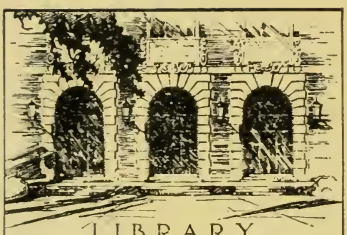

THE

EARTHQUAKE.

THE

EARTHQUAKE;

A

TALE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE AYRSHIRE LEGATEES."

A voice in the heavens—a sound in the earth—
And omens and prodigies herald the birth ;—
But the deeds that shall be to the sins that were done,
Are darker than shadows to forms in the sun.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

EDINBURGH;

PRINTED FOR WILLIAM BLACKWOOD:

AND T. CADELL AND W. DAVIES, STRAND, LONDON.

1820.

THE

EARTHQUAKE.

CHAPTER I.

I had a friend—no matter—
We were as brothers in our boyish days.
When in the glass I first beheld myself,
I took the image for that dearest play-mate,
And kissed at it with gladness—How I wept,
When I found what I deemed so like myself,
As little like as is that play-mate now.

THE FATAL DISCOVERY.

THE first rumour received at Naples of the destruction of Messina by the earthquake, was so dreadful, that when the true account arrived, full of horrors as it was, the public mind felt relieved, and seemed to consider the effects of the calamity as objects rather

of curiosity than of sorrow—at least it had this effect on the English travellers, who happened to be at that time in Naples, among whom were Lord and Lady Wildwaste. Her Ladyship had been long in delicate health; she inherited the infirmities of her mother's constitution, and the climate of Italy was prescribed as a palliative.—Mr. Mowbray, their friend, was also there, and it was proposed, as his Lordship had a yacht for sea-excursions, that they should visit those parts of the coast of Sicily and Calabria where the havoc was described to have been greatest. They embarked immediately, and on the third day after, reached the harbour of Messina. The sight of the ruins, the tottering walls, the broken arches, and the multitude of afflicted individuals still lamenting their losses, affected Lady Wildwaste so deeply, that she felt herself incapable at first of going on shore; and her husband, by whom she was very tenderly beloved, was induced to remain with her, while Mowbray went alone.

On his return, however, instead of wear-

ing that solemn countenance of commiseration and dread, which a scene of such manifold distresses was calculated to occasion, he had the appearance of one possessed of some singular intelligence, insomuch that the Countess, whose mind, naturally of a fine and superior order, was sharpened by her malady, soon perceived that he brought them strange tidings, and enquired what he had met with so surprising.

Mowbray immediately reminded her of the incident relative to the Count Corneli, whom they had seen in the Opera-house of London many years prior, as we have already described, and added, "He is now in Messina; but in circumstances so very remarkable, that I cannot well unravel the story which I have heard concerning him. As I was making my way through the fragments which fill the streets, I saw him pass conducted, or rather guarded, by several soldiers, attended by the Magistrates. I knew him at first sight, although he is greatly altered, and impaired in his ap-

pearance. I could not, however, catch his eye, and the impediments which lay between us prevented me from reaching him. But I followed in the crowd, and gathered from those around me that he was a prisoner, charged with some heinous offence, brought to light by the earthquake. Some said he was an impostor, and not Count Corneli;—others that he had murdered his wife and left her body in a vault; a third party accused him of having assassinated an English nobleman many years ago; and all agreed that he was most miraculously preserved by the interposition of the Holy Patroness of Messina beneath the ruins of his palace, which was shaken to pieces by the earthquake. What to make of this story is beyond my faculty," said Mowbray to Lord Wildwaste; "but as your Lordship knows something of the man, I wish very much that you would go on shore with me that we may learn the truth."

Independent altogether of the strong interest which, merely as in those of spectators, this report by Mowbray could not fail

to excite in the breasts of Lord and Lady Wildwaste, there were in it vague, indicatory allusions to circumstances which they were both equally grieved to recall to remembrance.

Lord Wildwaste had often experienced compunctious visitations when he thought of Castagnello, and her Ladyship had, on more than one occasion, reason to suspect that the death of her sister had not been unattended with incidents which the honour of her family required should be suppressed. But precisely in the same degree as they both wished to blot out all the record that was perhaps preserved of the past, relative to the cause of their respective uneasiness, a motive was induced which obliged them to be actually parties to the residue of our eventful story.

Lord Wildwaste suspected, from what he heard that his unfortunate brother was implicated with the fate of Corneli, and his Lady, on hearing that the death of an English nobleman was laid to his charge, had

distressing misgivings of the heart, intermingled with recollections of the early and sudden death of Alicia, and the insult which her father had received from Castagnello. It would indeed seem from the feelings with which this respectable and noble pair were at the time affected, that nothing is more certain in nature than that persons of the same blood and temperament, sympathise unconsciously with each other. In making this remark, however, we do it rather with reference to the peculiar genius of Francisco, the nephew of Baron Alcamo, than from any distinct persuasion of its truth; for at the very time of which we are speaking, that extraordinary young man was reflecting on the conduct of Corneli and Castagnello, in a manner not at all satisfactory to his own wisdom.

The Count and convict, on the night in which a disclosure of their mutual reciprocity of feeling seemed inevitable, were followed by Francisco to the Capuchin Monastery. He accompanied them into

the refectory, and watched their looks with a keen and an inquisitive eye ; and he began to doubt the justness of his philosophy when he observed that the Count, as he recovered his self-possession, acquired an awful advantage over the convict, who had treated him with such appalling contempt. He remarked that after the first panic of alarm had subsided, the Count began to summon in his feelings, and to eye the audacious felon with a firm and inquisitive glance.— Francisco, to whom this change was more interesting than even the developement of their secret connexion, was amazed at the phenomenon, and scrutinized them with vigilance. In a word, he discovered that the convict was only the bolder libertine of the two, and he wondered in what the mysteries of their secret understanding could consist. His wonder for that evening, however, was unavailing ; but he saw that the Count meditated some dark and effective revenge, and that the felon, who had so subjugated the courage of the nobleman, was touched with apprehension and fear. When

he returned home, the impression of what he had noticed, agitated him profoundly, and during the whole night he could not divest his mind of a notion that the scenes which he had witnessed, wherein the Count and the convict were concerned, were but a prelude to some dark and fearful tragedy that was strangely to affect his own fate.

Under this impression, he rose early in the morning, and visited his friend Salvator. He frankly told him all that he had seen, and all that he suspected; but the innate prudence of Salvator instructed that youth to deride his terrors, and Francisco for a time was conscious of having indulged feelings which he had no show of reason to support. Still, however, he was not convinced; something hung upon his mind that, whatever might be the issue of the dark confederacy of the two guilty spirits, whose communion he had so strangely discovered, it would be fraught with hazard and grief to him; and he

separated that day from Salvator, with an irritated persuasion that the mere professions of friendship, in circumstances of difficulty, were but little deserving of trust.

CHAPTER II.

An upright form wound in a clotted shroud—
* * * * there came he wist not how ;
Into its beamless eyes a horrid glare,
And turning towards him, for it did move—
Why dost thou grasp me thus ?

JOANNA BAILLIE.

THE philosophical Baron Alcamo was even more agitated by what had taken place than his nephew Francisco. He had framed a delightful series of theoretical adventures that most satisfactorily accounted for the degraded condition in which he had found the convict. But the discovery of his influence and connexion with Corneli, dissipated them like bubbles blown by idle boys into the air. What added to his disquiet was the extreme heat of the weather

during the night, by which, as much perhaps as by his own irksome thoughts, he was prevented from sleeping after retiring to bed. Upon the Baroness, a large corpulent lady, the sultry influence had quite an opposite effect. She lay beside her Lord alike unconscious of his sufferings and regardless of his cares, not unfrequently disconcerting his determined philosophical equanimity with the long-drawn mockery of her snores.

For some time the Baron endured the sound of that deep and dreadful organ-pipe in patience. It was an evil with which custom had made him familiar, and probably even on this occasion he might have suffered without complaint; but the warmth of the weather had brought out from their dens innumerable herds of those nimble animals that molest the sleep of the Sicilians, and which, like other bloody-minded beasts, such as lions and tigers, fall fiercest on their prey during the defenceless hours of the night. These set upon the unfortunate Baron, with beak and fang in such a man-

ner, that of themselves they were sufficient to murder sleep. Still, however, he writhed upon his couch, and would perhaps have done so till morning, had not his fat lady, after being saturated with slumbers on the one side, in turning round to indulge the other, laid the huge fleshy pillow of her arm directly over his mouth, in the same moment that a flea, of Goliah proportion, stabbed him to the quick with its proboscis. But we must drop the curtain over what ensued, and only in terms of delicate circumlocution, intimate that the Baroness was most effectually roused from her sleep, and added to the misfortunes of her husband, by roundly accusing him of taking far other liberties with his mouth on her arm, than could be justified even by the most eager fondness.

As soon as the day dawned, the Baron got up, dressed himself, and went in quest of Father Anselmo, whom he expected to find in his convent; but the benevolent Friar was already abroad, mustering his labourers to dig out the unfortunate inhabitants who were discovered to be still alive beneath the

ruins of their houses. The Baron, somewhat disappointed at not finding him, stood hesitating at the portal of the convent, when a female came to him, and said that the poor Nun, whom the holy Father had committed to her care, was desirous to see him. The Nun of whom she spoke was the same that the convict had brought out of the ruined convent, and whom, without further procrastination, we may as well at once declare was no other than the lady of Corneli, and the sister of the Baron. On the death of her aunt, with whom she took the veil, and had resided from the day on which she was carried to Sciacca by Castagnello, she obtained permission to change her abode to the convent in Messina, where she arrived on the evening preceding the earthquake.—Her motive for this translation, as in ecclesiastical language, her change of residence may be called, was to be near her son, who was at that time a fine youth, attending his studies in the University of the nobility at Catania. She was not aware that Corneli had returned to Messina; indeed from the

time that he left her in the catacombs of Selinus, she was so adverse to think of him, that as often as his image was recalled to her recollection, she knelt down, and with great fervour and humility implored the saints to appease the terrible remembrance of her wrongs.

It had been her intention, on the day after her arrival, to send for her brother the Baron, in order to concert with him some arrangements with respect to her son; but the calamity of the earthquake interposed, and she had been so much injured by the falling of the convent where she had taken up her abode, as to be incapable of any exertion till the morning after the Baron's night of afflictions.

The Baron was not a little surprised at the message, and questioned the woman somewhat curiously as to the object of the Nun, in wishing to see him; but she could give him no satisfactory answer, and he was rather surprised to find, upon closer enquiry, that the unfortunate sister was of a matronly age. "She is upwards of thirty, I think,"

said the woman. "Is she beautiful?"—asked the Baron, and he added, "O, I see how it is; the poor soul has heard of my benevolence, and amidst this chaos come again of palaces and monasteries, wishes to partake of the little I can spare; but it will never do for me to help every one: three-fourths of the population of Messina are reduced to beggary!"

The messenger then assured him that she did not think the Nun had any sinister views either towards his purse or person.—"She is in great sorrow, and only desires the consolation of your advice."

"Now you speak like a rational mortal," said the Baron, "for that is indeed the only way in which I can serve her. My advice is at all times ready, nor are my services often wanting in the way of interference and mediation; for I take that to be the best part of philosophy which comes home to mens' business and bosoms: not that I altogether despise those ingenious theories, or those hypothetical reflections which tend to elucidate abstruse truths. But they belong

to the higher fields of the studies—to those immortal heights to which only the enlightened few are permitted to ascend."

"But will you go with me to the poor wounded Nun," said the old woman, interrupting the philosopher. "That I will with all my heart," exclaimed the Baron; "show me the way," and in the same moment he descended the portal steps and followed.

He was conducted to a large house which had withstood the earthquake, and to which many of the wounded females had been carried—the Magistrates having ordered it to be converted into an hospital for the sufferers. On entering a large apartment, which had been the saloon of the edifice, the Baron's feelings were dreadfully shocked at the sight of a great number of women, of all ranks and ages, lying on the floor, some of them frightfully disfigured, and rolling their gashy heads in the agonies of pain. Several attendants were busily employed in washing their wounds, and supplying them with drink, while four or five medical men were superintending others, equally ear-

nestly engaged in bandaging the sores and renewing the dressings. Through this chamber of general horrors, the old woman hastily conducted the Baron, and as he passed, some of the patients whom the anguish of their wounds had rendered almost delirious, took him for one of the doctors, and peevishly chided that he should neglect them. One wretched creature, whose head had been literally crushed, and whose face in consequence was swollen to a preternatural size, and distorted into something more hideous than the imagination can picture, in a state of frenzy started up and grasping the Baron by the shoulders, babbled her reproaches, her powers of articulation being almost destroyed.

The Baron, in a state of the greatest alarm, shook her off, and rushed into a room, the door of which his conductor, who walked on before him, had in the meantime opened. In this apartment the Countess lay upon a sofa, pale and seemingly in a torpid state. Her brother, shaking with mingled terror and disgust, at the hideous maniac from

whom he had just escaped, did not at first observe her—indeed he was for some time incapable—but in a state of consternation sat himself down on a chair, unconscious of every present object, and wholly absorbed by the image of frantic disease which he had just seen.

The old woman, however, went to her patient, and told her that the Baron Alcamo was come—upon which the Countess turned her languid eyes towards the spot where he was sitting, and looked at him for some time in silence. After a pause of a few minutes, she requested the nurse to retire, and stretching out her hand, said in a feeble voice to the Baron, "I see you are my brother—but you are much changed since we parted—you were then in the prime of life, but now you are an old man. Alas! what changes have not I too suffered since that fatal parting."

The Baron's astonishment took now a new turn. The frightful effigy that had so scared him was forgotten, and he gazed towards the emaciated and languid Nun,

who had drawn her veil over her face while she was speaking, as if he beheld some strange and wonderful apocalypse. In the course of a minute or two, the Countess resumed, and in a few sentences informed him who she was, and for what purpose she had been translated to Messina on the evening before the earthquake. "But what at this moment makes me particularly anxious to see you," added she—"is a circumstance that took place at my removal from the ruins of the Monastery, where I had taken up my abode, and where I intended to reside.—The person who carried me out in his arms bore a resemblance so striking to Corneli, that I cannot divest myself of the persuasion that it was himself, and yet he was in the abject dress of a sentenced felon. How is this—can you explain to me this mystery?"

The Baron, who had now somewhat recovered his self-possession, told her that she must be under the influence of some delusion, for that although Corneli was in

Messina at that time, yet he was not in any such condition, as she had supposed; and he then briefly informed her in what manner the Count had been rescued by the convict from the ruins of his palace. The Countess, however, was not satisfied, and he was obliged to continue his narrative till the event of the preceding evening, when the convict had dragged the Count from his house with the energy of an avenging demon. Still the Countess was not content, but the interest which she felt as a mother was more strongly excited concerning her son than her unworthy husband; so that after some further conversation, having expressed her wish that he should be sent for from Catania, the Baron left her with the intention to do so, and to send the Baroness and Francisco's sister to visit her.

For a moment, however, he was so daunted at the idea of encountering again the hideous objects in the saloon, that he recoiled back for an instant in his way

towards the door, but abruptly recovering courage, he rushed forward, amidst the patients, and down the stairs as if he had been pursued by a legion of bedlamites.

As he returned homeward, the remark which the Countess had made respecting the convict, recurred to his recollection; he remembered that he had never seen Count Corneli until he came to reside at Messina, and the mystery in which he was involved, and the reserve which he always evinced towards him, were forcibly recalled to mind.

CHAPTER III.

One of these men is Genius to the other.

SHAKSPEARE.

THE profound interest excited in the bosoms of Lord and Lady Wildwaste, by the circumstance that Mr. Mowbray communicated respecting the condition in which he had seen Corneli, induced them to determine not only to go on shore, but to enquire into the particulars of those transactions of which a report so imperfect had been obtained from the populace. Accordingly in the cool of the afternoon, they landed among the ruins on the Marina, and endeavoured as well as they could to pick their way through the masses and fragments of the fallen edifices which filled the streets. In

the course of this toilsome and fatiguing labour, which was indeed particularly so to the invalid, they frequently halted to give her Ladyship time to recover from the effects of her exertions, and it happened when they had gained the open space in front of the cathedral, that a crowd of persons came from the church, with several police officers, attending the convict, who was then dressed like a Capuchin Friar, as he had appeared the preceding evening at the Baron Alcamo's supper table. The moment that Lady Wildwaste saw him, she grasped the arm of her Lord somewhat convulsively, and said in an agitated voice, "It is he—it is the Count Corneli."

Mowbray, who overheard her exclamation, turned round, and enquired where, and she pointed to the convict. "It is not the same," said he—"the general resemblance is considerable, I confess, but it is not the same man."

"It is, however, Corneli," resumed the Countess, firmly. "Older, much older in appearance than when I saw him last; but

the bold look, the expressive licentious physiognomy which rendered him so remarkable before, is only grown coarser, not changed."

While they were thus speaking, the crowd which was approaching, passed close to where they were sitting on the ruins. Their English appearance attracted attention, and the convict with the multitude looked at them in passing. He looked a second time, and halted, evidently greatly surprised.—He then came forward and addressed Lady Wildwaste by name as Lady Geraldine, exclaiming to all around, that Providence had performed another miracle to avouch the truth of what he had asserted, and to prove that he was indeed the true Count Corneli.

There was something so abrupt and extraordinary in this address, that Lord Wildwaste became alarmed at the effect which the agitation it had produced might have on his Lady, and he entreated the crowd to pass on. "But we cannot pass," exclaimed the convict—"we must return to the church,

the Magistrates are there with the impostor again before them, and I must implore the Lady to go with me and bear testimony as to the time and circumstances in which she formerly knew me as Count Corneli."

Mowbray, to whom the developement of this scene became an object even of painful anxiety, said to Lord Wildwaste, "This is a singular adventure, for the Corneli whom I knew in London, and whom I saw this morning, is quite another sort of man. If her Ladyship can at all endure the fatigue, I would almost entreat her not merely for curiosity, but for the sake of justice, to comply with the Friar's request."

The natural vigour of Lady Wildwaste's spirit rose superior to her infirmity. She lost in the interest of this incident the sense of her weakness, and with a fine elancing of those admirable powers of the mind, for which she was once as much celebrated as for the dignity of her personal beauty, she declared herself not only willing to attend the tribunal of the Magistrates, but felt as if she was in the instant endowed

with renovated health to endure the consequences.

The crowd, touched with a sentiment of superstition at an occurrence so extraordinary, followed the travellers and the convict into the cathedral. Don Birbone, for we must again employ the name by which the latter was best known, led the way to the place within the railing of the high altar where the Magistrates were sitting. As they ascended the steps, Lord Wildwaste exclaimed, "It is indeed Castagnello;" and in the same instant the person who had been known at Messina as Count Corneli, looked round and beheld his brother. A palour, on recognising Lord Wildwaste, overspread his visage, and his countenance became as confused and troubled as when he was dragged from the house of Baron Alcamo by Corneli himself.

The approach of the strangers occasioned a pause in the deliberations of the Magistrates, who on learning the rank of the Earl and his Lady, and the purpose for

which they had been brought forward by Corneli, accommodated them with seats within the consecrated enclosure.

This gave Castagnello time to recover his self-possession, and when his brother turned round to speak to him, he abruptly addressed the Magistrates to the following effect :—

"It would be useless now for me to practice any longer the deception of which I have been accused, had it been my intention to do so; for by a singular providence, I see here witnesses that can not only confute me, but bear testimony to the truth of what I may have to relate. It is true that I am not Count Corneli; it is also no less true that the convict, whose fetters you struck off, is that unworthy individual. Why I have personated him so long he may himself explain; but it was permitted by himself, and had he not sunk lower than the basest of mankind, he would never have ventured to appear in this place in his true character. The possession of his fortune I was willing to resign; it had enabled me

to redeem a youth of infamy, and to prove that in happier circumstances of fortune, I might have obtained some portion of the world's esteem."

As Castagnello uttered these words, he looked somewhat reproachfully towards Lord Wildwaste, who felt them tingle to the bottom of his heart. "But I have in vain contended with my fate," he continued. "The errors of the past have been seeds of evil that no subsequent course of temperance or study, I might even venture to say of virtue, has been able to eradicate. The offences which ravelled my destiny with that of Corneli, and placed him in my power, have again risen against me, and it would seem that I am born to suffer a continued series of degradations. To appease, to satisfy, to bribe me, he consented that for a time I should enjoy the greatest part of his revenues, and travel with the advantages of his rank. At the end of the stated period, I was to give him restitution. The time passed—for years after, I heard nothing of him, and believing him dead, I visited

this city, not at first with the intention of personating him, but where to the best of my ability I have performed whatever might have been expected from him, and I have done it as well. To his son, I have acted a father's part. But I have committed one great error—perhaps it is a crime. About a year ago I discovered Corneli in the state of a convict—I ought from that moment to have retired from Messina, and to have restored the name and fortune to which I had no longer any pretence, not even by the compact of guilt between us. But the spirit of irresolution fell upon me; I hesitated; I debated with myself—I was reluctant to resign the enjoyment of wealth, and to return to the hazards of poverty, the temptations of which I knew from experience I had not the firmness to withstand. In this situation the earthquake shook the habitation to which I had no right into ruins over me, and when the first stunning of the shock had passed off, and I found myself entombed as it were alive: I acquiesced in my fate as the

execution of a sentence which I had merited. While exposed to the horrors of perishing in that dreadful condition, the pickaxe of the Count delivered me, and like an avenging demon, he has come to claim his own."

The Magistrates looked at each other as Castagnello paused, and one of them, turning to Corneli, enquired what he had to say. The libertine, with his wonted frankness, answered with a sort of mental alacrity that had the tone of cheerfulness—"Since he so freely acknowledges my rights, I can do no less than pardon the fraud which he has practised ever since he knew that I was alive."

"Hold," exclaimed a voice behind the Magistrates—"what were the motives which induced you to give to that man the use of your name and fortune?" It was Francisco who enquired. A profound silence ensued, and Corneli, for a few seconds, was abashed, but recovering himself replied—"I have suffered my punishment,

and I have been pardoned by the decree of the Senate, which ordered me, with the other convicts, to be set at liberty."

Francisco immediately came forward, and requested that neither Castagnello nor the Count should be permitted to retire.—"It is evident," said he, "that there is some unexplained mystery between the two delinquents, and if Corneli has suffered punishment, the other has not."

"Have you any charge to make against them," said one of the Magistrates?

Francisco replied in the negative, but added, "I am conscious that the cause of their mystery is something which affects my own destiny—something wherein my blood and family have an interest."

Salvator Patrano, who was standing behind Francisco, endeavoured to pull him back, as he said to him urgently—"This language is foolish—tell them that the Count was married to your aunt, and that there have been suspicions concerning her fate—speak not of your own feelings and sympathies—state the fact."

Francisco turned round, and said with a look of intelligence that overawed Salvator, "You have explained to me the strange antipathy by which I have ever been affected at the sight of the convict. I did not recollect the unhappy story of my aunt at this moment, but the mind has other senses, I perceive, than the eyes and ears, and you have convinced me that my obscure and motiveless antipathy was not without reason."

During this short conversation, the Magistrates consulted together, and the reputation of Francisco, as the foolish nephew of Baron Alcamo, not standing high among them, they ordered silence, and told Castagnello and the Count that they were free to depart, recommending them to adjust their differences as speedily as possible, and give the town no more trouble concerning them.

Corneli immediately left the church, but Castagnello remained in a state of stupefaction, till Lord Wildwaste stepped towards him, and took him by the hand—"You will

go with me, Castagnello; astonished as I have been at this extraordinary explanation, I fear that to your errors I have contributed a part, and I am anxious to redeem, if possible, the harshness with which I treated you when we parted."—Castagnello said nothing, but grasping his brother's hand between both his own, bent forward deeply affected. The emotion was, however, but momentary, and when he recovered, he said, "This is no place for explanation nor complaint—your presence, equally miraculous in both instances, has saved me again from utter ruin. You are my better angel; would that you could think so."

This little scene and dialogue between the brothers was not lost on Francisco, who found himself compassionately interested in Castagnello, whom so shortly before he had regarded with distrust and suspicion. When on retiring from the cathedral, he informed Salvator Patrano of the change in his sentiments, and the latter rallied him for his mysticism, he endeavoured to account for

the altered state of his feelings, by supposing that it was the convict alone, who had occasioned all that inward stir and apprehension with which he had been so strangely affected.

CHAPTER IV.

I shudder at the past and fear the future,
Like a poor sailor cast on some wild coast,
Barbarian and unknown.

GONZANGA.

CASTAGNELLO accompanied Lord and Lady Wildwaste, with Mr. Mowbray, to their yacht. Little conversation took place in their difficult passage from the cathedral to the Marina, and when they reached the vessel, her Ladyship was so much fatigued by her exertions, that she immediately retired to her cabin. Under the awning which was spread over the deck, according to the usage of all vessels in harbour in the Mediterranean, the three gentlemen sat down, and after a few preliminary sentences, Lord

Wildwaste requested Castagnello to tell him what had befallen him since they parted in Palermo. "I have had an imperfect account of you from that period, at least the singular disclosure which has taken place to-day, shows that it must have been erroneous in all that I regarded as essential particulars."

After a few minutes silence, in which the adventurer evidently consulted with himself, he said, "I can have no objection to gratify your Lordship, for the narrative is less to my disadvantage than the story I had to relate when you rescued me from ignominy. It is not, however, free from stains." He would have added something more, but he felt that it would be disagreeable to his brother, of whose hasty temper he retained a painful remembrance, and he suppressed the just severity with which he was inclined to revert to the circumstances under which they parted.

He then explained the incidents which had occasioned his absence in Palermo on the evening of the embarkation, and all

that subsequently befell him, till the accident by which he was induced to join the banditti in the Roman Campagna. But he suppressed the discovery which he had made respecting the ill-fated Lady Alicia. The subsequent narrative we shall give in his own words :

" When I had been about a week with the robbers, the Count, in his way to Rome, was taken prisoner. It was the evening when he entered, and I happened at the time to be sitting in a dark recess of our den, where he could not see me; so that I had leisure to examine him attentively. It struck me in that moment as a curious accident that we should be again so strangely brought together; and when I reflected that I had subdued him in the contest among the ruins of Selinus, and that by my knowledge of the vile transactions to which he was a party, I possessed the power of withering him before the world, I felt that he was reduced to servility before me, and I resolved to use the means so mysteriously placed in my power

to rescue myself from the infamous career into which I had been betrayed by my intemperance and temerity. I did not therefore immediately come out of the recess where I was seated; but full of this notion, sat brooding on the methods of giving it effect,—when happening suddenly to observe, what I had not before noticed, that he bore a considerable personal resemblance to myself, the idea struck me that in the character of his brother, I might oblige him to allow me to participate in his fortune. In the same moment that this iniquitous conception entered my brain, I underwent a remarkable transmutation of the heart. I found myself endowed with a new spring of life; with intentions and purposes that absorbed, as it were, the sensual predilections to which I had been so much a slave, and I became wary, considerate, and forecasting.

"When the night was entirely closed in, the robbers stretched themselves out to sleep. No lamp was permitted to be lighted; but I so kept my eye fixed on

Corneli, that obscure as the cavern then was, I could discern his slightest movement; and I perceived that after lying down some time on the floor like the rest, he frequently raised his head. I could not but think that he was wakeful and watching, and the interest which I felt in my own designs, made me also vigilant.

"There were two entrances to the cavern, one from below, where a sentinel was placed, and which opened into a ravine, shaggy and precipitous, leading into a lower range of country; the other was by the ladder to the trap-door in the chest through which I had been conducted by the goat-herd. The ingenuity by which the latter was concealed, was deemed a sufficient protection, and it was by it that I resolved to attempt to effect our escape. But the hazard of being overheard by some of the robbers, deterred me for some time from venturing to approach the Count, and I was perplexed when I considered the difficulty of then either disclosing myself, or of stating the conditions on which I was willing to

assist his deliverance. As the night, however, advanced, I grew bolder, and gradually contrived to slide along the floor till I was close to him. He was then lying stretched at full length, and I heard by his breathing that he was not asleep. In this I was not deceived; for in the course of a few minutes he raised himself cautiously, upon which I took hold of him by the arm, and pressing it softly, said to him in a whisper, "Trust me and follow;" and he grasped me warmly by the hand to signify that he would.

"This preliminary understanding being adjusted, I then crawled silently towards the opening which led to the apartment where the ladder stood, and Corneli followed; but across the entrance, I found one of the robbers had laid himself out at full length, and it was impossible to pass without running the most eminent hazard of disturbing him, for the aperture was so low, that it could only be entered stooping almost to creeping. Fortunately, however, in this perilous crisis, the man turned him-

self round, by which his situation was so changed, that we easily effected our escape into the other apartment, and reached the foot of the ladder.

" I ascended first, but to my great dismay, found that the ladder had been removed from its usual situation, and placed against another part of the wall. To find the spot in the cieling where the trap-door opened, seemed a hopeless attempt in the dark, and I descended in extreme vexation. This will not do, I said in a whisper; we must wait till the morning begins to break.

" In that night it would really seem that fate or Providence was busily concerned in facilitating our enterprise. While I was standing at the foot of the ladder, a lambent flash of lightning illuminated all the cavern from without, and discovered, directly opposite to me, the proper spot against which the ladder should be placed. In an instant I turned it over and mounted, and in the course of a few seconds was safe with the Count out of the chest of goatskins in the hovel above.

"I knew that if the robbers discovered our escape, they could not overtake us if they issued by the other entrance to their den; and to prevent them from following us by the trap-door, with the Count's assistance, I drew up the ladder, and shut down the lid of the chest, which we loaded with stones.

"Being now safe beyond the risk of immediate seizure, we hastened to the high road where I had first encountered the goatherd, and as expeditiously as we could, walked to the nearest post-house, instead of going on towards Rome. My motive for leading him in that direction was simply because I thought the robbers, in the event of discovering our flight before morning, would try to intercept us by the road which passed the bottom of the ravine, through which, by the removal of the ladder, they could alone pursue us. This measure, dictated by immediate prudence, turned out most fortunate.

"At the post-house we found horses and an empty carriage returning from Rome to

Civita Vecchia. It was still dark, and I had not discovered myself to Corneli; but in the conversation that we had with the postman, to whom we related our escape from the banditti, he discovered me, and was so much disconcerted, that I grew confident in the superiority over him, of which I had found myself so curiously possessed; and almost without premeditation, I told the postman that I was the Count Corneli, a Sicilian Nobleman, capable of abundantly rewarding him for any attention he could show us in facilitating our journey.

"When we were seated in the carriage, I explained to the Count what I expected he would grant me, and reminding him of what had taken place in the catacombs of Selinus, and the still darker deed in which the doom of the fair Alicia was locked up, I convinced him that he had no escape from dishonour, but by complying with my demands."

Castagnello, who had inadvertently alluded to Lady Alicia, was extremely vexed

when Lord Wildwaste, with the piercing accent of surprise, enquired what he meant. A mysterious suspicion respecting her death had been entertained among the domestics of Lord Kenelsmore, and an obscure rumour from some of them had reached Lady Geraldine, although from her the facts had been carefully concealed.

Lady Wildwaste, who in the meantime had been somewhat refreshed by her repose, came on deck, and perceiving the solemnity of the triumvirate, said gaily, with a view to lighten the distress with which she saw her husband so overcome—"Come, come, my Lord, those things must not be thought of in these ways—we must not let the past become a spectre to daunt us from our present cheer." She knew not the force and apposite propriety of her words; but they struck both her husband and Mowbray—being said in English they were not understood by Castagnello; Mowbray, however, explained them when they afterwards rose to leave Lord and Lady Wildwaste together; and

the adventurer remarked, it was but one of those incidents, common enough in life, in which the parties who are most deeply interested, speak and feel in such a manner as to convince us how truly we are indeed blind to our own fate.

CHAPTER V.

The laws have cast me off from every claim
Of house and kindred, and within my veins
Turn'd noble blood to baseness and reproach.

ORRA.

CASTAGNELLO, after a short interval, resumed his seat with Mr. Mowbray, under the awning, and continued his narrative :—

" It was accordingly agreed between us, that for seven years he should abdicate as it were to me the entire possession of his rank and fortune, and we continued together at Civita Vecchia until

the necessary arrangements were made with the agents of his estates to give it effect. I should not, however, disguise one curious fact. In this arrangement it did not appear that Corneli suffered any sense of degradation, or felt much compunction for that profligacy which had reduced him so low; and I shudder with self-abhorrence, when I reflect that at one time I was myself almost as abject. But, strange as it may seem, the possession of his fortune, with only a small stipend to be paid periodically to himself, quenched, as it were, my thirst of pleasure. I was become a new creature, and having sounded all the depths of vice, I was actuated by an inexplicable curiosity, for I can give it no higher name, to measure the heights of virtue. But, the fear of being detected as an impostor, paralized my efforts. I knew that Corneli had it in his power to throw me down whenever he had courage enough to shew himself to the world, and that I had only the perishable security of his dread of a dishonourable exposure for the

fulfilment of his engagement. However, I had formed a scheme of life for myself; it was solitary and abstract, if I may use the expression, but it was calculated to enable me to view the workings of the human heart with great advantage. I parted from Corneli as a spy that went forth to inspect and watch mankind. I had a large experience of their iniquities, and was eager to probe the soundness of their virtues. Italy was not the field in which I could do this best: the hazards of detection were there greatest, and besides, the human character was in too artificial and methodized a form to give me that insight which my genius, now awakened, prompted me to seek. Accordingly having, as Count Corneli, provided myself with an ample credit, I went to Leghorn, and took my passage on board a Greek vessel bound for Smyrna. We had scarcely, however, passed the Straights of Messina, when the wind came baffling against us, and for several days drove us to the westward: at last it changed, and blew so strongly from the southward, that we were

compelled to bear away towards the island of Zante. We could not, however, make the harbour, but were constrained still to sail before the storm up the Adriatic, till we found an asylum in the port of Valona.

"It seemed to me that I was never fortunate at sea; that danger and the horrors of sickness always attended my voyages, and I determined to leave the vessel at Valona, and to throw myself, as it were, defenceless upon that wild and barbarous region. I accordingly disembarked the little luggage which I had taken with me, and engaged one of the seamen, who could speak the Turkish language, to go with me as my interpreter.

"After remaining a few days at Valona, where I saw no object to amuse or interest me, I joined a party of travellers bound across the country for Salonika. I had heard of Macedonia, and Alexander the Great, and was curious to traverse a region famed for the heroism of its inhabitants. We had not, however, proceeded far in our

journey, till I had reason to regret my precipitancy in joining those travellers. On the second day after our departure from Valona, we entered a magnificent valley; the mountains on each side towered in prodigious grandeur; a beautiful river, meandering through the middle, dispensed freshness and cheerfulness, and numerous flocks on the hills combined by their bleating to render it one of the most tranquil and primitive scenes I had ever witnessed. We sat down under the shadow of a precipice to take some refreshment, and while enjoying our repast, an English traveller, attended by a numerous retinue of guards for his protection, came also to rest there during the heat of the day.

"There was something interesting in the appearance of this stranger; and I was led in the moment to wish it should so fall out that we might travel together. There was indeed no motive for me to remain attached to the party with whom I had come from Valona. They were sordid Greeks and Jews, devoted entirely to the

gains of their petty frauds; nor did the gradations of their despicable cunning offer any thing sufficiently striking to make them moral objects of curiosity.

"The Englishman, I soon perceived, was an artist; for while his interpreter laid out the materials for their repast, he unlocked a case containing a sketch-book, and began to make a drawing of the landscape before us. He spoke Italian fluently, and I entered into conversation with him. I found him well informed and intelligent, as all men of genius commonly are, whatever the bent of their talent may be. I told him that I was also a traveller, and complaining of my companions as illiterate and vulgar, I proposed to join his party. He readily acceded to my offer, and informed me that his tour being chiefly of a professional nature, it was not only his intention to remain some time at Athens, but to visit the most celebrated scenes of Greece. This was exactly the sort of man that I longed to meet with, and for several months from that day we travelled together. His man-

ners were amiable and conciliating, his knowledge appeared to me various and extensive, his talents were of a high order, and altogether he was a man of a very superior kind. But he was a sceptic in religion, and ridiculed with equal poignancy the modern and the ancient superstitions of the Greeks. It might have been thought that in this respect, he was a dangerous companion to one who had scarcely formed any sentiment on the subject of religion, and whose early life had been so sullied with licentious adventures. But it produced quite an opposite effect; for to give life to his sarcasms, which I did not sometimes well understand, he was obliged to subjoin what may be called explanatory commentaries, and these always excited in me the most lively feelings, sometimes of pleasure, but often of dread. He remarked the impression which they produced, and frequently amused himself at my expence, by telling me wild and wonderful stories—many of them had, no doubt, some other origin than his own fancy, fertile as it was,

but the greater part of them were evidently inventions adapted to my particular taste.

"After visiting many parts of Greece, I returned with my companion to France, and made that excursion to London in which I became acquainted with Mr. Mowbray. I know not why I was tempted to do so, but from the moment that I saw Lord Wildwaste, I determined to return to the continent, and the conversation which I had with Mr. Mowbray on the following morning, decided and precipitated my departure."

Castagnello then related to them at length what happened to him afterwards, and which we have circumstantially described in the narrative of his adventures in Asia Minor, from the period of his arrival at Smyrna; for, on leaving London, he had proceeded directly to the Levant.

CHAPTER VI.

I will blow mildew upon his good name,
Wither the honours that now bud upon him;
The canker worm shall eat into his core,
And sweltering toads and scorpions venomous,
Shall lurk and crawl amidst his root's unseen,
Till he becomes a cumberer accursed,
And as a nuisance must be cut away.

THE TRIAL.

IN the adventures of Count Corneli, after his separation from Castagnello, it would almost seem that in having given up to him the use of his fortune, he had taken upon himself his destiny. For some time, however, he remained, as it were, stunned by what had taken place, and he was incapable alike of forming any rational plan for the future, or of deciding for himself even in

the most trivial matter. His whole mind was overwhelmed by the sense of his own abjectness; his faculties were loaded with the fetters of a thraldrom baser than slavery, and for a time he felt as if he was insulated by a spell, and cut off from all communion and sympathy with the rest of the world.

But this humiliation did not last long; the natural elasticity of his character enabled him to pass with great celerity from one state of feeling to another, as soon as the slightest change of circumstances induced a change of reflection. Before the third day, it was only as the distant sound of a departing danger, that he recollected or thought of the command which his crimes had given to an outcast and a felon over him. What alone gave him the slightest uneasiness, was the inadequacy of the stipend he retained, to supply the free expenditure to which he had been accustomed. He could no longer maintain that appearance which belonged to his rank; but then for a time it was desirable that he

should be as it were out of view; and the energy of his mind, recovering from the shock which had almost shattered its powers, prompted the wisest resolution, which under the circumstances, he could form, had it been wisely directed. He determined to abstain from going where he was likely at all to be known, and to let himself down into a lower sphere of life. But he did not reflect that in every place and every station he would still carry with him the same habits and passions, and that unless he could break from the influence of the one, and regulate the other, his difficulties would suffer no abatement. However, having formed his determination, he went to Venice, and in the purlieus of the piazza of St. Mark, indulged at the wonted cheap rate in all the variety of dissipation for which that Palais-Royal of Italy was then celebrated or infamous.

It is unnecessary, we presume, to acquaint our readers, that the Republic of Venice, in the decline of its power, had organised a system of espionage the most

complete in its operation, the most decisive in its effects, and yet the most mysterious in the methods it employed, of any engine that despotism ever exercised, saving and excepting that of the penance and auricular confession of the Roman Catholic Church. Every stranger who entered Venice was an object of vigilance to the police, until his habits, haunts, business and connections were thoroughly known. When crimes were committed, the State was the prosecutor, and justice in consequence was often administered unknown to the injured. This providential system, as it may be called, in its principles had many good qualities, but it was administered by men, and its abuses were enormous in exact proportion to the secrecy and tremendous power with which it acted.

Corneli, on his arrival in the city, fell of course under the inspection of the agents of its awful and mysterious tribunals, and his conduct was not calculated to procure for him any relaxation of their watchfulness;

indeed the tendency of his occupations was such, that the spies in all the places he frequented, marked him as their fated prey; and in the form of waiters, errand porters, gondoliers, or gentlemanly loungers, all the feelers of the police were about him.—Wherever he went, an invisible eye was upon him, an invisible arm, ready to strike, over him; and though he moved in all the unconcern of irresponsible licentiousness, he was under the superintendence of a special, but a remorseless and avenging political Providence.

Such was his situation when Castagnello arrived at Venice; and it is doubtless already anticipated, that it was owing to his machinations, that he was taken before the secret tribunal of the police. It was even so;—he had recognised him accidentally in the piazza of St. Mark, and instigated by a vindictive feeling, and by the hope of redeeming his fortune, he determined to accuse him of speaking seditiously of the State, and of being in other respects a profligate character. He judged of Castagnello by

the circumstances in which he had known him, and the monitor in his own bosom had not yet learnt that there are some minds liable to very extraordinary transmutations. The charge of sedition and profligacy was indeed vague; but as old age is more sensitive to pain than youth, Venice, in the decline of her power, was easily alarmed by any rumour of sedition, and of this Corneli was well aware; but he was not aware of the extent of her precautions.

He was sitting at the door of a coffee-house when Castagnello passed with several Venetian gentlemen. The waiter was one of the spies of the police, and happened to notice the emotion with which Corneli recognised the stranger. By a secret signal an errand porter, lingering at the door, was apprised that Castagnello was known to Corneli. In Venice the espionage was so perfectly organised, that the suspected were watched without almost the possibility of observing by whom; for the spies and officers hovered round particular stations, and communicated by signs with each other, so that a man was

dogged rather by the spirit of the system, than by men.

As soon as Castagnello had passed out of view, Corneli left the coffee-house and went to his lodgings to write the accusations which he meant to drop into one of the celebrated lions mouths, the two-penny post-holes of Venice, the customary receptacles of the insinuations of malice and the suggestions of patriotism. His resolution had been quickly formed, for he was naturally prompt and decisive, and he feared if he delayed his purpose, that Castagnello might discover he was in Venice, and frustrate his design. But the spirit of the police moved along with him. The servant of the house where he lodged was a familiar of the establishment; the Count not being in the practice of writing letters, was obliged to send for paper, and the servant in fetching it marked the sheets, that he might know them severally again.

When the letter was written, Corneli again walked out, and the servant contrived to apprise another confident that he

had written a letter, and to watch what he did with it. This, however, was not an easy task, for conscious guilt made the Count wary, and he wandered from place to place, and kept far aloof from the palace of St. Marco, in the open gallery of which the lions heads were placed. At last he embarked in a gondola, the gondolier was also a spy, and was apprised also by the wonted signals of the other familiars, that the Count had written a letter which he carried with him.

By this time the evening was far advanced, and the Count directed himself to be rowed to one of the theatres. This was done, and from spy to spy, till the doorkeeper was informed, the signals respecting the letterwere transmitted. At the close of the entertainment, Corneli hastened through the crowd, but not unobserved, and embarking in another gondola, was carried by his own directions with all possible speed to a particular place where he landed; he then hastened along the street a short dis-

tance, embarked again, was again rowed with celerity to another place, and in the course of a short time reached the piazza of St. Mark, where, mingling as he thought unobserved with the crowd, which at the cool hour of midnight were there enjoying the delightful breeze from the Adriatic, he deposited the letter, and by the same rapid and circuitous route and means, returned to the theatre before even the throng of the spectators had dispersed.

In this transaction he had so often changed the gondolas, that although the men belonging to them were all in the pay of the police, he might have avoided detection had he not been previously so well known. But when after the theatres were shut, the gondoliers at the wonted hour gave in their account to their respective wards, and the reports of the different wards were communicated to the central office, the whole course that Corneli had pursued was seen at once on comparing the reports: and all that he had done, from the moment

when he recognised Castagnello, till he deposited the letter in the lion's mouth, with every subsequent transaction up to the very moment of his going to bed, was recorded in the books of the secret tribunal, before the judges met in the morning.

CHAPTER VII.

Traps, traps, good worthy Don Diego, traps,
The mouse that gets his neck within the same
Will grind his teeth and grin mortality,
Before he whisk his tail in lady's bower,
To sip her honey-comb, or taste the store
Of frugal grand-dame in her garnel chest:
Traps, traps, I say again, worthy Diego.
THE LADY'S DOUBT.

BY a little mechanical contrivance connected with a clock, the time within a few seconds when a letter was dropped into the lion's mouth, was always ascertained. This was better than the clumsy stamping of the

hour in the receiving houses of the London two-penny post. The persons who had charge of the receptacles, marked upon the letters, before delivering them to the Secretary of State, the time at which, by the index, it appeared they had been put in. After reading the letters, they were sent to the different departments of the Government which they respectively concerned, and when the requisite attention was paid to them, they were then sent to the central tribunal of the police, in order that the authors might be discovered and forthcoming as occasion required.

As the accusation in Corneli's letter concerned the safety of the State, Castagnello was, in the first instance, ordered to be arrested and brought before the secret tribunal of the senate in the evening, which was done accordingly, as we have related in our account of the mysterious adventure that befell him at Venice. The letter at the same time was sent to the police department, and the process by which the dis-

covery of the author was effected, affords a curious view of the Venetian system of espionage.

It was known by the water-mark of the paper at what shop it had been sold, and it was also known, by the police report of the transactions of the preceding day, who had purchased any paper.

A few enquiries, conducted without any apparent anxiety, ascertained all the circumstances which we have described, and the servant of the house where Corneli lodged, proved his own secret mark on the paper. The Count, in consequence, was ordered to be brought before the secret tribunal, where, to his extreme consternation, he found not only that every step he had taken relative to the accusation was minutely registered, but that every thing he had done from the date of his arrival in the city, even to the minutest incidental action, was described in the same appalling record. He was then questioned as to the time and place and circumstances in which

Castagnello had made use of the seditious language imputed to him. The Count was thunderstruck and could make no reply. "Your accusation then is false," said one of the judges to him, the same who interrogated Castagnello. The Count attempted to speak, and began to describe Castagnello as a dissolute prodigal, a ruffian who had twice headed gangs of banditti; but the judge said to him,—These are things which do not concern the state of Venice; the crimes you speak of were not, even from your own account, committed within the dominions of the Republic, and the evident malice of your false accusation renders all you say unworthy of credit. But you are yourself a great public criminal; you have attempted to deceive justice, and to convert the sword of the Venetian laws into the dagger of an assassin. For this you are condemned to twelve months hard labour in the arsenal, and if in ten days after the expiration of that period, you are ever discovered within the bounds of Venice, you

will in this chamber, and before this tribunal, suffer death."

Corneli, at once terrified and astonished by this prompt and severe sentence, stood for a few minutes unable to move. At last, however, he so far recovered himself as to say, with some degree of spirit, "I am a Sicilian, of noble birth and high connections; you know not the consequences that may ensue from this tyranny." "Stranger," said the concealed judge, calmly—"It is justice that we administer here, and were the greatest Monarch in the world in Venice, and to do what you have done, he would be sentenced by us as we have sentenced you; the laws of Venice admit of no exceptions."

The Count was then removed from the tribunal by the officers, who by the signal of a bell which the judge rang, were apprised that the convict was not immediately to be conducted to the arsenal, but into another chamber. When he was withdrawn, other offenders were brought up,

and it was their blood with which the rack and trough were stained, when Castagnello was brought before the tribunal. At the proper time, by another signal which the officers understood, Corneli was conducted along the illuminated gallery opposite the mirror in which he was seen reflected by Castagnello. He was then carried to the arsenal, where the fetters were put on with which his hands acquired their first ignominious hardness.

During the twelve months that he was thus obliged to expiate his offence, he was so distinguished for the insolence of his demeanour, that it was at last found necessary to remove him from the other convicts, and to employ him in the most abject labour of the arsenal. At the end of the time he was removed from Venice, and landed on the terra firma, where his clothes, and all the effects of which he was in possession at the period of his condemnation, were restored. His arms and legs were galled with the iron of his fetters, but the

degradation he had suffered cut deeper into his soul. He was seized with the fiercest spirit of revenge; he thirsted for a terrible indemnification, and his rage burnt the more furiously by having no object to attract its fires. It was, however, but a frenzy, and the immediate anxieties of self-preservation soon absorbed every other care.

Not far from that part of the banks of the Brenta, where he was disembarked, stands a Franciscan Monastery, in which the discipline is according to the most rigid rules of the order. The brotherhood at that time consisted chiefly of penitents who had actually undergone the punishment of the law like Corneli, and the house was supported by the State, for the purpose of receiving such felons who, after the expiry of their sentence in the galleys and arsenal, might be disposed to embrace a religious and penitential life. To this house he was advised to repair by the officer who conducted him from Venice, and it offered

indeed the only fit asylum to one in his condition. Here he staid till his hands recovered their wonted texture, and he had ascertained that the stipend reserved from the temporary assignment of his fortune to Castagnello, was waiting his directions. The period of his punishment had allowed it to accumulate, and the change induced by the degradation he had already borne, rendered him careless of any farther ignominy.

On obtaining the remittance of the amount due to him, he resolved to proceed to Sicily, in order to take steps to cut off the payment of his rents to the agent appointed by him to receive them for Castagnello. Public contempt for the manner in which he had abandoned his lady, was nothing to a man who had been a convict in the arsenal of Venice; and what had he to dread for the part in which he had ministered to the death of the daughter of Lord Kenelsmore, when the only witness against him was man who had himself been guilty in all pro-

bability of equal crimes, and whose return to Sicily he supposed was interdicted by the dread of retribution for his own offences."— In a word, the sense of honour was almost destroyed by his vices, his punishment, and his resentments, and he was determined to live for personal gratifications in despite of the world. He had not, like Castagnello, any motive to amendment, for what he had endured prohibited him from enjoying the advantages of his rank, and left him no alternative but the pursuit of the basest pleasures, the indulgence of his own selfish inclinations. He might, it is true, have devoted himself to piety, and in the celestial offices of charity have atoned for his offences. But the age of founding Monasteries was past; the profession of the Monk was become despicable; and besides he was no longer able to contemplate any higher species of enjoyment than that libertine licentiousness which indulgence had made so habitual, that it at once absorbed the innate powers of a mind

which nature had highly gifted, and the affections of a heart, which in the bloom and promise of youth, seemed to be richly endowed with many generous qualities.

CHAPTER VIII.

He is like man, and yet is not a man,—
Cruel and fiercer than the hired assassin,
Yet mild and gentle as my lady's minion
At masques and revels.—He would shrink at knives,
Yea, tremble at the vision of a bodkin,
Yet doth he yearn to lap the tender blood
Which the fell tyrant hesitates to shed.

THE MOOR'S EUNUCH.

THE Franciscan brotherhood, with whom the Count had taken up his abode, was far from being an agreeable society; nor indeed were penitents and devotees of austere principles, and strict discipline, exactly the companions who, in any circumstances, would have suited his humours. There was, however, one among them of a different character, but he shunned Corneli,

or rather he seemed averse to social communion of any kind. Whether he had been a convict was not known, for among other rules of the house, no questions were asked respecting those who sought an asylum there, and he had obtained admission one evening during a thunder-storm, which of itself would have been a sufficient apology for the intrusion of any stranger.—But in the morning, when the weather had cleared up, he showed no disposition to go away, nor even for some days to pass the threshold of the portal. His complexion was fair, the cast of his physiognomy prepossessing, and his manners were soft and gentle; altogether he seemed to be a young man who might make himself agreeable if he would; and the Count, from the moment that he resolved on returning to Sicily, wished, as he wanted a companion on the road, that the Bolognesé, as he was called, would accompany him. His real name was not known, but as he spoke the dialect of Bologna, it was supposed he had come originally from that city, and the Monks,

in consequence, called him Bolognesé, according to an Italian usage often applied to artists and men of genius.

When Corneli proposed to take him to Sicily, he at once assented, and made the requisite little preparations for their journey, but still his unsocial fit, as the Count had supposed it, underwent no change. He looked as mild, but said as little as before, and seemed entirely absorbed with some inward contemplation, untinctured however with sorrow, or any shade of passion. As they travelled towards Leghorn, where it was intended they should embark, his taciturnity so vexed the Count, that he resolved to part with him on his arrival at that city. In the course, however, of their journey, the mystery and singularity of his character began to interest the curiosity of Corneli. He seemed entirely isolated from the common sympathies of mankind—in all circumstances and situations he still wore the same placid countenance, and possessed the same gentleness. Without affections, and free from passion, he was not only as a

stranger in the world, but as a being of a peculiar species, without mate, or match, or similarity. There was nothing in his conduct to which any one could object, but still there was something about him which no one could like; and before they reached Leghorn, the Count was bound to him as by a spell, for he wished to throw him off, but could never summon up sufficient resolution, so that they embarked together for Messina.

The weather was fine, and as the vessel sailed pleasantly along the picturesque Italian shores, Corneli, who had but little taste for the beauties of nature—perhaps it had been destroyed in his career of dissipation—was afforded an opportunity of studying the character of Bolognesé more closely. But he was still an enigma; he remarked, however, that a child about two years old, belonging to one of the other passengers, had particularly engaged his attention. That he followed it with a greedy eye, and when he could get hold of it, that he seized on it with a sort of canine fierce-

ness, that made even the depraved heart of Corneli shudder. The child instinctively fled from him, and cried with terror whenever he attempted to touch it. This singular circumstance led the Count to suspect that he was one of those terrible moral anomalies who have a hideous appetite for blood—a demoniac to whom only an exciting cause was wanting to produce those fits of frenzy, which have led to the supposition that they are immediately inspired by evil spirits.

The vessel was longer on her passage than had been anticipated—the provisions and water began to wear out, and Corneli observed with anxiety that the colourless cheek and sleepy eye of Bolognesé were frequently flushed and kindled. On more than one occasion he saw him, when he thought he was unobserved, glare on the child with horrible glances, and with difficulty restrained himself from rushing upon it with the fury of a tiger. The Count was dreadfully alarmed: the wind was calm—there was no chance of entering the

Straits of Messina that day; and he justly feared that the Bolognesé was on the point of being seized with that fervor of thirst, to which unfortunate mariners, from the want of water, are sometimes liable, and that the promptings of his latent insanity suggested the most hideous means of quenching it. He watched him, therefore, with a strong feeling of horror, for the disease was evidently making progress. In the afternoon the heat was intolerable, and nearly all the water on board was consumed. Corneli, however, with a self-denial that was new to his character, partook but sparingly of his own allowance, and added it to that of Bolognesé, who had, by this time, retired wholly from the other passengers, and lay coiled up as it were like a snake in a corner.

The child was playing on the deck, and he followed its movements with his half shut fiery eye, which glittered with the fascination of the basilisk. Every moment the restraining power of his volition was evidently becoming weaker and weaker,

and Corneli, apprehensive of the result, begged the mother of the child to remove it below. The woman, in the utmost consternation at the horrible danger which he hinted, seized it in her arms and hurried to the cabin door, looking behind at the incarnated demon, as she hastily descended. The instant that his prey was removed from his sight, the frantic monster sprung up as if inspired with supernatural energy. The Count darted forward and seized him; in the same moment the demoniac grasped him by the throat; a shriek of alarm from all on board startled the Bolognesé, and Corneli, who was a very powerful man, pressed him so firmly in the ribs, that the functions of his lungs were stopped, and he uttered a convulsive inarticulate sound and fell dead in his arms.

A cry of murder was echoed from all quarters. In vain did the Count attempt to obtain a hearing—nothing extraordinary had been remarked in the behaviour of Bolognesé, but some of the passengers had observed the suspicious looks with

which he had been watched, and they ascribed them to hatred and malice.

When the vessel reached Messina, it was soon known on the Marina that a corpse was on board and that a murder had been committed. A vast crowd assembled. Several officers belonging to a Venetian ship of war then in the harbour, and who had seen Corneli in the condition of a convict in the arsenal of Venice, were among the spectators. When he was landed, with his hands tied behind him as the murderer, they instantly recognised him, and it was loudly circulated among the multitude that he was a Venetian galley slave. The officers followed him to the tribunal of police, where an exaggerated account of the circumstances attending the death of the demoniac was given by the passengers and crew of the vessel. The Venetians bore testimony to the character of the culprit, and no doubt could be entertained of his guilt; he was, therefore, immediately sentenced to hard labour for life, and was only not condemned to die, because the

suddenness with which the crime was committed seemed to prove that it might have been the effect of momentary passion: A rumour of the plague having manifested itself in the city, spread a general alarm the same evening. The crime of the Venetian convict was forgotten in the individual apprehensions of personal danger; and when after a wasteful rage of several months, the pestilence abated, and business was renewed, and the tribunals of justice again opened, neither the judge nor the police officers were found alive, who had been present at the condemnation of Corneli. The memory of his crime was thus obliterated, and the records of the evidence by which he had been condemned, were buried by the earthquake, with the other archieves of the city, in the ruins of the senate house.

CHAPTER IX.

'Tis an eclipse: between me and my rights,
The foe has ta'en his station. But awhile,
Awhile endure with me and it will pass,
And men will more admire when they again
Behold our lustre breaking from the cloud,
Than if this occultation had not been.

THE USURPER.

SHAME and the hopelessness of his situation had prevented the miserable Corneli from making himself known to his relations. His sudden condemnation to perpetual ignominy was an event so far beyond all his apprehensions, that it produced for some time an extraordinary change on his character. The convicts with which he was obliged to associate, were wretches of the

lowest description; bred from their youth with immorality and indigence, they were the habitual companions of fraud and crime. His vices, without being less pernicious to society, were of a less ignoble kind, if the term may be at all applied to any species of wickedness. Education had also refined his manners, and in his fetters he still retained something of the port and bearing of a gentleman. It was owing to this, that he had been in mockery dignified with the epithet of Don Birbone (Lord Rogue) for he was not distinguished from the other convicts by any superiority of misdemeanour in his conduct. The mortification of his unmerited punishment was in fact so keenly felt, that the feelings of alternate grief, indignation, and despondency had almost overcome his licentiousness; but his restoration to liberty and the prospect of recovering his fortune, soon revived in full force all his libertine predilections.

The beauty of Adelina, the lovely and pious sister of Francisco, had, as we have mentioned, attracted his particular regard

at the supper table of her uncle; and in the moment that he obtained possession of his fortune, he had marked her for his first victim. He was aware of the just prejudice which she could not but naturally entertain against him; he was also startled by the recollection of the faded apparition of his lady, which he had seen in the unfortunate nun, but still more afraid of that jealous and singular perspicacity of Francisco, who seemed able to penetrate into the darkest recesses of his bosom, and had almost detected the secret of his mysterious connection with the adventurer.

Associating for so many years only with criminals, had made him acquainted with the devices of guilt and familiar with crimes. This evil knowledge came in aid of his licentious purposes. He perceived that he had no hope of success with Adelina, but by removing her from the vigilant protection of her brother, and he was not scrupulous in contriving the means. He was, previously however to taking any step, desirous of ascertaining whether in-

deed the nun was his unfortunate Countess, and for this purpose, with that promptitude which formed one of his characteristic peculiarities, immediately on quitting the cathedral, when dismissed by the magistrates, he went in search of Father Anselmo, to enquire where she had been placed, and to make the necessary enquiries.

In passing through the street, in which the female hospital was situated, he met the Baroness and Adelina with a young man going to the hospital. The youth was his own son, who had, previous to the arrival of Castagnello at Messina, been sent out to the university of the nobles at Catania, and who had in consequence never seen his supposed father. On hearing of the ruinous effects of the Earthquake, which had indeed been felt as far as Catania, Ferdinando, as the young Corneli was called, came to ascertain the fate of his father, and had just reached at the house of Baron Alcamo, when that philosophical character arrived, big with strange tidings, to relate respecting the Countess.

The Count was still in his friar's habit, and on seeing the party walked up to address them, but Adelina took the arm of her cousin and hastily passed him. The corpulent Baroness was not so well able to make as much speed, but what she wanted in nimbleness she resolved to supply by dignity, so that when he addressed her with his wonted effrontery, she spread her fan, and looked at him from behind it with a countenance expressive of the most ineffable disdain.

"I presume, madam," said he, "that you have not heard what has taken place."

"I don't want to hear of any such things," replied the Baroness.

"The usurper of my title and fortunes, the impostor whom you have hitherto considered as Count Corneli, has confessed the fraud and resigned the property."

The Baroness sloped her fan to her knees, and looked at him with a vacant and incredulous air. "What I say is true," continued Corneli—"the impostor,

who availed himself of my misfortunes, to assume my name, and to usurp my fortune, who has even practised on your discernment, and almost deluded you into a belief that he was the same person who married the Baron's sister at Palermo, has before the magistrates acknowledged the fraud, and I may now, without the hazard of contradiction, claim the privileges of being your relation."

"Adelina! Ferdinando!" cried the Baroness to her neice and nephew, in a tone of the most piercing shrillness. At this moment Francisco and his uncle came also in view, and the Count, averse to meet the inquisitive eye of the former, on seeing them approach, hastily retired.

Francisco had repeated to his uncle the scene which he had witnessed in the cathedral, and the singular encounter with the English nobleman, with the subsequent confession of Castagnello; and the old man was utterly at a loss to assign an adequate cause for the phenomenon. He could not understand how a stranger would

dare to personate Count Corneli, nor how it was possible for a nobleman of his consequence to be for many years a convict. But he triumphed not a little over Francisco, when he recalled to mind, with what sagacity he had himself discovered the gentleman under the ignominous disguise of the outcast. On observing, however, Ferdinando with Adelina, it was agreed that for the present they should not disclose to him what had come to light. Ferdinando, however, had learnt from Adelina in what manner the supposed Count had been rescued by the convict, and he was impatient to see him; and the amazement of the Baroness at what Corneli had told her, would have precipitated a disclosure of the whole, had not the nurse belonging to the hospital appeared again in quest of the Baron and entreated him to return with her to the nun, who was lying at the point of death. "She has been very ill since you were with her, and her look and appearance are so changed, that it is manifest

she cannot live long. I do, therefore, entreat you to come with me."

The Baron recollected with horror the frightful object in the hospital, that had so terrified him with her swelled head, and would have declined the urgent request of the nurse, but a faint reminissence of the affection which he had cherished for his sister in childhood, with curiosity, and those various shades and interests which in such a case may be supposed likely to constitute a motive, outweighed his disgust, and he agreed to go. Taking his corpulent spouse by the arm, and, followed by Adelina and Ferdinando, he walked towards the hospital. Francisco, to whom all these accidents, encounters, and disclosures were fearfuly interesting, at first moved also a few steps in the same direction, but he felt that he was not able to endure the tenderness of a death-bed scene, and abruptly quitted the party, and walked towards the skirts of the town. He perceived, as he said afterwards to his friend Salvator, that

a drama of Providence was winding up, in the catastrophe of which many destinies would meet, and in which he felt that he was more than a spectator. In this solemn state of the mind he ascended the mountains immediately behind the city, by a foot-path that led up the same steep to which the English soldiers, who garrisoned Messina in the late war, gave the descriptive name of Corkscrew Hill, in allusion to the winding road which they formed to its summit, and which seen from the top, presented a lively image of the form of that instrument. Here he sat down, and contemplating the magnificent landscape around, and the unaltered features which the Calabrian Mountains still wore, though the recent convulsions which rocked them to their base, had shaken into dust the habitations of man: he thought that it is ever thus: "The cloud darkens and the storm sweeps, but the shadow passes and the wind sinks, and Nature in the calm looks out again as vigourous and beautiful as before." A load however was on his heart,

a foreboding that was the more depressing, as the fears and anxieties to which it gave rise, were not reducible into any consistent form, and he added, "But it is not so with man — in every change that befalls him, he loses something more precious than the knowledge he acquires, and it may be doubted if the fortitude of virtue be in any case so great a blessing as the heedlessness of all-trusting innocence."

CHAPTER X.

What a strange medley is this busy world!
Here the gay daneer to the viol bounds,
There the slow mourner steals towards the tomb,
Where all her hopes lie buried. Then anon
With drum and trumpet, on his prancing charger
Comes the proud victor, and behind him droops
The humbled foe, that dreamt to be as proud.
There's no accordance in this checquered show,
But spots, and flaws, and contrarieties.

THE CHEATED WARD.

WHEN Francisco went home, he found the family arranged in the solemn state of formal woe, except Ferdinando, who had retired to his own chamber. The Baroness, in the amplitude of corpulency, was sitting erect, twirling her thumbs, and ever and anon fetching sighs from the deepest abysses even of her abdomen. The Baron, with the benign decorum of a philosopher, was meditating on the inutility of death, as he walked to and fro in the saloon, with his

hands behind; and Adelina with the meek look of resignation, seemed to acquiesce in the wisdom of the dispensation of Providence, to which she had been recently a witness. The unfortunate Countess, the nun, had indeed breathed her last. Her end was tranquil, and suitable to the holy quiet in which for so many years she had spent her life, in the heavenly contemplations of the cloister. She had the satisfaction to see her son, a noble and ingenuous youth, and to bestow on him her maternal blessing, before closing her eyes for ever. The appearance of Adelina attracted her attention; a few words satisfied her that he did not see the beauty and interesting air of his cousin with indifference; and she placed his hand in her's, and expired in the act of murmuring a prayer for their happiness.

Why the Baron and his lady should have deemed it expedient to assume such a profound air of sorrow on the occasion we know not; for if misfortunes have the effect of lessening the value of life to the possessor, and years of blamelessness and piety can

give any assurance of a happier change, there was certainly nothing to lament in the death of their sister: they had long before considered her as removed from this world, and her accidental appearance among them, had rather surprised than delighted them. But such things are the fashion on such occasions. The philosophy of the Baron, however, soon came effectually to his consolation, and he said to his lady, "It is not wise of us, my dear, to mourn in this way."

"I think so too," replied the Baroness, "and therefore let us send for the tradespeople, and get ourselves put in a proper condition to testify our respect to the memory of the poor dear creature. I was just in need of new dresses, and her death has happened very conveniently."

"You have misunderstood me," said the Baron, a little sharply. "I was going to make a moral reflection on the inutility of mourning for the dead."

"It is, however, the custom," replied the lady, "and persons in our rank of life are obliged to put on mourning as an example

to others, and for the encouragement of trade."

The Philosopher lost all temper at this, for nothing was further from his mind than considerations respecting sable suits of woe. He merely meant to say, that when we consider the uncertainties, the sufferings, and casualties that life is liable to, we ought, perhaps, to grieve more at a birth than a death.

In the meantime, Corneli was occupied with the contemplation of two objects; the first was to obtain possession of Adelina, either by fair or foul means, the other was even a darker design. We have already had occasion to remark that he was not very scrupulous in the means of attaining his ends, and the servitude of a felon had not improved his moral delicacy.

He stood in awe of Francisco: there was something in the singularity and simplicity of that young man's character which he could not fathom, and his spirit was rebuked before him. He perceived that with Francisco, it would be impossible to dissem-

ble, or that any considerations of etiquette, politeness, or prudence, would prevent him from expressing, in any time or place, whatever the circumstances of the moment suggested. Aware that the enthusiast had detected his marked attention to Adelina, he knew it would be a vain attempt to palter with his vigilance, and he dreaded the soul-searching scrutiny of his keen and terrible eye.

In addition to the apprehension which he thus entertained of Francisco, he bore him a bitter grudge on account of his behaviour to him in the Baron's house. He felt it with the resentment which an insult inspires, and it was only the conflict of incidents in which he was so soon after engaged, that had prevented him from studying the means of revenge.

Apprehension and resentment were each of them demons powerful enough to master the best feelings of this profligate man: united, they were capable of urging him to the perpetration of any crime. The

confusion in the city, and the tumults which impending famine occasioned, for there had not yet been sufficient time to obtain adequate supplies of provision, presented facilities for assassination, and he determined to quiet his fears and gratify his malevolence in that way.

In the career of vice abroad, and the degradation of punishment at home, Corneli had forgotten his son; and the hideous purpose which he had now formed, so occupied his mind, that he never once thought of enquiring concerning him. Ferdinando was indeed but an infant when he was sent to the care of the Baron Alcamo, and his father had never from his birth taken any paternal interest in him. Had he happened to notice him in the street when he met him with the Baroness and Adelina going to the hospital, it is probable that he would have been struck with his appearance, for Ferdinando bore a strong resemblance to his mother. But, from the trivial accident of Adelina hurrying on with her cousin, while

the Baroness addressed the Count, this recognition did not take place.

There was no other general resemblance between Francisco and Ferdinando than that of stature. They were about the same height, but the latter was finely formed, and possessed a cheerful social aspect, strikingly different from the absent look and thoughtful cast of Francisco's remarkable physiognomy.

Ferdinando, when the shock which he had received from his mother's death had in some degree subsided, became impatient to see his father. Both Francisco and the Baron were not a little disconcerted at this: his request came upon them suddenly, and they were averse to tell him the singular discovery that had been made. He observed their embarrassment, and concluded that his father was among the victims of the devastation: nor did they attempt to undeceive him. It was indeed a painful task to inform a noble high-spirited youth, nourished with the pre-

judices of rank, and full of those pure and precious hopes which all liberal studies encourage, that his father had been for years in the abject and ignominious condition of a common felon—that he had only been restored to freedom along with other convicts, not on account of any extenuative circumstance in his guilt, but by the indulgence of the magistrates; and that there had existed some mysterious compact between him and an unknown adventurer, by which the latter had usurped his name and enjoyed his fortune.

Ferdinando lamented for his parents with sincere sorrow. He had not seen them within his remembrance; but it is so much the object of a judicious education, and his had been well conducted to foster the domestic ties, that the loss of both father and mother, at the same time, could not fail to produce on him a profound impression. He was taught to love them unseen, till a feeling was excited towards them analogous to that sentiment of affection with which the ancients contempla-

ted their favorite deities. For the remainder of the day he retired to his chamber, where he sat alone, nor did he allow even the attractions of Adelina's company to draw him from the mournful reflections which so great a misfortune naturally inspired.

CHAPTER XI.

Oh! holy Father, when yon sun is setting,
Drop on your knees, and if it may be done,
Pray for a soul then sinking to perdition.
THE TRIAL.

IT is a beautiful ordinance of Nature, that sin should be always instinctively attended by shame. We require no knowledge of the law to assure us that our intentions are evil, when our own feelings prompt us to conceal them. From the moment that Corneli resolved to rid himself of the impediment which Francisco opposed to his designs on Adelina, and to revenge the insolence with which he considered himself to have been treated, the character of his countenance was changed. Instead of that bold and libertine look for which he had been formerly distinguished, and which

Francisco had seen with so much alarm lighted up with passion for his sister, his aspect assumed a contracted frown, a dark and knotted abstraction, accompanied with a sinister watchfulness which attracted the notice he was so careful to avoid.

Until his affairs were put into some train of arrangement, he had determined to remain at the monastery, whither he had retired for the first night with Father Anselmo, and, on parting from the Baroness in the street, he walked directly to the gate. The change in his appearance was so striking that it surprized the porter, who, on giving him admission, looked at him so particularly that he shrunk, as it were, from his view, and hastily ascended to the cell which had been allotted to him.

It was known to all the Friars that he had been a felon, for he was in the garb of a convict when he came home with Anselmo, and he had been allowed the use of a habit of the order until he should have time to be otherwise provided. They had heard also of the service which he had rendered to the

supposed Count Corneli, and calculated, that for their hospitality, he would allow them to participate in the reward which they had no doubt the Count intended to bestow. But they had not yet heard of the disclosure that had taken place, nor that he himself was Corneli, and capable of repaying their kindness far beyond their most sordid expectations: none of them were, therefore, much predisposed to pay him any particular respect, and some were not at all satisfied when they saw him return to the monastery, as if he considered it his own house. This feeling was particularly vivid in the breast of the porter; for it is the nature of menials to feel a stronger aversion than their masters against unwelcome or unworthy guests.

The porter, struck with the guilty expression of his countenance, and averse to him on account of his degraded condition, said to one of the Friars, who soon after came to the gate, that he wished they were well rid of the convict. This led to some conversation respecting him, but the porter could

give no satisfactory reason why he wished him away, farther than that he did not like the looks of him the more he saw of him, and that ill habits are not soon broken.

Vague and general as his observations were, they made some impression on the Friar, who, on joining his brethren in the cloister, mentioned what had passed. The remarks of the porter lost nothing by the reporter; on the contrary, they were digested into something of a more precise and logical form; and they had the effect before the close of the day, to make the whole brotherhood suspicious of their guest, and desirous of his removal; but, in the circumstances of his friendlessness, and the state of the town, they could not, in humanity, request him to go away.

Having thus awakened their vigilance and suspicion, his motions, while he was unconscious of being at all observed, were watched with curiosity and apprehension.

The dreadful purpose which he meditated, was as an arrow in his side, and he could not rest. His intention, when he

entered the house, was to remain in his cell till sunset, the wonted supper time of the Friars, but occasional touches of horror, chilled his blood, and forced him to descend to the cloisters, where several of the brethren were sitting enjoying the cool of the afternoon.

He avoided them, and walked alone in another part of the cloisters, a circumstance which they noticed. They also remarked that his steps were unequal, and that sometimes he would pace emphatically, as if weighing with himself the different considerations of a question. In an instant he would hurry forward, in a stealthy and agitated manner, with his right hand raised and clenched as if he grasped a dagger. He would then suddenly stop, as if he halted in his purpose, but still he returned to the debate which he was evidently holding with himself, until his countenance became distorted with rage and revenge, and again no longer master of himself, he unconsciously assumed the attitude of an assassin in the act of striking his victim.

The Friars, who had watched this singular

scene, were persuaded that he really did intend to commit some act of atrocity. Had they not been led to discuss the peculiarities of his character by the remark of the porter, they would probably have regarded it but as the effects of a troubled conscience, and might have looked on him with compassion, instead of dread and abhorrence. They took no notice, however, of what had passed when he joined them at supper in the refectory, but one of them observed that he contrived to slip a knife up the loose sleeve of his friar's cloak.

The monk who saw this, in the consternation of the moment, instead of asking what he intended to do with the knife, sat gazing at him. Corneli, fearfully thinking of his hideous purpose, happened in one of his sinister glances to notice him, and strangely at the moment fancying that the ghastly terror of the monk was owing to the sight of some dreadful apparition hovering behind him, started from his seat, and with a howl of horror, ran to the other side of the room, covering his face with his hands.

The Friars, astonished by this action, began to suspect that he was amusing himself at the expense of their fears, for on recovering his self-possession, he laughed at what he had done, and pretended that it was a whim of the moment, suggested by the consternation with which he saw the monk looking at him.

It was evident, however, from all this, that the profligate and unprincipled Corneli was not yet tempered into sufficient wickedness to commit murder with impunity. The good angel of his destiny, though long mastered by a triumphant demon, had not entirely quitted his trust. But this was their last struggle. The fiend conquered: The guardian angel, with a reddened visage and a shattered wing, returned to the skies: for a moment before entering, he stood on the threshold of heaven, and looking down on the long dark shadows that intersect and cross the spheres and orbits of the glorious starry worlds, wondered with awe and sorrow why sin is permitted.

CHAPTER XII.

Oh! why from my harp comes the soft sound of sadness,
Oh! why does my spirit in sorrow reply;
The tidings he told should bring gay notes of gladness,
But still my hand trembles and strikes to a sigh.
The seer of the mountain has studied the omen,
He warns me, he pities, he bids me beware;
The witch of the valley is leagued with our foemen,
She cross'd me in frenzy and beckon'd despair.

G. HALITON.

FRANCISCO, in the meantime, was restless and boding: an oppressive pre-sentiment, as he described it to his friend Salvator, hung upon his mind, and he was persuaded that some great misfortune impended over him. "The shadow of the coming evil," said he, "already darkens

my spirit; I am, as it were, surrounded by an invisible power: I feel its influence, I see the tokens of its presence—what it portends I know not, but it cannot be good, otherwise I should not be thus depressed and overawed."

Salvator made light of these fancies. He was safe and well; the horror of the earthquake had entirely left him; his friends and family had suffered little in the general calamity; his heart was hale and his mind at ease; nor could he, at any time, sympathize with the nervous palpitations, as he considered them, of Francisco; indeed, he thought it in some degree his duty to take every opportunity of ridiculing them, and sometimes this was done injudiciously. It was so in the present instance. Although a stranger might not feel that the discovery of a nobleman in a state of penal degradation, was a matter of any consequence, still to the relatives of the convict it could not fail to be regarded as a great misfortune; and the disclosures respecting Corneli were of this description to

Francisco. The death of the Countess too, under the painful circumstances of having been bruized in the ruins of her convent, also deeply affected him. He was, likewise, informed of what passed at her death-bed, and of her pious wish that Adelina and Ferdinando should be united.

Francisco loved his sister with that energy of affection which can only be experienced by a heart abandoned entirely to the indulgence of its sensibility. He was proud of her beauty, but he reverenced above all her other amiable qualities, that holy and serene purity of thought which gave to the simplicity of her character a grace and charm, which in common parlance might be called celestial. She seemed to have an entire innocency of the nature of any wrong. She could not conceive in what the wickedness of the heart consisted: she considered sin as of the nature of a disease which preys upon us, and which we cannot help; so artless had been her education among the blameless good and simple nuns by whom she had been brought up.

She had, as we have already mentioned in our first notice of this meek and lovely creature, no other desire but to return to the blessed calm of the cell and chapel, and to pass her life unknown to the world, like the peaceful flow of some clear and quiet spring that steals towards the ocean in silence and in solitude.

That the destiny of a being so bright and fair should be blended with the guilty mysteries of Corneli's blood, was a thought which alarmed the tenderness of her brother's affection, and called into a state of extraordinary excitement his constitutional enthusiasm, and the peculiar bent of his genius. It was the cause, unconscious to himself, of that foreboding of misfortune which weighed upon his spirit, unless we can believe, as he did, that the mind has other means of intelligence besides the common senses, and that his was apprized, by some undiscovered and occult organ, of the meditated assassination.

But, however this may be, there was surely enough in the circumstances of his

family, to have entitled him to the sympathetic consideration of one whom he had always considered as his friend. The defection of Salvator, for so he regarded his want of kindness, was, therefore, not one of the lightest of the disasters by which he was affected; nor could he disguise to himself that, whatever may be the habitual familiarity of intercourse, there can be no friendship where there is no consideration for those impalpable afflictions, that sink deeper into the heart than the vicissitudes of fortune.

To a mind so singularly constituted and so strangely formed as that of Francisco, all these things were calculated to produce much unhappiness. He had no one to whom he could communicate what he thought and feared: wrapped up in his own darkened anticipations, he withdrew himself, as it were, from the external world; and, like the somnambulist, in the luminous crisis, saw, as actual scenes and pictures before him, many woeful events in the

womb of time, which were but sketches of his own imagining.

In this mood he walked out alone along the sea-shore towards the Faro. The road lies close to the water, and in the tranquillity of a fine evening it is commonly much frequented, but at this time it was entirely deserted; for the sorrows, the cares, and the interests with which the city was overwhelmed by the consequences of the earthquake, had yet allowed to none the recreations of leisure.

About a mile beyond the city gate on this road, close to the sea, stands a small convent with a handsome church, the portico of which is the usual termination of the walk. Here the elderly citizens commonly rest a little before returning home, and when the Calabrian mountains on the opposite shore are illuminated by the setting sun, and the windows of the villages, like so many bright sparks that have been scattered from the sparkling and congregated lustre of the city of Reggio are lighted up

by his radiance, it is one of the sweetest spots in the world for contemplation. In the rocking of the earthquake, this church and monastery had been spared, and Francisco sat down under the portico. He was alone, and every thing around him was still; the very murmurs of the restless sea that licked and fondled the pebbles on the beach, was as soothing as the voice of a mother lulling her babe to sleep.

He was, however, too much occupied with his own cogitations to notice any external object; but the soft sound of the waters purred in his ear, and charmed him into a dreamy composure, which detained him on the spot until it was quite dark. It was indeed the sound of a passing oar that first awoke him from this conscious slumber, and he was surprized how the interval had passed, for it seemed to him that, but a moment before the landscape around was all sparkling with the light of the setting sun.

The boat came close to the beach. It contained two men, and one of them leapt out, and said in an undervoice, but loud

enough to be heard by Francisco, "They have not yet come, wait, they will be here presently."

Few and simple as these words were, they struck upon his ear as oracular and portentous. The frame of his mind at the moment, was indeed calculated to make him attach importance even to more trivial incidents; but there was something in the sound as well as the sense of that brief sentence, which affected his nerves with a degree of physical anguish.

The person who had disembarked went cautiously into the court of the convent, the gate of which was open. Francisco followed him into the cloisters, the middle of which was, as usual, a cemetery, and he saw that there was a grave open. The sexton-monk, who had dug the grave, was sitting on the earth which he had cast out, holding his spade by the shaft. Beside him stood a lantern, by the light of which Francisco dicovered a scull and several other relics and bones.

But we must revert to the result of what took place in the monastery with Corneli

and the Friars. For although he had laughed them into a belief that he was playing with their superstitious fears, he was still conscious that his perturbation was liable to attract attention, and to betray him into embarrassing disclosures. He therefore determined to leave their society that night, and accordingly, soon after supper, he retired from the refectory; but, instead of going to his cell, he quitted the house for ever.

CHAPTER XIII.

At that dread moment as I heaven-ward look'd,
A glorious star shot from its chrystal sphere,
And as it fell was utterly extinguished.
THE CHEATED WARD.

THE reflections with which Corneli was engaged instinctively led him to the gate of Baron Alcamo's residence, where he found a number of poor persons assembled in the expectation of receiving that dispensation of alms, which is commonly made by the Sicilians, at the funerals of their friends. He inquired among the crowd as to the cause of their assemblage, and was informed that there was to be a burial that night of some one of the family, who had

been killed in the Earthquake, and whose body had about an hour before been carried home to them in a litter.

While he was thus speaking with the crowd, the servants came out with the customary gift of money, and the mendicants left him to obtain their respective shares. In the pressure of a multitude, in the silence of a funeral performed in the darkness of the night, his guilty imagination saw a chance of perpetrating his bloody purpose, with a better prospect of escaping, than he might easily again possess; for it is customary in Sicily to send the body privately to the church nearest to the cemetry where it is to be laid, and for those friends to assemble there, who intend to assist in the last offices; on which occasions the concourse of persons is often very considerable. It was the funeral of his own wife that was to be performed. As she had died a nun, the Baron her brother was not prepared for this ceremony, but the body was sent to him from the hospital, and he had no choice. Preparations were

therefore made as quickly as possible for the interment the same evening, many imperious and awful considerations, arising from her wounds, rendering the utmost expedition requisite.

Francisco happened to be absent when the body arrived, and had strayed, as he ever afterwards considered it, by an unconscious providential impulse to the very place where the grave was dug. The funeral was delayed a short time in expectation of his return, but the persons who had charge of the interment became impatient; for the number of dead in the city, waiting burial, was so great that they could afford to lose no time, so that the family were induced to consent to allow the funeral to proceed without Francisco.

When the servants had distributed the alms, the bier with the dead was brought out, and carried towards the church. Presently after the Baron's carriage came also from the portal, and Corneli saw that it contained four persons, the Baron, his lady, Adelina, and a young man, who held

a handkerchief to his face, and whom he naturally supposed to be Francisco, but it was his own son.

Having learnt where the interment was to take place, Corneli with eager but perturbed steps ran to the Marina, and hired a boat, which he assisted himself to row towards the church. He promised the boatman a liberal reward if he arrived before the funeral, after which he was to convey him as rapidly as he could to the Calabrian shore. No explanation was given of this urgency, nor did the boatman think it extraordinary, but plied his oars to the best of his ability. It was this boat which disturbed the reverie of Francisco, and it was the convict-Count that he had seen land from her, and whom he followed into the cloister.

In the obscurity of the cloister he lost Corneli and paused. The sight of the ready grave made his blood cruddle with a vague superstitious horror, and he looked at the sexton-monk, the heap of earth, the glimmering lantern, and the mouldering bones

as an ominous spectacle, which strangely concerned himself. In this moment the bier with the body arrived at the gate, and before it was brought into the cloister, the Baron's carriage drove up, and the party alighted. Francisco immediately recognized his friends, but he was so struck by the remarkable coincidence of their appearance, and his own gloomy anticipations, that he was rivetted to the spot, as by the influence of a spell. Before the church door was opened, round which the monks who were to assist in the funeral service were assembling, he discovered the mysterious stranger from the boat stepping softly along towards the mourners, with a knife which faintly glimmered in his hand.

Before Francisco had power for utterance the deed was done ; the atrocious Corneli had consummated his crimes by the assassination of his son, who fell prostrate over the corpse of his mother.

Francisco saw the act, and in the same instant grasped the murderer by the wrist,

as he still held the bloody weapon. A shriek of horror from Adelina brought all the attendants of the monastery with their lamps from the church into the cloister—and Corneli looking round exclaimed, on discovering that it was Francisco who held his arm—"What have I done?"

Francisco dropped his hold, and with an accent of supernatural solemnity, said—"He is your own son—that is his mother's body."

Corneli glared rather than looked upon him, and with a howl of indescribable horror darted out of the cloister, and leaping into the boat, was in an instant conveyed beyond the reach of immediate pursuit.

It would be a vain attempt to describe the whirlwind of the murderer's mind. He breathed gaspingly; he tugged one minute fiercely at the oar, the next he started up, and looked to see if he was pursued. The boatman whom he had hired, and who had no conception of what had taken place,

plied his task in silence. He was happy in having a good fare: the night was beautiful, the sea was smooth, and as he dipt his oar in the water he sometimes murmured the cadence of a song. But Corneli could not endure these symptoms of an easy heart, and harshly ordered him to be silent, while he looked towards the shore, where he perceived, by the numerous lights hurrying to and fro, that the alarm of his crime was spreading.

When they had rowed into the mid channel, between Scylla and Charybdis, the fearful glances of the assassin discovered a boat with a hidden light on board coming swiftly with muffled oars towards them. He stopped and would have addressed the boatman, but his throat and tongue were parched with terror, and he could not articulate. "I am lost, lost for ever," were the first words that he was able to utter, and he looked upwards. The heavens were gloriously illuminated, but it seemed to him as if the innumerable

stars were only so many eyes of light that vigilantly watched him. In the same moment a splendid meteor fell from the skies, and was lost in the dark abysses of the air. The boatman shouted with admiration at its beautiful course, but Corneli sighed, and felt that he was himself fallen for ever.

CHAPTER XIV.

Ha! wherefore art thou here? Avaunt! and leave me—
Still hast thou cross'd me in my dearest purpose,
And marr'd the striking of my stern revenge.
THE CALIPH OF BAGDAD.

ABOUT the time that the funeral left the house of Baron Alcamo, Mr. Mowbray requested Lord Wildwaste to allow him the use of the yacht's boat, to amuse himself for an hour or two to fish in the Sicilian manner, with a torch and spear, and his Lordship being engaged with the Countess, whose delicate health had suffered by the agitation to which she had been subjected, Castagnello went with him. It was this boat that the conscience-striken Corneli discovered coming obscurely towards him.

As it came nearer and nearer, his alarm increased—the atrocity of his crime was augmented to his fancy—the image of his lady's corpse—the idea of having murdered his own son—the recollection of the night when he fled with the Countess from Palermo—her confidence in him—the beauty and helplessness of her infant—the career of wickedness and degradation which he had since ran—all came flashing upon his recollection like the flames of the torches which the furies dashed upon the miserable Orestes. He struggled to suppress the beating of his heart, but could not; he dropped the oar from his hands, which he half raised, and shook convulsively as he panted with horror. Still the dreadful boat came towards him, like a hearse on the waters. The boatman inquired if he was unwell; he heard him, but his eye was rivetted on the object before him, and he could only cry, "I am lost! undone, undone!"

The boat was now within an oars length; those on board had not before noticed his;

Castagnello was the first who observed her, and called out. Corneli heard and recognizing his voice, uttered a wild and maniac shriek. Castagnello again spoke, and the assassin, no longer able to withstand this new demonstration of some tremendous and incomprehensible connection in their fates—started from his seat and plunged into the sea.

He sank deep, and for some time it was thought he would rise no more, but an instinctive struggle brought him to the surface, close by the yacht's boat, and Castagnello having caught hold of him, he was speedily lifted on board. In the confusion, the light in the boat was accidentally trodden down and extinguished, so that the person of the wretched criminal was not then discovered.

As he was seemingly almost entirely exhausted, Mr. Mowbray proposed that they should carry him to the yacht for assistance, but Castagnello recollecting the state of Lady Wildwaste, suggested that it would be more prudent to take him to the shore,

and accordingly they made directly for the monastery.

By this time the lunar morning began to dawn over the Calabrian mountains; when they reached the beach, the beautiful planet was floating in the full round of her brightness above the hills; and by her light they saw with surprise the tumultuous crowd that the rumour of the murder had assembled in the portico of the church and round the monastery.

The blow had been aimed at Ferdinando with so much dexterity and vigour, that it pierced his heart, and instantly proved fatal. The body was laid out on the floor of the church, covered with a sheet, beside that of his mother. Francisco, with the Baron, had retired into an adjoining apartment, to which the ladies had been conducted from the cloister.

Castagnello and Mowbray ordered the sailors to bring in Corneli, who was still in a torpid state; although greatly recovered, still he was not wholly in possession of his recollection; his faculties were obscured,

and his eye wandered without seeming to recognise any object.

The sailors laid him down beside his son, and after some time he began to recover his self-possession, but seemed to have no recollection where he was. Castagnello had now recognised him, but having no conception that he was concerned in the bloody business of which the fruits lay before him, nor of the relation in which he stood to the bodies, was anxiously bending over him, when Francisco returned into the church. The fated outcast immediately knew him, and made a convulsive effort to rise, in doing which, he happened to take hold of the sheet that covered the corpse of his son, and drawing it accidentally off, exposed it as it lay all foul and clotted with gore. The face, however, still retained that pecular expression which may be called the immediate beauty of death, and which, though it resembles sleep, is yet far more awful and impressive.

The exclamation of horror which Castagnello and Mowbray gave on beholding

this ghastly spectacle, startled Corneli, who instantly turned round and saw beside him the victims of his guilt. He raised himself on his elbow and contemplated his son with an intense curiosity, seemingly incredulous to the evidence before him.

While he was thus engaged, Castagnello, who was familiar with the sight of death in battle, and, after the first emotions of surprise had subsided, could look upon it with indifference, went up to Francisco and begged him to explain what had happened.

The foreboding that had previously weighed upon the heart of Francisco, was removed by the catastrophe, which had disenchanted him from the spell of his own fancy, and awakened him from his trance. But when he perceived Castagnello before him, the main-spring, as he in some degree regarded him, of all the mysteries which had come to this fatal termination, and at the same time saw the murderer lying on the floor drenched, and pale, and wild, instead of evincing any of that wonder which so singular a meeting and coincidence were cal-

culated to have excited, he smiled with an inward feeling of inexpressible satisfaction. It seemed to him that a drama of Providence was winding up; that the consistency and connection of the machinery of the universe had received a palpable and ocular demonstration; and that the indexes which give to one part of the system, notice of the occurrence of evil in others, or, as he considered it, of derangements, were fully, though fearfully, manifested. He felt as if he had received the confirmation of some awful moral truth—and with a calm sublimity of countenance he looked for a moment at Castagnello, and said—"You have certainly been created to perform some special purpose in the scheme of Providence, and the story of your past life can alone explain the causes and motives of this terrible tragedy." And without waiting for a reply, he ordered Castagnello to be taken into custody, and the Count also to be removed into another apartment. "The city gates," said Francisco," are now shut,

we cannot return there to-night, and must remain here."

Mr. Mowbray interfered on behalf of Castagnello, and stated in what circumstances they had picked up Corneli, but Francisco only replied, "There will be time to-morrow to investigate all, you must therefore at present acquiesce in a determination that justice seems to require."

There was no controverting this, and Castagnello submitted. Mowbray returned to the yacht alone, Corneli was taken by the friars to a strong room, where they watched and attended him alternately till the morning, and about midnight the remains of the unfortunate Countess and her son were laid in the same grave.

CHAPTER XV.

Blood has been spilt and tears been shed, and mourners
Have sat as woeful in the dead of night,
Tending the sheeted corpse of some dear friend.
THE TEMPLARS.

DURING the transactions which we have concisely sketched, the Baron with his lady and Adelina were sitting together without speaking. The Baron vainly endeavoured to recover sufficient composure to consider the event in a philosophical point of view, but his efforts were unavailing. He was much attached to his nephew Ferdinando, and the image of him as a blithe and happy creature, redolent with

the joyfulness of childhood, and playing his innocent pranks at his knee, came fresh upon his memory. He grasped at it with affectionate avidity, and so worked himself into a persuasion that the scene of infantine glee and frolic, so long past, was still performing before him, that he rose from his seat smiling with delight. But his eye caught the dejected countenance of Adelina, and instantly recollecting what had happened, the fond poor old man hid his face and wept bitterly.

The Baroness, who was naturally kind hearted and easily moved, on seeing this paroxysm of sorrow in her husband, began also to sob aloud from pure sympathy. Hitherto she had sat calm and contemplative; she was indeed so stunned, that for some time the image of Ferdinando lying bleeding over the corpse of his mother, fascinated her mind and absorbed all her faculties. From this state of stupefaction she had however recovered, and was in the process of considering what ought to be done against the assassin, when the

grief of her husband melted her to sorrow. She begged him to come and set beside her, she took his hand kindly and began to sooth him with a soft and purring tenderness. "We have grown old people together," said she; "our own little babies have all long since been laid in the earth; they were taken from us in the bud, but they are happy. In this world they knew neither care nor woe, and there is none in that land to which they have been taken away. In Ferdinando, and Adelina, and Francisco, we had other children lent to us, and one of them is now gone, the others are fast following, and we shall be left alone in the world—none but our two aged selves to speak to. It will be a happy evening, when we lay our heads down together on that pillow, from which they shall never be raised, and close our eyes in that sleep from which they shall never open till we are awakened by the pretty cherubs that were our children, all standing round our tomb, and eager to lead us into heaven!"

The Baron, relieved by his tears from the immediate pressure at his heart, listened with compassionate gratefulness to this garrulous effort of the Baroness to console him, while at the same time he thought she had assumed too much, in supposing that they were to outlive Francisco and Adelina, who were so much there juniors, but he pressed her hand with tenderness, and said he wished that the picture she had drawn of their last evening might be realised, for they had lived so long together they were indeed become as one life.

The sorrow of Adelina was very different from that of her aunt and uncle. She was naturally shocked at the crime which she had witnessed, and she loved Ferdinando with the purity of a sister's affection. But in her estimation death was no evil. It was but a translation from one state of being into another, and she considered that those who die earliest suffer least. There was nothing in this world of clouds and cares, that in her mind could enter into computation with the boundless light

and love of that above the stars, while she regarded the term of mortal life, so long as it lasted, only as a voyage which afforded the eternal enemy opportunities of making reprisals on the souls of men in his war with the rider on the white horse. This pious mysticism lent the graces of holiness and resignation to her grief; and while the old people were indulging their tears, she was serenely contemplating the spirit of Ferdinando, rising from his body and ascending to the skies. She pictured to herself the sudden astonishment with which it had been driven out of its earthly tabernacle by his father's dagger. She saw it hovering over the body, and anxious for a moment to put on again its mortal vestment. She fancied that it looked round for a moment when it saw that this could not be, and smiled on her as it ascended. She followed it with her mind's eye, and beheld it brightening as it rose, till it became radiant with glory, and had received wings like a dove. She then saw the skies opening, and thousands of angels, and the souls of good men made

perfect, coming to protect the stranger from the fearful squadrons of darkness, who were congregating from all quarters of the nether scene, and rising with the ensigns of battle. But she saw the Guardian Angel take the soul of Ferdinando by the hand, and lead him in safety on high, while the demons, beholding all the host of light glittering afar off on the walls and towers, and battlements of heaven, shrunk back, and retired gnashing the teeth of disappointment as they cowered into their abodes of lamentations and woe.

Such were the consolations which the simple piety of Adelina suggested, and in the contemplation of these visions of beatitude, she found that peace of mind which passeth all understanding. What considerations of human reason could indeed so effectually sooth the sorrow of such a fine enthusiast, as the glimpses of another world? How little could any circumstance of earthly greatness or pleasure avail in an estimate of existence, which ascribed such a magnificent importance to the reception of a soul,

translated from this world while it was yet free from stain. Was it therefore to be wondered that she shed but few tears for her youthful lover, and only sighed to return to the society of that pious sisterhood, where she might contemplate in unmolested tranquillity the bright and unfading hopes of that glorious hereafter, which hath no end, but is still an everlasting increase of felicity.

It was in this state that Adelina, the Baron, and her aunt passed the night, till the bell announced the hour of interment. Francisco was surprized at the calmness which they seemed all to enjoy, and walked with them to the cloister to witness the last ceremony.

The convict in the meantime was shaken with the most dreadful paroxysms of superstitious dread. The window of the vaulted room in which he was confined looked into the cloister, and when he heard the stir of the funeral, and the shovelling of the earth into the grave, he sprung with the energy of a demoniac to the grating,

and glared on the spectacle for a moment. His strength then seemed to fail, and he dropped down like a load on the pavement.

Two friars, who were then with him, raised him up, and endeavoured to appease his horror, but he was so possessed with an idea of the perdition which awaited him, that the could only shake his head and gaze at them, as if he heard them not. For two hours this frightful panic and struggle of the spirit lasted, but towards morning he became calmer, and at sun-rise, when Francisco left the monastery, to return to the city to implore the assistance of Salvator, for he knew no other to whom he could apply, although he felt as if he had deserted him, the friars informed him that the guilty maniac appeared disposed to sleep. These visitations of despair are common to murderers; sometimes, however, when the criminal is possessed of a strong power over himself, they are mastered during his waking hours, but in such cases they never fail to come while the

will is prostrated in the defencelessness of sleep, and to pour their vials of retribution with the hideous pageantry of dreams and spectres.

CHAPTER XVI.

Let me not languish in this woeful state,
But come to me. O! to my fond entreaty,
I pray thee yield, and satisfy my heart.
THE LADY'S DOUBT.

SALVATOR was disturbed when informed that Francisco wished to see him so early in the morning. His constitutional infirmities obliged him to be indulgent to himself, and any unusual exertion was always attended with indisposition; he therefore peevishly answered the servant who called him; but with the wonted familiarity of the Sicilian domestics, the servant repeated what he said. "Go to him again," replied Francisco, "and tell him that he must come to me—that my cousin Ferdinando was last night assassinated by his father at his mother's funeral—that ruin from all quarters seems to be pouring in

upon us. I am almost distracted, and I implore him to come."

These words were not only all faithfully repeated, but a number of circumstances added, which the servant, in his sympathy, thought likely to induce Salvator to accelerate his movements: but in proportion to the urgency and importance of the case, it imposed, in the opinion of that discreet young man, a stronger necessity to weigh well what he was required to do. Assassination was in itself a crime of such a hideous description, that it could not in any way be slurred over; but in this case the atrocity was truly terrible, and the offence itself was prodigiously aggravated by the manner and place in which it had been committed. It was evident that a vast deal of trouble must attend the investigation of the circumstances: Salvator was afraid that he had not strength sufficient to undergo what might be expected of him, and, above all, it was impossible to foresee the consequences and responsibility that might attach to his interference.

He could not, however, under such a visitation of misfortune, but see Francisco; their long intimacy rendered this an obligation, and that respect for public opinion which Salvator cultivated so much, exalted it into a duty. But he knew also that time is the father of chances, and that the more he could procrastinate, the greater would be the probability of something occurring to place the case out of the influence of his advice. He was accordingly tedious in dressing, beyond all precedent, and before he got to the gate of Baron Alcamo's residence, Francisco, who was waiting there, despaired of his coming, and chided him sharply. "When things went smoothly with me," said Francisco, "you were ready enough in your friendship—you would share the gale when it blows prosperously, but when the wind changes and the sea threatens you retire from the storm."

Salvator felt the justice of these strictures quiver through his conscience, for he could not disguise to himself that his prudence was but a plated virtue, and would

not bear to be tested too severely. He, however, apologized to Francisco as well as he could, and pleaded with effect the infirmity of his constitution, which rendered many things difficult to him that were easy to others.

Francisco then described to him the distressing events which had taken place, and in doing this, mentioned the singular accident of Castagnello being present and taken into custody, enlarging on the illustration which all that had happened afforded of his own peculiar opinions. But Salvator would not listen to him on these points. He told him judiciously that his first duty now was to inform the police, and proposed to accompany him to the magistrates, in order to procure the necessary steps to be taken.

The magistrates, under the afflicting circumstances in which the city was placed, had come to the determination to punish all offences in the most summary manner; accordingly, on being informed of the murder, warrants were immediately issued to

bring the assassin and his supposed accomplice Castagnello before the tribunal, which still held its sittings in the cathedral. Indeed, the magistrates successively relieved each other, so that there was no interruption by night or day in the session, till the public safety was secured.

In the meantime, Mr. Mowbray had returned to the yacht, and informed Lord Wildwaste of Castagnello's detention, and the awful situation in which the wretched Corneli seemed destined to expiate his crimes. But previous circumstances, tended on every new occurrence, to make his Lordship suspicious of Castagnello, and he questioned Mowbray so particularly respecting him, that the latter found himslf obliged to say, "My Lord, you are too willing to think harshly of that unfortunate man: the worse thing that he did was the usurpation of Corneli's name and fortune, and perhaps it was in your Lordship's power to have prevented it."

The Earl confessed the justice of the observation. His prudence was of a different nature from that of Salvator's. He felt no diffidence in his own honour or integrity. It never occurred to him that the one could be questioned or the other endangered; and it was with him a maxim that whatever a man can do, holding these free from stain or blemish, it was his duty to do. He was aware, from the circumstances that had taken place between Castagnello and Corneli, that the magistrates would naturally see him in an unfavourable light, and might, by a hasty decision, load him with some new ignominy. He was also, on another account, anxious to have some conversation with the assassin himself. For we should state that, on the preceding night, after Mowbray and Castagnello had gone in the boat, the Countess had informed him, of the suspicious circumstances which attended the death of Lady Alicia. Something of this he had heard before, but not so particularly, and he was as much struck

as Francisco himself could have been, with the providential coincidence which had brought so many of the parties together.

"This Earthquake," said his Lordship, "has been a sort of larum, and while it seems to augment the general mysteries of nature, or rather to make us wonder more at them for a time, it appears ordained to bring many dark transactions to light. But it is always thus with great calamities; the moral impulse which they produce is of far more consequence to the world than all the temporary evil which they inflict. What effect the destruction of Messina may have on the generality of mankind, it would be useless to conjecture; but to us it seems to be the process to a most tremendous sequel, and it is only as individuals that we can estimate the importance of any prodigy or phenomenon."

These remarks were thrown out cursorily, but they dwelt in the ear of Lady Wildwaste; she recollected that the shock which she received when first informed of the mysterious death of her sister, had been the cause of her indis-

position, and that the dark secret had, from that moment, overshadowed and chilled her spirit. She was relieved, in some degree, of a load, whenever she spoke to her Lord on the subject; but he thought it a disagreeable topic, calculated to produce effects the reverse, and studiously avoided every allusion to it. The unexpected meeting with Corneli and Castagnello, occasioned by the earthquake, gave, however, a force and justness to what he had said on this occasion; and it seemed to her that, among other of its manifold consequences, some relief to the sad and irksome recollections which had so long preyed upon her mind, was likely to ensue. She had, therefore, urged his Lordship to go on shore early in the morning, and take Castagnello with him, and by every means to which he could obtain access, sift out the true causes of Lady Alicia's fate. "I feel," said her Ladyship, "that if I were relieved from the doubt that hangs upon me, I should be instantly well. It is the suspense that affects me. Her guilt or

innocence once clearly ascertained, would allow my feelings to flow in their natural course; at present, however, when I think of my sister, the beloved companion of my childhood and youth, the remembrance of her beauty and softness awakens afflicting emotions, but I know not whether I ought to rejoice or to grieve that she was so untimely cut off." It is therefore easy to conceive with what feelings her Ladyship heard of the assassination, and of Castagnello being detained at the convent: she determined notwithstanding her indisposition to go immediately on shore with the gentlemen; and to attend the investigation of the murder.

CHAPTER XVII.

Shall Justice, like a beld-dame in her dotage,
Thus prate and gossip on her awful throne?

THE TRIAL.

CORNELI and Castagnello were, at an early hour, brought with the Baron and the other witnesses before the tribunal in the cathedral. The interest which the cause excited, independent of the atrocity of a father having killed his own son, was so great, in consequence of the former disclosures, that the Senators were induced to give it an immediate hearing.

The convulsion of mind which Corneli suffered during the night, had produced such an appalling spasmodic expression of

countenance, that the spectators thought he must have swallowed poison. His head drooped upon his breast as if he was oppressed with a mortal sickness; his features were hideously relaxed, and his complexion was of a ghastly yellow. The glance of his eye, as he occasionally looked around, was wildly brilliant; his mouth was frightfully distended—his teeth protuberant, and the accents of his voice in his answers to the brief questions of the Judges, were deep, hoarse, and sepulchral.

Castagnello was placed at the bar beside him, and the contrast which his calm and melancholy countenance presented to the troubled visage of the assassin, softened every heart in his favour. But Lord Wildwaste had correctly estimated the prejudice which the previous transactions were calculated to raise against him. No one doubted that he had not participated in the crime, but all wondered at his motive; while the mystery of his former connection with the convict, filled every heart with the most dark and horrible conjectures.

The preliminary formalities of the trial were soon over, and Corneli having given no answer when the accusation was read, the witnesses, according to the forms of the Sicilian judicature, were examined. The evidence, which in England would have been concisely stated, and the guilt demonstrated in the course of a few minutes, occupied a considerable time. Baron Alcamo, in delivering his testimony, made an oration to the Judges interlarded with general maxims and moral reflections. Francisco was still more desultory; he gave a compendious history of all that he knew respecting the delinquents, from the time that they had first been together in his uncle's house, up to that moment when they were standing at the bar of the tribunal. He described the unaccountable sympathies and antipathies with which he had been affected; explained the theory which he had formed for himself relative to the moral and physical phenomena of the universe, and concluded a speech of such length and ability as surprized the whole audience, without,

however, furnishing the slightest clue to the motives which had led the wretched father to the commission of the crime.

The speech of Francisco, however, was not lost on Castagnello, for, in his description of the manner in which the convict had addressed himself at the supper table to Adelina, and of the resentment which his audacity inspired, an idea glanced into his mind, that something connected with that incident had instigated the crime. The dark business of the phial; the sudden illness and death of Lady Alicia Kenilsmore; his abandonment of his lady in the catacombs of Selinus, and all that he had heard or known to his disadvantage came rushing upon him, so that when Francisco had done speaking, he also, although one of the delinquents before the tribunal, addressed the Judges.

"Give me leave, my Lords," he exclaimed with eagerness, "I will explain to you the whole of this dreadful work."

The Judges were all attention, and the court silent in the expectation of a confes-

sion, an acknowledgment of guilt. Castagnello continued:—

"From what I know of the miserable man beside me, I think he has been actuated at once by his licentious passions, and by malice."

"Do not tell us of what you think, but of what you know," said one of the Judges.

"Then I do know him capable of perpetrating any crime to procure indulgence, or to conceal its effects," replied Castagnello. "He is enamoured of Adelina, the sister of Francisco, that witness who has just delivered his evidence: I know him base and vindictive. Francisco has offended him. Francisco stood in the way, an insurmountable impediment to his design on Adelina, and it was against Francisco that his dagger was lifted. Providence, in directing it to the heart of his own son, has vindicated the truth of its own declaration, that the sins of the parent shall be visited on the children."

Corneli looked at the speaker as if a spectre stood before him, and when he

paused, he hung his head, and his breast heaved with a violent internal emotion. Words rose in his throat which he was unable to articulate, but the sound was so horrible, and the eyes of terror with which he glared in the struggle to give them utterance so hideous, that all present turned away from him with an awful feeling of superstitious alarm. In the course of a few minutes, however, this paroxysm abated, and the first words he uttered were, "Betrayed, betrayed!"

He had listened in consternation to the account which Castagnello gave of his motives. He conceived that only the enemy of his soul could have made such a disclosure, and the words were but the abrupt expression of a fearful persuasion that the fiend to whom he was devoted had betrayed him. The Judges, however, and the spectators, considered them as an acknowledgment of guilt, and that Castagnello was a party to the crime. Both were deemed to have confessed, and it was therefore not thought at all requisite

that the circumstances of the parts which they had severally taken should be investigated.

Castagnello could not credit his hearing when he heard this inference made. In the trial he had never felt or considered himself as arraigned. The only anxiety that he at any time experienced during the proceedings, was for the appearance of Mr. Mowbray. He could not imagine by what accident he had been detained, but the manner in which he had himself been before angrily abandoned at Palermo without a hearing, by Lord Wildwaste, flashed upon his fears, and he trembled to think in what jeopardy he was again placed, possibly from his Lordship's caprice. While the Judges consulted together, he said to himself, "Well, let it be; I will make no objection to the sentence. I am tired of life; there is nothing in this world that now affords me any pleasure. Every hope that I once cherished is blasted —every endeavour to redeem my past errors leads to some deeper infamy; and it

is better that I should die under the imputation of a crime, of which I am innocent, than live to be thus a shuttlecock to sin and shame."

One of the Judges, who had listened with more self-possession than his colleagues to what had taken place, thought that it was necessary, before passing sentence, the execution of which was to be immediate, to enquire of Castagnello if he had any thing to allege why the sentence of the law for the crime of which he had been accused, should not be pronounced upon him. For the space of three minutes no answer was returned; Castagnello fixed his eye anxiously towards the door, and the Judge repeated the words compassionately. "You seem," said the Judge, "as if you expected somebody, state that you do so, and why; it will, at least, gain you a little longer time."

Castagnello replied, with an accent so extremely pathetic, and yet manly, that it melted all present,—"It is of no use to me to ask for any longer time; those who

might have saved me should have been here—they have not yet come—they do not think me worth the saving, and I therefore fear that I ought not to think so myself."

The humane Judge said no more; his senior put on the cap of judgment, before whom the clerk of the court laid an ancient volume, adorned with large golden clasps. It was the penal code of the laws of Messina, from which the sentence of death for murder, according to the Sicilian usage, was to be read.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Speak to the point, I pray you, and be brief—
Now, no parenthesis, no episode,
But with your plain strait forward tale go on—
Such as you told to me.

THE LADY'S DOUBT.

WHEN the Judge had read the sentence on Corneli, he was immediately removed from the bar, and taken to the place of execution. The Sicilian laws are not always administered so promptly, but the circumstances of the city had imposed an obligation on the Senators to punish all offences against the public peace, at that time, with the utmost severity, and in the most summary manner.

After the removal of the assassin, a stir was heard among the spectators in the church, as the Judge was on the point of reading the sentence on Castagnello, who stood in despondent expectation of a doom which he had certainly not incurred, but to which he was resigned. The disturbance induced the Judge to pause for a moment, after he had repeated the first two or three words, and Castagnello, looking round, saw Lord and Lady Wildwaste with Mr. Mowbray, approaching the inclosure where the tribunal was sitting. "The gentleman is coming," said he, modestly to the Judges, "who can bear witness that I am entirely innocent of the assassination for which Count Corneli has been condemned, and, that from the time I left this place yesterday, I had neither communication nor intercourse with him, till after the murder was committed."

The English party, in approaching the church met Corneli as he was conducted to his destiny by the officer of justice, and heard with astonishment that he was or-

dered to immediate execution, and that his abettor in the crime was then receiving his sentence. They hurried on, and arrived in the critical moment. The senators ordered them to be again admitted within the railing; and the humane Judge, who had wished to afford Castagnello all the time possible to see if his friends would arrive, concisely recapitulated to them what had taken place. Mowbray and the Earl were as much surprised at the lax and immethodical proceedings of the court, as they were at the precipitation, as it seemed to them, of the execution; and the latter, with some degree of heat in his manner, inquired if they had not listened to the defence of the prisoner. "Softly," said the senior Judge, "he has not made any defence, he has confessed." "Impossible!" exclaimed his Lordship with alarm, "impossible!"

"He cannot have done so with truth," added Lady Wildwaste — "He went with us to the yacht from the church

and continued on board till he went out to fish."

"He went with me in the boat," said Mowbray, "and as we were plying about we approached the one which had Corneli on board; we saw the wretched man leap into the sea, we watched his re-appearance, and the prisoner before you, when he came to the surface of the water, caught hold of him — we then carried him on shore to recover him, for he was almost drowned; by accident we landed at the church where the murder was committed, and we found there the body of the youth lying beside a female corpse on the floor."

The Judges consulted together. They were amazed at the brevity and distinctness of the evidence which the English gave, and immediately began to scold Castagnello for not telling them these particulars before.

Mr. Mowbray inquired if they had not examined the boatman who was along with Corneli. "He followed us on shore,

and might have been produced as a witness." They acknowledged that they had not, nor did they know any thing about him; "But we will send for him instantly," said the senior Judge; and it was done accordingly.

Lord Wildwaste was shocked beyond expression at this anomalous mode of administering law and justice, and began to remonstrate with the Judges. But he was interrupted by Mowbray asking if Castagnello was not at liberty, his innocence being so clearly substantiated. None of the Judges replied immediately; they were not accustomed to be dealt with in so peremptory a manner, and they said something to each other about the furiousness of the English. "I demand his acquittal," said Lord Wildwaste firmly, but in a tone of indignation, "You have had the most complete proof of his innocence, and have not a shadow of pretext for keeping him any longer before you."

The Judges again consulted, and the senior then said that he believed the pri-

soner might go away, but it would be as well if the Earl, since they had sent for the boatman, would consent to wait till he was examined.

The boatman happened to be among the spectators in the church, and had, by this time, on understanding he was called, elbowed his way to the railing, which enclosed the tribunal. "I am here," said Signor Stofolo, taking off his white cotton night cap, and without waiting for any order from the Court, he also immediately began a long oration, marked with all the peculiarities of Sicilian eloquence. He described how he was plying at the Marina; in what manner the assassin had come to him; how they had debated about the fare in what way they had rowed to the convent; in a word every thing that was done and said, from the moment that he was hired till Castagnello had saved the criminal. He would have proceeded still to relate all that he had seen, said, or heard till the moment of his appearing before the tribunal, but he was stopped by Mowbray, who

again appealed to the Judges, and requested Castagnello's discharge.

As there was no pretext whatever to detain him, they pronounced him not guilty, but as he was on the point of retiring, Francisco again interposed. He addressed the tribunal a second time, and with much natural eloquence and ingenuity, reminded the Judges of the singular connexion that seemed to exist between the prisoner and Castagnello, and begged that, before allowing him to depart, they would request an explanation of that most mysterious affair.

"Although this is only a matter of curiosity," said Castagnello, "I have no objection to gratify you, but it is a painful story, and will occasion distress to some present, who are little aware how nearly it concerns them." In saying these words Castagnello looked at Lady Wildwaste.

"I understand you," said her Ladyship, "and perhaps I ought to request that what you have to tell should be reserved for another place."

But this only excited the curiosity of the

Judges, who disregarding the press of business before the tribunal, ordered the prisoner to proceed with his narrative, and that he might entertain them the more at his ease, they bade him come within the bar and be seated. Mowbray and Lord Wildwaste smiled significantly to each other, and thought of the austere and decisive judicature of their native country.

Castagnello then related his whole story, with considerable circumstantiality, and spoke of his faults and errors with a degree of frankness that interested the audience in his favour. Of the transactions at Florence, and especially of the unfortunate Lady Alicia, he would have said little, but the acute mind of Lady Wildwaste perceived that his influence over Corneli was derived from something in that affair, and questioned him so closely, that in the end he was constrained to disclose all that he knew and suspected. When he had finished, her Ladyship rose, and taking her Lord by the arm, said, "I am now satisfied. Poor ill-fated Alicia! Let us go. Castagnello

and Mowbray will follow." But her emotion could not be controuled, and she was obliged to resume her seat. A flood of tears, however, soon relieved her, and when they had passed off she again rose, and leaning on the Earl's arm, quitted the church. "The load," said she as they walked to the porch, "which has so long oppressed my heart, is now removed; I only regret that my impatience at this time has forced on this public disclosure of my sister's imprudence; but it was a deed of darkness, and heaven, by many singular incidents, seems to have determined that it should not be hid. The young Sicilian is in the right, there are indeed more things in the heavens and the earth than are dreamt of in philosophy; and the extraordinary circumstance of my being here, a witness to the vindication of Divine Justice in the punishment of the seducer, or rather I should say the murderer of Alicia, is more awful than the earthquake that has destroyed the surrounding city."

They walked on to the Marina, and hav-

ing embarked, were almost immediately after followed by Castagnello and Mowbray in another boat. "Let us quit this theatre of mystery and crime," said his Lordship, as soon as they were come on board, and he ordered the anchor to be weighed and the yacht to put to sea for Naples. The wind was fair as they sailed up the straights, the pilot steered the vessel close along shore, that they might have a view of the fatal convent in passing. But Lord Wildwaste, who had a telescope in his hand, observing a crowd near the spot, looked through it, and in a voice of alarm ordered the helm to be turned, and the yacht to keep the Calabrian side. "They are preparing," said he in a whisper to Mowbray, "to hang the body of the miserable Corneli in chains."

CHAPTER XIX.

Ah, sir!
To have an airy spirit for a slave,
And mounting up to heavens great cupola,
Peep through the starry windows in the sky,
And see that Light which makes all bright within.

THE SORCERESS.

BARON Alcamo and his family quitted the tribunal, at the same time with Castagnello and Mowbray. They walked on in silence, and indeed were some time in the saloon before either of them spoke; at last Adelina said timidly, "I hope you will no longer oppose my desire to return to my proper home."

"To what home?" inquired the Baroness, "Is not this your home?"

"No," replied Adelina, "my home is in the peaceful convent where I was educated. Since I left it, I have had no repose. I feel that my affections are not of this world. I take no part nor interest in these proceedings, that I see affect you all nearly. What other proof can I have that heaven has been pleased to assign me the tranquil and blameless lot of a nun?"

"I will no longer resist your wishes," said the Baron. "Truly a wise mind can hold nothing that is in life of any esteem; all is deceit, and fraud, and falsehood; but I was right in my opinion you see, Francisco, that the convict was a nobleman, although he has proved rather worse than I expected. But who could have thought that he was any thing to me, or that I, blind mortal that I am, should have been the means of obtaining his delivery only to bring him to punishment for the injustice and cruelty with which he treated my unhappy sister."

"It is a great pity that she did not live a day longer, to have had the satisfaction

to see the wicked man so justly punished," rejoined the Baroness, wiping her weeping eyes.

"In that," replied Francisco, "the goodness of Providence towards her has been most evident. She has been spared the dreadful tragedy of Ferdinando's death by the knife of his father."

"But spirits after death," said Adelina, "see all that takes place on the earth: they watch over their friends. They grieve when they see us sin, they suffer when they see us in danger, and it is a sad inheritance that they take with them from this miserable world, that they can neither admonish nor help those whom they once loved."

"What proof have you of that being the case," inquired the Baron eagerly. But Adelina made no reply. Francisco, however, endeavoured to persuade his uncle that departed spirits might and did hold communion with their friends. The old man, however, declared that it was a most unphilosophical theory.

In loose and aimless conversation of this kind, somewhat occasionally of a more solemn cast, with the short intervals of their temperate meals, the family of Baron Alcamo passed the remainder of that eventful day. Next morning Francisco conducted his sister to the little convent, at their native village of Pati, to which she had so often longed to return, and after the usual noviciate, she was numbered with the innocent sisterhood.

The Baron Alcamo continued for several years to practice philosophy, with the wonted infirmities of his temper, but at last he was overtaken with a universal decay, and was gathered to his fathers in a state of infantine imbecility. The good-natured Baroness shed unaffected tears upon his hearse; she regarded him as one of the wisest of mankind, and in this notion justly considered his death as the occultation of the brighest star in the hemisphere of science and literature; and as the hour of her own departure drew near, for she had many warnings from unweildy age

that it was coming, her only anxiety was, least her soul should not be deemed a being of sufficient intelligence to mingle with that higher order of the blessed, among whom she was confident the Baron had found a lofty and a splendid throne. But one sultry afternoon, her doubts, upon this point, were all suddenly resolved by a stroke of apoplexy.

By her death Francisco was left alone, sole heir to his uncle; but from the trial of Corneli, he absented himself from all society. The coldness and indifferency with which his only friend Salvator Patrano, had acted in the troubles of that calamitous affair, disgusted him with the world, and he gave himself up to his own singular and hypothetical studies. At the time when we were introduced to him, he was verging towards fifty, and he had acquired a singular and unearthly intelligence of countenance. He was pale and thin, but his eyes had the brilliancy of actual spirits in a visible state. He was

sitting in his saloon, amidst piles of ancient vellum-bound volumes, and near him stood a brazen vessel over a large burning lamp. Into this vessel he was occasionally throwing various ingredients, and now and then consulting a memorandum book, in which he had recorded many curious and recondite notes. He seemed engaged in some chemical experiment, but when we observed the nature of his ingredients, we concluded he must be occupied with the more sublime researches of alchymy. In this, however, we were again mistaken; for of what use was gold to a man, who had more of the sordid trash than he knew how to spend; or of the immortal elixir to one who considered the corporeal investment of the body, as a dense medium which prevented the soul from seeing the secrets of the spiritual world? The gentle, patient, and harmless Francisco was solemnly engaged in a course of experiments, to discover by what fragrant or potent magical congregation of substances he

might be able to call up spirits from the vasty deep. He had not however succeeded, but on one or two occasions, according to his own account, he had the greatest reason to believe he was on the point of attaining his object, when the lamp which gave life to his cauldron expired for lack of oil, being neglected in his eagerness to mark the rising vapour of the spell from which the apparition was to be evolved. Whether afterwards he ever did succeed in obtaining any spiritual visitation, we have heard doubted, but certain it is that, for some time prior to his death, he did hold monthly conversations of the most affecting kind, at a particular time of night, at the full of the moon, and while the domestics could see no one but himself, alone, among his books, in the saloon, with the brazen vessel burning and simmering before him.

With this innocent lunacy his days passed away in unmolested tranquillity, untroubled by care or grief, and when he died, his domestics were the only persons in

the world by whom he was missed, but they mourned for him with unaffected sorrow, for he was the gentlest, the easiest, and the kindest of masters.

CHAPTER XX.

Are these the scenes that, on the distant sea,
And in the deserts of the Indian clime,
Rose in the freshness of a young remembrance
Till I did languish like a simple maiden
That sighs alone in unrequited love,
To visit them again? O! my sad heart,
Now do I feel that I have lived too long.

THE LADY'S DOUBT.

DURING the passage of the yacht to Naples, Lord and Lady Wildwaste urged Castagnello to remain with them while they continued in Italy, and to go with them to England, his Lordship promising to provide for him in such a manner as to put it out

of his own power, by any change of circumstances, to suspend or revoke his bounty. But the adventurer declined their earnest solicitations.

"I am now," said he, "past the noon of life, and I have been long cut off from the hope of distinction, which was my original motive to action. I had, perhaps, talents that, at one time properly directed, might have procured me an honourable place in society: I do not say this in vanity, but from a consciousness of what I was, and have to deplore the manner in which the gift of heaven has been abused by me. But I was early cast adrift on the ocean of the world, without compass and without skill, and I was driven as the winds and currents of youthful passion listed. It is impossible that I can forget the ignominy I have suffered, or doubt that I have forfeited the character of an honourable man. The wealth of the world cannot purchase for me again my own esteem. I have lost that, and without it

life, in any circumstances, must be a burden. All I dare now presume to expect is, that in some sequestered solitude I may wear out my future days without committing any great wrong. I hope they will be few."

The tone in which this was delivered deeply affected Lady Wildwaste. It was the accent of a broken heart, and with much tenderness and delicacy she remonstrated with him against the weakness of yeilding to the anguish of recollections. "It would be nobler," said her Ladyship, "to abandon all thought of what is gone by, and looking only to the future, set forward, as it were, from this moment, with the purpose to achieve something that would really entitle you to the respectful consideration of the wise and good."

"I had hoped," said his Lordship, "that you would have made an effort to redeem your errors." Castagnello reddened at this with a blush that was not altogether the hue of shame; but he replied modestly, "I have made an effort, and I have redeemed my

errors. Since we parted at Palermo, I have done but one thing which my conscience condemns, and yet it has been the means of proving that I was not a creature formed for ignominy. It is the compact with Corneli to which I allude. I think, however, it preserved me from greater offences, for destitute, as I then was, I tremble to think what I might have become. O, my Lord! I have seen enough of the world to know that the two greatest sins which man can commit against man, is to abandon the penitent, and to place the high-minded in the situation of being constrained to do mean things. In both cases, misery must ensue, but in the latter the victim almost invariably becomes a criminal. I have proved these two fatal extremes, and I have ascertained my own frailty. I dare not again risk a second probation."

The Earl saw that it was useless to reason with a man who thought in this way, and whose purpose seemed so firmly settled. "I will urge you no more," said his Lord-

ship, thoughtfully, and with a pang of grief for his own precipitation.

From that time, no allusion was made to the future intentions of Castagnello, but, during the remainder of the passage, it was observed by his friends, with sorrow, that he seemed to shun their society, and to give himself up entirely to his own melancholy thoughts. He sat looking at the sea all day long, and seldom went into the cabin, even to dinner; and at night he continued on deck, gazing at the stars and the other phenomena of the ocean and the sky.

The weather being fine, and the health of Lady Wildwaste having evidently improved in the course of the voyage, his Lordship proposed to continue some time at sea; but when Castagnello came in sight of Naples, endeared to him by all the recollections of the innocence of youth and the blandishments of affection, he pleaded so urgently to be set on shore, that the yacht was ordered to tack in, and he was landed on the mole, while she again stood out to sea.

It was about noon when he reached the hotel where he intended to stay, and he felt so overpowered by the heat, that he stretched himself on a sofa and fell asleep. When he awoke the day was far declined, but as he was anxious to revisit the well-known haunts of his childhood, he hastily changed his dress and went out. He did not expect to be recognized by any of his former acquaintance, for twenty years had passed since he had seen any of them, nor did he wish to make himself known.

His first course was towards his mother's villa, which overlooked the town. He was anxious to ascertain if she was still living, but was deterred from going directly to the house by a painful feeling at once desirous, and anxious, and reluctant.

As he walked along, he thought the streets and buildings had universally become of a meaner appearance, and that every thing was touched by the hand of time, and wore an air of decay. He recognized in passing several houses where he had been an occasional visitor, and he

lingered as he passed, in the hope of seeing some one belonging to them, but the guests that went in, and the inmates that came from them, were all strangers.

In crossing the Corso, he saw at a short distance the palace of the Duke del Fuocco, but he could not summon resolution to go towards it. It appeared, in all respects, the same as when he left it on the fatal evening of his departure for Rome. Servants, in the same liveries, stood at the portal; the very awnings which were extended from the windows, seemed to be the same. Had he, however, enquired, he would have been informed that the master was changed; but such is the habitual system that grows up with hereditary wealth, that the characteristics of a great family often remain for ages unaltered, while the individuals that compose them fluctuate with the common tide of life, and are lost and forgotten in the general stream that has passed away.

The first thing that he entirely missed, and it had been long removed, was a little rude

shed, attached to a garden wall, immediately without the city, on the road which led to the hill where his mother's residence was situated. Under this shed, an old woman of a singularly neat appearance, and of a mild obliging disposition, was wont to keep a stall for the sale of fruit. She was a great favourite with the neighbouring children, and often in the cool of the shed he had sat in the hot weather with his playmates beside her. But she was dead many years, and a vile assemblage of docks and nettles, and rubbish, occupied the scite of this favourite haunt.

While he was looking at this little scene of desolation, a beautiful girl with a light step, bearing on her head a basket of flowers, came gaily down the hill, singing with the jocund carol of youthful animation. He thought he recognized the voice, and when she came nearer, he was convinced, in the feeling of the moment, that it was Brunetta, the daughter of his nurse, a happy tempered girl, who had often taken pleasure in teasing him while a boy, and

he actually ran forward several steps towards her, when he perceived it was another. He, however, spoke to her, and heard, as if it had been a misfortune, that she was the daughter, and not the eldest, of Brunetta. He thought her beautiful, but far less so than her mother, and turned from her abruptly, while she pursued her way to the city, and resumed her song with the gaiety of a bird at liberty amidst its native bowers.

As he approached the villa, he heard the sounds of elegant music in the garden, performed with all the skill and taste which, in happier days, distinguished the concerts of his mother's little parties, after her retirement from the stage. He listened with inexpressible delight: the whole painful interval since he had last been on that spot seemed cancelled, and when the sonata was ended, he heard his mother call him by name, and chide him as an unruly boy, for having disturbed the performance. But it was another Castagnello, the son of one of his sisters; and it was not his, but the mother of that Castagnello, who chided with so much tenderness.

The emotion which this little incident and discovery produced, quite overcame him, and he retired to a distance dissolved in tears, but the sound of music was renewed in a cheerful strain, and he acquired self-possession to go to the villa. He did not wish to be known: he was desirous to avoid those congratulations which might naturally be expected on such an occasion, and to shun enquiries that he could not answer without equivocation and shame.

With a palpitating heart, he went to the gate which led to the garden where the musical party were sitting, in an alcove covered with vines. It was open, but he hesitated to enter: a young man, of a genteel air, however, on observing him, invited him to come in. "We are celebrating," said he, "a little festival in honour of a relation whom we have not heard of for many years. It is his birth-day, and he was my benefactor; as he is among strangers, strangers are with us to-day most welcome, I therefore pray you to join our party."

Castagnello recollected that it was his

own birth-day, a circumstance which he had forgotten; and he could not be mistaken that the youth before him was the child of his sister, for whose education in England he had provided, when in that country. This was the only moment of pure delight that he had ever enjoyed, and it was at once the just and natural reward of the kindness that he had shown to the orphan.

He accepted the invitation of his nephew, but he was more than ever resolved to remain unknown.

The party consisted of about twenty persons, besides a number of boys and girls, the children of his cotemporaries. As the sun was set before he reached the gate, when he entered the alcove, it was so obscured by the umbrageous leaves of the vines, with which it was covered, that the faces of the company could not be easily distinguished. This afforded him an opportunity of knowing which of his relations were present, but as he heard nothing of his mother, he began to conclude in sorrow

that she was gone to that country from which no traveller ever returns. He observed, however, an aged lady at the upper end of the alcove, seated on an armed chair, which was adorned with evergreens and garlands, and raised on a platform. It was evident that she was the queen of the festival, and when he reflected on the other changes he had seen, he thought that she could be no other than his mother, but she sat silent: no one noticed her, nor did she appear to notice any one.

Soon after he had taken his seat, the servants distributed coloured lamps amidst the branches of the vines, and by their light he contemplated this figure at leisure. She appeared to be about three-score, and she was bent into a hoop, but with infirmities more than old age. Her figure was meagre, her arms skinny, and her head, which drooped and projected over her withered bosom, shook with palsy. The expression of her countenance indicated the last extremity of imbecility and dotage, and a driveling smile, that mocked all

mirth, wavered among her features, as she endeavoured to look round on the lamps as they glittered among the leaves.

Castagnello perceived that her grey hairs were adorned with a coronal of flowers, and by the rich pendants of diamonds that sparkled in her ears—a tribute that had been paid to the matchless beauty of her youth—he recognised at last his mother. While he looked with anguish of heart on this fantastic spectacle, and saw that her mind, whose fine natural intelligence had once delighted and charmed the most polished spirits of Europe, was even more impaired then her person, he could not suppress his tears. At that moment the boy who bore his name came to her, and on her attempt to carress the child, she seemed to forget who he was, and to address him as her own Castagnello. The boy laughed at her mistake, and with an arch and playful look, asked her to sing one of her airs. The poor weak and vain old woman was pleased

with the knavish flattery of the urchin, and began to scream one of her once-admired bravuras, which threw the child into an extacy of laughter—Castagnello could not withstand this: he started from his seat with indignation, and shaking the boy furiously, darted out of the garden, and ran to his lodgings agitated with the bitterest grief he had ever experienced.

CHAPTER XXI.

O! would I were a flower, that weeps but dew,
Weeps without woe, and blushes without shame!
THE APPEAL.

THE return of Castagnello to his native city, and the emotions with which the changes of time and circumstances affected him, require us to pause and reflect on the general character of human life. Perhaps no incident, in the fortunes of men, occasions a more painful contrast of feeling, than the tamed and subjected state of mind with which an adventurer re-visits the scenes of his youth, whether his career

has been prosperous or unfortunate; for, among all the truths which experience teaches, there is none more manifest than this, that mankind universally set out in life with a false estimate of that world into which they are entering. This is so apparent, that even the most inattentive observe it; and those who are least in the practice of moralizing, cannot help sometimes making it the subject of their remarks. Every man, however humble his station, who has encountered the shock and contention of active life, must be sensible that he now views mankind, and their condition, in a very different light from that in which he once saw them; and, however unable he may be at first to describe to himself the nature of the change, he feels that it is real and important, and knows that it is the result of his experience. Let him examine himself more closely, and he will find it to be this; he has discovered the world to be a much more serious, trying, and difficult scene; and those who live in it, a more severe, rigorous, and unfriendly

set of beings, than he was previously aware of, or could have at all imagined. This ungrateful lesson is indeed gradually learned; and seldom without a degree of indignant surprise, and a painful revulsion of former feelings. The ingenuous mind of youth struggles long with the unwelcome information; admits it slowly and unwillingly; and often wholly rejects it as false, before it finally adopts it as too certain to be any longer doubted. There is indeed something in the situation of a young man, who has just taken upon himself the direction of his actions, we had almost said hard, if any thing could be justly called so which is the necessary result of the natural constitution of man and of society. The contrast betwixt his confidence and his inexperience, his security and his danger, is striking and affecting. Accustomed to be guided and directed in all things by the judgment of his parents; to receive from their hands the supply of his wants, and to fly to their affectionate bosoms for refuge and consolation in his little dis-

tresses; to suffer only a slight and unwilling chastisement for his most serious offences, and to be immediately restored to more than former favour—he cannot for a long time conceive the vast weight of responsibility which he takes upon himself by becoming his own master; nor convince himself of the hard necessity that rules in the world. Habituated from his earliest years to connect safety and protection with the attachment of his friends, he is unable to disjoin ideas so firmly linked together, and, with the liberty of a man, continues to act with the unthinking security of a child; not reflecting, that every man is constituted by nature his own sole protector, and can have no other safe-guard than his individual firmness and prudence, nor observing, what he may one day feel, that in all the most essential points of human interest, he stands as much alone, as entirely separated from all effectual support, as the most friendless and destitute of mankind. If he is prodigal and easily enticed by sinners, he may ruin his

health and fortune before his unsuspecting friends have become acquainted with his excesses; thus blasting, as by the frost of a single night, all the fair promise of early goodness and manly accomplishments. Imprudence alone may condemn him to waste the best of his days within the walls of a prison, at the command of an unforgiving creditor; or, led by sudden temptation to the commission of some criminal act, he may be seized by the ministers of justice, in the midst of his weeping and affrighted family, and dragged from their arms to the horrors of a public execution, that last and lowest degradation to which human nature is liable.

This last circumstance affords a subject of reflection peculiarly awful. Of all the scenes which human life exhibits, a public execution is the most effectual to open the eyes of man to his true state. To those who, in contemplating the possibilities of life, are not too proud to bring the case home to themselves, it presents a lesson

deeply instructive as well as solemnly affecting. It strips society at once of that deceitful colouring which prosperity throws over it; shews how unimportant the individual is in comparison with the species; and fixes in the heart that salutary fear, which is the beginning of wisdom. What a difference between the discipline of the world, and the mildness of parental authority! and how striking the contrast betwixt the actions of mankind as a body, and their individual feelings! That creatures by nature so tender and compassionate should, by one common consent, lay hold of an unfortunate brother, and put him to death with deliberate solemnity, for perhaps a trifling violation of property in a moment of need—would appear utterly incredible to a being acquainted only with the nature of man, and ignorant of the necessities of his condition. But the security and good order of society must be maintained, at whatever expence. The unhappy victim of the laws is led to exe-

cution amidst the tears of innumerable spectators; and though all pity, not one will interfere to save him.

To this extremity, in the rashness of youthful indiscretion, Castagnello had been exposed. He had borne the mortification and fetters of public punishment, and it was therefore not surprising that he should shrink at the idea of disclosing himself to his friends, who would naturally be desirous to hear his adventures; what answer could he indeed make to their enquiries? From the resignation of his commission in the German army, his life had been one continued series of follies, and frauds, and crimes. But unless the depth and grief of this sentiment can be fully appreciated, it will be difficult to form an idea of the impulse which prompted him to visit his mother unknown, and to fly undiscovered from the party at her villa; and it will be still more difficult to comprehend the state of mind in which he returned to the hotel, where he abandoned himself

to the most desponding and mournful reflections. He contrasted his blighted fortunes with the gay and beautiful hopes —the blossoms which adorned the spring of his life, and he felt that all his aims and motives had been prematurely plucked away, leaving him scarcely the wish to live. But one solitary remembrance still excited something like an interest in his bosom, and his return to Naples restored to their original purity the sentiments with which it was associated. The image of Bellina came back to his heart in the innocence and beauty of childhood. Amidst all the recollections which the scenes of his blameless pleasures recalled, this was the freshest and the fairest; but when he thought of the taint she had received like himself from her intercourse with the world, he was melted with inexpressible grief.

Thus softened and subdued, his mind naturally diverged to wonder over the inexplicable purposes of human life. He could trace an evident consistency in the series

of his own adventures; each new error was distinctly the progeny of some previous fault, some fatal acquiesence in the unrestrained dictates of passion, and when he thought of Corneli, and the fearful issue of their connection, an overwhelming apprehension darkened his spirit with a sense at once of an eternal and pre-determined order and mystery, which could neither be conceived, nor described.

On his return he had carelessly thrown himself on a sofa, and lay absorbed in this state of cheerless reminiscence, when the waiter entered and placed a lamp on a table. A stealthy softness in his steps, and something in his manner, attracted the attention of Castagnello, and excited a bodement of new sorrow. When he retired, after placing the light, instead of shutting the door in the usual manner, he drew it gently behind him, and left it unfastened, evidently that he might re-enter without noise.

The hotel had been formerly the palace of a nobleman, and the room which

Castagnello then occupied, happened to be the grand saloon, with which several suites of apartments communicated. The walls were sumptuously adorned with mirrors, and the ceiling exhibited the gods assembled at the birth of Pandora. The figures were not perhaps very exquisitely executed, but seen imperfectly by the almost ineffectual light of the lamp, and multiplied in the mirrors, they produced a striking effect. Under any circumstances, especially in the evening, the silence and solemnity of that magnificent chamber would have inspired Castagnello with a sentiment of awe; at a time when he was dejected with the remembrances of his luckless and dishonoured life, thrilling with the consciousness of an inscrutable destiny, and pondering on the darkness and incertitude of his being, the influence was sublime. His imagination was touched with a strange terror, a chillyness moved as it were in his flesh, his heart beat audibly, and he cowered as if some unknown and tremendous power actually hovered behind him.

In this crisis of superstitious dread he saw the door suddenly thrown open, and a female, in the dishevelled garb of sleep, enter and approach towards him with slow and tottering steps—Her form was emaciated; her eyes wild and glittering, and her countenance wore that hideous expression, which is only seen in the appalling hour of death.

The table with the lamp stood between the door and the sofa, on which he was sitting. The ghastly apparition came up to it, and placing her elbows on the table, supported her pale and sepulchral visage with both her hands, as she bent forward looking him steadily in the face.

"Castagnello," said the stranger mournfully, but he could make no reply—"Castagnello," she again repeated, but he was still unable to speak—"Castagnello, farewell," she added, in an accent of disappointment and anguish, and with a swift step glided away and disappeared in the darkness of the corridor, into which the door opened.

The astonished and awe-struck adventurer sat for a considerable time gazing towards the door, as if he questioned the reality of what he had seen and heard.

In the course of a few minutes after, a stir was heard in the adjoining rooms; and an elderly female domestic, with a lamp in her hand, came hastily into the saloon; she looked anxiously around, as if in quest of somebody, and almost instantly retired, drawing the door abruptly behind her. At the same moment the clock of a neighbouring convent struck the third hour, which according to the Italian mode of computing time, answered, at that season of the year, to about eleven of ours. The sound of the bell was in unison with the state of Castagnello's feelings, and vibrated through his whole frame. An influence, which he could not overcome, prevented him from calling the waiter to ask an explanation of the scene he had witnessed, and he retired to his bedchamber, oppressed with a weight of vague and boding thoughts, which hung upon his spirit like the lowering omens of a storm,

when it gathers on the hills and darkens the setting sun. Without undressing he threw himself on his couch, and listened all night to the sound of passing steps, and the murmuring of whispers throughout the house. Towards morning these stifled and muffled sounds subsided, and soon after day-break he fell asleep, but his sleep yielded no repose; a dismal succession of fantastic forms beset his pillow, and his dreams were a dim and distorted reflection of all his past life. The catacombs of Selinus, with the Countess Corneli claiming his protection, were again embodied to his view; but when he rushed towards her it was Bellina, wounded and bleeding, who supplicated his assistance. Suddenly a change would come over the spirit of his dream, and then he thought himself still a child, listening with delight to the celebrated accents of his mother; but in the instant when he ran to share her caresses, she too was transformed, and the arms which she stretched out to embrace him, were the fleshless anatomy of the tomb. While he looked, her appearance

again changed, and in her stead also he beheld Bellina, who gazed on him with solemnity and sorrow, and fading into the pale and ghastly visitor, who had so mysteriously addressed him thrice by name, melted away, and left him in a forlorn and dreary solitude.

CHAPTER XXII.

We are such stuff
As dreams are made of, and our little life
Is rounded with a sleep.

SHAKSPEARE.

THE day was considerably advanced before Castagnello was released from the troubled reverberations of his waking thoughts, and long after he had left his bed they continued to affect him profoundly. The more he reflected on the mysterious visit, he was inclined to consider the emaciated apparition as something preternatural. She seemed to bear no resemblance to any female of whom he retained the slightest recollection, yet she

knew him and addressed him by name; her accents penetrated to his very heart, and as often as he thought of her pathetic voice, the image of Bellina rose in his mind; but he could not conceive it possible that the youthful fulness and beauty which that image possessed in his remembrance, could, either by time or disease, be reduced to such a ghastly and appalling anatomy.

While he was sitting thus pondering and perplexed, the waiter entered his room at the usual hour with breakfast, and enquired if he had been disturbed. "What has happened in the house?" said Castagnello. "The poor lady," replied the waiter, "is dead—she died last night."

This intelligence made the blood freeze in Castagnello's veins; for, although he was not superstitious, or, more correctly speaking, had been prevented by his desultory education from becoming so, yet, like all persons of a sanguine temperament, he was quiveringly susceptible to impressions from the wild and wonderful.

"Of what lady do you speak?" he exclaimed in a tone of alarm.

"The Princess Bordero," said the man. "She came from Palermo, about ten days ago, so ill that she was with difficulty brought alive from the vessel to this house. It was only intended that she should repose herself in the hotel till she could bear removal, but she was never after in a condition to leave her bed."

Castagnello listened as if he heard the utterance of some tremendous prediction. The spectre was indeed the once beautiful Bellina; but the tidings of her death, though they sounded to his heart like a mortal knell, awakened a deeper key than the querrulous emotions of sorrow, and he enquired with dread and solemnity at what time she died.

"About the third hour," was the answer.

"The third hour!" cried Castagnello.

"Yes: about the third hour," repeated the waiter. "The nurse left her asleep, and came down stairs for fresh water, and other necessaries for the night; she was not absent many minutes, but when she

returned the unfortunate lady was no more."

"Was the nurse then absent when she died?" enquired Castagnello ardently, and the waiter recapitulated what he had just stated, adding, "I hope that I have not been rash in telling you of this: was the Princess related to you?" He received, however, no answer, but, after a pause, was desired to send in the nurse for a few minutes, when she could be conveniently spared from her melancholy offices.

"She can come now," said the man, "her business is over; the body has already been dressed and removed to the church, where it is to be deposited this evening, in the ancestral vaults of the Borderi."

The waiter appeared inclined to prolong the conversation, but Castagnello waved his hand for him to retire, and he immediately withdrew.

Castagnello, under the influence of the feelings associated with his dreams, and the mysterious visit and mournful recognition of the visitor, was disposed to think

that he had actually witnessed an apocalypse of Bellina's spirit, which, before taking its final departure from this world, had come to bid him farewell. But, when the waiter mentioned the absence of the nurse, he recollected that sometimes before the ultimate submission to death, nature, long prostrated by disease, is known to rally and make an effort, which for a moment repulses the conqueror; and he thought it possible that the patient, excited by some such lambent re-action, might have quitted her unguarded couch, and wandered into the saloon where he was then sitting. It was therefore with a view to ascertain how far this had been the case, that he wished to see the nurse; and soon after the waiter left the room, the same person made her appearance who had looked so anxiously into the saloon immediately after the apparitional visitor had disappeared.

She was a stout elderly matron, with a shrewd countenance, that indicated wariness and distrust. Her manner was somewhat embarrassed at her entrance, and she

seemed to be disconcerted by the scrutiny with which Castagnello unconsciously examined her from head to foot; for although her grey hair was sleeked and smoothed from her forehead as trimly as possible, according to the Italian fashion with dames of her description, she frequently stroked it back with both her hands, as if it had been loose and annoying.

Without disclosing that he had any previous knowledge of the Princess, he enquired at what time she died.

"The old woman perceived the drift of his conversation, and said, "I see that you have discovered a secret, and I will not attempt to deceive you, but it was an accident, and not owing to any negligence on my part. The other attendants had retired for the night. When I had occasion to leave the apartment of the Princess she was asleep; for many days before she was unable to raise her head without help, but, during my absence, she had strangely gathered strength to rise: when I returned, the couch was empty, and she had quitted

the room. In my alarm, I ran in quest of her through the adjoining apartments, and, among others, into the saloon where you were sitting. The whole was but the action of a minute, for, on flying back to the sick chamber, she in the same instant returned, and tottering to the bed, lay down and expired."

This explanation removed the superstitious doubt and dread which hovered in the mind of Castagnello, but it left him still to wonder by what affecting instinct Bellina had discovered him in the moment of her dissolution,—in that moment when the soul sees the radiance of a glorious morning breaking in through all the rents and fissures of its falling tenement, or hears the storms of that eternal night, in which there is no shelter. But to this he had no clue: her visit to the saloon was, doubtless, accidental; while the last flash of life with which she had been at the moment re-animated, probably lent intelligence enough to enable her to recognize him, notwithstand-

ing the change which time and anxiety had produced on his appearance.

The woeful spectacle of crazed and doting age, which he saw in his mother, had pierced him with the keenest anguish of grief; but the only remaining tie that linked him to the world, he felt was now broken. He had often thought of Bellina, during his wanderings, with a languishing and compassionate affection, and longed to know what her fate had been subsequent to that accident at Palermo, which, by causing his rupture with Lord Wildwaste, had so materially affected the colour of his own life. This he had, at last, learnt: she had passed her days, like many other noble ladies, in the careless pursuit of amusement, and died childless and unlamented; and yet her youth exhibited a rich bud of virtue, but, being unfostered by any genial affection, it never unfolded, and she sank into the grave, like a plant that had been reared only for ornament. The gay, the elegant, the high-born, and

the gallant, admired its form, its foliage, and its blossom; but, in the decay of its beauty, it was consigned to the hands of menials, and withered in solitude, neglected and forgotten.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Oh! cover it—Oh! hide it from my sight!
Oh! did that hideous thing once live, and bear
The air and eye of ever-beauteous woman?
THE TRIAL.

THE idea of having occupied the last place in the remembrance of Bellina, dissolved the heart of Castagnello; and when the nurse retired, he abandoned himself to the luxury of this pleasing, though mournful, reflection. It seemed to him that there was an obscure concordance in their respective lots, and that they had been naturally formed to contribute to the happiness of each other: but from the hour in which he was so fallaciously sent by her father to Rome, they had alike become subject to a

barren and unhappy destiny; nor had they ever afterwards met, but to witness, in their different conditions, some cause for secret sorrow, or to date the commencement of some new epoch of error or of suffering.

The nurse told him when the obsequies were to be performed, and about an hour before the time appointed for the ceremony, he went to take a last look of the only being for whom he had ever felt the delicacy of youthful love. The preparations were suitable to the rank of the deceased, and the hired mourners acted their parts with all befitting decorum. A number of spectators filled the area of the church, and Castagnello was diffident to obtrude himself close to the bier, on which, adorned in bridal apparel and strewed with flowers, emblems of the beauty that death had gathered, lay the remains of Bellina. He observed, however, that, contrary to the usual custom, the face was covered with a veil, and without reflecting that it had been placed there from a sentiment of reverence,

to conceal the frightful change which death had produced on the emaciated countenance, he resolved to wait till the funeral ceremonies were over, and then, if possible, to obtain permission to descend into the vault where the body was to be deposited, and where he might contemplate at leisure and unmolested, that form which he had never seen without delight, nor remembered without sorrow.

At the appointed hour, the relations of the Borderi and of Bellina began to assemble, and after the usual mass had been chaunted, a requiem, with all the pomp of solemn harmony, was performed; at the conclusion of which, the bier was slowly lowered into the cadavery, and the friends and spectators retiring from the church, left Castagnello alone with those who had the charge of closing up the vault. A small gratuity readily obtained the permission he desired, and they consented to suspend their task for a short time, while he descended alone, with a torch in his hand.

The mausoleum of the Borderi had been constructed by one of the proudest of the family. It resembled the interior of a rude temple, of the solidest Tuscan architecture, and between the ponderous columns that supported the ceiling, the bodies of the different members of the family were laid on stone benches. The founder occupied a more conspicuous station, being placed upright on a platform, like an altar; but it exhibited an appalling satire on his pride, for the lower jaw had hideously dropped upon his breast, and the scull, dislocated and mouldering, lay displaced on his shoulder. Time had also consumed a portion of his dress, and through the rags and tatters of the velvet and brocade, of which it consisted, a dark and horrible abysm was disclosed. Castagnello, however, paid no attention to this spectacle, but looked round for the body of Bellina, which he soon discovered in its allotted place.

In the meantime, the labourers above were expressing to each other their surprize and wonder at the object of the stranger's

visit, and, after some desultory discussion, they concluded that he could only have gone for the purpose of ascertaining whether, as it occasionally happened, the deceased had not been brought for burial with some of her rings and jewels. They upbraided themselves for not having thought of this before, and for their weakness in permitting him to go down into the vault alone; and they instantly resolved to rectify the error, determined to participate with the spoiler in his prize.

They eagerly seized and lighted some of the flambeaux, which had been used in the funeral, and hastily descended the steps that led into the mausoleum; but on reaching the entrance, the foremost suddenly recoiled with an exclamation of terror, upon which the others rushed forward, and beheld Castagnello standing with the veil in his hand, which he had removed from the face of Bellina, while the torch, which he had dropped on the body in the shock of the first glance, was kindling her mort-cloth and garments.

Astonished and alarmed, some of them ran to extinguish the flames, and others to drag Castagnello from the spot, for his ghastly look of horror and stupefaction instinctively convinced them that his visit had been for some other purpose than to plunder the dead. On conveying him up into the free air of the church, he began to recover; but his countenance was vacant, and his eyes wandered fearfully in quest of some object which he could not discover. The poor men were much affected by his situation, and kindly, in their rough way, offered him all the assistance in their power; but when they spoke to him, he only gazed at them for a moment, and then again looked round in quest of the terrific phantom which had fascinated his imagination. But the time elapsed at which it was customary to shut the church for the night, and they were obliged, in consequence, to leave him, while they hastily let down the stone that covered the entrance to the mausoleum. The noise and bustle of this, however, did more to restore him than their attentions,

and when they had finished, he was so far recovered as to be able to ask them to procure a carriage to take him home, for his limbs trembled to such a degree, that he could with difficulty support himself, and he complained otherwise of being extremely indisposed.

On arriving at the hotel, he was told that, during the evening, Lord Wildwaste's yacht had come in from her cruise, and that his Lordship, with the Countess and Mr. Mowbray, were in the house; but he did not feel himself in a condition to visit them, and retired immediately to his own room. The moment, however, that the servant who had accompanied him with a light, had withdrawn, the phantom of his mind returned. The hideous sight which he had witnessed, when he expected to see the composed features of Bellina, was renewed in all the grinning energy of rivetted death, and he uttered a piercing shriek of horror and distress, which alarmed the whole house. Lord Wildwaste and Mowbray were the first who entered his apartment,

and they found him prostrated on the bed, with his face hidden in his hands, and his whole frame shuddering with a convulsive tremour. His Lordship spoke to him soothingly, and after sometime the paroxym abated, and he was urged to join the Countess. He pleaded indisposition as an excuse; but his brother perceived that it was a disease of the mind with which he was affected, and attributing it to some impression which the ignominous fate of Corneli had perhaps left, would accept of no denial—Castagnello was therefore in a manner obliged to go with him, and after joining the Countess, he seemed to re-gain his wonted equanimity.

The conversation at first was general; each of the party studiously refrained from alluding to any circumstance calculated to re-call the transactions at Messina; but, among other topics, Lady Wildwaste having heard of the death of the Princess Bordero in the hotel, and not being aware in what relation she had stood with Castagnello, noticed the circumstance with some of

those common-place expressions, which might be expected from a stranger. This was touching the wound of the unfortunate adventurer's spirit. It brought back in all the vividness of a reality, the appalling spectacle of the tomb, and while her Ladyship was speaking, his mind was again unbalanced, and he fancied that he was still standing beside the emaciated corpse. Lord Wildwaste was the first who observed the alteration of his countenance, and in extreme terror begged the Countess to withdraw, while he endeavoured to shake the maniac from his trance.

It was evident that the brain of Castagnello had received a vital injury, and without delay the best medical assistance was procured; but such a dislocation of the mind as he had suffered, defies the appliances of art, and it is for metaphysicians to explain the mystery; for on all other subjects, save allusions to death, or to circumstances calculated to remind him of the sepulchre, he had undergone no change. He could speak with freedom and sometimes

even with gaiety; but the instant that his imagination happened, by any accident, however trivial, to be directed to that subject, he was seized with a paroxysm of delirious consternation, in which he could see only that sight which was unfolded when he removed the fatal veil.

CHAPTER XXIV.

Speak to him kindly, urge him as you may,
Get his consent, no matter how consented,
That once obtained will make him all our own;
Then leave the rest to me.

THE LADY'S DOUBT.

FOR a long time previous to the excursion to Messina, Lady Wildwaste, languid and declining, had taken no interest in any object; but from that period she dated her recovery, and the change was first perceptible in her spirits. Reviving health, like the genial influence of the returning spring, gradually restored the vigour of her character, till it stood forth again in all its wonted luxuriance and dignity. That per-

sonal beauty, which in her youth had excited universal admiration, was, however, essentially impaired. Time, as well as the canker of disease, had preyed upon the blossom, and though it still retained some of its pristine lustre, yet the general form was faded and touched with the irremediable sear of decay. But if she was less lovely, she was more interesting, and she exerted all her irresistible powers to rouse the benumed energies of Castagnello from the torpid state of indifference into which they were evidently sinking.

To this task of duty, as it was considered, Lord Wildwaste also contributed his best efforts; but he possessed less equanimity. Naturally quick and impatient, he was soon induced to abandon any pursuit where his endeavours were not immediately rewarded with some effect; and, in the case of Castagnello, time was as requisite as unremitted assiduity. But the rashness of his Lordship's temper was finely compensated by a frank and generous disposition; for, if he was easily offended, and, perhaps, often

apt to offend, no man forgave any wrong with a happier grace, or atoned for his temerity with more sincere contrition. His greatest faults were considered, by those who knew him best, as pardonable foibles, for they were ever tinctured with some feeling of justice or benevolence; they were indeed rather the aberrations and excesses of a virtuous warmth of disposition, than the sinister impulses of selfish aims, or vindictive resentments.

His friend Mowbray was of a less ardent temperament; the current of his life was more uniform, and his humours better regulated; but he was not more amiable, nor was he so thoroughly esteemed by his friends; for he possessed a calculating prudence which, without being so obtrusive as to make itself felt in the minor reciprocities of life, was nevertheless strong enough to prevent any affection from being blended with the general esteem which his talents and propriety of conduct deserved. The basis of this equivocal virtue, like every other modification of selfishness, was most

easily affected through the medium of vanity; and he was soon piqued by the greater degree of attention which Lord and Lady Wildwaste benevolently paid to the unhappy Castagnello than to himself. Considering, however, the listlessness with which the unfortunate adventurer received their kindness, it might have been expected that the spleen of Mowbray would have sought its gratification against them; and it would have done so, but for that calculating prudence to which we have alluded. His consequence in society was augmented by his intimacy with the Earl, and it was too evident that his interests might be deteriorated by losing that advantage, to allow him, even for a moment, to think that Castagnello was not the object which best merited to suffer for the neglect to which he was himself exposed.

He had observed, from the time of meeting with Castagnello, that Lady Wildwaste acquired new life; that in the course of the voyage back from Messina she became evidently convalescent, and, that the haze and dejection which had so long hung upon her

mind seemed from the same period gradually to clear away. The marked attention which she paid to Castagnello was, indeed, obvious to every one, but it was of that open, easy, and sisterly kind which neither excites surprise or suspicion. Mowbray, however, saw it through the invidia of his own ruffled feelings, and fancied that he could discover the hidden indications of a grosser affection: but he was not an Iago; on the contrary, he was himself the dupe of his own jealousy, and although subsequent circumstances betrayed him to communicate his apprehensions to Lord Wildwaste, it was in the full persuasion that they were well founded.

Castagnello himself was in a great degree unconscious of the interest which his friends had taken in him, and altogether incapable of conceiving that his conduct towards Lady Wildwaste was calculated to attract any inquisitive observation. He was sensible of her kindness, and he re-paid it with gratitude, the purest sentiment of which the human heart is susceptible; but

he could not be aware that her attentions were so manifest as they appeared to the invidious suggestions of Mowbray, nor that because he acknowledged them more particularly, as coming from a female, than he did those of her husband, that his own behaviour could be construed into impure or improper partiality; in fact, he was, from the death of Bellina, almost entirely absorbed in the contemplation of his own abortive condition, and was, day after day, becoming more and more absent. He had too many painful topics of remembrance to become subject to that vacuity of spirit which renders life a burden, even while he confessed to himself that his part in the business of the world was consummated. But, although he had no motive for enterprise, yet the vicissitudes of the past, and the strange unison that pervaded the main incidents of his adventures, furnished abundant materials for intellectual exertion; and in reflecting on them he neglected many of those little offices of domestic intercourse which among certain classes of

society are often deemed of as much importance as some of the moral duties. This absence and negligence Mowbray attributed to the influence of the passion with which he supposed him to be actuated towards Lady Widwaste, and having once conceived the existence of that passion, and that it was perhaps reciprocal, he watched, what he considered, its progress with an anxiety that was gratified by the indulgence of its own fears.

Lord Wildwaste having exerted all his endeavours in vainly trying to induce Castagnello to mingle with society, at last abandoned him to his own way, but he often complained of the indolence, as he called it, into which he was allowing himself to sink; sometimes he chided with asperity, at others he attempted ridicule, but he soon perceived that it was only through the medium of the Countess he could ever produce any effect. So far, however, from being infected by any distrust by this discovery, he was pleased at the result, and justly ascribed it to the

influence of the feminine character, aided by her Ladyship's own peculiar and extraordinary intellectual powers.

Matters were in this state as the period drew near which his Lordship had fixed for their return to England, whither he was desirous Castagnello should accompany them. But to this proposal he had always received an evasive answer, and when he sometimes fervently replied, "What then do you intend to do, Castagnello?" the other said, "I have nothing to do—I am fit for nothing; I am too old to begin a profession, and there is none that would not feel disgraced by receiving me as a member." The tone of humiliation in which this was uttered always overcame his Lordship, and made him incapable of pursuing the conversation.

When the preparations were completed for the journey to England, he therefore requested the Countess not only to speak to Castagnello, but to use her influence to obtain his consent to accompany them—"If he stays here," said his Lordship, "he will

assuredly become a useless monk, or relapse into his former courses, and I do not wish, if I can prevent it, that he should again be left in jeopardy. He is not a man that can contend with difficulties, and I am sensible of the great error I committed in so abruptly abandoning him at Palermo—do you therefore, Geraldine, exert your best persuasion to entice him with us, and if you do not succeed, try to discover what his intentions are. It is plain he remains at Naples only on our account, for he has never evinced the slightest disposition to renew any intimacy with his relations; I am therefore anxious to know what course he proposes to himself after our departure: undoubtedly he has formed some plan."

The Countess readily undertook this sisterly task; she had, indeed, on more than one occasion spoken to Castagnello, with a view of sounding his inclinations, as if she expected he would accompany them to England, but to her his replies had also been equivocal, and as she had remarked that Mowbray treated him with coldness

and formality, she suspected his indecision was partly caused by that circumstance; with the view therefore of softening a dislike, which she generously attributed to the blemished character of the adventurer, and for which she was rather sorry than surprised, she begged his Lordship to speak to Mowbray on the subject, and to urge him also to join his endeavours to theirs, that the reluctance, the diffidence, or the objections of Castagnello might be effectually overcome.

CHAPTER XXV.

Yes, I have had great cause; saw I not that?
It was the soft and peaceful twilight hour
When dews fall gentlest, and the fragrant rose
Breathes sweetest forth into the silent air,
That I did mark them whispering in that bow'r,
And looking only as fond lovers look.

THE TRIAL.

ON the following morning Lord Wildwaste proposed to ride with Mowbray as far as Portici, with the view of carrying into effect the suggestions of the Countess, while it was arranged that her Ladyship should avail herself of the opportunity at home, to converse with Castagnello on the same subject.

The weather happened to be delightfully fine, a delicious west wind came from the sea and an unusual animation pervaded all nature; the foliage of the trees shone with the brightest freshness, the outlines of every object were sharply defined, and such was the pure transparency of the atmosphere, that the most distant was not only distinctly seen, but seemed to be brought nearer; the very waves from the bay, as they broke among the rocks on the shore, sparkled with unwonted brilliancy; even the white vapour from Vesuvius, as it streamed to the morning sun across the clear blue sky, had the appearance of being gaily streaked and intertwined with silver.

The good intentions by which Lord Wildwaste was actuated made him more susceptible than usual to the influence of the universal exhiliration around him, and when he vaulted into his saddle, in the court of the hotel, the Neapolitan domestics remarked that they had seldom seen an Englishman look so companionable and cheerful.

Mowbray had for some time before, arising chiefly from the cause described in the preceding chapter, been taciturn and pensive, perhaps it would be more correct to say moody: but even his sullenness relented, as they rode along the coast, amidst the blandishments of the air and the sunny gaiety that laughed in the landscape and frolicked over all the expanse of the ocean.

"I wish," said Lord Wildwaste, as he was expressing his admiration of that beautiful Italian morning, "I wish poor Castagnello were with us—I do not know what to make of him, he seems to be every day growing more and more unsocial."

"I have remarked the same thing," replied Mowbray, "it has been particularly the case since our return to Naples." "He has hitherto," resumed his Lordship, "resisted all my endeavours to induce him to go with us to England."

"Why should your Lordship be so anxious to take him to England? It would

be better to procure him a commission in some foreign service, for I presume he would not choose to enter that of his own country," said Mowbray. Lord Wildwaste however replied, that it was useless to speak with him on such a subject, into no army would he ever again enter; his refusal was decisive and his reasons satisfactory.

"What does he then intend to do?" enquired the other, "were he to go to England he could not with any propriety be introduced among your Lordship's friends—the leader of a gang of banditti, a convict, who has suffered ignominious punishment, and who afterwards fraudulently personated a nobleman, an unworthy one I grant—what could be made of such a man in England, even with all your Lordship's rank and character?—nor is such a man a fit inmate to any honourable family."

"What you say, Mowbray, is very true," replied his Lordship, "you have stated the very reasons which he himself assigns for

declining my invitations; but you think more harshly of him than I expected. He has now been some time with us, during the whole of which he has conducted himself with unimpeachable propriety, I might justly say with dignity; and he evidently possesses the elements of many virtues, which by care and fostering may be yet rendered productive of advantage to himself, and useful to others."

"I hope your Lordship will never have any cause to alter your opinion of him," said Mowbray, dryly. "I trust so," answered his Lordship; "I am indeed convinced that he is not a vicious man, and that he has been more the victim of circumstances, than the votary of his offences."

"Habit however," replied Mowbray, "is a second nature; and his habits have not been long broken, if they are yet broken: he is still, for example, much more subject to female influence than to any reasoning, however just or forcible, which your Lordship has employed to urge him to mix with society."

"I really do not understand what you mean," said his Lordship. "Since he has been with us, his whole behaviour has been singularly correct; he seems, in fact, so much occupied with his own reflections, as sometimes to forget the external world altogether."

"I am not surprised that he should," was the answer; "but however inattentive he may be towards your Lordship and myself, the Countess, I should think, has no reason to make the same complaint."

"I should have been mortified had it been so," replied his Lordship, a little proudly. "The improvement in her health has restored, in some degree, her former spirits, and I should have been mortified if her strength of mind and eloquence, with the addition of the feminine powers of pleasing, had not been far more effective than any dry argument of mine, or sententious aphorism of yours. I have observed with pleasure the superior ascendancy which she has acquired; but hitherto it has not bent him to our wishes."

Mowbray made no immediate reply; but after riding a few paces, he again reverted to the impropriety of taking Castagnello to England, and said, "But even were your Lordship to induce him to go, surely you do not intend that he shall reside with you."

"I do," replied his Lordship. "If he recover his usual spirits, of which he occasionally gives us glimpses, he would be an addition to our domestic circle; for it is not my intention ever again to reside much in London."

"Were there no particular reasons, I might, on general principles, question the prudence at least of such an arrangement," said Mowbray gravely. "Your Lordship has noticed the influence which Lady Wildwaste has acquired over Castagnello; it is not impossible that it may have the effect of making him entertain a corresponding sentiment in return. His former habits, his vices might in consequence be awakened."

"Do you mean to insinuate," said his

Lordship indignantly, "any thing derogatory to Lady Wildwaste, even if Castagnello were to become her lover?"

"No; I do not," said Mowbray firmly, "but your Lordship might have much trouble were any such discovery to be made; for it is plain already that her Ladyship takes a sisterly pleasure in the company of Castagnello; and that which proceeds from the purest and most disinterested beneficence of disposition, the malicious may find no difficulty in ascribing to any other source. Her Ladyship, from the time that we met with Castagnello, has appeared to receive a new interest in life, her spirits have acquired new energy"——

"You seem to have observed her very closely," interrupted his Lordship with a scowl. Mowbray was alarmed; he had not intended to disturb the quiet of his friend. Although he disliked Castagnello, and cared not in what manner he was dismissed, he had yet never for a moment thought of suggesting any thing to the prejudice of Lady Wildwaste; but, having

unconsciously allowed himself to contemplate the possibility of a reciprocal passion, that unworthy reflection, the child of Envy and Antipathy, thus betrayed him far beyond the power of equivocating with a temper so impetuous as that of Lord Wildwaste. They, however, continued still to ride onward; his Lordship thoughtful and agitated, while Mowbray, embarrassed and uneasy, was vainly trying to devise some way of extenuating the circumstances on which he perceived that he had ventured to lay too much stress.

Lord Wildwaste admired and loved his wife so ardently, that he could not entertain the slightest idea for a single moment of any thing improper either in her manners or affection; but in proportion to that love and admiration, he was jealous of her fair fame, and the past conduct of Castagnello afforded no warrantry that he might not dare to attempt all that was insinuated, and thereby furnish those materials to malice which the prudence of Mowbray seemed so anxious to anticipate.

After riding some time in silence, he turned round, and said, "Mowbray, you are right. Considering myself in some degree to blame for the misfortunes and errors of Castagnello, subsequent to our rupture at Palermo, I have been too anxious to indemnify him in a way which prudence cannot approve. I can be his friend sufficiently without embroiling my own happiness, or that of Lady Wildwaste with his character. I will, therefore, no longer urge him to accompany us to London; but make such provision for him, as will allow him, if he is destined to a better fate, to live at least above the temptation of being a second time subject to the commission of fraud."

Mowbray respired more freely, and highly applauded this determination, which not only relieved his own mind from the immediate perplexity with which he so unwaringly entangled himself, but eased it from that invidious apprehension which he had so long suffered from the attentions paid to Castagnello. During the remainder of the ride, he was in consequence able to

discuss with frankness and discretion the different expedients which his Lordship from time to time broached as the most eligible proposals to submit to the ill-fated adventurer; and, before their return to Naples, it was agreed that the best, which could be adopted, would be to settle an annual stipend on him, and leave him at full liberty to choose his own course of life and place of residence. "He has," said Mowbray, "acquired habits of study, and if he should become a monk, it cannot be considered as improper in him, merely because we, who are Protestants, object to it as useless and derogatory." Lord Wildwaste, however, had a truly English contempt for the monastic character, and was averse to think that Castagnello should ever submit to the degradation of becoming a professed inhabitant of the cloister; and, in arguing this point, after having previously agreed to allow him entire liberty, the two friends returned towards the city.

CHAPTER XXVI.

A weary lot is mine, Garlea,
A weary lot is mine;
The wading sun looks through the cloud,
But never deigns to shine, Garlea,
But never deigns to shine.

OLD BALLAD.

LADY WILDWASTE had in the meantime sent for Castagnello, who had been reading in his own room during the morning. "Come, my friend," she said, as he entered her boudoir, "take a seat beside me—I wish to have some serious conversation with you; this moping and melancholy, to which you give yourself up, is extremely distressing both to the Earl and me—you are possessed of talents, Castag-

nello, that might earn you honour, but you cast them away, and most unwisely abandon yourself to a grief without reason, —you go forward in time, looking constantly behind on a blasted heath and ruins and other rueful objects of desolation, which having passed, you should cease to regard and try to forget, while you turn your eyes to the more pleasing prospect before—the fields of enterprise and of hope, and those asylums of domestic love beyond them, the homes and the habitations where comfortable old age enjoys the setting sun."

Castagnello was not prepared for the briskness of this attack, and took a seat near her Ladyship in silence, while she thus continued, "I have requested to see you, because I wish to know explicitly from yourself, what is the reason that you have refused to come with us to England?"

"What should I do there?" replied Castagnello pensively. "That is no answer to my question," exclaimed her Ladyship in a sprightly accent; "I do not enquire

what you may do there, but why it is that you refuse to come with us?"

"He made no reply for some time, but after a pause, in which he struggled to suppress his emotion, he said, "Because I am a dishonoured man. That, it may be said, will not be known in England, but it is always recollected here," and he laid his hand emphatically on his breast.

"A truce with that," cried her Ladyship, "past errors should strengthen present duties, and furnish motives to a continuance of exertion, until they are redeemed."

"And with me they would do so, if it were possible," said Castagnello—"But where there has been a wound, there will remain a scar, which no surgery can efface. Be the fruit of my efforts what it may, the brand of guilt and ignominy is upon me." But you owe a duty to the world while you have life," replied her Ladyship, moved by the disconsolate tone in which he had spoken, "and it is an aggravation of error to leave it unperformed."

"Do I owe a duty to the world?" he exclaimed with unaffected surprise. "Then it is to die, for I feel no other claim upon me; my connexion is contamination to all my kindred—It is better that they should believe me buried fifty fathoms deep beneath the bottom of the sea, than to know that such a being exists. The old remember me with affection, for they had bright and happy anticipations of my childhood—the young have been taught to expect from me assurances to themselves of future honour. Is it a duty to turn that love into aversion, and that hope into shame? No, madam! the very purpose of my being is in this world finished—I am now but like those trees which having been prematurely cut down, still continue to sprout and bud with a useless and ineffectual vegetation."

Lady Wildwaste did not attempt to answer this fallacy of feeling, but said affectionately, "I will not dispute the justness of what you say, but granting it all, I would only wish you to reflect that

there are other friends no less interested in your welfare, to whom you are likewise bound by the ties of reciprocal obligation. We are desirous to contribute all in our power to your happiness, and it is but the equity of nature to expect that you will in return repay us by doing something that will give us pleasure; we do not affect to be your friends disinterestedly, we hope, on the contrary, that our friendship shall be rewarded, by some effort on your part, that will be felt by us as kind and obliging: we would make a compact with you, why do you refuse it?"

"The compact is already sealed," cried Castagnello, with ardour. "Your kindness, madam, has obtained a bond from gratitude, that life will be too short to fulfil."

"But in what way do you prove this; how do you shew this gratitude?" said her Ladyship earnestly.

"By refusing to go with you to England —by refusing to bear my tainted destiny any further into your high and pure society.

Oh, my Lady! you know not the strength that I exert to prevent myself from yielding to the wish of accompanying you and my brother to England, and spending my days with the only beings who have, since childhood, interested my best affections."

The Countess was exceedingly disconcerted by this answer; she felt all its force and delicacy; it contained, at once, the most decided refusal and the most ready acquiescence; it explained the oscillations of Castagnello's mind, and expressed the whole depth of his sense of humiliation. After a short pause her Ladyship said—

"I will urge you no further. If you come with us to England it will give us pleasure; my Lord wishes it; I thought it might open to you some new path to exertion—some avenue to honourable enterprise; but if you decline our invitation from a sense of duty, and I can sympathise in your feeling, it would be unworthy of me, and unworthy of the respect due

to so fine a sentiment, to press you any longer. Do as you think best, and remain assured of the sincerity of our friendship."

Lady Wildwaste spoke these words in a soft and calm voice, that was much more touching than if she had expressed herself more strongly. She would then have enquired what were Castagnello's views and intentions; but her emotion overcame her, and she only added, "I hope you will never have occasion to regret this decision; I cannot, however, but lament, after the experience you have had of the world,—permit me to say affectionately, after the experience you have had of yourself,—that you should thus again venture on the voyage of life without any determined course, motive, or purpose."

"I can withstand any thing but kindness," exclaimed Castagnello: "your goodness subdues me; do with me what you will, but spare me the mortification of asking me to reside with you. My unworthiness sinks me to the earth; in the purity of your society, I am as the old moon in the

embrace of the new,—a darkened omen of storm and trouble. Direct me which ever way you will; to my Lord and yourself I resign my fate, and whatever you determine and advise, the effort shall not be wanting to perform."

"This now is as it should be," said the Countess, rising at the same time and taking his hand. "We shall delay our journey till something is decided for you; and I am confident, Castagnello, that you will not disappoint the expectation I entertain, if you were once embarked in any interesting pursuit."

Castagnello, wholly overpowered by the manner in which this was expressed, and the kindness and dignity with which the Countess pressed his hand, burst into tears, and falling at her feet, kissed the hem of her robe with the worship and reverence due to a saint. In the same moment the Earl, followed by Mowbray, entered the room. An exclamation of astonishment roused Castagnello, and he started up, blushing, and confused, and agitated.

Mowbray hastily retired; but, after the first momentary surprise, Lord Wildwaste rushed forward, and seizing Castagnello by the throat, dragged him with fury into the adjoining saloon. The Countess, perceiving the delusion which possessed her husband, flew after them, and at her entrance, with the air and majesty of Juno descending from the throne of Jupiter, said in a lofty and commanding voice, "Who has prompted you, my Lord, to commit this outrage, and to insult me?"

Convinced at once of his folly and of the offence he had given to her pure and lofty spirit, Lord Wildwaste, as if changed by a spell, unclosed Castagnello from his grasp and moved towards her, but she turned away and retired in silence. He followed her two or three paces, when suddenly recollecting himself he said, "Have I also done you wrong, Castagnello?" but received no reply. Castagnello was indeed incapable at the moment of speaking; for the whole errors of his past life were flashing upon his mind,

with the keen remorse of all their consequences; the distrust, the jealousy, and the forfeiture he had incurred: the precarious tenure by which he held the favor of his brother, was at the same time again demonstrated. He remembered with what precipitancy it had been formerly cancelled, and felt that generosity of disposition afforded but an uncertain compensation for the effects of rashness, where a previous unfavorable impression justified a suspicious interpretation of every equivocal circumstance. He looked at his Lordship however, for a moment with a proud air, but a humble heart, and making him a profound and impressive bow, immediately left the room.

CHAPTER XXVII.

O, Jericho! it was a sight to see—
There lay the portly Justice on his back,
Beside him, Madam and her poodle dog,
Howling in sympathy.—Caps, wigs, and slippers
Were the sad fragments of this dire explosion.

SIR BARBACUE.

MOWBRAY was not altogether satisfied with himself after the discovery, which he supposed had been made in confirmation of his suspicions. It would, perhaps, be doing him injustice to say that it actually gave him any pleasure; but although he was not quite contented, he was yet nevertheless in some degree pleased that his insinuations should have so soon been verified. In order however that he might

not be involved in any of the consequences, until the whole extent of the case was ascertained, on retiring from the scene, he immediately quitted the hotel. Having no precise object in view, and being very anxious to consume a certain portion of time, he walked towards the Mole, passively induced by the law of attraction, co-operating with the declivity of the street. There was a great bustle at the time along its whole extent, occasioned by the moving of packages, Greeks, and Moors, and all descriptions of men and manners. Loud and shrill, over the general murmur and hubbub, resounded the cries of "Aqua Fresca," from the water-sellers, who, with their tanks, like raree-show boxes, on their backs, emulously plied for customers; and ever and anon the nasal squeak of Punchinello, that Don Juan of puppets, was the signal and key-note to occasional chorusses of laughter. Here and there a sly demure friar might be seen—cautiously threading the crowd, apprehensive of his bare unsandled toes

among the profane feet and heels of the seculars—shewing his begging box, with a waxen doll under a glass, representing the Virgin and Child, with moveable eye-lids, which opened and shut as he twirled a secret pin with his fingers: while around the vessels that bore the flag of England, numerous groups were assembled, either to marvel at the superior activity of the British sailors, or to hear the "Grida Inglese," that English cry, which makes the ponderous hogshead start from its birth in the hold, and invokes the anchor from its trust beneath the wave.

Amidst this various congregation of men and merchandise, this epitome of Babel, this summary and sampling of nations and tongues, the motiveless Mowbray was floating, from place to place, like a thing adrift, when a wild shriek, at a short distance behind him, changed in an instant the whole chaos of the scene. A hundred boats from the ships in the port were quickly manned, and the dashing of oars, and the cries of haste and alarm, announced

some extraordinary accident. The water-criers were thrown down beneath their tanks, and with the respective proprietors of punchinello and the saints, amidst their puppets, booths, and boxes, lay scattered and sprawling in all directions, as the multitudinous confusion swept, like a whirlwind, along the Mole.

The cause of the uproar was soon ascertained; a madman had thrown himself into the sea, and as often as the crowd, in their humanity, attempted to seize him, he had plunged from their grasp. He was, however, by the alacrity of an English sailor, at last secured and taken on board the vessel to which the sailor belonged, where he was made fast to a ring-bolt on the deck, and left to dry and cool at his leisure.

Mowbray, on the first alarm being given, had rushed into the vortex of the crowd, where he was almost immediately thrown down by the sudden pressure from all quarters, and so trampled upon, that several of his bones were broken, and he

was hardly able to request the by-standers to assist him back to the hotel.

In the mean time, Lord Wildwaste had joined his Lady in the boudoir, to which she had retired. He was too well aware of her majestic nature to think of offering any apology, but he frankly related, without waiting for her to speak, the whole conversation between him and Mowbray, during their ride: at the conclusion she smiled, and holding out to him her hand, said, "I am, my Lord, sensible of the contrition which you feel, and I rejoice that the derogatory suspicion by which you were betrayed did not originate in your own bosom; but the effects may be fatal to the unfortunate Castagnello. I trust, however, that we may yet together be able to remove the impression. I, however, consider our acquaintance with Mowbray as finished, and I expect your Lordship will do the same. I say expect, not require, because I am sure when you consider the base temerity, or delusion, with which he has

hazarded your peace of mind, you must be convinced that prudence, no less than honor, demands this determination. But no more of him; as I am the cause and occasion of the rupture, let me, also, perfect the breach by dismissing him as he deserves."

Lord Wildwaste had always been sensible of the high-mindedness of his lady, and also of the decision of her character, but he was scarcely prepared for so proud a resolution as this; and he was on the point of making another attempt to soothe her, when they were interrupted by a noise in the hotel, occasioned by Mowbray being brought home from the Mole.

On being informed by one of the servants of what had happened, his Lordship rose suddenly to rush to the apartment of Mowbray, but the Countess took hold of him by the arm; and while she was almost unable to controul her own emotion, she said, "Our resolution to consider him as a stranger I trust is taken; let us abide by it;—even at the risk of being regarded as harsh and

vindictive by you, I intend to do so: all the aid and hospitality that we can bestow on a stranger let us give him freely; but nothing more. See that he is so treated, but act no longer towards him as to lead him into the error to suppose that he can ever be again with you on the footing of a friend."

Lord Wildwaste would have remonstrated against the austerity of the principle, but the manner in which the Countess expressed herself was too absolute and decided to admit of any controversy; he, therefore, merely said, half jocularly, but with perfect sincerity of heart, "You know, Geraldine, that I am myself in fault, and the severity with which you visit my friend, is the sharpest punishment that you can inflict on me." But she replied, with impressive solemnity, "Yes, I do know you are in fault; I, however, believe that you would not have been so, but for that supposed friend." She then added, "Go and see that he is properly attended, and in the

mean time let Castagnello be sent for; we have a task with him, that will not be so easily performed."

During this interview, the august mind of Lady Wildwaste sustained her with great dignity, with a magnanimity that inspired even her Lord with awe, for he was painfully convinced that he had done her wrong, in supposing for an instant that she could have listened to the expression of an ignoble passion from any man whatever. But when he left her, the weakness of her sex broke out, and she found its relief in weeping.

A considerable time elapsed and she was surprised that her husband had neither returned, nor Castagnello appeared, and she summoned her domestic to enquire the cause. The answer was unsatisfactory: "Mr. Mowbray was pronounced in no danger by the medical attendants; no one knew where Castagnello had gone, but his Lordship was abroad in quest of him."

After an absence of two hours, the Earl came home, pale and deeply affected;

and when the Countess asked him concerning his brother, he gave an evasive reply. "I now," he said, with a sigh, "feel the whole justness and virtue of your determination; I was not before half aware of the wrong that Mowbray had done. The punishment is too light. He put to jeopardy the happiness and future comfort of us all; and I fear has wrecked the ill-fated Castagnello for ever."

The maniac who attempted to drown himself was indeed Castagnello. An incidental conversation among some of the assistants who brought Mowbray home, alarmed and apprized Lord Wildwaste of what had happened. His Lordship lost not a moment in seeking for the wretched man, and he found him on board the English vessel, fastened to the ring-bolts of the deck, like a wild beast that could not be trusted at large. The paroxysm, however, had subsided, and Castagnello recognized his brother; but he shut his eyes, and remained torpid, till his Lordship gave

directions to unbind him, and take him to the hotel; at which he looked up, and said abruptly, "No—not there: any place but there!" He was, in consequence, considerately carried to another house.

CHAPTER XX.

My task is done and now I must depart;
Let no one follow me, no spy endeavour
To trace the secret of my hidden home,
But there unknown, forgetting and forgot,
Close my sad eyes in unmolested rest.

THE TRIAL.

EARLY on the following morning, Lord Wildwaste went to the house where he had left Castagnello, and, to his inexpressible concern, was informed that he had some time before walked out, seemingly calm and collected. His Lordship immediately ordered messengers to be dispatched in every direction in quest of him, and returned to the Countess much agitated and full of apprehension. Several hours passed

without the least information of the fugitive; one after another of the messengers came back, and the report of them all was equally unsatisfactory.

The persuasion on the mind of Lord Wildwaste, after what had taken place, was, that Castagnello had destroyed himself; but the Countess was of a different opinion. She ascribed the despair of the preceding day to the feelings of the moment, and assured herself that after his violence had subsided, he would not again attempt a repetition of that terrible crime. But the day passed and no intelligence was obtained; on the following, his Lordship applied to the police, but all the activity of the officers was fruitless.

During this suspense, Lord Wildwaste suffered the greatest distress of mind; he was not more anxious for the recovery of Castagnello, than afflicted with the reproaches of his own bosom. But his concern was unavailing; weeks elapsed, no tidings of the unfortunate adventurer could be obtained; and, with the melancholy con-

viction that he was no more, Lord and Lady Wildwaste departed for England, leaving Mowbray at Naples convalescent, but in a state of feeling far from enviable.

The fate of Castagnello was never thoroughly ascertained; but, many years after, an English traveller, in passing Mount Caucusus, on his way to Trebizond, halted for some days at the romantic town of Abeljazeer, and lodged in the monastery of the Propaganda, where Castagnello formerly resided. At that time, an interesting old man, whom the friars commonly called Isconoscuito, or THE UNKNOWN, was an inmate with them. He had come a pilgrim to their gate about twenty years before, and entreated, for the mercy of Christ, that they would take into the shelter of their house a miserable penitent, desirous of devoting the remainder of his days to religion within their walls.

Moved by his dejection, and the earnestness of his lowly supplications, they consented to receive him; but, from the hour of his admission, he lived a solitary and

contemplative life. Except when engaged in the few little duties of the monastic service, he spent his whole time, when the weather permitted, in rambling among the romantic environs of the Convent. During the storms of winter, he remained alone in his cell, with his clasped hands resting on his knees, and his head drooping on his bosom. He at no time indicated the slightest disposition to enter into conversation; but the Englishman, who was much interested in his appearance and by the mystery in which he seemed to be involved, addressed himself so particularly to the old man, that he at last broke his taciturnity. They became in consequence somewhat intimate, and it appeared that Isconoscuito had in his youth been a great traveller. He had visited all the most remarkable cities and objects in Europe, but he had formed no acquaintance with any of the celebrated characters who were esteemed the ornaments of their time. In speaking one day of London, he enquired of the Englishman if he knew a certain Earl and

Countess of Wildwaste; and when informed that they were both dead, he sighed, but only said that he had met with them, and that they were persons of many amiable qualities.

That Isconoscuito was Castagnello can hardly be questioned; but during the whole time that he resided at the convent, where he died in 1816, nothing further escaped him, by which his previous destiny, or the occasion of his extreme penitence, could be conjectured. His death was slow but gentle. It could scarcely be said, although he was often deeply dejected, that he died of a broken heart, for he had lived with the friars upwards of thirty years; but, undoubtedly, a mining sickness of the spirit contributed to accelerate the decay of his strength.

The pensive cast of his countenance, as his features became sharpened by time, acquired, as it were, a degree of transparency, which disclosed every movement of his mind, and beamed with a singular but melancholy intelligence.

Though in the progress of decay he was wasted to a skeleton, his appearance never assumed that haggard and cadaverous character which commonly belongs to old age when so wasted; and the friars who surrounded his couch at the time of his death, looked at him long after he had breathed his last: so tranquil and easy had been the transit of his spirit, that they did not observe the moment when he expired.

The moral of our tale is not susceptible of being explained with facility in words: unless it is felt in the bosom of the reader, the attempt to convey it in the definite form of an inference would be futile. We have simply endeavoured to delineate a character, not uncommon in the world; who abandoning himself to the impulses of passion, unchecked by any impressed sen-

timent or principle, yet in the main possessed of the rudiments of many virtues, acts throughout life, with as little self-respect, and equally exposed to ignominy, as the libertine, who is as it were naturally vicious and artificially fraudulent.

It is wicked to palliate crime, as it has been done in some instances, with wonderful success, by German authors, of surprising talent; and it is not a good taste that would ingraft interest on any fiction, by adopting incidents calculated to revolt the common sympathies of mankind, as in some late instances nearer home has been the case; but it cannot be detrimental to a judicious benevolence, to discriminate the distinctive characteristics of guilt and error. In the foregoing pages, Castagnello appears to have touched the edge of the grossest iniquities, and in more than one instance to have been spared from the commission of crime, by the intervention of circumstances over which he had no controul: But in all these particular situations, we have en-

deavoured to mark the difference between the error of yielding to temptation, and the viciousness of seeking opportunities to sin. We conceive it quite probable indeed, that there may be many in the world for whose misconduct it would be difficult to find any excuse, and yet who retain in their outcast condition the materials and ruins of a better nature. The wildest flights of guilt are often dictated by the despair of virtue, and victims have been consigned to disgrace and punishment by their own sense of humiliation, when the world, even with all its severity, was disposed to overlook their offences. There is no judge, perhaps, so austere, as the indignant conscience of a generous and ingenuous mind; and we know not how often, when we condemn and exclude the wild and reckless, as unworthy of confidence and as traitors to indulgence, we ought rather to court them into a belief that they are less in fault, than their own high notions of purity and honor suggest.

But in proportion to the tenderness which we would inculcate towards the errors that flow from circumstances and situation, is the austerity which we would claim against the propensities of inborn guilt. Few men have had any experience of life, without soon discovering that the world really contains characters intrinsically bad, whose very observance of the rites of religion and the obligations of the law, in which they sometimes greatly excel, is a proof either of their consciousness of the evil in themselves, or of that evil being actively in operation to procure the sinister advantages sometimes attained by hypocrisy. Between such characters and the thoughtless, the imprudent, or the passionate, there is an immeasurable difference; and, if we have exhibited the adventures of Castagnello,--conceiving that he illustrated the extremest case of the latter class,—more fully than those of Corneli, which we have thrown into the back ground, it is because it can never be favourable to correct moral impressions, to excite sympathy to-

wards the condition or the feelings of the criminal, who sacrifices himself untempted. But the moral tendency of a tale or a drama is the last thing considered by a reader; and if we have failed to interest, we cannot presume to hope that we shall be able to instruct; or expect to redeem by general reflections and metaphysical distinctions, the defects of our narrative, or the want of portraiture in our characters.

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PRINTED BY W. SMITH, KING STREET, LONG ACRE.

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