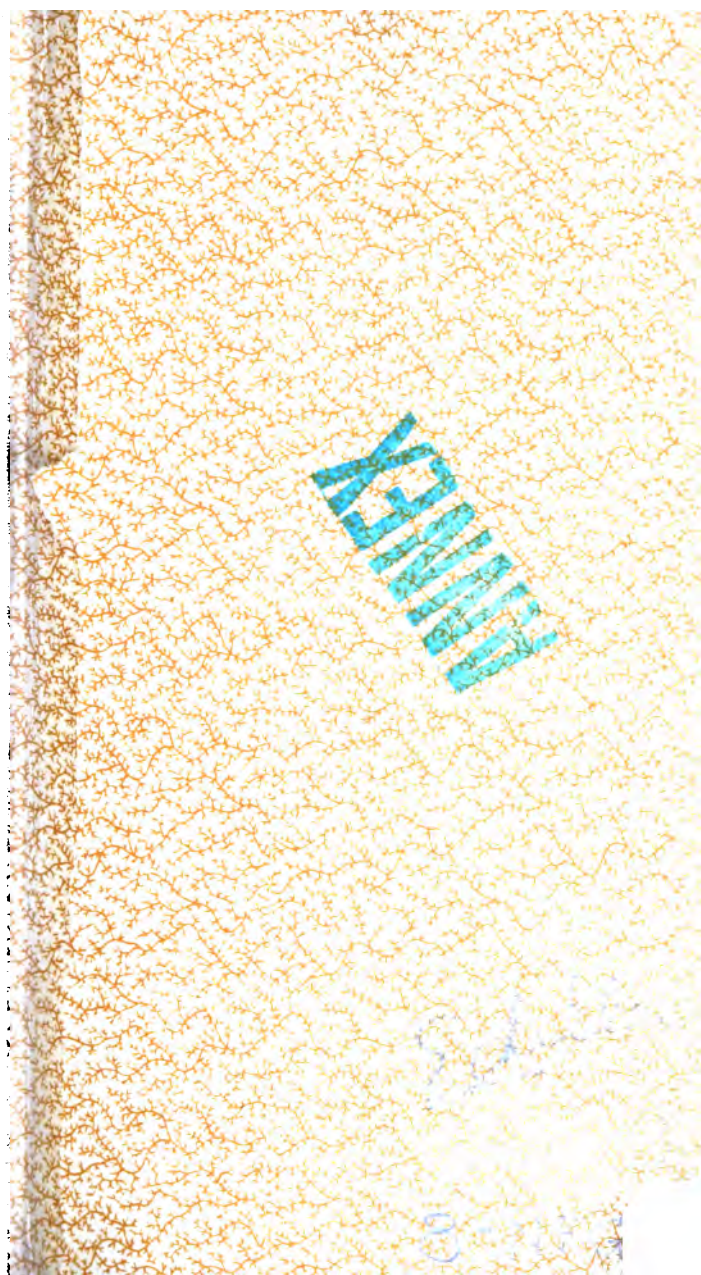


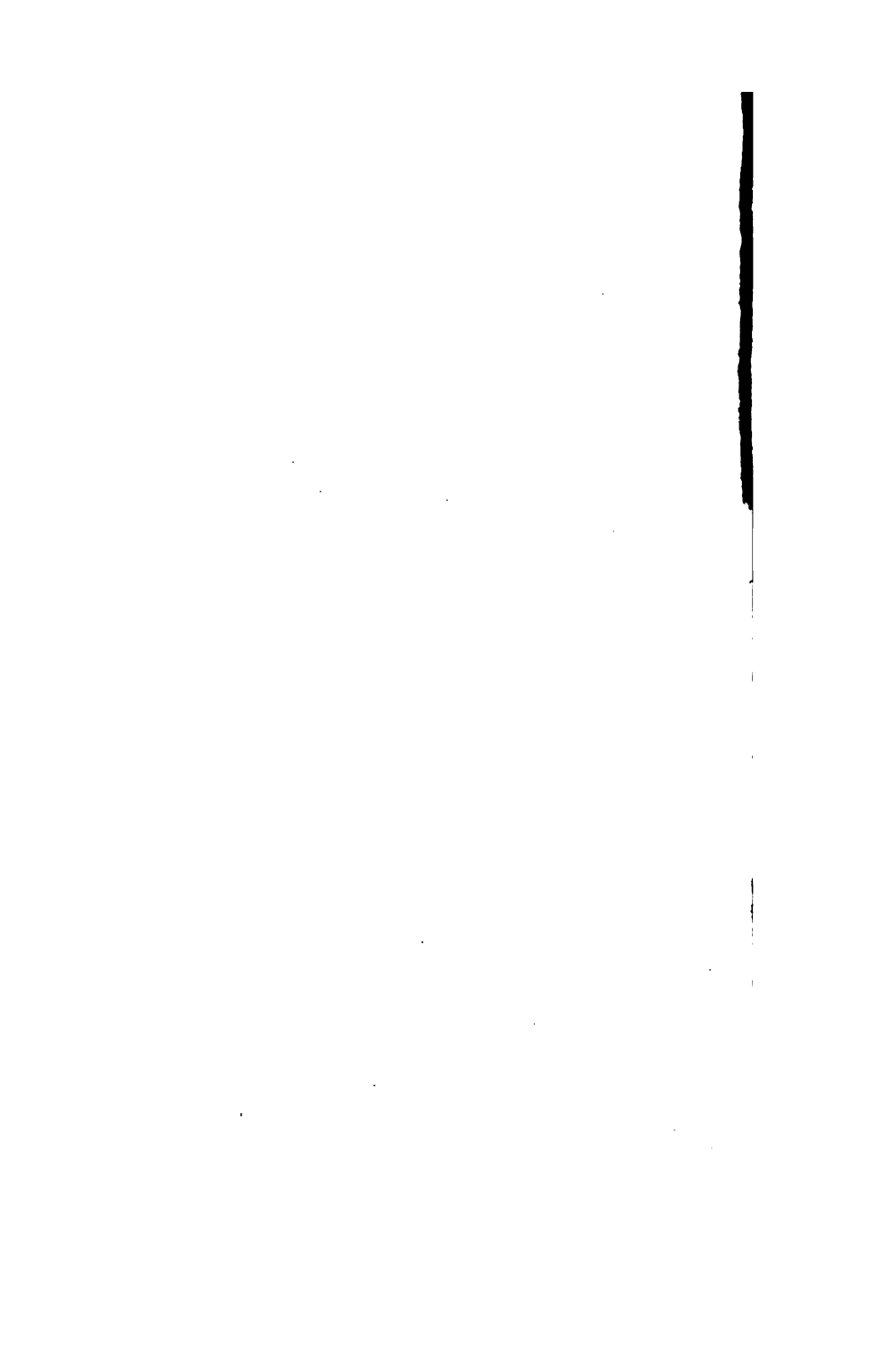
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THE
ARMENIAN;
OR,
THE GHOST SEER.

THE
LAW
OF
THE
STATE

THE
A R M E N I A N;

OR,

THE GHOST SEER.

A HISTORY FOUNDED ON FACT

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN OF

F. SCHILLER,

AUTHOR OF THE ROBBERS, DON CARLOS, &c.

By
THE REV. W. RENDLER.

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THE

GHOST SEER.

“**W**ITHOUT having any settled plan, I passed the first town-gate. It was the same to me whither I went; and wrapt up in contemplating the prospect of any future day, I walked through the street, without observing the objects which surrounded me.

“ The road that I pursued was encompassed with small bushes, which by degrees grew thicker and thicker, as I pursued the track.

VOL. IV.

B

“ Stop!”

“ Stop ! ” —cried a thundering voice, and immediately a frightful fellow stood before me, who held a cocked pistol to my breast. I appeared willing to deliver up to him the property that I had about me ; but when he was off his guard, I wrenched the pistol from his hand, and at the same moment, plunged a dagger into his breast. I made myself master of his money. The pass-port too, which I found in his pocket, struck me, that such a thing might, one time or other, be also useful to me, and I secured it. By the assistance of his clothes, I disguised myself so that no person could possibly know me. Thus was I secure against any warrants that might be issued to apprehend me ; and extremely happy that so fortunate an adventure had at once enriched, and enabled me to pursue my journey with greater security.

“ The

“ The extravagant ideas which I had of myself, and upon which I built the greatest expectations, were soon dissipated by experience; for in every city that I travelled through, I found the total reverse of that which I had supposed would take place. I flattered myself, that I should be received every where with open arms; and with what astonishment did I learn, that no credit was given to the idle and bombastic tales that had been circulated respecting me! I cannot conceive how it happened, that I put up with such gross affronts, and why I did not seek to revenge the insult in a manner which would have taught the people in future to credit my assertions. Was it for want of worldly experience? Or did the charms of novelty so much enchant me, as to prevent any other circumstance from making an impression upon my mind?—Both might, perhaps, have influenced my conduct; together

with the piercing reflection, that I was an abandoned outcast upon the world. My former resolute spirit seemed quite lost; and an irresistible power pressed me to return to my parents*. As long as my money lasted, however, all went on very well; but I observed with sorrow, that it decreased very much, and that the furies of want would soon begin to attack me. I saw no way to prevent the dreadful consequences of such a misfortune—I confess that my indolence sometimes overpowered me with shame; but still retaining my old prejudices in favor of my abilities, I went into an inn, with scarcely any thing in my pocket, and suffered myself to be treated like a gentleman, without ever thinking in what way I was to satisfy the landlord. I could with very little trouble change my dress, and disfigure my face and person, so that no one could

* Or it was perhaps the piercing voice of conscience.

dis-

discover me; and in case of necessity I intended to practise that artifice.

“The greater part of the strangers who dined with me at the same table, called for cards after the cloth was removed. They invited me to play. The valuable ring I had on my finger, I suspected, attracted their notice: flattering themselves, no doubt, that I should fall an easy prey, from my youth and inexperience. They played very high; but I soon found, from the many dishonest schemes I pursued, that I had the advantage of them: I stripped them of almost every thing they had. In the height of anger, they gave up the game; and elevated with my success, I reproached myself for not having followed before such a lucrative business.

“From that moment I resolved to make it my principal study; and I was so successful,

cessful, that in a little time it led me to keep a coach and servants. My youth, I thought, would be a bar to that respect, which is, in general, paid to age ; so to obviate that difficulty, I contrived to make myself appear a man of about thirty years of age : and as, at that time, I was as tall as I am now, the deception was practised with effect ; for, by an artificial beard, brown manly colour, and false testimonials, I procured an entrance into all eminent societies.

“ Besides gaming, I did not neglect to satisfy my attachment for extraordinary performances. At every place where I resided, I played some trick or other, for which they generally remembered me. But they were all, however, of such a nature, that they did not do any material harm. Thus, for example, many an eminent prelate became the object of laughter, if I ornamented his cowl with a jack-
 afs's

af's head. Many a lady was out of countenance, when I assured her, that instead of a red ribbon, she had put on a grey one; and she at last found this a truth before a looking-glass. Another scarcely could recover herself from a fit, when they told her, that she resembled a black lady to a hair. And a third was half dead, when she perceived, that the beauty-spots on her face, which she had managed with great care, looked like sun, moon, and stars, and had all the colours of the rain-bow.

“ Of that kind were the tricks I played: I only mention them to you, not to leave a blank in my narrative, but will not trouble you with them farther, because I think they are mere trifles, and fit only for the stage of a mountebank. I very seldom had any other views than those of momentary pleasure, and to see myself admired, and looked upon by those

in whose company I practised such foibles: they have not the least influence upon my future history. You may easily inform yourself of those mysterious pranks, if you procure the book of *Albertus Magnus*.

“ I must now turn to those events which originated with me, or have at least been guided by me, in order that I might ascend to the highest pinnacle of my ambition. The pious drone, who neglects to make use of the wings which nature has bestowed upon him, will, no doubt, say, that they are the offspring of malice, revenge, and deception, and stamp them with his detestation; because, from his natural stupidity, he is not able to fathom the design.

“ Many are rendered famous by following the systems of their predecessors; but I was without that advantage, and de-

depended entirely upon myself. I acted coolly; but not without machines, the smallest motion of which I had calculated with the greatest accuracy. Villains, in general, destroy those whom accident throws in their way. I only committed murder when I discovered any enemies to my plans being put in execution! You, Prince, will see I played by that a capital character.

“ Every rash action, added the Count O., is but of a short duration.

“ The Armenian endeavoured to conceal his repentance, by the ecstasy into which he laboured to throw us and himself. But it had seized so powerfully upon his hardened heart, that, in spite of all his artifices, we could perceive his remorse, and he very soon became exhausted.

“ We were obliged to permit him to go away. And that his health might not entirely be destroyed, which was already very much injured by the terrible prison in which he had been confined, under the leaden roofs of St. Mark’s place; fearing that he might be prevented by a sudden death, or madness, from giving us the key to events of so much consequence, the Colonel interceded with the best effect to remedy his situation.

“ After a few days he felt himself sufficiently recovered to continue his narrative, which he seemed inclined to do.

“ He might, perhaps, have reflected on his past life ; for his self-satisfied countenance had changed very much, and his high-toned speech was lowered ; although he every now and then displayed his savage disposition, and on that account it was very difficult for us to judge

of his true character. From his appearance, I supposed he was influenced by the effects of returning sensibility, and yet endeavouring all in his power to suppress it."

He continued.

" What will give you an idea of my character, I have related to you as sincerely as any biographer can do of himself; the period until my thirty-second year, (which indeed contains so much that I could fill up several folio volumes) I shall run through very briefly. It contains nothing that concerns your history, nor does it cause in me such dreadful reflections as the subsequent days of my life.

" In this space of time, I endeavoured to obtain that which was necessarily wanting on account of my youth. I studied with infinite assiduity the knowledge of mankind, which was easily obtained

from the multitude of propitious events that constantly occurred to assist me in my speculations.

“ During that time I travelled through all Europe, and a part of Asia and Africa. I also procured partizans at several courts. With their assistance, I played my tricks in every department in which they were concerned. This flattered my ambition, which aimed at nothing less than to be governor of some state.”

“ And that was really your expectation?” said the Prince, hastily.

“ And I should certainly have accomplished my aim,” answered he, “ if I could have remained undiscovered one quarter of a year longer.”

“ One would think it almost impossible, that an idea so extravagantly absurd should have entered your mind, and yet
you

you endeavoured to carry it into effect, notwithstanding all the difficulties that surrounded you! But how was it possible for you to procure such partizans in the cabinets of the great, upon whose influence you could depend?—Are not persons of integrity elected to such employments; men who are proof against corruption?”

“ Oh! my gracious Prince, if other people doubted the possibility of accomplishing a purpose, I reckoned with the greatest certainty upon its attainment. I frequently suggested to them new plans, and suddenly the work was finished. They looked at it with all the astonishment that a blind man would do upon the world; were he suddenly to be restored to sight. No one suspected its existence, no one comprehended its design. Even those who were employed on it, very often did not know what build-

building they were constructing, when they were putting the finishing stroke to it."

" You forget yourself—you load me with new mysteries, without having unravelled the first. I should like to know by what means you succeeded to bring the persons engaged in the secret cabinets of the different courts you mention, so entirely to your interests?"

" To your reply, that the great only elect men of undoubted sincerity to such employments, I could, if I wished, prove to you quite the contrary; and that the greatest treacheries have already been committed by such people. But I did not want to make use of such means as they could procure me!—The method by which I enchanted them was, to indulge their passions. The miser's hands I filled with money—the frantic, I threw into

into enthusiasm—I painted before the fancy of the ambitious, the satisfaction of his wishes—those that sought revenge, I assisted in fulfilling their desires—and the voluptuous became my foil. Oh! you will scarcely believe what unbounded influence I often obtained with the most conscientious, by procuring them a pair of blue languishing eyes, or by the assistance of a pretended virgin—according as the taste of my subjects required.—There was not one in whom I did not discover a weak side, by which I could guide him at my pleasure; and sovereigns very often listened to my inventions. I tell you this last for your own tranquillity, my Prince; as it proves, that others were in a similar situation with yourself.”

“No more of this—your answer is not satisfactory; I wish rather to draw new questions from it. From whence did you, in the first place, acquire all those
large

large sums, which were necessary, as you said yourself, to feed avaricious men? — You could not possibly acquire sufficient by gaming to do that, and support, at the same time, the pageantry which you were obliged to display?”

“ That I could not forward all my plans by gaming, I own, though I acquired large sums by it. But having adopted a title to my own fancy, it procured me easy access to the best of company; I resorted likewise to a variety of other methods, I forged hand-writings, and manufactured false bank-notes; and by that means I carried on a genteel rogueish trade. I will relate but one of my tricks to you, to convince you of the possibility of this,—

“ At . . . n, whither I travelled for the purpose of procuring sixty thousand dollars, which I wanted for the corruption of a minister of the court of . . . —I gave myself

myself out for the Duke of . . . — This Prince was, as I knew for certain, upon his travels, and residing at that time in . . . incognito. This lucky accident was assisted by his resembling me very much in his person ; and what was wanting, I easily supplied by art. The conversation which I had with him, whilst on a visit at his court, enabled me, without any difficulty, to imitate his gestures, and other peculiarities, that were characteristical. I also clothed my servants with the same livery as his. Very little prudence was then required to manage the rest. Who would have mistrusted me ? For to make the deception complete, I wrote false letters for the Duke, and sent them several days before my arrival there ; which obtained for me a good reception. I soon perceived, that they thought it a great honour to furnish me with jewels, and supply me with great sums of money. So fortunate a cir-

circumstance soon raised me to a state of absence."—

“ Incredible audacity!—But was you not afraid of being discovered?”

“ Not in the least. Even those who had seen the Duke were deceived, and my extraordinary assurance was of great assistance to me. The real Duke too was at a sufficient distance from me not to discover the plot. Besides that, I did not give out directly, that I was the Duke himself; but only made use of such favourable circumstances as would induce them to believe me to be him. I gave myself out for the Count Sta.— This was the name under which the real Duke travelled—and they whispered to one another, that they were certain it was the Duke . . . but they did not choose to call me so to my face, because it was known that I travelled secretly, and that
I did

I did not stay in a place where I was known.

“ Suppose, for instance, I suspected any one of treachery, it was very easy for me to change my appearance, and to make myself entirely unknown, which I could readily perform. In your own history you will find examples of it, which I omit here, to avoid being too circumstantial.

“ As soon as I had collected my treasure, I took a journey into the country, under the pretext of paying a visit to one of my acquaintances. Having penetrated some way into the forest I was obliged to pass through, all about me was immediately changed, for every thing was prepared for that purpose. My carriage became of another form; my horses were changed from bays to black; one of my servants sat by my side as my wife; the
others

others were entirely metamorphosed; and I exchanged my title for that of major. It was impossible for any one to know me again! For appearance sake, I left several of my servants and some large boxes behind. They indeed knew not who I was, for I took them a few days before, for that purpose, into my service; and the trunks contained nothing of any value, by which the good landlord could satisfy himself for my account; they were all filled up with earth and stones.

“That is vile!—But could you always trust your footmen, who were acquainted with your tricks, and were obliged to act their part in them?—Were you not afraid of being betrayed by them?”

“They were all so much involved in my interest, that they feared the discovery as much as I did. And, besides,
I had

I had only cunning people in my service, such as understood the mere movement of my eye-balls, and who, before I engaged them, had been accustomed to deceit and rascality.—It was a long while before I could muster a tribe, to whom I could entrust the execution of my schemes; and for that reason, I sent those into the other world, that I suspected. They enjoyed the best life that people of that description could wish for! They had a superfluity of every thing. I very seldom troubled them with any business; but when I did, it was of such a nature that they executed it willingly, for it cost them neither trouble nor drops of sweat. And as they could display great characters, mountebank tricks, and wonders, they were sure of not being discovered; as they told me, that by those means they contrived to have themselves held in the highest respect. Believe me, Prince,
those

... were very much attached to me, and have fulfilled my smallest wishes, and feared me so much, that they were unable to describe it. An ignorant woman now made them tremble, and describing this extraordinary and rare phenomenon, which I formerly had never known, to infill them with the idea, that supernatural powers were at my command."

"But how could I fright those people, who are so much call'd cunning and crafty, who have experienced the contrary, and are well reflect'd, that you made use of their own instruments in the execution of your plans, when your influence with supernatural powers would have been sufficient?"

"This is a just observation. But consider the argument, what an effect the influence of such powers is skilfully managed.

naged. It is but natural to expect great things from him, whom we once have seen perform a miracle; at least we do not doubt the want of ability, but conclude, that he begins and ceases at pleasure. But you must consider, that I only gave my people inconsiderable characters to play; the capital part I performed myself; and they always found something extraordinary in their part, though they assisted me individually to finish the whole."

" I must confess, that you always acted with the greatest precaution. But I must go back to my former questions, one of which only you have answered to my satisfaction, namely: the way you got the large sums of money to defray the expences of your plans. How you pleased the fanatic, and how you satisfied the revengeful and voluptuous, I can easily imagine; but what could the ambitious

expect of you, as you could not dispose of titles, or lucrative employments?"

" Very much, Prince; for before I applied to any one, and previous to my becoming closely connected with a person; (for I avoided carefully the appearance of seeking their friendship, and always contrived it so, that they sought for my acquaintance first,) I gave those persons such proofs of my power, that they were easily led to expect much from the connection. And we find no great difficulty in crediting every thing that tends to promote the accomplishment of our wishes. Extraordinary as it may seem, they sometimes obtained from me what I promised, though the difficulties that presented themselves were unbounded.

" It was not my intention to be so circumstantial in my account of this period

riod of my life, but only to point out the consequences, which were produced by my actions;—but I read it in your countenance, gracious Prince, that you will not be satisfied with it; and I begin on that account the history of another part of my life, which of itself would make me notorious; though it ought to be thrown in the back ground, when compared with that which follows.

“ The Court of*** which at that time took part in every war, and at the conclusion of it prescribed the conditions of peace, seemed to nourish some creatures, who would become useful to me, as soon as I wanted their assistance: with that view I travelled there.

“ To discover those that could be at all useful to me in the execution of my plans, was my first endeavour. I had not long to seek for them; they soon

presented themselves to me. These were the two first secretaries. Through their hands passed the most important matters that concerned the government. They were the oracles of the ministers, who troubled themselves with no other part of the business, than that of agreeing to the plans proposed to them by their secretaries; and, if requisite, signing their names, although fame founded their praise, and extolled their wisdom.

“ In short, the first ministers, who had no other merit, than that of having sprung from ancient families, were decorated with the ribbands, and enjoyed the titles, whilst the secretaries performed the labour. You are astonished, but it is really the fact, though few had a knowledge of it; for the honourable and learned private Councillor, Baron . . . had a pension, on account of his old age, which rendered him no longer capable, notwithstanding his great abilities, of transacting

aëting any business for the state. Those who were in office, had only to thank one person for their situation, who did not regard their being adequate to the station they filled ; but only, whether they had handsome features, and were well made. Some I must except, but they were either ambassadors, or had little influence in the cabinet.

“ All the principal business fell upon the two secretaries ; and through them alone, the court obtained and augmented that dignity, which the before mentioned Baron had procured.

“ It is incredible, what two men can perform, when placed in such a situation, if they act together. One passionately loved the lady the only daughter of the conference-minister ; and the other aimed at a lucrative sinecure. But as both their designs were thwarted, they,

for that reason, became sincerely attached to each other. They were of plebeian birth; and neither the lady, nor the elevated situation could possibly be obtained for them, according to the arrangement. Their superiors would not suffer them to be too powerful, for fear it should depreciate their own authority. Those two men laboured with great industry, and yet neither of them could advance a step farther in the attainment of his object. The first secretary L. . . . who was in love with the lady, thought of gaining her heart by his great merits and talents; and he was not entirely mistaken; for she valued superior abilities more than high birth. But how could she be aware that he was so accomplished a character, when all that he performed was attributed to the account of another? and the laws of etiquette hindered him from forming any other acquaintance with her, than that which some stolen looks pro-

procured him. He did not imagine, though the lady loved him sincerely, that she dared give him her hand; as she reckoned eighteen degrees of nobility! A dreadful idea, to connect eighteen degrees of birth with a plebeian of merit!—yet he did not despair.

“ The other secretary D... had for many years faithfully exerted himself in his situation; he undertook the most important business, and accomplished it with credit: but he was continually disappointed, for all the vacant situations were given to strangers. They both had daily business together; and their bad fortune and repeated disappointments were the subject of conversation, and the cause of a very intimate friendship; which is, in such circumstances, very rare: for we generally wish to surpass each other, and instead of expressing real friendship, exhibit masks of hypo-

crisy. They justly considered, that, if there were a possibility to arrive at the summit of their wishes, it could only be brought about by their being united. And this at length happened. L... fought every opportunity to praise the talents of D... to his superior, and was only satisfied when D... (who was in great favor with the lady's father) spoke a good word in his behalf, on account of his beloved.

“ Both were very near gaining their aim. L... was beloved by his girl; and, elevated with the idea, supposed, like lovers in general, that things might easily be settled after their union. D... also was on the point of obtaining an eligible situation as a counsellor, with the prospect of procuring a still better employment; when, behold, all suddenly fell to the ground.—And who brought this event about? It was I.

“ I de-

“ I destroyed their plans, in order that I might restore them again to happiness, when it should seem to them totally impossible. I could then with the greater certainty rely upon their gratitude for my generosity.

“ Observe how I undertook that difficult task, and how I persevered in it!

“ Into the house of the lady's father I had long before acquired access. I assumed the character of an Italian Baron, by name *Vatiffello*, and gaming, which he was fond of, procured me a ready admittance to his table. To increase his esteem, I made use of no other method, than to let him always be successful when we played. He was weak enough not to see through this manœuvre; and I, with a most chearful countenance, submitted to every thing that he proposed.

posed.—We were, when his business permitted, always together. I therefore became, in a great measure, necessary to promote his comfort. At his house I also contracted an intimacy with both the secretaries; and L... must acknowledge himself beholden to me for engaging the attention of the father, purposely, that he might entertain himself undisturbed with his beloved.

“ This seemed to be the time for blowing up the mine, which I had so artfully constructed. It was necessary to render the courtship of the Secretary with the old gentleman’s daughter suspicious, without his being able to guess at my intentions.—This was admirably effected. The poor young lady very soon received positive orders from her father, to avoid the company of the secretary.

“ She

“ She now could only weep in the solitude of her chamber over her misfortunes. L... was received coolly, when he came to the house; and too soon perceived the cause from which this treatment originated. He therefore discontinued his visits, and sought in vain to recover his lost repose in the silent path of retirement, where nought could disturb him in the hallowed pleasure of pouring forth the sorrows of his soul. Believe not, gracious Prince, that this is an addition of my own; no, the poor fellow had, indeed, loved so passionately, that he was almost driven to madness, and could not apply any longer to business.

“ D... did not obtain the promised situation, but was thrown into prison, because a document of consequence was missing, which had been put into his hands. He was suspected of having sent

it treacherously to a foreign court.—Reflect, my Prince, how this circumstance must have operated upon the mind of poor L...; for he justly feared he should be involved in D...’s affair. This would indeed have happened, had I not suspected, that if I any longer delayed unraveling the business, it might in the end become a task of great difficulty, or, at least, ultimately deprive me of what I expected to arise from my scheme.—On that account I hastened to accomplish all I had undertaken.

“ I pursued the steps of poor L..., in one of his solitary walks. For some time I could discover no traces of him. I ascended the steep, and penetrated into the deepest part of the wood, at several points, before I found him. I was on the point of giving up the search, when I fortunately perceived him.—For the situation of his mind, he could not have

have chosen a more convenient spot, than that where I found him. Before his feet a silver stream glided silently along, supplied by a torrent that rose among the scattered shrub-crowned rocks, that ornamented the opposite shore, and in which were formed a variety of beautiful grottos. Over it there was a shelving precipice, which almost reached the bank on which he was sitting. It was barren, and produced only here and there a few little shrubs and moss. From the middle of it there issued a rivulet, which with pleasing murmurs united itself with the stream of the river. The sun still gilded with his setting beams the summits of the rocks, and impatiently the pale moon seemed to wait for the period, when she should resume the government, and shed her faint light on the rippling waves. The ravenous night-birds had left their haunts, and were

wandering with hideous cries in search of prey.

“ He was sitting upon the stump of a tree, covered with moss. His head was placed on his hand, and he apparently struggled with some horrid resolution. In his right hand he held a writing tablet. I silently drew nearer to him, and beheld the following words inscribed upon it :

“ Not to the dregs is the cup of sorrow emptied, which was filled up to the brim. No : it falls from my hand.—Behind me—all is irrecoverably lost ; before me—impenetrable darkness ; within me—despair. No other path which leads from this labyrinth of innumerable sufferings, than through the gates of death.—Oh ! come then, come ! welcome friend !
“ —Thy

“ —Thy broken hour-glass is no fright-
“ ful picture ; thy horrible face seems
“ to me the sweet smiling of a bride be-
“ fore the altar ; the voice of the de-
“ stroyer sounds more charming to me,
“ than the most beautiful music on the
“ long wished nuptial day.—Oh ! come
“ then, and bring me, weary of life, to
“ the vaults of rest.—Thou comest not ?
“ —Then I will hasten to thee, who
“ hast thy habitation in every element,
“ to whom every moment of our lives
“ brings us nearer.—

“ In these waves, my beloved, I seek
“ a period to my sorrows, because my
“ affection for thee is unconquerable.
“ My last breath will be employed in
“ calling upon thy name ; and it will
“ be first repeated, when my tongue
“ shall resume its powers again, roused
“ by a sound which will penetrate even
“ into the most profound depths.”

“ He

“ He started hastily up, lifting his clasped hands towards heaven.—“ Thou, “ O! eternal God,” he exclaimed, “ wilt “ forgive me; for thou art gracious, and “ I am thy creature! My beloved Con- “ cordia!”—He rushed, after uttering these words, precipitately towards the river—but I caught him in my arms.

“ The fright, which my sudden appearance occasioned, threw him almost into a swoon; but he soon recovered, and remained speechless for sometime, staring at me with great earnestness. I thought it best not to interrupt him, but to wait, and discover what would be the effect of such a sudden shock to his whole frame.

“ I know not,” said he at length, “ whether I should thank you, or curse the moment in which it came into your mind, to visit this desert and
fruf-

frustrate my attempts, whilst I was willing to break the chain of my sufferings, which is become too heavy for me."

" When you know of what consequence it will be to you, then you will thank me."

" The gift of a joyless life.—For that must I thank you?"

" You will thank me."

" Incomprehensible!—Can we thank him, who, when we are seeking for a thing with anxiety, returns us that which we threw away?—

" But if the thing were a diamond, which we had falsely imagined a worthless stone, how then?"

" I do

“ I do not find myself in that situation. I was willing to throw aside a distressing burden, which you have again imposed upon me against my inclination.”

“ A distressing burden?—Is it possible that life can be despised by him, who sees himself on the point of obtaining the object of his wishes?—Impetuous man! What joy, what happiness still awaits you; of all of which you would have deprived yourself, if I had not prevented your accomplishing the dreadful act of suicide.”

“ The object of my wishes near me? Happiness still awaits me!—Cruel sport! And this from you, who are acquainted with my whole history?”

“ You are near the object of your wishes!—I am not sporting with your
feel-

feelings. I have spoken the truth. But I had almost forgotten, that mortals, when hurried to despair, are devoid of reflection."

" And are not you a man? Do you not feel the force of hope, the galling pangs of desire? Does not inability remind you of your gross matter, when you would exert your faculties beyond their limits, and endeavour to fly to the boundaries of the atmosphere?"

" These are questions which your own shame will unravel to you."

" Did I not see you frequently, and with passion play with the father of my beloved?"

" Did I play with passion?"

" Is

“ Is there left any other presumption, when we observe, that it becomes the daily business of a man ?”

“ Short-sighted mortal!—Not to trust me farther!—But I pardon you: however, mark this rule: if you see a wise man, according to your sentiments, act weakly or improperly, admit that he perhaps does it merely on account of its good consequences; for he acts like a prudent botanist, nourishes noxious and poisonous plants, in order that he may extract from them an efficacious fluid.”

“ But, what do you want with me ?”

“ To make you happy. Listen to me without interruption, and answer merely my questions.—You were about to cut, with your own hand, the thread of your life, because you thought yourself unhappy.”

happy, whilst you met with obstacles to your love !”

“ Obstacles, which were unfurmountable ; to remove which, I employed all my powers, but I exerted them in vain. And is not this sufficient to make me unhappy ? Is not the largest and most magnificent building overthrown, when we sap the foundation on which it is supported ? And the history of my friend, will not that also add to my miseries ? Is it possible for me to escape the dangerous gulph into which he has fallen ? Will not my grief, on seeing an intimate friend in distress, sooner than make my innocence appear, render it more suspicious ?—Leave me, or it will drive me to distraction, to find that a man can be witness to all this, and (he shuddered) yet remain indifferent.”

“ I have

“ I have heard you with patience. Your words are those of a man overpowered with calamities. If you had listened to me coolly, you would have been able to explain to yourself my unconcern, which seemed to you so much to deserve censure and reproof; but which arises merely from a conviction, that I can restore to you that which you think irrecoverably lost †

† “ You! you restore me that again! Alas, how willingly would I believe your words, if I were able!”

“ Well then acknowledge your incredulity, and be convinced of the fact!”

“ We arrived, during our discourse, before a coal-but, sequestered amidst thick bushes, and by which a little rivulet ran; I conducted his steps to the
door,

door, almost without his knowledge. His beloved Concordia flew out of the hut, into the arms of her astonished L..."

" I can now, with reason, expect the question from you, my Prince, how the Lady came there?—It was by my contrivance that this was effected.

" On what a good footing I stood with the lady's father you know already, and his opinion of me was increased, when he saw that my sentiments coincided with his, namely, that the love of his daughter must remain hopeless, because it was fixed upon a man, who, if even he had the merit of being learned, would, in spite of that, be a disgrace to his ancient family. He charged me, for that reason, to explain to his daughter this truth, and I was very willing to perform that task. Daily I conversed with the poor Concordia in secret, and I made
use

use of every opportunity to make her more and more attached to her beloved ; insomuch, that she at last promised me to venture every thing for him, rather than to lose him. On his account, she disregarded the inheritance and ancient family of her father.

“ As I had also contrived to render abortive all the attempts of her beloved to speak to her, or to send her a letter, she impaired her health by incessant anxiety ; and it was found adviseable to procure her a physician. He advised as I had suspected, frequent airings in a coach, and as soon as her strength would permit, to walk frequently. I was obliged to accompany her ; and in one of our walks, I discovered the coal-hut, and proposed it as a place of ambush for her, because they would be the least likely to find her in such a situation ; and in the mean time we could arrange the business.

business. She consented to my proposal, and flew thither, according to my advice, on a certain day, when her father was absent from home.

“ In the mean time I sought for her lover. I fortunately found him not far distant from the very spot, and brought him near to the hut, where, by the sudden appearance of his beloved, and the recollection of what I had before told him, I made an impression upon his mind that could never be effaced. Every word that he spoke evinced how deeply he felt his sorrows.

“ Their embraces lasted for a long time in the hut, which I observed from without, through a chink; then L... rushed out, and threw himself at my feet.”

“ Pardon

“ Pardon me,” exclaimed he, “ pardon me, that I did not believe your words.—But how could I expect this from you, when I thought myself abandoned by every one?”

I raised him up.

“ Have I kept my word? said I, smiling. Have I fulfilled my promise?”

“ Oh! magnanimous, noblest of men, forgive me!”

“ Is your life still indifferent to you?”

“ That you saved it, this angel shall thank you.”

“ He brought forth Concordia, who, not recovered from the effects of her ecstasy, was still weeping for joy.

“ A scene now ensued, which, if any thing could have operated upon my sensibility, would have had the desired effect. I saw two souls, elevated to the height of happiness by my exertions, who idolized me with speechless affection and gratitude. I partook of their joy, and was thus more than rewarded for my trouble.

“ As soon as the first intoxication of delight had subsided, the lady began to express much anxiety and fear, (so natural to virtuous women) for having ventured on such a perilous undertaking. I stood near them, and listened to all they said. They then reflected upon many things which could not previously have been thought of.

“ The young lady who had conquered so heroically her attachment to her country, her love to her father, and her regard

to his wealth, was now troubled with the thought, whilst she held her beloved object in her arms, whither they should fly, and whence they should derive subsistence; for she recollected with sorrow, that she had not taken with her, in her great haste, either money—or diamonds.”

“ And will,” exclaimed L..., “ our generous friend, to whose kindness and exertions we owe all our happiness, will he leave unfinished the work he has begun?”—

“ Certainly not,” said she, whilst she turned herself to me, and seized my hand, which she pressed suddenly to her lips; and every little cloud, which was before visible upon her countenance, disappeared immediately. “ At the idea, the most horrid which could influence my mind, that my beloved could again be torn from me, I forgot, for some moments,

ments, that you were our protector, and would provide for us. Pardon the weak, the anxious maiden, who has placed such confidence in you." -

" I could easily imagine, that in this uncommon confidence placed in me, which had now occupied the souls of this couple, fancy would do much ; and I only waited to see this manifested, when I represented to them, in its most striking point of view, what they might expect from me, if that which seemed to them an impossibility had been brought about by my management.

" It is right," I began, " for you to trust me ; and you have reason to expect more good fortune from him, who can give you more than even your most sanguine wishes would lead you to expect. This very day, (for day began already to break) and before the moon rises again,

you both shall be joined in wedlock by the hand of the priest, and pass in happiness through this transitory state ; united, by the consent of your father, my dear Lady, who will give you, moreover, his paternal blessing to increase your bliss. To-day, also, before the sun shines in his meridian splendor, shall D... be liberated from his imprisonment, and replaced in his situation with dignity and honor—and (turning to L...) which also waits for you.—I go to accomplish what I now promise : till I return, I request you to continue in this cottage.”

“ I left them in great astonishment, and flew, as hastily as possible, through the bushes, so that they believed (as they afterwards confessed to me) I had disappeared like a spirit, and I took care to favour the idea.

“ I hast-

“ I hastened to the residence of the lady’s father, and immediately presented myself before him. He was sitting melancholy upon a sofa; being much alarmed by the flight of his daughter. All who had been sent after her, had come back without having been able to discover the place of her retreat. He reprobated his own obduracy in the most violent terms. Under the mask of a comforter, I was about going to acquaint him with what might probably happen; but he would not at that moment listen to my proposals; for he still spurned the thought of procuring the return of his daughter by giving her hand to a plebeian. I tried every method I could invent to induce him to abandon his prejudices; but before I could obtain my end, there came an officer with several soldiers to take up the minister as a state prisoner. He immediately intreated me in the humblest manner, to accompany him to

his sovereign, who expected me, and had every where enquired for me. I followed him readily, as I had foreseen this ; for it was a part of my plan.

“ From the manner in which the king received me, I could easily judge that he had a high esteem for me. He related to me, that D...’s servant had absconded the foregoing night, and left a letter behind him, which was shewn me. It was to this purpose :

“ Sir, the secretary D... is innocent. The document which is wanting, I stole from him clandestinely, in the most roguish manner, and sold it to the minister for a large sum of money ; the greater part of which will be found in my trunk, as I cannot load myself with the wages of treachery. Repentance and anxiety persecute me every where. They seduced me to accomplish that
wicked

wicked action; and I confess with horror, that it was accursed avarice alone which prevented my discovering the villainy of such an infamous transaction, till the Baron Vatifello last night appeared suddenly in my chamber, and warned me of the consequences. God only knows from whence he could have got intelligence of it. He must be omniscient!—You may ask him; an anxious desire to save myself will not let me remain at rest!

JOHN KLEINBART."

" I read it without emotion, although the eyes of the king were fixed upon me all the time.

" Is this true?"—he asked me.

" I answered him by a look, whilst I assumed an air of superiority. He might have understood it, for he seemed ashamed

ed, and thanked me for the service which I had rendered him in having preferred an innocent useful man.

“ He began after an interval of several minutes.

“ After what I have this day seen of you, you seem to me to be an uncommon man, of whom I know not how to form a correct idea; but I believe you will be kind enough to answer me some questions.”

“ I have not forgotten, that when I enquired whether the account given in the letter were true, you seemed to be not quite satisfied. I was not induced through any suspicion to ask such a question; but I wished merely for your confirmation of this extraordinary circumstance.”

“ And

“ And I believed, said I, that my looks would explain this better to your Majesty than many words. 'Tis the boaster only that speaks his own praise. However, put your questions.”

“ To-day they found you at the minister's, and you knew he was a traitor to his country.”

“ That he is not.”

“ But he has, however, bought the document, upon which so much depends.”—

“ That he has not.”

“ Enigmas, and nothing but enigmas! —However, the letter?”

“ O King! all is not gold that glitters.—The counsellor, who afterwards

obtained the place, which was reserved for D..., bought the document, and designed to sell it again for a large sum to the enemy, as all depends upon it in the present war. Send to him. The messengers will find the paper behind his writing desk, and they will find him lying in his bed, poisoned, as he thought it not adviseable to live any longer by such iniquitous means. A letter in the right pocket of his dressing gown, will unravel the mystery."

" The King looked at me with astonishment, and immediately gave such orders as I recommended. The messengers soon returned, and found every thing as I had described. His surprize then arose to the highest degree; he shewed so much veneration for me, that he lost the power of speech, when he attempted to address me, as I looked at him.

" The

“ The note the messengers found in the pocket of the counsellor’s dressing gown, was as follows :

“ The Baron Vatifello appeared to me last night, though my door was locked. How this was possible for him, I cannot comprehend, and still tremble to reflect upon it. He knows all about the document. He has commanded me to discover it ; he has, however, permitted me to do it by a letter, which I shall leave behind me, and to fly, if I wish to become better, and that I will now do ! Their cursed money I leave behind me !—

“ In my letter I have accused the minister of the crime ; this was done that I might not break the oath which I have sworn, that I would not betray you. But if your conscience will not induce you to liberate an inno-

cent man, who suffers for you, the Baron will do it.—Good God, what a man must he be, who can discover such hidden secrets!

“ Save yourself if you can, but rescue your conscience from pain, and leave behind you such evidence as will prove the minister an innocent man.

“ I know not how to remove my painful anxiety.—Alas! if I were but in security!—You alone are the cause of my misfortune, with your cursed money and your artful persuasions.—I, who had such a good master, became his betrayer! Oh! that I were able to describe to you the hell which burns in my bosom!—God will assist me!—Save yourself, or at least your soul.—I can write no more, I must be gone.

JOHN KLEINBART.”

“ Secretary

“ Secretary D... and the minister immediately obtained their liberty, and thanked me in the presence of the Monarch, who had attended with much emotion to these circumstances. He entreated me very much to stay with him, to be his friend and Counsellor in the administration of state affairs, but I refused it. My ambition would have been flattered by it, I acknowledge, but in such a situation I could not pursue the system I had adopted, and my prospects being infinitely superior to that of being a royal favourite, to his request I made the following answer:

“ Your kingdom, my Sovereign, is populous and extensive, but the other empires in the world are of equal magnitude. All of them have a demand upon me. Every where they need my powerful services. I dare not give you and your country that which I have taken

ken from others. To be your favourite, or even vice-governor, would be limiting my power to too small a circle. I cannot now give a farther explanation of my conduct. Indeed if I were to endeavour to do so, you would not comprehend me. Do not press me to do that which I must refuse. If you will honour my memory, then follow my example: save innocence from oppression or seduction wherever you can, and make men happy who deserve it. I will at present give you an opportunity for so doing.

“ Both your secretaries, L... and D..., are the most deserving men in your court. You have hitherto known them too little. Follow my advice. You will find in them men who deserve your patronage, and who will serve you with fidelity. As soon as they are able, I will let you know it. For the present,

sent, let them both be your private counsellors. L... loves the daughter of the minister; command the hard-hearted father to give him his daughter's hand. They are destined for each other, their marriage is concluded in heaven; for that reason, neither rank nor power shall separate them!

“ The King willingly consented to all, and the minister was too prudent a courtier not to be guided by the voice of his Sovereign rather than his own opinion. It was impossible for him to meet with a better fortune for his daughter, when he saw L... was the King's favourite as well as mine, and contemplated the honourable employments which his son-in-law would arrive at. It was then very easy for the King to complete the happiness of the father, by giving L... a diploma for the number

ber of petty degrees which he had required. He reflected, however, that his daughter and L... were gone, and he bewailed his loss to the King.

“ Do not question me concerning them, (I interrupted him) my actions are secret, they are impenetrable to men; very often they seem contradictory, and I am covered with the dark veil of mystery. In a short time both will be here.”

“ My daughter here!” exclaimed the minister, “ my daughter !”

“ I made no reply, but threw myself into my coach, which was ready for me, and soon arrived at the hut, where I met the lovers. I say nothing of their ecstasy, when I delivered to them the unexpected news.

“ My

“ My seriousness alone deterred them from pressing me to death, out of love and veneration; and immediately upon my arrival with them in the King’s saloon, a Priest gave them the matrimonial benediction.

“ Tell me yourself, gracious Prince, had I not reason to expect fidelity and gratitude for such an act of generosity? Purposely had I conducted the business so, that their future happiness must depend upon me; and they were, for that reason, obliged to endeavour to secure a continuance of my favour.

“ Did I not also shew myself to them in such a manner, that they must think me the most perfect and best of mankind, from whom nothing could be expected but acts of goodness? You must have observed how firmly even the King believed every thing, and what in cases of exigency

exigency might I not hope from him, who saw that my conduct was quite disinterested, being merely careful for the welfare of others?

“ And to enforce these impressions so much the more, I absented myself suddenly from *** without the knowledge of any person; and that they might not discover any trace of me, I went off in a dress in which nobody had seen me before, in order to make the people believe (which really happened) I had disappeared.

“ And now hear, in what a natural manner I worked all those seeming wonders.

“ One of my people had, before I arrived at **d**, been engaged in the service of secretary D...., and thus, by him, I obtained a knowledge of all before-

before-hand. He was the pretended John Kleinbart. Pursuant to my command he stole the document, which was not difficult for a man like him.— I was obliged to have a person to hire him for that purpose, and he could not remain alive, because he could have proved his innocence by discovering the fact. Nobody was more fit for that than the Counsellor. John had a love-intrigue with his female-cook, and was often in the house when the Counsellor was absent. I made use of this favourable circumstance. It was very easy for John to put the document, the evening before, behind the writing-desk, and to convey the letter, written by me, into the pocket of the Counsellor's dressing gown. And, in order to kill him, nothing more was requisite than to put a powder into the drink he was accustomed to take before he went to bed.

bed, and which stood ready prepared for him against he came home.

“ The reason why I acted in the manner described, and caused the Minister to be suspected, you will, without asking me, very easily perceive; for those were the only proper means to display my powers.

“ All the purposes which I wished to accomplish, will now be manifest: so clearly will they appear, that I may now be entirely silent.

“ Nor need you ask me in future, how it was possible for me to attach indissolubly to my interest the best and most prudent men, and afterwards to persuade them to do any thing that I wished.

“ And

“ And now,” continued the Armenian, “ I was approaching that period, when, as I before said, my views were guided by a settled plan. What I had hitherto accomplished was (except acquiring an acquaintance with several courts, and a degree of influence in them) often nothing more than a continual chain of deceptions, by which I endeavoured to gain creatures, and to acquire credit in their eyes. I too soon perceived that my absence from any place, very soon effaced the impression which I had left there. To my terror did I discover, that the ties of gratitude for certain services I had rendered, which I thought had united so many to my interest, were not so strong as I had reason to expect, as soon as the evident advantages which I had procured for them ceased. I must, however, here except my creatures in **d***. There every circumstance had been favourable
to

to me. They could never discover in my actions any thing more than the noblest and most virtuous design that ever entered the mind of men, who never wished any thing contrary to their duty, and who were unacquainted with all my shameful expedients. But how seldom was I so fortunate! I was often obliged to appear despicable to them, when they saw their criminal plans brought to a conclusion by my means, and they hated me, though they did not shew it openly, perhaps from fear.

“ From my own experience, alas! I learnt that a villain is not loved by his fellow; and that those ties which bind the hearts of others with such firm affection, are to them unknown. What causes them to unite together? What renders them inseparable from one another? What makes one submissive to the other? Nothing more than self-interest.

interest. If this should be once satisfied, all bonds would break, and each would, with indifference, see the downfall of his companion and rejoice, if he could derive a profit from it.

“ That a profligate abandoned man can respect those virtues which he despises, I know from my own example, although I carefully stifled every impulse towards it; but that those who pursue a system of immorality cannot love the man who follows the same path, and adopts the same principles, was incomprehensible to me.

“ I said it was always incomprehensible to me. Now, alas, I see too late, the true value of virtue, which I once considered as imaginary: virtue, which alone can make us happy; which alone can fill the heart of another with love
for

for us; which—oh, I never knew what real joy was since iniquity enslaved me.—How can an abandoned wretch enjoy happiness?—It is virtue alone that influences the heart to revere her tender sentiments. I once had delighted in the contemplation of her charms, but knowing my depravity, she abandoned me.—Ah! I have loved, Prince, I have loved; but I soon found that the enchanting pleasures of this passion were only to be possessed by untainted souls; they were too pure for mine. Without remorse I sacrificed the happiness of an angel, and smiled with triumph at her sorrows. She followed me in all my wanderings, clung to my knees, entreated, prayed, wept at my feet, and I with indifference plunged a dagger into her breast, and destroyed at once the hopes of our embraces!

“ But

“ But away with it! away with it! I cannot think; of what use is repentance?”

“ Mercy,” added the Count D’O..., “ is so peculiarly the property of tender minds, that we were yet deceiving ourselves, in causing this Armenian, the most detestable of wretches, to partake of its blessing. We beheld his repentance, and our eyes overflowed with tears of affliction for his conduct. We forgot ourselves so much, as to endeavour to comfort him by religion, and made use of every argument in some measure to soothe him. His apparent attention encouraged us, and we collected every thing which could contribute to our purpose. We wished to insist upon his forbearance for the sake of virtue, but he burst out into a most horrid laugh, and bit his chains. The imprecations against religion, and every thing sacred, which flowed from his livid lips, evidently

showed how strongly he felt the want of them; and how much all consolation arising from them increased his despair. —All this made a strong impression upon the Prince. As soon as the Armenian was conducted away; which was immediately, he fell upon his knees, and returned thanks to God, for having ordained every thing in such a manner, that it convinced him what a treasure his religion was, which he had wished to reject in exchange for the wretched principles of scepticism.

“ But his prayer did not inspire him with that cheerfulness, which alone can give strength to an innocent and suffering soul. His eyes seemed to betray a confession of offences, which he had been guilty of, to which his former irreligiousness had led him, and an anxious melancholy clouded his brow, and riveted his eyes to the ground.

“ Suffer

“ Suffer not thyself, O man! who art reading this, when, perhaps, my bones, reduced to dust, are quietly reposing in the bosom of the earth, till the great day of the resurrection,—suffer not thyself to be robbed of thy religion, thy greatest treasure, which will lead thee through the world in security. Consider him who would snatch it from thee as an enemy who wishes to murder thy rest, and flee from him. Trust not alone to the light of reason, which thy beneficent Creator hath awarded thee, that thou mightest be able to distinguish the good from the bad, and pursue the straightest way to virtue. Since he is the God of truth, trust in him. Do not give thyself up entirely to thy own judgment; for how soon mayest thou err! Learn this from the example of the unfortunate Prince. He became, from an arrogant reliance upon his reason, and an unbounded confi-

dence in his own abilities, so indiscriminably miserable, that his former tranquillity and cheerfulness never returned. Impress this truth, O christian! strongly upon thy mind, *that religion alone can lead us securely through the valley of death.* By it is the grave deprived of all its terrors — by it does death become a friend, who opens for us the door of eternal happiness. Without it, every thing vanishes into darkness and desolation, we are seized with terror and dismay. Religion alone can make the beneficent gift of reason, that image of the deity, a blessing to us. He who hopes to be happy, and rests securely without religion, resembles a traveller, who perversely quits the direct road, where guides would prevent his foot from erring, and by following the path which he himself has chosen, is lost in an impassable country, where his cries cannot reach the ear of a deliverer, and thus
 he

he at length irretrievably sinks into an unforeseen abyss.

“ Had I not been previously convinced of these truths, I should have been so now from the sight of the Armenian. O! that all men, who are about to adopt erroneous opinions, had been present when the Armenian spoke. They must have been captivated by religion, and her daughter virtue, and inspired with the warmest attachment to them. Nothing, probably, ever placed their loveliness, and the certainty with which they reward their adherents, in so strong a light as the conduct of this Armenian, whose words alone I cannot relate without shuddering with horror.

“ When the Armenian was brought, the following day, to the Prince, he was in the same disposition as before. Not the least trace, by which one might

judge of what had happened, was perceptible.

He continued :

“ The coolness towards me, which I observed in so many of my companions, as soon as they perceived I could no longer assist them, induced me to contrive a method which attached them to me more firmly, and united them in my own interest. Such a method I very easily discovered.

“ At that time the order of stood in very high esteem, and contained members of every rank, religion, and manner of thinking. That members of every persuasion could adhere so closely to this order, naturally led me to conclude, that every one either must derive advantage from it, though this seemed incredible, or that the retreat
from

from it might be dangerous. Both these effects I designed at times to turn to my advantage, and without further hesitation I became a member.

“ The fundamental principle of this order was to augment the number of members as much as possible, and by that means to obtain a great influence in all external departments, and even to procure the direction in some. Only the superiors were acquainted with this, and it was difficult to obtain their degree. Every one of the under-graduate members represented to himself a different object to this superior degree, according to his individual situation, and as his manner of thinking induced him. A solemn oath was required, binding them not to divulge a syllable of what related to the order; and every member of it was consoled by the thought, that he had made a progress farther than

another, without communicating it to his brother.

“A general equality of sentiment being introduced, nobody considered that he was a mere instrument in the hands of others; and this equality was alone sufficient to attract the plebeian, when he thought himself in this society united with many great men. Figurative language and pretended wisdom, for appearance sake, veiled in symbols and characters pleased the fanatic, who wished anxiously to pass beyond the boundaries of human knowledge. Humane actions influenced the noble, and opened the hands of the rich and powerful to extensive charity, and curiosity frequently induced many persons to enter into the order.

“The strong inclination of the greater part of mankind to a mystical union, made them desirous of joining this society, though

though it stood not in need of members. Their number was called a legion. To preserve them, no additional manœuvre was wanted, and their defection was prevented by many methods; and even if that should have happened, it could not be of any material injury to the order.

“ Unwearied with every possible endeavour and exertion, I sought to push myself forward, and I at length succeeded, and became one of the leaders. I was elected to that employment with the greatest solemnity; and it was then that I discovered the real views of the society, which before that period were not quite clear to me. A small tablet of silver, with black letters engraved upon it, acquainted me with the motive of its institution. The contents were as follow:

“ Let the dominion of good be the object of
“ pursuit; and the continual endeavor to be-
“ come better, be the daily labor of yourself
“ and your brethren. Secrecy and darkness
“ secure the good, and prevent the wicked from
“ obstructing their proceedings.”

“ Do not believe that this grand
object, which seemed so entirely irre-
levant to my principles, deprived me
of my courage, although I had not ex-
pected it. My first thought was, that
every thing might be conducive to my
benefit by well managed proceedings.
And I therefore endeavoured immedi-
ately to gain the most exalted character
among my brethren.

“ One grand principle of the order
was, to raise its members, who were
known as good and useful subjects, to
the highest places in the state. No-
thing could be easier than this, and by
such means to place every one in that
department which he best understood,

and was most worthy of; from which he might succeed to others by degrees, from the lowest to the highest, so that all might be governed by members of our order, which would enable us to attain our object the sooner.

“ Twice every year the superiors met together in different places. There they communicated to each other the experience which they had acquired. The members were then proposed and examined, and they that were found fit for employments, soon obtained them.*

“ As much precaution was prescribed by the laws in respect to the choice of the superiors, and as many conditions

* That people may not suspect, that I mean the order of masonry, I solemnly declare that it is not the case; for this still exists, while the other by its infamous conduct was destroyed.

NOTE OF THE COUNT O...

B 6

were

were necessary in order to obtain places of consequence, it was very soon evident to me, that I had not obtained my situation by undue influence. Many had nothing more in view than the gratification of their vanity, and under the pretence of working for the order, were satisfied with having obtained their wishes. And I perceived with pleasure, that the majority of the superiors of that order were not at all interested in promoting the virtuous; their only object was to govern. To bring them over to my side, without discovering to them my plan, was a very easy task.

“ And now my game was won. Almost all places were either given away by me, or at my intercession; and I saw very soon all the places filled by people, who only waited my suggestion in order to communicate to me all which could be serviceable in accomplishing

plishing my plans. My power was now very far extended; and I may reasonably suppose, that what I have already communicated to you, will enable you to understand me in future without further explanation, as soon as I mention that order: without it I never could have reached those situations which by its means I arrived at.

“ In the mean time the Regent . . . died. During the government of his predecessor many changes happened. From one of my associates there, I obtained the following letter in hieroglyphics:

“ The creatures of the present Regent . . . raise up their heads in grandeur. They always surround their master, and know how to please him in such a manner, that he listens to all their proposals with blind confidence.

All is changed ; and merely from a national hatred, it is in contemplation to break off an alliance, of which our court was so proud till this period, and without which, we shall not long be able to avoid a bloody war."

" Both the prime ministers L... and D... (they procured that employment by my recommendation, added the Armenian) are dismissed, and have been beheaded in their prisons. The haste with which this was performed, did not permit an enquiry into the crime which was imputed to them ; and the secrecy in which all is enveloped, scarcely leaves us room for conjecture. I believe that something of a serious nature was alledged against them, which irritated so much the passion of ...d..., that the idea of coolly inquiring into the business did not once occur to him.

" The

“The Count P. . . . , who is now at Rome, as ambaffador, has received orders to return as quickly as poffible. His employment is given to another, and he has a more advantageous one. The . . . d . . . , whose heart he poffeffes, waits with the utmoft anxiety for his arrival. He has made him his private minifter, and all is in expectation on his account.

“The exactness and care which I obferve in writing to you nothing but what is really true, and the great hafte with which I proceeded to deliver all this into your hands, makes me wait with eager expectation your further commands, and it will, I flatter myfelf, meet your approbation.

CHARLES.”

“This Charles was by birth a frenchman, and one of my principal confidants;

dants; his talents having fitted him for that purpose.

“ Scarcely had I read the letter, when I threw myself into my carriage, and travelled day and night, that I might arrive speedily at Rome. I soon became acquainted with the Count P...., and found in him exactly such a man as I wished for. To bring him into the order of *** was very easy, because he was long before inclined to it. If I dare call the connection of common interest, friendship, there soon took place between us an intimate friendship. I discovered to him a part of my plan, and he swore faithfully to assist in fulfilling it, for which I promised to help him to the **d** throne; though this was in truth not my serious intention. I need not relate to you, that I magnified my influence, and by the adroitness,

ness, and mystery of my words and actions which I displayed, I acquired his entire confidence.

“ I was still in doubt which empire I should make the object of my government. Soon after I discovered circumstances that induced me to relinquish my former choice. I looked for the favourable moment that should direct my power; and for the present, I was satisfied with augmenting the number of my partisans.

“ This favourable moment was nearer than I thought, and all my undertakings became a settled point upon which they could direct themselves.

“ Besides the intimacy of Count P..., I had the good fortune, on account of this journey to Rome, to find again my foster father by a curious accident, by
means

means of which I learnt likewise the secret of my birth.

“ His continual employment in his laboratory, and the neglect of his patients, had brought him into the most unpleasant situation. The proprietor of the house in which I resided, and who was formerly a physician, maintained him out of compassion. Chance procured us an interview. I found no difficulty in recognizing him immediately, for his physiognomy was not altered, and it had made such an impression on my mind, that I should have known him among a multitude of men. -

“ On a former occasion, it was neither my intention to seek for him, nor to make myself known to him, and this was the case now; although I saw the poor old grey-beard standing before me, who so much wanted my assistance. I exulted

exulted in the firmness of my principles, which were not shaken even by the sight of a father; and which suffered not my heart to indulge the least emotion of tenderness.

“ It happened that, my foot slipping, I fell down a stair-case: I remained lifeless for some time, and when my senses returned again, I found myself laid in a bed, under the care of my foster father; besides whom nobody was present. I looked at him with surprise, and then apparently meditated upon something, the nature of which he could not discover.

“ What has happened to me,” I exclaimed angrily, “ that I find myself alone with a man, from whom I ought always to fly, because he could discover the lowliness of my birth.”

“ A fall

“ A fall from a stair-case—your fit—
I affited you—I opened your shirt collar.”

“ I shall recompense you for that.—
Where are my people?”

“ I contrived to have them absent,
because ————.”

“ And how did you dare to do it?
Let them come up immediately; I
command it. Ring the bell.

“ His knees trembled, tears gushed from
his eyes.—“ Do you not know me?”

“ What a question! Ring the bell!”
And in the mean time I jumped out of
the bed, and was going to ring it myself.
He put himself in my way.

“ For

“ For God’s sake, let me have but a few minutes. I am, indeed, Sylvio, and you are my Ferdinando. Are then the traces of my face become entirely strange to you? Does your happiness and fortune not permit you to indulge the pleasing recollection and acknowledgment of your father’s love?”

“ You are mad, fellow,” I exclaimed, and pushed him from me, whilst he endeavoured to embrace me.

“ Behold the mark on your neck: by it were you made known to me, when I opened your shirt collar during your fit. Oh! let me not have in vain thanked God, that he has enabled me to find you, and given me an opportunity of presenting to you your real father, who sighs for your embraces. Oh! if there arise not in your breast any sentiments of gratitude for me, be attentive
at least

at least to your own advantage, and force not him from you, who is the only person that can relate to you the secret of your birth, and can help you on that account to an immense fortune."

" You were then no deceiver?" said I, in order to maintain the character which at present I ought to act.

" Oh! did not your heart tell you this immediately?—However I forgive you; who knows what deceits may have hardened it, so that ——"

" Yes, dear father," I pressed him to my bosom.—It was by no means difficult for me to shed a few tears, when the old man mingled his with mine.—
" Oh! there are villains among mankind." I went on. " I have been deceived by one to whom I entirely sacrificed my friendship, and whom I charged

charged to seek after you, because I could not, by inquiry, obtain any account of you, and my business did not permit me to undertake this agreeable journey myself. The monster! He abused my confidence, and instructed a rascal, who acted the part of my father. My childish heart was easily deceived, and I embraced him with affection. But by a lucky circumstance, I discovered that he aimed at my life and fortune, so that they might divide the spoil among them. Yet he entirely owed his existence to me! Oh! father, how difficult it is to believe always in the Almighty! ***** For by the treatment I had experienced, I was almost rendered a complete misanthrope!"

* Many such expressions I have omitted. In the mouth of such a diabolical villain they seemed to me to be blasphemy.

NOTE OF COUNT O....

The

“ The old man willingly believed my stories, and his eyes overflowed with tears of joy.

“ Yes,” cried he in an ecstasy, “ you are my Ferdinando. The falsehood and deceit you have experienced in the world, could only give you the appearance of an enemy of human kind, but your heart remained noble. Oh! how your father will be rejoiced; for the only wish which glows in his bosom is, that he may live to see you again.”

“ You were not my father!” said I, shedding a fresh stream of tears. “ Yes, I deserve now to be cast from you.”

“ Not so my son. I only was your foster father, and that is sufficient for me, although you absconded. But enough of that, I now have you again! —Read this letter.”

“ My

“ MY DEAREST SYLVIO,

VENICE, AUG. 6, 17**.

“ I HAVE wronged you by my reproaches. I now know that you are innocent. Though I have lost my son, it was not your neglect or harshness that induced him to run away. Alas! forgive the oppressed heart of a father, which led me to treat you rigorously.

“ I thought I should make my son happier than his equals; that he might shine and soar above all others! God has punished my pride severely; though my punishment is milder than I deserved. Oh! that my son were still alive, and could be restored to me again!— That thought drives far away the long cherished idea of death, which otherwise I could embrace with pleasure. It is this alone which keeps my almost

stagnant blood in motion. It is this alone which nourishes my soul.

“ Could I but once more behold my beloved son, then would I fill his hands with immeasurable riches, with which the goodness of heaven has blessed me, who am so unworthy, and which I preserved but for him, my only one. Could I but lay my trembling hands upon his head, to impart my blessing, and might he with gratitude close my fading eyes; then after my death, every one would bless my name for the sake of such a son.

“ My old feeble head, thou wilt be obliged without that consolation, without that happiness, soon to lay thy grey hairs in the grave.

“ But, Sylvio, is it the feebleness of old age or presumption? I cannot yet
give

give up my hope. Do not spare any trouble to find him out.—Willingly I would then—O! what would I not—bear all your guilt, nay, were it the greatest, I would suffer for it in your stead in purgatory.

MISCARINI.”

“ It was not the desire of my heart to see my father, but the idea of obtaining his fortune, and many other plans which I had already in view, that induced me to hasten my journey to Venice.

“ Sylvio was obliged to send a letter before me, in order to prepare the way for my sudden appearance, and to procure me a welcome reception.

“ My father embraced me with ecstasy, and the feebleness of his old age seemed to leave him. I played the part

of a tender affectionate son, and endeavoured to render light the burdensome embraces of this disgusting grey-beard, by the thought of his fortune, and its accomplishing my plans already laid.

“ But as soon as I saw that his palsied head would induce him tenaciously to attack my religious principles, which some of my papers (which his curiosity led him to open) had discovered to him, and that he wished to make me a fanatic, I began to perceive that even the little time he had to live, would be of too long continuance. He could be of no more service to me, and was a barrier in the way of my undertakings; why should I wear longer the mask, when I could expect no further profit by so doing?

“ Better, I thought, that the old tree should make room for the young one, that
that

that it might gain more strength: and of this my father reaped the profit, for I suffered him not to struggle long with a painful death. In a sweet slumber I sent him to a better world, after having dispatched Sylvio his bosom friend."

" Good God !" exclaimed the Prince: " How ! Is it possible for a man to murder his father !"

" You should say *in cool blood*; this alone distinguishes me from all those who perhaps have committed such an act in the heat of passion. Indeed I could have spared him, had he not by his irresistible curiosity opened some of my papers, by which a part of my plans and manner of thinking might have been betrayed. He could have no confidence in my words, for he, with the help of Sylvio, usurped the authority

of a father. He even began to command, to admonish, to threaten. Prince, I could not bear a superior, who began to interrupt my course! And had I not to fear that his complaints of me would lay me open to suspicion, and by that means injure my reputation, as many thought me a pattern of sanctity?

“ The coward only trembles at obstacles which appear insurmountable.— I was wont to break through them.”

“ Every nerve of my frame,” added the Count O. . . , “ now shuddered from an over-powering complication of terror and grief. It was to me, as if my soul, filled with detestation, laboured powerfully to destroy the limits of its habitation, in order to flee from this more than infernal malice-breathing outcast. My eyes were fixed in my head—though
deeply

deeply oppressed, my heart throbbed—my breast seemed to deny respiration, and a cold sweat spread all over me.”

The Armenian remained with steadfast looks, and seemed to view with a contemptuous smile our horror at his situation. No signs of repentance were discovered in his countenance, in which we might have hoped to trace the feelings of a man.

At length he proceeded in his narrative.

“ I continued but a few months at Venice, as a great many young patri-
cians pressed around me, each of whom earnestly endeavoured to gain my friendship. My family and fortune gave me frequently a right of pre-eminence, which I made beneficial without ap-
pearing

pearing to assume more than was due to my situation.

“ I discovered, with pleasure, that many had already conceived an unextinguishable hatred against the government, and which became more bitter, whenever they endeavoured to suppress it, and therefore so much the more dangerous. All circumstances united for the accomplishment of my plan. Venice was to be overthrown by me, and upon its ruins was to be laid the foundation of my throne and government. To rise much higher would be no difficulty, could I but gain one step from my present situation. In this thought I was daily more and more strengthened. Each day convinced me, that in no place could my plan be so well executed as here, where I found all things prepared for my purpose. A great part of the nobility

nobility were dissatisfied with the tyranny of the government, most of the provinces sighed under the greatest oppression; the mob were like blades of corn, easily agitated and put into motion; nothing was wanted but to make use of all these favourable circumstances.

“ From what I had already heard and known of the government of Venice, I found it necessary to use the utmost precaution, and to proceed with the greatest care in every thing that I was about to undertake. I observed these rules the more, as they had been already a kind of law within me; they therefore gained me much attention and respect. I endeavoured by many means which I employed to discover, nay to extort, the sentiments of every one (which is very difficult here) without giving them the least hint concerning mine.

“ But carefully as I thought I had concealed every thing from the eyes of the public, some, however, had looked further into my character than I supposed.

“ In disguise, and wrapped up in deep contemplation, I walked upon the platform of Saint Mark. It had just begun to grow dark, when a party of bungling musicians came and surrounded me. I thought that this was nothing more than a common divertimento; but I had deceived myself. The kind of romance which they sung seemed to have some allegorical reference to myself. Little as this might be perceived by any other person, the meaning of it did not escape my observation. I was willing to consider it as accidental, when one of their company pressed close to me, and put a paper secretly into my hand, whilst the others began to sing :

“ Hide

“ Hide it,” said he, “ cautiously, and
“ take care that no one discovers
“ it ; else thou wilt lay, to-morrow,
“ stretched at length in thy grave.”

“ These words, which were sung by a woman, disguised as a fairy, did not escape my attention ; and on account of the emphatical manner in which they were repeated, they made a deep impression on my mind. I put the paper into my pocket, and went immediately home.

“ As quickly as possible I opened the letter, and read as follows :

“ Friend or Foe, it will entirely depend upon yourself, which of these names shall be applied to you by us for the future. For your own benefit we wish that it may be the former ; and now hear our request. We all are dissatis-

fied with the government, which hitherto has tyrannized over our country, cruelly oppressed its most noble subjects, and recompensed its most sincere friends with shameful ingratitude. Prerogatives, that in other countries are the right of every honourable patriot, which the enraptured poet makes the object of his sublimest strains, and thus transmits them to posterity, of what benefit are they here? They only lead the victim to a disgraceful punishment.—Is not this calculated to banish from our country all greatness of mind, and to destroy every incentive to magnanimous actions?

“ How often has the greatest General that drew his sword to revenge his country’s wrongs fallen a victim to prejudice, whilst he was the friend of liberty! How often has the greatest statesman been sacrificed to the lowest intrigues and meanest jealousy!

“ Our

“ Our history is fraught with examples of this kind, every one of which will be an infamous stain upon our character, and must render us contemptible in the eyes of every stranger.—And shall we longer support this evil when it is in your power to relieve us?

“ We delight in the idea of freedom, though the faintest shadow of it cannot be found among us!—Are not all our steps watched by numberless spies? Do they not catch at every syllable? And do we not often become a prey, even though we possess the greatest innocence, to the despotism of those abandoned creatures?—Does not the blood of our brethren and relations, which was spilt by that never-sated lust of murder, which they call state-prudence, cry aloud for revenge?

“ Ferdinando,

“ Ferdinando, from the noble race of Misgarini, need we tell you more? Does not your blood boil within you? Are not such insults to common sense sufficient to drive a man mad?—Can your country be indifferent to you?—And will not the blood of your relations move you?

“ We dreamt of freedom—we awoke, and the picture which fancy had portrayed disappeared. Real liberty shall occupy its place, or an eternal sleep, at least, shall procure us an eternal dream; where the ideal picture, to which we sacrificed our freedom, shall perpetually stand before our eyes.

“ There is a great party of us, linked by an indissoluble tie, and ready to meet death, or live like men; our numbers will increase, for our voices will rouse many

many from an apparent state of stupor, who will immediately see their error.

“ Courage inspires us all—large sums of money are in our hands ;—a prudent leader only is wanting. Ferdinando, will you be that person ?

“ Your high rank, together with your judgment, induce us to make this request. We are more acquainted with you than you perhaps imagine. A peculiar circumstance has given us the information—(only us alone.) We well know the history of the various events, which by your management occurred to both the Secretaries at *** d **. It is as incomprehensible to us as your conduct, and on that account you are our man.

“ We hope you will not hesitate to accept our invitation ; for you are, perhaps,

haps, not so much a stranger here, as not to know that by our excellent government we can effectually employ the affassin's dagger. We could have made use of it, but we confide in you, of which this letter is a proof.

“ If you accept of our offer, as we scarcely doubt that you will, then let your apartment be illuminated at midnight. Yet it is requisite that you should be alone. You shall then hear more from us. Till that time you will be closely observed.

“ The business requires great foresight, and on that account, and with anxious hope, we name ourselves, merely,

Your

FRIENDS.”

“ Nothing could be more desirable to me than the receipt of such a letter. I must

must confess that it overcame me at first. However I had prepared every thing, being in expectation of such an offer; for I knew many of the nobility were dissatisfied. But that this invitation would be given me so soon, exceeded my expectation.

“ The enthusiasm that was displayed in the letter, delighted me so much, that I read it several times over; for experience had long since taught me what to expect from men who were actuated by such motives. These only ought we to make use of, and they may be managed as we please. I could pretty nearly guess who the authors were, and with great impatience I waited for the appointed midnight hour.

“ It arrived. . My sensations were directed to something solemn, and even
the

the clocks seemed to sound differently from what they usually did. I thought it a kind of premonition of what might happen in future.

“ Suddenly the door flew open, and a form very much disguised stood before me.

“ Ferdinando Miscarini, are you resolved? said the form, with a deep expression and seriousness of voice.

“ I am!” I replied.

“ Then follow me.”

“ I was obliged to wrap myself up in black, and we went off. As soon as we came to the canal, we found a boat for us; he blind-folded me, and when he took the bandage from my eyes, I found

found myself in the Hall, to which you both were once brought*.

“ About twenty black masks rose from their seats, and bowed respectfully, whilst my companion brought me nearer to them, and addressed them in the following words:-

“ He is resolved—he belongs to us.”

“ You are then resolved to belong to us, in order to fulfil our demand? said one of them who occupied the first place.

“ I am.”

“ And your resolution is not premature? Is it firm?”

“ It is; for ever.”

* See Vol. I.

“ And

“ And you will not repent?”

“ I am a man.”

“ And if, by being linked with us, the most shameful, the most tormenting death should be your lot, and you could even by treachery revenge yourself, and procure riches and honours, what would you do?”

“ Does there need such a question? Let them slowly boil me in hot oil, and even extract the marrow from my bones, and pierce me with red hot irons: I should be silent!”

“ Then swear,” they all exclaimed at once; and this I did with all the solemnity possible. Whilst kneeling, they all pointed their naked daggers towards my breast. They swore obedience to me in the like manner, because I earnestly

restly desired it from them. They then snatched off their masks and exclaimed,

“ Welcome, welcome, Ferdinando Miscarini; welcome the chief of our band.”

“ And now,” said I, “ attend to this your sacred duty. Be careful in every word which you utter, and in every step you intend to take, to avoid every clandestine conversation. Moderate the just revenge which burns within your breast, till the period arrives which I shall fix upon; it may then burst forth like a rapid overwhelming torrent.—Will you do so?”

“ We will.”

“ I shall do all, even what your most sanguine expectations can suggest; but till then, I again repeat, patience and obedience!”

“ I now diligently fought to gain the confidence of my fellow conspirators, or rather my subjects ; and each day gave me new proofs how well I succeeded.

“ One of my principal objects now was, to extend as much as possible the order of ***. There was scarcely an employment or situation but what was filled by some of its members. The good fame of the order had already been of great advantage to many of my plans ; and they rejoiced to find me a representative of it. They came in multitudes to be received by me, and thought it a mark of honour to wear its official symbols.

“ The considerable fees of entrance which were paid by the wealthy, and the extraordinary contributions which the members gave, united with my large income, not only enabled me to live in the greatest splendour, in order to obtain

tain my views, and to purchase the assistance of poor people, whom I wanted very much ; but I even saved considerable sums.

“ I do not choose to say any thing to you of the meetings of the order, for it does not belong to this place. They were repeated weekly, and I never failed to encourage the conspirators to persevere in the exalted ideas they had already formed. You will also imagine, that I accounted for the expenditure of the money, which I obtained in the order, as contributing to the honour of the society, although I spent it merely to gratify my own desires, and to further the designs of the principal conspirators.

“ It was one of our most rigorous laws, that every thing was to be discovered to the chief of the order, to prevent

prevent surprize or misfortunes. This circumstance I turned to very great advantage. Treaties, and all secrets which had the least connection with me, or with the order, I cautiously applied to assist our designs. No oath of secrecy was so great and solemn, but it would have been broken for that purpose; no person was spared; any one was dispatched immediately, when the order had reason to be suspicious of his integrity. And there was not one among the whole society, who would not with pleasure have stabbed that man to the heart, whose death-warrant I had signed in the name of the order."

" This astonishes me exceedingly," observed the Prince, " surely the order must have greatly suffered by it, if they encouraged their members so often to commit murders."

" The

• “ The riddle is so easily explained, that I wonder you can require this now from me. How many have been assassinated by monks without their influence and authority being diminished by it! And how was this accomplished? They made it a cause of religion, and I made ours the cause of the order, and zeal for the benefit of the community. Can you not readily conceive, that he whom I commanded to be murdered, I carefully represented to the assassin as a villain who did not deserve mercy, or we should willingly have granted it? I always employed people for that purpose, upon whose secrecy I could depend. Under such circumstances, an inviolable secrecy was preserved, the pious members of the order knew not a syllable of it, and the numbers increased daily ”

“ But did not such a society awake the suspicion of the state?”

“ In that respect, the order was advantageously circumstanced. I took care that no proceeding was made known, from which a bad opinion of it could have been fairly inferred. The many benefits which the order conferred upon the poor, and which were bestowed sometimes for appearance sake, at others for the promotion of my plans), could not be hurtful to the state. On the contrary, we gained acquisitions from that side; many members came over to us who had the highest offices in the state, and who were spoken of as moralists.”

“ But amongst so great a multitude of members, might there not have been some who had considered it more deeply, and discovered that the order was a
mere

There mask for concealing dangerous designs? Must not such a thought occur to those who executed these wicked deeds?"

"Would not you place confidence in the man who was able to form such effectual plans, and pledged himself for their execution?—Would you not think that he must be wise and discreet?"

"Every man of consequence had his spies about him, for we contrived that even his footmen should be our tools. By such means I was acquainted with all their actions and movements; and as soon as they seemed unfavourable to me, one hint was sufficient to have the victim of my suspicions sent to the grave. I confess, that my once retentive memory cannot now state the number who experienced that fate.

If the informations of common spies were insufficient, it was not difficult for one of us to introduce himself as a friend, and thus discover his most secret thoughts; and if this scheme was frustrated, then I had recourse to the power of the State Inquisition, and by that means had him condemned at all events. I sought besides to increase the dissatisfaction to the government which the conspirators had already excited, by every method which offered itself to me, and even considerably to inflame their own secret hatred against them. Nay, I knew how to corrupt the minds of those with revolutionary principles, who had not been of that opinion. This was very easy to do; without their being able to discover my views.

“ The jealousy of the state, which has often deprived the most noble family

mily of an excellent member, made its sacrifice, was always detested by the relations of the deceased; but all were too much accustomed to regard that blood-thirsty hyena, the Inquisition, as a necessary evil, or rather they were prevented by terror, from publicly expressing their detestation for such an iniquitous tribunal. Thus the evil was reconciled, and their only consolation was, that others had suffered the same fate, and if they canonize dthe victim, it was considered as an honourable mark of respect to his ashes, and reckoned a sufficient recompence for their infamous cruelty*. All these wounds I sought to irritate, or to make fresh ones, and I could see with the greatest certainty the good effect of it, as nobody would bear without discontent unmerited affliction. Does

* See an interesting publication on that subject in *Maier's Description of Venice, 4 vols. Second Edition. Leipzig, 1795.*

not (thought I) even the most insignificant insect stretch forth its jaws to bite him who endeavours to crush it? Thus all feeling will not be entirely extinguished, and of course many will think of revenge.

“ It was mine, as well as my associates’ most serious occupation to procure sacrifices to this state jealousy, and we naturally selected those whom we in the least suspected. We employed false witnesses: treasonable letters were produced, and sometimes nothing more was wanting to ensure the suspicious person a tomb in the canal Orsono. I could relate to you many histories, to show how we proceeded, but I think them rather too trifling to detain you by such relations. How often did even the most wretched spy succeed in sacrificing an innocent man, merely to obtain the appointed reward! In all these

these affairs, I was the sole director of the whole, and left the execution of it to those subordinate to me. By that means I had the consolation to see in every department conspirators at the head, who had all possible influence in forwarding our grand aim. How easy is it to irritate a despicable state like that of Venice to the commission of the most horrid murders!

“ Every undertaking was successful, and the number of conspirators increased every week. Their desire of revenge was already risen to so high a pitch, that I alone, and that by the most serious admonitions, could prevent the storm from bursting. I told them, that it was not yet the proper time for our purpose: and did all in my power to persuade them to wait with patience for a short interval, when we should be sure of the most signal success. My arguments, my courage, my resolution

and actions, soon acquired me, even among the most savage, such unlimited influence, that they gave up themselves blindly and with great alacrity to my direction, and without enquiring into many things which appeared paradoxical to them."

" Prince, you seem not surprized that a party of conspirators gave themselves up entirely to my plans, promised to adhere to me by an oath (which in their eyes you will say is not looked upon as any thing), and kept it punctually. Do you not ask how it was possible for me to acquire such a great ascendancy?

" You must have forgotten yourself when you, a great moralist, a pious, virtuous, and highly esteemed person, who are known to be possessed of so much human knowledge, would have obeyed

obeyed any suggestions, let the execution of them have been ever so capricious or wicked*.

“ The putting the mob in motion was left to me, as without their aid the whole fabric must have been demolished.

“ Many of the statesmen among the conspirators, as I have observed, had high employments, and I myself was soon elevated to a similar situation. We

* The Prince had never the intention to give him any answer to such questions. His countenance shewed distinctly how much he suffered, how much the burden of his crimes oppressed him, and that he now saw clearly the consequences of his guilt, which he heard from the mouth of a seducer. My compassion towards the Prince, which continually agitated my inmost frame, could only be diverted by the strongest detestation for the Armenian, whose face seemed to glow with pleasure at the thought of having seduced an honest man.

NOTE OF COUNT O**.

did every thing in our power to make the poor people think their burdens insupportable. Even if this end were not answered, it produced still another advantage, as they confined to us all the places of dignity, and confirmed our appointments; for you cannot yet have forgotten, that this is the case with all those whom the people hate the most, because the state has the least to fear from them. We became more and more powerful, and I did not suffer the original scheme to be at all violated, but studied how to increase our influence. The oppressions of the state, we contrived, should rapidly increase, as the breaking out of the conspiracy approached. We began to oppose the common attachment to idleness: we declared that begging should be prohibited, and by that means the mob kept to industry and labour; moreover, we determined to abolish the frequent festivals and other diversions.

“ The

“ The few statesmen who did not belong to the conspiracy, were easily overcome, or deceived by the appearance of this innovation; and if none of them would suit, there was another method of obtaining our aim which never failed, namely, restoring to the mob their pleasures and their feasts, by our authority; the advantage we were to derive from that, is very obvious; for the mob, who think the government good and perfect only when it sanctions their favourite inclinations, must of course be the more enraged, when they find themselves so suddenly deprived of their pleasures, and no beam of hope left that they shall ever return. We then began to shew ourselves from a distance as their favours, and we could expect them with certainty to join us in large parties. All these things were prepared, and the proclamation was mere-

ly delayed, because I thought it as yet not proper.

“ I could see plainly, that the conspiracy, though it should break out in its most horrid form, would not satisfy my views, which were extended to the throne of government. I feared internal divisions; or, that they would not like a sovereign at the head of a republic, the principle of which they had long before imbibed.

“ To behold myself as a kind of Doge, which dignity I could have acquired without great difficulty, seemed rather too mean for me, who had ventured so much. I justly conceived, that every one of the noble conspirators would have contended with me for equal rights, although till that period they strictly obeyed my commands. I at least had reason to expect this from their
their

their interest and vanity, as soon as they saw that their purpose was accomplished, and that I was of no more use to them. The power of a foreign court only could support me, which I hoped, from a variety of circumstances, easily to obtain; yet there were some difficulties in my way; for my personal appearance at different places would have been of the greatest assistance in my designs, but it was necessary for me to continue at Venice.

“ I had many concerns of my own which I could not trust to another; and besides, I was at the same time Inquisitor of the State.

“ Before I had resolved how to proceed, I received a letter which at once removed all embarrassment. It was from Charles. I commanded him to stay at **d**, and to give me

an account of all circumstances which took place there. Till now I had heard nothing of him; I began, therefore, to consider him as lost, when I received a letter in hieroglyphics to the following purport*.

** d ** the 15th **, 17**.

“ As I dare say you are surprized at having heard nothing from me for so long a time, I must tell you the reason. Trifling affairs I thought not worth while to communicate to you, and business of importance I did not think proper to trust to the post. I know, that at Venice they have eyes like Argus, and an hieroglyphical letter might excite suspicion. On the supposition that you would be angry

* This letter I found among the papers of the Armenian. All his writings were in my possession.

COUNT O..

with.

with me for not using other means to give you information, I entreat you to read this letter, and your anger, I hope, will soon change into joy and satisfaction: for myself, I am so proud of what I have done, that I look forward with confidence for your commendation. That it might in some great measure be obtained, I thought proper not to acquaint you earlier with my undertakings, till I could be perfectly sure of their entire success, and on that account you will excuse my delay.

“ Now to the business.

“ I informed you in my last letter, that both the private ministers L... and D... had been dispatched in their prison. Rejoice with me, that this is false. These warm friends have been
pre-

preserved, though their death was ascertained so confidently that I myself was deceived. At that time, one did not know how to proceed, nor whom to believe. Only a very few who had been in the confidence, and always about . . . d . . . could know the proceedings with certainty, and on that account, I do not wonder that my endeavours to obtain some news from my associates were fruitless."

"The Count P... is now arrived. You are a great favourite of his; and if you were not the man, I should wonder, for he speaks of you with enthusiasm; and this is not his common method. You have studied his weak side so accurately, that he is involved in perpetual conjectures. He believes that you have the power of working miracles; and I cannot at all comprehend this peculiar phenomenon, which
is

is such a direct contrast with his usual mode of thinking.”

“ The greatest physiologists could not learn very much of us, for were they to examine us closely, they perhaps might entirely lose themselves in the labyrinth of hypothesis.

“ This Count P... I became acquainted with in one of our lodges. As my character at present is in high estimation, I easily obtained admittance into his private societies, and I soon succeeded in ingratiating myself into his favour, when he heard that I knew you personally.

“ I learned from him, that both the Secretaries L. . and D. . were still alive, but in close prison; and as they would not confess any thing in spite of all the rigorous means which had been employed,

ployed, the . . d. . had not yet passed his sentence upon them. Before I had heard the truth of their fate, I formed the resolution to save these persons at all hazards, and in that I have succeeded so excellently, that you will exult in your worthy scholar.

“ My first business was to prepare for the jailor a dose which sent him to his long home. By means of the Count P. . . I procured another person in his place, who was one of my associates, and a cunning fellow. By his means, all the locks, bolts, &c. were so prepared, that they could be opened with little trouble, and your newly-invented aqua fortis I used in this instance with incredible effect. A dark night was chosen for the purpose of setting both at liberty, in order to prevent their searching after them, and to exalt your power in the eyes of Count P. . .

“ I threw

“ I threw into the prison the following note :

“ You have experienced my power, and yet you dared to confine my favourites in dismal prisons. Could you suppose, that it would be impossible for me to break open locks and bolts? Do not inquire further after them, else shall my powerful arm execute the punishment which compassion and weakness still withhold.”

“ **BARON VATIFIELLO***.”

“ The effect which this produced was so great, that it was prohibited on pain of the most severe punishment to speak a word of these circumstances, particularly as they found the jailor

* The reader will recollect that the Armenian was known in . . . under this name.

shot,

shot, which business I contrived, but in such a manner, that it appeared as though he had committed this action himself."

" I pitied the poor fellow, for I could have made further use of him ; but, I feared that he might not be cautious enough ; and besides that, I had promised him a recompence, which I could never bestow. Besides, it was calculated to produce a deep impression, as it appeared that this man had killed himself through mistake. The most certain way is always to be preferred ; you have frequently told me so yourself ; and if I had considered this sooner, I should not have made such an ample excuse, thereby exhibiting a kind of weakness, as if I ought to hesitate before I sacrificed a man for either your interest or my own. I am heartily ashamed of that, and now give
you

you the greatest assurance of improvement, that I may obtain your pardon.

“ As soon as I had my prisoners in safety, they fell before me upon their knees ; for till then, it seemed to me as if veneration and terror had confined their tongues. They thought me an ambaffador from you, and I suffered them to continue in that opinion. They then confessed to me, that they had confidently reckoned upon your delivering them. These mén are entirely at your service, for they have promised me to perform any thing that you command them to do.

“ One I have sent to . . . , and the other to . . . , after having given them instructions. I hope this will be agreeable to you ; and so much the more, as D... sent me a letter to-day, a
copy

me so happy as to employ me as an instrument in his wonderful deeds! Yet I perhaps wish too much.

“ You know I have assumed the name of . . . , and am already risen to the rank of President. The . . . has given me his favour in the highest degree. I should be vain enough to imagine, that this, or at least a part of it, might be ascribed to my personal abilities, were it not, that when I seriously consider, I think that I must attribute all to the Baron and the Order of . . . , into which your goodness has introduced me as a member.

“ Before I conclude, I must give you a proof how well I am beloved by His nephew will soon be at Venice, and will stay there for some time incog.: this he has told me in confidence. You will perhaps say in reply, that this
is

is not of sufficient consequence to cause much exultation; but I would observe, that it may become so, for ... keeps it as a secret from *every other person* without exception, and without pretending to have any other intentions than those which are laudable. I made myself dear to the sovereign by degrees, and have been obliged to write in his name several letters to the young Prince.

“ I must expedite the bearer of this, who goes on business for my master, and without making his appearance, he will send this letter to you by a third person: I hope I shall soon be able to write you more fully. I conclude with thanks for your kindness: I do this in few words, because my heart is not able by any language to express its gratitude. You may rely upon my fulfilling all your commands in the most punctual manner. I look

with anxiety for your satisfaction, which will increase my happiness in the highest degree. In the mean time

I remain,

Your

DEBTOR."

P.S.—I was obliged to open this letter again. It was forgotten by an unpardonable negligence of the messenger, who had for a long time carried it about in his portmanteau. When I was informed of this, I could account for your long and till then inexplicable silence. At this time I have ready a parcel of letters for you, which will inform you what this letter can but tell you in a small degree. All is going on according to your own wishes. As soon as you inform me where I may send the parcel of letters to, you shall receive them without delay. The sincerity which you will

will find in them, must convince you how much I am disposed towards him to whom I owe every thing.

“ The Prince of ... has been some time at Venice : this information may be of the greatest consequence. All is tolerably quiet here, because the ... has been very much attacked by his usual disorder.”

“ The account that you were here, as well as the rest of the information, gave me great pleasure, for nothing ever occurred but what I overcame without any difficulty. You was from that moment the principal object of my attention, and that I should make you subservient to my purpose, I deemed certain, before I could possibly know your character. The idea may seem absurd, but I could not bring myself to think otherwise.

H 2

wife.

wife. My conjecture became so much the more strengthened, when I beheld you, and observed in your countenance a pleasing melancholy, which promised me the best effect, although your other qualities seemed in some measure to be in opposition to your appearance.

“ To make you entirely dependent upon me, was my first resolution, being the ground work of my plan. I was desirous, that they should choose you King of ... This seemed to me certain, because I learned, during my stay in ..., that there were many dissatisfied and rebellious persons in the nation, anxious to obtain a regent from the house of ..., who would restore them all their ancient privileges.

“ Prince, I feel how difficult it is to make a plan of mine appear to another person clear and intelligible ; let it

suffice that I executed them with effect, and triumphed over seeming impossibilities. The success of all my schemes, till the period when they arrested me, and when I, as the master spring, was made inactive, vouch for the truth of my assertions*.

“ Now Prince, recollect the period when I made myself first known to you, from which time I intend to trace your history minutely †.

“ It was upon the terrace of Saint Mark where I followed you in the mask of an Armenian, and announced to you

* I omit what he has related here. The reader knows it already, from the intercepted hieroglyphical letters by Lord Seymour. The Armenian did not then know that their contents were already made public.

† I must beg of the reader to recollect all that happened to the Prince, as related in the foregoing Volumes.

the death of one of your relations. I believed it to be the best method to act mysteriously, justly conceiving, that under such circumstances you would retain a greater veneration for me, and be very desirous to procure a more intimate acquaintance with me."

"In this," replied the Prince with sorrow, "you did but too well succeed, for I had scarcely any desire but that of speaking to you. How could it be otherwise, since your account agreed so perfectly with the truth! That you knew my real name, I now no longer wonder: but that you could announce the death of the hereditary prince, and the hour in which he expired, is still an enigma to me, at least I wish to have it unravelled, that I may no longer judge erroneously."

"I have

“ I have already told you,” said the Armenian, “ that D... was then in ..., under the name of ..., Prefident, and was in complete possession of the favour of the ... This person was a willing tool in my hands. I sent him some poison, which he was to put in the drink of the hereditary Prince ; and I was so well acquainted with its slow effect, that I could calculate the hour of his death very minutely.

“ Finding that you lived very retired, it was necessary for me (in order to afford my spies an easy access to you) to involve you in the intoxicating pleasures of dissipation, for every thing that tended to promote serious consideration was disadvantageous to me; with this view I discovered your rank, and the natural consequence was, that the ambassadors of the Senate received you with all possible respect* : you found

* See Vol. I. p. 11.

that it was agreeable to what I had previously informed you. This was done to give you a fresh proof how materially I was acquainted with all that concerned you, and to prevent any embarrassment in the assembly to which they conducted you, I was present as a nobleman, and observed with pleasure how deep the impression which I had made was engraven upon your mind.

“ To surprize you with something wonderful, and to strengthen the idea that I every where followed you invisibly, I went the next evening (for the purpose of observing you) to the Terrace of Saint Mark in an unknown mask. I was not long there when you appeared with Count O . . . , and was compelled by a shower of rain to enter a coffee-house.

“ The

“ The circumstance which happened there you cannot forget*. It made part of the plan I was pursuing. The hall in which you were brought upon my command, was the rendezvous of the conspirators, and the beheading of the Venetian, who belonged to our party, merely a piece of deception with a large puppet, by which means I recommended to you caution during your continuance at Venice. Knowing as you do, that what I have explained actually happened, it will not appear singular to you, that I delivered your watch (as a sign that you might perhaps not come home so soon as usual) to one of your attendants. I took it from your pocket in the tumult*.

“ And what was your intention by that? Perhaps nothing more than to raise yourself in my estimation?”

* See Vol. I. p. 13.

* See Vol. I. p. 20.

“ Partly so; for by that. I prevented their enquiring after you, and it convinced them that you were not, as some had supposed in the hands of the State Inquisition, the discovery of which might have had bad consequences.

“ I knew perfectly well that you were not very desirous to remain longer at Venice, in spite of what had happened to you; and on that account I contrived with the President . . . that you should receive a letter, in which your court suggested that they would be well pleased with your continuing at Venice*.

“ Hence it was that you were enabled by large remittances to make that splendid figure in the circles of gaiety which your situation required; and without this I was confident you

* See Vol. I. p. 21.

would

would not have continued so long there.

“ It was pursuant to my commands that the physician proposed a journey for pleasure upon the Brenta, after you were recovered from a fever; and all that happened to you there was previously ordered by me, and was executed by a cunning fellow, whom you suspected to be a Sicilian. He has given you an exact explanation of most parts; and I will only inform you of that in which he dealt falsely with you, according to the character he was obliged to display.

“ The scene which took place with the children *, I designed should not only please your fancy, but elevate your ideas beyond the sphere to which they were at that moment confined.

* See Vol. I. p. 24.

“ Then I was not mistaken when I thought the Sicilian was concerned with you?”

“ Certainly not. I now reflected what other means I should use to accomplish my plans; and wisely considered, that the sooner I began the better.

“ In what manner the first appearance of the ghost was contrived you know already, and it could not have been difficult for you to have discovered it yourself, because I meant it merely as an introduction, and for that purpose I chose the Sicilian to act the part, who without doing me any mischief, could easily come forward as a deceiver, and whom I designed to assist me in the subsequent performances.

“ And

“ And you would have obtained your object, if the Sicilian had not related so much to me, which inevitably weakened the impression, if it did not extinguish it entirely.”

“ I know it, and he has suffered very severely for it. On that account many schemes to support my plan became requisite, which would not have been necessary, if a mistrust had not been excited against me.”

“ But the second apparition,” replied the nobleman, who was always present, “ you have not yet explained to us.”

“ It was a very cunning person whom I had instructed in the business, and who had shrouded himself, in case of violence, with a strong suit of armour. As I had your snuff-box many times
in

in my hands, I examined the portrait upon it very minutely, and knew that it was a copy of your deceased friend: thus I was able to give the ghost a strong likeness by means of a wax-mask which I had manufactured myself. The other circumstances were trifles, as by the smoke of olive wood and spirits of wine I prevented your making any exact observations."

" But where did this man enter so suddenly?" I asked him.

" Do you not remember, that a cloud of smoke filled the whole apartment? It came from an opening in the boards; and these means were employed to obscure the figure as it ascended through the trap-door, which closed itself by a spring."

" And

“ And the appearance of the confab-
bles?”

“ Was contrived by me, that you
might not suspect that I was concerned
with the Sicilian.”

“ The ball rolled slowly upon the
altar,” said I, interrupting the Arme-
nian. “ How was that?”

“ I had loaded the pistols with pow-
der only, and the Sicilian himself rolled
the ball upon the altar.”

“ Oh God!” exclaimed the Prince,
and tears stood in his eyes, “ Was I
then so near discovering the trick, and
yet—”

“ You ought to admire me so much
the more,” said the Armenian, bursting
out into a violent fit of laughter. “ Is
it

it not true, Prince, my invention rises far above my conception? It must be done by art, if you mean to catch a person after he has perceived the net."

"The remainder," added Count O... "which the Armenian explained of that apparition, was nothing more than what the reader already knows from the Prince's conjectures*; and the more this was unravelled, the more his sorrow increased, so that we scarcely were able to comfort him.

"You ordered the Sicilian to be apprehended:" said Lord Seymour, after a pause, turning the conversation upon another object. "Did you not intend by that to let us have a conversation with him, that it might give us the key to his juggling tricks?"

* See Vol. I. p. 131. et seq.

“ Undoubtedly: for as he explained to you the appearances falsely (which lie you might have discovered by a little attention), I thought those which I had to produce myself would be represented to you so much the more plausibly as wonders.”

“ And that was the very point in which you entirely missed your aim,” said the Prince, “ that was exactly the method to open my eyes.”

“ But for how long?—Yes, Prince, I confess, that I did not expect that of you. It was something uncommon, and I was not sufficiently acquainted with you to be aware of this. Besides, the Sicilian went further than my orders extended.

“ I per-

“ I perceive that.—And is it true, then, that the whole story concerning Lorenzo del M...te was invention*.

“ Nothing else, I can assure you.”

“ It was of no great use to you, for the Sicilian gave a feeble account of the story of the ring †: there the wretched deceiver was too much unmasked.”

“ And yet this was exactly agreeable to my plan.”

“ How?”

“ I have told you before, that I did not know you well enough; and I believed, that if a deceiver of such a kind, who was in connection with a mur-

* See Vol. I. p. 95.

† See Vol. I. p. 119.

derer,

derer, impeached the character which I had played, if such an one, I say, should give evidence against me, it must make a stronger impression upon you, as by every inducement he had a tie to the contrary.

“ But what could you imagine would follow the letting us know, that he made his escape, as by that our suspicion must have been augmented ?”

“ That indeed happened without my knowledge : I was under the necessity of being absent for several days : they did not find out his escape in time, otherwise you would never have heard of it.”

“ What view had you in causing the second apparition to say, that I should experience it at Rome, and that I ought to look to myself ?”

“ This

“ This was nothing more than an allusion to your future conversion to the Roman Catholic Church, and to try whether you would by such means be persuaded to take a journey to Rome. If I had perceived that you were inclined to go there, I should have employed other means in order to dissuade you from it. From that also I could conclude, that you thought the second appearance of the ghost to be no deception, and this was a sufficient inducement for me to proceed in my operations.

“ I soon discovered you to be a sceptic; on that account, I was obliged to use other means by which I might obtain my aim; and although this could not be done suddenly, I thought it would be effected with certainty.

“ Through

“ Through the contrivance of a certain priest, your servant was drawn into my net, and I commanded that he should even be surprized, and taken up.”

“ And this also happened through you? Oh God!—And what views had you in doing that?”

“ Many: but those which concerned you were not answered—(only in a subsequent period he became useful to me; but till I describe that time, I will delay mentioning him)—I succeeded by his loss in bringing one of my most skilful creatures into your service,—the cunning Biondello. All that they told you of him, when you engaged him, was done merely to induce you to take him without hesitation. That it was easy to obtain your favour, the consequences of this event have shewn. As they

they had told you so many fine stories of his disinterested character and fidelity*, and that by the multitude of his associates (whom he could make use of every moment), he must become very necessary for you, it was not to be wondered at that you made unconditional use of him, and placed in him the greatest confidence. From him I became acquainted with every little project of yours, and when you thought I had no concern in your undertakings, they were solely under my direction.

“ Without even my expecting it, there arose another advantage, when you conceived the idea of explaining in a natural manner that which you believed at first to be a wonder, namely, the idea that the whole system of religion, which you had imbibed in your infancy, might be

* See Vol. I.

founded

founded on erroneous principles. I heard with great pleasure from Biondello, that you already began to doubt its purity, which seemed to you till then too holy to admit of an attack. Whatever Biondello said against the proposition, I could so clearly see the beneficial consequences which would arise from it, that I employed every method to detach you from your religion, and if possible, to make it detestable to you, and to convert you into a free-thinker. It was then that I hoped to find you a perfect victim to my authority. It was by my contrivance that your imaginary friends put into your hands all those books which seconded my intention. and that you were afterwards introduced into the Bucentauro. And to prevent your again enjoying that tranquillity of mind which was so much distinguished in you, and which upon reflection might have returned, they fought

fought in every possible manner to lead you into dissipation. They solicited your friendship, they seduced you, led you into the most agreeable companies, and endeavoured by every method to make your new manners of life as agreeable to you as possible.

“ Do not think, Prince, that this was merely accident, although it might appear so to you. So humiliated as you now are, it can have no other than good consequences upon your christian heart, particularly if you exercise this beloved virtue. On that account I once more remind you, that notwithstanding your superior qualities, of which you boasted so highly, you would not have become the idol of every society you went into, if it had not been partly because you were a prince (a title which hides what would much disfigure others), and principally because
because

because I designed it to be so. Know, Prince, for the many pleasant hours which you have passed in this manner, you still owe me your thanks.

“ Now I endeavoured to get rid of you, Count O It was effected by a letter to one of my brethren at the court of your sovereign; and your presence there, you know yourself, became so necessary, that you dared not stay longer here, though you were very much inclined to it.”

“ But I am surprized,” replied I, “ that you did not take a shorter step: you might have assassinated me by one of your banditti.”

“ Do not think so highly of yourself, my dear Count!—You were too despicable for me to have you murdered; and besides, it might have become too evident to the Prince, and perhaps (for what

will not such trifles sometimes produce? might have caused him to alter his opinions."

" If I was so despicable to you, whence was it that you feared my presence?"

" I feared your presence! We often avoid a little stone that lies in our road, or rather, we push it away with the foot, to walk more commodiously, not because we fear to break our neck or leg by its being in the way. The hindrances which you could throw in my way, in respect to the Prince, were so trifling, so— But why do I defend myself? The wise man very often suffers himself to be stung by a fly, when he has it in his power to chase it away. Yet I must be a little gallant to you, and for that reason I willingly will confess to you, that in comparison with the other

other cavaliers of the Prince's household, I had more to fear from you than those buzzing insects of the day. You see, Count, that I speak plainly to you."

" Now I will return to you, my most gracious exalted master!

" Till this period you had not made an appearance, which would in the end cause your circumstances to be embarrassed, and for which I wished so heartily. I saw beforehand, that this could happen in no other manner than by introducing you to a person with whom you would be obliged to draw a parallel, and by that means aid the accomplishment of my wishes. No one was better calculated for that purpose than the Prince of . . . d . . . , and I could easily induce him to come hither by the assistance of the Order . . . and the Count

P..., who was much esteemed at that court. That his presence had the desired effect upon your conduct, you know without having it again repeated."

" That you should soon fall into the hands of usurers, was natural ; but anxious to prevent this taking place immediately, I contrived to throw a stranger in your way, and so make you dependent upon him. This was (till then unknown to you) the Marquis Civitella.

" How!" exclaimed the Prince, " did I not save him from the hands of the banditti? and—"

" It was done by my express orders, Prince," interrupted the Armenian hastily. " Recollect the evening when you were carried home from the Bucen-
tauro

tauro in a chair. Biondello had purposely fixed upon that which he knew would soon break; and he conducted you wrong, in order to guide you unperceived to the spot where Civitella and his banditti waited for you. As soon as they heard your arrival, they began to make a noise, and I knew that you would be led to the spot by your courage, and assist the person attacked. As soon as this happened, the banditti fled, for they were employed by us for that purpose, and you imagined you had rescued the Marquis."

" But his wounds," said the Prince, " were visible, and I myself was covered with blood."

" He had no wounds at all. At the dawn of morning, when the lamps were nearly extinguished, and in such
13 a situation,

a situation, it was very easy for him to deceive you by sprinkling blood upon your cloaths. Consider also, that it was Biondello himself, who for appearance sake, dressed his wounds. Nobody from you even came to examine him."

" But why did you use such means to introduce to me the Marquis, as it would in any other manner have succeeded equally as well?"

" Because I wished to have him closely connected with you, which could not otherwise be done so well; for amongst the many with whom you were surrounded, you paid little attention to individuals; and besides, it would have displeased you if he had offered to lend you such large sums of money, had you not supposed that it was gratitude which induced him to do it. You was not aware,

sware, that your own egotism attached you to the Marquis, and he, on that account, conducted you every where, and by his extraordinary finesse persuaded you to many things which were agreeable to my intentions, and to the character which he was engaged to play. Biondello was no less expert at his employment; and he chose his apartment near the side of your sleeping-room. Now, therefore, consider whether it was wonderful that the least movement which you made was communicated to me, as you were always surrounded by two of my tools, in whom you placed an unlimited confidence. The other spies, who still served me, and who were found in every society in which you entered, I will not mention. I only remind you of these circumstances, that you may not be surprized when you find that the line of conduct which you thought

an act of your own, was directed solely by my will."

"What I had foreseen and expected now happened. You were entirely without money. Your letters of credit were kept back by my contrivance; and, to make your embarrassment still more pressing, I contrived that you should borrow of an usurer. The whirlpools of dissipation and shew, which the stay of the Prince . . . had caused, had already so engulfed you, that you could not be sufficiently master of your vanity to renounce it, otherwise than by leaving the place, which you knew would be suspicious. This however was necessary, if you would escape the abyss which was yawning to receive you, and which was enlarged to an alarming extent. You was unaccustomed to such a prospect. Fearing that all my former
mer

mer labours should prove fruitless, I was obliged to devise a scheme which would not only induce you to continue here, and gratify you in the mean time in the most agreeable manner, but which I could also employ in the execution of my plans.

“ To answer this purpose, nothing appeared to me so proper as love ; and this so much the more, because I knew perfectly well that this passion had never been roused within you, and must naturally burst forth the stronger. That I might proceed in the safest way, and not present to you many ladies without effect, I was disposed previously to try your taste. From several of the finest originals I had accurate copies taken, and commissioned a painter of Florence to offer them to you for sale. You know how soon you decided for the Madona, and it was on that account

unnecessary to make further trials with the other pieces. As I was confirmed by innumerable instances in the opinion, that fancy works the more powerfully if the object is taken from it, wherewith it was occupied, I contrived it so that you should not be able to buy the picture ; for the painter knew beforehand, that it must not be left with you for the highest price, because it was already my own property ; and, in order to destroy your hopes of obtaining it, it was told you, that a purchaser had already been found for it.

“ The copy had so powerfully been wrought upon your mind, that we naturally expected that you would be much impressed by the original, if we could exhibit her to you with a proper combination of circumstances which really happened afterwards.”

“ How !”

“ How !” exclaimed the Prince,
“ was this also your contrivance?—That
love, which nothing else—”

“ Do not put yourself out of temper, all shall be immediately explained to you.—Do you not remember that Civitella guided all your steps, and made you enter the church, where you found your beloved goddess, who already waited with impatience your arrival? Was any thing more wanting than to leave to her the part she was instructed to play, after you were already so much occupied with her picture ?

“ And to be certain that she had made the wished impresson upon you, Civitella was obliged, in the concert he gave to you, to introduce the handsome lady who sung, conceiving that a melodious air sung by an enchanting voice,

makes a sudden and sometimes deep impression. You were the only one in the whole company, who remained immoveable and regardless. This gave us a sufficient ground to presume, that the impression you received had not yet been effaced. In order, therefore, to make it deeper and more permanent, Biondello was to give you only a distant hint that she might be found again, and on that account you did not see her on the wished Sunday evening in church.

“ Civitella at that period led you to the gaming-table, to plunge you still deeper in debt ; and it must be ascribed to some other cause than your absence of mind, that you lost such large sums.

“ This

“ This was the time to prejudice you against your court. D... was long before convinced of your bad conduct by several accounts which the President ... gave of you ; it therefore only remained to inspire you with hatred against it. The first attempt at this was by Biondello, who told you, that they employed spies to watch you. Your bad conscience (let me for once use this expression) suggested immediately that this could come from no other place than from There was nothing more wanting than to confirm this proposed opinion within you, and Biondello (if it were possible) gained by that means upon your confidence. He was also instructed in giving you a hint, to whom you might attribute it, if the letters should not arrive, which really happened, because I intercepted the correspondence.”

“ On

“ On that account,” replied the Prince, “ I advised Biondello not to imprison those negociators.”

“ Oh ! I now perceive more and more clearly, how shamefully I was deceived by those to whom I gave my confidence, which I had withdrawn from my truly worthy friends !”

The Armenian here darted upon the Prince such a spiteful and contemptuous look, that he turned his eyes from him, and suppressed the tears which flowed down his cheeks. Yet the Armenian did not vent any invectives, to my great satisfaction, but left that part of the subject, and continued.

“ You begin to pity me, my gracious Prince. I determined to give you back your Greek Lady, fearful that the letter,

ter, which I had prepared for you by the President ... of your court, might attack you too severely, and then you would have a consolation left; and partly that you should not form a determination to leave Venice. What I suspected happened. As a fortunate lover, and under the idea of obtaining from your sister the accustomed supplies, you answered in an angry stile, and the true enmity was vented; especially as you received a fresh letter, in which they laid much guilt to your charge, of which you were totally ignorant at that time."

" And how was it possible that the ... could believe such things of me?"

" That was managed by the President, who, in hopes of becoming a great

great man through me, adopted, out of gratitude, every method to fulfil my wishes. And this was very easy for him to do. I took care of the letters which he obtained; and those which I contrived to get signed by your bosom friend Baron F. . . (as they would believe him, he always taking your part with great warmth) produced the greatest effect."

" Oh God !" exclaimed the Prince, " had I but then only defended myself in a letter !"

" And you believe, then, that a letter written in such a stile as that was, would have been sent away from hence ? Before I had perused all your letters, no one could be sent away, and those that arrived I always saw, previous to their being delivered to you. In every case, I could without difficulty forge
one,

one, as I knew so well how to imitate all hand-writings, and you were always deceived; and if you sent one of your people as messenger with a letter, there were many means to shorten his journey.

“ Your sister had by an accident learnt from ... all that was written to him, and I laboured to make you also quarrel with her, which happened of itself to my great satisfaction. Now you had no affectionate tie that could bind you to your relations, and your situation was precisely what I wished it.

“ In order to drive your despair to the highest pitch, and then to shew myself as your saviour, I was obliged to deprive you of all that which you could now rely upon, your beloved lady and the Marquis.

“ That

“ That you might have a high idea of me, and to prepare for what would follow, I contrived that apparition. The facility with which you then ascribed it to natural circumstances, made me with reason conclude how necessary it was that the impression of the following must become so much the stronger in proportion as you sought to enfeeble it by an explanation of the former.

“ I should myself think it almost superfluous to explain to you the apparition, did I not expect to have the pleasure of witnessing and enjoying your mortification, that you could not once comprehend it, although blest with such deep discernment, or see through the simplicity of such an experiment.

“ Listen

“ Listen then attentively. Biondello, so heartily beloved by you, to whom all your former friends gave way, performed this. That you might not suspect him, and to gain time for the preparations, he pretended to be indisposed. The book which they placed in your hands, kept you, according to my expectation, longer awake than was customary, so that you should not think what appeared was the effect of a dream. The candles were provided with a kind of caps, that scarcely reached to half of the light, which would necessarily be extinguished after a short interval. Biondello, without your knowledge, brought back two others. The violent shock which the thunder made, caused the doors and windows, which were not quite shut, to fly open. The words that you heard were spoken by Biondello through a trumpet,

a trumpet, the opening of which was hidden behind your writing-desk.

“ And now recal to your mind that evening which you spent in Saint Benedetto, so merrily at the beginning of the ball, and the frightful scene which afterwards caused you so much uneasiness. It will not, I know, be very surprizing to you, if I say, that all you met with there was my contrivance. You turned yourself in the dance round your neighbour, which was myself. Suddenly, and in such a way that nobody could observe it, I put a little hook in your dress, and a great part of it was torn. You were obliged to leave the ball, and Biondello conducted you to a room, in which the Marquis had been long waiting for your appearance.”

“ Ter-

“ Terrible!—And who was that lady near his side upon the sofa?—I almost believe still that it was Theresa, for—”

“ It was not Theresa, but a prostitute that we had engaged for the purpose.”

“ And the familiarity?”

“ Was a deception by a mask and dress.”

“ Oh! Why did I not inquire into—your infernal deceit:—I could have so easily discovered it, and then I should have been saved!”

“ Not at all. Only a delay of a few days was all that you could gain by it, and you would have fallen again into another trap.—But I knew how
to

to estimate the degree of your passion, which would arise at such a sight, with sufficient correctness to judge beforehand what would be your conduct in such a situation. I was certain, that nothing would prevent you from hastening towards the Marquis with the dagger which lay upon the table, and thus was I enabled even the preceding night, to give you a warning concerning the murder, without your being able to hinder my premeditated intentions. And supposing I should have been mistaken, if by chance you had remembered those words, and had been collected, what should I have lost by it? In that case it was not your beloved, and therefore you would have been satisfied, and the warning would have been a weight upon you, and Biondello would have made you attentive to it, because you had found yourself in a situation
in

in which a murder is not a strange phenomenon."

"But how could you induce your creatures to undertake a thing at such great peril? How, if I had murdered the Marquis?"

"Care was taken to prevent that. The dagger which Biondello laid upon the table when he went behind you into the room, was the only instrument at hand with which you could have injured him. At the point a little button was fixed, and when you was stabbing the Marquis, the blade returned into its handle, and only came out again when you let it loose: thus by the most violent blow it could not wound, although it deceived the mind. And is it not true that Civitella performed his character in a masterly manner?"

"The

“ The blood which came from his supposed wound issued from a bladder filled with a red liquid which he had hidden in his bosom ; and you, oh, great hero, were frightened so much by it, that though but a moment before you were all rage and revenge, you were persuaded by Biondello to run off with him, to which suggestion you yielded without the smallest resistance.

“ He accordingly conducted you first to the Convent of Franciscans, and increased your fears by his descriptions of the pursuits of the banditti, in order that he might convey you from that place to the Convent . . . , in which there had been previously made the necessary preparations. There you found your beloved.”

“ Then it was herself?”

“ She

“ She herself.”

“ And how can this be possible?—I saw her die, and F... saw her dissected, and you restored her to me afterwards alive again!—Since I was induced to believe in your power of miracles, I see in it many contradictions.”

“ You became yourself the cause of the contradiction. You were an eye-witness of all, and yet you will not trust your own experience!—Yes, it was your beloved, whom you saw ill and dying, yet this was nothing but deception.”

“ Is it possible!—That a deception!”

“ Deception.”

“ And I saw her pale lips, her fallen cheeks, her languid eyes.—No, that must be real.”

“ Prince, when shall I make you understand?—Hark, how my chains rattle!—How could I raise her again, if her death had not been a deception? or if I were able to do so, should I sit here? At any other time such an error would have given me pleasure; but now it is my intention to destroy every blossom, which at a future period might give you happiness even at the hazard of my own destruction. No, Prince, reconcile yourself to the fact, that the goddess whom you so passionately adored, was assisting to deceive you; and never, even in your dreams, must she hereafter appear to you, otherwise than a detestable being, that like a beautiful serpent would sting the person who caressed it. She

never

never loved you. Or do you think still that it was another person, who really was ill and then died, and had only borrowed the likeness of your beloved? If you think it is a fact, I would have you consider, that no person in the last hours of his life ever had so much presence of mind as to be able to play so vividly the character of another person; and if it should have been so, what profit could have ensued from it, when she had only applied the fatal hour of dissolution to aid a deception? Was not even the conversation, which you had with her, of such a nature that it was almost impossible to mistake another person for her?"

" Yes, it is but too true.—But why do you not unravel my doubts rather than augment them?"

“ Ha !—Could I but augment them—Her haggard cheeks, her pale lips, her hollow eyes, were nothing but—very strong painting, her feebleness nothing but disguise.—Do you not remember, that she pretended the light was insupportable to her, and that she sought to keep it always at a distance? How easy was it then to deceive you, especially as you were not a cool spectator, but felt every pain which the sick person suffered. Consider moreover the situation of your mind when you came to the convent.”

“ You oblige me to confess, that I am distressed I was so deceived—so shamefully deceived.”

“ Is it so, Prince? Oh that your feelings may not already be so blunted as to resist this attack! Oh that I were able to give a thousand-fold pangs that
that

that could pierce you to the very heart. Her death was nothing but an artificial swoon, at the beginning of which they contrived to have you absent, that you might not discover the truth."

" But the dissection?"

" Took place on another person, whom I had, merely for that purpose, suffered to be poisoned. And to deceive your Baron F . . . , a mask of wax would have been sufficient, but her face remained covered for the greatest part of the dissection.

" Now I thought it time to introduce you again to public notice, to shew myself to you as your friend. That could not happen in a common manner: on that account the apparition * appeared to you, which was easi-

* See the foregoing volume.

ly effected, because in your absence every thing had been prepared for it. The top of your bed was fastened to the ceiling, and this could be moved at pleasure. The Genius which presented himself before you was the image of a picture, which a magic-lantern threw upon the furniture of your bed, which was also prepared for that purpose."

" He seemed to lean down upon me."

" It seemed to be so, because it shewed itself first in miniature, and then by a combination of mirrors, convex glasses, and other optical instruments, it became larger and larger. The words which you heard were spoken by a child (who had learnt them by heart) through a tube, which terminated in one of the bed-posts, and I
myself

myself let fall a letter through an opening over you."

" And the music?—I never before heard any thing similar : it was divine, and the harmony so charming, that I could not compare it with sounds produced from any instrument."

" They were cylindrical glasses, which were turned between wetted leathers*, and they were accompanied by a little organ with silver pipes, and a lute. The object of that was, in case you was asleep, to wake you, and to prepare you for the ensuing scene."

" And why was I not to open the letter before day-break?"

* I have wondered very much to find here a kind of harmonica : a proof that the first invention is not so new as is by some persons imagined.

EDITOR.

“ I was willing to try the strength of the belief which you would have in the whole appearance. If you had opened the letter sooner, you would have found nothing in it but blank paper, for the writing in it was written with sympathetic ink, which could only be visible at a certain time, as you will have observed by the direction. I also should have punished you for that disobedience by an apparition, which in that case was already prepared.

“ That all in the letter relative to the Marquis was merely a deception, is now comprehensible; for it is easy to imagine, that he could immediately recover, as he was not in reality wounded.—But how could the watchmen be deceived? or were they creatures of yours?”

“ No;

“ No; they were not. Do you think that I should have disclosed such things to them. I appeared to the Marquis in the described form, and the watch by my command had taken a sleeping draught which affected them at the very moment:—that I could do this without those people receiving harm from it, I have already told you.”

“ But did the impression which your apparition made upon the watch, become doubly strong when they awoke, and could see all that happened?”

“ I shall prove the contrary, because their fancy presented to them more than they could in reality have observed.

“ But might not one of them have had the thought to inquire into the business?”

“ If so, nothing would have been lost. When you had formed the resolution to leave the convent, and had given your command to Biondello, from which I concluded, that you still doubted the truth of the matter, I commanded that those words “conquer your disbelief,” should be once more repeated to you, in order to confirm the idea that you were always surrounded by invisible powers, that attended to your words and actions.

“ Of the conduct which Civitella manifested towards you, I say nothing. You know the issue of it, that in spite of the preceding event which happened, he obtained the former place of friendship in your heart.”

“ I must interrupt you here. I recollect a circumstance which you have not explained to me. Who was it
that

that told me in the note, that I should go to a certain place, where I was attacked, but defended and rescued by the courage of a friend, who became afterwards my chamberlain? Yet I will not inquire further into the business: it was probably one of your plans."

"No, it was not: but both Biondello and myself sought to make it subservient to our wishes, and by bringing it forward as a scheme of your court to make you more inveterate against it. It happened during my absence, and I could not discover who had assisted me in so favourable a manner. You see that I am sincere*.

"That the multitude of unpleasant incidents, united with the apparitions,

* See the foregoing volume. This was the contrivance of Lord Seymour, when Johnson saved him, and to enter as chamberlain into the Prince's service.

must have made a strong impression upon your mind was very natural, but that it should induce you to harbour a disgust for the world, was not what I expected, according to your former manners of thinking. I supposed that you would sing penitential psalms, to bewail your former disbelief, and be thankful for the lash of correction, which had brought you to the right path. I was much mistaken, for you were occupied with nothing else than the idea of lost happiness. This induced you to think of committing suicide, as was proved by your soliloquies, which Biondello overheard through a crevice in your chamber-door, for no word could escape us."

" You have then been in my palace ?"

" Very

“ Very often.”

“ And did I never see you?”

“ You did not know me. The old man, who visited Biondello as his cousin, was myself*.”

“ Wonderful! However, proceed.”

“ Such ideas, I conceived, ought to be rooted from your mind, and that you should imbibe those which I found would be more necessary. The metamorphosis of the ribband was the beginning*.”

“ And how did that happen?”

“ Nothing was easier. Biondello had a false key to your bureau, and

* See the foregoing volume.

had

had coloured the ribband beforehand with a sympathetic liquid, which became visible in open air only, and disappeared again in a short space of time; he had observed, that you frequently took it out of the bureau, and this induced him to prepare it in that manner during your absence. The close of the scene was conducted by Biondello and the Marquis*, of which I hope nothing will be incomprehensible to you; as they only played their studied performances, and the ring which confirmed your opinion, I easily procured.

“ You will still remember, that Civitella conducted you into many societies merely for the purpose of leading you into dissipation; in consequence of which, all those sentiments were dis-

* See the foregoing volume.

carded which had been formerly your ambition. From perceiving that you had entirely abandoned them, I could easily draw a conclusion as to the situation of your mind, and that no new doubts might be thrown into your way, I contrived that the Bucentauro should be dispersed, because it would have appeared suspicious if the members of it had suddenly altered their opinions: and this was done in such a manner, that it might not destroy all that I had so carefully constructed; for the character of your disposition was so doubtful, that every object which offered itself could not fail to make a strong impression upon it, and produce great changes, which in a tranquil and reflecting mind would not have been possible.

“ That appeared to me the best time to make you a profelyte. We could
 ...
 observe,

observe, by every occurrence, how willingly you would submit to an opinion from which you could assure yourself forgiveness of your sins, although the priest often laughs in his sleeve at the idea ; and yet does not chuse to expose its falsehood, because he would not injure his trade, which is so lucrative, and so well fitted for him, on account of the clandestine enjoyments which are attached to it. I could not introduce to you for that purpose a common person : it must be one whose fame of sanctity was not merely bombast, the lustre of which disappears in a clear light. I therefore chose the Bishop."

" Was he also in league with you?"

" No ; his folly was increased to such a high pitch, that he sacrificed himself for others with the greatest pleasure."

" And

“ And you could persuade him to preach that sermon?”

“ Does that seem singular to you?— Men, whose heads are full of chimeras, are to be found almost every where; and such are easily persuaded to any undertaking, if it has but the least appearance of encouraging their favourite idea. And this was a clear case. I told him with great affliction you were a lost sheep from the flock, and tears immediately started from his eyes. I dared do nothing more than make him believe that a sermon might perhaps bring you back. It would have been a great scruple of conscience with him not to comply with my request.

“ The Bishop told me afterwards, that you had acquainted him with the incidents of my life, and that you had begged

begged of him to deliver that sermon. Was this also your desire?"

"Undoubtedly, and for that very reason I appeared before him in the same dress in which I had done to you, that you might know my person by the description he gave you. I was aware, that as soon as you learned this came from me, it would make a strong impression upon your mind, and augment my credit with you."

"But what if I had not gone to church?"

"I beg your attention to the issue; that you may learn how it happened. In that case I relied entirely on the Marquis and your own situation. He, whose lips always overflowed with taunts and scoffs against the admirers of religion, was at the same time with you a penitent. It was no wonder then that

that he should know that you had a desire to visit the church. You seemed unwilling to take that step alone: he offered you his hand, and you were then so much the more ready, because you had known him before to be the greatest free-thinker; and now heard him praise the Bishop; and if, against all our expectation, you should have refused to go, you know me, that I never was at a loss for methods to guide you.

“ Did you imagine that I should perhaps encourage the idea, that the Bishop was acquainted with you, when the Marquis persuaded me to go to the church with him?”

“ Not only had I seen this beforehand, but I even reckoned upon it; and if you had not fallen yourself upon that thought, the Marquis knew how
to

to guide you to it. Have you already forgotten how much I won afterwards upon you, when the death of the Marquis seemed to confirm the truth of what he had told you of me, and—

“ And did all that happen by contrivance? The fever of the Marquis, his violent paroxysm, his death:—Were these mere deception?”

Nothing more. As far as I know, the Marquis is yet alive.”

“ Oh God!—Proceed, that I may empty my cup of confusion to the dregs.”

“ That you shall, Prince, to the last drop. Do not fear that I leave off in order to deprive myself by so doing of the last happiness which I can be capable of enjoying. That the idea of what the Marquis could tell you from
me,

me, might have still greater effect upon you, and in order to leave it to your own imagination, what would you think of my miracles (though his relation alone must have already appeared to you incredible) I interrupted him by my appearance. This procured me in the mean time, the advantage of giving you new proof of my power and omnipresence. I came out from a thin tapestry, and that you might not approach me, and obstruct the second part of the miracle, the Marquis held you fast by your hand, till I had locked the room-door behind me."

" But I followed you immediately, and could not discover you. Where did you hide yourself so suddenly?"

" I was the same monk who met you upon the stair-case. My dress was so contrived, that I could change it immediately ;

mediately ; and a waxen mask, several of which I carried with me, rendered it impossible that you should know me by my face. The Cardinal, who was present during my metamorphosis, was in the plot, and came on that account down the stair-case to shew you that I could have no where escaped without being observed, and therefore must necessarily have disappeared. You evinced by your conduct, that you wished to know me more distinctly. And I thought that the best opportunity to tell you by a speaking trumpet, which was applied as before, that your obedience only would make you worthy of that knowledge : and to my satisfaction your countenance shewed that I might expect it from you*.

“ I thought it proper for me to shew myself once more as your saviour, before I came forward with my demands.

* See the foregoing volume.

On that account I fet all your creditors upon you, in order to put you in the greateft trouble, for I well knew that you had nobody at that time who would intereft himfelf for you, and endeavour to appeafe the noify claimants. On that account I appeared as a pay-mafter, commanded to deliver you new fums of money.

“ The period when the Bifhop could be ufeful to me was now over, and I found it neceffary to put him out of the way, that he might not be hurtful to me. He had made you an admirer of religion. Others were now neceffary to occupy his place, that a fcheme might be raifed upon a new foundation, as it agreed with my previous plans. On that account Sebastiano had fought to acquire the confidence of the Bifhop, that he might be able to get yours.”

“ You

“ You have not told me yet who the Bishop was. That he was not the person which the writing that Sebastiano delivered to me after his death, had represented him, I see now but too clearly.

“ But very little was known about him, his history remained a profound secret; the only thing discovered was, that Germany was his birth-place, and this merely was betrayed by his great partiality to that nation. You once told the Marquis a family-secret: this and other favourable circumstances induced me to compose that history which Sebastiano delivered to you. The character of the Bishop was too dear to you to entertain any doubt as to its being a genuine story. My object was gained. Your hatred against ... rose to the highest pitch, when you saw that so many deeds of murder were upon that
side.

side. You thought it was ... who had taken from you your beloved and the Bishop, and even aimed at your own life (as the sudden appearance of your lost servant proved to you) and your confidence increased towards Sebastiano.

“ But why did you seek to make the innocent Baron F... so suspicious and detestable to me, that I consented to his killing him? Could you not obtain your aim otherwise than by laying this crime upon my soul *?”

* I saw the letters which were fabricated in the name of Baron F... and myself, and which were delivered to the Prince to stimulate him to such a deed. Never did I see hand-writings so artfully and accurately imitated. I should have acknowledged all the letters which were forged under my name to have been my own writing, had I not seen the whole of their contents. This may serve as a new request to my readers for their compassion towards the unhappy Prince.

NOTE OF COUNT O**.

VOL. IV.

L

“ F...

“ F... was now a hindrance to me. Who could say, that if an opportunity offered, he might not make his friendship again valuable? And would not your new friends stand upon the ruins of your old ones so much the surer? The future party which I premeditated for you would have required many other assassinations; and could I not hope with certainty, that the absolution for your sins (an easy task for a person to perform in the Popish church) must be so much the more desirable to you, the greater burden you had upon your conscience?”

“ You have not yet explained to me the event that happened to my servant.—Was he also a creature of yours?”

“ No; he was too stupid.”

“ And

“ And yet how does that agree with what you told me? You said, you made him a prisoner, and at the same time a ... officer was about to hire him to assassinate me.”

“ You ought to admire my foresight. I caused your servant to be taken up, in order to extract some information from him; but principally to accommodate you with a new servant. To prevent any suspicion of that proceeding falling upon me, I examined him myself in an Austrian uniform. The darkness and my art deceived him, and he very easily mistook me for the colonel, and my companions for officers: besides, we left it to his own choice, to think of us as he pleased. I imprisoned him so long as I wanted him. He was easily induced to believe that no banditti could kill you, and I had entirely accomplished my end with him.

Your hatred towards your court, and the confidence you placed in me, who could warn you of approaching danger, increased very much."

" And you who always panted after blood—I do not comprehend why you did not make use of that opportunity to your profit, but rather prevented me in that letter from taking any revenge."

" It was not yet time. I stopt the current, that it might burst forth with greater violence. And did I not give you by that a new proof of my whole manner of thinking? And could I well miss having disclosed to you afterwards the whole business from a quarter where you even seemed to lend your arm to assist the Deity in punishing the crimes of others?"

" Sebast-

“ Sebastiano, and his brethren of the clergy, had already done so much, that I hoped that you would be entirely ready for an apostasy; and if this was not the case, then we were ready to expect, that as I made you so eager to obtain a near acquaintance with me; you would take that step with pleasure, in order to become worthy of me, as you were more firmly convinced that your whole fate depended upon my destination.”

“ Before you proceed further, I would ask you, if it happened also with your consent, that Biondello advised me to fly, as my creditors talked of arresting me?”

“ As certainly as that he dared not undertake any thing against my will.”

“ And if I had followed his advice?”

“I knew you better, and I only wanted to learn by the contrivance, if you had still a private resource to relieve you from your embarrassments, which I should have been obliged to prevent, as I intended to save you exclusively. In case you listened to Biondello's advice, I was prepared, so that I had nothing to fear from a flight of that kind.”

THE COUNT O*,****IN CONTINUATION.**

HERE we were interrupted.

From the beginning of the relation, the Armenian had often made great pauses, and affected to feel so feeble, that he was unable to speak long together. It was very visible, that he sought nothing else by that than merely to gain time; we were notwithstanding induced to comply with his request, because we wished very much to hear from him the sequel of the history. We

endeavoured to gain permission that a physician might visit him, and that he might be lightly fettered, though we perceived, in spite of all his diffimulation, that this was quite unnecessary; and the rigorous Inquisitors were the more easily persuaded to do it, because they still hoped to discover by that means the names of the other conspirators, as every other method to effect such a confession had failed. This appeared to me the proper place to mention this circumstance, and on that account I said nothing of it beforehand.

As those circumstances made it absolutely necessary for us to visit the Armenian in his own room, when we were there one evening, the jailor opened the door, and the physician came in. He came often when we were present, but we did not attend to him; however, his timidity was frequently

fo

so visible, that it did not escape us. After some inquiries about his patient, he drew out a phial, and presented it to him. His anxiety was very great, and the significant looks which in the mean time he threw at the Armenian, made us presume that it contained poison, to liberate him from his deserved punishment, which one of his conspirators had perhaps sent to him. Johnson dashed the glass from his hands, before one of us could take that resolution. The swoon of the bearer convinced us, that we had not deceived ourselves, and the savage countenance of the Armenian, as he gnashed his teeth, shewed that he had well understood the hints of the physician.

The physician recovered very soon, and entreated us, in the most humble manner, not to ruin him, and to keep the matter a secret. We promised it,

upon condition that he should discover to us every thing. This he did, and we perceived clearly by his sincerity and whole conduct that it was the first time that they had made use of him for such a business.

We found that the phial really contained some physic (and this we could have perceived ourselves, as all was immediately strictly enquired into before it was brought to the Armenian), but instead of the label, which according to the custom of apothecaries, is tied round the neck of the bottle, we found a note to the Armenian. An unknown person had promised the physician a great sum of money for its delivery, half of which he had already obtained, and the other half he was to receive afterwards, if every thing succeeded well; and in case he should refuse, he had been threatened with death.

His

His confusion at his entrance arose from seeing us, because he did not expect us there at such an unseasonable hour. I looked at the note very attentively, but, except the common direction, I could not make out one word of it. The Doctor told us, that the writing would only become legible when we wetted it, and that he was going to make that known to the Armenian. We did so, and to our astonishment found the following contents, written in a hand so small that it was scarcely legible.

“ After a thousand fruitless
 “ trials to convey a letter to your
 “ hands, this will, we think,
 “ succeed ; although necessity
 “ forces us to make use of a man
 “ as bearer, who is not fit for such
 “ a task.

“ Know that you, and we all,
“ have been terribly deceived ; the
“ Polish Jew, to whom you trusted
“ so much, was Count O... him-
“ self, whom we have not yet
“ been able properly to reward
“ for it. He has delivered your
“ letters to the Inquisition, and
“ many others are imprisoned.

“ That we have still courage,
“ although many of us are impris-
“ oned, and that we still hope to
“ save you, this attempt may be a
“ proof. If we succeed, then we
“ shall likewise be able to liberate
“ the others, or at least revenge
“ their death under your direction.
“ Despair braves every thing. A
“ life like ours, in which we are
“ in perpetual anxiety lest one
“ of the prisoners should be a
“ coward, and betray us also, is
“ become

“ become absolutely intolerable ;
“ our blood is also in a ferment-
“ tation, that cannot be appeased
“ till all means are exhausted.

“ We leave it to your prudence
“ to invent a pretext, by which you
“ may contrive, either this or to-
“ morrow night, to be conducted
“ for examination to another place.
“ Leave the rest to us. Your
“ guards may be as many as they
“ will, you are ours, and—free.
“ If this should not succeed, we shall
“ revenge ourselves, in spite of all.
“ They keep secret our names, as
“ they have done till now.

“ THE CONSPIRATORS.”

I was so imprudent, as to read this
very loud to the Prince. The Arme-
nian,

nian, who had lain, till now, in a kind of stupor, which (as I could now perceive) was nothing but attention, jumped up in a rage from his bed, dashed himself, before we could prevent him, so violently against the large iron lock on the door, that the blood gushed from his head, and he sunk down on the floor. He recovered again, and vented such a profusion of curses and imprecations as I never heard uttered by a mortal: his lips became blue and covered by a yellow froth. It would disgrace this paper to write down his expressions, and they would excite in the reader's breast the most horrid sensations. It was very evident that he must have still expected much from the narration to the Prince, and from the letter delivered to me, in order to procure his escape; and now all was entirely lost to him, and every way for his flight barricaded!

Dreadful

Dreadful beyond all description was his end. By repeatedly beating his head on the ground, his wound became incurable. The physician gave up all hopes of delivering him safe into the hands of justice, for his well deserved punishment; and they resolved to leave him to himself, as they saw, that the torments he was suffering was more than equal to the penalty which would be inflicted upon him by the most rigorous justice.

Large maggots engendered in his wound, and devoured by piece-meal his brain, which formerly was so full of malice. The consequences of his condition now operated as if they had only waited for that moment to begin their frightful tormentings. There were holes in every part of his body, and to prolong his torments they gave him the most nourishing food. A pesti-
lential

lential smell spread itself through the whole house. His eyes sunk and decayed in his head, his tongue became black, and gradually dissolved in a putrid saliva, which was discharged from his distorted jaws.

Piece by piece his flesh fell from his rotten bones, and he lived till all the joints separated themselves, and his heart, which seemed designedly to be preserved healthy, rotted in his breast.

I here drop the curtain over the most horrible scene which the eyes of mortals ever beheld. This spectacle affected us all very greatly, although we kept at a considerable distance from him; but the Prince caught a violent fever, which protracted our stay for eight days longer.

Nothing

Nothing more was heard during that period of the conspiracy. They however made an attempt to conduct some person, instead of the Armenian, from the prison, in order, by that trick, to draw the authors of the letter into the trap, but they perceived none of them. Perhaps they might have heard something of what had passed, and prudently had secreted themselves. I pitied most the physician, who was the bearer of the letter. By the noise which the Armenian's head made against the lock of the door, the guard, accompanied by an officer, came in. They must have heard something of his entreaties to us, and the note unfortunately was still in my hands. His anxiety discovered the rest; and this very innocent man, who was only weak enough to be seduced by money, was punished as a traitor against the state.

Thus

Thus ended this conspiracy, whose only biographer I am, because a dark veil covers every thing in the history of Venice that could have any relation to it, and which only can be comprehensible to those who are exactly acquainted with it. The secret which the senate made of it, was a hindrance to all enquiries of every kind, and the unknown criminals were never brought to light.

That I intended to write nothing but the truth, I promised at the beginning of this narrative, and that I adhered to that intention in the history of the Armenian, I need frankly to assert. How far his confessions are true, I am not competent to decide; but that the greatest part, or at least the chief event, could not be a tale, the letters in the history which I have communicated to the reader verbatim, must bear testimony.

By

By a strict search in the habitation of the Armenian, these letters were found, besides several other writings in a private cupboard. Perhaps they might not have fallen into my hands, if I had not been employed to decypher them, in which business I was very dexterous, and hence I could conveniently take copies of them. At first I had intended to give them, and several other papers of consequence, in an appendix, but I changed my design, and inserted them in the places where the Armenian made mention of them, and I hope the reader will not be displeas'd.

I suppress'd all real names, for which I think nobody will blame me. I wish'd not to cause any reproach to those to whom reputation is as sacred as to myself. I made it a maxim to give no offence to any family, by representing decoy'd villains (members of
many

many families) publicly, if I could possibly avoid it. I think it my duty to add what I heard from the Prince of that period, where his friendship with the Armenian became so very intimate, and from which we knew nothing distinctly till now. He had employed apparitions of ghosts and other methods for the purpose of inspiring the Prince with revenge against the ... anew, and to obtain the Prince's consent for his assassination. God knows why he thought this necessary! This, and the desire of being seated on the throne, and to blow the mouldering ashes into a great flame, was for him—(Oh, that I must say so!)—happily accomplished. But the Armenian desired still more: he desired that the Prince should for ever bind himself to him by an oath as long as he lived, and be entirely subject unconditionally to his
his

his will; without ever asking him the reason of it.

The good principles of the Prince were not yet so entirely eradicated from his heart as to consent to such a proposal; for his soul was still able to draw the conclusion, in spite of all his prejudices, that the Armenian would not make such a demand if he always designed to display his good intentions. The villain, who was prepared for all, had already seen the possibility of that beforehand, and for that purpose had spared the resurrection of the Prince's beloved. He at the moment beheld it as a miracle, and, intoxicated with love, consented to every thing. Providence destroyed at that period the complicated schemes which it had apparently so long continued to regard with indifference.

We

We left Venice, and my bosom beat high with joy for some time. I looked back, in order to survey that beautiful prospect perhaps for the last time in my life. I beheld Venice, full of magnificent palaces and churches, surrounded by the sea, reflecting the first beams of Aurora, which gilded the highest pinnacles of ancient edifices with his splendour. The upper part of the sun's bright orb richly illuminated the eastern sky, whilst it seemed hesitating whether to emerge from the serene ocean. My eye was unwearied in beholding this delightful prospect;—but my sensations. Oh! how far different were they from those which I felt at the first sight of this enchanting city! It now resembled a beautiful prison, ornamented without, which the more we admire, the more we must feel for those who must perish within its walls, helpless, and sometimes innocent; and my sadness increased with the
the

the approaching day, which rendered the charms of the scene more beautiful; till at last I proceeded so far that it disappeared entirely from my eyes.

We travelled as expeditiously as the health of the Prince would permit, for another letter from . . . had once more induced us to be as speedy as possible. About the middle of the journey, Lord Seymour and Johnson left us, and we could scarcely console ourselves for their departure; for the necessary act of separation had torn from us two excellent men, united to our destiny by so many bands of fate. They relieved us from a sorrowful farewell, as they communicated their separation by letters which they left for us, for which they received mine, and particularly the Prince's thanks.

“ I com-

“ I commend myself to him who rules above,” said the Prince, with a look towards heaven, when he saw the farewell letters, and a stream of tears suffocated his words.

I met my faithful Caspar in the same inn where I told him to stay, and I took him with me. His joy was without bounds, and I should have been ashamed if I did not acknowledge what a faithful companion I had again found in him.

We arrived at The . . . took the Prince affectionately in his arms.

“ Oh!” it is too much!” exclaimed the Prince, as he sunk down before him; “ it is too much for a criminal.”

I cannot

I cannot venture to describe the scene, where so much was expressed, although not a word was spoken.

All possible methods to recover the Prince were tried, but in vain. Deep melancholy portrayed itself in marked furrows upon his face, from which internal sorrow had long since stolen every blush of health and contentment, formerly planted upon it by tranquillity. His cheeks were haggard, and his gloomy eyes appeared darker, from the shadow of his projecting eyebrows. His head was constantly bowed towards the earth, and in his eyelids were seen a perpetual tear. The idea of a happy eternity, and of a merciful God, alone tranquillized his mind.

In a deep wood there were the ruins of a castle upon a romantic and almost impenetrable mass of rocks, covered

with moss. This castle formerly belonged to the rapacious ancestors of the ... house. A whole century was unable to destroy it, and lofty rocks and walls shewed distinctly enough the former impregnability of the Castle of the Robbers, which had excited terror in the breast of every traveller whose way led him by it.

The father of the present ... was a great admirer of hunting. Very often he pursued the game till night overtook him; and he therefore built for himself, upon that former site of his ancestors, a small castle, where he frequently passed whole weeks in the pursuit of his favourite amusement. Since that time it had been scarcely ever visited, and we were obliged to penetrate through thick bushes to come at a winding walk which led to it. This the Prince chose for his future habitation; and we may easily judge,

judge, by the description, how much it was suited to the present temper of his mind, as it stood in a romantic country, and the tranquillity of the solitude was seldom interrupted. His desire was satisfied, and the ... flattered himself with the hope, that retirement might perhaps work powerfully upon his mind, and that the attachment to society would one day awake within him the desire of again revisiting the world. But he had mistaken himself very much. He did not know, after all that had happened to this unfortunate man, added to his general character, that sorrow and melancholy had already so much gained the ascendancy, that happiness could no longer be enjoyed by him. Like a blossom, raised by a nourishing shower upon a barren soil, which immediately fades again, because the hot reflected beams of the sun destroy all powers of vegetation.

Here he lived apart from all society, except an old and faithful servant.

He was not disturbed, because every one honoured his sacred retreat, and .. sometimes paid him a visit, to see how far his hopes might be fulfilled, but he always returned more sorrowful. He entreated him several times to return to his court, or visit him there, but he as constantly refused his request.

At the desire of the Prince, and my own wish, I remained there as long as possible, but business at my own court, making my presence necessary, I could not longer delay.

Perfuated that it would deprive me of all former connections, to spend the rest of my days there, I departed; but the unpleasing reflection that I should never again see the Prince, which occupied

cupied my mind at my departure, was too well founded. By the many sufferings and struggles which had seized upon me of late so violently, the former stability of my health became very feeble. Not till the lapse of six months was I able to return, and I found, instead of the Prince, the grave which inclosed his remains. I knew nothing of his death, and my heart began fondly to anticipate the feelings of our meeting, as I approached the wood, in which stood his habitation. It was my custom to travel on foot in fine weather, being more agreeable to me, and affording a better opportunity of observing the surrounding objects. I pursued it now. The tears rolled from my cheeks, when I arrived at the foot of a mountain. Above my head the branches of the trees formed a grove, through which we scarcely could perceive the valley underneath, which was ornamented by

an opposite hill; upon which, oak-trees, the produce of centuries, raised their majestic heads. I stood before a deep dale, and enjoyed the romantic prospect which presented itself to me. I was lost in the contemplation of it, and on each twig my eye dwelt with a voluptuous pleasure. On surveying the spot attentively, a building appeared through the thick brush-wood which grew upon one side of the valley. As I had not expected this, my curiosity became stimulated to enquire what it was. I marked the spot, and walked towards the bushes, through which I passed with much trouble. As I bent back the last bush, I found myself in a small open space, ornamented with trees and shrubs. Before me I perceived a small cottage, and over against it a large oak-tree. In its shade arose a very simple monument, which buried its top in the close covert of the boughs.

boughs. I was stepping nearer, when I observed a grey-bearded old man, who was kneeling before it, praying fervently. I stood in silence, and my feelings pressed me to join his devotions. He rose. What a figure! Without reflecting, my hand seized my hat to uncover my head, that I might pay homage to this venerable old man. In the deep furrows of his forehead and cheeks beamed content : a smile upon his countenance was expressive of that tranquillity of conscience which fears not to meet the eternal judge, who is not unmindful of the weakness of human nature. To all appearance he had suffered much from misfortune.

He did not appear to observe me, and went into his cottage. I approached the monument with a sensation which I cannot describe. A short inscription told me, that the Prince

slumbered there till the day of resurrection.

Whilst I was rising from the hallowed spot, the old man stood behind me. With emotion he pressed my hand.

“ You have prayed :” said he, addressing himself to me. “ I observed it with joy and ecstasy. Thus act the children of happiness : be then welcome to me in this solitude, which will neither be disturbed nor dishonoured by you.”

“ You are right, old man,” I answered him. “ But I am no child of happiness : he who slumbers here was my friend, and—”

“ Are you perhaps the Count O... of whom the deceased spoke so much to me ?—Then I understand you before you finish your speech.”

I an-

I answered his question in the affirmative, and with a sacred ecstasy he led me towards a grass bench before the cottage, where we sat down together.

“ Your friend,” he began, “ journeyed very often quite alone into this wood, and chose the deepest solitude for meditation. Thus he discovered me after your departure in my retirement. I loved him soon, and he was no less fond of me. He frequently went away, but sometimes he tarried with me four days and nights together. Each day he waited for your coming back : you came not. If he should come (he said to me, a few days before his last), and I should be no more, then deliver him in my name my farewell, and say that I will thank him for his love in a better world. You are as able to tell him
so

so as I could be myself. Daily I pray near his grave, and from this day I shall thank God that he has given me an opportunity of discharging my commission."

We spoke of nothing but of the Prince. What the old man told me with great prolixity of the last period of his life, I will relate to the reader as briefly as possible. Every trifling particular, although interesting to a friend, would perhaps be insignificant to a third person, and on that account the principal things only are related.

He associated with this old man, sacrificing the remainder of his life to regain that repose of conscience which he formerly enjoyed, and he succeeded as far as his situation made it possible. Firmly convinced of the love of God, death became a friend to him, who would bring him still nearer

nearer to the knowledge of this eternal Being, and he looked forward to his dissolution with a mild and patient satisfaction.

A few weeks before his death, he came to the old venerable hermit: he was more lively than customary.

“ God has still procured me a happiness which I do not deserve,” he exclaimed, and delivered to him a letter which he had just received. It was from the Greek lady. The old man shewed it to me, and the following is a copy of it.

“ BELOVED of my soul!—Thus
“ I call you, although the greatest
“ malice has induced me to de-
“ ceive you. My conscience has
“ cleared itself before the Almight-
“ ty. I was deceived like your-
“ self.

“ BY

“ By birth I am a German lady.
“ Death deprived me at Venice of
“ my mother, and with her of every
“ comfort. A young unexperienced
“ girl, I was then abandoned to
“ the wide world. An accident
“ brought to me in my helpless
“ situation that Armenian. My
“ person was allowed by all to
“ possess an attractive beauty,
“ and on that account only
“ could I explain to myself those
“ looks which he gave when he
“ threw himself in my way as a
“ benefactor. The good principles
“ which he found within me,
“ seemed to make it necessary to
“ proceed carefully with me : he
“ appeared a saint. At length I
“ received directions from him to
“ play the character in that church
“ ..., where you saw me first.
“ He had found way to play
“ upon my vanity so much by the
“ pretence

“ pretence that you had already fal-
“ len in love with my picture,
“ that I not only earnestly followed
“ his directions, but I also gave
“ myself all possible trouble, to
“ interest you, though it was against
“ my inclination. But too soon I
“ became in reality what I had only
“ appeared to you ; I loved you
“ tenderly. The fear of losing you
“ again, and his tricks and threats,
“ prevented me always from dis-
“ covering myself to you : many
“ times this confession trembled
“ upon my tongue, and—”

“ My weakness will not longer
“ permit me to hold the pen. I
“ feel that the hours of my exis-
“ tence are few, and on that ac-
“ count I must conclude. More
“ than an hundred times I was
“ obliged to stop in writing this
“ letter.

“ letter. I discovered your abode,
“ and was anxious to find you
“ there, and implore your forgive-
“ nefs ; but my powers failed me.
“ Instead of me, this letter comes,
“ and, alas ! may it give you a
“ happy fenfation. That you will
“ not doubt this confeffion of my
“ innocence (as I make it at the
“ brink of the grave), I am con-
“ vinced as firmly as of my forgive-
“ nefs by God.

“ How difficult is it for me to
“ conclude this epiftle to my be-
“ loved ; but I am compelled to
“ do it, for I feel my weaknefs
“ increafe upon me, and you pro-
“ bably have obferved it in feveral
“ parts of what I have written. Af-
“ ter my death, you will receive this
“ letter, and not to difturb you,
“ I conceal the place where my
“ remains

“ remains will slumber until the
“ junction of our souls.

“ In that abode where the veil,
“ which before concealed from us
“ the reason of our fate, shall be
“ removed, where a perpetual bliss
“ shall unite our souls for ever, I will
“ tell you far more than I am now
“ able to make known to you!
“ Farewell!

“ Purified by my God from all
“ sins and faults, and cloathed in
“ the garment of the blessed at
“ the gates of eternity, I will haf-
“ ten toward you.

Your

“ THERESA.”

With

With this letter the Prince sat himself under an oak-tree, upon the same spot which he had selected for his perpetual rest. He read it very often, whilst the Hermit, who was placed by his side, celebrated her memory in conjunction with the Prince, amidst loud peals of thunder which rolled over them.

7
“ I shall soon be with thee, Oh Theresa ! ” exclaimed the Prince, as he lifted his hands and eyes towards Heaven. At that instant, a flash of lightning, attracted by the tree under which they were sitting, darted through the branches, and struck him lifeless to the earth.—Peace be to his ashes!

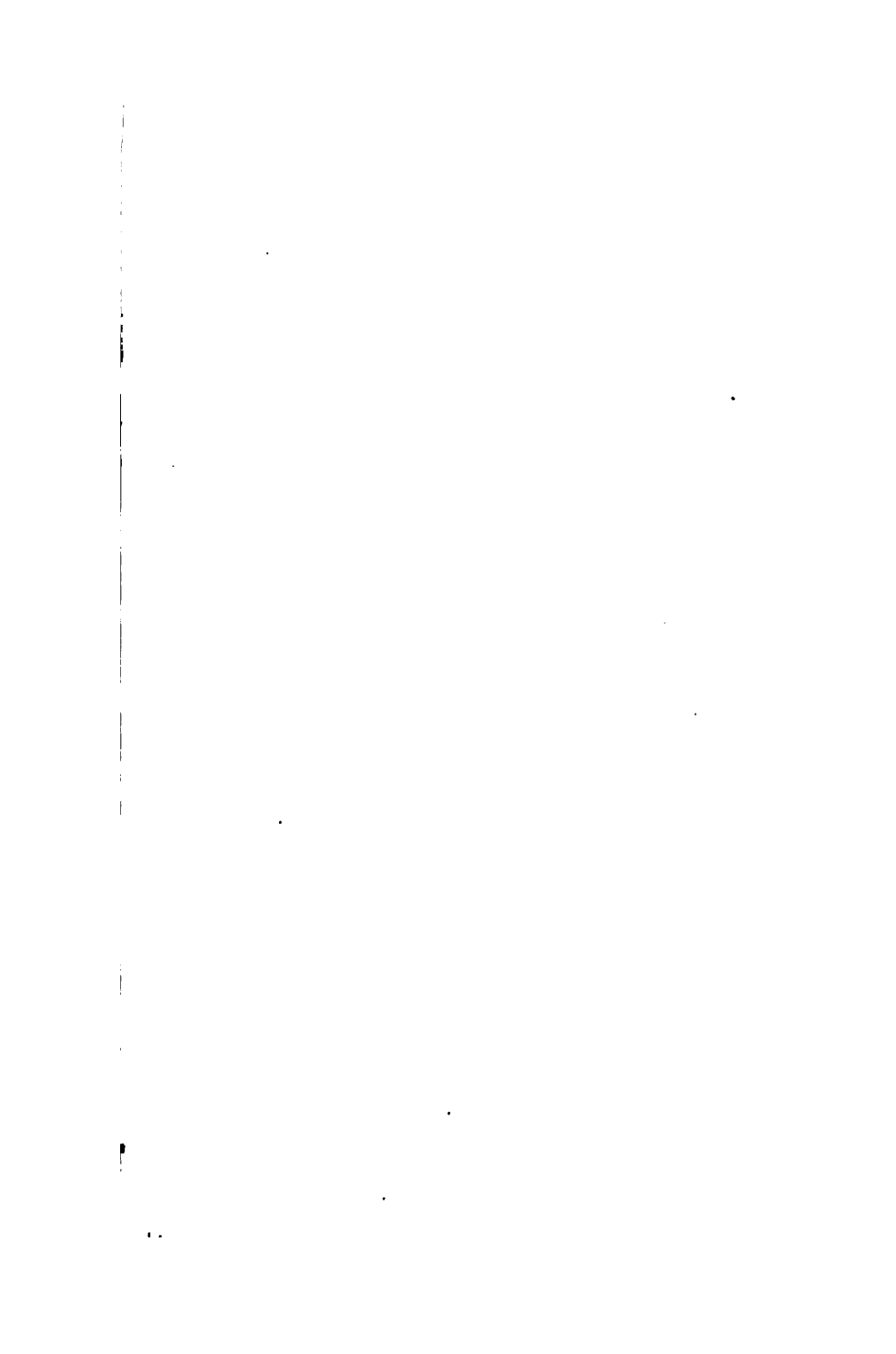
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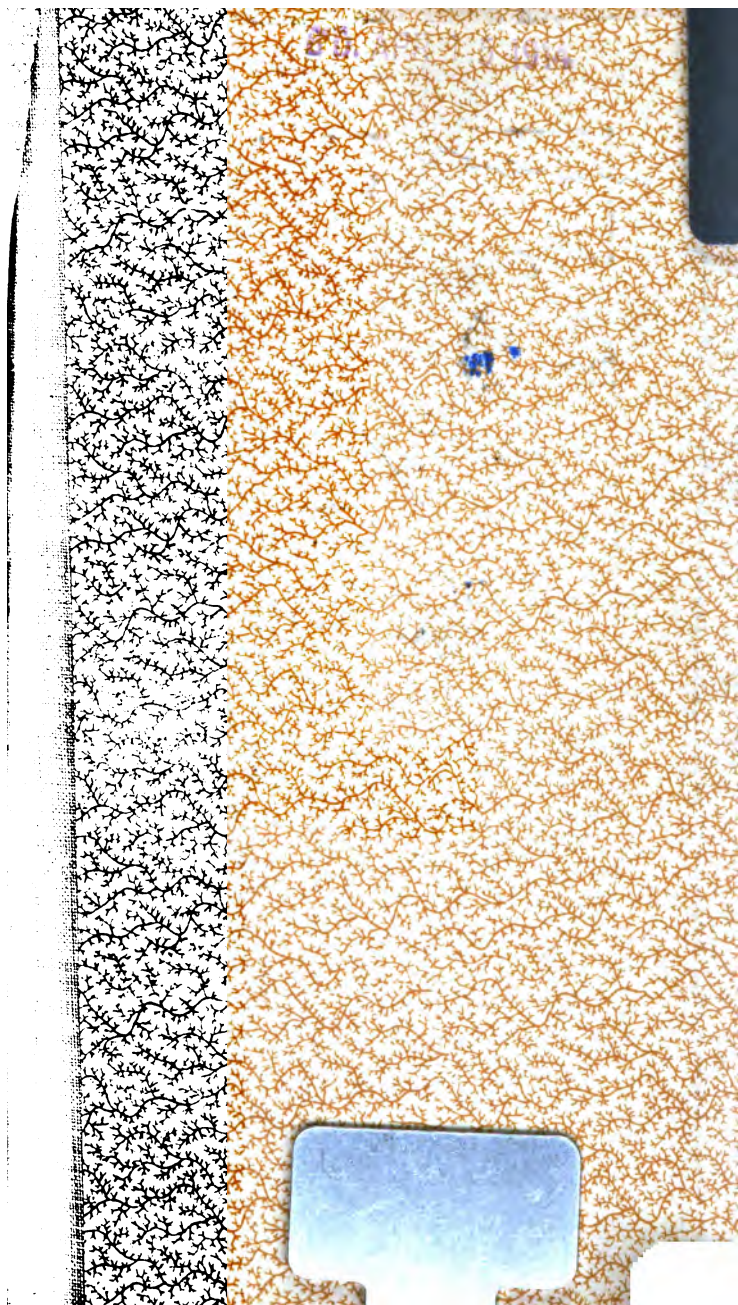




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