

## **‘Mary Hamel, or The Fatal Glove’**

In one of the most retired streets of Nuremburg, towards the middle of the seventeenth century, resided the family of Mary Hamel. She had been left a widow at an early age, with a moderate competency; and instead of mingling in the gay scenes of fashionable life, had, ever since the death of her husband, devoted herself almost exclusively to the education of her two daughters, Angiolina and Mary, and to a nephew who had been consigned as an orphan to her care.

At the period when our tale commences, George Hamel had more than fulfilled the great promises his infantine years seemed to afford of future greatness. His attention had been entirely devoted to the study of medicine; and at the age of five and twenty he was considered to be the most eminent physician in Nuremburg. His cousins were two of the most beautiful creatures that ever illumined the earthly sphere. Angiolina, the elder, was tall and stately – with dark blue eyes, light flaxen hair., and a clear complexion in which the white and red seemed to be struggling to decide which should obtain the conquest. Her bust was large and voluptuous – and her waist so thin, it appeared as if two hands could span it. She was a girl of quick and fiery disposition, of strong passions, and endowed with even a masculine intellect.

Her sister Mary was a perfect contrast to this picture. She was not above the middle height, her hair was as dark as jet, her eyes large and black, and full of softness, and her figure was modelled on the proportions of a Hebe. In temper she was mild, reserved in her manners, retiring in her disposition, and far more domestic in her habits than her beautiful sister.

It had always been Madame Hamel’s hope that Angiolina and George would one day be joined together in the indissoluble bonds of matrimony; and to every appearance the inclinations of the young physician tended towards the same point. But Angiolina felt no other affection for her cousin than that originated by relationship and intimacy; whereas Mary indulged in the secret and hopeless attachment she had formed for George Hamel.

The house in which this family resided belong to Madame Hamel: on one side of it was a large garden, separated from the street by a high wall; and at the end of the garden, a distance of about a hundred and twenty yards from the house, was a species of pavilion or cottage containing four or five rooms. With this pavilion there were two means of communication, either by the garden from the house, or by a wicket gate which opened into the street.

At the death of her husband, Madame Hamel let this pavilion; and a Captain Rosenthal, who commanded a company of infantry stationed in the town, was the occupier of it at the period which marks the commencement of our narrative.

Angiolina was about nineteen years of age when Captain Rosenthal first saw her; and a deep impression was made upon the heart of the susceptible girl by the handsome appearance of the

officer. This impression speedily yielded to the most sincere affection; and as Rosenthal was a frequent visitor to the house, he soon perceived the effect he had produced upon the mind of Angiolina. Rosenthal was a dissipated hypocrite, who under the mask of honourable intentions, had reduced many a lovely victim to disgrace, despair; and even death ! He spared no expense to gratify his desires; and as his fortune was easy, he found ample means of fulfilling all his wishes.

But if Angiolina were perfectly free from the slightest serious attachment to George, he was not the less independent of her caprice. In his capacity of medical adviser, he had been summoned to attend the only child of the Countess of Arnheim, a rich and lovely widow who resided in Nuremberg. Amelia d'Arnheim was about five or six and twenty when she first became acquainted with George Hamel. She possessed a fine and commanding figure, a lovely face, and the most fascinating manners. Her conversation was agreeable and lively, and as she had been educated in Paris she had all the vivacity of a Frenchwoman. She was highly connected and proud of her noble descent: her uncle was President of the tribunal of Nuremberg; and other relatives occupied important places near the person of the sovereign.

One of the most constant visitors at the house of the Countess of Arnheim was Captain Rosenthal; and as George entertained the most ardent passion for the beautiful widow from the first moment of his acquaintance with her, he did not fail to view the frequent calls of the gallant officer with the eye of jealousy. Rumours had whispered that if any one could make the countess change her resolutions, and accept the hand of a second husband, that man was Rosenthal; and scandal had even hinted that his intimacy with the countess was already based upon something more than common friendship. But of any thing to the prejudice of her character, George Hamel believed not a word: he imagined her to be too proud to be criminal, even if her inclinations were so deeply engaged in favour of Rosenthal. A variety of circumstances, however, compelled him to retain the secret of his attachment within his own breast; and while Mary vainly deemed that he doated upon Angiolina, his hopes were all centered in the possibility of his being enabled to render himself agreeable to the Countess of Arnheim.

It was therefore with pleasure that George began to perceive that the visits of Rosenthal to the countess's house became less frequent; and at length they ceased altogether, without any very evident cause. The captain, however, became more assiduous to the tender Angiolina; and it was easy to perceive that he was endeavouring to render himself as agreeable as he could to the susceptible girl. He would pass hours alone with Angiolina in the garden; and as Madame Hamel regarded him in the light of a particular friend, this increasing intimacy did not meet with any discouragement at her hands. As for George, he was delighted to observe that his cousin's society diverted the officer from paying his attentions any longer to the Countess of Arnheim; and he did not interfere in their increasing and dangerous intimacy.

One evening George was seated in his study, which was the first room on the right-hand side of the gate-way of the house, and was pondering on his passion, when the noise of some of the

turbulent students of the town attracted his attention, for he thought that their shouts were mingled with the screams of a female voice. He rushed out into the street, and perceived by the light of a dim lamp half a dozen students in pursuit of a woman closely veiled who was hastening along the garden wall before described, as if she had come from the direction in which the pavilion was situate, and running rapidly towards the place where George Hamel stood.

‘The coarse unmanly villains – thus to attack a defenceless female !’ exclaimed George; and as the fugitive at that moment came up to the door, he hastily invited her to seek protection in the house. The offer was gladly accepted – the lady followed George into his study – and the students passed onwards without attempting further molestation.

In about an hour George Hamel conducted her, to whom he had thus given refuge, to her own home.

On his return to his study, his mind was agitated with a thousand conflicting ideas and emotions. He paced up and down the room – muttered strange things to himself – and seemed a prey to the most extraordinary feelings. His face was pale, he appeared agitated and nervous – he resembled a man who, having committed some crime, is in momentary dread of detection.

He was aroused from his painful situation by the entrance of Mary Hamel, who came to inform him that supper was prepared.

‘I will wait upon you immediately,’ said he, somewhat impatiently.

‘Heavens, are you ill, George ?’ exclaimed the affectionate girl, gazing wistfully upon her cousin’s countenance. ‘You are as pale as death – and your eyes roll as if you have seen a spirit.’

‘Mary – it is nothing – a sudden illness – leave me, dear cousin,’ stammered George.

‘And your friend Harfeldt, who is engaged to sup with us ?’ said Mary.

‘Ah ! what, has my aunt invited that rack-brain, mad-capped student again this evening ?’ demand George.

At that moment a loud knock on the study door interrupted the conversation, and Charles Harfeldt, the youth of whom they had been speaking, entered the room.

‘Now, by my good name, I dare swear it was no other than Mademoiselle Mary Hamel whom I, with some five or six other rovers, most ungallantly pursued along the wall, up the street, just now,’ exclaimed Harfeldt.

‘Yes – yes – it was,’ ejaculated George, in haste.

‘I !’ cried Mary, in the most unfeigned astonishment.

‘Yes – do not contradict me for the love of God !’ said George in a low and tremulous whisper to his cousin, as Harfeldt cast his eye over a book.

‘In that case,’ resumed Harfeldt, who had not caught the hasty whisper, ‘I have to make ten thousand apologies. Indeed, I fancied it must have been Mademoiselle Mary, so soon as I saw her take refuge in this house: but who would have thought of seeing her out at that time of night ?’

‘She came from the pavilion, the door to the garden being locked,’ said George, more hastily than before, while Mary held her tongue in speechless astonishment. ‘Captain Rosenthal left us this morning – he has gone to the citadel of Valden with his company – and so the pavilion is vacant once more.’

‘What, George ?’ said Mary, recovering her self-possession, and trembling for the intellect of her cousin.

‘Silence – for the love of God; and I will explain all presently,’ again whispered George to the astonished girl, who however resolved to humour him.

‘Well, and if supper be ready, my dear friends,’ said the lively student, ‘let us e’en hasten to partake of it. But – ah ! what have we here ?’ and as he uttered the exclamation, he stooped down and picked up a lady’s mitten.

‘Upon my honour, there is blood upon it !’ cried Harfeldt, after a moment’s pause.

‘It is nothing !’ ejaculated George, snatching the mitten from his friend’s hand, and hastily locking it up in his desk. ‘It belongs to my cousin Mary – as she ran into the house, when you followed her, she fell down and grazed her arm.’

‘My dear George,’ began Mary, ‘I really think –’

‘Mary, have the kindness to hasten and show us the way to the supper-table,’ cried George, interrupting his cousin, in order to prevent her from remonstrating with him for the extraordinary statement he had just made.

The bewildered girl saw that expostulation was vain; and as Harfeldt seemed to attach no importance to anything that was said, she held her peace, and conducted the two gentlemen to the apartment where the evening repast was spread.

‘Have you seen Angiolina lately ?’ enquired Madame Hamel of her younger daughter.

‘She went to walk in the garden at about six o’clock,’ said Mary; ‘and from the moment I have not seen her.’

‘It is now ten o’clock,’ observed Madame Hamel, somewhat alarmed; ‘and your sister seldom keeps us waiting. Isn’t she in her bed-chamber?’

Mary hastened to inform herself of this, and returned in a minute or two with the tidings that she was not there. Supper was accordingly served up. During the meal George was still agitated and anxious in his manner – Harfeldt chattered as if he knew not the name of care – and Madame Hamel and her daughter were silent and abstracted.

At length the clock struck twelve, and Angiolina did not make her appearance. Every one now became really alarmed, and Madame Hamel was borne to her couch in a fainting fit. Mary forgot the extraordinary conduct of her cousin in her fear for her sister – George himself expressed his terror that something disastrous might have occurred – and even the volatile Harfeldt shared in the general grief.

Early on the following morning, George Hamel arose, having passed a sleepless night, and left the house without seeing his aunt and cousin. He merely enquired after their health, and if Angiolina had returned; and having received unfavourable replies to his queries, he mounted his horse and galloped away without uttering another word.

Long and tedious was that day for the wretched Mary and her afflicted mother. They had both pressed slumberless pillows – both dared not avow that hope was extinct, and that dread anticipations filled their minds – and both endeavoured, but fruitlessly, to cheer each other.

Suddenly a terrible idea rushed across the mind of Madame Hamel. She remembered that Angiolina and Captain Rosenthal had lately been much together. Could the imprudent girl have eloped with the handsome officer? In her agony, she divulged the suspicion to her younger daughter: but by her it was rejected with something approaching to indignation and disdain. She judged her sister’s purity and chastity of sentiment by her own: and she at once refused to admit even the possibility of such an occurrence. Still the mother was fain to believe that such was the case; and for some time she fancied that George had most probably departed to ascertain the truth of a suspicion which might have entered his mind also. Mary saw that her mother still attached some degree of faith to the idea; and she prayed to her Almighty Father speedily to dispel the terrible darkness which enveloped the affair.

It was about ten o’clock in the evening when one of the Countess of Arnheim’s servants informed his mistress that a stranger was desirous of obtaining an immediate audience. The noble lady turned deadly pale at this news, and for some time was uncertain how to act. She nevertheless speedily recovered her presence of mind, and desired the servant to admit the visitor. In a few moments an individual, enveloped in a large cloak, and with an immense slouched hat which concealed his features, stood in the presence of the Countess of Arnheim, who trembled like the aspen leaf, as she said faintly, ‘Sir – what means this mystery?’

The visitor threw aside his hat, dropped his cloak, and exclaimed, 'Pardon – madam – a thousand times pardon for this intrusion !'

'George Hamel !' cried the countess, sinking upon a chair, and gasping for breath: her emotions were not, however, perceived by the young physician.

'Yes – madam – George Hamel,' said he with a melancholy tone of voice: 'George Hamel, who is about to quit Nuremberg – this very night – and who still finds it impossible to leave without divesting himself of horrible suspicion –'

'A suspicion !' almost screamed the countess.

'Yes !—madam – a suspicion which occupies all my thoughts,' rejoined George Hamel. 'But if, as I hope, that suspicion be devoid of foundation – I know that your contempt will be the just chastisement of my audacity – and I also know, even should your lips change my fears into a certainty, that I have neither the right to accuse you nor to pity myself.'

'Ah !' exclaimed the Countess of Arnheim, the idea that she was beloved by her physician suddenly flitting across her mind. 'Proceed,' she added – and a glow of satisfaction animated that countenance which was vested with the unrivalled splendour and majesty of beauty.

'But,' continued George hastily, 'this suspicion renders me so truly miserable, that I am resolved at once to terminate the agonies I endure.'

'He is in my power then,' said the countess to herself, while a smile of triumph curled her pouting red lips.

'Know, then, madam,' said George in a low and hoarse tone of voice, 'that I have this moment returned to Nuremberg from Valden – and that already perhaps the officers of this place are after me for a murder committed at that fortress !'

'Impossible !' exclaimed the countess.

'O no,' returned George mournfully – 'it is, alas ! too true. I have killed a man – but it was in loyal and equal combat – he fell in a duel.'

'Heavens protect you !' said the countess emphatically.

'The real motive of the quarrel will not be publicly known,' continued George. 'The man whom I have slain is supposed to be the seducer of my cousin Angiolina – and thus scandal will be satisfied. You alone, madam, beside God and myself, shall be informed wherefore that man was killed by my hand.'

'I knew him then ?' cried the countess anxiously.

‘Yes – madam – I killed him,’ said the young man, with appalling vehemence, ‘because he dishonoured – he calumniated—he cast shame upon your name. It is almost impossible for me to mention his statement – but still it is necessary. He declared, madam, that you – you, Amelia, Countess of Arnheim – were his mistress !’

‘You have killed, then, Captain Rosenthal !’ cried the countess, taken off her guard by this sudden disclosure.

‘Oh ! horror – horror – she has named him – and it is then but too true !’ exclaimed George in a tone which bespoke the most bitter –bitter agony.

For one moment he hesitated what course to pursue – he reflected that the officers of justice might already be in search of him, for in those times the law punished the surviving duelist with death; he accordingly flung his cloak hastily around him, seized his hat, cast one look of despair at the almost fainting countess, and rushed from the house.

George hurried to the abode of his aunt in a state bordering on distraction. He dared not meet his affectionate relatives – he merely enquired if Angiolina had returned, and received an answer in the negative; he sat down and wrote a few words to Mary to apprise her that he had killed the reputed seducer of his cousin, and was obliged to fly from Nuremberg. He then despatched the servant with the note to Mary Hamel, and departed upon a fresh horse with the speed of lightning.

He was already far beyond the walls of Nuremberg when Mary, in breathless haste and horror, rushed into his study, which he had just left, to bid him adieu and utter one word of consolation ere his departure. But he was gone – and the weeping girl fell almost senseless into a chair. Miseries were complicating around herself and her miserable mother. Angiolina lost – ruined – perhaps in want and poverty, on one side; on the other a relative whom the savage laws of the land would lead to a scaffold if he were entrapped by the myrmidons of justice ! and then her own hopeless passion – Oh ! it was too much for that young heart to bear !

In the midst of her sorrows she was interrupted by the volatile Harfeldt, who ran hastily into the room with the unpleasant tidings that the police officers were in pursuit of George; and scarcely had Mary time to inform him that she was already too well aware of the fatal event, but that George had escaped from the city, when a violent knocking commenced at the front door. The servant ran to admit the visitors – and in a moment the study was filled by the delegates of the law, with a magistrate at their head. Mary cast a hasty glance amongst the crowd; and her courage rose when she saw that her cousin was not there.

‘Thank God,’ cried she fervently; ‘he has escaped !’

‘Mademoiselle,’ said the magistrate, stepping forward, and courteously addressing himself to Mary Hamel; ‘you are aware that Captain Rosenthal has this morning been killed in a duel by your cousin George Hamel.’

‘Alas, I am fully aware of the sad truth,’ replied Mary in an almost inaudible tone of voice.

‘If then,’ continued the magistrate, ‘the said George Hamel be really departed –’

‘Oh ! he is – he is,’ interrupted Mary wildly.

‘I believe it was in a pavilion adjoining the house that Captain Rosenthal resided,’ said the magistrate.

‘It was,’ returned Mary.

‘We must proceed thither and put the seals upon his property, for the benefit of his heir,’ continued the magistrate.

‘Monsieur Harfeldt, would you have the kindness to conduct this gentleman and his followers to the pavilion ?’ asked Mary, her own strength failing her.

‘With pleasure,’ returned Harfeldt; and in another moment Mary was again alone in the study.

Ten minutes elapsed – and the sorrowful girl was giving way to her tears, when the magistrate, his followers, and Harfeldt returned to the study in haste, with horror depicted upon their countenances.

‘Heavens, what a sight !’ exclaimed the magistrate, clasping his hands together.

‘Your sister, mademoiselle,’ began Harfeldt, whose face was as pale as death.

‘Oh ! my sister – what of my sister ?’ cried Mary, starting from her reverie.

‘Your sister is –’ said Harfeldt, trembling violently.

‘Speak – oh ! speak !’ cried Mary, with so wild an accent that even the magistrate shed tears; and she sank upon the chair from which she had risen when Harfeldt had addressed her.

‘Let no one leave this room,’ said the magistrate; and when Mary had slightly recovered herself, he observed, ‘and you, mademoiselle, pray endeavour to compose yourself sufficiently to reply to my questions.’

‘My poor sister !’ was the only reply. ‘Oh ! what will my dear mother suffer !’

‘Has any one been to that pavilion since the captain left Nuremberg ?’ enquired the magistrate.

Mary indicated a negative.

‘This mitten was found near the corpse,’ said one of the officers, stepping forward, and respectfully presenting the article alluded to, to his superior.

‘A mitten !’ ejaculated Harfeldt, a terrible suspicion darting across his brain. ‘I saw one like it –’

‘Where ?’ demanded the magistrate.

‘Oh ! I am mistaken,’ stammered Harfeldt, afraid of compromising even the one he now deemed guilty of murder.

‘You must speak,’ said the magistrate coolly, ‘or the torture will compel you.’

‘I was really mistaken,’ persisted Harfeldt.

‘To the prison and the torture-room, that witness,’ cried the magistrate, beckoning to his men.

At the utterance of that terrible word, Harfeldt’s courage failed him – he fell on his knees – and promised to reveal all he knew.

‘Tis well,’ said the magistrate. ‘You saw a mitten like this somewhere, I think ?’

‘I saw it here,’ answered Harfeldt, in a trembling tone of voice; and by degrees he related the circumstance of himself and a friend having pursued a female who seemed to have issued from the pavilion – of his having found Mary in her cousin’s study – of his picking up a mitten covered with blood – and of the conversation which then took place between himself and George Hamel.

‘Great God, protect me !’ cried the unhappy Mary, who had listened in stupid astonishment to this detail. ‘It is as he says – but George was mistaken !’

‘And where did George Hamel put the bloody mitten ?’ enquired the magistrate.

‘In his desk,’ was the answer.

‘Break it open’, said the magistrate.

The order was immediately obeyed – the desk was forced – and the object of search was produced. It corresponded exactly with one found near the corpse.

‘And this was stated to have belonged to Mary Hamel ?’ said the magistrate.

The answer was of course in the positive.

‘Where is the wound which you inflicted upon yourself when you fell, as stated by your cousin?’ demanded the magistrate of the almost fainting Mary.

‘It was all false – all a delusion,’ murmured Mary, in a state of mind which no pen can describe. ‘I knew not his motives – he certainly detailed all those circumstances to his friend Harfeldt – but not one iota was correct.’

‘Mary Hamel,’ cried the magistrate in a loud tone of voice, ‘I arrest you on suspicion of having murdered your sister!’

No sooner were these terrible words uttered, when the door which communicated with the interior of the house was suddenly opened, and Madame Hamel rushed wildly into the room. The magistrate’s decree of arrest had met her ears, and she arrived in time to receive her fainting daughter in her arms, and place her in an arm-chair.

‘Impossible, Sir; it is impossible!’ cried the agonized mother. ‘Where is my daughter Angiolina?’

‘Murdered, in yonder pavilion, Madam,’ returned the magistrate; ‘and oh! it grieves me to say that appearances are strongly against your younger daughter!’

Those words were as fatal as the arrows of Azrael, the Mahomedan angel of death. Madame Hamel made no reply; she glanced once at her inanimate daughter, and then towards the heavens, and she fell back a lifeless corpse upon the floor. In another hour Mary was alone, in a cell of the prison of Nuremberg.

There was a mass of evidence against the unfortunate Mary Hamel. The circumstances, with which the reader is already acquainted, the nature of Harfeldt’s testimony, and the well-known fact that Mary was desperately in love with her cousin George, and naturally jealous of her sister Angiolina, whom she believed he was attached to, were damning evidence against her. Still she firmly persisted in declaring her innocence, and in adhering to her original statement, viz. that she was not the female pursued by the students; that she merely suffered George to mislead Harfeldt as before described, because she saw that he wished her not to contradict him; and that she could not, of course, anticipate the disastrous events such a line of conduct might lead to. But she did not say that which she trembled to think upon, – she did not mention the agitation in which she found her cousin when she sought him in the study – O no; she would not create in the breasts of others that horrible suspicion which she could not prevent herself from entertaining – a suspicion which pointed to George Hamel as the murderer of her sister Angiolina!

Never was a young female in a more pitiable predicament than Mary Hamel. She was in a dungeon, under sentence of death for the murder of her sister; – her mother had died at her feet, – and George did not come forward to proclaim his consciousness of her innocence! Human

nature could scarcely support such an overburthening mass of afflictions. If hell be terrible, and if Mary Hamel were guilty, surely that was a foretaste of the suffering of the damned in those regions where the worm dieth not, and their fire is not quenched.

The morning of the execution dawned, and, as early as daylight, the place where the scaffold was erected was crowded to excess. A crier paraded the town, thus advising the inhabitants of the terrible tragedy which the tribunal had ordered to be enacted: –‘THIS DAY MARY HAMEL, FOUND GUILTY OF FRATRICIDE, WILL UNDERGO THE LAST PENALTY OF THE LAW. PRAY FOR HER SOUL’S REPOSE !’

But an hour before the one at which the unhappy girl was destined to ascend the scaffold, a horseman, covered with dust, his dress in disorder, his hair dishevelled, galloped into the town and rode straight to the Palace of Justice, where he surrendered himself into the hands of the police, and declared that Mary Hamel was innocent, and that he was the true ,murderer of the deceased Angiolina. The self-accused was no other than George Hamel.

The execution was accordingly suspended, and an immediate investigation into the matter was ordered by the president of the tribunal.

‘I am the guilty person !’ exclaimed George Hamel, so soon as the judges had taken their seats.

There was a strange coolness and dogged determination – unnatural and appalling – in the manners of the prisoner.

‘What prompted you to the horrid deed ?’ demanded the president.

‘I was devotedly attached to my deceased cousin,’ replied George, not daring to glance towards the place where he knew Mary to be standing; ‘and on the night when the terrible crime was consummated, I went to the pavilion to say farewell to Captain Rosenthal. Angiolina was there; – I was stung with rage and jealousy, and in a fit of passion I slew her !’

At this terrible announcement, a piercing scream rent the air – a scream so wild and loud, and so long, that even after its echoes had ceased to strike the air, the dismal wail made the very heart-strings of all present vibrate, and Mary Hamel was borne senseless from the court. Her worst suspicions were confirmed – *she* was saved – *George* was guilty of her sister’s death !

‘And wherefore,’ continued the president, when order was once more restored in the court, ‘wherefore did you now come forward to save Mary Hamel, when on the night in question, and in the presence of a witness named Harfeldt, you endeavoured to avert all suspicion that might subsequently arise from yourself to you cousin ?’

‘I was then nervous and agitated – oh ! I was ill in mind and body;’ answered George hastily; ‘and I said any thing that came uppermost in my mind: but I take God to witness,’ he added,

violently striking the bar at which he stood, ‘that I knew my folly on that evening would led to so dismal a result for her. Remorse has now brought me hither, and I await my doom !’

The judges consulted together; – Harfeldt was then examined once more; – Mary Hamel was ordered to be released, and George was committed to the dungeon which she had so lately occupied. On the following day, the examination was resumed, and sentence of death was passed on the unhappy young man.

It was in vain that Mary Hamel petitioned the tribunal to be allowed to have an interview with her wretched cousin. She would have endeavoured to console and support him in his hours of agony; she would even have been kind to the assassin of her sister: but the power was denied her; and this last stroke of affliction was more poignantly felt than any other.

But extraordinary revelations were yet to be made, and the *manes* of the murdered girl were not to be appeased with an innocent victim.

The evening before the day on which George was ordered to be executed, and just before the court was preparing to adjourn, the Countess of Arnheim was led in by the father confessor. Her face was ashy pale – her fine voluptuous form had lost its *embonpoint* – her eyes were sunken – her cheeks hollow – her hands emaciated; a few days had worked immense changes in that woman whose majestic beauty was lately the admiration of all Nuremberg; so changed, indeed, was she – so altered – that her uncle, the president, scarcely knew her, as she entered the hall where he and his fellow-judges sat.

‘My Lord,’ said the priest, on whose arm the almost-fainting countess supported herself, ‘I bring a penitent woman to confess an enormous crime, and do justice to one who would have sacrificed himself for her !’

‘What !’ cried the president, ‘the noble Countess of Arnheim guilty of a crime ? Oh ! no – impossible ! Father Bertrand, explain yourself !’

‘My lord, I take God to witness that your niece is now come to confess –’

‘What ?’ said the president hastily.

‘The murder of Angiolina Hamel,’ said the priest, in a firm tone of voice.

A cry of horror was uttered by every one in that spacious hall; and the countess sank senseless upon the cold pavement.

‘The Countess of Arnheim guilty of murder !’ cried the president. ‘Impossible !’ and he buried his face in his hands.

‘Oh ! my son – my son !’ ejaculated the countess, as she partially recovered her senses by the aid of the restoratives that were immediately applied. That expression of maternal solicitude drew tears from every eye; in sooth, it was a solemn and awful scene.

The countess was accommodated with a chair, and the priest hastened to disclose certain extraordinary particulars relative to the murder of Angiolina Hamel.

It appears that on the morning of the day when the deadly deed was committed, the Countess of Arnheim was informed that Captain Rosenthal was about to leave Nuremberg for the citadel of Valden. The countess, whose great affection for the handsome officer had led her into those criminal paths which eventually led to exposure and ruin, had long suspected that she had been slighted and neglected for some favoured rival. She accordingly determined to seek a last interview with Captain Rosenthal, and know the worst. Suspense was more terrible than a knowledge of misfortune.

She hastened at night to the pavilion, whither her guilty love had often before led her; but Rosenthal had already departed for the citadel. The countess, however, hastened to the parlour, which she knew full well; and there she found a lovely girl in an agony of grief and despair reclining on a sofa. That girl was Angiolina Hamel, – the mistress of captain Rosenthal, –the rival who had succeeded the countess in the affections of the fickle officer.

Angiolina raised her head, and immediately recognised the Countess of Arnheim.

‘To-morrow,’ said Angiolina bitterly, ‘all Nuremberg shall know that the noble Countess of Arnheim was at the same *rendezvous* of love with Angiolina Hamel.

The misguided girl recked not for her own honour.

At these words the countess felt the blood rush to her countenance; she become wild and uncertain how to act; and in her turn she uttered taunting words to the imprudent Angiolina.

‘You shall not leave this place,’ said the countess, ‘until you have sworn that you will forget this encounter.’

‘The Countess of Arnheim reduces herself by her profligacy to a level with Angiolina Hamel,’ exclaimed the victim of Rosenthal’s unhallowed desires; ‘and thus she can issue no commands as a superior.’

At that moment a cloud obscured the light of the moon; and Angiolina laughed in scorn at the haughty Countess of Arnheim, whose hand grasped a dagger, which she always wore concealed in her garments when she roved through the streets by night, as on this occasion. Fatal occurrence ! the countess, blinded by rage struck at random, – Angiolina fell: there was a deep groan – a gurgling in the throat – and all was over.

Bewildered – wild – haggard – and a prey to a million horrible ideas, the countess hastily left the pavilion and rushed into the street. There she found herself in the midst of a disorderly band of students, who surrounded her, and resolved on compelling her to unveil her countenance. But she concealed her face the more strenuously, and succeeded in emancipating herself from the impertinent collegians. She ran, – they pursued her, – a door stood open before her, – and George’s study afforded her refuge.

‘O my God !’ cried the countess as she sank upon the chair which George hastily tendered her.

‘That voice – those features !’ said the young physician, as the lady drew aside her veil.

‘Yes, – ‘tis I – the Countess of Arnheim !’ exclaimed she; ‘but ask me no questions –’

‘Oh ! this strange conduct demands explanation,’ thought George within himself. ‘But public rumour has already wronged this noble lady: tomorrow Rosenthal shall confirm or annihilate the scandal.’

‘One favour, sir, – one favour only have I to ask of you,’ said the countess.

‘Calumny must not reach her !’ ejaculated George aloud.

‘Calumny ? – no, sir, oh ! no – not for my son – my dear son’s sake, Monsieur Hamel, – calumny must not tarnish the noble name of Arnheim !’ cried the countess, with wildness depicted upon her countenance, and demonstrated in her manners.

‘You may command us, Madam,’ said George after a long pause.

‘You will conduct me to my hotel,’ returned the countess, dropping her mitten in the agitation of the moment. The other she had already left behind her from the same cause, in the pavilion.

George Hamel made no further observation – his mind was too full of extraordinary sentiments and conflicting emotions to allow him to give them utterance in words – mere words, cooled by human breath – and he obeyed the instruction of the countess without a murmur. The reader is already aware that he conducted her safely to her abode.

Time passed on, and after a series of occurrences already detailed – the day, nominated for the execution of George Hamel, dawned. Dreadful in the interim had been the sufferings of the Countess of Arnheim; the constant presence of her son alone prevented her from proclaiming the innocence of Mary and accusing herself.

The fatal hour approached – and awful was the conflict in the mind of the miserable countess. Still her sense of rectitude could not triumph over her maternal affection which made her cling to life, although that was now the only tie which bound the once envied Amelia of Arnheim to

existence. Suddenly a horseman galloped up the street – a violent ring at the bell alarmed her – in a few minutes a heavy foot ascended the spacious stair-case – and George Hamel entered the room.

‘Is that you ? Or am I the sport of an apparition ?’ exclaimed the countess, writhing upon her chair.

‘Vision or reality, noble countess,’ said George with a bitter smile, ‘wherefore turnest thou so pale ?’

‘Ah ! pardon, pardon’ cried Amelia of Arnheim, overcome by the consciousness that her secret was now known, and sinking at the feet of him who *once* – who *still* so tenderly loved her.

‘O pardon,’ continued George, more ironically than before: ‘pardon, sayest thou, for the murderess of Angiolina Hamel ?’

‘Pardon – pardon !’

‘Pardon for one who suffers an innocent victim to hasten to the scaffold,’ ejaculated George, almost frantically.

‘My son – my son – my little son !’ screamed the countess, in all the bitterness of maternal agony.

‘My suspicions then are well founded – the terrible tidings which followed me to Frankfort and brought me back hither,’ pursued George, lowering his tone of voice, ‘are, alas ! too true. Woman, thou dost not deny thy crime ?’

‘My son – my infant son – my orphan son !’ was the only, but heart-rending, reply.

‘Amelia,’ said George, taking her by the hand, and squeezing her wrist with such force that he almost screamed with pain, – ‘Amelia, I have loved you long and tenderly – Oh ! God only knows how well ! I have watched your slightest actions – I have drunk in as honied sweet the words that have fallen from your lips – Oh ! heaven alone can tell the extent of my passion.’

‘George – George – you will spare me !’ cried the countess, falling upon the floor, with her face towards the carpet.

‘I will !’ thundered the emphatic voice of the strange young man: and he rushed wildly from the apartment.

And, oh how faithfully he kept his promise ! He hastened to the tribunal – he denounced himself – he reasoned as a learned counsel against his own innocence – he argued his life away. Such was the force of that young man’s enthusiastic love !

But it was impossible to resist the force of the new evidence, and when George himself was informed that the Countess of Arnheim had confessed her crime, and was resolved to expiate it on the scaffold, he no longer pleaded guilty to that which he had not committed, but sorrowfully acknowledged his innocence.

So great was the impression made upon the minds of the judges by the heroic conduct of the magnanimous George Hamel, that when cognizance of the death of Captain Rosenthal was taken, an universal recommendation to mercy in a few days ensured him a full pardon.

The Countess of Arnheim was allowed the society of her child in the dismal dungeon to which her crime had consigned her; and on the evening before the morning appointed for her execution, she put an end to his existence, and her own, by administering poison, of which she carried a small quantity about her ever since she committed the dreadful deed which caused such desolation and misery in so many hearts !

Six months after the internment of the once brilliant and noble countess, George Hamel and his cousin Mary were united in the holy bonds of matrimony; and if a certain desponding and melancholy expression of countenance characterised them both during the remainder of their lives, they could not but enjoy a pure, tranquil, and uninterrupted degree of domestic felicity in each other's society. A numerous and smiling offspring sprung up around them; and in the good conduct of all their children they were indeed supremely blest.