

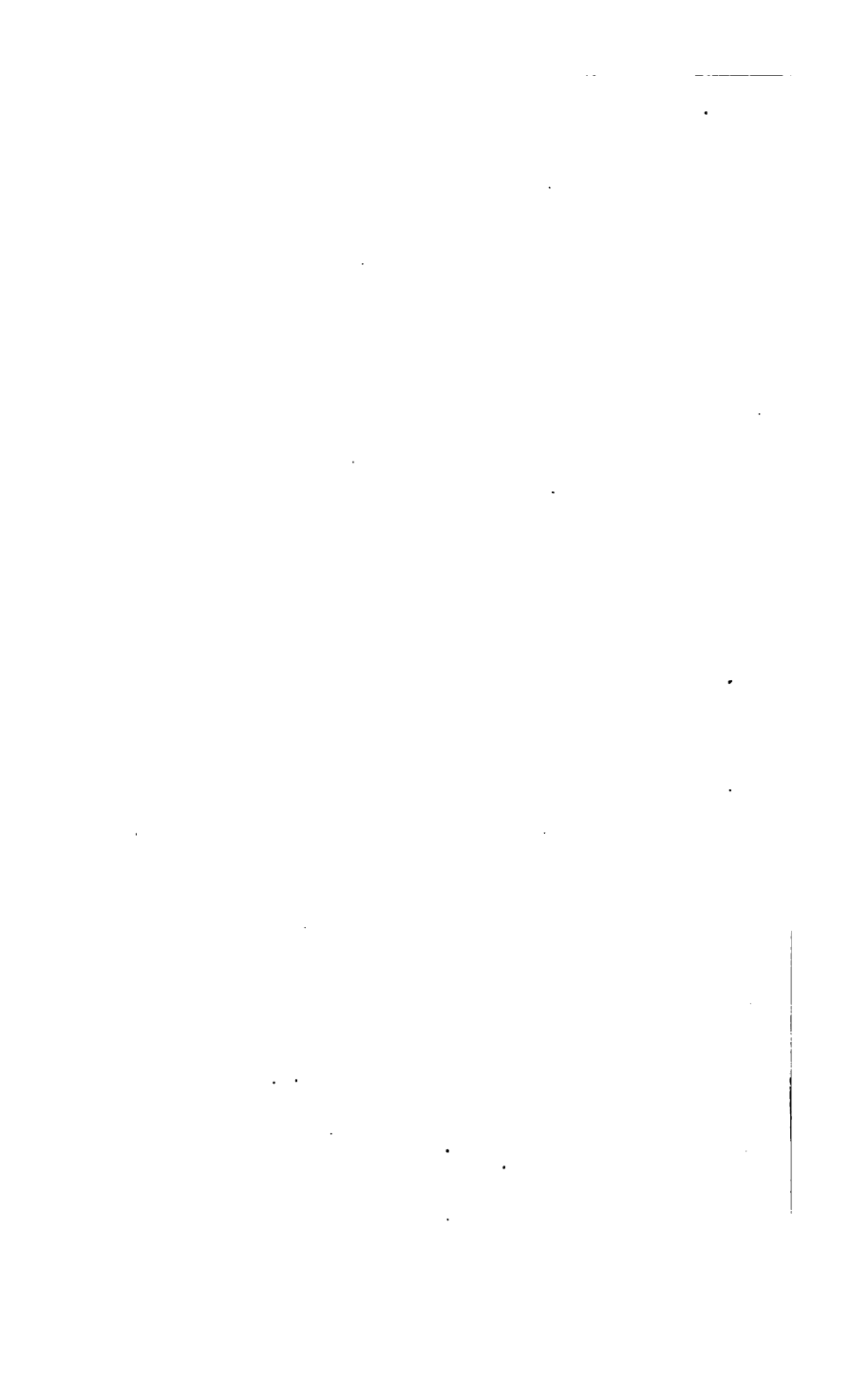


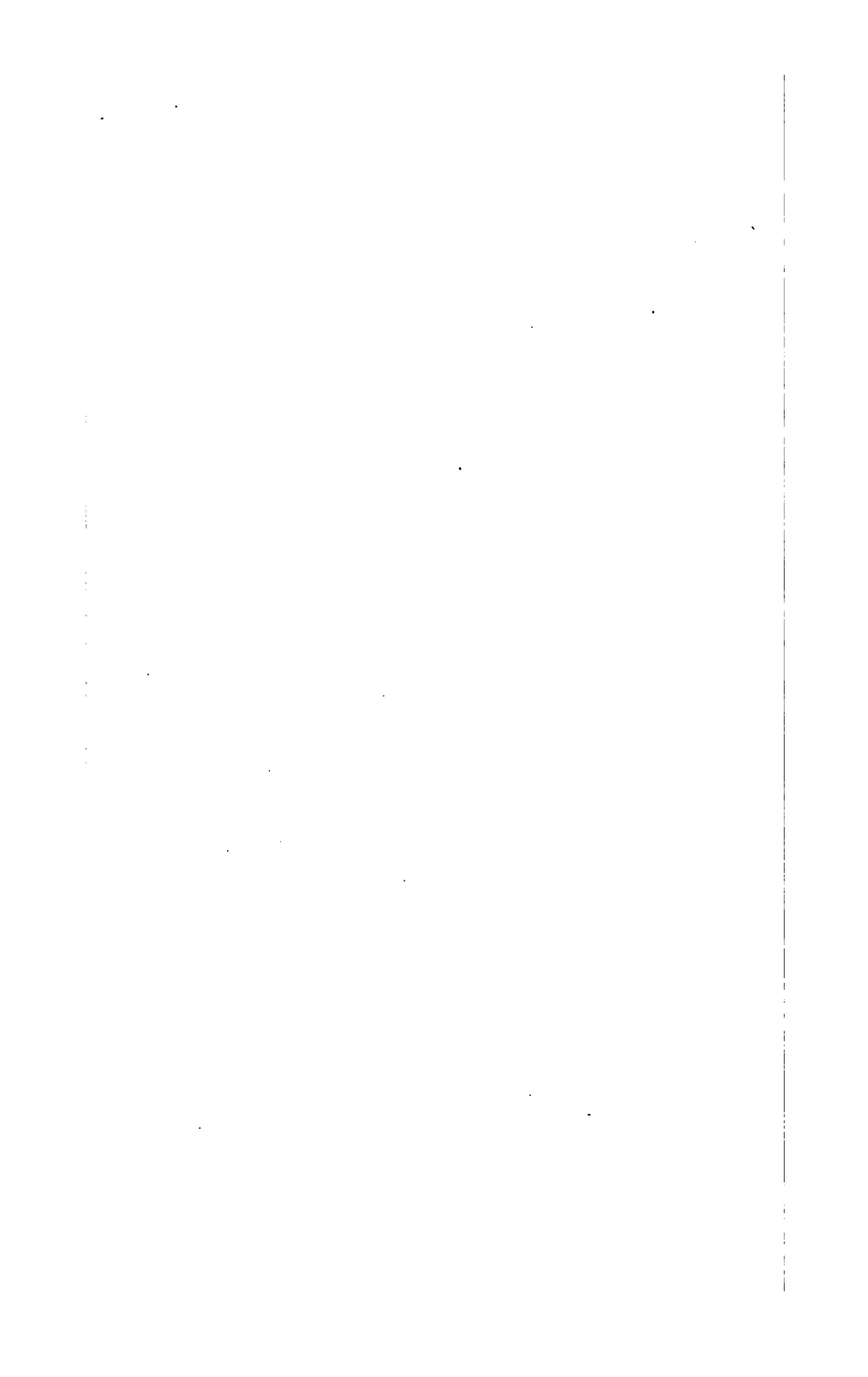
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THE
ARMENIAN;
OR,
THE GHOST SEER.

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THE
A R M E N I A N ;

OR,

THE GHOST SEER.

A HISTORY FOUNDED ON FACT.

John Christoff. Fried. Schiller
TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN OF

F. SCHILLER,

AUTHOR OF THE ROBBERS, DON CARLOS, &c.

BY

THE REV. W. RENDER.

VOL. I.

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1800.



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ADVERTISEMENT.

*THE Work now presented to the Public originally appeared in a German periodical publication entitled, THALIA, under the name of The Ghost Seer, a True History, found among the Papers of Count O** ; and was continued from time to time. It has been supposed, and it is not improbable, that it was intended to expose the impostures of the sect of the Illuminati, which was then beginning to extend itself in Germany.*

Germany. A translation of the first volume was published about five years ago, with a very imperfect and unsatisfactory account of the conclusion of the History. It was presumed, that a faithful translation of the whole Work would be highly acceptable to those who have read that volume, and to all the admirers of the genius of Schiller.

THE
GHOST SEER.

I SHALL relate an event, which to many will appear incredible, but of the greatest part of which I myself was an eye witness. The few, who are acquainted with a certain political occurrence, will (if these leaves should find them alive) have a perfect key to the publication; but without this Key it will be looked upon as an addition to the history of deceit and artifice so often imposed upon mankind. The boldness of the undertaking, which malice was able to conjecture and to pursue,

VOL. I B fue,

ful, must excite astonishment, and also the methods which they were able to invent, to secure themselves in their projects. Genuine, bold truth, will conduct my pen ; for when these leaves go into the world, I shall probably be no more, and shall never experience the credit with which they are received.

It was on my return to Courland, in the year 17—, about the time of the Carnival, that I paid a visit to the Prince of W.... in Venice. We had known each other in the P.... military service, and renewed here an acquaintance which peace had interrupted. As I wished to see the remarkable city of Venice, the Prince easily persuaded me to bear him company, and to delay my departure from hence until his remittances, which were expected every day, arrived. We agreed to live together as long as our stay at
Venice

Venice should last, and the Prince was so kind as to offer to share his habitation with me at the Moor Hotel. He lived in disguise, because he wished to enjoy himself, and his little income did not permit him to maintain the dignity of his rank. Two cavaliers, upon whose secrecy he could entirely rely, composed (besides some trusty servants) his whole household. He shunned expences more from temperance than œconomy. He fled from diversions of all kinds ; and at the age of thirty-five years, it may be said, that he had resisted all the charms of that voluptuous city. The fair sex was not regarded by him : gravity, and an almost profound melancholy, overshadowed his mind. His passions were still, but obstinate to excess ; his choice slow and fearful ; his attachment warm and lasting. Locked up in his own visionary ideas, he often was a stranger to the world about him ; and, con-

scious of his own deficiency in the knowledge of mankind, he very seldom observed that line of conduct which influences those who are wary and suspicious. Nobody was ever born to be governed more than he, without being the dupe of artifice and cunning : at the same time he was unterrified and decisive. As soon as he was once convinced, he possessed equal courage to combat an acknowledged prejudice, and to die for a new one. As the third prince of his house, he could not have any views for the sovereignty ; his ambition, therefore, on that point, was never awakened : his passion had taken quite another direction. Conscious of his own aversion to being governed by the opinion of others, he never forced his own upon any person as a law. The peaceable paths of solitude, and a private life, were the summit of his wishes. He read much, but without selection.

selection. A narrow education, together with being initiated into the military service early in life, served to check all application to the study of literature—all the knowledge which he afterwards acquired added but little to his ideas. He was a Protestant, as all his family had been, by birth, not by enquiry, which he never attempted, though he was, in a certain epoch of his life, an enthusiast—he never, to my knowledge, became a free-mason.

One evening, we, as usual, took a walk by ourselves, very well masked, upon St. Mark's Place. As it grew late, and the people were dispersing, the Prince observed that a man followed us every where. The man was an Arminian, and walked alone. We doubled our steps, and sought by striking into different turns of our road to lose him, but in vain, for he always remained close behind us.

“ You have not had, I hope, any intrigue here ?” said the Prince at last to me. “ The husbands at Venice are very dangerous.”

“ I know not one lady,” I replied.

“ Let us sit down here, and speak German,” he continued. “ I imagine they mistake us for some other persons.”

We sat down upon a stone bench, and expected that the mask would pass by. He came straight towards us, and took his seat very close by the side of the Prince ; who drew out his watch, and said rather loud in French, rising at the same time from his seat :

“ Nine—come ! we forget that they wait for us at the *Louvre*.”

This

This was only a pretence to deceive the mask as to our rout.

"Nine!" repeated the mask in the same language, very expressively and slowly. "With yourself joy, Prince, (whilst he called him by his right name), *at nine o'clock he died.*"

With this he rose, and went away: we looked at one another very much amazed.

"Who is dead?" said the Prince, after a long silence.

"Let us follow him," said I, "and request an explanation."

We hurried through all the bye ways of St. Mark, but the mask was not to be found. Chagrined at our bad success, we proceeded to our hotel. The

Prince spoke not a word in our way home, but walked apart from me, apparently in deep reflection, and greatly agitated, as he afterwards confessed to me. When we got home, assuming an air of gaiety—

“ It is indeed laughable,” said he, “ that a madman should thus be able to disturb the tranquillity of a person’s mind by a couple of words.”

We wished each other a good night, and as soon as I was in my own room, I noted in my pocket-book the day and the hour when this extraordinary event happened—it was upon a Thursday. The following evening the Prince said to me :

“ Let us take a walk again to St. Mark’s Place, and try to discover this mysterious Arminian. I am very anxious to unravel this adventure.”

I agreed

I agreed to the proposal, and we remained till eleven o'clock wandering about the place: the Arminian was no where to be seen. We repeated our visits the four following evenings, and each time with the same bad success. The sixth evening, when we left our hotel, I had the foresight (whether by design or not I cannot say) to tell the servants where we might be found, if there should be any enquiry after us: The Prince observed this, and praised my attention with a smiling countenance. There was a great crowd upon St. Mark's Place when we arrived there; and we scarcely had gone thirty steps, when I observed the Arminian, who pushed himself through the crowd in great haste, and seemed to be in the act of searching for somebody. We were just upon the point of reaching him, when the Baron F. . . one of the Prince's companions, came breath-

less towards us, and delivered a letter to the Prince.

“ It is sealed black,” said he, “ and we thought that it might contain intelligence of great consequence.”

It struck me like a thunderbolt. The Prince went to a lamp, and began to read the contents.

“ My cousin is dead,” he cried.

“ When?” said I, interrupting him hastily.

He once more read the letter.

“ Last Thursday, at nine o'clock in the evening.”

We scarcely had time to recover ourselves from our surprize, when the Arminian appeared.

“ You

“ You are known here, gracious Sire,” said he to the Prince. “ Hasten to the Moor: you’ll find there ambassadors from the Senate, and do not hesitate to accept the honour which they will offer you. The Baron F... forgot to tell you that your remittances are arrived.”

He left us precipitately, and mingled with the crowd. We hastened to our hotel, and found every thing as the Arminian had announced to us. Three noblemen of the Republic were arrived ready to receive the Prince, and to conduct him with splendor to the assembly, where the first nobility of the city expected him. He had just time enough to let me understand, by a slight hint, that he wished me to set up for him. About eleven o’clock at night he returned. He came into the room serious and thoughtful; and, after having dis-

miffed the servants, he feized me by the hand.

“ Count,” he faid, with the words of Hamlet, “ there are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamt of in your philofophy.”

“ Gracious Sir,” I replied, “ you feem to forget that you are enriched with the profpect of a fovereignty*.”

“ Do not remind me of that,” faid the Prince, “ I have fomething of greater importance to me than a crown

* The deceased was the hereditary Prince, the only fon of the reigning . . . who was in years, very fickly, and without the leaft profpect of having an heir to his dominions. An uncle of our Prince, almoft in the fame fituation, now alone ftood between him and the throne. I am obliged to mention this circumftance, as the fubject will be treated of in the Work.

GERMAN EDITOR.

that

that now claims my attention, if that Arminian has not been at guefs work."

"How is that possible, Prince?" I replied.

"Then will I resign all my princely hope for the habit of a monk."

The following evening we went together earlier to the market-place. A heavy shower of rain obliged us to take shelter in a coffee-house, where we observed a number of persons at a gaming table. The Prince placed himself behind the chair of a Spaniard to see the game played, whilst I went into an adjoining room to read the papers. A little time afterwards I heard a noise. Before the arrival of the Prince, the Spaniard univerfally loft, but since he entered, the latter won upon every card. The whole game was totally changed, and the bank was in danger
of

of being challenged by the pointer, whom this lucky reverse of fortune had made bolder. The Venetian, who kept it, said to the Prince in a furlly tone—

“ You have changed the luck, and shall quit the table.”

The Prince looked at him coolly, without giving him an answer, and kept his place, but the Venetian repeated his command in French. The latter thought that the Prince did not understand either language ; and, addressing himself to the company with a sneering grin—

“ Tell me, Gentlemen,” said he, “ how I shall make myself understood by this fool ?”

Hereupon he stood up, and would have struck the Prince ; but the Prince's patience forsaking him, he did not wait for the attack, but seized the Venetian
by

by the throat, and dashed him with violence on the ground. This circumstance threw the whole house into confusion. Upon hearing the uproar, I ran into the room, and unguardedly called him by his name."

"Take care, Prince," said I, incautiously, "we are in Venice!"

The name of the Prince excited an universal silence, and soon after a confused murmur ran through the assembly, which appeared to me to have a dangerous tendency. The Italians present crowded round each other, and walked aside. They soon quitted the room, one after the other, and we found ourselves left only with the Spaniard and several Frenchmen.

"You are lost, gracious Sir," said a Frenchman, "if you do not leave the city directly. The Venetian, whom
you

you have handled so roughly, is rich enough to hire a bravo—it will only cost him fifty sequins to be revenged by your death.”

The Spaniard, in concert with the Frenchmen, offered to conduct the Prince with safety to his house. We were standing thus consulting what was best to be done, when the door of the room was suddenly opened, and several officers of the *State Inquisition* entered. They produced an order from the government, in which we were both commanded to follow them immediately. They conducted us under a strong escort to a canal, where a boat waited for us. We were ordered to embark; but before we quitted it, our eyes were blindfolded; and, upon our landing, we found that they led us up a stone stair-case, and then through a long winding passage over arches, as we could discover by the repeated echoes that
that

that sounded under our feet. We soon arrived at another stair-case, which in twenty-six steps brought us to the bottom. We then heard a door creak upon its hinges ; and when they took the bandage from our eyes, we found ourselves in a spacious hall, encircled by an assembly of venerable old men. All appeared in sable robes, and the hall hung with black cloth; was dimly lighted by a few scattered tapers. A deadly silence prevailed through the assembly, which caused in us an awful sensation too powerful to be described. One of the old men, who appeared to be the principal state inquisitor, came near to the Prince, and spoke to him with a solemn countenance, whilst another set before him the Venetian.

“ Do you acknowledge this man to be the same that you used so roughly in the coffee-house ? ”

“ Yes ! ”

" Yes !" answered the Prince.

Then turning to the prisoner—

" Is that the person you would have assassinated this evening ?"

The prisoner answered, " Yes."

Immediately the judges opened the circle, and we saw, with the utmost horror, the head of the Venetian separated from his shoulders.

" Are you satisfied with this sacrifice?" said the State Inquisitor.

The Prince fainted in the arms of his conductors.

" Go," he continued, with a terrible voice, as he turned towards me, " and think in future more favourably of the administration of justice in Venice."

We

We could not learn who our unknown friend was, who had thus delivered us, by the arm of justice, from the diabolical plans of the assassin.

We reached our habitation terrified in the extreme. It was midnight. The chamberlain Z. . . waited for us upon the stairs with great impatience.

“ How lucky it was,” said he to the Prince, as he lighted us up stairs, “ that you sent the messenger as you did ; the intelligence from the Baron, which was brought to this house from the market-place, excited in us a dreadful anxiety for your safety.”

“ I sent a message !” said the Prince.
“ When ? I know nothing of it.”

“ This evening, after eight o'clock, a person arrived, and said, we must not be alarmed if you should not return until late at night.”

Here

Here the Prince said to me—

“ You, perhaps, without my knowledge, have taken this precaution.”

“ I know nothing of it.”

“ It must certainly be so, your Highness,” said the chamberlain, “ for here is your watch, which he left with me as a proof that he had been with you.”

The Prince felt his pocket immediately: the watch was actually gone; and, looking upon that which the chamberlain held in his hand, he acknowledged it to be his own.

“ Who brought it?” said he, with eagerness.

“ An unknown man in an Arminian habit, who immediately went away.”

We

We stood and looked at each other in silent horror.

“ What think you of this ? ” said the Prince at last ; after a long pause, “ It is now certain that I have in Venice a secret inspector . ”

The frightful transactions of this night threw the Prince into a fever, which confined him to his room for eight days. During this time our hotel was crowded with citizens and strangers, who had lately learnt the rank of the Prince. They strove to vie with each other in shewing civility to the Prince, and we saw with pleasure every night how fast suspicion was wearing away. Love letters and billets came from all quarters. Every person endeavoured to make himself useful. The whole proceedings of the State Inquisition were no longer thought of. In the mean time, the Court of . . . did not wish to hasten

hasten the departure of the Prince, and therefore gave instructions to a rich banker in Venice to furnish him with large sums of money. Thus he was put into a condition, contrary to his inclination, of remaining longer in Italy; and, agreeable to his wishes, I consented not to hasten my departure. As soon as he was so far recovered as to be able to leave his chamber, the physician ordered him to make an excursion upon the Brenta for the benefit of the air. The weather was fine, and we soon made an agreeable party. Just as we were about to step into the gondola, the Prince missed a key to a little box which contained some valuable papers. We returned immediately to look for it. He remembered perfectly to have locked the box the day before, and since that time he had not quitted the room. But all our efforts to discover it were fruitless; we therefore abandoned the search; and the Prince,

Prince, whose soul was above suspicion, gave it over as lost, but requested me not to take any notice of it. The voyage was delightfully enchanting; the landscape seemed to increase in beauty and variety at every turn of the river; added to this, a clear sky, which in the middle of February formed a May-day. The charming gardens that surrounded the elegant country houses which every where adorned the sides of the Brenta, together with the majestic Venice crowned with an hundred towers, as if rising from the water, offered us one of the most delightful prospects in the world. We lost ourselves entirely in the beautiful magic of the scenery around us. Our spirits were elated, and even the Prince assumed an air of gaiety, and joined with us in our frolicksome pleasantries. Sweet music occupied our attention, when we got to the shore about two Italian miles from the town. It proceeded from a small village

lage where they were holding a fair. Here every art was practised by the company. A troop of young maidens and children, dressed in a theatrical manner, welcomed us with a pantomimic dance. The invention was new : nimbleness and grace animated every motion. Before the dance was ended, one of them, who seemed to be the principal person, and who acted the part of the queen, suddenly stopped, as if restrained by an invisible power. She stood still, all followed her example, and the music ceased. An universal silence prevailed in the whole assembly, whilst she remained with her eyes fixed upon the ground as in a profound trance : then she became as if inspired, looked wild, and cried in a transport of joy—

“ A king is amongst us ! ”

She

She rose, took her crown from her head, and placed it at the feet of the Prince. All who were present directed their eyes towards the Prince, who was a long time uncertain what could be the meaning of this juggle, so well had she acted the monkey tricks of this farce in earnest. At length an universal clapping of hands interrupted this silence. I looked at the Prince, and perceived that he was not a little concerned and hurt to be examined by the enquiring eyes of the company. He distributed money to the children, and hastened from the crowd. We had not gone far, when a venerable monk came from the crowd, and placed himself in the path we were pursuing.

“Sir,” said the Monk, “bestow some of your money upon Madona; you will need her prayers.”

He spoke this in a tone which startled us—the crowd, however, soon separated him from us. Our suite was in the meantime increased. An English Lord, whom the Prince had seen before at Nizza, several merchants from Leghorn, a German prelate, a French abbé, with several ladies, and a Russian officer, attached themselves to our party. The physiognomy of this last, had something so remarkable about it, that it attracted our attention. Never in my life did I see so many traits, and so little character; so much inviting benevolence, and such forbidding coldness painted together in one man's countenance. Every passion seemed to have formerly dwelt there, and to have abandoned it. Nothing remained but the still piercing look of a perfect man of the world—every eye was fixed upon him wherever he went. This stranger followed at a distance, and seemed

seemed indifferent to whatever was going on. We arrived at the booth where a lottery was kept: the ladies bought tickets—we followed their example, and the Prince also purchased a share. He won a snuff box; and, when he opened it, I perceived him turn pale, and start back with the utmost surprize—the little key he had lost was in it.

“ What is this ? ” said he to me when we were alone, with a fixed countenance, “ an unknown power pursues me, an all-powerful being hovers over me; an invisible agency, which I cannot flee from, watches over all my actions. I must seek the Arminian, and obtain an explanation from him.”

The sun was setting as we arrived at the pleasure house where the supper was served up. The name of the

Prince had increased our party to the number of sixteen persons. Besides our former party, a virtuoso from Rome, several Swifs, and an adventurer from Palermo, who wore an uniform, and gave himself out for a captain, initiated themselves into our society. It was agreed to spend the whole evening here, and to return home by torch-light. The entertainment at the table was good, and the conversation very sprightly; the Prince could not refrain from relating the adventure of the key, which excited a general astonishment. A great dispute arose concerning this affair:—The major part of the company had the temerity to think all these cunning tricks depended upon witchcraft. The Abbé, who had already drank a sufficient quantity of wine, challenged the whole kingdom of ghosts into the ring. The Englishman swore the musician crossed himself for the assistance

stance of the Devil. A few, in the number of whom was the Prince, maintained that it was better not to give any decided opinions upon these subjects. During this conversation the Russian officer entertained himself with the ladies, and seemed to be perfectly inattentive to the conversation. In the height of this dispute, no one observed that the Sicilian had retired. A short time afterwards he returned, clothed in a mantle, and placed himself behind the chair of the Frenchman.

“ You have had the boldness,” said he, “ to challenge all the kingdom of ghosts.—Will you try one ?”

“ Yes !” said the Abbé, “ if you will undertake to bring one before me.”

“ That I will,” replied the Sicilian, turning himself about, “ when these ladies and gentlemen shall have left us.”

“ Why so !” exclaimed the Englishman, “ a jovial ghost will enjoy himself in such good company.”

“ I will not answer for the consequences,” said the Sicilian.

“ Oh, heavens !” cried the ladies, and fled, terrified, from their seats.

“ Let your ghost come,” said the Abbé, daringly, but warn him beforehand that he will find here sharp-pointed tools ;” at the same time endeavouring to borrow a sword.

“ You may do, in that respect, as you please,” said the Sicilian coolly, “ when you see it.”

Here

Here he turned himself towards the Prince.

“ Gracious Sir,” said he to him, “ you believe that your key was in strange hands—Can you guess in whose ?”

“ No.”

“ Do you suspect any body ?”

“ I had certainly a suspicion.”

“ Should you know the person if you were to see him ?”

“ Without doubt.”

Here the Sicilian put aside his mantle, and took from under it a looking-glass, which he held before the eyes of the Prince.

“ Is this the man ?”

The Prince started back with the utmost terror.

“ What have you seen ?” asked I.

“ The Arminian !”

The Sicilian put the glass under his mantle.

“ Was that the person you meant ?” enquired the whole company.

“ The very fame.”

Upon this every countenance was changed, no one was heard to laugh, and all eyes were fixed attentively upon the Sicilian.

“ Monsieur

“ Monsieur Abbé,” said the Englishman, “ this thing becomes serious: I advise you to think of your retreat.”

“ The fellow is in league with the Devil,” cried the Frenchman, and rushed out of the house. The ladies ran shrieking from the hall—the virtuoso followed them—the German prelate snored in his chair—the Russian remained sitting as if perfectly indifferent to what was passing.

“ You thought, perhaps, to have excited a great laugh,” said the Prince, “ against this boaster, if he had not gone out; or did you intend to have performed what you promised?”

“ It is true,” said the Sicilian, “ with the Abbé I was not in earnest; I took him at his word, because I knew that the coward would not suffer me to go so far as to put it in execution.”

“ The thing itself is of too serious a nature to make a joke of.”

“ You maintain, then, that you have it in your power to do what you asserted ?”

The magician was silent, and seemed to be studying the expressive countenance of the Prince.

“ Yes,” answered he, at length.

The curiosity of the Prince was already excited to the highest degree, for he had always believed in supernatural beings, and this act of the Arminian brought back to his mind all his former reflections on this subject, which reason had in some measure driven away. He went aside with the Sicilian, and I heard him conversing with him very earnestly.

“ You

" You have before you a man," continued he, " who burns with impatience for an explanation of this affair. I would esteem that man as my benefactor, as my best friend, who would, in this respect, remove my doubts, and dissipate the mist from my eyes.—Will you deserve this great service at my hands ?"

" What do you require of me ?" said the magician, with thoughtfulness.

" To give me immediately a proof of your art, let me see an apparition."

" Why should I do this ?"

" That you may judge, from a nearer acquaintance, whether I am worthy of higher instruction."

“ I esteem you above all others, mighty Prince. A secret power in your countenance, which you yourself are ignorant of, bound me at first sight irresistibly to you. You are more powerful than you are aware of. You have an undoubted right to command all my power, but—”

“ Then allow me to see an apparition.”

“ I must be first certain that you do not make this request out of curiosity ; for, although the supernatural powers are subjected to my will in some respect, it is under the sacred condition that I do not abuse my authority.”

“ My motives are the purest. I wish for an explanation of facts.”

Here

Here they left their places, and approached to a distant window, where I could not hear what was said. The Englishman, who had also heard this conversation, took me aside.

“Your prince has a noble mind,” said he, “but I pity him, for I will bet my life he has to deal with a sharper.”

“That will be proved,” said I, “when he comes to investigate this matter.”

“Let me tell you,” said the Englishman, “that the Devil makes himself very dear. He will not practise his art without touching the cash. There are nine of us. We will make a collection. This will break the neck of his scheme, and perhaps open the eyes of the Prince.”

“I am

“ I am content.”

The Englishman immediately threw six guineas into a plate, and gathered in the ring. Each gave several louis. The Russian especially was highly pleased at our proposal: he put a bank note of a hundred sequins into the plate—a piece of extravagance which startled the Englishman. We brought the collection to the Prince.

“ Have the goodness,” said the Englishman, “ to entreat, in our names, that gentleman to let us see a proof of his art, and persuade him to accept this small token of our acknowledgments for his trouble.”

The Prince also put a costly ring into the plate, and presented it to the Sicilian. He considered of our proposal

“ Gentle-

“ Gentlemen,” he began, “ this unexpected generosity is highly flattering. I obey your wishes. Your desires shall be fulfilled.”

In the meantime he rang the bell.

“ With respect to this money,” he continued, “ to which I have no right, if you will give me leave, I will present it to the nearest monastery, as a gratuity towards so benevolent an institution. This ring I shall always keep, as a valuable proof of the goodness of the best of princes.”

Here the master of the house entered, to whom he immediately delivered the money.

“ He is still a swindler,” said the Englishman, “ although he refuses the gold. It is done that he may get more into the Prince’s favour.”

Another

Another said, " the landlord is in league with him."

" What would you wish to see?" said the Sicilian to the Prince."

" Let us have a great man," said the Lord: " Challenge the Pope Ganginelli; it will be the fame to this gentleman."

The Sicilian bit his lips.

" I dare not call for one who has received extreme unction."

" That is bad," said the Englishman. " Perhaps we should learn from him of what disorder he died."

" The Marquis of *Lanoy*," said the Prince, " was a French brigadier in a former war, and my most intimate friend.

friend. In a battle near Hastinbeck he received a deadly wound. They took him to my tent, where he soon after died in my arms. Before he expired—"Prince," said he, "I shall never again behold my native country; I will therefore entrust you with a secret, which is known to no one but myself. In a cloister upon the borders of Flanders, there lives a——" At that instant he expired. Death destroyed the thread of his discourse. I could wish to have him brought before me, and to hear the conclusion of his tale."

"Well requested, by God," said the Englishman, "I shall esteem you as the greatest conjurer in the world, if you comply with this request."

We admired the wise choice of the Prince, and unanimously gave our consent to the proposition. In the mean
time

time the magician walked up and down the room, with hasty steps, and seemed to be holding a conference with himself.

“ And was that all which the deceased communicated to you ? ”

“ All.”

“ Did you make any further enquiries, on account of what you heard, in his native country ? ”

“ It was in vain.”

“ Did the Marquis of Lancy live irreproachably ? for I dare not call any one I please from the dead.”

“ He died with penitence for the sins of his youth.”

“ Have

“ Have you about you any token of his ?”

“ Yes.”

The Prince had actually a snuff-box, on the lid of which a miniature picture of the Marquis was painted in enamel, which he usually laid near him upon the table.

“ I do not desire to know what it is. Leave me alone : you shall see the deceased.”

We were desired to go into another apartment, and wait until he called for us. At the same time he ordered all the moveables to be taken from the hall, the windows to be taken out, and the window shutters to be put close to. He also ordered the landlord, with whom he had already been conniving,
to

to bring in a vessel filled with hot coals, and to put out all the fires in the house carefully with water. Before we returned, he made us all promise that we would observe a profound silence during the whole of what we should see or hear. All the doors of the rooms behind us leading to this apartment were fastened. The clock had struck eleven. A deadly silence prevailed through the whole house. Before we went out, the Russian said to me—

“ Have we any loaded pistols with us?”

“ Why?” said I.

“ It is at all events convenient,” answered he. “ Wait a minute, and I will go and see after some.”

He went out, and the Baron and myself opened a window which looked towards

towards another room, and we thought we heard people talking together, and a noise as if they were placing a ladder under it; but as that might only be a conjecture, I dared not give it out as certain. The Russian returned with a brace of pistols, after being absent about half an hour. We saw him load them. It was now near two o'clock when the magician appeared again, and announced that he was prepared. Before we returned, he ordered us to pull off our shoes, and to appear in our shirts, stockings, and under garments. The doors as before were all fastened. We found, when we returned into the hall, a large circle made with coals, in which we could all stand very conveniently. Round about the room, and by the four walls, the boards were taken away, so that we seemed to stand as if we were upon an island. An altar, hung with black cloth, was erected in the middle

middle of the circle, under which was spread a carpet of red silk ; a Chaldean Bible laid open near a death's head upon the altar, and a silver crucifix was fastened in the centre. Instead of candles, spirits were burning in a silver vessel. A thick smoke of olive wood darkened the hall, which almost extinguished the lights. The conjurer was clothed as we were, but bare-footed. On his bare neck he wore an amulet * suspended by a chain of human hair. Upon his loins he wore a white mantle, which was decorated with magical characters and mysterious figures. He made us join hands, and maintain a deep silence. Above all, he recom-

* Amulet was the name of a charm made of wood or other materials, and on which was engraved particular words and characters, and wore about the neck, to subvert the machinations of the Devil and his agents. They were held in high esteem by the Arabs, Turks, and Jews, and particularly amongst the Catholics.

mended

mended us not to ask the apparition any questions. He requested the Englishman and myself (for he seemed to entertain the greatest suspicion of us) to hold two drawn swords, steadily and cross ways, an inch above his head, as long as the ceremony should last. We stood in a half circle around him. The Russian officer pressed near to the Englishman, and stood next to the altar. The magician placed himself upon the carpet, with his face towards the east, sprinkled holy water to the four corners of the world, and bowed thrice before the Bible. A quarter of an hour passed in ceremonious acts, perfectly unintelligible to us; at the end of which, he gave those a sign who stood behind him to hold him fast by the hair. Struggling apparently with dreadful convulsions, he called the deceased by name three times; at the last, he stretched out his hand towards the crucifix.

cifix. We instantly experienced a violent shock, which separated our hands. A sudden clap of thunder shook the house to its foundation; at the same time the window shutters rattled, and all the doors were burst open. The apparatus fell in pieces, and as soon as the light was extinguished, we observed distinctly on the wall over the chimney-piece the figure of a man clothed in a bloody garment, with a pale and livid aspect.

“ Who called me ? ” cried a faint hollow voice.

“ Thy friend,” said the conjurer, “ who venerates thy memory, and prays for thy soul.”

At the same time he mentioned the name of the Prince.

“ What does he want ? ” continued the ghost, after a very long pause.

“ He

“ He wishes to hear your confession to the end, which you began in this world but did not finish.”

“ In a cloister upon the borders of Flanders there lives—”

Here the house shook again, the door opened of its own accord, and a violent clap of thunder was heard, as a flash of lightning illuminated the room. Immediately another form, bloody and pale like the other, appeared at the threshold. The spirits in the vase began to burn again, and the hall was as it first appeared.

“ Who is among us ?” cried the magician, looking with horror and astonishment at the spectators. “ I did not much wish for thee.”

The ghost immediately walked with a slow and majestic step to the altar, and stood upon the carpet opposite to us. It seized the crucifix, and the first apparition instantly vanished.

“ Who is it that has called me ? ” said the second apparition.

The magician began to tremble. Fear and astonishment almost overpowered us. I now seized a pistol—the magician wrested it from my hand, and fired at the ghost. The ball rolled along the altar, and the figure remained amidst the smoke unhurt. The magician immediately sunk down in a fit.

“ What have we here ? ” exclaimed the Englishman with astonishment, as he endeavoured to strike the ghost with his sword. The apparition arrested his arm, and the sword fell to the ground.

Here

Here the sweat of anguish started from my forehead, and the Baron confessed to us afterwards that he employed himself in praying. All this time the Prince stood fearless and unmoved, with his eyes rivetted upon the figure.

“ Yes !” said he at last pathetically, “ I know thee : thou art Lanoy—thou art my friend. From whence dost thou come ?”

“ I cannot divulge the mysteries of eternity.—Ask me any question that relates to my existence on earth.”

“ Who lives in the cloister,” said the Prince, “ of which you gave me notice at the hour of your death ?”

“ My daughter.”

“ How ! Have you ever been a father ? ”

“ I would that I had not been.”

“ Are you not happy, Laney ? ”

“ God is my judge.”

“ Can I not render you any service in this world ? ”

“ None ; but think of yourself.”

“ How must I do that ? ”

“ You will learn it at Rome.”

Immediately a clap of thunder was heard—a thick smoke filled the room; and when it cleared up, the figure had vanished. I pushed open a window-shutter—it was day-light.

The conjurer soon recovered his senses.

“Where are we?” he cried, when he saw the day-light.

The Russian officer stood close behind him ; and looking over his shoulder,

“Juggler,” he said, with a piercing frown, “this is the last time thou wilt ever have it in thy power to summon another ghost to appear on earth.”

The Sicilian turned hastily round ; and, looking steadfastly in his face, uttered a loud shriek, and fell senseless on the ground. Immediately the pretended Russian was discovered by the Prince to be no other person than his mysterious friend the Arminian.

No language can paint the horror this circumstance occasioned in the mind of the Prince, and the consternation that generally pervaded the company. We stood motionless as we surveyed this awful being, who penetrated us to the soul with his looks. A dead silence reigned for some minutes: at length several loud knocks at the door roused us from a state of stupefaction. The noise continued, and the door was soon after shattered in pieces, when several police officers, with a guard, rushed into the hall.

“ Here we find them all together,” cried the commander, turning to his followers. “ In the name of the government,” (addressing himself to us) cried he, “ I arrest you all.”

We had scarcely time to recollect ourselves, ere we were all surrounded
by

by the guard. The Russian, whom I shall now call the Arminian, took the commander aside ; and notwithstanding the confusion we were in, I observed that he whispered something in his ear, and shewed him a paper, at the sight of which the man bowed respectfully and retired—as he passed us he took off his hat.

“ Forgive me, gentlemen,” said he, “ for having confounded you with this impostor. I will not ask who you are, this person assures me that I have men of honour before me.”

In the meantime he gave his people a hint to withdraw from us. He commanded them, however, to seize the Sicilian, and to bind him.

“ This fellow has reigned long enough,” added he, “ we have been

upon the watch for him these seven months."

This miserable wretch was indeed an object of pity. The sudden fright which the second apparition occasioned, and the unexpected reproach from the Arminian, had overpowered his senses. He suffered himself to be bound without the least opposition. His eyes rolled in his head, and a death-like paleness spread itself over his countenance; as at intervals he heaved convulsive sighs. Every moment we expected that he would become frantic. The Prince pitied his distress, and undertook to solicit his discharge from the leader of the police, to whom he discovered his rank.

"Gracious Prince," said the officer, "do you know who this man is? and for whom you so generously intercede?"

The

The tricks which he practised to deceive you are the least of his crimes. We have already secured his accomplices, and they have discovered transactions which he has been concerned in of the most horrid nature. He may think himself well off if he escapes with banishment to the galleys."

In the meantime we observed the landlord and his family fettered and led through the yard.

"Is that man guilty?" cried the Prince. "What has he done?"

"He was his accomplice," said the officer, "and assisted him in his mountebank tricks and robberies, and shared the spoil with him. I will convince you immediately, gracious Sir, of the truth of my assertion" (turning towards his followers). "Search the house," he

D 5

cried,

cried, "and bring me immediately intelligence as to what you discover."

The Prince looked for the Arminian, but he was gone. In the confusion which this unexpected circumstance occasioned, he found means to steal off without being observed. The Prince was inconsolable: he determined to send servants after him, and also search for him himself; and, hurrying with me to the window, we observed the whole house surrounded by the populace, whom the account of this event had drawn to the spot.

"It is impossible to make our way through the crowd," said I; "and if it is the intention of the Arminian to elude our search, he certainly knows the means to do it effectually: let us rather stay here a little longer, gracious Sir. Perhaps this officer of the police can

can give us some information respecting him, to whom he has, if I have rightly observed, discovered himself."

We recollected that we were still in an undress, and promising to return soon, we hastened into a room to put on our clothes as quick as possible. When we came back, the searching of the house was finished. After they had removed the altar, and forced up the boards of the floor, they discovered a vault where a man was able to fit upright, which was separated by a secret door from a narrow stair-case that led to a gloomy cave. In this abyss they found an electrical machine, a clock, and a small silver bell; which last, as well as the electrical machine, had a communication with the altar and the crucifix that was fixed upon it. A hole had been made in the window-shutter opposite the chimney, which opened

opened and shut with a slide. In this hole, as we learnt afterwards, was fixed a magic lanthorn, from which the figure of the ghost had been reflected on the opposite wall over the chimney. From the garret and the cave they brought several drums, to which large leaden bullets were fastened by strings: these had probably been used to imitate the roaring of thunder which we had heard. In searching the Sicilian's clothes, they found in a case, different powders, genuine mercury in vials and boxes, phosphorus in a glass bottle, and a ring, which we immediately knew to be magnetic, because it adhered to a steel button that had been placed near to it by accident. In his coat pockets was a rosary, a jew's beard, a dagger, and a pocket pistol.

“ Let us see if it is loaded,” said one of the watch, and fired up the chimney.

“ Jesus

“Jefus Maria!” cried a voice, which we knew to be the fame as that we had heard when the firft fpirit appeared, and at the fame infant we beheld a bleeding perfon tumbling down the chimney.

“What! not yet at reft, poor ghofth?” cried the Englifhman, whilft we started back affrighted. “Go to thy grave. Thou haft appeared what thou wafth not, and now thou wilt be what thou haft appeared.”

“Jefus Maria! I am wounded!” replied the man.

The ball had fractured his right leg. Care was immediately taken to have the wound drefsed.

“But who art thou?” faid the Englifh lord, “and what evil fpirit brought thee here?”

“I am

“ I am a poor solitary monk,” answered the wounded man. “ A strange gentleman offered me a zechin to—

“ Repeat your magical lesson.—And why didst thou not withdraw immediately you had finished ?”

“ I was waiting for a signal to continue my speech, as had been agreed on between us ; but as this signal was not given, I was endeavouring to get off, when I found the ladder had been removed.”

“ And what was the formula he taught thee ?”

The wounded man fainted: nothing more could be got from him: When we observed his features more minutely, we discovered him to be the same man that stood in the path-way of the Prince
the

the evening before, and asked alms for the Madona. The Prince addressed the leader of the watch, giving him at the same time some pieces of gold.

“ You have rescued us,” said he, “ from the hands of a deceiver, and done us justice even without knowing us—increase our gratitude by telling us who the stranger was, that, by speaking only a few words, procured us our liberty ?”

“ Whom do you mean ?” asked the officer, with a countenance which seemed to indicate that the question was useless.

“ The gentleman in a Russian uniform, who took you aside, shewed you a written paper, and whispered in your ear, in consequence of which you immediately set us free.”

“ Do

“ Do not you know the gentleman?” said the officer. “ Was he not one of your company?”

“ No,” said the Prince; “ and I have very important reasons for wishing to be acquainted with him.”

“ He is a perfect stranger to me too,” replied the officer; “ even his name is unknown to me. I saw him to-day for the first time in my life.”

“ How! And was he able in so short a space of time, and by using only a few words, to convince you that we were all innocent?”

“ Undoubtedly, Sire, with a single word.”

“ And this was?—I confess I wish to know it.”

“ This

“ This stranger, my Prince,” (weighing the zechins in his hand)—“ You have been too generous for me to make it any longer a mystery—This stranger is an officer of the Inquisition.”

“ Of the Inquisition!—What! that man?”

“ Nothing else, my Prince. I was convinced of it by the paper which he shewed to me.”

“ That man did you say? It cannot be.”

“ I will tell you more, my Prince; it was upon his information that I have been sent here to arrest the conjurer.”

We looked at each other with the utmost astonishment.

“ Now

“ Now we know,” said the English Lord, “ why the poor devil of a forcerer started when he came near his face. He knew him to be a spy, and for that reason he made such a horrible outcry and threw himself at his feet.”

“ No!” interrupted the Prince. “ This man is whatever he wishes to be, and whatever the moment requires him to be. No mortal ever knew what he really was. Did not you see the knees of the Sicilian sink under him, when he said, with a terrible voice: “ Thou shalt no more call a ghost.” There is something mysterious in this matter. No person can persuade me that one man should be thus alarmed at the sight of another, without some most essential reason.”

“ The Conjuror will probably explain it the best,” said the English Lord,
“ if

“ if that gentleman (pointing to the officer) will procure us an opportunity of speaking to his prisoner.

The officer consented to it, and after having agreed with the Englishman to visit the Sicilian in the morning, we returned to Venice *.

Lord Seymour (this was the name of the Englishman) called upon us very early in the forenoon, and was soon after followed by a person whom the officer

* Count O., whose narrative I have thus far literally copied, describes minutely the various effects of this adventure upon the mind of the Prince, and of his companions, and recounts a variety of tales of apparitions, which this event gave occasion to introduce. I shall omit giving them to the reader, on the supposition that he is as curious as myself to know the conclusion of the adventure, and its effects on the conduct of the Prince. I shall only add, that the Prince got no sleep the remainder of the night, and that he waited with impatience for the moment which was to disclose this incomprehensible mystery.

had

had intrusted with the care of conducting us to the prison. I forgot to mention that one of the Prince's domestics, a native of Bremen, and who had served him many years with the strictest fidelity, and who possessed his confidence, had been missing for several days. Whether he had met with any accident; been kidnapped, or had voluntarily absented himself, was a secret to every one. The last supposition was extremely improbable, as his conduct had always been regular and irreproachable. All that his companions could recollect, was, that he had been for sometime very melancholy, and that, whenever he had a moment's leisure, he used to visit a certain monastery in the *Giudecca*, where he had formed an acquaintance with some monks. This led us to suppose that he might have fallen into the hands of the priests, and had been persuaded to turn Catholic. The Prince was

was indifferent about matters of this kind, and the few enquiries he caused to be made proving unsuccessful, he gave up the search. He, however, regretted the loss of this man, who had so constantly attended him in his campaigns, had always been faithfully attached to him, and whom it was therefore difficult to replace in a foreign country. The very same day the Prince's banker, whom he had commissioned to provide him with another servant, came at the moment we were going out; he presented to the Prince a well-dressed man, of a good appearance, about forty years of age, who had been for a long time secretary to a procurator; spoke French and a little German, and was besides furnished with the best recommendations. The Prince was pleased with the man's physiognomy; and as he declared that he would be satisfied with such wages as
his

his service should be found to merit, the Prince engaged him immediately. We found the Sicilian in a private prison, where, as the keeper assured us, he had been lodged for the present, to accommodate the Prince, as he was to be confined in future under the lead roofs, to which there is no access. These lead roofs are the most terrible dungeons in Venice. They are situated on the top of the Palace of St. Mark, and the miserable criminals suffer so excessively from the heat of the leads, occasioned by the burning rays of the sun descending directly upon them, that they frequently become distracted. The Sicilian had recovered from his terror, and rose respectfully at the sight of the Prince. He had fetters on one hand and one leg, but he was able to walk about the room. The keeper left the dungeon as soon as we had entered.

“ I come,”

“ I come,” said the Prince, “ to request an explanation of you on two subjects.—You owe me the one, and it shall not be to your disadvantage if you grant me the other.”

“ My part is now acted,” replied the Sicilian. “ My destiny is in your hands.”

“ Your sincerity alone can mitigate your punishment.”

“ Ask, my Prince, I am ready to answer you. I have nothing more to lose.”

“ You shewed me the face of the Arminian in your looking-glass.—How was it done?”

“ What you saw was no looking-glass—a portrait in pastel behind a glass, representing a man in an Arminian dress, deceived you. The want of light, your
astonish-

astonishment, and my own dexterity, favoured the deception. The picture itself must have been found among the other things seized at the inn."

" But how came you so well acquainted with my ideas as to hit upon the Arminian?"

" This was not difficult, my Prince. You have perhaps frequently mentioned your adventure with the Arminian at table, in presence of your domestics. One of my servants got accidentally acquainted with one of yours in the Giudecca, and soon learned from him as much as I wished to know."

" Where is this man?" asked the Prince; " I miss him, and in all probability you are acquainted with the place of his retreat, and the reason why he deserted my service."

" I swear

“ I swear to you, gracious Sir, that I know not the least of him. I have never seen him myself, nor had any other concern with him than the one before-mentioned.”

“ Go on,” said the Prince.

“ By this means also, I received the first information of your residence, and of your adventures at Venice ; and I resolved immediately to profit by them. Your Highness sees that I am ingenuous. I was apprized of your intended excursion on the Brenta—I was prepared for it : and a key, that dropped by chance from your pocket, afforded me the first opportunity of trying my art upon you.”

“ How ! Have I been mistaken ? The adventure of the key then was a trick of yours, and not of the Armenian ?

nian?—You say this key fell from my pocket?”

“ You accidentally dropped it in taking out your purse, and I instantly covered it with my foot. The person of whom you bought the lottery-ticket was in concert with me. He caused you to draw it from a box where there was no blank, and the key had been in the snuff-box long before it came into your possession.”

“ It is almost incomprehensible— And the monk who stopped me in my way, and addressed me in a manner so solemn—”

“ Was the same that I hear has been wounded in the chimney. He is one of my accomplices, and under that disguise has rendered me many important services.”

“ But

“ But what purpose was this intended to answer ? ”

“ To render you thoughtful : to inspire you with such a train of ideas as should be favourable to the wonders I intended to make you believe.”

“ The pantomimical dance, which ended in a manner so extraordinary, was at least none of your contrivance.”

“ I had taught the girl who represented the queen. Her performance was the result of my instructions. I supposed your Highness would not be a little astonished to find yourself known in this place, and (I entreat your Highness's pardon) your adventure with the Armenian gave room for me to hope that you were already disposed to reject natural interpretations, and to search for the marvellous.”

“ Indeed !” exclaimed the Prince, at once angry and amazed, and casting upon me a significant look—“ Indeed, I did not expect this*. But,” continued he, after a long silence, “ how did you produce the figure that appeared on the wall over the chimney ?”

“ By means of a magic lantern that was fixed in the opposite window-shut-

* Nor in all probability did my readers. The circumstance of the crown deposited at the feet of the Prince, in a manner so unexpected and extraordinary, and the former prediction of the Armenian, seemed so naturally and so obviously to aim at the same object; that at the first reading of these memoirs, I immediately remembered the deceitful speech of the Witches in the play of Macbeth :

“ All hail, Macbeth ! hail to thee, Thane of Glamis !

“ All hail, Macbeth ! that shalt be king hereafter !”

When a particular idea has once entered the mind, it necessarily connects with itself every subsequent idea that seems to have the least affinity to it.

ter,

ter, in which you have, no doubt, observed an opening.”

“And how did it happen that none of us perceived the lantern?” asked Lord Seymour.

“You remember, my Lord, that on your re-entering the room, it was darkened by a thick smoke of olive wood. I used likewise the precaution to place upright against the wall near the window, the boards which had been taken up from the floor. By these means I prevented the shutter from coming immediately under your sight. Moreover, the lantern remained covered until you had taken your places, and until there was no further reason to apprehend any examination from the persons in the hall.”

“As I looked out of the window in the other pavilion,” said I, “I heard
E 3 a noise:

a noise like that of a person who was in the act of placing a ladder against the side of the house. Was it really so?"

" Yes, my assistant stood upon this ladder to direct the magic-lantern."

" The apparition," continued the Prince, " had really a superficial likeness to my deceased friend ;" and what was particularly striking, his hair, which was of a very light colour, was exactly imitated. Was this mere chance, or how did you come by such a resemblance?"

" Your Highness must recollect, that you had at table a snuff-box laid by your plate, with an enamelled portrait of an officer in a French uniform. I asked whether you had any thing about you as a memorial of your friend. Your Highness answered in the affirmative. I conjectured it might be the box. I had atten-

attentively considered the picture during supper, and being very expert in drawing, and not less happy in taking likenesses, I had no difficulty in giving to my shade the superficial resemblance you have perceived, because the Marquis's features are very striking."

" But the figure seemed to move ?"

" It appeared so, yet it was not the figure, but the smoke which received its light."

" And the man who fell down in the chimney spoke for the apparition ?"

" He did."

" But he could not hear your questions distinctly."

" There was no occasion for it. Your Highness will recollect, that I ordered you

all very strictly not to propose any question yourselves to the apparition. My enquiries and his answers were pre-concerted between us; and that no mistake might happen, I caused him to speak at long intervals, which he counted by the beating of a watch."

"You ordered the innkeeper carefully to extinguish every fire in the house. This was, undoubtedly—"

"To save the man from the danger of being smothered; because the chimnies in the house communicate with each other, and I did not think myself very secure from your retinue."

"How did it happen," asked Lord Seymour, "that your ghost appeared neither sooner nor later than you wished him?"

"The

“ The ghost was in the room for some time before I called him; but while the room was lighted, the shade was too faint to be perceived. When the formula of the conjuration was finished, I caused the cover of the box, in which the spirit was burning, to drop down; the hall was darkened, and it was not till then that the figure on the wall could be distinctly seen, although it had been reflected there a considerable time before.”

“ When the ghost appeared, we all felt an electrical stroke. How was that managed?”

“ You have discovered the machine under the altar. You have also seen, that I was standing upon a silk carpet. I ordered you to form a half moon around me, and to take hold of each other's hand. When the crisis approached,

proached, I gave a sign to one of you to seize me by the hair. The silver crucifix was the conductor, and you felt the electrical shock when I touched it with my hand."

"You ordered Count O and myself," continued Lord Seymour, "to hold two naked swords across over your head, during the whole time of the conjuration; for what purpose?"

"For no other than to engage your attention during the operation; because I distrusted you two the most. You remember, that I expressly commanded you to hold the swords one inch above my head; by confining you exactly to this distance, I prevented you from looking where I did not wish you. I had not then perceived my principal enemy."

"I own,"

“ I own,” said Lord Seymour, “ you acted cautiously ; but why were we obliged to appear undressed ? ”

“ Merely to give a greater solemnity to the scene, and to fill your imaginations with the idea of something extraordinary.”

“ The second apparition prevented your ghost from speaking,” said the Prince ; “ what should we have learnt from him ? ”

“ Nearly the same as what you heard afterwards. It was not without design that I asked your Highness whether you had told me every thing that the deceased communicated to you, and whether you had made any further enquiries on this subject in his country ? I thought this was necessary, in order to prevent the deposition of the ghost

from being contradicted by facts that you were previously acquainted with. Knowing likewise that every man, especially in his youth, is liable to error, I enquired whether the life of your friend had been irreproachable, and on your answer I founded that of the ghost."

" Your explanation of this matter is in some measure satisfactory; but there remains yet one material circumstance which I must insist upon being cleared up."

" If it be in my power, and—"

" I shall not listen to any conditions. Justice, into whose hands you are fallen, ought not, perhaps, to deal with you so delicately. Who was the man at whose feet we saw you fall? What do you know of him? How did you get acquainted with him? and what do you know of the second apparition?"

" Your

“ Your Highness. . . . ”

“ Hesitate not a moment. Recollect, that on looking at the Russian officer attentively, you screamed aloud, and fell on your knees before him. What are we to understand by that ? ”

“ That man, my Prince. . . . ” He stopped, grew visibly pale and perplexed, and, looking around him with an awful trepidation—“ Yes, your Highness,” he continued, “ that man is a terrible being.”

“ What do you know of him ? What connection have you with him ? Do not conceal the truth from us.”

“ I will not ; but—I am not certain that he is not among us at this very moment ? ”

“ Where ? ”

“ Where? Who!” exclaimed we all together, looking fearfully about the room. “ It is impossible.”

“ That man, or whatever else he may be, is, a being incomprehensible; all things seem possible for him to do.”

“ Who is he? Whence does he come? Is he Armenian or Russian? Of the characters he assumes, which is his real one.”

“ He is not what he appears to be. There are few conditions or countries in which he has not worn the mask. No person knows who he is, whence he comes, or whither he goes. Some say he has been for a long time in Egypt, and that he has brought from thence, out of a catacomb, his occult sciences. Here we only know him by the name
of

of the Incomprehensible. How old, for instance, do you think he is?"

"To judge from his appearance, he can scarcely have passed forty."

"And of what age do you suppose I am?"

"Not far from fifty."

"Well, and I must tell you, that I was but a boy of seventeen, when my grandfather spoke to me of this extraordinary man, whom he had seen at Famagusta; at which time he appeared nearly of the same age as he does at present."

"Impossible," said the Prince; "it is ridiculous, and incredible."

"By no means, Sir. Were I not prevented by these fetters, I could produce

duce vouchers that would readily confirm my assertion. There are several credible persons who remember having seen him, each at the same time, in different parts of the globe. No sword can wound—no poison hurt—no fire burn him—no vessel in which he embarks can be shipwrecked or sunk : time itself seems to have no influence over him ; years do not affect his constitution, nor age whiten his hair. He was never seen to take any food. Never did he approach a woman. No sleep closes his eyes. Of the twenty-four hours in the day, there is only one which he cannot command, during which no person ever saw him, and during which he never was employed in any terrestrial occupation.”

“ And this hour is—”

“ That of midnight. When the clock strikes twelve, he ceases to belong to the
the

the living. In whatever place he is, he must immediately be gone; whatever business he is engaged in, he must instantly leave it. That dreadful hour tears him from the arms of friendship, hurries him from the sacred altar, and would, even in the agonies of death, drag him from his bed. His haunt has never been discovered, nor his engagements at that hour known. No person ventures to interrogate, and still less to follow him. As the hour approaches, his features are enveloped in the gloom of melancholy, and so terrifying that no person has courage to look him in the face or to speak a word to him. However lively the conversation may have been, a dead silence immediately succeeds it, and all around him wait for his return in awful horror, without venturing to quit their seats, or to open the door through which he has passed."

" Does

“ Does nothing extraordinary appear in his person when he returns ?”

“ Nothing, except that he seems pale and languid, nearly in the state of a man who has just suffered a painful operation, or received disastrous intelligence. Some pretend to have seen drops of blood on his linen, but with what degree of veracity I cannot affirm.”

“ Did no person ever attempt to conceal the approach of this hour from him, or endeavour to engage him in such diversions as might make him forget it ?”

“ Once only, it is said, he passed the fatal hour. The company was numerous, and remained together until late at night. All the clocks and watches were purposely set wrong, and the warmth of conversation diverted

verted his attention. When the moment arrived, he suddenly became silent and motionless; his limbs continued in the position in which this instant had arrested them; his eyes were fixed, his pulse ceased to beat; all the means employed to awake him proved fruitless, and this situation endured till the hour had elapsed; he then revived on a sudden, and continued his speech from the same syllable that he was pronouncing at the moment of interruption. The general consternation discovered to him what had happened; and he declared, with an awful solemnity, that they ought to think themselves happy in having escaped with no other injury than fear. The same night he quitted for ever the place where this circumstance had occurred. The common opinion is, that during this mysterious hour he converses with his attendant spirits. Some even suppose him to be one of the departed, who

who is allowed to pass twenty-three hours of the day among the living, and that in the twenty-fourth his soul is obliged to return to the infernal regions to suffer its punishment. Some believe him to be the famous Apollonius of Tyana*, and others the disciple of St. John the Baptist, of whom
it

* Apollonius, a Pythagorean philosopher, was born at Tyana, in Capadocia, about three or four years before the birth of Christ. At sixteen years of age he became a strict observer of Pythagorean rules, renouncing wine, women, and all sorts of flesh; not wearing shoes, letting his hair grow, and clothing himself with nothing but linen. He soon after set up for a reformer of mankind, and chose his habitation in the temple of Esculapius, where he is said to have performed many miraculous cures. On his coming of age, he gave part of his wealth to his eldest brother, distributed another part to some poor relations, and kept very little for himself. There are numberless fabulous stories recounted of him. He went five years without speaking, and yet, during this time, he stopped many seditions in Sicilia and Pamphylia. He travelled, set up for a legislator, and gave out that he understood all languages.

it is said that he shall remain wandering on the earth until the day of judgment."

"A character so wonderful," replied the Prince, "cannot fail to give rise to extraordinary conjectures. But all this you profess to know only by hearsay; and yet this behaviour to you, and yours to him, seemed to indicate a more intimate acquaintance. Is it not founded

languages without having ever learned them. He could tell the thoughts of men, and understood the oracles which birds delivered by their singing. The Heathens opposed the pretended miracles of this man to those of our Saviour, and gave the preference to this philosopher. After having for a long time imposed upon the world, and gained a great number of disciples, he died in a very advanced age about the end of the first century. His life, which is filled with absurdities, was written by Philostratus, and M. du Pin has published a confutation of Apollonius's life, in which he proves, that the miracles of this pretended philosopher carry strong marks of falsehood, and that there is not one which may not be ascribed to chance or artifice. Apollonius himself wrote some works, which are now lost.

upon

upon some particular event, in which yourself have been concerned? Conceal nothing from us."

The Sicilian remained silent, as if uncertain whether he should speak or not.

"If it concern any thing," said the Prince, "that you do not wish to publish, I promise you by my honour, and before these gentlemen, the most inviolable secrecy; but speak openly, and without reserve."

"Could I hope," answered the prisoner at last, "that you would not produce these gentlemen as evidence against me, I would tell you a remarkable adventure of this Armenian, to which I myself was witness, and which will leave you no doubt of his supernatural powers. But I beg leave to conceal some names."

"Cannot

“ Cannot you do it without this condition ?”

“ No, your Highness: there is a family concerned in it which I must respect.”

“ Let us hear then ?”

“ Above five years ago, being at Naples, where I practised my art with success, I became acquainted with a person of the name of Lorenzo del M. . . . chevalier of the order of St. Stephen, a young and rich nobleman of one of the first families in the kingdom, who loaded me with civilities, and seemed to have a great esteem for my occult science. He told me, that the Marquis del M. . . . his father, was a zealous admirer of the cabbala*,
and

* Cabbala is properly a mysterious kind of science delivered by revelation to the ancient Jews, and transmitted by oral tradition to those of our times;
serving

and would think himself happy in having a philosopher like me (for such he was pleased to call me) under his roof. The Marquis resided in one of his country seats on the sea shore, about seven miles from Naples; and there, almost entirely secluded from the world, he mourned the loss of a beloved son, of whom he had been deprived by a fatal and melancholy accident. The

servicing for the interpretation of difficult passages in scripture, and to discover future events by the combination of particular words, letters, and numbers. It is likewise termed the oral law. But Cabbala, among the Christians, is also applied to the use, or rather abuse, which visionaries and enthusiasts make of scripture for discovering futurity, by the study and consideration of the combination of certain words, letters, and numbers in the sacred writings. All the words, terms, magic characters, or figures, with stones and talismans, numbers, letters, charms, &c. in magic operations, are comprised under this species of Cabbala, and the word is used for any kind of magic, on account of the resemblance this art bears to the Jewish Cabbala. The Jews, however, never use the word in any such sense, but always with the utmost respect and veneration.

Chevalier

Chevalier gave me to understand, that he and his family might perhaps have occasion to employ my secret arts in obtaining some very important intelligence, to procure which every natural means had been exhausted in vain. He added, with a very significant look, that he himself might perhaps at some future period consider me as the author of all his earthly happiness. I did not choose to press him for an explanation. The affair was as follows: "Lorenzo, being the youngest son of the Marquis, had been destined for the church. The family estates were to devolve to the eldest. Jeronymo, which was the name of the latter, had spent many years on his travels, and returned to his country about seven years prior to the event which I am about to relate, in order to celebrate his marriage with the only daughter of a neighbouring count. This marriage had been determined on by the

parents during the infancy of the children, in order to unite the very large fortunes of the two houses. But though this agreement was made by the two families without consulting the hearts of the parties concerned, the latter had secretly entertained an affection for each other. Jeronymo del M. . . and Antonia C. . . had been always brought up together, and the little constraint imposed on two children, whom their parents were already accustomed to regard as united, soon produced between them a connection of the tenderest kind. The congeniality of their tempers cemented this intimacy, and in riper years it matured insensibly into love. An absence of four years, far from cooling this passion, had only served to inflame it, and Jeronymo returned to the arms of his intended bride as faithful and as ardent as if they had never been separated. The raptures occasioned by his
return

return had not subsided, nor the preparations for the happy day discontinued, when Jeronymo disappeared. He used frequently to pass the afternoon in a summer-house which commanded a prospect of the sea, and was accustomed to take the diversion of sailing on the water. One day, when he was at his favourite retirement, it was observed that he remained a much longer time than usual without returning, and his friends began to be very uneasy on his account. Boats were dispatched after him, vessels were sent to sea in quest of him—no person had seen him—none of his servants could have attended him, for none of them were absent—night came on, and he did not appear. The next morning dawned—the day passed—the evening succeeded—Jeronymo came not. Already had they begun to give themselves up to the most melancholy conjectures,

when the news arrived, that an Algerine pirate had landed the preceding day on that coast, and carried off several of the inhabitants. Two galleys, ready equipped, were immediately ordered to sea. The old Marquis himself embarked in one of them, to attempt the deliverance of his son at the peril of his own life. On the third day they perceived the corsair. The wind was favourable—they were just about to overtake him, and even approached so near to him, that Lorenzo, who was in one of the galleys, fancied that he saw, upon the deck of the adversary's ship, a signal made by his brother, when a sudden storm separated the vessels. Hardly could the almost shipwrecked galleys sustain the fury of the tempest. The pirate, in the meantime had disappeared, and the distressed state of the other vessels obliged them to put into Malta. The affliction of the family was beyond all bounds.

The

The distracted old Marquis tore his grey hairs in the utmost violence of grief, and the life of the young Countess was despaired of. Five years were consumed after this event in fruitless enquiries; diligent search was made all along the coast of Barbary; and immense sums were offered for the ransom of the young Marquis, but to no purpose. The only conjecture which could be founded on probability was, that the same storm which had separated the galleys from the pirate had destroyed the latter vessel, and that the whole ship's company had perished in the waves. But this supposition, however probable, as it did not by any means amount to a certainty, could not authorize the family to renounce the hope that the absent Jeronymo might again appear. In case however that he did not, either the family's name must be suffered to perish, or the youngest son must relinquish the church, and enter

ter into the rights of the eldest. Justice seemed to oppose the latter measure; and on the other hand, the necessity of preserving the family from annihilation required that the scruple should not be carried too far. In the meantime, sorrow, added to the weight of age, was bringing the Marquis fast to his grave. Every unsuccessful attempt served to increase his distress, and diminish the hope of finding his lost son. He saw that his name might be perpetuated by acting with a little injustice, in consenting to favour his younger son at the expence of the elder. The fulfilment of his agreement with Count C. . . . required only the change of a name; for the object of the two families was equally accomplished, whether Antonia became the wife of Lorenzo or of Jeronymo. The faint probability of the latter's appearing again weighed but little against the certain and pressing danger of the
total

total extinction of the family; and the old Marquis, who considered his dissolution fast approaching, ardently wished to die free from this inquietude. Lorenzo alone, who was to be principally benefited by this measure, opposed it with the greatest obstinacy. He resisted with equal firmness the allurements of an immense fortune, and the attractions of a beautiful and accomplished object ready to be delivered into his arms. He refused, on principles the most generous and conscientious, to invade the rights of a brother, who for any thing he knew might himself be in a capacity to resume them.

“Is not the lot of my Jeronymo,” said he, “made sufficiently miserable by the horrors of a long captivity, without the aggravation of being deprived for ever of all that he holds most dear? With what conscience could I suppli-

cate Heaven for his return, when his wife is in my arms? With what countenance could I meet him, if at last he should be restored to us by a miracle? And even supposing that he is torn from us for ever, can we honour his memory better than by keeping constantly open the chasm which his death has caused in our circle? Can we better shew our respects to him than by sacrificing our dearest hopes upon his tomb, and keeping untouched as a sacred deposit, what was peculiarly his own."

But these arguments of fraternal delicacy could not reconcile the old Marquis to the idea of being obliged to witness the decay of a tree which nine centuries had beheld flourishing. All that Lorenzo could obtain was a delay of two years. During this period they continued their enquiries with the utmost diligence. Lorenzo himself made

made several voyages, and exposed his person to many dangers. No trouble, no expence, was spared to recover the lost Jeronymo. These two years, however, like those which preceded them, were consumed in vain.

“ And Antonia,” said the Prince. “ You tell us nothing of her. Could she so calmly submit to her fate? I cannot suppose it.”

“ Antonia,” answered the Sicilian, “ experienced the most violent struggle between duty and inclination, between dislike and admiration. The disinterested generosity of a brother affected her. She felt herself forced to esteem a person whom she could never love. Her heart, torn by contrary sentiments, felt the bitterest distress; but her repugnance to the Chevalier seemed to increase in the same degree as his
F 5 claims

claims upon her esteem augmented. Lorenzo perceived with heartfelt sorrow the secret grief that consumed her youth. An unconquerable sympathy for her misfortune insensibly eradicated that indifference with which till then we had been accustomed to consider her. But this delusive sentiment deceived him, and an ungovernable passion began rapidly to shake the steadiness of his virtue, which till then had been unequalled. He, however, still obeyed the dictates of generosity, though at the expence of his love. By his efforts alone was the unfortunate victim protected against the cruel and arbitrary proceedings of the rest of the family. But his endeavours were ineffectual. Every victory he gained over his passion rendered him more worthy of Antonia, and the disinterestedness with which he refused her, left her without an apology for resistance. Thus were affairs situated,

ated, when the Chevalier engaged me to visit him at his father's villa. The earnest recommendation of my patron procured me a reception which exceeded my most sanguine wishes. I must not forget to mention, that by some remarkable operations I had previously rendered my name famous in different lodges of free-masons. This circumstance perhaps contributed to strengthen the old Marquis's confidence in me, and to heighten his expectations. I beg you will excuse me from describing particularly the lengths I went with him, or the means which I employed. You may form some judgment of them from what I have before confessed to you. Profiting by the mystic books which I found in his very extensive library, I was soon able to speak to him in his own language, and to adorn my system of the invisible world with the most

extraordinary inventions. He was therefore with so little difficulty induced to credit the fables I taught him, that in a short time he would have believed as implicitly in the secret commerce of philosophers and sylphs as in any article of the canon. The Marquis, being very religious, had acquired in the school of theology a facility of belief, which caused him at once to be fascinated with the stories I told him, and to put the most unreserved confidence in my character. At length I entangled him so completely in mystery, that he would no longer believe any thing that was natural. In short, I became the adored apostle of the house. The usual subject of my lectures was the exaltation of human nature, and the intercourse of men with superior things; the infallible Count Gabolis * was my oracle.

* A mystical work written in French by the Abbe de Villars.

Antonia,

Antonia, whose mind since the loss of her lover had been more occupied in the world of spirits, than in that of nature, and who had a strong tincture of melancholy in her composition, caught every hint I gave her with a fearful satisfaction. Even the servants contrived to have some business in the room when I was speaking, and, seizing part of my conversation, formed from it mysterious presages.—Two months were passed in this manner at the Marquis's villa, when the Chevalier one morning entered my apartment—His features had experienced a considerable alteration, and from his sorrowful countenance I suspected that something preyed upon his mind.—He threw himself upon a couch with every symptom of despair.

“ I am distracted, ruined,” said he ;
 “ I must, I cannot support it any longer.”

“ What

“ What is the matter with you, Chevalier ? What has befallen you ? ”

“ Oh ! this terrible passion ! ” said he, starting from his seat, and throwing himself into my arms. “ I have combated against it like a man, but can resist it no longer. ”

“ And whose fault is it but your own, my dear Chevalier ? Are they not all willing to gratify this passion ? Your father ! Your relations ! ”

“ My father, my relations ! What are they to me ? I want not to be united to her by force—Have not I a rival ? Alas ! and what a rival ! Perhaps a dead one ! Oh ! let me go, let me go to the end of the world ; I must find my brother. ”

“ What ! after so many unsuccessful attempts, have you still any hope ? ”

“ Hope !

“ Hope ! Alas, no. It has long since been banished from my heart, but it has not from her’s; of what consequence are my sentiments? Is it possible that I should be happy whilst there remains a gleam of hope in Antonia’s breast? Two words, my friend, would end my torments, but in vain; my destiny must continue to be miserable, till eternity shall break its long silence, and the grave shall speak in my behalf.”

“ Is it then a state of certainty that would render you happy?”

“ Happy ! Alas ! I doubt whether I shall ever be happy again; but uncertainty is of all others the most dreadful affliction.”

After a short interval of silence, he continued with an emotion less violent :

“ If

“ If he could see my torments! Surely a constancy which renders his brother miserable, cannot add to his happiness! Can it be just, that the living should suffer so much for the sake of the dead; that I should fruitlessly pine for an object which Jeronymo can no longer enjoy? If he knew the pangs I suffer, (said he, concealing his face while the tears streamed from his eyes) perhaps he himself would conduct her to my arms.”

“ But is there no possibility of gratifying your wishes?”

“ He started! What do you say, my friend?”

“ Less important occasions than the present,” said I, “ have disturbed the repose of the dead for the sake of the living; is not the terrestrial happiness of a man, of a brother—”

“ The

“ The terrestrial happiness! Ah, my friend, I feel but too sensibly the force of your expression—my entire felicity!”

“ And the tranquillity of a distressed family, are not these sufficient to justify such a measure? Undoubtedly, if any sublunary concern can authorize us to interrupt the peace of the blessed, to make use of a power—”

“ For God’s sake, my friend!” said he, interrupting me, “ no more of this—once, I avow it, I had such a thought; I think I mentioned it to you; but I have long since rejected it as horrid and abominable.”

“ You will have conjectured already,” continued the Sicilian, “ to what this conversation led us; I endeavoured to overcome the scruples of the Chevalier, and at last succeeded.—We resolved to
call

call the ghost of the deceased Jeronimo ; I only stipulated for a delay of a fortnight, in order, as I pretended, to prepare, in a suitable manner, for an act so solemn.—The time being expired, and my machinery in readiness, I took advantage of a very gloomy day, when we were all assembled as usual, to communicate the affair to the family, and not only brought them to consent to it, but even to make it a subject of their own request.—The most difficult part of the task was to obtain the approbation of Antonia, whose presence was essential.—My endeavours were, however, greatly assisted by the melancholy turn of her mind, and perhaps still more so, by a faint hope, that Jeronimo might still be living, and therefore would not appear.—A want of confidence in the thing itself was the only obstacle which I had to remove.—Having obtained the consent of the family, the third day was fixed

fixed on for the operation; I prepared then for the solemn transaction, by mystical instruction, fasting, solitude and prayers, which I ordered to be continued till late in the night.—Much use was also made of a certain musical instrument*, unknown till that time; and, in such cases, it has often been found very powerful.—The effect of these artifices was so much beyond my expectation, that the enthusiasm which on this occasion I was obliged to shew, was infinitely heightened by that of my audience.—The long expected moment at last arrived.—

“ I guess,” said the Prince, “ whom you are now going to introduce.—But go on, go on.”

“ Your Highness is mistaken.—The deception succeeded according to my wishes.”

* The Eolian harp.

“ How!

“ How ! Where then is the Armenian ? ”

“ Your Highness’s patience : he will appear but too soon. I omit the description of the juggling farce itself, as it would be too tedious to relate.—It is sufficient to say, that it answered my expectation ; the old Marquis, the young Countess, her mother, Lorenzo, and several other persons of the family were present.—You will imagine, that during my long residence in the house I took all opportunities of gathering information respecting every thing that concerned the deceased.—Several of his portraits enabled me to give the apparition a striking likeness ; and as I suffered the ghost to speak only by signs, that the sound of his voice might excite no suspicion, the departed Jeronymo appeared in the dress of a Moorish Slave, with a deep wound in his neck.—You observe,

observe, that in this respect I was counteracting the general supposition that he had perished in the waves, I had reason to hope, that this unexpected circumstance would heighten the belief in the apparition itself; for nothing appeared to me more dangerous than to be too natural."

"I think you judged well," said the Prince; "in whatever respects apparitions, the most probable is the least acceptable. If their communications are easily comprehended, we undervalue the channel by which they are obtained; nay, we even suspect the reality of the miracle, if the discoveries which it brings to light are such as might easily have been imagined.—Why should we disturb the repose of a spirit, to inform us of nothing more than the ordinary powers of the intellect are capable of teaching us?—

But,

But, on the other hand, if the intelligence which we receive be extraordinary and unexpected, it confirms, in some degree, the miracle by which it is obtained; for who can doubt an operation to be supernatural, when its effect could not be produced by natural means? I have interrupted you," added the Prince. " Proceed in your narrative."

" I asked the ghost, whether there was any thing in this world which he still considered as his own, and whether he had left any thing behind that was particularly dear to him? The ghost thrice shook his head, and lifted up his hands towards heaven. Previous to his retiring, he dropt a ring from his finger, which was found on the floor after he had disappeared; Antonia took it, and, looking at it attentively, she knew it to be the wedding-ring she had presented to her intended husband."

" The

“ The wedding-ring !” exclaimed the Prince, with surprise. “ How did you get it ?”

“ Who?—I!—It was not the true one!—I procured it.—It was only a counterfeit.”

“ A counterfeit !” repeated the Prince. But in order to counterfeit, you must have been in possession of the true one. How did you come at it? Surely the deceased never went without it.”

“ That is true,” replied the Sicilian, apparently confused. “ But, from a description which was given me of the original wedding-ring——”

“ A description which was given you by whom ?”

“ Long before that time. It was a plain gold ring, and had, I believe, the name

name of the young Countess engraved on it. But you made me lose the connection."

"What happened farther?" said the Prince, with a very dissatisfied countenance.

"The family fancied themselves convinced that Jeronymo was no more. From that very day they publicly announced his death, and went into mourning. The circumstance of the ring left no doubt even in the mind of Antonia, and added a considerable weight to the addresses of the Chevalier.

"In the mean time, the violent impression which the young Countess had received from the sight of the apparition brought on her a disorder so dangerous, that the hopes of Lorenzo were very near being destroyed for ever. On her recovering,

recovering, she insisted upon taking the veil; and it was only by the serious remonstrances of her confessor, in whom she placed an implicit confidence, that she was brought to abandon her project. At length, the united solicitations of the family, aided by the confessor, wrested from her the desired consent. The last day of mourning was fixed on for the day of marriage, and the old Marquis determined to add to the solemnity of the occasion, by resigning all his estates to his lawful heir. The day arrived, and Lorenzo received his trembling bride at the altar. In the evening, a splendid banquet was prepared for the guests, in a hall superbly illuminated. The most lively and delightful music contributed to increase the general joy of the assembly. The venerable Marquis wished all the world to participate in his felicity. The gates of the palace were thrown open, and every one that came in was

VOL. I. G joyfully

joyfully welcomed. In the midst of the throng"—The Sicilian paused—A trembling expectation suspended our breath.

"In the midst of the throng," continued the prisoner, "appeared a Franciscan monk, to whom my attention was directed by a person who sat next to me at table.

"He was standing motionless like a marble pillar. His shape was tall and thin; his face pale and ghastly; his aspect grave and mournful; and his eyes were fixed on the new-married couple. The joy which beamed on the face of every one present, appeared not on his. His countenance never once varied.—He seemed like a statue among living persons. Such an object, appearing amidst the general joy, struck me more forcibly from its contrast with every thing

thing around me. It left on my mind so durable an impression, that from it alone I have been enabled (which would otherwise have been impossible) to recollect in the Russian officer the features of this Franciscan monk; for without doubt you must have already conceived, that the person I have described was no other than your Armenian. I frequently attempted to withdraw my eyes from this figure, but they returned involuntarily, and found him always unaltered. I pointed him out to the person who sat nearest to me on the other side, and he did the same to the person next to him. In a few minutes, a general curiosity and astonishment pervaded the whole company. The conversation languished; a general silence succeeded; nor did the monk interrupt it. He continued motionless, and always the same; his grave and mournful looks constantly fixed upon the new-

G 2

married

married couple:—His appearance struck every one with terror. The young Countess alone, who found the transcript of her own sorrow in the face of the stranger, beheld with a sullen satisfaction the only object that seemed to sympathize in her sufferings. The crowd insensibly diminished, for it was past midnight. The music became faint and languid; the tapers grew dim, and many of them went out. The conversation, declining by degrees, lost itself at last in secret murmurs, and the faintly illuminated hall was nearly deserted. The monk, in the mean time, continued motionless, his grave and mournful look still fixed on the new-married couple. The company at length rose from the table. The guests dispersed. The family assembled in a separate group, and the Monk, though uninvited, continued near them. How it happened that no person spoke to him, I cannot conceive.

“ The

“ The female friends now surrounded the trembling bride, who cast a supplicating and distressed look on the awful stranger ; but he did not answer it. The gentlemen assembled in the same manner around the bridegroom. A solemn and anxious silence prevailed among them.

• “ At length—“ How happy we are here together !” said the old Marquis, who alone seemed not to behold the stranger, or at least seemed to behold him without dismay :—“ How happy we are here together, and my son Jeronymo cannot be with us !”

“ Have you not invited him, and did not he answer your invitation ?”—asked the Monk.

“ It was the first time he had spoken. We looked at him alarmed.

“ Alas! he is gone to a place whence there is no return,”—answered the old man.—“ Reverend father! You misunderstood me. My son Jeronymo is dead.”

“ Perhaps he only fears to appear in this company,”—replied the Monk.—“ Who knows how your son Jeronymo may be situated? Let him now hear the voice which he heard the last. Desire your son Lorenzo to call him.”

“ What does he mean?” whispered the company one to another.

“ Lorenzo changed colour. My own hair almost stood erect on my head. In the mean time the Monk approached

ed

ed a sideboard. He took a glass of wine, and bringing it to his lips,—
“To the memory of our dear Jeronymo!”
said he; “Every one who loved the
deceased will follow my example.”

“Wherever you come from, reverend father,” exclaimed the old Marquis—“you have pronounced a dearly beloved name, and you are welcome here;” then turning to us, he offered us full glasses—“Come, my friends! let us not be surpassed by a stranger. “The memory of my son Jeronymo?”

“Never, I believe, was any toast less heartily received.

“There is one glass left,” said the Marquis.—“Why does my son Lorenzo refuse to pay this friendly tribute?”

“Lorenzo, trembling, received the glass from the hands of the Monk. Trembling he put it to his lips. “ My dearly beloved brother Jeronymo!” The name trembled on his tongue, and, being seized with horror, he replaced the glass unemptied.

“ That is the voice of my murderer!” exclaimed a terrible figure, which appeared instantaneously in the midst of us, covered with blood, and disfigured with horrible wounds.

“ But ask nothing further from me,” added the Sicilian, with every symptom of horror in his countenance. “ I lost my senses the moment I looked at this apparition. The same happened to every one present. When we recovered, the Monk and the ghost had disappeared, Lorenzo was in the agonies of death. He was carried to bed in the most dreadful

ful convulsions. No person attended him but his confessor and the sorrowful old Marquis, in whose presence he expired.—The Marquis died a few weeks after him. Lorenzo's secret is concealed in the bosom of the priest who received his last confession ; and no person ever learnt what it was.

“ Soon after this event, a deep well was cleaned in the farm-yard of the Marquis's villa. It had been disused many years, and the mouth of it was almost closed up by shrubs and old trees. A skeleton was found among the rubbish. The house where this happened is now no more ; the family del M—— is extinct, and Antonia's tomb may be seen in a convent not far from Salerno.”

Astonishment kept us silent.

“ You see,” continued the Sicilian, “ how my acquaintance with
G 5 the

the Russian officer, Armenian, or Franciscan friar has originated. Judge whether I had not cause to tremble at the sight of a being, who has twice placed himself in my way in a manner so terrible."

" I beg you will answer me one question more," said the Prince, rising from his seat ;—" Have you been sincere in your account of the Chevalier ?"

" Yes, your Highness, to the best of my knowledge."—" You really believe him to be an honest man ?"

" I do, by heaven ! I believe him to be an honest man ?"

" Even at the time that he gave you the ring ?"—" How ! he gave me no ring. I did not say that he gave me the ring."

" Very

“ Very well !” said the Prince, pulling the bell, and preparing to depart. “ And you believe” (going back to the prisoner) “ that the ghost of the Marquis de Lanoy, which the Russian officer introduced after your apparition, was a real ghost ?”

“ I cannot think otherwise.”

“ Let us go !” said the Prince, addressing himself to us. The Jailor came in. “ We have done,” said the Prince to him. “ As for you,” turning to the prisoner, “ you shall hear farther from me.”

“ I am tempted to ask your Highness the last question you proposed to the Conjuror,” said I to the Prince, when we were alone. “ Do you believe the second ghost to have been a real one ?”

“ I believe it ! No, not now, most assuredly.”

“ Not now ? Then you did once believe it.”

“ I confess I was tempted for a moment to believe it to have been something more than the contrivance of a juggler ; and I could wish to see the man, who under similar circumstances would not have formed the same supposition.”

“ But what reason have you for altering your opinion ? What the prisoner has related of the Armenian, ought to increase rather than diminish your belief in his supernatural powers.”

“ What this wretch has related of him !” said the Prince, interrupting me very gravely. “ I hope,” continued he,

he, " you have not now any doubt that we have had to do with a villain."

" No ; but must his evidence on that account—"

" The evidence of a villain ! Suppose I had no other reason for doubt, the evidence of such a person can be of no weight against common sense and established truth. Does a man who has already deceived me several times, and whose trade it is to deceive, does he deserve to be heard in a cause in which the unsupported testimony of even the most sincere adherent to truth could not be received ? Ought we to believe a man who perhaps never once spoke truth for its own sake ? Does such a man deserve credit, when he appears as evidence against human reason and the eternal laws of nature ? Would it not be as absurd as to admit the accusation

fation of a person notoriously infamous against unblemished and reproachless innocence?"

" But what motives could he have for giving so great a character to a man whom he has so many reasons to hate?"

" I am not to conclude that he can have no motives for doing this, because I am unable to comprehend them? Do I know who has bribed him to deceive me? I confess I cannot penetrate through the mystery of this plan; but he has certainly done a material injury to the cause he contends for, by shewing himself at least an impostor, and perhaps something worse."

" The circumstance of the ring, I allow, appears suspicious."

" It

“ It is more than suspicious, it is decisive. He received this ring from the murderer. Let us even suppose the circumstances he has related are true ; at the moment he received it, he must have been certain that it was from the perpetrator of the murder. Who but the assassin could have taken from Jeronimo’s finger a ring, which he undoubtedly never was without? Throughout the whole of his narration, the Sicilian has laboured to persuade us, that while he was endeavouring to deceive Lorenzo, Lorenzo was in reality deceiving him. Would he have had recourse to this subterfuge, if he had not been sensible that he should lose much of our confidence, by confessing himself an accomplice with the assassin ? The whole story is visibly nothing but a series of impostures, invented merely to connect the few truths he has thought proper to give us. Ought I then to hesitate in
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disbelieving the eleventh assertion of a person who has already deceived me ten times, rather than admit a violation of the fundamental laws of nature, which I have ever found in the most perfect harmony ?”

“ I have nothing to reply to all this ; but the apparition we saw is to me not the less incomprehensible.”

“ It is also incomprehensible to me, although I have been tempted to find a key to it.”

“ How ?”

“ Do not you recollect that the second apparition, as soon as he entered, walked directly up to the altar, took the crucifix in his hand, and placed himself upon the carpet ?”

“ It

“ It appeared so to me.”

“ And this crucifix, according to the Sicilian’s confession, was a conductor. You see, that the apparition hastened to make himself electrical. Thus the blow which Lord Seymour struck him with his sword, must of necessity be ineffectual, the electric stroke having disabled his arm.”

“ That is true with respect to the sword. But the pistol fired by the Sicilian, the ball of which rolled slowly upon the altar—”

“ Are you convinced that this was the same ball which was fired from the pistol? Not to mention that the puppet, or the man who represented the ghost, may have been so well accoutred as to be invulnerable by swords or bullets ;

lets ; but consider who had loaded the pistols."

" True," said I ; and a sudden light darted into my mind. " The Russian officer had loaded them, but it was in our presence. How could he have deceived us?"

" Why should he not have deceived us? Did you suspect him sufficiently to observe him? Did you examine the ball before it was put into the pistol? It may have been one of quicksilver or clay. Did you take notice whether the Russian officer really put it into the barrel, or dropped it into his other hand? But supposing that he actually loaded the pistols, how can you be sure that he did not leave them behind him, and take some unloaded ones into the room where the ghost appeared. He might very easily have exchanged them while

while we were undressing. No person ever thought of noticing him in particular. It is very possible too, that the figure, at the moment when we were prevented from seeing it by the smoke of the pistol, might have dropped another ball on the altar. Which of these conjectures is impossible?"

"Your Highness is right. But that striking resemblance to your deceased friend! I have often seen him with you, and I immediately recognized him in the apparition."

"I did the same, and I must confess the illusion was complete; but as the juggler, from a few secret glances at the snuff-box, was able to give to his apparition such a likeness as deceived us both, what was to prevent the Russian officer (who had used the box during the whole time of supper,
who

who had liberty to observe the picture unnoticed, and to whom I had discovered in confidence the person it represented) from doing the same? Add to this, what has been before observed by the Sicilian, that the prominent features of the Marquis were so striking as to be easily imitated. What now remains to be explained respecting the second ghost?"

"The words he uttered, the information he gave you about your friend."

"What? Did not the juggler assure us, that from the little which he had learnt from me, he had composed a similar story? Does not this prove that the invention was obvious and natural? Beside, the answers of the ghost, like those of an oracle, were so obscure, that he was in no danger of being detected in a falsehood. If the man who per-

personated the ghost possessed sagacity and presence of mind, and knew ever so little of the affairs on which he was consulted, to what length might he not have carried the deception?"

" I beg your Highness to consider, how much preparation such a complicated artifice would have required from the Armenian ; what a time it requires to paint a face with sufficient exactness ; what a time would have been requisite to instruct the pretended ghost, so as to guard him against gross errors ; what a degree of minute attention to regulate every attendant or adventitious circumstance which might be useful or detrimental. And remember, that the Russian officer was absent but half an hour. Was that short space sufficient to make even such arrangements as were indispensably necessary? Surely not. Even a dramatic writer, who
has

nas the least desire to preserve the three unities of Aristotle, durst not venture to load the interval between one act and another with such a variety of actions, or to suppose in his audience such a facility of belief."

"What! You think it absolutely impossible that every necessary preparation should have been made in the space of half an hour."

"Indeed, I look upon it as almost impossible."

"I do not understand this expression. Does it militate against the laws of time and space, or of matter and motion, that a man so ingenious and so expert as this Armenian must necessarily be, assisted by agents whose dexterity and acuteness are probably not inferior to his own, provided with such
means

means and instruments as a man of this profession is never without; is it impossible that such a man, favoured by such circumstances, should effect so much in so short a time? Is it absurd to suppose, that by a very small number of words or signs, he can convey to his assistants very extensive commissions, and direct very complex operations? Nothing ought to be admitted against the established laws of nature, unless it is something with which these laws are absolutely incompatible. Would you rather give credit to a miracle than admit an improbability? Would you solve a difficulty rather by overturning the powers of nature, than by believing an artful and uncommon combination of them?"

“ Though the fact will not justify a conclusion such as you have condemned, you must however grant that it is far beyond our conception.”

“ I am

“ I am almost tempted to dispute even this,” said the Prince, with a sarcastic smile. “ What would you say, my dear Count, if it should be proved, for instance, that the operations of the Armenian were prepared and carried on not only during the half hour that he was absent from us, not only in haste and incidentally, but during the whole evening and the whole night? You recollect that the Sicilian employed near three hours in preparation.”

“ The Sicilian, your Highness !”

“ And how will you convince me that this juggler had not as much concern in the second apparition as in the first?”

“ How !”

“ That

“ That he was not the principal assistant of the Armenian—In a word, how will you convince me that they did not co-operate ? ”

“ It would be a difficult task to prove that they did,” exclaimed I, with no little surprize.

“ Not so difficult, my dear Count, as you imagine. What! could it have happened by mere chance that these two men should form a design so extraordinary and so complicated upon the same person, at the same time, and in the same place? Could mere chance have produced such an exact harmony between their operations, that one of them should appear as if subservient to the other? Suppose the Armenian has intended to heighten the effect of his deception, by

introducing it after a less refined one; that he has created a Hector to make himself an Achilles. Suppose he has done all this, to see what degree of credulity he should find in me; to examine the avenues to my confidence; to familiarize himself with his subject by an attempt that might have miscarried without any prejudice to his plan; in a word, to try the instrument on which he intended to play. Suppose he has done this with a view to draw my attention on himself, in order to divert it from another object more important to his design. Lastly, suppose he wishes to have imputed to the juggler some indirect methods of information which himself has had occasion to practise."

"What do you mean?"

"It is possible that he may have bribed some of my servants to give him
secret

secret intelligence, or perhaps some papers which may serve his purpose. One of my domestics has absconded. What reason have I to think that the Armenian is not concerned in his leaving me? Such a connection, however, if it exists, may be accidentally discovered; a letter may be intercepted; a servant, who is in the secret, may betray his trust. Now all the consequence of the Armenian is destroyed, if I detect the source of his omniscience; he therefore introduces this juggler, who must be supposed to have the same or some other design upon me. He takes care to give me early notice of him and his intentions, so that whatever I may hereafter discover, my suspicions must necessarily rest upon the Sicilian. This is the puppet with which he amuses me, whilst he himself, unobserved and unsuspected, is entangling me in invisible snares."

“ We will allow this. But is it consistent with the Armenian's plan, that he himself should destroy the illusion which he has created, and disclose the mysteries of his science to the eyes of the profane ?”

“ What mysteries does he disclose? None, surely, which he intends to practise on me ; he therefore loses nothing by the discovery. But on the other hand, what an advantage will he gain if this pretended victory over juggling and deception should render me secure and unsuspecting ; if he succeeds in diverting my attention from the right quarter (I mean himself,) and in fixing my wavering suspicions on an object most remote from the real one. If at any time, either from my own doubts or at the suggestion of another, I should be tempted to seek in the occult sciences for a key to his mysterious wonders,
how

how could he better provide against such an enquiry than by contrasting his prodigies with the tricks of the juggler? By confining the latter within artificial limits, and by delivering, as it were, into my hands, a scale by which to appreciate them, he naturally exalts and perplexes my ideas of the former. How many suspicions does he preclude by this single contrivance! How many methods of accounting for his miracles, which might afterwards have occurred to me, does he refute beforehand!"

"But in exposing such a finished deception, he has very much counteracted his own interest, both by quickening the penetration of those whom he meant to impose upon, and by staggering their belief of miracles in general. If he had had such a plan, your Highness's self is the best proof of its insufficiency."

“ Perhaps he has been mistaken in respect to myself, but his conclusions have nevertheless been well founded. Could he foresee that I should exactly notice the very circumstance which exposed the whole artifice? Was it in his plan, that the creature he employed should be so communicative? Are we certain that the Sicilian has not far exceeded his commission? He has undoubtedly done so with respect to the ring, and yet it is chiefly this single circumstance which determined my distrust in him. A plan whose contexture is so artful and refined, is easily spoiled in the execution by an awkward instrument. It certainly was not the Armenian's intention that the juggler should speak to us in the style of a mountebank, that he should endeavour to impose upon us such fables as are too gross to bear the least reflection. For instance, with what countenance
could

could this impostor affirm, that the miraculous being he spoke of, renounces all commerce with mankind at twelve in the night? Did not we see him among us at that very hour?"

"That is true. He must have forgot it."

"People of this description naturally overact their parts, and by exceeding every limit of credibility mar the effects which a well-managed deception is calculated to produce."

"I cannot, however, yet prevail on myself to look upon the whole as a mere contrivance of art. What! the Sicilian's terror, his convulsive fits, his sword, the deplorable situation in which we saw him, and which was even such as to move our pity; were all these nothing more than the mimicry of an actor?"

I allow that a skilful performer may carry imitation to a very high pitch, but he certainly has no power over the organs of life."

" As for that, my friend, I have seen the celebrated Garrick in the character of Richard the Third. But were we at that moment sufficiently cool to be capable of observing dispassionately? Could we judge of the emotions of the Sicilian, when we were almost overcome by our own? Besides, the decisive crisis, even of a deception, is so momentous to the deceiver himself, that excessive anxiety may produce in him symptoms as violent as those which surprize excites in the deceived. Add to this, the unexpected entrance of the watch."

" I am glad your Highness mentions that. Would the Armenian have ventured

tured to discover such an infamous scheme to the eye of justice, to expose the fidelity of his creature to such a dangerous test? And for what purpose?"

"Leave that matter to him; he is, no doubt, acquainted with the people he employs. Do we know what secret crimes may have secured him the discretion of this man? You have been informed of the office he holds at Venice; what difficulty will he find in saving a man, of whom himself is the only accuser?"

(This suggestion of the Prince was but too well justified by the event. For, some days after, on enquiring about the prisoner, we were told that he had escaped, and had not since been heard of.)

"You ask what could be his motives for delivering this man into the hands

of justice?" continued the Prince. "By what other method, except this violent one, could he have wrested from the Sicilian such an infamous and improbable confession, which, however, was material to the success of his plan? Who but a man whose case is desperate, and who has nothing to lose, would consent to give so humiliating an account of himself? Under what other circumstances than such as these could we have believed such a confession?"

"I grant your Highness all this. The two apparitions were mere contrivances of art: The Sicilian has imposed upon us a tale which the Armenian his master had previously taught him: The efforts of both have been directed to the same end; and by this mutual intelligence all the wonderful incidents that have astonished us in this adventure may be easily explained. But the prophecy of the
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the square of St. Mark, that first miracle, which as it were opened the door to all the rest, remains still unexplained; and of what use is the key to all his other wonders, if we must despair of resolving this single one?"

"Rather invert the proposition, my dear Count, and say, what do all these wonders prove if I can demonstrate that a single one among them is a manifest deception? The prediction, I allow is above my conception. If it had stopped there, if the Armenian had closed the scene with it, I confess, I do not know how far I might have been carried. But in the base alloy with which it is mixed, it is certainly suspicious."

"Gracious Sir, I grant it; but it still remains incomprehensible, and I defy all our philosophy to explain it."

“ But,” continued the Prince, “ can it be really so inexplicable?” After a few moments reflection—“ I am far from pretending to the title of a philosopher, and yet I am almost tempted to account for this miracle in a natural way, or at least to deprive it entirely of any extraordinary appearance.”

“ If your Highness can do that,” replied I, with a very unbelieving smile, “ you will be the only wonder in which I have any faith.”

“ And as a proof,” continued he, “ how little we are justified in flying to supernatural powers for an explanation, I will point out to you two different ways by which we may perhaps account for this event, without doing any violence to nature.”

“ Two ways at once! You do indeed raise my expectations.”

“ You

" You have read, as well as I, the last accounts of my late cousin's illness: He died of an apoplexy. It was an attack during a fit of the ague. The extraordinariness of his death, I confess it, induced me to ask the opinions of some physicians upon the subject, and the knowledge which I acquired from that circumstance gives me a clue to this enchantment. The disorder of my deceased relative, which was one of a most uncommon and alarming nature, had this peculiar symptom, that during the fit of the ague it threw the patient into a deep and irrecoverable sleep, which naturally put an end to his existence on the return of the apoplectic paroxysm. As these paroxysms return in the most regular order, and at an appointed hour, the physician is enabled, from the very moment in which he forms his opinion on the nature of the disorder, to predict the hour of the patient's

patient's decease. The third paroxysm of a tertian ague will fall to a certainty on the fifth day after the appearance of the illness, and that is exactly the length of time necessary for the carriage of a letter from ***, where my cousin died, to Venice. Let us suppose then that our Armenian possesses a vigilant correspondent among the attendants of the deceased; that he was very much interested to gain information from thence; that he had views upon my person, to the prosecution of which my belief in the wonderful and the appearance of supernatural powers would greatly conduce—thus you have a natural clue to this prediction, which is so inconceivable to you. This is sufficient, for you may hence see the possibility of a third person's informing another of a death which happened at the moment when he announced it, in a place at forty miles distance."

" In

“ In truth, your Highness in this instance combines things together, which, taken singly, appear very natural, but which could only be brought together by something than is not much better than enchantment.”

“ What! Do you then fear a wonder less than an uncommon plan? As soon as we allow that the Armenian is engaged in a plan of consequence, of which my destruction is either the end or at least conducive to it, (and may we not form that opinion of him with which his appearance first inspired us?) nothing will seem natural or forced, which could bring his scheme to a conclusion in the most expeditious manner. But what way could he devise more expeditious, than the securing his object by putting on the appearance of a miracle-worker? Who can resist a man, to whom the spirits are obedient? However, I grant you that

that my conjectures are not perfectly natural; I confess that I am not even myself satisfied with them. I do not insist upon it, because I do not think it worth my while to call into my assistance a well formed and deliberate design, when it may at last turn out to be a mere accident."

"What!" replied I; "it may be a mere accident?"

"Certainly, nothing more!" continued the Prince. "The Armenian was aware of the danger of my cousin. He met us in the place of St. Mark. The opportunity invited him to hazard a prophecy, which, if it failed, would be nothing more than a loose word—but if it succeeded, might be of the greatest consequence. The event was favourable to this attempt—and he might still design to make use of the gift of prophecy for

for the connection of his plan—Time will disclose this secret, or bury it in oblivion. But believe me, friend, (while he laid his hand upon mine, with a very earnest countenance) a man, to whose word the higher powers are obedient, will either not want the assistance of deception, or at least will despise it.”

“ Thus,” says Count O “ ended a conversation which I have faithfully related, because it shews the difficulties which were to be overcome before the Prince could be effectually imposed upon. I hope it may free his memory from the imputation of having blindly and inconsiderately thrown himself into a snare which was spread for his destruction by the most unexampled and diabolical iniquity. Many, at the moment I am writing this, are, perhaps, smiling contemptuously at the Prince’s credulity; but not all those who,
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in the fancied superiority of their own understanding, think themselves entitled to condemn him; not all those, I apprehend, would have resisted this first attempt with so much firmness. If afterwards, notwithstanding this happy prepossession, we witness his downfall; if we see that the black design against which, at its very opening, he was thus providentially warned, is finally successful, we shall not be so much inclined to ridicule his weakness, as to be astonished at the infamous ingenuity of a plot which could seduce an understanding so admirably prepared. Considerations of interest have no influence in my testimony. He, who alone would be thankful for it, is now no more. His dreadful destiny is accomplished. His soul has long since been purified before the throne of truth, where mine must likewise shortly appear. Pardon the involuntary tears which now flow at the remembrance

brance of my deceased friend—But for the sake of justice I write this history. He was a great character, and would have adorned a throne which, seduced by the most atrocious artifice, he attempted to ascend by the commission of a murder.

“ Not long after these events,” continues the Count d’O in his narrative, “ I began to observe an extraordinary alteration in the disposition of the Prince, which was partly the immediate consequence of the last event, and partly produced by the concurrence of many adventitious circumstances ; for hitherto the Prince had avoided every severe trial of his faith, and contented himself with purifying the rude and unabstracted notions of religion in which he had been educated, by those more rational ideas upon this subject which obtruded themselves upon him,

or

or with comparing the discordant opinions with each other, without enquiring into the foundations of his faith. The restraints imposed by religion in general, he has many times confessed to me, always appeared to him like an enchanted castle, into which one does not set one's foot without horror, and that we act a much wiser part if for that reason we pass it with a willing resignation, without exposing ourselves to the danger of being bewildered in its labyrinths; nevertheless, a contrary propensity irresistibly impelled him to those researches which were connected with it. A servile and bigoted education was the source of this dread: this had impressed frightful images upon his tender brain, which he was never able perfectly to obliterate during his whole life. Religious melancholy was an hereditary disorder in his family. The education which

which he and his brothers received was actuated by this principle; the men to whose care they were entrusted, selected with this view, were also either enthusiasts or hypocrites.

“ To stifle all the sprightliness of the boy by a gloomy restraint of his mental faculties, was the only method of securing to themselves the approbation of his noble parents. Such was the dark and gloomy aspect which the whole of our Prince's childhood wore. Mirth was banished even from his amusements. All his ideas of religion were accompanied by some frightful image, and the representations of terror and severity were those which first possessed themselves of his lively imagination, and which also the longest retained their empire over it. His God was an object of terror, a being whose sole occupation is the chastisement of
his

his creatures. The adoration which he paid to him, a blind submission stifling all his courage and vigour. In all his infantine or youthful propensities, which a stout body and blooming constitution naturally excited to break out with greater violence, religion stood in his way; she opposed every thing upon which his youthful heart was bent; he learned to consider her not as a friend, but as the scourge of his passions; so that a silent indignation was continually kindled against her in his heart, which, together with a revering faith and a blind dread, made both in his heart and head the strangest mixture—an abhorrence of the Lord before whom he trembled. It is no wonder, therefore, that he took the first opportunity of escaping from so galling a yoke—but he fled from it as a bond-slave from his rigorous master, who even in the midst of freedom drags

drags along with him a sense of his servitude ; for, as he did not renounce the faith of his earlier years from a deliberate conviction, as he did not wait till the maturity and improvement of his reason had weaned him from it, as he had escaped from it like a fugitive, upon whose person the rights of his master are still in force, so was he obliged, even after his widest separation, to return to it at last. He had escaped with his chain, and for that reason must necessarily become the prey of any one who should discover it, and know how to make use of the discovery. That he did consider himself in such a light, though the reader may not yet have supposed so, the sequel of this history will prove.

“ The confessions of the Sicilian left impressed upon his mind more important conclusions than the whole of the circumstance deserved ; and the small
victory

victory which his reason had thence gained over this weak imposture, remarkably increased his reliance upon it. The facility with which he had been able to unravel this deception, appeared to have perfectly overwhelmed him. Truth and error were not yet so accurately distinguished from each other in his mind, but that he often happened to mistake the arguments which were in favour of the one for those which were in favour of the other. Thence it arose, that the same blow which urged his faith to credulity, made the whole edifice of it totter. In this instance he fell into the same error as an unexperienced man who has been deceived in love or friendship because he made a bad choice, and who drops all credit in these sensations, because he takes mere incidental circumstances for their actual distinguishing features. The un-

masking

masking of a deception made even truth suspicious to him, because he had unfortunately discovered the truth on very weak grounds.

“ This imaginary triumph pleased him in proportion to the magnitude of the oppression from which it seemed to have delivered him. From this instant there arose in his mind a scepticism which did not spare even the most venerable objects.

“ Many circumstances concurred to encourage him in this turn of mind, and still more to confirm him in it.

“ He now quitted the retirement in which he had hitherto lived, and was obliged to give way to a more dissipated mode of life. His rank was discovered. Attentions which he was obliged to return, etiquettes for which

he was indebted to his rank, drew him imperceptibly within the vortex of the great world. His rank, as well as his personal attractions, opened to him the circles of all the *beaux esprits* in Venice, and he soon found himself on terms of intimacy with the most enlightened persons in the republic, the men of learning as well as politicians. This obliged him to enlarge the uniform and narrow circle to which his understanding had hitherto been confined. He began to perceive the poverty and debility of his ideas, and to feel the want of more elevated impressions. The old-fashioned dress of his understanding, spite of the many advantages with which it was accompanied, formed an unpleasing contrast with the current ideas of society; his ignorance of the commonest things frequently exposed him to ridicule, and nothing did he dread so much as that. The unfortunate prejudice which attached

tached to his native country, appeared to him a challenge to overcome it in his own person. Thence arose a peculiarity in his character; he was offended with every attention that he thought he owed to his rank, and not to his natural good qualities. He felt this humiliation principally in the company of persons who shone by their abilities, and triumphed, as it were, over their birth by their merit. To perceive himself distinguished as a prince in such a society, was always a base humiliation to him, because he unfortunately conceived that by that title he was totally excluded from all competition. All these circumstances together convinced him of the necessity for the formation of his mind, which he had hitherto neglected, in order to raise it to a level with the thinking part of the world, from which he had remained so far remote; and for that purpose

pose he chose the most fashionable books, to which he now applied himself with all the ardour with which he was accustomed to pursue every object he pitched upon. But the unskilful hand that directed his choice always prompted him to select such as were little calculated for the improvement either of his heart or his reason. And even in this instance, he was influenced by that propensity which rendered the charms of every thing incomprehensible and irresistible. He had neither attention nor memory for any thing that was not connected with this: his reason and his heart remained empty, while he was filling the vacuities in his brain with confused ideas.

The dazzling stile of the one captivated his imagination, while the subtlety of the other ensnared his reason.

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They were both able easily to possess themselves of a mind which became the prey of any one who obtruded himself upon it with a good assurance. A course of reading, which had been continued with ardour for more than a year, had scarcely enriched him with one benevolent idea ; but filled his head with doubts, which, as a natural consequence with such a character, had almost found an unfortunate road to his heart. In a word, he had entered this labyrinth as a credulous enthusiast, had left it as a sceptic, and was at length become a perfect free-thinker.

Among the many circles into which they had introduced him, there was a private society called the Buc-centauro, which, under the external show of a noble and rational liberality of sentiment, encouraged the most unbridled licentiousness of manners, and

opinions. As they enumerated many of the clergy among their members, and could even boast of some cardinals at their head, the Prince was the more easily induced to be admitted into it.

He thought that certain dangerous truths, which reason discovers, could be no where better preserved than in the hands of such persons, whose rank confined them to moderation, and who had had the advantage of hearing and examining the other side of the question.

The Prince did not recollect that licentiousness of sentiment and manners takes so much the stronger hold among persons of this rank, inasmuch as they for that reason feel one curb less; and this was the case with the Bucentauro; most of whose members, through an execrable philosophy, and manners worthy of such a guide, were not only a disgrace

disgrace to their own rank; but even to human nature itself. The society had its secret degrees; and I will believe, for the credit of the Prince, that they never thought him worthy of admission into the inmost sanctuary. Every one who entered this society was obliged, at least so long as he continued to be a member of it, to lay aside all distinctions arising from rank, nation, or religion; in short, every general mark or distinction whatever, and to submit himself to the condition of universal equality. To be elected a member was indeed a difficult matter, as superiority of understanding alone paved the way to it. The society boasted of the highest ton and the most cultivated taste, and such indeed was its fame throughout all Venice. This, as well as the appearance of equality which predominated in it, attracted the Prince irresistibly. Sensible conversa-

tions, fet off by the most admirable humour, instructive amusements, and the flower of the learned and political world, which were all attracted to this point as to their common centre, concealed from him for a long time the danger of this connection. Though he had by degrees discovered, through its mask, the spirit of the institution, as they were tired of being any longer on their guard before him, to recede was dangerous, and false shame and anxiety for his safety obliged him to conceal the displeasure which he felt. But he already began, merely from familiarity with men of this class and their sentiments, though they did not excite him to imitation, to lose the pure and charming simplicity of his character, and the delicacy of his moral feelings. His understanding, so little supported by any real knowledge, could not, without foreign assistance, solve the fallacious

cious sophisms with which he had been here ensnared ; and this fatal corroder had consumed all, or nearly all, on which his morality rested. He gave away the natural and necessary supports of his happiness for sophisms which deserted him at a critical moment, and consequently obliged him to abide by the best decision which should first offer itself.

Perhaps it was yet left to the hand of a friend to extricate him at a proper opportunity from this abyss ; but, besides that I did not become acquainted with the interior of the Bucentauro till long after the evil had taken place, an urgent circumstance called me away from Venice just at the beginning of this period. Moreover, Lord Seymour, a valuable acquaintance of the Prince's, whose understanding was proof against every species of
15 deception,

deception, and who would have infallibly been a secure support to him, left us at this time in order to return to his native country. Those in whose hands I left the Prince were very worthy men, but inexperienced, excessively narrow in their religious opinions, and as much deficient in insight into the evil as in credit with the Prince. They had nothing to oppose to his captious sophisms, except the maxims of a blind and unenquiring faith, which either irritated him or excited his ridicule. He saw through them too easily, and his superior reason soon silenced those weak defenders of the good cause, which will be clearly evinced from an instance that I shall introduce in the sequel. The others, who, subsequent to this, possessed themselves of his confidence, were much more occupied in plunging him deeper into it. When I returned to Venice
in

in the following year, a change had taken place in every thing.

The influence of this new philosophy soon shewed itself in the Prince's conduct. The more he openly pursued pleasure, and formed new friendships, the more did he desert his old ones. He pleased me less and less every day; we saw each other seldom, and indeed he was seldom to be found. He had launched out into the torrent of the great world. His threshold was never clear when he was at home. One amusement introduced another, one banquet another, and one pleasure was succeeded by a second. He was the beauty whom every one adored—the king and idol of every circle. As often as he reflected on the former quietness of his retired life, amidst the bustle of the world, so often did he find more reason for astonishment. Every thing met

his wishes. Whatever he uttered was admirable, and when he remained silent it was committing a robbery upon the company. They understood the art of almost banishing reflection from his soul by an agreeable thoughtlessness, and through a delicate assistance to overwhelm him with it.

This happiness, which accompanied him every where, and this universal success, raised him indeed too much in his own ideas, because it gave him reliance upon and confidence in himself.

The high opinion which he thence acquired of his own worth, made him credit the excessive and almost idolatrous adoration that was paid to his understanding; which, without this augmented and somewhat just self-complacency, must have necessarily recalled him to his senses. For the present,
however,

however, this universal voice was only the confirmation of that which his complacent vanity whispered to him in private—a tribute which he was entitled to by right. He would have infallibly disengaged himself from this snare, had they allowed him to take breath—had they granted him a moment of uninterrupted leisure for comparing his real merit with the picture that was exhibited to him in this seducing mirror; but his existence was a continued state of intoxication, of a staggering dizziness. The higher he had been elevated, the more difficulty had he to support himself in his elevation. This incessant exertion slowly undermined him—rest had forsaken even his slumbers. They had discovered his weakness, and turned to good account the passion which they had kindled in his breast.

His

His worthy attendants soon suffered for the *spirit* of their lord. That anxious sensibility, those glorious truths which his heart once embraced with the greatest enthusiasm, now began to be the objects of his ridicule. He revenged himself on the great truths of religion for the oppression which he had so long suffered from misconception. But, since from too true a voice his heart combated the intoxication of his head, there was more of acrimony than of humour in his jokes. His disposition began to alter, and caprice to make its appearance. The most beautiful ornament of his character, his moderation, vanished—parasites had poisoned his excellent heart. That tender delicacy of address which frequently made his attendants forget that he was their lord, was now obliged not seldom to give place to a decisive and despotical tone, that made the more sensible impression,

impression, because it was not founded upon the external distinction of birth, for the want of which they could have more easily consoled themselves, and which he himself esteemed less; but upon an injurious estimation of his own individual merit; since, when at home, he was attacked by reflections that seldom made their appearance in the bustle of company; his own people seldom beheld him otherwise than gloomy, peevish, and unhappy, whilst a forced vivacity made him the soul of every circle. With the sincerest sorrow did we behold him treading this dangerous path. In the tumult in which he was involved, the feeble voice of friendship was no longer heard, and he was yet too much intoxicated to understand it.

Just at the beginning of this epoch
an affair of the greatest consequence
required

required my presence in the court of my sovereign, and which I dared not postpone even for the dearest interests of friendship. An invisible hand, which I did not discover till long after that period, had contrived to derange my affairs there, and to spread reports which I was obliged to hasten to contradict by my presence. My absence from the Prince was as painful to me as it was pleasing to him. The ties which united us had now been severed for some time; but his fate had awakened all my anxiety: I on that account made the Baron de F... promise to inform me in his letters of every event, which he has done in the most conscientious manner. As I was now for a considerable time no longer an eye-witness of these events, it will be allowable for me to introduce the Baron de F... in my stead, and to fill up the gap in my narrative by the contents

tents of his letters, notwithstanding that the representation of my friend F... is not always that which I should have given. I would not, however, alter any of his expressions, by which the reader will be enabled to discover the truth with very little trouble.

LETTER

LETTER I.

BARON F... TO THE COUNT O...

I THANK you, my beloved friend, that you have given me permission to continue with you, even in your absence, the conversation of friendship, which, during your stay here was my greatest pleasure. There is not any person here with whom I could venture to converse, as you are well aware, on account of private transactions; and, independent of that, I despise the character of the people. Since the Prince became a member of their society, and from the moment that you were torn from

from us, I have been friendless in the midst of this populous city.

Z. . . takes it in an easier manner; for, encircled by the fair ones at Venice, he learns to forget the sorrows which he is obliged to share with me when at home. And why should he perplex himself? He desires nothing from the Prince but that which a master would bestow; but I, you know, place him nearer to my heart, and think I can never be too solicitous about his welfare and happiness; and, indeed, I have reason for it. I have now lived with him sixteen years, and exist only for him. At the age of nine years I entered into his service, and since that time I have never been separated from him. I have grown up under his patronage, shared with him his pleasures and misfortunes, and time has converted respect into a sincere attachment. Until now
I looked

I looked upon him as my friend and brother; we basked in the sun-beam of happiness, uninterrupted by the clouds of misery.

Since you have left us, considerable alterations have taken place. The Prince . . . de . . . arrived here last week with a great retinue, and has corrupted our circle of acquaintance with ideas of a tumultuous life. As he and our Prince are so nearly related, and live at present upon good terms, I suspect they will not separate from one another during his stay here, which will last, as I have heard, till the Ascension. His debut has already attracted notice; and for ten days the Prince has been in the midst of gaiety. The stile in which the Prince . . . de . . . has begun his career may be justified upon the ground that his stay here will not be long; but the first part of the business is, that he
has

has induced our Prince to partake of those insidious pleasures, knowing that he could not easily deny him his request, on account of the peculiar connection which exists between their houses; added to this, in a few weeks we must depart from Venice, when he will be obliged to abandon this extraordinary and insufferable mockery of happiness, and which, perhaps, may make a serious impression on his mind.

The Prince ... de ..., it is reported; is here on the business of the order of ... That he has taken advantage of all the acquaintances of our Prince you may easily imagine. He was received into the Bucentauro with great splendor, and pleased himself with the idea that he was characterized as a wit, and one of great spirit; and he has called himself in his correspondences (which he maintains in all parts of the world)
the

the *philosophical Prince*. I know not whether you have ever had the fortune to see him personally. He displays a promising exterior, piercing eyes, and a countenance full of expression. Polite, and unaffected, he entertains (pardon me this expression) a princely respect for the feelings of his inferiors, but at the same time puts great confidence in himself. Who could refuse to pay a doration to so princely a character? and how such a solitary Prince as ours will appear in opposition to such dazzling accomplishments, time itself must discover.

In the arrangement of our affairs, many and great changes have taken place. We possess a new and magnificent house opposite the new Procuracy, because the lodgings at the Moor Hotel were too small for the Prince.

Our

Our household has been augmented by twelve persons. Pages, moors, body-guards, &c. grace our retinue. You complained during your stay here of extravagance; you should be here now to witness the present system.

Our internal arrangements are still the same; only that the Prince, who no longer respects the advice of those he once loved, is become more reserved and cold towards us, and that we very seldom see him or are in his company, except in the hours employed in dressing and undressing him. Under the pretext that we speak the French language very bad, and the Italian not at all, he excludes us from his presence, which would not affect me in any great degree, but that I believe, to speak the truth, he is ashamed of us; and that circumstance displeases me, because

cause I am confident we have not deserved such treatment.

Of all our people (as you wish to know the minutiae) he seems most attached to Biondello, whom he took into his service, as you must remember, when he could not discover the retreat of his former servant from Bremen, and who has become, by this new manner of life, quite a necessary being. This man knows how every thing is going on at Venice, and he employs his time to some purpose. He is as if he had a thousand eyes and a thousand hands to set in motion at once. He contrives all plans, and gains the greater part of his knowledge, as he says, by the help of the gondoliers; for that reason, he has become a great acquisition to the Prince. He makes him acquainted with every new face whom the Prince has met in his societies;

ties ; and the secret information which he gives his Highness has always been found correct. Beside this, he reads and writes the Italian and French in an excellent style, by which means he has already become the Prince's secretary. I must relate to you a trait of fidelity in him, which is indeed very rare to be found in men of his station. Not long ago a merchant of great consequence from Rimini begged to be admitted to the Prince. The matter concerned a particular complaint against Biondello. The Procurator, his former master, who must have been an odd fellow, had for some time lived upon bad terms with his relations. Biondello possessed his confidence, and to him he entrusted all his secrets. As he was upon his death-bed, he made him swear never to disclose them to any one, that his relations might not be benefited by

VOL. I. K them,

them, and gave him, as a reward, a great legacy.

When the will was opened, and his papers inspected, there were found considerable numbers of blanks, to which Biondello alone could furnish the key. He denied that he knew any thing of the matter, gave up to the relations his legacy, and persevered in his fidelity to the injunctions of his deceased master. Great offers were made to him by the relations, but all to no purpose; at last he eluded their threats of forcing him to confession, by entering into the service of the Prince.

This merchant, who was the heir at law, addressed himself to the Prince, and made still greater offers to Biondello if he would discover the secret—but it was all in vain. The Prince interfered, but he remained firm. He confessed however to his Highness, that
secrets

secrets of great importance were confided to him, and he did not deny that the deceased might have acted with too much severity towards his relations; but he added, "he was my good master and benefactor, and with the firmest confidence in my sincerity he died. I was the only friend he left in the world—as such I will never betray my trust, nor act in contradiction to his dying request." In the mean time he gave a hint, that a discovery would not add to the honour of his deceased master. Was not such conduct worthy to be imitated? You may easily imagine that the Prince did not insist upon his violating his vow of fidelity. This extraordinary attachment which he shewed for the deceased, gained him the most unlimited confidence of his royal master.

Happiness attend you, my dear friend. I look back upon our former manner of life with secret pleasure, to which you have contributed in a high degree. I fear we shall never more enjoy those tranquil hours at Venice which we were wont formerly to do, and am much mistaken if the Prince is not of the same way of thinking. The element in which he lives at present is not that in which he can be happy in future, or an experience of sixteen years deceives me. Farewel!

LETTER

LETTER II.

BARON F... TO THE COUNT O...

MAY 18.

I HAD no idea that our stay at Venice would prove so satisfactory as it has done. He has saved the life of a man—I am reconciled to him.

The Prince not long ago suffered himself to be carried home in a chair from the Bicentauro; and two-footmen, with Biondello, conducted him. I know not how it happened, but the chair, which had been hired in haste, broke, and the Prince was obliged to walk on

foot the remainder of the way. Biondello went before. The way lay through several dark streets; and as it was not far from day-break, some of the lamps burnt but faintly, while the others were totally extinguished. They had been walking a quarter of an hour, when Biondello discovered that he had taken the wrong road. The similitude of the bridges had deceived him, and instead of crossing that of St. Mark, they found themselves in *Sestiere* of *Rastello*. It was in one of the bye streets, and not a soul stirring near the spot. They were obliged to turn back to gain, as the best way, one of the principal streets. They had walked but a few steps, when in an adjoining street they distinctly heard the cry of "Murder!" The Prince, unarmed as he was, snatched from one of the servants a stick, and with his usual courage, which you have often witnessed,

nessed, ran towards the place whence the voice issued. Three ruffianlike fellows were just on the point of vanquishing a person, who, with his servant, was defending himself, apparently overcome by fatigue, when the Prince appeared, and prevented the villains from murdering him. His voice, and that of his servants, startled the murderers, who did not expect in such a dismal place to meet with any interruption.

They immediately left their man, after several slight stabs with their daggers, and took flight. Fainting with loss of blood, the wounded man sunk into the arms of the Prince: his conductors then told him, that he had saved the life of the Marquis of Civitella, the nephew of the Cardinal A . . . i. As the Marquis's wounds bled very much, Biondello performed as well as he was

able the office of surgeon, and the Prince immediately saw him taken to the palace of his uncle, which was not far distant from the spot. This done, he left the house, without discovering his rank. But through the means of a footman, who was acquainted with Biondello, he was betrayed. The following morning the Cardinal appeared, an old acquaintance from the Bucen- tauro. The visit lasted an hour; the Cardinal was in great emotion, and when they separated tears stood in his eyes; the Prince also appeared extremely concerned. The same evening his Highness paid a visit to the wounded man, whom the Surgeon affirmed would soon recover. The cloak in which he was wrapped up had in some measure shielded him from the force with which the stabs were given.—Since that accident, not a day has passed over without the Prince paying a visit to the Cardinal, or
re-

receiving one from him; and a great friendship begins to exist between him and that family.

The Cardinal is a venerable man of sixty, with a majestic appearance, but full of gaiety and good health. They think him one of the richest prelates in the whole Republic. Of his enormous fortune he himself is the treasurer, and, although a prudent œconomist, he does not despise the pleasures of the world. This nephew, who is his only heir, does not always possess the good opinion of his uncle. Although the old man is not an enemy to youthful pleasures, the conduct of the nephew appears to exhaust every principle of tolerance in his relation. His dissipated principles, and his licentious manner of living, supported by every vice that is countenanced by the grossest sensuality, make him the terror of all fathers, and the curse of

domestic happiness. This last attack, it is said, was owing to an intrigue which he had concerted with the wife of the **** ambassador: not to mention other troubles, from which only the power and money of the Cardinal could extricate him. But for this the Cardinal might be the most enviable man in all Italy, because he possesses every thing that can make life worth preserving. But his nephew's enormities render the gifts of fortune superfluous; and the continual fear of not being able to find an heir worthy of his property, diminishes the comfort that his Eminence would otherwise enjoy in such a state of affluence.

I have this information from Biondello. In this man the Prince has acquired a treasure. Every day he makes himself more worthy of estimation, and we almost hourly discover in him some
new

new talent. Not long ago the Prince, being over-fatigued, could not sleep. The night-lamp was extinguished, and no bell could waken the valet de chambre, who it was soon found was gone to sleep out of the house with an opera girl. The Prince had the resolution to get up himself, to call one of his people. He had not gone far, when he heard at a little distance from him enchanting music. He followed the sound, and found Biondello playing upon the flute in his room, with his fellow-servants round him. He commanded him to proceed. With admirable skill Biondello repeated the same air, with the most delightful variations and niceties of a virtuoso. The Prince, who is a connoisseur in music, declared, that he might play with great confidence in the best concert.

“ I must dismiss this man,” said he to me the following morning; “ I am unable to recompence him according to his merits.”

Biondello, who heard these words, came towards him.

“ Gracious Sir, if you do that, you deprive me of my best reward.”

“ You are worthy of something better than being a servant,” said my master. “ I will not any longer be a bar to the improvement of your fortune.”

“ Do not press upon me any other fortune, gracious Sir, than that which I have chosen myself.”

“ And to neglect such a talent—No! I must not consent.”

“ Then

“ Then permit me, your Highness, to exercise it every now and then in your presence.”

To this proposition the Prince immediately consented, and Biondello obtained an apartment adjoining the sleeping-room of his master, where he lulled him to repose by soft and delicate airs, and awoke him in the morning with the same melody. The Prince insisted upon increasing his salary, which he did not accept without requesting his Highness to permit him to let it lie in his hands, as a capital which perhaps at some future period might be of service to him. The Prince expected that he would soon apply for his money, or some other favour; and whatever it might have been the Prince would not have denied it. Farewell, my best of friends. I expect with impatience news from R***n.

LETTER

LETTER III.

THE BARON F... TO THE COUNT O...

JUNE 4.

THE Marquis Civitella, who is now entirely recovered from his wounds, was introduced last week by the Cardinal his uncle to the Prince, and since that day he has followed him like his shadow. Biondello, I suspect, has not told me the truth concerning the character of the Marquis, at least he is gone too far in his description.

He is to all appearance a most amiable man, and irresistible in company. It is not

not possible to be angry with him; the first sight of him has conquered all my prejudices. Figure to your mind a man of the most enchanting person, a face full of uncommon expression, an insinuating tone of voice, possessed of the most fluent eloquence, united with all the advantages of the best education. He has none of that low despicable pride which in general so much disgraces the nobility here.

Every action teems with the energy of youth, benevolence, and warm sensibility. They must, in relating his extravagances, have gone far beyond the truth; I never saw a more perfect contrast than his conduct is to that which is represented of him. If he be really so licentious as Biondello asserted, then he is a Siren, whom no creature is able to resist.

Towards

Towards me he acted with unreserved confidence. He confessed to me with the most agreeable frankness, that he did not stand in high favour with his uncle the Cardinal, and perhaps he might have deserved his censure. But he was seriously resolved to amend his life; and he declared the merit of his reformation would entirely fall to the Prince: In the meantime he hoped, through his interference, to be entirely reconciled with his uncle, because he had the highest confidence of the Prince's character. He had wanted till now a friend and instructor, and he hoped to acquire both in the person of the Prince.

The Prince exercises all the authority of a tutor over him, and guides him with the paternal watchfulness and solicitude of a Mentor. This confidence also gives him certain advantages, and
he

he knows perfectly well how to make them valuable. He seldom quits the presence of the Prince, he partakes of all his pleasures, and has lately become one of the Bucentauro; and that is lucky for him,—he was before too young. Wherever he goes with the Prince, he charms the society by his accomplishments, which he is well skilled in turning to the greatest advantage. Nobody, they say, ever could succeed in reclaiming him; and should the Prince accomplish this Herculean labour, he will deserve the highest encomiums for his conduct. But I fear very much the tide will turn, and Mentor become the pupil of his scholar; to this end all the present circumstances seem to lead.

The Prince ** d** is departed, and indeed to the greatest satisfaction of all here, my master not excepted.

What

what I foretold, dear O , is thus happily accomplished. Two such opposite characters could not long, I was confident, maintain a good understanding with each other. The Prince . . . d . . . was not long at Venice before I observed a schism in their friendship; from which circumstance the Prince was in danger of losing all his former admirers. Wherever he went, he found this rival in his way, who possessed the artful quality of turning every advantage in which our Prince was deficient to good account. He had a variety of little manoeuvres at his command, which our master, from a noble sensibility, disdained. From such circumstances, in a short time, he procured a number of friends of his own description to follow his advice and participate in his schemes*. It would have

* In the unfavourable opinion which the Baron F forms of our Prince, in several parts of the first letter, every one who has the happiness to know

have been better for the Prince if he had not considered him as an enemy; but had looked forward to the time when this would have been the case. But now he has advanced too far into the stream, to reach the shore without difficulty. Although these trifles, by habit, have acquired an ascendancy over him, and probably he may despise them in his heart; yet his pride will not permit him to renounce them; naturally supposing that his submission will appear like conviction, rather than a free disposition to confess his abhorrence of them. The satirical manner in which they always conversed, and the spirit of rivalry that influenced his opponent, have also seized upon him. And to preserve his conquests, and to maintain himself upon the dangerous principles to which the

know him intimately, will think with me, that he went beyond the limits of his judgment, and will ascribe it to the prejudice of this young observer.

AN. OF THE COUNT O....

opinion

opinion of the world had riveted him, he is believed to augment the allurements of fashion and gaiety, and this cannot be acquired but by splendour equal to his rank ; on that account he has been involved in perpetual banquets, concerts, and gaming. And this strange madness diffused itself through their households, although they are in general more watchful of the principle of honour, than their masters ; he is therefore obliged to gain the favour of his people by liberality. A long chain of poverty is the unavoidable consequence of this unhappy connection.

We have got rid at last of the rival ; but what he has subverted cannot so easily be restored. The treasure of the Prince is exhausted ; all that he had saved by a strict œconomy is gone ; we must hasten from Venice, or else be involved in debt, which, till now, he has
carefully

carefully avoided. Our departure is certainly to take place as soon as fresh remittances arrive.

The many unnecessary expences he has incurred would be of little consequence if his happiness increased in proportion; but he was never less happy than at present! He feels that he is not now what he formerly was—he is dissatisfied with himself, and rushes into new dissipation, to avoid the piercing consequences of reflection. One new acquaintance follows another, which is fatal to his reformation. I know not what may happen, but we must depart—We have no other safety—But, dear friend, as yet I have not received a single line from you—how must I interpret this long silence?

LETTER

LETTER IV.

THE BARON F... TO THE COUNT
D'O...

JUNE 12.

RECEIVE my thanks, dear friend, for that token of your remembrance which young B...hl brought over to me. But what do you say about letters which I was to have received? I have not received any letters from you till now; not even a line. What a circuit must those which I now receive have taken! For the future, dear O... when you honour me with your letters, send them by Trient, and under cover to my master.

We

We have at length been obliged, my dear friend, to take that step which we had hitherto so fortunately avoided. The notes were kept back, even at this pressing emergency—for the first time were they kept back; we were absolutely compelled to have recourse to a usurer, and the Prince willingly pays something more for the sake of secrecy. The worst of these unpleasant circumstances is, that it delays our departure.

Such was the state of our affairs when the Prince and I came to an explanation. The whole of the business had passed through Biòndello's hands, and the Jew was present before I had the least suspicion of it.

I was grieved to the heart to see the Prince reduced to such an extremity, and it revived in me all the recollection
of

of the past, and all my fears for the future; so that I certainly might have looked a little melancholy and gloomy when the usher left the room. The Prince, to whom the preceding scene had doubtless been by no means pleasing, walked backwards and forwards with uneasiness. The rouleaus of gold were yet lying on the table—I was standing at the window, and employing myself in counting the windows in the *Procuratie*—there was a long silence. At length he addressed himself to me—

“ F...” he began, “ I cannot bear any dismal faces about me.”

I was silent.

“ Why do you not answer me?—
Do I not see that it will break your
heart not to pour forth your vexation?
I command you to speak. You may,
perhaps,

perhaps, wonder what extraordinary affairs I am concealing from you."

"If I am gloomy, gracious Sir," replied I, "it is only because I do not see you in better spirits."

"I know," continued he, "that you think I have acted wrongly for some time past—that every step which I have taken has displeased you—that—
What does the Count d'O... say in his letters?"

"The Count d'O... has not written to me."

"Not written? Why will you not confess the truth? You mutually lay open your hearts to each other—you and the Count. I know it very well: however, you need not conceal it from

me. I shall not introduce myself into your secrets."

"The Count d'O..." replied I, "has only answered the first of three letters which I wrote to him."

"I was wrong," continued he; "is it not so? (taking up one of the rouleaus) I should not have acted thus."

"I see very plainly that the step was *necessary*."

"I ought not to have involved myself in such a necessity."

I remained silent.

"Indeed, I ought not to have ventured beyond that point in the completion of my wishes, so as to have become a grey-

greybeard as soon as I became a man. Because I once step forth from the dreary uniformity of my former life, and look around me to see whether there will spring up no source of enjoyment for me in any other quarter; because I—”

“ If it were only a trial, gracious Sir, I have nothing more to say; for the experience which it has procured for you would not be purchased at too dear a rate, though it cost three times as much. It hurts me, I must confess, that the opinion of the world should have to decide upon the question, How you can be happy?”

“ Fortunate man, who can thus despise the opinion of the world! I am its creature, and must be its slave. What else are we governed by, but opinion? Opinion is every thing with

us princes. Opinion is our nurse and educatress in infancy, our legislatress and mistress in our manly years, and our crutch in old age. Take from us what we receive from opinion, and the meanest of the humblest class is better off than we are; for his fate has taught him a philosophy which enables him to bear it. A prince who laughs at opinion, is his own destroyer; like the priest who denies the existence of a god."

" And yet, gracious Prince—"

" I know what you are going to say. I can pass the boundary of the circle which my birth has drawn around me.—But can I eradicate from my memory all the foolish ideas which education and early habit have planted in it, and which a hundred thousand of you fools have ever been impressing
with

with more and more firmness? Every one wishes to be what he is to *perfection*, and our existence consists, in short, in *appearing happy*. If we cannot be so according to your mode, shall we not for that reason be so at all? If we can no longer taste of joy immediately from its uncorrupted source, shall we not deceive ourselves with an artificial enjoyment, shall we not snatch a small compensation even from the very hand which robs us?"

" You once found these joys in your own heart."

" But if I do not any longer find them there!—Oh, how came we to fall upon this subject? Why must you awake in me the recollection of that, even if I have had recourse to this tumult of voluptuousness, in order to stifle a voice which renders my life miserable—
in

in order to lull to rest this inquisitive reason which moves to and fro in my brain like a sharp sickle, and with every new stroke cuts off a new branch of my happiness?"

" Best of princes."

He got up, and walked backwards and forwards in the room with unusual agitation, and soon after left it.

Pardon, dear O... this tedious letter. You wish to know every trifle which concerns the Prince, and I may justly rank his moral philosophy among them. I know that the state of his mind is important to you, and his actions, I am aware, are on that account also important to you. I have for that reason faithfully transcribed all that I recollected of this conversation. I shall at a future period inform.

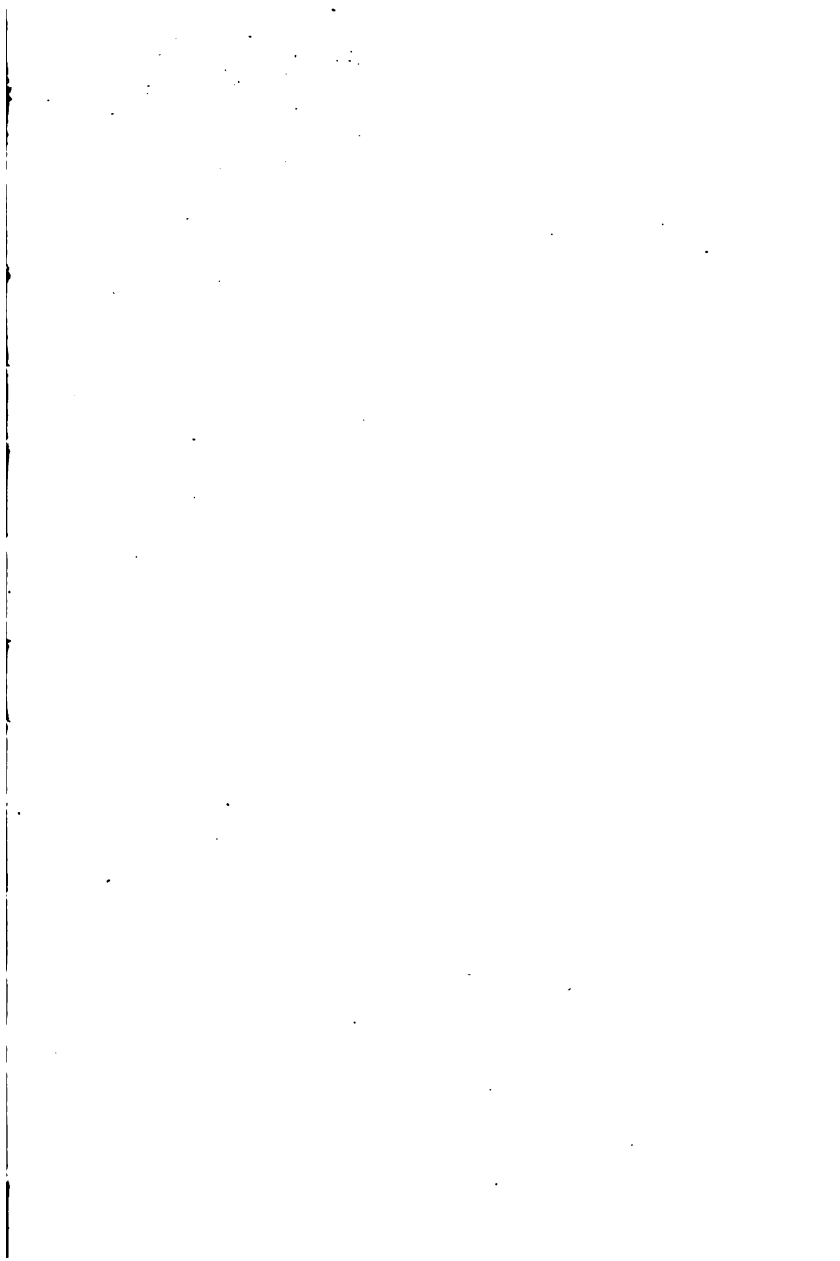
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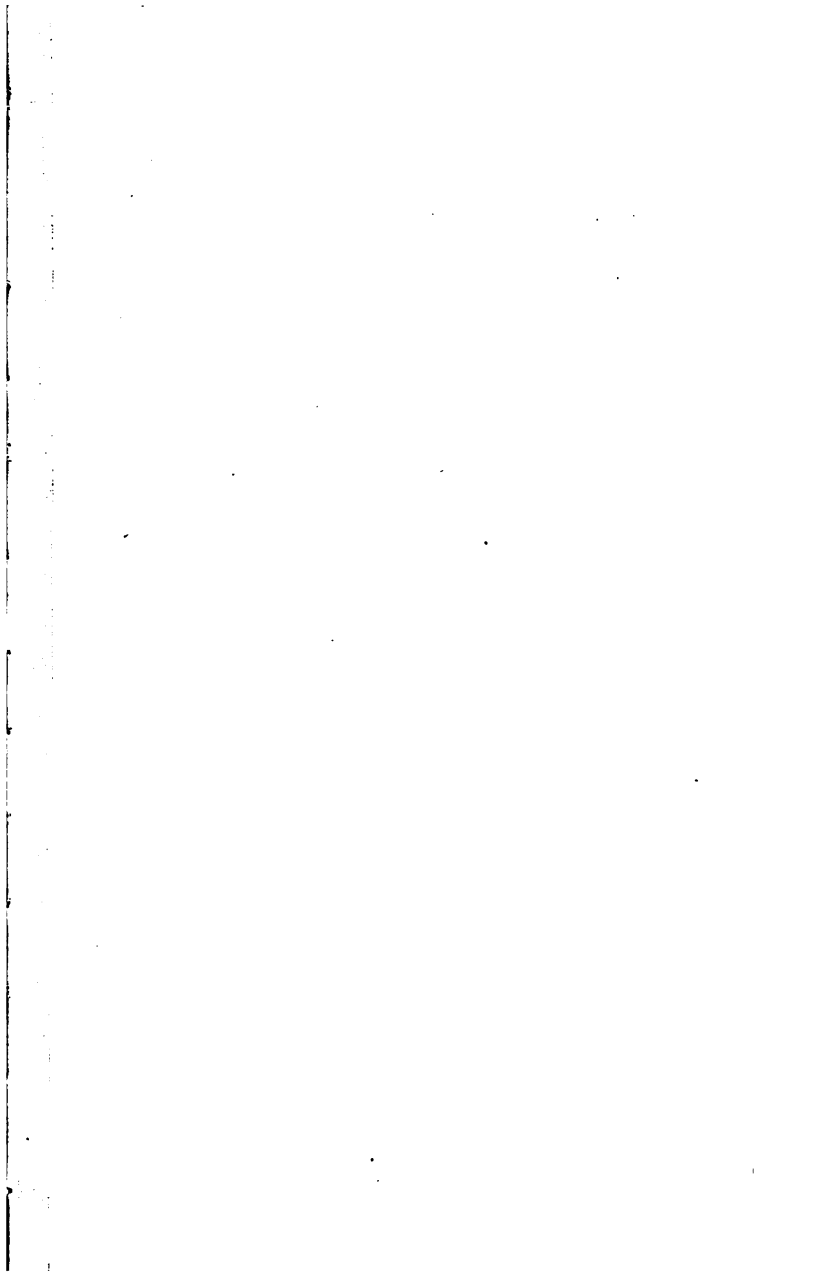
form you of a new occurrence, which you could hardly have been led to expect from a dialogue like that of to-day. Farewell.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

C. WHITTINGHAM, *Printer*,
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