

A REMARKABLE SUICIDE

IMPELLED BY

CONSTANT LOVE.

THE *Marquis Abruzzo* and the *Count Pellegrini*, the heads of two different branches of the same family, had been for twelve successive years at law with each other, to recover the immense fortune of a relation : this had so far exasperated them against each other that they became the most inveterate enemies. The *Marchioness Abruzzo* and the *Countess Pellegrini* followed the example of their lords, and carried their enmity to the same height as they did. *Pellegrini* had a son, and *Abruzzo* a daughter ; both infants.

After a well-contested trial, a verdict was at length given in favour of the *Marquis Abruzzo*, and he became possessor of the estate, and his house became one of the most wealthy and powerful in *Genoa*, whilst the *Count Pellegrini* was reduced to penury ; the expenses of the lawsuit had so far diminished his small income, that he was unable to support the dignity of his rank, and educate his little *Clementina*, then six years of age. This gave him great uneasiness, and preyed constantly on his mind : to think that his beloved daughter should be obliged to disgrace her noble family by entering into a profession, nay, perhaps to beg, were reflections which he could with difficulty support, and which continually haunted his tortured mind. One day he mentioned his inquietude to the abbess of a rich convent, with whom he was acquainted. " I will take your daughter under my care," said she, " and will myself attend to her education ; and, if she should ever feel herself inclined to enter our holy order, we shall feel ourselves highly honoured in admitting her into our society." *Pellegrini* thanked her with tears of joy ; the next day he conducted *Clementina* to the convent, and entreated the abbess to prepare her mind by degrees for a monastic life, and to lose no opportunity

SUICIDE THROUGH LOVE.

tunity of representing to her that the only way of avoiding misfortunes was to take the veil ; the abbess promised to comply with his request, and faithfully kept her word. Constant grief at the ruin of his family, and inquietude as to their fate hereafter, preyed upon the *Count Pellegrini's* mind, and a year after he died of a broken heart. His widow was left entirely destitute, and lived in obscurity by the help of her relations, who generously supplied her with every thing that could make her life comfortable. She visited her daughter frequently, and sought to instil into her mind, the necessity of a life of seclusion. Notwithstanding all this, *Clementina* frequently evinced a strong dislike to a monastic life. The desire of living in the world increased with her years ; and, when she attained her fifteenth year, she looked forward to the period of her taking the veil with horror. The tears and entreaties of her mother at last prevailed, and she entered into her noviciate. It is the custom in *Italy* to suffer the young females, who are destined to take the veil, to live among their relations for some time previous to their pronouncing the vows which for ever separate them from society ; this short period is always made as agreeable to them as possible ; they are generally dressed in the most costly and elegant manner, and introduced into all public places of amusement.

Clementina was therefore sent to her mother ; the beautiful and unhappy victim was adorned with a robe of white and silver, whilst her mother's relations vied with each other in adorning the lovely hair of poor *Clementina* with their most costly jewels ; thus decorated and radiant with beauty, the lovely girl was led to every place of amusement. This was continued for six weeks. *Clementina* was possessed of great sensibility ; she was delighted with the life she led, and could hardly conceal her grief when the time of returning to her sad prison approached.

The day came, on which she was to return to her convent. The friends and relations were already invited to witness

SUICIDE THROUGH LOVE.

the sad and awful ceremony of her taking the fatal vow when, accompanied by her mother, she went to take leave of one of her relations the *Marquis Carracci*, and for the first time met her cousin *Jeronymo*, son of the *Marquis Abruzzo*, her father's inveterate enemy. *Jeronymo*, who was then nineteen, was deemed the handsomest youth in *Genoa*; he had ever pitied his uncle's hard fate, but, knowing the enmity which subsisted between the two families, he concealed his sentiments from his parents; and, not being in possession of his fortune, contented himself with privately sending half of his pocket-money to his aunt; he had carefully avoided meeting his aunt and cousin at any of his relations from motives of delicacy; he had hitherto succeeded, but that happening to be the *Marquis Carracci's* birth-day, he had been obliged to visit him instead of his father, who was confined at home by a fit of the gout. The instant *Clementina* entered, he knew her from the strong resemblance she bore to his family. The *Marchioness Carracci* received *Clementina* in the politest manner, placed her on a sofa by her, and presented to her all the young men in company, *Jeronymo* excepted, whom she purposely left out of the number, on account of the animosity which subsisted between the two families. *Jeronymo*, therefore, undisturbed enjoyed the pleasure of contemplating the charms of his beautiful cousin, without being known by her; her interesting countenance, her soft and languishing eye, her open and ingenuous look, excited his admiration: but, when he beheld the grief which at times altered her countenance, and saw her lovely eyes filled with tears which she in vain tried to repress, when he saw the violence she did to her feelings in forcing a faint smile in order to conceal the grief which seemed to prey upon her heart, a tender pity took possession of his soul, and inspired him with the wish of alleviating her sorrows, and love soon confirmed him in his determination.

He approached her: *Clementina's* eyes were fixed upon his fine countenance; she thought she could read in his

SUICIDE THROUGH LOVE.

expressive features the interest with which she had inspired him ; at last she asked his name of a lady who sat near her : the lady whispered something to her. *Clementina's* eyes were again lifted towards him,—she then cast them down, and her lovely cheek was covered with blushes.

Jeronymo could not conceal his agitation : it was late, and the greatest part of the visitors had already retired. *Clementina's* mother was conversing with some ladies. The seat next to *Clementina* became vacant, and *Jeronymo* took possession of it. “How happy I am in having the felicity of meeting my lovely cousin,” said he, addressing her. “Your name is *Jeronymo Abruzzo* ?” replied she with a timid look. “It is,” returned *Jeronymo* ; “and I am proud of bearing that name, since it proves that I am related to you.” *Clementina* and *Jeronymo* remained buried in reflections for some time : after a long pause, he resumed, “Are you then determined to take the veil ?” “Alas ! am I not obliged to do it ?” answered she, with an agonized voice. “I wonder at your question ! you know the situation of my family, a convent is the only asylum that is left me. Alas ! had I a fortune, a monastic life would not be my choice.” “Is it indeed true ?” cried *Jeronymo* ; “then I will serve you.—It is my duty to do so.” At that moment the bells of the convent proclaimed the fatal hour, and summoned the inhabitants to attend the awful ceremony which was to deprive the beautiful, and wretched *Clementina* of her happiness for ever ; she started with horror !—*Jeronymo*, in an agony, exclaimed, “Permit me one more question : may I flatter myself that I am not disliked by you ?” “For God's sake,” answered poor *Clementina*, “do not add to my misery !” “Do you love me ?” again repeated he. *Clementina*, gently lying her hand in his, said, “Love you ?—Alas !—but hark ! do you not hear ? to-morrow, my dear cousin !—to-morrow !” “To-morrow you shall be mine,” cried *Jeronymo*, “or I shall not exist !” He kissed her hand with transport, bathed it with tears, and then suddenly left the room.

room. *Clementina* could scarcely believe her own senses ; and fancied that an angel of peace had appeared to her under the form of her cousin.

The amiable *Jeronymo* ran to his father : he was told that he was asleep. “ I must speak to him ! ” exclaimed he, and he instantly approached his father’s bed, took hold of his hand gently, and pressed it to his lips. The marquis awoke and said, “ What wouldst thou, my son ? ” “ Forgive me,” answered *Jeronymo*, “ if I disturb you at so late an hour, but the happiness of my life is concerned. Oh ! my dear father ! ” “ What dost thou mean ! ” again exclaimed his father, greatly surprized at his agitation. “ You have often expressed a wish to see me married, and even desired me to choose a wife among the noble families with whom we are acquainted.” “ I did so,” said the old marquis ; “ and it is my most ardent wish at this moment.” “ Well then, my dear father,” joyfully exclaimed *Jeronymo*, “ I will obey your command, I have found at last a woman worthy of my love ; the beautiful *Clementina* is the object of my choice ! ” “ Thou art out of thy senses ! ” exclaimed the marquis : “ I heard that she some time past took the veil ! ” “ She has not yet pronounced the vow, which must for ever destroy her happiness and my own : to-morrow will be the fatal day on which she is to be sacrificed, and society deprived of its brightest ornament. Oh, my dear father ! do not refuse your consent : suffer me to become the happiest of mankind, by uniting myself to the lovely *Clementina*.” “ Have you forgotten,” cried the marquis, extremely irritated, “ that she is the daughter of my greatest enemy ? Relinquish the absurd idea, I will never consent to such a union.” “ Never ! my father ? ” replied *Jeronymo*. “ No never,” answered his father. “ Then hear me, Heaven ! whilst thus kneeling I solemnly swear,” said the amiable young man, “ to marry with no other woman but *Clementina* ! ”

The marquis was astonished at his son’s resolution ; he knew the firmness of his disposition ; and, thinking his

SUICIDE THROUGH LOVE.

Love must be very violent, to make him adopt such a determination, he at last, after many remonstrances, gave his consent; besides, he sometimes felt remorse for his injustice towards *Clementina's* father, as he was not ignorant that he died in consequence of the ruin of his family, and thought that his son's marriage with *Clementina* would in some degree repair his want of humanity to the deceased. *Jeronymo*, delighted, went instantly to the archbishop's palace, and with great difficulty, from the lateness of the hour, gained admission to the venerable and worthy prelate: he related to him all that had passed, telling him that he had obtained his father's consent to marry *Clementina*, and implored him to forward his happiness without delay. "Happy young man," said the archbishop, "you have obtained in *one day* what I have in vain endeavoured to accomplish for years! God Almighty has at last heard my prayers, and will unite two families hitherto separated by the most implacable hatred. Oh! that the Count *Pellegrini* could witness this happy change. I will instantly send my orders to the abbess." "I know, my lord," said *Jeronymo*, "that the abbess cannot dispute your orders, but I wish you to give me the dispensation, that our marriage may be celebrated immediately, lest my father should change his mind." The venerable man gave him the necessary orders in writing, which empowered him to marry *Clementina* whenever he chose. *Jeronymo* thanked him a thousand times, and with the welcome paper went immediately to *Clementina's* house: her mother was not yet retired to bed, she was preparing for the ceremony which was to take place the next day. *Clementina* had retired to her apartment in order to prepare her mind for the awful ceremony; she could not repress her tears, and the image of her beloved *Jeronymo* would, notwithstanding all her efforts, still present itself to her agonized mind.

The Countess *Pellegrini* was extremely surprized to see *Jeronymo* at that hour, but her astonishment was greatly increased when he imparted his intention to her. She

could scarcely believe that he was in earnest, and it was not until he shewed her the dispensation that she could be persuaded he did not really mean to insult her, by raising hopes which he did not mean to realize. In the excess of her joy she conducted him to her daughter's chamber. *Clementina* started from her kneeling position, her lovely face was covered with blushes. *Jeronymo* in a transport of joy threw himself at her feet and pressed her hand to his burning lips ; her mother, having informed her of her lover's intentions, the lovely girl, overcome by various emotions which assailed her at once, fell half fainting into the arms of her future husband. When their joy was a little calmed, the countess said, " But, my dear children, how will this business be arranged ? the nuns have made all the necessary preparations, the repast is also provided, and all the nobility is invited to attend." " So they should, my dear madam," said *Jeronymo* ; " they will witness the celebration of our marriage." " Excellent !" exclaimed the delighted mother ; " suppose we were to—but it would perhaps be impossible !" " It is not impossible !" cried *Jeronymo*. " I guess your thought, dearest madam ; it shall be so !" " Indeed," returned she, while pleasure sparkled in her eyes ; " have you really guessed my thoughts ?" " I have," he replied ; " listen to me : we must keep our project a secret ; you and my beloved *Clementina* must go in the morning to the convent at the hour appointed : you will both go into the church, where I shall wait for you near the altar ; and, when the ceremony begins, and the priest makes the usual question of ' what dost thou want ?' I shall come forward and answer in her stead. I will then shew him the archbishop's order to perform the marriage-ceremony, and insist upon his complying instantly. Oh, *Clementina* ! that indeed will be an hour of bliss !" " I am like a child," said the good countess ; " I anticipate the pleasure I shall experience at the performance of this excellent plan, I shall not be able to sleep all night for joy."

SUICIDE THROUGH LOVE.

Clementina at first objected to the plan, but her mother's joined to her *Jeronymo's* entreaties soon silenced her objections, and she even began to think that her vanity would be highly gratified in being united to her lover in the presence of so numerous and distinguished an assembly. *Jeronymo* remained with his beloved till six in the morning, he then left them to dress for the approaching ceremony, and to give the ladies an opportunity of preparing themselves also.

About nine, all the bells of the convent began to ring, as a signal that the ceremony would soon begin. *Clementina* and her mother arrived at the convent a few minutes after; they were received at the church door with great form, and a chaplet of flowers was put upon *Clementina's* head; and she was led, while the most delightful music was playing, towards the altar. She trembled violently, and looked anxiously for *Jeronymo*, whom she soon saw standing close to the altar; his eyes met her's and inspired her with courage. All the nobility were ranged on each side, and the nuns entered into the choir. The croud was so immense, that it was with difficulty that the guards could keep them within bounds. The priest ascended the altar, and made a sign to *Clementina*, and she approached. "What do you wish?" said he to her with a loud and audible voice. "She wishes to be married to me," said *Jeronymo* advancing, and presenting the dispensation of the archbishop. The priest read it with a look of amazement, shewed it to his assistant, and then read it aloud. He began the marriage-ceremony; and some of *Jeronymo's* friends, who had been apprized of the plan, came forward to serve as witnesses.

The astonishment of the spectators was extreme; they could scarcely believe their own senses; and every eye was fixed upon the new married couple. The nuns, forgetting every sense of propriety in their confusion, unveiled their faces, to have a better view of this extraordinary scene; the spectators pressed closer to the grate, and gazed with

SUICIDE THROUGH LOVE.

with open mouths; the most profound silence reigned throughout the church.

When the nuptial ceremony was finished, *Jeronymo* led his bride to the banquetting room, and the Countess *Pellegrini* invited the nobility to partake of the refreshments. As *Jeronymo* perceived that the abbess was extremely irritated; he told her his reasons for not informing her of his plan, and promised to defray the whole of the expenses of the entertainment, and to pay besides a large sum for the education and board of his wife since she had been under her care. He did all this to appease the haughty and revengeful abbess, who was a woman of high birth, and connected with the most powerful families in *Genoa*. At this information her resentment seemed entirely to subside; she spoke and behaved in a friendly manner to *Clementina*, and the remainder of the company laughed at the singularity of the adventure. The refreshments were served with the greatest profusion. *Clementina* complaining of thirst, the abbess herself helped her to a glass of lemonade, which she drank at one draught, and soon after left the convent to go and receive the blessing of her father-in-law, whose indisposition had prevented his attending the marriage-ceremony.

On her way to her father, she felt herself rather unwell, which she attributed to the agitation of her spirits. She leaned upon the bosom of her beloved *Jeronymo*, and complained of a violent pain in her stomach. When she arrived at his father's, she knelt to receive his blessing; but, on attempting to rise, her pains increased to such a degree that she was unable to stand: she was shortly after taken with violent convulsions: a physician was sent for, who declared her life to be in great danger. "I have drunk a glass of lemonade at the convent," said the unfortunate *Clementina*: "it was given to me by the abbess. I" she could say no more, and instantly expired in the arms of her distracted husband. It was with the greatest difficulty that they could take her away from him. He raved! *Clementina's* last words were for

SUICIDE THROUGH LOVE.

ever present to his mind, and they had a great deal of trouble to prevent his going to the convent and murdering the abbess with his own hands. His force increased, and he became quite frantic. They were obliged to tie him down to his bed with strong cords, lest he should hurt himself. He repeated every moment the name of his beloved *Clementina*.

Poor *Clementina's* corpse was opened : the surgeons, who performed the operation, pronounced that she had been poisoned. A prosecution was commenced against the abbess, as no doubt remained of her being the author of the abominable deed. After a long trial, she was at length convicted of the crime. Notwithstanding sentence of death was pronounced against her, her powerful relations caused it to be mitigated into imprisonment for life ; but the populace, exasperated at the act of injustice, assembled in great numbers round the convent, and waited until the abbess was brought out to be conveyed to prison. They tore her forcibly from the hands of the officers of justice : her supplications were in vain ; and the wretch, after suffering every ignominy they could inflict, expired by their hands : a dreadful example to monastic cruelty ! The day of *Clementina's* funeral came : the hearse slowly proceeded through the court-yard, followed by the weeping relations of the unfortunate *Clementina*, and a vast concourse of people. The awful sound of the trumpet, * which preceded the mournful procession, roused *Jeronymo*, who had been for some hours in a kind of lethargic sleep. He broke, with supernatural strength, the cords with which he was bound, ran to the window, and, looking at the hearse which contained the corpse of his *Clementina*, he exclaimed, " Oh, my beloved ! take me with thee ! " and sprang out of the window !—He fell ! and his brains were dashed out and scattered over the black pall which covered the body of his *Clementina*. They were buried in the same grave : the agonized marquis of

* In Spain and other Roman Catholic countries, a trumpet formerly preceded all funerals.

Abruzzo soon followed his children. *Clementina's* mother to whom he bequeathed his fortune, lived a short time after her ; but the death of her dear *Clementina* soon put an end to her existence, and once more re-united her to her beloved daughter.

A melancholy instance of the unlimited power which the abbots and abbesses of convents could exercise on the unhappy victims entrusted to their care.

WHEN the late unfortunate Louis the Sixteenth attempted to escape from his persecutors, in 1791, I was then in *France*, where having resided for some years, I had an opportunity of witnessing the beginning and process of that dreadful revolution, which has shaken that devoted country to its foundation. The excesses which were daily committed in the capital determined me to leave it, and retire at a great distance from that scene of bloodshed. My health was at that time very bad, and I had every reason to suppose I was attacked with a pulmonary complaint ; I therefore chose the south of *France* as the place of my future residence, hoping that the well known salubrity of the air would prove beneficial. Being arrived in *Provence*, I found, to my great sorrow, that the revolutionary spirit had reached the shore of the *Mediterranean*, and that I was not to expect the tranquillity which I had promised myself to enjoy in that climate, to which nature has been so prodigally bountiful. I was however fortunate enough to discover a retreat in a delightful village not far from *Nice*, and in that charming place I flattered myself that I should regain my health and strength. I walked out every day, and admired the unrivalled beauty and luxuriancy of the country ; the hills were covered with fruits of all sorts, the flavour of which is unknown to the inhabitants of a higher latitude. At the distance of about five miles from