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ZANONI.



ytton, Edward George Earle Lytton Bulwer-Lytton,
1st Baron, 1803-1873.

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ZANONI

BY

THE AUTHOR OF "NIGHT AND MORNING,"
"RIENZI," ETC.

"In short, I could make neither head nor tail on't."

LE COMTE DE GARALIS.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

LONDON:

SAUNDERS & OTLEY, CONDUIT STREET.

1842.

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BOOK THE THIRD.

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VOL. II.

Page 175, line 6, for "tubes" read "tribes."

corrected by hand

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towards Baiæ. Glyndon left word at his hotel that if Signor Zanoni sought him, it was in the neighbourhood of that once celebrated watering-place of the ancients that he should be found.

They passed by Viola's house, but Glyndon resisted the temptation of pausing there; and

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BOOK THE THIRD.

(CONTINUED.)

CHAPTER X.

O chiunque tu sia, che fuor d'ogni uso,
Pieghi Natura ad opre altere e strane,
E, spiando i secreti, entro al piu chiuso
Spazj a tua voglia delle menti umane,
Deh—Dimmi !

GERUS. LIB. cant. x. xviii.

EARLY the next morning the young Englishmen mounted their horses, and took the road towards Baiæ. Glyndon left word at his hotel that if Signor Zanoni sought him, it was in the neighbourhood of that once celebrated watering-place of the ancients that he should be found.

They passed by Viola's house, but Glyndon resisted the temptation of pausing there; and

after threading the grotto of Posilipo, they wound by a circuitous route back into the suburbs of the city, and took the opposite road, which conducts to Portici and Pompeii. It was late at noon when they arrived at the former of these places. Here they halted to dine; for Mervale had heard much of the excellence of the macaroni at Portici, and Mervale was a *bon vivant*.

They put up at an inn of very humble pretensions, and dined under an awning. Mervale was more than usually gay; he pressed the *Lácrima* upon his friend, and conversed gaily.

“ Well, my dear friend, we have foiled Signor Zanoni in one of his predictions, at least. You will have no faith in him hereafter.”

“ The ides are come, not gone.”

“ Tush! if he be the soothsayer, you are not the Cæsar. It is your vanity that makes you credulous. Thank Heaven, I do not think myself of such importance, that the operations of nature should be changed in order to frighten me.”

“ But why should the operations of nature be changed? There may be a deeper philosophy than we dream of—a philosophy that discovers the secrets of nature, but does not alter, by penetrating, its courses.”

“ Ah! you relapse into your heretical credulity; you seriously suppose Zanoni to be a prophet—a reader of the future; perhaps an associate of genii and spirits!”

Here the landlord, a little, fat, oily fellow, came up with a fresh bottle of Lácrima. He hoped their Excellencies were pleased. He was most touched—touched to the heart, that they liked the macaroni. Were their Excellencies going to Vesuvius? There was a slight eruption; they could not see it where they were, but it was pretty, and would be prettier still after sunset.

“ A capital idea!” cried Mervale. “ What say you, Glyndon?”

“ I have not yet seen an irruption; I should like it much.”

“ But is there no danger ?” asked the prudent Mervale.

“ Oh, not at all ; the mountain is very civil at present. It only plays a little, just to amuse their Excellencies the English.”

“ Well, order the horses, and bring the bill ; we will go before it is dark. Clarence, my friend—*Nunc est bibendum* ; but take care of the *pede libero*, which will scarce do for walking on lava !”

The bottle was finished, the bill paid ; the gentlemen mounted, the landlord bowed, and they bent their way, in the cool of the delightful evening, towards Resina.

The wine, perhaps the excitement of his thoughts, animated Glyndon, whose unequal spirits were, at times, high and brilliant as those of a schoolboy released ; and the laughter of the northern tourists sounded oft and merrily along the melancholy domains of buried cities.

Hesperus had lighted his lamp amidst the rosy skies as they arrived at Resina. Here

they quitted their horses, and took mules and a guide. As the sky grew darker and more dark, the Mountain Fire burned with an intense lustre. In various streaks and streamlets, the fountain of flame rolled down the dark summit, and the Englishmen began to feel increase upon them, as they ascended, that sensation of solemnity and awe, which makes the very atmosphere that surrounds the Giant of the Plains of the Antique Hades.

It was night, when, leaving the mules, they ascended on foot, accompanied by their guide, and a peasant who bore a rude torch. The guide was a conversable, garrulous fellow, like most of his country and his calling; and Mervale, who possessed a sociable temper, loved to amuse or to instruct himself on every incidental occasion.

“ Ah! Excellency,” said the guide, “ your countrymen have a strong passion for the volcano. Long life to them! they bring us

plenty of money. If our fortunes depended on the Neapolitans, we should starve."

"True, they have no curiosity," said Mervale. "Do you remember, Glyndon, the contempt with which that old Count said to us, 'You will go to Vesuvius, I suppose? I have never been; why should I go? you have cold, you have hunger, you have fatigue, you have danger, and all for nothing but to see fire, which looks just as well in a brazier as on a mountain.' Ha! ha! the old fellow was right."

"But, Excellency," said the guide, "that is not all; some Cavaliers think to ascend the mountain without our help. I am sure they deserve to tumble into the crater."

"They must be bold fellows to go alone;—you don't often find such."

"Sometimes among the French, Signor. But the other night—I never was so frightened—I had been with an English party; and a lady

had left a pocket-book on the mountain, where she had been sketching. She offered me a handsome sum to return for it, and bring it to her at Naples. So I went in the evening. I found it, sure enough; and was about to return, when I saw a figure that seemed to emerge from the crater itself. The air there was so pestiferous, that I could not have conceived a human creature could breathe it, and live. I was so astounded that I stood still as a stone, till the figure came over the hot ashes, and stood before me, face to face. Santa María, what a head!"

"What! hideous?"

"No; so beautiful, but so terrible. It had nothing human in its aspect."

"And what said the salamander?"

"Nothing! It did not even seem to perceive me, though I was near as I am to you; but its eyes seemed prying into the air. It passed by me quickly, and, walking across a stream of burning lava, soon vanished on the

other side of the mountain. I was curious and foolhardy, and resolved to see if I could bear the atmosphere which this visitor had left; but, though I did not advance within thirty yards of the spot at which he had first appeared, I was driven back by a vapour that well nigh stifled me. Cospetto, I have spat blood ever since."

"Now will I lay a wager that you fancy this fire-king must be Zanoni," whispered Mervale, laughing.

The little party had now arrived nearly at the summit of the mountain; and unspeakably grand was the spectacle on which they gazed. From the crater arose a vapour, intensely dark, that overspread the whole back-ground of the heavens; in the centre whereof rose a flame, that assumed a form singularly beautiful. It might have been compared to a crest of gigantic feathers, the diadem of the mountain, high-arched, and drooping downward, with the hues delicately shaded off, and the whole shifting and tremulous as the plumage on a warrior's

helm. The glare of the flame spread, luminous and crimson, over the dark and rugged ground on which they stood, and drew an innumerable variety of shadows from crag and hollow. An oppressive and sulphureous exhalation served to increase the gloomy and sublime terror of the place. But on turning from the mountain, and towards the distant and unseen ocean, the contrast was wonderfully great; the heavens serene and blue, the stars still and calm as the eyes of Divine Love. It was as if the realms of the opposing principles of Evil and of Good were brought in one view before the gaze of man! Glyndon—once more the enthusiast, the artist—was enchained and entranced by emotions vague and undefinable, half of delight and half of pain. Leaning on the shoulder of his friend, he gazed around him, and heard, with deepening awe, the rumbling of the earth below, the wheels and voices of the Ministry of Nature in her darkest and most inscrutable recess. Suddenly, as a bomb from a shell, a huge stone was

flung hundreds of yards up from the jaws of the crater, and falling with a mighty crash upon the rock below, split into ten thousand fragments, which bounded down the sides of the mountain, sparkling and groaning as they went. One of these, the largest fragment, struck the narrow space of soil between the Englishmen and the guide, not three feet from the spot where the former stood. Mervale uttered an exclamation of terror, and Glyndon held his breath, and shuddered.

“ Diavolo !” cried the guide. “ Descend, Excellencies—descend ! we have not a moment to lose : follow me close !”

So saying, the guide and the peasant fled with as much swiftness as they were able to bring to bear. Mervale, ever more prompt and ready than his friend, imitated their example ; and Glyndon, more confused than alarmed, followed close. But they had not gone many yards, before, with a rushing and sudden blast, came from the crater an enormous volume of

vapour. It pursued—it overtook—it overspread them. It swept the light from the heavens. All was abrupt and utter darkness; and through the gloom was heard the shout of the guide, already distant, and lost in an instant amidst the sound of the rushing gust, and the groans of the earth beneath. Glyndon paused. He was separated from his friend—from the guide. He was alone—with the Darkness and the Terror. The vapour rolled sullenly away; the form of the plumed fire was again dimly visible, and its struggling and perturbed reflection again shed a glow over the horrors of the path. Glyndon recovered himself, and sped onward. Below, he heard the voice of Mervale calling on him, though he no longer saw his form. The sound served as a guide. Dizzy and breathless, he bounded forward; when—hark!—a sullen, slow, rolling sound in his ear! He halted—and turned back to gaze. The fire had overflowed its course; it had opened itself a channel amidst the furrows of the mountain

The stream pursued him fast—fast ; and the hot breath of the chasing and preternatural foe came closer and closer upon his cheek ! He turned aside ; he climbed desperately, with hands and feet, upon a crag, that, to the right, broke the scathed and blasted level of the soil. The stream rolled beside and beneath him, and then, taking a sudden wind round the spot on which he stood, interposed its liquid fire—a broad and impassable barrier, between his resting-place and escape. There he stood, cut off from descent, and with no alternative but to retrace his steps towards the crater, and thence seek, without guide or clue, some other pathway.

For a moment his courage left him : he cried in despair, and in that overstrained pitch of voice which is never heard afar off, to the guide—to Mervale, to return to aid him.

No answer came ; and the Englishman, thus abandoned solely to his own resources, felt his spirit and energy rise against the danger. He turned back, and ventured as far towards the

crater as the noxious exhalation would permit ; then, gazing below, carefully and deliberately, he chalked out for himself a path, by which he trusted to shun the direction the fire-stream had taken, and trod firmly and quickly over the crumbling and heated strata.

He had proceeded about fifty yards, when he halted abruptly ; an unspeakable and unaccountable horror, not hitherto felt amidst all his peril, came over him. He shook in every limb ; his muscles refused his will—he felt, as it were, palsied and death-stricken. The horror, I say, was unaccountable, for the path seemed clear and safe. The fire, above and behind, burned clear and far ; and beyond, the stars lent him their cheering guidance. No obstacle was visible—no danger seemed at hand. As thus, spell-bound and panic-stricken, he stood chained to the soil—his breast heaving ; large drops rolling down his brow ; and his eyes starting wildly from their sockets—he saw before him,

at some distance, gradually shaping itself more and more distinctly to his gaze, a Colossal Shadow—a shadow that seemed partially borrowed from the human shape, but immeasurably above the human stature; vague, dark, almost formless; and differing, he could not tell where, or why, not only from the proportions, but also from the limbs and outline of man.

The glare of the volcano, that seemed to shrink and collapse from this gigantic and appalling apparition, nevertheless threw its light, redly and steadily, upon another shape that stood beside, quiet, and motionless; and it was, perhaps, the contrast of these two things—the Being and the Shadow—that impressed the beholder with the difference between them—the Man and the Superhuman. It was but for a moment—nay, for the tenth part of a moment, that this sight was permitted to the wanderer. A second eddy of sulphureous vapours from the

volcano, yet more rapidly, yet more densely than its predecessor, rolled over the mountain; and either the nature of the exhalation, or the excess of his own dread, was such, that Glyndon, after one wild gasp for breath, fell senseless on the earth.

CHAPTER XI.

Was hab 'ich

Wenn ich nicht Alles habe?—sprach der Jüngling.

DAS VERSCHLEIERTE BILD ZU SAIS.

MERVALE and the Italians arrived in safety at the spot where they had left the mules; and not till they had recovered their own alarm and breath did they think of Glyndon. But then, as the minutes passed, and he appeared not, Mervale, whose heart was as good, at least, as human hearts are in general, grew seriously alarmed. He insisted on returning, to search for his friend; and, by dint of prodigal promises, prevailed at last on the guide to accompany him. The lower part of the mountain

lay calm and white in the starlight; and the guide's practised eye could discern all objects on the surface, at a considerable distance. They had not, however, gone very far, before they perceived two forms, slowly approaching towards them.

As they came near, Mervale recognised the form of his friend. "Thank Heaven, he is safe," he cried, turning to the guide.

"Holy angels befriend us!" said the Italian, trembling—"Behold the very being that crossed me last Friday night. It is he! but his face is human now!"

"Signor Inglese," said the voice of Zanoni, as Glyndon—pale, wan, and silent—returned passively the joyous greeting of Mervale—"Signor Inglese, I told your friend that we should meet to-night. You see you have *not* foiled my prediction."

"But how?—but where?" stammered Mervale, in great confusion and surprise.

"I found your friend stretched on the

ground, overpowered by the mephitic exhalation of the crater. I bore him to a purer atmosphere ; and, as I know the mountain well, I have conducted him safely to you. This is all our history. You see, sir, that were it not for that prophecy which you desired to frustrate, your friend would, ere this time, have been a corpse : one minute more, and the vapour had done its work. Adieu ; good night, and pleasant dreams."

" But, my preserver, you will not leave us !" said Glyndon, anxiously, and speaking for the first time. " Will you not return with us ?"

Zanoni paused, and drew Glyndon aside. " Young man," said he, gravely, " it is necessary that we should again meet to-night. It is necessary that you should, ere the first hour of morning, decide on your own fate. I know that you have insulted her whom you profess to love. It is not too late to repent. Consult not your friend—he is sensible and wise ; but not now is his wisdom needed. There are

times in life when, from the imagination, and not the reason, should wisdom come—this, for you, is one of them. I ask not your answer now. Collect your thoughts—recover your jaded and scattered spirits. It wants two hours of midnight. Before midnight I will be with you.”

“Incomprehensible being!” replied the Englishman, “I would leave the life you have preserved in your own hands; but what I have seen this night has swept even Viola from my thoughts. A fiercer desire than that of love burns in my veins—the desire not to resemble, but to surpass my kind—the desire to penetrate and to share the secret of your own existence—the desire of a preternatural knowledge and unearthly power. I make my choice. In my ancestor’s name, I adjure and remind thee of thy pledge. Instruct me; school me; make me thine; and I surrender to thee at once, and without a murmur, the woman whom, till I saw thee, I would have defied a world to obtain.”

“ I bid thee consider well ; on the one hand, Viola, a tranquil home, a happy and serene life. On the other hand, all is darkness—darkness, that even these eyes cannot penetrate.”

“ But thou hast told me, that if I wed Viola, I must be contented with the common existence,—if I refuse, it is to aspire to thy knowledge and thy power.”

“ Vain man!—knowledge and power are not happiness.”

“ But they are better than happiness. Say!—if I marry Viola, wilt thou be my master—my guide? Say this, and I am resolved.”

“ It were impossible.”

“ Then I renounce her! I renounce love. I renounce happiness. Welcome solitude—welcome despair; if they are the entrances to thy dark and sublime secret.”

“ I will not take thy answer now. Before the last hour of night thou shalt give it in one word—ay, or no! Farewell till then.”

Zanoni waved his hand; and, descending rapidly, was seen no more.

Glyndon rejoined his impatient and wondering friend; but Mervale, gazing on his face, saw that a great change had passed there. The flexile and dubious expression of youth was for ever gone. The features were locked, rigid, and stern; and so faded was the natural bloom, that an hour seemed to have done the work of years.

CHAPTER XII.

Was ist 's

Das hinter diesem Schleier sich verbirgt ?

DAS VERSCHLEIERTE BILD ZU SAIS.

ON returning from Vesuvius or Pompeii, you enter Naples, through its most animated, its most Neapolitan, quarter—through that quarter in which Modern life most closely resembles the Antient; and in which, when, on a fair day, the thoroughfare swarms alike with Indolence and Trade, you are impressed at once with the recollection of that restless, lively race, from which the population of Naples derives its origin: so that in one day you may see at Pompeii the habitations of a remote age; and on

the Mole, at Naples, you may imagine you behold the very beings with whom those habitations had been peopled.

But now, as the Englishmen rode slowly through the deserted streets, lighted but by the lamps of heaven, all the gaiety of day was hushed and breathless. Here and there, stretched under a portico or a dingy booth, were sleeping groups of houseless Lazzeroni; a tribe now merging its indolent individuality amidst an energetic and active population.

The Englishmen rode on in silence; for Glyndon neither appeared to heed nor hear the questions and comments of Mervale, and Mervale himself was almost as weary as the jaded animal he bestrode.

Suddenly the silence of earth and ocean was broken by the sound of a distant clock, that proclaimed the quarter preceding the last hour of night. Glyndon started from his reverie, and looked anxiously round. As the final stroke died, the noise of hoofs rung on the

broad stones of the pavement ; and from a narrow street to the right, emerged the form of a solitary horseman. He neared the Englishmen, and Glyndon recognised the features and mien of Zanoni.

“ What ! do we meet again, Signor ? ” said Mervale, in a vexed but drowsy tone.

“ Your friend and I have business together, ” replied Zanoni, as he wheeled his steed to the side of Glyndon. “ But it will be soon transacted. Perhaps you, sir, will ride on to your hotel. ”

“ Alone ? ”

“ There is no danger ! ” returned Zanoni, with a slight expression of disdain in his voice.

“ None to me ;—but to Glyndon ? ”

“ Danger from me ! Ah, perhaps you are right. ”

“ Go on, my dear Mervale, ” said Glyndon, “ I will join you before you reach the hotel. ”

Mervale nodded, whistled, and pushed his horse into a kind of amble.

“ Now your answer—quick.”

“ I have decided. The love of Viola has vanished from my heart. The pursuit is over.”

“ You have decided?”

“ I have; and now my reward.”

“ Thy reward! Well; ere this hour to-morrow it shall await thee.”

Zanoni gave the rein to his horse; it sprang forward with a bound; the sparks flew from its hoofs, and horse and rider disappeared amidst the shadows of the street whence they had emerged.

Mervale was surprised to see his friend by his side, a minute after they had parted.

“ What has passed between you and Zanoni?”

“ Mervale, do not ask me to-night; I am in a dream.”

“ I do not wonder at it, for even I am in a sleep. Let us push on.”

In the retirement of his chamber, Glyndon sought to re-collect his thoughts. He sat down on the foot of his bed, and pressed his hands

tightly to his throbbing temples. The events of the last few hours; the apparition of the gigantic and shadowy Companion of the Mystic, amidst the fires and clouds of Vesuvius; the strange encounter with Zanoni himself, on a spot in which he could never, by ordinary reasoning, have calculated on finding Glyndon, filled his mind with emotions, in which terror and awe the least prevailed. A fire, the train of which had been long laid, was lighted at his heart—the asbestos-fire, that, once lit, is never to be quenched. All his early aspirations—his young ambition—his longings for the laurel, were merged in one passionate yearning to overpass the bounds of the common knowledge of man, and reach that solemn spot, between two worlds, on which the mysterious stranger appeared to have fixed his home.

Far from recalling with renewed affright the remembrance of the apparition that had so appalled him, the recollection only served to kindle and concentrate his curiosity into a burning focus. He had said aright—*love had*

vanished from his heart; there was no longer a serene space amidst its disordered elements for human affection to move and breathe. The enthusiast was rapt from this earth; and he would have surrendered all that beauty ever promised, that mortal hope ever whispered, for one hour with Zanoni beyond the portals of the visible world.

He rose, oppressed and fevered with the new thoughts that raged within him, and threw open his casement for air. The ocean lay suffused in the starry light, and the stillness of the heavens never more eloquently preached the morality of repose to the madness of earthly passions. But such was Glyndon's mood, that their very hush only served to deepen the wild desires that preyed upon his soul. And the solemn stars, that are mysteries in themselves, seemed by a kindred sympathy to agitate the wings of the spirit no longer contented with its cage. As he gazed, a Star shot from its brethren, and vanished from the depth of space!

CHAPTER XIII.

Fra gli occulti pensieri
Che vuol? ch'io tema, o spero?

TASSO, Canzone vi.

THE young actress and Gionetta had returned from the theatre; and Viola, fatigued and exhausted, had thrown herself on a sofa, while Gionetta busied herself with the long tresses which, released from the fillet that bound them, half concealed the form of the actress, like a veil of threads of gold. As she smoothed the luxuriant locks, the old nurse ran gossiping on about the little events of the night, the scandal and politics of the scenes, and the tire-room. Gionetta was a worthy soul. Almanzor, in Dryden's

tragedy of "Almahide," did not change sides with more gallant indifference than the exemplary nurse. She was at last grieved and scandalized that Viola had not selected one chosen cavalier. But the choice she left wholly to her fair charge. Zegri or Abencerrage, Glyndon or Zanoni, it had been the same to her, except that the rumours she had collected respecting the latter, combined with his own recommendations of his rival, had given her preference to the Englishman. She interpreted ill the impatient and heavy sigh with which Viola greeted her praises of Glyndon, and her wonder that he had of late so neglected his attentions behind the scenes, and she exhausted all her powers of panegyric upon the supposed object of the sigh. "And then too," she said, "if nothing else were to be said against the other Signor, it is enough that he is about to leave Naples."

"Leave Naples!—Zanoni?"

"Yes, darling! In passing by the Mole to

day, there was a crowd round some outlandish-looking sailors. His ship arrived this morning, and anchors in the bay. The sailors say that they are to be prepared to sail with the first wind; they were taking in fresh stores. They—”

“Leave me, Gionetta! Leave me!”

The time had already passed when the girl could confide in Gionetta. Her thoughts had advanced to that point when the heart recoils from all confidence, and feels that it cannot be comprehended. Alone now, in the principal apartment of the house, she paced its narrow boundaries with tremulous and agitated steps; she recalled the frightful suit of Nicot; the injurious taunt of Glyndon; and she sickened at the remembrance of the hollow applauses which, bestowed on the actress, not the woman, only subjected her to contumely and insult. In that room the recollection of her father's death; the withered laurel and the broken chords, rose chillingly before her. Hers, she felt, was a yet gloomier fate—the chords may break while the

laurel is yet green. The lamp, waning in its socket, burned pale and dim, and her eyes instinctively turned from the darker corner of the room. Orphan! by the hearth of thy parents, dost thou fear the presence of the dead!

And was Zanoni indeed about to quit Naples? Should she see him no more? Oh, fool, to think that there was grief in any other thought! The Past, that was gone!—The Future! there was no Future to her—Zanoni absent! But this was the night of the third day on which Zanoni had told her that, come what might, he would visit her again. It was, then, if she might believe him, some appointed crisis in her fate; and how should she tell him of Glyndon's hateful words? The pure and the proud mind can never confide its wrongs to another, only its triumphs and its happiness. But at that late hour would Zanoni visit her—could she receive him? Midnight was at hand. Still in undefined suspense, in intense anxiety, she lingered in the room. The quarter before midnight

sounded dull and distant. All was still, and she was about to pass to her sleeping-room, when she heard the hoofs of a horse at full speed; the sound ceased; there was a knock at the door. Her heart beat violently; but fear gave way to another sentiment when she heard a voice, too well known, calling on her name. She paused, and then with the fearlessness of innocence, descended, and unbarred the door.

Zanoni entered with a light and hasty step. His horseman's cloak fitted tightly to his noble form; and his broad hat threw a gloomy shade over his commanding features.

The girl followed him into the room she had just left, trembling and blushing deeply, and stood before him with the lamp she held shining upward on her cheek, and the long hair that fell like a shower of light over the half clad shoulders and heaving bust.

“Viola,” said Zanoni, in a voice that spoke deep emotion, “I am by thy side once more to save thee. Not a moment is to be lost. Thou

must fly with me, or remain the victim of the Prince di ——. I would have made the charge I now undertake another's; thou knowest I would—thou knowest it!—but he is not worthy of thee, the cold Englishman! I throw myself at thy feet; have trust in me, and fly."

He grasped her hand passionately as he dropped on his knee, and looked up into her face with his bright beseeching eyes.

"Fly with thee!" said Viola, scarce believing her senses.

"With me. Name, fame, honour—all will be sacrificed if thou dost not."

"Then—then," said the wild girl, falteringly, and turning aside her face; "then I am not indifferent to thee? Thou wouldst not give me to another?"

Zanoni was silent; but his breast heaved, his cheeks flushed, his eyes darted dark and impassioned fire.

"Speak!" exclaimed Viola, in jealous suspicion of his silence.

“Indifferent to me! No; but I dare not yet say that I love thee.”

“Then what matters my fate?” said Viola, turning pale, and shrinking from his side; “leave me—I fear no danger. My life, and therefore my honour, is in mine own hands.”

“Be not so mad,” said Zanoni. “Hark! do you hear the neigh of my steed?—it is an alarum that warns us of the approaching peril. Haste, or you are lost!”

“Why dost thou care for me?” said the girl, bitterly. “Thou hast read my heart; thou knowest that thou art become the lord of my destiny. But to be bound beneath the weight of a cold obligation; to be the beggar on the eyes of Indifference; to throw myself on one who loves me not; *that* were indeed the vilest sin of my sex. Ah, Zanoni, rather let me die!”

She had thrown back her clustering hair from her face as she spoke; and as she now stood, with her arms drooping mournfully, and her hands clasped together with the proud bitterness

of her wayward spirit, giving new zest and charm to her singular beauty, it was impossible to conceive a sight more irresistible to the senses and the heart.

“ Tempt me not to thine own danger—perhaps destruction!” exclaimed Zanoni, in faltering accents. “ Thou canst not dream of what thou wouldst demand—come !” and, advancing, he wound his arm round her waist. “ Come, Viola; believe at least in my friendship, my honour, my protection——”

“ And not thy love,” said the Italian, turning on him her reproachful eyes. Those eyes met his, and he could not withdraw from the charm of their gaze. He felt her heart throbbing beneath his own; her breath came warm upon his cheek. He trembled—*He!* the lofty, the mysterious Zanoni, who seemed to stand aloof from his race. With a deep and burning sigh, he murmured, “ Viola, I love thee!” “ Oh!” he continued, passionately, and releasing his hold, he threw himself abruptly at her feet,

“ I no more command ;—as woman should be wooed, I woo thee. From the first glance of those eyes—from the first sound of thy voice, thou becamest too fatally dear to me. Thou speakest of fascination—it lives and it breathes in thee ! I fled from Naples to fly from thy presence — it pursued me. Months, years passed, and thy sweet face still shone upon my heart. I returned, because I pictured thee alone and sorrowful in the world ; and knew that dangers from which I might save thee were gathering near thee and around. Beautiful Soul ! whose leaves I have read with reverence, it was for thy sake, thine alone, that I would have given thee to one who might make thee happier on earth than I can. Viola ! Viola ! thou knowest not—never canst thou know—how dear thou art to me !”

It is in vain to seek for words to describe the delight—the proud, the full, the complete, and the entire delight that filled the heart of the Neapolitan. He whom she had considered too

lofty even for love—more humble to her than those she had half despised! She was silent, but her eyes spoke to him; and then slowly, as aware, at last, that the human love had advanced on the ideal, she shrunk into the terrors of a modest and virtuous nature. She did not dare—she did not dream to ask him the question she had so fearlessly made to Glyndon; but she felt a sudden coldness—a sense that a barrier was yet between love and love. “Oh, Zanoni!” she murmured, with downcast eyes, “ask me not to fly with me; tempt me not to my shame. Thou wouldst protect me from others. Oh, protect me from thyself!”

“Poor orphan!” said he, tenderly, “and canst thou think that I ask from thee one sacrifice,—still less the greatest that woman can give to love? As my wife I woo thee, and by every tie, and by every vow that can hallow and endear affection. Alas, they have belied love to thee indeed, if thou dost not know the religion that belongs to it! They who truly love would

seek for the treasure they obtain, every bond that can make it lasting and secure. Viola, weep not, unless thou givest me the holy right to kiss away thy tears!"

And that beautiful face, no more averted, drooped upon his bosom; and as he bent down, his lips sought the rosy mouth: a long and burning kiss—danger—life—the world was forgotten! Suddenly Zanoni tore himself from her.

"Hearest thou the wind that sighs, and dies away? As that wind, my power to preserve thee, to guard thee, to foresee the storm in thy skies, is gone. No matter. Haste, haste; and may love supply the loss of all that it has dared to sacrifice! Come!"

Viola hesitated no more. She threw her mantle over her shoulders, and gathered up her dishevelled hair; a moment, and she was prepared, when a sudden crash was heard below.

"Too late!—fool that I was—too late!" cried Zanoni, in a sharp tone of agony, as he hurried

to the door. He opened it, only to be borne back by the press of armed men. The room literally swarmed with the followers of the ravisher, masked, and armed to the teeth.

Viola was already in the grasp of two of the myrmidons. Her shriek smote the ear of Zanoni. He sprang forward; and Viola heard his wild cry in a foreign tongue! She saw the blades of the ruffians pointed at his breast! She lost her senses; and when she recovered, she found herself gagged, and in a carriage that was driven rapidly, by the side of a masked and motionless figure. The carriage stopped at the portals of a gloomy mansion. The gates opened noiselessly; a broad flight of steps, brilliantly illumined, was before her. She was in the palace of the Prince di —.

CHAPTER XIV.

Ma lasciamo, per Dio, Signore, ormai
Di parlar d'ira, e di cantar di morte.

ORL. FUR. Canto xvii. xvii.

THE young actress was led to, and left alone in, a chamber adorned with all the luxurious and half-Eastern taste that, at one time, characterized the palaces of the great seigneurs of Italy. Her first thought was for Zanoni. Was he yet living? Had he escaped unscathed the blades of the foe? her new treasure—the new light of her life—her lord, at last her lover?

She had short time for reflection. She heard steps approaching the chamber; she drew back, but trembled not. A courage, not of herself,

never known before, sparkled in her eyes, and dilated her stature. Living or dead, she would be faithful still to Zanoni! There was a new motive to the preservation of honour. The door opened, and the Prince entered in the gorgeous and gaudy costume still worn at that time in Naples.

“Fair and cruel one,” said he, advancing, with a half-sneer upon his lip, “thou wilt not too harshly blame the violence of love.” He attempted to take her hand as he spoke.

“Nay,” said he, as she recoiled, “reflect that thou art now in the power of one that never faltered in the pursuit of an object less dear to him than thou art. Thy lover, presumptuous though he be, is not by to save thee. Mine thou art; but instead of thy master, suffer me to be thy slave.”

“Prince,” said Viola, with a stern gravity, “your boast is in vain. Your power! I am *not* in your power. Life and death are in my

own hands. I will not defy ; but I do not fear you. I feel—and in some feelings,” added Viola, with a solemnity almost thrilling, “there is all the strength, and all the divinity of knowledge—I feel that I am safe even here ; but you—you, Prince di ——, have brought danger to your home and hearth !”

The Neapolitan seemed startled by an earnestness and a boldness he was but little prepared for. He was not, however, a man easily intimidated or deterred from any purpose he had formed ; and, approaching Viola, he was about to reply with much warmth, real or affected, when a knock was heard at the door of the chamber. The sound was repeated, and the Prince, chafed at the interruption, opened the door and demanded, impatiently, who had ventured to disobey his orders, and invade his leisure. Mascari presented himself, pale and agitated : “ My lord,” said he, in a whisper, “ pardon me ; but a stranger is below, who in-

sists on seeing you; and, from some words he let fall, I judged it advisable even to infringe your commands."

"A stranger!—and at this hour! What business can he pretend? Why was he even admitted?"

"He asserts that your life is in imminent danger. The source whence it proceeds he will relate to your Excellency alone."

The Prince frowned; but his colour changed. He mused a moment, and then re-entering the chamber, and advancing towards Viola, he said—

"Believe me, fair creature, I have no wish to take advantage of my power. I would fain trust alone to the gentler authorities of affection. Hold yourself queen within these walls more absolutely than you have ever enacted that part on the stage. To-night, farewell! May your sleep be calm, and your dreams propitious to my hopes."

With these words he retired, and in a few moments Viola was surrounded by officious at-

tendants, whom she at length, with some difficulty, dismissed; and refusing to retire to rest, she spent the night in examining the chamber, which she found was secured, and in thoughts of Zanoni, in whose power she felt an almost preternatural confidence.

Meanwhile, the Prince descended the stairs, and sought the room into which the stranger had been shewn.

He found the visitor wrapped from head to foot in a long robe—half gown, half mantle—such as was sometimes worn by ecclesiastics. The face of this stranger was remarkable! So sunburnt and swarthy were his hues, that he must, apparently, have derived his origin amongst the races of the furthest East. His forehead was lofty, and his eyes so penetrating, yet so calm in their gaze, that the Prince shrunk from them as we shrink from a questioner who is drawing forth the guiltiest secrets of our hearts.

“What would you with me?” asked the Prince, motioning his visitor to a seat.

“Prince of ——,” said the stranger in a voice deep and sweet, but foreign in its accent; “son of the most energetic and masculine race that ever applied godlike genius to the service of Human Will, with its winding wickedness and its stubborn grandeur; descendant of the great Visconti, in whose chronicles lies the History of Italy in her palmy day, and in whose rise was the development of the mightiest intellect, ripened by the most relentless ambition, I come to gaze upon the last star in a darkening firmament. By this hour to-morrow, space shall know it not. Man! unless thy whole nature change, thy days are numbered!”

“What means this jargon?” said the Prince, in visible astonishment and secret awe. “Comest thou to menace me in my own halls, or wouldst thou warn me of a danger? Art thou some itinerant mountebank, or some unguessed-of friend? Speak out, and plainly. What danger threatens me?”

“Zanoni and thy ancestor’s sword,” replied the stranger.

“Ha! ha!” said the Prince, laughing scornfully, “I half suspected thee from the first. Thou art then the accomplice or the tool of that most dexterous, but, at present, defeated charlatan? And I suppose thou wilt tell me that, if I were to release a certain captive I have made, the danger would vanish, and the hand of the dial would be put back?”

“Judge of me as thou wilt, Prince di——. I confess my knowledge of Zanoni. Thou, too, wilt know his power, but not till it consume thee. I would save, therefore I warn thee. Dost thou ask me why? I will tell thee. Canst thou remember to have heard wild tales of thy grandsire?—of his desire for a knowledge that passes that of the schools and cloisters?—of a strange man from the East, who was his familiar and master in lore, against which the Vatican has, from age to age, launched its mimic

thunder? Dost thou call to mind the fortunes of thy ancestor?—how he succeeded in youth to little but a name?—how, after a career wild and dissolute as thine, he disappeared from Milan, a pauper, and a self-exile?—how, after years spent, none knew in what climes or in what pursuits, he again revisited the city where his progenitors had reigned?—how with him came this wise man of the East, the mystic Mejnour?—how they who beheld him, beheld with amaze and fear that time had ploughed no furrow on his brow; that youth seemed fixed, as by a spell, upon his face and form? Dost thou not know that from that hour his fortunes rose? Kinsmen the most remote died; estate upon estate fell into the hands of the ruined noble. He allied himself with the royalty of Austria; he became the guide of princes, the first magnate of Italy. He founded anew the house of which thou art the last lineal upholder, and transferred his splendour from Milan to the Sicilian Realms. Visions of high ambition were then present with him

nightly and daily. Had he lived, Italy would have known a new dynasty, and the Visconti would have reigned over Magna-Græcia. He was a man such as the world rarely sees; but his ends, too earthly, were at war with the means he sought. Had his ambition been more or less, he had been worthy of a realm mightier than the Cæsars swayed; worthy of our solemn order; worthy of the fellowship of Mejnour, whom you now behold before you."

The Prince, who had listened with deep and breathless attention to the words of his singular guest, started from his seat at his last words. "Impostor!" he cried, "can you dare thus to play with my credulity? Sixty years have flown since my grandsire died; were he living he had passed his hundred and twentieth year; and you, whose old age is erect and vigorous, have the assurance to pretend to have been his contemporary! But you have imperfectly learned your tale. You know not, it seems, that my grandsire, wise and illustrious

indeed, in all save his faith in a charlatan, was found dead in his bed, in the very hour when his colossal plans were ripe for execution, and that Mejnour was guilty of his murder."

"Alas!" answered the stranger, in a voice of great sadness, "had he but listened to Mejnour, had he but delayed the last and most perilous ordeal of daring wisdom until the requisite training and initiation had been completed, your ancestor would have stood with me upon an eminence which the waters of Death itself wash everlastingly, but cannot overflow. Your grandsire resisted my fervent prayers, disobeyed my most absolute commands, and in the sublime rashness of a soul that panted for secrets, which he who desires orbs and sceptres never can obtain, perished, the victim of his own frenzy."

"He was poisoned, and Mejnour fled."

"Mejnour fled not," answered the stranger, proudly; "Mejnour could not fly from danger; for, to him, danger is a thing long left behind. It was the day before the duke took the fatal

draught which he believed was to confer on the mortal, the immortal boon, that finding my power over him was gone, I abandoned him to his doom. But a truce with this ; I loved your grand-sire ! I would* save the last of his race. Oppose not thyself to Zanoni. Oppose not thy soul to thine evil passions. Draw back from the precipice while there is yet time. In thy front, and in thine eyes, I detect some of that diviner glory which belonged to thy race. Thou hast in thee some germs of their hereditary genius, but they are choked up by worse than thy hereditary vices. Recollect that by genius thy house rose ; by vice it ever failed to perpetuate its power. In the laws which regulate the Universe it is decreed, that nothing wicked can long endure. Be wise, and let history warn thee. Thou standest on the verge of two worlds, the Past and the Future ; and voices from either shriek omen in thy ear. I have done. I bid thee farewell!"

"Not so ; thou shalt not quit these walls. I

will make experiment of thy boasted power. What, ho there!—ho!”

The Prince shouted; the room was filled with his minions.

“Seize that man!” he cried, pointing to the spot which had been filled by the form of Mejnour. To his inconceivable amaze and horror, the spot was vacant. The mysterious stranger had vanished like a dream. But a thin and fragrant mist undulated, in pale volumes, round the walls of the chamber. “Look to my lord,” cried Mascari. The Prince had fallen to the floor insensible. For many hours he seemed in a kind of trance. When he recovered, he dismissed his attendants, and his step was heard in his chamber, pacing to and fro, with heavy and disordered strides. Not till an hour before his banquet the next day, did he seem restored to his wonted self.

CHAPTER XV.

Oime! come poss 'io

Altri trovar, se me trovar non posso.

AMINT. At. i. Sc. ii.

THE sleep of Glyndon, the night after his last interview with Zanoni, was unusually profound; and the sun streamed full upon his eyes as he opened them to the day. He rose refreshed, and with a strange sentiment of calmness, that seemed more the result of resolution than exhaustion. The incidents and emotions of the past night had settled into distinct and clear impressions. He thought of them but slightly—he thought rather of the future. He was as one of the initiated in the old Egyptian myste-

ries, who have crossed the gate only to long more ardently for the penetralia.

He dressed himself, and was relieved to find that Mervale had joined a party of his countrymen on an excursion to Ischia. He spent the heat of noon in thoughtful solitude, and gradually the image of Viola returned to his heart. It was a holy—for it was a *human*—image. He had resigned her; and though he repented not, he was troubled at the thought that repentance would have come too late.

He started impatiently from his seat, and strode with rapid steps to the humble abode of the actress.

The distance was considerable, and the air oppressive. Glyndon arrived at the door breathless and heated. He knocked; no answer came. He lifted the latch, and entered. He ascended the stairs; no sound, no sight of life met his ear and eye. In the front chamber, on a table, lay the guitar of the actress and some manuscript parts in the favourite operas. He

paused, and summoning courage, tapped at the door which seemed to lead into the inner apartment. The door was ajar; and, hearing no sound within, he pushed it open. It was the sleeping chamber of the young actress, that holiest ground to a lover; and well did the place become the presiding deity; none of the tawdry finery of the profession was visible, on the one hand; none of the slovenly disorder common to the humbler classes of the south, on the other. All was pure and simple; even the ornaments were those of an innocent refinement; a few books, placed carefully on shelves, a few half-faded flowers in an earthen vase, which was modelled and painted in the Etruscan fashion. The sunlight streamed over the snowy draperies of the bed, and a few articles of clothing on the chair beside it. Viola was not there; but the nurse!—was she gone also? He made the house resound with the name of Gionetta, but there was not even an echo to reply. At last, as he reluctantly quitted

the desolate abode, he perceived Gionetta coming towards him from the street. The poor old woman uttered an exclamation of joy on seeing him; but, to their mutual disappointment, neither had any cheerful tidings or satisfactory explanation to afford the other. Gionetta had been aroused from her slumber the night before by the noise in the rooms below; but ere she could muster courage to descend Viola was gone! She found the marks of violence on the door without; and all she had since been able to learn in the neighbourhood, was, that a Lazzerone, from his nocturnal resting-place on the Chiaja, had seen by the moonlight a carriage which he recognised as belonging to the Prince di ——, pass and repass that road about the first hour of morning. Glyndon, on gathering, from the confused words and broken sobs of the old nurse, the heads of this account, abruptly left her and repaired to the palace of Zanoni. There he was informed that the Signor was gone to the banquet of the Prince

di ——, and would not return till late. Glyndon stood motionless with perplexity and dismay; he knew not what to believe, or how to act. Even Mervale was not at hand to advise him. His conscience smote him bitterly. He had had the power to save the woman he had loved, and had forgone that power; but how was it that in this Zanoni himself had failed? How was it that he was gone to the very banquet of the ravisher? Could Zanoni be aware of what had passed? If not, should he lose a moment in apprising him? Though mentally irresolute, no man was more physically brave. He would repair at once to the palace of the Prince himself; and if Zanoni failed in the trust he had half appeared to arrogate, he, the humble foreigner, would demand the captive of fraud and force, in the very halls and before the assembled guests of the Prince di ——.

CHAPTER XVI.

Ardua vallatur duris sapientia scrupis.

HADR. JUN., *Emblem.* xxxvii.

WE must go back some hours in the progress of this narrative. It was the first faint and gradual break of the summer dawn; and two men stood in a balcony overhanging a garden fragrant with the scents of the awakening flowers. The stars had not yet left the sky—the birds were yet silent on the boughs; all was still, hushed, and tranquil; but how different the tranquillity of reviving day from the solemn repose of night! In the music of silence there are a thousand variations. These men, who alone seemed awake in Naples, were Zanoni and the myste-

rious stranger, who had but an hour or two ago startled the Prince di —— in his voluptuous palace.

“ No,” said the latter; “ hadst thou delayed the acceptance of the Arch Gift until thou hadst attained to the years, and passed through all the desolate bereavements, that chilled and seared myself, ere my researches had made it mine, thou wouldst have escaped the curse of which thou complainest now, thou wouldst not have mourned over the brevity of human affection as compared to the duration of thine own existence; for thou wouldst have survived the very desire and dream of the love of woman. Brightest, and, but for that error, perhaps the loftiest, of the secret and solemn race that fills up the interval in creation between mankind and the children of the Empyreal, age after age wilt thou rue the splendid folly which made thee ask to carry the beauty and the passions of youth into the dreary grandeur of earthly immortality.”

“ I do not repent, nor shall I,” answered Zanoni. “ The transport and the sorrow, so wildly blended, which have at intervals diversified my doom, are better than the calm and bloodless tenour of thy solitary way. Thou, who lovest nothing, hatest nothing, feelest nothing ; and walkest the world with the noiseless and joyless footsteps of a dream !”

“ You mistake,” replied he who had owned the name of Mejnour,—“ though I care not for love, and am dead to every *passion* that agitates the sons of clay, I am not dead to their more serene enjoyments. I carry down the stream of the countless years, not the turbulent desires of youth—but the calm and spiritual delights of age. Wisely and deliberately I abandoned youth for ever when I separated my lot from men. Let us not envy or reproach each other. I would have saved this Neapolitan, Zanoni, (since so it now pleases thee to be called,) partly because his grandsire was but divided by the last airy barrier from our own brotherhood—

partly because I know that in the man himself lurk the elements of ancestral courage and power, which in earlier life would have fitted him for one of us. Earth holds but few to whom nature has given the qualities that can bear the ordeal! But time and excess, that have thickened the grosser senses, have blunted the imagination. I relinquish him to his doom."

"And still, then, Mejnour, you cherish the desire to revive our order, limited now to ourselves alone, by new converts and allies; surely—surely—thy experience might have taught thee, that scarcely once in a thousand years is born the being who can pass through the horrible gates that lead into the worlds without. Is not thy path already strewed with thy victims? Do not their ghastly faces of agony and fear—the blood-stained suicide, the raving maniac—rise before thee, and warn what is yet left to thee of human sympathy from thy insane ambition?"

"Nay," answered Mejnour; "have I not

had success to counterbalance failure? And can I forego this lofty and august hope, worthy alone of our high condition—the hope to form a mighty and numerous race with a force and power sufficient to permit them to acknowledge to mankind their majestic conquests and dominion—to become the true lords of this planet—invaders, perchance of others,—masters of the inimical and malignant tribes by which at this moment we are surrounded,—a race that may proceed, in their deathless destinies, from stage to stage of celestial glory, and rank at last amongst the nearest ministrants and agents gathered round the Throne of Thrones? What matter a thousand victims for one convert to our band? And you, Zanoni,” continued Mejnour, after a pause—“you, even you, should this affection for a mortal beauty that you have dared, despite yourself, to cherish, be more than a passing fancy—should it, once admitted into your inmost nature, partake of its bright and enduring essence—even you may brave all

things to raise the beloved one into your equal. Nay, interrupt me not. Can you see sickness menace her—danger hover around—years creep on—the eyes grow dim—the beauty fade—while the heart, youthful still, clings and fastens round your own,—can you see this, and know it is yours to——”

“ Cease !” cried Zanoni, fiercely. “ What is all other fate as compared to the death of terror ? What ! when the coldest sage—the most heated enthusiast—the hardiest warrior, with his nerves of iron—have been found dead in their beds, with straining eyeballs and horrent hair, at the first step of the Dread Progress,—thinkest thou that this weak woman—from whose cheek a sound at the window, the screech of the night-owl, the sight of a drop of blood on a man’s sword, would start the colour—could brave one glance of——Away !—the very thought of such sights for her makes even myself a coward !”

“ When you told her you loved her—when you clasped her to your breast, you renounced

all power to foresee her future lot, or protect her from harm. Henceforth to her you are human, and human only. How know you, then, to what you may be tempted?—how know you what her curiosity may learn and her courage brave? But enough of this—you are bent on your pursuit?”

“ The fiat has gone forth.”

“ And to-morrow?”

“ To-morrow, at this hour, our bark will be bounding over yonder ocean, and the weight of ages will have fallen from my heart! I compassionate thee, O foolish sage,—*thou* hast given up *thy* youth!”

CHAPTER XVII.

ALCH. Thou always speakest riddles. Tell me if thou art that fountain of which Bernard Lord Trevizan writ?

MERC. I am not that fountain, but I am the water. The fountain compasseth me about.—SANDIVOGIUS, *New Light of Alchymy*.

THE Prince di —— was not a man whom Naples could suppose to be addicted to superstitious fancies. Still, in the south of Italy, there was then, and there still lingers, a certain spirit of credulity, which may, ever and anon, be visible amidst the boldest dogmas of their philosophers and sceptics. In his childhood the Prince had learned strange tales of the ambition, the genius, and the career of his grand-sire,—and secretly, perhaps influenced by an-

cestral example, in earlier youth he himself had followed science, not only through her legitimate course, but her antiquated and erratic windings. I have, indeed, been shewn in Naples a little volume, blazoned with the arms of the Visconti, and ascribed to the nobleman I refer to, which treats of alchymy in a spirit half mocking and half reverential.

Pleasure soon distracted him from such speculations, and his talents, which were unquestionably great, were wholly perverted to extravagant intrigues, or to the embellishment of a gorgeous ostentation with something of classic grace. His immense wealth, his imperious pride, his unscrupulous and daring character, made him an object of no inconsiderable fear to a feeble and timid court; and the ministers of the indolent government willingly connived at excesses which allured him at least from ambition. The strange visit, and yet more strange departure, of Mejnour, filled the breast of the Neapolitan with awe and wonder, against which all the haughty arrogance

and learned scepticism of his maturer manhood combated in vain. The apparition of Mejnour served, indeed, to invest Zanoni with a character in which the Prince had not hitherto regarded him. He felt a strange alarm at the rival he had braved—at the foe he had provoked. When, a little before his banquet, he had resumed his self-possession, it was with a fell and gloomy resolution that he brooded over the perfidious schemes he had previously formed. He felt as if the death of the mysterious Zanoni were necessary for the preservation of his own life, and if at an earlier period of their rivalry he had determined on the fate of Zanoni, the warnings of Mejnour only served to confirm his resolve.

“ We will try if his magic can invent an antidote to the bane,” said he, half aloud, and with a stern smile, as he summoned Mascari to his presence. The poison which the Prince, with his own hands, mixed into the wine intended for his guest, was compounded from materials, the secret of which had been one of the proudest

heir-looms of that able and evil race, which gave to Italy her wisest and guiltiest tyrants. Its operation was quick, yet not sudden—it produced no pain—it left on the form no grim convulsion, on the skin no purpling spot, to arouse suspicion,—you might have cut and carved every membrane and fibre of the corpse, but the sharpest eyes of the leech would not have detected the presence of the subtle life-queller. For twelve hours the victim felt nothing, save a joyous and elated exhilaration of the blood—a delicious languor followed, the sure forerunner of apoplexy. No lancet then could save! Apoplexy had run much in the families of the enemies of the Visconti!

The hour of the feast arrived—the guests assembled. There were the flower of the Neapolitan *seignorie*, the descendants of the Norman, the Teuton, the Goth; for Naples had then a nobility, but derived it from the North, which has indeed been the *Nutrix Leonum*, the nurse of the lion-hearted chivalry of the world.

Last of the guests came Zanoni; and the crowd gave way as the dazzling foreigner moved along to the lord of the palace. The Prince greeted him with a meaning smile, to which Zanoni answered by a whisper—"He who plays with loaded dice does not always win."

The Prince bit his lip; and Zanoni, passing on, seemed deep in conversation with the fawning Mascari.

"Who is the Prince's heir?" asked the Guest.

"A distant relation on the mother's side; with his excellency, dies the male line."

"Is the heir present at our host's banquet?"

"No; they are not friends."

"No matter; he will be here to-morrow!"

Mascari stared in surprise; but the signal for the banquet was given, and the guests were marshalled to the board. As was the custom then, the feast took place not long after mid-day. It was a long oval hall, the whole of one side opening by a marble colonnade upon a court or garden, in which the eye rested gratefully upon

cool fountains and statues of whitest marble, half sheltered by orange trees. Every art that luxury could invent to give freshness and coolness to the languid and breezeless heat of the day without (a day on which the breath of the sirocco was abroad) had been called into existence. Artificial currents of air through invisible tubes, silken blinds waving to and fro as if to cheat the senses into the belief of an April wind, and miniature *jets d'eau* in each corner of the apartment, gave to the Italians the same sense of exhilaration and *comfort* (if I may use the word) which the well-drawn curtains and the blazing hearth afford to the children of colder climes.

The conversation was somewhat more lively and intellectual than is common amongst the languid pleasure-hunters of the South; for the Prince, himself accomplished, sought his acquaintance not only amongst the *beaux esprits* of his own country, but amongst the gay foreigners who adorned and relieved the mono-

tony of the Neapolitan circles. There were present two or three of the brilliant Frenchmen of the old regime, who had already emigrated from the advancing revolution, and their peculiar turn of thought and wit was well calculated for the meridian of a society that made the *Dolce far niente* at once its philosophy and its faith. The Prince, however, was more silent than usual; and when he sought to rouse himself, his spirits were forced and exaggerated. To the manners of his host, those of Zanoni afforded a striking contrast. The bearing of this singular person was at all times characterized by a calm and polished ease, which was attributed by the courtiers to the long habit of society. He could scarcely be called gay; yet few persons more tended to animate the general spirits of a convivial circle. He seemed, by a kind of intuition, to elicit from each companion the qualities in which he most excelled; and if occasionally a certain tone of latent mockery characterized his remarks upon the topics on which the conversa-

tion fell, it seemed to men who took nothing in earnest to be the language both of wit and wisdom. To the Frenchmen in particular there was something startling in his intimate knowledge of the minutest events in their own capital and country, and his profound penetration (evinced but in epigrams and sarcasms) into the eminent characters who were then playing a part upon the great stage of Continental intrigue. It was while this conversation grew animated, and the feast was at its height, that Glyndon arrived at the palace. The porter, perceiving by his dress that he was not one of the invited guests, told him that his Excellency was engaged, and on no account could be disturbed; and Glyndon then, for the first time, became aware how strange and embarrassing was the duty he had taken on himself. To force an entrance into the banquet hall of a great and powerful noble, surrounded by the rank of Naples, and to arraign him for what to his boon companions would appear but an act of gal-

lantry, was an exploit that could not fail to be at once ludicrous and impotent. He mused a moment; and slipping a piece of gold into the porter's hand, said that he was commissioned to seek the Signor Zanoni upon an errand of life and death; and easily won his way across the court, and into the interior building. He passed up the broad staircase, and the voices and merriment of the revellers smote his ear at a distance. At the entrance of the reception-rooms he found a page, whom he despatched with a message to Zanoni. The page did the errand; and Zanoni, on hearing the whispered name of Glyndon, turned to his host.

“Pardon me, my lord; an English friend of mine, the Signor Glyndon (not unknown by name to your Excellency) waits without—the business must indeed be urgent on which he has sought me in such an hour. You will forgive my momentary absence.”

“Nay, Signor,” answered the Prince, courteously, but with a sinister smile on his counte-

nance, "would it not be better for your friend to join us? An Englishman is welcome everywhere; and even were he a Dutchman, your friendship would invest his presence with attraction. Pray his attendance,—we would not spare you even for a moment."

Zanoni bowed—the page was despatched with all flattering messages to Glyndon—a seat next to Zanoni was placed for him, and the young Englishman entered.

"You are most welcome, sir. I trust your business to our illustrious guest is of good omen and pleasant import. If you bring evil news, defer it, I pray you."

Glyndon's brow was sullen; and he was about to startle the guests by his reply, when Zanoni, touching his arm significantly, whispered in English—"I know why you have sought me. Be silent, and witness what ensues."

"You know, then, that Viola, whom you boasted you had the power to save from danger—"

“ Is in this house !—yes. I know also that Murder sits at the right hand of our host. But his fate is now separated from hers for ever ; and the mirror which glasses it to my eye is clear through the steams of blood. Be still, and learn the fate that awaits the wicked !”

“ My Lord,” said Zanoni, speaking aloud, “ the Signor Glyndon has indeed brought me tidings, not wholly unexpected. I am compelled to leave Naples—an additional motive to make the most of the present hour.”

“ And what, if I may venture to ask, may be the cause that brings such affliction on the fair dames of Naples ?”

“ It is the approaching death of one who honoured me with most loyal friendship,” replied Zanoni, gravely. “ Let us not speak of it ; grief cannot put back the dial. As we supply by new flowers those that fade in our vases, so it is the secret of worldly wisdom to replace by fresh friendships those that fade from our path.”

“ True philosophy !” exclaimed the Prince. “ ‘ *Not to admire,*’ was the Roman’s maxim ; ‘ *Never to mourn,*’ is mine. There is nothing in life to grieve for, save, indeed, Signor Zanoni, when some young beauty on whom we have set our heart, slips from our grasp. In such a moment we have need of all our wisdom, not to succumb to despair, and shake hands with death. What say you, Signor? You smile! Such never could be your lot. Pledge me in a sentiment—‘ Long life to the fortunate lover—a quick release to the baffled suitor !’ ”

“ I pledge you,” said Zanoni. And as the fatal wine was poured into his glass, he repeated, fixing his eyes on the Prince, “ I pledge you, even in this wine !”

He lifted the glass to his lips. The Prince seemed ghastly pale while the gaze of his Guest bent upon him, with an intent and stern brightness beneath which the conscience-stricken host cowered and quailed. Not till he had drained

the draught, and replaced the glass upon the board, did Zanoni turn his eyes from the Prince ; and he then said, “ Your wine has been kept too long ; it has lost its virtues. It might disagree with many, but do not fear ; it will not harm me, Prince. Signor Mascari, you are a judge of the grape ; will you favour us with your opinion ? ”

“ Nay,” answered Mascari, with well-affected composure, “ I like not the wines of Cyprus ; they are heating. Perhaps Signor Glyndon may not have the same distaste ? The English are said to love their potations warm and pungent.”

“ Do you wish my friend also to taste the wine, Prince ? ” said Zanoni. “ Recollect, all cannot drink it with the same impunity as myself.”

“ No,” said the Prince, hastily ; “ if you do not recommend the wine, Heaven forbid that we should constrain our guests ! My Lord

Duke," turning to one of the Frenchmen ;
" yours is the true soil of Bacchus. What think
you of this cask from Burgundy? Has it borne
the journey?"

" Ah," said Zanoni, " let us change both the
wine and the theme."

With that, Zanoni grew yet more animated
and brilliant. Never did wit more sparkling,
airy, exhilarating, flash from the lips of reveller.
His spirits fascinated all present—even the
Prince himself, even Glyndon,—with a strange
and wild contagion. The former, indeed, whom
the words and gaze of Zanoni, when he drained
the poison, had filled with fearful misgivings,
now hailed in the brilliant eloquence of his wit
a certain sign of the operation of the bane. The
wine circulated fast; but none seemed conscious
of its effects. One by one the rest of the party
fell into a charmed and spell-bound silence, as
Zanoni continued to pour forth sally upon
sally, tale upon tale. They hung on his words,

they almost held their breath to listen. Yet, how bitter was his mirth!—how full of contempt for the triflers present, and for the trifles which made their life.

Night came on; the room grew dim, and the feast had lasted several hours longer than was the customary duration of similar entertainments at that day. Still the guests stirred not, and still Zanoni continued, with glittering eye and mocking lip, to lavish his stores of intellect and anecdote; when suddenly the moon rose, and shed its rays over the flowers and fountains in the court without, leaving the room itself half in shadow and half tinged by a quiet and ghostly light.

It was then that Zanoni rose. “Well, gentlemen,” said he, “we have not yet wearied our host, I hope; and his garden offers a new temptation to protract our stay. Have you no musicians among your train, Prince, that might regale our ears while we inhale the fragrance of your orange trees?”

“An excellent thought!” said the Prince.
“Mascari, see to the music.”

The party rose simultaneously to adjourn to the garden; and then, for the first time, the effect of the wine they had drunk seemed to make itself felt.

With flushed cheeks and unsteady steps they came into the open air, which tended yet more to stimulate that glowing fever of the grape. As if to make up for the silence with which the guests had hitherto listened to Zanoni, every tongue was now loosened—every man talked, no man listened. There was something wild and fearful in the contrast between the calm beauty of the night and scene, and the hubbub and clamour of these disorderly roysters. One of the Frenchmen, in especial, the young Duc de R——, a nobleman of the highest rank, and of all the quick, vivacious, and irascible temperament of his countrymen, was particularly noisy and excited. And as circumstances, the remembrance of which is still preserved among

certain circles of Naples, rendered it afterwards necessary that the Duc should himself give evidence of what occurred, I will here translate the short account he drew up, and which was kindly submitted to me some few years ago by my accomplished and lively friend, il Cavaliere di B——.

“ I never remember,” writes the Duc, “ to have felt my spirits so excited as on that evening; we were like so many boys released from school, jostling each other as we reeled or ran down the flight of seven or eight stairs that led from the colonnade into the garden, — some laughing, some whooping, some scolding, some babbling. The wine had brought out, as it were, each man’s inmost character. Some were loud and quarrelsome, others sentimental and whining; some whom we had hitherto thought dull, most mirthful; some whom we had ever regarded as discreet and taciturn, most garrulous and uproarious. I remember that in the midst

of our clamorous gaiety, my eye fell upon the cavalier, Signor Zanoni, whose conversation had so enchanted us all; and I felt a certain chill come over me to perceive that he wore the same calm and unsympathizing smile upon his countenance which had characterized it in his singular and curious stories of the Court of Louis XIV. I felt, indeed, half inclined to seek a quarrel with one whose composure was almost an insult to our disorder. Nor was such an effect of this irritating and mocking tranquillity confined to myself alone. Several of the party have told me since, that, on looking at Zanoni, they felt their blood yet more heated, and gaiety change to resentment. There seemed in his icy smile a very charm to wound vanity and provoke rage. It was at this moment that the Prince came up to me, and, passing his arm into mine, led me a little apart from the rest. He had certainly indulged in the same excess as ourselves, but it did not produce the same effect of noisy excitement. There was, on the

contrary, a certain cold arrogance and supercilious scorn in his bearing and language, which, even while affecting so much caressing courtesy towards me, roused my self-love against him. He seemed as if Zanoni had infected him; and in imitating the manner of his guest, he surpassed the original. He rallied me on some court gossip which had honoured my name by associating it with a certain beautiful and distinguished Sicilian lady, and affected to treat with contempt that which, had it been true, I should have regarded as a boast. He spoke, indeed, as if he himself had gathered all the flowers of Naples, and left us foreigners only the gleanings he had scorned. At this, my natural and national gallantry was piqued, and I retorted by some sarcasms that I should certainly have spared had my blood been cooler. He laughed heartily, and left me in a strange fit of resentment and anger. Perhaps (I must own the truth) the wine had produced in me a wild disposition to take offence and provoke

quarrel. As the Prince left me, I turned, and saw Zanoni at my side.

“ ‘ The Prince is a braggart,’ said he, with the same smile that displeased me before. ‘ He would monopolize all fortune and all love. Let us take our revenge.’

“ ‘ And how?’

“ ‘ He has, at this moment, in his house the most enchanting singer in Naples—the celebrated Viola Pisani. She is here, it is true, not by her own choice; he carried her hither by force, but he will pretend that she adores him. Let us insist on his producing this secret treasure, and when she enters, the Duc de R—— can have no doubt that his flatteries and attentions will charm the lady, and provoke all the jealous fears of our host. It would be a fair revenge upon his imperious self-conceit.’

“ This suggestion delighted me. I hastened to the Prince. At that instant the musicians had just commenced; I waved my hand, ordered the music to stop, and addressing the Prince,

who was standing in the centre of one of the gayest groups, complained of his want of hospitality in affording to us such poor proficient in the art, while he reserved for his own solace the lute and voice of the first performer in Naples. I demanded, half laughingly, half seriously, that he should produce the Pisani. My demand was received with shouts of applause by the rest. We drowned the replies of our host with uproar, and would hear no denial. ‘Gentlemen,’ at last said the Prince, when he could obtain an audience, ‘even were I to assent to your proposal, I could not induce the Signora to present herself before an assemblage as riotous as they are noble. You have too much chivalry to use compulsion with her, though the Duc de R—— forgets himself sufficiently to administer it to me.’

“I was stung by this taunt, however well deserved. ‘Prince,’ said I, ‘I have for the indelicacy of compulsion so illustrious an example, that I cannot hesitate to pursue the path ho-

noured by your own footsteps. All Naples knows that the Pisani despises at once your gold and your love—that force alone could have brought her under your roof; and that you refuse to produce her, because you fear her complaints, and know enough of the chivalry your vanity sneers at to feel assured that the gentlemen of France are not more disposed to worship beauty than to defend it from wrong.”

“ ‘ You speak well, sir,’ said Zanoni, gravely. ‘ The Prince dares not produce his prize !’

“ The Prince remained speechless for a few moments, as if with indignation. At last he broke out into expressions the most injurious and insulting against Signor Zanoni and myself. Zanoni replied not; I was more hot and hasty. The guests appeared to delight in our dispute. None, except Mascari, whom we pushed aside and disdained to hear, strove to conciliate; some took one side, some another. The issue may be well foreseen. Swords were called for and procured. Two were offered me

by one of the party. I was about to choose one, when Zanoni placed in my hand the other, which, from its hilt, appeared of antiquated workmanship. At the same moment, looking towards the Prince, he said, smilingly, 'The Duc takes your grandsire's sword. Prince, you are too brave a man for superstition; you have forgot the forfeit!' Our host seemed to me to recoil and turn pale at those words; nevertheless, he returned Zanoni's smile with a look of defiance. The next moment all was broil and disorder. There might be some six or eight persons engaged in a strange and confused kind of *melée*, but the Prince and myself only sought each other. The noise around us, the confusion of the guests, the cries of the musicians, the clash of our own swords, only served to stimulate our unhappy fury. We feared to be interrupted by the attendants, and fought like madmen, without skill or method. I thrust and parried mechanically, blind and frantic as if a demon had entered into me, till I saw the Prince stretched at

my feet, bathed in his blood, and Zanoni bending over him and whispering in his ear. That sight cooled us all. The strife ceased; we gathered in shame, remorse, and horror round our ill-fated host—but it was too late—his eyes rolled fearfully in his head. I have seen many men die, but never one who wore such horror on his countenance. At last, all was over! Zanoni rose from the corpse, and, taking, with great composure, the sword from my hand, said, calmly—‘Ye are witnesses, gentlemen, that the Prince brought his fate upon himself. The last of that illustrious house has perished in a brawl.’

“I saw no more of Zanoni. I hastened to our envoy to narrate the event, and abide the issue. I am grateful to the Neapolitan government, and to the illustrious heir of the unfortunate nobleman, for the lenient and generous, yet just, interpretation put upon a misfortune, the memory of which will afflict me to the last hour of my life.

(Signed) “LOUIS VICTOR, DUC DE R.”

In the above memorial, the reader will find the most exact and minute account yet given of an event which created the most lively sensation at Naples in that day.

Glyndon had taken no part in the affray, neither had he participated largely in the excesses of the revel. For his exemption from both, he was perhaps indebted to the whispered exhortations of Zanoni. When the last rose from the corpse, and withdrew from that scene of confusion, Glyndon remarked that in passing the crowd he touched Mascari on the shoulder, and said something which the Englishman did not overhear. Glyndon followed Zanoni into the banquet-room, which, save where the moonlight slept on the marble floor, was wrapt in the sad and gloomy shadows of the advancing night.

“How could you foretel this fearful event? He fell not by your arm!” said Glyndon, in a tremulous and hollow tone.

“The general who calculates on the victory

does not fight in person," answered Zanoni; "let the past sleep with the dead. Meet me at midnight by the sea-shore, half a mile to the left of your hotel. You will know the spot by a rude pillar—the only one near—to which a broken chain is attached. There and then, if thou wouldst learn our lore, thou shalt find the master. Go;—I have business here yet. Remember, Viola is still in the house of the dead man!"

Here Mascari approached, and Zanoni, turning to the Italian, and waving his hand to Glyndon, drew the former aside. Glyndon slowly departed.

"Mascari," said Zanoni, "your patron is no more; your services will be valueless to his heir; a sober man, whom poverty has preserved from vice. For yourself, thank me that I do not give you up to the executioner; recollect the wine of Cyprus. Well, never tremble, man, it could not act on me, though it might re-act on others; in that it is a common type of crime.

I forgive you ; and if the wine should kill me, I promise you that my ghost shall not haunt so worshipful a penitent. Enough of this ; conduct me to the chamber of Viola Pisani. You have no further need of her. The death of the gaoler opens the cell of the captive. Be quick, I would be gone."

Mascari muttered some inaudible words, bowed low, and led the way to the chamber in which Viola was confined.

CHAPTER XVIII.

MERC.—Tell me, therefore, what thou seekest after, and what thou wilt have. What dost thou desire to make?

ALCH.—The Philosopher's Stone.

SANDIVOGIUS.

It wanted several minutes of midnight, and Glyndon repaired to the appointed spot. The mysterious empire which Zanoni had acquired over him, was still more solemnly confirmed by the events of the last few hours; the sudden fate of the Prince, so deliberately foreshadowed, and yet so seemingly accidental, brought out by causes the most common-place, and yet associated with words the most prophetic, impressed him with the deepest sentiments of admiration and awe. It was as if this dark and wondrous

being could convert the most ordinary events and the meanest instruments into the agencies of his inscrutable will ; yet if so, why have permitted the capture of Viola ? Why not have prevented the crime, rather than punish the criminal ? And did Zanoni really feel love for Viola ? Love, and yet offer to resign her to himself ; to a rival whom his arts could not have failed to baffle. He no longer reverted to the belief that Zanoni or Viola had sought to dupe him into marriage. His fear and reverence for the former now forbade the notion of so poor an imposture. Did he any longer love Viola himself ? No ; when that morning he had heard of her danger, he had, it is true, returned to the sympathies and the fears of affection ; but with the death of the Prince her image faded again from his heart, and he felt no jealous pang at the thought that she had been saved by Zanoni, —that at that moment she was, perhaps, beneath his roof. Whoever has, in the course of his life, indulged the absorbing passion of the

gamester, will remember how all other pursuits and objects vanished from his mind ; how solely he was wrapped in the one wild delusion ; with what a sceptre of magic power the despot-dæmon ruled every feeling and every thought. Far more intense than the passion of the gamester was the frantic, yet sublime desire that mastered the breast of Glyndon. He would be the rival of Zanoni, not in human and perishable affections, but in preternatural and eternal lore. He would have laid down life with content—nay, rapture, as the price of learning those solemn secrets which separated the stranger from mankind. Enamoured of the goddess of goddesses, he stretched forth his arms—the wild Ixion—and embraced a cloud !

The night was most lovely and serene, and the waves scarcely rippled at his feet, as the Englishman glided on by the cool and starry beach. At length he arrived at the spot, and there, leaning against the broken pillar, he beheld a man wrapped in a long mantle, and in

an attitude of profound repose. He approached and uttered the name of Zanoni. The figure turned, and he saw the face of a stranger; a face not stamped by the glorious beauty of Zanoni, but equally majestic in its aspect, and perhaps still more impressive from the mature age and the passionless depth of thought that characterized the expanded forehead, and deep-set but piercing eyes.

“You seek Zanoni,” said the stranger; “he will be here anon; but, perhaps, he whom you see before you, is more connected with your destiny, and more disposed to realize your dreams.”

“Hath the earth then another Zanoni?”

“If not,” replied the stranger, “why do you cherish the hope and the wild faith to be yourself a Zanoni? Think you that none others have burned with the same godlike dream? Who, indeed, in his first youth—youth when the soul is nearer to the heaven from which it sprung, and its divine and primal longings are

not all effaced by the sordid passions and petty cares that are begot in time—who is there in youth that has not nourished the belief that the universe has secrets not known to the common herd, and panted, as the hart for the water-springs, for the fountains that lie hid and far away amidst the broad wilderness of trackless science? The music of the fountain is heard in the soul *within*, till the steps, deceived and erring, rove away from its waters, and the wanderer dies in the mighty desert. Think you that none who have cherished the hope have found the truth? or that the yearning after the Ineffable Knowledge was given to us utterly in vain? No. Every desire in human hearts is but a glimpse of things that exist, alike distant and divine. No! in the world there have been, from age to age, some brighter and happier spirits who have attained to the air in which the beings above mankind move and breathe. Zanoni, great though he be, stands not alone.

He has had his predecessors, and long lines of successors may be yet to come."

"And will you tell me," said Glyndon, "that in yourself I behold one of that mighty few over whom Zanoni has no superiority in power and wisdom?"

"In me," answered the stranger, "you see one from whom Zanoni himself learned some of his loftiest secrets. On these shores, on this spot have I stood in ages that your chroniclers but feebly reach. The Phœnician, the Greek, the Oscan, the Roman, the Lombard, I have seen them all!—leaves gay and glittering on the trunk of the universal life, scattered in due season and again renewed; till, indeed, the same race that gave its glory to the ancient world bestowed a second youth upon the new. For the pure Greeks, the Hellenes, whose origin has bewildered your dreaming scholars, were of the same great family as the Norman tribe, born to be the lords of the universe, and in no land

on earth destined to become the hewers of wood. Even the dim traditions of the learned, which bring the sons of Hellas from the vast and undetermined territories of northern Thrace, to be the victors of the pastoral Pelasgi, and the founders of the line of demi-gods ;—which assign to a population bronzed beneath the suns of the west, the blue-eyed Minerva and the yellow-haired Achilles (physical characteristics of the north);—which introduce amongst a pastoral people, warlike aristocracies and limited monarchies, the feudalism of the classic time ;—even these might serve you to trace back the primeval settlements of the Hellenes to the same region whence, in later times, the Norman warriors broke on the dull and savage hordes of the Celt, and became the Greeks of the Christian world. But this interests you not, and you are wise in your indifference. Not in the knowledge of things without, but in the perfection of the soul within, lies the empire of man aspiring to be more than men.”

“And what books contain that science—from what laboratory is it wrought?”

“Nature supplies the materials; they are around you in your daily walks. In the herbs that the beast devours and the chemist disdains to cull; in the elements, from which matter in its meanest and its mightiest shapes is deduced; in the wide bosom of the air; in the black abysses of the earth; everywhere are given to mortals the resources and libraries of immortal lore. But as the simplest problems in the simplest of all studies are obscure to one who braces not his mind to their comprehension, as the rower, in yonder vessel, cannot tell you why two circles can touch each other only in one point; so, though all earth were carved over and inscribed with the letters of diviner knowledge, the characters would be valueless to him who does not pause to inquire the language, and meditate the truth. Young man, if thy imagination is vivid, if thy heart is daring, if thy curiosity is insatiate, I will accept thee as

my pupil. But the first lessons are stern and dread."

"If thou hast mastered them, why not I?" answered Glyndon, boldly. "I have felt from my boyhood that strange mysteries were reserved for my career; and from the proudest ends of ordinary ambition, I have carried my gaze into the cloud and darkness that stretch beyond. The instant I beheld Zanoni, I felt as if I had discovered the guide and the tutor for which my youth had idly languished and vainly burned."

"And to me his duty is transferred," replied the stranger. "Yonder lies, anchored in the bay, the vessel in which Zanoni seeks a fairer home; a little while and the breeze will rise, the sail will swell, and the stranger will have passed, like a wind, away. Still, like the wind, he leaves in thy heart the seeds that may bear the blossom and the fruit. Zanoni hath performed his task, he is wanted no more; the perfecter of his work is at thy side. He comes!"

I hear the dash of the oar. You will have your choice submitted to you. According as you decide, we shall meet again." With these words the stranger moved slowly away, and disappeared beneath the shadow of the cliffs. A boat glided rapidly across the waters; it touched land; a man leapt on shore, and Glyndon recognised Zanoni.

"I give thee, Glyndon, I give thee no more the option of happy love and serene enjoyment. That hour is past, and fate has linked the hand that might have been thine own, to mine. But I have ample gifts to bestow upon thee, if thou wilt abandon the hope that gnaws thy heart, and the realization of which, even *I* have not the power to foresee. Be thine ambition human, and I can gratify it to the full. Men desire four things in life—love, wealth, fame, power. The first I cannot give thee, the rest are at my disposal. Select which of them thou wilt, and let us part in peace."

"Such are not the gifts I covet. I choose

knowledge (which, indeed, as the Schoolmaster said, *is* power, and the loftiest); that knowledge must be thine own. For this, and for this alone, I surrendered the love of Viola; this, and this alone, must be my recompence."

"I cannot gainsay thee, though I can warn. The desire to learn does not always contain the faculty to acquire. I can give thee, it is true, the teacher—the rest must depend on thee. Be wise in time, and take that which I can assure to thee."

"Answer me but these questions, and according to your answer I will decide. Is it in the power of man to attain intercourse with the beings of other worlds? Is it in the power of man to influence the elements, and to ensure life against the sword and against disease?"

"All this may be possible," answered Zanoni, evasively, "to the few. But for one who attains such secrets, millions may perish in the attempt."

"One question more. Thou ——."

“Beware! Of myself, as I have said before, I render no account.”

“Well, then, the stranger I have met this night, are his boasts to be believed? Is he in truth one of the chosen seers whom you allow to have mastered the mysteries I yearn to fathom?”

“Rash man,” said Zanoni, in a tone of compassion, “thy crisis is past, and thy choice made! I can only bid thee be bold and prosper; yes, I resign thee to a master who *has* the power and the will to open to thee the gates of an awful world. Thy weal or woe are as nought in the eyes of his relentless wisdom. I would bid him spare thee, but he will heed me not. Mejnour, receive thy pupil!” Glyndon turned, and his heart beat when he perceived that the stranger, whose footsteps he had not heard upon the pebbles, whose approach he had not beheld in the moonlight, was once more by his side!

“Farewell,” resumed Zanoni; “thy trial

commences. When next we meet, thou wilt be the victim or the victor."

Glyndon's eyes followed the receding form of the mysterious stranger. He saw him enter the boat, and he then for the first time noticed that besides the rowers there was a female, who stood up as Zanoni gained the boat. Even at the distance he recognised the once-adored form of Viola. She waved her hand to him, and across the still and shining air, came her voice, mournfully and sweetly in her mother's tongue—"Farewell, Clarence—I forgive thee!—farewell, farewell!"

He strove to answer, but the voice touched a chord at his heart, and the words failed him. Viola was then lost for ever; gone with this dread stranger; darkness was round her lot! And he himself had decided her fate and his own! The boat bounded on, the soft waves flashed and sparkled beneath the oars, and it was along one sapphire track of moonlight that the frail vessel bore away the lovers. Farther,

and farther from his gaze sped the boat, till at last the speck, scarcely visible, touched the side of the ship that lay lifeless in the glorious bay. At that instant, as if by magic, up sprang, with a glad murmur, the playful and freshening wind : And Glyndon turned to Mejnour and broke the silence.

“ Tell me, (if thou canst read the future,) tell me that *her* lot will be fair, and that *her* choice at least is wise ?”

“ My pupil !” answered Mejnour, in a voice the calmness of which well accorded with the chilling words, “ thy first task must be to withdraw all thought, feeling, sympathy from others. The elementary stage of knowledge is to make self, and self alone, thy study and thy world. Thou hast decided thine own career ; thou hast renounced love ; thou hast rejected wealth, fame, and the vulgar pomps of power. What then are all mankind to thee ? To perfect thy faculties, and concentrate thy emotions, is henceforth thy only aim !”

“And will happiness be the end?”

“If happiness exist,” answered Mejnour, “it must be centred in A SELF to which all passion is unknown. But happiness is the last state of being; and as yet thou art on the threshold of the first.”

As Mejnour spoke, the distant vessel spread its sails to the wind, and moved slowly along the deep. Glyndon sighed, and the pupil and the master retraced their steps towards the city.



BOOK THE FOURTH.

THE DWELLER OF THE THRESHOLD.

Sey hinter ihm was will! Ich heb ihn auf—
Es ruft's mit lauter Stimm? Ich will sie schauen.
DAS VERSCHLEIERTE BILD ZU SAIS.

BOOK THE FOURTH.

CHAPTER I.

Comme vittima io vengo all' ara.

METAST. At. ii. sc. vii.

IT was about a month after the date of Zanoni's departure, and Glyndon's introduction to Mejnour, when two Englishmen were walking, arm in arm, through the Toledo.

"I tell you," said one (who spoke warmly,) "that if you have a particle of common sense left in you, you will accompany me to England. This Mejnour is an impostor more dangerous, because more in earnest, than Zanoni. After all, what do his promises amount to? You allow

that nothing can be more equivocal. You say that he has left Naples—that he has selected a retreat more congenial than the crowded thoroughfares of men to the studies in which he is to initiate you ; and this retreat is among the haunts of the fiercest bandits of Italy—haunts which justice itself dares not penetrate. Fitting hermitage for a sage ! I tremble for you. What if this stranger—of whom nothing is known—be leagued with the robbers ; and these lures for your credulity bait but the traps for your property—perhaps your life ? You might come off cheaply by a ransom of half your fortune. You smile indignantly ! Well ;—put common sense out of the question ; take your own view of the matter. You are to undergo an ordeal which Mejnour himself does not profess to describe as a very tempting one. It may, or it may not succeed ; if it does not, you are menaced with the darkest evils ; and if it does, you cannot be better off than the dull and joyless mystic whom you have taken for a master. Away with

this folly; enjoy youth while it is left to you. Return with me to England; forget these dreams. Enter your proper career; form affections more respectable than those which lured you awhile to an Italian adventuress. Attend to your fortune, make money, and become a happy and distinguished man. This is the advice of sober friendship; yet the promises I hold out to you are fairer than those of Mejnour."

"Mervale," said Glyndon, doggedly, "I cannot, if I would, yield to your wishes. A power that is above me urges me on; I cannot resist its influence. I will proceed to the last in the strange career I have commenced. Think of me no more. Follow yourself the advice you give to me, and be happy."

"This is madness," said Mervale; "your health is already failing; you are so changed I should scarcely know you. Come; I have already had your name entered in my passport; in another hour I shall be gone, and you, boy

that you are, will be left without a friend, to the deceits of your own fancy and the machinations of this relentless mountebank."

"Enough!" said Glyndon, coldly; "you cease to be an effective counsellor when you suffer your prejudices to be thus evident. I have already had ample proof," added the Englishman, and his pale cheek grew more pale, "of the power of this man—if man he be, which I sometimes doubt—and, come life, come death, I will not shrink from the paths that allure me. Farewell, Mervale, if we never meet again,—if you hear, amidst our old and cheerful haunts, that Clarence Glyndon sleeps the last sleep by the shores of Naples, or amidst yon distant hills, say to the friends of our youth — ‘He died worthily, as thousands of martyr-students have died before him, in the pursuit of knowledge.’"

He wrung Mervale's hand as he spoke, darted from his side, and disappeared amidst the crowd.

By the corner of the Toledo, he was arrested by Nicot.

“ Ah, Glyndon ! I have not seen you this month. Where have you hid yourself ? Have you been absorbed in your studies ? ”

“ Yes.”

“ I am about to leave Naples for Paris. Will you accompany me ? Talent of all order is eagerly sought for there, and will be sure to rise.”

“ I thank you ; I have other schemes for the present.”

“ So laconic !—what ails you ? Do you grieve for the loss of the Pisani ? Take example by me. I have already consoled myself with Bianca Sacchini—a handsome woman—enlightened—no prejudices. A valuable creature I shall find her, no doubt. But as for this Zanoni !”—

“ What of him ? ”

“ If ever I paint an allegorical subject, I will take his likeness as Satan. Ha, ha ! a true painter’s revenge—eh ! And the way of the world, too ! When we can do nothing else against a man whom we hate, we can at least paint his

effigies as the Devil. Seriously, though; I abhor that man——”

“ Wherefore ?”

“ Wherefore ! Has he not carried off the wife and the dowry I had marked for myself ? Yet after all,” added Nicot, musingly, “ had he served instead of injured me, I should have hated him all the same. His very form, and his very face, made me at once envy and detest him. I feel that there is something antipathetic in our natures. I feel, too, that we shall meet again, when Jean Nicot’s hate may be less impotent. We, too, *cher confrère*—we, too, may meet again ! *Vive la Republique !* I to my new world !”—

“ And I to mine. Farewell !”

That day Mervale left Naples; the next morning Glyndon also quitted the City of Delight, alone, and on horseback. He bent his way into those picturesque, but dangerous parts of the country, which at that time were in-

fested by banditti, and which few travellers dared to pass, even in broad daylight, without a strong escort. A road more lonely cannot well be conceived than that on which the hoofs of his steed, striking upon the fragments of rock that encumbered the neglected way, woke a dull and melancholy echo. Large tracts of waste land, varied by the rank and profuse foliage of the south, lay before him; occasionally, a wild goat peeped down from some rocky crag, or the discordant cry of a bird of prey, startled in its sombre haunt, was heard above the hills. These were the only signs of life; not a human being was met—not a hut was visible. Wrapped in his own ardent and solemn thoughts, the young man continued his way, till the sun had spent its noon-day heat, and a breeze that announced the approach of eve sprung up from the unseen ocean which lay far distant to his right. It was then that a turn in the road brought before him one of those long, desolate, gloomy villages which are found in the interior of the

Neapolitan dominions ; and now he came upon a small chapel on one side the road, with a gaudily painted image of the Virgin in the open shrine. Around this spot, which, in the heart of a Christian land, retained the vestige of the old idolatry, (for just such were the chapels that in the pagan age were dedicated to the dæmon-saints of mythology,) gathered six or seven miserable and squalid wretches, whom the Curse of the Leper had cut off from mankind. They set up a shrill cry as they turned their ghastly visages towards the horseman ; and, without stirring from the spot, stretched out their gaunt arms, and implored charity in the name of the Merciful Mother ! Glyndon hastily threw them some small coins, and, turning away his face, clapped spurs to his horse, and relaxed not his speed till he entered the village. On either side the narrow and miry street, fierce and haggard forms—some leaning against the ruined walls of blackened huts, some seated at the threshold, some lying at full length in the

mud—presented groups that at once invoked pity and aroused alarm: pity for their squalor, alarm for the ferocity imprinted on their savage aspects. They gazed at him, grim and sullen, as he rode slowly up the rugged street; sometimes whispering significantly to each other, but without attempting to stop his way. Even the children hushed their babble, and ragged urchins, devouring him with sparkling eyes, muttered to their mothers, “We shall feast well to-morrow!” It was, indeed, one of those hamlets in which Law sets not its sober step, in which Violence and Murder house secure—hamlets common then in the wilder parts of Italy—in which the peasant was but the gentler name for the robber.

Glyndon’s heart somewhat failed him as he looked around, and the question he desired to ask died upon his lips. At length, from one of the dismal cabins emerged a form superior to the rest. Instead of the patched and ragged overall, which made the only garment of the

men he had hitherto seen, the dress of this person was characterized by all the trappings of the national bravery. Upon his raven hair, the glossy curls of which made a notable contrast to the matted and elfin locks of the savages around, was placed a cloth cap with a gold tassel that hung down to his shoulder; his mustaches were trimmed with care, and a silk kerchief of gay hues was twisted round a well-shaped but sinewy throat; a short jacket of rough cloth was decorated with several rows of gilt filagree buttons; his nether garments fitted tight to his limbs, and were curiously braided; while, in a broad parti-coloured sash, were placed two silver-hilted pistols, and the sheathed knife, usually worn by Italians of the lower order, mounted in ivory elaborately carved. A small carbine of handsome workmanship was slung across his shoulder, and completed his costume. The man himself was of middle size, athletic yet slender, with straight and regular features, sunburnt, but not swarthy; and an expression of

countenance which, though reckless and bold, had in it frankness rather than ferocity, and, if defying, was not altogether unprepossessing.

Glyndon, after eyeing this figure for some moments with great attention, checked his rein, and asked the way to the "Castle of the Mountain."

The man lifted his cap as he heard the question, and, approaching Glyndon, laid his hand upon the neck of the horse, and said, in a low voice, "Then you are the Cavalier whom our patron the Signor expected. He bade me wait for you here, and lead you to the castle. And indeed, Signor, it might have been unfortunate if I had neglected to obey the command."

The man then, drawing a little aside, called out to the by-standers, in a loud voice, "Ho, ho! my friends, pay henceforth and for ever all respect to this worshipful Cavalier. He is the expected guest of our blessed patron of the Castle of the Mountain. Long life to him! May he, like

his host, be safe by day and by night—on the hill and in the waste—against the dagger and the bullet—in limb and in life! Cursed be he who touches a hair of his head, or a baioccho in his pouch. Now and for ever we will protect and honour him—for the law or against the law—with the faith, and to the death. Amen! Amen!”

“Amen!” responded, in wild chorus, a hundred voices; and the scattered and straggling groups pressed up the street, nearer and nearer to the horseman.

“And that he may be known,” continued the Englishman’s strange protector, “to the eye and to the ear, I place around him the white sash, and I give him the sacred watchword—‘*Peace to the Brave.*’ Signor, when you wear this sash, the proudest in these parts will bare the head and bend the knee. Signor, when you utter this watchword, the bravest hearts will be bound to your bidding. Desire you safety, or ask you revenge—to gain a beauty, or to lose a foe—speak but the word, and we are yours,

—we are yours! Is it not so, comrades?” And again the hoarse voices shouted, “Amen, Amen!”

“Now, Signor,” whispered the bravo, “if you have a few coins to spare, scatter them amongst the crowd, and let us begone.”

Glyndon, not displeased at the concluding sentence, emptied his purse in the streets; and while, with mingled oaths, blessings, shrieks, and yells, men, women, and children scrambled for the money, the bravo, taking the rein of the horse, led it a few paces through the village at a brisk trot, and then, turning up a narrow lane to the left, in a few minutes neither houses nor men were visible, and the mountains closed their path on either side. It was then that, releasing the bridle and slackening his pace, the guide turned his dark eyes on Glyndon with an arch expression, and said—

“Your Excellency was not, perhaps, prepared for the hearty welcome we have given you.”

“Why, in truth, I *ought* to have been pre-

pared for it, since the Signor, to whose house I am bound, did not disguise from me the character of the neighbourhood. And your name, my friend, if I may so call you?"

"Oh, no ceremonies with me, Excellency. In the village I am generally called Maêstro Páolo. I had a surname once, though a very equivocal one; and I have forgotten *that* since I retired from the world."

"And was it from disgust, from poverty, or from some—some ebullition of passion which entailed punishment, that you betook yourself to the mountains?"

"Why, Signor," said the bravo, with a gay laugh, "hermits of my class seldom love the confessional. However, I have no secrets while my step is in these defiles, my whistle in my pouch, and my carbine at my back." With that the robber, as if he loved permission to talk at his will, hemmed thrice, and began with much humour; though, as his tale proceeded, the memories it roused seemed to carry him farther

than he at first intended, and reckless and light-hearted ease gave way to that fierce and varied play of countenance and passion of gesture which characterize the emotions of his countrymen.

“ I was born at Terracina—a fair spot, is it not? My father was a learned monk, of high birth; my mother—Heaven rest her!—an inn-keeper’s pretty daughter. Of course there could be no marriage in the case; and when I was born, the monk gravely declared my appearance to be miraculous. I was dedicated from my cradle to the altar; and my head was universally declared to be the orthodox shape for a cowl. As I grew up, the monk took great pains with my education; and I learned Latin and psalmody as soon as less miraculous infants learn crowing. Nor did the holy man’s care stint itself to my interior accomplishments. Although vowed to poverty, he always contrived that my mother should have her pockets full; and, between her pockets and mine, there

was soon established a clandestine communication; accordingly, at fourteen, I wore my cap on one side, stuck pistols in my belt, and assumed the swagger of a cavalier and a gallant. At that age my poor mother died; and about the same period, my father, having written a History of the Pontifical Bulls, in forty volumes, and being, as I said, of high birth, obtained a Cardinal's hat. From that time he thought fit to disown your humble servant. He bound me over to an honest notary at Naples, and gave me two hundred crowns by way of provision. Well, Signor, I saw enough of the law to convince me that I should never be rogue enough to shine in the profession. So, instead of spoiling parchment, I made love to the notary's daughter. My master discovered our innocent amusement, and turned me out of doors; that was disagreeable. But my Ninetta loved me, and took care that I should not lie out in the streets with the lazzeroni. Little jade, I think I see her now, with her bare feet and her finger

to her lips, opening the door in the summer nights, and bidding me creep softly into the kitchen, where, praised be the saints! a flask and a manchet always awaited the hungry amoroso. At last, however, Ninetta grew cold. It is the way of the sex, Signor. Her father found her an excellent marriage in the person of a withered old picture-dealer. She took the spouse, and very properly clapped the door in the face of the lover. I was not disheartened, Excellency; no, not I. Women are plentiful while we are young. So, without a ducat in my pocket, or a crust for my teeth, I set out to seek my fortune on board of a Spanish merchantman. That was duller work than I expected; but luckily we were attacked by a pirate—half the crew were butchered, the rest captured. I was one of the last—always in luck, you see, Signor—monks' sons have a knack that way! The captain of the pirates took a fancy to me. 'Serve with us,' said he. 'Too happy!' said I. Behold me, then, a pirate! O jolly life! how I blest the

old notary for turning me out of doors! What feasting, what fighting, what wooing, what quarrelling! Sometimes we ran ashore and enjoyed ourselves like princes: sometimes we lay in a calm for days together on the loveliest sea that man ever traversed. And then, if the breeze rose and a sail came in sight, who so merry as we? I passed three years in that charming profession, and then, Signor, I grew ambitious. I caballed against the captain; I wanted his post. One still night we struck the blow. The ship was like a log in the sea, no land to be seen from the mast-head, the waves like glass, and the moon at its full. Up we rose; thirty of us and more. Up we rose with a shout; we poured into the captain's cabin, I at the head. The brave old boy had caught the alarm, and there he stood at the doorway, a pistol in each hand; and his one eye (he had only one!) worse to meet than the pistols were.

“Yield!” cried I, ‘your life shall be safe.’

“‘Take that,’ said he, and whiz went the

pistol; but the saints took care of their own, and the ball passed by my cheek, and shot the boatswain behind me. I closed with the captain, and the other pistol went off without mischief in the struggle. Such a fellow he was—six feet four without his shoes! Over we went, rolling each on the other. Santa María! no time to get hold of one's knife. Meanwhile, all the crew were up, some for the captain, some for me—clashing and firing, and swearing and groaning, and now and then a heavy splash in the sea! Fine supper for the sharks that night! At last old Bilboa got uppermost; out flashed his knife; down it came, but not in my heart. No! I gave my left arm as a shield; and the blade went through to the hilt, with the blood spirting up like the rain from a whale's nostril. With the weight of the blow the stout fellow came down, so that his face touched mine; with my right hand I caught him by the throat, turned him over like a lamb, Signor, and faith it was

soon all up with him—the boatswain's brother, a fat Dutchman, ran him through with a pike.

“ ‘ Old fellow,’ said I, as he turned his terrible eye to me, ‘ I bear you no malice, but we must try to get on in the world, you know.’ The captain grinned and gave up the ghost. I went upon deck—what a sight! Twenty bold fellows stark and cold, and the moon sparkling on the puddles of blood as calmly as if it were water. Well, Signor, the victory was ours, and the ship mine; I ruled merrily enough for six months. We then attacked a French ship twice our size; what sport it was! And we had not had a good fight so long, we were quite like virgins at it! We got the best of it, and won ship and cargo. They wanted to pistol the captain, but that was against my laws; so we gagged him, for he scolded as loud as if we were married to him; left him and the rest of his crew on board our own vessel, which was terribly battered; clapped our black flag on the

Frenchman's, and set off merrily, with a brisk wind in our favour. But luck deserted us on forsaking our own dear old ship. A storm came on, a plank struck; several of us escaped in the boat; we had lots of gold with us, but no water! For two days and two nights we suffered horribly; but at last we ran ashore near a French seaport. Our sorry plight moved compassion, and as we had money we were not suspected—people only suspect the poor. Here we soon recovered our fatigues, rigged ourselves out gaily, and your humble servant was considered as noble a captain as ever walked deck. But now, alas, my fate would have it that I should fall in love with a silk mercer's-daughter. Ah, how I loved her!—the pretty Clara! Yes, I loved her so well, that I was seized with horror at my past life! I resolved to repent, to marry her, and settle down into an honest man. Accordingly, I summoned my messmates, told them my resolution, resigned my command, and persuaded them to depart. They were good

fellows ; engaged with a Dutchman, against whom I heard afterwards they made a successful mutiny, but I never saw them more. I had two thousand crowns still left ; with this sum I obtained the consent of the silk-mercator, and it was agreed that I should become a partner in the firm. I need not say that no one suspected that I had been so great a man, and I passed for a Neapolitan goldsmith's son instead of a cardinal's. I was very happy then, Signor, very—I could not have harmed a fly ! Had I married Clara, I had been as gentle a mercator as ever handled a measure.”

The bravo paused a moment, and it was easy to see that he felt more than his words and tone betokened. “ Well, well, we must not look back at the past too earnestly—the sunlight upon it makes one's eyes water. The day was fixed for our wedding—it approached. On the evening before the appointed day, Clara, her mother, her little sister, and myself, were walking by the port, and as we looked on the sea I

was telling them old gossip-tales of mermaids and sea-serpents, when a red-faced bottle-nosed Frenchman clapped himself right before me, and placing his spectacles very deliberately astride his proboscis, echoed out, *Sacré, mille tonnerres!* this is the damned pirate who boarded the *Niobe!*

“ ‘None of your jests,’ said I, mildly. ‘Ho, ho!’ said he; ‘I can’t be mistaken; help there!’ and he griped me by the collar. I replied, as you may suppose, by laying him in the kennel; but it would not do. The French captain had a French lieutenant at his back, whose memory was as good as his chief’s. A crowd assembled; other sailors came up; the odds were against me. I slept that night in prison; and, in a few weeks afterwards, I was sent to the galleys. They spared my life, because the old Frenchman politely averred that I had made my crew spare his. You may believe that the oar and the chain were not to my taste. I, and two others, escaped, they took to the road, and

have, no doubt, been long since broken on the wheel. I, soft soul, would not commit another crime to gain my bread, for Clara was still at my heart with her sweet eyes; so, limiting my rogueries to the theft of a beggar's rags, which I compensated by leaving him my galley attire instead, I begged my way to the town where I left Clara. It was a clear winter's day when I approached the outskirts of the town. I had no fear of detection, for my beard and hair were as good as a mask. Oh, Mother of Mercy! there came across my way, a funeral procession! There, now you know it; I can tell you no more. She had died, perhaps of love; more likely of shame. Can you guess how I spent that night—I stole a pickaxe from a mason's shed, and all alone and unseen, under the frosty heavens, I dug the fresh mould from the grave; I lifted the coffin, I wrenched the lid, I saw her again—again! Decay had not touched her. She was always pale in life! I could have sworn she lived! It was a blessed

thing to see her once more, and all alone too! But then, at dawn to give her back to the earth—to close the lid, to throw down the mould, to hear the pebbles rattle on the coffin—that was dreadful! Signor, I never knew before, and I don't wish to think now, how valuable a thing human life is. At sunrise I was again a wanderer; but now that Clara was gone, my scruples vanished, and again I was at war with my betters. I contrived at last, at O——, to get taken on board a vessel bound to Leghorn, working out my passage. From Leghorn I went to Rome, and stationed myself at the door of the cardinal's palace. Out he came, his gilded coach at the gate.

“ ‘ Ho, father !’ said I; ‘ don't you know me ?’

“ ‘ Who are you ?’

“ ‘ Your son,’ said I, in a whisper.

“ The cardinal drew back, looked at me earnestly, and mused a moment. ‘ All men are my sons,’ quoth he then, very mildly, ‘ there is gold for thee ! To him who begs once, alms are

due; to him who begs twice, jails are open. Take the hint, and molest me no more. Heaven bless thee!' With that he got into his coach, and drove off to the Vatican. His purse which he had left behind was well supplied. I was grateful and contented, and took my way to Terracina. I had not long passed the marshes, when I saw two horsemen approach at a canter.

" ' You look poor, friend,' said one of them, halting; ' yet you are strong.'

" ' Poor men and strong are both serviceable and dangerous, Signor Cavalier.'

" ' Well said; follow us.'

" I obeyed, and became a bandit. I rose by degrees; and as I have always been mild in my calling, and have taken purses without cutting throats, I bear an excellent character, and can eat my macaroni at Naples without any danger to life and limb. For the two last years I have settled in these parts, where I hold sway, and where I have purchased land. I am called a farmer, Signor; and I myself now only rob for

amusement, and to keep my hand in. I trust I have satisfied your curiosity. We are within a hundred yards of the castle."

"And how," asked the Englishman, whose interest had been much excited by his companion's narrative, "and how came you acquainted with my host?—and by what means has he so well conciliated the good will of yourself and your friends?"

Maêstro Páolo turned his black eyes very gravely towards his questioner. "Why, Signor," said he, "you must surely know more of the foreign cavalier with the hard name than I do. All I can say is, that about a fortnight ago I chanced to be standing by a booth in the Toledo at Naples, when a sober-looking gentleman touched me by the arm, and said, 'Maêstro Páolo, I want to make your acquaintance, do me the favour to come into yonder tavern, and drink a flask of *lácima*.' 'Willingly,' said I. So we entered the tavern. When we were seated, my new acquaintance thus accosted me :

‘The Count d’O—— has offered to let me hire his old castle near B****. You know the spot?’

“ ‘Extremely well; no one has inhabited it for a century at least; it is half in ruins, Signor. A queer place to hire; I hope the rent is not heavy.’

“ ‘Maêstro Páolo,’ said he, ‘I am a philosopher, and don’t care for luxuries. I want a quiet retreat for some scientific experiments. The castle will suit me very well, provided you will accept me as a neighbour, and place me and my friends under your special protection. I am rich; but I shall take nothing to the castle worth robbing. I will pay one rent to the count, and another to you.’

“With that we soon came to terms; and as the strange Signor doubled the sum I myself proposed, he is in high favour with all his neighbours. We would guard the old castle against an army. And now, Signor, that I have been thus frank, be frank with me. Who is this singular cavalier?’”

“ Who?—he himself told you, a philosopher.”

“ Hem! searching for the philosopher’s stone,—eh? a bit of a magician;—afraid of the priests?”

“ Precisely. You have hit it.”

“ I thought so; and you are his pupil?”

“ I am.”

“ I wish you well through it,” said the robber seriously, and crossing himself with much devotion: “ I am not much better than other people, but one’s soul is one’s soul. I do not mind a little honest robbery, or knocking a man on the head if need be—but to make a bargain with the devil!—Ah! take care, young gentleman, take care.”

“ You need not fear,” said Glyndon, smiling; “ my preceptor is too wise and too good for such a compact. But here we are, I suppose. A noble ruin—a glorious prospect!”

Glyndon paused delightedly, and surveyed the scene before and below with the eye of a painter. Insensibly, while listening to the

bandit, he had wound up a considerable ascent, and now he was upon a broad ledge of rock covered with mosses and dwarf shrubs. Between this eminence, and another of equal height upon which the castle was built, there was a deep but narrow fissure, overgrown with the most profuse foliage, so that the eye could not penetrate many yards below the rugged surface of the abyss; but the profoundness might be well conjectured by the hoarse, low, monotonous roar of waters unseen that rolled below, and the subsequent course of which was visible at a distance in a perturbed and rapid stream, that intersected the waste and desolate valleys. To the left, the prospect seemed almost boundless; the extreme clearness of the purple air serving to render distinct the features of a range of country that a conqueror of old might have deemed in itself a kingdom. Lonely and desolate as the road which Glyndon had passed that day had appeared, the landscape now seemed studded with castles, spires, and villages. Afar off,

Naples gleamed whitely in the last rays of the sun, and the rose-tints of the horizon melted into the azure of her glorious bay. Yet more remote, and in another part of the prospect, might be caught, dim and shadowy, and backed by the darkest foliage, the ruined pillars of the ancient Posidonia. There, in the midst of his blackened and sterile realms, rose the dismal Mount of Fire; while, on the other hand, winding through variegated plains, to which distance lent all its magic, glittered many and many a stream, by which Etruscan and Sybarite, Roman and Saracen, and Norman, had, at intervals of ages, pitched the invading tent. All the visions of the past—the stormy and dazzling histories of southern Italy—rushed over the artist's mind as he gazed below. And then, slowly turning to look behind, he saw the grey and mouldering walls of the castle in which he sought the secrets that were to give to hope in the Future a mightier empire than memory owns in the Past. It was one of those baronial fortresses

with which Italy was studded in the earlier middle ages, having but little of the Gothic grace or grandeur which belongs to the ecclesiastical architecture of the same time; but rude, vast, and menacing, even in decay. A wooden bridge was thrown over the chasm, wide enough to admit two horsemen abreast; and the planks trembled and gave back a hollow sound as Glyndon urged his jaded steed across.

A road which had once been broad, and paved with rough flags, but which now was half obliterated by long grass and rank weeds, conducted to the outer court of the castle hard by; the gates were open, and half the building in this part was dismantled; the ruins partially hid by ivy that was the growth of centuries. But on entering the inner court, Glyndon was not sorry to notice that there was less appearance of neglect and decay; some wild roses gave a smile to the grey walls, and in the centre there was a fountain, in which the waters still trickled coolly, and with a pleasing murmur,

from the jaws of a gigantic Triton. Here he was met by Mejnour with a smile.

“Welcome, my friend and pupil,” said he; “he who seeks for Truth can find in these solitudes an immortal Academe.”

CHAPTER II.

And Abaris, so far from esteeming Pythagoras, who taught these things, a necromancer or wizard, rather revered and admired him as something divine.—IAMBlich. *Vit Pythag.*

THE attendants whom Mejnour had engaged for his strange abode, were such as might suit a philosopher of few wants. An old Armenian, whom Glyndon recognised as in the mystic's service at Naples; a tall, hard-featured woman, from the village, recommended by Maêstro Páolo, and two long-haired, smooth-spoken, but fierce-visaged youths from the same place, and honoured by the same sponsorship, constituted the establishment. The rooms used by the

sage were commodious and weather-proof, with some remains of ancient splendour in the faded arras that clothed the walls and the huge tables of costly marble and elaborate carving. Glyndon's sleeping apartment communicated with a kind of belvidere, or terrace, that commanded prospects of unrivalled beauty and extent, and was separated on the other side by a long gallery, and a flight of ten or a dozen stairs, from the private chambers of the mystic. There was about the whole place a sombre and yet not displeasing depth of repose. It suited well with the studies to which it was now to be appropriated.

For several days Mejnour refused to confer with Glyndon on the subjects nearest to his heart.

“All without,” said he, “is prepared, but not all within; your own soul must grow accustomed to the spot, and filled with the surrounding nature; for nature is the source of all inspiration.”

With these words Mejnour turned to lighter topics. He made the Englishman accompany him in long rambles through the wild scenes around, and he smiled approvingly when the young artist gave way to the enthusiasm which their fearful beauty could not have failed to rouse in a duller breast; and then Mejnour poured forth to his wondering pupil the stores of a knowledge that seemed inexhaustible and boundless. He gave accounts the most curious, graphic, and minute, of the various races, (their characters, habits, creeds, and manners,) by which that fair land had been successively overrun. It is true, that his descriptions could not be found in books, and were unsupported by learned authorities; but he possessed the true charm of the tale-teller, and spoke of all with the animated confidence of a personal witness. Sometimes, too, he would converse upon the more durable and the loftier mysteries of Nature with an eloquence and a research which invested them with all the colours rather

of poetry than science. Insensibly the young artist found himself elevated and soothed by the lore of his companion; the fever of his wild desires was slaked. His mind became more and more lulled into the divine tranquillity of contemplation; he felt himself a nobler being; and in the silence of his senses he imagined that he heard the voice of his soul.

It was to this state that Mejnour evidently sought to bring the Neophyte, and in this elementary initiation the mystic was like every more ordinary sage. For he who seeks to DISCOVER, must first reduce himself into a kind of abstract idealism, and be rendered up, in solemn and sweet bondage, to the faculties which CONTEMPLATE and IMAGINE.

Glyndon noticed that, in their rambles, Mejnour often paused where the foliage was rifest, to gather some herb or flower; and this reminded him that he had seen Zanoni similarly occupied. "Can these humble children of nature," said he one day to Mejnour, "things

that bloom and wither in a day, be serviceable to the science of the higher secrets? Is there a pharmacy for the soul as well as the body, and do the nurslings of the summer minister not only to human health but spiritual immortality?"

"If," answered Mejnour, "a stranger had visited a wandering tribe before one property of herbalism was known to them; if he had told the savages that the herbs, which every day they trampled under foot, were endowed with the most potent virtues; that one would restore to health a brother on the verge of death; that another would paralyse into idiocy their wisest sage; that a third would strike lifeless to the dust their most stalwart champion; that tears and laughter, vigour and disease, madness and reason, wakefulness and sleep, existence and dissolution, were coiled up in those unregarded leaves,—would they not have held him a sorcerer or a liar? To half the virtues of the vegetable world mankind are yet in the darkness of the savages I have supposed. There are

faculties within us with which certain herbs have affinity, and over which they have power. The moly of the ancients is not all a fable."

The apparent character of Mejnour differed in much from that of Zanoni; and while it fascinated Glyndon less, it subdued and impressed him more. The conversation of Zanoni evinced a deep and general interest for mankind—a feeling approaching to enthusiasm for Art and Beauty. The stories circulated concerning his habits elevated the mystery of his life by actions of charity and beneficence. And in all this there was something genial and humane that softened the awe he created, and tended, perhaps, to raise suspicions as to the loftier secrets that he arrogated to himself. But Mejnour seemed wholly indifferent to all the actual world. If he committed no evil, he seemed equally apathetic to good. His deeds relieved no want, his words pitied no distress. What we call the heart appeared to have merged into the intellect. He moved, thought, and lived, like

some regular and calm Abstraction, rather than one who yet retained, with the form, the feelings and sympathies of his kind !

Glyndon once, observing the tone of supreme indifference with which he spoke of those changes on the face of earth, which he asserted he had witnessed, ventured to remark to him the distinction he had noted.

“ It is true,” said Mejnour, coldly. “ My life is the life that contemplates—Zanoni’s is the life that enjoys; when I gather the herb, I think but of its uses; Zanoni will pause to admire its beauties.”

“ And you deem your own the superior and the loftier existence ?”

“ No. His is the existence of youth—mine of age. We have cultivated different faculties. Each has powers the other cannot aspire to. Those he associates with, live better—those who associate with me, know more.”

“ I have heard, in truth,” said Glyndon, “ that his companions at Naples were observed

to lead purer and nobler lives after intercourse with Zanoni; yet, were they not strange companions, at the best, for a sage? This terrible power, too, that he exercises at will, as in the death of the Prince di —, and that of the Count Ughelli, scarcely becomes the tranquil seeker after good."

"True," said Mejnour, with an icy smile; "such must ever be the error of those philosophers who would meddle with the active life of mankind. You cannot serve some without injuring others; you cannot protect the good without warring on the bad; and if you desire to reform the faulty, why you must lower yourself to live with the faulty to know their faults. Even so saith Paracelsus, a great man, though often wrong.* Not mine this folly; I live but in knowledge—I have no life in mankind!"

Another time, Glyndon questioned the mystic

* "It is as necessary to know evil things as good, for who can know what is good without the knowing what is evil? &c."—*Paracelsus De Nat. Rer.*, lib. 3.

as to the nature of that union or fraternity to which Zanoni had once referred.

“ I am right, I suppose,” said he, “ in conjecturing that you and himself profess to be the brothers of the Rosy Cross.”

“ Do you imagine,” answered Mejnour, “ that there were no mystic and solemn unions of men seeking the same ends, through the same means, before the Arabians of Damus, in 1378, taught to a wandering German the secrets which founded the Institution of the Rosicrucians? I allow, however, that the Rosicrucians formed a sect descended from the greater and earlier school. They were wiser than the Alchemists—their masters are wiser than they.”

“ And of this early and primary order how many still exist?”

“ Zanoni and myself.”

“ What, two only!—and you profess the power to teach to all the secret that baffles Death?”

“ Your ancestor attained that secret; he died rather than survive the only thing he loved.

We have, my pupil, no arts by which we *can put Death out of our option*, or out of the will of Heaven. These walls may crush me as I stand. All that we profess to do is but this—to find out the secrets of the human frame, to know why the parts ossify and the blood stagnates, and to apply continual preventives to the effects of Time. This is not Magic; it is the Art of Medicine rightly understood. In our order we hold most noble—first, that knowledge which elevates the intellect; secondly, that which preserves the body. But the mere art (extracted from the juices and simples) which recruits the animal vigour and arrests the progress of decay, or that more noble secret which I will only hint to thee at present, by which HEAT or CALORIC, as ye call it, being, as Heraclitus wisely taught, the primordial principle of life, can be made its perpetual renovator—these, I say, would not suffice for safety. It is ours also to disarm and elude the wrath of men, to turn the swords of our foes against each other, to glide (if not incorporeal)

invisible to eyes over which we can throw a mist and darkness. And this some seers have professed to be the virtue of a stone of agate. Abaris placed it in his arrow. I will find you a herb in yon valley that will give a surer charm than the agate and the arrow. In one word, know this, that the humblest and meanest products of Nature are those from which the sublimest properties are to be drawn."

"But," said Glyndon, "if possessed of these great secrets, why so churlish in withholding their diffusion. Does not the false or charlatanic science differ in this from the true and indisputable—that the last communicates to the world the process by which it attains its discoveries; the first boasts of marvellous results, and refuses to explain the causes?"

"Well said, O Logician of the schools;—but think again. Suppose we were to impart all our knowledge to all mankind, indiscriminately, alike to the vicious and the virtuous—should we be benefactors or scourges? Imagine the tyrant,

the sensualist, the evil and corrupted being possessed of these tremendous powers; would he not be a dæmon let loose on earth? Grant that the same privilege be accorded also to the good; and in what state would be society? Engaged in a Titan war—the good for ever on the defensive, the bad for ever in assault. In the present condition of the earth, evil is a more active principle than good, and the evil would prevail. It is for these reasons that we are not only solemnly bound to administer our lore only to those who will not misuse and pervert it; but that we place our ordeal in tests that purify the passions, and elevate the desires. And Nature in this controls and assists us; for it places awful guardians and insurmountable barriers between the ambition of vice and the heaven of the loftier science.”

Such made a small part of the numerous conversations Mejnour held with his pupil,—conversations that, while they appeared to address themselves to the reason, inflamed yet more the

fancy. It was the very disclaiming of all powers which Nature, properly investigated, did not suffice to create, that gave an air of probability to those which Mejnour asserted Nature might bestow.

Thus days and weeks rolled on; and the mind of Glyndon, gradually fitted to this sequestered and musing life, forgot at last the vanities and chimeras of the world without.

One evening he had lingered alone and late upon the ramparts, watching the stars as, one by one, they broke upon the twilight. Never had he felt so sensibly the mighty power of the heavens and the earth upon man! how much the springs of our intellectual being are moved and acted upon by the solemn influences of nature! As a patient on whom, slowly and by degrees, the agencies of mesmerism are brought to bear, he acknowledged to his heart the growing force of that vast and universal magnetism which is the life of creation, and binds the atom to the whole. A strange and ineffable con-

sciousness of power, of the SOMETHING GREAT within the perishable clay, appealed to feelings at once dim and glorious,—like the faint recognitions of a holier and former being. An impulse, that he could not resist, led him to seek the mystic. He would demand, that hour, his initiation into the worlds beyond our world—he was prepared to breathe a diviner air. He entered the castle, and strode the shadowy and star-lit gallery which conducted to Mejnour's apartment.

CHAPTER III.

Man is the eye of things.—EURYPH. *de Vit. Hum.*

. . . There is, therefore, a certain ecstasical or transporting power which, if at any time it shall be excited or stirred up by an ardent desire and most strong imagination, is able to conduct the spirit of the more outward, even to some absent and far-distant object.—VON HELMONT.

THE rooms that Mejnour occupied consisted of two chambers communicating with each other, and a third in which he slept. All these rooms were placed in the huge square tower that beetled over the dark and bush-grown precipice. The first chamber which Glyndon entered was empty. With a noiseless step he passed on, and opened the door that admitted into the inner one. He drew back at the threshold, over-

powered by a strong fragrance which filled the chamber: a kind of mist thickened the air, rather than obscured it, for this vapour was not dark, but resembled a snow-cloud moving slowly, and in heavy undulations, wave upon wave, regularly over the space. A mortal cold struck to the Englishman's heart, and his blood froze. He stood rooted to the spot; and, as his eyes strained involuntarily through the vapour, he fancied (for he could not be sure that it was not the trick of his imagination) that he saw dim, spectre-like, but gigantic forms floating through the mist; or was it not rather the mist itself that formed its vapours fantastically into those moving, impalpable, and bodiless apparitions? A great painter, of antiquity, is said, in a picture of Hades, to have represented the monsters, that glide through the ghostly River of the Dead, so artfully, that the eye perceived at once that the river itself was but a spectre, and the bloodless things that tenanted it had no life, their forms blending with the dead

waters till, as the eye continued to gaze, it ceased to discern them from the preternatural element they were supposed to inhabit. Such were the moving outlines that coiled and floated through the mist; but before Glyndon had even drawn breath in this atmosphere—for his life itself seemed arrested or changed into a kind of horrid trance—he felt his hand seized, and he was led from that room into the outer one. He heard the door close—his blood rushed again through his veins, and he saw Mejnour by his side. Strong convulsions then suddenly seized his whole frame—he fell to the ground insensible. When he recovered, he found himself in the open air, in a rude balcony of stone that jutted from the chamber; the stars shining serenely over the dark abyss below, and resting calmly upon the face of the mystic, who stood beside him with folded arms.

“Young man,” said Mejnour, “judge by what you have just felt, how dangerous it is to seek knowledge until prepared to receive it.

Another moment in the air of that chamber and you had been a corpse.”

“Then of what nature was the knowledge that you, once mortal like myself, could safely have sought in that icy atmosphere, which it was death for me to breathe?—Mejnour,” continued Glyndon, and his wild desire, sharpened by the very danger he had passed, once more animated and nerved him. “I am prepared, at least for the first steps. I come to you as of old, the pupil to the Hierophant, and demand the initiation.”

Mejnour passed his hand over the young man’s heart—it beat loud, regularly, and boldly. He looked at him with something almost like admiration in his passionless and frigid features, and muttered, half to himself—“ Surely, in so much courage the true disciple is found at last.” Then, speaking aloud, he added—“ Be it so ; man’s first initiation is in **TRANCE**. In dreams commences all human knowledge ; in dreams hovers over measureless space the first faint bridge between spirit and spirit—this world and

the worlds beyond! Look steadfastly on yonder star!”

Glyndon obeyed, and Mejnour retired into the chamber; from which there then slowly emerged a vapour, somewhat paler and of fainter odour than that which had nearly produced so fatal an effect on his frame. This, on the contrary, as it coiled around him, and then melted in thin spires into the air, breathed a refreshing and healthful fragrance. He still kept his eyes on the star, and the star seemed gradually to fix and command his gaze. A sort of languor next seized his frame, but without, as he thought, communicating itself to the mind; and as this crept over him, he felt his temples sprinkled with some volatile and fiery essence. At the same moment, a slight tremor shook his limbs, and thrilled through his veins. The languor increased;—still he kept his gaze upon the star,; and now its luminous circumference seemed to expand and dilate. It became gradually softer and clearer in its light;

spreading wider and broader, it diffused all space—all space seemed swallowed up in it. And at last, in the midst of a silver-shining atmosphere, he felt as if something burst within his brain—as if a strong chain were broken; and at that moment a sense of heavenly liberty, of unutterable delight, of freedom from the body, of birdlike lightness, seemed to float him into the space itself. “Whom, now upon earth, dost thou wish to see?” whispered the voice of Mejnour. “Viola and Zanoni!” answered Glyndon, in his heart; but he felt that his lips moved not. Suddenly at that thought—through this space, in which nothing save one mellow, translucent light had been discernible,—a swift succession of shadowy landscapes seemed to roll: trees, mountains, cities, seas, glided along, like the changes of a phantasmagoria; and at last, settled and stationary, he saw a cave by the gradual marge of an ocean shore—myrtles and orange trees, clothing the gentle banks. On a height, at a distance, gleamed the

white but shattered relics of some ruined heathen edifice; and the moon, in calm splendour, shining over all, literally bathed with its light two forms without the cave, at whose feet the blue waters crept, and he thought that he even heard them murmur. He recognised both the figures. Zanoni was seated on a fragment of stone; Viola, half reclining by his side, was looking into his face, which was bent down to her, and in her countenance was the expression of that perfect happiness which belongs to perfect love. "Wouldst thou hear them speak?" whispered Mejnour; and again, without sound, Glyndon inly answered, "Yes!" Their voices then came to his ear, but in tones that seemed to him strange; so subdued were they, and sounding, as it were, so far off, that they were as voices heard in the visions of some holier men, from a distant sphere.

"And how is it," said Viola, "that thou canst find pleasure in listening to the ignorant?"

"Because the heart is never ignorant; be-

cause the mysteries of the feelings are as full of wonder as those of the intellect. If at times thou canst not comprehend the language of my thoughts, at times, also, I hear sweet enigmas in that of thy emotions."

"Ah, say not so!" said Viola, winding her arm tenderly round his neck, and under that heavenly light her face seemed lovelier for its blushes. "For the enigmas are but love's common language, and love should solve them. Till I knew thee—till I lived with thee—till I learned to watch for thy footstep when absent,—yet even in absence to see thee everywhere!—I dreamed not how strong and all-pervading is the connexion between nature and the human soul!"

"And yet," she continued, "I am now assured of what I at first believed—that the feelings which attracted me towards thee at *first* were not those of love. I know *that*, by comparing the present with the past,—it was a sentiment then wholly of the mind or the spirit! I could

not hear thee now say, ‘ Viola, be happy with another !’ ”

“ And I could not now tell thee so ! Ah, Viola ! never be weary of assuring me that thou art happy !”

“ Happy, while thou art so. Yet, at times, Zanoni, thou art so sad !”

“ Because human life is so short ; because we must part at last ; because yon moon shines on when the nightingale sings to it no more ! A little while, and thine eyes will grow dim, and thy beauty haggard, and these locks that I toy with now will be grey and loveless.”

“ And thou, cruel one !” said Viola, touchingly, “ I shall never see the signs of age in thee ! But shall we not grow old together, and our eyes be accustomed to a change which the heart shall not share !”

Zanoni sighed ! He turned away, and seemed to commune with himself.

Glyndon’s attention grew yet more earnest.

“ But were it so,” muttered Zanoni ; and

then looking steadfastly at Viola, he said, with a half smile, "Hast thou no curiosity to learn more of the Lover thou once couldst believe the agent of the evil one?"

"None; all that one wishes to know of the beloved one, I know—*that thou lovest me!*"

"I have told thee that my life is apart from others. Wouldst thou not seek to share it?"

"I share it now!"

"But were it possible to be thus young and fair for ever, till the world blazes round us as one funeral pyre!"—

"We shall be so, when we leave the world!"

Zanoni was mute for some moments, and at length he said—

"Canst thou recall those brilliant and aërial dreams which once visited thee, when thou didst fancy that thou wert pre-ordained to some fate aloof and afar from the common children of the earth?"

"Zanoni, the fate is found."

"And hast thou no terror of the future?"

“ The future ! I forget it ! Time past, and present, and to come, reposes in thy smile. Ah ! Zanoni, play not with the foolish credulities of my youth ! I have been better and humbler since thy presence has dispelled the mist of the air. The Future !—well, when I have cause to dread it, I will look up to heaven ; and remember who guides our fate !”

As she lifted her eyes above, a dark cloud swept suddenly over the scene. It wrapt the orange trees, the azure ocean, the dense sands ; but still the last images that it veiled from the charmed eyes of Glyndon were the forms of Viola and Zanoni. The face of the one rapt, serene, and radiant ; the face of the other, dark, thoughtful, and locked in more than its usual rigidity of melancholy beauty and profound repose.

“ Rouse thyself,” said Mejnour, “ thy ordeal has commenced ! There are pretenders to the solemn science, who could have shewn thee the absent ; and prated to thee, in their charlatanic

jargon, of the secret electricities and the magnetic fluid, of whose true properties they know but the germs and elements. I will lend thee the books of those glorious dupes, and thou wilt find, in the dark ages, how many erring steps have stumbled upon the threshold of the mighty learning, and fancied they had pierced the temple. Hermes, and Albert, and Paracelsus, I knew ye all; but, noble as ye were, ye were fated to be deceived. Ye had not souls of faith, and daring fitted for the destinies at which ye aimed! Yet Paracelsus—modest Paracelsus,—had an arrogance that soared higher than all our knowledge. Ho! ho!—he thought he could make a race of men from chemistry; he arrogated to himself the Divine gift—the breath of life.* He would have made men, and, after all, confessed that they could be but pigmies! My art is to make men above mankind. But you are impatient of

* Paracelsus, De Nat. Rer., lib. 1.

my digressions. Forgive me. All these men (they were great dreamers, as you desire to be,) were intimate friends of mine. But they are dead and rotten. They talked of spirits — but they dreaded to be in other company than that of men. Like orators whom I have heard, when I stood by the Pnyx of Athens, blazing with words like comets in the assembly, and extinguishing their ardour like holyday rockets when they were in the field. Ho! ho! Demosthenes, my hero-coward, how nimble were thy heels at Chæronea! And thou art impatient still! Boy, I could tell thee such truths of the Past, as would make thee the luminary of schools. But thou lustest only for the shadows of the Future. Thou shalt have thy wish. But the mind must be first exercised and trained. Go to thy room, and sleep; fast austere; read no books; meditate, imagine, dream, bewilder thyself, if thou wilt. Thought shapes out its own chaos at last. Before midnight, seek me again!”

CHAPTER IV.

It is fit that we who endeavour to rise to an elevation so sublime, should study first to leave behind carnal affections, the frailty of the senses, the passions that belong to matter; secondly, to learn by what means we may ascend to the climax of pure intellect, united with the powers above, without which never can we gain the lore of secret things, nor the magic that effects true wonders.—TRITEMIUS *on Secret Things and Secret Spirits.*

IT wanted still many minutes of midnight, and Glyndon was once more in the apartment of the mystic. He had rigidly observed the fast ordained to him; and in the rapt and intense reveries into which his excited fancy had plunged him, he was not only insensible to the wants of the flesh—he felt above them.

Mejnour, seated beside his disciple, thus addressed him:—

“ Man is arrogant in proportion to his ignorance. Man’s natural tendency is to egotism. Man, in his infancy of knowledge, thinks that all creation was formed for him. For several ages he saw in the countless worlds, that sparkle through space like the bubbles of a shoreless ocean, only the petty candles, the household torches, that Providence had been pleased to light for no other purpose but to make the night more agreeable to man. Astronomy has corrected this delusion of human vanity: And man now reluctantly confesses that the stars are worlds, larger and more glorious than his own,—that the earth on which he crawls is a scarce visible speck on the vast chart of creation. But in the small as in the vast, God is equally profuse of life. The traveller looks upon the tree, and fancies its boughs were formed for his shelter in the summer sun, or his fuel in the winter frosts. But in each leaf of these boughs the Creator has made a world, it swarms with innumerable races. Each drop of the water in

yon moat is an orb more populous than a kingdom is of men. Everywhere, then, in this immense Design, Science brings new life to light. Life is the one pervading principle, and even the thing that seems to die and putrify, but engenders new life, and changes to fresh forms of matter. Reasoning, then, by evident analogy—if not a leaf, if not a drop of water, but is, no less than yonder star, a habitable and breathing world—nay, if even man himself is a world to other lives, and millions and myriads dwell in the rivers of his blood, and inhabit man's frame as man inhabits earth, common sense (if your schoolmen had it) would suffice to teach that the circumfluent Infinite which you call space—the boundless Impalpable which divides earth from the moon and stars—is filled, also, with its correspondent and appropriate life. Is it not a visible absurdity to suppose that Being is crowded upon every leaf, and yet absent from the immensities of space? The Law of the Great System forbids the waste even of an atom; it

knows no spot where something of life does not breathe. In the very charnel-house is the nursery of production and animation. Is that true? Well, then, can you conceive that space which is the Infinite itself is alone a waste, is alone lifeless, is less useful to the one design of universal being than the dead carcass of a dog, than the peopled leaf, than the swarming globule? The microscope shews you the creatures on the leaf; no mechanical tube is yet invented to discover the nobler and more gifted things that hover in the illimitable air. Yet between these last and man is a mysterious and terrible affinity. And hence, by tales and legends, not wholly false nor wholly true, have arisen from time to time, beliefs in apparitions and spectres. If more common to the earlier and simpler tribes than to the men of your duller age, it is but that, with the first, the senses are more keen and quick. And as the savage can see or scent, miles away, the traces of a foe, invisible to the gross sense of the civi-

lized animal, so the barrier itself between him and the creatures of the airy world is less thickened and obscured. Do you listen?"

"With my soul!"

"But first, to penetrate this barrier, the soul with which you listen must be sharpened by intense enthusiasm, purified from all earthlier desires. Not without reason have the so-styled magicians, in all lands and times, insisted on chastity and abstemious reverie as the communicants of inspiration. When thus prepared, science can be brought to aid it; the sight itself may be rendered more subtle, the nerves more acute, the spirit more alive and outward, and the element itself—the air, the space—may be made, by certain secrets of the higher chemistry, more palpable and clear. And this, too, is not magic, as the credulous call it;—as I have so often said before, magic, (or science that violates nature,) exists not;—it is but the science by which Nature can be controlled. Now, in space there are millions of beings, not literally spiritual, for they have all, like the animalculæ unseen by

the naked eye, certain forms of matter, though matter so delicate, air-drawn, and subtle, that it is, as it were, but a film, a gossamer, that clothes the spirit. Hence the Rosicrusian's lovely phantoms of sylph and gnome. Yet, in truth, these races and tribes differ more widely, each from each, than the Calmuck from the Greek—differ in attributes and powers. In the drop of water you see how the animalculæ vary, how vast and terrible are some of those monster-mites, as compared with others. Equally so with the Inhabitants of the atmosphere: some of surpassing wisdom, some of horrible malignity; some hostile as fiends to men, others gentle as messengers between earth and heaven. He who would establish intercourse with these varying beings, resembles the traveller who would penetrate into unknown lands. He is exposed to strange dangers and un conjectured terrors. *That intercourse once gained, I cannot secure thee from the chances to which thy journey is exposed.* I cannot direct thee to paths free from the wanderings of the deadliest

foes. Thou must alone, and of thyself, face and hazard all. But if thou art so enamoured of life, as to care only to live on, no matter for what ends, recruiting the nerves and veins with the alchemist's vivifying elixir, why seek these dangers from the intermediate ^{tribes} tubes? Because the very elixir that pours a more glorious life into the frame, so sharpens the senses that those larvæ of the air become to thee audible and apparent; so that, unless trained by degrees to endure the phantoms and subdue their malice, a life thus gifted would be the most awful doom man could bring upon himself. Hence it is that though the elixir be compounded of the simplest herbs, his frame only is prepared to receive it who has gone through the subtlest trials. Nay, some, scared and daunted into the most intolerable horror by the sights that burst upon their eyes at the first draught, have found the potion less powerful to save than the agony and travail of Nature to destroy. To the unprepared the elixir is thus but the deadliest poison. Amidst the dwellers of the threshold is one, too, sur-

surpassing in malignity and hatred all her tribe—one whose eyes have paralysed the bravest, and whose power increases over the spirit precisely in proportion to its fear. Does thy courage falter?”

“Nay; thy words but kindle it.”

“Follow me, then; and submit to the initiatory labours.”

With that, Mejnour led him into the interior chamber, and proceeded to explain to him certain chemical operations, which, though extremely simple in themselves, Glyndon soon perceived were capable of very extraordinary results.

“In the remoter times,” said Mejnour, smiling, “our brotherhood were often compelled to recur to delusions to protect realities; and, as dexterous mechanics or expert chemists, they obtained the name of sorcerers. Observe how easy to construct is the Spectre Lion that attended the renowned Leonardo da Vinci!”

And Glyndon beheld, with delighted surprise, the simple means by which the wildest cheats of

the imagination can be formed. The magical landscapes in which Baptista Porta rejoiced; the apparent change of the seasons with which Albertus Magnus startled the Earl of Holland; nay, even those more dread delusions of the Ghost and Image with which the Necromancers of Heraclea woke the conscience of the Conqueror of Plataea* — all these, as the showman enchants some trembling children on a Christmas Eve with his lanthorn and phantasmagoria, Mejnour exhibited to his pupil.

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“And now laugh for ever at magic! when these, the very tricks, the very sports and frivolities of science, were the very acts which men viewed with abhorrence; and Inquisitors and Kings rewarded with the rack and the stake.”

“But the Alchemist’s transmutation of metals——”

“Nature herself is a laboratory in which metals, and all elements, are for ever at change,

* Pausanias—see Plutarch.

Easy to make gold,—easier, more commodious, and cheaper still, to make the pearl, the diamond, and the ruby. Oh, yes; wise men found sorcery in this, too; but they found no sorcery in the discovery, that by the simplest combination of things of every-day use they could raise a Devil that would sweep away thousands of their kind by the breath of consuming fire. Discover what will destroy life, and you are a great man!—what will prolong it, and you are an impostor! Discover some invention in machinery that will make the rich more rich and the poor more poor, and they will build you a statue! Discover some mystery in art, that would equalize physical disparities, and they will pull down their own houses to stone you! Ha, ha, my pupil! such is the world Zanoni still cares for! you and I will leave this world to itself. And now that you have seen some few of the effects of science, begin to learn its grammar.”

Mejnour then set before his pupil certain tasks, in which the rest of the night wore itself away.

CHAPTER V.

Great travell hath the gentle Calidore,
 And toyle endured
 There on a day—
 He chaunst to spy a sort of shepheard groomes,
 Playing on pipes and caroling apace.
 He, there, besyde
 Saw a faire damzell.

SPENSER, *Faerie Queene*. Cant. ix.

For a considerable period, the pupil of Mejnour was now absorbed in labour dependent on the most vigilant attention, on the most minute and subtle calculation. Results astonishing and various rewarded his toils and stimulated his interest. Nor were these studies limited to chemical discovery—in which it is

permitted me to say that the greatest marvels upon the organization of physical life seemed wrought by experiments of the vivifying influence of Heat. Amongst the rest, Glyndon was surprised to find Mejnour attached to the more abstruse mysteries which the Pythagoreans ascribed to the occult science of NUMBERS. In this last, new lights glimmered dimly on his eyes; and he began to perceive that even the power to predict, or rather to calculate, results, might by——*

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But he observed that the last brief process by which, in each of these experiments, the wonder was achieved, Mejnour reserved for himself, and refused to communicate the secret. The answer he obtained to his remonstrances on this head was more stern than satisfactory:—

“Dost thou think,” said Mejnour, “that I would give to the mere pupil, whose qualities

* Here there is an erasure in the MS.

are not yet tried, powers that might change the face of the social world? The last secrets are entrusted only to him of whose virtue the Master is convinced. Patience! It is labour itself that is the great purifier of the mind; and by degrees the secrets will grow upon thyself as thy mind becomes riper to receive them."

At last Mejnour professed himself satisfied with the progress made by his pupil. "The hour now arrives," he said, "when thou mayst pass the great but airy barrier—when thou mayst gradually confront the terrible Dweller of the Threshold. Continue thy labours—continue to suppress thy impatience for results until thou canst fathom the causes. I leave thee for one month; if at the end of that period, when I return, the tasks set thee are completed, and thy mind prepared by contemplation and austere thought for the ordeal, I promise thee the ordeal shall commence. One caution alone I give thee, regard it as a peremptory command—Enter not this chamber!" (They were then stand

ing in that one where their experiments had been chiefly made, and in which Glyndon, on the night he had sought the solitude of the Mystic, had nearly fallen a victim to his intrusion.) "Enter not this chamber till my return; or, above all, if by any search for materials necessary to thy toils, thou shouldst venture hither, forbear to light the naphtha in those vessels, and to open the vases on yonder shelves. I leave the key of the room in thy keeping, in order to try thy abstinence and self-control. Young man, this very temptation is a part of thy trial."

With that, Mejnour placed the key in his hands; and at sunset he left the castle.

For several days Glyndon continued immersed in employments which strained to the utmost all the faculties of his intellect. Even the most partial success depended so entirely on the abstraction of the mind, and the minuteness of its calculations, that there was scarcely room for any other thought than

those absorbed in the occupation. And doubtless this perpetual strain of the faculties was the object of Mejnour in works that did not seem exactly pertinent to the purposes in view. As the study of the elementary mathematics, for example, is not so profitable in the solving of problems, useless in our after-callings, as it is serviceable in training the intellect to the comprehension and analysis of general truths.

But in less than half the time which Mejnour had stated for the duration of his absence, all that the Mystic had appointed to his toils was completed by the Pupil; and then his mind, thus relieved from the drudgery and mechanism of employment, once more sought occupation in dim conjecture and restless fancies. His inquisitive and rash nature grew excited by the prohibition of Mejnour, and he found himself gazing too often, with perturbed and daring curiosity, upon the key of the forbidden chamber. He began to feel indignant at a trial of constancy which he deemed

frivolous and puerile. What nursery tales of Bluebeard and his closet were revived to daunt and terrify him! How could the mere walls of a chamber, in which he had so often securely pursued his labours, start into living danger? If haunted, it could be but by those delusions which Mejnour had taught to despise. A shadowy lion—a chemical phantasma! Tush! he lost half his awe of Mejnour, when he thought that by such tricks the sage could practise upon the very intellect he had awakened and instructed! Still he resisted the impulses of his curiosity and his pride, and, to escape from their dictation, he took long rambles on the hills, or amidst the valleys that surrounded the castle;—seeking by bodily fatigue to subdue the unreposing mind. One day, suddenly emerging from a dark ravine, he came upon one of those Italian scenes of rural festivity and mirth in which the classic age appears to revive. It was a festival, partly agricultural, partly religious, held yearly by the peasants of that

district. Assembled at the outskirts of a village, animated crowds, just returned from a procession to a neighbouring chapel, were now forming themselves into groups—the old to taste the vintage, the young to dance—all to be gay and happy. This sudden picture of easy joy, and careless ignorance, contrasting so forcibly with the intense studies and that parching desire for wisdom which had so long made up his own life, and burned at his own heart, sensibly affected Glyndon. As he stood aloof and gazing on them, the young man felt once more that he was young! The memory of all he had been content to sacrifice spoke to him like the sharp voice of remorse. The flitting forms of the women in their picturesque attire, their happy laughter ringing through the cool, still air of the autumn noon, brought back to the heart, or rather perhaps to the senses, the images of his past time, the “golden shepherd hours,” when to live was but to enjoy.

He approached near and nearer to the scene,

and suddenly a noisy group swept round him ; and Maêstro Páolo, tapping him familiarly on the shoulder, exclaimed, in a hearty voice, "Welcome, Excellency !—we are rejoiced to see you amongst us." Glyndon was about to reply to this salutation, when his eyes rested upon the face of a young girl, leaning on Páolo's arm, of a beauty so attractive, that his colour rose and his heart beat as he encountered her gaze. Her eyes sparkled with a roguish and petulant mirth, her parted lips shewed teeth like pearls ;—as if impatient at the pause of her companion from the revel of the rest, her little foot beat the ground to a measure that she half hummed, half chanted. Páolo laughed as he saw the effect the girl had produced upon the young foreigner.

"Will you not dance, Excellency ? Come, lay aside your greatness, and be merry, like us poor devils. See how our pretty Fillide is longing for a partner. Take compassion on her."

Fillide pouted at this speech ; and, disen-

gaging her arm from Páolo's, turned away, but threw over her shoulder, a glance half inviting half defying. Glyndon, almost involuntarily, advanced to her, and addressed her.

Oh yes, he addresses her! She looks down, and smiles. Páolo leaves them to themselves, sauntering off with a devil-me-carish air. Fillide speaks now, and looks up at the scholar's face with arch invitation. He shakes his head: Fillide laughs, and her laugh is silvery. She points to a gay mountaineer, who is tripping up to her merrily. Why does Glyndon feel jealous? Why, when she speaks again, does he shake his head no more? He offers his hand; Fillide blushes, and takes it with a demure coquetry. What! is it so, indeed! They whirled into the noisy circle of the revellers. Ha! ha! is not this better than distilling herbs, and breaking thy brains on Pythagorean numbers? How lightly Fillide bounds along! How her lithe-some waist supples itself to thy circling arm! Tara-ra-tara, ta-tara, rara-ra! What the devil is in the measure, that it makes the blood course

like quicksilver through the veins? Was there ever a pair of eyes like Fillide's? Nothing of the cold stars there! Yet how they twinkle and laugh at thee! And that rosy, pursed-up mouth, that will answer so sparingly to thy flatteries, as if words were a waste of time, and kisses were their proper language. Oh, pupil of Mejnour! oh, would-be Rosicrusian—Platonist—Magian—I know not what! I am ashamed of thee! What, in the names of Averroes, and Burri, and Agrippa, and Hermes, have become of thy austere contemplations? Was it for this thou didst resign Viola? I don't think thou hast the smallest recollection of the elixir or the cabala. Take care! What are you about, Sir? Why do you clasp that small hand locked within your own? Why do you—Tara-rara tara-ra, tara-rara-ra, rarara, tarara-ra! Keep your eyes off those slender ancles, and that crimson boddice! Tara-rara-ra! There they go again! And now they rest under the broad trees. The revel has whirled away from them. They hear—or do they not hear—the laughter

at the distance? They see—or, if they have their eyes about them, they *should* see—couple after couple, gliding by, love-talking and love-looking. But I will lay a wager, as they sit under that tree, and the round sun goes down behind the mountains, that they see or hear very little except themselves!

“Hollo, Signor Excellency! and how does your partner please you? Come and join our feast, Loiterers; one dances more merrily after wine.”

Down goes the round sun; up comes the autumn moon. Tara, tara, rarara, rarara, tarara-ra! Dancing again; is it a dance, or some movement gayer, noisier, wilder still? How they glance and gleam through the night-shadows—those flitting forms! What confusion!—what order! Ha, that is the Tarantula dance; Maêstro Páolo foots it bravely! Diavolo, what fury! the tarantula has stung them all. Dance or die; it is fury—the Corybantes—the Mænads—the——. Ho, ho! more wine! the Sabbat of the Witches at Benevento is a joke to this!

From cloud to cloud wanders the moon—now shining, now lost. Dimness while the maiden blushes; light when the maiden smiles.

“Fillide, thou art an enchantress!”

“Buona notte, Excellency; you will see me again!”

“Ah, young man,” said an old decrepit, hollow-eyed octogenarian, leaning on his staff, “make the best of your youth. I, too, once had a Fillide! I was handsomer than you then! Alas! if we could be always young!”

“Always young!” Glyndon started, as he turned his gaze from the fresh fair rosy face of the girl, and saw the eyes dropping rheum—the yellow wrinkled skin—the tottering frame, of the old man.

“Ha, ha!” said the decrepit creature, hobbling near to him, and with a malicious laugh. “Yet I, too, was young once! Give me a baioccho for a glass of acqua vita!”

Tara, rara, ra-rara, tara, rara-ra! There dances youth! Wrap thy rags round thee, and totter off, Old Age!

CHAPTER VI.

Whilest Calidore does follow that faire mayd,
Unmindful of his vow and high beheast
Which by the Faerie Queene was on him layd.

SPENSER, *Faerie Queene*, cant. x. s. 1.

IT was that grey, indistinct, struggling interval between the night and the dawn, when Clarence stood once more in his chamber. The abstruse calculations lying on his table caught his eye, and filled him with a sentiment of weariness and distaste. But—"Alas, if we could be always young!" Oh, thou horrid spectre of the old rheum-eyed man! What apparition can the mystic chamber shadow forth more ugly and more hateful than thou? Oh, yes; if we could

be always young! But not (thinks the Neophyte now)—not to labour for ever at these crabbed figures and these cold compounds of herbs and drugs. No; but to enjoy, to love, to revel! What should be the companion of youth but pleasure?—And the gift of eternal youth may be mine this very hour! What means this prohibition of Mejnour's? is it not of the same complexion as his ungenerous reserve even in the minutest secrets of chemistry, or the numbers of his cabala?—compelling me to perform all the toils, and yet withholding from me the knowledge of the crowning result? No doubt he will still, on his return, shew me that the great mystery *can* be attained; but will still forbid *me* to attain it. Is it not as if he desired to keep my youth the slave to his age?—to make me dependent solely on himself? to bind me to a journeyman's service by perpetual excitement to curiosity, and the sight of the fruits he places beyond my lips?" These, and many reflections still more repining, disturbed and irri-

tated him. Heated with wine—excited by the wild revels he had left—he was unable to sleep. The image of that revolting Old Age which Time, unless defeated, must bring upon himself, quickened the eagerness of his desire for the dazzling and imperishable Youth he ascribed to Zanoni. The prohibition only served to create a spirit of defiance. The reviving day, laughing jocosely through his lattice, dispelled all the fears and superstitions that belong to night. The mystic chamber presented to his imagination nothing to differ from any other apartment in the castle. What foul or malignant apparition could harm him in the light of that blessed sun! It was the peculiar, and, on the whole most unhappy, contradiction in Glyndon's nature, that while his reasonings led him to doubt—and doubt rendered him in *moral* conduct irresolute and unsteady—he was *physically* brave to rashness. Nor is this uncommon: scepticism and presumption are often twins. When a man of this character determines upon

any action, personal fear never deters him ; and for the moral fear, any sophistry suffices to self-will. Almost without analyzing himself the mental process by which his nerves hardened themselves and his limbs moved, he traversed the corridor, gained Mejnour's apartment, and opened the forbidden door. All was as he had been accustomed to see it, save that on a table in the centre of the room lay open a large volume. He approached, and gazed on the characters on the page ; they were in a cipher, the study of which had made a part of his labours. With but slight difficulty he imagined that he interpreted the meaning of the first sentences, and that they ran thus :—

“ To quaff the inner life, is to see the outer life ; to live in defiance of time, is to live in the whole. He who discovers the elixir, discovers what lies in space ; for the spirit that vivifies the frame strengthens the senses. There is attraction in the elementary principle of light. In the lamps of Rosicrusius, the fire is the

pure elementary principle. Kindle the lamps while thou openest the vessel that contains the elixir, and the light attracts to those beings whose life is that light. Beware of Fear: Fear is the deadliest enemy to Knowledge." Here the ciphers changed their character, and became incomprehensible. But had he not read enough? Did not the last sentence suffice?—"Beware of Fear!" It was as if Mejnour had purposely left the page open—as if the trial was, in truth, the reverse of the one pretended—as if the Mystic had designed to make experiment of his *courage* while affecting but that of his *forbearance*. Not boldness, but Fear was the deadliest enemy to Knowledge. He moved to the shelves on which the crystal vases were placed; with an un-trembling hand he took from one of them the stopper, and a delicious odour suddenly diffused itself through the room. The air sparkled as if with a diamond dust. A sense of unearthly delight—of an existence that seemed all spirit, flashed through his whole frame; and a faint,

low, but exquisite music, crept, thrilling, through the chamber. At this moment he heard a voice in the corridor, calling on his name; and presently there was a knock at the door without. "Are you there, Signor," said the clear tones of Maêstro Páolo. Glyndon hastily re-closed and replaced the vial; and, bidding Páolo await him in his own apartment, tarried till he heard the intruder's steps depart; he then reluctantly quitted the room. As he locked the door, he still heard the dying strain of that fairy music; and with a light step, and a joyous heart, he repaired to Páolo, inly resolving to visit again the chamber at an hour when his experiment would be safe from interruption.

As he crossed his threshold, Páolo started back, and exclaimed, "Why, Excellency! I scarcely recognise you! Amusement I see is a great beautifier to the young. Yesterday you looked so pale and haggard; but Fillide's merry eyes have done more for you than the philosopher's stone (Saints, forgive me for naming it!)

ever did for the wizards." And Glyndon, glancing at the old Venetian mirror, as Páolo spoke, was scarcely less startled than Páolo himself at the change in his own mien and bearing. His form, before bent with thought, seemed to him taller by half the head; so lithesome and erect rose his slender stature, his eyes glowed, his cheeks bloomed with health and the innate and pervading pleasure. If the mere fragrance of the elixir was thus potent, well might the alchemists have ascribed life and youth to the draught!

"You must forgive me, Excellency, for disturbing you," said Páolo, producing a letter from his pouch; "but our Patron has just written to me to say that he will be here tomorrow, and desired me to lose not a moment in giving to yourself this billet, which he enclosed."

"Who brought the letter?"

"A horseman, who did not wait for any reply"

Glyndon opened the letter, and read as follows:—

“ I return a week sooner than I had intended, and you will expect me to-morrow. You will then enter on the ordeal you desire; but remember that, in doing so, you must reduce Being as far as possible into Mind. The senses must be mortified and subdued—not the whisper of one passion heard. Thou mayst be master of the Cabala and the Chemistry; but thou must be master also over the Flesh and the Blood—over Love and Vanity, Ambition and Hate. I will trust to find thee so. Fast and meditate till we meet!”

Glyndon crumpled the letter in his hand with a smile of disdain. What! more drudgery—more abstinence! Youth without love and pleasure! Ha, ha! baffled Mejnour, thy pupil shall gain thy secrets without thine aid!

“ And Fillide! I passed her cottage in my

way—she blushed and sighed when I jested her about you, Excellency!”

“ Well, Páolo ! I thank thee for so charming an introduction. Thine must be a rare life.”

“ Ah, Excellency, while we are young nothing like adventure—except love, wine, and laughter !”

“ Very true. Farewell, Master Páolo ; we will talk more with each other in a few days.”

All that morning Glyndon was almost overpowered with the new sentiment of happiness that had entered into him. He roamed into the woods, and he felt a pleasure that resembled his earlier life of an artist, but a pleasure yet more subtle and vivid, in the various colours of the autumn foliage. Certainly, Nature seemed to be brought closer to him ; he comprehended better all that Mejnour had often preached to him of the mystery of sympathies and attractions. He was about to enter into the same law as those mute children of the forests ! He was to know the *renewal of life* ; the seasons

that chilled to winter should yet bring again the bloom and the mirth of spring. Man's common existence is as one year to the vegetable world: he has his spring, his summer, his autumn, and winter—but only *once*. But the giant oaks around him go through a revolving series of verdure and youth, and the green of the centenarian is as vivid in the beams of May as that of the sapling by its side. “ Mine shall be your spring, but not your winter !” exclaimed the Aspirant.

Wrapt in these sanguine and joyous reveries, Glyndon, quitting the woods, found himself amidst cultivated fields and vineyards to which his footstep had not before wandered: and there, stood, by the skirts of a green lane that reminded him of verdant England, a modest house—half cottage, half farm. The door was open, and he saw a girl at work with her distaff. She looked up, uttered a slight cry, and, tripping gaily into the lane to his side, he recognised the dark-eyed Fillide.

“Hist!” she said, archly putting her finger to her lip; “do not speak loud—my mother is asleep within; and I knew you would come to see me. It is kind!”

Glyndon, with a little embarrassment, accepted the compliment to his kindness, which he did not exactly deserve. “You have thought, then, of me, fair Fillide?”

“Yes,” answered the girl, colouring, but with that frank, bold, ingenuousness which characterizes the females of Italy, especially of the lower class, and in the southern provinces—“Oh yes! I have thought of little else. Páolo said he knew you would visit me.”

“And what relation is Páolo to you?”

“None; but a good friend to us all. My brother is one of his band.”

“One of his band!—A robber?”

“We, of the mountains, do not call a mountaineer ‘a robber,’ Signor.”

“I ask pardon. Do you not tremble sometimes for your brother’s life? The law——”

“ Law never ventures into these defiles. Tremble for him ! No. My father and grand-sire were of the same calling. I often wish I were a man !”

“ By these lips, I am enchanted that your wish cannot be realized !”

“ Fie, Signor ! And do you really love me ?”

“ With my whole heart !”

“ And I thee !” said the girl, with a candour that seemed innocent, as she suffered him to clasp her hand.

“ But,” she added, “ thou wilt soon leave us ; and I——” She stopped short, and the tears stood in her eyes.

There was something dangerous in this, it must be confessed. Certainly Fillide had not the seraphic loveliness of Viola ; but hers was a beauty that equally, at least, touched the senses. Perhaps Glyndon had never really loved Viola ; perhaps the feelings with which she had inspired him were not of that ardent character

which deserves the name of love. However that be, he thought, as he gazed on those dark eyes, that he had never loved before.

“And couldst thou not leave thy mountains?” he whispered, as he drew yet nearer to her.

“Dost thou ask me?” she said, retreating, and looking him steadfastly in the face. “Dost thou know what we daughters of the mountains are? You gay, smooth cavaliers of cities seldom mean what you speak. With you, love is amusement; with us, it is life. Leave these mountains! Well! I should not leave my nature.”

“Keep thy nature ever—it is a sweet one.”

“Yes, sweet while thou art true; stern, if thou art faithless. Shall I tell thee what I—what the girls of this country, are? Daughters of men whom you call robbers, we aspire to be the companions of our lovers or our husbands. We love ardently—we own it boldly. We stand by your side in danger; we serve you as slaves

in safety; we never change, and we resent change. You may reproach, strike us, trample us as a dog,—we bear all without a murmur; betray us, and no tiger is more relentless. Be true, and our hearts reward you; be false, and our hands revenge!—Dost thou love me now?”

During this speech, the Italian's countenance had most eloquently aided her words—by turns soft, frank, fierce, — and, at the last question, she inclined her head humbly, and stood, as in fear of his reply, before him. The stern, brave, wild spirit, in which what seemed unfeminine was yet, if I may so say, still womanly, did not recoil, it rather captivated Glyndon. He answered readily, briefly, and freely—“Fillide—yes!

Oh, “yes!” forsooth, Clarence Glyndon! Every light nature answers “yes” lightly to such a question from lips so rosy! Have a care—have a care! Why the deuce, Mejnour, do you leave your pupil of four-and-twenty to the mercy of these wild cats-a-mountain! Preach

fast, and abstinence, and sublime renunciation of the cheats of the senses! Very well in you, Sir, Heaven knows how many ages old! but, at four-and-twenty, your Hierophant would have kept you out of Fillide's way, or you would have had small taste for the cabala!

And so they stood, and talked, and vowed, and whispered, till the girl's mother made some noise within the house, and Fillide bounded back to the distaff, her finger once more on her lip.

"There is more magic in Fillide than in Mejnour," said Glyndon to himself, walking gaily home; "yet, on second thoughts, I know not if I quite so well like a character so ready for revenge! But he who has the real secret can baffle even the vengeance of a woman, and disarm all danger!"

Sirrah! dost thou even already meditate the possibility of treason? Oh, well said Zanoni, "to pour pure water in the muddy well does but disturb the mud!"

CHAPTER VII.

— Cernis, custodia qualis
 Vestibulo sedeat? facies quæ limina servet?
 ÆNEID. lib. vi. 574.

AND it is profound night. All is at rest within the old castle—all is breathless under the melancholy stars. Now is the time. Mejnour, with his austere wisdom—Mejnour, the enemy to love—Mejnour, whose eye will read thy heart, and refuse thee the promised secrets, because the sunny face of Fillide disturbs the lifeless shadow that he calls repose—Mejnour comes to-morrow! Seize the night! Beware of fear! Never, or this hour! So, brave youth—brave despite all thy errors—so, with a

steady pulse, thy hand unlocks once more the forbidden door!

He placed his lamp on the table beside the book, which still lay there opened; he turned over the leaves, but could not decipher their meaning till he came to the following passage:—

“ When, then, the pupil is thus initiated and prepared, let him open the casement, light the lamps, and bathe his temples with the elixir. He must beware how he presume yet to quaff the volatile and fiery spirit. To taste, till repeated inhalations have accustomed the frame gradually to the ecstatic liquid, is to know not life, but death.”

He could penetrate no farther into the instructions; the cipher again changed. He now looked steadily and earnestly round the chamber. The moonlight came quietly through the lattice as his hand opened it, and seemed, as it rested on the floor and filled the walls, like the presence of some ghostly and mournful Power. He ranged the mystic lamps (nine in number)

round the centre of the room, and lighted them one by one. A silvery and blue tinted flame sprung up from each, and lighted the apartment with a calm and yet most dazzling splendour; but presently this light grew more soft and dim, as a thin grey cloud, like a mist, gradually spread over the room; and an icy thrill shot through the heart of the Englishman, and quickly gathered over him like the coldness of death. Instinctively aware of his danger, he tottered, though with difficulty, for his limbs seemed rigid and stone-like, to the shelf that contained the crystal vials; hastily he inhaled the spirit, and laved his temples with the sparkling liquid. The same sensation of vigour, and youth, and joy, and airy lightness, that he had felt in the morning, instantaneously replaced the deadly numbness that just before had invaded the citadel of life. He stood, with his arms folded on his bosom, erect and dauntless, to watch what should ensue.

The vapour had now assumed almost the

thickness and seeming consistency of a snow-cloud; the lamps piercing it like stars. And now he distinctly saw shapes somewhat resembling in outline those of the human form, gliding slowly and with regular evolutions through the cloud. They appeared bloodless; their bodies were transparent, and contracted or expanded, like the folds of a serpent. As they moved in majestic order, he heard a low sound—the ghost as it were of voice—which each caught and echoed from the other; a low sound, but musical, which seemed the chant of some unspeakably tranquil joy. None of these apparitions heeded him. His intense longing to accost them, to be of them, to make one of this movement of aerial happiness—for such it seemed to him—made him stretch forth his arms and seek to cry aloud, but only an inarticulate whisper passed his lips; and the movement and the music went on the same as if the mortal were not there. Slowly they glided round and aloft, till, in the same majestic order, one after

one, they floated through the casement and were lost in the moonlight; then, as his eyes followed them, the casement became darkened with some object undistinguishable at the first gaze, but which sufficed mysteriously to change into ineffable horror the delight he had before experienced. By degrees, this object shaped itself to his sight. It was as that of a human head, covered with a dark veil, through which glared with livid and demoniac fire, eyes that froze the marrow of his bones. Nothing else of the face was distinguishable—nothing but those intolerable eyes; but his terror, that even at the first seemed beyond nature to endure, was increased a thousand-fold, when, after a pause, the Phantom glided slowly into the chamber. The cloud retreated from it as it advanced; the bright lamps grew wan, and flickered restlessly as at the breath of its presence. Its form was veiled as the face, but the outline was that of a female; yet it moved not as move even the ghosts that simulate the living.

It seemed rather to crawl as some vast misshapen reptile ; and pausing, at length it cowered beside the table which held the mystic volume, and again fixed its eyes through the filmy veil on the rash invoker. All fancies, the most grotesque, of Monk or Painter in the early North, would have failed to give to the visage of imp or fiend that aspect of deadly malignity which spoke to the shuddering nature in those eyes alone. All else so dark—shrouded—veiled and larva-like. But that burning glare so intense, so livid, yet so living, had in it something that was almost *human*, in its passion of hate and mockery—something that served to shew that the shadowy Horror was not all a spirit, but partook of matter enough, at least, to make it more deadly and fearful an enemy to material forms. As, clinging with the grasp of agony to the wall — his hair erect — his eyeballs starting, he still gazed back upon that appalling gaze—the Image spoke to him—his

soul rather than his ear comprehended the words it said.

“Thou hast entered the immeasurable region. I am the Dweller of the Threshold. What wouldst thou with me? Silent? Dost thou fear me? Am I not thy beloved? Is it not for me that thou hast rendered up the delights of thy race? Wouldst thou be wise. Mine is the wisdom of the countless ages. Kiss me, my mortal lover.” And the Horror crawled near and nearer to him; it crept to his side, its breath breathed upon his cheek! With a sharp cry he fell to the earth insensible, and knew no more till, far in the noon of the next day, he opened his eyes and found himself in his bed, —the glorious sun streaming through his lattice, and the bandit Páolo by his side, engaged in polishing his carbine, and whistling a Calabrian love air.

CHAPTER VIII.

Τ' ἀποφερβόμενοι
 Κλεινοτάτα ταν σοφίαν,
 Αἰεὶ διὰ λαμπροτάτου
 Βαίνοντες ἀβρῶς αἰθέρος
 Ἐνθά ποθ' ἀγνάς
 Ἐννέα περίδας
 Λέγουσι Μούσας
 Ξανθὰν Ἀρμονίαν φευτεῦσαι.

EURIP. MED. I. 834.

IN one of those islands whose history the imperishable literature and renown of Athens yet invest with melancholy interest, and on which Nature, in whom "there is nothing melancholy," still bestows a glory of scenery and climate equally radiant for the freeman or the slave—the Ionian, the Venetian, the Gaul, the Turk, or the restless Briton,—Zanoni had fixed his

bridal Home. There the air carries with it the perfumes of the plains for miles along the blue translucent deep.* Seen from one of its green sloping heights, the island he had selected seemed one delicious garden. The towers and turrets of its capital gleaming amidst groves of oranges and lemons;—vineyards and olivewoods filling up the valleys, and clambering along the hill-sides; and villa, farm, and cottage covered with luxuriant trellises of dark green leaves and purple fruit. For, there, the prodigal beauty yet seems half to justify those graceful superstitions of a creed that, too enamoured of earth, rather brought the deities to man, than raised the man to their less alluring and less voluptuous Olympus.

Durch die scopfung floss da Lebensfulle,
 An der Liebe Busen sie zu drucken
 Gab man hohern Adel der Natur.†

And still to the fishermen, weaving yet their antique dances on the sand—to the maiden,

* See Dr. Holland's Travels to the Ionian Isles, &c., p. 18.

† Die Götter Griechenlands.

adorning yet, with many a silver fibula, her glossy tresses under the tree that overshadows her tranquil cot—the same great mother that watched over the wise of Samos—the democracy of Corcyra—the graceful and deep-taught loveliness of Miletus—smiles as graciously as of yore. For the North, philosophy and freedom are essentials to human happiness. In the lands which Aphrodite rose from the waves to govern, as the Seasons, hand in hand, stood to welcome her on the shores,* Nature is all-sufficient.

The isle which Zanoni had selected was one of the loveliest in that divine sea. His abode, at some distance from the city, but near one of the creeks in the shore, belonged to a Venetian, and though small, had more of elegance than the natives ordinarily cared for. On the seas, and in sight, rode his vessel. His Indians, as before, ministered in mute gravity to the service of the

* Homeric Hymn.

household. No spot could be more beautiful—no solitude less invaded. To the mysterious knowledge of Zanoni—to the harmless ignorance of Viola—the babbling and garish world of civilized man, was alike unheeded. The loving sky and the lovely earth are companions enough to Wisdom and to Ignorance while they love!

Although, as I have before said, there was nothing in the visible occupations of Zanoni that betrayed a cultivator of the occult sciences, his habits were those of a man who remembers or reflects. He loved to roam alone, chiefly at dawn, or at night, when the moon was clear, (especially in each month, at its rise and full,) miles and miles away over the rich inlands of the island, and to cull herbs and flowers, which he hoarded with jealous care. Sometimes at the dead of night, Viola would wake by an instinct that told her he was not by her side, and, stretching out her arms, find that the instinct had not deceived her. But she early saw that

he was reserved on his peculiar habits, and if at times a chill, a foreboding, a suspicious awe crept over her, she forbore to question him. But his rambles were not always unaccompanied—he took pleasure in excursions less solitary. Often, when the sea lay before them like a lake, the barren dreariness of the opposite coast of Cephallenia contrasting the smiling shores on which they dwelt, Viola and himself would pass days in cruising slowly around the coast, or in visits to the neighbouring isles. Every spot of the Greek soil, “that fair Fable-Land,” seemed to him familiar; and as he conversed of the Past, and its exquisite traditions, he taught Viola to love the race from which have descended the poetry and the wisdom of the world. There was much in Zanoni, as she knew him better, that deepened the fascination in which Viola was from the first enthralled. His love for herself was so tender, so vigilant, and had that best and most enduring attribute, that it seemed rather grateful for the happiness in its

own cares than vain of the happiness it created. His habitual mood with all who approached him was calm and gentle, almost to apathy. An angry word never passed his lips—an angry gleam never shot from his eyes. Once they had been exposed to the danger not uncommon in those then half-savage lands. Some pirates who infested the neighbouring coasts had heard of the arrival of the strangers, and the seamen Zanoni employed had gossiped of their master's wealth. One night, after Viola had retired to rest, she was awakened by a slight noise below. Zanoni was not by her side ; she listened in some alarm. Was that a groan that came upon her ear? She started up, she went to the door ; all was still. A footstep now slowly approached, and Zanoni entered calm as usual, and seemed unconscious of her fears. The next morning, three men were found dead at the threshold of the principal entrance, the door of which had been forced. They were recognised in the neighbourhood as the most sanguinary and

terrible marauders of the coasts—men stained with a thousand murders, and who had never hitherto failed in any attempt to which the lust of rapine had impelled them. The footsteps of many others were tracked to the sea-shore. It seemed that their accomplices must have fled on the death of their leaders. But when the Venetian Proveditore, or authority, of the island, came to examine into the matter, the most unaccountable mystery was the manner in which these ruffians had met their fate. Zanoni had not stirred from the apartment in which he ordinarily pursued his chemical studies. None of the servants had even been disturbed from their slumbers. No marks of human violence were on the bodies of the dead. They died, and made no sign. From that moment Zanoni's house—nay, the whole vicinity, was sacred. The neighbouring villages, rejoiced to be delivered from a scourge, regarded the stranger as one whom the Pagiana (or Virgin) held under her especial protection. In truth, the lively Greeks around, facile to all

external impressions, and struck with the singular and majestic beauty of the man who knew their language as a native, whose voice often cheered them in their humble sorrows, and whose hand was never closed to their wants, long after he had left their shore, preserved his memory by grateful traditions, and still point to the lofty platanus beneath which they had often seen him seated, alone and thoughtful, in the heats of noon. But Zanoni had haunts less open to the gaze than the shade of the platanus. In that isle there are the bituminous springs which Herodotus has commemorated. Often at night, the moon, at least, beheld him emerging from the myrtle and cystus that clothe the hillocks around the marsh that embeds the pools containing the inflammable materia, all the medical uses of which, as applied to the nerves of organic life, modern science has not yet perhaps explored. Yet more often would he pass his hours in a cavern, by the loneliest part of the beach, where the stalactites seem almost arranged by

the hand of art, and which the superstition of the peasants associate, in some ancient legends, with the numerous and almost incessant earthquakes to which the island is so singularly subjected.

Whatever the pursuits that instigated these wanderings, and favoured these haunts, either they were linked with, or else subordinate to, one main and master desire, which every fresh day, passed in the sweet human company of Viola, confirmed and strengthened.

The scene that Glyndon had witnessed in his trance was faithful to truth. And some little time after the date of that night, Viola was dimly aware that an influence, she knew not of what nature, was struggling to establish itself over her happy life. Visions, indistinct and beautiful, such as those she had known in her earlier days, but more constant and impressive, began to haunt her night and day when Zanoni was absent, to fade in his presence, and seem less fair than *that*. Zanoni questioned her eagerly

and minutely of these visitations, but seemed dissatisfied, and at times perplexed, by her answers.

“Tell me not,” he said, one day, “of those unconnected images, those evolutions of starry shapes in a choral dance, or those delicious melodies that seem to thee of the music and the language of the distant spheres. Has no *one* shape been to thee more distinct and more beautiful than the rest—no voice uttering, or seeming to utter, thine own tongue, and whispering to thee of strange secrets and solemn knowledge?”

“No; all is confused in these dreams, whether of day or night; and when at the sound of thy footsteps I recover, my memory retains nothing but a vague impression of happiness. How different—how cold—to the rapture of hanging on thy smile, and listening to thy voice, when it says—‘I love thee!’”

“Yet, how is it that visions less fair than these once seemed to thee so alluring? How is it

that they then stirred thy fancies and filled thy heart? Once thou didst desire a fairy land, and now thou seemest so contented with common life !”

“ Have I not explained it to thee before? Is it common life, then, to love and to live with the one we love? My true fairy-land is won ! Tell me of no other.”

And so Night surprised them by the lonely beach ; and Zanoni, allured from his sublimer projects, and bending over that tender face, forgot that in the Harmonious Infinite which spread around, there were other worlds than that one human heart !

CHAPTER IX.

There is a principle of the soul, superior to all nature, through which we are capable of surpassing the order and systems of the world. When the soul is elevated to natures better than itself, *then* it is entirely separated from subordinate natures, exchanges this for another life, and, deserting the order of things with which it was connected, links and mingles itself with another.—IAMBlichus.

“ADON-AI! Adon-Ai!—appear, appear!”

And in the lonely cave, whence once had gone forth the oracles of a heathen god, there emerged from the shadows of fantastic rocks a luminous and gigantic column, glittering and shifting. It resembled the shining but misty spray, which, seen afar off, a fountain seems to send up on a starry night. The radiance lit the stalactites,

the crags, the arches of the cave, and shed a pale and tremulous splendour on the features of Zanoni.

“Son of Eternal Light,” said the invoker, “thou to whose knowledge, grade after grade, race after race, I attained at last, on the broad Chaldæan plains—thou from whom I have drawn so largely of the unutterable knowledge, that yet eternity alone can suffice to drain—thou who, congenial with myself, so far as our various beings will permit, hast been for centuries my familiar and my friend—answer me, and counsel !”

From the column there emerged a shape of unimaginal glory. Its face was that of man in his first youth; but solemn, as with the consciousness of eternity and the tranquillity of wisdom; light, like starbeams, flowed through its transparent veins; light made its limbs themselves, and undulated, in restless sparkles, through the waves of its dazzling hair. With its arms

folded on its breast, it stood distant a few feet from Zanoni, and its low voice murmured gently—" My counsels were sweet to thee once; and once, night after night, thy soul could follow my wings through the untroubled splendours of the Infinite. Now thou hast bound thyself back to the earth by its strongest chains, and the attraction to the clay is more potent than the sympathies that drew to thy charms the Dweller of the Starbeam and the Air! When last thy soul hearkened to me, the senses already troubled thine intellect and obscured thy vision. Once again I come to thee; but thy power even to summon me to thy side is fading from thy spirit, as sunshine fades from the wave, when the winds drive the cloud between the ocean and the sky."

" Alas, Adon-Ai!" answered the seer, mournfully, " I know too well the conditions of the being which thy presence was wont to rejoice. I know that our wisdom comes but from the

indifference to the things of the world which the wisdom masters. The mirror of the soul cannot reflect both earth and heaven; and the one vanishes from the surface as the other is glassed upon its deeps. But it is not to restore me to that sublime abstraction in which the Intellect, free and disembodied, rises, region after region, to the spheres, that once again, and with the agony and travail of enfeebled power, I have called thee to mine aid. I love; and in love I begin to live in the sweet humanities of another! If wise, yet in all which makes danger powerless against myself, or those on whom I can gaze from the calm height of indifferent science, I am blind as the merest mortal to the destinies of the creature that makes my heart beat with the passions that obscure my gaze."

"What matter!" answered Adon-Ai. "Thy love must be but a mockery of the name; thou canst not love as they do for whom there is

death and the grave. A short time!—like a day in thy incalculable life, and the form thou dotest on is dust! Others of the nether world go hand in hand, each with each, unto the tomb; hand in hand they ascend from the worm to new cycles of existence. For thee, below are ages; for her, but hours. And for her and thee—O poor, but mighty one!—will there be even a joint hereafter! Through what grades and heavens of spiritualized being will her soul have passed when thou, the solitary Loiterer, comest from the vapours of the earth to the gates of light!”

“Son of the Starbeam, thinkest thou that this thought is not with me ever; and seest thou not that I have invoked thee to hearken and minister to my design? Readest thou not my desire and dream to raise the conditions of her being to my own? Thou, Adon-Ai, bathing the celestial joy that makes thy life in the oceans of eternal splendour,—thou, save by the sympathies of knowledge, canst conjecture not

what I, the offspring of mortals, feel—debarred yet from the objects of the tremendous and sublime ambition that first winged my desires above the clay—when I see myself compelled to stand in this low world alone.—I have sought amongst my tribe for comrades, and in vain. At last I have found a mate! The wild bird and the wild beast have theirs; and my mastery over the malignant tribes of terror can banish their larvæ from the path that shall lead her upward till the air of eternity fits the frame for the elixir that baffles death.”

“ And thou hast begun the initiation, and thou art foiled! I know it. Thou hast conjured to her sleep the fairest visions; thou hast invoked the loveliest children of the air to murmur their music to her trance, and her soul heeds them not; and, returning to the earth, escapes from their control. Blind one, wherefore? Canst thou not perceive? Because in her soul all is love. There is no intermediate pas-

sion with which the things thou wouldst charm to her have association and affinities. Their attraction is but to the desires and cravings of the intellect. What have they with the passion that is of earth, and the hope that goes direct to Heaven?"

"But can there be no medium—no link—in which our souls, as our hearts, can be united, and so mine may have influence over her own?"

"Ask me not—thou wilt not comprehend me!"

"I adjure thee!—speak!"

"When two souls are divided, knowest thou not that a third in which both meet and live is the link between them?"

"I do comprehend thee, Adon-Ai," said Zanoni, with a light of more human joy upon his face than it had ever before been seen to wear; "and if my destiny, which here is dark to mine eyes, vouchsafes to me the happy lot of the humble—if ever there be a child that I may clasp to my bosom and call my own!—"

“ And is it to be man at last, that thou hast aspired to be more than man ? ”

“ But a child—a second Viola ! ” murmured Zanoni, scarcely heeding the Son of Light ; “ a young soul fresh from Heaven, that I may rear from the first moment it touches earth—whose wings I may train to follow mine through the glories of creation ; and through whom the mother herself may be led upward over the realm of death ! ”

“ Beware—reflect ! Knowest thou not that thy darkest enemy dwells in the Real ? Thy wishes bring thee near and nearer to Humanity. ”

“ Ah, Humanity is sweet ! ” answered Zanoni.

And, as the Seer spoke, on the glorious face of Adon-Ai there broke a smile.

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CHAPTER X.

“Æterna æternus tribuit, mortalia confert
Mortalis ; divina Deus, peritura caducus.”

AUREL. PRUD. CONTRA SYMMACHUM, lib. ii.

EXTRACTS FROM THE LETTERS OF ZANONI TO MEJNOUR.

LETTER I.

THOU hast not informed me of the progress of thy pupil ; and I fear that so differently does Circumstance shape the minds of the generations to which we are descended, from the intense and earnest children of the earlier world, that even thy most careful and elaborate guidance would fail, with loftier and purer natures than that of the Neophyte thou hast admitted within thy gates. Even that third state of being,

which the Indian sage* rightly recognises as being between the sleep and the waking, and describes imperfectly by the name of TRANCE, is unknown to the children of the northern world; and few but would recoil to indulge it, regarding its peopled calm, as the *máyá* and delusion of the mind. Instead of ripening and culturing that airy soil, from which nature, duly known, can evoke fruits so rich and flowers so fair, they strive but to exclude it from their gaze; they esteem that struggle of the intellect from men's narrow world, to the spirit's infinite home, as a disease which the leech must extirpate with pharmacy and drugs, and know not even that it is from this condition of their being, in its most imperfect and infant form, that Poetry, Music, Art—all that belong to an Idea of Beauty, to which neither *sleeping* nor *waking* can furnish

* The Bramins, speaking of Brahm, say—"To the Omniscient the three modes of being—sleep, waking, and trance, are not"—distinctly recognising *trance* as a third and coequal condition of being.

archetype and actual semblance—take their immortal birth. When we, O Mejnour, in the far time, were ourselves the Neophytes and Aspirants—we were of a class to which the actual world was shut and barred. Our forefathers had no object in life but knowledge. From the cradle we were predestined and reared to wisdom, as to a priesthood. We commenced research where modern Conjecture closes its faithless wings. And with us, those were the common elements of science which the sages of to-day disdain as wild chimeras, or despair of as unfathomable mysteries. Even the fundamental principles, the large, yet simple theories of Electricity and Magnetism, rest obscure and dim in the disputes of their blinded schools; yet, even in our youth, how few ever attained to the first circle of the brotherhood, and, after wearily enjoying the sublime privileges they sought, they voluntarily abandoned the light of the sun, and sunk, without effort, to the grave, like pilgrims in a trackless desert, overawed by the stillness

of their solitude, and appalled by the absence of a goal. Thou, in whom nothing seems to live *but the desire to know*—thou, who, indifferent whether it leads to weal or to woe, lendest thyself to all who would tread the path of mysterious science, a Human Book, insensate to the precepts it enounces; thou hast ever sought, and often made, additions to our number. But to these have only been vouchsafed partial secrets; vanity and passion unfitted them for the rest; and now, without other interest than that of an experiment in science, without love, and without pity, thou exposest this new soul to the hazards of the tremendous ordeal! Thou thinkest that a zeal so inquisitive, a courage so absolute and dauntless, may suffice to conquer, where austerer intellect and purer virtue have so often failed. Thou thinkest, too, that the germ of art that lies in the Painter's mind, as it comprehends in itself the entire embryo of Power and Beauty, may be expanded into the stately flower of the Golden Science. It is a new

experiment to thee. Be gentle with thy Neophyte, and if his nature disappoint thee in the first stages of the process, dismiss him back to the Real, while it is yet time to enjoy the brief and outward life which dwells in the senses, and closes with the tomb. And as I thus admonish thee, O Mejnour, wilt thou smile at my inconsistent hopes? I, who have so invariably refused to initiate others into our mysteries, I begin at last to comprehend why the great law, that binds man to his kind, even when seeking most to set himself aloof from their condition, has made thy cold and bloodless science the link between thyself and thy race;—why *thou* hast sought converts and pupils—why, in seeing life after life voluntarily dropping from our starry order, thou still aspirest to renew the vanished, and repair the lost—why, amidst thy calculations, restless and unceasing as the wheels of Nature herself, thou recoilest from the thought TO BE ALONE! So with myself; at last I, too, seek a convert—an equal—I, too, shudder

to be alone ! What thou hast warned me of has come to pass. Love reduces all things to itself. Either must I be drawn down to the nature of the beloved, or hers must be lifted to my own. As whatever belongs to true Art has always necessarily had attraction for *us*, whose very being is in the ideal whence art descends, so in this fair creature I have learned, at last, the secret that bound me to her at the first glance. The daughter of music—music passing into her being, became poetry. It was not the stage that attracted her, with its hollow falsehoods ; it was the land in her own fancy which the stage seemed to centre and represent. There the poetry found a voice—there it struggled into imperfect shape ; and then (that land, insufficient for it) it fell back upon itself. It coloured her thoughts, it suffused her soul ; it asked not words, it created not things ; it gave birth but to emotions, and lavished itself on dreams. At last came love ; and there, as a river into the

sea, it poured its restless waves, to become mute, and deep, and still—the everlasting mirror of the heavens.

And is it not through this poetry which lies within her that she may be led into the large poetry of the universe? Often I listen to her careless talk, and find oracles in its unconscious beauty, as we find strange virtues in some lonely flower. I see her mind ripening under my eyes; and in its fair fertility what ever-teeming novelties of thought! O Mejnour! how many of our tribe have unravelled the laws of the universe, have solved the riddles of the exterior nature—and deduced the light from darkness! And is not the POET, who studies nothing but the human heart, a greater philosopher than all? Knowledge and atheism are incompatible. To know nature is to know that there must be a God! But does it require this to examine the method and architecture of creation? Methinks, when I look upon a pure mind, however

ignorant and childlike, that I see the August and Immaterial One, more clearly than in all the orbs of matter which career at His bidding through the space.

Rightly is it the fundamental decree of our order, that we must impart our secrets only to the pure. The most terrible part of the ordeal is in the temptations that our power affords to the criminal. If it were possible that a malevolent being could attain to our faculties, what disorder it might introduce into the globe! Happy that it is *not* possible; the malevolence would disarm the power. It is in the purity of Viola that I rely, as thou more vainly hast relied on the courage or the genius of thy pupils. Bear me witness, Mejnour! Never since the distant day in which I pierced the Arcana of our knowledge, have I ever sought to make its mysteries subservient to unworthy objects; though, alas! the extension of our existence robs us of a country and a home; though the law that places all science, as all art, in the abstraction from the noisy passions

and turbulent ambition of actual life, forbids us to influence the destinies of nations, for which Heaven selects ruder and blinder agencies; yet, wherever have been my wanderings, I have sought to soften distress, and to convert from sin. My power has been hostile only to the guilty; and yet, with all our lore, how in each step we are reduced to be but the permitted instruments of the Power, that vouchsafes our own, but only to direct it. How all our wisdom shrinks into nought, compared with that which gives the meanest herb its virtues, and peoples the smallest globule with its appropriate world. And while we are allowed at times to influence the happiness of others, how mysteriously the shadows thicken round our own future doom! We cannot be prophets to ourselves! With what trembling hope I nurse the thought that I may preserve to my solitude the light of a living smile!

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EXTRACTS FROM LETTER II.

Deeming myself not pure enough to initiate so pure a heart, I invoke to her trance those fairest and most tender inhabitants of space that have furnished to Poetry, which is the instinctive guess into creation, the ideas of the Glendoveer and Sylph. And these were less pure than her own thoughts, and less tender than her own love! They could not raise her above her human heart, for that has a heaven of its own.

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I have just looked on her in sleep—I have heard her breathe my name. Alas! that which is so sweet to others has its bitterness to me; for I think how soon the time may come when that sleep will be without a dream—when the heart that dictates the name will be cold, and the lips that utter it be dumb. What a two-fold shape there is in love! If we examine it

coarsely—if we look but on its fleshly ties—its enjoyments of a moment—its turbulent fever and its dull reaction, how strange it seems that this passion should be the supreme mover of the world—that it is this which has dictated the greatest sacrifices, and influenced all societies and all times; that to this the loftiest and loveliest genius has ever consecrated its devotion; that but for love there were no civilization—no music, no poetry, no beauty, no life beyond the brute's.

But examine it in its heavenlier shape—in its utter abnegation of self—in its intimate connexion with all that is most delicate and subtle in the spirit—its power above all that is sordid in existence—its mastery over the idols of the baser worship—its ability to create a palace of the cottage, an oasis in the desert, a summer in the Iceland—where it breathes, and fertilizes, and glows; and the wonder rather becomes how so few regard it in its holiest nature. What the

sensual call its enjoyments, are the least of its joys. True love is less a passion than a symbol. ✓
 Mejnour, shall the time come when I can speak to thee of Viola as a thing that *was* ?

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EXTRACT FROM LETTER III.

Knowest thou that of late I have sometimes asked myself, ‘Is there no guilt in the knowledge that has so divided us from our race?’ It is true that, the higher we ascend—the more hateful seem to us the vices of the short-lived creepers of the earth;—the more the sense of the goodness of the All-good penetrates and suffuses us, and the more immediately does our happiness seem to emanate from Him. But, on the other hand, how many virtues must lie dead in those, who live in the world of death, and refuse to die! Is not this sublime egotism, this state of abstraction and

reverie—this self-wrapt and self-dependent majesty of existence, a resignation of that nobility which incorporates our own welfare, our joys, our hopes, our fears with others? To live on in no dread of foes, undegraded by infirmity, secure through the cares, and free from the disease of flesh, is a spectacle that captivates our pride. And yet dost thou not more admire—him who dies for another? Since I have loved her, Mejnour, it seems almost cowardice to elude the grave which devours the hearts that wrap us in their folds. I feel it—the earth grows upon my spirit. Thou wert right; eternal age, serene, and passionless, is a happier boon than eternal youth, with its yearnings and desires. Until we can be all spirit, the tranquillity of solitude must be indifference.

EXTRACTS FROM LETTER IV.

I have received thy communication. What!
is it so? Has thy pupil disappointed thee?
Alas, poor pupil! But—

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(Here follow comments on those passages in
Glyndon's life already known to the reader, or
about to be made so, with earnest adjurations
to Mejnour to watch yet over the fate of his
scholar.)

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But I cherish the same desire, with a warmer
heart. My pupil! how the terrors that shall
encompass thine ordeal warn me from the
task! Once more I will seek the Son of Light.

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Yes, Adon-Ai, long deaf to my call, at last has
descended to my vision, and left behind him
the glory of his presence in the shape of Hope

Oh, not impossible, Viola, not impossible, that we yet may be united, soul with soul.

EXTRACT FROM LETTER V.—(*Many months after the last.*)

Mejnour, awake from thine apathy—rejoice! A new soul will be born to the world. A new soul, that shall call me Father. Ah, if they for whom exist all the occupations and resources of human life—if they can thrill, with exquisite emotion, at the thought of hailing again their own childhood in the faces of their children—if, in that birth, they are born once more into the holy Innocence which is the first state of existence—if they can feel that on man devolves almost an Angel's duty, when he has a life to guide from the cradle, and a soul to nurture for the Heaven—what to me must be the rapture, to welcome an Inheritor of all the gifts which double themselves in being shared. How sweet the power to watch, and to guard—

to instil the knowledge, to avert the evil, and to guide back the river of a life in a richer, and broader, and deeper stream, to the paradise from which it flows! And beside that river our souls shall meet, sweet Mother. Our child shall supply the sympathy that fails as yet; and what shape shall haunt thee, what terror shall dismay, when thy initiation is beside the cradle of thy child!

CHAPTER XI.

They thus beguile the way
 Untill the blustering storme is overblowne,
 When weening to returne whence they did stray
 They cannot finde that path which first was showne.
 But wander to and fro in waies unknowne.

SPENSER'S *Faerie Queene*, book i. canto i. st. x.

YES, Viola, thou art another being than when, by the threshold of thy Italian home, thou didst follow thy dim fancies through the Land of Shadow ; or when thou didst vainly seek to give voice to an Ideal beauty, on the boards where Illusion counterfeits Earth and Heaven for an hour, till the weary sense, awaking, sees but the tinsel and the scene-shifter. Thy spirit reposes in its own happiness. Its wanderings

have found a goal. In a moment there often dwells the sense of eternity; for when profoundly happy, we know that it is impossible to die. Whenever the soul *feels its self*, it feels everlasting life! The initiation is deferred—thy days and nights are left to no other visions than those with which a contented heart enchants a guileless fancy. Glendoveers and sylphs, pardon me if I question whether those visions are not lovelier than yourselves.

They stand by the beach, and see the sun sinking into the sea. How long now have they dwelt on that island? What matters!—it may be months, or years—what matters! Why should I, or they, keep account of that happy time? As in the dream of a moment ages may seem to pass, so shall we measure transport or woe—by the length of the dream, or the number of emotions that the dream involves!

The sun sinks slowly down; the air is arid and oppressive; on the sea, the stately vessel

lies motionless ; on the shore, no leaf trembles on the trees.

Viola drew nearer to Zanoni ; a presentiment she could not define made her heart beat more quickly ; and, looking into his face, she was struck with its expression ; it was anxious, abstracted, perturbed.

“ This stillness awes me,” she whispered.

Zanoni did not seem to hear her. He muttered to himself, and his eyes gazed round restlessly. She knew not why, but that gaze, which seemed to pierce into space, that muttered voice in some foreign language, revived dimly her earlier superstitions. She was more fearful since the hour when she knew that she was to be a mother. Strange crisis in the life of woman, and in her love ! Something yet unborn begins already to divide her heart with that which had been before its only monarch !

“ Look on me, Zanoni,” she said, pressing his hand.

He turned—"Thou art pale, Viola; thy hand trembles!"

"It is true. I feel as if some enemy were creeping near us."

"And the instinct deceives thee not. An enemy is indeed at hand. I see it through the heavy air; I hear it through the silence: the Ghostly One—the Destroyer—the PESTILENCE! Ah, seest thou how the leaves swarm with insects, only, by an effort visible to the eye. They follow the breath of the plague!" As he spoke, a bird fell from the boughs at Viola's feet; it fluttered, it writhed an instant, and was dead.

"Oh, Viola!" cried Zanoni, passionately, "that is death. Dost thou not fear to die?"

"To leave thee? Ah, yes!"

"And if I could teach thee how Death may be defied—if I could arrest for thy youth the course of time—if I could—"

He paused abruptly, for Viola's eyes spoke only terror; her cheek and lips were pale.

“Speak not thus—look not thus,” she said, recoiling from him. “You dismay me. Ah, speak not thus, or I should tremble—no, not for myself, but for thy child.”

“Thy child. But wouldst thou reject for thy child the same glorious boon.”

“Zanoni !”

“Well !”

“The sun has sunk from our eyes, but to rise on those of others. To disappear from this world, is to live in the world afar. Oh ; lover—oh, husband !” she continued, with sudden energy, “tell me that thou didst but jest, that thou didst but trifle with my folly ! There is less terror in the pestilence, than in thy words.”

Zanoni’s brow darkened ; he looked at her in silence for some moments, and then said, almost severely—

“What hast thou known of me to distrust ?”

“Oh pardon, pardon !—nothing !” cried Viola,

throwing herself on his breast, and bursting into tears. "I will not believe even thine own words, if they seem to wrong thee!" He kissed the tears from her eyes, but made no answer.

"And, ah!" she resumed, with an enchanting and childlike smile, "if thou wouldst give me a charm against the pestilence, see, I will take it from thee." And she laid her hand on a small antique amulet that he wore on his breast.

"Thou knowest how often this has made me jealous of the past: surely, some love-gift, Zanoni? But no, thou didst not love the giver as thou dost me. Shall I steal thine amulet?"

"Infant!" said Zanoni, tenderly; "she who placed this round my neck deemed it indeed a charm, for she had superstitions like thyself; but to me it is more than the wizard's spell—it is the relic of a sweet vanished time, when none who loved me could distrust."

He said these words in a tone of such melancholy reproach, that it went to the heart of

Viola; but the tone changed into a solemnity which chilled back the gush of her feelings as he resumed: "And this, Viola, one day, perhaps, I will transfer from my breast to thine; yes, whenever thou shalt comprehend me better—*whenever the laws of our being shall be the same!*"

He moved on gently. They returned slowly home; but fear still was in the heart of Viola, though she strove to shake it off. Italian and Catholic she was, with all the superstitions of land and sect. She stole to her chamber, and prayed before a little relic of San Gennaro, which the priest of her house had given to her in childhood, and which had accompanied her in all her wanderings. She had never deemed it possible to part with it before. Now, if there was a charm against the pestilence, did she fear the pestilence for herself? The next morning when he woke, Zanoni found the relic of the saint suspended, with his mystic amulet, round his neck.

“ Ah! thou wilt have nothing to fear from the pestilence now,” said Viola, between tears and smiles; “and when thou wouldst talk to me again as thou didst last night, the saint shall rebuke thee.”

Well, Zanoni, can there ever indeed be commune of thought and spirit, except with equals?

Yes, the Plague broke out—the island home must be abandoned. Mighty Seer, *thou hast no power to save those thou lovest!* Farewell, thou bridal roof!—sweet resting place from Care, farewell! Climates as soft may greet ye, O lovers—skies as serene, and waters as blue and calm. But *that time*, can it ever more return? Who shall say that the heart does not change with the scene—the place where we first dwelt with the beloved one? Every spot *there* has so many memories which the place only can recall. The past that haunts it, seems to command such constancy in the future. If a

thought less kind, less trustful, enter within us, the sight of a tree under which a vow has been exchanged, a tear has been kissed away, restores us again to the hours of the first divine illusion. But in a home, where nothing speaks of the first nuptials, where there is no eloquence of association, no holy burial places of emotions, whose ghosts are angels!—yes, who that has gone through the sad history of Affection will tell us, that the heart changes not with the scene! Blow fair, ye favouring winds; cheerily swell, ye sails; away from the land, where Death has come to snatch the sceptre of Love! The shores glide by; new coasts succeed to the green hills and orange groves of the Bridal Isle. From afar now gleam in the moonlight the columns, yet extant, of a temple which the Athenian dedicated to Wisdom: And, standing on the bark that bounded on in the freshening gale, the votary who had survived the goddess, murmured to himself—

“Has the wisdom of ages brought me no happier hours than those common to the shepherd and the herdsman, with no world beyond their village—no aspiration beyond the kiss and the smile of home?”——

And the moon resting alike over the ruins of the temple of the departed Creed—over the hut of the living peasant—over the immemorial mountain top, and the perishable herbage that clothed its sides, seemed to smile back its answer of calm disdain to the being who, perchance, might have seen the temple built, and who, in his inscrutable existence, might behold the mountain shattered from its base.

BOOK THE FIFTH.

THE EFFECTS OF THE ELIXIR.

Frommt's den Schleier aufzuheben,
Wo das nahe Schreckniss droht?
Nur das Irrthum ist das Leben
Und das Wissen ist der Tod.

SCHILLER, *Kassandra.*

THE HISTORY OF

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BOOK THE FIFTH.

CHAPTER I.

Zwei Seelen wohnen, ach! in meiner Brust.

Was stehst du so, und blickst erstaunt hinaus?

FAUST.

IT will be remembered that we left Master Páolo by the bedside of Glyndon; and as, waking from that profound slumber, the recollections of the past night came horribly back to his mind, the Englishman uttered a cry, and covered his face with his hands.

“Good morrow, Excellency,” said Páolo, gaily. “Corpo di Bacco, you have slept soundly!”

The sound of this man's voice, so lusty, ringing, and healthful, served to scatter before it the phantasma that yet haunted Glyndon's memory.

He rose erect in his bed. "And where did you find me? Why are you here?"

"Where did I find you!" repeated Páolo, in surprise; "in your bed, to be sure. Why am I here!—because the Padrone bade me await your waking, and attend your commands."

"The Padrone, Mejnour!—is he arrived?"

"Arrived and departed, Signor. He has left this letter for you."

"Give it me, and wait without till I am dressed."

"At your service. I have bespoke an excellent breakfast: you must be hungry. I am a very tolerable cook; a monk's son ought to be! You will be startled at my genius in the dressing of fish. My singing, I trust, will not disturb you. I always sing while I prepare a

salad; it harmonizes the ingredients." And slinging his carbine over his shoulder, Páolo sauntered from the room, and closed the door.

Glyndon was already deep in the contents of the following letter:—

"When I first received thee as my pupil, I promised Zanoni, if convinced by thy first trials that thou couldst but swell, not the number of our order, but the list of the victims who have aspired to it in vain, I would not rear thee to thine own wretchedness and doom; I would dismiss thee back to the world. I fulfil my promise. Thine ordeal has been the easiest that Neophyte ever knew. I asked for nothing but abstinence from the sensual, and a brief experiment of thy patience and thy faith. Go back to thine own world; thou hast no nature to aspire to ours!

"It was I who prepared Páolo to receive thee at the revel. It was I who instigated the old beggar to ask thee for alms. It was I who left

open the book that thou couldst not read without violating my command. Well, thou hast seen what awaits thee at the threshold of knowledge. Thou hast confronted the first foe that menaces him whom the senses yet grasp and enthral. Dost thou wonder that I close upon thee the gates for ever? Dost thou not comprehend, at last, that it needs a soul tempered, and purified, and raised, not by external spells, but by its own sublimity and valour, to pass the threshold, and disdain the foe. Wretch! all my science avails nothing for the rash, for the sensual—for him who desires our secrets but to pollute them to gross enjoyments and selfish vice! How have the impostors and sorcerers of the earlier times perished by their very attempt to penetrate the mysteries that should purify, and not deprave! They have boasted of the philosopher's stone, and died in rags; of the immortal elixir, and sank to their grave, gray before their time. Legends tell you, that the

fiend rent them into fragments. Yes; the fiend of their own unholy desires and criminal designs! What they coveted thou covetest; and if thou hadst the wings of a seraph, thou couldst soar not from the slough of thy mortality. Thy desire for knowledge, but petulant presumption; thy thirst for happiness, but the diseased longing for the unclean and muddied waters of corporeal pleasure; thy very love, which usually elevates even the mean, a passion that calculates treason, amidst the first glow of lust;—*thou*, one of us! Thou, a brother of the August order! Thou, an Aspirant to the Stars that shine in the Shemaiá of the Chaldæan lore! The eagle can raise but the eaglet to the sun. I abandon thee to thy twilight!

“ But, alas, for thee, disobedient and profane! thou hast inhaled the elixir; thou hast attracted to thy presence a ghastly and remorseless foe. Thou thyself must exercise the phantom thou hast raised. Thou

must return to the world; but not without punishment and strong effort canst thou regain the calm and the joy of the life thou hast left behind. This for thy comfort will I tell thee: he who has drawn into his frame even so little of the volatile and vital energy of the aerial juices as thyself, has awakened faculties that cannot sleep—faculties that may yet, with patient humility, with sound faith, and the courage that is not of the body like thine, but of the resolute and virtuous mind, attain, if not to the knowledge that reigns above, to high achievement in the career of men. Thou wilt find the restless influence in all that thou wouldst undertake. Thy heart, amidst vulgar joys, will aspire to something holier; thy ambition, amidst coarse excitement, to something beyond thy reach. But deem not that this of itself will suffice for glory. Equally may the craving lead thee to shame and guilt. It is but an imperfect and new-born energy, which will not suffer thee to repose. As

thou directest it, must thou believe it to be the emanation of thine evil genius or thy good.

“But woe to thee! insect meshed in the web in which thou hast entangled limbs and wings! Thou hast not only inhaled the elixir, thou hast conjured the spectre; of all the tribes of the space, no foe is so malignant to man—and thou hast lifted the veil from thy gaze. I cannot restore to the happy dimness of thy vision. Know, at least, that all of us—the highest and the wisest—who have, in sober truth, passed beyond the threshold, have had, as our first fearful task, to master and subdue its griesly and appalling guardian. Know that thou *canst* deliver thyself from those livid eyes—know that, while they haunt they cannot harm, if thou resistest the thoughts to which they tempt, and the horror they engender. *Dread them most when thou beholdest them not.* And thus, son of the worm, we part! All that I can tell thee to encourage, yet to warn

and to guide, I have told thee in these lines. Not from me, from thyself has come the gloomy trial, from which I yet trust thou wilt emerge into peace. Type of the knowledge that I serve, I withhold no lesson from the pure aspirant; I am a dark enigma to the general seeker. As man's only indestructible possession is his memory, so it is not in my art to crumble into matter the immaterial thoughts that have sprung up within thy breast. The tyro might shatter this castle to the dust, and topple down the mountain to the plain. The master has no power to say, 'Exist no more,' to one THOUGHT that his knowledge has inspired. Thou mayst change the thought into new forms; thou mayst rarify and sublimate it into a finer spirit; but thou canst not annihilate that which has no home but in the memory—no substance but the idea. EVERY THOUGHT IS A SOUL! Vainly, therefore, would I or thou undo the past, or restore to thee the gay blindness of thy youth.

Thou must endure the influence of the elixir thou hast inhaled; thou must wrestle with the spectre thou hast invoked!"

The letter fell from Glyndon's hand. A sort of stupor succeeded to the various emotions which had chased each other in the perusal—a stupor, resembling that which follows the sudden destruction of any ardent and long-nursted hope in the human heart, whether it be of love, of avarice, of ambition. The world for which he had so thirsted, sacrificed, and toiled, was closed upon him "for ever," and by his own faults of rashness and presumption. But Glyndon's was not of that nature which submits long to condemn itself. His indignation began to kindle against Mejnour, who owned he had tempted, and who now abandoned him—abandoned him to the presence of a spectre. The Mystic's reproaches stung, rather than humbled him. What crime had he committed to deserve language so harsh and disdainful? Was it so deep

a debasement to feel pleasure in the smile and the eyes of Fillide? Had not Zanoni himself confessed love for Viola?—had he not fled with her as his companion? Glyndon never paused to consider if there are no distinctions between one kind of love and another. Where, too, was the great offence of yielding to a temptation which only existed for the brave? Had not the mystic volume Mejnour had purposely left open, bid him, but “Beware of fear?” Was not, then, every wilful provocative held out to the strongest influences of the human mind, in the prohibition to enter the chamber—in the possession of the key which excited his curiosity—in the volume which seemed to dictate the mode by which the curiosity was to be gratified? As, rapidly, these thoughts passed over him, he began to consider the whole conduct of Mejnour either as a perfidious design to entrap him to his own misery, or as the trick of an impostor, who knew that he could not

realize the great professions he had made. On glancing again over the more mysterious threats and warnings in Mejnour's letter, they seemed to assume the language of mere parable and allegory—the jargon of the Platonists and Pythagoreans. By little and little, he began to consider that the very spectra he had seen—even that one phantom so horrid in its aspect—were but the delusions which Mejnour's science had enabled him to raise. The healthful sunlight, filling up every cranny in his chamber, seemed to laugh away the terrors of the past night. His pride and his resentment nerved his habitual courage; and when, having hastily dressed himself, he rejoined Páolo, it was with a flushed cheek, and a haughty step.

“So, Páolo,” said he, “the Padrone, as you call him, told you to expect and welcome me at your village feast?”

“He did so, by a message from a wretched old cripple. This surprised me at the time,

for I thought he was far distant. But these great philosophers make a joke of two or three hundred leagues."

"Why did you not tell me you had heard from Mejnour?"

"Because the old cripple forbade me."

"Did you not see the man afterwards during the dance?"

"No, Excellency."

"Humph!"

"Allow me to serve you," said Páolo, "piling Glyndon's plate, and then filling his glass. "I wish, Signor, now the Padrone is gone,—not" (added Páolo, as he cast rather a frightened and suspicious glance round the room,) "that I mean to say anything disrespectful of him,—I wish, I say, now that he is gone, that you would take pity on yourself, and ask your own heart what your youth was meant for? Not to bury yourself alive in these old ruins, and endanger body and soul by studies which I am sure no saint could approve of."

“Are the saints so partial, then, to your own occupations, Master Páolo?”

“Why,” answered the bandit, a little confused, “a gentleman with plenty of pistoles in his purse, need not, of necessity, make it his profession to take away the pistoles of other people! It is a different thing for us poor rogues. After all, too, I always devote a tithe of my gains to the Virgin; and I share the rest charitably with the poor. But eat, drink, enjoy yourself—be absolved by your confessor for any little peccadilloes, and don’t run too long scores at a time—that’s my advice. Your health, Excellency! Pshaw, Signor, fasting, except on the days prescribed to a good Catholic, only engenders phantoms.”

“Phantoms!”

“Yes; the devil always tempts the empty stomach. To covet—to hate—to thieve—to rob, and to murder—these are the natural desires of a man who is famishing. With a full

belly, Signor, we are at peace with all the world. That's right: you like the partridge! Cospetto! When I myself have passed two or three days in the mountains, with nothing from sunset to sunrise but a black crust and an onion, I grow as fierce as a wolf. That's not the worst, too. In these times I see little imps dancing before me. Oh, yes; fasting is as full of spectres as a field of battle."

Glyndon thought there was some sound philosophy in the reasoning of his companion; and, certainly, the more he ate and drank the more the recollection of the past night and of Mejnour's desertion faded from his mind. The casement was open—the breeze blew—the sun shone—all Nature was merry; and merry as Nature herself grew Maêstro Páolo. He talked of adventures, of travel, of women, with a hearty gusto that had its infection. But Glyndon listened yet more complacently when Páolo turned with an arch smile to praises of the

eye, the teeth, the ankles, and the shape of the handsome Fillide.

This man, indeed, seemed the very personation of animal sensual life. He would have been to Faust a more dangerous tempter than Mephistophiles. There was no sneer on *his* lip at the pleasures which animated his voice. To one awaking to a sense of the vanities in knowledge, this reckless ignorant joyousness of temper was a worse corruptor than all the icy mockeries of a learned Fiend. But when Páolo took his leave, with a promise to return the next day, the mind of the Englishman again settled back to a graver and more thoughtful mood. The elixir seemed, in truth, to have left the refining effects Mejnour had ascribed to it. As Glyndon paced to and fro the solitary corridor, or pausing, gazed upon the extended and glorious scenery that stretched below, high thoughts of enterprise and ambition—bright visions of glory—passed in rapid succession through his soul.

“Mejnour denies me his science. Well,” said the painter, proudly, “he has not robbed me of my art.”

What! Clarence Glyndon! dost thou return to that from which thy career commenced? Was Zanoni right after all?

He found himself in the chamber of the Mystic: not a vessel—not a herb! the solemn volume is vanished—the elixir shall sparkle for him no more! But still in the room itself seems to linger the atmosphere of a charm. Faster and fiercer it burns within thee, the desire to achieve, to create! Thou longest for a life beyond the sensual!—but the life that is permitted to all genius—that which breathes through the immortal work, and endures in the imperishable name.

Where are the implements for thine art? Tush!—when did the true workman ever fail to find his tools? Thou art again in thine own chamber—the white wall thy canvass—a frag-

ment of charcoal for thy pencil. They suffice, at least, to give outline to the conception, that may otherwise vanish with the morrow.

The idea that thus excited the imagination of the artist was unquestionably noble and august. It was derived from that Egyptian ceremonial which Diodorus has recorded—the Judgment of the Dead by the Living :* When the corpse, duly embalmed, is placed by the margin of the Acherusian Lake, and before it may be consigned to the bark which is to bear it across the waters to its final resting-place, it is permitted to the appointed judges to hear all accusations of the past life of the deceased, and, if proved, to deprive the corpse of the rites of sepulture.

Unconsciously to himself, it was Mejnour's descriptions of this custom, which he had illustrated by several anecdotes not to be found in books, that now suggested the design to the

* Diod. lib. i.

artist, and gave it reality and force. He supposed a powerful and guilty king whom in life scarce a whisper had dared to arraign, but against whom, now the breath was gone, came the slave from his fetters, the mutilated victim from his dungeon, livid and squalid as if dead themselves, invoking with parched lips the justice that outlives the grave.

Strange fervour this, O Artist! breaking suddenly forth from the mists and darkness which the occult science had spread so long over thy fancies—strange that the reaction of the night's terror and the day's disappointment should be back to thine holy art! Oh, how freely goes the bold hand over the large outline! How, despite those rude materials, speaks forth no more the pupil, but the master! Fresh yet from the glorious elixir, how thou givest to thy creatures the finer life denied to thyself?—some power not thine own writes the grand symbols on the wall. Behind, rises the mighty sepul-

chre, on the building of which repose to the dead, the lives of thousands had been consumed. There, sit in a semicircle the solemn judges. Black and sluggish flows the lake. There, lies the mummied and royal dead. Dost thou quail at the frown on his life-like brow? Ha!—bravely done, O Artist!—up rise the haggard forms!—pale speak the ghastly faces! Shall not Humanity after death avenge itself on Power? Thy conception, Clarence Glyndon, is a sublime truth; thy design promises renown to genius. Better this magic than the charms of the volume and the vessel. Hour after hour has gone; thou hast lighted the lamp; night sees thee yet at thy labour. Merciful heaven! what chills the atmosphere?—why does the lamp grow wan?—why does thy hair bristle? There!—there!—there! at the casement!—it gazes on thee, the dark, mantled, loathsome thing! There, with their devilish mockery and hateful craft, glare on thee those horrid eyes!

He stood and gazed. It was no delusion—it spoke not, moved not, till, unable to bear longer that steady and burning look, he covered his face with his hands. With a start, with a thrill he removed them; he felt the nearer presence of the Nameless. There, it cowered on the floor beside his design; and, lo! the figures seemed to start from the wall! Those pale accusing figures, the shapes he himself had raised, frowned at him and gibbered. With a violent effort that convulsed his whole being and bathed his body in the sweat of agony, the young man mastered his horror. He strode towards the Phantom; he endured its eyes; he accosted it with a steady voice; he demanded its purpose and defied its power.

And then, as a wind from a charnel, was heard its voice. What it said, what revealed, it is forbidden the lips to repeat, the hand to record. Nothing, save the subtle life that yet animated the frame, to which the inhalations of

the elixir had given vigour and energy beyond the strength of the strongest, could have survived that awful hour. Better to wake in the catacombs and see the buried rise from their cerements, and hear the ghouls, in their horrid orgies, amongst the festering ghastliness of corruption, than to front those features when the veil was lifted, and listen to that whispered voice!

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The next day Glyndon fled from the ruined castle. With what hopes of starry light had he crossed the threshold; with what memories to shudder evermore at the darkness, did he look back at the frown of its time-worn towers.

CHAPTER XII.

FAUST. Wohin soll es nun gehn ?

MEPHIST. Wohin es der gefällt.

Wir sehn die kleine, dann die grosse Welt.

FAUST.

DRAW your chair to the fireside, brush clean the hearth, and trim the lights. Oh, home of sleekness, order, substance, comfort ! Oh, excellent thing art thou, Matter of Fact !

It is some time after the date of the last chapter. Here we are, not in moonlit islands, or mouldering castles, but in a room twenty-six feet by twenty-two—well carpeted—well cushioned—solid arm chairs, and eight such

bad pictures, in such fine frames, upon the walls! Thomas Mervale, Esq., merchant of London, you are an enviable dog!

It was the easiest thing in the world for Mervale, on returning from his continental episode of life, to settle down to his desk—his heart had been always there. The death of his father gave him, as a birthright, a high position in a respectable though second-rate firm. To make this establishment first-rate, was an honourable ambition—it was his! He had lately married—not entirely for money—no! he was worldly rather than mercenary. He had no romantic ideas of love; but he was too sensible a man not to know that a wife should be a companion—not merely a speculation. He did not care for beauty and genius, but he liked health and good temper, and a certain proportion of useful understanding. He chose a wife from his reason, not his heart, and a very good choice he made. Mrs. Mervale was an

excellent young woman—bustling, managing, economical, but affectionate and good. She had a will of her own, but was no shrew. She had a great notion of the rights of a wife, and a strong perception of the qualities that ensure comfort. She would never have forgiven her husband, had she found him guilty of the most passing fancy for another; but, in return, she had the most admirable sense of propriety herself. She held in abhorrence all levity, all flirtation, all coquetry—small vices, which often ruin domestic happiness, but which a giddy nature incurs without consideration. But she did not think it right to love a husband over much. She left a surplus of affection for all her relations, all her friends, some of her acquaintances, and the possibility of a second marriage, should any accident happen to Mr. M. She kept a good table, for it suited their station, and her temper was considered even, though firm; but she could say a sharp

thing or two, if Mr. Mervale was not punctual to a moment. She was very particular that he should change his shoes on coming home—the carpets were new and expensive. She was not sulky, nor passionate—Heaven bless her for that!—but when displeased she shewed it—administered a dignified rebuke—alluded to her own virtues—to her uncle, who was an admiral, and to the thirty thousand pounds which she had brought to the object of her choice. But as Mr. Mervale was a good-humoured man, owned his faults, and subscribed to her excellence, the displeasure was soon over.

Every household has its little disagreements, none fewer than that of Mr. and Mrs. Mervale. Mrs. Mervale, without being improperly fond of dress, paid due attention to it. She was never seen out of her chamber with papers in her hair, nor in that worst of disillusions—a morning wrapper. At half-past eight every morning

Mrs. Mervale was dressed for the day—that is, till she re-dressed for dinner;—her stays well laced,—her cap prim,—her gown, winter and summer, of a thick, handsome silk. Ladies at that time wore very short waists; so did Mrs. Mervale. Her morning ornaments were a thick gold chain, to which was suspended a gold watch—none of those fragile dwarfs of mechanism, that look so pretty, and go so ill—but a handsome repeater, which chronicled Father Time to a moment; also a mosaic brooch; also a miniature of her uncle, the admiral, set in a bracelet. For the evening, she had two handsome sets—necklace, earrings, and bracelets, complete—one of amethysts, the other topazes. With these, her costume, for the most part, was a gold-coloured satin and a turban, in which last her picture had been taken. Mrs. Mervale had an aquiline nose, good teeth, fair hair, and light eyelashes, rather a high complexion, what is generally called a fine bust, full cheeks,

large useful feet, made for walking, large white hands, with filbert nails, on which not a speck of dust had, even in childhood, ever been known to alight. She looked a little older than she really was; but that might arise from a certain air of dignity, and the aforesaid aquiline nose. She generally wore short mittens. She never read any poetry but Goldsmith's and Cowper's. She was not amused by novels, though she had no prejudice against them. She liked a play and a pantomime, with a slight supper afterwards. She did not like concerts or operas. At the beginning of the winter she selected some book to read, and some piece of work to commence. The two lasted her till the spring, when, though she continued to work, she left off reading. Her favourite study was history, which she read through the medium of Dr. Goldsmith. Her favourite author in the belles lettres was, of course, Dr. Johnson. A worthier woman, or

one more respected, was not to be found—except in an epitaph!

It was an autumn night. Mr. and Mrs. Mervale, lately returned from an excursion to Weymouth, are in the drawing-room—“the dame sate on this side—the man sat on that.”

“Yes, I assure you, my dear, that Glyndon, with all his eccentricities, was a very engaging, amiable fellow. You would certainly have liked him—all the women did.”

“My dear Thomas, you will forgive the remark,—but that expression of yours—‘all the women’——”

“I beg your pardon,—you are right. I meant to say that he was a general favourite with your charming sex.”

“I understand,—rather a frivolous character.”

“Frivolous! no, not exactly; a little unsteady—very odd—but certainly not frivolous;

presumptuous and headstrong in character, but modest and shy in his manners, rather too much so—just what you like. However, to return: I am seriously uneasy at the accounts I have heard of him to-day. He has been living, it seems, a very strange and irregular life, travelling from place to place, and must have spent already a great deal of money.”

“Apropos of money,” said Mrs. Mervale; “I fear we must change our butcher; he is certainly in league with the cook.”

“That is a pity; his beef is remarkably fine. These London servants are as bad as the Carbonari. But, as I was saying, poor Glyndon——”

Here a knock was heard at the door. “Bless me,” said Mrs. Mervale, “it is past ten! Who can that possibly be?”

“Perhaps your uncle, the admiral,” said the husband, with a slight peevishness in his accent. “He generally favours us about this hour.”

“I hope, my love, that none of my relations are unwelcome visitors at your house. The admiral is a most entertaining man, and—his fortune is entirely at his own disposal.”

“No one I respect more,” said Mr. Mervale, with emphasis.

The servant threw open the door, and announced Mr. Glyndon.

“Mr. Glyndon!—what an extraordinary—” exclaimed Mrs. Mervale, but before she could conclude the sentence, Glyndon was in the room.

The two friends greeted each other with all the warmth of early recollection and long absence. An appropriate and proud presentation to Mrs. Mervale ensued; and Mrs. Mervale, with a dignified smile, and a furtive glance at his boots, bade her husband’s friend welcome to England.

Glyndon was greatly altered since Mervale had seen him last. Though less than two years

had elapsed since then, his fair complexion was more bronzed and manly. Deep lines of care, or thought, or dissipation, had replaced the smooth contour of happy youth. To a manner once gentle and polished, had succeeded a certain recklessness of mien, tone, and bearing, which bespoke the habits of a society that cared little for the calm decorums of conventional ease. Still a kind of wild nobleness, not before apparent in him, characterized his aspect, and gave something of dignity to the freedom of his language and gestures.

“So, then, you are settled, Mervale—I need not ask you if you are happy. Worth, sense, wealth, character, and so fair a companion, deserve happiness, and command it.”

“Would you like some tea, Mr. Glyndon?” asked Mrs. Mervale, kindly.

“Thank you—no. I propose a more convivial stimulus to my old friend. Wine, Mervale—wine, ch!—or a bowl of old English

punch. Your wife will excuse us—we will make a night of it!”

Mrs. Mervale drew back her chair, and tried not to look aghast. Glyndon did not give his friend time to reply—

“So at last I am in England,” he said, looking round the room, with a slight sneer on his lips; “surely this sober air must have its influence; surely here I shall be like the rest.”

“Have you been ill, Glyndon?”

“Ill! yes. Humph! you have a fine house. Does it contain a spare room for a solitary wanderer?”

Mr. Mervale glanced at his wife, and his wife looked steadily on the carpet. “Modest and shy in his manners—rather too much so!” Mrs. Mervale was in the seventh heaven of indignation and amaze!

“My dear?” said Mr. Mervale at last, meekly and interrogatingly.

“My dear!” returned Mrs. Mervale, innocently and sourly.

“ We can make up a room for my old friend, Sarah ?”

The old friend had sunk back on his chair ; and, gazing intently on the fire, with his feet at ease upon the fender, seemed to have forgotten his question.

Mrs. Mervale bit her lips, looked thoughtful, and at last coldly replied—“ Certainly, Mr. Mervale ; your friends do right to make themselves at home.”

With that she lighted a candle, and moved majestically from the room. When she returned, the two friends had vanished into Mr. Mervale’s study.

Twelve o’clock struck — one o’clock — two ! Thrice had Mrs. Mervale sent into the room to know—first, if they wanted anything ; secondly, if Mr. Glyndon slept on a mattress or feather-bed ; thirdly, to inquire if Mr. Glyndon’s trunk, which he had brought with him, should be unpacked. And to the answer to all these ques-

tions, was added, in a loud voice from the visitor—a voice that pierced from the kitchen to the attic—“Another bowl! stronger, if you please, and be quick with it!”

At last, Mr. Mervale appeared in the conjugal chamber—not penitent, not apologetic—no, not a bit of it. His eyes twinkled, his cheek flushed, his feet reeled; he sung—Mr. Thomas Mervale positively sung!

“Mr. Mervale! is it possible, sir!——”

“‘Old King Cole was a merry old soul——’”

“Mr. Mervale! sir!—leave me alone, sir!”

“‘And a merry old soul was he——’”

“What an example to the servants!”

“‘And he called for his pipe, and he called for his bowl——’”

“If you don’t keep your hands to yourself, sir, I shall call——

“‘Call for his fiddlers three!’”

CHAPTER III.

In der Welt weit,
Aus der Einsamkeit
Wo Sinnen und Säfte stocken
Wollen sie dich locken.

FAUST.

THE next morning, at breakfast, Mrs. Mervale looked as if all the wrongs of injured woman sat upon her brow. Mr. Mervale seemed the picture of remorseful guilt and avenging bile. He said little, except to complain of headache, and to request the eggs to be removed from the table. Clarence Glyndon—impervious, unconscious, unailing, impenitent — was in noisy spirits, and talked for three.

“Poor Mervale! he has lost the habit of good fellowship, madam. Another night or two, and he will be himself again!”

“Sir,” said Mrs. Mervale, launching a pre-meditated sentence with more than Johnsonian dignity; “permit me to remind you that Mr. Mervale is now a married man, the destined father of a family, and the present master of a household.”

“Precisely the reasons why I envy him so much. I myself have a great mind to marry. Happiness is contagious.”

“Do you still take to painting,” asked Mervale, languidly, endeavouring to turn the tables on his guest.

“Oh, no; I have adopted your advice. No art, no ideal--nothing loftier than Common-place for me now. If I were to paint again, I positively think *you* would purchase my pictures. Make haste and finish your breakfast, man; I wish to consult you. I have come to England to see after my affairs. My ambition is to make money; your counsels and experience cannot fail to assist me here.”

“Ah! you were soon disenchanted of your

Philosopher's stone. You must know, Sarah, that when I last left Glyndon, he was bent upon turning alchemist and magician."

"You are witty to-day, Mr. Mervale."

"Upon my honour it is true. Have I not told you so before?"

Glyndon rose abruptly.

"Why revive those recollections of folly and presumption. Have I not said that I have returned to my native land to pursue the healthful avocations of my kind! O yes! what so healthful, so noble, so fitted to our nature, as what you call the Practical Life? If we have faculties, what is their use, but to sell them to advantage? Buy knowledge as we do our goods; buy it at the cheapest market, sell it at the dearest. Have you not breakfasted yet?"

The friends walked into the streets, and Mervale shrunk from the irony with which Glyndon complimented him on his respectability, his station, his pursuits, his happy marriage, and

his eight pictures in their handsome frames. Formerly the sober Mervale had commanded an influence over his friend; *his* had been the sarcasm; Glyndon's the irresolute shame at his own peculiarities. Now this position was reversed. There was a fierce earnestness in Glyndon's altered temper which awed and silenced the quiet common-place of his friend's character. He seemed to take a malignant delight in persuading himself that the sober life of the world was contemptible and base.

“ Ah!” he exclaimed, “ how right you were to tell me to marry respectably; to have a solid position, to live in decorous fear of the world and one's wife; and to command the envy of the poor, the good opinion of the rich. You have practised what you preach. Delicious existence! The merchant's desk, and the curtain lecture! Ha! ha! Shall we have another night of it?”

Mervale, embarrassed and irritated, turned

the conversation upon Glyndon's affairs. He was surprised at the knowledge of the world which the artist seemed to have suddenly acquired; surprised still more at the acuteness and energy with which he spoke of the speculations most in vogue at the market. Yes; Glyndon was certainly in earnest; he desired to be rich and respectable,—and to make at least ten per cent. for his money!

After spending some days with the merchant, during which time he contrived to disorganize all the mechanism of the house, to turn night into day, harmony into discord, to drive poor Mrs. Mervale half distracted, and to convince her husband that he was horribly henpecked, the ill-omened visitor left them as suddenly as he had arrived. He took a house of his own; he sought the society of persons of substance; he devoted himself to the money-market; he seemed to have become a man of business; his schemes were bold and colossal; his calcu-

lations rapid and profound. He startled Mervale by his energy, and dazzled him by his success. Mervale began to envy him—to be discontented with his own regular and slow gains. When Glyndon bought or sold in the funds, wealth rolled upon him like the tide of a sea; what years of toil could not have done for him in art, a few months, by a succession of lucky chances, did for him in speculation. Suddenly, however, he relaxed his exertions; new objects of ambition seemed to attract him. If he heard a drum in the streets, what glory like the soldier's? If a new poem were published, what renown like the poet's? He began works in literature, which promised great excellence, to throw them aside in disgust. All at once he abandoned the decorous and formal society he had courted; he joined himself with young and riotous associates; he plunged into the wildest excesses of the great city, where Gold reigns alike over Toil and Pleasure. Through all he

carried with him a certain power and heat of soul. In all society he aspired to command—in all pursuits, to excel. Yet whatever the passion of the moment, the reaction was terrible in its gloom. He sunk, at times, into the most profound and the darkest reveries. His fever was that of a mind that would escape memory—his repose, that of a mind which the memory seizes again, and devours as a prey. Mervale now saw little of him; they shunned each other. Glyndon had no confidant, and no friend.

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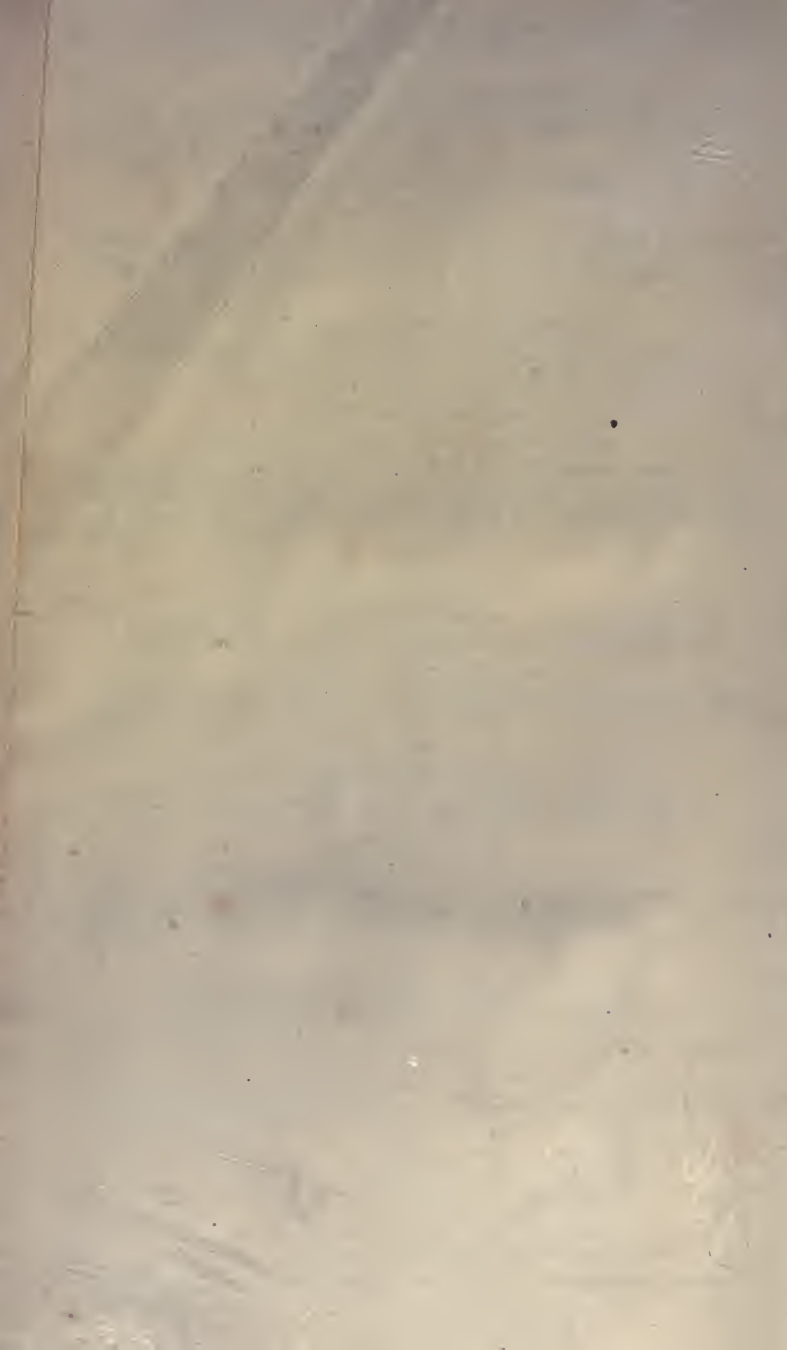
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