

enemy. The Emperor of Germany alone is the arbiter of your fate."

"Allah will decide what that fate is to be," was the pious response of the Mussulman.

The Elector of Bavaria has won his wager; but what cares a victorious hero for ducats or dastards like the Duke of Mantua?

"Where is Eugene?" was his first inquiry. And, not seeing him among his followers, he darted out of the castle in search of his friend.

The question passed from man to man, until one was found at last to answer it. The prince was in the hands of the imperial surgeons, who were vainly endeavoring to extract the ball.

The elector dragged one of them aside. "Is he dangerously wounded?" asked he, anxiously.

"He may not die of the wound," was the surgeon's reply; "but it will be tedious and very painful."

"He will live!" cried Max, wiping away a tear, and hastening to the litter whereon Eugene was lying.

He bent over him, and gently touched his forehead.

Eugene raised his large, melancholy eyes, and looking upon the beaming face that encountered his, he pointed to the wound, around which the blood had already coagulated, and said:

"Happy Max, whom Bellona has kissed! Me she has trodden under foot."

## CHAPTER V.

### THE MARCHIONESS.

"STROZZI, take my advice, and give up this miserable life. Of all earthly bores, solitude is the greatest."

"No, Barbesieur, in solitude I find my only comfort," returned Strozzi, with a weary sigh. "Here, at least, Laura is indubitably mine; here she is Marchioness de Strozzi."

"She is Marchioness de Strozzi throughout the entire world,

as I am ready to prove, who saw your hands joined together, and heard your reciprocated vows in Paris."

"Yes, yes; but you know that she denies the marriage, and persists that she is the wife of Eugene of Savoy."

"She is a sentimental fool," cried Barbesieur, with a coarse laugh. "And devil take me but I would cure her of her folly were she my wife! If she will not love you, man, why do you not force her to fear you?"

"Fear me! Her soul knows not fear. Have I not tried to intimidate her over and over again? and every threat I hurl, she thrusts back into my teeth, as though her spirit were defended from harm by some invisible, enchanted armor."

"And you love her! You, the master and jailer, creep about, with sallow cheek and sunken eye, while your prisoner is the very impersonation of hopeful happiness. At every unexpected step she listens with a smile; if a cloud stray across the window, she mistakes it for the shadow of deliverance! Verily, my excellent father, who sent me hither to find out whether you were slowly killing his daughter by your cruelty, will scarcely believe me when I tell him what a beneficial effect has been produced upon her by your wholesome restraint. You must know that, although not remarkable for his social virtues, Monsieur Louvois has intervals of puling sensibility, at which times he reproaches himself with the part he took in the comedy of your marriage, and, since Prince Eugene has grown famous, almost repents that he did not accept that fascinating individual for his son-in-law. He is beginning to be absolutely afraid of the little ex-abbé."

"And I too fear him," said Strozzi, gnashing his teeth. "He bears a charmed life, or he would not see the light of heaven to-day. I thought I had him beyond all power of rescue, once in Venice. So sure was I that he must die, that I hastened to Laura and announced his demise. That night I took her away, hoping by change of scene to induce forgetfulness, where hope, of course, was extinct. One day, in Milan, a group of men were talking of some recent victory of the imperialists, and to my amazement I heard the name of the Prince of Savoy among those who had most distinguished themselves."



"Was Laura with you?" asked Barbesieur.

"Alas, she was! And her beautiful face was transfigured with joy. I felt as if I could have swooned with jealousy. I hurried her home, and in half an hour she was on the road to this castle. Here I knew that no news could ever reach her of the world or its heroes; here I could leave her, and fear not to absent myself, for this is a lonely forest, no strangers ever wander hither, and I have good, watchful dragons to guard my treasure. I posted then, with all speed, to Venice, entered the palace at night, and made my way to the secret prison of which you have heard, to see for myself if it could possibly be true that Eugene of Savoy was living."

"Did you find any one?"

"Of course, some man was bound to be there: else he could not have escaped. Conceive my fury when I recognized my own hired bravo, Antonio, who must have betrayed me, and remained instead of the prince. I opened a niche in the wall, kicked his rotten carcass into the lagoon, and, more wretched than ever, returned to this hell wherein I languish, while paradise is within sight."

"How long do you intend to make a voluntary Tantalus of yourself?"

"I shall stay until she forgets Prince Eugene, and loves me."

"I wish you joy; meanwhile I shall await your bulletins at my delightful residence—your generous gift. I must remain until the arrival of my father's couriers; and, having seen them off with the glad tidings of my fair sister's flourishing condition, I will be off for Bonaletta. I wonder which of us two she hates the more? Come—we may as well go at once to her rooms, that my visit may be over."

So saying, Barbesieur put his arm within that of the marquis, but the latter, drawing back, pointed to the clock on the mantel.

"It is too early: she never permits me to come before eleven."

"And you—her husband, suffer such impertinent dictation from your vassal—your wife!"

"I dare not thwart her by any intrusion of myself except

at her will. If I were to lay my hand on her, she would kill herself, like another Lucretia, to save her honor. And if I contradict her by coming before my time, she will start and grow pale, perhaps faint, and be sick; and oh, Barbesieur! the idea of losing her, makes me frantic."

"As you please," returned Barbesieur, with a shrug and a loud laugh. "But as I am not pining for a sight of her beauty, I shall go rabbit-hunting, while you stay at home and look wistfully at what you dare not take."

So saying, Barbesieur shouldered his gun, whistled to his dogs, and went off to the chase; while Strozzi, his eyes on the dial of the clock, awaited the hour for visiting his inaccessible wife.

The marchioness was in an apartment situated in the centre of the wing which her affectionate husband had fitted up for her incarceration. No one that entered this magnificent suite would ever have imagined that it was a prison. The walls were covered with hangings of satin and gold; the floors were hidden by Turkey carpets as soft as turf; the windows were festooned with curtains of velvet and lace; and their recesses filled with tall Venetian mirrors. Paintings of value adorned the walls, and frescoes ornamented the ceilings; while every object of *vertu* that was known to the age, lay in elegant profusion about this luxurious abode.

And yet it was veritably a prison, wherein the Marchioness de Strozzi was confined "because of her hopeless lunacy," and the windows thereof were guarded by a strong trellis-work of iron, which might clearly be seen through their panes, while without, in an anteroom, two she-dragons kept watch over the doors which led from the prison to the world without.

The parlor of Laura's habitation opened into a boudoir which led to the bedroom. This apartment was as sumptuously fitted up as the others, but its windows were similarly guarded. Opposite, and beyond the parlor, was a small room occupied by the duennas, so that the prisoner could not leave her apartments without encountering one or both of them.

Tonietta, the second lady's maid, was busy with her needle



when the marquis entered, and began his usual routine of inquiries.

"How is the marchioness to-day? Is she quiet and well-disposed? Has she breakfasted? Does her health seem good?" and so on.

The woman's lip curled, but she controlled herself and made reply. "Her ladyship is as usual. She has played on the harp, sung, and taken her chocolate. But she was unusually cheerful while we were occupied with her toilet, and I do not like this humor."

"Why, why?" asked Strozzi.

"Because it is a very sudden change—too sudden to portend good. She has always been reserved, and showed no disposition to be friendly. All of a sudden, she becomes talkative and gay."

"So much the better. That proves that she is becoming accustomed to her lot."

"It might prove just the contrary," returned the duenna, with a crafty glance at her master. "It might be intended to blind us, or it might prove that she has hopes of escaping."

"Great God!" shrieked Strozzi, "you terrify me. What hope can she possibly indulge of escape?"

"I do not know, but I like not her cheerfulness, nevertheless. However, be under no apprehension, my lord; we keep strict watch, and there is no mode of egress save through one of these two doors. I am not afraid during the day—but at night! Who knows? Your lordship was wrong to allow her to sleep in a room without us, and to permit her to fasten her door against us."

"She would have it so," sighed Strozzi; "but what does it signify? Had she wings, she could not fly out of her prison." And, with these words, he passed into the parlor.

Laura sat by a window before her easel, and was so absorbed with her work that she was, or affected to be, unconscious of her husband's entrance. Not daring to advance, he stood in the doorway, devouring her with his eyes, almost mad with desire to clasp her to his heart. She, on her side, sat painting, and humming a song, her blue-satin dress defining the graceful contour of her bust and slender waist, then swell-

ing out beneath into rich folds that shimmered like silver under the sunbeams that fell upon them from the window above. The long lace sleeves drooped in gossamer waves over the dress, leaving bare her round, fair arms, firm and white as those of the Venus of Milo. Her hair was gathered into a Grecian knot behind, and her delicate profile, illumined by the morning sun, was so marvellous in its beauty, that Strozzi's eyes filled with tears as he gazed, and his sallow, sunken cheeks glowed with mingled love and hate.

He made a few steps forward, and encountered the cold glance of her splendid eyes, and saw the slight bend of her haughty head, as she became aware of his presence.

"What brings you hither, sir?" said she. "But I need not ask. You have come to satisfy yourself by ocular demonstration that your prisoner has not flown up the chimney. You need not trouble yourself to remain—I am here."

"Prisoner, say you, cruel Laura! 'Tis I that am a prisoner; prisoned by your coldness, and yet I love you—I love you to madness!"

"You are quite right thus to define your love; and perchance it may lead you to that lunacy which is your lying pretext for incarcerating me alive in this lonely castle."

"Oh, I fear it, I fear it!" cried he, despairingly, "for day by day my reason fails me. Have mercy, have mercy!"

"Mercy! You who would have taken the life of the man I love. You are an assassin, whose just portion would be the scaffold. But enough—why renew each day the mournful duo of your love and my contempt? Let me be silent and wait."

"Wait! Oh, then, there is hope for me, and you bid me not despair!"

"You!—I spoke of myself; for, as there is a just God above us, I believe that He will open the doors of my prison, and send His angel to deliver me."

"Then you are entirely without sympathy."

"Entirely—for the man that obtained possession of my person by a fraud, and who, for five long, bitter years, has laden me with the chains of this lie which he calls our marriage."

"I know that you have suffered, and I have wept for your sufferings, while I have been impotent to lessen them. Speak



but the word—say that you are that which, by the laws of God and man, you have been for these five long years, and I open your doors and restore you to freedom. I ask you not to love me; but I implore you to accept my love, and acknowledge yourself to be my wife; for well I know that, the acknowledgment once made, you are too honorable, too virtuous, to sully the name you are willing to bear. Oh, Laura, my peerless Laura! I will make amends for all that I have inflicted upon you through the madness of my love. I have wealth unbounded—a noble name, high station: all shall be yours. See—I am at your feet. Call me your husband, and henceforth I live to be your willing slave!”

“Never!” exclaimed she, starting from her seat, and receding in horror from his touch. “My body you hold in bondage, but my spirit is free; and it is away from this gloomy prison, far away, mingling with that of my spouse before Heaven, my Eugene, my lord and husband.”

“Silence!” shrieked Strozzi, starting to his feet. “Silence! or you will drive me mad! And be assured that as long as you defy me, just so long will I hold you in bondage.”

“You may not live forever, marquis, for the Strozzi, like other men, are mortal; and death, perchance, may liberate me, without your permission. But live or die, as you choose; I shall find means to rejoin Eugene, and this conviction gives me strength to endure your persecutions.”

“The Marchioness Bonaletta is too proud and chaste to be the mistress of any man,” returned Strozzi, with some return of courtesy.

“What do you know of me?—I counsel you not to build your hopes upon any estimate you may have formed of my notions of honor, for they will sorely deceive you, if you do.”

Before the marquis had time to reply to these defiant words, the door opened, and Barbesieur, holding a letter in his hand, entered the room.

Laura frowned, and asked Strozzi by what right her room was thus invaded by a stranger. “I do not desire his presence,” she said. “Be so good as to conduct him to your own apartments.”

“I am not so easily conducted, most amiable sister,” re-

turned Barbesieur. “I have come to deliver a message from your father, after which I shall take my leave without the least regret. We are about to go to war with Germany, and I am about to receive a general’s commission in the French army, so that I have no time to lose in forcing my company upon you.”

“You a general’s commission! You that were once publicly disgraced by—”

“Your marriage has long ago consoled me for that trifling mishap,” interrupted Barbesieur, “and in Paris nobody has ever presumed to think less of me on account of it. I think that, in every way, the sufferer therefrom was the valiant Eugene. And, by-the-by, that leads directly to the business that brought me hither. That Emperor of Austria has been entirely too lucky in war to please the King of France; and Max Emmanuel, whom we had expected to win over to our side, is the commander-in-chief of the imperial armies. Max—your *quasi* brother-in-law, Strozzi; for doubtless you are aware that Lucretia, the left-handed electress, is the first person in importance at the Bavarian court.”

“May she be damned for it!” muttered Strozzi, between his teeth.

“Not on her head as much as on yours rests the shame of Lucretia’s act,” said Laura, reproachfully.

“Ah!” cried Strozzi, a gleam of joy darting athwart his meagre face, “you acknowledge, then, that a woman is disgraced who loves a man whom she cannot marry!”

“A truce to this nonsense, my turtle-doves,” interposed Barbesieur. “I bring you tidings which henceforth render such discussions superfluous. Listen to me, both of you. My father has sent me a bit of news which, coming direct from the Marquis de Villars—that is, from Munich—is positive and authentic. Here it is.”

Laura turned away her head that they might not see her emotion, while Strozzi besought Barbesieur not to be so long-winded.

“Well, I will gratify you both. Belgrade is taken; Prince Eugene, as usual, was foremost in the fight; but unhappily for some people, and happily for others—”



Here Barbesieur paused to enjoy the agony of his sister's suspense. Her face he could not see, but her trembling figure gave evidence of the poignancy of her anguish.

"Well—" said Strozzi, "what befell him?"

"Something not at all uncommon—he was killed."

Laura turned quickly around and caught the diabolical glance of Barbesieur's eyes. "I—I do not believe it," murmured she.

"Did you say that you had the original letter from the Marquis?" asked Strozzi, eagerly.

"Yes, here it is; the marchioness can see for herself."

Laura took the paper and glanced hurriedly over its contents. She raised her eyes to heaven in thanksgiving. "He is not dead," said she, almost inaudibly.

"Then you have read very carelessly," returned Barbesieur. "The letter says, 'so dangerously wounded that he was transported in a dying condition to Vienna.'"

"Had he been dying, he would not have been transported to Vienna," exclaimed Laura, with a smile of returning hope. "No, no! Had Eugene been dead, the air I breathe, the clouds that I watch as they pass by yonder grated windows—my heart, whose beatings are responsive to his—every thing in nature would have revealed the terrible truth. Eugene lives—and lives to fulfil his great and glorious destiny. Pardon me, O Lord, that, for a moment, my faith was weak!"

She looked so transcendently lovely as she spoke, that Strozzi's heart sank within him. He turned his face away, and groaned.

"My charming sister is easily consoled, you perceive," said Barbesieur to Strozzi. "And now that, according to her own interpretation of the marriage ceremony, she is widowed, I hope to hear before long that you have effectually dried up her tears. Come—let us leave this hopeful widow to herself."

"I come," replied Strozzi, "for you must take some refreshment before you go. Until the hour of dinner I take my leave, marchioness."

"Marquis," said Laura, following him to the door.

Strozzi dropped Barbesieur's arm, and returned to her at once.

"You have something to command?" said he, humbly.

"I do not wish to dine to-day," said she. "It will be useless, then, for you to return."

"I cannot deny myself that pleasure," was the reply.

Laura constrained herself to soften her tone, and to implore. "Only this one day," said she, in trembling tones. "I need repose—quiet—"

"To weep out the first pangs of widowhood," interrupted Barbesieur, with one of his coarse laughs. "Come, Strozzi—let her cry it out to-day, she will be all the more smiling for it to-morrow."

"Then as you please," said Strozzi, bowing respectfully. "I will not return until to-morrow before noon."

"Tell my turnkeys that they need not disturb me," said Laura. "Let me be veritably and entirely alone."

"You cannot dispense with their help," objected the marquis.

"I can and will dispense with their presence," returned Laura. "And may I ask of you, as a guaranty that I shall not be disturbed, to leave the keys inside? The bolts without are secure, and the women can watch by the doors to see that I do not attempt to escape."

"Your will shall be my law, to-day," said Strozzi, "for I am but its slave. When will you reward my love—when, Laura?"

"Leave me, I implore you," was the faltering reply of his stricken wife; "leave me for this one day!"

"I will," cried Strozzi, casting passionate glances at her, "but to-morrow?"

"To-morrow," replied Laura, solemnly, "to-morrow is in the hands of God!"

"There, now," exclaimed Barbesieur, "she is making promises already. Come along—I am really hungry."

The voice of Strozzi was heard in the anteroom, and in a few moments Carlotta removed the key to the inside. With one bound Laura reached the door, and fastened it within. Then crossing the parlor, she locked herself within her boudoir, and, falling on her knees, besought the blessing of God upon her flight—for she was resolved to fly that very night.



## CHAPTER VI.

## THE FLIGHT.

FOR one year—from the day of her meeting with Eugene—Laura had been revolving in her mind the possibility of escape, and again and again had she been compelled to acknowledge that escape was impossible. At night, lest sleep should overpower their senses, her untiring spies had barred the doors that led from the anteroom with their beds. Sometimes Laura had proposed to bribe them; but in the event of success with the women, a watchman kept guard at the head of the staircase; and at the entrance of the castle was stationed a porter, whom no one could pass without the watchword. If all these obstacles had been overcome, and the prisoner had found egress to the park, she was met by four watchmen, whom neither promises nor bribery had power to conciliate. These were four bloodhounds who were loosed at night by the marquis's own hands, and on whose fidelity he knew that he might count.

Flight through the doors was out of the question; flight from the windows, had they been free, was equally so; for whoever had dared their dangerous descent, would have been devoured the very moment he touched the ground below.

Plan after plan was made and rejected, and yet she must—she would escape.

In her parlor was one of those large chimneys found in old castles, chimneys that were intended to consume an entire load of wood at once. On one occasion, Strozzi being present at the time, a chimney-sweep went up its grimy walls, to cleanse them from the accumulated soot of the winter. Strozzi, forgetting that the sweep had to return, began to make declarations to Laura, and finally became so lovelorn as to throw himself at her feet. He was on his knees, whining for forgiveness, when the little sweep, like a *deus ex machina*, alighted suddenly in the middle of the hearth, and surprised him in his abject and ridiculous posture.

Laura laughed outright; but the marquis, of course, did

not share her mirth. He turned furiously upon the sweep, threatening to take his life for his impertinent intrusion. The poor fellow pleaded the impossibility of getting out by any other means, when the marquis, stamping his foot with rage, bade him begone up the chimney, and ordered him to find his way over the castle-roof to another chimney at the farthest extremity of the building, which led into an ancient buttery, and thence to the park.

From that day, Laura had revolved in her mind the feasibility of escape through the chimney. If a boy like that had so often gone up and down in safety, why not she, when urged by the double incentive of liberating herself from Strozzi, and making her way to Eugene? The more she pondered the scheme, the easier it seemed of execution, and she began seriously to resolve means for carrying it out.

Accident soon befriended her. One day, in stepping back from a window, whence she had been watching the flight of a flock of birds, her foot became entangled in the carpet, and she fell. This carpet did not cover the entire room. Within a foot of the walls it was fastened by little brass rings, to nails of the same metal, which caught and confined it to the floor.

Laura naturally looked to see the cause of her fall, and, while examining the loosened nails, she perceived that the carpet—a magnificent product of the looms of Turkey—was lined underneath with a species of black cotton cloth, very similar to that of which the sweep's garments were made. When she saw this, her heart beat so wildly that she felt as if it were about to burst. Here was the material of which her dress should be made! Providence had sent it to her, and the enthusiastic girl knelt down and thanked God for His goodness.

She now began to loosen it, and night after night, when her door was locked inside, she worked as prisoners alone are gifted to work, until she had stripped off enough cloth for her purpose. She gave out that, to beguile her solitude, she was desirous of embroidering an altar-cloth of black velvet, and Carlotta was dispatched to the nearest town, to procure materials for the work.

Carlotta was absent three days, whence Laura concluded



that the "nearest town" was at some considerable distance from the castle, of whose situation the marquis had taken good care that she should remain ignorant. But another accident revealed to her the name of the town. She found it in a small paper which enveloped some thread, and contained the name of the merchant from whom it had been purchased, with the place of his residence in a street which Laura knew to be the great thoroughfare of Turin. She was then not two days' journey from Turin, and no longer on Venetian soil.

Once in Turin, she was safe from pursuit, for her estates lay in Savoy, and the duke was obliged to give her protection. She was his subject, and he could not refuse it.

And now began that change of manner and of life which had awakened the suspicions of the two duennas. For several hours of the day she worked at her altar-cloth; but when night set in, and her doors were locked, the needles, thread, and scissors, disappeared from the frame in the parlor, and the black cloth was gradually converted into a jacket and pantaloons like that of the sweep. This accomplished, Laura set about devising a cord and weight, by which she might descend into the buttery. She had so closely observed the little lad she was resolved to emulate, that she had succeeded in fashioning out of the heavy bindings of some old hangings, that lay in a sort of rubbish closet, a stout rope, of strength sufficient to bear her weight.

It was at this juncture of her preparations, that Barbesieur broke in upon her happy solitude, with his terrible tidings of Eugene's misfortune. She was ready to risk her life to meet him, and perchance he was mortally wounded, and she might never see him more! A woman less resolute might have faltered in her purpose; but to Laura the news of her lover's danger had imparted new strength, and she would liberate herself that very night, or perish in the attempt.

She had no money; the marquis had considered it prudent to relieve her of the custody of her wealth, and to put it out of her power to bribe his spies. But she had jewels, and such of these as could be concealed about her person she took.

During the day she had played upon her harp, and improvised melodies so ravishing, that Strozzi had been on his knees

outside, listening and weeping by turns. Finally, when she had ceased singing, he knocked, and besought her to let him look for one moment upon her face, to let him imprint one kiss upon her hand.

Laura thought it prudent to comply, so she opened the door and allowed him, for the first time in his life, to hold her hand and press it to his lips, and to thank her for the heavenly music. Not to overdo the matter, she allowed him to remain but a few moments; and the marquis retired, perfectly convinced that all was right, and that he had a hope of winning that obdurate heart at last.

Night was at hand! The skies were overclouded, with here and there a star struggling through the darkness. Gradually the castle grew silent, the closing of doors and drawing of bolts ceased at last, and all was still.

All, except those two duennas; and Laura saw that if she ever was to lull them to bed, she must call them in to undress her. So opening the door, she beckoned to Carlotta, who, to her great joy, appeared in a dressing-gown. Finally, the comedy being over, and the duennas completely hoodwinked, Laura locked her doors a second time, and, retreating to her bedroom, raised the carpet and drew forth her black disguise. She tore off her white night-gown, clasped a pearl necklace around her neck, and several diamond bracelets on her arms, and then arrayed herself in the costume of the chimney-sweeper. She took up her rope, and, fastening a small iron casket to the end, slung it over her shoulder, and began her dark, perilous ascent. Away! away! Over the castle-roof to liberty and love!—

With her delicate little hands she seized a hook that projected from the chimney. She reached a second and supported her foot on the first; a third, a fourth; and now the opening grew narrow and more narrow, and she struggled along through the black, suffocating hole, until her breath had almost failed her, and she had nigh been choked to death! Poor girl! She could not reach her eyes to clear them of the soot that was blinding and maddening her with pain, and she began to tremble lest she should lose her senses. But she prayed to God to deliver her, and made one supreme effort to



free herself. She felt the air from above ; the hole began to widen, and she could lay her head backward and breathe. She raised her smarting eyes and saw a light—a star ! A greeting from heaven !

But she felt that at such a moment she must not indulge in sensibility. The extremity in which she found herself required resolution, daring, and coolness. She called up all her courage, and struggled on. At last—at last, her hands rested on the top of the chimney : she drew herself upward, and with one bound sprang upon the roof.

For a moment or two she leaned her weary arms upon the edge of the chimney ; then, placing her ear at the opening, she listened to hear if there was any stir below. No—all was silent ; not a sound broke the profound stillness of the night. She must be going then—over the castle-roof to liberty and love !

She groped, with hands outstretched, for some support, but found nothing. Nevertheless she must tread the dark and mysterious way that was to lead her to freedom, and she made a few steps forward. Suddenly she grew faint and dizzy, and a shudder ran through her limbs ; she tried to rally her strength and put out her foot. It encountered some obstacle which sent her reeling backward ; and, murmuring a prayer to Heaven, she swooned and fell. When she recovered her senses, she was lying, she knew not where, perhaps she had fallen from the battlements to the ground, there to be devoured by the savage bloodhounds, or to become again and forever the prisoner of the abhorred marquis. But she felt no pain, and, stretching out her hand to make an effort to rise, she perceived that she was on a smooth, hard surface, and lay against the battlements, or rather against a heavy stone balustrade that surrounded the castle-roof. With this balustrade to grasp, she could arrive at the chimney she was seeking ; all she had to do, was to use it as a guide to the remote wing she was trying to reach. If there had been but a few friendly stars to smile upon her perilous pilgrimage ! But the night was fearfully dark ; so dark that she had no reliance beyond her sense of touch. This alone admonished her of her approach to the angle where she was to turn into the wing. Now and then

she paused and looked back to see if there was light or sign of life along that broad castle-front. But all was safe, and she went slowly on. She felt hopeful now, and strengthened, for the wing was quite remote from the inhabited parts of the castle ; its windows opened low ; and a pathway, now overgrown with weeds, led from one of these windows to a gate which, as the marquis had never dreamed of danger in that quarter, was always left unlocked for the accommodation of the foresters and wood-cutters. Oh, that she were but there ! On ! on ! she must hasten, or she might be discovered ! She was about to press forward, when, to her unspeakable horror, she perceived that her hand rested no longer on the balustrade. She had passed the chimney and stood upon the unprotected battlements ! Shuddering, she drew back—her feet almost giving way under her trembling limbs ; but in the might and vigor of her strong, firm will, she drew herself up and retreated. The roof was not steep—it had merely descent enough to carry off the rain ; but the tiles were so smooth that more than once she slipped back, and she was becoming timorous and weak. While she was resting for a moment from her fatigue, however, she saw something looming up above the roof the sight whereof restored her courage and her strength. It was the long-sought chimney.

She darted toward it, and in a few moments had made fast her rope, and dropped it within. She caught it in her hands, and then, carefully sliding into the chimney, began her frightful descent. In vain she tried to resist ; the rope slipped through her fingers with such fearful rapidity that, by the time she had reached the hearth, her delicate hands were all streaming with blood. She scarcely felt the pain, she had but one absorbing thought—she was free !

Folding those poor, quivering hands, she whispered a thanksgiving to God, and rose, full of hope and joy. Not a sound was to be heard ; and now, blessing the obscurity that shielded her from view, she opened the window, and darted down the pathway. The gate yielded to her touch, and, like a frightened doe, she fled through the woods, until the castle was out of sight, and she could venture to breathe.