ЭДВАРД БУЛЬВЕР-ЛИТТОН

ZANONI

Эдвард Бульвер-Литтон

Zanoni

Бульвер-Литтон Э. Д.

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Edward Bulwer Lytton
Zanoni

DEDICATORY EPISTLE First prefixed to the Edition of 1845

TO JOHN GIBSON, R.A., SCULPTOR.

In looking round the wide and luminous circle of our great living Englishmen, to select one to whom I might fitly dedicate this work,—one who, in his life as in his genius, might illustrate the principle I have sought to convey; elevated by the ideal which he exalts, and serenely dwelling in a glorious existence with the images born of his imagination,—in looking round for some such man, my thoughts rested upon you. Afar from our turbulent cabals; from the ignoble jealousy and the sordid strife which degrade and acerbate the ambition of Genius,—in your Roman Home, you have lived amidst all that is loveliest and least perishable in the past, and contributed with the noblest aims, and in the purest spirit, to the mighty heirlooms of the future. Your youth has been devoted to toil, that your manhood may be consecrated to fame: a fame unsullied by one desire of gold. You have escaped the two worst perils that beset the artist in our time and land,—the debasing tendencies of commerce, and the angry rivalries of competition. You have not wrought your marble for the market,—you have not been tempted, by the praises which our vicious criticism has showered upon exaggeration and distortion, to lower your taste to the level of the hour; you have lived, and you have laboured, as if you had no rivals but in the dead,—no purchasers, save in judges of what is best. In the divine priesthood of the beautiful, you have sought only to increase her worshippers and enrich her temples. The pupil of Canova, you have inherited his excellences, while you have shunned his errors,—yours his delicacy, not his affectation. Your heart resembles him even more than your genius: you have the same noble enthusiasm for your sublime profession; the same lofty freedom from envy, and the spirit that depreciates; the same generous desire not to war with but to serve artists in your art; aiding, strengthening, advising, elevating the timidity of inexperience, and the vague aspirations of youth. By the intuition of a kindred mind, you have equalled the learning of Winckelman, and the plastic poetry of Goethe, in the intimate comprehension of the antique. Each work of yours, rightly studied, is in itself a CRITICISM, illustrating the sublime secrets of the Grecian Art, which, without the servility of plagiarism, you have contributed to revive amongst us; in you we behold its three great and long-undetected principles,—simplicity, calm, and concentration.

But your admiration of the Greeks has not led you to the bigotry of the mere antiquarian, nor made you less sensible of the unappreciated excellence of the mighty modern, worthy to be your countryman,—though till his statue is in the streets of our capital, we show ourselves not worthy of the glory he has shed upon our land. You have not suffered even your gratitude to Canova to blind you to the superiority of Flaxman. When we become sensible of our title-deeds to renown in that single name, we may look for an English public capable of real patronage to English Art,—and not till then.

I, artist in words, dedicate, then, to you, artist whose ideas speak in marble, this well-loved work of my matured manhood. I love it not the less because it has been little understood and superficially judged by the common herd: it was not meant for them. I love it not the more because it has found enthusiastic favorers amongst the Few. My affection for my work is rooted in the solemn and pure delight which it gave me to conceive and to perform. If I had graven it on the rocks of a desert, this apparition of my own innermost mind, in its least-clouded moments, would have been to me as dear; and this ought, I believe, to be the sentiment with which he whose Art is born of faith in the truth and beauty of the principles he seeks to illustrate, should regard his work. Your serener existence, uniform and holy, my lot denies,—if my heart covets. But our true nature is in our thoughts, not our deeds: and therefore, in books—which ARE his thoughts—the author's character lies bare to the

discerning eye. It is not in the life of cities,—in the turmoil and the crowd; it is in the still, the lonely, and more sacred life, which for some hours, under every sun, the student lives (his stolen retreat from the Agora to the Cave), that I feel there is between us the bond of that secret sympathy, that magnetic chain, which unites the everlasting brotherhood of whose being Zanoni is the type.

E.B.L. London, May, 1845.

INTRODUCTION

One of the peculiarities of Bulwer was his passion for occult studies. They had a charm for him early in life, and he pursued them with the earnestness which characterised his pursuit of other studies. He became absorbed in wizard lore; he equipped himself with magical implements,—with rods for transmitting influence, and crystal balls in which to discern coming scenes and persons; and communed with spiritualists and mediums. The fruit of these mystic studies is seen in "Zanoni" and "A strange Story," romances which were a labour of love to the author, and into which he threw all the power he possessed,—power re-enforced by multifarious reading and an instinctive appreciation of Oriental thought. These weird stories, in which the author has formulated his theory of magic, are of a wholly different type from his previous fictions, and, in place of the heroes and villains of every day life, we have beings that belong in part to another sphere, and that deal with mysterious and occult agencies. Once more the old forgotten lore of the Cabala is unfolded; the furnace of the alchemist, whose fires have been extinct for centuries, is lighted anew, and the lamp of the Rosicrucian re-illumined. No other works of the author, contradictory as have been the opinions of them, have provoked such a diversity of criticism as these. To some persons they represent a temporary aberration of genius rather than any serious thought or definite purpose; while others regard them as surpassing in bold and original speculation, profound analysis of character, and thrilling interest, all of the author's other works. The truth, we believe, lies midway between these extremes. It is questionable whether the introduction into a novel of such subjects as are discussed in these romances be not an offence against good sense and good taste; but it is as unreasonable to deny the vigour and originality of their author's conceptions, as to deny that the execution is imperfect, and, at times, bungling and absurd.

It has been justly said that the present half century has witnessed the rise and triumphs of science, the extent and marvels of which even Bacon's fancy never conceived, simultaneously with superstitions grosser than any which Bacon's age believed. "The one is, in fact, the natural reaction from the other. The more science seeks to exclude the miraculous, and reduce all nature, animate and inanimate, to an invariable law of sequences, the more does the natural instinct of man rebel, and seek an outlet for those obstinate questionings, those 'blank misgivings of a creature moving about in worlds not realised,' taking refuge in delusions as degrading as any of the so-called Dark Ages." It was the revolt from the chilling materialism of the age which inspired the mystic creations of "Zanoni" and "A Strange Story." Of these works, which support and supplement each other, one is the contemplation of our actual life through a spiritual medium, the other is designed to show that, without some gleams of the supernatural, man is not man, nor nature nature.

In "Zanoni" the author introduces us to two human beings who have achieved immortality: one, Mejnour, void of all passion or feeling, calm, benignant, bloodless, an intellect rather than a man; the other, Zanoni, the pupil of Mejnour, the representative of an ideal life in its utmost perfection, possessing eternal youth, absolute power, and absolute knowledge, and withal the fullest capacity to enjoy and to love, and, as a necessity of that love, to sorrow and despair. By his love for Viola Zanoni is compelled to descend from his exalted state, to lose his eternal calm, and to share in the cares and anxieties of humanity; and this degradation is completed by the birth of a child. Finally, he gives up the life which hangs on that of another, in order to save that other, the loving and beloved wife, who has delivered him from his solitude and isolation. Wife and child are mortal, and to outlive them and his love for them is impossible. But Mejnour, who is the impersonation of thought,—pure intellect without affection,—lives on.

Bulwer has himself justly characterised this work, in the Introduction, as a romance and not a romance, as a truth for those who can comprehend it, and an extravagance for those who cannot. The most careless or matter-of-fact reader must see that the work, like the enigmatical "Faust," deals in types and symbols; that the writer intends to suggest to the mind something more subtle and

impalpable than that which is embodied to the senses. What that something is, hardly two persons will agree. The most obvious interpretation of the types is, that in Zanoni the author depicts to us humanity, perfected, sublimed, which lives not for self, but for others; in Mejnour, as we have before said, cold, passionless, self-sufficing intellect; in Glyndon, the young Englishman, the mingled strength and weakness of human nature; in the heartless, selfish artist, Nicot, icy, soulless atheism, believing nothing, hoping nothing, trusting and loving nothing; and in the beautiful, artless Viola, an exquisite creation, pure womanhood, loving, trusting and truthful. As a work of art the romance is one of great power. It is original in its conception, and pervaded by one central idea; but it would have been improved, we think, by a more sparing use of the supernatural. The inevitable effect of so much hackneyed diablerie—of such an accumulation of wonder upon wonder—is to deaden the impression they would naturally make upon us. In Hawthorne's tales we see with what ease a great imaginative artist can produce a deeper thrill by a far slighter use of the weird and the mysterious.

The chief interest of the story for the ordinary reader centres, not in its ghostly characters and improbable machinery, the scenes in Mejnour's chamber in the ruined castle among the Apennines, the colossal and appalling apparitions on Vesuvius, the hideous phantom with its burning eye that haunted Glyndon, but in the loves of Viola and the mysterious Zanoni, the blissful and the fearful scenes through which they pass, and their final destiny, when the hero of the story sacrifices his own "charmed life" to save hers, and the Immortal finds the only true immortality in death. Among the striking passages in the work are the pathetic sketch of the old violinist and composer, Pisani, with his sympathetic "barbiton" which moaned, groaned, growled, and laughed responsive to the feelings of its master; the description of Viola's and her father's triumph, when "The Siren," his masterpiece, is performed at the San Carlo in Naples; Glyndon's adventure at the Carnival in Naples; the death of his sister; the vivid pictures of the Reign of Terror in Paris, closing with the downfall of Robespierre and his satellites; and perhaps, above all, the thrilling scene where Zanoni leaves Viola asleep in prison when his guards call him to execution, and she, unconscious of the terrible sacrifice, but awaking and missing him, has a vision of the procession to the guillotine, with Zanoni there, radiant in youth and beauty, followed by the sudden vanishing of the headsman,—the horror,—and the "Welcome" of her loved one to Heaven in a myriad of melodies from the choral hosts above.

"Zanoni" was originally published by Saunders and Otley, London, in three volumes 12mo., in 1842. A translation into French, made by M. Sheldon under the direction of P. Lorain, was published in Paris in the "Bibliotheque des Meilleurs Romans Etrangers."

W.M.

PREFACE TO THE EDITION OF 1853

As a work of imagination, “Zanoni” ranks, perhaps, amongst the highest of my prose fictions. In the Poem of “King Arthur,” published many years afterwards, I have taken up an analogous design, in the contemplation of our positive life through a spiritual medium; and I have enforced, through a far wider development, and, I believe, with more complete and enduring success, that harmony between the external events which are all that the superficial behold on the surface of human affairs, and the subtle and intellectual agencies which in reality influence the conduct of individuals, and shape out the destinies of the world. As man has two lives,—that of action and that of thought,—so I conceive that work to be the truest representation of humanity which faithfully delineates both, and opens some elevating glimpse into the sublimest mysteries of our being, by establishing the inevitable union that exists between the plain things of the day, in which our earthly bodies perform their allotted part, and the latent, often uncultivated, often invisible, affinities of the soul with all the powers that eternally breathe and move throughout the Universe of Spirit.

I refer those who do me the honour to read “Zanoni” with more attention than is given to ordinary romance, to the Poem of “King Arthur,” for suggestive conjecture into most of the regions of speculative research, affecting the higher and more important condition of our ultimate being, which have engaged the students of immaterial philosophy in my own age.

Affixed to the “Note” with which this work concludes, and which treats of the distinctions between type and allegory, the reader will find, from the pen of one of our most eminent living writers, an ingenious attempt to explain the interior or typical meanings of the work now before him.

INTRODUCTION

It is possible that among my readers there may be a few not unacquainted with an old-book shop, 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 unsalable 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 communicate 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 Chaldean 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 old? Our very newspapers may seem to our posterity as full of delusions as the books of the alchemists do to us; not but what the press is the air we breathe,—and uncommonly foggy the air is too!

On entering the shop, I was struck by the venerable appearance of a customer whom I had never seen there before. I was struck yet more by the respect with which he was treated by the disdainful collector. "Sir," cried the last, emphatically, as I was turning over the leaves of the catalogue,—"sir, you are the only man I have met, in five-and-forty years that I have spent in these researches, who is worthy to be my customer. How—where, in this frivolous age, could you have acquired a knowledge so profound? And this august fraternity, whose doctrines, hinted at by the earliest philosophers, are still a mystery to the latest; tell me if there really exists upon the earth any book, any manuscript, in which their discoveries, their tenets, are to be learned?"

At the words, "august fraternity," I need scarcely say that my attention had been at once aroused, and I listened eagerly for the stranger's reply.

"I do not think," said the old gentleman, "that the masters of the school have ever consigned, except by obscure hint and mystical parable, their real doctrines to the world. And I do not blame them for their discretion."

Here he paused, and seemed about to retire, when I said, somewhat abruptly, to the collector, "I see nothing, Mr. D—, in this catalogue which relates to the Rosicrucians!"

"The Rosicrucians!" repeated the old gentleman, and in his turn he surveyed me with deliberate surprise. "Who but a Rosicrucian could explain the Rosicrucian mysteries! And can you imagine that

any members of that sect, the most jealous of all secret societies, would themselves lift the veil that hides the Isis of their wisdom from the world?"

"Aha!" thought I, "this, then, is 'the august fraternity' of which you spoke. Heaven be praised! I certainly have stumbled on one of the brotherhood."

"But," I said aloud, "if not in books, sir, where else am I to obtain information? Nowadays 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 greatcoat, 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 showed 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 character of the work which these prefatory pages introduce, that I should briefly observe, that he insisted as much upon the connection of the arts, as a distinguished author has upon that of the sciences; that he held that in all works of imagination, whether expressed by words or by colours, the artist of the higher schools must make the broadest distinction between the real and the true,—in other words, between the imitation of actual life, and the exaltation of Nature into the Ideal.

"The one," said he, "is the Dutch School, the other is the Greek."

"Sir," said I, "the Dutch is the most in fashion."

"Yes, in painting, perhaps," answered my host, "but in literature—"

"It was of literature I spoke. Our growing poets are all for simplicity and Betty Foy; and our critics hold it the highest praise of a work of imagination, to say that its characters are exact to common life, even in sculpture—"

"In sculpture! No, no! THERE the high ideal must at least be essential!"

"Pardon me; I fear you have not seen Souter Johnny and Tam O'Shanter."

"Ah!" said the old gentleman, shaking his head, "I live very much out of the world, I see. I suppose Shakespeare has ceased to be admired?"

"On the contrary; people make the adoration of Shakespeare the excuse for attacking everybody else. But then our critics have discovered that Shakespeare is so REAL!"

"Real! The poet who has never once drawn a character to be met with in actual life,—who has never once descended to a passion that is false, or a personage who is real!"

I was about to reply very severely to this paradox, when I perceived that my companion was growing a little out of temper. And he who wishes to catch a Rosicrucian, must take care not to disturb the waters. I thought it better, therefore, to turn the conversation.

"Revenons a nos moutons," said I; "you promised to enlighten my ignorance as to the Rosicrucians."

"Well!" quoth he, rather sternly; "but for 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 Abbe 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 imposter of Tyanea! are his writings extant?"

"Imposter!" cried my host; "Apollonius an imposter!"

"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 eye-witness 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 student 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 conception, 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 acceptation 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 Oedipus," 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:

(Several strange characters.)

and so on for nine hundred and forty 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 befell 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 remodel, and the chapters I had written to retranslate. 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 rhythmical 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 I. – THE MUSICIAN

Due Fontane
Chi di diverso effeto hanno liquore!

"Ariosto, Orland. Fur." Canto 1.7.

(Two Founts
That hold a draught of different effects.)

CHAPTER 1.I

Vergina era
D' alta belta, ma sua belta non cura:
....
Di natura, d' amor, de' cieli amici
Le negligenze sue sono artifici.

"Gerusal. Lib.," canto ii. xiv.-xviii.

(She was a virgin of a glorious beauty, but regarded not her beauty…
Negligence itself is art in those favoured by Nature, by love, and by the heavens.)

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 ancient 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.[1] 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

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

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 for having shocked the conoscenti, 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 reinstalment, 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 crestfallen, 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 striking, 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 Shakespeare 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 dependant 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 lantern 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 night-watch 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 sat 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 Mersennus 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 a Roman 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, breathed around 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 childishmirth, 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 sang, 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 1.II

Fu stupor, fu vaghezza, fu diletto!

"Gerusal. Lib.," cant. ii. xxi.

("Desire it was, 't was wonder, 't was delight." Wiffen's Translation.)

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 piu 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 "Matrimonia 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 which 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 house-top (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 heart 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 plaything, "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 statelily 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 ever the one heart has at once with a vast audience. He feels it by the breathless 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! Up rose 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 1.III

Fra si contrarie tempre in ghiaccio e in foco,
In riso e in pianto, e fra paura e speme
L'ingannatrice Donna—

"Gerusal. Lib.," cant. iv. xciv.

(Between such contrarious mixtures of ice and fire, laughter and tears,
—fear and hope, the deceiving dame.)

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 the 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 scenas. 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 of 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 analysed nor 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 inspiriting influence which 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 recall 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 with 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 sank 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 (We come to our own house.); 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. ("Ridete quidquid est domi cachinnorum." Catull. "ad Sirm. Penin.")

And a happy reunion 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 lacrima 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 on affectionately, 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 Viola, on the other side her brother, the barbiton, rearranged 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 forever 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 clew 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 1.IV

E cosi i pigri e timidi desiri
Sprona.

"Gerusal. Lib.," cant. iv. lxxxviii.

(And thus the slow and timid passions urged.)

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 practice, 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 gallants 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 sank 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 sprang, 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 them by.

"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 many days at Naples, and I cannot yet find any one who knows aught of his birthplace, 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 bankers he deals with speak with awe of the sums placed in their hands."

"Whence came he?"

"From some seaport 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 that in India men pick up gold like pebbles, and that there are valleys 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,—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 redoubted swordsman, and excelled in a peculiarly awkward manoeuvre, 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 1.V

Quello Ippogifo, grande e strano augello
Lo porta via.

"Orlando Furioso," c. vi. xviii.

(That hippogriff, great and marvellous bird, bears him away.)

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 stronghold of the Norman; there gleam the columns of Capua, above the Vulturnian Stream. Hail to ye, cornfields 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 Lautulae! 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 way-worn; 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 Jerusalem,—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 singular recluse. In the season of the malaria the native peasant flies the rank vegetation round; but he, a stranger and a foreigner, 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 those two men 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 Phaedo. May Homer live with all men forever!

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,

("An des Jahrhunderts Neige, Der reifste Sohn der Zeit." "Die Kunstler.")

stood as at the deathbed of the Old World, and beheld the New 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 1.VI

Precepteurs ignorans de ce faible univers.—Voltaire.
(Ignorant teachers of this weak world.)

Nous etions a table chez un de nos confreres a l'Academie, Grand Seigneur et homme d'esprit.—La Harpe.
(We supped with one of our confreres of the Academy,—a great nobleman and wit.)

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." (The idol and delight of the nation (so-called by his historian, Gaillard).) 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 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, I believe as little as the finest gentleman!'" "Unquestionably, the great Revolution draws near to its final completion,—a pas de geant, 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 Condrocet is more eloquent than before.

"Il faut absolument que la Superstition et le Fanatisme fassent place a la Philosophie. (It must necessarily happen that superstition and fanaticism give place to philosophy.) 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 pretre Serrez le cou du dernier roi.'"

(And throttle the neck of the last king with the string from the bowels of the last priest.)

"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 a 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. (See Condorcet's posthumous work on the Progress of the Human Mind.—Ed.) The art of medicine will then be honoured in the place of war, which is the art of murder: 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 organisation, mental and physical, to his sons. Oh, 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. St. 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 St. 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 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." ("My wife, my children, weep not for me; forget me not, but remember above everything never to offend God.)—Ed.)

"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, bravely; "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, from time to time, searching, curious, uneasy glances towards his companion.

The charming Duchesse 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 handwriting, and the story is given on M. Petitot’s authority, volume i. page 62. It is not for me to enquire if there be doubts of its foundation on fact.—Ed.),—

“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 headsman be glutted.”

“You are thinking of priestcraft, not philosophy, Cazotte,” said Champfort.

(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, “Fraternite ou la Mort,” he observed that the sentiment should be translated thus, “Sois mon frere, ou je te tue.” (“Be my brother, or I kill thee.”)) “And what of me?”

“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 fantasies.”

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, sank 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 afterwards broke up and retired.

CHAPTER 1.VII

Qui donc t'a donne la mission s'annoncer au peuple que la divinite n'existe pas? Quel avantage trouves-tu a persuader a l'homme qu'une force aveugle preside a ses destinees et frappe au hasard le crime et la vertu?—Robespierre, "Discours," Mai 7, 1794.

(Who then invested you with the mission to announce to the people that there is no God? What advantage find you in persuading man that nothing but blind force presides over his destinies, and strikes haphazard both crime and virtue?)

It was some time 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, scarcely 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, retired 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 emerged from a door in the entresol, and brushed beside him. His glance was furtive, sinister, savage, and yet timorous; 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 feeble 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 show 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 Encyclopedistes, whom Robespierre afterwards so singularly attacked when the coward deemed it unsafe to leave his reign without a God.

(“Cette secte (les Encyclopedistes) propagea avec beaucoup de zele l’opinion du materialisme, qui prevalut parmi les grands et parmi les beaux esprits; on lui doit en partie cette espece de philosophie pratique qui, reduisant l’Egoisme en systeme regarde la societe humaine comme une guerre de ruse, le succes comme la regle du juste et de l’injuste, la probite comme une affaire de gout, ou de bienseance, le monde comme le patrimoine des fripons adroits.”—“Discours de Robespierre,” Mai 7, 1794. (This sect (the Encyclopaedists) propagate with much zeal the doctrine of materialism, which prevails among the great and the wits; we owe to it partly that kind of practical philosophy which, reducing Egotism to a system, looks upon society as a war of cunning; success the rule of right and wrong, honesty as an affair of taste or decency: and the world as the patrimony of clever scoundrels.))

A volume lay on a table,—it was one of Voltaire, and the page was opened at his argumentative assertion of the existence of the Supreme Being. (“Histoire de Jenni.”) 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 new-comer 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 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 1.VIII

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

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, etc.

–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 connection 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 lumiere et la vertu.” (Light and virtue.) The boy showed 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 Etre Supreme. 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 protege,—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 protege.

“Tush, tush, Rene 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 Rene," 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 Rene 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 Rene 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 marketplace 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 1.IX

Che non vuol che 'l destrier piu vada in alto,
Poi lo lega nel margine marino
A un verde mirto in mezzo un lauro E UN PINO.

"Orlando Furioso," c. vi. xxiii.

(As he did not wish that his charger (the hippogriff) should take any further excursions into the higher regions for the present, he bound him at the sea-shore to a green myrtle between a laurel and a pine.)

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, Maestro 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 forever. 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 masterpiece: there is nothing he can add to THAT, however he might have sought to improve on the masterpieces 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 doorway,—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 rush-lights. 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 string seems 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 over-tasked 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 the dream-wakefulness which opium sometimes induces, when every nerve grows tremulously alive, and creates a corresponding activity in the frame, to which it gives a false and hectic vigour. Pisani 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 vine-clad 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 1.X

Che difesa miglior ch' usbergo e scudo,
E la santa innocenza al petto ignudo!

"Ger. Lib.," c. viii. xli.

(Better defence than shield or breastplate is holy innocence to the naked breast.)

And they buried the musician and his barbiton together, in the same coffin. That famous Steiner—primeval 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 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 desertion 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 wellnigh 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, perhaps 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,"—"Ger.Lib.," cant. xiv. 69.

(Where ship seldom or never comes from our coasts.)

is the space in the weary ocean of actual life to which the Muse or Sibyl (ancient in years, but ever young in aspect), offers thee no unhallowed sail,—

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

> (There, she a mountain's lofty peak ascends, Unpeopled, shady, shagg'd with forests brown, Whose sides, by power of magic, half-way down She heaps with slippery ice and frost and snow, But sunshiny and verdant leaves the crown With orange-woods and myrtles,—speaks, and lo! Rich from the bordering lake a palace rises slow. Wiffin's "Translation.")

BOOK II. – ART, LOVE, AND WONDER

Diversi aspetti in un confusi e misti.

"Ger. Lib," cant. iv. 7.

Different appearances, confused and mixt in one.

CHAPTER 2.I

Centauri, e Sfingi, e pallide Gorgoni.

"Ger. Lib.," c. iv. v.

(Centaurs and Sphinxes and pallid Gorgons.)

One moonlit night, in the Gardens at Naples, some four or five gentleman 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 gentleman 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 connection 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 animalculae 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 animalculae 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 enquire 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 qualities, and is, I must own, somewhat startling. You probably play, gentlemen?" (Here Cetoxa paused; and as both Englishmen had occasionally 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; besides, 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 sat 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, showed no resentment. He fixed his eyes 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 lounger 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 the 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 daylight. Adieu, signor!"

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

"Why, it is very clear that this Zanoni is some imposter,—some clever rogue; and the Neapolitan 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 imposter."

"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 2.II

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

"Ger. Lib." c. vi. xxix.

(Take, youth, bold and impatient, the offered occasion eagerly.)

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 canvas. Brave, adventurous, vain, restless, inquisitive, he was ever involved in wild projects and pleasant dangers,—the creature of 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, heralding 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 Ghost-seer, 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 development. 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 foretells. 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, in their salon-language, call 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 up voluptuously from the sparkling sea. Bending over a fragment of stone near the roadside, 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 showed Glyndon a small herb with a pale-blue flower, and then placed it carefully in his bosom.

"You are an 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 traditions which come dimly down from remoter ages,—as shells now found on the mountain-tops 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 Medea, 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 ("Plut. Symp." l. 5. c. 7.) 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 Circaean Promontory, came the Wise from the farthest East, to search for plants and simples which your Pharmacists 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. (Syncellus, page 14.—"Chemistry the Invention of the Giants.") 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; 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 wrapped 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 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 the young Englishman?"

"The presuming barbarian! As I before told thee, 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,—this night. 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 Shakespeare 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 sympathise 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 unreproving 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 arm 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 showed the noble features of Zanoni.

"Be calm, be hushed,—I can save you." He vanished, leaving Viola lost in surprise, 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 2.III

When most I wink, then do mine eyes best see,
For all the day they view things unrespected;
But when I sleep, in dreams they look on thee,
And, darkly bright, are bright in dark directed.

Shakespeare.

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 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 his 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 austerely 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 lowlily 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 2.IV

Les Intelligences Celestes se font voir, et see communiquent plus volontiers, dans le silence et dans la tranquillite de la solitude. On aura donc une petite chambre ou un cabinet secret, etc.

"Les Clavicules de Rabbi Salomon," chapter 3; traduites exactement du texte Hebreu par M. Pierre Morissoneau, Professeur des Langues Orientales, et Sectateur de la Philosophie des Sages Cabalistes. (Manuscript Translation.)

(The Celestial Intelligences exhibit and explain themselves most freely in silence and the tranquillity of solitude. One will have then a little chamber, or a secret cabinet, etc.)

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, whom 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 himself 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 (Augoeides,—a word favoured by the mystical Platonists, sphaira psuches augoeides, otan mete

ekteinetai epi ti, mete eso suntreche mete sunizane, alla photi lampetai, o ten aletheian opa ten panton, kai ten en aute.—Marc. Ant., lib. 2.—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 centred in itself.'), 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 austerely 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 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 2.V

I and my fellows
Are ministers of Fate.

—"The Tempest."

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 harmonise 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 selfish 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 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 that 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 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 arrogantly, 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 imposter."

"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. 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 2.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. (Mr. Disraeli, 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, it would certainly be useless.") 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 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 imposter. 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 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. From these 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 (Printed in 1615.), asserting that all the languages of the 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 which the Philosopher's Stone was but the least; who considered themselves the heirs of all that the Chaldeans, 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 of the singular events 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 manoeuvre of the stoccata. 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 (The author of two works on botany and rare plants.), to the radicals of the extinct language. Zan was unquestionably the Chaldean 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 (Ode megas keitai Zan.—"Cyril contra Julian." (Here lies great Jove.)) significantly showed. 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,—namely, 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, Smithe, Smith! And even now, I may remark 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 Smith*e*!"

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 2.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 to 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 trousers, 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 brooch 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 possessed 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 stories of scriptural record from which Raphael and Michael 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 Anthropographos, 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 debauch, 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.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.