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**JULIO ARNOUF;**

**A TALE OF THE VAUDOIS.**

**Designed for Young Persons.**

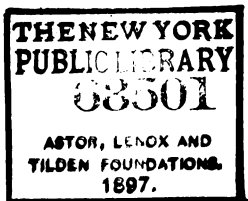
**By MRS J. B. WEBB,**

**AUTHOR OF "NAOMI," "MIRIAM'S TRAVELS," ETC.**

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## PREFACE.

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THE object of this narrative, many of the events in which are true, is to convey to young persons, in the form of a story, some information regarding the interesting but secluded race who inhabit those valleys of Piedmont, extending along the foot of the Coltian Alps between Mont Viso and the Col de Sestries; and from which valleys these people have derived their name of Vaudois or Waldenses. They have, until the last few years, been little known and seldom visited by the English, or even by those who dwell in the adjacent countries. Several works have recently appeared which have excited much interest and sympathy for this pure race of primitive Christians; and the Author of this story considered that it would not be displeasing or unprofitable to her

own children, and those of her Protestant countrymen, if she made them acquainted with the manners and mode of life of the people from whom we have reason to believe the doctrines of our Reformed Church first spread into England. These, our spiritual benefactors, are still suffering such poverty and such hardships as to call loudly for our commiseration and assistance. Should the perusal of this little book lead any of her young readers to interest themselves in the behalf of these poor mountaineers and their exemplary pastors, and excite in them a stronger feeling of attachment for the holy religion they have so long and so resolutely defended, the Author would rejoice in having composed

“A TALE OF THE VAUDOIS.”

# A TALE OF THE VAUDOIS.

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## CHAPTER I.

It was a lovely evening in the early part of summer, when the soft rays of the setting sun were glowing brightly on the summits of the mountains, and throwing a lovely tint of rose colour on the snow which covered the most lofty of the Cottian Alps, while the valleys were already in the gloom of twilight, caused by the broad shadows of that range stretching across the west. La Torre, the principal of the Vaudois Villages, lay in front of the road, and by the dim light of evening appeared to be a town of considerable size and beauty. The vesper bell of the Roman Catholic Church was calling the inhabitants of the village to the evening prayer to the Virgin ; and the sound died sweetly away among the mountains, as a young traveller walked rapidly along the road leading from San Giovanni to La Torre. He listened to the vesper

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bell, but did not pause to repeat the accustomed prayer; for he was of that religion which taught him never to bow his knee to any name but that of God: and proceeding on his way, he fervently asked the blessing of his heavenly Father, that his journey might not end in disappointment, but that he might that evening once more see his home, and find his aged mother alive and happy.

It was not to La Torre that he was hastening; his home was in the village of Angrogna, and he had yet more than half a league to go before his anxiety could be satisfied. He passed La Torre, and turned towards the north, by the torrent of Angrogna—a river which gives its name to several small valleys in the vicinity—and soon reached the foot of a chain of hills and commenced a steep ascent, winding among the rocks and along the edges of fearful precipices, rendered more dangerous by the gloomy shade of night, now spreading over every object; but the road was not, however, new to our traveller, and all his thoughts were fixed on the cottage of his mother, and the joyful meeting with her from whom he had been so long separated.

The village lay yet far above him, and he could see a few scattered lights glimmering from the cottages, as he emerged from a narrow pass between the rocks, overhung with ancient walnut trees; and

at the same moment he saw the figure of a shepherd, attended by a magnificent dog, descending the rocks on the left, and entering the pathway a little before him. In the hope that this was one of the peasants of Angrogna, he called to him; and was immediately asked by the shepherd boy, who had turned to meet him, "whether he had lost his way, or whether he was going to the secluded little village before them?"

"I am going to Angrogna," replied the youth, "and I know not whether I shall find a home and a mother to receive me; tell me, oh! can you tell me whether Agnes Arnouf is still living?"

"Old Agnes! oh, are you her son? are you Julio Arnouf, whom we all believed was lost for ever? Your mother is alive and well, and the joy of seeing you return will make her young again. Do you not remember me, Julio? I am Eugene Dumont; and though a very little boy at the time you were lost, yet I remember how old Agnes used to weep, and how my mother tried to comfort her."

"Thank God for all his mercies," exclaimed Julio; "then I shall see my dear mother, and be the comfort of her declining years; and shall also see all my other friends; and you, Eugene, who are grown so tall and manly, I should never have



remembered you. How happy I shall be to find myself among you all again."

Many were the questions Julio put to his young companion as they approached the village, and many a recollection of former days came over his mind whilst he endeavoured in the increasing darkness to trace out the objects once so familiar to him. Few changes had taken place in this sequestered spot, and as he and his companion reached the gate leading to the dwelling of Francesco Dumont, he could hardly believe that it was nine years since he had seen it.

Dumont was in a condition above the mere peasants, for he rented a small farm, and his dwelling was larger and better built than any other in the village, not excepting that of the pastor. It was built chiefly of wood, and greatly resembled those picturesque cottages frequently seen among the Swiss Alps, having two galleries running round the outside, and communicating with the different apartments; and a wide roof projecting so far as entirely to cover the galleries, and make them an agreeable place for the family to assemble in during the leisure hours of evening; and on this occasion, the father and mother of Eugene were seated in their favourite spot, watching the moon as it rose behind the snow-topped mountains.

They were somewhat surprised to see their son return accompanied by a stranger ; but he did not leave them long in suspense, for the moment he saw them he cried out, "Here is Julio, the long-lost Julio ! our dear old Agnes' son ; he is alive, and come back to live with us all again—and now his poor mother will be happy." In an instant, Francesco and his wife ran down to welcome the long-lost son of their friend, and greeted him with the greatest affection, for they had known and loved him as a child, and had sympathised sincerely with his afflicted mother when he had so suddenly and mysteriously disappeared from the valley.

Francesco drew him into the house, and Madeleine, his wife, with some difficulty persuaded him to remain with them that night, instead of proceeding immediately to his mother's cottage ; for she feared the sudden joy of seeing him would be too much for her feeble frame to bear. "Be patient, dear Julio," she said, "your mother is well, and as happy as a truly Christian spirit can make her, under all the troubles and anxieties it has pleased her heavenly Father to afflict her with. She has borne them all with cheerful resignation ; but joy is sometimes harder to bear than sorrow, and you must allow me to prepare her for this unexpected blessing."

Julio assented to Madeleine's arguments, and soon felt quite at home whilst seated at the supper table of his kind friends, and partaking of their simple but hospitable repast with the rest of their family; consisting of Gerrard, the father of Francesco, Eugene his eldest son, Constance an amiable intelligent girl, and little Elinor the darling of the house, not more than three years old, with bright blue eyes, and a complexion so fair that she seemed to belong to some other climate; this appearance was increased by the glossy light hair hanging over her shoulders. Her parents had lost two children just before she was born, which caused her to be an object of peculiar affection; and she was so gentle and so playful that everybody loved her.

This happy family were very anxious to hear the particulars of Julio's story, and to be informed of the cause of his long absence, and all that had befallen him during the nine long years his mother had mourned him as dead; but as they saw that the traveller was fatigued, they restrained their curiosity; and it was agreed that all the party should assemble the next day at Agnes' cottage, to listen to the interesting recital. Madeleine then desired Julio to retire to rest; but before he did so the whole family united in prayer, being joined by Pauline, a poor orphan girl, whom Francesco

had received into his house. She was treated rather as a friend than a servant, and proved her gratitude to her kind master by the most devoted attachment to him and his family. It was many years since Julio had knelt in prayer with a family of Protestants; and his heart swelled with gratitude to God, who had again restored to him so great a privilege.

After breakfast next morning, Madeleine proceeded to the dwelling of old Agnes, for the purpose of endeavouring to prepare her for the unexpected happiness which awaited her. She lived in a neat picturesque cottage a quarter of a mile from Francesco's house, and situated considerably higher up the mountain. A few small fields surrounded it, cultivated entirely by the kindness and charity of her neighbours, who, sympathising with her in her lonely situation, did all in their power to assist her; and their active industry was evident from the extreme care with which every little spot of soil among the surrounding rocks was dug and planted. Indeed, in several places earth had been carried up the steep acclivities, and small patches of rye, or diminutive vineyards, artificially formed on the side of the mountain. To support the soil, walls of stone were built up, so as to form narrow terraces, one above the other. This is a common

expedient with these industrious mountaineers, to increase their small stock of arable land; for their poverty is so great, that even with all their labour and pains, it is with difficulty they can find a subsistence, and pay the taxes required of them by their present master, the King of Sardinia. At the period when the events took place of which we are giving an account, the valleys inhabited by the Vaudois were under the dominion of Victor Amadeus, Duke of Savoy; and the inhabitants were treated with greater severity than at present, and more subjected to the caprices of their sovereign, who varied his conduct towards them whenever it suited his political views; occasionally bestowing on them a few trifling privileges and immunities, when he wished to secure their adherence to his government, and then rewarding their faithful services with civil oppression and religious persecution, suffering them to be insulted and annoyed by the Roman Catholic inhabitants of the valleys, whenever he felt he had no need of their assistance in defending his frontiers. But no ill usage has ever shaken the fidelity of these brave and righteous men; they have ever been as true to their lawful sovereign as they have proved themselves, "through good report and evil report," to the holy faith transmitted to them by their fore-

fathers, and which they have preserved pure and incorrupt amidst their mountain fastnesses for upwards of a thousand years. In their wild retreats they have, by the help of God, maintained their independence against the Papal authority in all points connected with their religion ; and in spite of all the efforts of the Romish Church to exterminate them, they have remained a “venerable church of God,” and continued in the faith of the Redeemer, as it was first taught by the apostles and primitive fathers.

In times of severe persecution, they have been hunted as prey by their cruel enemies, and frequently forced to take refuge in caves and dens of the earth, and sometimes at length to flee into other countries. Some of them wandered so far as into Provence and Languedoc ; and their descendants were the famous Albigenses, or “heretics of Albi,” as they were called by the Papists. From Guienne, then in the possession of the English, their pure doctrine spread into our own country ; and to these heroic, but much injured people, we may consider ourselves indebted for the first dawning of the Reformation, when Wicliff preached the doctrines which had for centuries before been taught in the valleys of Piedmont.

But we must return to the kind-hearted Made-

leine, who had reached the door of Agnes' humble dwelling, and, raising the latch, entered the cottage with as composed and indifferent an expression of countenance as she could assume ; and proceeded to lead the conversation to the long-lost Julio. The old woman had for so many years despaired of beholding him again in this world, that it was a long time before her friend could bring her to imagine it possible that he should be restored to her ; but when once this idea was excited, she became very much agitated, and implored Madeleine not to deceive her with false hopes, but instantly to tell her whether any tidings had been heard of her beloved son ; and when by degrees the whole truth was made known unto her, she burst into tears, and falling on her knees, exclaimed, in the words of the Patriarch Jacob, "It is enough, my son is yet alive ; I will go and see him before I die." Then, with a strength and energy of which she seemed incapable, rose up and prepared to leave the cottage.

Madeleine begged her to remain at home, while she should hasten down the steep pathway to her own dwelling, and quickly return with Julio ; but the old woman would not consent to wait one moment, and assisted by Madeleine, she descended the difficult route with trembling steps, and eyes

dimmed with tears of joy and gratitude. Julio and his friends were anxiously awaiting the return of their messenger, when, as they stood outside the gate of Dumont's house, they saw the aged Agnes herself advancing towards them, leaning on her staff, and supported by the arm of her kind friend.

Julio immediately sprang to meet her, and when she felt herself in the arms of her dear son, she faltered out a blessing on his head, and would have fallen senseless to the ground, had he not sustained her and carried her into the house. There she soon recovered, and on opening her eyes looked anxiously around, as if she was afraid that all her happiness had been but a dream; but Julio was leaning over her, and his hand was clasped in hers, and she saw that it was true.

“Blessed be God!” she said, “for His mercies are great. He has not forgotten His promise, but has helped me in my affliction, because I trusted in Him. Therefore I will praise His name for ever.”

Agnes had borne all her sorrows with pious resignation, knowing that they came from the hand of a merciful Father, who doth not willingly afflict nor grieve the children of men. When the hand of God was heavy upon her, and she was left a poor and lonely widow, she had been enabled to sing the song of Habakkuk, and to say in his sublime words



—“ Although the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines ; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat ; the flocks shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls : yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation !” And now that her sorrow was turned into joy, she did not forget that the same hand which had caused her tears to flow now came to dry them up. There was still one point, however, on which she felt most anxious. Her son had disappeared from his native valleys at a very early age, being not more than eleven years old at the time she lost him ; and though she had endeavoured from his earliest childhood to instil into his mind the pure doctrines of apostolical Christianity, and had unceasingly prayed that the Holy Spirit might assist her efforts, she could not feel assured that during the years gone by he might not have fallen under evil influence, and been seduced from the faith of his fathers. Indeed, now that she saw him alive, the painful idea entered her mind, that he had been enticed away or carried off by force to some Roman Catholic college or monastery, and there educated in the erroneous doctrines of that Church. She had good reason for her fears, as this horrible system was frequently pursued towards the children of the unfortunate

Vaudois ; and an edict had been passed, rendering it lawful for any Papist to decoy or seize upon a Protestant child, whenever an opportunity occurred, and carry it off to some Catholic asylum, to be brought up in the mistaken faith its forefathers perilled their lives rather than embrace. At Pine-rollo, a town not far distant from their own valleys, on the road to Turin, there was an hospital especially dedicated to the reception and education of such Vaudois children as could by any means be brought within its walls ; and where the poor little creatures, torn from their parents and companions, and committed to the care of strangers, were frequently induced, by persuasion, or threats, or sufferings, to abandon the Protestant religion ; while no entreaties of the distracted parents, who sometimes discovered the child's place of confinement, or tears or agony shed by the little victim, ever induced the cruel governors to resign their prey. The law supported them in their nefarious conduct, and the principles of the Romish Church taught them not to regard the *means*, whether just or unjust, if at any cost they could gain one proselyte.

Knowing all this, well might poor Agnes fear for the spiritual welfare of her son, even when she saw him restored to her in health and beauty, and apparently with all the same warmth of filial

affection which had always distinguished him when a child towards his widowed mother ; and rather, oh ! much rather would she have wept over his grave, had it pleased God to have taken him from her by death while his young heart was yet devoted to the true and pure religion of Christ, than have received him back to her home, with the doctrines of that Church which, in her eyes, was defiled with idolatry. She therefore anxiously desired to hear the recital of all that had befallen him, that she might know whether her worst fears were realised ; and, therefore, proposed that the whole party should seat themselves in the gallery over the entrance, whilst Julio should gratify the general curiosity by a full account of his adventures, from the time when he had left them, a light-hearted, thoughtless boy, though always kind, ingenuous, and brave, the favourite of all who knew him, and the pride and delight of his mother—to the present period, when he had returned to them, a noble looking youth, whose open look and manly carriage bespoke a fearless and resolute disposition, whilst his bright dark eyes were lighted up with animation, and beamed with affectionate joy at finding himself once more surrounded by his friends.

It was a source of great pleasure to him to observe the kind attention bestowed by every member

of the Dumont family on his mother. It seemed as if they all looked upon her as a parent, and vied one with another in performing any kind office towards her ; and while she regarded them all with love and gratitude, it was evident to him that Constance was the favourite of her heart. She was a tall and slender girl, and looked unfitted for the mountain life she led ; but her brilliant eyes, and clear brown complexion, tinged with a bright glow of health, removed all appearance of delicacy of constitution ; and her active elastic step bespoke greater strength than her slight form seemed to possess. She waited on Agnes with the affection of a child, and seemed by continual attention to anticipate her wishes. She led her up stairs, and placed the most easy of the rustic seats in a sheltered situation for her, then took her staff, and laid it aside, and, placing herself behind her aged friend, waited with youthful interest to hear the story of her former playfellow, and tried to trace in his features some resemblance to the kind, generous boy who used to be her helper and protector in all their childish sports.

Julio sat near his mother, and all the rest of the party gathered round, while thus he commenced his narration.

## CHAPTER II.

“It seems a long, long time to look back to, and yet I remember the sad day when I left these valleys as perfectly as if it were yesterday. I was playing with my favourite little dog at the bottom of the hill, on the road leading to La Torre, and teaching him to fetch me a stick, which I threw to a distance, when a stranger came slowly along the road, also accompanied by a dog, but larger and stronger than mine. The stranger stood and watched me for some time, and though I disliked his countenance I did not choose to appear afraid, and continued my sport. Presently the stranger’s dog came and seized my stick, which enraged my little Cora, and a battle commenced between them. I endeavoured to separate them, and at length succeeded, though not without a deep wound in my arm, inflicted by the teeth of my antagonist; and Cora finding himself free, bounded off towards La Torre, followed by the other dog. I feared my favourite would be killed, and forgetting my wound, which was bleeding profusely, I ran at full speed

after them, and never paused till they left the road and darted up the steep pathway leading over the mountains to San Giovanni. But when I had ascended this path for a short distance, I found my strength failing me, and was forced to sit down to recover my breath. I now observed the blood flowing from my arm, and endeavoured to bind it up with a handkerchief. Whilst I was doing so, the stranger came up and offered to assist me, but I begged him to leave me, and hasten after the dogs, and save the life of my little Cora, for I now heard them barking and howling at some distance up the hill, and knew that they had met again and recommenced the fight.

“He looked at me with a very peculiar expression, and complied with my request, advising me to sit still and rest till his return. The barking of the dogs ceased in a few minutes, so suddenly as to make me fear my poor Cora was dead, and I arose, though with difficulty, to follow the stranger up the mountain path, and soon came in sight of a spectacle which filled me with grief and rage. My beautiful dog was lying on the turf in the agonies of death, and his antagonist crouching at the feet of his master, who was calmly wiping the blood from a long knife he held in his hand. His face was turned away from me, and perhaps if I had thought

of my own danger, I might have crept away among the bushes, and knowing every part of the mountains so familiarly, I might yet have escaped from this cruel and hard-hearted man ; but I foolishly forgot all this, and only thought of my dying favourite, which it was evident this man had stabbed, as the blood was gushing from its breast. I angrily demanded how he had dared to take away its life, and I believe I should have struck him in my passion, had not my attention been attracted by a low moan from my poor Cora, who, hearing my voice, vainly tried to raise her head and look at me, but instantly expired. I ran up to her, hoping to discover some signs of life, when I felt myself rudely and suddenly seized from behind. Weak as I was from loss of blood, I was unable to resist, and in a few moments found myself overpowered and my arms firmly bound behind me ; the ruffian also proceeded to prevent my crying out, by tying a handkerchief so tightly over my mouth that I thought I should be suffocated. He then dragged me up the hill, and though I was wearied and faint, he forced me on till we were within sight of San Giovanni.

“ I suppose he was afraid to take me through the village in the daylight, as so many of the inhabitants knew me, and would probably have rescued

me out of his hands ; so he drew me some way out of the road, and tied me with a strong cord to a tree, in a spot so thick with bushes and underwood that I was quite concealed. Here he left me, and I believe went himself to the village. How long I remained in this situation I cannot tell, for when he was gone I began to think of you, my dear mother, and my happy home, and all my friends, from whom I feared I might be for ever separated, and I wept, and then I prayed to God for help, and wept again, till quite exhausted I fell asleep, and did not awake until I heard the rough voice of the stranger, and opening my eyes saw that it was evening, and the sun just setting.

“The man was leading a horse, and had a large cloak on his arm, and in his hand a handkerchief, which he opened, and shewed me some bread and meat, telling me that if I would promise not to make any noise, he would unbind the cords and let me eat it; but that if I attempted to cry out, he would find means to silence me as he had silenced my dog.

“I was so very hungry, having eaten nothing since morning, that I readily promised what he desired, and he then removed the cords. But oh, I never shall forget what I endured just then ; for a few moments afterwards I heard the voices of men



ascending the path from Giovanni ; and as they passed near us I recognised your well-known voice, Francesco, and that of our good neighbour André. I was sorely tempted to break my word, and cry out to you for help, notwithstanding the fierce looks of my guard, who laid his hand upon his knife to remind me of his threats. But it was not him I feared, for I was sure you and André would fly to my assistance and be able to save me ;—it was the fear of God which enabled me to refrain from calling to you, and it was you, my dearest mother, who had taught me that I must never break my word ; but if I ‘swear to my neighbour, I must disappoint him not, though it were to my own hindrance.’ While I was thinking of this the voices died away, and I remained in the power of the stranger, who wrapped me up in the cloak he had brought, and again placed the handkerchief over my mouth, and, lifting me on the horse, led it down the path to San Giovanni.

“By this time night had set in, and we passed unobserved through the village, and proceeded without stopping to Pinerolo. It was not in my power to ask any questions of my guide, and indeed I began to suspect what my destination was to be, for I had heard of children being carried away to Pinerolo, and other places, and brought up in the

Romish faith; and I earnestly asked God to give me grace and strength to remain firm in the religion I had been taught at home, whatever means might be employed to induce me to forsake it."

"And did He hear your prayer, my son?" exclaimed old Agnes, with earnestness. "Did He preserve you from the abominations of that Church which can sanction such cruelties as were practised on you? And have you returned to me, Julio, true to the faith in which your dear father lived and died; and for which he fought, and struggled, and bled?"

"I have, mother," said Julio. "Thanks be to God, that, young as I was, you had so well instructed me in the faith of Christ, and taught me to look so entirely to Him for pardon and redemption, that no arguments, no sufferings, could ever induce me to pray to God in any other name, or seek for the mediation of any human being, however holy;—knowing that there is but one Mediator between God and man, Jesus Christ the righteous."

"Oh, how thankful I am to hear you say this, my dear Julio; for I feared your apostasy more than your death, and this fear damped my joy at seeing you; but now my heart is at ease, and I may depart in peace, whenever my time shall come."

“I pray, my dear mother, that the sad time may yet be long delayed, and that when it comes no conduct of mine may cause you grief or shame, or ‘bring down your gray hairs with sorrow to the grave.’”

“I do not fear it now, my son. But go on with your story ; we are all anxious to hear what befell you.”

“But before I tell you of all that happened to me, I must beg you, my dear mother, not to allow the strong feeling which animates you against the errors of the Roman Catholic religion, to prejudice you also against every person who professes that faith. I hold the religion itself in perfect horror, yet I should be both blind and ungrateful, if I could not perceive and acknowledge the many good qualities and kind feelings possessed by some of its followers. Had it not been for these feelings, I might never have returned to you again, but have lingered out my days in hopeless captivity, as you will see when I proceed with my narrative.

“It was dark when we reached Pinerolo, and my guide led me directly to the hospital. Having struck three times with the handle of his knife against a small strong door in the outer wall, it was immediately opened by a man in a long black dress, such as I had then never seen, but which I

now know well to be that of a monk. I was lifted from the horse, and carried into a small court-yard; the man who had brought me whispered for a short time to the monk, and on leaving, the door was locked and barred, and I never saw him again.

“The monk led me into the house, and up a winding staircase, to a small cell opening on a long gallery. In this cell were a bed, a chair, a little table, and a crucifix fastened to the wall. My new companion here unbound my arms, and taking away the bandage from my mouth, spoke kindly to me; and observing the blood-stained clothes, inquired the cause of it, and examined my wound carefully. He then told me not to fear, for that I should enjoy every comfort, and be well treated, if I behaved properly; he then said he would go for some food and dressing for my arm, and return immediately. He then went out, and locked the door after him, leaving me to meditate on my extraordinary situation; but he soon came back, and brought me some supper; he then dressed my wound, and helped me to get my clothes off and go to bed, where, in spite of all my sorrowful thoughts and apprehensions for the future, I soon sunk into a profound sleep.

“I had asked no questions of the monk, for I was tired and exhausted, and only wished to be alone; but when he entered my little cell in the

morning, and awoke me from dreams of home and happiness, to find myself alone with strangers, and a prisoner, I besought him earnestly to have pity on me, and let me return to the valleys ; or at least to tell me why I was brought here, and how long I was to be kept confined. He told me that it was not in his power to release me, as he only acted by order of those above him ; but that if I was obedient, and complied with all the rules of the house, I should be very happy, and in time be restored to liberty ; and that I should find several other children in the establishment, who were being brought up in the true faith, and who would tell me how well they were treated. This confirmed my suspicions as to the object for which I had been carried off, and my heart sunk within me ; for I was determined, by God's help, to remain true to my own religion ; and then I felt sure my hopes of being released would be very small indeed.

“The monk conducted me down stairs into a large room, where several men, dressed in a similar costume to himself, assembled with a number of boys to breakfast ; and I was received with marked kindness by the Superior of the establishment. I did not then know that this is the plan always pursued at first with the young prisoners, in the hope of reconciling them to their fate, and bringing them

more easily to conform to the will of their masters; and I felt encouraged by his manner, and resolved to make an effort to excite his compassion. I fell at his feet, and with all the eloquence I possessed implored him to set me free. I told him how you, my dear mother, would weep for the loss of your only child, and I vainly thought that when he heard you had no hope left on earth but *me*, he must be moved. But I was mistaken; he regarded not my tears, and listened to my entreaties with perfect indifference, merely telling me never again to trouble him with my sorrows, for it would do me no good, and he had no doubt I should be perfectly contented where I was. At all events, he assured me, he knew too well what was best for me, and was too anxious for the salvation of my soul, to allow me to go back to those obstinate heretics from whom I had been rescued.

“ I saw by his countenance it was hopeless to plead with him, and I then began to perceive the full horror of my situation, and wept in the agony of my soul. My grief had no effect in moving the sympathy of the monks; but one little boy, younger than myself, looked at me with tears in his eyes, and timidly asked leave to take me into the garden, which was granted, and I gladly followed my new friend into a beautiful piece of ground, thickly

planted with trees, and ornamented with flowers, but surrounded with a very high wall. The sun was shining brightly on this lovely garden, and everything looked so calm and peaceful, that in a little time I dried my tears, and began to talk to my young companion, who did all he could to amuse me. Still, as I told him my sad tale, my sorrow returned afresh, and it was several hours before I regained my composure. My little friend told me that he was very happy, and that he had been in this hospital as long as he could remember, but he believed that he had been taken away from his home when almost an infant, and brought there, as I had been, to be educated; and that when he was a little older he was to go to college somewhere, and be brought up for a priest, and perhaps live to be a great man. All this was no comfort to me, for I could not forget my home, and I hoped I should never forget my religion; and then I could only look forward to perpetual confinement and misery.

“We were left to ourselves until dinner time, and for several days afterwards I was allowed to go where I pleased, and spend my time as I chose; but when I was supposed to have in some degree recovered my spirits, I was desired to attend mass with the other pupils of the establishment. This I

refused to do, saying that I never omitted praying to God every night and morning, as I had been taught to do by my mother, and the pastor of our village, and that I was determined to worship in no other way until I was set at liberty, and allowed to go back to my own country, and worship at my own church at Angrogna, with all my fellow Protestants. I suppose I spoke too boldly, for the Superior looked astonished, and very angry, telling me he would soon see whether he could not shake my resolution by some means or other; and then ordered me to be locked up in the cell for a week, with no food but bread and water, and nothing to amuse me but a Roman Catholic book of devotion.

“ You may suppose how slowly the days passed away, and how I longed for the company of my kind young friend, for I saw no one except the monk who had received me at first, and who came twice a-day to bring me my pittance of bread and water. I think he pitied me; but he never remained a moment, as I suppose he himself would have been punished if he had shewn any compassion towards a poor desolate child, deprived of every hope and every comfort.

“ At the end of a week I was visited by a priest, who came to give me instruction in the Romish faith, and endeavoured to bring me to obedience;



but it appeared to me that all he said was different from what I had read in the Word of God. He told me of the divinity of the Virgin Mary, and exhorted me to address my prayers to her; when I knew that the Bible teaches us to pray to none but God. He talked of the mediation of saints; when the Bible says, 'There is no Mediator but Christ.' He next endeavoured to make me worship the crucifix which adorned my cell; when the Word of God expressly says, 'Thou shalt not bow down to nor worship any graven image.' He talked to me of the efficacy of good works in obtaining our own salvation, and purchasing a remission of part of that punishment which he said even true believers would have to undergo in purgatory before they could be fitted for the joys of heaven; when the Word of God tells us that 'all our righteousness is as filthy rags,' that in our 'flesh dwelleth no good thing,' and that even if we could do all that is required of us, we should still be '*unprofitable servants*;' while, at the same time, we are assured that 'the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from *all sin*;' and that if we are of the number of His sheep, He will say unto us, 'Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord,' without any mention being made of previous punishment. He told me of the power and supremacy of the Roman Church, and the pre-

rogative of her ministers to pardon sin after confession and penance; all of which pretensions I knew had no foundation in Scripture, though I was too young and ignorant then to be able to refute his arguments. He called me, and all those of my religion, vile heretics, who had left the true apostolic Church; while I knew that our faith was derived from the Holy Scripture, and that our Church could boast of being built up in Christ, according to the doctrines of the apostles, and martyrs, and primitive fathers, and that the Romish Church had departed from the true faith, and become corrupt and full of error. All this I endeavoured to tell him as well as I could, but he called me a hardened little reprobate, and commanded me to hold my tongue; then bidding me beware how I continued in my obstinacy, he left the cell.

“I did not see him again for several days, during which time my confinement was as strict, and my food as scanty as before. When he returned to the cell I was very weak and ill, for sorrow and fear had broken my spirits, and want of nourishment had reduced my strength; he therefore hoped to find me in a more compliant humour; but thanks be to God, though my body was feeble, my soul was supported, and the aid I had unceasingly asked of

Him was vouchsafed me ; the efforts of the priest were as unavailing as before. He saw that threats had no effect, and at length tried to win me with promises of wealth and honourable employment as the reward of my apostasy ; but what could wealth have done for me if I had renounced the favour of my God ?

“ Finding me resolute, he returned to the Superior, who had authorised him to make these tempting offers, and I suppose they condemned me to a yet severer trial ; for soon after his departure two of the brethren came to my cell, and led, or rather dragged, me along the passage, and down a steep staircase, till we reached a subterraneous dungeon, which they unlocked and thrust me in, and then left me in utter darkness. I cannot tell why my courage did not utterly fail me here, except that I believe the Spirit of God strengthened me, and enabled me to endure this horrid confinement for many days without losing my trust in Him. But I grew very ill, and had no one to complain to, for I saw no human being, my food being passed through a hole in the wall, by means of a turning box ; and I began to fear I should die in this dungeon, without one friend to speak kindly to me. At length I became so weak that I did not take the food which was put for me ; and this being observed probably

excited some apprehension, for I remember being aroused from a heavy sleep or stupor, by the entrance of some person carrying a light, which dazzled my eyes so much that for some time I did not perceive that it was the same monk who had shewn the kindness to me when I first entered the hospital; but when he approached the miserable little bed I lay upon, and took hold of my hand, and spoke to me, I felt very glad it was his voice, for I was not afraid of him. He carried me up stairs, for I could not walk, and laid me on the bed in my little cell again; and though I had formerly thought it a sad thing to be confined in that small chamber, and even to be imprisoned in the house at all, yet it now seemed to be liberty and happiness to see the light, and hear the voice of one of my fellow-creatures.

“For a few days I saw no one but the good-natured monk, who attended me with the greatest care and kindness, except that once the Superior paid me a short visit, hoping to find that my sufferings had cured my obstinacy, as he called it. But while I had been in the dungeon I felt I had no hope but in God, and that if He had mercy on me it would only be for the sake of Jesus Christ; and, therefore, as long as I was able, I prayed to Him in the name of His dear Son, and He had heard my

prayer ; and now, could I deny my faith, and pretend to believe in the power of the Virgin or the saints to help me ? Oh, no ! they might send me back to die in that cold, dark cell, and then I trusted my soul would go to the Saviour whom I loved ; but they could not make me give the honour to a human creature which was due to Him alone.

“The Superior saw that I was firm, and said I should no longer remain in the establishment, but that as soon as I was sufficiently recovered, I should be sent to Turin, where he had no doubt but that means would be found to bring me to reason. He then went away very much displeased. I was not sorry to hear of this intention, for I hoped that any change would be for the better, and that perhaps either during the journey, or at some future time, I might effect my escape ; which seemed to me to be hopeless where I then was. But I wished very much to see my little friend Frederic once more before I left the house, for he had been kind to me, and I loved and pitied him because he had been taken away from Protestant parents, and taught to believe in the religion of the monks. I asked my attendant whether Frederic might come and see me, and he promised to obtain the permission of the Superior, which was, accordingly, granted the next day, and I was left alone with my friend ; which

indulgence surprised me at first ; but I afterwards learned from the little boy that he was only allowed to come in the hope that he might persuade me to become a Roman Catholic, and that he had been charged to try everything he could think of to make me afraid of refusing, and to shew me that I should be much happier if I complied with their requests. He begged me not to repeat what he had said, or he would be severely punished ; which I readily promised.

“ We were allowed to spend many happy hours together ; part of the time we spent in endeavouring to convince each other of the truth of our several religions—but we were too young to argue, and ended, as many older and abler disputants have done, in being more attached to our own opinions. This, however, did not weaken our mutual affection ; and when the time came for me to leave the house, we parted with many tears, and promises always to remember each other.

## CHAPTER III.

“I WAS taken to Turin and placed in a monastery, and soon found it was quite as impossible to escape from thence as when I was at the hospital at Pinerolo. I will not detain you by giving a minute account of my life in this monastery, which was very dull and monotonous. Both gentleness and severity, persuasion and threats, were tried to convert me ; but the Superior was not a cruel man, and when he found all means were equally unavailing, he contented himself with degrading me into one of the lowest situations of the establishment, where I was forced to work hard all day long, and obey the orders of every member of the establishment. For this, however, I was thankful, as I was left to follow my own religion unmolested, and was no longer considered worthy of the instructions and exhortations of the holy brethren. I believe they thought I could be trusted, as they knew I had never been induced to say what I did not believe, when I might have escaped suffering by so doing ; and, therefore, after some years I was employed as a messenger,

but was never sent out of the house without being desired to give a solemn promise that I would return, which, of course, I was bound to do, though I was often strongly tempted to run away, and try to escape to my dear native valleys again.

“Some of the monks found me useful to them, and began to treat me with more kindness; so much so as to instruct me in several useful branches of learning; and one of them, who was an excellent musician, taught me to play on the bugle-horn, and gave me an instrument, which I have got safe in the small packet I brought with me; for I delight in it so much, and had found so much happiness in playing on it during my long captivity, that I brought it with me as one of my greatest treasures. I have one treasure, however, still more precious, and which has afforded me far more comfort than anything else could do. I will tell you how it came into my possession.

“One day when I was sent on an errand into the town, I chanced to pass a bookseller’s shop, and I wondered whether he had any Bibles in the French language. I entered the shop, and asked the man the question; he answered in the affirmative, at the same time inquiring why I wished to know, as he knew that I belonged to the monastery, and therefore thought, of course, that I was a Roman



Catholic, and not permitted to read the Bible for myself.

“He looked kindly at me, and I ventured to tell him my story, which appeared to interest him very much. When I had concluded, he took me by the hand, led me into his own sitting-room, and put a Bible into my hands, which he said I might sit there and read as long as I might venture to stay; and told me I should be welcome to come to his house, and read God’s Word, pure and uncorrupt, whenever I found I could do so with safety. How I loved and thanked him for this kindness! and every time I could venture to take a few minutes, I used to run to his house and sit in his little parlour, and read a chapter of the Gospels, or try to learn a passage by heart, to repeat to myself when I was alone.

“I was thankful to God for this privilege, but most ardently wished that I could have a Bible, or at least a New Testament, of my own, that I might read it every night when I went to my little solitary cell; and I tried very hard to devise some means by which I might procure money enough to purchase one, but without success. At length I thought of my bugle, and after a short struggle determined to take it to my friend the bookseller, and entreat him to give me a Bible or a Testament

in exchange for it. The next time I went out I accordingly did so, though I must confess it cost me some grief to think of parting with my only earthly pleasure. My kind friend listened to my request with a benevolent countenance, and then told me to keep the instrument I so much loved ; and that if I thought I could conceal a Bible, so as not to be discovered by the monks, he would give me the best in his shop ; which, indeed, he said he would have done long ago, had he not feared that I might suffer for it if it was found out.

“ I could have wept for joy when he brought me a beautiful little Bible, so small that I could easily conceal it in my bosom, and he gave it me with his affectionate blessing ; telling me, at the same time, that he was of the Reformed Church, though he believed no one knew it ; and he had been afraid to communicate it to me until he was sure I could be trusted. From this time he was my most sincere friend, and to him I owe much of the religious knowledge which, by God’s mercy, I possess ; for many were the conversations we held together. As he was so pious and so pure in heart, I felt the highest esteem for him, though he was rather timid, and feared to attract attention by openly professing what he believed.

“ I kept my Bible unsuspected by any one in

the monastery, and every night for more than three years enjoyed the happiness of reading it ; during which time my affection for the good bookseller increased, and he seemed equally attached to me. He frequently joined me in lamenting my unhappy situation, and trying to think of some means by which I might be released from my captivity without breaking my promise ; but for a long time all our schemes seemed hopeless, and I began to despair of effecting my escape.

“ It pleased God, however, to order all things most wonderfully for my good, and in His own time to bring to pass what we could never have devised. One day, about four months since, whilst I was talking to my friend in his shop, a youth of about eighteen years of age came in to purchase something for a lady whom he named Madame d’Aubigny. His countenance attracted my attention ; it seemed familiar to me, and yet I could not conceive where I had seen it before. While I was trying to remember his face, the bookseller spoke to me, and called me by name, when the stranger turned, and looking at me, immediately exclaimed, ‘ Julio ! can it really be my friend Julio ? ’ and threw himself into my arms. It was Frederic, whom I had left in the hospital at Pinerolo nearly eight years before ; and truly happy were we to meet again.

“ He quickly told me his story, which was a prosperous one ; for soon after I had left the hospital, it was visited by Monsieur d’Aubigny and his wife, who were travelling through the country ; and who, being much pleased with his appearance, had obtained permission to take him away, and bring him up. Having no children of their own, they treated him as their own son, and had given him an excellent education. He spoke with the greatest warmth of their kindness and generosity ; and expressed an eager hope that they might be enabled to exert some influence in procuring my liberty ; for he assured me he had no doubt that though they differed from me in religion, that would be no obstacle to their using all their endeavours in my favour, when he had told them of all that I had suffered for the sake of what I considered to be the truth.

“ This was a ray of hope for me to dwell upon, though I did not venture to be very sanguine. Frederic promised to meet me the following day at my friend’s house, and I then hurried back to the monastery, dreading my unusual absence would be observed, and that I might be questioned. Fortunately, however, I entered unnoticed by any but the old porter ; for it was a grand festival day, and the brethren were nearly all engaged in celebrating

high mass ; and I heard the tones of the organ and the voices of the monks pealing through the whole building, as I traversed a long passage leading to my cell. I had always refused to enter the chapel during any of the services, and I had never seen the ceremony of high mass performed, though I certainly felt a curiosity to know what forms were observed on such occasions ; and it struck me now that I might safely gratify this curiosity. I therefore ascended to the gallery leading to the private room of the Superior, where I knew was a window overlooking the chapel. Finding the door open, I softly entered the apartment, and concealed myself behind the curtains in such a manner that I had a perfect view of all that was passing in the church beneath me. The whole area below was thronged with worshippers, for many inhabitants of the town had come to celebrate the festival in this chapel, which was regarded with great veneration on account of its being the depository of some very sacred relics. At the moment when I took my place at the window, the priest was in the act of elevating the host, or the sacred symbols which are used to represent the bodily presence of our Lord and Saviour, and by all Roman Catholics are believed to be transformed into His actual body and blood by the consecration of the priest. The music

had ceased, and a profound silence pervaded the whole of the spacious building; while every individual of that numerous congregation fell on their knees at the same moment, and bowed their heads to the earth before the consecrated emblems. It was a striking spectacle, and it moved me with sympathy to see the deep devotion of that vast concourse, till I remembered that they were paying Divine worship to a mere creature, and bowing down before the work of their own hands.

“The sacrament was then administered according to the custom of the Church of Rome; that is, the consecrated wafers were given to each of the communicants, while the cup was only drank of by the priests—a custom entirely at variance with our Saviour’s first ordination of the Holy Supper, when he said, ‘Drink ye *all* of it,’ and gave the cup to each of the disciples, as well as the bread. I have since learned that the reason of the cup being denied to the laity, was the fear of any drops being spilled on the ground; which (considering it to be the true blood of Christ) was considered to be profanation; and, for the same reason, small wafers were substituted for pieces of bread, and given whole to each individual, to avoid the chance of any crumbs being dropped.

“Presently a little bell was tinkled by a child

gaudily dressed, who stood on the steps of the altar, and instantly the whole assembly rose, and after a short prayer repeated in Latin by the priest, the chanting recommenced, and again the rich notes of the organ mingled with the voices of the choristers, whilst several priests, arrayed in splendid robes embroidered with gold or silver, moved round the altar, and swung their glittering censers to and fro, sending forth incense of the richest perfume, and filling the whole edifice with a cloud of fragrance, through which the innumerable lights that blazed about the altar shone faint and dim.

“It was to me an overpowering spectacle, and I remained intently watching the ceremony until the whole was finished; and the last tones of the organ were dying away before I recollected that I must hasten from my hiding-place, or run the risk of being discovered by the Superior on his return to his apartment, which would undoubtedly have excited his most serious displeasure. I therefore lost no time, but escaped to the garden, where, on cool reflection, I felt more and more convinced of the superiority of the pure and simple form of worship I had joined in when in my native valleys, to all the pomp and display I had just witnessed, and which, though it had powerfully affected my imagination, and gratified my senses, yet did not enlighten my mind,

instruct my reason, or tend to purify my heart; and I blessed God who had mercifully preserved me from the corruptions of this mistaken Church.

“To my great disappointment, I was not allowed to leave the convent the next day, and, therefore, could not meet my friend Frederic as I had promised; and when I asked one of the brethren if there was anything for me to do in the town, he observed that he thought I had become very fond of going out, and that I was by no means so quick in executing commissions as I used to be; adding that the porter had remarked my long absence from the house on several recent occasions, and he advised me to beware how I repeated such conduct, or this liberty would be denied me altogether.

“The next time I was sent out, I flew to the bookseller’s to inquire where Monsieur d’Aubigny resided, in order that I might try to see Frederic there, if it were only for a moment, to tell him how closely I was watched, and to entreat him to use all his influence with his kind patron in my behalf. To my great satisfaction, I found that my young friend lived in a part of the town at no great distance from the convent. I hastened thither, and had time to hear his assurances that both Monsieur and Madame d’Aubigny were greatly interested by his recital of my sufferings, and had already spoken to



some relations of theirs who were in high favour with the Duke of Savoy, and who had promised to exert themselves to the utmost to obtain an order for my release. With this agreeable intelligence I was hurrying away, when Madame d'Aubigny entered the room, and in the kindest manner repeated what Frederic had related, and begged me to visit them whenever it was in my power, and to depend upon finding a home in their house, as long as I would remain with them, should they succeed in procuring my liberty. She told me they usually resided in France, but had come to Turin for the winter to be near their Piedmontese relations. I could have remained listening to this kind lady all day long, for I had not heard such gentle words since I had been torn away from you, my dear mother, and our good Madeleine ; indeed, I had lived so entirely with men, that the sound of a female voice was almost strange to me, and recalled so strongly the friends and the home of my childhood, that I shuddered to think how soon all my expected hopes might be blasted.

“ With many thanks to my kind benefactress, I hastened back to my dismal home, now rendered doubly irksome by comparison with the cheerful dwelling I had just visited ; but I tried to believe that my captivity was soon to end ; and in this hope

I redoubled my efforts to please the brethren, and especially endeavoured to conciliate the Superior, that he might be more inclined to consent to my release, when the application should be made.

“Several weeks elapsed, during which I made frequent short visits to my new friends. The more I saw of Monsieur and Madame d’Aubigny, the more I found to love and to admire in their characters. Their benevolence and generosity were boundless, and they appeared to think no exertion too great in order to benefit their fellow-creatures. I did not wonder at the devoted affection Frederic entertained for them ; for they had been as parents to him, and he knew not whether his father or mother were still in existence, or even from what place he had been brought to Pinerolo in his infancy. The religion of Monsieur and Madame d’Aubigny was the Roman Catholic ; but though sincerely attached to their own faith, they were neither bigoted nor intolerant towards those who differed from them ; and often expressed their approbation of the resolution I had displayed in adhering to that religion I believed to be true, and their ardent hope that I might ere long be restored to my home and family, and be enabled to follow the forms of worship I so much regretted, without molestation. I was very happy in their society, and on making a request to

the Superior, I was occasionally permitted to spend a great part of the day with them, as they were known to be strict Papists; but still I was never suffered to go beyond the walls of the convent without the accustomed promise to return.

“As I knew that I had been captured unjustly at first, and that I was as unjustly detained, I should never have scrupled to make my escape at any time without breaking my word, and I had watched in vain for such an opportunity; but now that I had every reason to hope for an honourable release, I was contented, and tried no more to elude the vigilance of my keepers.

“But a sad disappointment awaited me. One day when I was employed working in the garden, I received a summons to attend the Superior in the parlour where guests were always received, and on entering the room I found Monsieur and Madame d'Aubigny, and Frederic, who all received me with countenances beaming with joy, and informed me that they had that moment received a packet from their friends, containing the order for which we had all waited so impatiently, and that they had hastened to the convent to tell me the joyful news, and to take me away with them to their own house. I cannot express what I felt at that moment—my heart was too full of gratitude and joy to allow me

to speak ; and it was not till the paper was unfolded and given to the Superior, that I remembered his stern displeasure, and the suspicion lurking in his keen black eye. I have said he never treated me with absolute cruelty, but it was not possible for him to regard with kindness one who despised his religion, and was deaf to the advice and instructions of the Church he revered. It would also have been a triumph for the poor Vaudois if any one of their persecuted race had been restored to them and to liberty, after having openly defied the authority of the Romish Church ; and he then knew that I had been treated with unwarrantable severity in the hospital of Pinerolo ; and I could readily believe that he would adopt any expedient to prevent these circumstances from becoming public, or at the least being known in the Protestant valleys. I therefore watched his countenance with great anxiety while he was perusing the paper, for I was afraid that it might still be in his power to evade the order, or that he might have influence enough to get it rescinded. With some surprise I observed an expression of satisfaction appear in his face ; and he laid down the paper, saying he had no objection to comply with the order it contained, as it left it entirely to him to prescribe the conditions on which I was to be released.

“ This remark filled me with apprehension, and

I think I felt a presentiment of the nature of the conditions that he would require. I was, therefore, not astonished, though deeply grieved, when he proceeded to state that he knew I was to be depended upon when I gave my word, and that consequently I should have full liberty to depart from the convent as soon as I had signed an agreement never to return to the Protestant valleys, and never to mention anything that had occurred to me either in his establishment or at the hospital at Pinerolo. My heart died within me, but I did not hesitate for a moment as to what should be my resolution. Could I accept my liberty united with a perpetual prohibition from ever returning to my poor dear mother, and to my beloved home? Oh no! it was better to wait patiently, and hope for some happier time, when it might please God to open a way for me to escape unfettered by any such dreadful restrictions. I announced my decision as firmly as I could, though I believe with a faltering voice; and it was received with evident pleasure by the Superior, but with the greatest sorrow by my excellent friends, who urged me with every argument in their power to change my resolution, and leave the convent, and come and live with them in liberty and peace, even if I could never return to my native valleys.

“Finding this of no avail, they turned to the Superior, and endeavoured to shake his determination, and persuade him to give me permission to depart, and go where I pleased, on the one condition of my solemnly swearing never to betray any secret of the convent; but here also they failed, for he was resolved that I should be liberated on his own terms, or not at all; and my friends were forced to depart, lamenting the ill success of all their generous efforts, and leaving me more lonely and miserable than ever.

“They renewed their solicitations to the Duke, entreating for a peremptory order of release, but the Sovereign was too little inclined to treat his Vaudois subjects with indulgence, to risk offending the Church for one poor Protestant youth.

“I did not know of these further exertions in my favour at this time; for after the events I have just related, I was never permitted to leave the convent on any pretence. I suppose the Superior observed the disappointment of my kind friends, particularly Frederic, and feared that they might persuade me to escape; therefore their kindness only added to my sufferings, though I did not on this account feel the less gratitude to them for their good intentions towards me.

“I now passed great part of my time working in

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the garden, and remained there frequently until after sunset, either playing on my bugle, or, if I found myself entirely alone, reading my Bible, and endeavouring to obtain patience and resignation under my late trial. One evening I lingered even later than usual, for the air was mild, and the moon shining peacefully on the dark walls of my prison-house, and casting broad shadows across the smooth turf on the lawn. I had been playing several of my favourite airs, but had now laid down my bugle and was gazing up into the clear heavens, looking forward with hope and joy to the time when my spirit should be released from all the sorrows of this world, and wing its way far beyond the most distant of the twinkling stars to the place of eternal rest and freedom. I thought the time could not be very far distant, for I felt I could not live long in this desolate lonely state, and my heart was withered by the tortures of hope deferred. I thought too, dear mother, that perhaps your spirit had already taken flight, and was waiting to receive me in that world of bliss, and that if God would sustain my faith I was ready to exclaim, 'Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly.'

"My reverie was broken by a low whistle on the other side of the wall, near where I was sitting, and immediately I heard the last air I had played repeated very softly. I was startled at this, and

thought it must be intended to attract my attention. I therefore took up my bugle, and again played the same air, which was again whistled by my unseen companion, and I felt sure that it was Frederic. The next moment he called me by name, and told me to look out for a packet he would throw over the wall ; and as he spoke, it passed over my head and fell on the grass before me, and I heard Frederic run rapidly away from the wall, as if to avoid observation.

“ I eagerly snatched up the little packet, and on opening it, found it contained a letter from my young friend, but the moon did not afford me sufficient light to read it, and I was obliged to keep it concealed until I retired to my cell after supper ; and then I found reason to reproach myself for my ingratitude and want of faith, which led me to think that I was deserted by God and forsaken by men, whilst all the time he was devising schemes of mercy for me, and putting it into the hearts of my friends to labour untiringly in my behalf.

“ Frederic informed me in this letter that he had been watching under the convent garden walls every evening since he had found that I was prevented from coming to visit him ; but though he frequently heard the sound of my bugle, he had never been able to call my attention without running the risk



of attracting the observation of some passenger in the street, which might have caused the destruction of all his plans, which I should find fully explained in a second enclosure. This enclosure informed me of the failure of the last application to the Duke, but that neither Frederic nor his parents, as he always called them, could relinquish the hope of effecting my escape. They had resolved to delay their departure from Turin until they had made one more effort ; and that they had prepared everything so as to leave the place the moment I could contrive to join them, when they hoped soon to convey me beyond the reach of the hard-hearted Superior.

“ Their scheme was, that I should get out of my cell some night between the time of midnight service and the call to matins, when all the brethren would have again retired to rest, and when also there was the best chance of the streets being deserted. Frederic was to wait every night on the outside of the wall ; and when I should succeed in getting safely to the spot where I had been seated this evening, and which was partly concealed by thick bushes, I was to whistle a signal ; and if all was safe and quiet, he would then throw a rope ladder over the wall, by means of which I could then ascend, when I should find everything ready for my escape.

“ My heart beat high with hope and gratitude as I read this well-arranged plan ; and I instantly began to contrive how to execute my part of it. There were many obstacles, all of which I thought might be overcome by patience and resolution. I was always locked up in my cell at night, and not allowed to come out until after matins, when I commenced the labours of the day. The small window was at a considerable height from the ground, my cell being on the first floor, and was crossed with small bars of iron, and placed so high in the wall that I could not look out without mounting on my table ; but the bars were old and rusty, and would certainly give way if I exerted all my strength ; but I could not venture to proceed with any violence, or I might be overheard by the good father who lodged in the adjoining cell ; so I was obliged to work gradually and patiently with my knife round each end of one of the bars, until I had loosened it from the stone window frame in which it was sunk. .

“ This took a considerable time, and I was not able to effect more than one bar that night ; so I filled up the cavity I had made in the stone with the loose pieces I had picked out, and retired to bed until I was aroused at the usual hour by the unlocking of my door. I thought the day very

long until I found myself again shut up in my cell, and able to resume my own work, at which I laboured so hard that I loosened two bars, and only one more remained to be done; but unluckily, as I was leaning against one of the irons, it broke in the middle, and one half fell to the floor with a loud noise. I trembled for fear it should be heard, and instantly extinguishing my light, crept into bed with my clothes on, where I lay till daylight, and then tried ineffectually to replace the bar. It happened in the morning, that the monk who unlocked my door entered the cell to give me some directions concerning the work I was to perform, and he immediately observed the broken bar, and inquired how it had occurred. I replied that I had been looking out of the window, and wishing that I was as free as the birds that built their nests in the eaves of the roof, and that the bar had broken with my weight. He looked at me suspiciously, and taking up the piece of iron, remarked its rusty condition, and said he must report it to the Superior, in order that it might be properly repaired; he however added, that he did not think there was any fear of my escaping by that window, unless I borrowed the wings of those swallows I envied so much.

“I now saw I had no time to lose, and that if

I did not effect my escape the following night, in all probability every hope would be shut out by the bars being repaired, when also the progress I had made towards removing them would be discovered. As soon, therefore, as I once more found myself alone at night, I packed up the Bible and bugle, and what other little articles I could conveniently carry, and proceeded to my task in almost breathless anxiety. I heard the monks passing the door to attend the midnight service, and suspended my work, and concealed the lamp under the bed, until they had again retired to their cells and all was still. It was a dark and gloomy night; the wind was high and the rain fell heavily, and not a star was to be seen, or one ray of moonlight to guide me; but this was perhaps in my favour, as I was less likely to be seen crossing the lawn, if any one happened to be looking out of the windows opening that way. I only feared that Frederic might not be waiting for me on such a stormy night; but I wronged his friendship.

“The chapel clock tolled two as I bent the last bar of my narrow window, and drew it out; I then tied the little package to my arm, extinguished my lamp, and, mounting once more on the table, with much difficulty succeeded in forcing myself through the aperture, and, holding by the window-

sill, I felt my feet touch the roof of the building beneath. The rain had made the tiles so slippery, that when I loosed my hold it was impossible to stand, and sliding down the roof, I fell into the court below. I believe it was the noise of the wind and rain that saved me from being discovered, for I listened attentively for a few moments, expecting to hear some voice from one of the grated windows; but finding I was unnoticed, I hastened to seek some method of surmounting the wall of the yard into which I had fallen. The darkness was so great that it took me a considerable time to collect and pile one on another the tubs and other articles I could lay my hands on, and then to mount this insecure ladder and scramble to the top of the wall; but this done, I dropped on my feet on the other side, and felt almost at liberty.

“I then groped across the lawn, and found myself among the bushes growing at the foot of the wall, and, listening attentively, thought I could distinguish the footsteps of some one pacing slowly on the other side. I whistled, but the violence of the wind prevented the sound from being heard, and no reply followed. Perhaps, I thought, it is not Frederic. I waited again until the steps passed near the spot where I stood, and then whistled as loudly as I could, and to my extreme joy was imme-

diately answered by my faithful friend; and in a few moments I heard the ladder of rope thrown over the wall by means of a weight fastened to the end, and catching it, I hastily tied it firmly to the stem of a tree, mounted it, and sliding down on the other side, was warmly embraced by Frederic.

“‘All is ready,’ he said, ‘I had almost given you up for to-night; but come, follow me, and I will tell you all that we have arranged.’ He hurried me down a narrow lane, at the end of which we met a man with a dark lantern, who guided us out of the town to a small auberge, where we found a carriage waiting, with horses ready harnessed. Frederic said he must now leave me, and return to his home, if possible, before daylight, for fear of attracting observation, as the driver of the carriage could be depended upon, and would quickly convey me to a village several miles off, where I must rest myself, and wait until he and his parents arrived there early in the morning, when I should proceed with them in the disguise of a servant.

“He hastened away, and I jumped into the carriage, and was driven off at a gallop on the road towards France. The clouds had passed away, and the sun rose gloriously before we reached Avigliana, the village where I was to stop; and I gazed with

delight on the open country around me. I had for so many years been immured within the walls of a convent, that everything I saw had the charm of novelty ; and grateful indeed did I feel to Him who had restored to me the blessings of liberty, and the society of my fellow-creatures, and to those friends whom He had raised up for my deliverance. In the midst of my happiness I remembered the kind bookseller, and regretted that I had left Turin without the possibility of taking leave of him, or that I had not even written to him, and left my letter with Frederic to convey to him. It seemed ungrateful, but in the agitation of the last few days, I confess it had been forgotten by me, and now the only thing I could do was to write a letter at the house where we stopped at in Avigliana, and give it to my driver with many charges to deliver it faithfully. Perhaps it was imprudent in me to do this, as had my letter fallen into other hands it would have disclosed by what route I had escaped ; but I could not bear that my good friend should believe me unmindful of all his kindness towards me.

“I remained closely shut up in my apartment in the retired inn to which I had been driven, hardly venturing to look out of the window, lest I should see the face of some one in search of me ; but before noon I heard a carriage arrive, and in a few minutes

afterwards, Monsieur and Madame d'Aubigny and Frederic entered the room, and warmly congratulated me on my escape. I would have poured forth my gratitude to them, but they assured me they were quite as happy as I was ; and desired me to dress myself quickly in a suit of clothes they had provided, and endeavour to act the part of a courier as well as I could.

“We were soon on our way again, and travelled with the greatest possible speed, as we still felt that we were within reach of pursuit ; and it was not till we arrived at Susa, on the banks of the river Dora, that we stopped for rest and refreshment. We passed the night in this town, and the next morning my generous friends invited me to proceed with them to France, and remain with them till all search should have ceased, when I might with greater safety return to my native land ; but though I felt grieved to leave them, my heart was at home with you, my dear mother, and I felt convinced I could find my way across the mountains by a circuitous route where I should have no chance of meeting an enemy ; and when once in these valleys, I should have nothing more to fear.

“When they found I was resolved on returning home immediately, they wished to load me with benefits of another kind ; but, of course, I only ac-



cepted what would be sufficient for the expenses of my journey; and having again changed my dress for that of a peasant, I took leave of my benefactors, praying God to return to them tenfold the kindness they had shewn to me. For four days I travelled among the mountains, seldom entering a village except at night; for I had some apprehensions that, when my flight should be discovered, messengers might be sent through all this country in search of me; but I was not observed. And the mercy of God, which has carried me through so many perils, has crowned my happiness by restoring me to my home, my mother, and my friends, in peace!"

## CHAPTER IV.

JULIO'S story had been a very long one, yet all his auditors were so much interested, that they did not perceive the length of time that had elapsed since it began. Little Elinor was the only one of the company who felt it tedious, and when she found that all her little playful arts were unavailing to attract the attention generally bestowed upon her, she crept upon her grandfather's knees, where she soon closed her laughing eyes and fell fast asleep. It is probable that a much longer time would have been spent in discussing the various events related by Julio, and in the happy exclamations of his mother, who could not cease from expressing her wonder and gratitude, and her admiration of her son's fortitude and faith; but all these joyful comments were interrupted by little Elinor, who, at length awaking, commenced an animated gambol with the shaggy dog, Carlo; the clock of the village church also struck at the same moment, and reminded Madeleine that her household cares had been long neglected; and calling Constance and

Pauline to accompany her, hastened to prepare the best repast the cottage could produce, and insisted that Julio and his mother should remain with them until the evening, when they would escort them back to Agnes' dwelling. To this they readily agreed, and the happy party soon sat down to a plentiful but homely table. The flesh of goats forms the principal animal food of these simple people ; for it is only on grand occasions that any of their small stock of cattle or sheep are killed, and by the poorer classes of peasantry meat is never eaten ; they subsist entirely upon potatoes, bread of the blackest and coarsest description, and roasted chestnuts.

The Protestant inhabitants are obliged to observe all the festivals of their Roman Catholic fellow-subjects, and therefore to pass two or three days almost every week in idleness ; the wages of the labourers are very low, seldom exceeding fifteen sous a-day, and they are compelled to pay a much higher rate of taxes than the Papists. Of course, the generality of them are in extreme poverty, and it is seldom that a Protestant is able to rent a small farm, and by that means maintain his family in the comparative ease and comfort found in the house of Francesco Dumont.

The news of Julio's return had rapidly spread through the village, and the neighbouring inhabi-

tants hastened from their widely scattered cottages, when the work of the day was done, to offer their warm congratulations to his aged mother, whom they had pitied and assisted by every means in their power since the time she became a widow, several years before the loss of her son. Among the foremost of these visitors were André Bertholde, and his wife Genevieve, an excellent couple, who lived in the valley far below Francesco's house. They were the most intimate friends of the Dumonts, and the two families spent much of their leisure time together; for although André was not in the comfortable circumstances which Francesco enjoyed, and was obliged to work hard to maintain his family, yet he did not feel himself inferior on that account, nor did Francesco look down on his poorer neighbour because God had bestowed on him less of the good things of this life.

In most countries a superiority of fortune implies that its possessor has been better educated, and brought up in a style of greater refinement than others, and this causes men to separate into classes and degrees; but in the Vaudois country all are equal, or nearly so, in those points constituting real superiority, for all receive the best education that can be procured in these remote valleys, and all live in the most simple and primitive manner.

It is rare, indeed, to meet a Vaudois peasant who cannot read and write, and is not also well versed in the Bible, and the few other books they are able to procure, relating as well to the history of his own country, as also to the fortitude and faith of his ancestors. On these subjects they converse together, and strengthen their own resolutions to endure whatever persecutions may yet be in store for themselves, by remembering the noble and heroic deeds of their forefathers. Old Gerard Dumont was the oldest man in the Commune, and had acted a part in several struggles of his countrymen, to maintain their independence against the Papal yoke ; and he was often called upon to relate to his younger brethren how their fathers had fought and bled in the glorious cause. But though the fire of youth would rekindle in his eye, and the flush of animation overspread his cheeks, while he grasped his staff, and rivetted the attention of his auditors to the exciting theme, yet he never spoke with bitterness or violence against those who had so cruelly, and frequently so treacherously, oppressed them. He was a Christian at heart ; and while he felt keenly the injuries which had been heaped upon his people, he, with the true charity inculcated by his Divine Master, could "pray for his enemies, and bless them that persecuted him." He

regarded all the trials of the Vaudois as appointed by God for the strengthening and purifying of their faith ; and he patiently waited his reward at the hands of his merciful Redeemer. He was looked upon as the patriarch of the village, and his blessing was felt to be that of a holy man of God, and his prayer that of "a righteous man, which availeth much." Being unable to walk far from the dwelling of his son, he was always carried on a rude litter to church on the Sabbath-day ; and when the air was mild, he would sit for hours under the large walnut-tree in front of the house, watching the occupations of his children, or reading the old family Bible, in which he was frequently interrupted by the gambols of his little darling Elinor, and her favourite tame goats.

The party who had collected at Francesco's house to welcome Julio home, insisted on escorting him and his mother to their own cottage in the evening, accompanied by all the Dumonts except Elinor and her grandfather. They formed a numerous *cortège* as they wound up the narrow pathway ; and when they reached the garden gate they raised a shout of joy and gratulation, so loud and hearty that it echoed from hill to hill, and was repeated several times, until it died away among the distant mountains. Then all these warm-hearted peasants dispersed and

returned to their own homes, leaving Julio and old Agnes together in peace.

When not assailed by persecution, and forced either to defend their lives and liberties, or to hide from the fury of the oppressor in wild caverns and almost inaccessible valleys, the lives of the Vaudois ran on in an even, unvaried course, chiefly occupied in cultivating their scanty fields and vineyards, and attending to their flocks. They have very few trades among them, and hardly any manufactures. Charcoal is prepared on some of the hills, and carried to the nearest towns; and many of the peasants rear silk-worms, and add to their small stock of comforts by the produce of these insects. These, however, are trifling resources; and the generality of the Protestant population lead humble and pastoral lives. When the snows of winter are partially melted, and the herbage has sprung up on the verdant meadows nearer the summit of the mountains, nearly all the inhabitants of the villages forsake their cottages, and remove, with flocks and herds, to the châteaux erected for that purpose near the pasturages. These châteaux are rude huts, built of logs of wood laid lengthwise, and frequently without either windows or chimneys; but during the summer months these inconveniences are little regarded by the hardy mountaineers. The time

was now approaching when the villagers of Angrogna would migrate as usual, and preparations were commenced for the general move. Francesco's chalet was larger and better built than those of his neighbours, and it had always been usual for old Agnes to accompany his family, and reside with them until they returned to their more substantial dwellings for the winter. It was Constance's pride and delight to take charge of the little flock belonging to her aged friend, who called her, her "young shepherdess;" and the small stock of cheeses adorning the dairy of Agnes' cottage were all the productions of her hands.

Francesco and Madeleine wished Julio to join their party this summer—an arrangement to which he gladly consented; and after the many years of his sad life he had been denied the happiness of rambling among woods and mountains, and breathing the pure air of his native land, he looked forward with delight to spending a few months on the hills, in the society of his oldest and kindest friends. He had already formed a friendship for Eugene, who, although several years younger than himself, was so intelligent and so well informed that he was always delighted to have him as a companion, and to learn from him those rural arts and amusements he had almost forgotten during his long impri-



sonment ; while Eugene, on his part, looked up to his new friend with pride and devotion, and felt that his greatest ambition would be to imitate his courage and his virtues.

A few days after Julio's arrival, the pastor of the village returned from a short absence he had been compelled to make from his flock ; and he no sooner heard of the happy event that had occurred in his parish, than he hastened to Agnes' cottage to wish her joy, and renew his acquaintance with her son, whom he well remembered as one of the most attentive and diligent of his young pupils, when he used to catechise him with the other children of the village, according to the invariable custom of the Vaudois clergy.

Monsieur Latour was received by Agnes with the respect and affection he well merited. He was a man of exemplary piety and much learning, and contented to bury his talents among his native mountains, and devote his life to the good of his humble countrymen, rather than accept the preferment offered to him in Switzerland, where he had received his education. Like the rest of the Protestant ministers of these valleys, his income was extremely small ; and even that was derived chiefly from the charitable grants bestowed by different foreign governments, particularly the English, for

this purpose: but these grants are very trifling, and when divided among the thirteen Vaudois clergy, afford them a bare subsistence, to which a small addition is occasionally made by those of their flock who can afford it. No fees are given for the performance of any of the rites of the Church, and the presbyteries or parsonage-houses are, in general, little superior to the cottages of the peasantry.

With this small remuneration for their labours, the duties of these devoted men are arduous and incessant. The hamlets are widely scattered over a sterile and mountainous country, often very difficult of access, and, even if poverty did not compel them, the nature of the country would generally render it necessary for them to perform all their journeys on foot. In winter they are frequently exposed to avalanches and sudden inundations; and in summer their labours are increased by the necessity of visiting and preaching to those of their flocks who have gone to reside in their mountain huts. Added to all this, they are frequently obliged, for the maintenance of their families, to work in their gardens and fields like the commonest labourers: so that theirs are indeed lives of toil and hardship, and frequently of fear and tribulation, when the hand of persecution is extended over their land.

Nevertheless, they endure it all as "good soldiers and servants," and may be characterised as a band of faithful and heroic men.

Julio's father always intended him for the ministry, and, had he lived, would have used every effort to meet the expense of sending him to Switzerland to finish his education, as is the usual practice of all the Vaudois youths who are candidates for holy orders, there being no college in their own country where they can be prepared for the sacred profession. He, however, had died while his son was quite a child, and left his widow, though not in poverty, yet quite unequal to bear the heavy charges of the journey, and the expenses of a liberal education. Julio regretted this extremely, as it was the first wish of his heart to embrace the sacred profession for which he had been designed, and for which he was well qualified. Seeing no prospect of this wish being gratified, he had made up his mind to live the life of a peasant, and labour to maintain his mother and himself as long as she should live, and at her death he resolved to sell his little patrimony, and expend the produce in obtaining such an education as would enable him to be ordained, and succeed to the care of one of the Vaudois parishes.

When Monsieur Latour questioned him concerning his future plans and prospects, he told him his

intentions, which met with the good pastor's warm approbation, and he kindly invited him to spend some time every day at his own house, when he would gladly give him all the instruction in his power, and also provide him with what books he possessed, so that he might spend his time profitably, and be making some progress during his residence in the valleys.

This offer was gratefully accepted by Julio, who continued to visit the pastor every evening after the occupations of the day were over, until the time arrived for their removing to the châteaux; when he accompanied his friends to the wild romantic spot where their summer residence was fixed, with the intention of dividing his time between them and the pastor, who desired him to make his house a home whenever he found it convenient.

Several of the neighbours moved to the mountains on the same day as the Dumont family, and they formed a very numerous and picturesque-looking troop, as they wended their way along the narrow ravines overhung with craggy rocks; each family conducting their own flocks and herds, which were collected and kept together by the sagacious dogs. Eugene's was of superior size and strength, and had distinguished itself in several encounters

with the wolves, which occasionally descended the mountains, and committed havoc among the flocks of sheep and goats, though they seldom were bold enough to attack a human being, or to approach very near to the hamlets. Carlo was a general favourite with the family, and to those with whom he was acquainted he was gentle and playful; so much so that he would allow little Elinor to ride on his back, or to play any tricks she pleased, and wagged his tail with satisfaction when he felt her little arms round his shaggy neck. On this occasion it was his part to carry her up the mountain, and he performed the task with astonishing care and steadiness, to the little girl's unbounded delight, while she held a cord fastened round his neck by way of bridle, and tried to urge him on with blows from her tiny hand.

Her mother walked by her side, supporting old Agnes, while Constance and Pauline attended to the flocks; and Francesco, his son <sup>Luciano and Julia</sup> ~~John~~, and their neighbour André, carried Gerard on his litter by turns. Two or three mules conveyed the baggage; for the principal part of the furniture, and other articles necessary for their mountain life, had been carried to the ch<sup>^</sup>âlet the day previous to the general march.

It was a very bright and lovely day, and our

happy party pursued their journey leisurely, occasionally pausing that Gerard's porters might be changed and rested, and that Agnes might repose her aged limbs; when Elinor also dismounted from her docile steed, and rambled among the rocks with André's children, who followed with their mother, and gathered the brilliant flowers that grew profusely in every sunny nook, and even adorned the surfaces of the steep and rugged rocks, striking their roots into the crevices of the stone, and drawing nourishment, where it seemed no soil could penetrate. The summits of the mountains among which they were winding their way were covered with perpetual snow; and some of the ravines were entirely filled up with solid ice, upon which the rays of the sun fell, and were reflected in many rainbow colours from its broken surface, but had not power to penetrate the frozen mass, which had probably remained there for ages. These glaciers are among the most striking objects to be met with in Alpine scenery; and when viewed from a distance, one might imagine that a furious rush of water from the heights above had been suddenly arrested in its course, and frozen into a solid body with all its foaming waves. Frequently the glaciers terminate abruptly, and present a lofty wall of ice, broken into a thousand glittering points, or worn

away into deep caverns by the action of the water constantly flowing beneath; and from the thickness of the ice which forms the roof of these beautiful natural caverns, the whole of the inside appears of a rich deep green colour. Close to these icy caves and frozen rocks may sometimes be seen flowers of the gayest and most delicate hues, whilst the barley often waves its yellow head within a few yards of a mass of never-melted ice, forty or fifty feet in height.

The path to the sheltered glen where the châteaux were situated, led through many varied scenes; now passing through a thick wood of dark pine-trees, through which the warm rays of the sun scarcely penetrated, and then traversing smooth green meadows, covered by the flocks and herds of those villagers who had already changed their habitations; and again it wound among barren rocks and by the edge of frightful precipices, overhung by stupendous blocks of stone, which seemed ready to fall and crush the passing traveller.

All these objects were familiar to the rest of the party, but to Julio everything seemed almost new; and he gazed around him with admiration and delight. At length they reached their temporary home; and this was one of the loveliest valleys in all that land, so rich in the noblest works of nature.

A smooth lawn of considerable extent was spread before them as they entered their mountain domain, bounded on each side by towering rocks, rising one above the other as they became more distant, and terminating in bright glistening pinnacles of snow. The verdant pasture was ornamented with scattered trees of various kinds, and under the shade of some wide-spreading chestnuts stood the rustic but spacious ch<sup>^</sup>alet of Francesco, while Andr<sup>^</sup>e's was situated near the cliffs on the left. A noble cascade fell from the side of the precipitous rocks on the right hand, and formed a stream of pure water, flowing down the valley with many windings, until it terminated in a peaceful and beautiful lake; and beyond, as far as the eye could reach, were ranges of snow-capped mountains, the most distant of which seemed to lose themselves in the skies, and could hardly be distinguished from the fleecy clouds floating in the horizon.

A short time sufficed to establish the two families in their respective abodes, when they began their pastoral life, in which little variety occurred beyond the usual occupations of tending the flocks, and leading them to fresh pastures, generally performed by women; while the men cultivated small patches of ground, and occasionally ascended the mountains in search of the chamois, or chased the wolves that



lurked in the caves and holes of the rocks during the day and at night prowled round the châteaux in quest of plunder.

Julio frequently returned to Angrogna, to spend a few days in reading with the pastor, where the days did not pass so swiftly as when he was in the mountains with his cheerful young companions, either working with Eugene and his father in their barley fields, or helping Constance to collect and drive home her flock, while Elinor would either run by his side, or sit on his shoulder, or ride her shaggy Carlo, which, however, was frequently exchanged for the back of her favourite goat Annett. Julio's bugle was his constant companion, and a source of great delight to all the family, particularly to Constance and Eugene, who listened untiringly to their friend's melody, and thought that no music had ever been so sweet as his wild strains echoing from the hills. Eugene endeavoured to learn the art himself, and soon became a very tolerable proficient, to the satisfaction and pride of his sister, who doated on him, and, until Julio came, had always thought that no one was so brave, so good, or so intelligent as her brother.

## CHAPTER V.

It was the Sabbath-day, and a sacred stillness prevailed in the peaceful valley. The flocks were grazing round the huts, or wandering unheeded over the surrounding lawn ; for on this day they were not taken to a distance, and all the inhabitants of the châteaux enjoyed a day of holy rest devoted to the service of God. The distance was too great to allow them to attend the village church at Angrogna, but every Sunday evening during the summer it was Monsieur Latour's custom to follow his congregation into their mountain fastnesses, and to preach to them in some convenient spot where the inhabitants of all the châteaux in the neighbourhood could collect. Though the road from Angrogna to the valley, being very circuitous, made the distance appear great, yet it was not so far removed but that the sound of the church bells ringing for morning service could be distinctly heard on a calm day, and then the peasants would gather together near Francesco's hut, and old Gerard read to them the prayers used by the members of their

Church ; and it was a striking spectacle to see this good old man, leaning against the trunk of a tree for support, with his long white hair falling uncovered on his shoulders, reading the Word of God to the simple and happy peasantry, who had come over the neighbouring mountains to listen to him in this spacious temple, with no roof but the clear blue sky, and no walls but the towering rocks. It has been well observed that "the still voice of religion is but faintly heard amidst the crowds of life, but it is loud upon the mountains, where the grandeur of the work bears a visible and continued testimony to the grandeur of the Creator ;" and hard and insensible indeed must that human being be who can stand unmoved among these noble works of God, and, while gazing on the stupendous mountains, the everlasting snows, the magnificent forests and ceaseless cataracts, can forbear to exclaim in deep humility, "Lord, what is man that thou art mindful of him, or the son of man that thou so regardest him ?"

Julio had been spending some days with the pastor, and he accompanied him back to the chalet when he came to pay his usual visit, and, according to his custom, to pass the night with the Dumonts, as it would have been dangerous for him to attempt returning to Angrogna the same evening. His presence was considered an honour by any of his flock,

and his arrival was always greeted with joy by old and young, for his manners were as cheerful and benevolent as his character was devoted and pious. His religion was of that true and happy kind which, instead of casting a gloom on all around, sheds light and joy. He felt that he himself was a pardoned sinner, through the merits of Christ alone ; and in gratitude for this inestimable blessing thought no labour too severe, no sacrifice too great, by which he could prove his love, or further his Master's glory and the salvation of any of his fellow-creatures. He wished to diffuse amongst all with whom he conversed the peace which reigned in his own breast, and which the events of this world " could neither give nor take away." He was eminently a *happy man* ;—happy in the station in which God had placed him, and in the power of doing good while on earth ; and unspeakably happy in the prospect of entering hereafter into those joys which " eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man to conceive, but which God hath prepared for those that love Him."

When the evening service was over, and those peasants who came from a distance were dispersed towards their homes, the Dumont family, with the pastor, André and Genevieve, and their three children, repaired to a beautiful spot near the waterfall,

where Constance, assisted by Pauline, had arranged their evening meal on the soft turf, and where they could listen to the rushing waters, which were just near enough to sound melodious without fatiguing the ear. From this spot they could watch the sun sinking behind the mountains beyond the lake, and lighting up the unruffled surface with its golden rays. This little glade was situated on the side of the mountain, and the ascent was so short and easy that even Gerard could climb it with Eugene's aid without difficulty; and he was always one of the happiest of the party on any of these festive occasions. When the repast was finished, and Monsieur Latour had returned thanks, Gerard proposed they should close the evening by singing a hymn. In his younger days he had been celebrated for possessing the finest voice in the Commune, and he was still able to take a part, and join with his children and grandchildren, who all inherited his fine ear and voice. He seated himself on a bank of turf near the foot of the rock forming the background to their rustic saloon, and all his family grouped around him, some sitting on the stones and roots of overhanging trees, and others standing, or leaning against the rock; while little Elinor lay at his feet, looking up in his face with a childish delight, as the old man led the pious strain, and was joined by all

the rest in singing, to a native and solemn air. a hymn of praise and thanksgiving composed by their pastor for his flock. Julio accompanied them with his bugle; and, being in the open air, the tones blended sweetly with the voices, and formed a concert more pleasing and imposing than many an elaborate and well-arranged performance. The soft murmuring of the waterfall, as it fell into a rocky basin at some depth below the platform where they were assembled, seemed to harmonise with the music; and everything was so calm, so lovely, and so hallowed by feelings of devotion, that in the eyes of Monsieur Latour, who sat contemplating the scene at a little distance, it appeared like a little glimpse of heaven upon earth.

The moon had risen high above the rugged mountains to the east before this happy group descended to the plain, and retired to their respective habitations, at some distance from each other; Francesco's chalet, or rather the group of huts composing his residence, being situated nearly in the centre of the plain; while André's lay near the foot of the mountain, on the opposite side of the valley to where they had this evening assembled.

The following morning, Monsieur Latour left his hospitable hosts, and proceeded by the mountain path to visit some other members of his scattered

flock, and the Dumonts returned to their usual avocations. Julio accompanied Constance, and assisted her and Carlo in conducting the sheep and goats to their more distant pastures, leaving none of the flock in the valley, except Elinor's favourite goat, which was allowed the privilege of remaining at home with its kid, for the amusement of its little mistress. The pasture to which Constance drove her flock on this day was situated on the other side of the mountain ; and the path led, by a winding ascent at the side of the cascade, to the gorge from which the water rushed forth. It appeared to have been formed by some violent convulsion of nature that had rent the summit of the mountain, and given vent to the waters of a lonely little lake, that lay so deeply imbedded in surrounding rocks as rarely to be shone upon by the warm beams of the sun. No shrub or herbage grew in this desolate spot ; the borders of the lake were steep and rugged, and even the bright moss with its rose-coloured blossoms, and the brilliant gentianella adorning the barren sides of almost every other mountain, were not here to be found. The waters looked cold, dark, and deep, and scarcely a bird was to be seen flitting over the surface. An eagle had built its nest on one of the loftiest pinnacles of the overhanging cliffs, and its wild cry was heard above their heads, as Constance

and Julio drove the flock along the narrow and stony path by the shores of the lake. Fearing that the eagle might descend from its eyrie and bear away one of the young lambs or goats as a prey for its nestlings, Julio blew a loud blast on his bugle, and the sound flew over the placid lake, and was reverberated from rock to rock till it subsided like distant thunder. The vibration of the air caused by this shrill blast disturbed the balance of a large mass of rock poised on another projecting block immediately over the path, and it fell with a tremendous crash.

The flock had passed on, and were beyond the impending danger, except one poor lamb which had laid itself down to rest beneath the rock. Constance rushed forward to frighten away her little charge as the mass came bounding down; and had not Julio with the swiftness of lightning darted towards her and snatched her back, she would have shared the fate of the lamb, and been crushed to atoms, as the stone rolled over it and fell with a tremendous splash into the lake, disturbing its quiet surface, and causing long rippling waves which extended to the other shore. Constance trembled as she saw the destruction from which she had been rescued, and gratefully thanked her preserver, who had so providentially saved her life; but she could



not help shedding a tear over the mangled body of the poor little lamb, which Julio had removed from the path and covered with stones; and this little lonely grave was never afterwards passed by Constance without feelings of deep gratitude that she had been spared a similar death.

They pursued their way when this task was done, and when they had passed the lake, came out upon a smooth green meadow, spangled with flowers, and lighted with sunshine. A few goats were already feeding on the fresh grass, and a young girl was watching them, and holding a distaff at the same time, with which she had been spinning, till her work was interrupted by the sounds reaching her ears from the ravine that enclosed the lake. She had approached towards the entrance of the dark gorge, and was listening for a repetition of the sounds, when the flocks of Constance issued forth, followed by the young shepherdess and Julio. The little girl accosted them, and inquired the cause of what she had heard. Constance informed her, and in her turn interrogated their new acquaintance as to where she lived, and by what path she had reached this secluded spot. She told them her name was Mariette Guyon, and that she lived with her grandfather and grandmother in a hamlet at no great distance, but that she had never brought her

goats to that pasture before, as the way to it was rough and difficult, and her grandmother had not before trusted her to go so far alone.

After some conversation, during which Mariette discovered her companions were Protestants, she told them that she had been brought up a Roman Catholic, that being the religion of her parents, and also of her grandfather and grandmother. She added that her father lived at a village many miles from the hamlet where she dwelt, and she very seldom saw him or her mother. She wished to live at home, she said, but her grandmother was old and infirm, and requested she would come and reside with her.

“I am not happy, though,” she added, “for I want to be instructed in the true religion,—in *your* religion,—and my grandfather will not allow me to go to the Protestant school: but I have an aunt who married a Protestant, and who lives at Angrogna, and I hope that some day he will let me go and visit her; for I know that she is now of the same religion as her husband, and she would teach me the right faith.”

“What is your aunt’s name?” asked Constance; “for we also live at Angrogna, and probably we are acquainted with her. One of my mother’s greatest friends was formerly, I have heard, a Roman

Catholic, and perhaps she is your relation. Her name is Genevieve, the wife of André Bertholde."

"Oh yes, she is my aunt, but I have not seen her for many years. She used to love me very much when I was a little child, and I can remember her kind face now."

"She is still as kind and good as ever; and I am sure would be delighted to see you. She is now living in a chalet down in the valley beyond the lake, and if you will come here to-morrow, I will ask her to accompany me, and meet you."

"Oh, thank you, thank you!" exclaimed the little girl; "I will be quite sure to come, to see my dear aunt Genevieve; and I will ask her to try and get my father's permission for me to visit her, and then she will tell me all I want so much to know. I am sure our religion is not the right one. I feel as if God had told me so, and I can never rest till I have heard the truth. I have conversed with few persons of the Protestant religion, but I often keep my flock near a rocky path leading down to La Porta, and when I see a peasant pass, I ask him where he comes from. If he names a Catholic village I say no more, and let him pass on; but if he comes from a Protestant hamlet, I put questions to him, and sometimes, by this means, I gain a little information, which I treasure up in my

memory. Will not you teach me?" added she, looking earnestly in Julio's face.\*

"Willingly," he replied; "since God has put it into your heart to seek after the right way, I will do my best to guide you into it. But His Word is the only sure guide, and when we meet you here to-morrow, I will lend you a Bible which has been a treasure to me, and I pray that it may prove one to you also."

Mariette thanked him warmly for this kind promise, and they all continued for a long time in serious conversation, during which the little girl shewed so much intelligence, and deep anxiety for spiritual instruction, that Julio and Constance were extremely interested with her.

They parted with mutual promises of meeting again at the same hour on the following day; and Mariette left them with a happy and grateful heart, while they retraced their steps to the châteaux, full of plans for the poor child's future instruction.

\* The story of Mariette Guyon is founded on fact.

## CHAPTER VI.

CONSTANCE related to her mother the meeting with Mariette, and then proceeded with Julio to Genevieve's chalet to tell her how anxious her poor little niece was to see her, and also her earnest desire to be instructed in the Protestant religion. Genevieve readily consented to accompany them to the pasture where they had appointed to meet her ; and the following morning they again followed the winding path by the waterfall, and passed the dark lake, and reached the sunny meadow at the time agreed upon.

Mariette was there before them, and they found her sitting near the spot where they must come out from the rocky valley, her distaff lying idle by her side, and her eyes fixed in the direction from which she expected to see her promised visitors arrive. The moment they appeared she rose, and ran to meet them, and threw herself into the arms of her aunt with tears of joy. Genevieve was equally delighted to see her little niece, and Julio and Constance left them in earnest conversation,

while they followed their flocks and counted them, to see that none had strayed away from their pasture.

When they returned to their companions, Julio put his Bible into the hands of Mariette, and told her that she might take it home with her, and keep it for some weeks, or even until they returned from the mountains to Angrogna; but she told him with many thanks, that much as she desired to have the precious book at home, yet she could not venture to take it, as it would cause severe displeasure from her grandfather, who was a very strict Catholic, and had already remarked the pleasure she took in conversing with any Protestant children with whom she could get acquainted, and had reproved her for it. But she said that she should be very happy if he would allow Constance to bring the Bible with her whenever she came to that pasture, and there they could read portions of it together, and Constance could explain it to her. This plan was agreed upon, and the little party separated; Genevieve having promised to write to her brother Pierre Guyon, and request him to allow his daughter to visit her while they remained in the mountains.

For many days Constance continued regularly to meet her new friend, and never failed to carry with her the Word of Life, for the comfort and instruc-

tion of the pious little girl, who increased in knowledge and faith, and in love and gratitude for her kind instructress.

One morning Constance was repairing to the mountain, and driving her flocks back to the pasture, after they had, as usual, remained during the Sabbath in the meadows round the *châlet*. She was alone, for Julio and Eugene were engaged with Francesco in reaping their scanty harvest on their little farm at Angrogna, to which place they had gone a few days before for that purpose, and were not expected to return to the *châlet* until the end of the week. Carlo was her companion, and was assisting her in driving the goats along the rugged path between the mountain and the lake, when she beheld little Mariette running with all the speed which terror and dismay could give, down the ravine towards her. Some few straggling goats were before her, and the rest of the flock were following her in confusion. The affrighted girl was almost breathless, but as soon as she saw Constance, she cried out :—

“Run, Constance, run, with all your speed! there is a wolf behind me ;” and at the same moment the voracious creature appeared on a rock she had just passed, and sprang down upon a goat in the path beneath him, and began to tear the wretch-

ed animal to pieces. This allowed Mariette time to reach Constance, who was an intrepid girl, and endued with great presence of mind, who, instead of taking flight the moment she saw the danger, and abandoning her little friend, stood still with her shepherd's staff in her hand, to receive, and if possible to protect her; for she knew that a wolf, though a cruel creature, is not a courageous one, and may be often daunted by a determined countenance and an appearance of resistance, while flight only encourages it to pursue and attack the fugitive. She also depended on the well-known strength and courage of the faithful Carlo to defend them, and she was not disappointed. He was at some distance behind her, bringing up a straggling sheep, when the enemy made his appearance; but he no sooner heard the voice of Constance calling to him for assistance, than he bounded forward, and with a yell of fierce defiance rushed upon the wolf, who abandoned his mangled prey, and turned upon his assailant with eyes of fire, and jaws reeking with the blood of the slaughtered goat.

The battle was long and furious, and Constance could not bring herself to leave the spot until it was decided, though Mariette hung trembling on her arm, and entreated her to fly back to the châlet; while the flock of the terrified child rushed past the



combatants, and meeting that of Constance in the narrow way, the poor animals were all mingled in confusion. The panic spread amongst them, and the whole affrighted herd ran off down the valley, passing the two young shepherdesses with such speed and violence as nearly to precipitate them into the lake.

Meanwhile the strife continued, and the wild yells of the wolf and the deep growling of his antagonist told they were fighting for life or death. But presently the savage cries of the wolf became fainter ; the struggle was less easily maintained, and the victory would soon have been decided in favour of Carlo, had not a reinforcement arrived unexpectedly on the other side. Another wolf was seen approaching stealthily down the rocks, and preparing to spring on the dog from behind ; when Constance, thinking only of the safety of the noble animal, shouted as loudly as she could, and ran forward a few steps, brandishing her staff, but drew back in terror when she saw the wolf turning from the combatants and approaching, though slowly, in the direction in which she stood. She called loudly to Carlo, who had that moment laid his antagonist weltering on the ground, and, without pausing to recover breath, he flew to the rescue of his mistress. But the wolf was probably unwilling to risk sharing

the fate of its expiring companion, and no sooner saw the dog bounding towards him, than he turned round and escaped up to the side of the mountain, with astonishing speed and activity, and was soon out of sight.

Carlo was contented with one triumph, and did not pursue the routed foe, but quietly attended Constance and Mariette down the valley to Francesco's cottage, where they were joyfully received by Madeleine and Pauline, who had been greatly alarmed at the sudden and confused return of the flocks. The conqueror was rewarded for his toils and his wounds by the praises and caresses of the whole party, of which he seemed duly sensible, for he wagged his tail, and capered about to express his delight, till at last, in one of his joyous bounds, he overthrew poor little Elinor, and rolled over her on the ground.

It was impossible for Mariette to return to her grandfather's hut alone; and indeed she had been so much terrified, and was so fatigued with her flight, that it was resolved she should remain in the valley until the return of Francesco and the young men from Angrogna. But as her friends would naturally be greatly alarmed at her absence unless assured of her safety, André proposed to go himself over the mountain, and tell them all that

had happened, and obtain permission for her to remain with her aunt until the beginning of the following week ; and he accordingly armed himself with a gun, and set forth, accompanied by a couple of dogs, that he might be prepared, should he meet with the runaway wolf prowling near his path. It was a very unusual occurrence for any of these animals to attack a flock by daylight, except during the winter months, when hunger sometimes compelled them to such boldness ; and André thought it probable that a number of them must have come to the neighbourhood together in quest of plunder ; for Mariette said, that before she saw the wolf pursuing her, she heard strange sounds in a valley beyond the pasture ground, which terrified her very much ; and she was preparing to return to her home when the savage animal appeared in her way, and drove her to seek refuge down the ravine.

It was very late when André returned from his long walk, and he told Mariette that her grandfather had been very unwilling to consent to her remaining so long with her aunt, but that, by the persuasion of his wife, he had at length agreed to it : at the same time he upbraided him with having caused Genevieve to forsake her former religion, and warned him not to attempt to shake the faith of his granddaughter.

Mariette remained very happily in the valley, in the society of her aunt and her little cousins, and her kind friend Constance, to whom she became every day more attached, and she dreaded the arrival of the day when she would be obliged to return to her home. On the Sabbath she formed one of the small congregation assembled to join in the prayers read by old Gerard, which afforded her great satisfaction; for she had never before heard any form of worship conducted in a language she could understand. But when in the evening Monsieur Latour arrived, accompanied by Francesco, Eugene, and Julio, and performed the evening service according to the beautiful liturgy of Geneva, which is principally used by the Vaudois pastors, and afterwards addressed his audience with a plain and forcible discourse on some of the principal doctrines of the Protestant Church, the little girl felt as if every word was intended expressly for her; and she listened with almost breathless attention, while she inwardly blessed God who had put her in the way of obtaining the instruction she so ardently desired.

When the service was over, Monsieur Latour, who had remarked the deep interest she took in everything he had said, inquired who she was; and when he heard her story, he felt convinced that "God

had called the child," and put it into her heart to "stand in the paths, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way," that she might "walk therein ;" and though in general he made a point of not interfering in any way with the flocks of his Roman Catholic brethren, yet in this case he felt it to be his duty to do all in his power to enlighten poor Mariette's mind. He kindly conversed with her for a long time, and exhorted her to patience and resolution ; not doubting but that the Lord, who had "begun a good work" in her, would also accomplish it unto the end.

The next day the little girl and her flock were escorted back to her grandfather's cottage in safety by Julio and Eugene, accompanied also by the valiant Carlo ; and from that time she saw her new friends no more for many months ; for neither she nor Constance ever led their flocks again to the pasture where they had passed so many happy hours in reading the Word of God together, as they feared the wolves might still be lurking in the surrounding rocks.

The news of the daring incursion of these animals had alarmed the whole neighbourhood, and the peasants who resided in the châteaux on that part of the mountain requested Francesco, as one of the boldest and most experienced of the hunters, to lead

them to the chase of these terrors of the sheep-fold ; and a day was fixed for the animating sport, which was eagerly anticipated by the young men. Julio had already been out with Eugene several times in pursuit of the partridges, grouse, and other small game, found in great abundance on the mountains ; but he had never yet joined in the chase of the wolf or the lynx, which is also occasionally discovered in some of the wildest regions of this country.

The guns were then examined and put in order, and the best dogs were also selected, as none but such as are possessed of great courage and spirit will persevere in the chase of the wolf. Of course, Carlo was appointed generalissimo of the canine forces, as a reward for his good services ; and by sunrise on the appointed day the band of hunters were collected with their dogs at the door of Francesco's chalet, where they were regaled with black bread, goats'-milk cheese, and new milk from Constance's flock, preparatory to the fatigue of the excursion. They also took with them a sufficient stock of the same simple food to support the party for two or three days, as they were resolved not to relinquish the chase, but to pursue their enemies over hill and dale until they had either exterminated them, or driven them so far away among the bleak and unin-

habited mountains as to leave no fear of their returning to commit further ravages among their flocks, during the time which still remained before they should return to their villages for the winter.

The hunters set forth in high spirits, and the dogs appeared to be aware they were going in pursuit of no ignoble game, for they made the rocks resound with their cries of joy as they bounded before their masters up the steep ravine. Constance stood at the door of the cottage as the animated party ascended the hill, and when they were passing round a projecting rock which would hide them from her sight, she waved her hand to Eugene and Julio, and returned to her domestic occupations, while she breathed a prayer for their safety and success.

The sportsmen pursued their way by the side of the lake, and passed the carcass of the slaughtered wolf, from which the birds of prey had torn away all the flesh, and the bones lay whitening in the sun and wind. Several hours were spent in traversing the various little valleys opening upon the elevated pasture-ground, and climbing the precipitous rocks to discover the hiding-places of the wolves, but without success ; and the only game they met with were a few partridges and marmottes. When the evening began to close in, they then found them-

selves on the other side of the range of mountains, in a wild and barren country, without a single habitation to be seen, and much too far from their own valley to admit of their returning that night. They therefore determined to take some refreshment, and then descend into a deep valley lying beneath them, bordered on one side by a thick fringe of dark pines, under whose boughs they intended to seek shelter for the night; but while they were resting themselves, and partaking of their frugal repast, the howl of a wolf was distinctly heard from the opposite side of the valley, and the sound was immediately answered by all the dogs. They pricked up their ears, and looked impatiently at their masters, as if waiting for the signal of attack; while the hunters hastily resumed their weapons, and prepared for the pursuit. When all were ready, Francesco gave the word of command, and they advanced in regular order down the hill; whilst the obedient dogs restrained their vivacity, and preceded the hunters in silence, wishing if possible to approach the covert of pine-trees without alarming their foes.

The deep and loud cries with which the dogs had replied to the first sound they had heard from the wolves, had aroused the attention of these wary creatures; and they were all on the alert,

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watching for the approach of their assailants, to ascertain whether it would be most prudent to fight or fly.

When the party of hunters entered the grove of pines, they saw the fierce eyes of several wolves glaring through the gloomy shade caused by the thick overhanging trees ; but when the savage creatures saw the number and strength of their enemies, and heard the wild cries of the hounds, which burst forth the moment they received the signal from their masters, they decided on seeking safety by flight, and the whole troop rushed from the covert, and galloped up the mountain, over rocks and stones, at a speed which bade fair to leave their pursuers at a distance.

They were followed, however, with courage and perseverance by both men and dogs, who were resolved if possible to keep them in sight. The wolves were about a dozen in number, and frequently paused to look back upon their enemies, uttering growls of fierce defiance, and then, as they approached almost within gun-shot, again retreated. The mountain was high and steep, and several deep chasms lay near its summit, partially filled with ice and snow. On the brink of one of these ravines the flight of the wolves was checked, the chasm being too wide for them to spring over, and they

could not turn back without passing within reach of the guns of the huntsmen; they, therefore, paused on the verge of the precipice, which allowed the foremost of the dogs to come up to them, and the conflict began. Several of the wolves which were not engaged in the first onset made a sudden rush down the hill, between the chasm and the approaching hunters, and by this means escaped; for the attention of every one was at that moment occupied in urging the rest of the dogs to the attack. The struggle was so violent, and the opposing forces were so mingled together, that for some time the huntsmen were afraid to fire lest they should wound the dogs.

One of the finest hounds in the party, whilst in the act of overpowering his foe, dragged it too near the slippery edge of the precipice, and they fell together into the deep bed of snow beneath, and sank yelling and struggling through the yielding mass, till their cries were heard no more. This was the only loss of life on the side of the hunters, while four of the wolves soon lay dead on the ground, and two more, which were trying to escape from the fray, were shot by Francesco and Julio. All the rest had saved themselves by flight when the battle commenced, so that nothing remained for the hunters but to seek for the best shelter the dreary

situation could afford, with the intention of pursuing the fugitives when daylight again returned. They therefore descended into the valley, and, collecting a quantity of scattered pine branches, soon made a blazing fire for the purpose of scaring away the wolves, and lay down to sleep around it, while one of the party supplied the fire with fuel, and kept watch lest any of the foe should approach.

Before sunrise the hunters were again on foot, ready to renew the pursuit, guided by the instinct of the hounds, which led them on the track of the wolves, round the mountain they had ascended the evening before. About mid-day they arrived at a secluded hamlet occupied by a few rude peasants, who appeared to be in the greatest poverty, but who, nevertheless, received them most hospitably, and refreshed them with some milk from the few goats which were scattered round their huts, picking a scanty subsistence among the rocks.

They soon perceived the object which had brought their visitors to this desolate spot, and informed them they had heard the growling of wolves the preceding night, and that the marauders had evidently passed very near the hamlet, as one of their little flock was missing. They had traced drops of blood for a considerable distance up a pathway formed by the goats, leading round the north side

of the mountain; and they had no doubt that the wolves had pursued that path, and were now lurking in the barren and uninhabited region beyond, until the darkness should again return and favour their depredations.

The hunters, therefore, determined to follow their prey into these rocky fastnesses, and use every exertion to discover their dens and destroy these ravenous creatures. On further inquiry of the peasants, they found that if they descended on the southern side of the mountain they would find themselves on the borders of the lake terminating their own little valley, and would be able to go round the upper end of it, and again take a mountain path which would conduct them along the side of the hills bounding the vale to the south-west. This path was well known to Francesco, as it led to a pasture where his own flocks were frequently conducted by his daughter, and from which spot there was an easy descent into the valley near André's cottage.

The hospitable peasants invited them to pass the night in their huts, and also offered to join the hunters in searching for the retreat of the wolves, in the wild and almost inaccessible tract of country lying immediately below the region of perpetual snow. The party was also further reinforced by

some shaggy and fierce-looking dogs kept by the poor mountaineers as a protection to their scanty flock, and which were almost as wild and savage as the enemy they had to contend with.

Thus strengthened, the sportsmen again set forward, and extended their line as widely as possible, in the hope that, if the wolves had really taken refuge in the spot where the peasants suspected them to be, they might surround and drive them up a rocky ravine, from whence it would be impossible for them to escape. After having pursued the narrow path formed by the goats for some time, they entered on the laborious part of the expedition ; for the side of the mountain became so steep and rugged, that they were compelled to climb on their hands and knees, or cling to the projections on the face of the rock, while they made their way along a narrow ledge, where no foot but that of a mountain goat, or that of an equally active hunter of the Alps, would have dared to venture. Frequently they came upon deep chasms, rent, as if by some violent convulsion, into the bosom of the mountain, where they were forced to leap over by the help of their long poles, and with which they also used to try the depth of the beds of snow that lay unmelted in the hollows, and were not at that season of the year frozen sufficiently hard to afford a secure

footing. Many times they sank to their waists in these snowy beds, and might have sunk to rise no more but for the ready help of their companions, who, stretching out their poles, thus dragged them again on the firm ground.

Julio found it extremely difficult to follow Francesco and Eugene, as he had been so little accustomed to this Alpine mode of hunting; but he had a steady foot and a bold heart, and by the help of his friends he surmounted every difficulty, and experienced all the keen enjoyment felt by a native of the mountains while following his game through danger and fatigue that would daunt the less hardy inhabitant of the plains. In the midst of the most perilous ascents, Francesco and his companions heard the barking of the dogs and the shouts of some of the hunters, who had taken another direction and were approaching the north of the rocky ravine. They pressed onwards, and on reaching the summit of the precipice they had been climbing, saw three wolves rush past them within a few paces of the spot on which they stood, followed by the dogs in full cry, and making for their retreat in the deep recesses of the ravine. Francesco, with the quickness of thought, swung round his gun, which was suspended at his back, and brought one of the savage beasts howling to the ground. The others

turned round and shewed their terrible teeth, but did not venture to wait for their pursuers, who followed them with threats and cries up the narrow valley.

Several other wolves had already been scared by the men and dogs from the other side, and had retreated to their hiding-place, so that when the hounds rushed up, urged on by their masters, to the attack, the battle became fierce and general. Some of the best marksmen had climbed up to the top of the rocks overhanging the ravine and commanding a view of the combatants; and from this elevated situation they fired, whenever they could find an opportunity, with so accurate an aim that ere long every wolf lay dead or dying on the ground, as also several of the dogs, which had been torn to pieces by the fangs of the infuriated animals.

The triumph being complete, and the object of the expedition successfully attained, the hunters lost no time in returning towards the huts of the peasants; for the night was rapidly advancing, and it was, if possible, more dangerous and difficult to descend the mountain than it had been to climb to the elevation where they now stood. The short summer the inhabitants of this wild country are favoured with had nearly passed away, and the tints of autumn were visible on the few shrubs and

bushes seen in this uncultivated district. The days had already considerably shortened, and even some snow had fallen in the more elevated regions, to warn the villagers that the time was approaching when they must abandon their rude châteaux and return to their more substantial habitations. The frequent recurrence also of heavy mists, rolling down from the summits of the mountains after the sun had set, rendered it very dangerous to remain too late where they then were, the vapour being frequently so thick as entirely to hide every surrounding object, and render it impossible to find the track, if any such existed.

The hunters feared such an event on the present occasion, and hastened back with all the speed they could use to the desolate little huts, where the women had prepared cheerful fires of blazing pine branches and a repast of such provisions as their scanty stores could furnish. The fears they had entertained that the mist would that night overspread the whole mountain were not groundless; and on the morrow they found the atmosphere so thick and hazy, that they could hardly have hoped to find their way home, had not several of the peasants offered to guide them; but with their assistance they accomplished the difficult route, and at length found themselves above the well-known



lake at the head of their own valley, and could just discern its placid waters through the intervening mist.

Here they dismissed their guides with many thanks, and proceeded on their way, conducted by Francesco; but the fog became more dense as the day advanced, instead of dispersing, as they had hoped it would do; and though Francesco was familiar with the path, he several times found that he had unconsciously diverged from it, and much time was lost in retracing their steps.

Occasionally, also, some of the party became separated from the rest, and the thickness of the atmosphere so deadened all sound that their shouts were scarcely audible, and they were obliged to fire their guns as signals to their companions, who replied in the same manner, and then waited for the stragglers to come up to them.

In consequence of all these impediments, it was late in the afternoon when they descended into the valley, and stopped at André's cottage. Neither Genevieve nor any of the children were there, which did not greatly surprise them, much of their time being generally spent at Francesco's *châlet*, and they might naturally expect that the hunters would return altogether, as they did not know what course they might have pursued. Thither, therefore, the

whole party repaired—but, alas ! did not meet with the joyful reception they had anticipated, for all was grief and apprehension.

The first exclamation of Madeleine and Genevieve was, “Have you seen Constance and Elinor? which way did you come?” and the sad truth was instantly apparent. That morning, being Saturday, Constance had set off as usual to bring home the flocks, and had taken little Elinor with her, as the pasture was not very far up the mountain behind André’s cottage; Annette had also accompanied them to carry the little girl when she became fatigued. The mist, which had been so thick in the higher part of the mountains, had only been a slight haze when Constance left the valley, but had gradually increased; and her mother felt greatly alarmed as hour after hour elapsed without her returning. She had gone to Genevieve’s cottage, and, attended by Pauline, ascended the pathway in the direction they knew Constance must have taken, as far as they could possibly venture; for the higher they mounted, the thicker became the descending vapours; and, having several times nearly lost the track, the afflicted mother returned with her companions, weeping, to her deserted home, there to wait in fear and sorrow for the arrival of the hunters.

She knew that they would surely come back that evening, as the next day would be the Sabbath ; and having already been absent for two days, she hoped to have seen them return many hours before they did so. She had also tried to hope that they might, from the time which had elapsed since they departed, have gone round the mountain range, and so would descend by the path Constance had followed—as in fact they had done, but not with the result the distracted Madeleine had hoped. They had seen nothing of Constance or of the flocks ; and the most gloomy fears took possession of every breast, when they thought of the poor girl, and her darling little sister, passing the night alone and unsheltered on the bleak mountain.

Had Carlo been with her, this danger would in all probability have been averted ; for the sagacious creature would have traced the way, and led her home, when no human being would have been able to do so. To his intelligence they now looked as the best hope for yet recovering her before it might be too late. They brought some articles of her apparel, which they held to him, at the same time repeating her name, and pointing towards the mountain. He looked up with an expression which seemed to sympathise with their own feelings, and uttering a low whine, appeared impatient to start

forth on the search. Eugene and Julio shared his eagerness, and would have rushed out without pausing to rest or refresh themselves after all the fatigue they had undergone, had not Francesco restrained them, and insisted on their waiting till the whole party of hunters had taken some refreshment, and provided themselves with dry branches of fir and pine to use as flambeaux, if, as he feared, the night should set in before they had found the poor wanderers. This done, they again departed from their home, led by Carlo, who ran before them with his nose to the ground, and immediately took the path by which Constance had ascended the mountain.

## CHAPTER VII.

WE must leave these indefatigable mountaineers to prosecute their difficult search, and turn to poor Constance and her little charge. She had gone as usual to the pasture where she had left her flock on the preceding day, and, on counting them, she found that several were missing, and had probably strayed further up the mountain. She therefore determined to seek them, though the increasing fog gave her warning that she must not long delay her return; and placing Elinor on the back of the docile goat, she led her by her side, pausing occasionally to gather wild flowers for the happy little girl. She did not find her stray sheep, and imprudently wandered on so far, that when at length she turned to retrace her steps, she soon became confused. The gathering mists had already changed the appearance of all around her, and she could no longer distinguish the clump of trees sheltering her father's cottage, and which she knew lay far beneath her.

She endeavoured, however, to follow the same path she had ascended, and to recall the different

rocks and eminences she had passed ; and for some time was successful. But the atmosphere became thicker every moment, and long before she came to the little plain where her flock had been left, she had deviated from the right way, and was wandering in the direction leading towards the lake. The sky was so overcast that she could not see the sun to guide her ; and when she became aware of having lost her way, terror nearly overcame her for a moment ; but she did not give way to despair. Again she turned, and sought carefully for some traces by which to recognise her path, and once she thought she had recovered it, and moved rapidly on, leading Annette with her little rider, when she came suddenly to the verge of a precipice, against which the mist was curling so thickly that she could not discover its depth.

While gazing into the abyss she distinctly heard the sound of a gun, which was immediately followed by another, and she thought they must be fired by her own friends, who were either returning home that way, or had already been to the châteaux, and were now in search of her and her sister ; and she shouted with all her strength, but the sound was deadened by the thickness of the vapour around ; and her father and his companions passed along the path below, unconscious of her cries and distress.

She could not follow them, for the precipice was nearly perpendicular ; and finding no other way, she drew back in agony of mind, and sat down for a few moments to rest and to consider what course she should pursue ; while Elinor, seeing her distressed countenance, and filled with vague fears she could not understand or express, began to weep bitterly. Constance tried to comfort her, and again rose up to make another effort to find the way, but it was unavailing ; she only wandered further from her home ; and when the shades of evening began to close around her, she felt desolate indeed, and her heart, though a firm and courageous one, died within her.

Her chief distress was for her dear little Elinor, who complained bitterly of cold, and hunger, and fatigue ; and as Constance had now no hope but that she must pass the night in their present dreary situation, she endeavoured to devise the best accommodation she could procure. The air became chill and damp, and the wind rose when the sun had set, though not sufficiently to clear away the mist. Constance sought for a sheltered nook among the rocks, and piled up as many stones as she could lift, to make a little shelter for their lonely resting-place.

She then seated herself on the ground, and,

taking her poor little sister on her knee, milked the goat which had so providentially accompanied them, and thus obtained some nourishment for herself and Elinor, which they so much needed. Annette lay down close to them, and greatly contributed to their warmth, and Constance wrapped her little darling in part of her own clothes, for she thought she was better able to bear the cold than her sister, and the poor little girl soon sunk into a comfortable sleep.

Constance fervently implored the blessing and protection of her heavenly Father, endeavouring to trust in Him for safety, and to forget her fears and sufferings in sleep—but it was in vain; though greatly fatigued she could not close her eyes for a moment, and long indeed did that wild and dreary night appear. Towards midnight the wind rose high, and the clouds, which had totally obscured the sky, now gathered into thick masses and threatened an approaching storm. Presently the rain began to fall heavily, and the roar of distant thunder was heard by the terrified girl. The storm increased, and seemed to break over the mountain, and the forked lightning almost dazzled her eyes, as it flashed immediately over her head, and lit up the whole surrounding country with its bright and momentary gleams.



By this lurid light Constance now saw the lake which washed the foot of the mountain far beneath her, and she knew that she was many miles from her dear home, and in a desolate uninhabited spot, frequently haunted by wolves and lynxes. She shuddered, and drew her little sister closer to her, as if she felt that though she could not protect herself, yet that to defend the helpless little creature she could exert the strength of a lion.

Elinor awoke, and, looking hurriedly up, saw by the glare of the lightning that she was in the arms of Constance; but the pealing thunder terrified the child, and her tears added to her sister's distress, until at length she sobbed herself again to sleep. The loud reverberations of every clap of thunder, as it was re-echoed from mountain to mountain, drowned every other sound.

To her joy and gratitude, the morning at length broke, and the light of heaven came to cheer her, unchecked by the heavy mist which the day before shrouded everything in gloom. The storm had cleared the air, and the sun rose bright and beautiful; and Constance tried to get up that she might look around her, and again seek to ascertain the way to her home. But the cold and damp had struck into her limbs, and she found that she could hardly move; she contrived, however, to rise, and

creep forth from her rude shelter, and then she clearly saw the lake and the mountains beyond. She had wandered so far to the north that she had lost sight of the valley, and knew that many a weary mile must be traversed before she could reach it again ; and how, in her present weak and suffering state, could she hope to travel so far, and lead Annette and Elinor ?

With slow and painful steps she began her difficult journey, and after some time, to her great joy, came upon a narrow path, and hoped that by following it she should either find the way towards the valley, or arrive at some hamlet or scattered *châlet*, where she could procure assistance. Many a time was she forced to rest her weary limbs, and try in vain to cheer and pacify her little companion, who was very impatient of the long and painful ride she was compelled to take ; at last her courage nearly forsook her, and she felt that she must lie down and die, and that she and her lovely little sister would be a prey to wolves and vultures. But the eye of God was watching over her, and His ear was open to the cry she had raised to Him for help. She turned her languid eyes, and saw the figure of a man on the summit of an eminence above her, and who, immediately on perceiving her, hastened down, when, to her inexpressible

gratitude, she beheld the kind face of Monsieur Latour.

It was Sunday, and he had been preaching to the inhabitants of a few châteaux situated in a little valley, not more than half a mile from the spot where poor Constance had passed the night, and was now proceeding to Francesco's cottage to perform the service, as usual. He had slept in the hamlet the preceding night, to enable him to accomplish all the labours of the day, intending to return to Angrognia in the afternoon, to address his own village congregation.

His astonishment was great at finding Constance so far from her home, and accompanied by her little sister. She briefly told him her story; and when he saw how weak and ill she was, and how entirely incapable of walking back to the valley, he desired her to remain where she was, while he should hasten to the hamlet and procure assistance to convey her home. He soon returned with several of the peasants, carrying a rude door they had taken from one of the huts; and placing Constance upon it they proceeded down the narrow path as gently as they could, followed by Monsieur Latour with little Elinor in his arms. The procession moved but slowly, for the way was rough and difficult, and Constance became rapidly so much worse that

she could hardly bear the motion of her simple vehicle.

Madeleine looked forth from the door of her cottage when the day dawned on that Sabbath; and she did not feel as she was wont to do on that day. Her eyes were red with weeping, and her heart was sad. She had passed a sleepless night, listening vainly for the return of her husband, and picturing to herself the dreadful situation of her beloved children, unprotected from the violence of the storm then raging over her head. She did not fear for Francesco or his companions, for they were well used to brave the inclemency of the weather; but her gentle Constance, her darling Elinor—how would they be able to endure the severity of that night?

Many and fervent were the prayers to God for the safety of her children, and for strength and resignation to bear the trial which might be awaiting her; and but for her trust in Him, she felt as if her senses would fail her. She had entreated Francesco to allow her to go with him, and assist in seeking for the poor wanderers; but this he positively forbade, and left her to the care of her good friend Genevieve, promising that the moment any trace was discovered of the lost children, he would despatch a swift messenger to inform her; and also that if they were found in safety, he and all his

friends would fire a volley with their guns, in the hope that the sound might reach her ears, and carry the glad tidings to her anxious heart.

Hour after hour had passed away, and no messenger had returned, and no signal had been heard, though she strained her ear in hopes of catching the happy sound, even amidst the thunder's roar. Morning broke, and still no news arrived ; and the distracted mother was tempted to disregard the injunctions of her husband, and endeavour to follow him, had not Genevieve and Pauline prevented her ; and Gerard strove to calm her mind and inspire her with hope which he hardly felt himself.

The hour for prayer arrived, and many of the neighbouring peasants assembled in the usual spot, near Francesco's chalet, where they only found the afflicted party ; and as soon as the sad story was made known to them, all the men set off to join in the search, leaving the women to use their ineffectual efforts to comfort poor Madeleine. Gerard proposed that they should all join him in prayer, whilst he lifted up his faltering voice in supplication for the dear objects of their solicitude, and all knelt down around him.

No sound was heard but the feeble voice of the good old man, for Madeleine restrained her grief, and strove to pray ;—when hark ! the sharp report of

many guns broke upon their ears, and was repeated again and again by the echoing rocks.

Madeleine started up and rushed to the door, followed by all the little assembly, and down the path behind André's cottage she saw the procession, joined by the hunters, slowly advancing. But when she perceived that some of the party were carrying a litter, her heart sunk for a moment, and the most dreadful fears filled her breast. But no! she remembered Francesco's promise that if *all was well* the guns should be fired; and she confided in that promise, and hastened forward.

Ere she had proceeded many steps, she saw Eugene bounding across the valley to meet her, and in a few moments he caught her in his arms, exclaiming, "They are safe, they are safe!" while tears of joy ran down his cheeks. Madeleine soon reached the approaching troop, and embraced her dear children with feelings of intense gratitude; though her joy was checked when she saw how very ill poor Constance appeared, and felt the burning fever on her cheek. Little Elinor was well and happy, and eager to tell, in her infantine language, what had befallen them, and how dear Constance had built her a house, and made her a bed on her lap, and milked the goat for her supper and breakfast.

No time was lost in getting poor Constance to bed, and her mother and Genevieve exerted all their skill and knowledge to relieve her sufferings and allay the fever;—but in vain. It increased fearfully in violence during the day, and by night she was perfectly unconscious of all that passed around her, and believed that she was still upon the mountain, and the storm still raging over her defenceless head. Sometimes she called upon her father to come and rescue her from the approaching wolf—then she uttered her mother's name and wept—she blamed herself for having taken her little sister out to die, and prayed to God to pardon her, and to receive her soul—and again she would raise her head, and look wildly around, and wonder why Julio and Eugene did not come to seek her.

Her friends became greatly alarmed, and knew not where to turn for succour and assistance, until Julio proposed to go to San Giovanni, or La Torre, in search of a medical man; and in a few minutes he was on his way to Angrogna. There, with some difficulty, he procured a horse, and proceeded with dangerous rapidity down the rugged path leading into the high road, and then galloped to La Torre without pausing. He soon found Monsieur Goante, the apothecary to whom Francesco had directed him. He was a Roman Catholic, as no Protestant was

then allowed to practise medicine in the valleys ; but he was a kind-hearted, excellent man, and readily consented to accompany Julio with all possible speed to the distant châlet.

They rode back to Angrogna, and were there obliged to leave their horses, and proceed on foot ; and Julio could scarcely restrain his impatience, and slacken his eager pace to the slow progress of the apothecary, who was little accustomed to such rough and steep ascents, and was also an elderly man. When he had guided him through the windings of the mountain path, and brought him into the valley, in sight of the châlet, he could wait no longer, but shewing him the cottage, he darted forward to announce his approach, and satisfy his own anxious feelings as to the state of the dear invalid.

She lay surrounded by her distressed family, who were watching her with looks of sorrow and anxiety. The wanderings of delirium had ceased, and she neither spoke nor moved ; and had not Julio heard her heavy and oppressed breathing, he would have thought she was already a corpse, for the hectic flush of fever had faded from her cheek, and an ashy paleness overspread her whole countenance. Her dark hair was parted from her marble brow, and fell on the pillow beside her pale face, and she



looked like a lovely statue. But Julio could not look at her—he thought he saw the hand of death upon her features; and to conceal his feelings, he rushed from the room, and hastened back to meet Monsieur Goante, whom he seized by the arm, and dragged rapidly to the rude apartment where poor Constance lay.

Every eye was turned upon the apothecary as he entered, to read in his countenance whether any hope remained; and the look of sorrow and sympathy with which he regarded the youthful sufferer gave no encouragement to their sinking hearts; but though he told them that he considered the patient in great danger, he yet told them not to despair, as she had youth and a naturally strong constitution in her favour. He administered some medicine he had brought with him, and kindly promised to remain as long as he possibly could, to watch the effects.

The night passed without any amendment, and Monsieur Goante was obliged the next morning to return to Angrogna, and leave the whole party at the chalet in deep distress. He gave them full directions how to proceed for the next twenty-four hours, when he hoped to be able again to visit them; but his presence had supported them and inspired them with hope, and when he was gone they felt depressed

and helpless. Even little Elinor ceased to play, and moved about with noiseless step and downcast eye; or climbed up on her sister's bed, and sat silently on her pillow. Once she stooped down and kissed poor Constance's cheek, and the touch of her little lips seemed to awaken the invalid to consciousness, for she opened her eyes and looked up, and a smile played over her face, as she met the earnest gaze of the little girl, and tried to speak to her, but the sound was inaudible, and she closed her eyes again.

It was evident, however, that her senses had returned, and that was joy to all who were watching her so affectionately; though her extreme weakness forbade them to be very sanguine. When, however, Monsieur Goante arrived, he declared her to be out of present danger, and assured them that with great care he had no doubt she would recover. How fervent was the gratitude of this now happy family when they heard this announcement! and how they did pour forth their thanks to the good apothecary who had been the instrument in the hands of God of saving their beloved Constance from an untimely death. Her recovery was very slow, though unremitting attention was paid to her by Monsieur Goante and her friends. Her constitution had received a severe shock, and it was

long before she regained sufficient strength to be able to support herself. Meanwhile the season advanced, and the weather had already become cold and cheerless; so that great anxiety was felt to move her, as soon as possible, back to the village, where she could be better protected from the chilly wind, which crept through every crevice in the log-built chalet.

An easy litter was prepared, and when it was supposed she could bear the fatigue, the emaciated girl was carried down to the village, and established once more in her father's comfortable house, from which, by Monsieur Goante's directions, she never ventured out during the long and inclement winter which succeeded; but she improved this season of unusual leisure by reading all the books with which Monsieur Latour could provide her, and storing her mind with much religious and useful information, in which she derived great assistance from Julio.

## CHAPTER VIII.

NOTHING had been heard of poor Mariette since she had returned to her grandfather's cottage; and Constance frequently thought of her, and wondered whether the good seed she had been enabled to sow in her mind had been allowed to grow and flourish, or whether the little girl had been drawn back to the errors of her former faith. She did not much doubt but that God had strengthened her to persevere in the way she was convinced to be right; but then she feared that she might have been subjected to great severity from her grandfather, whom she regarded with so much dread.

It was therefore with surprise and joy that, one evening, early in the spring, while Julio was amusing her with playing some of her favourite airs on his bugle, they saw their young friend Mariette enter the room. She looked at Constance for a moment, as if she hardly recognised her in the wasted and delicate form before her; but then she sprang forward and embraced her, eagerly inquiring the cause of her altered appearance.

Constance told her of her severe illness, and what had occasioned it, and asked what could have occurred to bring Mariette so far from her home.

“Oh,” she replied, “that is no longer my home. I am come to seek one with my dear Aunt Genevieve, and she has not refused to receive me. I have suffered a great deal since I saw you, but it is all over, and I do not regret it, for at length I have obtained permission to follow the religion I feel to be true, and I may live with Genevieve, and see you, dear Constance, every day, and help to nurse, for you still look very ill.”

“I am much better now, Mariette, and hope, when the warm weather comes, to be as well as ever again, if it pleases God. But tell me all that has happened to you, and how at last you have prevailed with your grandfather to allow you to come to us.”

“When I first went home from your *châlet*, I was very unhappy indeed, for my grandfather, as I told you, had already observed my inclination to converse with Protestants, and he questioned me closely as to all that had passed during my happy visit to my aunt. I told him everything—even that I had attended the service of your church, performed by a Protestant minister, and he was dreadfully angry with me. My grandmother tried to

appease him, but he insisted on sending to inform my father of the heretical opinions which he said had been put into my head by my new friends. I assured him that it was God himself who had first inspired me with the desire to be acquainted with the reformed religion, though I acknowledged I had lost no opportunity of acquiring information on the subject, and that the more I heard the more I felt sure that I had hitherto been wrong.

“I tried to speak humbly to him, and at length he was pacified, and consented to leave me to myself for some time, only forbidding me to converse with any heretics, and ordering me to attend mass regularly at the neighbouring village. I did so for several weeks, though very reluctantly, for it seemed to me to be a heartless ceremony when compared with the beautiful service I had heard in the valley, in my own language; and believing also that it was wrong in me to go to mass when I could not in my heart join in the mode of worship performed by the rest of the congregation. I ventured to tell my grandfather that I could go no more;—I shall never forget his anger. He declared he would drag me to the Catholic Church, and when I resisted he beat me severely. But my grandmother took my part, for she could not bear to see me treated cruelly, though she also was very

much displeased with me, and she thought it best to send for my father.

“He was very much surprised when he heard what had happened, and took me home with him, where he tried to persuade me to abandon my new opinions ; but finding he could not convince me, he at length yielded to my entreaties, and agreed that I should go to my aunt. I thank God who put it into his heart to treat me so kindly, and to send me here with a friend of his who knew André’s house. I reached it this afternoon, and was welcomed most kindly by him and my aunt. My stay there was not long, for I was exceedingly impatient to see you.”

The rest of the family came in soon after Mariette had finished her narration, and were rejoiced to see her. They would have detained her to repeat again all she had told Constance and Julio, but it was growing dark, and she was anxious to return to her new home.

The society of Mariette was a great pleasure to Constance, for the little girl was very intelligent and amiable, and it was her greatest delight to wait on her friend, who was still very weak and helpless, and endeavour to supply her place by watching the flock, and bringing them home, and doing any little household duties which formerly fell to the share of

Constance. Old Agnes, too, received much of her attention, and was delighted with her activity and kindness; but nothing could console her for the loss she felt in not seeing her favourite Constance come daily to the cottage, to cheer her with her bright smiles and lively conversation; and whenever she could leave her home, she tottered down the hill to Francesco's house, leaning on her son, who was quite as happy to visit his friends there as his mother could be.

The spring advanced, and the mild weather tended greatly to strengthen Constance, who began to resume her usual appearance, and move about again with her accustomed light and active step. She was again able to attend in the house of God, and to join the rest of her young companions when they made their weekly visit to their pastor, to be instructed and catechised. He had visited her constantly during her long confinement to the house, and had observed with satisfaction the growing piety of her heart, and the good sense she shewed in her conversation, while he admired her patience and cheerfulness in her tedious illness.

It had indeed endeared her to all her friends, and to none more than to Julio, who loved her with more than a brother's affection, and looked forward to a future time, when he might be able to ask her



of her father as his wife. They were both too young at present to think of marriage; but Julio regretted now more than ever that he had not been able to prosecute his father's intention of educating him for the ministry, as then he might in a few years more have had a home to offer to Constance. His mother knew all his feelings, and frequently tried in vain to devise some mode by which the expenses of his education at Geneva might be defrayed, when the difficulty was removed in a very unexpected manner.

It was nearly a year since Julio had returned to his native village. The chestnut and walnut-trees had resumed their thick foliage, and all nature was arrayed in its summer clothing. Julio was working in his mother's garden, in front of her little cottage, and the good old woman was spinning with her distaff at the door, when a young man of foreign appearance rode up to the wicket gate, and, hastily dismounting, approached Julio, and greeted him with the warmest affection. It was Frederic! his kind-hearted friend, who had sought him in his mountain home, and shewed unfeigned delight at meeting him again.

Julio fully shared his joy, and presented him to his mother as one of his best and most faithful friends:—the same Frederic to whose active and unwearied exertions he owed his present liberty

and happiness; and old Agnes received him with affectionate blessings as the restorer of her son, to cheer her declining years.

“And now tell me, Frederic,” said Julio, “to what cause I owe the unexpected pleasure of seeing you? Are you on your way through this wild country to Turin? or have you undertaken so long and difficult a journey merely to see your grateful friend enjoying the happiness he owes to your exertions?”

“I have no object but to visit you, dear Julio, and in endeavouring to add to your happiness in a way which I believe will be most agreeable. You may remember that my parents often conversed with you upon your future prospects, and what would be your mode of life when you recovered your liberty; and neither they nor I have forgotten the animated description you gave us of the happy, though laborious, life of a Vaudois pastor, nor the regret you seemed to feel that you had been prevented by your father's death and your own long imprisonment from being educated for the sacred profession. It has been our object ever since we saw you last to find some plan by which we could enable you to follow your own pious inclinations without offending your independent spirit, which revolted so much at the idea of any pecuniary obligation; and at last we

have devised one which you will not grieve us by declining."

"You are the most considerate friend that any one was ever blessed with," replied Julio, "and Monsieur and Madame d'Aubigny are as generous as they are good and amiable. I cannot feel it any burden to be under an obligation to those who know so well how to confer a favour. Tell me the kind plan, my dear Frederic."

"Monsieur d'Aubigny has lately succeeded to an estate very near Geneva, and in a few weeks he is going to reside there, there being an excellent house on the domain, situated on the borders of the lake, in the midst of the most lovely scenery, and France is no longer a safe residence for a man of his loyal principles. He remembered that you said Geneva was the place to which your father intended to send you for your education ; and his proposal is, that you should give us the pleasure of your society for any length of time that may best suit you, and reside with us at the Château d'Epinay. From thence it will be very easy for you to attend the lectures, and receive the instructions of the Protestant College ; in the same manner I purpose to become a student at our own college. Monsieur d'Aubigny has already written to those at the head of the Protestant establishment, and made all the

necessary arrangements; as he hoped by this means to prevent your making any objections. And now, Julio, it only remains for you to consent to our wishes, by which you will sincerely oblige us, and prepare to accompany me to Geneva in about three weeks, provided you will allow me to be your guest for that length of time.

“You have indeed arranged such a plan, Frederic, as it is impossible for me to decline. The kindness which I have already received from you and your parents is such that I never can repay, and I must be contented to shew my gratitude by incurring a fresh obligation. I would not insult your friendship by refusing Monsieur d’Aubigny’s most liberal offer; and the pleasure I shall feel in residing under his roof, and having you for my constant companion, will be the best consolation that can be afforded me for again being separated from my poor dear mother, and all my other friends in the valley.”

“It will be a sorrowful day for me,” said old Agnes, “when I have to part with you again, my boy, after having so lately found you. But I would not say any thing to thwart you in the wish of your heart. I know it will be for your happiness, and I shall not this time be left in a dreadful uncertainty whether you are alive or dead; or whether, which is worse than death, you have

forsaken the faith of your forefathers and become an apostate."

"Hush, dear mother," said Julio, smiling, and laying his hand on her arm; "you forget that our good kind Frederic, and his excellent parents, are Roman Catholics; and I have often told you that their piety, generosity, and zeal for the good of their fellow-creatures would do honour to any religion."

"Very true, Julio," said the warm-hearted old woman; "and I sincerely beg your friend's pardon for expressing myself so strongly. But the truth is, whenever I hear of some kind action being performed for one of us poor Vaudois, I am apt to think our benefactor must be of the good old faith we follow. We have not often to thank the Papists in any age for their benevolence to us."

"No, my good Agnes," said Frederic, kindly; "it is true that your countrymen have suffered much at our hands, through the mistaken zeal of those who look upon you as dangerous heretics. But perhaps there may have been offences on both sides, and we can only hope those sad contests may never again be revived. And believe me, whatever influence either I or my adopted father may possess will always be exerted in favour of the oppressed, whether Protestants or Catholics; and it would especially be a gratification to us to obtain

any privilege for the country where Julio and his dear friends dwell. We love and admire him for his firmness and attachment to the religion of his fathers; and it is to enable him to become a minister of that religion that I come to entreat him to be an inmate in our house, and live with us as one of our own family."

"You must excuse my mother's warmth, Frederic; she has seen much in her younger days to imbitter her feelings against our opponents—and God grant she may never live to witness such scenes again, but that for the future a better understanding may exist between us and our fellow-countrymen who differ from us in opinion. If all Roman Catholics were possessed of the liberality and charity of Monsieur and Madame d'Aubigny, those frightful struggles which have defiled our rocks and mountains with the blood of those whom God made to be brethren would not have occurred; and we should have been found faithful and useful subjects to our lawful sovereign—as true to him as we have been, and ever will be, to our God. But let us not discuss this painful subject any longer. Come, mother, let us go into the cottage, and offer our friend some refreshment after his journey; and while he partakes of our mountain fare, which I fear will seem very coarse to

him, I will provide for the accommodation of his horse."

They entered the humble cottage, and when Frederic was comfortably established there, Julio took his horse to a shed, where he dressed and fed it himself, and then returned to his friend.

He proposed in the evening they should go down to Francesco's house, to introduce Frederic to all the family, who were already so well acquainted with him by name; and also that he might tell them of his future prospects, and how soon he should be obliged to leave them.

"Ah," said Agnes, as they slowly descended the hill, leaning on the arm of her son, while Frederic supported her on the other side—"Ah, Julio, there is one in that house down yonder, who will miss you as much as your poor mother will do. We must comfort each other, I believe; and, truly, if any one could comfort me for my son's absence, it would be that dear, gentle girl. But she will not smile so brightly, and sing so cheerfully, when you are gone, Julio. Frederic d'Aubigny, I must shew you my other child—my beautiful Constance. She has always been my daughter in love and affection, and, please God, when Julio comes back to live with us again, she will be my daughter really. She is the sweetest girl in all the valleys, and as good as she

is beautiful. I always thought that she and Julio were made for each other, when they used to play in my cottage as little children ; and it is the first wish of my heart to see them united before I die."

"I trust, my dear mother, that wish may be gratified, and that you may live many years to enjoy the dutiful affection of Constance, who loves you now as if you were her mother. She will supply my place to you when I am gone ; and I am very thankful that she is now so much recovered as to be able to attend to you, as was her custom before her illness. Frederic, my mother will be very angry if you do not think Constance the most amiable girl you ever saw ; so beware what you say. So here we are at the gate, and you will judge for yourself whether all her praises are merited or not."

As Julio said this, he opened the door of Francesco's dwelling, and led his mother and Frederic into the large room which generally served as the sitting-room for all the family. It was lined with pannels of walnut wood, which from age had become as dark as the oldest oak, and in many parts was curiously carved and ornamented. The apartment was low, and the heavy wooden beams and unpainted ceiling would have given it rather a gloomy



appearance, if the warm rays of the western sun had not poured in through the broad lattice window, and thrown a cheerful glow over every object. A fire of pine branches blazed in the wide and open hearth, and near it, in an antique settle, sat old Gerard enjoying the warmth ; for the evenings are chilly in these elevated regions, even in summer ; while Carlo basked in the front of the fire as a privileged favourite. Madeleine and Pauline were employed in their domestic occupations ; and Constance was seated in the recess of the window, engaged in needlework, and in trying to teach little Elinor to sing one of the simple airs of the Vaudois. She still looked delicate and rather pale, but Frederic was struck with the mildness and intelligence of her countenance, and thought that Agnes had not described her with too much partiality. He was also greatly pleased with the kindness and simplicity of manners which distinguished the whole family, and the cordial way in which they received him as the friend of Julio.

Francesco and Eugene soon came in from their agricultural employments, and heard with great pleasure of the happy arrangement made for furthering Julio's prospects in life ; but the satisfaction of all the party was not a little clouded at the thought of so soon losing his society. Eugene was loud in

expressing his regrets at being deprived of his friend and companion; and Constance looked even more grieved than her brother, though she did not say so much.

The evening passed rapidly away, and with equal rapidity did the three weeks elapse which had been appointed for Frederic to remain with the mountaineers. During the time, he traversed the whole neighbourhood, in company with Julio and Eugene, and saw all the spots remarkable either for natural beauty or sublimity, or memorable as the theatre of any event connected with the history of the Waldenses.

The evenings were always spent at Dumont's house, and Frederic thought he had never seen so happy or so enviable a family, and fully entered into his friend's feelings of regret when the time arrived for taking leave of those to whom he was so much attached. It was felt by all the party that old Agnes' situation would be so lonely when she was again deprived of her son, that Francesco and his wife insisted on her coming to reside with them until his return, to which she very gladly acceded; and the night before Julio and Frederic were to set off, she was established in Dumont's house, and given by her son to the especial care of Constance.

When Julio departed, which he did with a heavy heart, he left his Bible with Constance, and his bugle with Eugene, as remembrances of their absent friend ; though they needed no mementos to make them think of him, and wish for his return ; and he rode from the door with Frederic, amid the tears and blessings of his friends.

## CHAPTER IX.

The travellers were obliged to pass through Pinerolo, where they both looked with interest on the walls of the hospital where their friendship had commenced so many years ago ; from thence they proceeded by Perosa to Fenestrelle. At this village they passed the night, as a lofty range of mountains lay between them and the town of Susa, the road to which was difficult and fatiguing.

The ascent was accomplished the following morning, and they soon reached Susa, where they got upon the high road from Turin to Switzerland, by Mont Cenis, the same route by which Frederic had reached the valleys ; though from Susa he had gone on to Turin, to see Monsieur d'Aubigny's relations, and also as the easier road to travel. But Julio had now preferred the mountain path to Susa, instead of passing the mountain, as he did not wish to run the risk of being seen by any of the monks or those who had known him as an inmate of the monastery ; for though he was now at liberty, and travelling with a Roman Catholic, he did not feel

at all sure that measures would not be taken for his re-capture by the offended Superior, whenever he could discover him within reach of his power.

The passage of the celebrated Mont Cenis was productive of the highest delight to Julio. He and his companion left Susa long before day broke, that they might gain some considerable elevation before the sun rose ; and as the morning proved bright and clear, they were fully repaid for their early rising by the glorious spectacle which met their eyes when they paused to look around them as the sun appeared above the horizon, and cast a sudden and beautiful light over the majestic scene surrounding them on every side. A light vapour lay in the valleys, and, as the rays of the sun fell upon it, had all the appearance of a series of lovely lakes, winding round the base of the mountains, and losing themselves behind the projecting promontories and rocky cliffs.

As the sun rose higher in the heavens, this drapery of mist rolled away as a curtain up the sides of the mountains, and gathered in thick fleecy clouds round the frozen summits ; leaving all the beautiful vales below clearly visible, with their cheerful hamlets, and cultivated fields and orchards. Beyond our travellers lay the level tract of land called the plain of Mont Cenis, which is of con-

siderable extent ; and on this plain is to be seen the well-known Hospice, originally founded by the great Charlemagne.

Besides this building, there are on the road over this range of mountains twenty-five houses of refuge, for the reception of travellers when overtaken by storms and tempests ; and each house is occupied by a person placed there to render assistance in such cases. In winter this is a most useful regulation, and many lives are saved by these means ; the sudden and violent snow-storms would frequently overwhelm the traveller if he had not these places of shelter to resort to.

When, however, Julio and Frederic traversed this road, they had no need of any such accommodation, for the clear blue sky smiled over their heads, and the snow was all cleared away from the passage, so that they met with no difficulty or obstruction. When they had reached the highest point of the road, Julio again turned to take a last look towards his native mountains, and try to distinguish in the distance the spot where lay his home, and which contained so many who were dear to him.

The descent into Lans-le-bourg is steep and short, when compared with that into Susa ; and in winter it may be performed in a sledge in less than ten minutes, though it takes a very considerable time

to accomplish it on foot or on horseback; and at the time the events we are relating took place, it was far more difficult than it now is, since Napoleon Bonaparte has constructed such an excellent road over Mont Cenis, and carried it through rocks, and over ravines, and along precipices, which seemed to defy the power of man.

From Lans-le-bourg the road runs along the course of the river Arc to Aiguebelle—a distance of about fifty miles—and thence to Chambéry, through a sublime and mountainous country. Julio was much struck, as they travelled through Savoy, with the wretched appearance of the inhabitants of the little hamlets they passed. Their houses were miserable, their clothing scanty, and their persons dirty and unhealthy; while the frequent occurrence of the goitre, a large swelling on the throat, and the number of idiots whom they remarked in idleness and beggary, made him think of his own fellow-countrymen with satisfaction and gratitude; for though poor, and often oppressed, they had never sunk into such an abject state as the Savoyards had been reduced to, and an air of freedom and cheerfulness still reigned among the high-spirited Vaudois.

The journey from Chambéry to Geneva was exquisitely beautiful, as every excursion through this

region of sublime mountains must ever be. We will, however, no longer pause to describe it, but hasten on to the Château d'Epinay, where Monsieur and Madame d'Aubigny were already comfortably established, and anxiously expecting the arrival of their adopted son and his friend. They were received with the warmest affection ; and Julio found himself perfectly at home in his new residence. It was a handsome house, surrounded with very lovely grounds, and so near the lake as to afford a very enchanting view of its clear waters, and the beautifully varied range of hills on the other side, with Mont Blanc, "the monarch of mountains," in his pure garment of everlasting snow.

Julio's eye was well accustomed to the magnificent scenery of his own native country, and in his estimation no other could compare with it ; but he had never looked upon a view that combined such varied beauty as that which met his gaze from the gallery in front of Monsieur d'Aubigny's house. There was a calmness and tranquillity in the scene which touched his heart ; and he lingered long that evening to watch the setting sun, as its rays illuminated the lofty summit of Mont Blanc, standing forth in solitary grandeur on the dark blue sky ; and he wished for Constance and Eugene to share his feelings of awe and admiration.



The time passed very pleasantly under the hospitable roof of Monsieur d'Aubigny. He pursued his studies with diligence and success at Geneva, and made great progress in such learning as was necessary to fit him for ordination ; while his leisure hours were employed in making frequent excursions with Frederic round the beautiful lake in their own boat. Occasionally they extended their rambles to a greater distance, and visited all the most striking and interesting places in the neighbourhood. The valley of Chamouni was one of their favourite rides, when they could devote the whole day to climbing the surrounding mountains to take a view of the glorious Mont Blanc ; or ascending to the vast glacier called the Mer de Glace, and traversing its frozen waves.

Several times, also, they wandered in a different direction towards the lofty range of Jura mountains, and even passed the highest point to which the road conducted them, and descended some way on the other side, that they might on their return enjoy the magnificent view which opens upon the traveller who enters Switzerland by this pass, and bursts so suddenly upon him, when for the first time he travels over this romantic road, as to be almost overpowering. The stupendous rocks rise on each side of the road, and form the foreground of the

picture. The lovely country lying beneath him, embellished with groves and villages—the town of Geneva, on the borders of the placid lake, whose waters are enlivened by the white sails of numerous boats passing to and fro—and, far beyond them all, Mont Blanc,

“ On his throne of clouds, with a robe of mist,  
And a diadem of snow,”—

form 'altogether a scene of surpassing beauty and sublimity.

But though Julio enjoyed his present mode of life, and the society of his kind friends, he yet looked forward with the greatest delight to the time when he should return again to the valleys. Two years were to elapse before his clerical education would be finished; and as the distance to his home was so great, it was determined he was not to visit it more than once during the interval, and this was to take place at the expiration of the first year. He wrote to his friends at Angrogna whenever it was possible for him to do so, but such opportunities occurred very rarely; and as seldom were they able to send him any intelligence of the quiet, unvaried course of their lives; but every letter expressed their anxiety to see him again amongst them, and the comparative dullness of their little society without him.

When one long year had passed away, Julio joyfully set out, accompanied by Frederic, for Piedmont, and again they spent a happy month in Francesco's house, for Agnes was quite domesticated there, and the Dumonts would not allow her to leave them.

Julio found a considerable change in some of his friends. His mother was well, and even seemed younger and more active than when he left her ; Constance had entirely recovered her health and bloom, though, perhaps, her spirits were more quiet, and her expression more steady and womanly, than when he last saw her ; and little Elinor was much grown, and had quite forgotten him. But in old Gerard the greatest alteration was perceptible. He had become much weaker, and more infirm, and his eye had lost its brightness. It was evident that the good old man would soon be taken away to a happier world, and all his family treated him with such respectful attention, as if they felt it would not long be in their power to minister to his comfort ; but they were not prepared so quickly to be deprived of his presence and counsel as God saw fit to appoint.

He had been placed in his favourite spot, under a spreading tree near the house, and sat there, surrounded by his family and André and Genevieve,

until the sun had set, and the shades of night were spreading around, when he complained of being very chilly, and was immediately carried into the house and seated in his accustomed place by a cheerful fire; but his children were struck, when the light of the blazing wood fell on his countenance, with the deadly paleness spread over his features, and they saw that his eyes were dim and sunk. They became alarmed, and requested him to allow them to carry him to bed; but he refused, saying he was better where he was, and should wish to see Monsieur Latour. Eugene ran quickly for the pastor, and soon returned, accompanied by that excellent man; when they found his grandfather greatly revived, and talking to his family with solemnity, yet with earnestness and animation.

He held out his feeble hand to Monsieur Latour, and said, "I am glad to see you once more, but I know that it is for the last time. The hand of death is upon me, and praised be God! through Jesus Christ, I fear it not. I have been convinced all day that the sun would never rise upon me again, though I forebore to distress my dear children until now, by telling them so; but I am going to a world where I shall not need his light; for 'the Lamb is the light thereof.'"

He paused, and a deep silence ensued. All saw

that his words were true, and that in a few hours his mortal career would be finished ; and they feared to interrupt him, or to lose one of his latest words ; but tears were in every eye, as they gazed on his venerable countenance.

“My children,” he continued, in a voice of some emotion, as he looked on the weeping group, “do not weep for me. I have already been permitted to remain among you longer than the time usually allotted to man ; and God knows how sweetly my latter days have been cheered by the duty and affection of my dear Francesco, and all his family. I know you will all regret the old man who has for so long a time required your care, and has had no return to make except his prayers and blessings ; but I would not have you ‘mourn as those without hope ;’ rather strive more earnestly to follow me, that we may all meet before the throne of God. It is a long invitation to some of you,” he added, laying his trembling hand on the fair hair of little Elinor, “but you will not forget it.”

He closed his eyes, and leaned back in his settle, supported by his son ; and appeared to be engaged in prayer, for his lips moved, and his hands were clasped. Monsieur Latour and all around knelt with him, while he offered up a short and impressive prayer for the dying man ; that his soul might be

strengthened and supported in its passage through "the valley of the shadow of death," and appear before his God, clothed in the robe of Christ's righteousness;—and also for his sorrowing family he prayed, that they might submit to his loss without murmuring, and so follow his pious example, that their "last end might be like his."

When he had concluded, Gerard opened his eyes, and attempted to speak, but the words were inaudible. At length he faintly articulated, "God bless you all.—I am ready.—Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly." And sinking into the arms of his son, expired without a struggle or a pang.

The sorrow of his family was deep and sincere, and it was participated in by the whole village, who loved and respected the good old man, and all had remembered him from the time they were children. His funeral was conducted with as much solemnity as the custom of the country would allow, the Vaudois having no burial service; and only six of the friends of a deceased Protestant are allowed to follow him to the grave. Monsieur Latour, however, addressed the little band of mourners, as they stood round the last resting-place of their venerable parent, and closed the sad ceremony with prayer.

Francesco's home had never looked so gloomy to him as when he returned from the burial of his

aged father ; and a long time elapsed before he or any of his family could look at the empty seat, for so many years the accustomed place of the good old man, without a heartfelt tear. Even little Elinor was deeply affected, and the childish questions she asked about her dear grandfather often renewed the grief of those around her.

Julio regretted that he could not remain with his friends to cheer their depressed spirits, but the time appointed for his visit was elapsed, and he and Frederic were obliged again to leave Angrogna, and journey back to Geneva ; and the Dumonts prepared for their usual removal to the châlets, hoping that the change of scene would disperse the gloom which had fallen on them from the late melancholy event, and also from Julio's departure.

The summer passed away, and the time arrived when Frederic was to enter the army in the service of the Duke of Savoy ; this being the profession he preferred ; and the frightful convulsions which had rendered France a scene of bloodshed and misery (1793) had disgusted him with his adopted country, and made him more readily join the forces of Piedmont, his native land. Monsieur d'Aubigny's property in France had also been confiscated in the time of anarchy and confusion which succeeded the murder of Louis XVI. ; and he had made up

his mind to return no more to his unhappy country, but remain in Switzerland, where he could yet enjoy liberty and security.

Frederic was called to Turin, where his regiment was then quartered; and Julio found himself very lonely without his young companion, though both Monsieur and Madame D'Aubigny treated him as a son, and he was always happy in their society. But he longed for the arrival of the following spring, when his studies would be completed, and he might return to fix himself at Angrogna. The disturbed state of the continent also made him anxious to be in his own country, for there was every reason to apprehend an invasion of the French into Savoy and Piedmont when the winter should be past.

This uneasiness was greatly increased about this time by a circumstance which excited his apprehensions, and called for watchfulness and suspicion. The priest who had hitherto attended the family of Monsieur D'Aubigny was a kind and excellent man, and had always treated Julio with the respect and confidence he so well merited; but soon after the departure of Frederic he was removed from his station, and was succeeded by a very different person. It was some time before Julio chanced to meet Father Jerome, as his mornings were almost



always spent at Geneva ; but when one day he encountered him on the stairs, as the priest was repairing to Madame D'Aubigny's sitting-room to hear her confession, their eyes met, and both involuntarily started back, and then hurried past each other.

Though closely wrapped in his cowl, Julio had recognised in Father Jerome one of the members of the monastery at Turin, where he had been so long and so unjustly confined, and a feeling of undefined horror came over his mind. He tried to persuade himself that under the protection of Monsieur d'Aubigny, a zealous Catholic, he could have nothing to fear, even if the Superior should be made acquainted with his place of abode ; but he knew the power and determination of the Church of Rome, and felt that he could not be secure save in the fastnesses of his native mountains, if that power should be exerted against his liberty.

If the danger he apprehended had been open and undisguised, his bold courageous spirit would not have shrunk for a moment ; but he foresaw that artifice might be used, and he was himself too ingenuous to contend successfully against intrigue and cunning. He determined to inform Monsieur d'Aubigny of what had given rise to his fears, and on his return home that evening he did so ; adding

that Father Jerome's character, which he well knew to be bigoted and cruel, made him peculiarly suspicious as to his conduct with regard to himself. His friend assured him of his protection and assistance under every emergency, but at the same time acknowledged that there was every probability of great exertion being made to recover him by the Superior.

“ You have offended him too deeply, Julio, for the offence to be forgotten; for I know he is a proud and inexorable man in everything which he considers to regard the dignity of our holy Church. I fear if he knew the part we have taken in your liberation, he would be equally offended with us; but strongly as I am attached to my own religion, and much as I would do to forward her true interests, I cannot sanction any act of injustice her ministers may be guilty of; for I feel that all injustice is contrary to the Divine spirit of her Founder.”

“ I would that all the members of your Church, and of my own also, were actuated by your feelings and motives,” replied Julio; “ but such will never be the case in this world; and the Superior and all his brethren have been brought up to consider it their duty to resent any violation of the commands of their Church as a heinous sin; and, therefore,

they look on me as a great offender, whom they are bound to punish if possible. I confess I fear them ; for, having known what it is to be free, and happy, and beloved, my heart sickens at the idea of again wearing away my days in captivity, far away from all I love."

"God forbid, my dear Julio, that such should ever again be your fate. Much as I should grieve to part with you, I should insist on your returning immediately to the security of your native land, if you were not detained here by the necessity of finishing your course of study for ordination. But I think I have power to promise you safety under my roof; and be assured no threats shall induce me voluntarily to give you up."

Julio thanked his kind friend, and confiding in his promise of protection, continued his usual mode of life, and went into the town to pursue his studies, as formerly.

## CHAPTER X.

FATHER JEROME's keen eye had not failed to recognise in Julio, the youth who more than two years ago had eluded the vigilance of himself and his brethren, and had hitherto escaped their vengeance. The Superior had spared no pains to discover his place of refuge, and through the Roman Catholic priest of La Torre, had learned that his former captive was enjoying liberty and peace in the land of his birth.

This intelligence had galled his pride; and as he had been unable to prevent Julio from returning to his own people, and making known the hardships and oppression he had undergone while he was in the power of the Romanists, he resolved never to rest until he had obtained revenge. He employed his emissaries to watch him narrowly, but as long as he remained in the valleys he was safe from his machinations. At length he heard that Julio had left his home; but those from whom he obtained his information were unable to discover whither he had gone; and it was not until he had

revisited his friends and again returned with Frederic to the Château d'Epinaÿ that he was traced to his new abode. It was through Mariette that the wished-for discovery was made at last. Her father came occasionally to visit her at the house of his sister Genevieve, and he was desired by the priest to ascertain from her where Julio and his friend were gone, and by what route they travelled. Mariette suspected no evil, and readily told her father every circumstance concerning the present abode and future intentions of Julio, and thus was the innocent cause of exposing him to the greatest danger.

When the Superior was made acquainted with all the particulars he so much desired to know, he used his interest to obtain the removal of the priest who then officiated in the Château d'Epinaÿ; as he knew that he was not a man who would lend himself to any designs against the liberty of an innocent person. He succeeded in this point, and then easily procured the appointment of one of his own brethren, on whom he could depend, as his successor; but the change was not allowed to take place until after Frederic's departure from home, as it was not considered prudent to make any attempts against Julio while he remained to take his part.

The first step Father Jerome took was to ascer-

tain from Madame d'Aubigny, under the seal of confession, all that she knew of her young protégé; and even the part which she and her husband had taken in procuring his liberty was artfully extracted from her. Not that the priest intended to betray her confidence, as whatever is divulged in confession is held sacred in the breast of the confessor; otherwise no member of the Church of Rome could be secure that his most secret thoughts and actions would not be made known, for the most minute particulars are frequently revealed to the priest.

But though Father Jerome did not communicate what he had heard to his Superior, he yet thought it his duty to reprimand Madame d'Aubigny for conniving at, and even assisting, the escape of one who had incurred the displeasure of their Church; and he told her the only way in which she could atone for her fault would be to join with him in delivering the culprit again into the power of the Superior; besides which he ordered her and her husband to perform a severe penance. To the penance Madame d'Aubigny cheerfully consented, for she was too conscientious a Roman Catholic to think of disobeying her spiritual adviser on such a point; but with regard to betraying Julio into his hand, she told him that she never would comply with so unfeeling a demand, for she knew that

religion could never require her to act treacherously towards one who confided in her, and dwelt under her roof.

Father Jerome tried all his arts to persuade and alarm her—but in vain ; her mind was too enlightened, and her heart too much imbued with the principles of true religion, to allow her to enter into the dark views of expediency urged upon her by her confessor ; and the baffled priest left her in great wrath (which he artfully concealed), and proceeded to devise other schemes by which he could attain his object.

He thought it best to let Madame d'Aubigny imagine that he had dropped all intentions against her young friend, and frequently took occasion to speak of him to her with admiration, and to lament that so promising a youth should adhere to the heretical doctrines of the Vaudois ; but at the same time he added, he saw it was too late now to hope for his conversion, and, therefore, it was best not to attempt it, but to allow him to return to his own wild valleys, and bury his talents among his barbarous fellow-countrymen, where he could do no injury to the true faith.

These observations completely lulled all suspicion in Monsieur and Madame d'Aubigny, and they repeated them to Julio, who was equally deceived,

especially as Father Jerome took every opportunity of conciliating him, and also behaved towards him, whenever they met, with marked kindness. He even offered to assist him in his studies during the leisure hours of evening; and, as he was a man of very great learning and information, Julio gratefully accepted the offer, being anxious to make the most of his time, and to prepare for his return to Angrogna.

The spring advanced, and the weather became mild and delightful; so much so, that Father Jerome proposed to Julio that their studies should be pursued in a summer-house situated in the upper part of the garden, and which, being raised from the ground to a level with the top of the garden wall, commanded a very beautiful view of the lake and the surrounding country. It was an old-fashioned building, and, according to the taste of the last century, had a window also looking to the high road to Geneva, which ran on the other side of the wall; thus allowing those who occupied it a full view of all the passengers to and fro.

In this retreat the monk and his pupil spent some hours almost every evening; and so kind was Father Jerome, so patient, and intelligent, that Julio often blamed himself for the distrust which would creep over him, and the suspicion he felt



when he met the keen black eye of his preceptor, and saw it instantly withdrawn, with an expression which he could not understand.

One day Monsieur and Madame d'Aubigny were going from home to visit a friend a few miles distant, and they invited Julio to accompany them; but he declined it, as he said that his time was now becoming so short that he was unwilling to devote a whole day to amusement; but that, if Father Jerome was at leisure, he should be glad to meet him in the evening at the summer-house, and consult him on a difficult passage which he had met with in his morning studies. The priest was present when this reply was made, and instantly acceded to Julio's proposal with such eagerness as rather to surprise him; and soon afterwards he left the house.

Julio returned as usual to Geneva, and his friends set off on their excursion, with the intention of returning home the following day. When evening came, our hero was punctual to the time appointed, but the monk did not join him in the summer-house for nearly an hour: and when he arrived he looked heated and discomposed, which he attributed to the various clerical duties which had occupied him all the day, and given him no time to rest. Indeed, he said it was nothing but

his regard for Julio, and his anxiety to be of use to him, that had induced him to come at all, so urgent were the calls upon his time.

The books were opened, and the lecture commenced; but never had the priest appeared so absent and wandering. He frequently committed an error while endeavouring to explain the difficulties which occurred; and when his pupil rallied him on his forgetfulness, he said that very unpleasant business had occupied him all the morning, but he would endeavour to banish it from his mind, and give his whole attention to the subject of their present study.

The sun set beautifully, and it became too dark to continue their studies, but still Father Jerome lingered in the summer-house, and, making an effort to command his thoughts, conversed so agreeably, that Julio had no wish to leave the spot, and willingly remained until the gloom of night had overspread the scene before them, and they could no longer distinguish the boats gilding along the lake, except by the light which was placed at the prow of each, and glimmered like a glow-worm on its calm surface.

A slight noise was heard under the window looking towards the road, and Julio drew aside the curtain suspended over it, to ascertain the cause. The

window was open, and to his surprise he perceived the dark figures of several men at the foot of the summer-house, and saw that one of them was mounting a ladder which was placed against the wall.

He instantly suspected treachery. All that had struck him as strange in the manner of the priest that day now flashed again into his mind, and the truth was evident. He turned to rush down the steps leading into the garden, but the door was already closed and locked, and there stood Father Jerome ready to oppose his passage. He was a powerful man, and, while Julio struggled violently to force him from the door, two of the men whom he had seen in the road entered the window, and, seizing his arms from behind, quickly overpowered him. They bound his hands tightly behind his back, and forced him to descend the ladder into the road, where he observed that a carriage was standing close to the wall at a little distance.

Julio was dragged to it, and while the ruffians were forcing him to enter, a violent noise was heard from the summer-house. The door from the garden was burst open with a sudden crash, and in an instant Paul the gardener leaped from the window, and attacked the men who held Julio with a club which he had in his hand.

The onset was so furious that for a moment they were discomfited, and had their prisoner been unshackled he might have shaken them off; but assistance had arrived too late, and Paul was soon defeated by numbers. The carriage drove off at a rapid pace with the unfortunate Julio and the priest, and one of his hired villains as a guard; while the gardener was left to make unavailing efforts to procure assistance, and the rest of the actors in this scene of perfidy escaped as quickly as they could.

We will not attempt to describe the feelings of the wretched captive, when he found himself again so suddenly deprived of liberty, and borne away rapidly from the dwelling of his kind friend, without a hope of succour. The night was dark; but the driver urged on his horses with dangerous speed. At a sudden turn in the road, another carriage met them with equal rapidity; and though it was furnished with lights, and the drivers made the greatest efforts to avoid each other, the two vehicles came in contact with such violence as to overturn that in which Julio was seated. All was bustle and confusion, and the voice of Monsieur d'Aubigny was heard calling to his servant to help him; while he sprang from his own carriage and opened the door of the other, which lay considerably shattered against the bank.

Julio's heart bounded at the well-known voice of his friend, and, though greatly bruised by the fall, and tightly jammed in between his two conductors, he contrived to extricate himself, and, with Monsieur d'Aubigny's assistance, forced his way out of the carriage.

Father Jerome had fallen under his two companions, and was very much hurt; his arm was broken, and he was also so severely bruised as to be unable to move; but the other man had escaped uninjured, and whilst Monsieur d'Aubigny and his servant were loosening Julio's bonds, he contrived to get out of the carriage, and was soon beyond their reach, even had they cared to pursue him. The priest was lifted out and placed in the other carriage, which was not much damaged, with Madame d'Aubigny, while her husband and Julio mounted the box, and they proceeded to the Château d'Épinay.

During the drive Julio heard from his friend by what unlooked-for circumstances he had been induced to return home that night, and thus had been made the instrument of again effecting his release. A messenger had reached the house at which he was visiting in the greatest haste, and entreated to see him without delay, as he was the bearer of important news; and as he was shewn into his presence, he recognised the son of his gardener, an intelligent

lad of about fourteen. His father had not ventured to tell him all he knew himself, but had merely desired him to inform his master that there was great danger at the Château, which he had accidentally discovered, and that Julio was concerned in it; and the boy was ordered to entreat Monsieur d'Aubigny to return instantly, as even then he might be too late. Paul could not write, or he would, he added, have been more explicit. This message, however, was quite sufficient to alarm Monsieur d'Aubigny; and the moment his carriage could be got ready he started at full speed. "And how thankful I am, my dear Julio," he continued, "that Providence directed that perfidious Father Jerome to carry you off by the very road I was travelling to your succour, and also that our carriages met so violently, or after all I might have missed you. That artful man, who is unworthy of the sacred profession he has disgraced, has met with a just punishment, which, I trust, may be a lesson to him for the future; he seemed to be dreadfully hurt."

"I fear he was," replied Julio; "and, deeply as he has injured me, I cannot rejoice in his sufferings. I hope he may recover, and live to repent of the action he has this night been guilty of. But I suspect the attempt did not originate with him, and that probably he acted from the commands of

his Superior, who must have known him to be a fitting instrument for such base deeds ; and if this is the case, my second escape, and the injury and detection of Father Jerome, will only exasperate him still more."

"You are right, Julio ; and I feel convinced that my house is no longer a safe retreat for you. You must complete your business at Geneva with the greatest expedition ; and happily the time appointed for finishing your studies here is so nearly elapsed, that you will be able to undergo your examination, and leave this place by the end of next week. I and my wife will also go from home for some time, for it will be best to let this affair die away, as it is impossible for us to obtain justice in such a case ; and at some future time, when it can be done with safety to all parties, we shall hope to visit you in a happy home of your own, out of the reach of all those who wish to do you evil."

"I believe it is true that I am not henceforth secure, except in my own dear country," said Julio ; "and since I must leave you and Madame d'Aubigny, to whom I owe so much that I can never repay, I must look forward to welcoming you in my own cottage ; and be assured, if the fervent gratitude of an affectionate heart could recompense you for all your kindness to me, you would be

truly repaid. You have twice rescued me from what is worse than death, and, under God, have been the means of restoring me to health and happiness; and I shall leave your house with feelings which never can be effaced while I live."

"All we have ever had it in our power to do for you, Julio," returned his friend, "has given us sincere pleasure; and if we needed a recompence, the attachment of such a heart as yours would be an ample one. We will, however, leave this subject, and endeavour to arrange some plan by which you may safely travel back to your home, for I confess I see many difficulties in the way. I believe the best thing will be for you to adopt some disguise. My wife must exercise her invention in this way. What do you say to a wandering musician? You play well on the French horn, and with a change of dress, and a few artificial appendages about your face, I have no doubt that you would be effectually concealed from observation."

Julio approved of Monsieur d'Aubigny's proposal; and while they were further considering it, they arrived at the Château d'Épinay, and, dismounting from the box, assisted in lifting the wounded monk from the carriage into the house. He seemed to be in great agony; and Madame d'Aubigny told them that she feared his head was



injured, as his mind had wandered frequently during the journey, and he seemed to be in great fear of the vengeance either of Julio or his Superior; while occasionally he muttered threats of what he would do as soon as his arm was well.

He was carried to bed, and medical assistance was sent for, when it was ascertained that he had received a violent bruise on the head, and was much hurt internally, so that the surgeon gave small hopes of his recovery.

His senses returned perfectly during the night, for his brain was not affected; and when he saw Julio enter the room the following morning, shame and anger seemed to contend in his countenance. Julio spoke to him, and assured him of his forgiveness, but he preserved a sullen silence, and the presence of him whom he had so greatly injured seemed to be so painful to him that Julio did not repeat his visit for some days.

The news of what had occurred soon spread, though the vile plot which had given rise to the accident was carefully kept secret; and several priests visited their sick brother to administer religious consolation to him during his illness. A day or two before the time fixed for Julio's departure, he passed the required examination at Geneva with great credit; and nothing remained for him

to do but to arrange his disguise, and take leave of his excellent friends. But he could not leave the house without being reconciled to Father Jerome; for the state of the unhappy man was declared to be nearly hopeless, and Julio felt that he should never meet him again until that day when they must meet before the judgment-seat of Christ. He therefore requested Madame d'Aubigny to tell the dying man how much he wished to see him once more, and to assure him that he felt no enmity towards him for the attempt he had made against his liberty, in which he believed him to have been actuated by a mistaken zeal; but God had frustrated the design, and he trusted that Father Jerome might obtain His forgiveness as freely and fully as he offered his own.

This message was delivered to the monk by Madame d'Aubigny in the same kind spirit by which it had been dictated, and it was received with more gentleness than she expected. Father Jerome had that morning been informed that he had but a few days to live, and when he reflected in how short a time he should be called to account for all his actions, and the motives which had prompted them, he trembled to review the cruel and vindictive feelings, as well as the pride and deceit, which had hitherto reigned in his heart,

and had at last led to the commission of a gross crime. He felt humbled and abased when he heard the generous message from him whose confidence he had betrayed ; and he could not conceal his emotion from Madame d'Aubigny. She profited by the feelings which agitated his countenance, and urged him to confess to Julio that he deeply regretted the conduct he had been guilty of, and accept his forgiveness ; and he consented that he should visit him immediately.

Julio entered the room, and was struck with the softened expression on the features of the monk, who extended his hand towards him, and in faint accents requested his pardon. He told him all the particulars of his treachery, and how he had acted in conformity to the commands of his Superior ; of whose vengeance he warned Julio still to beware.

The generous young man forgave him from his heart, and sincerely assured him that he still hoped that his life might be spared, and that they might yet live to be friends ; but Jerome knew his recovery to be hopeless, and he said that he felt it was but a just retribution that he should lose his own life, while he was seeking to deprive a fellow-creature of his liberty.

When Julio left, the monk called for his confessor, and passed a long time in prayer and religious

conference with him. It is not known what passed between them; and God alone, who sees the heart, can tell whether the repentance of this misguided but zealous man was sincere. He expired in the course of the night; and many were the masses which were celebrated for the repose of his troubled soul.

## CHAPTER XI.

AND now we behold our young friend Julio attired in the costume of a wandering Savoyard musician, with a knapsack on his back, well furnished with all he could want for his journey ; and his bugle (which had been purchased to replace the one he had left with Eugene) slung across his shoulders. A fine pair of mustachios adorned his lip, his eyebrows were darkened, and a large slouch hat was drawn over his brow ; and his friends all agreed, that even to those who were accustomed to seeing him daily he was most effectually disguised. He left Monsieur and Madame d'Aubigny with great regret, though his heart grew lighter at every step that led him towards his own dear home. The state of the country became more disturbed as he advanced ; and the accounts he had heard of the hostile proceedings of the French against Piedmont were fearfully confirmed by the poor Savoyards, who suffered dreadfully from the passage of the republican troops through their already impoverished land. He was informed that the object of the French army

was to penetrate into the country with an immense force, and extend their line from the Valais to the river Stura ; and then to seize the first opportunity of striking a blow at Turin. A body of twenty-five thousand men were preparing to march upon the provinces of Pinerolo and Saluzzo, while they kept up a line of communication with the main force, consisting of fifty thousand more. In fact, Piedmont was become the theatre of the conflicts between the French and the allied armies, and Julio trembled for the safety of his beloved friends at home.

The invasion of Piedmont had for months been dreaded, and the letters which he had received from Angrogna spoke of the fears entertained by the inhabitants of the valleys, and the preparations which were making for their defence. But the danger was not expected to be immediate, and Julio had felt convinced that he should yet have time to finish his studies, and return to his native land, before the impending storm should break over it.

As he journeyed on with as little delay as possible, he occasionally fell in with detachments of French troops marching towards the scene of action, but his peaceable costume preserved him from being insulted ; and on one occasion he was

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called on by a party of these light-hearted soldiers, who were resting by the road-side, to entertain them with his bugle, which he performed so much to their satisfaction that he was invited to partake of their frugal repast, and march with them into the next village. Julio complied, and in the course of conversation he discovered that his companions were going to join the army which threatened Saluzzo and Pinerolo, and several remarks were made as to the probable points of attack, which he carefully treasured up.

At the first village they entered the troops remained for the night, quartering themselves on the unfortunate inhabitants, and treating them with contempt and cruelty. But Julio had no wish to remain any longer in their company, and passing through the village, he obtained shelter and hospitality at a wretched little cottage a few miles further on the road.

Before daybreak he was again on foot; and having liberally repaid his poor host for his scanty entertainment, he proceeded on his way with eager steps, counting anxiously the days which must elapse ere he could reach his home, for his fears were now greatly excited for the safety of those he loved. He had walked for some hours, and seated himself on a bank to rest, when his reveries were

broken by the sound of a horse's hoofs, clattering along the road at full speed; and looking back towards the way he had come, he saw a lady mounted on a beautiful and high-mettled steed, which had apparently taken fright, and was running away with her at a furious pace. He saw that she was unable to control the violent creature, and seemed to have lost all presence of mind, for she was deadly pale, and could hardly retain her seat.

Julio started up, and, regardless of all personal danger, sprang into the middle of the road, and stood with his arms extended directly in front of the animal, which approached him with unslackened speed. He shouted loudly as it came near him in the hope of terrifying it, but it only leaped on one side, and would have resumed its course had not Julio in that momentary pause seized the reins which had fallen from the hand of the rider, and checked it with so powerful a grasp that it tottered and fell back on its haunches.

The sudden stop threw the lady from her seat, and would have precipitated her to the ground had not Julio broken the fall by extending his left arm, and supported her now fainting form, while he still held the panting steed with his other hand. While he was in this situation, he saw two officers gallop-



ing towards him, who immediately dismounted, and came to his assistance, thanking him most warmly for the important service he had rendered them.

The elder of these officers informed him that he was the husband of the lady whose life he had perhaps saved, and that his name was De Moulins ; the other gentleman was her brother, Captain St Croix. Colonel de Moulins was the commander of the detachment of French troops which Julio had fallen in with the day before, and was preceding them with his wife and her brother, to give orders in the next village for their accommodation, when a goat suddenly springing into the road had startled the horse which Madame de Moulins rode, and occasioned the accident which had terminated so fortunately.

The terrified lady soon recovered, and joined her thanks to those of her husband, who, imagining from Julio's costume that he was one of the poor inhabitants of the country through which they were passing, opened his purse and offered him a handsome reward. But the young Vaudois drew back, and declined the proffered gold with so much pride mingled with courtesy as to surprise Colonel de Moulins, who immediately suspected that he was not really the wandering minstrel that he then ap-

peared to be, and the cast of his fine countenance, and his pure pronounciation, confirmed him in this idea. He therefore apologised for having proposed to recompense him with money, and assured him that if he could serve him in any other way it would be his greatest pleasure to do so. "So fine a youth as you appear to be," he added, "ought to be in the army. What do you say to enlisting in my troop, and marching on with us to join the main body of our forces? I will answer for it you will soon distinguish yourself, and gain rank and honour."

"But never under the banners of the French Republic," replied Julio, with some warmth. "I am a native of the Protestant valleys of Piedmont, and when I take up arms it will be in defence of my home and of my beloved family, whose country you are preparing to invade."

"Are you, then, one of those Vaudois whom I have hitherto been taught to regard with pity and contempt? If your countrymen resemble you, my brave young friend, I shall feel great reluctance in performing the duty imposed on me, of assisting to carry war and desolation into your peaceful valleys."

"With the help of God, who has so often protected us, the attempt will again be fruitless," said Julio, while a flush of indignation crossed his manly

brow. "We are few in number, and ill supplied with means of defence, but our hearts are unconquerable; and though our natural allies care little for our preservation, there is One who watches over us, whose hand can scatter all our enemies—in Him we put our trust."

"Young man," replied De Moulins, "your courage and your piety do you honour. I should be proud to enlist you, and have you to fight by my side; but as that cannot be, I would at least wish to secure to myself the possibility of serving you in another way. Take this ring, and if in the chances of war you, or any friend of yours, should fall into the hands of our troops, send it to me, with any request that you may like to make, and I believe I have sufficient interest to promise that it shall be attended to. I perceive that you are now in disguise, but should I ever meet you during this unhappy war, I should recognise that eye of fire among a thousand combatants, and greet you as a friend even in the enemy's ranks."

"I thankfully accept your pledge," replied Julio; "and should I ever find occasion to use it, believe me I shall not scruple to do so with full confidence in your generosity and truth. And now I must bid you farewell; my time is precious, and I must hasten onwards to my home, commending you all to

God, and sincerely wishing you were engaged in a more righteous cause."

Julio received the parting salutations of his new friends, and hastened on his way, while they returned to meet the troop who were following them, and to exchange Madame de Moulin's horse for a gentler animal, as it still seemed too much excited to be safe for her to mount again immediately.

A few days more of travelling brought Julio again among the mountains of his dear native land; and the nearer he approached his home, the more impatient he became to reach it, and to learn what progress the invading army had made.

He knew that his friends did not expect him for some weeks, and he resolved to retain his disguise, and prove whether it was an effectual one, by trying whether they would recognise him. He passed several of his acquaintance as he ascended the pathway that led to Angrogna; but they only turned to gaze on the supposed stranger, and to wonder why a Savoyard musician could have wandered so far into their secluded valley. He then approached Francesco's house, and seeing none of its inmates, he knocked at the door, which was presently opened by Pauline, who looked at him as a perfect stranger.

Julio inquired whether Francesco Dumont was at home, and was informed that both he and his son

had joined the Piedmontese militia, and had left Angrogna a few days ago. He then requested to see Madeleine, as he had something to communicate to her; and Pauline desired him to enter and wait a few moments, while she summoned her mistress, who was engaged in another part of the house. But though Pauline's quick eye had failed to detect him in his disguise, Julio was no sooner in the apartment which was commonly used by the family, than the faithful Carlo with one glance remembered him, and sprang to meet him with a cry of joy, while he nearly overpowered him with his rather boisterous caresses, to the great astonishment of Pauline, who had never seen him receive a stranger so cordially. However, she did not expect him to be a friend, and went in search of her mistress, while Julio talked to Carlo, and returned his joyous congratulations.

Constance had been down the village to see her friend Mariette, and, returning to her home, as she approached the door heard the voice so familiar to her heart, and hastily entered the house, expecting to see the well-known form of Julio; but when her eyes fell on the strange costume and disguised countenance before her, she started back for a moment in disappointment, and the colour rose to her cheek. Another glance, however, was sufficient, and she

met her friend with as much delight as he evinced at seeing her.

They were talking earnestly together as Pauline entered with Madeleine, and great was the astonishment of the good mother at seeing her daughter in such familiar conversation with an itinerant musician; but Constance soon explained the seeming mystery, and Julio was received with the warmest affection by his kind friend. His mother was quickly summoned, and the first salutations over, the traveller divested himself of his false appendages, and when restored to his natural appearance little Elinor consented to approach him, for she had shrunk away from him before.

The account of all his recent adventures was soon given; and he then anxiously inquired into the state of the country, and the progress of the war, and related all that he had heard on the subject from the French soldiers whom he had met on the road. Madeleine informed him that Francesco and Eugene had been summoned to join a body of Piedmontese militia, who were defending the frontier between Mont Viso and the Col d'Aliries.

The invading army had already made several attempts to enter the valleys by the passes in that and other quarters; but they had met with a vigorous and brave resistance, and hitherto they

had failed to gain any advantage of importance. A powerful attack was now expected to be made by the French in a few days, and nearly all the male inhabitants of the valleys had marched to reinforce the native troops. André had accompanied his friends, and had taken his eldest son, Henri, with him, who was a very active, intelligent boy, of about eleven years of age; and his father wished to inure him to the hardships and dangers of mountain warfare, and also to make use of him as a messenger to pass to and fro from the camp to the village of Angrogna, and carry intelligence to the anxious families of the soldiers.

Constance had seen Genevieve that evening, and she was hoping that Henri might arrive the following day, as his father had promised to send him as soon as any encounter had taken place, and a peasant had that morning come to the village from a hamlet not far removed from the Piedmontese camp, and reported that the sound of musketry had been heard among the mountains in different directions, and it was supposed that a skirmish had occurred.

Julio had been educated for the sacred profession of a Christian minister, and had received the preparatory ordination conferred at Geneva, and which would admit him into the body of Vaudois clergy

after it had been confirmed by the Moderator or Bishop of his own Church; but he did not yet consider that he was separated from all secular employments, or debarred from the privilege of joining his countrymen in the defence of his native land, when threatened by a foreign invader. He therefore announced his intention of repairing to the camp as soon as he could make the necessary preparations, provided Monsieur Latour sanctioned his project. Madeleine gave it as her opinion that the good pastor would highly approve of it; but Constance's own feelings influenced her judgment, and she ventured to suggest that Julio was already dedicated to the profession which preaches peace, and that, therefore, it would be inconsistent in him to join in war, and lift his hand against his fellow-creatures.

Old Agnes smiled at her remonstrance, for she knew that the wish to secure Julio's safety, and the fear of again losing his society, were the motives which, though unknown to herself, had caused these scruples to arise in the heart of the high-minded girl, who, uninfluenced by such feelings, would have been the first to urge her young friend to join her father and brother, and fight in the good cause in which they were already engaged.

Julio was rather flattered than convinced by the



arguments of Constance, and the next morning repaired to the pastor, from whom he expected to receive a more disinterested opinion, and on whose judgment he felt that he could confidently depend.

Monsieur Latour was delighted to see him returned in safety to the valleys, for the state of the surrounding country was so disturbed that he had begun to be very apprehensive that he might be impeded in his journey home, and either be detained by the French troops, if he fell in with them, or be pressed into the service of the Duke of Savoy, and forced to join one of his regiments, without having the opportunity of seeing his family and friends before he engaged in the toils and dangers of war. He therefore greeted his dear young friend most cordially, and listened with great interest to the account of all that had befallen him.

Julio then consulted him on the subject which at present occupied his own thoughts—the propriety of taking up arms in defence of his country, notwithstanding his preparatory ordination had already taken place at Geneva ; and it was with sincere joy that he heard the excellent pastor's opinion, that duty in his case coincided with his own inclinations, and that as his consecration to the ministry had not been completed, and he, therefore, had no sacred duties to perform at home, he considered him at

full liberty to join his countrymen in endeavouring to repulse their common enemies.

With this decision Julio returned joyfully to his friends; and though he fully sympathised with them in their sorrow at the necessity for so soon parting again, he busied himself with alacrity in making all needful preparations for his new mode of life. In the evening Genevieve came up to Madeleine's house, accompanied by Mariette and her little son Henri, who, according to her expectations, had arrived that day from the camp with a letter from his father.

This letter contained the account of a slight engagement which had taken place with a body of the enemy's troops in advance, in which the French troops had been completely routed, and forced to retreat to the main body, with considerable loss. Very few of the native soldiers had suffered; for their active habits of life had fitted them well for the desultory warfare then carried on upon the frontiers of their land; and, knowing every steep and difficult path among the mountains, they were frequently able to surprise and annoy the enemy, and then escape without injury to themselves.

André informed his wife that a more important engagement was expected in a few days, and that preparations were making on both sides for the

contest; and the Piedmontese commander had despatched emissaries into several of the Vaudois villages, to endeavour to obtain reinforcements. André then concluded his letter with affectionately recommending his beloved family to the blessing and protection of Providence, and desiring in return that they would unite their prayers for the success of those who were fighting in their defence.

Little Henri seemed to be delighted with the bustle and excitement he had witnessed in the camp, and related with great pride how his father had allowed him to march by his side, and carry part of his ammunition during the late skirmish.

Genevieve turned pale when she heard of the dangers her darling boy had encountered, and saw his eagerness to return and share in the anticipated battle; but she did not endeavour to dissuade him, as his father wished him to be with him, and his wishes were always a law to his affectionate wife. She remained that evening with her friend, and together they talked of the perils their husbands were exposed to; and before they departed at night, they joined with all their family in a fervent prayer to their Almighty Father, that He would give success to the rightful cause, and restore their brave defenders in safety to their anxious families.

## CHAPTER XII.

THE following morning was occupied in completing Julio's preparations, and in the afternoon he took a sorrowful leave of his friends, and, with Henri for his guide, set out on his journey towards the camp. Their road lay through Villaro, a town to the west of Angrogna, having a large population, and a conspicuous church, but was by no means distinguished for the same beauty of scenery so remarkable in other parts of the valley of Lucerná. Many of the women and children were also disfigured by that frightful protuberance, the goître, which occurs so frequently in mountainous districts; and Julio thought it the least attractive of all the villages he had seen in his native land.

He therefore gladly proceeded with his lively comrade up the banks of the river Pelice, towards Bobbio, where he intended to rest for the night, as he was unwilling to fatigue little Henri with a longer journey; and as they had left Angrogna so late in the day, the sun was sinking low in the horizon when, as they advanced along the defile

which gradually opened before them, the village burst upon their view.

Julio was peculiarly susceptible of the beauty of mountain scenery ; and he paused for some time to gaze on the glorious prospect which now met his eye. The mountains seemed to retire before him, while they increased in magnitude and boldness, till they formed an amphitheatre of surpassing grandeur and beauty.

The awful peak of Mont Viso rose to the left, its mantle of unsullied snow glittering in the warm rays of the setting sun, far above the clouds which obscured its base ; while the Col d'Aliries lay to the right, presenting a succession of majestic ridges rising abruptly from their rocky base. The enormous masses rose cliff above cliff, and peak above peak, each at times appearing to be the loftiest summit, till the clouds passed on, driven by the evening breeze, and disclosed a still more elevated crown of snow.

The objects in the foreground were in perfect keeping with the magnificent scenery behind them. The town of Bobbio lay at the foot of the mountains, partially concealed by a thick grove of walnut and fruit trees, which afforded it shelter from the easterly wind ; and at the time when Julio first beheld this lovely view, the trees were beginning to

be covered with the bright green foliage of early spring, though the snow, which had fallen very heavily the preceding winter, still lay unmelted in the hollow and shady spots, and threatened the scattered cottages with destruction, as it fell in ponderous masses from the overhanging cliffs, when loosened by the warmth of the sun, or the streams of water which flowed from the summit.

Bobbio is the last village in this valley, for beyond it the Coltian Alps form the boundary between Piedmont and France; and owing to its situation being so near the frontier, it has been peculiarly exposed to the horrors of war, and has frequently suffered severely from the aggressions of its neighbours. In former times it was also twice destroyed by sudden irruptions of water from the mountains rising above it, and hundreds of its inhabitants, with their houses, their flocks, and all their little property, have been hurried to destruction.

To avert the recurrence of this danger, an immense breakwater, or projecting pier of stone, was erected many years ago, in which work the inhabitants were liberally assisted by a subscription raised for them in Holland.

When Julio and Henri reached the village, they walked to this pier, and stood in admiration to gaze

at the rush of foaming water thundering down the deep acclivity, and dashing against the wall, which yet effectually restrains its force, and keeps it within bounds. It is indeed a noble monument of the courage and perseverance by which man is permitted even to control a power apparently, at first sight, far beyond all the efforts of his strength or skill.

Julio had received a letter of introduction from Monsieur Latour to the exemplary pastor of Bobbio, Monsieur Rostain, and by him he was cordially welcomed, with his little companion, and entertained with all the hospitality his limited means could command. But the poverty of this good man, this devoted servant of Christ, was so great, that he was obliged to work as a day-labourer in order to procure a scanty subsistence for his wife and children, whenever he could find leisure to do so from the numerous calls of his parish.

The presbytery was very near the church, which was remarkable from being separated by the burial ground from the tower or belfry; the Roman Catholic church and vicarage were far more conspicuous on approaching the village.

Monsieur Rostain had other visitors in his humble dwelling, to whom he shewed the same kindness which marked his conduct towards Julio

and Henri, though they could not be said to have the same claim to it. These were two wounded French soldiers, who had been taken prisoners in the recent skirmish, and brought to Bobbio, where the good pastor had kindly taken charge of them; and he and his family attended and nursed them with the tenderness of Christian charity. When Julio saw these men, he immediately remembered one of them as having been in the troop he had met with on his way through Savoy, but the soldier did not recognise him in his altered garb until he told him that he was the poor Savoyard musician who had amused him and his comrades with his bugle, and had been so kindly treated by them.

The soldier greeted him frankly, though they now met as enemies, and told him that Colonel de Moulins had at present the command of the detachment then attacking the neighbouring frontier, and that his wife was at head-quarters at some distance from the present scene of action. He bitterly lamented his fate in having been wounded and captured in the very first engagement which occurred after his troop had arrived on the frontier; but at the same time he acknowledged that his kind host had done everything in his power to alleviate his sufferings, and render his captivity tolerable.

Julio was sorry when he heard that Colonel de



Moulins was in command of the troops against whom his friends were acting, as he felt a reluctance to meet in war one on whom he had conferred an obligation, and who had treated him with kindness; but he remembered the ring and the promise he had received from the Colonel, and consoled himself with the idea that he might have it in his power to liberate, or otherwise assist, one of his own fellow-countrymen.

Early the next morning he bade adieu to the hospitable pastor and his family, and, accompanied by Henri, pursued his march. The way became rough and difficult, and Julio was astonished at the sagacity and intelligence of his young guide in discovering the proper route where frequently no path was visible, and where they were forced to wind among rocks, and glaciers, and deep ravines. But the active boy had been well taught by his father, and every landmark was accurately remembered by him, so that, after a toilsome journey of many hours, he brought his companion within sight of the scattered camp or bivouac of the hardy band to which André and Francesco were attached.

No painted tents were stretched upon the green sward, with waving flags of many colours; no prancing steeds or glittering lances met their view, nor sound of martial music rose upon the ear to

animate the men to deeds of courage. The sky was their roof, the turf their bed, and the barren rocks their shelter; and these brave mountaineers wanted no other incentive to courage than the thought that their beloved families and native land were menaced with danger—and no feeling to animate their hearts but the feeling that theirs was a righteous cause, and that the Lord was their shield in the day of battle.

One solitary bugle was heard from a distant part of the encampment, and Julio instantly recognised the strains he himself had taught to his friend Eugene, and hastened with Henri to the spot, where he was received with the warmest affection by Francesco and his son, and a loud shout of joy from their comrades of Angrogna, by all of whom he was known and loved.

“You are welcome, dear Julio,” said Eugene, as he clasped his hand—“always welcome, but doubly so this evening, when we were anxiously looking for any recruits to strengthen our forces for the engagement we expect to-morrow. The enemy are on the alert, and our messengers report that they have made a considerable advance to-day, and appear to direct their steps towards a narrow defile which opens a way through the chain of mountains, a few miles from this spot. Our commandant,

Monsieur Odeti, has stationed the main body of his troops near the ravine, and our little band is to march up at the dawn of day, to be employed in climbing the precipices, and casting down rocks on the enemy, or winding down the passes of which they are ignorant, and surprising them in the flanks or rear. It is an animating service, and full of danger and enterprise, and I rejoice that you are come; I shall act with double spirit, Julio, with you by my side."

"You never wanted my presence, Eugene, to make you the boldest and most fearless youth among all your brave companions; and I think on this occasion you will rather require my prudent counsels to keep you within proper bounds, than any influence I may have to urge you to deeds of valour."

"My good friend," replied Eugene, laughing, "I shall take care to follow your example, and not your precepts, when we are in action, and then I have no fear but that I shall be amongst the foremost. But," added he, more seriously, "you must not hazard your life unnecessarily, my dear Julio, for it is more valuable than mine. Should any evil befall you, what would become of my darling Constance? There was a time when our father and I should have been her first concern in time of

danger, but now you have stolen away her heart from us, and her life, I verily believe, is hung on yours. However, you are worthy of her affection, and I love you the better because you are the object of it."

Julio turned away—perhaps a tear rose to his eye at the thoughts which were awakened by the speech of his warm-hearted friend—but if so, it was unseen by all but Him to whom at that moment he lifted up his soul in earnest supplication for a blessing on his dear Constance, for whose sake life had indeed become precious to him.

The shades of evening gathered round the mountain camp; and as the darkness increased, the scene was lightened by numerous fires of blazing pine branches, kindled by the scattered groups of soldiers for the purpose of preparing their evening meal, and also to afford them warmth in their unsheltered situation. After the simple meal was despatched, the men all rose, and drew together round the spot where Francesco stood, and Eugene whispered to Julio that it was the custom of their comrades to sing a hymn at the close of every night, and afterwards to join in prayer, before they lay down to rest.

A solemn air was then played by Eugene, and taken up by the voices of the whole surrounding

company. More scientific music Julio had often heard, but never had his heart swelled with such deep emotions at the sound of any melody, as when he heard the manly voices of this martial band united in that wild natural temple in singing the praises of their God.

The hymn was concluded, and the last sound died away in the silence of night, when the voice of Francesco was heard, saying, "Let us pray," and in an instant the whole assembly were on their knees. It would have been a deeply impressive sight to have looked upon that body of Christian soldiers, who were prepared on the morrow to engage in mortal conflict with their enemies, and peril their lives in the tumult of war, now humbly prostrate on the earth, imploring the blessing and protection of the God of holiness and peace. The cause they had engaged in was one on which they could conscientiously ask for the blessing of the Lord, for it was not ambition or revenge which had led them to take up arms, but the just defence of their families and their homes. The flickering lights of the fires guided them back to their respective stations, where, wrapt in their cloaks, all were soon asleep, except those whose turn it was to keep watch, and who slowly paced to and fro over the space occupied by the camp.

Before the first beams of the rising sun gilded the summit of Mont Viso, the sleeping soldiers were aroused by the guard, and after a hasty refreshment they all marched towards the defile of which Eugene had spoken. Little Henri walked by his father's side, and indulged his lively spirits in anticipating the glorious deeds he expected to see performed by André and his other friends, and in which he flattered himself he might also bear a part.

Our little party soon reached the main body, and found them in active preparation for the expected combat. Monsieur Odeti led the strongest and most experienced body of his troops to the mouth of the defile, there to wait until the enemy should advance up the other side of the mountain, when he proposed to lead them forward, and commence the engagement in the narrowest part of the rocky pass, where the inferiority of his numbers would be less perceptible. The band of Angrogna peasants, and some other of his recent recruits from the valleys, who were men of courage and activity, but little accustomed to the regular discipline of an organised army, he stationed in scattered groups among the rocks and precipices overhanging the narrow road, from which situation they could annoy the enemy with their muskets, or by hurling great stones upon them as they passed below.

Several scouts were sent forward over the mountains to observe the motions of the enemy, and they soon returned, and gave notice that they were advancing rapidly in considerable force, and were accompanied by a small body of artillery. The Piedmontese were entirely unprovided with cannon, and the commander felt some fears for the success of the day, when he found they were to be attacked with these destructive engines; but he spoke cheerfully to his men, and gave the word to march up the defile.

From the elevated position in which Francesco and his companions were placed, they could observe the movements of the hostile troops on either side; with beating hearts and eager eyes they watched the well-disciplined troops of France advancing in regular order from the western side of the mountain, and winding along the defile, which closed upon them as they proceeded, until they filled the narrow valley with a solid moving mass.

The flourish of their trumpets, and the clanging of their arms, rose above the sound of their heavy tramp, and warned the mountaineers of their approach; but as the Piedmontese were stationed in a part of the defile which turned abruptly round a projecting mass of rock, the adverse troops did not come in sight of each other until they were so close

that the French colonel was obliged to command an instant halt, to prepare for the contest.

He had advanced with no great precaution, for he had supposed his adversaries to be still at some distance ; and he had also no idea that they consisted of so considerable a number as he now perceived to be arrayed against him. But the recruits from the valleys had during the last few days been so numerous, that they now made a very respectable appearance ; and the situation in which they were placed made them seem still stronger than they really were.

Julio looked with interest at the commanding officer of the French troops, and thought he recognised in his manly form and martial bearing his friend Colonel de Moulins ; and when his eye fell on his noble steed, he did not doubt that it was him, for it was the same spirited creature whose headlong course he had himself arrested, when he saved Madame de Moulins from the danger which threatened her. Captain St Croix was also there, acting under the command of his brother-in-law.

The word of command was given, and a volley of musketry was discharged by the French soldiers, and returned with equal vigour by the Piedmontese. Another and another volley followed in quick succession, and many on either side lay wounded and



dying on the ground. The space was so confined that it was with difficulty those who fell could be carried to the rear by their comrades ; and some were crushed to death under the feet of those who advanced to fill the foremost ranks. Still no advantage was gained—each party presented the same determined front, and filled the breadth of the ravine from side to side. Colonel de Moulins ordered his men to charge with their bayonets, and thus force their way through the defile ; but they were met with a steadiness and determination on the part of the Piedmontese which disconcerted them.

The conflict was fierce and deadly, and the victory remained as undecided as before, when the heavy rumbling of the artillery was heard approaching the rear of the French ; and a way was opened through their body for the advance of these murderous implements. Until this time Francesco had with difficulty restrained his ardent companions, who would have descended the almost precipitous cliffs and mingled in the fight, had it not been for his more prudent counsels ; for he foresaw that their services would probably be more efficient presently. He now led them forward to the edge of a steep precipice, beneath which the artillery must immediately pass, from whence he directed them to cast heavy masses of rock upon the guns and their conductors,

while he and a few of the best marksmen fired down with such unerring aim at the horses which drew the gun-carriages, as soon to bring them to a halt, and threw the body into confusion.

The leader of the Piedmontese saw his advantage, and exhorted his men to make a vigorous charge upon the enemy, whose attention was somewhat distracted by the attack which had been made on the artillery by their hitherto unseen foes. A loud shout replied to his command, and with overwhelming speed and force they rushed forward. Disorder had commenced among the French troops, and was augmented by the stones with which they were now assailed from both sides of the ravine, and the well-directed shots which were then rapidly poured down from the muskets of the mountaineers. De Moulins and St Croix, assisted by the other officers, did all in their power to restore order, but in vain;—the panic spread, and a retreat was inevitable. By the exertions of the colonel, a body of his best troops were organised to protect the rear of the flying multitude, and with difficulty they maintained their ranks, and kept up a scattered fire, as they slowly retreated along the ravine, while Francesco and his active companions kept pace with them upon the rugged cliffs above, and continued to annoy them with stones and bullets.

Captain St Croix galloped past the routed forces, accompanied by a few steady officers, and when they had reached the more open ground at the other end of the defile, he succeeded in rallying them, and bringing them to a halt ; but they would not again advance on their pursuers, and only waited for their disappointed colonel to come up to them, when they continued their retreat towards their own camp.

André and his brave little son, accompanied by Eugene and several of their comrades, had hastened on beyond the rest of their party, and reached the end of the ravine just as the discomfited troops were re-forming their ranks. Eugene, with his accustomed ardour, was the foremost, and descended from the summit of the rock to obtain a good position from which to fire on the enemy ; when one of the fugitives, seeing the soldier who ran by his side fall wounded to the ground, turned back and perceived from whence the shot had come. He fired at Eugene and continued his flight ; and though the aim was not so successful as he purposed, yet he wounded him slightly in the foot ; and as he was standing at the very verge of the rock, he lost his position, and fell to the ground.

This event was observed by André and his com-

panions, and they instantly hurried down the declivity to the defence of their young comrade. Julio also, who was following with Francesco along the heights above, beheld the fall of his friend, and sprang forward with the swiftness of a deer over the rocks ; but he only reached the spot in time to see Eugene surrounded with French soldiers, and borne away a prisoner ; while André, and those who had descended with him into the valley, were vainly endeavouring to rescue him. Julio joined them, and a struggle ensued, which would probably have ended in the capture of all the party, as the number of their opponents increased every moment, if Francesco had not come to their aid, with his hardy mountain troop.

It was in vain to hope for Eugene's liberation, and his father was compelled to abandon the effort, and retreat again with his companions up the side of the mountain, to wait until the main body of the Piedmontese should come up to the spot, when they might join them in the pursuit.

But all the little band did not ascend in safety. André had distinguished himself by the precision and deadly effect of his well-aimed musket shots, and was marked out by one of the enemy, as he retired up the rock. The Frenchman levelled his piece, and fired—and the next moment the brave André

was stretched on the ground, weltering in blood. Henri uttered a cry of anguish, and threw himself upon his father's breast, but Julio gently raised him, and, assisted by Francesco, bore their wounded friend to a place of safety higher up the mountain. They then proceeded to examine the wound in his side, and endeavoured to stanch the blood, which flowed out fearfully ; but André felt it was in vain.

"Come hither, my boy," he said to Henri, who had now turned away, and was weeping bitterly—"come hither, and listen to what I have to say to you : I fear they are my last words. Raise me, Francesco, my kind, my faithful friend ; and let me look on my poor dear boy once more."

Francesco supported him in a sitting posture, and Julio held a handkerchief to the wound, to stay the life-blood, if possible, for a few moments ; while poor Henri fell on his knees, and buried his face in his father's bosom ; and tears trickled down the weather-beaten cheeks of all the hardy soldiers who stood around the melancholy group.

"Henri, my dear child," proceeded the dying man, in faltering accents, "I feel that I am about to leave you ; and you must bear my last blessing to your poor dear mother, and my two darling girls at home. You must be their comfort, my boy :

and hereafter you must be their protection and support. It is sad indeed to leave you all so soon, and to die far away from my home, and my beloved Genevieve; but it is the will of God, and may He give me grace to submit to it as a Christian. Pray for me, my friends, that my faith may not fail me in this extremity. I am very faint; support me."

He fainted away, and for a few moments those who stood gazing on his altered countenance thought that his spirit had departed. But Julio moistened his lips with some brandy from a small flask Madeleine had provided him; and he again opened his eyes. Henri had raised his head when his father's voice had ceased, and gazed on his face with intense affection and grief.

"Oh, father," he exclaimed, as he saw the signs of life return again in André's countenance, "you must not leave us; surely our merciful God will not let you die."

"My son, I will not deceive you; I am dying. But with my last breath let me exhort you to murmur not at the decrees of God. If He takes me away, He is able to comfort you. Trust in Him, and serve Him, Henri; and hereafter we shall meet again, where war and all its calamities will be unknown."

He clasped his hands, and feebly ejaculated,

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“ O God, pardon my sins for Jesus' sake, and take me to Thyself. Bless and protect my poor wife, and my fatherless children.—Francesco, you will be a friend to them. Farewell, Henri; my sight is failing.”

He spoke no more, and in a few moments the struggles of death were over.

When Henri saw that his father had ceased to breathe, he broke out into passionate exclamations of sorrow.—“ My father ! my kind good father ! and are you then gone for ever ? shall I never hear your voice again ? how shall I go home, and look upon my mother's face, and tell her that you are dead ? O God, have pity on us ! ” and he fell on the ground in an agony of grief.

All that the kindest sympathy and the truest piety could suggest was urged by Francesco and Julio to calm the sorrow of the unhappy boy, and at length with some success ; and then they covered the body of their departed friend with a cloak, and bore it along the cliffs to the end of the ravine opening on their own valleys. As they reached the spot they met the Piedmontese troops returning from the pursuit of the enemy, which they had not ventured to continue after they reached the more open country.

They also carried with them several dead and

wounded men ; and all proceeded sorrowfully to their encampment. They had indeed obtained a partial victory, and for the present repulsed their enemies ; but they knew that they would return in greater force, and assail them in some other quarter, and the loss of their friends and brothers in arms was a dear price for a temporary success.



## CHAPTER XIII

It was not in the camp alone that there was sorrow and suffering ;—the valley of Angrogna had also been visited by an awful calamity. It was now the latter end of the month of April, and the snow, which had fallen that year in unusual quantities, was beginning to melt on the southern sides of the mountains, and caused a frequent recurrence of those fearful avalanches which so often bring sudden destruction upon single cottages, or even upon whole hamlets.

André's house lay, as we have before mentioned, much lower down the valley than Francesco's dwelling. It was situated in a warm and sheltered spot, at the foot of a lofty and precipitous mountain, which rose high behind it to the north, and protected it from the bleak winds which blew in that direction during the long and inclement winter. But this very mountain, which had so long proved their shelter and protection, now became the cause of its utter destruction.

The sun shone bright and clear on the day when

the engagement just related took place, and the wind blew strongly from the west, and occasionally carried clouds of loose snow from the side of the mountain, and scattered it on the cottages below. But this was a circumstance which occurred so frequently, that it excited no alarm in the inhabitants of the valley, who retired to rest that night in security and peace.

At the dawn of day the people of Angrogna were awakened by a distant rumbling sound from the heights above them, which rapidly increased like the roar of a torrent, and ended in a tremendous crash. All rushed from their houses, dreading what might meet their eyes, and beheld a scene of devastation and death. A prodigious mass of snow had become detached from the upper part of the mountain, and had fallen into the little glen where the cottages of André and two or three other peasants were situated, and all were buried in ruin!

A cry of horror rose from the women and children who came forth and witnessed the catastrophe, and all hurried to the spot, to endeavour, if possible, to extricate the miserable inmates of the buried cottages. Very few men were left in the village, for all who were able to take up arms had joined the Piedmontese militia, and those who remained at home were chiefly old and infirm. But the

women of this country are inured to hardships and labour, and, directed by their pastor, who hastened to their assistance, they commenced digging away the snow with shovels and spades.

Madeleine, Constance, and Pauline, flew to the spot where Genevieve's dwelling stood, part of the roof of which was still seen projecting above the snow, and, aided by several of their neighbours, they laboured with their whole strength to clear a passage to the door. The snow was too loose to allow them to ascend to the roof, and frequently impeded their work by falling in upon the path they had succeeded in clearing ; but they continued without intermission, and their exertions were animated by the sound of groans and the cries of children, which reached them distinctly from the ruined cottage. At length their attention was diverted from their work by a noise from the roof, and they saw some of the broken shingles of which it was composed forced outwards from their places, and Mariette appeared at the opening, with the youngest child of Genevieve in her arms.

A shout of heartfelt joy greeted her, and some of the peasants ran to procure a ladder, by which they hoped to rescue her and her little charge from their perilous situation, and also to gain access to the cottage, and deliver Genevieve and her other

children from destruction. The ladder was quickly brought and laid upon the snow, with one end resting on the tottering roof, and Monsieur Latour immediately mounted it. It sank deeply in the yielding snow, through which he was obliged to wade up to his middle in order to reach the object of his anxiety; but he succeeded at last, and, with extreme difficulty and danger, brought Mariette and the terrified child safely to the ground.

He then left them to the care and gratulations of their friends, and again hastened along the ladder in the hope of rescuing other victims from a dreadful death; but his benevolent exertions were unavailing, and nearly cost him his own life, for the roof, which had hitherto been but slightly supported by a cracking beam, now gave way with the additional weight of the ladder, and fell with a sudden crash, precipitating Monsieur Latour into the mass of snow. Happily, he was again able to reach the ladder, and by that means struggled from his dangerous situation; but the joy which was felt at his safety was mingled with grief and distress for the miserable fate of Genevieve and her child. One piercing scream had been heard above the noise of the falling roof, and it was succeeded by a deep stillness, which told that all help would now be fruitless.

Madeline would still have continued her labour, but Monsieur Latour drew her away, and encouraged her to direct her exertions towards the other cottages, where they might still be useful. Her heart was oppressed with anguish for the dreadful fate of her friend, but she did not give way to her sorrow while yet there was a hope of saving others from a similar fate; and with her daughter and Pauline she joined the rest of the peasants, who had almost gained an entrance to the cottage nearest to that of poor Genevieve.

Several of the unfortunate inmates were brought out alive, though some of them were severely injured by the falling in of the beams and roof, and others were crushed to death. It was a scene of misery and woe hardly to be conceived by those who are never called upon to witness such awful calamities.

The third cottage was buried so deeply under the mountain of snow which had fallen immediately upon it, that no trace of it remained visible, and it would have required the continued exertions of many hundred men to have cleared a way to the ruined hut. Doubtless, the whole frame of the building gave way under the stupendous weight, and the destruction of the devoted inhabitants was sudden and complete.

In agony of mind poor Mariette accompanied Madeleine to her home, while Constance carried the little girl; and bitter were the tears shed by the sorrowful party when they reached their hitherto cheerful abode. The other unfortunate sufferers were conveyed to the presbytery, where Monsieur Latour and his family bestowed upon them every attention their desolate and suffering condition required.

The following day, Madeleine consulted her pastor as to the propriety of sending to inform poor André of the bereavement which had overtaken him, when the excellent minister said it was his intention to go himself on the painful errand, as he knew, from the influence he possessed over all his parishioners, and the affectionate respect in which they regarded him, that he could deliver a message of woe to any of his afflicted people better than any other person could do. It was not possible for him to set out on his mournful journey that evening, as the following day would be the Sabbath, but he proposed taking his departure on Sunday evening, after the duties of the day should be performed.

There had never been so sad a congregation in the church of Angrogna as assembled there on the Sabbath after the catastrophe we have related. Every countenance was downcast, and every eye

was full of tears, as they marked the vacant seats usually occupied by those who were now either dead or lying wounded and bereaved. Their minister was hardly less affected than his flock, and his voice faltered as he began the service. But he gained firmness as he proceeded, and concluded his discourse with a beautiful and emphatic address to his hearers on the calamity which had befallen their village, and a touching prayer for a blessing on the souls and bodies of those who survived.

On returning to her home with her daughters and old Agnes, what was Madeleine's surprise to find her husband there. He had entered just before her, and had not yet heard from Pauline of the dreadful events which had so lately occurred ; and from the path by which he approached the house he had not beheld the devastation. He looked sad and weary, and Madeleine turned as pale as death as she threw herself into his arms and burst into tears, for she feared a fresh calamity, and dreaded to ask for her son.

Francesco guessed her feelings, and assured her of Eugene's safety, though at present in captivity ; but he told her that Julio was gone to the enemy's camp to obtain his release, and that he had not the smallest doubt of his success, as he relied upon the promise of a man of honour. He then proceeded

to tell her of the death of their poor friend André, and was astonished when he heard her exclaim, "Thank God!—Then he is spared the anguish I believed he would have had to endure; and now he is again united to Genevieve in heaven, when I believed he would return to mourn over her loss."

Francesco eagerly demanded the meaning of these words, and was deeply shocked when Madeleine related all that had befallen. The desolate situation of poor little Henri chiefly engaged their attention; and they dreaded what the effect would be when he heard he was bereaved of both his dear parents. They agreed that they would take him to their hearts and their home, and adopt him as their own child, as well as little Claudine, who was too young to feel the loss she had sustained, and who now ran into the room with Elinor, and was embraced by her future father with tears of sympathy and kindness. He told her that Henri was coming home, but that her father was gone to heaven to her mother and sister, and the child wept when she saw him and Madeleine so sorrowful.

The place where André had fallen was too far removed from Angrogna, and the road was too difficult, to allow of his body being brought home. He was therefore buried in a sequestered spot near the encampment; and when the sad ceremony was over,



Francesco asked and obtained leave of the commanding officer to conduct his unhappy son home to his mother. Monsieur Odeti was a strict Romanist, but he was a benevolent and kind-hearted man, and he sympathised sincerely in the affliction of poor Henri, whose courage and activity in the engagement had not been lost on him.

He went with Francesco to visit him, and spoke kindly and encouragingly to him, desiring him now to return home, and endeavour to comfort his afflicted mother; but added, that he should hope, after a little time, to see him again in the ranks, by the side of his friend Francesco, and emulating the example which had been set him by his brave father.

When Henri and his companion set out for Angrogna, Julio also left the camp in an opposite direction, and traversed the defile which had the day before been the scene of such tumult and bloodshed. All was now still and motionless, except where a vulture rose heavily from the earth, disturbed by Julio's footsteps, and left its horrid repast to return again when he should have passed by. The cannon, which would probably have decided the battle in favour of the French, if their progress had not been so fortunately arrested by Francesco and his comrades, still lay in the ravine, for the

Piedmontese were unprovided with horses to draw them away, and their rightful owners had not yet ventured to return and take possession, fearing an ambuscade of the enemy.

The encampment of the French troops was several miles from the mountain barrier which they had attempted to force, and Julio did not reach it until late in the afternoon. He presented himself to the first soldier whom he found keeping guard at the outskirts of the camp, and requested to see Colonel de Moulins, as he had something of importance to say to him. His open countenance and frank demeanour prevented the soldier from doubting his integrity, and as he was also entirely unarmed, he immediately complied with his request, and led him to a party of men at a little distance, one of whom he desired to take charge of the Piedmontese youth, and conduct him to the Colonel's tent, as he himself dared not leave the spot he was appointed to watch.

As Julio traversed the camp, he observed signs of an intended movement. Several tents were already taken down, and the men were busily engaged in packing their baggage, and cleaning and repairing their arms and accoutrements, which had suffered in the last day's fight. The tent occupied by Colonel de Moulins was still standing in the

centre of the field, and when they reached it Julio's conductor immediately entered, and informed the commander that one of the Piedmontese soldiers waited without, and desired to speak to him on important business.

De Moulins ordered him to be brought in, but Julio perceived on entering that the Colonel did not recognise him, at which he was not surprised, considering the disguise he wore when he had last met him, and the different appearance which he now presented in a military costume.

Captain St Croix was also in the tent with his brother-in-law ; but neither did he remember the Savoyard musician who had so providentially rescued his sister from peril, until Julio drew forth the ring which had on that occasion been given to him, and presented it to Colonel de Moulins.

The officer cast a penetrating glance at his countenance, and then extended his hand to him, exclaiming, "Yes, it is my brave young friend, to whom I owe such an obligation. I wonder that I could have been deceived for a moment, but I am truly glad to see you. And now tell me your errand, and in whose favour you are come to claim my promise, and present my pledge ?"

"It is for a young friend who is as dear to me as a brother," replied Julio. "He was wounded

and taken prisoner yesterday, having fallen from his station on the rock, when he was immediately surrounded by your men. We endeavoured in vain to rescue him ; and now I am come to plead for his release."

"Then it was your friend whom I saw so bravely defending himself on his knees, after being wounded in his foot, and unable to stand. I paused to observe him for a moment, and thought it a pity such a noble youth should be deprived of liberty. But I had enough to do at that moment to keep my cowardly men in order, and did not see how the contest ended, or whether his comrades, who leapt from the rocks to his defence, succeeded in bearing him off. You were probably one of those who came to his assistance ?"

"I was," said Julio, "and his father was another, and a brave friend who received a mortal wound in the attempt. We were sorely grieved to leave him in the hands of your men ; but this ring and your promise were my consolation, for I felt sure that you would not disappoint me."

"Your confidence shall be rewarded," replied De Moulins, "and your friend shall be restored to you. St Croix," he continued, turning to his brother-in-law, "will you send for our young prisoner ; and also desire the horse I rode yesterday to

be saddled, and brought here immediately to convey him back to his own friends ; for I am sure he will be unable to travel on foot. But no," he added to Julio, "it is too late for you to return to-day, and I shall be very glad of an opportunity to detain you. You must also be my prisoner till to-morrow, and you and your wounded companion must dine with me in my tent. To-morrow at the dawn of day we decamp and move to another situation, for you have taught us that this defile is too narrow and too strong for us."

"I hope we shall also be able to prove to you that any entrance to our land is too well defended by her sons to be passed by hostile forces. I thank you gratefully for so kindly acceding to my request for the liberation of my friend ; and since you also offer him the loan of a horse, we will, with your permission, return this evening. To-morrow will be the Sabbath, and we would not unnecessarily perform a journey on that day ; and if we lose no time in setting out, I shall be able to send back your horse by a trusty messenger during the night, as I may not otherwise have an opportunity of restoring him to you for some time."

"Well, I suppose I must respect your scruples, and let you go. But do not trouble yourself about the charger. You have shewn that you can stop

him in his wildest career, and you must do me the favour to accept him. My wife would never venture to mount him again, and will be glad to hear that he is in the possession of one who will treat her old favourite with kindness."

Julio accepted the proffered gift with grateful courtesy, but assured the Colonel that he greatly overrated his services, which were amply repaid by the pleasure of saving Madame de Moulins from danger. They continued to converse for some time, when St Croix made his appearance, and informed them that the wounded prisoner was at the tent door, mounted and ready for his journey.

Eugene joyfully greeted his friend, and when they had taken leave of Colonel de Moulins and his brother, and assured them of their lasting gratitude, they left them and passed through the ravine towards their own land and their fellow-soldiers. The wound in Eugene's foot was slight, and had been skilfully dressed by the surgeon of the French troops, so that it gave him little inconvenience on horseback; and the spirit of the high-mettled animal was subdued by the exertions of the preceding day, so that he carried him gently on, while he conversed with Julio on the events of the engagement. He was deeply affected when he heard of André's death; and the more so as it had occurred

while he was endeavouring to succour him ; and he promised to be a brother to Henri, and a son to the widowed Genevieve.

His wound improved so rapidly that he was not obliged to leave the regiment, at which he greatly rejoiced ; and fortunately for him the troops remained in their present position for several days, waiting the orders of General Godin, who was commander-in-chief of the Piedmontese army acting on that frontier.

## CHAPTER XIV.

WE must now return to poor Henri, who had accompanied Francesco to Angrogna, and, when he stopped at his own house, had hurried on to meet his mother, with a nervous anxiety to get the first interview over. His friend had not attempted to detain him, feeling that it was better that their first burst of grief should be unchecked by any witnesses. But when he heard the recital of the sad catastrophe that made Henri a destitute orphan, he started up, and hastily ran down the hill with Madeleine, to seek the unhappy boy.

They found him standing mute and motionless by the mass of snow covering his once loved and happy home. Not a tear was in his eye, and so completely stunned was he by the sudden and overpowering shock, that he allowed himself to be led pensively back to Francesco's house, without appearing conscious of what had happened, or of the kind and soothing words the weeping Madeleine addressed to him.

She was alarmed, at his unnatural calmness, and



when they had returned to their home, she brought his little sister to him—the only surviving member of his beloved family. Henri had believed that *all* were lost, and when he saw Claudine, the tide of awakened feeling rushed again to his heart, and he caught her in his arms, while tears of affection burst from his eyes. This natural expression of grief relieved him, and after a time he was able to speak, and to listen to Madeleine's account of all that had occurred. The appearance of Mariette, whom he loved as a sister, also tended to cheer him ; and he exerted himself to bear up under his accumulated sorrows, for the sake of those who remained behind.

Nevertheless, the shock he had endured had been too much for his young heart to bear, and the next day Madeleine perceived that he was labouring under severe illness, brought on by mental suffering, and she became very uneasy about him.

Francesco's leave of absence from his regiment only allowed him to pass two days at home, but during that time Henri became so much worse, that he and Madeleine were anxious to obtain for him medical advice, and change of air and scene. While he remained at Angrogna, and every object reminded him of all he had lost, they feared that he would never recover either his health or spirits,

and, therefore, determined that Madeleine and all her family should remove to La Torre during the time Francesco was detained with the army. The whole party had suffered so much from the shock of the recent calamity that they thought the change would be beneficial to all ; and the seat of war had now approached so near their sequestered valleys, that many of the villagers, in various parts, had moved into the neighbouring towns for greater security ; while their husbands and brothers were forced to leave them, and fight in their defence.

The necessary preparations were hastily made ; and when the time arrived for Francesco again to leave his sorrowing family, they all travelled together to La Torre. It was not his shortest route to go thither, but he was anxious to see his wife comfortably settled in a place of safety, and to assist her in the fatigue and trouble of moving so large a party. Old Agnes and Henri were conveyed by turns in a litter, which Francesco with some difficulty found a peasant to assist him in carrying ; and the baggage was placed in a rude cart, much too rough to afford a tolerable conveyance for the sick or the infirm over the steep and stony road leading to La Torre.

A tolerable house was procured, not far from the residence of Monsieur Goante, the kind physician

who had formerly attended Constance in her long illness ; and he promised to pay equal attention to the interesting patient who was now placed under his care, and do all in his power to promote the health and comfort of the whole party. Francesco then took his leave, and departed on his way to the mountain camp.

On joining his fellow-soldiers he was rejoiced to find his son at liberty, and rapidly recovering from the effects of his wound ; but it was with deep concern that he and Julio heard of the heavy misfortune that had taken place in their formerly happy village. It was a satisfaction, however, to them both to find their own dear relations were removed from the scene of the calamity, and established safely at La Torre ; for the French detachment against whom they had been acting had removed their camp, and it was very uncertain on what quarter they would make their next attack, or what dreadful consequences would follow if they should succeed in effecting an entrance into the devoted country. Orders had arrived from General Godin for the brigade of Vaudois to join him in a different part of the frontier, that being the spot he suspected might next be assailed by the invaders, and toward which he was informed their march was now directed ; and the day after Francesco's arrival the

troops decamped, and proceeded to their appointed station.

They were kept in active operation during the succeeding weeks, and the frontier lying to the south of their new position remained comparatively unguarded ; and this circumstance was taken immediate advantage of by the commander of the invading forces. The French troops had met with such vigorous and effectual resistance in attempting to enter the Vaudois valleys by the other passes, that it was resolved to make a sudden effort in a direction not suspected by the natives ; and a strong detachment succeeded in crossing the mountains without opposition, at some distance from the defile which had been the scene of the late contest. The fort of Mirabouc was the immediate object of their attack. It stands near the extremity of the valley of Luzerna, and at no great distance from the spot where the river Pelice takes its rise. At the time of this unexpected assault it was not sufficiently garrisoned ; and none of those were Vaudois. The fort surrendered soon after the French appeared before it, and this event gave rise to circumstances deeply affecting those whose history we are relating.\*

\* The chief particulars of the following dreadful story are all historical.

A party of Roman Catholics, who were influenced by fierce fanatical feelings against their Protestant fellow-countrymen, seized the opportunity of laying to their charge a crime of which they were entirely innocent, and accused them of betraying the fort of Mirabouc into the enemy's hands. They succeeded in bringing upon them the odium and indignation which such conduct would have fully merited, if true ; and vengeance was resolved upon against the supposed traitors. A conspiracy was formed to massacre the unfortunate Vaudois ; and the fourteenth of May was the day appointed for the execution of the horrid scheme, which was carried on with secrecy and determination.

It is dreadful to reflect that the Curé of La Torre on this occasion so far forgot the principles of his professed religion, and the common feelings of humanity, as to become a partner to this revolting conspiracy to take away the lives of hundreds of his fellow-countrymen, and even to allow his own house and garden to be made a rendezvous where the murderers should assemble, and from whence they should sally forth upon their defenceless and unsuspecting victims.

But some of the Romanists shewed themselves to be actuated by higher and nobler motives ; among whom was Monsieur Brianza, the Curé of Luzerna.

Knowing his zeal for the interests of his Church, the conspirators confided to him the secret of their dreadful plot, in the hope that he would assist and sanction it; but the good man's soul revolted at such bloody methods of destroying what he considered to be heresy; and the true spirit of Christianity which reigned in his heart forbade him to conceal what had been revealed to him. He therefore despatched a trusty messenger to La Torre, with directions to proceed secretly and rapidly to the house of a Protestant with whom he was acquainted, to intimate to him that a serious danger was impending over him and all his brethren, and to warn him to be on his guard, and join with all the other members of the Reformed religion in preparing for their defence.

The whole particulars of the bloody plot were not communicated to this individual; and he could not bring himself to believe that there was any cause to apprehend such treachery as was darkly hinted to him; and therefore, though he carried the information to several of the Protestant inhabitants of the town, no serious alarm was excited, and no precautions were adopted.

The fatal day drew on, and yet all the inhabitants of the devoted town appeared to be tranquil and unsuspecting, little dreaming of the awful con-

vulsion preparing suddenly to destroy them and their families at a single shock. Monsieur Odeti, the captain of the detachment of Piedmontese militia, who had lately so bravely defended their frontier, was ordered by his commanding officer to remove with his men to Cavour, a place at some distance from the station then occupied by General Godin ; but the brigade of Vaudois were kept at headquarters, and placed under the command of another officer.

On the morning of the fourteenth of May, soon after sunrise, Monsieur Odeti was walking about the environs of his new post at Cavour, when a stranger of a very unprepossessing appearance came up and accosted him. He conversed for some time on indifferent subjects, and then inquired the number of his men, and whether they were all good and faithful Catholics. Monsieur Odeti answered his interrogations, and assured him that his whole corps was composed of Romanists ; but he added, that he was not sure that they were better soldiers on that account, as he had very lately an opportunity of witnessing and admiring the intrepidity and resolution of a party of brave Vaudois, who had set an example of courage and conduct he hoped would be followed by all the Piedmontese troops, whether Catholics or Protestants.

The stranger looked irritated at these expressions of approbation, and muttered a scarcely audible malediction on the heads of the Vaudois. He then continued, in a louder voice, "What dependence can be placed on the courage of men who thus make an appearance of defending their country one day, and the next betray an important fort into the hands of the enemy? Better would it be for Piedmont if they were openly to join the ranks of the invader, than thus wear our colours as a cloak for their treachery! And better still," he added, while an expression of deadly hate gleamed from his deep-set and cruel eye, "if the whole herd of heretics were exterminated, and the land freed from their baneful presence."

"I agree with you," replied Monsieur Odeti, calmly, "in wishing earnestly that our true and holy religion reigned universally over our beloved country, and there is no effort I would not use to promote so desirable an union. But the conversion of these resolute men is not to be expected; they have proved their obstinacy through many years of suffering, and poverty, and persecution; and as to extermination, such a scheme would be as impossible as it would be unjustifiable and iniquitous."

"Are you a true son of the Church," exclaimed the stranger, "and speak thus of any measure which



would so materially promote her power and interest? You stand high in the public estimation as a zealous and devoted Catholic, and you will not now disappoint your country by abandoning her cause, when a little resolute help from men like you may free her for ever from the thorn which has hitherto galled her so bitterly? Join our band of brave Piedmontese, and lead your men to the assistance of those who design this night to liberate their country from a detested burden, and success will be insured to our efforts."

"What do you allude to?" inquired Odeti, hastily, for he now saw that some murderous scheme was in contemplation; and, though he could scarcely restrain his indignation, endeavoured to assume the appearance of composure lest he should excite the fears of his companion, and fail to learn the particulars. "I have heard of no effort for the good of my country; but if you have anything to propose for the advantage of Piedmont I shall listen gladly, and willingly promise my co-operation, as far as my duty will allow."

"Then," said the stranger, "I do not doubt your joining us, for surely our Church teaches us that it is the duty of every true Catholic to lend his aid towards banishing heresy from his native land, or, if possible, from the face of the earth."

He then proceeded to detail to Monsieur Odeti all the particulars of the fearful plot, and entreated him to lose no time in marching with all his troops towards La Torre, where the conspirators were already collected in great numbers, and many others were expected to join them as soon as the appointed hour arrived.

The brave and kind-hearted soldier could with difficulty conceal his feelings during the dreadful narration; and his heart beat with impatience when he learned that the fatal moment agreed on for the massacre was that very evening at sunset, and that the signal for the murderers to rush forth to their work of carnage was to be the tolling of the vesper bell at the convent of the Récollets at La Torre.

He listened in silence; and when the dark-eyed stranger had finished his communication, he hastily dismissed him, promising that he would follow him to the devoted town with as little delay as possible. With this promise his informant was satisfied; and, little suspecting the intentions of Odeti, he left him immediately, and hastened back to his guilty and vindictive accomplices.

Odeti stood one moment rivetted to the spot in horror, and then he hurried back to his tent and ordered his horse to be immediately brought to

him. Not an instant was to be lost, and even now he feared that his promptest measures might be ineffectual in preventing the sanguinary deed. Cavour lay several miles to the east of La Torre, and the river Pelice lay across his route; but the generous soldier held on his way with unabated speed, nor paused until he reached the town, and dismounted at the house of a Protestant friend who resided there.

With eager footsteps he entered the room where his friend was seated with his family, and, to their alarm and consternation, exclaimed, "I am afraid that I am too late to prevent bloodshed. There is a conspiracy against you. The assassins are even now on foot; but if I cannot save you, I will perish with you. The honour of my religion is at stake, and I must justify it by sharing your danger."

The horrible intelligence spread from house to house, and no words can express the dismay of the unhappy Vaudois. Every house was barred and barricadoed as well as the helpless inhabitants could contrive to secure them; and heaps of stones and other missiles were collected to cast down from the windows on the heads of their assailants when the work of death should begin. But who was there left to use them? All the brave men who would have defended them, or shed the last drop of their

blood in the attempt, were far away, engaged in repelling the foreign invader, and little imagining that a more cruel and dreadful enemy had arisen in the bosom of their native land, and was now preparing to carry destruction into their beloved homes, and slaughter among their defenceless families. Scarcely a man who could bear arms was left in the valley—all had gone forth at the call of honour and loyalty against the common foe; and this was the moment chosen by eight hundred bigoted monsters to fall upon their wives and children, the helpless and the aged, and exterminate them from San Giovanni to Bobbio.

One possible chance of succour yet remained, and this was resorted to without a moment's delay. A messenger was despatched to General Godin, who commanded on the nearest frontier, to implore his instant aid, and declare the urgency of the danger. But the brave officer could not for a moment believe that such a conspiracy really existed; he could not conceive that such treachery and baseness were actually in operation; and, regarding the message as the mere result of women's groundless fears, he paid no attention to it.

How shall we express the anxiety and agony of the miserable inhabitants of La Torre, as the time slowly wore away, and no succour arrived?—or their

despair when their messenger returned, and declared that his journey to the camp had been unavailing? General Godin and his troops were posted seven or eight miles off, and the country which intervened was rugged and wild, and difficult to pass; for many torrents flowed over the narrow pathway, and rocks and precipices presented numerous obstacles.

Madeleine and her terrified family had quickly heard the fatal report; and though overwhelmed with grief and terror, they lost no time in unavailing lamentations, but proceeded with firmness and resolution to make every preparation for their defence of which their present residence was capable. Even old Agnes seemed to recover the activity she had so long lost; and her naturally high spirit enabled her to be an example of promptness and invention to the rest of the family.

Poor Henri forgot for a time his sorrows and his weakness, and even offered to go himself to General Godin, and try to alarm him. But for this exertion he was entirely unequal, and another messenger was with difficulty found, who was better able to encounter the fatigue of the expedition.

The General was busily engaged in some military arrangements when a second time he was told that a person from La Torre desired to speak to him.

His mind was occupied, and he felt annoyed at the interruption; and after keeping the impatient envoy waiting some time, he again dismissed him without success. He had not left the camp many minutes, before he was succeeded by some terrified fugitives from La Torre, who chanced to fall in with Francesco and a party of his friends, while hurrying forward in endeavouring to see the commanding officer.

No sooner had Francesco heard the cause of their flight, and observed the alarm depicted in their countenances, than he despatched his son to rouse and collect the whole body of Vaudois soldiers, and hastened himself, with the poor inhabitants who had just arrived, to the presence of General Godin, when he insisted that he and his brethren should instantly be sent to the relief of their families. The General could now no longer doubt the truth of the reports which had already reached him, and bitterly did he reproach himself for having so long neglected them. The day was wearing away, and but small hopes remained that, with their utmost exertions, they should be able to save the lives of the unhappy victims.

The Vaudois soldiers were gathering rapidly and tumultuously around the General, and vehemently demanding to be led immediately to La Torre; and,

hoping yet to redeem his unfortunate error, he gave the word for the brigade to march instantly, and prepared to follow them himself with another detachment as quickly as possible.

The distracted men rushed from the camp, and hurried in confusion on the way leading to the town, where they pictured to themselves their defenceless wives and children falling beneath the swords of the assassins. The path was rough and dangerous, but they regarded neither rocks nor precipices, and furiously dashed down frightful declivities, and leaped over chasms they would have shuddered at when not excited by the feelings which now animated them.

Julio had mounted his noble charger, the present of Colonel de Moulins, and started at a wild and fearful speed, which carried him far before his companions, who followed with loud shouts, urging each other to increase their speed, and calling on heaven to give them strength to hold on their rapid course. Julio was galloping down a steep ravine, the stones clattering and flying beneath the hoofs of his powerful steed, when his headlong race was arrested by the sight of several women flying towards him, with horror and dismay wildly painted in their countenances. He paused one moment, and hastily cried out to them, "Has the massacre

begun? have those fiends been let loose on our helpless friends?—Where is Madeleine Dumont? and where is Constance?”

The terrified fugitives assured him that when they fled from the town the carnage had not commenced, but the hour of vespers was approaching quickly, and they rushed forwards in the hope of meeting their defenders, and of hastening their speed.

Julio stayed to hear no more, but with an assurance that the brigade were following, again darted onwards, and was out of sight in a moment; while the wretched women hurried forward to meet the division in the rear. The shades of evening fell around them as they advanced, and heavy clouds gathered over the gloomy sky, which soon discharged themselves in torrents of rain. The streams which ran from the mountain's side became frightfully swollen, and stopped the further progress of the fugitives, who stood distractedly by the side of a rushing torrent, wringing their hands, and uttering wild cries of anguish and distress.

The Vaudois soldiers appeared on the other side of the furious stream, and heard the voices of the women calling on them to advance—they paused not for an instant, but at the peril of their lives dashed into the torrent, and with strong resolution



made their way through the foaming waters. A few of them met their wives or daughters on the brink as they came to land, and embraced them with loud blessings that they had been preserved; but they did not therefore delay, but followed their comrades to fight in the common cause.

As the brigade advanced, they again and again met parties of distracted women and children sent forth to hasten their progress, and some of the fugitives declared that the work of destruction was even now begun. Terror and despair had bereaved them of their senses, and they had believed that they heard the cries of death as they passed through the deserted streets of La Torre.

Another torrent, the last which rushed across their path, had yet to be passed; and since the women had crossed it, it had been swollen to a height and breadth which seemed to forbid all attempts at reaching the other side. What human strength could stem those wild waters? The strength of natural affection, when supported by trust in an Almighty arm.

“In the name of the Lord, come on,” cried Francesco, “to victory or to death!”—and he threw himself into the foaming waves. His companions gazed at him for a moment, as he struggled with the fierce waters, and then dashed after him into the stream.

Surely God was on the side of these intrepid men, or they would never have come forth in safety from that struggle for life or death; but not one was missing when they mounted the rugged bank and came suddenly in sight of La Torre. But what sound is that pealing on their ears through the rain and storm? It is the vesper bell of the Récollets—the signal for outrage and death?

“We will revenge,” they cried, “if we cannot prevent,”—and their speed was not abated.

Julio had reached the town long before his comrades had come in sight of it; and had hurried through the streets till he found the dwelling where Madeleine and her terrified family had vainly endeavoured to barricade themselves; and, having done all that their feeble efforts could accomplish to secure their safety, were now assembled in an inner room, and were uniting their voices in heartfelt supplication to the God of all mercy and power, that He would stretch forth His arm to save and deliver them from the hands of their cruel enemies.

Their prayers were interrupted by a loud knocking at the door of the house; and they heard a voice demanding admission. All turned pale, and trembled, for they thought the hour of death had arrived, and the murderers were even now preparing to force the door. The sound was quickly repeated,

and again the same voice called loudly on the inmates to open the door.

“It is Julio!” exclaimed Constance; and springing from her knees, she rushed from the room, followed by all the family, who entreated her not to undo the bars and locks until she had ascertained that it was indeed a friend who waited to be admitted.

But Constance could not be mistaken; her heart told her that it was Julio come to her defence, and, hastily unfastening the door, she greeted him as he entered with a cry of unutterable joy.

“Where is Francesco?” cried Madeleine, “where is Eugene? oh! are our deliverers come?”

“They are following me with the speed of hope and fear,” said Julio; “and God grant they may be in time. I rode away from them—I could not stop—and now, come the murderers when they will, I feel that I can defend those who are most dear to me—or else,” he added, “I can die with them.”

His presence infused a gleam of hope and security into the hearts of all the family, and Constance felt that by his side she must be safe. He examined and improved their means of defence, and he spoke with a confidence he could not himself feel. The day was closing, and he listened with great

anxiety for the sound of the vesper bell, and yet the Vaudois brigade did not appear.

“Can the torrents have arrested their course?” thought he; “I passed them with difficulty on my powerful horse, and since that time they must have increased in force and violence.” But he spoke not his fears, and tried to support the courage of those who crowded round him, and looked to him for protection.

The wind blew loud and shrill, and the rain fell heavily; but hark! above the violence of the storm a sound was heard, which struck horror into the soul of every individual in that house.

They listened in breathless anxiety, expecting every instant to hear the band of assassins rush from their lurking place, and begin the bloody work for which they had assembled together. Presently a tramp of many feet and the clash of arms was heard in the streets, and Julio and Henri sprang to the window overlooking the entrance, in the faint hope that the sounds proceeded from their friends and comrades. Through the gloom of that stormy night they distinguished the accoutrements of the Vaudois brigade, and heard their hurried exclamations as they spread through the village.

“The Lord has preserved you,” exclaimed Julio, turning to the terror-stricken family, who had

sunk on their knees, "and to His name be the praise."

A shout of joy was raised, and was soon echoed from house to house, as the intended victims became aware that a rescue had indeed been vouchsafed to them ; and, to the unutterable delight of their gallant deliverers, hundreds of women and children rushed from their dwellings to welcome and to bless them.

The arm of God had indeed interposed for the preservation of the innocent, and what no human power could have effected was brought about by His providence. It would have been impossible for the Vaudois soldiers to have reached La Torre before the time appointed for the signal of death ; and had not the conspirators been hindered in their murderous designs, the wretched husbands and fathers would only have arrived to deplore and to avenge the death of their beloved and helpless families. But the rushing of the mountain torrents, and the violence of the wind and rain, although unheeded by those who were hastening to the defence of the oppressed, were sufficient to strike terror into the guilty hearts of the assassins. Numbers of those who were expected at the place of rendezvous had not appeared, being detained by the fury of the waters from advancing to the town ; and

those that were already assembled had not courage to commence the sanguinary enterprise until they should be reinforced by the rest of the conspirators.

They heard the joyous shout which was spread through the village on the arrival of the soldiers, and anger and disappointment took possession of their breasts. But they knew that it was now too late to attempt any violence, and these cold-blooded villains were obliged to disperse, and seek safety from the vengeance of the excited soldiery they now expected would fall upon themselves and all the Roman Catholics within their reach. It would not have been surprising if such had been the case; and some indulgence would have been due to the deeply-injured Vaudois, had they taken justice into their own hands, and punished some, at least, of the most criminal of their enemies with death. But, to their immortal honour, they restrained the violence of their feelings, and not a drop of blood was spilt.

The conspirators all escaped, and in the joy of finding their families in safety, revenge was forgotten by the noble-minded Vaudois.

## CHAPTER XV.

THE following day an investigation was commenced into the particulars of the conspiracy, and an endeavour was made to obtain a correct list of the accomplices in the murderous design. When this was effected, the catalogue was forwarded to the government, in the expectation that active measures would be taken to punish the conspirators, or at least to prevent any future attempts of the same kind ; but even this act of justice was denied to the unfortunate Vaudois, and no inquiry was made into the matter.

The Piedmontese government not only declined taking any active part in chastising those who had so cruelly and treacherously designed to take away the lives of hundreds of its subjects by violence, but, to its lasting disgrace, even visited with its displeasure the brave General Godin, who had used all his efforts to avert the calamity, when once he was convinced it was impending. A military commission was appointed to try this gallant officer, for having permitted a part of the troops under his

command to quit the frontier. This shameful attempt against his character, happily, did not succeed;—none of his fellow-soldiers could agree to condemn him for so small a breach of military discipline, when the lives of so many human beings were at stake. But though he was acquitted of this charge, the jealousy of the government was excited against him, because he had shewn himself favourable to the oppressed Vaudois; and he was removed from the command he then held of the troops in the valley of Luzerna, and appointed to a station in the valley of San Martina; and some time afterwards he was entirely dismissed the service, without even being rewarded by any mark of royal approbation for the important services he had rendered during the war.

The officer appointed to succeed him was General Zimmerman, who, being a very strict Roman Catholic, was probably expected to enter into the short-sighted and bigoted views of the Piedmontese government, and act with severity towards his Protestant fellow-subjects. In this uncharitable hope the Duke of Savoy was disappointed, for instead of oppressing the poor Vaudois, General Zimmerman treated them with a kindness and lenity they were little accustomed to; and even went so far as to plead vigorously in their favour



to the Duke ; and at last succeeded in obtaining for them certain privileges which had never before been granted them. It is, however, to be lamented that these concessions were so trifling ; and did not history inform us of the fact, we should hardly believe that so poor a recompence could have been so pompously awarded to the acknowledged "fidelity and attachment" these brave people had always shewn towards the government. In the state papers of that time we find these vaunted privileges to consist in the following edicts :—that the Vaudois should henceforth have "permission to practise medicine among themselves ;" that "an investigation should be made into the choice of magistrates appointed in the Protestant Communes ;" that there should be "an amendment of the law by which Protestant children might be forcibly taken from their parents, and educated in the Roman Catholic religion ;" and that "if any charge should be brought against the Vaudois, from which Roman Catholics were exempt, the government should see that justice was administered."

The preamble placed at the head of these ridiculous concessions was perhaps the most valuable part of the royal munificence, as it remains a perpetual proof that the charge laid against the Vaudois of treacherously giving up the Fort of

Mirabouc was entirely without foundation. It was as follows :—

“ We have read the memorial presented to us from you by General Zimmerman, respecting the desires expressed by our *dear and faithful subjects, the Vaudois*, relating to their actual political existence. In consideration of the *constant and distinguished proofs* they have ever given to our royal predecessors, of their attachment and fidelity, and the zeal which they have shewn in pressing into the army for the defeat of our enemies, we are disposed to receive their memorial favourably, and to make them feel from the present moment the effects of our special protection, making only some reservation as to some articles which require more explanation; granting them, after the war, such concessions as may be compatible with the constitution of the state, and which may assure them of the value we entertain for their services, and the interest we take in their existence and happiness.

(Signed) VICTOR AMADEUS.”

After so decided an acknowledgment of the tried and constant fidelity of the Vaudois, and the services they had at all times shewn themselves ready to render to the government, we should hardly expect to find that even at the present time these unhappy

people are groaning under poverty, oppression, and humiliation—but so it is ; and our own time is disgraced by the cruel and irksome laws which still exist to annoy the members of the most ancient Protestant Church on earth.

From this painful subject we will return to the individuals whose history it is more immediately our object to relate.

As soon as the excitement consequent upon the discovery and failure of the murderous plot had somewhat subsided, and Francesco could obtain leave for himself, his son, and Julio, to spend some time at home, he removed his family again to their beloved cottage at Angrogna, and preparations were commenced for the marriage of Julio and Constance. The latter had now entered her nineteenth year, and had so long been accustomed to assist her mother in all her rural and household occupations, and was so steady, so well informed, and so sincerely and unaffectedly religious, that her parents no longer objected to her taking upon herself the care of a family, particularly as it was resolved that until Julio should obtain some clerical preferment the young couple should reside in Agnes' cottage, where Constance might have the benefit of her mother's advice and experience in all her little domestic difficulties.

The prospect of the wedding shed a glow of their former cheerfulness over the whole of the family, and the gloom which had hung on every countenance since the disastrous events we have lately been considering began to wear away; even poor Henri began to smile, and in his anxiety to be useful, and to shew his gratitude for all the kindness he and his little sister received, he almost forgot his own sorrows.

Agnes' cottage had been so long uninhabited that it was found to require very considerable repairs before it could be fitted for the habitation of the young couple; and the affection entertained for them both was quickly testified by the readiness with which all their neighbours who were able to work came forward to offer their assistance. Not only was all the labour performed gratuitously by these kind-hearted people, but even the materials were provided free of expense; and when the house was completed, the same generous plan was adopted for furnishing it, and for stocking the little farm and garden.

It was well known that Julio's resources were very small; and the misfortunes of his early life, combined with his many amiable and noble qualities, had so interested all who knew him, and so endeared him to them, that each individual claimed it as a privilege and a favour to be allowed to contribute

something towards his comfort and that of his young bride. Some brought a sheep, some a goat, or a pair of fowls, and others an article of household furniture, or some useful implements of husbandry, so that in a short time all was ready, and nothing was wanted to complete the establishment but the presence of its amiable mistress. The wedding gift of Monsieur Latour was by no means the least acceptable. Though very far from rich, the excellent pastor insisted on presenting his young friends with a beautiful cow; and the evening before the day appointed for the marriage it was led into Francesco's yard, adorned with bright garlands of flowers, which Elinor and the faithful Pauline had prepared for Constance's admiration.

Another, and an equally welcome, surprise occurred to complete the happiness of the festal party; for while they were admiring Monsieur Latour's liberal present, and extolling the unusual beauty of the gentle creature he had sent to a distance to procure, their attention was diverted by a strange voice calling loudly and gaily on Julio. They all hastened into the house, and there, to their great delight, beheld Frederic, accompanied by a lady and gentleman, whom Julio greeted affectionately as Monsieur and Madame d'Aubigny.

The cause of this happy and unexpected arrival

was quickly explained, and all parties congratulated themselves that it had occurred so opportunely, as Julio had often said that he wanted nothing but the presence of his dear Frederic and those kind friends who had been as parents to him to render the wedding-party quite perfect. After Julio left Geneva, Monsieur and Madame d'Aubigny had travelled about, wherever the disturbed state of the country would allow them to go, and having lately been to Turin, they were joined by Frederic on a short leave of absence from his regiment. He had then renewed his request that they would one day accompany him into the Waldensian valleys, and visit the happy home of Julio Arnouf, and become acquainted with his family and friends. To this they readily consented; and they had reached La Torre that evening, with the intention of passing the night there, and ascending on horseback to Angrogna the following morning. But happily, at the inn where they stopped, Frederic made inquiries after his friends, and was informed that Julio's marriage was to take place the next day, on hearing which they resolved to proceed immediately to the village, and get what accommodation the place would afford, that they might be in readiness to attend the interesting ceremony, and also have a longer time to become acquainted with the bride.

Monsieur Latour soon afterwards walked up to the house, and, finding the additions made to the already numerous family, insisted on Monsieur and Madame d'Aubigny and Frederic returning with him to the presbytery that night, and making whatever use they might find convenient of his house, as long as they remained in the valley.

The long and massy table of walnut wood, as dark and as well polished as varnished oak, was surrounded that evening by as many happy and grateful hearts as often meet together in this uncertain world.

The thought of parting with their beloved daughter on the morrow certainly cast a shade of gloom over the happiness of Francesco and Madeleine, and old Agnes was loud and eloquent in her lamentations on the subject. But they all consoled themselves with the reflection that Constance was not to be far removed from them—they might still see her every day; and the affection and esteem they all entertained for Julio made them rejoice in the prospect of her happiness.

Before the party broke up for the night, Monsieur Latour, as was his custom whenever he spent the evening with any of his parishioners, prayed with the assembled family. He implored a special blessing on the young persons, who were so soon, in the

presence of God, to take upon themselves so solemn and binding an engagement, and besought for them the Divine grace, that they might, in their new relation, "walk worthy of the vocation wherewith they were called," and be as "burning and shining lights" in the midst of an evil generation—"loving one another with a pure heart fervently," but loving God yet more. He also poured forth a thanksgiving to the God of all mercy and goodness, that it had pleased Him to save and protect all the members of all that highly-favoured family, in the midst of the many and great dangers with which they had so lately been threatened, and permitting them thus to meet together and praise Him, when many of their neighbours and friends had perished around them by war and sickness, and by the late awful catastrophe. The poor orphans, Henri and Claudine, were not forgotten by the kind-hearted pastor, and, in language of the warmest sympathy, he pleaded for the afflicted children to Him who has promised to be a "Father to the fatherless," and his prayer was echoed from the heart of every one present.

As he conducted Monsieur and Madamed'Aubigny and Frederic to the presbytery, they inquired into the history of the children to whom he had alluded so affectionately, for they had regarded them as



part of the Dumont family, until he named them as orphans. They were deeply interested in the relation Monsieur Latour made to them of the irreparable misfortunes that had befallen these poor children, and expressed an earnest desire to be allowed in some way to shew them kindness, if they could do so with the approbation of their present protectors.

It was a bright and beautiful morning when the wedding procession left the house of Francesco, and proceeded towards the church of Angrogna. Constance took the precedence, leaning on her father and mother, and Julio followed, supporting old Agnes, who had now become so infirm that she could with difficulty either climb or descend the steep mountain pathways; but even if she had been forced to be carried all that way, nothing would have induced her to be absent from the ceremony, or forego the pleasure of witnessing the marriage which had been so long the object of her wishes and her prayers. Indeed, the same feeling seemed to be shared, in a great degree, by the whole village, for the procession was increased at every step by numbers of the neighbouring peasants. As they advanced towards the church, they were met by a group of young girls, headed by the lovely little Elinor, who, with Mariette, had left her

father's house some time before the rest of the party, and was now waiting, with her companions, to salute her sister with an appropriate hymn, and then to strew her path across the churchyard with a profusion of flowers, fresh gathered from the mountain. A triumphal arch had also been erected near the entrance to the church, and nothing was forgotten that could testify the love which was felt for Constance by all her young friends and favourite companions.

The church was crowded while the service was performed, but not a sound disturbed the solemnity of the occasion, until Monsieur Latour concluded the impressive ceremony with a blessing, which was heartily responded to by the whole congregation. The bride and bridegroom left the church, followed by all their friends in silence ; but no sooner were they beyond the sacred precincts of the churchyard, than the enthusiasm of the assembly broke forth, and the happy event was hailed with an universal shout, so loud and long that it was heard at a distance of many miles, while the church bells, which rang merrily, were almost drowned by the sound of human voices.

The day was kept as a general holiday in the village, and the peasants were entertained with a rural feast Francesco had provided for them, which

was spread under the shade of some ancient walnut-trees, on a pleasant meadow near his house. All his family, and his foreign guests, sat down with them for a short time, and then conducted the bride and bridegroom to their comfortable and well-furnished home, where they left them, and returned to the scene of innocent mirth on the meadow.

The simple feast was over, and the younger part of the company were amusing themselves with various active sports, concluding with a lively dance, while the elder and graver members of the assembly walked up and down, enjoying the happiness of their children, or seated themselves in groups beneath the shade of the overhanging trees, and conversed on subjects more suited to their age, and more interesting to their habitually serious dispositions. Among these pure-hearted people, the feelings of piety are mingled with, and sanctify, all their other occupations—hallowing their joys, and softening their sorrows; and we may find a sufficient reason for their contented cheerfulness, notwithstanding the oppression and the privations they are subjected to, in the *sincerity* of their religion.

With them it is no heartless form, attended to at certain seasons, and then laid aside for the more interesting and engrossing occupations of this world; but it is a living principle, pervading their

thoughts, words, and actions, and giving to them, in the midst of poverty and suffering, "that peace which the world can neither give nor take away." Long may they retain this vital spirit of true religion, and shine forth a bright example to their less tried and less perfected brethren in Christ.

Monsieur Latour did not object to be present on this festive occasion, for his soul, though devoted to the service of his God, had no tincture of moroseness or heedless austerity; and therefore he felt a benevolent pleasure in witnessing the harmless gaiety of his young parishioners, unsullied as it was by vanity, or jealousy, or selfish emulation. Monsieur and Madame d'Aubigny strolled with him among the happy groups, and could not help comparing this interesting scene with the splendid assemblies of wealth and fashion they had so often witnessed in their own country, and acknowledging how much more true enjoyment was to be found in the simple manners and unaffected piety of the Vaudois, than in the circles of worldly vanity and the toils of luxury and ambition.

Before sunset the party had dispersed; and the sounds of laughter and conversation were succeeded by the hymn of praise and the voice of prayer, which rose from every cottage in that sequestered village, before the inhabitants retired to rest.

## CHAPTER XVI.

MONSIEUR and Madame d'Aubigny and Frederic remained in the valley for several days, and their attachment to their kind hosts and their family daily increased. The interest they had felt at first hearing of the misfortunes of Henri and his sister, was confirmed by the amiable and engaging manners of the children, and they much wished to take them both, or at all events the little Claudine, and bring them up at their own home, as they had already done with Frederic. They were both extremely fond of children, and, never having had any of their own, their affection was excited towards these orphans; and they would willingly have supplied to them the place of their lost parents, if Francesco and his wife would have consented. But when they made the proposal to them, they were met by a decided, though grateful denial of their request; for the excellent Dumonts looked on the children as bequeathed to their care by their departed friends; and besides the feeling of affection they entertained for them, and which would have made it a severe

trial to part with them under any circumstances, there was one insuperable obstacle to their resigning them to Monsieur and Madame d'Aubigny—and this was their religion.

No prospect of future temporal advantage would ever have induced them to place the helpless orphans under the influence of Roman Catholics, who, although truly pious themselves, and estimable for their amiable and generous qualities, were yet members of a mistaken religion. Madame d'Aubigny guessed this would be an objection, and hoped to obviate it before it was expressed, by offering to allow the children to be instructed in the Protestant faith by the Lutheran minister at Geneva, and also to take Mariette with them as their governess and attendant. But Francesco and his wife felt it to be their duty still to decline even this liberal offer, for they knew how much more influence the constant example of those with whom they live has on the mind and character of children, than the occasional instructions of the most pious and gifted individual; and with the courteous sincerity which marked all their intercourse with others, they expressed their feelings to their kind-hearted guests, who admired, though they regretted, the principles actuating their conduct. Though disappointed in their first plan for what they considered the welfare of the interest-

ing orphans, the benevolence of Monsieur d'Aubigny and his wife was not to be thus checked; and they determined that the future education and maintenance of the children should be no charge on Francesco; for though he was in better circumstances than the generality of his neighbours, and far removed from the actual poverty felt by the greater part of the Vaudois peasantry, he was little able to provide for so large an addition to his family as had been made to it since the destruction of André's house.

It is true, Mariette might have returned to her father, and probably he would not have refused to receive her, for he was not an unkind man, though strongly bigoted to the errors of his own Church. But the poor girl had felt the happiness of living in a Protestant family, and had enjoyed the privilege of serving God according to the Reformed religion; and she would have preferred remaining in the valley, even though she had been exposed to the greatest want, and forced to toil at the hardest labour, rather than dwell in ease and plenty with those who would ridicule and despise her, even if they did not ill use and persecute her, for having abandoned the faith in which she had been brought up. She was not subjected to either alternative, for Madeleine affectionately assured her that she

should henceforth be her daughter, and supply in all things the place of her dear Constance, who would feel less regret at leaving her home, and her parents, and her old friend Agnes, when she knew that Mariette would so well replace her.

Monsieur d'Aubigny communicated to Julio his kind intentions towards Henri and his sister, and he accompanied him to the spot where once stood the humble but happy home of André and Genevieve. The enormous mass of snow which had overwhelmed the cottage, and the others near it, had melted away beneath the summer sun, and left the scene of ruin and desolation exposed to view. The dwellings were either wholly or in great part crushed to the earth. They had been diligently searched, as soon as the snow had melted sufficiently, and the bodies of those who had perished had been drawn forth, and committed to the earth by their surviving relatives or friends. Such articles of furniture as were not utterly destroyed had also been removed for the use of their almost destitute owners, who, unable to rebuild their ruined habitations, or clear their little gardens and fields of the stones and rubbish covering them, now subsisted on the charity of their neighbours, and repaid their hospitality by the work of their hands.

The generous Monsieur d'Aubigny was moved to



compassion at the spectacle of ruin, and immediately proposed to Julio to rebuild all the cottages, and clear and restore to cultivation all the surrounding grounds, at his own expense. Nor did he lose any time in beginning to execute his benevolent scheme. He returned to Francesco, and consulted him as to the best method of getting the work well and quickly done, and did not rest until he had engaged a sufficient number of workmen in the village and at La Torre to perform it while the short summer lasted. He also placed in the hands of Francesco a considerable sum of money to defray the necessary expenses, and told him he appointed him and Julio the overseers of his work, promising that, if possible, he would return with Madame d'Aubigny and Frederic the following spring to see how it was executed, and to witness the comfort of the poor people again restored to their homes.

André's cottage and garden, with the addition of several small fields Monsieur d'Aubigny purchased for Henri, were to be entrusted to the care of Francesco and Eugene, who promised to take charge of them, and employ the produce for the benefit of the young possessor, until he should be of an age to remove thither with his sister, and cultivate his own little farm for himself. Poor Henri thanked his benefactor with tears of gratitude, for he was old

enough to have felt the dread of being a burden to his kind friends, and now his young heart was relieved by a feeling of independence, and the hope of one day returning the kindnesses so liberally shewn to him. All the other individuals who were also so much indebted to the generosity of Monsieur d'Aubigny, when informed of his charitable intentions, hastened to pour forth their gratitude, and implore blessings on his head, and that of his amiable wife and adopted son. But none were so happy as those who had conferred the favours, for they enjoyed the supreme satisfaction of knowing that they had contributed greatly to the happiness of many of their fellow-creatures, and had made a good use of those riches God had entrusted to their care, to be employed by them as His stewards in promoting His glory, and the good of all around them.

It was with sincere regret that they contemplated leaving their new friends, but the time allowed for Frederic's absence from his regiment was nearly expired, and the day for their departure was fixed. Constance and Julio insisted on entertaining them in their little cottage the evening before they set out; and Monsieur Latour was invited to meet them, as well as all Francesco's numerous family. The party was found to be too

large for the dimensions of Constance's parlour, and therefore all agreed to adjourn to a neighbouring tree, where the young bride, assisted by Mariette and Pauline, spread before them the treasures of her garden and dairy, prepared with all the skill she had acquired under her mother's tuition. How proud and happy was old Agnes to watch the beaming countenance of her darling Constance, and hear the admiration called forth by her beauty, her modesty, and her courteous hospitality!

The next day the D'Aubignys left Angrogna, attended by a very numerous cortège of the inhabitants, who accompanied them to La Torre, where their carriage awaited them. Here they parted with the warm-hearted and grateful mountaineers, and took with them the pleasing conviction that they would long be remembered in the prayers of a devout and pious people.

Soon after the departure of the D'Aubignys, the holy orders, which had been in part conferred on Julio at Geneva, were confirmed, and rendered binding, in the customary manner, by the Moderator or President of the Vaudois clergy.

During the remaining years of Monsieur Latour's life, Julio continued to reside at Angrogna, and assisted him in his ministerial duties as a voluntary curate; and when the excellent and beloved

pastor was removed to his everlasting rest, Julio was appointed to succeed him in the care of the parish, to the joy of all the inhabitants, who had already seen and admired his zeal and devotion to his sacred profession.

We have now followed Julio through many and various scenes of trial, danger, and temptation; and we have seen how his firm religious principles, and trust in God, enabled him to pass through all with the courage and the uprightness which ever characterise the true disciple of Christ. We have found him at length enjoying as much of earthly happiness as is ever allotted to a human being; and which we believe he as fully deserved as any creature *born in sin* can with propriety be said to do. . . . . Perhaps we had better now take leave of him; for were we much longer to pursue his history, we might again find him struggling with new trials and new afflictions—with poverty, sickness, persecution, or death; evils ever the lot of man in this world, *and from which even God's own people are not more exempt than others.*

“This is not our continuing city,” *here* we must not seek to take up our rest; and Julio and Constance had been taught by the Spirit of God to look for perfect and enduring happiness only in that

“city which hath foundations ; whose builder and maker is God.” Therefore, while they gratefully enjoyed the many blessings He in His mercy had bestowed on them, they were prepared to resign them at His bidding, and to say, “The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away ; and blessed be the name of the Lord !”

THE END.

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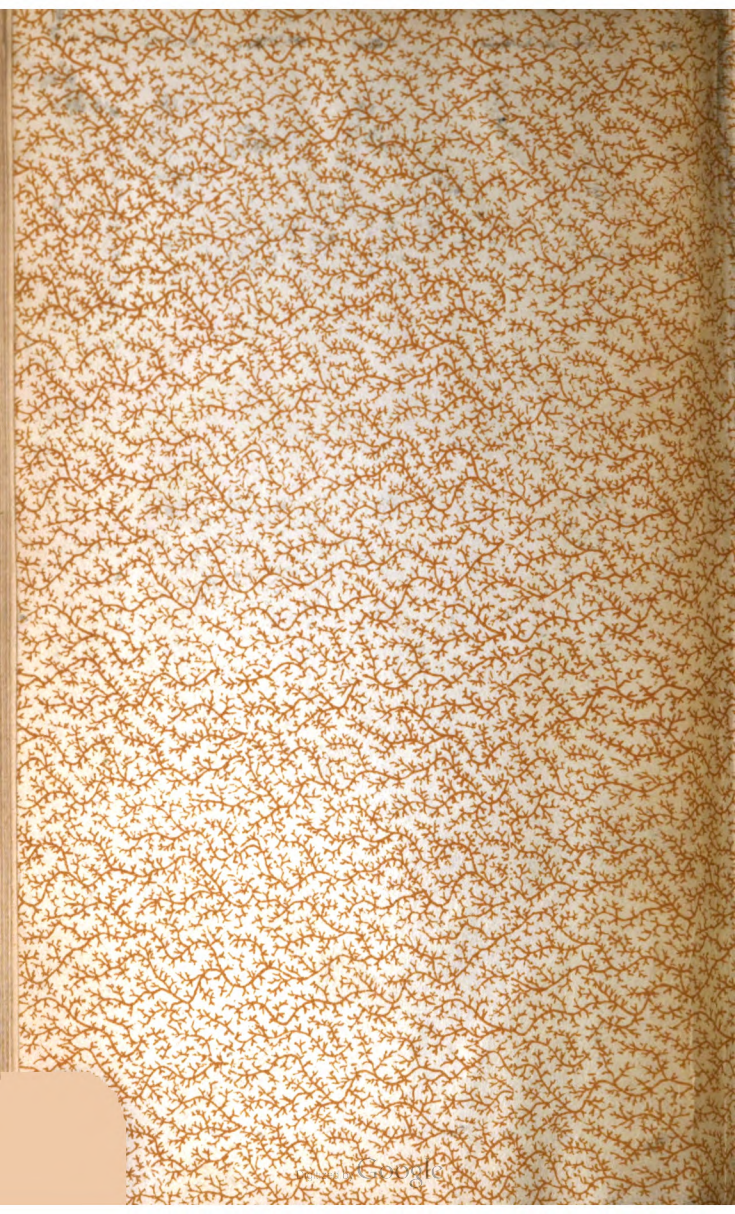
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