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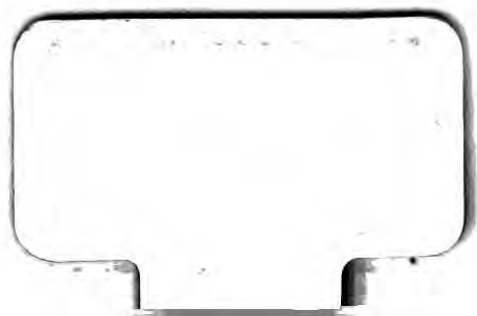
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The image shows the front cover of an antique book. The cover is decorated with a traditional marbled paper pattern, featuring a dark green base with intricate, branching veins of yellow and reddish-brown. The text is gold-tooled in a classic serif font. The spine of the book, visible on the left, is bound in dark, worn leather with blind-tooled decorative lines. The overall appearance is that of a well-used, historical volume.

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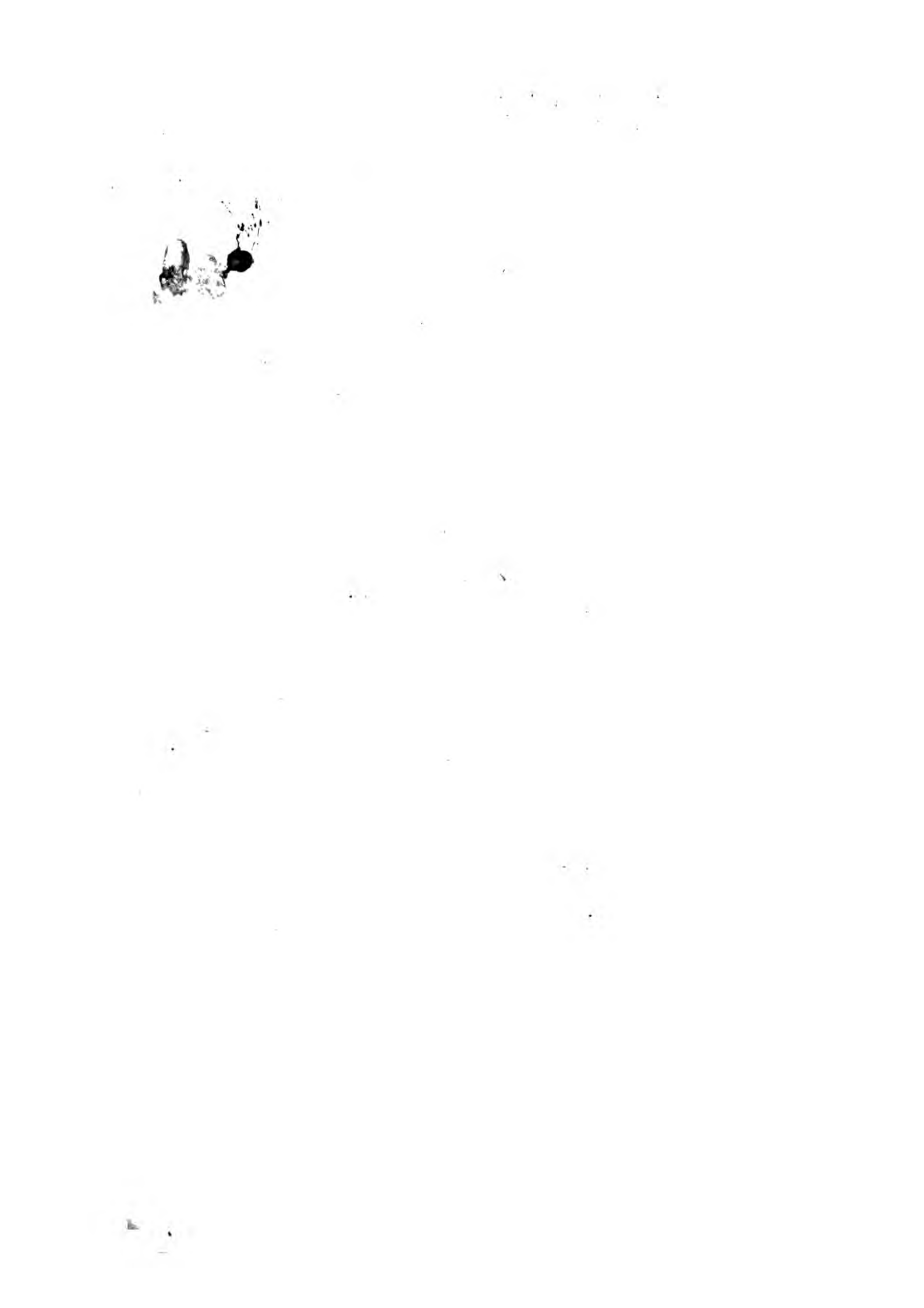
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THE  
*I T A L I A N,*  
OR THE  
CONFESSIONAL of the BLACK PENITENTS,  
*A R O M A N C E.*

---

BY  
ANN RADCLIFFE,  
AUTHOR OF THE MYSTERIES OF UDOLPHO, &c. &c.

---

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

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

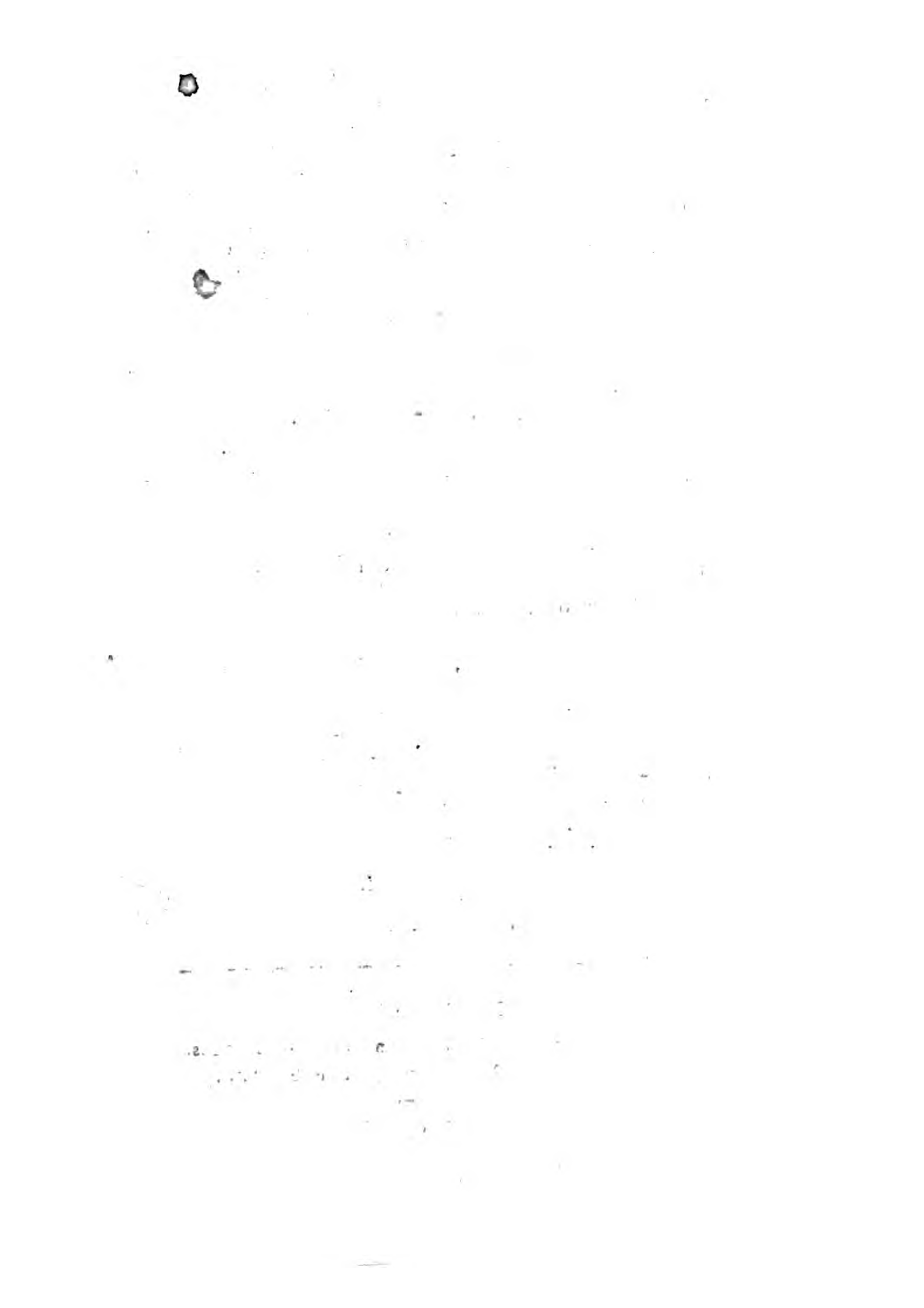
THE SECOND EDITION.

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L O N D O N :  
Printed for T. CADELL, Jun. and W. DAVIES,  
(Successors to Mr. CADELL) in the STRAND.

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1797.



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THE  
I T A L I A N.

---

C H A P. I.

Mark where yon ruin frowns upon the steep,  
The giant-spectre of departed power !  
Within those shadowy walls and silent chambers  
Have stalked the crimes of days long past !

ON this day, Schedoni was more communicative than on the preceding one. While they rode apart from the guide, he conversed with Ellena on various topics relative to herself, but without once alluding to Vivaldi, and even condescended to mention his design of disposing of her in a convent at some distance



tance from Naples, till it should be convenient for him to acknowledge her for his daughter. But the difficulty of finding a suitable situation embarrassed him, and he was disconcerted by the awkwardness of introducing her himself to strangers, whose curiosity would be heightened by a sense of their interest.

These considerations induced him the more easily to attend to the distress of Ellena, on her learning that she was again to be placed at a distance from her home, and among strangers; and the more willingly to listen to the account she gave of the convent della Pieta, and to her request of returning thither. But in whatever degree he might be inclined to approve, he listened without consenting, and Ellena had only the consolation of perceiving that he was not absolutely determined to adopt his first plan.

Her thoughts were too deeply engaged upon her future prospects to permit

mit leisure for present fears, or probably she would have suffered some return of those of yesterday, in traversing the lonely plains and rude vallies, through which the road lay. Schedoni was thankful to the landlord, who had advised him to keep the guide, the road being frequently obscured amongst the wild heaths that stretched around, and the eye often sweeping over long tracts of country, without perceiving a village, or any human dwelling. During the whole morning, they had not met one traveller, and they continued to proceed beneath the heat of noon, because Schedoni had been unable to discover even a cottage, in which shelter and repose might be obtained.

It was late in the day when the guide pointed out the grey walls of an edifice, which crowned the acclivity they were approaching. But this was so shrouded among woods, that no feature of it could be distinctly seen, and it did but slightly awa-

ken their hopes of discovering a convent, which might receive them with hospitality.

The high banks overshadowed with thickets, between which the road ascended, soon excluded even a glimpse of the walls; but, as the travellers turned the next projection, they perceived a person on the summit of the road, crossing as if towards some place of residence, and concluded that the edifice they had seen was behind the trees, among which he had disappeared.

A few moments brought them to the spot, where, retired at a short distance among the woods that browed the hill, they observed the extensive remains of what seemed to have been a villa, and which, from the air of desolation it exhibited, Schedoni would have judged to be wholly deserted, had he not already seen a person enter. Wearied and exhausted, he determined to ascertain whether any refreshment could be procured  
from

from the inhabitants within, and the party alighted before the portal of a deep and broad avenue of arched stone, which seemed to have been the grand approach to the villa. Over this majestic portal rose the light boles and tall heads of aloes; while the Indian-fig threw its broad leaves in many a luxuriant cluster among the capitals and rich ornaments below. The entrance was obstructed by fragments of columns, and by the underwood that had taken root amongst them. The travellers, however, easily overcame these interruptions: but, as the avenue was of considerable extent, and as its only light proceeded from the portal, except what a few narrow loops in the walls admitted, they soon found themselves involved in an obscurity that rendered the way difficult, and Schedoni endeavoured to make himself heard by the person he had seen. The effort was unsuccessful, but, as they proceeded, a bend in the passage shewed a

distant glimmering of light, which served to guide them to the opposite entrance, where an arch opened immediately into a court of the villa. Schedoni paused here in disappointment, for every object seemed to bear evidence of abandonment and desolation; and he looked, almost hopelessly, round the light colonnade which ran along three sides of the court, and to the palm-trees that waved over the fourth, in search of the person, who had been seen from the road. No human figure stole upon the vacancy; yet the apt fears of Ellena almost imaged the form of Spalatro gliding behind the columns, and she started as the air shook over the wild plants that wreathed them, before she discovered that it was not the sound of steps. At the extravagance of her suspicions, however, and the weakness of her terrors, she blushed, and endeavoured to resist that propensity to fear, which nerves long pressed upon had occasioned in her mind.

Schedoni,

Schedoni, meanwhile, stood in the court, like the evil spirit of the place, examining its desolation, and endeavouring to ascertain whether any person lurked in the interior of the building. Several doorways in the colonnade appeared to lead to chambers of the villa, and, after a short hesitation, Schedoni, having determined to pursue his inquiry, entered one of them, and passed through a marble hall to a suite of rooms, whose condition told how long it was since they had been inhabited. The roofs had entirely vanished, and even portions of the walls had fallen, and lay in masses amongst the woods without.

Perceiving that it was as useless as difficult to proceed, the confessor returned to the court, where the shade of the palmetos, at least, offered an hospitable shelter to the wearied travellers. They reposed themselves beneath the towering branches, on some fragments of a

B 5

marble

marble fountain, whence the court opened to the extensive landscape, now mellowed by the evening beams, and partook of the remains of a repast, which had been deposited in the wallet of the guide.

“ This place appears to have suffered from an earthquake, rather than from time,” said Schedoni, “ for the walls, though shattered, do not seem to have decayed, and much that has been strong lies in ruin, while what is comparatively slight remains uninjured ; these are certainly symptoms of partial shocks of the earth. Do you know any thing of the history of this place, friend ?”

“ Yes, Signor,” replied the guide.

“ Relate it, then.”

“ I shall never forget the earthquake that destroyed it, Signor ; for it was felt all through the Garganus. I was then about sixteen, and I remember it was near an hour before midnight that the great shock was felt. The weather had been almost stifling

stifling for several days, scarcely a breath of air had stirred, and slight tremblings of the ground were noticed by many people. I had been out all day, cutting wood in the forest with my father, and tired enough we were, when——”

“ This is the history of yourself,” said Schedoni, interrupting him, “ Who did this place belong to ?”

“ Did any person suffer here ?” asked Ellena.

“ The Baróne di Cambrusca lived here,” replied the guide.

“ Hah ! the Baróne !” repeated Schedoni, and sunk into one of his customary fits of abstraction.

“ He was a Signor little loved in the country,” continued the guide, “ and some people said it was a judgment upon him for ——”

“ Was it not rather a judgment upon the country,” interrupted the Confessor, lifting up his head, and then sinking again into silence.



“ I know not for that, Signor, but he had committed crimes enough to make one’s hair stand on end. It was here that he ——”

“ Fools are always wondering at the actions of those above them,” said Schedoni, testily; “ Where is the Baróne now ?”

“ I cannot tell, Signor, but most likely where he deserves to be, for he has never been heard of since the night of the earthquake, and it is believed he was buried under the ruins.”

“ Did any other person suffer ?” repeated Ellena.

“ You shall hear, Signora,” replied the peasant, “ I happen to know something about the matter, because a cousin of our’s lived in the family at the time, and my father has often told me all about it, as well as of the late lord’s goings-on. It was near midnight when the great shock came, and the family, thinking of nothing  
at

at all, had supped, and been asleep some time. Now it happened, that the Baróne's chamber was in a tower of the old building, at which people often wondered, because, said they, why should he chuse to sleep in the old part when there are so many fine rooms in the new villa? but so it was."

"Come, dispatch your meal," said Schedoni, awaking from his deep musing, "the sun is setting, and we have yet far to go."

"I will finish the meal and the story together, Signor, with your leave," replied the guide. Schedoni did not notice what he said, and, as the man was not forbidden, he proceeded with his relation.

"Now it happened, that the Baróne's chamber was in that old tower,—if you will look this way, Signora, you may see what is left of it."

Ellena turned her attention to where the guide pointed, and perceived the shattered

tered remains of a tower rising beyond the arch, through which she had entered the court.

“ You see that corner of a window case, left in the highest part of the wall, Signora,” continued the guide, “ just by that fig-tree, which grows out of the stone.”

“ I observe,” said Ellena.

“ Well, that was one of the windows of the very chamber, Signora, and you see scarcely any thing else is left of it. Yes, there is the door-case, too, but the door itself is gone; that little staircase, which you see beyond it, led up to another story, which nobody now would guess had ever been; for roof, and flooring, and all are fallen. I wonder how that little staircase in the corner happened to hold so fast !”

“ Have you almost done ?” inquired Schedoni, who had not apparently attended to any thing the man said, and now alluded to the refreshment he was taking.

“ Yes,

“ Yes, Signor, I have not a great deal more to tell, or to eat either, for that matter,” replied the guide; “ but you shall hear. Well, yonder was the very chamber, Signora; at that door-case, which is still in the wall, the Baróne came in; ah! he little thought, I warrant, that he should never more go out at it! How long he had been in the room I do not know, nor whether he was asleep, or awake, for there is nobody that can tell; but when the great shock came, it split the old tower at once, before any other part of the buildings. You see that heap of ruins, yonder, on the ground, Signora, there lie the remains of the chamber; the Baróne, they say, was buried under them!”

Ellena shuddered while she gazed upon this destructive mass. A groan from Schedoni startled her, and she turned towards him, but, as he appeared shrouded in meditation, she again directed her  
attention

attention to this awful memorial. As her eye passed upon the neighbouring arch, she was struck with the grandeur of its proportions, and with its singular appearance, now that the evening rays glanced upon the overhanging shrubs, and darted a line of partial light athwart the avenue beyond. But what was her emotion, when she perceived a person gliding away in the perspective of the avenue, and, as he crossed where the gleam fell, distinguished the figure and countenance of Spalatro ! She had scarcely power faintly to exclaim, " Steps go there !" before he had disappeared ; and, when Schedoni looked round, the vacuity and silence of solitude every where prevailed.

Ellena now did not scruple positively to affirm that she had seen Spalatro, and Schedoni, fully sensible that, if her imagination had not deluded her, the purpose of his thus tracing their route must be desperate, immediately rose, and, followed by

by the peasant, passed into the avenue to ascertain the truth, leaving Ellena alone in the court. He had scarcely disappeared before the danger of his adventuring into that obscure passage, where an assassin might strike unseen, forcibly occurred to Ellena, and she loudly conjured him to return. She listened for his voice, but heard only his retreating steps; when, too anxious to remain where she was, she hastened to the entrance of the avenue. But all was now hushed; neither voice, nor steps were distinguished. Awed by the gloom of the place, she feared to venture further, yet almost equally dreaded to remain alone in any part of the ruin, while a man so desperate as Spalatro was hovering about it.

As she yet listened at the entrance of the avenue, a faint cry, which seemed to issue from the interior of the villa, reached her. The first dreadful surmise that struck Ellena was, that they were  
mur-

murdering her father, who had probably been decoyed, by another passage, back into some chamber of the ruin; when, instantly forgetting every fear for herself, she hastened towards the spot whence she judged the sound to have issued. She entered the hall, which Schedoni had noticed, and passed on through a suite of apartments beyond. Every thing here, however, was silent, and the place apparently deserted. The suite terminated in a passage, that seemed to lead to a distant part of the villa, and Ellena, after a momentary hesitation, determined to follow it.

She made her way with difficulty between the half demolished walls, and was obliged to attend so much to her steps, that she scarcely noticed whither she was going, till, the deepening shade of the place recalling her attention, she perceived herself among the ruins of the tower, whose history had been related  
by

by the guide; and, on looking up, observed she was at the foot of the staircase, which still wound up the wall that had led to the chamber of the Barone.

At a moment less anxious, the circumstance would have affected her; but now, she could only repeat her calls upon the name of Schedoni, and listen for some signal that he was near. Still receiving no answer, nor hearing any further sound of distress, she began to hope that her fears had deceived her, and having ascertained that the passage terminated here, she quitted the spot.

On regaining the first chamber, Elena rested for a moment to recover breath; and, while she leaned upon what had once been a window, opening to the court, she heard a distant report of fire arms. The sound swelled, and seemed to revolve along the avenue through which Schedoni had disappeared.

Sup-



—Supposing that the combatants were engaged at the furthest entrance, Ellena was preparing to go thither, when a sudden step moved near her, and, on turning, she discovered, with a degree of horror that almost deprived her of recollection, Spalatro himself stealing along the very chamber in which she was.

That part of the room which she stood in, fell into a kind of recess; and whether it was this circumstance that prevented him from immediately perceiving her, or that, his chief purpose being directed against another object, he did not chuse to pause here, he passed on with skulking steps; and, before Ellena had determined whither to go, she observed him cross the court before her, and enter the avenue. As he had passed, he looked up at the window: and it was certain he then saw her, for he instantly faltered, but in the next  
mo-

moment proceeded swiftly, and disappeared in the gloom.

It seemed that he had not yet encountered Schedoni, but it also occurred to Ellena, that he was gone into the avenue for the purpose of waiting to assassinate him in the darkness. While she was meditating some means of giving the Confessor a timely alarm of his danger, she once more distinguished his voice. It approached from the avenue, and Ellena immediately calling aloud that Spalatro was there, entreated him to be on his guard. In the next instant a pistol was fired there.

Among the voices that succeeded the report, Ellena thought she distinguished groans. Schedoni's voice was in the next moment heard again, but it seemed faint and low. The courage which she had before exerted was now exhausted; she remained fixed to the spot, unable to encounter the dreadful spectacle that  
pro-

probably awaited her in the avenue, and almost sinking beneath the expectation of it.

All was now hushed; she listened for Schedoni's voice, and even for a footstep—in vain. To endure this state of uncertainty much longer was scarcely possible, and Ellena was endeavouring to collect fortitude to meet a knowledge of the worst, when suddenly a feeble groaning was again heard. It seemed near, and to be approaching still nearer. At that moment, Ellena, on looking towards the avenue, perceived a figure covered with blood, pass into the court. A film, which drew over her eyes, prevented her noticing further. She tottered a few paces back, and caught at the fragment of a pillar, by which she supported herself. The weakness was, however, transient; immediate assistance appeared necessary to the wounded person, and pity soon predominating over horror, she

she recalled her spirits, and hastened to the court.

When, on reaching it, she looked round in search of Schedoni, he was nowhere to be seen; the court was again solitary and silent, till she awakened all its echoes with the name of *father*. While she repeated her calls, she hastily examined the colonnade, the separated chamber which opened immediately from it, and the shadowy ground beneath the palmetos, but without discovering any person.

As she turned towards the avenue, however, a track of blood on the ground told her too certainly where the wounded person had passed. It guided her to the entrance of a narrow passage, that seemingly led to the foot of the tower; but here she hesitated, fearing to trust the obscurity beyond. For the first time, - Ellena conjectured, that not Schedoni, but Spalatro might be the per-

person she had seen, and that, though he was wounded, vengeance might give him strength to strike his filetto at the heart of whomsoever approached him, while the duskiness of the place would favour the deed.

She was yet at the entrance of the passage, fearful to enter, and reluctant to leave it, listening for a sound, and still hearing at intervals, swelling though feeble groans; when quick steps were suddenly heard advancing up the grand avenue, and presently her own name was repeated loudly in the voice of Schedoni. His manner was hurried as he advanced to meet her, and he threw an eager glance round the court. "We must be gone," said he, in a low tone, and taking her arm within his. "Have you seen any one pass?"

"I have seen a wounded man enter the court," replied Ellena, "and feared he was yourself."

"Where?"

“ Where ?—Which way did he go !” inquired Schedoni, eagerly, while his eyes glowed, and his countenance became fell.

Ellena, instantly comprehending his motive for the question, would not acknowledge that she knew whither Spalatro had withdrawn ; and, reminding him of the danger of their situation, she entreated that they might quit the villa immediately.

“ The sun is already set,” she added. “ I tremble at what may be the perils of this place at such an obscure hour, and even at what may be those of our road at a later !”

“ You are sure he was wounded ?” said the Confessor.

“ Too sure,” replied Ellena, faintly.

“ Too sure !” sternly exclaimed Schedoni.

“ Let us depart, my father ; O let us go this instant !” repeated Ellena.

“ What is the meaning of all this !” asked Schedoni, with anger. “ You cannot, surely, have the weakness to pity this fellow !”

“ It is terrible to see any one suffer,” said Ellena. “ Do not, by remaining here, leave me a possibility of grieving for you. What anguish it would occasion you, to see me bleed ; judge, then, what must be mine, if you are wounded by the dagger of an affassin !”

Schedoni stifled the groan which swelled from his heart, and abruptly turned away.

“ You trifle with me,” he said, in the next moment : “ you do not know that the villain is wounded. I fired at him, it is true, at the instant I saw him enter the avenue, but he has escaped me. What reason have you for your supposition ?”

Ellena was going to point to the track of blood on the ground, at a little distance, but restrained herself ; considering  
that

that this might guide him on to Spalatro, and again she entreated they might depart, adding, "O! spare yourself, and him!"

"What! spare an affaffin!" said Schedoni, impatiently.

"An affaffin! He *has*, then, attempted your life?" exclaimed Ellena.

"Why no, not absolutely that," replied Schedoni, recollecting himself, "but—what does the fellow do here? Let me pass, I will find him."

Ellena still hung upon his garment, while, with persuasive tenderness, she endeavoured to awaken his humanity. "O! if you had ever known what it was to expect instant death," she continued, "you would pity this man now, as he, perhaps, has sometime pitied others! I have known such suffering, my father, and can, therefore, feel even for him!"

"Do you know for *whom* you are pleading?" said the distracted Schedoni,



while every word she had uttered seemed to have penetrated his heart. The surprize which this question awakened in Ellena's countenance, recalled him to a consciousness of his imprudence ; he recollected that Ellena did not certainly know the office with which Spalatro had been commissioned against her : and when he considered that this very Spalatro, whom Ellena had with such simplicity supposed to have, at some time, spared a life through pity, had in truth spared her own, and, yet more, had been eventually a means of preventing him from destroying his own child, the Confessor turned in horror from his design ; all his passions changed, and he abruptly quitted the court, nor paused till he reached the furthest extremity of the avenue, where the guide was in waiting with the horses.

A recollection of the conduct of Spalatro respecting Ellena had thus induced Schedoni to spare him ; but this was all ;  
it

it did not prevail with him to inquire into the condition of this man, or to mitigate his punishment; and, without remorse, he now left him to his fate.

With Ellena it was otherwise; though she was ignorant of the obligation she owed him, she could not know that any human being was left under such circumstances of suffering and solitude without experiencing very painful emotion; but, considering how expeditiously Spalatro had been able to remove himself, she endeavoured to hope that his wound was not mortal.

The travellers, mounting their horses in silence, left the ruin, and were for some time too much engaged by the impression of the late occurrences, to converse together. When, at length, Ellena inquired the particulars of what had passed in the avenue, she understood that Schedoni, on pursuing Spalatro, had seen him there only for a moment. Spalatro

had escaped by some way unknown to the Confessor, and had regained the interior of the ruin, while his pursuers were yet following the avenue. The cry which Ellena had imagined to proceed from the interior, was uttered, as it now appeared, by the guide, who, in his haste, had fallen over some fragments of the wall that lay scattered in the avenue: the first report of arms had been from the trombone, which Schedoni had discharged on reaching the portal; and the last, when he fired a pistol, on perceiving Spalatro passing from the court.

“ We have had trouble enough in running after this fellow,” said the guide, “ and could not catch him at last. It is strange that, if he came to look for us, he should run away so when he had found us! I do not think he meant us any harm, after all, else he might have done it easily enough in that dark passage; instead whereof he only took to his heels!”

“ Silence !”

“ Silence !” said Schedoni, “ fewer words, friend.”

“ Well, Signor, he’s peppered now, however ; so we need not be afraid ; his wings are clipped for one while, so he cannot overtake us. We need not be in such a hurry, Signor, we shall get to the inn in good time yet. It is upon a mountain yonder, whose top you may see upon that red streak in the west. He cannot come after us ; I myself saw his arm was wounded.”

“ Did you so ?” said Schedoni, sharply : “ and pray where was you when you saw so much ? It was more than I saw.”

“ I was close at your heels, Signor, when you fired the pistol.”

“ I do not remember to have heard you there,” observed the Confessor : “ and why did not you come forward, instead of retreating ? And where, also, did you hide yourself while I was searching for the fellow, instead of assisting me in the pursuit ?”

The guide gave no answer, and Elena, who had been attentively observing him during the whole of this conversation, perceived that he was now considerably embarrassed; so that her former suspicions as to his integrity began to revive, notwithstanding the several circumstances which had occurred to render them improbable. There was, however, at present no opportunity for further observation, Schedoni having, contrary to the advice of the guide, immediately quickened his pace, and the horses continuing on the full gallop, till a steep ascent compelled them to relax their speed.

Contrary to his usual habit, Schedoni now, while they slowly ascended, appeared desirous of conversing with this man, and asked him several questions relative to the villa they had left; and, whether it was that he really felt an interest on the subject, or that he wished  
to

to discover if the man had deceived him in the circumstances he had already narrated, from which he might form a judgment as to his general character, he pressed his inquiries with a patient minuteness, that somewhat surprized Ellena. During this conversation, the deep twilight would no longer permit her to notice the countenance of either Schedoni, or the guide, but she gave much attention to the changing tones of their voices, as different circumstances and emotions seemed to affect them. It is to be observed, that during the whole of this discourse, the guide rode at the side of Schedoni.

While the Confessor appeared to be musing upon something, which the peasant had related respecting the Baróne di Cambrusca, Ellena inquired as to the fate of the other inhabitants of the villa.

“The falling of the old tower was enough for them,” replied the guide; “the crash waked them all directly, and

they had time to get out of the new buildings, before the second and third shocks laid them also in ruins. They ran out into the woods for safety, and found it too, for they happened to take a different road from the earthquake. Not a soul suffered, except the Baróne, and he deserved it well enough. O! I could tell such things that I have heard of him! ——”

“ What became of the rest of the family ?” interrupted Schedoni.

“ Why, Signor, they were scattered here and there, and every where; and they none of them ever returned to the old spot. No! no! they had suffered enough there already, and might have suffered to this day, if the earthquake had not happened.”

“ If it had *not* happened ?” repeated Ellena.

“ Aye, Signora, for that put an end to the Baróne. If those walls could but speak, they could tell strange things, for  
they

they have looked upon sad doings: and that chamber, which I shewed you, Signora, nobody ever went into it but himself, except the servant, to keep it in order, and that he would scarcely suffer, and always staid in the room the while."

"He had probably treasure secreted there," observed Ellena.

"No, Signora, no treasure! He had always a lamp burning there; and sometimes in the night he has been heard—Once, indeed, his valet happened to—"

"Come on," said Schedoni, interrupting him; "keep pace with me. What idle dream are you relating now?"

"It is about the Barone di Cambrusca, Signor," replied the guide, raising his voice, "him that you was asking me so much about just now. I was saying what strange ways he had, and how that, on one stormy night in December, as my cousin Francisco told my father, who told me, and he lived in the family at the time it happened—"



“ What happened ?” said Schedoni, hastily.

“ What I am going to tell, Signor. My cousin lived there at the time; so, however *unbelievable* it may seem, you may depend upon it, it is all true. My father knows I would not believe it myself till—”

“ Enough of this,” said Schedoni; “ no more. What family had this Baróne—had he a wife at the time of this destructive shock ?”

“ Yes, truly, Signor, he had, as I was going to tell, if you would but condescend to have patience.”

“ The Baróne had more need of that, friend; I have no wife.”—“ The Baróne’s wife had most need of it, Signor, as you shall hear. A good soul, they say, was the Baroneffa! but luckily she died many years before. He had a daughter, also, and, young as she was, she had lived too long, but for the earthquake which set her free.’

“How far is it to the inn? said the Confessor, roughly.

“When we get to the top of this hill, Signor, you will see it on the next, if any light is stirring, for there will only be the hollow between us. But do not be frightened, Signor, the fellow we left cannot overtake us. Do you know much about him, Signor?”

Schedoni inquired whether the trombone was charged; and, discovering that it was not, ordered the man to load immediately.

“Why, Signor, if you knew as much of him as I do, you could not be more afraid!” said the peasant, while he stopped to obey the order.

“I understood that he was a stranger to you!” observed the Confessor, with surprize.

“Why, Signor, he is, and he is not; I know more about him than he thinks for.”

“You

“ You seem to know a vast deal too much of other persons affairs,” said Schedoni, in a tone that was meant to silence him.

“ Why, that is just what he would say, Signor; but bad deeds will out, whether people like them to be known or not. This man comes to our town sometimes to market, and nobody knew where he came from for a long while; so they set themselves to work and found it out at last.”

“ We shall never reach the summit of this hill,” said Schedoni, testily.

“ And they found out, too, a great many strange things about him,” continued the guide.

Ellena, who had attended to this discourse with a degree of curiosity that was painful, now listened impatiently for what might be further mentioned concerning Spalatro, but without daring to invite, by a single question, any discovery  
on

on a subject which appeared to be so intimately connected with Schedoni.

“ It was many years ago,” rejoined the guide, “ that this man came to live in that strange house on the sea-shore. It had been shut up ever since—”

“ What are you talking of now ?” interrupted the Confessor, sharply.

“ Why, Signor, you never will let me tell you. You always snap me up so short at the beginning, and then ask—what I am talking about ! I was going to begin the story, and it is a pretty long one. But first of all, Signor, who do you suppose this man belonged to ? And what do you think the people determined to do, when the report was first set a-going ? only they could not be sure it was true, and any body would be unwilling enough to believe such a shocking—”

“ I have no curiosity on the subject,” replied the Confessor, sternly interrupting him ; “ and desire to hear no more concerning it.”

“ I meant

“ I meant no harm, Signor,” said the man; “ I did not know it concerned you.”

“ And who says that it does concern me ?”

“ Nobody, Signor, only you seemed to be in a bit of a passion, and so I thought — But I meant no harm, Signor, only as he happened to be your guide part of the way, I guessed you might like to know something of him.”

“ All that I desire to know of my guide is, that he does his duty,” replied Schedoni, “ that he conducts me safely, and understands when to be silent.”

To this the man replied nothing, but slackened his pace, and slunk behind his reprover.

The travellers reaching, soon after, the summit of this long hill, looked out for the inn of which they had been told; but darkness now confounded every object, and no domestic light twinkling,  
however

however distantly, through the gloom, gave signal of security and comfort. They descended dejectedly into the hollow of the mountains, and found themselves once more immersed in woods. Schedoni again called the peasant to his side, and bade him keep abreast of him, but he did not discourse; and Ellena was too thoughtful to attempt conversation. The hints which the guide had thrown out respecting Spalatro, had increased her curiosity on that subject; but the conduct of Schedoni, his impatience, his embarrassment, and the decisive manner in which he had put an end to the talk of the peasant, excited a degree of surprize, that bordered on astonishment. As she had, however, no clue to lead her conjectures to any point, she was utterly bewildered in surmise, understanding only that Schedoni had been much more deeply connected with Spalatro than she had hitherto believed.

The

The travellers having descended into the hollow, and commenced the ascent of the opposite height, without discovering any symptom of a neighbouring town, began again to fear that their conductor had deceived them. It was now so dark that the road, though the soil was a limestone, could scarcely be discerned, the woods on either side forming a "close dungeon of innumerable boughs," that totally excluded the twilight of the stars.

While the Confessor was questioning the man, with some severity, a faint shouting was heard from a distance, and he stopped the horses to listen from what quarter it came.

"That comes the way we are going, Signor," said the guide.

"Hark!" exclaimed Schedoni, "those are strains of revelry!"

A confused sound of voices, laughter, and musical instruments, was heard, and, as the air blew stronger, tamborines and flutes were distinguished.

"Oh!

“ Oh ! Oh ! we are near the end of our journey !” said the peasant ; “ all this comes from the town we are going to. But what makes them all so merry, I wonder !”

Ellena, revived by this intelligence, followed with alacrity the sudden speed of the Confessor ; and presently reaching a point of the mountain, where the woods opened, a cluster of lights on another summit, a little higher, more certainly announced the town.

They soon after arrived at the ruinous gates, which had formerly led to a place of some strength, and passed at once from darkness and desolated walls, into a market place, blazing with light and resounding with the multitude. Booths, fantastically hung with lamps, and filled with merchandize of every kind, disposed in the gayest order, were spread on all sides, and peasants in their holiday cloaths, and parties of masks crowded every avenue. Here  
was



was a band of musicians, and there a group of dancers ; on one spot the *outré* humour of a zanni provoked the never-failing laugh of an Italian rabble ; in another the *improvvisatore*, by the pathos of his story, and the persuasive sensibility of his strains, was holding the attention of his auditors, as in the bands of magic. Further on was a stage raised for a display of fire-works, and near this a theatre, where a mimic opera, the “ shadow of a shade,” was exhibiting, whence the roar of laughter, excited by the principal *buffo* within, mingled with the heterogeneous voices of the venders of ice, maccaroni, sherbet, and diavoloni, without.

The Confessor looked upon this scene with disappointment and ill-humour, and bade the guide go before him, and shew the way to the best inn ; an office which the latter undertook with great glee, though he made his way with difficulty. “ To think I should not know it was the time  
of

of the fair!" said he, "though, to say truth, I never was at it but once in my life, and then I was only three months old, so it is not so surprising, Signor."

"Make way through the crowd," said Schedoni.

"After jogging on so long in the dark, Signor, with nothing at all to be seen," continued the man, without attending to the direction, "then to come, all of a sudden, to such a place as this, why it is like coming out of purgatory into paradise! Well! Signor, you have forgot all your quandaries now; you think nothing now about that old ruinous place where we had such a race after the man, that would not murder us; but that shot I fired did his business."

"You fired!" said Schedoni, aroused by the assertion.

"Yes, Signor, as I was looking over your shoulder; I should have thought you must have heard it!"

"I should have thought so, too, friend."

"Aye,

“ Aye, Signor, this fine place has put all that out of your head, I warrant, as well as what I said about that same fellow ; but, indeed, Signor, I did not know he was related to you, when I talked so of him. But, perhaps, for all that, you may not know the piece of his story I was going to tell you, when you cut me off so short, though you are better acquainted with one another than I guessed for ; so, when I come in from the fair, Signor, if you please, I will tell it you ; and it is a pretty long history, for I happen to know the whole of it ; though, where you cut me short, when you was in one of those quandaries, was only just at the beginning, but no matter for that, I can begin it again, for——”

“ What is all this ! ” said Schedoni, again recalled from one of the thoughtful moods in which he had so habitually indulged, that even the bustle around him had failed to interrupt the course of his  
 4 mind.

mind. He now bade the peasant be silent ; but the man was too happy to be tractable, and proceeded to express all he felt, as they advanced slowly through the crowd. Every object here was to him new and delightful ; and, nothing doubting that it must be equally so to every other person, he was continually pointing out to the proud and gloomy Confessor the trivial subjects of his own admiration. “ See ! Signor, there is Punchinello, see ! how he eats the hot macaroni ! And look there, Signor ! there is a juggler ! O ! good Signor, stop one minute, to look at his tricks. See ! he has turned a monk into a devil already, in the twinkling of an eye ! ”

“ Silence ! and proceed,” said Scedoni.

“ That is what I say, Signor :—silence ! for the people make such a noise that I cannot hear a word you speak.—Silence, there ! ”

“ Con-

“ Considering that you could not hear, you have answered wonderfully to the purpose,” said Ellena.

“ Ah ! Signora ! is not this better than those dark woods and hills ? But what have we here ? Look, Signor, here is a fine fight !”

The crowd, which was assembled round a stage on which some persons grotesquely dressed, were performing, now interrupting all further progress, the travellers were compelled to stop at the foot of the platform. The people above were acting what seemed to have been intended for a tragedy, but what their strange gestures, uncouth recitation, and incongruous countenances, had transformed into a comedy.

Schedoni, thus obliged to pause, withdrew his attention from the scene ; Ellena consented to endure it, and the peasant, with gaping mouth and staring eyes, stood like a statue, yet not knowing whether he ought to laugh or cry, till suddenly turning  
ing

ing round to the Confessor, whose horse was of necessity close to his, he seized his arm, and pointing to the stage, called out, "Look! Signor, see! Signor, what a scoundrel! what a villain! See! he has murdered his own daughter!"

At these terrible words, the indignation of Schedoni was done away by other emotions; he turned his eyes upon the stage, and perceived that the actors were performing the story of Virginia. It was at the moment when she was dying in the arms of her father, who was holding up the poniard with which he had stabbed her. The feelings of Schedoni, at this instant, inflicted a punishment almost worthy of the crime he had meditated.

Ellena, struck with the action, and with the contrast which it seemed to offer to what she believed to have been the late conduct of Schedoni towards herself, looked at him with most expressive tenderness, and as his glance met her's, she per-

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ceived, with surprize, the changing emotions of his soul, and the inexplicable character of his countenance. Stung to the heart, the Confessor furiously spurred his horse, that he might escape from the scene, but the poor animal was too spiritless and jaded, to force its way through the crowd; and the peasant, vexed at being hurried from a place where, almost for the first time in his life, he was suffering under the strange delights of artificial grief, and half angry, to observe an animal, of which he had the care, ill-treated, loudly remonstrated, and seized the bridle of Schedoni, who, still more incensed, was applying the whip to the shoulders of the guide, when the crowd suddenly fell back and opened a way, through which the travellers passed, and arrived, with little further interruption, at the door of the inn.

Schedoni was not in a humour which rendered him fit to encounter difficulties,  
and

and still less the vulgar squabbles of a place already crowded with guests; yet it was not without much opposition that he at length obtained a lodging for the night. The peasant was not less anxious for the accommodation of his horses; and, when Ellena heard him declare, that the animal, which the Confessor had so cruelly spurred, should have a double feed, and a bed of straw as high as his head, if he himself went without one, she gave him, unnoticed by Schedoni, the only ducat she had left.



CHAP. II.

“ But, if you be afraid to hear the worst,  
Then let the worst, unheard, fall on your head.”

SHAKESPEAR.

**S**CHEDONI passed the night without sleep. The incident of the preceding evening had not only renewed the agonies of remorse, but excited those of pride and apprehension. There was something in the conduct of the peasant towards him, which he could not clearly understand, though his suspicions were sufficient to throw his mind into a state of the utmost perturbation. Under an air of extreme simplicity, this man had talked of Spalatro, had discovered that he was acquainted with much of his history, and had hinted that he knew by whom he had been employed; yet at the same time appeared unconscious, that  
that

that Schedoni's was the master-hand, which had directed the principal actions of the ruffian. At other times, his behaviour had seemed to contradict the supposition of his ignorance on this point ; from some circumstances he had mentioned, it appeared impossible but that he must have known who Schedoni really was, and even his own conduct had occasionally seemed to acknowledge this, particularly when, being interrupted in his history of Spalatro, he attempted an apology, by saying, he did not know it concerned Schedoni : nor could the conscious Schedoni believe that the very pointed manner, in which the peasant had addressed him at the representation of Virginia, was merely accidental. He wished to dismiss the man immediately, but it was first necessary to ascertain what he knew concerning him, and then to decide on the measures to be taken. It was, however, a difficult matter to obtain this information,

tion, without manifesting an anxiety, which might betray him, if the guide had, at present, only a general suspicion of the truth; and no less difficult to determine how to proceed towards him, if it should be evident that his suspicions rested on Spalatro. To take him forward to Naples, was to bring an informer to his home; to suffer him to return with his discovery, now that he probably knew the place of Schedoni's residence, was little less hazardous. His death only could secure the secret.

After a night passed in the tumult of such considerations, the Confessor summoned the peasant to his chamber, and, with some short preface, told him he had no further occasion for his services, adding, carelessly, that he advised him to be on his guard as he re-passed the villa, lest Spalatro, who might yet lurk there, should revenge upon him the injury he had received. "According to your account

count of him, he is a very dangerous fellow," added Schedoni ; but your information is, perhaps, erroneous."

The guide began, testily, to justify himself for his assertions, and the Confessor then endeavoured to draw from him what he knew on the subject. But, whether the man was piqued by the treatment he had lately received, or had other reasons for reserve, he did not, at first, appear so willing to communicate as formerly.

"What you hinted of this man," said Schedoni, "has, in some degree, excited my curiosity : I have now a few moments of leisure, and you may relate, if you will, something of the wonderful history you talked of."

"It is a long story, Signor, and you would be tired before I got to the end of it," replied the peasant ; "and, craving your pardon, Signor, I don't much like to be snapped up so !"

“ Where did this man live ?” said the Confessor. “ You mentioned something of a house at the sea-side.

“ Aye, Signor, there is a strange history belonging to that house, too ; but this man, as I was saying, came there all of a sudden, nobody knew how ! and the place had been shut up ever since the Marchese——”

“ The Marchese !” said Schedoni, coldly, “ what Marchese, friend ?” —“ Why, I mean the Baróne di Cambrusca, Signor, to be sure, as I was going to have told you, of my own accord, if you would only have let me. Shut up ever since the Baróne——I left off there, I think.”

“ I understood that the Baróne was dead !” observed the Confessor.

“ Yes, Signor,” replied the peasant, fixing his eyes on Schedoni ; but what has his death to do with what I was telling ? This happened before he died.”

Schedoni, somewhat disconcerted by this unexpected remark, forgot to resent  
the

the familiarity of it. "This man, then, this Spalatro, was connected with the Baróne di Cambrusca?" said he.

"It was pretty well gueffed so, Signor."

"How! no more than gueffed?"

"No, Signor, and that was more than enough for the Baróne's liking, I warrant. He took too much care for any thing certain to appear against him, and he was wise so to do, for if it had—it would have been worse for him. But I was going to tell you the story, Signor."

"What reasons were there for believing this was an agent of the Baróne di Cambrusca, friend?"

"I thought you wished to hear the story, Signor."

"In good time; but first what were your reasons?"

"One of them is enough, Signor, and if you would only have let me gone straight on with the story, you would have found it out by this time, Signor."

Schedoni frowned, but did not otherwise reprove the impertinence of the remark.

“ It was reason enough, Signor, to my mind,” continued the peasant, “ that it was such a crime as nobody but the Baróne di Cambrusca could have committed ; there was nobody wicked enough, in our parts, to have done it but him. Why is not this *reason* enough, Signor ? What makes you look at me so ? why the Baróne himself could hardly have looked worse, if I had told him as much !”

“ Be less prolix,” said the Confessor, in a restrained voice.

“ Well then, Signor, to begin at the beginning. It is a good many years ago that Marco came first to our town. Now the story goes, that one stormy night——”

“ You may spare yourself the trouble of relating the story,” said Schedoni, abruptly,

abruptly, " Did you ever see the Baróne you was speaking of, friend ?"

" Why did you bid me tell it, Signor, since you know it already ! I have been here all this while, just a-going to begin it, and all for nothing !"

" It is very surprizing," resumed the artful Schedoni, without having noticed what had been said, " that if this Spalatro was known to be the villain you say he is, not any step should have been taken to bring him to justice ! how happened that ? But, perhaps, all this story was nothing more than a report."

" Why, Signor, it was every body's business, and nobody's, as one may say ; then, besides, nobody could prove what they had heard, and though every body believed the story just the same as if they had seen the whole, yet that, they said, would not do in law, but they should be made to prove it. Now, it is not one time in ten that any thing can be proved,



Signor, as you well know, yet we none of us believe it the less for that !”

“ So, then, you would have had this man punished for a murder, which, probably, he never committed !” said the Confessor.

“ A murder !” repeated the peasant.

Schedoni was silent, but, in the next instant, said, “ Did you not say it was a murder ?”

“ I have not told you so, Signor !”

“ What was the crime, then ?” resumed Schedoni, after another momentary pause, “ you said it was atrocious, and what more so than—murder ?” His lip quivered as he pronounced the last word.

The peasant made no reply, but remained with his eyes fixed upon the Confessor, and, at length, repeated, “ Did I say it was murder, Signor ?”

“ If it was not that, say what it was,” demanded the Confessor, haughtily; “ but let it be in two words.”

“ As

“ As if a story could be told in two words, Signor !”

“ Well, well, be brief.”

“ How can I, Signor, when the story is so long !”

“ I will waste no more time,” said Schedoni, going.

“ Well, Signor, I will do my best to make it short. It was one stormy night in December, that Marco Torma had been out fishing. Marco, Signor, was an old man that lived in our town when I was a boy ; I can but just remember him, but my father knew him well, and loved old Marco, and used often to say——”

“ To the story !” said Schedoni.

“ Why I am telling it, Signor, as fast as I can. This old Marco did not live in our town at the time it happened, but in some place, I have forgot the name of it, near the sea shore. What can the name be ! it is something like——”

“ Well, what happened to this old do-  
tard ?

“ You are out there, Signor, he was no old dotard ; but you shall hear. At that time, Signor, Marco lived in this place that I have forgot the name of, and was a fisherman, but better times turned up afterwards, but that is neither here nor there. Old Marco had been out fishing ; it was a stormy night, and he was glad enough to get on shore, I warrant. It was quite dark, as dark, Signor, I suppose, as it was last night, and he was making the best of his way, Signor, with some fish along the shore, but it being so dark, he lost his way notwithstanding. The rain beat, and the wind blew, and he wandered about a long while, and could see no light, nor hear any thing, but the surge near him, which sometimes seemed as if it was coming to wash him away. He got as far off it as he could, but he knew there were high rocks over the beach, and he was afraid he should run his head against them, if he went too far, I suppose.

However,

However, at last, he went up close to them, and as he got a little shelter, he resolved to try no further for the present. I tell it you, Signor, just as my father told it me, and he had it from the old man himself."

"You need not be so particular, replied the Confessor ; " speak to the point.

" Well, Signor, as old Marco lay snug under the rocks, he thought he heard somebody coming, and he lifted up his head, I warrant, poor old soul ! as if he could have seen who it was ; however, he could hear, though it was so dark, and he heard the steps coming on ; but he said nothing yet, meaning to let them come close up to him, before he discovered himself. Presently he sees a little moving light, and it comes nearer and nearer, till it was just opposite to him, and then he saw the shadow of a man on the ground, and then he spied the man himself, with a dark lantern, passing along the beach."

" Well,

“ Well, well, to the purpose,” said Schedoni.

“ Old Marco, Signor, my father says, was never stout-hearted, and he took it into his head this might be a robber, because he had the lantern, though, for that matter, he would have been glad enough of a lantern himself, and so he lay quiet. But, presently, he was in a rare fright, for the man stopped to rest the load he had upon his back, on a piece of rock near him, and Old Marco saw him throw off a heavy sack, and heard him breathe hard, as if he was hugely tired. I tell it, Signor, just as my father does.”

“ What was in the sack ?” said Schedoni, coolly.

“ All in good time, Signor ;” perhaps old Marco never found it out ; but you shall hear. He was afraid, when he saw the sack, to stir a limb, for he thought it held booty. But, presently, the man, without saying a word, heaved it on his shoulders

ders again, and staggered away with it along the beach, and Marco saw no more of him."

"Well! what has he to do with your story, then?" said the Confessor, "Was this Spalatro?"

"All in good time, Signor; you put me out. When the storm was down a little, Marco crept out, and, thinking there must be a village, or a hamlet, or a cottage, at no great distance, since this man had passed, he thought he would try a little further. He had better have staid where he was, for he wandered about a long while, and could see nothing, and what was worse, the storm came on louder than before, and he had no rocks to shelter him now. While he was in this quandary, he sees a light at a distance, and it came into his head this might be the lantern again, but he determined to go on notwithstanding, for if it was he could stop short, and if it was not, he should

should get shelter, perhaps ; so on he went, and I suppose I should have done the same, Signor."

" Well ! this history never will have an end !" said Schedoni.

" Well ! Signor, he had not gone far when he found out that it was no lantern, but a light at a window. When he came up to the house he knocked softly at the door, but nobody came."

" What house ?" inquired the Confessor, sharply.

" The rain beat hard, Signor, and I warrant poor old Marco waited a long time before he knocked again, for he was main patient, Signor. O ! how I have seen him listen to a story, let it be ever so long !"

" I have need of his patience !" said Schedoni.

" When he knocked again, Signor, the door gave way a little, and he found it was open, and so, as nobody came, he thought fit to walk in of his own accord."

The

“ The dotard ! what business had he to be so curious ? ” exclaimed Schedoni.

“ Curious, Signor, he only sought shelter ! He stumbled about in the dark, for a good while, and could find nobody, nor make nobody hear, but, at last, he came to a room where there was some fire not quite out, upon the hearth, and he went up to it, to warm himself, till somebody should come.”

“ What ! was there nobody in the house ? ” said the Confessor.

“ You shall hear, Signor. He had not been there, he said, no, he was sure not above two minutes, when he heard a strange sort of a noise in the very room where he was, but the fire gave such a poor light, he could not see whether any body was there.”

“ What was the noise ? ”

“ You put me out, Signor. He said he did not much like it, but what could he do ! So he stirred up the fire, and tried  
to



to make it blaze a little, but it was as dusky as ever ; he could see nothing. Presently, however, he heard somebody coming, and saw a light, and then a man coming towards the room where he was, so he went up to him to ask shelter."

"Who was this man?" said Schedoni.

"Ask shelter. He says the man, when he came to the door of the room, turned as white as a sheet, as well he might, to see a stranger, to find a stranger there, at that time of the night. I suppose I should have done the same myself. The man did not seem very willing to let him stay, but asked what he did there, and such like ; but the storm was very loud, and so Marco did not let a little matter daunt him, and, when he shewed the man what a fine fish he had in his basket, and said he was welcome to it, he seemed more willing."

"Incredible!" exclaimed Schedoni, "the blockhead!"

"He

“ He had wit enough for that matter, Signor; Marco says he appeared to be main hungry——”

“ Is that any proof of his wit ? ” said the Confessor, peevishly.

“ You never will let me finish, Signor; main hungry; for he put more wood on the fire directly, to dress some of the fish. While he was doing this, Marco says his heart, somehow, misgave him, that this was the man he saw on the beach, and he looked at him pretty hard, till the other asked him, crossly, what he stared at him so for; but Marco took care not to tell. While he was busy making ready the fish, however, Marco, had an opportunity of eying him the more, and every time the man looked round the room, which happened to be pretty often, he had a notion it was the same.”

“ Well, and if it was the same,” said Schedoni.

“ But when Marco happened to spy the sack, lying in a corner, he had no doubt about

about the matter. He says his heart then misgave him sadly, and he wished himself safe out of the house, and determined, in his own mind, to get away as soon as he could, without letting the man suspect what he thought of him. He now guessed, too, what made the man look round the room so often, and, though Marco thought before it was to find out if he had brought any body with him, he now believed it was to see whether his treasure was safe."

"Aye, likely enough," observed Schedoni.

"Well, old Marco sat not much at his ease, while the fish was preparing, and thought it was, 'out of the fryingpan into the fire' with him; but what could he do?"

"Why get up and walk away, to be sure," said the Confessor, "as I shall do, if your story lasts much longer."

"You shall hear, Signor; he would have done so, if he had thought this man would have let him, but——"

"Well,

“ Well, this man was Spalatro, I suppose,” said Schedoni, impatiently, “ and this was the house on the shore you formerly mentioned.”

“ How well you have guessed it, Signor ! though, to say truth, I have been expecting you to find it out for this half hour.”

Schedoni did not like the significant look which the peasant assumed while he said this, but he bade him proceed.

“ At first, Signor, Spalatro hardly spoke a word, but he came to by degrees, and by the time the fish was nearly ready, he was talkative enough.”

Here the Confessor rose, with some emotion, and paced the room.

“ Poor old Marco, Signor, began to think better of him, and when he heard the rain at the casements, he was loath to think of stirring. Presently Spalatro went out of the room for a plate to eat the fish.—”

“ Out

“ Out of the room !” said Schedoni, and checked his steps.

“ Yes, Signor, but he took care to carry the light with him. However, Marco, who had a great deal of curiosity to——”

“ Yes, he appears to have had a great deal, indeed !” said the Confessor, and turning away, renewed his pace.

“ Nay, Signor, I am not come to that yet, he has shewn none yet ;—a great deal of curiosity to know what was in the sack, before he consented to let himself stay much longer, thought this a good opportunity for looking, and as the fire was now pretty bright, he determined to see. He went up to the sack, therefore, Signor, and tried to lift it, but it was too heavy for him, though it did not seem full.”

Schedoni again checked his steps, and stood fixed before the peasant.

“ He raised it, however, a little, Signor, but it fell from his hands, and with such  
a heavy

a heavy weight upon the floor, that he was sure it held no common booty. Just then, he says, he thought he heard Spalatro coming, and the sound of the sack was enough to have frightened him, and so Marco quitted it; but he was mistaken, and he went to it again. But you don't seem to hear me, Signor, for you look as you do when you are in those quandaries, so busy a-thinking, and I——"

"Proceed," said Schedoni, sternly, and renewed his steps, "I hear you."

"Went to it again," resumed the peasant, cautiously taking up the story at the last words he had dropped. "He untied the string, Signor, that held the sack, and opened the cloth a little way, but think, Signor, what he must have thought, when he felt—cold flesh! O, Signor! and when he saw by the light of the fire, the face of a corpse within! O Signor!"

The peasant, in the eagerness with which he related this circumstance, had

followed Schedoni to the other end of the chamber, and he now took hold of his garment, as if to secure his attention to the remainder of the story. The Confessor, however, continued his steps, and the peasant kept pace with him, still loosely holding his garment.

“ Marco,” he resumed, “ was so terrified, as my father says, that he hardly knew where he was, and I warrant, if one could have seen him, he looked as white, Signor, as you do now.”

The Confessor abruptly withdrew his garment from the peasant’s grasp, and said, in an inward voice, “ If I am shocked at the mere mention of such a spectacle, no wonder he was, who beheld it!” After the pause of a moment, he added,—“ But what followed?”

“ Marco says he had no power to tie up the cloth again, Signor, and when he came to his thoughts, his only fear was, lest Spalatro should return, though he had  
hardly

hardly been gone a minute, before he could get out of the house, for he cared nothing about the storm now. And sure enough he heard him coming, but he managed to get out of the room, into a passage another way from that Spalatro was in. And luckily, too, it was the same passage he had come in by, and it led him out of the house. He made no more ado, but ran straight off, without stopping to chuse which way, and many perils and dangers he got into among the woods, that night, and——”

“ How happened it, that this Spalatro was not taken up, after this discovery ?” said Schedoni. “ What was the consequence of it ?”

“ Why, Signor, old Marco had like to have caught his death that night ; what with the wet, and what with the fright, he was laid up with a fever, and was light-headed, and raved of such strange things, that people would not believe



any thing he said when he came to his senses."

"Aye," said Schedoni, the narrative resembles a delirious dream, more than a reality; I perfectly accord with them in their opinion of this feverish old man."

"But you shall hear, Signor; after a while they began to think better of it, and there was some stir made about it; but what could poor folks do, for nothing could be proved! The house was searched, but the man was gone, and nothing could be found! From that time the place was shut up; till many years after, this Spalatro appeared, and old Marco then said he was pretty sure he was the man, but he could not swear it, and so nothing could be done."

"Then it appears, after all, that you are not certain that this long history belongs to this Spalatro!" said the Confessor; "nay, not even that the history itself

self is any thing more than the vision of a distempered brain !”

“ I do not know, Signor, what you may call certain ; but I know what we all believe. But the strangest part of the story is to come yet, and that which nobody would believe, hardly, if——”

“ I have heard enough, said Schedoni, “ I will hear no more !”

“ Well but, Signor, I have not told you half yet : and I am sure when I heard it myself it so terrified me.”

“ I have listened too long to this idle history,” said the Confessor, “ there seems to be no rational foundation for it. Here is what I owe you ; you may depart.”

“ Well, Signor, ’tis plain you know the rest already, or you never would go without it. But you don’t know, perhaps, Signor, what an unaccountable—I am sure it made my hair stand an end to hear of it, what an unaccountable——”

“ I will hear no more of this absurdity,” interrupted Schedoni, with sternness. “ I reproach myself for having listened so long to such a gossip’s tale, and have no further curiosity concerning it. You may withdraw ; and bid the host attend me.”

“ Well, Signor, if you are so easily satisfied,” replied the peasant, with disappointment, “ there is no more to be said, but——”

“ You may stay, however, while I caution you,” said Schedoni, “ how you pass the villa, where this Spalatro may yet linger, for, though I can only smile at the story you have related——”

“ Related, Signor ! why I have not told it half ; and if you would only please to be patient——”

“ Though I can only smile at that simple narrative,”—repeated Schedoni, in a louder tone.

“ Nay, Signor, for that matter, you can  
frown

frown at it too, as I can testify," muttered the guide.

"Listen to me!" said the Confessor, in a yet more insisting voice. "I say, that though I give no credit to your curious history, I think this same Spalatro appears to be a desperate fellow, and, therefore, I would have you be on your guard. If you see him, you may depend upon it, that he will attempt your life in revenge of the injury I have done him. I give you, therefore, in addition to your trombone, this filetto to defend you."

Schedoni, while he spoke, took an instrument from his bosom, but it was not the one he usually wore, or, at least, that he was seen to wear. He delivered it to the peasant, who received it with a kind of stupid surprise, and then gave him some directions as to the way in which it should be managed.

"Why, Signor," said the man, who had listened with much attention, "I am

kindly obliged to you for thinking about me, but is there any thing in this filetto different from others, that it is to be used so ?”

Schedoni looked gravely at the peasant for an instant, and then replied, “Certainly not, friend, I would only instruct you to use it to the best advantage ;—farewell !”

“Thank you kindly, Signor, but—but I think I have no need of it, my trombone is enough for me.”

“This will defend you more adroitly,” replied Schedoni, retuining to take back the filetto, “and moreover, while you were loading the trombone your adversary might use his poniard to advantage. Keep it, therefore, friend ; it will protect you better than a dozen trombones. Put it up.”

Perhaps it was Schedoni’s particular look, more than his argument, that convinced the guide of the value of his gift  
he

he received it submissively, though with a stare of stupid surprise; probably it had been better, if it had been suspicious surprise. He thanked Schedoni again, and was leaving the room, when the Confessor called out, "Send the landlord to me immediately, I shall set off for Rome without delay!"

"Yes, Signor," replied the peasant, "you are at the right place, the road parts here; but I thought you was going for Naples!"

"For Rome," said Schedoni.

"For Rome, Signor! Well, I hope you will get safe, Signor, with all my heart!" said the guide, and quitted the chamber.

While this dialogue had been passing between Schedoni and the peasant, Ellena, in solitude, was considering on the means of prevailing on the Confessor to allow her to return either to Altieri, or to the neighbouring cloister of "*Our Lady of*

*Pity*," instead of placing her at a distance from Naples, till he should think proper to acknowledge her. The plan, which he had mentioned, seemed to her long-harrassed mind to exile her for ever from happiness, and all that was dear to her affections; it appeared like a second banishment to San Stefano, and every abbey, except that of *La Pieta*, came to her imagination in the portraiture of an inexorable jailor. While this subject engaged her, she was summoned to attend Schedoni, whom she found impatient to enter the carriage, which at this town they had been able to procure. Ellena, on looking out for the guide, was informed that he had already set off for his home, a circumstance, for the suddenness of which she knew not how to account.

The travellers immediately proceeded on their journey; Schedoni, reflecting on the late conversation, said little, and Ellena read not in his countenance any thing that  
 might

might encourage her to introduce the subject of her own intended solicitation. Thus separately occupied, they advanced during some hours on the road to Naples, for thither Schedoni had designed to go, notwithstanding his late assertion to the guide, whom it appears, for whatever reason, he was anxious to deceive, as to the place of his actual residence.

They stopped to dine at a town of some consideration, and, when Ellena heard the Confessor inquire concerning the numerous convents it contained, she perceived that it was necessary for her no longer to defer her petition. She therefore represented immediately what must be the forlornness of her state, and the anxiety of her mind, if she were placed at a distance from the scenes and the people, which affection and early habit seemed to have consecrated; especially at this time, when her spirits had scarcely recovered from the severe pressure of long-



suffering, and when to soothe and renovate them, not only quiet, but the consciousness of security, were necessary; a consciousness which it was impossible, and especially so soon after her late experience, that she could acquire among strangers, till they should cease to be such.

To these pleadings Schedoni thoughtfully attended, but the darkness of his aspect did not indicate that his compassion was touched; and Ellena proceeded to represent, secondly, that which, had she been more artful, or less disdainful of cunning, she would have urged the first. As it was, she had begun with the mention of circumstances, which, though she felt to be most important to herself, were the least likely to prevail with Schedoni, and she concluded with representing that, which was most interesting to him. Ellena suggested, that her residence in the neighbourhood of Altieri might be so managed, as that his secret would be as effectually preserved,

preserved, as if she were at an hundred miles from Naples.

It may appear extraordinary, that a man of Schedoni's habitual coolness, and exact calculation, should have suffered fear, on this occasion, to obscure his perceptions; and this instance strongly proved the magnitude of the cause, which could produce so powerful an effect. While he now listened to Ellena, he began to perceive circumstances that had eluded his own observation; and he, at length, acknowledged, that it might be safer to permit her to return to Villa-Altieri, and that she should from thence go, as she had formerly intended, to *La Pietà*, than to place her in any convent, however remote, where it would be necessary for himself to introduce her. His only remaining objection to the neighbourhood of Naples, now rested on the chance it would offer the Marchesa di Vivaldi of discovering Ellena's abode, before he should judge it convenient

convenient to disclose to her any hint respecting his family ; and his knowledge of the Marchesa justified his most horrible suspicion, as to the consequence of such a premature discovery.

Something, however, it appeared, must be risked in any situation he might chuse for Ellena ; and her residence at the *Santa della Pieta*, a large convent, well secured, and where, as she had been known to them from her infancy, the abbess and the sisters might be supposed to be not indifferent concerning her welfare, seemed to promise security against any actual violence from the malice of the Marchesa ; against her artful duplicity every place would be almost equally insufficient. Here, as Ellena would appear in the character she had always been known in, no curiosity could be excited, or suspicion awakened, as to her family ; and here, therefore, Schedoni's secret would more probably be preserved,

preserved, than elsewhere. As this was, at present, the predominant subject of his anxiety, to which, however unnatural it may seem, even the safety of Ellena was secondary, he finally determined, that she should return to *La Pieta*; and she thanked him almost with tears, for a consent which she received as a generous indulgence, but which was in reality little more than an effect of selfish apprehensions.

The remainder of the journey, which was of some days, passed without any remarkable occurrence; Schedoni, with only short intervals, was still enveloped in gloom and silence; and Ellena, with thoughts engaged by the one subject of her interest, the present situation and circumstances of Vivaldi, willingly submitted to this prolonged stillness.

As, at length, she drew near Naples, her emotions became more various and powerful; and when she distinguished the  
the

the top of Vesuvius peering over every intervening summit, she wept as her imagination characterized all the well-known country it overlooked. But when, having reached an eminence, that scenery was exhibited to her senses, when the Bay of Naples, stretching into remotest distance, was spread out before her ; when every mountain of that magnificent horizon, which enclosed her native landscape, that country which she believed Vivaldi to inhabit, stood unfolded, how affecting, how overwhelming were her sensations ! Every object seemed to speak of her home, of Vivaldi, and of happiness that was passed ! and so exquisitely did regret mingle with hope, the tender grief of remembrance with the interest of expectation, that it were difficult to say which prevailed.

Her expressive countenance disclosed to the Confessor the course of her thoughts and of her feelings, feelings which, while  
 he

he contemned, he believed he perfectly comprehended, but of which, having never in any degree experienced them, he really understood nothing. The callous Schedoni, by a mistake not uncommon, especially to a mind of his order, substituted words for truths ; not only confounding the limits of neighbouring qualities, but mistaking their very principles. Incapable of perceiving their nice distinctions, he called the persons who saw them, merely fanciful ; thus making his very incapacity an argument for his superior wisdom. And, while he confounded delicacy of feeling with fatuity of mind, taste with caprice, and imagination with error, he yielded, when he most congratulated himself on his sagacity, to illusions not less egregious because they were less brilliant, than those which are incident to sentiment and feeling.

The better to escape observation, Schedoni had contrived to avoid reaching  
Naples

Naples till the close of evening, and it was entirely dark before the carriage stopped at the gate of Villa-Altieri. Ellena, with a mixture of melancholy and satisfaction, viewed, once more, her long-deserted home, and while she waited till a servant should open the gate, remembered how often she had thus waited when there was a beloved friend within, to welcome her with smiles, which were now gone for ever. Beatrice, the old housekeeper, at length, however, appeared, and received her with an affection as sincere, if not as strong, as that of the relative for whom she mourned.

Here Schedoni alighted, and, having dismissed the carriage, entered the house, for the purpose of relinquishing also his disguise, and resuming his monk's habit. Before he departed, Ellena ventured to mention Vivaldi, and to express her wish to hear of his exact situation; but, though Schedoni was too well enabled to  
in-

inform her of it, the policy which had hitherto kept him silent on this subject still influenced him; and he replied only, that if he should happen to learn the circumstances of his condition, she should not remain ignorant of them.

This assurance revived Ellena, for two reasons; it afforded her a hope of relief from her present uncertainty, and it also seemed to express a degree of approbation of the object of her affection, such as the Confessor had never yet disclosed. Schedoni added, that he should see her no more, till he thought proper to acknowledge her for his daughter; but that, if circumstances made it necessary, he should, in the mean time, write to her; and he now gave her a direction by which to address him under a fictitious name, and at a place remote from his convent. Ellena, though assured of the necessity for this conduct, could not yield to such disguise, without an aversion that was strongly expressed



pressed in her manner, but of which Schedoni took no notice. He bade her, as she valued her existence, watchfully to preserve the secret of her birth ; and to waste not a single day at Villa-Altieri, but to retire to *La Pieta* ; and these injunctions were delivered in a manner so solemn and energetic, as not only deeply to impress upon her mind the necessity of fulfilling them, but to excite some degree of amazement.

After a short and general direction respecting her further conduct, Schedoni bade her farewell, and, privately quitting the villa, in his ecclesiastical dress, repaired to the Dominican convent, which he entered as a brother returned from a distant pilgrimage. He was received as usual by the society, and found himself, once more the austere father Schedoni of the Spirito Santo.

The cause of his first anxiety was the necessity for justifying himself to the Marchesa

chefa di Vivaldi, for afcertaining how much he might venture to reveal of the truth, and for eftimating what would be her decifion, were ſhe informed of the whole. His fecond ſtep would be to obtain the releafe of Vivaldi ; and, as his conduct in this inſtance would be regulated, in a great degree, by the reſult of his conference with the Marchefa, it would be *only* the fecond. However painful it muſt be to Schedoni to meet her, now that he had diſcovered the depth of the guilt, in which ſhe would have involved him, he determined to ſeek this eventful conference on the following morning : and he paſſed this night partly in uneaſy expectation of the approaching day, but chiefly in inventing circumſtances and arranging arguments, that might bear him triumphantly towards the accompliſhment of his grand deſign.

CHAP.

C H A P. III.

“ Beneath the silent gloom of Solitude  
Tho’ peace can sit and smile, tho’ meek Content  
Can keep the cheerful tenor of her soul,  
Ev’n in the loneliest shades, yet let not Wrath  
Approach, let black Revenge keep far aloof,  
Or soon they flame to madness.”

ELFRIDA.

SCHEDONI, on his way to the Vivaldi palace, again reviewed and arranged every argument, or rather specious circumstance, which might induce the Marchesa’s consent to the nuptials he so much desired. His family was noble, though no longer wealthy, and he believed that as the seeming want of descent had hitherto been the chief objection to Ellena, the Marchesa might be prevailed with to overlook the wreck of his fortune.

At the palace he was told, that the Marchesa was at one of her villas on the bay; and he was too anxious not to follow her thither immediately. This delightful residence was situated on an airy promontory, that overhung the water, and was nearly embosomed among the woods, that spread far along the heights, and descended, with great pomp of foliage and colouring, to the very margin of the waves. It seemed scarcely possible that misery could inhabit so enchanting an abode; yet the Marchesa was wretched amidst all these luxuries of nature and art, which would have perfected the happiness of an innocent mind! Her heart was possessed by evil passions, and all her perceptions were distorted and discoloured by them, which, like a dark magician, had power to change the fairest scenes into those of gloom and desolation.

The servants had orders to admit father Schedoni at all times, and he was shewn  
into

into a saloon in which the Marchesa was alone. Every object in this apartment announced taste, and even magnificence. The hangings were of purple and gold; the vaulted ceiling was designed by one of the first painters of the Venetian school; the marble statues that adorned the recesses were not less exquisite, and the whole symmetry and architecture, airy, yet rich; gay, yet chastened; resembled the palace of a fairy, and seemed to possess almost equal fascinations. The lattices were thrown open, to admit the prospect, as well as the air loaded with fragrance from an orangery, that spread before them. Lofty palms and plantains threw their green and refreshing tint over the windows, and on the lawn that sloped to the edge of the precipice, a shadowy perspective, beyond which appeared the ample waters of the gulf, where the light sails of feluccas, and the spreading canvas of larger vessels, glided upon the scene,  
and

and passed away, as in a camera obscura. Vesuvius and the city of Naples were seen on the coast beyond, with many a bay and lofty cape of that long tract of bold and gaily-coloured scenery, which extends towards Cape Campanella, crowned by fading ranges of mountains, lighted up with all the magic of Italian sunshine. The Marchesa reclined on a sofa before an open lattice; her eyes were fixed upon the prospect without, but her attention was wholly occupied by the visions that evil passions painted to her imagination. On her still beautiful features was the languor of discontent and indisposition; and, though her manners, like her dress, displayed the elegant negligence of the graces, they concealed the movements of a careful, and even a tortured heart. On perceiving Schedoni, a faint smile lightened upon her countenance, and she held forth her hand to him; at the touch of which he shuddered.

“ My good father, I rejoice to see you,” said the Marchesa; “ I have felt the want of your conversation much, and at this moment of indisposition especially.”

She waved to the attendant to withdraw; while Schedoni, stalking to a window, could with difficulty conceal the perturbation with which he now, for the first time, consciously beheld the willing destroyer of his child. Some further compliment from the Marchesa recalled him; he soon recovered all his address, and, approaching her, said,

“ Daughter! you always send me away a worse Dominican than I come; I approach you with humility, but depart elated with pride, and am obliged to suffer much from self-infliction before I can descend to my proper level.”

After some other flatteries had been exchanged, a silence of several moments followed, during which neither of the parties seemed to have sufficient courage  
to

to introduce the subjects that engaged their thoughts, subjects upon which their interests were now so directly and unexpectedly opposite. Had Schedoni been less occupied by his own feelings, he might have perceived the extreme agitation of the Marchesa, the tremor of her nerves, the faint flush that crossed her cheek, the wanness that succeeded, the languid movement of her eyes, and the laborious sighs that interrupted her breathing, while she wished, yet dared not ask, whether Ellena was no more, and averted her regards from him, whom she almost believed to be a murderer.

Schedoni, not less affected, though apparently tranquil, as sedulously avoided the face of the Marchesa, whom he considered with a degree of contempt almost equal to his indignation : his feelings had reversed, for the present, all his opinions on the subject of their former arguments, and had taught him, for once, at least,



to think justly. Every moment of silence increased his embarrassment, and his reluctance even to name Ellena. He feared to tell that she lived, yet despised himself for suffering such fear, and shuddered at a recollection of the conduct, which had made any assurance concerning her life necessary. The insinuation, that he had discovered her family to be such as would not degrade that of the Marchesa, he knew not how to introduce with such delicacy of gradation as might win upon the jealousy of her pride, and sooth her disappointment; and he was still meditating how he could lead to this subject, when the Marchesa herself broke the silence.

“Father,” she said, with a sigh, “I always look to you for consolation, and am seldom disappointed. You are too well acquainted with the anxiety which has long oppressed me; may I understand that the cause of it is removed?” She paused, and then added, “May I hope  
that

that my son will no longer be led from the observance of his duty ?”

Schedoni, with his eyes fixed on the ground, remained silent, but, at length, said, “ The chief occasion of your anxiety is certainly removed ;” —and he was again silent.

“ How !” exclaimed the Marchesa, with the quick-sightedness of suspicion, while all her dissimulation yielded to the urgency of her fear, “ Have you failed ? Is she not dead ?”

In the earnestness of the question, she fixed her eyes on Schedoni’s face, and, perceiving there symptoms of extraordinary emotion, added, “ Relieve me from my apprehensions, good father, I entreat ; tell me that you have succeeded, and that she has paid the debt of justice.”

Schedoni raised his eyes to the Marchesa, but instantly averted them ; indignation had lifted them, and disgust and stifled horror turned them away. Though

very little of these feelings appeared; the Marchesa perceived such expression as she had never been accustomed to observe in his countenance; and, her surprize and impatience increafing, she repeated the question, and with a yet more infisting air than before.

“ I have not failed in the grand object,” replied Schedoni: “ your fon is no longer in danger of forming a disgraceful alliance.”

“ In what, then, have you failed ?” asked the Marchesa; “ for I perceive that you have not been completely successful.”

“ I ought not to fay that I have failed in any respect,” replied Schedoni, with emotion, “ fince the honour of your house is preserved, and — a life is fpared.”

His voice faltered as he pronounced the laft words, and he feemed to experience again the horror of that moment, when,  
with

with an uplifted poniard in his grasp, he had discovered Ellena for his daughter.

“Spared!” repeated the Marchesa, doubtingly; “explain yourself, good father!”

“She lives,” replied Schedoni; “but you have nothing, therefore, to apprehend.”

The Marchesa, surprized no less by the tone in which he spoke, than shocked at the purport of his words, changed countenance, while she said, impatiently—  
“You speak in enigmas, father.”

“Lady! I speak plain truth—she lives.”

“I understand that sufficiently,” said the Marchesa; “but when you tell me, I have nothing to apprehend——”

“I tell you truth, also,” rejoined the Confessor; “and the benevolence of your nature may be permitted to rejoice, for justice no longer has forbidden the exercise of mercy.”

“This is all very well in its place,” said the Marchesa, betrayed by the vexa-

tion she suffered; "such sentiments and such compliments are, like gala suits, to be put on in fine weather. My day is cloudy; let me have a little plain sense: inform me of the circumstances, which have occasioned this change in the course of your observations, and, good father! be brief."

Schedoni then unfolded, but with reserve, and his usual art, such particulars relative to the family of Ellena as he hoped would soften the aversion of the Marchesa to the connection, and incline her, in consideration of her son's tranquillity, finally to approve it; with which disclosure he mingled a plausible relation of the way in which the discovery had been made, without, however, betraying by the most distant hint how nearly this discovery affected himself.

The Marchesa's patience would scarcely await the conclusion of his narrative, or her disappointment submit to the curb of  
dis-

discretion. When, at length, he had finished his history, "Is it possible," said she, with fretful displeasure, "that you have suffered yourself to be deceived by the plausibility of a girl, who might have been expected to utter any falsehood, which should appear likely to protect her! Has a man of your discernment given faith to the idle and improbable tale! Say, rather, father, that your resolution failed in the critical moment, and that you are now anxious to form excuses to yourself for a conduct so pusillanimous."

"I am not apt to give an easy faith to appearances," replied Schedoni, gravely, "and still less, to shrink from the performance of any act, which I judge to be necessary and just. To the last intimation, I make no reply; it does not become my character to vindicate myself from an implication of falsehood."

The Marchesa, perceiving that her passion had betrayed her into imprudence,

condescended to apologize for that, which she termed an effect of her extreme anxiety, as to what might follow from an act of such indiscreet indulgence; and Schedoni as willingly accepted the apology, each believing the assistance of the other necessary to success.

Schedoni then informed her, that he had better authority for what he had advanced than the assertion of Ellena; and he mentioned some circumstances, which proved him to be more anxious for the reputation than the truth of his word. Believing that his origin was entirely unknown to the Marchesa, he ventured to disclose some further particulars of Ellena's family, without apprehending that it could lead to a suspicion of his own.

The Marchesa, though neither appeased or convinced, commanded her feelings so far as to appear tranquil, while the Confessor represented, with the most delicate address, the unhappiness of her son, and  
the

the satisfaction, which must finally result to herself from an acquiescence with his choice, since the object of it was known to be worthy of his alliance. He added, that, while he had believed the contrary, he had proved himself as strenuous to prevent, as he was now sincere in approving their marriage; and concluded with gently blaming her for suffering prejudice and some remains of resentment to obscure her excellent understanding. “ Trusting to the natural clearness of your perceptions, he added, “ I doubt not that when you have maturely considered the subject, every objection will yield to a consideration of your son’s happiness.”

The earnestness, with which Schedoni pleaded for Vivaldi, excited some surprise; but the Marchesa, without condescending to reply either to his argument or remonstrance, inquired whether Ellena had a suspicion of the design, with which she had been carried into the forest of the



Garganus, or concerning the identity of her persecutor. Schedoni, immediately perceiving to what these questions tended, replied, with the facility with which he usually accommodated his conscience to his interest, that Ellena was totally ignorant as to who were her immediate persecutors, and equally unsuspecting of any other evil having been intended her, than that of a temporary confinement.

The last assertion was admitted by the Marchesa to be probable, till the boldness of the first made her doubt the truth of each, and occasioned her new surprize and conjecture as to the motive, which could induce Schedoni to venture these untruths. She then inquired where Ellena was now disposed of, but he had too much prudence to disclose the place of her retreat, however plausible might be the air, with which the inquiry was urged; and he endeavoured to call off her attention to Vivaldi. The Confessor did not,  
however,

however, venture, at present, to give a hint as to the pretended discovery of his situation in the inquisition, but reserved to a more favourable opportunity such mention, together with a zealous offer of his services to extricate the prisoner. The Marchesa, believing that her son was still engaged in pursuit of Ellena, made many inquiries concerning him, but without expressing any solicitude for his welfare; resentment appearing to be the only emotion she retained towards him. While Schedoni replied with circumspection to her questions, he urged inquiries of his own, as to the manner in which the Marchese endured the long absence of Vivaldi; thus endeavouring to ascertain how far he might hereafter venture to appear in any efforts for liberating him, and how shape his conduct respecting Ellena. It seemed that the Marchese was not indifferent as to his son's absence; and, though he had at first believed the search for  
Ellena

Ellena to have occasioned it, other apprehensions now disturbed him, and taught him the feelings of a father. His numerous avocations and interests, however, seemed to prevent such anxiety from preying upon his mind; and, having dismissed persons in search of Vivaldi, he passed his time in the usual routine of company and the court. Of the actual situation of his son it was evident that neither he, nor the Marchesa, had the least apprehension, and this was a circumstance, which the Confessor was very careful to ascertain.

Before he took leave, he ventured to renew the mention of Vivaldi's attachment, and gently to plead for him. The Marchesa, however, seemed inattentive to what he represented, till, at length, awaking from her reverie, she said—"Father, you have judged ill——," and, before she concluded the sentence, she relapsed again into thoughtful silence. Believing

believing that he anticipated her meaning, Schedoni began to repeat his own justification respecting his conduct towards Ellena.

“ You have judged erroneously, “ father,” resumed the Marchesa, with the same considering air, “ in placing the girl in such a situation ; my son cannot fail to discover her there.”

“ Or wherever she may be,” replied the Confessor, believing that he understood the Marchesa’s aim. “ It may not be possible to conceal her long from his search.”

“ The neighbourhood of Naples ought at least to have been avoided,” observed the Marchesa.

Schedoni was silent, and she added, “ So near, also, to his own residence ! How far is *La Pieta* from the Vivaldi palace ?”

Though Schedoni had thought that the Marchesa, while displaying a pretended knowledge of Ellena’s retreat, was only endeavouring to obtain a real one, this  
mention

mention of the place of her actual residence startled him ; but he replied almost immediately, “ I am ignorant of the distance, for, till now, I was unacquainted that there is a convent of the name you mention. It appears, however, that *La Pieta* is the place of all other, which ought to have been avoided. How could you suspect me, lady, of imprudence thus extravagant !”

While Schedoni spoke, the Marchesa regarded him attentively, and then replied, “ I may be allowed, good father, to suspect you of indiscretion in this instance, since you have just given me so unequivocal a proof of it in another.”

She would then have changed the subject, but Schedoni, believing this inclination to be the consequence of her having assured herself, that she had actually discovered Ellena’s asylum, and too reasonably suspecting the dreadful use she designed to make of the discovery, endeavoured

voured to unfettle her opinion, and mislead her as to the place of Ellena's abode. He not only contradicted the fact of her present residence at *La Pieta*, but, without scruple, made a positive assertion, that she was at a distance from Naples, naming, at the same time, a fictitious place, whose obscurity, he added, would be the best protection from the pursuit of Vivaldi.

“ Very true, father,” observed the Marchesa; “ I believe that my son will not readily discover the girl in the place you have named.”

Whether the Marchesa believed Schedoni's assertion or not, she expressed no further curiosity on the subject, and appeared considerably more tranquil than before. She now chatted with ease on general topics, while the Confessor dared no more to urge the subject of his secret wishes; and, having supported, for some time, a conversation most dissonant with his temper, he took his leave, and returned  
to

to Naples. On the way thither, he reviewed, with exactness, the late behaviour of the Marchesa, and the result of this examination was a resolution—never to renew the subject of their conversation, but to solemnize, without her consent, the nuptials of Vivaldi and Ellena.

The Marchesa, meanwhile, on the departure of Schedoni, remained, for some time, in the very attitude, in which he had left her, and absorbed by the interest, which his visit excited. The sudden change in his conduct no less astonished and perplexed, than disappointed her. She could not explain it by the supposition of any principle, or motive. Sometimes it occurred to her, that Vivaldi had bribed him with rich promises to promote the marriage, which he contributed to thwart; but, when she considered the high expectations she had herself encouraged him to cherish, the improbability of the conjecture was apparent. That Schedoni, from whatever cause,  
was

was no longer to be trusted in this business, was sufficiently clear, but she endeavoured to console herself with a hope that a confidential person might yet be discovered. A part of Schedoni's resolution she also adopted, which was, never again to introduce the subject of their late interview. But, while she should silently pursue her own plans, she determined to conduct herself towards the Confessor in every other respect, as usual, not suffering him to suspect that she had withdrawn her confidence, but inducing him to believe that she had relinquished all further design against Elena.

CHAP.



CHAP. IV.

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“ We  
Would learn the private virtues ; how to glide  
Through shades and plains, along the smoothest stream  
Of rural life ; or, snatch'd away by hope,  
Through the dim-spaces of futurity,  
With earnest eye anticipate those scenes  
Of happiness and wonder, where the mind,  
In endless growth and infinite ascent,  
Rises from state to state, and world to world.”

THOMSON.

ELLENA, obedient to the command of Schedoni, withdrew from her home on the day that followed her arrival there, to *La Pieta*. The Superiour, who had known her from her infancy, and, from the acquaintance which such long observation afforded, both esteemed and loved her, received Ellena with a degree of satisfaction proportionate to the concern she had suffered

suffered when informed of her disastrous removal from Villa-Altieri.

Among the quiet groves of this convent, however, Ellena vainly endeavoured to moderate her solicitude respecting the situation of Vivaldi; for, now that she had a respite from immediate calamity, she thought with more intense anxiety as to what might be his sufferings, and her fears and impatience increased, as each day disappointed her expectation of intelligence from Schedoni.

If the soothing of sympathy and the delicate arts of benevolence could have restored the serenity of her mind, Ellena would now have been peaceful; for all these were offered her by the abbess and the sisters of the *Santa della Pieta*. They were not acquainted with the cause of her sorrow, but they perceived that she was unhappy, and wished her to be otherwise. The society of *Our Lady of Pity*, was such as a convent does not often shroud; to the wisdom and virtue of the Superiour  
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the sisterhood was principally indebted for the harmony and happiness, which distinguished them. This lady was a shining example to governesses of religious houses, and a striking instance of the influence, which a virtuous mind may acquire over others, as well as of the extensive good that it may thus diffuse. She was dignified without haughtiness, religious without bigotry, and mild, though decisive and firm. She possessed penetration to discover what was just, resolution to adhere to it, and temper to practise it with gentleness and grace ; so that even correction from her, assumed the winning air of courtesy : the person, whom she admonished, wept in sorrow for the offence, instead of being secretly irritated by the reproof, and loved her as a mother, rather than feared her as a judge. Whatever might be her failings, they were effectually concealed by the general benevolence of her heart, and the harmony of her mind ;  
a har-

a harmony, not the effect of torpid feelings, but the accomplishment of correct and vigilant judgment. Her religion was neither gloomy nor bigotted ; it was the sentiment of a grateful heart offering itself up to a Deity, who delights in the happiness of his creatures ; and she conformed to the customs of the Roman church, without supposing a faith in all of them to be necessary to salvation. This opinion, however, she was obliged to conceal, lest her very virtue should draw upon her the punishment of a crime, from some fierce ecclesiastics, who contradicted in their practice the very essential principles, which the christianity they professed would have taught them.

In her lectures to the nuns she seldom touched upon points of faith, but explained and enforced the moral duties, particularly such as were most practicable in the society to which she belonged ; such as tended to soften and harmonize the af-

fections, to impart that repose of mind, which persuades to the practice of sisterly kindness, universal charity, and the most pure and elevated devotion. When she spoke of religion, it appeared so interesting, so beautiful, that her attentive auditors, revered and loved it as a friend, a refiner of the heart, a sublime comforter; and experienced somewhat of the meek and holy ardour, which may belong to angelic natures.

The society appeared like a large family, of which the lady abbess was the mother, rather than an assemblage of strangers; and particularly when gathered around her, they listened to the evening sermon, which she delivered with such affectionate interest, such persuasive eloquence, and sometimes with such pathetic energy, as few hearts could resist.

She encouraged in her convent every innocent and liberal pursuit, which might sweeten the austerities of confinement,  
and

and which were generally rendered instrumental to charity. The *Daughters of Pity* particularly excelled in music; not in those difficulties of the art, which display florid graces, and intricate execution, but in such eloquence of sound as steals upon the heart, and awakens its sweetest and best affections. It was probably the well regulated sensibility of their own minds, that enabled these sisters to diffuse through their strains a character of such finely-tempered taste, as drew crowds of visitors, on every festival, to the church of the *Santa della Pieta*.

The local circumstances of this convent were scarcely less agreeable than the harmony of its society was interesting. These extensive domains included olive-grounds, vineyards, and some corn-land; a considerable tract was devoted to the pleasures of the garden, whose groves supplied walnuts, almonds, oranges, and citrons, in abundance, and almost every kind of fruit.

fruit and flower, which this luxurious climate nurtured. These gardens hung upon the slope of a hill, about a mile within the shore, and afforded extensive views of the country round Naples, and of the gulf. But from the terraces, which extended along a semicircular range of rocks, that rose over the convent, and formed a part of the domain, the prospects were infinitely finer. They extended on the south to the isle of Capri, where the gulf expands into the sea; in the west, appeared the island of Ischia, distinguished by the white pinnacles of the lofty mountain Epomeo; and near it Profida, with its many-coloured cliffs, rose out of the waves. Overlooking several points towards Puzzuoli, the eye caught beyond other promontories, and others further still, to the north, a glimpse of the sea, that bathes the now desolate shores of Baiæ; with Capua, and all the towns and villas, that speckle the garden-plains between Caserta and Naples.

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In the nearer scene were the rocky heights of Paufilippo, and Naples itself, with all its crowded suburbs ascending among the hills, and mingling with vineyards and overtopping cypres; the castle of San Elmo, conspicuous on its rock, overhanging the magnificent monastery of the Chartreux; while in the scene below appeared the *Castel Nuovo*, with its clustered towers, the long-extended *Corso*, the mole, with its tall pharos, and the harbour gay with painted shipping, busy with vessels of all nations continually arriving and departing, and full to the brim with the blue waters of the bay. Beyond the hills of Naples, the whole horizon to the north and east was bounded by the mountains of the Appenine, an amphitheatre proportioned to the grandeur of the plain, which the gulf spread out below.

These terraces, shaded with acacias and plane-trees, were the favourite haunt of Ellena. Between the opening branches,



She looked down upon Villa-Altieri, which brought to her remembrance the affectionate Bianchi, with all the sportive years of her childhood, and where some of her happiest hours had been passed in the society of Vivaldi. Along the windings of the coast, too, she could distinguish many places rendered sacred by affection, to which she had made excursions with her lamented relative, and Vivaldi ; and, though sadness mingled with the recollections a view of them restored, they were precious to her heart. Here, alone, and unobserved, she frequently yielded to the melancholy which she endeavoured to suppress in society ; and at other times tried to deceive, with books and the pencil, the lingering moments of uncertainty concerning the state of Vivaldi ; for day after day still elapsed without bringing any intelligence from Schedoni. Whenever the late scenes connected with the discovery of her family recurred to Ellena, she was  
struck

struck with almost as much amazement as if she was gazing upon a vision, instead of recalling realities. Contrasted with the sober truth of her present life, the past appeared like romance; and there were moments when she shrunk from the relationship of Schedoni with unconquerable affright. The first emotions his appearance had excited were so opposite to those of filial tenderness, that she perceived it was now nearly impossible to love and revere him as her father, and she endeavoured, by dwelling upon all the obligations, which she believed he had lately conferred upon her, to repay him in gratitude, what was withheld in affection.

In such melancholy considerations, she often lingered under the shade of the acacias, till the sun had sunk behind the distant promontory of Miseno, and the last bell of vespers summoned her to the convent below.

Among the nuns, Ellena had many favourites, but not one that she admired

and loved equally with Olivia of San Stefano, the remembrance of whom was always accompanied with a fear lest she should have suffered from her generous compassion, and a wish that she had taken up her abode with the happy society of the *Daughters of Pity*, instead of being subjected to the tyranny of the abbess of San Stefano. To Ellena, the magnificent scenes of *La Pieta* seemed to open a secure, and, perhaps, a last asylum ; for, in her present circumstances, she could not avoid perceiving how menacing and various were the objections to her marriage with Vivaldi, even should Schedoni prove propitious to it. The character of the Marchesa di Vivaldi, such as it stood unfolded by the late occurrences, struck her with dismay, for her designs appeared sufficiently atrocious, whether they had extended to the utmost limit of Ellena's suspicions, or had stopped where the affected charity of Schedoni had pointed out.

In

In either case, the pertinacity of her aversion, and the vindictive violence of her nature, were obvious.

In this view of her character, however, it was not the inconvenience threatened to those who might become connected with her, that principally affected Ellena, but the circumstance of such a woman being the mother of Vivaldi; and, to alleviate so afflicting a consideration, she endeavoured to believe all the palliating suggestions of Schedoni, respecting the Marchesa's late intentions. But if Ellena was grieved on discovering crime in the character of Vivaldi's parent, what would have been her suffering, had she suspected the nature of Schedoni?—what, if she had been told that he was the adviser of the Marchesa's plans?—if she had known that he had been the partner of her intentional guilt? From such suffering she was yet spared, as well as from that, which a knowledge of Vivaldi's present situation, and of

the result of Schedoni's efforts to procure a release from the perils, among which he had precipitated him, would have inflicted. Had she known this, it is possible that in the first despondency of her mind, she would have relinquished what is called the world, and sought a lasting asylum with the society of the holy sisters. Even as it was, she sometimes endeavoured to look with resignation upon the events which might render such a step desirable; but it was an effort that seldom soothed her even with a temporary self-delusion. Should the veil, however, prove her final refuge, it would be by her own choice; for the lady abbess of *La Pietà* employed no art to win a recluse, nor suffered the nuns to seduce votaries to the order.

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

“ Sullen and sad to fancy’s frighted eye  
Did shapes of dun and murky hue advance,  
In train tumultuous, all of gesture strange,  
And passing horrible.”

CARACTACUS.

WHILE the late events had been passing in the Garganus, and at Naples, Vivaldi and his servant Paulo remained imprisoned in distinct chambers of the Inquisition. They were again separately interrogated. From the servant no information could be obtained; he asserted only his master’s innocence, without once remembering to mention his own, clamoured, with more justness than prudence, against the persons who had occasioned his arrest; and seriously endeavouring to convince the inquisitors, that he himself had *no other motive* in having demanded to  
F 5 be

be brought to these prisons than that he might comfort his master, he gravely remonstrated on the injustice of separating them, adding, that he was sure when they knew the rights of the matter, they would order him to be carried to the prison of Signor Vivaldi.

“ I do assure your *Serenissimo Illustrissimo*,” continued Paulo, addressing the chief inquisitor with profound gravity, “ that this is the last place I should have thought of coming to, on any other account ; and if you will only condescend to ask your officials, who took my master up, they will tell you *as good*. They knew well enough all along, what I came here for, and if they had known it would be all in vain, it would have been but civil of them to have told me as much, and not have brought me ; for this is the last place in the world I would have come to, otherwise, of my own accord.”

Paulo was permitted to harangue in his own way, because his examiners hoped that

that his prolixity would be a means of betraying circumstances connected with his master. By this view, however, they were misled, for Paulo, with all his simplicity of heart, was both vigilant and shrewd in Vivaldi's interest. But, when he perceived them really convinced, that his sole motive for visiting the Inquisition was that he might console his master, yet still persisting in the resolution of separately confining him, his indignation knew no bounds. He despised alike their reprehension, their thundering menaces; and their more artful exhibitions; told them of all they had to expect both here and hereafter, for their cruelty to his dear master, and said they might do what they would with him; he defied them to make him more miserable than he was.

It was not without difficulty that he was removed from the chamber; where he left his examiners in a state of astonishment at his rashness, and indignation of



his honesty, such as they had, probably, never experienced before.

When Vivaldi was again called up to the table of the Holy Office, he underwent a longer examination than on a former occasion. Several inquisitors attended, and every art was employed to induce him to confess crimes, of which he was suspected, and to draw from him a discovery of others, which might have eluded even suspicion. Still the examiners cautiously avoided informing him of the subject of the accusation on which he had been arrested, and it was, therefore, only on the former assurances of the Benedictine, and the officials in the chapel of San Sebastian, that Vivaldi understood he was accused of having carried off a nun. His answers on the present occasion were concise and firm, and his whole deportment undaunted. He felt less apprehension for himself, than indignation of the general injustice and cruelty, which the tribunal was permitted to

to exercise upon others ; and this virtuous indignation gave a loftiness, a calm heroic grandeur to his mind, which never, for a moment, forsook him, except when he conjectured what might be the sufferings of Ellena. Then, his fortitude and magnanimity failed, and his tortured spirit rose almost to frenzy.

On this, his second examination, he was urged by the same dark questions, and replied to them with the same open sincerity, as during the first. Yet the simplicity and energy of truth failed to impress conviction on minds, which, no longer possessing the virtue themselves, were not competent to understand the symptoms of it in others. Vivaldi was again threatened with the torture, and again dismissed to his prison.

On the way to this dreadful abode, a person passed him in one of the avenues, of whose air and figure he thought he had some recollection ; and, as the stranger stalked

stalked away, he suddenly knew him to be the prophetic monk, who had haunted the ruins of Paluzzi. In the first moment of surprize, Vivaldi lost his presence of mind so far, that he made no attempt to interrupt him. In the next instant, however, he paused and looked back, with an intention of speaking; but this mysterious person was already at the extremity of the avenue. Vivaldi however called, and besought him to stop; when, without either speaking or turning his head, he immediately disappeared beyond a door that opened at his approach. Vivaldi, on attempting to take the way of the monk, was withheld by his guards, and, when he inquired who was the stranger he had seen, the officials asked, in their turn, what stranger he alluded to.

“ He who has just passed us,” replied Vivaldi.

The officials seemed surprized, “ Your spirits are disordered, Signor,” observed one of them, “ I saw no person pass !”

“ He

“ He passed so closely,” said Vivaldi, “ that it was hardly possible you could avoid seeing him !”

“ I did not even hear a footstep !” added the man.

“ I do not recollect that I did,” answered Vivaldi, “ but I saw his figure as plainly as I now see your’s ; his black garments almost touched me ! Was he an inquisitor ?”

The official appeared astonished ; and, whether his incredulity was real, or affected for the purpose of concealing his knowledge of the person alluded to, his embarrassment and awe seemed natural. Vivaldi observed, with almost equal curiosity and surprize, the fear which his face expressed ; but perceived also, that it would avail nothing to repeat his questions.

As they proceeded along the avenue, a kind of half-stifled groan was sometimes audible from a distance. “ Whence come those sounds ?” said Vivaldi, “ they strike to my heart !”

“ They

“ They should do so,” replied the guard.

“ Whence come they ?” repeated Vivaldi, more impatiently, and shuddering.

“ From the place of torture,” said the official.

“ O God ! O God !” exclaimed Vivaldi, with a deep groan.

He passed with hasty steps the door of that terrible chamber, and the guard did not attempt to stop him. The officials had brought him, in obedience to the customary orders they had received, within hearing of those doleful sounds, for the purpose of impressing upon his mind the horrors of the punishment, with which he was threatened, and of inducing him to confess without incurring them.

On this same evening, Vivaldi was visited, in his prison, by a man whom he had never consciously seen before. He appeared to be between forty and fifty; was of a grave and observant physiognomy.

mony, and of manners, which, though somewhat austere, were not alarming. The account he gave of himself, and of his motive for this visit, was curious. He said that he also was a prisoner in the inquisition, but, as the ground of accusation against him was light, he had been favoured so far as to be allowed some degree of liberty within certain bounds; that, having heard of Vivaldi's situation, he had asked and obtained leave to converse with him, which he had done in compassion, and with a desire of assuaging his sufferings, so far as an expression of sympathy and commiseration might relieve them.

While he spoke, Vivaldi regarded him with deep attention, and the improbability that these pretensions should be true, did not escape him; but the suspicion which they occasioned he prudently concealed. The stranger conversed on various subjects. Vivaldi's answers were cautious and concise; but not even long pauses of  
silence

silence wearied the compassionate patience of his visitor. Among other topics he, at length, introduced that of religion.

“ I have, myself, been accused of heresy,” said he, “ and know how to pity others in the same situation.”

“ It is of heresy, then, that I am accused !” observed Vivaldi, “ of heresy !”

“ It availed me nothing that I asserted my innocence,” continued the stranger, without noticing Vivaldi’s exclamation, “ I was condemned to the torture. My sufferings were too terrible to be endured ! I confessed my offence ——”

“ Pardon me,” interrupted Vivaldi, “ but allow me to remark, that since your sufferings were so severe, your’s, against whom the ground of accusation was light, what may be the punishment of those, whose offences are more serious ?”

The stranger was somewhat embarrassed. “ My offence was slight,” he continued, without giving a full answer.

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“ Is it possible,” said Vivaldi, again interrupting him, “ that heresy can be considered as a slight offence before the tribunal of the Inquisition ?”

“ It was only of a slight degree of heresy,” replied the visitor, reddening with displeasure, “ of which I was suspected, and ——”

“ Does then the Inquisition allow of degrees in heresy ?” said Vivaldi.

“ I confessed my offence,” added the stranger with a louder emphasis, “ and the consequence of this confession was a remission of punishment. After a trifling penance I shall be dismissed, and probably, in a few days, leave the prison. Before I left it, I was desirous of administering some degree of consolation to a fellow sufferer ; if you have any friends whom you wish to inform of your situation, do not fear to confide their names and your message to me.”

The latter part of the speech was delivered in a low voice, as if the stranger feared



feared to be overheard. Vivaldi remained silent, while he examined, with closer attention, the countenance of his visitor. It was of the utmost importance to him, that his family should be made acquainted with his situation; yet he knew not exactly how to interpret, or to confide in this offer. Vivaldi had heard that informers sometimes visited the prisoners, and, under the affectation of kindness and sympathy, drew from them a confession of opinions, which were afterwards urged against them; and obtained discoveries relative to their connections and friends, who were, by these insidious means, frequently involved in their destruction. Vivaldi, conscious of his own innocence, had, on his first examination, acquainted the inquisitor with the names and residence of his family; he had, therefore, nothing new to apprehend from revealing them to this stranger; but he perceived that if it should be known he had attempted to convey

vey a message, however concise and harmless, the discovery would irritate the jealous inquisitors against him, and might be urged as a new presumption of his guilt. These considerations, together with the distrust which the inconsistency of his visitor's assertions, and the occasional embarrassment of his manner, had excited, determined Vivaldi to resist the temptation now offered to him; and the stranger, having received his thanks, reluctantly withdrew, observing, however, that should any unforeseen circumstance detain him in the Inquisition longer than he had reason to expect, he should beg leave to pay him another visit. In reply to this, Vivaldi only bowed, but he remarked that the stranger's countenance altered, and that some dark brooding appeared to cloud his mind, as he quitted the chamber.

Several days elapsed, during which Vivaldi heard no more of his new acquaintance. He was then summoned to another  
exami-

examination, from which he was dismissed as before; and some weeks of solitude and of heavy uncertainty succeeded, after which he was a fourth time called up to the table of the Holy Office. It was then surrounded by inquisitors, and a more than usual solemnity appeared in the proceedings.

As proofs of Vivaldi's innocence had not been obtained, the suspicions of his examiners, of course, were not removed; and, as he persisted in denying the truth of the charge which he understood would be exhibited against him, and refused to make any confession of crimes, it was ordered that he should, within three hours, be put to the *question*. Till then, Vivaldi was once more dismissed to his prison-chamber. His resolution remained unshaken, but he could not look, unmoved, upon the horrors which might be preparing for him. The interval of expectation between the sentence and the accomplishment

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ment of this preliminary punishment, was, indeed, dreadful. The seeming ignominy of his situation, and his ignorance as to the degree of torture to be applied, overcame the calmness he had before exhibited, and as he paced his cell, cold damps, which hung upon his forehead, betrayed the agony of his mind. It was not long, however, that he suffered from a sense of ignominy; his better judgment shewed him, that innocence cannot suffer disgrace from any situation or circumstance, and he once more resumed the courage and the firmness which belong to virtue.

It was about midnight, that Vivaldi heard steps approaching, and a murmur of voices at the door of his cell. He understood by these that persons were coming to summon him to the torture. The door was unbarred, and two men, habited in black, appeared at it. Without speaking, they advanced, and throwing over him a singular kind of mantle, led him from the chamber.

Along

Along the galleries, and other avenues through which they passed, not any person was seen, and, by the profound stillness that reigned, it seemed as if death had already anticipated his work in these regions of horror, and had condemned alike the tortured and the torturer.

They descended to the large hall, where Vivaldi had waited on the night of his entrance, and thence through an avenue, and down a long flight of steps, that led to subterranean chambers. His conductors did not utter a syllable during the whole progress; Vivaldi knew too well that questions would only subject him to greater severity, and he asked none.

The doors, through which they passed, regularly opened at the touch of an iron rod, carried by one of the officials, and without the appearance of any person. The other man bore a torch, and the passages were so dimly lighted that the way could scarcely have been found without

one. They crossed what seemed to be a burial vault, but the extent and obscurity of the place did not allow it to be ascertained ; and, having reached an iron door, they stopped. One of the officials struck upon it three times with the rod, but it did not open as the others had done. While they waited, Vivaldi thought he heard, from within, low intermitting sounds, as of persons in their last extremity, but, though within, they appeared to come from a distance. His whole heart was chilled, not with fear, for at that moment he did not remember himself, but with horror.

Having waited a considerable time, during which the official did not repeat the signal, the door was partly opened by a figure, whom Vivaldi could not distinguish in the gloom beyond, and with whom one of his conductors communicated by signs ; after which the door was closed.

Several minutes had elapsed, when tones of deep voices aroused the attention of Vivaldi. They were loud and hoarse, and spoke in a language unknown to him. At the sounds, the official immediately extinguished his torch. The voices drew nearer, and, the door again unfolding, two figures stood before Vivaldi, which, shewn by a glimmering light within, struck him with astonishment and dismay. They were clothed like his conductors, in black, but in a different fashion, for their habits were made close to the shape. Their faces were entirely concealed beneath a very peculiar kind of cowl, which descended from the head to the feet; and their eyes only were visible through small openings contrived for the sight. It occurred to Vivaldi that these men were torturers; their appearance was worthy of demons. Probably they were thus habited, that the persons, whom they afflicted, might not know them; or, perhaps, it was  
only

only for the purpose of striking terror upon the minds of the accused, and thus compelling them to confess without further difficulty. Whatever motive might have occasioned their horrific appearance, and whatever was their office, Vivaldi was delivered into their hands, and in the same moment heard the iron door shut, which enclosed him with them in a narrow passage, gloomily lighted by a lamp suspended from the arched roof. They walked in silence on each side of their prisoner, and came to a second door, which admitted them instantly into another passage. A third door, at a short distance, admitted them to a third avenue, at the end of which one of his mysterious guides struck upon a gate, and they stopped. The uncertain sounds that Vivaldi had fancied he heard, were now more audible, and he distinguished, with inexpressible horror, that they were uttered by persons suffering.

The gate was, at length, opened by a figure habited like his conductors, and two



other doors of iron, placed very near each other, being also unlocked, Vivaldi found himself in a spacious chamber, the walls of which were hung with black, duskiy lighted by lamps, that gleamed in the lofty vault. Immediately on his entrance, a strange sound ran along the walls, and echoed among other vaults, that appeared, by the progress of the sound, to extend far beyond this.

It was not immediately that Vivaldi could sufficiently recollect himself to observe any object before him ; and, even when he did so, the gloom of the place prevented his ascertaining many appearances. Shadowy countenances and uncertain forms seemed to flit through the dusk, and many instruments, the application of which he did not comprehend, struck him with horrible suspicions. Still he heard, at intervals, half-suppressed groans, and was looking round to discover the wretched people, from whom they were extorted, when a voice from a remote part of the chamber called on him to advance. The

The distance, and the obscurity of the spot whence the voice issued, had prevented Vivaldi from noticing any person there, and he was now slowly obeying, when, on a second summons, his conductors seized his arms, and hurried him forward.

In a remote part of this extensive chamber, he perceived three persons seated under a black canopy, on chairs raised several steps from the floor, and who appeared to preside there in the office of either judges or examiners, or directors of the punishments. Below, at a table, sat a secretary, over whom was suspended the only lamp, that could enable him to commit to paper what should occur during the examination. Vivaldi now understood that the three persons who composed the tribunal were the vicar general, or grand inquisitor, the advocate of the exchequer, and an ordinary inquisitor, who was seated between the other two, and who appeared more eagerly to engage in the duties of his cruel office. A portentous

obscurity enveloped alike their persons and their proceedings.

At some distance from the tribunal stood a large iron frame, which Vivaldi conjectured to be the rack, and near it another, resembling, in shape, a coffin, but, happily, he could not distinguish, through the remote obscurity, any person undergoing actual suffering. In the vaults beyond, however, the diabolical decrees of the inquisitors seemed to be fulfilling ; for, whenever a distant door opened for a moment, sounds of lamentation issued forth, and men, whom he judged to be familiars, habited like those, who stood beside him, were seen passing to and fro within.

Vivaldi almost believed himself in the infernal regions ; the dismal aspect of this place, the horrible preparation for punishment, and, above all, the disposition and appearance of the persons that were ready to inflict it, confirmed the resemblance. That any human being should willingly afflict

afflict a fellow being, who had never injured, or even offended him; that, unswayed by passion, he should deliberately become the means of torturing him, appeared to Vivaldi nearly incredible! But, when he looked at the three persons who composed the tribunal, and considered that they had not only voluntarily undertaken the cruel office they fulfilled, but had probably long regarded it as the summit of their ambition, his astonishment and indignation were unbounded.

The grand inquisitor, having again called on Vivaldi by name, admonished him to confess the truth, and avoid the suffering that awaited him.

As Vivaldi had on former examinations spoken the truth, which was not believed, he had no chance of escaping present suffering, but by asserting falsehood: in doing so, to avoid such monstrous injustice and cruelty, he might, perhaps, have been justified, had it been certain that such asser-

tion could affect himself alone ; but since he knew that the consequence must extend to others, and, above all, believed that Ellena di Rosalba must be involved in it, he did not hesitate for an instant to dare whatever torture his firmness might provoke. But even if morality could have forgiven falsehood in such extraordinary circumstances as these, policy, after all, would have forbidden it, since a discovery of the artifice would probably have led to the final destruction of the accused person.

Of Ellena's situation he would now have asked, however desperate the question ; would again have asserted her innocence, and supplicated for compassion, even to inquisitors, had he not perceived that, in doing so, he should only furnish them with a more exquisite means of torturing him than any other they could apply ; for if, when all the terrors of his soul concerning her were understood, they should threaten to encrease her sufferings,

as

as the punishment of what was termed his obstinacy, they would, indeed, become the masters of his integrity, as well as of his person.

The tribunal again, and repeatedly, urged Vivaldi to confess himself guilty; and the inquisitor, at length, concluded with saying, that the judges were innocent of whatever consequence might ensue from his obstinacy; so that, if he expired beneath his sufferings, himself only, not they, would have occasioned his death.

“ I am innocent of the charges, which I understand are urged against me,” said Vivaldi, with solemnity; “ I repeat, that I am innocent! If, to escape the horrors of these moments, I could be weak enough to declare myself guilty, not all your racks could alter truth, and make me so, except in that assertion. The consequence of your your tortures, therefore, be upon your own heads !”

While Vivaldi spoke, the vicar-general listened with attention, and, when he

had ceased to speak, appeared to meditate; but the inquisitor was irritated by the boldness of his speech, instead of being convinced by the justness of his representation; and made a signal for the officers to prepare for the *question*. While they were obeying, Vivaldi observed, notwithstanding the agitation he suffered, a person cross the chamber, whom he immediately knew to be the same that had passed him in the avenue of the inquisition on a former night, and whom he had then fancied to be the mysterious stranger of Paluzzi. Vivaldi now fixed his eyes upon him, but his own peculiar situation prevented his feeling the interest he had formerly suffered concerning him.

The figure, air, and stalk, of this person were so striking, and so strongly resembled those of the monk of Paluzzi, that Vivaldi had no longer a doubt as to their identity. He pointed him out to one of the officials, and inquired who he was.

While

While he spoke, the stranger was passing forward, and, before any reply was given, a door leading to the further vaults shut him from view. Vivaldi, however, repeated the inquiry, which the official appeared unable to answer, and a reproof from the tribunal, reminded him that he must not ask questions there. Vivaldi observed that it was the grand inquisitor who spoke, and that the manner of the official immediately changed.

The familiars, who were the same that had conducted Vivaldi into the chamber, having made ready the instrument of torture, approached him, and, after taking off his cloak and vest, bound him with strong cords. They threw over his head the customary black garment, which entirely enveloped his figure, and prevented his observing what was further preparing. In this state of expectation, he was again interrogated by the inquisitor.

“ Was you ever in the church of the Spirito Santo, at Naples ? ” said he.

“ Yes, ”



“ Yes,” replied Vivaldi.

“ Did you ever express there a contempt of the Catholic faith ?”

“ Never,” said Vivaldi.

“ Neither by word or action ?” continued the inquisitor.

“ Never, by either !”

“ Recollect yourself,” added the inquisitor. “ Did you never insult there a minister of our most holy church ?”

Vivaldi was silent : he began to perceive the real nature of the charge which was to be urged against him, and that it was too plausible to permit his escape from the punishment, which is adjudged for heresy. Questions so direct and minute had never yet been put to him ; they had been reserved for a moment when it was believed he could not evade them ; and the real charge had been concealed from him, that he might not be prepared to elude it.

“ Answer !” repeated the inquisitor.—

“ Did you ever insult a minister of the  
Catholic

Catholic faith, in the church of the Spirito Santo, at Naples?"

"Did you not insult him while he was performing an act of holy penance?" said another voice.

Vivaldi started, for he instantly recollected the well-known tones of the monk of Paluzzi. "Who asks the question?" demanded Vivaldi.

"It is you who are to answer here," resumed the inquisitor. "Answer to what I have required."

"I have offended a minister of the church," replied Vivaldi, "but never could intentionally insult our holy religion. You are not acquainted, fathers, with the injuries that provoked——"

"Enough!" interrupted the inquisitor; "speak to the question. Did you not, by insult and menace, force a pious brother to leave unperformed the act of penance, in which he had engaged himself? Did you not compel him to quit the church, and fly for refuge to his convent?"

"No,"

“ No,” replied Vivaldi. “ ’Tis true, he left the church; and that in consequence of my conduct there; but the consequence was not necessary; if he had only replied to my inquiry, or promised to restore her of whom he had treacherously robbed me, he might have remained quietly in the church till this moment, had that depended upon my forbearance.”

“ What!” said the vicar-general, “ would you have compelled him to speak, when he was engaged in silent penance? You confess, that you occasioned him to leave the church. That is enough.”

“ Where did you first see Ellena di Rosalba?” said the voice, which had spoken once before.

“ I demand again, who gives the question,” answered Vivaldi.

“ Recollect yourself,” said the inquisitor, “ a criminal may not make a demand.”

“ I do not perceive the connection between your admonition and your assertion,” observed Vivaldi.

“ You

“ You appear to be rather too much at your ease,” said the inquisitor. “ Answer to the question which was last put to you, or the familiars shall do their duty.”

“ Let the same person ask it,” replied Vivaldi.

The question was repeated in the former voice.

“ In the church of San Lorenzo, at Naples,” rejoined Vivaldi, with a heavy sigh, “ I first beheld Ellena di Rosalba.”

“ Was she then professed ?” asked the vicar-general.

“ She never accepted the veil,” replied Vivaldi, “ nor ever intended to do so.”

“ Where did she reside at that period ?”

“ She lived with a relative at Villa-Altieri, and would yet reside there, had not the machinations of a monk occasioned her to be torn from her home, and confined in a convent, from which I had just assisted to release her, when she was again seized, and upon a charge most false and  
cruel.

cruel.—O reverend fathers! I conjure, I supplicate——” Vivaldi restrained himself, for he was betraying to the inquisitors, all the feelings of his heart.

“The name of the monk?” said the stranger, earnestly.

“If I mistake not,” replied Vivaldi, “you are already acquainted with it. The monk is called father Schedoni. He is of the Dominican convent of the Spirito Santo, in Naples, the same who accuses me of having insulted him in the church of that name.”

“How did you know him for your accuser?” asked the same voice.

“Because he is my only enemy,” replied Vivaldi.

“Your enemy!” observed the inquisitor; “a former deposition says, you were unconscious of having one! You are inconsistent in your replies.”

“You were warned not to visit Villa-Altieri,” said the unknown person. “Why did you not profit by the warning?”

“I was

“ I was warned by yourself,” answered Vivaldi. “ Now I know you well.”

“ By me !” said the stranger, in a solemn tone.

“ By you !” repeated Vivaldi : “ you, who also foretold the death of Signora Bianchi ; and you are that enemy—that father Schedoni, by whom I am accused.”

“ Whence come these questions ?” demanded the vicar-general. “ Who has been authorised thus to interrogate the prisoner ?”

No reply was made. A busy hum of voices from the tribunal succeeded the silence. At length, the murmuring subsided, and the monk’s voice was heard again.

“ I will declare thus much,” it said, addressing Vivaldi ; “ I am not father Schedoni.”

The peculiar tone and emphasis, with which this was delivered, more than the assertion itself, persuaded Vivaldi that  
the

the stranger spoke truth; and, though he still recognized the voice of the monk of Paluzzi, he did not know it to be that of Schedoni. Vivaldi was astonished! He would have torn the veil from his eyes, and once more viewed this mysterious stranger, had his hands been at liberty. As it was, he could only conjure him to reveal his name, and the motives for his former conduct.

“Who is come amongst us?” said the vicar-general, in the voice of a person, who means to inspire others with the awe he himself suffers.

“Who is come amongst us?” he repeated, in a louder tone. Still no answer was returned; but again a confused murmur sounded from the tribunal, and a general consternation seemed to prevail. No person spoke with sufficient pre-eminence to be understood by Vivaldi; something extraordinary appeared to be passing, and he waited the issue with all the patience

tience he could command. Soon after he heard doors opened, and the noise of people quitting the chamber. A deep silence followed; but he was certain that the familiars were still beside him, waiting to begin their work of torture.

After a considerable time had elapsed, Vivaldi heard footsteps advancing, and a person give orders for his release, that he might be carried back to his cell.

When the veil was removed from his eyes, he perceived that the tribunal was dissolved, and that the stranger was gone. The lamps were dying away, and the chamber appeared more gloomily terrific than before.

The familiars conducted him to the spot at which they had received him; whence the officers who had led him thither, guarded him to his prison. There, stretched upon his bed of straw, in solitude and in darkness, he had leisure enough to reflect upon what had passed, and to recollect  
with



with minute exactness every former circumstance connected with the stranger. By comparing those with the present, he endeavoured to draw a more certain conclusion as to the identity of this person, and his motives for the very extraordinary conduct he had pursued. The first appearance of this stranger among the ruins of Paluzzi, when he had said that Vivaldi's steps were watched, and had cautioned him against returning to Villa-Altieri, was recalled to his mind. Vivaldi reconsidered, also, his second appearance on the same spot, and his second warning; the circumstances, which had attended his own adventures within the fortress,—the monk's prediction of Bianchi's death, and his evil tidings respecting Ellena, at the very hour when she had been seized and carried from her home. The longer he considered these several instances, as they were now connected in his mind, with the certainty of Schedoni's evil disposition towards

towards him, the more he was inclined to believe, notwithstanding the voice of seeming truth, which had just affirmed the contrary, that the unknown person was Schedoni himself, and that he had been employed by the Marchesa, to prevent Vivaldi's visits to Villa-Altieri. Being thus an agent in the events of which he had warned Vivaldi, he was too well enabled to predict them. Vivaldi paused upon the remembrance of Signora Bianchi's death; he considered the extraordinary and dubious circumstances that had attended it, and shuddered as a new conjecture crossed his mind.—The thought was too dreadful to be permitted, and he dismissed it instantly.

Of the conversation, however, which he had afterwards held with the Confessor in the Marchesa's cabinet, he recollected many particulars, that served to renew his doubts as to the identity of the stranger; the behaviour of Schedoni when he was  
obliquely

obliquely challenged for the monk of Paluzzi, still appeared that of a man unconscious of disguise; and above all, Vivaldi was struck with the seeming candour of his having pointed out a circumstance, which removed the probability that the stranger was a brother of the *Santa del Pianto*.

Some particulars, also, of the stranger's conduct did not agree with what might have been expected from Schedoni, even though the Confessor had really been Vivaldi's enemy; a circumstance which the latter was no longer permitted to doubt. Nor did those particular circumstances accord, as he was inclined to believe, with the manner of a being of this world; and, when Vivaldi considered the suddenness and mystery with which the stranger had always appeared and retired, he felt disposed to adopt again one of his earliest conjectures, which undoubtedly the horrors of his present abode

disposed

disposed his imagination to admit, as those of his former situation in the vaults of Paluzzi, together with a youthful glow of curiosity concerning the marvellous, had before contributed to impress them upon his mind.

He concluded his present reflections as he had began them—in doubt and perplexity; but at length found a respite from thought and from suffering in sleep.

Midnight had been passed in the vaults of the Inquisition; but it was probably not yet two o'clock, when he was imperfectly awakened by a sound, which he fancied proceeded from within his chamber. He raised himself to discover what had occasioned the noise; it was, however, impossible to discern any object, for all was dark, but he listened for a return of the sound. The wind only was heard moaning among the inner buildings of the prison, and Vivaldi concluded, that his dream had mocked him with a mimic voice.

Satisfied

Satisfied with this conclusion, he again laid his head on his pillow of straw, and soon sunk into a slumber. The subject of his waking thoughts still haunted his imagination, and the stranger, whose voice he had this night recognized as that of the prophet of Paluzzi, appeared before him. Vivaldi, on perceiving the figure of this unknown, felt, perhaps, nearly the same degrees of awe, curiosity, and impatience, that he would have suffered, had he beheld the substance of this shadow. The monk, whose face was still shrouded, he thought advanced, till, having come within a few paces of Vivaldi, he paused, and, lifting the awful cowl that had hitherto concealed him, disclosed—not the countenance of Schedoni, but one which Vivaldi did not recollect ever having seen before! It was not less interesting to curiosity than striking to the feelings. Vivaldi at the first glance shrunk back;—something of that strange and indescribable air, which

we attach to the idea of a supernatural being, prevailed over the features; and the intense and fiery eyes resembled those of an evil spirit rather than of a human character. He drew a poniard from beneath a fold of his garment, and, as he displayed it, pointed with a stern frown to the spots which discoloured the blade; Vivaldi perceived they were of blood! He turned away his eyes in horror, and, when he again looked round in his dream, the figure was gone.

A groan awakened him, but what were his feelings, when, on looking up, he perceived the same figure standing before him! It was not, however, immediately that he could convince himself the appearance was more than the phantom of his dream, strongly impressed upon an alarmed fancy. The voice of the monk, for his face was as usual concealed, recalled Vivaldi from his error; but his emotion cannot easily be conceived, when the stranger,

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slowly lifting that mysterious cowl, discovered to him the same awful countenance, which had characterised the vision in his slumber. Unable to inquire the occasion of this appearance, Vivaldi gazed in astonishment and terror, and did not immediately observe, that, instead of a dagger, the monk held a lamp, which gleamed over every deep furrow of his features, yet left their shadowy markings to hint the passions and the history of an extraordinary life.

“You are spared for this night,” said the stranger, “but for to-morrow”——he paused.

“In the name of all that is most sacred,” said Vivaldi, endeavouring to recollect his thoughts, “who are you, and what is your errand?”

“Ask no questions,” replied the monk, solemnly;—“but answer *me*.”

Vivaldi was struck by the tone with which he said this, and dared not to urge the inquiry at the present moment.

“How

“ How long have you known father Schedoni ?” continued the stranger, “ Where did you first meet ?

“ I have known him about two years, as my mother’s confessor,” replied Vivaldi. “ I first saw him in a corridor of the Vivaldi palace ; it was evening, and he was returning from the Marchesa’s closet.”

“ Are you certain as to this ?” said the monk, with peculiar emphasis. “ It is of consequence that you should be so.”

“ I am certain,” repeated Vivaldi.

“ It is strange,” observed the monk, after a pause, “ that a circumstance, which must have appeared trivial to you at the moment, should have left so strong a mark on your memory ! In two years we have time to forget many things !” He sighed as he spoke.

“ I remember the circumstance,” said Vivaldi, “ because I was struck with his appearance ; the evening was far advanced—it was dusk, and he came upon me suddenly. His voice startled me ; as he passed



he said to himself—"It is for vespers." At the same time I heard the bell of the Spirito Santo."

"Do you know who he is?" resumed the stranger, solemnly.

"I know only what he appears to be," replied Vivaldi.

"Did you never hear any report of his past life?"

"Never," answered Vivaldi.

"Never any thing extraordinary concerning him," added the monk.

Vivaldi paused a moment; for he now recollected the obscure and imperfect story which Paulo had related while they were confined in the dungeon of Paluzzi, respecting a confession made in the church of the Black Penitents; but he could not presume to affirm that it concerned Schedoni. He remembered also the monk's garments, stained with blood, which he had discovered in the vaults of that fort. The conduct of the mysterious being, who  
now

now stood before him, with many other particulars of his own adventures there, passed like a vision over his memory. His mind resembled the glass of a magician, on which the apparitions of long-buried events arise, and, as they fleet away, point portentously to shapes half veiled in the duskiness of futurity. An unusual dread seized upon him; and a superstition, such as he had never before admitted in an equal degree, usurped his judgment. He looked up to the shadowy countenance of the stranger; and almost believed he beheld an inhabitant of the world of spirits.

The monk spoke again, repeating in a severer tone, "Did you never hear any thing extraordinary concerning father Schedoni?"

"Is it reasonable," said Vivaldi, recollecting his courage, "that I should answer the questions, the minute questions, of a person who refuses to tell me even his name?"

“ My name is passed away—it is no more remembered,” replied the stranger, turning from Vivaldi,—“ I leave you to your fate.”

“ What fate ?” asked Vivaldi, “ and what is the purpose of this visit ? I conjure you, in the tremendous name of the Inquisition, to say !”

“ You will know full soon ; have mercy on yourself !”

“ What fate ?” repeated Vivaldi.

“ Urge me no further,” said the stranger ; “ but answer to what I shall demand. Schedoni——”

“ I have told all that I certainly know concerning him,” interrupted Vivaldi, “ the rest is only conjecture.”

“ What is that conjecture ? Does it relate to a confession made in the church of the Black Penitents of the Santa Maria del Pianto ?”

“ It does !” replied Vivaldi with surprise.

“ What

“ What was that confession ?”

“ I know not,” answered Vivaldi.

“ Declare the truth,” said the stranger, sternly.

“ A confession,” replied Vivaldi, “ is sacred, and forever buried in the bosom of the priest to whom it is made. How, then, is it to be supposed, that I can be acquainted with the subject of this ?”

“ Did you never hear, that father Schedoni had been guilty of great crimes, which he endeavours to erase from his conscience by the severity of penance ?”

“ Never !” said Vivaldi.

“ Did you never hear that he had a wife—a brother ?”

“ Never !”

“ Nor the means he used—no hint of—murder, of—”

The stranger paused, as if he wished Vivaldi to fill up his meaning; Vivaldi was silent and aghast.

“ You know nothing then, of Schedoni,”

doni," resumed the monk after a deep pause—"nothing of his past life?"

"Nothing, except what I have mentioned," replied Vivaldi.

"Then listen to what I shall unfold!" continued the monk, with solemnity. "To-morrow night you will be again carried to the place of torture; you will be taken to a chamber beyond that in which you were this night. You will there witness many extraordinary things, of which you have not now any suspicion. Be not dismayed; I shall be there, though, perhaps, not visible."

"Not visible," exclaimed Vivaldi.

"Interrupt me not, but listen.—When you are asked of father Schedoni, say—that he has lived for fifteen years in the disguise of a monk, a member of the Dominicans of the Spirito Santo, at Naples. When you are asked who he is, reply—Ferando Count di Bruno. You will be asked the motive for such disguise. In  
reply

reply to this, refer them to the *Black Penitents* of the Santa Maria del Pianto, near that city; bid the inquisitors summon before their tribunal one father Ansaldo di Rovalli, the grand penitentiary of the society, and command him to divulge the crimes confessed to him in the year 1752, on the evening of the twenty-fourth of April, which was then the vigil of San Marco, in a confessional of the Santa del Pianto."

"It is probable he may have forgotten such confession, at this distance of time," observed Vivaldi.

"Fear not but he will remember," replied the stranger.

"But will his conscience suffer him to betray the secrets of a confession?" said Vivaldi.

"The tribunal command, and his conscience is absolved," answered the monk,

"He may not refuse to obey! You are further to direct your examiners to sum-

mon father Schedoni, to answer for the crimes which Anfaldo shall reveal." The monk paused, and seemed waiting the reply of Vivaldi, who, after a momentary consideration, said,

"How can I do all this, and upon the instigation of a stranger! Neither conscience nor prudence will suffer me to assert what I cannot prove. It is true that I have reason to believe Schedoni is my bitter enemy, but I will not be unjust even to him. I have no proof that he is the Count di Bruno, nor that he is the perpetrator of the crimes you allude to, whatever those may be; and I will not be made an instrument to summon any man before a tribunal, where innocence is no protection from ignominy, and where suspicion alone may inflict death."

"You doubt, then, the truth of what I assert?" said the monk, in a haughty tone.

"Can I believe that of which I have no proof?" replied Vivaldi.

"Yes,

“Yes, there are cases which do not admit of proof; under your peculiar circumstances, this is one of them; you can act only upon assertion. I attest,” continued the monk, raising his hollow voice to a tone of singular solemnity, “I attest the powers which are beyond this earth to witness to the truth of what I have delivered!”

As the stranger uttered this adjuration, Vivaldi observed, with emotion, the extraordinary expression of his eyes: Vivaldi's presence of mind, however, did not forsake him, and, in the next moment, he said, “But who is he that thus attests? It is upon the assertion of a stranger that I am to rely, in defect of proof! It is a stranger who calls upon me to bring solemn charges against a man, of whose guilt I know nothing!”

“You are not required to bring charges, you are only to summon him who will.”

“I should still assist in bringing forward accusations, which may be founded



in error," replied Vivaldi. "If you are convinced of their truth, why do not you summon Anfaldo yourself?"

"I shall do more," said the monk.

"But why not summon also?" urged Vivaldi.

"I shall appear," said the stranger, with emphasis.

Vivaldi, though somewhat awed by the manner, which accompanied these words, still urged his inquiries, "As a witness?" said he.

"Aye, as a dreadful witness!" replied the monk.

"But may not a witness summon persons before the tribunal of the inquisition?" continued Vivaldi, falteringly.

"He may."

"Why then," observed Vivaldi, "am I, a stranger to you, called upon to do that which you could perform yourself?"

"Ask no further," rejoined the monk, "but answer, whether you will deliver the summons?"

"The

“The charges, which must follow,” replied Vivaldi, “appear to be of a nature too solemn to justify my promoting them. I resign the task to you.”

“When I summon,” said the stranger, “you shall obey!”

Vivaldi, again awed by his manner, again justified his refusal, and concluded with repeating his surprize, that he should be required to assist in this mysterious affair, “Since I neither know you, father,” he added, “nor the Penitentiary Anfaldo, whom you bid me admonish to appear.”

“You shall know me hereafter,” said the stranger, frowningly; and he drew from beneath his garment a dagger!

Vivaldi remembered his dream.

“Mark those spots,” said the monk.

Vivaldi looked, and beheld blood!

“This blood, added the stranger, pointing to the blade, “would have saved your’s! Here, at least, is some print of truth! To-morrow night you will meet me in the chambers of death!”

As

As he spoke, he turned away; and, before Vivaldi had recovered from his consternation, the light disappeared. Vivaldi knew that the stranger had quitted the prison, only by the silence which prevailed there.

He remained sunk in thought, till, at the dawn of day, the man, on watch, unfastened the door of his cell, and brought, as usual, a jug of water, and some bread. Vivaldi inquired the name of the stranger who had visited him in the night. The centinel looked surprized, and Vivaldi repeated the question before he could obtain an answer.

“ I have been on guard since the first hour,” said the man, “ and no person, in that time, has passed through this door !”

Vivaldi regarded the centinel with attention, while he made this assertion, and did not perceive in his manner any consciousness of falsehood; yet he knew not how to believe what he had affirmed. “ Did you

you hear no noise, either?" said Vivaldi.  
"Has all been silent during the night?"

"I have heard only the bell of San Dominico strike upon the hour," replied the man, "and the watch word of the centinels."

"This is incomprehensible!" exclaimed Vivaldi, "What! no footsteps, no voice?"

The man smiled contemptuously.—  
"None, but of the centinels," he replied.

"How can you be certain you heard only the centinel's, friend," added Vivaldi.

"They speak only to pass the watchword, and the clash of their arms is heard at the same time."

"But their footsteps!—how are they distinguished from those of other persons?"

"By the heaviness of their tread; our sandals are braced with iron. But why these questions, Signor?"

"You have kept guard at the door of this chamber?" said Vivaldi.

"Yes, Signor."

"And you have not once heard, during the  
the

the whole night, a voice from within it ?”

“ None, Signor.”

“ Fear nothing from discovery, friend ; confess that you have slumbered.”

“ I had a comrade,” replied the centinel, angrily, “ has he, too, slumbered ! and if he had, how could admittance be obtained without our keys ?”

— “ And those might easily have been procured, friend, if you were overcome with sleep. You may rely upon my promise of secrecy.”

“ What !” said the man, “ have I kept guard for three years in the Inquisition, to be suspected by an heretic of neglecting my duty ?”

“ If you were suspected by an heretic,” replied Vivaldi, “ you ought to console yourself by recollecting that his opinions are considered to be erroneous.”

“ We were watchful every minute of the night,” added the centinel, going.

“ This is incomprehensible !” said Vi-

valdi, "By what means could the stranger have entered my prison?"

"Signor, you still dream!" replied the centinel, pausing, "No person has been here."

"*Still* dream!" repeated Vivaldi, "how do you know that I have dreamed at all?" His mind deeply affected by the extraordinary circumstances of the dream, and the yet more extraordinary incident that had followed, Vivaldi gave a meaning to the words of the centinel, which did not belong to them.

"When people sleep, they are apt to dream," replied the man, drily. "I suppose *you* had slept, Signor."

"A person, habited like a monk, came to me in the night," resumed Vivaldi, and he described the appearance of the stranger. The centinel, while he listened, became grave and thoughtful.

"Do you know any person resembling the one I have mentioned," said Vivaldi.

"No!"

“ No !” replied the guard.

“ Though you have not seen him enter my prison,” continued Vivaldi, “ you may, perhaps, recollect such a person, as an inhabitant of the Inquisition.”

“ San Dominico forbid !”

Vivaldi, surprized at this **exclamation**, inquired the reason for it.

“ I know him not,” replied the centinel, with emotion, and he abruptly left the prison. Whatever consideration might occasion this sudden departure, his assertion that he had been for three years a guard of the Inquisition could scarcely be credited, since he had held so long a dialogue with a prisoner, and was, apparently, insensible of the danger he incurred by so doing.

CHAP. VI.

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

SHAKESPEARE.

**AT** about the same hour, as on the preceding night, Vivaldi heard persons approaching his prison, and, the door unfolding, his former conductors appeared. They threw over him the same mantle as before, and, in addition, a black veil, that completely muffled his eyes; after which, they led him from the chamber. Vivaldi heard the door shut, on his departure, and the centinels followed his steps, as if their duty was finished, and he was to return thither no more. At this moment, he remembered the words of the stranger when he had displayed the  
po-



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

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

as

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

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

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

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

His conductors stopped again, and Vivaldi heard the iron rod strike three times upon a door; immediately a strange voice spoke from within, and the door was unclosed. He passed on, and imagined that he was admitted into a spacious

cious vault ; for the air was freer, and his steps sounded to a distance.

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

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

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

"I *know* no more," replied Vivaldi.

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

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

“I do respect it,” said Vivaldi; “and I conjure you to believe that I also respect truth, when I declare, that what I am going to relate, is a report to which I give no confidence, and concerning even the probability of which I cannot produce the smallest proof.”

“Respect truth!” said another voice from the tribunal, and Vivaldi fancied he distinguished the tones of the monk. He paused a moment, and the exhortation was repeated. Vivaldi then related what the stranger had said concerning the family of Schedoni, and the disguise which the father had assumed in the convent of the Spirito Santo; but forbore even to name the penitentiary Anfaldo, and any circumstance connected with the extraordinary confession. Vivaldi concluded, with again declaring, that he  
had

had not sufficient authority to justify a belief in those reports.

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

Vivaldi was silent.

“ On what authority ?” inquired the inquisitor.

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

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

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

“ It is unknown, even to myself !” answered Vivaldi.

“ Do not equivocate !” said the vicar-general.

“ I solemnly protest,” rejoined Vivaldi, “ that I know not either the name

or the condition of my informer, and that I never even beheld his face, till the period when he spoke of father Schedoni."

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

"You did well to say, that you had something extraordinary to add," observed the inquisitor. "'Tis evident, also, that you expected something extraordinary from your judges, since you supposed they would credit these assertions."

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

"Why do you not summon father Anfaldo!" said the voice. "Remember my words!"

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

"My

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

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

“ Whose voice ?” said the vicar-general.

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

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

“ Not any person is now beside you, except the familiars,” said the inquisitor, “ and they wait to do their office, if you shall refuse to answer the questions put to you.”

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

The tribunal, after a long private consultation, granted the request ; the veil



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

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

Without awaiting the order of the tribunal, the familiars immediately covered Vivaldi's face with the veil, and he felt  
him-

himself again in their grasp. He endeavoured, however, to disentangle his hands, and, at length, shook these men from their hold, and again unveiled his eyes; but the familiars were instantly ordered to replace the veil.

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

“ If you expect that I should say more,” replied Vivaldi, “ I claim, at least, protection from the unbidden violence of the men who guard me. If they are suffered, at their pleasure, to sport with the misery of their prisoner, I will be inflexibly silent; and, since I must suffer, it shall be according to the laws of the tribunal.”

The vicar-general, or, as he is called, the grand inquisitor, promised Vivaldi

the degree of protection he claimed, and demanded, at the same time, what were the words he had just heard.

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

These assertions seemed to throw the tribunal into new perplexity. Vivaldi  
heard

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

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

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

“Pardon me, I do not forget,” replied Vivaldi; “and I request it may be

remembered that I am not acquainted with that person. If, therefore, he had given me any account of Anfaldo, I could not have relied upon its authenticity." Vivaldi again required of the tribunal to understand that he did not summon Anfaldo, or any other person, before them, but had merely obeyed their command, to repeat what the stranger had said.

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

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

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

"I am certain," replied Vivaldi, with firmness.

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

"Where are those persons now?" demanded Vivaldi.

"They are dispersed; alarmed at your accusation."

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

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

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

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

It was ordered that a lamp should be lowered from the roof, and that the strangers should arrange themselves on either side of Vivaldi. When this was done,  
and

and he glanced his eyes again upon the crowd, "He is not here!" said Vivaldi; "not one of these countenances resembles the monk of Paluzzi. Yet, stay; who is he that stands in the shade behind those persons on the left? Bid him lift his cowl!"

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

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

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

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

"I, Vincentio di Vivaldi," replied the prisoner, "I claim the privilege that has



been awarded me, and bid you unveil your countenance."

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

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

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

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

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

The

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

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

“It appears, then, that you *have* formerly seen the face of your informer!”

“I have already declared so,” replied Vivaldi.

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

“Last

“Last night, and in my prison,” answered Vivaldi.

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

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

“He dreams still!” observed an inquisitor. “Holy fathers! he abuses your patience, and the frenzy of terror has deluded his credulity. We neglect the moments.”

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

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

“It

“ It is ourself,” answered the Inquisitor.

After a short conversation among the members of the tribunal, the grand inquisitor gave orders that the centinels, who had watched on the preceding night at the prison door of Vivaldi, should be brought into the hall of justice. The persons, who had been lately summoned into the chamber, were now bidden to withdraw, and all further examination was suspended till the arrival of the centinels; Vivaldi heard only the low voices of the inquisitors, as they conversed privately together, and he remained silent, thoughtful, and amazed.

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

The doubts, however, which were admitted, as to the integrity of these men, did not contribute to dissipate those, which had prevailed over the opposite side of the question. On the contrary, the suspicions of the tribunal, augmenting with their perplexity, seemed to fluctuate equally over every point of the subject before them, till, instead of throwing any light upon the truth, they only served to involve the whole in deeper obscurity. More doubtful than before of the honesty of Vivaldi's extraordinary assertions, the grand inquisitor informed him, that if, after further inquiry into this affair, it should appear he had been trifling with  
the

the credulity of his judges, he would be severely punished for his audacity; but that, on the other hand, should there be reason to believe that the centinels had failed in their duty, and that some person had entered his prison, during the night, the tribunal would proceed in a different manner.

Vivaldi, perceiving that, to be believed, it was necessary he should be more circumstantial, described, with exactness, the person and appearance of the monk, without, however, mentioning the poniard which had been exhibited. A profound silence reigned in the chamber, while he spoke; it seemed a silence not merely of attention, but of astonishment. Vivaldi himself was awed, and when he had concluded, almost expected to hear the voice of the monk uttering defiance, or threatening vengeance; but all remained hushed, till the inquisitor, who had first examined him, said, in a solemn tone.

“ We

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

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

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

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

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



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

CHAP. VII.

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

CARACTACUS.

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

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

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

How

How little did Vivaldi foresee, that in repeating to the tribunal the stranger's summons of father Schedoni, he was deferring, or, perhaps, wholly preventing his own marriage with Ellena di Rosalba! How little, also, did he apprehend what would be the further consequences of a disclosure, which the peculiar circumstances of his situation had hardly permitted him to withhold, though, could he have understood the probable event of it, he would have braved all the terrors of the tribunal, and death itself, rather than incur the remorse of having promoted it.

The motive for his arrestation was concealed from Schedoni, who had not the remotest suspicion of its nature, but attributed the arrest to a discovery which the tribunal had made of his being the accuser of Vivaldi. This disclosure he judged to be the consequence of his own imprudence, in having stated, as an instance of Vivaldi's  
contempt

contempt for the Catholic faith, that he had insulted a priest while doing penance in the church of the Spirito Santo. But by what art the tribunal had discovered that he was the priest alluded to, and the author of the accusation, Schedoni could by no means conjecture. He was willing to believe that this arrest was only for the purpose of obtaining proof of Vivaldi's guilt; and the Confessor knew that he could so conduct himself in evidence, as in all probability to exculpate the prisoner, from whom, when he should explain himself, no resentment on account of his former conduct was to be apprehended. Yet Schedoni was not perfectly at ease; for it was possible that a knowledge of Vivaldi's situation, and of the author of it, had reached his family, and had produced his own arrest. On this head, however, his fears were not powerful; since, the longer he dwelt upon the subject, the more improbable it appeared that such a disclosure, at

at least so far as it related to himself, could have been affected.

Vivaldi, from the night of his late examination, was not called upon, till Schedoni and father Anfaldo appeared together in the hall of the tribunal. The two latter had already been separately examined, and Anfaldo had privately stated the particulars of the confession he had received on the vigil of San Marco, in the year 1752, for which disclosure he had received formal absolution. What had passed at that examination does not appear, but on this his second interrogation, he was required to repeat the subject and the circumstances of the confession. This was probably with a view of observing its effect upon Schedoni and on Vivaldi, which would direct the opinion of the tribunal as to the guilt of the Confessor, and the veracity of the young prisoner.

On this night a very exact inquiry was made, concerning every person, who had

obtained admission into the hall of justice; such officials as were not immediately necessary to assist in the ceremonies of the tribunal were excluded, together with every other person belonging to the Inquisition not material to the evidence, or to the judges. When this scrutiny was over, the prisoners were brought in, and their conductors ordered to withdraw. A silence of some moments prevailed in the hall; and, however different might be the reflections of the several prisoners, the degree of anxious expectation was in each, probably, nearly the same.

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

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

Schedoni

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

The penitentiary Anfaldo was next called upon. Vivaldi observed that he faltered as he advanced; and that his obeisance to the tribunal was more profound than Schedoni's had been. Vivaldi himself was then summoned; his air was calm and dignified, and his countenance expressed the solemn energy of his feelings, but nothing of dejection.

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

The grand-vicar himself opened the examination, "You, father Schedoni, of the Spirito Santo," he said, "answer and say, whether the person who now stands before you, bearing the title of grand-



penitentiary of the order of the *Black Penitents*, and presiding over the convent of the *Santa Maria del Pianto* at Naples, is known to you.

To this requisition Schedoni replied with firmness in the negative.

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

“ Never ! ” said Schedoni.

“ Let the oath be administered, ” added the grand-vicar. Schedoni having accepted it ; the same questions were put to Anfaldo concerning the Confessor, when, to the astonishment of Vivaldi and of the reater part of the court, the penitentiary denied all knowledge of Schedoni. His negative was given, however, in a less decisive manner than that of the Confessor, and when the usual oath was offered, Anfaldo declined to accept it.

Vivaldi was next called upon to identify Schedoni : he declared, that the person who was then pointed out to him, he had  
never

never known by any other denomination than that of father Schedoni; and that he had always understood him to be a monk of the Spirito Santo; but Vivaldi was at the same time careful to repeat, that he knew nothing further relative to his life.

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

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

After he had taken the customary oaths to relate neither more nor less than the

truth of what had passed before him, Anfaldo's depositions were written down nearly in the following words; to which Vivaldi listened with almost trembling attention, for, besides the curiosity which some previous circumstances had excited respecting them, he believed that his own fate in a great measure depended upon a discovery of the fact to which they led. What, if he had surmised how much! and that the person, whom he had been in some degree instrumental in citing before this tremendous tribunal, was the father of his Ellena di Rosalba!

Anfaldo, having again answered to his name and titles, gave his deposition as follows:

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

Vivaldi

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

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

"Be brief, holy father," said the inquisitor who had formerly been most active in examining Vivaldi; "speak closely to the point."

"The groans would sometimes cease," resumed Ansaldo, "and long pauses of silence follow; they were those of a soul

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

“Facts!” said the inquisitor, “these are only surmises.”

“Facts will come full soon!” replied Anfaldo, and bowed his head, “the mention of them will petrify you, holy fathers! as they did me, though not for the same reasons. While I endeavoured to encourage the penitent, and assured him, that absolution should follow the acknowledgment of his crimes, however heinous those crimes

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

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

"His face," continued the penitentiary, "I did not see; he was, with good reason, careful to conceal it; other resemblance, therefore, than the stature, I cannot point out between them. The voice, indeed, the voice of the penitent, I think I shall never forget; I should know it again at any distance of time."

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

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

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

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

Father Anfaldo paused, and was somewhat agitated ; he seemed endeavouring to re-collect courage to go through with  
what

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

“ I have been through life,” said the penitent, “ the slave of my passions, and they have led me into horrible excesses. I had once a brother.”—He stopped, and deep groans again told the agony of his soul ;



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

Ansaldo appeared affected by the remembrance, and was for a moment silent.

At

At the last words Vivaldi had particularly noticed Schedoni, that he might judge by their effect upon him, whether he was guilty ; but he remained in his former attitude, and his eyes were still fixed upon the ground.

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

“ I was silent,” said Anfaldo ; “ but at length I bade the penitent go on. ‘ I contrived, said he, that my brother should die at a distance from home, and I so conducted the affair, that his widow never suspected the cause of his death. It was not till long after the usual time of mourning had expired, that I ventured to solicit her hand : but she had not yet forgotten my brother, and she rejected me. My passion would no longer be trifled with. I caused her to be carried from her house, and she was afterwards willing to retrieve her honour by the marriage vow. I had sacrificed my conscience, without having  
found

found happiness;—she did not even condescend to conceal her disdain. Mortified, exasperated by her conduct, I began to suspect that some other emotion than resentment occasioned this disdain; and last of all jealousy—jealousy came to crown my misery—to light up all my passions into madness!

“The penitent,” added Anfaldo, “appeared by the manner in which he uttered this to be nearly frantic at the moment, and convulsive sobs soon stifled his words. When he resumed his confession, he said, ‘I soon found an object for my jealousy. Among the few persons, who visited us in the retirement of our country residence, was a gentleman, who, I fancied, loved my wife; I fancied too, that, whenever he appeared, an air of particular satisfaction was visible on her countenance. She seemed to have pleasure in conversing with, and shewing him distinction. I even sometimes thought she had pride in displaying

playing to me the preference she entertained for him, and that an air of triumph, and even of scorn, was addressed to me, whenever she mentioned his name. Perhaps, I mistook resentment for love, and she only wished to punish me, by exciting my jealousy. Fatal error! she punished herself also!"

"Be less circumstantial, father," said the inquisitor.

Ansaldo bowed his head, and proceeded.

'One evening,' continued the penitent, 'that I returned home unexpectedly, I was told that a visitor was with my wife! As I approached the apartment where they sat, I heard the voice of Sacchi; it seemed mournful and supplicating. I stopped to listen, and distinguished enough to fire me with vengeance. I restrained myself, however, so far as to step softly to a lattice that opened from the passage, and overlooked the apartment. The traitor was on his knee before her. Whether she had heard

heard my step, or observed my face, through the high lattice, or that she repented his conduct, I know not, but she rose immediately from her chair. I did not pause to question her motive; but, seizing my filetto, I rushed into the room, with an intent to strike it to the villain's heart. The supposed affassin of my honour escaped into the garden, and was heard of no more."—But your wife? said I. 'Her bosom received the poniard!' replied the penitent."

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

"Was she innocent?" said a voice; and Vivaldi, whose attention had latterly been

been

been fixed upon Anfaldo, now, on looking at Schedoni, perceived that it was he who had spoken. At the sound of his voice, the penitentiary turned instantly towards him. There was a pause of general silence, during which Anfaldo's eyes were earnestly fixed upon the accused. At length, he spoke, "She was innocent!" he replied, with solemn emphasis, "She was most virtuous!"

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

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

"I think it was," replied Anfaldo: "but I cannot swear to that."

"What

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

“ On this discovery of the murderer,” said the penitentiary, “ I quitted the confessional, and my senses forsook me before I could deliver orders for the detection of the affassin. When I recovered, it was too late ; he had escaped ! From that hour to the present, I have never seen him, nor dare I affirm that the person now before me is he.”

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

Anfaldo again looked at Schedoni, with a scrutinizing eye ; he fixed it long ; but  
the

the countenance of Schedoni suffered no change.

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

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

The tribunal was profoundly silent, but surprize, and a kind of restless expectation,



tion, marked every brow. Vivaldi was about to exclaim, "That is my informer!" when the voice of the stranger checked him.

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

Schedoni gave no reply.

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

"Know thee!" uttered Schedoni, faintly.

"Dost thou know this?" cried the stranger, raising his voice as he drew from his garment what appeared to be a dagger. "Dost thou know these indelible stains?" said he, lifting the poniard, and, with an outstretched arm, pointing it towards Schedoni.

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

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

Sche-

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

The consternation was now general ; the extraordinary appearance and conduct of the stranger seemed to strike the greater part of the tribunal, a tribunal of the inquisition itself ! with dismay. Several of the members rose from their seats ; others called aloud for the officials, who kept guard at the doors of the hall, and inquired who had admitted the stranger, while the vicar-general and a few inquisitors, conversed privately together, during which they frequently looked at the stranger and at Schedoni, as if they were the subjects of the discourse. Meanwhile the monk remained with the dagger in his grasp, and his eyes fixed on the Confessor, whose face was still averted, and who yet supported himself against the pillar.

At length, the vicar-general called upon the members who had arisen to return to  
4 their

their seats, and ordered that the officials should withdraw to their posts.

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

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

Vivaldi, who, during the tumult, had ineffectually endeavoured to make himself heard, now profited by the pause which followed the assent of the inquisitors to claim attention : but the instant he spoke several members impatiently bade that the examination should proceed, and the grand-vicar was again obliged to command silence, before the request of Vivaldi could be understood. Permission to speak being granted him,

“ That

“That person,” said he, pointing to the stranger, “is the same who visited me in my prison; and the dagger the same he then displayed! It was he, who commanded me to summon the penitentiary Ansaldo and the father Schedoni. I have acquitted myself, and have nothing further to do in this struggle.”

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

“Holy fathers! the stranger who is now before you is an impostor! I will prove that my accuser was once my friend;—you may perceive how much the discovery of his perfidy affects me. The  
charge

charge he brings is most false and malicious !”

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

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

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

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

“ Holy

“ Holy fathers ! ” said he, “ suffer me to defend myself . ”

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

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

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

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

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

The penitentiary observed the stranger with deep attention, and then repeated his assertion.

“Have you never seen him before?” said an inquisitor.

“Never, to my knowledge!” replied Anfaldo.

The inquisitors looked upon each other in silence.

“He speaks the truth, said the stranger.

This extraordinary fact did not fail to strike the tribunal, and to astonish Vivaldi. Since the accuser confirmed it, Vivaldi was at a loss to understand the means, by which he could have become acquainted with the guilt of Schedoni, who, it was not to be supposed, would have acknowledged crimes of such magnitude as those contained in the accusation to any person, except, indeed, to his confessor, and this confessor, it appeared, was so far from having betrayed his

his trust to the accuser, that he did not even know him. Vivaldi was no less perplexed as to what would be the nature of the testimony, with which the accuser designed to support his charges: but the pause of general amazement, which had permitted Vivaldi these considerations, was now at an end; the tribunal resumed the examination, and the grand inquisitor called aloud,

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

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

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



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

“ This,” observed the grand inquisitor, “ might have been accomplished by fair and open accusation. If you had known the charge to be just, it is probable that you would have appealed directly to this tribunal, instead of endeavouring insidiously to obtain an influence over the mind of a prisoner, and urging him to become the instrument of bringing the accused to punishment.”

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

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

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

To this remark the monk made no reply; but Schedoni, with reviving spirit, urged

urged the circumstance, in evidence of the malignity and falsehood of the accuser.

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

“ Why should I fear thee ? ” answered Schedoni.

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

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

To the last exhortation of the monk, Schedoni was silent. Vivaldi observed, that, during this short dialogue, the Confessor had never once turned his eyes towards the stranger, but apparently avoided him as an object too affecting to be looked upon. He judged, from this circumstance, and from some other appearances in his conduct, that Schedoni was guilty ; yet the consciousness of guilt alone did not perfectly account, he

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thought,

thought, for the strong emotions with which he avoided the sight of his accuser—unless, indeed, he knew that accuser to have been, not only an accomplice in his crime, but the actual assassin. In this case it appeared natural even for the stern and subtle Schedoni to betray his horror on beholding the person of the murderer, with the very instrument of crime in his grasp. On the other hand, Vivaldi could not but perceive it to be highly improbable, that the very man who had really committed the deed should come voluntarily into a court of justice for the purpose of accusing his employer; that he should dare publicly to accuse him, whose guilt, however enormous, was not more so than his own.

The extraordinary manner also, in which the accuser had proceeded in the commencement of the affair, engaged Vivaldi's consideration; his apparent reluctance

tance to be seen in this process, and the artful and mysterious plan, by which he had caused Schedoni to be summoned before the tribunal, and had endeavoured that he should be there accused by Ansaldo, indicated, at least to Vivaldi's apprehension, the fearfulness of guilt, and, still more, that malice, and a thirst of vengeance, had instigated his conduct in the prosecution. If the stranger had been actuated only by a love of justice, it appeared that he would not have proceeded towards it in a way thus dark and circuitous, but have fought it by the usual process, and have produced the proofs, which he even now asserted he possessed, of Schedoni's crimes. In addition to the circumstances, which seemed to strengthen a supposition of the guiltlessness of Schedoni, was that of the accuser's avoiding to acknowledge who he was, and whence he came. But Vivaldi paused again upon this point; it appeared to be inexplicable,

and he could not imagine why the accuser had adopted a style of secrecy, which, if he persisted in it, must probably defeat the very purpose of the accusation; for Vivaldi did not believe that the tribunal would condemn a prisoner upon the testimony of a person, who, when called upon, should publicly refuse to reveal himself even to them. Yet the accuser must certainly have considered this circumstance before he ventured into court; notwithstanding which, he had appeared!

These reflections led Vivaldi to various conjectures relative to the visit he had himself received from the monk, the dream that had preceded it, the extraordinary means, by which he had obtained admittance to the prison, the declaration of the centinels, that not any person had passed the door, and many other unaccountable particulars; and, while Vivaldi now looked upon the wild physiognomy of the stranger, he almost fancied, as he had

had formerly done, that he beheld something not of this earth.

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

When the tribunal had, at length, finally determined on the method of their proceedings, Schedoni was first called upon, and examined as to his knowledge of the accuser. It was the same inquisi-

tor, who had formerly interrogated Vivaldi, that now spoke. "You, father Schedoni, a monk of the Spirito Santo convent, at Naples, otherwise Ferando Count di Bruno, answer to the questions, which shall be put to you. Do you know the name of this man, who now appears as your accuser?"

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

"What is his condition?"

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

"Where have you seen him?"

"In the city of Naples, where he has resided, during some years, beneath the same roof with me, when I was of the convent of San Angiolo, and since that time, in the Spirito Santo."

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

"I have,"

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

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

The wary Schedoni was not entrapped by this observation.

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

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

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

“ Explain,” said the stranger, solemnly.

Schedoni hesitated; some sudden consideration seemed to occasion him perplexity.



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

“ Of sympathy! of friendship!” said the grand-vicar. “ Are we to believe that a man, who brings false accusation of so dreadful a nature as the one now before us, is capable of bestowing the consolations of sympathy and of friendship? You must either acknowledge, that services of a less disinterested nature won  
your

your promises of reward; or we must conclude that your accuser's charge is just. Your assertions are inconsistent, and your explanation too trivial, to deceive for a moment."

"I have declared the truth," said Schedoni, haughtily.

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

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

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

Schedoni was still silent.

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

Sche-

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

“ I have nothing to reply,” said the stranger, with malicious triumph; “ the accused has replied for me !”

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

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

Vivaldi listened with emotion.

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

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

The rejoinder of the inquisitor was delivered in so low a tone, that Vivaldi could

could not understand it. He was perplexed to interpret the answer given to the appeal of the stranger. He thought that the inquisitor would not have ventured an assertion thus positive, if his opinion had been drawn from inference only; and that he should know the accuser, while he was conducting himself towards him as a stranger, amazed Vivaldi, no less than if he had understood the character of an inquisitor to be as artless as his own. On the other hand, he had so frequently seen the stranger at Paluzzi, and in the habit of a monk, that he could hardly question the assertion of Schedoni, as to his identity.

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

"A ser-

“ A servant of the Inquisition ! ” exclaimed Schedoni, with unaffected surprize. “ Reverend father ! your assertion astonishes me ! You are deceived, however strange it may appear, trust me, you are deceived ! You doubt the credit of my word ; I, therefore, will assert no more. But inquire of Signor Vivaldi ; ask him, whether he has not often, and lately, seen my accuser at Naples, and in the habit of a monk.”

“ I have seen him at the ruins of Paluzzi, near Naples, and in the ecclesiastical dress,” replied Vivaldi, without waiting for the regular question, “ and under circumstances no less extraordinary than those, which have attended him here. But, in return for this frank acknowledgement, I require of you, father Schedoni, to answer some questions, which I shall venture to suggest to the tribunal— By what means were you informed that I have often seen the stranger at Paluzzi—  
and

and was you interested or not in his mysterious conduct towards me there?"

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

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

The inquisitor objected, that this did not certainly appear; and that, on the contrary, Schedoni seemed to have given his last questions in despair; an observation which Vivaldi thought extraordinary from an inquisitor.

"Be it *accomplices*, if it so please you," said Schedoni, bowing to the grand vicar, without noticing the inquisitor; "you may call us accomplices, but I say, that we were *friends*. Since it is necessary to my own peace, that I should more fully explain some circumstances attending our intimacy, I will own that my accuser was occasionally my agent,  
and

and assisted in preserving the dignity of an illustrious family at Naples, the family of the Vivaldi. And there, holy father," added Schedoni, pointing to Vincentio, "is the son of that ancient house, for whom I have attempted so much!"

Vivaldi was almost overwhelmed by this confession of Schedoni, though he had already suspected a part of the truth. In the stranger he believed he saw the slanderer of Ellena, the base instrument of the Marchesa's policy, and of Schedoni's ambition; and the whole of his conduct at Paluzzi, at least, seemed now intelligible. In Schedoni he beheld his secret accuser, and the inexorable enemy, whom he believed to have occasioned the imprisonment of Ellena. At this latter consideration, all circumspection, all prudence forsook him: he declared, with energy, that, from what Schedoni had just acknowledged to be his conduct, he knew him for his secret accuser, and the

ac-



accuser also of Ellena di Rosalba; and he called upon the tribunal to examine into the Confessor's motives for the accusation, and afterwards to give hearing to what he would himself unfold.

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

The inquisitor, addressing Schedoni, said, "The disinterested nature of your friendship is now sufficiently explained, and the degree of credit, which is due to your late assertions understood. Of you we ask no more, but turn to father Nicola di Zampari, and demand what he has to say in support of his accusation. What are your proofs, Nicola di Zampari, that he who calls himself father Schedoni is Ferando Count di Bruno; and that he has been guilty of murder, the murder of his brother, and of his wife? Answer to our charge!"

“ To

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

“ Still, these are not proofs, but assertions,” observed the vicar-general, “ and the first forbids our confidence in the second.—If, as you declare, Schedoni himself acknowledged to you that he was Count di Bruno, you must have been to him the intimate friend he has declared you were, or he would not have confided to you a secret so dangerous to himself. And, if you were that friend, what confidence ought we to give to your assertions respecting the dagger? Since, whether your accusations be true or false, you prove yourself guilty of treachery in bringing them forward at all.”

Vivaldi

Vivaldi was surprized to hear such candour from an inquisitor.

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

The vicar-general spoke again, “ Nicola di Zampari, I call upon you to say, why, if your proof of Schedoni’s guilt is so clear, as the confession of the assassins himself must make it,—why you thought it necessary to summon father Anfaldo to attest the criminality of the Count di Bruno? The dying confession of the assassins is certainly

tainly of more weight than any other evidence."

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

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

" Conscientiously observed!" said the vicar-general, interrupting the stranger, who was about to reply, " but you, Nicola di Zampari, have not on his head been sufficiently explicit.—How do you know that Schedoni is the penitent who confessed to Anfaldo on the vigil of San Marco?"

" Reverend father, that is the point I was about to explain," replied the monk.

“ I my-

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

“ Here is no proof,” said the vicar-general, “ other friars of that order might confess at the same hour, in the same church.”

“ But

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

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

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

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

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

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

had

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

“ Did he, then, confess to you also ? ” said the Vicar-general.

“ No, father. I understood him to be the penitent to whom the report alluded, but I had no suspicion of the nature of his crimes,



crimes, till the affaffin began his confession, the conclusion of which clearly explained the subject of Schedoni's; it explained also his motive for endeavouring ever after to attach me to his interest."

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

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

The vicar-general, with some surprise, looked at the inquisitor for explanation;  
other

other members of the tribunal did the same; the rest appeared to understand more than they had thought it necessary to avow. The inquisitor, who had been called upon, rose, and replied,

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

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

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

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

“ I will

“ I will explain all there,” answered the inquisitor.

“ It appears then,” resumed the vicar-general, speaking aloud, “ that this Nicola di Zampari was formerly the friend and confident of father Schedoni, whom he now accuses. The accusation is evidently malicious ; whether it be also false, remains to be decided. A material question naturally arises out of the subject—Why was not the accusation brought forward before this period ?”

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

“ Most holy father ! as soon as I ascertained the crime, I prepared to prosecute the perpetrator of it. A short period only has elapsed since the assassin gave his confession. In this interval I discovered, in these prisons, Signor Vivaldi, and immediately comprehended by whose means he was confined. I knew enough both of  
the

the accuser and the accused, to understand which of these was innocent, and had then a double motive for causing Schedoni to be summoned ;—I wished equally to deliver the innocent and to punish the criminal. The question as to the motive for my becoming the enemy of him, who was once my friend, is already answered ;—it was a sense of justice, not a suggestion of malice.”

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

Should Schedoni be acquitted of the charge of having murdered his brother, documents might appear for prosecuting him respecting the death of his wife.

Schedoni, when he withdrew from the hall, bowed respectfully to the tribunal, and whether, notwithstanding late appearances, he were innocent, or that subtlety enabled him to reassume his usual address, it is certain his manner no longer betrayed any symptom of conscious guilt. His countenance was firm and even tranquil, and his air dignified. Vivaldi, who during the greater part of this examination, had been convinced of his criminality, now only doubted his innocence. Vivaldi was himself reconducted to his prison, and the sitting of the tribunal was dissolved.

CHAP.

CH A P. VIII.

“ The time shall come when Glo’ster’s heart shall  
bleed  
In life’s last hours with horror of the deed ;  
When dreary visions shall at last present  
Thy vengeful image.”———

COLLINS.

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

whether inquisitor, official, witness, or prisoner, was habited in the same dismal hue, which, together with the kind of light diffused through the chamber from lamps hung high in the vaulted roof, and from torches held by parties of officials who kept watch at the several doors, and in different parts of this immense hall, gave a character of gloomy solemnity to the assembly, which was almost horrid.

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

tured by passions of dark malignity, or fiercer cruelty; and Vivaldi could not bear even to examine them long.

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

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



The witnesses being called over, Vivaldi understood that he was placed among them, though he had only repeated the words which father Nicola had spoken, and which, since Nicola himself was present as a witness against Schedoni, he did not perceive could be in the least material on the trial.

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

Vivaldi,

Vivaldi, as much affected by this meeting as Paulo, could not immediately speak. He would, however, have raised and embraced his affectionate servant, but Paulo, still clinging to his knees and sobbing, was so much agitated that he scarcely understood any thing said to him, and to the kind assurances and gentle remonstrances of Vivaldi, constantly replied as if to the officers, whom he fancied to be forcing him away.

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

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

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

Paulo looked up, and again bursting into a passion of tears, repeated, “O! my master! my master! where have you been  
all

all this while? are you indeed alive? I thought I never should see you again! I have dreamt an hundred times that you were dead and buried! and I wished to be dead and buried with you. I thought you was gone out of this world into the next. I feared you was gone to heaven, and so believed we should never meet again. But now, I see you once more, and know that you live! O! my master! my master!"

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

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

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

"It

“ It is impossible,” replied an officer, “ we dare not.”

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

“ Not speak to you, master !” exclaimed Paulo, “ but I will stay by you, and speak to you as long as I like, till my last gasp. Let them do their worst at once ; I defy them all, and all the devils of inquisitors at their heels too, to force me away. I can die but once, and they ought to be satisfied with that,—so what is there to be afraid of ? Not speak !”

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

“ A whisper !” said an officer sneeringly, “ do you suppose Signor, that any person

person is suffered to speak in a whisper here?"

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

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

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

once in their lives, however, they shall hear"——

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

“*I entreat,*” said Vivaldi.

Paulo stopped for a moment.

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

“Love my master!” said Paulo resentfully, without allowing Vivaldi to finish his sentence, “Have I not gone through fire and water for him? or, what is as good, have I not put myself into the Inquisition, and all on his account? and  
now

now to be asked, ' Do I love my master !' If you believe, Signor, that any thing else made me come here, into these dismal holes, you are quite entirely out : and when they have made an end of me, as I suppose they will do, before all is over, you will, perhaps, think better of me than to suspect that I came here for my own pleasure."

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

" *Entreat* me !" said Paulo, " O my master ! what have I done that it should come to this ? *Entreat* me !" he repeated, sobbing.

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

" Do not use such a heart-breaking word again, master," replied Paulo, while  
he

he dashed the tears from his cheek, "such a heart-breaking word, and I will do any thing."

"You submit to what I require then, Paulo?"

"Aye, Signor, if—if it is even to kneel at the feet of that devil of an inquisitor, yonder."

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

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

"Not a syllable! Paulo," interrupted Vivaldi.

"Only just say, master"——

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

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

"What!"



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

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

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

At length, after much difficulty, a sort of compromise was made, and Paulo being soothed by his master into some degree of compliance, was suffered to remain within a short distance of him.

The

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

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

It

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

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

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

doni, terming the necessary prudence of di Bruno to be meanness and cold insensibility to the comfort of others, suffered full as much resentment towards him from system as he did from passion, though the meanness and the insensibility he imagined in his brother's character were not only real traits in his own, but were displaying themselves in the very arguments he urged against them.

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

shore of the Adriatic, and, with a certain stipend, to reside there. The ruinous dwelling, to which Ellena had been carried, as its solitary situation suited Schedoni's views, was taken for him.

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

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

Schedoni contrived a plausible history of the shipwreck of his brother upon the Adriatic, and of the loss of the whole crew; and, as no persons but the assassins were acquainted with the real cause of his death, the guide, who had fled, and the people at the only town he had passed through, since he landed, being ignorant

norant even of the name of di Bruno, there was not any circumstance to contradict the falsehood. It was universally credited, and even the widow of the Count had, perhaps, never doubted its truth; or if, after her compelled marriage with Schedoni, his conduct did awaken a suspicion, it was too vague to produce any serious consequence.

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

The account which Spalatro had given of his motive for this journey to the priest was, that, having lately understood Schedoni to be resident at Rome, he had followed him thither, with an intention of



relieving his conscience by an acknowledgment of his own crimes, and a disclosure of Schedoni's. This, however, was not exactly the fact. The design of Spalatro was to extort money from the guilty Confessor; a design, from which the latter believed he had protected himself, as well as from every other evil consequence, when he misled his late accomplice respecting his place of residence; little foreseeing that the very artifice which should send this man in search of him to Rome, instead of Naples, would be the means of bringing his crimes before the public.

Spalatro had followed the steps of Schedoni as far as the town at which he slept, on the first night of his journey; and, having there passed him, had reached the villa di Cambrusca, when, perceiving the Confessor approaching, he had taken shelter from observation, within the ruin. The motive, which before made him shrink

shrink from notice, had contributed, and still did so, to a suspicion that he aimed at the life of Schedoni, who, in wounding him, believed he had saved himself from an assassin. The wounds, however, of Spalatro did not so much disable him, but that he proceeded towards Rome from the town whence the parting road had conducted his master to Naples.

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

might punish a man, from whose repeated promises he had received only severe disappointments.

Schedoni now perceived that all his designs against Spalatro had failed, and he had meditated more than have yet been fully disclosed. It may be remembered, that on parting with the peasant, his conductor, the Confessor, gave him a stiletto to defend him, as he said, from the attack of Spalatro, in case of encountering him on the road. The point of this instrument was tipped with poison; so that a scratch from it was sufficient to inflict death. Schedoni had for many years secretly carried about him such an envenomed instrument, for reasons known only to himself. He had hoped, that, should the peasant meet Spalatro, and be provoked to defend himself, this stiletto would terminate the life of his accomplice, and relieve him from all probability of discovery, since the other assassin  
whom

whom he employed had been dead several years. The expedient failed in every respect; the peasant did not even see Spalatro; and, before he reached his home, he luckily lost the fatal filetto, which, as he had discovered himself to be acquainted with some circumstances connected with the crimes of Schedoni, the Confessor would have wished him to keep, from the chance, that he might some time injure himself in using it. The poniard, however, as he had no proper means of fastening it to his dress, had fallen, and was carried away by the torrent he was crossing at that moment.

But, if Schedoni had been shocked by the confession of the assassin, his dismay was considerably greater, when a new witness was brought forward, and he perceived an ancient domestic of his house. This man identified Schedoni for Ferando Count di Bruno, with whom he had lived as a servant after the death of the Count his brother. And not only did he bear

testimony to the person of Schedoni, but to the death of the Countess, his wife. Giovanni declared himself to be one of the domestics who had assisted in conveying her to her apartment, after she had been struck by the poniard of Schedoni, and who had afterwards attended her funeral in the church of the Santa del Miracoli, a convent near the late residence of di Bruno. He further affirmed, that the physicians had reported her death to be in consequence of the wound she had received, and he bore witness to the flight of his master, previous to the death of the Countess, and immediately upon the assassination, and that he had never publicly appeared upon his estate since that period.

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

The witness replied, that a long search had been made for the Count, for such a  
pur-

purpose, but that he had wholly eluded discovery, and that, of course, no further step had been taken in the affair. This reply appeared to occasion dissatisfaction; the tribunal was silent, and seemed to hesitate; the vicar-general then addressed the witness.

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

Giovanni, without hesitation, answered, that, though years had worn the features of the Count, he recollected them the moment he beheld him; and not the Count only, but the person of the penitentiary Anfaldo, whom he had seen a frequent visitor at the house of di Bruno, though his appearance also was considerably changed by time, and by the ecclesiastical habit which he now wore.

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

The grand-inquisitor remarked, that it was extraordinary he should recollect the face of the servant, yet forget that of the master, with whom he had lived in habits of intimacy. To this Anfaldo replied, that the stronger passions of Schedoni, together with his particular habits of life, might reasonably be supposed to have wrought a greater change upon the features of the Count than the character and circumstances of Giovanni's could have effected on his.

Schedoni, not without reason, was appalled on the appearance of this servant, whose further testimony gave such clearness and force to some other parts of the evidence that the tribunal pronounced

nounced sentence upon Schedoni, as the murderer of the Count his brother; and as this, the first charge, was sufficient for his condemnation to death, they did not proceed upon the second, that which related to his wife.

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

Vivaldi, who witnessed this condemnation, appeared infinitely more affected by it than himself; and, though in revealing the circumstance of father Nicola's summons, which had eventually led to the discovery of Schedoni's crimes, he had not been left a choice in his conduct, he felt, at this moment, as miserable as if



he had actually borne witness against the life of a fellow being: what, then, would have been his feelings, had he been told that this Schedoni, thus condemned, was the father of Ellena di Rosalba! But, whatever these might be, he was soon condemned to experience them. One of the most powerful of Schedoni's passions appeared even in this last scene; and as, in quitting the tribunal, he passed near Vivaldi, he uttered these few words—  
“ In me you have murdered the father of Ellena di Rosalba !”

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

At

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

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

ago:

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

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

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

rose, he turned his eyes in silence upon Vivaldi, and they seemed to say, "Dear master! I shall never see you more!" and with this sad expression, he continued to gaze on him till he had left the hall.

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

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

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

"No *other!*" said Vivaldi.

"None,"

“None,” repeated the official. “This prisoner has been near getting one of his guards into a scrape already, for somehow or other, he so talked him over, and won upon him (for he is but a young one here), that the man let him have a light, and a pen and ink; but, luckily, it was found out before any harm was done.”

“And what became of this honest fellow?” inquired Vivaldi.

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

“Was he punished, then?”

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

“Paulo

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

“ Merry, Signor ! no ! he made him cry, and that was as bad.”

“ Indeed !” said Vivaldi. “ The man must have been here, then, a very short time.”

“ Not more than a month, or so, Signor.”

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

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

“ Are you *sure* of that ?” cried Vivaldi, shrewdly.

“ Aye, sure enough, Signor. This fellow is not worth a ducat in the world ?”

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

The

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

Vivaldi had given this as a bribe, to procure some kindness for his servant, not from any consideration of himself, for his own critical situation had ceased at this time to be a subject of anxiety with him. His mind was at present strangely agitated between emotions the most opposite in their nature, the joy which a discovery of Ellena's safety inspired, and the horrible suspicion that Schedoni's assurances of relationship occasioned. That his Ellena was the daughter of a murderer, that the father of Ellena should be brought to ignominious death, and that he himself, however unintentionally, should have assisted to this event, were considerations almost too horrible to be sustained! Vivaldi sought refuge from them in various conjectures as to the motive, which might have induced Schedoni  
to

to assert a falsehood in this instance; but that of revenge alone appeared plausible; and even this surmise was weakened, when he considered that the Confessor had assured him of Ellena's safety, an assurance which, as Vivaldi did not detect the selfish policy connected with it, he believed Schedoni would not have given, had his general intent towards him been malicious. But it was possible, that this very information, on which all his comfort reposed, might be false, and had been given only for the purpose of inflicting the anguish a discovery of the truth must lead to! With an anxiety so intense, as almost to overcome his faculty of judging, he examined every minute probability relative to this point, and concluded with believing that Schedoni had, in this last instance, at least, spoken honestly.

Whe-



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

**CHAP.**

CHAP. IX.

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

WHILE these events were passing in the prisons of the Inquisition at Rome, Ellena, in the sanctuary of *Our Lady of Pity*, remained ignorant of Schedoni's arrest, and of Vivaldi's situation. She understood that the Confessor was preparing to acknowledge her for his daughter, and believed that she comprehended also the motive for his absence ; but, though he had forbidden her to expect a visit from him till his arrangement should be completed, he had promised to write in the mean time, and inform her of all the present

sent circumstances of Vivaldi ; his unexpected silence had excited, therefore, apprehensions as various, though not so terrible, as those which Vivaldi had suffered for her ; nor did the silence of Vivaldi himself appear less extraordinary.

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

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

In

In such vague and gloomy surmise her days passed away ; employment could no longer withdraw her from herself, nor music, even for a moment, charm away the sense of sorrow. Yet she regularly partook of the various occupations of the nuns ; and was so far from permitting herself to indulge in any useless expression of anxiety, that she had never once disclosed the sacred subject of it ; so that, though she could not assume an air of cheerfulness, she never appeared otherwise than tranquil. Her most soothing, though perhaps most melancholy hour, was when about sun-set she could withdraw unnoticed, to the terrace among the rocks that overlooked the convent, and formed a part of its domain. There, alone and relieved from all the ceremonial restraints of the society, her very thoughts seemed more at liberty. As, from beneath the light foliage of the accacias, or the more majestic shade of the plane-trees that waved their

their branches over the many-coloured cliffs of this terrace, Ellena looked down upon the magnificent scenery of the bay; it brought back to memory, in sad yet pleasing detail, the many happy days she had passed on those blue waters, or on the shores, in the society of Vivaldi and her departed relative Bianchi; and every point of the prospect marked by such remembrance, which the veiling distance stole, was rescued by affection and pictured by imagination, in tints more animated than those of brightest nature.

One evening Ellena had lingered on the terrace later than usual. She had watched the rays retiring from the highest points of the horizon, and the fading imagery of the lower scene, till, the sun having sunk into the waves, all colouring was withdrawn, except an empurpling and reposing hue, which overspread the waters and the heavens, and blended in soft confusion every feature of the landscape

scape. The roofs and slender spires of the Santa della Piéta, with a single tower of the church rising loftily over every other part of the buildings that composed the convent, were fading fast from the eye; but the solemn tint that invested them accorded so well with their style, that Ellena was unwilling to relinquish this interesting object. Suddenly she perceived through the dubious light an unusual number of moving figures in the court of the great cloister, and, listening, fancied she could distinguish the murmuring of many voices. The white drapery of the nuns rendered them conspicuous as they moved, but it was impossible to ascertain who were the individuals engaged in this bustle. Presently the assemblage dispersed; and Ellena, curious to understand the occasion of what she had observed, prepared to descend to the convent.

She had left the terrace, and was about to enter a long avenue of chesnuts that

extended to a part of the convent, communicating immediately with the great court, when she heard approaching steps, and, on turning into the walk, perceived several persons advancing in the shady distance. Among the voices, as they drew nearer, she distinguished one whose interesting tone engaged all her attention, and began also to awaken memory. She listened, wondered, doubted, hoped, and feared! It spoke again! Ellena thought she could not be deceived in those tender accents, so full of intelligence, so expressive of sensibility and refinement. She proceeded with quicker steps, yet faltered as she drew near the group, and paused to inquire whether among them was any figure that might accord with the voice, and justify her hopes.

The voice spoke again; it pronounced her name; pronounced it with the tremblings of tenderness and impatience, and Ellena scarcely dared to trust her senses, when

when she beheld Olivia, the nun of San Stefano, in the cloisters of La Piéta!

Ellena could find no words to express her joy and surprise on beholding her preserver in safety, and in these quiet groves; but Olivia repaid all the affectionate caresses of her young friend, and, while she promised to explain the circumstance that had led to her present appearance here, she, in her turn, made numerous inquiries relative to Ellena's adventures after she had quitted San Stefano. They were now, however, surrounded by too many auditors to allow of unreserved conversation; Ellena, therefore, led the nun to her apartment, and Olivia then explained her reasons for having left the convent of San Stefano, which were indeed sufficient to justify, even with the most rigid devotee, her conduct as to the change. This unfortunate recluse, it appeared, persecuted by the suspicions of the abbess, who understood



derstood that she had assisted in the liberation of Ellena, had petitioned the bishop of her diocese for leave to remove to La Pieta. The abbess had not proof to proceed formally against her, as an accomplice in the escape of a novice, for though Jeronimo could have supplied the requisite evidence, he was too deeply implicated in this adventure to do so without betraying his own conduct. From his having withheld such proof, it appears, however, that accident rather than design had occasioned his failure on the evening of Ellena's departure from the monastery. But, though the abbess had not testimony enough for legal punishment, she was acquainted with circumstances sufficient to justify suspicion, and had both the inclination and the power to render Olivia very miserable.

In her choice of La Pieta, the nun was influenced by many considerations, some of which were the consequence of

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

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

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

“It is an embarrassing and rather an unusual circumstance,” concluded Olivia, “to change one’s convent; but you perceive the strong reasons which determined me upon a removal. I was, however, perhaps, the more impatient of severe treatment, since you, my sister, had described to me the society of *Our Lady of Pity*, and since I believed it possible that you might form a part of it. When, on my arrival here, I learned that my wishes had not deceived me on this point, I was impatient to see you once more, and as soon as

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the

the ceremonies attending an introduction to the superior were over, I requested to be conducted to you, and was in search of you when we met in the avenue. It is unnecessary for me to insist upon the satisfaction which this meeting gives me ; but you may not, perhaps, understand how much the manners of our lady abbess, and of the sisterhood in general, as far as a first interview will allow me to judge of them, have re-animated me. The gloom, which has long hung over my prospects, seems now to open, and a distant gleam promises to light up the evening of my stormy day."

Olivia paused and appeared to recollect herself; this was the first time she had made so direct a reference to her own misfortunes; and, while Ellena silently remarked it, and observed the dejection, which was already stealing upon the expressive countenance of the nun, she wished, yet feared to lead her back towards the subject of them.

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

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

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

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

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

With the society of La Pieta, Olivia had thus found an asylum such

as till lately she had never dared to hope for; but, though she frequently expressed her sense of this blessing, it was seldom without tears; and Ellena observed, with some surprise and more disappointment, within a very few days after her arrival, a cloud of melancholy spreading again over her mind.

But a nearer interest soon withdrew Ellena's attention from Olivia to fix it upon Vivaldi; and, when she saw her infirm old servant, Beatrice, enter a chamber of the convent, she anticipated that the knowledge of some extraordinary, and probably unhappy, event had brought her. She knew too well the circumspection of Schedoni to believe that Beatrice came commissioned from him; and as the uncertain situation of Vivaldi was so constantly the subject of her anxiety, she immediately concluded that her servant came to announce some evil relative to him.— His indisposition, perhaps his actual confinement

finement in the Inquisition, which lately she had sometimes been inclined to think might not have been a mere menace to Vivaldi, though it had proved to be no more to herself;—or possibly she came to tell of his death—his death in those prisons! This last was a possibility that almost incapacitated her for inquiring what was the errand of Beatrice.

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

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

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



“Holy San Marco!” exclaimed Beatrice, “if death be ill news, you have gueffed right, Signora, for I do bring news of that, it is certain. How came you, Lady, to know my errand? They have been beforehand with me, I fee, though I have not walked fo fast up hill this many a day, as I have now, to tell you what has happened.”

She ftopped on obferving the changing countenance of Ellena, who tremuloufly called upon her to explain what had happened — who was dead; and entreated her to relate the particulars as fpeedily as poffible.

“You faid you was prepared, Signora,” faid Beatrice, “but your looks tell another tale.” —

“What is the event you would difclofe?” faid Ellena, almoft breathlefs.

“When did it happen?—be brief.”

“I cannot tell exactly when it happened, Signora, but it was an own fervant

servant of the Marchese's that I had it from."

"The Marchese's?" interrupted Ellena in a faltering voice.

"Aye, Lady; you will say that is pretty good authority."

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

"Yes, Signora, I had it from his own servant. He was passing by the garden-gate just as I happened to be speaking to the macaroni-man.—But you are ill, Lady!"

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

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

"I be,

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

“ You shall hear, Signora. I saw he looked in a sort of a bustle, so I asked him how all did at the Palazzo : so he answers, ‘ Bad enough, Signora Beatrice, have not you heard ?’—‘ Heard,’ says I ; ‘ what should I have heard ?’—‘ Why,’ says he, ‘ of what has just happened in our family.’”

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

“ You shall hear, Signora,” continued Beatrice.

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

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

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

“ With

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

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

“ So when I asked him,” added Beatrice, “ again what had happened, he was ready  
enough

enough to tell all about it. ‘ It is near a month ago,’ said he, ‘ since she was first taken ; the Marchesa had been’——

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

“ Yes, Signora, to be sure. Who else did I say it was !”

“ Go on, Beatrice ; the Marchesa ?—

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

“ Proceed,” said Ellena.

“ Well !” added Beatrice, ‘ It was about a month ago that the Marchesa was first taken,’ continued the varlet. ‘ She had seemed poorly a long time, but it was from a *conversazione* at the di Voglio Palazzo, that she came home so ill. It is supposed she had been long in a bad state of health, but nobody thought her so near  
her

her end, till the doctors were called together ; and then matters looked very bad indeed. They found out that she had been dying, or as good, for many years, though nobody else had suspected it, and the Marchesa's own physician was blamed for not finding it out before. But he, added the rogue, 'had a regard for my lady. He was very obstinate, too, for he kept saying almost to the last, there was no danger, when every body else saw how it was going. The other doctors soon made their words good, and my lady died.'

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

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

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

" Yes, Signora ; he said what a sad thing it was that he should be out of the way

way at that time, and nobody know where !”

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

“ To be sure they are, lady, and have been for these many weeks. They have heard nothing at all of the Signor, nor of one Paulo Mendrico, his servant, though the Marchesa’s people have been riding post after them from one end of the kingdom to the other all the time.”

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

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

“ The Marchesa you are sure then was ignorant where he was ?” said Ellena, with

with new astonishment and perplexity as to the person who, after betraying him into the Inquisition, could yet have suffered her, though arrested at the same time, to escape.

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

“ What of him,” said Ellena, incautiously.

“ Nothing, Signora, for he could not be found.”

“ Not be found !” repeated Ellena.

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

Ellena recollected herself sufficiently to ask no further of Schedoni ; and, when she considered the probable cause of Vivaldi's arrest, she was again consoled by a hope  
that



that he had not fallen into the power of real officials, since the comrades of the men who had arrested him had proved themselves otherwise; and she thought it highly probable, that, while undiscovered by his family, he had been, and was still engaged in searching for the place of her confinement.

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

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

Ellena, who had attended closely to this little narrative, was prevented for the present from asking the few questions which it had suggested, by the entrance of Olivia, who, on perceiving a stranger, was retiring, but Ellena, not considering these

these inquiries as important, prevailed with the nun to take a chair at the embroidery frame she had lately quitted.

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

“No, Signora,” replied Beatrice rather sharply, “I have never seen his face since he attended you to the villa, though for that matter, I did not see much of it there; and then how he contrived to let himself out of the house that night without my seeing him, I cannot divine, though I have thought of it often enough since! I am sure

he need not to have been ashamed to have shewn his face to me, for I should only have blessed him for bringing you safe home again !”

Ellena was somewhat surprized to find that Beatrice had noticed a circumstance apparently so trivial, and replied, that she had herself opened the door for her protector.

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

Beatrice then received directions from Ellena as to some drawings, which she wished to have sent to the convent, and when the servant spoke in reply, Olivia  
again

again raised her eyes, and fixed them on her face with intense curiosity.

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

Beatrice with equal surprize answered, “ It is, Signora ; you are right in my name. But, lady, who are you that know me ?”

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

Olivia,

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

Beatrice, wholly occupied by interests of her own, gave no reply, but exclaimed, "It is in truth the Lady Olivia! It is herself! In the name of all that is sacred, how came you here? O! how glad you must have been to find one another out!" She looked, still gasping with astonishment, at Olivia, while Ellena, unheard, repeatedly inquired the meaning of her words, and in the next moment found herself pressed to the bosom of the nun, who seemed better to have understood them, and who weeping, trembling, and almost fainting, held her there in silence.

Ellena, after some moments had thus passed, requested an explanation of what

she witnessed, and Beatrice at the same time demanded the cause of all this emotion. "For can it be that you did not know one another?" she added.

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

"Your father!" exclaimed Olivia.

"Your father, lady!" echoed Beatrice.

Ellena, betrayed by strong emotion into this premature mention of Schedoni, was embarrassed and remained silent.

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

Ellena no longer returned her caresses; surprize and doubt suspended every tender emotion; she gazed upon Olivia with an intenseness that partook of wildness. At

length she said slowly—"It is my mother, then, whom I see! When will these discoveries end!"

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

The nun endeavoured to soothe the agitated spirits of Ellena, though she was herself nearly overwhelmed by the various and acute feelings this disclosure occasioned. For a considerable time they were unable to speak but in short sentences of affectionate exclamation, but joy was evidently a more predominant feeling with the parent than with the child. When, however, Ellena could weep, she became more tranquil, and by degrees was sensible to a degree of happiness such as she had perhaps never experienced.

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



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

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

Olivia, though affected by this intelligence, did not feel it with the acuteness she would have done probably at any other moment. After she had indulged her tears, she added, that from the unusual silence of Bianchi, she had suspected the truth, and particularly since not any answer had been returned to the letter she had sent to Altieri upon her arrival at the Santa della Pieta.

“ Alas!” said Beatrice, “ I wonder much my lady abbess failed to tell you the sad news, for she knew it too well!—

My dear mistress is buried in the church here! as for the letter, I have brought it with me for Signora Ellena to open."

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

Olivia asked an explanation of Ellena's late extraordinary assertion respecting her father, but this was a request made with emotions very different from those which hope or joy inspire. Ellena, believing that the same circumstances which had deceived herself during so many years, as to his death, had also misled Olivia, was not surpris'd at the incredulity her mother had shewn, but she was considerably embarrassed how to answer her inquiries. It was now too late to observe the promise of secrecy extorted from her

by Schedoni; the first moments of surprize had betrayed her; yet, while she trembled further to transgress his injunction, she perceived that a full explanation was now unavoidable. And, since Ellena considered, that as Schedoni could not have foreseen her present peculiar situation, his command had no reference to her mother, her scruples on this head disappeared. When, therefore, Beatrice had withdrawn, Ellena repeated her assertion, that her father still lived; which, though it increased the amazement of Olivia, did not vanquish her incredulity. Olivia's tears flowed fast, while in contradiction to this assurance, she mentioned the year in which the Count di Bruno died, with some circumstances relative to his death; which, however, as Ellena understood that her mother had not witnessed it, she still believed had not happened. To confirm her late assertion, Ellena then related a few particulars of her second  
interview

interview with Schedoni, and, as some confirmation that he lived, offered to produce the portrait, which he had claimed as his own. Olivia, in great agitation, requested to see the miniature, and Ellena left the apartment in search of it.

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

Ellena had now no doubt respecting the truth of Schedoni's declaration, and blamed herself for not having more gradually prepared her mother for the knowledge of

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

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

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

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

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

Olivia left the sentence unfinished, as if she was betraying more than was at present discreet; but Ellena, whom astonishment had kept silent, now entreated that she would explain her words, and the cause of her distress.

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

She paused and was much affected, but presently added—

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

Olivia was, however, soothed when she understood that Ellena had not named her

in

in the note, but had merely desired to see the Confessor upon a very particular occasion.

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

Olivia, thus released from her fears, consented to explain some points of the subject so interesting to Ellena; but it was not till several days after this discovery, that she could sufficiently command her spirits to relate the whole of her narrative. The first part of it agreed perfectly with the account delivered in the confession to the penitentiary Anfaldo; that which follows was known only to herself, her sister



Bianchi, a physician, and one faithful servant, who had been considerably entrusted with the conduct of the plan.

It may be recollected that Schedoni left his house immediately after the act, which was designed to be fatal to the Countess his wife, and that she was carried senseless to her chamber. The wound, as appears, was not mortal. But the atrocity of the intent determined her to seize the opportunity thus offered by the absence of Schedoni, and her own peculiar circumstances, to release herself from his tyranny without having recourse to a court of justice, which would have covered with infamy the brother of her first husband. She withdrew, therefore, from his house for ever, and, with the assistance of the three persons before-mentioned, retired to a remote part of Italy, and sought refuge in the convent of San Stefano, while at home the report of her death was confirmed by a public funeral.

Bianchi

Bianchi remained for some time after the departure of Olivia, in her own residence near the Villa di Bruno, having taken under her immediate care the daughter of the Countess and of the first Count di Bruno, as well as an infant daughter of the second.

After some time had elapsed, Bianchi withdrew with her young charge, but not to the neighbourhood of San Stefano. The indulgence of a mother's tenderness was denied to Olivia; for Bianchi could not reside near the convent without subjecting her to the hazard of a discovery, since Schedoni, though he now believed the report of her death, might be led to doubt it, by the conduct of Bianchi, whose steps would probably be observed by him. She chose a residence, therefore, at a distance from Olivia, though not yet at Altieri. At this period, Ellena was not two years old; the daughter of Schedoni was scarcely as many months, and she died  
before

before the year concluded. It was this his child, for whom the Confessor, who had too well concealed himself to permit Bianchi to acquaint him with her death, had mistaken Ellena, and to which mistake his own portrait, affirmed by Ellena to be that of her father, had contributed. This miniature she had found in the cabinet of Bianchi after her aunt's decease, and, observing it inscribed with the title of Count di Bruno, she had worn it with a filial fondness ever since that period.

Bianchi, when she had acquainted Ellena with the secret of her birth, was withheld, both by prudence and humanity, from entrusting her with a knowledge that her mother lived; but this, no doubt, was the circumstance she appeared so anxious to disclose on her death-bed, when the suddenness of her disorder had deprived her of the power. The abruptness of that event had thus contributed to keep the mother and daughter unknown to each

each other, even when they afterwards accidentally met, to which concealment the name of Rosalba, given to Ellena from her infancy by Bianchi, for the purpose of protecting her from discovery by her uncle, had assisted. Beatrice, who was not the domestic intrusted with the escape of Olivia, had believed the report of her death, and thus, though she knew Ellena to be the daughter of the Countess di Bruno, she could never have been a means of discovering them to each other, had it not happened that Olivia recognized this ancient servant of Bianchi, while Ellena was present.

When Bianchi came to reside in the neighbourhood of Naples, she was unsuspecting that Schedoni, who had never been heard of since the night of the assassination, inhabited there; and she so seldom left her house, that it is not surprising she should never happen to meet him, at least consciously; for her veil,  
and

and the monk's cowl, might easily have concealed them from each other if they had met.

It appears to have been the intention of Bianchi to disclose to Vivaldi the family of Ellena, before their nuptials were solemnized; since, on the evening of their last conversation, she had declared, when her spirits were exhausted by the exertion she had made, that much remained for her to say, which weakness obliged her to defer till another opportunity. Her unexpected death prevented any future meeting. That she had not sooner intended to make a communication, which might have removed, in a considerable degree, the objection of the Vivaldi to a connection with Ellena, appears extraordinary, till other circumstances of her family than that of its nobility are considered. Her present indigence, and yet more, the guilt attached to an individual of the di Bruno, it was reasonable to suppose would operate as a  
full

full antidote to the allurements of rank, however jealous of birth the Vivaldi had proved themselves.

Ferando di Bruno had contrived, even in the short interval between the death of his brother and the supposed decease of his wife, again to embarrass his affairs, and soon after his flight, the income arising from what remained of his landed property had been seized upon by his creditors, whether lawfully or not, he was then in a situation which did not permit him to contest, and Ellena was thus left wholly dependent upon her aunt. The small fortune of Bianchi had been diminished by the assistance she afforded Olivia, for whose admittance into the convent of San Stefano it had been necessary to advance a considerable sum; and her original income was afterwards reduced by the purchase of the villa Altieri. This expenditure, however, was not an imprudent one, since she preferred the  
 comforts.

comforts and independence of a pleasant home, with industry, to the indulgence of an indolence which must have confined her to an inferior residence; and was acquainted with the means of making this industry profitable without being dishonourable. She excelled in many elegant and ingenious arts, and the productions of her pencil and needle were privately disposed of to the nuns of La Pieta. When Ellena was of an age to assist her, she resigned much of the employment and the profit to her niece, whose genius having unfolded itself, the beauty of her designs and the elegance of her execution, both in drawings and embroidery, were so highly valued by the purchasers at the grate of the convent, that Bianchi committed to Ellena altogether the exercise of her art.

Olivia meanwhile had dedicated her life to devotion in the monastery of San Stefano, a choice which was willingly made  
while

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

When Olivia had first seen Ellena in the chapel of San Stefano, she was struck with a slight resemblance she bore to the late Count di Bruno, and had frequently afterwards examined her features with a most painful curiosity; but, circumstanced as she was, Olivia could not reasonably  
suspect



suspect the stranger to be her daughter. Once, however, a sense of this possibility so far overcame her judgment, as to prompt an inquiry for the surname of Ellena; but the mention of Rosalba had checked all further conjecture. What would have been the feelings of the nun, had she been told when her generous compassion was assisting a stranger to escape from oppression, that she was preserving her own child! It may be worthy of observation, that the virtues of Olivia, exerted in a general cause, had thus led her unconsciously to the happiness of saving her daughter; while the vices of Schedoni had as unconsciously urged him nearly to destroy his niece, and had always been preventing, by the means they prompted him to employ, the success of his constant aim.

CHAP X.

“ Those hours, which lately smil'd, where are they  
now ?

Pallid to thought and ghastly !”

YOUNG.

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

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

The Marchese, however, shocked as he was at this discovery of the duplicity  
and

and cruelty of his wife, had neither her terror of the future, or remorse for the past, to overcome his objection to the rank of Ellena; and he resisted all her importunity, till the anguish of her last hours vanquished every consideration but that of affording her relief; he then gave a solemn promise, in the presence of the Confessor, that he would no longer oppose the marriage of Vivaldi and Ellena, should the former persist in his attachment to her. This promise was sufficient for the Marchesa, and she died with some degree of resignation. It did not, however, appear probable, that the Marchese would soon be called upon to fulfil the engagements, into which he had so unwillingly entered, every inquiry after Vivaldi having been hitherto ineffectual.

During the progress of this fruitless search for his son, and while the Marchese was almost lamenting him as dead, the inhabitants of the Vivaldi palace were,

were one night aroused from sleep by a violent knocking at the great gate of the court. The noise was so loud and incessant, that, before the porter could obey the summons, the Marchese, whose apartment looked upon the court, was alarmed, and he sent an attendant from his ante-room, to inquire the occasion of it.

Presently a voice was heard from the first ante-chamber, exclaiming, " I must see my Lord Marchese directly; he will not be angry to be waked, when he knows all about it;" and, before the Marchese could order that no person, on whatever pretence, should be admitted, Paulo, haggard, ragged, and covered with dirt, was in the chamber. His wan and affrighted countenance, his disordered dress, and his very attitude, as on entering he half turned to look back upon the ante-rooms, like one, who, just escaped from bondage, listens to the fancied sounds of pursuit, were altogether,  
so

so striking and terrific, that the Marchese, anticipating some dreadful news of Vivaldi, had scarcely power to inquire for him. Paulo, however, rendered questions unnecessary; for, without any circumlocution, or preface, he immediately informed the Marchese, that the Signor, his dear master, was in the prisons of the Inquisition, at Rome, if, indeed, they had not put an end to him before that time."

"Yes, my Lord," said Paulo, "I am just got out myself, for they would not let me be with the Signor, so it was of no use to stay there any longer. Yet it was a hard matter with me to go away, and leave my dear master within those dismal walls; and nothing should have persuaded me to do so, but that I hoped, when your Lordship knew where the Signor was, you might be able to get him out. But there is not a minute to be lost, my Lord, for when once a gentleman has

got within the claws of those inquisitors, there is no knowing how soon they may take it in their heads to tear him in pieces. Shall I order horses for Rome, my Lord? I am ready to set off again directly."

The suddenness of such intelligence, concerning an only son, might have agitated stronger nerves than those of the Marchese, and so much was he shocked by it, that he could not immediately determine how to proceed, or give any answer to Paulo's repeated questions. When, however, he became sufficiently recollected to make further inquiry into the situation of Vivaldi, he perceived the necessity of an immediate journey; but first it would be prudent to consult with some friends, whose connections at Rome might be a means of greatly facilitating the important purpose, which led him thither, and this could not be done till the following morning. Yet he gave orders, that preparation should be made  
for

for his setting out at a moment's notice; and, having listened to as full an account as Paulo could give of the past and present circumstances of Vivaldi, he dismissed him to repose for the remainder of the night.

Paulo, however, though much in want of rest, was in too great an agitation of spirits either to seek or to find it; and the fear he had indicated, on entering the Marchese's apartment, proceeded from the hurry of his mind, rather than from any positive apprehension of new evil. For his liberty he was indebted to the young centinel, who had on a former occasion been removed from the door of his prison, but who, by means of the guard, to whom Vivaldi had given money, as he returned one night from the tribunal, had since been able to communicate with him. This man, of a nature too humane for his situation, was become wretched in it, and he deter-



mined to escape from his office before the expiration of the time, for which he had been engaged. He thought that to be a guard over prisoners was nearly as miserable as being a prisoner himself. "I see no difference between them," said he, except that the prisoner watches on one side of the door, and the centinel on the other."

With the resolution to release himself, he conferred with Paulo, whose good nature and feeling heart, among so many people of a contrary character, had won his confidence and affection, and he laid his plan of escape so well, that it was on the point of succeeding, when Paulo's obstinacy in attempting an impossibility had nearly counteracted the whole. It went to his heart, he said, to leave his master in prison, while he himself was to march off in safety, and he would run the risk of his neck, rather than have such a deed upon his head. He  
pro-

proposed, therefore, as Vivaldi's guards were of two ferocious a nature to be tampered with, to scale a wall of the court, into which a grate of Vivaldi's dungeon looked. But had this lofty wall been practicable, the grate was not; and the attempt had nearly cost Paulo not only his liberty but his life.

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

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

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

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

The applications, however, which were made to the inquisitors, were not so soon replied to as the wishes of the Marchese had expected, and he had been above a

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

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

that her dying request had been intended to promote his happiness, the cruel consciousness of having interrupted her's occasioned him severe anguish, and he was obliged to recollect her former conduct towards Ellena at San Stefano before he could become reconciled to himself.

CHAP. XI.

“Your’s in the ranks of death.”

SHAKESPEARE.

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

While

While they waited at the door of the prison-room, till the numerous bars and locks were unfastened, the agitation, which Vivaldi had suffered, on receiving the summons, returned with redoubled force, now that he was about to behold, once more, that wretched man, who had announced himself to be the parent of Elena di Rosalba. The Marchese suffered emotions of a different nature, and with his reluctance to see Schedoni was mingled a degree of curiosity as to the event, which had occasioned this summons.

The door being thrown open, the officials entered first, and the Marchese and Vivaldi, on following, discovered the Confessor lying on a mattress. He did not rise to receive them, but, as he lifted his head, and bowed it in obeisance, his countenance, upon which the little light admitted through the triple grate of his dungeon gleamed, seemed more than usually ghastly; his eyes were hollow,



and his shrunk features appeared as if death had already touched them. Vivaldi, on perceiving him, groaned, and averted his face; but, soon recovering a command of himself, he approached the mattress.

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

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

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

“Who are these that surround me?” said Schedoni. “Who is he that stands at the foot of the bed?” While he spoke, he bent his eyes on Vivaldi, who rested  
in

in deep dejection there, and was lost in thought, till, aroused by Schedoni's voice, he replied,

“ It is I, Vincentio di Vivaldi ; I obey your requisition, and inquire the purpose of it !”

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

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

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

“ That you will bear testimony to the truth

truth of what I shall declare," replied Schedoni.

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

Schedoni, after a pause, began: "That which I have to make known relates to the cabal formerly carried on by him, the father Nicola, and myself, against the peace of an innocent young woman, whom, at my instigation, he has basely traduced."

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

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

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

"I have

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

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

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

“ Where have you seen him, my Lord ?”

“ In my own palace, at Naples; and you yourself introduced him to me there.”

“ I did,” replied Schedoni.

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

“ O heavens !” said Vivaldi, “ this monk, then, this father Nicola, is, as I  
sus-

suspected, the slanderer of Ellena di Rosalba !”

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

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

In the instant that Vivaldi had uttered this, he became sensible of his indiscretion, for till now he had avoided informing the Marchese, that Ellena had been declared the daughter of Schedoni. This abrupt disclosure, and at such a moment, he immediately perceived might be fatal to his hopes, and that the Marchese would not consider the promise he had given to his dying wife, however solemn, as binding, under circumstances so peculiar and unforeseen as the present. The astonishment of the Marchese, upon this  
dis-

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

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

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

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

He stopped, unable to recover immediately from the effect of the exertion

tion he had made. At length, he resumed,

“ I have declared, and I continue to declare, that Elena di Rosalba, as she has been named, for the purpose, I conjecture, of concealing her from an unworthy father, is my daughter !”

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

Vivaldi, with the utmost difficulty, forbore to express the feelings, which this sentence excited. It appeared to recall all the spirit of Schedoni. “ She is the daughter of a noble house,” said the Confessor, haughtily, while he half raised him-

himself from his mistress. "In me you behold the last of the Counts di Bruno."

The Marchese smiled contemptuously.

Schedoni proceeded. "I call upon you, Nicola di Zampari, who have declared yourself, on a late occasion, so strenuous for justice; I call upon you now to do justice in this instance, and to acknowledge, before these witnesses, that Ellena Rosalba is innocent of every circumstance of misconduct, which you have formerly related to the Marchese di Vivaldi!"

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

The Marchese interrupted his son:—  
"Let me put an end to the difficulty, by concluding the interview; I perceive that my presence has been required  
for



for a purpose, that does not concern me.”

Before the Confessor could reply, the Marchese had turned from him to quit the chamber; but the vehemence of Vivaldi's distress prevailed with him to pause, and thus allowed him to understand from Schedoni, that the justification of the innocent Ellena, though it had been mentioned first, as being the object nearest to his heart, was not the only one, that had urged him to require this meeting.

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

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

This monk, meanwhile, had been balancing the necessity for acknowledging himself a slanderer, against the possibility of avoiding it; and it was the resolute manner of Vivaldi, who appeared to have no doubt as to his guilt in this instance, that made him apprehend the consequence of persisting in falsehood, not either remorse of conscience, or the appeal of Schedoni. He acknowledged then, after considerable circumlocution, in which he contrived to defend himself, by throwing all the odium of the original design upon the Confessor, that he had  
been

been prevailed upon by his arts to impose on the credulity of the Marchese, respecting the conduct of Ellena di Rosalba. This avowal was made upon oath, and Schedoni, by the questions he put to him, was careful it should be so full and circumstantial that even the most prejudiced hearer must have been convinced of its truth; while the most unfeeling must have yielded for once to indignation against the asperfer, and pity of the asperfed. Its effect upon the present auditors was various. The Marchese had listened to the whole explanation with an unmoved countenance, but with profound attention. Vivaldi had remained in a fixed attitude, with eyes bent on father Nicola, in such eager and stern regard, as seemed to search into his very soul; and, when the monk concluded, a smile of triumphant joy lighted up his features, as he looked upon the Marchese, and claimed an acknowledgment of his conviction,

viction that Ellena had been calumniated. The cold glance, which the Marchese returned, struck the impassioned and generous Vivaldi to the heart, who perceived that he was not only totally indifferent as to the injustice, which an innocent and helpless young woman had suffered, but fancied that he was unwilling to admit the truth, which his judgment would no longer allow him to reject.

Schedoni, meanwhile, appeared almost to writhe under the agony, which his mind inflicted upon him, and it was only by strong efforts, that he sustained his spirit so far as to go through with the interrogations he had judged it necessary to put to Nicola. When the subject was finished, he sunk back on his pillow, and closing his eyes, a hue so pallid, succeeded by one so livid, overspread his features, that Vivaldi for an instant believed he was dying; and in this supposition he was not singular, for even an official was touched  
with

with the Confessor's condition, and had advanced to assist him, when he unclosed his eyes, and seemed to revive.

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

A lamp was then called for by the secretary; but, as that could not immediately

diately be procured, the torch of one of the centinels, who watched in the dark avenue without, was brought in its stead, and this discovered to Schedoni the various figures assembled in his dusky chamber, and to them the emaciated form and ghastly visage of the Confessor, As Vivaldi now beheld him by the stronger light of the torch, he again fancied that death was in his aspect.

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

of heresy, which he had brought against him, was false and malicious.

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

To Vivaldi's inquiry, why it had been thought necessary to employ stratagem in the removal of Ellena, since, if Schedoni had only claimed her for his daughter, he

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

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



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

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

“ My presence is no longer necessary,” he added : “ the prisoner has concluded the only detail which I could be interested to hear from him ; and, in consideration of the confession he has made as to the innocence of my son, I pardon him the suffering, which his false charge has occasioned to me and my family. The paper containing his depositions is given to your responsibility, holy father,” addressing  
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the inquisitor; "and you are required to lay it upon the table of the Holy Office, that the innocence of Vincentio di Vivaldi may appear, and that he may be released from these prisons without further delay. But, first, I demand a copy of those declarations, and that the copy also shall be signed by the present witnesses."

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

portrait, which she wore as being her father's, had first led to the discovery of her family.

While the confessor had been giving this brief explanation, Nicola, who was somewhat withdrawn from the circle, stood gazing at him with the malignity of a demon. His glowing eyes just appeared beneath the edge of his cowl, while, rolled up in his dark drapery, the lower features of his face were muffled; but the intermediate part of his countenance, receiving the full glare of the torch, displayed all its speaking and terrific lines. Vivaldi, as his eye glanced upon him, saw again the very monk of Paluzzi, and he thought he beheld also a man capable of the very crimes of which he had accused Schedoni. At this instant, he remembered the dreadful garment that had been discovered in a dungeon of the fortress; and, yet more, he remembered the extraordinary circumstances attending the death of Bianchi, together

together with the immediate knowledge which the monk had displayed of that event. Vivaldi's suspicions respecting the cause of her death being thus revived, he determined to obtain, if possible, either a relief from, or a confirmation of them; and he solemnly called upon Schedoni, who, already condemned to die, had no longer any thing to fear from a disclosure of the truth, whatever it might be, to declare all that he knew on the subject. As he did so, he looked at Nicola, to observe the effect of this demand, whose countenance was now, however, so much shrouded, that little of its expression could be seen; and Vivaldi remarked, that, while he had spoken, the monk drew his garment closer over the lower part of his face, and that he had immediately turned his eyes from him upon the Confessor.

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

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

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

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

"I be-

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

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

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

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

“ Have you forgotten a conversation which I once held with you on invisible spirits ?” said Schedoni.

As he asked this, Vivaldi was struck with the tone of his voice ; he thought it

was different from what he had remembered ever to have heard from him; and he looked at Schedoni more intently, that he might be certain it was he who had spoken. The Confessor's eyes were fixed upon him, and he repeated slowly in the same tone, "Have you forgotten?"

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

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

Vivaldi

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

“ I acknowledge the truth of your remark,” said Vivaldi, “ as far as it concerns myself. I have, however, inquiries to make on a point less abstracted, and towards explaining which the evidence of my senses themselves have done little. To whom belonged the bloody garments I found in the dungeon of Paluzzi, and what became of the person to whom they had pertained ?”

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

“ They appeared to be those of a person who had died by violence,” replied



Vivaldi, "and they were discovered in a place frequented by your avowed agent, Nicola, the monk."

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

"They were my own," said this monk.

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

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

Vivaldi was astonished by this apparent subterfuge. "I had no pistol," he rejoined, "my sword was my only weapon!"

"Pause a moment," said the monk.

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

"I ap-

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

“ To me you have no longer any right of appeal,” said Schedoni. “ Why should I save you from suspicions, that may bring you to a state like this, to which you have reduced me !”

“ Your crimes have reduced you to it,” replied Nicola, “ I have only done my duty, and that which another person could have effected without my aid—the priest to whom Spalatro made his last confession.”

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

“ You, like me, have assisted to destroy a destroyer,” replied the monk. “ He has taken life, and deserves, therefore,

fore, to lose it. If, however, it will afford you consolation to know that you have not materially assisted in his destruction, I will hereafter give you proof for this assurance. There were other means of shewing that Schedoni was the Count di Bruno, than the testimony of Anfaldo, though I was ignorant of them when I bade you summon the penitentiary."

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

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

"Impossible," said Vivaldi, "I was armed only with my sword!"

"You

“ You had a companion,” observed the monk, “ had not he fire-arms ?”

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

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

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

The groans were clearly remembered by Vivaldi, and many other circumstances of Nicola's narration accorded so well with others, which he recollected to have occurred on the night alluded to, that he had no longer a doubt of its veracity. The suddenness of Bianchi's death, however,

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

While this conversation was passing, the Marchese, impatient to put a conclusion to it, and to leave the chamber, repeatedly urged the secretary to dispatch; and, while he now earnestly renewed his request, another voice answered for the secretary, that he had nearly concluded. Vivaldi thought that he had heard the  
 voice

voice on some former occasion, and on turning his eyes upon the person who had spoken, discovered the stranger to be the same who had first visited him in prison. Perceiving by his dress, that he was an officer of the Inquisition, Vivaldi now understood too well the purport of his former visit, and that he had come with a design to betray him by affected sympathy into a confession of some heretical opinions. Similar instances of treachery Vivaldi had heard were frequently practised upon accused persons, but he had never fully believed such cruelty possible till now, that it had been attempted towards himself.

The visit of this person bringing to his recollection the subsequent one he had received from Nicola, Vivaldi inquired whether the centinels had really admitted him to his cell, or he had entered it by other means; a question to which the monk was silent, but the smile on his features, if so strange an expression deserved to

to be called a smile, seemed to reply, "Do you believe that I, a servant of the Inquisition, will betray its secrets?"

Vivaldi, however, urged the inquiry, for he wished to know whether the guard, who appeared to be faithful to their office, had escaped the punishment that was threatened.

"They were honest," replied Nicola, "seek no further."

"Are the tribunal convinced of their integrity?"

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

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

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

"It has terrible secrets!" said Schedoni, who had been long silent. "Know, young  
young



young man, that almost every cell of every prisoner has a concealed entrance, by which the ministers of death may pass unnoticed to their victims. This Nicola is now one of those dreadful summoners, and is acquainted with all the secret avenues that lead to murder."

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

"His office has been short," resumed the Confessor, turning his heavy eyes upon Nicola, "and his task is almost done!" As he pronounced the last words his voice faltered, but they were heard by the monk, who drawing nearer to the bed, demanded an explanation of them. A ghastly smile triumphed in the features of  
Schedoni;

Schedoni; "Fear not but that an explanation will come full soon," said he.

Nicola fixed himself before the Confessor, and bent his brows upon him as if he would have searched into his very soul. When Vivaldi again looked at Schedoni, he was shocked on observing the sudden alteration of his countenance, yet still a faint smile of triumph lingered there. But, while Vivaldi gazed, the features suddenly became agitated; in the next instant his whole frame was convulsed, and heavy groans laboured from his breast. Schedoni was now evidently dying.

The horror of Vivaldi, and of the Marchese, who endeavoured to leave the chamber, was equalled only by the general confusion that reigned there; every person present seemed to feel at least a momentary compassion, except Nicola, who stood unmoved beside Schedoni, and looked steadfastly upon his pangs, while a smile of derision marked his countenance. As Vivaldi observed, with detestation,  
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this expression, a slight spasm darted over Nicola's face, and his muscles also seemed to labour with sudden contraction; but the affection was transient, and vanished as abruptly as it had appeared. The monk, however, turned from the miserable spectacle before him, and as he turned he caught involuntarily at the arm of a person near him and leaned on his shoulder for support. His manner appeared to betray that he had not been permitted to triumph in the sufferings of his enemy, without participating at least in their horror.

Schedoni's struggles now began to abate, and in a short time he lay motionless. When he unclosed his eyes, death was in them. He was still nearly insensible; but presently a faint gleam of recollection shot from them, and gradually lighting them up, the character of his soul appeared there; the expression was indeed feeble, but it was true. He moved his lips as if he would have spoken, and looked languidly round the chamber, seemingly

seemingly in search of some person. At length, he uttered a sound, but he had not yet sufficient command of his muscles, to modulate that sound into a word, till by repeated efforts the name of Nicola became intelligible. At the call, the monk, raised his head from the shoulder of the person on whom he had reclined, and turning round, Schedoni, as was evident from the sudden change of expression in his countenance, discovered him; his eyes, as they settled on Nicola seemed to recollect all their wonted fire, and the malignant triumph, lately so prevalent in his physiognomy, again appeared as in the next moment he pointed to him. His glance seemed suddenly impowered with the destructive fascination attributed to that of the basilisk, for while it now met Nicola's, that monk seemed as if transfixed to the spot, and unable to withdraw his eyes from the glare of Schedoni's; in their expression he read the dreadful sentence of his fate, the triumph of revenge  
and

and cunning. Struck with this terrible conviction a pallid hue overspread his face; at the same time an involuntary motion convulsed his features, cold trembling seized upon his frame, and, uttering a deep groan, he fell back, and was caught in the arms of the people near him. At the instant of his fall, Schedoni uttered a sound so strange and horrible, so convulsed, and so loud, so exulting, yet so unlike any human voice, that every person in the chamber, except those who were assisting Nicola, struck with irresistible terror, endeavoured to make their way out of it. This, however, was impracticable, for the door was fastened, until a physician, who had been sent for, should arrive, and some investigation could be made into this mysterious affair. The consternation of the Marchese and of Vivaldi, compelled to witness this scene of horror, cannot easily be imagined.

Schedoni, having uttered that demoniacal sound of exultation, was not permitted

mitted to repeat it, for the pangs he had lately suffered returned upon him, and he was again in strong convulsions, when the physician entered the chamber. The moment he beheld Schedoni, he declared him to be poisoned ; and he pronounced a similar opinion on father Nicola ; affirming also, that the drug, as appeared from the violence of the effect, was of too subtle and inveterate a nature to allow of antidote. He was, however, willing to administer the medicine usual in such cases.

While he was giving orders to an attendant, with respect to this, the violence of Schedoni's convulsions once more relaxed ; but Nicola appeared in the last extremity. His sufferings were incessant, his senses never for a moment returned, and he expired, before the medicine, which had been sent for, could be brought. When it came, however, it was administered with some success to Schedoni, who

recovered not only his recollection, but his voice ; and the first word he uttered was, as formerly, the name of Nicola.

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

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

“ Poison,” replied Schedoni readily.

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

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

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

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

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

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

“ I had no accomplice,” replied Schedoni.

“ How did you procure the poison, then ?”

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

“ Consider that you are dying,” said the inquisitor, “ and confess the truth.



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

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

The inquisitor smiled in contempt of this explanation, and Schedoni, observing him, desired a particular part of his vest might be examined, where would be found some remains of the drug concealed, as he had affirmed. He was indulged in his request, and the poison was discovered within a broad hem of his garment.

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

While this awful event had been accomplishing, the Marchese, suffering under the utmost perturbation, had withdrawn to the distant grate of the dungeon, where he conversed with an official as to what might be the probable consequence

of his present situation to himself; but Vivaldi, in an agony of horror, had been calling incessantly for the medicine, which might possibly afford some relief to the anguish he witnessed; and when it was brought, he had assisted to support the sufferers.

At length, now that the worst was over, and when the several witnesses had signed to the last avowal of Schedoni, every person in the chamber was suffered to depart; and Vivaldi was re-conducted to his prison, accompanied by the Marchese, where he was to remain till the decision of the holy office respecting his innocence, as asserted by the deposition of Schedoni, should be known. He was too much affected by the late scene to give the Marchese any explanation at present, respecting the family of Ellena di Rosalba; and the Marchese, having remained for some time with his son, withdrew to the residence of his friend.

CHAP.

CHAP XI.

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

SHAKESPEARE.

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

While they were receiving the ceremonious congratulations of the Count, and of some nobles assembled to welcome the emancipated prisoner, a loud voice was heard from the ante-chamber, exclaiming,  
“Let me pass! It is my master, let me

pafs ! May all thofe who attempt to flop me, be fent to the Inquifition themfelves !”

In the next inflant Paulo burft into the faloon, followed by a group of lacqueys, who, however, paused at the door, fearful of the difpleafure of their lord, yet fcarcely able to ftifle a laugh; while Paulo, fpringing forward, had nearly overfet fome of the company, who happened at that moment to be bowing with profound joy to Vivaldi.

“ It is my mafter ! it is my dear mafter !” cried Paulo, and, fending off a nobleman with each elbow, as he made his way between them, he hugged Vivaldi in his arms, repeating, “ O, my mafter ! my mafter !” till a paffion of joy and affection overcame his voice, and he fell at his mafter’s feet and wept.

This was a moment of finer fatisfaction to Vivaldi, than he had known fince his meeting with his father ; and he was too much interefted by his faithful fervant, to  
have

have leisure to apologize to the astonished company for his rudeness. While the lacqueys were repairing the mischief Paulo had occasioned, were picking up the rolling snuff-boxes he had jerked away in his passage, and wiping the snuff from the soiled clothes, Vivaldi was participating in all the delight, and returning all the affection of his servant, and was so wholly occupied by these pleasurable feelings as scarcely to be sensible that any persons besides themselves were in the room. The Marchese, meanwhile, was making a thousand apologies for the disasters Paulo had occasioned; was alternately calling upon him to recollect in whose presence he was, and to quit the apartment immediately; explaining to the company that he had not seen Vivaldi since they were together in the Inquisition, and remarking profoundly, that he was much attached to his master. But Paulo, insensible to the

repeated commands of the Marchese, and to the endeavours of Vivaldi to raise him, was still pouring forth his whole heart at his master's feet. "Ah! my Signor," said he, "if you could but know how miserable I was when I got out of the Inquisition!"——

"He raves!" observed the Count to the Marchese, "you perceive that joy has rendered him delirious!"

"How I wandered about the walks half the night, and what it cost me to leave them! But when I lost sight of them, Signor, O! San Dominico! I thought my heart would have broke: I had a great mind to have gone back again and given myself up; and, perhaps, I should too, if it had not been for my friend, the centinel, who escaped with me, and I would not do him an injury, poor fellow! for he meant nothing but kindness when he let me out. And, sure  
enough,

enough, as it has proved, it was all for the best; for now I am here too, Signor, as well as you; and can tell you all I felt when I believed I should never see you again."

The contrast of his present joy to his remembered grief again brought tears into Paulo's eyes; he smiled and wept, and sobbed and laughed with such rapid transition, that Vivaldi began to be alarmed for him; when, suddenly becoming calm, he looked up in his master's face and said gravely, but with eagerness, "Pray Signor, was not the roof of your little prison peaked, and was there not a little turret stuck up at one corner of it? and was there not a battlement round the turret? and was there not"—Vivaldi, after regarding him for a moment, replied smilingly, "Why truly, my good Paulo, my dungeon was so far from the roof, that I never had an opportunity of observing it."



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

As Paulo concluded, his tears and sobs returned with more violence than before ; and Vivaldi, who could not perceive any necessary connection between this mention of the roof of his late prison and the joy his servant expressed on seeing him again, began to fear that his senses were bewildered, and desired an explanation of his words. Paulo’s account, rude and simple as it was, soon discovered to him the relation of these apparently heterogeneous circumstances to each other ; when Vivaldi, overcome by this new instance of the power of Paulo’s affection, embraced him  
with.

with his whole heart, and, compelling him to rise, presented him to the assembly as his faithful friend and chief deliverer.

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

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

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

"Thank you, my Signor," replied Paulo, in a voice rendered almost inarticulate by his gratitude, "Thank you with my whole heart! if I stay with you, that is enough for me, I ask no more. But I hope my Lord Marchese will not think me ungrateful for refusing to accept of the thou-

thousand sequins he was so kind as to offer me, if I would but be independent, for I thank him as much as if I had received them, and a great deal more too."

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

"This is too much, Signor," said Paulo sobbing—"too much to be borne!" and ran out of the saloon. But amidst the murmur of applause which his conduct drew from the noble spectators, for Paulo's warm heart had subdued even the coldness of their pride, a convulsive sound from the ante-chamber betrayed the excess  
of

of emotion, which he had thus abruptly withdrawn himself to conceal.

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

Immediately on his arrival at Naples, however, Vivaldi, with a degree of impatience, to which his utmost speed was inadequate, and with a revived joy so powerful as to overcome every fear, and every  
every

every melancholy consideration, which the late conversation with his father had occasioned, hastened to the *Santa della Piéta*.

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

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

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

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

Ellena, however, upon this mention of a topic so interesting to them both, proceeded to express the happiness she had received from the discovery of a parent, whose virtues had even won her affection long before she understood her own interest in them. It was with some difficulty, that Vivaldi could conceal his surprize at such an avowal of prepossession; the manners of  
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Schedoni, of whom he believed her to speak, having certainly never been adapted to inspire tenderness. But his surprize soon changed its object, when Olivia, who had heard that a stranger was at the grate, entered the parlour, and was announced as the mother of Ellena di Rosalba.

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

When Ellena had withdrawn from the room, Vivaldi made a full acknowledgment to Olivia of his long attachment to her

her daughter, and supplicated for her consent to their marriage. To this application, however, Olivia replied, that, though she had been no stranger to their mutual affection, or to the several circumstances which had both proved its durability, and tried their fortitude, she never could consent that her daughter should become a member of any family, whose principal was either insensible of her value, or unwilling to acknowledge it; and that in this instance it would be necessary to Vivaldi's success, not only that he, but that his father should be a suitor; on which condition only, she allowed him to hope for her acquiescence.

Such a stipulation scarcely chilled the hopes of Vivaldi, now that Ellena was proved to be the daughter not of the murderer Schedoni, but of a Count di Bruno, who had been no less respectable in character than in rank; and he had  
little

little doubt that his father would consent to fulfil the promise he had given to the dying Marchesa.

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

The Marchese immediately caused a private inquiry to be made as to the identity of Olivia, the present Countess di Bruno; and, though this was not pursued without difficulty, the physician, who had assisted in the plan of her escape from the cruelty of Ferando di Bruno, and who was living, as well as Beatrice, who clearly remembered the sister of her late mistress, at length rendered Olivia's identity unquestionable. Now, therefore, that the Marchese's every doubt was removed, he paid a visit to *La Pieta*,  
and

and solicited, in due form, Olivia's consent to the nuptials of Vivaldi with Ellena; which she granted him with an entire satisfaction. In this interview, the Marchese was so much fascinated by the manners of the Countess, and pleased with the delicacy and sweetness, which appeared in those of Ellena, that his consent was no longer a constrained one, and he willingly relinquished the views of superior rank and fortune, which he had formerly looked to for his son, for those of virtue and permanent happiness that were now unfolded to him.

On the twentieth of May, the day on which Ellena completed her eighteenth year, her nuptials with Vivaldi were solemnized in the church of the *Santa Maria della Pieta*, in the presence of the Marchese and of the Countess di Bruno. As Ellena advanced through the church, she recollected, when on a former occasion

sion she had met Vivaldi at the altar, and, the scenes of San Sebastian rising to her memory, the happy character of those, which her present situation opposed to them, drew tears of tender joy and gratitude to her eyes. Then, irresolute, desolate, surrounded by strangers, and ensnared by enemies, she had believed she saw Vivaldi for the last time; now, supported by the presence of a beloved parent, and by the willing approbation of the person, who had hitherto so strenuously opposed her, they were met to part no more; and, as a recollection of the moment when she had been carried from the chapel glanced upon her mind, that moment when she had called upon him for succour, supplicated even to hear his voice once more, and when a blank silence, which, as she believed, was that of death, had succeeded; as the anguish of that moment was now remembered,

Ellena became more than ever sensible of the happiness of the present.

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

As a testimony of singular esteem, Paulo was permitted to be present at the marriage of his master ; when, as perched in a high gallery of the church, he looked down upon the ceremony, and witnessed the delight in Vivaldi's countenance, the satisfaction in that of my " old Lord Marchese," the pensive happiness in the Countess di Bruno's, and the tender complacency of Ellena's, which her veil,

partly undrawn, allowed him to observe, he could scarcely refrain from expressing the joy he felt, and shouting aloud, " O ! *giorno felice ! O ! giorno felice !*"\*

\* O happy day ! O happy day !

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CHAP.

C H A P. XII.

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

THOMSON.

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

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tended



tended over a valley, which opened to the bay, and the house stood at the entrance of this valley, upon a gentle slope that margined the water, and commanded the whole extent of its luxuriant shores, from the lofty cape of Miseno to the bold mountains of the south, which, stretching across the distance, appeared to rise out of the sea, and divided the gulf of Naples from that of Salerno.

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

and purple, lifted their tall heads, and threw gay gleams of light amidst the umbrageous landscape.

The style of the gardens, where lawns and groves, and woods, varied the undulating surface, was that of England, and of the present day, rather than of Italy; except "where a long alley peeping on the main," exhibited such gigantic loftiness of shade, and grandeur of perspective, as characterize the Italian taste.

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

The dresses of the higher rank of visitors were as splendid as the scenery, of which Ellena was, in every respect, the queen. But this entertainment was not given to persons of distinction only; for both Vivaldi and Ellena had wished that all the tenants of the domain should partake of it, and share the abundant happiness which themselves possessed; so that the grounds, which were extensive enough to accommodate each rank, were relinquished to a general gaiety. Paulo was, on this occasion, a sort of master of the revels; and, surrounded by a party of his own particular associates, danced once more, as he had so often wished, upon the moon-light shore of Naples.

As Vivaldi and Ellena were passing the spot which Paulo had chosen for the scene of his festivity, they paused to observe his strange capers and extravagant gesticulation, as he mingled in the dance, while every now-and-then he shouted forth,  
 though

though half breathless with the heartiness of the exercise, “*O! giorno felice! O! giorno felice!*”

On perceiving Vivaldi, and the smiles with which he and Ellena regarded him, he quitted his sports, and advancing, “Ah! my dear master,” said he, “do you remember the night, when we were travelling on the banks of the Celano, before that diabolical accident happened in the chapel of San Sebastian; don’t you remember how those people, who were tripping it away so joyously, by moonlight, reminded me of Naples and the many merry dances I had footed on the beach here?”

“I remember it well,” replied Vivaldi.

“Ah! Signor *mio*, you said at the time, that you hoped we should soon be here, and that then I should frisk it away with as glad a heart as the best of them. The first part of your hope, my dear  
master,

master, you was out in, for, as it happened, we had to go through purgatory before we could reach paradise; but the second part is come at last;—for here I am, sure enough! dancing by moonlight, in my own dear bay of Naples, with my own dear master and mistress, in safety, and as happy *almost* as myself; and with that old mountain yonder, Vesuvius, which I, forsooth! thought I was never to see again, spouting up fire, just as it used to do before we got ourselves put into the Inquisition! O! who could have foreseen all this! O! *giorno felice!* O! *giorno felice!*”

“ I rejoice in your happiness, my good Paulo,” said Vivaldi, “ almost as much as in my own; though I do not entirely agree with you as to the comparative proportion of each.”

“ Paulo!” said Ellena, “ I am indebted to you beyond any ability to re-  
pay;

pay ; for to your intrepid affection your master owes his present safety. I will not attempt to thank you for your attachment to him ; my care of your welfare shall prove how well I know it ; but I wish to give to all your friends this acknowledgment of your worth, and of my sense of it."

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

" You

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

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

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

"Pshaw!" replied Paulo, "who can stop, at such a time as this, to think about what he means! I wish that all those, who on this night are not merry enough to speak before they think, may ever after be grave enough to think before they



they speak! But you, none of you, no! not one of you! I warrant, ever saw the roof of a prison, when your master happened to be below in the dungeon, nor know what it is to be forced to run away, and leave him behind to die by himself. Poor souls! But no matter for that, you can be tolerably happy, perhaps, notwithstanding; but as for guessing how happy I am, or knowing any thing about the matter,—O! its quite beyond what you can understand. *O! giorno felice! O! giorno felice!*” repeated Paulo, as he bounded forward to mingle in the dance, and “*O! giorno felice!*” was again shouted in chorus by his joyful companions.

THE END.

