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“ Il fut en effet la type du Don Juan de Molière, du Faust de Goethe, du Manfred de Byron, et du MELMOTH de Maturin. Grandes images tracées par les plus grands génies de l'Europe.”

‘L'Elixir de longue Vie.’—BALZAC.

“ I felt quite afraid before them, and recollect comparing them to the eyes of the hero of a certain romance called ‘MELMOTH THE WANDERER,’ which used to alarm us boys thirty years ago; eyes of an individual who had made a bargain with a Certain Person, and at an extreme old age retained these eyes in all their awful splendour.”

‘Goethe in his Old Age.’—W. M. THACKERAY.

“ Célèbre voyageur Melmoth, la grande création satanique du révérend Maturin. Quoi de plus grand, quoi de plus puissant relativement à la pauvre humanité que ce pâle et ennuyé Melmoth ?”

‘De l'Essence du Rire.’—CHARLES BAUDELAIRE.

“ Any writing about devils, spectres, or the supernatural generally, whether in poetry or in prose, had always a fascination for him; at one time, say 1844, his supreme delight was the blood-curdling romance of Maturin, ‘MELMOTH THE WANDERER.’”

‘Preface to the Collected Works of D. G. Rossetti, 1886.’—W. M. ROSSETTI.

*the*  
*Maturin*

*//*

# MELMOTH

## THE WANDERER

BY

CHARLES ROBERT MATURIN

AUTHOR OF 'BERTRAM,' 'MONTORIO,' 'THE MILESIAN CHIEF,'  
'THE ALBIOENSES,' ETC.

A NEW EDITION FROM THE ORIGINAL TEXT

WITH A

MEMOIR AND BIBLIOGRAPHY OF MATURIN'S WORKS



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# MELMOTH

## CHAPTER VII

*Pandere res alta terrâ et caligine mersas.*

I'll shew your Grace the strangest sight,—  
Body o' me, what is it, Butts?—

HENRY THE EIGHTH.

“OF the desolation of mind into which the rejection of my appeal plunged me, I can give no account, for I retain no distinguishing image. All colours disappear in the night, and despair has no diary,—monotony is her essence and her curse. Hours have I walked in the garden, without retaining a single impression but that of the sounds of my footsteps;—thought, feeling, passion, and all that employs them, —life and futurity, extinct and swallowed up. I was already like an inhabitant of the land where “all things are forgotten.” I hovered on the regions of mental twilight, where the “light is as darkness.” The clouds were gathering that portended the ap-

proach of utter night, — they were scattered by a sudden and extraordinary light.

“The garden was my constant resort,—a kind of instinct supplying the place of that choice I had no longer energy enough to make, directed me there to avoid the presence of the monks. One evening I saw a change in its appearance. The fountain was out of repair. The spring that supplied it was beyond the walls of the convent, and the workmen, in prosecuting the repairs, had found it necessary to excavate a passage under the garden-wall, that communicated with an open space in the city. This passage, however, was closely watched during the day while the workmen were employed, and well secured at night by a door erected for the purpose, which was chained, barred, and bolted, the moment the workmen quitted the passage. It was, however, left open during the day; and this tantalizing image of escape and freedom, amid the withering certainty of eternal imprisonment, gave a kind of awakened sting to the pains that were becoming obtuse. I entered the passage, and drew as close as possible to the door that shut me out from life. My seat was one of the stones that were scattered about, my head rested on my hand, and my eyes were sadly fixed on the *tree and the well*, the scene of that false miracle. I knew not how long I sat thus. I was aroused by a slight noise near me, and perceived a paper, which some one was thrusting under the door, where a slight inequality in the ground rendered



the attempt just practicable. I stooped and attempted to seize it. It was withdrawn; but a moment after a voice, whose tones my agitation did not permit me to distinguish, whispered, "Alonzo."—"Yes,—yes," I answered eagerly. The paper was instantly thrust into my hands, and I heard a sound of steps retreating rapidly. I lost not a moment in reading the few words it contained. "Be here tomorrow evening at the same hour. I have suffered much on your account,—destroy this." It was the hand of my brother Juan, that hand so well remembered from our late eventful correspondence,—that hand whose traces I never beheld without feeling corresponding characters of hope and confidence retraced in my soul, as lines before invisible appear on exposure to the heat that seems to vivify them. I am surprised that between this and the following evening my agitation did not betray me to the community. But perhaps it is only agitation arising from frivolous causes, that vents itself in external indications,—I was absorbed in mine. It is certain, at least, that my mind was all that day vacillating like a clock that struck every minute the alternate sounds, "*There is hope,—there is no hope.*" The day,—the eternal day, was at last over. Evening came on; how I watched the advancing shades! At vespers, with what delight did I trace the gradual mellowing of the gold and purple tinges that gleamed through the great eastern window, and calculated that their western decline, though slower,

must come at last!—It came. Never was a more propitious evening. It was calm and dark—the garden deserted, not a form to be seen, not a step to be heard in the walks.—I hurried on. Suddenly I thought I heard the sound of something pursuing me. I paused,—it was but the beating of my own heart, audible in the deep stillness of that eventful moment. I pressed my hand on my breast, as a mother would on an infant whom she tried to pacify;—it did not cease to throb, however. I entered the passage. I approached the door, of which hope and despair seemed to stand the alternate portresses. The words still rung in my ears, “Be here to-morrow evening at the same hour.” I stooped, and saw, with eyes that devoured the sight, a piece of paper appear under the door. I seized and buried it in my habit. I trembled with such ecstasy, that I thought I never should be able to carry it undiscovered to my cell. I succeeded, however; and the contents, when I read them, justified my emotion. To my unspeakable uneasiness, great part of it was illegible, from being crushed amid the stones and damp clay contiguous to the door, and from the first page I could hardly extract that he had been kept in the country almost a prisoner, through the influence of the Director; that one day, while shooting with only one attendant, the hope of liberation suddenly filled him with the idea of terrifying this man into submission. Presenting his loaded fowling piece at the terrified wretch, he threatened him with instant

death, if he made the least opposition. The man suffered himself to be bound to a tree; and the next page, though much defaced, gave me to understand he had reached Madrid in safety, and heard for the first time the event of my ill-fated appeal. The effect of this intelligence on the impetuous, sanguine, and affectionate Juan, could be easily traced in the broken and irregular lines in which he vainly attempted to describe it. The letter then proceeded. "I am now in Madrid, pledged body and soul never to quit it till you are liberated. If you possess resolution, this is not impossible,—the doors even of convents are not inaccessible to a silver key. My first object, that of obtaining a communication with you, appeared as impracticable as your escape, yet it has been accomplished. I understood that repairs were going on in the garden, and stationed myself at the door evening after evening, whispering your name, but it was not till the sixth that you were there."

"In another part he detailed his plans more fully. "Money and secrecy are the primary objects,—the latter I can insure by the disguises I wear, but the former I scarce know how to obtain. My escape was so sudden, that I was wholly unprovided, and have been obliged to dispose of my watch and rings since I reached Madrid, to purchase disguises and procure subsistence. I could command what sums I pleased by disclosing my name, but this would be fatal. The report of my being in Madrid would immediately reach my father's ears. My resource must be a Jew;

and when I have obtained money, I have little doubt of effecting your liberation. I have already heard of a person in the convent under very extraordinary circumstances, who would probably not be disinclined to

“Here a long interval occurred in the letter, which appeared to be written at different times. The next lines that I could trace, expressed all the light-heartedness of this most fiery, volatile, and generous of created beings.

“Be not under the least uneasiness about me, it is impossible that I should be discovered. At school I was remarkable for a dramatic talent, a power of personation almost incredible, and which I now find of infinite service. Sometimes I strut as a *Majo*,<sup>1</sup> with enormous whiskers. Sometimes I assume the accent of a Biscayan, and, like the husband of Donna Rodriguez, “am as good a gentleman as the king, because I came from the mountains.” But my favourite disguise is that of a mendicant or a fortune-teller, — the former procures me access to the convent, the other money and intelligence. Thus I am paid, while I appear to be the buyer. When the wanderings and stratagems of the day are over, you would smile to see the loft and pallet to which the heir of Monçada retires. This masquerade amuses *me* more than the spectators. A consciousness of

<sup>1</sup> Something between a bully and a rake.

our superiority is often more delightful when confined to our own breasts, than when expressed by others. Besides, I feel as if the squalid bed, the tottering seat, the cobwebbed rafters, the rancid oil, and all the other *agremens* of my new abode, were a kind of atonement for the wrongs I have done you, Alonzo. My spirits sometimes sink under privations so new to me, but still a kind of playful and wild energy, peculiar to my character, supports me. I shudder at my situation when I retire at night, and place, for the first time *with my own hands*, the lamp on the miserable hearth ; but I laugh when, in the morning, I attire myself in fantastic rags, discolour my face, and modulate my accent, so that the people in the house, (where I tenant a garret), when they meet me on the stairs, do not know the being they saw the preceding evening. I change my abode and costume every day. Feel no fears for me, but come every evening to the door in the passage, for every evening I shall have fresh intelligence for you. My industry is indefatigable, my zeal unquenchable, my heart and soul are on fire in the cause. Again I pledge myself, soul and body, never to quit this spot till you are free,—*depend on me, Alonzo.*”

“I will spare you, Sir, the detail of the feelings,—feelings ! Oh my God, pardon me the prostration of heart with which I kissed those lines, with which I could have consecrated the hand that traced them, and which are worthy only to be devoted to the image of the great Sacrifice. Yet a being so young,

so generous, so devoted, with a heart at once so wild and warm, sacrificing all that rank, and youth, and pleasure could offer,—submitting to the vilest disguises, undergoing the most deplorable privations, struggling with what must have been most intolerable to a proud voluptuous boy, (and I knew he was all this), hiding his revoltings under a gaiety that was assumed, and a magnanimity that was real—and all this for me !——Oh what I felt !

“The next evening I was at the door ; no paper appeared, though I sat watching for it till the declining light made it impossible for me to discover it, had it been there. The next I was more fortunate ; it appeared. The same disguised voice whispered, “Alonzo,” in tones that were the sweetest music that ever reached my ears. This billet contained but a very few lines, (so I found no difficulty in *swallowing it* immediately after perusal). It said, “I have found a Jew, at last, who will advance me a large sum. He pretends not to know me, though I am satisfied he does.—But his usurious interest and illegal practices are my full security. I shall be master of the means of liberating you in a few days ; and I have been fortunate enough to discover how those means may be applied. There is a wretch——”

“Here the billet ended ; and for four following evenings the state of the repairs excited so much curiosity in the convent, (where it is so easy to excite

curiosity), that I dared not to remain in the passage, without the fear of exciting suspicion. All this time I suffered not only the agony of suspended hope, but the dread of this accidental communication being finally closed; for I knew the workmen could not have more than a few days to employ on their task. This I conveyed the intelligence of to my brother in the same way in which I received his billets. Then I reproached myself for hurrying him. I reflected on the difficulties of his concealment—of his dealing with Jews—of his bribing the servants of the convent. I thought of all he had undertaken, and all he had undergone. Then I dreaded that all might be in vain. I would not live over those four days again to be sovereign of the earth. I will give you one slight proof of what I must have felt, when I heard the workmen say, “It will be finished soon.” I used to rise at an hour before matins, displace the stones, trample on the mortar, which I mingled with the clay, so as to render it totally useless; and finally, *re-act Penelope’s web* with such success, that the workmen believed the devil himself was obstructing their operations, and latterly never came to their task unless armed with a vessel of holy water, which they dashed about with infinite sanctimony and profusion. On the fifth evening I caught the following lines beneath the door. “All is settled—I have fixed the Jew on *Jewish terms*. He affects to be ignorant of my real rank, and certain (*future*) wealth, but he knows it all, and dare not, for his own sake, betray

me. The Inquisition, to which I could expose him in a moment, is my best security—I must add, my *only*. There is a wretch in your convent, who took sanctuary from *parricide*, and consented to become a monk, to escape the vengeance of heaven in this life at least. I have heard, that this monster cut his own father's throat, as he sat at supper, to obtain a small sum which he had lost at gambling. His partner, who was a loser also, had, it seems, made a vow to an image of the Virgin, that was in the neighbourhood of the wretched house where they gamed, to present two wax tapers before it in the event of his success. He lost; and, in the fury of a gamester, as he repassed the image, he struck and spit at it. This was very shocking—but what was it to the crime of him who is now an inmate of your convent? The one defaced an image, the other murdered his father: Yet the former expired under tortures the most horrible, and the other, after some vain efforts to elude justice, *took sanctuary*, and is now a lay-brother in your convent. On the crimes of this wretch I build all my hopes. His soul must be saturated with avarice, sensuality, and desperation. There is nothing he will hesitate at if he be bribed;—for money he will undertake your liberation—for money he will undertake to strangle you in your cell. He envies Judas the thirty pieces of silver for which the Redeemer of mankind was sold. *His* soul might be purchased at half-price. Such is the instrument with which I must work.—It is horrible, but



necessary. I have read, that from the most venomous reptiles and plants, have been extracted the most sanative medicines. I will squeeze the juice, and trample on the weed.

“Alonzo, tremble not at these words. Let not your habits prevail over your character. Entrust your liberation to me, and the instruments I am compelled to work with; and doubt not, that the hand which traces these lines, will soon be clasping that of a brother in freedom.”

“I read these lines over and over again in the solitude of my cell, when the excitement of watching for, secreting, and perusing it *for the first time*, were over, and many doubts and fears began to gather round me like twilight clouds. In proportion as Juan’s confidence increased, mine appeared to diminish. There was a terrifying contrast between the fearlessness, independence, and enterprise of *his* situation, and the loneliness, timidity, and danger of mine. While the hope of escape, through his courage and address, still burnt like an inextinguishable light in the depth of my heart, I still dreaded entrusting my destiny to a youth so impetuous, though so affectionate; one who had fled from his parents’ mansion, was living by subterfuge and imposture in Madrid, and had engaged, as his coadjutor, a wretch whom nature must revolt from. Upon whom and what did my hopes of liberation rest? On the affectionate energies of a wild, enterprising, and unaided being, and the co-operation of a demon, who might snatch

at a bribe, and then shake it in triumph in his ears, as the seal of our mutual and eternal despair, while he flung the key of liberation into an abyss where no light could penetrate, and from which no arm could redeem it.

“Under these impressions, I deliberated, I prayed, I wept in the agony of doubt. At last I wrote a few lines to Juan, in which I honestly stated my doubts and apprehensions. I stated first my doubts of the possibility of my escape. I said, “Can it be imagined that a being whom all Madrid, whom all Spain, is on the watch for, can elude their detection? Reflect, dear Juan, that I am staked against a community, a priesthood, a nation. The escape of a monk is almost impossible,—but his concealment afterwards is downright impossible. Every bell in every convent in Spain would ring out *untouched* in pursuit of the fugitive. The military, civil, and ecclesiastical powers, would all be on the “*qui vive.*” Hunted, panting, and despairing, I might fly from place to place—no place affording me shelter. The incensed powers of the church—the fierce and vigorous gripe of the law—the execration and hatred of society—the suspicions of the lowest order among whom I must lurk, to shun and curse their penetration; think of encountering all this, while the fiery cross of the Inquisition blazes in the van, followed by the whole pack, shouting, cheering, hallooing on to the prey. Oh Juan! if you knew the terrors under which I live—under which I would rather die than

encounter them again, even on the condition of liberation! Liberation! Great God! what chance of liberation for a monk in Spain? There is not a cottage where I could rest one night in security—there is not a cavern whose echoes would not resound to the cry of my apostacy. If I was hid in the bowels of the earth, they would discover me, and tear me from its entrails. My beloved Juan, when I consider the omnipotence of the ecclesiastical power in Spain, may I not address it in the language applied to Omnipotence itself: “If I climb up to heaven, thou art *there*;—if I go down to hell, thou art *there* also;—if I take the wings of the morning, and flee unto the *uttermost parts of the sea, even there*—” And suppose my liberation was accomplished—suppose the convent plunged in a profound torpor, and the unsleeping eye of the ‘Inquisition winked at my apostacy—where am I to reside? how am I to procure subsistence? The luxurious indolence of my early years unfit me for active employment. The horrible conflict of apathy the deepest, with hostility the most deadly, in monastic life, disqualifies me for society. Throw the doors of every convent in Spain open, and for what will their inmates be fit? For nothing that will either embellish or improve it. What could I do to serve myself?—what could I do that would not betray me? I should be a persecuted, breathless fugitive,—a branded *Cain*. Alas!—perhaps expiring in flames, I might see *Abel* not *my* victim, but that of the Inquisition.”

“When I had written these lines, with an impulse for which all can account but the writer, I tore them to atoms, burnt them deliberately by the assistance of the lamp in my cell, and went to watch again at the door in the passage—the door of hope. In passing through the gallery, I encountered, for a moment, a person of a most forbidding aspect. I drew on one side—for I had made it a point not to mix, in the slightest degree, with the community, beyond what the discipline of the house compelled me to. As he passed, however, he touched my habit, and gave a most significant look. I immediately comprehended this was the person Juan alluded to in his letter. And in a few moments after, on descending to the garden, I found a note that confirmed my conjectures. It contained these words: “I have procured the money—I have secured our agent. He is an incarnate devil, but his resolution and intrepidity are unquestionable. Walk in the cloister to-morrow evening—some one will touch your habit—grasp his left wrist, that will be the signal. If he hesitates, whisper to him—“Juan,” he will answer—“Alonzo.” That is your man, consult with him. Every step that I have taken will be communicated to you by him.”

“After reading these lines, I appeared to myself like a piece of mechanism wound up to perform certain functions, in which its co-operation was irresistible. The precipitate vigour of Juan’s movements seemed to impel mine without my own concurrence;

and as the shortness of the time left me no opportunity for deliberation, it left me also none for choice. I was like a clock whose hands are pushed forward, and I struck the hours I was impelled to strike. When a powerful agency is thus exercised on us,—when another undertakes to think, feel, and act for us, we are delighted to transfer to him, not only our physical, but our moral responsibility. We say, with selfish cowardice, and self-flattering passiveness, “Be it so—you have decided for me,”—without reflecting that at the bar of God there is no bail. So I walked the next evening in the cloister. I composed my habit,—my looks; any one would have imagined me plunged in profound meditation,—and so I was, but not on the subjects with which they conceived I was occupied. As I walked, some one touched my habit. I started, and, to my consternation, one of the monks asked my pardon for the sleeve of his tunic having touched mine. Two minutes after another touched my habit. I felt the difference,—there was an intelligential and communicative force in his grasp. He seized it as one who did not fear to be known, and who had no need to apologise. How is it that crime thus seizes us in life with a fearless grasp, while the touch of conscience trembles on the verge of our garment. One would almost parody the words of the well known Italian proverb, and say that guilt is masculine, and innocence feminine. *I grasped his wrist* with a trembling hand, and whispered — “Juan,” in the

same breath. He answered—"Alonzo," and passed me onward in a moment. I had then a few moments leisure to reflect on a destiny thus singularly entrusted to a being whose affections honoured humanity, and a being whose crimes disgraced it. I was suspended like Mahomet's tomb between heaven and earth. I felt an antipathy indescribable to hold any communication with a monster who had tried to hide the stains of parricide, by casting over their bloody and ineffaceable traces the shroud of monasticism. I felt also an inexpressible terror of Juan's passions and precipitancy; and I felt ultimately that I was in the power of all I dreaded most, and must submit to the operation of that power for my liberation.

"I was in the cloisters the following evening. I cannot say I walked with a step so equal, but I am sure I did with a step much more artificially regular. For the second time the same person touched my habit, and whispered the name of Juan. After this I could no longer hesitate. I said, in passing, "I am in your power." A hoarse repulsive voice answered, "No, I am in yours." I murmured, "Well, then, I understand you, we belong to each other."—"Yes. We must not speak here, but a fortunate opportunity presents itself for our communication. To-morrow will be the eve of the feast of Pentecost; the vigil is kept by the whole community, who go two and two every hour to the altar, pass their hour in prayer, and then are succeeded by two more, and this con-

tinues all night. Such is the aversion with which you have inspired the 'community, that they have one and all refused to accompany you during your hour, which is to be from two till three. You will therefore be alone, and during your hour I will come and visit you,—we shall be undisturbed and unsuspected." At these words he quitted me. The next night was the eve of Pentecost, the monks went two and two all night to the altar,—at two o'clock my turn arrived. They rapped at my cell, and I descended to the church alone."

## CHAPTER VIII

Ye monks and nuns throughout the land,  
Who go to church at night in pairs,  
Never take bell-ropes in your hands,  
To raise you up again from prayers.

COLMAN.

“ I AM not superstitious, but, as I entered the church, I felt a chill of body and soul inexpressible. I approached the altar, and attempted to kneel, — an invisible hand repelled me. A voice seemed to address me from the recesses of the altar, and demand what brought me there? I reflected that those who had just quitted that spot had been absorbed in prayer, that those who were to succeed me would be engaged in the same profound homage, while I sought the church with a purpose of imposture and deception, and abused the hour allotted to the divine worship in contriving the means to escape from it. I felt I was a deceiver, shrouding my fraud in the very veils of the temple. I trembled at my purpose and at myself. I knelt, however, though I did not dare to pray. The steps of the altar felt unusually cold, — I shuddered at the silence I was compelled to



observe. Alas ! how can we expect that object to succeed, which we dare not entrust to God. Prayer, Sir, when we are deeply engaged in it, not only makes us eloquent, but communicates a kind of answering eloquence to the objects around us. At former times, while I poured out my heart before God, I felt as if the lamps burnt brighter, and the images smiled,—the silent midnight air was filled with forms and voices, and every breeze that sighed by the casement bore to my ear the harpings of a thousand angels. Now all was stilled,—the lamps, the images, the altar, the roof, seemed to behold me in silence. They surrounded me like witnesses, whose presence alone is enough to condemn you, without their uttering a word. I dared not look up,—I dared not speak,—I dared not pray, lest it would unfold a thought I could not supplicate a blessing on ; and this kind of keeping a secret, which God must know, is at once so vain and impious.

“I had not remained long in this state of agitation, when I heard a step approach—it was that of him I expected. “Rise,” said he, for I was on my knees ; “rise,—we have no time to lose. You have but an hour to remain in the church, and I have much to tell you in that hour.” I rose. “To-morrow night is fixed for your escape.”—“To-morrow night,—merciful God !”—“Yes ; in desperate steps there is always more danger from delay than from precipitation. A thousand eyes and ears are on the watch already,—a single sinister or ambiguous movement

would render it impossible to escape their vigilance. There may be some danger in hastening matters thus, but it is unavoidable. To-morrow night, after midnight, descend to the church, it is probable no one will then be here. If any one should, (engaged in recollection or in penance), retire to avoid suspicion. Return as soon as the church is empty,—I will be here. Do you observe that door?" and he pointed to a low door which I had often observed before, but never remembered to have seen opened; "I have obtained the key of that door,—no matter by what means. It formerly led to the vaults of the convent, but, for some extraordinary reasons, which I have not time to relate, another passage has been opened, and the former has not been employed or frequented for many years. From thence branches another passage, which, I have heard, opens by a trap-door into the garden."—"Heard," I repeated; "Good God! is it on report, then, you depend in a matter so momentous? If you are not certain that such a passage exists, and that you will be able to trace its windings, may we not be wandering amid them all night? Or perhaps——" "Interrupt me no more with those faint objections; I have no time to listen to fears which I can neither sympathise with or obviate. When we get through the trap-door into the garden, (if ever we do), another danger awaits us." He paused, I thought, like a man who is watching the effect of the terrors he excites, not from malignity but vanity, merely to magnify his own

courage in encountering them. I was silent; and, as he heard neither flattery nor fear, he went on. "Two fierce dogs are let loose in the garden every night,—but they must be taken care of. The wall is sixteen feet high,—but your brother has provided a ladder of ropes, which he will fling over, and by which you may descend on the other side in safety."—"Safety! but then Juan will be in danger."—"Interrupt me no more,—the danger within the walls is the least you have to dread, beyond them, where can you seek for refuge or secrecy? Your brother's money will enable you possibly to escape from Madrid. He will bribe high, and every inch of your way must be paved with his gold. But, after that, so many dangers present themselves, that the enterprise and the danger seem but just begun. How will you cross the Pyrennees? How——" and he passed his hand over his forehead, with the air of a man engaged in an effort beyond his powers, and sorely perplexed about the means to effect it. This expression, so full of sincerity, struck me forcibly. It operated as a balance against all my former prepossessions. But still the more confidence I felt in him, the more I was impressed by his fears. I repeated after him, "How is it possible for me to escape ultimately? I may, by your assistance, traverse those intricate passages, whose cold dews I feel already distilling on me. I may emerge into light, ascend and descend the wall, but, after that, how am I to escape?—how am I even to live? All

Spain is but one great monastery,—I must be a prisoner every step that I take.”—“Your brother must look to that,” said he abruptly; “I have done what I have undertaken.” I then pressed him with several questions relating to the details of my escape. His answer was monotonous, unsatisfactory, and evasive, to a degree that again filled me first with suspicion, and then with terror. I asked, “But how have you obtained possession of the keys?”—“It is not your business to inquire.” It was singular that he returned the same answer to every question I put to him, relative to his becoming possessed of the means to facilitate my escape, so that I was compelled to desist unsatisfied, and revert to what he had told me. — “But, then, that terrible passage near the vaults,—the chance, the fear that we may never emerge to light! Think of wandering amid sepulchral ruins, of stumbling over the bones of the dead, of encountering what I cannot describe,—the horror of being among those who are neither the living or the dead;—those dark and shadowless things that sport themselves with the reliques of the dead, and feast and love amid corruption,—ghastly, mocking, and terrific. *Must* we pass near the vaults?”—“What matter? perhaps I have more reason to dread them than you. Do *you* expect the spirit of your father to start from the earth to blast you?” At these words, which he uttered in a tone intended to inspire me with confidence, I shuddered with horror. They were uttered by a parricide, boasting of his crime in a

church at midnight, amid saints, whose images were silent, but seemed to tremble. For relief I reverted to the unscaleable wall, and the difficulty of managing the ladder of ropes without detection. The same answer was on his lips,—“Leave that to me,—all that is settled.” While he answered thus, he always turned his face away, and broke his words into monosyllables. At last I felt that the case was desperate,—that I must trust every thing to him. *To him!* Oh, my God! what I felt when I said this to myself! The conviction thrilled on my soul,—I am in his power. And yet, even under the impression, I could not help recurring to the impracticable difficulties that appeared to obstruct my escape. He then lost patience,—reproached me with timidity and ingratitude; and, while resuming his naturally ferocious and menacing tone, I actually felt more confidence in him than when he had attempted to disguise it. Half-remonstrance, half-invective as it was, what he said displayed so much ability, intrepidity, and art, that I began to feel a kind of doubtful security. I conceived, at least, that if any being on earth could effect my liberation, this was the man. He had no conception of fear,—no idea of conscience. When he hinted at his having murdered his father, it was done to impress me with an idea of his hardihood. I saw this from his expression, for I had involuntarily looked up at him. His eye had neither the hollowness of remorse, or the wandering of fear,—it glared on me bold, challenging, and prominent. He had but

one idea annexed to the word danger,—that of strong excitement. He undertook a perilous attempt as a gamester would sit down to encounter an antagonist worthy of him ; and, if life and death were the stake, he only felt as if he were playing at a higher rate, and the increased demands on his courage and talent actually supplied him with the means of meeting them. Our conference was now nearly at an end, when it occurred to me that this man was exposing himself to a degree of danger which it was almost incredible he should brave on my account ; and this mystery, at least, I was resolved to penetrate. I said, “But how will you provide for your own safety ? What will become of you when my escape is discovered ? Would not the most dreadful punishments attend even the suspicion of your having been an agent in it, and what must be the result when that suspicion is exchanged for the most undeniable certainty ?” It is impossible for me to describe the change his expression underwent while I uttered these words. He looked at me for some time without speaking, with an indefinable mixture of sarcasm, contempt, doubt, and curiosity in his countenance, and then attempted to laugh, but the muscles of his face were too stubborn and harsh to admit of this modulation. To features like his, frowns were a habit, and smiles a convulsion. He could produce nothing but a *rictus Sardonius*, the terrors of which there is no describing. It is very frightful to behold crime in its merriment,—its smile must be purchased

by many groans. My blood ran cold as I looked at him. I waited for the sound of his voice as a kind of relief. At length he said, "Do you imagine me such an idiot as to promote your escape at the risk of imprisonment for life,—perhaps of immurement,—perhaps of the Inquisition?" and again he laughed. "No, we must escape together. Could you suppose I would have so much anxiety about an event, in which I had no part but that of an assistant? It was of my own danger I was thinking,—it was of my own safety I was doubtful. Our situation has happened to unite very opposite characters in the same adventure, but it is an union inevitable and *inseparable*. Your destiny is now bound to mine by a tie which no human force can break,—we part no more for ever. The secret that each is in possession of, must be watched by the other. Our lives are in each other's hands, and a moment of absence might be that of treachery. We must pass life in each watching every breath the other draws, every glance the other gives,—in dreading sleep as an involuntary betrayer, and watching the broken murmurs of each other's restless dreams. We may hate each other, torment each other,—worst of all, we may be weary of each other, (for hatred itself would be a relief, compared to the tedium of our inseparability), but separate we must never." At this picture of the liberty for which I had risked so much, my very soul recoiled. I gazed on the formidable being with whom my existence was thus incorporated. He was now retiring, when

he paused at some distance to repeat his last words, or perhaps to observe their effect. I was sitting on the altar, — it was late, — the lamps in the church burned very dimly, and, as he stood in the aisle, he was placed in such a position, with regard to that which hung from the roof, that the light fell only on his face and one hand, which he extended towards me. The rest of his figure, enveloped in darkness, gave to this bodyless and spectre head an effect truly appalling. The ferocity of his features, too, was softened into a heavy and death-like gloom, as he repeated, “We part never,—I must be near you for ever,” and the deep tones of his voice rolled like subterranean thunder round the church. A long pause followed. He continued to stand in the same posture, nor had I power to change mine. The clock struck three, its sound reminded me that my hour had expired. We separated, each taking different directions; and the two monks who succeeded me luckily came a few minutes late, (both of them yawning most fearfully), so our departure was unobserved.

“The day that followed I have no more power of describing, than of analysing a dream to its component parts of sanity, delirium, defeated memory, and triumphant imagination. The sultan in the eastern tale, who plunged his head in a bason of water, and, before he raised it again, passed through adventures the most vicissitudinous and incredible— was a monarch, a slave, a husband, a widower, a



father, childless,—in five minutes, never underwent the changes of *mind* that I did during that memorable day. I was a prisoner;—free, — a happy being, surrounded by smiling infants, — a victim of the Inquisition, writhing amid flames and execrations. I was a maniac, oscillating between hope and despair. I seemed to myself all that day to be pulling the rope of a bell, whose alternate knell was *heaven—hell*, and this rung in my ears with all the dreary and ceaseless monotony of the bell of the convent. Night came at last. I might almost say *day came*, for that day had been my night. Every thing was propitious to me,—the convent was all hushed. I put my head several times out of my cell, to be assured of this, — *all was hushed*. There was not a step in the corridor, — not a voice, not a whisper to be heard under a roof containing so many souls. I stole from my cell, I descended to the church. This was not unusual for those whose consciences or nerves were disturbed, during the sleepless gloom of a conventual night. As I advanced to the door of the church, where the lamps were always kept burning, I heard a human voice. I retreated in terror;—then I ventured to give a glance. An old monk was at prayers before one of the images of the saints, and the object of his prayers was to be relieved, not from the anguish of conscience, or the annihilation of monasticism, but from the pains of a toothache, for which he had been desired to apply his gums to the image of a saint quite notorious for her efficacy in

such cases.<sup>1</sup> The poor, old, tortured wretch, prayed with all the fervency of agony, and then rubbed his gums over and over again on the cold marble, which increased his complaint, his suffering, and his devotion. I watched, listened,—there was something at once ludicrous and frightful in my situation. I felt inclined to laugh at my own distress, while it was rising almost to agony every moment. I dreaded, too, the approach of another intruder, and feeling my fear about to be realized by the approach of some one, I turned round, and, to my inexpressible relief, saw my companion. I made him comprehend, by a sign, how I was prevented from entering the church; he answered me in the same way, and retreated a few steps, but not without shewing me a bunch of huge keys under his habit. This revived my spirits, and I waited for another half-hour in a state of mental excruciation, which, were it inflicted on the bitterest enemy I have on earth, I think I would have cried, “Hold,—hold, spare him.” The clock struck two,—I writhed and stamped with my feet, as loud as I dared, on the floor of the passage. I was not at all tranquillized by the visible impatience of my companion, who started, from time to time, from his hiding-place behind a pillar of the cloister, flung on me a glance—no, a glare—of wild and restless inquiry, (which I answered with one of despondency), and retired, grinding curses between his teeth, whose horrible grating I could hear distinctly in the

<sup>1</sup> Vide Moore's View of France and Italy.

intervals of my long - withheld breath. At last I took a desperate step. I walked into the church, and, going straight up to the altar, prostrated myself on the steps. The old monk observed me. He believed that I had come there with the same purpose, if not with the same feelings, as himself; and he approached me, to announce his intention of joining in my aspirations, and intreating an interest in them, *as the pain had now reached from the lower jaw to the upper.* There is something that one can hardly describe in this union of the lowest with the highest interests of life. I was a prisoner, panting for emancipation, and staking my existence on the step I was compelled to take, — my whole interest for time, and perhaps for eternity, hung on a moment; and beside me knelt a being whose destiny was decided already, who could be nothing but a monk for the few years of his worthless existence, and who was supplicating a short remission from a temporary pain, that I would have endured my whole life for an hour's liberty. As he drew near me, and supplicated an interest in my prayers, I shrunk away. I felt a difference in the object of our addresses to God, that I dared not search my heart for the motive of. I knew not, at the moment, which of us was right, — he, whose prayer did no dishonour to the place, — or I, who was to struggle against a disorganized and unnatural state of life, whose vows I was about to violate. I knelt with him, however, and prayed for the removal of his pain with a

sincerity that cannot be questioned, as the success of my petitions might be the means of procuring his absence. As I knelt, I trembled at my own hypocrisy. I was profaning the altar of God,—I was mocking the sufferings of the being I supplicated for,—I was the worst of all hypocrites, a hypocrite on my knees, and at the altar. Yet, was I not compelled to be so? If I *was* a hypocrite, who had made me one? If I profaned the altar, who had dragged me there, to insult it by vows my soul belied and reversed faster than my lips could utter them? But this was no time for self-examination. I knelt, prayed, and trembled, till the poor sufferer, weary of his ineffectual and unanswered supplications, rose, and began to crawl away. For a few minutes I shivered in horrible anxiety, lest some other intruder might approach, but the quick decisive step that trod the aisle restored my confidence in a moment,—it was my companion. He stood beside me. He uttered a few curses, which sounded very shocking in my ears, more from the force of habit, and influence of the place, than from the meaning attached to them, and then hurried on *to the door*. A large bunch of keys was in his hand, and I followed instinctively this pledge of my liberation.

“The door was very low—we descended to it by four steps. He applied his key, muffling it in the sleeve of his habit to suppress the sound. At every application he recoiled, gnashed his teeth, stamped—then applied both hands. The lock did not give

way—I clasped my hands in agony—I tossed them over my head. “Fetch a light,” he said in a whisper; “take a lamp from before one of those figures.” The levity with which he spoke of the holy images appalled me, and the act appeared to me nothing short of sacrilege; yet I went and took a lamp, which, with a shuddering hand, I held to him as he again tried the key. During this second attempt, we communicated in whispers those fears that left us scarce breath even for whispers. “Was not that a noise?”—“No, it was the echo of this jarring, stubborn lock. Is there no one coming?”—“Not one.”—“Look out into the passage.”—“Then I cannot hold the light to you.”—“No matter—any thing but detection.”—“Any thing for escape,” I retorted with a courage that made him start, as I set down the lamp, and joined my strength to his to turn the key. It grated, resisted; the lock seemed invincible. Again we tried, with crunched teeth, indrawn breath, and fingers stripped almost to the bone,—in vain.—Again—in vain.—Whether the natural ferocity of his temper bore disappointment worse than mine, or that, like many men of undoubted courage, he was impatient of a *slight* degree of physical pain, in a struggle where he would have risked and lost life without a murmur,—or how it was, I know not,—but he sunk down on the steps leading to the door, wiped away the big drops of toil and terror from his forehead with the sleeve of his habit, and cast on me a look that was at once the pledge of sincerity and of

despair. The clock struck three. The sound rung in my ears like the trumpet of the day of doom—the trumpet that *will sound*. He clasped his hands with a fierce and convulsive agony, that might have pictured the last struggles of the impenitent malefactor,—that agony without remorse, that suffering without requital or consolation, that, if I may say so, arrays crime in the dazzling robe of magnanimity, and makes us admire the fallen spirit, with whom we dare not sympathize. “We are undone,” he cried; “*you* are undone. At the hour of three another monk is to enter on his hour of recollection.” And he added, in a lower tone of horror inexpressible, “I hear his steps in the passage.” At the moment he uttered these words, the key, that I had never ceased to struggle with, turned in the lock. The door opened, the passage lay free to us. My companion recovered himself at the sight, and in the next moment we were both in the passage. Our first care was to remove the key, and lock the door on the inside; and during this, we had the satisfaction to discover, that there was no one in the church, no one approaching it. Our fears had deceived us; we retired from the door, looked at each other with a kind of breathless, half-revived confidence, and began our progress through the vault in silence and in safety. In safety! my God! I yet tremble at the thought of that subterranean journey, amid the vaults of a convent, with a parricide for my companion. But what is there that danger will not

familiarize us with? Had I been told such a story of another, I would have denounced him as the most reckless and desperate being on earth—yet *I was the man*. I had secured the lamp, (whose light appeared to reproach me with sacrilege at every gleam it shed on our progress), and followed my companion in silence. Romances have made your country, Sir, familiar with tales of subterranean passages, and supernatural horrors. All these, painted by the most eloquent pen, must fall short of the breathless horror felt by being engaged in an enterprise beyond his powers, experience, or calculation, driven to trust his life and liberation to hands that reeked with a father's blood. It was in vain that I tried *to make up my mind*,—that I said to myself, “This is to last but for a short time,”—that I struggled to force on myself the conviction that it was necessary to have such associates in desperate enterprises;—it was all in vain. I trembled at my situation,—at myself, and that is a terror we can never overcome. I stumbled over the stones,—I was chilled with horror at every step. A blue mist gathered before my eyes,—it furred the edges of the lamp with a dim and hazy light. My imagination began to operate, and when I heard the curses with which my companion reproached my involuntary delay, I began almost to fear that I was following the steps of a demon, who had lured me there for purposes beyond the reach of imagination to picture. Tales of superstition crowded on me like images of terror on those who are in the

dark. I had heard of infernal beings who deluded monks with the hopes of liberation, seduced them into the vaults of the convent, and then proposed conditions which it is almost as horrible to relate as to undergo the performance of. I thought of being forced to witness the unnatural revels of a diabolical feast,—of seeing the rotting flesh distributed,—of drinking the dead corrupted blood,—of hearing the anthems of fiends howled in insult, on that awful verge where life and eternity mingle,—of hearing the hallelujahs of the choir, echoed even through the vaults, where demons were yelling the *black mass* of their infernal Sabbath,—I thought of all that the interminable passages, the livid light, and the diabolical companion, might suggest.

“Our wanderings in the passage seemed to be endless. My companion turned to right, to left,—advanced, retreated, paused,—(the pause was dreadful)!—Then advanced again, tried another direction, where the passage was so low that I was obliged to crawl on my hands and knees to follow him, and even in this posture my head struck against the ragged roof. When we had proceeded for a considerable time, (at least so it appeared to me, for minutes are hours in the *noctuary* of terror,—terror has no *diary*), this passage became so narrow and so low, that I could proceed no farther, and wondered how my companion could have advanced beyond me. I called to him, but received no answer; and, in the darkness of the passage, or rather hole, it was impossible to see



ten inches before me. I had the lamp, too, to watch, which I had held with a careful trembling hand, but which began to burn dim in the condensed and narrow atmosphere. A gush of terror rose in my throat. Surrounded as I was by damps and dews, my whole body felt in a fever. I called again, but no voice answered. In situations of peril, the imagination is unhappily fertile, and I could not help recollecting and *applying* a story I had once read of some travellers who attempted to explore the vaults of the Egyptian pyramids. One of them, who was advancing, as I was, on his hands and knees, stuck in the passage, and, whether from terror, or from the natural consequences of his situation, swelled so that it was impossible for him to retreat, advance, or allow a passage for his companions. The party were on their return, and finding their passage stopped by this irremoveable obstruction, their lights trembling on the verge of extinction, and their guide terrified beyond the power of direction or advice, proposed, in the selfishness to which the feeling of vital danger reduces all, to cut off the limbs of the wretched being who obstructed their passage. He heard this proposal, and, contracting himself with agony at the sound, was reduced, by that strong muscular spasm, to his usual dimensions, dragged out, and afforded room for the party to advance. He was suffocated, however, in the effort, and left behind a corse. All this detail, that takes many words to tell, rushed on my soul in a moment;—on my soul?—no, on my

body. I was all physical feeling,—all intense corporeal agony, and God only knows, and man only can feel, how that agony can absorb and annihilate all other feeling within us,—how we could, in such a moment, feed on a parent, to gnaw out our passage into life and liberty, as sufferers in a wreck have been known to gnaw their own flesh, for the support of that existence which the unnatural morsel was diminishing at every agonizing bite.

“I tried to crawl backwards,—I succeeded. I believe the story I recollected had an effect on me, I felt a contraction of muscles corresponding to what I had read of. I felt myself almost liberated by the sensation, and the next moment I was actually so;—I had got out of the passage I knew not how. I must have made one of those extraordinary exertions, whose energy is perhaps not only increased by, but dependent on, our unconsciousness of them. However it was, I was extricated, and stood breathless and exhausted, with the dying lamp in my hand, staring around me, and seeing nothing but the black and dripping walls, and the low arches of the vault, that seemed to lower over me like the frown of an eternal hostility,—a frown that forbids hope or escape. The lamp was rapidly extinguishing in my hand,—I gazed on it with a fixed eye. I knew that my life, and, what was dearer than my life, my liberation, depended on my watching its last glimpse, yet I gazed on it with the eye of an idiot,—a stupid stare. The lamp glimmered more faintly,—its

dying gleams awoke me to recollection. I roused myself,—I looked around. A strong flash discovered an object near me. I shuddered,—I uttered cries, though I was unconscious of doing so, for a voice said to me,—“Hush, be silent; I left you only to reconnoitre the passages. I have made out the way to the trap-door,—be silent, and all is well.” I advanced trembling, my companion appeared trembling too. He whispered, “Is the lamp so nearly extinguished?”—“You see.”—“Try to keep it in for a few moments.”—“I will; but, if I cannot, what then?”—“Then we must perish,” he added, with an execration that I thought would have brought down the vaults over our heads. It is certain, Sir, however, that desperate sentiments are best suited to desperate emergencies, and this wretch’s blasphemies gave me a kind of horrible confidence in his courage. On he went, muttering curses before me; and I followed, watching the last light of the lamp with agony increased by my fear of further provoking my horrible guide. I have before mentioned how our feelings, even in the most fearful exigencies, dwindle into petty and wretched details. With all my care, however, the lamp declined,—quivered,—flashed a pale light, like the smile of despair on me, and was extinguished. I shall never forget the look my guide threw on me by its sinking light. I had watched it like the last beatings of an expiring heart, like the shiverings of a spirit about to part for eternity. I saw it extinguished, and believed myself already

among those for "whom the blackness of darkness is reserved for ever."

"It was at this moment that a faint sound reached our frozen ears ;—it was the chaunt of matins, performed by candle-light at this season of the year, which was begun in the chapel now far above us. This voice of heaven thrilled us, — we seemed the pioneers of darkness, on the very frontiers of hell. This superb insult of celestial triumph, that amid the strains of hope spoke despair to us, announced a God to those who were stopping their ears against the sound of his name, had an effect indescribably awful. I fell to the ground, whether from stumbling from the darkness, or shrinking from emotion, I know not. I was roused by the rough arm, and rougher voice of my companion. Amid execrations that froze my blood, he told me this was no time for failing or for fear. I asked him, trembling, what I was to do ? He answered, "Follow me, and feel your way in darkness." Dreadful sounds !—Those who tell us *the whole* of our calamity always appear malignant, for our hearts, or our imaginations, always flatter us that it is not so great as reality proves it to be. Truth is told us by any mouth sooner than our own.

"In darkness, total darkness, and on my hands and knees, for I could no longer stand, I followed him. This motion soon affected my head ; I grew giddy first, then stupified. I paused. He growled a curse, and I instinctively quickened my movements, like a dog who hears the voice of a chiding master.

My habit was now in rags from my struggles, my knees and hands stript of skin. I had received several severe bruises on my head, from striking against the jagged and unhewn stones which formed the irregular sides and roof of this eternal passage. And, above all, the unnatural atmosphere, combined with the intensity of my emotion, had produced a thirst, the agony of which I can compare to nothing but that of a burning coal dropt into my throat, which I seemed to suck for moisture, but which left only drops of fire on my tongue. Such was my state, when I called out to my companion that I could proceed no farther. "Stay there and rot, then," was the answer; and perhaps the most soothing words of encouragement could not have produced so strong an effect on me. This confidence of despair, this bravado against danger, that menaced the power in his very citadel, gave me a temporary courage,—but what is courage amid darkness and doubt? From the faltering steps, the suffocated breath, the muttered curses, I guessed what was going on. I was right. The final—hopeless stop followed instantly, announced by the last wild sob, the cranching of despairing teeth, the claspings, or rather clap, of the lockèd hands, in the terrible extacy of utter agony. I was kneeling behind him at that moment, and I echoed every cry and gesture with a violence that started my guide. He silenced me with curses. Then he attempted to pray; but his prayers sounded so like curses, and his curses were so like prayers to

the evil one, that, choaking with horror, I implored him to cease. He did cease, and for nearly half an hour neither of us uttered a word. We lay beside each other like two panting dogs that I have read of, who lay down to die close to the animal they pursued, whose fur they fanned with their dying breath, while unable to mouthe her.

“Such appeared emancipation to us,—so near, and yet so hopeless. We lay thus, not daring to speak to each other, for who could speak but of despair, and which of us dared to aggravate the despair of the other. This kind of fear which we know already felt by others, and which we dread to aggravate by uttering, *even to those who know it*, is perhaps the most horrible sensation ever experienced. The very thirst of my body seemed to vanish in this fiery thirst of the soul for communication, where all communication was unutterable, impossible, hopeless. Perhaps the condemned spirits will feel thus at their final sentence, when they know all that is to be suffered, and dare not disclose to each other that horrible truth which is no longer a secret, but which the profound silence of their despair would seem to make one. The secret of silence is the only secret. Words are a blasphemy against that taciturn and invisible God, whose presence enshrouds us in our last extremity. These moments that appeared to me endless, were soon to cease. My companion sprung up,—he uttered a cry of joy, I imagined him deranged,—he was not. He exclaimed, “Light, light,—the light of

heaven; we are near the trap-door, I see the light through it." Amid all the horrors of our situation, he had kept his eye constantly turned upwards, for he knew that, if we were near it, the smallest glimmering of light would be visible in the intense darkness that enveloped us. He was right. I started up,—I saw it too. With locked hands, with dropt and wordless lips, with dilated and thirsting eyes, we gazed upwards. A thin line of grey light appeared above our heads. It broadened, it grew brighter,—it *was* the light of heaven, and its breezes too came fluttering to us through the chinks of the trap-door that opened into the garden."

## CHAPTER IX

“THOUGH life and liberty seemed so near, our situation was still very critical. The morning light that aided our escape, might open many an eye to mark it. There was not a moment to be lost. My companion proposed to ascend first, and I did not venture to oppose him. I was too much in his power to resist; and in early youth superiority of depravity always seems like a superiority of power. We reverence, with a prostituted idolatry, those who have passed through the degrees of vice before us. This man was criminal, and crime gave him a kind of heroic immunity in my eyes. Premature knowledge in life is always to be purchased by guilt. He knew more than I did,—he was my all in this desperate attempt. I dreaded him as a demon, yet I invoked him as a god.

“In the end I submitted to his proposal. I was very tall, but he was much stronger than I. He rose on my shoulders, I trembled under his weight, but he succeeded in raising the trap-door,—the full light of day broke on us both. In a moment he dropt



his hold of the door,—he fell to the ground with a force that struck me down. He exclaimed, “The workmen are there, they have come about the repairs, we are lost if we are discovered. They are there, the garden is full of them already, they will be there the whole day. That cursed lamp, it has undone us! Had it but kept in for a few moments, we might have been in the garden, might have crossed the wall, might have been at liberty, and now——” He fell to the ground convulsed with rage and disappointment, as he spoke. To me there was nothing so terrible in this intelligence. That we were disappointed for a time was evident, but we had been relieved from the most horrible of all fears, that of wandering in famine and darkness till we perished,—we had found the way to the trap-door. I had unfailing confidence in Juan’s patience and zeal. I was sure that if he was watching for us on that night, he would watch for many a successive night. Finally, I felt we had but twenty-four hours or less to wait, and what was that to the eternity of hours that must otherwise be wasted in a convent. I suggested all this to my companion as I closed the trap-door; but I found in his complaints, imprecations, and tossing restlessness of impatience and despair, the difference between man and man in the hour of trial. He possessed active, and I passive fortitude. Give him something to do, and he would do it at the risk of limb, and life, and soul,—he never murmured. Give me something to suffer, to

undergo, to submit, and I became at once the *hero of submission*. While this man, with all his physical strength, and all his mental hardihood, was tossing on the earth with the imbecillity of an infant, in a paroxysm of unappeasable passion, I was his consoler, adviser, and supporter. At last he suffered himself to hear reason; he agreed that we must remain twenty-four hours more in the passage, on which he bestowed a whole litany of curses. So we determined to stand in stillness and darkness till night; but such is the restlessness of the human heart, that this arrangement, which a few hours before we would have embraced as the offer of a benignant angel for our emancipation, began to display, as we were compelled to examine its aspect more closely, certain features that were repulsive almost to hideousness. We were exhausted nearly to death. Our physical exertions had been, for the last few hours, almost incredible; in fact, I am convinced that nothing but the consciousness that we were engaged in a struggle for life or death, could have enabled us to support it, and now that the struggle was over, we began to feel our weakness. Our mental sufferings had not been less,—we had been excruciated body and soul alike. Could our mental struggles have operated like our bodily ones, we would have been seen to weep drops of blood, as we felt we were doing at every step of our progress. Recollect too, Sir, the unnatural atmosphere we had breathed so long, amid darkness and danger, and which now began to show its anti-

vital and pestilent effect, in producing alternately on our bodies deluges of perspiration, succeeded by a chill that seemed to freeze the very marrow. In this state of mental fever, and bodily exhaustion, we had now to wait many hours, in darkness, without food, till Heaven pleased to send us night. But how were those hours to be passed? The preceding day had been one of strict abstinence,—we began already to feel the gnawings of hunger, a hunger not to be appeased. We must fast till the moment of liberation, and we must fast amid stone walls, and damp seats on floors of stone, which diminished every moment the strength necessary to contend with their impenetrable hardness,—their withering chillness.

“The last thought that occurred to me was,—with what a companion those hours must be passed. With a being whom I abhorred from my very soul, while I felt that his presence was at once an irrepealable curse, and an invincible necessity. So we stood, shivering under the trap-door, not daring to whisper our thoughts to each other, but feeling *that despair of incommunication* which is perhaps the severest curse that can be inflicted on those who are compelled to be together, and compelled, by the same necessity that imposes their ungenial union, not even to communicate their fears to each other. We *hear* the throb of each others hearts, and yet dare not say, “My heart beats in unison with yours.”

“As we stood thus, the light became suddenly eclipsed. I knew not from what this arose, till I felt

a shower, the most violent perhaps that ever was precipitated on the earth, make its way even through the trap-door, and drench me in five minutes to the skin. I retreated from the spot, but not before I had received it in every pore of my body. You, Sir, who live in happy Ireland, blessed by God with an exemption from those vicissitudes of the atmosphere, can have no idea of their violence in continental countries. This rain was followed by peals of thunder, that made me fear God was pursuing me into the abysses where I had shrunk to escape from his vengeance, and drew from my companion blasphemies more loud than thunder, as he felt himself drenched by the shower, that now, flooding the vault, rose almost to our ancles. At last he proposed our retiring to a place which he said he was acquainted with, and which would shelter us. He added, that it was but a few steps from where we stood, and that we could easily find our way back. I did not dare to oppose him, and followed to a dark recess, only distinguished from the rest of the vault by the remains of what had once been a door. It was now light, and I could distinguish objects plainly. By the deep hollows framed for the shooting of the bolt, and the size of the iron hinges that still remained, though covered with rust, I saw it must have been of no common strength, and probably intended to secure the entrance to a dungeon,—there was no longer a door, yet I shuddered to enter it. As we did so, both of us, exhausted in body and

mind, sunk on the hard floor. We did not say a word to each other, an inclination to sleep irresistibly overcame us; and whether that sleep was to be my last or not, I felt a profound indifference. Yet I was now on the verge of liberty, and though drenched, famishing, and comfortless, was, in any rational estimate, an object much more enviable than in the heart-withering safety of my cell. Alas! it is too true that our souls always contract themselves on the approach of a blessing, and seem as if their powers, exhausted in the effort to obtain it, had no longer energy to embrace the object. Thus we are always compelled to substitute the pleasure of the pursuit for that of the attainment,—to reverse the means for the end, or confound them, in order to extract any enjoyment from either, and at last fruition becomes only another name for lassitude. These reflections certainly did not occur to me, when, worn out with toil, terror, and famine, I fell on the stone floor in a sleep that was not sleep,—it seemed the suspension both of my mortal and immortal nature. I ceased from animal and intellectual life at once. There are cases, Sir, where the thinking power appears to accompany us to the very verge of slumber, where we sleep full of delightful thoughts, and sleep only to review them in our dreams: But there are also cases when we feel that our sleep is a “sleep for ever,”—when we resign the hope of immortality for the hope of a profound repose,—when we demand from the harassings of fate, “Rest, rest,” and no more,—when

the soul and body faint together, and all we ask of God or man is to let us sleep.

“In such a state I fell to the ground ; and, at that moment, would have bartered all my hopes of liberation for twelve hours profound repose, as Esau sold his birth-right for a small but indispensable refreshment. I was not to enjoy even this repose long. My companion was sleeping too. Sleeping ! great God ! what was his sleep ?—that in whose neighbourhood no one could close an eye, or, worse, an ear. He talked as loudly and incessantly as if he had been employed in all the active offices of life. I heard involuntarily the secret of his dreams. I knew he had murdered his father, but I did not know that the vision of parricide haunted him in his broken visions. My sleep was first broken by sounds as horrible as any I ever had heard at my bed-side in the convent. I heard sounds that disturbed me, but I was not yet fully awake. They increased, they redoubled,—the terrors of my habitual associations awoke me. I imagined the Superior and the whole community pursuing us with lighted torches. I felt the blaze of the lights in contact with my very eye-balls. I shrieked. I said, “Spare my sight, do not blind me, do not drive me mad, and I will confess all.” A deep voice near me muttered, “Confess.” I started up fully awake,—it was only the voice of my sleeping companion. I stood on my feet, I viewed him as he lay. He heaved and wallowed on his bed of stone, as if it had been down. He seemed to have

a frame of adamant. The jagged points of stone, the hardness of the floor, the ruts and rudenesses of his inhospitable bed, produced no effect on him. He could have slept, but his dreams were from within. I have heard, I have read, of the horrors attending the dying beds of the guilty. They often told us of such in the convent. One monk in particular, who was a priest, was fond of dwelling on a death-bed scene he had witnessed, and of describing its horrors. He related that he had urged a person, who was sitting calmly in his chair, though evidently dying, to intrust him with his confession. The dying person answered, "I will, when those leave the room." The monk, conceiving that this referred to the relatives and friends, motioned them to retire. They did so, and again the monk renewed his demands on the conscience of the penitent. The room was now empty. The monk renewed his adjuration to the dying man to disclose the secrets of his conscience. The answer was the same,—“I will, when those are gone.”—“*Those!*”—“Yes, those whom you cannot see, and cannot banish,—send them away, and I will tell you the truth.”—“Tell it now, then; there are none here but you and me.”—“There are,” answered the dying man. “There are none that I can see,” said the monk, gazing round the room. “But there are those that I do see,” replied the dying wretch, “and that see me; that are watching, waiting for me, the moment the breath is out of my body. I see them, I feel them,—stand on my right side.” The

monk changed his position. "Now they are on the left." The monk shifted again. "Now they are on my right." The monk commanded the children and relatives of the dying wretch to enter the room, and surround the bed. They obeyed the command. "Now they are every where," exclaimed the sufferer, and expired.<sup>1</sup>

"This terrible story came freshly to my recollection, accompanied by many others. I had heard much of the terrors that surrounded the dying bed of the guilty, but, from what I was compelled to hear, I almost believe them to be less than the terrors of a guilty sleep. I have said my companion began at first with low mutterings, but among them I could distinguish sounds that reminded me too soon of all I wished to forget, at least while we were together. He murmured, "An old man?—yes,—well, the less blood in him. Grey hairs?—no matter, my crimes have helped to turn them grey,—he ought to have rent them from the roots long ago. They are white, you say?—well, to-night they shall be dyed in blood, then they will be white no longer. Aye,—he will hold them up at the day of judgment, like a banner of condemnation against me. He will stand at the head of an army stronger than the army of martyrs,—the host of those whose murderers have been their own children. What matter whether they cut their parents' hearts or their throats. I have cut *one* through and through, to the very core,—now for

<sup>1</sup> Fact,—me ipso teste.



the other, it will give him less pain, I feel that,"—and he laughed, shuddered, and writhed on his stony bed. Trembling with horror ineffable, I tried to awake him. I shook his muscular arms, I rolled him on his back, on his face,—nothing could awake him. It seemed as if I was only rocking him on his cradle of stone. He went on, "Secure the purse, I know the drawer of the cabinet where it lies, but secure him first. Well, then, you cannot,—you shudder at his white hairs, at his calm sleep!—ha! ha! that villains should be fools. Well, then, I must be the man, it is but a short struggle with him or me,—he may be damned, and I must. Hush,—how the stairs creak, they will not tell him it is his son's foot that is ascending?—They dare not, the stones of the wall would give them the lie. Why did you not oil the hinges of the door?—now for it. He sleeps intensely,—aye, how calm he looks!—the calmer the fitter for heaven. Now,—now, my knee is on his breast,—where is the knife?—where is the knife?—if he looks at me I am lost. The knife,—I am a coward; the knife,—if he opens his eyes I am gone; the knife, ye cursed cravens,—who dare shrink when I have griped my father's throat? There,—there,—there,—blood to the hilt,—the old man's blood; look for the money, while I wipe the blade. I cannot wipe it, the grey hairs are mingled with the blood,—those hairs brushed my lips the last time he kissed me. I was a child then. I would not have taken a world to murder him then, now,—now, what am I? Ha!

ha! ha! Let Judas shake his bag of silver against mine,—he betrayed his Saviour, and I have murdered my father. Silver against silver, and soul against soul. I have got more for mine,—he was a fool to sell his for thirty. But for which of us will the last fire burn hotter?—no matter, I am going to try.” At these horrible expressions, repeated over and over, I called, I shrieked to my companion to awake. He did so, with a laugh almost as wild as the chattering of his dreams. “Well, what have you heard? I murdered him,—you knew that long before. You trusted me in this cursed adventure, which will risk the life of both, and can you not bear to hear me speak to myself, though I am only telling what you knew before?”—“No, I cannot bear it,” I answered, in an agony of horror; “not even to effect my escape, could I undertake to sustain another hour like the past,—the prospect of seclusion here for a whole day amid famine, damps, and darkness, listening to the ravings of a ——. Look not at me with that glare of mockery, I know it all, I shudder at your sight. Nothing but the iron link of necessity could have bound me to you even for a moment. I *am* bound to you,—I must bear it while it continues, but do not make those moments insupportable. My life and liberty are in your hands,—I must add my reason, too, in the circumstances in which we are plunged,—I cannot sustain your horrible eloquence of sleep. If I am forced to listen to it again, you may bear me alive from these walls, but you will bear me

away an idiot, stupified by terrors which my brain is unable to support. Do not sleep, I adjure you. Let me watch beside you during this wretched day,—this day which is to be measured by darkness and suffering, instead of light and enjoyment. I am willing to famish with hunger, to shudder with cold, to couch on these hard stones, but I cannot bear your dreams,—if you sleep, I must rouse you, in defence of my reason. All physical strength is failing me fast, and I am become more jealous of the preservation of my intellect. Do not cast at me those looks of defiance, I am your inferior in strength, but despair makes us equal.” As I spoke, my voice sounded like thunder in my own ears, my eyes flashed visibly to myself. I felt the power that passion gives us, and I saw that my companion felt it too. I went on, in a tone that made myself start, “If you dare to sleep, I will wake you,—if you dose even, you shall not have a moment undisturbed,—you shall wake with me. For this long day we must starve and shiver together, I have wound myself up to it. I can bear every thing,—every thing but the dreams of him whose sleep reveals to him the vision of a murdered parent. Wake,—rave,—blaspheme,—but sleep you shall not!”

“The man stared at me for some time, almost incredulous of my being capable of such energy of passion and command. But when he had, by the help of his dilated eyes, and gaping mouth, appeared to satisfy himself fully of the fact, his expression suddenly changed. He appeared to feel a community

of nature with me for the first time. Any thing of ferocity appeared congenial and balsamic to him; and, with oaths, that froze my blood, swore he liked me the better for my resolution. "I *will* keep awake," he added, with a yawn that distended like the jaws of an Ogre preparing for his cannibal feast. Then suddenly relaxing, "But how shall we keep awake? We have nothing to eat, nothing to drink, what shall we do to keep awake?" And incontinently he uttered a volley of curses. Then he began to sing. But what songs?—full of such ribaldry and looseness, that, bred as I was first in domestic privacy, and then in the strictness of a convent, made me believe it was an incarnate demon that was howling beside me. I implored him to cease, but this man could pass so instantaneously from the extremes of atrocity to those of levity,—from the ravings of guilt and horror ineffable, to songs that would insult a brothel, that I knew not what to make of him. This *union of antipodes*, this unnatural alliance of the extremes of guilt and light-mindedness, I had never met or imagined before. He started from the visions of a parricide, and sung songs that would have made a harlot blush. How ignorant of life I must have been, not to know that guilt and insensibility often join to tenant and deface the same mansion, and that there is not a more strong and indissoluble alliance on earth, than that between the hand that dare do any thing, and the heart that can feel nothing.

“It was in the midst of one of his most licentious songs, that my companion suddenly paused. He gazed about him for some time; and faint and dismal as the light was by which we beheld each other, I thought I could observe an extraordinary expression overshadow his countenance. I did not venture to notice it. “Do you know where we are?” he whispered. “Too well;—in the vault of a convent, beyond the help or reach of man,—without food, without light, and almost without hope.”—“Aye, so its last inhabitants might well say.”—“Its last inhabitants!—who were they?”—“I can tell you, if you can bear it.”—“*I cannot bear it,*” I cried, stopping my ears, “I will not listen to it. I feel by the narrator it must be something horrid.”—“It was indeed a horrid night,” said he, unconsciously advert- ing to some circumstance in the narrative; and his voice sunk into mutterings, and he forbore to mention the subject further. I retired as far from him as the limits of the vault admitted; and, burying my head between my knees, tried to *forbear to think*. What a state of mind must that be, in which we are driven to wish we no longer had one!—when we would willingly become “as the beasts that perish,” to forget that privilege of humanity, which only seems an undisputed title to superlative misery! To sleep was impossible. Though sleep seems to be only a necessity of nature, it always requires an act of the mind to concur in it. And if I had been willing to rest, the gnawings of hunger, which now

began to be exchanged for the most deadly sickness, would have rendered it impossible. Amid this complication of physical and mental suffering, it is hardly credible, Sir, but it is not the less true, that my principal one arose from the inanity, the want of occupation, inevitably attached to my dreary situation. To inflict a suspension of the action on a being conscious of possessing the powers of action, and burning for their employment,—to forbid all interchange of mutual ideas, or acquirement of new ones to an intellectual being,—to do this, is to invent a torture that might make Phalaris blush for his impotence of cruelty.

“I had felt other sufferings almost intolerable, but I felt this impossible to sustain; and, will you believe it, Sir, after wrestling with it during an hour (as I counted hours) of unimaginable misery, I rose, and supplicated my companion to relate the circumstance he had alluded to, as connected with our dreadful abode. His ferocious good nature took part with this request in a moment; and though I could see that his strong frame had suffered more than my comparatively feeble one, from the struggles of the night and the privations of the day, he prepared himself with a kind of grim alacrity for the effort. He was now in his element. He was enabled to daunt a feeble mind by the narration of horrors, and to amaze an ignorant one with a display of crimes;—and he needed no more to make him commence. “I remember,” said he, “an extraordinary circumstance

connected with this vault. I wondered how I felt so familiar with this door, this arch, at first.—I did not recollect immediately, so many strange thoughts have crossed my mind every day, that events which would make a life-lasting impression on others, pass like shadows before me, while thoughts appear like substances. *Emotions are my events*—you know what brought me to this cursed convent—well, don't shiver or look *paler*—you were pale before. However it was, I found myself in the convent, and I was obliged to subscribe to its discipline. A part of it was, that extraordinary criminals should undergo what they called extraordinary penance ; that is, not only submit to every ignominy and rigour of conventual life, (which, fortunately for its penitents, is never wanting in such amusing resources), but act the part of executioner whenever any distinguished punishment was to be inflicted or witnessed. They did me the honour to believe me particularly qualified for this species of recreation, and perhaps they did not flatter me. I had all the humility of a saint on trial ; but still I had a kind of confidence in my talents of this description, provided they were put to a proper test ; and the monks had the goodness to assure me, that I never could long be without one in a convent. This was a very tempting picture of my situation, but I found these worthy people had not in the least exaggerated. An instance occurred a few days after I had the happiness to become a member of this amiable community, of whose merits

you are doubtless sensible. I was desired to attach myself to a young monk of distinguished family, who had lately taken the vows, and who performed his duties with that heartless punctuality that intimated to the community that his heart was elsewhere. I was soon put in possession of the business; from their ordering me to *attach* myself to him, I instantly conceived I was bound to the most deadly hostility against him. The friendship of convents is always a treacherous league—we watch, suspect, and torment each other, for the love of God. This young monk's only crime was, that he was suspected of cherishing an earthly passion. He was, in fact, as I have stated, the son of a distinguished family, who (from the fear of his contracting what is called a degrading marriage, *i. e.* of marrying a woman of inferior rank whom he loved, and who would have made him happy, as fools, that is, half mankind, estimate happiness) forced him to take the vows. He appeared at times broken-hearted, but at times there was a light of hope in his eye, that looked somewhat ominous in the eyes of the community. It is certain, that hope not being an indigenous plant in the parterre of a convent, must excite suspicion with regard both to its origin and its growth.

“Some time after, a young novice entered the convent. From the moment he did so, a change the most striking took place in the young monk. He and the novice became inseparable companions—there was something suspicious in that. My eyes



were on the watch in a moment. Eyes are particularly sharpened in discovering misery when they can hope to aggravate it. The attachment between the young monk and the novice went on. They were for ever in the garden together—they inhaled the odours of the flowers—they cultivated the same cluster of carnations—they entwined themselves as they walked together—when they were in the choir, their voices were like mixed incense. Friendship is often carried to excess in conventual life, but this friendship was too like love. For instance, the psalms sung in the choir sometimes breathe a certain language; at these words, the young monk and the novice would direct their voices to each other in sounds that could not be misunderstood. If the least correction was inflicted, one would intreat to undergo it for the other. If a day of relaxation was allowed, whatever presents were sent to the cell of one, were sure to be found in the cell of the other. This was enough for me. I saw that secret of mysterious happiness, which is the greatest misery to those who never can share it. My vigilance was redoubled, and it was rewarded by the discovery of a secret—a secret that I had to communicate and raise my consequence by. You cannot guess the importance attached to the discovery of a secret in a convent, (particularly when the remission of our own offences depends on the discovery of those of others.)

“One evening as the young monk and his darling novice were in the garden, the former plucked a

peach, which he immediately offered to his favourite ; the latter accepted it with a movement I thought rather awkward — it seemed like what I imagined would be the reverence of a female. The young monk divided the peach with a knife ; in doing so, the knife grazed the finger of the novice, and the monk, in agitation inexpressible, tore his habit to bind up the wound. I saw it all — my mind was made up on the business — I went to the Superior that very night. The result may be conceived. They were watched, but cautiously at first. They were probably on their guard ; for, for some time it defied even my vigilance to make the slightest discovery. It is a situation incomparably tantalizing, when suspicion is satisfied of her own suggestions, as of the truth of the gospel, but still wants the *little fact* to make them credible to others. One night that I had, by direction of the Superior, taken my station in the gallery, (where I was contented to remain hour after hour, and night after night, amid solitude, darkness, and cold, for the chance of the power of retaliating on others the misery inflicted on myself) — One night, I thought I heard a step in the gallery — I have told you that I was in the dark — a light step passed me. I could hear the broken and palpitating respiration of the person. A few moments after, I heard a door open, and knew it to be the door of the young monk. I knew it ; for by long watching in the dark, and accustoming myself to number the cells, by the groan from one, the prayer

from another, the faint shriek of restless dreams from a third, my ear had become so finely graduated, that I could instantly distinguish the opening of *that door*, from which (to my sorrow) no sound had ever before issued. I was provided with a small chain, by which I fastened the handle of the door to a contiguous one, in such a manner, that it was impossible to open either of them from the inside. I then hastened to the Superior, with a pride of which none but the successful tracer of a guilty secret in convents, can have any conception. I believe the Superior was himself agitated by the luxury of the same feelings, for he was awake and up in his apartment, attended by *four monks*, whom you may remember." I shuddered at the remembrance. "I communicated my intelligence with a voluble eagerness, not only unsuited to the respect I owed these persons, but which must have rendered me almost unintelligible, yet they were good enough not only to overlook this violation of decorum, which would in any other case have been severely punished, but even to supply certain pauses in my narrative, with a condescension and facility truly miraculous. I felt what it was to acquire importance in the eyes of a Superior, and gloried in all the dignified depravity of an informer. We set out without losing a moment,—we arrived at the door of the cell, and I pointed out with triumph the chain unremoved, though a slight vibration, perceptible at our approach, showed the wretches within were already apprised of their danger. I unfastened

the door,—how they must have shuddered! The Superior and his satellites burst into the cell, and I held the light. You tremble,—why? I was guilty, and I wished to witness guilt that palliated mine, at least in the opinion of the convent. I had only violated the laws of nature, but they had outraged the decorum of a convent, and, of course, in the creed of a convent, there was no proportion between our offences. Besides, I was anxious to witness misery that might perhaps equal or exceed my own, and this is a curiosity not easily satisfied. It is actually possible to become *amateurs in suffering*. I have heard of men who have travelled into countries where horrible executions were to be daily witnessed, for the sake of that excitement which the sight of suffering never fails to give, from the spectacle of a tragedy, or an *auto da fe*, down to the writhings of the meanest reptile on whom you can inflict torture, and feel that torture is the result of your own power. It is a species of feeling of which we never can divest ourselves,—a triumph over those whose sufferings have placed them below us, and no wonder,—suffering is always an indication of weakness,—we glory in our impenetrability. I did, as we burst into the cell. The wretched husband and wife were locked in each others arms. You may imagine the scene that followed. Here I must do the Superior reluctant justice. He was a man (of course from his conventual feelings) who had no more idea of the intercourse between the sexes, than between two beings

of a different species. The scene that he beheld could not have revolted him more, than if he had seen the horrible loves of the baboons and the Hottentot women, at the Cape of Good Hope; or those still more loathsome unions between the serpents of South America and their human victims,<sup>1</sup> when they can catch them, and twine round them in folds of unnatural and ineffable union. He really stood as much astonished and appalled, to see two human beings of different sexes, who dared to love each other in spite of monastic ties, as if he had witnessed the horrible conjunctions I have alluded to. Had he seen vipers engendering in that frightful knot which seems the pledge of mortal hostility, instead of love, he could not have testified more horror,—and I do him the justice to believe he felt all he testified. Whatever affectation he might employ on points of conventual austerity, there was none here. Love was a thing he always believed connected with sin, even though consecrated by the name of a sacrament, and called marriage, as it is in our church. But, love in a convent!—Oh, there is no conceiving his rage; still less is it possible to conceive the majestic and overwhelming extent of that rage, when strengthened by principle, and sanctified by religion. I enjoyed the scene beyond all power of description. I saw those wretches, who had triumphed over me, reduced to my level in a moment,—their passions all displayed, and the display placing me a hero triumphant above

<sup>1</sup> Vide Charlevoix's History of Paraguay.

all. I had crawled to the shelter of their walls, a wretched degraded outcast, and what was my crime? Well,—you shudder, I have done with that. I can only say want drove me to it. And here were beings whom, a few months before, I would have knelt to as to the images round the shrine,—to whom, in the moments of my desperate penitence, I would have clung as to the “horns of the altar,” all brought as low, and lower than myself. “Sons of the morning,” as I deemed them in the agonies of my humiliation, “how were they fallen!” I feasted on the degradation of the apostate monk and novice,—I enjoyed, to the core of my ulcerated heart, the passion of the Superior,—I felt that they were all men like myself. Angels, as I had thought them, they had all proved themselves mortal; and, by watching their motions, and flattering their passions, and promoting their interest, or setting up my own in opposition to them all, while I made them believe it was only theirs I was intent on, I might make shift to contrive as much misery to others, and to carve out as much occupation to myself, as if I were actually living in the world. Cutting my father’s throat was a noble feat certainly, (I ask your pardon, I did not mean to extort that groan from you), but here were hearts to be cut,—and to the core, every day, and all day long, so I never could want employment.”

“Here he wiped his hard brow, drew his breath for a moment, and then said, “I do not quite like to go through the details by which this wretched pair

were deluded into the hope of effecting their escape from the convent. It is enough that I was the principal agent,—that the Superior connived at it,—that I led them through the very passages you have traversed to-night, they trembling and blessing me at every step,—that——” “Stop,” I cried; “wretch! you are tracing my course this night step by step.”—“What?” he retorted, with a ferocious laugh, “you think I am betraying you, then; and if it were true, what good would your suspicions do you,—you are in my power? My voice might summon half the convent to seize you this moment,—my arm might fasten you to that wall, till those dogs of death, that wait but my whistle, plunged their fangs into your very vitals. I fancy you would not find their bite less keen, from their tusks being so long sharpened by an immersion in holy water.” Another laugh, that seemed to issue from the lungs of a demon, concluded this sentence. “I know I am in your power,” I answered; “and were I to trust to that, or to your heart, I had better dash out my brains at once against these walls of rock, which I believe are not harder than the latter. But I know your interests to be some way or other connected with my escape, and therefore I trust you,—because I must. Though my blood, chilled as it is by famine and fatigue, seems frozen in every drop while I listen to you, yet listen I must, and trust my life and liberation to you. I speak to you with the horrid confidence our situation has taught me,—I hate,—I dread you. If we

were to meet in life, I would shrink from you with loathings of unspeakable abhorrence, but here mutual misery has mixed the most repugnant substances in unnatural coalition. The force of that alchemy must cease at the moment of my escape from the convent and from you; yet, for these miserable hours, my life is as much dependent on your exertions and presence, as my power of supporting them is on the continuance of your horrible tale,—go on, then. Let us struggle through this dreadful day. *Day!* a name unknown *here*, where noon and night shake hands that never unlock. Let us struggle through it, “hateful and hating one another;” and when it has passed, let us curse and part.”

“As I uttered these words, Sir, I felt that terrible *confidence of hostility* which the worst beings are driven to in the worst of circumstances, and I question whether there is a more horrible situation than that in which we cling to each other’s hate, instead of each other’s love,—in which, at every step of our progress, we hold a dagger to our companion’s breast, and say, “If you falter for a moment, this is in your heart. I hate,—I fear, but I must bear with you.” It was singular to me, though it would not be so to those who investigate human nature, that, in proportion as my situation inspired me with a ferocity quite unsuited to our comparative situations, and which must have been the result of the madness of despair and famine, my companion’s respect for me appeared to increase. After a long pause, he



asked, might he continue his story? I could not speak, for, after the slightest exertion, the sickness of deadly hunger returned on me, and I could only signify, by a feeble motion of my hand, that he might go on.

“They were conducted here,” he continued; “I had suggested the plan, and the Superior consented to it. He would not be present, but his dumb nod was enough. I was the conductor of their (intended) escape; they believed they were departing with the connivance of the Superior. I led them through those very passages that you and I have trod. I had a map of this subterranean region, but my blood ran cold as I traversed it; and it was not at all inclined to resume its usual temperament, as I felt what was to be the destination of my attendants. Once I turned the lamp, on pretence of trimming it, to catch a glimpse of the devoted wretches. They were embracing each other,—the light of joy trembled in their eyes. They were whispering to each other hopes of liberation and happiness, and blending my name in the interval they could spare from their prayers for each other. That sight extinguished the last remains of compunction with which my horrible task had inspired me. They dared to be happy in the sight of one who must be for ever miserable,—could there be a greater insult? I resolved to punish it on the spot. This very apartment was near,—I knew it, and the map of their wanderings no longer trembled in my hand. I urged them to enter this

recess, (the door was then entire), while I went to examine the passage. They entered it, thanking me for my precaution,—they knew not they were never to quit it alive. But what were their lives for the agony their happiness cost me? The moment they were inclosed, and clasping each other, (a sight that made me grind my teeth), I closed and locked the door. This movement gave them no immediate uneasiness,—they thought it a friendly precaution. The moment they were secured, I hastened to the Superior, who was on fire at the insult offered to the sanctity of his convent, and still more to the purity of his penetration, on which the worthy Superior piqued himself as much as if it had ever been possible for him to acquire the smallest share of it. He descended with me to the passage,—the monks followed with eyes on fire. In the agitation of their rage, it was with difficulty they could discover the door after I had repeatedly pointed it out to them. The Superior, with his own hands, drove several nails, which the monks eagerly supplied, into the door, that effectually joined it to the staple, *never to be disjoined*; and every blow he gave, doubtless he felt as if it was a reminiscence to the accusing angel, to strike out a sin from the catalogue of his accusations. The work was soon done,—the work never to be undone. At the first sound of steps in the passage, and blows on the door, the victims uttered a shriek of terror. They imagined they were detected, and that an incensed party of monks were breaking

open the door. These terrors were soon exchanged for others,—and worse,—as they heard the door nailed up, and listened to our departing steps. They uttered another shriek, but O how different was the accent of its despair!—they knew their doom.

It was my penance (no,—my delight) to watch at the door, under the pretence of precluding the possibility of their escape, (of which they knew there was no possibility); but, in reality, not only to inflict on me the indignity of being the convent gaoler, but of teaching me that callosity of heart, and induration of nerve, and stubbornness of eye, and apathy of ear, that were best suited to my office. But they might have saved themselves the trouble,—I had them all before ever I entered the convent. Had I been the Superior of the community, I should have undertaken the office of watching the door. You will call this cruelty, I call it curiosity,—that curiosity that brings thousands to witness a tragedy, and makes the most delicate female feast on groans and agonies. I had an advantage over them,—the groan, the agony I feasted on, were real. I took my station at *the door*—that door which, like that of Dante's hell, might have borne the inscription, "Here is no hope,"—with a face of mock penitence, and genuine—cordial delectation. I could hear every word that transpired. For the first hours they tried to comfort each other,—they suggested to each other hopes of liberation,—and as my shadow, crossing the

threshold, darkened or restored the light, they said, "That is he;"—then, when this occurred repeatedly, without any effect, they said, "No,—no, it is not he," and swallowed down the sick sob of despair, to hide it from each other. Towards night a monk came to take my place, and to offer me food. I would not have quitted my place for worlds; but I talked to the monk in his own language, and told him I would make a merit with God of my sacrifices, and was resolved to remain there all night, with the permission of the Superior. The monk was glad of having a substitute on such easy terms, and I was glad of the food he left me, for I was hungry now, but I reserved the appetite of my soul for richer luxuries. I heard them talking within. While I was eating, I actually lived on the famine that was devouring them, but of which they did not dare to say a word to each other. They debated, deliberated, and, as misery grows ingenious in its own defence, they at last assured each other that it was impossible the Superior had locked them in there to perish by hunger. At these words I could not help laughing. This laugh reached their ears, and they became silent in a moment. All that night, however, I heard their groans,—those groans of physical suffering, that laugh to scorn all the sentimental sighs that are exhaled from the hearts of the most intoxicated lovers that ever breathed. I heard them all that night. I had read French romances, and all their unimaginable nonsense. Madame Sevigné her-

self says she would have been tired of her daughter in a long tete-a-tete journey, but clap me two lovers into a dungeon, without food, light, or hope, and I will be damned (that I am already, by the bye) if they do not grow sick of each other within the first twelve hours. The second day hunger and darkness had their usual influence. They shrieked for liberation, and knocked loud and long at their dungeon door. They exclaimed they were ready to submit to any punishment; and the approach of the monks, which they would have dreaded so much the preceding night, they now solicited on their knees. What a jest, after all, are the most awful vicissitudes of human life!—they supplicated now for what they would have sacrificed their souls to avert four-and-twenty hours before. Then the agony of hunger increased, they shrunk from the door, and grovelled apart from each other. *Apart!*—how I watched that. They were rapidly becoming objects of hostility to each other,—oh what a feast to me! They could not disguise from each other the revolting circumstances of their mutual sufferings. It is one thing for lovers to sit down to a feast magnificently spread, and another for lovers to couch in darkness and famine,—to exchange that appetite which cannot be supported without dainties and flattery, for that which would barter a descended Venus for a morsel of food. The second night they raved and groaned, (as occurred); and, amid their agonies, (I must do justice to women, whom I hate as well as men), the man often accused

the female as the cause of all his sufferings, but the woman never,—never reproached him. Her groans might indeed have reproached him bitterly, but she never uttered a word that could have caused him pain. There was a change which I well could mark, however, in their physical feelings. The first day they clung together, and every movement I felt was like that of one person. The next the man alone struggled, and the woman moaned in helplessness. The third night,—how shall I tell it?—but you have bid me go on. All the horrible and loathsome excruciations of famine had been undergone; the disunion of every tie of the heart, of passion, of nature, had commenced. In the agonies of their famished sickness they loathed each other,—they could have cursed each other, if they had had breath to curse. It was on the fourth night that I heard the shriek of the wretched female,—her lover, in the agony of hunger, had fastened his teeth in her shoulder;—that bosom on which he had so often luxuriated, became a meal to him now.”

“Monster! and you laugh?”—“Yes, I laugh at all mankind, and the imposition they dare to practise when they talk of hearts. I laugh at human passions and human cares,—vice and virtue, religion and impiety; they are all the result of petty localities, and artificial situation. One physical want, one severe and abrupt lesson from the tintless and shrivelled lip of necessity, is worth all the logic of

the empty wretches who have presumed to prate it, from Zeno down to Burgersdicius. Oh! it silences in a second all the feeble sophistry of *conventional* life, and asceticious passion. Here were a pair who would not have believed all the world on their knees, even though angels had descended to join in the attestation, that it was possible for them to exist without each other. They had risked every thing, trampled on every thing human and divine, to be in each others sight and arms. One hour of hunger undeceived them. A trivial and ordinary want, whose claims at another time they would have regarded as a vulgar interruption of their spiritualised intercourse, not only, by its natural operation, sundered it for ever, but, before it ceased, converted that intercourse into a source of torment and hostility inconceivable, except among cannibals. The bitterest enemies on earth could not have regarded each other with more abhorrence than *these lovers*. Deluded wretches! you boasted of having hearts, I boast I have none, and which of us gained most by the vaunt, let life decide. My story is nearly finished, and so I hope is the day. When I was last here I had something to excite me;—talking of those things is poor employment to one who has been a witness to them. On the *sixth* day all was still. The door was unnailed, we entered,—they were no more. They lay far from each other, farther than on that voluptuous couch into which their passion had converted the mat of a convent bed. She lay contracted in a

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heap, a lock of her long hair in her mouth. There was a slight scar on her shoulder,—the rabid despair of famine had produced no farther outrage. He lay extended at his length,—his hand was between his lips; it seemed as if he had not strength to execute the purpose for which he had brought it there. The bodies were brought out for interment. As we removed them into the light, the long hair of the female, falling over a face no longer disguised by the novice's dress, recalled a likeness I thought I could remember. I looked closer, she was my own sister, —my only one,——and I had heard her voice grow fainter and fainter. I had heard——” and his own voice grew fainter—it ceased.

“Trembling for a life with which my own was linked, I staggered towards him. I raised him half up in my arms, and recollecting there must be a current of air through the trap-door, I attempted to trail him along thither. I succeeded, and, as the breeze played over him, I saw with delight unutterable the diminution of the light that streamed through it. It was *evening*,—there was no longer any necessity, no longer any time for delay. He recovered, for his swoon arose not from exhausted sensibility, but from mere inanition. However it was, I found my interest in watching his recovery; and, had I been adequate to the task of observing extraordinary vicissitudes of the human mind, I would have been indeed amazed at the change that he manifested on his recovery. Without the least



reference to his late story, or late feelings, he started from my arms at the discovery that the light had diminished, and prepared for our escape through the trap-door, with a restored energy of strength, and sanity of intellect, that might have been deemed miraculous if it had occurred in a convent:—Happening to occur full thirty feet below the proper surface for a miracle, it must be put to the account of strong excitement merely. I could not indeed dare to believe a miracle was wrought in favour of my profane attempt, and so I was glad to put up with second causes. With incredible dexterity he climbed up the wall, with the help of the rugged stones and my shoulders,—threw open the trap-door, pronounced that all was safe, assisted me to ascend after him,—and, with gasping delight, I once more breathed the breath of heaven. The night was perfectly dark. I could not distinguish the buildings from the trees, except when a faint breeze gave motion to the latter. To this darkness, I am convinced, I owe the preservation of my reason under such vicissitudes,—the glory of a resplendent night would have driven me mad, emerging from darkness, famine, and cold. I would have wept, and laughed, and knelt, and turned idolater. I would have “worshipped the host of heaven, and the moon walking in her brightness.” Darkness was my best security, in every sense of the word. We traversed the garden, without feeling the ground under our feet. As we approached the wall, I became again deadly sick,—my senses grew giddy,

I reeled. I whispered to my companion, "Are there not lights gleaming from the convent windows?"—"No, the lights are flashing from your own eyes,—it is only the effect of darkness, famine, and fear,—come on."—"But I hear a sound of bells."—"The bells are ringing only in your ears,—an empty stomach is your sexton, and you fancy you hear bells. Is this a time to falter?—come on, come on. Don't hang such a dead weight on my arm,—don't fall, if you can help it. Oh God, he has swooned!"

"These were the last words I heard. I had fallen, I believe, into his arms. With that instinct that acts most auspiciously in the absence of both thought and feeling, he dragged me in his brawny arms to the wall, *and twisted my cold fingers* in the ropes of the ladder. The touch restored me in a moment; and, almost before my hand had touched the ropes, my feet began to ascend them. My companion followed extempore. We reached the summit,—I tottered from weakness and terror. I felt a sickly dread, that, though the ladder was there, Juan was not. A moment after a lanthorn flashed in my eyes,—I saw a figure below. I sprung down, careless, in that wild moment, whether I met the dagger of an assassin, or the embrace of a brother. "Alonzo, dear Alonzo," murmured a voice. "Juan, dear Juan," was all I could utter, as I felt my shivering breast held close to that of the most generous and affectionate of brothers. "How much you must have suffered,

—how much I have suffered,” he whispered; “during the last horrible twenty-four hours, I almost gave you up. Make haste, the carriage is not twenty paces off.” And, as he spoke, the shifting of a lanthorn shewed me those imperious and beautiful features, which I had once dreaded as the pledge of eternal emulation, but which I now regarded as the smile of the proud but benignant god of my liberation. I pointed to my companion, I could not speak,—hunger was consuming my vitals. Juan supported me, consoled me, encouraged me; did all, and more, than man ever did for man,—than man ever did, perhaps, for the most shrinking and delicate of the other sex under his protection. Oh, with what agony of heart I retrace his manly tenderness! We waited for my companion,—he descended the wall. “Make haste, make haste,” Juan whispered; “I am famishing too. I have not tasted food for four-and-twenty hours, watching for you.” We hurried on. It was a waste place,—I could only distinguish a carriage by the light of a dim lanthorn, but that was enough for me. I sprung lightly into it. “*He is safe,*” cried Juan, following me. “*But are you?*” answered a voice of thunder. Juan staggered back from the step of the carriage,—he fell. I sprung out, I fell too—on his body. I was bathed in his blood,—he was no more.”

## CHAPTER X

Men who with mankind were foes.

Or who, in desperate doubt of grace.—

SCOTT'S MARMION.

“ONE wild moment of yelling agony,—one flash of a fierce and fiery light, that seemed to envelope and wither me soul and body,—one sound, that swept through my ears and brain like the last trumpet, as it will thrill on the senses of those who slept in guilt, and awake in despair,—one such moment, that condenses and crowds all imaginable sufferings in one brief and intense pang, and appears exhausted itself by the blow it has struck,—one such moment I remember, and no more. Many a month of gloomy unconsciousness rolled over me, without date or notice. One thousand waves may welter over a sunk wreck, and be felt as *one*. I have a dim recollection of refusing food, of resisting change of place, &c. but they were like the faint and successful attempts we make under the burden of the night-mare; and those with whom I had to do, probably regarded any

opposition I could make no more than the tossings of a restless sleeper.

“From dates that I have since been enabled to collect, I must have been four months at least in this state; and ordinary persecutors would have given me up as a hopeless subject for any further sufferings; but religious malignity is too industrious, and too ingenious, to resign the hope of a victim but with life. If the fire is extinguished, it sits and watches the embers. If the strings of the heart crack in its hearing, it listens if it be the *last* that has broken. It is a spirit that delights to ride on the *tenth wave*, and view it whelm and bury the sufferer for ever.

“Many changes had taken place, without any consciousness on my part of them. Perhaps the profound tranquillity of my *last* abode contributed more than any thing else to the recovery of my reason. I distinctly remember awaking at once to the full exercise of my senses and reason, and finding myself in a place which I examined with the most amazed and jealous curiosity. My memory did not molest me in the least. Why I was there? or what I had suffered before I was brought there? it never occurred to me to inquire. The return of the intellectual powers came slowly in, like the waves of an advancing tide, and happily for me memory was the last,—the occupation of my senses was at first quite enough for me. You must expect no romance-horrors, Sir, from

my narrative. Perhaps a life like mine may revolt the taste that has feasted to fastidiousness ; but truth sometimes gives full and dreadful compensation, in presenting us facts instead of images.

“I found myself lying on a bed, not very different from that in my cell, but the apartment was wholly unlike the latter. It was somewhat larger, and covered with matting. There was neither crucifix, painting, or vessel for holy water ;—the bed, a coarse table which supported a lighted lamp, and a vessel containing water for the purpose, were all the furniture. There was no window ; and some iron knobs in the door, to which the light of the lamp gave a kind of dismal distinctness and prominence, proved that it was strongly secured. I raised myself on my arm, and gazed round me with the apprehensiveness of one who fears that the slightest motion may dissolve the spell, and plunge him again in darkness. At that moment the recollection of all the past struck me like a thunder-bolt. I uttered a cry, that seemed to drain me of breath and being at once, and fell back on the bed, not senseless but exhausted. I remembered every event in a moment, with an intenseness that could only be equalled by actual and present agency in them,—my escape,—my safety,—my despair. I felt Juan’s embrace,—then I felt his blood stream over me. I saw his eyes turn in despair, before they closed for ever, and I uttered another cry, such as had never before been heard within those walls. At the repetition of this sound

the door opened, and a person, in a habit I had never seen before, approached, and signified to me by signs, that I must observe the most profound silence. Nothing, indeed, could be more expressive of this meaning, than his denying himself the use of his voice to convey it. I gazed on this apparition in silence,—my amazement had all the effect of an apparent submission to his injunctions. He retired, and I began to wonder where I was. Was it among the dead? or some subterranean world of the mute and voiceless, where there was no air to convey sounds, and no echo to repeat them, and the famished ear waited in vain for its sweetest banquet,—the voice of man? These wanderings were dispelled by the re-entrance of the person. He placed bread, water, and a small portion of meat on the table, motioned me to approach, (which I did mechanically), and, when I was seated, *whispered* me, That my unhappy situation having hitherto rendered me incapable of understanding the regulations of the place where I was, he had been compelled to postpone acquainting me with them; but *now* he was obliged to warn me, that my voice must never be raised beyond the key in which he addressed me, and which was sufficient for all proper purposes of communication; finally, he assured me that cries, exclamations of any kind, or even *coughing too loud*,<sup>1</sup> (which might be interpreted as a signal), would be considered as an attempt on the inviolable habits of the place,

<sup>1</sup> This is a fact well established.

and punished with the utmost severity. To my repeated questions of "Where am I? what is this place, with its mysterious regulations?" he replied in a whisper, that his business was to issue orders, not to answer questions; and so saying he departed. However extraordinary these injunctions appeared, the manner in which they were issued was so imposing, peremptory, and *habitual*,—it seemed so little a thing of local contrivance and temporary display,—so much like the established language of an absolute and long-fixed system, that obedience to it seemed inevitable. I threw myself on the bed, and murmured to myself, "Where am I?" till sleep overcame me.

"I have heard that the first sleep of a recovered maniac is intensely profound. Mine was not so, it was broken by many troubled dreams. One, in particular, brought me back to the convent. I thought I was a boarder in it, and studying Virgil. I was reading that passage in the second book, where the vision of Hector appears to Æneas in his dream, and his ghastly and dishonoured form suggests the mournful exclamation,

"——Heu quantum mutatus ab illo,—  
——Quibus ab oris, Hector expectate venis?"

Then I thought Juan was Hector,—that the same pale and bloody phantom stood calling me to fly—"Heu fuge," while I vainly tried to obey him. Oh that dreary mixture of truth and delirium, of the real



and visionary, of the conscious and unconscious parts of existence, that visits the dreams of the unhappy ! He was Pantheus, and murmured,

“ Venit summa dies, et ineluctabile tempus.”

I appeared to weep and struggle in my dream. I addressed the figure that stood before me sometimes as Juan, and sometimes as the image of the Trojan vision. At last the figure uttered, with a kind of querulous shriek,—that *vox stridula* which we hear only in dreams,

“ Proximus ardet Ucalegon,”

and I started up fully awake, in all the horrors of an expected conflagration.

“It is incredible, Sir, how the senses and the mind can operate thus, during the apparent suspension of both ; how sound can affect organs that seem to be shut, and objects affect the sight, while its sense appears to be closed,—can impress on its dreaming consciousness, images more horribly vivid than even reality ever presented. I awoke with the idea that flames were raging in contact with my eye-balls, and I saw only a pale light, held by a paler hand—close to my eyes indeed, but withdrawn the moment I awoke. The person who held it shrouded it for a moment, and then advanced and flashed its full light on me, and along with it—the person of my companion. The associations of our last meeting rushed on me. I started up, and said, “ Are we free, then ? ”

—“Hush,—one of us is free; but you must not speak so loud.”—“Well, I have heard that before, but I cannot comprehend the necessity of this whispering secrecy. If I am free, tell me so, and tell me whether Juan has survived that last horrible moment,—my intellect is but just respiring. Tell me how Juan fares.”—“Oh, sumptuously. No prince in all the land reposes under a more gorgeous canopy,—marble pillars, waving banners, and nodding plumes. He had music too, but he did not seem to heed it. He lay stretched on velvet and gold, but he appeared insensible of all these luxuries. There was a curl on his cold white lip, too, that seemed to breathe ineffable scorn on all that was going on,—but he was proud enough even in his life-time.”—“His life-time!” I shrieked; “then he *is* dead?”—“Can you doubt that, when you know who struck the blow? None of my victims ever gave me the trouble of a second.”—“You,—you?” I swam for some moments in a sea of flames and blood. My frenzy returned, and I remember only uttering curses that would have exhausted divine vengeance in all its plenitude to fulfil. I might have continued to rave till my reason was totally lost, but I was silenced and stunned by his laugh bursting out amid my curses, and overwhelming them.

“That laugh made me cease, and lift up my eyes to him, as if I expected to see another being,—it was still the same. “And you dreamt,” he cried, “in your temerity, you dreamt of setting the vigilance of

a convent at defiance? Two boys, one the fool of fear, and the other of temerity, were fit antagonists for that stupendous system, whose roots are in the bowels of the earth, and whose head is among the stars,—*you* escape from a convent! *you* defy a power that has defied sovereigns! A power whose influence is unlimited, indefinable, and unknown, even to those who exercise it, as there are mansions so vast, that their inmates, to their last hour, have never visited all the apartments;—a power whose operation is like its motto, —one and indivisible. The soul of the Vatican breathes in the humblest convent in Spain, —and you, an insect perched on a wheel of this vast machine, imagined you were able to arrest its progress, while its rotation was hurrying on to crush you to atoms.” While he was uttering these words, with a rapidity and energy inconceivable, (a rapidity that literally made one word seem to devour another), I tried, with that effort of intellect which seems like the gasping respiration of one whose breath has long been forcibly suppressed or suspended, to comprehend and follow him. The first thought that struck me was one not very improbable in my situation, that he was not the person he appeared to be,—that it was not the companion of my escape who now addressed me; and I summoned all the remains of my intellect to ascertain this. A few questions must determine this point, if I had breath to utter them. “Were you not the agent in my escape? Were you not the man who—— What tempted you to this

step, in the defeat of which you appear to rejoice?" — "A bribe." — "And you have betrayed me, you say, and boast of your treachery,—what tempted you to this?" — "A higher bribe. Your brother gave gold, but the convent promised me salvation,—a business I was very willing to commit to their hands, as I was totally incompetent to manage it myself." — "Salvation, for treachery and murder?" — "Treachery and murder,—hard words. Now, to talk sense, was not yours the vilest treachery? You reclaimed your vows,—you declared before God and man, that the words you uttered before both were the babble of an infant; then you seduced your brother from his duty to his and your parents,—you connived at his intriguing against the peace and sanctity of a monastic institution, and dare *you* talk of treachery? And did you not, with a callosity of conscience unexampled in one so young, accept, nay, cling to an associate in your escape whom you knew you were seducing from his vows,—from all that man reveres as holy, and all that God (if there be a God) must regard as binding on man? You knew my crime, you knew my atrocity, yet you brandished me as your banner of defiance against the Almighty, though its inscription was, in glaring characters,—impiety—paricide—irreligion. Torn as the banner was, it still hung near the altar, till you dragged it away, to wrap yourself from detection in its folds,—and *you* talk of treachery? —there is not a more traitorous wretch on earth than yourself. Suppose that I was all that is vile and

culpable, was it for you, to double-dye the hue of my crime in the crimson of your sacrilege and apostacy? And for murder, I know I am a parricide. I cut my father's throat, but he never felt the blow,—nor did I,—I was intoxicated with wine, with passion, with blood,—no matter which; but you, with cold deliberate blows, struck at the hearts of father and mother. You killed by inches,—I murdered at a blow,—which of us is the murderer?—And *you* prate of treachery and murder? I am as innocent as the child that is born this hour, compared to you. Your father and mother have separated,—she is gone into a convent, to hide her despair and shame at your unnatural conduct,—your father is plunging successively into the abysses of voluptuousness and penitence, wretched in both; your brother, in his desperate attempt to liberate you, has perished,—you have scattered desolation over a whole family,—you have stabbed the peace and heart of each of them, with a hand that deliberated and paused on its blow, and then struck it calmly,—and you dare to talk of treachery and murder? You are a thousand times more culpable than I am, guilty as you think me. I stand a blasted tree,—I am struck to the heart, to the root,—I wither alone,—but you are the Upas, under whose poisonous droppings all things living have perished,—father—mother—brother, and last yourself;—the erosions of the poison, having nothing left to consume, strike inward, and prey on your own heart. Wretch, condemned beyond the

sympathy of man, beyond the redemption of the Saviour, what can you say to this?"—I answered only, "Is Juan dead, and were you his murderer,—were you indeed? I believe all you say, I must be very guilty, but is Juan dead?" As I spoke, I lifted up to him eyes that no longer seemed to see,—a countenance that bore no expression but that of the stupefaction of intense grief. I could neither utter nor feel reproaches,—I had suffered beyond the power of complaint. I awaited his answer; he was silent, but his diabolical silence spoke. "And my mother retired to a convent?" he nodded. "And my father?" he smiled, and I closed my eyes. I could bear any thing but his smile. I raised my head a few moments after, and saw him, with an habitual motion, (it could not have been more), make the sign of the cross, as a clock in some distant passage struck. This sight reminded me of the play so often acted in Madrid, and which I had seen in my few days of liberation,—*El diablo Predicador*. You smile, Sir, at such a recollection operating at such a moment, but it is a fact; and had you witnessed that play under the singular circumstances I did, you would not wonder at my being struck with the coincidence. In this performance the infernal spirit is the hero, and in the disguise of a monk he appears in a convent, where he torments and persecutes the community with a mixture of malignity and mirth truly Satanic. One night that I saw it performed, a groupe of monks were carrying the Host to a dying

person ; the walls of the theatre were so slight, that we could distinctly hear the sound of the bell which they ring on that occasion. In an instant, actors, audience, and all, were on their knees, and the devil, who happened to be on the stage, knelt among the rest, and crossed himself with visible marks of a devotion equally singular and edifying. You will allow the coincidence to be irresistibly striking.

“When he had finished his monstrous profanation of the holy sign, I fixed my eyes on him with an expression not to be mistaken. He saw it. There is not so bitter a reproach on earth as silence, for it always seems to refer the guilty to their own hearts, whose eloquence seldom fails to fill up the pause very little to the satisfaction of the accused. My look threw him into a rage, that I am now convinced not the most bitter upbraidings could have caused. The utmost fury of imprecation would have fallen on his ear like the most lulling harmony ;—it would have convinced him that his victim was suffering all he could possibly inflict. He betrayed this in the violence of his exclamations. “What, wretch !” he cried ;—“Do you think it was for your masses and your mummeries, your vigils, and fasts, and mumbling over senseless unconsoling beads, and losing my rest all night watching for the matins, and then quitting my frozen mat to nail my knees to stone till they grew there,—till I thought the whole pavement would rise with me when I rose,—do you think

it was for the sake of listening to sermons that the preachers did not believe,—and prayers that the lips that uttered them yawned at in the listlessness of their infidelity,—and penances that might be hired out to a lay-brother to undergo for a pound of coffee or of snuff,—and the vilest subserviencies to the caprice and passion of a Superior,—and the listening to men with God for ever in their mouths, and the world for ever in their hearts,—men who think of nothing but the aggrandizement of their temporal distinction, and screen, under the most revolting affectation of a concern in spiritualities, their ravening cupidity after earthly eminence:—Wretch! do you dream that it was for this?—that this *atheism of bigotry*,—this creed of all the priests that ever have existed in connexion with the state, and in hope of extending their interest by that connexion,—could have any influence over *me*? I had sounded every depth in the mine of depravity before them. I knew them,—I despised them. I crouched before them in body, I spurned them in my soul. With all their sanctimony, they had hearts so worldly, that it was scarce worth while to watch their hypocrisy, the secret developed itself so soon. There was no discovery to be made, no place for detection. I have seen them on their high festivals, prelates, and abbots, and priests, in all their pomp of office, appearing to the laity like descended gods, blazing in gems and gold, amid the lustre of tapers and the floating splendour of an irradiated atmosphere alive with light,



and all soft and delicate harmonies and delicious odours, till, as they disappeared amid the clouds of incense so gracefully tossed from the gilded censers, the intoxicated eye dreamed it saw them ascending to Paradise. Such was the *scene*, but what was *behind the scene*?—*I saw it all*. Two or three of them would rush from service into the vestry together, under the pretence of changing their vestments. One would imagine that these men would have at least the decency to refrain, while in the intervals of the holy mass. No, I overheard them. While shifting their robes, they talked incessantly of promotions and appointments,—of this or that prelate, dying or dead,—of a wealthy benefice being vacant,—of one dignitary having bargained hard with the state for the promotion of a relative,—of another who had well-founded hopes of obtaining a bishoprick, for what? neither for learning or piety, or one feature of the pastoral character, but because he had valuable benefices to resign in exchange, that might be divided among numerous candidates. Such was their conversation,—such and such only were their thoughts, till the last thunders of the allelujah from the church made them start, and hurry to resume their places at the altar. Oh what a compound of meanness and pride, of imbecillity and pretension, of sanctimony so transparently and awkwardly worn, that the naked frame of the natural mind was visible to every eye beneath it,—that mind which is “earthly, sensual, devilish.” Was it to live among such wretches, who,

all-villain as I was, made me hug myself with the thought that at least I was not like them, a passionless prone reptile,—a thing made of forms and dressings, half satin and shreds, half ave's and credo's,—bloating and abject,—creeping and aspiring,—winding up and up the pedestal of power at the rate of an inch a day, and tracking its advance to eminence by the flexibility of its writhings, the obliquity of its course, and the filth of its slime,—was it for this?"—he paused, half-choaked with his emotions.

"This man might have been a better being under better circumstances; he had at least a disdain of all that was mean in vice, with a wild avidity for all that was atrocious. "Was it for this," he continued, "that I have sold myself to work their works of darkness,—that I have become in this life as it were an apprentice to Satan, to take anticipated lessons of torture,—that I have sealed those indentures here, which must be fulfilled below? No, I despise—I loathe it all, the agents and the system,—the men and their matters. But it is the creed of that system, (and true or false it avails not,—some kind of creed is necessary, and the falser perhaps the better, for falsehood at least flatters), that the greatest criminal may expiate his offences, by vigilantly watching, and severely punishing, those of the enemies of heaven. Every offender may purchase his immunity, by consenting to become the executioner of the offender whom he betrays and

denounces. In the language of the laws of another country, they may turn "king's evidence," and buy their own lives at the price of another's,—a bargain which every man is very ready to make. But, in religious life, this kind of transfer, this substitutional suffering, is adopted with an avidity indescribable. How we love to punish those whom the church calls the enemies of God, while conscious that, though our enmity against him is infinitely greater, we become acceptable in his sight by tormenting those who may be less guilty, but who are in our power! I hate you, not because I have any natural or social cause to do so, but because the exhaustion of my resentment on you, may diminish that of the Deity towards me. If I persecute and torment the enemies of God, must I not be the friend of God? Must not every pang I inflict on another, be recorded in the book of the All-remembering, as an expurgation of at least one of the pangs that await me hereafter? I have no religion, I believe in no God, I repeat no creed, but I have that superstition of fear and of futurity, that seeks its wild and hopeless mitigation in the sufferings of others when our own are exhausted, or when (a much more common case) we are unwilling to undergo them. I am convinced that my own crimes will be obliterated, by whatever crimes of others I can promote or punish. Had I not, then, every motive to urge you to crime? Had I not every motive to watch and aggravate your punishment? Every coal of fire that I heaped on your head, was

removing one from that fire that burns for ever and ever for mine. Every drop of water that I withheld from your burning tongue, I expect will be repaid to me in slaking the fire and brimstone into which I must one day be hurled. Every tear that I draw, every groan that I extort, will, I am convinced, be repaid me in the remission of my own!—guess what a price I set on yours, or those of any other victim. The man in ancient story trembled and paused over the scattered limbs of his child, and failed in the pursuit,—the true penitent rushes over the mangled members of nature and passion, collects them with a hand in which there is no pulse, and a heart in which there is no feeling, and holds them up in the face of the Divinity as a peace-offering. Mine is the best theology,—the theology of utter hostility to all beings whose sufferings may mitigate mine. In this flattering theory, your crimes become my virtues,—I need not any of my own. Guilty as I am of the crime that outrages nature, your crimes (the crimes of those who offend against the church) are of a much more heinous order. But your guilt is my exculpation, your sufferings are my triumph. I need not repent, I need not believe; if you suffer, I am saved,—that is enough for me. How glorious and easy it is to erect at once the trophy of our salvation, on the trampled and buried hopes of another's! How subtle and sublime that alchemy, that can convert the iron of another's contumacy and impenitence into the precious gold of your own redemption! I

have literally worked out *my* salvation by *your* fear and trembling. With this hope I appeared to concur in the plan laid by your brother, every feature of which was in its progress disclosed to the Superior. With this hope I passed that wretched night and day in the dungeon with you, for, to have effected our escape by daylight, would have startled credulity as gross as even yours. But all the time I was feeling the dagger I bore in my breast, and which I had received for a purpose amply accomplished. As for you,—the Superior consented to your attempt to escape, merely that he might have you more in his power. He and the community were tired of you, they saw you would never make a monk,—your appeal had brought disgrace on them, your presence was a reproach and a burden to them. The sight of you was as thorns in their eyes,—they judged you would make a better victim than a proselyte, and they judged well. You are a much fitter inmate for your present abode than your last, and from hence there is no danger of your escaping.” —“And where, then, am I?”—“*You are in the prison of the Inquisition.*”

## CHAPTER XI

Oh ! torture me no more, I will confess.

HENRY THE SIXTH.

You have betrayed her to her own reproof.

COMEDY OF ERRORS.

“ AND it was true,—I was a prisoner in the Inquisition. Great emergencies certainly inspire us with the feelings they demand ; and many a man has braved a storm on the wide wild ocean, who would have shrunk from its voice as it pealed down his chimney. I believe so it fared with me,—the storm had risen, and I braced myself to meet it. I was in the Inquisition, but I knew that my crime, heinous as it was, was not one that came properly under the cognizance of the Inquisition. It was a conventual fault of the highest class, but liable only to be punished by the ecclesiastical power. The punishment of a monk who had dared to escape from his convent, might be dreadful enough,—immurement, or death perhaps, but still I was not legitimately a prisoner of the Inquisition. I had never, under all my trials, spoken a disrespectful word of the holy Catholic church, or a doubtful one of our most holy

faith,—I had not dropped one heretical, obnoxious, or equivocal expression, relative to a single point of duty, or article of faith. The preposterous charges of sorcery and possession, brought against me in the convent, had been completely disproved at the visitation of the Bishop. My aversion to the monastic state was indeed sufficiently known and fatally proved, but that was no subject for the investigation or penalties of the Inquisition. I had nothing to fear from the Inquisition,—at least so I said to myself in my prison, and I believed myself. The seventh day after the recovery of my reason was fixed on for my examination, and of this I received due notice; though I believe it is contrary to the usual forms of the Inquisition to give this notice; and the examination took place on the day and hour appointed.

“You are aware, Sir, that the tales related in general of the interior discipline of the Inquisition, must be in nine out of ten mere fables, as the prisoners are bound by an oath never to disclose what happens within its walls; and they who could violate this oath, would certainly not scruple to violate truth in the details with which their emancipation from it indulges them. I am forbidden, by an oath which I shall never break, to disclose the circumstances of my imprisonment or examination. I am at liberty to mention some general features of both, as they are connected with my extraordinary narrative. My first examination terminated rather favourably; my contumacy and aversion to monas-

ticism were indeed deplored and reprobated, but there was no ulterior hint,—nothing to alarm the peculiar fears of an inmate of the Inquisition. So I was as happy as solitude, darkness, straw, bread, and water, could make me, or any one, till, on the fourth night after my first examination, I was awoke by a light gleaming so strongly on my eyes, that I started up. The person then retired with his light, and I discovered a figure sitting in the farthest corner of my cell. Delighted at the sight of a human form, I yet had acquired so much of the habit of the Inquisition, that I demanded, in a cold and peremptory voice, who had ventured to intrude on the cell of a prisoner? The person answered in the blindest tones that ever soothed the human ear, that he was, like myself, a prisoner in the Inquisition;—that, by its indulgence, he had been permitted to visit me, and hoped — “And is *hope* to be named here?” I could not help exclaiming. He answered in the same soft and deprecatory tone; and, without adverting to our peculiar circumstances, suggested the consolation that might be derived from the society of two sufferers who were indulged with the power of meeting and communicating with each other.

“This man visited me for several successive nights; and I could not help noticing three extraordinary circumstances in his visits and his appearance. The first was, that he always (when he could) concealed his eyes from me; he sat sideways and backways, shifted his position, changed his seat, held



up his hand before his eyes ; but when at times he was compelled or *surprised* to turn their light on me, I felt that I had never beheld such eyes blazing in a mortal face,—in the darkness of my prison, I held up my hand to shield myself from their preternatural glare. The second was, that he came and retired apparently without help or hindrance,—that he came, like one who had a key to the door of my dungeon, at all hours, without leave or forbiddance,—that he traversed the prisons of the Inquisition, like one who had a master-key to its deepest recesses. Lastly, he spoke not only in a tone of voice clear and audible, totally unlike the whispered communications of the Inquisition, but spoke his abhorrence of the whole system,—his indignation against the Inquisition, Inquisitors, and all their aiders and abettors, from St Dominic down to the lowest official,—with such unqualified rage of vituperation, such caustic inveteracy of satire, such unbounded license of ludicrous and yet withering severity, that I trembled.

“ You know, Sir, or perhaps have yet to know, that there are persons *accredited* in the Inquisition, who are permitted to solace the solitude of the prisoners, on the condition of obtaining, under the pretence of friendly communication, those secrets which even torture has failed to extort. I discovered in a moment that my visitor was not one of these,—his abuse of the system was too gross, his indignation too unfeigned. Yet, in his continued visits, there was one circumstance more, which struck

me with a feeling of terror that actually paralyzed and annihilated all the terrors of the Inquisition.

“He constantly alluded to events and personages beyond his *possible memory*,—then he checked himself,—then he appeared to go on, with a kind of wild and derisive sneer at his own *absence*. But this perpetual reference to events long past, and men long buried, made an impression on me I cannot describe. His conversation was rich, various, and intelligent, but it was interspersed with such reiterated mention of the dead, that I might be pardoned for feeling as if the speaker was one of them. He dealt much in anecdotal history, and I, who was very ignorant of it, was delighted to listen to him, for he told every thing with the fidelity of an eye-witness. He spoke of the *Restoration* in England, and repeated the well-remembered observation of the queen-mother, Henriette of France,—that, had she known as much of the English on her first arrival, as she did on her second, she never would have been driven from the throne; then he added, to my astonishment, I was beside her carriage,<sup>1</sup> *it was the only one then in London*. He afterwards spoke of the superb fetes given by Louis Quatorze, and described, with an accuracy that made me start, the magnificent chariot in which that monarch personated the god of day, while all the titled pimps and harlots of the court followed as the

<sup>1</sup> I have read this somewhere, but cannot believe it. Coaches are mentioned by Beaumont and Fletcher, and even glass-coaches by Butler, in his “Remains.”

rabble of Olympus. Then he reverted to the death of the Duchesse d'Orleans, sister to Charles II.—to Pere Bourdaloue's awful sermon, preached at the death-bed of the royal beauty, dying of poison, (as suspected); and added, I saw the roses heaped on her toilette, to array her for a fete that very night, and near them stood the pix, and tapers, and oil, shrouded with the lace of that very toilette. Then he passed to England; he spoke of the wretched and well-rebuked pride of the wife of James II. who "thought it scorn" to sit at the same table with an Irish officer who informed her husband (then Duke of York) that *he* had sat at table, as an officer in the Austrian service, where the Duchess's father (Duke of Modena) had stood behind a chair, as a vassal to the Emperor of Germany.

"These circumstances were trifling, and might be told by any one, but there was a minuteness and circumstantiality in his details, that perpetually forced on the mind the idea that he had himself seen what he described, and been conversant with the personages he spoke of. I listened to him with an indefinable mixture of curiosity and terror. At last, while relating a trifling but characteristic circumstance that occurred in the reign of Louis the Thirteenth, he used the following expressions:<sup>1</sup> "One night that the king was at an entertainment, where Cardinal Richelieu also was present, the Cardinal had the insolence to rush out of the

<sup>1</sup> This circumstance is related, I believe, in the Jewish Spy.

apartment before his Majesty, just as the coach of the latter was announced. The King, without any indignant notice of the arrogance of the minister, said, with much *bon hommie*, "His Eminence the Cardinal will always be first."—"The first to attend your Majesty," answered the Cardinal, with admirable polite presence of mind; and, snatching a flambeau from a page who *stood near me*, he lighted the King to his carriage." I could not help catching at the extraordinary words that had escaped him; and I asked him, "Were you there?" He gave some indirect answer; and, avoiding the subject, went on to amuse me with some other curious circumstances of the private history of that age, of which he spoke with a minute fidelity somewhat *alarming*. I confess my pleasure in listening to them was greatly diminished by the singular sensation with which this man's presence and conversation inspired me. He departed, and I regretted his absence, though I could not account for the extraordinary feeling which I experienced during his visits.

"A few days after I was to encounter my second examination. The night before it one of the *officials* visited me. These are men who are not the common officers of a prison, but accredited in some degree by the higher powers of the Inquisition, and I paid due respect to his communications, particularly as they were delivered more in detail, and with more emphasis and energy than I could have expected from an inmate of that speechless mansion. This

circumstance made me expect something extraordinary, and his discourse verified all, and more than I expected. He told me, in plain terms, that there had been lately a cause of disturbance and inquietude, which had never before occurred in the Inquisition. That it was reported a human figure had appeared in the cells of some of the prisoners, uttering words not only hostile to the Catholic religion, and the discipline of the most holy Inquisition, but to religion in general, to the belief of a God and a future state. He added, that the utmost vigilance of the officials, on the rack for discovery, had never been able to trace this being in his visits to the cells of the prisoners; that the guards had been doubled, and every precaution that the circumspection of the Inquisition could employ, was had recourse to, hitherto without success; and that the only intimation they had of this singular visitor, was from some of the prisoners whose cells he had entered, and whom he had addressed in language that seemed lent him by the enemy of mankind, to accomplish the perdition of these unhappy beings. He himself had hitherto eluded all discovery; but he trusted, that, with the means lately adopted, it was impossible for this agent of the evil one to insult and baffle the holy tribunal much longer. He advised me to be prepared on this point, as it would undoubtedly be touched on at my next examination, and perhaps more urgently than I might otherwise imagine; and so, commending me to the holy keeping of God, he departed.

“Not wholly unconscious of the subject alluded to in this extraordinary communication, but perfectly innocent of any ulterior signification, as far as related to myself, I awaited my next examination rather with hope than fear. After the usual questions of—Why I was there? who had accused me? for what offence? whether I could recollect any expression that had ever intimated a disregard for the tenets of the holy church? &c. &c. &c.—after all this had been gone through, in a detail that may be spared the hearer, certain extraordinary questions were proposed to me, that appeared to relate indirectly to the appearance of my late visitor. I answered them with a sincerity that seemed to make a frightful impression on my judges. I stated plainly, in answer to their questions, that a person had appeared in my dungeon. “You must call it cell,” said the Supreme. “In my cell, then. He spoke with the utmost severity of the holy office,—he uttered words that it would not be respectful for me to repeat. I could scarcely believe that such a person would be permitted to visit the dungeons (cells, I should say) of the holy Inquisition.” As I uttered these words, one of the judges, trembling on his seat, (while his shadow, magnified by the imperfect light, pictured the figure of a paralytic giant on the wall opposite to me), attempted to address some question to me. As he spoke, there came a hollow sound from his throat, his eyes were rolled upwards in their sockets,—he was in an apoplectic paroxysm, and died before

he could be removed to another apartment. The examination terminated suddenly, and in some confusion; but, as I was remanded back to my cell, I could perceive, to my consternation, that I had left an impression the most unfavourable on the minds of the judges. They interpreted this accidental circumstance in a manner the most extraordinary and unjust, and I felt the consequences of it at my next examination.

“That night I received a visit in my cell from one of the judges of the Inquisition, who conversed with me a considerable time, and in an earnest and dispassionate manner. He stated the atrocious and revolting character under which I appeared from the first before the Inquisition,—that of a monk who had apostatized, had been accused of the crime of sorcery in his convent, and, in his impious attempt at escape, had caused the death of his brother, whom he had seduced to join in it, and had overwhelmed one of the first families with despair and disgrace. Here I was going to reply, but he stopped me, and observed, that he came not to listen, but to speak; and went on to inform me, that though I had been acquitted of the charge of communication with the evil spirit at the visitation of the Bishop, certain suspicions attached to me had been fearfully strengthened, by the fact that the visits of the extraordinary being, of whom I had heard enough to assure me of his actuality, had never been known in the prison of the Inquisition till my entrance into it. That the fair

and probable conclusion was, that I was really the victim of the enemy of mankind, whose power (through the reluctant permission of God and St Dominic, and he crossed himself as he spoke) had been suffered to range even through the walls of the holy office. He cautioned me, in severe but plain terms, against the danger of the situation in which I was placed, by the suspicions universally and (he feared) too justly attached to me; and, finally, adjured me, as I valued my salvation, to place my entire confidence in the mercy of the holy office, and, if *the figure* should visit me again, to watch what its impure lips might suggest, and faithfully report it to the holy office.

“When the Inquisitor had departed, I reflected on what he had said. I conceived it was something like the conspiracies so often occurring in the convent. I conceived that this might be an attempt to involve me in some plot against myself, something in which I might be led to be active in my own condemnation,—I felt the necessity of vigilant and breathless caution. I knew myself innocent, and this is a consciousness that defies even the Inquisition itself; but, within the walls of the Inquisition, the consciousness, and the defiance it inspires, are alike vain. I finally resolved, however, to watch every circumstance that might occur within the walls of my cell very closely, threatened as I was at once by the powers of the Inquisition, and those of the infernal demon, and I had not long to watch. It was on the



second night after my examination, that I saw this person enter my cell. My first impulse was to call aloud for the officials of the Inquisition. I felt a kind of vacillation I cannot describe, between throwing myself into the power of the Inquisition, or the power of this extraordinary being, more formidable perhaps than all the Inquisitors on earth, from Madrid to Goa. I dreaded imposition on both sides. I believed that they were playing off terror against terror; I knew not what to believe or think. I felt myself surrounded by enemies on every side, and would have given my heart to those who would first throw off the mask, and announce themselves as my decided and avowed enemy. After some reflection, I judged it best to distrust the Inquisition, and to hear all that this extraordinary visitor had to say. In my secret soul I believed him their secret agent,—I did them great injustice. His conversation on this second visit was more than usually amusing, but it was certainly such as might justify all the suspicions of the Inquisitors. At every sentence he uttered, I was disposed to start up and call for the officials. Then I represented to myself his turning accuser, and pointing *me* out as the victim of their condemnation. I trembled at the idea of committing myself by a word, while in the power of that dreadful body that might condemn me to expire under the torture,—or, worse, to die the long and lingering death of inanity,—the mind famished, the body scarcely fed,—the annihilation of hopeless and interminable soli-

tude,—the terrible inversion of natural feeling, that makes life the object of deprecation, and death of indulgence.

“The result was, that I sat and listened to the conversation (if it may be called so) of this extraordinary visitor, who appeared to regard the walls of the Inquisition no more than those of a domestic apartment, and who seated himself beside me as quietly as if he had been reposing on the most luxurious sofa that ever was arrayed by the fingers of voluptuousness. My senses were so bewildered, my mind so disarranged, that I can hardly remember his conversation. Part of it ran thus: “You are a prisoner of the Inquisition. The holy office, no doubt, is instituted for wise purposes, beyond the cognizance of sinful beings like us; but, as far as we can judge, its prisoners are not only insensible of, but shamefully ungrateful for, the benefits they might derive from its provident vigilance. For instance, you, who are accused of sorcery, fratricide, and plunging an illustrious and affectionate family in despair, by your atrocious misconduct, and who are now fortunately restrained from farther outrages against nature, religion, and society, by your salutary confinement here;—you, I venture to say, are so unconscious of these blessings, that it is your earnest desire to escape from the further enjoyment of them. In a word, I am convinced that the secret wish of your heart (unconverted by all the profusion of charity which has been heaped on you by the holy

office) is not on any account to increase the burden of your obligation to them, but, on the contrary, to diminish as much as possible the grief these worthy persons must feel, as long as your residence pollutes their holy walls, by abridging its period, even long before they intend you should do so. Your wish is to escape from the prison of the holy office, if possible,—you know it is.” I did not answer a word. I felt a terror at this wild and fierce irony,—I felt a terror at the mention of escape, (I had fatal reasons for this feeling),—a terror of every thing, and every one near me, indescribable. I believed myself tottering on a narrow ridge,—an Al-araf, between the alternate gulphs which the infernal spirit and the Inquisition (not less dreaded) disclosed on each side of my trembling march. I compressed my lips,—I hardly suffered my breath to escape.

“The speaker went on. “With regard to your escape, though I can promise that to you, (and that is what no *human power* can promise you), you must be aware of the difficulty which will attend it,—and, should that difficulty terrify you, will you hesitate?” Still I was silent;—my visitor perhaps took this for the silence of doubt. He went on. “Perhaps you think that your lingering here, amid the dungeons of the Inquisition, will infallibly secure your salvation. There is no error more absurd, and yet more rooted in the heart of man, than the belief that his sufferings will promote his spiritual safety.” Here I thought myself safe in rejoicing, that I felt,—I

trusted, my sufferings here would indeed be accepted as a partial mitigation of my well-merited punishment hereafter. I acknowledged my many errors, — I professed myself as penitent for my misfortunes as if they had been crimes; and the energy of my grief combining with the innocence of my heart, I commended myself to the Almighty with an unction I really felt, — I called on the names of God, the Saviour, and the Virgin, with the earnest supplication of sincere devoutness. When I had risen from my knees, my visitor had retired.

“Examination followed examination before the judges, with a rapidity unexampled in the annals of the Inquisition. Alas! that they should be *annals*, — that they should be more than records of *one day* of abuse, oppression, falsehood, and torture. At my next examination before the judges, I was interrogated according to the usual forms, and afterwards was led, by questions as artfully constructed, as if there was any necessity for art to lead me, to speak to the question on which I longed to disburden myself. The moment the subject was mentioned, I entered on my narrative with an eagerness of sincerity that would have undeceived any but Inquisitors. I announced that I had received another visit from this unknown being. I repeated, with breathless and trembling eagerness, every word of our late conference. I did not suppress a syllable of the insults on the holy office, the wild and fiend-like

acrimony of his satire, the avowed atheism, the diabolism of his conversation,—I dwelt on every particular. I hoped to *make merit* with the Inquisition, by accusing their enemy, and that of mankind. Oh! there is no telling the agony of zeal with which we work between two mortal adversaries, hoping to make a friend of one of them! I had suffered enough already from the Inquisition, but at this moment I would have crouched at the knees of the Inquisitors,—I would have pleaded for the place of the meanest official in their prison,—I would have supplicated for the loathsome office of their executioner,—I would have encountered any thing that the Inquisition could inflict, to be spared the horror of being imagined the ally of the enemy of souls. To my distraction, I perceived that every word I uttered, in all the agony of truth,—in all the hopeless eloquence of a soul struggling with the fiends who are bearing it beyond the reach of mercy, was disregarded. The judges appeared struck, indeed, by the earnestness with which I spoke. They gave, for a moment, a kind of instinctive credit to my words, extorted by terror; but, a moment after, I could perceive that *I*, and not my communication, was the object of that terror. They seemed to view me through a distorting atmosphere of mystery and suspicion. They urged me, over and over again, for further particulars,—for ulterior circumstances,—for something that was in *their* minds, but not in mine. The more pains they took to construct their questions

skilfully, the more unintelligible they became to me. I had told all I knew, I was anxious to tell all, but I could not tell more than I knew, and the agony of my solicitude to meet the object of the judges, was aggravated in proportion to my ignorance of it. On being remanded to my cell, I was warned, in the most solemn manner, that if I neglected to watch, remember, and report every word uttered by the extraordinary being, whose visits they tacitly acknowledged they could neither prevent or detect, I might expect the utmost severity of the holy office. I promised all this,—all that could be demanded, and, finally, as the last proof I could give of my sincerity, I implored that some one might be allowed to pass the night in my cell,—or, if that was contrary to the rules of the Inquisition, that one of the guard might be stationed in the passage communicating with my cell, to whom I could, by a signal agreed on, intimate when this nameless being burst on me, and his impious intrusion might be at once detected and punished. In speaking thus, I was indulged with a privilege very unusual in the Inquisition, where the prisoner is only to answer questions, but never to speak unless when called on. My proposal, however, caused some consultation; and it was with horror I found, on its termination, that not one of the officials, even under the discipline of the Inquisition, would undertake the task of watching at the door of *my* cell.

“I went back to it in an agony inexpressible. The

more I had laboured to clear myself, the more I had become involved. My only resource and consolation was in a determination to obey, to the strictest letter, the injunctions of the Inquisition. I kept myself studiously awake,—*he* came not all that night. Towards the morning I slept,—Oh what a sleep was mine!—the genii, or the demons of the place, seemed busy in the dream that haunted me. I am convinced that a real victim of an *auto da fe* (so called) never suffered more during his horrible procession to flames temporal and eternal, than I did during that dream. I dreamed that the judgement had passed,—the bell had tolled,—and we marched out from the prison of the Inquisition;—my crime was proved, and my sentence determined, as an apostate monk and a *diabolical* heretic. The procession commenced,—the Dominicans went first, then followed the penitents, arms and feet bare, each hand holding a wax taper, some with *san benitos*, some without, all pale, haggard, and breathless, the hue of their faces frightfully resembling that of their clay-coloured arms and feet. Then followed those who had on their black dresses the *fuego revolto*.<sup>1</sup> Then followed—I saw *myself*; and this horrid tracing of yourself in a dream,—this haunting of yourself by your own spectre, while you still live, is perhaps a curse almost equal to your crimes visiting you in the punishments of eternity. I saw myself in the garment of condemnation, *the*

<sup>1</sup> *Flames reversed*, intimating that the criminal is not to be burned.

*flames pointing upwards*, while the demons painted on my dress were mocked by the demons who beset my feet, and hovered round my temples. The Jesuits on each side of me, urged me to consider the difference between these painted fires, and those which were about to enwrap my writhing soul for an eternity of ages. All the bells of Madrid seemed to be ringing in my ears. There was no light but a dull twilight, such as one always sees in his sleep, (no man ever dreamed of sun-light);—there was a dim and smoky blaze of torches in my eyes, whose flames were soon to *be in my eyes*. I saw the stage before me,—I was chained to the chair, amid the ringing of bells, the preaching of the Jesuits, and the shouts of the multitude. A splendid amphitheatre stood opposite,—the king and queen of Spain, and all the nobility and hierarchy of the land, were there to see us burn. Our thoughts in dreams wander; I had heard a story of an *auto da fe*, where a young Jewess, not sixteen, doomed to be burnt alive, had prostrated herself before the queen, and exclaimed, “Save me,—save me, do not let me burn, my only crime is believing in the God of my fathers;”—the queen (I believe Elizabeth of France, wife of Philip) wept, but the procession went on. Something like this crossed my dream. I saw the supplicant rejected; the next moment the figure was that of my brother Juan, who clung to me, shrieking, “Save me, save me.” The next moment I was chained to my chair again,—the fires were lit, the bells rang



out, the litanies were sung;—my feet were scorched to a cinder,—my muscles cracked, my blood and marrow hissed, my flesh consumed like shrinking leather,—the bones of my legs hung two black withering and moveless sticks in the ascending blaze;—it ascended, caught my hair,—I was crowned with fire,—my head was a ball of molten metal, my eyes flashed and melted in their sockets;—I opened my mouth, it drank fire,—I closed it, the fire was within,—and still the bells rung on, and the crowd shouted, and the king and queen, and all the nobility and priesthood, looked on, and we burned, and burned!—I was a cinder body and soul in my dream.

“I awoke from it with the horrible exclamation—ever shrieked, never heard—of those wretches, when the fires are climbing fast and fell,—*Misericordia por amor di Dios!* My own screams awoke me,—I was in my prison, and beside me stood the tempter. With an impulse I could not resist,—an impulse borrowed from the horrors of my dream, I flung myself at his feet, and called on him to “save me.”

“I know not, Sir, nor is it a problem to be solved by human intellect, whether this inscrutable being had not the power to influence my dreams, and dictate to a tempting demon the images which had driven me to fling myself at his feet for hope and safety. However it was, he certainly took advantage of my agony, half-visionary, half-real as it was, and, while proving to me that he had the power of effecting my escape from the Inquisition, proposed to me

that incommunicable condition which I am forbid to reveal, except in the act of confession.”

Here Melmoth could not forbear remembering the *incommunicable condition* proposed to Stanton in the mad-house,—he shuddered, and was silent. The Spaniard went on.

“At my next examination, the questions were more eager and earnest than ever, and I was more anxious to be heard than questioned; so, in spite of the eternal circumspection and formality of an inquisitorial examination, we soon came to understand each other. I had an object to gain, and they had nothing to lose by my gaining that object. I confessed, without hesitation, that I had received another visit from that most mysterious being, who could penetrate the recesses of the Inquisition, without either its leave or prevention, (the judges trembled on their seats, as I uttered these words);—that I was most willing to disclose all that had transpired at our last conference, but that I required to first confess to a priest, and receive absolution. This, though quite contrary to the rules of the Inquisition, was, on this extraordinary occasion, complied with. A black curtain was dropt before one of the recesses; I knelt down before a priest, and confided to him that tremendous secret, which, according to the rules of the Catholic church, can never be disclosed by the confessor but to the Pope. I do not understand how the business was managed, but I was called on to repeat the same confession

before the Inquisitors. I repeated it word for word, saving only the words that my oath, and my consciousness of the holy secret of confession, forbade me to disclose. The sincerity of this confession, I thought, would have worked a miracle for me,—and so it did, but not the miracle that I expected. They required from me that incommunicable secret; I announced it was in the bosom of the priest to whom I had confessed. They whispered, and seemed to debate about the torture.

“At this time, as may be supposed, I cast an anxious and miserable look round the apartment, where the large crucifix, thirteen feet high, stood bending above the seat of the Supreme. At this moment I saw a person seated at the table covered with black cloth, intensely busy as a secretary, or person employed in taking down the depositions of the accused. As I was led near the table, this person flashed a look of recognition on me,—he was my dreaded companion,—he was an official now of the Inquisition. I gave all up the moment I saw his ferocious and lurking scowl, like that of the tiger before he springs from his jungle, or the wolf from his den. This person threw on me looks, from time to time, which I could not mistake, and I dared not interpret;—and I had reason to believe that the tremendous sentence pronounced against me, issued, if not from his lips, at least from his dictation.—“You, Alonzo di Monçada, monk, professed of the order of ——, accused of the crimes of heresy,

apostacy, fratricide, (“ Oh no,—no !” I shrieked, but no one heeded me), and conspiracy with the enemy of mankind against the peace of the community in which you professed yourself a votary of God, and against the authority of the holy office ; accused, moreover, of intercourse in your cell, the prison of the holy office, with an infernal messenger of the foe of God, man, and your own apostatized soul ; condemned on your own confession of the infernal spirit having had access to your cell,—are hereby delivered to——”

“I heard no more. I exclaimed, but my voice was drowned in the murmur of the officials. The crucifix suspended behind the chair of the judge, rocked and reeled before my eyes ; the lamp that hung from the ceiling, seemed to send forth twenty lights. I held up my hands in abjuration—they were held down by stronger hands. I tried to speak—my mouth was stopped. I sunk on my knees—on my knees I was about to be dragged away, when an aged Inquisitor giving a sign to the officials, I was released for a few moments, and he addressed me in these words—words rendered terrible by the sincerity of the speaker. From his age, from his sudden interposition, I had expected mercy. He was a very old man—he had been blind for twenty years ; and as he rose to speak my malediction, my thoughts wandered from Appius Claudius of Rome,—blessing the loss of sight, that saved him from beholding the disgrace of his country,—to that blind chief Inquisitor of Spain, who assured Philip, that in sacrificing

his son, he imitated the Almighty, who had sacrificed his Son also for the salvation of mankind.—Horrid profanation! yet striking application to the bosom of a Catholic. The words of the Inquisitor were these: “Wretch, apostate, and excommunicate, I bless God that these withered balls can no longer behold you. The demon has haunted you from your birth—you were born in sin—fiends rocked your cradle, and dipt their talons in the holy font, while they mocked the sponsors of your unsanctified baptism. Illegitimate and accursed, you were always the burden of the holy church; and now, the infernal spirit comes to claim his own, and you acknowledge him as your lord and master. He has sought and sealed you as his own, even amid the prison of the Inquisition. Begone, accursed, we deliver you over to the secular arm, praying that it may deal with you not too severely.” At these terrible words, whose meaning I understood but too well, I uttered one shriek of agony—the only *human* sound ever heard within the walls of the Inquisition. But I was borne away; and that cry into which I had thrown the whole strength of nature, was heeded no more than a cry from the torture room. On my return to my cell, I felt convinced the whole was a scheme of inquisitorial art, to involve me in self-accusation, (their constant object when they can effect it), and punish me for a crime, while I was guilty only of an extorted confession.

“With compunction and anguish unutterable, I execrated my own beast-like and credulous stupidity.

Could any but an idiot, a driveller, have been the victim of such a plot? Was it in nature to believe that the prisons of the Inquisition could be traversed at will by a stranger whom no one could discover or apprehend? That such a being could enter cells impervious to human power, and hold conversation with the prisoners at his pleasure—appear and disappear—insult, ridicule, and blaspheme—propose escape, and point out the means with a precision and facility, that must be the result of calm and profound calculation—and this within the walls of the Inquisition, almost in the hearing of the judges—actually in the hearing of the guards, who night and day paced the passages with sleepless and inquisitorial vigilance?—ridiculous, monstrous, impossible! it was all a plot to betray me to self-condemnation. My visitor was an agent and accomplice of the Inquisition, and I was my own betrayer and executioner. Such was my conclusion; and, hopeless as it was, it certainly seemed probable.

“I had now nothing to await but the most dreadful of all destinations, amid the darkness and silence of my cell, where the total suspension of the stranger’s visits confirmed me every hour in my conviction of their nature and purport, when an event occurred, whose consequences alike defeated fear, hope, and calculation. This was the great fire that broke out within the walls of the Inquisition, about the close of the last century.

“It was on the night of the 29th November 17—,

that this extraordinary circumstance took place—extraordinary from the well-known precautions adopted by the vigilance of the holy office against such an accident, and also from the very small quantity of fuel consumed within its walls. On the first intimation that the fire was spreading rapidly, and threatened danger, the prisoners were ordered to be brought from their cells, and guarded in a court of the prison. I must acknowledge we were treated with great humanity and consideration. We were conducted deliberately from our cells, placed each of us between two guards, who did us no violence, nor used harsh language, but assured us, from time to time, that if the danger became imminent, we would be permitted every fair opportunity to effect our escape. It was a subject worthy of the pencil of Salvator Rosa, or of Murillo, to sketch us as we stood. Our dismal garbs and squalid looks, contrasted with the equally dark, but imposing and authoritative looks of the guards and officials, all displayed by the light of torches, which burned, or appeared to burn, fainter and fainter, as the flames rose and roared in triumph above the towers of the Inquisition. The heavens were all on fire—and the torches, held no longer in firm hands, gave a tremulous and pallid light. It seemed to me like a wildly painted picture of the last day. God appeared descending in the light that enveloped the skies—and we stood pale and shuddering in the light below.

“Among the groupe of prisoners, there were fathers and sons, who perhaps had been inmates of adjacent cells for years, without being conscious of each others vicinity or existence—but they did not dare to recognize each other. Was not this like the day of judgement, where similar mortal relations may meet under different classes of the sheep and goats, without presuming to acknowledge the strayed one amid the flock of a different shepherd? There were also parents and children who *did* recognize and stretch out their wasted arms to each other, though feeling they must never meet,—some of them condemned to the flames, some to imprisonment, and some to the official duties of the Inquisition, as a mitigation of their sentence,—and was not this like the day of judgement, where parent and child may be allotted different destinations, and the arms that would attest the last proof of mortal affection, are expanded in vain over the gulph of eternity. Behind and around us stood the officials and guards of the Inquisition, all watching and intent on the progress of the flames, but fearless of the result with regard to themselves. Such may be the feeling of those spirits who watch the doom of the Almighty, and know the destination of those they are appointed to watch. And is not this like the day of judgement? Far, far, above us, the flames burst out in volumes, in solid masses of fire, spiring up to the burning heavens. The towers of the Inquisition shrunk into cinders—that tremendous monument of the power,



and crime, and gloom of the human mind, was wasting like a scroll in the fire. Will it not be thus also at the day of judgement? Assistance was slowly brought—Spaniards are very indolent—the engines played imperfectly—the danger increased—the fire blazed higher and higher—the persons employed to work the engines, paralyzed by terror, fell to the ground, and called on every saint they could think of, to arrest the progress of the flames. Their exclamations were so loud and earnest, that really the saints must have been deaf, or must have felt a particular predilection for a conflagration, not to attend to them. However it was, the fire went on. Every bell in Madrid rang out. — Orders were issued to every Alcaide to be had.—The king of Spain himself, (<sup>1</sup> after a hard day's shooting), attended in person. The churches were all lit up, and thousands of the devout supplicated on their knees by torch-light, or whatever light they could get, that the reprobate souls confined in the Inquisition might feel the fires that were consuming its walls, as merely a slight foretaste of the fires that glowed for them for ever and ever. The fire went on, doing its dreadful work, and heeding kings and priests no more than if they were firemen. I am convinced twenty able men, accustomed to such business, could have quenched the fire; but when our workmen should have played their engines, they were all on their knees.

<sup>1</sup> The passion of the late king of Spain for field sports was well known.

“The flames at last began to descend into the court. Then commenced a scene of horror indescribable. The wretches who had been doomed to the flames, imagined their hour was come. Idiots from long confinement, and submissive as the holy office could require, they became delirious as they saw the flames approaching, and shrieked audibly, “Spare me—spare me—put me to as little torture as you can.” Others, kneeling to the approaching flames, invoked them as saints. They dreamt they saw the visions they had worshipped, — the holy angels, and even the blessed virgin, descending in flames to receive their souls as parting from the stake; and they howled out their allelujahs half in horror, half in hope. Amid this scene of distraction, the Inquisitors stood their ground. It was admirable to see their firm and solemn array. As the flames prevailed, they never faltered with foot, or gave a sign with hand, or winked with eye;—their duty, their stern and heartless duty, seemed to be the only principle and motive of their existence. They seemed a phalanx clad in iron impenetrable. When the fires roared, they crossed themselves calmly;—when the prisoners shrieked, they gave a signal for silence;—when they dared to pray, they tore them from their knees, and hinted the inutility of prayer at such a juncture, when they might be sure that the flames they were deprecating would burn hotter in a region from which there was neither escape or hope of departure. At this moment, while standing amid the

groupe of prisoners, my eyes were struck by an extraordinary spectacle. Perhaps it is amid the moments of despair, that imagination has most power, and they who have suffered, can best describe and feel. In the burning light, the steeple of the Dominican church was as visible as at noon-day. It was close to the prison of the Inquisition. The night was intensely dark, but so strong was the light of the conflagration, that I could see the spire blazing, from the reflected lustre, like a meteor. The hands of the clock were as visible as if a torch was held before them ; and this calm and silent progress of time, amid the tumultuous confusion of midnight horrors, — this scene of the physical and mental world in an agony of fruitless and incessant motion, might have suggested a profound and singular image, had not my whole attention been rivetted to a human figure placed on a pinnacle of the spire, and surveying the scene in perfect tranquillity. It was a figure not to be mistaken—it was the figure of him who had visited me in the cells of the Inquisition. The hopes of my justification made me forget every thing. I called aloud on the guard, and pointed out the figure, visible as it was in that strong light to every eye. No one had time, however, to give a glance towards it. At that very moment, the archway of the court opposite to us gave way, and sunk in ruins at our feet, dashing, as it fell, an ocean of flame against us. One wild shriek burst from every lip at that moment. Prisoners, guards, and Inquisi-

tors, all shrunk together, mingled in one groupe of terror.

“The next instant, the flames being suppressed by the fall of such a mass of stone, there arose such a blinding cloud of smoke and dust, that it was impossible to distinguish the face or figure of those who were next you. The confusion was increased by the contrast of this sudden darkness, to the intolerable light that had been drying up our sight for the last hour, and by the cries of those who, being near the arch, lay maimed and writhing under its fragments. Amid shrieks, and darkness, and flames, a space lay open before me. The thought, the motion, were simultaneous — no one saw — no one pursued ; — and hours before my absence could be discovered, or an inquiry be made after me, I had struggled safe and secret through the ruins, and was in the streets of Madrid.

“To those who have escaped present and extreme peril, all other peril seems trifling. The wretch who has swum from a wreck cares not on what shore he is cast ; and though Madrid was in fact only a wider prison of the Inquisition to me, in knowing that I was no longer in the hands of the officials, I felt a delirious and indefinite consciousness of safety. Had I reflected for a moment, I must have known, that my peculiar dress and *bare feet* must betray me wherever I went. The conjuncture, however, was very favourable to me — the streets were totally deserted ; — every inhabitant who was not in bed,

or bed-rid, was in the churches, deprecating the wrath of heaven, and praying for the extinction of the flames.

“I ran on, I know not where, till I could run no longer. The pure air, which I had been so long unaccustomed to breathe, acted like the most torturing spicula on my throat and lungs as I flew along, and utterly deprived me of the power of respiration, which at first it appeared to restore. I saw a building near me, whose large doors were open. I rushed in—it was a church. I fell on the pavement panting. It was the aisle into which I had burst—it was separated from the chancel by large grated railings. Within I could see the priests at the altar, by the lamps recently and rarely lighted, and a few trembling devotees on their knees, in the body of the chancel. There was a strong contrast between the glare of the lamps within the chancel, and the faint light that trembled through the windows of the aisle, scarcely showing me the monuments, on one of which I leaned to rest my throbbing temples for a moment. I could not rest—I dared not—and rising, I cast an involuntary glance on the inscription which the monument bore. The light appeared to increase maliciously, to aid my powers of vision. I read, “Orate pro anima.” I at last came to the name—“Juan di Monçada.” I flew from the spot as if pursued by demons—my brother’s early grave had been my resting place.

## CHAPTER XII

*Juravi lingua, mentem injuratam gero.*——

Who brought you first acquainted with the devil?

SHIRLEY'S ST PATRICK FOR IRELAND.

“I RAN on till I had no longer breath or strength, (without perceiving that I was in a dark passage), till I was stopt by a door. In falling against it, I burst it open, and found myself in a low dark room. When I raised myself, for I had fallen on my hands and knees, I looked round, and saw something so singular, as to suspend even my personal anxiety and terror for a moment.

“The room was very small; and I could perceive by the rents, that I had not only broken open a door, but a large curtain which hung before it, whose ample folds still afforded me concealment if I required it. There was no one in the room, and I had time to study its singular furniture at leisure.

“There was a table covered with cloth; on it were placed a vessel of a singular construction, a

book, into whose pages I looked, but could not make out a single letter. I therefore wisely took it for a book of magic, and closed it with a feeling of exculpatory horror. (It happened to be a copy of the Hebrew Bible, marked with the Samaritan points). There was a knife too; and a cock was fastened to the leg of the table, whose loud crows announced his impatience of further constraint.<sup>1</sup>

“I felt that this apparatus was somewhat singular—it looked like a preparation for a sacrifice. I shuddered, and wrapt myself in the volumes of the drapery which hung before the door my fall had broken open. A dim lamp, suspended from the ceiling, discovered to me all these objects, and enabled me to observe what followed almost immediately. A man of middle age, but whose physiognomy had something peculiar in it, even to the eye of a Spaniard, from the clustering darkness of his eye-brows, his prominent nose, and a certain lustre in the balls of his eyes, entered the room, knelt before the table, kissed the book that lay on it, and

<sup>1</sup> Quilibet postea paterfamilias, cum gallo præ manibus, in medium primus prodit.

Deinde expiationem aggreditur et capiti suo ter gallum allidit, singulosque ictus his vocibus prosequitur. Hic Gallus sit permutio pro me, &c.

Gallo deinde imponens manus, eum statim mactat, &c.

Vide Buxtorf, as quoted in Dr. Magee (Bishop of Raphoe's) work on the atonement. Cumberland in his Observer, I think, mentions the discovery to have been reserved for the feast of the Passover. It is just as probable it was made on the day of expiation.

read from it some sentences that were to precede, as I imagined, some horrible sacrifice ;—felt the edge of the knife, knelt again, uttered some words which I did not understand, (as they were in the language of that book), and then called aloud on some one by the name of Manasseh-ben-Solomon. No one answered. He sighed, passed his hand over his eyes with the air of a man who is asking pardon of himself for a short forgetfulness, and then pronounced the name of “Antonio.” A young man immediately entered, and answered, “Did you call me, Father?”—But while he spoke, he threw a hollow and wandering glance on the singular furniture of the room.

“I called you, my son, and why did you not answer me?”—“I did not hear you, father—I mean, I did not think it was on me you called. I heard only a name I was never called by before. When you said ‘Antonio,’ I obeyed you—I came.”—“But *that* is the name by which you must in future be called and be known, to me at least, unless you prefer another.—You shall have your choice.”—“My father, I shall adopt whatever name you choose.”—“No ; the choice of your new name must be your own—you must, for the future, either adopt the name you have heard, or another.”—“What other, Sir?”—“*That of parricide.*” The youth shuddered with horror, less at the words than at the expression that accompanied them ; and, after looking at his father for some time in a posture of tremulous and supplicating inquiry, he burst into tears. The father seized



the moment. He grasped the arms of his son, "My child, I gave you life, and you may repay the gift—my life is in your power. You think me a Catholic—I have brought you up as one for the preservation of our mutual lives, in a country where the confession of the true faith would infallibly cost both. I am one of that unhappy race every where stigmatized and spoken against, yet on whose industry and talent the ungrateful country that anathematizes us, depends for half the sources of its national prosperity. I am a Jew, "an Israelite," one of those to whom, even by the confession of a Christian apostle, "pertain the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh—" Here he paused, not willing to go on with a quotation that would have contradicted his sentiments. He added, "The Messiah will come, whether suffering or triumphant.<sup>1</sup> I am a Jew. I called you at the hour of your birth by the name of Manasseh-ben-Solomon. I called on you by that name, which I felt had clung to the bottom of my heart from that hour, and which, echoing from its abyss, I almost hoped you would have recognized. It was a dream, but will you not, my beloved child, realize that dream? Will you not?—will you not? The God of your fathers is waiting to embrace you—and your father is at your

<sup>1</sup> The Jews believe in two Messias, a suffering and a triumphant one, to reconcile the prophecies with their own expectations.

feet, imploring you to follow the faith of your father Abraham, the prophet Moses, and all the holy prophets who are with God, and who look down on this moment of your soul's vacillation between the abominable idolatries of those who not only adore the Son of the carpenter, but even impiously compel you to fall down before the image of the woman his mother, and adore her by the blasphemous name of Mother of God,—and the pure voice of those who call on you to worship the God of your fathers, the God of ages, the eternal God of heaven and earth, without son or mother, without child or descendant, (as impiously presumed in their blasphemous creed), without even worshipper, save those who, like me, sacrifice their hearts to him in solitude, at the risk of those hearts being PIERCED BY THEIR OWN CHILDREN.

“At these words, the young man, overcome by all he saw and heard, and quite unprepared for this sudden transition from Catholicism to Judaism, burst into tears. The father seized the moment, “My child, you are now to profess yourself the slave of these idolaters, who are cursed in the law of Moses, and by the commandment of God, — or to enrol yourself among the faithful, whose rest shall be in the bosom of Abraham, and who, reposing there, shall see the unbelieving crawling over the burning ashes of hell, and supplicate you in vain for a drop of water, according to the legends of their own prophet. And does not such a picture excite your pride to

deny them a drop?"—"I would not deny them a drop," sobbed the youth, "I would give them these tears."—"Reserve them for your father's grave," added the Jew, "for to the grave you have doomed me.—I have lived, sparing, watching, temporizing, with these accursed idolaters, for *you*. And now—and now you reject a God who is alone able to save, and a father kneeling to implore you to accept that salvation."—"No, I do not," said the bewildered youth.—"What, then, do you determine?—I am at your feet to know your resolution. Behold, the mysterious instruments of your initiation are ready. There is the uncorrupted book of Moses, the prophet of God, as these idolaters themselves confess. There are all the preparations for the year of expiation—determine whether those rites shall now dedicate you to the true God, or, seize your father, (who has put his life into your hands), and drag him by the throat into the prisons of the Inquisition. You may—you can—*will you?*"

"In prostrate and tremulous agony, the father held up his locked hands to his child. I seized the moment—despair had made me reckless. I understood not a word of what was said, except the reference to the Inquisition. I seized on that last word—I grasped, in my despair, at the heart of father and child. I rushed from behind the curtain, and exclaiming, "If he does not betray you to the Inquisition, *I will.*" I fell at his feet. This mixture of defiance and prostration, my squalid figure, my

inquisitorial habit, and my bursting on this secret and solemn interview, struck the Jew with a horror he vainly gasped to express, till, rising from my knees, on which I had fallen from my weakness, I added, "Yes, I will betray you to the Inquisition, unless you instantly promise to shelter me from it." The Jew glanced at my dress, perceived his danger and mine, and, with a *physical* presence of mind unparalleled, except in a man under strong impressions of mental excitation and personal danger, bustled about to remove every trace of the expiatory sacrifice, and of my inquisitorial costume, in a moment. In the same breath he called aloud for *Rebekah*, to remove the vessels from the table; bid *Antonio* quit the apartment, and hastened to clothe me in some dress that he had snatched from a wardrobe collected from centuries; while he tore off my inquisitorial dress with a violence that left me actually naked, and the habit in rags.

"There was something at once fearful and ludicrous in the scene that followed. *Rebekah*, an old Jewish woman, came at his call; but, seeing a third person, retreated in terror, while her master, in his confusion, called her in vain by her *Christian* name of *Maria*. Obligated to remove the table alone, he overthrew it, and broke the leg of the unfortunate animal fastened to it, who, not to be without his share in the tumult, uttered the most shrill and intolerable screams, while the Jew, snatching up the sacrificial knife, repeated cagerly, "*Statim mactat*

gallum," and put the wretched bird out of its pain ; then, trembling at this open avowal of his Judaism, he sat down amid the ruins of the overthrown table, the fragments of the broken vessels, and the remains of the martyred cock. He gazed at me with a look of stupified and ludicrous inanity, and demanded in delirious tones, what "my lords the Inquisitors had pleased to visit his humble but highly-honoured mansion for?" I was scarce less deranged than he was ; and, though we both spoke the same language, and were forced by circumstances into the same strange and desperate confidence with each other, we really needed, for the first half-hour, a rational interpreter of our exclamations, starts of fear, and bursts of disclosure. At last our mutual terror acted honestly between us, and we understood each other. The end of the matter was, that, in less than an hour, I felt myself clad in a comfortable garment, seated at a table amply spread, watched over by my involuntary host, and watching him in turn with red wolfish eyes, which glanced from his board to his person, as if I could, at a moment's hint of danger from *his* treachery, have changed my meal, and feasted on his life-blood. No such danger occurred,—my host was more afraid of me than I had reason to be of him, and for many causes. He was a Jew *innate*, an impostor,—a wretch, who, drawing sustenance from the bosom of our holy mother the church, had turned her nutriment to poison, and attempted to infuse that poison into the lips of his son. I was but a fugitive

from the Inquisition,—a prisoner, who had a kind of instinctive and very venial dislike to giving the Inquisitors the trouble of lighting the faggots for *me*, which would be much better employed in consuming the adherent to the law of Moses. In fact, impartiality considered, there was every thing in my favour, and the Jew just acted as if he felt so,—but all this I ascribed to his terrors of the Inquisition.

“That night I slept,—I know not how or where. I had wild dreams before I slept, if I did sleep; and after,—such visions,—such *things*, passed in dread and stern reality before me. I have often in my memory searched for the traces of the first night I passed under the roof of the Jew, but can find nothing,—nothing except a conviction of my utter insanity. It might not have been so,—I know not how it was. I remember his lighting me up a narrow stair, and my asking him, was he lighting me *down* the steps of the dungeons of the Inquisition?—his throwing open a door, and my asking him, was it the door of the torture-room?—his attempting to undress me, and my exclaiming, “Do not bind me too tight,—I know I must suffer, but be merciful;”—his throwing me on the bed, while I shrieked, “Well, you have bound me on the rack, then?—strain it hard, that I may forget myself the sooner; but let your surgeon not be near to watch my pulse,—let it cease to throb, and let me cease to suffer.” I remember no more for many days, though I have struggled to do so, and caught from time to time

glimpses of thoughts better lost. Oh, Sir, there are some *criminals of the imagination*, whom if we could plunge into the *oubliettes* of its magnificent but lightly-based fabric, its lord would reign more happy.

“Many days elapsed, indeed, before the Jew began to feel his immunity somewhat dearly purchased, by the additional maintenance of a troublesome, and, I fear, a deranged inmate. He took the first opportunity that the recovery of my intellect offered, of hinting this to me, and inquired mildly what I purposed to do, and where I meant to go. This question for the first time opened to my view that range of hopeless and interminable desolation that lay before me,—the Inquisition had laid waste the whole track of life, as with fire and sword. I had not a spot to stand on, a meal to earn, a hand to grasp, a voice to greet, a roof to crouch under, in the whole realm of Spain.

“You are not to learn, Sir, that the power of the Inquisition, like that of death, separates you, by its single touch, from all mortal relations. From the moment its grasp has seized you, all human hands unlock their hold of yours,—you have no longer father, mother, sister, or child. The most devoted and affectionate of all those relatives, who, in the natural intercourse of human life, would have laid their hands under your feet to procure you a smoother passage over its roughnesses, would be the first to grasp the faggot that was to reduce you to

ashes, if the Inquisition were to demand the sacrifice. I knew all this; and I felt, besides, that, had I never been a prisoner in the Inquisition, I was an isolated being, rejected by father and mother,—the involuntary murderer of my brother, the only being on earth who loved me, or whom I could love or profit by,—that being who seemed to flash across my brief *human* existence, to illuminate and to blast. The bolt had perished with the victim. In Spain it was impossible for me to live without detection, unless I plunged myself into an imprisonment as profound and hopeless as that of the Inquisition. And, if a miracle were wrought to convey me out of Spain, ignorant as I was of the language, the habits, and the modes of obtaining subsistence, in that or any other country, how could I support myself even for a day. Absolute famine stared me in the face, and a sense of degradation accompanying my consciousness of my own utter and desolate helplessness, was the keenest shaft in the quiver, whose contents were lodged in my heart. My consequence was actually lessened in my own eyes, by ceasing to become the victim of persecution, by which I had suffered so long. *While people think it worth their while to torment us, we are never without some dignity, though painful and imaginary.* Even in the Inquisition I belonged to somebody,—I was watched and guarded;—now, I was the outcast of the whole earth, and I wept with equal bitterness and depression at the hopeless vastness of the desert I had to traverse.

“The Jew, not at all disturbed by these feelings,



went daily out for intelligence, and returned one evening in such raptures, that I could easily discover he had ascertained his own safety at least, if not mine. He informed me that the current report in Madrid was, that I had perished in the fall of the burning ruins on the night of the fire. He added, that this report had received additional currency and strength from the fact, that the bodies of those who had perished by the fall of the arch, were, when discovered, so defaced by fire, and so crushed by the massive fragments, as to be utterly undistinguishable;—their remains had been collected, however, and mine were supposed to be among the number. A mass had been performed for them, and *their cinders, occupying but a single coffin*,<sup>1</sup> were interred in the vaults of the Dominican church, while some of the first families of Spain, in the deepest mourning, and their faces veiled, testified their grief in silence for those whom they would have shuddered to acknowledge their mortal relationship to, had they been still living. Certainly a lump of cinders was no longer an object even of religious hostility. My mother, he added, was among the number of mourners, but with a veil so long and thick, and attendance so few, that it would have been impossible to have known the Duchess di Monçada, but for the whisper that her appearance there had been

<sup>1</sup> This extraordinary fact occurred after the dreadful fire which consumed sixteen persons in one house, in Stephen's Green, Dublin, 1816. The writer of this heard the screams of sufferer whom it was impossible to save, for an hour and a half.

enjoined for penance. He added, what gave me more perfect satisfaction, that the holy office was very glad to accredit the story of my death; they wished me to be believed dead, and what the Inquisition wishes to be believed, is rarely denied belief in Madrid. This signing my certificate of death, was to me the best security for life. In the communicativeness of his joy, which had expanded his heart, if not his hospitality, the Jew, as I swallowed my bread and water, (for my stomach still loathed all animal food), informed me that there was a procession to take place that evening, the most solemn and superb ever witnessed in Madrid. The holy office was to appear in all the pomp and plenitude of its glory, accompanied by the standards of St Dominic and the cross, while all the ecclesiastical orders in Madrid were to attend with their appropriate insignia, invested by a strong military guard, (which, for some reason or other, was judged necessary or proper), and, attended by the whole populace of Madrid, was to proceed to the principal church to humiliate themselves for the recent calamity they had undergone, and implore the saints to be more personally active in the event of a future conflagration.

“The evening came on—the Jew left me; and, under an impression at once unaccountable and irresistible, I ascended to the highest apartment in his house, and, with a beating heart, listened for the toll of the bells that was to announce the commencement of the ceremony. I had not long to wait. At the

close of twilight, every steeple in the city was vibrating with the tolls of their well-plied bells. I was in an upper room of the house. There was but one window; but, hiding myself behind the blind, which I withdrew from time to time, I had a full view of the spectacle. The house of the Jew looked out on an open space, through which the procession was to pass, and which was already so filled, that I wondered how the procession could ever make its way through such a wedged and impenetrable mass. At last, I could distinguish a motion like that of a distant power, giving a kind of indefinite impulse to the vast body that rolled and blackened beneath me, like the ocean under the first and far-felt agitations of the storm.

“The crowd rocked and reeled, but did not seem to give way an inch. The procession commenced. I could see it approach, marked as it was by the crucifix, banner, and taper—(for they had reserved the procession till a late hour, to give it the imposing effect of torch-light.) And I saw the multitude at a vast distance give way at once. Then came on the stream of the procession, rushing, like a magnificent river, between two banks of human bodies, who kept as regular and strict distance, as if they had been ramparts of stone,—the banners, and crucifixes, and tapers, appearing like the crests of foam on advancing billows, sometimes rising, sometimes sinking. At last they came on, and the whole grandeur of the procession burst on my view, and nothing was ever

more imposing, or more magnificent. The habits of the ecclesiastics, the glare of the torches struggling with the dying twilight, and seeming to say to heaven, We have a sun though your's is set;—the solemn and resolute look of the whole party, who trod as if their march were on the bodies of kings, and looked as if they would have said, What is the sceptre to the cross?—the black crucifix itself, trembling in the rear, attended by the banner of St Dominick, with its awful inscription.—It was a sight to convert all hearts, and I exulted I was a Catholic. Suddenly a tumult seemed to arise among the crowd—I knew not from what it could arise—all seemed so pleased and so elated.

“I drew away the blind, and saw, by torch-light, among a crowd of officials who clustered round the standard of St Dominick, the figure of my companion. His story was well known. At first a faint hiss was heard, then a wild and smothered howl. Then I heard voices among the crowd repeat, in audible sounds, “What is this for? Why do they ask why the Inquisition has been half-burned?—why the virgin has withdrawn her protection?—why the saints turn away their faces from us?—when a parricide marches among the officials of the Inquisition. Are the hands that have cut a father's throat fit to support the banner of the cross?” These were the words but of a few at first, but the whisper spread rapidly among the crowd; and fierce looks were darted, and hands were clenched and raised, and

some stooped to the earth for stones. The procession went on, however, and every one knelt to the crucifixes as they advanced, held aloft by the priests. But the murmurs increased too, and the words, "parricide, profanation, and victim," resounded on every side, even from those who knelt in the mire as the cross passed by. The murmur increased—it could no longer be mistaken for that of adoration. The foremost priests paused in terror ill concealed—and this seemed the signal for the terrible scene that was about to follow. An officer belonging to the guard at this time ventured to intimate to the chief Inquisitor the danger that might be apprehended, but was dismissed with the short and sullen answer, "Move on—the servants of Christ have nothing to fear." The procession attempted to proceed, but their progress was obstructed by the multitude, who now seemed bent on some deadly purpose. A few stones were thrown; but the moment the priests raised their crucifixes, the multitude were on their knees again, still, however, holding the stones in their hands. The military officers again addressed the chief Inquisitor, and intreated his permission to disperse the crowd. They received the same dull and stern answer, "The cross is sufficient for the protection of its servants—whatever fears you may feel, I feel none." Incensed at the reply, a young officer sprung on his horse, which he had quitted from respect while addressing the Suprema, and was in a moment levelled by the blow of a stone that

fractured his skull. He turned his blood-swimming eyes on the Inquisitor, and died. The multitude raised a wild shout, and pressed closer. Their intentions were now too plain. They pressed close on that part of the procession among which their victim was placed. Again, and in the most urgent terms, the officers implored leave to disperse the crowd, or at least cover the retreat of the obnoxious object to some neighbouring church, or even to the walls of the Inquisition. And the wretched man himself, with loud outcries, (as he saw the danger thickening around him), joined in their petition. The Suprema, though looking pale, bated not a jot of his pride. "These are my arms!" he exclaimed, pointing to the crucifixes, "and their inscription is *εν-τουτω-νικα*. I forbid a sword to be drawn, or a musket to be levelled. On, in the name of God." And on they attempted to move, but the pressure now rendered it impossible. The multitude, unrepressed by the military, became ungovernable; the crosses reeled and rocked like standards in a battle; the ecclesiastics, in confusion and terror, pressed on each other. Amid that vast mass, every particle of which seemed in motion, there was but one emphatic and discriminate movement—that which bore a certain part of the crowd strait on to the spot where their victim, though inclosed and inwrapt by all that is formidable in earthly, and all that is awful in spiritual power—sheltered by the crucifix and the sword—stood trembling to the bottom of his soul. The Suprema

saw his error too late, and now called loudly on the military to advance, and disperse the crowd by any means. They attempted to obey him ; but by this time they were mingled among the crowd themselves. All order had ceased ; and besides, there appeared a kind of indisposition to this service, from the very first, among the military. They attempted to charge, however ; but, entangled as they were among the crowd, who clung round their horses' hoofs, it was impossible for them even to form, and the first shower of stones threw them into total confusion. The danger increased every moment, for one spirit now seemed to animate the whole multitude. What had been the stifled growl of a few, was now the audible yell of all—"Give him to us—we must have him ;" and they tossed and roared like a thousand waves assailing a wreck. As the military retreated, a hundred priests instantly closed round the unhappy man, and with generous despair exposed themselves to the fury of the multitude. While the Suprema, hastening to the dreadful spot, stood in the front of the priests, with the cross uplifted,—his face was like that of the dead, but his eye had not lost a single flash of its fire, nor his voice a tone of its pride. It was in vain ; the multitude proceeded calmly, and even respectfully, (when not resisted), to remove all that obstructed their progress ; in doing so, they took every care of the persons of priests whom they were compelled to remove, repeatedly asking their pardon for the violence they were guilty of. And

this tranquillity of resolved vengeance was the most direful indication of its never desisting till its purpose was accomplished. The last ring was broken—the last resister overcome. Amid yells like those of a thousand tigers, the victim was seized and dragged forth, grasping in both hands fragments of the robes of those he had clung to in vain, and holding them up in the impotence of despair.

“The cry was hushed for a moment, as they felt him in their talons, and gazed on him with thirsty eyes. Then it was renewed, and the work of blood began. They dashed him to the earth—tore him up again—flung him into the air—tossed him from hand to hand, as a bull gores the howling mastiff with horns right and left. Bloody, defaced, blackened with earth, and battered with stones, he struggled and roared among them, till a loud cry announced the hope of a termination to a scene alike horrible to humanity, and disgraceful to civilization. The military, strongly reinforced, came galloping on, and all the ecclesiastics, with torn habits, and broken crucifixes, following fast in the rear,—all eager in the cause of human nature—all on fire to prevent this base and barbarous disgrace to the name of Christianity and of human nature.

“Alas! this interference only hastened the horrible catastrophe. There was but a shorter space for the multitude to work their furious will. I saw, I felt, but I cannot describe, the last moments of this horrible scene. Dragged from the mud and stones,



they dashed a mangled lump of flesh right against the door of the house where I was. With his tongue hanging from his lacerated mouth, like that of a baited bull; with one eye torn from the socket, and dangling on his bloody cheek; with a fracture in every limb, and a wound for every pore, he still howled for "life—life—life—mercy!" till a stone, aimed by some pitying hand, struck him down. He fell, trodden in one moment into sanguine and discoloured mud by a thousand feet. The cavalry came on, charging with fury. The crowd, saturated with cruelty and blood, gave way in grim silence. But they had not left a joint of his little finger—a hair of his head—a slip of his skin. Had Spain mortgaged all her reliques from Madrid to Monserrat, from the Pyrennees to Gibraltar, she could not have recovered the paring of a nail to canonize. The officer who headed the troop dashed his horse's hoofs into a bloody formless mass, and demanded, "Where was the victim?" He was answered, "Beneath your horse's feet;"<sup>1</sup> and they departed.

"It is a fact, Sir, that while witnessing this horrible execution, I felt all the effects vulgarly ascribed to fascination. I shuddered at the first movement—the dull and deep whisper among the crowd. I shrieked involuntarily when the first de-

<sup>1</sup> This circumstance occurred in Ireland 1797, after the murder of the unfortunate Dr Hamilton. The officer was answered, on inquiring what was that heap of mud at his horse's feet,—“The man you came for.”

cisive movements began among them ; but when at last the human shapeless carrion was dashed against the door, I echoed the wild shouts of the multitude with a kind of savage instinct. I bounded—I clasped my hands for a moment—then I echoed the screams of the thing that seemed no longer to live, but still could scream ; and I screamed aloud and wildly for life—life—and mercy ! One face was turned towards me as I shrieked in unconscious tones. The glance, fixed on me for a moment, was in a moment withdrawn. The flash of the well-known eyes made no impression on me then. My existence was so purely mechanical, that, without the least consciousness of my own danger, (scarce less than that of the victim, had I been detected), I remained uttering shout for shout, and scream for scream—offering worlds in imagination to be able to remove from the window, yet feeling as if every shriek I uttered was as a nail that fastened me to it—dropping my eye-lids, and feeling as if a hand held them open, or cut them away—forcing me to gaze on all that passed below, like Regulus, with his lids cut off, compelled to gaze on the sun that withered up his eye-balls—till sense, and sight, and soul, failed me, and I fell grasping by the bars of the window, and mimicking, in my horrid trance, the shouts of the multitude, and the yell of the devoted.<sup>1</sup> I actually for a moment believed

<sup>1</sup> In the year 1803, when Emmett's insurrection broke out in Dublin—(*the fact* from which this account is drawn was related to me by an eye-witness)—Lord Kilwarden, in passing through Thomas Street, was dragged from his carriage, and murdered in

myself the object of their cruelty. The drama of terror has the irresistible power of converting its audience into its victims.

“The Jew had kept apart from the tumult of the night. He had, I suppose, been saying within himself, in the language of your admirable poet,

“Oh, Father Abraham, what these Christians are !”

But when he returned at a late hour, he was struck with horror at the state in which he found me. I was delirious,—raving, and all he could say or do to soothe me, was in vain. My imagination had been fearfully impressed, and the consternation of the poor Jew was, I have been told, equally ludicrous and dismal. In his terror, he forgot all the technical formality of the Christian names by which he had uniformly signalized his household, since his residence in Madrid at least. He called aloud on Manasseh-ben-Solomon his son, and Rebekah his maid, to assist in holding me. “Oh, Father Abraham, my ruin is certain, this maniac will discover all, and Manasseh-ben-Solomon, my son, will die uncircumcised.”

the most horrid manner. Pike after pike was thrust through his body, till at last he was *nailed to a door*, and called out to his murderers to “put him out of his pain.” At this moment, a shoemaker, who lodged in the garret of an opposite house, was drawn to the window by the horrible cries he heard. He stood at the window, gasping with horror, his wife attempting vainly to drag him away. He saw the last blow struck—he heard the last groan uttered, as the sufferer cried, “put me out of pain,” while sixty pikes were thrusting at him. The man stood at his window as if nailed to it ; and when dragged from it, became—an *idiot for life*.

“These words operating on my delirium, I started up, and, grasping the Jew by the throat, arraigned him as a prisoner of the Inquisition. The terrified wretch, falling on his knees, vociferated, “My cock,—my cock,—my cock! oh! I am undone!” Then, grasping my knees, “I am no Jew,—my son, Manasseh-ben-Solomon, is a Christian; you will not betray him, you will not betray *me*,—me who have saved your life. Manasseh,—I mean Antonio,—Rebekah,—no, Maria, help me to hold him. Oh God of Abraham, my cock, and my sacrifice of expiation, and this maniac to burst on the recesses of our privacy, to tear open the veil of the tabernacle!”—“Shut the tabernacle,” said Rebekah, the old domestic whom I have before mentioned; “yea, shut the tabernacle, and close up the veils thereof, for behold there be men knocking at the door,—men who are children of Belial, and they knock with staff and stone; and, verily, they are about to break in the door, and demolish the carved work thereof with axes and hammers.”—“Thou liest,” said the Jew, in much perturbation: “there is no carved work thereabout, nor dare they break it down with axes and hammers; peradventure it is but an assault of the children of Belial, in their rioting and drunkenness. I pray thee, Rebekah, to watch the door, and keep off the sons of Belial, even the sons of the mighty of the sinful city—the city of Madrid, while I remove this blaspheming carrion, who struggleth with me,—yea, struggleth mightily,” (and struggle I did

mightily). But, as I struggled, the knocks at the door became louder and stronger; and, as I was carried off, the Jew continued to repeat, "Set thy face against them, Rebekah; yea, set thy face like a flint." As he retired, Rebekah exclaimed, "Behold I have set my back against them, for my face now availeth not. My back is that which I will oppose, and verily I shall prevail."—"I pray thee, Rebekah," cried the Jew, "oppose thy FACE unto them, and verily that shall prevail. Try not the adversary with thy back, but oppose thy face unto them; and behold, if they are men, they shall flee, even though they were a thousand, at the rebuke of one. I pray thee try thy face once more, Rebekah, while I send this scape-goat into the wilderness. Surely thy face is enough to drive away those who knocked by night at the door of that house in Gibeah, in the matter of the wife of the Benjamite." The knocking all this time increased. "Behold my back is broken," cried Rebekah, giving up her watch and ward, "for, of a verity, the weapons of the mighty do smite the lintels and door-posts; and mine arms are not steel, neither are my ribs iron, and behold I fail,—yea, I fail, and fall backwards into the hands of the uncircumcised." And so saying, she fell backwards as the door gave way, and fell not, as she feared, into the hands of the uncircumcised, but into those of two of her countrymen, who, it appeared, had some extraordinary reason for this late visit and forcible entrance.

"The Jew, apprized who they were, quitted me,

after securing the door, and sat up the greater part of the night, in earnest conversation with his visitors. Whatever was their subject, it left traces of the most intense anxiety on the countenance of the Jew the next morning. He went out early, did not return till a late hour, and then hastened to the room I occupied, and expressed the utmost delight at finding me sane and composed. Candles were placed on the table, Rebekah dismissed, the door secured, and the Jew, after taking many uneasy turns about the narrow apartment, and often clearing his throat, at length sat down, and ventured to entrust me with the cause of his perturbation, in which, with the fatal consciousness of the unhappy, I already began to feel *I* must have a share. He told me, that though the report of my death, so universally credited through Madrid, had at first set his mind at ease, there was now a wild story, which, with all its falsehood and impossibility, might, in its circulation, menace us with the most fearful consequences. He asked me, was it possible I could have been so imprudent as to expose myself to view on the day of that horrible execution? and when I confessed that I had stood at a window, and had involuntarily uttered cries that I feared might have reached some ears, he wrung his hands, and a sweat of consternation burst out on his pallid features. When he recovered himself, he told me it was universally believed that my spectre had appeared on that terrible occasion,—that I had been seen hovering in the air, to witness the

sufferings of the dying wretch,—and that my voice had been heard summoning him to his eternal doom. He added, that this story, possessing all the credibility of superstition, was now repeated by a thousand mouths; and whatever contempt might be attached to its absurdity, it would infallibly operate as a hint to the restless vigilance, and unrelaxing industry of the holy office, and might ultimately lead to my discovery. He therefore was about to disclose to me a secret, the knowledge of which would enable me to remain in perfect security even in the centre of Madrid, until some means might be devised of effecting my escape, and procuring me the means of subsistence in some Protestant country, beyond the reach of the Inquisition.

“As he was about to disclose this secret on which the safety of both depended, and which I bent in speechless agony to hear, a knock was heard at the door, very unlike the knocks of the preceding night. It was single, solemn, peremptory,—and followed by a demand to open the doors of the house in the name of the most holy Inquisition. At these terrible words, the wretched Jew flung himself on his knees, blew out the candles, called on the names of the twelve patriarchs, and slipped a large rosary on his arm, in less time than it is possible to conceive any human frame could go through such a variety of movements. The knock was repeated,—I stood paralyzed; but the Jew, springing on his feet, raised one of the boards of the floor in a moment, and, with

a motion between convulsion and instinct, pointed to me to descend. I did so, and found myself in a moment in darkness and in safety.

“I had descended but a few steps, on the last of which I stood trembling, when the officers of the Inquisition entered the room, and stalked over the very board that concealed me. I could hear every word that passed. “Don Fernan,” said an officer to the Jew, who re-entered with them, after respectfully opening the door, “why were we not admitted sooner?”—“Holy Father,” said the trembling Jew, “my only domestic, Maria, is old and deaf, the youth my son is in his bed, and I was myself engaged in my devotions.”—“It seems you can perform them in the dark,” said another, pointing to the candles, which the Jew was re-lighting.—“When the eye of God is on me, most reverend fathers, I am never in darkness.”—“The eye of God is on you,” said the officer, sternly seating himself; “and so is another eye, to which he has deputed the sleepless vigilance and resistless penetration of his own,—the eye of the holy office. Don Fernan di Nunez,” the name by which the Jew went, “you are not ignorant of the indulgence extended by the church, to those who have renounced the errors of that accursed and misbelieving race from which you are descended, but you must be also aware of its incessant vigilance being directed towards such individuals, from the suspicion necessarily attached to their doubtful conversion, and possible relapse. We know that the



black blood of Grenada flowed in the tainted veins of your ancestry, and that not more than four centuries have elapsed, since your forefathers trampled on that cross before which you are now prostrate. You are an old man, Don Fernan, but not an *old Christian*; and, under these circumstances, it behoves the holy office to have a watchful scrutiny over your conduct."

"The unfortunate Jew, invoking all the saints, protested he would feel the strictest scrutiny with which the holy office might honour him, as a ground of obligation and a matter of thanksgiving,—renouncing at the same time the creed of his race in terms of such exaggeration and vehemence, as made me tremble for his probable sincerity in any creed, and his fidelity to me. The officers of the Inquisition, taking little notice of his protestations, went on to inform him of the object of their visit. They stated that a wild and incredible tale of the spectre of a deceased prisoner of the Inquisition having been seen hovering in the air near his house, had suggested to the wisdom of the holy office, that the living individual might be concealed within its walls.

"I could not see the trepidation of the Jew, but I could feel the vibration of the boards on which he stood communicated to the steps that supported me. In a choaked and tremulous voice, he implored the officers to search every apartment of his house, and to raze it to the ground, and inter him under its dust, if aught were found in it which a faithful and orthodox son of the church might not harbour.

“That shall doubtless be done,” said the officer, taking him at his word with the utmost *sang froid*; “but, in the mean time, suffer me to apprise you, Don Fernan, of the peril you incur, if at any future time, however remote, it shall be discovered that you harboured or aided in concealing a prisoner of the Inquisition, and an enemy of the holy church,—the very first and lightest part of that penalty will be your dwelling being razed to the ground.” The Inquisitor raised his voice, and paused with emphatic deliberation between every clause of the following sentences, measuring as it were the effect of his blows on the increasing terror of his auditor. “You will be conveyed to our prison, under the suspected character of a relapsed Jew. Your son will be committed to a convent, to remove him from the pestilential influence of your presence;—and your whole property shall be confiscated, to the last stone in your walls, the last garment on your person, and the last denier in your purse.”

“The poor Jew, who had marked the gradations of his fear by groans more audible and prolonged at the end of every tremendous denunciatory clause, at the mention of confiscation so total and desolating, lost all self-possession, and, ejaculating—“Oh Father Abraham, and all the holy prophets!”—fell, as I conjectured from the sound, prostrate on the floor. I gave myself up for lost. Exclusive of his pusillanimity, the words he had uttered were enough to betray him to the officers of the Inquisition; and,

without a moment's hesitation between the danger of falling into their hands, and plunging into the darkness of the recess into which I had descended, I staggered down a few remaining steps, and attempted to feel my way along a passage, in which they seemed to terminate.

## CHAPTER XIII

There sat a spirit in the vault,  
In shape, in hue, in lineaments, like life.

SOUTHEY'S THALABA.

“I AM convinced, that, had the passage been as long and intricate as any that ever an antiquarian pursued to discover the tomb of Cheops in the Pyramids, I would have rushed on in the blindness of my desperation, till famine or exhaustion had compelled me to pause. But I had no such peril to encounter,—the floor of the passage was smooth, and the walls were matted, and though I proceeded in darkness, I proceeded in safety ; and provided my progress removed me far enough from the pursuit or discovery of the Inquisition, I scarcely cared how it might terminate.

“Amid this temporary magnanimity of despair, this state of mind which unites the extremes of courage and pusillanimity, I saw a faint light. Faint it was, but it was distinct, —I saw clearly it was light. Great God! what a revulsion in my blood and heart, in all my physical and mental feelings, did

this sun of my world of darkness create ! I venture to say, that my speed in approaching it was in the proportion of one hundred steps to one, compared to my crawling progress in the preceding darkness. As I approached, I could discover that the light gleamed through the broad crevices of a door, which, disjoined by subterranean damp, gave me as full a view of the apartment within, as if it were opened to me by the inmate. Through one of these crevices, before which I knelt in a mixture of exhaustion and curiosity, I could reconnoitre the whole of the interior.

“It was a large apartment, hung with dark-coloured baize within four feet of the floor, and this intermediate part was thickly matted, probably to intercept the subterranean damp. In the centre of the room stood a table covered with black cloth ; it supported an iron lamp of an antique and singular form, by whose light I had been directed, and was now enabled to descry furniture that appeared sufficiently extraordinary. There were, amid maps and globes, several instruments, of which my ignorance did not permit me then to know the use,—some, I have since learned, were anatomical ; there was an electrifying machine, and a curious *model of a rack* in ivory ; there were few books, but several scrolls of parchment, inscribed with large characters in red and ochre-coloured ink ; and around the room were placed *four* skeletons, not in cases, but in a kind of upright coffin, that gave their bony emptiness a kind

of ghastly and imperative prominence, as if they were the real and rightful tenants of that singular apartment. Interspersed between them were the stuffed figures of animals I knew not then the names of,—an alligator,—some gigantic bones, which I took for those of Sampson, but which turned out to be fragments of those of the Mammoth,—and antlers, which in my terror I believed to be those of the devil, but afterwards learned to be those of an Elk. Then I saw figures smaller, but not less horrible,—human and brute abortions, in all their states of anomalous and deformed construction, not preserved in spirits, but standing in the ghastly nakedness of their white diminutive bones; these I conceived to be the attendant imps of some infernal ceremony, which the grand wizard, who now burst on my sight, was to preside over.

“At the end of the table sat an old man, wrapped in a long robe; his head was covered with a black velvet cap, with a broad border of furs, his spectacles were of such a size as almost to hide his face, and he turned over some scrolls of parchment with an anxious and trembling hand; then seizing a scull that lay on the table, and grasping it in fingers hardly less bony, and not less yellow, seemed to apostrophize it in the most earnest manner. All my personal fears were lost in the thought of my being the involuntary witness of some infernal orgie. I was still kneeling at the door, when my long suspended respiration burst forth in a groan, which

reached the figure seated at the table in a moment. Habitual vigilance supplied all the defects of age on the part of the listener. It was but the sensation of a moment to feel the door thrown open, my arm seized by an arm powerful though withered by age, and myself, as I thought, in the talons of a demon.

“The door was closed and bolted. An awful figure stood over me, (for I had fallen on the floor), and thundered out, “Who art thou, and why art thou here?” I knew not what to answer, and gazed with a fixed and speechless look on the skeletons and the other furniture of this terrible vault. “Hold,” said the voice, “if thou art indeed exhausted, and needest refreshment, drink of this cup, and thou shalt be refreshed as with wine; verily, it shall come into thy bowels as water, and as oil into thy bones,”—and as he spoke he offered to me a cup with some liquid in it. I repelled him and his drink, which I had not a doubt was some magical drug, with horror unutterable; and losing all other fears in the overwhelming one of becoming a slave of Satan, and a victim of one of his agents, as I believed this extraordinary figure, I called on the name of the Saviour and the saints, and, crossing myself at every sentence, exclaimed, “No, tempter, keep your infernal potions for the leprous lips of your imps, or swallow them yourself. I have but this moment escaped from the hands of the Inquisition, and a million times rather would I return and yield myself their

victim, than consent to become yours,—your tendermercies are the only cruelties I dread. Even in the prison of the holy office, where the faggots appeared to be lit before my eyes, and the chain already fastened round my body to bind it to the stake, I was sustained by a power that enabled me to embrace objects so terrible to nature, sooner than escape them at the price of my salvation. The choice was offered me, and I made my election,—and so would I do were it to be offered a thousand times, though the last were at the stake, and the fire already kindling.”

Here the Spaniard paused in some agitation. In the enthusiasm of his narration, he had in some degree disclosed that secret which he had declared was incommunicable, except in confessing to a priest. Melmoth, who, from the narrative of Stanton, had been prepared to suspect something of this, did not think prudent to press him for a farther disclosure, and waited in silence till his emotion had subsided, without remark or question. Monçada at length resumed his narrative.

“While I was speaking, the old man viewed me with a look of calm surprise, that made me ashamed of my fears, even before I had ceased to utter them. “What!” said he at length, fixing apparently on some expressions that struck him, “art thou escaped from the arm that dealeth its blow in darkness, even the arm of the Inquisition? Art thou that Nazarene youth who sought refuge in the house of our brother



Solomon, the son of Hilkiah, who is called Fernan Nunez by the idolaters in this land of his captivity? Verily I trusted thou shouldst this night have eat of my bread, and drank of my cup, and been unto me as a scribe, for our brother Solomon testified concerning thee, saying, His pen is even as the pen of a ready writer."

"I gazed at him in astonishment. Some vague recollections of Solomon's being about to disclose some safe and secret retreat wandered over my mind; and, while trembling at the singular apartment in which we were seated, and the employment in which he seemed engaged, I yet felt a hope hover about my heart, which his knowledge of my situation appeared to justify. "Sit down," said he, observing with compassion that I was sinking alike under the exhaustion of fatigue and the distraction of terror; "sit down, and eat a morsel of bread, and drink a cup of wine, and comfort thine heart, for thou seemest to be as one who hath escaped from the snare of the fowler, and from the dart of the hunter." I obeyed him involuntarily. I needed the refreshment he offered, and was about to partake of it, when an irresistible feeling of repugnance and horror overcame me; and, as I thrust away the food he offered me, I pointed to the objects around me as the cause of my reluctance. He looked round for a moment, as doubting whether objects so familiar to him, could be repulsive to a stranger, and then shaking his head, "Thou art a fool," said he, "but thou

art a Nazarene, and I pity thee; verily, those who had the teaching of thy youth, not only have shut the book of knowledge to thee, but have forgot to open it for themselves. Were not thy masters, the Jesuits, masters also of the healing art, and art thou not acquainted with the sight of its ordinary implements? Eat, I pray thee, and be satisfied that none of these will hurt thee. Yonder dead bones cannot weigh out or withhold thy food; nor can they bind thy joints, or strain them with iron, or rend them with steel, as would the living arms that were stretched forth to seize thee as their prey. And, as the Lord of hosts liveth, their prey wouldst thou have been, and a prey unto their iron and steel, were it not for the shelter of the roof of Adonijah to-night."

"I took some of the food he offered me, crossing myself at every mouthful, and drank the wine, which the feverish thirst of terror and anxiety made me swallow like water, but not without an internal prayer that it might not be converted into some deleterious and diabolical poison. The Jew Adonijah observed me with increasing compassion and contempt.—"What," said he, "appals thee? Were I possessed of the powers the superstition of thy sect ascribes to me, might I not make thee a banquet for fiends, instead of offering thee food? Might I not bring from the caverns of the earth the voices of those that "peep and mutter," instead of speaking unto thee with the voice of man? Thou art in my

power, yet have I no power or will to hurt thee. And dost thou, who art escaped from the dungeons of the Inquisition, look as one that feareth on the things that thou seest around thee, the furniture of the cell of a secluded leach? Within this apartment I have passed the term of sixty years, and dost thou shudder to visit it for a moment? These be the skeletons of bodies, but in the den thou hast escaped from were the skeletons of perished souls. Here are relics of the wrecks or the caprices of nature, but thou art come from where the cruelty of man, permanent and persevering, unrelenting and unmitigated, hath never failed to leave the proofs of its power in abortive intellects, crippled frames, distorted creeds, and ossified hearts. Moreover, there are around thee parchments and charts scrawled as it were with the blood of man, but, were it even so, could a thousand such volumes cause such terror to the human eye, as a page of the history of thy prison, written as it is in blood, drawn, not from the frozen veins of the dead, but from the bursting hearts of the living. Eat, Nazarene, there is no poison in thy food, — drink, there is no drug in thy cup. Darest thou promise thyself that in the prison of the Inquisition, or even in the cells of the Jesuits? Eat and drink without fear in the vault, even in the vault of Adonijah the Jew. If thou daredst to have done so in the dwellings of the Nazarenes, I had never beheld thee here. Hast thou fed?" he added, and I bowed. "Hast thou drank of the cup I gave

thee?" my torturing thirst returned, and I gave him back the cup. He smiled, but the smile of age,—the smile of lips over which more than an hundred years have passed, has an expression more repulsive and hideous than can be deemed; it is never the smile of pleasure,—it is a *frown of the mouth*, and I shrunk before its grim wrinkles, as the Jew Adonijah added, "If thou hast eat and drank, it is time for thee to rest. Come to thy bed, it may be harder than they have given thee in thy prison, but behold it shall be safer. Come and rest thee there, it may be that the adversary and the enemy shall not there find thee out."

"I followed him through passages so devious and intricate, that, bewildered as I was with the events of the night, they forced on my memory the well-known fact, that in Madrid the Jews have subterranean passages to each other's habitations, which have hitherto baffled all the industry of the Inquisition. I slept that night, or rather day, (for the sun had risen), on a pallet laid on the floor of a room, small, lofty, and matted half-way up the walls. One narrow and grated window admitted the light of the sun, that arose after that eventful night; and amid the sweet sound of bells, and the still sweeter of human life, awake and in motion around me, I sunk into a slumber that was unbroken even by a dream, till the day was closing; or, in the language of Adonijah, "till the shadows of the evening were upon the face of all the earth."

## CHAPTER XIV

Unde iratos deos timent, qui sic propitios merentur ?

SENECA.

“WHEN I awoke, he was standing by my pallet. “Arise,” said he, “eat and drink, that thy strength may return unto thee.” He pointed to a small table as he spoke, which was covered with food of the plainest kind, and dressed with the utmost simplicity. Yet he seemed to think an apology was necessary for the indulgence of this temperate fare. “I myself,” said he, “eat not the flesh of any animal, save on the new moons and the feasts, yet the days of the years of my life have been one hundred and seven ; sixty of which have been passed in the chamber where thou sawest me. Rarely do I ascend to the upper chamber of this house, save on occasions like this, or peradventure to pray, with my window open towards the east, for the turning away wrath from Jacob, and the turning again the captivity of Zion. Well saith the ethnic leach,

“Aer exclusus confert ad longevitatem.”

“Such hath been my life, as I tell thee. The light

of heaven hath been hidden from mine eyes, and the voice of man is as the voice of a stranger in mine ears, save those of some of mine own nation, who weep for the affliction of Israel; yet the silver cord is not loosed, nor the golden bowl broken; and though mine eye be waxing dim, my natural force is not abated." (As he spoke, my eyes hung in reverence on the hoary majesty of his patriarchal figure, and I felt as if I beheld an embodied representation of the old law in all its stern simplicity—the unbending grandeur, and primeval antiquity.) "Hast thou eaten, and art full? Arise, then, and follow me."

"We descended to the vault, where I found the lamp was always burning. And Adonijah, pointing to the parchments that lay on the table, said, "This is the matter wherein I need thy help; the collection and transcription whereof hath been the labour of more than half a life, prolonged beyond the bounds allotted to mortality; but," pointing to his sunk and blood-shot eyes, "those that look out of the windows begin to be darkened, and I feel that I need help from the quick hand and clear eye of youth. Wherefore, it being certified unto me by our brother, that thou wert a youth who couldst handle the pen of a scribe, and, moreover, wast in need of a city of refuge, and a strong wall of defence, against the laying-in-wait of thy brethren round about thee, I was willing that thou shouldst come under my roof, and eat of such things as I set before thee, and such as thy soul desireth, excepting only the abominable

things forbidden in the law of the prophet ; and shouldst, moreover, receive wages as an hired servant."

"You will perhaps smile, Sir ; but even in my wretched situation, I felt a slight but painful flush tinge my cheek, at the thought of a Christian, and a peer of Spain, becoming the amanuensis of a Jew for hire. Adonijah continued, "Then, when my task is completed, then will I be gathered to my fathers, trusting surely in the Hope of Israel, that mine eyes shall "behold the King in his beauty,—they shall see the land that is very far off." "And peradventure," he added, in a voice that grief rendered solemn, mellow, and tremulous, "peradventure there shall I meet in bliss, those with whom I parted in woe—even thou, Zachariah, the son of my loins, and thou, Leah, the wife of my bosom ;" apostrophizing two of the silent skeletons that stood near. "And in the presence of the God of our fathers, the redeemed of Zion shall meet—and meet as those who are to part no more for ever and ever." At these words, he closed his eyes, lifted up his hands, and appeared to be absorbed in mental prayer. Grief had perhaps subdued my prejudices—it had certainly softened my heart—and at this moment I half-believed that a Jew might find entrance and adoption amid the family and fold of the blessed. This sentiment operated on my human sympathies, and I inquired, with unfeigned anxiety, after the fate of Solomon the Jew, whose misfortune in harbouring me had exposed

him to the visit of the Inquisitors. "Be at peace," said Adonijah, waving his bony and wrinkled hand, as if dismissing a subject below his present feelings, "our brother Solomon is in no peril of death; neither shall his goods be taken for a spoil. If our adversaries are mighty in power, so are we mighty also to deal with them by our wealth or our wisdom. Thy flight they never can trace, thy existence on the face of the earth shall also be unknown to them, so thou wilt hearken to me, and heed my words."

"I could not speak, but my expression of mute and imploring anxiety spoke for me. "Thou didst use words," said Adonijah, "last night, whereof, though I remember not all the purport, the sound yet maketh mine ears to tingle; even mine, which have not vibrated to such sounds for four times the space of thy youthful years. Thou saidst thou wert beset by a power that tempted thee to renounce the Most High, whom Jew and Christian alike profess to worship; and that thou didst declare, that were the fires kindled around thee, thou wouldst spit at the tempter, and trample on the offer, though thy foot pressed the coal which the sons of Dominick were lighting beneath its naked sole."—"I did," I cried, "I did—and I would—So help me God in mine extremity."

"Adonijah paused for a moment, as if considering whether this were a burst of passion, or a proof of mental energy. He seemed at last inclined to believe it the latter, though all men of far-advanced age are apt to distrust any marks of emotion as a



demonstration rather of weakness than of sincerity. "Then," said he, after a long and solemn pause, "then thou shalt know the secret that hath been a burthen to the soul of Adonijah, even as his hopeless solitude is a burthen to the soul of him who traverseth the desert, none accompanying him with step, or cheering him with voice. From my youth upward, even until now, have I laboured, and behold the time of my deliverance is at hand ; yea, and shall be accomplished speedily.

"In the days of my childhood, a rumour reached mine ears, even mine, of a being sent abroad on the earth to tempt Jew and Nazarene, and even the disciples of Mohammed, whose name is accursed in the mouth of our nation, with offers of deliverance at their utmost need and extremity, so they would do that which my lips dare not utter, even though there be no ear to receive it but thine. Thou shudderest—well, then, thou art sincere, at least, in thy faith of errors. I listened to the tale, and mine ears received it, even as the soul of the thirsty drinketh in rivers of water, for my mind was full of the vain fantasies of the Gentile fables, and I longed, in the perverseness of my spirit, to see, yea, and to consort with, yea, and to deal with, the evil one in his strength. Like our fathers in the wilderness, I despised angel's food, and lusted after forbidden meats, even the meats of the Egyptian sorcerers. And my presumption was rebuked as thou seest:—childless, wifeless, friendless, at the last period of an existence

prolonged beyond the bounds of nature, am I now left, and, save thee alone, without one to record its events. I will not trouble thee now with the tale of my eventful life, farther than to tell thee, that the skeletons thou tremblest to behold, were once clothed in flesh far fairer than thine. They are those of my wife and child, whose history thou must not now hear—but those of the two others thou must both hear and relate.” And he pointed to the two other skeletons opposite, in their upright cases. “On my return to my country, even Spain, if a Jew can be said to have a country, I set myself down on this seat, and, lighted by this lamp, I took in my hand the pen of a scribe, and vowed by a vow, that this lamp should not expire, nor this seat be forsaken, nor this vault untenanted, until that the record is written in a book, and sealed as with the king’s signet. But, behold, I was traced by those who are keen of scent, and quick of pursuit, even the sons of Dominick. And they seized me, and laid my feet fast in the bonds; but my writings they could not read, because they were traced in a character unknown to this idolatrous people. And behold, after a space they set me free, finding no cause of offence in me; and they bade me depart, and trouble them no more. Then vowed I a vow unto the God of Israel, who had delivered me from their thralldom, that none but he who could read these characters should ever transcribe them. Moreover, I prayed, and said, O Lord God of Israel! who knowest that we are the sheep of

thy fold, and our enemies as wolves round about us, and as lions who roar for their evening prey, grant, that a Nazarene escaped from their hands, and fleeing unto us, even as a bird chased from her nest, may put to shame the weapons of the mighty, and laugh them to scorn. Grant also, Lord God of Jacob, that he may be exposed to the snare of the enemy, even as those of whom I have written, and that he may spit at it with his mouth, and spurn at it with his feet, and trample on the ensnarer, even as they have trampled; and then shall my soul, even mine, have peace at the last. Thus I prayed—and my prayer was heard, for behold, *thou art here.*”

“As I heard these words, a horrid foreboding, like a night-mare of the heart, hung heavily on me. I looked alternately at the withering speaker, and the hopeless task. To bear about that horrible secret inurned in my heart, was not that enough? but to be compelled to scatter its ashes abroad, and to rake into the dust of others for the same purpose of unhallowed exposure, revolted me beyond feeling and utterance. As my eye fell listlessly on the manuscripts, I saw they contained only *the Spanish language* written in *the Greek characters*—a mode of writing that, I easily conceived, must have been as unintelligible to the officers of the Inquisition, as the Hieroglyphics of the Egyptian priests. Their ignorance, sheltered by their pride, and that still more strongly fortified by the impenetrable secrecy attached to their most minute proceedings, made them hesitate to

entrust to any one the circumstance of their being in possession of manuscript which they could not decypher. So they returned the papers to Adonijah, and, in his own language, "Behold, he abode in safety." But to me this was a task of horror unspeakable. I felt myself as an added link to the chain, the end of which, held by an invisible hand, was drawing me to perdition; and I was now to become the recorder of my own condemnation.

"As I turned over the leaves with a trembling hand, the towering form of Adonijah seemed dilated with preternatural emotion. "And what dost thou tremble at, child of the dust?" he exclaimed, "if thou hast been tempted, so have they — if thou hast resisted, so have they — if they are at rest, so shalt thou be. There is not a pang of soul or body thou hast undergone, or canst undergo, that they have not suffered before thy birth was dreamt of. Boy, thy hand trembles over pages it is unworthy to touch, yet still I must employ thee, for I need thee. Miserable link of necessity, that binds together minds so uncongenial! I would that the ocean were my ink, and the rock my page, and mine arm, even mine, the pen that should write thereon letters that should last like those on the written mountains for ever and ever — even the mount of Sinai, and those that still bear the record, "Israel hath passed the flood."<sup>1</sup> As he spoke, I again

<sup>1</sup> Written mountains, *i.e.* rocks inscribed with characters recordative of some remarkable event, are well known to every oriental

turned over the manuscripts. "Does thy hand tremble still?" said Adonijah; "and dost thou still hesitate to record the story of those whose destiny a link, wondrous, invisible, and indissoluble, has bound to thine. Behold, there are those near thee, who, though they have no longer a tongue, speak to thee with that eloquence which is stronger than all the eloquence of living tongues. Behold, there are those around thee, whose mute and motionless arms of bone plead to thee as no arms of flesh ever pleaded. Behold, there are those who, being speechless, yet speak—who, being dead, are yet alive—who, though in the abyss of eternity, are yet around thee, and call on thee, as with a mortal voice. Hear them!—take the pen in thine hand, and write." I took the pen in my hand, but could not write a line. Adonijah, in a transport of ecstasy, snatching a skeleton from its receptacle, placed it before me. "Tell him thy story thyself, peradventure he will believe thee, and record it." And supporting the skeleton with one hand, he pointed with the other, as bleached and bony as that of the dead, to the manuscript that lay before me.

"It was a night of storms in the world above us; and, far below the surface of the earth as we were, the murmur of the winds, sighing through the passages, came on my ear like the voices of the

traveller. I think it is in the notes of Dr Coke, on the book of Exodus, that I have met with the circumstance alluded to above. A rock near the Red Sea is said once to have borne the inscription, "Israel hath passed the flood."

departed,—like the pleadings of the dead. Involuntarily I fixed my eye on the manuscript I was to copy, and never withdrew till I had finished its extraordinary contents.

### TALE OF THE INDIANS.

“There is an island in the Indian sea, not many leagues from the mouth of the Hoogly, which, from the peculiarity of its situation and internal circumstances, long remained unknown to Europeans, and unvisited by the natives of the contiguous islands, except on remarkable occasions. It is surrounded by shallows that render the approach of any vessel of weight impracticable, and fortified by rocks that threatened danger to the slight-canoes of the natives, but it was rendered still more formidable by the terrors with which superstition had invested it. There was a tradition that the first temple to the black goddess Seeva,<sup>1</sup> had been erected there; and her hideous idol, with its collar of human skulls, forked tongues darting from its twenty serpent mouths, and seated on a matted coil of adders, had there first received the bloody homage of the mutilated limbs and immolated infants of her worshippers.

“The temple had been overthrown, and the island half depopulated, by an earthquake, that agitated all

<sup>1</sup> Vide Maurice's Indian Antiquities.

the shores of India. It was rebuilt, however, by the zeal of the worshippers, who again began to re-visit the island, when a tufaun of fury unparalleled even in those fierce latitudes, burst over the devoted spot. The pagoda was burnt to ashes by the lightning; the inhabitants, their dwellings, and their plantations, swept away as with the besom of destruction, and not a trace of humanity, cultivation, or life, remained in the desolate isle. The devotees consulted their imagination for the cause of these calamities; and, while seated under the shade of their cocoa-trees they told their long strings of coloured beads, they ascribed it to the wrath of the goddess Seeva at the increasing popularity of the worship of Juggernaut. They asserted that her image had been seen ascending amid the blaze of lightning that consumed her shrine and blasted her worshippers as they clung to it for protection, and firmly believed she had withdrawn to some happier isle, where she might enjoy her feast of flesh, and draught of blood, unmolested by the worship of a rival deity. So the island remained desolate, and without inhabitant for years.

“The crews of European vessels, assured by the natives that there was neither animal, or vegetable, or water, to be found on its surface, forbore to visit; and the Indian of other isles, as he passed it in his canoe, threw a glance of melancholy fear at its desolation, and flung something overboard to propitiate the wrath of Seeva.

“The island, thus left to itself, became vigorously

luxuriant, as some neglected children improve in health and strength, while pampered darlings die under excessive nurture. Flowers bloomed, and foliage thickened, without a hand to pluck, a step to trace, or a lip to taste them, when some fishermen, (who had been driven by a strong current toward the isle, and worked with oar and sail in vain to avoid its dreaded shore), after making a thousand prayers to propitiate Seeva, were compelled to approach within an oar's length of it; and, on their return in unexpected safety, reported they had heard sounds so exquisite, that some other goddess, milder than Seeva, must have fixed on that spot for her residence. The younger fishermen added to this account, that they had beheld a female figure of supernatural loveliness, glide and disappear amid the foliage which now luxuriantly overshadowed the rocks; and, in the spirit of Indian devotees, they hesitated not to call this delicious vision an incarnated emanation of Vishnu, in a lovelier form than ever he had appeared before,—at least far beyond that which he assumed, when he made one of his avatars in the figure of a tiger.

“The inhabitants of the islands, as superstitious as they were imaginative, deified the vision of the isles after their manner. The old devotees, while invoking her, stuck close to the bloody rites of Seeva and Haree, and muttered many a horrid vow over their beads, which they took care to render effectual by striking sharp reeds into their arms, and tinging



every bead with blood as they spoke. The young women rowed their light canoes as near as they dared to the haunted isle, making vows to Camdeo,<sup>1</sup> and sending their paper vessels, lit with wax, and filled with flowers, towards its coast, where they hoped their darling deity was about to fix his residence. The young men also, at least those who were in love and fond of music, rowed close to the island to solicit the god Krishnoo<sup>2</sup> to sanctify it by his presence; and not knowing what to offer to the deity, they sung their wild airs standing high on the prow of the canoe, and at last threw a figure of wax, with a kind of lyre in its hand, towards the shore of the desolate isle.

“For many a night these canoes might be seen glancing past each other over the darkened sea, like *shooting stars of the deep*, with their lighted paper lanterns, and their offerings of flowers and fruits, left by some trembling hand on the sands, or hung by a bolder one in baskets of cane on the rocks; and still the simple islanders felt joy and devotion united in this “voluntary humility.” It was observed, however, that the worshippers departed with very different impressions of the object of their adoration. The women all clung to their oars in breathless admiration of the sweet sounds that issued from the isle; and when that ceased they departed, murmuring over in their huts those “notes angelical,” to

<sup>1</sup> The Cupid of the Indian mythology. *Wakana?*

<sup>2</sup> The Indian Apollo.

which their own language furnished no appropriate sounds. The men rested long on their oars, to catch a glimpse of the form which, by the report of the fishermen, wandered there; and, when disappointed, they rowed home sadly.

“Gradually the isle lost its bad character for terror; and in spite of some old devotees, who told their blood-discoloured beads, and talked of Seeva and Haree, and even held burning splinters of wood to their scorched hands, and stuck sharp pieces of iron, which they had purchased or stolen from the crews of European vessels, in the most fleshy and sensitive parts of their bodies,—and, moreover, talked of suspending themselves from trees with the head downwards, till they were consumed by insects, or calcined by the sun, or rendered delirious by their position,—in spite of all this, which must have been very affecting, the young people went on their own way,—the girls offering their wreaths to Camdeo, and the youths invoking Krishnoo, till the devotees, in despair, vowed to visit this accursed island, which had set every body mad, and find out how the unknown deity was to be recognised and propitiated; and whether flowers, and fruits, and love-vows, and the beatings of young hearts, were to be substituted for the orthodox and legitimate offering of nails grown into the hands till they appeared through their backs, and *setons* of ropes inserted into the sides, on which the religionist danced his dance of agony, till the ropes or his patience failed. In a

word, they were determined to find out what this deity was, who demanded no suffering from her worshippers,—and they fulfilled their resolution in a manner worthy of their purpose.

“One hundred and forty beings, crippled by the austerities of their religion, unable to manage sail or oar, embarked in a canoe to reach what they called the accursed isle. The natives, intoxicated with the belief of their sanctity, stripped themselves naked, to push their boat through the surf, and then, making their *salams*, implored them to use oars at least. The devotees, all too intent on their beads, and too well satisfied of their importance in the eyes of their favourite deities, to admit a doubt of their safety, set off in triumph,—and the consequence may be easily conjectured. The boat soon filled and sunk, and the crew perished without a single sigh of lamentation, except that they had not feasted the alligators in the sacred waters of the Ganges, or perished at least under the shadow of the domes of the *holy city* of Benares, in either of which cases their salvation must have been unquestionable.

“This circumstance, apparently so untoward, operated favourably on the popularity of the new worship. The old system lost ground every day. Hands, instead of being scorched over the fire, were employed only in gathering flowers. Nails (with which it was the custom of the devotees to lard their persons) actually fell in price; and a man might sit at his ease on his hams with as safe a conscience, and

as fair a character, as if fourscore of them occupied the interval between. On the other hand, fruits were every day scattered on the shores of the favourite isle; flowers, too, blushed on its rocks, in all the dazzling luxuriance of colouring with which the Flora of the East delights to array herself. There was that brilliant and superb lily, which, to this day, illustrates the comparison between it and Solomon, who, in all his glory, was not arrayed like one of them. There was the rose unfolding its "paradise of leaves," and the scarlet blossom of the bombex, which an English traveller has voluptuously described as banqueting the eye with "its mass of vegetable splendour" unparalleled. And the female votarists at last began to imitate some of "those sounds and sweet airs" that every breeze seemed to waft to their ears, with increasing strength of melody, as they floated in their canoes round this isle of enchantment.

"At length one circumstance occurred that put its sanctity of character, and that of its inmate, out of all doubt. A young Indian who had in vain offered to his beloved the mystical bouquet, in which the arrangement of the flowers is made to express love, rowed his canoe to the island, to learn his fate from its supposed inhabitant; and as he rowed, composed a song, which expressed that his mistress despised him, as if he were a Paria, but that he would love her though he were descended from the head of Brahma;—that her skin was more polished than the marble steps by which you descend to the tank of a

Rajah, and her eyes brighter than any whose glances were watched by presumptuous strangers through the rents of the embroidered purdah<sup>1</sup> of a Nawaub;—that she was loftier in his eyes than the black pagoda of Juggernaut, and more brilliant than the trident of the temple of Mahadeva, when it sparkled in the beams of the moon. And as both these objects were visible to his eyes from the shore, as he rowed on in the soft and glorious serenity of an Indian night, no wonder they found a place in his verse. Finally, he promised, that if she was propitious to his suit, he would build her a hut, raised four feet above the ground to avoid the serpents;—that her dwelling should be overshadowed by the boughs of the tamarind; and that while she slept, he would drive the mosquitoes from her with a fan, composed of the leaves of the first flowers which she accepted as a testimony of his passion.

“It so happened, that the same night, the young female, whose reserve had been the result of any thing but indifference, attended by two of her companions, rowed her canoe to the same spot, with the view of discovering whether the vows of her lover were sincere. They arrived about the same time; and though it was now twilight, and the superstition of these timid beings gave a darker tinge to the shadows that surrounded them, they ventured to land; and, bearing their baskets of flowers in trembling hands, advanced to hang them on the ruins of

<sup>1</sup> The curtain behind which women are concealed.

the pagoda, amid which it was presumed the new goddess had fixed her abode. They proceeded, not without difficulty, through thickets of flowers that had sprung spontaneously in the uncultivated soil—not without fear that a tiger might spring on them at every step, till they recollected that those animals chose generally the large jungles for their retreat, and seldom harboured amid flowers. Still less was the alligator to be dreaded, amid the narrow streams that they could cross without tinging their ancles with its pure water. The tamarind, the cocoa, and the palm-tree, shed their blossoms, and exhaled their odours, and waved their leaves, over the head of the trembling votarist as she approached the ruin of the pagoda. It had been a massive square building, erected amid rocks, that, by a caprice of nature not uncommon in the Indian isles, occupied its centre, and appeared the consequence of some volcanic explosion. The earthquake that had overthrown it, had mingled the rocks and ruins together in a shapeless and deformed mass, which seemed to bear alike the traces of the impotence of art and nature, when prostrated by the power that has formed and can annihilate both. There were pillars, wrought with singular characters, heaped amid stones that bore no impress but that of some fearful and violent action of nature, that seemed to say, Mortals, write your lines with the chisel, I write my hieroglyphics in fire. There were the disjointed piles of stones carved into the form of snakes, on which the hideous idol of

Seeva had once been seated ; and close to them the rose was bursting through the earth which occupied the fissures of the rock, as if nature preached a milder theology, and deputed her darling flower as her missionary to her children. The idol itself had fallen, and lay in fragments. The horrid mouth was still visible, into which human hearts had been formerly inserted. But now, the beautiful peacocks, with their rain-bow trains and arched necks, were feeding their young amid the branches of the tamarind that overhung the blackened fragments. The young Indians advanced with diminished fear, for there was neither sight or sound to inspire the fear that attends the approach to the presence of a spiritual being—all was calm, still, and dark. Yet their feet trod with involuntary lightness as they advanced to these ruins, which combined the devastations of nature with those of the human passions, perhaps more bloody and wild than the former. Near the ruins there had formerly been a tank, as is usual, near the pagodas, both for the purposes of refreshment and purification ; but the steps were now broken, and the water was stagnated. The young Indians, however, took up a few drops, invoked the “goddess of the isle,” and approached the only remaining arch. The exterior front of this building had been constructed of stone, but its interior had been hollowed out of the rock ; and its recesses resembled, in some degree, those in the island of Elephanta. There were monstrous figures carved in stone, some adhering to

the rock, others detached from it, all frowning in their shapeless and gigantic hideousness, and giving to the eye of superstition the terrible representation of "*gods of stone.*"

"Two of the young votarists, who were distinguished for their courage, advanced and performed a kind of wild dance before the ruins of the ancient gods, as they called them, and invoked (as they might) the new resident of the isle to be propitious to the vows of their companion, who advanced to hang her wreath of flowers round the broken remains of an idol half-defaced and half-hidden among the fragments of stone, but clustered over with that rich vegetation which seems, in oriental countries, to announce the eternal triumph of nature amid the ruins of art. Every year renews the rose, but what year shall see a pyramid rebuilt? As the young Indian hung her wreath on the shapeless stone, a voice murmured, "There is a *withered* flower there."—"Yes—yes—there is," answered the votarist, "and that withered flower is an emblem of my heart. I have cherished many roses, but suffered one to wither that was the sweetest to me of all the wreath. Wilt thou revive him for me, unknown goddess, and my wreath shall no longer be a dishonour to thy shrine?"—"Wilt *thou* revive the rose by placing it in the warmth of thy bosom," said the young lover, appearing from behind the fragments of rock and ruin that had sheltered him, and from which he had uttered his oracular reply, and listened with delight to the



emblematical but intelligible language of his beloved. "Wilt thou revive the rose?" he asked, in the triumph of love, as he clasped her to his bosom. The young Indian, yielding at once to love and superstition, seemed half-melting in his embrace, when, in a moment, she uttered a wild shriek, repelled him with all her strength, and crouched in an uncouth posture of fear, while she pointed with one quivering hand to a figure that appeared, at that moment, in the perspective of that tumultuous and indefinite heap of stone. The lover, unalarmed by the shriek of his mistress, was advancing to catch her in his arms, when his eye fell on the object that had struck hers, and he sunk on his face to the earth, in mute adoration.

"The form was that of a female, but such as they had never before beheld, for her skin was perfectly white, (at least in their eyes, who had never seen any but the dark-red tint of the natives of the Bengalese islands). Her drapery (as well as they could see) consisted only of flowers, whose rich colours and fantastic grouping harmonized well with the peacock's feathers twined among them, and altogether composed a feathery fan of wild drapery, which, in truth, beseemed an "island goddess." Her long hair, of a colour they had never beheld before, pale auburn, flowed to her feet, and was fantastically entwined with the flowers and the feathers that formed her dress. On her head was a coronal of shells, of hue and lustre unknown except in the

Indian seas—the purple and the green vied with the amethyst, and the emerald. On her white bare shoulder a loxia was perched, and round her neck was hung a string of their pearl-like eggs, so pure and pellucid, that the first sovereign in Europe might have exchanged her richest necklace of pearls for them. Her arms and feet were perfectly bare, and her step had a goddess-like rapidity and lightness, that affected the imagination of the Indians as much as the extraordinary colour of her skin and hair. The young lovers sunk in awe before this vision as it passed before their eyes. While they prostrated themselves, a delicious sound trembled on their ears. The beautiful vision spoke to them, but it was in a language they did not understand; and this confirming their belief that it was the language of the gods, they prostrated themselves to her again. At that moment, the loxia, springing from her shoulder, came fluttering towards them. “He is going to seek for fire-flies to light his cell,”<sup>1</sup> said the Indians to each other. But the bird, who, with an intelligence peculiar to his species, understood and adopted the predilection of the fair being he belonged to, for the fresh flowers in which he saw her arrayed every day, darted at the withered rose-bud in the wreath of the young Indian; and, striking his slender beak through it, laid it at her feet. The omen was interpreted

<sup>1</sup> From the fire-flies being so often found in the nest of the loxia, the Indians imagine he illuminates his nest with them. It is more likely they are the food of his young.

auspiciously by the lovers, and, bending once more to the earth, they rowed back to their island, but no longer in separate canoés. The lover steered that of his mistress, while she sat beside him in silence ; and the young people who accompanied them chaunted verses in praise of the *white* goddess, and the island sacred to her and to lovers.

## CHAPTER XV

But tell me to what saint, I pray,  
What martyr, or what angel bright,  
Is dedicate this holy day,  
Which brings you here so gaily dight ?

Dost thou not, simple Palmer, know,  
What every child can tell thee here ?—  
Nor saint nor angel claims this show,  
But the bright season of the year.

QUEEN-HOO HALL, BY STRUTT.

“THE sole and beautiful inmate of the isle, though disturbed at the appearance of her worshippers, soon recovered her tranquillity. She could not be conscious of fear, for nothing of that world in which she lived had ever borne a hostile appearance to her. The sun and the shade—the flowers and foliage—the tamarinds and figs that prolonged her delightful existence—the water that she drank, wondering at the beautiful being who seemed to drink whenever she did—the peacocks, who spread out their rich and radiant plumage the moment they beheld her—and the loxia, who perched on her shoulder and hand as she walked, and answered her sweet voice with

imitative chirpings—all these were her friends, and she knew none but these.

“The human forms that sometimes approached the island, caused her a slight emotion ; but it was rather that of curiosity than alarm ; and their gestures were so expressive of reverence and mildness, their offerings of flowers, in which she delighted, so acceptable, and their visits so silent and peaceful, that she saw them without reluctance, and only wondered, as they rowed away, how they could move on the water in safety ; and how creatures so dark, and with features so unattractive, happened to *grow* amid the beautiful flowers they presented to her as the productions of their abode. The elements might be supposed to have impressed her imagination with some terrible ideas ; but the periodical regularity of these phenomena, in the climate she inhabited, divested them of their terrors to one who had been accustomed to them, as to the alternation of night and day—who could not remember the fearful impression of the first, and, above all, who had never heard any terror of them expressed *by another*,—perhaps the primitive cause of fear in most minds. Pain she had never felt—of death she had no idea—how, then, could she become acquainted with fear ?

“When a north-wester, as it is termed, visited the island, with all its terrific accompaniments of midnight darkness, clouds of suffocating dust, and thunders like the trumpet of doom, she stood amid the leafy colonnades of the banyan-tree, ignorant of

her danger, watching the cowering wings and drooping heads of the birds, and the ludicrous terror of the monkees, as they skipt from branch to branch with their young. When the lightning struck a tree, she gazed as a child would on a fire-work played off for its amusement; but the next day she wept, when she saw the leaves would no longer grow on the blasted trunk. When the rains descended in torrents, the ruins of the pagoda afforded her a shelter; and she sat listening to the rushing of the mighty waters, and the murmurs of the troubled deep, till her soul took its colour from the sombrous and magnificent imagery around her, and she believed herself precipitated to earth with the deluge—borne downward, like a leaf, by a cataract—engulphed in the depths of the ocean—rising again to light on the swell of the enormous billows, as if she were heaved on the back of a whale—deafened with the roar—giddy with the rush—till terror and delight embraced in that fearful exercise of imagination. So she lived like a flower amid sun and storm, blooming in the light, and bending to the shower, and drawing the elements of her sweet and wild existence from both. And both seemed to mingle their influences kindly for her, as if she was a thing that nature loved, even in her angry mood, and gave a commission to the storm to nurture her, and to the deluge to spare the ark of her innocence, as it floated over the waters. This existence of felicity, half physical, half imaginative, but neither intellectual or impassioned, had

continued till the seventeenth year of this beautiful and mild being, when a circumstance occurred that changed its hue for ever.

“On the evening of the day after the Indians had departed, Immalee, for that was the name her votarists had given her, was standing on the shore, when a being approached her unlike any she had ever beheld. The colour of his face and hands resembled her own more than those she was accustomed to see, but his garments, (which were European), from their square uncouthness, their shapelessness, and their disfiguring projection about the hips, (it was the fashion of the year 1680), gave her a mixed sensation of ridicule, disgust, and wonder, which her beautiful features could express only by a smile—that smile, a *native of the face* from which not even surprise could banish it.

“The stranger approached, and the beautiful vision approached also, but not like an European female with low and graceful bendings, still less like an Indian girl with her low salams, but like a young fawn, all animation, timidity, confidence, and cowardice, expressed in almost a single action. She sprung from the sands—ran to her favourite tree;—returned again with her guard of peacocks, who expanded their superb trains with a kind of instinctive motion, as if they felt the danger that menaced their protectress, and, clapping her hands with exultation, seemed to invite them to share in the delight she felt in gazing at the *new flower that had grown in the sand*.

“The stranger advanced, and, to Immalee’s utter astonishment, addressed her in the language which she herself had retained some words of since her infancy, and had endeavoured in vain to make her peacocks, parrots, and loxias, answer her in corresponding sounds. But her language, from want of practice, had become so limited, that she was delighted to hear its most unmeaning sounds uttered by human lips; and when he said, according to the form of the times, “How do you, fair maid?” she answered, “God made me,” from the words of the Christian Catechism that had been breathed into her infant lip. “God never made a fairer creature,” replied the stranger, grasping her hand, and fixing on her eyes that still burn in the sockets of that arch-deceiver. “Oh yes!” answered Immalee, “he made many things more beautiful. The rose is redder than I am—the palm-tree is taller than I am—and the wave is bluer than I am;—but they all change, and I never change. I have grown taller and stronger, though the rose fades every six moons; and the rock splits to let in the bats, when the earth shakes; and the waves fight in their anger till they turn grey, and far different from the beautiful colour they have when the moon comes dancing on them, and sending all the young, broken branches of her light to kiss my feet, as I stand on the soft sand. I have tried to gather them every night, but they all broke in my hand the moment I dipt it into water.”—“And have you fared better with the stars?” said the stranger



smiling.—“No,” answered the innocent being, “the stars are the flowers of heaven, and the rays of the moon the boughs and branches; but though they are so bright, they only blossom in the night,—and I love better the flowers that I can gather, and twine in my hair. When I have been all night wooing a star, and it has listened and descended, springing downwards like a peacock from its nest, it has hid itself often afterwards playfully amid the mangoes and tamarinds where it fell; and though I have searched for it till the moon looked wan and weary of lighting me, I never could find it. But where do you come from?—you are not scaly and voiceless like those who grow in the waters, and show their strange shapes as I sit on the shore at sun-set;—nor are you red and diminutive like those who come over the waters to me from other worlds, in houses that can live on the deep, and walk so swiftly, with their legs plunged in the water. Where do you come from?—you are not so bright as the stars that live in the blue sea above me, nor so deformed as those that toss in the darker sea at my feet. Where did you grow, and how came you here?—there is not a canoe on the sand; and though the shells bear the fish that live in them so lightly over the waters, they never would bear me. When I placed my foot on their scalloped edge of crimson and purple, they sunk into the sand.”—“Beautiful creature,” said the stranger, “I come from a world where there are thousands like me.”—“That is impossible,” said

Immalee, "for I live here alone, and other worlds must be like this."—"What I tell you is true, however," said the stranger. Immalee paused for a moment, as if making the first effort of reflection—an exertion painful enough to a being whose existence was composed of felicitous tacts and unreflecting instincts—and then exclaimed, "We both must have grown in the world of voices, for I know what you say better than the chirp of the loxia, or the cry of the peacock. That must be a delightful world where they all speak—what would I give that my roses grew in the world of answers!"

"At this moment the stranger made certain signals of hunger, which Immalee understood in a moment, and told him to follow her to where the tamarind and the fig were shedding their fruit—where the stream was so clear, you could count the purple shells in its bed—and where she would scoop for him in the cocoa-shell the cool waters that flowed beneath the shade of the mango. As they went, she gave him all the information about herself that she could. She told him that she was the daughter of a palm-tree, under whose shade she had been first conscious of existence, but that her poor father had been long withered and dead—that she was very old, having seen many roses decay on their stalks; and though they were succeeded by others, she did not love them so well as the first, which were a great deal larger and brighter—that, in fact, every thing had grown smaller latterly, for she was now able to reach to the

fruit which formerly she was compelled to wait for till it dropt on the ground ;—but that the water was grown taller, for once she was forced to drink it on her hands and knees, and now she could scoop it in a cocoa-shell. Finally, she added, she was much older than the moon, for she had seen it waste away till it was dimmer than the light of a fire-fly ; and the moon that was lighting them now would decline too, and its successor be so small, that she would never again give it the name she had given to the first—Sun of the Night. “But,” said her companion, “how are you able to speak a language you never learned from your loxias and peacocks ?” —“I will tell you,” said Immalee, with an air of solemnity, which her beauty and innocence made at once ludicrous and imposing, and in which she betrayed a slight tendency to that wish to mystify that distinguishes her delightful sex, —“there came a spirit to me from the world of voices, and it whispered to me sounds that I never have forgotten, long, long before I was born.” —“Really ?” said the stranger. “Oh yes !—long before I could gather a fig, or gather the water in my hand, and that must be before I was born. When I *was* born, I was not so high as the rose-bud, at which I tried to catch, now I am as near the moon as the palm-tree —sometimes I catch her beams sooner than he does, therefore I must be very old, and very high.” At these words, the stranger, with an expression indescribable, leaned against a tree. He viewed that lovely and helpless being, while he refused the fruits

and water she offered him, with a look, that, for the first time, intimated compassion. The stranger feeling did not dwell long in a mansion it was unused to. The expression was soon exchanged for that half-ironical, half-diabolical glance Immalee could not understand. "And you live here alone," he said, "and you have lived in this beautiful place without a companion?"—"Oh no!" said Immalee, "I have a companion more beautiful than all the flowers in the isle. There is not a rose-leaf that drops in the river so bright as its cheek. My friend lives under the water, but its colours are so bright. It kisses me too, but its lips are very cold; and when I kiss it, it seems to dance, and its beauty is all broken into a thousand faces, that come smiling at me like little stars. But, though my friend has a thousand faces, and I have but one, still there is one thing that troubles me. There is but one stream where it meets me, and that is where there are no shadows from the trees—and I never can catch it but when the sun is bright. Then when I catch it in the stream, I kiss it on my knees; but my friend has grown so tall, that sometimes I wish it were smaller. Its lips spread so much wider, that I give it a thousand kisses for one that I get." "Is your friend male or female," said the stranger.—"What is that?" answered Immalee.—"I mean, of what sex is your friend?"

"But to this question he could obtain no satisfactory answer; and it was not till his return the next day, when he revisited the isle, that he dis-

covered Immalee's friend was what he suspected. He found this innocent and lovely being bending over a stream that reflected her image, and wooing it with a thousand wild and graceful attitudes of joyful fondness. The stranger gazed at her for some time, and thoughts it would be difficult for man to penetrate into, threw their varying expression over his features for a moment. It was the first of his intended victims he had ever beheld with compunction. The joy, too, with which Immalee received him, almost brought back human feelings to a heart that had long renounced them; and, for a moment, he experienced a sensation like that of his master when he visited paradise,—pity for the flowers he resolved to wither for ever. He looked at her as she fluttered round him with outspread arms and dancing eyes; and sighed, while she welcomed him in tones of such wild sweetness, as suited a being who had hitherto conversed with nothing but the melody of birds and the murmur of waters. With all her ignorance, however, she could not help testifying her amazement at his arriving at the isle without any visible means of conveyance. He evaded answering her on this point, but said, "Immalee, I come from a world wholly unlike that you inhabit, amid inanimate flowers, and unthinking birds. I come from a world where all, as I do, think and speak." Immalee was speechless with wonder and delight for some time; at length she exclaimed, "Oh, how they must love each other! even I love my poor birds and flowers, and

the trees that shade, and the waters that sing to me!" The stranger smiled. "In all that world, perhaps there is not another being beautiful and innocent as you. It is a world of suffering, guilt, and care." It was with much difficulty she was made to comprehend the meaning of these words, but when she did, she exclaimed, "Oh, that I could live in that world, for I would make every one happy!"—"But you could not, Immalee," said the stranger; "this world is of such extent that it would take your whole life to traverse it, and, during your progress, you never could be conversant with more than a small number of sufferers at a time, and the evils they undergo are in many instances such as you or no human power could relieve." At these words, Immalee burst into an agony of tears. "Weak, but lovely being," said the stranger, "could your tears heal the corrosions of disease?—cool the burning throb of a cancered heart?—wash the pale slime from the clinging lips of famine?—or, more than all, quench the fire of forbidden passion?" Immalee paused aghast at this enumeration, and could only falter out, that wherever she went, she would bring her flowers and sunshine among the healthy, and they should all sit under the shade of her own tamarind. That for disease and death, she had long been accustomed to see flowers wither and die their beautiful death of nature. "And perhaps," she added, after a reflective pause, "as I have often known them to retain their delicious odour even after they were

faded, perhaps *what thinks* may live too after the form has faded, and that is a thought of joy." Of passion, she said she knew nothing, and could propose no remedy for an evil she was unconscious of. She had seen flowers fade with the season, but could not imagine why the flower should destroy itself. "But did you never trace a worm in the flower?" said the stranger, with the sophistry of corruption. "Yes," answered Immalee, "but the worm was not the native of the flower; its own leaves never could have hurt it." This led to a discussion, which Immalee's impregnable innocence, though combined with ardent curiosity and quick apprehension, rendered perfectly harmless to her. Her playful and desultory answers, —her restless eccentricity of imagination, —her keen and piercing, though ill-poised intellectual weapons, —and, above all, her instinctive and unfailing *tact* in matters of right and wrong, formed altogether an array that discomfited and baffled the tempter more than if he had been compelled to encounter half the *wranglers* of the European academies of that day. In the logic of the schools he was well-versed, but in this logic of the heart and of nature, he was "ignorance itself." It is said, that the "awless lion" crouches before "a maid in the pride of her purity." The tempter was departing gloomily, when he saw tears start from the bright eyes of Immalee, and caught a wild and dark omen from her innocent grief. "And you weep, Immalee?" "Yes," said the beautiful being, "I always weep when I see the sun set in

clouds; and will you, the sun of my heart, set in darkness too? and will you not rise again? will you not?" and, with the graceful confidence of pure innocence, she pressed her red delicious lip to his hand as she spoke. "Will you not? I shall never love my roses and peacocks if you do not return, for they cannot speak to me as you do, nor can I give them one thought, but you can give me many. Oh, I would like to have many thoughts about *the world that suffers*, from which you came; and I believe you came from it, for, till I saw you, I never felt a pain that was not pleasure; but now, it is all pain when I think you will not return."—"I will return," said the stranger, "beautiful Immalee, and will shew you, at my return, a glimpse of that world from which I come; and in which you will soon be an inmate."—"But shall I see you there," said Immalee, "otherwise how shall I *talk thoughts*?"—"Oh yes,—oh certainly."—"But why do you repeat the same words twice; *your once* would have been enough."—"Well then, yes."—"Then take this rose from me, and let us inhale its odour together, as I say to my friend in the fountain, when I bend to kiss *it*; but my friend withdraws *its* rose before I have tasted it and I leave mine on the water. Will you not take my rose," said the beautiful suppliant, bending towards him. "I will," said the stranger; and he took a flower from the cluster Immalee held out to him. It was a withered one. He snatched it, and hid it in his breast. "And will you go without a canoe across



that dark sea?" said Immalee.—"We shall meet again, and meet in the *world of suffering*," said the stranger.—"Thank you,—oh, thank you," repeated Immalee, as she saw him plunge fearless amid the surf. The stranger answered only, "We shall meet again." Twice, as he parted, he threw a glance at the beautiful and isolated being; a lingering of humanity trembled round his heart,—but he tore the withered rose from his bosom, and to the waved arm and angel-smile of Immalee, he answered, "We shall meet again."

## CHAPTER XVI

Più non ho la dolce speranza.

DIDONE.

“SEVEN mornings and evenings Immalee paced the sands of her lonely isle, without seeing the stranger. She had still his promise to console her, that they should meet in the world of suffering; and this she repeated to herself as if it was full of hope and consolation. In this interval she tried to educate herself for her introduction into this world, and it was beautiful to see her attempting, from vegetable and animal analogies, to form some image of the incomprehensible destiny of man. In the shade she watched the withering flower.—“The blood that ran red through its veins yesterday is purple to-day, and will be black and dry to-morrow,” she said; “but it feels no pain—it dies patiently,—and the ranunculus and tulip near it are untouched by grief for their companion, or their colours would not be so resplendent. But can it be thus in the world that thinks? Could I see *him* wither and die, without withering

and dying along with him. Oh no ! when that flower fades, I will be the dew that falls over him !”

“She attempted to enlarge her comprehension, by observing the animal world. A young loxia had fallen dead from its pendent nest ; and Immalee, looking into the aperture which that intelligent bird forms at the lower extremity of the nest to secure it from birds of prey, perceived the old ones with fire-flies in their small beaks, their young one lying dead before them. At this sight Immalee burst into tears. — “Ah ! you cannot weep,” she said, “what an advantage I have over you ! You eat, though your young one, your own one, is dead ; but could I ever drink of the milk of the cocoa, if *he* could no longer taste it ? I begin to comprehend what he said—to think, then, is to suffer—and a world of thought must be a world of pain ! But how delicious are these tears ! Formerly I wept for pleasure—but there is a pain sweeter than pleasure, that I never felt till I beheld *him*. Oh ! who would not think, to have the joy of tears ?”

“But Immalee did not occupy this interval solely in reflection ; a new anxiety began to agitate her ; and in the intervals of her meditation and her tears, she searched with avidity for the most glowing and fantastically wreathed shells to deck her arms and hair with. She changed her drapery of flowers every day, and never thought them fresh after the first hour ; then she filled her largest shells with the most limpid water, and her hollow cocoa nuts with

the most delicious figs, interspersed with roses, and arranged them picturesquely on the stone bench of the ruined pagoda. The time, however, passed over without the arrival of the stranger, and Immalee, on visiting her fairy banquet the next day, wept over the withered fruit, but dried her eyes, and hastened to replace them.

“She was thus employed on the eighth morning, when she saw the stranger approach; and the wild and innocent delight with which she bounded towards him, excited in him for a moment a feeling of gloomy and reluctant compunction, which Immalee’s quick susceptibility traced in his pausing step and averted eye. She stood trembling in lovely and pleading diffidence, as if intreating pardon for an unconscious offence, and asking permission to approach by the very attitude in which she forbore it, while tears stood in her eyes ready to fall at another repelling motion. This sight “whetted his almost blunted purpose.” She must learn to suffer, to qualify her to become my pupil, he thought. “Immalee, you weep,” he added, approaching her. “Oh yes!” said Immalee, smiling like a spring morning through her tears; “you are to teach me to suffer, and I shall soon be very fit for your world—but I had rather weep for you, than smile on a thousand roses.”—“Immalee,” said the stranger, repelling the tenderness that melted him in spite of himself, “Immalee, I come to shew you something of the world of thought you are so anxious to inhabit, and of which

you must soon become an inmate. Ascend this hill where the palm-trees are clustering, and you shall see a glimpse of part of it.”—“But I would like to see the whole, and all at once!” said Immalee, with the natural avidity of thirsty and unfed intellect, that believes it can swallow all things, and digest all things. “The whole, and all at once!” said her conductor, turning to smile at her as she bounded after him, breathless and glowing with newly excited feeling. “I doubt the part you will see to-night will be more than enough to satiate even your curiosity.” As he spoke he drew a tube from his vest, and bid her apply it to her sight. The Indian obeyed him; but, after gazing a moment, uttered the emphatic exclamation, “I am there!—or are they here?” and sunk on the earth in a frenzy of delight. She rose again in a moment, and eagerly seizing the telescope, applied it in a wrong direction, which disclosed merely the sea to her view, and exclaimed sadly, “Gone!—gone!—all that beautiful world lived and died in a moment—all that I love die so—my dearest roses live not half so long as those I neglect—you were absent for seven moons since I first saw you, and the beautiful world lived only a moment.”

“The stranger again directed the telescope towards the shore of India, from which they were not far distant, and Immalee again exclaimed in rapture, “Alive and more beautiful than ever!—all living, thinking things!—their *very walk thinks*. No mute

fishes, and senseless trees, but wonderful rocks,<sup>1</sup> on which they look with pride, as if they were the works of their own hands. Beautiful rocks! how I love the perfect straitness of your sides, and the crisped and flower-like knots of your decorated tops! Oh that flowers grew, and birds fluttered round you, and then I would prefer you even to the rocks under which I watch the setting sun! Oh what a world must that be where nothing is natural, and every thing beautiful!—thought must have done all that. But, how *little every thing is!*—thought should have made every thing larger—*thought should be a god.* But,” she added with quick intelligence and self-accusing diffidence, “perhaps I am wrong. Sometimes I have thought I could lay my hand on the top of a palm-tree, but when, after a long, long time, I came close to it, I could not have reached its lowest leaf were I ten times higher than I am. Perhaps your beautiful world may grow higher as I approach it.”—“Hold, Immalee,” said the stranger, taking the telescope from her hands, “to enjoy this sight you should understand it.”—“Oh yes!” said Immalee, with submissive anxiety, as the world of sense rapidly lost ground in her imagination against the new-found world of mind,—“yes—let me think.”—“Immalee, have you any religion?” said the visitor, as an indescribable feeling of pain made his pale brow still paler. Immalee, quick in understanding and sympathising with physical feeling, darted away at these

<sup>1</sup> Intellige “buildings.”

words, returned in a moment with a banyan leaf, with which she wiped the drops from his livid forehead; and then seating herself at his feet, in an attitude of profound but eager attention, repeated, "*Religion!*" what is that? is it a new thought?"—"It is the consciousness of a Being superior to all worlds and their inhabitants, because he is the Maker of all, and will be their judge—of a Being whom we cannot see, but in whose power and presence we must believe, though invisible—of one who is every where unseen; always acting, though never in motion; hearing all things, but never heard." Immalee interrupted with an air of distraction—"Hold! too many thoughts will kill me—let me pause. I have seen the shower that came to refresh the rose-tree beat it to the earth." After an effort of solemn recollection, she added, "The voice of dreams told me something like that before I was born, but it is so long ago,—sometimes I have had thoughts within me like that voice. I have thought I loved the things around me too much, and that I should love things *beyond* me—flowers that could not fade, and a sun that never sets. I could have sprung, like a bird into the air, after such a thought—but there was no one to shew me that path upward." And the young enthusiast lifted towards heaven eyes in which trembled the tears of ecstatic imaginings, and then turned their mute pleadings on the stranger.

"It is right," he continued, "not only to have thoughts of this Being, but to express them by some

outward acts. The inhabitants of the world you are about to see, call this, *worship*,—and they have adopted (a Satanic smile curled his lip as he spoke) very different modes; so different, that, in fact, there is but one point in which they all agree—that of making their religion a torment;—the religion of some prompting them to torture themselves, and the religion of some prompting them to torture others. Though, as I observed, they all agree in this important point, yet unhappily they differ so much about the mode, that there has been much disturbance about it in the world that thinks.”—“In the world that *thinks!*” repeated Immalee, “Impossible! Surely they must know that a difference cannot be acceptable to Him who is One.”—“And have you then adopted no mode of expressing your thoughts of this Being, that is, of worshipping him?” said the stranger.—“I smile when the sun rises in its beauty, and I weep when I see the evening star rise,” said Immalee.—“And do you recoil at the inconsistencies of varied modes of worship, and yet you yourself employ smiles and tears in your address to the Deity?”—“I do,—for they are both the expressions of joy with me,” said the poor Indian; “the sun is as happy when he smiles through the rain-clouds, as when he burns in the midheight of heaven, in the fierceness of his beauty; and I am happy whether I smile or I weep.”—“Those whom you are about to see,” said the stranger, offering her the telescope, “are as remote in their forms of worship as smiles



from tears ; but they are not, like you, equally happy in both." Immalee applied her eye to the telescope, and exclaimed in rapture at what she saw. "What do you see?" said the stranger. Immalee described what she saw with many imperfect expressions, which, perhaps, may be rendered more intelligible by the explanatory words of the stranger.

"You see," said he, "the coast of India, the shores of the world near you.—There is the black pagoda of Juggernaut, that enormous building on which your eye is first fixed. Beside it stands a Turkish mosque—you may distinguish it by a figure like that of the half-moon. It is the will of him who rules that world, that its inhabitants should worship him by that sign.<sup>1</sup> At a small distance you may see a low building with a trident on its summit—that is the temple of Maha-deva, one of the ancient goddesses of the country."—"But the houses are nothing to me," said Immalee, "shew me the living things that go there. The houses are not half so beautiful as the rocks on the shore, draperied all over with sea-weeds and mosses, and shaded by the distant palm-tree and cocoa."—"But those buildings," said the tempter, "are indicative of the various modes of thinking of those who frequent them. If it is into their thoughts you wish to look, you must see them expressed by their actions. In their dealings with

<sup>1</sup> Tippoo Saib wished to substitute the Mohamedan for the Indian mythology throughout his dominions. This circumstance, though long antedated, is therefore imaginable.

each other, men are generally deceitful, but in their dealings with their gods, they are tolerably sincere in the expression of the character they assign them in their imaginations. If that character be formidable, they express fear; if it be one of cruelty, they indicate it by the sufferings they inflict on themselves; if it be gloomy, the image of the god is faithfully reflected in the visage of the worshipper. Look and judge."

"Immalee looked and saw a vast sandy plain, with the dark pagoda of Juggernaut in the perspective. On this plain lay the bones of a thousand skeletons, bleaching in the burning and unmoistened air. A thousand human bodies, hardly more alive, and scarce less emaciated, were trailing their charred and blackened bodies over the sands, to perish under the shadow of the temple, hopeless of ever reaching that of its walls.

"Multitudes of them dropt dead as they crawled. Multitudes still living, faintly waved their hands, to scare the vultures that hovered nearer and nearer at every swoop, and scooped the poor remnants of flesh from the living bones of the screaming victim, and retreated, with an answering scream of disappointment at the scanty and tasteless morsel they had torn away.

"Many tried, in their false and fanatic zeal, to double their torments, by crawling through the sands on their hands and knees; but hands through the backs of which the nails had grown, and knees worn

literally to the bone, struggled but feebly amid the sands and the skeletons, and the bodies that were soon to be skeletons, and the vultures that were to make them so.

“Immalee withheld her breath, as if she inhaled the abominable effluvia of this mass of putrefaction, which is said to desolate the shores near the temple of Juggernaut, like a pestilence.

“Close to this fearful scene, came on a pageant, whose splendour made a brilliant and terrible contrast to the loathsome and withering desolation of animal and intellectual life, amid which its pomp came towering, and sparkling, and trembling on. An enormous fabric, more resembling a moving palace than a triumphal car, supported the inshrined image of Juggernaut, and was dragged forward by the united strength of a thousand human bodies, priests, victims, brahmins, faqueers and all. In spite of this huge force, the impulse was so unequal, that the whole edifice rocked and tottered from time to time, and this singular union of instability and splendour, of trembling decadence and terrific glory, gave a faithful image of the meretricious exterior, and internal hollowness, of idolatrous religion. As the procession moved on, sparkling amid desolation, and triumphant amid death, multitudes rushed forward from time to time, to prostrate themselves under the wheels of the enormous machine, which crushed them to atoms in a moment, and passed on;—others “cut themselves with knives and lancets after their

manner," and not believing themselves worthy to perish beneath the wheels of the idol's chariot, sought to propitiate him by dyeing the tracks of those wheels with their blood ;—their relatives and friends shouted with delight as they saw the streams of blood dye the car and its line of progress, and hoped for an interest in these voluntary sacrifices, with as much energy, and perhaps as much reason, as the Catholic votarist does in the penance of St Bruno, or the ex-oculation of St Lucia, or the martyrdom of St Ursula and her eleven thousand virgins, which, being interpreted, means the martyrdom of a single female named *Undecimilla*, which the Catholic legends read *Undecim Mille*.

"The procession went on, amid that mixture of rites that characterizes idolatry in all countries,—half resplendent, half horrible—appealing to nature while they rebel against her—mingling flowers with blood, and casting alternately a screaming infant, or a garland of roses, beneath the car of the idol.

"Such was the picture that presented to the strained, incredulous eyes of Immalee, those mingled features of magnificence and horror,—of joy and suffering,—of crushed flowers and mangled bodies,—of magnificence calling on torture for its triumph,—and the steam of blood and the incense of the rose, inhaled at once by the triumphant nostrils of an incarnate demon, who rode amid the wrecks of nature and the spoils of the heart! Immalee gazed on in horrid curiosity. She saw, by the aid of the tele-

scope, a boy seated on the front of the moving temple, who “perfected the praise” of the loathsome idol, with all the outrageous lubricities of the Phallic worship. From the slightest consciousness of the meaning of this phenomenon, her unimaginable purity protected her as with a shield. It was in vain that the tempter plied her with questions, and hints of explanation, and offers of illustration. He found her chill, indifferent, and even incurious. He gnashed his teeth and gnawed his lip *en parenthese*. But when she saw mothers cast their infants under the wheels of the car, and then turn to watch the wild and wanton dance of the Almahs, and appear, by their open lips and clapped hands, to keep time to the sound of the silver bells that tinkled round their slight ankles, while their infants were writhing in their dying agony,—she dropt the telescope in horror, and exclaimed, “The world that thinks does not feel. I never saw the rose kill the bud !”

“But look again,” said the tempter, “to that square building of stone, round which a few stragglers are collected, and whose summit is surmounted by a trident,—that is the temple of Mahà-deva, a goddess who possesses neither the power or the popularity of the great idol Juggernaut. Mark how her worshippers approach her.” Immalee looked, and saw women offering flowers, fruits, and perfumes ; and some young girls brought birds in cages, whom they set free ; others, after making vows for the safety of some absent, sent a small and gaudy boat of paper,

illuminated with wax, down the stream of an adjacent river, with injunctions never to sink till it reached him.

“Immalee smiled with pleasure at the rites of this harmless and elegant superstition. “This is not the religion of torment,” said she.—“Look again,” said the stranger. She did, and beheld those very women whose hands had been employed in liberating birds from their cages, suspending, on the branches of the trees which shadowed the temple of Maha-deva, baskets containing their new-born infants, who were left there to perish with hunger, or be devoured by the birds, while their mothers danced and sung in honour of the goddess.

“Others were occupied in conveying, apparently with the most zealous and tender watchfulness, their aged parents to the banks of the river, where, after assisting them to perform their ablutions, with all the intensity of filial and divine piety, they left them half immersed in the water, to be devoured by alligators, who did not suffer their wretched prey to linger in long expectation of their horrible death; while others were deposited in the jungles near the banks of the river, where they met with a fate as certain and as horrible, from the tigers who infested it, and whose yell soon hushed the feeble wail of their unresisting victims.

“Immalee sunk on the earth at this spectacle, and clasping both hands over her eyes, remained speechless with grief and horror.

“Look yet again,” said the stranger, “the rites of all religions are not so bloody.” Once more she looked, and saw a Turkish mosque, towering in all the splendour that accompanied the first introduction of the religion of Mahomet among the Hindoos. It reared its gilded domes, and carved minarets, and crescented pinnacles, rich with all the profusion which the decorative imagination of Oriental architecture, at once light and luxuriant, gorgeous and aerial, delights to lavish on its favourite works.

“A group of stately Turks were approaching the mosque, at the call of the muezzin. Around the building arose neither tree nor shrub; it borrowed neither shade nor ornament from nature; it had none of those soft and graduating shades and hues, which seem to unite the works of God and the creature for the glory of the former, and calls on the inventive magnificence of art, and the spontaneous loveliness of nature, to magnify the Author of both; it stood the independent work and emblem of vigorous hands and proud minds, such as appeared to belong to those who now approached it as worshippers. Their finely featured and thoughtful countenances, their majestic habits, and lofty figures, formed an imposing contrast to the unintellectual expression, the crouching posture, and the half naked squalidness of some poor Hindoos, who, seated on their hams, were eating their mess of rice, as the stately Turks passed on to their devotions. Immalee viewed them with a feeling of awe and pleasure, and began to think there might

be some good in the religion professed by these noble-looking beings. But, before they entered the mosque, they spurned and spit at the unoffending and terrified Hindoos; they struck them with the flats of their sabres, and, terming them dogs of idolaters, they cursed them in the name of God and the prophet. Immalee, revolted and indignant at the sight, though she could not hear the words that accompanied it, demanded the reason of it. "Their religion," said the stranger, "binds them to hate all who do not worship as they do."—"Alas!" said Immalee, weeping, "is not that hatred which their religion teaches, a proof that theirs is the worst? But why," she added, her features illuminated with all the wild and sparkling intelligence of wonder, while flushed with recent fears, "why do I not see among them some of those lovelier beings, whose habits differ from theirs, and whom you call women? Why do they not worship also; or have they a milder religion of their own?"—"That religion," replied the stranger, "is not very favourable to those beings, of whom you are the loveliest; it teaches that men shall have different companions in the world of souls; nor does it clearly intimate that women shall ever arrive there. Hence you may see some of these excluded beings wandering amid those stones that designate the place of their dead, repeating prayers for the dead whom they dare not hope to join; and others, who are old and indigent, seated at the doors of the mosque, reading aloud passages from a book lying on their knees,



(which they call the Koran), with the hope of soliciting alms, not of exciting devotion." At these desolating words, Immalee, who had in vain looked to any of these systems for that hope or solace which her pure spirit and vivid imagination alike thirsted for, felt a recoiling of the soul unutterable at religion thus painted to her, and exhibiting only a frightful picture of blood and cruelty, of the inversion of every principle of nature, and the disruption of every tie of the heart.

"She flung herself on the ground, and exclaiming, "There is no God, if there be none but theirs!" then, starting up as if to take a last view, in the desperate hope that all was an illusion, she discovered a small obscure building overshadowed by palm-trees, and surmounted by a cross; and struck by the unobtrusive simplicity of its appearance, and the scanty number and peaceable demeanour of the few who were approaching it, she exclaimed, that this must be a new religion, and eagerly demanded its name and rites. The stranger evinced some uneasiness at the discovery she had made, and testified still more reluctance to answer the questions which it suggested; but they were pressed with such restless and coaxing importunity, and the beautiful being who urged them made such an artless transition from profound and meditative grief to childish, yet intelligent curiosity, that it was not in man, or more or less than man, to resist her.

"Her glowing features, as she turned them toward

him, with an expression half impatient, half pleading, were indeed those "of a stilled infant smiling through its tears."<sup>1</sup> Perhaps, too, another cause might have operated on this prophet of curses, and made him utter a blessing where he meant malediction; but into this we dare not inquire, nor will it ever be fully known till the day when all secrets must be disclosed. However it was, he felt himself compelled to tell her it was a new religion, the religion of Christ, whose rites and worshippers she beheld. "But what are the rites?" asked Immalee. "Do they murder their children, or their parents, to prove their love to God? Do they hang them on baskets to perish, or leave them on the banks of rivers to be devoured by fierce and hideous animals?"—"The religion they profess forbids that," said the stranger, with reluctant truth; "it requires them to honour their parents, and to cherish their children."—"But why do they not spurn from the entrance to their church those who do not think as they do?"—"Because their religion enjoins them to be mild, benevolent, and tolerant; and neither to reject or disdain those who have not attained its purer light."—"But why is there no splendour or magnificence in their worship; nothing grand or attractive?"—"Because they know that God cannot be acceptably worshipped but by pure hearts and crimeless hands;

<sup>1</sup> I trust the absurdity of this quotation here will be forgiven for its beauty. It is borrowed from Miss Baillie, the first dramatic poet of the age.

and though their religion gives every hope to the penitent guilty, it flatters none with false promises of external devotion supplying the homage of the heart ; or artificial and picturesque religion standing in the place of that single devotion to God, before whose throne, though the proudest temples erected to his honour crumble into dust, the heart burns on the altar still, an inextinguishable and acceptable victim."

"As he spoke, (perhaps constrained by a higher power), Immalee bowed her glowing face to the earth, and then raising it with the look of a new-born angel, exclaimed, "Christ shall be my God, and I will be a Christian!" Again she bowed in the deep prostration which indicates the united submission of soul and body, and remained in this attitude of absorption so long, that, when she rose, she did not perceive the absence of her companion. — "He fled murmuring, and with him fled the shades of night."

## CHAPTER XVII

“Why, I did say something about getting a licence from the Cadi.”

BLUE BEARD.

“THE visits of the stranger were interrupted for some time, and when he returned, it seemed as if their purpose was no longer the same. He no longer attempted to corrupt her principles, or sophisticate her understanding, or mystify her views of religion. On the latter subject he was quite silent, seemed to regret he had ever touched on it, and not all her restless avidity of knowledge, or caressing importunity of manner, could extract from him another syllable on the subject. He repayed her amply, however, by the rich, varied, and copious stores of a mind, furnished with matter apparently beyond the power of human experience to have collected, confined, as it is, within the limits of threescore years and ten. But this never struck Immalee; she took “no note of time;” and the tale of yesterday, or the record of past centuries, were synchronized in a mind to which facts and dates were alike unknown; and which was

alike unacquainted with the graduating shades of manner, and the linked progress of events.

“They often sat on the shore of the isle in the evening, where Immalee always prepared a seat of moss for her visitor, and gazed together on the blue deep in silence ; for Immalee’s newly-awaked intellect and heart felt that bankruptcy of language, which profound feeling will impress on the most cultivated intellect, and which, in her case, was increased alike by her innocence and her ignorance ; and her visitor had perhaps reasons still stronger for his silence. This silence, however, was often broken. There was not a vessel that sailed in the distance which did not suggest an eager question from Immalee, and did not draw a slow and extorted reply from the stranger. His knowledge was immense, various, and profound, (but this was rather a subject of delight than of curiosity to his beautiful pupil) ; and from the Indian canoe, rowed by naked natives, to the splendid, and clumsy, and ill-managed vessels of the Rajahs, that floated like huge and gilded fish tumbling in uncouth and shapeless mirth on the wave, to the gallant and well-manned vessels of Europe, that came on like the gods of ocean bringing fertility and knowledge, the discoveries of art, and the blessings of civilization, wherever their sails were unfurled and their anchors dropt,—he could tell her all,—describe the destination of every vessel,—the feelings, characters, and national habits of the many-minded inmates,—and enlarge her knowledge to a degree which books never

could have done; for colloquial communication is always the most vivid and impressive medium, and lips have a prescriptive right to be the first intelligencers in instruction and in love.

“Perhaps this extraordinary being, with regard to whom the laws of mortality and the feelings of nature seemed to be alike suspended, felt a kind of sad and wild repose from the destiny that immitigably pursued him, in the society of Immalee. We know not, and can never tell, what sensations her innocent and helpless beauty inspired him with, but the result was, that he ceased to regard her as his victim; and, when seated beside her listening to her questions, or answering them, seemed to enjoy the few lucid intervals of his insane and morbid existence. Absent from her, he returned to the world to torture and to tempt in the mad-house where the Englishman Stanton was tossing on his straw——”

“Hold!” said Melmoth; “what name have you mentioned?” — “Have patience with me, Senhor,” said Monçada, who did not like interruption; “have patience, and you will find we are all beads strung on the same string. Why should we jar against each other? our union is indissoluble.” He proceeded with the story of the unhappy Indian, as recorded in the parchments of Adonijah, which he had been compelled to copy, and of which he was anxious to impress every line and letter on his listener, to substantiate his own extraordinary story.

“When absent from her, his purpose was what I

have described ; but while present, that purpose seemed suspended ; he gazed often on her with eyes whose wild and fierce lustre was quenched in a dew that he hastily wiped away, and gazed on her again. While he sat near her on the flowers she had collected for him,—while he looked on those timid and rosy lips that waited his signal to speak, like buds that did not dare to blow till the sun shone on them,—while he heard accents issue from those lips which he felt it would be as impossible to pervert as it would be to teach the nightingale blasphemy,—he sunk down beside her, passed his hand over his livid brow, and, wiping off some cold drops, thought for a moment he was not the Cain of the moral world, and that the brand was effaced,—at least for a moment. The habitual and impervious gloom of his soul soon returned. He felt again the gnawings of the worm that never dies, and the scorchings of the fire that is never to be quenched. He turned the fatal light of his dark eyes on the only being who never shrunk from their expression, for her innocence made her fearless. He looked intensely at her, while rage, despair, and pity, convulsed his heart ; and as he beheld the confiding and conciliating smile with which this gentle being met a look that might have withered the heart of the boldest within him,—a Semele gazing in supplicating love on the lightnings that were to blast her,—one human drop dimmed their portentous lustre, as its softened rays fell on her. Turning fiercely away, he flung his view on the ocean, as if to

find, in the sight of human life, some fuel for the fire that was consuming his vitals. The ocean, that lay calm and bright before them as a sea of jasper, never reflected two more different countenances, or sent more opposite feelings to two hearts. Over Immalee's, it breathed that deep and delicious reverie, which those forms of nature that unite tranquillity and profundity diffuse over souls whose innocence gives them a right to an unmingled and exclusive enjoyment of nature. None but crimeless and unimpassioned minds ever truly enjoyed earth, ocean, and heaven. At our first transgression, nature expels us, as it did our first parents, from her paradise for ever.

“To the stranger the view was fraught with far different visions. He viewed it as a tiger views a forest abounding with prey; there might be the storm and the wreck; or, if the elements were obstinately calm, there might be the gaudy and gilded pleasure barge, in which a Rajah and the beautiful women of his haram were inhaling the sea breeze under canopies of silk and gold, overturned by the unskilfulness of their rowers, and their plunge, and struggle, and dying agony, amid the smile and beauty of the calm ocean, produce one of those contrasts in which his fierce spirit delighted. Or, were even this denied, he could watch the vessels as they floated by, and, from the skiff to the huge trader, be sure that every one bore its freight of woe and crime. There came on the European vessels full of the



passions and crimes of another world,—of its sateless cupidity, remorseless cruelty, its intelligence, all awake and ministrant in the cause of its evil passions, and its very refinement operating as a stimulant to more inventive indulgence, and more systematized vice. He saw them approach to traffic for “gold, and silver, and the souls of men;”—to grasp, with breathless rapacity, the gems and precious produce of those luxuriant climates, and deny the inhabitants the rice that supported their inoffensive existence;—to discharge the load of their crimes, their lust and their avarice, and after ravaging the land, and plundering the natives, depart, leaving behind them famine, despair, and execration; and bearing with them back to Europé, blasted constitutions, inflamed passions, ulcerated hearts, and consciences that could not endure the extinction of a light in their sleeping apartment.

“Such were the objects for which he watched; and one evening, when solicited by Immalee’s incessant questions about the worlds to which the vessels were hastening, or to which they were returning, he gave her a description of the world, after his manner, in a spirit of mingled derision, malignity, and impatient bitterness at the innocence of her curiosity. There was a mixture of fiendish acrimony, biting irony, and fearful truth, in his wild sketch, which was often interrupted by the cries of astonishment, grief, and terror, from his hearer. “They come,” said he, pointing to the European vessels, “from a

world where the only study of the inhabitants is how to increase their own sufferings, and those of others, to the utmost possible degree; and, considering they have only had 4000 years' practice at the task, it must be allowed they are tolerable proficient.—"But is it possible?"—"You shall judge. In aid, doubtless, of this desirable object, they have been all originally gifted with imperfect constitutions and evil passions; and, not to be ungrateful, they pass their lives in contriving how to augment the infirmities of the one, and aggravate the acerbities of the other. They are not like you, Immalee, a being who breathes amid roses, and subsists only on the juices of fruits, and the lymph of the pure element. In order to render their thinking powers more gross, and their spirits more fiery, they devour animals, and torture from abused vegetables a drink, that, without quenching thirst, has the power of extinguishing reason, inflaming passion, and shortening life—the best result of all—for life under such circumstances owes its only felicity to the shortness of its duration."

"Immalee shuddered at the mention of animal food, as the most delicate European would at the mention of a cannibal feast; and while tears trembled in her beautiful eyes, she turned them wistfully on her peacocks with an expression that made the stranger smile. "Some," said he, by way of consolation, "have a taste by no means so sophisticated,—they content themselves at their need with the flesh

of their fellow-creatures ; and as human life is always miserable, and animal life never so, (except from elementary causes), one would imagine this the most humane and salutary way of at once gratifying the appetite, and diminishing the mass of human suffering. But as these people pique themselves on their ingenuity in aggravating the sufferings of their situation, they leave thousands of human beings yearly to perish by hunger and grief, and amuse themselves in feeding on animals, whom, by depriving of existence, they deprive of the only pleasure their condition has allotted them. When they have thus, by unnatural diet and outrageous stimulation, happily succeeded in corrupting infirmity into disease, and exasperating passion into madness, they proceed to exhibit the proofs of their success, with an expertness and consistency truly admirable. They do not, like you, Immalee, live in the lovely independence of nature—lying on the earth, and sleeping with all the eyes of heaven unveiled to watch you—treading the same grass till your light step feels a friend in every blade it presses—and conversing with flowers, till you feel yourself and them children of the united family of nature, whose mutual language of love you have almost learned to speak to each other—no, to effect their purpose, their food, which is of itself poison, must be rendered more fatal by the air they inhale ; and therefore the more civilized crowd all together into a space which their own respiration, and the exhalation of their bodies, renders

pestilential, and which gives a celerity inconceivable to the circulation of disease and mortality. Four thousand of them will live together in a space smaller than the last and lightest colonnade of your young banyan-tree, in order, doubtless, to increase the effects of foetid air, artificial heat, unnatural habits, and impracticable exercise. The result of these judicious precautions is just what may be guessed. The most trifling complaint becomes immediately infectious, and, during the ravages of the pestilence, which this habit generates, ten thousand lives a-day are the customary sacrifice to the habit of living in cities.”—“But they die in the arms of those they love,” said Immalee, whose tears flowed fast at this recital; “and is not that better than even *life* in solitude,—as mine was before I beheld you?”

“The stranger was too intent on his description to heed her. “To these cities they resort nominally for security and protection, but really for the sole purpose to which their existence is devoted,—that of aggravating its miseries by every ingenuity of refinement. For example, those who live in uncontrasted and untantalized misery, can hardly feel it—suffering becomes their habit, and they feel no more jealousy of their situation than the bat, who clings in blind and famishing stupefaction to the cleft of a rock, feels of the situation of the butterfly, who drinks of the dew, and bathes in the bloom of every flower. But the people of the *other worlds* have invented, by means of living in cities, a new and singular mode of aggra-

vating human wretchedness—that of contrasting it with the wild and wanton excess of superfluous and extravagant splendour.”

“Here the stranger had incredible difficulty to make Immalee comprehend how there could be an unequal division of the means of existence; and when he had done his utmost to explain it to her, she continued to repeat, (her white finger on her scarlet lip, and her small foot beating the moss), in a kind of pouting inquietude, “Why should some have more than they can eat, and others nothing to eat?”—“This,” continued the stranger, “is the most exquisite refinement on that art of torture which those beings are so expert in—to place misery by the side of opulence—to bid the wretch who dies for want feed on the sound of the splendid equipages which shake his hovel as they pass, but leave no relief behind—to bid the industrious, the ingenious, and the imaginative, starve, while bloated mediocrity pants from excess—to bid the dying sufferer feel that life might be prolonged by one drop of that exciting liquor, which, wasted, produces only sickness or madness in those whose lives it undermines;—to do this is their principal object, and it is fully attained. The sufferer through whose rags the wind of winter blows, like arrows lodging in every pore—whose tears freeze before they fall—whose soul is as dreary as the night under whose cope his resting-place must be—whose glued and clammy lips are unable to receive the food which famine, lying like a burning coal at his vitals,

craves—and who, amid the horrors of a houseless winter, might prefer its desolation to that of the den that abuses the name of home—without food—without light—where the howlings of the storm are answered by the fiercer cries of hunger—and he must stumble to his murky and strawless nook over the bodies of his children, who have sunk on the floor, not for rest, but despair. Such a being, is he not sufficiently miserable?”

“Immalee’s shudderings were her only answer, (though of many parts of his description she had a very imperfect idea). “No, he is not enough so yet,” pursued the stranger, pressing the picture on her; “let his steps, that know not where they wander, conduct him to the gates of the affluent and the luxurious—let him feel that plenty and mirth are removed from him but by the interval of a wall, and yet more distant than if severed by worlds—let him feel that while *his* world is darkness and cold, the eyes of those within are aching with the blaze of light, and hands relaxed by artificial heat, are soliciting with fans the refreshment of a breeze—let him feel that every groan he utters is answered by a song or a laugh—and let him die on the steps of the mansion, while his last conscious pang is aggravated by the thought, that the price of the hundredth part of the luxuries that lie untasted before heedless beauty and sated epicurism, would have protracted his existence, while it poisons theirs—let him *die of want on the threshold of a banquet-hall*, and then admire with me the in-

genuity that displays itself in this new combination of misery. The inventive activity of the people of the world, in the multiplication of calamity, is inexhaustibly fertile in resources. Not satisfied with diseases and famine, with sterility of the earth, and tempests of the air, they must have laws and marriages, and kings and tax-gatherers, and wars and fetes, and every variety of artificial misery inconceivable to you."

"Immalee, overpowered by this torrent of words, to her unintelligible words, in vain asked a connected explanation of them. The demon of his superhuman misanthropy had now fully possessed him, and not even the tones of a voice as sweet as the strings of David's harp, had power to expel the evil one. So he went on flinging about his fire-brands and arrows, and then saying, "Am I not in sport? These people,"<sup>1</sup> said he, "have made unto themselves kings, that is, beings whom they voluntarily invest with the privilege of draining, by taxation, whatever wealth their vices have left to the rich, and whatever means of subsistence their want has left to the poor, till their extortion is cursed from the castle to the cottage—and this to support a few pampered favourites, who are harnessed by silken reins to the car, which they

<sup>1</sup> As, by a mode of criticism equally false and unjust, the worst sentiments of my worst characters, (from the ravings of Bertram to the blasphemies of Cardonneau), have been represented as *my own*, I must here trespass so far on the patience of the reader as to assure him, that the sentiments ascribed to the stranger are diametrically opposite to mine, and that I have purposely put them into the mouth of an agent of the enemy of mankind.

drag over the prostrate bodies of the multitude. Sometimes exhausted by the monotony of perpetual fruition, which has no parallel even in the monotony of suffering, (for the latter has at least the excitement of hope, which is for ever denied to the former), they amuse themselves by making war, that is, collecting the greatest number of human beings that can be bribed to the task, to cut the throats of a less, equal, or greater number of beings, bribed in the same manner for the same purpose. These creatures have not the least cause of enmity to each other—they do not know, they never beheld each other. Perhaps they might, under other circumstances, wish each other well, as far as human malignity would suffer them; but from the moment they are hired for legalized massacre, hatred is their duty, and murder their delight. The man who would feel reluctance to destroy the reptile that crawls in his path, will equip himself with metals fabricated for the purpose of destruction, and smile to see it stained with the blood of a being, whose existence and happiness he would have sacrificed his own to promote, under other circumstances. So strong is this habit of aggravating misery under artificial circumstances, that it has been known, when in a sea-fight a vessel has blown up, (here a long explanation was owed to Immalee, which may be spared the reader), the people of that world have plunged into the water to save, at the risk of their own lives, the lives of those with whom they were grappling amid fire and blood a moment before,



and whom, though they would sacrifice to their passions, their pride refused to sacrifice to the elements.”—“Oh that is beautiful!—that is glorious!” said Immalee, clasping her white hands; “I could bear all you describe to see that sight!”

“Her smile of innocent delight, her spontaneous burst of high-toned feeling, had the usual effect of adding a darker shade to the frown of the stranger, and a sterner curve to the repulsive contraction of his upper lip, which was never raised but to express hostility or contempt.

“But what do the kings do?” said Immalee, “while they are making men kill each other for nothing?”—“You are ignorant, Immalee,” said the stranger, “very ignorant, or you would not have said it was for *nothing*. Some of them fight for ten inches of barren sand—some for the dominion of the salt wave—some for any thing—and some for nothing—but all for pay and poverty, and occasional excitement, and the love of action, and the love of change, and the dread of home, and the consciousness of evil passions, and the hope of death, and the admiration of the showy dress in which they are to perish. The best of the jest is, they contrive not only to reconcile themselves to these cruel and wicked absurdities, but to dignify them with the most imposing names their perverted language supplies—the names of fame, of glory, of recording memory, and admiring posterity.

“Thus a wretch whom want, idleness, or intemperance, drives to this reckless and heart-withering busi-

ness,—who leaves his wife and children to the mercy of strangers, or to famish, (terms nearly synonymous), the moment he has assumed the blushing badge that privileges massacre, becomes, in the imagination of this intoxicated people, the defender of his country, entitled to her gratitude and to her praise. The idle stripling, who hates the cultivation of intellect, and despises the meanness of occupation, feels, perhaps, a taste for arraying his person in colours as gaudy as the parrot's or the peacock's; and this effeminate propensity is baptised by the prostituted name of the love of glory—and this complication of motives borrowed from vanity and from vice, from the fear of distress, the wantonness of idleness, and the appetite for mischief, finds one convenient and sheltering appellation in the single sound—patriotism. And those beings who never knew one generous impulse, one independent feeling, ignorant of either the principles or the justice of the cause for which they contend, and wholly uninterested in the result, except so far as it involves the concerns of their own vanity, cupidity, and avarice, are, while living, hailed by the infatuated world as its benefactors, and when dead, canonized as its martyrs. He died in his country's cause, is the epitaph inscribed by the rash hand of indiscriminating eulogy on the grave of ten thousand, who had ten thousand different motives for their choice and their fate,—who might have lived to be their country's enemies if they had not *happened* to fall in her defence,—and whose love of their country, if fairly analysed, was, under

its various forms of vanity, restlessness, the love of tumult, or the love of show—purely love of themselves. There let them rest—nothing but the wish to disabuse their idolaters, who prompt the sacrifice, and then applaud the victim they have made, could have tempted me to dwell thus long on beings as mischievous in their lives, as they are insignificant in their death.

“Another amusement of these people, so ingenious in multiplying the sufferings of their destiny, is what they call law. They pretend to find in this a security for their persons and their properties—with how much justice, their own felicitous experience must inform them! Of the security it gives to the latter, judge, Immalee, when I tell you, that you might spend your life in their courts, without being able to prove that those roses you have gathered and twined in your hair were your own—that you might starve for this day’s meal, while proving your right to a property which must incontestibly be yours, on the condition of your being able to fast on a few years, and survive to enjoy it—and that, finally, with the sentiments of all upright men, the opinions of the judges of the land, and the fullest conviction of your own conscience in your favour, you cannot obtain the possession of what you and all feel to be your own, while your antagonist can start an objection, purchase a fraud, or invent a lie. So pleadings go on, and years are wasted, and property consumed, and hearts broken,—and law triumphs. One of its most admir-

able triumphs is in that ingenuity by which it contrives to convert a difficulty into an impossibility, and punish a man for not doing what it has rendered impracticable for him to do.

“When he is unable to pay his debts, it deprives him of liberty and credit, to insure that inability still further; and while destitute alike of the means of subsistence, or the power of satisfying his creditors, he is enabled, by this righteous arrangement, to console himself, at least, with the reflection, that he can injure his creditor as much as he has suffered from him—that certain loss is the reward of immitigable cruelty—and that, while he famishes in prison, the page in which his debt is recorded rots away faster than his body; and the angel of death, with one obliterating sweep of his wing, cancels misery and debt, and presents, grinning in horrid triumph, the release of debtor and debt, signed by a hand that makes the judges tremble on their seats.”—“But they have religion,” said the poor Indian, trembling at this horrible description; “they have that religion which you shewed me—its mild and peaceful spirit—its quietness and resignation—no blood—no cruelty.”—“Yes,—true,” said the stranger, with some reluctance, “they have religion; for in their zeal for suffering, they feel the torments of one world not enough, unless aggravated by the terrors of another. They have such a religion, but what use have they made of it? Intent on their settled purpose of discovering misery wherever it could be traced, and inventing it

where it could not, they have found, even in the pure pages of that book, which, they presume to say, contains their title to peace on earth, and happiness hereafter, a right to hate, plunder, and murder each other. Here they have been compelled to exercise an extraordinary share of perverted ingenuity. The book contains nothing but what is good, and evil must be the minds, and hard the labour of those evil minds, to extort a tinge from it to colour their pretensions withal. But mark, in pursuance of their great object, (the aggravation of general misery), mark how subtilly they have wrought. They call themselves by various names, to excite passions suitable to the names they bear. Thus some forbid the perusal of that book to their disciples, and others assert, that from the exclusive study of its pages alone, can the hope of salvation be learned or substantiated. It is singular, however, that with all their ingenuity, they have never been able to extract a subject of difference from the *essential* contents of that book, to which they all appeal—so they proceed after their manner.

“They never dare to dispute that it contains irresistible injunctions, — that those who believe in it should live in habits of peace, benevolence, and harmony,—that they should love each other in prosperity, and assist each other in adversity. They dare not deny that the spirit that book inculcates and inspires, is a spirit whose fruits are love, joy, peace, long-suffering, mildness, and truth. On these points they never presumed to differ.—They are too plain to be

denied, so they contrive to make matter of difference out of the various habits they wear; and they cut each other's throats for the love of God, on the important subject,<sup>1</sup> whether their jackets should be red or white—or whether their priests should be arrayed in silk ribbons,<sup>2</sup> or white linen,<sup>3</sup> or black household garments<sup>4</sup>—or whether they should immerse their children in water, or sprinkle them with a few drops of it—or whether they should partake of the memorials of the death of him they all profess to love, standing or on their knees—or—— But I weary you with this display of human wickedness and absurdity. One point is plain, they all agree that the language of the book is, "Love one another," while they all translate that language, "Hate one another." But as they can find neither materials or excuse from that book, they search for them in their own minds,—and there they are never at a loss, for human minds are inexhaustible in malignity and hostility; and when they borrow the name of that book to sanction them, the deification of their passions becomes a duty, and their worst impulses are hallowed and practised as virtues."—"Are there no parents or children in these horrible worlds?" said Immalee, turning her tearful eyes on this traducer of humanity; "none that love each other as I loved the tree under which I was first conscious of existence, or the flowers that grew

<sup>1</sup> The Catholics and Protestants were thus distinguished in the wars of the League.

<sup>2</sup> Catholics.

<sup>3</sup> Protestants.

<sup>4</sup> Dissenters.

with me?"—"Parents?—children?" said the stranger; "Oh yes! There are fathers who instruct their sons——" And his voice was lost—he struggled to recover it.

"After a long pause, he said, "There are some kind parents among those sophisticated people."—"And who are they?" said Immalee, whose heart throbbed spontaneously at the mention of kindness.—"Those," said the stranger, with a withering smile, "who murder their children at the hour of their birth, or, by medical art dismiss them before they have seen the light; and, in so doing, they give the only credible evidence of parental affection."

"He ceased, and Immalee remained silent in melancholy meditation on what she had heard. The acrid and searing irony of his language had made no impression on one with whom "speech was truth," and who could have no idea why a circuitous mode of conveying meaning could be adopted, when even a direct one was often attended with difficulty to herself. But she could understand, that he had spoken much of evil and of suffering, names unknown to her before she beheld him, and she turned on him a glance that seemed at once to thank and reproach him for her painful initiation into the mysteries of a new existence. She had, indeed, tasted of the tree of knowledge, and her eyes were opened, but its fruit was bitter to her taste, and her looks conveyed a kind of mild and melancholy gratitude, that would have wrung the heart for giving its first lesson of

pain to the heart of a being so beautiful, so gentle, and so innocent. The stranger marked this blended expression, and exulted.

“He had distorted life thus to her imagination, perhaps with the purpose of terrifying her from a nearer view of it; perhaps in the wild hope of keeping her for ever in this solitude, where he might sometimes see her, and catch, from the atmosphere of purity that surrounded her, the only breeze that floated over the burning desert of his own existence. This hope was strengthened by the obvious impression his discourse had made on her. The sparkling intelligence,—the breathless curiosity,—the vivid gratitude of her former expression,—were all extinguished, and her down cast and thoughtful eyes were full of tears.

“Has my conversation wearied you, Immalee?” said he.—“It has grieved me, yet I wish to listen still,” answered the Indian. “I love to hear the murmur of the stream, though the crocodile may be beneath the waves.”—“Perhaps you wish to encounter the people of this world, so full of crime and misfortune.”—“I do, for it is the world you came from, and when you return to it all will be happy but me.”—“And is it, then, in my power to confer happiness?” said her companion; “is it for this purpose I wander among mankind?” A mingled and indefinable expression of derision, malevolence, and despair, overspread his features, as he added, “You do me too much honour, in devising for me an occupation so mild and so congenial to my spirit.”



“Immalee, whose eyes were averted, did not see this expression, and she replied, “I know not, but you have taught me the joy of grief; before I saw you I only smiled, but since I saw you, I weep, and my tears are delicious. Oh! they are far different from those I shed for the setting sun, or the faded rose! And yet I know not—” And the poor Indian, oppressed by emotions she could neither understand or express, clasped her hands on her bosom, as if to hide the secret of its new palpitations, and, with the instinctive diffidence of her purity, signified the change of her feelings, by retiring a few steps from her companion, and casting on the earth eyes which could contain their tears no longer. The stranger appeared troubled,—an emotion new to himself agitated him for a moment,—then a smile of self-disdain curled his lip, as if he reproached himself for the indulgence of human feeling even for a moment. Again his features relaxed, as he turned to the bending and averted form of Immalee, and he seemed like one conscious of agony of soul himself, yet inclined to sport with the agony of another’s. This union of inward despair and outward levity is not unnatural. Smiles are the legitimate offspring of happiness, but laughter is often the misbegotten child of madness, that mocks its parent to her face. With such an expression he turned towards her, and asked, “But what is your meaning, Immalee?”—A long pause followed this question, and at length the Indian answered, “I know not,” with that natural and

delicious art which teaches the sex to disclose their meaning in words that seem to contradict it. "I know not," means, "I know too well." Her companion understood this, and enjoyed his anticipated triumph. "And why do your tears flow, Immalee?"—"I know not," said the poor Indian, and her tears flowed faster at the question.

"At these words, or rather at these tears, the stranger forgot himself for a moment. He felt that melancholy triumph which the conqueror is unable to enjoy; that triumph which announces a victory over the weakness of others, obtained at the expence of a greater weakness in ourselves. A human feeling, in spite of him, pervaded his whole soul, as he said, in accents of involuntary softness, "What would you have me do, Immalee?" The difficulty of speaking a language that might be at once intelligible and reserved,—that might convey her wishes without betraying her heart,—and the unknown nature of her new emotions, made Immalee falter long before she could answer, "Stay with me,—return not to that world of evil and sorrow.—Here the flowers will always bloom, and the sun be as bright as on the first day I beheld you.—Why will you go back to the world to think and to be unhappy?" The wild and discordant laugh of her companion, startled and silenced her. "Poor girl," he exclaimed, with that mixture of bitterness and commiseration, that at once terrifies and humiliates; "and is this the destiny I am to fulfil?—to listen to the chirping

of birds, and watch the opening of buds? Is this to be my lot?" and with another wild burst of unnatural laughter, he flung away the hand which Immalee had extended to him as she had finished her simple appeal.—"Yes, doubtless, I am well fitted for such a fate, and such a partner. Tell me," he added, with still wilder fierceness, "tell me from what line of my features,—from what accent of my voice,—from what sentiment of my discourse, have you extracted the foundation of a hope that insults me with the view of felicity?" Immalee, who might have replied, "I understand a fury in your words, but not your words," had yet sufficient aid from her maiden pride, and female penetration, to discover that she was rejected by the stranger; and a brief emotion of indignant grief struggled with the tenderness of her exposed and devoted heart. She paused a moment, and then checking her tears, said, in her firmest tones, "Go, then, to your world,—since you wish to be unhappy—go!—Alas! it is not necessary to go there to be unhappy, for I must be so here. Go,—but take with you these roses, for they will all wither when you are gone!—take with you these shells, for I shall no longer love to wear them when you no longer see them!" And as she spoke, with simple, but emphatic action, she untwined from her bosom and hair the shells and flowers with which they were adorned, and threw them at his feet; then turning to throw one glance of proud and melancholy grief at him, she was retiring. "Stay, Immalee,

—stay, and hear me for a moment,” said the stranger ; and he would, at that moment, have perhaps discovered the ineffable and forbidden secret of his destiny, but Immalee, in silence, which her look of profound grief made eloquent, shook sadly her averted head, and departed.

## CHAPTER XVIII

Miseram me omnia terent, et maris sonitus, et scopuli, et solitudo, et sanctitudo Apollinis.

LATIN PLAY.

“MANY days elapsed before the stranger revisited the isle. How he was occupied, or what feelings agitated him in the interval, it would be beyond human conjecture to discover. Perhaps he sometimes exulted in the misery he had inflicted,—perhaps he sometimes pitied it. His stormy mind was like an ocean that had swallowed a thousand wrecks of gallant ships, and now seemed to dally with the loss of a little slender skiff, that could hardly make way on its surface in the profoundest calm. Impelled, however, by malignity, or tenderness, or curiosity, or weariness of artificial life, so vividly contrasted by the unadulterated existence of Immalee, into whose pure elements nothing but flowers and fragrance, the sparkling of the heavens, and the odours of earth, had transfused their essence — or, possibly, by a motive more powerful than all,—*his own will*; which, never analysed, and hardly ever confessed to be the

ruling principle of our actions, governs nine-tenths of them.—He returned to the shore of the haunted isle, the name by which it was distinguished by those who knew not how to classify the new goddess who was supposed to inhabit it, and who were as much puzzled by this new specimen in their theology, as Linnæus himself could have been by a non-descript in botany. Alas ! the varieties in moral botany far exceed the wildest anomalies of those in the natural. However it was, the stranger returned to the isle. But he had to traverse many paths, where human foot but his had never been, and to rend away branches that seemed to tremble at a human touch, and to cross streams into which no foot but his had ever been dipped, before he could discover where Im-malee had concealed herself.

“Concealment, however, was not in her thoughts. When he found her, she was leaning against a rock ; the ocean was pouring its eternal murmur of waters at her feet ; she had chosen the most desolate spot she could find ;—there was neither flower or shrub near her ;—the calcined rocks, the offspring of volcano—the restless roar of the sea, whose waves almost touched her small foot, that seemed by its heedless protrusion at once to court and neglect danger—these objects were all that surrounded her. The first time he had beheld her, she was embowered amid flowers and odours, amid all the glorious luxuries of vegetable and animal nature ; the roses and the peacocks seemed emulous which should

expand their leaves or their plumes, as a shade to that loveliness which seemed to hover between them, alternately borrowing the fragrance of the one, and the hues of the other. Now she stood as if deserted even by nature, whose child she was; the rock was her resting-place, and the ocean seemed the bed where she purposed to rest; she had no shells on her bosom, no roses in her hair—her character seemed to have changed with her feelings; she no longer loved all that is beautiful in nature; she seemed, by an anticipation of her destiny, to make alliance with all that is awful and ominous. She had begun to love the rocks and the ocean, the thunder of the wave, and the sterility of the sand,—awful objects, the incessant recurrence of whose very sound seems intended to remind us of grief and of eternity. Their restless monotony of repetition, corresponds with the beatings of a heart which asks its destiny from the phenomena of nature, and feels the answer is—“Misery.”

“Those who love may seek the luxuries of the garden, and inhale added intoxication from its perfumes, which seem the offerings of nature on that altar which is already erected and burning in the heart of the worshipper;—but let those who *have* loved seek the shores of the ocean, and they shall have their answer too.

“There was a sad and troubled air about her, as she stood so lonely, that seemed at once to express the conflict of her internal emotions, and to reflect

the gloom and agitation of the physical objects around her; for nature was preparing for one of those awful convulsions—one of those abortive throes of desolation, that seems to announce a more perfect wrath to come; and while it blasts the vegetation, and burns up the soil of some visited portion, seems to proclaim in the murmur of its receding thunders, that it will return in that day, when the universe shall pass away as a scroll, and the elements melt with fervent heat, and return to fulfil the dreadful promise, which its partial and initiatory devastation has left incomplete. Is there a peal of thunder that does not mutter a menace, “For *me*, the dissolution of the world is reserved, I depart, but I shall return?” Is there a flash of lightning that does not say, *visibly*, if not audibly, “Sinner, I cannot now penetrate the recesses of your soul; but how will you encounter my glare, when the hand of the judge is armed with me, and my penetrating glance displays you to the view of assembled worlds?”

“The evening was very dark; heavy clouds, rolling on like the forces of an hostile army, obscured the horizon from east to west. There was a bright but ghastly blue in the heaven above, like that in the eye of the dying, where the last forces of life are collected, while its powers are rapidly forsaking the frame, and feeling their extinguishment must shortly be. There was not a breath of air to heave the ocean,—the trees drooped without a whisper to woo their branches or their buds,—the birds had



retired, with that instinct which teaches them to avoid the fearful encounter of the elements, and nestled with cowering wings and drooping heads among their favourite trees. There was not a human sound in the isle ; the very rivulet seemed to tremble at its own tinklings, and its small waves flowed as if a subterranean hand arrested and impeded their motion. Nature, in these grand and terrific operations, seems in some degree to assimilate herself to a parent, whose most fearful denunciations are preceded by an awful silence, or rather to a judge, whose final sentence is *felt* with less horror than the pause that intervenes before it is pronounced.

“Immalee gazed on the awful scene by which she was surrounded, without any emotion derived from physical causes. To her, light and darkness had hitherto been the same ; she loved the sun for its lustre, and the lightning for its transitory brilliancy, and the ocean for its sonorous music, and the tempest for the agitation which it gave to the trees, under whose bending and welcoming shadow she danced, in time kept by the murmur of their leaves, that hung low, as if to crown their votarist. And she loved the night, when all was still, but what she was accustomed to call the music of a thousand streams, that made the stars rise from their beds, to sparkle and nod to that wild melody.

“Such she had been. Now, her eye was intently fixed on the declining light, and the ap-

proaching darkness,—that preternatural gloom, that seems to say to the brightest and most beautiful of the works of God, “Give place to me, thou shalt shine no more.”

“The darkness increased, and the clouds collected like an army that had mustered its utmost force, and stood in obdured and collected strength against the struggling light of heaven. A broad, red, and dusky line of gloomy light, gathered round the horizon, like an usurper watching the throne of an abdicated sovereign, and expanding its portentous circle, sent forth alternately flashes of lightning, pale and red;—the murmur of the sea increased, and the arcades of the banyan-tree, that had struck its patriarchal root not five hundred paces from where Immalee stood, resounded the deep and almost unearthly murmur of the approaching storm through all its colonnades; the primeval trunk rocked and groaned, and the everlasting fibres seemed to withdraw their grasp from the earth, and quiver in air at the sound. Nature, with every voice she could inspire from earth, or air, or water, announced danger to her children.

“That was the moment the stranger chose to approach Immalee; of danger he was insensible, of fear he was unconscious; his miserable destiny had exempted him from both, but what had it left him? No hope—but that of plunging others into his own condemnation. No fear—but that his victim might escape him. Yet with all his diabolical heartless-

ness, he *did* feel some relentings of his human nature, as he beheld the young Indian; her cheek was pale, but her eye was fixed, and her figure, turned from him, (as if she preferred to encounter the tremendous rage of the storm), seemed to him to say, "Let me fall into the hands of God, and not into those of man."

"This attitude, so unintentionally assumed by Immalee, and so little expressive of her real feelings, restored all the malignant energies of the stranger's feelings; the former evil purposes of his heart, and the habitual character of his dark and fiendish pursuit, rushed back on him. Amid this contrasted scene of the convulsive rage of nature, and the passive helplessness of her unsheltered loveliness, he felt a glow of excitement, like that which pervaded him, when the fearful powers of his "charmed life" enabled him to penetrate the cells of a madhouse, or the dungeons of an Inquisition.

"He saw this pure being surrounded by the terrors of nature, and felt a wild and terrible conviction, that though the lightning might blast her in a moment, yet there was a bolt more burning and more fatal, which was wielded by his own hand, and which, if he could aim it aright, must transfix her very soul.

"Armed with all his malignity and all his power, he approached Immalee, armed only with her purity, and standing like the reflected beam of the last ray of light on whose extinction she was gazing. There

was a contrast in her form and her situation, that might have touched any feelings but those of the wanderer.

“The light of her figure shining out amid the darkness that enveloped her,—its undulating softness rendered still softer to the eye by the rock against which it reclined,—its softness, brightness, and flexibility, presenting a kind of playful hostility to the tremendous aspect of nature overcharged with wrath and ruin.

“The stranger approached her unobserved; his steps were unheard amid the rush of the ocean, and the deep, portentous murmur of the elements; but, as he advanced, he heard sounds that perhaps operated on his feelings as the whispers of Eve to her flowers on the organs of the serpent. Both knew their power, and felt their time. Amid the fast approaching terrors of a storm, more terrible than any she had ever witnessed, the poor Indian, unconscious, or perhaps insensible of its dangers, was singing her wild song of desperation and love to the echoes of the advancing storm. Some words of this strain of despair and passion reached the ear of the stranger. They were thus:

“The night is growing dark—but what is that to the darkness that his absence has cast on my soul? The lightnings are glancing round me—but what are they to the gleam of his eye when he parted from me in anger?

“I lived but in the light of his presence—why

should I not die when that light is withdrawn? Anger of the clouds, what have I to fear from you? You may scorch me to dust, as I have seen you scorch the branches of the eternal trees—but the trunk still remained, and my heart will be his for ever.

“Roar on, terrible ocean! thy waves, which I cannot count, can never wash his image from my soul,—thou dashest a thousand waves against a rock, but the rock is unmoved—and so would be my heart amid the calamities of the world with which he threatens me,—whose dangers I never would have known but for him, and whose dangers for him I will encounter.”

“She paused in her wild song, and then renewed it, regardless alike of the terrors of the elements, and the possible presence of one whose subtle and poisonous potency was more fatal than all the elements in their united wrath.

“When we first met, my bosom was covered with roses—now it is shaded with the dark leaves of the ocynum. When he saw me first, the living things all loved me—now I care not whether they love me or not—I have forgot to love them. When he came to the isle every night, I hoped the moon would be bright—now I care not whether she rises or sets, whether she is clouded or bright. Before he came, every thing loved me, and I had more things to love than I could reckon by the hairs of my head—now I feel I can love but one, and that one has deserted

me. Since I have seen him all things have changed. The flowers have not the colours they once had—there is no music in the flow of the waters—the stars do not smile on me from heaven as they did,—and I myself begin to love the storm better than the calm.”

“As she ended her melancholy strain, she turned from the spot where the increasing fury of the storm made it no longer possible for her to stand, and turning, met the gaze of the stranger fixed on her. A suffusion, the most rich and vivid, mantled over her from brow to bosom; she did not utter her usual exclamation of joy at his sight, but, with averted eyes and faltering step, followed him as he pointed her to seek shelter amid the ruins of the pagoda. They approached it in silence; and, amid the convulsions and fury of nature, it was singular to see two beings walk on together without exchanging a word of apprehension, or feeling a thought of danger,—the one armed by despair, the other by innocence. Immalee would rather have sought the shelter of her favourite banyan-tree, but the stranger tried to make her comprehend, that her danger would be much greater there than in the spot he pointed out to her. “Danger!” said the Indian, while a bright and wild smile irradiated her features; “can there be danger when you are near me?”—“Is there, then, no danger in my presence?—few have met me without dreading, and without feeling it too!” and his countenance, as he spoke, grew darker than the heaven at which he

scowled. "Immalee," he added, in a voice still deeper and more thrilling, from the unwonted operation of human emotion in its tones; "Immalee, you cannot be weak enough to believe that I have power of controuling the elements? If I had," he continued, "by the heaven that is frowning at me, the first exertion of my power should be to collect the most swift and deadly of the lightnings that are hissing around us, and transfix you where you stand!"—"Me?" repeated the trembling Indian, her cheek growing paler at his words, and the voice in which they were uttered, than at the redoubling fury of the storm, amid whose pauses she scarce heard them.—"Yes—you—you—lovely as you are, and innocent, and pure, before a fire' more deadly consumes your existence, and drinks your heart-blood—before you are longer exposed to a danger a thousand times more fatal than those with which the elements menace you—the danger of my accursed and miserable presence!"

"Immalee, unconscious of his meaning, but trembling with impassioned grief at the agitation with which he spoke, approached him to soothe the emotion of which she knew neither the name or the cause. Through the fractures of the ruin the red and ragged lightnings disclosed, from time to time, a glimpse of her figure,—her dishevelled hair,—her pallid and appealing look,—her locked hands, and the imploring bend of her slight form, as if she was asking pardon for a crime of which she was unconscious,—and soliciting an interest in griefs not her own. All

around her wild, unearthly, and terrible,—the floor strewn with fragments of stone, and mounds of sand,—the vast masses of ruined architecture, whose formation seemed the work of no human hand, and whose destruction appeared the sport of demons,—the yawning fissures of the arched and ponderous roof, through which heaven darkened and blazed alternately with a gloom that wrapt every thing, or a light more fearful than that gloom.—All around her gave to her form, when it was momentarily visible, a relief so strong and so touching, that it might have immortalized the hand who had sketched her as the embodied presence of an angel who had descended to the regions of woe and wrath,—of darkness and of fire, on a message of reconciliation,—and descended in vain.

“The stranger threw on her, as she bent before him, one of those looks that, but her own, no mortal eye had yet encountered unappalled. Its expression seemed only to inspire a higher feeling of devotedness in the victim. Perhaps an involuntary sentiment of terror mingled itself with that expression, as this beautiful being sunk on her knees before her writhing and distracted enemy; and, by the silent supplication of her attitude, seemed to implore him to have mercy on himself. As the lightnings flashed around her,—as the earth trembled beneath her white and slender feet,—as the elements seemed all sworn to the destruction of every living thing, and marched on from heaven to the accomplishment



of their purpose, with *Væ victis* written and legible to every eye, in the broad unfolded banners of that resplendent and sulphurous light that seemed to display the *day of hell*—the feelings of the devoted Indian seemed concentrated on the ill-chosen object of their idolatry alone. Her graduating attitudes beautifully, but painfully, expressed the submission of a female heart devoted to its object, to his frailties, his passions, and his very crimes. When subdued by the image of power, which the mind of man exercises over that of woman, that impulse becomes irresistibly humiliating. Immalee had at first bowed to conciliate her beloved, and her spirit had taught her frame that first inclination. In her next stage of suffering, she had sunk on her knees, and, remaining at a distance from him, she had trusted to this state of prostration to produce that effect on his heart which those who love always hope *compassion* may produce,—that illegitimate child of love, often more cherished than its parent. In her last efforts she clung to his hand—she pressed her pale lips to it, and was about to utter a few words—her voice failed her, but her fast dropping tears *spoke* to the hand which she held,—and its grasp, which for a moment convulsively returned hers, and then flung it away, answered her.

“The Indian remained prostrate and aghast. “Immalee,” said the stranger, in a struggling voice, “Do you wish me to tell you the feelings with which my presence should inspire you?”—“No—no—no!”

said the Indian, applying her white and delicate hands to her ears, and then clasping them on her bosom; "I feel them too much."—"Hate me—curse me!" said the stranger, not heeding her, and stamping till the reverberation of his steps on the hollow and loosened stones almost contended with the thunder; "hate me, for I hate you—I hate all things that live—all things that are dead—I am myself hated and hateful!"—"Not by me," said the poor Indian, feeling, through the blindness of her tears, for his averted hand. "Yes, by you, if you knew whose I am, and whom I serve." Immalee aroused her newly-excited energies of heart and intellect to answer this appeal. "Who you are, I know not—but I am yours.—Whom you serve, I know not—but him will *I* serve—I will be yours for ever. Forsake me if you will, but when I am dead, come back to this isle, and say to yourself, The roses have bloomed and faded—the streams have flowed and been dried up—the rocks have been removed from their places—and the lights of heaven have altered in their courses,—but there was one who never changed, and she is not here!"

"As she spoke the enthusiasm of passion struggling with grief, she added, "You have told me you possess the happy art of writing thought.—Do not write one thought on my grave, for one word traced by your hand would revive me. Do not weep, for one tear would make me live again, perhaps to draw a tear from you."—"Immalee!" said the stranger.

The Indian looked up, and, with a mingled feeling of grief, amazement, and compunction, beheld him shed tears. The next moment he dashed them away with the hand of despair; and, grinding his teeth, burst into that wild shriek of bitter and convulsive laughter that announces the object of its derision is ourselves.

“Immalee, whose feelings were almost exhausted, trembled in silence at his feet. “Hear me, wretched girl!” he cried in tones that seemed alternately tremulous with malignity and compassion, with habitual hostility and involuntary softness; “hear me! I know the secret sentiment you struggle with better than the innocent heart of which it is the inmate knows it. Suppress, banish, destroy it. Crush it as you would a young reptile before its growth had made it loathsome to the eye, and poisonous to existence!”—“I never crushed even a reptile in my life,” answered Immalee, unconscious that this matter-of-fact answer was equally applicable in another sense. “You love, then,” said the stranger; “but,” after a long and ominous pause, “do you know whom it is you love?”—“You!” said the Indian, with that purity of truth that consecrates the impulse it yields to, and would blush more for the sophistications of art than the confidence of nature; “you! You have taught me to think, to feel, and to weep.”—“And you love me for this?” said her companion, with an expression half irony, half commiseration. “Think, Immalee, for a moment, how unsuitable, how unworthy, is the object of the feelings you lavish on him. A being

unattractive in his form, repulsive in his habits, separated from life and humanity by a gulph impassable ; a disinherited child of nature, who goes about to curse or to tempt his more prosperous brethren ; one who—what withholds me from disclosing all ?”

“At this moment a flash of such vivid and terrific brightness as no human sight could sustain, gleamed through the ruins, pouring through every fissure instant and intolerable light. Immalee, overcome by terror and emotion, remained on her knees, her hands closely clasped over her aching eyes.

“For a few moments that she remained thus, she thought she heard other sounds near her, and that the stranger was answering a voice that spoke to him. She heard him say, as the thunder rolled to a distance, “This hour is mine, not thine—begone, and trouble me not.” When she looked up again, all trace of human emotion was gone from his expression. The dry and burning eye of despair that he fixed on her, seemed never to have owned a tear ; the hand with which he grasped her, seemed never to have felt the flow of blood, or the throb of a pulse ; amid the intense and increasing heat of an atmosphere that appeared on fire, its touch was as cold as that of the dead.

“Mercy !” cried the trembling Indian, as she in vain endeavoured to read a human feeling in those eyes of stone, to which her own tearful and appealing ones were uplifted—“mercy !” And while she uttered the word, she knew not what she deprecated or dreaded.

“The stranger answered not a word, relaxed not a muscle; it seemed as if he felt her not with the hands that grasped her,—as if he saw her not with the eyes that glared fixedly and coldly on her. He bore, or rather dragged, her to the vast arch that had once been the entrance to the pagoda, but which, now shattered and ruinous, resembled more the gulphing yawn of a cavern that harbours the inmates of the desert, than a work wrought by the hands of man, and devoted to the worship of a deity. “You have called for mercy,” said her companion, in a voice that froze her blood even under the burning atmosphere, whose air she could scarce respire. “You have cried for mercy, and mercy you shall have. Mercy has not been dealt to me, but I have courted my horrible destiny, and my reward is just and sure. Look forth, trembler—look forth,—I command thee!” And he stamped with an air of authority and impatience that completed the terror of the delicate and impassioned being who shuddered in his grasp, and felt half-dead at his frown.

“In obedience to his command, she removed the long tresses of her auburn hair, which had vainly swept, in luxuriant and fruitless redundance, the rock on which the steps of him she adored had been fixed. With that mixture of the docility of the child, and the mild submission of woman, she attempted to comply with his demand, but her eyes, filled with tears, could not encounter the withering horrors of the scene before her. She wiped those brilliant eyes

with hairs that were every day bathed in the pure and crystal lymph, and seemed, as she tried to gaze on the desolation, like some bright and shivering spirit, who, for its further purification, or perhaps for the enlargement of the knowledge necessary for its destination, is compelled to witness some evidence of the Almighty's wrath, unintelligible in its first operations, but doubtless salutary in its final results

“Thus looking and thus feeling, Immalee shudderingly approached the entrance of that building, which, blending the ruins of nature with those of art, seemed to announce the power of desolation over both, and to intimate that the primeval rock, untouched and unmodulated by human hands, and thrown upwards perhaps by some volcanic eruption, perhaps deposited there by some meteoric discharge, and the gigantic columns of stone, whose erection had been the work of two centuries,—were alike dust beneath the feet of that tremendous conqueror, whose victories alone are without noise and without resistance, and the progress of whose triumph is marked by tears instead of blood.

“Immalee, as she gazed around her, felt, for the first time, terror at the aspect of nature. Formerly, she had considered all its phenomena as equally splendid or terrific. And her childish, though active imagination, seemed to consecrate alike the sun-light and the storm, to the devotion of a heart, on whose pure altar the flowers and the fires of nature flung their undivided offering.

“But since she had seen the stranger, new emo-

tions had pervaded her young heart. She learned to weep and to fear ; and perhaps she saw, in the fearful aspect of the heavens, the developement of that mysterious terror, which always trembles at the bottom of the hearts of those who dare to love.

“How often does nature thus become an involuntary interpreter between us and our feelings ! Is the murmur of the ocean without a meaning ?—Is the roll of the thunder without a voice ?—Is the blasted spot on which the rage of both has been exhausted without its lesson ?—Do not they all tell us some mysterious secret, which we have in vain searched our hearts for ?—Do we not find in them, an answer to those questions with which we are for ever importuning the mute oracle of our destiny ?—Alas ! how deceitful and inadequate we feel the language of man, after love and grief have made us acquainted with that of nature !—the only one, perhaps, capable of a corresponding sign for those emotions, under which all human expression faints. What a difference between *words without meaning*, and that *meaning without words*, which the sublime phenomena of nature, the rocks and the ocean, the moon and the twilight, convey to those who have “ears to hear.”

“How eloquent of truth is nature in her very silence ! How fertile of reflections amid her profoundest desolations ! But the desolation now presented to the eyes of Immalee, was that which is calculated to cause terror, not reflection. Earth and heaven, the sea and the dry land, seemed mingling

together, and about to replunge into chaos. The ocean, deserting its eternal bed, dashed its waves, whose white surf gleamed through the darkness, far into the shores of the isle. They came on like the crests of a thousand warriors, plumed and tossing in their pride, and, like them, perishing in the moment of victory. There was a fearful inversion of the natural appearance of earth and sea, as if all the barriers of nature were broken, and all her laws reversed.

“The waves deserting their station, left, from time to time, the sands as dry as those of the desert; and the trees and shrubs tossed and heaved in ceaseless agitation, like the waves of a midnight storm. There was no light, but a livid grey that sickened the eye to behold, except when the bright red lightning burst out like the eye of a fiend, glancing over the work of ruin, and closing as it beheld it completed.

“Amid this scene stood two beings, one whose appealing loveliness seemed to have found favour with the elements even in their wrath, and one whose fearless and obdurate eye appeared to defy them. “Immalee,” he cried, “is this a place or an hour to talk of love!—all nature is appalled—heaven is dark—the animals have hid themselves—and the very shrubs, as they wave and shrink, seem alive with terror.”—“It is an hour to implore protection,” said the Indian, clinging to him timidly. “Look up,” said the stranger, while his own fixed and fearless eye seemed to return flash for flash to the baffled and insulted elements; “Look up, and if you cannot



resist the impulses of your heart, let me at least point out a fitter object for them. Love," he cried, extending his arm towards the dim and troubled sky, "love the storm in its might of destruction—seek alliance with those swift and perilous travellers of the groaning air,—the meteor that rends, and the thunder that shakes it! Court, for sheltering tenderness, those masses of dense and rolling cloud,—the baseless mountains of heaven! Woo the kisses of the fiery lightnings, to quench themselves on your smouldering bosom! Seek all that is terrible in nature for your companions and your lover!—woo them to burn and blast you—perish in their fierce embrace, and you will be happier, far happier, than if you lived in mine! *Lived!*—Oh who can be mine and live! Hear me, Immalee!" he cried, while he held her hands locked in his—while his eyes, rivetted on her, sent forth a light of intolerable lustre—while a new feeling of indefinite enthusiasm seemed for a moment to thrill his whole frame, and new-modulate the tone of his nature; "Hear me! If you will be mine, it must be amid a scene like this for ever—amid fire and darkness—amid hatred and despair—amid ——" and his voice swelling to a demoniac shriek of rage and horror, and his arms extended, as if to grapple with the fearful objects of some imaginary struggle, he was rushing from the arch under which they stood, lost in the picture which his guilt and despair had drawn, and whose images he was for ever doomed to behold.

“The slender form that had clung to him was, by this sudden movement, prostrated at his feet; and, with a voice choaked with terror, yet with that perfect devotedness which never issued but from the heart and lip of woman, she answered his frightful questions with the simple demand, “*Will you be there?*”—“Yes!—THERE I must be, and for ever! And *will* you, and *dare* you, be with me?” And a kind of wild and terrible energy nerved his frame, and strengthened his voice, as he spoke and cowered over pale and prostrate loveliness, that seemed in profound and reckless humiliation to court its own destruction, as if a dove exposed its breast, without flight or struggle, to the beak of a vulture. “Well, then,” said the stranger, while a brief convulsion crossed his pale visage, “amid thunder I wed thee—bride of perdition! mine shalt thou be for ever! Come, and let us attest our nuptials before the reeling altar of nature, with the lightnings of heaven for our bed-lights, and the curse of nature for our marriage-benediction!” The Indian shrieked in terror, not at his words, which she did not understand, but at the expression which accompanied them. “Come,” he repeated, “while the darkness yet is witness to our ineffable and eternal union.” Immalee, pale, terrified, but resolute, retreated from him.

“At this moment the storm, which had obscured the heavens and ravaged the earth, passed away with the rapidity common in those climates, where the visitation of an hour does its work of destruction

unimpeded, and is instantly succeeded by the smiling lights and brilliant skies of which mortal curiosity in vain asks the question, Whether they gleam in triumph or in consolation over the mischief they witness ?

“As the stranger spoke, the clouds passed away, carrying their diminished burden of wrath and terror where sufferings were to be inflicted, and terrors to be undergone, by the natives of other climes—and the bright moon burst forth with a glory unknown in European climes. The heavens were as blue as the waves of the ocean, which they seemed to reflect; and the stars burst forth with a kind of indignant and aggravated brilliancy, as if they resented the usurpation of the storm, and asserted the eternal predominance of nature over the casual influences of the storms that obscured her. Such, perhaps, will be the developement of the moral world. We shall be told why we suffered, and for what; but a bright and blessed lustre shall follow the storm, and all shall yet be light.

“The young Indian caught from this object an omen alike auspicious to her imagination and her heart. She burst from him—she rushed into the light of nature, whose glory seemed like the promise of redemption, gleaming amid the darkness of the fall. She pointed to the moon, that sun of the eastern nights, whose broad and brilliant light fell like a mantle of glory over rock and ruin, over tree and flower.

“Wed me by this light,” cried Immalee, “and I will be yours for ever!” And her beautiful countenance reflected the full light of the glorious planet that rode bright through the cloudless heaven—and her white and naked arms, extended towards it, seemed like two pure attesting pledges of the union. “Wed me by this light,” she repeated, sinking on her knees, “and I will be yours for ever!”

“As she spoke, the stranger approached, moved with what feelings no mortal thought can discover. At that moment a trifling phenomenon interfered to alter her destiny. A darkened cloud at that moment covered the moon—it seemed as if the departed storm collected in wrathful haste the last dark fold of its tremendous drapery, and was about to pass away for ever.

“The eyes of the stranger flashed on Immalee the brightest rays of mingled fondness and ferocity. He pointed to the darkness,—“WED ME BY THIS LIGHT!” he exclaimed, “*and you shall be mine for ever and ever!*” Immalee, shuddering at the grasp in which he held her, and trying in vain to watch the expression of his countenance, yet felt enough of her danger to tear herself from him. “Farewell for ever!” exclaimed the stranger, as he rushed from her.

“Immalee, exhausted by emotion and terror, had fallen senseless on the sands that filled the path to the ruined pagoda. He returned—he raised her in his arms—her long dark hair streamed over them

like the drooping banners of a defeated army—her arms sunk down as if declining the support they seemed to implore—her cold and colourless cheek rested on his shoulder.

“Is she dead?” he murmured. “Well, be it so—let her perish—let her be any thing *but mine!*” He flung his senseless burden on the sands, and departed—nor did he ever revisit the island.



“As they paused, the person returned alone, and walking slowly—and they again encountered that singular expression of the features, (the eyes particularly), which no human glance could meet unappalled. Accustomed to look on and converse with all things revolting to nature and to man,—for ever exploring the mad-house, the jail, or the Inquisition,—the den of famine, the dungeon of crime, or the death-bed of despair,—his eyes had acquired a light and a language of their own—a light that none could gaze on, and a language that few dare understand.

“As he passed slowly by them, they observed two others whose attention was apparently fixed on the same singular object, for they stood pointing after him, and speaking to each other with gestures of strong and obvious emotion. The curiosity of the groupe for once overcame the restraint of Spanish reserve, and approaching the two cavaliers, they inquired if the singular personage who had passed was not the subject of their conversation, and the cause of the emotion which appeared to accompany it. The others replied in the affirmative, and hinted at their knowledge of circumstances in the character and history of that extraordinary being that might justify even stronger marks of emotion at his presence. This hint operated still more strongly on their curiosity—the circle of listeners began to deepen. Some of them, it appeared, had, or pretended to have, some information relative to this extraordinary subject. And that kind of desultory conversation commenced, whose

principal ingredients are a plentiful proportion of ignorance, curiosity, and fear, mingled with some small allowance of information and truth;—that conversation, vague, unsatisfactory, but not uninteresting, to which every speaker is welcome to contribute his share of baseless report,—wild conjecture,—anecdote the more incredible the better credited,—and conclusion the more falsely drawn the more likely to carry home conviction.

“The conversation passed very much in language incoherent as this:—“But why, if he be what he is described, what he is known to be,—why is he not seized by order of government?—why is he not immured in the Inquisition?”—“He has been often in the prison of the holy office—oftener, perhaps, than the holy fathers wished,” said another. “But it is a well-known fact, that whatever transpired on his examination, he was liberated almost immediately.” Another added, “That the stranger had been in almost every prison in Europe, but had always contrived either to defeat or defy the power in whose grasp he appeared to be inclosed,—and to be active in his purposes of mischief in the remotest parts of Europe at the moment he was supposed to be expiating them in others.” Another demanded, “If it was known to what country he belonged?” and was answered, “He is said to be a native of Ireland—(a country that no one knows, and which the natives are particularly reluctant to dwell in from various causes)—and his name is Melmoth.” The Spaniard had



great difficulty in expressing the *theta*, unpronounceable by continental lips. "Another, who had an appearance of more intelligence than the rest, added the extraordinary fact of the stranger's being seen in various and distant parts of the earth within a time in which no power merely human could be supposed to traverse them—that his marked and fearful habit was every where to seek out the most wretched, or the most profligate, of the community among which he flung himself—what was his object in seeking them was unknown."—"It is well known," said a deep-toned voice, falling on the ears of the startled listeners like the toll of a strong but muffled bell,— "it is well known both to him and them."

"It was now twilight, but the eyes of all could distinguish the figure of the stranger as he passed; and some even averred they could see the ominous lustre of those eyes which never rose on human destiny but as planets of woe. The groupe paused for some time to watch the retreat of the figure that had produced on them the effect of the torpedo. It departed slowly,—no one offered it molestation.

"I have heard," said one of the company, "that a delicious music precedes the approach of this person when his destined victim,—the being whom he is permitted to tempt or to torture,—is about to appear or to approach him. I have heard a strange tale of such music being heard; and—Holy Mary be our guide! did you ever hear such sounds?"—"Where—what?"—and the astonished listeners took off their

hats, unclasped their mantles, "opened their lips, and drew in their breath," in delicious ecstasy at the sounds that floated round them. "No wonder," said a young gallant of the party, "no wonder that such sounds harbinger the approach of a being so heavenly. She deals with the good spirits; and the blessed saints alone could send such music from above to welcome her." As he spoke, all eyes were turned to a figure, which, though moving among a groupe of brilliant and attractive females, appeared the only one among them on whom the eye could rest with pure and undivided light and love. She did not catch observation—observation caught her, and was proud of its prize.

"At the approach of a large party of females, there was all that anxious and flattering preparation among the cavaliers,—all that eager arrangement of capas, and hats, and plumes,—that characterized the manners of a nation still half-feudal, and always gallant and chivalrous. These preliminary movements were answered by corresponding ones on the part of the fair and fatal host approaching. The creaking of their large fans—the tremulous and purposely-delayed adjustment of their floating veils, whose partial concealment flattered the imagination beyond the most full and ostentatious disclosure of the charms they seemed jealous of—the folds of the mantilla, of whose graceful falls, and complicated manœuvres, and coquettish undulations, the Spanish women know how to avail themselves so well—all

these announced an attack, which the cavaliers, according to the modes of gallantry in that day (1683), were well prepared to meet and parry.

“But, amid the bright host that advanced against them, there was one whose arms were not artificial, and the effect of whose singular and simple attractions made a strong contrast to the studied arrangements of her associates. If her fan moved, it was only to collect air—if she arranged her veil, it was only to hide her face—if she adjusted her mantilla, it was but to hide that form, whose exquisite symmetry defied the voluminous drapery of even that day to conceal it. Men of the loosest gallantry fell back as she approached, with involuntary awe—the libertine who looked on her was half-converted—the susceptible beheld her as one who realized that vision of imagination that must never be embodied here—and the unfortunate as one whose sight alone was consolation—the old, as they gazed on her, dreamt of their youth—and the young for the first time dreamt of love—the only love which deserves the name—that which purity alone can inspire, and perfect purity alone can reward.

“As she mingled among the gay groupes that filled the place, one might observe a certain air that distinguished her from every female there,—not by pretension to superiority, (of that her unequalled loveliness must have acquitted her, even to the vainest of the groupe), but by an untainted, unsophisticated character, diffusing itself over look and

motion, and even thought—turning wildness into grace—giving an emphasis to a single exclamation, that made polished sentences sound trifling—for ever trespassing against etiquette with vivid and fearless enthusiasm, and apologizing the next moment with such timid and graceful repentance, that one doubted whether the offence or the apology were most delightful.

“She presented altogether a singular contrast to the measured tones, the mincing gait, and the organized uniformity of dress, and manner, and look, and feeling, of the females about her. The harness of art was upon every limb and feature from their birth, and its trappings concealed or crippled every movement which nature had designed for graceful. But in the movement of this young female, there was a bounding elasticity, a springiness, a luxuriant and conscious vitality, that made every action the expression of thought; and then, as she shrunk from the disclosure, made it the more exquisite interpreter of feeling. There was around her a mingled light of innocence and majesty, never united but in *her* sex. Men may long retain, and even confirm, the character of power which nature has stamped on their frames, but they very soon forfeit their claim to the expression of innocence.

“Amid the vivid and eccentric graces of a form that seemed like a comet in the world of beauty, bound by no laws, or by laws that she alone understood and obeyed, there was a shade of melancholy,

that, to a superficial observer, seemed transitory and assumed, perhaps as a studied relief to the glowing colours of a picture so brilliant, but which, to other eyes, announced, that with all the energies of intellect occupied,—with all the instincts of sense excited,—the heart had as yet no inmate, and wanted one.

“The groupe who had been conversing about the stranger, felt their attention irresistibly attracted by this object; and the low murmur of their fearful whispers was converted into broken exclamations of delight and wonder, as the fair vision passed them. She had not long done so, when the stranger was seen slowly returning, seeming, as before, known to all, but knowing none. As the female party turned, they encountered him. His emphatic glance selected and centered in one alone. She saw him too, recognized him, and, uttering a wild shriek, fell on the earth senseless.

“The tumult occasioned by this accident, which so many witnessed, and none knew the cause of, for some moments drew off the attention of all from the stranger—all were occupied either in assisting or inquiring after the lady who had fainted. She was borne to her carriage by more assistants than she needed or wished for—and just as she was lifted into it, the voice of some one near her uttered the word “Immalee!” She recognized the voice, and turned, with a look of anguish and a feeble cry, towards the direction from which it proceeded. Those around

her had heard the sound, — but as they did not understand its meaning, or know to whom it was addressed, they ascribed the lady's emotion to indisposition, and hastened to place her in her carriage. It drove away, but the stranger pursued its course with his eyes—the company dispersed, he remained alone — twilight faded into darkness—he appeared not to notice the change—a few still continued lingering at the extremity of the walk to mark him—they were wholly unmarked by him.

“One who remained the longest said, that he saw him use the action of one who wipes away a tear hastily. To his eyes the tear of penitence was denied for ever. Could this have been the tear of passion? If so, how much woe did it announce to its object!

## CHAPTER XX

Oh what was love made for, if 'tis not the same  
Through joy and through torment, through glory and shame !  
I know not, I ask not, what guilt's in thine heart,  
I but know I must love thee, whatever thou art.

MOORE.

“THE next day, the young female who had excited so much interest the preceding evening, was to quit Madrid, to pass a few weeks at a villa belonging to her family, at a short distance from the city. That family, including all the company, consisted of her mother Donna Clara di Aliaga, the wife of a wealthy merchant, who was monthly expected to return from the Indies ; her brother Don Fernan di Aliaga, and several servants ; for these wealthy citizens, conscious of their opulence and formerly high descent, piqued themselves upon travelling with no less ceremony and pompous tardiness than accompanied the progress of a grandee. So the old square-built, lumbering carriage, moved on like a hearse ; the coachman sat fast asleep on the box ; and the six black horses crawled at a pace like the progress of time when he visits affliction. Beside the carriage

rode Fernan di Aliaga and his servants, with umbrellas and huge spectacles ; and within it were placed Donna Clara and her daughter. The interior of this arrangement was the counterpart of its external appearance,—all announced dullness, formality, and withering monotony.

“Donna Clara was a woman of a cold and grave temper, with all the solemnity of a Spaniard, and all the austerity of a bigot. Don Fernan presented that union of fiery passion and saturnic manners not unusual among Spaniards. His dull and selfish pride was wounded by the recollection of his family having been in trade ; and, looking on the unrivalled beauty of his sister as a possible means of his obtaining an alliance with a family of rank, he viewed her with that kind of selfish partiality as little honourable to him who feels it, as to her who was its object.

“And it was amid such beings that the vivid and susceptible Immalee, the daughter of nature, “the gay creature of the elements,” was doomed to wither away the richly-coloured and exquisitely-scented flower of an existence so ungenially transplanted. Her singular destiny seemed to have removed her from a physical wilderness, to place her in a moral one. And, perhaps, her last state was worse than her first.

“It is certain that the gloomiest prospect presents nothing so chilling as the aspect of human faces, in which we try in vain to trace one corresponding



expression ; and the sterility of nature itself is luxury compared to the sterility of human hearts, which communicate all the desolation they feel.

“They had been some time on their way, when Donna Clara, who never spoke till after a long preface of silence, perhaps to give what she said a weight it might otherwise have wanted, said, with oracular deliberation, “Daughter, I hear you fainted in the public walks last night—did you meet with any thing that surprised or terrified you?”—“No, Madam.”—“What, then, could be the cause of the emotion you betrayed at the sight, as I am told—I know nothing—of a personage of extraordinary demeanour?”—“Oh, I cannot, dare not tell!” said Isidora, dropping her veil over her burning cheek. Then the irrepressible ingenuousness of her former nature, rushing over her heart and frame like a flood, she sunk from the cushion on which she sat at Donna Clara’s feet, exclaiming, “Oh, mother, I will tell you all!”—“No!” said Donna Clara, repelling her with a cold feeling of offended pride ; “no!—there is no occasion. I seek no confidence withheld and bestowed in the same breath ; nor do I like these violent emotions—they are unmaidenly. Your duties as a child are easily understood—they are merely perfect obedience, profound submission, and unbroken silence, except when you are addressed by me, your brother, or Father Jose. Surely no duties were ever more easily performed—rise, then, and cease to weep. If your conscience disturbs you, accuse yourself to Father Jose,

who will, no doubt, inflict a penance proportioned to the enormity of your offence. I trust only he will not err on the side of indulgence." And so saying, Donna Clara, who had never uttered so long a speech before, reclined back on her cushion, and began to tell her beads with much devotion, till the arrival of the carriage at its destination awoke her from a profound and peaceful sleep.

"It was near noon, and dinner in a cool low apartment near the garden awaited only the approach of Father Jose, the confessor. He arrived at length. He was a man of an imposing figure, mounted on a stately mule. His features, at first view, bore strong traces of thought; but, on closer examination, those traces seemed rather the result of physical conformation, than of any intellectual exercise. The channel was open, but the stream had not been directed there. However, though defective in education, and somewhat narrow in mind, Father Jose was a good man, and meant well. He loved power, and he was devoted to the interests of the Catholic church; but he had frequently doubts, (which he kept to himself), of the absolute necessity of celibacy, and he felt (strange effect!) a chill all over him when he heard of the fires of an *auto da fe*. Dinner was concluded; the fruit and wine, the latter untasted by the females, were on the table,—the choicest of them placed before Father Jose,—when Isidora, after a profound reverence to her mother and the priest, retired, as usual, to her apartment. Donna Clara turned to the con-

fessor with a look that demanded to be answered. "It is her hour for siesta," said the priest, helping himself to a bunch of grapes. "No, Father, no!" said Donna Clara sadly; "her maid informs me she does not retire to sleep. She was, alas! too well accustomed to that burning climate where she was lost in her infancy, to feel the heat as a Christian should. No, she retires neither to pray or sleep, after the devout custom of Spanish women, but, I fear, to"— "To do what?" said the priest, with horror in his voice—"To think, I fear," said Donna Clara; "for often I observe, on her return, the traces of tears on her face. I tremble, Father, lest those tears be shed for that heathen land, that region of Satan, where her youth was past."—"I'll give her a penance," said Father Jose, "that will save her the trouble of shedding tears on the score of memory at least—these grapes are delicious."—"But, Father," pursued Donna Clara, with all the weak but restless anxiety of a superstitious mind, "though you have made me easy on that subject, I still am wretched. Oh, Father, how she will talk sometimes!—like a creature self-taught, that needed neither director or confessor but her own heart."—"How!" exclaimed Father Jose, "need neither confessor or director!—she must be beside herself."—"Oh, Father," continued Donna Clara, "she will say things in her mild and unanswerable manner, that, armed with all my authority, I"— "How—how is that?" said the priest, in a tone of severity—"does she deny any of

the tenets of the holy Catholic church?"—"No! no! no!" said the terrified Donna Clara crossing herself. "How then?"—"Why, she speaks in a manner in which I never heard you, reverend Father, or any of the reverend brethren, whom my devotion to the holy church has led me to hear, speak before. It is in vain I tell her that true religion consists in hearing mass—in going to confession—in performing penance—in observing the fasts and vigils—in undergoing mortification and abstinence—in believing all that the holy church teaches—and hating, detesting, abhorring, and execrating——" "Enough, daughter—enough," said Father Jose; "there can be no doubt of the orthodoxy of your creed?"—"I trust not, holy Father," said the anxious Donna Clara. "I were an infidel to doubt it," interposed the priest; "I might as well deny this fruit to be exquisite, or this glass of Malaga to be worthy the table of his Holiness the Pope, if he feasted all the Cardinals. But how, daughter, as touching the supposed or apprehended defalcations in Donna Isidora's creed?"—"Holy Father, I have already explained my own religious sentiments."—"Yes—yes—we have had enough of them; now for your daughter's."—"She will sometimes say," said Donna Clara, bursting into tears—"she will say, but never till greatly urged, that religion ought to be a system whose spirit was universal love. Do you understand any thing of that, Father?"—"Humph—humph!"—"That it must be something that bound all who professed it to habits

of benevolence, gentleness, and humility, under every difference of creed and of form.”—“Humph—humph!”—“Father,” said Donna Clara, a little piqued at the apparent indifference with which Father Jose listened to her communications, and resolved to rouse him by some terrific evidence of the truth of her suspicions, “Father, I have heard her dare to express a hope that the heretics in the train of the English ambassador might not be everlastingly”—— “Hush!—I must not hear such sounds, or it might be my duty to take severer notice of these lapses. However, daughter,” continued Father Jose, “thus far I will venture for your consolation. As sure as this fine peach is in my hand—another, if you please—and as sure as I shall finish this other glass of Malaga”—here a long pause attested the fulfilment of the pledge—“so sure”—and Father Jose turned the inverted glass on the table—“Madonna Isidora has—has the elements of a Christian in her, however improbable it may seem to you—I swear it to you by the habit I wear;—for the rest, a little penance—a——I shall consider of it. And now, daughter, when your son Don Fernan has finished his siesta,—as there is no reason to suspect him of retiring to *think*,—please to inform him I am ready to continue the game of chess which we commenced four months ago. I have pushed my pawn to the last square but one, and the next step gives me a queen.”—“Has the game continued so long?” said Donna Clara. “Long!” repeated the priest, “Aye, and may continue much longer—we

have never played more than three hours a-day on an average."

"He then retired to sleep, and the evening was passed by the priest and Don Fernan, in profound silence at their chess—by Donna Clara, in silence equally profound, at her tapestry—and by Isidora at the casement, which the intolerable heat had compelled them to leave open, in gazing at the lustre of the moon, and inhaling the odour of the tube-rose, and watching the expanding leaves of the night-blowing cereus. The physical luxuries of her former existence seemed renewed by these objects. The intense blue of the heavens, and the burning planet that stood in sole glory in their centre, might have vied with all that lavish and refulgent opulence of light in which nature arrays an Indian night. Below, too, there were flowers and fragrance; colours, like veiled beauty, mellowed, not hid; and dews that hung on every leaf, trembling and sparkling like the tears of spirits, that wept to take leave of the flowers.

"The breeze, indeed, though redolent of the breath of the orange blossom, the jasmine, and the rose, had not the rich and balmy odour that scents the Indian air by night.

*Ενθα νησον μακαρων Ανραι περιπνεουσιν.*

"Except this, what was not there that might not renew the delicious dream of her former existence, and make her believe herself again the queen of that fairy isle?—One image was wanting—an image whose

absence made that paradise of islands, and all the odorous and flowery luxury of a moonlight garden in Spain, alike deserts to her. In her heart alone could she hope to meet that image,—to herself alone did she dare to repeat his name, and those wild and sweet songs of his country<sup>1</sup> which he had taught her in his happier moods. And so strange was the contrast between her former and present existence,—so subdued was she by constraint and coldness,—so often had she been told that every thing she did, said, or thought, was wrong,—that she began to yield up the evidences of her senses, to avoid the perpetual persecutions of teasing and imperious mediocrity, and considered the appearance of the stranger as one of those visions that formed the trouble and joy of her dreamy and illusive existence.

“I am surprised, sister,” said Fernan, whom Father Jose’s gaining his queen had put in unusually bad humour—“I am surprised that you never busy yourself, as young maidens use, at your needle, or in some quaint niceties of your sex.”—“Or in reading some devout book,” said Donna Clara, raising her eyes one moment from her tapestry, and then dropping them again; “there is the legend of that<sup>2</sup> Polish saint, born, like *her*, in a land of darkness, yet chosen to be a vessel—I have forgot his name, reverend Father.”

<sup>1</sup> Ireland.

<sup>2</sup> I have read the legend of this Polish saint, which is circulated in Dublin, and find recorded among the indisputable proofs of his vocation, that he infallibly swooned if an indecent expression was uttered in his presence—*when in his nurse’s arms!*

—“Check to the king,” said Father Jose in reply. “You regard nothing but watching a few flowers, or hanging over your lute, or gazing at the moon,” continued Fernan, vexed alike at the success of his antagonist and the silence of Isidora. “She is eminent in alms-deeds and works of charity,” said the good-natured priest. “I was summoned to a miserable hovel near your villa, Madonna Clara, to a dying sinner, a beggar rotting on rotten straw!”—“Jesu!” cried Donna Clara with involuntary horror, “I washed the feet of thirteen beggars, on my knees in my father’s hall, the week before my marriage with her honoured father, and I never could abide the sight of a beggar since.”—“Associations are sometimes indelibly strong,” said the priest drily;—then he added, “I went as was my duty, but your daughter was there before me. She had gone uncalled, and was uttering the sweetest words of consolation from a homily, which a certain poor priest, who shall be nameless, had lent her from his humble store.”

“Isidora blushed at this anonymous vanity, while she mildly smiled or wept at the harassings of Don Fernan, and the heartless austerity of her mother. “I heard her as I entered the hovel; and, by the habit I wear, I paused on the threshold with delight. Her first words were——Check-mate!” he exclaimed, forgetting his homily in his triumph, and pointing, with appealing eye, and emphatic finger, to the desperate state of his adversary’s king. “That was a very extraordinary exclamation!” said the literal



Donna Clara, who had never raised her eyes from her work.—“I did not think my daughter was so fond of chess as to burst into the house of a dying beggar with such a phrase in her mouth.”—“It was I said it, Madonna,” said the priest, reverting to his game, on which he hung with soul and eye intent on his recent victory. “Holy saints!” said Donna Clara, still more and more perplexed, “I thought the usual phrase on such occasions was *pax vobiscum*, or”—— Before Father Jose could reply, a shriek from Isidora pierced the ears of every one. All gathered round her in a moment, reinforced by four female attendants and two pages, whom the unusual sound had summoned from the antichamber. Isidora had not fainted; she still stood among them pale as death, speechless, her eye wandering round the groupe that encircled her, without seeming to distinguish them. But she retained that presence of mind which never deserts woman where a secret is to be guarded, and she neither pointed with finger, or glanced with eye, towards the casement, where the cause of her alarm had presented itself. Pressed with a thousand questions, she appeared incapable of answering them, and, declining assistance, leaned against the casement for support.

“Donna Clara was now advancing with measured step to proffer a bottle of curious essences, which she drew from a pocket of a depth beyond calculation, when one of the female attendants, aware of her favourite habits, proposed reviving her by the scent

of the flowers that clustered round the frame of the casement; and collecting a handful of roses, offered them to Isidora. The sight and scent of these beautiful flowers, revived the former associations of Isidora; and, waving away her attendant, she exclaimed, "There are no roses like those which surrounded me when he beheld me first!"—"He!—who, daughter?" said the alarmed Donna Clara. "Speak, I charge you, sister," said the irritable Fernan, "to whom do you allude?"—"She raves," said the priest, whose habitual penetration discovered there was a secret,—and whose professional jealousy decided that no one, not mother or brother, should share it with him; "she raves—ye are to blame—forebear to hang round and to question her. Madonna, retire to rest, and the saints watch round your bed!" Isidora, bending thankfully for this permission, retired to her apartment; and father Jose for an hour appeared to contend with the suspicious fears of Donna Clara, and the sullen irritability of Fernan, merely that he might induce them, in the heat of controversy, to betray all they knew or dreaded, that he might strengthen his own conjectures, and establish his own power by the discovery.

*"Scire volunt secreta domus, et inde timeri."*

And this desire is not only natural but necessary, in a being from whose heart his profession has torn every tie of nature and of passion; and if it generates malignity, ambition, and the wish for mis-

chief, it is the system, not the individual, we must blame.

“Madonna,” said the Father, “you are always urging your zeal for the Catholic church—and you, Senhor, are always reminding me of the honour of your family—I am anxious for both—and how can the interests of both be better secured than by Donna Isidora taking the veil?”—“The wish of my soul!” cried Donna Clara, clasping her hands, and closing her eyes, as if she witnessed her daughter’s apotheosis. “I will never hear of it, Father,” said Fernan; “my sister’s beauty and wealth entitle *me* to claim alliance with the first families in Spain—their baboon shapes and copper-coloured visages might be redeemed for a century by such a graft on the stock, and the blood of which they boast would not be impoverished by a transfusion of the *aurum potabile* of ours into it.”—“You forget, son,” said the priest, “the extraordinary circumstances attendant on the early part of your sister’s life. There are many of our Catholic nobility who would rather see the black blood of the banished Moors, or the proscribed Jews, flow in the veins of their descendants, than that of one who”—— Here a mysterious whisper drew from Donna Clara a shudder of distress and consternation, and from her son an impatient motion of angry incredulity. “I do not credit a word of it,” said the latter; “you wish that my sister should take the veil, and therefore you credit and circulate the monstrous invention.”—“Take heed, son, I con-

jure you," said the trembling Donna Clara. "Take you heed, Madam, that you do not sacrifice your daughter to an unfounded and incredible fiction."—"Fiction!" repeated Father Jose—"Senhor, I forgive your illiberal reflections on me,—but let me remind you, that the same immunity will not be extended to the insult you offer to the Catholic faith."—"Reverend Father," said the terrified Fernan, "the Catholic church has not a more devoted and unworthy professor on earth than myself."—"I do believe the latter," said the priest. "You admit all that the holy church teaches to be irrefragably true?"—"To be sure I do."—"Then you must admit that the islands in the Indian seas are particularly under the influence of the devil?"—"I do, if the church requires me so to believe."—"And that he possessed a peculiar sway over that island where your sister was lost in her infancy?"—"I do not see how that follows," said Fernan, making a sudden stand at this premise of the Sorites. "Not see how that follows!" repeated Father Jose, crossing himself;

"Excæcavit oculos eorum ne viderent."

But why waste I my Latin and logic on thee, who art incapable of both? Mark me, I will use but one unanswerable argument, the which whoso gainsayeth is a—gainsayer—that's all. The Inquisition at Goa knows the truth of what I have asserted, and who will dare deny it now?"—"Not I!—not I!" exclaimed Donna Clara; "nor, I am sure, will this

stubborn boy. Son, I adjure you, make haste to believe what the reverend Father has told you.”—“I am believing as fast as I can,” answered Don Fernan, in the tone of one who is reluctantly swallowing a distasteful mess; “but my faith will be choaked if you don’t allow it time to swallow. As for digestion,” he muttered, “let that come when it pleases God.”—“Daughter,” said the priest, who well knew the *mollia tempora fandi*, and saw that the sullen and angry Fernan could not well bear more at present; “daughter, it is enough—we must lead with gentleness those whose steps find stumbling-blocks in the paths of grace. Pray with me, daughter, that your son’s eyes may yet be opened to the glory and felicity of his sister’s vocation to a state where the exhaustless copiousness of divine benignity places the happy inmates above all those mean and mundane anxieties, those petty and local wants, which——Ah!—hem——verily I feel some of those wants myself at this moment. I am hoarse with speaking; and the intense heat of this night hath so exhausted my strength, that methinks the wing of a partridge would be no unseasonable refreshment.”

“At a sign from Donna Clara, a salver with wine appeared, and a partridge that might have provoked the French prelate to renew his meal once more, spite of his horror of *toujours perdrix*. “See, daughter, see how much I am exhausted in this distressing controversy—well may I say, the zeal of thine house hath eaten me up.”—“Then you and the zeal of the

house will soon be *quit*," muttered Fernan as he retired. And drawing the folds of his mantle over his shoulder, he threw a glance of wonder at the happy facility with which the priest discussed the wings and breast of his favourite bird,—whispering alternately words of admonition to Donna Clara, and muttering something about the omission of pimento and lemon.

"Father," said Don Fernan, stalking back from the door, and fronting the priest—"Father, I have a favour to ask of you."—"Glad, were it in my power to comply with it," said Father Jose, turning over the skeleton of the fowl; "but you see here is only the thigh, and that somewhat bare."—"It is not of that I speak or think, reverend Father," said Fernan, with a smile; "I have but to request, that you will not renew the subject of my sister's vocation till the return of my father."—"Certainly not, son, certainly not. Ah! you know the time to ask a favour—you know I never could refuse you at a moment like this, when my heart is warmed, and softened, and expanded, by—by—by the evidences of your contrition and humiliation, and all that your devout mother, and your zealous spiritual friend, could hope or wish for. In truth, it overcomes me—these tears—I do not often weep but on occasions like these, and then I weep abundantly, and am compelled to recruit my lack of moisture thus."—"Fetch more wine," said Donna Clara.—The order was obeyed.—"Good night, Father," said Don Fernan.—"The saints watch round

you, my son! Oh I am exhausted!—I sink in this struggle! The night is hot, and requires wine to slake my thirst—and wine is a provocative, and requires food to take away its deleterious and damnable qualities—and food, especially partridge, which is a hot and stimulative nutritive, requires drink again to absorb or neutralize its exciting qualities. Observe me, Donna Clara—I speak as to the learned. There is stimulation, and there is absorption; the causes of which are manifold, and the effects such as—I am not bound to tell you at present.”—“Reverend Father,” said the admiring Donna Clara, not guessing, in the least, from what source all this eloquence flowed, “I trespassed on your time merely to ask a favour also.”—“Ask ‘and ’tis granted,” said Father Jose, with a protrusion of his foot as proud as that of Sixtus himself. “It is merely to know, will not all the inhabitants of those accursed Indian isles be damned everlastingly?”—“Damned everlastingly, and without doubt,” returned the priest. “Now my mind is easy,” rejoined the lady, “and I shall sleep in peace to-night.”

“Sleep, however, did not visit her so soon as she expected, for an hour after she knocked at Father Jose’s door, repeating, “Damned to all eternity, Father, did you not say?”—“Be damned to all eternity!” said the priest, tossing on his feverish bed, and dreaming, in the intervals of his troubled sleep, of Don Fernan coming to confession with a drawn sword, and Donna Clara with a bottle of Xeres

in her hand, which she swallowed at a draught, while his parched lips were gaping for a drop in vain,—and of the Inquisition being established in an island off the coast of Bengal, and a huge partridge seated with a cap on at the end of a table covered with black, as chief Inquisitor,—and various and monstrous chimeras, the abortive births of repletion and indigestion.

“Donna Clara, catching only the last words, returned to her apartment with light step and gladdened heart, and, full of pious consolation, renewed her devotions before the image of the virgin in her apartment, at each side of whose niche two wax tapers were burning, till the cool morning breeze made it possible for her to retire with some hope of rest.

“Isidora, in her apartment, was equally sleepless; and she, too, had prostrated herself before the sacred image, but with different thoughts. Her feverish and dreamy existence, composed of wild and irreconcilable contrasts between the forms of the present, and the visions of the past,—the difference between all that she felt within, and all that she saw around her,—between the impassioned life of recollection, and the monotonous one of reality,—was becoming too much for a heart bursting with undirected sensibilities, and a head giddy from vicissitudes that would have deeply tried much firmer faculties.

“She remained for some time repeating the usual number of ave’s, to which she added the litany of the



Virgin, without any corresponding impulses of solace or illumination, till at length, feeling that her prayers were not the expressions of her heart, and dreading this heterodoxy of the heart more than the violation of the ritual, she ventured to address the image of the Virgin in language of her own.

“Mild and beautiful Spirit!” she cried, prostrating herself before the figure—“you whose lips alone have smiled on me since I reached your Christian land,—you whose countenance I have sometimes imagined to belong to those who dwelt in the stars of my own Indian sky,—hear me, and be not angry with me! Let me lose all feeling of my present existence, or all memory of the past! Why do my former thoughts return? They once made me happy, now they are thorns in my heart! Why do they retain their power since their nature is altered? I cannot be what I was—Oh, let me then no longer remember it! Let me, if possible, see, feel, and think as those around me do! Alas! I feel it is much easier to descend to their level than to raise them to mine. Time, constraint, and dullness, may do much for me, but what time could ever operate such a change on them! It would be like looking for the pearls at the bottom of the stagnant ponds which art has dug in their gardens. No, mother of the Deity! divine and mysterious woman, no!—they never shall see another throb of my burning heart. Let it consume in its own fires before a drop of their cold compassion extinguishes them! Mother

divine! are not burning hearts, then, worthiest of thee?—and does not the love of nature assimilate itself to the love of God! True, we may love without religion, but can we be religious without love? Yet, mother divine! dry up my heart, since there is no longer a channel for its streams to flow through!—or turn all those streams into the river, narrow and cold, that holds its course on to eternity! Why should I think or feel, since life requires only duties that no feeling suggests, and apathy that no reflection disturbs? Here let me rest!—it is indeed the end of enjoyment, but it is also the end of suffering; and a thousand tears are a price too dear for the single smile which is sold for them in the commerce of life. Alas! it is better to wander in perpetual sterility than to be tortured with the remembrance of flowers that have withered, and odours that have died for ever.” Then a gush of uncontrollable emotion overwhelming her, she again bowed before the Virgin. “Yes, help me to banish every image from my soul but his—his alone! Let my heart be like this lonely apartment, consecrated by the presence of one sole image, and illuminated only by that light which affection kindles before the object of its adoration, and worships it by for ever!”

“In an agony of enthusiasm she continued to kneel before the image; and when she rose, the silence of her apartment, and the calm smile of the celestial figure, seemed at once a contrast and a reproach to this excess of morbid indulgence. That

smile appeared to her like a frown. It is certain, that in agitation we can feel no solace from features that express only profound tranquillity. We would rather wish corresponding agitation, even hostility—any thing but a calm that neutralizes and absorbs us. It is the answer of the rock to the wave—we collect, foam, dash, and disperse ourselves against it, and retire broken, shattered, and murmuring to the echoes of our disappointment.

“From the tranquil and hopeless aspect of the divinity, smiling on the misery it neither consoles or relieves, and intimating in that smile the profound and pulseless apathy of inaccessible elevation, coldly hinting that humanity must cease to be, before it can cease to suffer—from this the sufferer rushed for consolation to nature, whose ceaseless agitation seems to correspond with the vicissitudes of human destiny and the emotions of the human heart—whose alternation of storms and calms,—of clouds and sun-light,—of terrors and delights—seems to keep a kind of mysterious measure of ineffable harmony with that instrument whose chords are doomed alternately to the thrill of agony and rapture, till the hand of death sweeps over all the strings, and silences them for ever.—With such a feeling, Isidora leaned against her casement, gasped for a breath of air, which the burning night did not grant, and thought how, on such a night in her Indian isle, she could plunge into the stream shaded by her beloved tamarind, or even venture amid the still and silvery waves of the ocean,

laughing at the broken beams of the moonlight, as her light form dimpled the waters—snatching with smiling delight the brilliant, tortuous, and enamelled shells that seemed to woo her white footsteps as she turned to the shore. Now all was different. The duties of the bath had been performed, but with a parade of soaps, perfumes, and, above all, attendants, who, though of her own sex, gave Isidora an unspeakable degree of disgust at the operation. The sponges and odours sickened her unsophisticated senses, and the presence of another human being seemed to close up every pore.

“She had felt no refreshment from the bath, or from her prayers—she sought it at her casement, but there also in vain. The moon was as bright as the sun of colder climates, and the heavens were all in a blaze with her light. She seemed like a gallant vessel ploughing the bright and trackless ocean alone, while a thousand stars burned in the wake of her quiet glory, like attendant vessels pursuing their course to undiscovered worlds, and pointing them out to the mortal eye that lingered on their course, and loved their light.

“Such was the scene above, but what a contrast to the scene below! The glorious and unbounded light fell on an inclosure of stiff parterres, cropped myrtles and orange-trees in tubs, and quadrangular ponds, and bowers of trellis-work, and nature tortured a thousand ways, and indignant and repulsive under her tortures every way.

“Isidora looked and wept. Tears had now become her language when alone—it was a language she dared not utter before her family. Suddenly she saw one of the moonlight alleys darkened by an approaching figure. It advanced—it uttered her name—the name she remembered and loved—the name of Immalee! “Ah!” she exclaimed, leaning from the casement, “is there then one who recognizes me by that name?”—“It is only by that name I can address you,” answered the voice of the stranger—“I have not yet the honour of being acquainted with the name your Christian friends have given you.”—“They call me Isidora, but do you still call me Immalee. But how is it,” she added in a trembling voice,—her fears for his safety overcoming all her sudden and innocent joy at his sight—“how is it that you are here?—here, where no human being is ever beheld but the inmates of the mansion?—how did you cross the garden wall?—how did you come from India? Oh! retire for your own safety! I am among those whom I cannot trust or love. My mother is severe—my brother is violent. Oh! how did you obtain entrance into the garden?—How is it,” she added in a broken voice, “that you risk so much to see one whom you have forgotten so long?”—“Fair Neophyte, beautiful Christian,” answered the stranger, with a diabolical sneer, “be it known to you that I regard bolts, and bars, and walls, as much as I did the breakers and rocks of your Indian isle—that I can go where, and retire when I please, without

leave asked or taken of your brother's mastiffs, or Toledos, or spring-guns, and in utter defiance of your mother's advanced guard of duennas, armed in spectacles, and flanked with a double ammunition of rosaries, with beads as large as——" "Hush!—hush!—do not utter such impious sounds—I am taught to revere those holy things. But is it you?—and did I indeed see you last night, or was it a thought such as visits me in dreams, and wraps me again in visions of that beautiful and blessed isle where first I——Oh that I never had seen you!"—"Lovely Christian! be reconciled to your horrible destiny. You saw me last night—I crossed your path twice when you were sparkling among the brightest and most beautiful of all Madrid. It was me you saw—I rivetted your eye—I transfixed your slender frame as with a flash of lightning—you fell fainting and withered under my burning glance. It was me you saw—me, the disturber of your angelical existence in that isle of paradise—the hunter of your form and your steps, even amid the complicated and artificial tracks in which you have been concealed by the false forms of the existence you have embraced!"—"Embraced!—Oh no! they seized on me—they dragged me here—they made me a Christian. They told me all was for my salvation, for my happiness here and hereafter—and I trust it will, for I have been so miserable ever since, that I ought to be happy somewhere."—"Happy," repeated the stranger with his withering sneer—"and are you not happy now?"

The delicacy of your exquisite frame is no longer exposed to the rage of the elements—the fine and feminine luxury of your taste is solicited and indulged by a thousand inventions of art—your bed is of down—your chamber hung with tapestry. Whether the moon be bright or dark, six wax tapers burn in your chamber all night. Whether the skies be bright or cloudy,—whether the earth be clothed with flowers, or deformed with tempests,—the art of the limner has surrounded you with “a new heaven and a new earth;” and you may bask in suns that never set, while the heavens are dark to other eyes,—and luxuriate amid landscapes and flowers, while half your fellow-creatures are perishing amid snows and tempests!” (Such was the overflowing acrimony of this being, that he could not speak of the beneficence of nature, or the luxuries of art, without interweaving something that seemed like a satire on, or a scorn of both.) “You also have intellectual beings to converse with instead of the chirpings of loxias, and the chatterings of monkeys.”—“I have not found the conversation I encounter much more intelligible or significant,” murmured Isidora, but the stranger did not appear to hear her. “You are surrounded by every thing that can flatter the senses, intoxicate the imagination, or expand the heart. All these indulgences must make you forget the voluptuous but unrefined liberty of your former existence.”—“The birds in my mother’s cages,” said Isidora, “are for ever pecking at their

gilded bars, and trampling on the clear seeds and limpid water they are supplied with—would they not rather rest in the mossy trunk of a doddered oak, and drink of whatever stream they met, and be at liberty, at all the risk of poorer food and fouler drink—would they not rather do any thing than break their bills against gilded wires?”—“Then you do not feel your new existence in this Christian land so likely to surfeit you with delight as you once thought? For shame, Immalee—shame on your ingratitude and caprice! Do you remember when from your Indian isle you caught a glimpse of the Christian worship, and were entranced at the sight?”—“I remember all that ever passed in that isle. My life formerly was all anticipation,—now it is all retrospection. *The life of the happy is all hopes,—that of the unfortunate all memory.* Yes, I remember catching a glimpse of that religion so beautiful and pure; and when they brought me to a Christian land, I thought I should have found them all Christians.”—“And what did you find them, then, Immalee?”—“Only Catholics.”—“Are you aware of the danger of the words you utter? Do you know that in this country to hint a doubt of Catholicism and Christianity being the same, would consign you to the flames as a heretic incorrigible? Your mother, so lately known to you as a mother, would bind your hands when the covered litter came for its victim; and your father, though he has never yet beheld you, would buy with his last ducat the faggots that were to consume you to ashes;



and all your relations in their gala robes would shout their hallelujahs to your dying screams of torture. Do you know that the Christianity of these countries is diametrically opposite to the Christianity of that world of which you caught a gleam, and which you may see recorded in the pages of your Bible, if you are permitted to read it?"

"Isidora wept, and confessed she had not found Christianity what she had at first believed it; but with her wild and eccentric ingenuousness, she accused herself the next moment of her confession,—and she added, "I am so ignorant in this new world,—I have so much to learn,—my senses so often deceive me,—and my habits and perceptions so different from what they ought to be—I mean from what those around me are—that I should not speak or think but as I am taught. Perhaps, after some years of instruction and suffering, I may be able to discover that happiness cannot exist in this new world, and Christianity is not so remote from Catholicism as it appears to me now."—"And have you not found yourself happy in this new world of intelligence and luxury?" said Melmoth, in a tone of involuntary softness. "I have at times."—"What times?"—"When the weary day was over, and my dreams bore me back to that island of enchantment. Sleep is to me like some bark rowed by visionary pilots, that wafts me to shores of beauty and blessedness,—and all night long I revel in my dreams with spirits. Again I live among flowers and odours—a

thousand voices sing to me from the brooks and the breezes—the air is all alive and eloquent with invisible melodists—I walk amid a breathing atmosphere, and living and loving inanimation—blossoms that shed themselves beneath my steps—and streams that tremble to kiss my feet, and then retire; and then return again, wasting themselves in fondness before me, and touching me, as my lips press the holy images they have taught me to worship here!”—“Does no other image ever visit your dreams, Immalee?”—“I need not tell you,” said Isidora, with that singular mixture of natural firmness, and partial obscuration of intellect,—the combined result of her original and native character, and extraordinary circumstances of her early existence—“I need not tell you—you know you are with me every night!”—“Me?”—“Yes, you; you are for ever in that canoe that bears me to the Indian isle—you gaze on me, but your expression is so changed, that I dare not speak to you—we fly over the seas in a moment, but you are for ever at the helm, though you never land—the moment the paradise isle appears, you disappear; and as we return, the ocean is all dark, and our course is as dark and swift as the storm that sweeps them—you look at me, but never speak—Oh yes! you are with me every night!”—“But, Immalee, these are all dreams—idle dreams. I row you over the Indian seas from Spain!—this is all a vision of your imagination.”—“Is it a dream that I see you now?” said Isidora—“is it a dream that I talk

with you?—Tell me, for my senses are bewildered; and it appears to me no less strange, that you should be here in Spain, than that I should be in my native island. Alas! in the life that I now lead, dreams have become realities, and realities seem only like dreams. How is it you are here, if indeed you are here?—how is it that you have wandered so far to see me? How many oceans you must have crossed, how many isles you must have seen, and none like that where I first beheld you! But is it you indeed I behold? I thought I saw you last night, but I had rather trust even my dreams than my senses. I believed you only a visitor of that isle of visions, and a haunter of the visions that recall it—but are you in truth a living being, and one whom I may hope to behold in this land of cold realities and Christian horrors?”—“Beautiful Immalee, or Isidora, or whatever other name your Indian worshippers, or Christian god-fathers and god-mothers, have called you by, I pray you listen to me, while I expound a few mysteries to you.” And Melmoth, as he spoke, flung himself on a bed of hyacinths and tulips that displayed their glowing flowers, and sent up their odorous breath right under Isidora’s casement. “Oh you will destroy my flowers!” cried she, while a reminiscence of her former picturesque existence, when flowers were the companions alike of her imagination and her pure heart, awoke her exclamation. “It is my vocation—I pray you pardon me!” said Melmoth, as he basked on the crushed flowers, and

darted his withering sneer and scowling glance at Isidora. "I am commissioned to trample on and bruise every flower in the natural and moral world—hyacinths, hearts, and bagatelles of that kind, just as they occur. And now, Donna Isidora, with as long an *et cetera* as you or your sponsors could wish, and with no possible offence to the herald, here I am to-night—and where I shall be to-morrow night, depends on your choice. I would as soon be on the Indian seas, where your dreams send me rowing every night, or crashing through the ice near the Poles, or ploughing with my naked corse, (if corsers have feeling), through the billows of that ocean where I must one day (a day that has neither sun or moon, neither commencement or termination), plough forever, and reap despair!"—"Hush!—hush!—Oh forbear such horrid sounds! Are you indeed he whom I saw in the isle? Are you he, invoven ever since that moment with my prayers, my hopes, my heart? Are you that being upon whom hope subsisted, when life itself was failing? On my passage to this Christian land, I suffered much. I was so ill you would have pitied me—the clothes they put on me—the language they made me speak—the religion they made me believe—the country they brought me to—Oh *you!*—you alone!—the thought—the image of you, could alone have supported me! I loved, and to love is to live. Amid the disruption of every natural tie,—amid the loss of that delicious existence which seems a dream, and which still fills my dreams,

and makes sleep a second existence,—I have thought of you—have dreamt of you—have loved you!”—“Loved me?—no being yet loved me but pledged me in tears.”—“And have I not wept?” said Isidora—“believe these tears—they are not the first I have shed, nor I fear will be the last, since I owe the first to you.” And she wept as she spoke. “Well,” said the wanderer, with a bitter and self-satirizing laugh, “I shall be persuaded at last that I am “‘a marvellous proper man.” Well, if it must be so, happy man be his dole! And when shall the auspicious day, beautiful Immalee, *still* beautiful Isidora, in spite of your Christian name, (to which I have a most anti-catholic objection)—when shall that bright day dawn on your long slumbering eye-lashes, and waken them with kisses, and beams, and light, and love, and all the paraphernalia with which folly arrays misery previous to their union—that glittering and empoisoned drapery that well resembles what of old Dejanira sent to her husband—when shall the day of bliss be?” And he laughed with that horrible convulsion that mingles the expression of levity with that of despair, and leaves the listener no doubt whether there is more despair in laughter, or more laughter in despair. “I understand you not,” said the pure and timid Isidora; “and if you would not terrify me to madness, laugh no more—no more, at least, in that fearful way!”—“*I cannot weep,*” said Melmoth, fixing on her his dry and burning eyes, strikingly visible in the moonlight; “the fountain of tears has been long

dried up within me, like that of every other human blessing.”—“I can weep for both,” said Isidora, “if that be all.” And her tears flowed fast, as much from memory as from grief—and when those sources are united, God and the sufferer only know how fast and bitterly they fall. “Reserve them for our nuptial hour, my lovely bride,” said Melmoth to himself; “you will have occasion for them then.”

“There was a custom then, however indelicate and repulsive it may sound to modern ears, for ladies who were doubtful of the intentions of their lovers to demand of them the proof of their purity and honour, by requiring an appeal to their family, and a solemn union under the sanction of the church. Perhaps there was more genuine spirit of truth and chastity in this, than in all the ambiguous flirtation that is carried on with an ill-understood and mysterious dependence on principles that have never been defined, and fidelity that has never been removed. When the lady in the Italian tragedy<sup>1</sup> asks her lover, almost at their first interview, if his intentions are honourable, and requires, as the proof of their being so, that he shall espouse her immediately, does she not utter a language more unsophisticated, more intelligible, more *heartedly* pure, than all the romantic and incredible reliance that other females are supposed to place in the volatility of impulse,—in that wild and extemporaneous feeling,—that “house on the sands,”—which never has its foundation in the

<sup>1</sup> Alluding possibly to “Romeo and Juliet.”

immoveable depths of the heart. Yielding to this feeling, Isidora, in a voice that faltered at its own accents, murmured, "If you love me, seek me no more clandestinely. My mother is good, though she is austere—my brother is kind, though he is passionate—my father—I have never seen him! I know not what to say, but if he be *my* father, he will love you. Meet me in their presence, and I will no longer feel pain and shame mingled with the delight of seeing you. Invoke the sanction of the church, and then, perhaps,"—— "Perhaps!" retorted Melmoth; "You have learned the European 'perhaps!'—the art of suspending the meaning of an emphatic word—of affecting to draw the curtain of the heart at the moment you drop its folds closer and closer—of bidding us despair at the moment you intend we should feel hope!"—"Oh no!—no!" answered the innocent being; "I am *truth*. I am Immalee when I speak to you,—though to all others in this country, which they call Christian, I am Isidora. When I loved you first, I had only one heart to consult,—now there are many, and some who have not hearts like mine. But if you love me, you can bend to them as I have done—you can love their God, their home, their hopes, and their country. Even with *you* I could not be happy, unless you adored the cross to which your hand first pointed my wandering sight, and the religion which you reluctantly confessed was the most beautiful and beneficent on earth."—"Did I confess that?" echoed Melmoth; "It must have been

*reluctantly* indeed. Beautiful Immalee! I am a convert to you ;” and he stifled a Satanic laugh as he spoke ; “ to your new religion, and your beauty, and your Spanish birth and nomenclature, and every thing that you would wish. I will incontinently wait on your pious mother, and angry brother, and all your relatives, testy, proud, and ridiculous as they may be. I will encounter the starched ruffs, and rustling manteaus, and whale-boned fardingales of the females, from your good mother down to the oldest duenna who sits spectacted, and armed with bobbin, on her inaccessible and untempted sofa ; and the twirled whiskers, plumed hats, and shouldered capas of all your male relatives. And I will drink chocolate, and strut among them ; and when they refer me to your mustachod man of law, with his thread-bare cloke of black velvet over his shoulder, his long quill in his hand, and his soul in three sheets of wide-spread parchment, I will dower you in the most ample territory ever settled on a bride.”—“ Oh let it be, then, in that land of music and sunshine where we first met ! One spot where I might set my foot amid its flowers, is worth all the cultivated earth of Europe !” said Isidora.—“ No !—it shall be in a territory with which your bearded men of law are far better acquainted, and which even your pious mother and proud family must acknowledge my claim to, when they shall hear it asserted and explained. Perchance they may be joint-tenants with *me* there ; and yet (strange to say !) they will never litigate my



exclusive title to possession.”—“I understand nothing of this,” said Isidora ; “but I feel I am transgressing the decorums of a Spanish female and a Christian, in holding this conference with you any longer. If you think as you once thought,—if you feel as *I* must feel for ever,—there needs not this discussion, which only perplexes and terrifies. What have I to do with this territory of which you speak? That *you* are its possessor, is its only value in my eyes!”—“What have you to do with it?” repeated Melmoth ; “Oh, you know not how much you may have to do with it and me yet! In other cases, the possession of the territory is the security for the man,—but here the man is the security for the everlasting possession of the territory. Mine heirs must inherit it for ever and ever, if they hold by my tenure. Listen to me, beautiful Immalee, or Christian, or whatever other name you choose to be called by! Nature, your first sponsor, baptized you with the dews of Indian roses—your Christian sponsors, of course, spared not water, salt, or oil, to wash away the stain of nature from your regenerated frame—and your last sponsor, if you will submit to the rite, will anoint you with a new chrism. But of that hereafter. Listen to me while I announce to you the wealth, the population, the magnificence of that region to which I will endower you. The rulers of the earth are there—all of them. There be the heroes, and the sovereigns, and the tyrants. There are their riches, and pomp, and power—Oh what a glorious accumulation!—and

they have thrones, and crowns, and pedestals, and trophies of fire, that burn for ever and ever, and the light of their glory blazes eternally. There are all you read of in story, your Alexanders and Cæsars, your Ptolemies and Pharaohs. There be the princes of the East, the Nimrods, the Belshazzars, and the Holoferneses of their day. There are the princes of the North, the Odins, the Attilas, (named by your church the scourge of God), the Alarics, and all those nameless and name-undeserving barbarians, who, under various titles and claims, ravaged and ruined the earth they came to conquer. There be the sovereigns of the South, and East, and West, the Mahommedans, the Caliphs, the Saracens, the Moors, with all their gorgeous pretensions and ornaments—the crescent, the Koran, and the horse-tail—the trump, the gong, and the atabal, (or to suit it to your Christianised ear, lovely Neophyte!) ‘the noise of the captains, and the shoutings.’ There be also those triple-crowned chieftains of the West, who hide their shorn heads under a diadem, and for every hair they shave, demand the life of a sovereign—who, pretending to humility, trample on power—whose title is, Servant of servants—and whose claim and recognizance is, Lord of lords. Oh! you will not lack company in that bright region, for bright it will be!—and what matter whether its light be borrowed from the gleam of sulphur, or the trembling light of the moon, by which I see you look so pale?”—“I look pale!” said Isidora gasping; “I *feel* pale! I

know not the meaning of your words, but I know it must be horrible. Speak no more of that region, with its pride, its wickedness, and its splendour! I am willing to follow you to deserts, to solitudes, which human step never trod but yours, and where mine shall trace, with sole fidelity, the print of yours. Amid loneliness I was born; amid loneliness I could die. Let me but, wherever I live, and whenever I die, be yours!—and for the place, it matters not, let it be even”—— and she shivered involuntarily as she spoke; “Let it be even”—— “Even — *where?*” asked Melmoth, while a wild feeling of triumph in the devotedness of this unfortunate female, and of horror at the destination which she was unconsciously imprecating on herself, mingled in the question. “Even where you are to be,” answered the devoted Isidora, “let me be there! and there I must be happy, as in the isle of flowers and sunlight, where I first beheld you. Oh! there are no flowers so balmy and roseate as those that once blew there! There are no waters so musical, or breezes so fragrant, as those that I listened to and inhaled, when I thought that they repeated to me the echo of your steps, or the melody of your voice—that *human music* the first I ever heard, and which, when I cease to hear”—— “You will hear much better!” interrupted Melmoth; “the voices of ten thousand—ten millions of spirits—beings whose tones are immortal, without cessation, without pause, without interval!”——“Oh that will be glorious!” said Isidora, clasping her hands; “the

only language I have learned in this new world worth speaking, is the language of music. I caught some imperfect sounds from birds in my first world, but in my second world they taught me music; and the misery they have taught me, hardly makes a balance against that new and delicious language.”—

“But think,” rejoined Melmoth, “if your taste for music be indeed so exquisite, how it will be indulged, how it will be enlarged, in hearing those voices accompanied and re-echoed by the thunders of ten thousand billows of fire, lashing against rocks which eternal despair has turned into adamant! They talk of the music of the spheres!—Dream of the music of those living orbs turning on their axis of fire for ever and ever, and ever singing as they shine, like your brethren the Christians, who had the honour to illuminate Nero’s garden in Rome on a rejoicing night.”—“You make me tremble!”—“Tremble!—a strange effect of fire. Fie! what a coyness is this! I have promised, on your arrival at your new territory, all that is mighty and magnificent,—all that is splendid and voluptuous—the sovereign and the sensualist—the inebriated monarch and the pampered slave—the bed of roses and the canopy of fire!”—“And is this the home to which you invite me?”—“It is—it is. Come, and be mine!—myriads of voices summon you—hear and obey them! Their voices thunder in the echoes of mine—their fires flash from my eyes, and blaze in my heart. Hear me, Isidora, my beloved, hear me! I woo you in earnest,

and for ever! Oh how trivial are the ties by which mortal lovers are bound, compared to those in which you and I shall be bound to eternity! Fear not the want of a numerous and splendid society. I have enumerated sovereigns, and pontiffs, and heroes,—and if you should condescend to remember the trivial amusements of your present sejour, you will have enough to revive its associations. You love music, and doubtless you will have most of the musicians who have chromatized since the first essays of Tubal Cain to Lully, who beat himself to death at one of his own oratorios, or operas, I don't know which. They will have a singular accompaniment—the eternal roar of a sea of fire makes a profound bass to the chorus of millions of singers in torture!” — “What is the meaning of this horrible description?” said the trembling Isidora; “your words are riddles to me. Do you jest with me for the sake of tormenting, or of laughing at me?” — “Laughing!” repeated her wild visitor; “that is an exquisite hint—*vive la bagatelle!* Let us laugh for ever!—we shall have enough to keep us in countenance. There will be all that ever have dared to laugh on earth—the singers, the dancers, the gay, the voluptuous, the brilliant, the beloved—all who have ever dared to mistake their destiny, so far as to imagine that enjoyment was not a crime, or that a smile was not an infringement of their duty as sufferers. All such must expiate their error under circumstances which will probably compel the most inveterate disciple of Democritus, the most

*inextinguishable laughter* among them, to allow that *there*, at least, 'laughter is madness.'—"I do not understand you," said Isidora, listening to him with that sinking of the heart which is produced by a combined and painful feeling of ignorance and terror. "Not understand me?" repeated Melmoth, with that sarcastic frigidity of countenance which frightfully contrasted the burning intelligence of his eyes, that seemed like the fires of a volcano bursting out amid masses of snow heaped up to its very edge; "not understand me!—are you not, then, fond of music?"—"I am."—"Of dancing, too, my graceful, beautiful love?"—"I *was*."—"What is the meaning of the different emphasis you give to those answers?"—"I love music—I must love it for ever—it is the language of recollection. A single strain of it wafts me back to the dreamy blessedness, the enchanted existence, of my own—own isle. Of dancing I cannot say so much. I have *learnt* dancing—but I *felt* music. I shall never forget the hour when I heard it for the first time, and imagined it was the language which Christians spoke to each other. I have heard them speak a different language since."—"Doubtless their language is not always melody, particularly when they address each other on controverted points in religion. Indeed, I can conceive nothing less a-kin to harmony than the debate of a Dominican and Franciscan on the respective efficacy of the cowl of the order, to ascertain the salvation of him who happens to die in it. But have you no other reason

for *being* fond of music, and for only *having been* fond of dancing? Nay, let me have ‘your most exquisite reason.’”

“It seemed as if this unhappy being was impelled by his ineffable destiny to deride the misery he inflicted, in proportion to its bitterness. His sarcastic levity bore a direct and fearful proportion to his despair. Perhaps this is also the case in circumstances and characters less atrocious. A mirth which is not gaiety is often the mask which hides the convulsed and distorted features of agony—and laughter, which never yet was the expression of rapture, has often been the only intelligible language of madness and misery. Extacy only smiles,—despair laughs. It seemed, too, as if no keenness of ironical insult, no menace of portentous darkness, had power to revolt the feelings, or alarm the apprehensions, of the devoted being to whom they were addressed. Her “most exquisite reasons,” demanded in a tone of ruthless irony, were given in one whose exquisite and tender melody seemed still to retain the modulation on which its first sounds had been formed,—that of the song of birds, mingled with the murmur of waters.

“I love music, because when I hear it I think of you. I have ceased to love dancing, though I was at first intoxicated with it, because, when dancing, I have sometimes forgot you. When I listen to music, your image floats on every note,—I hear you in every sound. The most inarticulate murmurs that I pro-

duce on my guitar (for I am very ignorant) are like a spell of melody that raises a form indescribable—not you, but *my idea of you*. In your presence, though that seems necessary to my existence, I have never felt that exquisite delight that I have experienced in that of your image, when music has called it up from the recesses of my heart. Music seems to me like the voice of religion summoning to remember and worship the God of my heart. Dancing appears like a momentary apostasy, almost a profanation.”—“That, indeed, is a sweet and subtle reason,” answered Melmoth, “and one that, of course, has but one failure,—that of not being sufficiently flattering to the hearer. And so my image floats on the rich and tremulous waves of melody one moment, like a god of the overflowing billows of music, triumphing in their swells, and graceful even in their falls,—and the next moment appears, like the dancing demon of your operas, grinning at you between the brilliant movement of your fandangoes, and flinging the withering foam of his black and convulsed lips into the cup where you pledge at your banquetting. Well—dancing—music—let them go together! It seems that my image is equally mischievous in both—in one you are tortured by reminiscence, and in the other by remorse. Suppose that image is withdrawn from you for ever,—suppose that it were possible to break the tie that unites us, and whose vision has entered into the soul of both.”—“You may suppose it,” said Isidora, with maiden pride and tender grief



blended in her voice ; “and if you do, believe that I will try to suppose it too ; the effort will not cost much,—nothing but—my life !”

“As Melmoth beheld this blessed and beautiful being, once so refined amid nature, and now so natural amid refinement, still possessing all the soft luxuriance of her first angelic nature, amid the artificial atmosphere where her sweets were uninhaled, and her brilliant tints doomed to wither unappreciated,—where her pure and sublime devotedness of heart was doomed to beat like a wave against a rock,—exhaust its murmurs,—and expire ;—As he felt this, and gazed on her, he cursed himself ; and then, with the selfishness of hopeless misery, he felt that the curse might, by dividing it, be diminished.

“Isidora !” he whispered in the softest tones he could assume, approaching the casement, at which his pale and beautiful victim stood ; “Isidora ! will you then be mine ?”—“What shall I say ?” said Isidora ; “if love requires the answer, I have said enough ; if only vanity, I have said too much.”—“Vanity ! beautiful trifler, you know not what you say ; the accusing angel himself might blot out that article from the catalogue of my sins. It is one of my prohibited and impossible offences ; it is an earthly feeling, and therefore one which I can neither participate or enjoy. Certain it is that I feel some share of human pride at this moment.”—“Pride ! at what ? Since I have known you, I have felt no pride but that of supreme devotedness,—that self-annihilating

pride which renders the victim prouder of its wreath, than the sacrificer of his office.”—“But I feel another pride,” answered Melmoth, and in a proud tone he spoke it,—“a pride, which, like that of the storm that visited the ancient cities, whose destruction you may have read of, while it blasts, withers, and encrusts paintings, gems, music, and festivity, grasping them in its talons of annihilation, exclaims, Perish to all the world, perhaps beyond the period of its existence, but live to me in darkness and in corruption! Preserve all the exquisite modulation of your forms! all the indestructible brilliancy of your colouring!—but preserve it for me alone!—me, the single, pulseless, eyeless, heartless embracer of an unfertile bride,—the brooder over the dark and unproductive nest of eternal sterility,—the mountain whose lava of internal fire has stifled, and indurated, and inclosed for ever, all that was the joy of earth, the felicity of life, and the hope of futurity!”

“As he spoke, his expression was at once so convulsed and so derisive, so indicative of malignity and levity, so thrilling to the heart, while it withered every fibre it touched and wrung, that Isidora, with all her innocent and helpless devotedness, could not avoid shuddering before this fearful being, while, in trembling and unappeaseable solicitude, she demanded, “Will you then be mine? Or what am I to understand from your terrible words? Alas! *my* heart has never enveloped itself in mysteries—never has the light of its truth burst forth amid the thunder-

ings and burnings in which you have issued the law of my destiny.”—“Will you then be mine, Isidora?”—“Consult my parents. Wed me by the rites, and in the face of the church, of which I am an unworthy member, and I will be yours for ever.”—“*For ever!*” repeated Melmoth; “well-spoken, *my* bride. You will then be mine *for ever?*—will you, Isidora?”—“Yes!—yes!—I have said so. But the sun is about to rise, I feel the increasing perfume of the orange blossoms, and the coolness of the morning air. Begone—I have staid too long here—the domestics may be about, and observe you—begone, I implore you.”—“I go—but one word—for to me the rising of the sun, and the appearance of your domestics, and every thing in heaven above, and earth beneath, is equally unimportant. Let the sun stay below the horizon and wait for me. *You are mine!*”—“Yes, I am yours; but you must solicit my family.”—“Oh, doubtless!—solicitation is so congenial to my habits.”—“And”—— “Well, what?—you hesitate.”—“I hesitate,” said the ingenuous and timid Isidora, “because”—— “Well?”—“Because,” she added, bursting into tears, “those with whom you speak will not utter to God language like mine. They will speak to you of wealth and dower; they will inquire about that region where you have told me your rich and wide possessions are held; and should they ask me of them, how shall I answer?”

“At these words, Melmoth approached as close as possible to the casement, and uttered a certain word

which Isidora did not at first appear to hear, or understand—trembling she repeated her request. In a still lower tone the answer was returned. Incredulous, and hoping that the answer had deceived her, she again repeated her petition. A withering monosyllable, not to be told, thundered in her ears,—and she shrieked as she closed the casement. Alas! the casement only shut out the form of the stranger—not his image.

END OF VOL. II.



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