THE ITALIAN.

THE

ITALIAN;

OR, THE

CONFESSIONAL OF THE BLACK PENITENTS.

A ROMANCE.

BY ANN RADCLIFFE,

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He, wrapt in clouds of mystery and silence,
Broods o'er his passions, bodies them in deeds,
And sends them forth on wings of Fate to others:
Like the invisible Will, that guides us,
Unheard, unknown, unsearchable!

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THE

ITALIAN.

CHAPTER I.

—— Is it not dead midnight?
Cold fearful drops stand on my trembling flesh.
What do I fear?

SHAKESPEARE.

At about the same hour, as on the preceding night, Vivaldi heard persons approaching his prison, and, the door unfolding, his former conductors appeared. They threw over him the same mantle as before, and, in addition, a black veil, that completely muffled his eyes; after which, they led him from the chamber. Vivaldi heard the door shut, on his departure, and the sentinels followed his steps, as if their duty was

finished, and he was to return thither no more. At this moment, he remembered the words of the stranger when he had displayed the poniard, and Vivaldi apprehended the worst, from having thwarted the designs of a person apparently so malignant; but he exulted in the rectitude, which had preserved him from debasement, and, with the magnanimous enthusiasm of virtue, he almost welcomed sufferings, which would prove the firmness of his justice towards an enemy; for he determined to brave every thing rather than impute to Schedoni circumstances, the truth of which he possessed no means of ascertaining.

While Vivaldi was conducted, as on the preceding night, through many passages, he endeavoured to discover, by their length and the abruptness of their turnings, whether they were the same he had traversed before. Suddenly, one of his conductors cried—Steps! It was the first word Vivaldi had ever heard him utter. He immediately perceived

that the ground sunk, and he began to descend; as he did which, he tried to count the number of the steps, that he might form some judgment whether this was the flight he had passed before. When he had reached the bottom, he inclined to believe that it was not so; and the care, which had been observed in blinding him, seemed to indicate that he was going to some new place.

He passed through several avenues, and then ascended; soon after which, he again descended a very long staircase, such as he had not any remembrance of, and they passed over a considerable extent of level ground. By the hollow sounds, which his steps returned, he judged that he was walking over vaults. The footsteps of the sentinels, who had followed from the cell, were no longer heard, and he seemed to be left with his conductors only. A second flight appeared to lead him into subterraneous vaults, for he perceived the air change, and felt a damp vapour wrap round him. The menace of the

monk, that he should meet him in the chambers of death, frequently occurred to Vivaldi.

His conductors stopped in this vault, and seemed to hold a consultation, but they spoke in such low accents, that their words were not distinguishable, except a few unconnected ones, that hinted of more than Vivaldi could comprehend. He was, at length, again led forward; and soon after, he heard the heavy grating of hinges, and perceived that he was passing through several doors, by the situation of which Vivaldi judged they were the same he had entered the night before, and concluded, that he was going to the hall of the tribunal.

His conductors stopped again, and Vivaldi heard the iron rod strike three times upon a door; immediately a strange voice spoke from within, and the door was unclosed. Vivaldi passed on, and imagined that he was admitted into a spacious vault; for the air was freer, and his steps sounded to a distance.

Presently a voice, as on the preceding night, summoned him to come forward; and Vivaldi understood that he was again before the tribunal. It was the voice of the inquisitor, who had been his chief examiner.

You, Vincentio di Vivaldi, it said, answer to your name, and to the questions, which shall be put to you, without equivocation, on pain of the torture.

As the monk had predicted, Vivaldi was asked what he knew of father Schedoni, and, when he replied, as he had formerly done to his mysterious visitor, he was told that he knew more than he acknowledged.

I *know* no more, replied Vivaldi.

You equivocate, said the inquisitor. Declare what you have heard, and remember that you formerly took an oath to that purpose.

Vivaldi was silent, till a tremendous voice from the tribunal commanded him to respect his oath.

I do respect it, said Vivaldi; and I conjure you to believe that I also re-

spect truth, when I declare, that what I am going to relate, is a report, to which I give no confidence, and concerning even the probability of which I cannot produce the smallest proof.

Respect truth! said another voice from the tribunal, and Vivaldi fancied he distinguished the tones of the monk. He paused a moment, and the exhortation was repeated. Vivaldi then related what the stranger had said concerning the family of Schedoni, and the disguise which the father had assumed in the convent of the Spirito Santo: but forbore even to name the penitentiary Ansaldo, and any circumstance connected with the extraordinary confession. Vivaldi concluded with again declaring, that he had not sufficient authority to justify a belief in those reports.

On what authority do you repeat them? said the vicar-general.

Vivaldi was silent.

On what authority? inquired the inquisitor, sternly.

Vivaldi, after a momentary hesitation, said, What I am about to declare, holy fathers, is so extraordinary ——

Tremble! said a voice close to his ear, which he instantly knew to be the monk's; and the suddenness of which electrified him. He was unable to conclude the sentence.

What is your authority for the reports? demanded the inquisitor.

It is unknown, even to myself! answered Vivaldi.

Do not equivocate, said the vicar-general.

I solemnly protest, rejoined Vivaldi, that I know not either the name, or the condition of my informer, and that I never even beheld his face, till the period when he spoke of father Schedoni.

Tremble! repeated the same low, but emphatic voice in his ear. Vivaldi started, and turned involuntarily towards the sound, though his eyes could not assist his curiosity.

You did well to say, that you had something extraordinary to add, ob-

served the inquisitor. 'Tis evident, also, that you expected something extraordinary from your judges, since you supposed they would credit these assertions.

Vivaldi was too proud to attempt the justifying himself against so gross an accusation, or to make any reply.

Why do you not summon father Ansaldo, said the voice. Remember my words!

Vivaldi, again awed by the voice, hesitated for an instant how to act, and in that instant his courage returned.

My informer stands beside me! said Vivaldi, boldly; I know his voice! Detain him; it is of consequence.

Whose voice? demanded the inquisitor. No person spoke but myself.

Whose voice? said the vicar-general.

The voice was close beside me, replied Vivaldi. It spoke low, but I knew it well.

This is either the cunning, or the frenzy of despair! observed the vicar-general.

Not any person is now beside you,

except the familiars, said the inquisitor, and they wait to do their office, if you shall refuse to answer the questions put to you.

I persist in my assertion, replied Vivaldi; and I supplicate that my eyes may be unbound, that I may know my enemy.

The tribunal, after a long private consultation, granted the request; the veil was withdrawn, and Vivaldi perceived beside him—only the familiars! Their faces, as is usual, were concealed. It appeared that one of these torturers must be the mysterious enemy, who pursued him, if, indeed, that enemy was an inhabitant of the earth! and Vivaldi requested, that they might be ordered to uncover their features. He was sternly rebuked for so presumptuous a requisition, and reminded of the inviolable law and faith, which the tribunal had pledged, that persons appointed to their awful office, should never be exposed to the revenge of the criminal, whom it might be their duty to punish.

Their duty! exclaimed Vivaldi, thrown from his guard by strong indignation. And is faith held sacred with demons!

Without awaiting the order of the tribunal, the familiars immediately covered Vivaldi's face with the veil, and he felt himself in their grasp. He endeavoured, however, to disentangle his hands, and, at length, shook these men from their hold, and again unveiled his eyes; but the familiars were instantly ordered to replace the veil.

The inquisitor bade Vivaldi to recollect in whose presence he then was, and to dread the punishment, which his resistance had incurred, and which would be inflicted without delay, unless he could give some instance, that might tend to prove the truth of his late assertions.

If you expect that I should say more, replied Vivaldi, I claim, at least, protection from the unbidden violence of the men, who guard me. If they are suffered, at their pleasure, to sport with the misery of their prisoner, I will be

inflexibly silent; and, since I must suffer, it shall be according to the laws of the tribunal.

The vicar-general, or, as he is called, the grand inquisitor, promised Vivaldi the degree of protection he claimed, and demanded, at the same time, what were the words he had just heard.

Vivaldi considered, that, though justice bade him avoid accusing an enemy of suspicious circumstances, concerning which he had no proof, yet, that neither justice nor common sense required he should make a sacrifice of himself to the dilemma, in which he was placed: he therefore, without further scruple, acknowledged, that the voice had bidden him require of the tribunal to summon one father Ansaldo, the grand penitentiary of the Santa del Pianto, near Naples, and also father Schedoni, who was to answer to extraordinary charges, which would be brought against him by Ansaldo. Vivaldi anxiously and repeatedly declared, that he knew not the

nature of the charges, nor that any just grounds for them existed.

These assertions seemed to throw the tribunal into new perplexity. Vivaldi heard their busy voices in low debate, which continued for a considerable time. In this interval, he had leisure to perceive the many improbabilities that either of the familiars should be the stranger who so mysteriously haunted him; and among these was the circumstance of his having resided so long at Naples.

The tribunal, after some time had elapsed in consultation, proceeded on the examination, and Vivaldi was asked what he knew of father Ansaldo. He immediately replied, that Ansaldo was an utter stranger to him, and that he was not even acquainted with a single person residing in the Santa del Pianto, or who had any knowledge of the penitentiary.

How! said the grand inquisitor. You forget that the person, who bade you require of this tribunal to summon Ansaldo, has knowledge of him.

Pardon me, I do not forget, replied Vivaldi; and I request it may be remembered that I am not acquainted with that person. If, therefore, he had given me any account of Ansaldo, I could not have relied upon its authenticity. Vivaldi again required of the tribunal to understand that he did not summon Ansaldo, or any other person, before them, but had merely obeyed their command, to repeat what the stranger had said.

The tribunal acknowledged the justness of this injunction, and exculpated him from any harm, that should be the consequence of the summons. But this assurance of safety for himself was not sufficient to appease Vivaldi, who was alarmed lest he should be the means of bringing an innocent person under suspicion. The grand inquisitor again addressed him, after a general silence had been commanded in the court.

The account you have given of your informer, said he, is so extraordinary, that it would not deserve credit, but

that you have discovered the utmost reluctance to reveal the charges he gave you, from which, it appears, that, on your part, at least, the summons is not malicious. But are you certain that you have not deluded yourself, and that the voice beside you was not an imaginary one, conjured up by your agitated spirits?

I am certain, replied Vivaldi, with firmness.

It is true, resumed the grand inquisitor, that several persons were near you, when you exclaimed, that you heard the voice of your informer; yet no person heard it besides yourself!

Where are those persons now? demanded Vivaldi.

They are dispersed; alarmed at your accusation.

If you will summon them, said Vivaldi, and order that my eyes may be uncovered, I will point out to you, without hesitation, the person of my informer, should he remain among them.

The tribunal commanded that they

should appear, but new difficulties arose. It was not remembered of whom the crowd consisted; a few individuals only were recollected, and these were summoned.

Vivaldi, in solemn expectation, heard steps and the hum of voices gathering round him, and impatiently awaited for the words, that would restore him to sight, and, perhaps, release him from uncertainty. In a few moments, he heard the command given; the veil was once more removed from his eyes, and he was ordered to point out the accuser. Vivaldi threw an hasty glance upon the surrounding strangers.

The lights burn dimly, said he, I cannot distinguish these faces.

It was ordered that a lamp should be lowered from the roof, and that the strangers should arrange themselves on either side of Vivaldi. When this was done, and he glanced his eyes again upon the crowd; He is not here! said Vivaldi; not one of these countenances resembles the monk of Paluzzi. Yet,

stay; who is he that stands in the shade behind those persons on the left? Bid him lift his cowl!

The crowd fell back, and the person, to whom Vivaldi had pointed, was left alone within the circle.

He is an officer of the Inquisition, said a man near Vivaldi, and he may not be compelled to discover his face, unless by an express command from the tribunal.

I call upon the tribunal to command it! said Vivaldi.

Who calls? exclaimed a voice, and Vivaldi recognised the tones of the monk, but he knew not exactly whence they came.

I, Vincentio di Vivaldi, replied the prisoner, I claim the privilege, that has been awarded me, and bid you unveil your countenance.

There was a pause of silence in the court, except that a dull murmur ran through the tribunal. Meanwhile, the figure within the circle stood motionless, and remained veiled.

Spare him, said the man, who had before addressed Vivaldi; he has reasons for wishing to remain unknown, which you cannot conjecture. He is an officer of the Inquisition, and not the person you apprehend.

Perhaps I *can* conjecture his reasons, replied Vivaldi, who, raising his voice, added, I appeal to this tribunal, and command you, who stand alone within the circle, you in black garments, to unveil your features!

Immediately a loud voice issued from the tribunal, and said,

We command you, in the name of the most holy Inquisition, to reveal yourself!

The stranger trembled, but, without presuming to hesitate, uplifted his cowl. Vivaldi's eyes were eagerly fixed upon him; but the action disclosed not the countenance of the monk! but of an official whom he recollected to have seen once before, though exactly on what occasion he did not now remember.

This is not my informer! said Vivaldi, turning from him with deep disappointment, while the stranger dropped his cowl, and the crowd closed upon him. At the assertion of Vivaldi, the members of the tribunal looked upon each other doubtingly, and were silent, till the grand inquisitor, waving his hand, as if to command attention, addressed Vivaldi.

It appears, then, that you *have* formerly seen the face of your informer.

I have already declared so, replied Vivaldi.

The grand inquisitor demanded when, and where, he had seen it.

Last night, and in my prison, answered Vivaldi.

In your prison! said the ordinary inquisitor, contemptuously, who had before examined him, and in your dreams, too, no doubt!

In your prison! exclaimed several of the members of the lower tribunal.

He dreams still! observed an inquisitor. Holy fathers! he abuses your

patience, and the frenzy of terror has deluded his credulity. We neglect the moments.

We must inquire further into this, said another inquisitor. Here is some deception. If you, Vincentio di Vivaldi, have asserted a falsehood—tremble!

Whether Vivaldi's memory still vibrated with the voice of the monk, or that the tone, in which this same word was now pronounced did resemble it, he almost started, when the inquisitor had said *tremble!* and he demanded who spoke then.

It is ourself, answered the inquisitor.

After a short conversation among the members of the tribunal, the grand inquisitor gave orders that the sentinels, who had watched on the preceding night at the prison door of Vivaldi, should be brought into the hall of justice. The persons, who had been lately summoned into the chamber, were now bidden to withdraw, and all further examination was suspended till the arrival of the sentinels; Vivaldi heard only the low

voices of the inquisitors, as they conversed privately together, and he remained silent, thoughtful, and amazed.

When the sentinels appeared, and were asked who had entered the prison of Vivaldi during the last night, they declared, without hesitation, or confusion, that not any person had passed through the door after the hour when the prisoner had returned from examination, till the following morning, when the guard had carried in the usual allowance of bread and water. In this assertion they persisted without the least equivocation, notwithstanding which they were ordered into confinement till the affair should be cleared up.

The doubts, however, which were admitted, as to the integrity of these men, did not contribute to dissipate those, which had prevailed over the opposite side of the question. On the contrary, the suspicions of the tribunal, augmenting with their perplexity, seemed to fluctuate equally over every point of the subject before them, till, instead of

throwing any light upon the truth, they only served to involve the whole in deeper obscurity. More doubtful than before of the honesty of Vivaldi's extraordinary assertions, the grand inquisitor informed him, that if, after further inquiry into this affair, it should appear he had been trifling with the credulity of his judges, he would be severely punished for his audacity; but that, on the other hand, should there be reason to believe, that the sentinels had failed in their duty, and that some person had entered his prison during the night, the tribunal would proceed in a different manner.

Vivaldi, perceiving that, to be believed, it was necessary he should be more circumstantial, described, with exactness, the person and appearance of the monk, without, however, mentioning the poniard which had been exhibited. A profound silence reigned in the chamber while he spoke; it seemed a silence not merely of attention, but of astonishment. Vivaldi himself was awed, and, when he had concluded, almost

expected to hear the voice of the monk uttering defiance, or threatening vengeance; but all remained hushed, till the inquisitor, who had first examined him, said, in a solemn tone,

We have listened with attention to what you have delivered, and will give the case a full inquiry. Some points, on which you have touched, excite our amazement, and call for particular regard. Retire whence you came—and sleep this night without fear;—*you will soon know more.*

Vivaldi was immediately led from the chamber, and, still blindfolded, reconducted to the prison, to which he had supposed it was designed he should return no more. When the veil was withdrawn, he perceived that his guard was changed.

Again left to the silence of his cell, he reviewed all that had passed in the chamber of justice; the questions which had been put to him; the different manners of the inquisitors; the occurrence of the monk's voice; and the

similarity, which he had fancied he perceived between it and that of an inquisitor, when the latter pronounced the word *tremble;* but the consideration of all these circumstances did not in any degree relieve him from his perplexity. Sometimes he was inclined to think, that the monk was an inquisitor, and the voice had more than once appeared to proceed from the tribunal; but he remembered, also, that, more than once, it had spoken close to his ear, and he knew that a member of this tribunal might not leave his station during the examination of a prisoner; and that, even if he had dared to do so, his singular dress would have pointed him out to notice, and consequently to suspicion, at the moment when Vivaldi had exclaimed, that he heard the voice of his informer.

Vivaldi, however, could not avoid meditating, with surprise, on the last words, which the inquisitor, who had been his chief examiner, had addressed to him, when he was dismissed from

before the tribunal. These were the more surprising, because they were the first from him that in any degree indicated a wish to console, or quiet the alarm of the prisoner; and Vivaldi even fancied, that they betrayed some foreknowledge, that he would not be disturbed this night by the presence of his awful visitor. He would entirely have ceased to apprehend, though not to expect, had he been allowed a light, and any weapon of defence, if, in truth, the stranger was of a nature to fear a weapon; but, to be thus exposed to the designs of a mysterious and powerful being, whom he was conscious of having offended, to sustain such a situation, without suffering anxiety, required somewhat more than courage, or less than reason.

CHAPTER II.

— It came o'er my soul as doth the thunder,
While distant yet, with an unexpected burst
It threats the trembling ear. Now to the trial.

CARACTACUS.

IN consequence of what had transpired at the last examination of Vivaldi, the grand penitentiary Ansaldo, together with the father Schedoni, were cited to appear before the table of the holy office.

Schedoni was arrested on his way to Rome, whither he was going privately to make further efforts for the liberation of Vivaldi, whose release he had found it more difficult to effect, than his imprisonment; the person, upon whose assistance the confessor relied in the first instance, having boasted of more influence than he possessed, or perhaps thought it prudent to exert. Schedoni had been the more anxious to procure an immediate release for Vivaldi, lest a

report of his situation should reach his family, notwithstanding the precautions, which are usually employed to throw an impenetrable shroud over the prisoners of this dreadful tribunal, and bury them for ever from the knowledge of their friends. Such premature discovery of Vivaldi's circumstances, Schedoni apprehended, might include also a discovery of the prosecutor, and draw down upon himself the abhorrence and the vengeance of a family, whom it was now, more than ever, his wish and his interest to conciliate. It was still his intention, that the nuptials of Vivaldi and Ellena should be privately solemnized immediately on the release of the prisoner, who, even if he had reason to suspect Schedoni for his late persecutor, would then be interested in concealing his suspicions for ever, and from whom therefore, no evil was to be apprehended.

How little did Vivaldi foresee, that in repeating to the tribunal the stranger's summons of father Schedoni, he was deferring, or, perhaps, wholly prevent-

ing his own marriage, with Ellena di Rosalba! How little, also, did he apprehend what would be the further consequences of a disclosure, which the peculiar circumstances of his situation had hardly permitted him to withhold, though, could he have understood the probable event of it, he would have braved all the terrors of the tribunal, and death itself, rather than incur the remorse of having promoted it.

The motive for his arrestation was concealed from Schedoni, who had not the remotest suspicion of its nature, but attributed the arrest, to a discovery, which the tribunal had made, of his being the accuser of Vivaldi. This disclosure he attributed to his own imprudence, in having stated, as an instance of Vivaldi's contempt for the Catholic faith, that he had insulted a priest whilst doing penance in the church of the Spirito Santo. But by what art the tribunal had discovered, that he was the priest alluded to, and the author of the accusation, Schedoni could by no means

conjecture. He was willing to believe, that this arrest was only for the purpose of obtaining proof of Vivaldi's guilt; and the confessor knew, that he could so conduct himself in evidence, as in all probability to exculpate the prisoner, from whom, when he should explain himself, no resentment on account of his former conduct, was to be apprehended. Yet Schedoni was not perfectly at ease; for it was possible, that a knowledge of Vivaldi's situation, and of the author of it, had reached his family and had produced his own arrest. On this head, however, his fears were not powerful; since, the longer he dwelt upon the subject, the more improbable it appeared, that such a disclosure, at least so far as it related to himself, could have been effected.

Vivaldi, from the night of his late examination, was not called upon till Schedoni and father Ansaldo appeared together in the hall of the tribunal. The two latter had already been separately examined, and Ansaldo had pri-

vately stated the particulars of the confession he had received on the vigil of the Santo Marco, in the year 1752, for which disclosure he had received formal absolution. What had passed at that examination does not appear, but on this his second interrogation, he was required to repeat the subject and the circumstances of the confession. This was probably with a view of observing its effect upon Schedoni and on Vivaldi, which would direct the opinion of the tribunal, as to the guilt of the confessor, and the veracity of the young prisoner.

On this night, a very exact inquiry was made, concerning every person, who had obtained admission into the hall of justice; such officials as were not immediately necessary to assist in the ceremonies of the tribunal were excluded, together with every other person belonging to the Inquisition not material to the evidence, or to the judges. When this scrutiny was over, the prisoners were brought in, and their conductors

ordered to withdraw. A silence of some moments prevailed in the hall; and, however different might be the reflections of the several prisoners, the degree of anxious expectation was in each, probably, nearly the same.

The grand vicar having spoken a few words in private to a person on his left hand, an inquisitor rose.

If any person in this court, said he, is known by the name of father Schedoni, belonging to the Dominician society of the Spirito Santo at Naples, let him appear!

Schedoni answered to the summons. He came forward with a firm step, and, having crossed himself, and bowed to the tribunal, awaited in silence its commands.

The penitentiary Ansaldo was next called upon. Vivaldi observed, that he faltered as he advanced; and that his obeisance to the tribunal was more profound than Schedoni's had been. Vivaldi himself was then summoned; his air was calm and dignified, and his coun-

tenance expressed the solemn energy of his feelings, but nothing of dejection.

Schedoni and Ansaldo were now, for the first time, confronted. Whatever might be the feelings of Schedoni on beholding the penitentiary of the Santa del Pianto, he effectually concealed them.

The grand vicar himself opened the examination: You, father Schedoni, of the Spirito Santo, he said, answer and say, whether the person who now stands before you, bearing the title of grand penitentiary of the order of the Black Penitents, and presiding over the convent of the Santa Maria del Pianto, at Naples, is known to you.

To this requisition Schedoni replied with firmness in the negative.

You have never, to your knowledge, seen him before this hour?

Never! said Schedoni.

Let the oath be administered, added the grand vicar. Schedoni having accepted it; the same questions were put to Ansaldo concerning the confessor,

when, to the astonishment of Vivaldi and of the greater part of the court, the penitentiary denied all knowledge of Schedoni. His negative was given, however, in a less decisive manner than that of the confessor, and, when the usual oath was offered, Ansaldo declined to accept it.

Vivaldi was next called upon to identify Schedoni: he declared, that the person who was then pointed out to him, he had never known by any other denomination than that of father Schedoni; and that he had always understood him to be a monk of the Spirito Santo; but Vivaldi was at the same time careful to repeat, that he knew nothing further relative to his life.

Schedoni was somewhat surprised at this apparent candour of Vivaldi towards himself, but, accustomed to impute an evil motive to all conduct, which he could not clearly comprehend, he did not scruple to believe, that some latent mischief was directed against him in this seemingly honest declaration.

After some further preliminary forms had passed, Ansaldo was ordered to relate the particulars of the confession, which had been made to him on the eve of the Santo Marco. It must be remembered, that this was still what is called in the Inquisition, a *private* examination.

After he had taken the customary oaths to relate neither more nor less than the truth of what had passed before him, Ansaldo's depositions were written down nearly in the following words; to which Vivaldi listened with almost trembling attention, for, besides the curiosity which some previous circumstances had excited respecting them, he believed, that his own fate in a great measure depended upon a discovery of the fact, to which they led. What, if he had surmised how much! and that the person whom he had been in some degree instrumental in citing before this tremendous tribunal, was the father of his Ellena di Rosalba!

Ansaldo, having again answered to

his name, and titles, gave his deposition as follows:

It was on the eve of the twenty-fifth of April, and in the year 1752, that as I sat, according to my custom, in the confessional of San Marco, I was alarmed by deep groans, which came from the box on my left hand.

Vivaldi observed, that the date now mentioned agreed with that recorded by the stranger, and he was thus prepared to believe what might follow, and to give his confidence to this extraordinary and unseen personage.

Ansaldo continued, I was the more alarmed by these sounds, because I had not been prepared for them; I knew not that any person was in the confessional, nor had even observed any one pass along the aisle—but the duskiness of the hour may account for my having failed to do so; it was after sun set, and the tapers at the shrine of San Antonio as yet burned feebly in the twilight.

Be brief, holy father, said the inqui-

sitor, who had formerly been most active in examining Vivaldi; speak closely to the point.

The groans would sometimes cease, resumed Ansaldo, and long pauses of silence follow; they were those of a soul in agony, struggling with the consciousness of guilt, yet wanting resolution to confess it. I tried to encourage the penitent, and held forth every hope of mercy and forgiveness, which my duty would allow, but for a considerable time without effect;—the enormity of the sin seemed too big for utterance, yet the penitent appeared equally unable to endure the concealment of it. His heart was bursting with the secret, and required the comfort of absolution, even at the price of the severest penance.

Facts! said the inquisitor, these are only surmises.

Facts will come full soon! replied Ansaldo, and bowed his head, the mention of them will petrify you, holy fathers! as they did me, though not for the same reasons. While I endeavoured

to encourage the penitent, and assured him, that absolution should follow the acknowledgment of his crimes, however heinous those crimes might be, if accompanied by sincere repentance, he more than once began his confession, and abruptly dropt it. Once, indeed, he quitted the confessional; his agitated spirit required liberty; and it was then, as he walked with perturbed steps along the aisle, that I first observed his figure. He was in the habit of a white friar, and, as nearly as I can recollect, was about the stature of him, the father Schedoni, who now stands before me.

As Ansaldo delivered these words, the attention of the whole tribunal was turned upon Schedoni, who stood unmoved, and with his eyes bent towards the ground.

His face, continued the penitentiary, I did not see; he was, with good reason, careful to conceal it; other resemblance, therefore, than the stature, I cannot point out between them. The voice, indeed, the voice of the penitent, I think

I shall never forget; I should know it again at any distance of time.

Has it not struck your ear, since you came within these walls? said a member of the tribunal.

Of that hereafter, observed the inquisitor; you wander from the point, father.

The vicar general remarked, that the circumstances just related were important, and ought not to be passed over as irrelevant. The inquisitor submitted to this opinion, but objected that they were not pertinent at the moment; and Ansaldo was again bidden to repeat what he had heard at confession.

When the stranger returned to the steps of the confessional, he had acquired sufficient resolution to go through with the task he had imposed upon himself, and a thrilling voice spoke through the grate the facts I am about to relate.

Father Ansaldo paused, and was somewhat agitated; he seemed endeavouring to re-collect courage to go through with what he had begun. During this pause, the silence of expectation

rapt the court, and the eyes of the tribunal were directed alternately to Ansaldo and Schedoni, who certainly required something more than human firmness to support unmoved the severe scrutiny and the yet severer suspicions, to which he stood exposed. Whether, however, it was the fortitude of conscious innocence, or the hardihood of atrocious vice, that protected the confessor, he certainly did not betray any emotion. Vivaldi, who had unceasingly observed him from the commencement of the depositions, felt inclined to believe, that he was not the penitent described. Ansaldo, having, at length, recollected himself, proceeded as follows:

I have been through life, said the penitent, the slave of my passions, and they have led me into horrible excesses. I had once a brother!—He stopped, and deep groans again told the agony of his soul; at length, he added—That brother had a wife!—Now listen, father, and say, whether guilt like mine may hope for absolution! She was beautiful—I

loved her; she was virtuous, and I despaired. You, father, he continued in a frightful tone, never knew the fury of despair! It overcame or communicated its own force to every other passion of my soul, and I sought to release myself from its tortures by any means. My brother died!—The penitent paused again, continued Ansaldo, I trembled while I listened; my lips were sealed. At length, I bade him proceed, and he spoke as follows.—My brother died at a distance from home.—Again the penitent paused, and the silence continued so long, that I thought it proper to inquire of what disorder the brother had expired. Father, I was his murderer! said the penitent in a voice, which I never can forget; it sunk into my heart.

Ansaldo appeared affected by the remembrance, and was for a moment silent. At the last words Vivaldi had particularly noticed Schedoni, that he might judge by their effect upon him, whether he was guilty; but he remained

in his former attitude, and his eyes were still fixed upon the ground.

Proceed, father! said the inquisitor; what was your reply to this confession?

I was silent, said Ansaldo; but at length I bade the penitent go on. I contrived, said he, that my brother should die at a distance from home, and I so conducted the affair, that his widow never suspected the cause of his death. It was not till long after the usual time of mourning had expired, that I ventured to solicit her hand: but she had not yet forgotten my brother, and she rejected me. My passion would no longer be trifled with. I caused her to be carried from her house, and she was afterwards willing to retrieve her honour by the marriage vow. I had sacrificed my conscience, without having found happiness——she did not even condescend to conceal her disdain. Mortified, exasperated by her conduct, I began to suspect, that some other emotion than resentment occasioned this disdain; and

last of all jealousy—jealousy came to crown my misery—to light up all my passions into madness!

The penitent, added Ansaldo, appeared by the manner in which he uttered this, to be nearly frantic at the moment, and convulsive sobs soon stifled his words. When he resumed his confession, he said, I soon found an object of my jealousy. Among the few persons, who visited us in the retirement of our country residence, was a gentleman, who, I fancied, loved my wife; I fancied too, that, whenever he appeared, an air of particular satisfaction was visible on her countenance. She seemed to have pleasure in conversing with, and shewing him distinction. I even sometimes thought, she had pride in displaying to me the preference she entertained for him, and that an air of triumph, and even of scorn, was addressed to me, whenever she mentioned his name. Perhaps I mistook resentment for love, and she only wished to punish me, by exciting

my jealousy. Fatal error! she punished herself also!

Be less circumstantial, father, said the inquisitor.

Ansaldo bowed his head, and continued. One evening, continued the penitent, that I returned home unexpectedly, I was told that a visitor was with my wife! As I approached the apartment where they sat, I heard the voice of Sacchi; it seemed mournful and supplicating. I stopped to listen, and distinguished enough to fire me with vengeance. I restrained myself, however, so far as to step softly to a lattice that opened from the passage, and overlooked the apartment. The traitor was on his knee before her. Whether she had heard my step, or observed my face, through the high lattice, or that she resented his conduct, I know not, but she rose immediately from her chair. I did not pause to question her motive; but seizing my stiletto, I rushed into the room, with intent to strike it to the

villain's heart. The supposed assassin of my honour escaped into the garden, and was heard of no more.—But your wife? said I. Her bosom received the poniard! replied the penitent.

Ansaldo's voice faltered, as he repeated this part of the confession, and he was utterly unable to proceed. The tribunal, observing his condition, allowed him a chair, and, after a struggle of some moments, he added, Think, holy fathers, O think! what must have been my feelings at that instant! I was myself the lover of the woman, whom he confessed himself to have murdered.

Was she innocent? said a voice; and Vivaldi, whose attention had latterly been fixed upon Ansaldo, now, on looking at Schedoni, perceived that it was he who had spoken. At the sound of his voice, the penitentiary turned instantly towards him. There was a pause of general silence, during which Ansaldo's eyes were earnestly fixed upon the accused. At length he spoke; She was

innocent! He replied with solemn emphasis, She was most virtuous!

Schedoni had shrunk back within himself; he asked no further. A murmur ran through the tribunal, which rose by degrees, till it broke forth into audible conversation; at length, the secretary was directed to note the question of Schedoni.

Was that the voice of the penitent, which you have just heard? demanded the inquisitor of Ansaldo. Remember, you have said that you should know it again!

I think it was, replied Ansaldo; but I cannot swear to that.

What infirmity of judgment is this! said the same inquisitor, who himself was seldom troubled with the modesty of doubt, upon any subject. Ansaldo was bidden to resume the narrative.

On this discovery of the murderer, said the penitentiary, I quitted the confessional, and my senses forsook me before I could deliver orders for the detec-

tion of the assassin. When I recovered, it was too late; he had escaped! From that hour to the present, I have never seen him, nor dare I affirm that the person now before me is he.

The inquisitor was about to speak, but the grand vicar waved his hand, as a signal for attention, and, addressing Ansaldo, said, Although you may be unacquainted with Schedoni, the monk of the Spirito Santo, reverend father, can you not recollect the person of the Count di Bruno, your former friend?

Ansaldo again looked at Schedoni, with a scrutinizing eye; he fixed it long; but the countenance of Schedoni suffered no change.

No! said the penitentiary, at length, I dare not take upon me to assert, that this is the Count di Bruno. If it be he, years have wrought deeply on his features. That the penitent was the Count di Bruno I have proof; he mentioned my name as his visitor, and particular circumstances known only to the Count and myself; but that father Schedoni

was the penitent, I repeat it, I dare not affirm.

But that dare I! said another voice; and Vivaldi, turning towards it, beheld the mysterious stranger advancing, his cowl now thrown back, and an air of menace overspreading every terrific feature. Schedoni, in the instant that he perceived him, seemed agitated; his countenance, for the first time, suffered some change.

The tribunal was profoundly silent, but surprise and a kind of restless expectation marked every brow. Vivaldi was about to exclaim, That is my informer! when the voice of the stranger checked him.

Dost thou know me? said he, sternly, to Schedoni, and his attitude became fixed.

Schedoni gave no reply.

Dost thou know me? repeated his accuser, in a steady solemn voice.

Know thee! uttered Schedoni, faintly.

Dost thou know this? cried the stranger, raising his voice, as he drew from

his garment what appeared to be a dagger. Dost thou know these indelible stains! said he, lifting the poniard, and with an outstretched arm, pointing it towards Schedoni.

The confessor turned away his face; it seemed as if his heart sickened.

With this dagger was thy brother slain! said the terrible stranger. Shall I declare myself!

Schedoni's courage forsook him, and he sunk against a pillar of the hall for support.

The consternation was now general; the extraordinary appearance and conduct of the stranger seemed to strike the greater part of the tribunal, a tribunal of the Inquisition itself! with dismay. Several of the members rose from their seats; others called aloud for the officials, who kept guard at the doors of the hall, and inquired who had admitted the stranger, while the vicar general and a few inquisitors conversed privately together, during which they frequently looked at the stranger and at Schedoni,

as if they were the subjects of the discourse. Meanwhile the monk remained with the dagger in his grasp, and his eyes fixed on the confessor, whose face was still averted, and who yet supported himself against the pillar.

At length, the vicar general called upon the members, who had risen, to return to their seats, and ordered, that the officials should withdraw to their posts.

Holy brethren! said the vicar, we recommend to you, at this important hour, silence and deliberation. Let the examination of the accused proceed; and hereafter let us inquire, as to the admittance of the accuser. For the present, suffer him also to have hearing and the father Schedoni to reply.

We suffer him! answered the tribunal, and bowed their heads.

Vivaldi, who, during the tumult, had ineffectually endeavoured to make himself heard, now profited by the pause, which followed the assent of the inquisitors, to claim attention: but the in-

stant he spoke, several members impatiently bade, that the examination should proceed, and the grand vicar was again obliged to command silence, before the request of Vivaldi could be understood. Permission to speak being granted him, That person, said he, pointing to the stranger, is the same, who visited me in my prison; and the dagger the same he now displays! It was he, who commanded me to summon the penitentiary Ansaldo and the father Schedoni. I have acquitted myself, and have nothing further to do in this struggle.

The tribunal was again agitated, and the murmurs of private conversation again prevailed. Meanwhile Schedoni appeared to have recovered some degree of self command; he raised himself, and, bowing to the tribunal, seemed preparing to speak; but waited till the confusion of sound, that filled the hall, should subside. At length, he could be heard, and, addressing the tribunal, he said,

Holy fathers! the stranger who is now before you is an impostor! I will prove

that my accuser was once my friend;—you may perceive how much the discovery of his perfidy affects me. The charge he brings is most false and malicious!

Once thy friend! replied the stranger, with peculiar emphasis, and what has made me thy enemy! View these spots, he continued, pointing to the blade of the poniard; are they also false and malicious? are they not, on the contrary, reflected on thy conscience?

I know them not, replied Schedoni, my conscience is unstained.

A brother's blood *has* stained it! said the stranger, in a hollow voice.

Vivaldi, whose attention was now fixed upon Schedoni, observed a livid hue overspread his complexion, and that his eyes were averted from this extraordinary person with horror: the spectre of his deceased brother could scarcely have called forth a stronger expression. It was not immediately that he could command his voice; when he could, he again appealed to the tribunal.

Holy fathers! said he, suffer me to defend myself!

Holy fathers! said the accuser, with solemnity, hear! hear what I shall unfold!

Schedoni, who seemed to speak by a strong effort only, again addressed the inquisitors; I will prove, said he, that this evidence is not of a nature to be trusted.

I will bring *such* proof to the contrary! said the monk. And here, pointing to Ansaldo, is sufficient testimony, that the Count di Bruno did confess himself guilty of murder.

The court commanded silence, and upon the appeal of the stranger to Ansaldo, the penitentiary was asked whether he knew him. He replied, that he did not.

Recollect yourself, said the grand inquisitor, it is of the utmost consequence, that you should be correct on this point.

The penitentiary observed the stran-

ger with deep attention, and then repeated his assertion.

Have you never seen him before? said an inquisitor.

Never, to my knowledge, replied Ansaldo.

The inquisitors looked upon each other in silence.

He speaks the truth, said the stranger.

This extraordinary fact did not fail to strike the tribunal and to astonish Vivaldi. Since the accuser confirmed it, Vivaldi was at a loss to understand the means, by which he could have become acquainted with the guilt of Schedoni, who, it was not to be supposed, would have acknowledged crimes of such magnitude as those contained in the accusation, to any person, except, indeed, to his confessor, and this confessor, it appeared, was so far from having betrayed his trust to the accuser, that he did not even know him. Vivaldi was no less perplexed, as to what would be the nature of the testimony, with which

the accuser designed to support his charges: but the pause of general amazement, which had permitted Vivaldi these considerations, was now at an end; the tribunal resumed the examination, and the grand inquisitor called aloud,

You, Vincentio di Vivaldi, answer with exactness to the questions, that shall be put to you.

He was then asked some questions, relative to the person, who had visited him in prison. In his answers Vivaldi was clear and concise, constantly affirming, that the stranger was the same who now accused Schedoni.

When the accuser was interrogated, he acknowledged, without hesitation, that Vivaldi had spoken the truth. He was then asked his motive for that extraordinary visit.

It was, replied the monk, that a murderer might be brought to justice.

This, observed the grand inquisitor, might have been accomplished by fair and open accusation. If you had known the charge to be just, it is probable that

you would have appealed directly to this tribunal, instead of endeavouring insidiously to obtain an influence over the mind of a prisoner, and urging him to become the instrument of bringing the accused to punishment.

Yet I have not shrunk from discovery, observed the stranger, calmly; I have voluntarily appeared.

At these words, Schedoni seemed again much agitated, and even drew his hood over his eyes.

That is just, said the grand inquisitor, addressing the stranger; but you have neither declared your name, nor whence you come!

To this remark the monk made no reply; but Schedoni, with reviving spirit, urged the circumstance, in evidence of the malignity and falsehood of the accuser.

Wilt thou compel me to reveal my proof? said the stranger: Darest thou to do so?

Why should I fear thee? answered Schedoni.

Ask thy conscience! said the stranger, with a terrible frown.

The tribunal again suspended the examination, and consulted in private together.

To the last exhortation of the monk, Schedoni was silent. Vivaldi observed, that during this short dialogue, the confessor had never once turned his eyes towards the stranger, but apparently avoided him, as an object too affecting to be looked upon. He judged from this circumstance, and from some other appearances in his conduct, that Schedoni was guilty; yet the consciousness of guilt alone did not perfectly account, he thought, for the strong emotion, with which he avoided the sight of his accuser—unless, indeed, he knew that accuser to have been, not only an accomplice in his crime, but the actual assasin. In this case, it appeared natural even for the stern and subtle Schedoni to betray his horror, on beholding the person of the murderer, with the very instrument of crime in his grasp. On

the other hand, Vivaldi could not but perceive it to be highly improbable, that the very man, who had really committed the deed should come voluntarily into a court of justice, for the purpose of accusing his employer; that he should dare publickly to accuse him, whose guilt, however enormous, was not more so than his own.

The extraordinary manner, also, in which the accuser had proceeded in the commencement of the affair, engaged Vivaldi's consideration; his apparent reluctance to be seen in this process, and the artful and mysterious plan by which he had caused Schedoni to be summoned before the tribunal, and had endeavoured that he should be there accused by Ansaldo, indicated, at least to Vivaldi's apprehension, the fearfulness of guilt, and, still more, that malice, and a thirst of vengeance, had instigated his conduct in the prosecution. If the stranger had been actuated only by a love of justice, it appeared, that he would not have proceeded toward it in

a way thus dark and circuitous, but have sought it by the usual process, and have produced the proofs, which he even now asserted he possessed, of Schedoni's crimes. In addition to the circumstances, which seemed to strengthen a supposition of the guiltlessness of Schedoni, was that of the accuser's avoiding to acknowledge who he was, and whence he came. But Vivaldi paused again upon this point; it appeared to be inexplicable, and he could not imagine why the accuser had adopted a style of secrecy, which, if he persisted in it, must probably defeat the very purpose of the accusation; for Vivaldi did not believe that the tribunal would condemn a prisoner upon the testimony of a person who, when called upon, should publicly refuse to reveal himself, even to them. Yet the accuser must certainly have considered this circumstance before he ventured into court; notwithstanding which, he had appeared!

These reflections led Vivaldi to various

conjectures, relative to the visit he had himself received from the monk, the dream that had preceded it, the extraordinary means, by which he had obtained admittance to the prison, the declaration of the sentinels, that not any person had passed the door, and many other unaccountable particulars; and, while Vivaldi now looked upon the wild physiognomy of the stranger, he almost fancied, as he had formerly done, that he beheld something not of this earth.

I have heard of the spirit of the murdered, said he, to himself, restless for justice, becoming visible in our world— But Vivaldi checked the imperfect thought, and, though his imagination inclined him to the marvellous, and to admit ideas which, filling and expanding all the faculties of the soul, produce feelings, that partake of the sublime, he now resisted the propensity, and dismissed, as absurd, a supposition, which had begun to thrill his every nerve with horror. He awaited, however, the result

of the examination and what might be the further conduct of the stranger, with intense expectation.

When the tribunal had, at length, finally determined on the method of their proceedings, Schedoni was first called upon, and examined, as to his knowledge of the accuser. It was the same inquisitor, who had formerly interrogated Vivaldi, that now spoke. You, father Schedoni, a monk of the Spirito Santo convent, at Naples, otherwise Ferando Count di Bruno, answer to the questions, which shall be put to you. Do you know the name of this man, who now appears as your accuser?

I answer not to the title of Count di Bruno, replied the confessor, but I will declare that I know this man. His name is Nicola di Zampari.

What is his condition?

He is a monk of the Dominican convent of the Spirito Santo, replied Schedoni. Of his family I know little.

Where have you seen him?

In the city of Naples, where he has

resided, during some years, beneath the same roof with me, when I was of the convent of San Angiolo, and since that time, in the Spirito Santo.

You have been a resident at the San Angiolo ? said the inquisitor.

I have, replied Schedoni ; and it was there that we first lived together in the confidence of friendship.

You now perceive how ill placed was that confidence, said the inquisitor, and repent, no doubt, of your imprudence ?

The wary Schedoni was not entrapped by this observation.

I must lament a discovery of ingratitude, he replied, calmly, but the subjects of my confidence were too pure to give occasion for repentance.

This Nicola di Zampari, was ungrateful then ? You had rendered him services ? said the inquisitor.

The cause of his enmity I can well explain, observed Schedoni, evading, for the present, the question.

Explain, said the stranger, solemnly.

Schedoni hesitated ; some sudden

consideration seemed to occasion him perplexity.

I call upon you, in the name of your deceased brother, said the accuser, to reveal the cause of my enmity!

Vivaldi, struck by the tone, in which the stranger spoke this, turned his eyes upon him, but knew not how to interpret the emotion visible on his countenance.

The inquisitor commanded Schedoni to explain himself; the latter could not immediately reply; but, when he recovered a self command, he added,

I promised this accuser, this Nicola di Zampari, to assist his preferment with what little interest I possessed; it was but little. Some succeeding circumstances encouraged me to believe, that I could more than fulfil my promise. His hopes were elevated, and, in the fulness of expectation—he was disappointed, for I was myself deceived, by the person, in whom I had trusted. To the disappointment of a choleric man I am to attribute this unjust accusation.

Schedoni paused, and an air of dissatisfaction and anxiety appeared upon his features. His accuser remained silent, but a malicious smile announced his triumph.

You must declare, also, the services, said the inquisitor, which merited the reward you promised.

Those services were inestimable to me, resumed Schedoni, after a momentary hesitation, though they cost di Zampari little: they were the consolations of sympathy, the offices of friendship, which he administered, and which gratitude told me never could be repaid.

Of sympathy! of friendship! said the grand vicar. Are we to believe that a man, who brings false accusation of so dreadful a nature as the one now before us, is capable of bestowing the consolations of sympathy and of friendship? You must either acknowledge, that services of a less disinterested nature won your promises of reward; or we must conclude that your accuser's charge is

just. Your assertions are inconsistent, and your explanation too trivial to deceive for a moment.

I have declared the truth, said Schedoni, haughtily.

In which instance? asked the inquisitor, for your assertions contradict each other!

Schedoni was silent. Vivaldi could not judge whether the pride, which occasioned his silence, was that of innocence, or of remorse.

It appears from your own testimony, said the inquisitor, that the ingratitude was your's, not your accuser's, since he consoled you with kindness, which you have never returned him!—Have you any thing further to say?

Schedoni was still silent.

This, then, is your only explanation? added the inquisitor.

Schedoni bowed his head. The inquisitor then addressing the accuser, demanded what he had to reply.

I have nothing to reply, said the

stranger, with malicious triumph; the accused has replied for me!

We are to conclude, then, that he has spoken truth, when he asserted you to be a monk of the Spirito Santo, at Naples? said the inquisitor.

You, holy father, said the stranger, gravely, appealing to the inquisitor, can answer for me, whether I am.

Vivaldi listened with emotion.

The inquisitor rose from his chair, and with solemnity replied, I answer, then, that you are not a monk of Naples.

By that reply, said the vicar general, in a low voice, to the inquisitor, I perceive you think father Schedoni is guilty.

The rejoinder of the inquisitor was delivered in so low a tone, that Vivaldi could not understand it. He was perplexed to interpret the answer given to the appeal of the stranger. He thought, that the inquisitor would not have ventured an assertion thus positive, if his

opinion had been drawn from inference only; and that he should know the accuser, while he was conducting himself towards him as a stranger, amazed Vivaldi, no less than if he had understood the character of an inquisitor to be as artless as his own. On the other hand, he had so frequently seen the stranger at Paluzzi and in the habit of a monk, that he could hardly question the assertion of Schedoni, as to his identity.

The inquisitor, addressing Schedoni, said, Your assertion we know to be in part erroneous; your accuser is not a monk of Naples, but a servant of the most holy Inquisition. Judging, from this part of your defence, we must suspect the whole.

A servant of the Inquisition! exclaimed Schedoni, with unaffected surprise. Reverend father! your assertion astonishes me! You are deceived, however strange it may appear, trust me, you are deceived! You doubt the credit of my word; I, therefore, will assert no more. But inquire of Signor Vivaldi; ask him,

whether he has not often, and lately, seen my accuser at Naples and in the habit of a monk.

I have seen him at the ruins of Paluzzi, near Naples, and in the ecclesiastical dress, replied Vivaldi, without waiting for the regular question, and under circumstances no less extraordinary than those, which have attended him here. But, in return for this frank acknowledgment, I require of you, father Schedoni, to answer some questions, which I shall venture to suggest to the tribunal—By what means were you informed, that I have often seen the stranger at Paluzzi—and were you interested or not in his mysterious conduct towards me there?

To these questions, though formally delivered from the tribunal, Schedoni did not deign to reply.

It appears, then, said the vicar general, that the accuser and the accused were once accomplices.

The inquisitor objected, that this did not certainly appear; and that, on the

contrary, Schedoni seemed to have given his last questions in despair; an observation, which Vivaldi thought extraordinary from an inquisitor.

Be it *accomplices*, if it so please you, said Schedoni, bowing to the grand vicar, without noticing the inquisitor: you may call us accomplices, but I say, that we were *friends*. Since it is necessary to my own peace, that I should more fully explain some circumstances attending our intimacy, I will own, that my accuser was occasionally my agent, and assisted in preserving the dignity of an illustrious family at Naples, the family of the Vivaldi. And there, holy father, added Schedoni, pointing to Vincentio, is the son of that ancient house, for whom I have attempted so much!

Vivaldi was almost overwhelmed by this confession of Schedoni, though he had already suspected a part of the truth. In the stranger he believed he saw the slanderer of Ellena, the base instrument of the Marchesa's policy and of Schedoni's ambition; and the whole

of his conduct at Paluzzi, at least, seemed now intelligible. In Schedoni he beheld his secret accuser and the inexorable enemy, whom he believed to have occasioned the imprisonment of Ellena. At this latter consideration, all circumspection, all prudence forsook him: he declared, with energy, that, from what Schedoni had just acknowledged to be his conduct, he knew him for his secret accuser and the accuser, also, of Ellena di Rosalba; and he called upon the tribunal to examine into the confessor's motives for the accusation and afterwards to give hearing to what he would himself unfold.

To this, the grand vicar replied, that Vivaldi's appeal would be taken into consideration; and he then ordered, that the present business should proceed.

The inquisitor, addressing Schedoni, said, The disinterested nature of your friendship is now sufficiently explained, and the degree of credit, which is due to your late assertions, understood. Of you we ask no more, but turn to father

Nicola di Zampari, and demand what he has to say in support of his accusation. What are your proofs, Nicola di Zampari, that he, who calls himself father Schedoni, is Ferando Count di Bruno; and that he has been guilty of murder, the murder of his brother, and of his wife? Answer to our charge!

To your first question, said the monk, I reply that he has himself acknowledged to me, on an occasion, which it is not necessary to mention, that he was the Count di Bruno; to the last, I produce the poniard which I received, with the dying confession of the assassin, whom he employed.

Still, these are not proofs, but assertions, observed the vicar general, and the first forbids our confidence in the second.—If, as you declare, Schedoni himself acknowledged to you that he was Count di Bruno, you must have been to him the intimate friend he has declared you were, or he would not have confided to you a secret so dangerous to himself. And, if you were that friend,

what confidence ought we to give to your assertions respecting the dagger? since, whether your accusations be true or false, you prove yourself guilty of treachery in bringing them forward at all.

Vivaldi was surprised to hear such candour from an inquisitor.

Here is my proof, said the stranger, who now produced a paper, containing what he asserted to be the dying confession of the assassin. It was signed by a priest of Rome, as well as by himself, and appeared from the date to have been given only a very few weeks before. The priest, he said, was living, and might be summoned. The tribunal issued an order for the apprehension of this priest, and that he should be brought to give evidence on the following evening; after which, the business of this night proceeded, without further interruption, towards its conclusion.

The vicar general spoke again, Nicola di Zampari, I call upon you to say, why, if your proof of Schedoni's guilt be so

clear, as the confession of the assassin himself must make it,—why you thought it necessary to summon father Ansaldo to attest the criminality of the Count di Bruno? The dying confession of the assassin is certainly of more weight than any other evidence.

I summoned the father Ansaldo, replied the stranger, as a means of proving that Schedoni is the Count di Bruno. The confession of the assassin sufficiently proves the count to have been the instigator of the murder, but not that Schedoni is the count.

But that is more than I will engage to prove, replied Ansaldo; I know it was the Count di Bruno, who confessed to me, but I do not know that the father Schedoni, who is now before me, was the person who so confessed.

Conscientiously observed! said the vicar general, interrupting the stranger, who was about to reply; but you, Nicola di Zampari, have not on this head been sufficiently explicit.—How do you know that Schedoni is the penitent, who

confessed to Ansaldo on the vigil of San Marco!

Reverend father, that is the point I was about to explain, replied the monk. I myself accompanied Schedoni, on the eve of San Marco, to the church of the Santa Maria del Pianto, at the very hour when the confession is said to have been made. Schedoni told me he was going to confession; and, when I observed to him his unusual agitation, his behaviour implied a consciousness of extraordinary guilt; he even betrayed it by some words, which he dropped in the confusion of his mind. I parted with him at the gates of the church. He was then of an order of white friars, and habited as father Ansaldo has described. Within a few weeks after this confession, he left his convent, for what reason I never could learn, though I have often surmised it, and came to reside at the Spirito Santo, whither I also had removed.

Here is no proof, said the vicar general; other friars of that order might

confess at the same hour, in the same church.

But here is strong presumption for proof, observed the inquisitor. Holy father, we must judge from probabilities, as well as from proof.

But probabilities themselves, replied the vicar general, are strongly against the evidence of a man, who would betray another by means of words dropped in the unguarded moments of powerful emotion.

Are these the sentiments of an inquisitor! said Vivaldi to himself, can such glorious candour appear amidst the tribunal of an Inquisition! Tears fell fast on Vivaldi's cheek while he gazed upon this just judge, whose candour, had it been exerted in his cause, could not have excited more powerful sensations of esteem and admiration. An inquisitor! he repeated to himself; an inquisitor!

The inferior inquisitor, however, was so far from possessing any congeniality of character with his superior, that he was evidently disappointed by the ap-

pearance of liberality, which the vicar general discovered, and immediately said, Has the accuser any thing further to urge in evidence, that the father Schedoni is the penitent, who confessed to the penitentiary Ansaldo?

I have, replied the monk, with asperity. When I had left Schedoni in the church, I lingered without the walls for his return, according to appointment. But he appeared considerably sooner than I expected, and in a state of disorder, such as I had never witnessed in him before. In an instant he passed me, nor could my voice arrest his progress. Confusion seemed to reign within the church and the convent, and, when I would have entered, for the purpose of inquiring the occasion of it, the gates were suddenly closed, and all entrance forbidden. It has since appeared, that the monks were then searching for the penitent. A rumour afterwards reached me, that a confession had caused this disturbance; that the father confessor, who happened at that time to be the

grand penitentiary Ansaldo, had left the chair in horror of what had been divulged from the grate, and had judged it necessary, that a search should be made for the penitent, who was a white friar. This report, reverend fathers, excited general attention; with me it did more—for I thought I knew the penitent. When on the following day I questioned Schedoni as to his sudden departure from the church of the Black Penitents, his answers were dark, but emphatic, and he extorted from me a promise, thoughtless that I was! never to disclose his visit of the preceding evening to the Santa del Pianto. I then certainly discovered who was the penitent.

Did he, then, confess to you, also! said the vicar general.

No, father. I understood him to be the penitent, to whom the report alluded, but I had no suspicion of the nature of his crimes, till the assassin began his confession, the conclusion of which clearly explained the subject of Schedoni's; it explained also his motive for

endeavouring ever after to attach me to his interest.

You have now, said the vicar general; you have now, confessed yourself a member of the convent of the Spirito Santo, at Naples, and an intimate of the father Schedoni; one, whom for many years he has endeavoured to attach to him. Not an hour has passed since you denied all this; the negative to the latter circumstance was given, it is true, by implication only; but to the first a direct and absolute denial was pronounced.

I denied that I *am* a monk of Naples, replied the accuser, and I appealed to the inquisitor for the truth of my denial. He has said, that I am now a servant of the most holy Inquisition.

The vicar general, with some surprise, looked at the inquisitor for explanation; other members of the tribunal did the same; the rest appeared to understand more than they had thought it necessary to avow. The inquisitor, who had been called upon, rose, and replied,

Nicola di Zampari has spoken the

truth. It is not many weeks since he entered the holy office. A certificate from his convent at Naples bears testimony to the truth of what I advance, and procured him admittance here.

It is extraordinary that you should not have disclosed your knowledge of this person before! said the vicar general.

Holy father, I had reasons, replied the inquisitor; you will recollect that the accused was present, and you will understand them.

I comprehend you, said the vicar general, but I do neither approve of, nor perceive any necessity for your countenancing the subterfuge of this Nicola di Zampari, relative to his identity. But more of this in private.

I will explain all there, answered the inquisitor.

It appears, then, resumed the vicar general, speaking aloud, that this Nicola di Zampari was formerly the friend and confidant of father Schedoni, whom he now accuses. The accusation is evidently malicious; whether it be also

false, remains to be decided. A material question naturally arises out of the subject—Why was not the accusation brought forward before this period?

The monk's visage brightened with the satisfaction of anticipated triumph, and he immediately replied,

Most holy father! as soon as I ascertained the crime, I prepared to prosecute the perpetrator of it. A short period only has elapsed since the assassin gave his confession. In this interval I discovered, in these prisons, Signor Vivaldi, and immediately comprehended by whose means he was confined. I knew enough both of the accuser and accused, to understand which of these was innocent, and had then a double motive for causing Schedoni to be summoned;—I wished equally to deliver the innocent and punish the criminal. The question as to my motive for becoming the enemy of him, who was once my friend, is already answered; it was a sense of justice, not a suggestion of malice.

The grand vicar smiled, but asked no

further; and this long examination concluded with committing Schedoni again into close custody, till full evidence should be obtained of his guilt, or his innocence should appear. Respecting the manner of his wife's death, there was yet no other evidence, than that, which was asserted to be his own confession, which, though perhaps sufficient to condemn a criminal before the tribunal of the Inquisition, was not enough to satisfy the present vicar general, who gave direction that means might be employed towards obtaining proof of each article of the accusation: in order that, should Schedoni be acquitted of the charge of having murdered his brother, documents might appear for prosecuting him, respecting the death of his wife.

Schedoni, when he withdrew from the hall, bowed respectfully to the tribunal, and whether, notwithstanding late appearances, he were innocent, or that subtlety enabled him to reassume his usual address, it is certain his manner

no longer betrayed any symptom of conscious guilt. His countenance was firm and even tranquil, and his air dignified. Vivaldi, who, during the greater part of this examination, had been convinced of his criminality, now only doubted his innocence. Vivaldi was himself reconducted to his prison, and the sitting of the tribunal was dissolved.

CHAPTER III.

The time shall come when Gloster's heart shall bleed
In life's last hours, with horrors of the deed;
When dreary visions shall at last present
Thy vengeful image.

COLLINS.

WHEN the night of Schedoni's trial arrived, Vivaldi was again summoned to the hall of the tribunal. Every circumstance was now arranged according to the full ceremonies of the place; the members of the tribunal were more numerous than formerly at the examinations; the chief inquisitors wore habits of a fashion different from those, which before distinguished them, and their turbans, of a singular form and larger size, seemed to give an air of sterner ferocity to their features. The hall, as usual, was hung with black, and every person who appeared there, whether inquisitor, official, witness or prisoner, was habited in the same dismal hue, which, together with the kind of

light diffused through the chamber from lamps hung high in the vaulted roof, and from torches held by parties of officials who kept watch at the several doors, and in different parts of this immense hall, gave a character of gloomy solemnity to the assembly, which was almost horrific.

Vivaldi was situated in a place, whence he beheld the whole of the tribunal, and could distinguish whatever was passing in the hall. The countenance of every member was now fully displayed to him by the torchmen, who, arranged at the steps of the platform, on which the three chief inquisitors were elevated, extended in a semicircle on either hand of the place occupied by the inferior members. The red glare, which the torches threw upon the latter, certainly did not soften the expression of faces, for the most part sculptured by passions of dark malignity, or fiercer cruelty; and Vivaldi could not bear even to examine them long.

Before the bar of the tribunal, he

distinguished Schedoni, and little did he suspect, that in him, a criminal brought thither to answer for the guilt of murder—the murder of a brother, and of a wife, he beheld the parent of Ellena di Rosalba!

Near Schedoni was seated the penitentiary Ansaldo; the Roman priest, who was to be a principal witness, and father Nicola di Zampari, upon whom Vivaldi could not even now look without experiencing somewhat of the awe, which had prevailed over his mind when he was inclined to consider the stranger, rather as the vision of another world, than as a being of this. The same wild and indescribable character still distinguished his air, his every look and movement, and Vivaldi could not but believe that something in the highest degree extraordinary would yet be discovered concerning him.

The witnesses being called over, Vivaldi understood that he was placed among them, though he had only repeated the words, which father Nicola

had spoken, and which, since Nicola himself was present as a witness against Schedoni, he did not perceive could be in the least material on the trial.

When Vivaldi, had, in his turn, answered to his name, a voice, bursting forth from a distant part of the hall, exclaimed, It is my master! my *dear* master! and on directing his eyes whence it came, he perceived the faithful Paulo struggling with his guard. Vivaldi called to him to be patient, and to forbear resistance; an exhortation, however, which served only to increase the efforts of the servant for liberty, and in the next instant he broke from the grasp of the officials, and, darting towards Vivaldi, fell at his feet, sobbing, and clasping his knees, and exclaiming, O my master! my master! have I found you at last?

Vivaldi, as much affected by this meeting as Paulo, could not immediately speak. He would, however, have raised and embraced his affectionate servant, but Paulo, still clinging to his

knees and sobbing, was so much agitated that he scarcely understood any thing said to him, and to the kind assurances and gentle remonstrances of Vivaldi, constantly replied, as if to the officers, whom he fancied to be forcing him away.

Remember your situation, Paulo, said Vivaldi, consider mine also, and be governed by prudence.

You shall not force me hence! cried Paulo, you can take my life only once; if I must die, it shall be here.

Recollect yourself, Paulo, and be composed. Your life, I trust, is in no danger.

Paulo looked up, and again bursting into a passion of tears, repeated, O! my master! my master! where have you been all this while? are you indeed alive? I thought I never should have seen you again! I have dreamt an hundred times that you were dead and buried! and I wished to be dead and buried with you. I thought you was gone out of this world into the next. I

feared you was gone to heaven, and so believed we should never meet again. But now, I see you once more, and know that you live? O! my master! my master!

The officers who had followed Paulo, now endeavouring to withdraw him, he became more outrageous.

Do your worst at once, said he; but you shall find tough work of it, if you try to force me from hence, so you had better be contented with killing me here.

The incensed officials were laying violent hands upon him, when Vivaldi interposed. I entreat, I supplicate you, said he, that you will suffer him to remain near me.

It is impossible, replied an officer; we dare not.

I will promise that he shall not even speak to me, if you will only allow him to be near, added Vivaldi.

Not speak to you, master! exclaimed Paulo, but I will stay by you, and speak to you as long as I like, till my

last gasp. Let them do their worst at once; I defy them all, and all the devils of inquisitors at their heels too, to force me away. I can die but once, and they ought to be satisfied with that,—so what is there to be afraid of? Not speak!

He knows not what he says, said Vivaldi to the official, while he endeavoured to silence Paulo with his hand: I am certain that he will submit to whatever I shall require of him, and will be entirely silent; or, if he does speak now and then, it shall be only in a whisper.

A whisper, said an officer sneeringly, do you suppose, signor, that any person is suffered to speak in a whisper here?

A whisper! shouted Paulo, I scorn to speak in a whisper. I will speak so loud, that every word I say shall ring in the ears of all those old black devils on the benches yonder; ay, and those on that mountebank stage too, that sit there looking so grim and angry as if they longed to tear us in pieces. They

Silence, said Vivaldi with emphasis; Paulo, I command you to be silent.

They shall know a bit of my mind, continued Paulo, without noticing Vivaldi; I will tell them what they have to expect for all their cruel usage of my poor master. Where do they expect to go when they die, I wonder? Though for that matter, they can scarcely go to a worse place than they are in already, and I suppose it is, knowing that, which makes them not afraid of being ever so wicked. They shall hear a little plain truth, for once in their lives, however; they shall hear—

During the whole of this harangue, Vivaldi, alarmed for the consequence of such imprudent, though honest indignation, had been using all possible effort to silence him, and was the more alarmed, since the officials made no further attempt to interrupt Paulo, a forbearance, which Vivaldi attributed to malignity, and to a wish that Paulo might be entrapped by his own act. At length he made himself heard.

I *entreat*, said Vivaldi.

Paulo stopped for a moment.

Paulo! rejoined Vivaldi earnestly, do you love your master?

Love my master! said Paulo resentfully, without allowing Vivaldi to finish his sentence; Have I not gone through fire and water for him? or, what is as good, have I not put myself into the Inquisition, and all on his account! and now to be asked—Do I love my master? If you believe, signor, that any thing else made me come here, into these dismal holes, you are quite entirely out; and when they have made an end of me, as I suppose they will do, before all is over, you will, perhaps, think better of me than to suspect that I came here for my own pleasure.

All that may be as you say, Paulo, replied Vivaldi coldly, while he with difficulty commanded his tears; but your immediate submission is the only conduct that can convince me of the sincerity of your professions. I *entreat* you to be silent.

Entreat me! said Paulo. O my mas-

ter! what have I done that it should come to this? *Entreat* me! he repeated, sobbing.

You will then give me this proof of your attachment? asked Vivaldi.

Do not use such a heart-breaking word again, master, replied Paulo, while he dashed the tears from his cheek; such a heart-breaking word, and I will do any thing.

You submit to what I require then, Paulo?

Ay, signor, if—if it is even to kneel at the feet of that devil of an inquisitor, yonder.

I shall only require you to be silent, replied Vivaldi, and you may then be permitted to remain near me.

Well, signor, well; I will do as you bid me, then, and only just say ——

Not a syllable, Paulo, interrupted Vivaldi.

Only just say, master.

Not a word, I entreat you! added Vivaldi, or you will be removed immediately.

His removal does not depend on that, said one of the officials, breaking from his watchful silence; he must go, and that without more delay.

What! after I have promised not to open my lips! said Paulo, do you pretend to break your agreement?

There *is* no pretence, and there *was* no agreement, replied the man sharply, so obey directly, or it will be the worse for you.

The officials were provoked, and Paulo became still more enraged and clamorous, till at length the uproar reached the tribunal at the other end of the hall, and silence having been commanded, an inquiry was made into the cause of the confusion. The consequence of this was, an order that Paulo should withdraw from Vivaldi; but, as at this moment he feared no greater evil, he gave his refusal to the tribunal with as little ceremony as he had done before to the officials.

At length, after much difficulty, a sort of compromise was made, and,

Paulo being soothed by his master into some degree of compliance, was suffered to remain within a short distance of him.

The business of the trial soon after commenced. Ansaldo the penitentiary and father Nicola appeared, as witnesses, as did, also, the Roman priest, who had assisted in taking the depositions of the dying assassin. He had been privately interrogated, and had given clear and satisfactory evidence, as to the truth of the paper produced by Nicola. Other witnesses, also, had been supœnaed, whom Schedoni had no expectation of meeting.

The deportment of the confessor, on first entering the hall, was collected and firm; it remained unchanged when the Roman priest was brought forward; but, on the appearance of another witness, his courage seemed to faulter. Before this evidence was, however, called for, the depositions of the assassin were publicly read. They stated, with the closest conciseness, the chief facts, of

which the following is a somewhat more dilated narrative.

It appeared, that about the year 1742, the late Count di Bruno had passed over into Greece, a journey which his brother, the present confessor, having long expected, had meditated to take advantage of. Though a lawless passion had first suggested to the dark mind of Schedoni the atrocious act, which should destroy a brother, many circumstances and considerations had conspired to urge him towards its accomplishment. Among these was the conduct of the late count towards himself, which, however reasonable, as it had contradicted his own selfish gratifications, and added strong reproof to opposition, had excited his most inveterate hatred. Schedoni, who, as a younger brother of his family, bore, at that time, the title of Count di Marinella, had dissipated his small patrimony at a very early age; but, though suffering might then have taught him prudence, it had only encouraged him in duplicity, and rendered him more eager

to seek a temporary refuge in the same habits of extravagance which had led to it. The Count di Bruno, though his fortune was very limited, had afforded frequent supplies to his brother; till, finding that he was incorrigible, and that the sums, which he himself spared with difficulty from his family, were lavished, without remorse, by Marinella, instead of being applied, with economy, to his support, he refused further aid than was sufficient for his absolute necessities.

It would be difficult for a candid mind to believe how a conduct so reasonable could possibly excite hatred in any breast, or that the power of selfishness could so far warp any understanding, as to induce Marinella, whom we will, in future, again call Schedoni, to look upon his brother with detestation, because he had refused to ruin himself that his kinsman might revel! Yet it is certain that Schedoni, terming the necessary prudence of Di Bruno to be meanness and cold insensibility to the comfort of

others, suffered full as much resentment towards him from system, as he did from passion, though the meanness and the insensibility he imagined in his brother's character were not only real traits in his own, but were displaying themselves in the very arguments he urged against them.

The rancour thus excited was cherished by innumerable circumstances, and ripened by envy, that meanest and most malignant of the human passions; by envy of di Bruno's blessings, of an unencumbered estate, and of a beautiful wife, he was tempted to perpetrate the deed, which might transfer those blessings to himself. Spalatro, whom he employed to this purpose was well known to him, and he did not fear to confide the conduct of the crime to this man, who was to purchase a little habitation on the remote shore of the Adriatic, and, with a certain stipend, to reside there. The ruinous dwelling, to which Ellena had been carried, as its

solitary situation suited Schedoni's views, was taken for him.

Schedoni, who had good intelligence of all di Bruno's movements, acquainted Spalatro, from time to time, with his exact situation; and it was after di Bruno, on his return, had crossed the Adriatic, from Ragusi to Manfredonia, and was entering upon the woods of the Garganus, that Spalatro, with his comrade, overtook him. They fired at the count and his attendants, who were only a valet, and a guide of the country; and, concealed among the thickets, they securely repeated the attack. The shot did not immediately succeed, and the count, looking round, to discover his enemy, prepared to defend himself, but the firing was so rapidly sustained, that at length, both di Bruno and his servant fell, covered with wounds. The guide fled.

The unfortunate travellers were buried by their assassins on the spot; but, whether the suspicion, which attends

upon the consciousness of guilt, prompted Spalatro to guard against every possibility of being betrayed by the accomplice of his crime, or whatever was the motive, he returned to the forest alone; and, shrouded by night, removed the bodies to a pit, which he had prepared under the flooring of the house where he lived; thus displacing all proof, should his accomplice hereafter point out to justice the spot in which he had assisted to deposit the mangled remains of di Bruno.

Schedoni contrived a plausible history of the shipwreck of his brother upon the Adriatic, and of the loss of the whole crew; and, as no persons, but the assassins, were acquainted with the real cause of his death, the guide, who had fled, and the people at the only town he had passed through, since he landed, being ignorant even of the name of di Bruno, there was not any circumstance to contradict the falsehood. It was universally credited, and even the widow of the count had, perhaps, never doubted

its truth; or if, after her compelled marriage with Schedoni, his conduct did awaken a suspicion, it was too vague to produce any serious consequence.

During the reading of Spalatro's confession, and particularly at the conclusion of it, the surprise and dismay of Schedoni were too powerful for concealment; and it was not the least considerable part of his wonder, that Spalatro should have come to Rome for the purpose of making these depositions; but further consideration gave him a conjecture of the truth.

The account, which Spalatro had given of his motive for this journey to the priest, was, that, having lately understood Schedoni to be resident at Rome, he had followed him thither, with an intention of relieving his conscience by an acknowledgment of his own crimes, and a disclosure of Schedoni's. This, however, was not exactly the fact. The design of Spalatro was to extort money from the guilty confessor; a design, from which the latter had believed he

had protected himself, as well as from every other evil consequence, when he misled his late accomplice, respecting his place of residence; little foreseeing that the very artifice, which should send this man in search of him to Rome, instead of Naples, would be the means of bringing his crimes before the public.

Spalatro had followed the steps of Schedoni as far as the town at which he slept, on the first night of his journey; and, having there passed him, had reached the villa di Cambrusca, when, perceiving the confessor approaching, he had taken shelter from observation, within the ruin. The motive, which before made him shrink from notice, had contributed, and still did so, to a suspicion that he aimed at the life of Schedoni, who, in wounding him, believed he had saved himself from an assassin. The wounds, however, of Spalatro, did not so much disable him, but that he proceeded towards Rome from the town whence the parting road

had conducted his master towards Naples.

The fatigue of a long journey, performed chiefly on foot, in Spalatro's wounded condition, occasioned a fever, that terminated together his journey and his life; and in his last hours he had unburdened his conscience by a full confession of his guilt. The priest, who, on this occasion, had been sent for, alarmed by the importance of the confession, since it implicated a living person, called in a friend as witness to the depositions. This witness was father Nicola, the former intimate of Schedoni, and who was of a character to rejoice in any discovery, which might punish a man from whose repeated promises he had received only severe disappointments.

Schedoni now perceived, that all his designs against Spalatro had failed, and he had meditated more than have yet been fully disclosed. It may be remembered that on parting with the peasant, his conductor, the confessor

gave him a stiletto to defend him, as he said, from the attack of Spalatro, in case of encountering him on the road. The point of this instrument was tipped with poison: so that a scratch from it was sufficient to inflict death. Schedoni had for many years secretly carried about him such an envenomed instrument, for reasons known only to himself. He had hoped, that, should the peasant meet Spalatro, and be provoked to defend himself, this stiletto would terminate the life of his accomplice, and relieve him from all probability of discovery, since the other assassin, whom he employed, had been dead several years. The expedient failed in every respect; the peasant did not even see Spalatro; and, before he reached his home, he luckily lost the fatal stiletto, which, as he had discovered himself to be acquainted with some circumstances connected with the crimes of Schedoni, the confessor would have wished him to keep, from the chance, that he might some time injure himself in using it.

The poniard, as he had no proper means of fastening it to his dress, had fallen, and was carried away by the torrent he was crossing at that moment.

But, if Schedoni had been shocked by the confession of the assassin, his dismay was considerably greater, when a new witness was brought forward, and he perceived an ancient domestic of his house. This man identified Schedoni for Ferando Count di Bruno, with whom he had lived as a servant, after the death of the count his brother. And not only did he bear testimony to the person of Schedoni, but to the death of the countess, his wife. Giovanni declared himself to be one of the domestics, who had assisted in conveying her to her apartment, after she had been struck by the poniard of Schedoni, and who had afterwards attended her funeral in the church of the Santa del Miracoli, a convent near the late residence of di Bruno. He further affirmed, that the physicians had reported her death to be the consequence of the wound she had

received, and he bore witness to the flight of his master, previous to the death of the countess, and immediately upon the assassination, and that he had never publicly appeared upon his estate, since that period.

An inquisitor asked, whether any measures had been taken by the relations of the deceased lady, toward a prosecution of the count.

The witness replied, that a long search had been made for the count, for such a purpose, but that he had wholly eluded discovery, and that, of course, no further step had been taken in the affair. This reply appeared to occasion dissatisfaction; the tribunal was silent, and seemed to hesitate; the vicar general then addressed the witness.

How can you be certain that the person now before you, calling himself father Schedoni, is the Count di Bruno, your former master, if you have never seen him during the long interval of years you mention?

Giovanni, without hesitation, answer-

ed, that, though years had worn the features of the count, he recollected them the moment he beheld him; and not the count only, but the person of the penitentiary Ansaldo, whom he had seen a frequent visitor at the house of Di Bruno, though his appearance, also, was considerably changed by time, and by the ecclesiastical habit, which he now wore.

The vicar general seemed still to doubt the evidence of this man, till Ansaldo himself, on being called upon, remembered him to have been a servant of the count, though he could not identify the count himself.

The grand inquisitor remarked, that, it was extraordinary he should recollect the face of the servant, yet forget that of the master, with whom he had lived in habits of intimacy. To this Ansaldo replied, that the stronger passions of Schedoni, together with his particular habits of life, might reasonably be supposed to have wrought a greater change upon the features of the count than the

character and circumstances of Giovanni's could have effected on his.

Schedoni, not without reason, was appalled, on the appearance of this servant, whose further testimony gave such clearness and force to some other parts of the evidence, that the tribunal pronounced sentence upon Schedoni, as the murderer of the count his brother; and as this, the first charge, was sufficient for his condemnation to death, they did not proceed upon the second, that which related to his wife.

The emotion betrayed by Schedoni, on the appearance of the last witness, and during the delivery of the evidence, disappeared when his fate became certain, and when the dreadful sentence of the law was pronounced, it made no visible impression on his mind. From that moment, his firmness or his hardihood never forsook him.

Vivaldi, who witnessed this condemnation, appeared infinitely more affected by it than himself, and, though in revealing the circumstance of father Ni-

cola's summons, which had eventually led to the discovery of Schedoni's crimes, he had not been left a choice in his conduct, he felt, at this moment, as miserable as if he had actually borne witness against the life of a fellow-being: what, then, would have been his feelings, had he been told that this Schedoni, thus condemned, was the father of Ellena di Rosalba! But, whatever these might be, he was soon condemned to experience them. One of the most powerful of Schedoni's passions appeared even in this last scene; and, as, in quitting the tribunal, he passed near Vivaldi, he uttered these few words—In me you have murdered the father of Ellena di Rosalba!

Not with any hope that the intercession of Vivaldi, himself also a prisoner, could in the least mitigate a sentence pronounced by the Inquisition, did he say this, but for the purpose of revenging himself for the evil, which Vivaldi's evidence had contributed to produce, and inflicting the exquisite misery such

information must give. The attempt succeeded too well.

At first, indeed, Vivaldi judged this to be only the desperate assertion of a man, who believed his last chance of escaping the rigour of the law, to rest with him; and, at the mention of Ellena, forgetting every precaution, he loudly demanded to know her situation. Schedoni, throwing upon him an horrible smile of triumph and derision, was passing forward without replying, but Vivaldi, unable to support this state of uncertainty, asked permission of the tribunal to converse, for a few moments, with the prisoner; a request, which was granted with extreme reluctance, and only on condition that the conversation should be public.

To Vivaldi's questions, as to the situation of Ellena, Schedoni only replied, that she was his daughter, and the solemnity, which accompanied these repeated assertions, though it failed to convince Vivaldi of this truth, occasioned him agonizing doubt and appre-

hension: but when the confessor, perceiving the policy of disclosing her place of residence to Vivaldi, softened from his desire of vengeance to secure the interest of his family, and named the Santa della Pieta as her present asylum, the joy of such intelligence overcame, for a time, every other consideration.

To this dialogue, however, the officials put a speedy conclusion; Schedoni was led back to his cell, and Vivaldi was soon after ordered to his former close confinement.

But Paulo became again outrageous, when he was about to be separated from his master, till the latter, having petitioned the tribunal, that his servant might accompany him to his prison, and received an absolute refusal, endeavoured to calm the violence of his despair. He fell at his master's feet and shed tears, but he uttered no further complaints. When he rose, he turned his eyes in silence upon Vivaldi, and they seemed to say, Dear master! I

shall never see you more! and with this sad expression, he continued to gaze on him till he had left the hall.

Vivaldi, notwithstanding the various subjects of his distress, could not bear to meet the piteous looks of this poor man, and he withdrew his eyes; yet, at every other step he took, they constantly returned to his faithful servant, till the doors folded him from sight.

When he had quitted the hall, Vivaldi pleaded, however hopelessly, to the officials, in favour of Paulo, entreating that they would speak to the persons, who kept guard over him, and prevail with them to shew him every allowable indulgence.

No indulgence can be allowed him, replied one of the men, except bread and water, and the liberty of walking in his cell,

No *other!* said Vivaldi.

None, repeated the official. This prisoner has been near getting one of his guards into a scrape already, for, somehow or other, he so talked him

over, and won upon him (for he is but a young one here) that the man let him have a light, and a pen and ink; but, luckily, it was found out, before any harm was done.

And what became of this honest fellow? inquired Vivaldi.

Honest! he was none so honest, either, signor, if he could not mind his duty.

Was he punished, then?

No, signor, replied the man, pausing, and looking back upon the long avenue they were passing, to inquire whether he was observed to hold this conversation with a prisoner: No, signor, he was a younker, so they let him off for once, and sent him to guard a man, who was not so full of his coaxing ways.

Paulo made him merry, perhaps! asked Vivaldi. What were the coaxing ways you spoke of?

Merry, signor! no! he made him cry, and that was as bad.

Indeed! said Vivaldi. The man must

have been here, then, a very short time.

Not more than a month, or so, signor.

But the coaxing ways you talked of, repeated Vivaldi, what were they?—a ducat, or so?

A ducat! exclaimed the man, no! not a *paolo!*

Are you *sure* of that! cried Vivaldi, shrewdly.

Ay, sure enough, signor. The fellow is not worth a ducat in the world!

But his master is, friend, observed Vivaldi, in a very low voice, while he put some money into his hand.

The officer made no answer, but concealed the money, and nothing further was said.

Vivaldi had given this as a bribe, to procure some kindness for his servant, not from any consideration of himself, for his own critical situation had ceased at this time to be a subject of anxiety with him. His mind was at present strangely agitated between emotions the most opposite in their nature, the joy, which a discovery of Ellena's safety in-

spired, and the horrible suspicion, that Schedoni's assurances of relationship occasioned. That his Ellena was the daughter of a murderer, that the father of Ellena should be brought to ignominious death, and that he himself, however unintentionally, should have assisted to this event, were considerations almost too horrible to be sustained! Vivaldi sought refuge from them in various conjectures as to the motive, which might have induced Schedoni to assert a falsehood in this instance; but that of revenge alone appeared plausible; and even this surmise was weakened, when he considered, that the confessor had assured him of Ellena's safety, an assurance which, as Vivaldi did not detect the selfish policy connected with it, he believed Schedoni would not have given, had his general intent towards him been malicious. But it was possible, that this very information, on which all his comfort reposed, might be false, and had been given only for the purpose of inflicting the anguish a discovery of the

truth must lead to! With an anxiety so intense as almost to overcome his faculty of judging, he examined every minute probability relative to this point, and concluded with believing, that Schedoni had, in this last instance, at least, spoken honestly.

Whether he had done so in his first assertion was a question, which had raised in Vivaldi's mind a tempest of conjecture and of horror; for, while the subject of it was too astonishing to be fully believed, it was, also, too dreadful, not to be apprehended even as a possibility.

CHAPTER IV.

O holy nun! why bend the mournful head?
Why fall those tears from lids uplift in pray'r!
Why o'er thy pale cheek steals the feeble blush,
Then fades, and leaves it wan as the lily
On which a moon-beam falls?

WHILE these events were passing in the prisons of the Inquisition at Rome, Ellena, in the sanctuary of Our Lady of Pity, remained ignorant of Schedoni's arrest, and of Vivaldi's situation. She understood, that the confessor was preparing to acknowledge her for his daughter, and believed that she comprehended also the motive for his absence; but, though he had forbidden her to expect a visit from him till his arrangement should be completed, he had promised to write in the mean time and inform her of all the present circumstances of Vivaldi; his unexpected silence had excited, therefore, apprehensions as various, though not so terrible, as those, which Vivaldi had suf-

fered for her; nor did the silence of Vivaldi himself appear less extraordinary.

His confinement must be severe indeed, said the afflicted Ellena, since he cannot relieve my anxiety by a single line of intelligence. Or, perhaps, harassed by unceasing opposition, he has submitted to the commands of his family, and has consented to forget me. Ah! why did I leave the opportunity for that command to his family; why did I not enforce it myself!

Yet, while she uttered this self reproach, the tears she shed contradicted the pride which had suggested it; and a conviction lurking in her heart, that Vivaldi could not so resign her, soon dissipated those tears. But other conjectures recalled them; it was possible that he was ill—that he was dead!

In such vague and gloomy surmise her days passed away; employment could no longer withdraw her from herself, nor music, even for a moment, charm away the sense of sorrow; yet

she regularly partook of the various occupations of the nuns; and was so far from permitting herself to indulge in any useless expression of anxiety, that she had never once disclosed the sacred subject of it; so that, though she could not assume an air of cheerfulness, she never appeared otherwise than tranquil. Her most soothing, yet perhaps most melancholy hour, was when about sunset she could withdraw unnoticed, to the terrace among the rocks, that overlooked the convent, and formed a part of its domain. There, alone and relieved from all the ceremonial restraints of the society, her very thoughts seemed more at liberty. As, from beneath the light foliage of the accacias, or the more majestic shade of the plane trees, that waved their branches over the many coloured cliffs of this terrace, Ellena looked down upon the magnificent scenery of the bay, it brought back to memory, in sad yet pleasing detail, the many happy days she had passed on those blue waters, or on the shores, in

the society of Vivaldi and her departed relative Bianchi; and every point of the prospect, marked by such remembrance, which the veiling distance stole, was rescued by imagination and pictured by affection in tints more animated than those of brightest nature.

One evening, Ellena had lingered on the terrace later than usual. She had watched the rays, retiring from the highest points of the horizon, and the fading imagery of the lower scene, till, the sun having sunk into the waves, all colouring was withdrawn, except an empurpling and reposing hue, which overspread the waters and the heavens, and blended in soft confusion every feature of the landscape. The roofs and slender spires of the Santa della Pieta, with a single tower of the church rising loftily over every other part of the buildings that composed the convent, were fading fast from the eye; but the solemn tint, that invested them, accorded so well with their style, that Ellena was unwilling to relinquish this interesting

object. Suddenly she perceived through the dubious light an unusual number of moving figures in the court of the great cloister, and listening, she fancied she could distinguish the murmuring of many voices. The white drapery of the nuns rendered them conspicuous as they moved, but it was impossible to ascertain who were the individuals engaged in this bustle. Presently the assemblage dispersed; and Ellena, curious to understand the occasion of what she had observed, prepared to descend to the convent.

She had left the terrace, and was about to enter a long avenue of chesnuts, that extended to a part of the convent, communicating immediately with the great court, when she heard approaching steps, and, on turning into the walk, perceived several persons advancing in the shady distance. Among the voices, as they drew nearer, she distinguished one, whose interesting tone engaged all her attention, and began also to awaken memory. She listened, wondered, doubted, hoped,

and feared! It spoke again! Ellena thought she could not be deceived in those tender accents, so full of intelligence, so expressive of sensibility and refinement. She proceeded with quicker steps, yet faltered as she drew near the group, and paused to discern whether among them was any figure, that might accord with the voice and justify her hopes.

The voice spoke again; it pronounced her name; pronounced it with the tremblings of tenderness and impatience, and Ellena scarcely dared to trust her senses, when she beheld Olivia, the nun of San Stefano, in the cloisters of the Della Pieta!

Ellena could find no words to express her joy and surprise on beholding her preserver in safety, and in these quiet groves; but Olivia repaid all the affectionate caresses of her young friend, and, while she promised to explain the circumstance, that had led to her present appearance here, she, in her turn, made numerous inquiries, relative to

Ellena's adventures after she had quitted San Stefano. They were now, however, surrounded by two many auditors to allow of unreserved conversation; Ellena, therefore, led the nun to her apartment, and Olivia then explained her reasons for having left the convent of San Stefano, which were, indeed, sufficient to justify, even with the most rigid devotee, her conduct as to the change. This unfortunate recluse, it appeared, persecuted by the suspicions of the abbess, who understood, that she had assisted in the liberation of Ellena, had petitioned the bishop of her diocese for leave to remove to the Santa della Pieta. The abbess had not proof to proceed formally against her, as an accomplice in the escape of a novice, for though Jeronimo could have supplied the requisite evidence, he was too deeply implicated in this adventure to do so without betraying his own conduct. From his having withheld such proof, it appears, however, that accident, rather than design, had occasioned his failure

on the evening of Ellena's departure from the monastery. But, though the abbess had not testimony enough for legal punishment, she was acquainted with circumstances sufficient to justify suspicion, and had both the inclination and the power to render Olivia very miserable.

In her choice of the Santa della Pieta, the nun was influenced by many considerations, some of which were the consequence of conversations she had held with Ellena respecting the state of that society. Her design she had been unable to disclose to her friend, lest, by a discovery of such correspondence, the abbess of San Stefano should obtain grounds on which to proceed against her. Even in her appeal to the bishop the utmost caution and secrecy had been necessary, till the order for her removal, procured not without considerable delay and difficulty, arrived, and when it came, the jealous anger of the superior rendered an immediate departure necessary.

Olivia, during many years, had been

unhappy in her local circumstances, but it is probable she would have concluded her days within the walls of San Stefano, had not the aggravated oppression of the abbess aroused her courage and activity, and dissipated the despondency, with which severe misfortune had obscured her views.

Ellena was particular in her inquiries whether any person of the monastery had suffered for the assistance they had given her; but learned that not one, except Olivia, had been suspected of befriending her; and then understood, that the venerable friar, who had dared to unfasten the gate, which restored her with Vivaldi to liberty, had not been involved by his kindness.

It is an embarrassing and rather an unusual circumstance, concluded Olivia, to change one's convent; but you perceive the strong reasons which determined me upon a removal. I was, however, perhaps, the more impatient of severe treatment, since you, my sister, had described to me the society of Our

Lady of Pity, and since I believed it possible that you might form a part of it. When, on my arrival here, I learned that my wishes had not deceived me on this point, I was impatient to see you once more, and as soon as the ceremonies attending an introduction to the superior were over, I requested to be conducted to you, and was in search of you when we met in the avenue. It is unnecessary for me to insist upon the satisfaction which this meeting gives me; but you may not, perhaps, understand how much the manners of our lady abbess, and of the sisterhood in general, as far as a first interview will allow me to judge of them, have reanimated me. The gloom, which has long hung over my prospects, seems now to open, and a distant gleam promises to light up the evening of my stormy day.

Olivia paused and appeared to recollect herself; this was the first time she had made so direct a reference to her own misfortunes; and, while Ellena silently remarked it, and observed the

dejection, which was already stealing upon the expressive countenance of the nun, she wished, yet feared to lead her back towards the subject of them.

Endeavouring to dismiss some painful remembrance, and assuming a smile of languid gaiety, Olivia said, Now that I have related the history of my removal, and sufficiently indulged my egotism, will you let me hear what adventures have befallen you, my young friend, since the melancholy adieu you gave me in the gardens of San Stefano.

This was a task, to which Ellena's spirits, though revived by the presence of Olivia, were still unequal. Over the scenes of her past distress Time had not yet drawn her shadowing veil; the colours were all too fresh and garish for the meek dejection of her eye, and the subject was too intimately connected with that of her present anxiety, to be reviewed without very painful feelings. She therefore requested Olivia to spare her from a detail of particulars, which she could not repeat but with extreme

reluctance; and, scrupulously observing the injunction of Schedoni, she merely mentioned her separation from Vivaldi upon the banks of the Celano, and that a variety of distressing circumstances had intervened before she could regain the sanctuary of the della Pieta.

Olivia understood too well the kind of feelings, from which Ellena was desirous of escaping, willingly to subject her to a renewal of them; and felt too much generous compassion for her sufferings not to endeavour to sooth the sense of them by an exertion of those delicate and nameless arts, which, while they mock detection, fascinate the weary spirit as by a charm of magic!

The friends continued in conversation, till a chime from a chapel of the convent summoned them to the last vespers; and, when the service had concluded, they separated for the night.

With the society of the Santa della Pieta, Olivia had thus found an asylum such as till lately she had never dared

to hope for; but, though she frequently expressed her sense of this blessing, it was seldom without tears; and Ellena observed, with some surprise and more disappointment, within a very few days after her arrival, a cloud of melancholy spreading again over her mind.

But a nearer interest soon withdrew Ellena's attention from Olivia to fix it upon Vivaldi; and, when she saw her infirm old servant, Beatrice, enter a chamber of the convent, she anticipated that the knowledge of some extraordinary, and probably unhappy, event had brought her. She knew too well the circumspection of Schedoni to believe, that Beatrice came commissioned from him; and, as the uncertain situation of Vivaldi was so constantly the subject of her anxiety, she immediately concluded, that her servant came to announce some evil relative to him.—His indisposition, perhaps his actual confinement in the Inquisition, which lately she had sometimes been inclined to think might not have been a mere

menace to Vivaldi, though it had proved to be no more to herself;—or possibly she came to tell of his death—his death in those prisons! This last was a possibility that almost incapacitated her for inquiring what was the errand of Beatrice.

The old servant, trembling and wan, either from the fatigue of her walk, or from a consciousnes of disastrous intelligence, seated herself without speaking, and some moments elapsed before she could be prevailed with to answer the repeated inquiries of Ellena.

O signora! said she, at length; you do not know what it is to walk up hill such a long way, at my age! Well! heaven protect you, I hope you never will!

I perceive you bring ill news, said Ellena; I am prepared for it, and you need not fear to tell me all you know.

Holy San Marco! exclaimed Beatrice; if death be ill news, you have guessed right, signora, for I do bring news of that, it is certain. How came you, lady,

to know my errand? They have been beforehand with me, I see, though I have not walked so fast up hill this many a day, as I have now, to tell you what has happened.

She stopped on observing the changing countenance of Ellena, who tremulously called upon her to explain what had happened—who was dead; and entreated her to relate the particulars as speedily as possible.

You said you was prepared, signora, said Beatrice; but your looks tell another tale—

What is the event you would disclose! said Ellena, almost breathless. When did it happen?—be brief.

I cannot tell exactly when it happened, signora, but it was an own servant of the Marchese's that I had it from.

The Marchese's! interrupted Ellena, in a faltering voice.

Ay, lady; you will say that is pretty good authority.

Death! and in the Marchese's family! exclaimed Ellena.

Yes, signora, I had it from his own servant. He was passing by the garden gate just as I happened to be speaking to the maccaroni man.—But you are ill, lady!—

I am very well, if you will but proceed, replied Ellena faintly, while her eyes were fixed upon Beatrice, as if they only had power to enforce her meaning.

Well, dame, he says to me, I have not seen you of a long time. No, says I, that is a great grievance truly! for old women now-a-days are not much thought of; out of sight out of mind with them, now-a-days!

I beseech you to the purpose, interrupted Ellena. Whose death did he announce? She had not courage to pronounce Vivaldi's name.

You shall hear, signora. I saw he looked in a sort of a bustle, so I asked him how all did at the Paluzzo: so he answers, Bad enough, signora Beatrice, have not you heard? Heard, says I; what should I have heard? Why, says

he, of what has just happened in our family.

O heavens! exclaimed Ellena, he is dead! Vivaldi is dead!

You shall hear, signora, continued Beatrice.

Be brief! said Ellena, answer me simply, yes or no.

I cannot, till I come to the right place, signora; if you will but have a little patience, you shall hear all. But if you flutter me so, you will put me quite out.

Grant me patience! said Ellena, endeavouring to calm her spirits.

With that, signora, I asked him to walk in and rest himself, and tell me all about it. He answered, he was in a great hurry, and could not stay a moment, and a great deal of that sort; but I, knowing whatever happened in that family, signora, was something to you, would not let him go off so easily; and so, when I asked him to refresh himself with a glass of lemon ice, he forgot all his business in a minute, and, we had a long chat.

And Beatrice might now have continued her circumlocution, perhaps as long as she had pleased, for Ellena had lost all power to urge inquiry, and was scarcely sensible of what was said. She neither spoke, nor shed a tear; the one image that possessed her fancy, the image of Vivaldi dead, seemed to hold all her faculties, as by a spell.

So when I asked him, added Beatrice, again what had happened, he was ready enough to tell me all about it. It is near a month ago, said he, since she was first taken; the Marchesa had been——

The Marchesa! repeated Ellena, with whom that one word had dissolved the spell of terror—the Marchesa!

Yes, signora, to be sure. Who else did I say it was?

Go on, Beatrice; the Marchesa?—

What makes you look so glad all of a sudden, signora? I thought just now you was very sorry about it! What! I warrant you was thinking about my young lord, Vivaldi.

Proceed, said Ellena.

Well! added Beatrice, it was about a month ago that the Marchesa was first taken, continued the varlet. She had seemed poorly a long time, but it was from a *conversazione* at the di Voglio Palazzo, that she came home so ill, It is supposed she had been long in a bad state of health, but nobody thought her so near her end, till the doctors were called together; and then matters looked very bad indeed. They found out that she had been dying, or as good, for many years, though nobody else had suspected it, and the Marchesa's own physician was blamed for not finding it out before. But he, added the rogue, had a regard for my lady. He was very obstinate, too, for he kept saying almost to the last, there was no danger, when every body else saw how it was going. The other doctors soon made their words good, and my lady died.

And her son—said Ellena, was he with the Marchesa when she expired?

What, Signor Vivaldi, lady? No, the signor was not there.

That is very extraordinary! observed Ellena with emotion. Did the servant mention him?

Yes, signora, he said what a sad thing it was that he should be out of the way at that time, and nobody know where!

Are his family then ignorant where he is? asked Ellena, with increased emotion.

To be sure they are, lady, and have been for these many weeks. They have heard nothing at all of the signor, or one Paulo Mendrico, his servant, though the Marchesa's people have been riding post after them from one end of the kingdom to the other all the time!

Shocked with the conviction of a circumstance, which, till lately she scarcely believed was possible, the imprisonment of Vivaldi in the Inquisition, Ellena lost for a while all power of further inquiry; but Beatrice proceeded.

The Lady Marchesa seemed to lay something much to heart, as the man told me, and often inquired for Signor Vincentio.

The Marchesa you are sure then was ignorant where he was? said Ellena, with new astonishment and perplexity as to the person who, after betraying him into the Inquisition, could yet have suffered her, though arrested at the same time, to escape.

Yes, signora, for she wanted sadly to see him. And when she was dying, she sent for her confessor, one father Schedoni, I think they call him, and——

What of him? said Ellena incautiously.

Nothing, signora, for he could not be found.

Not be found! repeated Ellena.

No, signora, not just then; he was confessor, I warrant, to other people beside the Marchesa, and I dare say they had sins enough to confess, so he could not get away in a hurry.

Ellena recollected herself sufficiently to ask no further of Schedoni; and, when she considered the probable cause of Vivaldi's arrest, she was again consoled by a belief that he had not fallen

into the power of real officials, since the comrades of the men who had arrested him, had proved themselves otherwise; and she thought it highly proba ble, that, while undiscovered by his family, he had been, and was still engaged in searching for the place of her confinement.

But I was saying, proceeded Beatrice, what a bustle there was when my lady, the Marchesa, was dying. As this father Schedoni was not to be found, another confessor was sent for, and shut up with her for a long while indeed! And then my Lord Marchese was called in, and there seemed to be a deal going forward, for my lord was heard every now and then by the attendants in the antichamber, talking loud, and sometimes my lady Marchesa's voice was heard too, though she was so ill! At last all was silent, and after some time my lord came out of the room, and he seemed very much flustered, they say, that is, very angry and yet very sorrowful. But the confessor remained with my lady for

a long while after; and, when he departed, my lady appeared more unhappy than ever. She lived all that night, and part of the next day, and something seemed to lie very heavy at her heart, for she sometimes wept, but oftener groaned, and would look so, that it was piteous to see her. She frequently asked for the Marchese, and when he came, the attendants were sent away, and they held long conferences by themselves. The confessor also was sent for again, just at the last, and they were all shut up together. After this, my lady appeared more easy in her mind, and not long after she died.

Ellena, who had attended closely to this little narrative, was prevented for the present from asking the few questions, which it had suggested, by the entrance of Olivia, who, on perceiving a stranger, was retiring, but Ellena, not considering these inquiries as important, prevailed with the nun to take a chair at the embroidery frame she had lately quitted.

After conversing for a few moments with Olivia, she returned to a consideration of her own interests. The absence of Schedoni still appeared to her as something more than accidental; and, though she could not urge any inquiry with Beatrice, concerning the monk of the Spirito Santo, she ventured to ask whether she had lately seen the stranger, who had restored her to Altieri, for Beatrice knew him only in the character of Ellena's deliverer.

No, signora, replied Beatrice rather sharply; I have never seen his face since he attended you to the villa, though for that matter, I did not see much of it there; and then how he contrived to let himself out of the house that night, without my seeing him, I cannot divine, though I have thought of it often enough since. I am sure he need not to have been ashamed to have shewn his face to me, for I should only have blessed him for bringing you safe home again.

Ellena was somewhat surprised to find, that Beatrice had noticed a cir-

cumstance apparently so trivial, and replied, that she had herself opened the door for her protector.

While Beatrice spoke, Olivia raising her eyes from the embroidery, had fixed them upon the old servant, who respectfully withdrew her's; but, when the nun was again engaged on her work, she resumed her observation. Ellena fancied she perceived something extraordinary in this mutual examination, although the curiosity of strangers towards each other might have accounted for it.

Beatrice then received directions from Ellena, as to some drawings, which she wished to have sent to the convent, and when the servant spoke in reply, Olivia again raised her eyes, and fixed them on her face with intense curiosity.

I certainly ought to know that voice, said the nun with great emotion, though I dare not judge from your features. Is it,—can it be possible!—is it Beatrice Olca, to whom I speak? So many years have passed——

Beatrice, with equal surprise, answered, It is, signora; you are right in my name. But, lady, who are you, that know me?

While she earnestly regarded Olivia, there was an expression of dismay in her look, which increased Ellena's perplexity. The nun's complexion varied every instant, and her words failed when she attempted to speak. Beatrice meanwhile exclaimed, My eyes deceive me! yet there is a strange likeness. Santa della Pieta! how it has fluttered me! my heart beats still—you are so like her, lady, yet you are very different too.

Olivia, whose regards were now entirely fixed upon Ellena, said in a voice that was scarcely articulate, while her whole frame seemed sinking beneath some irresistible feeling, Tell me, Beatrice, I conjure you quickly say, who is this? ——She pointed to Ellena, and the sentence died on her lips.

Beatrice, wholly occupied by interests of her own, gave no reply, but exclaimed, It is in truth the Lady Olivia!

It is herself! In the name of all that is sacred, how came you here? O! how glad you must have been to find one another out! She looked, still gasping with astonishment, at Olivia, while Ellena, unheard, repeatedly inquired the meaning of her words, and in the next moment found herself pressed to the bosom of the nun, who seemed better to have understood them, and who, weeping, trembling, and almost fainting, held her there in silence.

Ellena, after some moments had thus passed, requested an explanation of what she witnessed, and Beatrice at the same time demanded the cause of all this emotion. For can it be that you did not know one another? she added.

What new discovery is this? said Ellena, fearfully to the nun. It is but lately that I have found my father! O tell me by what tender name I am to call you.

Your father! exclaimed Olivia.

Your father, lady! echoed Beatrice.

Ellena, betrayed by strong emotion

into this premature mention of Schedoni, was embarrassed and remained silent.

No, my child, said Olivia, softening from amazement into tones of ineffable sorrow, while she again pressed Ellena to her heart—No!—thy father is in the grave.

Ellena no longer returned her caresses: surprise and doubt suspended every tender emotion; she gazed upon Olivia with an intenseness that partook of wildness. At length she said slowly —It is my mother, then, whom I see! When will these discoveries end!

It is your mother! replied Olivia solemnly, a mother's blessing rests with you!

The nun endeavoured to sooth the agitated spirits of Ellena, though she was herself nearly overwhelmed by the various and acute feelings this disclosure occasioned. For a considerable time they were unable to speak but in short sentences of affectionate exclamation, but joy was evidently a more predominant feeling with the parent than with the

child. When, however, Ellena could weep, she became more tranquil, and by degrees was sensible of a degree of happiness, such as she had perhaps never experienced.

Meanwhile Beatrice seemed lost in amazement mingled with fear. She expressed no pleasure, notwithstanding the joy she witnessed, but was uniformly grave and observant.

Olivia, when she recovered some degree of composure, inquired for her sister Bianchi. The silence and sudden dejection of Ellena indicated the truth. On this mention of her late mistress, Beatrice recovered the use of speech.

Alas! lady, said the old servant, she is now where I believed you were! and I should as soon have expected to see my dear mistress here as yourself!

Olivia, though affected by this intelligence, did not feel it with the acuteness she would have done probably at any other moment. After she had indulged her tears, she added, that from the unusual silence of Bianchi, she had

suspected the truth, and particularly since not any answer had been returned to the letter she had sent to Altieri upon her arrival at the Santa della Pieta.

Alas! said Beatrice, I wonder much my lady abbess failed to tell you the sad news, for she knew it too well!—My dear mistress is buried in the church here! as for the letter, I have brought it with me for Signora Ellena to open.

The lady abbess is not informed of our relationship, replied Olivia, and I have particular reasons for wishing, that at present she should remain ignorant of it. Even you, my Ellena, must appear only as my friend, till some inquiries have been made, which are essential to my peace.

Olivia required an explanation of Ellena's late extraordinary assertion, respecting her father, but this was a request made with emotions very different from those, which hope or joy inspire. Ellena, believing, that the same circumstances, which had deceived herself during so many years, as to his

death, had also misled Olivia, was not surprised at the incredulity her mother had shewn, but she was considerably embarrassed how to answer her inquiries. It was now too late to observe the promise of secrecy extorted from her by Schedoni; the first moments of surprise had betrayed her; yet, while she trembled further to transgress his injunction, she perceived that a full explanation was now unavoidable. And, since Ellena considered, that as Schedoni could not have foreseen her present peculiar situation, his command had no reference to her mother, her scruples on this head disappeared. When, therefore, Beatrice had withdrawn, Ellena repeated her assertion, that her father still lived; which, though it increased the amazement of Olivia, did not vanquish her incredulity. Olivia's tears flowed fast, while in contradiction to this assurance, she mentioned the year in which the Count di Bruno died, with some circumstances relative to his death; which, however, as Ellena understood

that her mother had not witnessed it, she still believed had not happened. To confirm her late assertion, Ellena then related a few particulars of her second interview with Schedoni, and as some confirmation that he lived, offered to produce the portrait, which he had claimed as his own. Olivia, in great agitation, requested to see the miniature, and Ellena left the apartment in search of it.

Every moment of her absence was to Olivia's expectation lengthened to an hour; she paced the room; listened for a footstep; endeavoured to tranquillize her spirits; and still Ellena did not return. Some strange mystery seemed to lurk in the narrative she had just heard, which she wished, yet dreaded to develope; and when, at length, Ellena appeared with the miniature, she took it in trembling eagerness, and having gazed upon it for an instant, her complexion faded, and she fainted.

Ellena had now no doubt respecting the truth of Schedoni's declaration, and

blamed herself for not having more gradually prepared her mother for the knowledge of a circumstance, which she believed had overwhelmed her with joy. The usual applications, however, soon restored Olivia, who, when she was again alone with her daughter, desired to behold once more the portrait. Ellena, attributing the strong emotion, with which she still regarded it, to surprise, and fear lest she was admitting a fallacious hope, endeavoured to comfort her by renewed assurances, that not only the Count di Bruno yet existed, but that he lived at this very time in Naples, and further, that he would probably be in her presence within the hour—When I quitted the room for the miniature, added Ellena, I dispatched a person with a note, requesting to see my father immediately, being impatient to realize the joy, which such a meeting between my long lost parents must occasion.

In this instance Ellena had certainly suffered her generous sympathy to overcome her discretion, for, though the

contents of the note to Schedoni could not positively have betrayed him, had he even been in Naples at this time, her sending it to the Spirito Santo, instead of the place which he had appointed for his letters, might have led to a premature inquiry respecting herself.

While Ellena had acquainted Olivia that Schedoni would probably be with them soon, she watched eagerly for the joyful surprise she expected would appear on her countenance; how severe then was her disappointment when only terror and dismay were expressed there! and, when in the next moment, her mother uttered exclamations of distress and even of despair!

If he sees me, said Olivia, I am irrecoverably lost! O! unhappy Ellena! your precipitancy has destroyed me. The original of this portrait is not the Count di Bruno, *my* dear lord, nor your parent, but his brother, the cruel husband——

Olivia left the sentence unfinished, as if she was betraying more than was at

present discreet; but Ellena, whom astonishment had kept silent, now entreated that she would explain her words, and the cause of her distress.

I know not, said Olivia, by what means that portrait has been conveyed to you; but it is the resemblance of the Count Ferando di Bruno, the brother of my lord, and my——second husband she should have said, but her lips refused to honour him with the title.

She paused and was much affected, but presently added—

I cannot at present explain the subject more fully, for it is to me a very distressing one. Let me rather consider the means of avoiding an interview with di Bruno, and even of concealing, if possible, that I exist.

Olivia was, however, soothed when she understood that Ellena had not named her in the note, but had merely desired to see the confessor upon a very particular occasion.

While they were consulting upon the excuse it would be necessary to form

for this imprudent summons, the messenger returned with the note unopened, and with information, that father Schedoni was abroad on a pilgrimage, which was the explanation the brothers of the Spirito Santo chose to give of his absence; judging it prudent, for the honour of their convent, to conceal his real situation.

Olivia, thus relieved from her fears, consented to explain some points of the subject so interesting to Ellena; but it was not till several days after this discovery, that she could sufficiently command her spirits to relate the whole of her narrative. The first part of it agreed perfectly with the account delivered in the confession to the penitentiary Ansaldo; that, which follows, was known only to herself, her sister Bianchi, a physician, and one faithful servant, who had been considerably intrusted with the conduct of the plan.

It may be recollected, that Schedoni left his house immediately after the act, which was designed to be fatal to the

countess his wife, and that she was carried senseless to her chamber. The wound, as appears, was not mortal. But the atrocity of the intent determined her to seize the opportunity, thus offered by the absence of Schedoni and her own peculiar circumstances, to release herself from his tyranny without having recourse to a court of justice, which would have covered with infamy the brother of her first husband. She withdrew, therefore, from his house for ever, and with the assistance of the three persons before mentioned, retired to a remote part of Italy, and sought refuge in the convent of San Stefano, while at home the report of her death was confirmed by a public funeral. Bianchi remained for some time after the departure of Olivia, in her own residence near the Villa di Bruno, having taken under her immediate care the daughter of the Countess and of the first Count di Bruno, as well as an infant daughter of the second.

After some time had elapsed, Bianchi withdrew with her young charge, but

not to the neighbourhood of San Stefano. The indulgence of a mother's tenderness was denied to Olivia, for Bianchi could not reside near the convent without subjecting her to the hazard of a discovery, since Schedoni, though he now believed the report of her death, might be led to doubt it, by the conduct of Bianchi, whose steps would probably be observed by him. She chose a residence, therefore, at a distance from Olivia, though not yet at Altieri. At this period, Ellena was not two years old; the daughter of Schedoni was scarcely as many months, and she died before the year concluded. It was this his child, for whom the confessor, who had too well concealed himself to permit Bianchi to acquaint him with her death, had mistaken Ellena, and to which mistake his own portrait, affirmed by Ellena to be that of her father, had contributed. This miniature she had found in the cabinet of Bianchi after her aunt's decease, and, observing it inscribed with the title of Count di

Bruno, she had worn it with a filial fondness ever since that period.

Bianchi, when she had acquainted Ellena with the secret of her birth, was withheld, both by prudence and humanity, from intrusting her with a knowledge, that her mother lived; but this, no doubt, was the circumstance she appeared so anxious to disclose on her death-bed, when the suddenness of her disorder had deprived her of the power. The abruptness of that event had thus contributed to keep the mother and daughter unknown to each other, even when they afterwards accidentally met, to which concealment the name of Rosalba, given to Ellena from her infancy by Bianchi, for the purpose of protecting her from discovery by her uncle, had assisted. Beatrice, who was not the domestic intrusted with the escape of Olivia, had believed the report of her death, and thus, though she knew Ellena to be the daughter of the Countess di Bruno, she could never have been a

means of discovering them to each other, had it not happened that Olivia recognized this ancient servant of Bianchi, while Ellena was present.

When Bianchi came to reside in the neighbourhood of Naples, she was unsuspicious that Schedoni, who had never been heard of since the night of the assassination, inhabited there; and she so seldom left her house, that it is not surprising that she should never happen to meet him, at least consciously; for her veil and the monk's cowl, might easily have concealed them from each other if they had met.

It appears to have been the intention of Bianchi to disclose to Vivaldi the family of Ellena, before their nuptials were solemnized; since, on the evening of their last conversation, she had declared, when her spirits were exhausted by the exertion she had made, that much remained for her to say, which weakness obliged her to defer till another opportunity. Her unexpected death prevented any future meeting. That

she had not sooner intended to make a communication, which might have removed, in a considerable degree, the objection of the Vivaldi to a connection with Ellena, appears extraordinary, till other circumstances of her family, than that of its nobility, are considered. Her present indigence, and yet more, the guilt attached to an individual of the di Bruno, it was reasonable to suppose would operate as a full antidote to the allurement of rank, however jealous of birth the Vivaldi had proved themselves.

Ferando di Bruno had contrived, even in the short interval between the death of his brother and the supposed decease of his wife, again to embarrass his affairs, and soon after his flight, the income arising from what remained of his landed property had been seized upon by his creditors, whether lawfully or not, he was then in a situation which did not permit him to contest, and Ellena was thus left wholly dependant upon her aunt. The small fortune of Bianchi had been diminished by the assistance she

afforded Olivia, for whose admittance into the convent of San Stefano it had been necessary to advance a considerable sum; and her original income was afterwards reduced by the purchase of the Villa Altieri. This expenditure, however, was not an imprudent one, since she preferred the comforts and independence of a pleasant home, with industry, to the indulgence of an indolence which must have confined her to an inferior residence; and was acquainted with the means of making this industry profitable without being dishonourable. She excelled in many elegant and ingenious arts, and the productions of her pencil and needle were privately disposed of to the nuns of the Santa della Pieta. When Ellena was of an age to assist her, she resigned much of the employment and the profit to her niece, whose genius having unfolded itself, the beauty of her designs and the elegance of her execution, both in drawings and embroidery, were so highly valued by the purchasers at the grate of the convent, that Bianchi

committed to Ellena altogether the exercise of her art.

Olivia meanwhile had dedicated her life to devotion in the monastery of San Stefano, a choice, which was willingly made, while her mind was yet softened by grief for the death of her first lord, and wearied by the cruelty she had afterwards experienced. The first years of her retirement were passed in tranquillity, except when the remembrance of her child, whom she did not dare to see at the convent, awakened a parental pang. With Bianchi she, however, corresponded as regularly as opportunity would allow, and had at least the consolation of knowing, that the object most dear to her lived, till within a short period of Ellena's arrival at the very asylum chosen by her mother, her apprehensions were in some degree excited by the unusual silence of Bianchi.

When Olivia had first seen Ellena in the chapel of San Stefano, she was struck with a slight resemblance she

bore to the late Count di Bruno, and had frequently afterwards examined her features with a most painful curiosity; but, circumstanced as she was, Olivia could not reasonably suspect the stranger to be her daughter. Once, however, a sense of this possibility so far overcame her judgment, as to prompt an inquiry for the sirname of Ellena! but the mention of Rosalba had checked all further conjecture. What would have been the feelings of the nun, had she been told when her generous compassion was assisting a stranger to escape from oppression, that she was preserving her own child! It may be worthy of observation, that the virtues of Olivia, exerted in a general cause, had thus led her unconsciously to the happiness of saving her daughter; while the vices of Schedoni had as unconsciously urged him nearly to destroy his niece, and had always been preventing, by the means they prompted him to employ, the success of his constant aim.

CHAPTER V.

Those hours which lately smil'd where are they now?
Pallid to thought, and ghastly!

YOUNG.

THE Marchesa di Vivaldi, of whose death Beatrice had given an imperfect account, struck with remorse for the crime she had meditated against Ellena, and with terror of the punishment due to it, had sent, when on her death-bed, for a confessor, to whom she unburthened her conscience, and from whom she hoped to receive, in return, an alleviation of her despair. This confessor was a man of good sense and humanity; and, when he fully understood the story of Vivaldi and Ellena di Rosalba, he declared, that her only hope of forgiveness, both for the crime she had meditated and the undeserved sufferings she

had occasioncd, rested upon her willingness to make those now happy, whom she had formerly rendered miserable. Her conscience had already given her the same lesson; and, now that she was sinking to that grave which levels all distinctions, and had her just fear of retribution no longer opposed by her pride, she became as anxious to promote the marriage of Vivaldi with Ellena as she had ever been to prevent it. She sent, therefore, for the Marchese; and, having made an avowal of the arts she had practised against the peace and reputation of Ellena, without, however, confessing the full extent of her intended crimes, she made it her last request, that he would consent to the happiness of his son.

The Marchese, however, shocked as he was at this discovery of the duplicity and cruelty of his wife, had neither her terror of the future, nor remorse for the past, to overcome his objection to the rank of Ellena; and he resisted all her importunity, till the anguish of her last

hours overcame every consideration but that of affording her relief; he then gave a solemn promise, in the presence of the confessor, that he would no longer oppose the marriage of Vivaldi and Ellena, should the former persist in his attachment to her. This promise was sufficient for the Marchesa, and she died with some degree of resignation. It did not, however, appear probable, that the Marchese would soon be called upon to fulfil the engagements, into which he had so unwillingly entered, every inquiry afier Vivaldi having been hitherto ineffectual.

During the progress of this fruitless search for his son, and while the Marchese was almost lamenting him as dead, the inhabitants of the Vivaldi palace were, one night, aroused from sleep by a violent knocking at the great gate of the court. The noise was so loud and incessant, that, before the porter could obey the summons, the Marchese, whose apartment looked upon the court, was alarmed, and sent an attendant

from his anti-room, to inquire the occasion of it.

Presently a voice was heard from the first anti-chamber, exclaiming, I must see my Lord Marchese directly; he will not be angry to be waked, when he knows all about it; and, before the Marchese could order that no person, on whatever pretence, should be admitted, Paulo, haggard, ragged, and covered with dirt, was in the chamber. His wan and affrighted countenance, his disordered dress, and his very attitude, as on entering he half turned to look back upon the anti-rooms, like one, who, just escaped from bondage, listens to the fancied sounds of pursuit, were altogether so striking and terrific, that the Marchese, anticipating some dreadful news of Vivaldi, had scarcely power to inquire for him. Paulo, however, rendered questions unnecessary, for, without any circumlocution, or preface, he immediately informed the Marchese, that the signor, his dear master, was in the prisons of the Inquisition, at Rome,

if, indeed, they had not put an end to him before that time.

Yes, my lord, said Paulo, I am just got out myself, for they would not let me be with the signor, so it was of no use to stay there any longer. Yet it was a hard matter with me to go away, and leave my dear master within those dismal walls; and nothing should have persuaded me to do so, but that I hoped, when your lordship knew where the signor was, you might be able to get him out. But there is not a minute to be lost, my lord, for when once a gentleman has got within the claws of those inquisitors, there is no knowing how soon they may take it in their heads to tear him in pieces. Shall I order horses for Rome, my lord? I am ready to set off again directly.

The suddenness of such intelligence, concerning an only son, might have agitated stronger nerves than those of the Marchese, and so much was he shocked by it, that he could not immediately determine how to proceed, or give any

answer to Paulo's repeated questions. When, however, he became sufficiently recollected to make further inquiry into the situation of Vivaldi, he perceived the necessity of an immediate journey; but first it would be prudent to consult with some friends, whose connections at Rome might be a means of greatly facilitating the important purpose, which led him thither, and this could not be done till the following morning. Yet he gave orders, that preparation should be made for his setting out at a moment's notice; and, having listened to as full an account as Paulo could give of the past and present circumstances of Vivaldi, he dismissed him to repose for the remainder of the night.

Paulo, however, though much in want of rest, was in too great agitation of spirits, either to seek or to find it; and the fear he had indicated, on entering the Marchese's apartment, proceeded from the hurry of his mind, rather than from any positive apprehension of new evil. For his liberty he was indebted

to the young sentinel, who had, on a former occasion, been removed from the door of his prison, but who, by means of the guard, to whom Vivaldi had given money, as he returned one night from the tribunal, had since been able to communicate with him. This man, of a nature too humane for his situation, was become wretched in it, and he determined to escape from his office, before the expiration of the time, for which he had been engaged. He thought that to be a guard over prisoners was nearly as miserable as being a prisoner himself. I see no difference between them, said he, except that the prisoner watches on one side of the door, and the sentinel on the other.

On this desire to release himself, he conferred with Paulo, whose good nature and feeling heart, among so many people of a contrary character, had won his confidence and affection, and he laid his plan of escape so well, that it was on the point of succeeding, when Paulo's obstinancy in attempting an impossibi-

lity, had nearly counteracted the whole. It went to his heart, he said, to leave his master in prison, while he himself was to march off in safety, and he would run the risk of his neck, rather than have such a deed upon his head. He proposed, therefore, as Vivaldi's guards were of too ferocious a nature to be tampered with, to scale a wall of the court into which the grate of Vivaldi's dungeon looked. But had this lofty wall been passable, the grate was not; and the attempt had nearly cost Paulo not only his liberty, but his life.

When, at length, he had made his way through the perilous avenues of the prison, and was fairly beyond the walls, he could hardly be prevailed upon by his companion to leave them. For near an hour he wandered under their shade, weeping and exclaiming, and calling upon his dear master, at the evident hazard of being retaken; and probably would have remained there much longer, had not the dawn of morning rendered his companion desperate. Just, however

as the man was forcing him away, Paulo fancied he distinguished, by the strengthening light, the roof of that particular building, in whose dungeon his master was confined; and the appearance of Vivaldi himself could scarcely have occasioned a more sudden burst of joy; succeeded by one of grief. It is the roof, it is the very roof! exclaimed Paulo, vaulting from the ground, and clapping his hands; it is the roof, the roof! O, my master, my master! the roof, the roof! He continued alternately to exclaim, My master! the roof! my master! the roof! till his companion began to fear he was frantic, while tears streamed down his cheeks, and every look and gesture expressed the most extravagant and whimsical union of joy and sorrow. At length, the absolute terror of discovery compelled his companion to force him from the spot; when having lost sight of the building, which inclosed Vivaldi, he set off for Naples with a speed that defied all interruption, and arrived there in the con-

dition, which has been mentioned, having taken no sleep, and scarcely any sustenance, since he left the Inquisition. Yet, in this exhausted state, the spirit of his affection remained unbroken, and when, on the following morning, the Marchese quitted Naples, neither his weariness, nor the imminent danger, to which this journey must expose him, could prevent his attending him to Rome.

The rank of the Marchese and the influence he was known to possess at the court of Naples were circumstances, that promised to have weight with the Holy Office and to procure Vivaldi a speedy release; but superior to these, were the high connections, which the Count di Maro, the friend of the Marchese, had in the church of Rome.

The applications, however, which were made to the inquisitors, were not so soon replied to as the wishes of the Marchese had expected, and he had been above a fortnight in that city, before he was even permitted to visit his son. In

this interview, affection predominated on both sides over all remembrance of the past. The condition of Vivaldi, his faded appearance, to which the wounds he had received at Celano, and from which he was scarcely recovered, had contributed; and his situation in a melancholy and terrible prison, were circumstances, that awakened all the tenderness of a father; his errors were forgiven, and the Marchese felt disposed to consent to all, that might restore him to happiness, could he but be restored to liberty.

Vivaldi, when informed of his mother's death, shed bitter tears of sorrow and remorse, for having occasioned her so much uneasiness. The unreasonableness of her claims was forgotten, and her faults were extenuated; happily, indeed, for his peace, the extent of her criminal designs he had never understood; and, when he learned that her dying request had been intended to promote his happiness, the cruel consciousness of having interrupted her's,

occasioned him severe anguish, and he was obliged to recollect her former conduct towards Ellena at San Stefano, before he could become reconciled to himself.

CHAPTER VI.

Your's in the ranks of death.

SHAKESPEARE.

NEAR three weeks had elapsed since the Marchese's arrival at Rome, and not any decisive answer was returned by the Inquisition to his application, when he and Vivaldi received at the same time a summons to attend father Schedoni in his dungeon. To meet the man, who had occasioned so much suffering to his family was extremely painful to the Marchese, but he was not allowed to refuse the interview; and, at the hour appointed, he called at the chamber of Vivaldi; and, followed by two officials, they passed on together to that of Schedoni.

While they waited at the door of the prison-room till the numerous bars and locks were unfastened, the agitation,

which Vivaldi had suffered, on receiving the summons, returned with redoubled force, now that he was about to behold, once more, that wretched man, who had announced himself to be the parent of Ellena di Rosalba. The Marchese suffered emotions of a different nature, and with his reluctance to see Schedoni was mingled a degree of curiosity, as to the event, which had occasioned this summons.

The door being thrown open, the officials entered first, and the Marchese and Vivaldi, on following, discovered the confessor lying on a mattress. He did not rise to receive them, but, as he lifted his head, and bowed it in obeisance, his countenance, upon which the little light admitted through the triple grate of his dungeon gleamed, seemed more than usually ghastly; his eyes were hollow, and his shrunk features appeared as if death had already touched them. Vivaldi, on perceiving him, groaned, and averted his face; but, soon

recovering a command of himself, he approached the mattress.

The Marchese, suppressing every expression of resentment towards an enemy, who was reduced to this deplorable condition, inquired what he had to communicate.

Where is father Nicola? said Schedoni to an official, without attending to the question: I do not see him here. Is he gone so soon, and without having heard the purport of my summons? Let him be called.

The official spoke to a sentinel, who immediately left the chamber.

Who are these that surround me? said Schedoni. Who is he that stands at the foot of the bed? While he spoke, he bent his eyes on Vivaldi, who rested in deep dejection there, and was lost in thought, till aroused by Schedoni's voice, he replied,

It is I, Vivaldi; I obey your requisition, and inquire the purpose of it?

The Marchese repeated the inquiry.

Schedoni appeared to meditate; sometimes he fixed his eyes upon Vivaldi, for an instant, and when he withdrew them, he seemed to sink into deeper thoughtfulness. As he raised them once again, they assumed a singular expression of wildness, and then settling, as if on vacancy, a sudden glare shot from them, while he said—Who is he that glides there in the dusk?

His eyes were directed beyond Vivaldi, who, on turning, perceived the monk, father Nicola, passing behind him.

I am here, said Nicola: what do you require of me?

That you will bear testimony to the truth of what I shall declare, replied Schedoni.

Nicola and an inquisitor, who had accompanied him, immediately arranged themselves on one side of the bed, while the Marchese stationed himself on the other. Vivaldi remained at its foot.

Schedoni, after a pause, began: That which I have to make known relates to

the cabal formerly carried on by him, the father Nicola, and myself, against the peace of an innocent young woman, whom, at my instigation, he has basely traduced.

At these words, Nicola attempted to interrupt the confessor, but Vivaldi restrained him.

Ellena di Rosalba is known to you? continued Schedoni, addressing the Marchese.

Vivaldi's countenance changed at this abrupt mention of Ellena, but he remained silent.

I have heard of her, replied the Marchese, coldly.

And you have heard falsely of her, rejoined Schedoni. Lift your eyes, my lord Marchese, and say, do you not recollect that face? pointing to Nicola.

The Marchese regarded the monk attentively, it is a face not easily to be forgotten, he replied; I remember to have seen it more than once.

Where have you seen him, my lord?

In my own palace, at Naples; and

you yourself introduced him to me there.

I did, replied Schedoni.

Why, then, do you now accuse him of falsehood, observed the Marchese, since you acknowledge yourself to have been the instigator of his conduct!

O heavens! said Vivaldi, this monk, then, this father Nicola, is, as I suspected, the slanderer of Ellena di Rosalba!

Most true, rejoined Schedoni; and it is for the purpose of vindicating——

And you acknowledge yourself to be the author of those infamous slanders! passionately interrupted Vivaldi;—you, who but lately declared yourself to be her father!

In the instant, that Vivaldi had uttered this, he became sensible of his indiscretion, for till now he had avoided informing the Marchese that Ellena had been declared the daughter of Schedoni. This abrupt disclosure, and at such a moment, he immediately perceived might be fatal to his hopes. The astonishment of the Marchese, upon this discovery, cannot easily be imagined; he looked

at his son for an explanation of what he had heard, and then with increased detestation at the confessor; but Vivaldi was not in a state of mind to give any explanation at this moment, and he requested his father to suspend even his conjectures, till he could converse with him alone.

The Marchese desisted for the present from further inquiry, but it was obvious, that his opinion and his resolution, respecting the marriage of Vivaldi, were already formed.

You, then, are the author of those slanders! repeated Vivaldi.

Hear me! cried Schedoni, in a voice, which the strength of his spirit, contending with the feebleness of his condition, rendered hollow and terrible.—Hear me!

He stopped, unable to recover immediately from the effect of the exertion he had made. At length, he resumed,

I have declared, and I continue to declare, that Ellena di Rosalba, as she has been named for the purpose, I con-

jecture, of concealing her from an unworthy father, is my daughter!

Vivaldi groaned in the excess of his despair, but made no further attempt to interrupt Schedoni. The Marchese was not equally passive. And was it to listen to a vindication of your daughter, said he, that I have been summoned hither? But let this Signora Rosalba be who she may, of what importance can it be to me, whether she be innocent or otherwise!

Vivaldi, with the utmost difficulty, forbore to express the feelings which this sentence excited. It appeared to recall all the spirit of Schedoni. She is the daughter of a noble house, said the confessor, haughtily, while he half raised himself from his mattress. In me you behold the last of the Counts di Bruno.

The Marchese smiled contemptuously.

Schedoni proceeded. I call upon you, Nicola di Zampari, who have declared yourself, on a late occasion, so strenuous for justice; I call upon you

now to do justice in this instance, and to acknowledge, before these witnesses, that Ellena Rosalba is innocent of every circumstance of misconduct, which you have formerly related to the Marchese di Vivaldi!

Villain! do you hesitate, said Vivaldi to Nicola, to retract the cruel slanders, which you have thrown upon her name, and which have been the means of destroying her peace, perhaps for ever? Do you persist——

The Marchese interrupted his son: Let me put an end to the difficulty, by concluding the interview; I perceive that my presence has been required for a purpose that does not concern me.

Before the confessor could reply, the Marchese had turned from him to quit the chamber; but the vehemence of Vivaldi's distress prevailed with him to pause, and this allowed him to understand from Schedoni, that the justification of the innocent Ellena, though it had been mentioned first, as being the

object nearest to his heart, was not the only one, that had urged him to require this meeting.

If you consent, added Schedoni, to listen to the vindication of my child, you shall afterwards perceive, signor, that I, fallen though I am, have still been desirous of counteracting, as far as remains for me, the evil I have occasioned. You shall acknowledge, that what I then make known is of the utmost consequence to the repose of the Marchese di Vivaldi, high in influence, and haughty in prosperity as he now appears.

The latter part of this assurance threatened to overcome the effect of the first; the pride of the Marchese swelled high; he took some steps towards the door, but then stopped, and conjecturing that the subject, to which Schedoni alluded, concerned the liberation of his son, he consented to attend to what Nicola should disclose.

This monk, meanwhile, had been balancing the necessity for acknowledging himself a slanderer, against the pos-

sibility of avoiding it; and it was the resolute manner of Vivaldi, who appeared to have no doubt as to his guilt in this instance, that made him apprehend the consequence of persisting in falsehood, not either remorse of conscience, or the appeal of Schedoni. He acknowledged, then, after considerable circumlocution, in which he contrived to defend himself, by throwing all the odium of the original design upon the confessor, that he had been prevailed upon by his arts to impose on the credulity of the Marchese, respecting the conduct of Ellena di Rosalba. This avowal was made upon oath, and Schedoni, by the questions he put to him, was careful it should be so full and circumstantial, that even the most prejudiced hearer must have been convinced of its truth; while the most unfeeling must have yielded for once to indignation against the asperser and pity of the aspersed. Its effect upon the present auditors was various. The Marchese had listened to the whole explanation with an unmoved counte-

nance, but with profound attention. Vivaldi had remained in a fixed attitude, with eyes bent on father Nicola, in such eager and stern regard, as seemed to search into his very soul; and, when the monk concluded, a smile of triumphant joy lighted up his features, as he looked upon the Marchese, and claimed an acknowledgment of his conviction, that Ellena had been calumniated. The cold glance, which the Marchese returned, struck the impassioned and generous Vivaldi to the heart, who perceived, that he was not only totally indifferent as to the injustice, which an innocent and helpless young woman had suffered, but fancied that he was unwilling to admit the truth, which his judgment would no longer allow him to reject.

Schedoni, meanwhile, appeared almost to writhe under the agony, which his mind inflicted upon him, and it was only by strong effort, that he sustained his spirit so far as to go through with the interrogations he had judged it neces-

sary to put to Nicola. When the subject was finished, he sunk back on his pillow, and, closing his eyes, a hue so pallid, succeeded by one so livid, overspread his features, that Vivaldi for an instant believed he was dying; and in this supposition he was not singular, for even an official was touched with the confessor's condition, and had advanced to assist him, when he unclosed his eyes, and seemed to revive.

The Marchese, without making any comment upon the avowal of father Nicola, demanded, on its conclusion, the disclosure, which Schedoni had asserted to be intimately connected with his peace; and the latter now inquired of a person near him, whether a secretary of the Inquisition was in the chamber, who he had requested might attend, to take a formal deposition of what he should declare. He was answered, that such an one was already in waiting. He then asked, what other persons were in the room, adding, that he should require inquisitorial witnesses to his deposition;

and was answered, that an inquisitor and two officials were present, and that their evidence was more than sufficient for his purpose.

A lamp was then called for by the secretary; but, as that could not immediately be procured, the torch of one of the sentinels, who watched in the dark avenue without, was brought in its stead, and this discovered to Schedoni the various figures assembled in his dusky chamber and to them the emaciated form and ghastly visage of the confessor. As Vivaldi now beheld him by the stronger light of the torch, he again fancied, that death was in his aspect.

Every person was now ready for the declaration of Schedoni; but he himself seemed not fully prepared. He remained for some moments reclining on his pillow in silence, with his eyes shut, while the changes in his features indicated the strong emotion of his mind. Then, as if by a violent effort, he half raised himself, and made an ample confession of the arts he had practised against Vivaldi

He declared himself to be the anonymous accuser, who had caused him to be arrested by the Holy Office, and that the charge of heresy, which he had brought against him, was false and malicious.

At the moment when Vivaldi received this confirmation of his suspicions, as to the identity of his accuser, he discovered more fully that the charge was not what had been stated to him at the chapel of San Sebastian, in which Ellena was implicated; and he demanded an explanation of this circumstance. Schedoni acknowledged, that the persons, who had there arrested him, were not officers of the Inquisition, and that the instrument of arrest, containing the charge of elopement with a nun, was forged by himself, for the purpose of empowering the ruffians to carry off Ellena, without opposition from the inhabitants of the convent, in which she was then lodged.

To Vivaldi's inquiry, why it had been thought necessary to employ stratagem in the removal of Ellena, since, if Sche-

doni had only claimed her for his daughter, he might have removed her without any, the confessor replied, that he was then ignorant of the relationship, which existed between them. But to the further inquiries, with what design, and whither Ellena had been removed, and the means, by which he had discovered her to be his daughter, Schedoni was silent; and he sunk back, overwhelmed by the recollections they awakened.

The depositions of Schedoni having been taken down by the secretary, were formally signed by the inquisitor and the officials present: and Vivaldi thus saw his innocence vindicated by the very man who had thrown him among the perils of the Inquisition. But the near prospect of release now before him failed to affect him with joy, while he understood that Ellena was the daughter of Schedoni, the child of a murderer, whom he himself had been in some degree instrumental in bringing to a dreadful and ignominious death. Still, however, willing to hope, that Schedoni

had not spoken the truth concerning his relationship to Ellena, he claimed, in consideration of the affection he had so long cherished for her, a full explanation of the circumstances connected with the discovery of her family.

At this public avowal of his attachment, a haughty impatience appeared on the countenance of the Marchese, who forbade him to make further inquiry on the subject, and was immediately retiring from the chamber.

My presence is no longer necessary, he added; the prisoner has concluded the only detail, which I could be interested to hear from him; and, in consideration of the confession he has made as to the innocence of my son, I pardon him the suffering, which his false charge has occasioned to me and my family. The paper containing his depositions is given to your responsibility, holy father, addressing the inquisitor; and you are required to lay it upon the table of the Holy Office, that the innocence of Vincentio di Vivaldi may appear, and that

he may be released from these prisons without further delay. But first, I demand a copy of those declarations, and that the copy also shall be signed by the present witnesses.

The secretary was now bidden to copy them, and, while the Marchese waited to receive the paper, (for he would not leave the chamber till he had secured it,) Vivaldi was urging his claim for an explanation, respecting the family of Ellena, with unconquerable perseverance. Schedoni, no longer permitted to evade the inquiry, could not, however, give a circumstantial explanation, without partly disclosing, also, the fatal designs, which had been meditated by him and the late Marchesa di Vivaldi, of whose death he was ignorant; he related, therefore, little more respecting Ellena than that a portrait, which she wore as being her father's, had first led to the discovery of her family.

While the confessor had been giving this brief explanation, Nicola, who was somewhat withdrawn from the circle,

stood gazing at him with the malignity of a demon. His glowing eyes just appeared under the edge of his cowl, while, rolled up in his dark drapery, the lower features of his face were muffled; but the intermediate part of his countenance, receiving the full glare of the torch, displayed all its speaking and terrific lines. Vivaldi, as his eye glanced upon him, saw again the very monk of Paluzzi, and he thought he beheld also a man capable of the very crimes, of which he had accused Schedoni. At this instant, he remembered the dreadful garment, that had been discovered in a dungeon of the fortress; and, yet more, he remembered the extraordinary circumstances attending the death of Bianchi, together with the immediate knowledge, which the monk had displayed of that event. Vivaldi's suspicions, respecting the cause of her death, being thus revived, he determined to obtain, if possible, either a relief from, or a confirmation of them; and he solemnly called upon Schedoni, who, already

condemned to die, had no longer any thing to fear from a disclosure of the truth, whatever it might be, to declare all that he knew on the subject. As he did so, he looked at Nicola, to observe the effect of this demand, whose countenance was, however, now so much shrouded, that little of its expression could be seen; but Vivaldi remarked, that, while he had spoken, the monk drew his garment closer over the lower part of his face, and that he had immediately turned his eyes from him upon the confessor.

With most solemn protestations, Schedoni declared himself to be both innocent and ignorant of the cause of Bianchi's death.

Vivaldi then demanded by what means his agent, Nicola, had obtained such immediate information, as the warning he had delivered at Paluzzi proved him to have, of an event, in which it appeared that he could be so little interested; and why that warning had been given.

Nicola did not attempt to anticipate the reply of Schedoni, who, after a momentary silence, said, That warning, young man, was given to deter you from visiting Altieri, as was every circumstance of advice or intelligence which you received beneath the arch of Paluzzi.

Father, replied Vivaldi, you have never loved, or you would have spared yourself the practice of artifices so ineffectual to mislead, or to conquer, a lover. Did you believe that an anonymous adviser could have more influence with me than my affection, or that I could be terrified by such stratagems into a renunciation of its object?

I believed, rejoined the confessor, that the disinterested advice of a stranger might have some weight with you; but I trusted more to the impression of awe, which the conduct and seeming foreknowledge of that stranger were adapted to inspire in a mind like your's; and I thus endeavoured to avail myself of your prevailing weakness

And what do you term my prevailing weakness? said Vivaldi, blushing.

A susceptibility which renders you especially liable to superstition, replied Schedoni.

What! does a monk call superstition a weakness? rejoined Vivaldi. But grant he does, on what occasion have I betrayed such weakness?

Have you forgotten a conversation which I once held with you on invisible spirits?

As he asked this, Vivaldi was struck with the tone of his voice; he thought it was different from what he had remembered to have heard from him; and he looked at Schedoni more intently, that he might be certain it was he who had spoken. The confessor's eyes were fixed upon him, and he repeated slowly in the same tone, Have you forgotten?

I have not forgotten the conversation to which you allude, replied Vivaldi, and I do not recollect to have then disclosed any opinion, that may justify your assertion.

The opinions you avowed were rational, said Schedoni, but the ardour of your imagination was apparent, and what ardent imagination ever was contented to trust to plain reasoning, or to the evidence of the senses? It may not willingly confine itself to the dull truths of this earth, but, eager to expand its faculties, to fill its capacity, and to experience its own peculiar delights, soars after new wonders into a world of its own!

Vivaldi blushed at this reproof, now conscious of its justness; and was surprised, that Schedoni should so well have understood the nature of his mind, while he himself, with whom conjecture had never assumed the stability of opinion, on the subject to which the confessor alluded, had been ignorant even of its propensities.

I acknowledge the truth of your remark, said Vivaldi, as far as it concerns myself. I have, however, inquiries to make on a point less abstracted, and towards explaining which the evidence of

my senses themselves have done little. To whom belonged the bloody garments I found in the dungeon of Paluzzi, and what became of the person, to whom they had pertained?

Consternation appeared for an instant on the features of Schedoni. What garments? said he.

They appeared to be those of a person, who had died by violence, replied Vivaldi, and they were discovered in a place frequented by your avowed agent, Nicola, the monk.

As he concluded the sentence, Vivaldi looked at Nicola, upon whom the attention of every person present was now directed.

They were my own, said this monk.

Your own! and in that condition! exclaimed Vivaldi. They were covered with gore!

They were my own, repeated Nicola. For their condition, I have to thank you,—the wound your pistol gave me occasioned it.

Vivaldi was astonished by this apparent

subterfuge. I had no pistol, he rejoined; my sword was my only weapon!

Pause a moment, said the monk.

I repeat that I had no fire-arms, replied Vivaldi.

I appeal to father Schedoni, rejoined Nicola, whether I was not wounded by a pistol shot.

To me you have no longer any right of appeal, said Schedoni. Why should I save you from suspicions, that may bring you to a state like this, to which you have reduced me! Your crimes have reduced you to it, replied Nicola. I have only done my duty, and that which another person could have effected without my aid—the priest, to whom Spalatro made his last confession.

It is, however, a duty of such a kind, observed Vivaldi, as I would not willingly have upon my conscience. You have betrayed the life of your former friend, and have compelled me to assist in the destruction of a fellow being.

You, like me, have assisted to destroy

a destroyer, replied the monk. He has taken life, and deserves, therefore, to lose it. If, however, it will afford you consolation to know, that you have not materially assisted in his destruction, I will hereafter give you proof for this assurance. There were other means of shewing, that Schedoni was the Count di Bruno, than the testimony of Ansaldo, though I was ignorant of them, when I bade you summon the penitentiary.

If you had sooner avowed this, said Vivaldi, the assertion would have been more plausible. Now, I can only understand that it is designed to win my silence, and prevent my retorting upon you your own maxim—that he who has taken the life of another, deserves to lose his own.—To whom did those bloody garments belong?

To myself, I repeat, replied Nicola. Schedoni can bear testimony that I received at Paluzzi a pistol wound.

Impossible! said Vivaldi; I was armed only with my sword!

You had a companion, observed the monk; had not he fire arms?

Vivaldi, after a momentary consideration, recollected that Paulo had pistols, and that he had fired one beneath the arch of Paluzzi, on the first alarm occasioned by the stranger's voice. He immediately acknowledged the recollection. But I heard no groan, no symptom of distress! he added. Besides, the garments were at a considerable distance from the spot where the pistol was fired! How could a person so severely wounded as those garments indicated, have silently withdrawn to a remote dungeon, or having done so, is it probable he would have thrown aside his dress!

All that is nevertheless true, replied Nicola. My resolution enabled me to stifle the expression of my anguish; I withdrew to the interior of the ruin, to escape from you, but you pursued me even to the dungeon, where I threw off my discoloured vestments, in which I

dared not return to my convent, and departed by a way, which all your ingenuity failed to discover. The people, who were already in the fort, for the purpose of assisting to confine you and your servant, during the night on which Signora Rosalba was taken from Altieri, procured me another habit and relief for my wound. But, though I was unseen by you during the night, I was not entirely unheard, for my groans reached you more than once from an adjoining chamber, and my companions were entertained with the alarm, which your servant testified—Are you now convinced?

The groans were clearly remembered by Vivaldi, and many other circumstances of Nicola's narration accorded so well with others, which he recollected to have occurred on the night alluded to, that he had no longer a doubt of its veracity. The suddenness of Bianchi's death, however, still unchanged his suspicions as to its cause; yet Schedoni had declared not only his ignorance, but his innocence

of this cause, which it appeared from his unwillingness to give testimony in favour of his agent, he would not have affirmed, had he been conscious, that the monk was in any degree guilty in this instance. That Nicola could have no inducement for attempting the life of Bianchi, other than a reward offered him by Schedoni, was clear; and Vivaldi, after more fully considering these circumstances, became convinced, that her death was in consequence of some incident of natural decay.

While this conversation was passing, the Marchese, impatient to put a conclusion to it and to leave the chamber, repeatedly urged the secretary to dispatch; and, while he now earnestly renewed his request, another voice answered for the secretary, that he had nearly concluded. Vivaldi thought, that he had heard the voice on some former occasion, and, on turning his eyes upon the person who had spoken, discovered the stranger to be the same, who had first visited him in prison.

Perceiving by his dress, that he was an officer of the Inquisition, Vivaldi now understood too well the purport of his former visit, and that he had come with a design to betray him by affected sympathy into a confession of some heretical opinions. Similar instances of treachery Vivaldi had heard were frequently practised upon accused persons, but he had never fully believed such cruelty possible till now, that it had been attempted towards himself.

The visit of this person bringing to his recollection the subsequent one he had received from Nicola, Vivaldi inquired, whether the sentinels had really admitted him to his cell, or he had entered it by other means; a question, to which the monk was silent, but the smile on his features, if so strange an expression deserved to be called a smile, seemed to reply, Do you believe that I, a servant of the Inquisition, will betray its secrets?

Vivaldi, however, urged the inquiry, for he wished to know whether the guard,

who appeared to be faithful to their office, had escaped the punishment, that was threatened.

They were honest, replied Nicola; seek no further.

Are the tribunal convinced of their integrity?

Nicola smiled again in derision, and replied, they never doubted it.

How! said Vivaldi. Why were these men put under arrest, if their faithfulness was not even suspected!

Be satisfied with the knowledge which experience has given you of the secrets of the Inquisition, replied Nicola solemnly; seek to know no more!

It has terrible secrets! said Schedoni, who had been long silent. Know, young man, that almost every cell of every prisoner has a concealed entrance, by which the ministers of death may pass unnoticed to their victims. This Nicola is now one of those dreadful summoners, and is acquainted with all the secret avenues, that lead to murder.

Vivaldi shrunk from Nicola in horror, and Schedoni paused; but while he had spoken, Vivaldi had again noticed the extraordinary change in his voice, and shuddered at its sound no less than at the information it had given. Nicola was silent; but his terrible eyes were fixed in vengeance on Schedoni.

His office has been short, resumed the confessor, turning his heavy eyes upon Nicola, and his task is almost done! As he pronounced the last words his voice faltered, but they were heard by the monk, who, drawing nearer to the bed, demanded an explanation of them. A ghastly smile triumphed in the features of Schedoni; Fear not but that an explanation will come full soon, said he.

Nicola fixed himself before the confessor, and bent his brows upon him, as if he would have searched into his very soul. When Vivaldi again looked at Schedoni, he was shocked on observing the sudden alteration in his countenance, yet still a faint smile of triumph lingered there. But, while Vivaldi gazed, the

features suddenly became agitated; in the next instant his whole frame was convulsed, and heavy groans laboured from his breast. Schedoni was now evidently dying.

The horror of Vivaldi and of the Marchese, who endeavoured to leave the chamber, was equalled only by the general confusion, that reigned there; every person present seemed to feel at least a momentary compassion, except Nicola, who stood unmoved beside Schedoni, and looked steadfastly upon his pangs, while a smile of derision marked his countenance. As Vivaldi observed, with detestation, this expression, a slight spasm darted over Nicola's face, and his muscles also seemed to labour with sudden contraction; but the affection was transient and vanished as abruptly as it had appeared. The monk, however, turned from the miserable spectacle before him, and, as he turned he caught involuntarily at the arm of a person near him, and leaned on his shoulder for support. His manner

appeared to betray that he had not been permitted to triumph in the sufferings of his enemy, without participating at least in their horror.

Schedoni's struggles now began to abate and in a short time he lay motionless. When he unclosed his eyes, death was in them. He was yet nearly insensible; but presently a faint gleam of recollection shot from them, and gradually lighting them up, the character of his soul appeared there: the expression was indeed feeble, but it was true. He moved his lips as if he would have spoken, and looked languidly round the chamber, seemingly in search of some person. At length, he uttered a sound, but he had not yet sufficient command of his muscles, to modulate that sound into a word, till by repeated efforts the name of Nicola became intelligible. At the call, the monk raised his head from the shoulder of the person, on whom he had reclined, and, turning round, Schedoni, as was evident from the sudden change of expression in his countenance,

discovered him; his eyes, as they settled on Nicola seemed to recollect all their wonted fire, and the malignant triumph, lately so prevalent in his physiognomy, again appeared as in the next moment, he pointed to him. His glance seemed suddenly impowered with the destructive fascination, attributed to that of the basilisk, for while it now met Nicola's, that monk seemed as if transfixed to the spot and unable to withdraw his eyes from the glare of Schedoni's; in their expression he read the dreadful sentence of his fate, the triumph of revenge and cunning. Struck with this terrible conviction, a pallid hue overspread his face; at the same time, an involuntary motion convulsed his features, cold trembling seized upon his frame, and, uttering a deep groan, he fell back, and was caught in the arms of the people near him. At the instant of his fall Schedoni uttered a sound so strange and horrible, so convulsed, yet so loud, so exulting, yet so unlike any human voice, that every person in the chamber, except those,

who were assisting Nicola, struck with irresistible terror, endeavoured to make their way out of it. This, however, was impracticable, for the door was fastened, until a physician, who had been sent for, should arrive, and some investigation could be made into this mysterious affair. The consternation of the Marchese and of Vivaldi, compelled to witness this scene of horror, cannot easily be imagined.

Schedoni, having uttered that demoniacal sound of exultation, was not permitted to repeat it, for the pangs he had lately suffered returned upon him, and he was again in strong convulsions, when the physician entered the chamber. The moment he beheld Schedoni, he declared him to be poisoned; and he pronounced a similiar opinion on father Nicola; affirming, also, that the drug, as appeared from the violence of the effect, was of too subtle and inveterate a nature to allow of antidote. He was, however, willing to administer the medicine usual in such cases.

While he was giving orders to an attendant, with respect to this, the violence of Schedoni's convulsions once more relaxed; but Nicola appeared in the last extremity. His sufferings were incessant, his senses never for a moment returned, and he expired, before the medicine, which had been sent for, could be brought. When it came, however, it was administered with some success to Schedoni, who recovered not only his recollection, but his voice; and the first word he uttered was, as formerly, the name of Nicola.

Does he live? added the confessor, with the utmost difficulty, and after a long pause. The persons around him were silent, but the truth, which this silence indicated, seem to revive him.

The inquisitor, who had attended, perceiving, that Schedoni had recovered the use of his intellects, now judged it prudent to ask some questions, relative to his present condition and to the cause of Nicola's death.

Poison, replied Schedoni readily.

By whom administered? said the inquisitor, consider that, while you answer, you are on your death-bed.

I have no wish to conceal the truth, rejoined Schedoni, nor the satisfaction—he was obliged to pause but presently added, I have destroyed him, who would have destroyed me, and—and I have escaped an ignominious death.

He paused again; it was with difficulty that he said thus much, and he was now overcome by the exertion he had made. The secretary, who had not been permitted to leave the chamber, was ordered to note Schedoni's words.

You avow, then, continued the inquisitor, that the poison was administered, both in the case of father Nicola and in your own, by yourself?

Schedoni could not immediately reply; but when he did, he said, I avow it.

He was asked by what means he had contrived to procure the poison, and was bidden to name his accomplice.

I had no accomplice, replied Schedoni.

How did you procure the poison then?

Schedoni, slowly and with difficulty, replied, It was concealed in my vest.

Consider that you are dying, said the inquisitor, and confess the truth. We cannot believe what you have last asserted. It is improbable that you should have had an opportunity of providing yourself with poison after your arrest, and equally improbable that you should have thought such provision necessary before that period. Confess who is your accomplice.

This accusation of falsehood recalled the spirit of Schedoni, which, contending with and conquering, for a moment, corporeal suffering, gave him strength to say, in a firmer tone, It was the poison, in which I dip my poniard, the better to defend me.

The inquisitor smiled in contempt of this explanation, and Schedoni, observing him, desired a particular part of his

vest might be examined, where would be found some remains of the drug concealed as he had affirmed. He was indulged in his request, and the poison was discovered within a broad hem of his garment.

Still it was inconceivable how he had contrived to administer it to Nicola, who, though he had been for some time alone with him on this day, would scarcely have so far confided in an enemy, as to have accepted any seeming sustenance, that might have been offered by him. The inquisitor, still anxious to discover an accomplice, asked Schedoni, who had assisted to administer the drug to Nicola, but the confessor was no longer in a condition to reply. Life was now sinking apace; the gleam of spirit and of character, that had returned to his eyes, was departed, and left them haggard and fixed; and presently a livid corse was all that remained of the once terrible Schedoni!

While this awful event had been ac-

complishing, the Marchese, suffering under the utmost perturbation, had withdrawn to the distant grate of the dungeon, where he conversed with an official, as to what might be the probable consequence of his present situation to himself; but Vivaldi, in an agony of horror, had been calling incessantly for the medicine, which might possibly afford some relief to the anguish he witnessed; and when it was brought, he had assisted to support the sufferers.

At length, now that the worst was over, and when the several witnesses had attested the last avowal of Schedoni, every person in the chamber was suffered to depart; and Vivaldi was re-conducted to his prison, accompanied by the Marchese, where he was to remain, till the decision of the Holy Office, respecting his innocence, as asserted by the deposition of Schedoni, should be known. He was too much affected by the late scene to give the Marchese any explanation at present,

respecting the family of Ellena di Rosalba; and the Marchese, having remained for some time with his son, withdrew to the residence of his friend.

CHAPTER VII.

Master, go on, and I will follow thee
To the last gasp with truth and loyalty.
SHAKESPEARE.

In consequence of the dying confession of Schedoni, an order was sent from the Holy Office for the release of Vivaldi, within a few days after the death of the confessor; and the Marchese conducted his son from the prisons of the Inquisition to the mansion of his friend the Count di Maro, with whom he had resided, since his arrival at Rome.

While they were receiving the ceremonious congratulations of the count and of some nobles, assembled to welcome the emancipated prisoner, a loud voice was heard from the anti chamber exclaiming, Let me pass! It is my master, let me pass! May all those who attempt to stop me, be sent to the Inquisition themselves.

In the next instant, Paulo burst into the saloon, followed by a group of lacqueys, who, however, paused at the door, fearful of the displeasure of their lord, yet scarcely able to stifle a laugh; while Paulo, springing forward, had nearly overset some of the company, who happened at that moment to be bowing with profound joy to Vivaldi.

It is my master! it is my dear master! cried Paulo, and, sending off a nobleman with each elbow, as he made his way between them, he hugged Vivaldi in his arms, repeating, O, my master! my master! till a passion of joy and affection overcame his voice, and he fell at his master's feet, weeping.

This was a moment of finer joy to Vivaldi, than he had known, since his meeting with his father, and he was too much interested by his faithful servant, to have leisure to apologize to the astonished company for his rudeness. While the lacqueys were repairing the mischief Paulo had occasioned, were picking up the rolling snuff boxes he had jerked

away in his passage, and wiping the snuff from the soiled clothes, Vivaldi was participating in all the delight, and returning all the affection of his servant, and was so wholly occupied by these pleasurable feelings as scarcely to be sensible, that any persons besides themselves were in the room. The Marchese, meanwhile, was making a thousand apologies for the disasters Paulo had occasioned; was alternately calling upon him to recollect in whose presence he was, and to quit the apartment immediately; explaining to the company, that he had not seen Vivaldi since they were together in the Inquisition, and remarking profoundly that he was much attached to his master. But Paulo, insensible to the repeated commands of the Marchese and to the endeavours of Vivaldi to raise him, was still pouring forth his whole heart at his master's feet. Ah! my signor, said he, if you could but know how miserable I was when I got out of the Inquisition!

He raves! observed the Count to the

Marchese, you perceive that joy has rendered him delirious!

How I wandered about the walls half the night, and what it cost me to leave them! But when I lost sight of them, signor, O! San Dominico! I thought my heart would have broken. I had a great mind to have gone back again and given myself up; and, perhaps, I should too, if it had not been for my friend, the sentinel, who escaped with me, and I would not do him an injury, poor fellow! for he meant nothing but kindness when he let me out. And sure enough, as it has proved, it was all for the best, for now I am here, too, signor, as well as you; and can tell you all I felt when I believed I should never see you again.

The contrast of his present joy to his remembered grief again brought tears into Paulo's eyes; he smiled and wept and sobbed and laughed with such rapid transition, that Vivaldi began to be alarmed for him; when suddenly becoming calm, he looked up in his master's face and said gravely, but with

eagerness, Pray, signor, was not the roof of your little prison peaked, and was there not a little turret stuck up at one corner of it? and was there not a battlement round the turret? and was there not———Vivaldi, after regarding him for a moment, replied smilingly, Why truly, my good Paulo, my dungeon was so far from the roof, that I never had an opportunity of observing it.

That is very true, signor, replied Paulo, very true indeed; but I did not think of that. I am certain, though, it was as I say, and I was sure of it at the time. O signor! I thought that roof would have broken my heart, O how I did look at it! and now to think that I am here, with my dear master once again!

As Paulo concluded, his tears and sobs returned with more violence than before; and Vivaldi, who could not perceive any necessary connection between this mention of the roof of his late prison and the joy his servant ex-

pressed on seeing him again, began to fear that his senses were bewildered, and desired an explanation of his words. Paulo's account, rude and simple as it was, soon discovered to him the relation of these apparently heterogeneous circumstances to each other; when Vivaldi, overcome by this new instance of the power of Paulo's affection, embraced him with his whole heart, and, compelling him to rise, presented him to the assembly as his faithful friend and chief deliverer.

The Marchese, affected by the scene he had witnessed and with the truth of Vivaldi's words, condescended to give Paulo a hearty shake by the hand and to thank him warmly for the bravery and fidelity he had displayed in his master's interest. I never can fully reward your attachment, added the Marchese, but what remains for me to do, shall be done. From this moment I make you independent, and promise, in the presence of this noble company,

to give you a thousand sequins, as some acknowledgment of your services.

Paulo did not express all the gratitude for this gift which the Marchese expected. He stammered and bowed and blushed and at length burst into tears; and, when Vivaldi inquired what distressed him, he replied, Why, signor, of what use are the thousand sequins to me, if I am to be independent! what use if I am not to stay with you?

Vivaldi cordially assured Paulo, that he should always remain with him, and that he should consider it as his duty to render his future life happy. You shall henceforth, added Vivaldi, be placed at the head of my household; the management of my servants and the whole conduct of my domestic concerns shall be committed to you, as a proof of my entire confidence in your integrity and attachment; and because this is a situation which will allow you to be always near me.

Thank you, my signor, replied Paulo,

in a voice rendered almost inarticulate by his gratitude, Thank you with my whole heart! if I stay with you, that is enough for me, I ask no more. But I hope my Lord Marchese will not think me ungrateful for refusing to accept of the thousand sequins he was so kind as to offer me, if I would but be independent, for I thank him as much as if I had received them, and a great deal more too.

The Marchese, smiling at Paulo's mistake, rejoined, As I do not perceive, my good friend, how your remaining with your master can be a circumstance to disqualify you from accepting a thousand sequins, I command you, on pain of my displeasure, to receive them; and, whenever you marry, I shall expect that you will shew your obedience to me again, by accepting another thousand from me with your wife, as her dower.

This is too much, signor, said Paulo sobbing—too much to be borne! and ran out of the saloon. But amidst the mur-

mur of applause, which his conduct drew from the noble spectators, for Paulo's warm heart had subdued even the coldness of their pride, a convulsive sound from the anti chamber betrayed the excess of emotion, which he had thus abruptly withdrawn himself to conceal.

In a few hours, the Marchese and Vivaldi took leave of their friends and sat out for Naples, where they arrived, without any interruption, on the fourth day. But it was a melancholy journey to Vivaldi, notwithstanding the joy of his late escape; for the Marchese, having introduced the mention of his attachment to Ellena di Rosalba, informed him, that under the present unforeseen circumstances, he could not consider his late engagement with the Marchesa on that subject as binding, and that Vivaldi must relinquish Ellena, if it should appear, that she really was the daughter of the late Schedoni.

Immediately on his arrival at Naples, however, Vivaldi, with a degree of im-

patience, to which his utmost speed was inadequate, and with a revived joy so powerful as to overcome every fear and every melancholy consideration, which the late conversation with his father had occasioned, hastened to the Santa della Pieta.

Ellena heard his voice from the grate, inquiring for her of a nun, who was in the parlour, and in the next instant, they beheld each other yet once again.

In such a meeting, after the long uncertainty and terror, which each had suffered for the fate of the other, and the dangers and hardships they had really incurred, joy was exalted almost to agony. Ellena wept, and some minutes passed before she could answer to Vivaldi's few words of tender exclamation: it was long ere she was tranquil enough to observe the alteration, which severe confinement had given to his appearance. The animated expression of his countenance was unchanged; yet, when the first glow of joy had faded from it, and Ellena had leisure to ob-

serve its wanness, she understood, too certainly, that he had been a prisoner in the Inquisition.

During this interview, he related, at Ellena's request, the particulars of his adventures, since he had been separated from her in the chapel of San Sebastian; but, when he came to that part of the narration, where it was necessary to mention Schedoni, he paused in unconquerable embarrasment and a distress not unmingled with horror. Vivaldi could scarcely endure even to hint to Ellena any part of the unjust conduct, which the confessor had practised towards him, yet it was impossible to conclude his account, without expressing much more than hints; nor could he bear to afflict her with a knowledge of the death of him whom he believed to be her parent, however the dreadful circumstances of that event might be concealed. His embarrassment became obvious and was still increased by Ellena's inquiries.

At length, as an introduction to the

information it was necessary to give, and to the fuller explanation he wished to receive upon a subject, which, though it was the one that pressed most anxiously upon his mind, he had not yet dared to mention, Vivaldi ventured to declare his knowledge of her having discovered her parent to be living. The satisfaction immediately apparent upon Ellena's countenance heightened his distress and his reluctance to proceed; believing, as he did, that the event he had to communicate must change her gladness to grief.

Ellena, however, upon this mention of a topic so interesting to them both, proceeded to express the happiness she had received from the discovery of a parent, whose virtues had even won her affection long before she understood her own interest in them.

It was with some difficulty, that Vivaldi could conceal his surprise at such an avowal of prepossession; the manners of Schedoni, of whom he believed her to speak, having certainly never

been adapted to inspire tenderness. But his surprise soon changed its object, when Olivia, who had heard that a stranger was at the grate, entered the parlour, and was announced as the mother of Ellena di Rosalba.

Before Vivaldi left the convent, a full explanation, as to family, was given on both sides, when he had the infinite joy of learning, that Ellena was not the daughter of Schedoni; and Olivia had the satisfaction to know, that she had no future evil to apprehend from him, who had hitherto been her worst enemy. The manner of his death, however, with all the circumstances of his character, as unfolded by his late trial, Vivaldi was careful to conceal.

When Ellena had withdrawn from the room, Vivaldi made a full acknowledgment to Olivia, of his long attachment to her daughter, and supplicated for her consent to their marriage. To this application, however, Olivia replied, that, though she had long been no stranger to their mutual affection, or

to the several circumstances, which had both proved its durability and tried their fortitude, she never could consent, that her daughter should become a member of any family, whose principal was either insensible of her value, or unwilling to acknowledge it; and that in this instance it would be necessary to Vivaldi's success, not only that he, but that his father, should be a suitor; on which condition only, she allowed him to hope for her acquiescence.

Such a stipulation scarcely chilled the hopes of Vivaldi, now that Ellena was proved to be the daughter not of the murderer Schedoni, but of a Count di Bruno, who had been no less respectable in character than in rank; and he had little doubt that his father would consent to fulfil the promise he had given to the dying Marchesa.

In this belief he was not mistaken. The Marchese, having attended to Vivaldi's account of Ellena's family, promised, that, if it should appear there was no second mistake on the subject,

he would not longer oppose the wishes of his son.

The Marchese immediately caused a private inquiry to be made as to the identity of Olivia, the present Countess di Bruno; and, though this was not pursued without difficulty, the physician, who had assisted in the plan of her escape from the cruelty of Ferando di Bruno, and who was living, as well as Beatrice, who clearly remembered the sister of her late mistress, at length rendered Olivia's identity unquestionable. Now, therefore, that the Marchese's every doubt was removed, he paid a visit to the Santa della Pieta, and solicited, in due form, Olivia's consent to the nuptials of Vivaldi with Ellena; which she granted him with an entire satisfaction. In this interview, the Marchese was so much fascinated by the manners of the countess, and pleased with the delicacy and sweetness, which appeared in those of Ellena, that his consent was no longer a constrained one, and he willingly relinquished the

views of superior rank and fortune, which he had formerly looked to for his son, for those of virtue and permanent happiness, that were now unfolded to him.

On the twentieth of May, the day on which Ellena completed her eighteenth year, her nuptials with Vivaldi were solemnized in the church of the Santa Maria della Pieta, in the presence of the Marchese and of the Countess di Bruno. As Ellena advanced through the church, she recollected, when on a former occasion she had met Vivaldi at the altar, and, the scenes of San Sebastian rising to her memory, the happy character of those, which her present situation opposed to them, drew tears of tender joy and gratitude to her eyes. Then, irresolute, desolate, surrounded by strangers and ensnared by enemies, she had believed she saw Vivaldi for the last time; now, supported by the presence of a beloved parent, and by the willing approbation of the person, who had hitherto so strenuously opposed

her, they were met to part no more; and, as a recollection of the moment, when she had been carried from the chapel glanced upon her mind, that moment when she had called upon him for succour, supplicated even to hear his voice once more, and when a blank silence, which, as she believed, was that of death, had succeeded; as the anguish of that moment was now remembered, Ellena became more than ever sensible of the happiness of the present.

Olivia, in thus relinquishing her daughter so soon after she had found her, suffered some pain, but she was consoled by the fair prospect of happiness, that opened to Ellena, and cheered, by considering, that, though she relinquished, she should not lose her, since the vicinity of Vivaldi's residence to La Pieta, would permit a frequent intercourse with the convent.

As a testimony of singular esteem, Paulo was permitted to be present at the marriage of his master, when, as

perched in a high gallery of the church, he looked down upon the ceremony and witnessed the delight in Vivaldi's countenance, the satisfaction in that of my "old Lord Marchese," the pensive happiness in the Countess di Bruno's and the tender complacency of Ellena's, which her veil, partly undrawn, allowed him to observe, he could scarcely refrain from expressing the joy he felt, and shouting aloud, "*O, giorno felice! O, giorno felice!*"*

* O happy day! O happy day!

CHAPTER VIII.

Ah! where shall I so sweet a dwelling find!
For all around, without, and all within,
Nothing save what delightful was and kind,
Of goodness favouring and a tender mind,
E'er rose to view.

THOMSON.

THE fête, which, some time after the nuptials, was given by the Marchese, in celebration of them, was held at a delightful villa, belonging to Vivaldi, a few miles distant from Naples, upon the border of the gulf and on the opposite shore to that, which had been the frequent abode of the Marchesa. The beauty of the situation and its interior elegance induced Vivaldi and Ellena to select it as their chief residence. It was, in truth, a scene of fairy land. The pleasure grounds extended over a valley, which opened to the bay, and the house stood at the entrance of this valley, upon a gentle slope, that mar-

gined the water and commanded the whole extent of its luxuriant shores, from the lofty cape of Miseno to the bold mountains of the south, which, stretching across the distance, appeared to rise out of the sea, and divided the gulf of Naples from that of Salerno.

The marble porticoes and arcades of the villa were shadowed by groves of the beautiful magnolia flowering ash, cedrati, camellias, and majestic palms; and the cool and airy halls, opening on two opposite sides to a colonnade, admitted beyond the rich foliage all the seas and shores of Naples, from the west; and to the east, views of the valley of the domain, withdrawing among winding hills wooded to their summits, except where cliffs of various coloured granites, yellow, green, and purple, lifted their tall heads and threw gay gleams of light amidst the umbrageous landscape.

The style of the gardens, were lawns and groves and woods varied the undulating surface, was that of England, and

of the present day, rather than of Italy; except "Where a long alley peeping on the main," exhibited such gigantic loftiness of shade and grandeur of perspective, as characterize the Italian taste.

On this jubilee, every avenue and grove and pavilion were richly illuminated. The villa itself, where each airy hall and arcade was resplendent with lights and lavishly decorated with flowers and the most beautiful shrubs, whose buds seemed to pour all Arabia's perfumes upon the air, this villa resembled a fabric called up by enchantment, rather than a structure of human art.

The dresses of the higher rank of visitors were as splendid as the scenery, of which Ellena was, in every respect, the queen. But this entertainment was not given to persons of distinction only, for both Vivaldi and Ellena had wished that all the tenants of the domain should partake of it, and share the abundant happiness, which themselves possessed; so that the grounds, which were extensive enough to accommodate each rank,

were relinquished to a general gaiety. Paulo was, on this occasion, a sort of master of the revels; and, surrounded by a party of his own particular associates, danced once more, as he had so often wished, upon the moonlight shore of Naples.

As Vivaldi and Ellena were passing the spot, which Paulo had chosen for the scene of his festivity, they paused to observe his strange capers and extravagant gesticulation, as he mingled in the dance, while every now and then he shouted forth, though half breathless with the heartiness of the exercise, *O, giorno felice! O, giorno felice!*

On perceiving Vivaldi, and the smiles with which he and Ellena regarded him, he quitted his sports, and advancing, Ah! my dear master, said he, do you remember the night, when we were travelling on the banks of the Celano, before that diabolical accident happened in the chapel of San Sebastian; don't you remember how those people, who were tripping it away so joyously, by

moonlight, reminded me of Naples, and the many merry dances I had footed on the beach here?

I remember it well, replied Vivaldi.

Ah! signor *mio*, you said at the time, that you hoped we should soon be here, and that then I should frisk it away with as glad a heart as the best of them. The first part of your hope, my dear master, you was out in, for, as it happened, we had to go through purgatory before we could reach paradise; but the second part is come at last; for here I am, sure enough! dancing by moonlight, in my own dear bay of Naples, with my own dear master and mistress, in safety, and as happy *almost* as myself; and with that old mountain yonder, Vesuvius, which I, forsooth! thought I was never to see again, spouting up fire just as it used to do before we got ourselves put into the Inquisition! O! who could have foreseen all this! *O, giorno felice! O, giorno felice!*

I rejoice in your happiness, my good Paulo, said Vivaldi, almost as much as

in my own; though I do not entirely agree with you, as to the comparative proportion of each.

Paulo! said Ellena. I am indebted to you beyond any ability to repay; for to your intrepid affection your master owes his present safety. I will not attempt to thank you for your attachment to him; my care of your welfare shall prove how well I know it; but I wish to give to all your friends this acknowledgment of your worth and of my sense of it.

Paulo bowed and stammered and writhed and blushed and was unable to reply; till, at length, giving a sudden and lofty spring from the ground, the emotion, which had nearly stifled him, burst forth in words, and O, *giorno felice! O, giorno felice!* flew from his lips with the force of an electric shock. These communicated his enthusiasm to the whole company, the words passed like lightning from one individual to another, till Vivaldi and Ellena withdrew amidst a choral shout, and all the

woods and strands of Naples re-echoed with—*O, giorno felice! O, giorno felice!*

You see, said Paulo, when they had departed and he came to himself again, you see how people get through their misfortunes, if they have but a heart to bear up against them, and do nothing that can lie on their conscience afterwards; and how suddenly one comes to be happy just when one is beginning to think one never is to be happy again! Who would have guessed that my dear master and I, when we were clapped up in that diabolical place, the Inquisition, should ever come out again into this world! Who would have guessed when we were taken before those old devils of inquisitors, sitting there all of a row in a place under ground, hung with black, and nothing but torches all around, and faces grinning at us, that looked as black as the gentry aforesaid; and when I was not so much as suffered to open my mouth, no! they would not let me open my mouth to my master!—who, I say, would have guessed we should ever be

let loose again! who would have thought we should know what it is to be happy! Yet here we are all abroad once more! All at liberty! And may run, if we will, straight forward, from one end of the earth to the other, and back again without being stopped! May fly in the sea, or swim in the sky, or tumble over head and heels into the moon! For remember, my good friends, we have no lead in our consciences to keep us down!

You mean swim in the sea, and fly in the sky, I suppose, observed a grave personage near him, but as for tumbling over head and heels into the moon! I don't know what you mean by that!

Pshaw! replied Paulo, who can stop, at such a time as this, to think about what he means! I wish that all those, who on this night are not merry enough to speak before they think, may ever after be grave enough to think before they speak! But you, none of you, no! not one of you! I warrant, ever saw the roof of a prison, when your master hap-

pened to be below in the dungeon, nor know what it is to be forced to run away, and leave him behind to die by himself. Pour souls! But no matter for that, you can be tolerably happy, perhaps, notwithstanding; but as for guessing how happy I am, or knowing anything about the matter.——O! its quite beyond what you can understand. *O, giorno felice! O, giorno felice!* repeated Paulo, as he bounded forward to mingle in the dance, and *O, giorno felice!* was again shouted in chorus by his joyful companions.

THE END.

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