

MAGIC AND MESMERISM

An Episode

OF

THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

AND OTHER TALES.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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P R E F A C E.

IN the autumn of 184—, a party of friends, male and female, started from Manheim, on an expedition up one of the lovely valleys that shelter those mountain-streams, whose beauties scarcely yield the palm to the proud Rhine, whose tributaries they are. The party was numerous; and for the first two or three days, all went right. But just as they were about to escape from the worst roadside-inn it had yet been their ill luck to fall in with, a mountain-storm broke overhead with such fury, and of

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such duration, as to render the narrow, precipitous road—bad enough in fair weather—perfectly impassable for a few days, especially for the ladies, whose fears magnified the inconveniences of the venture.

Thus weather-bound, in the fullest meaning of the word—an incessant cold rain alternating with a high sharp wind by day, and early biting frosts by night, that made the smoky stoves of mine host, crammed full of greenwood, and his unswept, uncurtained rooms, a luxury—the spirits of the society, and the general stock of patience, was much tried. Passing under silence those nameless privations, whose enumeration would fill a volume, but which any traveller whom chance or caprice has led into the more unfrequented parts of Germany will have no trouble in calling back to his remembrance, I will barely hint at the blue-devils that seized upon and tor-

mented each in turn; and though to record the sighs, and yawns, and sundry exclamations, were a hopeless task, I will declare, that a more complete specimen of immeasurable ennui—ennui of the deepest, darkest hue—was never seen.

There was not a musical instrument in the whole house! Not one of the ladies had strung her blue or pink ribboned guitar on the top of a bandbox—bandboxes having been most ungallantly prohibited by the male portion of the society. Not one of the gentlemen had with him so much as a flute-cane, or had smuggled even a Jew's-harp into his pocket! The heavy, iron-tipped oak, that helped to climb the rocks, was alone *à l'ordre du jour*; and the gentlemen's shooting-jackets boasted little more in the way of musical resources than pocket-combs. Draught or chess board—nay, even the very oldest pack of cards—would

have been hailed with delight, had the landlord of the Stork been able to produce any such ; but he seemed not even to have an inkling of such town-fangled notions, and there were no other resources left the travellers but those of their own conversational powers. As politeness precludes controversy, and people invariably tire of assenting to each other's propositions, these soon flagged ; and—in default of any of those pink-bound volumes that Galignani strews with so untiring a hand over all the highways and by-ways of the Continent, and of which, strange to say, not one copy had found its way in the scanty luggage of the travellers,—it was at last agreed that story-telling should fill up the blank ; and those who, in the course of those few days' domestication, had betrayed the slightest anecdotal powers, were now unmercifully plied to exert those powers on an enlarged scale. “ Anything would do,” the ladies said ;

but when divers subjects were started, it came to light, that “they did not like pure fiction; it required a master-hand to make anything of it; something that had really happened always had an interest of its own that would greatly aid the manner of the telling;”—in short, the historical was decided upon, *una voce*. Needles were soon plied by delicate white fingers, whilst the male portion of the audience, with laudable feelings of tender reminiscences of their schoolboy days, busied their hands in cutting out figures on their sticks, or indenting them in mine host’s already much-damaged tables.

The bravest among the gentlemen, then, devoted themselves to the slippery task of amusing others. They succeeded, however, so well, that it was suggested that the Tales which had whiled away the ennui of a chosen few, might, perchance, render the same service to others, if

given a wider circulation by means of the Press. In vain did he upon whom the chancy task of Editing them was forced, grumble and represent how under different circumstances the same things assumed different aspects, and how much the partiality of friendly listeners may blind them to the defects of the productions they patronise. All was of no avail; the fiat had gone forth from lips that would take no denial, and the Editor now, perhaps, stands committed past redemption.

THE CAPTAIN'S STORY.

MAGIC AND MESMERISM.

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I WAS yet a very young man, and but just gazetted as a second lieutenant, when my ill luck ordained that I should be sent, with many other English prisoners, to Toulon ; at which place, Napoleon's name being held in even more enthusiastic reverence than elsewhere, our prospect of comfort was not re-assuring.

Many of my countrymen have complained of the sufferings they endured, and the hard treatment they met with, in this time of probation ; but I must confess much of this was drawn upon them by their own obstinacy in refusing to remain at large on parole—an alternative generally offered, and which, though it

debarred the prisoner from any chance of an early release, made, at least, the detention less irksome. Of the few who preferred a comparatively free *séjour* in a town to the gloomy confinement of a prison, I was one of the first; and I soon found I had made proof of no small sagacity in my choice.

The French are, or at least were when I knew them—but that's a long while ago—a very polite, kindly race, and evinced a generous sympathy in favour of the poor prisoners who came in their way, of which I, at least, am a grateful instance. I could not, however, afford to remain an idler on the *pavé*, and was soon obliged to chalk out for myself some plan for procuring a livelihood. Many in my situation might have been tempted to adduce, as a motive for so doing, the difficulty of receiving regular remittances; I owned the truth—I had none to receive.

I knew something of music, more of drawing, could paint very tolerably in water colours; in short, I was not deficient in that smattering *des arts d'agrémens*, which—for at that time

artists did not everywhere abound as at present—might, I thought, suffice to help me out of my difficulties. I soon, indeed, got more pupils than I had time to attend to, and found that their kindness contributed even more to my comfort than their money. In some families, acquaintance ripened into friendship, or—what generally answers as well, if not better, for social enjoyment—into intimacy unfettered by the duties and cares that friendship entails upon its votaries.

Of these families, I must mention one in particular. The father, though very rich, would not afford his daughters the accomplishments deemed so indispensable to modern education at the usual costs, yet was not unwilling to bestow board and lodging upon any one who would consent to instruct them on those terms. The proposal implied the comforts of a social, though not a luxurious home, and was accepted by me with infinite pleasure; and a source of pleasure it proved, in every sense, during the many years of my captivity.

Doubtless, I could dwell with untiring com-

placency upon these reminiscences of my youth, and of those with whom its heyday was spent; but as they might prove more wearisome than interesting, and do not bear upon the point, I will at once make you acquainted with the only member of this family who has any reference to my story, and whose introduction I may as well premise by stating, that, although the most singular mortal that ever fell in my way, he was at this period my constant companion, and one of the men I have liked best of all those, young or old, I ever associated with, not excluding the officers of my mess.

Mr. Chaudon—this was his name—was past sixty, at the head of no inconsiderable competency, a confirmed bachelor, and being godfather, besides, to all the younger children, great expectations were entertained of him; a circumstance that led my friends to make very flattering advances to the old gentleman, who, in his turn, availed himself of them in a manner to justify the presumption that he meant to repay them one day in full. Thus were we continually thrown into each other's society;

and as I spoke French with great fluency, despite the dissimilitude of our ages, tastes, habits, and, above all, nationality, we soon became great cronies.

In order to make you understand our dissimilitude and points of attraction more clearly, I must, even at the risk of being thought tedious, dilate a little on our characters and peculiarities. Although barely twenty, and rather good-looking than otherwise, I was more fond of reading and thinking than most men possessed of these advantages, especially in the profession I had embraced. Of a very cheerful temperament, endowed with that most precious of nature's gifts—which I have ever striven to retain, through fair and foul—the power of being easily pleased and amused, I was thus far qualified to meet half way his natural bibliomania and national *gaieté de cœur*. But the leading feature of my mind was coolness of judgment—so, at least, I and my friends qualified it; those who were not so well disposed towards me called it want of imagination: be that as it may, anything out of the common routine of

life and of the beaten track of ideas, has ever appeared to me extravagant — preposterous, and never took root in my brain. Some said this was a happy gift; but so, probably, did not think my companion, who was in nothing more opposed to me than in this particular.

Monsieur Jules Chaudon's sixty years had cooled none of the fire of youth. His overabundance of imagination, by leading him constantly from the practical to the theoretical, and rendering impossible the constant application and persevering attention necessary to all professions, but especially that which he had adopted—the law—had materially interfered with his advancement; and never having risen above mediocrity, in spite of strong natural powers, he had, in consequence, retired from its arduous duties even before his age justified the measure: but his was the contemplative disposition and the studious habit, which invest a life of ease with charm.

During the twenty years that my worthy friend had found himself at liberty to follow the bent of his own inclinations, he had devoted

the greater portion of his time to reading. That reading being, however, of the most promiscuous kind, and the natural romance of his mind tinging with peculiar interest the wilder and more chimerical speculations of his and other times, he soon suffered himself to be led away by them, and became what the French so well describe by the epithet "*bizarre*," which was universally applied to him, although he was otherwise held in great esteem for his acknowledged talents.

"They call me singular, original," he would often say, "and make this a matter of reproach; but I accept the denomination as the highest possible compliment, for neither virtue nor genius are commonplace. Everybody, on the contrary, must allow they are most unlike what we observe in the generality of mankind; and by their very dissemblance from the inferiority that, at every turn, meets and checks them, often, alas! jar, like a chord too tightly strung, in the harmony of this world, where their aspirations remain unsatisfied and their efforts misunderstood."

I used to laugh heartily at the frankness of my friend's vanity; but if, like most of his countrymen, he was addicted to much talking, especially about himself, and even to boasting on occasions, still did he more than counterbalance these slight peculiarities by his many and rare qualities. Most of my leisure hours were devoted to his society; and this circumstance was doubly favourable to me, tending, as it did, to exercise my intellectual faculties, and to keep me out of harm's way, for the ladies of the South of France are very fascinating, I assure you.

One day, calling, according to my wont, to share his *demie tasse de café*, after a very early dinner, I was somewhat surprised to find him in a less vivacious humour than ordinary. His fit of silence embarrassed me; and, *par manière de contenance*, I began to survey the various objects that surrounded me, although habit had made them perfectly familiar. The small, white-curtained windows, always opened to the mild breezes of Provence, letting in the effulgence of a southern sun through the tempering medium

of a couple of tall trees which shaded his little flower garden—the perfume the latter exhaled in that luxuriant clime—all this I had enjoyed before. My eye wandered to the well-stored bookcases on either hand of the door—to the door itself with its *Watteau* panels, representing puffy, rosy swains, making love in a very playful and becoming manner by the intervention of a flute or bagpipe, to smiling, courtly-looking shepherdesses, with a profusion of roses and sheep and doves, to enhance the poetry of the conception—the quiet lamp on the *console*, placed carefully in front of a dish of waxen fruits under glass—the landscape over the door, in which the village church did not forget to chime the hour with more precision than many a Brégué—the magnificent *boule* cabinet, no longer appreciated for its own merits, retained in a corner out of respect for the past—the pictures, all daubs in their way, and merely interesting as family portraits—the very prints, hung round the wall, were known to me in all their details. I gazed, mechanically, from that representing the death of the unfortunate

Louis XVI. to that of the *Jeu de Paume* and the Coronation of Napoleon. Reminiscence, rather than political opinion, seemed to have guided the choice of those engravings, several of which were portraits of celebrities contemporary with himself—Mesmer, Puysegur, D'Eslon, and a few others, whose names escape my memory, more or less famous in the annals of magnetism.

“Strange men and bold, those,” said Chaudon, following the direction of my eyes as they rested on the last named personages.

“Dreamers! idle dreamers,” I answered, with a shrug — “dreamers, if not knaves and villains.”

“Far too sweeping a conclusion,” said Chaudon. “May not a science exist, though folly and knavery may have abused it? May not the fairest flowers spring up from the same soil that will bear a toadstool?”

“Perhaps,” said I, “but the mere chimera of the brain I consider to be a most barren ground, productive of little better than the thorns of disputation.”

“Then you take upon yourself to deny, al-

together, the existence of Mesmerism, and its effects for good or for evil?"

"I should, indeed, feel inclined to do so," I replied, "but that I do not consider myself sufficiently master of the subject to give a decided opinion."

"Far be it from me to deny that Mesmerism has had its charlatans and its victims—but so has medicine, and yet what science is nobler? Has not religion itself had its abuses?"

"But," I timidly urged, "public opinion has so completely done justice by the votaries of magnetism ——"

"It is natural, my young friend," hastily interrupted Chaudon, "that the first who wander through unknown regions, and bring back new stores of ideas and facts to others, should expose themselves, by communicating them, to ridicule and animadversion. For, strange to say, fond as he thinks himself of change, and eager as he is in its pursuit, all novelty is hateful to man—but this is one of the many contradictions of his nature. Thus we see ignorant people ever ready to laugh at the simplest truth which

has escaped their sphere of intelligence. Perfect incredulity on all points is an infallible token of the total absence of intellectual development ; none know how to credit what is new to them but persons of cultivated understanding.”

“ True,” said I ; “ but if it be folly to reject, without investigation, any proposition whatever, surely it is more foolish to admit any theory as true without due proof.”

“ Granted,” said the old man—“ granted ; but how few ever pause to balance a question, however vital its import. The greater portion of mankind decide at once, without being able to adduce any better reason for their decision than caprice or prejudice. I dare say your opinions, my young friend, are not based on firmer ground.”

Without renouncing my scepticism, I gracefully yielded this point.

“ I thought as much,” said he ; “ without having duly weighed the arguments *pro* and *con* in your own mind, merely because those are stigmatized as enthusiasts and dreamers who have given into the system. *Fausse honte*, my young friend, and worldly prudence, are the

graves of science and discovery. Now, if you will patiently listen to a few reasons I can adduce in favour of the existence, if not the merits of animal magnetism, I think I can convince you, or, at least, lead you on the road to conviction."

"Most willingly," said I.

"Then we will adjourn to the beach, and, in the face of nature's sublimest work, discuss one of her deepest mysteries."

The old *bonne* had soon helped my friend to exchange his flowered silk robe de chambre for a coat of somewhat antediluvian fashion—for he still clung to former habits, and had renounced neither his *queue*, powder, nor shoe-buckles; and having donned this somewhat antiquated apparel, he sallied forth with me to enjoy the invigorating sea breeze. Hardly had we come within view of the waves, when he took up the subject of discussion precisely where we had left it, with the air of one who sets regularly in for a prose. I confess I had forgotten it altogether.

"Mesmerism," said he, "might, perhaps, as justly be called sympathy; that word, more

familiar to our understanding, will bring the notion of the thing more clearly to our minds. It is the great link that binds man, not only to man, but to the creation throughout all its parts, and causes everything in nature to act upon the rest in some way or other. Every object of which we are conscious must, I hold, be made evident to us merely by sympathy; and where sympathy ceases, there must perception cease also. No one thinks of denying the influence of the emanations from plants, waters, and mines upon the human body. If, then, these inanimate things possess a spirit that escapes them in an impalpable form, independently of their more palpable qualities,—if in animal life we do not doubt the power of the snake to fascinate its fluttering victim, why should man, the most perfect of created things, be incapable of emitting a portion of *his* spirit in an invisible, but no less active manner.”

“Maladies are catching,” said I, laughing, “but they can hardly be called the workings of the spirit; but beyond that ——”

“Are not sighs, yawns, and laughter infec-

tious?—does not the sight of a clouded brow chill the spirit as much as that of a sunny one cheers it? These are the involuntary, spontaneous results of this great agent called sympathy. Its guidance into any given channel by the power of volition is termed magnetism; and since the one can hardly be denied, why should the other be deemed impossible?"

"But if no delusion," I persisted, "why should so simple a theory find so few partisans?"

"Its very simplicity is its greatest enemy," replied my companion. "Remember Columbus' egg. Why, most of us, in the details of every-day life, unconsciously practise or yield more or less to the influence of magnetism. The low monotonous song by which the nurse seeks to calm the cries of a troublesome infant—the chafing of the hand, by which the most ignorant will seek to soothe pain—the stern look, by which madness may be quelled and brute nature tamed—all these are results of the same cause. But let us proceed to bolder speculations, and trace the power of sympathy beyond the physical, into the mystic world. Whence is

it that dreams so often shadow forth to us coming events, though in a misty, doubtful form? How is it that our own thoughts are apt to reflect facts, and suggest consequences, the most unlike what bare supposition founded on probability would have prompted, which yet subsequent events justify; that some people have been known to foresee the time and manner of their death years before it actually took place; or how to account for that most ordinary phenomenon—so ordinary as to have passed into a proverb—the sudden appearance among us of those we talk of, even when least expected; or of the letter, at whose delay we but that moment wonder; or of an object to which chance alone directed our thoughts;—and yet who has not often experienced something of this sort himself? In short, the endless catalogue of presentiments and coincidences, sympathies and antipathies, all come, as I believe, within the range of magnetism, and are but effects of that primary cause. I will not pursue this theory in all its branches, it would lead us too far, and, perhaps, make us lose

sight altogether of the *point de départ*, for it is a field for thoughts as infinite as space."

"Yes," said I, laughing, "your world of thought is indeed illimited; it is, in good sooth, that of dreams. Chaudon, of course you, who admit so willingly and defend so warmly, the fashionable bubbles of modern philosophy, will not dare to laugh at the follies and delusions of our forefathers—astrology and its long chain of errors."

"I consider astrology at best but an idle question put to nature, which, if answered, could produce no useful result. But I have not the slightest doubt the planets have as much influence upon our constitutions as they exert over other sublunary bodies. So far there may be some foundation for the medical system of the Arabs, so much in favour during the Middle Ages."

"When physicians," said I, laughing, "suffered their patients to die of the disease, whilst they were quietly awaiting the proper moment indicated by the stars to administer the saving potion."

“Every system has its flaws. It is in vain that human ingenuity shifts its ground. Perfection is not attainable,” said Chaudon, gravely; “and I am sometimes tempted to fear, that, even in these enlightened times of ours, excess of light often blinds us to what our ancestors saw and our descendants may yet see. Science, my young friend, has its rotations, like every other thing in this world. The wheel is eternally revolving, and objects are lost sight of in the movement, to appear again after the necessary lapse of forgetfulness. It is thus that reality and speculation now stand forth from, and then sink back into, the shadows of time; that opposite systems are now enthusiastically admitted, anon rejected with scorn; and that human knowledge is ever turning round truth, as does the earth around the sun, like it to feel the alternation of night and day. There can be no doubt but many things we now rail or laugh at will one day be taken up again with avidity. Magnetism, classified by Mesmer, was known throughout all ages, and has served, in turn, to the deceptions of the priests of Isis and those

of other and more modern creeds—was familiar to the natural philosophers of the Dark Ages, and formed the groundstone of those cures by sympathy that created so much wonder in these simple days. Magnetism, in fact, and the vague dreams it may inspire, the errors it sometimes gives rise to, the crimes to which it has in many instances undeniably ministered,—magnetism, veiled and unrecognised, was the source of most of those trials for sorcery and magic to which we could find no key, except by admitting this science and its phenomena.”

“In short,” said I, “according to your views, magnetism existed always and everywhere—*c’est tout, dans tout.*”

“Assuredly, my young friend; that makes part of my theory of the harmony of nature.”

“You feel, doubtless,” said I, “the beauty of these lines—

“ ‘From harmony, from heavenly harmony,
 This universal frame began ;
From harmony to harmony,
 Through all the compass of the notes it ran,
 The diapason closing full in man.’ ”

“ I confess, they have ever appeared to me fraught with the deepest meaning.”

Chaudon listened to my translation of these beautiful lines, imperfect as it was, with evident satisfaction.

“ We feel alike there,” he said, warmly grasping my hand. “ Ah, my young friend, Milton was a mighty spirit—a natural philosopher, as well as poet ! I have no doubt, had he lived in our days, he would have been a devoted adherent of Mesmer.”

I could not refrain from laughing heartily at a thought which seemed to me so truly preposterous.

“ And why not ?” asked my old friend, reddening very much at the same time—“ and why not, pray ? Is it not a sublime thing even to dream of a power that could heal both mind and body, renovate the wearied spirit in the sinking frame, and cause the lamp of life to burn with a fresh glow, when about to sink for ever ? Think what a sublime mission were that of the good man here below, if he could infuse a portion of his vigour, mental and corporeal, into the misled and the suffering ; if he could,

by this means, make wickedness openly avow and turn away from its dark designs, alleviate but a few of those multifarious evils that afflict our organs, defeat what is bad, and promote what is excellent. This was poor Mesmer's dream—worthy indeed of a philanthropic genius like his—when he first conceived that responsive nerves could enable the magnetizer not only to read the thoughts, but even to guide the will and the feelings of the being subjected to his influence, empowering him, like a mighty conqueror, to cast the spirit he had enslaved into chains."

"You allow, then," said I, "that Mesmer was a mere visionary?—his system a dream?"

"Nay, I fear, you have misunderstood me," he replied. "I would assert, that its happier influences are still a matter for much doubt. I must in conscience admit they rather exist in the contemplation of the well-intentioned than in the regions of reality; nor am I less prepared to own that its dangers so far outbalance its possible and speculative advantages, as to make its general practice a great evil."

“It were an ample field for quackery and the grossest deception,” I exclaimed, “if given fair play.”

“Far worse than that,” he replied. “My views on this subject, delusive, extravagant, as they are deemed on many others, have been sobered down by a very sad story, so early grafted on my memory as to have sunk into my very soul, and which has inspired me at once with a firm belief in, and a salutary terror of, the power of magnetism, by associating it in my mind with the very worst species of abuse of which it is capable. This morning, whilst rummaging among papers long laid aside as useless, and well-nigh forgotten, my eye lighted upon some documents referring to this same affair; and the sight awakened a long train of painful reminiscences, which your presence alone, to confess the truth, but partially dispelled. I have more than half a mind to relate the melancholy tale to you, in support of that agency’s power whose very existence you deny, and as, alas! but too melancholy a proof of the misery it may inflict.”

“Indeed,” said I, eagerly, “you could not clothe your proofs in a more acceptable form, I assure you. I’ll swallow any hook, if baited with a story.”

“Ay; but alas! it is no fiction,” said the old man, with a deep sigh; “and, I dare say, enough of the thousands of volumes written at the time have escaped the fury of the Jesuits, to enable you to satisfy your curiosity without the help of my poor narration.”

I had no trouble in seeing through this artless coquetry of the storyteller, and pleaded my preference for verbatim instruction with so good a grace, that I soon obtained the narrative, which I will endeavour to repeat, word for word, as it was given me (so far, at least, as my memory will permit), although I am afraid I never can do it justice as it came from the lips of my good old friend.

Here, he began,—seating himself at a point from whence he could command equally the town and the sea,—here, in sight of the theatre where the scenes I am about to relate were

enacted, where the heroes of the story fretted away their hour on the human stage, where every object our eyes rest upon has probably been gazed at by them a hundred times over—here, where their feet must often have trod, I feel I can best talk of them, their sorrows, their deceptions; and you will perceive that magnetism alone can account for things so passing strange, that they will appear beyond belief, and yet for the truth of which I can vouch; for my father, from whom I had all the details, was himself deeply implicated in the affair. Indeed, he not only related it to me, but talked of the matter over and over again; and I still possess the papers concerning it, which he had carefully preserved.

It was early in the year 1726, when my father, Monsieur Jules Chaudon, then a young man, left his native town, Marseilles, to come and practise here as an *avocat*. He knew no one in Toulon, except an old relation of his, who had caused him to be bred up to his own profession, intending to pass over to him his *clientelle*, when he grew old and tired, and

bequeath him his fortune at his death. The first epoch had arrived; and it was on this account that my father, although an only son, was sent forth from home to try his fortune in life. The old gentleman was a confirmed valetudinarian; and my father's existence would have been but a dull one, had not the solicitude of his parents provided him with those means of honest recreation, which are a young man's best safeguard on entering life, against illicit and degrading amusements. He had letters of introduction to two of the most respectable families of the city. One such, in a provincial town, where society is so confined to *coteries* and classes, is sufficient to open to every tolerably connected young man the doors of that society to which he by birth belongs; and when once admitted, his own misconduct can alone close them against him.

I know, now-a-days, young men, far from seeking such quiet circles, vote them dull and stupid, and avoid them as they would the plague, caring for nothing but noisy and doubtful company; that horses, actresses, and orgies,

appear to them the zenith of fashion and the acme of enjoyment. But it was not so in my father's day; and had it been, I think I may safely aver that such would not have been his inclination.

One of these letters was addressed to a certain Madame Cadières, the widow of a rich merchant, who kept a very good house, and was a lady of some figure in this city. She was the mother of four children, one of whom, her eldest son, was married, and had left the maternal roof; but the three others—two sons, who were preparing for the clerical profession, and a daughter—still resided with her when my father first visited the family.

Before entering upon the history of this family and its connexion with my father, I think it advisable to give you an idea of the first impression its various members produced upon him, and describe his youthful feelings as circumstantially as I may. This will help to bring more vividly before you the actors of the drama which I am about to recount.

His recollection of that first visit was so

strong, and he so often recurred to it in the latter years of his life, that every detail of it is as present to my mind as if I had actually been there. Upon the strength of his introduction, given by a very near relation of Madame Cadières—perhaps, also, upon that of his future expectations—he was at once invited to join her party at her country-house, situated within a convenient walk from the town, where he was received with a frank and hearty cordiality, which is now fast fading away even from our southern provinces.

It was then customary to dine at the hour when lunch is now served; and this necessitated another meal between dinner and supper, that generally went by the name of collation, at which, however, nothing solid was ever offered—fruits and creams in summer, comfits and cakes in winter, were its only ingredients. The family were at collation when my father entered. Madame Cadières was taking her coffee with a few respectable-looking matrons, at one end of the room; whilst a group of laughing young girls, clustered round a marble

table at the further extremity, were enjoying their strawberries and cream. They were in the very sweetest season of life, just budding into womanhood—for the most part, of that rich, dark, voluptuous beauty peculiar to our clime, and laughing with the exhilarating merriment which is a no less distinguishing characteristic of its sunny influence.

My father was at first so dazzled with this galaxy of loveliness, that he could scarcely discern any individuality in the fair assemblage; but his attention and admiration soon became exclusively rivetted on one as dissimilar in form and expression to the others as, in his eyes at least, she was superior. Although rather below than above the middle stature, her figure was sufficiently rounded to betray her age—she was just turned seventeen, and moulded into the perfection of grace. Her hair, simply parted on the brow and brought to the back of her head in a wreath of tresses, which seemed by their weight to set at defiance the thralldom of the combs and sky-blue ribbons that confined them, was of so brilliant a hue, that it

well deserved the term golden. Her eyes generally sought the ground with a modesty of expression that seemed the chief characteristic of her physiognomy, and imparted to it an unnameable charm; but when raised, they were of a blue, brilliant and vivid as the purest summer sky, and as calm and serene in aspect. Her features were delicate and regular; no smile hovered round her small and well-formed mouth; her looks were grave beyond her years, even unto severity; her skin, dazzlingly fair as though it had caught a reflection from the snows of the North, did not contrast more with the dark complexions of her companions than did the composure of her countenance and bearing with the animation that distinguished them. My father always told me that, in the midst of this group, she put him in mind of a Christian virgin surrounded by the houris of the Mahomedan Paradise.

In spite of all his efforts he could not keep his eyes off this little circle, and had barely presence of mind sufficient to answer the polite, encouraging observations addressed to him by

the matrons whilst sipping their favourite beverage. At last, Madame Cadières very considerately conducted him towards the party he so much longed, but had not the courage, to join, saying, at the same time, it was not fair to keep him away from the society best suited to his age.

“My dear Catherine,” said Madame Cadières, addressing one of the young ladies, “this is the stranger of whom I spoke to you this morning—he is to be for the future *l’ami de la maison*, and it is in this light I wish you and your brothers to treat him from this evening forth. Pray, my dear, endeavour to make him as comfortable as you can amongst you until their return.”

At this address all eyes were, for one instant, raised to my father’s blushing countenance; the next they were demurely fixed on the floor. Mademoiselle Cadières invited him to be seated; the tones of her voice were singularly clear and decided, but very sweet; and he perceived with delight that the speaker was the very girl whose personal appearance had so much struck

him. The mother then retired, leaving the young people to make acquaintance as they best could.

Like all strictly brought up young men whose youth has been free from premature excess, my father was, at this period of his existence, painfully shy in the presence of females, especially of the young and beautiful ; so that, even while he felt it a delight to look at them from afar, it was a proportionable agony to be placed in juxtaposition with them, and compelled to endure the formidable battery of their bright eyes. Happy the man, my young friend, who, like him, has known youth in the full meaning of the word—has suffered from the bashfulness natural to its first phases—has yielded to its warm impulses—enjoyed its freshness of feeling, and has not been blighted in the bud by the hotbed of a forced and premature experience ; like him will the timid, ardent boy grow up to vigorous manhood, and know a green old age. The young men of our days are older at twenty than the septuagenarians of the past generation. Manhood, real sterling manhood, such as can

only be based on regularity of conduct and steadiness of mind, is fast passing away altogether from my degenerate countrymen. Forgive this digression of an old grumbler. I cannot omit now and then moralizing, especially when talking with the young, to whom I think my opinions and advice may be of some use.

My father soon found that his awkwardness excited the risible faculties of his young companions in no ordinary degree, who exchanged nods and looks and smiles anything but flattering to his vanity. Mademoiselle Cadières and another young lady, called Eleonore Raymond, whom my father observed for the first time as a plain, nay, the only plain one of the party, endeavoured by their gravity to check this inhospitable merriment, and he felt grateful for the support thus afforded him.

But vain were the endeavours of the former to make him take any share in the conversation that was going forward, or partake of the collation; his excessive embarrassment for a time neutralized all the effects of her kindness, and

of his keen sense of the ridicule attached to his want of assurance. Still no one felt pity for him but Catherine; the others finished by fairly giving way to their mirth, which Mademoiselle Raymond, although far from joining, did not attempt to palliate by any gracious display of sympathy on her own part, nor did she in any way assist Catherine in her weary task of relieving him from his state of trial. At last his power of volition triumphed over his sheepishness; and he became more able to attend to what was passing around him, if not actually to mix in it.

The repast, which had seemed to him insufferably long while it lasted, soon came to what he now considered a too early termination. The whole party passed into the garden, where the elder ladies sauntered carelessly about, whilst the younger sought divertisement at a swing, and apparently found it, if a judgment might be formed from the peals of laughter that soon issued from the thick grove within which the swing was placed. Mademoiselle Cadières stood at the entrance, in the attitude of a not

very interested spectator ; and my father gazed at her from the parlour door, with an admiration which, little as he was conscious of the fact, was depicted in every line of his speaking physiognomy.

My father, in his day, was reckoned the handsomest man in Toulon. Cast in a Herculean mould, his figure was devoid of all clumsiness, and his swarthy countenance bore evidence, in its correct but somewhat stern lines, that the strength of his mind corresponded with that of his frame. He looked, what nature had turned him out, a fine specimen of a vigorous, fiery, and resolved race ; but his vigour was tempered by goodness, his fire by reason, and his resolves were guided by wisdom. In short, if ever man came nigh unto perfection, that man was my father ; and I, his son, am not the only person now living who can bear testimony to this assertion.

Of his personal advantages, as well as of his undisguised and ardent admiration of her daughter, Madame Cadières seemed very leisurely taking cognizance from a short distance,

and after a somewhat prolonged examination, of which he was scarcely aware of being the object, she came up to him, and at once embarked upon a conversation that caused him no small surprise.

“ My daughter,” she said, “ seems to have found favour in your eyes?” My father felt himself blushing crimson. “ Do not be distressed,” she continued, kindly. “ If you think her pretty, you are of one mind with all Toulon, I believe, and there is nothing offensive in it ; but it reminds me that I have a duty to perform with regard to yourself. Forewarned, forearmed, as the saying goes ; I had better let you at once into the secret of my Catherine’s views. She never means to marry ; so, you see, it were no use in the world your falling in love with her.”

My father was even more astonished at the manner than at the matter of the good lady’s communication, but could not help owning in his secret heart there was some ground for the warning, premature as it was, since he felt so unwilling to receive it. Some remark of his,

trite and commonplace, elicited further explanation.

“Yes,” she said, “Catherine is a singular being—gifted beyond the gifts of ordinary women—and who, unless I be much mistaken, will run through no ordinary course of life. I cannot help thinking, and many of my friends are of the same opinion, that she will one day shine forth as a brilliant light of sanctity. She is, and has always been, an angel—why may she not become a saint?”

My father thought it was something very like a fall instead of a promotion to quit an angelship for a saintship; but he was too prudent to give vent to the juvenile sarcasm, and suffered the old lady to proceed, who, flattered by his deep attention, opened her communicative vein.

“She intends to devote herself wholly to religion, and to permit no earthly affections to interfere with this great object of her life. From earliest childhood, piety has been the corner stone of her existence. I could cite to you instances of her faith and charity for eight days running,

and never have done. So perfect a creature never was ; so meek and humble—so unconscious of her merits, yet so abounding in Christian virtues ; her first communion alone would furnish matter for a volume ; her soul was more spotless than her veil, and her fervour amazed and confused even the reverend Father Alexis himself. One instance of her singular devotion will suffice. Imagine, sir, that when scarcely turned of seven, a delicate, puny child—for my Catherine never was strong,—she insisted upon tending the sick at the hospital, where, on account of a contagious disease raging within its walls, even the most necessary attendance failed the poor invalids. But Heaven spared her to me then, to make, I doubt not, an example of her in this land ; and in these days of growing unbelief such examples are indeed needful.”

“ Mademoiselle Cadières seems, indeed, from your account, a person of no ordinary character,” observed my father, mechanically, as she paused in her narration.

“ Ordinary ! certainly not !” exclaimed the eager mother. “ In infancy she disliked and

avoided the idle games of other children—cast away from her the toys in which they delighted. As she grew, vanity and frivolity, the thirst for admiration and love of dress, that mostly influence other young women, had no hold on her. Books of devotion were her dearest companions; to aid the poor, to console the afflicted, her chief pleasures. Thus has she from day to day improved in virtue and grace, until she is the wonder of all who know her. She begins already to be much talked of. I do not wonder at it, nor shall I be astonished at anything she may turn out, for I myself was very pious, and always prayed above all things that my children might be so too. I knew I bore no ordinary being in my bosom even before her birth. I could not touch aught that had life in it—not a mouthful of anything coarse or nutritive could pass my lips; like the hermits of yore, herbs were my food and water my drink until after she was born.”

“Perhaps,” said my father, “you destine Mademoiselle Catherine to the veil?”

At these words a shade passed over Madame Cadières' countenance ; she looked as if they had caused a disagreeable chord to vibrate within her, and she resumed, in a less emphatic and animated tone—

“ Well, my dear young friend, I have given you fair warning, so look to your heart. If you were to fall in love with my daughter, I should not be the one to rebuke you, assuredly ; but I am convinced you would only expose yourself to a severe disappointment. Now let me give you another piece of advice, which may be equally useful if you are wise enough to avail yourself of it. I know it to be the wish of your parents that you settle early in life. Among these young ladies you will find many unexceptionable matches, and I do not think you have any refusal to apprehend on their part. There's Marie Langières, the best soul alive, though a little indolent, perhaps languid, but the duties of a housewife soon drill activity into a young girl ; she has many relations in the magistracy, and has good expectations. Mademoiselle Guyol, too, is very

lively and pretty, though somewhat flighty and coquettish, but marriage tames down all superabundance of spirit, and once fairly settled, she'll grow steady enough, I dare say. She has an uncle, a judge, in Montpelier, who might be of use to you in your profession. Marie Reboul and Mademoiselle la Rue, again, belong to commercial families, and are very well off; the former is rather heavy and not over bright in the head, it is true, but some people are of opinion that fools make the best wives—as to the latter, her avarice is a guarantee for her economy; she would take care of your gains, and a thrifty housewife causes the house to flourish. Ah! I had forgot to mention Eleonore Raymond; she is very rich indeed; but though a catholic herself, has protestant relations, and that's an objection. However, I have given you the *carte du pays*; you may now think of whom you please, provided it be not of Catherine."

This abrupt and extraordinary warning, though doubtless well meant, on the whole did more harm than good; for by the pleasure with which my father listened to the mother's rhap-

sodical encomiums of her daughter, he already felt himself a lover, for who else but a lover can understand a mother's praise of her child. But, with a tact that was at that time rather the instinct of nature than the growth of experience, he was at no loss to discover how matters stood in the family. He saw that the affection of Madame Cadières for her handsome, gentle daughter, which partook of a sort of involuntary respect for her imagined superiority, was mixed with no small alloy of pride and ambition. To make you fully understand how ambition could be gratified in this circumstance, I must remind you—or rather inform you, for you may chance never to have heard of the influence of religion among us previous to the revolution.

The different classes of society were then so distinctly marked, that there was no possibility of passing the boundary which divided the *tiers état* from the aristocracy. Wealth, talent, beauty, genius, the gifts of fortune and of nature, were alike inadequate to smooth away the obstacles that lay between the unprivileged and the privileged, however deficient the latter

might be in equivalent merits. Now, as is usual in such cases, the secondary classes had nothing so much at heart as to pass the forbidden frontier, and in proportion as they neared that point, were they considered and looked up to by their own society. Such was the power of the priesthood, however, that what nothing else could effect, religion could; and before its members all doors flew open, all artificial barriers fell. Royalty itself was fain to humble its head before the cowl, and the veil had precedence of the coronet. Hence, perhaps, the secret of many a misnamed religious calling, the source of many a fervent devotion and of a certain mania for saintship, a prevailing distemperature of mind at that epoch, which was a convenient channel for female ambition.

My father perceived, without much difficulty, that Madame Cadières was silly, bigoted, and very ambitious. To such a woman the thought of giving the world a saint, and a pretty one,—for ugly female eminences are always at a discount,—would most naturally present itself; and chance having met her half

way in the merits and disposition of her daughter, what more natural than that she should hail the prospect with delight?

That Catherine had wholly yielded up her young soul to the feelings thus carefully instilled into her was evident, and what might have been expected. But my father began to suspect that a warm imagination lay concealed beneath her calm exterior, and he could not help thinking that she was more calculated to bless a husband and children with the sources of love lying as yet unrevealed within her young bosom, than for the frigidity of a monastic seclusion. He approached the object of his meditations, and timidly asked why she did not mingle in the amusements of her friends.

“Because they do not amuse me,” she replied. “When the thoughts are often fixed on grave subjects, it becomes difficult to bring them to bear on lighter things.”

Although the observation might have seemed affected and odd in most girls of her age, Catherine’s manner was so simple and natural that there was no possibility of misunderstanding.

ing her. Whatever she said came spontaneously to her lips, and was the offspring of her thoughts; but those thoughts—her very nature—had taken a forced and unnatural bent.

“I understand,” said my father. “By remaining fixed too long on any one object, the mind is apt, like the limbs, to lose its elasticity. You are perfectly right, Mademoiselle Catherine; but ought we not, in such a case, to apply the same remedy we use for the body—a change?”

“Surely there is no need of remedy where there is no evil,” was Catherine’s answer; and my father dared not yet venture his real opinions on so delicate a theme.

When the party again gathered together he felt almost relieved from his former embarrassment, so fast had his imagination familiarized him with those whom Madame Cadières had so amply described to him; but neither the languishing, voluptuous beauty of Marie Langières, whose long silken lashes fell over orbs that glowed with passion; nor the lustrous, laughing eyes of the merry Mademoiselle Guyol,

whose light step seemed scarcely to touch the earth, and whose *espieglerie* lighted up an irregular, but very pretty face, nor any grace or charm of any of them, could induce him to change his former impression of Catherine Cadières' incomparable superiority; in short, he was fast yielding himself up to the all-delightful illusions of a first love.

More than once he attempted to enter into something like conversation with Mademoiselle Raymond, next to whom he sat; but the frigid, disagreeable manner of that young lady so totally discouraged him, that, although he could perceive she was the most intimate of Catherine's companions, he could not make up his mind to win her good graces; and, moreover, doubted the possibility of the achievement.

The young men of the family came home very late, but, the evening being inviting for a walk, they accompanied my father back to town. During that time he had an opportunity of perceiving that they partook, in a great degree, of their mother's poverty of intellect, and

entered fully into her views and opinions with regard to Catherine, whom they evidently fancied must, one day, become the footstool of their own promotion in the church, and cause the elevation of the whole family. My father listened with apparent acquiescence to all they advanced on this subject, but determined, in his own mind, to carry off the prize if he could, despite all the saintships in the world.

Now began, for him, the golden dreams of youth, mingled with the realities of life. Grounded in excellent studies, gifted with a fine organ and natural eloquence, he soon made way in his profession, whilst his good qualities—intercourse with the world gaining for him a sufficient ease of manner to set them off—began to develop themselves, and in a very short time he became a general favourite with young and old. He was quoted as an example to the sons, and looked upon as a very desirable suitor for the daughters. But the parents were not alone in discovering his merits; he was not slow in perceiving that Madame Cadières had prophesied rightly, in assuring him that he

had no rejection to apprehend on the part of their fair scions. Even the languid and proud Marie Langières grew more animated in his presence, and the sprightly Marie Guyol more pensive; but his heart, from the first hour of meeting, acknowledged no other sovereign but Catherine.

Whether, after all, the mother triumphed in Madame Cadières' bosom, and she could not remain insensible to the advantage of settling her daughter so happily and comfortably as she had an opportunity of doing with my father, and therefore thought it a matter of conscience to keep her doors open to him, or that she was actuated merely by a feeling of kindness, he could never discover; but her house became a sort of second home, where all his leisure hours were spent; his place was marked at the hospitable board, where a frank welcome ever awaited him.

He was treated by Catherine with the utmost cordiality; and, though her manner remained as calm and grave as ever, he could not help fancying that he was daily gaining

ground in her esteem, and that her preference was insensibly ripening into a warmer feeling. The bare possibility of such a thing sufficed to gild every hour of his life with sunshine. How often did he picture to himself the rapturous joy with which he would clasp the dear girl to his bosom,—his own, his Catherine, for life. With what downcast eyes and blushing cheeks would she still, even when a wife, receive him on his return home; and how he would teach her lip to smile, and something sweeter still. How quietly, but yet cheerfully, would she fulfil the little home duties that make home so comfortable—the only comfortable spot on earth. How her meek virtues would clothe her in a lasting beauty, that, like his love, would grow with coming years. All the dreams of an honourable love were his. He would sit gazing on her in silence by the hour together, rapt in thought, whilst a glowing, ardent admiration filled his breast, equally inspired by the sun-beam playing on his mistress' golden tresses, the passing pallor of her cheek, or the soft murmur of her voice. In short, love made him a poet.

Having no reason to conceal these sentiments, they soon became pretty generally known, and formed the topic of conversations it was sometimes his chance to overhear. One autumnal evening, as he was quietly reclining against one of the prim, tall box hedge rows in Madame Cadières' garden, a few of her merry young guests happened to seat themselves on the other side of the leafy barrier; and, unconscious of his vicinity, handled the subject with no great ceremony.

"As for me," said Marie Langières, as if in reply to something previously advanced, "I am sure I do not see why the Cadières should refuse Monsieur Jules Chaudon. I am even better connected than Catherine; my uncle is a judge; I might hope for a *de*, at least, before my name, whenever I chose to change it, and yet I don't know that I should have refused him myself, had he proposed to me."

"Nor I," said Mademoiselle Guyol, "although he is so grave, and likes so little the theatre. However, if she should marry him, it is a comfort to think that he will never take her to Paris,

where it is my great ambition to reside, for any girl with tolerable looks is said to cut an uncommon figure there."

"For my part," exclaimed Mademoiselle Reboul, "I had rather marry him than that old Monsieur Renoir, whom my parents wish me to wed, for all that he is so rich, and certainly, as most people would think, the best match of the two."

"Not I, *par exemple*," returned Mademoiselle la Rue, whose predilection for money Madame Cadières had touched upon in her first conversation with my father; "I wish Monsieur Renoir would ask me, that's all! Were he fifty times as old and as ugly, I'd accept him at the very first asking. 'If fortune be not happiness, 'tis the better half of it,' says my grand-mamma, and I believe her."

"That's dutiful," said Mademoiselle Guyol, laughing; "and now, young ladies, let's see if we shall each of us be gratified in our dearest wishes. Here is a daisy I pluck for Marie Langières; I'll tear each leaf off with a *yes* or a *no*, alternately, and we'll see with what word

the last will fall—that will be fate’s decision. Come, say, pretty daisy,—Shall Marie Langières marry a chevalier, or a monsieur *de*, or even an officer—she would so fain be a fine lady? *Yes—no—yes—no*. No! ha, ha, ha!” laughed the merry girl; “she’ll marry an underwriter after all, or an usher, or a schoolmaster, or, perhaps, take the veil. Well—let’s see! now it’s my turn.—Shall I ever see Paris? Again the flower says—*no*. Shall Mademoiselle Reboul marry Renoir?—*no*! Well, that’s strange! And Marie de la Rue, shall she find a Cræsus for a suitor?—*no*! Well, that’s odd! Shall any one of us marry at all, I wonder?” But the harmless flowret seemed unpropitious, for again it determined—*no*! “Well, that’s stupid!” said Mademoiselle Guyol, impatiently; “I’ll know if Catherine will accept Monsieur Jules?”

My father did not hear the conclusion of the childish trick, for Catherine herself came up the alley in which he sat, and he had not yet sufficient courage to put the question to the only true oracle, the sweet girl herself.

A short time after this, my father witnessed

a strange incident, which I must not omit to relate, for it bears upon the story.

It was a frequent amusement of the inhabitants of Toulon to make excursions into its delightful vicinities, on which occasions the old axiom of the more the merrier seemed to be the order of the day ; and, in the summer season, gay caravans were constantly seen issuing from the town gates.

Madame Cadières had invited a large party to accompany herself and her bevy of young companions on a visit to a cave of celebrity in the neighbourhood, that had served as a resting-place to some saint or other, but ninety-two and ninety-three have so sadly confused these superstitious traditions, that I cannot precisely inform you of the whereabouts, nor the exact object, of their curiosity or devotion. I only know it was to answer both ends, and that my father was, as usual, invited to make one of the party.

This place was at a considerable distance from the town, to which it was agreed they should return by moonlight, being too many—

for their servants accompanied them—to have anything to fear from the unsettled state of the roads. Gay was the little band, and none gayer than my father. The warmer glow which the sun of the south gives to man's spirits, as it lends a richer hue to its flowers, a sweeter fragrance to its breezes, ripening all it lights upon to a more finished existence, imparted to the whole cavalcade a tone of hilarity, to which old and young, master and man, yielded without control, and all laughed in the face of smiling nature around them. Even Catherine seemed, to a certain degree, infected with the general cheerfulness, though her enjoyment in no way interfered with her usual repose of manner. My father rode the whole day by her side un-reproved by herself, and unmolested by others, as though his right to that place of honour was silently acknowledged by all. Catherine spoke freely and feelingly on all subjects; and though not brilliantly witty, her frank and gentle earnestness imparted to her conversation a charm which rendered him perfectly insensible to the gloomy silence maintained by her insepa-

rable friend, Mademoiselle Raymond, whose joyless countenance and chilling aspect made her like unto a shadow thrown across their path.

The merry devotees reached the aim of their pilgrimage in safety, performed their somewhat protracted devotions, and refreshed themselves with a plentiful cold repast, the ingredients for which had been brought from town, in large baskets, wherewith a couple of strong mules had been laden.

Up to this time every thing had been most favourable ; but when their meal was finished, and they prepared to return, the sky, which had gradually assumed a threatening appearance, poured forth a shower of rain as violent as it was unexpected, forcing every one to cover. The same tree sheltered my father and Mademoiselle Cadières, nor did either seem to feel the circumstance an annoyance.

They all fancied the cloud would soon spend its fury, and the weather clear again, such sudden and apparently causeless atmospherical changes being very common in our climate ; but instead of mending, matters grew worse

with every minute. The thunder growled, at first indistinctly, and the lightning occasionally illumined the lurid heavens with a faint flash ; but soon the storm broke forth with unparalleled might, and it was as much as my father could do to prevent his fragile companion from being dashed to the ground by the hurricane.

He was at first amazed,—then frightened at the effect of the storm upon her nerves. As it increased, she grew more silent and more pale, seemed gradually to lose all consciousness of his kind attentions, and even of his very presence, and yielded herself up completely to her terror. Remonstrances and encouragement were alike disregarded ; he took her hand, but she tore it impatiently from him. He then grasped her by the arm to force, since he could not persuade, her to leave the shelter of the tree, which bowed to the wind in a manner to make him dread it would snap, and crush them in its fall.

The rain was blinding. Large hail stones were driven furiously into their faces ; he vainly strove to conduct Catherine towards some bushes that grew at a short distance, and which

afforded, at least, protection from the wind. Escaping his grasp, she uttered a few angry expressions, in a sharp tone, such as he never thought to have heard from her lips; and, cowering down upon the field amid the rank grass laid by the rain, panting breathless with the excess of terror, she lay in dangerous proximity to the tree.

Fortunately, however, the hurricane was not of long duration, and the air soon became filled with calls and shouts, as, one by one, the scattered members of the party emerged from their various places of refuge. The young ladies looked all the lovelier for the unavoidable disarray of their costume, in spite of pale cheeks and lank hair; but the elder dames were greater sufferers by this trivial mishap, and more concerned for its consequences. They looked disconsolately at the rain, which, although the wind had ceased, continued to pelt them most unmercifully,—then at their dripping clothes, and at the lowering heavens, to which the dusk of evening now began to impart an additional obscurity, and finally called upon the aged

servant, who acted as guide, to join them in a hasty consultation.

My father, all this time, stood near Mademoiselle Cadières, to whom he did not venture again to speak. She still lay apparently insensible in the wet grass, and he was much relieved by the approach of Mademoiselle Raymond, who stepped up to the prostrate Catherine, and addressed her in a decided manner.

“Rise, Catherine—for shame—why will you ever remain a child? Rise, I say! Do you not see that all is over? I hope these ladies are not going to remain here all night, or ride in their damp clothes; you and I, at least, must walk forward.”

Mademoiselle Raymond spoke rather with an air of authority than affection, and my father observed with surprise that it produced an almost instantaneous effect. Catherine rose at her bidding, and walked on with the passive obedience of a child, looking with reviving confidence into her stern features.

“Ah!” thought my father, “hers is a weak as well as a gentle spirit, and requires no less

guidance than support—the most amiable of all characters for a wife. Well, I am able to afford her both.”

“It is not easy to understand,” said Madame Cadières, in an apologetic manner to the company fast gathering around, “how so gifted a being as my Catherine, so superior to others of the same age and sex, can be afraid of thunder, and tremble at the wind. To be sure, I was always a dreadful coward in these things, but that’s no reason why——”

“It is the weakness of her nerves,” said Eleonore Raymond, somewhat sharply; “they are singularly irritable, though you will not perceive it, and I advise you not to expose her any longer to this cold shower-bath than you can help.”

Though the advice was ungraciously given, its wisdom went directly home to the mother’s heart; besides, it accounted favourably for a weakness in her daughter’s character which she imagined to be a flaw, and she gratefully availed herself of this opportunity of turning the attention of the listeners into another channel.

It was promptly decided that they should proceed on foot along a cross road leading to a village well known to their guide, where they hoped to find an inn of some sort or other. The attendants were to bring up the rear with the mules and baggage.

Again it fell to my father's lot to escort Catherine and Eleonore. The latter gave him little or no trouble; it was but seldom she needed his assistance, and never his encouragement. Not so his fairer companion; not a step could she advance alone. As the gloom deepened, she looked around in vague apprehension; now fancying a bat was flying about her head—now, that a toad leaped before her in the pathway; then, that dark figures flitted along behind the hedgerows; started at the sound of her own voice, and feared to look back, lest she might behold—she could not herself say what.

For all these imaginary terrors Eleonore every now and then reproved her friend in no gentle tone; and my father perceived, with displeasure, that her remonstrances had more

weight with Catherine than his gentle persuasions. He could have wished Mademoiselle Raymond at the other end of the world; but still Catherine's trembling hand rested on his arm. He could distinctly feel her heart beat against it; she called on his name with soft and timid accents, and he felt happy, as young lovers only can feel, and wished it might be permitted to walk on thus, hand in hand, throughout all space and time.

“At last an inn was discovered. It was crowded with wayfarers surprised by the storm; and all that the surly hostess would or could do, was to allow this new influx of visitors to dry themselves by the kitchen-fire, and to pass the night in a large comfortless room, boasting no beds, and very little furniture of any kind; along the walls of which she distributed heaps of straw for their accommodation; and, poor as this was, they had reason to congratulate themselves upon it; for it was with the utmost difficulty they obtained that no strangers should share the apartment with them.

After much scrambling and laughing on

the part of the juniors, and much grumbling on that of the seniors, the disasters of the evening were tolerably repaired; and all busied themselves in making preparations, as best they could, for the enjoyment of rest, rendered doubly necessary by the exertions of the day.

Catherine, who had by this time completely recovered her equanimity, provided, with the most engaging solicitude, for her mother's comfort. A few cushions, taken from the mules by her brothers, and arranged by her own careful hand, and a coverlid borrowed from the hostess (by a miracle clean and fresh), soon made the old lady a tolerable couch. Madame Langières pillowed herself on her daughter's shoulder; Mesdemoiselles la Rue and Reboul were equally eager in displaying their filial affection; whilst Marie Guyol kept in exercise the gallantry of the few young men who had neither mothers nor sisters to claim their attention.

Eleonore Raymond stood pensively gazing on the various movements of her young friends, with an expression of sadness not habitual to her austere countenance, and which softened

its harsher lines. My father approached her, and inquired if he could be of any service.

“No, I thank you,” she replied, in a less abrupt tone than usual.

“I thought you looked as if you missed something,” he said, apologetically.

“You were right,” she answered. “When I behold these happy children and parents thus occupied, and anxious for one another, I miss my own mother.”

Tears started to her eyes as she spoke, and her voice trembled. For the first time, she appeared to him not absolutely repulsive. She is not pretty, thought he, but decidedly interesting. He would have continued a conversation begun in a tone so congenial to his own feelings, for he was the best of sons; but Mademoiselle Raymond suddenly turned her back upon him, and moved off to another end of the room, as if ashamed of her momentary communicativeness.

“She has not a bad heart; but what a surly, uncongenial temper,” thought my father.

“At last, every thing and every body was

settled. Catherine, whose exhaustion had for some time been visible, now lay stretched upon a couch composed of cloaks and shawls thrown upon the straw; and her brothers already began to nod in their chairs by her side. My father, too, had taken his station at no great distance, in a situation so shaded, that, while no motion of Catherine's could escape him, she could not easily become aware of his vicinity. Even Eleonore Raymond, who sat at the table, on which burned dimly a couple of villanous tallow candles, with her head buried in her hands, remained so still, that it was impossible to say whether she slept or not.

That my father felt neither weary nor sleepy I need perhaps scarcely tell you; and yet young men seldom now-a-days possess sufficient freshness of feeling to know the luxury of a real *bona fide* passion—a pure, yet glowing first love. I am sorry for them; for I think them great losers by the change. Sentiment has its epicurism as well as sensuality; and I consider him a pitiful wight indeed, who knows too much of the latter ever to have tasted the

sweets of the former. However, this is a digression, *revenons à nos moutons*.

It has often been said, and my father felt on this occasion the full force of the observation, that nothing ripens intimacy faster than a journey, or anything resembling it. Weeks, months, of almost daily associations in the usual routine of society, do not mature a budding affection, rub off the mutual diffidence, and efface the doubts, which are its chief impediments, like a whole day spent together. It has something of the familiarity of domestic habits; nor is it possible for the fair lady to maintain herself within the strong ramparts of icy reserve, when exposed to the incessant skirmishes of polite attentions, needed kindnesses, and all the chances that throw young people on such occasions into each other's way. I see by your smile, my young friend, that you think my comparisons and sentiments as *roccocos* as myself; so I will even on with my story.

For the first few hours, everything was hushed in the large crowded chamber, and every one slept, or seemed to sleep. Catherine was

wrapt in the peaceful slumbers of a child, from which even the loud snorings of her brothers were unequal to arouse her. To the young lover's enamoured fancy she seemed more lovely in this placid, gentle repose, than in her most animated moments. But he loved as we of Toulon and Marseilles love; whether she spake or was silent, laughing or sad, kind or otherwise, her last mood ever seemed the most fascinating, and herself more perfect with every passing hour.

Midnight tolled from the neighbouring church in thin, sharp accents, denoting, by the meagre sound, how much it stood in need of fresh bells. My father started at the chime, and looked around. Mademoiselle Raymond was yet in the same position; Marie Guyol had dropped asleep, in the midst of her frolics, like a wearied Hebe; and her admirers had glided to a heap of straw not far off, doubtless with the intention of never losing sight of their divinity, where, nature having overcome them, they lay in a state of the deepest oblivion. Scarcely had the hour ceased to chime, when the moon,

emerging from the cloud that had hitherto veiled her, shone forth in uncontrolled brilliancy, streaming full through the curtainless windows upon Catherine's reclining figure. My father, dreading lest the light should disturb her, was about to seek the means of excluding it, when suddenly she rose to a sitting posture, and stretched forth her hands anxiously.

"I must dress my hair," she said, in an audible, though low voice; "but I cannot find my comb—I fear it is left behind."

He was surprised at the extraordinary demand, and no less so when the elder brother gently roused the younger, who immediately produced the desired object.

"That's right," she said. "Now, bring me a mirror. How can I braid my hair without one? Thank you. Now, take away this odious kerchief—so. Joseph, don't stand in my light."

My father was startled; for it was he, and not her brother, who stood between her and the light of the moon. He moved off, saying to Joseph, as he did so—

"I am afraid my presence annoys Mademoiselle Cadières."

“Not the least in the world,” was the reply. “She is not even aware of it. If it interests you to watch her just now, you may do so, provided you do not attempt to wake her.”

“But she is no longer asleep.”

“She is,” answered Joseph, with a smile. “Have you never before witnessed an instance of somnambulism? My poor sister has been subject to this affliction since her childhood; it is, however, fast wearing off. But hush! she is about to speak.”

“Joseph, bring the light nearer.”

He lighted a candle and placed it by her with great precaution, and my father then perceived that her eyes were completely closed. One brother, at her desire, held the candle, the other, the mirror,—then removing the silk kerchief, she carefully unbraided her tresses and suffered them to flow in natural luxuriance down her shoulders.

I have often heard it said by those who had known her, that Catherine’s hair was finer than any they had ever seen. Of the purest, palest gold colour, and of the softest, most silken tissue, it fell in glittering showers about her, and

literally veiled her person. The only touch of vanity her friends and detractors had been able to trace in Catherine, was in reference to this beautiful ornament of nature. A menial hand was never suffered to profane it, but she braided and smoothed it herself with peculiar care ; and, setting at nought the perverse taste of the time, when ladies befrizzled and bespangled themselves most unmercifully, she gathered them up at the back of her head in a simple Grecian knot, aware, doubtless, that this simplicity displayed their beauty to the greatest possible advantage, and would now and then pass a sky-blue ribbon through them with a coquettish and becoming grace.

Most men, besides admiring beauty in its more broad and general acceptance, are devoted to some separate, individual grace. Some praise a small foot, others offer their homage at the shrine of a snowy, well-formed hand, a third fancies beauty rests in the eye ; my father had always a caprice for fine hair, and this charm in Mademoiselle Cadières, although so strangely exhibited, made no small impression on his imagination.

The light caught the long rich locks as she carefully combed and separated them, and even occasionally played on her closed eyelids without discomposing her. At last she seemed satisfied, and well she might be so, for the most expert practitioner could not, with open eyes and in full daylight, have achieved the work better. She then rose to her feet and made towards the window, feeling with her hands for a curtain.

"There's no shutting out the moon," she said. "Well, it can't be helped. It is but for one night, to-morrow I shall be home again."

"She must be awake," said my father, in a whisper to Joseph, who watched his sister narrowly, without, however, attempting to impede her movements. "She speaks quite connectedly."

"She is asleep, notwithstanding, and we must be careful not to wake her, for that the physician declares is the only danger."

Catherine walked, indeed, somewhat hesitatingly, with outstretched hands, like a blind person, or one groping in the dark, yet contriving with singular nicety to avoid coming in contact with any person or object that stood in her way, ad-

dressing herself to Joseph alone, as if unconscious of the presence of any other.

She next approached the table where Eleonore sat, who, by a slight movement, betrayed that she was either aroused by the circumstance, or, what is more probable, had never slept at all. Catherine took up the light; my father sprang forward to snatch it from her uncertain hold, but Mademoiselle Raymond interfered. Gently pushing him back, she took the candlestick from Catherine's unresisting hand, saying, with her wonted abruptness,—

“Go to your bed, Catherine; night is the time for sleep. Go and rest.”

Catherine hung her head like a chided child, and moved slowly to her couch. She knelt by its side and recited her evening prayer in a sweet, though smothered voice. She never omitted to cross herself at the appropriate places, and even gently struck her breast at certain words expressive of penitence and humility; then laid herself down, and, in another instant, seemed as calm and motionless as though her sleep were unvexed even by dreams.

My father had heard much and read more about the singular abnormity called somnambulism, but had never before witnessed this phenomenon. Now that he, for the first time, beheld its effects in a beloved object, he had sufficient food for meditation until the early dawn broke upon the uncomfortable party, and roused them to fresh exertions. Joseph had warned him that Catherine, in her waking hours, was totally unconscious of having walked and talked during sleep; and that it was thought advisable by her friends not to allude, in any manner, to the circumstance. He therefore greeted her as if nothing unusual had happened, and, after a hasty meal, they mounted and rode homewards.

He would have resumed his place by Catherine's side, but perceived she had fallen to the rear, and was engaged in an earnest conversation with Eleanor Raymond, of which, by the direction of their glances, he could not but guess he was the subject.

"They are discussing your merits," said Mademoiselle Guyol, in the free gay manner of childhood which she had retained while woman-

hood and its graces were rapidly growing upon her; "you never advocated a cause more warmly than Mademoiselle Raymond does yours at this moment, I can assure you."

Before he could frame a reply, she had urged her horse forward and headed the cavalcade. Her words, whether spoken in jest or earnest, somewhat disconcerted him. He could not help fancying they came nearer the mark, as to the fact of his merits being under discussion, than the speaker herself was aware of, though he became nervous at the bare thought that Catherine might be prejudiced against him by the harsh opinions which, in spite of Mademoiselle Guyol's assertion, he doubted not her friend entertained of him, as well as of all the world besides.

The weather, though cloudy and uncertain in the morning, cleared up in the course of the day, and young and old recovered their spirits, which had been damped by the mischance of the previous night. But when my father again joined Catherine, all his efforts to resume the unembarrassed confidential tone of the eve

were unsuccessful; long pauses intervened in their conversation, which Eleonore, as usual, took no trouble to fill up. But whether this chilling restraint originated with himself or Mademoiselle Cadières, he was at a loss to determine. This trifling check naturally rendered their ride back to Toulon less agreeable than their departure; still my father, on the whole, was sorry when it was over, and felt that this excursion had rivetted his chains.

Matters remained for a few months in statu quo. The intimacy continued, obviously encouraged by the mother, and anything but discouraged, as he thought, by the daughter. His parents, to whom he had openly declared his feelings and intentions, approved highly of his choice, and thus all things looked propitious. He fancied, too, that Catherine's disposition gradually became modified, by some unknown cause or other, but which he did not fail, with the sanguineness of youth, to attribute to his own growing influence. She seemed every day less of a saint and more of a woman. This change, while it damped the ambitious hopes

and disconcerted the personal views of her friends, gratified him unspeakably. All parties appeared to soften towards him; even her brother's jealousy diminished, in exact ratio, as the hopes they had built upon their sister began to wane.

It was again spring. Catherine and her mother had removed to their country house, where my father continued to be an every day visitor; and he determined, at last, to venture on the grand question, whose answer was to fix his future happiness or misery. But it would be wearisome to relate, and incredible to believe, how often he went to the house with the firm resolution that that very evening should be the last of suspense, and returned without even having hinted at the subject nearest his heart. Whenever he attempted to bring himself to the point, his courage failed him. Uncertainty was bliss compared to the misery a rejection would inflict.

At last he took heart, and made his proposals in due form to the mother. She was, evidently, by no means taken by surprise; her answer

was fair and candid—it revealed her innermost thoughts.

“It were my duty as a mother,” she said, “to decide for my inexperienced daughter in so grave a business, and most mothers in my condition would, unhesitatingly, and gladly avail themselves of such an offer as yours, so every way satisfactory are your prospects, your connexions, and especially your own qualities. But my Catherine is so superior a being, that what would be wisdom in the mothers of ordinary daughters, would be folly in me. She is the only authority to whom I can refer you in such matters: if she accept you, no one can be more willing than myself to call you son. However different may once have been my hopes and views for my daughter—whatever wishes I may still entertain in my secret heart,—I do not feel justified in depriving her of the earthly advantages that Providence may throw in her path; besides, if she do not reject you, it is a proof heaven willed her not to be of the elect; but if, as I believe, she be one of the chosen, then are such proposals as yours merely the test by which her

virtue is tried. Speak to her yourself, Monsieur Chaudon—I will not seek to influence her either way—we must all abide by her decision.”

He was received by Mademoiselle Cadières with the same kind smile that ever greeted him ; but, somehow, it assumed a more sisterly expression than usual, in his disturbed fancy. She listened to him throughout—and, though awkward enough at first, he grew eloquent with his subject—with a calm, grave attention, and a collectedness of manner, that almost damped his hopes. She blushed once or twice, indeed, at the ardour of his expressions, but never turned away her head, nor trembled, nor, in short, shewed any of those symptoms of embarrassment and fear, so reassuring to a lover’s doubts.

“And now,” she said, in a firm though gentle tone, “now that I have listened to all you have to say, pray do the same by me, and do not interrupt me. I have long guessed the preference with which you honour me. Indeed, Eleonore opened my eyes to it the day we rode back from —” (she mentioned the very excur-

sion, the incidents of which I have detailed to you), “and I would then have renounced your acquaintance, although a source of much real pleasure, but for her advice, which I thought wise, like everything she utters. ‘Do not judge hastily, Catherine,’ she said; ‘you are perfectly aware of Monsieur Jules’ qualities; give yourself the time to be just to them, and to know your own heart. Try it by every test in your power before you consider it altogether Heaven’s—a mistake might cost you dear.’ She spoke at great length of my being misled by vanity—delusions of all kinds—of the necessity of giving my feelings fair play. I yielded to the truth of her observations. I thought you then, as I still do—and I feel a pride in owning the fact—a man whom I could love, because I esteem—to whom I could willingly, gladly, yield up my destiny.” My father’s heart bounded with joy. “But,”—Oh! those *buts*; how they trifle with our best hopes in life, and nip them in the bud, as a hoar frost does the early spring blossoms;—“but, though I could have been content to wed you—could

have loved you—I did not, because I loved God more, and wished to devote myself wholly to his service. Interrupt me not, I entreat. I gave myself a fair trial—saw you every day—received your attentions—courted, rather than avoided, the opportunities of judging your merits—and every day asked my own heart the question you have put me to-day. The answer has invariably been the same. I am not destined for the calm joys and easy duties of a housewife; my vocation speaks loudly in my bosom, haunts me in my dreams, and points out to me the path I must tread.”

My father vehemently contradicted her assertion, and blamed her desire for a conventual life.

“You mistake,” she said, with a quiet smile, “I do not wish to take the veil. Nothing can be further from my thoughts or desires. The idle, dreamy existence of a nun, appears to me the most insignificant and useless of any. My sphere of action and of feeling must be enlarged, not curtailed. No! my mind is fixed on other points. To take up, one day, the

pilgrim's staff, and turn my steps towards the holy city,—such is my plan;—to reach it, through many perils and troubles, and be blessed by his Holiness, my hope. There, under the shadow of his wing, will I dwell,—devote myself and my fortune entirely to the service of the unhappy—the suffering. All women can be kind mothers, complacent wives—they but fulfil nature's instinct; but it is a noble mission for a weak, timid woman, made strong by the spirit of Christianity, to encounter, willingly, danger under every shape—to bear privation and discomfort—to renounce the deceptions and vain joys of the world, that she may soothe, in their excess of misery, the poor, the afflicted, the abandoned; smooth the pillow of infirm dotage, guide the steps of the sightless, bring repentance to the bosom of the wicked, and care for those who have none to protect them. Oh! it is a holy mission, and one to which I burn to devote myself. Seek not to interfere with my vocation; no temptation earth can offer could induce me to renounce it.”

My father listened with mixed feelings of

consternation, pity, and admiration. The heart of an angel seemed unveiling itself. He knew she spoke not vain, calculated words—that they welled from her inmost soul. But, beautiful as he thought the aspirations of that soul, he deemed her views visionary, and was convinced that time would prove this even to herself. Suspecting that, after all, she was more attached to him than she was aware of, he did not renounce his hopes at once, and frankly told her so.

She smiled and sighed at the same time ; but he obtained the permission to continue the trial, with the result of which, she said, having forewarned him—since he was willingly courting error and disappointment—she would not have to fear the reproaches of her conscience.

The words with which she closed the interview were balm to the wounds she had inflicted ; —“ If ever I should change my determination, which is not likely, rest assured it will be in your favour only.”

After this explanation my father was very unhappy, but not hopeless ; and continued his

visits to the house. Indeed, his footing there seemed exactly the same as heretofore, and a stranger to the circumstances of the case would never have guessed but that he was an accepted, not a rejected suitor.

Upon being informed of her daughter's final decision, Madame Cadières' feelings were of a mixed kind. She was glad and sorrowful, proud and humbled; for, should Catherine accomplish her destiny in obscurity, she, like most mothers, would not have been best pleased to see her daughter remain a spinster, whilst she would have the mortification to behold the fair scions of almost every other matron of her set more or less advantageously settled. But she was consoled by the reflection that my father's love would, in all probability, outlive his refusal, and that she could at any time secure him if nothing better turned up.

My father, as I have said, suffered himself by no means to be discouraged; he even became, every day, more convinced that he was gaining ground in Catherine's affections,—that her childish adherence to early plans and fan-

tastic notions was giving way to the voice of nature and the force of truth. He was not the only one to perceive that she was gradually descending from those imaginary spheres wherein her young imagination had been foolishly suffered to wander; that the tone of her feelings was growing more natural, and that her thoughts were becoming more bent towards the realities of life. Fools and the envious deplored the change; but all people of sense rejoiced, especially the young men of the town, for Catherine was blessed with a good inheritance as well as with beauty and goodness.

It was very much the fashion with the idle youths of the day—not being, as now, allowed to dabble in politics ere they were fledged—to make a great parade of gallantry. It was one of their customs to elect, every now and then, some fair idol of the hour, who was adulated, talked over, and rhymed at, until she either wedded or faded, when a new election took place. Catherine, from earliest dawn of womanhood, had been the standard *belle* of her own society; but, at this epoch of her life, her

loveliness ripened into such fulness as to become the theme of universal homage. Officers and students, *aspirants de marine* and seminarists, all agreed in electing her, with one voice, the queen of beauty; and strove, with envious emulation, to throw themselves in the way of the young girl, who could not take a walk round the ramparts, or look out of her window by the merest chance, without encountering a host of eager eyes, ready to drink in the most casual of her glances.

My father was more distressed than flattered by the general homage thus rendered to the object of his affections; for he dreaded the appearance of competitors to the prize which he was so eager to snatch to himself; nor were his misgivings altogether without foundation.

One young man, who had just arrived from a northern province to join his regiment, quartered for the time at Toulon, viewed Catherine with a deeper, purer admiration, than the idle throng. He belonged to the privileged classes; for he not only had a *de* before his

name, but bore one of those made illustrious in the annals of our country, by the deeds of his forefathers. His fortune was not inferior to his birth; yet he did not disdain, a few months after his arrival, to depose all these advantages at Mademoiselle Cadières' feet, and entreat her to share them with him.

Catherine unhesitatingly refused. To understand fully the merit of this rejection, I must again remind you of the state of society previous to the Revolution. The king in the fairy tales, who wedded a shepherdess tending her flock, scarcely conferred upon her a greater honour, than did the gentleman of those days upon a bourgeoisie, in making her his spouse. One must bear in mind the different position of the *gentilhomme* at that epoch, and how inconceivably greater were its advantages, to understand clearly that such a refusal was actually a sacrifice.

In this case, too, the young lady could not reasonably object to the person or mental qualities of the lover. Youthful, tolerably good-looking, thoroughly enamoured of her, he pos-

sessed besides that high polish of manner, which it is not prejudice to believe the property of those only who have leisure to bestow on its cultivation.

Still vanity and ambition left the heart untouched which love had failed to move; and the agonizing suspense my father endured whilst the affair was on the *tapis*, gave way to the most exuberant feelings of triumph when it was decided. His rival, deeply galled at what he conceived to be an insult, and yet too sincerely attached to resent his disappointment by an affectation of contemptuous indifference, obtained leave of absence, and eventually an exchange of regiment; so that he left the town immediately, never to return.

Madame Cadières' ambition, all devotee as she was, had received a severe blow by Catherine's determination. But when she pressed her on this point, the answer was invariably the same—"If you insist on my choosing a husband, then let it be Monsieur Jules Chaudon:" and there the matter rested; for, like most weak mothers, Madame Cadières found it impossible

to take up the reins she had once suffered to escape from her hands.

Gratified as my father was at this decision of his mistress, so favourable to his own wishes, still he felt daily more anxious about the issue of his suit. His own ardent devotion, together with that of the rejected officer, contributed to spread the fame of Catherine's charms; and he doubted not but rivals would spring up from every quarter. They soon indeed became numerous as blackberries; but Mademoiselle Cadières was as inexorable to her many lovers as ever was that model of female truth and excellence, fair Penelope herself. Thus my father's fears again gave way to brighter hopes. Her manner to him continued the same as ever; still he fancied he now and then could trace the semblance of a blush on her countenance, when he ventured to praise; but her damask cheek was habitually tinged with so soft a glow, that he might easily have been mistaken.

Mademoiselle Raymond, who, in spite of her uncourteous, chilling demeanour, he could not but think, was well disposed towards him,

since the kind advice she had once bestowed in his favour, might perhaps best have informed him of what he really had to expect; for she possessed the whole of Catherine's confidence. Indeed, though constantly surrounded by the young ladies he had met on his first visit to the house, Catherine's intimacy dated with them but from the epoch of her first communion, having received their religious instructions at the same time, and from the same person. With the Catholics, especially in the narrow circles of provincial life, this often forms a bond that lasts throughout existence; at any rate, is seldom broken during the first few years that elapse after the event. But Eleonore Raymond was a friend from the very cradle, as it were, and one whom Catherine could love and trust without reserve. They were constantly with each other; and more serious in disposition, graver in manner, than their youthful companions, often kept aloof and to themselves, even in moments of the greatest apparent sociability.

Although my father was fully aware of the

immense power of a female companion and confidante in the furtherance of a love affair—and it may be imagined that a certain degree of intimacy had arisen between them from their daily meetings for the space of a couple of years—there was that about Mademoiselle Raymond which checked all advance to familiarity. Always with Catherine, she seemed like the shadow-side of a bright picture, in which objects are so indistinctly represented, that the beholder can with difficulty discern them. When spoken to, it was impossible to decide whether she was affronted or pleased, amused or wearied, when listening to the conversation of others. She was kind to Catherine alone—communicative with no one else; to every other individual, without exception, her manner was cold to repulsion.

My father could not often overcome a certain disagreeable sensation, when addressing her, even though convinced she had once acted a friendly part towards him, and might do so again. But, one evening, finding her alone in the parlour, while the company were dispersed

in the garden, he summoned up sufficient resolution to entreat her good offices with Catherine. Her answer was of a nature to preclude all recurrence to the subject for the future.

“I never,” she said, “would meddle or mar in so grave an affair as the marriage of other people. It is a trouble for which one seldom reaps thanks, whether success attend the endeavour or the reverse. Parents are the only lawful advisers in such cases.”

“I am, then, totally without friendly assistance,” said my father, despondingly.

“Catherine herself is your best friend,” said Mademoiselle Raymond, with marked emphasis; and turning away with her usual abruptness, she left him to digest the meaning of her words at his leisure.

The autumn of 1728 had just begun, and Toulon was sadly at a loss for some novelty wherewith to while away the tedious hours of rainy weather which they had for some time to endure. Even the little *coterie* to which my father belonged was at a stand still; for Monsieur Jules Chaudon’s long-protracted attachment to Made-

moiselle Cadières had grown to be so stale an affair, that the intelligence of their marriage would scarcely have elicited an exclamation, when suddenly a new star appeared in their hemisphere, and roused the inhabitants of our good town from their momentary torpor.

Among the numerous beehives of cowls and shaven crowns that Toulon possessed, it boasted a seminary of Jesuits, and several establishments belonging to the order of Mount Carmel. The latter certainly had more partisans in the town than the former; and even the Lord Bishop himself was supposed to favour them greatly. The Carmelites had the best preachers, the guidance of the most fashionable souls, and, in short, carried it with a high hand over the Jesuits.

For a long while were the latter forced to bear this mortification—not without complaint or murmur, it is true; but still they were compelled to yield the step to their rivals. That this could not last for ever, that something must be done, was certain; but what that something should be, it took some time to consider—as

much indeed as a few years, it would seem, since my father had spent already a couple in Toulon—before they thought of the expedient which they finally fell upon.

They had—namely, in one of their communities at Aix—a preacher, who was singularly distinguished by his eloquence and fiery zeal. His reputation had spread far and wide over the country, and his order considered him as one of its most useful members. Such a person only could be opposed to the barefooted Carmelites with success. He would bear down every thing before him at Toulon, as he had done wherever he had appeared: the triumph of the Jesuits, and the defeat of the Carmelites would be complete.

This man was accordingly called to Toulon, under the title of Rector of the Royal Seminary of Chaplains to the Navy. He was expected with great anxiety by the rival parties, and with intense curiosity by the whole town; for the Jesuits had artfully enough contrived that many interesting rumours should be afloat respecting their new champion.

The gossips of the place took up the subject with avidity. The success of the new preacher in the pulpit, his incredible zeal for the conversion of erring souls, the mighty persuasions by which he brought new votaries to the church, his power over the hearts of men, or rather women—for among them, it would appear, his talents had been chiefly exercised—were the theme of every conversation, from the highest to the lowest circles. The Carmelites indeed assumed a scornful, incredulous smile, as if very well assured that all this great stir would turn out much ado about nothing, whilst the Jesuits looked as if about to celebrate a *Te Deum* for victory.

At last, the news of the reverend father's arrival was spread throughout the town. It was announced that he would preach at the church of the Jesuits on the ensuing Sunday; and until that hour of trial, he was carefully kept from prying eyes, lest his novelty should wear off.

The decisive Sunday at length arrived. The moment the doors of the church were

thrown open, a rush was made by the expecting multitude, as if they were going to a show, instead of the decent, grave approach due to the house of God. Everybody who was anybody was there; and among the rest, my father, who was not without some curiosity about the matter.

When John Baptiste Girard entered the pulpit, all eyes were bent on him, with the anxious curiosity with which spectators examine a new actor, on whose merits they are about to decide.

He was plain to ugliness, which my father considered detrimental to an orator. Already past fifty, his tall, gaunt, emaciated frame made him look considerably older. His skin, sallow and drawn like parchment, adhered tightly to the frontal and cheek bones, giving to their cavities beneath a remarkably ascetic appearance—his pallor, contrasting with harsh, heavy un-intellectual brows—his large mouth, and ears that stuck to his head like two plates, formed altogether one of the coarsest and most ungainly exteriors imaginable. His eye was the

only redeeming point about the man—large, dark, and fiery, it scanned the assembled crowd with a glance of fierce assurance that seemed the prologue to success, and was not devoid of a sort of rude dignity.

His voice was at first husky, but cleared by degrees, until it became loud and full, and, like his glance, seemed to search every conscience and descend into every heart.

He chose a simple text, and developed it with singular perspicuity, avoiding to overburthen it with hyperbolical amplification. His periods were well rounded, without exaggeration; every sentence had a point—every word a meaning; his comparisons were just, though sufficiently flowery to be graceful; his argument was close and rapid;—in short, my father said he might have been a lawyer, and an uncommonly good one.

As a preacher that day, his success was complete. The Carmelites were routed; and the Jesuits looked that ineffably humble and meek triumph of which women and monks only have the secret.

From that day the issue of the quarrel was not dubious. Father Girard's celebrity daily accrued, to the no small satisfaction of his order. His eloquence and ambition took bolder flights as he grew more at home in his new residence ; and soon the town was filled with the account of the proselytes he was making.

Gradually, the churches of the bare-footed Carmelites were deserted, their preachers voted tame, their confessors unsatisfactory, and the tide of public favour was rapidly ebbing from them. Father Girard understood, marvellously, the art of warming the zeal of elderly ladies, and making them denounce and renounce the pleasures in which they could scarcely continue to take a share ; but he had for some time no opportunity of exercising his power over the minds of the junior members of the community, and this for a reason which I must explain.

Catherine was considered by all the young girls of her age, or thereabouts, as their model and guide in religious matters ; and though many were anxious to try the new confessor, they dared not even so much as manifest their

desire openly, before it had received the sanction of her example. But there reigned a great curiosity among them to discover her opinion upon the subject; for although resolved to abide by it, they were naturally desirous that her views should coincide with their own. Though she had attended his sermons several times, without ever dropping the slightest hint about the matter in question, they did not think fit to mention it until such time as she should afford them a fair opening for so doing. They felt confident that she would explain herself one day or other, and awaited the moment in silent but eager expectation.

In their anxiety concerning the all-absorbing question, they forgot other topics that had lately much engrossed them, such as the approaching nuptials of Marie Langières and Marie La Rue, which promised to be very brilliant, the former being about to unite herself with the only son of a *fermier general*, who had just obtained a *savonnette à vilain*, as it was called (a position among the aristocracy, by means of the purchase of an estate, to which a

title was annexed—a term applied in derision by the nobility, who meant thereby to insinuate that the purchaser had acquired means whereby to wash off his plebeianism); and Mademoiselle La Rue was shortly to be led to the altar by Monsieur Renoir, the Cræsus of the province. Thus the taste of the one for grandeur and the other for wealth was in a fair way to be gratified. Mademoiselle Guyol's flirtations and *inconséquences* with her admirers among the officers had also been much discussed, as well as the obstinate refusals of all proposals by Eleonore Raymond, whose wealth tempted many families to seek her alliance. All these interesting subjects were swallowed up for the moment by the new interest excited by Father Girard.

Several weeks elapsed before the desired explanation took place. At last, Mademoiselle Cadières formally invited all her young friends to a species of conclave, on which occasion it was understood she would explicitly announce her opinion on the much-mooted point. A collation was, as usual, to soften the fatigue of so grave a debate. All the young ladies of

her coterie joyfully accepted the invitation, which included no gentlemen, except Catherine's brothers, and my father, whom she treated with the same confidence as though he in reality made part of her family.

The sitting amused him not a little at the time, ignorant as he was of the influence it would have upon his own fate and that of all present. How little did any of those there reunited, revelling in their youth and their prospects, laughing rather to ease their heart of its fulness of joy than at the objects that raised that laughter—how little did they dream they were nearing, with careless, dancing steps, the abyss that was about to engulf them.

Catherine sat, in childish state, in a purple velvet chair of antique shape, that had been brought down from the lumber-room for the purpose of giving the meeting a more imposing effect. On her right, on a plain tabouret, sat the languishing Marie Langières, who already spoke confidently of soon having a tabouret *à la cour*; and next to her was placed Made-moiselle La Rue, who remarked on the oc-

casion, that once in her new home, such vile things as these *mesquins* settees should never be seen. On Catherine's left was Mademoiselle Raymond, and next to her my father. The two brothers stood behind their sister's chair, as gentlemen of honour; and opposite to her sat the *piquante* Marie Guyol, whose pretty head passed that of all the rest by one good half, so that, as she herself observed, she might easily have been mistaken for the president.

The girlish fancy that had inspired these arrangements was a happy augury in my father's eyes; the more Catherine's character would lose of its loftiness and austerity, the more likely and near seemed the realization of his hopes. When silence was established, and all were willing to listen, Catherine began:—

“I know, my dear friends,” she said, “that you have long tacitly awaited my decision upon a grave and important point—namely, whether it be best to adhere to the Carmelite priests, who have hitherto guided and enlightened our consciences, or choose a new director in the person of the celebrated Father

Girard, of the Jesuits. I feel flattered by your reliance on me, but would not misuse it by seeking to influence you in a matter where conscience alone can decide. But I owe it to myself, as well as to you, to lay before you the real cause of the line of conduct I myself am about to pursue, which might otherwise be imputed to motives furthest from my heart. It is not Father Girard's brilliant eloquence that has touched me, nor am I dazzled by his great reputation; for I should have resisted both these impulses, as being too worldly to induce me to resign my soul into the keeping of a stranger. No! it is the will of Heaven. You all remember St. John's Day, when Father Girard preached at the church of the Carmelites. The service being over, I was about to depart, when, crossing the porch, I happened to meet him, and caught his eye, as I had often done before, resting upon me. At the same instant, an angel form appeared visibly to me, pointing towards him, and a voice distinctly murmured in my ear—'This is the man who is to lead thee unto Heaven.' I well nigh fainted with

surprise, and can well imagine yours in listening to this extraordinary fact. Yet, when we remember how of yore the will of God was revealed in visions to his chosen, we may wonder, but may not doubt. His voice bids me seek Father Girard, to whom, alone, the mission of my salvation is given. I follow not, therefore, my own blind, erring judgment, which might deceive, but the guidance of Providence, which I obey with joyful confidence. But you, who have not received such direct warnings from above, should weigh the matter gravely in your own minds, and submit it to another course of reasoning, before you follow my example, if indeed you wish to do so."

The whole party was, as you may conceive, amazed at this communication, which evidently was new, even to Eleonore, who looked the extreme of displeasure while listening to it. My father, too, felt pained by an announcement, which exhibited the object of his affection in a less favourable light than that in which he had hitherto regarded her. He and Eleonore testified their disapprobation by a cold silence,

whilst Catherine's eye—lighted up with the secret triumph of a devotee, who fancies herself singled out by Heaven as an object of especial predilection—sought in vain for sympathy in their grave countenances. But the rest of the party expressed their admiration of the secret ways of Providence, and obviously attached the most ridiculous importance to this, as my father then thought it, fantastic communication.

He could, at the time, scarcely listen to Catherine with common patience; but frequently in after times did he remember the details of her recital with much interest, for they afforded him the first clue to the unravelling of a succession of mysteries, upon which for years his reason could throw no light.

The general curiosity being sated, the suffrage was loud in favour of Father Girard, who was henceforth to direct all the tender consciences there present. For although not favoured, like Mademoiselle Cadières, with an especial call, they conceived that she had merely been the chosen vehicle whereby Providence deigned to

make manifest its will unto them. Catherine was too much carried away by the elation of her spirits at the moment to notice the reserve and silence of Eleonore, which was evidently intended as a reproof. As to my father, he was merely angry with the fuss made about what he conceived at best but an extraordinary hallucination, which he thought it unpardonable in Catherine to bring thus forward. For the rest, he cared but little who was the director of her conscience; Girard was old and ugly, and, in his opinion, would do quite as well as another. When, however, at last, Mademoiselle Raymond's opinion was thought of and solicited, he perceived she viewed the matter in another light.

“I am sorry to say,” she answered, “I differ from you all—most especially from Catherine—but opinion is personal, and we are all at liberty to think as we please. We have been trained from childhood by the worthy Father Alexis of the Carmelites—what we know of our religion we owe to his care. Hitherto he has had the sole management of our consciences,

and we are not worse than our neighbours. Why should we, suddenly, turn ungrateful for the many benefits which we have so often acknowledged, and pain our good, kind, old confessor? This, I regret to say, seems, to me at least, a mere love of change, caprice, imitation. I, for one, am quite certain of having no part or parcel in Catherine's vision, and I am not likely to be visited by one myself. I shall not, therefore, attend Father Girard either at the confessional or even at mass, though I allow him to be an excellent preacher."

A murmur of disapprobation went round the circle, and the words heretic—heretical relations, more than once reached my father's ear, to whose memory they recalled what Madame Cadières had told him of Mademoiselle Raymond's situation and parentage.

He was deeply impressed with the good sense of her remarks, and the clearness with which they were delivered; but they had evidently given offence, for the others did not again address her, and even Catherine's manner was cooler than usual until the party broke up.

His road led past the house of Elconore's guardian, and for the first time since their acquaintance he accompanied her to the door. Although not alone, they walked somewhat in advance together, and could exchange some few sentences unheard. He turned to account this opportunity of sifting her feelings more closely concerning that evening's proceeding, and to his surprise she threw off, in great measure, the frigidity from which he had not yet seen her depart.

"I am much grieved," she said, "by what I have just heard; and by the manner in which Catherine has announced her intention, I know it will be in vain for me to attempt to dissuade her."

My father begged her to explain herself further, for he could see no harm in this caprice *de confesseur*, independently of the pain the change might inflict on the worthy man who had hitherto officiated in that capacity. Her answer struck him forcibly.

"I could not well convey my real opinion, or rather, I should say, develop it completely,

before so many biassed persons as were there to-night," she said, "because the mere fact of my poor mother, whom I do not remember, and her relations, whom I have never seen, having been protestants, is enough to create a strong prejudice against me; but you, I am sure, are not so bigoted, and will not misunderstand me if I tell you that I object to Father Girard as a confessor for Catherine on account of his zeal. The good fathers who have until now guided us, used all their efforts to maintain my poor friend within the bounds of real piety, and prevent her imagination from taking too wild a flight. They thought of her happiness and their duty only, and were not, like this idol of the day, struggling for notoriety. I hear that of him which convinces me he will be but too glad to have such a disciple, and will make of her an instrument for the advancement of his own vainglory and ambition. But I am afraid," she added, hesitatingly, "you will think it very bold in one so young, so inexperienced, to advance such opinions."

Being reassured on this point, she continued.

“Next to the danger of over-exciting a young person so predisposed to religious enthusiasm as Catherine is, there will be another and very serious evil attendant upon this. There will arise among these young ladies an emulation of holiness, a struggle to get furthest in the esteem and good graces of their teacher, who will know how to turn this rivalry to the advantage of his reputation. His disciples will no longer consider religion a duty, but desecrate it into an occupation—an amusement to fill up the void that must at times be felt in such a quiet life as ours. The loftier feeling of religion will be lost, in the hearts of many, amid its grimaces.”

Mademoiselle Raymond had reached home before my father could utter a reply; he would have been puzzled, indeed, how to frame one—and he felt grateful for the circumstance that released him from the necessity of so doing. He required time to think over all she had said, and to reflect on the strong masculine good sense she had that evening evinced. “If she has not many of the graces of her sex,” thought

he, “ she has some of the qualities of ours—she is sincere, clear-headed, and plain-spoken. The very woman one would select for a friend.”

From that hour dated a total revulsion of feeling in favour of Mademoiselle Raymond. When once a woman has honoured a man with any portion of her confidence, however slight, and finds that he respects it, from that time forth he is no longer indifferent to her, and it is his own fault if he do not improve the opening thus afforded him. The evil spell that had kept so long asunder two beings formed to understand and appreciate each other was now broken; and henceforth, whenever they met, Eleonore and my father spoke freely and kindly to each other.

The change which Eleonore had foretold, took place more rapidly than either she or my father expected, and extended even to the families and friends of the young ladies. Through its tender offshoots the wily Jesuit was regenerating the whole of the *Toulonaise* society, or rather filling it with reports of his own fame.

None dreamed of noticing my father's growing

intimacy with Eleonore, so wrapt were they in their new confessor. They talked of nothing among themselves but his humility, his austerity, his surpassing love of God, the severity with which he scanned the consciences of others, the hopes, the fears he knew so well how to awaken; even Catherine's brothers could join in these discourses, from which my father and Eleonore only were excluded, knowing nothing of the subject. It is incredible in how short a time this want of sympathy estranged them from her who had but lately prized them so highly, and how much it threw in the background those who had hitherto played principal parts in that limited circle.

What is stranger yet, is the deep pain this circumstance caused my father, independently of his attachment to Catherine. To understand fully his feelings on this occasion, we must have felt ourselves ousted out of our intimacies and habits by a total stranger, who comes across us, and everywhere fills our place. Eleonore bore the growing coolness of her friend, and the glances of suspicion and dislike cast askance at

her by the others, with a stoical indifference, which my father thought did more credit to her nerves than her heart.

A change had, indeed, come over everybody. Marie Langières seemed, like Pygmalion's statue, to have become animated under the hands of Father Girard — and Mademoiselle Guyol to forget her smiles and to learn the use of frowns, for the advantage and better teaching of the young aristocratic officers of the garrison, whose flighty homage she had but lately received with so much pleasure. Even Mademoiselle La Rue forgot her ruling passion, and spoke of the blessing of poverty, which gives a meek spirit. As to the approaching nuptials of some of the young ladies, it seemed that, by a tacit understanding, a subject so full of levity and worldliness was altogether to be eschewed. They walked as though they dreaded the contact of anything so material as earth, even with the soles of their feet; and their eyes sought the ground as if to avoid the subjects of scandal with which the air around must be filled. Confession, communion, and penance, employed all

their days—holy converse with each other their evenings — and melancholy meditations their nights. The great reform that the rector had wrought in these lovely young pupils soon became known, and his power in reclaiming and purifying souls was the theme of every tongue.

The Jesuits deemed their triumph complete ; but the Carmelites bided their time with that quiet, untiring patience of which men of the world cannot even form a conception ; for it requires the leisure of the cell or the solitary closet to admit of the constant recurrence of the same idea, and the tension of the mind on one and the same point for any length of time. Hence the patient, enduring resentment which from time to time has been known to actuate monks and prisoners — in short, all those doomed to inactive, incomplete existences.

But of all the alterations produced by Father Girard's arrival, none was so evident as that wrought in Mademoiselle Cadières. Every time my father beheld her—and his opportunities for so doing were gradually curtailed—he found her less like herself—the heroine of his

first dream of love ; and yet, rapid as was the process of the change he was watching with such poignant regret, many months elapsed before it was complete ; and he was compelled to confess to his own heart the sad truth that Catherine was, indeed, a new, but not an improved being.

Her manner was strange and fantastic. Whenever the subject mentioned before her had no reference to religion, she either sat abstracted, with folded hands and uplifted eyes, the image of pious meditation, or testified, by fretful tones, her impatience of the topic. Instead, however, of listening with lively interest—as might naturally enough have been concluded—when religious discourse was introduced, she was restless and dissatisfied until she had the lead in the conversation. Then she would break out in the most flighty rhapsodies about visions and martyrdoms, saints and devils, temptations and submissions ; in short, her language was mystic and her ideas confused. She assumed a loftiness, a triumph in look, word, and action, that seemed plainly to

intimate her consciousness of angel wings fast growing and spreading around her, shortly to waft her to the world of fleecy clouds above, which alone now filled her mind waking or sleeping. Her feet scarcely touched the earth when she walked; a painter must have been struck with the light buoyancy of her figure when in motion, so dreamy was its grace, and he might have borrowed inspiration from the heaven-wrapt expression of her countenance.

But how much soever a painter—especially one who had an altar-piece on hand—might have been delighted by a glimpse of the fair devotee, in spite of the poetic grace this new mood imparted to her loveliness, my father remarked, with deep sorrow, that it invaded every corner of her heart. Eleonore had prophesied but too truly on every point. Not only had the religious feelings of Mademoiselle Cadières ripened into enthusiasm,—always dangerous in the young and the imaginative, and most destructive to his own hopes and wishes,—but, what grieved him yet more, the beautiful purity and simplicity of her character was

obviously undermined. Vanity had, indeed, mingled with, and stained, every thought, every feeling.

He might still have worshipped the saint, even whilst renouncing all earthly commune with her, and enshrined her within the niche of remembrance as some vision of a better world; but there was in Catherine's sanctity a spiritual pride, a mixture of Saint Theresa's raptures, in their wild sincerity, with a desire to unveil the mysteries of her heart to the world, that it might be amazed and worship, which, in itself, was sufficient to destroy the illusion in one so clear-sighted as my father.

Perhaps he would have been more blind, had his own feelings not been wounded, and his pride hurt, by the growing and marked coolness of Catherine, which extended even to her once beloved Eleonore. She delighted now in the society of none but those who, like herself, were under Father Girard's direction. The intimacy of these young ladies, but lately differing so much from each other in temper, taste, and prospects, was—to borrow their own

quaint, exaggerated style of expression—a bond of union; they were but as one in submission and love to Heaven and Father Girard, and through him, and with him, of Heaven's elect. It was, indeed, clear enough to the meanest comprehension, that he was the corner-stone of this alliance; for they met, as it seemed, merely for the pleasure of talking of him, and spent all their powers of figurative language in the ever-renewed struggle of outstripping one another in the most fulsome and extravagant adulation of his sanctity.

If their evenings were thus devoted to kind reminiscences of him who had so far succeeded in insinuating himself into their good graces, their days were no less so to his society; and the time he could consecrate to them within the precincts of the church not sufficing to the necessities of their consciences, towards the close of the year he began to attend some of them at their homes. Mademoiselle Cadières was not yet of the number thus honoured—a circumstance which appeared to mortify her not a little, although her poor friend Mademoiselle Langières' state of

health,—so delicate as to cause the delay of her marriage,—might well justify the preference which, at this epoch, the reverend father testified in her favour.

My father's visits at the Cadières' were now so evidently barely tolerated, not desired, by any member of the family, that it required all the fortitude of a lover to persevere in them. But what would he not have borne, rather than be altogether banished from his mistress's presence? Whilst all were thus occupied with one object, and he was overlooked, if not forgotten, his only comfort was the society of Mademoiselle Raymond. With her, at least, he could talk of Catherine, abuse Father Girard, and dwell on his grievances, confident in the luxury of a sympathizing listener—for a change had also come over Eleonore, no less advantageous to her, than that of Catherine was the reverse. Her sternness and coldness had gradually melted in their growing intimacy. She proved herself a true friend in his affliction, cheering him to look forward with hope to the future, infusing consolation for the pre-

sent, palliating his mistress's folly, and, above all, patiently repeating to him every particular she could collect respecting her actual state of mind, and the every-day occurrences of her life; for she continued to love Catherine,—no longer, indeed, for the affection she met with in return; not for the qualities her friend had gained or lost; but because where she had once placed her affection she could not withdraw it: she could overlook and forget everything but the fact that they had once been friends, though she plainly saw the time fast approaching, when, without any fault of hers, that friendship would be broken.

As my father discovered, one by one, the sterling qualities of Eleonore's mind, his eye learned to rest with complacency on her features, which he sometimes wondered how he could ever have thought so very plain. The evenings he could no longer devote to Catherine might have hung heavy on his hands, and the sudden rupture of the bond of habit have added an additional pang to those he already endured, had not this fresh interest in life soothed, in

some degree, the loss of the first and greatest his existence had yet known.

Mademoiselle Raymond's store of consolation, however, diminished rapidly. Her bulletin of Catherine's state of feelings grew every day more alarming, so far, at least, as regarded my father's chance of happiness, and—as both he and Eleonore conceived it—of her own.

Her situation was, indeed, such as to warrant some anxiety on the part of her friends. Father Girard, forbidding all books but those which he chose to denominate holy, had substituted for light, moral essays, the dangerous romances of the catholic religion. The imagination of poor Catherine was fast ripening at the fires of Saint Theresa's ecstasies of divine love, and Saint Anthony's temptations in the desert—both which, to the reflective mind, must appear but the self-deceits of poor, erring mortals, who had lost their path in life in seeking that to heaven. Her mind, naturally weak, yielding, and affectionate, requiring, to maintain its equilibrium, a calm, serene state, was, by this constant effervescence of thought, wearied beyond its power,

and in danger of being destroyed altogether. Already her health began to suffer from this feverish excitement: her nights were restless, or visited by the most appalling visions; and her mother, so obtuse in the ordinary matters of life, soon became painfully sensible, by the state of her daughter's nerves, of the necessity of medical assistance, and earnestly consulted Father Girard on the subject. But the rector, who saw, or pretended to see, in the altered state, sinking frame, and disturbed slumbers of his young penitent, nothing but the workings of the Divine Spirit, strongly opposed the intervention of an earthly power, proposed his own aid,—a measure joyfully accepted,—and, finally, established himself as a constant visitor at the house of the Cadières.

This step was decisive as to my father's footing in the family. The mother gave the final blow to his still lingering hopes, which, she said, Catherine herself would long since have done, but for her innate dislike to wound the feelings of another. It became incumbent on her, however, to speak, since Monsieur Chaudon ap-

peared so very insensible to the eloquence of silence. She observed that, as Catherine was decided never to marry, she felt it unjust to herself as well as to him to continue to encourage attentions which could be of no use to either party, and certainly gave no pleasure to the receiver ; in short, maidenly modesty in the daughter, and maternal prudence in the mother, alike moved them to forbid his appearance at their house for the future.

My father received his sentence of banishment in the deepest silence, suffered no shadow in his countenance to betray the inward pain, but permitted Madame Cadières, woman fashion, to turn the dagger in the wound without wincing.

“I really do not know, Monsieur Jules, on whom you can now turn your eyes for a wife,” continued the loquacious lady ; “and yet it is time a handsome young man like you, and one of such promise, with such good prospects, should think seriously of the matter. You suffered Marie Langières to slip through your fingers. It is true, poor thing, she has no

health, and is obliged to put off her marriage until, people say, her bridegroom has sworn that if she makes him wait much longer, he will cut the matter short by wedding another—youth is so vain and impatient! Then there's Mademoiselle La Rue, who has just broken off her marriage, and she did but what was right and proper. Fancy that impious Monsieur Renoir insisting on her giving up Father Girard, and taking another confessor! Shocking, was it not?—quite her duty to stand firm. I would have proposed her to you, but then I know that, like my Catherine, whom she apes in all things, she objects to marriage altogether."

Madame Cadières, during the course of her address, occasionally paused artfully in the vain hope of hearing her auditor burst forth in some assurances, that no female could be thought of after her incomparable daughter; but he would not gratify so far the feminine and maternal vanity that induced her thus heartlessly to probe the bleeding wound.

"Well, then," she continued, with a look of

evident disappointment, "there's Marie Guyol, now she has turned off the officers that used to swarm around her like so many troublesome mosquitoes,—she might do very well. She has no money, it is true—is, or rather was, a little lightheaded, but Father Girard has put lead enough in it by this time, I warrant you. He would put some in an air balloon, and cause an opera-dancer to repent, I verily believe. She is a pretty girl, Marie Guyol!" Still my father maintained his perverse silence. "There remains, it is true, that half-pagan, half-heretic, Mademoiselle Raymond," she continued, with a frown,—“she has plenty of money to make one forget her uncomeliness; but ah! what can efface the uncomeliness of the heart that comes not unto God?"

"I thought Mademoiselle Raymond gave full satisfaction to the directors of her conscience?"

"The Fathers Carmelite! Lukewarm drowsy set, as they are—Catherine's soul languished beneath their care, like a flower in the shade. No warming up—no elevating—they understood nothing, felt and saw nothing—they would

rather have turned away my Catherine from the glorious path she is about to tread, than, like Father Girard, borne her onward in it with a mighty hand."

"I have no doubt," said my father, with a bitterness he could not check, "that Mademoiselle Cadières will shortly stand forth as a candidate for the honours of the calendar!"

"And you for the hand of Mademoiselle Raymond, I doubt as little," answered Madame Cadières, with ill suppressed choler.

My father looked full in the lady's face, and bowed.

This was too much for the mother's patience. She had expected—nay, secretly delighted in the idea of having to encounter a lover's ravings, and, to her amazement, had to deal with a composed, collected man, who did not put himself at her mercy for one single instant. It is surprising how much women participate, in their dealings with men, in the feline propensity of experiencing pleasure in inflicting a pang. I mean, of course, in love matters, for in all others I have ever known them compassionate and

kind ; but this instinct of their nature is so strong, that it dies but with them. 'The mother still indulges in it by means of her daughter. Yet, after all, it is but the promptings of an innocent vanity.

Madame Cadières was sadly hurt on this occasion, for she had not discernment enough to see beneath the surface. When my father took leave, he uttered none but ordinary phrases,—thanked her for past kindnesses, and for having endured his society so long,—wished all happiness, for the future, to herself and her fair daughter,—was very sorry to have troubled her with a love that had no merit but its sincerity, and bowed himself out of the room with all the grace he could assume.

Prepared as he was for this conclusion to the early romance of his life, it caused him a shock, and an exquisitely painful one. Not only had he to lament the loss of a hope, too fondly cherished, but also to regret ever having suffered himself to be drawn into illusions, that evidently never had the slightest foundation in reality. The preference, the something more than sisterly affection, he once imagined that Cathe-

rine manifested in his favour in spite of her own will, existed but in his fancy—Catherine had not felt, could never feel for him. The cold manner of his expulsion from the house—a trial in itself, of which she must have been conscious—not even softened by a word, a look, a token of kindness or regret, certainly warranted the supposition. My father owed to me, that the first hours of his return home were spent in unmitigated anguish, but having paid this tribute to the weakness of his heart, he struggled manfully against that morbidness of feeling, which is so apt, in extreme youth, to enervate its best powers, when it has to encounter disappointment.

One part of Madame Cadières' conversation had wounded him more than the rest, and seemed to him particularly characteristic of that lady's utter want of refinement and feeling. It was her allusion to his union with Mademoiselle Raymond. He was yet too young to know, that those who are strangers to our own feelings,—and who can read the human heart aright but he who bade it beat?—are apt to jump at conclusions, which the natural course of events

render probable—nay, almost unavoidable, but which, at the moment they are broached, seem to us, from our peculiar state of mind, at the very antipodes of possibility, and we are indignant at being foretold that, which it pleases us not to think about; but the experience of riper years teaches us not only to bear this handling of our finer feelings, but even to inflict it on ourselves. We have so often fancied our sorrows eternal, and yet forgotten them, that we willingly anticipate and permit others to suggest to us those consolations which are within our reach, and of which we are not sorry, in due time, to avail ourselves. For it is another and no less approved truism, that endurance in woe is a luxury only sought and yielded to by the extremely young in feeling; those whose hearts passion or the world has tried, recoil from pain as from an old enemy, whose might they have too cruelly experienced to be willing to face again. Hence the callousness of age. But I am again at my old trick of steering wide of my subject.

Although offended at what he conceived to

be a gross insinuation under the circumstances, my father was not childish enough to give up an intimacy which suited him, merely to prove the falsehood of the lady's suggestion, the more especially that he cared but little what she thought, and was but too painfully convinced that Catherine never gave herself the trouble of thinking about it all, or indeed anything else concerning him. On the other hand, he was not disposed to do anything whatsoever out of pique, or to make a silly parade of an indifference he did not feel; he therefore remained on precisely the same footing with Eleonore as before.

I am afraid I have made use of a great many words to explain a fact, which but a few would have sufficed to establish—namely, that there was in my father's character a manliness which even at this early period of his life displayed itself in every point of his conduct. He bore his sorrow well—denied it to none, but obtruded it on no one; he felt no resentment against Catherine or her family, for his sound understanding told him he had no reason to feel any. They

had never deluded him with false hopes—their conduct had been strictly honourable, from first to last; but, at the same time that he acquitted them of injustice towards himself, he gave up, at once and for ever, all idea of possessing Catherine, plainly perceiving that they were not suited for each other, and that happiness, even should unforeseen circumstances prove eventually favourable to its completion, could never attend their union.

From this time forth my father devoted the energies of his mind to the career he had embraced, and all his leisure hours to Mademoiselle Raymond, whose strong mind could fully understand and cope with his, although she had not disrobed it of those gentle sympathies which make the society of women, especially under affliction, so attractive. She also was soon given to understand by Catherine, that her friendship was one of those earthly pleasures which it was incumbent upon her to resign, as interfering too much with her religious duties. Had Eleonore followed the same course with herself—nay, if even at that late hour, for Catherine's sake, she would put her conscience under

the guidance of Father Girard, then indeed they might remain to each other what they had ever been ; otherwise, it would be a great trial, but one that God would give her strength to bear, they must not meet again. In short, she sacrificed Eleonore without much scruple ; but it is fair to state, that the latter renounced her most unhesitatingly, rather than enlist herself among the Jesuit's fanatical worshippers.

“ This rupture between us may, perhaps, hereafter conduce to Catherine's benefit,” said Mademoiselle Raymond, when communicating this new caprice to my father. “ She will one day come back to me, when I may even turn this breach to account in making conditions, perhaps, in your favour.”

“ Not in mine,” he replied. “ I have ceased to hope, and even to wish anything connected with Mademoiselle Cadières. Her happiness is, and ever will remain, a subject of deep interest to me ; and should it at any time lie in my power to serve her, I shall not neglect the opportunity : love, such as I have felt, may be overcome, but never forgotten.”

“ She bade me tell you she would remember

you in her prayers," said Mademoiselle Raymond; "and I still persevere in believing that, but for Father Girard, she would ultimately have yielded to your wishes."

"It is better thus," said my father—and what he said he thought—"far better thus, at least for myself, if not for her."

He inquired then, with some curiosity, what spell could possibly have been exercised over the female imagination, by one whose austere bearing, and still more austere language, seemed but little calculated to make amends for his ungainliness of person; and by what means so ill-endowed an individual as Father Girard had contrived to revolutionize the whole existence of those who had been drawn within his circle.

His very austerity, she said, was, to many women, a charm. Their weakness required a stay, which his severity afforded; their self-love was flattered by the importance which he attached to every trifle connected with his penitents; there was a species of voluptuousness in this petty sinning, constant reproof, performance of daily penances, and the necessity of satis-

fying his exalted notions of righteousness. It was a perpetual excitement, which chased away all languor from the mind, and kept it in unwearied exercise. The divine love, in short, as taught by Father Girard, had in some sort the advantage of an earthly one. It kept its votaries awake.

One of his fair penitents, however, already began to find all this flurry a bore rather than a pleasure. This was Marie Langières. Her inclination, indeed, for the rector—enthusiasm, her torpid temperament prevented her feeling for any one—had been on the wane at an early epoch of their acquaintance; for her very nature revolted against the excitement that fascinated others, and which had acted so perniciously on her health, as to cause the breaking off of the brilliant marriage she had been on the eve of accomplishing; nor could she help entertaining some resentment against Father Girard—the author, as she conceived it, of her disappointment. Something of this sentiment had already transpired before Eleonore, who determined to avail herself of it, in order to be the better *au*

courant as to what was passing among the Jesuit's votaries.

About this time, my father and Mademoiselle Cadières began to excite much of the public attention, and that in a manner the most flattering to the views of both. He, young as he was, had so distinguished himself by arduous study and close attention to his profession, that he was entrusted with a cause of some note and difficulty. The brilliant style in which he won it, and that when opposed to one of the shrewdest and ablest lawyers of the time, made a great sensation. The powers of his mind now ripened and developed themselves under the sunny influence of public approbation and applause; and it soon became evident, that his progress in the honourable profession to which he belonged would be attended with no ordinary success. His parents were proud of the universal praise he elicited. Eleonore warmly congratulated him; but where was the sympathy of her at whose feet he would have laid his budding laurels? All engrossed with self, as he had but too much reason to know.

Her sanctity was now as much the theme of conversation as her beauty had lately been, and her sayings and doings scarcely occupied the public less than those of Father Girard himself; nay, as Mademoiselle Raymond had foreseen, they even added lustre to his celebrity. The singular fact of her confessing and taking the sacrament daily was obviously, the people said, a proof of a spirit peculiarly holy, whose spiritual necessities were different from those of less gifted mortals, or the priest would not grant such out of the way privileges.

Her visions, too, and celestial colloquies, were much talked of—all crowded the Jesuits' church to obtain a glimpse of this beautiful and holy maid; and Father Girard's reputation spread like a mighty shadow, veiling completely the radiance of Mount Carmel—at least, in Toulon.

Now that they were full blown, the Jesuits wore not their laurels meekly. Under their rector's guidance, saints and angels were trained for the use of heaven, and the edification of the world. Surely, few communities could boast so

many. Eleonore had been right in predicting that Catherine would become the mere instrument of party spirit and personal vanity. What mattered it to the Jesuits in general, or to Father Girard in particular, that her future prospects were blasted by the errors of her judgment, at the very period of woman's life when she has to decide for its weal or its woe? What mattered it that her health gave way under the weight of emotions she had not the strength to bear? What was *she* in the eyes of an ambitious priest, when weighed in the balance with the furtherance of his own private views of elevation?

"We shall live to see Father Girard a cardinal, and Catherine a canonized saint; and saints are never calendared until after death," said Eleonore one day to my father, who answered but by a sigh.

Thus had they each entered on a separate path of life who, a few short months before, it was but natural to suppose were destined to end their days together.

There was now no pause in my father's

career. Not willing, like many young men, vain of a day's applause, to rest after his first success, he progressed steadfastly upwards — mounting, step by step, the weary ascent; never pausing to take breath, nor turning round to admire the prospect, but keeping his final aim, and nothing but that, in view, he slowly but unerringly neared the goal of fortune. Poor Catherine, too, held on her course; from visions she passed to miracles, and grew with every day more sick, and more saintly, drawing towards her all the praise the town could spare from Father Girard.

Though not her equals in sanctity or in reputation, nor such favourites of Heaven or Heaven's interpreter at Toulon, as Father Girard styled himself, the health of his other disciples grew every day more precarious. This was more particularly the case with Marie Langières. Roused from the natural sloth of her disposition, it was not to a pleasing animation, but to a state of nervous irritability, so strong as to render it impossible to behold her without dreading its consequences upon her reason, which, Eleonore

thought, was already tottering on its throne. This belief she grounded on a circumstance, certainly of a nature calculated to suggest it: her former disinclination to her confessor had ripened into a most vehement antipathy; no expression of vituperation seemed of sufficient force to gratify this apparently insane hatred—for she could assign no motive for it, and yet she could not live out of his presence. So irresistible indeed had this feeling become, that when he could not come to her, she sought him out, wherever he might happen to be at the time. She strove neither to conceal nor palliate this glaring contradiction—inexplicable, indeed, except by the adoption of Eleonore's supposition.

Upon hearing these evil tidings, my father became seriously alarmed about Catherine; he was not, however, without some hope that she too might experience a portion of that young lady's feelings of repulsion for Father Girard, a sentiment which he would have hailed with delight, as the first step towards a more happy and healthy tone of mind. He therefore en-

treated Eleonore to forgive and forget the unkind and unjust treatment she had met with on the part of her friend, and endeavour to see her at this crisis, when the renewal of their former intimacy might prove so useful to poor Catherine, and sympathy for her failing health afford so natural a pretext for making up the breach between them which had now subsisted for more than a year.

Eleonore shared my father's feelings ; for her interest in the poor recluse was still, like his love, glowing beneath the embers. She, therefore, willingly promised to comply with his request.

“ And what message am I to bear from you ? ” said she, with a smile.

“ None ! ” was my father's prompt and decided answer. “ To me she can never be anything more than a cherished remembrance of the past. When once rudely awakened from his dream, the slumberer can seldom resume it ; so is it with that of love. I have been aroused from my sweet dream, and I would not, if I could, renew it.”

Eleonore's account of her visit to Catherine astonished and perplexed my father not a little at the time. He could not understand or fathom, any more than Eleonore herself, the phenomenon she described; nor was it until Mesmer had revived the science of animal magnetism among the studious, and revealed it to the idle vulgar, that my father fancied he had at last obtained the key to the mysteries which, for so many years, baffled his ingenuity. That I have adopted his view of the subject is but natural, considering by whom the tale was told, and the manner in which it was represented to me at an age when impressions are most easily received and retained. The bent of my mind, too,—the systems and studies I afterwards adopted, confirmed me, at a later period, in the opinion thus early formed. It is for you, unbiassed as you are by all such circumstances, to account for the strange facts I am now about to relate, if you can, in another and a more satisfactory manner.

Eleonore found less trouble in gaining admittance to Catherine than she had expected,

every one being from home at the time of her visit except Mademoiselle Cadières, whom ill health kept confined, not only to the house, but to her room. Upon hearing she was alone, Eleonore unhesitatingly took her way to the well-known little chamber where they had spent so many happy hours together.

Catherine was reclining, listlessly, on a couch, her head propped up by a deep crimson cushion, which, by its harsh contrast, caused the paleness of her features to be more apparent. At the slight noise caused by Eleonore's entrance she started up in nervous alarm, and on perceiving who was the intruder on her solitude, she became yet more agitated. Uncertainty, hesitation, a sort of reluctant shame, seemed to overwhelm her; but when Eleonore approached with open arms, she threw herself into them, and sobbed aloud on her bosom. Mademoiselle Raymond gently led her back to the couch, sat by her side, and still retaining her hand in hers, with the other stroked down her hair with a soothing fondness. Her manner was impressed with an eloquence that needed no

words ; Catherine evidently felt and understood it, for when she could control the vehemence of her first emotion, she said, in a tone of gentle reproach—

“ Oh ! Eleonore, why did you leave me for so long, or ever ? ”

“ One word of recal would, long ere this, have brought me to your side,” said Eleonore. “ Why did you not speak it sooner ? ”

“ Oh ! but you know not, you cannot know how wretched, how miserable I have been—we have all been—how unhappy I now am—you have come too late, Eleonore ! ”

“ Hush, Catherine ! Do not as usual fly into extremes, errors may be repented of and repaired, Father Girard dismissed, and Jules Chaudon recalled. Open your heart to me, Catherine, without reserve ; I am still, as ever, disposed to do you what service I may.”

“ I have not deserved this, Eleonore,” said Catherine, again throwing herself on her friend’s neck, and indulging in an excess of feeling, which, as such exhibitions were most foreign and uncongenial to Mademoiselle Raymond’s

nature, at once surprised and embarrassed her. She attributed this lively display of sorrow, in one of Catherine's susceptible temperament, to remorse for having severed herself from those whom she truly loved, under the passing influence of an utter stranger, and began to administer consolations on that head, by assuring her that she had grieved, but not alienated, their affections; but her kind words seemed rather to irritate than soothe the still weeping Catherine.

"Oh! it is not that!" she impatiently exclaimed—"not that which torments me—not of that I would speak! Had I but followed your advice from the first, and never come near that *man*, or that you had never left me!"

"It was not my choice," gently remonstrated Eleonore; "you must not forget *that*. But why recur to the past, which is every way so painful, since you are again the same dear Catherine as ever, and see things as you were wont to do? It only requires a little self-exertion to throw off your new habits of thought and feelings, and to resume your former ones. Leave Father Girard!"

“Speak not of it,” was the hurried reply. “It is *impossible*, or I had long since thrown him off. But I cannot. No! anything but *that*!”

“So says Marie Langières, and yet she hates him.”

“Yes; it is the same with us all, more or less. Eleonore, he is a *terrible* man. You don’t know his power; you do not dream of it—you who never were exposed to its influence. If you were always there by my side—with your hand on my burning head, and with those calm, penetrating eyes fixed on mine, as now,—always thus, then perhaps I might free myself from him, from every thrall!”

“My poor Catherine, your mind wanders!” exclaimed her friend, for a moment thrown off her guard; then, reassuming as naturally as she could the cold severe tone she had always found from experience to soothe best any casual irritation in her friend, she said:—“Come Catherine—you must exert your reason, and not give way in this childish manner—you know I cannot abide it. Come, tell me, as rationally as you can, all about Father Girard and yourself, from beginning to end.”

“I will obey you,” said Catherine in a calmer tone, whilst a sudden and striking change came over her features, which had assumed a more languid expression as Eleonore’s manners softened. “Suffer your hand to rest on my brow, as you did before, nothing clears my ideas better—so—that’s right—my other hand in yours. Oh! had you never left me, Eleonore, it had perhaps fared better with me. I see you are impatient that I should proceed, and yet I scarcely know how to do so; all is confusion in my brain—discord in my heart. Sometimes I think Father Girard the best, the most holy of men, and myself a wretch to doubt him; at other times, I see in him but the vilest and worst of mankind. It has ever been thus with me, since I first knew him. I have lost all power of discrimination—I had almost said of thought; but, no, that is my misfortune; I still think, and that, too, differently from him; but this is only when he is away. When he is present, I am his slave—enthralled by his will, even when it is most opposed to mine. I sometimes cannot help fancying that he has bound me by some power-

ful, unhallowed spell, which I vainly struggle to break,—at others, I again believe him sent to me by Heaven, on a special mission of grace ; and my sufferings, whether in body or mind, a most signal favour. Then I accuse myself of faint-heartedness in not being able to bear up against them, and weep over my own frailty of purpose, and the weakness that makes me rebel against the will of Heaven and unworthy of the trials which are awarded me.”

“ But of what trials are you speaking ?” inquired Eleonore, with some curiosity. “ Do you mean the regret you feel, at having permitted a comparative stranger to exercise an undue influence over your mind, and cause an estrangement between you and those who most cherished you ? That, indeed, has been a trial to others as well as to you !”

“ That, it is true, has cost me many a sleepless night—many a tearful day,” said Catherine. “ The struggle between the impulses of my heart and what I conceived to be a duty was a severe one. *He* bade me discard you from my thoughts, but this I could not do, and when left

to myself, loved you as much as ever. Thus has it been with almost every object of former affection or preference—nay, even with every matter of opinion—until all my notions of right and wrong are confused—and sometimes I feel exalted in my own opinion and the next instant humbled to the very dust; for he has taught me the holiness of self-abasement—the necessity of sinning in order to repent—of yielding in all things to the will of Heaven, blindly, darkly, with the heart, not with the understanding.”

“And *he*, I suppose,” said Eleonore, with a flashing eye and contracted brow—“he is the oracle of that will?”

“Not he alone, he merely expounds it—it is revealed to me in visions, in ecstasies, and the palpable signs of these supernatural communions remain with me!”

“The palpable signs?—I don’t understand you!” said the amazed listener.

“Yes, I can shew them to you as I have to my mother and brothers. Look here!” and, removing the hair that clustered over her brow and neck,

she exposed to view some rather severe and but recently healed wounds.

Eleonore was mute with surprise.

“Yes,” continued Catherine, “these are the inflictions, with which the devils are permitted to visit me, during my trances; but do not look so shocked, there is more fear than pain attending them—my soul alone is conscious at such times, my body lies in a state of torpor that deadens feeling.

“This is passing strange,” said Mademoiselle Raymond as she closely examined the marks thus subjected to her observation. “These are but too real, and cannot well have been self-inflicted, even in the worst fit of—of——”

“Insanity, you would say,” added Catherine, with a mournful smile; “I am not insane—but, oh! I often dread becoming so!”

“Do these fits—these trances, come over you by day or by night?”

“Both; they sometimes rouse me from my sleep, but, strange to say, it is but to another sort of slumber—a numbness steals over my frame whilst my mind wakens to activity.”

“You describe but the state of dreaming, which is common to all,” remarked Eleonore.

“Ay,” resumed her companion; “but dreams do not extend to the waking moments. This phenomenon overtakes me when I least expect it—whilst talking or walking—even at meals.”

“I have read of people being drugged into a forced sleep,” said Eleonore, thoughtfully.

“But Father Girard gives me nothing, nor is he always present at such times. When he is, my slumber is more peaceful, and I feel more tranquil on waking. In his absence, the fits are torture, and on their leaving me I am totally exhausted.”

“If you do not attribute these accidents to Father Girard, how do you account for them unto yourself and others,” demanded Eleonore, who was desirous to sift the matter to the bottom, and to probe her friend’s feelings to the uttermost, before venturing on advice, or even on conclusions.

“Why, I have already told you, I sometimes fancy he has charmed me; but am more often inclined to think myself, like Saint Theresa, one

of those elected to suffer and to love, and unto whom mysteries are revealed in visions—through whom and upon whom miracles are wrought.”

“ This is a most extraordinary delusion,” observed Eleonore, carried away by the feeling of the moment beyond the reserve which it was her desire to maintain until the close of the conference.

“ It is, perhaps, natural you should think so, to whom nothing has been revealed,” said her friend, with a slight shade of hauteur. “ But from earliest childhood I was unlike others, and I believe destined to higher things: and I cannot but believe that Father Girard has been especially appointed to guide me in the path which I should tread.”

“ Fatal error!” burst involuntarily from Eleonore’s lips. “ And bethink you, Catherine, if it *be* an error, it may cost you dear——”

“ If it be an error! ay, indeed, Eleonore! the thought were madness—but no! it cannot be—I will not believe it. Listen to facts: I know nothing else will have any weight with you; but surely to them you must yield belief,

even whilst they, perhaps, exceed your comprehension. Led away by your views and opinions, and those of my ordinary associates, I was beginning to yield to them in all things; my yearnings after higher things gradually diminished—my fervour of piety was cooling, and my soul became more alive to earthly objects.” As she spoke these words, a slight flush crimsoned her cheek. “At this juncture, Father Girard appeared on the scene. You cannot but remember the mysterious circumstance that first attracted me more particularly towards him?”

A mournful expression pervaded the features of Eleonore, but she carefully abstained from breaking the thread of her friend’s narrative.

“As you well know, until that moment,” continued Catherine, “strange to say, his eloquence, the theme of the world’s praise, was quite thrown away upon me—I did not always understand it; and when I did, his sentiments failed to strike me as particularly beautiful; at any rate, *that* had no effect upon me; nor had, I am ashamed to confess, his extraordinary de-

votion. On the contrary, an unnameable, unaccountable feeling of repulsion at times possessed me, which I could with difficulty control. Well, this was again counteracted by his alternate severity and praise. Thus, even whilst secretly disliking him personally, I derived great benefit from his spiritual guidance. It is remarkable that Marie Langières, Anne Guyol, and all his penitents, have felt exactly like me in this respect. The bright side of my existence—I may even call it its glorious sunshine—was the hope I entertained of treading in the footsteps of the blessed virgins who adorn our church. He taught me to believe myself called to the same path as that of my holy patroness, sweet St. Catherine of Sienna. All the bright dreams of my childhood came back to my heart with renewed freshness. I was like one suddenly transported to the summit of a high mountain, whence the eye could bathe itself in the blue of the heavens, the green of the valleys, the radiance of the setting sun. I looked beyond the very heavens, and I was proud and very happy. My mother and brothers also

encouraged me in my new vocation, to the utmost of their power. They already saw the halo of canonization encircling my brow; but we were all too vainglorious—I especially. In vain did Father Girard warn me of the dangers of this self-exaltation; nothing could damp my glowing ardour; the warning was overlooked, but the punishment was not long in overtaking the fault. One day—I had already been a whole year under his care—he breathed gently on my brow, and looked full into my eyes as he did so. From that hour I have been his slave. He often repeated this form, and each time it drew the chain tighter that bound me to him, until I had no will but his. I could neither act nor feel as I pleased, nor even think. Thus I became, if I may so express it, estranged from my own self. Oh!—but you cannot understand me—indeed, how should you, I cannot myself,—this perpetual struggle between my own will and that of another, gliding into my very being, was the dark side of that period of my existence. At last, you and Chaudon were excluded from our house; and since then, how

ever great have been my mental sufferings in consequence of that event, Father Girard at least has no longer tormented me on the subject. I had already had many visions of a mystic and holy character, all of a nature to flatter my inordinate vanity; but now came one predicted by Father Girard, in which I was told I should be possessed for more than a year by evil spirits, to whom the power of tormenting me should be given, in order that a soul in much pain should be freed from purgatory. From that time, my trances have changed their heavenly form—foul fiends have haunted me under every shape, and burnt wounds into my flesh, which, upon waking, I still found there. Father Girard told me this was necessary to my soul's weal and to the perfection of my character, as well as implicit blind obedience to him in all things. All this have I undergone; but I have suffered in body and mind enough to win the crown of martyrdom; my health is, indeed, so impaired, that I could no longer either confess or take the communion, if it were not that Father Girard attends me daily

at home, as he has done his other penitents when indisposed."

"But," said Eleonore, "is it not a profanation to perform such sacred duties daily? You cannot always be in a suitable frame of mind."

"I cannot explain all that," answered Catherine, looking embarrassed, "but Father Girard does, and very clearly, too."

"Then, I am to understand," said Eleonore, "that you are as convinced as himself of the merit—the necessity of this abuse of things most sacred. Unbosom yourself to me, dear girl, without restraint."

"And so I do, Eleonore, you have there probed the sore to the quick. I should agree with you were I to follow my own weak and wicked thoughts: but Father Girard must know best. He has also forbidden me prayer; saying, that it is not an efficient means of binding myself to God—that has cost me the severest pang of all. But since I have fallen into the power of the spirits of darkness, I *can* no longer pray, even when I feel most the necessity for so doing. There is a moral

impossibility, a clog on my thoughts, a seal on my lips, which all the warm impulses of my heart, and even the force of habit, are inadequate to vanquish. This is one of my greatest torments, which I am sure you, who knew me when the outpourings of my spirit flowed as freely from my lips as water from its source, will be well able to imagine."

"There may be a remedy to all this," said Eleonore, thoughtfully. "Have you thought of none?"

"Exorcism might afford a relief to my soul, and a physician to my enfeebled frame; but it is for my own future weal and glory that all this should be unflinchingly borne. How high the price at which both are bought, none shall ever know but myself. Oh! Eleonore, conceive, if you can, what are my feelings; when, in spite of all that *he* can say, I sometimes doubt if my path is a right one—dread that I am altogether misguided—that Father Girard is the only evil spirit which torments me! When that idea crosses my brain, I am for hours the prey to despairing regrets and the bitterest

remorse. Then he comes and talks me over, or barely looks at me—for he reads my thoughts at a glance—and I repent my miserable guilty doubts, so that my soul is ever dark and troubled as the most tempestuous night.”

“It was once clear as a summer morning,” said Eleonore, spiritedly, “why should not the mists that obscure it clear up again? If you would but trust in my advice, as you once did, perhaps all might yet be well.”

“How? What would you advise?” said Catherine, looking up into her friend’s face, with renovated hope lighting up her wasted features, as a ray of autumn’s paly sun is often seen to play on a sickly flower.

Eleonore paused in doubt how to proceed. Should she discuss the character of the director with his half-enlightened proselyte, and endeavour to convince her of the absurdity and villany of which she believed her the victim? or had she better trace out a plan for the future, without attempting to throw too much light upon the past? A two-fold reason induced her to determine upon adopting the latter measure.

In the first place, she could come to no clear understanding of the means and ultimate plans of the Jesuit; and, secondly, the little light that glimmered forth from the darkness was not of a nature calculated to suit the capacity of her friend; for Eleonore, tenderly as she was attached to Catherine, was perfectly aware of her own great superiority in intellect.

“Well, Catherine, if you really wish for advice, listen to mine, which I am willing to support by every means in my power. I have friends in Paris, I shall go and visit them; you, under pretence of seeking to benefit your health by change of scene, will accompany me. Father Girard cannot pursue you thither; and you will there find more consoling and gentle guides, that will soon quiet your alarmed and disturbed conscience. Other objects, too, will divert your mind from its present painful tension. Nerve yourself but with the courage necessary to break your present fetters, and time and I will contrive to smoothe your way before you.”

“Never—never!” answered Mademoiselle

Cadières, despondingly ; “ you cannot do that, Eleonore ; no one can. Is Monsieur Chaudon going to Paris ? ” she demanded, with a sudden revulsion of feeling. “ Has he put you up to counsel this ? You are silent, Eleonore ; you fear, perhaps, I shall dislike the measure on that account ; but it is a mistake, I assure you. Pray tell me, does *he* wish to see me, too ? ”

“ I will be quite frank with you, Catherine, as I always am when aught is demanded of me. Jules Chaudon has loved you with a love such as it is seldom woman’s lot to inspire—so deep, pure, and sincere.” She paused, and fancied her friend breathed an audible sigh. “ His is a noble heart,” she continued, “ and a gift which I fancy few would have rejected as carelessly as you did. He suffered much ; a thousand times more than he would have cared to avow to any living creature.”

The subdued, timid, almost deferential expression that had pervaded the manner and look of Catherine up to this point of the conversation, suddenly gave way to one of another character ; she seemed not unlike a startled

courser, unrestrained by bit and bridle, about to spring forward on his mad career. Eleonore's self-possession wavered before the wildness of her gaze, and she could not repress an exclamation of alarm.

"Oh, yes; you think me insane, and are more than half afraid of me," said Catherine, with a strange irritability; "but I care not what you think!"

"But, dearest Catherine, why fly out thus at me for a thought I have never expressed."

"Oh! because I *saw* you think it."

This answer somewhat startled Mademoiselle Raymond, who was not pleased that Catherine, contrary to her wont, possessed sufficient discernment to read her unspoken thoughts; justly displeased, too, with the acerbity of her manner, she involuntarily assumed a sterner air.

"I have then been mistaken," she said, coolly, drawing herself up to her full height, as she rose from the couch. "I was induced, by the first glow of your welcome, to believe that it was sincere, and that your feelings were unchanged,

at least towards me. I see my error ; for had it been so, you could have declined my advice without rudeness or scorn. I perceive you neither know your own mind, nor can appreciate mine ; so I had better leave you, until it is your pleasure to recal me."

"Do not part thus, dear, dear Eleonore," exclaimed Catherine, tenderly, throwing her arms around her ; "I will do and say whatever you please. Do not look thus angrily at me, I implore you ; your love is all that remains to me of the happy past—do not withdraw that which you have but so lately restored to me."

"If this be your wish, Catherine, then try to be more consistent in your conduct."

"I cannot ; it is not my fault. I am very sorry, and very, very ill, Eleonore,—far more so than you or any one else can imagine ;" and again the poor girl hid her pale face in the bosom of her friend, and gave vent to her agitation in a succession of hysterical sobs.

Mademoiselle Raymond, in spite of her usual clearness and rapidity of judgment, was completely at fault, at this moment, what to say or

do, or even to think. A few hours of undisturbed meditation were necessary to enable her to collect herself, and to decide upon the course of conduct which it would be most advisable to pursue. One thing she felt intuitively—namely, that the least appearance of hesitation or uncertainty on her part, or any appeal to Catherine in her present odd, unsettled frame of mind, was so much ground lost in her esteem, and, in consequence, a forfeiture of that influence over the unhappy girl, of which she had once possessed so large a share, and which had now become so all-important to the welfare, at least, of one of them. That she might keep all her advantages, therefore, and gain time to reinforce her position, she decided on leaving the house for the present.

“Well, Catherine,” she said, gently extricating herself from the embrace of her weeping companion, “I will exact nothing of you just now, but what I believe you both able and willing to perform. Do not tell Father Girard of my visit, and let me know when you are most likely to be alone, that I may come again

to you; but mind,—do not tell him of this meeting, or he will do his utmost to prevent its repetition.”

“You are right—quite right,” said Mademoiselle Cadières. “Yes, if I can, I will keep this visit from him. Come at this hour whenever you please; I am then always alone, and perhaps you may ultimately do something for me.”

“I hope so,” said Eleonore. “If you are at all docile and manageable, I am sure I shall prove the most able of physicians. But, for to-day, adieu.”

When Mademoiselle Raymond had leisure to think over what she had just heard, she was not more successful in arriving at a clear, dispassionate view of her friend's case, than during their interview. The most rational, nay, the only solution she could find to this problem, was the admission of a fact, the bare surmise of which was pain,—namely, that her poor friend's intellects were deranged. This idea she could not bear to dwell upon; and remembered, with pleasure, many symptoms of rationality and col-

lectedness which tended to combat this opinion; yet there were but too many flighty assertions she had no other means of explaining.

My father was deeply moved by Mademoiselle Raymond's communication; but hesitated in coinciding with her concerning Catherine's state of mind.

"The constant super-excitement of the brain under which she has laboured for the last two years, is, it is true, well calculated to produce this result," said he; "but if really afflicted by this infirmity, I suspect Father Girard has hurried it on by some foul practice or other, which may one day be brought to light. Far from having the real interest of his church at heart, I believe him to be one of those men who, actuated merely by personal motives and ambition, would not scruple to employ means to obtain their ends, before which even fanaticism would recoil. We must, however, sift this matter thoroughly before passing judgment."

But when he came to ponder over this subject in the silence of his own closet, he was to the full as embarrassed as Mademoiselle Ray-

mond, in tracing out the machinations of which, he doubted not, Father Girard had been guilty. He could, indeed, find no clue to them whatever, except by adopting Catherine's own version of the affair, and disgracing his reason by admitting the truth of all those tales of enchantment and sorcery which the enlightenment of his day already began to class among popular errors.

He pored over the pages of Cornelius Agrippa, and other writers on the same mystic subjects, without being able either satisfactorily to refute, or unscrupulously to admit, the truth of the strange doctrines they contain.

He found that they described, as a means of enchanting, or, in other words, mastering the passions and affections of indifferent persons, the very acts to which Mademoiselle Cadières alluded when speaking of her confessor—breathing upon the brow, and steadfastly gazing into the eyes of the person upon whom it is designed to operate, whilst the fixity of thought was declared a necessary accompaniment to the fixity of gaze recommended. This proceeding was

averred to be infallible ; and, could my father but have relied on this exposition, not only might the incoherences of poor Catherine—the singular description she had given of the state of her soul under Father Girard's direction, in some measure, be accounted for, but also his mysterious power over his other penitents, as well as the moral changes and contradictions which each had exhibited in turn.

You will wonder, perhaps, that he did not laugh at what, in the days of the great philosophers then about to dawn on France,—the harbingers of the storm that was to shake her to her very foundation, and root up, for a time at least, all her ancient and respectable uses, together with her abuses,—would have been termed old women's stories. But in his youth sorcery was yet accredited among the mass ; and though consigned to ridicule by a few of the bolder spirits of the day, the fancy of the many, even in the better classes, still clung to the traditional delusion.

My father, whose mind was yet fresh from Nature's mint, ready to receive every impression, hovered for some time between the fluctuating

prejudices of his epoch ; but eventually his own reason told him, that to deny the secrets of nature, or to despise them and her all pervading power, betrayed rather a deficiency of ability in unbelievers to read her mysteries aright, than it argued that her dominion was limited. In short, what Cornelius Agrippa terms magic, and Mesmer animal magnetism, that much discussed and not yet thoroughly understood agency, flitted across his imagination, until facts on the one hand, and Mesmer's eloquence on the other, clearly proved it in after times to his understanding.

It is worthy of remark, indeed, that in the exposition of practical magnetism, Mesmer's directions tally so completely with some of the fantastic assertions of the talented secretary of Charles V., in his occult philosophy, that on these points, at least, it may be said they have treated one and the same subject. And it is a no less remarkable fact, that every detail which has transpired concerning Father Girard and his penitents can be referred to that system, and, in my opinion, to nothing else.

You may adduce, and with truth, that by

playing upon the mind—especially in youth—exalting and debasing it by turns, it is easy, without the assistance of any extraneous agency, to affect the reason, if not actually to destroy its equilibrium. You may further urge, and with equal truth, that so complete is the power which he who wields skilfully the dangerous weapon called enthusiasm may obtain over his miserable victims, it remains no difficult task to sway, not only their judgment, but their feelings also. It is, indeed, the knowledge of numerous cases handed down to us in history, and even still of daily occurrence, in which fanaticism conducts to crime—to madness—even to death, that has caused me sometimes to hesitate in my conclusions.

Had this, however, been the Jesuit's real hold on Mademoiselle Cadières, it is not likely that she would have struggled so painfully with the influence he exercised over her; she would rather have yielded cheerfully and wholly to it. But it is averred by the most experienced writers on the subject of magnetism, that the operator has an unlimited power over the

patient, obtained by the concentration of his own thoughts, and their transfusion into the mind of the person subjected to this process, either by means of manipulation, which supposes consent in the party concerned ; or by the mere attraction of gaze, and sympathy with surrounding objects submitted to the ordeal of magnetism by the one party, and unconsciously much used by the other ; which does not imply connivance. This was the case with Mademoiselle Cadières and all the worthy Father's penitents, who yielded to, or rather suffered by an artifice whose very nature and existence was totally unknown to them.

When once affinity is established between the master and the patient—or victim, as the case may be—that strange psychological phenomenon takes place, of which I have often read in works on magnetism, but which I have never witnessed, or even heard of in real life, except in the case of Mademoiselle Cadières—I mean that state of high exaltation of the nerves, which permits spirit to commune with spirit without the grosser intervention of the organs of speech,—when

the half-formed thought is met by a corresponding thought, and the unspoken, unspeakable feelings are, at once, conveyed to a heart that throbs,—that *must* throb with sympathy ;—a communion so full of harmony that, when we first contemplate its nature, we are excusable in believing it to belong to spheres and to beings of a higher order than ourselves, and the little world that contains us ;—but when we bethink ourselves of the further consequences of this latitude, and perceive that the will of man, the noblest, holiest of his attributes, is also to be enchained by the same mysterious link between a stronger and a weaker mind, while both are yet clothed within their frail human tenements, liable to be shaken and riven by human passion, we shudder and turn away from the picture of mental degradation which this subject may offer to our view.

The antagonists of Mesmer have advanced a fact; which, if true—as it seems likely enough to be—would bear me out in my supposition of his science being applicable to this particular case. They assert that magnetism is highly

prejudicial to the health, and, by over exciting, is apt to cause the most serious derangements of the nervous system,—that the senses are frequently brought to a state betwixt waking and sleeping, which can hardly be said to be either and yet partakes of both,—that this unnatural condition, in which the intellect is constantly struggling betwixt its perceptions of the real and the unreal, is most dangerous alike to mind and body, and that magnetism can produce other consequences as fatal to the sufferer as the convulsions which are its usual accompaniment.

All this, I feel, must seem very obscure to those who, like you, have not dipped much into this theory. We see, however, by daily experience, how miserable are good and innocent young females—and they are the persons in point—when forced into the companionship of the bad and the reckless of our sex. That such trials have often affected their reason is a fact proved beyond dispute, by the fate of many who have been induced to marry notorious rakes. We may suppose, therefore, a close affinity of spirits, such as is said to be produced by mag-

netism between persons of unequal morality, in which the weaker party has been compelled, in spite of its purity, to adopt the loose sentiments and principles of the stronger and more dissolute, to be a thralldom past the human powers of endurance. I see, by your incredulous smile, you believe rather in the possibility of corrupting human purity, than of forcing its barriers; well—I think differently. But then, I am a confirmed believer in this mysterious agency, whose nature is, I own, startling enough at the first glance.

Having given you a faint outline of the pretensions of this doctrine, in order to enable you to understand in what manner I apply it to this particular case, I will return to my story.

When Mademoiselle Raymond next called upon Catherine, she was no longer alone. Father Girard was closeted with her; and Mademoiselle Cadières' confidential maid delivered her the somewhat ungracious message, that she was entreated not to come again to the house, as her friend could in no case see her. This was a relapse which Eleonore had

not expected to take place so soon; but as she saw that, for a time at least, nothing more was to be done in the matter, she departed.

Some weeks more elapsed, during which little transpired at large of what passed at the Cadières', beyond the fact of Father Girard's daily—nay, hourly—presence there, and the rapid progress of his fair penitent in sanctity. The chapter of miracles was freely broached by himself and her brothers; the curiosity of the public was strongly excited; and even the bishop, the worthiest soul alive, dropped a few hints, that proved he began to feel a growing interest in the subject. The Carmelites still shook their heads ominously, and shrugged their shoulders at the bare mention of these things with an affected contempt, which could not veil their real mortification. The Jesuits' triumph was complete, radiant; and they bore the palm over all competitors at Toulon without dispute.

Such was the state of affairs, when, all of a sudden, the news was spread about the town that Mademoiselle Cadières was about to em-

brace the veil. Various reasons were assigned for this step, and diverse convents named, of which one would be selected by the young saint to become the theatre of her future glory. Mademoiselle Raymond was, however, informed by Marie Langières, whom she still continued occasionally to visit, that Father Girard had appointed the convent of St. Clare of Ollioules as the future residence of Catherine, whom she described as most unwilling to enter it. She declared, also, that Madame Cadières, though fully sharing the reluctance of her daughter, was, like herself, unable to resist the imperative monk, who would suffer no contradiction.

“She loathes the very idea of a convent,” said Marie Langières, in conclusion, “and is growing daily less religious, I fancy. But what then? If that horrid man *wills* it, of course she must take the veil.”

These words roused Eleonore’s attention. She found, upon a closer investigation, that all the peculiarities she had remarked in Catherine’s discourses, as betraying an incipient insanity, were developed almost to a greater de-

gree in Marie Langières: the same depression of spirits and faded appearance, the same inward struggle between opposing emotions,—the natural impulses counteracted and controlled by an unaccountable, inexplicable inner thralldom. She would talk in the same breath on the same subject, now in her own person, and with the feelings that might be supposed natural to her; and again, with an altered tone, would utter sentiments unbecoming her sex and her years, which must have been farthest removed from her sphere of thought.

The similitude which Eleonore found between Catherine and Marie forced themselves upon her notice in Father Girard's other penitents, when accident brought her near them; and they so puzzled and confounded her reason, that she gradually yielded to Catherine's suggestion—namely, that they were all suffering under some powerful spell which Father Girard had cast upon them.

My father, as I have already explained to you, had not sufficiently made up his own mind on this subject to be enabled to enlighten an-

other; and indeed, as all personal interest in the affair was fast subsiding in his heart, he soon discovered that he had enough to think of in other quarters, and had no time to waste in fruitless brooding.

Not so with Mademoiselle Raymond. However superior in intelligence to the mass of young women of her age, especially at an epoch when the education of women was very deficient, still the monotony of her pursuits left her ample leisure for the development of her feminine curiosity; and this was a subject to excite it to the uttermost.

“If,” said my father to her often recurring remarks on this subject—“if you think there is a chance of your being able to move Mademoiselle Cadières from her purpose, I would advise you, by all means, to attempt seeing her before she sets off for the convent. Once there, she will find it perhaps impossible to return to the world, even should she desire it.”

“Could *you* contrive to speak to her,” urged Eleonore.

Her eyes were keenly fixed on his counte-

nance. The colour mounted to his very brow, as he felt conscious of the gaze; but he returned it, and it was Mademoiselle Raymond's turn to blush.

“If I thought any earthly exertion of mine could save Mademoiselle Cadières,” he said, “I would not spare myself, be assured of that; but I am convinced, that any interposition on my part would but hurry on Catherine to her fate. If I could unravel the mystery, and prove but half the villany I suspect in Father Girard, I would *avenge* her; but I must not forget, that I have no right whatever to interfere with the concerns of that young lady, when even that of friendship has been withdrawn from me; and my position as a rejected suitor should make me doubly reserved in all my proceedings.”

“But will you quietly sit by and see Catherine take the veil?”

“You must have too much sense, my good young lady,” was the answer, accompanied by an arch smile, “not to see that had I even the right, I can no longer have any reason for opposing such a measure. After all, if the

family Cadières prefer their *Tartuffe* to all else in the world, who may gainsay them? But you know very well the opinions I must perforce entertain on this subject: I cannot understand why you should insist on making me repeat them so often."

Mademoiselle Raymond's tell-tale cheek might have enlightened him as to her drift, and Madame Cadières' prophecy, which, when spoken two years back, had so grievously displeased him, now flitted across his mind, but this time certainly without causing any disagreeable emotion.

That Eleonore was not too deeply hurt at his being so resigned on the chapter of Catherine's retiring altogether from the world, was evident from her manner growing even more free and unreserved under the influence of his answer.

The footing on which they stood together was peculiar, as indeed, Mademoiselle Raymond's whole bearing and character was reputed to be. Circumstances allowed her, on many points, a greater latitude than other young women of her age are ordinarily permitted in

our country, more especially with regard to the choosing the society that best suited her; for her guardians were but distantly connected with her, and took little or no interest in her welfare. An impoverished elderly gentlewoman had been imposed upon her by way of a duenna; but, beyond this necessary restriction, no control whatever was laid upon her actions. Though nominally residing under the roof of her guardians, she kept a separate establishment, and received in her salon when and whom she pleased.

The liberty that fell thus early to her lot, might have been misused by many, so inexperienced as herself; but Eleonore, guarded by a powerful understanding, and the consciousness that her wealth, rather than her looks, would be generally considered her chief attraction, had steeled herself in an impenetrable armour of coldness and suspicion, that had stood proof against many a well-directed arrow.

Up to her acquaintance with my father, her salon, as well as her heart, had been closed against every intruder; and when he was at last admitted into that sanctum sanctorum, it

still remained inaccessible to others, to the no small mortification of all the speculative sons and parents in our good city. Great, therefore, was the outcry against what was almost deemed an impropriety—their marriage was spoken of as a certainty; then, as neither party took the trouble to notice the many hints thrown out before them on this subject, and as weeks grew to months and the thing remained in statu quo, and Mademoiselle Raymond refused offer after offer, and yet solemnly pledged her word, in so doing, that she was under no pre-engagement, people set down this intimacy as one of the bizarreries of the heiress, and turned to the discussion of some newer topic.

My father, as I have said, had accepted Elcōnore's friendship as a substitute for Catherine's love, without much reflection; but, independently of the gratitude he owed her who had softened the sharpness of his first disappointment, he soon discovered in her qualities calculated to fix his esteem.

The uprightness and candour which she displayed on every occasion, even the most trivial,—her fair and dispassionate judgment even in

those things that concerned her most,—the generosity of heart that overlooked the foibles of others, which her own keenness of intellect rendered so glaring,—the firmness of her character and principles, that kept her in everything and at all times true to herself and to others—these sterling qualities, so rarely found in the opposite sex, that we may fairly term them masculine, made her, at once, an object of his respect and admiration. Nor was she devoid of those feminine inspirations, which teach even the most guileless of womankind how to ingratiate themselves with those whom they are desirous of pleasing. Habit, too, often reconciles men to the very plainest exteriors; and my father had long since discovered that Mademoiselle Raymond, whose figure and eyes were really fine, did not belong, absolutely, to that category—her society had become indispensable to him. Her superiority to all the women it had ever been his fortune to meet with, was by this time an established fact in his own mind; and had he been forced to forego her intimacy and renounce her friendship, the pain would have been scarcely less, though perhaps of

another character, than that which he felt when separated from Catherine. In short, though he would doubtless have written better verses in favour of the latter, he would much rather have chosen the former for the companion of his life, now that he had a fair opportunity of comparing their real merits.

But, although the progress of this attachment was so gradual on his part, that it was almost imperceptible to himself, Mademoiselle Raymond's preference for him had dated from the beginning of their acquaintance. It was, probably, the struggle she constantly maintained against her own heart, when she perceived that her friend's beauty had cast her into shade, that caused her usual reserve to deepen into ungraciousness and gloom. Too generous to resent his choice, and too modest not to acquiesce in its justice, she suffered no feeling of mortification or envy to dim the purity of her long established friendship with Catherine. She was careful not to permit the slightest trace of her weakness to become evident, well knowing that Catherine would not have encouraged any attentions likely to distress her, and she was

too proud to owe anything to pity. Thus had she sedulously avoided showing my father any more attention than what the most frigid courtesy exacted, and it was this line of conduct—the principle which influenced it remaining concealed from him—that had so long blinded him to her rare and high merits.

From the moment the fact became public of Catherine being about to leave Toulon, Eleonore was constantly on the look out to procure a final interview; but the vigilance of Father Girard even exceeded her own, and frustrated all her efforts. To her great surprise, now that a powerful motive had made her keep a kind of watch over Madame Cadières' house, she perceived that the confessor scarcely ever left it, nay, even the apartment of his penitent—that he penetrated into the latter at all hours, and sometimes banished her nearest relations from the chamber, whilst he remained alone with its fair tenant. This displeased to the full as much as it surprised Eleonore; nor could she view with patience the degrading, imbecile humility with which the Dominican and the Abbé, Catherine's two brothers, greeted or took leave

of, or indeed even approached the haughty Jesuit.

She was also struck with the alteration that had taken place in his whole person and manner. The latter had grown abrupt and presumptuous—the former more repulsive than ever. A restless, fiery look, that seemed at once to dread and yet defy opposition, gleamed from beneath his shaggy eyebrows, whilst the hollow of his cheeks and corpse-like pallor had even increased, although those who remembered him on his first arrival at Toulon might have deemed the thing impossible.

Most of Mademoiselle Raymond's remarks were made from a house opposite to that of Madame Cadières, to which she had contrived to obtain admission, at first for the express purpose of laying in wait for a favourable opportunity of executing her project of speaking with Catherine previous to her departure; but she soon became aware what an ample field was thus afforded for general observation. In any other case her innate delicacy of mind, and indeed, her perfect indifference to the concerns of strangers, would have made her shrink from

such a mode of gratifying her curiosity ; but she conceived that her love for Catherine gave her a right to inquire more closely into actions which, but for the baneful influence of a stranger, rising suddenly like a cloud between them, and which she trusted might yet in time be blown away, would have been laid bare to her like her own.

She could often catch a glimpse of Madame Cadières, bathed in tears ; a circumstance that convinced her how painful was the sacrifice she was about to make in suffering her daughter's departure. But Catherine was so completely confined to her room, which had no other look-out but upon the yard, that she could form no idea of her real feelings. That Father Girard wielded the sceptre of domestic power with a most tyrannical sway was obvious from a series of trivial occurrences that came within her notice ; and her dislike to, and distrust of the man, amounted to disgust as she perceived how unscrupulously he took the most open and unfair advantage of the weak, almost sottish, infatuation of the Cadières.

Finding all her endeavours to obtain speech

of her friend vain, she had recourse to letters, with no better success. She soon, indeed, became convinced that none ever reached their destination ; and, finally, she had the mortification of seeing her friend safely deposited in a travelling carriage by the side of Anne Guyol, and another of Father Girard's most devoted adherents, by that worthy personage himself. The mode of departure at that time partook but little of the hurry of our present habits, nor were leave takings as unceremonious then as now ; so that Mademoiselle Raymond had time to reach the carriage before, in spite of the Jesuit's impatience, the ponderous vehicle had yet been put in motion. Eleonore's bare head and careless attire denoted the eagerness of the moment ; and no sooner had the Father's angry exclamation drawn Catherine's eyes towards her than she seemed conscious of her friend's devotion, and grateful for the feeling.

“Thank you, Eleonore, thank you, dearest ! I will pray for you,” murmured she, in scarcely audible accents.

“Catherine, do not leave us,” said Eleonore,

fixing her penetrating eye on the young girl, who had already assumed a semi-religious habit.

“You cannot really desire to do so!”

Catherine cast a timid, pleading glance at Father Girard, which tears soon obscured, coursing each other rapidly down her pale cheeks.

Father Girard crushed the mute appeal by a single threatening look, which seemed at once to terrify, not only the frail object on whom it fell, but even the weeping mother, who had looked up, as Eleonore was speaking, with something like an expression of hope depicted on her sunken countenance. The Priest turned sharply on Mademoiselle Raymond, and darting at her one of those withering glances which so well sustained the thunders of his eloquence in the pulpit, and produced such triumphant effects on his female adherents, he stood in haughty expectation of the result; but, in this instance, it fell short of its customary effect. Eleonore returned the look with one of undisguised contempt; and the Jesuit quailed before the firm, steady gaze he encountered in

the large, dark, severely expressive eyes of Mademoiselle Raymond.

“Leave us, Mademoiselle,” he said, in a tone of ill-suppressed rage; “leave this holy maiden, whom you never approach but with the attempt to lead her astray from a path of light which you have not the grace to follow. Go, I say,” he continued, raising his voice in the nervous impatience of the moment, above the pitch of decorum, and grasping, at the same time, the arm of the young lady in no gentle or reserved manner. “Go! impious heretic—or—” and he compressed the arm he held in a rude, rough manner, equally unbecoming his habit, and the sex of her whom he addressed.

“You forget yourself,” said Mademoiselle Raymond, coolly drawing herself up, and seeking, by a slight gesture, to release herself from the bold grasp of the Jesuit, but instantly ceasing the effort upon discovering that it would not avail her.

“It is not I, it is you!—you!” An excess of resentment, for which there appeared scarcely sufficient cause, seemed about to transport

the Monk beyond the bounds of decency. In vain did the Cadières, mother and sons, and the young girls in the carriage exhort him to be pacified; it was evident that rage was fast mastering his reason, when Eleonore, bending her tall form towards him, whispered a few words in his ear.

No spell spoken by necromancer ever produced a more magical effect. A hue still more ghastly than usual overspread his countenance,—his trembling hand released the frail arm it had grasped as though no longer able to retain it,—his knees knocked against each other,—his eyes rolled wildly in his head,—the most abject terror was depicted in every feature. Had Eleonore stabbed him, the change could not have been more sudden, or more striking. It was so much so that Madame Cadières exclaimed—

“Good God! what has happened to the reverend Father?—what has she done to him?”

“Nothing, assuredly, madame,” said Eleonore. “But what is he doing to you? Rob-

bing you of your daughter, and yet you know not how to resist!"

An embarrassing pause ensued, to which Mademoiselle Guyol put an end by ordering the coachman, somewhat fiercely, to drive off. Father Girard seemed to breathe anew as the wheels began slowly to revolve, and the coachman's whip cracked cheerily in the air. Madame Cadières re-entered the house abruptly, as if unwilling to mark the progress of the vehicle that was bearing from her what she held dearest on earth. The Jesuit, without speaking another word, hastily darted up the street, following the carriage with rapid strides, whilst the brothers remained rooted to the spot. Eleonore's keen eye caught the figure of Catherine, at the next turning, as, leaning with her whole body out of the carriage window, she stretched forth her arms towards her—the next instant she was out of sight. Whether the movement had been an adieu, or an appeal, was a point which it troubled much Mademoiselle Raymond to decide. Luckily, for all parties, the early hour at which this scene took

place precluded the possibility of its getting bruited about. This was especially fortunate for Eleonore ; for, bigoted as were the times and the people, had the report once gained ground that she had insulted a member of the church, and so holy a man, too, as Father Girard was considered to be, it might have blighted her fair fame. She recounted, however, the affair to my father, down to the smallest detail. His answer was :—

“ The *Tartuffe* will never forgive you, and I am afraid you have braved his anger to little or no purpose. I, too, have taken my informations, and we have little to fear for Catherine. I understand that the nunnery of St. Clare belongs to a mild order, and boasts, besides a very sensible and high-born abbess, many sisters of distinction. Should she not feel disposed to take the veil, no one there will exert any undue authority, or even persuasion, to induce her to that step ; and, should she really perform the vows, she has every chance of happiness that such an existence can afford. At all events, there she will be delivered from that odious director’s

presence and control ; he will hardly dare to follow her to the sisterhood—if, indeed, he could quit Toulon. He believes, however, his object attained ; her person and fortune are secured to the church, and he will now turn his thoughts to some other victim, perhaps Marie Langières.”

“God grant you may be right,” said Mademoiselle Raymond ; but she looked very much as if she could not bring herself to share his opinion.

Catherine’s departure, and the manner of it, had put an end to all Eleonore’s hopes of a reconciliation. That unfortunate being would, probably, now, for the rest of her life, be dead to them and to the world, as completely as though the grave had closed upon her ; and, having mourned this easy to be foreseen event long before it actually took place, both my father and Mademoiselle Raymond felt themselves very much at liberty to think of each other,—the only other object of interest that stood in their way being withdrawn from them.

I will cut a long story short—or one that might be spun out into such—nor detail to you

by what rapid gradations my father became aware of the real nature of his attachment to Eleonore — that she alone could render him truly happy. Neither will I dwell on the manner in which he communicated this discovery, nor on that in which it was received. Mademoiselle Raymond was free from all even the slightest shadow of coquetry, and probably would have been thought, upon the whole, too deficient in that respect by a vulgar-minded man; but my father was as superior to the generality of his sex as she was to hers, and was able to appreciate her every quality. The frank, candid admission she at once made of the state of her feelings, even previous to the existence of his own love for her, was received by him with delight and gratitude. He wondered, in his soul, how he could ever have preferred the rose to the pearl—Catherine to Eleonore; but, as he expressed it in after life, one was the romance, the other the reality of love. It is right and proper that youth should have its dreams, and manhood its happiness. The first choice of the heart depends so much on cir-

cumstances, and on the imagination, and every man's tastes and opinions alter so much with time and experience, that the object of his boyish passion would seldom, if obtained, conduce to the happiness of his after years.

My father's proposal came at a most fortunate and critical moment for poor Eleonore. In a very short time her minority would cease ; her guardians had determined on leaving Toulon, and had she wished to remain there, she would have found it no easy matter to procure a home.

I will not tell you of all the tittle-tattle of the town, when this news was made public by the parties whom it most concerned. After having loudly predicted it nearly three years before it had any basis on truth, they would not credit it, even from the lips of the future couple. It was not until the parents of Monsieur Chaudon came from Marseilles, in great haste, to attend the *fiançailles* of the young people, that at last the thing was believed ; and then, again, it gave rise to as much jealousy and animadversion, to as many heart-burnings and calumnies, as though such an event had been a flagrant act

of injustice committed against all the marriageables of the good city.

Now that the beauty and the heiress—Catherine and Eleonore—were both disposed of, it was but reasonable to expect they would be forgotten. So far as regards Eleonore this was indeed the case. You must not suppose, however, that her marriage had actually taken place. Matrimony, like every other thing, was treated then with far more importance than it is at present; and the *fiançailles*, or betrothals—a ceremony seldom, if ever, observed now in France—was in full use at that epoch. It generally preceded the marriage by many months, but bound the parties almost irrevocably to the performance of that engagement.

But Mademoiselle Cadières did not subside into forgetfulness. On the contrary, never had she been so much talked of as since her arrival at Ollioules. Father Girard having requested her admission to this convent in no very humble terms—for he had announced his *protégée* as one whose peculiar holiness would shed a fresh lustre on the establishment, and in whom he

himself took a special interest, on account of the extraordinary graces with which she was gifted—and being, moreover, personally known to the superior,—she was received with singular honours; and all the strange, unusual conditions he made in her behalf were acquiesced in without demur.

But his after proceedings, and her own, attached a still greater importance to Catherine, and brought her before the public in a far more glaring manner than heretofore. Abandoning almost entirely his concerns at his seminary, more to the satisfaction of his superiors than to the edification of his other penitents, the whole of Father Girard's time was taken up with journeys to and from Ollioules; and the soul of Catherine occupied his attention so exclusively as to cause much jealousy and discontent among those whom it had long been his habit, and was now more than ever his duty, to attend to; for they all seemed to live but in his presence.

Marie Langières, Madame la Rue, and her daughter, were loudest in their complaints on this occasion, and stood forth the representatives, as it were, of the malecontents.

Among these, neither last nor least were the Cadières; nor were they slow in making their uneasiness known. Serious rumours now began to circulate about miracles having been wrought upon Catherine, visibly and palpably impressing her with the sign manual of special election; and they soon became not only universally discussed, but credited in every circle, drawing the attention of the clergy and the great, in a marked manner, towards the convent. The nearer she approached the culminating point at which they had long desired to see her, the greater became the mortification of her relations at having the saint of Ollioules, as she was now called, removed beyond their sphere, her glory profiting utter strangers rather than themselves. This was certainly the first consideration that roused the indignation of her brothers, who, if they were not brought into notice by her means, had but little advancement to hope for in their profession.

The mother, doubtless, was influenced by tenderer and less interested motives. Her great source of anxiety, that which really pressed heavily on her mind, was the state of her

daughter's health, which seemed materially impaired since the last few months. She reproached herself constantly with having yielded to Father Girard's persuasions in delaying to call in medical aid, whilst she had yet an opportunity of so doing. She felt, moreover, severely the loss of her idol—for Catherine might be called such in the fullest sense of the word; and her confidence in, and reverence for, Father Girard, began to diminish from the moment she no longer beheld in him the promoter of, but rather the bar to, the realization of those plans and ambitious desires which she had cherished in her bosom for years. But Father Girard was not probably very desirous of sharing the glory redounding upon him for having made a saint with any one else, not even with the Dominican or the Abbé, whose interest in their sister was thus completely neutralized.

At Ollioules, as at Toulon, Catherine had trances, ecstasies, and fits of a character that almost bordered on epilepsy. At other times, she seemed to walk, talk, and exist, like one in a perpetual dream. The miracles spoken of had

indeed wrought visibly on her person. She received the communion, and confessed almost daily with Father Girard; and the fame of her sanctity spread far and wide over the country, so that priests and *laics*, *grande*es and beggars, devotees of all classes, ages, and sexes, were daily entreating admittance to this new saint, of whom the strange fact is recorded, that she could read the thoughts, and guess the ailings or troubles, of those who approached her, before they had even spoken them.

Miraculous cures and heaven-inspired advice was soon reported to have emanated from her, and curiosity attracted even those to see the lovely saint of Ollioules whom credulity did not bring to her shrine.

The bishop several times meditated a personal visit to her, which Father Girard was careful to prevent, in order to keep her humble, as he said; but he could not prevent the grand vicar, and other dignitaries of the church from doing her that honour. It seemed, indeed, from the Jesuit's account, that his chief difficulty in guiding his young votary's soul aright consisted in

combatting her growing pride in her own surpassing sanctity, and the privileges it drew down upon her from heaven.

My father was much pained at the growing honours of Mademoiselle Cadières. A conviction he could no longer repel induced him to believe they were due to imposture alone; and that Catherine herself—his but so lately beloved Catherine—was the chief impostor. It was most reluctantly that he admitted this truth even unto himself; but his reason spoke loud enough to silence the pleadings of his heart. These miracles and wondrous signs from above—this gift of prophecy in one so simple-minded and little enlightened—this power of penetrating into the secrets of consciences, reading the darkest mysteries of the human heart—of diving with equal skill into the past and future—seemed to him, not, as to the superstitious and illiterate vulgar, a voice from Heaven speaking to the amazed multitude through the lips of an innocent and favoured agent, but rather the well-played comedy of an artful priest, performed by a no less cunning stager. When he reflected how pure and

spotless was her mind at the epoch of his first introduction to her, and then thought of her actual position, so young, and brought up in such reserve and obscurity, and yet exhibiting herself in so glaring a manner to public notice, displaying acting so consummate as to deceive and blind men of the strictest honour, and of no mean capacities, he shuddered at the moral depravity which so much perseverance and boldness in falsehood betrayed.

These feelings of disgust weighed heavily on his spirits; and although he permitted them to be apparent to no one else, he frankly communicated them to Elleonore. Her answer was, as usual, calculated to dispel the clouds from his brow.

“You are kind enough to say you have some confidence in my judgment,” she said; “allow me, then, like so many others, to perform a pilgrimage to Ollioules; I shall then be better able to tell you how much of all these reports that affect you so painfully is founded in truth; for exaggeration has doubtless laid on its colours with no sparing brush. I shall, also, I doubt

not, be able to detect how far Catherine is herself the dupe of her own imagination. I will, at all events, be a careful observer of all that I may be permitted to see, and will report everything most faithfully, even in its minutest details. May I go to Ollioules?"

The approbation she sought was not withheld; and Eleonore, always prompt in following up an idea, was that very day on the road to St. Clare's. Many, and of various kinds, were the wayfarers she fell in with—all bound to the same goal as herself. She addressed several females, who evidently belonged to the lowest class, and discovered that their trust in the new saint of Ollioules was illimited; and as they seemed sufficiently burthened by misery and illness already, Eleonore thought it a cruelty to seek to lessen the comfort which their strange delusion afforded them. They recounted to her the most incredible facts that had occurred to some of their friends and relations through the intervention of the Holy Virgin of St. Clare's, as they called Catherine. The stories they recited, in spite of her utmost efforts to repress

the rising smile, brought it more than once to her lips, and once even forced a laugh, the real cause of which she had some trouble in concealing from her simple interlocutor, whose severest indignation would doubtless have been roused by her avowed incredulity. The obvious interest, however, with which she listened to their lengthened tales of distress and sickness, ingratiated her with them too much to allow of their suspecting her real sentiments.

When, however, she was at last ushered along with the others into the convent parlour to await Catherine's appearance, she was surprised, on examining those who surrounded her, to perceive that many were of a standing in life not only far superior to her own, but some even apparently of the most exalted station.

These clustered together at one end of the long dark chamber, whilst the poorer devotees grouped themselves at the opposite extremity, thus leaving Eleonore, in solitary dignity, the sole possessor of the centre immediately facing the grate. This circumstance might have intimidated some young women ; but Elconore Ray-

mond was ever above the trivial occurrences of life that so often disturb less well-strung nerves; and she sat quietly surveying the scene, unconscious perhaps of the effect her calm demeanour, and the depth of intelligence reflected in her lustrous eyes, was calculated to produce on the beholders. Having been for some time the subject of much scrutiny, especially from the aristocratic end of the room, she was not surprised when a young lady detached herself from the group, and took a seat beside her.

“ You are of Toulon, madam, I presume ?” said the stranger, in tones, the slight hauteur of which was almost veiled by their sweetness, and whose accent was decidedly Parisian.

Elconore guessed the rank of her interlocutor at a glance; and though certainly not in the habit of conversing with, or even of seeing marquises out of their glass coaches, she was far from being overwhelmed by the condescension of the pretty sprig of aristocracy who honoured her thus far.

“ I am,” was the reply, conveyed in Mademoiselle Raymond’s most ungracious manner.

The lady was evidently shocked at the want of respect, even of courtesy, to which she had exposed herself, and was about to turn away in disgust; but a second thought seemed to prevail with her; for, pushing aside the profusion of curls and laces that obscured her features, she exhibited them in full to Mademoiselle Raymond, whose gaze, in spite of herself, was rivetted by their exquisite loveliness, although time, and the fatigue of an agitated life, had already somewhat dimmed their brightness. The impertinence of a slightly turned up, but most delicately formed nose, was fully amended by the gentle smile that played on her ripe and pouting lips. There lay a world of love in her deep hazel eyes, fringed with darker lashes; and the grace of courts, and the assurance of fashion, rather than that of rank, was revealed in her careless attitude.

“Then,” she said, “you must know something of this—this——” she paused a moment, as if embarrassed to find the fitting expression—“this young person,” she continued, remarking the sardonic smile that lighted up for a moment the gravity of the Toulonese lady.

“I do,” was the blunt answer; “we have been friends from earliest childhood.”

“Really!—oh! charming! Then, you can tell us all about her. Come, come,” she cried out, in a gleeful tone to her companion—“come, we have what we want.”

“I do not understand,” said Eleonore, laughing, “what you want; but if it is me, or any information I am able to afford, how can you make sure of securing either.”

The handsome and animated Parisian lady turned her soft eyes upon her with a stare expressive of anything but pleasure, and already her lips opened, doubtless, to utter some ungracious reply, which would certainly not have furthered her views with the person she addressed, when another came forward, whose countenance, though scarcely less beautiful than that of the former speaker, was more touched by time, and evidently had ever been of a thoughtful cast.

“Ah! come, my dear Madam, to my assistance,” said the repulsed fair one, “if you would while away time, and procure some light on

the important subject that has lured us so far."

"Yes," was the answer, "but above all, I must remind you, *tête folle*, that we are to keep our incognito, or you will infallibly betray us. Down with that veil."

"Oh! it is merely some *Toulonèse roturière*," was the whispered reply, which Eleonore's quick ear caught, nevertheless, most distinctly.

"Never mind—we must deal cautiously by her, or she may guess who we are," said the other, in a tone scarcely less low; "and if it were to gain wind that we have been here this day, it would cover us with ridicule. To have come so far, and incognito, for such folly—and I a philosopher too—it is too bad!—" And the lady laughed and coloured at the same time.

"No fear for the incognito, if your wit does not betray us, fair Canoness—"

"Or your beauty, thoughtless one!" said the graver lady.

Not a word of this colloquy was lost upon the unnoticed listener; and when the elder turned to address her, she already knew they were of

high distinction in the capital—the one an acknowledged wit, the other a beauty ; but her utter ignorance of Paris and the exalted sphere in which such orbs were accustomed to move, prevented these discoveries from being of any service to her with regard to satisfying her awakening curiosity. A Canoness and a Philosopher were two qualities which, united in one and the same person, might have sufficed to betray a name but too well known to the public, had Eleonore been less provincial ; but, as it was, the ladies were perfectly safe from discovery, so far as she was concerned.

“ Being of this neighbourhood, to which we are perfect strangers,” said she, whom Eleonore had heard complimented on her talents, in a natural and simple manner, which, in proportion as it was freer from courtly graces and *minauderies* than that of the other, was more congenial to the person she addressed, “ perhaps you will be kind enough to inform us if there be any truth in the extraordinary things that are reported concerning this new marvel of Provence. Is she so beautiful, so gifted, and, above all, so trustworthy, as people say ?”

The deep, thoughtful blue eyes of the lady were fixed on Mademoiselle Raymond's, with an expression that said, as plainly as words could have spoken it, she felt confident of obtaining a satisfactory answer to *her* question. Eleonore rose with that involuntary feeling of respect which the mere presentiment of talent in others awakens in those who are conscious of possessing some share of it themselves ; and she unhesitatingly replied :—

“The young lady you have come to see out of mere curiosity has been most lovely and excellent, and was once truth itself. What she may have become during the few months we have not met I can scarcely determine until I have again seen her ; and it is that purpose which has drawn me here to-day.”

“I understand,” said the stranger, with a deep sigh—“she has been during that time in this convent ; and sincerity is not always the lesson best taught in cloisters.”

During the full hour that intervened previous to Catherine's appearance, there ensued between the two courtly friends and Eleonore an animated colloquy, in which the latter was un-

consciously drawn out by the extraordinary conversational powers of the elder lady, who joined to much depth of thought a gentle earnestness of manner that pleased Mademoiselle Raymond, and made her overlook at the moment, though it afterwards came back to her memory most distinctly, a few startling paradoxes, bold views of religion, and flighty ones of morality, which were calculated to amaze a mind like hers, firm in womanly strength of principle, but which soared not beyond the limits assigned to her sex by education and society. The other lady testified, now by her wearied looks and yawns, and now by a few sparkling phrases, shining through the discourse like the facets of a diamond, and bringing a smile even to Mademoiselle Raymond's grave lips, that her wit, more brilliant than solid, was of that light order which distils just as much essence from the flower of all things as it can conveniently retail to a crowd of admirers, that has no time to be charmed too long; whereas the honey the other had gathered, whether of a good or bad quality, was evidently extracted for her own use, the world only

deriving advantage from the overflow of its abundance. But if this trio was sufficiently concentrated in itself to wait with patience for the appearance of the saint, not so the poorer votaries, whose hopes began to cool at the chill of their reception; and their murmurs were growing very loud indeed, when they were silenced by the sound of many steps behind the grate: then ensued much shuffling of feet—the dragging of some heavy piece of furniture was distinctly heard, and another awful pause of suspense followed.

“I wonder they did not prepare their comedy beforehand,” said the wit, in a whisper to Eleonore.

“The worst of convents is, they are so very unpoetical in the country,” said the Beauty. “A dark, dingy parlour, with a few high-backed, hard-stuffed, villanous oak chairs, a rusty grate, behind which hangs a dirty black curtain of moth-eaten wool—it is quite chilling. If ever I made my retreat, it should be, like the Duchesse de la Vallière, into a Parisian sisterhood, where the Lady Abbess was a princess of the blood at the very least.”

“Princess Adelaide’s, perhaps,” murmured the other.

“Perhaps,” was the answer; but it was accompanied with a deep sigh, which shewed the heart was not quite so light as the gay roving glance would have bespoken it.

The heavy, dark curtain, so scornfully described by the fair advocate of the capital, after sundry jerks and tugs, was withdrawn; and a novice appeared behind the grate, seated in state in an antediluvian arm-chair, from the old hard-stuffed arms of which the brass knobs appeared ready to drop with age. Beside her was a *prie Dieu*, to match with two miserable-looking thin tapers burning before it; and a flaming heart, surmounted by doves wrapt in a chaste embrace, cut delicately out of paper by the cunning hand of some of the sisterhood, and resembling the lace-like tracery one finds on some of our *bonbons* boxes, stood out in relief on a dark-coloured missal placed upon it. On either hand of the novice a few nuns had grouped themselves, self-importance and idle curiosity being strongly stamped upon their features.

These *mesquine* details were taken in at a glance by the trio, who stood yet aloof from the grate, and raised a smile, that shewed how unfavourable to the effect intended are the toy-like resources of the catholic faith when addressed to cultivated intellects, or even to such as have been ripened by the mere influence of elegant habits and the refinements attendant upon wealth and rank.

The poorer class, of course, were more edified with this little display, however simple; but Catherine herself occupied most their attention, and they drew nigh to where she sat with an expression of holy confidence, ennobling in itself the object to which it was addressed.

The few persons there present that belonged to the higher order of society grouped themselves in the background, as their inferiors crowded on the first ranks, but occasionally caught glimpses of the young saint through the waving motions of her votaries.

Catherine, far from looking pale or dejected as when last Eleonore beheld her, had a colour in her cheeks so bright and transparent as to

contrast with the waxy whiteness of her brow and hands in a manner that almost betrayed the hand of art rather than that of nature; and the lustre of her eye and the delicacy of her features were heightened beyond the degree that is agreeable by this lovely but unnatural tint. The novice's veil shrouded her slight figure, and lent additional dignity to the perfect oval of her physiognomy; but it was not the well-known lineaments, nor even the unusual colouring, that startled Eleonore—it was the expression pervading that once familiar countenance, and making it as strange to her eye as though it had never rested on it before.

There was a radiance on the brow, a light in the eye, a suavity in the smile hovering round the half-unclosed lips, the very impress of heaven itself seeming to surround her lovely head with a halo of refulgent light, invisible to mortal eye, except by the reflection it cast upon her irradiated countenance.

“She's a saint—one has only to look on her to say so!” exclaimed one of the common women, in ecstasy.

“Ay, the glory is round her, ’tis plain,” said another.

“She looks like one in a dream,” said the beauty to Eleonore—“was she always thus?”

But Eleonore’s whole soul was in her eyes, and there was echo in her breast but for the words her friend might speak. The concentration of her faculties was too evident for her courtly companion to insist on claiming an attention which was evidently rivetted elsewhere; and the profoundest silence reigned in this strange and heterogeneous assembly.

“If,” said one of the nuns, coming forward, “you would anything of this holy maiden, good people, she who would hold converse with her must give her hand through the grate.” And the nun opened a little wicket for the purpose.

A woman, in circumstances apparently above those by whom she was surrounded, advanced hastily, and said, in a voice half choked with sobs—

“I am not come for myself—but they say you are a holy maid, and can read the secrets

of nature as well as those of afflicted hearts. Here is a lock of my daughter's hair. Oh tell me—tell me, in the Virgin's name! something about her, sweet lady!"

Catherine looked earnestly at the lock of soft, dark hair which had been placed by the sobbing mother in her hand, put it on her heart, and kept it there some time, when she said, in low but distinct tones, as audible as if they had been spoken in the ear of each person in the room—

"I see your daughter; she is very young—almost a child—and very beautiful."

"She is but fifteen," murmured the grieved parent.

"She lies on her snowy bed, all decked out in white. The marriage wreath binds her dark locks, and the small gold ring glitters on the third finger of her left hand. But the lights for the dead are burning at her head and at her feet; people in mourning are kneeling around her; a young man is weeping;—yes, she is dead—I see the seal of death upon her brow!"

"No, no,—not dead!" exclaimed the wo-

man, putting forth her hand and clasping, in the anguish of the moment, that of the young novice, who in turn held it tightly imprisoned within the grasp of her own slender, delicate fingers.

“Woman! woman!—why should you doubt that the hand of God has withdrawn what it had given? But though your lips move in prayer, and speak of submission, your heart murmurs and rebels against his will. It is all of no avail! The physician has spoken it—the priest has read the prayers for the dead over her—friends have wept her loss! What more would you know?”

“Ay, but it must be a trance—a lethargy!” said the mother, impetuously, the despair at her heart drying up the tears at their source. “But fifteen, and so fair!—my only darling!—so happy, too! The priest had but just spoken the blessing—the husband pressed his lips to hers for the first time—all her little ailings had ceased—she looked as bright and smiling as the angels—and as she turned from the altar, fell into my arms—dead!—no, no! impossible!—it

is false, I tell you! and so I would tell the angels were they to come on earth and tell me so! It cannot be—they laid her on her bridal bed, in her wedding-clothes; but it is now six days ago, and yet no trace of death has come to mark her for his prey. Her hand is not yet cold—her face is pale, but not discoloured. Oh, sweet Saint of Ollioules! say the priest and the doctor are wrong—that she is but in a swoon!—oh, say so, and I will worship you evermore!”

Catherine again looked intently at the lock of hair which the mother had given her, pressed it to her bosom, and after a somewhat protracted pause, replied—

“No, you must no longer resist the orders of the physician, nor refuse the dead the peaceful grave. Let flowers spring up from the bed of sod where must rest your innocent child. Her sleep is that of eternity—her heart is broken.”

“Broken!” shrieked the mother, “broken! Oh, no!—the lark that sang at her window was not gayer than she.”

“The fibres of that heart were too weak to

resist its throbs of happiness," murmured Catherine, gazing intently on the curl. "She is well—she is happy now—all her little ailings, the beatings of that fitful heart are over—she is *dead*, I tell you. Woman, bow your head in submission to the Divine decree."

But the mother was alike insensible to reproof or sympathy,—she had fainted. The poor women who surrounded her, manifested the greatest attention and feeling, but were evidently more awe-stricken than encouraged by the scene that had reduced her to this state.

Mademoiselle Raymond, for the first time since the appearance of Catherine, cast her eyes on the mysterious strangers. All trace of meriment or affectation had vanished from the dimpled and capricious countenance of the younger, and tears stood in the eyes of the elder as she gazed sorrowfully on the prostrate form of the bereaved mother.

The nuns took the lock of hair from the novice's passive hand, and, closing around her, for a moment effectually veiled her from sight.

Then, after a short consultation as it appeared, one of them again came forward and announced that those who had any more demands to make of the novice should hasten, as she would not be much longer able to reply to them.

The humbler votaries seemed now far less anxious than previously to draw near the Saint of St. Clare's, and after some hesitation, observed that, as their betters were waiting, they would retire for that day. This design they soon put into execution, bearing the still insensible woman in their arms, whom, with the sudden and warm impulse of southern natures, they were now more intent upon reviving and consoling than concerned about the business that had brought them thither. The few ladies who were there, lingered not long behind, but, seemingly too painfully affected with what they had just witnessed to have the courage to expose themselves to anything of the kind, left the parlour with looks and gestures sufficiently indicative of their deep conviction of the supernatural agency visible in Catherine.

As they were moving away, the strangers,

who still stood at Eleonore's elbow, spoke in low hurried tones that gradually became audible, discussing the propriety of remaining yet awhile, or of following the example set by others.

"After having come so far," said the graver lady, who was the first to recover her composure, "it were absurd to depart thus unsatisfactorily. To have made all this fuss, and yet to lack the courage to face the matter out! Nay, if you go, I stay; and see, we are not alone," and her glance plainly intimated that Mademoiselle Raymond was the presence alluded to.

"May be, but I like not the aspect the thing has taken," answered the other, tremulously. "At a distance, it looked a very amusing *plaisanterie*, but it is a very different matter now. I tell you, I do not feel nerve to go through it."

"Nonsense, my dear!" urged the other, with reviving spirits—"it is, I assure you, but a well got up comedy; it is easy for this pretended marvel of the place to gain intelligence of what has been passing so immediately in her vicinity;

the trick is a stale one, and ought not to be palmed off with success upon a person who knows so much of the world as you do."

"But really I ——" began the other, hesitatingly.

"You must, *ma toute belle*, allow yourself to be persuaded—overruled even, if you please—by me, in this affair. Let us advance bravely, hand in hand, and you will soon see that, to unexpected visitors, of whose identities and history she must be wholly ignorant, her answers will be altogether of another nature. She will get embarrassed, speak nonsense, or take refuge in an obstinate silence; and after what you have this morning seen, it will, perhaps, be a soothing conviction to your mind that she is nothing but an impostor."

"Truly, if I could bring myself to believe so——" but before the timid beauty had time to finish her sentence, her companion had taken her by the hand, and with gentle violence brought her close to the grate.

Eleonore, who had not lost a syllable of the foregoing dialogue, although it was spoken in

too low a voice to have reached the ears of the nuns or novice, followed them closely ; taking care, however, to conceal herself behind the tall form of the elder of the two friends, for the other was rather diminutive in stature—that she might avoid, if possible, withdrawing Catherine’s attention from those whose object it was to attract it.

Her curiosity was excited to the uttermost by the scene about to take place ; for, like the lady who had suggested the idea, she thought it very likely that Catherine had heard in her retreat of an event which at that time created some sensation at Toulon. A pretty young girl, namely, had fallen dead at the foot of the altar, where she had but just pronounced vows that were to bind her on earth—a bond broken asunder at the very moment it was formed ;—and yet there was nothing in the handsome bridegroom to excite the suspicion of his having called down upon himself such a catastrophe by any dark deed of his own. The wild overwhelming grief of the mother,—her reluctance and that of her friends to believe in her de-

cease,—their formal opposition to the burial taking place according to custom and police regulations—all this was a matter of notoriety, and caused much discussion among the public, who began to shew manifest alarm lest the ceremony of interment should be, in some cases, too promptly performed; a possibility to which the rumours excited by this event gave some colour. What Eleonore had just witnessed, therefore, was not conclusive evidence of her friend's veracity. She might still be acting a part, though Mademoiselle Raymond was forced to acknowledge that in that case she had proved a most consummate actress.

“We have been informed you can divine as well the mysteries of the future as declare those of the past,” said the bolder of the two ladies to Catherine, with a somewhat incredulous smile. “We would have a proof of the latter talent, that we may repose more trust in the former.”

The nuns were, at first, struck dumb, with this irreverent mode of addressing their saint; then suddenly gave vent to their reprobation in terms of anything but placid reproof. To their

vehement objurgations the offender replied in the most winning and honeyed phrases, evidently anxious to make up for her mistake, and succeeded after a time, though not without difficulty, in laying the storm she had raised. The softened sisters withdrew from before their idol, to whose person they had momentarily formed an impenetrable barrier; peace was restored, and the lady prepared herself to address Catherine in more appropriate terms.

“It is not to gratify idle curiosity, or to dissipate an hour of languor, that we open our gates to the followers of folly or mundane vanities. Our motives for departing from the strictness of our rules are of a graver, higher nature,” said one of the nuns, who seemed, both in manner and rank, above the rest, and who was addressed as the mistress of the novices. “It is that the grace and light which it has pleased God to bestow upon this humble maiden, and which exalt her above her years and station, may, peradventure, recal an erring soul from its career of mortal sin, and turn it to repentance; or,” she added, with a severe look and marked

emphasis—"or to confound, perchance, shameless scepticism, that would seek, in the brightness of the sun itself, a proof of the darkness which it advocates."

The reproach cut deep into the soul of the younger lady, who devoutly crossed herself; but the elder cast an inquiring glance on the nun, in whom the freemasonry of education and manner had at once revealed to her practised eye an equal. Nor was she mistaken. Madame de L'Escot, the mistress of the novices at the convent of St. Clare, of Ollioules, was a lady by birth as well as breeding. The result of this discovery was a slight bow of acquiescence in the stranger; who now, turning to Catherine, and extending her left hand through the wicket, whilst with the right she still tightly grasped her companion, as if afraid that she would break away, and leave her alone and unassisted to get out of the dilemma in which she had placed herself, said, in a grave, submissive tone—

"You behold two women, who would willingly atone by the future for many an error in the past, if they but knew how; they are come

to claim assistance of your holier spirit, that you may point out to them by what means such errors may best be expiated, and how they may deserve that their remaining days should know nothing of the storms that agitated their youth."

Madame de L'Escot placed the ungloved hand of the stranger, on which a wedding ring stood conspicuous amidst many an accompanying gem, into that of Catherine, who had relapsed into a sort of reverie, apparently wholly unconscious of what was passing around her. She seemed transported in thought to some far distant world, whose bright tints were reflected in her deep, radiant gaze.

She started as she felt the contact of the small, delicate palm of the stranger with her own, and appeared gradually recalled by the touch to a sense of her situation. She stared for a few seconds rather wildly at this new interlocutor, then heaved a deep sigh, as renewed activity of thought beamed from her bright eyes. When the visitor had ceased speaking, she answered, in the same calm, clear, low, yet searching tone as before—

“Yours has been a stormy youth, lady. Your besetting sin was pride; it is humbled, not broken. Ambition was your idol; to it you have sacrificed duty and honour—for it, stifled alike the voice of your heart and that of your conscience—you broke the vows that bound you to heaven, the tie that bound you to earth—you forgot your convent, and later, your child, in the guilty pursuit of a guilty aim. Yes, you have known the court well, and its hollowness and deceit. It makes me suffer to think of such things—to behold them is pain, very great pain. You have known power, too, but that dream is over now; pleasure, pomp, and power, are alike left behind in the rapid flight of time. Born to obscurity, fate has elevated you on its pinions for a time, to fling you back into your native element. Your son, inheriting your gifts, and, perchance, some of the errors of your judgment, will rise on this hemisphere, a brilliant star, but will deny you in his hour of triumph, as you have denied him in his helplessness. You rejected a mother’s care—a mother’s joys will never be yours. But the past may yet be

atoned;—to the world by your talents, to heaven by sincere contrition——”

“Enough—enough !” said the lady, haughtily, tearing her hand from the novice. “It is now your turn, madam,” addressing her companion.

The latter stood as if rooted to the spot by some irresistible power. As her friend fell back, she involuntarily extended her hand to the saint, who seized, and kept it in hers for a few moments without speaking, then gazed intently at it for a few more, as if willing to read, in the almost imperceptible lines of the rosy palm, the secrets of the heart whose throbs were almost audible.

“It is fair to look upon, and yet there is blood on that hand,” she said. The lady gasped for breath and closed her eyes, whilst a slight, but visible shudder passed over her frame. “Yes, there is blood—it sickens me to look at it.”

“I have not spilled any,” murmured the fair penitent. “Oh! if you know aught, you surely know that.”

“Not you,—but it was spilt through you ;

your smiles were his destruction. Had he looked less often into your bright eyes, never knelt at your feet—had he not been surprised there by a jealous, a princely lover—his doom had never been sealed. Yes, that is what weighs heaviest on your heart. All your manifold sins—your broken vows—your adulterous amours—your shame—your hours of dalliance and of guilt, are all light, forgotten offences, compared with that one fatal consequence of your levity. He loved you with all the devotion of a reckless, an erring, but a truthful heart; and you accepted the homage that was to prove his ruin, thoughtlessly—carelessly; but he was handsome, young, high-born; you loved him too. *His* portion was the rack and the wheel—his noble blood was spilt as though it had been that of the meanest boor that ever crawled. Yes, he loved you well—your name was on his dying lips; and yet your head rested again on his princely rival's bosom; you heard him call a cowardly revenge, justice; you drank in his cup, sat in his halls, wreathed gay flowers in your locks for his banquets, and the pale spectre

of the dead never rose to your mind—the thought of your guilt never caused you to turn pale at the sight of the ruby wine, or to sicken at the touch of that hand which had signed his doom. He looks at us even now—there—so pale and yet so noble in aspect—his fair hair clotted with blood—he beckons to you——”

“Where! where!” wildly shrieked the lady. “De Hornes, unhappy de Hornes, why torment me? It was the regent—the regent’s insane jealousy—and not my love, that caused your death!”

“This is too much!—you forget yourself, Madame de Parabères!” said the elder lady, authoritatively, tearing the trembling, agonized female from the grate, and leading her forcibly away.

“Oh! Madame de Tencin, you have killed me,” said she, in a broken murmur, as her companion dragged her from the parlour.

All stood amazed and paralysed at this sudden, unlooked for revelation.

The errors of both these celebrated mistresses of the Regent had been too flagrant to have

escaped the knowledge even of such recluses as the virgins of Ollioules. The literary fame of Madame de Tencin had indeed survived, in the world of Paris, the renown of her beauty and her intrigues; but nought could mitigate their heinousness in the eyes of the nuns, though swallowed up, for the moment, in the deep interest created by the supposed heroine of the tragical event just alluded to—the death of the young Count de Hornes—which was yet fresh in every mind.

Although all creditable historians have agreed in charging him with the offence for which he suffered, yet there were many at the time, especially among the privileged classes to which he belonged, who were inclined to doubt both the justice of his sentence and the Regent's motives for enforcing it with a relentless purpose so much at variance with his usual easiness of temper. The dissolute habits of the Prince naturally led the suspicious to couple this unwonted severity with some portion of the scandalous chronicle of his life; and they asserted that jealousy of the Count's success with one of

the very few objects of his gallantry for whom he ever professed, or felt, a real passion, the lovely Marquise De Parabères, was the real cause of his secret rage against De Hornes, which a chance accident, by involving the Count in a mysterious and criminal affair, had favoured. Others there were, who affirmed that the desire to oblige law, and protect his system, was the only reason for this act of inclemency.

However slight the foundation for such rumours may have been, and however obvious the motives of those who brought them into circulation, still none can read the sad fate of this ill-starred young nobleman without feeling some surprise, perhaps even suspicion, at such unwonted, and in some details almost malignant severity, as the Regent displayed, in a case where so many attenuating circumstances might have pleaded in favour of the culprit. His extreme youth, his illustrious origin, his more than doubtful sanity of mind, his quality of foreigner—the mean condition and lost character of his accusers—all these were so many facilities

afforded to the Prince's mercy. But vainly did the highest in the realm humble the pride they almost invariably opposed to the Regent on every possible occasion, to petition the youth's life, or at least a commutation of the sentence into inflicting death in a more humane manner. Vainly did they implore that his blood, which claimed affinity to that of the Regent himself, should not be disgraced by a *peine infâmante*—the voice of petition and that of mercy were alike disregarded; and at the early age of nineteen, the handsomest youth of the day perished like the lowest and worst of malefactors.

The general outline of this sad story was, as I have said, but too well known to admit of what had just passed not being fully understood by all present; and there ensued at its close a pause of surprise and indignation, during which the unfortunate woman who had so powerfully excited the latter feeling in the bosoms of the quiet sisterhood, was shoved by her friend, more dead than alive, into the chaise that had brought them to the convent door.

It was the rattle of its wheels that first re-

called the wandering thoughts of those in the parlour. Catherine had fallen back into the arm-chair, apparently in a state of total exhaustion. It seemed as if an enchanter's wand had passed over her frame, dispelling at one touch the magic beauty he had lent, so complete and remarkable was the change. There she lay, ghastly pale, with closed eyes and lips apart, the veil flung back from her emaciated features, from which all expression had fled except one of intense fatigue.

"Her fit is coming on," murmured one of the nuns to the mistress of the novices; "we must remove her."

The little candles were blown out; after a few violent tugs, the curtain was again hermetically drawn to; the shuffling of feet was heard, the rolling away of the heavy chair, with its half insensible burthen; then that of the *prie Dieu*; a banging of many doors ensued, and the scene was over.

The terrified Eleonore still stood rooted before the grate, unable to determine if what she had just assisted to was the representation

of an excellently got up, exquisitely played comedy, that only wanted a little better setting off in the way of decoration to be perfect, or if it were a strange awful mystery of nature which she had for the first time beheld. How long she might yet have remained thus absorbed and unmindful of time or place, it is impossible to say; for a light, though firm grasp was laid on her arm—she started, looked up in surprise, and my father stood before her.

“I have been present almost since the very first moment,” he said, “though you did not see me, lost as I was in the shadow of the entrance door. I have seen and heard everything; so trouble not yourself to relate what it were pain to describe, nor attempt to explain what hardly admits of explanation. I am not ashamed to confess it, it was a womanish curiosity that brought me here; but I am glad of the impulse, let its cause be what it may, since it has brought me to you at the right moment.”

Mademoiselle Raymond indeed had cause to rejoice at his timely presence. Her nerves, strong as they naturally were, had been un-

usually shaken, and she needed an arm on which to lean, a gentle and sympathising but firmer mind than her own to lead her by degrees, if not thoroughly to understand in all its details, or to obliterate the general impression of that morning's proceeding, at least to calm the agitation it had excited, and to regulate the ideas it had engendered.

As to my father, puzzled and perplexed, he once more turned over many a dusty volume, that only perplexed and puzzled him the more, then ceasing from his unfruitful labour, voluntarily, though not without a strong effort, he dismissed the subject altogether from his mind, and trusted to the future to throw more light upon it than his reason, torture it as he would, could well afford at the present moment.

I may as well here mention that when, at a later period, Mademoiselle Raymond had occasion to visit Paris, and the ladies De Tencin and De Parabère were pointed out to her notice, she had no difficulty, though meeting them in a calmer, lighter scene, in recognising in them the strangers of the parlour at St. Clare's; and

when, at a still later period, D'Alembert, the former's natural son, shone conspicuous in the bright but baneful constellation that for a time illumined the horizon of French literature, when his name was pronounced along with those of Voltaire, Rousseau, Diderot, and the rest, that name recalled, involuntarily, to all who had been present at the scene we have described, Catherine's allusions concerning him. Nor was the fact thought less remarkable that when at last, at the request of the physicians and desire of the authorities, the body of the young girl whose sudden decease had caused such general sensation, was submitted to autopsy, it was discovered that the cause, though totally unsuspected, was very natural. The heart had burst; which, as the poor child had been for the last few years subject to constant and violent palpitations, and was otherwise of a very delicate constitution, was not a matter of marvel to the faculty.

The events which led to the sketch I have so rapidly traced, took, however, many months in developing themselves; and some time had

since elapsed when Mademoiselle Raymond, who was now busily engaged in the arrangements necessary for her approaching nuptials, was one day startled out of her usual composure by the sudden appearance of Madame Cadières, who had never been in the habit of visiting her, even when her daughter's intimacy with Eleonore was at its height. The laces she had just taken up dropped from her hand, and surprise kept her mute; but her visitor was at no loss to explain herself, as indeed a powerful sentiment or desire seldom leaves room for embarrassment.

“I feel,” she said, “you must think it very odd of me to come to you in my difficulties, whom I so unscrupulously offended in my time of happiness. But do not forget I did so only at the bidding of another, not from any personal disinclination, and that that other has deceived me. I now know you to have been our real friend throughout.”

Had Mademoiselle Raymond consulted her feelings only, she would have frankly confessed how very immaterial she considered what Ma-

dame Cadières thought or had ever thought of her ; but the recollection of the daughter softened her towards the mother, to whose folly she could not but remember that she owed her own felicity ; and she said, in a gentle tone—

“ And so I could wish ever to remain. But, pray, is there anything in my power by which I can testify my friendship at this moment ? ”

“ Oh, yes—many things,” replied the old lady, accepting a proffered seat. “ You see, I am sadly afraid I have been altogether mistaken in Father Girard, although not in my daughter, as you must now admit.”

Mademoiselle Raymond not choosing to fill up the pause which Madame Cadières here made for an answer, the latter continued—

“ Yes, there will be a Saint Catherine of Toulon, as there is one of Genoa and of Sienna—as for that, heresy itself cannot deny it, although I have heard it denies saints altogether. However ; that signifies nothing—mine cannot be talked away ; but I will candidly own you were right in thinking Father Girard selfish and overbearing. My son, the Dominican, and

even the ecclesiastic, have come to the same conclusion."

"And is it merely to impart this discovery that you have done me the honour of this visit?" said Mademoiselle Raymond, whose patience was ebbing fast.

"Oh, no—not exactly," said the expansive matron—"I came to ask your advice, your assistance, on a very difficult point for a mother to decide about. I have just received a letter from Catherine."

"Have you it by you?" said Mademoiselle Raymond, with reviving interest—"what does it contain?"

"Why, you must know that neither I nor my poor girl ever liked the idea of her going into a convent. She always declared herself loudly against the plan. No, no! Catherine was destined to be a saint, but not a nun. Father Girard, however, insisted in spite of all her tears and protestations—he also wrung a forced consent from me. His taking her to Ollioules, and that, too, when she was very ill, and needed nothing so much as a mother's care——"

“ You might, you ought to have prevented this; but perhaps it may not be too late,” said Mademoiselle Raymond, endeavouring to cut short the wearisome repetition of facts with which she was well acquainted, and which had ceased to be of paramount interest to her. “ I hope Catherine is no worse. Have you seen her lately ?”

“ Not very recently; but when I last saw her, I thought my heart would break only to look upon her. She is so changed—she looks as if she had just risen from her grave.”

Madame Cadières put her kerchief to her eyes, and Eleonore did not feel wearied by the sight of this natural sorrow, nor at the mode in which it was expressed, but pressed her visitor’s hand in sympathizing kindness.

“ Well, Father Girard’s power being at an end with Catherine, it will be easy to put a stop to all this,” she said. “ Exert yourself but a very little, and you will recover her.”

“ There’s the difficulty; the poor child is completely in his hands—she can’t withdraw herself from him, but wants us to do it; she

needs our assistance, she says, to counteract her own passive obedience—her blind submission to his will,—in short, to take her from the convent.”

“Then, if she has so decided a will of her own, why does she not express it to her director?—perhaps he might be prevailed upon to yield to it.”

“There lies the mistake: she has begged and entreated him on her knees to let her return to me; she has sobbed at his feet—besought him by all he holds sacred; but he will not hear of it, and punishes her severely for what he terms her disobedience to the will of God. But as the abbess, who is a lady of great discernment and kindness, has found out that Catherine has no vocation for a monastic life, and does not, under such circumstances, approve of her embracing it, he speaks of removing her to a severer order, that of the Carmelites of Prémole, where she will be so cut off from all communication with the world, that she had as well be entombed alive. Indeed, I am sure she will not survive her noviciate.”

“What can be his motive for this strange insistence?” said Eleonore, thoughtfully, endeavouring in her own mind to find a clue to the seemingly aimless labyrinth of the Jesuit’s system of persecution.

“He says it is to humble my poor Catherine’s pride; but, if you but saw her, she already looks more dead than alive. The convent kills her by inches, and yet the order of St. Claire is very mild. What will she not have to suffer if forced into one of a more austere description! I cannot bring myself to think of it.”

“But after all, my dear madam, what can Catherine object to so much in a convent life?—she dislikes marriage.” Mademoiselle Raymond blushed deeply as she spoke.

“Yes; and some people, doubtless, think themselves lucky that she does.”

Eleonore forbore from answering the taunt with one in the same bad taste, for which the efforts of Madame Cadières, at one time, to obtain her hand and fortune for one of her sons, might have afforded her an ample opportunity;

but, as I before have had occasion to say, she was superior, if not to all the weaknesses of her sex, at least to those that take their rise in narrowness of mind or badness of the heart. Her spirit was as noble as her feelings were generous. She could utter a reproach, but never a sarcasm—she could blame, but never turn any one into ridicule. I fear there are not many like her, or we should see the world abounding with better brought-up families. But this is again a digression—forgive it me, I entreat, I have cause to dwell on this subject with pleasure.

Madame Cadières was utterly unable to understand such sentiments, and accordingly, without paying any attention to the delicacy of the young lady's silence, she added, in the tone of one deeply affronted—

“But although Catherine does not like the notion of matrimony, as you say, she loves her home and her mother.”

“She is happy in possessing either,” said Mademoiselle Raymond, with a sigh.

“Besides,” continued the mother, in eager

vindication of her child, “you should remember that the life she leads is not an easy one for a sick girl, accustomed to all the indulgences of home. To be roused in the depth of night from sound, refreshing sleep, to attend midnight prayers—to kneel on the cold marble—and, above all, to abstain from meat all the year round—are physical sufferings which ordinary beings, such as you and I, can easily comprehend. But to these are added moral struggles, of which we can have no notion. The latter of course come from Heaven, and can’t be helped; but it is my duty to spare her those unnecessary trials which can be of little use in elevating such a soul as hers, but must bring her body to premature decay. I am proud and happy to see the palm of the saint in Catherine’s hand, but I have not the courage to see her wear the crown of martyrdom.”

“Nor I, could I but see in what manner it were possible to extricate one who will not be extricated!”

“That is just the point on which I came to consult. Having fully explained my motives

for withdrawing her from St. Clare's—for should she once enter on her noviciate at Salette, I doubt if we could ever get her back again,—I implore you to point out to me by what means I can effect my purpose, and to aid me in so doing. I am but a simple woman myself, and my sons are but inexperienced youths, rendered more than usually cautious and timid by their profession. It would never do for them, you know, to put themselves in too marked an opposition to Father Girard.”

“Well, really, deeply grieved as I feel for your daughter, since neither you nor your sons are willing to exert your lawful authority, I scarcely know what advice to give.”

“I did not exactly expect you would,” said Madame Cadières, at last coming to the point; “but you have one at your disposal who can, and, at your bidding, probably will give the best of advice—perhaps even aid us; and *you*, I am sure, for Catherine’s sake, will not refuse to bid him.”

Mademoiselle Raymond stared at her visitor in undisguised astonishment.

“But, my dear madam, if it is Monsieur Chaudon’s advice you require, why not ask it, personally, of him? You know him, and must be convinced of his kind feelings towards you and yours.”

“That is what I could not feel sure of; and as he has experienced so much disappointment at our hands, of course we feel delicate in asking any service of him.”

“But, surely, not now, when his being in a state of consolation is officially announced,” answered Eleonore, laughing. “It is, at the best, an exaggeration of delicacy. Go to him; I can assure you of a kind welcome.”

“Oh, I have no doubt. Still, he might resent the past; my sons, and even I, were obliged to treat him with great distance; well, you know it all, and so——”

“I see that you totally misconceive the whole affair, my dear madam,” said Mademoiselle Raymond; “but if you will follow *my* advice—though, it seems, after all, it is not for that you came here—you will sit quiet for a few minutes longer, when Monsieur Chaudon, whom I ex-

pect every instant, will be able to satisfy all your doubts."

This was said with a malicious smile, and produced, instantaneously, the desired effect. Madame Cadières rose and took her leave; but in so doing she thrust a sadly crumpled note into Eleonore's hand, saying—

"This is from Catherine. Oh! do not abandon us!"

Eleonore willingly forgot the silly, vain woman, the moment the mother spoke in Madame Cadières. She promised her assistance, and her promises were sacred as oaths.

The letter contained but these words:—

"If you do not withdraw me hence, my mother, I perish!

"CATHERINE."

On reading these few words, Mademoiselle Raymond's emotion was great; but, of course, its first impulses were controlled by the wise hand that in future was to guide her destiny. It was agreed that both her future husband and herself should go to Ollioules, and try to gain

admittance to the saint. They had even fixed the day for this joint visit, when a sudden fit of sickness interfered with Mademoiselle Raymond's wishes, and my father went alone.

After some demur—for, at first, he was not willing to let Catherine know who sought an interview with her, apprehensive of a refusal—he gave in his name, which proved the real *sesame* to the parlour grate of St. Clare's; where, in the habit of a novice of that order, Catherine awaited him.

Had he not been prepared to meet her, he could never have recognised, in the colourless, worn, emaciated being who now stood before him, with pendant arms, half open lips, and a wan brow, from which all intelligence had faded, the object of his early adoration.

Her vestments hung loosely round her shrunken person, that no longer exhibited the graceful outlines of ripening womanhood which had once distinguished it. They were, too, donned with a negligence contrasting much with the scrupulous neatness of attire which she was wont to display; but the change that

most startled him was the careless arrangement of her beautiful hair. This object of her former pride and delight, as well as of his own admiration, was now thrust under the novice's veil, from beneath which a few locks struggled forward, unrepressed and untrained, whose paly gold glittered no longer.

"Her mother is right—she is dying," was the thought that involuntarily suggested itself to his mind, as he gazed on this wreck of human loveliness. The next was, "She must be saved, cost what it may," and compassion, deep and ardent, was now the predominant feeling with which he regarded the wretched being before him. All unpleasant recollections of the past vanishing at once from his mind, he approached her no longer as a lover, but in a character that partook little less of devotion in one whose soul was so highly toned—that of a friend.

"I am here, partly at Eleonore's request," he said, "who is too ill to come herself, and partly at your mother's. I hope you will receive me as you would them."

This prelude eliciting no answer, he con-

tinued, with the familiarity of past times, that all awkwardness might be removed on her part, should she feel any in addressing him for the first time since she had so unkindly dismissed him.

“Are you sorry to see me, Catherine?” he said, gently, looking steadfastly at her as he spoke,—for he remembered Eleonore’s assertion, that this was the most effectual means she had discovered of securing her attention.

The novice turned her eyes languidly from his fixed gaze, and answered in a low, toneless voice, that struck painfully on his ear, like the harbinger of approaching decay.

“Oh, no! why should I?—I am never glad or sorry at anything now.”

“But you would be glad to leave the convent, I presume? At least, I have been told as much.”

“Yes, if Father Girard will allow me; but he won’t—he never will.” She uttered these words despondingly, and suffered her head to fall on her breast.

“Exert your own will but for a moment, and

you are free," urged my father. "Your mother is ready to receive you back to her arms, so are your brothers, so is Elconore,—all who have ever known and loved you; and here am I, with full authority, to claim you in their name, if you will but allow me to do so."

"You!—you want to take me away from here! This is very, very kind, and more than I deserve at your hands,"—she blushed slightly as she made this allusion to the past,—“but it cannot avail me. You had better not put yourself forward in this matter; don't thwart him—he will not bear to be thwarted."

"That is spoken more like your former self, dear Catherine, though not in the same tones. You seem very feeble; you must really return home, were it only for your health's sake. As for me, I neither seek to offend, nor yet dread to do so, in a fair cause, any breathing mortal; monk or soldier are alike to me in that respect. Besides, why should this redoubted Jesuit wish to immure you here, or any where else?"

"Because he wishes my speedy death now he has ceased to like me; that is why he wishes

me to go to Saletta. He may cheat others with fair words, but from *me* he cannot hide his thoughts."

"I dare say you know him thoroughly," said my father, delighted at seeing the soulless apathy, which, at first sight, had seemed to him to have usurped in her the place of every faculty, gradually giving way, as something more of life and human interest lighted up her eye. It was to him as if the mists of night were slowly rolling away from before a well known prospect. He rejoiced in the change, slight as it was, and was pleased to ascribe it to the beneficial effects of his presence; but her voice had still the same monotonous, husky, powerless sound that so painfully grated on his ear, on which still hung the soft, silvery tones that had once charmed him.

"But, knowing him and his purposes well," he continued, "why not defeat them?"

"I may not," muttered the novice, with a slight shudder.

"Then why write to your mother to take you away?"

“I don’t know,” was the disconsolate answer.

“This is more like moody madness than sober sense. She must be roused from this,” thought my father; “but first I will try her.”

“If Father Girard be persuaded to let you go,—if he give his free consent, what then?”

“Then—then I should be saved!” exclaimed Catherine, with some vivacity. “But, no; he never will consent!”

“He must have strange reasons for this insistance, Catherine.”

“Of course he has. It would never do if the world at large were to learn that he is a magician—a sorcerer—and has bewitched me! But the lady abbess and all this community know it, and do not approve of my vocation, nor of him,—that is why I am to be withdrawn hence.”

“Catherine, give me your hand through the grate in sign of renewed amity; do not hesitate, mine is pledged to Eleonore; there, that’s right. Now, look at me, and answer me succinctly and frankly, as though I were Father Girard, and do not trifle with me. You know I bear no trifling.”

Although well aware how powerful are the rays of the human eye on all those to whom reason is denied, either in our own species, or even in the most wild of the animal creation, my father had recourse to the means recommended by Eleonore to command both Catherine's attention and goodwill, without much trusting in their efficacy. Severity, indeed, he believed to be operative, to a certain extent, over all weak intellects, even when not actually disordered; but never had he so strong an evidence of that doctrine's truth as in this instance, which, he frankly owned to me, made him fully understand the nature of animal magnetism, though, at the time, he vainly struggled to class it under any received denomination, or define its boundaries.

The manner of the young girl underwent a marked change, at the same time that her whole person assumed an air of passive obedience; an animated expression instantly pervaded her features, nor did she attempt to withdraw her hand from the firm grasp that held it.

"Yes," she said, as if in communion with her

own thought rather than with reference to the subject under discussion—"yes, you mean it well by her and by me. Oh, no! you are not like Father Girard! Your hand cools, it does not burn."

"Well, then, let yours rest in it, and answer freely and frankly—Do you *love* Father Girard?"

"Oh, no, no!" almost shrieked Catherine. "Ours is a bond of hatred, not of love. He has bewitched me, I tell you—that is our only tie. But, do not mention this. It maddens me to think of it!"

"I must insist," continued my father, authoritatively, "painful as the interrogatory may be to both. In what way has the spell you complain of worked?"

"You see me after months of absence, and you ask?" said Catherine, reproachfully. "Is there anything left of what I once possessed? Youth, beauty, happiness—he has wrenched everything from me! His words have mocked my ears, his thoughts bewildered my brain, his wickedness seared my heart. From the first hour his unhallowed breath warmed my brow,

fever has throbbed in my pulses, madness burnt my brain, remorse gnawed into my heart. My nights have known no rest, my days no joy, my conscience no peace. My life has been but a protracted torture, and you ask me in what manner the spell has worked?"

My father was startled at this sudden display of vehemence, and though prepared for some such ebullition by Eleonore's account of her own observations, still this strange exhibition of feeling aroused his deepest interest.

"You have suffered much!" he mechanically exclaimed, still retaining within his the passive hand which Catherine thought not of withdrawing.

"Much!" she repeated, with a bitterness of accent that seemed, for a moment, to restore some tone to her voice. "Much!—more, a thousand times more, than you, or any human being who has not been in that fiend's power, can guess! Oh! but, were I to speak for hours, I never could tell all I have suffered. My whole existence is wrecked in this world, and, perhaps, in the next! All I loved he bade me

hate; and I hated and loved the same objects at the same time, until the furious struggles of these contending passions threatened to break the fibres of my heart, too weak to contain them. Yes, I could have loved you,—*I did love you*. I was on the eve of giving up my imagined vocation to the loud dictates of my heart, when he came, like a thunderbolt, to blight every honest feeling—every happy prospect! But I loved you even when my lips denied it—even when they pronounced the doom of our eternal separation—of my own misery!”

She looked full into the face of him whom she thus frankly addressed, and scarcely did the faintest blush tinge her sallow cheek, so intense was the concentration of her feelings upon herself, whilst she lay the secrets of her heart bare to the analysis of another.

A man of ordinary and superficial mind would, on this occasion, either have felt a perfect indifference on hearing that he had been the object of a sentiment in one whom he no longer cared for, and, perhaps, considering the

circumstances, have felt a mean triumph in it; or, admitting that he was influenced by more gentle and gentlemanly feelings, some weakness might have come over him, and the past become blended with the present. Not so my father. His character was as firm as it was noble. The latter quality, indeed, rarely exists where the former is missing. That which had been, was, in his mind, irrevocably separated from what was. Constitutionally free from the infirmity of melancholy brooding, he never looked backwards in life, but ever cheerily forward. When he heard, therefore, this confirmation of a fact long since suspected by him, he was grieved for Catherine's sake, but not for his own, for his affections were now unreservedly in the possession of Eleonore; nor was he depraved enough to misunderstand the words of the wretched inmate of St. Clare's, as they welled from the depth of uncontrollable feeling.

As he paused to consider in what manner he should avoid uttering anything consistent with the truth without offending the young girl, she continued, with increasing warmth:—

“Oh! you cannot fancy such an existence as mine has been. I could not love—I could not pray—that was worse than all beside. I thought blasphemies, even whilst the world called me holy. My soul is lost! lost for ever—that fiend has possessed himself of it!” and suddenly tearing her fingers from my father’s grasp, she wrung her hands in the very wildness of despair.

“Brighter days”—began my father.

“Never — never!” she exclaimed. “You know not—I am lost, irretrievably lost, in this world as in the next—he has robbed me of everything—my faith and my hope—even of innocence!”

“Nay, Catherine, you speak wildly; *your* innocence who could taint?”

She covered her face with both her hands, and the tears forced their way through her slender fingers.

“What can this mean, Catherine? I must—I insist on knowing.”

“Yes,” said the poor girl, slowly withdrawing her hands, and exhibiting on her wan cheeks

two hectic spots—"yes—I know what I say—I am disgraced—he has robbed me of everything—home and friends—my God and my early love—he has left me nothing—nothing—not even a woman's honour."

My father was speechless with amazement. Much as he had pondered on Father Girard's character, and the possible motives of his strange conduct towards Catherine, this leading one had never struck him; and when Made-moiselle Raymond recited how she had caused the Jesuit to tremble at the mere epithet, "seducer," which she breathed in his ear on the morning of Catherine's departure for Ollioules, he had not suspected the full meaning which both the young lady and the priest attached to the word. He fancied, indeed, she meant to reproach him with seducing a young girl from her home and friends, inducing her to adopt a course of life diametrically opposed to her real inclinations and their wishes; but the coarser, broader acceptation of the word he had deemed inapplicable in reference to Catherine, had not even Father Girard's disgusting appearance

been a sufficient warrant against such a supposition.

Mademoiselle Raymond's feminine tact had dived into the secret sooner ; but, on perceiving how unconscious was every one else but herself, she had deemed it best to confine her suspicions to her own bosom.

Even now, when my father heard the fact admitted by the unfortunate victim of abominable arts, he could not credit his own senses. That her director had driven her mad was the inference he drew from her whole behaviour and manner. As this thought presented itself to his mind, he gazed on her with unmitigated pity ; and as the ravages of disease forced themselves upon his notice, as he viewed thus, at one glance, the havoc that the hypocrite's tampering with so fine a spirit had produced, he felt every nerve thrill through him with rage, the fiercer because he knew how impossible it was to procure redress, and visit with deserved punishment the Jesuit's villany. As he continued his interrogatories, and Catherine, swayed as usual by the more or less firmness of

those with whom she came in contact, answered the questions he put with almost childlike frankness, the whole web of iniquity was laid bare to his scrutiny. Father Girard's aim, he now plainly saw, was to elevate himself in his order by means of his votaries and proselytes; but his ambition, though strong, was not the master passion of his soul. His baser, grosser instincts came athwart it, and neutralized his other well-ordered plans for bettering himself. This had been more glaringly the case with Catherine Cadières; whose peculiarities of mind had presented him with a glorious opportunity of satisfying his ambition, had not her beauty too fatally tempted him from the pursuit of his primary object. He would, however, have succeeded in blending the glory of proselytism with the indulgence of his cynical libertinism, had not Catherine's violent remorse, and the moody melancholy that preyed on her health, together with the general attention she excited, agitated him with the fear that his foul secret might be discovered.

This, then, was the reason why he insisted on

her removal to St. Clare's, where he hoped all chance of discovery would be buried with her beneath her nun's veil. The resistance, however, which Catherine and her friends opposed to his wishes on this point, both incensed and embarrassed him; but he was determined to overcome every difficulty; for his profane and licentious passion drew him still towards his wretched victim, by a spell as powerful as any that he himself could raise.

But, either fear getting the better of his inclination—as a marked change in the lady abbess's manner warned him that her suspicions were roused, or, as usual with depraved beings, the very violence of his passion wearing it out, he finally saw less of its object; and, at last, formed the project of removing her altogether from any communication either with himself or others—hence his diabolical determination to bury her wrongs and her sorrows in the living tomb of a Carthusian cell.

What a mass of vices—what a tale of misfortune did the few words he elicited from Catherine's lips reveal to her companion! He

could have wept over her as a father over a favourite child ; and he felt it would have been a pleasure, at that moment, to crush the vile Jesuit, like a venomous reptile under his heel.

But his was a profession that teaches self-control better, and tames the passions earlier, than perhaps any other. His warm and generous nature had not, indeed, become chilled, but merely guided by the habits of self-possession it imposes. He dared not trust himself to speak, lest he should utter aught that he might repent of ; but his flashing eye and quivering lip betrayed the secret struggle within, and his sympathy with the victim more than words could have conveyed. When he felt conscious of having sufficiently mastered his first indignant emotion, he gave vent to the grief that filled his heart, for the ruin of one whose welfare, in spite of his alienated affection, he yet held so dear, and whose overwhelming wretchedness—whose very loss, made her still dearer.

“ My poor Catherine !” he exclaimed, clothing his sympathy in the words of tenderness with an almost feminine intuition of compassion—

“Dear, unhappy Catherine, redress for such wrongs as yours is impossible. The revenge it might afford us upon”—the mere allusion to the wretch caused a gulping sensation at his throat which he paused to repress—“would be barren, productive of evil to others, perhaps, but chiefly to ourselves—yourself, I mean, my poor Catherine. The world, in such cases, stamps with infamy the brow of the innocent victim more than that of the cowardly aggressor. An attempt at redress must be attended with publicity; and the public ought never, with your free will or that of those who love you, to be made a participator in a secret which would blast your name for ever. Innocent you still are and must ever appear to the thoughtful; but to the unreflecting multitude! Oh, Catherine! Catherine! that *you* should have been the victim! I had as soon believed the brightest star of heaven would have fallen!”

Catherine listened with a half-bewildered air, but when she beheld large drops of moisture glitter on his dark lashes, which, after a vain struggle to repress, he was obliged to dash away

repeatedly with his hand, her look became still more strange.

“ You have loved me well,” she said; “ your advice must be the best ; but you must not be so sad, or my heart will break. If I could only get home again, I should then, at least, sink quietly into my grave.”

“ You *shall* return home. I promise it,” said my father; and his words seemed to convey assurance to the poor sufferer.

“ But,” continued he, “ surely you can afford me consolation on some points. Make my mind easier on the past and the future, by confessing yourself the involuntary agent of a fraud, not a participator in it,—a pretended saint, in short. Say so, my dear girl; for your sake as well as mine, say so.”

The tone of my father had become gentle and imploring as he tried to coax Catherine into a conviction, which he conceived an indispensable preliminary to any steps he might think fit to take on her behalf. But, to his great surprise, his manner produced exactly the contrary result to that which he was desirous of effecting.

“I am not obliged to think like other people,” answered Catherine, the permanent irritability of her shattered nerves being in nothing more obvious than in the fitfulness of her mood ; it seemed to vary with every tone and turn of her interlocutor. “I may be a saint, or a sinner, or both, for aught that others may wish me to be. I scarcely know myself what I am ; it is not likely, therefore, I should be able or willing to tell even you.”

“Catherine, I hoped to have listened to kinder language, the expression of gentler feelings on your part. I am sure, if the most devoted, the most brotherly sentiments can deserve such, I may claim as a right some return of friendship.”

“Doubtless, you are very good ; and if my poor head were not so confused, if my pulses did not throb so, I am certain I should be and should say all you desire ; but, I do not know how it is, I cannot fix my thoughts. The pleasure I had in first seeing you is ebbing fast. Perhaps,” she added, with a slight degree of embarrassment and perturbation, “perhaps you had better go.”

To be thus coolly discarded after having met with so warm a reception, and especially after having been made the depositary of her sad secret, appeared to my father a conclusive evidence of insanity in the poor girl, and a momentary doubt of the truth of all she had so lately narrated flashed across his mind.

“I were worse than an idiot,” he thought, “to take offence at her inconsiderate, unconnected conduct,—and most unfeeling as well as unreasonable.” Reassuming, therefore, the severe aspect, which the knowledge gleaned from that morning’s experience pointed out as most calculated to gain his end, he said coldly—

“I shall depart, Catherine, when I feel inclined to do so, but certainly not before I have obtained from you a promise——”

“Go—go!” she exclaimed in a low, hurried tone, interrupting him, as it appeared, without even being aware that he spoke. “I feel nervous, uneasy—I am sure something is wrong. Oh, now I have it! *He* is at the convent gate. Leave me, I entreat, or he will visit upon me your presence here; if you have any

affection left for me, oh ! do not let him meet you."

As she spoke thus strangely, a marked change came over her. She stood before the grate that divided the convent parlour in equal parts, and which she had approached so near as almost to touch it, with the appearance of being transfixed to the spot. Her limbs gradually stiffened, and her eyes became fixed on the opposite wall with a deep, intense gaze, as if watching the movements of some visible object beyond it; her lips were parted, and her attitude was one of the most rigid and strained attention.

After a pause of some minutes, during which not a muscle relaxed from its tension, she said, in a husky, guttural voice :—

" I see him—he is passing the portal—he has answered the portress's greeting—his hands are meekly folded on his breast. He crosses the yard with rapid strides that cause his long black robe to hang more negligently than ever,—his flat cap is pressed deep over his brows—its points seem like the horns of Satan. But," she exclaimed, looking directly at my father,

“why do you thus remain rooted to the spot? Go! perhaps you may yet have time to evade him by gliding for a few moments along the cloisters until he is passed. But no!” she continued, after another slight pause, “it is too late,—his foot is on the stairs,—in two minutes he will be here!”

Surprise kept my father mute. The solitary parlour window lay outside the grate at the other end of the room, and, though of favourable dimensions, it would have been impossible for Catherine to glance through it, even had she looked in that direction; but her eyes had fallen, as I have said, on the opposite wall, with an intensity of gaze as if desirous of questioning the dark, oaken panels with which it was adorned. The singularity of her manner absorbed him, at first, too much to admit of any interruption on his part; but, when he had recovered from his astonishment, he was about to tax her for yielding to so strange an hallucination, when a heavy step was heard outside the parlour—then, a hand was laid on the lock—it turned, and Father Girard entered the room,

with a perturbation of spirit which he could scarcely conceal beneath the veil—and thin enough it was—of common decency. His countenance, moulded by Nature into a most scowling aspect, looked absolutely savage with scarce contained rage. His step, as he entered the parlour, was even more haughty than usual; he walked up at once to the grate, behind which stood his victim, trembling in every limb, contemplating him with a fixed and mournful gaze, as the poor bird must gaze at the snake that is said to fascinate ere it destroys.

“How is this?” exclaimed Father Girard, in a loud, peremptory voice—“I had forbidden you to receive any more visits, even from your nearest and dearest, and I find a man with you. Catherine—Catherine! are you, then, decided to forfeit the last particle of my good-will?”

“It was not I who wished—who asked—” faltered the poor, overawed creature, as she clung to the grate for support; and her lids drooped heavily on her moist orbs, and her head fell back on her shoulder, as if her senses were about to leave her.

“ But,” resumed the monk, in his hoarse tones, that fell on the tympanum like the croak of a disturbed crow—“ but you consented to speak to him. It is lucky I was on my road hither, else ——”

“ Else what, Sir Jesuit?” said my father, interposing his person between the confessor and his fair, stricken penitent—“ Else what? It is I rather who ought to say—‘ Go hence,’ and you to obey. It is my respect for her alone that shields you. Take a timely warning—meddle not again with her, or anything concerning her, or——”

“ Leave us—leave us this instant!” almost screamed the priest, in the excess of his rage. “ Depart, and let us never meet again on earth, who never can meet in heaven !”

“ Beware, canting hypocrite, what words you speak, and, from this hour forth, what deeds you do ! There is a place on earth where we should have met, face to face, but for *her* sake ! Now, you know me her avowed protector, beware of foul dealings, for a brother’s eye is upon her !”

“ Impious, unchristian man, avaunt thee ! Satan speaks his wickedness from your lips—leave me, and this dear child ; and think not your idle threats can terrify me. I bear no sword by my side to avenge my honour as a man ; but you insult your faith in aggressing its minister, and it is my turn to say—*beware !* We have thunderbolts wherewith to strike the unbeliever and the scorner.”

“ Your eloquence is lost on me, and your villany known, and may, perhaps, one day be avenged. I go now, not at your bidding, proud priest, but because I care not to stay any longer.”

As he spoke, my father came close up to the Jesuit, and gazed full in the malignant, fierce, dark eyes, that gleamed like those of a tiger at bay, from beneath his shaggy eyebrows. “ But, if we meet again,” he said, in the deep, clear, slowly accentuated tones of suppressed but intense wrath—“ if we meet again, it shall be your fault, not mine ; and then, though neither of us may use the sword, yet will it be a struggle of life and death between us—a struggle to

which, as I live, I will bring all the energy, every capability with which God has gifted me, to blast, to ruin, to *kill* you, as ruthlessly as you have blasted, ruined, and killed *her*. But one step further, one little act of injustice and oppression more, and *then we meet*."

With these words my father turned away, and strode hastily out of the apartment, without casting a single glance behind at the fainting form of his once beloved Catherine, as, releasing her hold of the iron bars that supported her, she sank heavily on the floor; nor did he mark the terrified, quivering Jesuit, who, lost in his fears, was not even aware of his companion's situation.

My father felt that the ecclesiastical arm alone was long enough to overtake the priest—its grasp alone strong enough to compel him: the only influence, indeed, that could be brought to bear, in order to save Catherine, since the *inertia* and timidity of her natural friends and protectors would paralyse the effects of their sympathy. But how to implicate himself in this affair, without injury to Catherine in any

way, he scarcely knew. Chance, however—as so often happens, at the very moment when an affair seems most complicated to our puzzled brains, and we in vain endeavour to find the right way out of it—served him very satisfactorily at the present crisis.

A family council was to be held at one of the aristocratic mansions of the town that very evening, where, as matters of interest were to be deliberated upon, and contending claims discussed in private, previous to their being debated in public, most of the parties brought with them their legal advisers, among whom was my father. As he never allowed private feelings to interfere with the duties of his avocation, on his return from Ollioules his first care was to prepare immediately for the evening's task. This he did, not only by bestowing upon his toilet the necessary degree of attention, but by forcibly banishing from his mind every thought unconnected with the interests he was about to espouse.

Always scrupulously punctual, it was often the young lawyer's fate to find himself the first

at his *rendezvous* of business, especially when he had to do with patrician clients. It was so on this occasion. When he had defiled through the double row of expecting footmen who stood ranged along the anteroom awaiting the guests, and was formally ushered by the valet whose duty it was to announce, into the grand saloon, brilliantly lighted up, as if for grand reception, he found himself the solitary tenant of its splendours. Its many candelabras revealed without dispelling the gloom of its rich crimson hangings. The light of the tapers fell cold and unfriendly on the white polished surface of the marble *consoles* and tables that stood between the tall windows, glittered on the gilding of their bases, and played mysteriously in the depths of the mirrors that overhung them. The stiff-backed sofas and chairs, ranged in awful precision against the walls, sombre and rich, looked, to his unaccustomed eye, like so many Spanish dons awaiting for the king's presence. In short, the cold magnificence of an apartment furnished à la Louis XIV., and of dimensions of the most lofty description, not much relieved from the

chilling sensation of solitude that pervaded it by a few tables in the centre, ostentatiously covered with paper, pens, and ink, and surrounded with not very elegant, dark, leather chairs—especially and exclusively set apart for the men of business—all that offered itself to the eye was not of a nature to exhilarate his spirits. He mechanically approached the immense chimney, under whose mantel-piece, tall as he was, he could stand with ease. Although nominally autumn, summer yet lingered in this favoured clime; the hearth was fireless and obscure, and he was almost concealed within its shade.

He was not long left to his solitude, however, nor the meditation which it might have inspired. A tall dignified figure slowly advanced from one of the doors leading to the inner apartments, in which my father had no difficulty in recognising the Bishop of Toulon. He soon remembered, as he gazed on the mild benevolent countenance of the venerable prelate, that he was nearly related to the nobleman to whom the house belonged, and ceased to wonder at his presence.

The old man looked wistfully round, as if seeking some one whom he expected to meet there; and as my father stepped respectfully forward to greet him, he became aware that he, and no other, was the individual of whom the Bishop was in quest. In a few brief, simple words, but full of apostolic eloquence, in which he sought to bring over my father to the views of peace, for the establishment of which he had forced his own presence and counsel on the conflicting parties, he communicated the object that had induced him to precede the others.

He succeeded, perhaps, all the better in his Christian mission, that my father was extremely averse to the meaner parts of his profession, which often consist in fanning into a devastating flame the passions of men—sometimes even of those between whom nature and duty should form an indissoluble bond. Far from considering the worthy Prelate's interference in any way disadvantageous to himself, he entered eagerly into his views; and promised to open them to his colleagues, in a manner that should prepare them to support, or at least prevent their

opposing, the amicable arrangements which it was the Bishop's wish to promote.

The Prelate mingled in his conversation a few paternal remarks, and eulogiums on my father's conduct and talents, with the grace peculiar to the sphere in which he habitually moved, and with the sincerity of a kind heart.

The young lawyer was much flattered by this proof of his dawning reputation. He had scarcely dared to hope that his merits should be acknowledged in circles where the names of the obscure of other classes seldom penetrate, and where, consequently, to be known at all argues no small degree of notoriety. By the way, it is worthy of remark that those young men who so loudly proclaim their carelessness of praise, their indifference to public opinion, and think thereby to stamp themselves with the seal of superiority, seldom, if ever, rise above the most vulgar mediocrity. It is only he who has an aim in view, who urges forward in the lists of life, and meets bravely the shock of competition—he only who values the laurel wreath

that can ever hope to win, or deserve to wear it. The poet—the painter—the hero—all need the spur of some such ennobling influence to charm or dazzle the world. Oftener, too, does this unnatural affectation of disdain in the young arise from the consciousness of utter nullity and want of those powers which enable the more favoured to gain applause, than from any real insensibility to its value. The heart that beats with joy at merited distinction is the only one worthy of receiving it.

My father's heart was elated at that instant with a justifiable pride, but still he forgot not those who had an interest in it, even in his hour of triumph. Availing himself of the moment when the Bishop, having obtained his aim, and apparently exhausted every topic of conversation, was evidently meditating a retreat, he arrested his attention by introducing at once the subject uppermost in his thoughts.

“I have this day heard,” he began, “that Toulon is about to lose one of its palms of glory, and yield it up to Saletta. It is said, too, in a secret manner; but I can scarcely

believe that any one would dare to transplant any sprig out of your lordship's garden without your special permission."

"I do not understand you," mildly answered the Prelate—"pray explain, if indeed it be a matter that may concern me," he added, nervously; "for if it be relating to some young person or other whose vocation parents are anxious to promote, I love not, except the case be urgent, to interfere with the privileges and rights of the heads of families in my diocese. Still, it is my duty to interpose my authority in cases of too flagrant an abuse of these privileges; but this requires caution—great caution. Such dealings are extremely delicate—admit of much misrepresentation,—in fact, Monsieur Chaudon, unless the matter be very imperative, it had better be submitted to my grand vicar."

My father having permitted the flow of words to subside, in which the great and those high in office are apt to indulge, in order, probably, to avoid hearing certain addresses from their inferiors, which, for divers reasons, they may be willing to escape, and having listened to them

with the respect due to the rank of the speaker, he replied, with apparent carelessness—

“ Oh no—this is no case of domestic tyranny—it is referable merely to the Saint of Ollioules, whom Father Girard, it appears, wishes to remove to the community of Carthusians at Saletta, that she may, as he says, shine elsewhere, having edified enough at St. Clare’s and Toulon.”

All the *nonchalance* of the *grand seigneur* gave way at once in the Bishop, before the roused and instinctive feelings of the priest.

“ How is this?—the Saint of Ollioules to be snatched by the Carthusians of Saletta from our dear sisters of St. Clare’s ! You must be mistaken, Monsieur Chaudon—this cannot be !”

“ I have heard it this day from the novice’s own lips, and yet, when I heard, too, that your lordship’s sanction to so important a measure had neither been obtained nor even solicited, I unhesitatingly declared my disbelief in the power of any member of the clergy to effect it.”

“ Your clear and quick insight, young sir, does your judgment credit,” answered the

Bishop, warmly. "We bear meekly, we trust, our honours and dignity—wield, also, our apostolical sceptre mildly, and with due reserve in all things, whenever we can in conscience do so; but for the sake of ourselves, of our successors, and, above all, for that of the church, we may not permit that dignity to be slighted, that power to be braved, nor that sceptre to be put aside."

"I dared to believe so," modestly put in my father, "and even to predict that you would not think it meet to permit any other diocese to appropriate the glories of your own; for, I argued, the high dignitaries of the church have to consult policy as well as all other rulers; and such a step would be an error, as tending to displease our many excellent religious communities, the boast of this town, who all conceive they have a greater right to a native celebrity than those of other territories—but I am afraid I weary your lordship."

"Nay, proceed, young man—proceed," impatiently urged the Bishop, now evidently deeply interested in the conversation, and ap-

prehensive lest the arrival of the expected guests should put an end to their colloquy. "Your lucid views are peculiarly agreeable to me—they perfectly coincide with my own."

My father, whose artful pause had only been made that he might ascertain, to a certain degree, the impression produced by his words, now continued, with increased assurance—

"I also urged that the town, as well as the clergy would expect their beloved lord to preserve to them their young countrywoman, in whom they take so much pride."

"Of course," said the venerable Bishop—"of course, sound policy and duty, and the care of my own dignity, alike require my interference in this affair—require, I may say, an instantaneous, resolute interference; unless, indeed," he added, "the Saint of Ollioules herself has been guided in this, as in former resolves, by a heavenly voice, which to disobey were sinful even in the highest and most mighty of this earth."

My father perceived, by these words, the shoal on which he might strike in his endea-

vours to guide into the channel of his wishes the gentle, but irresolute, timid, malleable spirit of the Bishop, whose mental abilities were not of the highest order, though his heart was most excellent. Every instant was now of the utmost importance—he might never again command so favourable an opportunity even of addressing, far less of influencing the high personage before him; and he, too, began to feel nervously alive to every sound that seemed to announce an intruder, and to tremble lest he should not have time to utter all he was desirous of grafting on his listener's mind.

“It is far from being the desire of Mademoiselle Cadières to exile herself from her native town,” he replied, “and to carry her fame into other and strange communities; but Father Girard is a bold man—a very bold man. I suppose he presumes on his reputation as a preacher of eminence, and believes that it emancipates him from all ordinary restrictions and the respect due to his superiors. At any rate, I think—and so, I am sure, will all Toulon—that he is very presumptuous in thus acting

upon his own authority in a case of so much delicacy, when our good town is honoured with the presence of a lord bishop."

"Oh! but he shall be taught, and Toulon shall see, that none can brave with impunity their lawful superiors," replied the Bishop, with dignity. "Providence has placed me at the head of the flock, and I were a bad shepherd if I suffered the sheep to be stolen from me in the dead of night, as it were. I thank you, my young sir—heartily do I thank you, for your timely warning. It would not have been seemly in me to have learnt this too late, and might have involved me in great difficulties with our neighbours of Saletta; but—" the prelate slightly hesitated; then, resuming the air of calm dignity habitual to him, which, in the uncommon animation of the moment, had been somewhat ruffled, he continued—"of course, the latter part of our conversation and its subject will remain strictly private for a time—perhaps only for this evening; I must impose secrecy on you, and ——"

What more he might have added was in-

terruted by the arrival of my father's colleagues ; his reply to the last words of the prelate was therefore conveyed in a mute but low obeisance, which was acknowledged by his lordship with a most affable nod as he retired from the apartment ; nor did he reappear until the valet of the chambers announced the arrival of the expected parties, who awaited nothing but his presence to open the evening's debate.

The worthy prelate was received by all present, however hostile their feelings towards each other, with the deepest reverence ; the doors were then closed, and the business of the evening began in earnest.

The difficulties that opposed the bishop's pacific mission were not small, for bitterness of feeling was at its height, and many of the profession gave advice the most contrary to his desires ; nor would he, perhaps, in spite of the high veneration in which he was held, have succeeded, had it not been for the eloquent manner in which my father laid his views and wishes before the assembly, not failing to point out adroitly to each, individually, how a fair

accommodation would best further the personal views of each ; so well did he perform this self-imposed task, that his success was complete.

All the preliminaries to a fair compromise were then settled ; and the delighted bishop reaped the grateful thanks of the soothed assembly before the deliberations of the evening closed, which, considering the habits of those days, had been, indeed, protracted to a very late hour. It was midnight when my father was summoned to the door of the good bishop's coach to receive his acknowledgments for the able manner in which he had supported his measures during the last few hours, hinting, at the same time, that his services should not be forgotten, any more than his timely warning about the saint of Ollioules. My father returned home, too agitated by all that had passed in the course of the day to court even the semblance of repose ; but, pacing the narrow limits of his bachelor's apartment with hasty strides, he, according to his wont, resolutely endeavoured to class and arrange the chaos of thoughts and emotions that filled his breast,

and to test them by the calm light of his reason.

He was still very young, although five years had elapsed since his arrival at Toulon, his first entrance into life; and his mind, though equal to the effort, had need of all its powers to regulate itself with the hot blood of youth yet dancing through his veins.

It was impossible for one whose heart's first and purest offering had been made at the shrine of Catherine's virtue and beauty, to behold the idol thus broken into fragments,—the shrine desecrated,—the blossoms of his early love torn, leaf by leaf, and scattered to the winds, without feelings of the most vehement indignation against the author of so much evil.

He felt even more than a brother's sorrow for Catherine's fate,—more than a brother's humiliation in her shame; and his anger, whenever his thoughts reverted to the infamous agent of her ruin, partook somewhat of the violence which generally marks the emotions of us children of the south.

To calm the more bitter feelings, to soothe

the sadder ones, could not, he felt, be the result of a single night of meditation, although it afforded sufficient leisure to trace out, both for himself and the unfortunate object of his solicitude, the line of conduct most advisable to pursue with regard to Father Girard, and to the rest of the world.

There is, perhaps, no better composing draught to administer to the human passions, when excited, than a well-weighed, firmly-embraced, formal resolution, on any point whatever. This is, for most people, of all difficulties, the greatest, for the very simple reason that weak minds are more abundant in this world than strong ones ; as my father's, however, belonged most decidedly to the latter order, he did not experience any such embarrassment ; and, in pursuance of the measures he had resolved upon, the very first rays of the sun escorted him to the house of Madame Cadières, where he was soon closeted in earnest conference with Catherine's brothers.

A couple of hours later, the Dominican was on his way to the Carmelite convent, where he,

too, claimed and obtained a long interview with Father Alexis, the former confessor and director of Mademoiselle Cadières; and not long after, Father Alexis was seen on his road to the episcopal palace, where, in his turn, a protracted audience was granted him.

For the rest of the day great animation seemed to prevail within its usually quiet walls. Members of the divers religious orders were to be seen gliding in and out of the gateway, with visible traces of agitation on their ordinarily impassible countenances. The lights burned late in the good old Bishop's chamber, and the Grand Vicar, who shared, with a few more privileged councillors, the honours of his table, left him not before, the evening meal being concluded, the Bishop retired for the night.

Whilst the train he had laid was thus slowly taking fire, my father kept himself aloof from it, and was, to all appearance, a careless, uninterested observer; but Eleonore, with whom he spent the better portion of the day, knew better than to suspect him of indifference as to its results.

Nor were they backward in manifesting themselves. At twelve o'clock precisely, next day, the Grand Vicar was seen, accompanied by two other of the most confidential satellites of the Bishop, all three seated, in great pomp, in the Grand Vicar's phaeton, exhibiting, in their whole air and manner, an increase of dignity, that seemed to proclaim the importance of the mission on which they were bound.

Many idlers stood still, gazing after them, as they rattled over the roughly-paved streets, and here and there a casement was flung open at the sound, and a curious female head thrust out. In the streets through which they had to pass in order to gain the Marseilles gate, there were, however, a few houses whose occupants denoted a greater interest in their proceedings, and who evidently were no strangers to them. At the first floor of the one might be seen my father and his affianced bride, joyfully watching the progress of the clerical vehicle, although its tenants did not appear aware of the circumstance. But shortly afterwards, as they encountered the watchful glances of Madame

Cadières and her sons, who were also ornamenting the front windows of their small dwelling with their rubicund faces, they interchanged mysterious nods and smiles. Heartfelt happiness beamed from every face—there was an air of rejoicing and festivity throughout the establishment, proclaiming the celebration of some gladsome event, such as a marriage, a christening, or the return of a very dear and long-absent friend. The most savoury perfumes escaped the kitchen, as the females of that department opened its window to obtain a glimpse of the phaeton. Flowers everywhere met the eye in wreaths and bouquets; and Clara, Mademoiselle Cadières' own maid, had departed for once, and that without reproof, from her usual soberness of habiliment. The little white dog, too, that had once belonged to Catherine, was decked out with most coquettish pink knots and bows, shewing off to advantage the carefully preserved snowiness of his coat.

As the reverend fathers drove past the College of the Jesuits, they examined its long, imposing front in vain for any trace of the atten-

tion which they seemed to imagine their passage must excite ; nor did their investigating glances detect any emotion of curiosity or surprise in the visage of the well-trained porter, whose brow was as dark and chilling as his habit.

Not such, however, was the appearance of the Carmelite convent. Heads were to be seen in every quarter, and anxious eyes peering from beneath every cowl, at the very first glimpse of the Grand Vicar's well-known equipage. The reverend fathers within and those without exchanged glances of intelligence, which were soon converted, by the former at least, when the latter were out of sight, into looks of the most uncontrollable triumph ; for if the Jesuits, unconscious of the cloud that was lowering so near over their heads, had paid little or no attention to the all-important fact that the Grand Vicar was on his road to Ollioules in company with the Prior of the Carmelites,—whose zeal for his order was as notorious as the talents which enabled him to display it to advantage,—the Carmelites were better instructed as to the impending storm, and enjoyed already in antici-

pation the victory they were about to achieve over their proud rivals, though little guessing how complete—how immeasurable it was destined to be.

The next day explained satisfactorily the movements of the preceding one. It was now publicly reported that the Grand Vicar had proceeded to Ollioules to claim Mademoiselle Cadières in the Bishop's name; that she had been most willingly delivered into his hands by the Lady Abbess herself, who, contrary to expectation, seemed anything but mortified at the loss; that, in short, Catherine was restored to her home and her friends, and the Bishop had issued forth his interdiction against Father Girard, to prohibit him from attending her any more in the light of confessor, and had appointed Father Nicholas, the distinguished Carmelite I have already alluded to, in his place.

This intelligence sounded like the trumpet of judgment in the ears of the Jesuit; like the bells of a *Te Deum* in those of my father and Eleonore; resolving, however, that his own participation in this event should remain per-

fectly unknown—perhaps, indeed, it was already forgotten, or still unsuspected, by those whose more active interference had been but the mere result of his adroit instigations—my father formed a determination to resume his visits at the house, which he felt certain none would now forbid. All motive, indeed, for refusing him admittance had long ceased to exist; and it was a matter of moment to poor Catherine that some wise hand should now re-unite and guide the broken threads of her destiny.

END OF VOL. I.

MAGIC AND MESMERISM

An Episode

OF

THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

AND OTHER TALES.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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MAGIC AND MESMERISM.

It is easier to set a stone rolling than to foresee or direct the course it will take, or the spot where it will cease all motion; easier to excite into action human passion, than to say to aught so wayward, there thou shalt stop! When my father advised the brothers of Catherine to appeal to the jealousy of the Carmelites in order to get their sister out of her tyrannical confessor's hands, he had no idea that the latter, not content with so signal a victory over their rivals, would not rest until they had pursued that advantage to the uttermost; and that Father Nicholas, in his way, would prove as efficient and unflinching a champion for the

interests of his convent, as even Father Girard himself, had that personage been able to adhere strictly to the line of conduct which duty to his order should have dictated.

It was, perhaps, enough for the personal vanity of Father Nicholas that the spiritual guidance of this candidate for the honours of canonization was remitted to his care; but it was more important to his community to discover that the pretensions of this young saint of a Jesuit's training were, in good sooth, jesuitical; and accordingly, both in and out of the confessional, he directed all his attention and efforts to that anticipated discovery, which would naturally establish a fresh victory of Mount Carmel over the rival college.

But this charitable purpose was for some time defeated by the torpid state in which Catherine remained for many weeks after her return home; for the delight she experienced in finding herself once more restored to familiar objects had been but of short duration. Her debilitated frame, already much exhausted by the journey, slight as it was, sunk under this

new and powerful emotion, the first pleasurable one she had experienced for months. The exaltation of every faculty, which had developed in her such strange phenomena, had completely departed; and whilst nature was probably gaining fresh strength during this pause, her existence was reduced to a state purely vegetative.

Eleonore's interference at this crisis most probably was the means of saving Catherine's life; for she continually dwelt on the necessity of not disturbing this quietude in any manner, especially by allusions to the past. Long and uninterrupted slumbers, a strengthening diet, and complete repose of the mind, was the course she recommended, which Madame Cadières implicitly followed, confident that should it not prove successful in dispelling her daughter's ailments, it could not by any possibility increase them. Both Eleonore and her betrothed were constantly in attendance; the former regulating in great measure the house, and presiding over the cares necessary for her friend, which she was herself solicitous in administering; and the

latter admonishing the young men in the most earnest manner of the silence and reserve which it behoved them and their sister to observe relative to Father Girard; pointing out the extreme danger that would inevitably attend any indiscretion on their part; and endeavouring to convince them, that for the sakes of all it were wise to hush up the saintship altogether. He met with the greater difficulty in persuading them to adopt this line of conduct, that he was unable, without betraying more of the truth than he thought fit to entrust to their inferior capacities, to make them feel its imperious necessity. The house, too, soon became crowded with visitors of all ranks, eager to gain admittance to the holy maid, or, at least, to obtain some trifling relic.

These visits and demands—the lively interest shewn by the whole clergy, but especially by the Lord Bishop, in their young relative, strongly opposed my father's salutary endeavours, and served to strengthen that fatal ambition and silly vanity which again revived in the bosoms of the Cadières. My father

began to tremble for the consequences of these renewed delusions to the poor girl, whose only chance of at least closing her days in peace wholly depended, in his opinion, on the past being buried in oblivion, and the future in obscurity ; for if he did not dread any adversary, however powerful, he knew the world and his own times too well not to see the whole extent of the danger to be incurred in a collision with one so well protected and artful as Father Girard. This important truth he most strenuously endeavoured to impress on the weak but stubborn intellects of Catherine's brothers, but, alas ! to little purpose, as the sequel will shew.

To the first few days of stupor succeeded a general and feverish excitement, which plainly indicated that the appearance of repose exhibited by the invalid was but a lull, not a calm. This sad relapse terrified my father even more than the anxious females who surrounded her ; for he was ever apprehensive lest a word should disclose to her friends a secret which, he was well assured, they would not have suffi-

cient tact to dissimulate from the world. Eleonore, indeed, retained her suspicions of the truth, without being able to elicit a confirmation from his lips; for he desired above all things to keep her aloof from the disagreeable occurrences which he could not help anticipating in the future. Conscious, however, that her sound advice, and calm, steady way of delivering it, constituted her the best support for her poor friend to lean upon in her affliction, he would not unnecessarily deprive Catherine of her friendly sympathy. But whilst he thus permitted her almost daily visits, he continued to watch carefully the tide of events, that he might not lose the pilotage of those crafts which it was his most earnest desire to guide safely into port.

The first symptoms of uneasiness exhibited by Catherine occurred generally at those times when, the grosser faculties being at rest, the mysterious agency of the finer and more subtle powers is most active. It was when about to sink into slumber, or sometimes when, to all appearance, actually plunged into the deepest

sleep, that she suddenly started from her semblance of repose, and broke out into the most bitter lamentations at being so cruelly deprived of him who was at once her comforter and her tormentor. She would moan and complain like a sick child after its nurse, and express her desire for Father Girard in terms so wild and passionate, that, unsuspecting as were those who surrounded her, they could not listen to them without being alarmed at the nature and energy of her feelings. Sometimes, even in the dead of night, she would seek to escape the vigilance of her friends, and, laying aside the modesty and timidity of her sex, which had once shone so conspicuously in her, attempt to hurry to the Jesuits' college.

This circumstance first roused Father Nicholas's suspicions as to the real state of the case. He perceived that there existed a stronger tie between his young penitent and her late confessor than mere gratitude, on the one part, and kind solicitude, on the other, which their late position might be supposed to generate.

His desire to penetrate further into this matter

it was easy to satisfy in the Confessional, where the admonitory glance of my father could not pierce to warn his penitent of the necessity of silence on some points, and those the most important, of her sad history. It is probable that no consideration, however weighty, would have interfered with what Catherine considered the discharge of a duty, or prevented her from seeking the only balm that could heal her bruised spirit, reconciliation with Heaven. But this great consolation was not hers to enjoy; for every attempt on her part to resume the feelings, and especially the practice, of that devotion which had once been the very essence of her existence, brought on those terrible struggles between her own pure nature and the dark, fearful one that had, as it were, been forced into her; whose more immediate consequences were those fits and trances, which lasting many hours at a time, and recurring with frightful frequency, again brought her to the very brink of the grave.

It was impossible, whilst she was in this state, that some things should not escape her lips tend-

ing to enlighten those who surrounded her; and even the brothers were at last, though most unwillingly, compelled to coincide with the opinion of Father Nicholas, as to the infamy their infatuation for the Jesuit had brought upon their house. They were not long before communicating their suspicions to the Prior, who did not fail to confirm them by every argument in his power. The mother, too, was unavoidably made privy to these facts, the truth of which, after her first indignation had worn off, she was at no trouble in ascertaining the very first hour she spent alone with her daughter, whose artlessness and ingenuity were such as to baffle all the lessons of prudence my father and Eleonore Raymond had endeavoured to instil into her. Thus had her fatal secret fallen into the very worst keeping to which it could have been confided—the Carmelites, whose own purposes it was calculated so powerfully to further—and her poor mother, whose discretion was as slender as her excellency in other respects was great.

Father Nicholas's first step was to announce

to the family his intention of proclaiming to the world at large, and to the Bishop in particular, that what had been declared by Father Girard a work of divine grace, was nothing else than a delusion of the Evil One; and that, instead of a being, a saint, worthy of worship, Catherine was a miserable object, whom the exorcisms of pious and holy men could alone deliver from the possession under which she laboured. The Cadières' family did not much rejoice at this. But reflection soon taught them that the Prior could not in conscience allow the silly report of her saintship to continue, especially as the whole clergy of Toulon, and the venerable Bishop himself, had shared the common error, or at least had given it the sanction of their approval. Thus his first care and duty was to put an end to this idle rumour, which might otherwise soon be accredited in a way that would make recantation dangerous to the interests of his church.

As to Madame Cadières, the blow that had lighted upon her head bowed her to the very ground. The calamity had, indeed, like a two-edged sword, wounded her at once in her

dearest affections and her proudest hopes ; her maternal love, her pride and vanity, were equally blighted. She had nothing now before her but apprehension and sorrow ; nor could her thoughts revert to the past without the bitter conviction forcing itself upon her that she, and she alone, was the cause of her child's misfortune ; less blind zeal, a little more worldly prudence, had saved her beloved Catherine !

The disgrace was doubly felt by one whose faults had ever been mere errors of judgment, but whose whole life, so far as the performance of every duty went, had been like unto a polished mirror, whose purity no passing breath ever tainted. The trial was a severe one ; but she had something better than mere philosophy to oppose to it. Her simplicity and weakness were converted into strength by her Christian fortitude ; and she bore up well against her affliction. That she should do so tacitly, however, was hardly to be expected ; and though she cautiously concealed the worst facts, she dwelt, more loudly than prudence should have dictated, upon the possession of her daughter

being the work of foul magic and unhallowed arts, and upon Father Girard, whom she most unadvisedly denounced as an impostor and a sorcerer.

Eleonore was the first to inform my father of the sad state into which Catherine had relapsed, and of all the surmises to which it gave rise in her domestic circle. Nothing, in his opinion, could be worse than the turn affairs were taking. At that period, when the Jesuits were all-powerful, he well knew the danger of exciting the wrath and revenge of a body, whose unjust and unwise policy it was invariably to side with any member of the community whom it had once received within its bosom, let him prove ever so undeserving, or even guilty. He would have given worlds to spare the poor, suffering Catherine, the fearful struggle, and the still more fearful consequences that must inevitably result from a contest so unequal.

“You cannot really see or speak to Catherine to-day,” was Mademoiselle Raymond’s positive answer, when summoned from her friend’s side

by the eager message of my father. "It would be only inflicting unnecessary pain on yourself, and that for no earthly advantage. Pray, do not attempt it."

"Is she in one of her fits?" was the natural query.

"No—not exactly; but in one of those strange moods which I really cannot, in spite of the battling of my reason, help thinking border on the supernatural."

"I must see her, let her fancy steer whatever way it pleases," was the answer. "You know not how much may depend on my being able to force my advice upon her in time; and you, Eleonore, must come to my assistance to further the plans I have laid down for her."

When my father opened his views to Mademoiselle Raymond, she most fully entered into them, but doubted his being able to bring any of the Cadières into his way of thinking.

"They are now as completely under the Prior's guidance as they were formerly under the Rector's. None of them are sufficiently gifted, in the way of brains, to have an opinion,

far less a will of their own," said Mademoiselle Raymond, as she led the way to Catherine's apartment.

"It is really a fatality," exclaimed my father, in bitterness of spirit, "that the best are seldom the wisest of mankind! Man were, perhaps, too glorious a creature, if a sound heart and a sound head were always united in him."

"It is a no less strange fatality," answered Eleonore, "that the simple ever despise honest, plain truth, and suffer themselves to be led by the designing, were their schemes even to lead to ruin!"

Catherine was seated in the very crimson velvet, antique arm-chair which she had, on a former occasion—and all present had cause to remember that occasion well—in youthful sportiveness, transformed into a temporary throne, from whence she had solemnly announced her intention of putting herself under the Jesuit's guidance. My father had never forgotten how lovely she looked that evening; her delicate fairness relieved by the rich, sombre hues of the framework in which she unconsciously sat. The

reminiscence was yet fresh in his mind, as though it had been but the day before, and made the contrast between the past and the present painfully striking. The old chair had been again brought down, in compliance with the capricious desire expressed by Catherine but a few hours previous; and in it she now sat, clothed in a *simarre*, as the loose white robe that formed the *deshabille* of that day was called, as pale and colourless as her vestment. Her eyes were closed, as if in sleep; and her long fair lashes rested on the wasted cheek, darkening the deep shades encircling the veiled orbs, that betrayed but too clearly the ravages of disease. Her lips were firmly compressed—her head was listlessly thrown back, as if the slender throat was not equal to its support—her waxy hands hung by her side—and her whole attitude was that of leaden slumber.

“We must not awake her,” said my father, in a whisper to Eleonore, as he prepared softly to retreat.

“She is not asleep; if you wait but a few seconds, you will hear her speak, although in

such a strange fashion as to justify the vulgar credulity of her maid, who has just fled, fearing lest it be a demon speaking from within her; and, Jules," continued Mademoiselle Raymond, fixing on him a glance fraught with the deepest meaning—"and, Jules, it is really passing strange. I am not afraid—but awed!"

"You are too often present at such scenes," replied my father, with a reproofing, grave look. "It is not a wholesome food for the imagination, Eleonore, and may bear its fruits even in after years."

"But, surely, I cannot abandon Catherine in such a state?" she said, warmly. "*You*, of all men, are, I am sure, the last to advise such a course."

"My opinion on that point, and many others, will depend wholly on the more or less weight Catherine and her family may choose to give to my counsel; and I am well assured, Eleonore, that you at least will abide by my wishes."

Eleonore was spared the trouble of an answer, for their whispering discourse had brought them

close to the apparently unconscious object of it, who moved restlessly in her chair, as if rendered uneasy, though not actually roused, by the slight disturbance around her. Eleonore pressed forward, and gently replaced the pillows that propped her up, and which her action had slightly deranged. As she did so, she imprinted a soft kiss on her friend's damp brow; for her feelings were moved by the sentence of separation which she had distinctly read in my father's eyes.

"Thank you, Eleonore, thank you," murmured the invalid. "You love me truly and kindly, but you must not resent Monsieur Chaudon's having a warmer affection for you now than he has for me. He once loved me more than aught else on earth. His friendship is, at least, as warm and sincere as yours, Eleonore, and still neither can avail me. I see into your hearts quite plainly—as plainly as ever I saw into *his*.—But his was like a murky den filled with wild and unhallowed feelings, the offspring of his vile passions—yours are pure and true as gold."

Although Catherine spoke, her lips moved not, nor did her eyes uncloze; the sound of her voice, much altered by the circumstance of not issuing forth in the usual manner, was, however, singularly clear and distinct, though very low; and the utterance calm, but slow, and hesitating, almost like that of a child reading with difficulty its imposed task.

“We had better profit of every chance in our way,” urged my father in a low tone, and approaching Catherine, he gently seated himself on the footstool at her feet, and took one of her hands in his, whilst Eleonore, kneeling beside him, seized the other. A long pause ensued, which none chose to break. At last my father said, addressing himself to the slumberer—

“You can read the purposes of the heart as well as its infirmities, Catherine; can you tell what brought me to you this day—what I at this moment wish?”

“I can,”—murmured the sufferer. “But I have more trouble now than I once had. My internal vision is dimmed.”

“Try, Catherine,” urged Eleonore, watching

with anxious curiosity the result of a scene in which no acting was possible, and which would enable herself and my father to form a correct, definitive notion of her veracity.

“I will—but I must have time”—she slightly bent forward at these words, which she still spoke with closed lips, and without raising her eyelids. A tint of red, faint at first, but gradually increasing until it became a brilliant hectic spot, fixed on either cheek; her hands and brows became clammy, and she assumed altogether the appearance of undergoing no ordinary mental or physical exertion. After what seemed a severe, though silent struggle, during which she placed her hand upon my father’s brow, she spoke in still slower, more hesitating tones than before.

“You would persuade me to leave my mother for a time—to quit Toulon—to go to Paris—to put myself under the care of a physician—a married man—he has many children—is a relation of Eleonore’s—a heretic! You wish me to reside with him, unknown to all my friends, until—until this affair is blown over—

until Father Girard and myself are forgotten ! You even think it best for me never to return—to die in peace elsewhere !”

Mademoiselle Raymond and my father exchanged glances of surprise.

“ You think, once fairly removed from this place, you would persuade my mother to follow me. That is your plan, and you have come expressly to urge me to it.”

She removed her hand from his forehead, and sank back into her former passive attitude, continuing, however, to speak, but with more rapidity and fervour.

“ It cannot be—it cannot be,” she said. “ I am bound here in iron fetters, which none can break but he who forged them. I cannot go so far from him ; I must turn back ere I had reached the gates.”

“ This is inconceivable—she loves him after all !” exclaimed Eleonore.

“ No ! no ! I *hate* him, and he *fears* me, and yet we cannot live asunder. I shall perish if he come not to me—Oh ! if any one ever loved me, bring Father Girard back to me, he only

can bid me be well, or tranquil, or happy, or wise—he only can bid me live. Without him I perish.”

At that moment steps were heard on the stairs rapidly approaching. My father rose hastily from his seat, cast one more glance at the simple arrangement of the little chamber, that had once occupied so large a portion of his thoughts, another at the poor sufferer, whose frame was now violently agitated, and hurried from the scene, his mind a prey to the wildest suppositions, most painful anticipations, and saddest regrets, that ever perplexed and tormented man.

“I can easily guess your feelings, Jules, by my own,” said Eleonore—“but is there not an unfathomable mystery in all this?”

“Let us not talk of *that*,” said my father, earnestly, “at least for the present.”

“And yet,” she replied, “I wish I could prevail upon you to accompany me to Mademoiselle Langières. I have heard that her state is exactly similar to Catherine’s—pray come. I was once somewhat of a favourite, and though I have neglected her since my time has been more

agreeably engaged, I am sure of not being refused admittance."

My father mechanically consented. They had not the slightest difficulty in gaining access to this young lady's presence, whom they found reclining on a couch, surrounded, as it seemed, by sympathizing friends.

"Here at least," said my father, in the lowest of whispers, "I think we may fairly trace pretence."

But here, too, a nearer view convinced them of the utter groundlessness of such a suspicion. Where were the distinguishing traits of the once handsome Marie Langi res? The contracted brow, the pale-blue lips, the sallow, faded complexion they now gazed upon, announced, but too truly, that her beauty had departed for ever! Eleonore, who had not seen her for some time, exchanged a look of surprise with my father at the extraordinary change wrought in so short a period. She advanced towards the sofa with the intention of apologizing for their intrusion; but before she reached it she stopped suddenly, for to all appearance its occupant had swooned.

"I think we had better retire," said Eleo-

nore, the moment she became aware of the circumstance.

“ Oh, do not go !” interposed the female attendant who stood at the head of the couch. “ She will be better presently, and delighted to see you. She would have sought you out long ago had she not been so very poorly all this time. I have been run off my legs to get the rector here, who is the only physician that can avail her.”

“ How so—does he practise medicine ?” inquired my father.

“ Not that I know of,” said the woman ; “ but it is a fact, that however ill or convulsed she is before he comes, he is not fifteen minutes with her but she is quite well again, and happy and quiet, for a time at least, as of yore.”

“ And what may be the means he employs whose efficiency is thus prompt ?”

“ I know not,” said the woman, shrugging her shoulders.

One of the ladies present belonging to the family now stepped forward and addressed my father :—

“ I dare say,” she said, “ you will think it more cruel than kind of us to stand thus by, watching, with eager curiosity, the development of infirmities whose source and nature, being alike unknown to us, it is beyond our power to assuage. But there is something so strange in this malady, that it excites our curiosity to the uttermost.”

“ I can perfectly understand feelings which I am not ashamed to confess I share,” said my father; “ but is Mademoiselle Langières asleep or in a swoon ?”

“ Neither,” replied the young lady—“ she is, and has for some time been, unconscious, it is true, of what is passing around her; but this is an infallible sign that her fit is at hand.”

A few convulsive movements at this moment warranted the truth of her assertion. Sighs and moans escaped, at intervals, the lips of the sufferer, and grew louder and more frequent, as though proceeding from one in great pain. She presently started up to a sitting posture, and, wringing her hands in utter desolation, gave vent to her feelings in broken sobs and

mutterings. The words she uttered were so wild—the phrases so incoherent, that little could be distinguished except her pressing and passionate instances that the Rector might be called, as he alone, she repeatedly averred, could afford her the least relief.

“ Oh, bring him to me !—fly, Jane !—tell him I die if he come not !”

“ Why do you not go ?” said one of the assistants, greatly moved, addressing the waiting-woman.

“ And so I would, had I not done so on almost every similar occasion, and been ever received with the most violent show of anger. Especially of late, the Rector wont hear of it. He says that if we always call him in, instead of a doctor, the end of it will be that the people will take him for a wizard or a quack. Since the return of the Saint of Ollioules, he is not to be come at ; however, I’ll try once more.” And with a sigh, denoting how useless she deemed her mission, the faithful woman left the room.

“ I think I had better go,” said Eleonore,

looking towards my father, "since Father Girard is coming."

"He will not come, depend upon it—he never does," said the young female who had first spoken; "so let not the fear of meeting this truly awful and mysterious person drive you away. I assure you I am perfectly convinced he will not come—he is too much alarmed at the strange rumours afloat in the town respecting him."

This sounded so rational, that Eleonore and my father suffered themselves to be convinced, and remained where, indeed, their help did not seem superfluous.

A succession of convulsions ensued that frightened all present; none, however, offered any assistance except my father and Mademoiselle Raymond. While they were thus engaged, a hasty stride was heard without, and Jeanne, the maid, burst into the apartment, breathless with pleasure, exclaiming, at the top of her voice,—

"Here's *Monsieur le Recteur*—the Rector is coming!"

Eleonore started, turned pale, and receded a few steps. My father, fancying she needed the support of his arm, darted to her side. His hasty motion deranged a large, heavy curtain extending at the back of the couch, and hiding a recess, wherein a settee was placed, into which she mechanically sank. Whilst he gently expostulated with her on this weakness, so unlike her usual self-possession, the curtain dropped into its place, screening them completely from view.

A few words from the haughty Jesuit, whose temper a hot walk had by no means tended to cool, drove the others from the chamber—a measure he never failed to take preliminary to any effort towards quieting the poor creatures who might be termed, with equal propriety, his patients and his victims. There was now but one alternative left for the unwilling and hidden spectators of his next movements—either to push honestly back the curtain and face the Rector boldly, or to maintain the advantageous, but not very honourable position which chance had assigned them. Mademoi-

selle Raymond was in the act of pursuing the former course ; already her hand was laid on the curtain to withdraw it, when my father arrested her motion.

“ No,” he said, in a whisper so low as to be inaudible to any one whose senses had not been rendered more than ordinarily acute by the excitement of the moment. “ The finger of Providence is distinctly marked in this incident, trifling as it seems ; and we may be the chosen instruments to bring this mysterious affair to light. He is a villain at best, and one ought not, in justice, to treat with him as with a man of honour.”

The fair hand that had raised the curtain did not suffer it to fall, retaining it in such a position as to enable those within the recess to see and hear distinctly everything that was going on in the room.

The place where the poor sufferer lay was so near the curtain as to have rendered concealment difficult, had not the Rector been wholly engaged with the pitiable object before him, obviously in a great hurry to get his task as quickly over as might be.

His first care was to raise the prostrate form of the still struggling girl, and place her upon the couch, addressing her, as he did so, in the language of severest reproof.

“And now, for the last time, do I ease your silly head,” he said, roughly; “never send to me again, even were you dying, for I should not come—you never will be quiet until you see me burnt at the stake for a wizard.”

A slight pause ensued, during which Eleonore and my father watched his movements from their place of concealment, with as much surprise as curiosity.

His proceedings were, indeed, singular, and seemed but ill calculated to produce the perfect success which crowned them. They consisted in slow movements of the hands, which were now brought in close approximation to one another, near her person, and then thrown about in large circles in the air, as it appeared, without either rule or motive. This was done for the space of more than ten minutes consecutively, during which not a word was uttered by the Rector; whilst the convulsive

motions of the patient visibly and rapidly declined. Her breathing became easier as the airy evolutions were performed nearer to the region of the heart. The sobs—the gasps—the nervous spasms of the limbs, all gave way; until not one of the symptoms of the fearful agitation remained, which but a few minutes before seemed to threaten dissolution to her whole system. The Rector appeared satisfied with the result of his operations, and put both his hands on the crown of her head, as if in the act of bestowing a blessing. He held them there for the space of five minutes, when a deep sigh escaped the young sufferer, immediately upon which she spoke, but in a mild, submissive tone, very unlike the choked and hurried accents or violent language she had before used.

“Thank you—thank you—I am easy now—quite well. I feel as strong as ever, and as calm; my heart, too, is lighter; in less than a quarter of an hour I shall fall into a natural, sound sleep, which will last for a couple of hours or more, and refresh me completely.”

“Sleep, I command you, till four this afternoon; and speak not of me, or to me, either during your slumber or upon waking.”

“I will obey you; but my fit will come on to-morrow, precisely at the same hour as it did to-day.”

The Rector, without vouchsafing another look or word, strode rapidly towards the door, which, when opened, shewed the group in the inner apartment, awaiting with anxious countenance the Jesuit's return.

“She is well now,” he said, in a hurried manner; “her conscience is lightened by opening itself to me; a little rest is all she requires: but I beg that all further messages of this nature may be spared me for the future, as they interfere too much with my time, every moment of which is of the last importance, not only to myself, but what is of far more consequence, to the service of my God, and the weal of poor sinners.”

Accompanying these words with a proud-humble look, such as none but the most detestable hypocrites can ever command, he departed,

leaving the company much edified by the self-importance and virtue they betrayed.

They now returned to Marie Langières, whom they found composed, and even cheerful; but as she was in need of rest, her desire of being left alone was instantly complied with; they again retired to the outer chamber, where they presently received the intelligence that the invalid had sunk into the peaceful slumber of a child.

“My mind is at least now made up as to the course it must be mine to pursue, should events take the turn which I think unavoidable,” said my father to Mademoiselle Raymond, when they again found themselves in the street. “It is to me an inexpressible comfort that I shall know, should, as I suspect, the day of battle be at hand, what arms to select, and the right I shall have to use them; for deep as was my interest in Catherine, strong as was my trust in her purity, yet there were moments when I have had to combat two suspicions, equally irksome and painful to me:—one was, that all she alleged about Father Girard was the mere

creation of a disordered brain—the other, that after having been tutored by him into serving his private ends, she had at last turned the weapons he had put into her hands against himself, for some secret motive for which I could not account; that is to say,—understand me rightly,—at times I thought so; at others, the persuasion of a mysterious agency, which I could not reason away, came across all my calmer, more rational deductions, and puzzled me sorely. At any rate, whether she were mad or bad, he had been the cause of either evil; and as a monster of iniquity, who had profaned and ruined so sweet and holy a shrine of every gentle and womanly virtue, as such I was his bounden foe—the sworn avenger of her wrongs. But still the thought would occur to me:—‘Of what wilt thou accuse him, that may bring down upon him a punishment adequate to his crimes?’ There was *one* fearful accusation raised against him by the Cadières, the Prior of the Carmelites, and a few old women about town, which if taken up might, indeed, be made an instrument of justice. But justice is

an awful word, and human life, even that of the most criminal of men, must not be demanded on a *false pretence*, even when a legitimate cause nerves the heart against him. To call him a seducer, a cheat, an impostor, a fiend under a human shape, were nothing; but to call him, to prove him a sorcerer, were his doom. To do so without faith in the existence of such a thing as magic, were the act of one utterly devoid alike of principle and honour—the revenge of a midnight assassin, not that of an open, honest enemy.”

And my father owned that he trembled at the bare thought of a possible conflict where his conscience, perhaps, might not have permitted him to side with the injured victim.

“But,” said Eleonore, who had grown paler with every word he uttered, fixing her dark eyes upon him, as though her very fate hung on his answer,—“Will you then, should such a conflict take place—will you now—I mean, under existing circumstances, be *her* champion?”

“Would *you* forbid it?” demanded my father,

returning her glance of inquiry with one that sent every drop of her blood back from her heart to her cheek. "Do you doubt the purity of my motives in so doing—do you doubt the truth of my heart in aught, Eleonore?"

"Oh! no—not so," she hastened to reply, as she perceived a dark cloud gathering on her affianced lover's brow; for she was well aware—such being of rare occurrence with him—that these signs bore a deeper meaning than the more violent but often causeless rage of other men. She knew him too well already to attempt braving the approaching storm, and with feminine tact endeavoured to turn it aside.

"But the Jesuits," she gently urged, "are fearful enemies; it is you yourself who have taught me to think so."

"Assuredly, neither safety nor honour will attend the task of unveiling the crimes of any who bear their habit," answered my father; "therefore is it that, even had Catherine been a stranger to me, I should have stood up in her just cause against the oppressor, mighty as he seems. Mine, Eleonore, to a man of feeling, is a

Quixotic profession, and like the knights-errant of old, I will brandish my lance *sans peur et sans reproche*. There is a triumph, too, in the very thought of a daring act," continued he, suffering the generous warmth of his temper to betray him beyond the bounds of that calm reserve which it was the chief study of his life to acquire, and wherewith he was anxious to veil from the eyes of an unsympathizing world the best, the noblest features of his character. "Yes, if it come, as I believe it eventually must, to an open struggle between our poor, lost Catherine, and that monster of hypocrisy and vice, I will arm myself for the combat—arm myself with justice and with truth, and in such cause I shall expect the lady of my love to bestow on me her best wishes."

This was said with a smile, evincing that some of the feelings of the eager warrior would accompany my father to the disputed field; and that the struggle itself, independently of its merits, would not be without a charm for the young combatant.

"But if you fall," observed Elconore,—“for

justice does not always triumph in this world,—what then, Jules?”

“I am prepared for that,” said my father, gravely, “but I will fight to the last. You, Eleonore—”

“Oh! as for me,” she exclaimed, with an earnest gaze, “my lot is cast with yours—whilst pleading for you I was pleading for myself.”

“Not so, dear girl; nay, do not start; but this may not be. The dangers I may have to encounter must be braved alone—even for *my* sake, Eleonore, it must be so; the best swimmer gains the shore with difficulty, when his efforts are impeded by any extraneous weight. This argument is not, however, the only one I have to bring forward why you, dearest, should abstain from coming forward in this business. I would not, for any consideration whatever, that my wife’s name were brought into an affair where female honour and modesty must be so roughly handled. You cannot imagine, Eleonore, how the law and its plain-spoken interpreters deal with these matters. Your name is

already as sacred to me as my own, into which it is so soon to merge. You must quit Toulon, my dear girl, and that immediately, and stay away until all this is blown over."

However strong might be Mademoiselle Raymond's objections to this arrangement—and nothing could be more opposed than their views at that moment, she felt the uselessness of resistance; and with a heavy heart she yielded compliance to his wishes, leaving even the time of her departure and the place of her residence to his nomination. It was, indeed, tender forethought that induced him to select his paternal roof for her abode, until she could return and share his home, that was her greatest comfort in this trial; for should matters terminate in a disagreeable crisis, there, she knew, all hearts would sympathise with the anxiety of her own—her fears would be shared, and her opinions fully understood.

The very day that my father accompanied his future bride to Marseilles, the circumstances that dictated this measure were already in their climax.

The oblivion to which it was the desire of Catherine's friends to consign all the facts connected with her saintship, by no means suited the personal interests of the Carmelites. She had been the tool by means of which the Jesuits had triumphed over their order. Father Girard had caused their confessionals to be deserted, their churches to be emptied, had thinned their flock; it was now their time to turn the tables against the wily Jesuits. Their intrigues must be unmasked, their most-valued soldier disarmed and prostrated, their pride humbled, and Mount Carmel proudly rear, once more, its own haughty crest; and again poor Catherine was to be put forward, the expiating victim of crimes not her own. The quiet, unsuspecting, easy-tempered Bishop was again to be made party to these monkish discussions, and at last was duly informed how, instead of a divine spirit having descended from Heaven upon this presumed holy maid, it was a devil from the infernal regions that had taken possession of her.

Had, from the midst of a blue and smiling

heaven, a thunderbolt fallen at the poor Bishop's feet, it could not have surprised him more, and probably would have frightened him less; it was many days before what he so ardently desired to know could even find its way to his comprehension; and when at last, by dint of much trouble, he was made to understand, he would not believe. After much hesitation, he formed a resolution which evinced his deep interest in this awful discovery. He determined to investigate the affair in person, and examine the late Saint of Ollioules himself; which, under the circumstances, certainly was the wisest step he could have taken. Though not likely to bring to bear upon the subject any very strong blaze of intellectual light, his purposes were honest, his heart was good, and when left to his own unbiassed judgment, he was pretty certain to err, if err he did, on the side of leniency and forgiveness.

Catherine, worn out in health and spirits, and nearly exorcised to death by Father Nicholas since he had become assured of her being possessed, had, however, experienced a great

mental change under his care. Although still subject to fits and convulsions, they came at rarer intervals; and her prophetic visions—her power of divining the unspoken thoughts—were on the decline. The darkness of her mind, except during the fits, was fast giving way to a more wholesome intellectual state. Her thoughts again became tinged with the piety of past days; her lips could move in prayer—the spell that sealed them seemed broken,—and except, as I have said, when a relapse came over her, her whole mind assumed a more vigorous tone. By nature and training, Catherine had ever been truthfulness itself, nor was her imagination brilliant enough, or her self-assurance sufficient to the task of inventing and bearing out a deception, or even of giving it the particular colour which might best suit the occasion. What, therefore, the Bishop asked in his plain, straightforward, paternal manner, was answered by her in a simple, unvarnished tale, delivered in a spirit of filial trust and veracity, well calculated to enlist his feelings in her favour.

His indignation on hearing of the Jesuit's

unworthiness knew no bounds, and he swore the ravenous wolf should be driven from among his flock.

Whatever the wishes of the Carmelites might have prompted at this moment, there being none of their order present to suggest them to the parties concerned, they obeyed their own unbiassed impulses. Revenge made no part of the gentle victim's feelings towards her destroyer, and the rest of the family dreaded the Jesuit quite as much in Father Girard as they hated the man. All knelt, therefore, at the good Bishop's feet, imploring him to forgive the past, and suffer it, for the sake of those concerned in its disgraceful revelations, to lie buried in forgetfulness.

The sight of a whole family pleading for their honour moved the Bishop; their tears and entreaties were not disregarded by one whose benevolence laid him, perhaps, but too much open to persuasion. The Cadières supplicated that their disgrace might remain a secret, even though that secrecy should shield the guilty; and such a course was too consonant with his own disposition for him to refuse it his sanction.

He promised occasionally to give his spiritual succour to the afflicted young girl, who had been made more alive to the shame attendant upon exposure by the earnest pleadings of her brothers and mother than she had hitherto felt,—assured them of his discretion and of the warm interest which Catherine had awakened in his breast, and departed, carrying along with him the blessings of every member of the family, who, after trembling at the possible consequences of the visit, felt doubly the relief and assurance it had been the means of affording them.

Had matters rested there, all had been well ; and my father, when informed of the transaction by Catherine, flattered himself that all difficulties were removed, and wrote in a spirit of comfort and gladness on that subject to his *fiancée*. But he had not sufficiently calculated on the various springs that were at play beneath this apparently obscure family drama.

The Prior of the Carmelites having been duly informed of the event—the Bishop's visit might well be termed such,—built upon it many

a hope doomed to be disappointed. The chief one was, that Father Girard would be dismissed from Toulon by the indignant prelate, with an *éclat* that would reflect his shame upon his college; nay more, he expected no less than the expulsion of the whole body of the Jesuits from the good city, and flattered himself that, having restored Catherine both to health and to sanctity, he might lay claim to all the honours of a conversion. Prompted by these considerations, he continued, with the help of a few more persons, among whom was the highly-revered and venerable curate of the cathedral, Monsieur Gondalbert, to exorcise the *ci-devant* saint, but now possessed one,—for such was the name which her mother's indiscreet avowals, and Father Nicholas's perhaps more intentional admissions, had affixed to her. On the other hand, the Jesuits were not slow in learning from those of their order who more immediately surrounded the Bishop, the position of affairs as they then stood; and, in their turn, began to consider seriously the dilemma into which they had fallen, and the means of extrication

that might remain at their disposal. They were soon hard at work poisoning the mind of the good-natured but vacillating prelate against the unfortunate girl, whom it was their savage resolution to sacrifice on the altar of their indomitable pride.

My father continued to urge the temporary absence of the Cadières' family, in order that Catherine might be removed beyond the reach of any further annoyance. 'Out of sight, out of mind,' was the old proverb with whose truism he strove to impress them; but all his eloquence was lost on the perplexed and harassed minds of his listeners, who, now advised one thing and then another by well-meaning but meddling friends, scarcely knew which way to turn, or whom to believe.

In the meantime the anticipations of Father Nicholas did not promise a speedy realization. The whole affair, indeed, seemed hushed up as if by enchantment. Father Girard walked about the town wrapped in his hypocritical sanctity as in a coat of proof, and the success which crowned the Prior's efforts passed un-

noticed, at least in the quarter where it was most important that it should be appreciated. Whether party spirit or personal vanity alone, or a mixture of both, prompted the Carmelite's further proceedings, it were difficult to decide ; but certain it is, that he made no mystery of his powers to break the spells and dissipate the enchantments wrought by Father Girard.

The Jesuit, on his side, was not backward in denouncing to the world as an unworthy impostor the unfortunate girl whom he had ruined ; declaring his unwillingness to remain any longer her director from the moment he discovered himself to have been the dupe of a gross deception, and the saintship little better than a paltry fraud played off upon his credulity.

Some lent a willing ear to this assertion, not wholly devoid of plausibility ; but there lacked not those who listened with scepticism to the story of a Jesuit of fifty being fooled by a girl of eighteen, brought up in the shades of domestic retirement, and whose life, spent among them, afforded not a single act to justify the

suspicion. The curiosity of all classes of persons was excited to the uttermost by the idle and, in many cases, erroneous and exaggerated reports, wherewith a portion of the population sought to divert the rest of the community. Madame Cadières' house was besieged from morning till night by visitors, oftentimes of the very highest distinction, eager to obtain sight or speech of her daughter—a boon but too easily granted,—whilst the more plebeian and therefore less favoured crowd, stood without, listening with eager delight to such scraps of intelligence as they could extract from the servants or gather from the chance sounds or sights, the in-comings and out-goings, which their close observation of the house permitted them to profit by.

No one witnessed these signs with a more boding heart than my father. The storm, he saw, was lowering on the horizon. He drew in sail accordingly, and prepared everything aloft to meet the gale. From his head, indeed, were all his resources to spring; and to ballast it properly for the occasion was now his chief

care. Every spare hour was devoted to the heavy task of poring over musty, voluminous volumes, on which the dust of centuries seemed to have accumulated, and whose bare titles were enough to scare the sober-minded Latinist who had vouchsafed to look on them. Solomon's "*Clavicula*," that corner-stone to magical lore—the secrets of the great Albert—the occult philosophy of Cornelius Agrippa—and many less known and still darker commentaries and wilder theories on the secrets of nature, lay scattered on his table, sufficiently enriched in their margins by his own annotations to make it evident that, turning away from the more ordinary routine of legal studies, he now wholly devoted himself to those more fanciful researches, which, however fascinating to the solitary student, whose speculative powers afford ground more favourable to their development, were, it might be imagined, but little congenial to the mind of one who had devoted himself to what many term a dry profession, and whose habits of thought belonged so decidedly to the realities of life. That he should thus waste the hours

which he might have allotted to rest, or disposed of in a more rational manner, might, in good sooth, have puzzled those who were not aware of the real and urgent motives that made these dusty volumes, and the visionary speculations of the great and poetical minds which they recorded, of paramount importance to him.

He had never yet been witness to any of Catherine's fits, nor even to the exorcisms by which Father Nicholas and Father Cadières, Monsieur Gondalbert, and others, succeeded in calming them. Neither had he any opportunity of private conversation with his former mistress since her departure from Ollioules. Her constant state of suffering, indeed, had been such as to make a conference far from desirable. Now, in pursuance of his private plans, he resolved upon soliciting the permission of the Prior to be present at his operations, in order to satisfy himself upon both points; but chance anticipated his purpose.

Midnight had tolled from all the churches at Toulon, when my father issued from a house

in the suburbs, where he had been detained at supper with some of his colleagues until that hour. In order to reach his lodgings, which lay at the further extremity of the town, he had to traverse, together with many another, the long street in which the Cadières' house was situate.

On many accounts unwilling to remain out so late, he was hurrying along at no moderate pace, when, as he passed Catherine's abode, his eye was accidentally arrested by many lights in the windows moving to and fro. This, at an hour when it would have been natural to suppose so quiet an establishment buried in the deepest repose, surprised him not a little. He paused to discover, if possible, the cause of the disturbance; and had not stood many minutes, when stifled screams reached his ear. The next instant the door flew open, and a maid, breathless with excitement, rushed from it in the direction where he stood. He laid his hand gently on her arm.

"Jesus Maria, don't stop me!" exclaimed the agitated woman; "my young mistress is

dying—the devil is killing her!” and with these words breaking from him, she darted down the street with a velocity which, had he been so disposed, would have rendered it difficult for him to overtake her.

For a moment he stood uncertain how to proceed. Again suppressed groans reached his ear. The thought flashed across his mind that Father Girard might have attempted to silence his victim for ever. The door was yet ajar—the next instant he found himself in Catherine’s chamber, scarcely knowing how he had come there, or how to act in the exigency of the moment. She lay extended lifeless, as it seemed, on the floor, full dressed, as if for a party; whilst the rest of the family, roused from slumber by her cries, had rushed to her assistance in all the varieties of *deshabille*. No one knew exactly what had happened; but, accustomed to the recurrence of similar periodical attacks, this paroxysm was unanimously recognised as one of them, only more violent than ordinary.

It had been her brother, the Dominican’s, first care to send for the reverend father under whose

direction she was then placed; but the mother, still more anxious for the body's weal than that of the soul, had laid her secret injunctions on the maid to secure the attendance of the physician before she took any steps towards calling in the priest.

It was a painful, but, at the same time, an almost ludicrous sight to behold the bystanders gazing, in mute consternation, at the poor girl, without offering the slightest assistance: Father Cadières with his right hand besprinkling her plentifully with holy water from the end of a gigantic *goupillon*, whilst with the left he held on high a crucifix.

My father was the first to suggest the propriety of placing the poor sufferer on a couch, and of making some efforts towards restoring her. His suggestions had not time to be complied with, however, before Catherine began to give tokens of reviving; at first in low moans and broken murmurs, which, although her lips still remained firmly closed, gradually became more intelligible, and at last burst forth in clear, audible, even sonorous tones, as unlike her usual

low and toneless voice, as though the sounds had proceeded from another person. To my father's surprise, she recited the mass in Latin; and he has often declared no priest could have done it with greater accuracy. After this she seemed much troubled; her face became flushed, her hands felt hot and feverish, and her temples throbbed violently, though she preserved throughout the appearance of one plunged in the deepest sleep.

The weeping mother at this juncture pointed out to the witnesses of this singular scene the strange swelling of her daughter's throat, which, increasing every moment, really grew so serious as to alarm my father, who, indignant at the inactivity of all around—fearing, too, lest the maid should have neglected the wisest part of her errand—flew to a neighbouring doctor for assistance.

When he returned, accompanied by the medical man, in whose good sense and high principles he knew the greatest confidence might be reposed, he found the bed of the sufferer surrounded by priests, and many other persons,

whom chance or curiosity had brought together. Sensitively alive to the importance of secrecy on every point connected with Catherine's infirmities, he seriously remonstrated with her friends on the unnecessary exposure thus incurred; but the Prior would hear of no interruption whatever to the work of exorcism on which he was engaged.

The responses of Catherine to his various questions, touching different points of faith, were very remarkable, being delivered in Latin, and evincing a sceptical, hardened spirit, erring from a false philosophy: anything but such as could be supposed to originate in the mind of a young girl so little conversant with the subtleties of theology or any abstruse argument.

The physician examined, with curiosity and wonder, the symptoms of a malady which he pronounced to be purely nervous, although he confessed that, during the long course of his practice, one of a similar nature had never come within his notice. The priests, still insisting that it was one of a spiritual nature, continued strenuously their exorcisms; whilst those who

could in no manner account for the moral phenomenon thus developed to their astonished senses, were no less awed than amazed.

“After all,” my father ventured to say to the Prior, “what wonder, if she speak the words which Father Girard may have taught her, and entertain such sentiments as he may have inspired? This is a sort of sorcery which all men think lawful, and find it easy enough to practise.”

“Nay,” said Father Nicholas; “but you will hear herself confess to her diabolic possession, and even name the fiend.”

Having framed the question, he was answered, in a distinct voice, by the name of the Jesuit at full length.

“You hear!” said the Prior, triumphantly; “she admits it herself.”

A change now came over the invalid, that recalled the attention of all present from the discussion to which her former state had given rise. Her frame was agitated with convulsions so violent, that, debilitated as she was from long sufferings, and despite her fragility of form, the strongest men in the room held her

down with difficulty. Her shrieks were so harrowing, that many left the chamber, unable to bear them, whilst they attracted the attention of others from the street and neighbouring houses, who, thus disagreeably roused from their sleep, conceived they had a right to inquire into the cause of the disturbance.

The little apartment was soon crowded with strangers, whose presence only interfered with immediate assistance, now absolutely necessary. My father, by dint of incredible exertions, at length succeeded in clearing the room; and Catherine was then left to the care of the females of the establishment—those truly interested in the result of their efforts remaining in the little parlour below, whilst the rest sought their homes with bosoms full of mysterious feelings, that threatened to banish slumber from their pillows.

The next day, the reports of Mademoiselle Cadières' health were satisfactory, and my father busied himself for the rest of the morning about his own affairs. Before returning home to his early dinner, he again called, and heard that

Catherine had just been seized with another terrible fit, which she had, however, declared would be her last, and had relapsed into a quiet sleep. Having occasion to pay several visits that afternoon, my father ascertained, to his regret, that Catherine's indisposition, and all its accompanying incidents, had been bruited about, and everywhere formed the topic of conversation. He resolved to return that evening, and again try what his eloquence could do by way of terrifying the Cadières into his plan of retiring, for a time at least, from Toulon; for he foresaw that, even if they could command sufficient prudence to keep themselves quiet, others would not let them.

He found the house in the greatest possible consternation. The bishop, indignant at the scene of the preceding night, had that very morning interdicted all the reverend fathers who had figured in it. This step seemed the prelude to some great act of oppression; and the whole family, unable to form any plan to meet, or think of any means of escaping the coming storm, were terrified by the unexpected blow.

“ Well, then,” said Madame Cadières, on whose weak mind the Bishop’s indignation had evidently made the deepest impression, “ I think, with Monsieur Chaudon, that we ought to leave Toulon for a while, and avail ourselves of the letters Eleonore has kindly left with us for her friends in Paris. I am thinking of starting this very night, before any one can possibly guess at my plan, and hinder it. You will be glad to hear this, Monsieur Chaudon?”

“ No,” said my father, earnestly; “ far from it—it is now too late—you must not go.”

“ And why not?” inquired the whole of the party, as it were with one breath.

“ Because, after the measures taken by the Bishop, it were a flight, not a departure; and the aspect it might give things would be your ruin. It is here only, in the midst of your friends and country people, of those before whose eyes all these transactions have been unfolded, that you can be fairly judged.”

“ Judged!” repeated all around, in dismay.

“ Yes—*judged!* I did not use too strong a term, as you will but too soon discover. It is

necessary, therefore, that if any attack be meditated upon you, it be perpetrated where the gross injustice of such proceedings may be appreciated, and the public voice, at least, be raised in your favour."

"At any rate, our departure must be deferred, until Catherine's perfect recovery," said Madame Cadières' daughter-in-law, gently. "Ever since that last attack, she has been plunged in a lethargy that would be alarming to behold, had she not, whilst the fit was upon her, foretold this change. She particularly dwelt on the necessity of permitting her long sleep to remain undisturbed; for she would awake, she said, not only refreshed and strengthened, but, from that time forth, the devil would have no more power over her."

"Then, be heedful that you do not arouse her," said my father, earnestly; "for she will need all her energy to encounter the Lord Bishop's next visit."

It was evident that this counsel sounded anything but consoling in the ears of the timid listeners. Still he persevered in his painful task

of preparing them for the events which he saw impending over them; but at the same time, he bade them keep up their courage, and rely on him throughout, in spite of every difficulty.

“ Whether I can best assist you with my counsel, my pen, or my credit, events only can determine; but in all cases, depend upon me—I shall prove myself what I have ever been, a staunch and unalienable friend.”

Leaving them to ruminate on the purport of these parting words, my father left them, anxious in his turn to prepare for, and if possible, to scent out, the turn that affairs were likely to take.

The morrow, however, brought but too ample confirmation of his worst fears. Although everything was tranquil enough in appearance, the whole town was, in fact, agitated by the intelligence that the Lord Bishop was about to pursue the Cadières family, in a suit for conspiracy and defamation against Father Girard, the Jesuit.

This news was the more startling, that it was well known throughout all coteries and classes that

Catherine was no more of an impostor than any of the other young females who had come within the fangs of the wily priest; that all had been alike seduced from the path of innocence and honour, many of whom were even more unfortunate in the consequences of their fault than poor Catherine. All these were facts too well established to be disputed; and public opinion altogether flowed in her favour.

Many persons of note and distinction, on whom my father called, for the purpose of enlisting them in favour of his client, had already, either in their own persons or through their friends, taken the measures he would have recommended, and others cheerfully promised to enter into his views. In fact, all the higher classes dreaded the scandal of a prosecution, the issue of which, turn as it would, was calculated to reflect no credit on the church; and looked forward with apprehension to its but too probable tragical termination.

If, however, the perturbation was unparalleled among the privileged classes, indignation was at its height in the lower. My father's own

heart was heavy and oppressed; but though aware of the fearful odds to be encountered, he prepared to buckle on his armour of proof, soliloquizing, as he figured to himself all that might ensue:—"My motto must be, like that of our ancient preux—*sans peur et sans reproche*. And am I not about to wield a lance in favour of virtue and oppressed beauty? They say, the days of chivalry are gone by, and with them all the ennobling self-devotion of manhood towards the fairer, the weaker sex. Maybe, that with them is departed the glow of patrician virtue; at least, one is fain to think so, when contemplating the mean, degrading profligacy into which, under late reigns, our nobility has plunged, and how they have sullied the emblems of honour transmitted to them by their ancestry, whose heroic exploits are obliterated by the deeds of their descendants, and whose blood, spilt on the battle-field for the sons of France, has been long since washed away by the tears and the shame of her daughters! Yes—the patricians have lost their manhood, their high daring, their chivalric honour, in the midst of shameful

pleasures, weakened Sybarites that they are! Let the loud blast of danger be heard, and they are scattered to the four winds of heaven; nor would they know how to defend the home they have ceased to love, the country they no longer illustrate by their virtue. But to the Middle Ages, on whose dark canvas the golden light of chivalry stood conspicuous, have succeeded those days of calmer, steadier light, when moral courage is a man's best shield; and thought, written or spoken, escaping the student's pen or the orator's lips, is the most powerful weapon man can wield. Now, it is the author's task to reveal to the country at large the abuses that claim redress—that of the lawyer to raise his voice against individual oppression. The lance and the sword are now remitted to us of the middle classes; let the world, then, see that *we* are not deficient in courage, and can stand to our arms.”

These, and such as these, were the thoughts that fired my father's imagination, though justice, doubtless, and remembrance of the past, was the strong stimulus that induced him to

embrace Catherine's cause as his own. But let me enlighten you on a subject on which you might easily be misled by my admissions. My father, though an ardent, enthusiastic believer in the possibility of gradual reform and improvement, was no friend to political convulsions. He never considered, noble-minded and liberal as he was on all points, how personal interests and interests of caste could interfere with the natural development of those germs of good, and bring on a fearful harvest of evil in the place of the pleasant fruits that might be expected to spring forth to rejoice the world.

He lived to admire and sympathise with Mirabeau, but Robespierre killed him. I may well say so ; that man, sir, though they never met, was his death. As for me, I never had a political or a moral opinion that did not hinge upon the apophthegm, so forcibly spoken by your own immortal Shakspeare—

“ The time is out of joint ;”

though I do not feel myself, like Hamlet,—

“ Born to set it right.”

My father, at his next visit, found the whole

family assembled; none of its members were missing, not even Catherine. A great change had taken place in her personal appearance, for which he was at first at a loss to account. Something of other days seemed to have returned to her brow and eye—the former was unruffled as of yore, the latter full of gentle meaning. A sad, sweet smile played on her lips, and, though paler, thinner, weaker than in her palmy days of beauty, it appeared to him all of a sudden as if the Catherine he had once loved again stood before him.

She greeted him with sisterly frankness and cordiality. It was evident, by the way in which she spoke of his approaching union—of Eleonore—that she was unaware or unmindful, he could not well divine which, of all she had previously confessed to him relative to her own feelings. She spoke on every subject with the easy, unembarrassed manner of by-gone days; no trace lingered about her of those strange starts, incoherencies, and absorptions, which had made all regular intercourse with her for a length of time impossible. She was attentive,

collected, calm, and perfectly sensible on all points, without exhibiting greater or less perspicuity than might have been expected from any young person so situated. My father was amazed, but turned immediately this happy mood to account, by laying before her all the reasons he could command for urging her mother to remain, pointing out how ruinous would be the consequences of a flight—for a departure under such circumstances could be considered nothing else. She listened to all he had to say with a composure that contrasted most happily with the agitation of her relations. When he had done, she replied, with a look of quiet, meek endurance that went to his very heart,—

“My fate in this world is sealed, Monsieur Chaudon ; you are too fair to deny it ; and why should any one think it kind to veil such a truth from me. I was a mere child when I first knew you, but now I am a woman in feeling and in thought. All delusions, of whatever kind, have faded from my mind. The innocent, happy joys, the dreamy hopes that once were mine, have vanished for ever. My own

peace of mind I may—nay, I have recovered ; but that is all I have now to claim on earth. Had I been the only one injured by the craft and malignity of that—” she hesitated and coloured deeply,—“ Father Girard,” she continued, with a strong effort, “ I could be content to bury his crimes in the oblivion I would fain court for myself. Perhaps, even, had he not attacked my friends and protectors so ruthlessly as he is now doing, I might have thought a silent forgiveness most befitting a Christian. But there are limits even to endurance. I cannot permit those to suffer through my cowardice or personal scruples, whose only fault has been credulity, truthfulness, and above all, love for me. Since he seeks to brand the innocent with disgrace, I will let the world know the truth, even though my own dishonour be the penalty. Let me stand before the eyes of the whole world disgraced—as much an object of contempt, perhaps, as of pity—I shall have the courage to bear it, if that courage can save others from the abyss into which I have fallen. My resolve is taken, Monsieur Chaudon, and nothing can

shake it. If questioned legally—publicly, before assembled thousands, or even on the rack in a solitary dungeon, as is not unlikely, I will proclaim the whole truth, and am decided to abide by it even unto martyrdom, if such be necessary.”

Catherine delivered herself of her sentiments with such warmth and decision, that my father, as well as the others, contemplated her with surprise, which, in his breast at least, soon gave way to admiration. He could not refrain from assuring her that as this was the most honourable, so it was the safest course to pursue. She answered, with a smile,—

“Whether it be wisest, it is doubtless your province to determine, Monsieur Chaudon; but my resolution rests on firmer grounds than mere expediency. I will stand by the truth for the truth’s sake, and for that alone.”

“But should your friends not be as firm as yourself, and as faithful to the polar star which you have chosen,” said my father, “then are you indeed in the most imminent peril. Could they but be made to feel the importance of

never being at variance with you on any point——”

“It matters little,” said Catherine; “even should others deny me, I shall be true to myself. But be not uneasy about me. I fear nothing, nor am I ashamed. I feel strong in my own innocence; it may seem strange to some that I dare yet claim such an attribute, but I am innocent, let the world or the law send forth whatever fiat it chooses against me.”

My father was struck with the unconscious loftiness with which her simplicity and rectitude of purpose invested her, and confessed to his own heart, that had she ever been such as she now stood before him, that heart had never changed allegiance. But his was not a mind to yield to such impressions. What he now witnessed he conceived to be an additional proof of her former state of possession—the moment that this strange, mysterious agency had been put an end to, Catherine was herself again. Had her reason been unsettled by her fanaticism, as he and Eleonore had often been tempted to imagine, the obscuring mists could not so com-

pletely have rolled away. In over-excited imaginations, one delusion invariably follows another, and calm, sober sense has scarcely time to reign alone. That she had been an impostor at any period of her history, was an idea which he now discarded altogether from his mind. If, then, this state but lasted, he could enter on the affair with a sound conscience and an assured spirit; his only fear was, not that Catherine's high resolve would fade away, but that her power of acting up to it would fail her—that she would again grow weak, bewildered, and pull down, in an evil hour, upon her devoted head, the whole edifice of truth she was so anxious to raise.

He inquired into the steps they were desirous of taking; whether they were disposed merely to remain on the defensive, or if they were willing that he should repress, perhaps quell the enemy at once by a bold attack.

“And will *you* really be our champion in the latter case?” demanded Catherine, with a look of some surprise, but more pleasure.

“Doubtless, doubtless!” put in the mother, hastily, aware of the opening her daughter's

inconsiderate words afforded my father of slipping out of a situation certainly anything but pleasant; for the good lady did not reflect, that had such been his intention he would not have thrust himself into it.

“Assuredly,” said my father. “Although,” he added, after a moment’s consideration, “if there be any one in the profession whom you would associate with me—”

This was declined, and that upon very good grounds; for there was perhaps no other lawyer in all Toulon whose zeal could in any way be relied upon in so unpromising a cause.

Before they had come to any decision about the material point—the tack on which it were most advisable to proceed, Father Nicholas stepped into the apartment. His haughty brow and curling lip sufficiently attested with how little of canonical meekness he bore the unmerited disgrace that had befallen him. He greeted my father warmly, and owned it was with great pleasure that he saw him take upon himself the arduous task of pleader in a cause in which he himself was implicated.

Nothing could be more gratifying to the

vanity of the young lawyer than this confidence reposed in his powers by one so capable of appreciating them, on an occasion, too, so all-important to the Prior, involving, indeed, not only his own, but the reputation of his Order. The assurance of Father Nicholas that he had been to his lodgings for the express purpose of securing his assistance, was already like a foretaste of triumph. There was a resolution, too, that increased his own, in the calm look and firm air of Catherine; and only when gazing on her terrified, unhappy mother, and on her timid, hesitating brothers, did he feel that his hopes of success had been too hastily encouraged.

When he communicated to Father Nicholas his plan of meeting the attack of the Jesuit with one as formidable—his denunciation to the Bishop and the clergy of Mademoiselle Cadières, her brothers, and new director, as impostors and calumniators, with the bold accusation before the justice of the land, of magic and seduction, two crimes than which, for a man in his situation, no worse could be committed—his

auditor was at first somewhat startled at the idea of a trial of such import, with all its awful array of publicity. The Cadières were perfectly aghast, with the exception of Catherine, who quietly assented to the charge by a mute inclination of her head. But when my father proceeded to prove, by very logical conclusions, that the choice lay between private and public persecution, and that the latter was more difficult of execution than the former, all were convinced. As for Father Nicholas, the moment it was pointed out to him that this action would bring the Jesuits and Carmelites into a fair, open field, clear of the ambushes from behind which they occasionally pounced upon each other, he viewed the affair much in the light of a battle, where victory or defeat would at once decide all dispute between the contending parties. He was, indeed, far more sanguine of success than my father. At any rate, his good name depended upon matters being set in a proper light.

“And will you, my poor child, have courage for such a trial?” said the mother, tears stream-

ing down her cheeks as she strained Catherine to her bosom. "Will you be equal to it? I feel that I would willingly consent to die this very hour rather than hear your shame revealed—revealed to a cold, cruel world, who will, perchance, think you guilty!"

"The world can neither dismay nor shame me," was the calm reply; "my conscience will be my strength; and when I dare again to approach the Lord's table, shall I think myself too humbled to stand before the children of men?"

The scruples of the Cadières were not easily overruled; but soon all their hesitation was dispelled by an incident as alarming as it was unexpected.

One morning, a few days after the foregoing interview, my father, wishing to collect some further evidence, had called rather early upon his client, and the whole family were in earnest conversation, when their attention became roused by a loud knocking at the house door. My father stepped to the window; and his accustomed eye immediately recognised the myr-

midons of justice, who, upon their admittance, formally claimed Catherine as their prisoner. Her mother's heart seemed about to break when she beheld her child in the hands of these low, untutored wretches, about to be dragged along to a dismal, solitary dungeon, from whence she might, perhaps, never return. But Catherine's fortitude never deserted her even for an instant.

“God will be with me there, as much as when I was sheltered in your loving arms, my mother, in the days of happy childhood. I shall not be alone even there; comfort and counsel will come to me from above, and support my weakness.—May He who makes my heart so strong dry up your tears.”

Deeply moved by this appeal to the strongest feeling of her nature—a sincere though misguided devotion, the mother checked her convulsive sobs as she imprinted a parting kiss on her daughter's fair brow. My father accompanied on foot the chaise in which Catherine was conveyed to the prison, and only parted with her at the threshold.

“I offer no earthly consolations to one so much above them as you are, Catherine,” said he, as he respectfully pressed her hand to his lips. “Farewell; this is a great—a bitter trial to *me*, if not to you.”

“Let it not weigh on your mind, my friend,” she answered, with a responsive pressure of the hand; “be my fate what it may, remember I am ready to meet it.”

The rough, rude men who had her in charge could not suppress a natural emotion of pity and respect at the sight of so much resignation in one so lovely and so young; and the sacred, mysterious halo still lingering around her, from the fame of her former saintship, added to this feeling a slight touch of awe. My father watched her movements until the last fold of her garment swept past the massive iron gate; he then returned home with a heavier heart than he had borne in his bosom for many a weary day.

It had probably been the hope of the Jesuits that the active, decided measures they thus adopted, and above all the favour of the Bishop,

whom they had adroitly succeeded in gaining over to their side, would strike dismay into the bosom of the unprotected being whose revelations might prove so disagreeable to them—(these they imagined to have smothered in the bud)—that Mademoiselle Cadières, as well as Mademoiselle Langières, and so many other votaries of Father Girard, would be frightened into a salutary silence. Great, therefore, was their surprise, and no less their indignation, at the new turn which the fearlessness of Catherine gave to the whole affair. Now it was theirs to tremble ; and although in public they put on a bold front, in private, as my father had occasion to ascertain, they brooded over the matter in no very enviable state of mind.

One morning, as he was sitting alone in his study, rapt in thought, his papers and notes strewn about him, the door of his apartment was suddenly opened, and, unannounced even by the usual tap, Father Sabatier the Jesuit stood before him.

My father knew this man only by report ; and the decidedly hostile part which he had

taken against Catherine had certainly not inspired him either with respect or sympathy. He was at a loss to guess the real aim of this unceremonious visit, and was disposed to consider it in any light but that of an honour; still the conventional respect due to the monastic habit did not admit of any manifestation of his feelings, and it was in vain for him, as he received his self-imposed visitor with due formality, to extract from his looks any clue to his object. There was neither menace to be read on the brow, flattery in the smile, nor yet promise in the eye; his astucious countenance bore no definite expression whatever, beyond that of habitual cunning. There was besides, perhaps, something sinister about the pent brow, somewhat of instinctive cruelty in the lines of the thin, blanched mouth; but these were parts of the natural conformation of the face, and at best betrayed but the general character. My father saw, at a glance, how important it was to be strictly on his guard during the interview about to take place; and summoning all his acquired coolness and self-possession—for I have already told you that, like most men of great abilities, he was full of

ardour, and like all men of strict honour, very candid,—he prepared to stand on the defensive ; leaving the enemy to unmask his weak points one by one, if such a result were possible.

“I am come,” said Father Sabatier, after the first awkward moment had passed in mutual silence, “at the request of my Lord Bishop, who has condescended to express much regret on being informed that a young man of so much promise is about to embrace a cause so prejudicial to the interests of the church, and therefore so destructive to the future weal of its children. These were his lordship’s own, kind expressions, which it was his particular request that I should repeat to you, in whom he appears to take a lively interest, which ought, I think, to gratify your feelings in the highest degree.”

My father bowed a respectful but silent acquiescence ; but seeing that the Jesuit paused, as if decided to extract a direct answer, he muttered some few commonplaces by way of thanks for the Bishop’s kindness in remembering him, especially as he had had so few opportunities of recommending himself to his notice.

It may not be unnecessary to remind you,

that upon the solitary occasion afforded my father of acquiring his lordship's favour, he had deserved and obtained it in a signal manner, quite as much in reference to the family arrangements which the Bishop was desirous of effecting, as with regard to the Saint of Ollioules—a service, doubtless, become somewhat problematical by the force of subsequent events; but still the former claim remained good. Now my father, as most young and inexperienced men in his situation would have done, had on that memorable evening conceived hopes of patronage, which he understood too well his position in life not to appreciate; but he had found, what many striving youths have found before, that “out of sight out of mind” is especially applicable to the great. A little reflection, however, not only consoled him for the circumstance, but convinced him that the safest, even should it not be the swiftest or most brilliant path to success, is that which one chalks out for oneself. His mind had also been too much absorbed by other matters to dwell long on the neglect of the Bishop, and he

now felt—circumstances compelling him to take up contrary ground—that it was, on the whole, fortunate that no kind passages had taken place between them, which would have greatly tended to increase the difficulties of his position. Father Sabatier had become possessed of the details of that one meeting through the Bishop, who remembered my father well enough the moment he was thus forcibly brought back to his notice, and his wily adviser had formed his own plans accordingly.

“Yes, Monsieur Chaudon,” continued the Jesuit, with the same cold unconcern of manner with which he had introduced the subject, “the Bishop is much struck with your abilities, and the propriety and modesty of your deportment; he has, indeed, conceived so good an opinion in your favour, that he cannot help thinking you, although misled at present by false statements and erroneous conceptions, formed to be an ornament to society; and he feels that an effort is due on his part to turn you away from the unadvised, dangerous, and, above all, discreditable course you are about to

pursue. He wishes to hold out a saving hand to you, and I am here at his express desire to persuade you—to open your eyes. This, sir, is my mission ; but before I enter upon it with all the zeal and charity which my profession and the Bishop's desire make a duty, it is no less due to myself to ascertain how great may be my chance of success or even of being hearkened to."

My father had not allowed a muscle to stir during the reverend father's prologue—he even listened to it with an appearance of the deepest, most respectful attention. "This," thought he, "is the *entrée en scène*—it does not mean much—there is nothing in it to compromise the adverse party. I must be content with not committing myself, for I cannot expect such weakness on his part."

"I will listen with deference to anything you may have to state on the part of our good lord the Bishop, as well as to any argument you may think proper to adduce, reverend father ; but I cannot promise to be convinced."

"Nor persuaded?"

“Nor even persuaded,” said he, shaking his head, coldly.

“Do you, then, reject the Bishop’s interposition in behalf of your own happiness hereafter?”

“I can but regret that the Bishop does not share my opinion with regard to this strange case, for then he never could assert that the cause of the unfortunate and the innocent could harm me, either in this world or in the next.”

“With regard to the consequences of your conduct, so far as your worldly interests go, the Bishop does not make himself the judge. It would seem to me, however, that loss of reputation, at the very least, is the necessary evil that must attend a measure such as that you meditate. Nor is it likely to procure you many friends, for, thank Heaven! all influential persons are faithful to the church.”

“I must beg to interrupt you,” said my father—“I do not see that the unmasking of a villain, even though he has assumed the guise of holiness, is rendering the church a bad

service. I can no more view the matter in that light than I could consider it a crime to warn my king of a favourite's treachery, had I chanced to discover it, or an unsuspecting master, of the vices and evil designs of a fair-spoken but deceitful servant. The Bishop has himself declared Father Girard to be a wolf in sheep's clothing, which he would expel from his flock. I am but the faithful hound who helps, to the best of his ability, the good shepherd to effect his purpose."

"The Lord Bishop never spoke such words," answered Father Sabatier, with forced composure; but an anger spot crimsoned either cheek, and the upper lip slightly quivered. "These are but the devices of wretched impostors to mislead those who are—" he paused, as if to seek a more appropriate word than that which rose to his lips—"who are," he resumed, with some effort, "good enough to trust them. I assure you, Monsieur Chaudon, the Bishop may have been—nay, doubtless was at first—a little imposed upon by the comedy got up, I doubt not, for his especial benefit; but a very

little reflection has enabled him to triumph over the weakness of his heart. He now sees the whole affair in its true colours, and will act accordingly."

"Ha!" ejaculated my father—"and pray how will that be?"

Artful as the Jesuit was in those things that came within his competence, he did not see through the real aim of this simple question, and answered, without a moment's consideration—

"By drawing up a memorial with his own hand in favour of Father Girard. So public a testimony of the Bishop's respect for our Order, and of his private feelings in this particular matter, will not be without its weight with the court, the public, and even the witnesses. You are engaging in a bad, and, what you perhaps may consider worse, a losing cause."

My father was glad to have obtained this timely hint of the proceedings of the enemy. Weak as the Bishop was, there was no knowing to what lengths he might go, under the careful

management of such a person as Father Sabatier. He replied, therefore, in a manner, if possible, to elicit further communication.

“ This is a very decided measure,” said he, throwing into his looks as much concern as he could well assume—“ very strong indeed ; but it may come too late to make a very general impression. Moreover—” he paused, as if unwilling to trust what more he could have said to the eager ears of his listener. This, too, took effect.

“ Of course it will be our care that the Bishop’s view of the case gets pretty well blown about beforehand, so that the vile calumniators may not gain time to choke up every channel with their venomous insinuations. The opinion of our worthy prelate will carry everything before it.”

“ Opinion is but opinion after all,” said my father, with a shrug. “ If nothing be added to that——”

“ You must be sensible that those who side with the Bishop—with the church, will be considered as friends, and treated as such. This is

but fair, Monsieur Chaudon, and will be pretty well understood when the Bishop is seen so decidedly on our side.”

This was speaking in a general and vague acceptation; my father would willingly have brought the enemy to closer quarters.

“If,” said he, after another pause, during which, although not looking directly at him, he felt the keen eye of Father Sabatier scrutinizing every feature of his countenance—“if I but knew exactly what my Lord Bishop desires—what he would have, that is, of me especially—in short, situated as I am, what would he have me do? To recede were cowardly, and likely to do me as much injury as advancing boldly on the open course.”

“The Bishop would, I have no doubt, if the matter were properly represented to him, contrive your being removed from hence in a way at once to justify your withdrawing from the affair, and to shew others that the friendship of the good is better, even in a worldly point of view, than that of the wicked.”

“This is the fair side of the question, most

reverend father—what were the reverse of the medal?”

“Revenge belongs unto God, not unto man,” said the monk, with a somewhat conventual droop of the lid and snuffle through the nose, whilst he mechanically folded his arms on his narrow chest, and screwed up the corners of his mouth; but the next instant all conventionality vanished, and the flashing eye of the Jesuit rested, with a withering glance, upon the young lawyer.

“Nevertheless, be wary, Monsieur Chaudon, how you offend the powerful—it is a very unwise policy.”

“Well, I don’t mind being explicit with you,” said my father—“a written promise might tempt some young men—I do not absolutely say it would me. A threat of any positive nature might alarm—but, my dear sir, you must think me very youthful indeed to imagine that vague and mysterious insinuations, so vague that you might deny—nay, perchance forget them hereafter, can influence me in a matter of such importance. Had I any clear

proposal before my eyes, — anything tangible—”

“ That you might produce it to the court by way of proving bribery or intimidation,” said the Jesuit, with a smile *de caste*, which is untranslatable. “ No, no, Monsieur Chaudon ! You are yet green in your profession, indeed, to think of naming such a thing. Your proposal at once unmasks your real purposes.”

My father felt the justice of this remark, and that he was not yet an overmatch for his wily antagonist ; but he had obtained some useful information already as to the enemy’s motions—more he would not be able to extract, now that his awkwardness had put his opponent on his guard. He much regretted the false move he had made, but saw it was too late to recover it ; he decided, accordingly, on a bolder avowal of his principles.

“ Well, I do not deny my youth and inexperience, good father, but this is precisely what warms me towards a just cause, and permits me to overlook the dangers I may incur in supporting it.”

“But it is not a just cause,” said Father Sabatier, losing patience, whilst all the terrors of the Inquisition fostered in a less happy country by his merciless Order lighted up his eye and darkened every feature. “It is a vile, unworthy cause, embraced through vile and unworthy motives. I will tell you your motives, young man; they are carnal lust and worldly vanity. The impostor is pretty, and the lawsuit may make the whole of France ring with your name. Deny this if you dare.”

“Yes, I deny both positions,” said my father, whose own southern impetus of temper, although generally carefully kept under, was now thoroughly roused, more by Father Sabatier’s manner and looks than by his words. “What you advance is as false as all your statements against the innocent victim whom you would even deprive of the means of self-defence. Now let me in turn tell *you*, Father Sabatier, the motives that influence you. Nay, interrupt me not!—here, as well as in court, I will be heard! You are actuated by the inflexible, unjust, oppressive rule of your Order, odious

alike to God and man, which bids you support every criminal—justify every crime that emanates from it. Nay,” he continued, as the other waved his hand, indignantly, to command silence—“Nay, listen to the voice of humanity and justice—abandon the cause of a miscreant—let his own Order, by rejecting him with scorn from its bosom, and handing him over to the arm of secular justice, shew their sense of his guilt, and separate it from their own innocence, as our Lord will divide the wheat from the chaff. Let all men say—‘Father Girard is a wretch whose community has justly been the first to brand him,’—and that one act of honesty will do more towards rehabilitating your Order in the esteem of men than a thousand bulls. Protect Father Girard—shield his pitifulness within the ample folds of your garment of might—and you proclaim at once to France, to Europe itself, that such faults as his are venial in your eyes, and that your robe sanctions every sin, however deep its dye. It is impolitic, as well as cruel.”

During this burst of irrepressible indigna-

tion, although he made many fruitless attempts to check it, and obviously endured it with the utmost disgust, the Jesuit gradually regained his own composure. He now answered, with calm severity—

“Are you wise or prudent, young man, to utter such rank heresy in the presence of one invested with a sacred character?”

“What I have said,” answered my father, “may be heresy to the Jesuits, but cannot be so construed against my faith or my church. You stand yourself accused of heresy; forget it not, reverend father, ere you fling the stone that has lighted upon your own head at that of others.”

“Envy and malignity ever pursue the godly!” again snuffed the Jesuit, with an upturned eye and a sigh that might have done Tartuffe credit; “but we are not without power; though jealousy may seek to undermine it; it is ours, and”—he looked steadfastly at my father—“although we use it with discretion, we can wield it also with decision when needful.”

“You have power—you may well assert a

fact, reverend sir, which none can deny—a power which would fetter alike the liberties of the people and the authority of the sovereign in every land you flourish in: and you are proud as powerful; but the Templars were once great and presumptuous—and they fell.”

“When the Bishop sent me here, it was not to expose me to gross insult or to threats. He thought, mayhap, that his name—the title of his messenger—might shield me from such, if not my ministry—my years. I withdraw, sir, in sorrow; but chiefly grieved on account of the pain which I am sure my report of the manner in which his fatherly message has been received will give his lordship.”

Had Father Sabatier acted up to these last words, delivered in an impressive, dignified manner, doubtless my father would have had cause for regret, on many accounts, at the lengths to which passion had hurried him, and Father Sabatier might have enjoyed a complete triumph over his inexperience and youthful sincerity. But the wily priest turned away only for a second; the next found him peering

anxiously into my father's countenance, evidently mindful how to turn every passing shade to advantage. My father soon perceived his drift by the way his apologies were received; for he did apologize, not for the sentiments he had expressed, but for the manner in which they had been uttered. He frankly owned that he had spoken with a freedom which would have been excusable before the bar, but which was inappropriate when addressed to a visitor, especially the emissary of one whom he was in every way bound to honour. His frank admission was received with an apparent show of mild forgiveness, which was not without its effect; but the very next words of the Jesuit proved that, acting up to the knowledge he had acquired in his seminary of the sudden and generous revulsions natural to the youthful, which so often lead them beyond the line drawn by prudence, he was about to ascertain how far he had profited by his experience in such matters; at least, so it seemed, when he said, in dulcet tones, which, far from allaying, roused my father's suspicions—

“The next step in order to manifest the sincerity of repentance, when the fault is once acknowledged, is to repair it. In your case, Monsieur Chaudon, nothing would be easier. I do not say, be with us; but be not against us—remain neuter. Surely such forbearance would please my Lord Bishop greatly, and spare him the mortification of hearing, at the same time that it would enable me to forget altogether, the unbecoming heat of temper into which you have been betrayed.”

“This may not be,” said my father; “this may not be, reverend sir. I will not deceive you, as, indeed, honesty is the best policy after all”—he said this with marked emphasis. “Not only have I a conviction of Father Girard’s guilt, but I have proofs; so that my conscience and my mind are equally at rest on the subject.”

“Delude not yourself with the idea that you will be able to establish such proofs; when the day of trial comes you will be foiled, indeed you will. I know you reckon much on the testimony of the ladies of St. Clare; but you may find yourself mistaken as to its weight,

when opposed to my Lord Bishop's clear and candid statements. You also lay much stress on the jealousy entertained by the inferior orders against us, but you deceive yourself singularly if you believe that they can in any way support you. It is a losing cause, and you will break down with it, Monsieur Chaudon."

"I must abide by it, and do my best, trusting the rest to Providence."

"Is that, then, your answer to the Lord Bishop?"

"It is," said my father, calmly; "though I hope you will deign to couch it in the most grateful and respectful terms——"

"Which the feelings that *I* entertain for his lordship may enable me to frame—is it not so?"

My father silently assented; for he was decided not to moot the point further with the Jesuit, having made up his mind to lay his views before the Bishop either in person, if he could obtain admittance, or by means of a memorial of his own, trusting but little to the fidelity of the mediator between them.

"Well; he will be sorry to hear how matters

stand with you, young man, though of course Monsieur Thorame, our adviser, will be perfectly equal to the approaching struggle.”

My father was rejoiced to see his troublesome visitor move to depart, and bowed him, with every mark of outward reverence, into the street.

“And so,” said the Jesuit, when finally about to take his way home; “and so it is war with the church—you have decided upon it?”

“Not with the church, but with the Je——”

“Our Order, you would say,” muttered the monk, with unconcealed bitterness. “Our Order will have cause to tremble, indeed, before such an opponent.”

“The Jesuit Girard is the only person who has any cause for apprehension from me,” said my father, firmly; “but, certainly, between myself and him it is war unto death.”

Without vouchsafing another word to the obdurate young man, Father Sabatier, brimful of ill-suppressed rage, directed his steps forthwith towards the episcopal palace, where doubtless it was his intention to let it flow over.

“After all,” was my father’s first thought on re-entering the little chamber, the scene of the late conflict, “every stratagem is thought fair in war, but surely, surely, this is a detestable association that owns a Father Girard, and sanctions such acts as his. I have, however, shewn myself weak and hot-headed enough to shame a boy. If I do not keep my temper better at the bar I am a lost man. The Bishop must be rightly informed, and that without loss of time, or matters will even be made worse by misrepresentation. By the way, for all the cleverness he may think himself possessed of, Father Sabatier has given me many a clue worth having, and it will be my fault if I do not turn them to account.”

Indeed, either from unwariness, or, what is more probable, from unconsciousness of the advantage he thus afforded the adverse party, Father Sabatier had let out a few facts, which it much imported my father to be possessed of, and which, as he had no facilities of ascertaining them with exactness, had already puzzled him not a little. For instance, it was important

that he should learn the name of the advocate who would be opposed to him, that he might have sufficient leisure to prepare himself for the peculiarities of that person's pleading, and know beforehand whether he should have to resist an eloquence directed especially towards the feelings, and calculated to carry them along with the speaker, or whether it would be his lot to battle it out with a close arguer. He now knew he should have both these advantages to compete with, in one of great talent and long experience at the bar, whose overthrow would be a great, but somewhat doubtful achievement. This circumstance, however, far from discouraging, even animated my father, whose spirit was of that order which rather rises against, than sinks before opposition. He was also well pleased to have timely notice of the Bishop's memorial and certitude on a point which caused him no slight misgivings—namely, what part the community at Ollioules would be disposed to assume in this affair, for he well knew the peculiar difficulties that would beset their path. Catherine had, it is true, repeatedly

assured him that the worthy sisters were goodness itself, and that the Lady Abbess was a highly distinguished person, in every sense of the word; that she and the principal sisters had been entrusted with her fearful secret, and had themselves seen and heard many things corroborative of her own statements. Still he doubted their unwillingness to appear publicly, until Father Sabatier's own words had convinced him of Catherine's reliance on these ladies' honour being well-founded.

"I must lose no time in ascertaining to what their evidence will amount," was his next reflection. But whilst thus summing up what had passed in the late agitating interview, and laying to his soul the flattering unction that his own talents must be anything but contemptible to have caused interference from such high quarters—for he easily traced to Father Sabatier himself, the organ of his order, the measures of the bishop—another and a hasty tread was on the stair, another unceremonious turn of the lock, and again a monk interrupted his solitary musing. But Father Nicholas and

my father were, on many points, kindred spirits; and at this juncture they stood in a peculiarly interesting situation towards each other.

“Father Sabatier has been here—for what purpose?” began the prior, breathless with eagerness.

My father explained, briefly, the substance of that person’s visit.

“Well, it greatly relieves my mind to find you as watchful as you are true,” said Father Nicholas. “You are yet young, my son, to figure in, perhaps, one of the most important, extraordinary trials ever brought before the French bar.”

“I think I feel equal to it,” said the young advocate, with a proud smile.

“Pray God you may,” said the prior, fervently; but, perceiving a slight cloud pass across his friend’s face, he added, hastily—“and I believe you to be fully competent to all we may hope and desire. But remember, the task is no light one. Come, what is, in plain terms, your plan of accusation? What are the presumable grounds of their defence?”

“Why, as I have already hinted to you, the counts stand thus,” answered my father, drawing forth a small paper from among the many that littered his table. “This is it:—First, seduction—motive, his unhallowed passion; secondly, magical practices, through which alone he succeeded in perpetrating his crime; thirdly, breach of trust, abusing of the confidence reposed in his sacred character; and, fourthly, extension of his threefold offences to all those of his penitents whom he thought worth his while to pervert.”

“I thought so—I thought so!” exclaimed Father Nicholas, with an impatient start. “You have forgotten the worst, the most essential, the very most essential part of the accusation, the perverseness which deserves most to be made an example of.”

“And what may that be?” inquired my father.

“Quietism—quietism, my son; the abominable heresy with which the Jesuits infect the land. Surely, our proofs of this are sufficiently abundant, in the case of Father Girard, to bring it triumphantly home to them.”

“ You are right,” said my father ; “ nor can this important point be overlooked. But I have yet a heavy task before me—the collecting of evidence. I need a clear, distinct statement of all that has passed between Catherine and the Jesuit since their first meeting. Everything I have hitherto heard has been so fragmentary and disjointed, as to make the case very difficult of clear comprehension in its details, although I am pretty familiar with its general outline.”

“ Mademoiselle Cadières is now perfectly recovered,” said Father Nicholas, “ and able to give you as distinct and coherent an account as you may desire. I myself, and the Fathers Giraud and Gondalbert, can testify in what condition we found the penitents of Father Girard, infected all alike with the pernicious dogmas of Quietism. The respectable physicians, who have declared her convulsions and trances unnatural and mysterious, will surely not deny their own words, when called upon to repeat them before the court. The sisters of St. Clare, and Mademoiselle Cadières’ maid, will prove sufficiently his gross misconduct with

regard to that lady ; and his other votaries can shew in what manner it extended to them. I think this is all clear and open ground ; but I cannot imagine what can be alleged in the Jesuit's favour, beyond that unfounded, ridiculous plea of calumny, which must fall to the ground."

"Not so easily as you fancy, reverend father. We must expect a severe struggle, and be prepared to endure much : what Father Girard will want in proofs he will amply make up in interest."

♦ The prior, clear-headed, able to encompass at a glance the general bearing of an affair, and yet not disdaining to enter into its minutest details, had a great capacity for business ; and my father found it no disadvantage to claim his attention on many points of intricacy.

The lawsuit soon assumed a very formidable aspect. The reverend Fathers Girard, Nicholas, and Cadières, whose habit had for some time spared them the mortification, were all prisoners as well as Catherine, but treated with greater leniency. The unfortunate young girl was indeed actually debarred from communi-

cation with any human being, except her confessor and legal adviser; and her treatment, in all small matters connected with her personal comfort, was harsh even unto cruelty.

My father attended sedulously upon her, aware that she had no other source of worldly consolation, and no other means of obtaining the smallest tidings of her family. He found, however, that she needed but little the ordinary routine of condolence. She was miraculously supported, in the midst of her troubles, by a spirit of resignation, and a lofty trust in Providence, to which earthly sympathy could bring no additional solace.

At this period of her agitated existence, she was truly sublime. No privations dismayed her, no threats intimidated, no insult roused her spirit; it lay placid like a limpid lake, reflecting nothing but the tranquil tints of the heaven within. Not only did she bear with cheerfulness the miseries of her situation, but, what is stranger still, her health, so weak and shattered when under the shelter of her own roof, and fostered by the tenderest

care, daily fortified itself under circumstances so calculated to have irretrievably destroyed it.

As my father gazed on the damp, unwholesome, dungeon-like apartment, in which she was confined, deprived alike of fresh air, and light, and warmth, whose low ceiling and dark rafters seemed to weigh with even pressure on the mind and on the lungs of those doomed to linger beneath its heavy canopy, and whose extremities deepened into that sort of gloom which tends vaguely to alarm excitable imaginations and susceptible nerves—as he gazed on this rude abode, from which every even the meanest article of furniture had been removed beyond a couple of wooden stools, a small truckle-bed, and a half empty box, the only accommodation afforded for the few articles of personal apparel she had been permitted to retain—and as he felt, even in the delightful autumnal air of Provence, chilled and aguish during his long conferences there,—he could not help suspecting that her enemies were not without hope that a long and solitary detention

in a place like this would break her spirits, if not actually terminate her existence.

What would have been the feelings of her poor mother, had she beheld the coarse, scanty food, the cold neglect, the total absence of all comfort to which her beloved child was reduced—she, for whom the tender parent had thought a conventual rule, however mild, too severe! Happily, as much in conformity with Catherine's especial request as with the dictates of his own compassion, he carefully kept these afflicting particulars from her knowledge, and cheered her, to the uttermost of his power, by dwelling with unfeigned admiration upon the heroic courage and calmness with which her daughter bore her unjust captivity.

From Catherine, too, he anxiously concealed the extent of her mother's sufferings, her harrowing regrets for the past, her agonizing apprehensions for the future. He did not even make her acquainted with the circumstance that, valuable as was his time at that moment, he devoted those hours which, out of respect for his health, he ought to have allotted to

repose, to the difficult and fatiguing task of infusing courage into one who had none at her own heart.

Being provided with the materials necessary for the purpose, Mademoiselle Cadières now drew up a statement of the sad transactions of the last two years, which, though it bore evidence, in its negligence, and, in many passages, incorrectness of style, to the very imperfect education received at that time by females even of the highest respectability, was still remarkable for its extreme simplicity and natural eloquence of feeling.

“This will do,” said my father, as he glanced over the memorial, “though there seems no small confusion as to dates; but we will try to set that right. Now, you must endeavour to remember, dear Catherine, something of the substance of those letters which have passed between you and Father Girard, since the originals have been so shamefully extracted from you.”

He alluded here to a circumstance which had deprived him of the most powerful weapons wherewith he had thought to confound the

enemy. Letters, namely, of a very important nature—for Catherine had repeatedly assured him that they contained the most flagrant confirmation of guilt, and bore evidence to eccentric doctrines on points of faith—had been carefully withdrawn. The craft of the Jesuit had been too much for the inexperience of the young girl. Immediately upon his ceasing to be her confessor, he had sent one of his most faithful female adherents to claim the whole of his correspondence from the unsuspecting novice, who suffered it to pass from her hands without the least misgiving or surmise.

My father had long since been apprised of this important loss, but saw no means of repairing it, except by noting carefully the dates and subjects of such of them as Catherine should remember, that he might reclaim them in due time and place.

He now turned his attention towards the convent of St. Clare, for from among its simple but just-minded inmates his chief witnesses were to be drawn. In the Lady Abbess, Madame d'Aubert, and in Madame de L'Escot, the

mistress of the novices, he found persons whose education and abilities were by no means inferior to their birth. He was so favourably impressed with all he saw and heard in this house, that he sincerely regretted for her sake that Catherine had ever quitted it. True it is, that all the members of the sisterhood were not persons of so much merit as those who formed its head; but Catherine herself was not so marked by brilliant parts, as to feel this quiet, inoffensive association distasteful to her. He could, indeed, scarcely comprehend her repulsion for the monastic life, unless he attempted to account for it by supposing her mind too distracted whilst yet under the malefices of Father Girard, to admit of repose, even in so well regulated an establishment.

His collection of witnesses left nothing to desire as to respectability of character, and for the most part, as to social position; and his client's frame of mind was everything that was satisfactory. Even her brothers bore up better than he could have expected. They endured their confinement with extreme patience, and

seemed perfectly easy in their consciences ; having determined to state the facts simply as they had occurred, and to suffer truth to take care of itself. My father placed more reliance on their veracity than a mere glance at their colourless, unmarked characters would have seemed to warrant. Their very intellectual deficiencies were the best guarantee for the steadfastness of their purpose. Too grossly ignorant not to swallow any morsel offered to their credulity, their firm conviction of their sister's spiritual elevation, and of her suffering for the truth's sake, inspired them with an honest boldness which made them invaluable in a court of justice.

But whilst my father was thus advancing with some confidence and more energy towards the goal, the adverse party was not idle. Everything that money and intrigue could do, had been attempted by the Jesuits to screen Father Girard, not only from punishment, but even from conviction. They were moving heaven and earth ; exhausting at once their credit and their treasury, to save a wretch whom it would have

been wiser, cheaper, more honest to have left to the justice of his countrymen. The most shameless and persevering corruption was tried upon the witnesses. Some, whom promises could not seduce, were intimidated by threats—anonymous letters were dispatched to those who could not be openly addressed in the strains in which they were penned—in short, every engine was at work to crush, if possible, the accusers along with the accusation. My father was himself much annoyed by these mysterious missives, and by the advice of many well-meaning though timid friends; but neither these uncalled for interferences, nor the disapprobation of his family, nor the ill-suppressed displeasure of his future bride—for Eleonore, superior as she was to the common herd, was a woman still, and could not view with satisfaction so much devotion on her lover's part to any other than herself—nothing of all this could move him an inch from his purpose. He must, indeed, have taken shame to himself had he even entertained the thought. When Catherine, whom they had threatened with the rack and the faggot if she

persisted in her vile falsehoods—thus the Jesuits were pleased to style her artless admissions, so unwelcome and disparaging to themselves—menaces, which she well knew were not idle breath, yet remained unshaken in her high resolve of unmasking vice and villany, let the consequences of her bold but virtuous deed be what they might—when a young and tender maiden could nerve herself thus to bear and defy the worst, could a man dare to recede and yet boast of his manhood?

In the meanwhile, Father Girard in his confinement offered the most striking contrast to Father Nicholas. The latter, confident of ultimate success and of having right on his side, bent his ardent, eager mind to the study of the principles of Quietism, and followed it with untiring patience from its first source—a schism in the Greek church, opposed by some of its members, but not interdicted by its patriarch—down to the time when, brought forward by a Jesuit in Rome, the too celebrated Molinos, it drew down the anathemas of the Catholic church even upon the Pope himself, who, ac-

cused of entertaining this loose doctrine, was called to account by the Inquisition at Rome. Father Nicholas pursued the subject through pages of heavy theological treatises, until he plunged into the very marrow of the disputes and schisms that caused such dissensions between the Jesuits and the other religious orders in France at that moment. His clear, forcible abridgments of this abstruse lore was not without use to my father, who in this manner had much severe work taken off his hands.

But whilst the Carmelite prior was thus whiling away the monotony of confinement, Father Girard occupied his own leisure and that of the public with all the grimaces of a hypocritical sanctity. He feared not to profane those objects which he ought to have held most sacred, but approached the Lord's table daily without care or preparation, as unceremoniously as he would have sat down at his daily board, with less of respect than we are in the habit of bestowing upon the hospitalities of our neighbours. This impiety was lauded to the skies by his partisans, though of course viewed with

disgust by the right-thinking and truly pious. As to his confessions, they were not only daily but almost hourly ; but whatever gratification this exercise may have afforded himself, or however much it might edify his fellow-prisoners and his adherents at large, they appeared of no avail with regard to bringing repose to his mind.

This was the situation, and these the feelings of all parties during the necessary lapse of time between the day when the first hostile demonstrations manifested themselves and that appointed for the trial.

No cause pleaded at the French bar ever created more sensation throughout the whole country even upon decision as this one in the bare anticipation. Nay, it involved so many interesting points of faith—would touch on grounds so ticklish—the heresies of which the Jesuits were accused,—that the clergy everywhere stood up, as it were, breathless as to the issue of the pendant suit, but too eager, perhaps, to bring conviction home to the Jesuits ; whilst the world stood aghast at the character of the

crime, deepened as it was by that of the perpetrator.

Now, my young friend, that I have, I think, sufficiently touched upon the unfortunate division about the dogmas of Quietism, I must once more beg your attention for a moment to another subject, still further removed from our present point of thought. Every epoch has its prejudices, its utopias, its extravagances, and delusions. The predominating one of past times—a sad legacy of the darker ages—had not yet, as I have already said, been totally cleared away by the more brilliant light of our days—I mean the belief in sorcery—an agency much disputed, indeed, in some instances, strenuously denied in many, but still accredited by the mass.

Cases of this nature were constantly subjected to criminal proceedings, not always conducted in a manner creditable to the impartiality or common sense of the judges, but too often proved the gross ignorance and superstition that still disgraced the early part of the eighteenth century. You must have heard of

the horrid and unjust affair of Father Grandier, of Loudun, and its sad termination in that unfortunate victim of popular error ascending the funeral pile. This took place considerably before the events which I am recording; but Father Grandier had not severer, if so severe, accusations brought against him as those which lay to the charge of Father Girard.

In those days, indeed, it would have been difficult to advance anything more calculated to poison the most cultivated understandings, and to exasperate the people, than an accusation of this kind, involving, as it did, a supposition of foul dealings with the spirit of darkness. Justice, too, at that time might with more propriety be termed cruelty, so inordinately savage was its mode of administering its awards. In most cases, the punishment far exceeded the offence. Death by fire was the doom of any man convicted of sorcery; how heresy and seduction were ordinarily dealt with I cannot at this moment precisely remember, but I dare say it was not over leniently.

Now picture to yourself, if you can, the ex-

citement that would naturally arise from a cause so complicated in its facts of interest when it came to public trial. A church dispute, a philosophical doubt, and a case of egregious scandal, being all thrown into the balance of guilt between a young and very beautiful female, hitherto remarkable for her surpassing virtue, and an old Jesuit, whom talent and holiness, or the mask of it, had brought no less before the public. Imagine the young girl and the old man, each requiring at the hands of justice the life of the other—for, as I have explained to you, it amounted to this on either side. Fancy a crowd of witnesses drawn from almost every class of society, but especially from the more exalted. Imagine, too, the host of piquant revelations that would be ministered to the rapacious curiosity of the idlers of the higher orders—the prospect of an *auto-da-fé* held out to the mob, equally eager for stimulus, but requiring it of a rather coarser and more racy nature than their betters,—I say, having considered all the incidents of this strange case, picture to yourself, if you can, the pressure

within, the crowd without, and the intensity of feeling that strung every nerve to the uttermost, of every single individual in that multitude, not one of whom but expected a tragic issue to the pendant cause.

I need scarcely tell you that carriages with emblazoned panels lined every avenue, and that most of the noble persons they deposited had arrived direct from Paris to follow in person this singular affair, either fearful lest no public channel for diffusing the truth would dare to be correct in detailing it, or wishing to dissipate their vapidty by means of this artificial, yet strong and sustained excitement.

I repeat it, no heart there could be quite free from anxiety. The troubled brows of the judges themselves betrayed sufficiently that even theirs did not lie very light within their bosoms; whilst party spirit, which of course ran fearfully high, lent an eager, ardent look to all the spectators, such as, perhaps, many a listless countenance among them had never worn before.

It was a remarkable spectacle, and might well have attracted the eye and awakened the medi-

tations of a philosopher—that breathless crowd of fashionably, nay, in some instances gaudily, dressed persons of both sexes, there to feast their eyes with the visible signs of mental agonies, their ears with the moral sin and degradation of their kind! The highly rouged cheeks of the ladies, red and glaring as the wheels of their vehicles—their immense breadth of gorgeous petticoats—their huge fans and mincing graces—contrasting as quaintly with the mean, almost naked appearance of the court as the flowing, curled, scented perukes, pale-coloured, satin embroidered coats, lace ruffles, delicate snuff-boxes, and bejewelled fingers, of their lords offered to the dark flowing robes, anxious, perplexed countenances, and simple severity, of the twenty-five judges who were to pass sentence on this grave occasion.

The groups, however, which attracted most attention were those of the contending parties. On one side stood my father, in the pride of manly beauty—and I think I have already mentioned that his person was singularly handsome—his natural dignity of form enhanced by

the energy of purpose with which he had armed himself, a look of almost womanly pity softening the expression of his dark eye, whenever it turned on his fair young client. Close behind him stood the Prior of the barefooted Carmelites, Father Nicholas, in the flowing white garments of his order, whose tall, commanding form seemed to tower in the dignity of innocence, whilst his strikingly prepossessing, though, perhaps, somewhat too marked and ardent physiognomy, tintured, and that not slightly, with hauteur, presented one of the finest samples of southern blood that Toulon could have produced. Near the Prior stood Catherine; no more vivid or picturesque a contrast could be imagined than she formed to her companions. Her loveliness had during the last few months changed its character. Her complexion had lost something of its freshness, and her form shewed symptoms of strength undermined by her rigorous confinement. Her feebleness was, however, but physical; her calm, serene look, whenever the golden lashes that veiled her deep blue eyes were for an

instant raised, betrayed that no doubt, no apprehension, no passion whatever, disturbed the spirit within.

Not immediately fronting her, but still on the opposite bench, sat the Rector of the Jesuits, with looks blacker than his habit, and whose person, forbidding to repulsion, seemed desirous of shrinking into itself.

The eyes of all present, even those of the grave, anxious judges, whose responsibility weighed so obviously on their spirits, were turned, with ill-suppressed amazement, from the beautiful young victim to the hideous old seducer; and to those who were at all familiar with Catherine's previous existence, the many advantageous offers of marriage she had declined, the universal homage her charms had elicited, the mystery seemed more inexplicable than ever. Here sat youth, loveliness, fortune, every charm re-united, which, separately, forms a woman's boast—there age and some of its dawning infirmities—a being capable of misleading neither the eye nor the imagination, and possessed of none of those factitious advan-

tages of wealth or position which, in such cases, sometimes compensate for other deficiencies. How such a being, so critically situated, should have dreamed of those offences of which he stood accused, and should have been able to accomplish them, was, indeed, a problem to baffle ordinary ingenuity ; nor is it surprising that they who gazed upon him should deem his success due to no common agency. As he there sat, with a scowling, sullen look, he seemed, in good sooth, the very archetype of those figures which the imagination sometimes pictures to itself as holding familiar colloquy with the imps of darkness. Around such a being could they be supposed to perch, whilst conning over the forbidden pages of mystic lore, and the females began to feel a mingled sensation of dread and horror tingling through their veins, that was not without some secret charm. The men contemplated him with contempt and disgust ; whilst all read guilt in his downcast eyes, and shivering, spiritless attitude. Many curious looks were directed to the witness bench ; most of the ladies, however, had their faces concealed

by veils, whose rich tissue formed an impenetrable barrier to the bold, rude stare which, in in many instances, would doubtless, have otherwise searched the countenance of the wearer. Conspicuous in this row sat the long train of the ladies of Ollioules, with Madame D'Aubert their superior. They, too, had drawn their wimples so close to their faces as to shroud them from impertinent curiosity, and were silent, motionless observers of the scene. Not so poor Catherine's mother, who, though supported by her eldest son and his wife, was overwhelmed with grief, shame, and nameless terrors concerning the issue of the day.

At length the cause was opened by my father, who laid the indictment before the Court in brief, but emphatic language, careful not to draw too early on the stores of his eloquence, before his experienced, talented opponent had been compelled to spend some of his own ammunition.

He began with a few, but touching allusions to the happy innocent life which the plaintiff had enjoyed before infernal machinations

blighted at once her every prospect, and made her home, which up to the period of her acquaintance with the defendant had been a little earthly paradise of peace and content, the desolate abode of a broken-hearted mother.

When he spoke of the decided aversion of Mademoiselle Cadières from marriage, his voice faltered a little, and his manner became slightly embarrassed; a circumstance which, by the alternate glances they cast at him and his strangely successful rival, it was evident most of the Toulonese were at no loss to account for. He pointed out that had she been light-minded, there was no necessity for tarrying until the arrival of such a person as Father Girard to have exhibited some symptoms of flightiness, even though the esteem in which her whole family, but especially her mother, was held in the town had not formed of itself a sufficient rampart, to screen her youth and inexperience against the wiles and deceits of the world; of whose wickedness, indeed, she was as ignorant as an infant, until her intimacy with the prisoner.

Having done ample justice to Catherine's unblemished character, he entered upon the subject of Quietism; and, after dilating upon it sufficiently to explain the offensive nature and tendency of this doctrine, he at once brought the charge home to Father Girard. He could prove that he had sought to inculcate the pernicious dogmas of this demoralising system into the innocent minds of his pupils, by repeatedly assuring them, both in his private and public instructions, that mental preparation of any kind, even prayer itself, were superfluous forms to approach the Divinity—that self-denial was useless—on the contrary, the indulgence of every, even the worst propensities of human nature, not only justifiable, but even, in some cases, meritorious; that impure thoughts and culpable actions could no more affect the purity of the immortal spirit, than the cloud that for a moment intercepts the light of the sun can sully its brightness. Such tenets, he held, might well be considered so many proofs that the prisoner was infected with those detestable heresies with which repentance is as incompatible as virtue.

As my father entered upon this part of the indictment, which tended to shew that Father Girard had sought to complete the ruin of his victim by perverting her inmost soul, the agitation became very great in the court; and the interest was visibly on the increase as he proceeded.

From this charge, to the culprit sufficiently formidable, he passed to the gravest of all, that of sorcery. At the very approach to this argument, a general thrill passed through the assembly. The sceptical permitted their faces to assume a very perceptible sneer; the fans dropped from the hands of the ladies, all trembling with eagerness and excitement; the judges exchanged glances fraught with the deepest perturbation and perplexity; but my father went on calmly with this critical and doubtful subject, one which he felt exposed him at once to the ridicule of the thoughtless, the contempt of the thoughtful, and the suspicion of all.

Nerved by the purity of his motives in bringing forward such a charge, and by his own innermost convictions, he did not quail before his

self-imposed task even at this most difficult crisis. He continued to enumerate, without shrinking, the many undeniable instances upon record of a mysterious agency, which might well be classed among the supernatural, from its nature never having as yet been explained or understood; and then proceeded to charge Father Girard with having used such unhallowed practices to throw Mademoiselle Cadières into fits and trances—of having abused her in the latter state, and, by the former, of having reduced her to the very brink of the grave.

He then eloquently dwelt upon the agonies of mind, bordering on madness, which she had endured, when her soul, no longer, as it were, under her own control—her thoughts, heretofore bent on Heaven alone, became sullied by doubts of the most hideous scepticism and infidelity—when her lips uttered blasphemies which burnt into her very brain—when the pure instincts of her nature were not sufficiently powerful to break through the spell that enslaved her, and made her pulses throb with an ardent, insane passion for a being whom her

conscience and her heart made, alike, abhorrent to her nature. He depicted in glowing terms the horrors of her mental state—debarred of the comfort of prayer—of that of self-communion—thinking herself the guiltiest of the human race, yet *forced* to remain so.

Passing from the description of feelings and systems to more tangible facts, he went on to depict the singular phenomena observable upon her at the time of possession—mentioned the stigmas found upon her head and hands, which could never have been self-inflicted, but had most probably been dealt in one of those long trances, during which, as many persons could testify, she was as insensible to every outward object, to every sensation, as though death had actually taken place. He informed the Court of the opportunities he had had of so doing unobserved, when abusing the implicit trust reposed in the sacredness of his character, the prisoner had spent hours locked up alone in his penitent's chamber whilst she was in this passive state, both at home and at the cloister of St. Clare. And after alluding to the peremptory

manner in which Father Girard had enforced his wishes on this head with Catherine and her mother, he proceeded to detail, at some length, the conduct of the Jesuit at the latter place.

He shewed how his especial request, that the correspondence passing between him and his penitent should, contrary to the rules of the cloister, not be submitted to the eye of the Lady D'Aubert—the indiscreet frequency of that correspondence—his almost daily and lengthened visits—his insistance to be allowed the privilege of entering her chamber, another unheard of infringement of the rules and proprieties of a convent—the ardent passion which every chance look or word betrayed, all these dubious circumstances had early awakened the suspicions of the lady abbess to the real state of the case, which were afterwards confirmed by the candid and even unrequested admissions of the young novice herself.

From the moment when the nature of the intercourse between the confessor and his penitent had been thus made evident to the Superior, and the sanctity of Mademoiselle Ca-

dières was no longer a matter of doubt, but the imposture a certitude, it became her warmest desire to get rid of the parties, yet in such a way as to avoid so great a scandal as the revelation of the truth would not fail to create. Acting upon this plan, she very plainly intimated the revulsion of her feelings to Father Girard by the frigidity of her demeanour, and greatly encouraged the desire of the novice to return home.

The watchful eye of the criminal was not slow in marking these symptoms that his secret was on the eve of discovery, perhaps of exposure. Hence his determination to bury his victim in the eternal silence of a Carthusian cell, the severity of whose rules he hoped would soon put an end to an existence which his magical practices had already made precarious, and which had now become an obstacle in his path—an obstacle that he was determined to remove at every cost. “Herein,” continued my father, “we may behold the unvarying concatenation of crime. One evil action leads to another as inevitably as the foot mechanically

ascends, one by one, the steps of a ladder, when the will points upwards."

He then stated the base manner in which the Jesuit had persecuted, or caused to be persecuted, all those who had dared to extend a friendly hand towards the unfortunate object of his unpriestly passion and unmanly hate; how he had, finally, even ventured to attack a worthy and zealous member of the church, because he had devoted, in obedience to the Bishop's express orders, his talents and his care to the poor sufferer, in order to rescue her from the horrible state in which he found her. He dwelt in glowing terms of heartfelt gratitude on the success that had attended these charitable endeavours, and using the very words applied by Catherine to the subject, he depicted how the darkness and gloom of night were gradually dispelled from her soul by a pure and bright effulgence, the light of a never-forgotten or unregretted truth, which filled her bosom with comfort and endurance as of yore. The power of praying was restored, and with it the pure devotion of past days—her thoughts, polluted

no longer with the evil promptings of an accursed spirit, flowed again in their accustomed channel—all strange, wild, rebellious desires and doubts had vanished, and she was the Catherine of former days, at least in conscience. She would even have forgiven the author of her past sufferings had not her present line of conduct been forced upon her by his own machinations. Then, having dilated warmly upon the persecutions that followed, he continued:—

“The dark spirit that has wrought the ruin of a fair and innocent being who had never wronged him, now demands the life of his victim as a sacrifice to his own security, that he may screen his guilt behind the rack or the wheel on which she may expire. This he requires; and for the honour he has sullied, for the life he now claims, I, on the part of my client, in turn demand the punishment of the ravisher, the quietist, and the magician!”

When my father resumed his seat, the sensation created in the court was immense, as might have been expected from the exorbitant interest of the case itself, heightened, perhaps,

a little, by the manner and person of the advocate. Indeed, not only was justice on the side of the plaintiff, but every prepossession that can influence the judgment through the eyes or prejudices.

During many parts, and those the most striking and essential of my father's harangue, the culprit had betrayed much agitation, whilst Catherine maintained throughout the same composure that had marked her appearance when she entered the court. It was impossible not to be convinced as to the real offender the moment the eye rested on either.

The reply of Monsieur Pezeray Thorame was less lucid, less terse, and, above all, far less powerful than my father had anticipated. The subject was, indeed, sufficiently difficult. To prove that a man past fifty,—grown old, not in the retirement of a cell or an hermitage, but in the bosom of populated cities, where the numerous consciences laid bare before him must have given him a thorough knowledge of the world, and especially of the human heart,—should have been imposed, grossly imposed

upon, in the first instance, by a young girl of nineteen, brought up in the deepest retirement, and utterly ignorant of the ways and wickedness of mankind so familiar to himself; and that when at last his eyes were opened to the deception practised on his unsuspecting frankness, this same young girl, her brothers, and her confessor, had reunited in a base conspiracy to punish him for refusing to become the participator in a fraud—the accomplice in an imposture calculated to compromise the interests of the church,—all this was too preposterous to lay much weight upon. That such would be the ground of Father Girard's defence my father was well assured; but he was not prepared to hear it in a great measure supported by aspersions upon poor Catherine's temper and disposition; for to her character, of course, no evil could be ascribed—that was placed beyond the power of even the most malignant calumny. He was also not a little surprised at the fallacious representation of many facts brought forward in support of the charges thus boldly advanced.

This could, however, in some measure be explained by the distorted accounts, in possession of which Father Girard and his friends would doubtless have put the advocate retained in his defence. But these accusations could not be substantiated, and were, in themselves, even of too trivial a nature to disturb my father's plea.

It was not Monsieur Thorame's fault, nor could it cast any discredit on his talents, that the subject he had to discuss was barren of those many points favourable to the display of eloquence and pathos, in which the discourse of the adverse party might well abound. Although he evidently felt embarrassed, he did not fail to seize hold adroitly of every straw within his reach; but the plausibility of his observations did not carry conviction. In vain did he urge the possibility of a man of unbounded devotion believing in miracles, saints, and visible, tangible tokens from above, although he admitted that the more mundane could not be supposed to appreciate feelings which they did not share, and might, therefore, have avoided

falling so easily into the snare laid out by an artful, vain girl, and a designing family, to entrap simplicity and innocence.

The incredulous smile that met this sally from all sides did not prevent Monsieur Thorame from maintaining his ground, and dwelling upon it at great length, which produced no other effect than that of wearying many of the auditors. Having proved, to his own satisfaction at least, that his client's timely discovery of the comedy played by Catherine and her friends, upon him and the public at large, had alone induced him to renounce the direction of that young lady's conscience, and, also, to attempt every possible means of compelling her to bury her pretensions, and the scandal to which the whole story might give rise, within the walls of a cloister—a precaution, as he said, of course more for the young lady's sake than his own,—he pointed out how this opposition to her intrigues, and those of her brothers, had exposed that virtuous man to their deadliest hatred and revenge.

He then expatiated on the infernal plot

which these cruel enemies had fallen upon to destroy the innocent bar to their wily purposes, with an energy of language that might not have been without effect, had not the presence of the oppressed and the oppressor, so powerfully dwelt upon in high-sounding language by Monsieur Thorame, rendered the comparison ludicrous. As well might he have described a dove as a bird of prey, ready to pounce upon, and rend to shreds in her tiny claws, some dark and antiquated crow; for Father Girard could not, even in the dizziest flight of eloquence, be compared to any nobler species of the feathered tribe.

The charge of sorcery the orator left to disclaim itself; for who, in the eighteenth century, could for a moment be led into the field of error by such a mere Will-o'-the-wisp, as had thus been held up by his learned opponent. After a few brilliant, disdainful flourishes, he declared himself unwilling to argue a matter so far beneath the enlightenment of the epoch, and passed to the question of Quietism, which, my father thought,

he lingered too long upon, considering how little demonstrative of erudition, happy thought, or rational argument, he in reality brought forward. Finally, he denied the charge of seduction, denouncing it as a calumny invented to give colour to the other absurd charges; for of course the crime of magic must be based on some criminal motive; and he declared his opinion, that the whole accusation would have fallen to the ground, had not party spirit fanned the flame, and designing priests taken up the weapons offered them by worldly plotters, who entertained scarcely more malicious designs, and whose intrigues he relied upon justice and equity to unmask and to punish.

When Monsieur Thorame resumed his seat, if any conclusion might be drawn from the dead, chilling silence that ensued, public feeling was evidently not with the Jesuit. He had denied all the facts alleged by Catherine, and announced a few which, if satisfactorily proved, would certainly go far towards justifying himself; but still much remained unexplained, obscure, or very ill accounted for;

and my father saw plainly, that not only truth, but even its outward show, would rest on his side.

When the witnesses were called, the interest of the spectators, which had visibly flagged during the lengthened harangue of Monsieur Thorame, became again intense. Mademoiselle Langières' beauty, her obvious distress, and reluctant avowals, excited at once pity and indignation—Mademoiselle Guyol, giddy no longer—Mesdemoiselles Batterel, Reboul, all the once happy and bright satellites which, in former days, revolved around that star of purest loveliness, Catherine Cadières, now fallen, like herself, a sunken constellation, extinguished for ever by the same ruthless, unsparing hand,—presented for the most part cases so similar to Catherine's, that nothing could be more corroborative of her statements than their evidence. In admitting their individual dishonour, they one and all, like her, swore to breathings on the brow, fixed and prolonged gazes, that bewildered their senses, and declared their conviction that their ruin had been accomplished

by means of foul, dark acts of magic. Indeed, in spite of the enlightenment of that or any other period, it was next to impossible to assign a rational cause for the errors of so many youthful maidens in favour of the prisoner at the bar. It was difficult to believe these young victims, all equally perjured, willing abettors of a detestable fraud; and yet human reason was confounded in the inextricable labyrinth into which their disclosures were well calculated to involve it.

Thus ended the first day; and with perturbed, agitated spirit, did every single individual of that countless throng return to his home or his inn, as the case might be, to discuss throughout the livelong night possibilities that seemed to verge on the impossible; and dreamy questions, that led to anything but the sweet oblivion of slumber.

Had Mesmer but been there to give a new name to that mysterious phenomenon of nature, whose definition in darker ages, by their few and much calumniated philosophers, has become a despised and contemptible byword—

had Mesmer proclaimed his startling propositions to those whose minds the artless revelations of a few simple, uneducated young women had so much perplexed—all would been explained. Father Girard had been held a magician no longer; but a perfect adept in animal magnetism would have been unmasked at once. Let no one henceforth say there is nothing in a name, though your incredulous smile, my young friend, would indicate that to your ear both are alike empty, equally void of sense and truth. But facts are facts; and how, by the process of ordinary reasoning, will you account for those which are registered, and were but too well substantiated on this eventful trial to leave any room for doubt.

The next day, and the next, and a few more were entirely devoted to the examination of witnesses. Their name, indeed, was legion, but to my father they certainly proved no evil spirits, for throughout they confirmed every fact he had advanced—every word he had uttered. Nothing could exceed in dignity the bearing of Madame D'Aubert; the most cursory glance

was sufficient to establish her claims to respect, even in the lightest minds. Her depositions were all and wholly in Catherine's favour; and so concise, so clear, so complete, that no more conclusive evidence could be desired. Nor was the testimony borne by any one of her community less definitive. The mistress of the novices, the numerous sisters, down to the very domestics of the establishment, all represented the facts in the same light.

Thus a serious clause in the indictment was established by the most indisputable evidence, and the deep personal interest lay exposed, that was alleged to have driven Father Girard to those magical practices which formed now the darkest part of the charge brought against him. The singular phenomenon of an exalted state of clairvoyance and artificial somnambulism of which the unfortunate Catherine had furnished so striking an example, was deposed to by physicians, doctors in divinity, nuns, and chance witnesses of every grade and station, and details were furnished which, as might well have been imagined, excited the court even more than all

that had gone before. In short, to avoid wearying your patience as much as possible, no case was ever more complete as to evidence. There was not the least shadow of a doubt left wherein to conceal Father Girard's shame, nor outlet, however small, for him to creep through.

The effect of his disgrace was yet enhanced by the truly admirable conduct of Mademoiselle Cadières during the whole of the trial; never for a single moment had she faltered in her depositions, never in a single word or expression departed from the truth. Though repeatedly cross-examined, and that in no gentle or fair manner, she had steadfastly clung to her first statement with a calmness, an equanimity of temper, that vouched at once for her sincerity and the generosity of purpose that had made her place herself in so trying a situation.

Father Girard, on the contrary, broke down at each question, contradicted himself at every word, and, finally, became so perplexed in his own falsehoods as to stand repeatedly exposed, not only to the rebuke of the court, but to the ridicule of the assembled crowd, whose disgust

and contempt could with difficulty be restrained within ordinary bounds. His embarrassment seemed to accrue with every instant ; his prevarication and imbroglios became so palpable, that finding every word he uttered involved him deeper, crimsoning under the consciousness of his exposure, he folded his arms across his breast, and turned away his face, apparently determining thenceforth to maintain an absolute silence.

But it was when confronted with Catherine that the little presence of mind he had yet preserved, failed him altogether. He could not bring himself, despite his most strenuous efforts, to gaze on her lovely countenance, and serene blue eyes fixed on him with cold, but not bitter reproach ; but shrunk from her gaze, as an owl shrinks from the brightness of day, and sought the darkness of his own breast. When her sweet, clear tones rang close to his ear, a slight but perceptible shudder thrilled through his frame ; and when, at last, compelled to answer the few leading questions put to him in the same calm, firm tone which she had hitherto main-

tained, remorse, fear, or a lingering tenderness for the object of a passion perhaps but ill extinguished—one or all of these feelings combined so overwhelmed him, that, unmindful even of the semblance of manhood, he fairly sobbed aloud. His weakness set the seal to public opinion. No witness could have given a more unfavourable impression of him than the Jesuit, humbled, perplexed, lost in an ocean of contending feelings, effected for himself.

One link in the chain of evidence had been lost—that, namely, of the mysterious correspondence averred to by the abbess and others, but of which it was not in Catherine's power to produce the least trace. Father Girard now swore to the destruction of the letters—now owned they were still in his possession; but all efforts to induce him to deliver them up, or to be explicit about their contents, failed completely. This gap in the demonstrative evidence, otherwise so clear, could not, however, weigh the balance in his favour. The very fact of his having withdrawn them tended sufficiently to prove how damning he considered their contents.

A more decided, more triumphant case could not possibly await the final sanction of a judgment. Public feeling—nay, one might almost say public passion—was completely enlisted in favour of the plaintiff. Her personal beauty, youth, and, above all, her feminine modesty, meekness of demeanour, yet firmness and rectitude of purpose, joined to the justice of her cause, the power of her enemies, and the sufferings she had already undergone, justified the enthusiastic sympathy inspired by her misfortunes; nor was there one heart within the city of Toulon, however humble the breast in which it beat, that did not throb with a fervent desire that her wrongs might be avenged, since reparation was impossible.

On every day of this eventful trial—and it was an unusually protracted one—the people had never ceased crowding to suffocation every approach to the hall of justice; but on the last day the press was fearful; and it was with the utmost difficulty that ingress or egress could be obtained to or from the court. An expression of unusual animation pervaded every face, which in many of those ardent southern countenances

was deepened into ferocity—a peculiarity not altogether foreign to their impassioned natures.

The Jesuits, ever since the beginning of the affair, had scarcely ventured to pass through the mob, so intense was the execration in which they were held at that moment by the very people who had worshipped them with slavish respect but a few short days before. The excitement within and without the court was at its height.

The spectators had nosegays of white flowers at their breasts, as if in joyous expectation of the triumph of that innocence for whose emblem they had been selected. Catherine looked still more beautiful than on the previous days, though somewhat more moved than usual; a slight blush suffused her face at almost every alternate minute, and her eyes more frequently sought those of her trembling mother, who was scarcely less an object of deep sympathy and interest than herself.

The judges seemed more perturbed and gloomy than ever, and turned no friendly glances towards the plaintiff and her advocate.

Their collision with the Jesuits was too evident to make it doubtful which way their judgment would go, had they but dared to follow their inclinations—perhaps their fears would be the truer interpretation of their feelings—in the undeniably critical position in which they were placed ; but my father heeded not their frowning aspect. Although the eighteenth century yet retained all the seeds of the feudal and justiciary system of the dark ages, and justice was yet almost synonymous with barbarity, power with abuse, still so flagrant and outrageous an act as the condemnation of Catherine, especially considering the ferment of spirit throughout the town, he could not bring himself to believe possible.

The proceedings of that day he estimated as mere child's play, to delay as long as possible an unavoidable sentence, which, however, older practitioners warned him not to look forward to so very sanguinely. Once, and once only, did his eye light, perchance, upon the Jesuit's countenance, whose every movement he had hitherto watched, nevertheless, most carefully

—he seemed moody and absorbed, but in great measure recovered from the abject consternation and terror which had overwhelmed him throughout the proceedings of this harassing trial. My father remarked that in the course of that morning he had helped himself repeatedly from a water-flask that stood near, in order, as he thought, to calm his inward perturbation; and when his glance fell on him, he was in the very act of raising a glassful of the pure element to his lips. There was nothing in this simple movement to excite any attention, and my father soon turned his thoughts to other objects. Shortly afterwards, Catherine feeling much exhausted, one of the inferior officers about the court approached her with a tumbler of fresh water, which was accepted and drained at a draught. As she returned the glass to the man, who waited for it with extended hand, she observed to him—and many besides my father, who scarcely heeded it at the moment, heard the remark—that the water had a very salt and disagreeable taste, and rather excited than slacked her thirst.

The examination of other witnesses went on, and, finally, Catherine was again confronted with Father Girard. Her behaviour in public had been, until that moment, in such perfect accordance with the sentiments she expressed in private, that my father no longer watched her with the same keen, sickening apprehension which at first his doubts of her stability had occasioned. But now there was something so strange and unsteady in the sound of her voice, as to cause him to start and look round, when the change that he beheld in her whole mien and bearing riveted at once his eye and his attention.

Had the wand of an enchanter touched her, and that wand been invested with all the mysterious qualities ever bestowed on it by the most generous imagination, it could not have wrought a change more complete, and to her friends and well-wishers more appalling. Her eyes wandered with uncertain, dreamy gaze from object to object, or sought the ground, not, however, from natural bashfulness, but from a heaviness that seemed to press the lids

forcibly down; her lips and brow were contracted as if by an intense effort at collecting thought; her answers were broken, dark, vague, unconnected; and the light from within, that had irradiated her countenance and diffused its brightness into every lineament, seemed fading away from her perplexed brow, on which the mists that had lain so heavy on it at St. Claire's were slowly again gathering.

Gradually as Catherine lost her self-command—and that, too, at the most critical moment of her fate,—Father Girard assumed an air of growing courage, as much at variance with his hitherto abject timidity and unmanly incoherency. His manner grew proportionably assured, as that of his opponent lost firmness; my father gazed in speechless amazement; whilst the judges exchanged smiles, that shewed how much this change relieved their minds at that decisive hour.

The rest passed with the rapidity and, my father has often assured me, with the indistinctness of a dream. He more than once made a violent effort as if to awake from some

troubled vision, as he heard Catherine, in a hurried, confused manner, recant, one by one, every word she had before spoken, deny every fact that had been proved by irrefragable evidence,—assert herself a mean impostor, the tool of a vile conspiracy,—Father Girard, an injured saint,—herself, her friends and supporters, the vilest of sinners that ever trod the earth.

Father Girard's scowling glances, fraught with darkest malignity in the hour of victory—the exclamations of uncontrollable wonder that burst from the spectators—the sobs of the agitated mother—the indignant rustle of the veils of the nuns of St. Clare, as they drew them closer to their faces in speechless indignation at the inconceivable, shameless prevarication of the plaintiff, whom they had hitherto regarded with feelings of the purest commiseration—the thundering eloquence of Monsieur Thorame as it came pouring down from the Alps of his imagination like a headlong avalanche—his own weak and confused refutation spoken in a hoarse, indistinct tone of voice—the summing up of the judges—the fatal condemnation itself—all that

passed around him sounded to my father like the horrid mockery of a dream. But an hour ago a victor, standing proudly opposed to humbled foes, whose evil designs he had so valiantly combated, now prostrate and vanquished without a final struggle—taken by surprise—thrown off his guard—never had knight fallen so low or lady proved so false! How he left the court and reached home he could scarcely tell; nor was it before a few hours of calm and solitude had restored his wonted elasticity and energy of spirit, that he felt himself again able to look about him and to think.

Heaps of letters, bearing the post-mark of Marseilles, lay on his table; most of them bore the quaint, straggling characters of the period, which he recognised as his sister's; one or two only were written in the regular, firm, round hand of Eleonore. His affianced bride had never approved of the self-devotion of her lover to her friend, nor had she been flattered by the necessary delay of their union which it enforced. Too frank to conceal her displeasure, too maidenly to admit its extent or motive, her

letters were few, and those few cold and constrained. No casual peruser could have guessed the tender devotion of the writer from such unmeaning gleanings; but my father read the spirit aright that lay concealed behind the barrier of reserve, an insight into the truth, for which he was as much indebted to his sister's detailed and ample communications, as to his own sagacity. As he was too fair to expect the object of his choice to be faultless, he was neither surprised nor angry at the feminine weakness she thus displayed; he was not sorry to find his bride a woman still, though a superior one, and had sufficient vanity or self-love—I scarcely know which to term it—to feel a pleasure in knowing himself the object of an ardent attachment. Had Mademoiselle Raymond performed the heroics of feminine friendship on this occasion, it would certainly not have satisfied him so well as this little display of nature.

As he glanced rapidly from page to page, gleaning consolation from the gentle sympathy therein expressed, the bitter feelings of disappointment and indignation that swelled his

heart well nigh to bursting, gradually softened, and the long detailed account which he sat down to write relieved it more and more. As he vented his grief and anger on the unconscious paper, and poured out his whole soul to the being in whom he already felt that boundless confidence which makes an affectionate, sensible wife the most peerless friend on earth, he felt the weight on his spirits by degrees give way ; and with reviving courage, the resources of his mind awoke anew. More than once he was compelled to lay down the pen to follow some new train of thought, as a word, a phrase suggested it, and his epistle, begun in despondency, ended with words of a nature peculiarly characteristic of himself:—"This engagement is lost, but not the day. We may rally and win after all. My honour is now yours, or will be so soon enough to enlist your good wishes on my side in another struggle, should I be successful in getting one up ; if I fail in this measure, I shall shortly be in Marseilles, if no *untoward chance befall*."

The latter words were dashed, and the letter

which was to convey so painful an intelligence to his whole family, through his chosen interpreter, was entrusted, not to the chances of the post, but to a special and trustworthy messenger, to deliver it with his own hands into those of Mademoiselle Raymond.

Having thus performed a somewhat protracted duty, and lightened his own spirits of their heavy burthen, by confiding it to those of another, his ideas being cleared up by the mental labour he had just undergone, and the keen edge of his own disappointment somewhat softened by the few hours of uninterrupted reflection which had passed by, his thoughts naturally reverted to the miserable sufferers—the afflicted mother—the doomed daughter. The more vividly the sorrow of the one and the fate of the other presented themselves before him, the more rapidly and completely did his mind recover its tone. What were his egotistical and vain regrets, his humiliation, compared to the abyss into which they had fallen.

Although evening had already crept upon

him—for it was the close of autumn, and the days were shortening fast—my father hurried to the poor desolate mother, whom he found, to his great surprise, shut up alone in her room. Her son and daughter-in-law informed him that she had obstinately refused to receive the consolations tendered by her many friends, and even by a large number of the most respectable people of Toulon, who had called on her in person to testify their respect and sympathy. She had resolutely denied herself to all, even to those who had every claim upon her attention — her afflicted children — her confessor. The house was, indeed, one of mourning; nor were her feelings soothed, but her sufferings rather sharpened, by the ceaseless clamours of the populace, who, unconscious of Catherine's fatal recantation, which afforded some sort of colour to the sentence pronounced against her, were incensed beyond measure at this fresh proof of the boundless power of her persecutors, and the ruthless manner in which it was wielded.

Discontented groups hovered the whole day

about the college of the Jesuits and Mademoiselle Cadières' dwelling. The former with strictly closed gates, seemed haughtily to defy, from within its high grey walls, the taunts that could not pierce them; thus irritating the mob as much as the weeping faces that met their curious gaze in and about the dwelling of the Cadières excited their tumultuous sympathies. Never had that fickle but powerful adjunct, the favour of the people, been more completely enlisted in any cause. But whilst Catherine was proclaimed in every public place and street by the busy tongues of the multitude, and in the luxurious *salons* of almost every member of the Toulon society, except such as might be influenced against her by their connexion with the Bishop, as an injured saint whose grievous wrongs cried aloud for vengeance, the victim of unheard of injustice and oppression; her mother, dead to all around her—dead to all but pain and anguish—spent the whole of that eventful day in her chamber, which she had carefully darkened; and so hushed, so still was everything within, that more than once the

minds of her children had been visited with the most fearful apprehensions. Had not the blow aimed at the offshoot struck the tree?

“I will obtain admittance for myself,” said my father. “Hope is the best of all consolations, and that I will make it my duty to inspire.”

He had, however, to repeat, again and again, in the loudest tones he could command, his assurances that the evil was not irreparable—that there were yet many steps to be taken, of a nature to change altogether the face of affairs—and that he had come expressly to consult with her on those very points, before the slightest stir was heard within the apartment. All seemed silent as the grave; and as appeal succeeded appeal without effect, he began to feel no inconsiderable share of alarm, when suddenly the door was flung open, and Madame Cadières stood before him.

A few hours had altered the poor mother as though as many years had passed over her, yet there was no trace of recent tears on her ashy countenance—it expressed that silent, stubborn grief, which gnaws the very heart away.]

“And do you really bring comfort, or are you commissioned by those who love me, to perform some charitable office of deception. It were but mistaken kindness, and utterly thrown away.”

My father had the greatest difficulty in convincing her of his sincerity; but he was at last successful in obtaining her consent to the further measures which he deemed it necessary immediately to take.

“Activity and promptitude,” said he, “are our best, indeed, at the present crisis, our only means of safety. We must, without loss of time, make an appeal to the Parliament at Aix; if unsuccessful, we will not even then give up the game. Do not therefore, dear Madam, despair, before at least we have exhausted our resources.”

“But if Catherine should really have deceived us all, Monsieur Chaudon? It is a horrid, a maddening thought! But if it were so, would not every further effort be only an aggravation of guilt?” And for the first time since the awful sentence had been spoken, the mother wept.

The scalding tears relieved her bursting heart, and my father suffered them for a time to flow unrepressed; for he considered that these were saving tears, and too precious to her reason, perhaps her life, to be interrupted; but when the first strong fit of emotion had subsided, he took her hand within his, and said in the gentle, soothing tones of a son:—

“And can *you* doubt Catherine?—*I* never did. Who that knows her can for a moment *doubt*?”

“That were, indeed, a blessed thought,” said the sobbing mother, clasping her hands tightly together, and raising a grateful look to Heaven; “but if it be as you would infer, wherefore that horrible confession, which sounded in my ears like a death knell? That can never be explained away.”

“Her words cannot turn aside such evidence as that borne by the whole sisterhood of St. Clare, and other witnesses. I consider her extraordinary recantation as an accidental wandering of the mind, occasioned by its over-tension. The bow too tightly strung will snap.

It was nothing more, I am assured; though I confess nothing could be more unfortunate at the moment, or more perplexing. I taught myself to look forward to something of this kind—I mean, to much weakness and vacillation of thought—when first I undertook the task which has this day been defeated. But she had won the respect and admiration of all, and my fullest confidence, by the simple truthfulness of her manner. Had I been prepared for the change, I might, perhaps, even have turned this infirmity to advantage. The trial lasted too long—it wearied her,—I am well assured that nothing else caused the melancholy error.”

“You pour balm, indeed, into my wounded spirit; you bring hope and comfort in the hour of my utmost need, and when I thought it beyond man’s power to afford either. Alas! alas! but for my folly and vanity—for it was not my better feelings, but my worst, that misled me,—you, who have performed a son’s part throughout, would now be my son in good sooth, and I a proud and happy mother.”

“ You could never, under any circumstances, have possessed more of my friendship than is now yours,” said my father, hastily interrupting the train of self-recrimination on which Madame Cadières had entered, and which, natural as it was, he did not feel much pleasure in listening to.

She understood the check, and passing her handkerchief over her eyes, and suppressing with difficulty a rising sigh, she said :—

“ Well, then, we will make the appeal, and I am very, very sorry I could for a moment entertain a doubt of my Catherine’s innocence, whilst you—you—but you once loved her well.”

“ I do so still,” he gently answered, “ and will bear her, to-morrow, the most efficacious of all cordials in her heavy affliction, one which will strengthen her, I am sure, beyond any other that earth can afford, the knowledge that you bear up with vigour against this calamity.”

My father did not leave the house until its other inmates had recovered in some measure from the first stupor of the shock ; then issuing

once more into the open street, he turned his steps towards the prison, where he deemed his services might prove equally essential.

He found the Carmelite Prior somewhat dejected on his own account, but mainly sorrowing for poor Catherine, whose condemnation had filled his breast with the deepest compassion. He fired up at the idea of a second trial, and, it would appear, had been revolving precisely the same subject in his own mind. To save the intended victim of the Jesuits at every cost and risk was the generous desire at that moment predominating in his bosom, and they long talked over the means of effecting this new plan of action. When my father left the Prior, he obtained admittance to the young men, Catherine's brothers. They were both a prey to the most fearful agitation, but which their sister's situation so amply justified as to call forth pity rather than reproof. Here, too, my father remained faithful to his self-imposed task of charity; nor did he leave them until they were more composed, and able to look forward to the future with sufficient confidence to render

the present more tolerable. Catherine he had previously determined not to visit until the morrow, in which decision he had been confirmed by hearing from the gaoler's wife that ever since her return to the prison, whither she had been brought back in a swoon, she had lain senseless on her bed ; and though she had occasionally given some slight signs of life, had neither unclosed her eyes nor opened her lips.

My father, with a deep drawn sigh, left the prison, grieved at what he could not but consider a relapse into one of those mysterious fits from which he had hoped Catherine was for ever delivered. He had felt how painful their meeting would be that day, and on leaving the court, had slipped into her hand a card, on which were pencilled, in a hurried scrawl, these few words:—"Do not despair—put your trust in God ; one way or the other, you shall be saved."

But these encouraging words, traced more with a view to soften the first pangs of her grief than with any definite, clear view of the subject at the moment, were not permitted to produce

the desired effect. The card, hastily thrust into her bosom, had not been removed thence. What consolation, indeed, did she need, who felt no pain?

My father's first movement on the ensuing morning was towards Madame Cadières', whose revived appearance sufficiently paid him for his cares; his next was to Catherine, who, he was informed, had already anxiously inquired after him. He found her still in the clothes of the previous day, her eyes sparkling with a feverish lustre, heightened by a hectic flush. She looked wretchedly ill; and as she extended her hand towards him, which he raised to his lips, he felt it hot and dry. In the other, she held his hastily-scribbled lines, which she had been, for the first time, perusing.

"What must you think of me, Monsieur Chaudon," she impetuously exclaimed; "how unworthy have I proved of your generous exertions! The thought of how cruelly I have committed you, and of my poor mother, distracts me."

My father, delighted to find her so rational

and connected—a thing he had scarcely dared to hope—having tranquillized her fears with respect to her mother, delicately veered towards the dangerous shoal, on which her composure would inevitably be wrecked, if her senses were as uncertain as he imagined ; but, to his no small wonder, she reverted to the subject without the slightest embarrassment or confusion.

“You say my mother is well, my brothers too, and that I have the forgiveness of all ; their love, indeed, I could not doubt ; but you—can you forgive, and, above all, believe me again ?”

As she said these words, she fixed a keen, searching glance on my father, as if she would read his very soul.

“Yes,” he replied, solemnly. “I have already declared my conviction, that your yesterday’s error was an involuntary, unpremeditated weakness—the effect of overwrought sensibilities.”

“No ; not so !” said Catherine, with singular earnestness. “Repeat again that you will implicitly believe me, for that assurance alone can give me courage to reveal the truth.”

My father now seriously entreated, if she had anything to state, that she would lose no time in so doing, owning that an explanation of so strange a circumstance would not be ungratifying.

“It is difficult to advance anything that must seem preposterous and absurd to others, however deeply we may feel convinced of its veracity, without some reluctance. In spite of your kind assertions to the contrary, I am afraid you will hardly credit me when I state, that it was that fatal glass of water which bewildered, scattered my reason, and that I am certain Father Girard had, by some means or other, contrived to charm it. It seems a wild supposition, and yet I am positive it is the case. Scarcely had the draught passed my lips, when I felt its intoxicating qualities mount to my brain. I was lost in a world of deception; everything appeared under a new light—myself a monster; *he* was again, for the hour, the master of my soul, and I felt, thought, and spoke as he desired; the spell was again on my brain, on my heart, and my lips obeyed its sug-

gestions. Oh! how could you imagine that of my own free will I could have uttered such horrid falsehoods—have thrown shame and danger on the innocent to save the guilty—sacrificed Father Nicholas, my brothers, my poor mother, for whom?—for that monster? No! surely you cannot think that, left to my own free will, I could ever have done this. It is impossible!”

During the delivery of this impassioned appeal, my father suddenly remembered that, almost immediately before Catherine had taken the glass of water which she imagined to have been tainted by the Jesuit, he had seen one in his hand. Might it not have been that which he had contrived to send her? The coincidence struck him as singular, to say the least of it.

“The cup,” said he, “may have been drugged, to produce a partial derangement of faculties.”

“No, it was not drugged!” said Catherine, impatiently—“not drugged, but charmed by some incantation or other device of the evil spirit, such as that emissary of darkness has at his command. It was a state which I have too

often been in to mistake its operation, followed, too, by one of those death-like trances. But now the effect of that noxious draught is over, I am myself again—ready to bear all things—to proclaim my innocence to the whole world, if it stood by to listen.”

“Do you remember the awful conclusion of the scene yesterday?”

“The condemnation!” said Catherine, with a majesty of look such as my father had never seen her or any other mortal being assume before. “I do; but it is not that which affrights my spirit. I am ready to seal the truth with my blood; and the words which I shall speak at the last hour will be believed, will they not, Monsieur Chaudon? Surely the dying accents of innocence will be recorded amongst the living, for methinks my spirit could not rest in other and happier realms, were yesterday’s error unrepaired.”

“Perish you shall not!” said my father, with emphasis, as he gazed on her inspired countenance, lighted up with the expression of high, unflinching resolve.

“I thank you from my heart,” she replied, with a sad smile, as she slightly glanced at his card, which she still mechanically retained in her hand; “but I cannot avail myself of your generous kindness. I may not fly without bringing danger on others—disgrace on myself. No! Let Father Girard and his friends do their worst by me, and may my untimely fate be a warning to others.”

“Nay, I do not speak of flight,” said my father, gravely, “nor will I yet seek to combat your enthusiastic notion of self-sacrifice. I will content myself with offering you the means of rehabilitating yourself in the eyes of the world, and of obtaining, perchance, a more equitable verdict, if justice be left in the land. But, Catherine, before I venture the appeal, I wish I were convinced that your strength would carry you well through your second trial. Another relapse were a fearful contingency, and would involve even the honour of your defenders.”

Catherine seized eagerly upon the thought. “I am more grateful than mere words can tell,”

said she, “ that I may yet be afforded an opportunity of vindicating my character. You cannot possibly imagine the pang of knowing oneself judged guilty, whilst the consciousness of innocence is at one’s heart. It is an awful thing for a woman to stand arraigned before a court—to gaze in the frowning countenances of men whose hearts are steeled against her by opinions formed beforehand or rooted prejudice—to steal a timid glance at the crowd of fellow-creatures ready to smile her back to life, or to turn away in cold disgust, and fling its portals too against her, at a word, a beck of those dark men who cannot read her heart or fathom the hidden truth. On a chance—a word—her name, her life depends. Innocent or guilty, presumption, prejudice, or private passions and interests are against her. When I heard my sentence read, Monsieur Chaudon, and saw the cold eye, the steady lip of him who delivered it, and remembered I had never done wrong to any being on earth, and yet that my fellow creatures found me worthless to remain in this poor world of ours beside them, I could not

help thinking human justice an awful responsibility !”

A slight shudder thrilled visibly through poor Catherine’s frame as she spoke the last words, and she fixed her eyes on the gloomy wall of her dungeon, as if carried back by the vividness of her reminiscences beyond their narrow limits, to the impressive scene whose effect on herself she had described.

My father, too, grew thoughtful, for he remembered but too many cases where human justice had been warped by human passion, and though he had not yet witnessed the judiciary murder of the family, Calas, who, although accused of the most heinous offences, expiated on the wheel no worse crime than that of adhering to the Protestant faith,—yet sufficient instances were on record of trials in which power had bought over justice, or compelled it ; and the recollection made him tremble for Catherine.

“Do not look so downcast, my friend,” she said, rousing herself from her reverie with a smile so sweet that he could have wept to see

it. "We are all in the Lord's hand, and should bow our heads meekly to his dispensations."

My father's philosophy was put to shame by this calm resignation, whose source was so much higher and purer than that to which he sometimes applied for comfort ; and he left the prison with such an increase of admiration and pity for his client, and of fervour for her cause, as to make it in the fullest sense of the word his own.

Weeks elapsed, during which little was changed in the general aspect of affairs. The cause was removed from Toulon to the Parliament of Aix, and Catherine transported from a bad prison to a worse—from harsh to cruel gaolers—from among the people in the midst of whom she had grown like a violet beneath its sheltering leaves, to a city where she was little known except by reputation,—where Father Girard had been a ruling star for above ten years, and where the Jesuits had a flourishing establishment. But she endured all these additional hardships with a serenity and fortitude which, though it failed to touch the hearts of her tormentors, inspired them with involuntary

respect; and she bore up miraculously under the soul-wearying delays which law always imposes as a *cortège d'étiquette* to its majesty.

Father Nicholas continued deep in theological studies, successfully whiling away time and anxiety, whilst the brothers Cadières were both ill-treated and tormented with harrowing cares, which my father made it his constant task to alleviate by an assumption of more hope than he was, in reality, sanguine enough to entertain.

Madame Cadières' restless misery preyed on her spirits in a manner greatly to enfeeble her health. Her daughter's final condemnation was the sword of Damocles, which, waking or sleeping, she ever saw suspended over her head.

Afflicted on her friend's account, anxious on my father's, distressed at the prospect of her own happiness being involved, perhaps wrecked, in this unfortunate business, Mademoiselle Raymond's letters were constrained in spite of her efforts to make them otherwise, for she continued unwilling to dwell on her real sentiments and forebodings, and yet was too candid to veil them altogether. Her lover, on his part, had

no time to indulge in long or frequent effusions. He had to strain every nerve to the difficult task before him. The Jesuits were moving heaven and earth to get Father Girard out of his difficulties, whilst not only France, but the whole of Europe, swayed by diverse religions, moral and philosophical opinions, breathlessly awaited the issue.

My father's spirits were always invigorated by his visits to Catherine, for however much his feelings might be roused by the indignities he saw heaped upon her,—however deeply he might feel for the privations she was compelled to endure, still the cheerfulness which she exhibited under these trying circumstances, and her confidence in him and herself, ever inspired him with an assurance and hope which, when left to himself, did not always visit his bosom. She never complained, and seemed reconciled to everything; neither damp nor foul air faded the rosy tints of her cheek, nor dimmed the lustre of her eye. On the contrary, they grew brighter with every day.

One morning, however, he turned away from

the grey massive pile which enclosed her with an elation of spirits, a renovation of hope, such as he had not experienced since the signal failure at Toulon. He frequently, almost mechanically, thrust his hand within his vest, and felt for something evidently deposited there, for each time he unconsciously smiled. Catherine had remitted a treasure to his keeping, which Providence itself seemed to have accorded them, so great was its import at that moment, and so unforeseen the trove.

In a box containing a few articles of immediate necessity, which Madame Cadières had recently sent her daughter, and which had not been touched since Catherine's return from Ollioules, she had found one of those letters so cunningly abstracted by Father Girard, and which would, doubtless, have been given up with the rest had it not chanced to have lain, unknown to herself, in another place than that wherein she was in the habit of depositing them.

This epistle was sufficiently conclusive to prove at least the seduction, and the ardent

flame with which his unfortunate client had inspired Father Girard. It was, also, in other respects corroborative enough of all that had been advanced to make it a document of the utmost importance. If Catherine had by her spoken words implicated herself so deeply, in what light must a written admission of guilt, signed and dated—and that, too, under no compulsion whatever—place the other party? Was not this the most triumphant of all arguments against Catherine's insane recantation?

Great as was the trust my father placed in this paper, he did not fail to communicate its contents to those who were in any way interested, in order that, in case of untoward accidents, he might avail himself of their testimony at the trial, which was now expected very shortly to take place.

It was on the eve of that trial when my father thought fit to see in what mood he should find Catherine. He had, it is true, left her as resolved as ever in the morning; but, taught by the unlucky occurrence that had already proved well nigh so fatal, he trembled lest he should

discover the symptoms of wavering, in which case he determined to give a different colour to his pleading from that he had settled upon.

“How glad I am you are come,” said she; “I have but just received this letter, and am much agitated by its contents. There—read it yourself; I know not what to make of it.”

My father took up with surprise a paper hastily scrawled over with characters, whose indistinctness did not prevent him from immediately recognising as the handwriting of Father Girard. He approached the dimly burning light and began to decipher the hieroglyphics with an absorbing interest. He could scarcely credit his senses as he read the following lines:—

“I cannot face you to-morrow, Catherine, without having, for the first, probably for the last time, exonerated myself in your eyes of what will appear to you the most cruel and inexplicable part of my conduct. What must *you* have thought—you, whom I had already so deeply aggrieved—when you beheld me suing for your death and denying the truth in *your* presence. You must, indeed, have believed that the fury

of hatred had taken possession of my breast. Alas! I almost wish it were so; but I cannot allow you to remain in that belief, or to misunderstand my motives of action, when remorse, the bitterest regret, shame, and contrition are the feelings that torture me. Had I uncontrolled power over my own destiny, I should not for a moment hesitate, but at once, by pleading guilty to the accusations wherewith I am charged, save you and, by my self-sacrifice, perhaps atone in your remembrance and that of the world for my crimes. But my shame would recoil on the order to which I belong—my avowals commit, my dishonourable end disgrace it. My principles allow me to deny or admit what I please, and as I please. Care for the weal of my order is the first of my duties, and to that alone do I sacrifice you, Catherine; to an obligation that binds my very soul. This is why you will see me to-morrow—poor wretch that I am, torn all through life by contending passions, now swayed by one and now by another—resisting, denying the truth, whilst it tortures my heart. Remember then, Catherine,

whatever the issue of this fearful struggle, that it is not against you, not for myself that I stand up, but for *them*—that all my wishes, my sympathies, alas! my guilty weakness, are still enlisted on your side, and yet I must—nay, more—I *will* listen to your *condemnation*. Hate me—despise me for the past as much as you may, you cannot do so more than I do myself, but still for what is to come, believe me, I have no choice.”

The paper dropped from my father’s fingers.

“Can this be real?” he exclaimed. “And yet it seems his hand.”

“It is,” said Catherine. “I have but too much cause to know it well; it is signed too.”

My father, again taking up the letter, carefully reperused it; and this time he scanned carefully the Jesuit’s signature.

“This is a most perplexing affair,” he at last said. “Either Father Girard has become mad with remorse and fear, or this is some device of the enemy, whose clue it will be next to impossible to sift.”

“I leave it to you to decide on these points,”

said Catherine. "As for me, nothing shall make me turn away from the truth. I am happy to think that Father Girard has enough of Christianity about him to feel repentance; but I do not see how such a conviction can influence me."

My father was delighted to find her so perfectly rational, and soon took his leave, more astonished at the chance that had put so all-important a confession into his hands, and more puzzled as to the use he should make of it, than he had been about any one link of this portentous affair.

But the next morning solved all his difficulties in a somewhat curious fashion. He had, on his return home, carefully deposited the document in a secret drawer of his writing-desk; and on opening it, the paper was indeed still there, but beyond a dirty yellowish appearance, it exhibited not the slightest trace of ever having been sullied by pen and ink.

Vainly did my father expose its surface to the rays of the sun, the flame of a lamp, and employ all the known means of bringing out

the sympathetic ink, with which he was now aware the letter had been written. During the many hours of night, the characters had faded beyond recovery; and he saw all further attempt would only be time lost. "Well," thought he, "honesty and fair dealing are on our side, and we may yet prove a match for them, though cunning be on theirs. I had better not mention the circumstance at all, having not even the shadow of a proof to adduce—it looks too preposterous." And he discarded the incident from his mind as futile, at a moment when other and graver thoughts oppressed it.

Early on the following morning, active preparations were made for the trial. I will not dwell on its circumstances, for they too closely resembled those which I have already detailed. The mob without—the crowd within—the Jesuits' dark figures gliding through both with boding looks: everything wore about the same appearance as on the former occasion. The twenty-five judges alone exhibited a striking contrast. Instead of the heavy brows and

anxious looks observable in the court at Toulon, theirs were indicative of the liveliest interest; and their manner, though partaking of the usual gravity which may be termed the etiquette of the court, had nothing inordinately severe to either party. My father saw, at a glance, that he stood before a more impartial bench, and felt proportionately relieved.

Catherine displayed even more of that mixed dignity, composure, and yet sweet modesty, which had before so prepossessed all beholders. Father Girard, on the contrary, behaved with a weakness utterly discreditable. He wept almost incessantly, and broke down at every answer; and when his own miserable doublings and shiftings were brought home to him, his only reply consisted of tears and groans. His counsel seemed more than once heartily ashamed of his client; whilst my father, secretly congratulating himself on having dealt so sparingly with his resources in the first struggle, triumphed in the consciousness of increasing eloquence. Monsieur Thorame had very little that was new or interesting to advance; the

only fresh argument, indeed, at his call was based on the egregious absurdity of asserting that a glass of water could have influenced Mademoiselle Cadières' recantation. He owned he could understand that a draught might be drugged with such ingredients as might produce death, madness, or imbecility, an exaggeration, or a suspension of the intellectual faculties, but was at a loss to imagine what compound could guide them at the will and pleasure of the compounder. This, he contended, was a story fitter to adorn a tale-book, than to be submitted to the examination of men whose sagacity and talents stood too high in the estimation of the public to be thus tested by child's play. On this theme, Monsieur Thorame descanted at great length, making the most of his advantage, as his adversary had done before, with regard to the recovered epistle. My father felt this to be his weak point, despite his own inmost convictions. It was not at that time in his power to adduce the singular fact—since so often averred, and firmly maintained by the professors of mag-

netism—that great power can be infused into any liquid, by the mere contact of the open palm, for the space of a few minutes, with the vessel that contains it, and the breathing gently on the surface of the fluid for about the same time. The more ardent practitioners go so far as to state, that they can, by this simple, and seemingly most inadequate means, produce the effect of any medicament they may be in need of, without being necessitated to apply to the apothecaries. And though the system seems odd enough at a first glance, and is repugnant to our preconceived ideas, which we are inclined almost, in every case, to decorate with the name of reason, still this memorable lawsuit tends to prove that these assertions, so extravagant in appearance, rest on a more solid basis than at a cursory observation may seem probable. Throughout its heroine's sad history, every single hypothesis of Mesmerism is brought forward and attested, and that at a period when Mesmerism was not classed among the known sciences, though evidently slowly creeping into existence; for what reflective mind will not be

led to suspect some no very dissimilar agency at work in the singular affair of the "*Convulsionnaires*," which, though the miracles of the Abbé Paris's tomb were limited to the capital where that monument stood, created so much scandal but a few months later throughout the whole of France.

I repeat it, the knowledge of magnetism—and with it, as usual in the state of infancy of any science, its abuse—was gradually creeping upon the world. Still swathed in mystery, the cause slowly revealing itself by the effects, it remained for Mesmer, bolder than the rest, to define what he saw, and impress that definition with his name.

But my father had not the resource of appealing to his or subsequent works on this subject; and was, therefore, compelled to avail himself of those more antiquated records of the same truth, described under a different denomination, by which he was, likewise, obliged to profit; and the plea he brought forward was at that time more calculated to find an echo in the minds of his auditors, than would now-

a-days assuredly animal magnetism, were it made the groundwork of an accusation; at least, I think so.

Of course, he kept a vigilant eye on Catherine, that no further attempt might be made upon her susceptible nerves; and Father Girard more than once shrank from his watchful glance. The trial lasted even longer than the preceding one; for the judges, more impartial than those of Toulon, were anxious to possess themselves thoroughly of the state of the case, before venturing to commit themselves by a sentence, the importance and consequences of which they fully estimated.

The part imposed upon them was, indeed, of a somewhat embarrassing nature. Should they punish so dark, treacherous, and systematic a villany as it deserved, the bold deed might not be unaccompanied by disagreeable results to those who dared it. On the other hand, with what face could men and Christians condemn to a martyr's death a poor young creature, who stood arraigned for her misfortunes rather than her crimes? Humanity and shame alike for-

bade so dastardly an act. What would the annals of their country—nay, their contemporaries—say to so vile a truckling to power, so glaring an abuse of it? A middle course only could conciliate all difficulties, shield their honour, and ease their consciences, without exposing them to the full wrath and fury of party spirit. That middle course was singular enough in its results; for Catherine was declared *innocent*, and Father Girard *not guilty*. A very contradictory verdict, you will say, on the face of it; but it was, after all, the very thing most ardently desired by Catherine, and certainly relieved the parliament from much difficulty. Indeed, when fully explained, it seems more rational than one would at first sight be inclined to suppose; for after a protracted sitting, on the last day twelve of the judges declared Father Girard guilty of Quietism, or heresy, seduction, and sorcery, and adjudged him to be burnt alive; nine declared his guilt not adequately proved, and voted his discharge; the three remaining found him guilty of the charges, but did not think them deserving of

capital punishment, and therefore agreed with the nine preceding. The laws of France having provided, in cases where there exists a just balance of voices for and against a criminal, that mercy should weigh in his favour, Father Girard was merely sentenced to be delivered up to his superiors, and left to their justice.

This decision, drily, almost severely delivered by the president of the chamber, amounted to a moral declaration of the prisoner's guilt; but at the same time manifestly betrayed their extreme unwillingness to award its punishment. As to the charge of conspiracy brought against Father Nicholas and the Brothers Cadières, it was at once thrown out *una voce*; and Catherine, although declared innocent, was nevertheless condemned to pay the costs, having drawn upon herself these proceedings by her recantation at Toulon.

As the president concluded, he directed on Catherine a glance of benevolent compassion, that caused her eyes for a moment to fill with tears, the first that had glistened in them throughout this protracted trial. The pearly

drops rested on her long lashes, until she felt her mother's arms thrown about her, and her fervent whisper—"God be praised, you are safe!" reached her ear. Then the tears fell fast down her flushed cheeks. But, presently disengaging herself from the close embrace of her fond parent and the congratulations of her friends, she turned hastily to my father, and put forth her hand to him, with a look that spoke more eloquently her thanks than could have done those words which she sought, but which would not come to the relief of her overcharged feelings.

The throng sympathized most warmly with her. Flowers and wreaths were showered on her from fair and aristocratic hands; the young girls especially, in every class, vied with each other in testifying a feminine and sisterly interest.

My father did not remain to share the happiness of the domestic circle, of which he was now considered the dearest member, but flew to Marseilles to claim the prize that there awaited him. He was, indeed, impatient to

attend to his own happiness, now that his soul was relieved from the harrowing fears and anxieties that had for months oppressed it. The mere sensation of such a relief was bliss—to share it with those who had suffered with him was a duty; and to make them participate in the first exultation of his triumph was to increase his happiness tenfold. He knew, it is true, that his place would be missed quite as much in the reunion of that family whose every member had for months lived and hoped but through him, nor was he so free from self-love as not to feel a pleasurable emotion in the society of those who looked up to him as to a demigod; but in the little circle to which he was sacrificing the Cadières, warmer interests and still more powerful affections bound him. Nor was he unwilling to make Catherine and her mother feel that, with their necessity for his support, their claim on his time and intimacy must diminish likewise; for he saw more clearly than, perhaps, the former would have cared to allow, even to herself, how to her their familiar daily intercourse had become a part,

and that the dearest part, of her existence, and how lively were her regrets for the irretrievable past. He knew of what sophistry the human heart is capable, to deceive itself; and deeming it possible that unbidden, unsuspected hopes might spring up if not checked in the bud, he was determined to break the charm of habit as soon as might be.

On the same evening that restored to Madame Cadières her three children, my father was folded in the embrace of his own fond parents and gentle sister; and his *fiancée*, half blushing, gratified not a little by his impatience to hurry to her side, was compelled at last by his earnest entreaties to fix an early period for their union. He had soon, however, to return to Toulon on matters still connected with the recent affair; and, by the merest chance, arriving on the very day when Catherine returned with her family to her native town, he witnessed the triumphal entrance which her fellow-citizens had prepared for her. For many miles, indeed, the people had congregated by thousands to greet her, and proclaim the triumph of her innocence

with that wild enthusiasm which is so characteristic of our southern population, by whom everything is felt for the time being with intense ardour, and expressed accordingly. Men, women, and children, of all ranks, crowded on her passage, and vied with each other in testifying their delight at seeing her safe amongst them, and their satisfaction that the Jesuits could not pervert altogether the justice of the country. Flowers were strewn on her path—she passed beneath many a verdant arch bearing her cipher—the bells pealed, and the shouts of the people rang loud and far as she entered her native city. From the windows streamed all sorts of festive decorations—her own house was blocked up with the throng that had assembled before it. There were but very few dwellings that remained cold and dark on this day of public and national rejoicing; that the college of the Jesuits was of the number was but natural.

Catherine was unaffectedly elated at this public testimony of the esteem in which she was held, and of the sympathy of her towns-

men for her unhappy fate. For some weeks she seemed almost restored to happiness and forgetfulness of all that had gone before, and her health rapidly improved under the fostering care of her mother.

The first visit of Eleonore, upon her return to Toulon as my father's wife, was paid to Catherine, whom she found fully prepared to meet her as Madame Chaudon,—happy, as she said, to see the two persons whom she esteemed most on earth, and had most cause to love, united. There was not a shadow on her fair brow as she spoke, and if, perchance, a slight pang shot through her heart, no mortal eye could detect it.

“I, too, am about to become a bride,” said she, with a calm, sweet smile; then, as she saw her friend's look of amazement, she added, with a deep blush—“the bride of Heaven. Having already performed the better part of my noviciate at St. Clare's, and having every reason to revere the lady abbess of that convent—to love its kind sisters—I shall shortly take the veil there, when, though dead to the world—

indeed, how could I ever again belong to it?— I hope not to be lost to you, my earliest, my best friend. I should not have selected an order of this sort from choice. I would rather have been a *Beguine* in Flanders, or a *Sœur Hospitaliere* in Rome ; but, as it is, no choice is left me, even if my impaired health allowed of those benevolent exertions which I once contemplated as the only useful mode of dedicating my life to God. Great was my ambition, as you know, to have become a minister of his charities in this world ; but it may not be. All I ever dreamed of has been dissolved, like a dream, into nothing. But it is useless for me to dwell on this, and cloud, for a single instant, your fulness of joy with a thought of my sorrows. The only reminiscence of my mundane existence which I shall think fit to retain beneath the nun's robe, will be that of your generous, unfailing, much-tried affection. You still loved me, when others might have spurned. Your husband, too, has been to me——well, there is no use in dwelling on such topics. I have but thanks to offer for all you have both

done and endured for my sake, and even those thanks I have not the eloquence to express as I could wish. But I can pray for you both, and ever will. You know, Eleonore, how the generosity of your husband has enabled me to take my little fortune almost entire to the convent. I did not attempt to make him accept the remuneration he refused, because I was glad not to go portionless to my new home, and because I consider Monsieur Chaudon in the light of a brother."

"Jules is one to you in affection," said the young bride, deeply moved by the tone and manner of her friend.

They talked *almost* with the confidence and tenderness of former times,—still there was a reserve on either party that had crept so gradually and imperceptibly into their feelings as to make it apparent to neither.

Eleonore could not gaze on the surrounding objects—for they were sitting at the marble table in the parlour of the little villa outside the town—or on the lovely creature before her, to whom fast improving health had restored

beauty, without a painful recollection of the first time she met her husband, and how little his thoughts had then turned towards her. Such reflections must, she conceived, haunt Catherine's mind, and she was woman enough to find that disagreeable. She was, therefore, not sorry when, upon rising to take leave, Catherine, detaining her by a gentle grasp, said—

“Do not be offended, dear Eleonore, nor misunderstand me, when I beg that neither you nor your husband may seek to see me before my retirement from the world. The little time I have yet to spend at home must be wholly devoted to my mother.”

Her wishes were strictly complied with; her friends did not again see her until the day on the morning of which she took the veil, when they with difficulty obtained places in the overcrowded chapel.

The ceremony, under existing circumstances, was fraught with peculiar sadness to reflective minds. Catherine possessed everything which in this world is thought equal to ensure happi-

ness ; it smiled once upon her like an opening Eden, but the serpent came across her path and fascinated her unto destruction.

An expression of sublime resignation illumined her features, and made her look truly angelic. Her eye often rested on the young couple whom she then saw together for the first time ; but the thoughts that caused those glances who might unravel ?

The only trace of worldliness visible about her was when the long, rich, golden tresses were ruthlessly detached from her head. She cast a lingering look at the glittering mass at her feet, then smiled—that smile was her last. Adieu to all earthly vanities ! From that time forth my mother,—for you surely have guessed, by this time, that Mademoiselle Raymond became my respected, beloved parent,—visited sister *Marie des Douleurs* once every year, introducing at each visit a little stranger, whom the recluse would fondly bless.

I, the youngest of fifteen, remember her but slightly ; for her shattered nerves never fully recovered their tone, and, having never ceased

to be more or less of an invalid, she did not live to see us all launched into life. But a faint recollection of her haunts me yet, even at this remote period—so concealed beneath her veil, you could scarcely trace the graceful oval of her pale countenance behind its folds—her slight figure rendered more emaciated by the close, black garb of her order, whilst her features, preserving to the last an unrivalled delicacy, when a chance movement revealed them, wore an expression so strangely in accordance with her name, that the thought involuntarily rose to the mind that she, and she alone, must have inspired it. There was the seal of exquisite sorrow set upon her brow—a resigned, a gentle, but never-fading sorrow; no trace of tears existed in her eyes, but it was pain to meet their mournful gaze, or to watch the smile that rested on her small mouth; no tears could have spoken a tale of woe with so much eloquence—so sweet, but so sad! Never saw I a human being that looked more stricken. Poor Sister Marie!

I remember well an observation she once

made before me, which, young as I then was, struck me very much from the tone and air with which it was spoken. My mother had brought a young girl with her, who wished to become a novice at St. Clare's on account of some disappointment in love which she had taken to heart.

"A nun's cell is not the place wherein to fly from thought, my child," she said, in the soft, plaintive tones that were one of her peculiarities. "Here it is ever awake, and grows with what it feeds on. It is in the active pursuits and shifting scenes of the world that one learns to forget. If you are not compelled to the step, never take the veil; it is but courting protracted, never-dying regret."

I have no means of ascertaining how far such sentiments are applicable to a monastic life in general; but these words are a sufficient proof, that poor Catherine lamented the course which her misfortunes had necessitated her to adopt, and that she found neither peace nor happiness in the cloister.

Father Girard was, according to his sentence,

returned to his order; he shortly afterwards was said to have left Toulon for Dôle, his native place, and two years later was reported to have closed, in that obscure retreat, a life that but for his errors had never been recorded.

It may, however, be permitted to doubt how far this common-place termination to a very uncommon scandal was natural to a society whom he had so deeply offended—whose laws he had broken—whose treasury he had exhausted—whose credit he had impaired—of whose temple of pride he had been a falling pillar—and whose principles were by no means at variance with the vindictive feelings which such an occurrence might be expected to call forth, and may, therefore, be inferred to have been merely a blind thrown out by the Jesuits to veil from the curious eyes of the uninitiated the severer forms of their own justice. Indeed, it was the opinion of many, that Father Girard's guilt had been as fully atoned for behind the secret, silent walls of his convent, as it might have been had the severest bolt of the law been hurled at him. That is, however,

a mere matter of conjecture, for it had been idle to seek any trace of the truth even had such surmises been correct.

As to the domestic felicity of my parents, no shadow that I know of ever crossed it; they lived to a great age, surrounded by a thriving, prosperous, and affectionate family. When I was a young man, and the heroine of this story had long been dead, my parents spoke freely of the circumstances preceding their marriage before me; and later, when I began to dive into the mysteries of magnetism, my father, who was deeply versed in them, and wished me not to dabble in such pursuits beyond mere speculation, related to me all the facts connected with his first love, and his first brilliant success at the bar which founded his celebrity.

To me, as to him, the leading features of this case from beginning to end appeared to coincide fully with the accidents of Mesmerism. Those trances during which Mademoiselle Cadières was insensible to all exterior sensations whatsoever, even to being cut or wounded, whilst at the same time she was visited by wild and

fantastic visions ; her subsequent state of clairvoyance, when she sought to predict futurity, or read the unspoken thoughts, and, as it would appear, in many instances with singular success ; her lassitude and exhaustion, whenever she was not supported by factitious and febrile excitement ; her subsequent fits or convulsions, during which, as was averred by numerous witnesses, she spoke clearly through firmly closed lips ; the manner in which, also, by breathing on the brow, and repeatedly making the signs of the cross over her—a practice, as you will please to observe, not very dissimilar from those of actual magnetism—the charm was broken that bound a young and lovely girl to an old, disgusting, decrepit monk ; and, above all, the magical influence of the fatal glass of water, every circumstance, even that of the decisive vision that called her to Father Girard, are completely in the due course of Mesmerism.

Starting from the fact of her being from childhood upwards afflicted with natural somnambulism, thus predisposed to magnetic slumber, and by her constitutional delicacy laid

open to every attack on the nerves, how easy for a man like Father Girard to practise upon her the dangerous skill which he had, doubtless, long before acquired by a close study of the old occult philosophers and mediciners.

As has already been seen in the course of the narrative, my father had no doubt but that primarily the Jesuit used this powerful agency merely as a means of exalting and guiding the human susceptibilities, in such a manner as to confer honour upon himself and his order ; but that his unbridled licentiousness, in spite of his better reason, led him away from his original design. Such a supposition is, however, but speculative.

It is easy, in many instances, to trace the numerous miracles and saintships that agitated France about that period to the same cause, shewing, as I presume to think, that Father Girard was by no means the first monk who had made himself master of this mystery, though, perhaps, few ever adapted it to such vile ends.

But where unfair means are put into the

hands of weak erring mortals, who can vouch for the purposes to which they may be applied? The moral of my tale is, therefore, that though I most firmly believe in the existence of such an agency as Mesmerism, and even think it might, in some cases, be turned to a good account, it is my conviction that it would for the most part be made an abuse and a nuisance of; perhaps, even, as I have shewn, admit of crime to which, unhappily, there are but too many inlets into the world without human ingenuity seeking to add to them.

Yes, I know that such a science exists; but I am of opinion that no government should allow it to be in any way practised within its boundaries; that no conscientious person should meddle with it, and that no prudent one should expose himself, or any member of his family to its influence; and that, as a thing more likely to lead to evil than to good, it should be just sufficiently accredited to put people on their guard against it, but certainly not made the object of particular research or inquiry; its

eventual utility to mankind not being sufficiently established to make it worth the student's while.

* * * This singular trial is recorded in "Pittaval's *Causes Célèbres*," together with one precisely of the same nature, and almost similar circumstances, but of an anterior date, that of Father Gauffredy, who perished at the stake.

THE STUDENT'S STORY.

THE OLD MAN OF HAARLEM.

THE
OLD MAN OF HAARLEM.

IN the year 1440, Haarlem was already a flourishing city; and on the opposite bank of the Sparr, which now divides the town into nearly equal parts, there appeared even then many houses of stone, whose more solid masonry, greater pretension to architectural elegance, together with the armorial bearings above the door, denoted them the dwellings of the wealthy and the noble. Yet here and there still remained some small wooden tenements, where resided persons of the poorer class.

In one of the latter description—distin-

guished from the rest by being situated nearer the river's edge, so that the water almost laved its threshold—apparently tottering with age, half rotten from the damp, a species of green moss extending in fragmentary lines along its dank walls, dwelt a fisherman; a circumstance made evident by the boat filled with fishing tackle, that lay high and dry at the very door. That he was not thriving was obvious to the most superficial observer. The boat and nets were in a miserable state; the door of the cottage and its small shutters all but fell from their hinges; and the little garden lying behind the hut was but a patch of overgrown weeds. One single large willow in front extended its pale foliage sparingly around, its branches sweeping in the untrimmed luxuriance of nature, until their extremities tipped the water. The squalid appearance of the place was not diminished by a couple of long poles, placed on the side of the cottage nearest the water, as if to afford the dilapidated structure indispensable support.

The air of neglect and wretchedness thus exhibited formed a striking contrast to the neat-

ness and cheerful comfort that prevailed throughout the country, whose people have been long renowned for industry and cleanliness. But there were strong reasons for this exception. The fisherman was the infirm son of a poor old widow, who had, for a person of her class, known easy and even affluent circumstances. He was the youngest of a once numerous and happy family, of which he, too, had promised to become, one day, a useful member; but, the dread inundation of the year 1421, that rolled its waves over eighty flourishing villages, innumerable castles and places of strength, engulfing thousands in its deadly embrace, and sending as many to wander over the face of the country as houseless beggars, had spared of this family—Kluyn by name—but two individuals. The mother and her youngest born—a mere boy at the time—were absent on a visit further inland, when the convulsion of nature took place that extended the limits of the mighty Zuidersee, and created the lake of Haarlem.

We will not paint the horrors of the return—or rather the intended return of the poor woman

to that home which existed no more. Her despair was such that her surviving the catastrophe and retaining her reason would have been a cause for marvel, had there been any leisure to attend to individual sorrow in so general and overwhelming a calamity. But she was yet a mother—the mother of a helpless boy—and this thought gave her courage for the strong effort. She lingered long near the place of her former happiness, in the vain expectation, which thousands shared with her, that the sea would withdraw as suddenly as it had advanced. Her boy caught a complicated fever, caused by the damps and exhalations, from which the poor child recovered, indeed, but only to remain infirm for life.

Friendless and destitute, she now saw the impossibility of remaining any longer a burthen on the afflicted people around her—that she must leave the spot if she and her child would not perish with hunger. When they accordingly set forth, hand in hand, pale, thin, like two apparitions risen from the dead, none guessed the sublime resignation which guided

her first steps along the path of a hopeless wandering. She was one of those who had dwelt between Dort and Gertruidenberg; and, it was a weary road she had to traverse before she could reach Haarlem—weary, for the eye rested on naught but sights of distress, and the ear heard nothing but the groans of the wretched. When, at last, she came within sight of the thick wood, that then served the inhabitants as their chief source of amusement, she sat herself on one of the numerous stone benches interspersing the wood for the convenience of the walkers, and took out of a small basket a fresh loaf and some cold meat—bestowed upon her by the retainers of a noble house as she passed along—together with a few pieces of money, her only and last resource. After having with a sigh contemplated the scantiness of both supplies, she put the money into her bosom and began to divide the food into sparing portions—giving her child the largest—and returned the residue carefully into the basket, saying:—

“We must not squander carelessly the last

means we can make sure of, for God only knows when and how we may procure more !”

As she spoke, the twigs rustled gently behind them, and a figure, gliding from the underwood, approached with the timid hesitating step—the frightened eager look of a starved dog. It was the tall form of a man, bent apparently by age, although his physiognomy did not bespeak him much past seventy. A few grey hairs still lingered round his temples, though they had left the crown of his head totally bare. His small grey eyes glistened with a peculiar expression that denoted the miser, a notion which his sharp, meagre features, and shrivelled appearance, tended to confirm. His peaked nose and pointed chin almost met across his thin blue lips, and the corners of his mouth were lost in the hollow of his cheeks. His eyelashes were blanched, and so thinly sown as to have left his grey orbs inconveniently exposed, had it not been for the protection of the protruding bones above them, which boasted but two red streaks marking the place where the eye brows should have been. There was in the whole

man a general appearance of craft and cunning, mingled with a certain air of severity, which served to excite, at the very first glance, a feeling of mistrust and dislike towards him. The habiliments of this individual were so tattered and discoloured as to make it difficult to recognise their original hue and form; still, such as they were, they appeared to belong to a seafaring man.

“ Good woman,” began this strange figure—but at the very first sound of his voice, the widow Kluyn started from her seat, and, clasping her hands over her head, exclaimed, in tones of the greatest surprise — “ Good heavens! Lord Wonter the Rich!”

“ For the sake of the Virgin, woman, speak not that name—it lies buried, with many a fair and goodly treasure, beneath the sea of Haarlem. It must never be heard again—never—never.” He laughed wildly as he spoke. “ I am Wonter, the poor Wonter, the beggar! But,” he added, suddenly sinking the shrill tone in which he had spoken to a whining whisper, “ good woman, I am very hungry—I am a poor

man—I have lost my all; for the sake of Jesus, give me some bread.”

The woman pressed her hands to her heart, and held them there, as if to still its beatings; then raised her eyes to Heaven. “But he has asked it in thy name,” she murmured, “and may not be refused.” She put the portion she had destined for herself into his hand, and motioning him to sit down by her son, placed her basket beside him, saying—“my share may be too small.”

“And you, mother?” inquired the boy in surprise.

“Oh! I—I am no longer hungry,” she replied; and, folding her arms upon her breast, stood at a little distance, watching her small stock of provisions disappear before the keen appetite of the old man, the growth, as it seemed, of many a day’s fast. There was a slight contraction on her brow and round her mouth, as if a sudden pain shot across her heart.

“It is thy will,” she murmured, “that we should repay evil with good. Truly hast thou dealt vengeance with thine own hand. If yon

bad man be now poor—if the assertion be not one of his thousand falsehoods—then, indeed, has his punishment begun on this earth; and what evil could weigh down his hard heart, but that poverty to which he has reduced thousands!”

At last the meal of the stranger came to a close. He had not left a fragment of meat or bread, and the old woman, with a sigh, silently helped him from a horn flask filled with beer.

“Now, good woman, you who seem to know me,” said he, returning the horn, “tell me your name?”

“Kluyn,” said the woman, sternly, “I am the widow of Jan Kluyn, who bought the Steenhuis of you.”

“Ah! an excellent bargain that,” said the old man, with a twinkle of the eye, that seemed, however, rather the consequence of habit than of any peculiar feeling of exultation at the moment, for it was instantly changed to one of deprecatory humility. “I hope, good woman, you have no faith in all the calumnies that it has pleased the people to spread concerning me.”

“It matters not what I believe,” she replied, “nor what I know. It is sufficient that I did not mingle reproaches with the bread I gave, nor will I betray you to the incensed people, to whom your name is an abomination. What more would you have of me?”

“More—much more. Do not leave me, good woman, I beseech you—I dare not go on my road alone, nor beg my bread, for fear of being recognised and murdered; for, I know not why, the people hate me. Take me with you, I implore you, lest they find me out and slay me. Surely you would not abandon a helpless old man, who has lost everything, even his children!”

“Did you love them in life, that you mourn them in death?” inquired the old woman, sternly.

Wonter hung his head, and returned no answer.

“Come, Jan,” said the mother to her boy, who stood listening in silent wonderment to the foregoing dialogue.

“You are going,” said the stranger, with a

look of wild alarm. “You leave me to perish—you will have to answer for this one day—I call upon Heaven——”

“Blaspheme not !” said the widow, casting a fearful look around ; “I never yet knew one thrive on curses. The orphan, the widow, have cursed you, Wonter the Rich—Wonter the Bad. And what are you now ? a miserable outcast like ourselves ! But, such as you are, come and take your portion along with us. You are poor now, and may well share what charity may afford ; and pray God that those of whom we may demand bread, bear not in their bosoms such hearts as yours.”

The widow perhaps imagined, that after this reproof the old man would not follow. If so, she was mistaken ; he bore her rebuke like a chided child, and pressed hard upon her footsteps.

Many months elapsed, during which the old woman, her companion, and child, entirely subsisted on the alms of the charitable, which we are compelled to own did not afford them a very substantial existence. It was a luxury not

often enjoyed, when they were permitted to abide for a time by a cheerful kitchen fire. For the most part, their fare consisted of cold broken victuals, and they were compelled to seek their rest in miserable sheds and out-houses; for the objects claiming compassion were so numerous, that the most humanely disposed were obliged to restrict their benevolence towards individuals, that they might benefit the multitude—to give but little that they might give to all.

The once competent farmer's wife felt the change even more keenly than the Baron. Accustomed to all the decencies of life, and its gentle charities, this vagrant life contrasted painfully with all her habits; but the fallen lord had been so stunned by the shock of his reverse of fortune, that he barely retained enough consciousness of existence to seek to prolong it by every means in his power. He had, moreover, in his happier days, been characterized by a certain obduracy of mind, which had caused him to set at naught all principles of honour and rectitude. He had gloried in

overreaching those who were more honest and trusting than himself, and had dignified low cunning by calling it sagacity. This peculiarity did not abandon him, even in the half imbecile state into which he had fallen ; and it was remarkable how gleeful he would feel, when, by any pretended tale of moving distress, in which the power of his imagination would display itself to the uttermost, he received any pecuniary donation that he conceived due to his ingenious falsehoods. Such sum, however trifling, he would hug to his secret bosom, concealing it carefully from his benefactress, watchful not to betray his possession of it, even though she had not tasted food that day. If the gift were eatables, he would retire to some out-of-the-way corner, and devour them alone and unperceived.

During the first months of their singular association, more than once the widow thought Wonter's intellects would entirely desert him ; and after a time, he sank into a state from which it seemed improbable that anything would rouse him. It was not madness, nor was it altogether the imbecility of second

childhood; yet it partook of both. His recollection of the past was not, indeed, always fallacious as to details, and remained singularly tenacious of the leading events of his life, especially such as reverted to his ruling passion—the love of gold. But the energy and vigour he once possessed had completely departed from him, whether from the effect of age, or of a mean spirit suffering under adversity, it were difficult to decide. His selfishness was in no ways abated from what it had formerly been; but it had changed objects; and to secure or augment his small stock of personal comforts seemed now to be the aim, the mainspring, of all his actions. Though he mechanically obeyed the habit, long since acquired, of hoarding whatever he could lay hold of, yet the thought of retrieving past losses, or raising himself at least from his present abject condition, to all appearance, never once occurred to him. Far from wishing to vindicate his former station in the world, he dreaded nothing so much as the discovery of his real name and identity. And, sooth to say, he had reasons for this reserve.

Wonter, Baron of Oostersteen, wherever he had been known, was hated for his hardness of heart and griping disposition. Whosoever had come in contact with him, high or low, had suffered for it; and so great had been the dread he inspired, such the universal detestation in which he was held, that the name of Wonter the Rich, which he had long borne, had been exchanged for that of Wonter the Bad, or the Bad Lord of Oostersteen. His equals had withdrawn from him in contempt—his inferiors in dread. He had therefore nothing to hope from being recognised, but much to fear from the effects of some unforgiven offence. He had no kindred to claim, or rather, none who would not have beheld in him their bitterest enemy; the very mob would have triumphed in his fall. For this reason, he had not dared to approach the only property he had left in the world, a stately mansion in Haarlem, situated near the banks of the Spaar.

But the young Kluyn and his mother were not so disposed to content themselves with a life of idleness as the septuagenarian; and

though the lad was but young, weak in body, and sickly in health, he managed to earn his bread by performing odd jobs for the fishermen, until, finally, he so distinguished himself by his docility and good-will, that he obtained permanent employment among them. In his leisure hours, he and his mother occupied themselves in mending or making baskets and nets. In short, what with one little traffic or another, a great stock of industry and patience, without fortune having favoured them with any extraordinary turn, in a very few years young Kluyn was able to afford his mother the shelter of a tolerable roof, under which she might hope to close her days in peace. It is but fair to state, that during this time they had cared for all the wants of the old man, without once murmuring at the charge, or bidding him begone. If he continued to beg, it was rather in compliance with his own caprice than at any request of theirs, who indeed never touched or even saw a penny of his gainings, whatever they might be.

Chance, as well as predilection, had led Jan

to fix his home at Haarlem, in the very tenement we have described, where they had all three resided at the period our story opens, for upwards of twelve years. The old woman had by this time grown too infirm to increase in any way their stock. All she could do was to keep house, and that not without the help of a young maiden of thirteen, the fruit of her son's one year of marriage; for his wife had not survived the birth of her child. The task, therefore, of supporting the old lord of Oostersteen, his aged mother, and his helpless daughter, had entirely devolved upon poor Jan, who, unequal to great exertion, found it difficult enough to provide the bare necessities of life. His little daughter had her hands fully occupied in keeping the cottage tidy, and helping her grandmother in all the domestic arrangements. Thus, in spite of Jan's diligence, and his child's good-will, their dwelling looked, as we have described it, dilapidated and forlorn.

As to Oostersteen, no one expected the slightest aid from him; and accordingly, he was left to do very much as he pleased. The small

closet he slept in had but one window, looking out on the Spaar, and facing the very house he dared not claim, which having become, for lack of heirs, the property of the town, and being as yet undisposed of, was hermetically closed. This circumstance tending to awaken reminiscences of the past, made him naturally averse to his home; and, having been recognised by none in the town, he ventured by degrees to beg about the streets, according to his wont, without the least anxiety or embarrassment.

About this time a new idea took possession of his mind. His chief pleasure—if indeed what constituted his torment can be designated by such a name—consisted in sailing upon the recently created sea of Haarlem; and his whole soul seemed concentrated on such adventures. Now he would cast his nets like a fisherman, in the hope that some of his lost treasures might be thus recovered, glancing suspiciously at every boat that skimmed the lake, which, he believed, was either seeking or taking away a fragment of his wealth; then he would throw

himself backwards in despair, in the stern sheets, as the thought flashed upon his mind that nothing could remain of all he had once possessed—that the waves had yielded everything up to the indefatigable exertions of the poor fishermen, who would not have failed to make this spot the object of their search; and again he would delude himself with the idea that he and he alone could ever discover them.

But vain his fears, and vain his labours! The waters yielded up their prey to no mortal desires. His hoarded gold, bought with so many a sin—his towers of strength—his broad lands—all that he felt conscious of having once possessed—lay parted from him but by a few feet of water—yet irretrievably lost! He fancied he might, by a mere plunge of his hand, tear up his own banner from the turret on which it waved; and yet, for all his jewels and gold—the riches that lay beneath that flag—he was a beggar!—he, the lord of four castles, all of which stood deep below the keel of the boat that bore him—he, whose name was yet a proverb in the mouths of all,—a pensioner on the

charity of a poor fisherman! Often and often did the people yet speak of the fabulous riches of Wouter the Bad; and tears would involuntarily spring to the eyes of the old man, as the thought flashed upon him that they were now to him but as the shadows of a dream.

Sometimes, in spite of himself, he could not help talking of his former prosperity, and the people would smile as they listened to what they conceived to be the ravings of a distempered fancy. His passionate desire to recover his treasures grew more rooted every day, until the remembrance of them became the fever of his brain, and seemed to burn it.

This feeling waxed so strong, increased to such a pitch, that he could neither enjoy his proper rest nor food, that the people—from whom, as well as from her family, the widow Kluyt had concealed the real name and circumstances of her strange inmate, and who only knew him by the appellation of *the old man*—frequently added the epithet, mad. During the many long years he spent in Haarlem, no other denomination was given him; and he was well satisfied to abide by it.

On a raw, gusty, autumnal evening, the family was reunited round their cheerless hearth, listening to the mournful wailing of the wind without, that now rose into a threatening blast, and then died away in repining moans, like an accusing, injured spirit, that could not rest. The loud hissing of the Spaar, as it rolled tumultuously by—the occasional sounds of the bells ringing from neighbouring churches, wafted in feebler, more melancholy accents than usual across the troubled air,—all tended to make the comfortless hovel still more desolate.

“It is a fearful night!” said the child, creeping up closer to her father, and putting his rough hand upon her head, as if it could shield her from the storm without.

“Holy Virgin!” exclaimed the old woman, “I never hear the wind howl in that manner but I bethink me of the eve of St. Elizabeth. Ah! when my husband and children listened to the growing storm, little did they guess, as they closed their doors and shutters against it, as we have done this night—little did they guess the fearful eve would have no morrow! They perhaps named me—perhaps thought of

me—my brave sons!—my pretty daughters!—all grown up, too—my poor husband!—and to think that I have survived them all so long—that my heart has not broken! It always seems to me, on such nights as this, that their voices are borne past my window. Sancta Maria! what a night!”

“And hark! father,” said the little girl, in trembling accents, “how the Spaar dashes furiously along. Wont it enter our house, and wash us all away? And see how the walls tremble! If they were to fall and crush us!”

“The child is right,” murmured Kluyn, thoughtfully. “I’d better go and see if there’s danger.”

“Nay; what you hear,” said his mother, “is the step of the old man in his closet. On nights like this he cannot sleep—and no wonder. He has that to think of that prevents the eyes from closing.”

“Oh! grandmother, you promised,” said the child, “to tell us all about him; if you would do so now, I would forget the storm.”

Jan’s hand, which was on the latch of the

door, was arrested by these words; and the most intense curiosity was depicted in his weather-beaten countenance.

“My child, I have said it,” answered the grandmother. “Should I survive him, you will know the secret of his mysterious existence; but if I go to my grave before him, his secret dies with me.”

Jan Kluyn, without uttering a word, left the hut; for though past thirty, he was as submissive to his mother as an infant; and the little girl hung her head, and listened to her father’s retreating footsteps. Another step was soon heard on the creaking stairs—a cautious, stealthy step; then an inner door opened, and the old man made his appearance.

“I can’t sleep,” he said, as he came in, and sat himself down on a low stool between the females.

“No doubt—no doubt,” said the widow. “It is a night to make one think of one’s end, and repent of one’s sins.”

“No—I was not thinking of that,” answered the old man. “I have been hanging out one of little Dortje’s aprons from my casement, to

see which way the wind blows. It is seaward—seaward—think of that!” and he rubbed his hands with glee.

“What if it be?” said the widow.

“What if it be! Don’t you see, that if a storm rises, equal in strength to that of St. Elizabeth’s Eve, blowing towards instead of from the sea, all the waves which cover my castles may be driven back; and then, you know, we’ll come into our own again.”

“And if such a thing were to happen, would it restore the lost—the dead?” asked the widow, severely.

“The dead!” he mechanically repeated. “Yes—the dead! They never can claim anything. There is that rich chalice that the monks of St. Alexis have pledged to me; they never can claim it; they are all at the bottom of the sea. But, alas! the chalice, too, is buried in the lake of Haarlem, and so are the rich pearls of the Countess of Namur. I caught her rarely! She pawned them for a trifle; but she knew not to whom to apply, that the transaction might remain a secret to her husband.

It was as much as her life was worth, she said, if he should discover it. And, later, when she would have reclaimed the jewels, I took care she should never have speech of me but in her lord's presence. Ah—ah—ah! she dared not, for her life, claim her own again. Ah—ah—ah! was not that shrewdly done? But woe's me!" he continued, the transient gleam of satisfaction fading almost instantaneously from his features, and giving way to one of extreme wretchedness—"Woe's me! they lie at the bottom of my iron chest, in the wall on the right hand of my bed. Woe's me! I shall never behold those glorious pearls again!"

"Instead of bewailing the objects of your sinful desires, should you not rather lament the means by which you obtained them?"

"Nay, they were all good bargains," said the old man. "If people did not understand what they were about, sure it was no fault of mine. If I had more sagacity—more foresight than others, it was a gift of nature, of which I had a right to profit."

"Alas! what is human wisdom, or human

foresight, that we should pride ourselves on them!—God alone can see into the future,” said the widow, crossing herself devoutly. “You foresaw many things, but could you, with all your sagacity, predict that the waters would cover your own high towers?”

“I might, I ought to have known it—that was my folly!” said the old man, striking his head violently with his hands. “I should have deduced that knowledge from the same circumstance that made me foresee the inundations in the North; but who could believe the waters would have extended so far!”

Kluyn reappeared at that moment.

“The house shakes fearfully!” he said, “but I think there is no danger; the props stand fast, nor will the Spaar overleap its banks to-night. Though the waters are violently agitated, they have not risen an inch.”

“Ah! but I will tell you,” said the old man; “the Sea of Haarlem has fallen at least the breadth of my hand since it first appeared—I have measured it year after year myself, on different points along the margin.”

“ Foolish man !” said the widow. “ And if it should every fifteen years sink by so much, do you expect to live to see it dried up ?”

The old man looked confused.

“ If I were you,” said Kluyn, laughing, “ I would seek a bladder large enough to put myself in, get at the bottom, and take out all the fine things you are always talking about.”

“ Oh that I could !” exclaimed Wonter, with an almost youthful energy—“ I have thought of it by day and by night, so that I could neither take food nor rest. But I can devise no feasible plan — none — none whatever.” He leant his elbows on the table, and extending his hands, buried his face within them.

A long pause ensued, which no one in the cabin felt inclined to break, and the howlings of the wind were alone heard.

“ It is in vain,” he continued, starting wildly from his languid posture. “ If I could recover my iron chest, it would not restore my four fair castles, my villages, my vassals. I am a wretched—a ruined old man ! But,” he added, turning to Jan Kluyn, “ if you can recover that

chest for me, half of its contents shall be yours. I will cover this table with gold. Where this wretched hut of wood now stands shall rise a palace of stone. Little Dortje's neck shall be covered with pearls of price and precious stones; she may then, like the fisherman's daughter in the old ballad, marry the king's son. Think of that, fisherman—think of that!"

"And if your treasures were in this hut, my curse would light on him if he dared to touch but one stiver of them!" said the widow, in a deep emphatic tone, which agreed well with her austere, withered features, on which a keen, preying sorrow had left deeper furrows than the flight of time.

"You need have no care," said Jan, again laughing—and that feeble sound of merriment rang discordant through the desolate-looking dwelling. "Could I this moment deliver into his hands all and more than ever he called his own, whatever that may have been, he would not give me out of it so much as would suffice to purchase a new net."

"That's true!" cried the little girl, with a

sudden burst of anger. "This spring, when you lay so ill of the fever, and granny knew not where to find money to pay the apothecary, who would not trust us with the physic, I once went to the old man in his room, in the middle of the night. I knew he was not asleep, for I heard him walking up and down overhead, and I went partly to beg him to be quiet, for it annoyed you, and partly to ask to be taken the next day to beg with him. He did not perceive me as I entered, and he had on the table before him a heap of money."

"My poor alms," said the old man, impatiently—"the few pennies I have found so hard to collect together. Wicked child, to mention them, when you promised me to be silent!"

"But I will not be silent!" replied the child, indignantly. "When I saw the money, I entreated him for the smallest part of it—only so much as would buy the physic that might save my father's life. He said no—not to save the whole world. Again, when we wanted bread but a short time ago, he refused to give me a few stivers, and that with hard words, threatening to beat me if I asked any more."

“And is this the man,” exclaimed Jan Kluytn, a fierce expression lighting up his attenuated features, which, in spite of the joint evils of poverty and ill health was not familiar to his countenance—“is this the man to tend whose old age—to warm and clothe whose old limbs I have toiled for years—to satisfy whose hunger my mother and my child have lessened their share! A wretch, who cares not whether I famish or die on straw like a masterless cur! And he would beat my child, would he? but,” he added, with increasing violence, striking the table as he spoke, “it shall not be under this roof—he shall remain here no longer!”

The rage of the storm without was silenced for a moment by this sudden outbreak of human passion.

“Forbear, my son!” said his mother, with her usual severity of tone and aspect—“respect his white hair, and bethink you that he is our guest!”

“And who invited him?” insisted Jan, whose anger, once fairly roused, was not so easily assuaged. “Who invited him?—not I!”

“It was I who invited him,” continued the

widow, in the same cold, assured manner; “and at my bidding he shall stay!”

“But he shall go at mine!” cried young Kluyn, with ungovernable fury in eye and voice—“he shall, by the Virgin! I will no longer rise earlier and work harder than other folk, to shelter and feed an ungrateful——”

“Hold!” exclaimed his mother, in an authoritative tone, displaying, as she rose and drew herself up to her full height, the dignity of nature in look and mien. “Dismiss him from the shelter of this roof, and you drive me forth with him—together we will quit this inhospitable hearth, nor will my blessing rest on the head of a disobedient son!”

Her solemn tones and implied threat, the deep respect for her authority which progressive years had by no means impaired in Jan’s simple and manly bosom, reduced him at once to his usual state of passive obedience. He slunk back into his chair, muttering, as his wrath died away,—

“Who and what is he to us, that we should

thus bear all things from him? What good turn has he ever done us?"

"I will tell you," said the widow, impressively, "for what reason we should cherish him as though he were one of us. Because it is easy to love our friends, and no merit; but to love our enemies is a hard task to learn. We are told it is God's will that we return good for evil. He has done us wrong—the greatest wrong man ever did to man—therefore, and for the love of Him who commanded it, shall we administer to his wants even until the latest hour."

The old man, during the foregoing discussion, looked, frightened and abashed, from one disputant to the other; then fixed his eyes imploringly on the widow as she advocated his cause. When she quietly resumed her seat, like one assured of victory, he again breathed freely and glanced triumphantly at little Dortje, who, however, had so thoroughly fixed her attention on her grandmother, whose every word appeared to enter her very soul, that for some time his regards were wholly thrown away; but when the widow had ceased speaking, she rose,

and, coming up to the old man, said, as she stretched forth her little hand,—

“I forgive you, then, and will pray again for you, which I have not done since you treated me so harshly.”

“Pray that I may find my treasures, Dortje.”

“But if you had them,” said the child, “you are so old you could not keep them long—the people are always wondering that you are yet alive, and ask me when we mean to bury you.”

“I cannot die—I will not die away from them!” answered the miser, impatiently.

For some time Jan’s ill temper continued to vent itself in muttered grumblings, then all became unbroken silence in the hut. The tempest, too, gradually softened, and finally died away in the patterings of a heavy incessant rain, and lulled nature appeared no longer likely to disturb the repose of night.

Though all four retired to their appointed places of rest, it was rather to court that blessing than to experience its actual enjoyment; for the roughness of the weather had reawakened in the bosom of two, at least, in that lonely cot,

reminiscences which banished sleep. The widow spent the remainder of the night in prayer; and the old man continued to walk restlessly about in his den, absorbed in those passionate regrets and wild desires which time, instead of softening, seemed to heighten into madness.

At break of day every trace of the storm had passed away, and nature looked as bright and smiling as if no convulsion had ever ruffled its calm expanse. The widow and her son resumed their ordinary work, and the old man proceeded unquestioned, as usual, to betake himself, it was supposed, to his accustomed rounds. He did not, however, on this occasion, place himself, according to his wont, in the principal streets or squares, or at the doors of churches, to implore the charity of the passers by—a change had come over him, which none were sufficiently interested in him to observe, except the boys about the streets, who remarked one to another, as he went along,—“How proud our old man seems to-day; he struts as if he would not dirty his hands with copper.”

In sooth, Wonter bore himself as he had not

done since the eve of St. Elizabeth. The load of twenty years was apparently removed from his shoulders. His step was feeble no longer, nor his person bent—there was not on his shrivelled features the humble, fawning aspect, which, for the long series of years he had spent in Haarlem, had characterized them. The old man had assumed an air of triumph, which did not conceal nor mitigate an expression of harshness, that seemed also to have revived from the ashes of the past.

On the threshold of one of the houses stood a young girl, who had frequently proved herself his benefactress, and who had never seen him without bestowing upon him some token of recognition. As he walked by, she stretched forth her hand, with a smile, to bestow the customary grant of hard coppers, which the old man generally received with a childish joy, but he shook his head scornfully, saying—

“Keep them for yourself, my pretty lass; you are more likely to need them than I.”

“Indeed!” said the young girl, laughing. “And what sudden prosperity makes you so disdainful?”

“I am coming into my own again,” he answered, with a somewhat wild smile, “and then, you know, who so rich in all Haarlem as I?” And he passed on with a light step for one of his years.

“Poor deluded being!” thought the young girl. “A beggar in rags—and yet the owner of wealth! But, may it not, after all, be happiness to imagine oneself possessed of that which one most longs for?”

After wandering some time, as it appeared, without object, Wouter betook himself to follow the windings of the Spaar, and soon stood opposite to his own house, before which he stopped, and gazed intently upon the grey walls. It was the first time he had done so since his return to Haarlem in his character of a beggar.

“I will claim this, too,” he said, as he leaned on his staff, “for who dare gainsay a rich man? Besides—it is so many years ago, the people must have forgotten all about it!”

A passenger, struck by the earnestness of the old man’s gaze, arrested his steps, and turned his eyes in the same direction, in order to ascertain what so attracted the attention of the beggar;

but seeing nothing to justify it, he addressed him.

“Are you of Haarlem, my good man?” Wouter shook his head impatiently, angry at being interrupted in his reverie.

“Because, if you are, you must know the history of him to whom this mansion once belonged—mayhap you have seen or even known him, and you are standing here to vent a curse against the walls, for there are few of your age who have not some in store against the Lord of Oostersteen.”

“Ay, this house belonged to Lord Wouter the Rich,” said the old man.

“Wouter the Bad!” answered the stranger.

“It matters not whether he was good or bad; he was rich!” querulously retorted the old man; “very rich! and that is, after all, the only thing important. Rich!” he repeated, with increasing energy. “Is not all that life has of joy contained within that word? And for twenty years I have been a *beggar*!”

“The sick man,” said the stranger, “knows no other desire but health; but, beggar as you are, you would not have exchanged condition

with Lord Wonter some twenty years ago, when, had he put his foot within this town, it is a chance if the mob had not torn him limb from limb."

"It matters not—and, though but for one day, I will be rich!" exclaimed the old man.

"If the wish could be father to the fact, so would many," said the stranger, laughing.

"I will"—continued Wonter, muttering to himself—"I will!" and he resumed his course in the direction of the lake.

To the storm of the preceding night had succeeded a calm, serene day, such as is often enjoyed in the vicinity of the sea; a clear sun, cheering without warming, permitted the fresh breeze to invigorate the limbs and the heart. The tints pervading the horizon and the meadows, harmonized by an universal pearly hue, imparted to the landscape that tranquil character so peculiar to the country.

The sea of Haarlem, however, retained, from the bad weather of the preceding eve, an unusual agitation—a circumstance deemed favourable to the fishing; it was accordingly studded with boats, which, gliding past each other in

every direction, and stationary long in none, seemed like so many water-birds skimming the water after a gale. In one of these light crafts the old man soon took his place. He did not, as on former occasions, ask or obtain this as a favour on the part of the fishermen. On the contrary, he beckoned the nearest boatmen to the shore with an imperative air, and demanded how much they would take to put themselves at his disposal for the day. They first replied only by a laugh of derision; but when he actually shewed them gold, and spoke as one not only willing but able to pay, they changed their tone;—perhaps the air of command natural to him, but which for years he had not exhibited, convinced them, even more than his words, of his claim on their compliance. They placed themselves at his disposal accordingly, not, however, without insisting on receiving the sum stipulated in advance.

“There,” said he, throwing his purse into the boat, “I will double it on our return.”

The men were inclined to think their old customer crazy,—an opinion which would long

since have prevailed in the country had it not been for the glimpses of shrewdness he sometimes displayed ; but on the present occasion there was so much of self-possession and assurance in his manner, that they discarded the thought at once. The various gyrations, indeed, which he commanded, would have appeared strange enough to persons in whose minds the catastrophe of St. Elizabeth's eve had not been so fresh as it was in those of the fishermen ; but they well knew how many persons in their vicinity—especially among the old—had actually escaped its immediate horrors, to suffer through life under its consequences. Among sufferers of this class the old man had long been ranked ; it was therefore with pity, at first, and then with increasing interest, that they observed him endeavouring to retrace the haunts of former days over the broad surface of the waters.

It soon became evident that such was the purpose on which the old man was bent. Now throwing an inquiring look across the horizon, and scanning the four points of the

heavens—then suffering his glance to wander over the shore, he seemed desirous of fixing upon some marks whereby he might guide himself—and again, leaning over the boat's side, his eye anxiously questioned the depth of the waves, as if to discover the mysteries that lay beneath them.

His efforts, however, did not seem likely to be crowned with any success. Scarcely had he urged the boatmen forward in one direction, when he bade them put back in another. His perplexity grew with every instant, and hour after hour passed away in this fruitless manner. In vain did he scan the sky and the water. With every fresh disappointment his eagerness increased—his cheek, ashy with age, became tinged with the crimson spot of feverish excitement—his eyes brightened, and his whole person betrayed the impetus of the soul within.

“Nay, good man,” said one of the fishermen, persuasively; “you see it will not do—the waters give not back what they have once swallowed up. Come, let us put to shore.”

“No, no!” exclaimed Wonter. “It is true

what the child said; I cannot live to enjoy them long—but it matters not. If it were but for one day—one single hour—if I recover them but for one instant, I were content to die the next !”

“It is useless, good man,” persisted the former speaker. “Be what you seek ever so valuable, it is past all recovery.”

“But, I tell you, I *will* recover it !” answered the old man, querulously. “There—listen—we are touching on the very ground !”

The boatmen lay on their oars. A faint sound reached their ears that seemed to come from the bottom of the lake; but whether it was the rippling of an under current, or the tingling of bells—as popular tradition asserts—it is not our province to decide. The superstitious credulity of that time was more willing to accept the latter supposition, and the old man did not even hesitate between them.

“That’s the bell of my own castle !” he exclaimed, rapturously. “I am sure of it !—I recognise its tones ! Now it comes clearer on the ear ! Rest on your oars, my men; if we

succeed you shall have gold—if we fail, the dungeon shall be your portion! Ha, ha!” he laughed, wildly, “it is mine!”

The men looked at each other in amazement as they listened to his broken exclamations. His air was so commanding, there was such an impress of truth upon his brow, that they no longer doubted the real rank of the man whom they had up to this day considered only as a beggar. In those days the feeling of servitude was as much the natural instinct of the lower classes as revolt against all authority is at present; and the lowly fishermen looked up to the ill-clad, miserable lord with awe, although the little dignity yet lingering around him was but a shadow of the past. Wouter stooped over the boat's side until his silvery hair almost touched the water.

“I see my tower!” he said. “Its blue-pointed roof pierces through the water! My flag still rises above its summit—see how the tide waves it to and fro!”

“It is but some torn weeds hanging by a log of wood floating by,” whispered one of the

men, though not in so low a tone but it was overheard by Lord Wonter.

“And the bell!” said he, raising himself up indignantly. “Hear ye not the toll of my castle bell?”

“He is right”—said the man—“there it comes distinct enough, though God wot who rings the peal.”

“It sounds like a knell,” said another; “it is awful to listen to. Holy Virgin, speed us! I wish we were safely off this spot!”

The desire found an echo in the breasts of all except the old man, whose delusion increased with every moment.

“It is fearful to look on him—he is quite wild!” muttered one of the men, crossing himself. “If I get safely home to-night, I’ll lay a taper on St. Elizabeth’s shrine no later than the morrow.”

“There—there!—I knew I should find my castle—my treasures!” shouted the old man with ecstasy, throwing his arms triumphantly about his tall, spare form, whilst the few thin hairs he still retained were blown back from his fore-

head by the fresh wind. The feebleness of age supported by the intensity of passion, beheld at that moment in the person of the beggar lord—the visible struggle between the perishable and the imperishable—was indeed awful to behold.

“I now plainly see the battlements”—he exclaimed—“they are deserted! Ha! I knew it would be so, but I will soon man them again. My turret, too, there it is!—my daughter’s windows—my son’s chamber—they are empty! Pshaw!—but mine—ah! there, I see my own casements—the chest, too, is there yet—I see it—yes—but who has dared to uncloset the niche within the wall?—that’s strange!”

“Give way, my men!” said the man at the helm, in low and quivering accents. “For the Virgin’s sake give way, or harm will come of it! He’ll rouse the spirits of the dead!”

“He is mad—stark mad!” muttered another with suppressed anger, as he dipped his oar.

“Stir not, I charge you!” screamed Wonter, shaking his fist at them with impotent rage. “Stir not, I command you! Know, that the

poor old man of Haarlem—the despised—the beggar—is no other than the Lord of Oostersteen !”

“Jesu Maria !” said the helmsman, falling on his knees. “We are on a haunted spot, and the spirit of the bad Lord Wonter is among us !”

“Lord Wonter the Rich—the Rich—do you hear ?—vassals !—slaves ! Ha ! I am a beggar no longer, and you are at my mercy—within my castle gates ! But you are moving off ! My chest—my castle—my gold—my treasures—no ! you shall not again escape me !”

As he spoke, with outstretched arms and straining eyes, he leaped into the waves. They closed upon him with a gurgling sound, which, to the terrified mariners appeared that of a distant chime, growing fainter and fainter as their sinewy arms urged forward their light craft.

When the strange end of the old man became known in the town, enriched with all the embellishments the teeming fancy of the mariners could lend it, and at the same time his real charac-

ter was revealed, the circumstance revived the memory of his faults and history ; and the widow Kluy'n's narrative was not the only one where-with, after so many years of deprivation, Jan and Dortje sated their curiosity.

For a time, indeed, nothing else was spoken of, among high and low, but the retributive justice which had lighted on the head of one, who, after having made gold the idol to which he had sacrificed every human feeling, had thus fallen a victim to the very sin he had cherished, —whose days had been lengthened beyond the ordinary span that he might drain to the last drop the cup of bitterness.

As no heirs remained to claim his house, it was sold ; and the magistrates, struck with the generous conduct of the family Kluy'n towards its late proprietor, gave the money paid for it to the widow and her son, which enabled the former to spend her few remaining days in comfort, and assured the fate of her family.

Among the many laborious monks who took the trouble of recording so minutely the prin-

cial transactions of their town and neighbourhood, it was impossible that the remarkable fate of Lord Wouter should escape mention; and to this circumstance we owe that we have it in our power to lay before our readers the following fragment.

Wouter the Rich.

THE castle of Terwick, where the Lord of Oostersteen usually dwelt, was situated at no great distance from the wood of Haarlem. It consisted, like most of the smaller edifices of that period, pretending to this style of architecture, of a square building, flanked by four towers, surrounded by a broad moat. Although denominated a fortress, it was tolerably insignificant as a place of defence; but, according to the limited views of the time with respect to comfort, it was a very eligible place of residence—more especially as the Lord Wouter was by no means inclined to the perils and glory of warfare. His patrimonial estates lay

between Dort and Gertruydenberg. Upon this territory, near the first mentioned place, stood proudly pre-eminent, the fair and strong castle of Oostersteen ; but, either in consequence of his possessing a mansion in Haarlem, where he often spent a few months, or, on account of having married a lady of that city, by which alliance he had acquired dominion over Terwick and its dependencies, he much preferred abiding in its vicinity.

There were, too, perhaps other motives for this predilection. His only daughter, by a former marriage, was entitled, in right of her mother, to no inconsiderable domains, and to a fine defensible castle, in that immediate neighbourhood ; whilst, at a very short distance from his own dwelling, rose the turrets of one whose person and property lay under his sole guardianship. Terwick formed thus a central position in the midst of the scattered objects of his solicitude.

Lord Wonter was the last of a house more distinguished for its wealth than for its prowess. Averse to deeds of arms from his youth, he

never had recourse to violent measures, except when it became necessary to cover some of the numerous acts of petty fraud or oppression which his peculiar disposition induced him frequently to commit. In those days, when might was right, he knew as well as most men how to apply that great lever to his own purposes ; and the ruling passion of his whole life, to whose gratification he applied all the resources of a shrewd and cunning mind, was avarice—that avarice which seeks to grasp, even more than to retain—the thoughtful calculating avarice which, when it once invades and takes possession of the human bosom, excludes thence every other thought and feeling.

His first marriage had been one of interest, nor had its fetters weighed long upon him ; and his daughter, left so early an heiress, had not proved, it was reported, an unprofitable ward. He had been influenced in his second choice by the same calculations—the lady was rich and an orphan—and so perfect was Wonter's management of all the affairs of life, especially with regard to property—so well did he understand

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how to lay out small sums on large securities, whether in lands or jewellery, and so successfully did he back his rights as a creditor by his power as a lord, that he soon trebled the wealth originally his own.

In the days of which we speak, the ordinary method of raising money consisted in engaging houses, lands, or moveables; and it was no unfrequent practice among the princes and lesser nobles, either to apply to the towns or clergy to obtain money by such pledges or deposits, or to pawn their jewels to each other. Such accommodations disgraced as little the creditor as the debtor—it was not considered more disreputable to lend or borrow money on such securities, than is a mortgage in our time.

It was also no unusual occurrence, when the clergy and the corporations of towns under any embarrassment, applied to the richer nobles for assistance under similar conditions; and Lord Wonter had, by such means, increased his property to a considerable amount.

By an arrangement of this nature, perfectly in accordance with the customs of the times,

the fiery young Lord Henry of Matenesse, desirous of raising a large body of lances to assist the Duke in his wars, had, in the headlong impetuosity of youth, pledged his castle and lands to the Lord of Oostersteen for a sum which he could never hope to redeem. On his return—a knight renowned for his prowess, but whose poverty was rendered more grievous by his having burthened himself with a portionless bride—he was glad enough to accept the proposal with which Lord Wonter greeted him—that, namely, of overlooking his claims for the moment—and, large as they were, this was a great concession—upon the sole condition that, should Henry de Matenesse predecease the Lord of Oostersteen, leaving no heirs of his body, he should name the latter as his successor, or, in case of male issue, at least appoint him guardian.

This proposal, proceeding from one considerably his senior, appeared so advantageous to the young lord, that it was unhesitatingly accepted. But matters were not to remain thus. Wonter, a few years later, contrived to fan into flame a

feud between Henry de Matenesse and one of his neighbours—the fiery youth flew to arms, and after a few severe conflicts, remained upon the field, leaving his helpless widow and son—the only offspring of their union—in a manner he had little anticipated, wholly in the hands of his perfidious creditor; thus, personal interest, as well as inclination, strongly bound the Lord of Oostersteen to the vicinity of Haarlem.

One of the four towers we have mentioned as flanking the castle of Terwick, contained the apartment of the Lady Aleyde Oostersteen—Wonter's second wife—in the solitary enjoyment of which she was seldom interrupted, either by the presence of her husband, or by that of any guest; for hospitality, the virtue of that rude age, and of all nations at an early stage of civilization, was not known to the Lord of the castle; nor was it probable that the soothing power of love, to whose sunny influence his youth had been a stranger, should melt the snows of age. Thus, she would have been condemned to complete solitude but for the com-

panionship of her daughter in law, and that of her maidens.

To this tower was attached a smaller turret which formed an inner recess, commanding an extensive view over the fertile plains beneath. Within this bower, on a calm summer evening of the year 1420, Aleyde and her friend Gertrude sat in confidential discourse, the maidens having descended to attend the evening meal, leaving them free leisure to disburthen their minds to each other.

The Lady Aleyde had the advantage of Gertrude in years but by very few summers, and was scarcely less beautiful, though her features were of a less commanding order. The eyes of both ladies wandered ever and anon wistfully over the verdant meadows, that extended far and wide, until they blended in the distance with the blue waters of the Zuydersee.

“If I did not know you are so good, dear Aleyde,” said the daughter of Oostersteen, “I should half suspect you of envying my approaching happiness.”

“Because I advise you to postpone it? You

would greatly wrong me there, Gertrude, but, I repeat, I mistrust your father's joyful consent to so disadvantageous a union—he who has refused your hand to so many good and rich knights.”

“And do you, too, value wealth and pomp above all else?”

“I, once in my life,” answered Aleyde, with a deep sigh, “valued them too highly, and I am not likely ever to fall into that error again.”

“I know it, my poor friend!” said Gertrude. “And it is warned by your example, that I am determined to act upon another principle.”

“But fall not into the contrary error,” said Aleyde. “Beware of extremes! the knight of your choice has not the qualities that could have inspired you with a real love. Beware, dear girl, lest the infatuation of a moment, and an ardent desire for change, conduct you to your ruin.”

“You speak, perhaps, from experience, madam,” replied Gertude, bitterly, for hers was a spirit impatient of control.

“Nay, Gertrude, for all the anger I may ex-

cite by speaking my mind freely, I am decided to give you my best advice on this matter; and it was for the purpose of so doing that I refused attending the evening meal, which, luckily, the absence of Lord Wonter has enabled us to escape without animadversion."

"But, I repeat, Madam," continued Gertrude, still offended, "as I suppose all you can say on this subject must be dictated by your experience ——"

"Well! be it so—I will not deny it," said Aleyde—"I will not deny that, when your father demanded my hand, I, scarcely escaped from the trammels of childhood, accepted it merely with the view of exchanging the dullness of my guardian's isolated castle in the marshes, for the pleasures Lord Wonter depicted in so tempting a form, and of which he promised me so large a share. I was to have been the queen of every tournament—to wander from court to court, and everywhere to meet with the most flattering reception as the wife of a rich and puissant baron—I was to go on distant pilgrimages, attended by a numerous and gay

retinue—in short, my dear, nothing was to have been too bright or too good for the bride of Oostersteen. But it all ended in the exchange of a dull prison for one more desolate, from whence there is no hope of release.”

“Granted,” said Gertrude, “yours was a sad mistake.”

“Say rather a cruel deception, Gertrude.”

“Well, perhaps; but here the case is very different. My intended bridegroom is both young and good-looking, truly devoted to me, and were he not so, my wealth alone would give me all due preponderance in my home: and if it be, indeed, as you say, for liberty and pleasure that I pine, and not for my lover, surely by this marriage I shall secure both. My wealth is sufficient to cover all the deficiencies of my husband in that respect, and moreover, I shall be free to do with it what I please.”

“Possibly so; and yet you may buy regret with it. You may, one day, blush for the insignificance of your choice in every respect,—rank, fortune, knightly accomplishments—for he is deficient in all. And you, forgive me for

hinting at the truth, are changeful in disposition, proud, fond of show, and value your own advantages but too highly. Do not look so dark and frowning at me, Gertrude—I do not wish to offend, but to warn. No one knows and can appreciate your good qualities so well as myself, though I am not blind to your faults.”

“I thank you for your candour,” said Gertrude, with a look anything but grateful; “but as I love both the knight and the prospect of liberty which this marriage affords me, and as he is, moreover, the only suitor my father will hear of, I will even try the venture.”

“I repeat it,” insisted Aleyde, shaking her head thoughtfully,—“I mistrust your father. His hasty consent to this marriage is, to me, an inexplicable mystery which, I am persuaded, must conceal some plan discreditable to himself, and disadvantageous to you.”

“That’s impossible,” said Gertrude. “What plan can he have?”

“I know not—I cannot sift it. His plans always lay too deep for my poor brain to unravel; but, taught by the experience of many a

painful year, I ever suspect him most in his fits of good-nature. If I were you, Gertrude, I would not marry this poor powerless knight, or, at least, would postpone the event until I could see clearer through my father's motives. For, say yourself, Gertrude, why should he suffer his daughter, an heiress, to marry a penniless obscure knight, when he refuses his son, in so harsh a manner, an alliance with a lady so unexceptionable, in every respect but fortune, as our friend, Marie de Matenesse." She pointed as she spoke to the dwelling of the young widow, which lay between them and the Zuydersee. Gertrude's eyes followed the same direction, and, for a few minutes, both remained lost in thought. At last Aleyde resumed the thread of the discourse.

"I have made it a rule, the prudence of which, young as I am, I have lived long enough to appreciate, ever to oppose the measures which your father recommends."

"Then how is it that you have consented to reside alone in my house at Haarlem? for you know, dear Aleyde, though equally at your service, it is mine, not his, to dispose of."

“First, it was not he who offered, but I who asked it of him,” replied the lady; “secondly, my dear child, I did not wish to live there alone, but with you; and if you will grant me the pleasure of your society, still do I desire it. Besides, to confess the whole truth, though I much doubt your father’s acquiescence to the plan of your removing with me to Haarlem, I could not resist this temptation of withdrawing myself entirely from his society. But reflect well on what I have said to you,—be wiser than myself in resisting the force of your own wishes, and, above all, guard against your father’s persuasions and deceitful promises.”

So deep did the advice of the Lady of Oostersteen sink into the mind of her step-daughter, that her affianced bridegroom, who entered the castle by chance during the absence of Lord Wonter, was imperatively put off for an indefinite space.

The estates of the Lord Wonter lay, as we have already stated, between Dort and Gertruydenberg, a fine flourishing country, which the number of dikes and other irrigations rendered unusually fruitful. Nowhere did the

meadows offer softer, more velvet-like pasture. Nowhere did the corn more luxuriate—each ear growing double the dimension of the ordinary produce. In none other of the provinces, rich and populated as they were, was there to be seen so many smiling villages with gaily painted huts, and tall steeples, scattered like summer flowers on the verdant plain; whilst here and there a well moated battlemented castle threw out its black mass in relief against the pale blue northern sky, by its gloomy aspect breaking in upon, though not destroying, the cheerfulness of the scene.

There was a breathing life along the whole district, which, like the hum of bees, never ceased from morning till night. The chimes of one village answered to that of another across the plain—the lowing of the cattle, the loud blast of a warder's horn, and the occasional glee of some boors returning from the fields, or the solemn chant proceeding from some near monastery, continually greeted the ear of the wanderer over this favoured ground. Property hereabouts was not to be had for love or

money; and there were none among those who possessed any parcel of it, however small, who could not boast wealth, according to their comparative situations. But no one had so large a share of these lands as the Lord of Oostersteen, and no castle was to be compared with his in strength or importance. He had, therefore, much to overlook in these parts, which necessitated his frequent and prolonged absences from home, and many wondered he had not selected the residence of his ancestors, instead of that which he had acquired by his alliance; but though the Baron was already advanced in life, he had lost none of the activity of his youth—the eye of the master was never wanting to the prosperity of his estate, large as it was, nor was its care ever entrusted to the vigilance of strangers.

The same autumnal evening on which we have described his ladies engaged in discussing his character and plans, found him occupied in surveying part of his property in the vicinity of Dort. He had dismounted, and leaving his attendants on the road, had entered one of his

meadows to examine the cattle browsing there. He was accompanied by the only one of his menials who possessed his confidence, or rather, so much of it as it was possible for one of his disposition to grant. He was the intelligent remorseless agent of his master's mean, and sometimes cruel schemes, bold and intrepid as a man at arms, a discreet and silent confidant—exactly, in short, the sort of tool of which Wonter knew the use.

The Baron slowly followed the course of one of the large dikes that enclosed his meadows, surveying, with a satisfied glance, the beasts whose heavy sides proclaimed the richness of their nurture, occasionally suffering his eye to wander over the neighbouring corn fields, whose golden produce was already ripe for the sickle. As he was thus employed, the man, who followed at due distance, and observed with exactness each movement of his master's eyes, perceived the Baron start suddenly, and look with strong interest into the ditch beneath. It seemed to him, at the same time, that a frog had leapt from the grass into the water, for he heard a splash

though he could not see the object which had caused it.

This circumstance, in itself so trifling, excited the curiosity of the man ; for he knew his master, whom nothing escaped, be it ever so minute, capable of deriving benefit from things in appearance the most unimportant. Wouter, indeed, bestowed more attention on the incident, whatever it might be, than the occasion appeared to justify. He looked long and wistfully into the water—then stooped low, and, taking some in the hollow of his hand, raised it to his lips. Apparently he was but half satisfied ; he shook his head, and tasted it again,—then, to the amazement of his companion, crouched down, and put his ear to the soft grass, as if listening to the gentle sound of the insects that lay concealed within its verdure. He remained long in this attitude—so long, indeed, that his attendant began to fear that some fit had prostrated him, and hesitated whether to run to his assistance or to call further aid ; but before he had made up his mind, his lord sprang to his feet with a look so thoughtful, and

a brow so contracted, that the favourite dared not hint at his surmise, nor comment, even by so much as a look of surprise, upon his late extraordinary movements. He had recourse, however, to his usual expedient for leading his master into conversation, one which hitherto had never failed him. As they were retracing their steps along the meadow, he at once entered upon this topic.

“It is a fair pasture land,” he said. “My lord may well admire every blade of grass that grows upon it. There is not such another to be seen throughout the whole of Holland—there’s many a one laments he can’t buy a rood of it with his hard gold.”

This encomium extracting no answer, he proceeded with unchecked volubility:—

“The Lords of Oostersteen had ever reason to value the domains which it was their happy lot to be born to; and lucky it is for the descendants of that illustrious house that each successive lord was as chary of it as his predecessor. When I think,” continued the man, with uplifted hands and eyes, “of the sums

which my lord has refused in my day, for very small portions of this same land!——”

“Have I though?” said the Baron suddenly, “the greater fool I!”

The attendant was struck dumb with amazement, nor did he again venture to break the silence that ensued until they reached the spot where the retinue and horses were waiting.

When Wouter had remounted, he rose in his stirrups, and cast a long, inquiring glance in the direction of the sea, and suffered his eye to sweep over the landscape, so as to embrace every object within the range of sight. He then bestowed on the ground near him a no less investigating examination. Still he did not seem satisfied, but continued this mute scrutiny for so long that it began to excite the curiosity, and awaken the alarm of his men. They, too, looked anxiously abroad to discover, if possible, what could justify their lord's abstraction; but their efforts were in vain. No glittering spears—no floating pennon appeared in the distance, announcing the approach of a knight, possibly of an enemy; for they knew their lord did not

lack such, though he very prudently kept out of their way—but peer out in what direction they would, there was nothing—absolutely nothing to be seen.

Wonter rode on a little in advance, then halted, and looked perplexed as before. He repeated this strange manœuvre several times, until at length, seized, it would appear, with a sudden thought, he struck his forehead with his ungauntleted hand, and exclaimed aloud: “I have it!” and, turning his horse’s head, rode furiously back on the very road up which, but a short time previous, he had been advancing.

“Urge the men, Jost,” he exclaimed, “I would reach St. Alexis betimes.”

“But, my lord, we have just left it!”

“What’s that to you?” answered Oostersteen sternly. “Obey my bidding, and ask no questions.”

Jost knew his master too well to draw his anger upon himself by insistence; and falling silently to the rear, retained his position until they had reached the gates of the convent.

Great was the amazement of the monks, and

small their pleasure, on witnessing this speedy and unlooked for return ; for Lord Wonter was seldom a desired guest anywhere, but least of all was his presence agreeable at the convent of St. Alexis ; which had, but that day, made itself his debtor to a considerable amount. The Abbot had, since his departure, betaken himself to his own apartments, to meditate in quiet upon the pressing and heavy embarrassments of the community, which had forced him to pawn the best part of its dependencies, upon the hardest conditions, to the grasping Lord of Oostersteen—he being the only one within his cognizance capable of affording immediate relief. Certainly, he thought, there was no chance of redeeming the pledges he had that day sanctioned on the part of the monastery, short of a miracle ; but its total impoverishment, its ruin, perhaps, could not take place for some years ; and, in all probability, he would be at rest with his predecessors before the final consummation of the evil. For his lifetime, at any rate, he had secured rest—but whilst the old man, alarmed at the magnitude of his conces-

sions, was soothing his mind with these reflections, he was most disagreeably aroused from his reverie by the intelligence of the Baron's return.

"Holy St. Alexis!" he exclaimed. "Our patron saint protect us! What can that bad man want of us? Well, I suppose I must see him—a sufficient penance for the worst sin I have committed for many a long year."

The words of welcome dropped slowly and coldly from the frightened Abbot's lips, as he re-entered the chamber where he had so recently bidden adieu to the Lord of Oostersteen.

"Nay," said the latter, "I am about as welcome as a white frost in May. All the brethren looked scared at the sight of me, as if I were a walking malefice—but it is because you know me not. You think me hard-hearted and griping, because I have been represented as such by some discontented boors or envious neighbours. But I assure you, good father, in harbouring such an opinion you do me great injustice."

“Indeed, my good lord,” replied the Abbot, somewhat pettishly, “what we think cannot be a matter of much importance to you; nor do I suppose you have taken the trouble of retracing your steps merely to discuss this point with us poor brothers of an impoverished community.”

“There again you do me wrong, good father,” answered Lord Wonter with a peculiarly disagreeable smile, which he meant to be conciliating. “It is for the purpose of justifying myself in your eyes, and of recovering your good opinion—which I value much more than you seem to imagine—that I have again sought your abode. The fact is, I overheard this morning, at my departure, some expressions which dropped from you, as it seemed, involuntarily, plainly intimating, that in your opinion, I had not acted the part of a true son of the church in the matter which passed between us. Is it not so, good father? I ask it in all humility.”

“I do not exactly remember what I said,” replied the Abbot, hesitating; for he began to

fear Wouter had returned for the express purpose of retracting his loan if possible. "I must, however, confess that for a loving son, I think you have dealt hardly with the church. But," added he, hastily, the bargain is made, and such as it is we are content to abide by it—so, methinks, you should be; and I cannot understand what more you have to say on the subject.

"Good Father, I have returned with the best intentions towards you; repulse me not, I beseech you, in your peevishness. Grant me but your patience for a short time, and you will see how much the world and you have wronged a man naturally *débonnaire*, and ready to make any concessions to the interests of others, which those of his own family will admit of. You insinuate that my conditions have been hard; I am willing to propose lighter ones. Your lands are, in sooth, much above in value the loan I have placed upon them. With this my conscience was forcibly struck as I rode along. I felt, indeed, that I was despoiling the church of its rights. Keep them, therefore, good

Father, and long may you and the brethren live to enjoy their produce. Instead of this valuable pledge, I shall be satisfied to receive what you at first proposed—the golden chalice, and the vases of the holy sacrament, the reliquary and tabernacle; in fact, the little treasures that decorate your church on occasions of high festivities. They are scarcely equal to ——”

“Nay, my Lord,” interrupted the Abbot, with brightening eyes and expanding brow; “they are equal in value to the sum you have lent us; and our chapel will miss them even more than the church lands and vassals. But, if the exchange can in any way oblige you ——”

“It is for your accommodation—not mine—that I offer these terms,” said Oostersteen, with habitual caution.

“Well,” said the Abbot, with a glow of rapture he could not suppress, “I will be fair with you, my lord. This proposal fills my bosom with delight and gratitude; for we retain enough of relics to make our church rich in sanctity,

if poor in gold. What matters it that the casket be gone, if the gem remain! he, he, he!" and the fat Abbot laughed heartily, rubbing his hands with glee; and Wonter, in echoing it, assumed the malicious grin of a monkey, rather than the smile of congratulation he meant to convey. "And we will trust," continued the Abbot, recovering his gravity, "to the piety of some good souls, to make up to us the losses our church will this day experience. If the sacred deposit were to remain unredeemed in your hands, you would still be a gainer to a considerable amount; but as you had it in your power to exact much more, and out of consideration for the sufferings of our community resigned your advantages, I will frankly confess I think the world has much wronged you. For my own part, I freely recant my opinion, and will offer up for your weal the prayers of the church in return for your kindness."

It was not till the next morning that Wonter departed from the convent, when, having sent on the previous night for a reinforcement of men-at-arms—for he dared not venture forth

laden with his treasures without insuring at once a strong escort and the light of the day—he made the best of his way towards Terwick. Here he remained only a few hours, during which he did not so much as see his family; but having rested himself, and concealed his precious deposit, he set out in another direction.

He now proceeded further inland towards Utrecht. He soon, however, diverged from the high road; and, approaching one of the smiling villages that lay embedded in trees at no great distance, and which he had often occasion to frequent, he stopped at the door of one of its wealthiest inhabitants—a small farmer, named Kluyn. The honour of his visit was acknowledged with a mixture of frank cordiality, and the respect due to his rank, without the slightest touch of that servility which the inferior classes generally observed towards their superiors.

“No, my good friends,” said Wonter, addressing himself, as it appeared, more to the wife than to the husband; for, in Holland, the

women were, for the most part, all-powerful in the government of their homes. "I have not called here to-day merely for a stirrup-cup; I wish to have some words with you on a matter of business. I am disposing of my lands between Dort and Gertruydenberg; and, knowing you to be both honest and industrious, have thought of you; for," he continued, after a moment's pause, "to deserving persons, I will let them go at the same price as other land."

"Indeed!" said Jan Kluyn, with a deep-drawn breath.

"And," continued Wonter, "you well know it would be no mean advantage to have them at any price."

Jan Kluyn looked into his wife's face, in order to ascertain her opinion of this proposal.

"We are comfortable where we are," said the woman, in rather a rough tone; for her manner was naturally ungracious. "Those only can gain by change who are badly off at home. If the Baron seeks to sell his lands, he will not lack buyers."

“True, my good woman,” said Oostersteen. “I can have no trouble in selling them, and at a high rate too, I promise you. There are some rich lords I wot of, who would be but too glad to possess them; but I chose rather to parcel them out to benefit the many.”

“I understand perfectly,” said the woman. “The lords would not pay ready money.”

“Wife, wife! what are you saying?” interrupted Jan Kluyn. “My lord has been very good to think of us; the ground is better than ours by a great deal; and if I can, for the price I sell mine for, have as much of his, we ought ever after to look up to the Lord of Oostersteen as our benefactor.”

A strange malicious smile passed over the bloodless lips of Wonter; and he did not leave the tidy farm-house, in whose visible comforts the prosperity of the family was revealed, until he had arranged the terms of the sale. Vainly did his confidential man attempt, more than once, with due deference, to hint at the impolicy of his proceedings. The old Lord, without even so much as noticing the remonstrance,

repeated this manœuvre, with more or less success, with all the rich farmers whose properties lay on his road. But still greater was the astonishment, almost dismay of Jost, when, on their return to Terwick, he was entrusted with the commission to sell as much of his master's remaining estate as he could parcel away among those who, though humble in station, might be considered able to afford instant payment; for that seemed the chief aim of the Lord of Oostersteen.

Success in this matter was not the work of a day, and the ensuing spring was fast ripening into summer before Jost had got rid of all the large possessions between Dort and Gertruydenberg. When this great affair was brought to a happy conclusion, chiefly owing to the desire of the citizens of Haarlem to become purchasers, Wonter found himself possessed of considerable sums in his iron chest, but without a rood of his once-extensive patrimonial estate to call his own. But this did not seem to disconcert him; nor was there much cause, for reasons that will appear in the course of this narrative.

On Oostersteen's return to Terwick, he was not a little surprised to find that his daughter had given up all thoughts of marriage—at least for the present—and that she had expressed a desire to accompany her mother-in-law to Haarlem. Lady Aleyde, who communicated this intelligence, beheld his brow contract with fury, which he did not even try to dissemble.

“And this is at your instigation,” he said. “You are passing bold, madam, to put yourself between a father and his daughter. How dared you to give advice unbidden?”

Aleyde grew pale, and it was not without effort that she was able to answer in a mild, deprecatory tone—

“I did not mean to offend my good lord, but surely it is early for us to part with our daughter. Is it a crime to wish to retain her longer by my side?”

“And what right have you to her society—is she your child?”

“The right of affection,” murmured the lady, growing more and more embarrassed.

“Nonsense!” said Wonter, scornfully. “Tell

me not of such follies. I know the world too well not to know what female friendships are worth—ay, and for that matter, friendships of any kind—so think not to deceive me, madam. You have some design in thwarting my intentions, which I will fathom ; but, depend upon it, it will be the worse for you.”

“I do not know,” replied Aleyde, “what you mean by talking of deception. It seems to me, if any one here has a right to complain of such a thing, it is not you. But I will not return unjust reproaches with recriminations.”

“You have none to make,” said Wonter ; “for tell me, is there a woman in Holland who can boast a richer lord than you?”

“As that does not make me the richest lady in the land,” answered Aleyde, with that readiness at retort which the gentlest of her sex will sometimes exhibit, “I do not see how that consciousness can contribute to my felicity.”

“Nay, I know you love nothing but pleasure”—said Wonter, scornfully—“senseless, idle pleasure, which is but the breath of a moment. I know your weakness, madam ; you need not

boast of it; but if you would not be for ever debarred, not only from the pleasures, but the liberty you value so highly,"—the lady stared with amazement, for she was not conscious of enjoying either,—“you will henceforth beware how you interfere with my daughter’s affairs, or any of my wishes. Now, send Lady Gertrude to me.”

It was in his own chamber that Wouter awaited his daughter, but not a trace of the anger for which Aleyde had prepared her was visible on his countenance when she entered. He was as composed as, and seemed more complaisant than ordinary.

“I read your astonishment in your eyes, my child,” he said, as he gazed fondly on her. “Lady Aleyde has, doubtless, threatened you with my indignation; but, my dear Gertrude, it is with her, not with you, that I am angry; and justly so, as you would see if it beseemed a father and a husband to dwell on the secret miseries of his union.”

“But, my lord,” said Gertrude, bluntly, “Aleyde seems to me an angel of gentleness and resignation.”

“Yes, so she seems,”—said Wonter, laying a strong stress on the word,—“so she seems; none know the truth but myself, and it is a secret that must go with me to my grave.” Here the Lord of Oostersteen drew himself up with the majesty of sorrow. “But believe me, my dear girl, the saddest hour of my life was that when, forgetful of your mother, I wedded a second time—I, an old man, with white hair, and my bride a young and giddy creature. Mine the fault, Gertrude—therefore it is but fair that mine should be the punishment.”

Gertrude listened with amazement, and with a look of incredulity that did not escape her father.

“Yes, my dear child,” he continued, “I repent my choice bitterly, and yet few men would judge their wives more leniently than I do mine. I make every allowance for the circumstance of my white hairs and her black locks having been brought into unnatural conjunction, but I cannot forgive her seeking to alienate from me my daughter’s confidence when most I need it.”

“Indeed, sir, you are mistaken,” said Gertrude, seeing that her father paused for an answer. “Never has Aleyde, to my knowledge, attempted aught that was not consistent with her duty to you.”

“Ay, there again, so it seems—but so it is not! Has she not dissuaded you from a marriage calculated to ensure our mutual happiness?”

“I do not really see—” said Gertrude, looking anxiously at her father at this preamble.

“No; but I will shew you,” continued Wonter, without giving his daughter time to argue the point—“I will shew you how my happiness is no less interested than yours in the union which I design for you—to which I could force, but would rather persuade. One word—one revelation will make this clear, and you will admit that the greatest tenderness could alone induce me to give you a similar explanation. Aleyde loves the knight I would have you marry. Possibly she imagines that at my death she will be able to satisfy, with the aid of my wealth, the desires of her heart; but this I am

determined shall never be ! Now you have my secret, Gertrude,—and hers. Keep them well ; and, as you value my affection, prepare to accept without murmur the suitor I have chosen for you.”

At these words, a new light broke in upon Gertrude—she had been betrayed by her mother-in-law ; and being by nature of a temper easily roused, and not possessing an over-shrewd judgment, she felt all the anger necessary to prompt her to a rash resolution. Had Lady Aleyde, she thought, openly avowed her weakness, though she must have blamed, she could have pitied and respected her feelings—she would not have submitted to become an instrument of revenge, even in her father’s hands, against one whom she had called her friend ; as it was, her indignation was awakened, and she gave a glad consent to an immediate union with her rejected lover, in order to punish that friend’s hypocrisy.

No sooner were the nuptial festivities over, than, leaving Gertrude mistress of the castle, Lady Aleyde withdrew to Haarlem, where her

daughter-in-law, disgusted at her imagined treachery, would not so much as visit her.

In the meantime, Floris, the Baron's only son, returned from an expedition undertaken at the desire of his sovereign, the ill-fated Jacqueline of Bavaria, Countess of Holland, in which he had reaped great honour, but small profit; a circumstance calculated to ensure him the cold reception, if not the censure of his sire. He was surprised to find his sister already married, and to a man whom he regarded much in the same light as his mother-in-law had done; and this extraordinary concession, as he conceived it, on the part of his father to the wishes of Gertrude, encouraged him to hope much on his own account; for his first thoughts were devoted to her whose image had filled up every moment of absence.

END OF VOL. II.

MAGIC AND MESMERISM

An Episode

OF

THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

AND OTHER TALES.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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THE
OLD MAN OF HAARLEM.

THE Castle of Matenesse was, as we have said, not far from that of Terwick; and this close proximity had, perhaps, originally served to fan the flame which the charms of its mistress were well calculated to kindle.

Marie de Matenesse was seated near the window of her turret chamber, with her boy reclining upon her knee; the rays of the evening sun fell full upon her countenance and that of the child, revealing a strong resemblance between them. She was one of those women from whom juvenility seems loth to depart;

and though her little Henry was nearly six years old, she possessed a purity of expression that approached nearer to the conception of the Virgin mother than is usually rendered, even by the most skilful artists. Her features, infantine in their delicacy, agreed well with the rich masses of dark-brown hair that floated around them—the paleness of her cheek spoke of thought and care; and in her deep blue eyes, intently fixed upon her boy's face, there was an expression of ardent but sorrowful love,—such as proceeds only from a mother's heart. She had remained absorbed, nearly in the same attitude, for more than an hour, when a firm tread was heard on the narrow, winding, stone stairs leading to her chamber. She started from her reverie, and listened with a mixture of surprise and pleasure to the long-missed, but well-recognised sound. A slight flush passed over her countenance, which faded almost as instantaneously, when the door opened, and Floris entered the apartment. The next in-

stant, her boy glided from her knee, and the delicate, fragile woman was clasped in the arms of the stalwart knight.

When the first effervescence of their feelings was calmed, Floris communicated his hopes that their union would no longer be deferred. Marie shook her head doubtingly. In vain did he plead the marriage of his sister with an obscure and penniless adventurer.

“He may have had secret reasons for furthering that match,” said she, “for which we are not able to account. Believe me, Floris, your father values nothing but money, and he will never suffer his heir to wed a dowerless widow. To speak the truth, I know not if I have acted rightly in encouraging your hopes—I who can offer you no portion, and but half a heart, in return for your glowing first love. It is not acting fairly towards you, nor, perhaps, towards my son, who, deprived of one parent, has the more need of the undivided affection of the remaining one.”

“You are wrong, Marie, in both inferences,” said the young knight, with warmth. “As for me, I am well assured of your love, and that mine is necessary to your happiness—at least, I trust—I believe so. You are a tender plant, Marie, and need support; but even were it not so, the interest of your child, which you have at heart, should prevail upon you to give him a father. How can you rear him yourself? how instruct him in the noble exercise of chivalry, such as beseems the son of one who, in the flower of manhood, died in his stirrups. Unassisted, you will make a mere drivelling monk of him, unable to assert his dignity or his rights.”

“The spirit of his father is likely to awake in him but too soon,” said Marie, checking a few drops that hung trembling on her long lashes.

“Suppose it does,” replied Floris. “Is it not, then, probable that he will grow up into a petty tyrant in the solitude of his castle, where there are none to control him? Besides, how can you protect yourself and him through the

many long years that must elapse before he is of age to wield a lance? It is true my father is bound to protect him, but you know he is old, and not much disposed to enter into feuds or quarrels with his neighbours."

"Would you protect my child against *him*?" demanded Marie, raising her eyes, fraught with meaning, to those of her lover.

"Against him!—against my father! Why that question Marie?" said the knight, somewhat severely. "Surely from him you have nothing to fear?"

Marie made no answer, but suffered her head to drop on her bosom, whilst a sigh she could not repress escaped her lips.

"Moreover," continued Floris, after a pause, during which he narrowly examined his companion's countenance, "if he should wish to interfere with your child more than you desire, though I might not to a certain degree oppose my father, yet it would be easy for us to avoid all such discussions, by a timely retreat from

these parts. My name will be a sufficient recommendation to our good duchess, and at her court, you may be quite confident, my father will never seek us."

"Could we—could we, indeed, get far away from him?" said the young mother, eagerly. "If I were sure of that——"

"You would accept me," said Floris, smiling. "But I assure you, Marie, I have long considered myself as plighted to you, and in spite of your, no doubt, very wise objections, shall still continue your true knight."

Marie answered by a gentle smile; and when Floris had left her, she fell into a deep train of thought, from which she was only roused by the caresses of her boy, who claimed the evening song with which she was wont to amuse him before sleep closed his young eyelids.

"He already makes me forget thee, my poor Henry!" she said, as she covered the child with kisses. "Alas, alas! what ought I to do? But fate will spare me the pain of deciding, for

Floris, all loyalty and honour, little knows what his father's heart can encompass !”

Floris had soon an opportunity of ascertaining the correctness of Marie's forebodings. It was dark when he reached home, and his father had retired to his own chamber, where he loved not to be disturbed ; but so eager was Floris to prove to his own satisfaction the groundlessness of Marie's fears, that he ventured to demand an audience, which, somewhat to his surprise, was instantly granted. Before, however, he had time to expound the object of his visit, Wonter addressed him, in a harsh and angry tone.

“ I know what you are come about,” he said, “ for I saw you ride by, and I am fully prepared to answer your demand at once. You are again come to torment me about Marie de Matenesse, and I, again, declare to you, I will never consent to your union.”

“ But wherefore, my lord ?” urged Floris, whose dark eyes flashed with the spirit within. “ When a few years ago I made a similar request,

you said I was yet too young to talk about so solemn an engagement as matrimony. You told me that my love for Marie was a mere boyish caprice—that travels—entering on life, would soon dispel the feeling—that if it were the same a few years hence, it would be then time to speak of it,—that you would be the first to recompense my constancy. Well, my lord, here I am—I have been in camps and courts—have won and worn the price of honour given by the fairest hands at the most brilliant tournaments; but I come back to claim the reward of my unchanged feelings; for they are unchanged, and will remain so to the hour of my death.”

“Then am I the more sorry for your folly,” said Wonter. “The more sorry that as a man you should remember the foolish words with which I tried to appease a foolish boy, who gave me much trouble at a time when I was engaged with graver thoughts. But now, if you will have a reason and a rational one, I will give it you at once,—the lady of Matenesse is too poor.”

“I understand, sir ;—you do not wish me to be a charge upon you ; but, as Marie’s husband, you will find me no burthen on your treasury. Until her son is of age the castle will be mine, and by my good sword will I fill up the blank in my revenues.”

“No doubt—no doubt. Like the German knights we hear so much about, you would rob on the highways. Only, I would have you remember that our country does not offer, like theirs, fastnesses within which to find protection. Moreover, to cut the matter short, I will tell you once for all, that I have a rich bride in view for you. Ah, Floris !” he said, leaning his hand heavily on the young knight’s shoulder, “you are mad to think of throwing yourself away in this manner—you, who will be one day so rich : for I must die, Floris—though the day may be very far off,—then you know, my son, I cannot take my money away with me. Come, Floris, you must think no more of this, for if that brat Matenesse *dies*, are we not the heirs of all ?”

“We the heirs!” exclaimed Floris. “Ha! I remember!” and a dark suspicion crossed the youth’s mind, as the uncertainty that still hung over his mother’s fate, and Marie’s fears and misgivings, rushed back upon his recollection, and for a moment he remained silent. Again, he thought upon his father’s indulgence to Gertrude, and he could not help alluding to the subject.

“Oh!—ay—true,” said Wonter. “By the way, Floris, I am by no means satisfied with my new son-in-law, and already repent my weakness. The insolent fellow, who, considering how doubtful is his right to his spurs, should have considered himself too honoured in being allowed a place at my board, and the love of my daughter, dares to claim her heritage. As if she had any, forsooth! But you, Floris, must help me to chastise this foolish conceit of theirs, for Gertrude has suffered herself to become infected by some of her husband’s silly notions.”

These words caused a new light to break in

upon the mind of the young knight. He knew, and had been assured by those who had seen it, that in the marriage settlement of his mother, a great heiress, her fortune had been awarded to her daughters and younger sons, that of Lord Wouter descending by right to his eldest. But, these witnesses were dead : so were the friends of his mother ;—indeed, she had possessed so few, that when Wouter had reported her dead, no one inquired when or where she died, or whether she had left issue. Who, therefore, was to prove the will ? Gertrude might, indeed, throw herself upon the justice of the Countess of Holland ; but that lady would not find it easy, perplexed as she was by her own troubles, to assist her ; and, for the first time, his father's policy dawned upon Floris, when he considered how impossible it would be for Gertrude's obscure, powerless, vassalless husband, to struggle against the Lord of Oostersteen. He was struck to the heart by the cruel, selfish calculations that had condemned his sister, in the bloom of life, to a lot so mean

—she who might long since have been wedded to a Baron more powerful, though less rich, than her father.

To these thoughts he could not, of course, give utterance, but he warmly pleaded his sister's cause, though he could perceive that, in so doing, he was uselessly endangering his own. However earnest his eloquence, it was fruitless. His father's resolution with respect to himself was as irrevocable as that he had formed towards his daughter. He considered all feelings chimerical that were not connected with the object of his own especial idolatry, and did not even believe in the existence of those sorrows, by the description of which his son sought to move him. He could not perceive why a state of dependence on him should humiliate Gertrude; for the pride of his daughter, as well as the passion of his son, were sentiments equally foreign to his nature; he had never known such, and could, therefore, feel no sympathy with them.

“For yourself, Floris,” concluded Wonter, “I will prove to your satisfaction, that you are mistaken—deceived. I tell you, she loves you not—she loves nothing but her child; and would sacrifice you without a scruple to that puny brat. This I will prove to you, before the sun is many days older.”

A few days after this conversation, Marie de Matenesse was busily engaged at her spinning wheel, accompanying its monotonous sound with the more melodious one of a plaintive ballad, ever and anon casting an anxious glance towards the sun, fast sinking behind the horizon. Her little boy appeared to divine the cause of his mother’s anxiety, and said, with the licensed candour of his age—

“Floris of Oostersteen is late to-day; and mamma is afraid he wont come. It is very naughty of Oostersteen to make my mother wait so.”

The maidens looked at their lady to observe the effect of the child’s artless prattle, and

Marie bent low to close his lips with a kiss, and conceal her blushes in his dark ringlets. At that moment a heavy tread was heard. The thoughtful maidens rose unbidden but unchecked, and, according to their wont, retired from the apartment as the steps of the expected comer drew near.

Scarcely had they disappeared by the door that conducted to the inner chambers, when the opposite one opened—a figure advanced from its shade, and Marie, at the very first accents of the intruder, recognised Lord Wonter. She started from her quiescent attitude, and instinctively cast one arm round her boy; a gesture which, apparently, passed unnoticed by her unwelcome visitor.

“You are surprised to see me, and I am afraid not agreeably so,” said the old lord. “My son has, I suppose, already informed you of my opposition to the marriage you meditate.”

Marie merely bowed her assent.

“Nor has he, perhaps, neglected to acquaint you,” continued Wonter, “with the reasons which have dictated this refusal on my part? In your heart, doubtless, you attribute it to the very worst motives that your imagination can suggest?”

“I know but one likely to influence you, messire,” said Marie, somewhat contemptuously, “and however much I may grieve at your determination, as the want of money does not argue the absence of other qualifications, neither my pride nor my vanity are wounded by your disapprobation of an alliance otherwise in every way suitable to your house.”

“Is the grief you speak of *very great*?” demanded Lord Wonter, with a significant shake of the head; “I frankly confess I doubt it.”

“And what reason have you for doubt?” inquired the lady, somewhat haughtily. “I can have, assuredly, no interest in asserting what is not true.”

“By my honour but you can, though!” said Oostersteen, gruffly, “or your regrets proceed from the head rather than the heart. You may remember, as well as I, though Floris, silly boy, seems so willing to forget it, that he is heir to a princely fortune.”

“And do you suppose my heart is fixed upon his fortune?”

“Give me a proof that it is not so,” said Wonter, with the insulting smile so peculiarly his own; “I shall then have some reason to be convinced of the sincerity of your affection—satisfy me but on that point, and you shall have to your union, not only a willing, but a glad consent.”

Marie gazed in astonishment upon the speaker.

“Say, Marie, you who forsook your natural friends for the Lord of Matenesse—for they had destined you to the cloister, I know it well—you, who once made to love so great a sacrifice, if now you indeed love again, will you hesitate to make another?”

“Assuredly not, if it be such as may beseeem me to make. Propose your terms—but, I guess them, and accede to them in advance—I will even spare you the shame of speaking them; you wish me to renounce all dowry. Oh! if it be but that, it has not even the merit of being a privation.”

“You mistake me, Marie, I demand a concession still more easy to grant. Floris must rule alone in the heart that owns him for its master—give up Henry to my care, and I will yield Floris to yours.”

“Good heavens! what do you mean? What can you mean?” exclaimed the young mother in extreme agitation.

“Something very simple and rational. Suffer me to remove your little Henry to a cloister; where, under the guidance of the good monks, he may pick up some lore; and after the expiration of a few years, I’ll restore him to you. Now, he were little else than obstacle to my son’s happiness—a rival in your affections.”

“Enough—enough!” almost shrieked the

mother, snatching the boy to her bosom. "I will hear no more of this. You have decided about your son; abide by that decision, and trouble me no more!"

"Come, come, Marie," urged Oostersteen, with the hypocritical softness of manner that formed so peculiar a feature in his character, and which increased in suavity, in exact proportion to the pain he inflicted—"if you value Floris, as you would have me believe, you will surely consent to exchange, for a few years, the insignificant society of a child for that of the man you love. That answer of yours tends to confirm my belief——"

"Believe what you please," exclaimed Marie, passionately, "but leave me my child, my own Henry. Be merciful, my Lord of Oostersteen, and do not even breathe the thought. Oh! if *you* but once had him in your power—" she held her child with a tighter grasp, and shuddered.

"Simple girl—and can I not have him when-

ever I please? Is he not my ward? What is it you fear on his account—and from me?”

The light was waning too fast for Marie to perceive the red glow that mounted to Wonter's very forehead; and her heart beat too thick and too painfully to admit of her remarking, or even hearing, his altered tones.

“I know it—nothing,” she murmured faintly. “But, oh, leave me!—leave me instantly!”

“Yes, Marie, I will leave you—you shall be tormented with me and mine no longer. Say, do you really refuse to resign Henry to my care for a few years, for the sake of Floris? If you but agree to this ——”

“My choice is made. Oh! leave me but my child, Lord Wonter, and take from me every other joy. Let me but keep my Henry, and I will bless you evermore.”

“Then, rest you content lady, it shall even be as you desire; and you, Floris, I hope are satisfied that my wisdom is not folly after all.”

“Yes, I am satisfied that I am not loved as

I fondly, foolishly imagined," said a deep voice, issuing from the gloom of the thick arch doorway, and the young mother recognised the tones of Floris. She turned her head in the direction whence they proceeded, but could scarcely distinguish through the dusk, his tall massive form as he leant against the wall. He paused, obviously in expectation of some words of kindness—of comfort; but Marie dared not trust herself with an answer—a choking sensation rose to her throat, and she felt that utterance would fail her.

"Farewell, then, Marie de Matenesse," continued the young knight, less firmly than he had before spoken. "I would have been a father to your child, loved and protected him for your sake, but then I thought—it matters not what. This was but a trick to discover your real feelings. May your heart's idol repay you in the future, for the true affection you have this day cast from you." The reproachful words expired on his lips, as he turned and left the turret chamber.

The heavy tread of the young knight was, for a time, the only sound heard in the stillness around. At last his retreating footsteps died away, and Marie, raising her eyes from the ground, perceived that she was alone. Wouter had glided noiselessly from the room.

Marie, still holding her child on her lap, leant back in her chair, and wept silently, but bitterly. There was a conflict in her bosom of regret for the past, and of vague apprehension for the future ; and, above all, she experienced that dreary blank which a violent rupture with, or the sudden departure or loss of, a beloved being generally produces. It seemed to her affrighted fancy that life itself had become a desolate waste, without one green spot of hope, one incitement to exertion. Few there are, however smooth their course of existence, who have not, at one time or another, felt this mental darkness gathering around them. The true wisdom of some, the buoyant temperament of others, may have successfully wrestled with this worst of human moods; but happy

indeed are those who have escaped such altogether. The moon shed its mild light over the landscape, and tipped with silver the projecting angles of Matenesse castle, still Marie sat at the open casement, unconscious of the flight of time, until her women, seriously anxious, ventured to rouse her from her abstraction, and their young lord from the peaceful slumber he was enjoying on his mother's agitated breast.

It was not long after Gertrude's pretensions, supported by her husband's counsels, became known to her father, ere the latter found means to rid himself of her presence. She departed from Terwick with a haughty brow, imagining it would be an easy matter to establish her just claims; but in this expectation she soon found herself deceived. As Floris had foreseen, useless was her application to the Sovereign, and her husband strove in vain to possess himself of her inheritance by other means. Oostersteen had thrown a strong garrison into the castle, and though his son had refused to command it, and

he himself seldom acted in such a capacity, he had found a sufficiently active coadjutor in his favourite man at arms, Jost. It was impossible for the knight to baffle these measures of his prompt antagonist. He had no vassals of his own to bring into the field,—no money wherewith to purchase mercenary aid,—no alliances from which to derive support,—nor was Holland a land where adventurers thronged, as in other countries, who might be glad to collect together under any specious pretext, for the easier perpetration of their own freebooting trade.

Standing thus alone and unfriended by the side of one as helpless as herself, but less lofty in mind, less vigorous in purpose, the haughty Gertrude soon felt in its full force the misery her folly, or rather her father's perfidy, had brought upon her. She soon learnt how false was his assertion with regard to his wife's alleged preference for her chosen knight ; and the little of illusion that a momentary caprice had cast over the lover's insignificance, faded rapidly

away from the husband. She even exaggerated his faults, and he now appeared in her eyes, what Aleyde had so often described him, mean-spirited, craven-hearted, and altogether deficient in that personal strength and animal resolution which constituted, in those rude days, the chief merit of man. Poverty and its train of evils soon overtook her. With none by to listen to, or soothe her complaints—had she stooped to relieve her heart by such ebullitions—Gertrude bitterly lamented the fatal error, which had not only induced her to disregard Aleyde's sage advice, but also to quarrel with the gentlest of friends; the only one, indeed, she had ever possessed. Great, however, as was her repentance, and good as were the feelings momentarily engendered by it, her stubborn pride crushed in the bud the fruits of both. Floris, too, her last hope and stay, had departed from the land of his birth, and, as far as she knew, without any motive. None could tell whither he had gone, or wherefore he had departed; but Ger-

trude suspected he had been driven forth by some new machinations of her father.

Little did Oostersteen, as he watched with keen delight the success of his schemes, know or care for the anguish he caused. The aching hearts of so many beings whose bloom of life he sacrificed to his ruthless thirst for gold—Floris—Gertrude—Aleyde—Marie de Matenesse—neither the closeness of the ties that bound him to them, nor their personal merits and grace—no consideration could move his heart, steeled as it was by one mighty passion against all natural affection. Vain would have been any recrimination on the part of the sufferers, had they been tempted to move him to compassion; and as vain were the indignant murmurs of the inhabitants of Haarlem, who beheld his innocent, rejected wife pine away in the solitude he had assigned her in their town, and his lovely daughter gradually sinking into absolute destitution.

Autumn and winter glided away imper-

ceptibly whilst these changes were slowly brought about; and the green leaves did not bud forth more abundantly from the trees on the ensuing spring, than did fresh devices from the fertile brain of the Lord of Oostersteen; nor did he wait till the first blossoms fell from the trees to ripen them into execution.

The castles of his first and second wives were now wholly under his control, and his estates at Dort sold; but the delicate boy of Marie de Matenesse had thriven under her fostering care, and outlived another rough winter, and a few of those infantine diseases to which heirs apparent look with scarce less hope than to the increasing feebleness of old age. That estate, also, must be his, and matters be forced to a crisis in that quarter. The cunning Oostersteen knew enough of the young widow's character to be perfectly sure, that what she had not yielded to love no mode of persuasion could wring from her; he therefore determined to have recourse to other means. Open violence he

abhorred, but in treachery he delighted—a crooked path ever appeared preferable in his eyes to a straight one, be it never so fair and promising.

Marie had found the winter months long and wearisome; but, once her first grief for the loss of Floris at an end, her heart grew lighter as she found herself neglected, and hoped she was forgotten by his father. She began to flatter herself that her fears had been groundless, and though her lovely boy was never allowed to stray a minute from her side, it was less from any of those vague apprehensions of danger to his person which she had formerly entertained, than from an excess of maternal love. She now more frequently left her apartment to walk with him round the limited battlements of their moated dwelling, never venturing, however greatly she might be tempted by the genial influence of the warm spring season or her little Henry's prayers, to pass the drawbridge and guide his young steps along his own

domain. Her thoughts would, indeed, sometimes wander to the absent—oftener still to the dead. Personal hopes and joys had faded from her breast, but a thousand bright chimeras would rise to her fancy for her darling boy. His life was to be a tissue of gold and silver, in which no dark thread should be mingled. The heroic ballads she loved her maids to sing seemed but the prophecy of his future deeds of chivalry, and her visions by night were but the reflection of her day dreams, in a shape scarcely more flitting, more impalpable.

One night, however, her slumbers were less fortunate. She had heard but that very day, by a wandering pedler who had seen him, that Floris of Oostersteen was distinguishing himself greatly in distant parts, but that he was so altered as to be recognised with difficulty; and though much looked after by the dames, he disregarded their soft glances, being, as it was currently reported, already bound in the fetters of some unhappy love.

Marie had need that day of gazing more than usual on her heart's idol—her sweet child; and the castle bell tolled many a chime before sleep closed her eyelids; nor was all consciousness lost in the troubled slumber that at last stole upon her.

The light of the moon, but ill excluded by the tapestry hung before the casement, fell on her boy's cradle, and revealed, as she fancied, his little form, together with some dark, indistinct figures surrounding and endeavouring to seize him. She strained in vain to catch a clearer view of these moving shadowy objects; as she gazed they vanished from her sight, to reappear the next instant plainer than before. Once or twice she fancied a half-stifled shriek reached her ear, then again it would seem but the cry of the owlet nestled in the chapel tower. Vainly did Marie strive to break through the spell of her dream—to awake—to call; her lids seemed pressed down by leaden weights, her lips forcibly glued together. At length

a clearer, louder scream freed her from the horrible nightmare with which she was struggling. She awoke completely, and gazed fearfully around her. The heavy curtains of her bed were closed, and her trembling hand had scarcely force enough to tear them asunder. Her first look sought the light that usually burned before the image of the Virgin in a niche above her child's crib—it was extinguished. To glide from her bed—to feel for her son—to miss him—to call upon him by name, and pause in the vain hope of an answer—then to shriek wildly for assistance, was for Marie the work of an instant ; but when her women, at last alarmed by her cries, entered the chamber, their mistress lay stretched in blissful unconsciousness across the empty couch of her boy.

Upon awakening to a sense of her bereavement, Marie immediately divined whence came the blow ; but her frantic endeavours to trace her child, or to bring Oostersteen to a confession of his being the instigator of the abduction,

were ineffectual. The men who guarded her castle were all his creatures, and to gain any clue from them was next to impossible. A rumour current among both soldiers and menials but too soon reached the ears of the unhappy mother—the child was believed to be murdered! So deep did this conviction sink into poor Marie's mind, that she ceased after a time to make any effort towards ascertaining the truth, but gave herself up to a mute grief, which it was easy to foresee would lead her to an early grave. Contrary to the expectation of all, Wonter never even so much as hinted at her ejection from the castle—his by right, supposing the child dead or irrecoverably lost; he appeared, rather, perfectly willing patiently to bide his time.

Soon after the event just narrated, Oostersteen was seen slowly riding along the banks of the Spaar, with a thoughtful brow and abstracted air. The few burghers who passed him on their quiet-pacing mules, in spite of their richly furred robes and caps, and the heavy gold

chains round their necks, extracted as little attention from the baron, as they humbly unbbonneted to him, as the rude fisherman who tossed his woollen cap aside with a sulky look—for to the poor he was an object of unmitigated hatred; his thoughts were evidently far from the scene. When he reached the house nominally his daughter's, but where the Lady Aleyde resided by his permission, he reined up his horse, but did not immediately dismount. His eye wandered, unconscious of what it dwelt upon, from the calm surface of the Spaar to the various houses that bordered it. A mean hut, neglected, uninhabited as it seemed, and nearly opposite to his mansion, although parted from it by the river, at last attracted his observation.

“Jost,” he said to his never-failing attendant, “I wish I could have that rotten concern pulled to the ground; it mars the prospect of my house—makes it less valuable—eh?”

“I don't see, my lord, how that can be done, unless, indeed, by buying it; it would cost a mere trifle.”

“Why, Jost, it belongs to nobody—it is good for nothing.”

“And yet,” said Jost, shrugging his shoulders, “there’s many a beggar would be glad to find shelter for his old limbs even there.”

“A beggar!” said Wonter, with a curling lip, expressive of the most impatient disgust, as if something ineffably horrible had been mentioned. “A beggar! who cares for beggars—how can such beings exist?”

“My father was a beggar,” muttered Jost between his teeth, “or I had not become your vassal—your bounden slave, as I may say—I warrant you.”

Oostersteen, dismounting, slowly ascended the steps conducting from the street to the door of the house, and mounted the stairs with the same leisurely gait; but, once in Lady Aleyde’s presence, all trace of hesitation disappeared completely both from his manner and countenance.

His wife turned pale as he entered, not from

surprise—for, having viewed his approach from her casement, she was fully prepared for the meeting—but from aversion, not unmixed with terror. The hour he had chosen for his visit was late,—her apartment was far from the menials, very few of whom had been allowed her,—and the rumours she had often heard concerning the fate of his first wife, rushed back to her recollection in a manner noways calculated to allay her fears. She began to tremble at the suggestions of her imagination.

“I hope the leisure you have had for sober reflection has not been thrown away,” said Oostersteen, gruffly. “I have reckoned on its influence, and am come with a hope of finding you tender as a dove and pliable as a reed.”

“When have you found me otherwise?” said the lady, in a low, timid voice.

“Well, provided you are amiable and yielding to day, I shall rest perfectly satisfied.”

“What is it you would have of me? My duty as a wife you have rejected, my castle and

land you have in your own possession—what else can you ask of me, or I grant?”

“Your jewels, my dear; they are more valuable than the handful of land and the nut-shell of a castle you make so many words about.”

“My jewels!” exclaimed Aleyde. “But I may not give them—they are an heirloom! You are not—you cannot be in earnest in demanding of a woman the decorations of her person. How can you possibly need them?”

“Let it suffice that I do need them, Aleyde; and, having said so much on the subject, I am sure you will not trouble me further for reasons which it may not suit my humour just now to give.”

Aleyde, conscious of the advantage the revelation of her terror would give her husband, had endeavoured to conceal it under an appearance of coolness, which, if it did not deceive him, afforded her at least the consolation of thinking so; but his extraordinary demand,

meek and submissive as she was, subdued for a time this feeling, and roused the woman's spirit within her. A scornful smile curled her lip as she answered, in a bantering tone that scarcely veiled her anger and contempt—

“ Really, Lord Wonter, I cannot sufficiently marvel at the grave manner with which you urge so strange a request. Husbands are generally expected to bestow such objects on their wives, not to deprive them of them. If I were of a jealous temperament, or you likely to give cause for its development, I might then, indeed, divine some probable reason for a demand so extraordinary ; but as it is, such as you are, who never, I am well assured,”—she tossed her head contemptuously as she spoke,—“ even in your best days, won any heart from duty's path——”

“ And who tells you, madam,” interrupted Wonter with a malignant look, “ I have never achieved the triumph of which you speak, and even indulged in the connexion you seem to

hint at? Who tells you that, even now, I am not enthralled in the chains of an unhallowed love?"

"You, Lord Wonter—you!" said the lady, with an incredulous look and smile. "Nay, say what you will, you will find it hard to convince me of that."

"And what if I were to tell you, Lady Aleyde, that you yourself were the light paramour, whose existence you so greatly doubt." He smiled, in his turn, a smile of fiend-like triumph, before which Aleyde's spirit for an instant quailed; but the next, the dignity of her sex awoke at the insult.

"You cannot—you dare not repeat these words to me; unprotected as I am, I warn you, I will not endure it!"

"But, by the mass, you shall though. What I have told you is the truth—do you hear? an undeniable truth, which I can prove any day, and will, too, if you drive me to it. But rest you content, Aleyde; one free love is worth ten fettered ones, and procrastination in marriage is

a wise thing, as you have so often and so sagely preached yourself."

Aleyde could not gaze on the old man's withered features, illuminated as they were by a Satanic sneer. She shuddered and turned away, but answered firmly enough—

"You may disgrace yourself, my Lord of Oostersteen, by heaping upon me insults which I have not the power to repel; but your words cannot wound me, for it is impossible to credit such wild assertions. I am not a child, to be frightened by so poor a subterfuge, I who know your every word a falsehood, your every thought a deceit! This is another invention to further some scheme of your own. Oh! say it is so, Lord Wonter—in pity, say. But no, you need not speak—I know it is not true—I will not believe it."

"Alas! would to God, my child," said Wonter, suddenly changing his manner, "I had not this great sin on my soul. I would fain think I repent of it, for it was in some sort the sum-

mons of my conscience that brought me here to day."

"Oh, spare me your hypocrisy!" said the Lady, with an expression of disgust. "Of all your sins, numerous as they may be for aught I know, to me that is the most revolting. What is it you would have of me—explain yourself in clear terms?"

"I forgive your reproaches, madam, for truth is sometimes unpalatable; and that which I have announced to you even now, might excuse more bitter recriminations. I judged you would find it difficult of belief, and have, in consequence, ordered Gertrude's old nurse to meet me here to day, a woman whom you trust because you think her honest, and like because she hates me. She who attended the mother of Gertrude, and nursed my children on her knee, will tell you, madam, that my first wife is not dead."

"Not dead!" said Lady Aleyde, breathless with astonishment. "It is impossible!"

“But so it is. She loved me not—met a gay foolish German Knight at a tournament—I was not jealous—not I—suspected nothing.” As he spoke an infernal smile passed over the lips of the old man. “She fled, and, in another country, wedded anew. I, too, seduced by your youth and graces, became equally guilty!”

“Proceed,” said the Lady, waving her hand impatiently.

“Well, madam. The rest is very clear I think—you are not my wife. That point being established, you are wholly in my power. Now, listen to my final determination—you shall retire into a convent, but before doing so, you shall yield me up your jewels, and sign over to me your possessions in consideration of my respecting your secret—so far, at least, as the world is concerned. Your honour, and that of your noble family, demands my silence; and the concessions I have named only can purchase it. Come, madam, you will gain nothing by procrastination—and resist me if you dare! I

will provide you an entrance into some distant convent, where your history and your name will be alike unknown ; and where, having awarded you a suitable portion, you may spend the rest of your days in quietude, for I will report you dead to the world."

"And claim as your own my estate and castle? No, Lord Wonter, think me not so weak. If I were inclined to bury the shame of others in a convent—for of shame on my own part I am unconscious—I would, at least, endow it with my lawful inheritance. That would be my irrevocable resolve."

"Say not so," retorted Oostersteen with a contemptuous smile. "Women's resolutions are seldom so obdurate, and in your case, I will point out a small obstacle. Your fate is inevitable, therefore do not puzzle your brains with vain endeavours to escape it ; for know, that I am determined to keep your castle and all your estates, except such a portion as I think suitable for you."

“But I will appeal to the justice of my Sovereign—I will throw myself on the laws of my country!”

“Ha! and be pointed at by the finger of scorn as the leman of old Oostersteen—sully the spotless name of your ancestors!”

Lady Aleyde fell back in her chair and wept bitterly.

“And where is the man of honour who now would wed you?—where the spotless maid or wife who would consort with you?”

“But you dare not publish your own crime.”

“What should hinder me? The Duchess is not strong enough to punish me, I trow—you have no friends likely to interfere, were they even desirous of doing so. You see, there you stand at my mercy; attempt to oppose my will, and I can either brand you before the world, or claim you back as my wife; for, mark me, you have no proofs to the contrary, and what happiness have you now to expect in either case? Better withdraw to a convent, and there pray for me,” as he

spoke, he assumed an air of insolent exultation, "and lament the sinful love—for once you thought it sin—which you bore my Floris."

"You are mistaken," said Aleyde, with dignity. "Judge not of others after your own dark heart! I might, indeed, have loved your son, and I know, too, he could have loved me before he knew Marie de Matenesse; but when that love became a sin I struggled with and overcame it, until it was as pure as that of a sister. But the happiness you destroyed in coming between our two young hearts—oh, Lord Wonter, you have much to answer for!"

"I may have much more than you dream of, if you urge me too far," said Oostersteen, sternly. "To-morrow, after the sun is set, you must be ready to accompany me—the woman down stairs will be your attendant, and I your escort."

So saying, Oostersteen, without taking a more ceremonious farewell, left Lady Aleyde to her

terrors, and to take counsel of her own desolate heart.

Gertrude, in the meantime, had become deserted by her last prop, feeble as it was. Her husband, perceiving that a life of penury and incessant reproach was likely to be his portion, when he imagined himself a made man by so splendid an alliance, grew disgusted, and following the instinct of a mean and sordid nature, left his unhappy consort without even performing the ceremony of leave-taking, to seek his fortunes elsewhere; and, to enable him the better to support the exigencies of his wandering career, he had conveyed with him their few remaining resources.

Thus, at a time when Gertrude most needed the soothing offices of her sex—for she was about to become a mother—and those of a mediator between herself and her irritated parent, Floris, Aleyde, her husband, all failed her; nor would she have known where to lay her head, had it not been for an ancient servitor

of her mother's house, who, though many years a retainer of Lord Wonter, still cherished the memory of the past, and loved Gertrude for her mother's sake.

The poor man could not, it is true, afford his young mistress the shelter of a home he did not himself possess, but having been ordered to attend his lord, with a handful of the more trusty retainers, on a secret expedition by night to the castle of Oostersteen, he resolved to avail himself of the darkness, to smuggle Gertrude into the party under a favouring disguise, when she might either seize the opportunity to effect a reconciliation with her father, or take up her abode at the castle, unknown to him, at least for such time as he should remain at Oostersteen.

All those in any way acquainted with Wonter's habits were accustomed to see him walk in mysteries, an attempt to penetrate which was, in his eyes, a most serious offence, and for the most part resented as such. Gertrude, there-

fore, did not lose time in speculating on this strange mode of proceeding, but at once gladly embarked in an adventure whose issue, however doubtful, could in no possibility leave her in a more painful plight than she was at that moment.

When Gertrude joined the little party at the spot appointed by the faithful servant, who held a led horse ready for her use, the darkness was already so great, that she could scarcely discern the persons of whom it was composed; but, after having ridden some time, in spite of the increasing obscurity, and the unbroken silence maintained throughout the little band, she became convinced that a female rode in front, and that the horseman by her side was no other than her father. Who the lady might be she could not conjecture, but her heart beat quicker as the possibility suggested itself to her mind of its being Aleyde.

Dawn had not broken when they reached the castle. The portcullis being raised, the riders

passed through two arched gateways successively into an inner court; but, after giving a few brief orders in an authoritative tone to the men at arms who had crowded around, and exchanging a few sentences with the muffled lady in a low tone, the leader rode away alone. The fall of the heavy drawbridge, the creaking of the chains as it rose again, and the grating of the massive bars and bolts, plainly told Gertrude that retreat was now impossible. Chilled, benumbed by the heavy night dew of a damp climate, but exhausted in spirits even more than in frame—weary at heart of an existence so wretched, she scarcely cared to know what would become of her. One thought, however, supported her, and darting forward, with a bold hand, she withdrew the muffler that concealed the face of her companion in misfortune, and beheld her suspicions confirmed—her hope realised—her fellow prisoner was, indeed, Aleyde, the friend of her brighter days. She, too, looked pale and miser-

able, but this was not the time for questions; they fell into each other's arms, and mingled tears of joy at the happy chance—for such they considered it—that had thus united their evil destinies.

No explanation of Gertrude's presence was either given or required; for all, except the man under whose protection she had entered the castle, conceived her to be in the same predicament as Lady Aleyde, whom the Baron had delivered over to their charge with the assurance, that her escape would cost them their lives. Gertrude joyfully accepted the fate she had thrust herself upon, and in very few words conveyed this pleasing intelligence to her terrified ally, who was already trembling at the dilemma into which he had brought her.

Aleyde and Gertrude shared once more the same apartment; and the sympathy that had formerly bound them to each other was strengthened by the bond of affliction. It was impossible for them to conjecture whether

Oostersteen would adhere to the resolution he had formed with regard to his unfortunate wife, of eventually forcing her into a convent, and detain her at the castle during the time necessary for taking a few preliminary measures to that effect, or whether it was his intention that she should linger out her days in the solitary confinement of his own towers, whilst he, perhaps, formed another and no less advantageous alliance. The assurances of Gertrude's old nurse, but lately returned from Germany, where she had seen and spoken with her former mistress, had completely cleared away all doubts from Aleyde's mind as to the truth of his assertion. To return to the world under such circumstances was difficult; yet she could not make up her mind to the alternative of embracing the veil. She and Gertrude had yet so much more of life before them than their persecutor that, even were they to remain in his power for a few years more, they might still look forward with certitude to the recovery of

their liberty, fortune, and happiness. This view of the case, which involuntarily forced itself upon her consideration, enabled Aleyde to contemplate with resignation a prolonged existence in the castle. Gertrude's delicate situation, moreover, opened to them a new source of interest, to render the solitude of their prison less irksome.

Weeks grew to months, without bringing the slightest change in their position. The desired event was drawing nearer with each day, and every preparation was made at the castle of Oostersteen to welcome life; whilst at that of Matenesse, the dead and the lost were mourned with unceasing sorrow.

The heavy rains of November had set in, and the dulness of the shortening days harmonized with, and seemed to soothe Marie's gloomy mood. Well pleased was she that the thick veil of intervening fogs hid from her sight the gladness of the land without, and the proud banner of her child's unjust guardian triumphantly

waving from the neighbouring castles. No stranger's foot had been heard within her hall—no strange voice had rang in her ear for months; the pedler, the minstrel had been turned away from the gate with unvaried severity; the begging friar, or wandering pilgrim, had been, indeed, admitted to such hospitality as the castle could afford, but not to the presence of its mistress; and no recluse under her veil was ever more completely cut off from communication with her fellow-creatures, than Marie de Matenesse. She had gradually sunk into that apathy of sorrow from which it is painful to be roused, and found a sort of pleasure in its very monotony. To sit for hours in the same chair, near the very casement where so often she had awaited the approach of Floris, or toyed with her boy, listening to the same ballads that had awakened so many glorious visions in her breast,—these, when not engaged in the chapel, where most of her hours were spent, were the habits she still found a melancholy satisfaction in indulging.

The approach of winter, severely felt in so close a vicinity to the sea, had already long introduced the blazing logs of wood within the large chimneys; and Marie loved to watch the capricious bickerings of the flames, and the gradual formation of the embers into strange fantastic shapes. One evening, as she thus sat, so completely buried in thought that she was scarcely conscious of surrounding objects, her women at the ever-going spinning-wheel, intent on their silent occupation, at a respectful distance, the party was suddenly roused by unwonted sounds, that proclaimed a strange horseman at the gate. Attention was succeeded by surprise, when it grew evident that he had obtained admittance; and surprise in its turn gave way to a feeling bordering on fear, so unusual was the circumstance, when they became aware that he was actually making his way towards the turret-chamber. They rivetted their eyes upon the door, in breathless curiosity, mingled with an apprehension natural in their

lonely mode of life ; but a cry of pleasure burst from the lips of all, as the door opened, and Floris of Oostersteen stood before them.

Marie gazed in speechless anxiety upon his altered mien. He, too, looked long at her before he spoke. On a sign from their mistress, the maidens withdrew, when Floris took her hand in his, and said, in a tone which implied sadness, but not reproof—

“How unlike our last meeting, Marie !”

“How unlike, indeed !” exclaimed Marie, gently, but firmly withdrawing her hand.
“This is, again, your father’s work, Floris.”

“Had I known your misfortune sooner, I should have returned on the instant. A mere chance revealed it to me ; and see—I am here.”

“To go away again, Floris,” said the lady, firmly—“at least, from me—we can never meet again !”

“And wherefore ? You repulsed me in your happiness. I have forgiven that ; but why drive me from you in your sorrow ?”

“Because it is *your* father who has made me childless! You forget that, Floris.”

The young knight remained silent.

“Yes,” continued Marie, her pale cheeks suffused with the crimson-tide of indignation.

“Much can be forgotten in this world—most things, by a Christian, forgiven; but murder and ——”

“Murder! By heavens, Lady of Matenesse, you do my father wrong! But indeed,” he added, softening the momentary asperity of his manner, “he has much injured you.”

“He has, most cruelly,” murmured Marie, the passing energy she had evinced fading altogether from her look and manner. “He has left me nothing to live for.”

“Say not so, lady!” exclaimed Floris. “Your child may yet be restored to you; for,” he added, a slight blush tinging his embrowned visage, “he is often unjust—harsh, perhaps; but he does not *kill*. Believe me, your child yet lives.”

“Do not, for the Virgin’s sake,” interrupted the young mother, “attempt to hold out to me a false hope! You know not what additional misery you may inflict.”

“I seek not to deceive, Marie. It is my firm, my solemn conviction, that your child is living, and well; and has not, in all probability, experienced the slightest discomfort.”

“Then, where can he have concealed him? Oh, Floris! if you speak not without reason—if you know aught about the matter, reveal everything to me. It were inhuman to increase the agony I have so long endured.”

“If I had any certain tidings to communicate, think you I could keep them from you? No, Marie; at this moment, I can say nothing positive. That the child is kept hidden by my father, and that he intends his concealment to be eternal, I have no doubt; but I have returned for the express purpose of restoring Henry to your arms; nor will I again present myself before you until my object be achieved;

may, having brought him to your gate, I shall, perhaps, go back whence I came, without claiming of you so much as a last farewell!"

"No—no, Floris!" exclaimed Marie. "If it be the will of heaven that I recover at once all I love on earth,—oh, let us never again be severed!"

A glow of ineffable delight crimsoned the countenance of the knight; and those hearts which separation had tried, as the touchstone tries gold, proved the true ore of their affection in the happy hour of meeting. Marie was deeply moved by the sincere devotion and noble disposition of her lover. She felt a necessity in her weakness to cling to his strength for support, as the tendril to the oak. Floris found it now an easier task than he had anticipated to induce her to share his hopes, and consent to his plans; and before he rode away from the castle, it was agreed between them, that the moment he made any discovery, he should dispatch his confidential squire to the castle

of Matenesse; and that Marie should, in the meantime, prepare everything for an immediate departure for the court of the Duchess, where they could presume themselves secure from Wonter's pursuit. Their journey thither, it was understood, must assume the appearance of a flight; for Floris could evade, but not oppose his father's will. Thus, no time was to be lost, in order to avoid the possibility of an intervention arising from that person's well-known vigilance.

During the days that elapsed before the arrival of the promised messenger, Marie was an altered woman. The listlessness of despair was succeeded by the nervous thrill of eager expectation. Every horse galloping across the plain caused her to rush to the battlements; every horn in the distance brought the blood in welling tides to her heart. Might not an evil chance delay the emissary on the road, or prevent him from ever reaching the place of his destination? In those days of violence,

no occurrence could be more ordinary. Might not Floris himself fall a victim to his generous purpose? But even this time of trial passed by; and the glad tidings reached her, at the close of November, that Floris, after many fruitless researches, had succeeded in tracing little Henry of Matenesse to the convent of St. Alexis. Feeling convinced that it was Lord Wonter who had placed him there, he had formed the determination of claiming the child boldly in his father's name, at whose bidding only, he felt assured, he would be given up. The messenger further stated that, should his master succeed in possessing himself of the young Lord Henry, he might be expected each day at the castle. Later than St. Elizabeth's Eve he certainly would not be, and he hoped to find the Lady of Matenesse prepared for an instant departure.

Now, indeed, gladness alone filled a bosom long inured to sorrow; and Marie gave herself up again to the impatience and ardour natural to youth, and so long controlled. Minutes seemed

hours, and hours eternity, until the sun rose that was to set on her reunion with all she held dear on earth.

She wondered, as she unclosed her eyes with the dawn to watch that happy day's progress to its close, that its aspect did not correspond with the tumultuous gladness of her bosom. But nature often smiles on our sorrows, and weeps when our joys are full.

The weather, for some time past, had been unusually stormy. Ships had suffered much at sea, and the coasts had been lined with wrecks. Travellers by land had been subjected to great inconvenience, by the partial floods which they frequently encountered in a country so inundated as North Friesland and Zealand; but the threatening aspect of the sky had been lost on Marie, who had seen in it but a spirit congenial with her own sorrow; and she did not remember to have beheld, for many a day, the face of nature so gloomy and frowning, as when she opened her casement at dawn of St. Elizabeth's Eve.

The incessant north winds had crippled the finest trees, unroofed cottages, broken down fences, and, by causing many fires in the villages, had given the whole line of coast a sadder appearance than ordinary, even at that time of the year.

“Again a bad day for the traveller by land and by water,” sighed Marie, as she gazed towards the sullen Zuydersec, whose dark waves were ever and anon crested with a wreath of snow, and on the lofty trees around the castle bowing to the blast. She listened with a palpitating heart to the wailing of the wind through the tall chimneys, the harsh and incessant gratings of the iron vane, and the heavy flap of the mourning banner, that still floated from the tower for the loss of its last lord.

“The gloom of the heavens,” thought she, “pervades all things in nature, even unto my own heart, that ought to overflow with joy. Does this portend some catastrophe to me and mine? Well, be it so; and let my life, troubled

in its beginning like this gusty morning, resemble it in its progress and close : be the omen for good or for bad, I accept it."

The wind rising in tornado on the plain, driving the dust in clouds before it, and howling along the battlements, forced Marie to retreat within her chamber, and seemed a melancholy answer to the mental interrogation her superstition had put to nature. Nor did matters mend as the day advanced : the fitful gusts of wind increased in violence with every fresh blast ; the spray of the sea was driven far inland ; everything creaked and shook in the storm ; and the few sails boldly hoisted on the waves, were, in an instant, rent into shreds.

So fearful a tempest existed not in the memory of the oldest fisherman. The distant roar of the angry ocean sounded like approaching thunder, and seemed echoed within the bowels of the earth. The trembling cattle belowed in the stalls, and the birds flew in rapid, capricious gyrations through the air, with cries

of disquietude, or sought the shelter of the steeples and turrets. Not a soul ventured forth who had no absolute need. In hall and bower—in the fisherman's hut, and in the burgher's comfortable tenement,—all watched the progress of the storm with astonishment and awe.

At Enchuysen, traditions of former sufferings caused the boldest to quail. The inhabitants of Medenblick, familiar by habit with the danger of their position, were now fearfully alive to it. Dort, too, and especially the many islands that crowded the coast of Zealand, exhibited the wildest terror among those accustomed to the rage of the ocean; and at Haarlem, the Spaar careered madly along, like a frightened courser, tearing away in its passage whatever opposed it. The day closed in earlier than usual; and the people became more seriously alarmed at the tempest, whose horror was increased by the growing darkness, and which, unparalleled as it was in violence, still seemed to gather fury with every instant.

Marie yet stood by the open casement, for all its defences had been wrenched from their sockets. She listened with indescribable feelings of desire, and yet of fear, for the sounds that should announce the arrival of Floris and her little Henry, and she offered up many a mental prayer that her lover might not have attempted to brave such a hazard. She had remained exposed to the inclemency of the weather for many hours, regardless of its severity, lost in the all-devouring anxiety that filled her bosom. The feeble light that glimmered in the lanterns placed in various recesses of the wall—for no torch or taper could stand the night even in the most sheltered spot—now revealed, and now left in darkness, her slight form, as she thus stood a prey to conflicting emotions, whose violence, contrasting with the delicacy of her frame, imparted a superhuman expression to her pale countenance.

Obeying a girlish impulse, which her years were still few enough to justify, Marie de Ma-

tenesse, in honour of the day which she anticipated would prove the most eventful of her life, had donned her bridal attire, that had not seen the light since the morning of her espousal. It consisted of a pale sea-green silk, adhering, according to the fashion of the time, closely to the form, so as to reveal its every curve from the throat to the waist ; but, gaining breadth as it descended to the floor, it fell in graceful folds, and lay in easy undulations about her feet—a style of costume peculiarly advantageous to the few blessed with the excellency of perfect grace of outline, and of these few, Marie, although somewhat beneath the middle size, was an exquisite type. Her long air, divested of the graceless pointed cap of that epoch, escaping all control, floated wildly in the night wind, which now blew with such a strength that it was with difficulty she could retain her position near the casement.

“ Sancta Maria ! what a night,” exclaimed one of the frightened maidens, clasping her

hands with fear,—“but, hark, is not that the sound of a horse’s hoofs clattering across the drawbridge?”

“It is—it is!” said Marie; then murmured in a lower tone, “thanks be to St. Elizabeth, they are safe at last.” She pressed her hands against her heart, as if endeavouring to still its beatings. “But no, it is not Floris. Sweet Virgin, have pity on me!” she exclaimed, in sudden alarm, as the door opened and the intruder entered the room, for, though his visor was down, she had recognised her tormentor, the old Lord of Oostersteen.

Loud as was the howling of the tempest without, the fierce tones of his voice domineered over the blast, as, raising his helmet, he shewed to the trembling Marie a countenance darkened by an expression of furious passion which it had never before assumed in her presence.

“You are a bold schemer, Lady of Mate- nesse,” he exclaimed, “who have dared to mislead a son from his duty to his father, and at-

tempted to steal a ward from his guardian. You look confused—frightened ; you shake now like the aspen leaf, and yet you are daring enough in venturing to cross *me*. You answer me not, madam, but you are discovered, and, what is better, defeated !”

Marie remained mute and still, like a carved effigy of despair—as completely without the power of giving her feelings vent in tears, or words, or even signs. One of her women, the youngest yet the boldest, came forward in her stead.

“And is this the time for a brave knight to come and terrify a helpless lady, when the meanest hind keeps within the shelter of his hut, and the very beasts creep to cover? But, well is it said of you, bad Lord Wonter, that you neither fear God nor man, and never spare woman.”

“Silence, maiden !” shouted Oostersteen in a voice of thunder, that caused the women to huddle together at the other extremity of the

narrow chamber, like a timid herd of deer. "Your speech smacks of a boldness that courts chastisement. Marie de Matenesse," he continued, in the same abrupt stern tone and manner which he could on occasion assume and maintain, "most solemnly do I assure you—mark well my words—never shall Floris be your husband—*never* shall your child be restored to you—*never*, do you hear me? and no later than to-morrow will I claim this castle in my ward's name or *my own*."

Marie lifted her hands to Heaven in silent agony.

"Yes," continued the old man, with savage triumph, "to-morrow you may wander whithersoever you please; your late husband fixed you no dower—indeed, he had not left himself the power to do so—but as it is ——"

"I will go when and where you please,—I will do anything,—only, for mercy's sake, tell me, Lord Wonter, are they safe from this dreadful storm?" exclaimed Marie, in accents that might

have moved a heart of stone, but Lord Wonter's was proof against them.

"If my messenger reach the convent of St. Alexis in time, your son will remain *safe* within its walls." These words were spoken with a strange emphasis and smile, for which Marie was at a loss to account. He then added with renewed energy, "I have not power over the storm, nor the sea, the mighty overwhelming waves, nor the wind."

Marie and her women began to suspect that some strange influence had disordered the intellects of the Lord of Oostersteen ; a suspicion which the extreme excitement of his manner, usually so calm, tended to confirm.

"Well," he continued, after a pause, during which he appeared to reflect deeply, "prepare to deliver up to me this castle on the morrow, and should they even reach it to night, that will avail you nothing."

"If I were you, lady"—said the damsel who had already braved Lord Wonter.

"You would curse and rail at me like a spite-

ful toad as you are," exclaimed the knight, "but little do I care for women's curses."

"May those of widows and orphans never rest upon you," said Marie, meekly. "*I* will not curse you, but pray that your heart may be softened."

"Should they even come, I doubt if you would think of flight this night," was the only answer her words elicited. "Now, lady, I commend you to St. Elizabeth, whose fête has already begun so cheerily," and turning abruptly he left the apartment.

Beyond the drawbridge he found his faithful ally and attendant, awaiting his return with ill-suppressed impatience.

"Let us away with all speed, my lord," said the man eagerly, the moment his master came within hail: "the very furies of hell are loose to night,—we shall be happy if we reach the castle without accident—such weather, too, for paying visits to dames," he muttered, as he helped his lord to mount.

"If you were not all a pack of cowards, I

need not have done so, but I knew I could trust none of you to watch the castle, or prevent mischief; therefore, the next best thing was to frighten her out of her wits; for should that knave of a son of mine succeed in bringing back her brat to night, she will never dare take a bold measure, intimidated as she is, and if she but procrastinate till morning ——”

A tremendous explosion at this moment caused Wonter to pause. Something came crashing through the air, and fell within but a few feet of the barbican near which he stood. His high mettled steed started, reared, and then stood stock still, shivering through all his limbs, with his jet black coat covered with foam. The mourning banner, and part of the tall tower above which it had floated, lay in the dust.

“Prostrate is the house of Matenesse,” said Oostersteen, coldly, looking on the crumbling heap—“that of Oostersteen must rise upon its ruin. But now let us ride for it, for black as the night is, it will grow blacker ere morning.”

When they reached Terwick, Wonter ordered his man to accompany him to his apartment; and, seating himself within a recess of stone that had formerly contained an altar, but now canopied his bed, he addressed him in tones of placid content, singularly contrasting with the severity he had so recently displayed.

“So you are sure, Jost, the man you dispatched to the convent will have arrived in time?”

“He *must*,” answered Jost, with a savage smile.

“Well! so far, so good; and did he perfectly understand his errand?—for I would not that my son were delayed at the convent this night.”

“I ordered him as you directed. He was to tell the young knight to return in all haste, that you were dying of a fall from your horse and wished to take a last farewell of him; and to tell the monks they were on no pretence whatever to let the little lord go?”

“That’s right. And now, Jost, what do you

look into my face so like a fool for? By the blood of the Lord, you stare like a mad-man!"

"It is, my lord, because I used to fancy I knew you, and could guess your reasons for every action, however trifling; but ever since last autumn, a year and more, I am as much in the dark as a blind puppy."

"Well, Jost, for all that, I know you are a keen, clever dog, and I care not if I waste some breath in shewing you how what you and others may often have deemed folly, was the height of wisdom."

"Had I not better, my lord, look to the men in the guard room? They may get dead drunk to chase away fear, and in case of need we'd find them as helpless as a barrel of oysters."

"No, Jost; leave the men—we shall not want them this night, nor will they find it easy to procure so much liquor as that comes to. But say, did you not wonder at my selling the rich lands near Dort to a pack of boors, who

could not even give me their full value? Now listen, and wonder still more at my foresight and prudence. Do you remember the day when first the thought struck me?"

"Perfectly, my lord; and even the most trifling circumstances connected with that most extraordinary decision."

"Very well; looking mechanically into the ditch, as I was treading the path along it, my eye was attracted by the light striking now and then some glittering object within it. My attention became roused; but great was my surprise when, on closer inspection, I discovered this object to be a sea fish—a herring. At first I doubted the testimony of my own eyes—then, wondering how it could exist out of its native element, I was induced to taste the water—it was brackish. This was passing strange. I began to suspect something was wrong, without clearly understanding what. I next fancied the earth was softer—more yielding to the tread than usual; and wishing to ascertain the cause,

which I began vaguely to guess, I put my ear to the ground, when I plainly, distinctly, heard a hoarse, low, continued sound, that seemed to proceed from hidden waters. It was some minutes before I could account for all this in my own mind ; but, on casting my eye in the direction of the sea, a sudden thought struck me. It occurred to me that the dikes were being slowly undermined by the waters, which had found some secret passage through their foundations, and were stealing gradually into the bowels of the earth, making it soft and spongy. Time, or a sudden convulsion of nature—a tempest like this night’s, for instance—must inevitably enlarge the passages, and the land be overwhelmed by the mighty flood. Do you now understand me, Jost ?”

“Perfectly, perfectly !” said the man, lifting up his eyes and hands to Heaven. “That is why you would send after Lord Floris in such haste.”

“Yes ; the weather has been so rough of

late that such a catastrophe may be daily expected in that quarter, and I am mistaken if convent or castle will be able to stand it." Oostersteen's visage expanded into his *peculiar* smile as he spoke; and its expression, even more than his words, caused the whole truth to flash on his companion's mind.

"That's why," said he, after a slight pause,—
"well, my lord beats King Solomon, whose wisdom we hear so much about, quite hollow—*that's* why, then, Lady Aleyde is at Oostersteen, and little Lord Henry at St. Alexis!"

"I am not the master of the flood, Jost, nor of the tempest. None can say *I* harmed them."

"Just so!" said Jost, with a cunning leer.
"But, holy St. Joseph, what is that? It sounds like thunder, yet it is not; ah! my gracious lord, it is like the night of judgment. *Sancta Maria, ora pro nobis!*"

"But observe, Jost," continued Wonter, unmoved by his attendant's terror—"observe how success attends all my steps. If I can but

drive that pale-faced chit into a convent with whom Floris is so madly infatuated, I may then push him forward in the world. He is handsome—very—at least all women think so; he is foolhardy, too—nothing they like so well. There is our gracious lady of Holland, fair Jacqueline of Bavaria, all disconsolate for lack of a mate. The English Gloucester will hear no more of her than she would of the Duke of Brabant. Thus is she neither wife nor widow. This cannot last; and, with a little management, Floris might presume——”

“To become a sovereign?” said Jost, forgetting the storm for a moment, in his amazement at the boldness of the thought.

“No, not a sovereign; but I would for a time make loans to the countess—in short, get all her affairs in my hands—eh, eh, eh! Her jewels alone, if one could but get at them——”

The fury of the tempest at this moment rose to such a pitch, that the frightened Jost could neither give further attention to what his master had to communicate, nor even

remain in the large, gloomy apartment in which the spirit of the storm seemed revelling; and when Oostersteen came to this plain exposition of his designs for the future, he suddenly raised his eyes and found himself alone.

At this crisis of the storm the Lady Aleyde was wringing her hands in despair; for Gertrude had hovered between life and death for the space of many hours, and yet no succour whatever could be procured. Had the men been even willing to brave the tempest, it is more than doubtful if they could have procured assistance from the distracted village matrons; but nothing, they swore, should tempt them to sally forth, and Aleyde had nothing wherewith to try the steadfastness of their resolution. Gertrude bore her sufferings with an energy natural to her disposition; but the long suppressed bitterness of her feelings welled over in those hours of agony, and the curses Marie de Matenesse had spared Oostersteen were heaped upon his head by his own deserted child.

The alarm bells ringing from all the villages

around were occasionally distinguished from, and then mingled with, the howlings of the tempest. The roaring of the infuriated elements sounded like the trumpet of destruction, announcing to man the end of all things; and the lofty tower, at whose very pinnacle Aleyde and Gertrude had been deposited—their apartment consisting of a single room, only accessible by means of a ladder, which the men were careful to remove after their periodical visits—shook to its very foundation.

It was in one of the lulls of the storm that a feeble cry, mingling with the wail of the wind, announced that one more being had been ushered into life and to pain. For one moment Aleyde felt a sensation of joy; but when she looked at the ghastly state of the mother—bethought herself of her helpless position, and her own inability to afford assistance—the certitude that the poor infant would be an orphan ere the day had dawned, and probably perish for want of sustenance, made her shudder;

she leant over the sufferer in the vain hope of yielding her the comfort she did not feel.

“Keep up your spirits, Gertrude; your boy is safe and well. This fearful hurricane cannot last; to-morrow we can procure help, and, surely, when your father sees your child he will be moved to pity.”

“He! ever!” exclaimed Gertrude. “We shall both perish in this night of anguish! Do not be deceived, Aleyde, I am going; and before you can provide assistance the innocent spirit of my child will have joined mine. And is this what he or I had a right to expect? I! whose father is the richest in the land, and who yet should have perished with hunger, but for the compassion of a menial, and am now dying for lack of succour! Where is the velvet bed in which every female of my line has given birth to her first-born? Where the rejoicing vassals to welcome their young heir to life? Where is my mother—where my husband, who should have stood by me in my hour of trial?

far from me ! I am robbed of my affections—despoiled of my inheritance—and who is the despoiler ? my own father !”

“ Gertrude, do not excite yourself so fearfully,” said Aleyde—“ your looks are so wild, they terrify me.”

“ Let me speak whilst I may—I am dying, Aleyde ! dying through him. His cruelty has killed me ! But you will see him again—tell him—mind well, you must tell him my very words—let him hear that his daughter cursed him with her last breath !”

“ Oh ! do not die with such words on your lips,” said Aleyde, clasping her hands in supplication. “ A daughter cursing her father ! It is too horrible !”

But the fever of her veins had communicated to Gertrude’s brain. Her cheeks were glowing ; and her eyes were lighted up with an unnatural lustre.

“ I *will* curse him ! and the evil spirits that are abroad to-night shall record that curse.

He has lived but for gold—for gold he has killed me—may that gold, from this hour forth, never be his to enjoy—never—never! May he live to the extremity of life—a lord no more—rich no more—but that thing he himself most despises and abhors, a beggar. Do you hear me?” she screamed, wildly, “a beggar! a beggar!” and fell back exhausted—a corpse!

“Saints forgive her,” murmured Aleyde, “and there is not even a priest at hand. Oh! what will become of me?”

The flickering light of a lamp, protected from the eddying blasts by the deep recess within which it burned, cast ever and anon what appeared a bright effulgence compared with the darkness it revealed. The wind tossed about the dishevelled hair of her who had ceased to be conscious of all pain, and agitated her drapery in a manner that startled Aleyde, and made the appearance of death still more awful.

Now the storm burst again as if it would

sweep from the earth everything living and breathing that crawled upon its surface. The crashing of parts of the building, as they were rent and driven down one after the other, crumbling to the ground, and the roaring of the mighty element, which, forced from its bed, came thundering on like the Angel of Desolation, mingled together in horrible confusion. But more dreadful to the ears of Aleyde than the wind and the ocean, was the plaintive wail of the helpless infant that lay on its mother's cold bosom, and she had no means—not one—of yielding to the cry of despairing nature that assistance which her woman's heart bled to afford. She cried—she shouted through the windows—in vain. Could any human sounds have been heard that night, there were none by to hear. The gates were thrown open—the drawbridge down—the stables deserted—every man had fled—the very dogs had broken loose and sought safety elsewhere. She looked down the trap door, leading from her chamber—the

men might have forgotten the ladder, and have left it in an erect position—but no, it had been withdrawn; and the space from her floor to the guard room beneath was a fearful chasm. Thus alone—unsupported by human sympathy, the bond of mutual suffering that robs even death of its worst terrors, Aleyde prepared to die; or, what is more awful still, to wait for death—to watch its coming inch by inch—nearer and nearer; she crossed her arms on her bosom and wept, not that she was to perish, but that she was alone.

But though unseen by the wretched inmate of Oostersteen castle, thousands were, at that moment, sharing her terrors and encountering the same doom. The messenger sent in such haste by Wonter to the convent of St. Alexis, had but arrived in time to threaten the poor monks with the consequences of the error they had committed, in delivering over their young charge to the son of his guardian; but as the day advanced their fears of man gave way

before that of the contending, infuriated elements. The messenger who had started off again in pursuit of Floris, turned in dismay, and followed the terrified monks from chapel to refectory, and from thence back to chapel, as disconsolate and helpless as themselves.

In fact, a more distracted community had never been: they clung to each other's robes, forming thus a long chain, and whithersoever the Abbot moved, all followed like a drove of cattle, using neither thought nor discrimination of their own. Their ashy faces and quivering limbs—their muttered aves and credos, that escaped the lips rather than the heart, overwhelmed as it was by blind terror—would have made them fit objects of contempt but for the awful scene of which they formed a part.

"It is the eve of St. Elizabeth," muttered the aged sacristan querulously; "I ever said some disaster would happen on her day. Her altar has been sadly despoiled and neglected. I knew the extracting of her precious stones

and the replacing them with false ones would bode us no good; and her picture has been allowed to rot in the dust—she has long been without an eye, and, of late, the rats have eaten part of her nose, but the holy father would never have her retouched, and now is this evil come upon us, and no wonder!”

“Oh, God, inspire us!” murmured the Abbot in accents of despair; “where shall we fly from the sound of thy wrath. Let us again to the chapel, my children, and mingle our feeble voices with that of the Lord—but hark! I hear a trampling as of men’s feet and horse’s hoofs hurrying by, and human cries, which the fearful hurricane cannot silence. See, some of you, if they need what little help we can afford.”

Not a monk stirred; and the Abbot would have repeated his command in vain, had not one of the novices exclaimed:—

“They are flying—perhaps some fresh danger is upon us—let’s hear the tidings.” And he rushed from the long gallery up which they

were proceeding to chapel, under the guidance of their superior.

The words and example of the youth wrought like magic. The long train of monks hurried on his footsteps, and for a moment the Abbot stood alone; but the next instant he was again surrounded by his scared brethren.

“The sea—the sea is upon us!” they exclaimed—“the dikes are broken down, and the waves are advancing with the speed of the wind! Men, women, and children, are all scouring the fields, let us also seek safety in flight.”

The confusion was, however, so great, and the design so sudden, that but few succeeded in putting it into execution; nor could mortal swiftness avail in the fearful race. The sound of rushing waters soon drowned the cries of man and beast. The certitude of their fate excited many to madness—some called aloud for wine with the fury of despair; others betook themselves to the chapel and clung by its altars.

Some wept and moaned like children—some hurried to the stables to betake themselves to flight. Alas! before the mule was saddled, the wine tasted, or the prayer half muttered, the ruthless element had enshrouded one and all in its arms of might, and hurried on its mission of destruction.

Jan Kluyn, the comfortable farmer to whom Oostersteen had been so anxious to sell a portion of his lands, when, at last, much to his wife's regret, he had suffered himself to be persuaded into the bargain by that wily personage, had settled in a thriving, lovely village farther inland, and on a position of some eminence near Gertruydenberg. Whilst, therefore, the waves were tumultuously breaking over the grey walls and Gothic gables of the cloister, and were dashing up against the tower of Oostersteen castle, wherein Lady Aleyde watched—which from its considerable height and strength stood isolated in the world of waters, like a lonely lighthouse in the midst of

the roaring sea—the unconscious inhabitants scarcely deemed the mighty foe so near.

“Go, boys,—secure the shutters and the outer gates well; and you, my girls, to your beads!” said old Jan, in a voice he meant to render cheerful and encouraging, but which died away in quivering—half-audible accents.

“We cannot, father—the shutters and gates fly from the hand in fragments; and as to seeking others, no man can stand against the wind this night.”

“Chastise those howling dogs!” shouted the father—“what are they making such an infernal whining about?”

“They are scraping holes in the yard, father,” said the youngest daughter, timidly; “people say that’s meant as graves for their masters.”

“Nonsense, girl—let the brutes be taught better cheer with the whip, if they wont hear command.”

“Oh, father! such a night as this, who would harm man or beast?”

The father felt the rebuke and was silent—the sturdy sons moved not—the force of the appeal was understood, and the consciousness of their own weakness softened even those rough, untutored hearts, towards the helplessness of a species weaker than their own.

“The bells are ringing fearfully,” said one of the boys, in a low tone, “as if the enemy were upon us.”

“The enemy is upon us!” said a couple of rustics, of Herculean mould, who entered at that moment, pale and quivering, like timid maidens. “He is upon us, by St. Elizabeth ! who this day brings us a curse instead of a blessing. The sea has broken through the dikes—Oostersteen and St. Alexis lie buried beneath the waves !”

“Then up, my boys!” said the father;—“help the maidens, and let us fly !”

“It is too late,” answered the youths ; “the waters are oozing beneath the sand all round us,—the ground yields and gives way under the tread—we are surrounded by the waters, go

where we will they'll overtake us. Let us rather prepare to die as we would have lived, all together." And the manly youths clasped Jan's daughters to their bosoms, for they were their affianced brides.

"Oh, my Mary! my wife—my friend—where is she?" said the husband, mournfully. "It was but a few days ago, that, yielding to her desire to be back at the old place, I gave her leave to go and try to settle the matter with the present proprietor. Oh, had I believed her all along, we should this very night have been snug inland, far, far away from these feeble dikes—but, perhaps you are mistaken, boys—one more effort—let's all up, and see what may yet be done."

The father and one of his sons ventured forth, but soon returned to the frightened group at the cottage.

"The boys have spoken but truth," said Jan mournfully; "the waters enclose us on all sides—we are done for, or I am much mistaken—the church steeple, even the roof is covered with

people who seek safety there—to attempt joining them were madness, they have scarcely sufficient room for themselves, and will suffer no sharers. Let us climb to the loft, and there abide our fate ! Thank God, my children, your mother and the boy are safe !”

They scaled the ladder that led to their lofts, and sat on the floor, hand clasped in hand, with tearless eyes and mute lips, awaiting what Providence had ordained for them, with that passive, unmoved resignation, which distinguishes the brute creation, the savage, and frequently may be traced in the uncultivated and the rude. It is one of nature’s loftiest instincts, which is often destroyed by the softening influence of reflection and sentiment. For a time the deepest silence reigned among them ; when the cries of the villagers, half drowned by the roar of the advancing tide, warned them that the crisis was at hand.

“Thank God,” exclaimed Jan Kluyn, “that my wife is safe, and the boy ! My children, commend your souls to Heaven !”

“But father,” murmured the youngest daughter—“if we took to the boats?”

“No boat can live this night!” said one of the sons, despondingly; “but we may yet escape; people have outlived inundations.”

“Hush, my children—kneel and receive my blessing—your mother will remember you in her prayers!”

The whole family knelt at the feet of its chief. No murmur, no wild burst of sorrow escaped them; and they, too, soon slept beneath the deep waters, that rolled on, urged by the tempest, engulfing castle and village in their irresistible career.

Oostersteen, unmindful of wind or wave, or rather fearless of the one, unconscious of the other, had, when left to his solitude by the retreat of his companion, opened the well-concealed niche he had caused to be made in the wall behind his bed, for the better secreting of the iron chest that contained his wealth, and which was so contrived, that he could, without with-

drawing it, open the treasure box, and contemplate its glittering contents.

“Yes,” he muttered, as his eyes gloated upon the amassed riches, “the pearls of the Countess of Namur were peerless, but for those of the Countess of Holland—I shall know no rest till they lie side by side in this same chest of mine. Surely they cannot fly to-night—besides, my son’s first care will be to come to me, and if I am obliged to use force—I *will*; and once this cursed storm over, I will take care they never meet again. There are fine rubies, too, in this chalice of St. Alexis—bah! they’ll never want chalice more, or I am a poor prophet. It was cunning of me—ay, very excellently cunning, to keep back the rest of my loan—if this storm break not through the dikes, and cut not further payments short, I am not the Lord of Oostersteen. Was I not wise to foresee all these things! But the chest is not more than three quarters full, and yet Aleyde’s jewels have been added since, and the moneys produced by the sale of my

estate.—Ha ! ha ! it will produce fine fish in future, and will be well worth the gold in herrings. Hark ! what do I hear through the howling of the storm ? 'Tis a horse's hoof clattering on the wet ground ! Who can be abroad on such a night ? By the Mass, I must look to this !" So saying, Oostersteen mechanically flung to the lid of his box, and ran with unwonted agility down to the hall—the frightened menials had deserted it, and thronged in the guard room.

"Ho ! my men !" shouted Wouter—"torches here—quick—torches to the gates,—and tell me who's without on such a night !"

Two or three rushed to the gate with torches, which, as they stood within the arch, looking out into the obscurity, flared wildly up for a moment, playing like the lurid flashes of lightning round their dark forms, then went out. From where Wouter stood, he could distinctly hear the pattering of the rain. It seemed to fall on an echoing surface, and the sound blanched his cheek.

“ Well, my men—what, or who is it ?”

“ A knight, my lord, mounted on a powerful steed, bearing a child in his arms, galloping across the plain.”

“ Hither ?”

“ No; he passed the castle as we looked out.”

“ Then saddle my brown horse, and mount—we’ll to the pursuit.”

“ To-night, my lord ?—No ! no ! no !” said the men, boldly and with one voice.

“ It is your young lord—he is on the brink of destruction ! Mount, I say, and follow me !”

So saying, the old lord advanced rapidly towards the stables ; not a man stirred.

“ Get to the horses,” said Jost, in a low tone, to the refractory troop—“ we need not go on this madcap’s errand with him, but Haarlem may prove safer on a night like this than the plain.” And he hurried after his master.

The men were soon mounted ; but no sooner had they passed the drawbridge than with one consent they made for Haarlem. The knight’s

horse, frightened at the tempest, combated for a time all the efforts of his master to guide him in the opposite direction, and at last, seizing the bit between his teeth, he galloped furiously along the road his companions had taken.

Meanwhile, Floris flew rather than sped towards Matenesse Castle. The very animal he bestrode seemed to feel the necessity of speed, for though covered from head to heel with foam, and bearing other traces of having been ridden fast and far, he still rushed on with unabated vigour, as if borne forward by the raging element behind him. On came the waters, and onward rode the knight; and for a space it seemed doubtful which would gain the advantage in the mortal career.

“Courage—courage, my little fellow,” said Floris, pressing his young charge closer to his breast—“do not cry so bitterly! See—yonder are the strong towers of Matenesse; you will soon be in your mother’s arms.”

Marie de Matenesse had taken refuge in the

chapel of the castle, which, from its situation in the heart of the building, surrounded by buttresses, walls, and towers, was greatly protected from the storm. Her women had all followed her thither, and even some of the men stood at the entrance.

Many tall lighted tapers were before St. Elizabeth's shrine, round which the maidens flocked, offering word upon word to the saint, whom they supposed all-powerful on that night; whilst the rudely carved, and indifferently-coloured image smiled vacantly upon them, according to the intention of the somewhat primitive artist.

Marie knelt alone and apart by her husband's tomb. Her sweet, pale face was bent over the stony hand of the knight's effigy, which represented him in the attitude of slumber, in full armour, with an open visor, displaying a handsome countenance, on which the bold, almost fierce, expression of the warrior was well preserved. His right hand still held the sword he

had loved so well to wield ; the other was extended with open palm, as if to grasp at some near object.

“ Henry, thou knowest I loved thee more than all on earth ! I shall not quail at our meeting, even should it be this night,” murmured Marie, as though the cold substance she invoked could either hear or answer her appeal. “ Yes—though I am grateful to him—have loved him perhaps,—it is not with the affection I bore thee—my first, my early love. Henry, intercede for him and for thy son ! May thy blessed spirit watch over them this night ! Sweet Virgin, protect them ! Henry—Henry ! I would not he were to perish too—the last of thy line—the living image of her thou didst love so well. Sancta Maria ! what a night !” she exclaimed, in louder tones, throwing back her head in dismay, as the storm shook the strong walls of the castle, and caused the banners and shields hanging on the walls to fall rattling to the earth.

“St. Elizabeth, it is thy eve!” murmured some of the females, faintly.

“We shall never outlive this night!” said Marie, clasping her hands passionately, “I shall never see them again—never know that they are safe! Hark! my maidens,—was not that a noise as of a galloping horse? No—I am again deceived. Henry, forgive that my soul clings not wholly to thine, as of yore! but my hand shall never rest in his, if——hark!—there again!—” and, rising to her feet, she strained every nerve to catch a fainter sound that mocked her ear in the loud din of the tempest; “but no—’tis but that fearful storm!”

Again she knelt—she prayed. She rose again—the damps of fear stood on her brow—her face was colourless as the stone against which she leant.

“Hark!” again she exclaimed, in the accents of agony, as, along with rushing waters, she distinguished the sound of a horse tearing furiously along. “It is—it is! Oh, Floris!

To the gates—to the gates, for mercy's sake!—unbar them this instant—I command!” The timid, fragile woman had suddenly assumed the energy of despair. “I command!” she shrieked the word, but the wind, eddying through the chapel, bore the sound faintly away. “Cowards! you desert me! Could Lord Henry rise from that tomb but for one instant, you *dared* not. My maidens, I entreat—I implore, for sweet charity's sake, help these weak hands to undo the bolts!” She rushed, as she spoke, towards the gate; none attempted to follow or to prevent her. As she reached the postern, the flying steed was clattering over the drawbridge. Her name rang in her ear—then a loud shriek; an awful pause ensued—and the tumultuous dashing of the element, breaking over tower and turret, and forcing its way through the apertures of the edifice, was alone heard.

When the morrow dawned, and the storm was lulled, which seemed sent to destroy the world, Dort was an island; and where once

bloomed smiling verdant plains, lay the Sea of Haarlem. According to the ancient chronicler, a hundred thousand souls perished; whilst miles and miles of land were thus torn away for ever from the industry of man.*

Lord Wonter and his men, as we have seen, reached Haarlem in safety; though, owing to the darkness of the night, the former was not conscious of riding in the same direction as the latter, nor did they enter the city together. The trusty Jost, believing that his lord had ridden towards Matenesse, and had consequently perished in the storm, did not keep secret his deeds and intentions; and the indignation of the citizens, many of whose relations had become purchasers of his lands, was raised to such a pitch at his having knowingly betrayed them unto so fearful a fate, that it would not have been safe to shew himself among them. Of this circumstance he was made aware by acci-

* For a more detailed account of the inundations of 1421, vide "Chron. of Jean le Petit."

dent ; and, overwhelmed by the blow that had fallen upon him, he concealed himself, not daring to divulge his existence. The widow Kluyn had heard how he had cruelly boasted of the bargain to which her whole family had fallen victims, and could not help remembering, when first she saw him after the catastrophe, that but for him she might have been in prosperity, and surrounded by those whose welfare constituted her happiness ; but she remembered—as a Christian should remember offences—only to forgive.

THE ANTIQUARY'S STORY.

MARGARET LAMBRUN.

MARGARET LAMBRUN.

JOHN STOWE, in his naïve black letter chronicle, records yearly, through many centuries, the following interesting facts.

“In this moneth (as afore) fell continually raines every day or night.

“This moneth of June, and also the moneth of July, was every day raine (as afore) more or lesse to the end.

“This yeare, in the moneth of May, fell many great raines ; but in the moneth of June and July much more, for it commonly rained day or night till St. James’ eve ; and on St. James’ day, in the afternoone, it had beguni again, and continued for two dayes together.

“In the moneth of November, December, and January, fell such raine that thereof ensued great floudes, which destroyed corne fieldes, pasture, and beast. Then was it drie till the twelfth of April, and from that time it rained every day and night till the third of June.”

The moisture peculiar to our climate, thus established past all doubt by the veracious Chronicler of this rain-favoured land, as it had been by Cæsar long before, may still be certified by any one of the many thousands of London idlers who may feel any curiosity or misgivings about the truth of his assertion. Nay, if he would ascertain it to a nicety, he has but to make it a rule to walk out every day for the space of one year, or thereabouts, without an umbrella, and on his return home when dry, make a cross against the days marked out in his calendar, and we shrewdly suspect the unmarked days would greatly preponderate in number.

It was in the early part of September, in the year of our Lord, 1587, the 31st of Elizabeth,

that, after some tolerably fair weather, the heavens began to shew evidence of that lachrymose propensity which the aforesaid Chronicler has so faithfully commemorated. One of these days in particular calls for our own especial notice.

It was twelve of the clock ; all dinners were over ; but still the thoroughfares were quiet. Scarcely was there aught else to be seen in the streets but the heavy water-spouts, tumbling in tiny cataracts down upon the foot-path, from almost every roof, or aught heard but the full, sonorous pattering of the rain as it dashed against the houses, or fell with steady vigorous aim upon the hard round pebbles that then paved the best parts of London. But such rain as it was ! Heavy, close, incessant, now driven like a cloud of spray before the wind, enwrapping all far objects in a glistening grey veil, now coming down in perpendicular columns of large thick hurried drops, which seemed aware, singly and collectively, that they were about to be

recorded to posterity, and that it became them to make the most of themselves.

A solitary individual was plodding slowly up High-street, in Southwark, with a carefulness which the style of his costume fully justified ; but which, alas ! seemed to avail him but little against the inclemency of the weather. The wayfarer was a middle aged man, but his whole appearance had something strange and startling about it, so as to come within the pale of the ludicrous, an effect to which nature and art had contributed in equal shares ; to the former he was indebted for the quaint fashion of his person, and to the latter for that of his dress.

He was tall and thin ; and the undue length of his nether limbs, and the exiguity of their proportions were set off to the worst possible advantage by the tight dark hose of the period, which, together with his puffy trunk breeches, of dull brown woollen stuff slashed with black, swollen out even beyond the exaggerated mode of that day, imparted to the wearer, from the

middle downwards, no small resemblance to a balloon. Above this protuberance appeared so tapering a waist—so tightened, too, by the black leather belt from which depended his sword, and arms so long and emaciated, swinging to and fro as he walked, and terminated by so very spectral-looking hands, that a philosopher would have paused involuntarily to ponder, as he gazed at him, on the possibility of spiders spiriting themselves into the human form by way of a frolic. But his head, resting jauntily on the top of a scraggy, crane-like neck, had nothing venomous in its aspect. His round eyes, hooked nose, and pointed chin, although boasting but little of grace or harmony, and, taken separately, of expression, yet produced in their combination a general appearance of great good-nature and hilarity, not unmixed with shrewdness.

He had carefully wrapped his short cloak—which was of more costly materials than the rest of his vestment—round his arm, with the

lining turned outwards, exposing thus his person, without the slightest scruple, to the pelting of the storm, that he might save his finery—a precaution which argued either poverty or an over-careful spirit. A close investigation of his physiognomy would have led to the latter conclusion, inasmuch as poverty seldom bears a contented or self-satisfied aspect, and much of both these feelings could be traced in the countenance of the cloakless stranger. Even whilst the rain assailed him most furiously, defenceless as he was against it, he occasionally smiled as though comforted by some warm thought within, that helped him, better than umbrella or Macintosh of our days, to ward off the cold moisture from without.

But umbrellas, jarveys, and M‘Intoshes were then equally unknown, as well as M‘Adam’s art of smoothing the asperities of roads and streets, for which the tender of foot must ever feel deeply grateful. The humble pedestrian, in the sixteenth century, had to struggle with

many difficulties, unknown to, undreamt of by the present happy citizens of this oft-metamorphosed metropolis. Like our friend of the brown jerkin, he was compelled to jump aside at every step to avoid the drippings from the roofs, or the heavy flap of some huge sign board, which hanging too low, threatened, as it swung in the wind, to catch the bonnet of the unwary passer by, especially if he were at all of an aspiring height. And as these boards were generally fastened to the extremities of long iron bars protruding almost into the middle of the street, the gutter by which it was divided, lying there apparently for the very purpose, generally received in its miry centre the unguarded passenger who sought to avoid the multifarious evils of the foot path. Such was more than once the fate of our wayfarer, as, startled now by one inconvenience and now by another, he endeavoured to guide himself unscathed through them. Many a smile did the rapid and often inelegant evolutions to which

he was thus compelled elicit from those who, snugly ensconced behind their casements, were the casual witnesses of his progress. A few points about his attire denoted him to be from foreign parts; but above all the manner in which he stared about him as he steadily kept his way towards the bridge, announced him as one not altogether familiar with the city and its environs.

London was not then what it is now, but Southwark might truly be termed in its infancy. Except a few houses and gardens extending along the river, and the already mentioned street up which the stranger was proceeding,—whose houses, gradually thinning, gave way, not far behind the pedestrian, to the bare, open country,—there was nothing yet of that second city now hovering on the skirt of the metropolis, and whose rapid growth may perhaps lead, at no very distant period, to rivalry with the mother town.

When the bridge came fairly in sight—and

that was not, thanks to the drizzling, misty weather, until he was right upon it—the stranger suddenly checked himself, and gazed wistfully at the frowning massive gate that guarded its entrance. But it was not the solid mass itself, flanked on either hand by a stalwart tower, its strength, nor architectural merits, that riveted his attention. Nor was he lost in the remembrance of those disasters which in times past it had helped to ward off; his mind was wholly, and as it would seem from the blanching of his cheek and contraction of his brow, painfully engrossed by the spectacle exhibited on its battlements. There, stuck on long poles that they might the better be seen, bleached a row of human skulls, holding forth but too forcible a lesson on the demerits of treason not to convince eight out of nine beholders into the most zealous loyalty. It was a lesson which, to surmise from the awed and horror-stricken meaning of his fixed look, the fascinated stranger was obviously grafting on

the tablet of his memory in never-fading characters. At last, he removed his eyes from the hideous objects of his prolonged contemplation, and, suddenly wheeling round, turned his back upon the bridge, and began hastily to retrace his steps.

He had not, however, proceeded twenty paces, when, struck by a new thought, his crest-fallen bearing gave way to one of renewed confidence, and once more pacing the bridge, but keeping his eyes steadily fixed on the ground, as though unwilling to test his resolution by a second view of that which had so sadly discomposed him, he darted at once through the gate like an arrow shot from the bow.

Having performed this achievement, he paused and looked behind him ; when, behold ! a similar archway—the same towers and battlements, with like decorations above them—met his fearful glance. Not choosing to linger in order to familiarize himself with these, to him, evidently most disagreeable novelties, he

hastened to pass the bridge house—a second gate, before which an enemy might be brought to an inconvenient stand, supposing the four towers which frowned on its front to be manned with merry men and true. Emerging from this dark portal, he entered the narrow passage formed by high, quaint houses encroaching on either side, and converting the bridge into an obscure and not very commodious street, shutting out all view of the fair Thames, and of the proud vessels that decked its bosom—nay, almost that of heaven itself; for, gaining dimension as they ascended, each floor overhanging that immediately beneath,—the upper stories, too, being adorned with turrets, curious, protruding gables, and out-spreading galleries or balconies,—the space they lacked below was in this manner amply made up above, at the expense of both light and air.

Although the stranger occasionally bestowed a look right and left, or rather upwards, at these tenements, still he remained thoughtful, and as

he approached the drawbridge he again paused irresolutely. "Yes" and "no" were visibly balanced in his puzzled brain; but the affirmative triumphed, as, with a still more thoughtful brow, he slowly paced between the massive chains. Beyond this third gateway the activity of the town began to display itself more satisfactorily than heretofore. People came and went with busy, active gestures, and as he looked up into the bluff but hearty faces that he met, the stranger seemed greatly comforted. He stopped before a very neat though small dwelling, cheerfully ornamented with sundry painted devices of lions' heads and monkeys' tails that ran round every frieze, and tugged at the bell-rope with an assured air, plainly indicative of a certitude of welcome.

"Master's not at home," was the answer that his queries elicited from a cross-looking old woman who had opened the door, but which she held in her hand ready for the bang she meant to give it the very next instant.

“And when may he be expected, good woman?”—inquired the visitor, with a very blank look,—“or rather, where is he gone? Perhaps I might find him out.”

“No you mightn’t! He is in the country at some friend’s, and will remain there no one can tell how long.”

“Worthy Master Ross so far from the Still-yard! I’ll never believe it”—said the spider-like gentleman, with an incredulous shrug—“that’s not possible!”

“If it an’t possible, it’s true,” replied the querulous dame, who viewed his woe-begone and perplexed aspect with no favourable eye; “but,” she added, prompted doubtless rather by feminine curiosity than any precautionary motive, “what is your name? I may tell him you’ve been here ’gainst he comes back, whenever that may be.”

“Oh! it’s immaterial,” said the stranger, reluctantly turning away.

This denial, aided by the instinctive feeling

of a mystery lying concealed beneath its apparent carelessness, roused the housekeeper's thirst for knowledge ; and after a moment's reflection, which allowed him to get a few strides a-head, she stood at his elbow, saying, in a softened tone—

“Master, sir, is always very particular to know the names of those who call when he is from home. He is indeed, sir—pray, please to tell me your name?”

“I wont, woman—that's flat!” impatiently exclaimed the stranger, and, shaking himself free of the old woman, he hastened forward.

Until now the stranger had, in spite of the weather, proceeded with a careless air, and exercised his visual organs without restraint ; but as he passed through the arch of the belfried tower gate, leading into the busy haunts of men, he grew more cautious in his movements, and a close inspector might have detected him in taking great pains to conceal the irrefragable evidence of foreignism 'about his person, and

as far as possible to screen himself from observation. But if indeed a foreigner, his familiarity with the complicated windings and turnings, leading through intricate lanes from behind Fishmonger's-hall, in a westerly direction along the Thames, proved that he was no stranger in London.

The Stillyard was reached at last; and having shaken out his mulberry velvet cloak, and thrown it over his shoulders, he pushed boldly into the building. His appearance there excited little or no attention, and he had to address the rough porter several times before he could obtain the unsatisfactory intelligence that Master Martin Ross had not been near the place that day, nor the day previously.

"Think you I may chance to find him at Blackwell Hall," he asked, with an anxious brow.

The man did not even deign a reply, beyond a shrug, which plainly intimated that he could not or would not tell.

“If you seek worshipful Master Ross, who resides on London Bridge,” said a whispering voice in his ear—and he felt himself at the same time tugged by the sleeve—“follow me, and I may chance to give you news of him.”

The stranger looked nervously round, and beheld a man at his elbow, whose dress and bearing had so decided a smack of the sea, that he unhesitatingly pronounced him the master of one of the many ships in the offing. There was nothing in his smiling, youthful face to awaken mistrust, and after having, by a sly glance, ascertained this circumstance, the stranger readily followed him through the busy hall into the court beyond, which was crowded with carts laden with wheat and corn, recently imported from Dantzic.

The cranes were creaking away lustily as their heavy loads swung lazily in the air; carters and packmen shouted to one another; respectable, self-satisfied, and evidently im-

portant personages stood watching these proceedings with careful scrutiny from a porch, consisting of a jutting fragment of the main building, which served as a granary or loft, supported by four pillars of wood; affording thus, in foul weather, a canopy for those whose duty or interest it was to superintend the movements in the yard. Few of these privileged personages even deigned a stray glance at the foreigner as he brushed by them, following in the wake of his guide, who received and returned a few familiar becks and nods, that shewed him to be no stranger there.

They reached the opposite wall, and gliding unobserved through men, beasts, and packages, slipped round the crane, and made towards another small wooden fragment of a building, littered with a heterogeneous mass of objects, the exact use of which it would require no small speculation and time to decide.

Into this shed the skipper conducted, and the stranger followed; when, placing themselves

in such a way as to keep the entrance in view, and yet to screen their own persons from observation, the younger broke silence.

“You inquire after Master Martin Ross—is it in the way of business or of friendship?” he demanded, in an earnest manner.

“Baith, my good maister,” was the reply, conveyed in an accent so decidedly Scottish, that no doubt could remain in the listener’s mind as to the nation to which the speaker belonged.

“Ha! a countryman, I see,” muttered the sailor, “perhaps, something more. Well, he must be warned. May I ask your name and business?”

“You may—but I’m no jist at leeberty to answer,” replied the other, with a scared look at the interrogator. “I’ve not been aboon twenty-four hours here, and every one puts that very same question to me. I am bound to say I don’t call that manners. But to my simple question no one will reply, however politely I

make it; and simple enough it is, too, I'se warrant."

"Not so simple as you fancy, friend," said the young sailor, with a smile; "however, I wish to surprise no man's secret. But if you be, as I suspect, what Master Ross himself is—I needn't say what, for if you are a friend you know it, and if not, the least said the soonest mended—you had better not tarry here, but be off as quick as you can. Master Ross himself is under a cloud for the present, and he does not like to shew himself much abroad; any small message you may have for him, however, I will take upon myself to deliver."

"Gude guide us!" exclaimed the stranger, in rueful tones—"what am I to do? I shall be quite lost in this great Babel, without my worthy friend and countryman. He was to have helped me through with my business, for I would fain make short work of it, and be off again as soon as I may; I know not another soul in all London. Well, to be sure, what a

sea of troubles I've fallen into ! Had he but let me know in time, I should not have been found here in a hurry.

“ Give me but a token by which he may know who seeks him, and he may, perchance, devise some plan to assist you ; I myself, perhaps ; but we cannot trust in the dark.”

“ Allah—Allah ! as the Turks say when they are in trouble—and that's not half often enough for their deserts, the dogs !—what shall I do ? Well,” he continued, after bestowing another long and anxious glance at the young mariner, “ I will trust you thus far :—one who has served the Turk, and now lives under an even worse master, but once had a gracious mistress, would give much to have speech of him before night-fall, for his heart is very heavy at having thus unexpectedly missed his friend.”

“ To-night ! that's too early—say to-morrow.”

“ That's too late for my wishes,” said the stranger.

“ Ay, but it cannot be sooner ; and perhaps

you had better, on the whole, depart without an interview."

"I canna' weel do that," replied the Scotchman; "I'll even tarry till to-morrow night; but when and where shall I again meet you?"

"At your lodgings—where do you stay?"

The canny Scotsman smiled.

"I'm no so free to tell that either," he said,—"can I not see you here?"

"Not here, it might be observed; no, not twice running at the same place. But say the Coal Harbour, at the same hour, eh? We are in no danger of meeting there the same faces as here, and it is but a step."

"Yes, yes,—I know it well; 'twixt this and Fishmonger Hall. I'll be there punctual enough, I'se warrant."

They now nodded significantly to each other, and the elder left the hut, the younger remaining a few minutes behind, in order that his late companion might gain the advance; he had not patience, however, to stay long, and in crossing

the hall they again encountered. Neither gave the slightest token of recognition, and whilst the Scotchman departed through the opening towards the street, the sailor hurried along the vaulted entrance leading to the Thames, and, careless of all the busy toil, of rolling barrels, cursing watermen, and sliding barrows, he leapt nimbly into the boat awaiting him at the foot of the steps, and the next minute was rowing lustily towards the middle of the stream.

His late companion was not so fortunate in extricating himself from the turmoil of the city, which then, as now, bore chiefly upon the river's banks. His brow was full of care; and he occasionally halted, and looked wistfully round, as if willing to take counsel of some one of the passing crowd. But it brought no familiar face to his eye, no familiar voice to his ear; and he proceeded, with a deep sigh, to skirt the Thames along the narrow, ill-built streets and alleys lying in the direction of Whitehall; for the many buildings of public

necessity, built on the water's brink, broke up the Strand between London Bridge and that part where the towers and massive structures of the nobility, divided from each other by the trees of their gardens, completely obstructed it, throwing their broad flights of stairs down to the very edge of the river.

No reflecting person could wend his way along the tortuous, narrow streets of the city, previous to the great fire, without being struck with the manifold dangers to health and safety with which their peculiarities of construction threatened the overstocked population penned within its limited precincts. The houses were, for the most part, built of timber, and left but scanty room between their opposite bases for the passage of heavy wagons. Enlarging as they rose, each additional floor projected further into the street, so that the occupants of the attics might, without difficulty, shake hands together, or leap into each other's balconies, if need or fancy prompted. Thus, with the aid of curious,

fanciful, irregular additions, which the caprice of almost every proprietor induced him to make, in the shape of turret, gable, or belfry, the streets above were choked up; and, not only were the purifying rays of the sun absolutely prevented from penetrating into the cold, dark region beneath, but the free circulation of the air was impeded; whilst the many blind alleys and closed courts that intersected the streets, were anything but outlets to the mephitic vapours stagnating in the regions where they originated.

The scanty proportion of dwellings to the number of the inhabitants, especially in those parts where traffic was most active, was such as to justify the poorer and more busy classes in cramming themselves into the smallest possible space. Thus, family upon family, trades of the most various, sometimes of the most offensive kinds, were huddled together, in a manner that may well account for the general insalubrity of London at that period, and the annual visitations of the plague.

The crowding, too, of this part of the metropolis together, with the horrid abuse of sanctuary granted in some of its most gregarious and intricate mazes, and many other imprudent, absurd privileges, that seemed granted but for the express encouraging and facilitating of crime, rendered the city insecure. Few indeed, if any, of respectability, ventured out on foot or unattended; and the occasional appearance of mounted horsemen—if gentlemen, with a swaggering train of liveried footmen at their back—or of staid personages on mules, attended by their clerks, if merchants—made our friend of the Spanish cloak start more than once from his abstraction,—lost in which, he frequently obstructed the way. At such times he would gaze after the riders with a concerned air, as if suddenly reminded that his pedestrian tour at once stamped him as one either little versed in the customs of the town, or of but slight standing in the world.

“But it is an act of common humanity,” he

frequently muttered to himself, as he slowly made his way through the many obstacles in his path.

His recollection of the localities now began to fail him. At every fresh turning, he was sadly puzzled how to proceed; but rather than put the simplest question to any one concerning the road, he would treble his fatigue by running up one street and down another, to find himself at almost the very same point whence he had attempted to diverge. He even more than once retraced his steps towards the bridge; but, still recovering himself, he pursued his weary way, until the streets narrowed into alleys, the houses became with every turn smaller, more dirty, less ornamented, and, as he advanced, the smoke began to issue from the doors and chinks instead of the chimneys.

The squalid, filthy, ragged population here hung idly about their premises, watching their ill-trained and half-fed urchins frolicking in the unwholesome gutters, or exerted their malig-

nity upon them, or upon each other. The scene of misery and depravity—misery unrelieved by industry, depravity in its most repulsive nudity—deepened at every step he took, and gradually assumed an air of mystery and cunning, that clad it with a garb of dread. The faces were no longer begrimed with the dust and filings of the workshop, but darkened by ferocity, or bloated with intemperance—the steps of the passengers were either ruffling and insolent, or creeping and stealthy. The females were scarce; and, such as they were, in pity one could have wished them in the cold churchyard, when the Scotchman entered upon the purlieus of Bainard Castle and the Savoy.

The latter had been once the palace of Peter Duke of Savoy, and derived its appellation from that valiant prince; and after having passed through the hand of some few noble possessors, had been adapted to the noblest of purposes, that of charity. It had been an hospital until suppressed under Edward the Second, when,

affording the disastrous advantage of sanctuary, it became not only the home of poverty and vice, but the refuge of crime. It was enough to make a stout heart quail to look up into the countenances there to be met with. The sounds, the sights were enough to try the toughest nerves, supposing either to belong to an honest fellow.

But toughness and boldness were not, as we faintly indicated, the leading features of our mysterious adventurer; and no wonder that he became paler and more pale as he proceeded. Still, strengthened by some powerful motive, he struggled against the inward feelings, and manfully kept his way.

Avoiding the meaner tenements, he was making straight for the palace, whose outline was but dimly visible through the unwholesome, foggy atmosphere, when a strong arm was suddenly, and rather roughly, passed round his neck.

“ You’ve been in Spain—so have I !” shouted

a rude voice in his ear. "Let's be buon comrades; I'll take you to a rare jolly place for roystering blades like you and me."

"Unhand me, ruffian," said the Scotchman, sternly, the blood mounting to his very temples at feeling the disgusting touch of his assailant. "Unhand me, I say! or, by St. Andrew ——"

"A Scotchman and a Papist! Ha, ha, ha!" roared the other.

A few slouch-beavered, raggamuffin rascals joined in the jeering laugh, and approached the embarrassed stranger, whose secret was thus rudely divulged. As they closed in upon him, and while he was struggling to free himself from the insolent grasp which still detained him, a tall black whiskered fellow, who seemed, from the style and condition of his apparel, somewhat above his comrades, endeavouring to convey to his debauched features a mild, conciliating expression, advanced apparently to his rescue.

“Leave the gentleman alone, can’t you? Don’t you see how much you distress him?”

This announcement was received with peals of laughter.

“I tell you he is one of us,” persisted the first speaker, still maintaining his hold.

“Will you let that Scotch lord alone, when I bid you!” retorted the second, laying his hand on the sword-belt of the other. A slight scuffle ensued, during which the subject of contention, gliding away from the scene of action, turned hastily towards the palace, not perceiving, until he stood in the first narrow court, that his cloak of fine Genoa velvet, which he had again carefully folded up the moment he found himself nearing the disreputable quarter into the heart of which it was his intention to penetrate, was missing.

More ruffled by this loss than by anything that had yet occurred, he hastily retraced his steps to the spot where he had left the disputants; but not a trace of them was visible, and least

of all, of the fair cloak. The sounds of boisterous mirth that filled the air sufficiently betrayed that the ruffians were making themselves merry at the expense of their dupe, at no great distance. His first impulse was to pursue them, and claim his property; but a moment's reflection convinced him how little likelihood there was of such a measure producing an agreeable result; and angry with himself at the loss he had experienced, more especially at the manner of it, he again turned into the Savoy, muttering to himself as he went along—" *Mea culpa, mea maxima culpa*, but I'll be d—d, if I'm ever caught in a mistake of this kind again."

To the small yards and turreted walls of the original building had been added, as expediency or choice dictated, here one fragment, and there another, until the back part of the palace was so blocked up with narrow courts and blind alleys, that it required much patience, and more sagacity, to discover any one individual dwelling in the confused irregular pile,

and no small degree of perseverance to penetrate into the main building. It is more than probable that the stranger who had so boldly ventured into these to him evidently unknown regions would have given up his object in despair, but for the timely services of a young lad, who, seduced by the promise of some few pennies—pennies, in those days, were worth half-crowns at this time—undertook to pilot him safe through the shoals of this perilous adventure.

“And now,” said he, when he had brought the stranger to the last inner court, “you have but to ascend those steps, pass that little door, then straight up the staircase—you can hardly miss that, provided you follow your nose; then turn to the left, and at the third or fourth door, you’ll find the woman you seek.”

“Well, if ever I’m caught doing another kindness to any one, and that on a rainy day, and in the Savoy!” murmured, disconsolately, the Scotchman, as he looked after his youthful

guide, who had no sooner clutched the promised pence than he disappeared like a skyrocket. "A pretty figure I cut—lost so goodly a cloak, too! Men are right, in England, to prefer the furred gown—they can hardly tear that off one's back. To meet a lady, too! A pretty fellow I am for such an adventure. Well, well, I have come too far to recede; but, catch me here again—that's all!"

So saying, he slowly mounted the slippery, foot-worn steps; and having succeeded in squeezing himself through the narrow, low, arched doorway, he came to another pause, and taking off his plumed cap, attempted to shake the wet from its once glittering tassels and gay plumes. But, alas! the feather was literally soaked through with the rain, the tassels dimmed for ever; and from his dark lank hair he felt sundry streamlets trickling gently down his neck, finding a sly entrance between the ruff and the throat. It was in vain he sought, like the privileged of the quadruped

race, to disencumber himself, by a few vigorous shakes, of the but too visible and penetrating tokens of the weather, that lingered in large bright drops on every part of his garments. He saw the case was a desperate one; and every efficacious remedy being out of reach, he resigned himself to his fate, and began to ascend the steep, rugged, winding stairs, rendered insecure by the loose and broken state of many of the flags. As he was cautiously toiling up this precarious ascent, a shrill female voice was heard from the passage to the right on the ground-floor, demanding what was the matter, and if any one were there? Upon which another voice, whose careless tones revealed juvenility, answered, from the foot of the stairs up which the speaker was probably peeping—

“Oh, dear, no—it is only a spider crawling up the wall! Bring your broom, granny, and we’ll soon brush it down.”

A loud peal of cracked laughter joining the

gay sound of the young girl's voice, it appeared that the granny had by this time caught a view of the stranger, and approved of the joke highly. A little annoyed at the disrespectful insinuation as to his outward properties which it conveyed, the stranger hurried on, and soon found himself in a long, narrow, cloistral passage, scantily lighted from a few small slits looking out upon the yard. Here were many blackened doors, from which time and filth had obliterated the numbers that had once marked the different wards of the hospital.

He knocked hesitatingly, then more resolutely at the first, the second, the third ; laid a regular siege to the fourth ; but all in vain—they were fast locked, and none came to answer his loud summons. Doubtless the reckless or miserable tenants were following elsewhere their diverse pursuits of gain or pleasure, as the case might be, and they were deserted for the day.

He stood before the fifth, a picture of blank perplexity, and was about to apply a fresh sum-

mons, when it was cautiously opened, and a timid juvenile countenance peeped at the aperture to ascertain the cause of this unusual disturbance.

“Pray tell me, my little lad,” said the stranger, “if you know where I can find a certain Mistress Finch, who ought to dwell somewhere hereabouts.”

“What do you seek her for?” answered the boy, without opening the door.

“For her own sake, not for mine, be assured of that, or I had never sought her in this stew of a place.”

“Have you any token—the pass word?” still persisted the boy.

“Then she does live here? Open the door without delay, there’s a good little fellow, for I have no more time to waste.”

“Not without the pass word, master,” said the boy, firmly.

The stranger looked puzzled, as well he might, for, in good sooth, he had clean for-

gotten it; but he had that day gone through a sufficient quantum of trivial annoyances to have tried a spirit more patient than his own, and so, without further ceremony, he pushed against the door with a degree of strength which the youth could not resist, and stood face to face with him.

Although scarcely above thirteen, the boy was tall and strong of his age, and determined not to submit tamely.

“You shall not pass further,” he said, with a glowing cheek and flashing eye, “unless you give the pass word;” and he put himself in such a position, that to proceed to the inner chamber the Scot must remove him by main force.

“Go—go, you foolish youngster,” said he, with a good-humoured smile. “By St. Andrew, but you are a cock of the game. Luckily I now bethink me—‘for the sake of auld lang syne’—ay, that was the phrase, or something like it.” And pushing aside his no longer resisting opponent, he entered the room beyond.

It was nearly as bare and comfortless as the first, but looked less dismal from the circumstance of the light pouring freely into it from its lofty windows looking out upon the Thames.

Its solitary occupant was a middle-aged female, whose mean apparel and faded looks harmonized well with the abode which she had selected. She started on seeing a stranger,—rose in haste, and with a somewhat flurried air; but the moment she fixed her visitor, she raised her eyes and hands to Heaven, as if in mute thanksgiving—then extended them towards him.

“And so we meet again, Roger Achamber! I had scarcely dared to hope this wish of mine would be fulfilled in this life.”

“I wonder you know me at once,” replied the new comer, “after the lapse of so many years, and altered as I must be—I had scarcely recognised you, Margaret, if I had not been prepared to meet you, and none but you in this place.”

“Grief is a canker-worm that blights even

more than time," answered the woman, solemnly. "I am altered indeed, but more so in heart than in outward looks, great as the change wrought in the latter may seem to you."

"I am sorry to hear it. Indeed, news from home, public or private, has been a source of much grief to me for many a long year."

"You have not then forgotten your country, your friends, and above all, your allegiance, over the seas? exclaimed the female, with visible emotion. "You are still the same kind, honest, faithful Roger *we* all thought you. Do you understand the full meaning of that *we*, Achamber?" she added, mournfully.

"I do, I do," said he, hurriedly, as if unwilling to dwell on a disagreeable subject. "*He* too is gone, I see it by your dress."

"Yes, I am a widow," she resumed, in a scarce audible tone. "All those I loved are gone—all but *one*. You have seen him in the outer room, have you not?"

"Yes, and a bonny laddie he is," said the

Scotchman, kindly, taking the woman's hand and warmly pressing it. "What a comfort he must be to you in your afflictions; he is a fine spirited boy. But tell me, Margaret, why do I find you here?—in such a place! I, a man, could scarcely make my way through it in safety—and you, who have dwelt in palaces——"

"This is one still," replied the woman, with a sad smile, "and it is besides, what few palaces are, a sanctuary. Here none may lay hold of me, and drag me forth for punishment on account of my creed, my feelings, my regrets. Here, too, my poverty is no sin—my tears, my sufferings, my very existence, are hid from the observance of men. But poor as this home may be, you are welcome to it,—welcome as a last hope sent from Heaven to cheer my overburthened spirit! Come, sit by me, and I will, for the first and last time since the weight has sunk on my heart, which must eventually break it, speak of my sorrows."

"That's right, my good friend," said he,

whom the woman called Achamber. "That's right—depend upon it, there's no better relief to sorrow than to talk about it, especially to those who can feel for one. And so let's sit down, and, in God's name, to business !"

An expression of displeasure, which gradually gave way to one of deeper sadness, overcast the countenance of the female as she listened to her companion. They sat down, opposite to each other, on the stone benches occupying a parallel position in the deep embayment of the window, commanding on a clear day the opposite shore of Southwark, and a fine view of the noble Thames, curving towards Whitehall ; but which generally, and on the morning in question more especially, assumed the appearance of a vast ocean of fog, whence, at rare intervals, a near mast indistinctly loomed.

It were hard to say whether the female had been wounded by the word "business,"—so offensive to feminine organs, especially when applied with reference to themselves personally,

or anything connected with them,—or if the giving vent to feelings so long pent up within her own bosom were an effort to which she scarcely felt equal, but it was some minutes ere she broke the silence, which her visitor devoted to a closer examination of her features. He remembered her a tall, comely, though somewhat masculine woman, with fine lineaments and finer eyes, whose impassioned expression had frequently betrayed the inward fire which the reserve of Scottish manners sought to veil. Nought of youth and beauty now lingered about her countenance or person. An ashy paleness contrasted harshly with the widow's weeds she wore, and the few locks of hair that straggled from beneath her cap, though still retaining the raven blackness of their pristine hue, betrayed here and there the marks of time or care. The bold contour of her physiognomy was disagreeably exaggerated by thinness, and her deep-set, dark eye gleamed restlessly from beneath the harsh brow, speak-

ing in but too legible characters the fever that preyed on the unfortunate woman's soul.

"Well, Margaret, you wished to see me, and I am here, ready to assist you with all my might and main if you would but tell me how," said her guest, at last breaking a silence which he began to feel irksome.

"Ay, true," said the woman; and starting as if from a dream, she removed her own keen glance from the good-natured, friendly face she had been anxiously scanning, and suffered it to wander from object to object till it finally settled on the ground. "True—most true. Well, you have prospered abroad I hear, and have probably bound yourself to the land of your adoption by the strong ties of domestic affection."

"No; I am still a bachelor, and, please God, mean to remain so to the end of my days," was the answer, given with a sly, meaning smile. "You know well enough, Margery, that when I was a poor, penniless lad, the lassies did

not take to me ; now I am comfortable and well off, I do not mean to take to any of them. So, you see, I am pretty much in the same predicament with the merry miller of Dee—

“ I care for nobody—no, not I—
For nobody cares for me.”

“ I see your early disappointment has sunk deeper into your mind than I at the time imagined it would. You were aye light-hearted, Roger !”

“ But not unmindful of injury nor ungrateful for kindness—that’s why I am here to-day. You and yours have ever been friends to me, even when it went hard enough in this world with poor Roger Achamber—ay, even before we had all the luck to enter the same service. Ah, me ! I have never forgotten those days of careless childhood, when we played together on the heath of our native hills.”

“ Nor, I hope and trust,” eagerly interrupted the woman, “ those which we spent in Holy——”

“ Stop, stop !” interrupted Achamber.

“Nor,” persisted the woman, “those which we spent in——”

“Hush, hush !” urged the visitor, with a look askance towards the door. “We cannot be too cautious in talking of those times.”

“There’s no danger,” replied his companion. “My boy keeps watch without, nor is this the place for spies. Surely you are not ashamed, Roger, to name the home of your young days—the mistress,” she added, with a bitter smile, whilst her dark eye rested upon him with a slight yet irrepressible expression of scorn—“the mistress whose bread you have eaten?”

“Not exactly; not ashamed, but afraid, Dame Margery. Yes, despite your frowning look, I will say afraid, and think it no stain on my manhood. By my troth, I saw a sight on the bridge to-day that is enough to make a man of prudence and substance—I say substance, too—look twice to what he says or does in this fair city.”

“I thought as much,” said the female, after

a pause, during which she evidently struggled to repress some ungracious expression of displeasure. "You were ever prudent and cautious, Master Achamber."

"Had I not been so by nature, experience would have taught me that lesson," responded her companion, gravely. "A slave once to the Turk, and now scarce anything better in my quality of subject to the Spanish king, I have learned to bow my head and keep my own counsel."

"So much the more fortunate for you; but that is not my way, Roger. I cannot bow my head to crime even when enthroned."

"But to the dispensations of Providence you surely can, and ought, Margery."

"I am afraid I *cannot*," answered the woman, with a wild, almost fierce look. "No; I have tried to conquer my rebellious thoughts, my brooding heart—but I cannot. The spirit of my ancestors is roused within me at the bare thought of my trials, and of my triumphant enemies!"

“I hope not,” hastily exclaimed her friend, shaking his head reprovably. “If our traditions speak true it was no gentle one. Your forefathers oftener drew their dirks than be-seems good Christians.”

“May be, may be!” she said, impatiently; “but I, at least, have wrongs to resent.”

“To forget—to forget, Margery! Think you, when I was the bondsman of a vile infidel, cursed at, buffeted, reviled from morn till night, think you I might not have indulged in spite and hatred? Yet, so help me God, I never did! I toiled cheerfully—lulled suspicion to rest—made myself easy, and, when the opportunity offered, slipped the leash. Well, there was I,—a free man once more, it is true, but free to starve, had it not been for a good Easterling, who took compassion upon me, besides wanting me for the little of Turkish lingo that I knew. Well, King Philip is not a gentle master, God wot; and yet here am I, quietly anchored at Antwerp for a good time, as I hope, and well

to do in the world for all that I have known of hardship."

"It does not signify arguing upon the difference of our natures just now," said the female, hastily. "Yours is the happiest—perhaps, too, no less acceptable to God than to man—nay, I make no doubt it is so. But you do not know what it is to suffer through those we love. It is nothing to bear with personal injury, and personal suffering; but, oh, God! to see the anguish, the struggles of those a thousand times dearer than self—it is that which fires the brain, and maddens thought. You remember me in the days of early wedded felicity, the object of the most devoted attachment, when love gilded the darkness of poverty. You afterwards saw me basking in the smiles of fortune, for were not in those days *her* smiles and those of fortune synonymous? You have known, too, what *she* could be to those who shared her palace home, and can remember how she favoured us above all others; but you, who

have seen her and us but in prosperity, know not—cannot imagine, the tie that bound me by every fibre of my heart to that illustrious—that murdered ——”

“But,” interrupted Achamber, “when the death of her first Scottish husband broke up her household, I thought you had been dismissed as well as myself, and obliged, like me, to seek your fortunes elsewhere than in that dismal castle—so dark a casket to enclose so bright a pearl!”

“We were not with her in those few perilous and troubled days, but her bounteous hand was still upon us, and those that loved her well, at her request became our friends for her dear sake. Nor were we long exiled from her presence. We followed her here, and shared her captivity—would to Heaven we had shared her fate! It was then, and then only, that I knew what it was to love Mary Stuart. Start not at that sacred name—if indeed you be friend or countryman of mine, start not at the name of

the murdered, the unavenged! These walls hear it repeated in my orisons and nightly vigils, until the echo is as familiar to them as that of my sighs and groans."

"Say rather she was sacrificed to policy; and I fear, my good Margery, it is such blind enthusiasts as you who have caused her doom. Plot succeeded plot, and the plotters never perceived, whilst they sent head after head to bleach upon those horrid London gates, that they forced the axe into the hand of the executioner."

"Silence, silence! if you would not have me ——" The woman paused, but her flashing eyes so eloquently filled up the blank, that Master Roger Achamber started from his seat as if uncertain of his companion's purpose. Of her sanity, indeed, there was room for doubt, from the startling energy of her manner, and the fearful wildness of her look, but he checked himself as she motioned him to resume his seat with a lofty gesture.

"Forgive me," she said, "for my impetuosity;

but it maddens me to think that you, who have looked upon her day by day, who heard the tones of her voice, who felt the sunshine of her smile—to think that you can thus talk coldly of her death !”

“Twenty years’ absence from my home,” said Roger, soothingly, “have calmed the acerbity of my feelings,—influenced, perhaps, in some measure my views ——”

“Cooled your heart you should say—frozen the warm current of your blood,” said the woman; then, hastily checking herself, she added, “but no, were that the case, you had not been here to day. You cannot feel what I feel, nor even guess at the hundredth part of my sufferings. It was nothing to behold her surrounded by regal splendour—to grow in the sunshine of her power; but to see her day by day, in her time of trial, pining away in her youth and her beauty—a queen, a wife, a mother no longer, but an isolated, lonely woman, debarred from the pleasures of princes—nay, even deprived of those mere physical enjoyments which belong

in common to the great and the most despised of God's creatures—to sit, hour by hour, watching the tear of regret slowly stealing down her pale cheek as her thoughts reverted to the blythe days that were past never to return, or to see her cast a longing glance at the bright blue summer sky, beneath which Earth's children were rejoicing. But, oh ! that look—it spoke of such soul-sickening misery, that I have often wept the livelong day at the slow lingering martyrdom she was silently enduring—a look, a smile of irrepressible soul-wearing anguish were the mute appeals of her tortured heart. It was but rarely her lips disclosed its burthen ; but when she would confess her willingness to lay down the rest of a miserable existence for one short day of life under Heaven's free sun, that she might warm her frozen heart in its cheerful rays—to hear her speak of those happy times when her life was all sunshine, flowers, and love, and to see that peerless loveliness fade away in the dark, gloomy walls of a prison, where naught spoke of love but the tears of a

few trusty servants—then it was that I thought my own heart would break. She who had drunk in so many an impassioned glance that bore on its ray the soul of the chivalric, the handsome, the regal—her gaze now fell on the withered, downcast looks of a few sad followers, or the frowning brows of her enemies. Those fatal graces that had decked her brow with woman's fairest crown were fast fading away! To see her waste, day by day, in that hopeless solitude, her step grow more languid, her smile sadder, the tones of her voice falling more mournfully on the ear, like the cadence of some dying strain,—and yet to see her meek and patient to the last, even when years were added to years, and the best part of life's fitful dream was over, and the future a blank—a dread blank, which thought dared not to fill up,—all this, Roger, you have not felt as I have felt, or you could not talk of political expediency. When a hope, a faint ray of hope, penetrated to the poor sufferer's heart, it was but the mere mockery of destiny—the wound torn open to

bleed afresh. The eager swimmer, struggling for life, who sees the shore in view, friendly forms beckoning to him in the distance, life and hope in port, and whom the ruthless waves dash away in spite of his most vigorous efforts, knows not a worse despair than did the royal Mary of Scotland, when knight after knight fell in her cause,—when, one by one, the lights of her destiny were extinguished. Had you seen her thus—had you watched her, day by day, in her woe, as *we* did, you had better understood our love—our devotion.”

The woman paused for a few minutes, overcome with her emotions, but soon continued:—

“But when came the fatal day on which the news reached us that she was to prepare for death—she gave it us herself,—then, and then only, we knew our own hearts. Oh, that never-to-be-forgotten anguish! We thought—we knew, that we had no hope; and yet, when that last blow came upon us, then only did we feel that all was indeed over with us. Yet it

seemed too horrible to be believed—we deemed it the deception of a fiend. Can you image to yourself the horrors of the intervening days—the counting the hours of life, and marking them ebb away like the sand in the hour-glass, and death nearing with every one—the seeing her sit with folded hands, listening to the chimes that brought it nearer yet and nearer—to watch its coming—to hear, as it were, the flap of its black wing? How she—how we bore it, I know not. Then that last morning, concentrating in its short and flitting space the agony of years of thought—that last toilet! She bade me braid her long tresses with more care than usual. ‘Never will your skill be again tried on poor Mary Stuart!’ she said. ‘Margaret, do your best.’ Oh! the feel of those soft, long tresses, the only diadem that had still been spared of the many Fate had given! As I gazed on their dark waves, I fancied them already clotted with the crimson stains; and when chance brought my hand in contact with

that snowy neck, I shuddered as though an aspen had stung me. Words can never—never tell the feelings of that hour! More than once I would have given up my task in despair, but for her look, so fraught with reproach and sorrow. ‘Grieve not, my trusty Margaret,’ she said, ‘they who have left me nought but life, which they have made worthless and desolate, may take that too. But if the woman has wept, the queen must not. At this awful moment, let not those who still love me try my courage by their weakness.’

“Her injunctions nerved me; but what a task was that of performing those every-day duties whose frequent recurrence makes almost mechanical, but which such circumstances invested with a nameless, sickening importance. That mourning robe which never was to fall again from that regal and lovely form—it felt in my hands like a pall. It was death divested of all the worldly pomp with which it generally approaches princes—devoid of the common sym-

pathy and Christian charities that soothe its approach to more ordinary mortals. It was an appalling death, to be encountered alone and unsupported ! The sound of that castle bell, as it doled out the last fragments of time to the unfortunate queen, has haunted me ever since ! I fancy I still see her raise her drooping head, and listen to the strokes with a sweet, sad smile ; and none were by to witness or record her lofty resignation but a few faithful menials. Where were the friends—the allies—the subjects whose life-blood should have been shed ere one drop of hers was suffered thus ignobly to flow ! Then came the cold summons—a few dark, grim satellites conducted her to a blackened hall, where three hundred *English gentlemen* had assembled to witness severed by the glittering axe the head of a woman—of a beautiful, a crowned princess ! What a feat of chivalry ! I cannot tell you the rest. Ever before me, in the tedious watches of the night, in the long, weary hours of day, it was a sight

that has blasted my mental vision. All the anguish that preceded—that followed—is alike lost, forgotten, engulfed in that one awful moment! *His* faithful heart broke when hers ceased to beat—the horrible scene was too much for him—the same stroke that ended her chequered, wretched existence made me a widow!”

“Alack! alack! poor queen!—her cruel end may well atone for all her——” The Scotchman paused, as the eagle glance of the female encountered his own; and obviously anxious to soothe her irritated feelings, he substituted another expression for that which had nearly escaped him—“all her errors. Poor Margery! it is no wonder that such sorrows should have well-nigh turned your head!”

“At times, I fancy they have done so,” she replied. “The remembrance of that one horrid deed never departs from me. It fevers my pulse, and lies heavy on my heart. Never can I escape from that one dread image, but when one more horrible still rises to my mind. I

have wrestled with the thought until my strength is spent. I may struggle no longer—it has conquered me!”

“And what may that be?” inquired her listener, with an anxious, eager gaze.

“It matters not,” answered the woman, with an impatient wave of the hand—“it matters not for the present.” And she drew a deep breath, as if exhausted with the vehement outpouring of her feelings.

Roger Achamber, much affected with what he had heard, looked on her with a mingled expression of deep commiseration and doubt, which resolved itself to one of solicitude, as, taking her hand gently in his, he said—

“You have suffered much—but let bygones be bygones, as we used to say in our bonny country. You were ever a mettled, high-spirited lassie; but where is the use of grieving overmuch, or of indulging in dark and gloomy thought! You’ve wept the dead—turn now your thoughts to the living.”

“It is kindly meant of you,” said the woman,

rising—"you mean well by me, but you cannot understand me, Roger; I should have known this ere now; nor has it lightened my grief to pour it into careless ears. I will even speak the language you best understand. I am in need of your assistance, and for the sake of auld lang syne I make bold to claim it. I have neither husband nor home, nor even a friend left to care for me or my helpless boy."

"I guessed as much—you are poor—nothing has been left you?"

"Nothing—absolutely nothing. For months naught has been 'twixt me and starvation but the few trinkets *she* gave me during the many years of my service—not one remains to me now."

"I guessed as much," repeated the merchant, pulling out from his inmost vest a long leathern purse well filled with gold pieces—"lucky it is that the swash-bucklers who stole my cloak took not this also."

"Nay—nay—put up your broad pieces," said

the woman, motioning the proffered purse haughtily back.—“It is not a few gold coins that I stand in need of—it is more, far more than that. Not the paltry charity of an hour, but the fate of a life—such, Roger Achamber, is the boon that I ask at your hands.”

Something of the impassioned, wild expression of her fierce, dark eye, faded as she spoke, and gave way to one of eager, almost impatient anxiety, as if her very soul hung on the answer.

“Whatever I can, that will I most certainly do,” said Roger, “nor is that little, for I am—yes, to you I may say so—rich—very,—and have no kith or kin of my own to hinder me from doing what I please with my gains. But listen to me: I have formed a plan of my own for you and the laddie, which, I think, will do as well as another, if not better. What say you to following me abroad, where I will make you as snug as possible, and we’ll bring up the boy between us to be a comfort and an honour to you.”

“Something of this sort I expected of you, Roger, and will accept your offer in the spirit in which it is tendered. As for myself, my lot in life is cast; all further care bestowed on it were vain and unavailing. But I have one more duty to fulfil in this world ere I quit it, and nothing must interfere with its performance. It is for this that I would speak with you, for this that I sent you a message through the Dutch skipper who brought you over, for when he mentioned your name perchance in my hearing, I fancied, I hoped that it might be yourself of whom he spoke. I had not forgotten you, Roger, even through so many years of absence, and trusted you would not refuse to come to me. Now you are here, let me briefly tell what I would have of you. I wish to give up to your care my only son—my poor boy. He is intelligent and high-souled, but gentle withal, and quiet as a lamb. He will give you but little trouble, nor will he require your fostering care long; for though but a boy to-day, a very few years will make him a

man, and enable him to take care of himself. Will you grant me this boon?"

"But surely you will not part from your child," gently insinuated the visitor—"especially seeing there is no cause."

"There is cause—great cause," said the woman, sternly. "If you will grant what I demand, do so at once—unconditionally; take my boy and a mother's grateful blessing with you, and ask not further after me or my ways."

Master Roger Achamber would willingly have remonstrated further, but there was something about Margaret Lambrun which froze on his lips the words he would have uttered.

"I see, by your silence," she continued, "that my desire meets not with your approbation—that you would fain sift my purposes and views. That may not be, Roger—for your own sake and his."

"I'll be a father to your boy," said Achamber in answer to the anxious searching glance of the mother. "A son in everything shall he be to me;

but, of course, I am not going to remain here any longer than I possibly can help. Skippers know my name, it would seem, and go hawking it about in low places, the haunts of those who would not, perhaps, scruple to deliver me up as a Papist and a plotter, when, God wot, I am nothing of the latter and less of the former than, in good sooth, I ought to be ! But times like these we live in harden the heart, Dame Lambrun. Here one may not be a Catholic, and over the water one dares not so much as look on a Protestant ; whilst further south Paganism is all the go, and one mayn't be a Christian at all. Well, it is a cross world we live in, where we can't all be at peace, and love one another after God's own law—but then men's fashions differ. Let not that distress you : I shall soon have gathered enough money to serve me for the rest of my days, and mean to return to bonny Scotland, where I will settle in a handsome house of my own, with, may be, a stone shield over the door, bearing my coat-of-arms—and the boy may

share it with me, too, an' he like—though I'm afraid mine is but a quiet life for young blood like his."

"My boy has been nurtured in silence, solitude, and sorrow. He drew his first breath within the walls of a prison, and never crossed its threshold but to pass into the scarcely less gloomy confinement of this sanctuary. You will find him all you can wish—and as for your plans, they meet my inmost desires on every point. You cannot leave this place or return to Scotland too soon to gratify me. Mary—Mary!" she loudly called, and the next instant the boy, who had hitherto stood sentinel in the outer apartment, was at her side.

"Mary, my darling, look up; Heaven has sent you, at last, a friend and a protector."

The lad did as he was desired, and raised his mild blue eyes to the whimsical countenance of worthy Master Achamber. If the latter had already been struck with his prepossessing exterior in the cursory glimpse he had had of

him during their short discussion without, he was still more, though not agreeably so, now the light, such as it was, revealed to him more fully a face of remarkable, though feminine beauty. The singular delicacy of the features and complexion harmonized well with the pensive, soft, dreamy expression which they bore, and with the flowing ringlets that framed the pale thoughtful brow.

“That lad wants air and exercise sadly,” thought his new patron, as he took cognisance of the boy’s appearance with a long, examining glance. “There’s no life under that white skin,—no promise of manhood in that dulled eye and fragile form. It is a sickly plant, and must perish, if not speedily transplanted to a more vigorous soil.”

A slight shade of disappointment might have been traced in the mother, as she beheld her son the object of less admiration than she, doubtless, thought his due. But she soon mastered the womanish vanity that lurked beneath

that passing feeling, as she listened to the simple, but hearty words that escaped her visitor.

“I will be a father to your child, Dame Lambrun; you need be under no apprehension whatever, either as to the present or the future, should God grant that I live to perform my promise.”

“A promise such as that, given to the orphan and the widow, is a solemn pledge,” said the woman, with emphasis.

“I mean it as such, most assuredly; and if his departed parent’s spirit be hovering around us at this very moment, as our creed teaches us to believe possible, I cannot speak the words with more sincerity.”

“God hears and will record the promise, and will not forget the deed. I have but thanks to offer, and can express those but poorly.”

“Mention them not at all, Margery,” exclaimed Achamber—“we understand each other thoroughly. But why should the boy lose one parent because Providence sends him another

in the place of him he has lost?" he continued, lowering his voice to a whisper, as he led the reluctant woman somewhat apart, that, if possible, the boy should not overhear his words. "Come, Margery—what on earth can chain you to this country now?"

"Question me not—you must not—shall not know. It is on account of what I have to do that I am so anxious to part from my only child. I have prayed morn and night that a friend might be raised to him from this wilderness called the world, that I might, unfettered by any earthly tie, follow the promptings of my own heart; and, lo! my prayers have been heard. A friend has risen even at the last hour, and is this not a visible sign that Heaven itself smiles on my wishes, and permits their execution?"

"Many a fallacious design of our hearts here below may be considered the instigation of the Evil one, rather than of Heaven's inspiration," said Achamber, gravely. "Take heed, Margery, that yours be not of the former."

“I tell you, man, I have wrestled with myself in vain. Whether it be for evil or for good, what I would I must do. Those who would seek to hinder me, would do so at their peril.”

“I hope you are not engaged in any plots?”

“It matters not what I am about, and least of all to you, Master Achamber, of whom, if you keep your own counsel, none will ever be able to say that you were in any way connected with me. Mary,” she said, striding up to her son, and taking him by the hand, “Mary, I am about to yield you up to this kind gentleman.”

As the boy turned his head gently away to conceal the burst of natural grief which the bare mention of this sudden change in his fate naturally enough called forth, Roger Achamber exclaimed, with surprise:—

“Mary! but that’s a maiden’s name!—how comes your boy to bear it?”

“*She* was his godmother,” was the answer, which Margaret Lambrun delivered in a husky, smothered tone. “She blessed him at his birth,

and gave him her name—Mary Stuart is one which no deed of my son could make him worthy to bear.”

“Ay! ay! ’Twere but a poor shield against harm in these days, my good dame, and might raise him more enemies than friends—in England, at least, he must not bear it. Come, my bonny laddie,” he continued, in a more encouraging tone of voice, “come, do not be down-cast; a man cannot stick for ever to the apron strings of his mammy! Come with me, and you’ll see more of life in a fortnight, than you’ve yet done in your whole days, I’ll warrant you.”

“And, Mary,” added the mother, impressively, “I give you up altogether to this gentleman—my early friend, and that of your father. He was, too, once *her* servant as well as ourselves. I give you up to him *for ever*. Your love, your duty, your obedience must be transferred to him, in the same measure as it now belongs to me. From this hour, when in his

generous kindness he has adopted you, a friendless, helpless orphan, you are as much his as though Heaven had wrought the tie between you, and angels blessed the bond."

The boy could resist the tide of his feelings no longer, but flinging himself on his mother's breast, he sobbed aloud. The stern woman was moved, and folded her child in her arms with a look of utter despair. Master Achamber, wisely deeming that the pleadings of her own heart might do more than all his eloquence, charm he never so wisely, determined to yield her up to them; and he came to this resolve, the more readily that he was one of those men who, having but seldom occasion to give way to their emotions, disliked above all things to have them brought into play at any time.

"Well, my good dame," said he, "I cannot take the boy thus upon my hands without any preparation whatever. I will leave you to make what arrangements you may think necessary, whilst I do the same thing my own

way, and to-morrow, since you know my lodgings so well, you may bring him to me, when we may have some more talk respecting our mutual plans for the future. The parting, too, will, perhaps, come off all the easier."

"You are right—quite right," said the mother, gently disengaging herself from the boy's passionate embrace. "It is best as you say—I have neither leisure nor means to attend to external arrangements of any kind, and leave all that to you, kind Roger; but I will employ the few hours that you thus afford me in preparing him to receive with gratitude and joy the benefits you are about to confer, and for the new life which is opening upon him. To-morrow, then, at an early hour, Mary will be with you."

Achamber, whilst in the act of taking leave of his young protégé, glided, unperceived by the mother, a few gold pieces into his hand, with a significant glance at Dame Lambrun, which the child, by his slight, almost imper-

ceptible nod of acquiescence, evidently understood. His obvious—nay, ungovernable joy, as he pressed his slender fingers tight over his treasure, would have convinced the worthy visitor of the need in which the mother and son stood of pecuniary aid; if, indeed, their pale, wan appearance had not already revealed it to his keen apprehension.

As he stepped into the outer chamber, Dame Lambrun followed him alone, where, laying her hand upon his sleeve, she detained him for a moment.

“God bless you, Roger, for what you have this day done for us—I never can; but let what may befall me, you have reaped the thanks—the prayers of one who is still innocent. Think of that in after-times, and be indeed a father to the orphan.”

He would have questioned and remonstrated further, but pushing him with a gentle force from the room, she bolted the door behind him,

and he found himself once more in the dark, narrow passages of the Savoy.

At that period, as we have said, the main part of the ancient structure still existed, although its courts and wings had been so gradually widened, extended, and added to, as to form an aggregate of blind alleys and intricate passages, not always, as we have seen, agreeable to a chance intruder; but towards the Thames the palace still retained its original features, its irregularly pierced windows, its turrets, and two main towers, through the left of which a gate opened upon a broad flight of steps descending to the river, where boats generally lay in readiness. It was to this point that Master Achamber now bent his steps; choosing rather to brave the wind, and the fog, that hung low, on the water, than incur the risk of retracing his way through quarters of such questionable respectability as the purlieus of the Savoy.

Before, however, quitting for ever, as he

hoped, this abode of misery and vice, he had the curiosity, or was, perhaps, prompted by a better feeling, to enter the chapel. Indifferent as he had appeared on such matters, it was with irrepressible bitterness that he gazed on the denuded walls, which once had been honoured with many a gilded cross and carved image of the Virgin, but one glance at the emblem of meekness which, sculptured on the roof, seemed to appeal to the better and more peaceful feelings of his nature, changed the current of his reflections.

“Yes,” thought he, “it matters but little; Catholic and Protestant steer equally wide of *Thy* law. Here one is hanged and quartered for adoring the Virgin and recognising the Pope; one is burned abroad for renouncing either. Woe’s me! when will the holier spirit of peace descend upon this world, and make it one of pleasantness!” The worthy man turned away as the recollection of dangers at that moment surrounding him on all sides, was thus

brought more forcibly to his mind. He was keenly alive to the disadvantage which any evident connexion with one so deeply dyed with Papistry and Stuartism as Margaret Lambrun might prove, and though much moved by the lively picture she had drawn of her own mental sufferings, and still more at that of the miseries endured by the illustrious victim whose fate she deplored,—still he did not think himself by any means called upon to sacrifice life or limb to such emotions.

“I have done my best for the poor creature,” thought he, as he took his place in the stern of a dingy, paintless little wherry, moored at the bottom of the stairs, “and no man can do more.”

He resolutely turned his back upon the palace, fearful lest, by the merest look, he should betray an undue interest in the pile. Nay, he carried precaution to such a length, that he actually caused himself to be rowed to Lambeth, resolved rather to undergo another long walk in

the rain than land at the steps of St. Mary Overis, from which he could have reached the door of his hostelry in five minutes.

“And yet,” thought he, “how vain my precautions, if such false knaves as that cursed Dutch skipper will go bawling one’s name and business about town, in such a place, too, as that Savoy; and the woman she sent with her message, that one found me out easy enough, I’ll warrant. Well, one never can make sure of lying snug and safe anywhere in these troublous times. If one had wings, like a sparrow, to soar in air, there would still be a hawk to strike one down; and were one to burrow in the earth like a fox, there would yet be your wire-haired rascal of a terrier to drag one out. To think that worthy Master Ross has been obliged to leave his quiet house, where he lived like a mouse in its hole, and that I had not spent above a night in this great city before a message found its way to me! And now a pretty charge has fallen on my shoulders. True,

I am a lone and solitary being in this crowded, busy world—have no kith nor kin to care for me when I get old and peevish, or to look after, now that I am stout and vigorous. Some people find pleasure in training a hawk or a hound, and call it a noble task ; others waste their leisure on rare flowers, and call it pleasure. Is it not a nobler task and a greater pleasure to foster an orphan, and to train a fresh member for a succeeding generation—to drop some good seed into a human heart, that it may ripen and bear the fruit of a finer humanity—to leave some reminiscence of one's earthly passage here below? Some such thoughts have often flitted across my fancy, although they never before assumed so tangible a form. Well, the die is cast ; and I do not regret it, if the lad be but docile, as he seems likely enough to be, though I could have wished him younger, perhaps, and the son of a less rampant dame ; but the father was a good, meek soul as ever lived, and maybe he'll take after him, and that would suit my books better. However, we'll see."

When the worthy man came to this point of his cogitations, the sudden shock of the boat against the steps reminded him that this was neither the fitting time nor place to indulge in such reflections. Having satisfied the insolent demand of the boatman,—which was about double what it ought to have been, but which, eager to escape all observation, Achamber did not take the trouble to dispute,—he bent himself in earnest to the long walk which lay before him, through open fields, ere he could reach Southwark.

Thoroughly drenched, cold and shivering, plodding with difficulty along the heavy roads, the already mentioned merciless rain pouring down upon him its unexpended fury, his condition was certainly not calculated to sweeten the milk of human kindness in a less stout bosom than that of our adventurer." But though by no means insensible to the disagreeable predicament in which he stood—his exposure to the mighty weepings of a disconsolate heaven—he was fair enough to absolve the

objects of his sympathy from causing the sufferings which he thus boldly encountered for their sake. Nay, he more than once congratulated himself upon his escaping the necessity of again facing the dread spectacle over the bridge gate.

“By St. Andrew, I wish I could well see through Margaret Lambrun, though, and her wild, reckless purposes!—I’m afraid Satan hath his finger in them rather than any Saint I wot of; and yet I cannot fathom her. Does she mean mischief to herself or to others? Well, Gude guide us! I’ll just get the boy under my wing, give t’other chap a meeting to know what is become of Ross, and leave the town by the morrow’s eve, an’ I can, ere worse come of it.”

As he came to this very wise conclusion, Master Achamber turned into the lowly inn that he had selected in preference to the more frequented Tabard, which has passed to posterity through the grateful pens of the choice spirits that met and revelled within its dusky

limits, and whose loud glee often caused the low, smoke-blackened rafters to re-echo to a merriment which even their dull canopy could not smother. 'Those were, indeed, rougher and hardier—we had well nigh been tempted to say, healthier—times than the present, when pleasure smiled within dark, confined, comfortless walls, or paraded the dirty, narrow, insecure streets; whereas it so seldom lingers in our rose-coloured boudoirs, or can be traced in our safe, large, brilliantly-crowded thoroughfares.'

Southwark, although in those days, as we have elsewhere observed, but a mere fragment of the metropolis, was one of its gayest offshoots. The *lupanarias*,—which had long made it a place of moral desolation,—having been expunged by Henry VIII., had given way to two circular buildings, rising from amidst the refreshing foliage of surrounding gardens, in which the purest and the loveliest, the highest and the noblest—nay, royalty itself—did not disdain to seek divertisement.

But how different were those divertisements whose proximity lay so near! The Paris—or bear-garden—was, as its name sufficiently proclaimed, the scene of that cruel kind of sport which disgraces the spirit of gentler humanity—a remnant of the savageness of past centuries, when man, unreclaimed by Christianity or civilization, loved the sight of blood as we do that of beauty, and in whose ears the cries of mortal agony were dulcet as is to us the melody of song; whilst in the adjoining building—the Globe—the mightiest enchanter that ever wielded the magic power of thought worked his nightly spells, to which, with a prescience of what that power was to become, the crowd that still clung to the barbarity of the past by so many tangible ligaments bent in accordance with the growing spirit of the future.

Not far from these places of public entertainment, towered high, in the noble and romantic Gothic architecture, two stately piles, in close vicinity to each other. The one nearest the

bridge was the church of St. Mary Overis, whose many graceful towers, and slender, dentalated spires, rose conspicuous from amidst the humble dwellings by which it was surrounded. The neighbouring structure—the palace of the ancient lords of Winchester—yet more dignified in its simplicity, presented a range of wide and lofty arched windows, whose brilliant tintings caught and reflected every passing glimpse of the western sun. The houses immediately behind these buildings seemed thrown there with a view to contrast; but in reality denoted but too plainly the poverty which, in those days as well as now, lay grovelling in the vicinity of wealth.

Among these uninviting tenements stood Master Achamber's inn. It was more desolate and filthy than its popular rival, but less noisy; and, having in view concealment rather than pleasure, the worthy Scot did not quarrel with its discomforts. Every now and then casting an admiring glance at the palace and the

church—both of which he commanded from his casement—he busily employed himself in removing all traces of the merciless pelting from which he had been so severe a sufferer. The task was a long and a weary one ; nor was the small apartment allotted him sufficiently fenced against the weather to shield him completely from the damp atmosphere without. It was no wonder, therefore, if he felt impatient for the comforts of the tap-room, such as they were, and that he should lose no time in hurrying thither when the laborious task on which he was engaged had come to a happy conclusion.

When Achamber took possession of a table in the vicinity of the huge chimney, whose dark canopy protected a blaze of no ordinary magnitude, with the exception of the landlord the room was empty. Contrary to the custom of those days, when my host was, in real truth, the *Amphitryon* of his hospitable hearth, and whose warm welcome was considered an essential part of that hospitality, the master of this

obscure place of entertainment was both distant and surly, a circumstance to which probably was due, that his tavern had not risen in public favour. Perhaps, too, he was indebted to this peculiarity that it had not sunk to be the haunt of the low rioting skippers and vagabonds of every description in Southwark, at a period when the sanctuaries of the mint afforded them so central a point of resort and refuge.

With this personage, therefore, there was little or no talk to be had; and though Master Achamber prolonged his repast as much as was possible, by way of dissipating ennui, even the keen edge of his appetite acquired by his morning's expedition was well nigh sated, and a sense of loneliness came over the worthy man, whose jovial, hearty nature and cheerful habits were sadly at variance with his present condition. Had prudence warranted the measure, doubtless the poor disheartened traveller would have sought a less retired haunt of revelry, where such a thing indeed might be found; but

as it was, when he had washed down his last crumb of very stale bread, with the last drop of very indifferent ale that had but too evidently been tapped from a cask not waterproof, there was nothing for it but to resign himself to the tediousness of his chamber.

“Well,” thought he, as he gazed on its chilling nudity, “to-morrow will not find me alone, nor I trust in this miserable hovel,” and throwing himself on his bed, he calmly yielded to his fate, and dozed away the weary hours until that which called him forth to another meal, renewing this interesting process, until the chimes of St. Mary Overis warned him, in sonorous peals, that it was time to court sleep in earnest, which, strange to say, despite his previous draft upon his kindness, Morpheus did not deny to his ardent votary.

Although Master Achamber was on foot at an early hour the next day, he had not time to descend for his morning meal before a single knock at the door roused his attention. Mine

host, who appeared at the chink, announced a lad below stairs, desirous, he said, of speaking with his guest. The cautious Scotchman was about to inquire why the boy had not sent up his name, when it occurred to him that this could be no other than the son of his old friend Margaret Lambrun, and desired that he might be sent up. The moment his eye rested on the soft, effeminate, blanched countenance of the youth, who, with eyes swollen with weeping, and an expression of blank despair legible in every line of his fair young face, followed close upon the heels of mine host, the worthy patron recognised at once the future object of his cares.

“I’m glad you’re come, at last—eh, eh, hem—my good little cousin,” he said, extending his hand in token of welcome and encouragement to the lad, who hung timidly back on being thus unceremoniously addressed by the utter stranger who was to be henceforth the master of his destiny.

“You see,” continued Achamber, as if by way of explanation to the retiring host, “this is a

lad sent me from the country by—his father—a sort of country cousin, you see,” but ere this needless elucidation had come to an end, the silent and incurious personage to whom they were addressed had reached the bottom of the wooden stairs, and Master Achamber was alone with his protégé.

“I did not expect you so soon,” he said, again turning to the lad, and with a kindlier air than before—“and so your poor mother would not join you, after all?”

The boy shook his head in sign of negation, but could not answer.

Perceiving and compassionating his distress, the well-meaning merchant tried to soothe it after his own fashion:—

“You see, my good lad,” he said, as he busied himself about his final arrangements for the day, “you are going to begin life; and that’s the time for smiles, not tears, I take it. Ay, ay—it is a time worth sighing for when it is over. The world is before you, and you

have a fair chance of a good start, Everything, in the long years that come after, depends upon that. If boys could but take that to heart—could but know it! All's before you, you young dog—it were not seemly in me to tell you all that may be, but I can tell you this much :—The year has but one spring, and so has life; and the tree that hasn't flourished in the early part of the season will bear no fruit at its close. So up and be merry, my little man; sure these tears disgrace your dawning manhood!"

"I can't help it, sir—my good master, I should say," blubbered the boy, unable to restrain his emotion any longer, and giving it, unreservedly, vent in a flood of tears. "I am very—very sorry," he continued between his sobs—"my mother warned me against this; but I cannot—indeed I *cannot* help it, or my heart would break. But all my other promises I will keep—faithfully keep, as beseems a man. I will be grateful and submissive, and strive to

do my best in all things, for *her* sake—oh! indeed I will, sir!”

“I make no doubt of it, my little fellow,” said Roger, as he looked into the ingenuous countenance of the youth; and then, apprehensive of increasing the boy’s agitation, he paused, hesitating to put those queries to which he so earnestly desired an answer! He gathered, indeed, from his broken sentences, that his mother had spent the weary watches of the night in preparing him for the coming separation, and impressing on his mind the duties and the struggles of the long years that were to intervene ere they should meet again. Under these circumstances, he felt aware that this was not exactly the most suitable time for moralizing, and sought to divert young Lambrun’s thoughts into a fresh channel.

“We must work ourselves gradually out of this lachrymose humour,” thought the worthy man. “One cannot take content by storm; like everything that’s worth having, one has, at

times, to wait for it. Well, my young friend," he said, aloud, after casting another rueful glance at the disconsolate boy, whose convulsive sobs, far from subsiding, seemed rather to gain fresh impulse from his sorrow—"well, well, when you *can*, dry your eyes; and when you have wiped away those tell-tale tears, I will take you out with me. Now, let us lay our heads together, and find you a suitable name for the future."

"My name is Mary Stuart," retorted the boy, with some spirit; "it is a good—a holy name, and I never mean to change it, nor that of my poor father."

"Why, my little fellow, that's all very well at the first blush of the affair, but Mary is not a name fit for a boy to bear. All the girls will laugh at you who hear you so called, especially by and by; and as long as we are here, the circumstance would create suspicion which might not only place me in a disagreeable predicament, but even your mother."

The boy hung his head, and murmured—

“I’ll do whatever you please, sir.”

“There’s a sensible lad. We’ll go to the Globe this evening, and if you like, you may christen yourself after one of the heroes of the hour. There now, there’s a prospect for you. I’ll not take you to breakfast with me,” he continued, with a smile, “for I’ll be bound you are not hungry just now; and I’ll take the liberty of locking you up in this chamber whilst I go and transact some business of my own in town, after which I’ll come and fetch you, and we’ll make the best of our time together.”

The next moment, Master Achamber was carefully extracting the key from the lock and committing it to his pocket; and the young prisoner was left to the uninterrupted enjoyment of his sorrow, whilst his kind jailer partook of a very simple, and, to his pampered taste, not over-succulent repast.

When the hour of his morning’s appointment drew nigh, throwing a fresh maroon-coloured

velvet cloak over his shoulders, and drawing the cape close to his throat, Master Roger Achamber took his way past St. Mary Overis to the steps in its vicinity. There he took to water, determined not again to face the dread objects that had so scared his imagination the day before; and in order to effect this, he pertinaciously sat with his back to the bridge, keeping thus its noble gates and curious houses scrupulously out of sight.

No sooner had he landed at the opposite shore, than he made with all speed the Coal Harbour, where he soon descried the seafaring man of the eve, impatiently striding up and down the narrow, encumbered court.

“Your token was a true one, worthy master,” he said, in a low tone, as Roger drew near. “Master Ross acknowledges it, and would like to see and welcome you; but being in trouble himself, he fears that such a measure might place you in the same category. He bid me, however, put myself entirely at your disposal.”

“And wherefore is my poor friend in trouble?” inquired Achamber.

“Why, that is a long story, although but a few words will suffice to tell it, only they had better be spoken as much out of earshot as may be. However, here it is,” he said, in a whisper, so low as to be almost inaudible:—“he preferred a Catholic to a Protestant queen; and—hark in your ear—had Mary Stuart lived, why matters would have gone well with him; as it is, he has been hiding himself for months, and hopes to be forgotten. But come to a tavern hard by, and I’ll tell you all about it more comfortably and more safely than I can here.”

The distance was short; and at the back of a filthy, noisy, overcrowded hostelry, the young sailor led the way to a private, secluded closet, evidently much frequented by him; when, seating himself, and motioning his companion to follow his example, he continued:—

“My unfortunate relation had entered into a plan, headed by most distinguished adherents

abroad and friends at home, to re-establish the true owner of the English crown in her lawful rights. Letters—papers were discovered, in which Queen Elizabeth was termed a bastard, and reviled in no very measured language. Master Ross had harboured agents of the court of Rome, whose feelings were of no very mitigated colour—in short, his conduct and opinions gained vent. The poor Queen of Scots was put out of the way: and he keeps himself concealed as much as he can, until either all personal danger is blown over, or he and those who think like him have an opportunity of *avenging* her. If you entertain similar opinions, Master Ross bade me speak without reserve, and tell you where and when to meet him, and many more brave spirits who share his views.”

“Gramercy!” exclaimed Master Achamber, with a look expressive of the deepest consternation at these unwelcome tidings—“gramercy! I am no man to put my neck in a noose for any Queen, living or dead—nay, God forgive me—not

even for the Queen of Heaven herself! You see, fair sir, it is by all these plottings and plannings, that put her throne in jeopardy and threaten even her life, that we Catholics—God assoilzie our souls for the same—have forced a great Queen to a dark deed—for, say what you will, Elizabeth is a great Queen.”

“Ay, but the blood of the martyr cries for vengeance,” said the young man, impetuously; “until that crime had stained her name, I too thought Elizabeth a great Queen, and a noble mistress, and served her faithfully, but——”

“Do so still for *your* sake, if not for hers,” said the Scotchman. “Had the Catholics been wiser and quieter, the Queen had not perished. If you force your craft on the breakers, you can accuse no one but yourself if it founders.”

“I understand what you would say, but surely you, an ancient retainer of the Queen of Scots, do not excuse her death because the crime was a political, not a personal one?”

“It is a crime that has saved England, and

perhaps Scotland, from the nameless horrors of civil and religious wars; which had you but witnessed, young man, as I have, you would think less of the solitary victim whose life-blood ebbed, than that of thousands might be spared."

"You speak strangely for a Scotchman, a Catholic, and one that once eat the bread of that unfortunate lady. Whether what you now speak be truth, or the result of that callousness of heart which time and experience bring in their train, I wish not to be in the way of profiting by either."

"If you follow the steps of Master Ross, your inclinations are likely to be gratified," answered Master Achamber, testily. "I have regretted my royal mistress—I have wept over her misfortunes and untimely end; I do not hesitate in calling it a crime; but why seek to bring on the miseries which her tragical end has averted. I am a philosopher, sir—I have had time and opportunity to cool my passions."

"And your heart, if ever you had one," mut-

tered the young man. "Well, be it so, my worthy master—our conference is at an end.—As you love the murderess of your mistress so well, go and betray me to her agents if you like."

"I will not do that, young man," said Achamber. "I consider my business quite put an end to by your unwelcome communication about Master Ross, and having most certainly no wish to thrust myself on the same course, I shall leave this city without delay."

"Then, sir, our interview has come to a close, and, as *I* consider, in a manner to give neither of us the wish to meet again."

Master Roger Achamber took no notice of the young man's scornful, bitter air, but departed without another word, and hurried back to his tavern, where he arrived in a state of mind the least enviable that can be imagined.

Here, indeed, were motives to spread his wings, had he but possessed any, to make away with himself without delay. After numerous inquiries

he learned that no boat was to leave London for Holland that night. A Dutch skipper, influenced by a large bribe, promised, indeed, to weigh anchor early next morning ; and with this prospect of a speedy termination to his troubles the impatient traveller was fain to rest contented.

The sight of the still weeping boy, who had never stirred during his absence from the spot where he had left him, roused Master Achamber's sympathy, and dissipated something of that egotism which is apt to encrust the heart of an old bachelor.

"Care killed a cat," said he, patting the long flaxen ringlets of the youth ; "let it not kill either you or me, but let us do our best to murder it after the most approved fashion."

The boy, too timid to raise any objection to this proposition, effaced as well as he could the traces of his tears by the aid of fresh water, and endeavoured to compose himself.

"I never will be so weak again, sir," he said,

in an apologetic tone to his patron, "whatever my sorrow, I will never shew it in this way again. But it is our first and will be our last separation."

"Well, well!—never mind—we'll make a man of you after all, my fine lad! But now let's be moving, that we may be home in time for dinner. By the way, before I take you through the city, let me know if you have ever been seen there before?"

Lambrun assured his patron that he had never, for the few months he had spent in London since his expulsion from Fotheringay, stirred beyond the precincts of the Savoy, and that he had been very little seen even there.

"That accounts for your pale cheeks and girlish air, Master Lambrun," said his friendly protector, eying his delicate-looking protégé with a dissatisfied expression. "Well, we must contrive to amend all that. You shall not be stuck at once behind the ledger; that would

make bad worse. We'll see to that; and now, let's be jogging."

Again Achamber took his way to the water-side; and, pushing his young charge jocosely into the boat to accelerate his tardy movements, they set off for the opposite shore. The yesterday's rain had not set in with the same relentless virulence as on the previous day; but from the lowering clouds fell every now and then a rapid succession of heavy drops, that seemed to foretel the lull was but temporary.

Master Achamber and his companion were proceeding towards St. Paul's, which the former felt a curiosity in revisiting, and fancied the least likely place in the world where a plotter would be suspected of exhibiting himself, when he became aware that a large concourse of people were hurrying in the same direction. Willing to avoid, if possible, the crowds that preceded, surrounded, and followed him, he altered his course several times, still keeping

his main object in view. He vainly strove, however, to escape the shoals of people, decked out in their holiday attire, who on all sides pressed upon him. Fearful to put any questions to the passers by, lest he should draw, unnecessarily, attention upon himself and his companion, the gay dresses, and gayer looks of the crowd could alone lead him to the very natural conclusion that some public rejoicing was going forward.

Trusting to the axiom, that nowhere is one more alone than in a crowd, Master Achamber, by no means averse to sights, and confident that such would prove the best balm to his young protégé's sorrow, far from turning away on perceiving how matters stood, proceeded eagerly along with the rest.

Indeed the open air, damp and heavy as it was—the walk, and the most unusual spectacle of so many gay groups and faces around him—had already produced their effects on the boy. Bewildered, half frightened, and more than half

interested in the scene, it was with great difficulty that he managed to keep up with his protector; and, for the moment at least, all sense of the bitterness of his regrets was lost in the novelty of his situation.

At last, they caught a view of St. Paul's, and both paused in involuntary admiration of the noble pile. It yet stood in its original splendour of proportion and design—an elongated fabric, enriched with massive buttresses and high oriel windows, above which rose a solid square stone tower of immense altitude, from whose summit an elegant wooden spire, of singular height, ascended into the air.

As they gazed on the venerable building in absorbed and delighted attention, they altogether overlooked the swarms that hurried past them, eager to gain the western gate of the churchyard.

“High as that proud tower soars in the air, and a fair and comely sight it is,” said Achamber, turning to his protégé, “I will shew

you that below its base which is yet more worth seeing. The subterranean choir and aisles of St. Faith, extending immediately beneath the whole of St. Paul's, are perhaps unique in Europe, and, though forming, as it were, but one mass, both churches, the one above, the other under ground, belong to two different parishes. But what are you staring at, with open mouth?"

"At that wooden house near the gate, sir, yonder," pointing to the spot towards which the people were pressing.

Master Achamber's eye now fell, for the first time, upon a large booth erected at the west end of the churchyard, more, as it seemed, with a view to space than to solidity. It was a temporary enclosure for some unexpected emergency, composed of boards put together in a manner to bear testimony to the dispatch of the workmen; and as all people, of whatever degree, appeared free to enter it at their pleasure, Master Achamber made direct towards it.

The interior presented, indeed, a motley assembly; for in those days, the variety and richness of costume gave a general light and glow to a crowd, which, to modern uniformity of attire, and prescribed dulness of colour, is unknown. How far variety and brilliancy of hues may, through the medium of the eye, promote health and cheerfulness of spirit, among inhabitants of cities, is, perhaps, a matter deserving of more consideration than has hitherto been bestowed upon it. It was the opinion of one whose wit was never questioned, and whose views were often singularly philanthropic, the celebrated Prince Charles de Ligne, that if houses were, as in olden times, painted with gay tints instead of sober tones, such as custom has long established, and if the same principle were adapted to costume, it would produce the most beneficial effects on the humours and moods of men. Something towards recreating the dulled spirit, in a climate so eminently calculated to depress it, is, as it seems, about to be achieved,

in the many decorations contemplated with regard to the interior of our public edifices. Dark, gloomy fanaticism — Cromwell's worst legacy to his country — may, perchance, gradually be dispelled by the softening and reanimating power of the fine arts; and could every influence tending to gladden man's pilgrimage here below be successfully exerted towards that great aim in this country, the national spirit, without losing any of the loftiness and dignity which makes England pre-eminent amongst nations, would perhaps gain in gentle humanity and content.

But far from such speculations were the thoughts of those who gazed on the animated scene within the booth. On a high estrade, at the further end, was a group of officials, busily engaged in superintending certain arrangements, on which a quantity of varlets were employed. The sides of the booth around this platform were hung with rich dark velvet, on which was suspended a variety of very beau-

tiful armours, some damascened, some quaintly and richly embossed, some of furbished steel, and others of pure silver. Some there were—in the eyes of connoisseurs the most precious—of dark, dull-coloured iron, but wrought with so cunning a hand, that heavy indeed must be the blow that would rend them. A brave show of helmets, adorned with streaming, gay-coloured plumes, large petronels, and gauntlets, whose steel scales seemed instinct with life, lay on the tables drawn up on either side the platform. In the centre stood two huge jars, and near them several young children gorgeously and fantastically arrayed.

A single look at these preparatives sufficed to enable the quick eye of Master Achamber to divine the business of the day, but the youth at his side stared wildly around, utterly incapable to comprehend what he beheld. On perceiving his embarrassment, Roger Achamber hastened to explain that a public lottery was about to take place—a fact soon confirmed, not only by

the remarks of those more immediately surrounding them, but by the business of the day, which shortly afterwards began in earnest. Here, as everywhere in those times, the aristocratic pretenders to the smiles of fortune were separated from the mass, and made doubly conspicuous by the advantageous position they occupied, as well as the richness of their attire, and, in many instances, the insolence of their followers.

As the proceedings advanced, the delight of the poor boy, whose young life had hitherto been wasted behind the bars of a prison—whose young heart had never yet beat with the excitement of pleasure, was boundless; and as the tiny hands of fortune's ministers for the nonce drew forth, and called out in shrill tones the lucky numbers, and the handy knaves quickly caught down from their hooks the rich prizes, his eyes glistened with delight. His looks anxiously followed the men as, upon given signals, they disappeared and returned with a fresh supply of cuissards, brassards, gorgets,

knee and breast plates, groaning under the weight of their splendid burthens—then his glances flew back to the young children, whose interesting avocation did not prevent their often manifesting very visible signs of fatigue. Sometimes, too, but more rarely, he permitted his eye to rove over the assembled crowd; so deeply absorbed was his every faculty, that he did not even hear the words which his companion every now and then addressed him, nor even felt the few gentle tugs by which he endeavoured to recal his wandering attention. Perceiving how matters stood, and that for a while, at least, the lad's tears had dried up at their source, and conceiving this to be an auspicious beginning to their acquaintance, and one likely to reconcile the poor boy more speedily to his new existence, Master Achamber yielded him up to his novel sensations.

Hours passed thus away like minutes, nor was either Achamber or his charge aware of their flight. It is even probable that, like most

present, forgetful of all previous arrangements and unmindful of the cravings of nature, they would have sat out the lottery, which was to last night and day, had not an incident occurred which disturbed, at least, their relish for the game.

A trusty coat of mail of antique fashion was about to be awarded to the lucky winner, whose delay caused some murmur among the impatient spectators. Master Achamber was diverting himself with the study of the physiognomies around, when suddenly, as the figure of him to whom the mail shirt was about to be delivered appeared clearly in view, a slight scream at his elbow made him start. Dismayed at the sound, Achamber turned and beheld his young companion pale as death, with his body eagerly bent forward, and with straining eyes endeavouring, as it appeared, to trace some particular object through the dense crowd. The cry, and more especially the scared look of the youth, brought a formidable array of eyes to rest on him and his conductor.

“You are not well, lad,” whispered Roger, in his ear; “have you seen any one whom you know?”

Lambrun nodded assent—he could not speak.

“Then must we up and away, lest harm come of it,” said his protector in the same key, and continued in a loud, indifferent voice. “The heat has overcome you; let’s to the open air, and when you are better, we can return; perhaps our kind neighbours will keep our places for us.”

Achamber with some difficulty reached the entrance through the almost impenetrable crowd. The air did not, however, calm the boy’s agitation; and the multifarious questions with which his compassionate friend assailed him, far from assuaging, seemed to add greatly to his perplexity.

“I ought not to tell you, my good master—indeed I ought not”—he at last found courage to say, finding that his silence and his gathering tears did not shield him from those inquiries which he was obviously anxious to evade.

“Well, be it so!” said Master Achamber, after a moment’s reflection ; “it is, perhaps, better for myself not to press the matter further, especially just now : the lad seems to be first cousin to Arethusa, if not the Nymph herself in disguise. If we are to be friends, this must not last. However, just at first a little patience is necessary, of course, and allowance must be made for the peculiarity of his distressing situation with regard to his only surviving parent, and for his strange mode of education.

“Come, you Sir Nameless-one, we must home and to dinner with what appetites we may. As for mine, I am pretty certain it will not desert me at a pinch ; I only wish I had better fare on which to satisfy it.”

The return home was performed in absolute silence ; both parties seemed wrapt in their own thoughts ; they had better, however, have been wrapt in camlet cloaks, for the rain had by this time resumed its sway, and, before they reached their hostelry, literally washed the streets. The

repast they found ready on their arrival was so far from satisfactory, as fully to justify the worst anticipations of Master Achamber. The roast beef was tough and luke-warm, and the addition of faded greens did not tend to mend this imperfection of the main staple. The ale was swipes; and, as Master Achamber pithily observed when the meal was over, the boy had lost nothing by having no appetite. As there was little or no conversation possible between him and his young charge, having once more deposited him safely under lock and key, he proceeded to take another look at the boat that was to bear them away on the morrow. But the skipper was sulky, and dropped a few hints about wind and weather, that sounded very much like a knell to poor Achamber's hope of speedy release from his intolerable situation.

He left the wharf with a heavy heart, and though he found young Lambrun more composed than in the morning, he read in his eyes

that his was not a light one. To yield to despondency, however, was against the principles of the worthy merchant, who deemed such moods unworthy of a spirit which, like his, had been tried in so many different ways, and had ever triumphed over difficulties. When, therefore, the hour came at which Will Shakspeare's divine witcheries were to be displayed at the Globe hard by, assuring himself that there the chances were against their being recognised or otherwise annoyed, he determined on proceeding thither with young Lambrun, whose mind, since their hasty retreat from St. Paul's Churchyard, was evidently harassed by some fresh anxiety. Achamber forbore from distressing him with any recurrence to the subject, but trusted to the powerful enchantment of scenic effect on the mind of one to whom such was perfectly new, to dispel the cloud.

Thither, accordingly, he went, and was not displeased to find that, owing to the state of

the weather, the lottery, or some other cause, the theatre was nearly left to the occupation of those whose legitimate area it was. Here and there, indeed, an individual might be seen, and a straggling party, whom love for the drama had irresistibly drawn thither; but these were few, and so widely scattered that, at first sight, the house appeared empty.

Doubtless, a theatre embowered in foliage and verdure, whose openings admitted the fragrance and coolness of its own and surrounding gardens, had something more enjoyable about it in the hot season than is to be found in the heavy piles of modern London, closely wedged in on all sides by houses and streets; but on a gusty autumnal evening, such as that on which Achamber and his protégé sought amusement at the Globe, this circumstance did not much enhance the charm. The mournful rustling of the trees sounded dismally enough between the pauses in the play; and the knowledge that for miles around the country extended, whilst

the town, revelling in its many lights, was felt to be out of reach, as it were, far over the mighty river, caused a sensation of chill to come over the spectators, as they witnessed a very cold representation of that most genial and glowing of an immortal poet's immortal conceptions, *Romeo and Juliet*. But the audience was, as we have said, scanty, and not of a very select kind. Shakspeare himself was not present; and the actors appeared only eager to get through their task as rapidly as might be, in order to finish their evening, in a merrier mood, at some favourite tavern. For the most part, they were beneath mediocrity. Juliet was, in especial, an unfortunate personification of that *Psyche*-like conception which scarcely yields in grace to its classic prototype. She was but a too visible specimen of sprouting manhood; and the virile intonations of the supposed youthful maiden of the south were not less jarring to the ear than were the energetic strides, and very careless gestures with which she topped her part, offensive to the eye.

Master Achanber, as he smiled more than once at these burlesque incongruities—the contrast between the real and the fictitious personage—declared to his youthful companion that the illusion of the play was completely destroyed for him; muttering something, at the same time, about a bore that women were excluded from the stage.

As to young Lambrun, forgetful of all the cares that had, but a moment before, weighed him to the very earth, his soul swam in an ecstasy of delight; and despite flaws and incongruities of every kind, such as would disgrace a party of strollers in these enlightened times, he was soon, by privilege of his happy age, borne on the wings of the Poet's spoken thoughts into the realm of fancy. Had the Juliet on the stage boasted the most sylph-like charms, she could never have seemed more translucent and fairy-like to him—had her voice been of syren softness, it never could have sounded a sweeter “Good night,” into his charmed ears. Had Romeo looked the glow-

ing ardent lover which his words expressed, whilst he carelessly fiddled with his points and ribbons, he had not appeared more full of youthful ardour and manhood—nay, the very south, with its, as yet, unknown, unguessed at, starry skies, deep blue heavens, balmy perfumes—its music and its balconies—its fierce loves and sudden hatreds, was as vivid to his mind, as suddenly revealed, as though Titania herself had borne him thither on her gossamer wing.

Oh, Fancy! thou rarest, richest, dearest boon of Heaven, why do thy pinions ever droop, and fail at last to elevate us to those regions of light and life for which thou didst start in youth? But thou wouldst seem to love the lightest burthens best; for in after years man knows little of the spells thou dost fling so prodigally upon his boyhood! A new world was opening upon young Lambrun—a world of feeling and of thought; which, secluded as his existence had hitherto been, and shadowed by maternal caution, he had never

even guessed at. Thus was he again lost, as in the morning, to everything not immediately connected with the object of his intense interest. He was at Verona, not in the Globe at London; nor did it seem strange that Romeo and the pale apothecary should look fixedly at him, in rather a marked manner, when they might fairly have been expected to look at each other. Nay, a similar token of unpardonable absence of mind in the gallant lover, in the very presence of his adored Juliet, even failed to rouse his attention.

Master Achamber, however, began to feel seriously annoyed at the circumstance, naturally concluding that his young friend was not so unknown about town as he had represented himself to be, and he bitterly repented the imprudence which had induced him to exhibit him thus publicly. He rose more than once with the intention of withdrawing himself and his companion from the notice of the stagers, so obviously directed towards them; but the pas-

sionate entreaties of the boy prevailed, and he had the endurance to remain until the cork-blackened eyebrows, coarsely painted cheeks, and chalk-white forehead and nose of Romeo, and Juliet's whitewashed countenance, with its budding beard, were finally lost to the public behind the closing curtain, and, to Mary Lambrun's imagination, in the depth of an untimely grave.

Again was the way homeward retraced in silence; but this time care and anxiety was the portion of the elder companion. The younger was unconscious of everything but the new world of wonders which had that evening opened upon him; and moral excitement tending to promote a like result in the physical system, it happened that their parts were reversed, and whilst his patron looked moodily on, the lad devoured his supper with the keen appetite of his age.

"I thought I should bring him round," was the reflection that suggested itself to Achamber's mind, as he looked, with a bland smile, on the

achievements of his young friend. "Well! it is something to have some one by one to care for, even though that care should be mingled with anxiety," was his next idea, leading to a not unpleasing train of meditations, which the incomings and outgoings of a few inferior customers did not interrupt. But soon the entrance of new and—as became apparent from the host's manner—unaccustomed, and in his estimation most important visitors, disturbed at once the course of his reverie and the boy's supper.

Though ruffling, noisy, and brave enough in their apparel to pass, perhaps, at a cursory glance, for wild young blades about town, a closer observation discovered their braveries to be soiled, and their swagger devoid of real assurance—their loudness, habit—their mirth, hollow; and, though unable to define to what class they exactly belonged, and led to infer much from the subservience of manner assumed by the surly host, the cautious Scotchman doubted both their quality and their breeding. He ob-

served with displeasure that they made straight towards the table at which he and the boy were sitting; nor was he better satisfied when the landlord drew another close beside it, which the boon companions, after a leisurely survey of the chamber, took possession of without much ceremony. Still, considering its close vicinity to the fire—and the evening was raw and gusty—he felt he had no right to resent an intrusion upon his retirement; but not much relishing his neighbourhood, especially on the lad's account, he desired him, in a whisper, to hurry over his repast, for he would fain retire early.

“This place is not the Tabbard,” said one of the new guests, glancing contemptuously round the dark, comfortless apartment; “here the laugh will not echo, nor will the song pass the throat moistened by such a vile compound as this!” he exclaimed, pointing ruefully to the beer just placed before him. “We must have a posset of burnt sack at the very least to raise

our spirits, that, God wot, were low enough before! How detestably that affair went off at the Globe to-night, eh! We must wash all remembrance of it from the tablets of memory, or the memory of such things will drown us in an ocean of tears."

"My good fellow," responded another, "you ought to write tragedies yourself, not——"

"Not witness them, you would say," hastily interrupted the first speaker. "I know that is what you were going to say."

"But, no; I meant——"

"I know full well what thou meant'st, thou dolt! thou braying ass! better than hadst thou spoken thy dull thoughts, or even taken the trouble to think at all; but," he continued, waving his hand gracefully, "let us fly discussion, nor contaminate the ears of listening juvenility with our usual bickerings and wranglings."

As he spoke these words he pointed to young Lambrun, who stood staring at him and his companions with unmitigated curiosity.

“Yes, a likely youth and a proper,” said another, in a lower tone, but not so low as to escape Achamber’s quick ear; “I wonder what man’s brat he is.”

“Some nameless offshoot of the great social tree,” retorted the one who took upon himself the air of a leader. “Unsuspicious and investigating juvenile,” he suddenly exclaimed, turning full upon the startled Lambrun, “why lookest thou so intently upon one who would fain inquire with his tongue, in sober, vulgar language, what thy parentage—thy home?—for, as I take it, yon respected sir is not the author of thy days.”

During this apostrophe—delivered in a strain that was meant to hover between the mock-heroic and the facetious, but partook most of impudence—Master Achamber’s blood mounted to his very temples, and it required the liveliest recollection of the decorations on the bridge tower to keep down his temper; he said, however, with as much calmness as he could command—

“This boy is mine, sir. Please let him alone ; you distress him.”

“Nay, God forbid ! But say, thou pensive Jacques, say,—is this thine honoured parent ? If so, I should honour thy honourable mother as little as she has honoured her honour.”

“This is too much, my masters !” said Achamber, rising angrily, as loud, rude peals of laughter burst from the boisterous set, incensing him even more than the insolence of the speaker.

“Nay, nay ! don’t take offence, pr’ythee !” said another of the party, interposing, soothingly. “We mean no offence ; quite the contrary. Why, man ! instead of standing there with legs apart, like the Colossus of Rhodes, draw them under thee, tailor-fashion, and quaff a cup of burnt sack with us.”

“Ay !—why not ?” repeated the others, in chorus.

“I thank you very much, but had rather retire, an’ you please.”

“Ay !—but we don’t please !” exclaimed the

former speaker, throwing himself into an attitude which, though apparently assumed in sport, must effectually bar the boy's passage. In the meantime the latter had been plied with so many questions, and was so little able to parry them, that two important revelations had already been extracted from him—namely, that Achamber was not his father, and that he did not know his own name—a *naïveté* which was received with a vehemence of applause that seemed to indicate how very pleasant his tormentors found the task of teasing him. But his patience was now beginning to ebb fast as well as that of his patron. The latter, indeed, curbed his choler to the best of his ability; but even the kind solicitations that he would join the mirthful party, though repeated with more earnest and sober politeness by its graver members, could not soften him towards them sufficiently to receive their overtures even with common civility, far less to avail himself of them.

“But see, my master, we really mean it kindly by you—we take an interest in you and this fair lad of yours, and would fain tell you of something that might turn up to the advantage of both. He owns he is an orphan, and belongs to you and the world by no tie but that of charity. Well, that’s a virtue which all men are bound to exercise towards their fellow-creatures, and must not be monopolized; and as you do not seem, on the whole, over able to squander such a commodity, we might relieve you, perhaps, of a great burthen, by taking the boy altogether off your hands. That’s what I call Christianly; so let’s have a quart of burnt sack upon it, and make it a settled thing.”

The tranquillity with which the cautious Scot listened to this harangue had encouraged the speaker, a burly and somewhat authoritative looking person, to go on with it, until at last it came to an end of itself, the subject being, as it were, exhausted. But, in fact, Master Achamber was rooted to the earth with

surprise. What could this wild and strange-looking set of revellers want with his protégé? What could be their possible object with regard to himself or the youth? As his reason suggested no satisfactory answer to these mental queries, he laid the whole down at once to the unbridled licence of a drunken frolic, and conceived it just likely that the idea of hoaxing an old bachelor on so ticklish a point was the groundwork of the strange proposition. But, then, how could they from the first have discovered the relative position of himself and young Lambrun? The suspicion pressed itself on his mind that these merry brawlers were not unfamiliar with the purlicus of Baynard Castle and the Savoy—that they had certain means of discovering his late visit to that quarter—and that they had traced him to his inn with some evil purpose either towards himself or his charge. Recollections of his lost cloak, and the manner of that loss, again occurred to him; and he sought, but in vain, to

trace in the half-jovial, half-serious countenances around him, the features of the fellows who figured on that occasion. To this mystery there seemed, at least for the moment, no solution at hand; but Master Achamber, ever dreading the worst, felt in no small degree anxious to rid himself of these troublesome customers. Desirous, nevertheless, of doing so without risking the chances of a brawl, he struggled hard to keep down his temper as he replied—

“Gentlemen, I seek neither good nor evil at your hands; trouble not yourselves, therefore, with my concerns, but please to let me take my own way. Indeed, I never suffer myself to be hindered by fair words or by foul; and you are wasting on a stranger that time you might assuredly spend better among yourselves.”

“He has refused our sack and our company; he must be a very owl thus to fly from the lightning-flashes of our wit!” exclaimed the forward babbler who had constituted himself

the spokesman of the party. "Let us entwine him with chains of roses and links of gold: he and that most juvenile juvenility must not stir a foot from our magic circle."

"Come, my masters," said the Scotchman, with an indignation he could no longer suppress, "let me pass, I say, or by St. Andrew! I'll sheathe my dirk in the first of you who shall stand in my way! Follow, boy!"

This sudden explosion of wrath, for which Achamber's hitherto quiet manner had not prepared them, startled his assailants. They fell back at once with a precipitancy that threw their own party into no small confusion, as, proudly marshalling the way, the victorious Scotchman led off his unconscious prize. A heap of clean straw, over which his fatherly friend threw a riding-cloak, in a corner of the chamber, was the only pallet prepared for Mary Lambrun; but, such as it was, the youth lost no time in availing himself of his couch, and, overcome with the manifold sensations of the day,

and the fatigue of the previous night, he was soon wrapt in profound slumber.

Achamber, perplexed and annoyed at the various occurrences of the day, and doubly so at the ill-omened prophecies of the skipper, spent the better portion of the time he should have allotted to rest in listening to the ominous wailing of the wind. He had not been long stationed at his casement when the dark forms of his crest-fallen antagonists, emerging from the inn door, met his eye. He softly opened the window, to catch, if possible, some passing word that might serve as a clue to their singular behaviour; but he listened in vain—they spoke not, or, at least, until they were at too great a distance for him to profit by their conversation.

The jaunty swagger which they had exhibited on entering the inn was no longer observable, as they silently took their way down High Street towards one of the more indifferent quarters of Southwark. At length silence was broken by the most sober-looking of the party,

who spoke in little above a whisper to the individual who had conducted the attack on the Scotchman:—

“All your fine plan has ended in nothing, as usual—in nothing, quotha! I ought rather to say in a very lamentable fashion, seeing that ten good men and true were forced to gulp down such a poisonous compound of ditch-berries and rain-water as never was drank before. You shall pay us a quart a-piece of some conscientious stuff at the Tabbard this very night, in punishment for such dire offence, and in token of failure.”

“I’ll own to having been foiled to-night, but, an’ thou livest, man, thou shalt see if sharp Dick’s brain will be at fault another time!” was the answer given, in a decided and assured tone, that rather pertains to triumph than to defeat.

“If your fine plans are to end in a taste of the Scotchman’s Andrew Ferrara, or of any more of the hateful vinegar of mine host of the

sour grape, as yon churl by rights should style himself, I am not with you!" exclaimed one of the party.

"And unless you spirit the lad away, I see not how we can push the matter further, without encountering both risks, of which I hold the latter to be the worst."

"Then let's back in all haste to our wonted nook at the Tabbard. I'll pay the piper to-night, that you may spare me your jeers and gibes, and listen to the fresh plan I have formed."

The faint morning tints barely streaked the horizon, and the light was scarcely sufficient to permit objects to be seen indistinctly detaching themselves from the gloom, when Master Achamber, unable to bear his suspense any longer, determined again to seek out the skipper, who had, indeed, appointed him an early, though not quite so early an hour for the final settling of his departure. He forgot not, as usual, to secure the door carefully behind him, and placing the key within his inner vest, together

with his purse, he descended the steep ladder-like stairs as noiselessly as possible. He was meditating on the propriety of waking the landlord to let him out, and the thought of so doing had induced him to hesitate more than once in his purpose, when chance came to his aid. A young, half-starved help of mine host, indeed, with himself, the only human being of any kind ever visible on the establishment, was in the act of slipping through the house door as Master Achamber reached the bottom of the stairs; and being, probably, on some private excursion to which he was unwilling that his master should be privy, by cautiously leaving the door ajar he had prepared himself an easy return. To follow in his wake was no difficult matter for the long-limbed, active Scotchman, and the next instant he was making for the river side with no measured strides.

Southwark lay still plunged, to all appearance, in the deepest repose—not a soul was stirring; and the very buildings, vague and undefined as

they stood out, half-revealed, from the heavy river fog, assumed the air of something fantastic and unreal. The mint and its unruly bands,—the Clink and its miserably lodged tenants,—St. Thomas' suffering inmates—the Tabbard and its gay, attic-witted visitors—the very King's Bench-yard, where still hung the vile carcasses of those whose viler souls had been divorced from them by the force of the law—the venerable St. Mary Overis—the still more antique St. Olave, whose pious congregations lay scattered in the surrounding tenements—all was still as death; and crime, and woe, and mortal error, and piety, and virtue, and innocent mirth, the groans and curses, the laugh and the prayer—all was hushed, as though there were nought in this world to stain or to redeem it.

To Achamber this state of things was particularly agreeable, and though it was difficult to judge of the weather at that time of day, still it seemed to him that the wind stood in the right quarter, and he hoped, by means of the per-

suasive little yellow arguments he had safe in his bosom, to prevail upon the skipper to sail that very morning. Completely absorbed in his busy thoughts, occasionally diversified by some reflection appropriate to the scene and hour, he had, mechanically, passed the boat he was in search of, which lay close to the Surrey shore, and was about to retrace his steps, when his attention became suddenly roused by the sound of whispering in his vicinity, and raising his eyes, he perceived that he was about to fall in with a party of men issuing from a hovel hard by.

The insecurity of those times extended to every place and hour; but the river side—the time of day—a lonely part of a small suburb, afforded facilities to crime which might shun broad daylight and a more frequented thoroughfare. Of this circumstance, all stranger as he was to the metropolis, and accustomed to a better regulated system of public safety, Master Achamber seemed fully conscious, for it brought him to a sudden halt of a few seconds' duration, his keen

eye the whilst marking the stealthy steps with which the party under his observation was endeavouring to gain the water's brink. A very slight splash as of an oar, but which was not repeated, convinced him of the correctness of his surmises with regard to these men's characters and movements. As well as the dawning light permitted him to ascertain, he fancied he had distinguished a heavy burthen borne between them, which, though concealed by a large and dark drapery, assumed the outline of the human form. Whatever their avocation, they did not appear to have become aware of his presence, and after a slight self-commune, imagining that he could effect his retreat unperceived, as he had advanced, Achamber turned round, and began to move away as softly and rapidly as possible.

He had not, however, proceeded many steps, when suddenly he felt himself secured from behind in the arms of a couple of stout fellows—others flung over him a large horseman's cloak, and drew it in such a manner round his

head and shoulders as to stifle his cries. His feet and hands were then tied, and he felt himself lifted from the ground as if he had been but an infant in the nurse's arms. The whole transaction was but the affair of a moment, and ere the amazed and half-stifled victim could recover breath, he was sensible of being wholly in the power of the miscreants whom he had so confidently hoped to evade. Even at that moment, whilst in a predicament the most calculated to absorb him in his own personal fears, his thoughts reverted to the wretched plight of his adopted son, when, upon awaking, he would find himself alone, penniless, and forsaken,—a pledge in the hands of an unsatisfied landlord; and bitterly did he lament the fatal impatience which had separated him from his side.

When young Lambrun, however, was at last roused from his leaden slumber, it was not by the loud knocking of an angry innkeeper, nor even by the rays of the sun falling full on his

rude couch, through the curtainless windows, for neither had yet risen; but a slight noise, of whose real nature in the confused state of his senses he could form no very accurate notion, caused him to move in his bed. As the sound seemed to proceed from the casement, he conceived, between sleeping and waking, that Master Achamber had arisen, and was looking out in order to judge of the state of the weather; but drowsiness prevailing, his head dropped heavily back on his pillow of straw, and he was again lost to consciousness. Had it been otherwise, he might have become aware that a human face was brought in very close approximation with the casement, and peering through it with very marked interest.

“There is no one in the room besides the lad—I am pretty certain of that,” whispered the man at the head of the ladder to one a little lower down.

“Mind what you are about, Dick; you’ll never rest until you get yourself into hot water,”

was the answer. "Whatever you do, do quickly; day is coming fast, and it will never do to be found here. I, at least, will be off in a jiffy."

"Why quaiileth thy coward spirit? Hie thee hence, craven; never let me see thee more." Whilst delivering this speech, in a voice as low as circumstances required, but with his usual emphasis, the man nick-named Sharp Dick continued to peer intently into the narrow chamber where lay the unconscious youth.

"He is alone, in good sooth," resumed the adventurous Dick, and the next instant he leaped into the room. The casement, indeed, yielded to a very slight pressure; for Master Achamber, who had spent the better portion of the night at it, had only drawn it to, without fastening it.

It was a rather rough shake that again broke young Lambrun's slumber; but second sleep being generally more heavy than the first, it did not completely rouse him. But the next tug was of a nature to dispel the drowsiness of

any one less torpid by one degree than the famous seven, and the boy was on his feet in an instant, standing in the middle of the floor rubbing his eyes, and endeavouring to recal his wandering senses.

“Master Achamber, is it you?” he exclaimed, ’twixt sleeping and waking; “or was it all a dream? Am I yet in the Savoy with my mother?”

“An’ thou speakest, thou diest!” murmured his unexpected visitor in the boy’s startled ear. “Follow, an’ thou lovest the Scotchman or thy mother.”

“But you!—who are you?” said the affrighted and astonished youth. “Where is Master Achamber? Master Achamber!” shouted the boy, as the first attempt proved unsuccessful.

“Speak not that name again! Beware, boy; follow, I say. Be silent, and swift, or the grave shall close on thee and them.”

But the lad had already flown to the door, hoping to gain the stairs, and rouse the house.

He shook and rattled at it in vain. The lock was sound, and the key safely lodged in Master Achamber's vest. The host slept too far off to be easily made aware of what was passing at this end of his house, and the faithless ostler was out. The impotent efforts of the boy, who sought with might and main to force the door, only exhausted his own strength, without giving him the slightest prospect of a rescue. Again the deep, firm tones of the man rang in his ear.

"Foolish boy, follow, without any more demur, or your fate is sealed, and his, and hers. Antonio, hand me the dagger? It is a silent work, and sure!" The last words were addressed to another man, whose figure now darkened the casement.

"There," responded this fresh antagonist; "there—and make short work of it, a' God's name—the day's coming apace!"

Master Achamber was nowhere visible. All was dead silence around, and the boy utterly

at the mercy of those who seemed about to take his life; yet, young as he was, he instinctively looked about for some weapon of defence, or any object that might serve for the purpose, but none such was within reach even had his strength been equal to the task of wielding it. What alternative remained, therefore, but to yield or perish. It is no wonder that the lad chose the former. Passively obeying the men's injunctions, he descended the ladder, and was received by the first, who had alighted, whilst the other came after by way of a rear-guard.] They then bandaged his eyes, and that pretty tightly, and hurried him along, a prisoner.

Master Achamber, in the meantime, was in a scarcely more enviable position. A very few minutes after his capture, he was again set down, but not upon his feet, nor even on kind mother earth, but, as he felt pretty well assured, sprawling on his back at the bottom of a very wet boat, which he every second expected to

exchange for a still wetter grave. But the wherry shot ahead, propelled by the vigorous and well-feathered strokes of his captors, under a most profound silence, which, coupled with the perfect regularity of their movements, increased poor Roger's apprehensions. "They belong to some smuggling craft," thought he, "and will take me out to sea; for, daring as they may be, I hardly think they would murder me so near the shore, under the very houses, and in the face of day, which will soon dawn."

His suspense was not of long duration. "Boat, ahoy!" shouted a stern voice hard by as he thought. "Adrians, sir," was the ready response given close at his ear, followed by a shrill whistle from above. Then ensued some bustle in the boat; the men talked, and even laughed. But though immediately aware that the language they spoke was English, he could not comprehend their meaning. The next instant he felt himself springing in mid air, caught up and

cast roughly down, like a bale of damaged goods; then he distinctly heard the order pass to set him at liberty. Eager hands were soon busied about the knots that bound his arms and legs, and in removing the cumbrous cloak in which he was enveloped. All these hindrances were removed in an incredibly short time, and with a dexterity that amazed the prisoner, who, ere he was well aware of his own condition, was raised to his feet, unhooded and unbound, free to speculate on his situation.

Still winking and blinking from the effect of blind-folding, and not very well assured on his recovered legs, Master Achamber cast a hurried glance around. Yes—his worst fears were realized—he was on board a vessel with a warlike range of teeth alongside, and a fierce-looking crew, in whose costume the blue and red contrasted most awfully; and before him stood a short, sturdy, and not very gentle-looking personage, who, he at once felt assured,

was the captain. Achamber's senses nearly forsook him at so formidable a discovery of his predicament. His head swam; still, with a strong effort, he mastered sufficient energy to exclaim—

“Surely, sir, you dare not take the life of a freeborn Briton?”

“Indeed, sir, but I dare,” said the little gentleman, with a doubtful smile. “Our gracious mistress needs the lives of all her subjects at this juncture—that is to say, of all such as are able-bodied and get-at-able—though, God wot, it is hard enough now-a-days to get at anything good; but you are a tall man and a proper.”

“For mercy sake, listen to me, sir! Here's my purse—all I now possess. But if you will but land me safe on the coast of Holland, I will consent to treble—nay, centuple the sum.”

“Sir!”—the fiery little gentleman receded three steps with amazement at the straightforward proposal—“Sir!”—all that indigna-

tion, surprise, and savage rage could possibly suggest, seemed implied in the varied intonation of that little monosyllable—"Sir! you dare to offer me a bribe! and that to my face, in the face of my crew! D—n it, sir, what do you mean? Land you safely in Holland! To be sure I will—safe enough, I warrant you—to receive the first bullet that may chance to come across your mug, and spoil your ugly face!"

Achamber, rendered desperate by terror, began to plead in passionate terms for life—that dearest of earthly boons, ever prized so highly when in jeopardy, and often so lightly risked—so much abused, and carelessly undermined in our hours of ease.

The captain cut short his eloquent appeal with no gentle grace; and, turning to some rude specimens of Neptune's followers standing in a respectful attitude at no great distance, apparently in readiness for some such mandate, he said—

“Down below with the fellow and his money, and take care they be not parted. Close the hatches carefully over him and the rest, or they’ll drive us deaf with their clamour. Once in salt water they’ll be less noisy, ’specially if we get a tight breeze as seems likely.”

Again the poor struggling Achamber was dragged along; but when near the hatchway, and at such distance that a whisper might not reach the ears of his captain, the marine giant at his elbow bent towards him, and said, in a suppressed growl:—

“Why didn’t you shew the shiners on shore, since you had them; may be they’d have softened our hearts, ’specially as ’twas so dark. Those in the boat could never have seen it.”

“How could I tell,” murmured the disconsolate Scotchman, “what were your intentions?”

“A pretty d—d fool you must have been not to see we were press men,” said the colossus, rudely pushing Achamber down the gangway. “Howsoever, it doesn’t signify so much—the

Queen wants sodgers, and a nice gumption of a sodger you'll make ; and as you want to go to the Low Countries, you'll have your wish in a trice, I take it." So saying, he flung to the hatches, and left Achamber so stunned with the discovery he had just made, that it is a query whether it was a relief to know himself on board an English transport ship, instead of a piratical smuggling smack.

Despite the bandage tied over his eyes, young Lambrun, when his conductors halted, had no difficulty in guessing that he was still in Southwark, and at no great distance from the inn. He heard a key grate in a lock ; but by the extreme difficulty with which it revolved, it was evident that it had long been in disuse. When at last it yielded to the joint efforts of the men, and the door creaked on its rusty hinges, the softness of the sod under foot, and the rustling of foliage, made it apparent that it opened upon a garden, or some other pleasure-ground, into which they penetrated. A similar difficulty

had to be encountered at another door; then the velvet softness of the turf was exchanged for a damp cold floor, a creaking uneven staircase, and he was unceremoniously pushed into what might be a large square apartment.

“Remain there patiently until our return, which will be presently,” said one of the men soothingly; “don’t attempt to jump out of the window—you’d only break a limb. We mean you no harm, so be quiet, there’s a good boy.”

“If he could fly like Ischarus, or flee to Neptune’s crystal home, I’d find wings to spread after him, or dive into the depths of the sea to drag him forth. Escape is impossible—death certain!”

“Pshaw, don’t fool it out any longer, Dick; you’ll only make the boy uncomfortable.”

The remaining part of his remonstrance, and the flowery reply it elicited, were lost, as again the poor lad heard the key grate harshly in the door.

Hardly had the footsteps of his captors died

away, than he hastily tore away the bandage. One glance shewed him what he had already partly guessed; namely, that he had been thrust into a ruinous out-house, in a neglected part of very neglected grounds. The door did not look strong in its fastenings, nor were the windows at a very formidable height from the ground, still he hesitated to essay either means of escape. Some one might have been left to watch below, who would, of course, should he attempt it, arrest his flight, and the leap, at a second inspection, looked sufficiently hazardous to be only ventured upon in the last extremity. The one trial might make matters worse; the other was well nigh certain of fatal consequences; and upon the whole, he was inclined to think no real harm was meant him. Little as he knew of life, young Lambrun had an intuitive notion that highwaymen and cut-throats would speak less, and do more; and upon reflection, it appeared to him that the strangers had merely wished to frighten, rather than force him into

compliance with their wishes. What these were likely to prove, he could by no means conjecture; but the dread lest his poor mother and friendly patron were at the mercy of these strange men as well as himself, tormented him nearly as much as apprehension of bodily harm could have done.

His alarms would, however, have been dispelled by one glance at the countenance of his chief captor, could he at that very moment have seen him enter the principal chamber of a small house situated at the opposite side of the garden, in which said room sat half a dozen men, busily engaged in canvassing the merits of a few cold pies, and the contents of certain tempting long-necked bottles. His dancing step and joyous laugh spoke of anything but meditated crime.

“Successful, by Jove!” exclaimed some of the company, rising to make way for the new comers. “Romco has not only won his Juliet, but wears her!”

“All by my consummate skill—the conquest of my bow and my spear;” and Dick pointed as he spoke to the partner of his morning’s adventure, “he is a very Falstaff for cowardice—he dare not face a mother goose, if he wanted a gosling.”

“Nay, nay; but geese and Christian folks’ children are different things to deal with, especially under the reign of our gracious Queen; and we, of all her Majesty’s subjects, are the very last who should venture upon breaking her peace.”

“’Twas but a frolic, man!—don’t look so sober upon it!” exclaimed the other, looking somewhat crest-fallen.

“Well, let’s hear: we trust, Dick, your high spirits have not carried you too far; a mad freak may sit well on a young gallant who ruffles it at court and elsewhere, but her gracious Majesty’s poor players should look twice ere they commit themselves by any outrage or ill-timed levity.” These admonitory words were

spoken with earnestness by the same elderly person who checked Master Dick's impertinence on the previous eve, at the inn.

"You are always such a stickler about trifles," retorted Dick, in evident discomfiture, obviously feeling he had gone too far, although he sought to brave it out with as good an air as he might. "Why you have all been as anxious as myself—nay, a great deal more so, about procuring a personable youth to enact our female parts. Jones is grown too old, and too masculine to keep them up with any degree of illusion. He is perfectly ludicrous, and stares and storms more like a Brutus about to poniard Cæsar, than any female of them all: even Lady Macbeth is getting too soft for him."

"That is all very true; no one has felt the deficiency more than myself," said the older and graver looking personage. "Alas! none but a manager can understand all I have endured with that fellow Jones. First came his mustachios,—then his whiskers,—every night

has added an inch to his height, I'll be sworn, for the last few days,—and his breadth of shoulders might do for a porter or a plough boy. He a Juliet ! He an Ophelia, or the Regal Kate of France, or the playful Titania ! The witches of Macbeth, the untutored Bottom, were characters in which, I grant, he might shew to advantage, for he is grown ungainly enough for anything unsightly. Your pretty boys ever grow up such infernal louts !”

“Jones never *was* a pretty boy, and what is worse, never was a clever one,” remarked another of the party, scornfully ; “the fellow is a mere parrot—nothing more.”

“Now this lad is a proper lad and a handsome—a rare catch, I can tell you, Master Manager—old enough to get through a play, and what is better, to *feel* it, yet slight and fair-skinned, with such small features and timid look, that, provided we can keep him from overmuch exercise and strong diet—boys get so soon men when not kept a little from the air—he'll remain

serviceable for the next six or seven years, at the very least. After that he may pass, like Jones, to the male characters ; but I don't think, with that complexion and voice, he'll ever come up to me in the tyrants, robbers, murderers and heroes—he'll never have the right strut, though I dare say he may oust me out of the tender lovers, by and by."

" You, Dick!—you are always the same impudent puppy, by lamp-light or by sunshine. Yourself, always yourself, and nothing but yourself, at all times and places."

Upon hearing this pithy remark, Master Dick, bridling up, was about to answer with some acrimony, when silence was imposed by the manager, who, with a chagrined air and heavy sigh, exclaimed—

" Ah, me—ah, me ! None know better than I what this boy is worth to us, especially at this crisis, when I really know not what to do about that masque at Richmond. It will be in broad daylight, too, and all the painting and daubing

in the world wont wash the Ethiop white. You all know as well as myself how hard I've hunted for some one who would answer our purposes, and how I have met with nothing but ingratitude from the foolish parents to whom I made my applications. Alas! my disappointments on this trying subject are but too constantly before my eyes. I was quite willing, yesterday, when you pointed out this lad to my attention at the theatre, to do my best to get him, especially if he could be engaged in time for the royal sport; but when you, Dick, swore he should be ours, I expected you would use gentle means—those of persuasion. It was upon an express condition of this sort that I accompanied you last evening to that infernal tavern of the grim host and sour wine. Your surmises proved true; the boy did not belong to the man, nor is the man a gentle in any sense of the word. What then?—all our persuasive arguments failed. What are those with which you have succeeded?"

"Please, sir," said Dick, "I merely enacted a Romeo balcony scene, and a fragment of a banditti one."

"It is quite true," asseverated his companion. "He entered by the window, which was not well closed—found no one but the boy, whom he overwrought by fear to follow him like a dog, quite willingly and softly—upon my faith, he used no other means but his own disjointed phraseology and scraps of plays."

"But my consummate acting was such,"—continued Dick, looking triumphantly round,—
"I spoke of daggers——"

"And shewed one, I'll be bound!" said one of the company, uneasily, whilst all begun to look very grave.

"Behold my only weapon, but small where-with to guard my life!" retorted the accused, flourishing on high a long and heavy corkscrew, an old pocket companion which had often proved useful to the party, whose spirits and laughter were raised at the sight.

"Well, well! This gear must be looked to,

however," said the manager, "or we may get into a mess about Master Dick's foolish prank. We must to the inn, and see the man in whose charge the boy has been left. We'll again ply him with fair proposals, that he may leave us the lad until, at least, the Richmond bother is over; but should he persist in refusing, we have no option left."

"What! Return the brat to its owner," said Dick, impatiently, "after all my trouble?"

"Just as you say," returned the manager. "But one of you get the youngster here, and let's make a good impression upon his mind, if we can; perhaps, after all, he may wish to be one of us."

Dick fell back with a sheepish, angry look, disappointed at reaping censure where he expected praise. He soon, however, recovered his usual light tone, and proposed himself to head the party in their visit to the offended guardian of "abducted juvenility," as he persisted in calling the poor boy.

Under pretence of a morning cup, they

accordingly entered the hostelry a little after sunrise, and renewed their inquiries after Achamber and his *protégé*, expressing their desire to have speech of the former. Followed by the whole train, the ready host mounted to the chamber and knocked at the door; but upon no notice being taken of his repeated summons, he applied a duplicate key, which he carried about his person, and entered the apartment. No words can describe his amazement on finding it tenantless; and though for one of his guests the witnesses of his surprise were well able to account, the absence of the other was inexplicable to them as to him.

The additional absence of the stranger's money—a fact which the worthy innkeeper, by tossing about the sundry effects of Master Achamber, lost no time in ascertaining—might have led to strange presumptions, had not the window—open, indeed, but shewing no evidence of having been forced, and the utter want of any, even the slightest, trace of a personal

struggle, sufficiently indicated that the exit of the strangers had been perfectly voluntary, and that the host was the only one likely to prove a sufferer.

Seeing how matters stood, the confederates thought it best to withdraw without divulging unnecessarily their share in the transaction; being, moreover, well aware that Achamber had taken his departure before they came on the scene, their consciences perfectly acquitted them of any injustice with regard to the boy, who, thus deserted, would have been in a more miserable plight at the inn than amongst his new friends.

When the actual situation of the latter was communicated to him, he could scarcely believe in its reality; and even when convinced by his own eyes of his protector's sudden flight—an evidence which, favoured by a slight disguise, was easily afforded him—he had the greatest difficulty in comprehending it. When, at last, a full sense of his misfortune was forced upon

him, he felt himself indeed deserted. Whither Achamber had removed himself, and wherefore, was an insoluble mystery. His mother, he knew, had determined to leave the Savoy for ever on the same day that he joined his patron, but of her ultimate plans and views, or possible place of refuge, he knew at the present moment as little as of the fate of his absent friend. Where to lay his head in that vast aggregate of roofs, called London, the poor boy could not tell, unless he should consent to throw himself at once upon the kindness of those whom he now conceived Providence had sent to him in the time of his utmost need. Summoning up, therefore, his resolution, he made known his submission with the best grace he could, forming at the same time the mental reservation of embracing some more congenial line of life the moment any such should offer.

Thus, as necessity knows no law, the proud Scottish boy, the godson of a queen, and but a few hours ago not without some fair prospects

for the future, was fain to content himself with associating, at least for the nonce, with low wits and players. But more than this he determined, in his secret soul, he would not do; and although caprice or sentiment had imposed upon him a name belonging to another sex, nothing, he internally resolved, not hunger itself—poverty he knew, but starvation he had not yet faced—should ever force him into renouncing his sex, evening after evening, before the eyes of assembled hundreds. Against this emasculation his very inmost spirit revolted; but with laudable, though somewhat premature wisdom, he kept his sentiments upon this subject to himself, trusting, with the hopefulness of his age, to the turning up of some unforeseen chance in his favour.

The manager had every reason to rejoice in his good fortune, for that very evening orders came express from Richmond, that on the third day from the present, should the weather prove propitious, as there was every reason to expect,

the players should proceed thither at an early hour, in order to surprise her Majesty with a masque in her garden. Preparations were immediately commenced to meet the wishes of the court; and though so very decided that nothing should induce him to submit to that indignity, young Lambrun, by the mere force of the one little, magic word, "queen," was prevailed upon to try on his new costume, and to attend to what was expected of him concerning the part he was to assume in the approaching pageantry. Yes, it was to see the Queen that he consented to don the hateful clothes, which, in good sooth, fitted him so well as to render his sex, to the uninitiated, problematical. It was for this that he spent the better part of three successive nights in getting by rote the few words which were deemed absolutely incumbent upon him to speak.

Although, on the morning of the third day, the sun was pale, and surrounded by a watery nimbus, the weather—having, despite the

strength of habit, shaken off its dull mantle—was mild and summer-like. The gardens at Richmond, though still damp from the heavy showers of the last few days, smiled in autumnal beauty. The rich foliage of the wide-spreading trees caught, here and there, a golden ray, that enhanced its crimson or yellow tints. There was that sweet repose which, in the fading year, rests in the heavens and on the flowers, pervades the atmosphere, and is inhaled into the spirit through every pore. The few hours of relaxation from the cares of the state were generally spent by Elizabeth in these walks, consecrated to her pleasures, but at no time of the year were they so congenial to her harassed spirit as at the lingering adieu of the dying summer.

Her expanded brow, on which sat enthroned the most divine of God's gifts, a high intelligence,—her searching, commanding eye, and mouth so expressive of firmness—that noble attribute second only to intelligence—all seemed

on the morning in question influenced and softened by the agreeable sensation of the hour. She, too, like the tall trees around, had known storms, had now yielded like the ash, now resisted like the oak—but they seemed over, these earthly trials; and the sear and yellow leaf of life might, perchance, linger on in as stilly an air—bathed in the golden hues of prosperity—as those of the forest world around her. Some such thoughts, perhaps, smoothed the Queen's often ruffled brow into the placid calm which it that morning wore. True, for this autumnal peace she had foregone the dearest hopes and wishes of woman's spring; sacrificed every impulse of ordinary nature to the sterner duties, the loftier impulses of a nature and a position equally exalted above the common herd of mankind. In other and better times such sacrifice had been needless—and, because needless, of no value; but Scotland, England's foe no more, but her bounden ally, would make Britain strong, and in the strength

of nations lie their happiness ; and never did a more truly British heart beat in a British bosom, than that of Elizabeth of England. Her policy had often been cruel to others—had crossed many an idle wish—a secretly treasured feeling of her own, but in every circumstance of moment the queen had invariably triumphed over the woman.

It has frequently been asserted, as the highest possible compliment to the merits of that great princess, that she was rather a king than a queen. This is, to say the least, a not very philosophical turn of thought or expression ; for, as woman's passions are often said to exceed our own, their patience and perseverance in pursuing the object of those passions an acknowledged fact, it would seem a natural result, that where personal and national glory are the aim—although we grant that to pursue such argues a masculine, to say the least, a not ordinary nature—woman should follow it up with a zeal, even more fiery than that which the opposite

sex might exhibit; the minor passions and duties, even the reproaches of conscience are all conquered, broken down, or disregarded; of which truth, Catherine of Russia, Catherine of Medicis, Margaret Waldemar, and a few more, have afforded striking instances.

The ladies and courtiers in Elizabeth's train followed with a practised step, so as not to press too closely on her Majesty in this one little hour of relaxation; but everything was prepared that ennui should not clog its enjoyment. When the slightest trace of weariness should become visible on her countenance, at a given signal the gay maskers were to appear, and, in appropriate words, lament the passing season and hail the approaching one. The chief speaker on this occasion was to be Master Dick, in the character of a rustic swain, whilst young Lambrun, who, as his listening Daphne, had little or nothing to say, should kneel to strew flowers at the royal feet.

Lying perdu with his companions in a thick

grove, awaiting the expected signal, the poor boy's heart beat thicker at the sight of the Queen, than even at his approaching appearance on the unwonted scene. There stood She whom he had been taught to consider the murderess of his leal sovereign—of his own father—the cause of all his mother's tears—of the anguish that had burnt her brain, and had well nigh unsettled her reason. There stood the heedless power that had unconsciously, by the consequences of its deeds, crushed his young life as a worm is trodden under a careless foot. Blinding tears came so fast into his eyes that he could scarcely distinguish the object of his dread and hatred—of dread, ever since his soul had awakened to consciousness—of hatred, since the best loved of his parents had sunk into his grave, and the surviving one had sought to implant in his young bosom feelings most alien to the soft, yielding disposition he had inherited from his father. He *would* see Elizabeth; but now that the Queen stood

before him, he could scarcely look upon her. He had, more than once, been permitted to gaze on the far lovelier features of Mary of Scotland, and her gentle smile had often beamed upon him ; but though years had robbed Elizabeth of her early charms, the loftier impress of genius was stamped upon her brow in such indelible characters that instinct made the boy quail before the inborn majesty of the spirit of England's Queen. He gazed after her, awed and subdued, hardly daring to remember his long-cherished resentment in so august a presence.

The Queen had already passed several times the cover in which the masque was ensconced, and still neither step nor look betrayed fatigue. On the contrary, so keen an enjoyment of the passing glimpse of sunshine was depicted in her every feature—so sweet a sense of the mere animal pleasure of existing under its cheering influence, that her well-trained attendants would rather have renounced the little episode

with which they had imagined to amuse her than have obtruded it upon her presence at such a moment. They hung back still more completely, as, with brisk movements, she retraced her steps along the avenue, and when she was again about to pass the pregnant bush, they had dropped so far to the rear, that trees and parterres intervened betwixt them and their royal mistress.

Elizabeth, on becoming aware that she had so far outwalked her train, paused to allow them time to come up with her, and in so doing, turned half round with her back towards the players. At that instant the leaves of a neighbouring bush became slightly agitated, but not sufficiently to attract her attention—it might have been caused by the circulation of the air—and she still continued to gaze, undisturbed, after her tardy followers. It soon became apparent, however, that the foliage was disturbed by no passing breeze; the crackling of a few twigs succeeded—and stealing cautiously

from beneath the leafy canopy, a man stood in the same path with herself, not five paces from her. His purpose did not long remain doubtful. Drawing a pistol from his belt, and cocking it, he proceeded to take a calm, deliberate aim at his intended victim, on whom his eye remained intently fixed. His finger slowly sought the trigger, when, as he was in the act of pressing it, a light figure bounded forward, and at one single blow dashed the pistol to the ground, and a soft voice murmured—"Oh, God! rather death than this——!"

The Queen turned hastily round at the report, for the pistol had exploded in falling—her deliverer had disappeared; and there stood before her a man, young in form, but through whose coal-black hair the silver threads were already mingling, and whose eyes rolled wildly about like those of a maniac. His hand grasped a fresh pistol, which, no sooner had the other been wrested from him, than he had drawn from his vest. The vest, too, hastily,

carelessly adjusted, revealed beneath its folds a shirt of mail, the bright links glittering in the rays of the sun.

Elizabeth's life had hung by a thread, and even now seemed at the mercy of a madman, yet her cheek did not even change colour—every nerve was firm.

“What means this?” she said, sternly facing the wretch who stood before her, mute and aghast, as if turned to stone by the unexpected check to his meditated crime. “God’s death! we’ve a traitor here! and ye—be ye more of them?” she added, with angry frown, turning to the players, who now, by surrounding the stranger, threw themselves effectually ’twixt him and the Queen, but deprived so completely of their presence of mind, that they did not even attempt to disarm the foiled murderer.

From where they stood loitering listlessly, the train could not well witness the transaction; but the report of fire-arms having startled

them from their quietude, their alarm literally lent them wings, so soon did they reach the place of action. To their incoherent expressions of terror and sympathy Elizabeth answered by a smile, as tranquil as though nothing had occurred to ruffle her. But the angry frown was again on her brow, as, pointing to the bewildered and terror-stricken mummors, who each individually looked a detected assassin, she exclaimed, in loud, angry tones—

“Who be these men?”

When the presence of the poor devils was explained, the Queen’s serenity returned. She ordered all to make way, that she might herself confront the criminal.

“Strange,” she muttered, as all made way, and her bold, clear, blue eye scanned the features of the stranger with a look that had recalled her royal sire to any who had ever gazed on him—“Strange!—this man seems old in youth; his bearing is above the condition his mean vestments would denote. But now he

looked a desperate madman, and now seems humbled to the very dust—a craven, at best—a carrion-crow. Who or what art thou? A base-born churl and a vile, I'll be sworn; no gentle spirit could stoop so low. Who art thou, man? Speak!"

"One whom thou hast made desperate, proud Queen, and who fears not thy wrath; for it has done its worst by her already," said the stranger, folding his arms across his breast, and returning the Queen's look with one of haughty defiance. "I am a woman, madam—a woman, whom your deeds have driven to despair, to madness, and to death. My name is Margaret Lambrun. I am of gentle blood, though it be but Scottish. Nay, why tarry in sending me to my doom? Have I not deserved it threefold, even ere your eyes lighted on me? Was I not a Scot, a Papist, and a devoted subject to her who claimed England as her lawful inheritance? She, whose mother was of royal lineage, and pure!"

“She raves, madam! Listen not to her, we entreat,” said several of the nobles, starting forward, as they perceived a deep crimson spot upon the Queen’s brow.

“Stand back, my lords,” she said, angrily—
“Stand back; and if this be really a woman, unhand her—there—gently, my lords, and let me speak to her. Go on, woman—go on. What more wouldst thou say?”

“That I once was happy, in my mountain home, with the husband of my choice, and a bountiful, gracious mistress, whom Providence had permitted that I should serve—the royal Mary of Scotland. I followed her to Fotheringay—I saw her die!—my husband, too, who, like a faithful hound, could not survive the hand that had fed him. I gloried in his fidelity; but I could not die like him—life had too resolute a hold upon me. But if I lived, it must be to avenge them. I imagined Heaven itself had marked me to be the instrument of its awful decrees. This day has proved my

error; it was my own blind passion, not the will of Heaven, that whispered me to undertake this dark deed. But it is too late—the guilt is on my soul! It is England's Queen, and not the humble Scottish matron, that is the chosen instrument of God's wrath!"

"This is strange, indeed," muttered Elizabeth; "and yet, as says our favourite, poor Will, 'there's method in her madness.' But sorrow has turned her brain. What think you, woman, are your deserts at our hands—you, who would have murdered, who have insulted us, a crowned Queen? By our faith, we would fain hear your own opinion on this head."

"Would you hear what I have deserved of the offended laws of this country, or of individual resentment? Or shall I say what I expect the Queen will do?" answered the woman, with composure. "If you speak as a judge, you will send me forth to expiate on the scaffold my meditated crime. But the

Queen would bid me go in peace—repent, and sin no more.”

“That were easily spoken, though lightly, methinks,” said the Queen, laughing, “considering that you might return to-morrow with fresh pistols.”

“Easily spoken, indeed, madam,” resumed the woman; “but this were not all. You would order some trusty persons to see that I am permitted to depart this country in safety. This will you do, if you would shew yourself a Queen.”

Elizabeth remained silent for a moment, as if absorbed in thought; whilst the woman, whose life hung, as it were, by as light a thread as that of Elizabeth had done a few minutes back, stood calm and firm as ever. At last, the Queen looked up, and said—

“You are free to go or to remain; in either case, you are safe. I would to Heaven England’s welfare never wrung harder concessions from its Queen!”

The woman's pride was broken. She fell on one knee, and scalding tears fell down her cheeks, as she murmured—

“Forgive, gracious lady, forgive! and may God, at that awful hour of utmost need, to princes as to slaves, remember this day's leniency, and forgive your offences, as you have forgiven mine. It is not for myself that I return you thanks for this poor boon of life; but there was another hard by, but for whom—however, the guilt is the same, whether I expiate it with my blood or with my tears; I'll go and mourn it in sackcloth and ashes!”

She rose from her humble posture, her face still bedewed with tears, and turned to depart. At a few whispered words from the Queen, one of her train hurried after her. Then Elizabeth, without uttering another word, made towards the palace, closely followed by her anxious attendants. When about to turn into her apartments, she dismissed them, without making a single remark on the morning's adventure; but

there was more of thought and melancholy in her countenance than it had exhibited for many months past.

Upon the retiring of the Queen, the disregarded and now superfluous players had been unceremoniously thrust from the gardens, when all the issues were instantly closed, and the guards everywhere trebled. Whilst they yet stood huddled up together in confusion at the gate by which they had been ejected, Margaret Lambrun, escorted by several persons of the Queen's household, came by, leaning on the arm of the gentleman to whom she had been given in charge. As she passed the staggers, her dark eyes rested for a moment full on that of her son.

"We shall meet again," she murmured, and passed on, without any further token of recognition. The next instant, Master Achamber was descried hurrying furiously forward with some very suspicious-looking personages at his heel, at sight of whom, as if they were old acquaintances that they felt no desire to meet,

Master Dick and his party scampered off in an opposite direction, leaving young Lambrun to bear the brunt of the meeting alone,—and a glad one it was to both parties. Thanking the constables who had, at his request, accompanied him so far to assist in the recovery of his protégé, he dismissed them with a handsome reward; and without allowing the boy time to question him, dragged him rapidly along, recounting his adventures by the way.

After having detailed his captivity at great length, he went on to tell how, for the mortal space of three long days, he had vainly intreated for his liberty. Although he had represented that he was no subject of the Queen of England, but plainly shewed they must consider him either the bounden vassal of Spain or of Scotland, they would listen to nothing; and he must infallibly have sailed that very morning, had not, by the merest chance, Master Ross's nephew come on board, who, the moment he recognised him—being besides a friend of the

captain—had him restored to freedom. This youth was in the Queen's service, and commanded a small transport ship, in which, being about to sail on the morrow, he very politely offered a free passage to Master Achamber, in gratitude for some advice tendered a few days back, which, though rejected with the utmost scorn at the moment, had since, it appeared, been remembered with pleasure, and even acted upon.

The offer had been joyfully accepted, and Master Achamber had hurried back to his inn, merely to pay his score, and to ascertain what had become of his protégé in the meanwhile. He had learnt the truth from the host, who, in his turn, had the whole story as a second-hand joke from the Tabbard, where many a good tankard had been drained on the strength of it. The rest was soon told. Young Lambrun's tale was longer. He began by explaining how his having seen his mother at the lottery, habited in male attire, had enabled him to recognise

her in the gardens at first glance, under her disguise, and then gave the details of that morning's adventure, which were of a nature to reawaken the merchant's timid fears, and the ghastly monitors at the bridge gate rose again most distinctly before the "eye of his imagination." He insisted on embarking that very evening on board the friendly craft that was to bear them away on the morrow; and when at last it weighed anchor and swept by the battlemented Tower, he kept beneath, nor did he breathe freely until restored to his own home.

After the expiration of a few more years he returned to his native country, accompanied by his adopted son and eventual heir, young Lambrun, who—his own name having become odious to him since the morning when he had seen his mother about to commit a deed, the bare thought of which caused him to shudder with shame and disgust—had himself entreated to bear that of his benefactor.

Deeming herself thenceforth unworthy to

remain in a world whose laws she had broken, Margaret Lambrun retired into a nunnery abroad, where the miserable woman, weighed down even more by remorse for her intended crime than by the severe penances she inflicted on herself, did not survive many years, but died in a spirit far more becoming a Christian than that which had influenced her life. On her tomb no name was inscribed; and, but for the page of an obscure and foreign historian,* she had been, together with her mad attempt, consigned to that oblivion from which, perchance, his short paragraph may not have redeemed her.

* Gregorio Leti.

THE END.