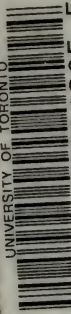


UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO



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I

ZANONI.

BY

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

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

LE COMTE DE GABALIS.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:

SAUNDERS & OTLEY, CONDUIT STREET.

1842.

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INTRODUCTION.

IT is possible that, among my readers, there may be a few not unacquainted with an old bookshop, existing some years since in the neighbourhood of Covent Garden; I say a few, for certainly there was little enough to attract the many, in those precious volumes which the labour of a life had accumulated on the dusty shelves of my old friend D——. There, were to be found no popular treatises, no entertaining romances, no histories, no travels, no “Library for the People,” no “Amusement for the Million.” But there, perhaps, throughout all Europe, the curious

might discover the most notable collection, ever amassed by an enthusiast, of the works of Alchemist, Cabalist, and Astrologer. The owner had lavished a fortune in the purchase of unsaleable treasures. But old D—— did not desire to sell. It absolutely went to his heart when a customer entered his shop; he watched the movements of the presumptuous intruder with a vindictive glare, he fluttered around him with uneasy vigilance; he frowned, he groaned, when profane hands dislodged his idols from their niches. If it were one of the favourite sultanas of his wizard harem that attracted you, and the price named were not sufficiently enormous, he would not unfrequently double the sum. Demur, and in brisk delight he snatched the venerable charmer from your hands; accede, and he became the picture of despair:—Nor unfrequently, at the dead of night, would he knock at your door, and entreat you to sell him back, at your own terms, what you had so egregiously bought at his. A believer himself in his Averroes and Paracelsus, he was as loth as the philosophers he studied to com-

municate to the profane the learning he had collected.

It so chanced that some years ago, in my younger days, whether of authorship or life, I felt a desire to make myself acquainted with the true origin and tenets of the singular sect known by the name of Rosicrucians. Dissatisfied with the scanty and superficial accounts to be found in the works usually referred to on the subject, it struck me as possible that Mr. D——'s collection, which was rich, not only in black letter, but in manuscripts, might contain some more accurate and authentic records of that famous brotherhood—written, who knows? by one of their own order, and confirming by authority and detail the pretensions to wisdom and to virtue which Bringaret had arrogated to the successors of the Chaldæan and Gymnosophist.

Accordingly I repaired to what, doubtless, I ought to be ashamed to confess, was once one of my favourite haunts. But are there no errors and no fallacies, in the chronicles of our own day, as absurd as those of the alchemists of

where else am I to obtain information? Now-a-days one can hazard nothing in print without authority, and one may scarcely quote Shakespeare without citing chapter and verse. This is the age of facts—the age of facts, Sir.”

“Well,” said the old gentleman, with a pleasant smile, “if we meet again, perhaps, at least, I may direct your researches to the proper source of intelligence.” And with that he buttoned his great coat, whistled to his dog, and departed.

It so happened that I did meet again with the old gentleman, exactly four days after our brief conversation in Mr. D——’s bookshop. I was riding leisurely towards Highgate, when, at the foot of its classic hill, I recognised the stranger; he was mounted on a black pony, and before him trotted his dog, which was black also.

If you meet the man whom you wish to know, on horseback, at the commencement of a long hill, where, unless he has borrowed a friend’s favourite hack, he cannot, in decent humanity to the brute creation, ride away from you, I apprehend that it is your own fault if

you have not gone far in your object before you have gained the top. In short, so well did I succeed, that on reaching Highgate the old gentleman invited me to rest at his house, which was a little apart from the village: and an excellent house it was—small but commodious, with a large garden, and commanding from the windows such a prospect as Lucretius would recommend to philosophers;—the spires and domes of London, on a clear day, distinctly visible; here the Retreat of the Hermit, and there the Mare Magnum of the world.

The walls of the principal rooms were embellished with pictures of extraordinary merit, and in that high school of art which is so little understood out of Italy. I was surprised to learn that they were all from the hand of the owner. My evident admiration pleased my new friend, and led to talk upon his part which shewed him no less elevated in his theories of art than an adept in the practice. Without fatiguing the reader with irrelevant criticism, it is necessary, perhaps, as elucidating much of the design and cha-

what purpose? Perhaps you desire only to enter the temple in order to ridicule the rites?"

"What do you take me for! Surely, were I so inclined, the fate of the Abbé de Villars is a sufficient warning to all men not to treat idly of the realms of the Salamander and the Sylph. Everybody knows how mysteriously that ingenious personage was deprived of his life, in revenge for the witty mockeries of his *Comte de Gabalis*."

"Salamander and Sylph! I see that you fall into the vulgar error, and translate literally the allegorical language of the mystics."

With that, the old gentleman condescended to enter into a very interesting, and, as it seemed to me, a very erudite relation, of the tenets of the Rosicrucians, some of whom, he asserted, still existed, and still prosecuted, in august secrecy, their profound researches into natural science and occult philosophy.

"But this fraternity," said he, "however respectable and virtuous—virtuous I say, for no monastic order is more severe in the practice of moral precepts, or more ardent in Christian

faith—this fraternity is but a branch of others yet more transcendent in the powers they have obtained, and yet more illustrious in their origin. Are you acquainted with the Platonists?”

“I have occasionally lost my way in their labyrinth,” said I. “Faith, they are rather difficult gentlemen to understand.”

“Yet their knottiest problems have never yet been published. Their sublimest works are in manuscript, and constitute the initiatory learning, not only of the Rosicrucians, but of the nobler brotherhoods I have referred to. More solemn and sublime still is the knowledge to be gleaned from the elder Pythagoreans, and the immortal masterpieces of Apollonius.”

“Apollonius the impostor of Tyanea! are his writings extant?”

“Impostor!” cried my host. “Apollonius an impostor!”

“I beg your pardon; I did not know he was a friend of yours; and if you vouch for his character, I will believe him to have been a very respectable man, who only spoke the truth when he boasted of his power to be in two places at the same time.”

“Is that so difficult?” said the old gentleman; “if so, you have never dreamed!”

Here ended our conversation; but from that time an acquaintance was formed between us, which lasted till my venerable friend departed this life. Peace to his ashes! He was a person of singular habits and eccentric opinions; but the chief part of his time was occupied in acts of quiet and unostentatious goodness. He was an enthusiast in the duties of the Samaritan; and as his virtues were softened by the gentlest charity, so his hopes were based upon the devoutest belief. He never conversed upon his own origin and history, nor have I ever been able to penetrate the darkness in which they were concealed. He seemed to have seen much of the world, and to have been an eyewitness of the first French Revolution, a subject upon which he was equally eloquent and instructive. At the same time, he did not regard the crimes of that stormy period with the philosophical leniency with which enlightened writers (their heads safe upon their shoulders) are, in the present day, inclined to treat the massacres of the past: he spoke not as a stu-

dent who had read and reasoned, but as a man who had seen and suffered. The old gentleman seemed alone in the world; nor did I know that he had one relation, till his executor, a distant cousin, residing abroad, informed me of the very handsome legacy which my poor friend had bequeathed me. This consisted first of a sum about which I think it best to be guarded, foreseeing the possibility of a new tax upon real and funded property; and secondly, of certain precious manuscripts, to which the following volumes owe their existence.

I imagine I trace this latter bequest to a visit I paid the Sage, if so I may be permitted to call him, a few weeks before his death.

Although he read little of our modern literature, my friend, with the affable good nature which belonged to him, graciously permitted me to consult him upon various literary undertakings meditated by the desultory ambition of a young and inexperienced student. And at that time I sought his advice upon a work of imagination, intended to depict the effects of enthusiasm upon different modifications of character. He listened to my con-

ception, which was sufficiently trite and prosaic, with his usual patience ; and then, thoughtfully turning to his bookshelves, took down an old volume, and read to me, first in Greek, and secondly in English, some extracts to the following effect :—

“ Plato here expresses four kinds of Mania, by which I desire to understand enthusiasm, and the inspiration of the gods.—Firstly, the musical; secondly, the telestic or mystic; thirdly, the prophetic; and fourthly, that which belongs to Love.”

The Author he quoted, after contending that there is something in the soul above intellect, and stating that there are in our nature distinct energies, by the one of which we discover and seize as it were on sciences and theorems with almost intuitive rapidity, by another, through which high art is accomplished, like the statues of Phidias, proceeded to state, that “enthusiasm, in the true acceptance of the word, is, when that part of the soul which is above intellect is excited to the gods, and thence derives its inspiration.”

The Author then, pursuing his comment

upon Plato, observes, that "one of these manias may suffice (especially that which belongs to Love) to lead back the soul to its first divinity and happiness; but that there is an intimate union with them all: and that the ordinary progress through which the soul ascends is, primarily, through the musical; next, through the telestic or mystic; thirdly, through the prophetic; and lastly, through the enthusiasm of Love."

While, with a bewildered understanding and a reluctant attention, I listened to these intricate sublimities, my adviser closed the volume, and said with complacency, "There is the motto for your book—the thesis for your theme."

"*Davus sum non Œdipus,*" said I, shaking my head, discontentedly. "All this may be exceedingly fine, but, Heaven forgive me—I don't understand a word of it. The mysteries of your Rosicrucians, and your fraternities, are mere child's play to the jargon of the Platonists."

"Yet, not till you rightly understand this passage can you understand the higher theories

of the Rosicrucians, or of the still nobler fraternities you speak of with so much levity."

"Oh, if that be the case, I give up in despair. Why not, since you are so well versed in the matter, take the motto for a book of your own?"

"But if I have already composed a book with that thesis for its theme, will you prepare it for the public?"

"With the greatest pleasure," said I,—alas, too rashly!

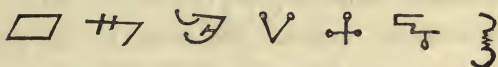
"I shall hold you to your promise," returned the old gentleman, "and when I am no more, you will receive the manuscripts. From what you say of the prevailing taste in literature, I cannot flatter you with the hope that you will gain much by the undertaking. And I tell you beforehand that you will find it not a little laborious."

"Is your work a romance?"

"It is a romance, and it is not a romance. It is a truth for those who can comprehend it, and an extravagance for those who cannot."

At last there arrived the manuscripts, with a brief note from my deceased friend, reminding me of my imprudent promise.

With mournful interest, and yet with eager impatience, I opened the packet and trimmed my lamp. Conceive my dismay when I found the whole written in an unintelligible cipher. I present the reader with a specimen ;—



and so on for 940 mortal pages in foolscap ! I could scarcely believe my eyes ; in fact I began to think the lamp burned singularly blue ; and sundry misgivings as to the unhallowed nature of the characters I had so unwittingly opened upon, coupled with the strange hints and mystical language of the old gentleman, crept through my disordered imagination. Certainly, to say no worse of it, the whole thing looked *uncanny* ! I was about, precipitately, to hurry the papers into my desk, with a pious determination to have nothing more to do with them, when my eye fell upon

a book, neatly bound in blue morocco, and which, in my eagerness, I had hitherto overlooked. I opened this volume with great precaution, not knowing what might jump out, and,—guess my delight,—found that it contained a key or dictionary to the hieroglyphics. Not to weary the reader with an account of my labours, I am contented with saying that at last I imagined myself capable of construing the characters, and set to work in good earnest. Still it was no easy task, and two years elapsed before I had made much progress. I then, by way of experiment on the public, obtained the insertion of a few desultory chapters, in a periodical with which, for a few months, I had the honour to be connected. They appeared to excite more curiosity than I had presumed to anticipate; and I renewed, with better heart, my laborious undertaking. But now a new misfortune befel me: I found as I proceeded, that the author had made two copies of his work, one much more elaborate and detailed than the other; I had stumbled upon the earlier copy, and had my whole task to re-model, and the chapters I had written to

re-translate. I may say then, that, exclusive of intervals devoted to more pressing occupations, my unlucky promise cost me the toil of several years before I could bring it to adequate fulfilment. The task was the more difficult, since the style in the original is written in a kind of rythmical prose, as if the author desired that in some degree his work should be regarded as one of poetical conception and design. To this it was not possible to do justice, and in the attempt I have, doubtless, very often need of the reader's indulgent consideration. My natural respect for the old gentleman's vagaries with a muse of equivocal character must be my only excuse, whenever the language, without luxuriating into verse, borrows flowers scarcely natural to prose. Truth compels me also to confess that, with all my pains, I am by no means sure that I have invariably given the true meaning of the cipher; nay, that here and there either a gap in the narrative, or the sudden assumption of a new cipher, to which no key was afforded, has obliged me to resort to interpolations of my own, no doubt easily discernible, but which, I

flatter myself, are not inharmonious to the general design. This confession leads me to the sentence with which I shall conclude—If, reader, in this book there be anything that pleases you, it is certainly mine—but whenever you come to something you dislike,—lay the blame upon the old gentleman !

London, January, 1842.

N.B.—The notes appended to the text are sometimes by the Author, sometimes by the Editor,—I have occasionally (but not always) marked the distinction :—where, however, this is omitted, the ingenuity of the Reader will be rarely at fault.

BOOK THE FIRST.

THE MUSICIAN.

————— Due Fontane
Che di diverso effetto hanno liquore!
ARIOSTO, ORLAND. FUR. Canto i. 78.

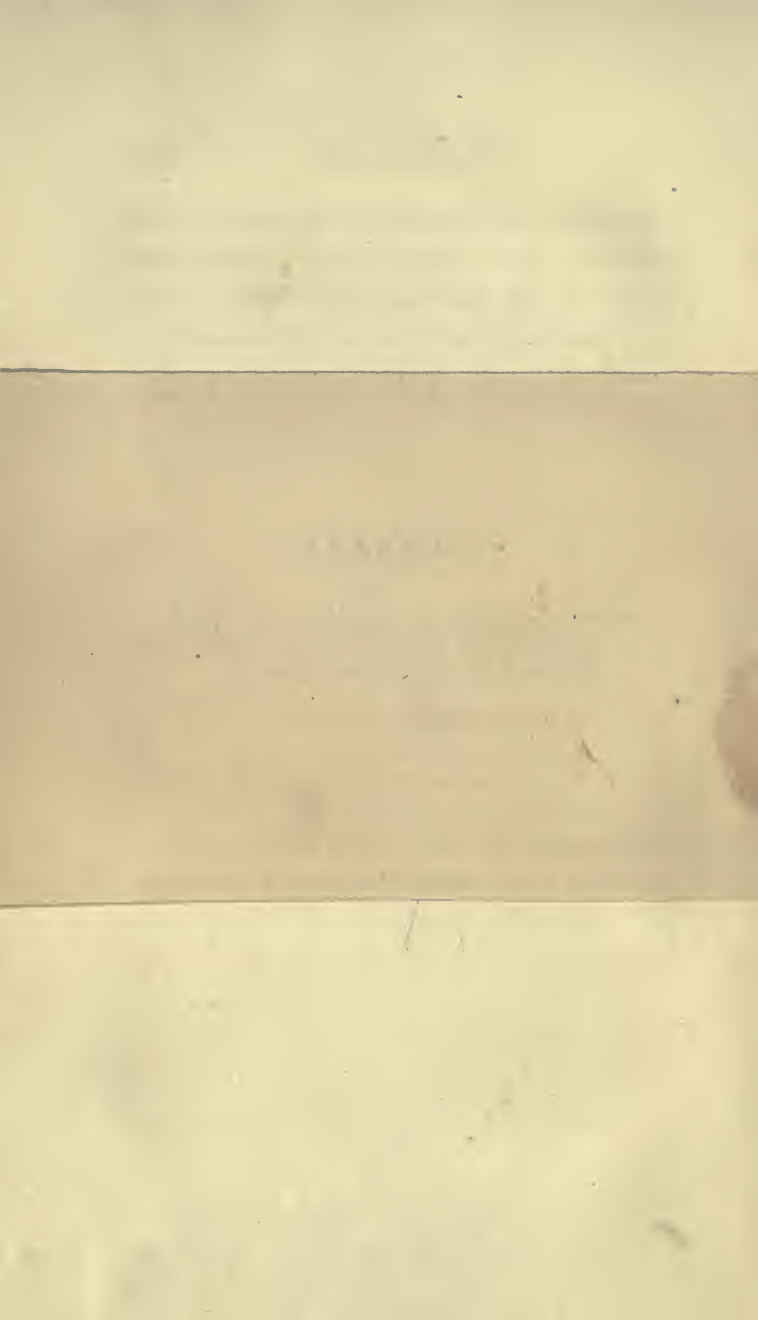
ERRATA.

VOL. I.

- Page 24, line 12, for "No. Pisani," read "No, Pisani!"
— 193, line 2, for "dear calamities" read "drear calamities."
— 265, line 7, for "record" read "records."

corrected by hand.

and flourished. He was a musician of great genius, but not of popular reputation; there was in all his compositions something capricious and fantastic, which did not please the taste of the Dilettanti of Naples. He was fond of unfamiliar subjects, into which he introduced



BOOK THE FIRST.

CHAPTER I.

Vergina era

D'alta beltà, ma sua beltà non cura :

* * * * *

* * * * *

Di natura, d'amor, de 'cieli amici

Le negligenze sue sono artifici.—

GERUSAL. LIB., canto ii. xiv.—xviii.

AT Naples, in the latter half of the last century, a worthy artist, named Gaetano Pisani, lived and flourished. He was a musician of great genius, but not of popular reputation; there was in all his compositions something capricious and fantastic, which did not please the taste of the Dilettanti of Naples. He was fond of unfamiliar subjects, into which he introduced

airs and symphonies that excited a kind of terror in those who listened. The names of his pieces will probably suggest their nature. I find, for instance, among his MSS. these titles, "The Feast of the Harpies," "The Witches at Benevento," "The Descent of Orpheus into Hades," "The Evil Eye," "The Eumenides," and many others that evince a powerful imagination, delighting in the fearful and supernatural, but often relieved, by an airy and delicate fancy, with passages of exquisite grace and beauty. It is true that in the selection of his subjects from ancient fable, Gaetano Pisani was much more faithful than his contemporaries to the remote origin and the early genius of Italian Opera. That descendant, however effeminate, of the antient union between Song and Drama, when, after long obscurity and dethronement, it regained a punier sceptre, though a gaudier purple, by the banks of the Etrurian Arno, or amidst the Lagunes of Venice, had chosen all its primary inspirations from the unfamiliar and classic sources of heathen legend; and Pisani's "Descent of Orpheus"

was but a bolder, darker, and more scientific repetition of the "Euridice" which Jacopi Peri set to music at the august nuptials of Henry of Navarre and Mary of Medicis.* Still, as I have said, the style of the Neapolitan musician was not on the whole pleasing to ears grown nice and euphuistic in the more dulcet melodies of the day; and faults and extravagances easily discernible, and often to appearance wilful, served the critics for an excuse for their distaste. Fortunately, or the poor musician might have starved, he was not only a composer, but also an excellent practical performer, especially on the violin, and by that instrument he earned a decent subsistence as one of the orchestra at the Great Theatre of San Carlo. Here, formal and appointed tasks necessarily kept his eccentric fancies in tolerable check, though it is recorded that no less than five times he had been deposed from his desk

* Orpheus was the favourite hero of early Italian Opera, or Lyrical Drama. The Orfeo of Angelo Politiano was produced 1475. The Orfeo of Monteverde was performed at Venice in 1667.

for having shocked the *conoscènti*, and thrown the whole band into confusion, by impromptu variations of so frantic and startling a nature, that one might well have imagined that the harpies or witches who inspired his compositions had clawed hold of his instrument. The impossibility, however, to find any one of equal excellence as a performer (that is to say, in his more lucid and orderly moments), had forced his reinstatement, and he had now, for the most part, reconciled himself to the narrow sphere of his appointed *adagios* or *allegros*. The audience, too, aware of his propensity, were quick to perceive the least deviation from the text; and if he wandered for a moment, which might also be detected by the eye as well as the ear, in some strange contortion of visage, and some ominous flourish of his bow, a gentle and admonitory murmur recalled the musician from his *Elysium* or his *Tartarus*, to the sober regions of his desk. Then he would start as if from a dream—cast a hurried, frightened, apologetic glance around, and, with a crest-fallen, humbled air, draw his rebellious instrument back to the beaten track of the glib

monotony. But at home, he would make himself amends for this reluctant drudgery. And there, grasping the unhappy violin with ferocious fingers, he would pour forth, often till the morning rose, strange wild measures, that would startle the early fisherman on the shore below with a superstitious awe, and make him cross himself as if mermaid or sprite had wailed no earthly music in his ear.

This man's appearance was in keeping with the characteristics of his art. The features were noble and regular, but worn and haggard, with black, careless locks, tangled into a maze of curls, and a fixed, speculative, dreamy stare in his large and hollow eyes. All his movements were peculiar, sudden, and abrupt, as the impulse seized him; and in gliding through the streets, or along the beach, he was heard laughing and talking to himself. Withal, he was a harmless, guileless, gentle creature, and would share his mite with any idle lazzaroni, whom he often paused to contemplate as they lay lazily basking in the sun. Yet was he thoroughly unsocial. He formed no friends, flattered no patrons, resorted to none of the merry-makings, so dear

to the children of music and the south. He and his art seemed alone suited to each other—both quaint, primitive, unworldly, irregular. You could not separate the man from his music; it was himself. Without it, he was nothing, a mere machine. *With* it, he was king over worlds of his own. Poor man, he had little enough in this!—At a manufacturing town in England there is a gravestone, on which the epitaph records “one Claudius Phillips, whose absolute contempt for riches, and inimitable performance on the violin, made him the admiration of all that knew him!” Logical conjunction of opposite eulogies! In proportion, O Genius, to thy contempt for riches will be thy performance on thy violin!

Gaetano Pisani's talents as a composer had been chiefly exhibited in music appropriate to this his favourite instrument, of all unquestionably the most various and royal in its resources and power over the passions. As Shakspeare among poets, is the Cremona among instruments. Nevertheless, he had composed other pieces, of larger ambition and wider accomplishment, and, chief of these, his precious

—his unpurchased—his unpublished—his unpublishable and imperishable opera of the “Siren.” This great work had been the dream of his boyhood—the mistress of his manhood; in advancing age “it stood beside him like his youth.” Vainly had he struggled to place it before the world. Even bland, unjealous Paisiello, Maestro di Capella, shook his gentle head when the musician favoured him with a specimen of one of his most thrilling scenas. And yet, Paisiello, though that music differs from all Durante taught thee to emulate, there may—but patience, Gaetano Pisani!—bide thy time, and keep thy violin in tune!

Strange as it may appear to the fairer reader, this grotesque personage had yet formed those ties which ordinary mortals are apt to consider their especial monopoly—he was married, and had one child. What is more strange yet, his wife was a daughter of quiet, sober, unfantastic England; she was much younger than himself; she was fair and gentle, with a sweet English face; she had married him from choice, and (will you believe it?) she yet loved him. How

she came to marry him, or how this shy, unsocial, wayward creature ever ventured to propose, I can only explain by asking you to look round and explain first to *me* how half the husbands and half the wives you meet ever found a mate! Yet, on reflection, this union was not so extraordinary after all. The girl was a natural child of parents too noble ever to own and claim her. She was brought into Italy to learn the art by which she was to live, for she had taste and voice; she was a dependent, and harshly treated, and poor Pisani was her master, and his voice the only one she had heard from her cradle, that seemed without one tone that could scorn or chide. And so—well, is the rest natural? Natural or not,—they married. This young wife loved her husband; and, young and gentle as she was, she might almost be said to be the protector of the two. From how many disgraces with the despots of San Carlo and the Conservatorio had her unknown officious mediation saved him! In how many ailments—for his frame was weak—had she nursed and tended him! Often, in the dark nights, she would

wait at the theatre, with her lanthorn to light him, and her steady arm to lean on ;—otherwise, in his abstract reveries, who knows but the musician would have walked, after his “ Siren,” into the sea ! And then she would so patiently, perhaps (for in true love there is not always the finest taste,) so *delightedly* listen to those storms of eccentric and fitful melody, and steal him—whispering praises all the way—from the unwholesome nightwatch to rest and sleep ! I said his music was a part of the man, and this gentle creature seemed a part of the music ; it was, in fact, when she sate beside him that whatever was tender or fairy-like in his motley fantasia crept into the harmony as by stealth. Doubtless her presence acted on the music, and shaped and softened it ; but he, who never examined how or what his inspiration, knew it not. All that he knew was, that he loved and blessed her. He fancied he told her so twenty times a day ; but he never did, for he was not of many words, even to his wife. His language was his music, as hers—her cares ! He was more communicative to his *barbiton*, as the learned Mer-

sennus teaches us to call all the varieties of the great viol family. Certainly barbiton sounds better than fiddle; and barbiton let it be. He would talk to *that* by the hour together—praise it—scold it—coax it, nay, (for such is man, even the most guileless;) he had been known to swear at it; but for that excess he was always penitentially remorseful. And the barbiton had a tongue of his own, could take his own part, and when *he* also scolded, had much the best of it. He was a noble fellow, this Violin! a Tyrolese, the handiwork of the illustrious Steiner. There was something mysterious in his great age. How many hands, now dust, had awakened his strings ere he became the Robin Goodfellow and Familiar of Gaetano Pisani! His very case was venerable;—beautifully painted, it was said, by Caracci. An English collector had offered more for the case than Pisani had ever made by the violin. But Pisani, who cared not if he had inhabited a cabin himself, was proud of a palace for the barbiton:—His barbiton, it was his elder child! He had another child, and now we must turn to her.

How shall I describe thee, Viola? Certainly the music had something to answer for in the advent of that young stranger. For both in her form and her character you might have traced a family likeness to that singular and spirit-like life of sound which night after night threw itself in airy and goblin sport over the starry seas . . . Beautiful she was, but of a very uncommon beauty—a combination, a harmony of opposite attributes. Her hair of a gold richer and purer than that which is seen even in the North; but the eyes, of all the dark, tender, subduing light of more than Italian—almost of Oriental—splendour. The complexion exquisitely fair, but never the same—vivid in one moment, pale the next. And with the complexion, the expression also varied; nothing now so sad, and nothing now so joyous.

I grieve to say that what we rightly entitle education was much neglected for their daughter by this singular pair. To be sure, neither of them had much knowledge to bestow, and knowledge was not then the fashion, as it is now. But accident or nature favoured young

Viola. She learned, as of course, her mother's language with her father's. And she contrived soon to read and to write: and her mother, who, by the way, was Catholic, taught her betimes to pray. But then, to counteract all these acquisitions, the strange habits of Pisani, and the incessant watch and care which he required from his wife, often left the child alone with an old nurse, who, to be sure, loved her dearly, but who was in no way calculated to instruct her. Dame Gionetta was every inch Italian and Neapolitan. Her youth had been all love, and her age was all superstition. She was garrulous, fond—a gossip. Now she would prattle to the girl of cavaliers and princes at her feet, and now she would freeze her blood with tales and legends, perhaps as old as Greek or Etrurian fable—of demon and vampire—of the dances round the great walnut tree at Benevento, and the haunting spell of the Evil Eye. All this helped silently to weave charmed webs over Viola's imagination, that afterthought and later years might labour vainly to dispel. And all this especially fitted her to hang, with

a fearful joy, upon her father's music. Those visionary strains, ever struggling to translate into wild and broken sounds the language of unearthly beings, were round her from her birth. Thus you might have said that her whole mind was full of music—associations, memories, sensations of pleasure or pain, all were mixed up inexplicably with those sounds that now delighted, and now terrified—that greeted her when her eyes opened to the sun, and woke her trembling on her lonely couch in the darkness of the night. The legends and tales of Gionetta only served to make the child better understand the signification of those mysterious tones; they furnished her with words to the music. It was natural that the daughter of such a parent should soon evince some taste in his art. But this developed itself chiefly in the ear and the voice. She was yet a child when she sang divinely. A great Cardinal,—great alike in the State and the Conservatorio, heard of her gifts, and sent for her. From that moment her fate was decided: she was to be the future glory of Naples, the prima donna of San Carlo. The

Cardinal insisted upon the accomplishment of his own predictions, and provided her with the most renowned masters. To inspire her with emulation, his Eminence took her one evening to his own box: it would be something to see the performance, something more to hear the applause lavished upon the glittering signoras she was hereafter to excel! Oh how gloriously that Life of the Stage—that fairy World of Music and Song, dawned upon her. It was the only world that seemed to correspond with her strange childish thoughts. It appeared to her as if, cast hitherto on a foreign shore, she was brought at last to see the forms and hear the language of her native land. Beautiful and true enthusiasm, rich with the promise of genius! Boy or man, thou wilt never be a poet, if thou hast not felt the ideal, the romance, the Calypso's isle that opened to thee, when, for the first time, the magic curtain was drawn aside, and let in the World of Poetry on the World of Prose!

And now the initiation was begun. She was to read, to study, to depict by a gesture, a look, the passions she was to delineate on the boards;

lessons dangerous, in truth, to some, but not to the pure enthusiasm that comes from Art ; for the mind that rightly conceives Art, is but a mirror, which gives back what is cast on its surface faithfully only—while unsullied. She seized on nature and truth intuitively. Her recitations became full of unconscious power ; her voice moved the heart to tears, or warmed it into generous rage. But this arose from that sympathy which genius ever has, even in its earliest innocence, with whatever feels, or aspires, or suffers. It was no premature woman comprehending the love or the jealousy that the words expressed ; her art was one of those strange secrets which the psychologists may unriddle to us if they please, and tell us why children of the simplest minds and the purest hearts are often so acute to distinguish, in the tales you tell them, or the songs you sing, the difference between the True Art and the False—Passion and Jargon—Homer and Racine ;—echoing back, from hearts that have not yet felt what they repeat, the melodious accents of the natural pathos. Apart from her studies, Viola

was a simple, affectionate, but somewhat wayward child; wayward, not in temper, for that was sweet and docile, but in her moods, which, as I before hinted, changed from sad to gay and gay to sad without an apparent cause. If cause there were, it must be traced to the early and mysterious influences I have referred to, when seeking to explain the effect produced on her imagination by those restless streams of sound that constantly played around it: for it is noticeable, that to those who are much alive to the effects of music, airs and tunes often come back, in the commonest pursuits of life, to vex, as it were, and haunt them. The music, once admitted to the soul, becomes also a sort of spirit, and never dies. It wanders perturbedly through the halls and galleries of the memory, and is often heard again, distinct and living as when it first displaced the wavelets of the air. Now at times, then, these phantoms of sound floated back upon her fancy; if gay, to call a smile from every dimple; if mournful, to throw a shade upon her brow—to make her cease from her childish mirth, and sit apart and muse.

Rightly, then, in a typical sense, might this fair creature, so airy in her shape, so harmonious in her beauty, so unfamiliar in her ways and thoughts,—rightly might she be called a daughter, less of the Musician than the Music—a being for whom you could imagine that some fate was reserved, less of actual life than the romance which, to eyes that can see, and hearts that can feel, glides ever along *with* the actual life, stream by stream, to the Dark Ocean.

And therefore it seemed not strange that Viola herself, even in childhood, and yet more as she bloomed into the sweet seriousness of virgin youth, should fancy her life ordained for a lot, whether of bliss or woe, that should accord with the romance and reverie which made the atmosphere she breathed. Frequently she would climb through the thickets that clothed the neighbouring grotto of Posilipo — the mighty work of the old Cimmerians, — and, seated by the haunted Tomb of Virgil, indulge those visions, the subtle vagueness of which no poetry can render palpable and defined:—for the Poet that surpasses all who ever sung—is the

Heart of dreaming Youth! Frequently there, too, beside the threshold over which the vine-leaves clung, and facing that dark-blue, waveless sea, she would sit in the autumn noon or summer twilight, and build her castles in the air. Who doth not do the same—not in youth alone, but with the dimmed hopes of age? It is man's prerogative to dream, the common royalty of peasant and of king. But those day-dreams of hers were more habitual, distinct, and solemn, than the greater part of us indulge. They seemed, like the Orama of the Greeks—prophets while phantasma.

CHAPTER II.

Fu stupor, fu vaghezza, fu diletto!

GERUSAL. LIB., cant. ii. xxi.

Now at last the education is accomplished! Viola is nearly sixteen. The Cardinal declares that the time is come when the new name must be inscribed in the Libro d'Oro—the Golden Book set apart to the children of Art and Song. Yes, but in what character?—to whose genius is she to give embodiment and form? Ah, there is the secret! Rumours go abroad that the inexhaustible Paisiello, charmed with her performance of his “Nel cor più non me sento,” and his “Io son Lindoro,” will produce

some new masterpiece to introduce the debutante. Others insist upon it that her forte is the comic, and that Cimarosa is hard at work at another "Matrimonio Segreto." But in the meanwhile there is a check in the diplomacy somewhere. The Cardinal is observed to be out of humour. He has said publicly—and the words are portentous—"The silly girl is as mad as her father—what she asks is preposterous!" Conference follows conference—the Cardinal talks to the poor child very solemnly in his closet—all in vain. Naples is distracted with curiosity and conjecture. The lecture ends in a quarrel, and Viola comes home sullen and pouting: she will not act—she has renounced the engagement.

Pisani, too inexperienced to be aware of all the dangers of the stage, had been pleased at the notion that one, at least, of his name, would add celebrity to his art. The girl's perverseness displeased him. However, he said nothing—he never scolded in words, but he took up the faithful barbiton. Oh, faithful barbiton, how horribly thou didst scold! It

screeched—it gabbled—it moaned—it growled. And Viola's eyes filled with tears, for she understood that language. She stole to her mother, and whispered in her ear; and when Pisani turned from his employment, lo! both mother and daughter were weeping. He looked at them with a wondering stare; and then, as if he felt he had been harsh, he flew again to his Familiar. And now you thought you heard the lullaby a fairy might sing to some fretful changeling it had adopted and sought to soothe. Liquid, low, silvery, streamed the tones beneath the enchanted bow. The most stubborn grief would have paused to hear; and withal, at times, out came a wild, merry, ringing note, like a laugh, but not mortal laughter. It was one of his most successful airs from his beloved opera—the Siren in the act of charming the waves and the winds to sleep. Heaven knows what next would have come, but his arm was arrested. Viola had thrown herself on his breast, and kissed him, with happy eyes that smiled through her sunny hair. At that very moment the door opened—a message from the Cardinal.

Viola must go to his Eminence at once. Her mother went with her. All was reconciled and settled; Viola had her way, and selected her own opera. O ye dull nations of the North, with your broils and debates—your bustling lives of the Pnyx and the Agora!—you cannot guess what a stir throughout musical Naples was occasioned by the rumour of a new opera and a new singer. But whose the opera? No cabinet intrigue ever was so secret. Pisani came back one night from the theatre, evidently disturbed and irate. Woe to thine ears hadst thou heard the barbiton that night! They had suspended him from his office—they feared that the new opera, and the first debut of his daughter as prima donna, would be too much for his nerves. And his variations, his diablerie of sirens and harpies, on such a night, made a hazard not to be contemplated without awe. To be set aside, and on the very night that his child, whose melody was but an emanation of his own, was to perform—set aside for some new rival—it was too much for a musician's flesh and blood. For the first time he spoke

in words upon the subject, and gravely asked—for that question the barbiton, eloquent as it was, could not express distinctly—what was to be the opera, and what the part? And Viola as gravely answered that she was pledged to the Cardinal not to reveal. Pisani said nothing, but disappeared with the violin, and presently they heard the Familiar from the housetop, (whither, when thoroughly out of humour, the Musician sometimes fled,) whining and sighing as if its heart were broken.

The affections of Pisani were little visible on the surface. He was not one of those fond, caressing fathers whose children are ever playing round their knees; his mind and soul were so thoroughly in his art, that domestic life glided by him, seemingly as if *that* were a dream, and the art the substantial form and body of existence. Persons much cultivating an abstract study are often thus; mathematicians proverbially so. When his servant ran to the celebrated French philosopher, shrieking, “The house is on fire, sir!” “Go and tell my wife then, fool!” said the wise man, settling back to

his problems ; “ do *I* ever meddle with domestic affairs ? ” But what are mathematics to music, —music, that not only composes operas, but plays on the barbiton ? Do you know what the illustrious Giardini said when the tyro asked how long it would take to learn to play on the violin ? Hear, and despair, ye who would bend the bow to which that of Ulysses was a play-thing—“ Twelve hours a-day, for twenty years together ! ” Can a man, then, who plays the barbiton be always playing also with his little ones ? No, Pisani ! Often, with the keen susceptibility of childhood, poor Viola had stolen from the room to weep at the thought that thou didst not love her. And yet, underneath this outward abstraction of the artist, the natural fondness flowed all the same ; and as she grew up, the dreamer had understood the dreamer. And now, shut out from all fame himself—to be forbidden to hail even his daughter’s fame !—and that daughter herself to be in the conspiracy against him ! Sharper than the serpent’s tooth was the ingratitude, and sharper than the serpent’s tooth was the wail of the pitying barbiton !

The eventful hour is come. Viola is gone to the theatre—her mother with her. The indignant musician remains at home. Gionetta bursts into the room—My Lord Cardinal's carriage is at the door—the Padrone is sent for. He must lay aside his violin—he must put on his brocade coat and his lace ruffles. Here they are—quick, quick! And quick rolls the gilded coach, and majestic sits the driver, and stately prance the steeds. Poor Pisani is lost in a mist of uncomfortable amaze. He arrives at the theatre—he descends at the great door—he turns round and round, and looks about him and about—he misses something—Where is the violin? Alas! his soul, his voice, his self of self, is left behind! It is but an automaton that the lackeys conduct up the stairs, through the tier, into the Cardinal's box. But then, what bursts upon him!—Does he dream? The first act is over, (they did not send for him till success seemed no longer doubtful,) the first act has decided all. He feels *that*, by the electric sympathy which every the one heart has at once with a vast audience. He feels it by the breath-

less stillness of that multitude—he feels it even by the lifted finger of the Cardinal. He sees his Viola on the stage, radiant in her robes and gems—he hears her voice thrilling through the single heart of the thousands! But the scene—the part—the music! It is his other child—his immortal child—the spirit-infant of his soul—his darling of many years of patient obscurity and pining genius—his masterpiece—his opera of the Siren!

This, then, was the mystery that had so galled him—this the cause of the quarrel with the Cardinal—this the secret not to be proclaimed till the success was won, and the daughter had united her father's triumph with her own!

And there she stands, as all souls bow before her—fairer than the very Siren he had called from the deeps of melody. Oh! long and sweet recompense of toil! Where is on earth the rapture like that which is known to genius when at last it bursts from its hidden cavern into light and fame!

He did not speak—he did not move—he stood transfixed, breathless—the tears rolling down

his cheeks: only from time to time his hands still wandered about—mechanically they sought for the faithful instrument—why was it not there to share his triumph?

At last the curtain fell; but on such a storm—and diapason of applause! Uprose the audience as one man—as with one voice that dear name was shouted. She came on—trembling, pale—and in the whole crowd saw but her father's face. The audience followed those moistened eyes—they recognised with a thrill the daughter's impulse and her meaning. The good old Cardinal drew him gently forward—Wild musician! thy daughter has given thee back more than the life thou gavest!

“My poor violin!” said he, wiping his eyes—
“they will never hiss thee again now!”

CHAPTER III.

“ Fra sì contrarie tempore in ghiaccio e in foco,
 In riso e in pianto, e fra paura e spene
 L' ingannatrice Donna—”

GERUSAL. LIB. cant. iv. xciv.

Now, notwithstanding the triumph both of the singer and the opera, there had been one moment in the first act, and, consequently, *before* the arrival of Pisani, when the scale seemed more than doubtful. It was in a chorus replete with all the peculiarities of the composer. And when this Maelstrom of Capricci whirled and foamed, and tore ear and sense through every variety of sound, the audience simultaneously recognised the hand of Pisani. A title had been given to the opera, which had hitherto prevented

all suspicion of its parentage ; and the overture and opening, in which the music had been regular and sweet, had led the audience to fancy they detected the genius of their favourite Paisiello. Long accustomed to ridicule and almost to despise the pretensions of Pisani as a composer, they now felt as if they had been unduly cheated into the applause with which they had hailed the overture and the commencing scenes. An ominous buzz circulated round the house ;—the singers, the orchestra—electrically sensitive to the impression of the audience—grew, themselves, agitated and dismayed, and failed in the energy and precision which could alone carry off the grotesqueness of the music.

There are always in every theatre many rivals to a new author, and a new performer—a party impotent while all goes well—but a dangerous ambush the instant some accident throws into confusion the march to success. A hiss arose ; it was partial, it is true, but the significant silence of all applause seemed to forebode the coming moment when the displeasure would grow contagious. It was the breath that stirred the

impending avalanche. At that critical moment—Viola, the Siren queen, emerged for the first time from her ocean cave. As she came forward to the lamps, the novelty of her situation, the chilling apathy of the audience—which even the sight of so singular a beauty, did not at the first arouse—the whispers of the malignant singers on the stage, the glare of the lights, and more—far more than the rest—that recent hiss, which had reached her in her concealment, all froze up her faculties and suspended her voice. And instead of the grand invocation into which she ought rapidly to have burst, the regal Siren, retransformed into the trembling girl, stood pale and mute before the stern cold array of those countless eyes.

At that instant, and when consciousness itself seemed about to fail her—as she turned a timid beseeching glance around the still multitude—she perceived, in a box near the stage, a countenance which at once, and like magic, produced on her mind an effect never to be analyzed or forgotten. It was one that awakened an indistinct haunting reminiscence, as if she had seen it

in those day dreams she had been so wont from infancy to indulge. She could not withdraw her gaze from that face, and as she gazed, the awe and coldness that had before seized her, vanished, like a mist from before the sun.

In the dark splendour of the eyes that met her own there was indeed so much of gentle encouragement, of benign and compassionate admiration ; so much that warmed, and animated, and nerved ; that any one—actor or orator—who has ever observed the effect that a single, earnest, and kindly look, in the crowd that is to be addressed and won, will produce upon his mind, may readily account for the sudden and inspiring influence the eye and smile of the stranger exercised on the debutante.

And while yet she gazed, and the glow returned to her heart, the stranger half rose, as if to recal the audience to a sense of the courtesy due to one so fair and young ; and the instant his voice gave the signal, the audience followed it by a burst of generous applause. For this stranger himself was a marked personage, and his

recent arrival at Naples, had divided with the new opera the gossip of the city. And then, as the applause ceased—clear, full, and freed from every fetter—like a spirit from the clay—the Siren's voice poured forth its entrancing music. From that time Viola forgot the crowd, the hazard, the whole world—except the fairy one over which she presided. It seemed that the stranger's presence only served still more to heighten that delusion, in which the artist sees no creation without the circle of his art; she felt as if that serene brow, and those brilliant eyes, inspired her with powers never known before: and, as if searching for a language to express the strange sensations occasioned by his presence, that presence itself whispered to her the melody and the song.

Only when all was over, and she saw her father and felt his joy, did this wild spell vanish before the sweeter one of the household and filial love. Yet again, as she turned from the stage, she looked back involuntarily, and the stranger's calm and half melancholy smile sunk into her heart—to live there—to be recalled

with confused memories, half of pleasure and half of pain.

Pass over the congratulations of the good Cardinal-Virtuoso, astonished at finding himself and all Naples had been hitherto in the wrong on a subject of taste, — still more astonished at finding himself and all Naples combining to confess it; pass over the whispered ecstasies of admiration which buzzed in the singer's ear, as once more, in her modest veil and quiet dress, she escaped from the crowd of gallants that choked up every avenue behind the scenes; pass over the sweet embrace of father and child, returning through the starlit streets and along the deserted Chiaja in the Cardinal's carriage; never pause now to note the tears and ejaculations of the good, simple-hearted mother . . . see them returned—see the well-known room, *venimus ad larem nostrum*—see old Gionetta bustling at the supper; and hear Pisani, as he rouses the barbiton from its case, communicating all that has happened to the intelligent Familiar; hark to the mother's merry low English laugh,—Why, Viola, strange child,

sittest thou apart, thy face leaning on thy fair hands, thine eyes fixed on space? Up, rouse thee! Every dimple on the cheek of home must smile to-night.*

And a happy re-union it was round that humble table; a feast Lucullus might have envied in his Hall of Apollo, in the dried grapes and the dainty sardines, and the luxurious polenta, and the old *lácroma*, a present from the good Cardinal. The barbiton, placed on a chair—a tall, high-backed chair—beside the musician, seemed to take a part in the festive meal. Its honest varnished face glowed in the light of the lamp; and there was an impish, sly demureness in its very silence, as its master, between every mouthful, turned to talk to it of something he had forgotten to relate before. The good wife looked affectionately on, and could not eat for joy; but suddenly she rose, and placed on the artist's temples a laurel wreath, which she had woven beforehand in fond anticipation; and

* “*Ridete quidquid est Domi cachinnorum.*”

CATULL. ad Sirm. Penin.

Viola, on the other side her brother, the barbiton, re-arranged the chaplet, and smoothing back her father's hair, whispered, "Caro Padre, you will not let *him* scold me again!"

Then poor Pisani, rather distracted between the two, and excited both by the *lacrima* and his triumph, turned to the younger child with so naive and grotesque a pride, "I don't know which to thank the most. You give me so much joy, child,—I am so proud of thee and myself. But he and I, poor fellow, have been so often unhappy together!"

Viola's sleep was broken; that was natural. The intoxication of vanity and triumph, the happiness in the happiness she had caused, all this was better than sleep. But still from all this, again and again her thoughts flew to those haunting eyes, to that smile, with which for ever the memory of the triumph, of the happiness, was to be united. Her feelings, like her own character, were strange and peculiar. They were not those of a girl whose heart, for the first time reached through the eye, sighs its natural and native language of first love. It

was not so much admiration, though the face that reflected itself on every wave of her restless fancies was of the rarest order of majesty and beauty; nor a pleased and enamoured recollection that the sight of this stranger had bequeathed; it was a human sentiment of gratitude and delight, mixed with something more mysterious, of fear and awe. Certainly she had seen before those features; but when and how? only when her thoughts had sought to shape out her future, and when in spite of all the attempts to vision forth a fate of flowers and sunshine, a dark and chill foreboding made her recoil back into her deepest self. It was a something found that had long been sought for by a thousand restless yearnings and vague desires, less of the heart than mind; not as when youth discovers the one to be beloved, but rather, as when the student, long wandering after the clue to some truth in science, sees it glimmer dimly before him, to beckon, to recede, to allure, and to wane again. She fell at last into unquiet slumber, vexed by deformed, fleeting, shapeless phantoms; and,

waking, as the sun, through a veil of hazy cloud, glinted with a sickly ray across the casement, she heard her father settled back betimes to his one pursuit, and calling forth from his Familiar, a low mournful strain, like a dirge over the dead.

“And why,” she asked, when she descended to the room below,—“Why, my father, was your inspiration so sad, after the joy of last night?”—“I know not, child. I meant to be merry, and compose an air in honour of thee, but he is an obstinate fellow, this—and he would have it so.”

CHAPTER IV.

E così i pigri e timidi desiri

Sprona.

GERUSAL. LIB. cant. iv. lxxxviii.

IT was the custom of Pisani, except when the duties of his profession made special demand on his time, to devote a certain portion of the mid-day to sleep; a habit not so much a luxury as a necessity, to a man who slept very little during the night. In fact, whether to compose or to practise, the hours of noon were precisely those in which Pisani could not have been active if he would. His genius resembled those fountains full at dawn and evening, overflowing at night, and perfectly dry at the meridian. During this time, consecrated by her husband to repose, the Signora generally stole out to

make the purchases necessary for the little household, or to enjoy, as what woman does not, a little relaxation in gossip with some of her own sex. And the day following this brilliant triumph, how many congratulations would she have to receive.

At these times it was Viola's habit to seat herself without the door of the house, under an awning which sheltered from the sun, without obstructing the view; and there now, with the prompt-book on her knee, on which her eye roves listlessly from time to time, you may behold her, the vine leaves clustering, from their arching trellis over the door behind, and the lazy white-sailed boats skimming along the sea that stretched before.

As she thus sat, rather in reverie than thought, a man coming from the direction of Posilipo, with a slow step and downcast eyes, passed close by the house, and Viola looking up abruptly, started in a kind of terror as she recognised the stranger. She uttered an involuntary exclamation, and the cavalier turning, saw, and paused.

He stood a moment or two between her and the sunlit ocean, contemplating in a silence too serious and gentle for the boldness of gallantry, the blushing face and the young slight form before him : at length he spoke.

“Are you happy, my child,” he said, in almost a paternal tone, “at the career that lies before you? From sixteen to thirty, the music in the breath of applause is sweeter than all the music your voice can utter!”

“I know not;” replied Viola, falteringly, but encouraged by the liquid softness of the accents that addressed her—“I know not whether I am happy now, but I was, last night. And I feel, too, Excellency, that I have you to thank, though, perhaps, you scarce know why!”

“You deceive yourself,” said the cavalier, with a smile. “I am aware that I assisted to your merited success, and it is you who scarce know how. The *why* I will tell you: because I saw in your heart a nobler ambition than that of the woman’s vanity; it was the daughter that interested me. Perhaps you would rather I should have admired the singer!”

“No; oh, no!”

“Well, I believe you. And now, since we have thus met, I will pause to counsel you. When next you go to the theatre, you will have at your feet all the young gallantry of Naples. Poor infant! the flame that dazzles the eye can scorch the wing. Remember that the only homage that does not sully, must be that which these gallants will not give thee. And whatever thy dreams of the future—and I see, while I speak to thee, how wandering they are, and wild—may only those be fulfilled which centre round the hearth of home.”

He paused, as Viola's breast heaved beneath its robe. And with a burst of natural and innocent emotions, scarcely comprehending, though an Italian, the grave nature of his advice, she exclaimed—

“Ah, Excellency, you cannot know how dear to me that home is already. And my father—there would be no home, Signor, without him!”

A deep and melancholy shade settled over the face of the Cavalier. He looked up at the

quiet house buried amidst the vine-leaves, and turned again to the vivid, animated face, of the young actress.

“It is well,” said he. “A simple heart may be its own best guide, and so, go on, and prosper. Adieu, fair singer.”

“Adieu, Excellency; but,” and something she could not resist—an anxious, sickening feeling of fear and hope—impelled her to the question, “I shall see you again, shall I not, at San Carlo?”

“Not, at least, for some time. I leave Naples to-day.”

“Indeed;” and Viola’s heart sunk within her: the poetry of the stage was gone.

“And,” said the Cavalier, turning back, and gently laying his hand on hers—“And perhaps before we meet, you may have suffered;—known the first sharp griefs of human life;—known how little what fame can gain, repays what the heart can lose; but be brave, and yield not—not even to what may seem the piety of sorrow. Observe yon tree in your neighbour’s garden. Look how it grows up, crooked and distorted. Some wind scattered the germ, from which it

sprung, in the clefts of the rock ; choked up and walled round by crags and buildings, by nature and man, its life has been one struggle for the light ;—light which makes to that life, the necessity and the principle : you see how it has writhed and twisted—how, meeting the barrier in one spot, it has laboured, and worked, stem and branches, towards the clear skies at last. What has preserved it through each disfavour of birth and circumstances — why are its leaves as green and fair as those of the vine behind you, which, with all its arms, can embrace the open sunshine ? My child, because of the very instinct that impelled the struggle—because the labour for the light, won to the light at length. So with a gallant heart, through every adverse accident, of sorrow, and of fate, to turn to the sun, to strive for the heaven ; this it is that gives knowledge to the strong, and happiness to the weak. Ere we meet again, you will turn sad and heavy eyes to those quiet boughs, and when you hear the birds sing from them, and see the sunshine come aslant from crag and housetop to be the playfellow of their

leaves, learn the lesson that Nature teaches you, and strive through darkness to the light !”

As he spoke, he moved on slowly, and left Viola wondering — silent — saddened with his dim prophecy of coming evil, and yet, through sadness, charmed. Involuntarily her eyes followed him — involuntarily she stretched forth her arms, as if by a gesture to call him back ; she would have given worlds to have seen him turn—to have heard once more his low, calm, silvery voice,—to have felt again the light touch of his hand on hers. As moonlight that softens into beauty every angle on which it falls, seemed his presence,—as moonlight vanishes, and things assume their common aspect of the rugged and the mean—he receded from her eyes, — and the outward scene was commonplace once more.

The stranger passed on, through that long and lovely road which reaches at last the palaces that face the public gardens, and conducts to the more populous quarters of the city.

A group of young dissipated courtiers, loitering by the gateway of a house which was open for the favourite pastime of the day—the resort

of the wealthier and more high-born gamesters—made way for him, as with a courteous inclination he passed by them.

“*Per fede,*” said one, “is not that the rich Zanoni, of whom the town talks?”

“Ay—they say his wealth is incalculable!”—

“*They* say—who are *they*?—what is the authority? He has not been so many days at Naples, and I cannot yet find any one who knows aught of his birth-place, his parentage, or, what is more important, his estates!”—

“That is true; but he arrived in a goodly vessel, which *they say* is his own. See—no, you cannot see it here,—but it rides yonder in the Bay. The banker he deals with, speaks with awe of the sums placed in his hands.”

“Whence came he?”—

“From some sea-port in the East. My valet learned from some of the sailors on the Mole that he had resided many years in the interior of India.”

“Ah, I am told men pick up gold there like pebbles, and there are vallies where the birds build their nests with emeralds to attract the

moths. Here comes our prince of gamesters, Cetoxa; be sure that he already must have made acquaintance with so wealthy a cavalier; he has that attraction to gold which the magnet has to steel. Well, Cetoxa, what fresh news of the ducats of Signor Zanoni?"

"Oh," said Cetoxa, carelessly, "my friend"—

"Ha! ha! hear him!—his friend"—

"Yes; my friend Zanoni is going to Rome for a short time; when he returns he has promised me to fix a day to sup with me, and I will then introduce him to you, and to the best society of Naples. Diavolo! but he is a most agreeable and witty gentleman!"

"Pray tell us how you came so suddenly to be his friend."

"My dear Belgioso, nothing more natural. He desired a box at San Carlo; but I need not tell you that the expectation of a new opera (ah, how superb it is,—that poor devil, Pisani!—who would have thought it?) and a new singer—(what a face—what a voice!—ah!) had engaged every corner of the house. I heard of Zanoni's desire to honour the talent of Naples, and, with

my usual courtesy to distinguished strangers, I sent to place my box at his disposal. He accepts it,—I wait on him between the acts,—he is most charming,—he invites me to supper.—Cospetto, what a retinue! We sit late,—I tell him all the news of Naples,—we grow bosom friends,—he presses on me this diamond before we part,—it is a trifle, he tells me,—the jewellers value it at 5000 pistoles!—the merriest evening I have passed these ten years!”

The cavaliers crowded round to admire the diamond.

“Signor Count Cetoxa,” said one grave-looking sombre man, who had crossed himself two or three times during the Neapolitan’s narrative. “Are you not aware of the strange reports about this person; and are you not afraid to receive from him a gift, which may carry with it the most fatal consequences. Do you not know that he is said to be a sorcerer—to possess the mal-occhio—to—”

“Prithee, spare us your antiquated superstitions,” interrupted Cetoxa, contemptuously. “They are out of fashion, nothing now goes down but scepticism and philosophy. And

what, after all, do these rumours, when sifted, amount to. They have no origin but this—a silly old man of eighty-six, quite in his dotage, solemnly avers that he saw this same Zanoni seventy years ago—(he himself, the narrator, then a mere boy)—at Milan. When this very Zanoni, as you all see, is at least as young as you or I, Belgioso.”

“But that,” said the grave gentleman, “*that* is the mystery. Old Avelli declares that Zanoni does not seem a day older than when they met at Milan. He says that even then, at Milan—mark this—where, though under another name, this Zanoni appeared in the same splendour, he was attended also by the same mystery. And that an old man *there*, remembered to have seen him sixty years before, in Sweden.”

“Tush,” returned Cetoxa, “the same thing has been said of the quack Cagliostro—mere fables. I will believe them when I see this diamond turn to a wisp of hay. For the rest (he added gravely) I consider this illustrious gentleman my friend; and a whisper against his honour and repute will, in future, be equivalent to an affront to myself.”

Cetoxa was a ~~und~~doubted swordsman, and excelled in a peculiarly awkward manœuvre, which he himself had added to the variations of the stoccata. The grave gentleman, however anxious for the spiritual weal of the Count, had an equal regard for his own corporeal safety. He contented himself with a look of compassion, and, turning through the gateway, ascended the stairs to the gaming-tables.

“Ha, ha!” said Cetoxa, laughing, “our good Loredano is envious of my diamond. Gentlemen, you sup with me to-night. I assure you I never met a more delightful, sociable, entertaining person—than my dear friend, the Signor Zanoni.”

CHAPTER V.

“ Quello Ippogifo, grande e strano augello
Lo porta via.”

ORL. FUR. c. vi. xviii.

AND now, accompanying this mysterious Zanoni, am I compelled to bid a short farewell to Naples. Mount behind me—mount on my hippogriff, reader—settle yourself at your ease. I bought the pillion the other day of a poet who loves his comfort; it has been newly stuffed for your special accommodation. So, so, we ascend! Look as we ride aloft—look!—never fear, hippogriffs never stumble; and every hippogriff in Italy is warranted to carry elderly gentlemen—look down on the gliding landscapes! There, near the ruins of the Oscan's old

Atella, rises Aversa, once the strong hold of the Norman; there gleam the columns of Capua, above the Vulturian Stream. Hail to ye, corn-fields and vineyards famous for the old Falernian! Hail to ye, golden orange groves of Mola di Gaeta! Hail to ye, sweet shrubs and wild flowers, *omnis copia narium*, that clothe the mountain skirts of the silent Lautulæ! Shall we rest at the Volscian Anxur—the modern Terracina—where the lofty rock stands like the giant that guards the last borders of the southern land of Love? Away, away! and hold your breath as we flit above the Pontine Marshes. Dreary and desolate, their miasma is to the gardens we have passed what the rank commonplace of life is to the heart when it has left love behind. *Mournful Campagna, thou openest on us in majestic sadness. Rome, seven-hilled Rome! receive us as Memory receives the wayworn; receive us in silence, amidst ruins! Where is the traveller we pursue? Turn the hippogriff loose to graze; he loves the acanthus that wreathes round yon broken columns. Yes, that is the Arch of Titus, the conqueror of Jeru-

saalem, — that the Colosseum! Through one passed the triumph of the deified invader — in one fell the butchered gladiators. Monuments of murder, how poor the thoughts, how mean the memories ye awaken, compared with those that speak to the heart of man on the heights of Phyle, or by thy lone mound, grey Marathon! We stand amidst weeds, and brambles, and long, waving herbage. Where we stand reigned Nero—here were his tessellated floors; here “mighty in the Heaven, a second Heaven,” hung the vault of his ivory roofs—here, arch upon arch, pillar on pillar, glittered to the world the golden palace of its master—the Golden House of Nero. How the lizard watches us with his bright timorous eye! We disturb his reign. Gather that wild flower: the Golden House is vanished—but the wild flower may have kin to those which the stranger’s hand scattered over the tyrant’s grave;—see, over this soil, the grave of Rome, Nature strews the wild flowers still!

In the midst of this desolation is an old building, of the middle ages. Here dwells a sin-

gular Recluse. In the season of the malaria, the native peasant flies the rank vegetation round; but he, a stranger and a foreigner, breathes in safety the pestilential air. He has no friends, no associates, no companions, except books and instruments of science. He is often seen wandering over the grass-grown hills, or sauntering through the streets of the new city, not with the absent brow and incurious air of students, but with observant, piercing eyes, that seem to dive into the hearts of the passers by. An old man; but not infirm—erect and stately, as if in his prime. None know whether he be rich or poor. He asks no charity, and he gives none—he does no evil, and seems to confer no good. He is a man who appears to have no world beyond himself; but appearances are deceitful; and Science, as well as Benevolence, lives in the Universe. This abode, for the first time since thus occupied, a visitor enters. It is Zanoni.

You observe them seated together, conversing earnestly. Years long and many have flown away since they met last—at least, bodily, and face to face. But if they are sages, thought can meet thought, and spirit spirit, though

oceans divide the forms. Death itself divides not the wise. Thou meetest Plato when thine eyes moisten over the Phædo. May Homer live with all men for ever! They converse—they confess to each other—they conjure up the past, and repeople it; but note how differently do such remembrances affect the two. On Zanoni's face, despite its habitual calm, the emotions change and go. *He* has acted in the Past he surveys; but not a trace of the humanity that participates in joy and sorrow can be detected on the passionless visage of his companion: the Past, to him, as is now the Present, has been but as nature to the sage, the volume to the student—a calm and spiritual life—a study—a contemplation.

From the Past they turn to the Future. Ah! at the close of the last century, the Future seemed a thing tangible—it was woven up in all men's fears and hopes of the Present.

At the verge of that hundred years, Man, the ripest-born of Time,* stood as at the death-bed of the Old World, and beheld the New

* “ An des Jahrhunderts Neige,

Der reifste Sohn der Zeit.”—DIE KÜNSTLER.

Orb, blood-red amidst cloud and vapour,—uncertain if a comet or a sun. Behold the icy and profound disdain on the brow of the old man—the lofty yet touching sadness that darkens the glorious countenance of Zanoni. Is it that one views with contempt the struggle and its issue, and the other with awe or pity? Wisdom contemplating mankind leads but to the two results—Compassion or Disdain. He who believes in other worlds can accustom himself to look on this as the naturalist on the revolutions of an ant-hill or of a leaf. What is the Earth to Infinity—what its duration to the Eternal! Oh, how much greater is the soul of one man than the vicissitudes of the whole globe! Child of heaven, and heir of immortality, how from some star hereafter wilt thou look back on the ant-hill and its commotions, from Clovis to Robespierre, from Noah to the Final Fire. The spirit that can contemplate, that lives only in the intellect, can ascend to its star, even from the midst of the Burial-ground called Earth, and while the Sarcophagus called Life immures in its clay the Everlasting!

But thou, Zanoni—thou hast refused to live *only* in the intellect—thou hast not mortified the heart—thy pulse still beats with the sweet music of mortal passion—thy kind is to thee still something warmer than an abstraction — thou wouldst look upon this Revolution in its cradle, which the storms rock—thou wouldst see the world while its elements yet struggle through the chaos!

Go!

CHAPTER VI.

Précepteurs ignorans de ce faible univers.

VOLTAIRE.

• Nous étions à table chez un de nos confrères à l'Académie, Grand Seigneur et homme d'esprit.—LA HARPE

ONE evening, at Paris, several months after the date of our last chapter, there was a reunion of some of the most eminent wits of the time, at the house of a personage distinguished alike by noble birth and liberal accomplishments. Nearly all present were of the views that were then the mode. For as came afterwards a time when nothing was so unpopular as the people, so that was the time when nothing was so vulgar as aristocracy. The airiest fine gentleman and the haughtiest noble prated of equality and lisped enlightenment.

Among the more remarkable guests were

Condorcet, then in the prime of his reputation, the correspondent of the King of Prussia, the intimate of Voltaire, the member of half the academies of Europe—noble by birth, polished in manners, republican in opinions. There, too, was the venerable Malesherbes, “l’amour et les delices de la Nation.”* There Jean Silvain Bailly, the accomplished scholar—the aspiring politician. It was one of those *petits soupers* for which the capital of all social pleasures was so renowned. The conversation, as might be expected, was literary and intellectual, enlivened by graceful pleasantry. Many of the ladies of that ancient and proud noblesse—for the noblesse yet existed, though its hours were already numbered—added to the charm of the society; and theirs were the boldest criticisms, and often the most liberal sentiments.

Vain labour for me—vain labour almost for the grave English language, to do justice to the sparkling paradoxes that flew from lip to lip. The favourite theme was the superiority of the Moderns to the Ancients. Condorcet on this

* So called by his historian, Gaillard.

head was eloquent, and to some, at least, of his audience most convincing. That Voltaire was greater than Homer few there were disposed to deny. Keen was the ridicule lavished on the dull pedantry which finds everything ancient necessarily sublime.

“ Yet,” said the graceful Marquis de —, as the champagne danced to his glass, “ more ridiculous still is the superstition that finds everything incomprehensible holy ! But intelligence circulates, Condorcet ; like water, it finds its level. My hairdresser said to me this morning, ‘ Though I am but a poor fellow, Monseigneur, I believe as little as the finest gentleman ! ’ ”

“ Unquestionably, the great Revolution draws near to its final completion—*à pas de géant*, as Montesquieu said of his own immortal work.”

Then there rushed from all—wit and noble, courtier and republican—a confused chorus, harmonious only in its anticipation of the brilliant things to which “ the great Revolution ” was to give birth. Here Condorcet is more eloquent than before.

“ Il faut absolument que la Superstition et le Fanatisme fassent place à la philosophie.

Kings persecute persons, priests opinion. Without kings, men must be safe; and without priests, minds must be free.”

“ Ah,” murmured the Marquis, “and as *ce cher Diderot* has so well sung—

‘ Et des boyaux du dernier prêtre
Serrez le cou du dernier roi.’ ”

“ And then,” resumed Condorcet—“ then commences the Age of Reason!—Equality in instruction—equality in institutions—equality in wealth! The great impediments to knowledge are, first, the want of a common language; and next, the short duration of existence. But as to the first, when all men are brothers, why not an universal language? As to the second,—the organic perfectibility of the vegetable world is undisputed, is Nature less powerful in the nobler existence of thinking man? The very destruction of the two most active causes of physical deterioration—here, luxurious wealth,—there, abject penury—must necessarily prolong the general term of life.* The art of medicine will then be honoured in the place of war, which is the art of murder;

* See Condorcet’s posthumous work on the Progress of the Human Mind.—EDITOR.

the noblest study of the acutest minds will be devoted to the discovery and arrest of the causes of disease. Life, I grant, cannot be made eternal; but it may be prolonged almost indefinitely. And as the meaner animal bequeaths its vigour to its offspring, so man shall transmit his improved organization, mental and physical, to his sons. O yes, to such a consummation does our age approach!"

The venerable Malesherbes sighed. Perhaps he feared the consummation might not come in time for him. The handsome Marquis de —— and the ladies, yet handsomer than he, looked conviction and delight.

But two men there were, seated next to each other, who joined not in the general talk; the one, a stranger newly arrived in Paris, where his wealth, his person, and his accomplishments had already made him remarked and courted; the other, an old man, somewhere about seventy—the witty and virtuous, brave and still light-hearted Cazotte, the author of *Le Diable Amoureux*.

These two conversed familiarly and apart from the rest, and only by an occasional smile

testified their attention to the general conversation.

“ Yes,” said the stranger—“ yes, we have met before.”

“ I thought I could not forget your countenance ; yet I task in vain my recollections of the past.”

“ I will assist you. Recall the time when, led by curiosity, or perhaps the nobler desire of knowledge, you sought initiation into the mysterious order of Martines de Pasqualis.”*

* It is so recorded of Cazotte. Of Martines de Pasqualis little is known ; even the country to which he belonged is matter of conjecture. Equally so the rites, ceremonies, and nature of the cabalistic order he established. Saint Martin was a disciple of the school, and that, at least, is in its favour ; for, in spite of his mysticism, no man more beneficent, generous, pure, and virtuous, than Saint Martin, adorned the last century. Above all, no man more distinguished himself from the herd of sceptical philosophers by the gallantry and fervour with which he combated materialism, and vindicated the necessity of faith amidst a chaos of unbelief. It may also be observed, that Cazotte, whatever else he learned of the brotherhood of Martines, learned nothing that diminished the excellence of his life and the sincerity of his religion. At once gentle and brave, he never ceased to oppose the excesses of the Revolution. To the last, unlike the Liberals of his time, he was a devout and sincere Christian. Before his execution, he demanded a pen and paper,

“ Ah! is it possible! You are one of that theurgic brotherhood?”

“ Nay, I attended their ceremonies but to see how vainly they sought to revive the ancient marvels of the cabala.”

“ Such studies please you? I have shaken off the influence they once had on my own imagination.”

“ You have not shaken it off,” returned the stranger, gravely; “ it is on you still—on you at this hour; it beats in your heart; it kindles in your reason; it will speak in your tongue!”

And then, with a yet lower voice, the stranger continued to address him, to remind him of certain ceremonies and doctrines,—to explain and enforce them by references to the actual experience and history of his listener, which Cazotte thrilled to find so familiar to a stranger.

Gradually the old man’s pleasing and benevolent countenance grew overcast, and he turned,

to write these words:—“ Ma femme, mes enfans, ne me pleurez pas, ne m’oubliez pas, mais souvenez-vous surtout de ne jamais offenser Dieu.”—EDITOR.

from time to time, searching, curious, uneasy glances at his companion.

The charming Duchess de G—— archly pointed out to the lively guests the abstracted air and clouded brow of the poet; and Condorcet, who liked no one else to be remarked when he himself was present, said to Cazotte, “ Well, and what do *you* predict of the Revolution—how, at least, will it affect us?”

At that question, Cazotte started—his cheeks grew pale, large drops stood on his forehead—his lips writhed. His gay companions gazed on him in surprise.

“ Speak !” whispered the stranger, laying his hand gently upon the arm of the old wit.

At that word, Cazotte’s face grew locked and rigid, his eyes dwelt vacantly on space, and in a low, hollow voice, he thus answered*—

* The following prophecy, (not unfamiliar, perhaps, to some of my readers,) with some slight variations, and at greater length, in the text of the authority I am about to cite, is to be found in La Harpe’s posthumous Works. The MS. is said to exist still in La Harpe’s hand-writing, and the story is given on M. Petitot’s authority, vol. i. p. 62. It is not for me to inquire if there be doubts of its foundation on fact.—EDITOR.

“You ask how it will affect yourselves,—you, its most learned, and its least selfish agents. I will answer; you, Marquis de Condorcet, will die in prison, but not by the hand of the executioner. In the peaceful happiness of that day, the philosopher will carry about with him, not the elixir, but the poison.”

“My poor Cazotte,” said Condorcet, with his gentle smile, “what have prisons, executioners, and poison, to do with an age of liberty and brotherhood?”

“It is in the names of Liberty and Brotherhood that the prisons will reek, and the headsmen be glutted.”

“You are thinking of priestcraft, not philosophy, Cazotte,” said Champfort.*—“And what of me?”

* Champfort, one of those men of letters who, though misled by the first fair show of the Revolution, refused to follow the baser men of action into its horrible excesses, lived to express the murderous philanthropy of its agents by the best *bon mot* of the time. Seeing written on the walls, “*Fraternité ou la Mort*,” he observed that the sentiment should be translated thus—“*Sois mon frère, ou je te tue.*”

“ You will open your own veins to escape the fraternity of Cain. Be comforted; the last drops will not follow the razor. For you, venerable Malesherbes, — for you, Aimar Nicolai, — for you, learned Bailly, — I see them dress the scaffold! And all the while, O great philosophers, your murderers will have no word but philosophy on their lips!”

The hush was complete and universal when the pupil of Voltaire—the prince of the academic sceptics, hot La Harpe—cried, with a sarcastic laugh, “ Do not flatter me, O prophet, by exemption from the fate of my companions. Shall *I* have no part to play in this drama of your phantasies?”

At this question, Cazotte’s countenance lost its unnatural expression of awe and sternness; the sardonic humour most common to it came back and played in his brightening eyes.

“ Yes, La Harpe, the most wonderful part of all! *You* will become—a Christian!”

This was too much for the audience, that a moment before seemed grave and thoughtful; and they burst into an immoderate fit of laughter,

while Cazotte, as if exhausted by his predictions, sunk back in his chair, and breathed hard and heavily.

“Nay,” said Madame de G——, “you who have predicted such grave things concerning us, must prophesy something also about yourself.”

A convulsive tremor shook the involuntary prophet;—it passed, and left his countenance elevated by an expression of resignation and calm. “Madame,” said he, after a long pause, “during the siege of Jerusalem, we are told by its historian that a man, for seven successive days, went round the ramparts, exclaiming, ‘Woe to thee, Jerusalem, woe to myself!’”—

“Well, Cazotte, well?”—

“And on the seventh day, while he thus spoke, a stone from the machines of the Romans dashed him into atoms!”

With these words, Cazotte rose; and the guests, awed in spite of themselves, shortly after broke up and retired.

CHAPTER VII.

Qui donc t'a donné la mission d'annoncer au peuple que la divinité n'existe pas—quel avantage trouves-tu à persuader à l'homme qu'une force aveugle préside à ses destinées et frappe au hasard le crime et la vertu? — ROBESPIERRE, Discours, Mai 7, 1794.

It was sometime before midnight when the stranger returned home. His apartments were situated in one of those vast abodes which may be called an epitome of Paris itself. The cellars rented by mechanics, scarce removed a step from paupers, often by outcasts and fugitives from the law,—often by some daring writer, who, after scattering amongst the people doctrines the most subversive of order, or the most libellous on the characters of priest, minister, and king,—re-

tired amongst the rats, to escape the persecution that attends the virtuous,—the ground-floor occupied by shops—the entresol by artists—the principal stories by nobles, and the garrets by journeymen or grisettes.

As the stranger passed up the stairs, a young man of a form and countenance singularly unprepossessing, emerging from a door in the *entresol*, brushed beside him. His glance was furtive, sinister, savage, and yet fearful; the man's face was of an ashen paleness, and the features worked convulsively. The stranger paused, and observed him with thoughtful looks, as he hurried down the stairs. While he thus stood, he heard a groan from the room which the young man had just quitted; the latter had pulled-to the door with hasty vehemence, but some fragment, probably of fuel, had prevented its closing, and it now stood slightly ajar; the stranger pushed it open and entered. He passed a small anteroom, meanly furnished, and stood in a bedchamber of meagre and sordid discomfort. Stretched on the bed, and writhing in pain, lay an old man; a single candle lit the room, and threw

its sickly ray over the furrowed and death-like face of the sick person. No attendant was by ; he seemed left alone to breathe his last. "Water," he moaned, feebly—"water—I parch,—I burn!" The intruder approached the bed, bent over him, and took his hand—"Oh, bless thee, Jean, bless thee!" said the sufferer ; "hast thou brought back the physician already? Sir, I am poor, but I can pay you well. I would not die yet, for that young man's sake." And he sat upright in his bed, and fixed his dim eyes anxiously on his visitor.

"What are your symptoms, your disease?"

"Fire—fire—fire in the heart, the entrails—I burn!"

"How long is it since you have taken food?"

"Food! only this broth. There is the basin, all I have taken these six hours. I had scarce drunk it ere these pains began."

The stranger looked at the basin, some portion of the contents was yet left there.

"Who administered this to you?"

"Who? Jean! Who else should? I have no servant—none! I am poor, very poor, Sir.

But, no! you physicians do not care for the poor. *I am rich!* can you cure me?"

"Yes, if Heaven permit. Wait but a few moments."

The old man was fast sinking under the rapid effects of poison. The stranger repaired to his own apartments, and returned in a few moments, with some preparation that had the instant result of an antidote. The pain ceased; the blue and livid colour receded from the lips; the old man fell into a profound sleep. The stranger drew the curtains round the bed, took up the light, and inspected the apartment. The walls of both rooms were hung with drawings of masterly excellence. A portfolio was filled with sketches of equal skill; but these last were mostly subjects that appalled the eye and revolted the taste; they displayed the human figure in every variety of suffering—the rack, the wheel, the gibbet, all that cruelty has invented to sharpen the pangs of death, seemed yet more dreadful from the passionate gusto and earnest force of the designer. And some of the countenances of those thus delineated were

sufficiently removed from the ideal to shew that they were portraits; in a large, bold, irregular hand, was written beneath these drawings, "The Future of the Aristocrats." In a corner of the room, and close by an old bureau, was a small bundle, over which, as if to hide it, a cloak was thrown carelessly. Several shelves were filled with books; these were almost entirely the works of the philosophers of the time—the philosophers of the material school, especially the Encyclopédistes, whom Robespierre afterwards so singularly attacked, when the coward deemed it unsafe to leave his reign without a God.* A volume lay on a table, it was one of Voltaire, and the page was open at his argumentative assertion of the existence of

* Cette secte (les Encyclopédistes) propagea avec beaucoup de zèle l'opinion du materialisme, qui prévalut parmi les grands et parmi les beaux esprits, on lui doit en partie cette espèce de philosophie pratique qui, réduisant l'Egoïsme en système, regarde la société humaine comme un guerre de ruse, le succès comme la règle du juste et de l'injuste, la probité comme une affaire de goût, ou de bienséance, le monde comme le patrimoine des fripons adroits. DISCOURS DE ROBESPIERRE, May 7, 1794.

the Supreme Being.* The margin was covered with pencilled notes, in the stiff but tremulous hand of old age; all in attempt to refute or to ridicule the logic of the sage of Ferney: Voltaire did not go far enough for the annotator! The clock struck two, when the sound of steps was heard without. The stranger silently seated himself on the farther side of the bed, and its drapery screened him, as he sat, from the eyes of a man who now entered on tiptoe; it was the same person who had passed him on the stairs. The man took up the candle and approached the bed. The old man's face was turned to the pillow; but he lay so still, and his breathing was so inaudible, that his sleep might well, by that hasty, shrinking, guilty glance, be mistaken for the repose of death. The new comer drew back, and a grim smile passed over his face; he replaced the candle on the table, opened the bureau with a key which he took from his pocket, and loaded himself with several rouleaus of gold, that he found in the drawers. At this time the old

* Histoire de Jenni.

man began to wake. He stirred, he looked up; he turned his eyes towards the light, now waning in its socket; he saw the robber at his work; he sat erect for an instant, as if transfixed, more even by astonishment than terror. At last he sprang from his bed—

“Just Heaven! do I dream! Thou—thou—thou for whom I toiled and starved!—*Thou!*”

The robber started; the gold fell from his hand, and rolled on the floor.

“What!” he said, “art thou not dead yet? Has the poison failed?”

“Poison, boy! Ah!” shrieked the old man, and covered his face with his hands; then, with sudden energy, he exclaimed, “Jean! Jean! recall that word. Rob, plunder me if thou wilt, but do not say thou couldst murder one who only lived for thee! There, there, take the gold; I hoarded it but for thee. Go—go!” and the old man, who, in his passion had quitted his bed, fell at the feet of the foiled assassin, and writhed on the ground—the mental agony more intolerable than that of the

body which he had so lately undergone. The robber looked at him with a hard disdain.

“What have I ever done to thee, wretch?” cried the old man, “what but loved and cherished thee? Thou wert an orphan, an outcast. I nurtured, nursed, adopted thee as my son. If men call me a miser, it was but that none might despise thee, my heir, because nature has stunted and deformed thee, when I was no more. Thou wouldst have had all when I was dead. Couldst thou not spare me a few months or days—nothing to thy youth, all that is left to my age? What have I done to thee?”

“Thou hast continued to live, and thou wouldst make no will.”

“Mon Dieu! Mon Dieu!”

“*Ton Dieu!* Thy God! Fool! Hast thou not told me, from my childhood, that there is no God? Hast thou not fed me on philosophy? Hast thou not said, ‘Be virtuous, be good, be just, for the sake of mankind, but there is no life after this life?’ Mankind! why should I love mankind? Hideous and misshapen, mankind jeer at me as I pass the streets. What

hast thou done to me? Thou hast taken away from me, who am the scoff of this world, the hopes of another! Is there no other life? Well, then, I want thy gold, that at least I may hasten to make the best of this!"

"Monster! Curses light on thy ingratitude, thy——"

"And who hears thy curses? Thou knowest there is no God! Mark me; I have prepared all to fly. See—I have my passport; my horses wait without; relays are ordered. I have thy gold." (And the wretch, as he spoke, continued coldly to load his person with the rouleaus.) "And now, if I spare thy life, how shall I be sure that thou wilt not inform against mine?" He advanced with a gloomy scowl and a menacing gesture as he spoke.

The old man's anger changed to fear. He cowered before the savage. "Let me live! let me live!—that—that—"

"That—what?"

"I may pardon thee! Yes, thou hast nothing to fear from me. I swear it!"

"Swear! But by whom and what, old man?"

I cannot believe thee, if thou believest not in any God! Ha, ha! behold the result of thy lessons.”

Another moment, and those murderous fingers would have strangled their prey. But between the assassin and his victim rose a form that seemed almost to both a visitor from the world that both denied—stately with majestic strength, glorious with awful beauty.

The ruffian recoiled, looked, trembled, and then turned and fled from the chamber. The old man fell again to the ground insensible.

CHAPTER VIII.

To know how a bad man will act when in power, reverse all the doctrines he preaches when obscure.

S. MONTAGU.

Antipathies also form a part of magic (falsely) so called. Man naturally has the same instinct as the animals ; which warns them involuntarily against the creatures that are hostile or fatal to their existence. But *he* so often neglects it that it becomes dormant. Not so the true cultivator of The Great Science, &c.

TRISMEGISTUS THE FOURTH. (A Rosicrucian.)

WHEN he again saw the old man the next day, the stranger found him calm, and surprisingly recovered from the scene and sufferings of the night. He expressed his gratitude to his preserver with tearful fervour, and stated that he had already sent for a relation, who would make arrangements for his future safety

and mode of life: "For I have money yet left," said the old man; "and henceforth have no motive to be a miser." He proceeded then briefly to relate the origin and circumstances of his connexion with his intended murderer.

It seems that in earlier life he had quarrelled with his relations—from a difference in opinions of belief. Rejecting all religion as a fable, he yet cultivated feelings that inclined him—for though his intellect was weak, his dispositions were good—to that false and exaggerated sensibility which its dupes so often mistake for benevolence. He had no children; he resolved to adopt an *enfant du peuple*. He resolved to educate this boy according to "Reason." He selected an orphan of the lowest extraction, whose defects of person and constitution only yet the more moved his pity, and finally engrossed his affection. In this outcast he not only loved a son, he loved a theory! He brought him up most philosophically. Helvetius had proved to him that education can do all; and before he was eight years old, the little Jean's favourite expressions

were—" *La lumière et la vertu.*" The boy shewed talents, especially in art. The protector sought for a master who was as free from "superstition" as himself, and selected the painter, David. That person, as hideous as his pupil, and whose dispositions were as vicious as his professional abilities were undeniable, was certainly as free from "superstition" as the protector could desire. It was reserved for Robespierre hereafter to make the sanguinary painter believe in the *Être Suprême*. The boy was early sensible of his ugliness, which was almost preternatural. His benefactor found it in vain to reconcile him to the malice of nature by his philosophical aphorisms; but when he pointed out to him that in this world money, like charity, covers a multitude of defects, the boy listened eagerly, and was consoled. To save money for his protégé—for the only thing in the world he loved—this became the patron's passion. Verily, he had met with his reward.

"But I am thankful he has escaped," said the old man, wiping his eyes. "Had he left me a beggar, I could never have accused him."

“ No, for you are the author of his crimes.”

“ How! I, who never ceased to inculcate the beauty of virtue? Explain yourself.”

“ Alas, if thy pupil did not make this clear to thee last night from his own lips, an angel might come from heaven to preach to thee in vain.”

The old man moved uneasily, and was about to reply, when the relative he had sent for, and who, a native of Nancy, happened to be at Paris at the time—entered the room. He was a man somewhat past thirty, and of a dry, saturnine meagre countenance, restless eyes, and compressed lips. He listened, with many ejaculations of horror, to his relation’s recital, and sought earnestly, but in vain, to induce him to give information against his protégé.

“ Tush, tush, René Dumas!” said the old man, “ you are a lawyer. You are bred to regard human life with contempt. Let any man break a law and you shout—‘Execute him!’”

“ I!” cried Dumas, lifting up his hands and eyes, “ venerable sage, how you misjudge me.

I lament more than any one the severity of our code. I think the state never should take away life—no, not even the life of a murderer. I agree with that young statesman—Maximilien Robespierre—that the executioner is the invention of the tyrant. My very attachment to our advancing revolution is, that it must sweep away this legal butchery.”

The lawyer paused, out of breath. The stranger regarded him fixedly, and turned pale.

“You change countenance, Sir,” said Dumas; “you do not agree with me.”

“Pardon me, I was at that moment repressing a vague fear which seemed prophetic”—

“And that”—

“Was that we should meet again, when your opinions on Death and the philosophy of Revolutions might be different.”

“Never!”

“You enchant me, cousin René,” said the old man, who had listened to his relation with delight. “Ah, I see you have proper sentiments of justice and philanthropy. Why did I not seek to know you before! You admire the

Revolution?—you, equally with me, detest the barbarity of kings and the fraud of priests?”

“Detest! How could I love mankind if I did not?”

“And,” said the old man, hesitatingly, “you do not think, with this noble gentleman, that I erred in the precepts I instilled into that wretched man?”

“Erred! Was Socrates to blame if Alcibiades was an adulterer and a traitor?”

“You hear him—you hear him! But Socrates had also a Plato; henceforth you shall be a Plato to me. You hear him?” exclaimed the old man, turning to the stranger.

But the latter was at the threshold. Who shall argue with the most stubborn of all bigotries—the fanaticism of unbelief?

“Are you going?” exclaimed Dumas, “and before I have thanked you, blessed you, for the life of this dear and venerable man? Oh, if ever I can repay you—if ever you want the heart’s blood of René Dumas!” Thus volubly delivering himself, he followed the stranger to the threshold of the second chamber, and there

gently detaining him, and after looking over his shoulder, to be sure that he was not heard by the owner, he whispered, "I ought to return to Nancy. One would not lose one's time;—you don't think, Sir, that that scoundrel took away *all* the old fool's money?"

"Was it thus Plato spoke of Socrates, Monsieur Dumas?"

"Ha, ha!—you are caustic. Well, you have a right. Sir, we shall meet again."

"AGAIN!" muttered the stranger, and his brow darkened. He hastened to his chamber, he passed the day and the night alone, and in studies, no matter of what nature,—they served to increase his gloom.

What could ever connect his fate with René Dumas? or the fugitive assassin? Why did the buoyant air of Paris seem to him heavy with the steams of blood—why did an instinct urge him to fly from those sparkling circles, from that focus of the world's awakened hopes, warning him from return?—he, whose lofty existence defied—but away these dreams and omens! He leaves France behind. Back, O, Italy, to thy

majestic wrecks! On the Alps his soul breathes the free air once more. Free air! Alas, let the world-healers exhaust their chemistry; Man never shall be as free in the market-place as on the mountain. But we, reader, we, too, escape from these scenes of false wisdom clothing godless crime. Away, once more

“ In den heitern Regionen
Wo die reinen formen wohnen.”

Away, to the loftier realm where the pure dwellers are. Unpolluted by the Actual, the Ideal lives only with Art and Beauty. Sweet Viola, by the shores of the blue Parthenope, by Virgil's tomb, and the Cimmerian cavern, we return to thee once more.

CHAPTER IX.

“ Come sì presso è l’Ippogrifo a terra :—

Che non vuol che ’l destrier più vada in alto ;

Poi lo lega nel margine marino

A un verde mirto in mezzo un lauro *e un pino.*”

ORL. FUR. CANT. vi. xxiii.

O MUSICIAN ! art thou happy now ? Thou art reinstalled at thy stately desk—thy faithful barbiton has its share in the triumph. It is thy masterpiece which fills thy ear—it is thy daughter who fills the scene—the music, the actress so united, that applause to one is applause to both. They make way for thee at the orchestra—they no longer jeer and wink, when, with a fierce fondness, thou dost caress thy Familiar, that plains, and wails, and chides, and growls, under thy remorseless hand. They understand

now how irregular is ever the symmetry of real genius. The inequalities in its surface make the moon luminous to man. Giovanni Paisiello, Mâestro di Capella, if thy gentle soul could know envy, thou must sicken to see thy Elfrida and thy Pirro laid aside, and all Naples turned fanatic to the Siren, at whose measures shook querulously thy gentle head! But thou, Paisiello, calm in the long prosperity of fame, knowest that the New will have its day, and comfortest thyself that the Elfrida and the Pirro will live for ever. Perhaps a mistake, but it is by such mistakes that true genius conquers envy. "To be immortal," says Schiller, "live in the whole." To be superior to the hour, live in thy self-esteem. The audience now would give their ears for those variations and flights they were once wont to hiss. No!—Pisani has been two-thirds of a life at silent work on his master-piece: there is nothing he can add to *that*, however he might have sought to improve on the master-pieces of others. Is not this common? The least little critic, in reviewing some work of art, will say,

“pity this, and pity that;” “this should have been altered—that omitted.” Yea, with his wiry fiddlestring will he creak out his accursed variations. But let him sit down and compose, himself. He sees no improvement in variations *then!* Every man can control his fiddle when it is his own work with which its vagaries would play the devil.

And Viola is the idol—the theme of Naples. She is the spoiled Sultana of the boards. To spoil her acting may be easy enough—shall they spoil her nature? No, I think not. There, at home, she is still good and simple; and there, under the awning by the door-way—there she still sits, divinely musing. How often, crook-trunked tree, she looks to thy green boughs; how often, like thee, in her dreams and fancies, does she struggle for the light;—Not the light of the stage-lamps. Pooh, child! be contented with the lamps, even with the rushlights. A farthing candle is more convenient for household purposes than the stars.

Weeks passed, and the stranger did not reappear: months had passed, and his prophecy of

sorrow was not yet fulfilled. One evening, Pisani was taken ill. His success had brought on the long-neglected composer pressing applications for concerti and sonata, adapted to his more peculiar science on the violin. He had been employed for some weeks, day and night, on a piece in which he hoped to excel himself. He took, as usual, one of those seemingly impracticable subjects which it was his pride to subject to the expressive powers of his art—the terrible legend connected with the transformation of Philomel. The pantomime of sound opened with the gay merriment of a feast. The monarch of Thrace is at his banquet; a sudden discord brays through the joyous notes—the strings seem to screech with horror. The king learns the murder of his son by the hands of the avenging sisters: Swift rage the chords, through the passions of fear, of horror, of fury, and dismay. The father pursues the sisters. Hark, what changes the dread—the discord — into that long, silvery, mournful music? The transformation is completed; and Philomel, now the nightingale, pours from the

myrtle-bough the full, liquid, subduing notes that are to tell evermore to the world the history of her woes and wrongs. Now, it was in the midst of this complicated and difficult attempt that the health of the overtasked musician, excited alike by past triumph and new ambition, suddenly gave way. He was taken ill at night. The next morning, the doctor pronounced that his disease was a malignant and infectious fever. His wife and Viola shared in their tender watch; but soon that task was left to the last alone. The Signora Pisani caught the infection, and in a few hours was even in a state more alarming than that of her husband. The Neapolitans, in common with the inhabitants of all warm climates, are apt to become selfish and brutal in their dread of infectious disorders. Gionetta herself pretended to be ill, to avoid the sick chamber. The whole labour of love and sorrow fell on Viola. It was a terrible trial—I am willing to hurry over the details. The wife died first!

One day, a little before sunset, Pisani woke, partially recovered from the delirium which had

preyed upon him, with few intervals, since the second day of the disease;—and casting about him his dizzy and feeble eyes, he recognised Viola, and smiled. He faltered her name as he rose and stretched his arms. She fell upon his breast, and strove to suppress her tears.

“Thy mother?” he said. “Does she sleep?”

“She sleeps—ah, yes!” and the tears gushed forth.

“I thought—eh! I know not *what* I have thought; but do not weep, I shall be well now—quite well. She will come to me when she wakes—will she?”

Viola could not speak; but she busied herself in pouring forth an anodyne, which she had been directed to give the sufferer as soon as the delirium should cease. The doctor had told her, too, to send for him the instant so important a change should occur.

She went to the door, and called to the woman who, during Gionetta’s pretended illness had been induced to supply her place; but the hireling answered not. She flew through

the chambers to search for her in vain—the hireling had caught Gionetta's fears, and vanished. What was to be done? The case was urgent—the doctor had declared not a moment should be lost in obtaining his attendance; she must leave her father—she must go herself! She crept back into the room—the anodyne seemed already to have taken benign effect—the patient's eyes were closed, and he breathed regularly, as in sleep. She stole away, threw her veil over her face, and hurried from the house.

Now, the anodyne had not produced the effect which it appeared to have done; instead of healthful sleep, it had brought on a kind of light-headed somnolence, in which the mind, preternaturally restless, wandered about its accustomed haunts, waking up its old familiar instincts and inclinations. It was not sleep—it was not delirium; it was that dream-wakefulness which opium sometimes induces, when every nerve grows tremulously alive, and creates a correspondent activity in the frame, to which it gives a false and hectic vigour. Pisai

missed something—what he scarcely knew ; it was a combination of the two wants most essential to his mental life—the voice of his wife, the touch of his Familiar. He rose—he left his bed — he leisurely put on his old dressing-robe, in which he had been wont to compose. He smiled complacently as the associations connected with the garment came over his memory ; he walked tremulously across the room, and entered the small cabinet next to his chamber, in which his wife had been accustomed more often to watch than sleep, when illness separated her from his side. The room was desolate and void. He looked round wistfully, and muttered to himself, and then proceeded regularly, and with a noiseless step, through the chambers of the silent house, one by one.

He came at last to that in which old Gionetta, —faithful to her own safety, if nothing else—nursed herself, in the remotest corner of the house, from the danger of infection. As he glided in — wan, emaciated, with an uneasy, anxious, searching look in his haggard eyes—

the old woman shrieked aloud, and fell at his feet. He bent over her, passed his thin hands along her averted face, shook his head, and said in a hollow voice—

“ I cannot find them ; where are they ? ”

“ Who, dear master ? Oh, have compassion on yourself ; they are not here. Blessed saints ! this is terrible : he has touched me ; I am dead ! ”

“ Dead ! who is dead ? Is any one dead ? ”

“ Ah ! don't talk so ; you must know it well : my poor mistress—she caught the fever from you ; it is infectious enough to kill a whole city. San Gennaro protect me ! My poor mistress—she is dead, buried too ; and I, your faithful Gionetta, woe is me ! Go, go—to—to bed again, dearest master—go ! ”

The poor musician stood for one moment mute and unmoving, then a slight shiver ran through his frame ; he turned and glided back, silent and spectre-like, as he had entered. He came into the room where he had been accustomed to compose—where his wife, in her sweet patience, had so often sat by his side, and praised and flattered when the world had but jeered and

scorned. In one corner he found the laurel-wreath she had placed on his brows that happy night of fame and triumph; and near it, half hid by her mantilla, lay in its case the neglected instrument.

Viola was not long gone; she had found the physician; she returned with him; and as they gained the threshold, they heard a strain of music from within, a strain of piercing, heart-rending anguish: it was not like some senseless instrument, mechanical in its obedience to a human hand—it was as some spirit calling in wail and agony from the forlorn shades, to the angels it beheld afar beyond the Eternal Gulf. They exchanged glances of dismay. They hurried into the house—they hastened into the room. Pisani turned, and his look, full of ghastly intelligence and stern command, awed them back. The black mantilla, the faded laurel-leaf, lay there before him. Viola's heart guessed all at a single glance—she sprung to his knees, she clasped them—"Father, father, *I am left thee still!*"

The wail ceased—the note changed; with a confused association—half of the man, half of

the artist—the anguish, still a melody, was connected with sweeter sounds and thoughts. The nightingale had escaped the pursuit—soft, airy, bird like,—thrilled the delicious notes a moment, and then died away. The instrument fell to the floor, and its chords snapped. You heard that sound, through the silence. The artist looked on his kneeling child, and then on the broken chords. . . . “Bury me by her side;” he said, in a very calm, low voice; “and *that*, by mine.” And with these words his whole frame became rigid, as if turned to stone. The last change passed over his face. He fell to the ground, sudden and heavy. The chords *there*, too—the chords of the human instrument, were snapped asunder. As he fell, his robe brushed the laurel-wreath, and that fell also, near, but not in reach of, the dead man’s nerveless hand.

Broken instrument—broken heart—withered laurel-wreath!—the setting sun through the vineclad lattice streamed on all! So smiles the eternal Nature on the wrecks of all that make life glorious! And not a sun that sets not somewhere on the silenced music — on the faded laurel!

CHAPTER X.

Questo è il suo albergo.

* * * * *

Chè difesa miglior ch' usbergo e scudo

E la santa innocenza al petto ignudo!

GER. LIB. cant. viii. xli.

AND they buried the Musician and his barbiton together, in the same coffin. That famous Steiner—Primæval Titan of the great Tyrolese race—often hast thou sought to scale the heavens, and therefore must thou, like the meaner children of men, descend to the dismal Hades! Harder fate for thee than thy mortal master. For *thy* soul sleeps with thee in the coffin. And the music that belongs to *his*, separate from the instrument, ascends on high, to be heard often by a daughter's pious ears, when the heaven is

serene and the earth sad. For there is a sense of hearing that the vulgar know not. And the voices of the dead breathe soft and frequent to those who can unite the memory with the faith.

And now Viola is alone in the world. Alone in the home where loneliness had seemed from the cradle a thing that was not of nature. And at first the solitude and the stillness were insupportable. Have you, ye mourners, to whom these sibyl leaves, weird with many a dark enigma, shall be borne, have you not felt that when the death of some best-loved one has made the hearth and the heart desolate—have you not felt as if the gloom of the altered home was too heavy for thought to bear?—you would leave it, though a palace, even for a cabin. And yet—sad to say—when you obey the impulse, when you fly from the walls, when in the strange place in which you seek your refuge nothing speaks to you of the lost, have ye not felt again a yearning for that very food to memory which was just before but bitterness and gall? Is it not almost impious and profane to abandon that dear hearth to strangers? And the deser-

tion of the home where your parents dwelt, and blessed you, upbraids your conscience as if you had sold their tombs. Beautiful was the Etruscan superstition, that the ancestors become the household gods. Deaf is the heart to which the Lares call from the desolate floors in vain. At first Viola had, in her intolerable anguish, gratefully welcomed the refuge which the house and family of a kindly neighbour, much attached to her father, and who was one of the orchestra that Pisani shall perplex no more, had proffered to the orphan. But the company of the unfamiliar in our grief, the consolation of the stranger, how it irritates the wound! And then, to hear elsewhere the name of father, mother, child—as if death came alone to you—to see elsewhere the calm regularity of those lives united in love and order, keeping account of happy hours, the unbroken timepiece of home, as if nowhere else the wheels were arrested, the chain shattered, the hands motionless, the chime still! No, the grave itself does not remind us of our loss like the company of those who have no loss to mourn. Go back to

thy solitude, young orphan—go back to thy home; the sorrow that meets thee on the threshold can greet thee, even in its sadness, like the smile upon the face of the dead. And there, from thy casement, and there, from without thy door, thou seest still the tree, solitary as thyself, and springing from the clefts of the rock, but forcing its way to light,—as, through all sorrow, while the seasons yet can renew the verdure and bloom of youth, strives the instinct of the human heart! Only when the sap is dried up, only when age comes on, does the sun shine in vain for man and for the tree.

Weeks and months—months sad and many—again passed, and Naples will not longer suffer its idol to seclude itself from homage. The world ever plucks us back from ourselves with a thousand arms. And again Viola's voice is heard upon the stage, which, mystically faithful to life, is in nought more faithful than this, that it is the appearances that fill the scene; and we pause not to ask of what realities they are the proxies. When the actor of Athens moved all hearts as he clasped the burial urn, and burst

into broken sobs; how few, there, knew that it held the ashes of his son! Gold as well as fame was showered upon the young actress; but she still kept to her simple mode of life, to her lowly home, to the one servant, whose faults, selfish as they were, Viola was too inexperienced to perceive. And it was Gionetta who had placed her when first born in her father's arms. She was surrounded by every snare, wooed by every solicitation that could beset her unguarded beauty and her dangerous calling. But her modest virtue passed unsullied through them all. It is true that she had been taught by lips now mute the maiden duties enjoined by honour and religion. And all love that spoke not of the altar only shocked and repelled her. But besides that, as grief and solitude ripened her heart, and made her tremble at times to think how deeply it could feel, her vague and early visions shaped themselves into an ideal of love. And till the ideal is found, how the shadow that it throws before it chills us to the actual! With that ideal, ever and ever, unconsciously, and with a certain awe

and shrinking, came the shape and voice of the warning stranger. Nearly two years had passed since he had appeared at Naples. Nothing had been heard of him, save that his vessel had been directed, some months after his departure, to sail for Leghorn. By the gossips of Naples, his existence, supposed so extraordinary, was well nigh forgotten; but the heart of Viola was more faithful. Often he glided through her dreams, and when the wind sighed through that fantastic tree, associated with his remembrance, she started, with a tremor and a blush, as if she had heard him speak.

But amongst the train of her suitors was one to whom she listened more gently than to the rest; partly because, perhaps, he spoke in her mother's native tongue; partly because, in his diffidence, there was little to alarm and displease; partly because his rank, nearer to her own than that of lordlier wooers, prevented his admiration from appearing insult; partly because he himself, eloquent and a dreamer, often uttered thoughts that were kindred to those buried deepest in her mind. She began to like—per-

haps to love him, but as a sister loves ; a sort of privileged familiarity sprung up between them. If, in the Englishman's breast, arose wild and unworthy hopes, he had not yet expressed them. Is there danger to thee here, lone Viola ? or is the danger greater in thy unfound ideal ?

And now, as the overture to some strange and wizard spectacle, closes this opening prelude. Wilt thou hear more ? Come with thy faith prepared. I ask not the blinded eyes, but the awakened sense. As the enchanted Isle, remote from the homes of men—

————— ove alcun legno
 Rado, o non mai va dalle nostre sponde,
 Fuor tutti i nostri lidi*—

is the space in the weary ocean of actual life to which the Muse or Sibyl (Donna giovin di viso antica d'anni) offers thee no unhallowed sail—

Quinci ella in cima a una montagne ascende
 Disabitata, e d' ombre oscura e bruna ;
 E par incanto a lei nevole rende
 Le spalle e i fianchi ; e senza neve alcuna
 Gli lascia il capo verdeggiante e vago ;
 E vi fonda un palagio appresso un lago.

* Ger. Lib. cant. xiv. xlix.—li.



BOOK THE SECOND.

ART, LOVE, AND WONDER.

Diversi aspetti in un confusi e misti.

GERUS. LIB. cant. iv. v.

BOOK THE SECOND.

CHAPTER I.

Centauri, e Sfingi, e pallide Gorgoni.

GER. LIB. cant. iv. v.

ONE moonlit night, in the Gardens at Naples, some four or five gentlemen were seated under a tree, drinking their sherbet, and listening, in the intervals of conversation, to the music which enlivened that gay and favourite resort of an indolent population. One of this little party was a young Englishman, who had been the life of the whole group, but who, for the last few moments, had sunk into a gloomy and abstracted reverie. One of his countrymen observed this sudden gloom, and, tapping him on the

back, said, "What ails you, Glyndon? Are you ill? You have grown quite pale—you tremble. Is it a sudden chill? You had better go home: these Italian nights are often dangerous to our English constitutions."

"No, I am well now; it was a passing shudder. I cannot account for it myself."

A man, apparently of about thirty years of age, and of a mien and countenance strikingly superior to those around him, turned abruptly, and looked steadfastly at Glyndon.

"I think I understand what you mean," said he; "and perhaps," he added, with a grave smile, "I could explain it better than yourself." Here, turning to the others, he added, "You must often have felt, gentlemen, each and all of you, especially when sitting alone at night, a strange and unaccountable sensation of coldness and awe creep over you; your blood curdles, and the heart stands still; the limbs shiver, the hair bristles; you are afraid to look up, to turn your eyes to the darker corners of the room; you have a horrible fancy that something unearthly is at hand; presently the whole

spell, if I may so call it, passes away, and you are ready to laugh at your own weakness. Have you not often felt what I have thus imperfectly described? if so, you can understand what our young friend has just experienced, even amidst the delights of this magical scene, and amidst the balmy whispers of a July night."

"Sir," replied Glyndon, evidently much surprised, "you have defined exactly the nature of that shudder which came over me. But how could my manner be so faithful an index to my impressions?"

"I know the signs of the visitation," returned the stranger, gravely; "they are not to be mistaken by one of my experience."

All the gentlemen present then declared that they could comprehend, and had felt, what the stranger had described.

"According to one of our national superstitions," said Mervale, the Englishman who had first addressed Glyndon, "the moment you so feel your blood creep, and your hair stand on end, some one is walking over the spot which shall be your grave."

"There are in all lands different superstitions

to account for so common an occurrence," replied the stranger: "one sect among the Arabians holds that at that instant God is deciding the hour either of your death, or of some one dear to you. The African savage, whose imagination is darkened by the hideous rites of his gloomy idolatry, believes that the Evil Spirit is pulling you towards him by the hair: so do the Grotesque and the Terrible mingle with each other."

"It is evidently a mere physical accident—a derangement of the stomach—a chill of the blood," said a young Neapolitan, with whom Glyndon had formed a slight acquaintance.

"Then why is it always coupled, in all nations, with some superstitious presentiment or terror—some connexion between the material frame and the supposed world without us? For my part, I think——"

"Ay, what do you think, Sir?" asked Glyndon, curiously.

"I think," continued the stranger, "that it is the repugnance and horror with which our more human elements recoil from something, indeed, invisible, but antipathetic to our own

nature ; and from a knowledge of which we are happily secured by the imperfection of our senses.”

“ You are a believer in spirits, then ? ” said Mervale, with an incredulous smile.

“ Nay, it was not precisely of spirits that I spoke ; but there may be forms of matter as invisible and impalpable to us as the animalculæ in the air we breathe—in the water that plays in yonder basin. Such beings may have passions and powers like our own,—as the animalculæ to which I have compared them. The monster that lives and dies in a drop of water—carnivorous, insatiable, subsisting on the creatures minuter than himself—is not less deadly in his wrath, less ferocious in his nature, than the tiger of the desert. There may be things around us that would be dangerous and hostile to men, if Providence had not placed a wall between them and us, merely by different modifications of matter.”

“ And think you that wall never can be removed ? ” asked young Glyndon, abruptly.
“ Are the traditions of sorcerer and wizard,

universal and immemorial as they are, merely fables?"

"Perhaps yes—perhaps no," answered the stranger, indifferently. "But who, in an age in which the reason has chosen its proper bounds, would be mad enough to break the partition that divides him from the boa and the lion—to repine at and rebel against the law which confines the shark to the great deep? Enough of these idle speculations."

Here the stranger rose, summoned the attendant, paid for his sherbet, and, bowing slightly to the company, soon disappeared among the trees.

"Who is that gentleman?" asked Glyndon, eagerly.

The rest looked at each other, without replying, for some moments.

"I never saw him before," said Mervale, at last.

"Nor I."

"Nor I."

"I know him well," said the Neapolitan, who was, indeed, the Count Cetoxa. "If you

remember, it was as my companion that he joined you. He visited Naples about two years ago, and has recently returned; he is very rich—indeed, enormously so. A most agreeable person. I am sorry to hear him talk so strangely to-night; it serves to encourage the various foolish reports that are circulated concerning him.”

“And surely,” said another Neapolitan, “the circumstance that occurred but the other day, so well known to yourself, Cetoxa, justifies the reports you pretend to deprecate.”

“Myself and my countryman,” said Glyndon, “mix so little in Neapolitan society, that we lose much that appears well worthy of lively interest. May I inquire what are the reports, and what is the circumstance you refer to?”

“As to the reports, gentlemen,” said Cetoxa, courteously addressing himself to the two Englishmen, “it may suffice to observe, that they attribute to the Signor Zanoni certain qualities which everybody desires for himself, but damns any one else for possessing. The incident Signor Belgioso alludes to illustrates these qua-

lities, and is, I must own, somewhat startling. You probably play, gentlemen?" (Here Cetoxa paused; and, as both the Englishmen had probably staked a few scudi at the public gaming tables, they bowed assent to the conjecture.) Cetoxa continued: "Well, then, not many days since, and on the very day that Zanoni returned to Naples, it so happened that I had been playing pretty high, and had lost considerably. I rose from the table, resolved no longer to tempt fortune, when I suddenly perceived Zanoni, whose acquaintance I had before made, (and who, I may say, was under some slight obligation to me,) standing by, a spectator. Ere I could express my gratification at this unexpected recognition, he laid his hand on my arm. 'You have lost much,' said he; 'more than you can afford. For my part, I dislike play; yet I wish to have some interest in what is going on. Will you play this sum for me? the risk is mine — the half profits yours.' I was startled, as you may suppose, at such an address; but Zanoni had an air and tone with him it was impossible to resist; be-

sides, I was burning to recover my losses, and should not have risen had I had any money left about me. I told him I would accept his offer, provided we shared the risk as well as profits. 'As you will,' said he, smiling; 'we need have no scruple, for you will be sure to win.' I sate down; Zanoni stood behind me; my luck rose; I invariably won. In fact, I rose from the table a rich man."

"There can be no foul play at the public tables, especially when foul play would make against the bank?" This question was put by Glyndon.

"Certainly not," replied the Count. "But our good fortune was, indeed, marvellous—so extraordinary, that a Sicilian (the Sicilians are all ill-bred, bad-tempered fellows) grew angry and insolent. 'Sir,' said he, turning to my new friend, 'you have no business to stand so near to the table. I do not understand this; you have not acted fairly.' Zanoni replied, with great composure, that he had done nothing against the rules—that he was very sorry that one man could not win without another man losing;

and that he could not act unfairly, even if disposed to do so. The Sicilian took the stranger's mildness for apprehension, and blustered more loudly. In fact, he rose from the table, and confronted Zanoni in a manner that, to say the least of it, was provoking to any gentleman who has some quickness of temper, or some skill with the small sword."

"And," interrupted Belgioso, "the most singular part of the whole to me was, that this Zanoni, who stood opposite to where I sat, and whose face I distinctly saw, made no remark, shewed no resentment. He fixed his eye steadfastly on the Sicilian: never shall I forget that look! it is impossible to describe it, it froze the blood in my veins. The Sicilian staggered back, as if struck. I saw him tremble; he sank on the bench. And then—"

"Yes, then," said Cetoxa, "to my infinite surprise, our gentleman, thus disarmed by a look from Zanoni, turned his whole anger upon me—the—but perhaps you do not know, gentlemen, that I have some repute with my weapon?"

"The best swordsman in Italy," said Belgioso

“Before I could guess why or wherefore,” resumed Cetoxa, “I found myself in the garden behind the house, with Ughelli (that was the Sicilian’s name) facing me, and five or six gentlemen, the witnesses of the duel about to take place, around. Zanoni beckoned me aside. ‘This man will fall,’ said he. ‘When he is on the ground, go to him, and ask whether he will be buried by the side of his father, in the church of San Gennaro?’ ‘Do you then know his family?’ I asked, with great surprise. Zanoni made me no answer, and the next moment I was engaged with the Sicilian. To do him justice, his *imbrogliato* was magnificent, and a swifter lounge never crossed a sword; nevertheless,” added Cetoxa, with a pleasing modesty, “he was run through the body. I went up to him; he could scarcely speak. ‘Have you any request to make—any affairs to settle?’ He shook his head. ‘Where would you wish to be interred?’ He pointed towards the Sicilian coast. ‘What!’ said I, in surprise, ‘not by the side of your father, in the church of San Gennaro?’ As I spoke, his face altered terribly—

he uttered a piercing shriek—the blood gushed from his mouth, and he fell dead. The most strange part of the story is to come. We buried him in the church of San Gennaro. In doing so we took up his father's coffin; the lid came off in moving it, and the skeleton was visible. In the hollow of the skull we found a very slender wire of sharp steel: this caused surprise and inquiry. The father, who was rich, and a miser, had died suddenly, and been buried in haste, owing, it was said, to the heat of the weather. Suspicion once awakened, the examination became minute. The old man's servant was questioned, and at last confessed that the son had murdered the sire: the contrivance was ingenious; the wire was so slender, that it pierced to the brain, and drew but one drop of blood, which the grey hairs concealed. The accomplice will be executed."

"And Zanoni—did he give evidence? did he account for ——"

"No," interrupted the Count; "he declared that he had by accident visited the church that morning; that he had observed the tombstone

of the Count Ughelli; that his guide had told him the Count's son was in Naples—a spendthrift and a gambler. While we were at play, he had heard the Count mentioned by name at the table; and when the challenge was given and accepted, it had occurred to him to name the place of burial, by an instinct which he either could not or would not account for.”

“A very lame story,” said Mervale.

“Yes! but we Italians are superstitious;—the alleged instinct was regarded by many as the whisper of Providence. The next day the stranger became an object of universal interest and curiosity. His wealth, his manner of living, his extraordinary personal beauty, have assisted also to make him the rage; besides, I have had pleasure in introducing so eminent a person to our gayest cavaliers and our fairest ladies.”

“A most interesting narrative,” said Mervale, rising. “Come, Glyndon; shall we seek our hotel?—It is almost day-light. Adieu, Signor!”

“What think you of this story?” said Glyndon, as the young men walked homeward.

“Why, it is very clear this Zanoni is some impostor—some clever rogue; and the Neapo-

litan shares the booty, and puffs him off with all the hackneyed charlatanism of the Marvellous. An unknown adventurer gets into society by being made an object of awe and curiosity;—he is more than ordinarily handsome; and the women are quite content to receive him without any other recommendation than his own face and Cetoxa's fables."

"I cannot agree with you. Cetoxa, though a gambler and a rake, is a nobleman of birth and high repute for courage and honour. Besides, this stranger, with his noble presence and lofty air—so calm—so unobtrusive—has nothing in common with the forward garrulity of an impostor."

"My dear Glyndon, pardon me; but you have not yet acquired any knowledge of the world: the stranger makes the best of a fine person, and his *grand air* is but a trick of the trade. But, to change the subject—how advances the love affair?"

"Oh, Viola could not see me to-day."

"You must not marry her. What would they all say at home?"

"Let us enjoy the present," said Glyndon,

with vivacity; "we are young, rich, good-looking: let us not think of to-morrow."

"Bravo, Glyndon! Here we are at the hotel. Sleep sound, and don't dream of Signor Zanoni."

CHAPTER II.

Prende, giovine audace e impaziente,
L'occasione offerta avidamente.

GERUS. LIB. cant. vi. xxix.

CLARENCE GLYNDON was a young man of fortune, not large, but easy and independent. His parents were dead, and his nearest relation was an only sister, left in England under the care of her aunt, and many years younger than himself. Early in life he had evinced considerable promise in the art of painting, and, rather from enthusiasm than any pecuniary necessity for a profession, he determined to devote himself to a career in which the English artist generally commences with rapture and historical composition, to conclude with avaricious calculation, and portraits of Alderman

Simpkins. Glyndon was supposed by his friends to possess no inconsiderable genius ; but it was of a rash and presumptuous order. He was averse from continuous and steady labour, and his ambition rather sought to gather the fruit than to plant the tree. In common with many artists in their youth, he was fond of pleasure and excitement, yielding with little forethought to whatever impressed his fancy or appealed to his passions. He had travelled through the more celebrated cities of Europe, with the avowed purpose and sincere resolution of studying the divine masterpieces of his art. But in each, pleasure had too often allured him from ambition, and living beauty distracted his worship from the senseless canvass. Brave, adventurous, vain, restless, inquisitive, he was ever involved in wild projects and pleasant dangers—the creature of the impulse and the slave of imagination.

It was then the period, when a feverish spirit of change was working its way to that hideous mockery of human aspirations, the Revolution of France. And from the chaos into which were already jarring the sanctities of the World's

Venerable Belief, arose many shapeless and unformed chimeras. Need I remind the reader, that while that was the day for polished scepticism and affected wisdom, it was the day also for the most egregious credulity and the most mystical superstitions,—the day in which magnetism and magic found converts amongst the disciples of Diderot,—when prophecies were current in every mouth,—when the salon of a philosophical deist was converted into an Heraclea, in which necromancy professed to conjure up the shadows of the dead—when the Crosier and the Book were ridiculed, and Mesmer and Cagliostro were believed. In that Heliacal Rising which heralded the new sun before which all vapours were to vanish, stalked from their graves in the feudal ages all the phantoms that had flitted before the eyes of Paracelsus and Agrippa. Dazzled by the dawn of the Revolution, Glyndon was yet more attracted by its strange accompaniments, and natural it was with him, as with others, that the fancy which ran riot amidst the hopes of a social Utopia, should grasp with avidity all that

promised, out of the dusty tracks of the beaten science, the bold discoveries of some marvellous Elysium.

In his travels, he had listened with vivid interest, at least, if not with implicit belief, to the wonders told of each more renowned *Gheister-seher*, and his mind was therefore prepared for the impression which the mysterious Zanoni at first sight had produced upon it.

There might be another cause for this disposition to credulity. A remote ancestor of Glyndon's, on the mother's side, had achieved no inconsiderable reputation as a philosopher and alchemist. Strange stories were afloat concerning this wise progenitor. He was said to have lived to an age far exceeding the allotted boundaries of mortal existence, and to have preserved to the last the appearance of middle life. He had died at length, it was supposed, of grief, for the sudden death of a great grandchild, the only creature he had ever appeared to love. The works of this philosopher, though rare, were extant, and found in the library of Glyndon's home. Their Platonic mysticism, their bold

assertions, the high promises that might be detected through their figurative and typical phraseology, had early made a deep impression on the young imagination of Clarence Glyndon. His parents, not alive to the consequences of encouraging fancies which the very enlightenment of the age appeared to them sufficient to prevent or dispel, were fond, in the long winter nights, of conversing on the traditional history of this distinguished progenitor. And Clarence thrilled with a fearful pleasure when his mother playfully detected a striking likeness between the features of the young heir and the faded portrait of the alchemist that overhung their mantelpiece, and was the boast of their household and the admiration of their friends:—The child is, indeed, more often than we think for, “the father of the man.”

I have said that Glyndon was fond of pleasure. Facile, as genius ever must be, to cheerful impression, his careless Artist-Life, ere Artist-Life settles down to labour, had wandered from flower to flower. He had enjoyed, almost to the reaction of satiety, the gay revelries of Naples,

when he fell in love with the face and voice of Viola Pisani. But his love, like his ambition, was vague and desultory. It did not satisfy his whole heart and fill up his whole nature; not from want of strong and noble passions, but because his mind was not yet matured and settled enough for their developement. As there is one season for the blossom, another for the fruit, so it is not till the bloom of fancy begins to fade that the heart ripens to the passions that the bloom precedes and foretels. Joyous alike at his lonely easel or amidst his boon companions, he had not yet known enough of sorrow to love deeply. For man must be disappointed with the lesser things of life before he can comprehend the full value of the greatest. It is the shallow sensualists of France who call, in their *salon*-language, love "a folly." Love, better understood, is wisdom. Besides, the world was too much with Clarence Glyndon. His ambition of art was associated with the applause and estimation of that miserable Minority of the Surface that we call the Public.

Like those who deceive, he was ever fearful

of being himself the dupe. He distrusted the sweet innocence of Viola. He could not venture the hazard of seriously proposing marriage to an Italian actress; but the modest dignity of the girl, and something good and generous in his own nature, had hitherto made him shrink from any more worldly but less honourable designs. Thus the familiarity between them seemed rather that of kindness and regard, than passion. He attended the theatre; he stole behind the scenes to converse with her; he filled his portfolio with countless sketches of a beauty that charmed him as an artist as well as lover. And day after day he floated on through a changing sea of doubt and irresolution, of affection and distrust. The last, indeed, constantly sustained against his better reason, by the sober admonitions of Mervale, a matter-of-fact man!

The day following that eve on which this section of my story opens, Glyndon was riding alone by the shores of the Neapolitan sea, on the other side of the Cavern of Posilipo. It was past noon; the sun had lost its early fervour,

and a cool breeze sprung voluptuously from the sparkling sea. Bending over a fragment of stone near the road-side, he perceived the form of a man; and when he approached he recognised Zanoni.

The Englishman saluted him courteously. "Have you discovered some antique?" said he, with a smile; "they are common as pebbles on this road."

"No," replied Zanoni; "it was but one of those antiques that have their date, indeed, from the beginning of the world, but which Nature eternally withers and renews." So saying, he shewed Glyndon a small herb, with a pale blue flower, and then placed it carefully in his bosom.

"You are a herbalist?"

"I am."

"It is, I am told, a study full of interest."

"To those who understand it, doubtless."

"Is the knowledge, then, so rare?"

"Rare! The deeper knowledge is perhaps rather, among the arts, *lost* to the modern philosophy of commonplace and surface! Do you imagine there was no foundation for those tra-

ditions which come dimly down from remoter ages—as shells now found on the mountaintops inform us where the seas have been? What was the old Colchian magic, but the minute study of Nature in her lowliest works? What the fable of *Médea*, but a proof of the powers that may be extracted from the germ and leaf? The most gifted of all the Priestcrafts, the mysterious sisterhoods of *Cuth*, concerning whose incantations Learning vainly bewilders itself amidst the maze of legends, sought in the meanest herbs what, perhaps, the Babylonian Sages explored in vain amidst the loftiest stars. Tradition yet tells you that there existed a race* who could slay their enemies from afar, without weapon, without movement. The herb that ye tread on may have deadlier powers than your engineers can give to their mightiest instruments of war. Can you guess, that to these Italian shores—to the old *Circæan Promontory*, came the Wise from the farthest East, to search for plants and simples which your Pharmacists

* The natives of *Theba*.—*Plut. Symp.* 1. 5. c 7.

of the Counter would fling from them as weeds? The first Herbalists—the master chemists of the world—were the tribe that the ancient reverence called by the name of *Titans*.* I remember once, by the Hebrus, in the reign of—— But this talk,” said Zanoni, checking himself abruptly, and with a cold smile, “serves only to waste your time and my own.” He paused, looked steadily at Glyndon, and continued—“Young man, think you that vague curiosity will supply the place of earnest labour? I read your heart. You wish to know me, and not this humble herb: but pass on; your desire cannot be satisfied.”

“You have not the politeness of your countrymen,” said Glyndon, somewhat discomposed. “Suppose I were desirous to cultivate your acquaintance, why should you reject my advances?”

“I reject no man’s advances,” answered Zanoni; “I must know them if they so desire;

* Syncellus, p. 14.—“Chemistry the Invention of the Giants.”

but *me*, in return, they can never comprehend. If you ask my acquaintance, it is yours; but I would warn you to shun me."

- "And why are you, then, so dangerous?"

"On this earth, men are often, without their own agency, fated to be dangerous to others. If I were to predict your fortune by the vain calculations of the astrologer, I should tell you in their despicable jargon that my planet sat darkly in your house of life. Cross me not, if you can avoid it. I warn you now for the first time and last."

"You despise the astrologers, yet you utter a jargon as mysterious as theirs. I neither gamble nor quarrel; why, then, should I fear you?"

"As you will; I have done."

"Let me speak frankly; your conversation last night interested and perplexed me."

"I know it; minds like yours are attracted by mystery."

Glyndon was piqued at these words, though in the tone in which they were spoken there was no contempt.

"I see you do not consider me worthy of

your friendship. Be it so. Good day!" Zanoni coldly replied to the salutation; and, as the Englishman rode on, returned to his botanical employment.

The same night, Glyndon went, as usual, to the theatre. He was standing behind the scenes watching Viola, who was on the stage in one of her most brilliant parts. The house resounded with applause. Glyndon was transported with a young man's passion and a young man's pride:—"This glorious creature," thought he, "may yet be mine."

He felt, while thus wrapt in delicious reverie, a slight touch upon his shoulder: he turned, and beheld Zanoni. "You are in danger," said the latter. "Do not walk home to-night; or if you do, go not alone."

Before Glyndon recovered from his surprise, Zanoni disappeared; and when the Englishman saw him again, he was in the box of one of the Neapolitan nobles, where Glyndon could not follow him.

Viola now left the stage, and Glyndon accosted her with an unaccustomed warmth of

gallantry. But Viola, contrary to her gentle habit, turned with an evident impatience from the address of her lover. Taking aside Gionetta, who was her constant attendant at the theatre, she said, in an earnest whisper—

“ Oh, Gionetta! He is here again!—the stranger of whom I spoke to thee!—and again, he alone, of the whole theatre, withholds from me his applause.”

“ Which is he, my darling?” said the old woman, with fondness in her voice. “ He must indeed be dull—not worth a thought.”

The actress drew Gionetta nearer to the stage, and pointed out to her a man in one of the nearer boxes, conspicuous amongst all else by the simplicity of his dress, and the extraordinary beauty of his features.

“ Not worth a thought, Gionetta!” repeated Viola—“ not worth a thought! Alas, not to think of him seems the absence of thought itself!”

The prompter summoned the Signora Pisani. “ Find out his name, Gionetta,” said she, moving slowly to the stage, and passing by Glyndon,

who gazed at her with a look of sorrowful reproach.

The scene on which the actress now entered was that of the final catastrophe, wherein all her remarkable powers of voice and art were pre-eminently called forth. The house hung on every word with breathless worship; but the eyes of Viola sought only those of one calm and unmoved spectator: she exerted herself as if inspired. Zanoni listened, and observed her with an attentive gaze, but no approval escaped his lips; no emotion changed the expression of his cold and half disdainful aspect. Viola, who was in the character of one who loved, but without return, never felt so acutely the part she played. Her tears were truthful;—her passion that of nature: it was almost too terrible to behold. She was borne from the stage exhausted and insensible, amidst such a tempest of admiring rapture as Continental audiences alone can raise. The crowd stood up—handkerchiefs waved—garlands and flowers were thrown on the stage—men wiped their eyes, and women sobbed aloud.

“By heavens!” said a Neapolitan of great rank, “she has fired me beyond endurance. To-night, this very night, she shall be mine! You have arranged all, Mascari?”

“All, Signor. And if this young Englishman should attend her home?”

“The presuming barbarian! At all events, let him bleed for his folly. I will have no rival.”

“But an Englishman! There is always a search after the bodies of the English.”

“Fool! is not the sea deep enough, or the earth secret enough, to hide one dead man? Our ruffians are silent as the grave itself:—and I!—who would dare to suspect, to arraign the Prince di ——? See to it—let him be watched, and the fitting occasion taken. I trust him to you:—robbers murder him—you understand;—the country swarms with them;—plunder and strip him, the better to favour such report. Take three men; the rest shall be my escort.”

Mascari shrugged his shoulders, and bowed submissively.

The streets of Naples were not then so safe as now, and carriages were both less expensive and

more necessary. The vehicle which was regularly engaged by the young actress was not to be found. Gionetta, too aware of the beauty of her mistress and the number of her admirers to contemplate without alarm the idea of their return on foot, communicated her distress to Glyndon, and he besought Viola, who recovered but slowly, to accept his own carriage. Perhaps before that night she would not have rejected so slight a service. Now, for some reason or other, she refused. Glyndon, offended, was retiring sullenly, when Gionetta stopped him. "Stay, Signor," said she, coaxingly; "the dear Signora is not well—do not be angry with her; I will make her accept your offer."

Glyndon stayed, and after a few moments spent in expostulation on the part of Gionetta, and resistance on that of Viola, the offer was accepted. Gionetta and her charge entered the carriage, and Glyndon was left at the door of the theatre to return home on foot. The mysterious warning of Zanoni then suddenly occurred to him; he had forgotten it in the interest of his lover's quarrel with Viola. He

thought it now advisable to guard against danger foretold by lips so mysterious: he looked round for some one he knew: the theatre was disgorging its crowds; they hustled, and jostled, and pressed upon him; but he recognised no familiar countenance. While pausing irresolute, he heard Mervale's voice calling on him, and, to his great relief, discovered his friend making his way through the throng.

“I have secured you,” said he, “a place in the Count Cetoxa's carriage. Come along, he is waiting for us.”

“How kind in you! how did you find me out?”

“I met Zanoni in the passage.—‘Your friend is at the door of the theatre,’ said he; ‘do not let him go home on foot to-night; the streets of Naples are not always safe.’ I immediately remembered that some of the Calabrian bravos had been busy within the city the last few weeks, and, suddenly meeting Cetoxa—but here he is.”

Further explanation was forbidden, for they now joined the Count. As Glyndon entered the carriage and drew up the glass, he saw four

men standing apart by the pavement, who seemed to eye him with attention.

“Cospetto!” cried one — “that is the Englishman!” Glyndon imperfectly heard the exclamation as the carriage drove on. He reached home in safety.

The familiar and endearing intimacy which always exists in Italy between the nurse and the child she has reared, and which the “Romeo and Juliet” of Shakspeare in no way exaggerates, could not but be drawn yet closer than usual, in a situation so friendless as that of the orphan-actress. In all that concerned the weaknesses of the heart, Gionetta had large experience; and when, three nights before, Viola, on returning from the theatre, had wept bitterly, the nurse had succeeded in extracting from her a confession that she had seen one—not seen for two weary and eventful years—but never forgotten, and who, alas, had not evinced the slightest recognition of herself. Gionetta could not comprehend all the vague and innocent emotions that swelled this sorrow; but she resolved them all, with her plain blunt understanding,

to the one sentiment of love. And here, she was well-fitted to sympathize and console. Confidante to Viola's entire and deep heart she never could be—for that heart never could have words for all its secrets. But such confidence as she could obtain, she was ready to repay by the most unreprieving pity and the most ready service.

“Have you discovered who he is?” asked Viola, as she was now alone in the carriage with Gionetta.

“Yes: he is the celebrated Signor Zanoni, about whom all the great ladies have gone mad. They say he is so rich!—oh, so much richer than any of the Inglesi!—not but what the Signor Glyndon——”

“Cease!” interrupted the young actress. “Zanoni! Speak of the Englishman no more.”

The carriage was now entering that more lonely and remote part of the city in which Viola's house was situated, when it suddenly stopped.

Gionetta, in alarm, thrust her head out of the window, and perceived by the pale light of

the moon, that the driver, torn from his seat, was already pinioned in the arms of two men: the next moment, the door was opened violently, and a tall figure, masked and mantled, appeared.

“Fear not, fairest Pisani,” said he, gently, “no ill shall befall you.” As he spoke, he wound his arms round the form of the fair actress, and endeavoured to lift her from the carriage. But Gionetta was no ordinary ally—she thrust back the assailant with a force that astonished him, and followed the shock by a volley of the most energetic reprobation.

The mask drew back, and composed his disordered mantle.

“By the body of Bacchus!” said he, half laughing, “she is well protected. Here, Luigi—Giovanni! seize the hag—quick—why loiter ye?”

The mask retired from the door, and another and yet taller form presented itself. “Be calm, Viola Pisani,” said he, in a low voice; “with me you are indeed safe!” He lifted his mask as he spoke, and shewed the noble features of Zanoni. “Be calm, be hushed,—I can save you.” He vanished, leaving Viola lost in sur-

prise, agitation, and delight. There were, in all, nine masks: two were engaged with the driver; one stood at the head of the carriage horses; a fourth guarded the well-trained steeds of the party; three others (besides Zanoni, and the one who had first accosted Viola) stood apart by a carriage drawn to the side of the road. To these three Zanoni motioned: they advanced; he pointed towards the first mask, who was in fact the Prince di ——, and, to his unspeakable astonishment, the Prince was suddenly seized from behind.

“Treason!” he cried. “Treason among my own men! What means this?”

“Place him in his carriage! If he resist, his blood be on his own head!” said Zanoni, calmly.

He approached the men who had detained the coachman.

“You are outnumbered and outwitted,” said he: “join your lord; you are three men—we six, armed to the teeth. Thank our mercy that we spare your lives.—Go!”

The men gave way, dismayed. The driver remounted.

“Cut the traces of their carriage and the bridles of their horses,” said Zanoni, as he entered the vehicle containing Viola, which now drove on rapidly, leaving the discomfited ravisher in a state of rage and stupor impossible to describe.

“Allow me to explain this mystery to you,” said Zanoni. “I discovered the plot against you—no matter how; I frustrated it thus:—The head of this design is a nobleman, who has long persecuted you in vain. He and two of his creatures watched you from the entrance of the theatre, having directed six others to await him on the spot where you were attacked; myself and five of my servants supplied their place, and were mistaken for his own followers. I had previously ridden alone to the spot where the men were waiting, and informed them that their master would not require their services that night. They believed me, and accordingly dispersed. I then joined my own band, whom I had left in the rear; you know all. We are at your door.”

CHAPTER III.

In quale scuola,
Da qual mastro s'apprendre
La tua sì lunga e dubbia arte d'amare.

AMINTA, At. 2.

ZANONI followed the young Neapolitan into her house: Gionetta vanished — they were left alone.

Alone, in that room so often filled, in the old happy days, with the wild melodies of Pisani; and now, as she saw this mysterious, haunting, yet beautiful and stately stranger, standing on the very spot where she had sat at her father's feet, thrilled and spellbound — she almost thought, in her fantastic way of personifying her own airy notions, that that spiritual music had taken shape and life, and stood before her

glorious in the image it assumed. She was unconscious all the while of her own loveliness. She had thrown aside her hood and veil; her hair, somewhat disordered, fell over the ivory neck which the dress partially displayed; and, as her dark eyes swam with grateful tears, and her cheek flushed with its late excitement, the god of light and music himself never, amidst his Arcadian valleys, wooed, in his mortal guise, maiden or nymph more fair.

Zanoni gazed at her with a look in which admiration seemed not unmingled with compassion. He muttered a few words to himself, and then addressed her aloud.

“ Viola, I have saved you from a great peril; not from dishonour only, but, perhaps, from death. The Prince di —, under a weak despot and a venal administration, is a man above the law. He is capable of every crime; but amongst his passions he has such prudence as belongs to ambition; if you were not to reconcile yourself to your shame, you would never enter the world again to tell your tale. The ravisher has no heart for repentance, but he has

a hand that can murder. I have saved you, Viola. Perhaps you would ask me wherefore?" Zanoni paused, and smiled mournfully, as he added, "You will not wrong me by the thought that he who has preserved is not less selfish than he who would have injured. Orphan, I do not speak to you in the language of your wooers; enough that I know pity, and am not ungrateful for affection. Why blush, why tremble at the word? I read your heart while I speak, and I see not one thought that should give you shame. I say not that you love me yet; happily, the fancy may be roused long before the heart is touched. But it has been my fate to fascinate your eye, to influence your imagination. It is to warn you against what could bring you but sorrow, as I warned you once to prepare for sorrow itself, that I am now your guest. The Englishman, Glyndon, loves thee well—better, perhaps, than I can ever love: if not worthy of thee yet, he has but to know thee more to deserve thee better. He may wed thee, he may bear thee to his own free and happy land, the land of thy mother's kin.

Forget me; teach thyself to return and to deserve his love; and I tell thee that thou wilt be honoured and be happy."

Viola listened with silent, inexpressible emotion, and burning blushes, to this strange address, and when he had concluded she covered her face with her hands, and wept. And yet, much as such words were calculated to humble or irritate, to produce indignation or excite shame, those were not the feelings with which her eyes streamed and her heart swelled. The woman at that moment was lost in the child; and *as* a child, with all its exacting, craving, yet innocent desire to be loved, weeps in unrebuking sadness when its affection is thrown austere-ly back upon itself—so, without anger and without shame, wept Viola.

Zanoni contemplated her thus, as her graceful head, shadowed by its redundant tresses, bent before him; and after a moment's pause he drew near to her, and said, in a voice of the most soothing sweetness, and with a half smile upon his lip—

"Do you remember, when I told you to

struggle for the light, that I pointed for example to the resolute and earnest tree: I did not tell you, fair child, to take example by the moth, that would soar to the star, but falls scorched beside the lamp. Come, I will talk to thee. This Englishman——”

Viola drew herself away, and wept yet more passionately.

“ This Englishman is of thine own years, not far above thine own rank. Thou mayst share his thoughts in life—thou mayst sleep beside him in the same grave in death! And I—but *that* view of the future should concern us not. Look into thy heart, and thou wilt see that till again my shadow crossed thy path, there had grown up for this, thine equal, a pure and calm affection that would have ripened into love. Hast thou never pictured to thyself a home in which thy partner was thy young wooer?”

“ Never!” said Viola, with sudden energy, “ never, but to feel that such was not the fate ordained me. And, oh!” she continued, rising suddenly, and putting aside the tresses that veiled her face, she fixed her eyes upon the

questioner; “and, oh! whoever thou art that thus wouldst read my soul and shape my future, do not mistake the sentiment that—that”—(she faltered an instant, and went on with downcast eyes,) “that has fascinated my thoughts to thee. Do not think that I could nourish a love unsought and unreturned. It is not love that I feel for thee, stranger. Why should I? Thou hast never spoken to me but to admonish—and now, to wound!” Again she paused, again her voice faltered; the tears trembled on her eyelids; she brushed them away, and resumed. “No, not love—if that be love which I have heard and read of, and sought to simulate on the stage,—but a more solemn, fearful, and, it seems to me, almost preternatural attraction, which makes me associate thee, waking or dreaming, with images that at once charm and awe. Thinkest thou, if it were love, that I could speak to thee thus? that” (she raised her looks suddenly to his) “mine eyes could thus search and confront thine own? Stranger, I ask but at times to see, to hear thee! Stranger, talk not to me of others. Forewarn, rebuke,

bruise my heart, reject the not unworthy gratitude it offers thee, if thou wilt, but come not always to me as an omen of grief and trouble. Sometimes have I seen thee in my dreams surrounded by shapes of glory and light ; thy looks radiant with a celestial joy which they wear not now. Stranger, thou hast saved me, and I thank and bless thee ! Is that also a homage thou wouldst reject ?” With these words, she crossed her arms meekly on her bosom, and inclined lowly before him. Nor did her humility seem unwomanly or abject, nor that of mistress to lover, of slave to master, but rather of a child to its guardian, of a neophyte of the old religion to her priest. Zanoni’s brow was melancholy and thoughtful. He looked at her with a strange expression of kindness, of sorrow, yet of tender affection, in his eyes ; but his lips were stern, and his voice cold, as he replied—

“ Do you know what you ask, Viola ? Do you guess the danger to yourself—perhaps to both of us—which you court ? Do you know that my life, separated from the turbulent herd

of men, is one worship of the Beautiful, from which I seek to banish what the Beautiful inspires in most? As a calamity, I shun what to man seems the fairest fate—the love of the daughters of earth. At present, I can warn and save thee from many evils; if I saw more of thee, would the power still be mine? You understand me not. What I am about to add, it will be easier to comprehend. I bid thee banish from thy heart all thought of me, but as one whom the Future cries aloud to thee to avoid. Glyndon, if thou acceptest his homage, will love thee till the tomb closes upon both. I, too,” (he added, with emotion,)—“I, too, might love thee!”

“You!” cried Viola, with the vehemence of a sudden impulse of delight, of rapture, which she could not suppress; but the instant after she would have given worlds to recall the exclamation.

“Yes, Viola, I might love thee; but in that love what sorrow and what change! The flower gives perfume to the rock on whose heart it grows. A little while, and the flower is dead; but the rock still endures. The snow at its

breast—the sunshine on its summit. Pause—think well. Danger besets thee yet. For some days thou shalt be safe from thy remorseless persecutor; but the hour soon comes when thy only security will be in flight. If the Englishman love thee worthily, thy honour will be dear to him as his own; if not, there are yet other lands where love will be truer, and virtue less in danger from fraud and force. Farewell; my own destiny I cannot foresee except through cloud and shadow. I know, at least, that we shall meet again; but learn ere then, sweet flower, that there are more genial resting places than the rock.”

He turned as he spoke, and gained the outer door where Gionetta discreetly stood. Zanoni lightly laid his hand on her arm. With the gay accent of a jesting cavalier, he said—

“The Signor Glyndon woos your mistress: he may wed her. I know your love for her. Disabuse her of any caprice for me. I am a bird ever on the wing.”

He dropped a purse into Gionetta's hand as he spoke, and was gone.

CHAPTER IV.

Les Intelligences Celestes se font voir et se communiquent plus volontiers dans le silence et dans la tranquillité de la solitude. On aura donc une petite chambre ou un cabinet secret, &c. — *Les Clavicules de Rabbi Salomon*, chap. 3 ; traduites exactement du texte Hebreu par M. Pierre Morisoneau, Professeur des Langues Orientales et Sectateur de la Philosophie des Sages Cabalistes. (Manuscript Translation.)

THE Palace retained by Zanoni was in one of the less frequented quarters of the city. It still stands, now ruined and dismantled, a monument of the splendour of a chivalry long since vanished from Naples, with the lordly races of the Norman and the Spaniard.

As he entered the rooms reserved for his private hours, two Indians, in the dress of their

country, received him at the threshold with the grave salutations of the East. They had accompanied him from the far lands in which, according to rumour, he had for many years fixed his home. But they could communicate nothing to gratify curiosity or justify suspicion. They spoke no language but their own. With the exception of these two, his princely retinue was composed of the native hirelings of the city; and these his lavish but imperious generosity made the implicit creatures of his will. In his house, and in his habits, so far as they were seen, there was nothing to account for the rumours which were circulated abroad. He was not, as we are told of Albertus Magnus or the great Leonardo da Vinci, served by airy forms; and no brazen image, the invention of magic mechanism, communicated to him the influences of the stars. None of the apparatus of the alchemist—the crucible, and the metals—gave solemnity to his chambers, or accounted for his wealth; nor did he even seem to interest himself in those serener studies which might be supposed to colour his peculiar conversation

with abstract notions, and often with recondite learning. No books spoke to him in his solitude; and if ever he had drawn from them his knowledge, it seemed now that the only page he read was the wide one of Nature, and that a capacious and startling memory supplied the rest. Yet was there one exception to what in all else seemed customary and commonplace, and which, according to the authority we have prefixed to this chapter, might indicate the follower of the occult sciences. Whether at Rome or Naples, or, in fact, wherever his abode, he selected one room remote from the rest of the house, which was fastened by a lock scarcely larger than the seal of a ring, yet which sufficed to baffle the most cunning instruments of the locksmith—at least, one of his servants, prompted by irresistible curiosity, had made the attempt in vain; and though he had fancied it was tried in the most favourable time for secrecy—not a soul near—in the dead of night—Zanoni himself absent from home, yet his superstition, or his conscience, told him the reason why the next day the Major Domo quietly dismissed him. He compensated him-

self for this misfortune by spreading his own story, with a thousand amusing exaggerations. He declared that, as he approached the door, invisible hands seemed to pluck him away; and that when he touched the lock, he was struck as by a palsy to the ground. One surgeon, who heard the tale, observed, to the distaste of the wonder-mongers, that possibly Zanoni made a dexterous use of electricity. Howbeit, this room, once so secured, was never entered, save by Zanoni himself.

The solemn voice of Time, from the neighbouring church, at last aroused the lord of the palace from the deep and motionless reverie, rather resembling a trance than thought, in which his mind was absorbed.

“It is one more sand out of the mighty Hour-glass,” said he, murmuringly, “and yet time neither adds to, nor steals from, an atom in the Infinite! —Soul of mine, the luminous, the Augoeides,*

* *Αυγοειδης*—a word favoured by the mystical Platonists, σφαιρα ψυχης αυγοειδης, οταν μητε εκτεινηται επι τι, μητε εσω συντρεχη μητε συνιζανη, αλλα φωτι λαμηται, φ την αληθειαν ορα την παντων, και την εν αυτη. *MARC. ANT.*

why descendest thou from thy sphere—why from the eternal, starlike, and passionless Serene, shrinkest thou back to the mists of the dark sarcophagus? How long, too austere taught that companionship with the things that die brings with it but sorrow in its sweetness, hast thou dwelt contented with thy majestic solitude?”

As he thus murmured, one of the earliest birds that salute the dawn broke into sudden song from amidst the orange trees in the garden below his casement. And as suddenly song answered song, the mate, awakened at the note, gave back its happy answer to the bird. He listened; and not the soul he had questioned, but the heart replied. He rose, and with restless strides paced the narrow floor. “Away

Lib. ii.—The sense of which beautiful sentence of the old philosophy, which, as Bayle well observes, in his article on Cornelius Agrippa, the modern Quietists have (however impotently) sought to imitate, is to the effect that the sphere of the soul is luminous, when nothing external has contact with the soul itself; but when lit by its own light, it sees the truth of all things and the truth centered in itself.

from this world!" he exclaimed at length, with an impatient tone. "Can no time loosen its fatal ties? As the attraction that holds the earth in space, is the attraction that fixes the soul to earth. Away, from the dark-grey planet! Break, ye fetters; arise, ye wings!"

He passed through the silent galleries, and up the lofty stairs, and entered the secret chamber.

* * * * *

CHAPTER V.

Oh quanti sono incantatrici ; oh quanti
Incantator tra noi, che non si sanno.

ORL. FUR., cant. viii. 1.

THE next day, Glyndon bent his steps towards Zanoni's palace. The young man's imagination, naturally inflammable, was singularly excited by the little he had seen and heard of this strange being—a spell, he could neither master nor account for, attracted him towards the stranger. Zanoni's power seemed mysterious and great, his motives kindly and benevolent; yet his manners chilling and repellent. Why at one moment reject Glyndon's acquaintance, at another save him from danger? How had Zanoni thus acquired the knowledge of enemies

unknown to Glyndon himself? His interest was deeply roused, his gratitude appealed to; he resolved to make another effort to conciliate the ungracious herbalist.

The Signor was at home, and Glyndon was admitted into a lofty saloon, where in a few moments Zanoni joined him.

“I am come to thank you for your warning last night,” said he, “and to entreat you to complete my obligation by informing me of the quarter to which I may look for enmity and peril.”

“You are a gallant,” said Zanoni, with a smile, and in the English language, “and do you know so little of the south as not to be aware that gallants have always rivals?”

“Are you serious?” said Glyndon, colouring.

“Most serious. You love Viola Pisani; you have for rival one of the most powerful and relentless of the Neapolitan princes. Your danger is indeed great.”

“But, pardon me!—how came it known to you?”

“I give no account of myself to mortal man,”

replied Zanoni, haughtily ; “and to me it matters nothing whether you regard or scorn my warning.”

“Well, if I may not question you, be it so ; —but at least advise me what to do.”

“Would you follow my advice ?”

“Why not ?”

“Because you are constitutionally brave ; you are fond of excitement and mystery ; you like to be the hero of a romance. Were I to advise you to leave Naples, would you do so while Naples contains a foe to confront, or a mistress to pursue ?”

“You are right,” said the young Englishman, with energy. “No ! and you cannot reproach me for such a resolution.”

“But there is another course left to you : do you love Viola Pisani truly and fervently ? if so, marry her, and take a bride to your native land.”

“Nay,” answered Glyndon, embarrassed ; “Viola is not of my rank. Her profession, too, is—in short, I am enslaved by her beauty, but I cannot wed her.”

Zanoni frowned.

“Your love, then, is but selfish lust, and I advise you to your own happiness no more. Young man, Destiny is less inexorable than it appears. The resources of the great Ruler of the Universe are not so scanty and so stern as to deny to men the divine privilege of Free Will; all of us can carve out our own way, and God can make our very contradictions harmonize with His solemn ends. You have before you an option. Honourable and generous love may even now work out your happiness, and effect your escape; a frantic and interested passion will but lead you to misery and doom.”

“Do you pretend then to read the Future?”

“I have said all that it pleases me to utter.”

“While you assume the moralist to me, Signor Zanoni,” said Glyndon, with a smile, “are you yourself so indifferent to youth and beauty, as to act the stoic to its allurements?”

“If it were necessary that practice square with precept,” said Zanoni, with a bitter smile, “our monitors would be but few. The gestic or conduct of the individual can affect but a

small circle beyond himself; the permanent good or evil that he works to others lies rather in the sentiments he can diffuse. His acts are limited and momentary; his sentiments may pervade the universe, and inspire generations till the day of doom. All our virtues, all our laws, are drawn from books and maxims, which *are* sentiments, not from deeds. In conduct, Julian had the virtues of a Christian, and Constantine the vices of a Pagan. The sentiments of Julian reconverted thousands to Paganism, those of Constantine helped, under Heaven's will, to bow to Christianity the nations of the earth. In conduct, the humblest fisherman on yonder sea, who believes in the miracles of San Gennaro, may be a better man than Luther. To the sentiments of Luther the mind of modern Europe is indebted for the noblest revolution it has known. Our opinions, young Englishman, are the angel part of us; our acts, the earthly."

"You have reflected deeply, for an Italian," said Glyndon.

"Who told you I was an Italian?"

“Are you not? And yet, when I hear you speak my own language as a native, I—”

“Tush!” interrupted Zanoni, impatiently turning away. Then after a pause he resumed in a mild voice—“Glyndon, do you renounce Viola Pisani? Will you take some days to consider of what I have said?”

“Renounce her—never!”

“Then you will marry her?”

“Impossible!”

“Be it so: she will then renounce you. I tell you that you have rivals.”

“Yes; the Prince di ———; but I do not fear him.”

“You have another whom you will fear more.”

“And who is he?”

“Myself.”

Glyndon turned pale, and started from his seat.

“You, Signor Zanoni!—you—and you dare to tell me so?”

“Dare! Alas! there are times when I wish that I could fear.”

These arrogant words were not uttered arro-

gantly, but in a tone of the most mournful dejection. Glyndon was enraged, confounded, and yet awed. However, he had a brave English heart within his breast, and he recovered himself quickly.

“Signor,” said he, calmly, “I am not to be duped by these solemn phrases and these mystical assumptions. You may have powers which I cannot comprehend or emulate, or you may be but a keen impostor.”

“Well, proceed !”

“I mean, then,” continued Glyndon, resolutely, though somewhat disconcerted, “I mean you to understand, that, though I am not to be persuaded or compelled by a stranger to marry Viola Pisani, I am not the less determined never tamely to yield her to another.”

Zanoni looked gravely at the young man, whose sparkling eyes and heightened colour testified the spirit to support his words, and replied—“So bold ! well ; it becomes you. But take my advice : wait yet nine days, and tell me then if you will marry the fairest and the purest creature that ever crossed your path.”

“But if you love her, why—why—”

“Why am I anxious that she should wed another: to save her from myself! Listen to me. That girl, humble and uneducated though she be, has in her the seeds of the most lofty qualities and virtues. She can be all to the man she loves—all that man can desire in wife or mistress. Her soul, developed by affection, will elevate your own: it will influence your fortunes, exalt your destiny: you will become a great and a prosperous man. If, on the contrary, she fall to me, I know not what may be her lot; but I know that there is an ordeal which few can pass, and which hitherto no woman has survived.”

As Zanoni spoke, his face became colourless, and there was something in his voice that froze the warm blood of the listener.

“What is this mystery which surrounds you?” exclaimed Glyndon, unable to repress his emotion. “Are you, in truth, different from other men? Have you passed the boundary of lawful knowledge? Are you, as some declare, a sorcerer, or only a—”

“Hush!” interrupted Zanoni, gently, and with a smile of singular but melancholy sweetness: “have you earned the right to ask me these questions? Though Italy still boast an Inquisition, its power is rivelled as a leaf which the first wind shall scatter. The days of torture and persecution are over; and a man may live as he pleases, and talk as it suits him, without fear of the stake and the rack. Since I can defy persecution, pardon me if I do not yield to curiosity.”

Glyndon blushed, and rose. In spite of his love for Viola, and his natural terror of such a rival, he felt himself irresistibly drawn towards the very man he had most cause to suspect and dread. He held out his hand to Zanoni, saying, “Well, then, if we are to be rivals, our swords must settle our rights: till then I would fain be friends.”

“Friends! You know not what you ask.”

“Enigmas again!”

“Enigmas!” cried Zanoni, passionately, “ay! can you dare to solve them? Not till then could I give you my right hand, and call you friend.”

“ I could dare everything and all things for the attainment of superhuman wisdom,” said Glyndon; and his countenance was lighted up with wild and intense enthusiasm.

Zanoni observed him in thoughtful silence.

“ The seeds of the ancestor live in the son,” he muttered; “ he may, — yet”—— He broke off abruptly; then, speaking aloud — “ Go, Glyndon,” said he: “ we shall meet again, but I will not ask your answer till the hour presses for decision.”

CHAPTER VI.

'Tis certain that this man has an estate of fifty thousand livres, and seems to be a person of very great accomplishments. But, then, if he's a Wizard, are wizards so devoutly given as this man seems to be?—In short, I could make neither head nor tail on't.—(*The COUNT DE GABALIS, Translation affixed to the Second Edition of the "Rape of the Lock."*)

“OF all the weaknesses which little men rail against, there is none that they are more apt to ridicule than the tendency to believe. And of all the signs of a corrupt heart and a feeble head, the tendency of incredulity is the surest.

“Real philosophy seeks rather to solve than to deny. While we hear, every day, the small pretenders to science talk of the absurdities of Alchemy and the dream of the Philosopher's

Stone, a more erudite knowledge is aware that by Alchemists the greatest discoveries in science have been made, and much which still seems abstruse, had we the key to the mystic phraseology they were compelled to adopt, might open the way to yet more noble acquisitions. The Philosopher's Stone itself has seemed no visionary chimera to some of the soundest chemists that even the present century has produced.* Man cannot contradict the Laws of Nature. But are all the Laws of Nature yet discovered?

“ ‘Give me a proof of your Art,’ says the rational inquirer. ‘When I have seen the effect, I will endeavour, with you, to ascertain the causes.’” Somewhat to the above effect were the first thoughts of Clarence Glyndon on quitting Zanoni. But Clarence Glyndon was *no* ‘rational inquirer.’ The more vague and mysterious the

* Mr. D’Israeli, in his “Curiosities of Literature,” (Article Alchem.) after quoting the sanguine judgments of modern chemists, as to the transmutation of metals, observes, of one yet greater and more recent than those to which Glyndon’s thoughts could have referred—“Sir Humphry Davy told me that he did not consider this undiscovered art as impossible; but should it ever be discovered, would certainly be useless.”

language of Zanoni, the more it imposed upon him. A proof would have been something tangible, with which he would have sought to grapple. And it would have only disappointed his curiosity to find the supernatural reduced to Nature. He endeavoured, in vain, at some moments rousing himself from credulity to the scepticism he deprecated, to reconcile what he had heard with the probable motives and designs of an impostor. Unlike Mesmer and Cagliostro, Zanoni, whatever his pretensions, did not make them a source of profit; nor was Glyndon's position or rank in life sufficient to render any influence obtained over his mind subservient to schemes, whether of avarice or ambition. Yet, ever and anon, with the suspicion of worldly knowledge, he strove to persuade himself that Zanoni had at least some sinister object in inducing him to what his English pride and manner of thought considered a derogatory marriage with the poor actress. Might not Viola and the Mystic be in league with each other? Might not all this jargon of prophecy

and menace be but artifices to dupe him? He felt an unjust resentment towards Viola, at her having secured such an ally. But with that resentment was mingled a natural jealousy. Zanoni threatened him with rivalry. Zanoni, who, whatever his character or his arts, possessed at least all the external attributes that dazzle and command. Impatient of his own doubts, he plunged into the society of such acquaintances as he had made at Naples—chiefly artists, like himself, men of letters, and the rich commercialists, who were already vying with the splendour, though debarred from the privileges, of the nobles. Here he heard much of Zanoni, already with them, as with the idler classes, an object of curiosity and speculation.

He had noticed, as a thing remarkable, that Zanoni had conversed with him in English, and with a command of the language so complete that he might have passed for a native. On the other hand, in Italian, Zanoni was equally at ease. Glyndon found that it was the same in languages less usually learned by foreigners.

A painter from Sweden, who had conversed with him, was positive that he was a Swede; and a merchant from Constantinople, who had sold some of his goods to Zanoni, professed his conviction that none but a Turk, or at least a native of the East, could have so thoroughly mastered the soft Oriental intonations. Yet, in all these languages, when they came to compare their several recollections, there was a slight, scarce perceptible distinction, not in pronunciation, nor even accent, but in the key and chime, as it were, of the voice, between himself and a native. This faculty was one which, Glyndon called to mind, that sect, whose tenets and powers have never been more than most partially explored, the Rosicrucians, especially arrogated. He remembered to have heard in Germany of the work of John Bringeret,* asserting that all the languages of earth were known to the genuine Brotherhood of the Rosy Cross. Did Zanoni belong to this mystical Fraternity, who, in an earlier age, boasted of secrets of

* Printed in 1615.

which the Philosopher's Stone was but the least ; who considered themselves the heirs of all that the Chaldæans, the Magi, the Gymnosophists, and the Platonists had taught ; and who differed from all the darker Sons of Magic in the virtue of their lives, the purity of their doctrines, and their insisting, as the foundation of all wisdom, on the subjugation of the senses, and the intensity of Religious Faith? A glorious sect, if they lied not ! And, in truth, if Zanoni had powers beyond the race of worldly sages, they seemed not unworthily exercised. The little known of his life was in his favour. Some acts, not of indiscriminate, but judicious generosity and beneficence, were recorded ; in repeating which, still, however, the narrators shook their heads, and expressed surprise how a stranger should have possessed so minute a knowledge of the quiet and obscure distresses he had relieved. Two or three sick persons, when abandoned by their physicians, he had visited and conferred with alone. They had recovered ; they ascribed to him their recovery ; yet they could not tell by what medicines they had been healed. They

could only depose that he came, conversed with them, and they were cured ; it usually, however, happened that a deep sleep had preceded the recovery.

Another circumstance was also beginning to be remarked, and spoke yet more in his commendation. Those with whom he principally associated—the gay, the dissipated, the thoughtless, the sinners and publicans of the more polished world—all appeared rapidly, yet insensibly to themselves, to awaken to purer thoughts and more regulated lives. Even Cetoxa, the prince of gallants, duellists and gamesters, was no longer the same man since the night the singular events in which he had related to Glyndon. The first trace of his reform was in his retirement from the gaming houses ; the next was his reconciliation with an hereditary enemy of his house, whom it had been his constant object for the last six years to entangle in such a quarrel as might call forth his inimitable manœuvre of the stoccáta. Nor when Cetoxa and his young companions were heard to speak of Zanoni, did it seem that this change had

been brought about by any sober lectures or admonitions. They all described Zanoni as a man keenly alive to enjoyment—of manners, the reverse of formal—not precisely gay, but equable, serene and cheerful; ever ready to listen to the talk of others, however idle, or to charm all ears with an inexhaustible fund of brilliant anecdote and worldly experience. All manners, all nations, all grades of men seemed familiar to him. He was reserved only if allusion were ever ventured to his birth or history. The more general opinion of his origin certainly seemed the more plausible. His riches, his familiarity with the languages of the East, his residence in India, a certain gravity which never deserted his most cheerful and familiar hours, the lustrous darkness of his eyes and hair, and even the peculiarities of his shape, in the delicate smallness of the hands, and the Arab-like turn of the stately head, appeared to fix him as belonging to one at least of the Oriental races. And a dabbler in the Eastern tongues even sought to reduce the simple name of Zanoni, which a century before

had been borne by an inoffensive naturalist of Bologna,* to the radicals of the extinct language. Zan was unquestionably the Chaldæan appellation for the sun. Even the Greeks, who mutilated every Oriental name, had retained the right one in this case, as the Cretan inscription on the tomb of Zeus† significantly shewed. As to the rest, the Zan, or Zaun, was, with the Sidonians, no uncommon prefix to On. Adonis was but another name for Zanonas, whose worship in Sidon Hesychius records. To this profound and unanswerable derivation, Mervale listened with great attention, and observed that he now ventured to announce an erudite discovery he himself had long since made—viz., that the numerous family of Smiths in England were undoubtedly the ancient priests of the Phrygian Apollo. “For,” said he, “was not Apollo’s surname, in Phrygia, Smintheus? How clear all the ensuing corruptions of the august name—Smintheus—Smitheus—Smithé—Smith! And even now, I may remark

* The author of two works on botany and rare plants.

† Ωδε μεγας κειται Ζαν.—Cyril contra Julian.

that the more ancient branches of that illustrious family, unconsciously anxious to approximate at least by a letter nearer to the true title, take a pious pleasure in writing their names Smithe !”

The Philologist was much struck with this discovery, and begged Mervale’s permission to note it down as an illustration suitable to a work he was about to publish on the origin of languages, to be called “Babel,” and published in three quartos by subscription.

CHAPTER VII.

Learn to be poor in spirit, my son, if you would penetrate that sacred night which environs truth. Learn of the Sages to allow to the Devils no power in nature, since the fatal stone has shut 'em up in the depth of the abyss. Learn of the Philosophers always to look for natural causes in all extraordinary events; and when such natural causes are wanting, recur to God.—THE COUNT DE GABALIS.

ALL these additions to his knowledge of Zanoni, picked up in the various lounging places and resorts that he frequented, were unsatisfactory to Glyndon. That night Viola did not perform at the theatre; and the next day, still disturbed by bewildered fancies, and averse from the sober and sarcastic companionship of Mervale, Glyndon sauntered musingly into the

public gardens, and paused under the very tree under which he had first heard the voice that had exercised upon his mind so singular an influence. The gardens were deserted. He threw himself on one of the seats placed beneath the shade; and again, in the midst of his reverie, the same cold shudder came over him which Zanoni had so distinctly defined, and to which he had ascribed so extraordinary a cause.

He roused himself with a sudden effort, and started to see, seated next him, a figure hideous enough to have personated one of the malignant beings of whom Zanoni had spoken. It was a small man, dressed in a fashion strikingly at variance with the elaborate costume of the day: An affectation of homeliness and poverty approaching to squalor, in the loose trowsers, coarse as a ship's sail—in the rough jacket, which appeared rent wilfully into holes—and the black, ragged, tangled locks that streamed from their confinement under a woollen cap, accorded but ill with other details which spoke of comparative wealth. The shirt,

open at the throat, was fastened by a broach of gaudy stones; and two pendent massive gold chains announced the foppery of two watches.

The man's figure, if not absolutely deformed, was yet marvellously ill favoured; his shoulders high and square; his chest flattened, as if crushed in; his gloveless hands were knotted at the joints, and, large, bony and muscular, dangled from lean, emaciated wrists, as if not belonging to them. His features had the painful distortion sometimes seen in the countenance of a cripple—large, exaggerated, with the nose nearly touching the chin; the eyes small, but glowing with a cunning fire as they dwelt on Glyndon; and the mouth was twisted into a grin that displayed rows of jagged, black, broken teeth. Yet over this frightful face there still played a kind of disagreeable intelligence, an expression at once astute and bold; and as Glyndon, recovering from the first impression, looked again at his neighbour, he blushed at his own dismay, and recognised a French artist, with whom he had formed an acquaintance, and who was pos-

sessed of no inconsiderable talents in his calling. Indeed, it was to be remarked that this creature, whose externals were so deserted by the Graces, particularly delighted in designs aspiring to majesty and grandeur. Though his colouring was hard and shallow, as was that generally of the French school at the time, his *drawings* were admirable for symmetry, simple elegance, and classic vigour; at the same time, they unquestionably wanted ideal grace. He was fond of selecting subjects from Roman History, rather than from the copious world of Grecian beauty, or those still more sublime stores of scriptural record from which Raffaële and Michel Angelo borrowed their inspirations. His grandeur was that, not of gods and saints, but mortals. His delineation of beauty was that which the eye cannot blame and the soul does not acknowledge. In a word, as it was said of Dionysius, he was an Anthropopograhos, or Painter of Men. It was also a notable contradiction in this person, who was addicted to the most extravagant excesses in every passion, whether of hate or love, implacable in revenge, and insatiable in de-

bauch, that he was in the habit of uttering the most beautiful sentiments of exalted purity and genial philanthropy. The world was not good enough for him; he was, to use the expressive German phrase, a *world-betterer!* Nevertheless, his sarcastic lip often seemed to mock the sentiments he uttered, as if it sought to insinuate that he was above even the world he would construct.

Finally, this painter was in close correspondence with the Republicans of Paris, and was held to be one of those missionaries whom, from the earliest period of the Revolution, the regenerators of mankind were pleased to dispatch to the various states yet enslaved, whether by actual tyranny or wholesome laws. Certainly, as the historian of Italy* has observed, there was no city in Italy where these new doctrines would be received with greater favour than Naples, partly from the lively temper of the people, principally because the most hateful feudal privileges, however partially curtailed

* Botta.

some years before by the great minister, Tanuccini, still presented so many daily and practical evils, as to make change wear a more substantial charm than the mere and meretricious bloom on the cheek of the harlot—Novelty. This man, whom I will call Jean Nicot, was therefore an oracle among the younger and bolder spirits of Naples; and before Glyndon had met Zanoni, the former had not been among the least dazzled by the eloquent aspirations of the hideous Philanthropist.

“It is so long since we have met, cher confrère,” said Nicot, drawing his seat nearer to Glyndon’s, “that you cannot be surprised that I see you with delight, and even take the liberty to intrude on your meditations.”

“They were of no agreeable nature,” said Glyndon; “and never was intrusion more welcome.”

“You will be charmed to hear,” said Nicot, drawing several letters from his bosom, “that the good work proceeds with marvellous rapidity. Mirabeau, indeed, is no more; but, *mort Diable!* the French people are now a Mirabeau them-

selves." With this remark, Monsieur Nicot proceeded to read and to comment upon several animated and interesting passages in his correspondence, in which the word Virtue was introduced twenty-seven times, and God not once. And then, warmed by the cheering prospects thus opened to him, he began to indulge in those anticipations of the Future, the outline of which we have already seen in the eloquent extravagance of Condorcet. All the Old Virtues were dethroned for a new Pantheon: Patriotism was a narrow sentiment; Philanthropy was to be its successor. No love that did not embrace all mankind, as warm for Indus and the Pole as for the hearth of home, was worthy the breast of a generous man. Opinion was to be free as air; and in order to make it so, it was necessary to exterminate all those whose opinions were not the same as Mons. Jean Nicot's. Much of this amused, much revolted Glyndon; but when the Painter turned to dwell upon a science that all should comprehend, and the results of which all should enjoy,—a science that, springing from the soil of equal institutions and equal mental cultivation, should give to all the races of men

wealth without labour, and a life, longer than the Patriarchs', without care, — then Glyndon listened with interest and admiration, not unmixed with awe. "Observe," said Nicot, "how much that we now cherish as a virtue will then be rejected as meanness. Our oppressors, for instance, preach to us of the excellence of gratitude. Gratitude, the confession of inferiority! What so hateful to a noble spirit as the humiliating sense of obligation? But where there is equality there can be no means for power thus to enslave merit. The benefactor and the client will alike cease, and——"

"And in the meantime," said a low voice, at hand, "in the meantime, Jean Nicot?"

The two artists started, and Glyndon recognised Zanoni.

He gazed with a brow of unusual sternness on Nicot, who, lumped together as he sate, looked up at him askew, and with an expression of fear and dismay upon his distorted countenance.

Ho, ho! Messire Jean Nicot, thou who fearest neither God nor Devil, why fearest thou the eye of a Man?

"It is not the first time I have been a witness

to your opinions on the infirmity of gratitude," said Zanoni.

Nicot suppressed an exclamation, and, after gloomily surveying Zanoni with an eye villainous and sinister, but full of hate impotent and unutterable, said, "I know you not—what would you of me?"

"Your absence. Leave us!"

Nicot sprung forward a step, with hands clenched, and shewing his teeth from ear to ear, like a wild beast incensed. Zanoni stood motionless, and smiled at him in scorn. Nicot halted abruptly, as if fixed and fascinated by the look, shivered from head to foot, and sullenly, and with a visible effort, as if impelled by a power not his own, turned away.

Glyndon's eyes followed him in surprise.

"And what know you of this man?" said Zanoni.

"I know him as one like myself—a follower of art."

"Of ART! Do not so profane that glorious word. What Nature is to God, Art should be to Man—a sublime, beneficent, genial, and warm

creation. That wretch may be a *painter*, not an *artist*."

"And pardon me if I ask what *you* know of one you thus disparage?"

"I know thus much, that you are beneath my care if it be necessary to warn you against him; his own lips shew the hideousness of his heart. Why should I tell you of the crimes he has committed? He *speaks* crime!"

"You do not seem, Signor Zanoni, to be one of the admirers of the dawning Revolution. Perhaps you are prejudiced against the man because you dislike the opinions?"

"What opinions?"

Glyndon paused, somewhat puzzled to define; but at length he said, "Nay, I must wrong you; for you, of all men, I suppose, cannot discredit the doctrine that preaches the indefinite improvement of the human species."

"You are right; the few in every age improve the many; the many now may be as wise as the few were; but improvement is at a standstill, if you tell me that the many now are as wise as the few *are*."

“ I comprehend you, you will not allow the law of universal equality!”

“ Law! If the whole world conspired to enforce the falsehood, they could not make it *law*. Level all conditions to-day, and you only smoothe away all obstacles to tyranny to-morrow. A nation that aspires to *equality* is unfit for *freedom*. Throughout all creation, from the archangel to the worm, from Olympus to the pebble, from the radiant and completed planet to the nebula that hardens through ages of mist and slime into the habitable world, the first law of nature is inequality.”

“ Harsh doctrine, if applied to states. Are the cruel disparities of life never to be removed?”

“ Disparities of the physical life? Oh, let us hope so. But disparities of the *intellectual* and the *moral*, never! Universal equality of intelligence, of mind, of genius, of virtue!—no teacher left to the world, no men wiser, better than others—were it not an impossible condition, what a hopeless prospect for humanity! No; while the world lasts, the sun will gild the

mountain top before it shines upon the plain. Diffuse all the knowledge the earth contains over all mankind to-day, and some men will be wiser than the rest to-morrow. And *this* is not a harsh, but a loving law,—the *real* law of Improvement; the wiser the few in one generation, the wiser will be the multitude the next!”

As Zanoni thus spoke, they moved on through the smiling gardens, and the beautiful bay lay sparkling in the noontide. A gentle breeze just cooled the sunbeam, and stirred the ocean; and in the inexpressible clearness of the atmosphere, there was something that rejoiced the senses. The very soul seemed to grow lighter and purer in that lucid air.

“And these men, to commence their era of improvement and equality, are jealous even of the Creator. They would deny an Intelligence—a God!” said Zanoni, as if involuntarily. “Are you an Artist, and, looking on the world, can you listen to such a dogma? Between God and Genius there is a necessary link—there is almost a correspondent language. Well said

the Pythagorean*—‘ A good intellect is the chorus of divinity.’ ”

Struck and touched with these sentiments, which he little expected to fall from one to whom he ascribed those powers which the superstitions of childhood ascribe to the darker agencies, Glyndon said, “ And yet you have confessed that your life, separated from that of others, is one that man should dread to share. Is there then a connexion between magic and religion.”

“ Magic! And what is magic? When the traveller beholds in Persia the ruins of palaces and temples, the ignorant inhabitants inform him they were the work of magicians! What is beyond their own power, the vulgar cannot comprehend to be lawfully in the power of others. But if by magic you mean a perpetual research amongst all that is more latent and obscure in nature, I answer, I profess that magic, and that he who does so comes but nearer to the fountain of all belief. Knowest thou not

* Sextus, the Pythagorean.

that magic was taught in the schools of old? But how and by whom? as the last and most solemn lesson, by the Priests who ministered to the Temple.* And you, who would be a painter, is not there a magic also in the art you would advance? Must you not, after long study of the Beautiful that has been, seize upon new and airy combinations of a Beauty that is to be? See you not that The Grander Art, whether of poet or of painter, ever seeking for the TRUE, abhors the REAL; that you must seize Nature as her master, not lackey her as her slave? You demand mastery over the past, a conception of the future. Has not the Art, that is truly noble, for its domain the Future and the Past? You would conjure the invisible beings to your charm; and what is painting but the fixing into substance the Invisible? Are you discontented with this world? This world was never meant for genius! To exist, it must create another. What magician can do more; nay, what science can do as much? There are

* Psellus de Dæmon (MS.)

two avenues from the little passions and the dear calamities of earth ; both lead to the heaven and away from hell—Art and Science. But art is more godlike than science ; science discovers, art creates. You have faculties that may command art ; be contented with your lot. The astronomer who catalogues the stars cannot add one atom to the universe ; the poet can call an universe from the atom ; the chemist may heal, with his drugs, the infirmities of the human form ; the painter, or the sculptor, fixes into everlasting youth, forms divine, which no disease can ravage, and no years impair. Renounce those wandering fancies that lead you now to myself, and now to yon orator of the human race ; to us two who are the antipodes of each other. Your pencil is your wand ; your canvass may raise Utopias fairer than Condorcet dreams of. I press not yet for your decision ; but what man of genius ever asked more to cheer his path to the grave, than love and glory ?”

“ But,” said Glyndon, fixing his eyes earnestly

on Zanoni, "if there be a power to baffle the grave itself—"

Zanoni's brow darkened. "And were this so," he said, after a pause, "would it be so sweet a lot to outlive all you loved, and to recoil from every human tie? Perhaps the fairest immortality on earth is that of a noble name."

"You do not answer me—you equivocate. I have read of the long lives, far beyond the date common experience assigns to man," persisted Glyndon, "which some of the alchemists enjoyed. Is the golden elixir but a fable?"

"If not, and these men discovered it, they died, because they refused to live! There may be a mournful warning in your conjecture. Turn once more to the easel and the canvass."

So saying, Zanoni waved his hand, and, with downcast eyes and a slow step, bent his way back into the city.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE GODDESS WISDOM.

To some she is the goddess great ;
To some the milch cow of the field ;
Their wisdom is to calculate
What butter she will yield.

From SCHILLER.

THIS last conversation with Zanoni left upon the mind of Glyndon a tranquillizing and salutary effect. From the confused mists of his fancy glittered forth again those happy, golden, schemes which part from the young ambition of art, to play in the air, to illumine the space, like rays that kindle from the sun. And with these projects mingled also the vision of a love purer and serener than his fe yet had known. His mind went back into that fair childhood of genius, when the forbidden

fruit is not yet tasted, and it knows of no land beyond the Eden which is gladdened by an Eve. Insensibly before him there rose the scenes of a home, with his art sufficing for all excitement, and Viola's love circling occupation with happiness and content; and in the midst of these phantasies of a future that might be at his command, he was recalled to the present by the clear strong voice of Mervale, the man of common sense.

Whoever has studied the lives of persons in whom the imagination is stronger than the will, who suspect their own knowledge of actual life, and are aware of their facility to impressions, — will have observed the influence which a homely, vigorous, worldly understanding obtains over such natures. It was thus with Glyndon. His friend had often extricated him from danger, and saved him from the consequences of imprudence; and there was something in Mervale's voice alone that damped his enthusiasm, and often made him yet more ashamed of noble impulses than weak conduct. For Mervale, though a downright, honest man, could not sym-

pathize with the extravagance of generosity any more than with that of presumption and credulity. He walked the strait line of life, and felt an equal contempt for the man who wandered up the hill sides, no matter whether to chace a butterfly or to catch a prospect of the ocean.

“ I will tell you your thoughts, Clarence,” said Mervale, laughing, “ though I am no Zanoni. I know them by the moisture of your eyes and the half smile on your lips. You are musing upon that fair perdition—the little singer of San Carlo.”

The little singer of San Carlo! Glyndon coloured as he answered—

“ Would you speak thus of her if she were my wife ?”

“ No ! for then any contempt I might venture to feel would be for yourself. One may dislike the duper, but it is the dupe that one despises.”

“ Are you so sure that I should be the dupe in such an union? Where can I find one so lovely and so innocent—where one whose virtue has been tried by such temptation? Does even

a single breath of slander sully the name of Viola Pisani ?”

“ I know not all the gossip of Naples, and therefore cannot answer ; but I know this, that in England no one would believe that a young Englishman, of good fortune and respectable birth, who marries a singer from the Theatre of Naples, has not been lamentably taken in. I would save you from a fall of position so irretrievable. Think how many mortifications you will be subjected to ; how many young men will visit at your house, and how many young wives will as carefully avoid it.”

“ I can choose my own career, to which commonplace society is not essential. I can owe the respect of the world to my art, and not to the accidents of birth and fortune.”

“ That is, you still persist in your second folly—the absurd ambition of daubing canvass. Heaven forbid I should say anything against the laudable industry of one who follows such a profession for the sake of subsistence ; but with means and connexions that will raise you in life, why voluntarily sink into a mere artist ?

As an accomplishment in leisure moments, it is all very well in its way; but as the occupation of existence, it is a frenzy."

"Artists have been the friends of princes."

"Very rarely so, I fancy, in sober England. There, in the great centre of political aristocracy, what men respect is the practical, not the ideal. Just suffer me to draw two pictures of my own. Clarence Glyndon returns to England; he marries a lady of fortune equal to his own, of friends and parentage that advance rational ambition. Clarence Glyndon, thus a wealthy and respectable man, of good talents, of bustling energies then concentrated, enters into practical life. He has a house at which he can receive those whose acquaintance is both advantage and honour; he has leisure which he can devote to useful studies; his reputation, built on a solid base, grows in men's mouths. He attaches himself to a party; he enters political life; his new connexions serve to promote his objects. At the age of five and forty, what, in all probability, may Clarence Glyndon be? Since you are ambitious, I leave that

question for you to decide! Now turn to the other picture. Clarence Glyndon returns to England with a wife who can bring him no money, unless he lets her out on the stage; so handsome that every one asks who she is, and every one hears—the celebrated singer, Pisani. Clarence Glyndon shuts himself up to grind colours and paint pictures in the grand historical school, which nobody buys. There is even a prejudice against him, as not having studied in the Academy,—as being an amateur. Who is Mr. Clarence Glyndon? Oh! the celebrated Pisani's husband! What else? Oh! he exhibits those large pictures. Poor man! they have merit in their way; but Teniers and Watteau are more convenient, and almost as cheap. Clarence Glyndon, with an easy fortune while single, has a large family, which his fortune, unaided by marriage, can just rear up to callings more plebeian than his own. He retires into the country, to save and to paint; he grows slovenly and discontented; 'the world does not appreciate him,' he says, and he runs away from the world. At the age of forty-five,

what will be Clarence Glyndon? Your ambition shall decide that question also!"

"If all men were as worldly as you," said Glyndon, rising, "there would never have been an artist or a poet!"

"Perhaps we should do just as well without them," answered Mervale. "Is it not time to think of dinner? The mullet here are remarkably fine!"

CHAPTER IX.

Wollt ihr hoch auf ihren Flügeln schweben,
Werft die Angst des Irdischen von euch !
Fliehet aus dem engen dumpfen Leben
In des Ideales Reich !

DAS IDEAL UND DAS LEBEN.

As some injudicious master lowers and vitiates the taste of the student by fixing his attention to what he falsely calls the Natural, but which, in reality, is the Commonplace, and understands not that beauty in art is created by what Raffaële so well describes—viz., *the idea of beauty in the painter's own mind* ; and that in every art, whether its plastic expression be found in words or marble, colours or sounds, the servile imitation of nature is the work of journeymen and tyros ; —so in conduct the man of the world vitiates and

lowers the bold enthusiasm of loftier natures by the perpetual reduction of whatever is generous and trustful to all that is trite and coarse. A great German poet has well defined the distinction between discretion and the larger wisdom. In the last, there is a certain rashness which the first disdains—

“The purblind see but the receding shore,
Not that to which the bold wave wafts them o'er.”

Yet in this logic of the prudent and the worldly there is often a reasoning unanswerable of its kind.

You must have a feeling—a faith in whatever is self-sacrificing and divine—whether in religion or in art, in glory or in love—or Common-sense will reason you out of the sacrifice, and a syllogism will debase the divine to an article in the market.

Every true critic in art, from Aristotle and Pliny—from Winkelman and Vasari, to Reynolds and Fuseli, has sought to instruct the painter that
 ✓ Nature is not to be copied, but *exalted*; that the loftiest order of art, selecting only the loftiest com-

binations, is the perpetual struggle of Humanity to approach the Gods. The great painter, as the great author, embodies what is *possible* to man, it is true, but what is not *common* to mankind. There is truth in Hamlet; in Macbeth, and his witches; in Desdemona; in Othello; in Prospero; and in Caliban: there is truth in the cartoons of Raffaële; there is truth in the Apollo, the Antinous, and the Laocoon. But you do not meet the originals of the words, the cartoons, or the marble, in Oxford-street or St. James's. All these, to return to Raffaële, are the creatures of the idea in the artist's mind. This idea is not inborn; it has come from an intense study. But that study has been of the ideal that can be raised from the positive and the actual into grandeur and beauty. The commonest model becomes full of exquisite suggestions to him who has formed this idea; a Venus of flesh and blood would be vulgarized by the imitation of him who has not.

When asked where he got his models, Guido summoned a common porter from his calling, and drew from a mean original a head of sur-

passing beauty. It resembled the porter, but idealized the porter to the hero. It was true; but it was not real. There are critics who will tell you that the Boor of Teniers is more true to nature than the Porter of Guido! The common place public scarcely understand the idealizing principle, even in art. For high art is an acquired taste.

But to come to my comparison. Still less is the kindred principle comprehended in conduct. And the advice of worldly Prudence would as often deter from the risks of Virtue as from the punishments of Vice; yet in conduct, as in art, there is an idea of the great and beautiful, by which men should exalt the hackneyed and the trite of life. Now, Glyndon felt the sober prudence of Mervale's reasonings; he recoiled from the probable picture placed before him, in his devotion to the one master talent he possessed, and the one master passion that, rightly directed, might purify his whole being as a strong wind purifies the air.

But though he could not bring himself to decide in the teeth of so rational a judgment,

neither could he resolve at once to abandon the pursuit of Viola. Fearful of being influenced by Zanoni's councils and his own heart, he had for the last two days shunned an interview with the young actress. But after a night following his last conversation with Zanoni, and that we have just recorded with Mervale—a night coloured by dreams so distinct as to seem prophetic—dreams that appeared so to shape his future according to the hints of Zanoni, that he could have fancied Zanoni himself had sent them from the house of sleep to haunt his pillow, he resolved once more to seek Viola; and though without a definite or distinct object, he yielded himself up to the impulse of his heart.

CHAPTER X.

O sollecito dubbio e fredda tema
Che pensando l'accresci.

TASSO, Canzone vi.

SHE was seated outside her door—the young actress! The sea before her in that heavenly bay seemed literally to sleep in the arms of the shore; while, to the right, nor far off, rose the dark and tangled crags to which the traveller of to-day is duly brought to gaze on the tomb of Virgil, or compare with the cavern of Posilipo the archway of Highgate-hill. There were a few fishermen loitering by the cliffs, on which their nets were hung to dry; and, at a distance, the sound of some rustic pipe (more common at that day than at this) mingled now and

then with the bells of the lazy mules, broke the voluptuous silence — the silence of declining noon on the shores of Naples ;—never, till you have enjoyed it,—never, till you have felt its enervating, but delicious charm, believe that you can comprehend all the meaning of the *Dolce far niente* ; and when that luxury has been known, when you have breathed that atmosphere of faëry land, then you will no longer wonder why the heart ripens into fruit so sudden and so rich beneath the rosy skies, and the glorious sunshine, of the south.

The eyes of the actress were fixed on the broad blue deep beyond. In the unwonted negligence of her dress might be traced the abstraction of her mind. Her beautiful hair was gathered up loosely, and partially bandaged by a kerchief, whose purple colour served to deepen the golden hue of the tresses. A stray curl escaped, and fell down the graceful neck. A loose morning robe, girded by a sash, left the breeze, that came ever and anon from the sea, to die upon the bust half disclosed ; and the tiny slipper, that Cinderella might have worn,

seemed a world too wide for the tiny foot which it scarcely covered. It might be the heat of the day that deepened the soft bloom of the cheeks, and gave an unwonted languor to the large dark eyes. In all the pomp of her stage attire—in all the flush of excitement before the intoxicating lamps—never had Viola looked so lovely.

By the side of the actress, and filling up the threshold, stood Gionetta, with her arms thrust to the elbow in two huge pockets on either side her gown.

“But I assure you,” said the nurse, in that sharp, quick, ear-splitting tone in which the old women of the south are more than a match for those of the north, “but I assure you, my darling, that there is not a finer cavalier in all Naples, nor a more beautiful, than this *Inglese*; and I am told that all the *Inglesi* are much richer than they seem. Though they have no trees in their country, poor people! and instead of twenty-four they have only twelve hours to the day, yet I hear that they shoe their horses with *scudi*; and since they cannot (the poor heretics!) turn grapes into wine, for they have

no grapes, they turn gold into physic ; and take a glass or two of *pistoles* whenever they are troubled with the colic. But you don't hear me—little pupil of my eyes, you don't hear me !”

“ And these things are whispered of Zanoni !” said Viola, half to herself, and unheeding Gionetta's eulogies on Glyndon and the English.

“ Blessed Maria ! do not talk of this terrible Zanoni. You may be sure that his beautiful face, like his yet more beautiful *pistoles*, is only witchcraft. I look at the money he gave me the other night, every quarter of an hour, to see whether it has not turned into pebbles.”

“ Do you then really believe,” said Viola, with timid earnestness, “ that sorcery still exists ?”

“ Believe !—Do I believe in the blessed San Gennaro ? How do you think he cured old Filippo, the fisherman, when the doctor gave him up ? How do you think he has managed himself to live at least these three hundred years ? How do you think he fascinates every one to his bidding with a look, as the vampires do ?”

“ Ah, is this only witchcraft? It is like it— it must be !” murmured Viola, turning very pale. Gionetta herself was scarcely more superstitious than the daughter of the musician. And her very innocence, chilled at the strangeness of virgin passion, might well ascribe to magic what hearts more experienced would have resolved to love.

“ And, then, why has this great Prince di — been so terrified by him? Why has he ceased to persecute us? Why has he been so quiet and still? Is there no sorcery in all that ?”

“ Think you, then,” said Viola, with sweet inconsistency, “ that I owe that happiness and safety to his protection? Oh, let me so believe ! Be silent, Gionetta ! Why have I only thee and my own terrors to consult. O beautiful sun !” and the girl pressed her hand to her heart with wild energy, “ thou lightest every spot but this. Go, Gionetta ! leave me alone—leave me !”

“ And indeed it is time I should leave you; for the *polenta* will be spoiled, and you have eat nothing all day. If you don't eat, you will lose

your beauty, my darling, and then nobody will care for you. Nobody cares for us when we grow ugly; I know that; and then you must, like old Gionetta, get some Viola of your own to spoil. I'll go and see to the *polenta*."

"Since I have known this man," said the girl, half aloud, "since his dark eyes have haunted me, I am no longer the same. I long to escape from myself—to glide with the sunbeam over the hill tops—to become something that is not of earth. Phantoms float before me at night; and a fluttering, like the wing of a bird, within my heart, seems as if the spirit were terrified, and would break its cage."

While murmuring these incoherent rhapsodies, a step that she did not hear approached the actress, and a light hand touched her arm.

"Viola!—*bellissima!*—Viola!"

She turned, and saw Glyndon. The sight of his fair young face calmed her at once. His presence gave her pleasure.

"Viola," said the Englishman, taking her hand, and drawing her again to the bench from which she had risen, as he seated himself beside

her, "you shall hear me speak! You must know already that I love thee! It has not been pity or admiration alone that has led me ever and ever to thy dear side; reasons there may have been why I have not spoken, save by my eyes, before; but this day—I know not how it is—I feel a more sustained and settled courage to address thee, and learn the happiest or the worst. I have rivals, I know—rivals who are more powerful than the poor artist; are they also more favoured?"

Viola blushed faintly; but her countenance was grave and distressed. Looking down, and marking some hieroglyphical figures in the dust with the point of her slipper, she said, with some hesitation, and a vain attempt to be gay, "Signor, whoever wastes his thoughts on an actress must submit to have rivals. It is our unhappy destiny not to be sacred even to ourselves."

"But you do not love this destiny, glittering though it seem; your heart is not in the vocation which your gifts adorn."

"Ah, no!" said the actress, her eyes filling

with tears. "Once I loved to be the priestess of song and music; now I feel only that it is a miserable lot to be slave to a multitude."

"Fly, then, with me," said the artist, passionately. "Quit for ever the calling that divides that heart I would have all my own. Share my fate now and for ever—my pride, my delight, my ideal! Thou shalt inspire my canvass and my song; thy beauty shall be made at once holy and renowned. In the galleries of princes, crowds shall gather round the effigy of a Venus or a Saint, and a whisper shall break forth, 'It is Viola Pisani!' Ah! Viola, I adore thee: tell me that I do not worship in vain."

"Thou art good and fair," said Viola, gazing on her lover, as he pressed nearer to her, and clasped her hand in his. "But what should I give thee in return?"

"Love—love—only love!"

"A sister's love?"

"Ah! speak not with such cruel coldness!"

"It is all I have for thee. Listen to me, Signor: when I look on your face, when I hear your voice, a certain serene and tranquil

calm creeps over and lulls thoughts—oh! how feverish, how wild! When thou art gone, the day seems a shade more dark; but the shadow soon flies. I miss thee not; I think not of thee; no, I love thee not; and I will give myself only where I love.”

“But I would teach thee to love me: fear it not. Nay, such love as thou now describest, in our tranquil climates is the love of innocence and youth.”

“Of innocence!” said Viola. “Is it so? Perhaps”—she paused, and added, with an effort, “Foreigner! and wouldst thou wed the orphan! Ah! *thou* at least art generous. It is not the innocence thou wouldst destroy!”

Glyndon drew back, conscience-stricken.

“No, it may not be!” she said, rising, but not conscious of the thoughts, half of shame, half suspicion, that passed through the mind of her lover. “Leave me, and forget me. You do not understand, you could not comprehend, the nature of her whom you think to love. From my childhood upward, I have felt as if I were marked out for some strange and preter-

natural doom; as if I were singled from my kind. This feeling (and, oh! at times it is one of delirious and vague delight, at others of the darkest gloom) deepens within me day by day. It is like the shadow of twilight, spreading slowly and solemnly around. My hour approaches: a little while, and it will be night!"

As she spoke, Glyndon listened with visible emotion and perturbation. "Viola!" he exclaimed, as she ceased, "your words more than ever enchain me to you. As you feel, I feel. I, too, have been ever haunted with a chill and unearthly foreboding. Amidst the crowds of men I have felt alone. In all my pleasures, my toils, my pursuits, a warning voice has murmured in my ear, 'Time has a dark mystery in store for thy manhood.' When you spoke, it was as the voice of my own soul!"

Viola gazed upon him in wonder and fear. Her countenance was as white as marble: and those features, so divine in their rare symmetry, might have served the Greek with a study for the Pythoness, when, from the mystic cavern and the bubbling spring, she first hears the

voice of the inspiring god. Gradually the rigour and tension of that wonderful face relaxed, the colour returned, the pulse beat, the heart animated the frame.

“Tell me,” she said, turning partially aside, “tell me, have you seen—do you know—a stranger in this city? one of whom wild stories are afloat?”

“You speak of Zanoni? I have seen him—I know him—and you? Ah! he, too, would be my rival!—he, too, would bear thee from me!

“You err,” said Viola, hastily, and with a deep sigh; “he pleads for you: he informed me of your love; he besought me not—not to reject it.”

“Strange being! incomprehensible enigma! Why did you name him?”

“Why? ah! I would have asked whether, when you first saw him, the foreboding, the instinct, of which you spoke, came on you more fearfully, more intelligibly than before—whether you felt at once repelled from him, yet attracted towards him—whether you felt (and the actress

spoke with hurried animation) that with HIM was connected the secret of your life?"

"All this I felt," answered Glyndon, in a trembling voice, "the first time I was in his presence. Though all around me was gay—music, amidst lamp-lit trees, light converse near, and heaven without a cloud above,—my knees knocked together, my hair bristled, and my blood curdled like ice. Since then he has divided my thoughts with thee."

"No more, no more!" said Viola, in a stifled tone; "there must be the hand of fate in this. I can speak to you no more now. Farewell!" She sprung past him into the house, and closed the door. Glyndon did not follow her, nor, strange as it may seem, was he so inclined. The thought and recollection of that moonlit hour in the gardens, of the strange address of Zanoni, froze up all human passion. Viola herself, if not forgotten, shrunk back like a shadow into the recesses of his breast. He shivered as he stepped into the sunlight, and musingly retraced his steps into the more populous parts of that liveliest of Italian cities.

BOOK THE THIRD.

THEURGIA.

———— cavalier sen vanno
Dove il pino fatal gli attende in porto.
GERUS. LIB. cant. xv. (ARGOMENTO.)

BOOK THE THIRD.

CHAPTER I.

But that which especially distinguishes the brotherhood is their marvellous knowledge of all the resources of medical art. They work not by charms, but simples. — *MS. Account of the origin and attributes of the true Rosicrucians, by J. Von D——.*

AT this time it chanced that Viola had the opportunity to return the kindness shewn to her by the friendly musician, whose house had received and sheltered her when first left an orphan on the world. Old Bernardi had brought up three sons to the same profession as himself, and they had lately left Naples to seek their fortunes in the wealthier cities of northern Europe, where the musical market was less

of M.
Leahy
x

overstocked. There was only left to glad the household of his aged wife and himself, a lively, prattling, dark-eyed girl, of some eight years old, the child of his second son, whose mother had died in giving her birth. It so happened that, about a month previous to the date on which our story has now entered, a paralytic affection had disabled Bernardi from the duties of his calling. He had been always a social, harmless, improvident, generous fellow—living on his gains from day to day, as if the day of sickness and old age never was to arrive. Though he received a small allowance for his past services, it ill-sufficed for his wants; neither was he free from debt. Poverty stood at his hearth—when Viola's grateful smile and liberal hand came to chace the grim fiend away. But it is not enough to a heart truly kind to send and give; more charitable is it to visit and console. "Forget not thy father's friend." So almost daily went the bright idol of Naples to the house of Bernardi. Suddenly a heavier affliction than even poverty or the palsy befel the old musician. His grandchild, his little Bea-

trice, fell ill, suddenly and dangerously ill, of one of those rapid fevers common to the south; and Viola was summoned from her strange and fearful reveries of love or fancy, to the sick bed of the young sufferer.

The child was exceedingly fond of Viola, and the old people thought that her mere presence would bring healing; but when Viola arrived, Beatrice was insensible. Fortunately, there was no performance that evening at San Carlo, and she resolved to stay the night, and partake its fearful cares and dangerous vigil.

But during the night the child grew worse, the physician (the leech-craft has never been very skilful at Naples) shook his powdered head, kept his aromatics at his nostrils, administered his palliatives, and departed. Old Bernardi seated himself by the bedside in stern silence: here was the last tie that bound him to life. Well, let the anchor break, and the battered ship go down! It was an iron resolve, more fearful than sorrow. An old man with one foot in the grave, watching by the couch of a dying child, is one of the most awful spectacles in human calamities. The wife was more

active, more bustling, more hopeful, and more tearful. Viola took heed of all three. But towards dawn, Beatrice's state became so obviously alarming, that Viola herself began to despair. At this time she saw the old woman suddenly rise from before the image of the saint at which she had been kneeling, wrap herself in her cloak and hood, and quietly quit the chamber. Viola stole after her.

“It is cold for thee, good mother, to brave the air; let me go for the physician?”

“Child, I am not going to him. I have heard of one in the city who has been tender to the poor, and who, they say, has cured the sick when physicians failed. I will go and say to him, ‘Signor, we are beggars in all else, but yesterday we were rich in love. We are at the close of life, but we lived in our grandchild's childhood. Give us back our wealth—give us back our youth. Let us die blessing God that the thing we love survives us.’”

She was gone. Why did thy heart beat, Viola? The infant's sharp cry of pain called her back to the couch; and there still sate the old man, unconscious of his wife's movements,

not stirring, his eyes glazing fast as they watched the agonies of that slight frame. By degrees the wail of pain died into a low moan—the convulsions grew feebler, but more frequent—the glow of fever faded into the blue, pale tinge that settles into the last bloodless marble.

The daylight came broader and clearer through the casement—steps were heard on the stairs—the old woman entered hastily: she rushed to the bed, cast a glance on the patient—“She lives yet, Signor—she lives!”

Viola raised her eyes—the child’s head was pillowed on her bosom—and she beheld Zanoni. He smiled on her with a tender and soft approval, and took the infant from her arms. Yet even then, as she saw him bending silently over that pale face, a superstitious fear mingled with her hopes. “Was it by lawful—by holy art that”—her self-questioning ceased abruptly; for his dark eye turned to her as if he read her soul: and his aspect accused her conscience for its suspicion, for it spoke reproach not unmingled with disdain.

“Be comforted,” he said, gently turning to

the old man; "the danger is not beyond the reach of human skill;" and, taking from his bosom a small crystal vase, he mingled a few drops with water. No sooner did this medicine moisten the infant's lips, than it seemed to produce an astonishing effect. The colour revived rapidly to the lips and cheeks; in a few moments the sufferer slept calmly, and with the regular breathing of painless sleep. And then the old man rose, rigidly, as a corpse might rise—looked down—listened, and, creeping gently away, stole to the corner of the room, and wept, and thanked Heaven!

Now, old Bernardi had been, hitherto, but a cold believer; sorrow had never before led him aloft from earth. Old as he was, he had never before thought as the old should think of death—that endangered life of the young had wakened up the careless soul of age. Zanoni whispered to the wife, and she drew the old man quietly from the room.

"Dost thou fear to leave me an hour with thy charge, Viola? Thinkest thou still that this knowledge is of the Fiend?"

“ Ah,” said Viola, humbled and yet rejoiced, “ forgive me, forgive me, Signor. Thou biddest the young live and the old pray. My thoughts never shall wrong thee more !”

Before the sun rose, Beatrice was out of danger; at noon, Zanoni escaped from the blessings of the aged pair, and as he closed the door of the house, he found Viola awaiting him without.

She stood before him timidly, her hands crossed meekly on her bosom, her downcast eyes swimming with tears.

“ Do not let me be the only one you leave unhappy !”

“ And what cure can the herbs and anodynes effect for thee? If thou canst so readily believe ill of those who have aided and yet would serve thee, thy disease is of the heart; and—nay, weep not! nurse of the sick, and comforter of the sad, I should rather approve than chide thee. Forgive thee! Life, that ever needs forgiveness, has, for its first duty, to forgive.”

“ No, do not forgive me yet. I do not de-

serve a pardon; for even now, while I feel how ungrateful I was to believe, suspect, aught injurious and false to my preserver, my tears flow from happiness, not remorse. Oh!" she continued, with a simple fervour, unconscious, in her innocence and her generous emotions, of all the secrets she betrayed—"thou knowest not how bitter it was to believe thee not more good, more pure, more sacred than all the world. And when I saw thee—the wealthy, the noble, the sought of all, coming from thy palace to minister to the sufferings of the hovel—when I heard those blessings of the poor breathed upon thy parting footsteps, I felt my very self exalted—good in thy goodness—noble at least in those thoughts that did *not* wrong thee."

"And thinkest thou, Viola, that in a mere act of science there is so much virtue? The commonest leech will tend the sick for his fee. Are prayers and blessings a less reward than gold?"

"And mine, then, are not worthless? thou wilt accept of mine?"

"Ah, Viola!" exclaimed Zanoni, with a sud-

den passion, that covered her face with blushes, "thou only, methinks, on all the earth, hast the power to wound or to delight me!" He checked himself, and his face became grave and sad. "And this," he added, in an altered tone, "because, if thou wouldst heed my counsels, methinks I could guide a guileless heart to a happy fate."

"Thy counsels! I will obey them all. Mould me to what thou wilt. In thine absence, I am as a child that fears every shadow in the dark; in thy presence, my soul expands, and the whole world seems calm with a celestial noon-day. Do not deny to me that presence. I am fatherless, and ignorant, and alone!"

Zanoni averted his face, and after a moment's silence, replied, calmly—

"Be it so. Sister, I will visit thee again!"

CHAPTER II.

Oh, se sempre tranquille
 Fosser le luci vaghe !

* * * * *

Onde i fioretti e l'erbe
 Si fan vaghe e superbe ;
 E par la terra di diamante aspersa.

TASSO, Canzone xv.

Who so happy as Viola now ! A dark load was lifted from her heart ; her step seemed to tread on air ; she would have sung for very delight as she went gaily home. It is such happiness to the pure to love—but oh, such more than happiness to believe in the worth of the One beloved. Between them there might be human obstacles—wealth, rank, man's little world. But there was no longer that dark gulf which the

imagination recoils to dwell on, and which separates for ever soul from soul. He did not love her in return. Love her! But did she ask for love? Did she herself love? No; or she would never have been at once so humble and so bold. How merrily the ocean murmured in her ear; how radiant an aspect the commonest passer by seemed to wear! She gained her home—she looked upon the tree, glancing, with fantastic branches, in the sun. “Yes, brother mine!” she said, laughing in her joy, “like thee, I *have* struggled to the light!”

She had never hitherto, like the more instructed Daughters of the North, accustomed herself to that delicious Confessional, the transfusion of thought to writing. Now, suddenly, her heart felt an impulse; a new-born instinct that bade it commune with itself, bade it disentangle its web of golden fancies—made her wish to look upon her inmost self as in a glass. Up-sprung from the embrace of Love and Soul—the Eros and the Psyche—their beautiful offspring, Genius! She blushed, she sighed, she trembled as she wrote. And from the fresh

World that she had built for herself, she was awakened to prepare for the glittering stage. How dull became the music, how dim the scene, so exquisite and so bright of old. Stage, thou art the Fairy Land to the vision of the worldly. Fancy, whose music is not heard by men, whose scenes shift not by mortal hand, as the Stage to the present world, art thou to the Future and the Past!

CHAPTER III.

A te le luci mie

Volgo, o stella, che serri ed apri 'l die

TASSO, Canzone xv.

THE next day, at noon, Zanoni visited Viola; and the next day, and the next, and again the next;—days, that to her seemed like a special time set apart from the rest of life. And yet he never spoke to her in the language of flattery, and almost of adoration, to which she had been accustomed. Perhaps his very coldness, so gentle as it was, assisted to this mysterious charm. He talked to her much of her past life, and she was scarcely surprised (she now never thought of *terror*) to perceive how much of that past seemed known to him.

He made her speak to him of her father; he

made her recal some of the airs of Pisani's wild music. And those airs seemed to charm and lull him into reverie.

“As music to him,” said he, “may science be to the wise. Your father looked abroad in the world. All was discord to the fine sympathies that he felt with the harmonies that daily and nightly float to the throne of Heaven. Life, with its noisy ambition and its mean passions, is so poor and base! Out of his soul he created the life and the world for which his soul was fitted. Viola, thou art the daughter of that life, and will be the denizen of that world.”

In his earlier visits, he did not speak of Glyndon. The day soon came on which he renewed the subject. And so great, trustful, obedient, and entire was the allegiance that Viola now owned to his dominion, that, unwelcome as that subject was, she restrained her heart, and listened to him in silence!

At last he said, “Thou hast promised thou wilt obey my counsels, and if, Viola, I should ask thee, nay, adjure, to accept this stranger's hand, and share his fate, should he offer to thee such a lot—wouldst thou refuse?”

And then she pressed back the tears that gushed to her eyes—and with a strange pleasure in the midst of pain—the pleasure of one who sacrifices heart itself to the one who commands that heart, she answered, falteringly—“If thou *canst* ordain it—why—”

“Speak on.”

“Dispose of me as thou wilt !”

Zanoni stood in silence for some moments ; he saw the struggle the girl thought she concealed so well ; he made an involuntary movement towards her, and pressed her hand to his lips ; it was the first time he had ever departed even so far from a certain austerity, which perhaps made her fear him and her own thoughts the less.

“Viola,” said he, and his voice trembled, “the danger that I can avert no more, if thou linger still in Naples, comes hourly near and near to thee ! On the third day from this, thy fate must be decided. I accept thy promise. Before the last hour of that day, come what may, I shall see thee again, *here*, at thine own house. Till then, farewell !”

CHAPTER IV.

Between two worlds life hovers like a star,
'Twixt night and morn.

BYRON.

WHEN Glyndon left Viola, as recorded in the concluding chapter of the second division of this work, he was absorbed again in those mystical desires and conjectures which the haunting recollection of Zanoni always served to create. And as he wandered through the streets, he was scarcely conscious of his own movements till, in the mechanism of custom, he found himself in the midst of one of the noble collections of pictures which form the boast of those Italian cities whose glory is in the past. Hither he had been wont, almost daily, to

repair, for the gallery contained some of the finest specimens of a master especially the object of his enthusiasm and study. Here, before the works of Salvator, he had often paused in deep and earnest reverence. The striking characteristic of that artist is the *Vigour of Will*; void of the elevated idea of abstract beauty, which furnishes a model and archetype to the genius of more illustrious order, the singular energy of the man hews out of the rock a dignity of his own. His images have the majesty, not of the god, but the savage; utterly free, like the sublimer schools, from the commonplace of imitation,—apart, with them, from the conventional littleness of the Real,—he grasps the imagination, and compels it to follow him, not to the heaven, but through all that is most wild and fantastic upon earth; a sorcery, not of the starry magian but of the gloomy wizard—a man of romance, whose heart beat strongly, gripping art with a hand of iron, and forcing it to idealize the scenes of his actual life. Before this powerful Will, Glyndon drew back more awed and admiring than before the calmer

beauty which rose from the soul of Raffaële, like Venus from the deep. And now, as awaking from his reverie, he stood opposite to that wild and magnificent gloom of Nature which frowned on him from the canvass, the very leaves on those gnomelike, distorted trees seemed to rustle sibylline secrets in his ear. Those rugged and sombre Apennines, the cataract that dashed between, suited, more than the actual scenes would have done, the mood and temper of his mind. The stern uncouth forms at rest on the crags below, and dwarfed by the giant size of the Matter that reigned around them, impressed him with the might of Nature and the littleness of Man. As *a* genius of the more spiritual cast, the living man, and the soul that lives in him, are studiously made the prominent image ; and the mere accessories of scene kept down, and cast back, as if to shew that the exile from paradise is yet the monarch of the outward world,—so in the landscapes of Salvator, the tree, the mountain, the waterfall, become the principal, and man himself dwindles to the accessory. The Matter seems

see how this compares to M.

to reign supreme, and its true lord to creep beneath its stupendous shadow. Matter giving interest to the human figure, not the figure to the matter. A terrible philosophy in art!

While something of these thoughts passed through the mind of the painter, he felt his arm touched, and saw Nicot by his side.

“A great master,” said Nicot, “but I do not love the school.”

“I do not love, but I am awed by it. We love the beautiful and serene, but we have a feeling as deep as love for the terrible and dark.”

“True,” said Nicot, thoughtfully. “And yet that feeling is only a superstition. The nursery, with its tales of ghosts and goblins, is the cradle of many of our impressions in the world. But art should not seek to pander to our ignorance; art should represent only truths. I confess that Raffaële himself pleases me less because I have no sympathy with his subjects. His saints and virgins are to me only men and women.”

“And from what source should painting then take its themes?”

“From History, without doubt,” returned Nicot, pragmatically, — “those great Roman actions which inspire men with sentiments of liberty and valour, with the virtues of a republic. I wish the cartoons of Raffaële had illustrated the story of the Horatii; but it remains for France and her Republic to give to posterity the new and the true school, which could never have arisen in a country of priestcraft and delusion.”

“And the saints and virgins of Raffaële are to you only men and women?” repeated Glyndon, going back to Nicot’s candid confession in amaze, and scarcely hearing the deductions the Frenchman drew from his proposition.

“Assuredly. Ha, ha!” and Nicot laughed hideously, “do you ask me to believe in the calendar, or what?”

“But the ideal?”

“The ideal!” interrupted Nicot. “Stuff! The Italian critics, and your English Reynolds, have turned your head. They are so fond of their ‘gusto grande,’ and their ‘ideal beauty that speaks to the soul!’—soul!—*is* there a soul?”

I understand a man when he talks of composing for a refined taste—for an educated and intelligent reason—for a sense that comprehends truths. But as for the soul—bah!—we are but modifications of matter, and painting is modification of matter also.”

Glyndon turned his eyes from the picture before him to Nicot, and from Nicot to the picture. The dogmatist gave a voice to the thoughts which the sight of the picture had awakened. He shook his head without reply.

“Tell me,” said Nicot, abruptly, “that impostor—Zanoni?—oh! I have now learned his name and quackeries, forsooth—what did he say to thee of me?”

“Of thee? Nothing; but to warn me against thy doctrines.”

“Aha! was that all?” said Nicot. “He is a notable inventor, and since, when we met last, I unmasked his delusions, I thought he might retaliate by some tale of slander.”

“Unmasked his delusions!—how?”

“A dull and long story: he wished to teach an old doting friend of mine his secrets of

prolonged life and philosophical alchemy. I advise thee to renounce so discreditable an acquaintance." With that Nicot nodded significantly, and, not wishing to be further questioned, went his way.

Glyndon's mind at that moment had escaped to his art, and the comments and presence of Nicot had been no welcome interruption. He turned from the landscape of Salvator, and his eye falling on a Nativity by Corregio, the contrast between the two ranks of genius struck him as a discovery. That exquisite repose—that perfect sense of beauty—that strength without effort—that breathing moral of high art, which speaks to the mind through the eye, and raises the thoughts, by the aid of tenderness and love, to the regions of awe and wonder,—ay! that was the true school. He quitted the gallery with reluctant steps and inspired ideas; he sought his own home. Here, pleased not to find the sober Mervale, he leant his face on his hands, and endeavoured to recal the words of Zanoni in their last meeting. Yes, he felt Nicot's talk even on art was crime; it

debased the imagination itself to mechanism. Could he, who saw nothing in the soul but a combination of matter, prate of schools that should excel a Raffaële? Yes, art was magic; and as he owned the truth of the aphorism, he could comprehend that in magic there may be religion, for religion is an essential to art. His old ambition, freeing itself from the frigid prudence with which Mervale sought to desecrate all images less substantial than the golden calf of the world, revived, and stirred, and kindled. The subtle detection of what he conceived to be an error in the school he had hitherto adopted, made more manifest to him by the grinning commentary of Nicot, seemed to open to him a new world of invention. He seized the happy moment—he placed before him the colours and the canvas. Lost in his conceptions of a fresh ideal, his mind was lifted aloft into the airy realms of beauty; dark thoughts, unhallowed desires vanished. Zanoni was right: the material world shrunk from his gaze; he viewed nature as from a mountain-top afar; and as the waves of his unquiet heart became calm

and still, again the angel eyes of Viola beamed on them as a holy star.

Locking himself in his chamber, he refused even the visits of Mervale. Intoxicated with the pure air of his fresh existence, he remained for three days, and almost nights, absorbed in his employment; but on the fourth morning came that re-action to which all labour is exposed. He woke listless and fatigued; and as he cast his eyes on the canvass the glory seemed to have gone from it. Humiliating recollections of the great masters he aspired to rival forced themselves upon him; defects before unseen magnified themselves to deformities in his languid and discontented eyes. He touched and retouched, but his hand failed him; he threw down his instruments in despair; he opened his casement; the day without was bright and lovely; the street was crowded with that life which is ever so joyous and affluent in the animated population of Naples. He saw the lover as he passed, conversing with his mistress, by those mute gestures which have survived all changes of languages, the same now as when

the Etruscan painted yon vases in the Museo Borbonico. Life from without beckoned his youth to its mirth and its pleasures; and the dull walls within, lately large enough to comprise heaven and earth, seemed now cabined and confined as a felon's prison. He welcomed the step of Mervale at his threshold, and unbarred the door.

“And is that all you have done,” said Mervale, glancing disdainfully at the canvass. “Is it for this that you have shut yourself out from the sunny days and moonlit nights of Naples?”

“While the fit was on me, I basked in a brighter sun, and imbibed the voluptuous luxury of a softer moon.”

“You own that the fit is over. Well, that is some sign of returning sense. After all, it is better to daub canvass for three days than make a fool of yourself for life. This little Siren?”

“Be dumb! I hate to hear you name her.”

Mervale drew his chair nearer to Glyndon's, thrust his hands deep in his breeches pockets, stretched his legs, and was about to begin a

serious strain of expostulation, when a knock was heard at the door, and Nicot, without waiting for leave, thrust in his ugly head.

“ Good-day, mon cher confrère. I wished to speak to you. Hein! you have been at work I see. This is well—very well! A bold outline—great freedom in that right hand. But, hold! is the composition good? You have not got the great pyramidal form. Don’t you think, too, that you have lost the advantage of contrast in this figure; since the right leg is put forward, surely the right arm should be put back? Peste! but that little finger is very fine!”

Mervale detested Nicot. For all speculators, Utopians, alterers of the world, and wanderers from the high road, were equally hateful to him; but he could have hugged the Frenchman at that moment. He saw in Glyndon’s expressive countenance all the weariness and disgust he endured. After so rapt a study, to be prated to about pyramidal forms, and right arms, and right legs—the accident of the art—the whole conception to be overlooked, and the criticism to end in approval of the little finger!

“Oh,” said Glyndon, peevishly throwing the cloth over his design, “enough of my poor performance. What is it you have to say to me?”

“In the first place,” said Nicot, huddling himself together upon a stool—“in the first place, this Signor Zanoni—this second Cagliostro—who disputes my doctrines! (no doubt—a spy of the man Capet) I am not vindictive; as Helvetius says, ‘our errors arise from our passions.’ I keep mine in order; but it is virtuous to hate in the cause of mankind; I would I had the denouncing and the judging of Signor Zanoni at Paris.” And Nicot’s small eyes shot fire, and he gnashed his teeth.

“Have you any new cause to hate him?”

“Yes,” said Nicot, fiercely. “Yes, I hear he is courting the girl I mean to marry.”

“You! Whom do you speak of?”

“The celebrated Pisani! She is divinely handsome. She would make my fortune in a republic. And a republic we shall have before the year is out!”

Mervale rubbed his hands, and chuckled. Glyndon coloured with rage and shame.

“Do you know the Signora Pisani? Have you ever spoken to her?”

“Not yet. But when I make up my mind to anything, it is soon done. I am about to return to Paris. They write me word that a handsome wife advances the career of a patriot. The age of prejudice is over. The sublimer virtues begin to be understood. I shall take back the handsomest wife in Europe.”

“Be quiet! What are you about?” said Mervale, seizing Glyndon, as he saw him advance towards the Frenchman, his eyes sparkling, and his hands clenched.

“Sir!” said Glyndon, between his teeth, “you know not of whom you thus speak. Do you affect to suppose that Viola Pisani would accept *you*?”

“Not if she could get a better offer,” said Mervale, looking up to the ceiling.

“A better offer? You don’t understand me,” said Nicot. “I, Jean Nicot, propose to marry the girl;—marry her! Others may make her more liberal offers, but no one, I apprehend, would make one so honourable. I alone have pity

on her friendless situation. Besides, according to the dawning state of things, one will always, in France, be able to get rid of a wife whenever one wishes. We shall have new laws of divorce. Do you imagine that an Italian girl—and in no country in the world are maidens, it seems, more chaste, (though wives may console themselves with virtues more philosophical,)—would refuse the hand of an artist for the settlements of a prince? No; I think better of the Pisani than you do. I shall hasten to introduce myself to her.”

“I wish you all success, Monsieur Nicot,” said Mervale, rising, and shaking him heartily by the hand.

Glyndon cast at them both a disdainful glance.

“Perhaps, Monsieur Nicot,” said he, at length, constraining his lips into a bitter smile, “perhaps you may have rivals.”

“So much the better,” replied Monsieur Nicot, carelessly, kicking his heels together, and appearing absorbed in admiration at the size of his large feet.

“I myself admire Viola Pisani.”

“Every painter must!”

“I may offer her marriage as well as yourself.”

“That would be folly in you, though wisdom in me. You would not know how to draw profit from the speculation! Cher confrère, you have prejudices.”

“You do not dare to say you would make profit from your own wife?”

“The virtuous Cato lent his wife to a friend. I love virtue, and I cannot do better than imitate Cato. But to be serious—I do not fear you as a rival. You are good looking, and I am ugly. But you are irresolute, and I decisive. While you are uttering fine phrases, I shall say, simply, ‘I have a bon état. Will you marry me?’ So do your worst, chere confrère. A revoir, behind the scenes!”

So saying, Nicot rose, stretched his long arms and short legs, yawned till he shewed all his ragged teeth from ear to ear, pressed down his cap on his shaggy head with an air of defiance, and casting over his left shoulder a glance of triumph and malice at the indignant Glyndon, sauntered out of the room.

Mervale burst into a violent fit of laughter.

“See how your Viola is estimated by your friend. A fine victory, to carry her off from the ugliest dog between Lapland and the Calmucks.”

Glyndon was yet too indignant to answer, when a new visitor arrived. It was Zanoni himself. Mervale, on whom the appearance and aspect of this personage imposed a kind of reluctant deference, which he was unwilling to acknowledge, and still more to betray, nodded to Glyndon, and saying, simply, “More when I see you again,” left the painter and his unexpected visitor.

“I see,” said Zanoni, lifting the cloth from the canvass, “that you have not slighted the advice I gave you. Courage, young artist, this is an escape from the schools; this is full of the bold self-confidence of real genius. You had no Nicot—no Mervale at your elbow, when this image of true beauty was conceived!”

Charmed back to his art by this unlooked for praise, Glyndon replied, modestly, “I thought well of my design till this morning; and then I was disenchanted of my happy persuasion.”

“Say, rather, that, unaccustomed to continued labour, you were fatigued with your employment.”

“That is true. Shall I confess it? I began to miss the world without. It seemed to me as if, while I lavished my heart and my youth upon visions of beauty, I was losing the beautiful realities of actual life. And I envied the merry fisherman, singing as he passed below my casement, and the lover conversing with his mistress.”

“And,” said Zanoni, with an encouraging smile, “do you blame yourself for the natural and necessary return to earth, in which even the most habitual visitor of the Heavens of Invention seeks his relaxation and repose. Man’s genius is a bird, that cannot be always on the wing; when the craving for the actual world is felt, it is a hunger that must be appeased. They who command best the ideal, enjoy ever most the real. See the true artist, when abroad in men’s thoroughfares, ever observant, ever diving into the heart, ever alive to the least as to the greatest of the complicated truths of existence; descending to what pedants would call the trivial and

the frivolous. From every mesh in the social web, he can disentangle a grace. And for him each airy gossamer floats in the gold of the sunlight. Know you not that around the animalcule that sports in the water there shines a halo, as around the star* that revolves in bright pastime through the space? True art finds beauty everywhere. In the street, in the market-place, in the hovel, it gathers food for the hive of its thoughts. In the mire of politics, Dante and Milton selected pearls for the wreath of song. Whoever told you that Raffaële did not enjoy the life without, carrying everywhere with him the one inward idea of beauty which attracted and embedded in its own amber every straw that the feet of the dull man trampled into mud? As some lord of the forest wanders abroad for its prey, and scents and follows it over plain and hill, through brake and jungle, but, seizing it at last, bears the quarry to its unwitnessed cave—so Genius searches through wood and waste, untiringly and

* The monas mica, found in the purest pools, is encompassed with a halo. And this is frequent amongst many other species of animalculæ.

eagerly, every sense awake, every nerve strained to speed and strength, for the scattered and flying images of matter, that it seizes at last with its mighty talons, and bears away with it into solitudes no footstep can invade. Go, seek the world without ; it is for art, the inexhaustible pasture ground and harvest to the world within !”

“ You comfort me,” said Glyndon, brightening. “ I had imagined my weariness a proof of my deficiency ! But not now would I speak to you of these labours. Pardon me if I pass from the toil to the reward. You have uttered dim prophecies of my future, if I wed one who, in the judgment of the sober world, would only darken its prospects and obstruct its ambition. Do you speak from the wisdom which is experience, or that which aspires to prediction ?”

“ Are they not allied ? Is it not he best accustomed to calculation who can solve at a glance any new problem in the arithmetic of chances ?”

“ You evade my question.”

“ No ; but I will adapt my answer the better to your comprehension, for it is upon this very point that I have sought you. Listen to me !”

Zanoni fixed his eyes earnestly on his listener, and continued. "For the accomplishment of whatever is great and lofty, the clear perception of truths is the first requisite—truths adapted to the object desired. The warrior thus reduces the chances of battle to combinations almost of mathematics. He can predict a result, if he can but depend upon the materials he is forced to employ. At such a loss, he can cross that bridge; in such a time, he can reduce that fort. Still more accurately, for he depends less on material causes than ideas at his command, can the commander of the purer science or diviner art, if he once perceive the truths that are in him and around, foretel what he can achieve, and in what he is condemned to fail. But this perception of truths is disturbed by many causes—vanity, passion, fear, indolence in himself, ignorance of the fitting means without to accomplish what he designs. He may miscalculate his own forces; he may have no chart of the country he would invade. It is only in a peculiar state of the mind that it is capable of perceiving truth; and that state is profound

serenity. Your mind is fevered by a desire for truth ; you would compel it to your embraces ; you would ask me to impart to you, without ordeal or preparation, the grandest secrets that exist in nature. But truth can no more be seen by the mind unprepared for it, than the sun can dawn upon the midst of night. Such a mind receives truth only to pollute it ; to use the simile of one who has wandered near to the secret of the sublime Goetia, (or the magic that lies within nature, as electricity within the cloud.) ‘ He who pours water into the muddy well, does but disturb the mud.’”*

“ What do you tend to ?”

“ This : that you have faculties that may attain to surpassing power ; that may rank you among those enchanters who, greater than the magian, leave behind them an enduring influence, worshipped wherever beauty is comprehended, wherever the soul is sensible of a higher world than that in which matter struggles for crude and incomplete existence.

* Iamb. de Vit. Pythag.

“ But to make available those faculties, need I be a prophet to tell you that you must learn to concentrate upon great objects all your desires. The heart must rest, that the mind may be active. At present, you wander from aim to aim. As the ballast to the ship, so to the spirit are Faith and Love. With your whole heart, affections, humanity, centred in one object, your mind and aspirations will become equally steadfast and in earnest. Viola is a child as yet; you do not perceive the high nature the trials of life will develop. Pardon me, if I say that her soul, purer and loftier than your own, will bear it upward, as a sacred hymn carries aloft the spirits of the world. Your nature wants the harmony, the music which, as the Pythagoreans wisely taught, at once elevates and soothes. I offer you that music in her love.”

“ But am I sure that she does love me ? ”

“ Artist, no ; she loves you not at present ; her affections are full of another. But if I could transfer to you, as the loadstone transfers its attraction to the magnet, the love that she

has now for me—if I could cause her to see in you the ideal of her dreams——”

“ Is such a gift in the power of man ?”

“ I offer it to you, if your love be lawful, if your faith in virtue and yourself be deep and loyal; if not, think you I would disenchant her with truth to make her adore a falsehood ?”

“ But if,” persisted Glyndon, “ if she be all that you tell me, and if she love you, how can you rob yourself of so priceless a treasure ?”

“ Oh, shallow and mean heart of man !” exclaimed Zanoni, with unaccustomed passion and vehemence, “ dost thou conceive so little of love as not to know that it sacrifices all—love itself—for the happiness of the thing it loves ? Hear me !” And Zanoni’s face grew pale. “ Hear me ! I press this upon you, because I love her, and because I fear that with me her fate will be less fair than with yourself. Why—ask not, for I will not tell you. Enough ! Time presses now for your answer ; it cannot long be delayed. Before the night of the third day from this, all choice will be forbid you !”

“ But,” said Glyndon, still doubting and suspicious, “ but why this haste ?”

“ Man, you are not worthy of her when you ask me. All I can tell you here, you should have known yourself. This ravisher, this man of will, this son of the old Visconti, unlike you,—steadfast, resolute, earnest even in his crimes,—never relinquishes an object. But one passion controls his lust—it is his avarice. The day after his attempt on Viola, his uncle, the Cardinal —, from whom he has large expectations of land and gold, sent for him, and forbade him, on pain of forfeiting all the possessions which his schemes already had parcelled out, to pursue with dishonourable designs one whom the Cardinal had heeded and loved from childhood. This is the cause of his present pause from his pursuit. While we speak, the cause expires. Before the hand of the clock reaches the hour of noon, the Cardinal — will be no more. At this very moment thy friend, Jean Nicot, is with the Prince di —”

“ He ! wherefore ?”

“ To ask what dower shall go with Viola

Pisani, the morning that she leaves the palace of the Prince."

"And how do you know all this?"

"Fool! I tell thee again, because a lover is a watcher by night and day; because love never sleeps when danger menaces the beloved one!"

"And you it was that informed the Cardinal ——?"

"Yes; and what has been my task might as easily have been thine. Speak—thine answer!"

"You shall have it on the third day from this."

"Be it so. Put off, poor waverer, thy happiness to the last hour. On the third day from this, I will ask thee thy resolve."

"And where shall we meet?"

"Before midnight, where you may least expect me. You cannot shun me, though you may seek to do so!"

"Stay one moment! You condemn me as doubtful, irresolute, suspicious. Have I no cause? Can I yield without a struggle to the strange fascination you exert upon my mind? What interest can you have in me, a stranger,

that you should thus dictate to me the gravest action in the life of man? Do you suppose that any one in his senses would not pause, and deliberate, and ask himself, ‘Why should this stranger care thus for me?’”

“And yet,” said Zanoni, “if I told thee that I could initiate thee into the secrets of that magic which the philosophy of the whole existing world treats as a chimera, or imposition,—if I promised to shew thee how to command the beings of air and ocean, how to accumulate wealth more easily than a child can gather pebbles on the shore, to place in thy hands the essence of the herbs which prolong life from age to age, the mystery of that attraction by which to awe all danger, and disarm all violence, and subdue man as the serpent charms the bird; if I told thee that all these it was mine to possess and to communicate, thou wouldst listen to me then, and obey me without a doubt!”

“It is true; and I can account for this only by the imperfect associations of my childhood—by traditions in our house of——”

“Your forefather, who, in the revival of science, sought the secrets of Apollonius and Paracelsus.”

“What!” said Glyndon, amazed, “are you so well acquainted with the annals of an obscure lineage?”

“To the man who aspires to know, no man who has been the meanest student of knowledge should be unknown. You ask me why I have shewn this interest in your fate? There is one reason which I have not yet told you. There is a Fraternity to whose laws and whose mysteries the most inquisitive schoolmen are in the dark. By those laws, all are pledged to warn, to aid, and to guide even the remotest descendants of men who have toiled, though vainly, like your ancestor, in the mysteries of the Order. We are bound to advise them to their welfare; nay, more,—if they command us to it, we must accept them as our pupils. I am a survivor of that most ancient and immortal union. This it was that bound me to thee at the first; this, perhaps, attracted thyself unconsciously, Son of our Brotherhood, to me.”

“ If this be so, I command thee, in the name of the laws thou obeyest, receive me as thy pupil !”

“ What do you ask ?” said Zanoni, passionately. “ Learn first the conditions. No Neophyte must have, at his initiation, one affection or desire that chains him to the world. He must be pure from the love of woman, free from avarice and ambition, free from the dreams even of art, or the hope of earthly fame. The first sacrifice thou must make is—Viola herself. And for what? For an ordeal that the most daring courage only can encounter, the most ethereal natures alone survive ! Thou art unfit for the science that has made me and others what we are or have been ; for thy whole nature is one fear !”

“ Fear !” cried Glyndon, colouring with resentment, and rising to the full height of his stature.

“ Fear ! and the worst fear—fear of the world’s opinion ; fear of the Nicots and the Mervales ; fear of thine own impulses when most generous ; fear of thine own powers when thy genius is most bold ; fear that virtue is not eternal ; fear

that God does not live in heaven to keep watch on earth ; fear, the fear of little men ; and that fear is never known to the great.”

With these words Zanoni abruptly left the artist—humbled, bewildered, and not convinced. He remained alone with his thoughts, till he was roused by the striking of the clock ; he then suddenly remembered Zanoni’s prediction of the Cardinal’s death ; and, seized with an intense desire to learn its truth, he hurried into the streets,—he gained the Cardinal’s palace. Five minutes before noon his Eminence had expired, after an illness of less than an hour. Zanoni’s visit had occupied more time than the illness of the Cardinal. Awed and perplexed, he turned from the palace, and as he walked through the Chiaja, he saw Jean Nicot emerge from the portals of the Prince di —.

CHAPTER V.

Col tuo lume mi giro.

TASSO, Canzone xv.

VENERABLE Brotherhood, so sacred and so little known, from whose secret and precious archives the materials for this history have been drawn; ye who have retained, from century to century, all that time has spared of the august and venerable science,—thanks to you, if now for the first time, some records of the thoughts and actions of no false and self-styled luminary of your Order are given, however imperfectly, to the world. Many have called themselves of your band; many spurious pretenders have been so called by the learned ignorance which still, baffled and perplexed, is driven to confess that it knows nothing of your origin, your cere-

monies or doctrines, nor even if you still have local habitation on the earth. Thanks to you if I, the only one of my country, in this age, admitted, with a profane footstep, into your mysterious Academe,* have been by you empowered and instructed to adapt to the comprehension of the uninitiated, some few of the starry truths which shone on the great Shemaía of the Chaldean Lore, and gleamed dimly through the darkened knowledge of later disciples, labouring, like Psellus and Iamblichus, to revive the embers of the fire which burned in the *Hamarim* of the East. Though not to us of an aged and hoary world, is vouchsafed the NAME which, so say the earliest oracles of the earth, “rushes into the infinite worlds, ακοιμητη σφοδαλιγγι,”† yet is it ours to trace the reviving truths, through each new discovery of the philosopher and chemist. The laws of Attraction, of Electricity, and of the yet more mys-

* The reader will have the goodness to remember that this is said by the author of the original MSS., not by the editor.

† Excerpta Orac. Chald. ap Procl.

terious agency of that Great Principle of Life, which, if drawn from the Universe, would leave the Universe a Grave, were but the code in which the Theurgy of old sought the guides that led it to a legislation and science of its own. To rebuild on words the fragments of this history, it seems to me as if, in a solemn trance, I was led through the ruins of a city whose only remains were tombs. From the sarcophagus and the urn I awake the Genius* of the extinguished Torch, and so closely does its shape resemble Eros, that at moments I scarcely know which of ye dictate to me—O Love! O Death!

And it stirred in the virgin's heart—this new, unfathomable, and divine emotion! Was it only the ordinary affection of the pulse and the fancy, of the eye to the Beautiful, of the ear to the Eloquent, or did it not justify the notion she herself conceived of it,—that it was born not of the senses, that it was less of earthly and human love than the effect of some wondrous, but not unholy charm? I said that, from that day,

* The Greek Genius of Death.

in which, no longer with awe and trembling, she surrendered herself to the influence of Zanoni, she had sought to put her thoughts into words. Let the thoughts attest their own nature.

THE SELF-CONFESSIONAL.

“ Is it the Daylight that shines on me, or the memory of thy presence? Wherever I look, the world seems full of thee; in every ray that trembles on the water, that smiles upon the leaves, I behold but a likeness to thine eyes. What is this change, that alters not only myself, but the face of the whole universe?

.

How instantaneously leapt into life the power with which thou swayest my heart in its ebb and flow. Thousands were around me, and I saw but thee. That was the Night in which I first entered upon the world which crowds life into a Drama, and has no language but music. How strangely and how suddenly with thee became that world evermore connected! What the delusion of the stage was to others, thy presence

was to me. My life, too, seemed to centre into those short hours, and from thy lips I heard a music, mute to all ears but mine. I sit in the room where my father dwelt. Here, on that happy night, forgetting why *they* were so happy, I shrunk into the shadow, and sought to guess what thou wert to me; and my mother's low voice woke me, and I crept to my father's side, close—close, from fear of my own thoughts.

“ Ah! sweet and sad was the morrow to that night, when thy lips warned me of the Future. An orphan now—what is there that lives for me to think of, to dream upon, to revere, but thee!

“ How tenderly thou hast rebuked me for the grievous wrong that my thoughts did thee! Why should I have shuddered to feel thee glancing upon my thoughts like the beam on the solitary tree, to which thou didst once liken me so well? It was—it was, that, like the tree, I struggled for the light, and the light came. They tell me of love, and my very life of the stage breathes the language of love into my lips. No; again and again, I know *that* is not the love that I feel for thee!—it is not a passion, it is

a thought! I ask not to be loved again. I murmur not that thy words are stern and thy looks are cold. I ask not if I have rivals; I sigh not to be fair in thine eyes. It is my *spirit* that would blend itself with thine. I would give worlds, though we were apart, though oceans rolled between us, to know the hour in which thy gaze was lifted to the stars—in which thy heart poured itself in prayer. They tell me thou art more beautiful than the marble images, that are fairer than all human forms; but I have never dared to gaze steadfastly on thy face, that memory might compare thee with the rest. Only thine eyes, and thy soft, calm smile haunt me. As when I look upon the moon, all that passes into my heart is her silent light.

.

“Often, when the air is calm, I have thought that I hear the strains of my father’s music; often, though long stilled in the grave, have they waked me from the dreams of the solemn night. Methinks, ere thou comest to me, that I hear them herald thy approach. Methinks I hear them wail and moan, when I sink back into

myself on seeing thee depart. Thou art *of* that music—its spirit, its genius. My father must have guessed at thee and thy native regions, when the winds hushed to listen to his tones, and the world deemed him mad! I hear, where I sit, the far murmur of the sea. Murmur on, ye blessed waters! The waves are the pulse of the shore. They beat with the gladness of the morning wind—so beats my heart in the freshness and light that make up the thoughts of thee!

.

“ Often in my childhood I have mused and asked for what I was born; and my soul answered my heart, and said—‘Thou wert born to worship!’ Yes; I know why the real world has ever seemed to me so false and cold. I know why the world of the stage charmed and dazzled me. I know why it was so sweet to sit apart and gaze my whole being into the distant heavens. My nature is not formed for this life, happy though it seem to others. It is its very want to have ever before it some image loftier

than itself! Stranger, in what realm above,
 when the grave is past, shall my soul, hour
 after hour, worship at the same source as thine?

.

“ In the gardens of my neighbour there is a
 small fountain. I stood by it this morning
 after sunrise. How it sprung up, with its eager
 spray, to the sunbeams! And then I thought
 that I should see thee again this day, and so
 sprung my heart to the new morning which
 thou bringest me from the skies.

.

I *have* seen, I have *listened* to thee again. How
 bold I have become! I ran on with my child-
 like thoughts and stories, my recollections of
 the past, as if I had known thee from an infant
 Suddenly the idea of my presumption struck
 me. I stopped, and timidly sought thine eyes.

“ ‘ Well, and when you found that the night-
 ingale refused to sing?’—

“ ‘ Ah!’ I said, ‘ what to thee this history of
 the heart of a child?’

“ ‘ Viola,’ didst thou answer, with that voice, so inexpressibly calm and earnest!—‘ Viola, the darkness of a child’s heart is often but the shadow of a star. Speak on! And thy nightingale, when they caught and caged it, refused to sing?’

“ ‘ And I placed the cage yonder, amidst the vine-leaves, and took up my lute, and spoke to it on the strings; for I thought that all music was its native language, and it would understand that I sought to comfort it.’

“ ‘ Yes,’ saidst thou. ‘ And at last it answered thee, but not with song—in a sharp, brief cry; so mournful, that thy hands let fall the lute, and the tears gushed from thine eyes. So, softly didst thou unbar the cage, and the nightingale flew into yonder thicket; and thou heardst the foliage rustle, and, looking through the moonlight, thine eyes saw that it had found its mate. It sang to thee then from the boughs a long, loud, joyous jubilee. And, musing, thou didst feel that it was not the vine-leaves or the moonlight that made the bird give melody to night; and that the secret

of its music was the presence of a thing beloved.'

"How didst thou know my thoughts in that childlike time better than I knew myself! How is the humble life of my past years, with its mean events, so mysteriously familiar to thee, bright stranger! I wonder — but I do not again dare to fear thee!

.
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"Once the thought of him oppressed and weighed me down. As an infant that longs for the moon, my being was one vague desire for something never to be attained. Now I feel rather as if to think of thee sufficed to remove every fetter from my spirit. I float in the still seas of light, and nothing seems too high for my wings, too glorious for my eyes. It was mine ignorance that made me fear thee. A knowledge that is not in books seems to breathe around thee as an atmosphere. How little have I read!—how little have I learned! Yet when thou art by my side, it seems as if the veil were lifted from all wisdom and all nature. I startle

when I look even at the words I have written; they seem not to come from myself, but are the signs of another language which thou hast taught my heart, and which my hand traces rapidly, as at thy dictation. Sometimes, while I write or muse, I could fancy that I heard light wings hovering around me, and saw dim shapes of beauty floating round, and vanishing as they smiled upon me. No unquiet and fearful dream ever comes to me now in sleep, yet sleep and waking are alike but as one dream. In sleep, I wander with thee, not through the paths of earth, but through impalpable air — an air which seems a music—upward and upward, as the soul mounts on the tones of a lyre! Till I knew thee, I was as a slave to the earth. Thou hast given to me the liberty of the universe! Before, it was life; it seems to me now as if I had commenced eternity!

.
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“ Formerly, when I was to appear upon the stage, my heart beat more loudly. I trembled to encounter the audience, whose breath gave

shame or fame; and now I have no fear of them. I see them, heed them, hear them not! I know that there will be music in my voice, for it is a hymn that I pour to thee. Thou never comest to the theatre; and that no longer grieves me. Thou art become too sacred to appear a part of the common world, and I feel glad that thou art not by when crowds have a right to judge me.

.

“ And he spoke to me of another; to another he would consign me! No, it is not love that I feel for thee, Zanoni; or why did I hear thee without anger? why did thy command seem to me not a thing impossible! As the strings of the instrument obey the hand of the master, thy look modulates the wildest chords of my heart to thy will. If it please thee—yes—let it be so. Thou art Lord of my destinies; they cannot rebel against thee! I almost think I could love him, whoever it be, on whom thou wouldst shed the rays that circumfuse thyself. Whatever thou hast touched, I love; whatever

thou speakest of, I love. Thy hand played with these vine-leaves; I wear them in my bosom. Thou seemest to me the source of all love; too high and too bright to be loved thyself, but darting light into other objects, on which the eye can gaze less dazzled. No, no; it is not love that I feel for thee, and therefore it is that I do not blush to nourish and confess it. Shame on me if I loved, knowing myself so worthless a thing to thee!

.
“Another!—my memory echoes back that word. Another! Dost thou mean that I shall see thee no more? It is not sadness—it is not despair that seizes me. I cannot weep. It is an utter sense of desolation. I am plunged back into the common life; and I shudder coldly at the solitude. But I will obey thee, if thou wilt. Shall I not see thee again beyond the grave? Oh, how sweet it were to die!

“Why do I not struggle from the web in which my will is thus entangled? Hast thou a right to dispose of me thus? Give me back—give me back—the life I knew before I gave

life itself away to thee. Give me back the careless dreams of my youth—my liberty of heart, that sung aloud as it walked the earth. Thou hast disenchanted me of everything that is not of thyself. Where was the sin, at least, to think of thee?—to see thee? Thy kiss still glows upon my hand; is that hand mine to bestow? Thy kiss claimed and hallowed it to thyself. Stranger, I will *not* obey thee.

.

“Another day—one day of the fatal three is gone! It is strange to me that since the sleep of the last night, a deep calm has settled upon my breast. I feel so assured that my very being is become a part of thee, that I cannot believe that my life can be separated from thine; and in this conviction I repose, and smile even at thy words and my own fears. Thou art fond of one maxim, which thou repeatest in a thousand forms—that the beauty of the soul is faith—that as ideal loveliness to the sculptor, faith is to the heart—that faith, rightly understood, extends over all the works of the Creator, whom we can know but through belief—that it

embraces a calm confidence in ourselves, and a serene repose as to our future—that it is the moonlight that sways the tides of the human sea. That faith I comprehend now. I reject all doubt—all fear. I know that I have inextricably linked the whole that makes the inner life to thee; and thou canst not tear me from thee, if thou wouldst! And this change from struggle into calm came to me with sleep—a sleep without a dream; but when I woke, it was with a mysterious sense of happiness—an indistinct memory of something blessed—as if thou hadst cast from afar off a smile upon my slumber. At night I was so sad; not a blossom that had not closed itself up as if never more to open to the sun; and the night itself, in the heart as on the earth, has ripened the blossoms into flowers. The world is beautiful once more, but beautiful in repose—not a breeze stirs thy tree—not a doubt my soul!

CHAPTER VI.

Tu vegga o per violenza o per inganno
 Patire o disonore o mortal danno.

ORL. FUR. Cant. xlii. i.

IT was a small cabinet ; the walls were covered with pictures, one of which was worth more than the whole lineage of the owner of the palace. Oh, yes ! Zanoni was right. The painter *is* a magician ; the gold he at least wrings from his crucible is no delusion. A Venetian noble might be a fribble, or an assassin—a scoundrel, or a dolt ; worthless, or worse than worthless, yet he might have sate to Titian, and his portrait may be inestimable !—A few inches of painted canvass a thousand times more valuable than a man with his veins and muscles, brain, will, heart, and intellect !

In this cabinet sate a man of about three and forty; dark-eyed, sallow, with short, prominent features, a massive conformation of jaw, and thick, sensual, but resolute lips; this man was the Prince di ——. His form, above the middle height, and rather inclined to corpulence, was clad in a loose dressing-robe of rich brocade. On a table before him, lay an old-fashioned sword and hat, a mask, dice and dice-box, a portfolio, and an inkstand of silver curiously carved.

“Well, Mascari,” said the Prince, looking up towards his parasite, who stood by the embrasure of the deep-set barricadoed window—“well! the Cardinal sleeps with his fathers. I require comfort for the loss of so excellent a relation; and where a more dulcet voice than Viola Pisani’s?”

“Is your Excellency serious? So soon after the death of his Eminence?”

“It will be the less talked of, and I the less suspected. Hast thou ascertained the name of the insolent who baffled us that night, and advised the Cardinal the next day?”

“Not yet.”

“Sapient Mascari! I will inform thee. It was the strange Unknown.”

“The Signor Zanoni! Are you sure, my Prince?”

“Mascari, yes. There is a tone in that man’s voice that I never can mistake; so clear, and so commanding, when I hear it I almost fancy there is such a thing as conscience. However, we must rid ourselves of an impertinent. Mascari, Signor Zanoni hath not yet honoured our poor house with his presence. He is a distinguished stranger—we must give a banquet in his honour.”

“Ah! and the cyprus wine! The cypress is a proper emblem of the grave.”

“But this anon. I am superstitious: there are strange stories of his power and foresight; remember the death of Ughelli. No matter! though the fiend were his ally, he should not rob me of my prize; no, nor my revenge.”

“Your Excellency is infatuated; the actress has bewitched you.”

“Mascari,” said the Prince, with a haughty

smile, "through these veins rolls the blood of the old Visconti—of those who boasted that no woman ever escaped their lust, and no man their resentment. The crown of my fathers has shrunk into a gewgaw and a toy; their ambition and their spirit are undecayed. My honour is now enlisted in this pursuit—Viola must be mine!"

"Another ambushade?" said Mascari, inquiringly.

"Nay, why not enter the house itself? the situation is lonely, and the door is not made of iron."

"But what if, on her return home, she tell the tale of our violence? A house forced—a virgin stolen! Reflect; though the feudal privileges are not destroyed, even a Visconti is not now above the law."

"Is he not, Mascari? Fool! in what age of the world, even if the Madmen of France succeed in their chimeras, will the iron of law not bend itself, like an ozier twig, to the strong hand of power and gold? But look not so pale, Mascari, I have fore-planned all things. The day

that she leaves this palace, she will leave it for France, with Monsieur Jean Nicot."

Before Mascari could reply, the gentleman of the chamber announced the Signor Zanoni.

The Prince involuntarily laid his hand on the sword placed on the table, then with a smile at his own impulse, rose, and met his visitor at the threshold, with all the profuse and respectful courtesy of Italian simulation.

"This is an honour highly prized," said the Prince. "I have long desired to clasp the hand of one so distinguished ——."

"And I give it in the spirit with which you seek it," replied Zanoni.

The Neapolitan bowed over the hand he pressed; but as he touched it, a shiver came over him, and his heart stood still. Zanoni bent on him his dark, smiling eyes, and then seated himself with a familiar air.

"Thus it is signed and sealed; I mean our friendship, noble Prince. And now I will tell you the object of my visit. I find, Excellency, that, unconsciously perhaps, we are rivals. Can we not accommodate our pretensions?"

“ Ah !” said the Prince, carelessly, “ you then were the cavalier who robbed me of the reward of my chase. All stratagems fair, in love as in war. Reconcile our pretensions ! Well, here is the dice-box ; let us throw for her. He who casts the lowest shall resign his claim.”

“ Is this a decision by which you will promise to be bound ?”

“ Yes, on my faith.”

“ And for him who breaks his word so plighted, what shall be the forfeit ?”

“ The sword lies next to the dice-box, Signor Zanoni. Let him who stands not by his honour, fall by the sword.”

“ And you invoke that sentence if either of us fail his word ? Be it so ; let Signor Mascari cast for us.”

“ Well said !—Mascari, the dice !”

The Prince threw himself back in his chair ; and, world-hardened as he was, could not suppress the glow of triumph and satisfaction that spread itself over his features. Mascari took up the three dice, and rattled them noisily in the box. Zanoni leaning his cheek on his

hand, and bending over the table, fixed his eyes steadfastly on the parasite; Mascari in vain struggled to extricate himself from that searching gaze: he grew pale, and trembled—he put down the box.

“I give the first throw to your Excellency. Signor Mascari, be pleased to terminate our suspense?”

Again Mascari took up the box; again his hand shook, so that the dice rattled within. He threw; the numbers were sixteen.

“It is a high throw,” said Zanoni, calmly; “nevertheless, Signor Mascari, I do not despond.”

Mascari gathered up the dice, shook the box, and rolled the contents once more on the table; the number was the highest that can be thrown—eighteen.

The Prince darted a glance of fire at his minion, who stood with gaping mouth, staring at the dice, and trembling from head to foot.

“I have won, you see,” said Zanoni; “may we be friends still?”

“Signor,” said the Prince, obviously strug-

gling with anger and confusion, "the victory is already yours. But, pardon me, you have spoken lightly of this young girl—will anything tempt you to yield your claim?"

"Ah, do not think so ill of my gallantry; and," resumed Zanoni, with a stern meaning in his voice, "forget not the forfeit your own lips have named."

The Prince knit his brow, but constrained the haughty answer that was his first impulse.

"Enough!" he said, forcing a smile; "I yield. Let me prove that I do not yield ungraciously: will you favour me with your presence at a little feast I propose to give in honour,"—he added, with a sardonic mockery,— "of the elevation of my kinsman, the late Cardinal, of pious memory, to the true seat of St. Peter?"

"It is, indeed, a happiness to hear one command of yours I can obey."

Zanoni then turned the conversation, talked lightly and gaily, and soon afterwards departed.

"Villain," then exclaimed the Prince, grasping Mascari by the collar, "you betrayed me."

“I assure your Excellency that the dice were properly arranged : he should have thrown twelve ; but he is the Devil, and that’s the end of it.”

“There is no time to be lost,” said the Prince, quitting his hold of his parasite, who quietly resettled his cravat.

“My blood is up—I will win this girl, if I die for it ! What noise is that ?”

“It is but the sword of your illustrious ancestor that has fallen from the table.”

CHAPTER VII.

Il ne faut appeller aucun ordre si ce n'est en tems clair et serein.—LES CLAVICULES DU RABBI SALOMON.

LETTER FROM ZANONI TO MEJNOUR.

MY art is already dim and troubled. I have lost the tranquillity which is power. I cannot influence the decisions of those whom I would most guide to the shore; I see them wander farther and deeper into the infinite ocean, where our barks sail evermore, to the horizon that flies before us! Amazed and awed to find that I can only warn where I would control, I have looked into my own soul. It is true that the desires of earth chain me to the Present, and shut me from the solemn secrets which Intellect, purified from all the dross of the clay,

alone can examine and survey. The stern condition on which we hold our nobler and diviner gifts darkens our vision towards the future of those for whom we know the human infirmities of jealousy, or hate, or love. Mejnour, all around me is mist and haze; I have gone back in our sublime existence; and from the bosom of the imperishable youth that blooms only in the spirit, springs up the dark poison-flower of human love.

This man is not worthy of her—I know that truth; yet in his nature are the seeds of good and greatness, if the tares and weeds of worldly vanities and fears would suffer them to grow. If she were his, and I had thus transplanted to another soil the passion that obscures my gaze and disarms my power, unseen, unheard, unrecognised, I could watch over his fate, and secretly prompt his deeds, and minister to her welfare through his own. But time rushes on! Through the shadows that encircle me, I see, gathering round her, the darkest dangers. No choice but flight—no escape, save with him or me. With me!—the rapturous

thought—the terrible conviction! With me! Mejnour, canst thou wonder that I would save her from myself? A moment in the life of ages—a bubble on the shoreless sea. What else to me can be human love? And in this exquisite nature of hers—more pure, more spiritual even in its young affections than ever heretofore the countless volumes of the heart, race after race, have given to my gaze—there is yet a deep-buried feeling that warns me of inevitable woe. Thou, austere and remorseless Hierophant—thou who hast sought to convert to our brotherhood every spirit that seemed to thee most high and bold—even thou knowest, by horrible experience, how vain the hope to banish *fear* from the heart of woman. My life would be to her one marvel. Even if, on the other hand, I sought to guide her path through the realms of terror to the light, think of the Haunter of the Threshold, and shudder with me at the awful hazard! I have endeavoured to fill the Englishman's ambition with the true glory of his art; but the restless spirit of his ancestor still seems to whisper in him, and to

attract to the spheres in which it lost its own wandering way. There is a mystery in man's inheritance from his fathers. Peculiarities of the mind, as diseases of the body, rest dormant for generations to revive in some distant descendant, to baffle all treatment and elude all skill. Come to me from thy solitude amidst the wrecks of Rome! I pant for a living confidant—for one who in the old time has himself known jealousy and love. I have sought commune with Adon-Ai; but his presence, that once inspired such heavenly content with knowledge and so serene a confidence in destiny, now only troubles and perplexes me. From the height from which I strive to search into the shadows of things to come, I see confused spectres of menace and wrath. Methinks to behold a ghastly limit to the wondrous existence I have held—methinks that, after ages of the Ideal Life, I see my course merge into the most stormy whirlpool of the Real. Where the stars opened to me their gates, there looms a scaffold—thick steams of blood rise as from a shambles. What is more strange to me,

a creature here, a very type of the false ideal of common men—body and mind, a hideous mockery of the art that shapes the beautiful, and the desires that seek the perfect, ever haunts my vision in these perturbed and broken clouds of the fate to be. By that shadowy scaffold it stands and gibbers at me, with lips dropping slime and gore. Come, O friend of the far-time; for me, at least, thy wisdom has not purged away thy human affections. According to the bonds of our solemn order, reduced now to thee and myself, lone survivors of so many haughty and glorious aspirants, thou art pledged, too, to warn the descendant of those whom thy counsels sought to initiate into the great secret in a former age. The last of that bold Visconti, who was once thy pupil, is the relentless persecutor of this fair child. With thoughts of lust and murder, he is digging his own grave; thou mayst yet daunt him from his doom. And I also, mysteriously, by the same bond, am pledged to obey, if he so command, a less guilty descendant of a baffled but nobler student. If he reject my

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counsel, and insist upon the pledge, Mejnour, thou wilt have another Neophyte. Beware of another victim! Come to me! This will reach thee with all speed. Answer it by the pressure of one hand that I can dare to clasp!

CHAPTER VIII.

Il lupo

Ferito, credo, mi conobbe e 'ncontro

Mi venne con la bocca sanguinosa.

AMINTA, At. iv. sc. i.

At Naples, the Tomb of Virgil, beetling over the cave of Posilipo, is revered, not with the feelings that should hallow the memory of the poet, but the awe that wraps the memory of the magician. To his charms they ascribe the hollowing of that mountain passage; and tradition yet guards his tomb by the spirits he had raised to construct the cavern. This spot, in the immediate vicinity of Viola's home, had often attracted her solitary footsteps. She had loved the dim and solemn fancies that beset her as she looked into the lengthened gloom of the

grotto, or, ascending to the tomb, gazed from the rock on the dwarfed figures of the busy crowd that seemed to creep like insects along the windings of the soil below; and now, at noon, she bent thither her thoughtful way. She threaded the narrow path, she passed the gloomy vineyard that clammers up the rock, and gained the lofty spot, green with moss and luxuriant foliage, where the dust of him who yet soothes and elevates the minds of men is believed to rest. From afar rose the huge fortress of St. Elmo, frowning darkly amidst spires and domes that glittered in the sun. Lulled in its azure splendour, lay the Siren's sea; and the grey smoke of Vesuvius, in the clear distance, soared like a moving pillar into the lucid sky. Motionless on the brink of the precipice, Viola looked upon the lovely and living world that stretched below; and the sullen vapour of Vesuvius fascinated her eye yet more than the scattered gardens, or the gleaming Caprea, smiling amidst the smiles of the sea. She heard not a step that had followed her on her path, and started to hear a voice at hand. So sudden

was the apparition of the form that stood by her side, emerging from the bushes that clad the crags, and so singularly did it harmonize in its uncouth ugliness with the wild nature of the scene immediately around her, and the wizard traditions of the place, that the colour left her cheek, and a faint cry broke from her lips.

“Tush, pretty trembler!—do not be frightened at my face,” said the man, with a bitter smile. “After three months’ marriage there is no difference between ugliness and beauty. Custom is a great leveller. I was coming to your house when I saw you leave it; so, as I have matters of importance to communicate, I ventured to follow your footsteps. My name is Jean Nicot, a name already favourably known as a French artist. The art of painting and the art of music are nearly connected, and the stage is an altar that unites the two.”

There was something frank and unembarrassed in the man’s address, that served to dispel the fear his appearance had occasioned. He seated himself, as he spoke, on a crag beside her, and, looking up steadily into her face, continued :

“ You are very beautiful, Viola Pisani, and I am not surprised at the number of your admirers. If I presume to place myself in the list, it is because I am the only one who loves thee honestly, and woos thee fairly. Nay, look not so indignant ! Listen to me. Has the Prince di —— ever spoken to thee of marriage ?—or the beautiful impostor, Zanoni ?—or the young blue-eyed Englishman, Clarence Glyndon ? It is marriage, it is a home, it is safety, it is reputation, that I offer to thee. And these last, when the straight form grows crooked, and the bright eyes dim. What say you ?” and he attempted to seize her hand.

Viola shrunk from him, and silently turned to depart. He rose abruptly, and placed himself on her path.

“ Actress, you must hear me ! Do you know what this calling of the stage is in the eyes of prejudice—that is, of the common opinion of mankind. It is to be a Princess before the lamps, and a Pariah before the day. No man believes in your virtue, no man credits your vows ; you are the puppet that they consent to

trick out with tinsel for their amusement, not an idol for their worship. Are you so enamoured of this career that you scorn even to think of security and honour? Perhaps you are different from what you seem. Perhaps you laugh at the prejudice that would degrade you, and would wisely turn it to advantage. Speak frankly to me; I have no prejudice either. Sweet one, I am sure we should agree. Now, this Prince di ——, I have a message from him. Shall I deliver it?"

Never had Viola felt as she felt then; never had she so thoroughly seen all the perils of her forlorn condition and her fearful renown. Nicot continued:—

"Zanoni would but amuse himself with thy vanity; Glyndon would despise himself, if he offered thee his name—and thee, if thou wouldst accept it; but the Prince di —— is in earnest, and he is wealthy. Listen!"

And Nicot approached his lips to her, and hissed a sentence which she did not suffer him to complete. She darted from him with one glance of unutterable disdain. As he strove to

regain his hold of her arm, he lost his footing and fell down the sides of the rock, till, bruised and lacerated, a pine-branch saved him from the yawning abyss below. She heard his exclamation of rage and pain, as she bounded down the path, and, without once turning to look behind, regained her home. By the porch stood Glyndon, conversing with Gionetta. She passed him abruptly, entered the house, and, sinking on the floor, wept loud and passionately.

Glyndon, who had followed her in surprise, vainly sought to soothe and calm her. She would not reply to his questions; she did not seem to listen to his protestations of love, till suddenly, as Nicot's terrible picture of the world's judgment of that profession, which to her younger thoughts had seemed the service of song and the beautiful, forced itself upon her. She raised her face from her hands, and looking steadily upon the Englishman, said, "False one, dost thou talk to me of love?"

"By my honour, words fail to tell thee how I love!"

“Wilt thou give me thy home—thy name? Dost thou woo me as thy wife?” And at that moment, had Glyndon answered as his better angel would have counselled, perhaps, in that revolution of her whole mind, which the words of Nicot had effected, which made her despise her very self, sicken of her lofty dreams, despair of the future, and distrust her whole ideal,—perhaps, I say, in restoring her self-esteem, he would have won her confidence, and ultimately secured her love. But, against the prompting of his nobler nature, rose up at that sudden question all those doubts that, as Zanoni had so well implied, made the true enemies of his soul. Was he thus suddenly to be entangled into a snare laid for his credulity by deceivers? Was she not instructed to seize the moment to force him into an avowal prudence must repent? Was not the great Actress rehearsing a premeditated part? He turned round, as these thoughts, the children of the world, passed across him, for he literally fancied that he heard the sarcastic laugh of Mervale without. Nor was he deceived. Mervale was passing by the threshold, and Gionetta had told him his friend was within.

Who does not know the effect of the world's laugh? Mervale was the personation of the world. The whole world seemed to shout derision in those ringing tones. He drew back—he recoiled. Viola followed him with her earnest, impatient eyes. At last he faltered forth—"Do all thy profession, beautiful Viola, exact marriage as the sole condition of love?" Oh, bitter question! Oh, poisoned taunt! He repented it the moment after. He was seized with remorse of reason, of feeling, and of conscience. He saw her form shrink, as it were, at his cruel words. He saw the colour come and go, to leave the writhing lips like marble; and then, with a sad, gentle look of self-pity, rather than reproach, she pressed her hands tightly to her bosom, and said,

"He was right! Pardon me, Englishman; I see now, indeed, that I am the Pariah and the outcast."

"Hear me. I retract. Viola, Viola! it is for you to forgive!"

But Viola waved him from her, and smiling mournfully, as she passed him by, glided from the chamber; and he did not dare to detain her.

CHAPTER IX.

DAFNE. Ma, chi lung' è d'Amor,

TIRSI.

Chi teme e fugge.

DAFNE. E che giova fuggir da lui ch' ha l'ali?

TIRSI. *Amor nascente ha corte l'ali!*

AMINTA, At. ii. sc. ii.

WHEN Glyndon found himself without Viola's house, Mervale, still loitering there, seized his arm. Glyndon shook him off abruptly.

“Thou and thy counsels,” said he, bitterly, “have made me a coward and a wretch. But I will go home—I will write to her. I will pour out my whole soul; she will forgive me yet.”

Mervale, who was a man of impenetrable temper, arranged his ruffles, which his friend's angry gesture had a little discomposed, and not

till Glyndon had exhausted himself awhile by passionate exclamations and reproaches did the experienced angler begin to tighten the line. He then drew from Glyndon the explanation of what had passed, and artfully sought not to irritate, but soothe him. Mervale, indeed, was by no means a bad man; he had stronger moral notions than are common amongst the young. He sincerely reproved his friend for harbouring dishonourable intentions with regard to the actress. "Because I would not have her thy wife, I never dreamed that thou shouldst degrade her to thy mistress. Better of the two an imprudent match than an illicit connexion. But pause yet; do not act on the impulse of the moment."

"But there is no time to lose. I have promised to Zanoni to give him my answer by to-morrow night. Later than that time, all option ceases."

"Ah!" said Mervale, "that seems suspicious. Explain yourself."

And Glyndon, in the earnestness of his passion, told his friend what had passed between

himself and Zanoni — suppressing only, he scarce knew why, the reference to his ancestor and the mysterious brotherhood.

This recital gave to Mervale all the advantage he could desire. Heavens! with what sound, shrewd common sense he talked. How evidently some charlatanic coalition between the actress, and perhaps—who knows?—her clandestine protector, sated with possession! How equivocal the character of one—the position of the other! What cunning in the question of the actress? How profoundly had Glyndon, at the first suggestion of his sober reason, seen through the snare. What! was he to be thus mystically cajoled and hurried into a rash marriage, because Zanoni, a mere stranger, told him with a grave face that he must decide before the clock struck a certain hour?

“Do this, at least,” said Mervale, reasonably enough,—“wait till the time expires; it is but another day. Baffle Zanoni. He tells thee that he will meet thee before midnight to-morrow, and defies thee to avoid him. Pooh! let us quit Naples for some neighbouring place, where,

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Zanoni

unless he be indeed the devil, he cannot possibly find us. Shew him that you will not be led blindfold even into an act that you meditate yourself. Defer to write to her, or to see her, till after to-morrow. This is all I ask. Then visit her, and decide for yourself."

Glyndon was staggered. He could not combat the reasonings of his friend; he was not convinced, but he hesitated; and at that moment Nicot passed them. He turned round, and stopped, as he saw Glyndon.

"Well, and do you think still of the Pisani?"

"Yes; and you ——"

"Have seen and conversed with her. She shall be Madame Nicot before this day week! I am going to the café, in the Toledo; and, hark ye, when next you meet your friend, Signor Zanoni, tell him that he has twice crossed my path. Jean Nicot, though a painter, is a plain, honest man, and always pays his debts."

"It is a good doctrine in money matters," said Mervale; "as to revenge, it is not so moral, and certainly not so wise. But is it in

your love that Zanoni has crossed your path? How that, if your suit prosper so well?"

"Ask Viola Pisani that question. Bah! Glyndon, she is a prude only to thee. But I have no prejudices. Once more, farewell."

"Rouse thyself, man!" said Mervale, slapping Glyndon on the shoulder. "What think you of your fair one now?"

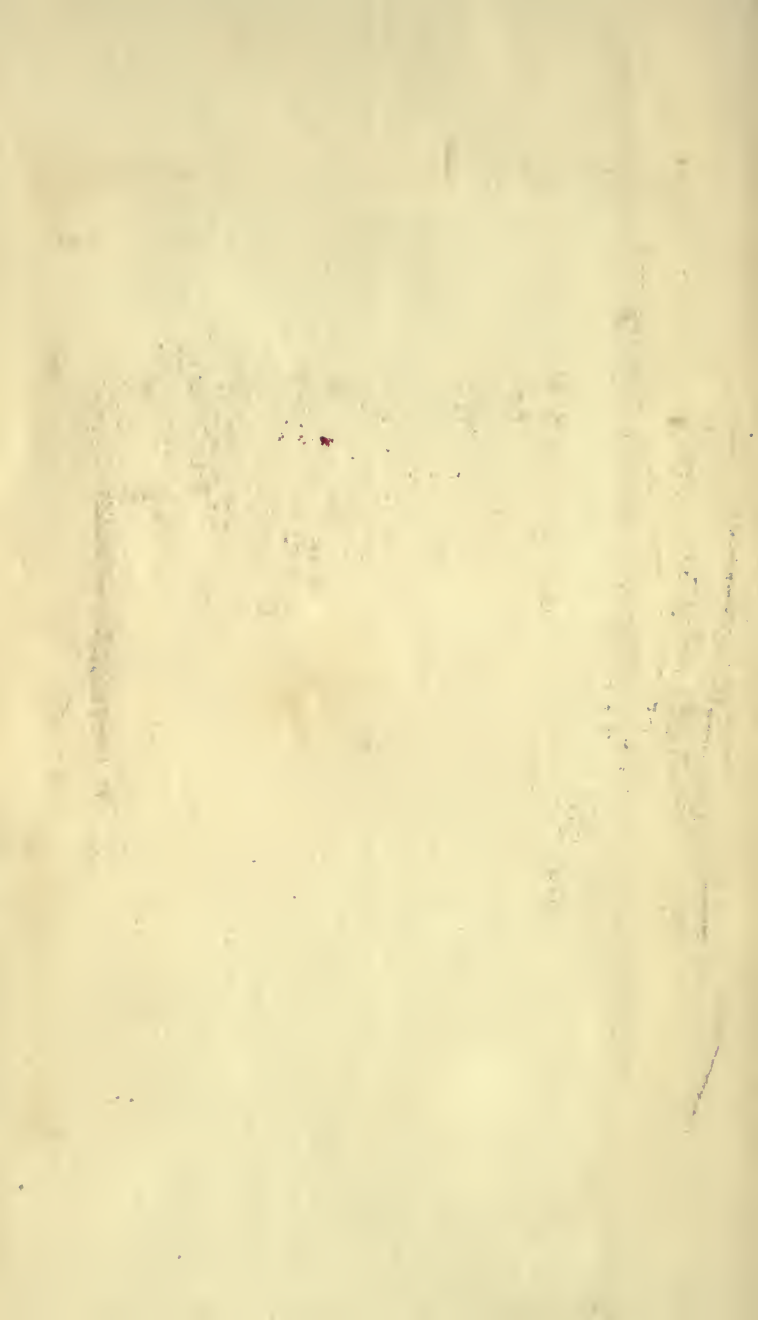
"This man must lie."

"Will you write to her at once?"

"No; if she be really playing a game, I could renounce her without a sigh. I will watch her closely; and, at all events, Zanoni shall not be the master of my fate. Let us, as you advise, leave Naples at day-break tomorrow."

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