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The Distressed Nun [Transcript]

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THE DISTRESSED NUN.

SEATED on the beautiful banks of the *Arno*, in the province of *Tuscany*, lately stood the splendid palace of *Luvido di Brindoli*, a *Florentine* nobleman; who, to his own plentiful estate, added an equal portion of reputation and honor. He had signalized himself in his early youth, by a rigorous attachment to the religion of his country; and had contributed, with the other crusaders, to expel the *Turks* from *Jerusalem*, and tarnish the lustre of the *Ottoman* crescent. He returned loaded with military honors to his own country, and, soon after his arrival, made the irrevocable vow at the altar with a lady, who seemed, by her amiable temper, to be capable of bestowing that felicity, which ought to be the result of every matrimonial contract. He soon saw himself the father of two amiable children of either sex; and spent, some years in training up their infant minds in the pursuit of virtue. At the period which, this history commences, the daughter was near nineteen, and the son twenty-one years of age. Nature had lavished her favors on both, as far as it regarded personal attractions: *Vincentio* (this was the name of the youth) inherited every requisite which could adorn and dignify the human shape; the ruddy glow of his cheek spoke him very intimate with the goddess of health; in short, his whole figure was conspicuous for health and activity. The gentle *Herselia* (so was the daughter called) exhibited a form which you would have thought was symmetry personified, in exact correspondence to which was her lovely face; a neck of the purest white, and most exquisite form; submitted to the wandering undulation of tresses of the loveliest brown. Such was the charming maid, who we now declare to be our heroine, presenting her on the grand theatre of life, at nineteen, graced with all the advantages of person which we have just delineated. But these were far from being the only advantages; no; her mind was an inseparable counterpart of her love-inspiring figure. Her sentiments were noble and diffusive; her affections were warm, and truly alive to all those sympathetic feelings which produced them; they, like the bountiful dispenser of munificence, frequently extended their cheering influence to the unhappy. Signor *Brindoli* was excessively fond of his daughter; but this fondness he never designed should be detrimental to his son; but *Vincentio* beheld with an envious eye the seeming partiality which his father had for his sister. This circumstance occasioned a mutual shyness between them, which soon increased, on the part of *Vincentio*, to a rooted dislike; and the better to disguise the dark revenge he meditated, he threw over his deep intent the veil of assumed kindness. *Herselia* was deceived. She really imagined that her brother had seen the error of his former conduct, and was desirous to atone for it, by a behavior very opposite to what he had so recently preserved. A circumstance soon after this occurred, by which the maligned *Vincentio* thought he discovered a way most effectually to pull down ruin upon the innocent head of the object of his unceasing envy.

A short distance from the residence of signor *Brindoli* stood the castle of *Marcello* count *de Fovolli*, a nobleman descended from honorable ancestors; but who, afterward plunging into some extravagances, left the estate to their posterity in an impaired condition; so that *Fovolli* had every thing but riches to support his nobility. At a late hour one very stormy night, the family of signor *Brindoli* was alarmed by a violent knocking at the gate; and on the domestics being dispatched to see the occasion, it was two signors on horseback, who desired shelter from the fury of the approaching tempest. They were introduced to the family, and received

an hospitable welcome before they were known to be the count *Fovalli* and his son *Henri Velasquez*. This was the first time they had ever been in the *Brindoli* palace; for the signor knew the defect of riches would never, in the opinion of the world, be sufficiently recompensed by their noble birth; and as he had a competent share of ambition, he had never invited them to his palace. He, however, now behaved to them with politeness; but it had too much haughtiness in it, to make it affable. The young *Henri* seemed to be the best pleased of the whole party, except *Herselia*, to whom he was discoursing. The subtle *Vincentio* eagerly watched the motions of their eyes, and soon received intelligence from those faithful interpreters of the human heart; which flushed his countenance with malicious joy. It was not difficult for him to see that the seeds of a mutual passion had been sown in the innocent breasts of his sister and young *Henri*; and he determined to improve his observations into a steady pursuit of revenge. He was an admirable dissembler; but he now resolved to throw over his dire intentions the thickest veil his hypocrisy was capable of weaving.

Accordingly, the very next day, he began to open his masked battery, by remarking to his sister, that she appeared altered from what she was of late; that her native vivacity seemed entirely fled; and it was with sorrow he observed that some secret grief preyed upon her gentle spirits, and dashed the means of every enjoyment which her splendid situation in life amply furnished. He conjured her, by the tender name of beloved sister, to repose her confidence in his faithful breast, and let him share her distresses, or rather exterminate them for ever; which he called all the angels in heaven to witness he would, provided it lay within the verge of possibility.

While the gentle maid yet hesitated, unknowing how to act, the consummate hypocrite now deemed it prudent to facilitate his detestable designs, to come a little closer to the mark, and give his sister to see that he knew more than perhaps she imagined. He therefore pressed her hand tenderly between both his, and with a smiling countenance said, “the young count *Henri*, my dear sister, is calculated to dispel all troubles.” He felt the hand he held agitated with tremor; her sweet face was covered with blushes, and she sunk in the arms of her perfidious brother. “Ah!” exclaimed she, “you have discovered my secret. Yes! I confess I love the count; but, in pity, do not expose me to my father.”—“Be comforted, my dear sister,” said the artful *Vincentio*. “In me you have a brother, whom you may command. I’ll shield you with my utmost power; my happiness is yours. You love the young count. You shall have him.” He accompanied these last words with peculiar fervor. The sweet maid raised her eyes to him in a kind of doubtful pleasure. He continued. “I repeat it, you shall have him. *Henri* shall be yours. That he loves you to distraction, is indisputable; and why should you sink a victim to hopeless love? It shall not be. You shall be happy, my sister.”—“Oh! no. I never shall,” exclaimed she, in a tone of despair. “My father”—“He must not know it,” interrupted *Vincentio*. “O! my brother! It must not be. I cannot disobey him. Leave me, brother. I am a wretch marked out for misery, and unworthy of your protection. I have dared to bestow my heart without my parents sanction.”—“But it is sanctioned by heaven and justice,” answered her brother; “and the church shall ratify the sacred ties.”

A few days after this conversation, frequent interviews were projected, and executed, between the two lovers, through the subservient mediation of *Vincentio*. In these meetings the young count declared his passion in terms where ardency and truth kept pace. Frequently, on

evenings, would our young lovers wander along the delightful shores of the *Arno*, and enjoy, by moonlight, the enchanting effects of *Florentine* scenery. Here her love for *Henri* was strengthened by that delicate fondness, which her presence always created; but, notwithstanding this, she could not be prevailed on to give her hand privately to him, although the persuasion of her brother was supported, on the part of the young count, by all the arguments his love could devise. But her greatest trial was now to come.

Her father one day took her aside, and informed her, that the only son of the marquis *Diori* had solicited her hand, and she must prepare for the nuptials, as it was an honor quite unlooked for, and therefore not to be retarded by a moment's delay. You, my love," continued he, "can have no objection, as the chevalier is a handsome young man." This was like a thunder bolt to our heroine, which threatened to demolish all her happiness. Independent of her partiality for *Henri*, she had conceived an invincible contempt for the young marquis, who had been more than once at her father's palace, and who was as vain of his figure as any the most consummate fribble.

Her distress now exceeded every species of misery she had before known. She saw at once how dear *Henri* was to her heart, and how impossible it would be to resign him for such a being as the young marquis; and yet the lovely maid upbraided herself for not being able to do so, when her duty to the author of her being required it. If this was weakness in our heroine, surely it was an amiable one. She now sought her brother *Vincentio*, to pour her sorrow into his faithless breast. He was of opinion that no time was to be lost in bestowing her hand privately on the noble *Henri*, as the hypocrite called him, on purpose to shut her eyes with respect to his real design. After a severe struggle between her inclination and her duty, she at length consented to bless her loved *Henri* with her hand on the morrow early; which time was fixed by her brother.

Vincentio now had proceeded to the last extremity, and there only remained one decisive blow to be struck. He accordingly repaired to his father, and informed him that *Herselia* was fully bent upon frustrating his intentions with respect to her marrying the son of *Diori*; for he was assured she determined, on the very next day, to throw herself away on the young count *Fovvilli*. The astonishment of his father almost equalled his rage at this intelligence; and he vowed an exemplary revenge, if this should be the case. *Vincentio* again affirmed it, and told his father that he might convince himself, by waiting 'till the morning; when she intended to rise early, and step out privately; and that he himself should be with her; which, he said, he had consented to, merely to withdraw himself from her supplications and tears; but that his conscience told him it was his duty to inform him of the scheme, and, thereby, if possible, save the honor of the family from being contaminated by the **govel**ing desires of his sister.

Vincentio had said enough. The morrow was waited for by the parties concerned with different emotions. At length it came; and, as it was agreed on between the signor and his son, the latter went privately to his sister's chamber, and led her forth. *Brindoli* now mustered his domestics; and mounting his horse, intercepted his daughter before she got far toward the church. With fury in his countenance, he charged her with guilty disobedience. She bore his reproaches with a passive submission; until he vowed, with dreadful imprecations, that, as a punishment for the base degeneracy of her intentions, she should be shut up in a monastery for life. No sooner did

she hear this fatal sentence pronounced, than, overcome with the violence of her emotions, she sunk to all appearance lifeless at her father's feet; who, so far from being touched with her situation, walked away, after he bade her domestic watch her returning recollection, and inform him of it.

When our lovely heroine had come a little to herself, in a voice fraught with delirious agony she exclaimed, "they shall not tear him from me. Cruel men! O! *Henri, Henri!*" Coming more to her senses, her real situation shot across her sickening mind, and she had nearly relapsed into insensibility. Her stern father adhered to his resolution; for in spite of her tears and entreaties, she was the next day consigned to the dismal gloom of a cloister.

In the mean time, *Henri* waited in vain at the place appointed, impatient to meet his destined bride; but, alas! she came not; and the distracted youth walked to and fro with disordered steps, unknowing what to think, but conjecturing the worst; at length, having walked 'till all probability of their appearing was extinguished, he returned to his father's castle, in a frame of mind, which pours contempt upon all description. Here he soon found the mystery unravelled.

As soon as the count saw his son, with a countenance inflamed by anger, he ordered *Henri* to follow him directly, having something of importance to communicate. Our hero accordingly followed his father to a private apartment; where he took from his pocket a letter, and put it in his son's hand, asking him, at the same time, how he dared to project that design which this paper reprobated? adding, with fervent indignation, "I would sooner see you married to a beggar, than to his daughter—an upstart mushroom, without nobility, without birth. Shall *he* dare to mix his plebeian blood with that of the noble *Fovolli*? But read the note, my son, and say, what the insolence of that mortal deserves who dared to dictate it." *Henri* then, with trembling hands, unfolded the paper, and read as follows:—

To MARCELLO Count DE FOVOLLI.

"If you value your own safety, you will see the necessity of curbing the ambitious spirit of your son, and reduce his inclinations to the level of his circumstances. I suppose you can hardly be ignorant that he has had the daring temerity to lift his eye to my daughter; and as I have punished the base inclinations of the dishonorable branch of my family, I hope you will inflict a proper chastisement on the arrogant presumption of yours; or expect the resentment of Brindoli Palace. "LUVIDO DI BRINDOLI"

"If," exclaimed the count contemptuously, as *Henri* finished reading it; "I did not think it beneath the dignity of my house, I would personally chastise his brutal insolence. As for you, signor; as I consider your actions originated in the boyish ebullition of passion, I for this time pardon your dishonorable rashness; but remember, if you wish to secure my future favor, you must instantly discard her from your thoughts."—"O! my father!" exclaimed the afflicted *Henri*, "sentence me not to such severe torment. Oh! let gentle pity animate your breast toward your unhappy son! The affections are involuntary. You yourself first introduced me to the sweet *Herselia*; and I feel that I shall cease to love her only when I cease to exist."

An attempt to describe the fury of the count, when he heard these last words, would be equally futile and impossible. He stormed, and swore; and at length vowed, with dreadful oaths, to

disinherit him, if he did not vanquish the foolish passion, as he termed it. He then burst out of the room, leaving the youth in an agony of mind, which surpasses all conception.

Week after week passed away, without *Henri* hearing a word of his mistress. At length, his suspense as to her fate became so intolerable, that one night he disguised himself, and lurked secretly about the walls of her father's palace, in hopes of discovering some traces of the object of his unceasing love; but no glimpse of hope cheered his melancholy breast; till, dispirited at his unsuccessful expedition, he was on the point of returning to the castle when he heard himself called by a low voice. He answered in a restrained tone, and soon perceived a female figure turning an angle of the palace. She directly ran toward him with great celerity; and our young lover had prest her with rapture to his breast, before he discovered that it was a domestic of the palace. In short, it was *Annis*, who had been the confidential servant of *Herselia*; and who observing, from a window, a man walking pensively about the outside of the palace, rightly conjectured it to be her young mistress's lover. She had therefore stepped out, to communicate to him all she knew concerning her. After she had suffered herself to be in the arms of our hero a considerable time, without declaring who she was; for fear he should first make the discovery. She thought proper to exclaim, "bless me, signor! what do you mean? I am not my young lady, but *Annis*, her faithful servant. Holy Virgin! I am all in a fluster. Lord! how fond you men are! Well, I *purtest*, it is no wonder that my young lady should be so much averse to being shut up in a convent for life, while—" "shut up in a convent for life!" repeated *Henri* faintly, while he leaned against a tree for support. "Shut up, did you say?" "Ah! signor, the more the pity; for it is but a gloomy place; and such a sweet young lady! It was a distressing scene, signor, to see her dragged away from her home, while she clung to the knees of her father, and entreated for mercy; and then, how she called on your name, signor! her *Henri!* her dear *Henri!* she should never see him more."—"O! excess of misery!" exclaimed the young count, almost choked with grief, "why was not I present, to avert the cruel sentence? *Annis*," continued he, in an altered tone of soft composure, "do you love your young lady?"—"Love her! what, my sweet mistress! how could you be so cruel, signor; as to ask that question? To be sure I do; and would lay down my life for her, if it could do her any service."—"I believe you. Well, then, my good *Annis*, tell me at what convent they have confined her."—"Holy Maria! I don't know, signor; for though I heard my lord mention several to himself, as if he meant my young lady should go to one, yet nobody of the servants know which it is, but *Dorcas*; and she is as close as a confessor."—"But what convents did signor *Brindoli* name!" said *Henri*. "Why, let me see; he named—he named St. *Augustine*, St. *Ursula*, Our Holy Virgin, and—I cannot recollect any more, signor."

On this very slender information, or rather surmise, did our hero build a plan of operations, which nothing but love could have prompted. He resolved to travel all over Italy, but what he would find her; and giving *Annis* strict injunctions not to let his intentions transpire, he took leave of her, and returned to the castle, fully determined to begin his melancholy perigrinations on the morrow.

When the morning came, *Henri*, having provided himself with pecuniary accommodations requisite for a long absence, mounted his horse, and took the road to the convent of St. *Au-*

gustine, which was about the distance of twelve leagues. In the course of the first day he travelled through the most delightful track of country that imagination can fancy; although, for the attention our hero bestowed on it, it might as well have exhibited the hideous gloom of a dungeon. As the closing shades of evening began to draw the dun veil of obscurity over the scene, our forlorn traveller saw the necessity of looking out for a resting-place for the night; but, alas! none appeared, and so seemed doomed to sustain the fury of that storm, which the frowning aspect of the heavens declared to be inevitable. In this truly unenviable situation the hopeless lover pursued his doubtful and melancholy way; expecting every moment, that the growling elements would burst in tremendous fury over his devoted head. At length, striking suddenly into a more open part of the country, he imagined he discerned at a distance a twinkling light, which at intervals, wholly disappeared, and then again sent forth its feeble quivering rays. Animated by this circumstance, he directed his horse cautiously toward it; and in a little time came to a solitary hut, almost surrounded with trees. He directly alighted from the horse, and knocked at the door for admission. It was opened by a woman, who appeared to border on sixty; her countenance was placid, and strongly expressive of the virtue of benevolence; yet was there a shade of habitual sorrow over the *tout ensemble* of her features, which spoke her acquaintance with early misfortunes. "My good mother," said Henri, "will you compassionate an unhappy man, and permit him to pass the night in your, humble dwelling?"—"Most willingly. The unhappy shall always have a special claim on my protection. Walk in, my young signor. Alas! I know what it is to be unhappy myself."

As she said this, a silent tear, which rolled down her venerable cheek, corroborated the mournful truth. A cheerful fire soon blazed on the hearth, and afforded a comfortable contrast to the obfuscated tenebrosity without. Our hero sat over the fire listening to the howling storm, while frequent sighs burst from his lacerated heart, as he thought on *Herselia*, his dear *Herselia*, torn from him for ever in the very moment when he thought he had secured her from the gripe of envious fate; even then pining envy, in league with barbarous wealth, seized on the fair prize, and consigned her to the merciless fangs of monastic superstition. These were thoughts which agitated our lover's breast with cruel emotions; and the old woman would have had little difficulty in seeing that he was wretched, if our hero had not told her so. Remarking his perpetual sighs, "ah! signor," said she, "so young, and so sorrowful! What can so cruelly agitate your youthful breast? Has the arrow of love pierced your young heart? or do you sigh to the memory of a departed friend?" Soothed in some degree by the sympathy of this venerable hostess, he was induced to give a narrative of the real history of his misfortunes; which he did in such a manner as made the tender-hearted old woman weep exceedingly, especially when he came to speak of the near approach to his felicity, and how his beloved *Herselia* was snatched from his arms in the very moment when he was congratulating himself upon her being irrecoverably his own.

When he had concluded his sorrowful tale, the weeping matron took him by the hand. "I sincerely sympathise with your misfortunes, my young friend, said she, "you have lost, by your account, a beautiful and amiable lady. Fortune seems purposely to have mocked you, throwing the precious jewel as it were temptingly in your very grasp, and then commissioned cruel avarice to ravish it from you for ever. But your misfortunes are not irremediable. You may yet

be united to your *Herselia*; [the youth shook his head in despair] whereas mine, alas! cannot admit of the smallest alleviation.”

These words raised *Henri's* curiosity; and he hinted a desire to hear from her own mouth the events of her life, which he had good reason to think were very extraordinary. “I can refuse you nothing,” said the venerable matron, “after the confidence you have reposed in me.” So saying, she directly began the following

HISTORY OF AN UNFORTUNATE WIFE.

I AM the only daughter of a nobleman, long since committed to his silent grave; but whose virtues will long live in the remembrance of those who have experienced their beneficial influence. As the period of infancy is generally uninteresting, I shall pass over mine, which was chequered with no events uncommon to childhood. When I arrived at eighteen, my father took me to *Naples*; and I must confess that my young heart was highly delighted with the splendor of that gay city. I soon became an object of curiosity and admiration; which soon occasioned me being beset with a swarm of admirers, two of whom distinguished themselves more than the rest as candidates for my favor. They were both handsome, well-made signors, and greatly resembled each other, though in nothing so much as in their voice, the accents of which it was almost impossible to discriminate, especially when the speakers were apart. But if their persons and voices bore so great an affinity, their dispositions were very opposite; the one was proud, lascivious, and revengeful; the other mild, pacific, and though quickly provoked, would readily forgive, upon the slightest concession. You may easily see upon which my affections were likely to be fixed, as also the answer I made to my dear father, when he took me aside, and spake to me as follows:—‘My beloved girl, I would wish now to consult with you upon an important subject. You know, that ever since the death of your mother (I should have told you, signor, that I lost my mother when I was but nine years of age), you, my dear Maria, have been at once the sole object of my earthly delight, and anxious care. My only wish now is to have the happiness of seeing my beloved child settled comfortably in the world, beyond the reach of malignant contingency. If I could do so, the connexion between my affections and this world would be dissolved; and I should prepare with great resignation for those enjoyments, to which I look forward with eager expectations. The chief object that attaches me to existence, as I said before, is yourself. I could wish to see you settled in life by a suitable and happy marriage.’ Here my tender parent made a full pause; but, as I remained silent, he went on thus. ‘Among the young noblemen who have distinguished you by marks of their admiration, if I am not deceived in my penetration, the count *d’Orsino* shares more than any other of your partiality. He is a young signor, of a good estate, an unblemished character, and amiable disposition and if you think your *penchant* for him is strong enough to bear the stamp of conjugal affection, I must own that my regard for him could only receive addition, by knowing that he was my son-in-law.’ My dear father left off speaking, and I readily owned my love for the young count. In short, within six months from this time we were married; and in less than that time after my nuptials, I, to my inexpressible grief, lost my dear father for ever; who died in his bed in the utmost peace and serenity, as he had himself predicted; proving, that a virtuous course of life will ever secure an happy dissolution. For a time, the agonies I experienced in consequence of this melancholy event transcends all description; although it could not be said to be unexpected, as my dear lamented parent had for some *months* been afflicted with a

consumptive cough, which settled on his lungs, and at length bore him to the regions of immortality, in the 72d year of his age.' Some time after this, my loved husband and I removed to our estate at *Lucca*, in consequence of a very unpleasant circumstance. I suppose, you know, signor, that it is a fashionable custom for the *Neapolitan* ladies to have their *cicisbeos*. My dear husband was pitched upon by one, to fulfil that ridiculous and shameless office; but his invariable constancy to me rendered this impossible; he therefore sent a polite refusal. The lady complained to her husband of the insult, as she absurdly called it; and he was so highly exasperated, that he instantly sent mine a formal challenge. Alas! I little thought what danger my dear count's love for me had exposed him to. He carried the matter very privately from me; and met his antagonist, without my having the slightest suspicion of his design. O! that he had fallen beneath the sword of his adversary! What poignant reflection, what sharp anguish should I have escaped! But he was reserved for a severer fate. To go on with my story. My husband returned from the field of bloody contention with only two flight wounds, while his opponent suffered severely in consequence of his irritable spirit. This event made *Naples* a disagreeable residence, as it exposed him to accidents of a similar nature. We therefore removed to *Lucca*, which was my native place. Here we found, that the other signor, who was the rival of count *d'Orfino*, had likewise a seat. He often saw both me and my husband, but spoke not; and I never imagined that my discarding him for count *d'Orfino* would have rankled at his heart, and produced those enormous crimes which he was afterward guilty of. One evening, my husband received a letter, requesting his attendance at a certain place, as the writer had matter of importance to communicate, which, as it materially concerned himself, he would not venture to trust on paper. My dear count did not seem inclined to meet the writer; but I persuaded him to go. O! let me forget that I did so. It pierces my heart. He smiled, and said he would go to please me. He had not been gone an hour, before a note was brought me from him, importing that I might not sit up, as it would be very late before he could return. As I was really fatigued that night, I retired to my chamber soon after I read the note. Though I was sorry my husband could not come home sooner, yet I was very glad I had persuaded him to go, as it appeared that the business (whatever it was) was of real importance to himself; as I was very sure that he would not stay from me upon any frivolous occasion. About one o'clock, as I judged, he came into the chamber. The taper had burnt out; and I was somewhat surprised that he came without a light; for the faint glimmering of a warning moon was hardly sufficient to dispel total darkness. To my questions concerning the business which he was summoned, he made no satisfactory answer, but said that I should know more to-morrow; which was, alas! too true; for in the morning, when I waked, conceive my horror and astonishment, on beholding sleeping by my side, not my dearest husband, but his detested rival. The piercing shriek I uttered, awaked him and consigned me to a temporary oblivion. I recovered from my insensibility, and found myself in the arms of my servants. I eagerly inquired after my dear husband, and the infernal monster, who had so treacherously stolen his honor. They knew nothing of either; and for several days I was in a state bordering on distraction; during which time I heard nothing of my dear count, nor of the detested ruffian, who had superseded him in my mistaken embraces; whose person and voice, as I said before, so greatly resembled my loved lord's, that I had no suspicion of its not being himself. At length news was spread, that a naked body was discovered, with several wounds about it, in a remote wood. To cut short the story, the body was my dear husband's. The measure of my woes was now complete. I fainted successively on the body; clasped it passionately to my breast; bathed it with agonizing tears; imprecated a thousand curses on its murderer; and I believe my affliction reached the last

extent of human endurance. When time had a little meliorated my sorrow, I resigned my honors, and converted all my moveables into money; a great part of which I presented to a neighboring convent, and with the remainder retired to this solitary hut, where I intend to spend the remainder of my days, in preparation for the great and awful change to immortality.”

(intentional double return here; see p. 33)

Our young hero was very much astonished at the disastrous events, which the mournful matron had unfolded; and he was compelled to acknowledge, that there were situations more distressing than his own—a truth, which he would by no means have acceded to an hour ago. The distressed matron having concluded the melancholy recital of her history, and the hour growing late, *Henri* retired to an homely apartment for the night; where we sincerely wish him a hearty repose (though we are rather doubtful whether he will enjoy it), and shall take the liberty to transport our readers to the *Brindoli* palace.

The mother of *Herselia* tenderly loved her; and as she dared not oppose her husband’s intentions of confining her daughter for life in a monastery, we may easily conceive what she felt, when she saw that beloved, that only daughter, torn away from her maternal arms. The tears she shed, were truly those of anguish; and at length she ventured to request her husband to soften the severity of her fate. But signor *Brindoli*, who in his own family was as despotic as an *Indian* nabob, absolutely refused to grant the request, and forbade it ever to be repeated. It has been said, at the beginning of this history, that his lady was of a very amiable temper. These characters generally feel the most. So it was with our heroine’s mother. The stern repulse she experienced, excited no fierce invectives against his cruelty, as it would in a less amiable and delicate character, but it sunk deep in her heart; and, by corroding all her domestic comforts, gave the first stab to an excellent constitution; and she died broken-hearted in a very short time. Three days after her funeral, signor *Brindoli* received the following letter:

To LUVIDO BRINDOLI.

“When I first received your impertinent note, my indignation at your impotent menaces was quickly superseded by my contempt; and I therefore did not think it worth my while to chastise your insolence. But when I consider that you have murdered your own wife, and robbed me of my beloved son, you may not think it strange that I shall condescend to put myself for a few minutes upon a level with one, whose nobility, like his ancestry, is a perfect solecism in the honorable world. Meet me to-morrow morning, at six o’clock, a little to the left of Moor-shear Ruins, with rapier or pistol; where I shall endeavor to retaliate upon your guilty head, the evils you have occasioned the injured Fovolli Castle. ←check layout of this line in original mss.

“MARCELLO *Count* DE FOVOLLI.”

This severe sarcastic epistle enraged *Erindoli* to that degree, that he kicked the messenger out of doors; and ordered him to assure his master, that he would not fail to be at the place appointed, to give him that judicious discipline, which his impertinence had solicited. The time came, and the parties accordingly met. They drew their shining rapiers, and instantly fell to it with desperate fury. At the first close, *Brindoli* received a thrust

just below the left breast, and wounded his antagonist slightly in the right side; at the second, the count wounded his adversary in the sword-arm; which made him drop his rapier. *Fovolli*, with an imperious air, bade him acknowledge himself a rascal, or prepare to die; instead of which, *Brindoli*, maddened at his defeat, and burning with revenge, with his left hand, suddenly drew forth his pistol, and immediately shot his opponent through the head.

Signor *Brindoli* then hurried home, leaving the murdered count on the bloody field; and as the combatants had no seconds, the affair remained concealed, till the gnawing conscience of the signor compelled him to reveal it to the astonished world. He was, shortly after this, taken violently ill; during which, the subtle *Vincentio* constantly attended his couch. But the signor could not now bear his fight. His cruel treachery to his sister rose to his mind; and, for the first time, he beheld that transaction in its true light; and comprehended the spring of her brother's unnatural envy. This made him exclaim against his own cruelty to *Herselia*, for whom he continually raved; but before she could be brought from the convent, he breathed his last; and when the physicians saw the body, they declared, with one accord, that he had died in consequence of poison. This was indeed true; for the unhappy man, wearied out with the torturing lashes of an exasperated conscience; and dreading the disgrace of an ignominious death, had commenced his own executioner.

Vincentio now of course became lord of *Brindoli Palace*, and of the extensive demesnes of his late father. Yet, strange to say! notwithstanding his being in possession of his heart's desire, he must continue to persecute his defenceless sister; for no sooner did he take possession of the estate, but, resolving to reign unrivalled, he sent to the monastery, which contained his sister, with orders that she was to take the veil; and in case of her refusal, compulsion was to be administered. We will now leave this dreadful wretch to that repose which his conscience will bestow, and return to the lover of our unfortunate heroine.

After he had renovated his animal functions by a night's rest at the old woman's cottage, he prepared to prosecute his journey in search of *Herselia*. He understood, by his hostess, that the convent of St. *Augustine* was about five miles distant from the cottage. He then took a respectful leave of her, and rode away. The morning was delightfully beautiful; the pearly dew-drops, which hung on the weeping shrubs, touched with the solar beam, emitted a chrysal ray; the glowing east was reflected in lucid colors in the distant waters of the *Arno*; and nature smiled gay and fresh after the late storm. These lovely appearance might well call forth the enthusiasm of one, who had no grief to corrode his heart; but our hero, notwithstanding his admiration of nature's sublime architecture, being oppressed by superior interests, was proof against their blended enchantments. Silent and cheerless, he pursued his lonely way; and having secretly inquired at the monastery of St. *Augustine*, he became convinced that the object of his search was not immured within its gloomy walls. To that of St. *Ursula*, he next bent his inquiry; but, alas! that too entertained not the idol of his affections. One more he had to try, and that was our Holy Virgin's. Before however he had reached it, night again overtook the forlorn wanderer; he was now travelling down a narrow winding path; and, after infinite difficulty, he succeeded in

reaching the bottom, which was a deep glen. The moon now arose; and assisted him to observe, at the distance of four or five hundred yards, some tall grey towers, which he doubted not was the very place he was in search of. Animated by this idea, he spurred on his horse. "O!" thought he, "if she should not be here neither!" He had no sooner made this mental exclamation, but his horse fell with him over an unseen chasm. He did not receive any great hurt; but he was astonished at seeing just behind him a large aperture in the side of a rock; and much more, on hearing, as he thought, the low murmuring accents of human sorrow. First securing the horse as well as he could, by attaching the bridle to a projecting crag, he entered the mouth; but found it so narrow, that he was obliged, for conveniency, to leave his hat behind him, as likewise for the opportunity of standing upright. He now observed a glimmering light upon the rocky side of the cavern at a little distance; and soon after turning an angle, he plainly discerned a lamp before him, whose rays, pouring through a grated window, played on the rugged side of the passage. The moans of somebody in distress he clearly distinguished. He also thought he heard the sound of distant footsteps. He paused to listen; and was confirmed in his conjecture. The sound drew nearer and nearer; he heard bolts undrawn, and the moans ceased. "This is wonderful!" cried the astonished youth, in a restrained voice, "some poor wretch is undoubtedly imprisoned here; and heaven has perhaps sent me to release them." He again listened, and distinctly heard the bolts shot in their fastenings, and the footsteps depart. He moved on cautiously, and soon came to a more open part of the cavern. A ponderous door instantly arrested his notice; he easily drew the bolts, and discovered, seated on a bed of straw, with a jug of water by her side; her dress in all the disorder of exquisite misery; her cross and beads strewed about the prison, and her lustreless eye bent on the ground—Eternal powers! *Herselia!* his long-lost, and anxiously-sought *Herselia!*

After he had stood for some time in speechless wonder, he uttered an exclamation of surprise. The lovely girl raised her eyes; and giving a scream of joy, sunk on the straw in a state of insensibility. The distracted youth ran to her relief; and, by sprinkling over her beautiful, though inanimate countenance, some water from the jug, restored her, with much difficulty, to her senses.

The reader's imagination must conceive, for my pen, conscious of its inability, refuses to describe the mutual emotions of these faithful lovers upon meeting so unexpectedly, and in such a horrid place.

Henri knew there was no time to be lost; and therefore eagerly made known, in a brief manner, the way he had discovered her prison, which evidently communicated with the monastery, and conjured her not to delay her escape from the horrors of imprisonment to liberty and life. She accordingly quitted the dungeon with her beloved *Henri*, elate with the joyous enthusiasm of newly acquired liberty. They soon reached the mouth of the cavern, where our hero saw his hat, and his horse, just as he had left them. O! that my pen could express the rapture *Herselia* experienced, when she felt the breeze of night once more fan her face; when she again saw the moon pour its silver rays over the sleeping landscape; and again was conscious of being in her loved *Henri's* presence!

It perplexed him a great deal to know where he could safely find an asylum for his redeemed captive; for he could not think of going to *Florence*, as he was totally ignorant of the events that had taken place since his departure; and indeed, had he been acquainted with them, he would not have trusted his beloved there, until he had investigated her brother's right of succession. In this critical juncture he luckily remembered the cottage of the old woman, which had afforded him such seasonable relief; and he doubted not that it would prove a temporary shelter for the persecuted maid. He made the proposal to *Herselia*, who joyfully closed with it. Soon after the dawn of day, they arrived at the cottage, and were received with an hearty welcome by the good old matron, who sincerely congratulated our hero upon his successful search after the fair victim of monastic cruelty. "I told you, my young friend," said she, "that you might possibly be again happy; but you could not believe me; the mind of youth is quick, and ardent in despair." Our young hero smiled an answer. The old woman was greatly taken with the modest beauties of *Herselia*, and she soon conceived the most tender friendship for her. True friendship, like love, is always, or at least generally reciprocal; and our amiable heroine quickly felt almost a daughter's regard for the kind, although unfortunate countess *d'Orfino*.

The anxious reader may now wish to know the occasion of *Herselia*'s imprisonment; and for his sake, we shall explain that mystery. When the dying signor *Brindoli* sent to the convent for his daughter, that he might see her before he expired, the subtle *Vincentio* bribed the messenger to avoid going; but, after the necessary absence, to return, and say that she was laid up by illness. Her father died before he came back, as we have already mentioned; and this brother hating his innocent sister more and more, because he had injured her, sent off this very messenger with this barbarous order—that *Herselia di Brindoli* was to take the veil immediately; and, upon her refusing it, compliance was to be enforced by the most rigorous treatment. In consequence of this inhuman edict, the lady abbess, who was an unfeeling monster, tendered the worldly-separating veil to our distressed heroine, who resolutely refused it. This roused the most baleful passions of her nature; and, aided by the licence she received, she determined to execute a black revenge upon her innocent victim; who, by her order, was imprisoned in one of the most horrid dungeons under the foundation of the monastery; where many a victim of conventual austerity had lingered out a wretched existence. Here was the lovely sufferer doomed to sustain the double malice of her brother's remorseless cruelty, and the abbess's vindictive spirit. A ghostly sister of the convent came regularly once a week to prolong her miseries, by bringing a small allowance of bread and water. On these occasions, she always advised her to terminate her confinement, by accepting the veil; and although she had frequently seen the unhappy effects of it, yet her misery weighed so heavy upon her gentle spirits, that she began to deliberate upon the choice; when providence, in compassion to her unmerited sufferings, sent her own *Henri* to rescue her from that horrible fate, to which her unnatural brother, and the un pitying abbess, had jointly consigned her.

We now return to *Vincentio*. Being now absolute master of his own actions, he resolved to indulge his favorite propensity, which propensity was illicit pleasure. He therefore took to his palace an *Italian* courtesan, whose loose, tawdry charms suited well with his vicious imagination. But vice is ever its own punishment. Constancy was not to be expected from a professed *bona roba*; and, yet, it seems, *Vincentio* did expect it; for when he had almost

ocular proof of her infidelity, his astonishment overcame every other emotion; in the next minute, his rage exceeded the furious tiger's; and, he vented such a tempest of wrath upon her, that she was determined to gratify another passion, which she possessed in an immeasurable degree, called revenge. She therefore secretly and deliberately mixed a few grains with his beverage, which in a very short time closed his eyes for ever on that world, in which he had acted so bad a part. In other words, she poisoned him first, and herself afterward. Thus ended the life of this abandoned man, this unnatural brother, who at last fell a martyr to the predominant passion of his corrupted nature; affording a most indisputable proof, that as virtue is always its own reward, so vice in the end never fails to be its own punishment. The two miserable victims of unlawful love were buried with all decency, and not a soul now appeared to claim the *Brindoli* estate.

In this dilemma, the steward of the family sent off to the monastery for the young heiress to the estate. The same night the messenger was dispatched, a person obtained admittance into the palace, who quickly dissipated their confusion. In short, it was *Henri*; who having entered *Florence* in disguise, soon heard of the disastrous scenes of the *Brindoli* palace; and had gone directly there, to advertise the domestics that their young lady would be there on the morrow, to take possession of her lawful inheritance. He then, without losing a moment, rode back to the cottage, attended by a trusty servant. They got to the old woman's habitation just after dawn of day. When our heroine became acquainted with the disasters of her family, although it promised a final termination to her own distresses, yet a heavy load of sorrow oppressed her heart; and over the shocking fate of that brother, who had taken such an infernal delight in afflicting her, she shed tears of unmerited compassion. They quitted the unhappy countess *d'Orfino* with a heavy heart. They both endeavored to prevail on her to appear once more in the world; but she resisted all their arguments, and was determined to linger out the short remnant of her existence in that lonely cottage. But her own misfortunes, though irreparable, did not preclude her from feeling rejoiced that her young friend (as she kindly called our heroine) was again restored to a world, which she was formed to ornament by her charming figure, and dignify by that correctness of behavior, and rectitude of sentiment, which she so eminently possessed. Indeed, the good matron was of a disposition directly contrary to the late *Vincentio*; she had not a grain of that infernal combustible called envy in her formation. O! that the same could be said of every one! What bloody tragedies would immediately cease in every part of the universe! But while mankind continue to nourish the seeds of malignant passions, it is to be feared that the Novelist will never want a vicious example to hold out *in terrorem* of those whom it may concern.

We have now only to add, that *Herselia di Brindoli* safely arrived in *Florence*, and took possession of her family honors; after which, she and her faithful lover mourned a decent time for their parents. That time expired, our lovely heroine freely bestowed her hand on the manly, the tender, the truly deserving *Henri Valasquez Count de Fovolli*; and thereby rescued the names of two ancient and honorable families from sinking into undistinguished oblivion.

THE VINDICTIVE MONK;
OR THE
FATAL RING.

THE young *Calini* was descended of a good family, was heir to great and still-increasing wealth; was the last representative of an honorable house; and the delight and admiration not only of his doting parent, but of everybody who knew him. He possessed every grace of mental perfection; for his education had been conducted on so liberal a plan, that a clear, just, and accurate perception had been the happy result of his juvenile studies. His person was every way answerable to the above delineation of his mind. His make exhibited the truest symmetry; and his countenance beamed with masculine dignity, corrected with a gracious condescension.

Although *Calini* was reared up in the principles of the *Romish* church, that did not hinder him from seeing some of its absurdities; and therefore, while some of the votaries placed the essence of their religion in a gaudy exhibition of pompous ceremonies, his consisted in a steady, uniform system of good actions; an undeviating rectitude of conduct, prompted by the motive of his present and everlasting interest, as well as by the intrinsic beauty of benevolence. Such was the youth, whom we have selected for the hero of these memoirs. One day his father (as the youth had ever considered him), took him aside, and spake as follows—

“The substance of what I am now going to unfold, I once thought I should have buried in oblivion; but, upon mature deliberation, I am come to a determination of entrusting you with it. You have always been thought to be my son. This is the moment to undeceive you. You are *not* my child!”—“Not your son!” exclaimed the youth, in the utmost astonishment; whose then can I be?”—“That you will never probably know,” replied signor *Calini*. “But you have not many obligations to your parents, who left you to perish in your infancy. My story excites your astonishment. Listen attentively, while I disclose the circumstance which induced me to bring you up as my own offspring. About twenty years, ago, as I was landing from a gondola, one dark night, on the northern shores of the Adriatic, after I had returned from visiting one of my estates, my sight was struck with a white bundle within a foot from the waves; on examining which, I found it contained an infant. It was yourself; and I resolved that the direful intentions of those who left you should not only be frustrated, but I would adopt you as my son, two of mine having recently died. When I got home, I examined the bundle more accurately, and was surprised to see this ring. [here he presented one to the astonished youth] You see, it is of a peculiar make; there is some name underneath. [the young man turned it, and saw the word *Ollorini* engraved on it] I beg, that from this day you would wear it, to remind you of the singular event; and be assured, my dear boy, although you are not the natural issue of my own loins, yet I shall always feel for you a father’s tenderness.”

Here signor *Calini* concluded his narration, and left his auditor overwhelmed with astonishment. The barbarity of his real parents affected him severely; but the kindness of the signor afforded him a continual source of the most pleasing sensation.

A short time after this wondrous disclosure, young *Calini* (for so we shall still call him) had been to visit a young lady, to whom he was sincerely attached; and was now returning home on horseback; the night was far advanced, and very threatening. His road lay through a dark wood; in the midst of which, he was seized by two men, who dragged him along, 'till **← it's at this point at which I discovered that some "tills" have apostrophes, others do not, throughout the text (40)** they came to the ruins of an old castle, where they halted, till **←** one, who had a lamp, fought for a door, and at length told his comrade he had found it. They then led our hero through a long intricate passage, at the end of which they unbolted an heavy iron door, and entered a gloomy stone dungeon. A strong chain, which was fastened to an enormous staple in the wall, discovered to the youth the horrors which awaited him. "Here," said one of the ruffians, "here is your habitation, 'till you resign all pretensions to lady *Alexa*." Our young lover now saw through the whole affair. He but been seized by order of rival; but who this rival was, he had no means of judging. The inhuman monsters chained him to the wall, and, without speaking another word, left the dungeon. This mysterious event we shall now unfold:

There lived, in the neighborhood of *Calini*, a man called *Sceloni*; of a gloomy character, and who was never seen once to smile; he was dependant on a nobleman, and had, from motives of self-interest, engaged to administer to his lewd propensities. This nobleman was enamoured of the very same lady our hero loved. Seeing no possibility of supplanting him in her affection, he called in the aid of the dark *Sceloni*, to whom he promised great pecuniary rewards, if he would dispatch his rival, and secure to him the possession of *Alexa*. The avaricious *Italian* undertook to perform what he required. For this purpose, he way-laid the youth on his return from *Alexa*'s house, as we have observed. But as he did not wish to embroe his hands in blood, if it could be done without, he had conveyed him to the ruins of the castle, whose intricate windings he well knew. Here he meant to keep him, 'till he should be able to extort an oath from him, that he would for ever resign all pretensions to *Alexa*. When he left the dungeon, he went directly to his employer, and told him the rival of his love was removed beyond the possibility of again being formidable. Signor *Holbruzi* took these words to mean no less than the death of the youth; and therefore he reaped the golden reward he aimed at.

But, notwithstanding this, *Alexa* was decidedly against his suit; and as she could not but be surprised at *Calini*'s unaccountable absence, as well as very much affected at it; she not only conceived additional disgust at *Holbruzi*'s addresses but began to be suspicious of some base design having been executed against *Calini*. In the mean time, that unfortunate youth was suffering the severest extremities of imprisonment; and calling in vain our his dear *Alexa*. He was visited in the dungeon frequently by *Sceloni*, who endeavored, by every means in his power, to make him resign all pretensions to *Alexa*; but he was steady in his refusal; nor did he yield, even when he was threatened with assassination. *Calini* was as unsuccessful in trying to discover the name and quality of his rival, as *Sceloni* was in extorting a **resignation** of *Alexa*.

After *Sceloni* had quitted the dungeon, the miserable youth began to reflect anew on his unhappy situation. He saw no probability of being united to the beloved object of his soul; why then not resign her? There was something in this word which seemed to imply cowardice, and he pertinaciously objected it. *Holbruzi* finding *Alexa* so little disposed to favor his passion, was resolved to possess her at all events. He ordered *Sceloni* to force her from her home, and bring her to his palace; which, under cover of a dark night, he effected.

Alexa was left an orphan at an early age; and, after her **parents** death, she was reared up by a tender aunt, who loved her as her own child; but having a very slender income, necessity had obliged her to part with an estate in *Piedmont*; and she had purchased a small but neat villa in the neighborhood of *Naples*, where she resided with her beloved niece. The young *Calini* had found them out in their retirement, and had made his addresses to the fair *Alexa*; which at first were discouraged by the aunt, not as she had any objection to the youth; on the contrary, she was convinced he was worthy of her niece, but she knew the girl was his inferior in point of fortune. Yet when she found how firm he had taken hold of *Alexa*'s heart, and likewise heard of the liberal sentiments of signor *Calini*, she no longer opposed the mutual bias of their young and innocent hearts.

Things were in this situation, when *Calini* discontinued so unaccountably (to them at least) his visits. This circumstance, severe as it was to the young lady, was also felt by her aunt, who had conceived the greatest friendship for him. But her sorrows were unspeakably acute, when one night several ruffians broke into the house, and tore away her beloved *Alexa*. These were the cruel *Sceloni* and his emissaries, who conveyed her to the monster *Holbruzi*, as already related. But that lascivious wretch did not yet find his end answered. The persecuted maid was enabled to make a vigorous resistance to his meretricious wishes. Force he could have employed; but this he determined to delay, 'till every other method had been tried. He thought no way so likely to weaken her virtuous resolutions, as to let her know that her union with *Calini* was impossible, as that being was no longer an inhabitant of earth. This fatal intelligence overwhelmed her unfortunate breast with fresh despair, and rendered *Holbruzi* more than ever an object of disgust and abhorrence. His pride was severely mortified by her fixed dislike and undisguised contempt. In this unseasonable moment *Sceloni* forfeited a new supply for his late services in bringing *Alexa* to his palace. *Holbruzi*, smarting with the indifference of that female, answered sternly, that his trifling services had already been more than sufficiently rewarded; and, after rebuking him sharply for his avarice, absolutely refused to give him another *carlin* (four-pence of our money).

Sceloni seemed all humility, but he quitted the palace with a soul full of revenge; to accomplish which, he concerted a deep-laid scheme. He retired to the outskirts of the city, wrote to *Holbruzi* that he was leaving his monastery (for this wretch was of an holy order), and going to a different part of the world; but conjured him to release the young *Calini* (who he confessed was alive, but imprisoned), and he described a dungeon where the youth was not. After he had sent this letter, he provided himself with a brace of pistols, and repaired to that very dungeon which he had mentioned in his letter as the prison of *Calini*. Here he threw himself on the ground, and personating the distress of that unfortunate youth, waited deliberately for *Holbruzi*'s arrival; for he never doubted but that vindictive tyrant would come to sacrifice *Calini* with his own hand. He was not deceived in his conjecture. When that

monster received the monk's letter, his countenance bespoke the savage passions it inspired. "What!" said he, "my detested rival living! This night he breathes his last." He accordingly stole away that very evening, muffled up in a disguise, with a lamp in one hand, and a dagger in the other, through the dark passages of the ruins. *Sceloni* heard him coming, and uttered a groan, on purpose to direct his steps to the dungeon where he was. *Sceloni* soon heard the door unfastened, and he kept his finger close to the trigger. *Holbruzi* cautiously advanced the light, and then entered. The subtle *Sceloni* lay as if he was in a disturbed sleep. *Holbruzi* drew near; and as he bent over him, exclaimed, "favored minion! Wilt thou ever more rival me in love? Thou sleepest. Awake in—" he would have said *death*; but at this moment the pseudo-*Calini* pressed the trigger, and dismissed his soul from this world.

But *Sceloni* was not yet satisfied; his revengeful soul thirsted for more blood. He considered, that if *Calini* had resigned *Alexa*, that maid, out of revenge, might have yielded to *Holbruzi*; and consequently he should not have met with that mortifying refusal from him, which had stimulated him to take the bloody means that he had just executed. His vindictive spirit resolving upon a double revenge, marked *Calini* for a second victim. No sooner had he made this horrible determination, but, snatching up the lamp (which had not been extinguished in falling), and the yet bloodless dagger, he rushed out of the dungeon into that of the destined youth, fully resolved to accomplish his dreadful purpose. The report of the pistol, as it was at a considerable distance from him, and vented in a close-pent dungeon, did not reach his auditory nerves; and he was yet in a deep slumber, with his right hand on his breast. *Sceloni* drew near to strike; but, on observing the position of his hand, stooped down to remove it. The rays of the light discovered the ring, which his supposed father desired him to wear. It excited *Sceloni*'s curiosity. He gently drew it off, and examined it by the lamp. Each moment furnished new alarm to his terrified mind. His face assumed an ashy paleness; his joints trembled with amazement and horror; but when he turned it up, and saw the engraved name of 'Ollorini' upon it, his horror and astonishment was complete. he hastily threw away the dagger; and awaking the youth, interrogated him, about the mysterious ring. He could only relate what his supposed father had told him. This was enough. *Sceloni*, while convulsive sobs burst from his torn bosom, could only exclaim, "I am your father." The astonished youth looked up, and thought his reason was unsettled; but seeing his tears and groans, he knew not what to think. At length, he desired him to give some indubitable proof that he was his father. "I will, my son, I will do it," answered *Sceloni*; "but this is not a proper place for conversation; let me unbind you from these ignominious chains!" He then freed the youth from his fetters; and they left the dungeon together, and retired to a small house, where, after they had entered a private room, he addressed the wondering impatient youth as follows:—

I added this quote mark, missing in the text (44) → "Although, in reciting those circumstances which prove you to be my son, I must criminate myself; yet I shall not hesitate to do it, as I am sensible that you have more virtue than to conspire against the life of your father." Here he paused a moment, for he recollected, that he himself had conspired against the life of his son. At length, he proceeded. "My real name is *Dictori*. I was brought up under very indulgent parents. My natural temper, which was violent in the extreme, was put into a hot-bed, by the unreasonable and fatal indulgence of those parents. 'Tis that indulgence which has caused my ruin. If they had done their duty, and restrained, by due correction, the impetuosity of my natural temper, I should not have been a prey to those destructive passions of my nature,

which have since acted as gourds to prick me forward down the slippery path of vice. I was early attached to a lady, whose name was *Mariana Vicenza*; but my native pride was severely wounded, when I discovered that she not only beheld me with indifference, but with a fixed dislike. I now, through obstinacy, advanced my suit with more eagerness than ever; when it would have been more honorable silently to withdraw it. However, her parents obliged her to accept of my hand at the altar. As I never could forgive the little affection she had shown for me, I soon began to retaliate upon her after marriage. Among other passions which I vented upon her without mercy, the demon of jealousy began to agitate my restless breast with its hydra horrors. I thought it very probable that she, who was forced to marry a man whom she did not like, should entertain in his absence one she did. My suspicions were strengthened by seeing this very ring upon her finger, which I apprehended was given her by her gallant. I went so far as to believe you was his child. In a frenzy of rage, I murdered my wife, and committed you to the waves, together with the detested and fatal ring. I have had proof since, that that very ring was given her before marriage by an uncle who had gone beyond sea; that he had his name engraved on it, which was *Ollorini*. As I was afraid to stay in that part, I came to *Naples*, and became a monk of the order of St. *Francis*. Spare me the rest!"

This truly wonderful relation affected the astonished youth a great deal.

But we must take leave of *Calini* a little while to look after the lovely persecuted *Alexa*. That unfortunate maid was ready to abandon herself to despair. Torn away from her peaceful retreat by ruffians at the dreadful, the horror-working hour of midnight, to fall a prey to the unbridled lust of a lewd barbarian! Separated from her dear aunt! Torn too from the fond, the protecting arms of the youth she sighed for! what can exceed her misery, wretched captive as she then was in the most hated mansion of the nefarious monster *Holbruzi*? for she as yet knew nothing of the sanguinary scenes which had been exhibited in the castle-ruins. The savage *Holbruzi*, when he left his house at midnight, had consigned the wretched maid to one of his trusty servants, who executed with relentless rigor the confidence reposed in him. We now, for a short time, turn from the unhappy beauty, to see the mournful effect which her loss had upon her disconsolate aunt. That distressed matron, now separated by cruel fate from a beloved niece, in whom her very existence seemed to be wrapt up, experienced the most poignant anguish that can possibly be imagined. She wrung her aged hand in wild despair, and in frantic accents called on her far-off niece, her dear *Alexa*. While she was in the height of her lamentation, a knocking at the door was heard. For a considerable time, she was afraid to open it, least, in so doing, she should let in those who ravished from her embraces her beloved niece, and thereby become herself a victim of their savage fury. But while she hesitated what to do, she heard a voice at the door requesting admission; the cadence of which she thought she remembered, though her distress would not permit her to be certain to whom it belonged. She however assumed courage sufficient to open it, when *Calini* directly rushed in. As he knew nothing of *Alexa* being at *Holbruzi*'s detested mansion, he, as soon as he left the monk, repaired to her residence, though not without dreadful apprehensions for her safety, occasioned by the silence of *Sceloni*, on his asking after her.

It may perhaps be thought strange, that the monk should not have told his son where she was; seeing he knew she was at *Holbruzi*'s palace. But, if we consider that he had been some time absent from *Naples*, and that he knew so much of that villain as to think it probable that he had

murdered that maid, before he intended to assassinate her lover, we shall cease to wonder at his conduct. Add to this, that if he had discovered to *Calini* that *Alexa* was at *Holbruzi*'s mansion, it would naturally have introduced an inquiry into that monster's mysterious absence—an inquiry which would doubtless have directed the finger of suspicion to himself. This was what the monk dreaded should transpire. He had already dipped his hands so deep in blood, that his conscience was always pointing to the gibbet, or the inquisitorial torture. He had therefore preserved an obstinate silence respecting *Alexa*; and our hero, unable to endure the tortures of suspense, flew upon the pinions of **indescribable (45)** anxiety to her aunt's, as already mentioned.

When *Calini* asked for *Alexa*, all her grief was renewed; and she told the distracted lover the real truth. "Dragged away at midnight!" exclaimed our frantic hero. "I am the football of destiny. Why did I not die in my prison?" In a little time, however, he became more calm; and he vowed to discover her, if it was within the verge of possibility.

The reputed father of our hero received his foster son with the greatest joy imaginable, and heard with astonishment and horror the circumstances which had happened to him. He was, however, severely afflicted at the loss of the amiable *Alexa*; for that lovely maid stood very high both in his esteem and affection; and he had beheld the growing love which the youth evinced for her with cheerful approbation. It excited his utmost surprise to think who could possibly have stolen her from her peaceful home. He little thought that it was the machinations of one who had often partook of his hospitality, and had been a frequent visitor at his festive board. But this very consideration enabled our hero to trace out her persecutor, and her present prison. He recollected *Holbruzi* being at his father's, as he then thought him; as likewise, that he was always exceedingly discourteous to himself, the occasion of which he had in vain attempted to unravel; but now it appeared plain enough. *Calini* considered also, that he knew perfectly well of his love for *Alexa*, as also the place of that young lady's residence. When therefore he, in his cooler moments, put all these circumstances together, the suspicions they excited were so strong, that our unfortunate youth found it impossible to think **other-ways (45)** than that he must be certainly somehow concerned, if not a principal agent in the removal of the unfortunate girl.

Influenced by this supposition, he determined to go directly to the palace of *Holbruzi*, to see if the beloved of his soul was really there. But, upon second thoughts, he resolved to await all night; and set spies in the mean time about the house, to discover, if possible, the secret transactions going forward in it. The spies brought him intelligence, that they saw a young lady superficially through one of the windows, leaning upon her arm in a melancholy posture, and that she appeared to be in extreme distress. This was sufficient to stimulate our hero to instant exertion. He directly went, with a desperate determination; well armed; resolving, if they denied him admission, to force the door. But the servant admitted him upon the first summons, expecting it was his master. Our hero instantly rushed up stairs; and hearing a female scream, he broke into the room, and beheld his beloved *Alexa*, struggling in the embraces of a ruffian; whom he severely wounded, and rescued the lovely maid.

How was she rejoiced to see her dear, her loved *Calini*!

Sceloni had the satisfaction of seeing them happy before he retired for life to his monastery.

He now found no difficulty in being united to his dear *Alexa*; whose marriage was celebrated amid an amazing multitude of admiring spectators.

The monk, after this, was never seen beyond the walls of his convent; but passed his life in the most rigorous penance.

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