same. He left Spain under this idea, but found nothing could supply the loss of his native land and the first scenes of infancy. My husband and two sweet babes perished by the unwholesome atmosphere of Cuba, and nothing could have saved my Ambrosia, but my sudden return to Spain. Ah! Don Antonio, could you conceive what I suffered during his absence; could you know how sorely I regretted all I had left behind, and how dear to me was the very name of Spain, you would no longer indulge such a thought. When the Spanish sailor chaunted some well known air as he passed under my window, how did I wish to change situations

with him. Tears filled my eyes—my exiled husband too—” Here her voice faltered: she concealed her face for a few minutes in her handkerchief, and, after giving her sorrows a short freedom, she arose from the sofa, and thus proceeded.—“ Excuse the recollection which so much pains me. I have now nothing more to say, my lord; you are master of my reasons for not repeating your visits, and I throw myself upon your honour in full confidence; nor do I think that my opinion of it will be disappointed.”

Antonio said, he had but the following question to ask, and then he would no longer intrude: “ Whether, if the duke, his uncle, approved of his love, his addresses would be unacceptable to her and the fair Ambrosia?”——“ I most candidly reply,” said Leonora, “ that such an event is ardently wished for by my daughter; and, for myself, I should sincerely rejoice in placing my child so eligibly, conscious that my sinking health will shortly leave her under the protection of an entire stranger, for such is the Marquis di Langara to me. He may marry, and his lady, beholding Ambrosia with a jealous eye, deprive her of her only friend. With the Duke’s consent you will obtain our’s; and till that takes place, let me entreat you not to strengthen Ambrosia’s prepossession by your presence. Without that sanction, you must remain satisfied with my gratitude and esteem; but remember, without it, we never meet again!” Antonio promised the more willingly to obey her, as he made little doubt of obtaining the requisite conditions.—He then explained to Leonora the causes which had detained the Marquis from calling, related the history of his sister’s affection for the Marquis, and concluded by saying, that, as he hoped to set Bertha at liberty the following day, Langara’s fears would soon be quieted on her account, after which he would lose no time in assuring her of his friendship and protection.

After some conversation with Leonora on the reputed superstition and implacability of the Prioress of St. Clare, when the rigid rules of her Convent were broken through, Antonio kissed her hand, and, trusting that he should soon have the pleasure of seeing Ambrosia, took his leave.—Leonora was much pleased with the conversation that had transpired, and looked forward with much satisfaction to the probable hope of his being her son-in-law, which she

prudently resolved in the present state of things to conceal from her daughter. Early the next morning Antonio repaired to the Convent of St. Clare, furnished with the Bull for the surrender of Bertha. He demanded to see his sister, but the old lady replied, that the dear child's situation grew every hour more dangerous, and that the physician had declared, the only chance she had of her life was in being kept quiet, particularly from those who might agitate her. Every syllable of this was disbelieved by Antonio, and to make an end of the business, he put the Pope's mandate into the hands of the Domina, and required his sister to be surrendered up to him immediately. No sooner had the eye of the Prioress glanced over the contents of it, than her resentment overcame her hypocrisy. "This order," said she, "is from his Holiness, and willingly would I obey it, but it is no longer in my power."—"Not in your power!" vociferated Antonio. "I repeat it, Signor," said the Prioress, "it is not in my power. I have not mentioned the sad event out of tenderness to a brother's feelings: this order breaks through my kind concealment, and compels me plainly to tell you, that your sister Bertha expired on Friday last." Antonio started, pondered for a moment, and was then convinced that little attention was to be paid to this information.—"Thou prevaricator!" exclaimed Antonio in a rage, "it is not five minutes since you said she was alive. Produce her this instant! Produce her, or fatal consequences may ensue!"—"Signor," replied the Prioress, "do not forget the respect due to my age and profession. Your sister is no more; and if she were not, what interest should I have in detaining her?—one who has long wished to quit the holy sisterhood of St. Clare. But she knew the magnitude of her crime, and you ought to rejoice that she is no longer in existence. Last Thursday evening, returning from confession in the Capuchin chapel, she was taken ill. Her disorder had strange symptoms, such as we are, thanks to heaven, wholly unacquainted with. Judge then of our consternation, when she was the next day delivered of a still born child, whom she immediately followed to the grave. Signor, you express little surprise at her crime: is it possible you knew of it, and could yet retain any affection for her!—In that case you also are not intitled to my compassion. I have there—

fore only to repeat that his Holiness's order has arrived too late ; Bertha is no more, and I swear by this blessed crucifix that three days have elapsed since her burial." As she said this, she kissed a small crucifix hanging at her girdle, and then quitted the parlour, directing a scornful smile at Antonio.

Deeply afflicted with the news, he retired, but Langara's grief almost amounted to madness ; still he maintained, that she existed within the walls of St. Clare, and he was unremittingly employed in some fruitless scheme to penetrate into the Convent. Antonio thought she had been taken off by unfair means, and under this idea he encouraged his friend's researches, that, should any circumstances of this nature transpire, the Prioress might be sacrificed to his vengeance. The loss of his sister obliged him for some time to defer mentioning Ambrosia to the Duke ; in the mean time his emissaries gave him constant intelligence of the movements of his mistress. As she never failed to attend on Thursdays the sermon in the Capuchin cathedral, he had the pleasure of viewing her privately once every week. Several weeks passed away in this manner ; no news of Bertha came, and Antonio was determined to disclose his passion for Ambrosia to his uncle, as he had already dropped some hints of a matrimonial nature, which had been well received.

To return now to the Father Innocent.—The moment that appetite was satisfied, shame and terror overspread his mind. He withdrew himself from Matilda's arms, as his perjury and broken vows rushed to recollection. Guilt presented her forked tongue to him, and he avoided the eyes of his trait partner. A long silence ensued, till Sabina broke it, by taking his hand, and, pressing it to her burning lips, softly articulated his name. The Abbot started at the sound, and turning his eyes towards Sabina, saw her's were filled with tears ; her supplicating looks seemed to solicit his compassion.—“ Seductive woman !” he exclaimed, “ into what an abyss have you plunged me !—I have no security for my honour or my life, but in the concealment of your sex ! What can now expiate my offence ! What penance can wash away my crime ! Wretched Sabina, and more wretched Innocent !”—“ Why do you reproach me ?” returned Sabina ; “ have I not sacrificed every thing that is valuable, fame, friends, fortune, and delicacy, to please

you? We have each partaken alike of pleasure and of guilt. But in what does this guilt consist? You have broken your vows of celibacy; vows that are in direct opposition to the will of heaven, and the order of nature. Why are the delights of love made so sweet, if not to be enjoyed? Reproach me not then with having taught you what is bliss, but indulge her, who adores you, in those pleasures without which life is an insipid gift."——Scarce had she done, when she twined her arms around him; her voluptuous bosom heaved, and her eyes expressed her wishes, as she glued her lips to his. Innocent again raged with wild desire; the vows were already broken, and what would avail forbearance now!——No longer repressed by the sense of shame or detection, he gave a loose to passion, while the artful syren put in practice every refinement of lust to increase the bliss of possession. Intoxicated with pleasure, the Monk rose next morning from Sabina's luxurious couch: his mind now became hardened; he feared that death should rob him of those enjoyments, for which his long fast had hitherto only given him the keener edge. Sabina was still under the influence of poison, and the voluptuous Monk trembled less for his preserver's life than that of his mistress. She was now become necessary to his pleasures, and he wished her to use the means of preservation which she had declared to be in her power.

"Yes, I will preserve my life," said she, "since you have made me feel that life is valuable! I will put in practice the means to preserve it, nor shudder at the horrors they present. But before I take this step, Innocent, you must swear in the most solemn manner never to seek out the means by which I preserve my life."——Innocent did not hesitate to bind himself by the most solemn abjurations. "This is well, my beloved," said Sabina. "Being as yet under the influence of vulgar prejudices, the business on which I mean to employ you this night might otherwise startle you, and reduce me in your opinion. Have you the key of the lower door on the western side of the garden, which opens into the burial ground common to us and the sisterhood of St. Clare?" The Abbot replied, that he could easily procure the key. "Having obtained it," continued Sabina, "you are to admit me into the burying ground at midnight. Watch while I descend into the vaults of St.

Clare : there leave me for an hour, and that life is safe which I dedicate to your pleasures. To avoid the prying eyes of the brotherhood, do not visit me during the day. Remember twelve ! Hark, a footstep comes ! I will pretend to be asleep !”

Innocent obeyed, and quitted the cell. As he opened the door, Father Medjos appeared, and announced that he came to inquire after the health of the young patient ; but understanding he had just sunk into a refreshing slumber, he retired, and the bell ringing, he accompanied the Abbot to matins.—How uneasy now sat the face of sanctity on the Monk ! his thoughts insensibly wandered to Sabina's chamber. As his heart became estranged from purity, he seemed to worship with more devotion. The service over, he retired to his cell, where his brain presented a confused mass of remorse and voluptuousness. He trembled to think that one moment of indiscretion on his part, or Sabina's, might overturn the face of sanctity he had been endeavouring to raise for thirty years, overwhelm him with contempt, and hurl him into the dungeons of the Inquisition. On the other hand, the mental presentment of Sabina's beauties, of the raptures he had enjoyed without detection on the preceding night, filled his soul with extacy. He summoned all the arguments in favour of his indulgence, persuaded himself that he had injured no one, and doubted not he might still retain the favour of the Virgin and of men, though he had violated his vows of chastity. Innocent, fatigued in mind, and with the last night's excesses, threw himself on the bed, and slept soundly. Father Medjos had mentioned in the refectory, that the medicines he had administered to Philario had not had the desired effect, and that no mortal skill, he believed, could rescue him from the grave. The Abbot agreed with this, and lamented loudly the untimely fate of such an amiable youth !

The hour of midnight at length arrived, and the Abbot, with the key, hastened to the cell of Sabina. She was dressed ready, and taking a small covered basket in one hand, and a lamp in the other, she hastened with Innocent silently through the cloisters, till they reached the western side of the garden, where, taking the key, she unlocked the low door, and entered the cemetery. It was a spacious square, planted with yew trees, and covered with a roof

of stone ; it was divided between the sisterhood of St. Clare and the Monks, and was separated by an iron railing, the wicket of which was always left unlocked. A desperate wildness sat on the brow of Sabina, as she put the lamp into his hand, and bid him follow. She opened the wicket, and sought for the door leading to the subterraneous vaults, in which are deposited the mouldering bodies of the votaries of St. Clare. They discovered the door, sunk deep in the ivied wall, and to which three steps descended. Sabina was on the last step when she started back, and bid the Monk conceal himself, for there were people in the vaults. They concealed the lamp, and retreated behind a large monument, erected in honour of the Convent's foundress. They had not stood long, when the door was pushed open, and the concealed spectators recognized the Prioress of St. Clare, and one of the elder nuns, her companion.—“ Every thing is ready,” said the Prioress, “ and suffer she shall. Five and twenty years have I been superior here, and never witnessed so dreadful a transaction !”——The other nun spoke in favour of the delinquent, who, it may be readily conceived, was Bertha. She urged that her rigid conduct might be dangerous, as the Mother St. Concessia was her warm friend ; and concluded by recommending her to mitigate her severity, offering herself as the pledge of her future penitence and good conduct. “ What !” replied the Prioress, “ after disgracing me in the eyes of Madrid's idol ; he, whom of all holy men, I wished to impress with an idea of the strictness of my discipline. What must his purity think of mine, if I suffered such a crime to go unpunished ! No ; I will convince him that I abhor such incontinence, by making her a dreadful example of resentment and justice to-morrow !” They discoursed together till they were out of hearing. The Prioress unlocked the door which communicated with St. Clare's chapel, and, having entered with her companion, they closed it again after them. Sabina now asked who ~~the~~ Bertha was, and what communion she could have with ~~him~~ ^{her} ~~incontinent~~ ^{incontinent}. He related her adventure, and added, that his ~~ideas~~ ^{idea} had undergone a revolution since that time ; indeed so much so, that he would apply to the Prioress to-morrow to mitigate her sentence.

“ Foolish abbot,” replied the enchantress, “ your sudden change of opinion will create suspicions which it is our interests to avoid. Rather redouble your outward austerity, and thunder your menaces against the faults of others, the better to conceal your own. Leave this nun to her own fate; interfere not to implicate yourself. But let us not waste time thus; the night flies apace, and much must be done before morning. Now all is quiet, and the nuns have retired. Give me the lamp, Innocent; I must descend into these caverns; you must wait, and warn me if any one approaches by your voice; but presume not to follow me as you value your life.” Sabina then advanced to the door of the sepulchre, with the lamp and the basket, and soon disappeared down a narrow winding staircase of black marble, leaving the abbot to watch in total darkness. Left to himself, he could not but contemplate the change in Sabina’s character and sentiments. Before, she looked up to him as a deity; now, she took upon her to command; he was astonished at the powers of her mind. The more he observed the masculinity of her air, the less he admired her as a lover. He thought of her want of pity to the unfortunate nun with detestation; yet he determined to listen to her counsel, and not interfere in behalf of Bertha. After an hour had elapsed, the abbot saw nothing of Sabina; he listened, and could only hear her voice winding along the subterranean vaults. Curiosity prompted him to disobey her injunction, and follow her into the cavern. He descended some steps of the staircase; he trembled, and finding himself overcome with an unaccountable awe, he returned to his former station, to wait the issue of the adventure. Suddenly he felt the shock of an earthquake—the roof under which he stood menaced him with its fall; a sudden burst of thunder followed, and a flash of light darted along the caverns beneath. Darkness again surrounded him, and another hour elapsed, before the same light again appeared, and was lost again as suddenly.— Sweet and solemn music now stole through the vaults; and when it ceased, Sabina ascended from the cavern, the most lively joy animating her beautiful features.

“ Did you see any thing?” she said to the abbot. He replied that he had twice seen a column of light flash up the staircase, and nothing else. Sabina then observed that the dawn was advancing, and they must retire to her cell.—

This they reached undiscovered, and having disembarrassed her hands of the lamp and basket, she threw herself upon Innocent's bosom. "I have succeeded," she cried, beyond the utmost of my hopes. I shall live for you! The step which I shuddered to take will prove to me a source of inexpressible joy!—Oh! that I could raise you as much above the level of your sex, as one bold act has elevated me above mine!" "And what prevents you?" retorted the friar. "Do you make your business in the cavern a secret, fearful of my betraying it?—Can Sabina have joys in which I am forbidden to share?" "The fault," replied Sabina, "lies in yourself, Innocent, not in me.—Enslaved by the prejudices of education and superstition, you shudder at the idea of that which experience has taught me to prize and value. At present you are unfit to be trusted with a secret of such importance, but I hope one day you will deserve my confidence. You know you have given your solemn oath never to enquire into this night's adventures, and I insist upon your keeping your word; for, remember," she added, at the same time she gave him a burning kiss, "though I forgive you breaking your vows to heaven, I expect you to keep your vows to me." The friar was inspired by the warmth of her embrace; it led to the unbounded excesses of the former night, and they did not separate before the bell rang for matins.

The same pleasures were frequently repeated. The monks rejoiced in the unexpected recovery of Philario, without once suspecting his sex. The abbot finding no detection follow his intercourse with Sabina, abandoned himself to his passions, till conscience became seared, and he grew satiated. A week had elapsed before he began to be weary of his paramour, and when the moment of passion was over, he quitted her with disgust, and his natural humour now made him sigh for variety. In proportion as the flame of the monk abated, that of Sabina increased. He was become dearer than ever to her since he had obtained her favours, and she felt grateful for those she had received. Her perfections, her musical talents, and her person, were no longer the objects of praise: she perceived the change, and redoubled her efforts to revive those sentiments which he once had felt; but her extraordinary assiduities produced only effects contrary to what was intended: yet their illicit commerce continued; but she could perceive that he was led to her arms.

not by love, but the cravings of brutal appetite. Constitution made a woman necessary to him, and whom could he be so unsuspected with as Sabina? He gazed indeed upon every other female with more ardour, but fearing his hypocrisy should be made public, he concealed his desires within his own breast. Education had made him timid, not nature. He was naturally fearless and enterprising, and had he been brought up in the world, would have possessed many estimable and manly qualities. In disposition he was generous and charitable; in judgment and abilities solid and shining. Unfortunately while a child he was deprived of his parents, and fell into the protection of a relation, who never wished to hear of him any more; he was conveyed to the former superior of the Capuchins, who succeeded in persuading the boy that happiness could not exist outside the walls of a convent, since which his highest ambition was to be admitted into the order of St. Francis. The grandeur and disinterestedness of his sentiments were carefully repressed; he was taught to respect only his own particular establishment; compassion for crimes was decried as a heinous offence, and his natural temper was broken by constantly having the gloomy terrors of superstition and the terrors of hell denounced against him, on the commission of the slightest fault. Terrors like these made his character timid and apprehensive; and while his fraternity were busied in rooting out his virtues and narrowing his sentiments, they allowed all his natural failings to arrive at full perfection: thus he became irreconcilable when offended, proud, and despised all merit but his own. A struggle often took place between his real character and his acquired one. He would pronounce the most severe sentences upon offenders, which pity would induce him in the next moment to mitigate. The rest of the brother monks saw the strength of his genius, and remarked not the contradiction in their idol's conduct. The different sentiments with which nature and education had inspired him long were combating in his bosom; and it remained for his passions to decide his character.

His monastic situation had hitherto kept him from temptation, and had prevented every discovery of his bad qualities. His superior talents made him the oracle of the monks; his oratory and pleasing manners procured him universal esteem; hence his pride was flattered, and he had

no injuries to revenge. Ignorant of the pleasures in the power of women to bestow, the natural warmth of his constitution was checked by spare diet, watching, and severe penance. If he read in books of these enjoyments, religious barriers presented but a feeble resistance to the torrent of his desires, and all the other passions required only to be awakened to display their violence. Continuing to be Madrid's orator, every Thursday the Capuchin cathedral was crowded with auditors: he became the confessor of all people of fashion. His resolution of never stirring out of his convent increased the opinion of his sanctity and self-denial. The fairest and noblest women thronged to be enjoined penance of him, less influenced by devotion than his handsome countenance and manly figure. His eyes devoured the charms of his penitents; but so strongly were they assured that an improper thought never entered into the breast of their holy confessor, that they would as soon have thought of inspiring the marble statue of St. Francis with a passion as the cold frigid heart of the chaste Innocent. The friar, on his part, was but little acquainted with the world;—had he thought it safe, he did not think that any of his penitents would have accepted his addresses; but he knew the importance of keeping a secret so strange and unsuspected as that of his own frailty, and trembled lest Sabina should betray him. He was jealous to preserve a reputation infinitely dear to him; the beauties of Madrid charmed his senses, but did not interest his heart; the fear of repulse and discovery induced him to stifle his desires, and for safety he found himself compelled to continue the amour with Sabina.

It happened one morning the quantity of confessing penitents were greater than usual; the crowd being at length dispatched, he prepared to quit the chair, when two females entered, and drew near him with great humility. They threw aside their veils, and the youngest entreated him to listen to her for a few moments. The plaintive melody of her voice charmed the ear of Innocent: he looked at the young petitioner, whose head was bowed down; her cheeks were pale, her eyes swam in tears, and her fine hair was loosely spread over her enchanting bosom. Such an innocent beautiful countenance might have charmed a heart less susceptible than that of the abbot. In his softest and most encouraging manner, he desired her to speak her request,

which she did as follows : " Reverend father, you see an unhappy maid who is about to lose her dearest and only friend. I have an excellent mother, who lies upon the bed of sickness. Last night she was suddenly taken ill, and the malady has been so rapid, that the physicians despair of her life. In this state, I have no other resource but to implore the mercy of heaven. Holy father, your piety and virtue is the admiration of all Madrid. Your prayers may prevail on St. Francis to intercede with heaven ; and should that be the case, I engage myself for every Thursday in the next month to illuminate the shrine of that pious saint ! " The monk acceded to her request in such an affectionate manner, that the fair petitioner was induced to proceed. " I have yet another favour to ask, reverend father. My mother needs a confessor, and, having but recently arrived at Madrid, she knows not where to apply. As we understand you never quit the abbey, and my parent is incapable of coming hither, if you will have the goodness to name a proper person, whose consolations and practice may soften the hour of death, you will confer an everlasting obligation on the most grateful of hearts. " This petition was also granted ; and he promised to send a confessor that very evening, at the same time begging her to leave her card. The other lady presented him one, and then withdrew with her fair petitioner, who repaid the abbot's kindness with her benedictions.

His eyes were rivetted on the latter till she disappeared, when he turned to examine the card, which contained the name of Donna Leonora—and the same place of abode as what Drusilla had given the cavaliers in the Capuchin church a short time before. In fact, the suppliants were no other than Drusilla and Ambrosia ; it was only at the strong persuasion of the latter, that Drusilla was induced to accompany her niece to the abbey ; and such was her awe of the priest, that she uttered not a single syllable in his presence. The monk retired to his cell, whither the image of Ambrosia pursued him. The emotions which rushed into his bosom, as he contemplated her perfections and her artlessness, were very different from those inspired by Sabina, when she first discovered her sex and affection. His imagination was not heated by her beauties, nor did he feel the provocation of lust ; on the contrary, a mingled sentiment of tenderness, admiration, and respect, reigned in his bosom. A

soft pleasing melancholy now stole over his mind, which he would not have exchanged for the most enlivening transports of joy: his thought were sad and soothing, and the whole world presented him with no other object than Ambrosia. Here he indulged in a vein of contemplation on the happiness of the man who should possess this lovely girl; he viewed with rapture the delicacy of her features, the elegance of her form, the innocence expressed in her soft blue eyes, and the delicious sweetness of the kisses springing from her nectareous lips. He drew comparisons disadvantageous to the forward lustful allurements of Sabina, and thought if she had but known the inexpressible charm of modesty, how irresistibly it enslaves the heart of man, she would never have thrown it off. How tranquil would his hours pass away, in striving to inspire her with tenderness, with friendship, and esteem! What delight to see her downcast blue eyes beam upon his with timid fondness, to listen to her melodious voice, to wipe away her tears when distressed, and see her fly to his embrace for protection and support!

Thus he reasoned, and concluded if there were perfect happiness for mortals on earth, it must be the lot of this divine creature's husband. Awhile he paced his cell in deep agitation, while he reflected that this vision of happiness could never be realized to him. She was removed from him by marriage, because of his vows, and to seduce her was a turpitude which he yet startled at. "Fear not, thou lovely girl," he exclaimed, "any harm from me! For worlds I would not plant the thorn of remorse in your bosom!" As he continued to walk up and down his room, his eye fell upon the picture of his once-admired Madona. In a rage he tore it from the wall, and trampled it under foot, calling its resemblance a prostitute, and forgetting that she had sacrificed her innocence only through loving him too well. The card with Leonora's address on it next attracted his attention: it reminded him of the confessor he was to send; and this person he was not long in determining should be himself. He knew that by closely wrapping up his face in his cowl, he could pass unknown through the streets of Madrid, and by enjoining Leonora's family to silence, it would not easily be discovered that he had broken his vow never to be seen out of the abbey walls. He had indeed to guard against the jealousy of Sabina, but he thought to

quiet her vigilance by telling her at the refectory that business would confine him for that day closely to his cell. At the hour when the Spaniards take their siesta, he quitted the abbey by a private door, the key of which was in his possession, and without accident arrived safely at the house of Leonora.

He rang, was admitted, and ushered into an upper apartment. Fortunately Drusilla was not at home; she would immediately have recognised him, and her loquacity would soon have spread the news of the monk's visitation. A few hours before, a letter had been left, instructing her that a cousin was just dead, who had divided his little property between herself and Leonora. Anxiety for the interest of her sister, more than herself, induced her instantly to set off to Cordova to secure it, grieved at the same time at leaving her sister in ill health, and sorry for the inconstancy of the amiable Don Olmas. Whatever was the cause of his declining the pursuit of the amour, Drusilla lamented it sorely; and assumed the woe-struck appearance of a love-bereft maiden, frequently wandering by limpid streams and in moonlight shades. Such was the state of Drusilla's mind, when obliged to quit Madrid. Nothing, she asserted, would ever make her forget the perfidious treatment of Don Olmas; but this opinion she afterwards found very erroneous, for an honest young journeyman apothecary, of Cordova, perhaps more in love with her little portion than her person, avowed himself her devoted admirer. The warmth of his address melted her virgin heart, and she was soon after united to him in the hymeneal bond. She wrote to inform her sister of the nuptials, but the latter returned no answer, for reasons which will be hereafter explained. — Innocent was conducted into the antichamber to that where Leonora was reposing: on the arrival of a confessor being announced, Ambrosia quitted her mother's bed-side to introduce him. When she saw it was Innocent in person, she uttered a cry of joy. "Worthy father, what extent of goodness is this, to break through your resolution to soften the pains of the best of mothers! What delight will your presence give her! — But let us not delay for a moment the joyful introduction."

She then opened the chamber door, and having announced her distinguished visitor, left them together. Leonora had heard much said in praise of the abbot, and she found he far

exceeded even the warmth of general report. He calmed her fears about her soul's health in a future state, laid open the extent of heaven's mercy, and thus encouraged her to descend from the concerns of a future state to that of the present. Leonora trembled for the fate of Ambrosia: the protection of the Marquis di Langara might prove very uncertain, and that of Drusilla was very improper for a young girl unacquainted with the world. The monk, when he had learned the cause of her uneasiness, begged her to be at ease on that head. He undertook to dispose of her in the house of one of his penitents, the Marchioness of Gardana, a lady of inflexible virtue and benevolence, or place her in some respectable convent, as a boarder only; for Leonora had announced her strong dislike to a monastic life for women. Before Innocent rose to take his leave he had entirely won Leonora's heart; and promised to return at the same hour on the following day, requesting only that his visits might be kept secret; he ascribed this to a desire not to be interrupted by frivolous requests, as he never meant to be seen outside the convent walls, but on important occasions, like the present. In the antichamber Innocent found Ambrosia, whom he cheered with the consolation that her mother seemed more tranquil: that he entertained very strong hopes she might do well, and he would send the physician of his own convent to prescribe for her. Ambrosia looked at him with delight; he spoke of the esteem he had conceived for her mother with so much warmth, and the interest he felt in her own well-doing, that the former favourable impression she had received of him was considerably strengthened, and she thanked him with all the genuine warmth of a young and artless heart. Unacquainted with the character of the world, she thought it was composed only of those who resembled herself; nor did she suspect that a favour might be conferred only to bring about a secret motive. The monk had been of service to her, and she thought no terms were strong enough to express her kindness in. With delight did Innocent listen to every word she uttered. The graces of her person, and her animated conversation, united to captivate his senses, and he found it at length necessary to tear himself away from the fresh allurements every minute presented.

Having enjoined Ambrosia to keep his visits secret he withdrew, to his convent, to meditate on her charms, while Ambrosia hastened to inform her mother of what had passed. — With respect to Sabina, she was fully sensible of his increasing coldness; but the monk, who was much alarmed lest her jealousy might endanger his reputation and his life, might have easily been convinced by her mildness, that he had nothing to dread from her resentment. By degrees Leonora recovered, to the great satisfaction of every one but her confessor. He feared that her discernment would discover his designs, and before she quitted her chamber, he determined to try his influence over the mind of Ambrosia. One evening he retired from the chamber of Leonora earlier than usual, and not finding Ambrosia in the antichamber, ventured to follow her to her own. A small closet, in which the waiting woman slept, formed all the separation between that and her mother's. Ambrosia was seated on a sofa, attentively reading, and did not regard his approach till he had seated himself by her. The conversation turned upon Leonora's amendment, and Ambrosia spoke of it with great satisfaction. "I admire your filial devotion," said Innocent; "it proves to me the fondness which your breast will some day cherish for a lover—nay, perhaps does now. —It cannot be, that, while you fill every heart with passion, your own remains cold and insensible! Your melting eye, your blushing cheek, your panting bosom, all speak, and confess that you love!" — "You surprisic me. Father," said Ambrosia; "I know nothing of the love you speak of; and if I did, I know not why I should conceal it." The Friar then asked her, if she had never seen any man whose form, though strange, was yet familiar to her sight, whose voice pleased her, and in whose bosom she could repose her cares as safely as in her own. Ambrosia replied, that she certainly felt all this the first time she saw him. "For me, Ambrosia!" cried Innocent, starting with surprise and joy; "you felt these sentiments for me!" "Indeed I did!" said Ambrosia: "The very first moment I beheld you, I felt pleased; your voice was melody to me; it uttered a thousand things which I wished to hear! It seemed to say, I was intitled to your protection and friendship. I was sorry when you departed, and longed for the time of your return." "Then you do love me?" exclaimed the Monk, snatching her to his bosom. "Oh!

that I do!" replied the artless girl; "there is but one in the world I love better than you, and that is my mother." This open declaration stifled every caution. With wild desire he pressed the maid to his heart; glued his lips to her's, and boldly invaded the untouched treasures of her bosom. Surprise for a moment prevented resistance; but she soon recovered herself, and in a tone of severity desired to be instantly released. But the licentious Monk heeded her not; he proceeded to take greater liberties, holding her firmly in his powerful grasp. Ambrosia was on the point of shrieking out for assistance, when the chamber door was suddenly thrown open. He had heard the foot-step, and, reluctantly quitting his prey, started from the couch, while Ambrosia sprang towards the door, and found herself clasped in the arms of her mother. Various causes had arisen to give Leonora suspicion of the Monk's purity. His pernicious doctrines, passed in the private conversations between him and Ambrosia; his visits paid only to her family, and his agitation when he spoke of Ambrosia, had determined the prudent mother the next time they were alone to surprise them. Her plan had succeeded, and though she had not actually caught her in his arms, the disorder that reigned on both sides was sufficient evidence.—Knowing, however, the great power and reputed sanctity of the Abbot, she noticed not his agitation, but seated herself on the sofa, assigned some trifling cause for entering the room, and conversed upon general subjects. The Monk soon began to be persuaded that all was right, and urging that his duty called him to the Convent, he rose to depart; but, imagine his confusion, when Leonora told him that the amended state of her health no longer required a further intrusion upon his valuable and sacred time, which he might dedicate to the happiness of other families, and, fearful lest his holy anxiety for her welfare should again induce him to leave the Convent walls, she must put a curb to his goodness, by disclosing his visits. He would have replied, but a look from the eye of Leonora said that she read his heart; he then took a hasty leave, and retired to the Abbey, filled with shame, rage, and disappointment. Ambrosia felt some sorrow, as well as her mother, that she was never to see him more. She next endeavoured to convince her daughter of the risk she had run,

and enjoined her, if the Abbot ever returned again, not to receive his visits but in company. When Innocent reached his cell, he threw himself upon the bed in a confusion of mind almost inexpressible. Desire had been disappointed, his character lay at the stake of an angry mother, against whom he vowed severe vengeance for her intrusion at the moment he was about to accomplish the object of his desires. With the most direful imprecations he vowed vengeance against her, and swore, cost what it would, he would still possess Ambrosia.—Starting from his couch, he was pacing the room with the most impotent fury, when he heard a gentle knock at the door of his cell. Conscious that his voice was too loud not to have been heard, he drew back the bolt, the door opened, and Sabina appeared.—Very ill suited was the Monk's disposition to receive a visit from her. He looked frowningly, and said, he wished to be alone, as he was busy. Sabina, regardless of what he said, fastened the door on the inside, and advancing in a supplicating manner, thus addressed him:—"Fear no complaints, Innocent, from me: I come not to reproach your ingratitude; but to solicit your confidence and friendship. If my beauty no longer excites desire, the fault rests with me, not in you. But why do you fly me? Why not permit me to share your sorrows, to promote your inclinations, and aid your pursuits? No longer considered as your lover, let me now be your friend." The Monk was highly gratified by the footing on which Sabina had placed herself; and, after complimenting her on the superiority of her mind to the foibles of her sex, replied that his wishes lay without the sphere of her action.—"Innocent," said she, "it lies in my power only to serve you. Your secret is none to me; I have observed your every step—your soul's wish. Think not I am tainted by jealousy; no, I rise superior to it.—You love Ambrosia; you have failed in corrupting her imagination; you have attempted to enjoy her person; detection has followed, and you have been dismissed Leonora's house. You now despair of possessing her, but I come to point out the means of enjoyment!"—"Impossible!" cried the monk.—"The time is come," continued Sabina, "when regard for your comfort induces me to reveal that part of my history you are ignorant of. I formerly mentioned my guardian was a man of knowledge, which he took great pains to instil into me. Among

the rest, he neglected not that which relates to the world of spirits, and may be comprehended under the name of magic, or dæmonology. His deep researches informed him of the property of every gem and herb; from their commixture he gave new laws to nature, read the events in the womb of time, and subjected the infernal spirits to his command.—Why do you shrink from me? I see you suspect what I am capable of. But be not terrified; I have acquired all my guardian's skill, yet, had I never seen *you*, my power would not have been exerted. Like you I was horrified at the idea of raising a dæmon. To preserve the life your embraces had taught me to prize, I employed means which I trembled before at employing. The night you watched at the door of St. Clare's sepulchre, I was within, engaged in raising a mystic dæmon; I saw the spirit obedient to my orders, and found, instead of selling my soul to a master, my courage had purchased a willing slave!"

The Monk observed, that he was not so lost, but he still considered it as a merit to look upon guilt with horror; that it ill became her to tax him with perjury, who had first induced him to sin, and that he had still sufficient grace to shudder at sorcery.—The artful Sabina next attacked him on the principle, that heaven had not shortened its mercy against sinners, and the greater the crime, the greater the merit in pardoning; added to which, he would have time to repent after he had possessed Ambrosia.—The last inducement, however, had no weight with the Monk. He considered it as equally bold and impious, and concluded with affirming, that he would neither follow *her* to the sepulchre, nor accept the services of her infernal agents. "Then, learn!" exclaimed Sabina, "she is lost to you for ever! Ambrosia loves a youth of distinguished merit, who, unless you interfere, will make *her* his bride in a few days. My invisible agents have informed me of every transaction, and, though you shunned my presence, I was invisibly present with you by the help of this talismanic mirror!" Upon saying this, she drew from her vest a mirror of polished steel, surrounded with various magical characters. She announced, that by pronouncing certain words, the person would appear in it, on whom the observer's thoughts were bent. The Monk questioned the truth

of its properties, and Sabina placed the talisman in his hand. Love induced him to wish for the presence of Ambrosia, and Sabina pronounced the magical words. Suddenly a thick vapour overspread the mirror, which again dispersed, and arranged itself into various forms and colours, till it subsided in the miniature moving picture of Ambrosia. He beheld her in a small closet, undressing to bathe. She had just thrown off the last garment, and was stepping in, when the water felt cold, and she drew back. A linnet at this moment flew to her bosom, and Ambrosia gently raised her hand to drive the little intruder away.—The voluptuous contours and exquisite symmetry of her person became wholly exposed. The Monk was worked up to a phrensy of desire, and dashing the mirror on the ground, bid Sabina do with him whatever she pleased. It was then midnight; she gave the monk no time to reflect, but flew to her cell for the key of the cemetery and her little basket; then taking his hand, led him to the subterranean stair case in the sepulchre. They had no lamp, and therefore when they had reached the foot of the marble stair case, they groped their way along the walls, till they came to a small sepulchral lamp, which perpetually illuminated the statue of St. Clare. Sabina took the lamp, bidding the friar wait a few moments till she returned. She then disappeared in some of the subterranean labyrinths, and left the monk in apprehension and half-repenting: he would have sought the stairs, but such was the intricacy, there was no hope without his guide. Finding no escape possible, he summoned to recollection what he had read of witchcraft, and remembered, that, unless he signed a formal act, renouncing his claim to salvation, Satan could have no power over him. This he determined fully never to do, whatever might be his terrors or advantages. While he stood waiting for the return of Sabina, a loud murmur sounded at no great distance from him; in a few minutes a groan followed; he started with terror; it might be some daemon near him, or some wandering ghost; or Sabina might have perished in her diabolical incantations. The noise at intervals became more audible, and once he distinguished the words, “No hope, no succour!—no one to save me from perishing!”—The truth now struck him; “Should this be Bertha,” he exclaimed to himself, “what a monster am I!”—He would have made towards the spot, but the return of Sabina,

with the lamp, enveloped him in the danger of his own situation. She had thrown off her monastic habit, and was dressed in a long sable robe, embroidered with various unknown characters, and fastened by a girdle of precious stones, in which stuck a poniard. Her neck and arms were uncovered; her hair was loose, her eyes looked awful, and in her hand she bore a golden wand. She bid the monk follow her, for all was ready. She then conducted him through the fragments of death, spread about the vaults, till they reached a spacious cavern, whose roof could not be traced. Vapours filled the void, and light only shone within the small circle of the dim lamp, which Sabina placed on the ground beside her basket. She now began the mysterious rights, and drew a circle round him, and another round herself. She then took a small phial from the basket, and poured some drops on the ground, at the same time uttering a few indistinct words, when a sulphureous flame arose from the ground, and overspread in clouds the whole space, except the circles where they stood; this in a few moments after changed to a blue flame, but extreme cold rather than heat was felt. Sabina continued to throw various things into the fire, among which he perceived a human hand, and an Agnus Dei. These were instantly consumed by the flame. Suddenly she appeared to be delirious, uttered a loud shriek; and amidst various frantic gestures, plunged the poniard into her left arm. The blood flowed copiously, and she took care it should flow on the outside of the circles. The flame retired from where the blood fell; a peal of thunder shook the fabric above; the ground beneath seemed to heave convulsively, and the terrified monk sunk upon one knee, overcome with fear!—"He comes!" said Sabina, in an accent of joy.—Soft music now succeeded to the thunder, and, as the clouds disappeared, a figure more beautiful than fancy can imagine advanced. It was a youth, perfectly naked, of exquisite symmetry; two silken wings extended themselves from his shoulders, and in his right hand he bore a silver flower resembling a poppy.—Rose coloured light and perfumes seemed to surround him, on whom the monk gazed with delight. The music having ceased, a long unintelligible conversation took place between the spirit and Sabina, in which she seemed to remonstrate and threaten. It ended in the spirit bending his knee, and surrendering up the en-

chanted poppy. Suddenly the music struck up, the apparition disappeared in a thick cloud, the blue flames subsided, and nothing was seen but Sabina standing by him in her religious habit, with the poppy in her hand.

"I have succeeded," said Sabina, "with some difficulty. Lucifer has consented in this one instance to obey me; but never must I invoke the internal spirits again for your sake. This must be done in future by yourself, and for their agency you must pay the established price. I now offer you the means of enjoying your mistress, and neglect it not. This enchanted poppy will carry you to-morrow night to Ambrosia's chamber. Every door you touch with it will fly open to you. By laying it on her pillow, and breathing on it thrice, a death-like slumber will pervade her senses till day-light, when the charm will dissolve. Before this, you are to enjoy her undetected. She will perceive her dishonour, but be ignorant of the ravisher. Now let us adjourn, as the morning is fast advancing, to avoid suspicion." The Abbot received the talisman with gratitude; they ascended from the vaults, and retired each to their cell; where the Abbot waited with impatience for the coming midnight.

In the meanwhile all the searches which the Marquis di Langara had caused to be made for Bertha had proved fruitless, and the effect of his despair had produced a severe illness, which had prevented him from visiting Leonora as he intended. The death too of Antonio's sister had prevented him from consulting his uncle upon his marriage with Ambrosia; and as he could not, according to his promise, visit her till he had obtained the Duke's consent, Leonora became every day more uneasy. Day after day came, but no intelligence from either the Marquis or Antonio; but this she could have supported, if the Abbot had not proved the baseness of his designs; and her heart sometimes swelled with the bitterness of apprehension, when she reflected on the unbefriended state of Ambrosia in case of her death. Antonio's intention of consulting his uncle would at this time have relieved the fears of Leonora, if Don Langara's malady had not gained ground, and prevented his projected visit to his uncle. He was constantly by his bedside, endeavouring to comfort him; yet was his grief not less sincere than that of Lucas, a page whom the Marquis had taken into his service in his late

travels, and whose affection, docility, and ingenuity, had endeared him to his master.

The page, fearful that his master's death might follow, if he really knew that his mistress was dead, always encouraged the idea that she was still in existence, and that his ingenuity would one time or other find out the truth. Full of this idea, Lucas one day disguised himself as a beggar boy, took his guittar with him, and succeeded in getting into the parlour of the convent, where he sung and played till the convent bell summoned the nuns to assemble in the refectory. Before parting with him, they made him promise to return next day, and that he might be induced to keep his word, they each made him some little present of lace, flowers, &c. In short, he received so many, that he was embarrassed how to carry them away, till the Mother St. Bastia advanced with a small basket lined with green silk, and significantly said that her gift was more valuable than any of the rest for its *hidden* virtues: at the same time, as she deposited the things in it, she whispered the name of Bertha! Lucas caught the sound, retired with his basket, and flew to the Marquis, who, on hearing the adventure, caught the basket from him, emptied the contents, and tore up the lining, beneath which was a scrap of paper addressed to him, and containing a request that he would obtain an order for the seizure of her person and that of the Prioress, to be executed on the Friday, at midnight, when a grand procession of the nuns would take place by torchlight, in honour of St. Clare. It further charged him, if he valued the memory of Bertha, and would punish her inhuman assassins, to avoid mentioning the letter she had written.

This intelligence for a time deprived the Marquis of sense or motion, because it identified the death of Bertha. Antonio was not so overcome, because he had long been convinced of it. He had now another object in view, which was the punishment of the Prioress; leaving therefore his friend in the hands of able physicians, he flew to the Cardinal Duke of Madrid, who was a relation and friend of Langara's, and after explaining the nature of his suspicions, he easily obtained the order for the arrest on the Friday night following, as well as a letter to the principal officer of the Inquisition, desiring him to see the mandate executed. He arrived with these papers on the Friday, and

having passed an hour with Langara, he immediately set about carrying them into execution.

While Antonio was anxious to unmask one religious hypocrite, he was ignorant of the Monk and Sabina's infernal combination against him. The distressing moment of Ambrosia's sufferings was approaching; she took leave of her mother for the night, and hung about her with an unusual fondness, wishing anxiously to God that the night were passed. Leonora chid her for such ungrounded sadness, at the same time she felt herself more than ordinarily indisposed, and retired to bed at an early hour. Ambrosia took a parting look of her mother, recommended herself to St. Rosalia's protection, and withdrew to bed, where sleep lulled all her inquietudes to rest.

It was near two o'clock before the Monk ventured to bend his steps towards Ambrosia's dwelling. As he went, he reasoned on the probabilities of his being discovered, and finally believed that his fame was too secure, even if discovered, to be shaken by the calumny of two unknown women. He touched the street door with his enchanted poppy, which immediately opened, and closed after him. The moon beams directed him up the staircase to Ambrosia's chamber. All was hushed within: the door was fastened on the inside; and he applied his talisman: it opened, and refastening itself, he saw the lovely object of his turpitude before him. His first object was to perform the magic ceremony, which he did, by breathing on the poppy thrice, pronouncing Ambrosia's name, and laying it on her pillow. Convinced now that she was insensible to her danger, he securely contemplated her half-disclosed beauties, as she lay with elegant indolence at full length. He remained for some moments lost in admiration, and had just joined his lips to her's, when a voice behind him exclaimed, "Father of Mercies! who--what is it I see!" He turned involuntarily round, and saw Leonora standing at the chamber door, regarding him with an eye of horror and detestation.

A frightful dream, in which she had seen her daughter on the brink of a precipice, and calling out to her for succour, had impelled her to see if she were safe, and thus save her from the grasp of the ravisher. A silence ensued for some minutes, which Leonora at length broke. "Monster of hypocrisy!" she exclaimed, "I have long suspected your

designs; I have hitherto spared you in pity to human frailty; forbearance now would be a crime, and all Madrid shall hoot the villain as he passes!" While the guilty Abbot stood trembling, Leonora endeavoured to wake Ambrosia, but the charm acted too powerfully. "Monster!" she exclaimed, "this slumber is not natural; there is some mystery in it! But I proceed to unveil your villainy. Within there! Carma, Carma!"

The Monk now intreated for pity, swore her daughter's honour was unviolated, and if she would spare him the shame of a discovery, his future life should prove—— He was proceeding in this strain, when Leonora cast an angry look at him, and again vociferated for Carma! As the Monk stood, he thought on the forlorn Bertha, who had once sued to him for pity, as he now prayed for it at the hand of Leonora. The Monk now endeavoured to escape, assured, that if he could but reach the Abbey undiscovered, his fame would be secure; but the incensed mother caught him by the arm, ere he could draw back the bolt, and redoubled her cries for assistance. In this dilemma, and expecting every moment her outcries would be his ruin, he turned suddenly round, and grasping her with one hand violently by the throat, with the other dragged her towards the bed: then snatching a pillow from the bolster, and placing it over the face and breast of his victim, he knelt upon it till resistance and life had flown together. He took off the pillow; a frightful blackness overspread the countenance, and a cold senseless corpse was all that remained of Leonora's once noble and majestic form. Horror of conscience now seized him, and he staggered to a chair, where he sat till his sense of danger aroused him to fly to the Abbey. He had no desire to profit by the execution of his crime, for Ambrosia appeared now only an object of disgust, and his desires were all absorbed in the fear of death and guilt. Replacing the pillow on the bed, he took the fatal talisman, and applying it to the doors, found no obstruction to his reaching the Abbey. Here, in his cell, he gave a loose to the tortures of detection and murder.

Day after day, however, passed on, and the Abbot being free from all suspicion, the terrors of his mind abated, and Sabina administered comfort, by arguments tending to show that he had been compelled by the first law of nature to do

what he had done; that it had fortunately warded off all suspicion, and that Ambrosia now would be an easy conquest to him. By detailing her charms, she again kindled the Monk's desire, but no assistance could be derived now from the talisman, as the Abbot, in his first rage, had dashed it to pieces. Sabina finding him resolved not to enter into any compact with the infernal fiends, soon sought out other means of putting Ambrosia in his power.—On the morning of the murder, when Ambrosia awoke, and rose to dress herself, what was her horror, on discovering the corpse of Leonora at her feet! Shrieks and lamentations followed, which alarmed Carma, who soon summoned all the neighbourhood; but vain were the efforts of medicine or pity to restore her to life. Ambrosia was put to bed in an alarming state of illness, and the landlady undertook to manage the funeral, which, as she was very much afraid of dead bodies and ghosts, was conveyed to the cemetery of St. Clare the next day.

It was supposed that Leonora's death was occasioned by a convulsion fit in her daughter's room, and as such excited no particular interest. Ambrosia's health was soon reinstated, though her mind, from her embarrassed circumstances, was ill at ease. She heard no news of the Marquis Langara, nor Antonio; to the Monk, both by the injunctions of her mother and by her own convictions, it was no longer possible to apply, though she looked upon him still with a partial eye. At length she determined to address herself to the Marquis Langara, and wrote to him claiming his protection, but the letter unfortunately arrived when he was in the paroxysms of despair for the loss of Bertha, and Antonio was gone into the country to obtain the order from the Cardinal Duke. All the answer returned to her communication was, that the Marquis was wholly incapable of attending to any letters, and that probably a few hours would decide his fate. Carma and her landlady, however, exerted themselves to console her, and at this time arrived a letter from her aunt Drusilla, containing an account of her marriage: that she had recovered her sister's legacy, and meant to be at Madrid on the next Tuesday night, with her husband. This intelligence gave infinite satisfaction to Ambrosia, who waited with impatience for the time of her aunt's arrival.

At length the night came, but Drusilla did not appear; the hours passed on slowly, and she could neither play nor work comfortably. As she walked with an unquiet step up and down the chamber, she recollected that in her mother's chamber was her little library, where she might possibly find a book to amuse her till Drusilla should arrive. It was the first time she had entered her mother's room since her death, and the awful stillness, added to the gloom of night, impressed her with a melancholy awe.—She sat down in the large chair which her mother had frequently occupied, and burst into tears at the recollection that she should never see her more!—Ashamed of this weakness, however, she repaired to the collection of books, and selected a volume of Spanish ballads. The story she happened to fix on was ill calculated to dispel the gloom of the hour; it treated of a ghost and a murderer, and recalled all those terrors to Ambrosia's mind which her nurse had very early taken pains to instil into her, by way of making her good. Leonora's arguments had never eradicated this fear, and every thing now served to increase it. It was the dead of night, she was alone in her room, the wind howled, the rain pattered, and the taper was just expiring. In this situation, she rose to depart, but before she had reached the middle of the room, the latch was raised, and she involuntarily turned her head. The door gradually opened, and in the aperture stood a tall thin figure, shrouded in white from head to foot. The feet of Ambrosia were fixed to the floor, while the figure advanced to a table, on which stood a clock, and raising its right hand, it pointed to the hour, which then stood at three. The clock in a moment after struck, and the spirit advanced a few paces nearer to Ambrosia. "We shall meet in three days!" said the hollow sepulchral voice. "Whom—where shall we meet?" said Ambrosia, shuddering. The figure pointed to the ground, and with the other unveiled its face. "My mother!" shrieked Ambrosia, and fell lifeless on the floor. The landlady, Teresa, heard the noise of her fall, and ran to her assistance; with some difficulty she conveyed her to her own apartment, and after various means of restoration had been tried, Ambrosia opened her eyes wildly, and asked if the ghost was gone! "Ghost!" exclaimed Teresa; "Jesu Maria!—I saw no ghost—nor you neither!" "O Teresa," said Ambrosia,

"I have seen the spirit of my mother!—In three days she said we should meet again!" The frightened landlady flew out of the room, and as she hastened down stairs met Carma ascending them, whom she dispatched to the aid of Ambrosia, whilst she made the best of her way to the Capuchin abbey in the midst of the storm, and requested admission to the superior, who was then conferring with Sabina on the means of procuring access to Ambrosia. He had already made one attempt to gain admission to her, but the trusty Carma, to whom Leonora had imparted her suspicions, had rejected him that morning, and he found to obtain a sight of his mistress by open means was out of the question. When the name of Teresa was announced, he would have deferred seeing her, but Sabina suggested that she was Ambrosia's hostess, and some information might be gained by attending to the cause of her coming. They accordingly adjourned to the parlour, where Teresa, after much circumlocution, told his holiness that the ghost of Leonora had taken a fancy to come into her house, and that if it were not laid, she must walk out of it; from which cause poor young lady Ambrosia was then lying in strong convulsions, and she much doubted if she would recover the fright. "It is then a deed of charity, good woman," said the abbot. "Lead on, and I will follow you." Having armed himself with a large bottle of holy water, and sprinkled some of it on Teresa, they set out together, and soon reached the destined spot. The physician, for the first two or three hours, had declared Ambrosia's life in danger; but her fits at last gradually ceasing, he found she wanted nothing more than some composing medicines, which he ordered to be prepared.

The presence of Innocent, who now appeared with Teresa at her bed side, greatly contributed to calm her ruffled spirits. She fancied his presence was a safeguard from danger, for her mother, though she warned her against the designs of the abbot, had not stated what those designs were. The abbot endeavoured to convince her of the fallacy of ghosts; and maintained that the time, place, and the story she had been reading of, had contributed to create the phantom in her fancy. Ambrosia was comforted, but not convinced, and maintained strongly that the ghost's prediction would be verified in her speedy death. The abbot advised her against encouraging these sentiments, and then quitted

her chamber, promising to return on the morrow. Ambrosia was thankful for his attention; but the monk saw that his visit was not pleasant to the trusty Carina, who had received some hints from Leonora, when alive, which induced her not to leave the chamber while the abbot was in it. The monk saw her suspicions, and felt that while this vigilant observer remained, he must fail in being able to gratify his passion. Before he retired, Teresa met him, and he perfectly gained that good woman's opinion by promising to watch the next night in person. It was broad day-light when he reached the abbey; his first care was to communicate to his confidante what had passed, who agreed with him that the ghost was only the creature of Ambrosia's imagination, but that it must be his care to verify the prophecy. "Ambrosia," said she, "must indeed be dead to the world, but she must live for you. She shall be yours, and all the vigilance of the duenna shall not avail her. The nephew of the Duke di Segovia purposes to demand Ambrosia for his wife, and in a few days she will be removed to the Marquis di Langara's. Now listen to me. In the laboratory of the convent of St. Clare is a bottle of liquor, extracted from certain herbs known to few, which brings on the person who drinks it the exact image of death. Pour a few drops of this into her medicine, and the effect will be throwing her into strong convulsions for an hour, after which her blood will gradually cease to flow, and her heart to beat; she will then appear a corse to every eye.—Without friends about her, you may cause her to be buried in the vaults of St. Clare. Give Ambrosia the soporific draught this evening; two days after she has drank it, life will revive in her bosom, and necessity will compel her to receive you to her arms."

The monk was transported, renewed his vows of friendship for Sabina, and immediately set about this infamous plan. No sooner was morn'g over, than he bent his way to the convent of St. Clare, where his arrival threw the whole sisterhood into the utmost amazement. His visit was considered as an honour of the highest degree, and he accounted to the prioress for the motive of having broken his resolution, by stating that among his penitents illness prevented many from quitting their houses, whence he had found it necessary for the service of heaven to emerge from

his beloved retirement. He was paraded through every part of the convent, and at length reached the laboratory, where, on the third shelf, as described by Sabina, stood the bottle of liquor, from which he took an opportunity to fill a phial, and then withdrew, leaving the nuns highly flattered by his visit. At evening he repaired to Ambrosia, whom he found tolerably well, but still harping on the ghost's prediction.—The physician soon after arrived, and his Argus, Carina, left the room to get lights. While the physician questioned his patient, Innocent took the opportunity to let fall a few drops of his fatal liquor into her medicine. Carina soon after returned; and, at the doctor's request, the draught which stood on the table was immediately poured out, and administered. The monk at one moment felt an inclination to arrest the fatal cup, but the die was cast, and there was no alternative but to abide by the issue. The priest now thought it prudent to adjourn to avoid suspicion; but took care, in withdrawing, to speak so loud, that Teresa could not but overhear he was going. When he reached the foot of the stairs, she intreated the holy father to remember the promise he had made, to pass the night in Leonora's chamber. This request Ambrosia expected; and the abbot, after some affected objections, suffered himself to be conducted to the haunted chamber. He placed his light upon the table, bolted the door, and sat himself down in the great chair.

His mind was impressed with a certain mysterious horror; he thought of the murdered Leonora, and then of the drops he had given to Ambrosia. What if they were poison!—but the thought was too dreadful to dwell long upon, and he rose to drive away this train of reflexion, by taking a book from the shelves near the table; but the volume supplied him with words only, not a change of thoughts. The closet door was now thrown open, and in rushed Teresa, pale and trembling; she brought the intelligence that Ambrosia was seized with the same convulsions as her mother, and that, as the ghost had said, she must soon be a corse.—Carina and Innocent both ran to Ambrosia's chamber, where they found her as Teresa had described. The monk instantly dispatched the latter to Father Medjos, who had no sooner beheld Ambrosia, than he pronounced her malady incurable. Her groans pierced the abbot to the heart, and he frequently cursed himself for his barbarous project.—

When the hour was expired, the fits subsided, she became calm, and, perceiving that her end was approaching, she, in a speech of gratitude, took leave of the monk, requested him to see that her property was conveyed to her aunt Drusilla, desired that some masses might be said for the repose of her mother's soul and her own, and having told the monk that she should again meet him in heaven, she resigned herself to the awful moment, which soon approached. Her sight failed, her heart apparently beat no longer, the extremities grew cold, and at two o'clock in the morning she departed without a groan. Father Medjos then retired, Carma yielded to the most violent sorrow, and Innocent, having cautioned her against fruitless grief, hastened to command the burial. He obtained permission from the prioress to have the corse interred in St. Clare's monument, and on the Friday morning, every respect having been paid to the deceased, Ambrosia's body was committed to the tomb.

On this day Drusilla arrived at Madrid; she had been compelled to defer her journey from Tuesday to Friday, and when she had learned from Innocent the particulars of the melancholy event, and that he would remit all the effects bequeathed to her by Ambrosia, she, full of sorrow, returned to Cordova.

In the mean time, as Friday night was the time fixed on for the arrest of the Prioress and mother St. Concessia, Antonio, with his uncle, Don Aranjuez, and a troop of archers interspersed among the crowd, assembled to see the august procession in honour of St. Clare, and waited at the gates. The abbey of the Capuchins was only separated from the convent by the garden and the cemetery. The monks had been invited to assist at the procession; they lined the gates in ranks, with father Medjos at their head, the Abbot having excused himself that evening from attending. At midnight the procession began. Charming nuns, representing the persons of St. Lucia, St. Catherine, and St. Genevieve, separated only by a band of choristers, followed in regular order; next came the reliques of St. Clare, and the nun who bore the heart was mother St. Concessia. After this followed St. Clare, who was personified by a nun of exquisite beauty and elegance; seated on a moving throne, dressed in the most costly apparel, and fanned by lovely

children dressed as seraphs. A murmur of delight ran through the crowd, and Antonio's heart felt that next to Ambrosia she was the most enchanting woman he had ever seen. Her name he learnt was Romalia di Villa Franca, a noble pensioner of St. Clare's convent, and a relation of the prioress. The prioress followed, with her eyes raised upward to heaven, and her hands crossed upon her breast. The populace blessed her as she passed, but what general confusion reigned when Aranjuez, started forward, and challenged her and the mother St. Concessia as his prisoners. At this moment Antonio and the Duke his uncle stepped up; they revealed on whose account she was arrested, and she exclaimed, "Blessed Maria!" then I am betrayed?" "Yes!" loudly exclaimed the mother St. Concessia, "you are discovered, not betrayed. Don Aranjuez, I commit myself to your custody, and charge the prioress of St. Clare with murder, and stake my life for the truth of the accusation!" The mob, who had at first shewn a disposition to rescue the prioress, on hearing this, compelled the accusing nun to mount the throne of St. Clare, which had been deserted by its fair possessor, who, with the rest of the nuns, had flown some to their friends, and some to the convent. Mother St. Concessia then addressed the populace briefly thus: "Among the votaries of St. Clare, none was more lovely nor more gentle than Bertha di Segovia. Every one has some fault, and it was the misfortune of Bertha to violate the laws of our order. The penance adjudged to the culprit was conformable to an obsolete law, long since exploded for its cruelty. It condemned the unhappy victim to be shut up in an underground dungeon, there to live without society, on bread and water, till she perished. This last Bertha now endures, and at the same time in her dungeon has been brought to bed of a dead child.—I therefore, good people, accuse the prioress of hypocrisy and murder, and the four nuns Maria, Nona, Felice, and Barbella, of being her accomplices."

Here the narrative of St. Concessia ended, and the enraged mob insisted that the prioress should be delivered up to their fury. In vain did the archers oppose their rage: the wretched woman was struck on the temple with a well-aimed stone, felled to the ground, and in an instant was trampled on, and torn to pieces. The next object of the mob was to sacrifice the nuns, and destroy the convent. Antonio now hastened to the spot to protect the nuns who had taken

refuge in the building, but already had they beat in the windows, and thrown in firebrands; soon after the door was forced open, and the building rapidly taking fire, those who had dispersed themselves within the walls were in imminent danger from the difficulty of getting out at the doors, now blocked up with people. Antonio, with the Duke, and some of his attendants, were in the chapel at this critical juncture, and to effect their escape, had recourse to a small door in a farther aisle in the chapel; the bolt was undrawn, they rushed through, and found themselves at the foot of St. Clare's sepulchre. The Duke and his attendants passed through the wicket gate into the Capuchin side of the cemetery, and Antonio was on the point of following them, when he saw the door of the sepulchre softly opened; some one looked out, and on seeing a stranger, started back with a shriek, and flew down the marble stairs. The Duke and the party immediately pursued the fugitives, but at the bottom of the stairs became bewildered, and dispersed in various directions.—Antonio, who was the first to pursue, followed the fugitive closely, till he no longer heard the sound of a footstep. Drawing his sword, he groped his way along till he came to the statue of St. Clare, before which was placed a lamp, and several nuns standing round, in great terror. On seeing Antonio, the beautiful Romalia called out for mercy! her companions also uttered a loud scream; but Antonio soon explained to them the benevolent purpose of his visit, and swore to defend Romalia with the last drop of his blood. Having reassured the nuns, and entered into conversation with them; they were interrupted by a groan which seemed to proceed from the middle of the vault in which they then stood. Again the deep moan was heard, and Antonio was convinced it was some way connected with the statue of St. Clare. Without hesitation he leaped the railing round it, and in examining the statue, pressed a knob on the shoulder, which loosened a chain, and the statue seemed to totter. He now found no difficulty in lifting the statue from its pedestal, and beneath discovered an iron grating, which he raised, and against the remonstrance of the nuns, descended a frightful abyss. He reached the foot of the stairs unhurt, and wandered along the winding walls, till he came to a vaulted dungeon, illuminated feebly by a lamp, the glimmering beams of which shewed a forlorn emaciated being, lying on the ground with a bundle beside her, an empty basket,

and a small earthen pitcher. He trembled at the miserable spectacle, asked her in a soft voice if he could relieve her sorrows, and informed her that his name was Antonio di Segovia. The emaciated figure then endeavoured to raise herself, and clasp his knees, but she fell backwards in a fit of joy, uttering the words "Antonio, my brother!"—When Bertha had recovered, Antonio took her in his arms, and conveyed her with the lamp up the stairs to where he had left Romalia and the other nuns at the statue of St. Clare. A number of voices was now heard approaching the spot, which threw the nuns into the greatest alarm, who crowded round Antonio, and claimed his promise of protection. Romalia alone forgot her own danger, and remained busily employed in restoring to animation the form of Bertha. Their apprehensions were soon relieved, for it proved to be only the Duke, Don Aranjuez, and some of these friends, to whom Antonio consigned the care of the female, while he, with Aranjuez and a few of the archers, resolved to continue his subterranean researches. The nuns were conducted to their separate homes, and Bertha at the request of Romalia was consigned to her care, which was eventually crowned with a perfect recovery, and followed in a few weeks after by the double marriage of Romalia and Bertha to Antonio and Langara. Antonio and Don Aranjuez having provided themselves with torches, repaired to the cavern. Scarcely had the latter advanced some steps when he heard people approaching from the interior of the sepulchre. In the next moment, a mild voice, whose tones vibrated to the heart of Antonio, was heard to exclaim, "Help, help! for mercy's sake!"—He flew towards the sound, and was followed by Aranjuez, with the rapidity of lightning.—All this while Innocent was unconscious of the dreadful scenes passing so near. His designs upon Ambrosia occupied all his attention.

For this purpose Innocent crossed the garden, entered the cemetery, and descended into the vault which contained his mistress. There he beheld the sleeping beauty, lying beside three other corrupted bodies, once perhaps as sweet and lovely as herself. At this time the cheeks of Ambrosia exhibited a lively red, the forerunner of animation; her bosom heaved: the passions of the monk became uncontrollable, and but too soon was his nefarious purpose effected! The ruin of Ambrosia was completed, and she returned to

Life and animation only to be sensible that the monk was a villain, and herself undone! Directly the monk had completed his infamy, he started at the blackness of his crime, and the means he had employed. The wretched victim remained for a time stretched on the earth, till her tears began to flow, when, with a feeble step, she moved towards the door, intending to quit the sepulchre. The monk seized her by the arm, and, with a look of fury, exclaimed,—“Think you I will suffer my crimes to be published to the world! Here, amidst these lonely tombs, the companion of mouldering bodies, and sole witness of the horrors which torment me, shall you keep the secret. Fatal beauty, to possess you I have murdered your mother!—At heaven’s bar of justice——” The monk was interrupted by the sudden entrance of Sabina, who rushed into the dungeon, exclaiming “Ruin, Ruin!—The vaults are filled by archers, headed by Antonio di Segovia—Ambrosia will be found, and detection must follow. The difficulty of exploring the door of this dungeon is our only security now!” “But the voice of Ambrosia may betray us,” said the monk. “This then for security!” said the furious Sabina, drawing a poniard, and rushing on her devoted prey.—“Hold, monster!” cried Innocent, wresting the dagger from her hand, “would you add crime to crime!” The distant voices at this moment were heard advancing, and the abbot flew to close to the door, which Sabina had left unfastened. Suddenly Ambrosia rushed through, and darted towards the noise, impelled by the certainty of protection if she could but reach Antonio. The monk pursued her; and, having overtaken the fugitive, attempted to drag her back to the dungeon: but Ambrosia, twining her arms round a pillar, proved an overmatch for his efforts, at the same time loudly vociferating for help and pity! The monk intreated her to silence; but Ambrosia continued to resist and exclaim, till the danger became extreme; he then suddenly raised Sabina’s dagger, which he still held, and plunged it thrice into the bosom of Ambrosia. She shrieked, and fell to the ground, but still so firmly grasped the pillar, that the abbot’s efforts to bear her away were ineffectual, and the flash of the archers’ torches compelled him to rush back to the vault where he had left Sabina. He fled not unobserved. Don Aranjuez instantly pursued with some of his men, leaving Antonio and the others to protect the wounded

stranger. She had fainted through loss of blood, but soon gave signs of returning life: on lifting her up, and removing her hair from her face, Antonio discovered it was his beloved Ambrosia! He clasped her to his bosom; he wept over her, and swore to revenge her death. The wounds Ambrosia received were mortal: she lay with her head on Antonio's bosom till the convent bell tolled three; when, starting up, she exclaimed, "The clock strikes three!—Mother, I come!" She then pressed the hand of Antonio convulsively, and expired without a groan. In the mean time Innocent and Sabina were discovered in the dungeon, and, being bound, were conveyed to the cells of the Inquisition, with the dagger, some books on magic, and the constellated mirror. In a few days after a court was holden for the trial of the offenders, with all the horrid preparations that attend examinations of this nature. The Inquisition in vain exhorted the abbot to confess his guilt; he was ordered to the torture. This he endured with the utmost fortitude; its rack was increased, but he swerved not, and he was at length taken from it totally insensible. Sabina was next brought forward, but the sufferings of the monk vanquished her fortitude. She confessed her connexion with infernal spirits, accused the monk of the rape and murder of Ambrosia, but acquitted him of necromancy.—The monk was then ordered back to his cell, to await a second examination, and Sabina was told to prepare herself to be burnt alive at the approaching Auto de Fé. Returned to his dungeon, the sufferings of Innocent's mind were more insupportable than his dislocated limbs. On the night preceding the day of his second examination, while he was sitting in a state of stupefaction, a voice bid him look up. The monk started, and beheld Sabina standing before him. She wore a splendid dress, spangled with diamonds, and a coronet of roses confined her hair. In her right hand was a small book. "What, Sabina?" exclaimed the monk, "are you free? What price have you paid for your liberty?" "The price of my soul!" replied Sabina. "What will be your sufferings in a few years!" added the monk. "Fool!" said Sabina, "pass but this night, and to-morrow you are to be tortured doubly to what you have endured; in two days you will be burnt at the stake. Deceive not yourself, Innocent: when you are dead, your lot is hell!—Your crimes demand it.—Why not then ensure present safety,

and delay the future? I must now quit you; yet, before the moment of your escape be past, I leave this book with you. By reading the seven first lines of the seventh page backwards, the spirit Lucifer will again appear to you. If you are wise, we shall meet again; if not, farewell for ever!" Sabina then disappeared in a cloud of blue flame, and the wretched monk threw himself into his seat, and was lost in unconnected reflections till his goaler entered, to conduct him before the Grand Inquisitors. To the questions of his guilt, he replied in the same manner as on the preceding examination, roundly affirming his innocence; but when he saw the engines of torture again preparing, he sunk beneath his apprehensions, and made confession of his crimes, but denied being guilty of sorcery or heresy. The sentence of death by burning was then passed upon him, and he was told to prepare for execution by twelve that night. Innocent was reconducted to his dungeon, where, after he had for some time walked wildly up and down, his eye rested on the magical book Sabina had given him. — Here, he reflected, was a resource from the fate he dreaded; he sought out the leaf, and, in an unknown language, read the seven lines of the seventh page backwards. At the last word, Lucifer, in a flame, appeared, but divested of that beautiful shape in which he had seen him before; the prince of darkness now wore a black gigantic blasted form, snakes formed his hair, talons ornamented his hands and feet, and in his hand he held a roll of parchment and an iron pen. — The monk would have compounded with him for the price of his freedom on any terms but the surrender of his soul; but the devil was inflexible; he would free him on no other condition.

The parchment was then extended for him to sign; Lucifer struck the pen into a vein of the monk's arm, and with the bloody ink gave it into his hand. The monk hesitated, threw the pen from him; and had resolved to endure death rather than make over his soul, when the sound of the archers unbarring the dungeon door to lead him to the stake, determined the abandoned priest to sign the fatal contract. "Save me!" cried the monk; "snatch me hence!" "Hold!" cried Lucifer, "do you make over your soul to me without reserve, and for ever?" "For ever and ever!" replied the monk. The Devil then fixed his talons into Innocent's arm, the roof opened, and closed when they had

passed. The goalers instantly hastened to the Inquisitors, to inform them how the Devil had flown away with a sorcerer, and all Madrid was for some days occupied in discussing the subject. While this was passing in the city, Lucifer traversed the air with great rapidity, and placed the monk upon the awful brink of the steepest precipice in Sierra Morena. The dreadful view of the rocky caves and wild rocks by moon light, the howling of the winds and the mountain eagles; the roar of the torrents which bathed the base of the pinnacle on which he stood, filled his soul with terror, and he asked to be carried to Sabina, and taken from the dismal scene. The fiend gazed upon him with delight, and thus addressed him. "Soon, thou wretch, now devoted to suffer in hell, soon shalt thou be with the companion of your crimes! Hearken! thou parricide, thou ravisher, thou hypocrite, to the brief catalogue of your enormities!——Ambrosia and Leonora perished by your hand! Ambrosia, you violated;—she was your sister!——Leonora, you strangled; she was your mother!——I had long marked your hypocrisy, and noted you for my prey!——I bade an inferior spirit take the likeness of your idolized Madona's picture, and you yielded to the treacherous charms of Sabina. It was I who threw her in your way, and gave you the dagger which pierced your sister's bosom.

"Hearken again, thou monster of iniquity!—One minute more, had you *resisted* me, you had saved your body and soul!—The guards at your prison door came to *announce your pardon*!—But the triumph was mine. You committed crimes as quick as I could ask them. Your soul is now to suffer, and body too! You asked only to be freed from prison, and saved from the Inquisition. My contract is performed! Miscreant, now then prepare for death!" As the fiend said this, he darted his talons in the monk's tattered crown, and flew upwards with him from the rocks.—The air resounded with the shrieks of Innocent. The demon regarded him not; but when he had reached a dreadful elevation in the air, he precipitated the abbot down.—He fell on the sharp point of a rock, and rolled from crag to crag till, bruised and mangled, he fell into the torrents at the base of the mountain. There, amidst a storm of thunder, lightning, and earthquake, his corpse was carried away by the overwhelming waters.

F I N I S.