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THE
SPANISH NOVELISTS:

A SERIES OF TALES,

FROM

THE EARLIEST PERIOD TO THE CLOSE OF THE SEVENTEENTH
CENTURY.

Translated from the Originals,

WITH

CRITICAL AND BIOGRAPHICAL NOTICES.

BY

THOMAS ROSCOE,

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IN THREE VOLUMES.

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MATIAS DE LOS REYES.

THIS writer flourished at a period when the Castilian language approached its highest degree of polish and perfection, and his works bear sufficient evidence of that superior elegance, purity, and correctness which then generally prevailed. These advantages, however, when unaccompanied by higher qualities, are not such as to enable a writer to attain any considerable celebrity, especially in the walks of fiction and imagination, and surrounded by contemporaries gifted with loftier powers. The degree of reputation, therefore, which he acquired, notwithstanding the established fame of his great predecessors, redounds the more highly to his credit.

In regard to the particulars of his life, it is only recorded, that Matias de los Reyes was a native of Madrid, and wrote about the year 1624, after the period when Mendoza, Aleman, and Cervantes had banished the taste for novels of chivalry, and those

of a moral and serious cast, in favour of those of a more lively, satirical, and adventurous kind; in particular the *novelas picorescas*, which form a distinct class of their own.

In the work entitled *Curial del Parnaso*, first published at Madrid in 1624, and from which we have borrowed the specimens here given of his productions, Reyes appears to have adopted Trajano Boccalini, an eminent Italian, as his model. He subsequently published another work, entitled *Para Algunos* (For Some People), as a contrast to which his famous contemporary, Montalvan, brought out a sort of companion with the name of *Para Todos* (For Every Body), in both of which the writers treat on a great variety of subjects, with moral tracts and examples.

In addition to the two works already mentioned, there is a serious romance (MOST serious to the reader) entitled *El Menandro*, which has been attributed to Reyes; a strange compound of chivalric adventures and moral treatises, of too grave and prolix a description to invite attention.

THE DUMB LOVER AND HIS PHYSICIAN.

ONE would imagine, after considering how Adam lost his innocence, Sampson his strength, Asher his constancy, David his holiness, and Solomon his wisdom, by having a wife, that a man would examine what measure he possesses of these good qualities, before he commit himself to the marriage state. The wise man has well said, in relation to this subject, that "it is better to dwell in the wilderness than with a contentious and an angry woman;" and the following tale is a striking illustration of the same point.

In the castle of Montcaller, not far distant from Turin, the capital of the Duke of Savoy, lived the widow of one of the principal chevaliers of that country. She was young, beautiful, and accomplished, and her retired and amiable manners shed the lustre of virtue over her personal graces. So unostentatious was her behaviour, that she seemed to have been all her life the inhabitant of a village, rather than of a court; and determining upon never again

marrying, she retained only one domestic, and inhabited a small and lonely country house. Here she employed herself in the humblest duties of life, seldom allowed herself to be seen, except in going to mass on festival days, and lived in a manner altogether below her proper condition.

It is a custom in that country, for the ladies, in time of peace, to entertain any illustrious strangers, who may happen to be travelling through it, with all the attentions of domestic hospitality: but Finea, the name of our heroine, abhorred this custom, and, on all occasions, took advantage of her solitude to prevent the intrusion of company. But about this time, there arrived at Montcaller, the cavalier whose misfortune is the subject of our story. He was a knight famous throughout the province for his valour and address, and had come thither on some important public business. Having accomplished his purpose, he went on the morning previous to his return home to hear mass, at the church usually attended by Finea. He saw her, was struck with her beauty, and still more with the report of her wisdom and accomplishments. He, in fact, became most passionately enamoured of her, and, according to the usual course of things, his passion was strong in proportion to the difficulties which opposed themselves to its gratification. Hastening, therefore, to Turin, and completing his official duties, he immediately

returned to Montcaller, to pursue the conquest of Finea's heart. He spent several days in reconnoitring, but his mistress never made her appearance, except, as before, in her walk to church; and if at any time he attempted to address her, she covered her face with her hands, so as to forbid any conversation. Piqued beyond bearing at this, the knight felt his love still increasing as her disdain became more manifest. He used every art of the lover, enlarged his presents as his hopes decreased, multiplied his attentions in proportion as she rejected them, and the more severely she repulsed him, the more earnest was he in his suit. But neither presents, attentions, nor patience availed any thing, with the firmness and austerity of the widow. The miserable lover was able neither to obtain the least sign of success, nor to divert his thoughts a moment from his design. He lost his appetite, sleep fled his eyes, and he fell into a dreadful sickness. The physicians, not discovering the seat of the disease, could apply no remedy, and he went step by step towards the grave. While in this condition, he was visited by a friend of his, a knight of Espoleto. To him, Lelio, the name of our hero, related the story of his love, and the cause of his sickness; particularizing and dwelling upon the cruelty and harshness of his mistress, which would, without doubt, prove the cause of his death. The knight of Espoleto, finding the origin of his

friend's illness, said to him affectionately, "Lelio, trust this affair of your love to my hands. Fear not but that I shall discover some method for bringing this lady to a more tractable state of mind."—"I ask no more," replied the sick man, "but that you would speak to her, and tell her the condition into which her cruelty has thrown me; for I think if she knew it, she would not be so inexorable—or so obstinately opposed to my passion. But tell me, how do you intend proceeding? for I have employed both entreaties and stratagems to obtain only one hour's interview, yet without success." "Attend," said the other, "to your recovery, and leave every thing else to me."

Lelio was contented with the promises of his friend, and in a few days, to the astonishment of his physicians, was in a condition to leave his chamber. The natives of Espoleto are all great talkers, and endowed with a ready wit. They are admirable beggars for Saint Anthony, whose cause they advocate through all Italy, and are omnipotent in words, gesticulations, and protestations, by which they make all whom they address, converts to their persuasion. Lelio's friend was of this notion, and not forgetting the promise he had made, he set about fulfilling it in the best manner possible. As, in addition to their occupation already mentioned, the Espositans are celebrated for their traffic in all

female curiosities, he thought he might make use of this circumstance to accomplish his designs. He accordingly bought a basket, furnished it with wares, and having clad himself like a travelling merchant, set out for his destination. On arriving before Finea's house, he loudly recounted his list of articles, and the lady, hearing his noise, stepped to the door herself, and beckoned him with her hand. The pedlar was not backward in accepting the invitation; and when he had entered the house, taking advantage of his assumed old age, he began to converse with great ease and garrulousness. The lady put her hand into the basket, and having shown great skill in her judgment of the different articles, at last fixed her attention on a piece of valuable and very beautiful stuff, saying, if she could she would have purchased the whole of it. "Señora," said the pedlar, "take the whole, ask not the price either of this or any thing else here—all is at your service. I am sufficiently paid in finding they are agreeable to your taste." "Heavens," said the lady, "I require nothing but what I can pay for, women like me must not receive things for nothing; but I thank you for your kindness; tell me the price I pray you, it is not right you should be so liberal of your property and labour." "If," rejoined the pedlar, "you have a heart as generous as your countenance is beautiful, you will receive what I offer as coming from one who

desires to consecrate them on the altar of your beauty."

Finea, hearing this, blushed like a rose opening its young buds to the first May sun. Looking attentively at the supposed merchant, she said, "You astonish me much by speaking as you do. I should wish to know to what purpose you thus address me, since I am persuaded you are under an error, and mistake the person to whom you are sent." Then, without changing his appearance, but with eyes bent downwards, he spoke of the sufferings which her disdain had caused to Lelio, how passionately he loved her, and how no one else in the world possessed greater accomplishments, or could be found in the court of Turin with more wealth, valour, courtesy, affability; at length he succeeded so well, that Finea agreed to give her lover a secret interview, appointing both the time and place.

Lelio was delighted at his friend's diligence, and hastening at the appointed time to the place assigned by Finea, was conducted by her, in company with a domestic, into a low back apartment, but which was sufficiently large to hinder the conversation from being heard by the servant, who was sent to the farther part of it. Lelio began by declaring his intentions, with eyes full of love and tenderness, saying how much he had suffered for her sake, and supplicating her to have pity on him, which, if she

granted, would purchase his gratitude for ever. She replied, that she was a widow, that she had ceased to think of love; that she now only regarded the services of religion, and that there were many more beautiful women under no such restraints. At last, after much reasoning, the poor lover, seeing that he was fatiguing himself in vain, and that she was determined not to give him any comfort, with tears in his eyes, and almost ready to die, said, "Since I see I must resign all hope of pity, and that I am doomed to suffer the extremity of misery, I have still one means left of preferring my request; it is, that you would grant me peace for the sake of our common country.

The lady sought a moment to reply. "I question," said she at length, "if your love, Señor Lelio, be as great as you say. But to try it, you shall swear to observe one request which I will make, and which, if you religiously fulfil, shall obtain my regard in return. The incautious cavalier solemnly swore to do whatever Finea should require, and besought her to declare her wishes.

"Señor Lelio," said she, "I grant your petition; and you must fulfil mine, according to your solemn oath. That which I require of you then is, that, for the space of three years from this time, you speak no more with any human being, neither man nor woman, whomsoever it may be — that for this space you

live as if you were dumb!" Wonderful that thus at the feet of a woman, the spoil of her dexterity, should have fallen all the wisdom and valour of a knight. Well were the sentiments of the wise man and of Saint Hieronimus now exemplified! Lelio was for a moment thunderstruck at his mistress's demand, which appeared mad and foolish, and almost impossible to be observed. However, having taken a most solemn oath, he determined upon fulfilling the promise. Having, therefore, made signs with his hand, placing it on his mouth, and thus assuring the lady of his intention, he departed, after a similar farewell, to his home.

Continuing in the same determination after his return to observe his oath inviolably, he pretended to have become suddenly dumb—a misfortune for which he was greatly pitied by all who knew him. From Monciller he went to Turin, still pretending to be suffering under the loss of his speech. He then proceeded to Ferrara, whither his fame, as one of the bravest and most accomplished chevaliers in Europe, had preceded him. The duke accordingly invited him to his court, where his noble bearing won him the respect of the courtiers and the admiration of the ladies. An opportunity also soon occurred, in which he rendered the duke good service by his knightly prowess; and the war in which the prince was then engaged had no sooner terminated, than he

bestowed the highest honours on the good chevalier for his aid. But the more he regarded him, the greater was his sorrow for the affliction under which he suffered, and he determined that no means should be left untried for his recovery. He therefore made it known throughout Italy, at all times celebrated for its learned schools of medicine, that whosoever could discover a remedy for the dumb knight should receive a reward of fifty thousand florins; but to prevent needless trouble, that they who failed should forfeit as much, or be imprisoned in default of payment. Numbers were the unfortunate physicians who employed all the resources of their art in vain, and repented of having ever made the attempt, in prison. At length Finea, secretly secure of success, offered to effect the cure; but all the courtiers ridiculed the idea of a woman's performing a cure in which so many learned men had failed. The duke, however, determined on making the experiment of her skill, and directed her to be shown the apartment of Lelio, which was in the most retired part of the palace.

Finea, however, was not met with the ardor which she had, it may be supposed, expected. The knight armed himself with reason and resolution, and resisted every approach of tenderness, with the suspicion that she had been attracted by the reward rather than by love and compassion for him. He called to mind also the greatness of the affection he had showed her—the

cruel manner in which she had treated him, and how much he had suffered for her sake. Having a little tempered his passion by these means, he determined upon taking vengeance for her cruelty, and making her suffer in turn. Finea, therefore, having saluted him courteously, and mentioned the reasons for desiring to see him alone, without obtaining the expected reply, said, "Señor Lelio, do you not know me? Do you not see that I am your mistress, Finea, to whom you a little time since made so many professions of love?"

He answered her by signs that he knew her well, and then, touching his tongue and shaking his head, gave her to understand he had not the power of speech.

Finea answered him a little anxiously, that she absolved him from his oath—that she would keep her promise, and excuse him the half-year, still wanting to complete the period of his silence—that she had come to Ferrara for the sole purpose of doing this, and giving him a full assurance of her affection. To all which Lelio gave no reply, but touching his tongue and sorrowfully shrugging up his shoulders.

The Señora, seeing the resolution of Lelio, was at a loss what to do; for neither tears, promises, nor entreaties, were able to effect the miracle she had boasted herself capable of performing. At last, finding nothing of any avail, she was obliged to retire unsuc-

cessful, and in default of paying the fine, was thrown into prison with the rest who had made vain attempts at the cure. After this occurrence, the cavalier, well satisfied with the revenge he had taken, presented himself before the duke, and unloosening his hitherto tied-up tongue, told him the whole history of the circumstances which led to his long silence. He then besought him immediately to free the persons who had been so unjustly confined on this account, and repaid them for their sufferings and uneasiness with very ample gifts. Finea was then sent for, and in the presence of all the court Lelio said, "Well do you know, Señora, how long and how faithfully I served you, and how truly I deserved to obtain that return which the highest lady of the land fails not to give her faithful lover; well do you know also how little was the reward I received for my great toil, and how you obliged me, by a solemn oath, to three years' silence. This penance I have observed without the slightest remission; and I would rather have died than have failed in the observance. And now, although your rigour deserved a greater punishment than that you have received, I am determined to use my power with lenity; and I, therefore, publicly say, that you ought to receive the reward promised for my cure, and I supplicate his highness to give it you for a dowry, and to permit me to espouse you, hoping that you will in future be more courteous and tractable.

The duke and all his courtiers greatly applauded the address of Lelio, and his highness immediately ordered the fifty thousand florins to be given to Finea, as being rightly due to her for the cure of Lelio. To the knight he gave fresh assurances of favour and promotion; and the nuptials being celebrated with all due rejoicing, he succeeded in persuading Lelio to settle in Ferrara, where he spent his days with Finea in peace and happiness.

THE MIRROR OF FRIENDS.

I WAS the only and beloved child of parents who bestowed upon me an excellent education. No sooner had I mastered the first elements of learning, than they sent me to the famous university of Bologna, under the guardianship of a particular friend, called Federico, one of the most wealthy merchants in that city, and universally known and respected. He had a son exactly of my own age; nor did the resemblance between us end here; it extended equally to our features, character, and manners. Add to this, that our student's dresses being the same, we were not unfrequently accosted the one for the other. My reception by Federico's family was like that of his own son, with whom, indeed, I soon became more intimate; our studies and pursuits were the same, and the same apartments were assigned us.

This acquaintance gradually ripened into a more perfect friendship, and we were soon seldom to be seen out of each other's company. It seemed as if

we had only one mind, and every thing, even to our most secret feelings, was mutually communicated.

Four years had elapsed without any interruption of our youthful amity and regard, when one day it was my fate, in passing along one of the principal streets, to fix my eyes upon a beautiful and richly attired lady, looking from a balcony, the mere sight of whom excited such emotion in my soul, that I felt as if bereft of life in her absence—the lovely vision was ever before my eyes—I was enslaved, impassioned, and no longer master of my own mind.

It would be idle, however, to dilate on the growth and progress of my new passion; it is enough that the lady was not insensible to its extreme devotedness and intensity, and returned it with scarcely less fervour; her soul seemed to have caught the strong and all-absorbing contagion that preyed on mine; and she felt the deprivation of my absence as much as I felt hers. There was only one circumstance at all painful in this our first and sudden love; and it was, that my lovely Laura insisted upon its being kept wholly secret, and not unfolded, even to my nearest and dearest friend.

We had not long enjoyed the freshness and felicity of our passionate vows and wishes, before Laura's father, sensible of the advantage of such an alliance, and being on intimate terms with the family, made proposals to the parents of Lisardo,

my friend, to bestow his daughter's hand in marriage, and cement the union between the families by still stronger ties. There lay no difficulties in the way, the proposals were accepted, and by none with less hesitation than my young friend Lisardo. Laura and I were the only persons who had cause for regret; although, situated as we were, we could not make known our wishes. We trusted rather to fortune than to the risk of proclaiming our secret correspondence; but not without experiencing, as will shortly appear, the ill effects of such secret proceedings, with all those doubts, and fears, and agonies of suspense felt most deeply by those who most truly love. I adored Laura, yet not more than I valued and esteemed my friend. His visits became more and more frequent; our very resemblance rendered my risk the greater; often I fancied Laura smiled upon him, and, spite of the most virtuous resolutions, the pangs of jealousy shot through my heart. With the most fascinating manners, and nearly always in her presence, Lisardo pressed the advantages he thus enjoyed; and I shortly after heard that the period of his intended nuptials was approaching. What were my emotions—the fierce struggles between love and duty—upon hearing this intelligence; and from the lips of my rival, yet my dearest friend. My sense of honour, my obligations to him and to his family, forbade me to cross his

path ; but still I felt that I could never vanquish, never survive this first and fatal passion of my breast.

I had nothing left but to die ; yet my virtuous education, and my principles, seemed to cut off and prohibit this last resource. I could not even tear myself away from the spot ; and such was the intensity of my suffering, that it at last manifested itself to all in a deep and settled melancholy, soon followed by a severe and dangerous illness. To me this was a relief ; the anxiety and attentions of my friend Lisardo were incessant ; he hardly ever left my couch ; all which only aggravated my distemper ; and in a few weeks the physicians despaired of my life. Such was my friend's affliction, that he no longer thought of celebrating his marriage on the appointed day ; and singular as it may seem, I feel convinced that it was this resolution on his part that saved me from a premature grave. Yet I long lay unconscious of my sufferings, not the least of which was the necessity of concealing the source of them from Lisardo, which I now regretted that I had not at first done. He too loved her ; could I wish to inflict all that I suffered upon him ? Besides, Laura had obtained my promise not to reveal our early vows to any living being, and from this promise she had never released me. Her wishes and feelings were dearer to me than my own life ; our stolen

interviews should never first be revealed by me. Her silence seemed to say that she loved Lisardo, and must have forgotten her earliest vows.

While in this state of suspense, my friend one evening approached my bed side, and addressing me in a more earnest and affectionate tone than usual, he said,—“Now, my friend Ricardo, you know with what pleasure I had looked forward to see you grace my approaching nuptials with your presence. But since you continue thus confined to a sick chamber, I have ceased to dwell with the same delight upon the celebration of a love festival that cannot be gladdened by your eyes. Such in truth is my concern, that the esteemed and beloved object herself,—my own Laura, no longer fills my thoughts as heretofore, being busied rather with devising plans how best to divert the deep sadness that preys upon your mind. To do this, believe me, I would adventure the most precious of all I possess, even went it to the sacrifice of my own peace and honour.”

I thanked him, and added, that he could give me no greater pleasure than that of his company, which ever cheered and consoled me.

“Then why,” he replied, “should you sigh so deeply as you speak thus ; unless there be something beyond what my society can relieve ? Confide in me, I intreat you, and on the faith of a loyal friend, I will make every effort, as I said, to procure you

the desired relief." "You are, indeed, kind, I then replied, but the cause of my suffering, is, alas! irremediable; and, since you could not, though you knew, remove it, is it at all proper on my part to unfold it to you?"

"What evil," he interrupted, "can there possibly exist that calls for so much secrecy? Surely you show too little confidence in one so sincerely devoted to you; and who may well doubt your friendship, if you persist in disguising the real truth." "Nay," replied I, "doubt not the perfect sincerity of my regard; there is no one from whom I would less willingly conceal all I know."

"But you compel me," exclaimed Lisardo, in anger; "and you must now either consent to unfold the cause of your continued depression, or to see our intimacy broken off from this time forth."

Unable longer to withstand solicitations and threats like these, I came to the resolution of confiding to him the whole; no less to comply with his request, than to relieve my mind from the painful secret which oppressed it. This I did in the fullest and most undisguised manner, excusing myself for not having earlier revealed my sad story, by pleading the injunction of Laura to that effect.

He listened in perfect silence till I touched upon this last topic, when he first interrupted me by saying, "Yet I must still complain of your little faith,

inasmuch as not even the love of woman would have shewn itself more true and loyal than my friendship for you. More than this ; I should have been enabled to promote your wishes ; while by your obstinate silence, you ran the risk of losing every chance, and of rendering me the cruel instrument of all your sufferings, without becoming in the remotest degree culpable, either in your eyes or in those of the world. Henceforth, however, consider yourself as freed from your cause of sorrow ; for you only shall become possessed of the hand of Laura. It would be unreasonable in me to desire the possession of one who is already betrothed, and there can be nothing extravagant in my resigning her to you now, when I assure you, that, were she mine, I should not hesitate to give her up in exchange for the restoration of your health. Be of good cheer, therefore, and recover with all speed, that we may proceed to put our intended design into effect."

It would be vain to attempt to describe the excessive joy that thrilled my heart on hearing these words. It seemed as if all my sufferings had miraculously ceased, and the only painful sensation was that of having too unworthily estimated the generous and noble character of a friend capable of such true greatness and self-denial. Not a word of gratitude could I utter ; my eyes were rivetted upon the ground ; and I can only recollect that, in attempting

to give utterance to my feelings, I burst into a flood of tears.

He threw his arms about my neck, knowing the cause of my emotion, and then said,—“It is all well, Ricardo; I have no cause to complain, and you ought not to think so, as it would seem by this extreme delicacy of feeling you have done. In that case even, you were pardoned, if such additional proof of my regard for you be at all wanting to set your mind at rest. Try then to get well as soon as you can, for I feel interested in settling every thing to your satisfaction as speedily as possible.”

Hearing him speak thus, I ventured to mention the many difficulties that seemed to stand in the way of my availing myself of his generous design,—“For how, my dear friend, can we prevail upon Laura’s parents to transfer their affection from you to a mere stranger, of whose character they are almost wholly ignorant?” His answer was,—“Are you well assured of the affections of Laura,—does she sincerely wish to become your wife?”

Being assured that she did, he continued:—“Seeing it is so, we have nothing to fear; and what we cannot effect by dint of reason with the parents, we must contrive to bring about by art. You are aware how very nearly we resemble each other in person, so as even to deceive, at times, our most intimate friends. Now here lies the best chance of our future success.

“The marriage is intended to be celebrated in this very house, and not until evening; so as to favour my plan, which is this:—you will consent to remain in your room, as if confined by sickness, till the hour arrives. I shall then come and pay you a visit, unobserved by the rest of the family, and there dismantling myself of my bridal attire, I will remain in your place; while you assume mine, arrayed as the bridegroom, and claim the hand of your beloved Laura, who having first loved you, will justly become your own. The late hour, and our resemblance, will sufficiently favour the intended happy result. In order, moreover, to avoid anything like imposition upon your beloved Laura, and to enhance her pleasure, it will be preferable to inform her of our intention. When the parents afterwards learn the truth, they will become reconciled to what cannot be helped. You must, first, however, recover your good looks, lest we should otherwise be discovered and until you be perfectly restored, I will invent some excuses or other to delay the period of my intended marriage.”

This ingenious, yet harmless device, was much applauded by me; and my gratitude to the best of friends,—at once my physician and my benefactor,—knew no bounds. I lost no time in communicating our plan to Laura, reporting every particular; and had the delight of ascertaining that she entered fully

into all our feelings, expressing herself in the most lavish and grateful terms at this unexampled act of virtuous love and friendship.

Such was its effect upon my health, that within a very few days I felt myself wholly a different being, and without the least traces of illness remaining in my appearance. Indeed, I was already equal to the task of assuming the character of Lisardo, who instantly fixed upon the day to be appointed for his marriage. When the happy morning arrived, I feigned extreme illness, and my friend affected a wish to delay the ceremony to another day. But this not being complied with, on the part of Laura's parents, he was easily induced to acquiesce, so that before evening, the bride made her appearance at the house of Federico, my friend's father, and Lisardo came to announce to me the long wished for intelligence. What were my sensations as he began to disrobe himself of all his bridal grace and gallantry, to bestow them upon me! I would have resisted, but it was too late; it was the work of a moment, and with a cheerful air my friend assisted and encouraged me. He then gently compelled me to leave the room, and proceeded to assume my place. I joined the bridal party in an elegant apartment below stairs. There I took the willing hand of my Laura, and we pledged our mutual faith before the holy man, with equal sincerity and rapture, in the presence of the bride's relatives and friends.

The guests then sat down to supper—I say the guests, because the only feast for Laura and myself was the conscious delight we dare hardly yet believe, of belonging to each other, and which made it impossible for us to relish any other repast. By degrees, the company broke up, and took leave; till at length, after so many trials and disappointments, we found ourselves in each other's presence, and none beside us. What a delicious moment when the last guest retired—when, turning to my Laura, I clasped her to my bosom—my bride—my wife.

And whose, on the ensuing morrow, were the first congratulations I received? Those of our noble friend and benefactor, to whose apartment I hastened the moment of quitting my own. He embraced me, and we next began to consult respecting the best means of coming to an amicable explanation of the whole affair; and at length determined on going instantly to my friend's father, Federico, in whose high worth and prudence we had every reason to confide. Besides, he loved me little less than his own son, and would have no difficulty in reconciling the parents and friends of Laura to the idea of receiving me in the place of Lisardo. Upon seeing us, he expressed his surprise that his son Lisardo should so early have left the side of his lovely Laura; but it was much greater when he beheld me, and not his son, arrayed in the bridegroom's dress, and kneeling to receive his

pardon and blessing. We then gave him an exact account of every thing as it had passed. Here, however, his surprise gave way to a flush of passion too evident to be concealed. The idea of not having previously been consulted, and of his son's having resigned so lovely a bride, and so wealthy an alliance, one indeed every way so desirable, without his permission, were certainly trying to his feelings. At the same time, he was aware of the powerful influence of Laura's friends, and that they would by no means submit even to the appearance of such an affront. Yet he concealed his fears at the time, and having checked the first sallies of his indignation, he merely observed:—"Your friendship, my son, must assuredly have been very great; such an action displays at least some generosity, if not magnanimity of mind. For Lisardo, doubtless, had the hand and fortune of Laura in his own power, which he as freely relinquished in his friend's behalf. This, as far as regards yourselves, may perhaps be right; but in respect to Laura's parents, it will be looked upon, as all these secret proceedings generally are, as neither more nor less than unjustifiable imposition." "These difficulties," replied Lisardo, "are precisely what we wish to consult you upon, and if possible to remove. To your greater prudence we look for safety in the approaching storm—to conduct our adventurous little bark of friendship to its desired haven in peace. No one

so well as yourself can display the amiable and brilliant qualities of my friend Ricardo, to the eyes of Laura's parents. Be persuaded then, dear Sir, to forgive us, and to render us some assistance in this our singular and very unpleasant dilemma."

My friend's father somewhat softened, if not flattered, by our humble and appealing demeanour, at length consented to take upon himself the task of imparting to Laura's father, and her other relatives, the curious predicament in which we stood. This he did in so cautious and admirable a manner, exaggerating my qualities, and showing the advantages of the alliance, that both the father and his friends expressed their satisfaction and their willingness to accept me as their relative. The excellent Federico next wrote to my own parents, who though at first surprised and shocked, no sooner learnt the particulars, than they set out for Bologna, bearing with them an immense assortment of rich jewels, and other costly presents, much to the taste of their new relatives. They soon became delighted with the surpassing beauty, grace, and discretion of my Laura; and after residing at Bologna about a month, we took our leave of my friend Lisardo, and his excellent father, in order to return to our native place.

From the period, however, that we quitted Bologna, during more than two years, I was extremely uneasy at receiving no tidings of Lisardo, notwith-

standing the most urgent and repeated inquiries. In the course of my researches, I again visited Bologna, where the only intelligence I could gather, was of the death of his father, and my dear friend's final departure from that city. This redoubled my anxiety, for alas! what could I now think? Had my friend repented of the sacrifice made in my favour; had he been more passionately attached to Laura than I had from his conduct been led to suppose; and had he been unable to vanquish this deep-rooted attachment? In the midst of these suppositions, I lost no time in endeavouring to trace his route; but all without avail. Still unwearied by disappointments, I continued the pursuit, in the course of which I visited all the chief cities, the states and sea ports of Italy.

Upon reaching Naples for the second time, and at length thinking of my return home, I beheld, on entering one of the chief squares, a large concourse of people assembled, as if to witness some grand public spectacle. I succeeded in getting through part of the crowd, so as to extend my view; and perceived that it was no other than preparations for an execution. It was for the crime of homicide, and the insignia of death were already presented to my eyes;—the sword, the sand to receive the blood, and the executioner at his post. In a few moments afterwards the criminal was brought forth, and took

his station upon the sand in front of the executioner; a priest, administering consolation, being seen on either side of him. His features were deadly pale, yet noble and undaunted. I turned away my eyes—a strange sensation came over me, as if some dream had suddenly recurred to my mind; and I again raised my eyes and fixed them upon his countenance. At that moment it chanced that our eyes met; a slight flush suffused those white and deathly features. I started, for I knew *him* then, and uttered a loud piercing cry, as a thrill of horror ran through my frame, and I felt as if sinking into the earth. As I lay supported in the arms of some persons near to me, I heard my name pronounced by a voice, which, though long a stranger to my ear, confirmed all that my worst fears had told me. It was that of my friend Lisardo; of the criminal on the scaffold before me. Great God! yes it was Lisardo. He it was who now called me—who vainly tried to stretch forth his pinioned arms to embrace me. At that sight my terror and surprise vanished; starting from my swoon, I felt the strength of a giant, as I sprang forward, exclaiming, “I am the murderer! that man is innocent! Unbind him, and add not another murder to one deed of blood.” Before I had finished these words, I was already at my friend’s side, and held him clasped in my arms. But suddenly recollecting myself, I extended my hands towards the

Sbirri, who stood round the spot, when the goaler instantly came forward and bound my hands. All this seemed the work of a moment; it acted like an electric shock upon the surrounding people, who gave vent to their feelings in mingled murmurs and applause; while my friend and myself stood lost to every feeling save that of delight, but ill concealed, of meeting each other once more.

One of the magistrates now came forward, and perceiving the tumult had somewhat subsided, gave orders for the dispersion of the mob; at the same time directing that both Lisardo and myself should be conducted to the public prison.

All we petitioned for was, to be permitted to remain in the same place of confinement until the affair should be further investigated; and this, after some difficulty, was granted. What were our feelings upon finding ourselves alone with each other. The first motion of Lisardo was to throw himself at my feet, and thank me as the preserver of his life: "But, alas," he continued, "at what a sacrifice,—at what a terrific risk. In accusing yourself of a heinous crime, you have done worse than preserve my life,—you have accused the innocent;—ah, why not have let justice take its course." "Justice!" I exclaimed with surprise; "I never dreamed of inquiring.....it is impossible," "What," replied Lisardo, "do you believe that I am not guilty?"

“ Can I believe otherwise,” at the same time fixing my eyes more intently upon his face? “ Then,” he exclaimed in a tone of heart-felt delight, “ you are still my true friend,—my Ricardo,—I am indeed the victim of injustice;—and I will now give you the whole of my sad eventful history, until I became reduced to the very last stage of human wretchedness and disgrace. Ah, Ricardo ! within two months after you left Bologna, my dear father died. Though he stood high in credit, his wealth had never been great ; and some unfortunate engagements had so far involved his affairs, that on a full settlement of his accounts, only a small surplus remained. When he went, his credit and influence died with him, and I was left much like the poor bird in *Æsop*, shorn of all his splendid feathers.

“ You would naturally suppose the friends and relatives of your Laura would now have congratulated themselves on my not having become her husband. It was just the reverse. When they saw me in difficulties, instead of assisting, they took the opportunity of wreaking their revenge upon me, for the imagined slight, and became my bitterest enemies. In short, I was soon compelled to leave my native city, with the poor wreck of my fortune—a few jewels—all that my creditors had left me, and take my chance in the wide world before me. Only four days after having left Bologna, in passing

the outskirts of a thick wood towards evening, I was unluckily set upon by robbers, who cruelly despoiled me of every article I possessed, leaving me hungry and naked to proceed on my way.

“ In this extremity, I directed my steps towards a little village, a short way distant, where the people out of compassion gave me these wretched garments in which you now see me. Henceforth I was compelled, in order to support life, to beg my way from place to place.

“ Often did the idea of our former friendship cross my mind, with a feeling of anguish I cannot express. My pride had hitherto borne me up against fortune ; and forgive me, my dear friend, but I had resolved to endure any degree of hardship, rather than appear in the form of a suppliant before one with whom I had always appeared on a footing of perfect equality, and who, moreover, conceived himself something indebted to me. But now this foolish pride was completely subdued, and I sighed to reach the place of your residence, spite of my misgivings that poverty was ever considered despicable and loathsome, and that even I might not escape the contempt along with the pity of my former friends. Yet even this last solace of seeing you once more before I died seemed to be denied me ; for to sorrow and unheard of sufferings, sickness was now added, and for months I lay in a public hospital,

lingering between life and death. Nearly two years had elapsed since I left Bologna; I knew nothing of your place of residence, and was unable to have reached it if I had. How often did I sigh for death, and think of different means of ridding myself of so wretched an existence. But the cup of life's bitterness was not yet full; I had to drain it to the very dregs; and it was you, my Ricardo, who administered it to me, though—”

“ I! impossible — utterly impossible! — I have sought you everywhere. I left no means untried to discover you.”

“ Were you not at your own country residence only a very short time since?” inquired Lisardo.

“ I was; but set out again almost immediately in quest of you.”

“ True,” rejoined Lisardo; “ yet you saw me near your own villa; I begged alms from you, and you deigned not to stop and bestow them; but rode on, pointing to the menial who followed you to relieve my wants, which he did according as my dress seemed to require.”

“ Heavens! do you mean to sport with my feelings—my honour?—no, it is only a jest—such a thing is quite incredible.”

“ No! it is quite true,” said Lisardo: “ I threw myself across your path, I begged alms, and wished to give my name; but with an angry look, that shot

through my soul, you bade me apply to your servant, and begone."

"Oh! God forgive me, then, if I did. Yet I remember something of the kind. Heaven's ways are very wonderful! And could that mendicant have been you?"

"It was, indeed," replied Lisardo; "and when, after all my sufferings, I thought myself despised by my only and best friend—not considering how greatly I must have been altered in this strange disguise—it is surprising that I did not die of grief upon the spot. I turned my steps, I knew not, and I cared not, whither; but at the end of some days I chanced to reach the spot where I was last found. I had no fear that fortune could have any thing worse in reserve for me, but I was mistaken. I found an ancient cavern, that seemed to offer me some refuge against the inclemency of the season, and there I took up my melancholy abode. I had not observed on entering, the dead body of a man, near which I was early the next morning found slumbering, by some peasants of the district, who awoke me rudely, at the same time pointing to the corpse of the murdered man. I gazed on the terrific spectacle; yet was compelled to feel how far more horrible must be my own situation that taught me to envy even such a lot. "Yes," I exclaimed, "thou art at rest, and never canst thou feel the

agony which I now suffer. Would to heaven that I could now exchange my place for thine. I should so have brought these human sorrows to a final close.

“I had little leisure, however, to indulge in lamentations over my unhappy lot. The ministers of justice were at hand; whom, instead of avoiding, I met with a joyful and serene aspect, in the hope that my sufferings would not much longer endure. Upon being accused of the murder, I thought it useless to make any defence; but submitting myself quietly into the hands of justice, entreated to be brought to the nearest dungeon, and to be allowed the luxury of a little bread and water before my trial. This was charitably granted to me, and the rest you know.”

“Yes, and most happy and fortunate do I esteem myself in having arrived in time to rescue your dear and precious life, and to devote my whole existence to your future welfare.”

“You have already,” replied my Lisardo, “more than repaid me by risking your life, which you must no longer persist in. That is too great a sacrifice for the one I made, in presenting you with her who was about to become my own wife. She first loved you; I had no title beyond what chance and fortune gave me to her; and your coming forward to save me, is an act of pure, disinterested generosity, such as I had no right to claim. I

absolve you, therefore, dear Ricardo, from all responsibility, as regards my lot ; and when I come seriously to reflect, believe me, you are but rendering me an ungracious service by wishing to prolong my days. Alas ! I have lived but too long, I have known enough of human life ; and the very consciousness of the terrific evils and fatalities to which it is ever liable, would continue to haunt me amidst the utmost security, and to embitter with past recollections, and future fears, my remnant of existence. Go, therefore, and recall your ill-judged words,—accuse not yourself of a foul crime in the vain hope of saving me. Hasten without loss of time ; confess the real truth to the good chaplain of this prison, and he will take your deposition before the authorities, who will then set you free. My days are numbered,—I have not long to live.” “Never ! never !” I exclaimed, “I would rather die a thousand deaths !”

“Remember your Laura,” said Lisardo ; “I am a lonely and useless being,—a burden and a blot upon this goodly earth.” “For your sake I would sacrifice both wife and boy,—all I hold dearest in the world. Restore me only your former love and confidence, my Lisardo.”

The tears started to his eyes, but ere he could reply, a tumult was heard without,—our prison door opened, and a messenger suddenly announced the discovery of the real murderers, the same who

had robbed Lisardo, whose clothes and jewels were discovered upon their persons.

These joyful tidings, which at once vindicated the character of Lisardo, and rescued me from the perilous situation in which I stood, were nevertheless attended with the same unhappy fatality that seemed to have pursued my friend's footsteps, and turned every occurrence into a source of unhappiness whithersoever he went. It was, however, the last trial he was doomed to bear,—the sudden revulsion was too much for his exhausted frame. He gazed most earnestly in my face a few moments, uttering a deep sigh; and then would have fallen had I not caught him in my arms.

“I am dying,” he cried in a faint voice; “Oh, forgive me, my dear friend, and ask Laura to forgive me!” “Forgive!” I exclaimed, “Oh, talk not thus,—talk not of leaving me now.”

“Yes, forgive! for I have never ceased to love Laura, your wife,—fondly, passionately loved her, as when I first—last saw her. Say I died for my error—my crime against you and her,—but I lost her, and all else went to wreck,—nothing without Laura.” These were his last words.

He expired in my arms; and though I have since supported life, for the sake of her he loved, its dearest enjoyments have nothing in them half so sweet, as the fond hope of rejoining the sainted spirit of my friend, “in another and a better world.”

LOVE AND HONOUR.

IN the populous city of Copenhagen, at the court of the great King of Denmark, there now lives a certain courtier, whose real name, for good reasons, as well as that of others whom I shall have occasion to mention, will not here be given. The courtier, however, we shall call Artemio, a man celebrated at the Danish court for his rare abilities; though in point of rank belonging only to the middle class of people. He had formed an union with a lady in the same sphere of life as himself; a beautiful being, deserving of far higher commemoration than any I am equal to bestow, richly gifted as she was with all those virtues which rendered her a bright example to her whole sex. Her name we propose to call Antandra; she was adored by her husband, and such was her devotedness to his happiness, that the simple wishes of Artemio were the laws that governed their household. Not long, however, were they destined to enjoy this delicious union of hearts and minds undisturbed. The enemy of their peace was near, and doubtless prompted a

certain knight, called Leopold, one of the king's chamberlains, and high in the royal favour, to envy Artemio the possession of so much excellence and beauty.

This knight was of an artful character, by means of which, more than by any superior virtue and capacity, he had contrived to rise in the world. When excited by his passions, he became violent, headstrong, and uncourteous, as little respecting the rights of others as his own honour. He had first beheld the lovely Antandra at one of the public festivals, where her beauty eclipsed that of all others, as the sun surpasses the less brilliant stars. Becoming violently enamoured, he instantly inquired of his confidants the rank and name of the lady. They informed him, that though not of high birth, she was a woman of strict virtue, and that any pretensions in that quarter must prove hopeless. By his smile, the handsome Leopold did not seem to acquiesce in the correctness of this remark. The difficulties they represented to him, he felt rather as a spur to his desires, shrewdly opining that his wealth and his influence at court would suffice to vanquish greater impediments than stood in his way. He already gazed upon the lady with anticipated triumph in his eyes, esteeming there was not a single beauty in the island who could long resist his attempts. He first made a point of exhibiting his personal accomplish-

ments, walking, dancing, and riding in company with the beloved object ; he had then recourse to flattery and gallantries of the most delicate and captivating kind. These, he followed up with the lover's artillery of presents, and public entertainments, dazzling and bewildering, as it were, the imagination of his victims with the enchantments he spread around. By similar means he trusted to surprise all the defences of Antandra's chastity, and for this purpose soon brought his worst devices into play. His approaches, however, proved less successful than he expected, and whenever he had recourse to bolder movements, he found himself invariably repulsed. His manœuvres were all counteracted, and in his open attacks he came off only with contempt and disdain. He persevered, however, like a wily veteran, in his views, drawing his lines stronger and stronger round the citadel, even skirmishing and inventing new mines and machinery to compass its capture ; withal he had the worst of the battle.

At length the abandoned courtier, finding all other manœuvres vain, had recourse to the following stratagem, which did him very little credit ; but which we shall recount as a warning and example to all evil disposed coveters of their neighbour's wives. He came to the resolution, then, of offering large bribes, for the purpose of corrupting the commander of this invincible fortress himself, in the hope of thus receiv-

ing the keys of the treasure from the hands of the possessor, and making him a party to his own dishonour. With this view, he invited Artemio to his house; and after some time ingratiating himself into his confidence and good opinion, he began to lavish upon him promises and favours without end. At last, when he conceived he had laid him under sufficient obligations, he began to discover his evil designs. Receiving no answer, he at once made bold to propose, that Artemio should be advanced to one of the most lucrative and honourable offices in the realm, upon condition of consenting to make him master of the sole object of his love. As the light flashed upon Artemio's mind, he stood thunderstruck; deeply attached to his lovely consort, the words of Leopold struck daggers to his heart. Yet aware of his unlimited authority, and the numerous obligations under which he himself already lay, he felt that he was in the courtier's power, and must pause before he defied the authority of one who stood so high in favour at court. Besides, he knew the excessive ambition, and the violence of which he was capable, when suddenly crossed in any object of his pursuit. He was afraid, that as he had shewn so little respect for his honour, as to avow such a design, he would hardly stop short at any attempt, however daring, to accomplish his atrocious views.

Accordingly, he stood some time doubtful, revolv-

ing in his mind a variety of suggestions, that occurred on the spur of the moment. He at length replied, that he should perhaps be better able to return an answer to such a proposal when they should next meet; and the artful Leopold, relying upon his great power, and the effect of his benefactions, concluded from the answer that the affair was already in good train, in particular as it seemed only deferred until the ensuing meeting. At the same time, he gave the wretched husband to understand, that he fully expected, under pain of his displeasure, to be made acquainted with the resolution he was about to adopt as early as the ensuing day.

Artemio rushed from his presence, and hastened home with a heavy heart. As he reflected upon the vast influence, and the numerous accomplishments of the false-hearted courtier, a thrill of jealousy shot through his veins, and he resolved to conceal the vile views to which he had been made a party, lest the vanity of his Antandra should be excited by the splendid offers of such a lover. But he could not long disguise from the eye of his beloved that there was something preying upon his mind. He had before been accustomed to greet her with smiles; now his brow was clouded, and an expression of strong anxiety and affliction, ill-repressed, was visible in every feature. Nor was his Antandra's anxiety less to ascertain, in order to alleviate, if not to re-

move, the source of his apparent suffering; and in timid but fond accents, she intreated to be told what had happened. Artemio only replied, that he hoped she would not assist in adding to what he already felt by any inquiries on the subject. But Antandra's caresses followed her questions and her tears, until, quite overpowered by her expressions of mingled love and grief, he unfolded every thing that had passed between him and Count Leopold that very morning. This avowal, together with the unfortunate state of his affairs,—involving the loss of honour, or of fortune, and perhaps life,—was made with the bitterest anguish, and was heard with feelings no less intense. For Antandra was tenderly attached to her husband; she had also more than her sex's share of discretion, liveliness, and energy of mind. "Despair not," she cried; "yours I am, and yours, my Artemio, will I remain till death; the faith I pledged you before Heaven, shall ever be sacred to my first love, come what may. Believe this, and let that bold bad man attempt what he please. He can never forbid me to continue always yours, with that entireness and constancy I have hitherto shewn; and of this, dearest, ever rest assured. Yet if this be not enough to insure you, and to satisfy your jealous fears on my behalf, let us leave the country, and fly to some retired and safe spot. Nor let it afflict you that we shall leave our

property behind us ; because, in having you, I can say for myself, I shall still feel that I have along with me all that I am worth in the world."

Hearing these generous words, Artemio rapturously embraced his lovely wife, while gratitude and affection almost choked his words: " No, my love, with the help of God, we will look to some other remedy, nor lose all our prospects by sudden flight. To Heaven, and to you, my Antandra, do I commit my life, my honour, and all my hopes." " So be it, then," replied his wife ; " and now hasten back to Count Leopold; assure him that you consent to forward his views, and that you are desirous of disposing me to receive him upon the footing of a lover. Nay, frown not; oppose me not; but confide in me that I will bring you honourably through this difficulty.

Having before experienced the singular love and fidelity of his wife, Artemio could not now refuse to listen to, and at length to approve of, her design. So the following day he went to Count Leopold, and thus addressed him :—" My Lord, the reason of my entreating you to grant me until to-day, in order to reply to your demands, did not arise from any idea of opposing your wishes ; but that I might induce the lady in question to listen to your proposals. It has, however, turned out just the contrary ; for, spite of all I could say, she still persevered in refusing to listen to any such solicitations, bent on

keeping true to her first vows. This, however, may only be the effect of natural modesty, and aversion to confiding in me; as I doubt not, considering your accomplishments, she will soon be brought to consider the matter in another light. On this account it has suggested itself to me, that it might be well if you were to solicit her with presents, and compliment her in a dexterous and delicate manner before proceeding further; as in that case you will finally be sure of success, she already having my opinion and permission to grant your request."

Count Leopold expressed his infinite satisfaction, and promised to comply, declaring there was no favour his friend could now ask which he should think of refusing. Indeed, he gave entire credit to the feigned submission of Artemio, and already imagined himself in the arms of the beautiful Antandra. He believed Artemio to be one of those who are base enough to traffic with the charms of a lovely woman, not refusing even to wear upon their brows the gilded diadem of their dishonour. Having found, likewise, that his attempts had hitherto proved unsuccessful, inasmuch as the lady had studiously avoided exchanging even a word with him, he now determined to hold a public entertainment at the palace, to be attended by all the ladies of the court. Accordingly, the king proclaimed a court festival, and among the guests invited at his favourite's

request, appeared the name of Antandra. Armed strong in heroic chastity, she scrupled not to accept the invitation of her abandoned admirer, resolved to bid defiance to his vilest arts. The assembly consisted of the flower and chivalry, combined with all the birth and beauty, of the Danish court. The most accomplished knight-revellers and dancers, as is the custom of the country, sallied out and each challenged to the dance the favourite lady of his love. After being accepted, and the dances concluded, it is permitted the favoured partners to gallant their ladies to their seats, and to remain by and converse with them during the remainder of the festival, without the slightest breach of maidenly decorum. A certain degree of freedom, too, is allowed on the occasion, from the supposition that these knights are the admitted lovers of the fair.

Aware of this, Count Leopold seized upon the hand of the bright Antandra, who, unconscious of the extent of this courtly custom, easily fell into the snare. Having danced with her several figures in a gallant style, which excited the admiration of the whole assembly, at the surpassing gallantry and beauty of both, Leopold handed his panting charmer to her seat. It was now he proceeded to avail himself of the golden moments permitted by courtly license, and seated himself at her side. He began to converse,—soon in a lower and softer tone,—a flush

is on Antandra's cheeks,—her eyes are bent upon the ground ;—Ah ! is Artemio still in all her thoughts ? She only once looked up, and then her eyes met, fixed upon hers, the expression of a countenance so full of inexpressible woe and wretchedness, that she almost started from her seat.

It was that of Artemio, who stood on the threshold of the splendid scene, occupied with far other thoughts than those of the revellers in that enchanted circle. That sad look went to the soul of Antandra, and the demon of temptation fled. She sat there indeed, but she was no longer sensible of the tender effusions poured into her ear. The Count was passionately pleading his suit, at once with the most delicate and effectual arguments, ever, until then, found irresistible. Beseeching she would no longer be deaf to all his tears and prayers, he urged his tender claims to some degree of gratitude for his long services, and his desire of conferring additional rank and splendour upon the object of all his hopes. Struggling with emotions too strong for utterance, Antandra, summoning all her former character, at length replied : “ You give yourself, my lord, too much trouble in saying all this ; for, believe me, I have long loved and admired you with all the affection that a virtuous woman may ; all, in truth, that a virtuous knight and noble would desire. It would give me much pain to learn, that a knight of such

bright endowments had descended so far from his proper sphere as to bend his thoughts upon the lowly subject before him." "Heavens!" replied the Count, "speak you so of that rare beauty, which hath compelled me not only to love, but to prize your smiles as the most blissful reward you could confer upon your lowly and adoring slave." "Never did I yet," replied the lady, "hold my poor beauty in such esteem, as to believe there can be any truth in your flattering words. What I would wish you to think about me is, to consider yourself not in the light of my slave or suitor, but of my lord and master, to whom only the highest respect and veneration are due from me."

"Then what proofs," replied the Count, "are you willing to give me, lovely Antandra, of such devotedness on your part, which must include love?" "Yes," answered Antandra, "but no other than that which is ready to entrust into your keeping the most precious treasure it has in the world, which is my honour; because I feel assured, from the esteem which you bear me, that my good name will be well protected under the shield of your high reputation and worth." "If it be," said the Count, "as you state, that you make me indeed the owner of your honour, you may rest well assured that I shall cherish it as if it were my own." "So be it," returned she, "with this condition only, that as you patronise my

good name, in such like form you will consent to defend it likewise from your own desires. Were you not to do this, it would convince me that you cannot love me as you say, since such conduct would be injurious to my honour; and he who truly loves, will consult the interest of the beloved. That gift of beauty you so much esteem, would, if duly prized, not become the cause of my deformity, and the dishonour of my lord, its master."

"The perfection of your beauty and honour," replied the Count, "depends upon giving your husband no just cause for complaint; but for as much as you are permitted to do without offending him, you are in no way culpable. If your husband, therefore, consent that you should be obedient to all my wishes, as your lord and master, you can do so without blemish to your honour." "I can well believe," replied the lady, "that Artemio, from the respect he owes you, would be induced to grant his permission; but so courteous an act on his part, would well merit from your noble liberality and courtesy a more honourable reward than I fear you intend. Should he, however, be thus prodigal of his own honour, I will say, that such liberality towards me could not dispense with my obligation to consult the maintenance of his honour as of my own. I have therefore resolved to treasure it up as something dearer to me than my very life, which would cease

to appear pleasing in my eyes with the loss of my good name."

Count Leopold, however blinded by passion, could not refuse to extol and to esteem motives so pure and virtuous as these. For some moments he felt as if capable of abandoning his unjust and evil views. He had so long, however, been the slave of his inclinations, that he stifled the virtuous impulse as quickly as it arose, and directed all his thoughts to the gratification of his selfish passion. They then parted; and from this time forth the count employed every art of which he was master to accomplish his object,—all, however, in vain. He next resolved to try whether threats would not vanquish that constancy which had defied his allurements, and at the following interview, turning towards her with an indignant countenance, he said,—“ Antandra, since all my entreaties and long services have proved worthless in your eyes, you will soon find that my power is not so despicable as not to command for me that return of love, hitherto solicited in vain. Now, inasmuch as you would have obliged me by your voluntary love and submission to my will, I shall feel as little beholden to you for compelling me to adopt harsher means.

Terrified at these violent and threatening words, the gentle lady replied, “ Surely, my lord, these are not your words, unworthy as they are of a noble

knight, and a counsellor of the king. In reply, however, I can only declare, that you must do as you best please; and that I, for my part, protest that I will live and die the same Antandra that I have until this hour been. And if such were indeed your shameful resolution, to think of depriving me, by violence, of my honour, as you seem to threat, it will first be necessary to take my life; or, if you persist, with my own hand will I fall a victim to your cruelty, committing to my God and to my king, the meet vengeance and justice due to so great a wrong." Saying these words, she rose and flew from his presence, before he was aware of her intent; and hastened to her own house, with the resolution of acquainting her husband with every thing that had passed. Delighted with the admirable courage and constancy she had shown, he expressed his gratitude by the fondest caresses, while he did not attempt to disguise the alarm he felt at the increased cruelty and barbarous threats of their lordly persecutor. On his part, he now began to suspect that Antandra's persevering rejection of his proposal must be owing to her affection for her husband, and that if he could remove him out of the way, there might be a much better chance of success.

For this purpose he devised a plot worthy only of his own depraved mind. It was no less than to deprive Artemio at once of his character and his

liberty, by fixing upon him the stigma of a felon. Having charge of the king's treasury, with all the royal jewels, he one day, after having been particularly attentive and friendly, invited Artemio to accompany him, and took him directly into the treasury apartments, and thence into that which contained the jewels, and other precious rarities, belonging to the crown. While minutely describing their varieties, he seized the moment when he saw his attention most diverted, to slip a diamond of inestimable worth into one of his pockets; soon after which he dismissed him, with expressions of courtesy and regard. No sooner was he gone, than feigning to count over the jewels, as he replaced them, the Count observed to those about him, that a fine diamond was missing. Those present looked at each other with suspicion and surprise, and after satisfying him that it was not in their possession, the Count exclaimed: "Surely it cannot be Artemio; I had always the highest opinion of him; can he have robbed me? It is only right, however, that he should clear himself like the rest. Let him be called, and we will at once set the matter to rest." This was done; and on Artemio's appearance he was examined, and the diamond found. "What!" exclaimed the Count, "could you avail yourself of such an occasion, when I so far honoured you, as to intrust you here, to rob me? Is this the way you reward my friendship, by com-

mitting high treason in my very presence, a crime that is now made public, and you may rest assured will be heavily visited upon your head." Such was the shock Artemio experienced, that he could not utter a word. He was instantly seized as a state prisoner; and Leopold, exulting in the success of his scheme, hastened to communicate the affair to the king, and to solicit the immediate trial and punishment of the offender. This was granted, and the Count now flattered himself that he was on the eve of accomplishing his designs.

What were the feelings of the chaste Antandra when she heard the bitter tidings! Her heart was pierced with woe, too strong for utterance; but her spirit and constancy, nevertheless, did not forsake her. She knew that the charge against her husband was false; she knew the real culprit, and she confided in heaven that the truth would sooner or later be brought to light. On the other hand, the perjured Count, proceeding with his diabolical purpose, issued a commission for Artemio's trial; and after bringing forward the evidence of those present, and going through the usual forms, the cause was concluded, and the disgraced Artemio condemned like a public robber to the gallows. At the instigation, however, of the unjust prosecutor, the execution of the sentence was deferred. It was in vain that Antandra sought to appeal to the king or to the public, and to

develop the vile plots of her persecutor ; he was too powerful ; and every avenue to redress was cut off. The diamond had been found on her husband's person ; it was idle to suppose the Count capable of such enormous and gratuitous wickedness ; and similar accusations were attributed to the unhappy wife's distraction and despair.

Count Leopold now began to mature his plans, and to draw the toils closer around his victim. He sought an interview with her husband ; and after convincing him that all counter accusations against him had fallen to the ground, offered again to save his life, and obtain the king's pardon, if he would induce Antandra to comply with his wishes. To this Artemio replied, that what he now least of all feared was death ; he would never consent to what he required ; and having already been deprived of his honour, he defied his base enemy to do his worst. That, moreover, he confided so implicitly in the virtue of his wife, he doubted not she would know how to guard her own honour as well in his captivity as before. Perceiving that he had nothing to hope for in this quarter, Count Leopold resolved to carry his plans into execution by working on the feelings of Antandra herself. Going to her house the next day, under pretence of matters connected with the trial, he informed her that her husband's life was now in her hands, and that if it were true

she loved him so much as had been said, she had now an occasion of shewing it, as there was no time to lose; and the means of procuring his liberation were easy, and in her own power. To these words, Antandra, with admirable spirit and constancy, made reply, that he might at once undeceive himself, for she had come to the resolution of sharing her Artemio's fate; that as he had partaken his fortune and freedom with her, she was not afraid to accompany him in captivity and death. Having said thus much, she left him, refusing longer to listen to him, or to remain in his presence. Great was the haughty Leopold's indignation, and he would doubtless have proceeded to execute the sentence upon her husband, but for the consideration that he should, by so doing, cut off the last chance of obtaining her voluntary consent. He contented himself with having the unhappy Artemio in his power, and trying what time and captivity, with additional threats and harshness, would effect.

On the other hand, the unhappy wife's whole thoughts were bent upon preserving the honour, and attempting the liberation of her husband. The tower in which he was confined was attached to the palace, with which the principal entrance communicated; and on the other side there were yet greater difficulties to encounter, as it opened upon the sea. Here it could be approached only

by boats, and none, under pain of death upon the offenders, were permitted to come near, either by day or by night. The station was also secured by cannon and military posts on every other point. But what difficulties are too formidable to be encountered by true love; by love that is "stronger than death," and will perish, where it cannot triumph, with the object beloved?

As with sorrowing eyes Antandra regarded the sea, she thought on what Leander had once done for the sake of his beloved Hero; and undaunted at the idea of his unhappy fate, she wished only to emulate the heroic example. After revolving many plans in her mind, she at length resolved, after calculating the distance of the passage between the city gates and the foot of the tower, to select the hour of night for the purpose of executing her design of seeing once more the face of her beloved husband. But how was she to escape being detected by the guards in going through the gates of the city? Even this difficulty, enough to have deterred the boldest, was not found insurmountable to a woman who truly loved. She recollected the public aqueducts, which communicated at the distance of two hundred paces, by subterraneous passages, with the sea. One of these lay near her own dwelling, and by pursuing its direction, she would be enabled, without going through the city gates, to reach the

sea. This with incredible courage and perseverance she effected; and then throwing herself into the waves, as boldly swam across the space between the city walls and the tower. Alighting under the prison grating, which looked into the sea, nearly on a parallel with the shore, she cautiously threw some pebbles against the window. Artemio awoke, and approaching near, the next moment heard the voice of his beloved Antandra, though he believed the whole must be a vision, so impossible did it appear to him that it could be really his beloved, his heroic wife, who there stood before him. His joy was almost too overwhelming, and had nearly anticipated the cruel fate to which his persecutor had condemned him.

There, lamenting over their misfortunes, they stood awhile, their hands clasped in each other's, (for this even the iron prison bars did not deny), and moistened with their mutual tears. Soon, however, they were compelled to tear themselves asunder, ere break of day; but not before she vowed to return and concert some measures for her husband's liberation, the mere mention of which revived his hopes, and he applauded her unheard of constancy and magnanimity, while he besought her no longer thus to peril her beloved life. But again and again did Antandra appear at night-fall, under his window, to cheer the heart of the prisoner; until one evening, the guard on duty, imagining he heard voices, approached softly, and

listened to their conversation, and became acquainted with the whole affair. What was his astonishment to hear that it was a gentle woman—Antandra herself—who had performed an action from which the stoutest soldier might well have shrunk. Aware of the innumerable difficulties she must have surmounted, and hearing the story of their calamity told in broken accents, amid sobs and tears, the heart of the rude soldier sympathised in their unhappy lot. He gently approached the window at which Artemio stood, and inquired with whom he was there conversing; to which the prisoner answered, that the lady who stood there was his wife. He then recounted to the guard the dreadful suffering she had undergone for his sake, declaring it was only needful to hear, for the hardest heart to pity them; while Antandra stood weeping by his side, a mournful witness to the truth. The guard was moved; and hearing from her own lips, the repeated asseverations of her husband's innocence, and the base motives of Count Leopold's persecution, he said, he could believe her, because of what she had done; and, turning towards her, added: "Lady, what would you give, were I to permit you to enter the prison, and partake the company of your husband with more security from observation than here?"

Transported at the idea, Antandra replied: "My life, Sir, perhaps would be little, since you know I have adventured it so many times, only to have my

husband's company in the manner you see. My life, then, is in your hands,—money have I none; for our cruel enemy hath deprived us of our fortune as well as our good name; and besides, any gift would fall far short of the blessing you propose to bestow, and for which only heaven can reward you."

The guard then said: "I am willing to risk the loss of Count Leopold's favour,—I will oblige you, lady; and he hastened towards a little sally-port, opening from the tower to the sea, by which he introduced the afflicted Antandra into the arms of her husband.

What a meeting was there,—with what mingled grief and rapture he hung over the lovely, half-fainting form of his best beloved; still as lovely, and endeared by tenfold stronger claims upon his gratitude and love, Happier, far happier, was he at that moment than his proud oppressor, amidst all the pride and splendour of his rank,—basking in the sunshine of royalty and power. For even there, he was tortured by the bad passion which destroyed his peace, to possess those charms which his happier victim then held in his arms. Long he held her clasped in a fervent embrace, as if to convince himself that it was no delusion; and long they mingled their sighs and tears. He was then about to throw himself at her feet, exclaiming that it was upon his knees he ought to express his gratitude for her

boundless love and devotion ; but she prevented him, clinging to his neck, and twining herself closer round him ; at the same time stifling the expression of his gratitude with rapturous kisses, and no less delicious words. “ Thine only, my Artemio, have I promised to be ; and I have redeemed, and will yet redeem, my pledge. These moments repay me for all ; for more than all I have suffered for thy sake.

In such mutual effusions of long divided tenderness and affection, did their re-united hearts continue to unbosom themselves to each other, until the guard came to inform them that morning was about to break. The happy prisoners were eloquent in the expression of their gratitude, engaging that he should be amply recompensed, if it were ever in their power, till when, they left it to heaven and his own heart to reward him for what he had done. Having heard their story, he said he was content to risk his life as long as the lady so nobly ventured hers, and he would give her admission to the prison on any night she liked to come. He was even generous enough to applaud her heroic conduct, which had first awakened his compassion ; and turning to Artemio, added, “ You may well pride yourself, Sir, on possessing the most constant, loyal, and lovely lady whom man ever deserved. “ I know it, friend,” replied Artemio, “ but, alas ! what boots it,

when fate is about to part us for ever; and I can never more enjoy her, with liberty and my good name, as once I did." "Console yourself, since it is so," replied the guard; "heaven has already permitted me somewhat to lighten your misfortunes, and you shall see your lady as long as I shall keep possession of the station here." "I am truly grateful for your humanity and courtesy; they do you very great credit; and I wish it were in my power to reward you as you deserve."

Many times did Antandra return to cheer and bless the prison-hours of her loved Artemio; and as often did the humane guard admit her, without any discovery of her visits to the tower. But her unhappy husband was evidently declining under the weight of his captivity and his injured name.

Antandra saw it,—and one evening, when they were seated with their benefactor in the prison, she threw herself at his feet, beseeching him with tears in her eyes to have pity on them, and to release her husband from his bonds. "Alas," she cried, "the term of his respite is approaching,—the cruel Count more fiercely sues me, insisting upon the sacrifice of our honour or our lives; and, even if he grant us a further respite, I see that my dear husband will not long survive the persecutions we now suffer." "Yes," added Artemio, "it is too true; our last hope rests upon our kind benefactor. Only his

noble-hearted pity and humanity can defeat the full accomplishment of Leopold's crimes; and save both us and him alike, from the ruin that threatens to overwhelm us." Such was the effect of this appeal, that the guard, without a moment's hesitation, consented to favour his prisoner's escape. And that this might be effected without bringing down suspicion upon him, it was fixed for the ensuing day, when the guard was to accompany Count Leopold to the chase, and give up the post until the evening. On that evening, Artemio was permitted to leave the tower in company with his Antandra. He threw himself joyfully into the waves; his beloved wife still keeping close at his side. The sight of a boat would have brought destruction upon them; though the shattered frame of Artemio was ill able to accomplish the design of swimming to the appointed spot, where a trusty servant was awaiting their arrival with horses to continue their flight. But Artemio's strength was fast failing him, spite of his repeated efforts, though he disguised the truth from his companion. His prison-bonds had palsied his limbs, and within a hundred yards of the shore he felt he should never be able to reach it. "Farewell, my Antandra," he murmured, as she cast an anxious eye on his enfeebled efforts; "I sink,—I die!" He was about to yield to his fate, when the next moment he felt his arm thrown over the beau-

tiful neck of his companion, who still continued to approach the shore. "Fear not; faint not, my love," she said, "I am with you; only hold fast by my hair." "My blessed angel, whispered Artemio," as he felt his returning strength, while they drew nigher and nigher to the banks, "you have saved me! my limbs are no longer cramped," and he again swam more swiftly than before at her side. Ere reaching the spot, however, Antandra, exhausted by her intense efforts, fainted; while Artemio, with redoubled energy on his part, bore his lovely burden in triumph over the short space that intervened. With what mingled emotions did he then watch over her, chafing her hands and temples, and marking returning consciousness in the softly reddening colour of her lips and cheeks, and in the light of love and intelligence that at length beamed from her unclosed eyes. We should vainly attempt to depict the scene that followed—the emotions with which they rushed into one another's embrace, before they again proceeded on their way.

Enough that they succeeded in reaching the nearest sea-port, where they embarked for Scotland, and arrived in safety at the town of Leith.

Next morning tidings of the prisoner's flight were received at court, and Antandra being no where found, it was believed it must be she who had been instrumental in promoting his flight. The heroic action was

extolled throughout the city, nor did the court refuse to share in the applause. The designs of Count Leopold and the virtuous resistance and triumph of Antandra, could not be held so secret but that they were known to many, who before ventured not to open their lips, though now they became the general topic of the court. All rejoiced in his disappointment, which, besides the loss of love and vengeance, was wormwood to the soul of the tyrannical favourite. His passion for Antandra still remained unabated, and gradually produced a fever, which consumed him. He was on the point of setting out in pursuit of her, when a fresh access compelled him to keep his couch; and at the period of six months, he died, after having revealed to his confessor the innocence of Artemio, and the motives by which he had been induced to persecute him and his lovely consort, until he succeeded in depriving them of their fortune and their country, though not of their virtue, their honour, and unexampled constancy and love.

Upon learning the false and treacherous conduct of his late minister and favourite, and how unjustly Artemio, and the beautiful Antandra, had been persecuted and oppressed, the king despatched messengers in different directions to discover their place of retreat. Nor was it long before tidings of the death and confession of Count Leopold reached the court of Scotland, where the fugitives then resided. Con-

finding in their own innocence, and the offers of their king to reinstate them in their former rank and possessions, they joyfully took ship for their native country; and on their arrival at Copenhagen, were received, not only with public demonstrations of applause, but being introduced at the court, Artemio, by his ability and integrity, rapidly rose in the king's favour, and was finally intrusted with the official situation of his predecessor, and the charge of those very treasures which he had been so basely accused of having purloined.

THE KING AND THE MINISTER.

IN Poland, whose government is not hereditary, but elective, there was born, no long time ago, a gentleman of respectable, though not distinguished parentage. By his heroic actions, however, he has since rendered his name illustrious, obtaining honours and titles, to which his house was before a stranger. He first distinguished himself by his military conduct, which, added to his wisdom and integrity, soon gave him a high station in the councils of his country ; insomuch that not the proudest nobles of the land boasted a brigher reputation, or more influence and esteem, than Count Sigismund in the eyes of his royal master. Indeed, he seemed only to live for the service of his king and his country, having passed with eclat through all the subordinate civil and military offices, signalizing himself on every occasion, until he rose to those of the first distinction in the state. Such, in short, was the confidence reposed in him by his royal master, from his eminent success in the cabinet as well as in the field, that he

was esteemed more like a bosom friend than a minister, and the Polish sceptre was swayed solely according to his judgment and advice.

Distinguished merit such as this, however, invariably offers the broadest mark for the shafts of envy and malignity. They pursue all brilliant and successful efforts like their shadows, and reflect more strongly in the sunshine of royal favour, distorting the finest forms and actions into deformity like their own. Attractive and courteous as his manners were, it was impossible for Sigismund to remain long undisturbed in the possession of power like his. Soon was he doomed to prove those bitter disgusts experienced in the courts of kings, disguised at first, indeed, with the gilding of courtly favour; but shortly losing their false splendour, and covered with the base alloy of envy, they show, in their true colours, what the real nature of all human friendship is.

At the same court were two lords, attached to the royal chambers, who chose to consider themselves aggrieved and offended at the more recent claims, and the honours bestowed by royalty on the more plebeian Sigismund, which they conceived quite derogatory to their more ancient name. They took counsel together how best to cast some slur upon his honour, and to oppose and incense him, until he should afford them an opportunity of achieving

his downfall, by forfeiting the favour and confidence of the king. In pursuance of their design, they leagued themselves with some of the worst and most despicable characters of the court, the more cunning and active charging themselves with the execution of the intrigues planned by the rest. In order to secure their ancient reputation, and more legitimate lives from all risk, they resolved to spring their mine under ground, and to seize the occasion of an approaching election of the kingdom ; previous to which, the most influential among the factious band took the first opportunity of thus poisoning the ear of the king. “ It is my duty, please your Majesty, inasmuch as I am bound to preserve your royal tranquillity, and that of your whole kingdom, which I trust in God you will long live to sway ; it is my duty to acquaint your Majesty with a matter of some importance to your state. Would to heaven it had fallen upon any one else ; would that it were in my power to conceal it, and to avoid offending your royal ears with the truth. Indeed, it is quite against my nature to undertake such a task, were it not due to my own honour, and love for my country, which led me to wave all lesser motives in this case.

“ Your Majesty will be surprised to learn,—what I am almost afraid to utter,—that your most confidential and powerful minister—too powerful it would seem—is no other than a traitor, and the

sworn enemy of your crown. He has conspired with other accomplices, his trained followers—how shall I speak it—to assassinate your Majesty, after having concerted that the next election shall behold him monarch of this kingdom.”

The king, on hearing this dreadful accusation pronounced against Sigismund, whom he had ever held as a mirror of loyalty and fidelity, exclaimed as he interrupted the speaker, “Behold the fruits of envy, which in vain attempts to look without an evil eye upon the increasing prosperity of another. I know Count Sigismund better than you can; and were it not from respect to my own station, I would punish the vile aspersion upon his good name with my own hand upon the spot. But no, his virtues are too strongly rooted in my regard to fear any accusations like these; they will only make me more cordially his friend. In future, however, take heed how you venture to abuse my forbearance, and to repeat slanders which can only have the effect of bringing down upon their authors, retribution due upon the crime of malignant perjurers and envious traitors. If it now be your wish not quite to forfeit my countenance and regard, tell me the truth; and repeat all you know of what is good and honourable in my friend Count Sigismund.”

The wily and revengeful courtier, however, was not thus easily thrown off his beat. Not a whit

daunted, he replied with more firmness and audacity than before—"I was well aware, your Majesty, of the unlimited confidence you placed in Count Sigismund, and the risk I ran of bringing down upon me your royal displeasure. My loyalty may suffer in your eyes, but it is not less my duty as an honest man and your subject, when I see you walking blindfold on the edge of a precipice, to attempt to tear the scales from your Majesty's eyes. You would then behold a gulf of conspiracy yawning to receive you, and your kingdom, compared with which, that of the Roman Catiline himself would appear trivial in your regard. A confidence, my liege, like yours, however laudable, is that fault of kings, which has subverted thrones, desolated kingdoms, and consigned innumerable monarchs to captivity and death. I have long watched over the destinies of my country: I have marked the brilliant career of Count Sigismund—his soaring ambition and grasping power. It is not suspicion; I have proofs clear as the sun, that you are betrayed, and your confidence most unworthily abused. If I must keep silence on the subject of what I know, so let it be; but I could do no less than acquaint your Majesty with the fact. Let me be called envious and malicious, however harsh the terms, provided your Majesty, for your own sake, would only consent to hear me. For whatever may be the consequence, I return thanks to heaven for enabling

me to detect this conspiracy, and prove my loyalty and truth. I would myself have called the traitor to account with my own sword, had I not wished to bring home the proofs against him, to satisfy your Majesty's mind on this head."

The king, now somewhat staggered, began to reflect that he might possibly carry his confidence too far; and that it would only be just towards Count Sigismund and his accuser, to examine into the grounds of such allegations, so positively and repeatedly maintained. He accordingly inquired how this patriotic courtier had come by the knowledge of the existing conspiracy? "I have already," replied he, "informed your Majesty, that it aims at your life, after which, his faction propose to proclaim Sigismund king of this realm. Many of the electors are already in his interests, dazzled with the brilliant prospects held out to them under his future sway." "How know you that," inquired the king, "and what are the names of these wise electors?" "Those of his own particular faction I have yet to learn; but the means by which I obtained information of the conspiracy are these:—There is one of his retainers named Roberto, a man who has shared his bosom secrets. From him I succeeded in eliciting my intelligence. Being entrusted with his master's letters, I traced him from one conspirator to another on various occasions; till, entertaining just grounds of suspicion, I agreed, along

with my friends, to surprise, and compel him to give up his dispatches under pain of instant death. This we did; and on granting his life, he took from his valise a packet of letters, which he placed in our hands, at the same time confessing that they contained full information of the conspiracy to which we referred. On opening them, I found they were directed to the Grand Turk; and I read their contents, as your Majesty may now likewise do. They will explain the sources of our information. We farther compelled Roberto to acquaint us with his master's proceedings in the affair as far as he knew; and he avowed that it aimed both at your crown and life. Count Sigismund intended to administer poison when attending on your Majesty, with his own hand, while his friends should stand prepared, on hearing the event, to proclaim him king. He added, that he had moreover agreed with the Turk, to give up some frontier towns, on condition of receiving his support, if need be, to put down the loyal portion of your Majesty's subjects. This account of Roberto will be found confirmed by the letters under the seal manual of Count Sigismund; without which we should not have ventured to proceed in an affair of such grave and weighty importance. If your Majesty will please to read this letter, and can still persist in your fatal incredulity, you will then command our silence, and it will become our duty to obey."

The king took the letter, and found it to contain as follows :—

“ LETTER TO THE GRAND SIGNOR.

“ Our undertaking, most mighty sultan, is now matured, and the electors have joined us in it. The king slumbers in security ; and I have assured my friends that you will hold your promise sacred to assist us, in consideration of which we shall gratefully comply with the conditions already laid down. As the arm of our power is now raised, and we have only to give the blow, it were better to cut off all delays, since they do often prove dangerous. My agents now at your capital, have orders to arrange that every thing be prepared according to agreement, at the place you wot of, where a free passage will be opened to you, until when, may heaven prosper your sublimity, with all increase of power and prosperity.

“ SIGISMUNDO.”

The king having carefully read this letter, and examined the signature, to his infinite astonishment was compelled to admit that appearances were much against his friend. It was the hand of Sigismund ; it was his seal ; and yet he could hardly believe the evidence of his senses. In order to sift the matter more thoroughly, he forthwith commanded the traitor, Roberto, to be brought before him. This man

was already in the interests of Sigismund's enemies, and his having been private secretary, gave a stronger colour to their proceedings. It was known that he had enjoyed his master's confidence, and been treated by him with singular kindness and affection. He had been tampered with by the traitor, Rudolph; and, by dint of bribes, had consented to bear false witness against his master.

On being brought before the king, he at first stoutly denied any knowledge of the affair; but after several threats on the part of Rudolph, and observing the severe countenance of the king, he turned towards the courtier and said, "Is this the way in which noble knights keep their words with their servants?" "Sir," exclaimed the courtier, "it is my duty to keep my loyalty to my king, before my word to thee. If you would prefer reward to torture, speak out what you know, and thus recommend yourself to his Majesty's mercy."

After feigning the utmost reluctance to state any facts prejudicial to the interests of Count Sigismund, his generous master, he proceeded to confirm in every point what had already been asserted by his more infamous colleague. And on being shown the letter, he observed that it was the same which he had been enjoined to bear to the Grand Turk, and that he had been witness to its having been penned by the hand of Count Sigismund himself. The king then

no longer considering it safe to disregard these strong proofs against the fidelity of his favourite minister, gave the false Rudolph a commission to secure his person, and confine him in the state tower. What a shock this was to the noble-minded and innocent Sigismund, may be better imagined than described. It was in vain he entreated to know the cause of his sudden arrest, and to be brought into the presence of the king. "I have no concern with that," replied Rudolph; "it is my duty to execute the orders of my king." Saying this, he had the Count conducted, like a common culprit, to prison, in a place wholly unfit to one of his rank and character; and purposely with a view of irritating him into some imprudent expressions against the authority of the king. He even affected a reluctance to execute the severe terms of the commission with which he had been intrusted by the king. But the lofty, uncompromising spirit of Sigismund would not stoop to the meanness he had calculated upon; and he thus escaped falling into the base snare. He maintained, on the other hand, that his sovereign must have some just grounds for his indignation; and he took the spectators to witness that he felt nothing from the harsh treatment thus imposed upon him—nothing but the loss of his gracious master's favour, and having been the cause, however innocent, of provoking his displeasure.

Not even magnanimity like this could disarm the

malice of his rival; and he basely gave the king to understand, that the Count had given way to the most intemperate language and threats of revenge, not scrupling to accuse him of the following words: "Had my arrest been only delayed a single month, the king and I should then have exchanged places; and not very unlikely as it is!" The king, giving credit to this falsehood, became incensed in the highest degree, and expressed his eagerness to see the traitor put upon his trial, and condemned to death, without more delay.

An air of sorrow, however, pervaded the whole court, with the exception of the cabal, on hearing of Sigismund's arrest. He was generally beloved throughout the country for his liberality and courtesy towards all ranks. And no one more sincerely partook of this regret than the chief justice of the land, a man of eminent worth and prudence, upright and well disposed towards the views and principles of the disgraced minister. Indeed no one could conjecture what he had been guilty of, to compel the king to carry matters to such extreme severity, against a man whom he had raised to the highest distinction, and always treated less as a minister than as a friend.

The chief justice now received orders to wait upon the king, who communicated to him the whole affair, at the same time submitting to him the proofs of the conspiracy under the delinquent's own hand. He then

added, that as the ingratitude was of the blackest dye he would have it visited with summary vengeance, and no means of torture left untried, to elicit the whole truth from the lips of the arch-conspirator himself. The chief justice, having heard the intentions of the king, and received full powers to see them executed, then first requested to be heard. With the wisdom and humanity belonging only to noble and generous minds, when they behold one of kindred merit trampled upon by the blind rage of fortune, this upright judge, at the risk of his master's displeasure, threw himself boldly between the ruin of the helpless prisoner and the wrath of the king. He could not for a moment contemplate the dreadful fate prepared for so great a man:—"It will be well to consider, my gracious sovereign, before we proceed to this extreme rigour against a brave soldier and a great statesman, whom I have ever reputed a man of sterling worth, virtue, and fidelity—to consider, I repeat, the grave importance of the case. I say this, because I know that, in the precincts of royal courts, there ever exists cause of envy, jealousy, and inveterate malice; there are never wanting numbers against individual genius and merit, who envy the more fortunate, and seek to raise upon their ruins the foundation of their own advancement." The king replied, "You speak the traitor fair, my lord: I too was of your opinion; and I adopted another, from

no trivial presumption of guilt. But proofs, my lord, are hard to deal with; and these brought to mind an old saying, that the 'green herb sometimes hides the serpent which stings the careless traveller.' With my own eyes have I seen what I never would have believed; and know, my lord, that the injuries inflicted by a friend wound us far more deeply than those of an enemy." Here the king, much affected, stopt, and handed the letter with the Count's signature to the judge. He next enjoined him to elicit, if possible, the whole circumstances, not sparing the utmost and most exemplary rigour upon the offender. Full of trouble and perplexity, the judge proceeded to the prison, and began to examine the Count upon the subject. No sooner was the latter made acquainted with the nature of the accusation, than he became half frantic, and, invoking curses upon his evil fate, desired that he might instantly be led to death. Henceforward life was worthless in his eyes. "Alas," he cried, "after the innumerable proofs of my fidelity and friendship, how could he be induced to entertain so vile an opinion of me, unworthy as it alike is of a king, a master, or a friend." He then, in the most touching terms, assured the chief justice of his innocence; that he would rather lose a thousand lives than perpetrate so foul a treason against his sovereign, to whom he was so deeply indebted. The supposition, he said, was too incredible, even as to the basest and

most ungrateful of mankind ; and he burned to prove with his sword upon the body of the false traitor who had thus abused the ear of his Majesty, the wickedness and fallacy of so detested a charge." The chief justice, who still preserved his good opinion of Sigismund, replied :—" You have ever stood high in the king's estimation, and also in mine ; but I am bound to add, that appearances, and even evidences, are against you. These last go to convince us that your words are very good, but your works evil. In short, Count, to avoid more of these remarks, which I do not like to use in speaking of you, pray read this letter," which the prisoner took and read. " Is it yours ?" inquired the judge. Again the Count read the letter, and his emotion was too visible to be concealed from the judge's eye. " No, never," he at last exclaimed ; " never, though it certainly appears to be mine. But that I wrote it I deny : it is false as the heart that conceived it !" " Yet," said the judge, " there is one witness against you who saw you write it—Roberto, your own private secretary, upon whom that letter was found, confessed that he saw you write it."

Heaving a deep sigh, Sigismund then said : " Alas ! with what deep laid snares have they beset me. But let me entreat you to go to the king, and obtain his order to arrest the person who communicated this letter. Let him be confronted with me, when I

doubt not but my innocence and loyalty will be made manifest to the confusion of my enemies. Would to God that my royal master would grant me to prove the same in open arms, by which means I would quickly compel the perjured witnesses to confess the truth.

Notwithstanding these exculpatory assertions on the part of the Count, the justice affected to disbelieve and oppose them, in order, if possible, to irritate and throw him off his guard, concluding that, if he were guilty, he would thus, by some inconsiderate words, betray the real fact. He could gather nothing, however, that led to such an inference; the Count remained constant and unmoved. He at once, therefore, went to the king, and related the whole of what had passed. He added, "that, with his Majesty's permission, it would be well to examine the bearer of the letter, who had in the first instance been arrested. The king was pleased to follow this advice, and Count Rudolph was forthwith required to have Roberto conducted to the justice's house, in order that he might be privately examined. The courtier, pretending the utmost alacrity to fulfil the king's commands, hastened to consult with his colleagues. They were of opinion that some risk would be incurred by Roberto's examination before so upright and able a judge; more particularly as he was a man of low birth and timid disposition; and they immediately

sent for him into their presence, and charged him, word for word, in what manner to conduct himself, in order to escape being detected by the skill and penetration of the judge.

Roberto was then dispatched, with rather a mis-giving conscience, to the house of the chief justice. It was now evening, and just as Roberto was proceeding along one of the least frequented streets, he was suddenly set upon by assassins. His cries brought persons to his assistance, but not before he was badly wounded. On this event, his accomplices immediately spread a report, that the friends of Count Sigismund had assaulted him, in order that he might not live to reach the house of the justice, and establish his evidence of the conspiracy. Such, unfortunately, was the impression produced upon the mind of the king; nor did it fail to add to the suspicions entertained against the prisoner in that of the justice himself.

By the king's order the wounded man was conveyed to the palace, and the best physicians were called in to his assistance. This had not entered into the calculation of his accomplices, who had, in fact, been the authors of the attempted assassination; concluding, that if he were out of the question, they would be safe, and the ruin of the Count accomplished. Now they attempted to irritate his feelings against his master, declaring that it was he

who had instigated the assassins, who belonged to Count Sigismund's party. This foul calumny had the desired effect; and when sufficiently recovered, the base secretary made other depositions, which involved still more deeply the character of his unfortunate master. During his convalescence, the chief justice, by order of the king, held frequent interviews with the prisoner, in whom he found the same constant and magnanimous spirit. He had also frequent interviews with Roberto, from whom he endeavoured to elicit some information, threatening him both with temporal and eternal torments if he attempted to conceal any facts he had not yet avowed. But he now asserted more confidently than before, what he had before advanced, swearing to the truth of all that he had deposed. The king being made acquainted with these facts, again insisted with the chief justice that Sigismund should be put to the torture; such was become the enormity of his offence, in attempting the life of his secretary in order to remove the chief witness against his crimes. The justice, however, having by no means made up his mind as to the prisoner's guilt, replied: "Please your Majesty, it will always be in our power to put the prisoner to the question after having ascertained his guilt; but, if acquitted, it will no longer be possible for us to recall the injury thus inflicted. The secretary is at length sufficiently recovered to

bear witness at the trial, and, with your permission, it shall now take place."

Eager to have his doubts resolved, the king issued a commission, and on the appointed day the court being assembled, the chief justice, attended by the state officers, with the usual forms and ceremonies, entered the court and took his seat. He then gave orders for the prisoner to be brought forward, and to be confronted face to face with his accuser. This being done, and the treacherous secretary stationed close in front of his master, the judge turning towards the bar addressed the prisoner: "Count Sigismund, you there behold in your presence the servant by whom you are accused of the high crime of treason; it remains with you to shew how you can defend yourself from his accusations." Sigismund then fixing his eyes upon the treacherous secretary, with the same undaunted and terrible countenance which he had ever borne towards the king's enemies, and which produced a feeling of respect and veneration in the minds of the beholders, thus addressed him: "And is it thou, vile wretch, that hast cast upon me the name of traitor to my king? On me, who have shed my blood like water in his defence, and am still prepared to lay down my life in his service! Dost thou know who I am, and what thou art? Is it for such as thou to stain my untarnished honour and good name? Awake

out of thy wicked delusion ; look around thee in the face of thy king and thy country ; rouse thee, and prepare in their presence, as I will have thee, to speak the truth. Nay, turn not thy head aside ; think not to escape me, but try to look me as an honest man in the face, and tell me for which of all the benefits I have conferred on thee, thou hast conceived the diabolical design of robbing me of my life and honour, by base charges it is impossible for thee to prove. Answer me, did I write that letter ;—on what occasion—at what hour and place ? Speak, I say ; hesitate, tremble not ; for thou hast been brought hither to speak the truth.”

Then turning towards the judge, the Count in a loud voice added : “ I call upon you, my lord judge, in the name of God and of his justice, to put this bad man to the question, and compel him to speak the truth, the whole truth in this affair.”

The perfidious servant had till this moment kept his eyes fixed upon the ground, afraid to encounter his master’s indignant looks ; and such was his terror and confusion when he heard threats and denunciations from those lips which he had ever been accustomed to obey, that he could no longer support his part. His agitation was dreadful ; he trembled till he became almost convulsed ; and in the presence of his great accomplices, and of the king and court, he threw himself in a burst of agony at the Count’s

feet. With abundant tears he confessed his treason, and that of his accomplices, along with the motives which had induced Count Rudolph to concert the plot, and bribe the others to join in it. At the same time he confessed that he had himself written the letter in imitation of the Count's hand.

After the astonishment and indignation of the court had somewhat subsided, the judge, in order the better to satisfy the parties in the cause, turned towards Roberto, and said, "You need not be afraid, if you have spoken the truth; nor can your master punish you, standing as he does, under a charge which affects his life. If any alarm, as regards him, has weighed with you in your confession, you are now at liberty to state it; and to maintain your former declarations against him." "No, my lord," replied the secretary, "I have nothing more to say. I have only now spoken the truth; though it convicts me of being one of the most abandoned of mankind,—deserving the most exemplary punishment; and utterly unworthy the generous usage—the clemency and forgiveness of my revered master."

The whole of his confession was then committed to writing, duly signed and witnessed; after which the false witness was conveyed to prison; and had it not been for the generous intercession of his former master, would have paid the penalty due to his crimes.

DON CRISTOVAL LOZANO.



DON CHRISTOVAL LOZANO.

OF this writer there is no account in Nicolo Antonio, or any other biographer, the particulars of which are at all worthy of notice. That he was a doctor, a commissary of the *Santa Cruzada*, and a composer of voluminous religious works, as well as of a few novels, is ample information for the reader, who has no taste for a dry catalogue of titles and editions, and chiefly of abstract and ecclesiastical books.

SOLEDADES DE LA VIDA, &c.

In the capital of the kingdom of Sicily, at the time when it was governed by Dionysius, generally known by the name of Tyrant, dwelt a young nobleman named Enrico. He was of very high lineage, being descended from royalty, and was of such ability and integrity, that the king created him his private secretary, and honoured him so far with his confidence and friendship, that the surest road to the king's favour was by the interest of Enrico. In this enviable situation did Enrico find himself, favoured by his sovereign, respected by his friends, and feared by his enemies—when, in addition to the feelings of pride and pleasure, which such prosperous circumstances would naturally create, love stepped in to dispute the ascendancy. The lady who had captivated him was the only daughter of a nobleman of great wealth and power; she was called Theodora, and her beauty was celebrated throughout the city. It was not long before the gallant appearance of Enrico, and the exclusive regard which he

omitted no opportunity of showing, created a reciprocal sentiment in her heart, and Enrico soon found means in a less general manner to testify his regard. From the correspondence which had commenced between them, Enrico was obliged to abandon his intention of demanding her in marriage of her father, in consequence of a private engagement which subsisted between him and the king, wherein the king had promised on the death of the queen to raise his daughter to the throne ; or, in default, that she should be the wife of his eldest son. This engagement was of course a secret to all but those concerned, but was sufficiently powerful to damp the hopes of Enrico. But as love is blind, and always endeavours to break the barriers which prudence raises, be they ever so strong and formidable, the lovers agreed to obviate the difficulty of the father's refusal by a private marriage. More than a year elapsed, during which a secret though delightful intercourse was carried on between the lovers, the one refusing the chance of a crown, for the sake of him she loved, and he risking the displeasure of the king, and the vengeance which might ensue—when the death of the old nobleman produced a change in their affairs. As no notice whatever of the private engagement had been given by the king, even to him whom he honoured with his friendship and confidence, and Theodora had only heard it from her father, Enrico thought

the king had no intention of fulfilling it in any manner; he therefore thought there was no longer a necessity for keeping his marriage a secret, and determined to acquaint the king forthwith, and solicit his approbation of a public ceremonial. One morning, however, before he had effected his intention, the king entered his study, and told him he had a secret of some importance to communicate. Enrico listened with attention while the king proceeded—“ You have been for a long time the confidant of all my actions, the depositary of my most secret thoughts; there is however one fact, and one only, with which I have not made you acquainted, because the nature of it was such, that neither your advice nor assistance would avail me.” He then related the engagement he had with the father of Theodora, but added, it was contracted solely with a view to secure her from the offers which might be made to her father, for he had long secretly but ardently loved.—The king further said, the reason he now mentioned it was, that the death of the father having created a change in the family, he had adopted a resolution, in which he required the assistance of a friend devoted to his interests; for there being no chance of the queen’s death, and not caring to give to his son that which he valued so much, he intended to make the offer of a secret *liaison*, to which he was not prepared to expect a refusal. This intimation from one who was never disobeyed,

was like a thunderstroke to poor Enrico ; who, nevertheless, concealed the surprise and indignation it would have been death to have betrayed. "By the way," said the king facetiously, "you are a poet, and I dare say you have some verses about you, dedicated to some fair damsel, which will doubtless answer for me,—give me them, that I may transcribe them, and thus make love after the fashion of our country."

Without knowing what he did, Enrico instinctively took some verses from his pocket, which he had often sung to Theodora, and gave them to the king, who, after praising the style, told him that he intended to visit Theodora that evening, and should require his attendance. Enrico had no opportunity of escaping from the palace for a moment, to warn Theodora of their danger, and night arrived without his resolving what conduct to adopt. The king entered his apartment at the hour assigned ; and they both, concealed in large cloaks, sallied from the palace by a private entrance. Perplexed with fear, that Theodora, ignorant of the presence of another, might welcome him in terms which would betray them, he anxiously devised an expedient. "My liege," said he, "would it not be better that I should reconnoitre the position before you venture? it would not be prudent to risk a discovery of you by any strangers." "Right," answered the king, "I will remain in this street until your return; use all expe-

dition." Enrico flew to the dwelling of Theodora, when, giving the accustomed signal, she met him at the door, but without entering as usual, he embraced, and whispered, "Be not surprised, I have a companion who has determined to visit you, and obliges me to accompany him; call up your duennas and receive him in their presence." He then returned in haste to the king, who was impatient even at the short time that had elapsed, and told him that all was safe for him to advance, that he had seen Theodora, and informed her that a person of high distinction was about to honour her with a visit, without saying who, fearing the abruptness might disturb her. Without farther delay, they entered the house of Theodora, and were shown into her apartment, where she was sitting with her two attendants. When Theodora saw the quality of her visitor, she was exceedingly disturbed, not doubting but that he came to renew the engagement contracted with her father, and she was still more distressed on seeing the agitation of Enrico. Concealing her own emotions, however, she entertained the king, who sat apart with her, with every thing she could tax her imagination, rather than listen to the advances which she dreaded; and at last when she found he was determined to say that to which she dared not listen, she rose and said, that lest any wrong constructions might be placed on the visits of his Majesty, if he

had communications to make, he would respect her character, and make them by letter, which she would reason on more fully than in his presence. The king, glad that she had consented to a correspondence, took his leave with Enrico, after first giving her the verses which he received from Enrico, and returned to the palace. Enrico, who had been apart, and had not heard their conversation, was not a little annoyed to find the king so well contented with his progress, and Theodora was equally uneasy on finding the verses of the king to be the same that Enrico had so often sung to her, and which he must have given the king to present to her.

From this time a correspondence was commenced, in which the king gradually made known his designs. The letters were usually indited by Enrico, and he was always the bearer, with injunctions from his master to forward his views by argument whenever he had an opportunity. It was a mortifying duty for a husband, but he was unfortunately in such a situation, that to refuse would at once create suspicion, and perhaps discovery. The answers were framed respectfully, but always remonstrating strongly against the proposals which were urged, so that the king at last, impatient of contradiction, began to revolve in his mind certain plans by which he could bring the stubborn fair one to his views. An accident however occurred, which brought the affairs of the lovers to a crisis more

quickly than by the ordinary course of events. One day, Enrico had been the bearer of a letter from the king, which had occasioned considerable uneasiness to Theodora, who, in lamenting the situation to which they were reduced, threw her arms round his neck, and gave way to her tears. In this situation they were surprised by a page, who was sent from the king to hasten Enrico's return. Before they perceived him, however, he stepped back, and, hastening to the palace, informed the king of what he had witnessed. The king, dissembling his feelings, commanded the page on no account to mention the circumstance, feigning to be jealous of the honour of his secretary, and more particularly that of the young lady. The information, however, created the most vivid feeling of disappointment and rage. Sometimes he would doubt the testimony of the page, and at others would denounce the most dreadful vengeance against his false secretary. Determined to satisfy himself on the subject, he sent for Enrico, and informed him that it was his intention to remove Theodora to his palace, as a lady of honour to the queen, when he should have a better opportunity of bringing her to his arrangements. The king thought that the feelings of Enrico at this unexpected purpose might perhaps betray him, but he was deceived, for a servant of Theodora had observed the page return from the house of her mistress in the morn-



ing, testifying every mark of astonishment, and suspecting the cause, informed Enrico. He was therefore prepared for some act of jealousy on the part of the king, so that when the proposal was made, he immediately coincided with him in the eligibility of the plan, hoping thereby to remove suspicion, and trusting to good fortune for the future. Theodora removed to the palace on the invitation being sent her, knowing that her consent would be considered by the king as the test of Enrico's faith. During a month that she was in attendance on the queen, the king made but little progress with her. She took care to give him but little opportunity of seeing her alone, and always met his advances with coldness and distrust. Every night Enrico contrived to visit her, by means of a ladder of cords which she lowered from her window into the garden, which was in a retired situation, and little liable to observation.

The king finding his suit proceed so slowly, and still having some suspicions of Enrico, placed people to watch him, and soon learnt enough to rouse his dormant jealousy. Determined to prove him to the utmost, one morning he accosted his secretary thus:—
“ Enrico, I am at last on the point of vanquishing the scruples which this silly girl has entertained so long, but on condition of the strictest secrecy, and that I give my royal word, to bestow her in marriage to my faithful and confidential secretary.—What

say you? will you serve your master so far?" The abruptness of such astounding intelligence, and the feelings to which it gave rise, was too much for the self-possession of Enrico. The colour rushed to his face, and then left him deadly pale—he could hardly articulate a reply. His confusion was sufficient to satisfy the doubts which the king entertained of his fidelity, and he determined on that evening to witness himself the ill faith of his secretary, and thereby feel certain that the judgment he meditated might be deserved. A little before twelve o'clock that night, till which time he contrived to detain Enrico, the king, taking a single page, went to the apartment of Theodora, and having obtained admittance, informed her that he was come to converse with her for an hour before retiring for the night. Theodora was exceedingly perplexed at this strange visit, the more, as it might involve some disagreeable consequences; the hour which the monarch had chosen being precisely the time when Enrico usually made the signal. And it so happened; for no sooner did Enrico obtain leave to depart, than with very little delay he went to the garden, and under the balcony of Theodora made the signal for her to lower the ladder of ropes. Of course no answer was returned; and seeing from the light that she had not retired, he became distracted with the idea that she had yielded to the king, as he had informed him in the

morning, considering it the only way to ensure their safety. Stung to the quick with rage and jealousy, he called out to her in a feigned voice, upbraiding her with perfidy, and giving her to understand he was acquainted with her weakness. Theodora was during this time in the greatest agony, for the voice was too loud not to be heard, and the king immediately charged her with entertaining a lover. She denied the accusation, saying she was utterly ignorant of the cause of such an appeal; when the king, turning to his page, commanded him to seek a companion, and without any ceremony, dispatch the slanderer who dared make so free with the reputation of an honourable lady.

The page departed; and Theodora, distracted with apprehension, knew not how to act. To inform the king of the fact would be certain death to her lover; and she heard the order given for his assassination, without being able to move in his behalf. The king saw the perturbation of Theodora, which nearly amounted to distraction, and considering himself wronged, awaited the event as an act of justice.

Meanwhile, Enrico was continuing his complaints, when the two pages approached, and demanded how he dared to utter such language to any lady of the palace, at the same time rushing on him with their swords drawn, to dispatch him. But Enrico was not slow in his defence; for on hearing the first word,

he drew his sword, and used it with such effect, that his assailants were quickly obliged to seek their safety in flight. Enrico then, to avoid discovery, retraced his steps to his own apartment. The state of terror to which Theodora was subjected during this trying scene, was almost insupportable; and when the pages returned, sorely maltreated, to relate the ill success of their attempt, no longer able to contend with her feelings, she sunk on the floor in a state of insensibility; on which the king, after summoning assistance, retired to meditate a more certain chastisement. When Theodora returned to herself, she felt comparatively happy to think of her lover's escape without discovery; but not knowing what to think of the allusions which he made to her want of faith, she opened the window and made signals, thinking he might be somewhere concealed. She then lowered the ladder of ropes, but as he did not appear, she, not being able to rest while he was evidently under some delusion respecting her, descended herself, and cautiously making her way to his windows, made signals for him to descend. Almost doubting his senses, he came down to her, and she related to him the visit of the king, and her uneasiness. He was overjoyed to find the whole only a *ruse* of the king's, from which he had gained no advantage; and excusing himself for the pain he had unconsciously inflicted on her, and which

she readily forgave, he returned with her to her apartment.

On the following morning, Enrico waited in the antichamber for the coming of the king, feeling perfectly satisfied that he was yet undiscovered, and determined to meet boldly any fresh suspicions which the evening's adventure might have created. The king appeared in perfect good humour, and in the course of the evening informed him it was his intention to summon a hunting party, for the purpose of granting Theodora the favour of distributing the whole of the game, adding, that she had changed her mind with respect to her last determination, but that he doubted not he should soon prevail. Splendid preparations were made, and shortly the party took their way to a park of the king's, about two leagues distance. On their arrival, after arranging their plan of meeting, they all separated to pursue their sport; but the king and Enrico continued together, accompanied only by one of the king's personal attendants. Under the pretence of pursuing their sport, the king led his companion into the most wild and unfrequented part, and when arrived at a certain spot, suddenly drew up his horse. The good humour, which had apparently marked his conduct throughout the day, now became completely changed. A fearful frown succeeded the smile he had hitherto worn, and regarding Enrico sternly,—“Traitor Enrico!” he

exclaimed, "what dost thou answer for having betrayed thy master and friend? confess thy iniquity, and receive from my hand thy punishment." The king leaped from his steed, and drew his sword. "Draw," he cried, "and defend yourself, for as thou art of royal blood, so from the hand of a king alone shalt thou meet thy doom." Enrico saw that he had been discovered, and knew, from the remorseless nature of the king, no explanation would serve him; he therefore descended his horse, but the natural feeling of respect for him who had been so long his friend, prevented him from raising his hand against him, even in his own defence. He threw himself on his knees before his sovereign, and handing him his sword, "If you are determined to take the life of one who has served you so long and not unworthily," he exclaimed, "stain not your own sword with his blood, but take this, and if your heart will allow, do your pleasure on him." The king took his sword, but his words had no effect on his determination, for raising a bugle to his mouth, he sounded an alarm, when there presently appeared from a short distance a band of armed men. "Seize this traitor," cried the king, "who confesses himself unworthy of receiving his punishment at my hands, and do by him as he deserves." Without saying another word, or listening to Enrico, who begged to be heard, he mounted his courser, and was out of sight in an instant, leaving

Enrico unarmed in the midst of assassins. Enrico saw that all resistance was vain, and submitted to his fate. They bound him, and then cast him headlong into a yawning cavern, so dark and deep, that report had invested it with supernatural terrors, and whence it was firmly believed no mortal could ever escape with life.

The king was made acquainted with the result, and was well satisfied with the manner in which they had executed his commands. He then penned some verses, descriptive of the death of Enrico, and the treason for which he suffered, and caused them to be sung under the balcony of Theodora, at the time when Enrico used to visit her. Theodora had been all the evening in the greatest agitation; she had seen the king return with those nobles who had accompanied him, but missed Enrico from their number. She inquired of all who were most likely to afford her information, but could obtain no satisfactory intelligence. A prey to doubt and anxiety, she awaited the hour which she hoped would calm her apprehensions, by bringing his accustomed signal. When the hour arrived, instead of the voice of Enrico she heard the dismal recitation the king had ordered, the meaning of which was too plain to be misunderstood. The false hopes of security in which she had so long indulged were suddenly withdrawn, and she saw at a glance the

detection of the king, and the vengeance which had followed. She gave way to the most bitter and heart-rending grief; she tore her fair hair, and threw herself on the ground, praying that she might never more rise with life. The whole night was passed in the most bitter desolation of feeling, and on the morrow she sought an interview with two cavaliers who were most intimate with Enrico, and heard from them the rumours which were abroad respecting the death of their friend. She then confessed to them the relation she bore him, and the cause of his death, entreating them, if they would compassionate her grief, to show her the spot where he was murdered, so that she might render the last duties to her husband's remains. They could not withstand her tears, and promised, if she could absent herself without the knowledge of the household, they would show her the spot. This she promised to do, and fixed on the next night for the engagement. The knights, whether they repented, fearing the king's wrath in case of discovery, or seeking his favour by these dishonourable means, made him acquainted with the engagement, and asked how they were to proceed. The king seized this circumstance as the means of carrying into effect a plan which he had long contemplated, but knew not how to execute for want of an opportunity. He desired them to conduct Theodora as she requested, while he would

repair to the spot with assistance, to force her off to one of his castles, where she would not long be able to resist his continued and unrestrained communications.

It was considerably past the middle of the night before Theodora could arrange every thing to meet her conductors, when, having provided themselves with a master key, they left the palace without observation. The morning began to dawn before they reached the spot where the king had left Enrico to the mercy of his myrmidons, and Theodora had scarcely cast her eyes around to discover the traces of her murdered husband, when the king rushed out from a concealment which he had sought previous to their arrival, and seized on Theodora to prevent her escape. The knights, feigning fear, immediately fled to some distance; and Theodora, filled with dismay on finding herself in the power of the king, cried long and violently for assistance. It was, however, of no avail; and the king making a sign to his assistants, they brought up their horses for the purpose of forcing her away. Her cries were not in vain, for a voice was heard as though from an adjacent rock, which, from the reverberation, produced a most fearful effect; and suddenly there issued from a fissure the figure of a man, which, although disguised with wounds, and covered with blood, was immediately recognised as that of Enrico. The king

and his attendants drew back appalled, and thinking he was the inhabitant of another world come to rescue their victim, were immediately about to fly; but Theodora being only alive to the presence of her husband, threw herself in his arms, regardless of the terrible appearance he presented. Enrico called on the king to stay, who, astonished at what he saw, called on his attendants to remain; when Enrico, taking the hand of Theodora, threw himself at the feet of the king. "Great Dionysius," he cried, "I am indeed Enrico, your most faithful friend and servant; a miracle has alone preserved me from death, which I shall esteem the more if I can repeat to you my innocence. Theodora, for whom you suspect me guilty of betraying your confidence, was my wife long before you made known to me your views respecting her; this I hope will be sufficient to convince you of the little reason you have had to think injuriously of me, when duty and loyalty were the feelings by which I was actuated. Behold us now both at your feet; and if you are deaf to the voice of mercy, let the same blow end our lives and miseries together."

The king was moved with pity at the situation to which his own unjust passion had reduced one whom he had so long honoured with his friendship. Raising him from the ground, he embraced him, and said, that since such was the case, he freely



forgave him for the annoyance which his apparent duplicity had caused him, and asked his forgiveness for what he had made him suffer. Enrico then informed him that his descent into the pit was stayed by some bushes, which grew at no great distance from the mouth; and that although sorely cut and bruised, he with great difficulty made his way out, and sought shelter in the caves of the rocks until he could devise some plan for escape. The king then returned with them to the palace, where the nuptials were publicly celebrated.

JEALOUSY OF THE DEAD.

THAT beautiful city of Spain, which is bathed by the crystal waters of the Tagus ; the mistress of arts and arms, within whose limits are gathered together all that is beautiful and noble ; the splendid residence, in past ages, of a race of kings, and now the illustrious heritage of their successors, will be easily recognised as the imperial Toledo. In this city lived an honourable cavalier, a native of Valencia, whose name was Don Lucindo. He was a gentleman of good pretensions, noble, valiant, and discreet, if such qualifications can be possibly possessed by a lover ; for Don Lucindo had been six years in the wars of Flanders, solely to acquire honour and fame, the better to deserve the love of a beautiful lady of Toledo, named Donna Ana.

As his parents had been some time dead, and he was entirely free from any ties of kindred, he left his property at Valencia in the hands of trusty individuals, and fixed his residence at Toledo. Donna Ana, as we have before observed, was beautiful, and moreover possessed a handsome property of twenty

thousand ducats, with solely the care of providing for an aged aunt, who resided with her, and under whose superintendence she was left. The gallant attentions of Don Lucindo were not lost on his mistress, who repaid his courtesy with occasional glances of recognition and kindness, sometimes from her window, and at others when going to mass ; on which occasions he was never far from her side. As a circumstance consequent on such an understanding, notes and sonnets began to pass in some profusion, in the safe transmission of which was employed a servant of Donna Ana, named Teela. This girl proved her fidelity to her young mistress, and endeavoured to deserve her good opinion, by cheating the old lady, her aunt, on all occasions ; but her suspicions were, nevertheless, raised by some inadvertences, so that on one occasion, by watching an opportunity, she intercepted a sonnet, which was intended by Don Lucindo for his mistress. Notwithstanding the protestations of Teela, that it was a perfect stranger who gave her the sonnet, the aunt was not without suspicion as to the writer, and Donna Ana did not escape without a sharp rebuke from her aunt, whom, however, she shortly contrived to pacify.

Don Lucindo was much annoyed when Teela, who was herself so much amazed with her own want of care, that the sight of a doubloon could hardly reconcile her, related to him the *contretemps*. This, how-

ever, she pertinaciously refused to take, although in the end it did not return into Don Lucindo's purse, resembling in this particular certain medical practitioners, who have sometimes been known, by strong language, to refuse their fees, yet never to withhold their hand when offered. Don Lucindo entertained great hopes that his suit, from so auspicious a commencement, would have a happy and successful termination; but as nothing is certain in this life, whether in love or any other of our desires, Don Lucindo was doomed like others to experience the effects of the instability of fortune. There was in Toledo a noble cavalier, named Don Juan de Moncada, very wealthy, and possessed of such estimable qualities, that he was beloved by all who knew him. This young cavalier had met Donna Ana, and her beauty had made such an impression on him, that he determined to solicit her favour, without heeding cost or consequences. But as it was necessary to employ some one to assist him in his projects, he chose one of his own servants as a confidant,—and he could hardly have made choice of a better, for Martin was shrewd and clever; and no sooner did he understand his master's wishes, than he immediately undertook to forward them. He soon found means to introduce himself to Teela, as a preparatory measure to gain admission into the house. Without giving any hint of his ulterior designs, Martin professed himself,

with such apparent sincerity, so ardent an admirer of Teela, and withal was so good humoured and witty, that the waiting maid shortly became so much his own, that he introduced the subject of his master's love, and was satisfied that he had secured her assistance. Of course, Teela informed him of Don Lucindo's attachment, and the progress he had made with her mistress, but Martin was in no way disheartened for his master's success; he only extorted a promise from Teela, that she would conceal all the notes for the future from Don Lucindo, and forward all that he should bring from Don Juan. Don Juan was delighted with the progress his servant had made, and immediately addressed a letter to Donna Ana, breathing his protestations of admiration and love.

The fair Ana was somewhat disturbed at the receipt of the letter; but lest he might construe anything favourable from her silence, she lost no time in framing a reply, in which she stated the utter impossibility of receiving his proffered attentions. This letter was sent to Don Juan much in the same way as memorials are handed to the king. Donna Ana giving it to Teela, Teela giving it to Martin, and Martin to Don Juan. The cavalier was very sorrowful on reading the contents; for though he could not help admiring the style in which it was indited, yet the resolution it expressed filled him with grief.

Martin took up the letter when his master had finished, hoping to find some little expression on which to ground a hope; for without being a learned man or a magician, who would warp the truth to frame a consequence agreeing with his argument, yet he thought he understood the bye-roads to a lady's favour, which are never to be found in their general discourse, but are sometimes discovered hidden in an ambiguous phrase or obscure expression, which when threaded rightly would lead to a different result. The conclusion, however, that Martin drew from Donna Ana's letter, was simply, that there was a lover in the question, and that, as long as he remained, no success could be contemplated. He therefore advised his master, if he were intent on prosecuting the adventure, the shortest way would be to engage him in a duel, which, if successful, would dispose of his rival, and if not, would at least ease the ardour of his own love. Don Juan found this advice very reasonable; and making light of everything in comparison with the flame that consumed him, he sallied out one night with Martin to the house where Donna Ana resided, supposing that, if there was any favoured rival, that was the most likely spot to meet him. They were not disappointed; for, directly beneath the window, they discovered Don Lucindo waiting in expectation of seeing his mistress. Don Juan left Martin at some

few paces, and advanced alone. "Señor cavalier," said he haughtily, "what seek you here?" "Nothing that it imports you to know," returned Don Lucindo in the same strain; pass on, as I generally answer such questions rather with the sword than the tongue." This reply pleased Don Juan exceedingly, considering the purpose for which he came, and immediately drawing from it a sufficient cause of quarrel, he replied, "I am not one who would answer such language as that in the open street; but if your courage will not belie your words, follow me." Not a word more was necessary; for Don Lucindo, incensed at such an impertinent interference, was determined to chastise the author of it, and without further consideration, followed him to the castle of San Cervantes, where, drawing their swords, they engaged in combat. It was nearly dark, and chance directed their weapons; so that after one or two passes, fortunately avoided by each, the sword of Don Juan passed through the body of his antagonist, and he fell on the spot without a word or a groan. Don Juan and his servant found their way home without observation; and such was the rapidity and secrecy with which the whole affair was conducted, that when the death of Don Lucindo was rumoured abroad, not the slightest trace could be discovered of the person from whose hand he received his mortal wound. After a time, his funeral was celebrated with

splendour, and the talk which the affair created gradually subsided, as the event which caused it was forgotten. For a long time Don Juan refrained from preferring his suit to Donna Ana, whose feelings had undergone too severe a shock to render it politic to address her on such a subject ; but Martin had not been idle. He had no feelings of delicacy to restrain him from prosecuting his suit with the waiting maid, who on her part had neglected nothing to advance the interest of Don Juan with her mistress, by constantly repeating the praises she heard from without, respecting his gallantry and great qualities. It is not in the heart of woman to withstand, for any length of time, so formidable a league ; and by the time Don Juan thought proper to renew his solicitations for her intimacy, she was more than half disposed to receive them. The verses which he wrote never wanted a favourable criticism while Teela was at hand to read them ; for if Don Lucindo, a soldier, was not free from the infirmity of poetizing, little less could be expected of Don Juan, who had had a finished education in the different colleges of learning, and had dedicated works to the muses with some effect. His letters, which were composed with the greatest care, were sure to be admired by Teela for their tenderness and grace ; and it was not long before they were rewarded with an answer which was sufficient to convince him his endeavours had not been unsuccessful.

Having proceeded thus far, Donna Ana was persuaded before long to grant him interviews at night from her balcony, which was but the next step to introducing him within. Accordingly, Teela was on the alert within, in case the aunt should be disturbed, and Martin was posted to prevent intrusion from without. In this manner Don Juan repeated to his mistress those vows of affection which he had heretofore only presumed to commit to paper, and Donna Ana was not an uninterested listener; for the heart that had been occupied formerly by Don Lucindo, could not withstand the living graces of Don Juan; therefore the remembrance of her dead lover could only now be considered as an early dream. No sooner had Don Juan obtained this permission, by which means he hoped soon to crown his conquest, than his visits were stopped in a very unpleasant and unexpected manner. On his arrival at the house of Donna Ana, and preparing to enter, he saw a stranger placed directly in the door way. He instantly retired, thinking it might be some relation of Donna Ana, who had obtained intelligence of their nocturnal meetings, and had prepared an ambush for him. The next day the circumstance was repeated to Donna Ana, who with Teela laughed and declared it must have been imagination, for if any relations had discovered them, her aunt would have been more watchful, and they would certainly have

heard concerning it. The next night Don Juan was resolved to clear up the mystery, and seeing the same figure, as on the preceding night, posted at the door, as though to dispute his entrance, desired Martin to go forward and demand his reason, not choosing to make himself known unless there was reason. Martin, who prided himself on his gallantry, instantly walked up boldly to the intruder, and demanded his business, when the stranger slowly casting aside the cloak which concealed him, discovered to the astonished gaze of Martin the countenance of the cavalier whom his master slew at the castle of San Cervantes. His valour was instantly quelled, and he darted away, crying out on his master, and making the sign of the cross with a fervour which it could hardly be imagined he could ever have displayed. Don Juan rushed to the assistance of Martin, thinking he had been wounded, but when he heard the account which his servant related, and not seeing any body near, he did not feel quite comfortable, although he concealed his feelings as much as possible from Martin, resolving, however, on the next night, to ascertain himself the truth of the story.

On the next night they repaired to the adventure, taking care to ascertain that no one was hidden in the adjacent street, to turn the odds against them in case they should be obliged to fight. They found the same figure in exactly the same situation as on

the preceding nights. The courage of Don Juan was not to be daunted, but the valorous Martin quivered like an aspen for very fear, and the better to conceal his feelings, as well as to preserve his faith to his master, by not deserting him, he turned his back on the figure, and began to implore the divine assistance, his conscience assisting him in recollecting, that had it not been for his counsels the poor defunct might still have been living. Don Juan had no such compunctions, and advancing, fiercely demanded to know why he waited there. The stranger, without uncovering his face, replied in a melancholy tone,—“I am not one who would answer such language in the public street, but if your courage be as great as your action indicates, follow me, and you shall know”—being nearly the same words Don Juan uttered on the night he slew Don Lucindo. Don Juan was a man of undaunted courage, yet these words made him hesitate a little, before he accepted the invitation of the stranger. He was half inclined to fancy that it was the appearance of his deceased rival, yet if it should by any chance be a relation of Donna Ana, or some other pretender to her hand, his character would be lost for ever by betraying any symptoms of fear; he therefore, without appearance of hesitation, followed the unknown, much to the horror of Martin, who accompanied him.

They took the same road as Don Juan had chosen

with Don Lucindo, and when at the castle of San Cervantes, the stranger halted on the very spot where the deceased cavalier received his death wound. These circumstances did not tend to heighten the courage of Don Juan or his attendant, who were doomed to experience a still greater trial, for the stranger, on throwing aside his concealment, was recognized by Don Juan as a resemblance of his deceased rival. "I will keep you no longer in suspense; know that I am Don Lucindo, who on this very spot, and at this very hour, you deprived of life, to rob me of the mistress whom I adored; but I come not to upbraid you, for the dead have no enmity, but I come to you as the man on whom I have the most claim on earth to do me service." "Speak," said Don Juan, "I have injured you, and would willingly ease my conscience by performing your commands." "The evil actions of which I have been guilty during life, disturb my repose; it is for you to repair them, and ensure my tranquillity. Know that in Valencia, my native place, I was blessed with the affection of a beautiful girl, whose mind was as rich in all good thoughts, as her person was replete with every elegance and grace; yet for one who has so soon forgotten me did I leave this treasure, and she now pines over my unworthy remembrance with the most pious constancy. Go to Valencia, say nothing of my death, but endeavour to obtain her forgiveness for

my past cruelty ; if you succeed, bear her answer in writing, and place it under this stone, on this very spot where I fell ; as you do this, so shall your suit with Donna Ana prosper, but if you fail, dread my vengeance !” Saying this, he disappeared in the darkness of the night, and Don Juan returned home in a more melancholy mood than he had ever been before ; he was afraid to absent himself from Toledo without making Donna Ana acquainted with the reason, and yet he could not inform her : the distance from Toledo was great, and no excuse of business would be sufficient, he therefore determined to send Martin, hoping that his agency would be sufficient to execute the mission of the dead. Martin was accordingly ordered to depart on the following morning, and on that night his master determined to visit Donna Ana. When they arrived, they met with no hindrance as on the former occasions, and after making the accustomed signal, Teela opened the door, and in silence and darkness they entered the house. On this occasion, as Martin was about to start on a journey of some risk, the duties of sentinel were forgotten, and he was introduced into the apartment of his mistress, much in the same manner as his master was to that of Donna Ana.

Don Juan was overjoyed to meet again the object of his affections, and had already taken her hand, which he pressed fervently to his lips, when he felt

himself seized by a powerful grasp, that seemed impossible for him to resist, and was hurled the length of the room against the wall with such violence, that he remained for a moment overcome. At that moment, a voice whispered in his ear—"Don Juan, why art not thou gone on my mission? I have suffered enough by thee, and beware how you trifle with me." Without knowing the cause, Donna Ana felt her lover forcibly snatched from her, and hearing him fall heavily on the floor, not being able to conceal her excessive fear, she screamed aloud for assistance. Immediately Teela heard the cries of her mistress, she ran to her assistance, and her aunt being aroused from her slumbers, hobbled to her niece's apartment, fearing some terrible accident had befallen her. Donna Ana, seeing the consequences of her rash outcry, jumped into bed, and then assured her aunt that a frightful dream had occasioned the cry that had disturbed her. The old lady tried to pacify her, and insisted that Teela should remain with her during the night. She then retired; but as Martin was curious to know the cause of the disturbance, he had cautiously left Teela's room, and passing that of the old lady, was making his way to that of Donna Ana, when, hearing some one coming, he hastily made his way back. The ancient dame saw the shadow of Martin flit past her door, which was open, the light from within being indistinct, though

not quite dark ; and fancying there was some spirit in her room, a belief to which she was quite a convert, she took it into her head to go to that of Teela's, not choosing to betray her weakness to the young women by returning to her niece. She had scarcely entered the room, and closed the door, when Martin, anxious to know the cause of her absence, seized her in his arms, overwhelming her with kisses and questions. The old lady, bewildered and speechless with fright, could not answer, but believing it to be some supernatural visitation, and having borne her maiden reputation without blemish for so many years, was horror stricken that it should now be sullied, and by such equivocal means ; the moment, therefore, she could recover the use of her tongue, she commenced such an outcry, that Donna Ana and Teela, who had been assisting Don Juan, in their turn ran from their room to ascertain the cause of the old lady's terror. Martin, on finding his mistake, made off with all convenient speed, and Don Juan, thinking the devil had obtained possession, followed his example, and left the ladies to explain as they were best able. The old lady was for some time in strong fits, and it was not without difficulty that she was restored, when it was all attributed to the malign agency of some evil spirit, whom it was the father *Carraco's* care on the morrow to allay. During the rest of the night they remained together, the aunt not choosing to trust her-

self alone, and Donna Ana waited impatiently for the day, fearing some unpleasant accident had happened to her lover, though by what means she was at a loss to conjecture. Don Juan, on his arrival at home, recounted the circumstance that had occurred in Donna Ana's apartment, to Martin, who agreed that it would be perfectly impossible to prosecute his views with regard to Donna Ana, without complying with the injunctions of the deceased to the letter. Don Juan, therefore, wrote a letter to his mistress, stating the singular occurrence, part of which she had witnessed, only omitting the share he had in the death of Don Lucindo, and asking her permission to absent himself for the purpose of complying with the injunction of the deceased, after which he hoped she would reward his affection by giving him her hand. Donna Ana replied in the manner he could wish, and gave her consent to his request, that the nuptials should be solemnized on his return from Valencia.

Don Juan lost no time in fulfilling the mission required of him. He repaired immediately to Valencia, and discovered the fair one whom Don Lucindo had so shamefully deserted, to be Donna Laura de Fonseca, a young lady gifted with every advantage of beauty and fortune. Don Juan chose an opportunity of introducing the subject of his mission, though without mentioning the death of Don Lucindo. It was some time before she could

believe in the sincerity of her former lover's repentance; but no one knew better than Don Juan the heart of woman, or the ways by which her gentle nature may be wrought upon. He soon obtained from her the letter required, containing her forgiveness of all that had passed, and an assurance of undiminished regard. Delighted at the success of his mission, which removed the only barrier to his happiness, Don Juan returned as speedily as possible to Toledo. He placed the letter under the piece of rock, according to the injunction he had received, and then ordered masses to be said for the repose of Don Lucindo's soul, who he doubted not would be sufficiently grateful for these efforts made in its behalf, as to abstain from further interference in his evenings' amusement.

The time had been fixed by Donna Ana for her marriage with Don Juan, which was to be celebrated with great splendour in the cathedral of the city, and the intermediate time had been employed in preparations for the ceremony, and the arrangements for their future residence. The troubled spirit of Don Lucindo seemed to be hushed into repose; for during this period, the visits of Don Juan had been uninterrupted by any ghostly agency, and Martin had, in consequence, quite regained his courage. The auspicious day so anxiously awaited by all at length arrived. The relations of both families, and a crowd

of guests, thronged around the altar to witness the ceremony. The bride and bridegroom were arrived, and nothing was wanting to delay the performance of the rites, when a loud noise was heard at the gates of the cathedral, which had been closed before the commencement of mass. Under the supposition that some friends had arrived late, the doors were opened, and to the surprise of all, two figures clothed in black garments, and their features entirely concealed, slowly walked up the aisle towards the altar. The presence of these strangers seemed to throw a damp on the spirits of the guests, and whispers began to be interchanged as to their quality and errand. Don Juan, wishing to remove the unpleasantness that seemed to prevail, when the unknown visitors arrived near the altar, demanded, though in a courteous tone, their name and business. The taller of the strangers immediately threw off his sable garments, and discovered to the astonished Juan the person of the deceased Don Lucindo. Donna Ana screamed, and fainted in the arms of her betrothed husband. Martin raised a similar outcry, and made no scruple in declaring it to be the restless spirit of Don Lucindo. Don Juan was firm amidst the disturbance. "Injured shade," he cried, "what have I neglected to perform, that thou shouldst still be unquietly wandering on earth; what more can I do to insure thy repose?" The figure made no

reply, but advanced and seized Don Juan by the hand. Consternation seized all present ; but Don Juan felt the touch to be of so corporeal a nature, that either his senses deceived him, or ghosts had very much changed their nature, if Don Lucindo had not resumed his earthly covering of flesh and blood. "Don Juan," he exclaimed, "I will no longer deceive you. You will not have the sin of Don Lucindo's death to answer for ; the wound you gave me was not mortal ; but on a bed of sickness which it occasioned, I felt remorse for my conduct to Donna Laura, and vowed on my recovery to make her reparation. But willing to try the constancy of Donna Ana, I caused myself to be proclaimed as dead : the rest you know. I could not entrust my cause with Donna Laura in more experienced and better hands than your own, particularly when you had such a stake on its success. The result has proved it, and I have now the pleasure of resigning for ever all claims I formerly had on your intended bride, and of introducing to you one to whom my affections have ever been due, and from whom they shall never more wander." He then removed the sombre vestment from his companion, and discovered a young and most interesting woman, who, it need not be said, proved to be Donna Laura ; and, in truth, the pair were gallantly attired for ghosts, being dressed in nothing less than full suits of rich

wedding raiment. It is impossible to describe the surprise and joy of all present at this happy conclusion of an unpromising adventure; and after sincere compliments of congratulation on both sides, it was arranged that the marriage of both should take place together; thus sharing the festivities prepared for Don Juan's wedding, and cementing an intimacy which continued unbroken during their lives.



GUEVARA.



LUIS VELIZ DE GUEVARA.

GUEVARA has been designated by French writers as the "Spanish Scarron;" and forms one of that luminous tribe of wits, who infused life and spirit into the court and palace of Philip IV. of Spain. The king was himself attached to poetry, though more for the sake of amusement, than from any rational desire of promoting literature and its professors. To the native Andalusian grace and spirit, and nobility of birth, he united that promptitude and facility of genius, which early acquired for him a distinguished name, both as an orator and a writer, and introduced him to the confidence and familiarity of his monarch. Entrusted with the office of chamberlain to the royal household, he resided nearly the whole of his life at Madrid; and he bore away the palm of poetry and eloquence, as well as wit, among numbers who then disputed it with no trivial pretensions to the prize. Thus his fame as a lively writer, both in prose and verse, was little inferior to that of Lope de Vega himself. In the opinion of Nicholas Antonio, Gue-

vara was his equal in points of dramatic plot and incident, and these qualities, added to his genial and animated disposition, rendered his death, in the year 1646, a serious deprivation to the court, whose society lost much of its pleasure and vivacity, and reverted to its former solemnity and gloom. Guevara wrote numerous comedies, all in the tone and spirit of his age; nor was this his crowning merit, as among the few tragic subjects treated by him is that of the celebrated Inez de Castro, whose unhappy fate he placed in so touching a point of view under the title of *Reinar depues de Morir*. His name thus occupies a high place among the dramatic writers of his time; but the work on which rests his chief claim to modern popularity and applause, is the *Diablo Cojuelo Verdades de la otra Vida*, The Devil upon two Sticks; Tidings of the other World; the earliest and most remarkable among those productions, entitled in Spanish literature, *La Novela allegorica Satirica*; and one of the many which have supplied the writers of other nations, as in the case of Le Sage, with the most valuable portion of their works. It is full of originality, and admirable traits of nature, combined with an ease and vividness of style, when distinct from scenes of low life, which render it universally popular wherever it is naturalised or known.

MODERN MIRACLES; OR SPIRITS OF
THE OTHER WORLD.

THERE was a beautiful Andalusian girl, of the name of Beatrice, sprung from a distinguished family, celebrated in the wars of Ferdinand and Isabella, and their successors, whose numerous attractions and accomplishments made her the theme of every gallant tongue. Among the most assiduous and attached of her lovers, in the town in which she dwelt, was Don Pedro Giron, a youth of signal worth and accomplishments, calculated to attract the eye of a lady like Beatrice, who easily forgave his want of high birth and fortune, in consideration of his personal merits.

Fortune, however, whose course we know "in true love, did never yet run smooth," and that seems always to bear a sort of spite at mere personal merit, put it into the heads of the lady's parents to take a different view of the subject from her own. They courted a wealthy alliance; and the mere presence of the handsome Don Pedro in the same street, much more near their own house, threw them into a

fit of the spleen, and they would scold the pretty Beatrice by the hour's length, for idly throwing her thoughts away upon a poor *parvenu*. Well for them the gallant Don Pedro heard them not, though they sometimes provoked their daughter to tell him; which, after throwing him into a terrible passion, made him only the more intent upon succeeding in his views, and foiling their opposition, by greater obstinacy and perseverance on his part. Even Beatrice's own attempts to dissuade him from the pursuit, tended but to excite his ardour; and he took a vow to brave every risk, natural or supernatural, ere he would desist from his pretensions to her love.

Of the temerity of such a vow, almost defying heaven as well as fortune, we shall hear more in the sequel; at present we must pursue the plots and counter-plots—all the resources of a love campaign—between the gallant Pedro and the lady's parents. Finding the bold and manœuvring genius with which they had to deal, they came to the resolution of making their virgin treasure altogether inaccessible, by placing it under lock and key, whether with or without consent of the party concerned.

They had just sense enough to see that she favoured Don Pedro's addresses; and, in order to make their own game the more sure against poor Pedro, they hit upon the following scheme. Without saying a word of their purpose, one warm Andalusian summer

day, when the lovely Beatrice lay almost panting under the darts of Love and Phœbus, both striking her at once, her kind parents introduced a somewhat ancient but spirited looking cavalier, whom they announced with grand emphasis and distinction, with a string of titles, such as captain, colonel, or knight at arms; the most excellent and welcome Don Vasco de Ataide. He was then presented to her as her intended husband, and as a particular favour, the lady Beatrice was allowed till the next day to prepare her bridal ornaments, and receive him as her noble husband.

We shall leave to any young person over head and ears in love, to form an idea of the infinite surprise and concern of the fair Beatrice, at these very parental tidings. Her sighs and tears were so many, and lasted so long, that it was some time before she could see distinctly enough to mark what sort of a looking animal her new husband really was. When she did this, the striking contrast between him and her lover, by no means to his advantage, actually threw her into a fit, whether from love to Don Pedro, or aversion to the old cavalier, she had no time to state. Her cruel parents, however, paid no attention to this tender appeal to their feelings, beyond consigning her to her attendants, and adopting the usual means of recovery,—cold water and cold comfort of every kind.

In her bosom was detected a portrait of Don Pedro, carefully enveloped; and on Don Vasco expressing a wish to have it, the precious face was handed to him, on sight of which, the pretty Beatrice again took refuge in a swoon.

On her recovery, she appeared a thousand times more obstinately bent against the match than before; but what will not parental threats, promises, cajolings, and persecutions of every kind, seconded by the efforts of so experienced an old lover as Don Vasco, be able to effect in the constancy of a young girl like Beatrice. It was not that her first love was banished from her heart, as the vain old cavalier imagined; but she had no chance of effectual resistance against so many and such powerful adversaries. From this, Don Vasco soon really believed that he was preferred by the young lady, even before the handsome and spirited young Pedro; because, forsooth, at the end of four days, she found herself obliged to yield to the storm, and avoid a convent, by giving her hand to one whom her heart wished far away.

And of a truth she felt any thing but kindly feelings towards her new husband, notwithstanding the handsome presents which he lavished upon her, with those of her parents and other rich friends; all of which, in her secret heart, she resolved in her turn to have the pleasure of presenting to her handsome

lover. This at least was in her power, and something more, she thought, if they went on provoking her as much after her marriage as they had done before it; an intention, however, she did not care to communicate to any of the parties except one. She first sent him a pair of beautiful Andalusian horses, next several pages to attend him; with a very great variety of fanciful ornaments and jewels, befitting a young prince.

“Oh, then,” he might well exclaim, “the inhuman folly and cruelty of these starched old duty bound fathers, who will neither lead nor drive. What chance has a luckless lover, like me, against their infernal arts. Here indeed, do I hold some of their precious trash;—even that little vengeance is sweet; but what are all these gauds and jewels for the price of that, my sweet Beatrice, which thou hast lost me. Stop only a little, and the infernal old knight shall pay dear enough for his folly and temerity; and thy cruel parents as well. Rank and honours, forsooth! they shall wear their honours thick enough upon them, ere long, that I promise them; and all Andalusia shall point at him as one of the most besotted and dishonoured old dotards in existence. When that is done, I will kill him; yes, I shall have the pleasure of killing him at least,—by this good sword again I vow I will, spite of man or fiend, for he has robbed me of my Beatrice,—and then I will marry her.”

Such were some of the exclamations of the disappointed lover, on receiving a letter from the married beauty, in which she lamented the hard fate to which she had been condemned. She declared that she was excessively unhappy; and only lived in the idea that he still loved her, as she loved him, only better and better. At the same time, she intreated him to make no attempt just at present, as it could only have the effect of increasing her duration, and making her the more miserable. But though it was impossible to meet, still, if he wished to see her, she would appear at her prison window, and he might converse with her during some time of the night through the grating.

We need not say how gladly Don Pedro complied with this request; and he instantly hastened to prepare for the next evening a beautiful canzone to sing softly under her chamber, which we must be excused however from inserting. On approaching the spot, he beheld the usual signal of a white kerchief, and began to pour his love-song in the most plaintive and lugubrious measures. The fair one, through her smiles and tears, reproached him for bringing music, that might excite suspicion, and even sully her reputation.

On this he ceased, and with eyes bent earnestly towards each other, they began to weep over their misfortune, till at length Don Pedro declared he

would set out for the Neapolitan wars, it being utterly impossible to remain there and behold her in possession of another. Beatrice tried to inspire him with better hopes, and he at length took his departure somewhat comforted; brooding on revenge all the way home, and after he got home, upon different plans for putting the old new Benedict out of the world at the shortest possible notice.

At last he so far mastered his feelings as to resolve to challenge him fairly, and give him a chance of his life; yet fully resolved that both of them should not remain alive. For he knew that Don Vasco had little taste for that sort of duel he proposed, since he began to relish one of a less dangerous nature, insomuch that he had almost forgotten his old campaigns in the field of Mars. Could he be surprised, therefore, at receiving a challenge from a spirited young lover, whose promised bride he had appropriated to himself. It contained not the slightest apology for the desperate proposal it offered; and the old captain, with equal indifference, armed himself for the combat with the young knight.

Now old Benedict was a Portuguese, and had self-sufficiency enough to despise his neighbours, and he took the whole matter rather as a bravado than any thing else. He did not even think it worth while to take any company along with him, in the full belief

that he should conclude the whole business to his own satisfaction, without any such assistance as a second. Don Pedro, in the same way of thinking, prepared himself merely with his own good sword, a breastplate, a dagger, and a small pair of pistols; not for the purpose of taking any undue advantage, but that he might be a match for any on the part of the wily old Portuguese. Besides, he had to go through some dark and obscure passages, the more secretly to reach the place of rendezvous, and to pass a large piece of ground, formerly a burial place for certain malefactors, whose bodies were forfeited to justice. It was about the eleventh hour of night; the sky was clear and tranquil, and the stars just shone enough, in the absence of the moon, to make the surrounding objects visible. But Don Pedro bent his way through the gloomy cemetery without the slightest fear, for he had been too well broken in to encounter danger, of whatever nature, in his early days, to tremble now he was a man, at shadows in the dark.

Just, however, as he had reached the centre of the malefactors' burial place, he heard something enough to upset the courage of the boldest philosopher, to say nothing of a young soldier's, who had only been accustomed to natural sounds and sights, however terrible, arising out of the perils of war. But this was neither natural nor tolerable to a mere mortal

ear ; and it was followed by a sight that had still less to recommend itself, just at that place and hour. It was in the shape of an enormous black dog, of such dimensions, indeed, that the young knight at first mistook it for a horse. At least he thought it must either be a horse, or Cerberus himself escaped above ground, such were the infernal kind of howlings it produced in the ears of the terrified youth, who felt that, but for these, he could perhaps have stood his ground.

As it was, he unsheathed his sword, and essayed to pass on ; but the monstrous beast placed himself directly in his path, or wheeled round him, whithersoever he turned. He had aimed many blows, but in vain ; when taking a sudden spring, the hateful animal lighted with his huge paws upon Don Pedro's shoulders, and attempted to fix his sharp gnashing teeth in his neck. A cold shiver ran through his frame, as he felt the beast aiming at his throat ; but soon resuming his courage, he took one of his pistols, and discharged it at the breast of his fierce assailant.

But, as it appeared to Don Pedro, the shot took no effect, and flew harmless from the scaly hide ; in-somuch, that one of the balls glanced back from its aim, and wounded its own master on the leg. The struggle continued during about half an hour ; the dog attempting to worry the knight, and the latter to escape from his enemy's claws. Finding all

human efforts vain, Don Pedro at length began to implore the divine aid, protesting that if he escaped from the present danger, he would renounce the evil design which he had in view. He had little merit indeed in such renunciation, being now incapacitated for any such expedition. The duel he had in hand was quite enough for that day; and he fought on, till, altogether overpowered by the huge apparition, he was dragged to some distance, where he was next morning found insensible by some passengers, and in that state carried back to his own home.

Meanwhile Don Vasco, like a brave old cavalier, stood attending the arrival of his enemy at the appointed spot. He had no other occupation but to gaze at the moon; till having looked and waited a reasonably long while, and never suspecting the kind of obstacle that stood in his rival's way, he grew excessively impatient, and began to revile him for an impostor and a coward. Determined not to put up with such treatment, he proceeded next morning to his rival's house, and found that he had just been brought thither in the sad plight we have already mentioned. He felt much hurt at the idea of not having had an opportunity of proving his courage, and returned home in no very good humour, to await the period when his rival should be sufficiently recovered to give him satisfaction.



Upon first coming to himself, Don Pedro saw his couch surrounded by some of his friends, who eagerly inquired into the cause of the late accident, and by whom he had been so roughly handled. This, however, like a prudent man, he resolved to reveal only to his doctor, or his father confessor ; as, in fact, he stood in no little need both of one and the other.

The report of her lover's disaster soon came to the ears of Lady Beatrice, and though unacquainted with the particular circumstances, she shed many tears, which proved how tenderly she was still attached to him. She had hardly need to plead illness, for she was indeed sick at heart, as an excuse for not attending at her meals, and confining herself altogether to her own apartment. She longed for an opportunity to assure Don Pedro how deeply she sympathised in his misfortunes, and how much she suffered from the severity of her husband's treatment, whose jealousy led him to debar her from the most innocent enjoyments of life.

By degrees her lover recovered from his late shock ; and though at first he intended to renounce the pursuit of her, he no sooner set eyes upon her first letter, than all his former tenderness revived. In short, like a man who retires only a few steps back, in order to take a greater spring, Don Pedro resumed all his courage, bent on prosecuting the adventure to the last. At the same time, to satisfy his conscience,

he abandoned the design of the duel, confining his views to the accomplishment of a less fatal, but hardly less difficult kind of revenge.

Beatrice, too, was fondly attached to him ; at the same time she was of noble birth ; and the preservation of her reputation was a matter of some moment. The manner of carrying on their correspondence called for the utmost care ; and such was Don Pedro's persevering and impassioned earnestness, as to inspire her with fears, lest the whole should come to the ears of her incensed husband. He could not even refrain from reciting some of his romantic love ditties under her window, in which he gave free vent to his hopes and fears.

One evening, as he was thus employed, the figure of a man with the speed of lightning seemed to dart from one of the balconies over his head, soon followed by another ; both of whom attacked Don Pedro with the greatest fury. He defended himself valiantly, like one resolved to sell his life dearly ; but he had, nevertheless, the worst of it ; and was on the point of falling under their swords, when luckily another man approached, and seeing how hard he was pressed, drew, and put himself at his side.

Upon this, the others retired, or rather vanished with the same speed they had approached, insomuch that Don Vasco, for it was no other who had come to Pedro's aid, remarked that they must have sprung

from the other world. Don Vasco, as much astonished as Don Pedro, inquired if he were hurt, and the latter in his confusion, replied that he was, and he feared it was over with him.

Upon this, he was assisted into Don Vasco's house, neither of them knowing the other; and now by this strange adventure, Don Pedro found himself in the house of his beloved Beatrice, and she knew nothing of his being there. Upon lights being brought, Don Vasco, regarding his companion, exclaimed:—

“How is this? Don Pedro! do I see aright;—who then, pray, were your assailants? and where are the wounds of which you complained?”

“I know not,” was the reply; “it is all like a dream. Down came both of them upon me from the balcony, as I thought; and they truly seemed to deal me some severe and heavy strokes. But instead of being mortally wounded, I now feel perfectly well; yet had it not been for your timely aid, I was fast losing all consciousness, and doubtless must have died. If, however, you have only preserved me to betray me into your own hands, in this your own house, at least permit me to defend myself, or open your doors and let me go free.”

“From all that I see,” replied Don Vasco, “it behoves you, I think, Don Pedro, to look to yourself, and to mend your ways. For it is a true saying, that when men revenge not their own injuries, just

heaven is on their side ; and to tell you my mind, I suspect that your assailants were no men of this world. They vanished like smoke ; I saw it ; and therefore if you fear not man, yet fear God. No one injured, as I conceive myself to be, can treat the matter lightly ; so that it will be better for us both, when you shall recover your presence of mind after this accident, to refer the affair to our swords, and fix upon a place of meeting like honourable men."

"I have no wish," answered Don Pedro, "to engage you now, Captain ; for you are my benefactor ; I cannot do it."

"Yet so it must be," returned Vasco, "my honour enjoins it : yes, Sir, I must hack you to pieces ; you will find you have also to do with a man of this world as well as the other. What ! did you not call me out ? and do you shrink from receiving the punishment due to your temerity ? It cannot be. In proper time the meeting must and shall take place."

During this dialogue the parents of Beatrice were present, and it was agreed by all parties that the adventure should not transpire, and Don Pedro be allowed to depart, upon the mere condition of never passing through the street where Don Vasco lived. Don Pedro pledged his word ; whether in the intention of observing it or not, is another question, after which he returned thanks for their courtesy, and took his leave.



He walked home like a man in a dream, utterly confounded and astonished. For some days he continued to suffer under the same kind of excitement he had felt subsequent to his strange encounter with the terrible dog; and in the same manner had the men who sought to kill him, uttered ferocious threats, and yet left him alive and unhurt. There seemed something more than natural in all this, and Don Pedro began to feel that heaven had pronounced against him, and was armed against his life. No longer, therefore, wishing to contend with fate and his evil stars, manifested in such a fearful manner, he promised to renounce all idea of his beloved Beatrice, and the more so as he considered himself twice indebted for his life to his more fortunate rival. He began by dropping his correspondence with her, and day after day passed without Beatrice obtaining the least token of his former regard. She had come to a knowledge of what had passed on that eventful night by means of one of her maids; and at length becoming quite impatient, she conveyed to him by the same means the following letter:—"Is it not rather surprising, that she who beholds the sword of her tyrannic husband suspended by a hair above her head, yet fears it not, should have to remind you, a man of approved courage and resolution, of fealty to her you professed to love. That this change should be owing to false terror of mere shadows, or the still

viler fear of offending an old man, is still more strange, and little creditable to the character of a lover, whose professions taught her to expect that his attachment would be proof even against spirits of the air. My Pedro, I love you, or I would not say this ; oh, do not then prove inconstant ; be true as I am true, and ever will be."

What could Don Pedro now do ;—was there any resisting such a letter as this, written too by the fair Beatrice ? No ; for though he long struggled, his good intentions and fine promises were all in vain. No longer a repentant sinner, he again fitted on his cuirass, took his sword, and accompanied this time by two stout attendants, he hastened towards the street of his beloved. Her husband was from home on matters of business, and he could not have a more fortunate opportunity. He arrived beneath her window, it was opened, and Beatrice appeared. She was in tears, and Don Pedro was touched at the sight. The quarrels of lovers, we are assured, tend only to rivet the bonds of affection more closely, and so it was on this occasion. They renewed their vows of fidelity, and even agreed upon a place of meeting for the following night, in order to accomplish the ultimate object of pledging their immutable faith. All Don Pedro's good resolutions were put to flight ; not a single pious thought remained ; or if he thought of heaven, he still flattered himself

that he should find a time for every thing, and that it could never be too late to repent. Besides, the near approach of the long wished for and delicious prospect in view, was too alluring to be resisted; and that night he returned home in a tumult of promised pleasure. It would now be worse than barbarous, it would be base and despicable to recede; and he could not find in his heart to do so much violence to her feelings and his own.

The ensuing night approached; and more tender of his Beatrice's reputation than of his own safety, the devoted lover, concealing his rope ladder in his bosom, issued forth. He arrived at the wished for spot; the silken thread was thrown over the balcony, a delicate white hand drew it in; the ladder was fixed, and in a few more moments Don Pedro found himself clasped in the arms of her he loved dearest on earth. Nor was it only this night that witnessed their stolen joys; such was the skill and caution with which they pursued their wicked intrigue, as to escape even the jealous eyes of the lady's guardians. One night, however, just as the rope ladder had been fixed, and the lover was about to ascend into the chamber, there appeared a huge giant, about the size of four men, which seemed to dilate into still larger proportions as it approached the terrified lover. The apparition uttered some fearful and lamentable sounds, enough to strike terror to any

heart but that of a lover's as infatuated as Don Pedro.

Spite of these portentous signs, he sought to scale the window ; but the horrible phantom opposed his efforts, and he was compelled to desist. He was glad to turn his steps homewards, and had already reached about half way, when again plucking up his spirit, he began to revile himself for turning his back upon any danger in the presence of the bright object of his love. Like a gallant-hearted lover, then, he turned back ; but this time he had not reached her door before the same figure rose to view. After a few dismal howls and furious looks, it threatened to put an end to our hero upon the spot, if he did not instantly take himself off ; and this threat it followed up with such ferocious demonstrations of its intention, that the lover's courage quite failed him, and he sunk in a deadly swoon upon the ground. There he lay till early the next morning, when the holy brethren of the parish, going to prepare for the administration of the sacrament to a dying acquaintance, found him lying at full length just where the horrid phantom had left him the night before. Here lay his sword, there his pistols ; and next his hat, his cloak, and one of his boots, all scattered in such a manner as to show that their master had been roughly handled by some body or other. The good brethren lifted him gently up,

and conveyed him to his own residence, where we shall for the present leave him to the care of his Spanish doctor, and his father confessor, who both of them found enough to do.

Alas, the incredible power of love! Was it possible, after such manifestations of the divine displeasure as these, that the infatuation of their hearts should still hurry them on! Beatrice had beheld from her window the whole adventure of that fearful night; she saw the efforts of her lover, and alternate love and fear took possession of her breast. She was aware that heaven was now offended, and firmly believed in all that had previously happened to her lover. What was she to do; how to pacify the vengeance of the skies without abandoning the most cherished object of her love? "Wretched Beatrice," she cried, "does heaven indeed enjoin you, by these fearful portents, to separate, to bid him tear himself from my heart for ever! Oh, how shall I ever learn to live without him, how believe that he can live without me?" And here, overpowered by her troubled feelings, she sunk upon her couch, more dead than alive.

After the lapse of some days Don Vasco returned, and he soon heard of the occurrence, that Don Pedro had been found, as before, insensible in the public streets; and what was worse, in the street he had promised to visit no more, and close to his own

house. There are never wanting people to spread ill news; and Don Vasco's imagination easily supplied any particulars that were left untold, little flattering to his honour and repose. Now that it was too late, he made a rule that Donna Beatrice should never more converse with any one except in his presence. He changed all his domestics, male as well as female, even to the duenna; in short, he turned the house topsy-turvy, and took his own station to preserve its honour at his wife's chamber windows. He had hoped they would have been deterred by huge hobgoblins and phantoms, sent on purpose to fright and reform them; but as these had proved ineffectual, his faith in supernatural duennaship was much shaken, and he determined to watch the lovers with his own eye. But if they had not been afraid even of ghosts, why should they be afraid of an old man? However, he was resolved to keep them at a distance, and do his best; for Don Pedro had now recovered, and Beatrice was already contriving how to write to him, and how to see him again.

This she found to be wholly impracticable, and the more she persisted, the more cautious and severe did she find her implacable and lynx-eyed husband. Such at length became his harshness and oppression, that, incensed beyond measure, the lady resolved to regain her freedom at any price. Find-

ing every resource cut off, in an evil moment it suggested itself to her, to accomplish at once the object of her love and hate, by depriving her vexatious guardian of his existence. She contrived at last to communicate her design to her lover, and it was agreed upon, with equal eagerness by both parties.

The wretched Beatrice administered poison to him in his food; but its effect did not wholly answer the expectations of the lovers. Don Vasco was taken seriously ill; he declared that his inside was all on fire, and he had wit enough to suspect the real cause. He accordingly made haste to make his will, and then took the sacrament in the most edifying manner.

Among other noble friends who called to inquire after his health, while he lay in a lingering state, was our unlucky and abandoned lover, who, the better to escape suspicion, came arm in arm with the chief magistrate, as the most expert thieves sometimes find no safer asylum than under the very nose of justice herself. Both asked very tenderly as to his present state, trying also to cheer him up. Poor Don Vasco raised his eyes, and fixing them stedfastly on Pedro's face, he said: "I shall die of this sickness; it must be so; but I will take care after I am gone, to revenge myself for those injuries which you did not allow me time for doing in my lifetime."

On saying this, the spectators all turned their eyes upon Don Pedro, with an inquisitive look ; for they had heard something of his proceedings, and they supposed Don Vasco to intimate that he was the author of his death. In fact, his confusion almost betrayed him ; but having high connexions, and nothing more being said, Don Vasco gave up the ghost, though it turned out to be a ghost by no means agreeable to Don Pedro. In melancholy mood the latter retired to his own house, where he passed many days wholly secluded from the world.

Soon, however, tempted by the increased facilities now afforded him, he resumed his visits to the guilty Beatrice, and for some time as before, he continued to do so with impunity.

It was one night, about eleven of the clock, that Don Pedro was alarmed by a very unusual noise, as if the whole house were falling about his ears. It began by the clanging of chains, and continued little more than half an hour ; and such was its effect upon Don Pedro, that he hastened to call some of his domestics to his assistance.

As he was going, however, the ghost of the injured Don Vasco stood in his way ; its face presenting a perfect likeness, and its arms outstretched, as if to embrace him. It carried a large wax taper in one hand, and pausing in a sorrowful attitude as it drew close to him, it said : “ When this candle hath burnt

to the socket, prepare to depart this life." As it pronounced these words, a terrible crash again shook the edifice to its foundations. Don Pedro shook still more, and it was with the utmost difficulty that he kept himself upon his legs. As it was, he was seized with a violent illness which lasted many days, though he still attempted to persuade himself that all he had seen and heard was but the effect of his excited imagination.

However this may be, we must now leave him on his sick couch, and return to inquire after the guilty partner of his crimes. Still more passionately attached than ever to the object of her regard, though she observed an outward show of mourning for the death of her deceased husband, she flattered herself that she should at length become indissolubly united by the holiest ties to her heart's idol. Surprised too that she had not seen him during the last few days, she made inquiry, and was shocked to learn that another adventure, similar to the former, had again occurred.

Being now completely her own mistress, both her aged parents having followed Don Vasco to the tomb, she summoned one of her most confidential domestics, and ordered him to bear her company, as she was proceeding upon a matter of the utmost importance. She then arrayed herself in a man's dress, and was just issuing from her own room to join the domestic,

when the shade of Don Vasco intercepted her passage, and with indignant gesture addressed her in the following words: "Is it possible, then, abandoned woman, that, dead to all my wrongs and to your own reputation, you are thus eager to throw your soul away, in spite of denunciations both human and divine. Draw back and repent of your enormities while there is yet time; for though dead, I am still appointed your guardian here and hereafter."

After pronouncing these words, the chamber shook with a tremendous noise; while the domestic, perceiving that his mistress delayed her return, entered the place, and found her lying senseless upon the floor. At first he thought she was deceased, and calling other help, they laid her upon her couch, and sent for immediate advice.

Dreadful as such occurrences are, and fictitious as they may seem, they are recounted just as they were handed down in the family annals.

On recovering in some measure from her fearful trance, Donna Beatrice found that her feelings had undergone a complete change. She resolved to eradicate from her bosom the fatal passion that had led her to the very brink of destruction; and this good resolution was confirmed by receiving a letter from Don Pedro, containing an account of his late sufferings, and deploring the apparent impossibility of pursuing their intended love, and becoming united to each other as they had hoped.

Don Pedro, on his part, was made acquainted with what had happened to his Beatrice, and was at the same time informed that she intended to see him once more at his own house, and there take leave of him for ever. The meeting accordingly took place; and with mingled tears of love and remorse, they tore themselves from each other; and Beatrice retired to a convent, while Don Pedro, having confesed his sins and taken the holy sacrament, as the church required, resigned himself to his fate, awaiting the moment when the celestial taper should be burnt down to the socket, when he knew he must instantly expire. This event took place exactly on the same day two months after the decease of Don Vasco, and on the same day and hour as those on which the spirit had appeared to Don Pedro, with the fatal wax taper in its hand.

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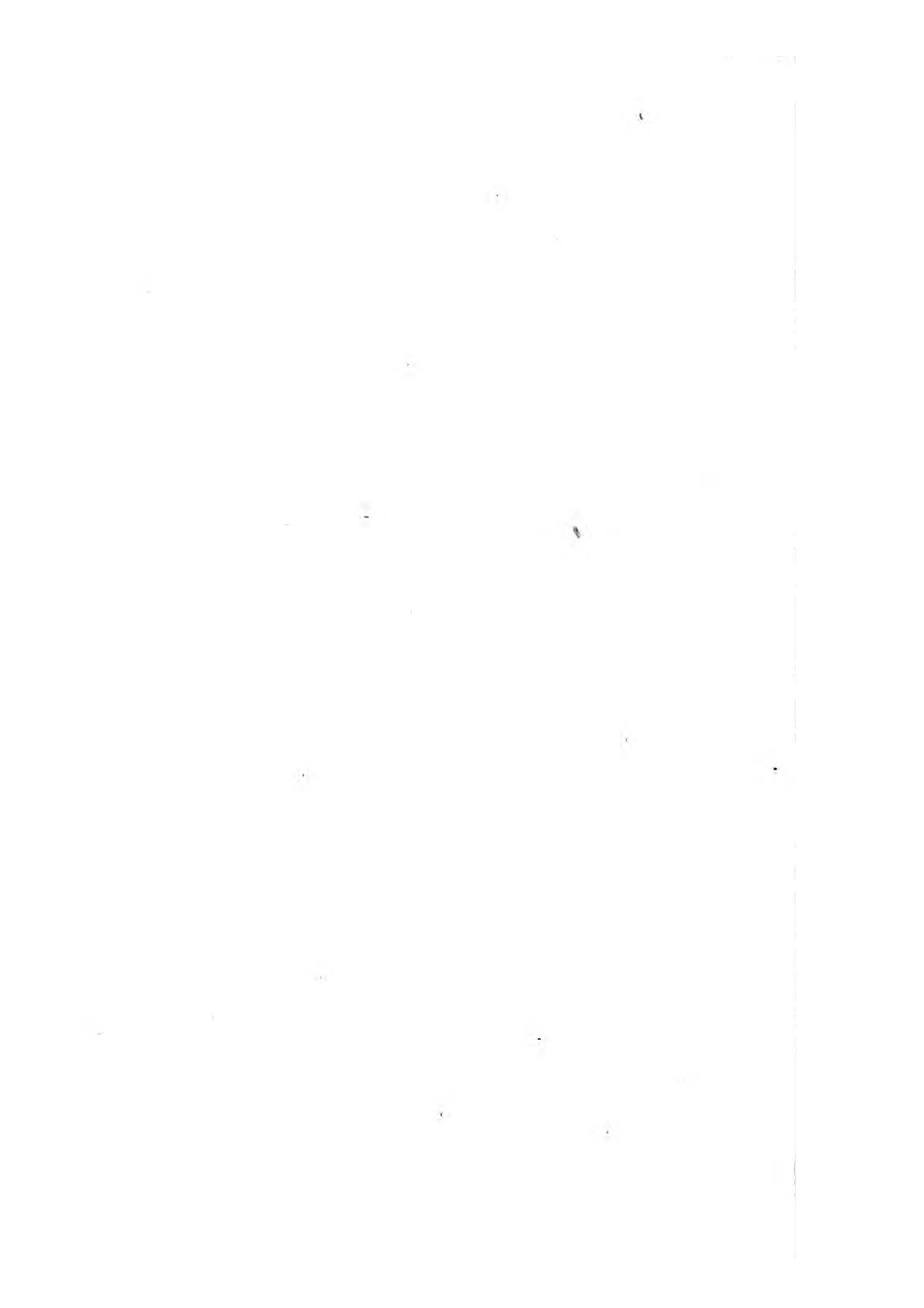
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ISIDRO DE ROBLES.



ISIDRO DE ROBLES

Is a novelist whose name we find inserted in the *Bibliotheca Hispana* of Nicolas Antonio; from which, however, we gather nothing, except that he wrote novels about the year 1666. Some specimens of these are to be met with in the collection entitled, "Select Novels by the Minor Spanish Authors," 8 vols. 8vo., and from this publication is extracted the specimen we give of this author. Robles also published a volume of *Novelas Morales*, under the title of *Varios prodigios de Amor*, Love's many Wonders; but he attributed the work, from some whim, to different authors, whom he characterises as the *best minor writers*. It is remarkable, moreover, for containing five novels, each of which displays the peculiar humour of the author and his age, by dispensing with the use of one of the five vowels in each of the five tales. It at the same time served to show the richness and flexibility of the Castilian tongue, in as much as the reader is not aware of the slightest alteration or embarrassment in the style, not even discovering the absence of so necessary an ingredient

to good composition. This is not indeed a solitary example of a similar experiment; the anonymous novel entitled *Meritos disponan premios*, being written throughout with four vowels, A minus; while at the end of one of the editions of the "Devil upon Two Sticks," (*Diablo Cojuelo*), we remember to have read another without the letter O.

THE DIAMOND RING.

IN the royal and illustrious city of Madrid, there lived, no great while ago, three beautiful women ;— and what may be accounted still more rare, all three discreet and married ladies, altogether a pattern to their lovely sex.

The first of these was the partner for life, of a cashier to a rich Genoese merchant ; and his occupations were of so absorbing a character, that he had no time to go home and dine on week days, nor even to pass his evenings at home.

The second had for her spouse a painter of reputation, who, on the faith of his brushes, had been engaged for more than a month past in decorating one of the most celebrated monasteries belonging to this most Christian and Catholic of courts. Journey-work like his, permitted him little more leisure than his distinguished contemporary, the foregoing cashier. The festivals and other holidays, which brought a truce to his labours, were only just enough to divert that most painful and atrabilious tendency, which the assiduous, though contemplative nature of this occupation is apt to communicate to its professors.

The third lady was subject to all the varieties of that awkward distemper common to Spanish husbands upwards of fifty—namely, jealousy, that emptied her Pandora's box of plagues upon her innocent head, without a moment's cessation of her woes. With the help of eternal ill humour, the income of two or three respectable houses, and his poor hard striving wife, this elderly gentleman contrived to get over his leisure hours, and lead a decent kind of indolent life.

Now these three ladies happened to be intimate friends, they having formerly been educated altogether in the same establishment; and they yet inhabited districts not very distant from each other. Consequently, the husbands also were compelled to profess a kind of good fellowship, to which, however, the jealous husband submitted with rather an ill grace; while his lady was wholly precluded from paying any visits unless he happened to take her with him. Thus, on feast and play days, in fencing or in running the ring, they were generally in the habit of bearing each other company.

The ladies were one day assembled at the house of the jealous man, listening to the history of his wife's grievances, with all the petty persecutions to which she was condemned by his absurd suspicions. He insisted upon accompanying her to mass, and seemed jealous of the very wind if it blew

the lace or riband against her face; and such, in short, were his vexatious proceedings, that her friends had enough to do to cheer and console her.

On one occasion, while thus engaged, their husbands happened to drop in, and they all agreed upon making an excursion together, upon the approaching festival of St. Blas. On the evening of that day, the king was to proceed in state to visit our lady of Atocha, and they proposed to join the royal procession, after spending some hours in the fields and gardens in the neighbourhood. It was not, however, without some difficulty that Señor Geloso was prevailed upon to permit his wife to be of the party.

The joyous morning came: they arrived at the gala scene, and after partaking of an excellent dinner, *al fresco*, the husbands went to amuse themselves at their favourite game of nine-pins, in an adjoining meadow. It happened that, as the lady of Señor Geloso was resuming her history of domestic grievances, she cast her eyes upon a little fountain of clear water, not far from the spot where they were conversing; and the next moment, exclaimed, "What is that I see in the water? how it sparkles,—do you see it there?" "I do declare," returned the wife of the cashier, "it is,—it must be a jewel, it so dazzles one's eyes. Some court dame or other has dropt it, as she has been walking by, during some gala day, like this." The painter's wife, meanwhile,

had approached without saying a word, and snatching it up, found it to be a diamond ring of great value ; with which she returned in triumph to her companions. A contest instantly took place, one declaring she had first seen it ; another, that she had declared it was a jewel ; and a third, that she had found it, and would keep it. Such was the spirit with which they kept up the controversy, that it must certainly have reached the ears of their husbands, if the painter's wife had not shown more discretion than the others, and interfered. " My dear creatures," she exclaimed, " do stop your tongues a moment, and let us try some other plan of settling the affair ; for in this way it will never end. It is rather an awkward discovery ; for though so valuable, it is so small, that there is no dividing it, you know. But we can sell it, and divide the money it brings ; only let us take care that our husbands hear nothing of it, or there will, indeed, be the deuce to pay, and we shall never hear the last of it. In the first place, to which of us shall the diamond be entrusted, until it be decided who is the real owner,—I mean among ourselves,—of this inestimable ring. We must have an umpire ; and I declare, if there is not our friend, the Count, walking there with his party ; let us call him aside, and we will abide by what he says." " I know him," replied the cashier's wife, " and I for one am content ; he loves justice, and I

am convinced he will decide for me." "No, for me, I am convinced," interrupted the third lady, "if we can only escape the eye of my jealous husband, for the Count is young, and that alone would drive him mad."

While thus engaged, the king made his appearance; and there was a general rush, in which the three husbands joined, to see him come through the gate. The ladies availed themselves of the opportunity to catch the Count's attention; and they drew him aside. The important affair was referred to him; the diamond placed in his hands; and they all insisted upon having his opinion to whom of right it belonged.

Now, the Count having wit at will, and being something of a wag, at once replied, "Really, ladies, you allow short time for judgment; and I suspect I should show very little, were I to attempt to decide against any of the fair appellants in a case like this. But since you are pleased to confide in me, I am pleased to enjoin and decree as follows; that whichever of you, within the space of the next six weeks, shall succeed in playing off upon her husband the most clever and ingenious trick (always having due regard to his honour), she shall possess the diamond, and in the mean time it shall remain in my hands. But I perceive the gentlemen coming this way, therefore each of you exert your skill, and farewell." All three

congratulated themselves upon this happy decision, confiding in her own ability to carry away the prize. Their husbands now approached ; and the evening being far advanced, the party retired to their own homes, each lady by the way torturing her invention to hit upon some scheme, which she hoped would ensure her the long wished for trinket, for herself alone.

We shall first inform our readers of the immutable idea that occurred to the cashier's wife, in the execution of which she exercised her utmost skill, to cause infinite annoyance to her husband's peace.

There lived in the vicinity an astrologer ; one of the most celebrated calculators of nativities ever heard of in Madrid. It was reported, that at one time he had paid attentions to the cashier's wife ; and, in her present emergency, she bethought herself of applying to him, to turn his knowledge of the stars to good account. Feigning more kindness towards him than she really felt, she informed him, that she stood in need of all his skill to assist her in a little innocent jest, well adapted to the carnival season, for the amusement of her friends. It was merely to induce her husband to believe, that in four and twenty hours he would depart this life, and render up his account ; which, she added, would be a very bad one.

The star gazer, without enquiring into her motives, readily promised to do just as she pleased ;

declaring, that it was exactly the same as predicted by his natal star. The lady next went to acquaint her husband's friends, stating how it was all got up for a mere carnival jest, to beguile the holiday season with a little harmless mirth.

Accordingly, the astrologer contrived to meet the cashier as he returned home in the evening, and thus accosted him; "Is it indeed you, my good friend; I should hardly have known you—how very pale and ill you look." "It must be with counting money then," replied the cashier; "I have been at it from morning till night, and I never felt better in my life."

"Perhaps so," replied the other, "but your complexion is the most deadly I ever saw. What does your pulse say, I wonder?"

A little alarmed, the cashier stretched forth his hand, and the man of horoscopes, with a still more serious and sympathising look, observed—"My dear neighbour, had my acquaintance with celestial influences been of use only to forewarn you of your danger, I should not regret the time and labour bestowed on the subject. My knowledge, at least, enables me to be of some service to a friend; for I should be no friend to you, did I not hasten to inform you of the imminent peril you run. I am sorry to say it—but pray lose no time in disposing of your affairs, and what is more, of preparing to depart in peace. I am

bound to acquaint you, that before the same hour to-morrow, you will have exchanged this world for a better ; and I trust there is nothing upon your conscience, in regard to keeping your accounts, or any other matter ; for, if so, the sooner you put it straight, and make out an exact account for another place, the better it will be for your soul."

Half terrified, and half in jest, his companion replied—" Yet should this prognostic of yours, my friend, turn out like that you ventured upon the weather last season, I think I may promise myself a good many years yet."

" Be it so," exclaimed the wily astrologer, " for if you be alive after this time to-morrow, I will venture you may live for ever. I have fulfilled the part of a Christian and a friend ; it is for you to look to the rest. You will at least have no excuse at the bar of the other world, for not having prepared yourself for the change ; you cannot say I failed to give you due notice ;" saying which, he turned round, and walked off at a brisk pace. The poor agent stood some moments quite confounded ; then felt his pulse, and proceeded homewards, in no very enviable state of mind. Finding himself much as usual, he at first refused to credit the evil prediction ; he even got up a forced laugh, and entered his own door half ridiculing the attempt to frighten him out of his wits. He did not even say a word to his

wife, lest it should give her pain, but in his usual manner requested to have his supper. This she soon prepared, well aware how he was likely to act, and having already concerted in what way to humour the stratagem.

In fact he shewed little appetite; and after a poor supper, he expressed a wish to retire to rest. Observing his dejection, the lady anxiously inquired into the cause; upon which he answered, that he had merely had a few words with his employer, but she need give herself no uneasiness on his account. She soon perceived that he in vain tried to compose himself to sleep; feverish and restless, he turned from side to side, while the wicked lady pretending to console him, secretly flattered herself with the success of her plan. He rose earlier than usual, looked ill; but proceeding to his business, dined that day at his master's, feeling, in fact, too weak to return home. On his way, however, in the evening, he met the parish vicar, accompanied by some friars and other persons, all of whom had been instructed by the painter how to act. Just as they passed, pretending not to see him, one of them observed:—"What sad tidings these are of poor Luca Moreno's sudden death, (for this was the cashier's name)." "Sad, indeed," replied a friar, "for he died without taking the sacrament, or any Christian ordinance whatsoever. He was found dead in his bed this morning, and such

was his wife's grief, that she had very nearly accompanied him."

"The worst of it," said a lay brother, "is, that he was forewarned by a wise astrologer, whom he only ridiculed for his pains. However, he has furnished a good example for unbelieving folks." "The Lord have mercy upon him," said a fourth, "for his case is indeed pitiable; he died like a brute, and left not a maravedi to any holy order."

"True, but his widow has now a handsome fortune; though gotten by bad means, it will serve to grace her next nuptials, and perhaps come into the hands of some honest man. But it is very cold, and we had better go home; it is useless to waste more words upon the old usurious wretch."

Not a word escaped the unhappy Luca Moreno; for he stood spell-bound to the spot, unable even to reply, or inquire if there were any other of the same name who had recently died. Besides, they gave him no time, each walking briskly away, leaving him to deal with his luckless fate as well as he could.

He continued his way home in great perplexity of mind; and on entering a street that led into his own, he perceived the astrologer conversing with the stranger; and on approaching nearer, he heard the following words pronounced in a loud and indignant tone: "Well, it was his own fault: he refused to believe me, and almost laughed in my face, when I



informed him he would die within the four and twenty hours. I wonder what he thinks of the matter now. As he has sown, so he must reap: it is ever thus with these ignorant sceptics. Now, I will venture, he wishes he had attended to what I said." The painter replied: "Would to heaven his sins may be forgiven, for he will have much need of mercy. He was, I fear, a sad extravagant and abandoned man. What with sitting whole days counting over his thousands, and eating hot suppers, I always thought an apoplexy would be his end. I am sorry for his poor wife."

This was too much; and approaching with a most ludicrous expression of face, our poor agent said: "What can be the meaning of this? Who pays me these funeral honours during my life? Or has some one been imposing upon me, and dying instead of me? Be it so; for I am very well, thanks to God, and likely to do well."

At the sound of his voice, however, the speakers all started off as if they had seen a ghost, crossing themselves, and crying out to each other, "It is the spirit of Luca Moreno come to restore some of his ill-gotten gains. Would it were again in purgatory, instead of coming to frighten poor Christians out of their wits."

More alarmed than ever, poor Moreno made the best of his way home. As he approached it, he en-

countered his friend Geloso, who appeared to be coming from it, and he instantly approached him. But his friend as instantly started back, crying, "Blessed spirits of purgatory," and most devoutly crossing himself as he retired, "what do I see? Is it some terrific phantom? or is it indeed my deceased friend?" "It is I, Luca Moreno, and no other," replied the poor cashier; "why are you afraid?" And saying this, he took Geloso by the cloak, in order to prevent him running away like the rest. But the other struggled to get free, exclaiming, "Avaunt! thou evil one! touch me not! why come to haunt me thus? I owe you only six reals, which I lost at nine pins the other day. If you must have them, take and sell this cloak;" at the same time unloosing the clasp about his neck, "and the devil give you good of it. I want no dealings with men of the other world."

He then ran away, leaving the cloak in Moreno's hands. What could he think? what could he do? For such was his surprise and confusion, that he had nearly fainted away. "Alas!" he at length said, "it must be true: one may lie, and two may lie; but every body cannot be mistaken. I suppose I must be dead. In that case I have perhaps died, and heaven has restored me to life again, in order that I may dispose of my own affairs; I had better go and make my will. But then, if I died so suddenly, and have

been the wretch they say I was, how is it that I have not yet seen the devil, been brought up to judgment, and know so little of the other world? How is it I find myself drest just as usual, and feel just as well? Am I alive? am I dead? or have I died and risen again without knowing it? How am I? who am I, I wonder? Certainly I must have died suddenly: I heard something about it. One thing I am certain of is, that every body runs away when I appear, because they think I am dead; even my own friends seem terrified when they behold me; and there can be no doubt but I have died. Still how odd it is that I should never have felt any of the pangs of death. They say they are hard to bear; but I am sure I found no sort of difficulty about it. Then how strange that only my own acquaintance seem to avoid me: but perhaps others are not yet informed respecting my decease; otherwise one might think it were some trick they were playing me."

In this confusion of his faculties, our unhappy hero arrived at his own house; and finding all shut up, he knocked loud and long before the servant maid came to the door. She, too, was in the conspiracy, and in a low and mournful tone she inquired, "Who is it?—for you cannot come in, my master is just dead."

"The Lord have mercy upon us," ejaculated poor Moreno, "why, Casilda, it is I, your old master—open the door, pray."

“Who calls at this hour? it is the house of a poor widow lady; we are all in grief for the loss of our master; who comes to disturb the house at such an hour?”

“Hold your tongue, you hussey, and let me in. I am your master. Don't you know me? don't you hear it raining and blowing?—I can bear it no longer.”

“Would to God it were indeed my master!” replied the girl, “but that is impossible;—I fear he is counting cash in another country he little likes, where he must make out a fair account, and prompt payment, instead of long bills. Heaven have mercy on him, poor soul!”

Dead or alive, this specimen of menial vituperation threw our hero into a great rage; and he began to batter the door in so forcible a style, that it speedily gave way, and in walked the master of the house. The servant took to her heels, crying out, like the others he had met, as loud as she could. This brought her mistress to her assistance, who stepped out of the parlour, arrayed in all the solemnity of widow's weeds. No sooner had she set eyes upon her husband, than with a well affected scream, she threw herself upon the ground, as if in a violent fit. The astonished husband in perfect sincerity had very nearly followed her example; for he now felt convinced he was no longer a proper inhabitant of this world.

Pleased, however, at such proofs of affection, which he had seldom before seen, he took her up in his arms, and conveying her to his chamber, tenderly placed her upon the couch, trying every means in his power to restore her; at which sight the servant girl, no longer able to contain her laughter, ran to her own room to give full loose to her mirth.

Soon beginning to feel the cravings of hunger, the newly deceased hastened to the pantry, and began to partake of every thing the house had to afford—such as sweetbreads, marmalade, and other delicacies. He found a second life by no means so intolerable as he had at first expected, could he always continue, he thought, to regale himself as he had done that evening.

Determined too, if possible, to drown the horrid fears that had gotten possession of him, he applied himself to a bottle or two of his choicest wine, which so far strengthened his heart, that he persevered until he had fairly lost all recollection of his late dilemma, in the joys of pure noyveau. He then, as well as he could, found his way to his bed-room, and once more buried his cares in a deep and long sleep, only chequered a little with dreams of the most confused and comical kind. All Dante's poem, except the Paradise, ran riot through his head, and he could no longer complain of having visited no other world

except his own; for many times was he alive, dead and buried, and alive again during that single night.

Meanwhile his friends had assembled at his house, to learn from the servant every thing that had passed. They were informed in what an unghostly kind of manner he had sacked the provisions, and paid his respects, in repeated libations, to the Bacchanalian god.

Next morning, perceiving that he was still asleep, the lady rose and arrayed herself in her best attire. She removed every indication of mourning from the room, decorated the apartments as if for a festival, and returning to her husband's chamber, proceeded to rouse him in no very gentle style, giving him a few sharp pinches and twitches of the nose, exclaiming in the kindest tone, "Waken, my dear!—how heavy you are to sleep—how long you lie abed this morning. Come, awake, my dear, and again she gave him a more painful pull by the nose. After a few heavy groans and yawns, the persecuted cashier began to recover his recollection, and opening his eyes with some difficulty, he beheld his wife standing at his bedside with the utmost composure, no longer drest in her widow's weeds. "How is this, Polonia?" was his first inquiry; "where do you come from? Are you dead then, as well as myself? Have you followed, to show the love you bore me in the other world; and are we to be married over again

here? What did you die of, aye! and what did I die of; for as heaven is my judge,—if we are allowed to swear here at all,—I know not when I died, nor when I got to heaven, if we are indeed there. I see there are rooms, and places like any where else; but is there plenty of wine and meat, for yesterday, on my arrival, I really thought I did not fare so much amiss for one newly come; and to look round me, I should say it was the carnival season, the house looks so fine.”

“ And a fine good humour you are in for the carnival, forsooth,” replied his wife laughing, as she observed him rubbing his face and arms where she had pinched him black and blue. “ What sort of nonsense is all this you are raving about? Do you never mean to rise and go to your business any more? I have twice sent to your master, the Genoese, and I wish he would come and deal with you as you deserve.”

“ Am I not dead then? Was I not interred only yesterday?” inquired the bewildered man.

“ I know of no burial,” replied his wife, “ except that you buried some of our best wine, and the greater part of the dainties prepared for the carnival, a beast as you are.”

“ Don't be angry, my dear, though I acknowledge I paid the last funeral honours to some good wine. At the same time, you must admit the truth of what

the vicar said ;—the mournful countenances of our friends,—the house shut up,—the servant terrified out of her wits ; and you yourself, my dear, fainting away in my arms, all drest in deep mourning.” “ Cease,” replied his wife, “ this ridiculous nonsense, or I will myself go and bring your master the Genoese.”

“ And are they too here,—there must be very poor hopes for my soul, if such grand people and usurers like him, come to inhabit the same place.”

“ You are drunk, you are mad, to talk such stuff as this. Get up directly, and go to your business like a man.”

“ I tell you, woman, it is not five-and-twenty hours since I died. I know not how long ago I was buried, and yet you will have me get up and go about my business as usual. No, no ! go you and ask all our friends and acquaintance, from the old astronomer to our servant girl, who saw you in your widow’s weeds yesterday, whether I am not dead and buried to all intents and purposes. As it strikes me too, you are dead likewise, and that is the reason I now see you in white, instead of being in mourning as before. Perhaps you are an angel, only you might be a little more good tempered if you were.”

“ Well,” replied the lady, “ your head must be turned with a vengeance ; you went to rest last night with me as usual, and what do you mean by

all this nonsense of dying, burying, and being in heaven, when you are in your own house. But Casilda ! quick ! run for the doctor ; our friend the astrologer I mean, without delay ; he will be able to inform us what has happened to my poor husband ; I fear he can have been in no good company, for they have turned his brain."

More perplexed than ever, the poor man was at a loss to determine if he were really dead or alive ; but it was impossible to dispossess him of one idea, which was, that he had been allowed to return in order to arrange his affairs.

The astrologer next came in, and agreed in every word he said, with the lady. He affirmed that her husband had bewildered his mind by too close an application to affairs, and that if he did not take care, and the police came to hear of the case, he would run a chance of being placed in the next lunatic asylum, instead of a comfortable house of his own.

"If that be so," replied the poor man, "and I am not really dead, why did you threaten me yesterday with all those horrible prognostics of my speedy death." "You saw me yesterday!" exclaimed the astrologer ; "impossible ! I was absorbed in my studies, and never left my house during the whole of the day, busily calculating the chances of discovering the purloiners of a rich diamond jewel." "And

I," declared the painter, "I can protest I never left the monastery where I am now employed, during the whole of the day." All the unlucky cashier's friends repeated the same thing, and then said, "It is very strange, for I thought I saw my friend the astrologer; and he remarked upon my complexion, my horrible deadly looks, and prognosticated my death within four and twenty hours."

"That," replied the astrologer, "must have been a dream; recollect yourself, Señor Moreno, and pray do not attribute any such absurdities to me." "Oh, then," exclaimed the cashier, in a joyful tone, "I dare say it was a dream. Only convince me of that, and I will cheerfully bear the whole burden of the feast, and song, and wine to boot, on next Shrove Tuesday."

"Now you begin to recover your senses, we can understand you," said the astrologer; "and we willingly accept your proposal; and I can assure you, there is not a doubt that it was all a dream. We will go and take a pleasant walk, and then hear mass,—the fresh air will do you good. The effect of imagination, more particularly in dreams, is a very wonderful thing."

The now happy patient did as he was desired, and in the course of their walk they met the vicar and his companions, who all expressed the utmost astonishment when he asserted the strange delusion

he had undergone ; insomuch that he agreed with them all it could only have been a dream.

Accordingly, he handsomely redeemed his promise of giving all his friends a dinner, to celebrate his perfect recovery from the dream, and he moreover obtained leave of absence from his master for a fortnight, by which he escaped the raillery and jocularities of his acquaintance, till the affair died away. The parties concerned, however, were careful not to reveal the share they took in it to the principal, and to the last day of his life he continued in the firm persuasion, that the whole of these trying adventures had occurred to him in the space of one night, and that, like life itself, they were all—only a dream.

The lady of course considered she had made pretty sure of the diamond ring, so complete had been her success. The wife of the painter, however, now prepared to enter the lists with her ; not a little encouraged by the discovery, that it was no such difficult task to pass off a successful joke, even upon the lords of the creation themselves. For this purpose she concerted a plan with a brother of hers, who happened to possess a fine genius for amusing himself at other people's expense. In the first place, they contrived to have a false door made at the entrance of her house, on such a plan (then frequently adopted), that it might easily be substituted

for the real entrance, even at a short notice. It was brought thither secretly one night, and concealed in a cellar, while the brother and two friends lay ready to carry on the intended plot in an upper chamber of the house. In about two hours after every thing had been arranged, the painter returned home from the monastery for the evening; having left his apprentices to grind colours ready for the ensuing day, for he had entered into an agreement to have the entire painting completed for exhibition on the ensuing Easter day. In short, he had no time to lose. His wife, Maria, received him that evening with more than her usual kindness, and having supped, they early retired to rest, in order that the painter might resume his task early the following morning. He slept till about midnight very soundly, when he was suddenly awakened by the screams of his wife, who had never closed her eyes, having her head full of the most mischievous projects she could devise. "Heaven have mercy upon me," she cried, "for I think my last hour is come; I feel just as if I was at my last gasp. Do, my dear, get up directly, and go for my confessor, for I shall not last long."

Her husband, only half awake, inquired what was the matter; and fell asleep again before he heard the answer. But in vain, for she soon roused him with more piteous ejaculations than before, insisting on his

instantly dressing himself, and going to find the holy man. Her repeated cries soon brought her niece to her bed-side. Being well schooled in her part, she added her lamentations to those of her aunt, pretended to apply warm flannels, mulled some delicious wine with rich spices, and adopted all the most approved methods for restoring suspended animation on these occasions. Still the patient insisted upon her husband fetching a confessor ; which he at length attempted to do with a very ill grace, muttering that it was all owing to her eating too much salad with strong vinegar, for supper, and that he had said enough about it at the time. What between reflecting upon her folly, looking for his clothes, and thinking of his next day's task, the afflicted husband was ready to hang himself, while all the answer he obtained was :—" You cruel man, is this a time to reproach me for what cannot now be helped. Go along with you, if you do not wish to see me die before your face ; and after you have called my confessor, run as hard as you can for my good nurse Joan, for she knows my constitution, and will be able to give me something to relieve this racking pain. If you will not, at least consent to go as far as the undertaker's, and give your orders, for I am a dead woman." " But, my dear," replied the afflicted painter, " recollect where the nurse lives. She is gone to live at the Fuencarral Gate, about three leagues off ; it is a cold rainy night, and even if I get safe,

it is ten to one whether she will like to get up and come out on such a night as this. I will go for you to the chemist's, and bring you that fine remedy which did you so much good before; and in heaven's name try to compose yourself; for really while you are in this state, I dare not think of leaving you to go half so far as the old nurse's house. Besides, it would be all in vain; and I would not leave you for the world. It would be the death of me, as well as you; I should never get back alive. No, I cannot leave you; ask me any thing but that."

These words brought a fresh storm of lamentations. "Blessed heaven," she exclaimed, "only to think what a helpmate thou hast given me. What mighty favours do I ask? Did I ask to take thy life, or to squander thy whole property, you could not make more fuss. Just to fetch my old nurse, and soil a pair of shoes, is no such great sacrifice, I should think. But I have long suspected you wanted to lead a second woman to the altar; and this conduct convinces me I was right. Get to bed with you, and sleep and snore to your heart's content; but if I die, I will swear to my last breath that you mixed poison in my salad. Yes, you did, you wretch, and your present behaviour proves it."

"Woman, woman!" replied the indignant painter, "set a rein upon that tongue; for if you rail at me much longer, it is likely that I shall, at least, remove the pain out of your stomach to your shoulders, by

means of a good strong stick." "Beat my aunt, you wretch, would you," interrupted the niece; "the Lord requite you for your pains; but I will first scratch my ten commandments in your cheeks; and tear out both your eyes,—yes, I would." These words increased the painter's ire to such a degree, that he was about to take summary vengeance, when the girl ran off, and his wife renewed her screams, declaring that she had been poisoned, and wished to take the sacrament before she died. Alarmed at the violence of his wife, and fearful that if she really should die with such accusations in her mouth, it would go hard with himself, he now did all in his power to appease her. He promised to go, and taking a lanthorn, his boots and cloak, he sallied into the streets in search of the nurse; and before he had got fifty yards from home, found himself wet to the skin.

The sole direction he had was, that nurse Joan resided somewhere in Fuencarral; but it was not likely, on such a night as that, he should meet a single soul to direct him. Thus he went muttering to himself, and cursing his own fate for contracting matrimony, without studying the temper of his lady. We may well imagine how long he was in finding the place; indeed, so long, that we shall have plenty of time to return, and inquire into the state of the infirm lady.

Having watched her *caro sposo* clear off the premises, she hastened to call her brother and his companions, who soon removed the ancient door-way, and placed the new one in its stead, with its bolts, locks, and hinges, all previously prepared. In short, it worked beautifully on its hinges; and they next hoisted above it a public sign-board, with the motto of "*House of Public Entertainment.*"

This done, a party of friends, all in readiness, were invited with their wives and children; a grand treat was prepared, and a band of musicians with all kinds of instruments to celebrate the exploit of the poor painter, who had not yet succeeded in discovering the nurse's abode: all he had effected was to knock at wrong doors, and rouse the peaceable inhabitants from their slumber.

At length, he was seen exploring his way back to his own house, knee deep in mud, and mad with vexation and fatigue. As he drew near, the sound of mirth and revelry struck on his ear; and to his infinite astonishment, appeared to come from his own dwelling. Extremely perplexed, he now approached the door, and holding up his lantern to ascertain the spot, he saw the public sign over the door, and found that the music issued from a new inn. How odd he had never seen it before; and where was his house; for he felt convinced that he had left it somewhere near that spot.

On this he began to examine his neighbours' houses with great caution, till at length, more puzzled than ever, he exclaimed; "Good God! not many hours ago I left home; this very place, if I mistake not, and my wife was then more dead than alive. I find my neighbours' houses just as they were; this is the street, the place, and the house; only it is not mine, it cannot be mine. Besides, there were only my wife, her niece, and myself, and all the town seem to be gathered together here, singing and dancing as if they were mad. Am I asleep or awake? for I am sure there was never an inn before in this street. But here it is, however it came here, for these are none of my old doors that were near tumbling about my ears. No wonder if I were intoxicated, and could not see; but I am drenched with water to the skin, enough to sober Bacchus himself."

He then rubbed his eyes, and shook himself again and again; applied his ear to the door, and started back as fresh peals of music burst upon his bewildered senses. At length it struck him that the whole must be some horrible enchantment; and he trembled in his shoes as he gazed on the fearful sign above his head. No longer able to support this state of agony and suspense, he seized the knocker and gave some tremendous peals, that roused half the neighbourhood, followed by a dozen people's heads popped out of the windows to learn the cause of such an unusual alarm at that hour of the night.

Among these, appeared a head thrust out of an upper window ; doubtless that of the ostler or the shoe-boy, with a candle in his hand. At the same time a voice was heard exclaiming, " Go about your business ; how dare you make such a clamour ; there is no room here, and if you do not take yourself off, a good horsewhip will help you ;—to think of disturbing honest people at this time of night."

" It is my own house ! let me in," cried the painter. " Off with you, or I will fling something on your head you will hardly like."

The unhappy man, however, persisted, and in a few minutes the door opened, and out rushed two dogs and a stout fellow, and all of them fell upon him at a time. " You villain," cried the servant, " how dare you make such a riot here at this time of night ? Did I not inform you there was no room ?" " But, my good fellow, this is my own house ; it has been in my family from time immemorial ; and how it has been converted into an inn is what I can no way divine." " Who are you ?" inquired the man. " Diego de Morales ; and this mansion has belonged to the Morales', time out of mind. I am an artist of reputation, and master of this house during more than twenty years. My wife's name is Maria Morales ; unless, indeed, she have turned hostess within these few hours. Perhaps you can inform me what is the meaning of all this."

“The meaning is,” replied the man, “that more than six years ago the hostess of this place came hither, and has ever since been entertaining more than half the strangers in Madrid. My master’s name is Pedro Carrasio; his wife’s, Maria Molino; and I am their head waiter. I have to request, therefore, that you will depart without delay, before I have recourse to harsher measures.” Saying which, he shut the door in the painter’s face. His case was now pitiable; and he had no alternative but to turn round, and make the best of his way through the miry streets till he came to the house of Señor Geloso, about three o’clock in the morning. Again he knocked with all his might; his friend threw up the window, and seeing who it was, hastened down and opened the door. He believed some dreadful calamity must have befallen him; but on hearing the explanation, he decided that it could be nothing but some frolic, the consequence of his good Cyprus, or St. Martin’s wine, to which he was known to be somewhat addicted. However, he took him into the house, assisted him to take off his wet clothes, and gave him what he lay most in need of—a good comfortable bed.

No sooner did his wife perceive that the poor painter had quitted the field in despair, than she hastened to restore her establishment to its former appearance. The sign-board was removed, the old

door replaced upon its hinges, and the guests all retired. The hostess herself, completely fatigued with playing the castanets and dancing, besides the laughter, which she could not conceal, was glad enough to get a little more rest.

Early next morning the painter returned to his own house, attended by Señor Geloso, who had been more than half persuaded of the truth of the story. When he found every thing exactly in its former situation, he began to tax him with wishing to play off a trick upon him ; and the painter was little less surprised on his part, when he witnessed such a complete metamorphosis in the appearance of every thing from what it was the night before. The unfortunate husband protested, on the faith of a Christian, that some horrid necromancy had been practised upon him by some vile Jew or heretic, in order to drive him out of his senses. Upon knocking at the door, it was opened by the niece, who appeared half asleep, quite in dishabille, and in a night-cap.

“ Gracious heavens, is that you, uncle ? ” she cried ; “ you have behaved in a very pretty manner, truly. You deserted the bed-side of your dying wife, and now return at ten in the morning just as unconcerned as if nothing had happened.”

“ Bridget, my dear,” replied the painter, “ if you only knew the sufferings I have undergone since I left this place last night, you would pity instead of reviling me.”

“ Oh ! you wretch ! ” exclaimed his wife, hastening towards them, “ you are a kind husband and an excellent messenger ; are you not ? Where have you been keeping company the whole of last night ? You brought the confessor and the nurse, did you not ? So you did not venture to face your injured wife alone ; you have brought a friend to intercede for you. But it shall avail you nothing ; for I will insist upon a separation from such a cruel hearted wretch as you are. No more husbands for me ! I have no further inclination to have my supper sprinkled with poison. No, Sir, I know you well : a bill of divorce is the sole chance that is now left for me.”

“ Be pacified, good lady,” observed Señor Geloso ; “ for my friend here meant to commit no offence. There has been some horrible witchcraft at work, not to make you love, but to divide your affections, as it appears.”

“ Yes ! ” added the husband, “ she might at least listen to the chapter of accidents and calamities that befell me this last horrible night.”

He then entered upon his defence, giving a description of what had passed at his house, which had only the effect of throwing his wife into a still greater passion. “ What,” she exclaimed, “ must your friend here, think of us ; such doings as these indeed, at any honest woman’s house. But it is all a malicious falsehood ; and he knows it. Our house

an inn, forsooth! Dances, revels, and feasts! I should like to see them here, with a vengeance. The only music were my sighs and groans; my only supper was a little rhubarb, and a small spoonful of hartshorn. But for this, he would have left me to die, as I doubt not he intended; but, heaven be praised, it cured me; and he looks thus unhappy because he finds me alive."

"In the name of all the saints, my dear," cried the poor painter, "cease to torture my feelings thus; I cannot bear it, both by day and night. By St. Jerome, I have only spoken the truth; for the devil and all his imps were celebrating their orgies here the last night. Do, my dear, consent to leave this house; better take up our lodging in the street, than have to entertain such guests."

"Yes, uncle," observed Miss Bridget, "I have been haunted all night long, and I am pinched all over black and blue, by these imps and witches."

"Lord, niece!" interrupted her aunt, in a pretended fright, "why did you not tell me that before?" "Why, because I thought you would not believe me, aunt, and then I was afraid of hurting the reputation of the house."

"Then, I think," said Señor Geloso, "we had better say no more about it. You are all safe; and though you have been bedevilled for one night or so, it will be easy to have the house exorcised. Let the

bad spirits be laid ; and meanwhile we can of all us spend a merry Easter together."

The lady now expressed her willingness to make the matter up, after giving her husband a sharp lesson on his evil ways and practices, that had doubtless encouraged the devil to come and take possession, and convert his house into a tavern. The pranks he had been played were only a proper punishment for his sins, and he had now had fair warning. The unlucky painter took all this advice in good part, and promised compliance with every thing she chose to exact from him ; insomuch, that Donna Maria believed it to be morally impossible that either of her rivals could more effectually succeed in imposing upon the credulity of their respective husbands. She consequently flattered herself with the speedy possession of the prize, for which they were all three thus laudably contending, to the infinite perplexity and annoyance of their unlucky helpmates.

Now at length came the turn of the lady of Señor Geloso, and she had a long score of miseries and vexations to pay off, on account of his foolish jealousy. " Though last not least" in shrewdness, and keen desire of revenge and triumph, she set about her task with a gay and courageous spirit, surpassed by neither of her rivals, and which gave her a happy presentiment of success. Luckily, too, her brother was a monk, and had just opportunely arrived at

Madrid. He was, moreover, prior of the convent of Capuchins, a fact altogether unknown to Señor Geloso, as will appear. He had often received letters from his sister, lamenting her husband's unhappy and jealous temper, and the misery she consequently endured. She had more than once, indeed, insisted upon having a divorce, unless he altered his manners; and would have executed her threat, had it not been for the scandal it might bring upon her family and the church.

Finding that all remonstrances had hitherto proved ineffectual, or rather tended to exasperate his jealous temper, the good monk, pitying her case, declared his willingness to join in any plan for bringing the old gentleman to his senses. Besides, he could no longer tolerate the harsh treatment of Señor Geloso towards a beloved sister, whose continual sighs and tears were enough to move a much harder heart than the good priest's, to sentiments of compassion. We shall proceed to detail the plan adopted, to carry the intended reformation into complete effect.

Returning to the convent, his prior assembled his holy brethren, explaining the whole merits of the case, and referring it to their judgment. It was unanimously agreed, that in so charitable an undertaking as the correction of a bad husband, almost any means were justifiable. Being thus sanctioned, the prior sent his sister a present of a certain

medicine, the effect of which was to give the patient a good sound slumber during many hours. The lady received it with infinite delight; and after supper, she took care to mix it in a large glass of wine, which her husband drank. She had the pleasure of seeing him drop asleep in his chair, even before they had time to remove the supper things. Had they not expected such a result, they would infallibly have pronounced him to be dead, and have sent for an undertaker, and had him buried without more delay. They put him to bed, and then sent to inform the prior, who, attended by two lay brothers, instantly came to the spot. Proceeding to the chamber, the prior ordered one of his attendants to begin, who, taking out a razor and a huge pair of scissors, began to cut and shave till he was prepared to be equipped in the monastic tonsure, altogether presenting a new spectacle to the eyes of his friends. Arrayed in cowl and frock, like one of the brothers of St. Francis, they carried him neck and heels, and laid him in some straw at the bottom of a vehicle prepared for the purpose.

It stopt at the convent, and Señor Geloso was conveyed to one of the penitential cells, where he was placed upon a hard wooden couch, with the ensigns of his new profession placed near him, and a light burning upon the table lest he should recover in their absence from the effects of his sedative potion, and awaken in a sudden fright.

It operated, however, during the next two hours upon the unconscious novice, who continued in his lethargy till after midnight, when the bells, as is usual, first began to ring for matins. One of the friars then took his rounds with the *matraca* in his hands, a kind of square instrument, headed with iron nails, which makes a horrible noise when he strikes it against the doors of the sleepers' cells.

No sooner did it reach the ears of the new father Geloso, than leaping up in a fright, and fancying himself at the side of his wife in his own house, he cried: "Lord have mercy on us; what in the name of all the saints is that dreadful clatter? Is the house going to tumble about our ears? Is it thunder;—is it doomsday;—or is it the devil in a gale of wind?" As he thus said he looked about for his wife, but she was not there; she spoke not, and a suspicion now first arose that she had deserted him. "What!" he exclaimed in a rage! "left her couch at this time of night? Vile adulteress! I dare say she has let her wretched paramour gain admittance through the top of the house. Stop a little, and I will be amply revenged. Bring me my clothes this very instant, and my sword; my honour is at issue in this affair." He next began to feel for his clothes, and first set hands upon the friar's habit at his side. But what was his surprise when he found himself in a small square cell, without knowing how he got there! and in trying to open the door

he knocked down a scull over his head, which coming into contact with his own, was by no means calculated to improve his good temper, though it tended rather to cool his jealousy. Considering it too a bad omen, he looked eagerly about him to ascertain by what way he could have entered, how he was to get out, and what was the real situation of the place. By help of his taper he at length found he was in the midst of a vast dormitory, extending far and wide on both sides; and rubbing his temples, yet aching with the effect of his encounter with another scull, he exclaimed with a most puzzled look: "Heaven defend us! what is all this? Did I not retire to my own chamber, after eating supper at my own house? And how came I by this habit; a hood and cowl too as I hope to be saved! What will become of me;—am I in the hospital—in a monastery—or where am I? What if my jealousy hath driven me mad, and I have been conveyed hither by my relations to end my days in Bedlam, for such it seems to be. This room is little better than a strait waistcoat; it is certainly more like a gaol than a hospital. And now I think of it, I was only yesterday, as it seems, talking very wildly about my honour; while, in fact, I may perhaps have been for the last three years under the doctor's hands in this hospital for fools. Then this must be a lucid interval for the first time; and I will no longer labour

under the delusion that I was yesterday at home, and by the side of my wife. But confirmed lunatics and felons, I know, are accustomed to have their heads shaved, and in that case I should be like them." Saying which words, he put his hand to his head, and found his own as bald as a shaven board, with the exception that he wore a fool's cap—the very crown of the king of jealous fools.

As he was thus pursuing his lucubrations, and stood shivering in his shirt, one of the lay-brothers, whose business it was to attend upon the monks, walked very leisurely into his cell. "Well, holy father," said the visitor, "are you determined to be absent from matins this morning? it is high time; and yet you seem to be making no preparation to dress."

Señor Geloso, having now almost lost his patience, replied very sharply to this interrogatory :

"What do you mean? Do you know what you are prating about? What have I to trouble myself with matins or vespers? Are you too one of the incurables belonging to this asylum, unable perhaps even to carry a message? If you should not be quite mad, however, I would intreat you to call the doctor, as I wish to inform him that I have been suddenly restored to reason, and feel quite well again."

"Surely," replied the friar, "you mean to jest with me this morning, but there is not time. Had

you not better dress, and not stand shivering there in the cold. They have rung for matins long since, and doubtless the holy prior will be greatly offended at such an instance of neglect."

Saying these words, the friar retired, and poor Señor Geloso was left in a state of anxiety and alarm, not easy to be described.

"What!" he cried aloud in a tone of horror, "I a monk! I father Rebolledo! how dare the villain make use of such terms? I go to matins, forsooth! I, who a few hours since imagined myself in my own bed, and my wife with me in our own house! I wish I were rightly awake, for there is something strange or mad about all this, for which I can in no way account."

Thus puzzled and incensed, he stood lost in deep thought, while the wind whistled through his cell, reminding him of the policy of dressing himself; but he abhorred the idea of touching the frock and cowl, far more than the cold. In a short time another friar made his appearance:—"My good father Rebolledo," he cried, "what is the meaning of this? the vicar has sent to know what can be the meaning you do not attend matins. They are almost over; and yet remember that it is your turn to lead the choir the whole of this week."

"All the saints in the calendar bless me," exclaimed the astonished father; "for I suppose I

must needs be father Rebolledo, and no other. Yet how?—when was I made a father?—who, and what am I? Heaven help us, is not this same a refuge for madmen and fools? Pray can you tell me who has robbed me of my house, my wife, my dress, my hair, and my very beard?”

“What sort of conduct is this,” interrupted the chorister; “is this an answer for me to return with to the vicar; you will be reported to the chapter, you may depend. Surely you paid your respect to the refectory last night in a way from which you are hardly yet recovered. You are intoxicated, holy father, but try if you can dress yourself, and if you are really too tipsy, I will do what I can to help you.”

Saying this, he threw the friar's frock over the neck of the novice; but when he next attempted to adjust the cowl, somewhat of a close fit, it came into Señor Geloso's head, that the friar was going to strangle him. Releasing himself, therefore, he knocked the poor chorister down with a heavy blow, and uttering a few loud, deep, and tremendous curses against all evil spirits and enchanterers, he rushed out of the cell, and ran along the dormitory as if all the demons below had been in pursuit of him. This was a most amusing sight, and the prior and his whole order of monks, who witnessed it from one of the galleries, had very nearly betrayed

the secret of the scheme by their obstreperous mirth. However, they contrived to subdue their laughter sufficiently to form into regular procession, and advance with lighted tapers in their hands, as if coming from the choir. Skilfully cutting off the new father's retreat, the worthy prior met him face to face.

“What now, father Rebolledo,” he cried in an indignant voice, “what means this rebellious conduct in a son of the holy church? Have you dared to disgrace your sacred order by lifting up your hand even against a minister of the most high; neglecting your duty at matins as you have done, when we were about to celebrate a great festival; you have now added sacrilege to your other crimes, and must prepare for excommunication. Down upon your knees, humiliate yourself before me this moment, and we shall see what can be done by means of a little wholesome discipline, that may be of some efficacy, I hope, in removing your excessive presumption and obstinacy.”

“Humble myself, forsooth,” cried the new monk; “why should I humble myself? and who are you, I wonder? Away; get out of my road, ye vile demons and sorcerers, as ye are. Ye have changed me; but metamorphosed as I am, I know ye, and defy ye. By this sign of the cross ye have no power over a true Christian, such as I.” “What! dare you?” inter-

rupted the prior, with a stern look, and stamping his foot in a manner that quite daunted the poor novice. "You will see who will have the worst of it, and cry out *peccavi* first. Are you mad?" "Nay, have pity on me," exclaimed our hero, half prostrating himself before the prior, "I am penitent, and I am heartily tired too, I can assure you."

"Will you be more orderly, then," inquired the prior, "and learn to obey us?"

"I do obey—I do repent from the bottom of my soul; but of what I confess I do not well know."

"A fine sort of repentance, this, forsooth!" cried the prior; "but we have subdued many a rebellious sinner before now."

As he uttered these words, the prior raised his holy staff, and suddenly showered down a succession of heavy blows upon the shoulders of the old novice, who fell at full length, as his only resource to save himself from the prior's well directed vengeance.

"Stop, reverend father, he cried; spare my shoulders; do not quite break my bones, and I will confess myself one of the vilest sinners upon the face of the earth. As regards my future conduct, believe me, I will so comport myself as to merit your entire approbation, if you will only spare the heavy hand of chastisement."

"But do you know you are a monk; and that a trivial offence is more unpardonable in you than a glaring sin in a mere layman?"

“ To be sure I do. I confess that I am a monk, and a very sinful one.”

“ Of what order? Quick, tell me to what order you belong?” “ To what order!” repeated the poor novice, infinitely puzzled. “ Why, to any order your reverence best pleases. I will readily become the Grand Turk, if it be your good pleasure.” “ And you promise henceforth, father Rebolledo, to be ever obedient and industrious in all your duties; will you?” “ Yes; I will be father Rebolledo, or any father you may please but to call me.”

“ Be quick, then, and kiss the feet of that venerable friar,” said the prior, “and express your gratitude to the whole brotherhood for their well-meant correction.”

“ I will kiss anywhere you please,” holy father, said the repentant novice, “so that you will withhold your heavy hand from my smarting shoulders; and I will confess my obligations to you for all passed favours.”

This admirable example of humility was too much for the risible faculties of the holy brotherhood; and they began to titter and whisper among themselves, till they received a reproofing look from the superior. “ Can you see ought to excite mirth, my dear brethren, in the wilfulness and folly of a companion. Rather learn to weep, to think that a monk who, during the last fifteen years, had been a pattern of

piety and obedience to the whole monastery, should, at the last, so far have forgotten himself—rather weep, I say.”

Fifteen years ! thought Señor Geloso. Well, that is indeed wonderful ; and surpasses every miracle I ever heard of. Never did knight of romance meet any thing more strange. Monk as I am, devil a bit do I know how, when, or where I became such.

“Get up, and follow us to the choir,” continued the prior. The father Rebolledo obeyed ; but as he knew about as much of music as a horse, he led off the choir in so novel and facetious a style, that the superior affecting to believe that he sang in ridicule of his brethren, ordered him to be forthwith removed, and imprisoned during the space of eight days, in a solitary cell. He was to be treated only to bread and water ; and to be whipt twice every day on the soles of his feet, to rouse him to a livelier degree of repentance.

This having been performed to the letter, he was next sent on a journey to beg alms, along with another monk, for the benefit of the monastery ; and it was to be repeated every Saturday. So very docile had the new monk become through such excellent discipline, that he used to set out singing a psalm, with a wallet at his back, cheerfully obeying his superior ; and suffering himself to be conducted even into his own street, till he actually recognised his former dwelling. But he only muttered to



himself:—"Good heavens! and am I no longer the husband of my wife. It seems impossible to question that fact, and yet I must not believe it; for how, by all the saints, how came I by this shaven crown, and monkish habit? See, there is my beloved wife;" and suddenly bursting away from his companion, he ran into the house, and meeting her at the entrance, he threw his arms round her, and cried out in a most piteous tone:—"Ah! my dear, if you only knew how hardly I have been dealt with, as a punishment, doubtless, of my unjust and unkind conduct towards you. Alas! I have been made a monk against my will, without knowing when or wherefore. But henceforward they may find some other alms' collector; they shall not come and disturb the happiness of a married man."

"What new piece of impudence is this," exclaimed the wife; "help, help, my friends, here is a brutal monk who has dared to be impertinent; out upon your rudeness."

No sooner did the friar, who was waiting outside, hear these words uttered in a tone of anger, than he ran into the house, followed by some of the neighbours. Unable to recognize Señor Geloso at first sight, they took him by the neck and shoulders, and thrust him out of doors. They would even have inflicted more serious punishment, had it not been for the intercession of the friar, who declared that he

was only a poor lunatic from the monastery, who had got possessed with the idea that every woman he met, must be his own wife. "We were led to think," he added, "that he was latterly sufficiently recovered to go and beg alms, in company with another, but he will smart for his bad behaviour when I get him back to the monastery; come, father Rebolledo, come along." Accordingly, when he got back, the prior gave him another castigation, and he was put upon a new course of bread and water during so long a period, that his hair and beard had full time to grow afresh. Not many days after having recovered these ancient honours, as he was sitting brooding over his misfortunes in his cell alone, he overheard the following words uttered in a very plaintive voice:—

"You have been a very wicked and cruel man, Señor Geloso; you have suspected your innocent wife, who is wholly free from any of those faults you once laid to her charge. You find heaven has punished you for such conduct; and your still more ridiculous jealousy. Be warned, therefore, in future, and if you should be permitted to see your wife once more, take precious care how you venture to hurt a hair of her head, or give her the slightest provocation whatever. For if you do not take care, you will bring down still heavier punishment upon your head."

The voice thrice repeated these words, which had such an effect upon Señor Geloso, that, clasping his hands, he fell upon his knees, and in a tremulous voice, full of devotion, he cried out:—"Blessed oracle, whether divine or human, only assist me to escape from this horrid prison-house, and I will become every thing that can be required of me. As to my wife, I will be the very mirror of husbands; never dare to utter a word of complaint; but ever continue to return thanks unto the Virgin for this kind intercession in my favour."

As he made this vow, one of the brethren entered with a hot supper, and some wine, of which he had never tasted from the first day of his transformation. The friar assured him that he ran some risk in thus supplying him with an excellent bottle of wine, which, he did not add, contained a soporific dose, similar to that he had before taken. He drank it, and the opiate very soon began to take effect. Of course he fell into a sound sleep, and as his hair and beard were now completely grown, he was conveyed back to his own house, and arrayed exactly in the same dress as he had before been, and put to bed. He enjoyed an excellent night's rest; and it was late next morning before he awoke.

What was his surprise on first gazing around him; the elegant apartment, handsome furniture, fine clothes, &c.; but more than all, when, upon

stretching forth his arms, he discovered that his long lost wife was quietly sleeping beside him. At first, he believed she must be some witch or spirit, and began to cross himself, and utter exorcisms, to the best of his ability. Being all the time awake, heartily enjoying her husband's perturbation, though she affected to slumber, she at last, as if suddenly, started out of her sleep, exclaimed, "What is the matter, my dear? What are you mumbling about,—are you in another fit of the sulks?"

"First tell me," replied her husband, "who are you that make the inquiry? I am, by no means, in the sulks; I am much worse;—I am ill of what they call the MONK; and I beseech you to tell me who you are?"

"Why, who should I be, you stupid wretch, but your own wife; your affectionate, but ill-used wife."

"But how came you to get admittance into this convent," inquired her husband. "If the prior should come to hear of it, you will infallibly be excommunicated, as I have already been. Think of being expelled out of the pale of the holy Catholic church; and, as regards myself, I am sure to get a sound bastinado, within an inch of my life."

"Are you dreaming?" exclaimed his wife; "what monastery, and what prior, are these you talk of?"

"Why don't you know I have been a monk for the last fifteen years?"

“You are raving, I suppose,” replied his wife; “but if you think of getting up to day before dinner, you had better bestir yourself; unless, indeed, you wish to get supper at the same time.”

Altogether unable to account for the singularity of his position, and lost in a crowd of strange ideas, the Señor could hardly believe his senses, especially when he raised his hand to his chin, and found himself possessed of a beard as long as the Grand Turk's.

Agreeably to his wife's direction, having found his way out of bed, he first saw that he was in his own room, and not a remnant appeared to indicate the nature of his late pursuits. He was arrayed in his former dress, and on consulting the glass, he saw exactly the same personage he had been accustomed to contemplate before he assumed the ecclesiastical habit, and underwent so many mortifications of the flesh. Again he crossed himself in an impulse of grateful devotion, firmly believing that what he had of late gone through, was wholly to be attributed to the promises he had heard pronounced by the mysterious voice. As he replied with the utmost politeness to the queries of his now happy wife, with a grave and somewhat sad countenance, he admitted, at her suggestion, that the whole must have been a dream, intended to give him warning how he longer ventured to conduct himself with the same neglect and unkindness towards such a wife.

It was her object to keep up this opinion, and she actually promised nine masses to the Holy Virgin, when it should please heaven to confirm her good endeavours, and turn her roughly handled husband from the error of his ways. By this plan, she sought to inculcate upon him a little more of that Spanish virtue of conjugal obedience on the part of the husband; to all which, with exemplary patience and resignation, Señor Geloso agreed. He entreated her forgiveness for the past, and assured her, that he would never more accuse her of any fault, of which he did not himself become an eye-witness. In short, he gave her permission to go out wherever she pleased, and said he would endeavour to make himself easy during her absence.

Not a little rejoiced at her success, the lady hastened to acquaint her two friends, who sat anxiously awaiting the result, to compare their respective exploits. Having informed them of the reasons she had to delay the affair during so many weeks, all three agreed to adjourn to the residence of the Count, in order to recount the merits of their different efforts, in their new school of the husband's reform. The whole three declared they had wrought a thorough cure in their worse halves—namely, of the vices of avarice, drunkenness, and jealousy, which had so much disturbed their matrimonial happiness at home.

“My fair and accomplished ladies,” replied the Count, “that diamond ring, found by you on the day of the late festival, and which has excited you to such happy exertions, is the same that was lost by me just before you came to consult me. The value amounts to two hundred pistoles, and I believe I promised to make it one hundred more. But to attempt to distinguish between three ladies of so much ingenuity, is a difficult task; it is almost impossible to draw comparisons, where all are in the superlative degree; so I must leave you to divide the contents of this purse as you please. Seldom have I parted with my money with so much pleasure ‘as I now do.’”

After expressing their gratitude to the Count, these merry ladies took their leave, repairing to their respective homes, with the resolution of appropriating to their own advantage their recent good fortune, by the purchase of whatever their husbands might happen to refuse to let them have.

Nor was this their only reward: the steward having realized sufficient for an independence, withdrew from his master’s service, and took an elegant country villa. The painter, from that time forth, renounced the society of all quarrelsome and drunken companions; while the old jealous Señor was so completely cured of his former obstinacy and suspicions, as to allow his wife to follow the natural bent

of her inclinations, as to where, when, and whom, she chose to visit; in short, he openly avowed his intentions of discontinuing his course of curtain lectures, which he had before regularly delivered, to the extreme annoyance of his fair audience,—so many, indeed, that they would have filled a handsome quarto volume.

It was thus that the three merry wives of Madrid proved to the whole world, that they knew how to take advantage of the good old proverb of being “Merry and wise,” and to turn it also to some account.

A PRODIGIOUS ADVENTURE.

It once fell out, that a young man from Andalusia, intending to study for one of the learned professions, whichsoever he might most fancy, resorted to the University of Alcala de Henares. He belonged to the middle rank of life, but it had already pleased heaven to take both his parents. Being one of those youths who are apt to aspire to higher matters than seem quite befitting their scanty means, and proper station, he estimated himself not exactly according to the rule of right reason. Now if we may credit Seneca in his tragedies, Juvenal in his satires, and Horace in his art of poetry, there is no hard-mouthed animal that requires a sharper bit and steadier rein, nor one more inclined to perform extravagant antics, than an unruly youth. Indeed, the new student had no sooner set foot in Alcala, than he began to show signs of that overweening folly and presumption peculiar to some youthful and fiery wits, that carry far more sail than ballast, and whose lighter particles continually bubbling to the

surface, prove that they have at least reached the full boiling point of the juvenile thermometer. Accordingly, his first step was to take possession of some splendid apartments, that would by no means have done discredit to the taste of a young sprig of quality, or the scion of some princely house. He next engaged two livery servants, one butler, a housekeeper, and other attendants, to regulate his household and table, without once inquiring how far his purse-strings were likely to answer the draft upon their respective demands. Had he in fact consulted that indispensable *vade mecum* of a young student, it would have taught him the wisdom of joining in an economic cause with some three or more students, to live like poor patients and hard-working sizzars, in some poor court of the college, dividing between them some sixty onions every day, and taking it in turns to ask charity every other night from their wealthier neighbours.

These prudent college rules, however, he threw along with those of Aristotle upon the shelf, and with only three or four hundred marks in his pocket, undertook to support the elegant establishment already stated; and if need be, like every wise administration, to draw farther sums upon the national credit. After these preliminaries, he began to cultivate the society of the wealthiest students in the place: accepted invitations; visited all the great



houses, whose attentions he repaid with compliments, and more rarely with presents, that failed not to obtain for him the reputation of a fashionable, as well as an open-handed youth. He resided in the street set apart, *par excellence*, for the most distinguished and influential families, though he kept strictly to the rules of those who run up large accounts and take long credit, rewarding the long-suffering parties by the splendid promise of making the fortunes of all his creditors.

Had he thus continued to confine himself within the due bounds of ambition, without carrying his vanity to a pitch of absurdity, no doubt but, with his gentlemanly manners and liberal spirit, all must have gone well. But fortune, that traitor to all great men, was the rock on which our young student was destined to split. He attached himself to the study of the canon law; and here, too, he piqued himself upon his lofty and capacious views. Sometimes he appeared in a broad and splendid ermine mantle, sometimes with his sword and cape—plainly indicating that he should rest content with no common figure in the world, did success only continue to fill his sails with the same auspicious breezes as she had done. Soon he appeared absorbed in the abstract study of the laws; for when the voice of the schools seconds that of fashion, and is re-echoed in the ears of princes, the popular candidate for court-favour and

offices seems, through this medium, to claim rather than solicit the favour of the court. He pursued his studies then, though in the midst of splendour, with redoubled ardour; his credit rose and became inexhaustible. He had already kept his terms, and he now took the highest degrees, buoyed up with a confidence that gave additional eclat to his success. His genius was lively and versatile, his memory great, in possessing which he showed no respect to the decided opinion of Aristotle, who maintains, that where the understanding is very great, the memory can only be improved by incessant and repeated study, which is not often the case.

When residing in Andalusia, his name had been plain Paul; but in Castile it became Don Pablo, and was in a fair way for far higher titles ere long, had he but known how to apply his resources with due discretion. His demands, however, upon the credulity and the purses of the good people of Alcala was carried to an imprudent length; the tide of good fortune had risen to its height, and at length it began to ebb. His great friends seemed inclined to retort the compliment of borrowing upon its patron, when they found it carried to such an extreme. Like an able tactician, he had taught them his art of war by dint of pushing his successes too far, and they gradually turned the credit-system against its ingenious author. At first, by way of requesting a reimbursement; secondly, by



hinting accommodations of the same kind—with what success you may imagine; for those who are in the habit of giving long credit to students of the universities, are much in the case of a bankrupt merchant, expecting an argosy from the east. Thus Don Pablo began by amusing his creditors with that well-known maxim, that money, like manure, is of no use until it be spread; that you ought to throw your bread upon the waters, and trust for its return after many days; that he who gives quickly gives twice; that if you are asked for your cloak, you should give your coat also; and that if your friend ask you to walk a mile, you ought to go with him twain.

For the first time, he was observed to look a little thoughtful, indulged the idea of sounding a retreat, and sometimes almost wished he had entered Alcala in quality of a great man's attendant, instead of the great man himself. In such a mood, with all "a poet's remorse," he might be observed pacing the banks of the river, by turns sighing and swearing, or devising schemes how best he might prop up the falling fortunes of his new house. Still he made a bold and ingenious defence, and was a long time driven "from pillar to post," before he was reduced to think of flying, much less of surrendering to his creditors at discretion.

One day, however, on returning from one of his rambles, in pursuit of fresh projects, he was joined by a friend, who came in haste to inform him, that a

limb of the law, the whole body of which he had himself so long been dissecting, was just then employed in taking an inventory of his affairs, and questioned the prudence of his proceeding at that moment in the direction of his own house. Without a word, Don Pablo turned short round, and pursued the other way, proceeding at a pretty quick pace, being resolved to encounter any one just then, rather than one of the college police. Of these latter gentlemen, a party had already waited on him at his splendid apartments, and finding him "not at home," had informed themselves of his "whereabouts," and were even now walking briskly in pursuit of the Don, as his friend gave him the timely hint. More than this, he assisted him in concealing his precious person until nightfall, when he might have a better chance of disguising or absenting himself for good, whichever he might judge best.

Here was a sad revolution in Don Pablo's affairs, and it proved a great hindrance to his studies, in which he had always shown a decided predilection for the theory, in preference to the practice of the law. He imagined himself already seized and incarcerated for debt, and that he was become the jest of all the place, particularly of the students, who would be infinitely amused at the notoriety of his adventures.

For this reason, he took speedy leave of his companion, and sought shelter among the shady elms

and poplar trees that skirt the banks of the river Henares, till he arrived at a little wood, in which he soon disappeared. But not yet thinking himself secure enough from the searching eye of the alguazils; suspecting even the fidelity of his late companion, he mounted into a lofty poplar, whose thick umbrageous arms completely sheltered him from public view. Having found a secure seat, he there first gave himself up to his melancholy forebodings, in which he was doomed to beguile his time, until the shades of evening should afford him safer escort to proceed on his way. He was bent on flying as far as possible from Alcala and his creditors, though he felt assured they would hold him in so much respect, as not to meddle with much of his substance during his absence, which he meant should continue some special long time. He now repented of his extreme folly, and prayed heartily that in future he might be endowed with grace to conduct himself with more prudence and discretion.

In this perplexed state of idle repentance, weak resolutions, and hearty prayers to be released from his manifold difficulties and anxiety, he continued to ruminate some time. He was first roused by the sound of footsteps, and looking out sharply from his concealment, he saw a well dressed elderly man, well known to him, and a native of Alcala. His name was Rosino, a most industrious genius, who had con-

trived to raise himself from nothing, to a respectable and even lucrative condition; for he had married his daughter to a man of letters, and established his two sons in a promising way, if they would only have turned out half as good as their father. One, however, assumed the air of a bully, the other became a gambler; and, in short, what the father had amassed by long economy, and cudgelling of his brains, his hopeful sons dissipated, by bringing themselves into all kinds of scrapes and excesses. The sagacious old gentleman, seeing the speed at which he was going down hill, after all his efforts in climbing up it, judged it would be wise to stop a little short of the bottom. "At this rate," thought he, "what will become of me when I am an old man; (he was not then quite seventy;) my dear, blessed, and long-saving wife is dead and gone, and I can no longer keep my house together against the violence of these scapegraces—they would ruin a nation. Alas!" he continued, "they have turned it almost inside out; there is no one now that cares to lay by a single shilling; nay, by heavens, they have broken through stone walls and locks, and ransacked all my drawers and boxes. They have stripped me nigh to the skin; yet, why talk only of my spendthrift sons; there is my son-in-law, a man of letters, my daughter, and ten grandchildren, all as greedy as the rest; and when they come to see me, it is only for what each and all

can carry away with them. I live in continued hot water ; like an old soldier on active service, I have to fight to the last, surrounded by inveterate enemies. Yes, I shall be ruined. I see it as plainly as that poplar tree, (here our hero drew in his breath,) there is nothing left for it, but to steal my own money, and hide as much of it as I can get."

In this way the old man went on lamenting himself, much to the edification of the student ; at the same time proceeding to count out of a large yellow bag, one by one, a thousand crowns in hard gold. He had come to the resolution of concealing them in the thickest part of the wood, where no wicked relations would have any further chance of finding them. So cautiously wrapping them up in a cat-skin, which he had prepared for the purpose, in order the better to secure and protect them, he set to work to find an appropriate bank for their safe deposit. With this view he approached the identical tree on which he had before fixed his eyes, for an apt illustration of his hard case, and from whose venerable branches Don Pablo had contemplated the whole proceeding. With his usual caution, the old merchant looked earnestly round him, on every side, and in every direction, except above his head ; till finding all safe and quiet, he took from his pocket a large garden knife, and with singular dexterity began to excavate a little savings bank at the foot of the

tree. He first made some neat incisions in the green turf, which he carefully removed, and then hollowed out the earth till he had made a reasonably sized aperture, when he stopt and breathed a little from his labours. Next he took the gold, which after wistfully gazing at some moments, he still more carefully deposited in the hole, observing, at the same time: "Heaven defend THIS at least from all evil hands; as heaven knows it is done with good intent, to befriend a poor man in his old days, instead of his being driven to beg alms from door to door, besides saving a mass or two for his soul when he is gone, which I doubt his own sons would never have the grace to see done!"

Saying these words, he proceeded to replace the earth, and refix the sward exactly in the manner he had found them. Moreover, that he might be at no loss to recognise the precise spot where he had deposited his treasure, he carved with the same knife in the bark of the said tree the following letters in large capitals, such as we see used for grand inscriptions at our cathedrals:—"HERE." He then looked very complacently around him, as if congratulating himself on his providential labours; and returned, well satisfied with the security of his money, to rejoin his friends at Alcala.

Meantime Don Pablo, intent on all that had passed, permitted the old gentleman to go, without

the slightest molestation. He even maintained his seat till evening; but then he descended from his aerial station, and forthwith began to repeat the same operation which the old man had shortly before concluded. He guessed so well, that he hit at once upon the hidden treasure, which he began to count at his leisure, and found it amounted to not less than five hundred. But the night having set in, Don Pablo was at a loss to make out whether the precious pieces were doubloons, reals, crowns, or penny pieces. It was his good fortune, however, to find that the whole consisted of doubloons; and as to reconciling his conscience to carry them away with him, though he had some qualms, he consoled himself with the mental reservation, that he would certainly one day restore them, when somewhat less inconvenient to him than just at present. He then proceeded smartly on his way, after first inscribing, by way of rejoinder upon the tree, under the emphatic word *HERE*, the following couplets:—

*“ Here came one who could not see,
The man who saw him from this tree;
May fortune grant, ere long he may
The money that was stolen repay,”*

Many were the schemes Don Pablo now revolved in his mind, as to his future movements, and the most prudent plan of applying his wonderful piece of good fortune. Instead of entering upon new specu-

lations, he conceived it would redound most to his advantage to re-establish his credit upon its former basis in the university he had left. He therefore lost no time, but retraced his steps with wonderful alacrity. Before morning broke, he had again arrived at Alcala, and went to take possession of his former abode.

Now it happened that a few choice spirits, among his former gay acquaintance, had met together at the very same house, by no means deficient in a good stock of wine, and were busily celebrating the obsequies of their friend's reputation, and discussing the relative merits of the catastrophe which appeared to have overwhelmed him. What was their surprise, then, to see him walk into the room, and seat himself, with his usual self-complacency, at the head of the table. Had his ghost presented itself, they could not well have looked more alarmed. There was a general exclamation, and all rose, and were for making the best of their way out. He reassured them, by filling a glass to their gay carousals, in a style too good to be imitated, even by his ghost. They then, one and all, took him to task for the perilous step he had just taken in returning, and flying, as it were, into the very face of justice, whose Argus eyes were on a sharp look out. "It will be a fine treat for your enemies," cried one; "it is impossible you can ever extricate yourself; and you will die the

death of a sinner in close 'durance vile.'" Don Pablo laughed, filled another glass of wine, and thus addressed them,—“ Know, my good friends, that I am not so poor a fellow as you take me for ; nor am I one to engage in a matter I am unable to carry through. Do you imagine I have not ample resources in my estate to meet the little expences I have incurred in living here at Alcala ? Do you ? and do you take me for a fool ? I had, indeed, a stupid wretch of an agent, to whom I had confided the settlement of my accounts, who, by his remissness, put me to some inconvenience. The moment, however, my creditors applied to me, I wrote him a sharp letter, threatening to have him up before the council of the University, which brought me in reply a remittance of two hundred and fifty doubloons. So I think I am a match now for your Alguazils and your debtor's jail ; for I have luckily more gold than bills after all. I will therefore trouble you, each and all, to give my creditors notice on the morrow, that the poor souls may attend at my chambers as early as they may deem fit ; for I will trust my rascally agents no more ; but have the pleasure of satisfying the wants of the good citizens with my own hands.” Saying this, he took a little bag of gold from his pocket, as an earnest of greater things ; at the same time throwing down a doubloon, with which he begged them to make merry, as they had already done that evening, at his expense.

The whole of this magnanimous declaration was taken as it was intended by the students, and the different members of his own establishment. He had before conducted himself like a man of wealth and fashion, and besides, no one could contradict him without knowing that he was not in possession of all to which he laid claim. His credit, in short, was restored even faster than it had given way; all his debts were paid, and the report of his good conduct did him far greater service than his late dilemma had done him injury.

All this led Don Pablo seriously to reflect; next to repent of his errors; then to resolve, and upon good resolutions to lay the foundation of a reformed life. He grew discreet, studied hard, and avoided all undue extravagance and display. Indeed, he applied the remainder of his time at the University to such good purpose, that he rose high in credit with all classes. He succeeded so well in his profession, that in a short period he was raised to the Decretal Chair in the University, and was in no want of the approbation and patronage of men of rank and influence.

In a very brief period, he became both honoured and wealthy; acquired the reputation of a distinguished pleader, and formed an union with the daughter of a man of great landed property, so as to assure him a fixed rank and station among the chief families of Alcala.

It was now Don Pablo had leisure to think of the good turn which a certain old gentleman named Rosino, had once served him, as we have seen. As bound in honour, as well as in conscience, he immediately restored not only the capital with the entire interest, but did every thing to forward the interests of his family, and to oblige him in every respect. And true it was, as the old gentleman had predicted, it would ensue from his graceless sons, although they had paid the forfeit. He found him begging his way from door to door; one of his sons had died, and the other met with the accident of being hanged. Moreover, he assured Don Pablo, it was a wonder he had not himself died when he returned to claim his secret treasure, and instead of it found only the said inscription upon the tree. He would certainly have hanged himself from one of its branches, but for the consolatory tenor of the last line, which held out a sort of promise of restitution.

Upon this single hope he had ever since lived, and never ceased to pray, and weary heaven that the thief might be forgiven and permitted to prosper, in order the sooner to be enabled to clear his conscience by refunding the whole sum with interest, as early as convenient. To these prayers, indeed, the old man attributed Don Pablo's sudden reformation and subsequent success; and he often declared, that unless the borrower had been honourable enough to

leave his note of hand upon the tree, he should perhaps never have thought of praying for his reformation ; that consequently Don Pablo would have gone on in his old courses ; have come to some bad end ; and he himself, without heaven's help, never have seen his money more.

SALORZANO.



ALONZO DEL CASTILLO SALORZANO

WAS one of the most voluminous writers of novels that flourished in Spain during the middle of the seventeenth century. He addicted himself chiefly to the satirical class, with the erotic, the moral, and the historical, interspersing them all with poetical effusions, which he poured forth with infinite facility, and with a display of erudition too often out of place. If we except certain traces of that national affectation and conceit which began to prevail in the language during his times, the style of Castillo will be found extremely chaste, animated, and full of wit and spirit. He composed some comedies, or rather novels in dialogue, which have nothing remarkable in them as distinguished from others of the same class.

From the same pen proceeded an historical romance on the subject of Antony and Cleopatra; an abridgment of the Life and Deeds of Pedro III. of Arragon; and a volume of Lives of the Valencian

Saints. He is supposed to have been a native of the same province; and a number of his works are known to have been published there, and that he was in the service of Don Pedro Fagardo, Marquis de los Relez, and Viceroy of the kingdom of Valencia. Finally, he is one of those authors who have been commemorated by Lope de Vega in his *Laurel de Apolo*.

THE DUCHESS OF MANTUA.

ON the death of Frederick, Duke of Mantua, his only daughter, the young and beautiful Camilla, then the theme of every tongue, assumed the ducal sceptre. She was every where extolled, no less for her virtues, than for her graces and accomplishments. Such too was her discreet deportment, that she found no difficulty in regulating even affairs of state, and was thus universally respected and obeyed, as well as loved, by all classes of her subjects. Many of the adjoining princes had already sought her hand in marriage, but like another Zenobia or Panthasilia, she highly valued and delighted in her freedom, and the exercise of her own authority. She rode with consummate grace, and managed her steed with uncommon spirit and skill; was attached to the chace, and not afraid even of war. In the exercise of her power, directed to the happiness and prosperity of her people; in her public and private amusements; or when in pursuit of the stag or the wild boar, she forgot there was such a thing as love in

the world ; or at least she offered up the capricious deity as a sacrifice on the cold shrine of Diana.

Foremost among her suitors ranked the Duke of Modena, a generous, but eccentric prince ; the Marquess of Salucio, a famous soldier ; and the wealthy Duke of Urbino. Of these her lovers, and numerous others, she possessed indeed a perfect gallery of portraits, which she disposed of much more easily than of the originals. The latter were all either too proud and arbitrary, or, what she disliked still worse, too mercenary for her. She therefore gave the same answer to all their ambassadors, namely, that she had no intention of changing her condition just at that time ; and by these excuses she contrived to keep them at a respectable distance, and yet in good humour, frequently assuring each of them, that when she should think about it, their master's merits would first come under consideration.

The Duke of Modena least of all relished these repeated delays, for he happened to be in possession of her portrait, and had become deeply smitten with the charms it displayed. In short, he could not resist the temptation of going in disguise to Mantua, and there he found that she even surpassed the ideas he had formed of her beauty, accusing the artist of a most envious and niggardly pencil. On his return he employed fresh ambassadors and fresh presents, in the hope of softening or subduing her

continued resistance. But they were followed only by similar results, for both presents and ambassadors were returned upon his hands, and he was still more puzzled and miserable than before.

One day, during the most delightful season of an Italian spring, when the air is full of fragrance, and the earth teeming with flowers, beneath a sky that gladdens the soul, no less than the eye, to behold ; the lovely Duchess went forth to enjoy the chace, accompanied by her favourite Clenarda, daughter of old Ernesto, her minister of state. This lady had been attached to the Duchess from her infancy, and their friendship had known no interruption up to the present time.

On arriving at the mountain, the hunters each took their appointed station, and when the sport commenced, Camilla and her companion descended from the carriage, and joined the courtly train, mounted upon two light and spirited steeds. Each was armed with a light hunting spear ; and soon the sport began, with the barking of dogs and the voices of the huntsmen ; the usual loud and cheering concert on similar occasions. Suddenly, there started into view, on the side where the Duchess rode, an enormous boar, followed pretty closely by two noble hounds. Yet, not at all daunted, and taking her aim with precision, she advanced some way before the party, and wounded the animal as it rushed past her,

towards the other side, in which direction it continued its career, followed by the entire company, with the exception of the Duchess.

Lingering to enjoy a full view of the chase from the eminence, she remained until they were lost from sight by some intervening shrubs and trees, when she first thought of rejoining the cavalcade. After riding a pretty long space, without regaining even a sight of her party, she blew her silver hunting-horn, then paused, and again repeated the shrill music ; but she heard no answering sounds. She next resolved to remain some time where she was, in hopes one or other of the hunters might appear ; and still she was disappointed. Now she thought it time to try and recover the track, which she succeeded in following a little space, but soon lost the path she was pursuing, till at length she came to the edge of a less frequented cover, opposite the same path by which the party had first entered. Again she stopped, and listened whether she could catch any sound to guide her, when she was suddenly startled by a noise that seemed to come from some close thicket near her. She turned and fixed her eye upon the spot, but the dense foliage prevented her distinguishing any object. Suspecting it might be some fierce animal, she grasped her spear, to prepare for the encounter, and on the glimpse of some object appearing from the underwood, she threw it with all her force. The



next moment a young man, with a noble air and features, stood before her, with the weapon enfixed in his left arm, but with a drawn sword in his right, as if eager to attack the enemy who had thus grievously wounded him. Camilla fixed her eyes upon him, while his were no less intently directed towards her. Both stood rivetted with surprise for some moments, as if struck with admiration of each other's beauty. He seemed indeed to have forgotten his wound; he uttered not a word, nor even attempted to draw the dart that had pierced quite through his arm. Camilla, on her part, expressed no less wonder at his countenance, than at his strange attire. He wore a rustic cloak, which reached as low as his knees, with a rope of coarse sedge for his belt; but it hardly served effectually to conceal his under garment of rich blue cloth, embroidered with spangled lace and silver coronals. His stockings and garters were of a colour adapted to the rest of his dress; the hilt of his sword was of gold, and was worn without any scabbard. These were incongruities on which to muse more at leisure; for his noble presence and elegant deportment, with the peculiar circumstances in which he appeared, altogether presented an enigma not easy of solution on the spot. He first, however, recovered use of his speech, by observing:—"I had imagined, fair lady, that these leafy solitudes would at least have shaded me from mortal weapons; and

that my slumber might be indulged without risk of surprise. But heaven hath so willed, that nowhere shall we boast impunity from evil; and according to its impenetrable purposes was I led, while seeking these quiet retreats, to feel the point of your weapon, doubtless intended for some enraged spoiler of the woods; for your eyes assure me you would be incapable of employing any more cruel force than they can well inflict, without having recourse to ruder, though not less deadly weapons. Yet it rejoices me that I have become the victim of your weapon, and your willing prey. If you please to preserve the life of him you have captured, it is well, and I will live a slave to your service; if not, here is my sword for you to complete what your keen dart has left unfinished."

Hearing these words, the Duchess betrayed still more surprise; and moved at the same time with compassion and regret for the injury she had inflicted, she quickly alighted from her steed, and accosted him: "I could almost vow never more to wield that fatal spear, were it only for the wrong it has done so patient and gentle a youth as you appear to be. But haste and apply this kerchief to your arm, until we be enabled to procure you some more desirable aid." The young man, kneeling at her feet, presented his arm, which the Duchess carefully bound, not without fresh expressions of her



regret. "Nay," replied the stranger, "such adventures might well be sought after, if the same cause of remedy could always be applied with the same tender care."

"Cease your flattery," observed Camilla, "and tell me whether you suffer much pain; for I am sure, from the flow of blood, it can be no other but a grievous wound." "The pain," returned the youth, "is less now, since you applied your charms to remove it." "Cease then, I repeat, this language," said the Duchess, unused to be thus addressed; while she felt she knew not what of strange and pleasing in the sound: "I am lost in wonder when I reflect on the singular incidents that have just occurred. When on the point of striking, as I thought, a wild beast, a youth presents himself to my view; and when I expect some rustic speech, to judge by his rude attire, I hear the language of a courtier, utterly at variance with his dress. At more leisure, you will inform me how this can be; at present we must attempt to join my party, which, methinks, I already hear at a distance." So it was; and one by one the hunters began to appear, all equally anxious to ascertain the cause of their sovereign lady's prolonged absence.

Camilla, assisted by the noble youth, again mounted her steed; but ere they reached the approaching horsemen, an immense boar was seen coming towards

them, followed by Clenarda, who had already wounded it. No sooner did the Duchess observe this, than she crossed its path, in sight of the youth, who kept close to her, and wounded the beast in the flank, in such a manner that it was unable to free itself from the weapon. Camilla then drew nearer, when, disentangling itself at the moment, the furious animal rushed upon her horse, inflicting a desperate wound with its tusk. Mad with pain, the poor steed plunged, and threw its lovely rider, who then lay at the mercy of the infuriated boar, had not the stranger at the same instant rushed between them. Seizing the weapon that lay on the ground, instead of throwing, he held it firmly grasped; and at the instant the boar lowered his head for the deadly assault, he planted it, with sure aim, in his neck, near the spine, and leaving it in the wound, he seized the Duchess in his arms, and bore her off in safety. For a moment she felt her bosom pressed against that of her liberator, before he placed her in the hands of her followers, who now crowded round. They instantly left the mountain, the brave youth accompanying them, who now first learnt the sovereign rank of the lovely being he had rescued. He felt a pang of disappointment, for which he could not account, and would instantly have retired, had he not been enjoined to enter the city with the cavalcade.

On their arrival, he was the first object of the

Duchess's attention, who, spite of his humble dress, suspected him to be of higher rank than he appeared, and ordered the first advice, and the most splendid apartments to be procured for him. She then sought her favourite Clenarda, to whom she communicated the whole adventure, and entreated her advice as to the best plan of discovering who the stranger really was. Clenarda, having attentively eyed the handsome person and noble manners of the youth, was by no means at a loss to account for the peculiar anxiety evinced by the Duchess in his behalf. She agreed with her friend, that he must be a person of high rank, and even felt a degree of jealousy at the manner in which she spoke of him ; for she had not beheld the stranger without a feeling of admiration, not a little new to her.

During the ensuing week, the Duchess continued at Mantua, without once resuming her mountain sports. She frequently sent to inquire after the health of the wounded stranger, enjoining that he should be treated with the utmost attention and respect. But when he was sufficiently recovered to appear before her, she commanded a dress to be prepared for him of the same rude materials as his cloak, with coarse gaiters and thick shoes, like those of a common labourer. In this attire he appeared before the beautiful Camilla, and the contrast she now observed between his appearance and his man-

ners tended to confirm her still more strongly in the opinion that he must be some person of rank. She first inquired, "if he were perfectly recovered from his wound?" On his replying that he was, she continued: "You will now then, young man, inform me respecting your real name and country, as well as the reason of my meeting with you in those mountain solitudes, disguised in a dress somewhat different to that you now bear. Without the slightest appearance of confusion, the youth replied as follows;—

"About four miles from the city of Ferrara, there is situated a small village, of which I am a native, born under the sway of the noble Duke Philip. But as regards my parents, I cannot speak with the same certainty; inasmuch as those who had the care of my education, always treated me in a manner far more respectful than those whom they called my brothers. This, indeed, was so remarkable, that I began to suspect there must be some mystery in it, and that I could hardly be their own child. Soon I was sent to the university of Pavia, where I was carefully instructed in various branches of polite learning. During the vacations, I again returned into my native village, and was universally looked up to by those of my own age, and became a sort of dictator in all their sports, quarrels, and cases of doubt or emergency.

“ Upon one occasion, a large assemblage of the country people took place at the village, in order to celebrate the annual festival of St. John the Baptist. Like most others, the house of my parents was filled with guests ; and among others, came an old friend, with his wife and only daughter. Her name was Libia ; a perfect prodigy of beauty, the sight of which made such an impression upon my imagination, that it was long before I could forget it.

“ I tried every method of making her sensible of the feelings she had inspired, but she was always in the presence either of her own parents or of mine. The sole reply I could obtain, were timid and downcast looks. On the eve, however, of the expected festival, it so happened, that all the rest walked out, leaving her in care of the house till their return ; and I had thus an opportunity of explaining the young passion that consumed my heart. And so earnestly did I appeal to her tenderness and compassion, that she could not refuse to listen to me, though her parents were already in treaty with a substantial farmer, who soon afterwards joined them, to bestow her hand in marriage. He arrived in the midst of the rural sports on the ensuing day ; nor was it long before the duke himself, attended by his son, a gallant youth, made his appearance. This gave redoubled animation to the scene, as they shewed a marked interest in the emulation exhibited in the

games, such as wrestling, racing, both on horse and foot, throwing the bar, and singing and dancing ; to all of which they assigned some proof of their admiration at any superior display of strength or skill. I was fortunate enough to attract the eye of the young prince. Turning to his father, he extolled my performance in such terms, as to excite me to fresh exertions, in all of which I succeeded in bearing away the palm.

“ The duke now inquired my name; and on being informed that I was the son of a poor labourer, yet withal well accomplished in learning as well as in rural sports, he sent for me into his presense. He received me with much urbanity; and the young prince was pleased to present me with a rich dress ; the same which I wore on the day when your highness surprised me in the wood. He also invited me to come to Ferrara, a proof of favour which excited in me ambitious hopes, far above the views of my humble birth. Nevertheless, I had not yet forgotten the lovely Libia, at whose feet I laid the prizes won by me on that fortunate day.

“ She received them with manifest pleasure ; while the attentions of her intended husband were met with coolness and constraint. The festival being over, the duke and his train took their departure, and my lovely rustic returned also to her native village. But unable to support her absence, in a

few days I followed her, and few evenings passed that I could refrain from repeating my visits. These, however, gave rise to such remarks, that I was induced to continue them only under the friendly shade of night; when I could only converse with her I loved through a vile grated window. At length, Libia confided our attachment to an aunt, sincerely loved by her, who strongly dissuaded her from encouraging it, on the ground of my superior education and pretensions. She, moreover, expressed doubts of my honourable views; and as her love was not so deeply rooted as my own, she judged it prudent to secure a more decided and substantial offer. The change in her manner, at first cut me to the heart. What was worse, in order to end our engagement, she acquainted her other admirer with my secret solicitations. He became desperately jealous, and even engaged two of his cousins to join with him in giving me the meeting at the appointed spot, instead of the treacherous and cruel Libia.

“ On that evening I had exhausted all my taste and attention in decking out my person to most advantage. I was arrayed in the handsome dress presented me by Prince Lodovico, namely, a blue cloth embroidered with silver, and rich hat and sword. I was mounted upon a light steed belonging to my father, that brought me as quick as a lover’s fancy to the appointed spot. Having fastened my horse to a

tree, I found myself in a few moments at our favourite trysting place; but hardly had I given my usual token, before I was attacked by my rival and his abettors, who rushed on me with drawn swords. Throwing my cloak over my arm, I stood my ground, and summoned my utmost skill to disable him, whom I at once conceived had been guilty of the atrocious design. In this I succeeded, by thrusting my sword clean through his body, entering at his breast, and coming out at his shoulder, and he fell dead at my feet. On witnessing this sudden and fatal result, his two companions betook themselves to flight; and the next moment Libia herself appeared at the window, whence she had witnessed the catastrophe, and cried out, ‘Would to heaven, Fabio, it had fallen to your lot instead of my dear Florio, for your outrageous conduct well merits punishment, even were it death.’ She then closed the window in an apparent agony of grief and rage. I stood rivetted to the earth with astonishment; could it have been the voice of my Libia; had she really been capable of such treachery and fickleness within so short a time, and without any shadow of provocation?

“I hastened from the spot, in an opposite direction to my own village, and pursuing my route till morning, I met an acquaintance, who generously undertook to go and inquire into the results of this

unhappy affair. Meantime I sought refuge in an obscure hamlet until mid-day, when my friend returned, and informed me, that the father of the deceased had already set out to lodge an information against me with the duke himself. Being a rich farmer, and in favour with the duke for his ready contributions in time of war, I perceived there was no resource left for me, but retiring as speedily as possible from my native state. I had but little to support me, which had been just given me by my father, who had declared that he could do no more for me; but that he would some time confide to me an important secret when he should have permission, an observation that made me extremely happy, as it seemed to confirm my former suspicions. Soon I found myself on the confines of Mantua, though I journeyed only by night to avoid pursuit. I had some difficulty in making my escape, as I found that the duke's police had more than once got upon my track. At six leagues hence, I was compelled to part with my horse; and I next arrived near that woody mount, where I first yielded my wearied limbs to repose, and where your highness surprised me, in a manner so alarming to you, but so extremely gratifying to myself."

The fair Duchess, on the conclusion of this narrative, was far from being so well satisfied as she had expected. There were some things she could

reconcile neither to probability nor to truth. How, for instance, had he learnt that Libia's aunt had been so prudent as to give her all the good advice which he so particularly described ; and how happened it that her more substantial lover, who had conducted himself in so orderly a manner, when he saw her rival paying her so many attentions, should, the moment he heard Libia had broken with him, become so violent, and attempt to assassinate his rival in cold blood ?

The poor Duchess found herself quite as much puzzled as before ; still she pretended to give credit to his story, and invited him to remain some time longer at her court. At the same time she desired him to assume a more courtier-like dress, to which Fabio, with a respectful bow, consented, and having been admitted to the honour of kissing her ducal hand in testimony of allegiance, he retired from her presence. She did not forget that he had saved her life, and a regular establishment was provided for him. Her favourite Clenarda was the person employed to convey to the stranger the Duchess's commands, in regard to his affairs on every occasion. She thus gradually indulged an admiration of his superior qualities and accomplishments, which at length ripened into a tenderer feeling ; and this wonderfully sharpened her observation of the sort of patronage and regard shown towards him by her

sovereign lady. He had rescued her from a dreadful death, and gratitude is of itself a warm feeling, more especially in the female heart. Judging too from herself, she suspected that the Duchess liked the stranger. He was moreover invited to join in all parties of pleasure, and in the more select literary circles, in which the Duchess took particular delight. Here the most interesting subjects were discussed; the most recent poems were read aloud; and new topics for various or improvised effusions, were proposed. What was still more novel, the discussions upon the characters of Petrarch and Laura, and on the courts of love, were no longer prohibited as they had been in the select meetings, and the amusement of the chase seemed to have lost much of its charms. Premiums were also awarded to the most happy delineation and poetical commentaries upon the passions; sometimes consisting of a diamond, worth two hundred crowns, at others of ladies' gloves or bracelets, while the best lyrics on Endymion and the moonlight were extolled to the skies. A series of six poems were composed upon the single idea of the lovely Camilla being surprised slumbering in her flower garden, by a malicious deity in the shape of a bee, that stung her, till she cried, upon her ruby lips; and to the best of these was assigned a rich golden chain of the value of one hundred and fifty crowns. The most celebrated Italian and Spanish musicians

were invited to the Mantuan court, whose rare and rich concerts attracted all the beauty and chivalry of Italy from distant states. In all these exhibitions of love, poetry, and music, the most successful of all competitors was still the handsome stranger, who carried off prizes in every department of literature and art; but most of all in his amatory lyrics and chivalric romance. At the conclusion of a grand festival given by Count Rosardo, on the Duchess having completed her twenty-first year, she expressed a desire to make a collection of all the poems that had been composed, in particular those that had carried prizes in her praise. These were presented to her soon after by the Count, contained in royal quarto, with gold letters and illustrations, and most splendidly bound. She received it with a delicious smile, followed, however, by a gentle sigh, that did not escape the ear either of Clenarda or the young stranger, who felt a thrill of sudden rapture that ran through his whole frame.

That evening she spent in her garden bowers, in company with her young and beautiful attendants, hanging over the pages of the golden volume; at times perusing or expounding doubtful and difficult passages, until she came suddenly on some love verses, written for her portrait by the stranger. She then drew in her breath, stopt, and blushed—a blush too that did not escape the Argus eye of her favourite

Clenarda. Though she ceased to read aloud, in her secret heart she confessed the surpassing power and beauty of Fabio's poetry, to each specimen of which, some prize had been awarded. The names of the different authors, before unknown, were here given, and the Duchess seemed much amused in recognising them. But her favourite Clenarda could not conceal her pleasure, and extolled the lyric effusions of the handsome stranger, beyond bounds. The young Duchess remarked it, and, from the language of Clenarda, began for the first time to suspect the tendency of her own secret feelings. The discovery, however, seemed to give her no anxiety, for the difference of rank was a sufficient safeguard against the indulgence of more serious thoughts; and yet it pained her to observe Clenarda's undisguised admiration of her young protégée.

From that period he continued to rise in the estimation of all ranks, such was the charm of his conversation, and the affability of his manners. His talents were of a high order, and had not escaped the attention of the Duchess's ministers, in particular of Count Rosardo, her former tutor, whom she highly respected, and retained at the head of her affairs. To evince his sense of her favours, he now did all in his power to render the stranger's residence at the court agreeable; and display his merits in the fairest point of view. The nobleness of this proceeding

may be estimated by the fact, that the Count was sincerely attached to Clenarda before the arrival of Fabio, and that he was aware of the alteration in her manner towards himself, and the light in which she regarded the accomplished stranger. Still he might justly aspire to her hand, being every way her equal, and boasting superior pretensions in point of rank and fortune, to those possessed by his rival, such as he supposed him to be. Thus he left no honourable means unemployed, to recover his lost ground in the young lady's regard, with what degree of success will farther appear.

At present we must return to the love fortunes of the agreeable unknown. Could he, indeed, have dared to indulge a serious passion for the lovely Duchess, or had he only meant to convey a poet's thoughts and feelings in his beautiful love elegies, and lyric songs? Unfortunately, the exquisite grace and charm they boasted in the eyes of her to whom they were addressed, arose out of their genuine fervour and truth. He was only too passionately attached to the lovely being he had rescued from a cruel fate; yet he was compelled to disguise his feelings under an allegorical and poetical dress. His eyes ventured not to reveal, his lips to utter, the delicious secret of his breast. His days were no longer calm and cheerful, and his nights were robbed of repose. He grew thoughtful and solitary; he was a prey to disappoint-

ment, and the lover's remorse, for having surrendered his affections without a struggle, or the most distant hope of a return. He was equally debarred from speaking his thoughts, and from flying from her presence, lest he should excite the displeasure of her he adored. He had no friend in whom to confide; and to breathe his wishes, would be to provoke the fate of a traitor and a fool. He knew he was of noble birth, but not such as to authorise him to aspire to the hand of Mantua's mistress, and the idol of more than one princely heart. Soon, his health began to give way under the torture and wretchedness of continually beholding her he loved; whom it was impossible he could ever possess. Count Rosardo perceived the change, and was at a loss how to account for it, as Clenarda seemed to smile upon him; yet he generously sought to amuse him, and they continued even better friends than before.

The state apartments assigned to Fabio, were situate under those belonging to the Duchess, the balconies of which overlooked his windows. Among his other accomplishments, he had a fine taste for music, a fact of which the Duchess was not yet informed. One night, while enjoying the *fresco* at his window, he sought to divert his melancholy by striking the chords of his theorbo, running over a variety of beautiful and difficult airs. To these he

soon added his full and rich voice, which catching the ear of Camilla and her attendants, they proceeded to the balcony, eager to learn whence such exquisite music came, and extolling the skill of the new performer. Camilla, when it had ceased, despatched one of her pages to learn whose performance it had been; and he shortly returned with intelligence, that it must be Lord Fabio, as he had actually seen him with the instrument in his hand.

She was delighted to hear these tidings, and Cleonarda no less so, who secretly flattered herself, that the complaints and praises contained in the romantic songs they had just heard, were directed for her ear. But the Duchess had read another tale in the sad voice and appealing eyes of the stranger, who now seemed to have lost even his usual self-command. Nor did she feel offended at the discovery; for no woman, however high her rank, ever deploras the effects of her beauty or her power; and she now became more attached than before to her friend Cleonarda, towards whom she had lately felt a degree of estrangement she could not well comprehend. At the same time, she felt it would be incumbent upon her rank, to check the aspiring hopes of her young protégée, in the manner we shall shortly relate. Cleonarda, on her part, gave him to understand, as clearly as her eyes would permit, that his attentions would not be disagreeable, at least to her. What was her

mortification to find, that all her tenderness was thrown away upon, or only met with melancholy or averted looks.

One day, while thus engaged, the Duchess suddenly entered Fabio's apartments, and turning to him with an air of displeasure, said—"To whom, Sir, may the burden of those romantic songs you sung the other evening, that seem to steal away the hearts of all my hand-maids be addressed? are they not a little too bold and open?" Fabio stammered, and coloured deeply, and was some time before he could reply—"Mere romances, please your highness; and I would hope not bold, but full of poetic truth and sentiments of honour." "You are right," said Camilla, "could they only boast as much success as they do beauty." The young lover stood rivetted to the spot; for by these words he knew that the secret passion of his soul was discovered, though she affected to believe that it applied to some other. There was a tenderness, likewise, in the tone she spoke, ill disguised under an appearance of anger; and her colour came and went, as if under the influence of some strong emotion. "You confess, then, you were the author of that love rhapsody we heard the other evening; did it soften the cruelty of the lady?" a question that brought burning blushes into the fair Clenarda's cheek.

"It did not," replied Fabio; "that was impossible; it did not even dare to aspire so high. "I do not

wonder," returned the Duchess; "perhaps the boldness of the attempt was sufficient reward. I fear me the days are passed for love miracles, and it were unwise to expect them, though love, we are told, is known to confound all distinctions of rank." "That," said Fabio, "is what I intimated; and the lady replied to my gentle appeal, that though success was out of the question, the glory of having loved remained my own. To love the most excellent and beautiful for its own sake, is worth more than enjoying all that inferior beings can bestow upon us." "Those refined ideas in these matters," replied the Duchess, "have, we know, laid many a lovely head low, and should you ever be brought to that hapless pass, tell her she will at least be bound to give you a handsome monument, inscribed with lofty praises to your gentle shade. But now-a-days," she continued, laughing, "no one ever dies of love." Fabio was about to reply, when the Duchess, interrupting him, continued,—“It is now time that I acquaint you with my intentions respecting your residence at this court. I wish to employ you in my service, and finding you so accomplished a musician, you shall be my court professor in this delightful art. Tell me, how would you like such an appointment.” At these words Fabio suddenly changed colour in such a way as to excite her attention; but as quickly recovering himself, he said, without the least show of anger,

“In *your* service, princess, I should feel honoured in accepting any situation most agreeable to you. However, it is a profession wholly new to me, as a profession; and if it will please your highness only to command my poor powers of pleasing in this line, without any professional title, I shall always feel happy to obey you.” Having said this, he made his obeisance, and retired in no pleasant mood to another apartment.

There he began bitterly to inveigh against his own folly, for not having earlier revealed his real rank, and thus subjected himself to what he would have regarded as an insult from any other being in the world. As it was, his wounded pride could ill brook the trial to which the lovely Duchess had subjected him; and, in short, he fell grievously sick after it. When his life began to be despaired of, Camilla was concerned to think that her harshness had perhaps reduced him to so sad a pass. She called the best advice to his aid, and felt the more anxious as she was now convinced that he was of higher birth and pretensions than he appeared.

It one day happened that she met her favourite Clenarda proceeding to the patient's couch, with a dish of fruit and sweets; and she appeared to wish to avoid her. A pang of jealousy like that she had before felt, again seized the Duchess at this sight; and she rather sharply reproved the lady for demean-

ing herself, like a common menial, by attending on a man, with whose real rank and character she was wholly unacquainted. Perceiving her confusion, the Duchess became still more suspicious, and even threatened, that in case she found her again in a similar error, the loss of her favour would assuredly be the forfeit; and she would be compelled to inform the young lady's father. Clenarda attempted to reply, but only burst into tears; on seeing which, the beautiful Camilla instantly entreated her forgiveness, and embracing her, declared that she had no intention of hurting her feelings; for she herself had already begun to feel the bitter sting of disappointed affection.

About this time the King of Naples was engaged in a war with the Sicilians, and the other princes of Italy attached themselves to one or the other party. The care and kind attentions of the Duchess having soon wrought an improvement in Fabio's health, he was now nearly enabled to leave his apartment. And no sooner did he obtain notice of the expected campaign, than he summoned his friend Count Rosardo to his apartments. There, in confidence, he acquainted him with his intentions of joining the army of the King of Naples as speedily as possible. This he further proposed to put in execution without informing the Duchess, lest his departure should be delayed or prevented. "He had come," he said, "to

the resolution of distinguishing himself in some way that should entitle him, at least, to some more honourable distinction than that of becoming a court musician, and merely for the fault of having tried to amuse himself one evening with a song, when he had felt rather melancholy." His friend, the Count, did not attempt to dissuade him from pursuing his object; and the less so, as he hoped his absence would be favourable to his recovering his Clenarda's good opinion, and making her his, if possible, before Fabio's return to the court. He declared that it was a resolution every way worthy of the noble blood from which he doubted not he must have sprung, whenever he judged right to make known his real birth. Nor did he disguise his reasons for speaking thus; acquainting his friend with the long and hopeless attachment he had borne Clenarda; and he was assured in return, that the idea of her had never crossed his (Fabio's) thoughts. At the same time he thanked the Count for his noble and kind attentions to him, the real worth of which he had not before so fully known. He then prepared to write a letter to the Duchess, expressing his unceasing gratitude, and sentiments of profound respect; giving also his reasons for the step he was about to take.

He was readily supplied by the Count with every thing requisite to his new undertaking; and accompanied by a single attendant, he set out on the same night for Naples.

It so happened, that on the ensuing morning the Duchess sent her page to enquire after his health, and if well enough, to request his attendance. She had not hitherto seen him since his recovery ; and on her page's return, she learnt that he had found the entire suite of his apartments open, and that he could no where meet with him. Enquiries were then made throughout the palace, and next through the city, with the same result.

At length, an account was brought of his having been seen with his servant, proceeding on his way from the city. The real truth flashed in a moment on the Duchess's mind, and she felt much hurt. Doubtless his departure had been owing to his respect for Count Rosardo, and a sense of wounded pride, in having received her offer of a subordinate situation ; and she could not but honour his motives, while she lamented her own imprudence. What confirmed her in this opinion, was his own letter, now presented her by the hand of Count Rosardo, the perusal of which redoubled her regret. If it were not love she felt, it was something very nearly allied to it. But that it was not a passion like that of Clenarda's, the intense grief and disappointment displayed by the latter, fully proved. This at once awakened Camilla's anger and compassion. She sent instantly for Count Rosardo, and inquired if he were aware of Fabio's intention to quit the city. Rosardo did not

attempt to deny what had passed between them. The Duchess reproached him for not communicating the intelligence ; not that she would have thought of preventing his departure, but that he might have no cause of complaint in any way against the court of Mantua.

She then retired to her own apartments, where she again perused Fabio's letter, and gave freer vent to the feelings it inspired. In the recesses of her own heart, where the importance and duties of her rank no longer imposed silence, she felt a sad bereavement of enjoyment, in losing the unknown, but accomplished lover. Her attachment, also, seemed to grow more and more by his absence ; and to all her doubts and wishes succeeded a pensiveness, and languid dejection, which no amusement, and no sense of duty, could remove. Still she struggled against it ; and with the view of trying change of scene, she set out for one of her villas, about six miles distant from Mantua. It was a place that presented all the attractive charms of rural life, and had been a favourite resort of the dukes of Mantua ; much like the paradise of Aranjuez with the kings of Spain.

This was the first time she had gone thither unaccompanied by her favourite Clenarda—no longer a favourite, and now suffering under severe illness, and all the sorrow of unrequited affection. There, too, she was soon followed by a new ambassador from the

Duke of Modena, with proposals for an alliance in marriage. But they were now more decidedly rejected than before, and he returned to his master with the old story of a bootless errand. The Duke's pride was deeply wounded; this, he said, was really past enduring, and his former love and admiration began to partake of something very like hatred and revenge. He even swore to risk his dukedom, sooner than see her bestow her hand upon another; in pursuance of which design he resolved upon her abduction. He fixed on her residence at the villa as the most favourable opportunity; thence he would convey her to his own capital, retain her at Modena some days, and then send her back to her own state, under the plea of not finding her a suitable match: after which proceeding he imagined few would like to court her alliance.

Meanwhile Fabio had arrived at the city of Naples, where he had the mortification to learn that the differences between the two belligerents had already been adjusted. On this he felt the utmost desire to return to Mantua; absence only had the effect of increasing at once his grief and his love. At the same time he resolved to conceal the knowledge of his intention, his pride not permitting him to present himself openly before the court, so soon after secretly leaving it in the hope of signaling himself by some exploit. Besides, he might have sought another scene

of action in Germany, where the emperor was engaged in a war with Denmark, and the King of France was also on the same terms with England. But he could not resist the temptation of being near her he loved; and on arriving at Mantua, where he heard that she had retired to her country seat, he forthwith resolved on following her thither. It was late in the evening as he approached the villa, and under the favour of the deepening shadows, he eagerly sought to catch a glance of her person from some balcony or other spot, as she appeared to enjoy the *fresco*. While thus employed, he observed a number of men in close parley under a row of trees in the public walk, not far from a battlement that adjoined the park. Their appearance excited Fabio's curiosity, and he contrived to approach near enough to be within hearing, concealing himself under the shelter of the night, close to the spot. "Your excellency," said one, "is about to engage in a very difficult enterprise, and, I fear, not without some risk of your person. Should you escape it now, yet doubtless in carrying off the Duchess, it will be followed by war, not only with Mantua, but with all those neighbouring princes who aspire to Camilla's hand, and who, for reasons of policy, will take her part. Besides, your excellency, by this proceeding, will forfeit all title to her regard, for although you may detain her by force at Modena, you cannot compel her

to become yours. Do, my lord, consider the matter, and that I only give this advice for your own benefit." The other replied (whom Fabio now knew to be no other than the Duke of Modena), "I left my own court with the decided resolution of taking the young Duchess by surprise in this her unguarded retreat; let those whose craven hearts misgive them, return home, and I alone will carry into effect my own project: I will bear the proud beauty from this place, or perish in the attempt. Have I not already the consent of Leonido to admit me through the first gate at midnight, when all are at rest, and does not the darkness of the night and every thing second the attempt? We have only to wait patiently under these trees until I give the sign, and I am sure of my man; he is bribed up to the mark."

The party then seated themselves on the green turf to await the occasion; while Fabio, astonished at what he had heard, hastened back to the spot where he had left his servant, whom he forthwith dispatched in search of Count Rosardo, with an injunction to bring him back with him precisely to the same spot.

The Count was found by the messenger in his own apartment, and expressed no little surprise at the earnest solicitation of Fabio to attend him at that hour on business of importance. At first he suspected it must be a challenge, for what else could

have induced Fabio to retrace his steps so soon after his resolute departure for Mantua. Being a man of courage, the Count took his sword and buckler, and followed his guide to the place where Fabio awaited them. After a polite salutation Fabio first addressed him: "You would naturally conjecture, my lord, that my sudden return to Mantua must be owing to some delicate affair, in which a lady is concerned. You are already aware of the termination of the war, and though I might have sought employment in other countries, yet I judged it most fitting to return hither, hearing that a certain knight had arrived, who was very desirous of seeing me." Thus much did he state to the Count, to give a fair colour to his return; assuring him that he had come to wait upon him at the villa, with the intention of concealing himself from the eye of the Duchess. "So well too have I timed my arrival, as to become instrumental in bringing to light a foul treason, even now upon the point of being put into execution." He then acquainted him with the whole plot, and the treason of Leonido, who had actually concerted to give the Duke admission into the villa. Rosardo's astonishment was such as almost to deprive him of the power of deciding upon what was best to be done, but Fabio soon removed his doubts, by declaring, that the Duchess ought by no means to be made acquainted with the plot until after the danger was over. The

plan of conducting the affair was determined upon as follows:—It was first of all necessary to secure the person of Leonido, while Fabio, on his part, was to fall in with the views of the Duke, so as to decoy the whole party into certain capture. This being accomplished, the Duchess was to be made acquainted with the attempt, and the sudden arrest of the illustrious prisoner. The stratagem seemed to promise well, and Count Rosardo instantly sought the company of the traitor Leonido, and after having sometime conversed with him in his own apartment, he dexterously turned the key upon him as he went out, and placed two soldiers in guard at the entrance. He next placed eight cavaliers on whom he knew he could rely, at the entrance to the palace, while he himself determined to head a body-guard of twelve more, intended for the special protection of the Duchess. This done, he returned to the spot where Fabio expected him, to whom he related what had passed, and proceeded, as if on Leonido's part, to communicate with the Duke. He was found on the very spot where Fabio had last seen him; and the artful Count, as if commissioned by Leonido, declared that he had come to guide his excellency to the Duchess's presence, where he would assuredly succeed in his intended object. Such was the Duke's infatuation, that he easily believed him to be Leonido's agent, feeling assured that no one but he

was acquainted with the secret; and he agreed with his companions to accompany the Count into the palace. He led them into one of the lower halls, and leaving them in perfect security, he assured them he would almost instantly return with Leonido. There they stood safe in custody, under lock and key, while Rosardo hastened to advise Fabio of the success of their project. The Count then sought the Duchess's chambers, who had not yet retired to rest, and revealed to her the whole of the plot, to her infinite indignation and astonishment.

With a strong party the Count next proceeded to secure the Duke's person, and on the doors being opened, the guards entered. At first he prepared to make a vigorous defence; till the Count, declaring him a prisoner in the Duchess's name, summoned his attendants to yield their arms, as they valued their master's and their own lives. The Duke's companions instantly complied, assuring him that it would only be provoking their fate to offer a weak and ineffectual resistance. Upon this, the Duke handed his sword to Count Rosardo, observing: "The lovely Camilla must be well aware that only love and anxiety brought me hither, and no evil purpose. All indeed is owing to my deep regret and disappointment at not having been deemed worthy of obtaining the honour of her fair hand." "And so it is rightly considered," replied the crafty

Rosardo, "your excellency may safely venture therefore to come along with me." He then attended his illustrious prisoner to a state-tower in the palace, where he was provided with every thing becoming his station. This was a severe blow upon the Duke, nor the less so to be deprived of his own attendants, who were removed to different prisons.

On returning to the Duchess, the Count was questioned by her as to the manner in which he had been enabled to detect the Duke's design; and he was at length induced to confess that it was Fabio who had first discovered it. The Duchess expressed her gratitude in the most lively terms, no less than her high satisfaction on his return. She instantly gave orders for him to appear before her, and a search was made throughout the whole palace, but in vain. He had set out with his servant the moment he had heard of the Duke's capture, and taken up his quarters at a little place about a mile without the city of Mantua, where he intended to pass the night.

Finding all their researches ineffectual, Count Rosardo concluded that he had purposely absented himself, in order not to be recognised by the Duchess. Camilla felt much hurt, as it had been her wish to bestow upon him some high office, as a reward for his signal services. At the same time, she consoled herself with the idea, that, ere long, he would again be seen at court.

The report of what had passed at the palace, brought the inhabitants of Mantua in crowds on the ensuing day, to assure themselves respecting the Duchess' safety; and on Duke Ernest, Clenardo's father, devolved the duty of explaining the affair, and examining the parties concerned in it.

This last process took place without farther delay. The able and experienced minister ordered the culprits to be brought before him separately, threatening them with the severest penalties, if they refused to reveal the whole truth. Three among them instantly confessed; accusing Leonido of having treacherously entered into the plot, with the intention of betraying their sovereign mistress. Others averred that the sole blame was to be imputed to the violent passion entertained by the Duke, who had flattered himself that by obtaining the lovely Camilla's acquaintance while residing in that delightful retreat, he might so far ingratiate himself as to merit the honour of her hand. But Leonido's treason being clearly proved, orders were given that he should be brought into the city, and forthwith condemned to lose his head, before the assembled multitude.

This accordingly took place; after which the Duchess was desirous of having an interview with her illustrious prisoner. He was conducted into her presence, and there he beheld, seated in her drawing-room, the proud and indignant, yet lovely Duchess,

prepared to receive him. The Duke made the most humble and courteous obeisance in his power, testifying his submission; to which the fair Camilla replied by a somewhat stern and distant motion of her head. By order, a seat was placed for the prisoner, at some distance from the footstool of the stately canopy beneath which she sat, and she then addressed herself to him as follows:—

“ I know not, my Lord Duke of Modena, what motive may have induced you to embrace such a design as that of which your own attendants accuse you. Of a truth, the lords of the house of Mantua have ever shewn themselves friends of yours, and little deserved so insulting and base a return for their courtesy. True friendship is one thing, and individual taste another. In respect to the first, you would never have experienced the slightest diminution on my part; and for the second, it is not that I have refused to do justice to your merits, or cast the slightest imputation upon your good character; my sole offence consists in my objecting at present to enter into the married state.

“ My own mother, if you will recal to mind, was not so exceedingly happy in that state, as to lead me to embrace it at once, without ample consideration. Is it wonderful that I should wish to avoid some years of slavery. I am both esteemed and obeyed in my own state; and although my subjects be

desirous that I should give them a master, in order to secure the succession of our line, their wishes are not such as to annoy me. For this reason, I naturally long to delay the period of my subjection, which surely may be granted without being interpreted into an insult against those neighbouring lords and princes who offer me their hand. If you indeed sincerely wished me to become yours, you would rather have attempted to persuade, than to outrage my feelings. And what had you to hope from the success of your design, in case you had really carried me away to your own court? Did you imagine I should ever submit to violence; are you of opinion that power and rigour can more effectually win woman's regard, than humility and courtesy of demeanour? Could you suppose that such temerity would fail to excite the indignation of all my subjects? In order to give you to understand how far I value your attempts—how far I fear you, from this moment I set you at liberty, and grant permission for your attendants to accompany you back to your own city. You are also at liberty to do your worst; but I would rather caution you to be more gallant, and give no farther occasion, by any instance of pride and baseness, to punish you more severely than I have done."

Having uttered these words, the Duchess, without awaiting a reply, left the drawing-room for an adjoining apartment. The Duke, terribly exaspe-

rated at the manner in which the beautiful Camilla had chastised his temerity, hurried back to his prison without uttering a word. There he was treated to a splendid repast, but felt little appetite for the dainties set before him. On its conclusion, a messenger on the part of the Duchess came to acquaint him, that the carriages were in readiness to convey him and his party to the place from whence they came.

Overwhelmed with shame and disappointment, the Duke instantly set out; and by the time he reached Modena, he found an ambassador from the Duchess ready to receive him, who politely insisted on the return of certain troops, sent in aid of the Modenese by her father, when much in want of it. To this demand the Duke made reply, that in the state in which he had inherited his dominions from his father, so would he preserve them; and those troops also were a part of such inheritance; for which reason, God willing, he would retain them. With this laconic reply the ambassador returned to the court of the fair Camilla, where it excited the greatest astonishment. A council was forthwith held, and it was agreed, that since so fair a claim was resisted, it would be necessary to recover a right thus usurped by force of arms. A levy of men was instantly set on foot; while the Duke of Modena, on his part, was not idle; having concluded upon war in con-

sequence of the refusal to return the troops ; for instead of doing this he everywhere doubled them.

Having soon raised a choice body of troops, Count Rosardo was placed at their head, by order of the Duchess, as a man of approved courage, experience, and skill. He led them in strict order across the Mantuan territories into the Modenese. Now our hero, Fabio, was residing in that little village near Mantua, and had heard every event that took place, not a little gratified at the high and generous spirit shown by the Duchess in defending her own right and honour.

On the war breaking out, he flew to lend the fair Camilla the support of his arm, being resolved to defend her, or perish in the attempt. In the first encounter between the rival armies, he signalised himself in a manner to draw the whole eyes of the army upon his deeds. Count Rosardo, too, observed him, and after the battle, made strict inquiry respecting the name of the noble volunteer. He was seen just as he was retiring for the night into a small cottage, and was informed that he must instantly appear before the commander-in-chief.

He complied, and was instantly recognised, to the no small satisfaction of the Count. He insisted on Fabio sharing his own quarters, inviting him as a dear friend and companion in arms, to dine and to repose in the same tent. Fabio's reputation was

already brilliant, and an account of his conduct was transmitted to the Duchess. Camilla owned her vast obligations to the handsome stranger, and sighed for a termination of the war in order to reward him as he deserved.

Whilst the war continued, Camilla never left the walls of Mantua, being actively engaged in preparing supplies for her army. Every evening before the gates of the palace were closed, the guards went round the city walls, carefully examining every part, and round the vicinity. On one occasion, close to one of the old towers, they surprised a man lying fast asleep. Upon being rudely awakened, he manifested the utmost confusion, and was unable to reply a word.

This excited suspicion, and he was instantly secured, and brought into the presence of the Duchess, who, on being informed of the manner in which he had been taken, inquired whence he had come? The prisoner answered, that he was a subject of the Duke of Ferrara, and native of a village about four miles from that city. "And how is your venerable Duke?" again inquired the Duchess; "does he not yet think of marriage, seeing that he has no heir to succeed him in his estate?" "It is not that," replied the prisoner, "which gives him any anxiety at present; it is the loss of his natural son, young Rugero, my lord and master, for whom I am now in search, since the time

he disappeared from the court of Ferrara." "And for what reason might he abscond?" asked the Duchess. "Of that," replied the man, "should your excellency be at all desirous of hearing more, I can gratify your wish in a few words." Camilla intimated her curiosity to hear the full particulars; and the stranger proceeded to obey her commands in the following manner.

"Upon the death of the unfortunate Ludovico, the Duke's only legitimate son, the next heir to the ducal sceptre was an aged but ambitious cavalier, named Renato, his own cousin. Perceiving that the Duke was plunged in affliction at the sad event, he sought to beguile his grief in the best way he could. One day, when they were conversing together, the Duke informed his relative of the circumstance of his having a natural son, then resident in the village where I was, in order to screen him from the jealous eye of the Duchess. Here, though he had obtained the best education at the University of Pavia, he appeared in the character of a mere rustic, brought up in the house of Tirreno, a poor countryman, albeit he is my own father. Now the Duke gave his kinsman, Renato, to understand, that it was his desire that the young man, who possessed admirable talent, and a noble disposition, should succeed him in his dukedom, there being many examples of the kind, in case of the failure of the legitimate branch. The proud

Renato was little flattered at this intimation, which went to cut off himself and his sons from what he deemed his rightful inheritance; but he contrived to disguise his real feelings. Soon after the Duke sent to inform his cousin, that it was his intention to have his son, Rugero, brought from his retreat, and owned as his successor, in a manner becoming his high station. I was the person despatched to bear him letters from the Duke, on this occasion, and your excellency may imagine the delighted feelings of Rugero on learning, that, instead of being a poor rustic, he was the son of a great prince.

“ Notwithstanding the desire of keeping this some time longer a secret, the happy Rugero could not longer conceal that he was no more my brother, and the son of my poor father. During this interval, Renato was not idle; for, having taken counsel with his wife and sons, the result of their indignant and disappointed feelings was a resolution to effect their design, by procuring the death of him who stood between them and their succession. Prince Renato had great influence at Ferrara, though not by any means popular or beloved; and he, with little difficulty, organized a plot with some of the most abandoned hirelings in the place, to accomplish the death of his nephew Rugero. By a fortunate circumstance, being then in the city, and acquainted with the friends of some of the parties, I got intelligence of the affair,



and forthwith wrote word of it to Rugero, whom I advised to depart instantly, and in secret, from the village. This he accordingly did ; and I, and one of my brothers, were companions of his flight. That very evening had been fixed upon for the perpetration of the horrid deed ; the assassins were commissioned by their employer to break into the house, and dispatch the young Rugero in his bed.

“ The Duke, now becoming anxious for his son’s arrival, in order to announce him as his intended successor, and unacquainted with what had passed, sent to inquire the reason, and was informed by one of his principal ministers of his son’s sudden flight. It directly struck him, that Renato was in some way concerned in this, and he sent for him into his presence. At the same time, the families of the assassins were arrested, and the Duke issued orders that they should not be liberated until tidings of his son’s safety should be obtained. These soon came to hand, and were communicated by my father, who first received them, to the Duke, without a moment’s delay. They contained an account of all that had occurred to Rugero, from the time of his leaving the village. The Duke then commanded the most diligent inquiries to be set on foot on all sides. These, however, were fruitless ; no tidings of him were received ; and it was concluded, that he must either have passed into Spain, or have died at some obscure spot. This

supposition added to the Duke's affliction, and had it not been for the society of an only daughter, to soothe his declining days, the lot of Ferrara's Duke would be little enviable, splendid as is his station.

"Hearing at length of the war with the Duke of Modena, it struck me, that my young lord might possibly have joined the ranks of your army, and, in compliance with the Duke's wishes, I instantly resolved to seek him there. Yesternight I arrived on my way at this city, and finding no other quarters open to me, I even laid my weary limbs to rest on the spot where your guards surprised me."

"And what," inquired the Duchess, "might be the name of the young prince of whom you speak?"

"He goes by the name of Fabio," answered the man; "and I would it were my fortune to meet him."

At once startled and delighted at this intelligence, the Duchess yet more eagerly observed; "Of a truth, there was one of that name, and from your territory, who sometime sojourned at this court. I it was who met with him, when engaged in the chase upon the mountain side, not far from the city, and our encounter had nigh cost him his life." The Duchess here related the whole occurrence, describing very accurately his appearance and dress, in order that he might more easily be recognised. "That is he—it is, indeed, the same—" exclaimed the stranger with

a cry of joy, "no other than Rugero; and can your excellency inform me if he still remain here?"

Equally gratified as the other, the Duchess replied; "He is not, indeed, in this city at present; for I am informed he is engaged with the army in defending my person from the attempts of the Duke of Modena; and he had never informed me who he really was." It were needless to observe, that the stranger was now set at liberty, and liberally rewarded; while the joy of the Duchess received a fresh accession, by letters from her commander, Count Rosardo, stating how the Duke of Modena's army had been routed, and himself taken captive, by the hand of Fabio; or rather the young prince of Ferrara. Already, too, the army was on its way back to Mantua, with the gallant young Rugero, and Count Rosardo at its head. It was now the heart of the fair Duchess first began to beat, and that tumultuously, with the new hopes this discovery of the high birth, and approved worth and valour of her former protegee had excited. Her pride had before forbidden her to love; but now she knew and felt that she loved:—loved with a fervour and devotedness, that gathered additional force and intensity from her former pride and coolness. Now, if he too loved, he might aspire to her hand.—Would he do so? Her first step was to send letters to the Duke of Ferrara, earnestly entreating, that as he hoped to hear tidings most dear to him,

he would be pleased to resort to the city of Mantua, and bring with him his beloved daughter, whom she was extremely desirous of seeing. Being on most amicable terms, the Duke lost no time in complying with Camilla's request, bringing along with him his daughter. They were received in the most splendid style by the young Duchess, into whose presence they were ushered through a long line of nobles, and courtiers of the first rank. She expressed her joy at their arrival, and invited them, after partaking of a sumptuous repast, to retire to repose, in order to be better prepared to hear happy tidings, and share in the triumph of the morrow, when she expected the return of her victorious army, with its illustrious prisoner, the captive duke, and other prisoners of rank.

On the ensuing day the princely party took their station at a magnificent balcony, commanding a view of the leading street, by which the army, led by its triumphant cavalcade, and followed by its prisoners, was to appear. Expectation was excited to the highest pitch, and the windows, roofs of houses, and every spot, seemed alive with spectators eager to catch a glimpse of the novel scene.

First appeared the general in chief, Count Rosardo, leading the vanguard; the captive Duke was seen in the midst of a squadron of horse, and next came his conqueror, the valiant Rugero, who had taken

him single-handed in the field. What were his feelings in thus presenting himself before the eyes of the lovely Camilla, whom he so passionately loved, whom he had rescued from the grasp of a hated rival, and brought him in chains to do penance at her feet? How her eye, too, brightened; how heaved her bosom, as with flushed cheek she saw her conqueror approach, all unconscious of the presence of his princely father, and the glorious reception and prospects in store for him. Now he approached her, led by Count Rosardo, and kneeling at her feet, received the proffered hand, which he pressed with thrilling emotion to his lips. At this moment a burst of general applause was heard from the vast assemblage around, and Camilla's countenance was lit up with joy, as she sat by the old Duke's daughter, and pointed them both out to her enraptured lover. Yet she wished to put his passion and devotedness for her still more to the proof, and feigning an indifference she could not feel, she said, "here, Prince Rugero, is a lady with whose hand I wish to reward your high services; she is the daughter of a nobleman of distinction, and the kind Duke of Ferrara has already given his consent. Inform me, then, if you will be quite happy in complying with his wishes, for the Duke, as you see, has deigned to honour my court with his presence."

At these words Rugero changed colour, and could

not conceal his confusion from his fair tormentor. Perceiving, however, that she too was agitated and even trembled, he summoned his courage and thus replied: "I feel most grateful to your excellency for this proof of your regard, and rejoice to find that the rustic Libia has found noble parents to protect her. My former attentions to her, before I knew either who I was or who she was, I scruple not to confess, but that is past. I was compelled to leave my father's house, owing to the attempt of some villains who sought my life. Delighted I am to have rendered you some small service against the treachery and violence of your foes; but while I thank you, I must decline the proffered alliance, and throw myself for forgiveness at the feet of my honoured father, and crave his blessing." The Duke, raising him up, shed tears of joy over his return; and to crown Rugero's joy, the Duchess now stretched forth her hand, and standing with him before his father, avowed her love, and intreated him to accept her as a daughter—as the gallant Rugero's wife.

They then joined hands and knelt at the feet of the old Duke, who gave them his blessing; at the sight of which the people raised another deafening shout of applause, in which all joined except the unfortunate Duke of Modena, who stood writhing in all the bitterness of disappointed love and ambition. But the old Duke of Ferrara stood his friend, and

on condition of a simple apology for his conduct, he was set at liberty ; and Camilla generously solicited the Duke, in her turn, that he would bestow upon her cousin of Modena the hand of the beautiful Lisaura, now presented to him as the sister of Rugero, and the lovely pledge of future amity and love. The Duke of Modena instantly closed with the offer with the best possible grace, and, no longer a prisoner, joined the festive board.

The same day beheld the union of the two princes and the Count Rosardo, with the objects whom they held most dear upon earth. The three marriages were solemnized at the court of Mantua, among all whose inhabitants no one heart experienced more true rapture than that of their lovely Duchess, in receiving the bridal salute from the lips of Prince Rugero.

THE MASK.

NEAR the celebrated city of Madrid, lies a favourite promenade called El Campo de Leganitos, affording a delightful resort during the sultry summer evenings, to the most distinguished ladies and cavaliers of the Spanish court. Casting aside their fashionable attire, it is there they appear under the cool and friendly shadows of twilight, to enjoy all its freshness, in simple dishabille, and throwing off much of the ceremony and restraint appertaining to state occasions. The vicinity, moreover, of the deep bay of Guadarrama, adds its cool, inviting influence, tempering the rage of the canicular beams, no less with its delicious freshness, than with the pure and gentle breezes that ruffle its surface.

One evening, when not even the moon shed her silvery beams, there ventured forth two fair ladies, who had their residence near the spot, to partake the evening fragrance, mingled with the murmurs of waves and breezes from the delicious fountains of Leganitos. They were accompanied by two female



domestics,—were delicately arrayed in light embroidered dresses, with richly ornamented girdles; and, to command greater respect, were followed at a respectable distance, so as not to infringe upon any little exuberance or flashes of gentle mirth, by an ancient squire, ready to assert his chivalry on any sudden emergency, but whose gallant motto was “*Ne Deus intersit, nisi,*” &c.

With this understanding, then, the two ladies and their damsels, with their old duenna just in sight enough not to see without occasion, directed their course along the great road of the College called Donna Maria de Aragon, down towards the said fountain of Leganitos. When within about forty paces, they perceived a man habited in somewhat coarse and rustic garments, with his grey cloth cloak, a hunting cap of the same, a capote with two skirts, and white linen trowsers. On approaching nearly in a line with the ladies, he contrived to place himself by the side of the most beautiful of the two, named Serafina. The other was her sister Theodora; and by his manner he appeared desirous of introducing himself to their better acquaintance. “Of a truth,” he began, “the moon is ashamed of displaying her less radiant beams to-night; it irketh her, peradventure, to be outshone in this her favourite and delicious spot.” Both his fair listeners looked with some surprise upon hearing a compliment

couched in words like these, from the lips too of an apparent clown. But perceiving they had fixed their eyes upon him with an expression of surprise, he rather drew back, and sought to conceal his features in his rustic cloak, without, however, leaving the spot. Being of a lively turn, and, like most other women, fond of novelty, Serafina was unable to resist her curiosity to clear up this apparent mystery, and in a playful style she suddenly lifted up his mask, observing:—"Let us draw up the curtain, sister, and see the face of this new actor; he has already piqued my fancy; only think of hearing the flattering courtier break through all the restraints of this rude disguise—it is a poor device."

"I would not willingly," said the stranger, "think you so indifferent to your own charms, as not to have seen them reflected far more brightly in the truth-telling mirror, than my poor praises can ever succeed in doing."

"Oh," replied Serafina, "flattery is a cheap commodity; yet, such as it is, I suspect you would hardly have been guilty of uttering it, had you always been condemned to wear these simple rustic weeds. Disguise, however, is sometimes convenient, and perhaps you have doffed your holiday suit this evening, the better to beguile a leisure hour after the cares of state."

"There, lady, you deceive yourself; humble birth

should boast no rich raiment; but surely high thoughts and a heart of courtesy, need not always be denied it."

"And of what such lofty thoughts be sprung," returned Serafina, as she withdrew somewhat apart from the throng, "I should like well to know." The stranger, drawing nearer, said:

"My thoughts, lady, such as they be, aim at reaching something higher than my condition doth seem to promise; and they have now attained half their object in being imparted to one capable of giving to them fresh strength and lustre."

"You there at least misapply them," replied the lady; "for if you imagine that you have fallen in with some person in disguise, I am bound to undeceive you, and to add, that you can profit nothing from such an idea. You are come to seek employment at court, I presume."

"No," said the stranger, "I had never that vanity; with my poor parts it were impossible. But in regard to my good fortune in having met with you, I am not without hopes that I should merit it, and win your good opinion, were I permitted to enjoy sufficient opportunity. For not in vain, I trust, did I direct my steps to this delicious spot."

"Dreaming only to refresh myself," returned Serafina, "in the cool air of these clear fountains,

there can be no objection to our passing the time away in conversation with one who seems to love it so well."

"You do me infinite honour, and equal pleasure," replied the stranger; "and the greater in proportion to the little title I can boast to them."

"Then as you hope to be saved," replied Serafina, smiling, "pray indulge my curiosity, and tell me what caprice has put it into your head to night, to assume this odd disguise. To be sure, I have my suspicions that you are only patiently awaiting the appointed hour when you expect to be admitted into some more pleasing society."

"Not so," said the stranger, "I am so complete a novice in the ways of this court, that I have not yet met with any similar adventure. This you see is my real dress, in no manner unbecoming my humble birth. In this I walk during the day; and as night serves for a veil to hide many defects, I select it as the best to disguise that of my poor dress, which I should yet not esteem so lightly, could its master boast of being numbered among the sincerest admirers of your surprising beauty."

"Love, they say," retorted the sprightly Serafina, "is quite blind, and you have fallen, or feign to have fallen, upon him in the dark, 'the blind leading the blind;' what credit can I give you, Señor Mask? Give me a satisfactory answer, and tell me who and



what you are; on which terms only will I consent to prolong our conversation here during the remainder of the evening."

"Will you promise me nothing for the ensuing?" inquired the stranger.

"Certainly, you will so far have a better title to my courtesy, after acquainting me with the motives for this concealment."

"To be sure," said the other, "I might invent many a pretty story; such as feigning myself a great courtier, which I am not; but you have taken my fancy captive on a sudden, so that I know not how to feign, only earnestly desiring to give you the utmost proofs of my fidelity and truth." As he thus spoke, Serafina's admiration increased, and she was mightily puzzled how to reconcile the language and the appearance of the speaker. She longed to obtain a clearer view of him by the light of the moon, and continued to converse some time, but always refusing to believe that he spoke with sincerity of his sudden passion, or that he was the humble plebeian he pretended; both of which positions he very stoutly maintained.

At length the moon shone out, just as the parties began to desert the vicinity of the fountain, when the two ladies, with their attendants, approached nearer, and another figure in exactly a similar dress, suddenly appeared, as if following the first stranger.

Perplexity and surprise now partook of apprehension, though the party was soon re-assured by the manner of the second visitor. While the ladies were engaged enjoying the *fresco*, the two men were seen softly whispering together, a proceeding by no means pleasant at that hour, and in a court where there resorted so many dubious or audacious characters. They felt a sudden qualm lest the two strangers might belong to that impertinent class of adventurers, who live by making free with the purses of their betters. Serafina told her thoughts to her sister, trembling for the safety of some jewels and other ornaments which they both had about their persons. Yet they beheld people walking not far from them; and affecting to make light of the matter, they again entered into conversation with the first stranger, rallying him, and insisting that he should disclose his real character, and he persevering in asserting his humble condition; although, he added, that it had received a large accession of honour and importance by his being admitted to converse with such accomplished and lovely minds as they appeared to possess.

Again Serafina tried to catch a better view of his features by the light of the moon. In this she partly succeeded, and thought he appeared to be about four-and-twenty, with a fine complexion and genteel carriage. His dress she found as we have described it; but one circumstance did not escape her; she

remarked, that his hands, instead of bearing the slightest resemblance to the rude hard skin of base hinds and peasants, were of the most delicate shape and colour, from which she concluded he must be something above the common order. Then she observed, that after refreshing himself with water from the fountain, he drew a fine linen kerchief of the most approved and fashionable kind, which he delicately pressed to his lips. This gratified Serafina not a little ; for she was certainly pleased with his conversation and manners, and would have lost one of her best bracelets to gratify her curiosity, as to who, or what he could be.

However, the ancient squire now made his appearance, heartily weary with dancing attendance *al fresco*, and suggested the propriety of retiring homewards. They all set themselves to oppose it, in particular Señor Mascara himself, who earnestly entreated to be allowed a little more time. At the same moment approached his second with a gold salver in which he brought some delicate confections, choice wine, ice, and some Genoese sweets. He presented them to the ladies, with an elegance and gallantry of manner quite his own, shewing he was no stranger to fine breeding, all which threw an air of greater mystery over the whole adventure.

At length, observing the last groups of company about to disperse, Serafina, turning to the stranger,

said: " My evening walk has pleased me well ; and not the less so for your courteous treatment, which, believe me, I would gladly acknowledge, did I only know to whom. It irks me to retire to rest without the satisfaction of hearing even your name. We sometimes frequent this spot to enjoy the fragrance of the summer evening, though I can by no means assure you we shall be seen here on the ensuing one ; unless with the promise of being informed with whom we trust ourselves to converse."

"I truly regret," replied the stranger, "the strange embarrassment of my situation, which even compels me to decline complying with so trivial a request ; eager as I am for every occasion of convincing you of my devoted and lasting regard."

The ladies then took their leave ; insisting, however, upon not being followed, as the surest pledge of such courtesy and regard. This, with evident regret, was acceded to ; but as there was nothing said on the part of his companion, the latter kept them in his eye at a distance, until they had actually entered their own residence.

The fair Serafina was certainly struck with the noble bearing and courtly manners of the first stranger, and did not attempt to disguise her admiration from her sister. But that she had excited in the breast of the object of it, exceeded even her own. Her surpassing beauty, added to the charm of

her voice and manner, had completely taken him by surprise ; and he longed, with an ardour and anxiety that robbed him of all rest, for the ensuing meeting. At the first tinge of evening he hastened to the exact spot where they had parted, and beheld with delight the distant approach of those he sought. He wore precisely the same dress, a circumstance that led his companions to apprehend he must really have sprung from the low origin he had pretended, by again appearing thus arrayed before their eyes. But he accosted them with the same courtesy, and even greater deference than before, acknowledging, in the most grateful and lavish terms, the rapture he felt in their not having disappointed him.

“ Indeed,” said Theodora, “ you are not a little beholden to us, considering how many obstacles were in the way ; under the control as we are too of others.”

“ I may not doubt it,” replied the stranger ; “ but ah ! deign to relieve my anxiety ; is it a husband or a brother who enjoys the honour of controlling your time and pleasure ?”

“ Enough,” interrupted Serafina, “ there is some one to whom we are bound to render account ; surely that is all that concerns you.”

“ True,” replied the stranger ; “ yet I cannot resist my earnest desire to learn whether you be really a married lady, or—or still free ?”

“ How can that benefit you, one way or other ?”

“ Much, very much ; I cannot reconcile myself to the thought of your being engaged.”

“ Indeed,” replied the lady, “ I have a lord and master, though not just now at Madrid.”

“ I could have sworn it,” exclaimed the stranger ; “ for never yet did fortune give me her smile, but it was sure to be followed by a gathering cloud upon her brow.”

“ Really,” said Serafina, “ had I imagined it could have caused you so much pain, I would have been the last person in the world to inform you.”

“ What would have been my delight to have heard you were free ! For, lady, though my birth had forbade me to aspire to so proud an alliance, love, you well know, acknowledges no rank ; yes, it would have rejoiced me to hear you owned no master over your destiny, though without the faintest prospect of ever becoming yours !”

“ What an odd fancy,” replied Serafina, “ aware, as you are, of the strange inequality of our rank. Why wish to see me free ? Nay, affect not such becoming grief ; how very handsome—I mean how mournful it makes him look,” added she, in a lower tone, to her sister.

“ How can you be so cruel, Serafina,” whispered the other ; “ he looks as if he were going to hang himself forthwith.”

“ Well, then,” said Serafina aloud, “ I was perhaps only jesting about lords and masters; thank heaven, I am yet under no subjection to any one.”

“ Ah, heaven bless you then for those words !” replied the stranger; “ and with the same sincerity I may declare, that should I ever be undeceived in this respect, you would never be troubled with my company again.” Hearing these words, Serafina and her sister looked at each other, as if still more perplexed than before what to think. In every word and action they beheld the elegant and impassioned lover, maintaining, at the same time, with an air of sincerity, that he was but of humble birth. This, too, the dress he wore seemed to confirm, more especially as he had not thought proper to make the least alteration in it. He was desirous of finding Serafina’s hand at liberty; but while they conversed on many a topic, they decided upon nothing. He conducted himself with the same courtesy, and again treated them to elegant refreshments. They remained late, and this time permitted the stranger to accompany them home, though without entering their mansion.

These two ladies were daughters of a cavalier of high rank, who, in consideration of his services in Flanders, under Philip the Third, had obtained the royal patronage, and titles which, on his decease, were to be continued in the person of the lovely

Serafina's husband. Consequently, she had numerous lovers ; her fortune amounting to three thousand ducats yearly. Still she was so young, and had so tender a regard for her sister, and an aged mother, for the most part unprovided for, that she was resolved to delay the period of her marriage. The stranger had retired to his hotel, more captivated with her than ever, while Serafina's anxiety more than equalled his own. She was as much perplexed as hurt to find, that he could not be induced to abandon his assertion of belonging to a humble sphere of life, in which she felt convinced there must exist some kind of mystery.

On the following evening, as the two sisters were employed at their embroidery, in one of the lower apartments of the house, the door suddenly opened, and a lady, completely enveloped in a mantle, stepped forward, to their no small surprise. They both rose, and left their work, to receive her, though with an expression of evident alarm. Observing this, the lady, in a tone of real concern, endeavoured to remove it, saying—"I entreat you, gentle ladies, to pardon this my unlooked for intrusion ; but when you learn the cause, no other than the hope of saving my perilled life, you will not, I trust, be angry. I had believed that he who seeks my life, was now many, many miles from this city. But it has, alas ! pleased heaven, as a chastisement for my disobedience,

that every thing should combine to make me wretched. Ah ! protect me from him then, at least for this night, for on the morrow I should be enabled to give notice to some person who has the power to defend me." As she thus spoke, the afflicted fair one threw aside her veil, and discovered an uncommonly handsome face, whose lovely expression was enhanced by traces of sorrow, she tried in vain to disguise. The two sisters were moved at the sight ; and Serafina, as the eldest, took her hand tenderly in hers, and replied— " Endeavour to calm your feelings, dear lady, and be not afraid, for there is none here to molest you. You shall be protected from any one who should dare to insult you ; and while in this house, believe me, no one will attempt it." Hearing these words, the grateful creature would have thrown herself at Serafina's feet, and was profuse in her expressions of grateful delight. Theodora then insisted upon taking off her mantle, and, to set her mind still more at ease, that she should be admitted to share her own couch.

This occurrence prevented the young ladies that evening from keeping their engagement, to meet the handsome stranger at the fountain of Leganitos. He felt the disappointment severely, nor was it at all pleasing to Serafina, who could not but regret the cause of such an interruption. Long and vainly did the pensive lover linger round the spot, until, spite of

his desire of seeing her, he lost all patience, and retired in a fit of the spleen to his chambers. But Serafina was too good and generous, to let her own little vexations affect her noble treatment of the unhappy lady, whom she regaled with the utmost elegance and splendour, having first, like an affectionate daughter, solicited permission from her aged mother, although commanding the entire establishment, and a handsome fortune in her own right.

When the hour came for retiring to their own chambers, Serafina, being unable to close her eyes, entreated their new guest to oblige them with some account of her adventures, and the reason for having deserted her natural protectors and friends. "Those, you know," she continued, "who have the courage to unburthen their hearts of sad feelings, are sure to obtain relief, and perhaps find some remedy, that may bring every thing they could wish to pass."

"That is true," replied the afflicted lady; "but first of all, I must again express my lively gratitude, with the fervent sincerity of my whole soul, not only for my refuge from the fate that threatened me, but for the rare honours and favours you have already lavished upon me; most of all, that you permit me to be near you, and to relieve my mind by conversing with you, as if you were at once a mother and a sister to me."

"The last, if you please," interrupted Serafina,

smiling, "I hope I am hardly old enough yet to be your mother. But pray, as I fear it will be no laughing matter, oblige us by proceeding, and be very exact and circumstantial in all you say." "I wonder," said Theodora, "whether it is your father or your husband who has thus treated you, and almost frightened you to death. You have your revenge, for I dare say they are in terrible alarm lest you should have made away with yourself. How was it, and how did it begin?" "It never will begin," interrupted her sister, "if you go rattling on in this way. Now pray begin in the very middle of your story, before she has time to speak again."

"You are very pleasant and very kind to try to amuse me," said the lady, "and I am only the more grateful; so, in obedience to your command, I proceed to relate my sorrowful adventures as follows :

"Seville, the rich and populous capital of Andalusia, is my native place; my family that of the Monsalves, so universally known throughout all parts of Spain. I was the third child of Don Enrique de Monsalve, having two brothers older than myself, of whom the eldest became my natural guardian upon the death of my parents, an event that occurred in early life. Sincerely attached to me, he kept a jealous eye over every thing that might affect my happiness. His name was Don Rodrigo, and that of my second brother Don Antonio, whose more impe-

tuous disposition led him to embrace a military life. He greatly distinguished himself in the army of Flanders, and speedily rose high in his profession. Don Rodrigo, with whom I remained at home, declined every opportunity of forming a grand alliance for himself in marriage, until he should behold me arrived at a sufficient age to bestow my hand on some noble youth, who would thus become my natural protector. He gave me masters to accomplish myself in every grace and virtue, withholding nothing that might add to my amusement or my instruction.

“ On one occasion, a friend of my mother, to whose daughter of my own age I was tenderly attached, gave me a pressing invitation to accompany them to their country seat, situated near a place called San Juan de Alfarache. Now this noble lady had also a son, then a student, who one day returned secretly from college along with a friend of his, a native of Cordova, belonging to the illustrious lineage of the Godoys. Before his mother's return, the student had selected an apartment in the villa, communicating by a secret door with the principal drawing-room; and he had so taken his measures, that none of us had any suspicion of his return. From their retired chamber they could easily obtain a view of what was passing in the villa, and had often their eye upon my young friend, Donna Rufina, and myself, when we fancied we were conversing with the utmost confi-

dence. Only the old gardener was admitted into their confidence, and soon afterwards his sister, there being nothing that bribery and persuasion will not effect both with young and old. One day we had just passed through the beautiful flower garden into that containing the fruit, then just coming into season, which we by no means spared, notwithstanding the old gardener's evident anxiety, who kept his eye upon us at a distance ; thence we sought refuge from the intense heat in an elegant and spacious hall, where we began to beguile our time with all kind of pleasant games, and in dancing and singing, of which I was passionately fond, to the infinite delight of our young country friends, no less than that of the young gentlemen, who, it seems, beheld us from their place of concealment.

“ It was thus the brother's friend, Don Esteban, first began to admire, and soon became passionately attached to me. After we had continued to beguile the sultry hours in innocent mirth, and play till the shades of evening once more invited us to enjoy the *fresco*, we took our harps, guitars, and other music, and again sallied forth into the flower garden. We were accompanied by our female attendants, who, with their voice and tambourins, were to fill up the pauses of the concert. This was a rich treat for the secret lovers, whose ears were so well regaled, that they could not refrain from sending an invitation

by the old gardener to my young friend Rufina, entreating that she would pity the case of Don Esteban, and contrive to bring me along with her, to have a first interview at the villa. She instantly invited me to accompany her back for a few moments, leaving the whole party where they were ; and I, wholly ignorant of her real object, as readily gave my consent. Hand in hand we entered the great hall, where the two cavaliers instantly appeared and accosted us. I uttered an exclamation of surprise, and was about to retire, when I was assured they were only the brother of my Rufina, and his friend, Don Esteban, just returned from college.

“I was certainly struck with the manners, and more with the conversation of Don Esteban. In the most courteous and gentle terms, he sought to reassure me, and soon, to my infinite confusion and surprise, declared how he had first seen, admired, and become passionately eager to show his personal respect and regard for me. He then entreated to be permitted thenceforward to enjoy more of my society, and to have an equal chance of winning my regard, by being put on an equal footing with my numerous other admirers. Having never been thus warmly addressed before, you may imagine I was thrown into strange confusion, while I felt myself quite at a loss to make any kind of reply. The rest too were silent during some moments, in vain awaiting my reply, until my

friend, repeating Don Esteban's request, said:—'Of a truth, Lady Clara, you look as terrified and astonished as if you had seen two live dragons instead of my poor brother and his friend. Is there any thing so very novel in a handsome chevalier wishing to escort the ladies; more especially, if tolerably equal in point of birth, and prompted only by honorable feelings? Our friend here, Don Esteban, is no new sprig of quality, but of an ancient and noble family, yet ambitious of showing his devotion to you, for which he hardly merits your cold and averted looks.'

“Such, in fact, was the effect of her persuasions, added to those of her brother, that Don Esteban easily extorted from me permission to consider himself as a suitor for my hand; and I already began to feel a strange sensation of pleasure and anxiety fluttering at my heart. I had never known what love was, except the name; on the contrary, I had, till now, been accustomed to make a mock of those fancied pains and sorrows, which were but now springing up in my breast. The object of my new feelings was worthy of all the anxiety and affection he was calculated to inspire; he had a noble presence, high port, handsome features, and fine complexion, such only as my brother's, Don Rodrigo, could at all compare with. From that day forth he paid me the most unremitting assiduity and attention; and when he left the villa, he continued to correspond with me, expressing still greater devotedness and affection.

“ Sometimes, with the concurrence of my dear Rufina, he contrived to steal an interview with me at her house, though she always continued to be present, and I never suffered a greater degree of freedom than that of his taking my hand. At this time, he happened to be engaged in a law-suit at Seville, and wished to delay, until he knew the result, his formal application to my brother, and intended declaration. Often during the interval would he importune me to see him more frequently, and at least consent to hold some conversation with him through the grating of my chamber windows. In order to avoid the risk of being suddenly surprised by my brother, he farther requested, that it should be only under the friendly veil of night.

“ He appeared, indeed, to love me, as he said, to distraction; and as it is the nature of love never to rest content with what is granted, until wholly in possession of the beloved object, I was too weak and fondly attached to him long to withstand his request, and at length he gained admittance into our house. This, alas, was a step fatal to my future happiness and peace; for under the repeated vows of becoming my husband, which he farther enforced by oaths, sworn even over the Holy Cross, he succeeded in depriving me of my honour. The continued repetition of his nightly visits soon awakened the jealous care of my brother, and in addition to my fears for my lover’s life and safety, I had next the daily increas-

ing terror of finding I was likely ere long to become a mother. It was now I became eager, and even wild in my entreaties, that he would perform his plighted vows, and apply to my brother, in order that I might be introduced as his wife. Excuses, and fresh protestations, were all he deigned to give me; and floods of tears, and deep remorse, seemed to be all the sad resource left me. Two of my attendants next obtained a knowledge of my situation, which threw me entirely into their power, of which I shortly experienced the most disastrous effects. Happening one day to reprove one of these for some error, she replied with the utmost insolence, and even threatened to acquaint my brother, with whom, indeed, she was somewhat a favourite; and on the very first opportunity she was malignant enough to keep her word.

“In the utmost rage my brother swore to sacrifice both of us to his revenge, which he was only prevailed upon to postpone in consideration of the innocent cause of my misfortunes, to which I was soon to give birth. At the same time he exacted a promise from my faithless betrayer, that she would acquaint him when the period arrived, as he was resolved that I should not survive it, to cast a stigma on the family honour.

“Accordingly, no sooner did the hour arrive, than he stationed himself along with a single friend, ready

prepared to receive the infant, and then to inflict deadly vengeance upon the authors of his disgrace. It was night, and he heard footsteps approaching as he kept watch to prevent any one entering the house. It was Don Esteban ; a fierce encounter ensued, and I heard the clashing of swords. At the same moment two of my women entered the apartment, informing me that I must instantly prepare to leave the place, and began to assist in dressing me. I was then borne from my chamber and placed in a litter in waiting for me at the house door, attended by two men with drawn swords, who accompanied me through several streets to another dwelling. There I was carried in the same women's arms into a secluded apartment, and farther assistance being obtained for me, I was enabled, through the greatest care and attention on the part of those around me, to survive the shock and sufferings which I had so strangely experienced. Here it was many days before I was permitted to learn the result of the dreadful meeting between my brother and my affianced husband. The brother of the latter, Don Fernando, had been slain in the scuffle, and my brother, unfortunately being unable to make his escape, had been arrested for the homicide, and thrown into the public prison.

“ His agents, however, were still in pursuit of me ; I found that the place of my retreat, where I had

been placed by Don Esteban, my lover, before he fled from justice, had been discovered, and that nothing was left for me but to attempt to save myself by flight.

“ In pursuance of this design, yesterday, in company with my hostess, I for the first and last time left my lodgings, under pretence of taking the air in the Campo de Leganitos. Good heavens! what was my terror on turning a corner of the road suddenly, to meet face to face the spectre, or the living person—I know not whether—of my dreaded brother! He was enveloped in the most singular attire you can well imagine, if it indeed were him. For he had on a common grey cloak, muffled up at the chin, such as is worn by labourers and rustics, an old white hat, and a small mantle of the same colour as his enormous cloak. Add to these a pair of old spatterdashes, white linen pantaloons; altogether presenting the most grotesque and singular appearance. I affected not to recognise him in his disguise, though terrified beyond measure, so that I could scarcely support myself. My companion, assisting me forward, enquired into the cause of my sudden alarm. This I confided to her, expressing my fears lest he should have seen and known me. My suspicions were confirmed when I actually beheld him turn round and direct his steps towards the place where we stood.

“ On beholding this, my companion suddenly left me, and entered into a house close by ; while I, in the utmost perturbation, hastened forward, till, on turning a corner where he could not mark where I disappeared, I entered the first house, and claimed your generous protection. How he came not to follow me, or how he lost me when so close in pursuit, I am at a loss to divine. Had he seen where I sought refuge, he would assuredly have followed, and perhaps sacrificed me to his fury in your presence. Such, dear ladies, is my unhappy story ; though I am still under the greatest anxiety and alarm respecting the fate of Don Esteban, notwithstanding his cruel treatment ; and far more at the idea of my brother being at full liberty to perpetrate his savage design, to which I shall assuredly, one time or other, fall a victim.”

Here the unhappy lady's feelings overpowered her, and she again besought, with tears in her eyes, that they would conceal her from the revenge of her enraged brother. This both the sisters again promised, and tried every means of composing her mind ; at the same time declaring how deeply interested they felt in her strange and sorrowful adventure. They then conversed with each other respecting the singular resemblance observed between the handsome stranger and the lady's brother, such as to convince them that they could be no other

than one and the same personage. Doubtless it was Don Roderigo whom they had seen, and who had so strongly captivated their fancy. The delight of Serafina on this discovery knew no bounds; and it redoubled her interest in the fortunes of Lady Clara, whom she again encouraged to look forward to a happy termination of her sufferings, with the blessing of heaven, and the efforts of attached friends.

The gentle party then tried to compose themselves to sleep; but it was in vain Clara closed her eyes, while the new hopes kindled in the breast of Serafina produced the same watchfulness. Theodora alone, whose heart was yet untroubled with the passions of love or revenge, gently fell into the soothing arms of slumber, without making a single effort.

Upon the following day Serafina received a letter, delivered by the hand of a woman in disguise, who, at the same time, informed her she had been ordered to await her reply. It ran as follows :

“ Absence from those we love is allowed to be one of the greatest torments that can be inflicted upon lovers. All that is then left them is to supplicate for pity’s sake that the cause of it, if possible, may be speedily removed. That if, moreover, it depend upon the beloved object herself, her cruelty should yield to more charitable thoughts of him, who, by

his long fidelity, merits the highest rank that can be assigned him in her desired affections."

The beautiful Serafina was overjoyed on the perusal of this proof of the stranger's unaltered regard, as she had begun to suspect he might perhaps have thought nothing more of their casual meeting during their walks; in particular, when she had failed to make good her promise of seeing him again. She directly replied to the letter in terms, she conceived, best adapted to excite his passion, and having delivered it into the hands of the messenger, hastened to unfold the tidings to her sister, and take measures for their future meetings.

Don Rodrigo, on his part, eagerly perused the contents of her reply, which was of the following tenor :

"He is little deserving of compassion who conducts himself in so imprudent a manner. Even the object he affects to love he treats as if he had almost forgotten her. This he would have learned before this time, had it not been considered that the less there is said on the subject, the more prudent it will be; and that his errors ought perhaps to be forgiven, on account of the absence of which he complains. The cause of not keeping the appointment was one out of our power to remove, but this even-

ing, perhaps, it may be explained, if the stranger should be at the appointed spot, as there are many topics on which to consult him. Farewell."

Don Rodrigo was in raptures at the concluding part of this epistle, holding out the delightful promise of another interview. Having arranged every thing with their guest respecting their speedy return, Serafina and her sister waited impatiently for the appointed hour. On its arrival they again summoned the old family squire, the only person admitted to attend them, and sallied forth to the promenade near the fountain of Leganitos. There they were at no loss to discover the stranger, already stationed near it, precisely in the same dress as before. He accosted them with an air of lively pleasure, expressed his gratitude, and dwelt with much feeling on the disappointment he had felt, in so long and vainly expecting them the previous night, and the many fears for their health or safety it had occasioned him.

"Neither one nor the other," replied Serafina; "it was our dear mother's illness that detained us; and even had it been as you suspected, you could hardly have indulged all the anxiety you pretend, or you would doubtless have applied at our residence, of which you are not ignorant."

"It was no want of inclination," replied the lover,

“but merely a dread of exciting notice, and giving umbrage to her I loved. It is very unjust to charge me with neglect, when you know I could not resist the temptation of writing; but—as to calling—at once”—

“Oh yes,” exclaimed both the ladies, “we see you did not wish it; you have said enough,”—and they went on rallying the poor cavalier with extreme severity.

“If,” replied he, attempting to turn the subject, “I could have disposed events agreeably to the fervent love I bear you, I should in nothing have erred or offended. But one like me, of obscure birth and simple rustic manners, well assorting,” he added, smiling, “with my uncouth dress, how could you reasonably expect better of me?”

“Ah,” exclaimed Serafina, snatching this opportunity of proceeding with the design she had in view, “do you indeed say so, Señor Don Rodrigo de Monsalve, and do I read you aright? Do I see you, as you are, quite plainly through your rustic disguise, and penetrate into your wicked and most revengeful and unbrotherly designs? What a malignant disposition, now, you must have, to think of showing such tender regard and courtesy towards one lady, while you pursue another, far more lovely and beautiful, with the most cruel hatred and desire of vengeance. You may well look astonished, Don Rodrigo de Mon-



salve, but can you inform us on what evil errand you came from Seville to this place. How did you contrive to get out of prison; what had you done to get there. Do, pray, inform us respecting these little adventures, and we will then see what can be done to make your mind easy, and put your affairs in a better train."

Don Rodrigo, thus taken by surprise, was unable to utter a single word; but stood lost in astonishment, and a vexation he could ill disguise. Serafina seemed to enjoy his confusion exceedingly, and felt redoubled assurance that she had discovered the right man. At length he found words:

"This is a very singular occurrence, ladies; I who have never set foot in Madrid;—you are labouring under some strange mistake.—You call me one Don Rodrigo, but it is really all a riddle to me. I was born under no such lucky star, as to merit the title you please to honour me with, and, doubtless, you confound me with some other person. My reason for coming to Madrid was merely to get a sight of the court, as every poor clown likes to boast of having done at some time or other, besides a little matter of business."

"For instance, to look for your sister," interrupted Theodora; "so you need not think to deceive us any longer, as we know more of your affairs than you

seem to know yourself, and will acquaint you with the particulars if you please." Here, indeed, was a fresh shock for poor Don Rodrigo, who began to think of surrendering at discretion, while his fair foes continued to press him hard, and to enjoy their approaching triumph. They fairly laughed him out of his defence; till, becoming curious to learn the source of their new information, he at once confessed they were in the right, and that he was indeed Don Rodrigo, and no other.

Delighted at this avowal, Serafina entreated him to oblige them with a more particular account of his adventures. This he did with the best grace possible; but it differed in nothing from that they had previously heard from the lips of his sister Clara, except in what related to the death of Don Fernando, and the manner in which he had effected his escape from prison. He confessed he had come to Madrid with the intention of avoiding the pursuit of justice, and that he was about to proceed for the city of Lisbon, where he had reason to suppose his sister then was.

Desirous as Serafina was to come to an amicable explanation on the subject, she considered it yet premature, until they could count upon his future conduct with greater certainty. It was in vain he now entreated to be made acquainted with the author

of their information respecting him ; and he even went so far as to declare, that he had his suspicions it could have been derived from no other but his unhappy sister, whose place of retreat he was bent on discovering ; to which end he would make stricter inquiries than heretofore.

At this interview they had little leisure to enter on the subject of their mutual passion ; but the chief difficulty being now removed, they met on more equal and pleasant ground ; and it was not long before Don Rodrigo made formal proposals for Serafina's hand in marriage. Meantime, the police of Seville was not idle in its pursuit of the lover, sparing no pains to secure so rich a prize, as his recapture would turn out to be. Nor were the spies of Don Rodrigo himself less active about Madrid and elsewhere, to find the retreat of his sister Clara, who had been treated with the greatest respect and attention by the two sisters, and so carefully protected as to give rise to no suspicions as to her real residence.

Serafina, however, fearful of her lover's absenting himself, as he had mentioned, in order to prosecute his researches for his lost sister, was now preparing means to bring about a favourable *denouement* of the whole of this unlucky adventure. With this view, she first informed lady Clara that she was in direct

communication with her dreaded brother, to whom she had, in fact, pledged her hand ; tidings that gave her unfortunate guest the most lively pleasure. She first poured forth her gratitude to heaven, that only could have brought such happy results to pass ; and next, she threw herself at Serafina's feet, and bathing her hands with tears, declared, that only to her goodness she owed her life.

After becoming more composed, Serafina began to consult her on the most prudent means of reconciling Don Esteban and Don Rodrigo, her brother, to each other. Now it happened, that just at that period, the character of the Conde de Palma stood deservedly high in estimation, and for nothing more than his wit and affability. There was no case, however difficult and involved, that his good-nature would not undertake, and his ability bring to a successful result. His authority and opinion, therefore, were universally resorted to, often in preference to the laws ; he had reconciled some of the bitterest enemies, and adjusted differences that bade defiance to every less influential means. To him lady Clara was advised to make application, as to how she should proceed ; and she wrote a full and circumstantial account of the whole affair, and the state in which it then stood.

Upon receiving the particulars, the Count without

hesitation declared he would willingly undertake it, and had great hopes of bringing it to a fortunate termination. He first sought an interview with Don Esteban, and without reference to Clara's letter, he recommended to him the honourable course of fulfilling his plighted faith to Don Rodrigo's sister, as it was already beginning to excite the animadversion of the court. To this proposal, though a little surprised, Don Esteban made slight objection, as he was really attached to her, and during their separation, had felt all his former affection revived. What gave him most pain, was the reflection that neither she nor her brother had made the smallest attempt to renew the negotiation respecting their marriage, in which his honour was so deeply implicated. The Count, therefore, at once took upon himself the task of bringing this about at the shortest period; and with this view, after complimenting Don Esteban upon his honourable intentions, he next hastened to consult with the head of the public police. Here he had no great difficulty in compromising the affair relating to the death of Don Fernando, by the payment of a moderate fine, so as to place Don Esteban at perfect liberty from all judicial proceedings.

The active and generous-minded Count, without a moment's delay, then sought an interview with Lady Clara herself, informing her of every thing

that had taken place. And in order to run no risk of future misunderstanding, he invited Don Esteban and a cousin of his to accompany him. It is impossible to describe the sensations of the unfortunate lady on receiving the good Count's visit ; and on his introducing her lover. No longer able to support the intense delight she felt—she fainted in his arms. Being at length perfectly reconciled and happy, all that now remained was to inform Don Rodrigo of what had passed, and obtain his reconciliation with Don Esteban, and his consent to the marriage. This, the beautiful Serafina undertook to effect ; and at her next interview with her lover, she related to him his sister's adventure, and how she had been received and protected in their house. At the same time she declared that she would never be induced to give him her hand, until he first gave his consent to Clara's marriage with Don Esteban.

Finding himself reduced to this unexpected alternative, Don Rodrigo yielded with a good grace, and declared his willingness to meet her wishes in every respect. He freely pardoned his sister, from his heart, and thanked his Serafina for all the tender care she had lavished upon her. The lady then commanded him, on pain of her displeasure, to appear at her house on the ensuing evening in his real character, without any idea of concealing himself from

her relatives or any one else. He had little difficulty in granting this request, wishing only to accompany her back at that moment, and claim her hand before all the world.

To this Serafina would not consent, and they then parted; he to throw off his uncourtly disguise, and she to reveal the happy conclusion of her luckless adventure to the fond and delighted Clara. The next day was a joyful festival to them all, in which enemies were to meet as friends, and all perplexities and disguises were to be thrown aside. In the evening Don Rodrigo appeared, followed by a train of domestics in rich livery—he himself attired in a handsome court costume. How the heart of the lovely Serafina beat as she heard his step; how her bosom heaved, and her colour came and went, as the noble and elegant chevalier—no longer a humble rustic—approached and took her hand, seizing likewise in her confusion the favour of a first salute. The next object that met his eye was his unfortunate sister kneeling at his feet, and entreating his forgiveness with sobs and tears. “My poor Clara!” exclaimed Don Rodrigo, as he raised and embraced her—“my dear sister, it is all forgiven.”

“It is to this angelic girl, then, I owe everything, my dearest brother. She it is who has made so many hearts beat with joy to-day.”

“And her own, too,” replied Theodora, as she placed her sister’s hand in that of the happy Don Rodrigo, whose happiness, indeed, required no accession from the appearance of the Conde de Palma, accompanied by Don Esteban, who, taking the hand of Clara, knelt at the feet of Don Rodrigo, and nobly implored his forgiveness.

THE END.

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