Tales from "Blackwood", by Various

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Title: Tales from "Blackwood"

Author: Various
HOW WE GOT UP THE GLENMUTCHKIN RAILWAY AND HOW WE GOT OUT OF IT

BY PROFESSOR AYTOUN.

[The following Tale appeared in the Magazine for October 1845. It was intended by the writer as a sketch of some of the more striking features of the railway mania (then in full progress throughout Great Britain), as exhibited in Glasgow and Edinburgh. Although bearing the appearance of a
burlesque, it was in truth an accurate delineation (as will be acknowledged by many a gentleman who had the misfortune to be "out in the Forty-five"); and subsequent disclosures have shown that it was in no way exaggerated.

Although the "Glenmutchkin line" was purely imaginary, and not intended by the writer to apply to any particular scheme then before the public, it was identified in Scotland with more than one reckless and impracticable project; and even the characters introduced were supposed to be typical of personages who had attained some notoriety in the throng of speculation. Any such resemblances must be considered as fortuitous; for the writer cannot charge himself with the discourtesy of individual satire or allusion.

I was confoundedly hard up. My patrimony, never of the largest, had been for the last year on the decrease--a herald would have emblazoned it, "ARGENT, a money-bag improper, in detriment"--and though the attenuating process was not excessively rapid, it was, nevertheless, proceeding at a steady ratio. As for the ordinary means and appliances by which men contrive to recruit their exhausted exchequers, I knew none of them. Work I abhorred with a detestation worthy of a scion of nobility; and, I believe, you could just as soon have persuaded the lineal representative of the Howards or Percys to exhibit himself in the character of a mountebank, as have got me to trust my person on the pinnacle of a three-legged stool. The rule of three is all very well for base mechanical souls; but I flatter myself I have an intellect too large to be limited to a ledger. "Augustus," said my poor mother to me, while stroking my hyacinthine tresses, one fine morning, in the very dawn and budding-time of my existence--"Augustus, my dear boy, whatever you do, never forget that you are a gentleman." The maternal maxim sunk deeply into my heart, and I never for a moment have forgotten it.

Notwithstanding this aristocratic resolution, the great practical question, "How am I to live?" began to thrust itself unpleasantly before me. I am one of that unfortunate class who have neither uncles nor aunts. For me, no yellow liverless individual, with characteristic bamboo and pigtail--emblems of half-a-million--returned to his native shores from Ceylon or remote Penang. For me, no venerable spinster hoarded in the Trongate, permitting herself few luxuries during a long-protracted life, save a lass and a lanthorn, a parrot, and the invariable baudrons of antiquity. No such luck was mine. Had all Glasgow perished by some vast epidemic, I should not have found myself one farthing the richer. There would have been no golden balsam for me in the accumulated woes of Tradestown, Shettleston, and Camlachie. The time has been when--according to Washington Irving and other veracious historians--a young man had no sooner got into difficulties than a guardian angel appeared to him in a dream, with the information that at such and such a bridge, or under such and such a tree, he might find, at a slight expenditure of labour, a gallipot secured with bladder, and filled with glittering tomauns; or in the extremity of despair, the youth had only to append himself to a cord, and straightway the other end thereof, forsaking its staple in the roof, would disclose amidst the fractured ceiling the glories of a profitable pose. These blessed days have long since gone by--at any rate, no such luck was mine. My guardian angel was either woefully ignorant of metallurgy or the stores had been surreptitiously ransacked; and as to the other expedient, I frankly confess I should have liked some better security for its result, than the precedent of the "Heir of Lynn."
It is a great consolation amidst all the evils of life, to know that, however bad your circumstances may be, there is always somebody else in nearly the same predicament. My chosen friend and ally, Bob M'Corkindale, was equally hard up with myself, and, if possible, more averse to exertion. Bob was essentially a speculative man—that is, in a philosophical sense. He had once got hold of a stray volume of Adam Smith, and muddled his brains for a whole week over the intricacies of the *Wealth of Nations*. The result was a crude farrago of notions regarding the true nature of money, the soundness of currency, and relative value of capital, with which he nightly favoured an admiring audience at "The Crow;" for Bob was by no means—in the literal acceptation of the word—a dry philosopher. On the contrary, he perfectly appreciated the merits of each distinct distillery; and was understood to be the compiler of a statistical work, entitled, *A Tour through the Alcoholic Districts of Scotland*. It had very early occurred to me, who knew as much of political economy as of the bagpipes, that a gentleman so well versed in the art of accumulating national wealth, must have some remote ideas of applying his principles profitably on a smaller scale. Accordingly, I gave M'Corkindale an unlimited invitation to my lodgings; and, like a good hearty fellow as he was, he availed himself every evening of the license; for I had laid in a fourteen-gallon cask of Oban whisky, and the quality of the malt was undeniable.

These were the first glorious days of general speculation. Railroads were emerging from the hands of the greater into the fingers of the lesser capitalists. Two successful harvests had given a fearful stimulus to the national energy; and it appeared perfectly certain that all the populous towns would be united, and the rich agricultural districts intersected, by the magical bands of iron. The columns of the newspapers teemed every week with the parturition of novel schemes; and the shares were no sooner announced than they were rapidly subscribed for. But what is the use of my saying anything more about the history of last year? Every one of us remembers it perfectly well. It was a capital year on the whole, and put money into many a pocket. About that time, Bob and I commenced operations. Our available capital, or negotiable bullion, in the language of my friend, amounted to about three hundred pounds, which we set aside as a joint fund for speculation. Bob, in a series of learned discourses, had convinced me that it was not only folly, but a positive sin, to leave this sum lying in the bank at a pitiful rate of interest, and otherwise unemployed, whilst every one else in the kingdom was having a pluck at the public pigeon. Somehow or other, we were unlucky in our first attempts. Speculators are like wasps; for when they have once got hold of a ripening and peach-like project, they keep it rigidly for their own swarm, and repel the approach of interlopers. Notwithstanding all our efforts, and very ingenious ones they were, we never, in a single instance, succeeded in procuring an allocation of original shares; and though we did now and then make a hit by purchase, we more frequently bought at a premium, and parted with our scrip at a discount. At the end of six months, we were not twenty pounds richer than before.

"This will never do," said Bob, as he sat one evening in my rooms compounding his second tumbler. "I thought we were living in an enlightened age; but I find I was mistaken. That brutal spirit of monopoly is still abroad and uncurbed. The principles of free-trade are utterly forgotten, or misunderstood. Else how comes it that David Spreul received but yesterday an allocation of two hundred shares in the Westermidden Junction; whilst your application and mine, for a thousand each, were overlooked? Is this a state of things to be tolerated? Why should he, with his fifty thousand pounds, receive a slapping premium, whilst our three hundred of available capital remains unrepresented? The fact is monstrous,
and demands the immediate and serious interference of the legislature."

"It is a burning shame," said I, fully alive to the manifold advantages of a premium.

"I'll tell you what, Dunshunner," rejoined M'Corkindale, "it's no use going on in this way. We haven't shown half pluck enough. These fellows consider us as snobs, because we don't take the bull by the horns. Now's the time for a bold stroke. The public are quite ready to subscribe for anything--and we'll start a railway for ourselves."

"Start a railway with three hundred pounds of capital!"

"Pshaw, man! you don't know what you're talking about--we've a great deal more capital than that. Have not I told you seventy times over, that everything a man has--his coat, his hat, the tumblers he drinks from, nay, his very corporeal existence--is absolute marketable capital? What do you call that fourteen-gallon cask, I should like to know?"

"A compound of hoops and staves, containing about a quart and a half of spirits--you have effectually accounted for the rest."

"Then it has gone to the fund of profit and loss, that's all. Never let me hear you sport those old theories again. Capital is indestructible, as I am ready to prove to you any day, in half an hour. But let us sit down seriously to business. We are rich enough to pay for the advertisements, and that is all we need care for in the mean time. The public is sure to step in, and bear us out handsomely with the rest."

"But where in the face of the habitable globe shall the railway be? England is out of the question, and I hardly know a spot in the Lowlands that is not occupied already."

"What do you say to a Spanish scheme--the Alcantara Union? Hang me if I know whether Alcantara is in Spain or Portugal; but nobody else does, and the one is quite as good as the other. Or what would you think of the Palermo Railway, with a branch to the sulphur mines?--that would be popular in the North--or the Pyrenees Direct? They would all go to a premium."

"I must confess I should prefer a line at home."

"Well, then, why not try the Highlands? There must be lots of traffic there in the shape of sheep, grouse, and Cockney tourists, not to mention salmon and other et-ceteras. Couldn't we tip them a railway somewhere in the west?"

"There's Glenmutchkin, for instance----"

"Capital, my dear fellow! Glorious! By Jove, first-rate!" shouted Bob in an ecstasy of delight. "There's a distillery there, you know, and a fishing-village at the foot--at least there used to be six years ago, when I was living with the exciseman. There may be some bother about the population, though. The
last laird shipped every mother's son of the aboriginal Celts to America; but, after all, that's not of much consequence. I see the whole thing! Unrivalled scenery--stupendous waterfalls--herds of black cattle--spot where Prince Charles Edward met Macgrugar of Glengrugar and his clan! We could not possibly have lighted on a more promising place. Hand us over that sheet of paper, like a good fellow, and a pen. There is no time to be lost, and the sooner we get out the prospectus the better."

"But, heaven bless you, Bob, there's a great deal to be thought of first. Who are we to get for a Provisional Committee?"

"That's very true," said Bob, musingly. "We must treat them to some respectable names, that is, good sounding ones. I'm afraid there is little chance of our producing a Peer to begin with?"

"None whatever--unless we could invent one, and that's hardly safe--Burke's Peerage has gone through too many editions. Couldn't we try the Dormants?"

"That would be rather dangerous in the teeth of the standing orders. But what do you say to a baronet? There's Sir Polloxfen Tremens. He got himself served the other day to a Nova Scotia baronetcy, with just as much title as you or I have; and he has sported the riband, and dined out on the strength of it ever since. He'll join us at once, for he has not a sixpence to lose."

"Down with him, then," and we headed the Provisional list with the pseudo Orange-tawny.

"Now," said Bob, "it's quite indispensable, as this is a Highland line, that we should put forward a Chief or two. That has always a great effect upon the English, whose feudal notions are rather of the mistiest, and principally derived from Waverley."

"Why not write yourself down as the Laird of M'Corkindale?" said I. "I daresay you would not be negatived by a counter-claim."

"That would hardly do," replied Bob, "as I intend to be Secretary. After all, what's the use of thinking about it? Here goes for an extempore Chief;" and the villain wrote down the name of Tavish M'Tavish of Invertavish.

"I say, though," said I, "we must have a real Highlander on the list. If we go on this way, it will become a Justiciary matter."

"You're devilish scrupulous, Gus," said Bob, who, if left to himself, would have stuck in the names of the heathen gods and goddesses, or borrowed his directors from the Ossianic chronicles, rather than have delayed the prospectus. "Where the mischief are we to find the men? I can think of no others likely to go the whole hog; can you?"

"I don't know a single Celt in Glasgow except old M'Closkie, the drunken porter at the corner of Jamaica Street."
"He's the very man! I suppose, after the manner of his tribe, he will do anything for a pint of whisky. But what shall we call him? Jamaica Street, I fear, will hardly do for a designation."

"Call him THE M'CLOSKIE. It will be sonorous in the ears of the Saxon!"

"Bravo!" and another Chief was added to the roll of the clans.

"Now," said Bob, "we must put you down. Recollect, all the management--that is, the allocation--will be intrusted to you. Augustus--you haven't a middle name, I think?--well, then, suppose we interpolate 'Reginald;' it has a smack of the Crusades. Augustus Reginald Dunshunner, Esq. of--where, in the name of Munchausen!"

"I'm sure I don't know. I never had any land beyond the contents of a flower-pot. Stay--I rather think I have a superiority somewhere about Paisley."

"Just the thing," cried Bob. "It's heritable property, and therefore titular. What's the denomination?"

"St Mirrens."

"Beautiful! Dunshunner of St Mirrens, I give you joy! Had you discovered that a little sooner--and I wonder you did not think of it--we might both of us have had lots of allocations. These are not the times to conceal hereditary distinctions. But now comes the serious work. We must have one or two men of known wealth upon the list. The chaff is nothing without a decoy-bird. Now, can't you help me with a name?"

"In that case," said I, "the game is up, and the whole scheme exploded. I would as soon undertake to evoke the Ghost of Croesus."

"Dunshunner," said Bob very seriously, "to be a man of information, you are possessed of marvellous few resources. I am quite ashamed of you. Now listen to me. I have thought deeply upon this subject, and am quite convinced that, with some little trouble, we may secure the co-operation of a most wealthy and influential body--one, too, that is generally supposed to have stood aloof from all speculation of the kind, and whose name would be a tower of strength in the moneyed quarters. I allude," continued Bob, reaching across for the kettle, "to the great Dissenting Interest."

"The what?" cried I, aghast.

"The great Dissenting Interest. You can't have failed to observe the row they have lately been making about Sunday travelling and education. Old Sam Sawley, the coffin-maker, is their principal spokesman here; and wherever he goes the rest will follow, like a flock of sheep bounding after a patriarchal ram. I propose, therefore, to wait upon him to-morrow, and request his co-operation in a scheme which is not only to prove profitable, but to make head against the lax principles of the present age. Leave me alone to tickle him. I consider his name, and those of one or two others belonging to the same
meeting-house--fellows with bank-stock, and all sorts of tin, as perfectly secure. These dissenters smell a premium from an almost incredible distance. We can fill up the rest of the committee with ciphers, and the whole thing is done."

"But the engineer--we must announce such an officer as a matter of course."

"I never thought of that," said Bob. "Couldn't we hire a fellow from one of the steamboats?"

"I fear that might get us into trouble: You know there are such things as gradients and sections to be prepared. But there's Watty Solder, the gas-fitter, who failed the other day. He's a sort of civil engineer by trade, and will jump at the proposal like a trout at the tail of a May fly."

"Agreed. Now, then, let's fix the number of shares. This is our first experiment, and I think we ought to be moderate. No sound political economist is avaricious. Let us say twelve thousand, at twenty pounds a-piece."

"So be it."

"Well, then, that's arranged. I'll see Sawley and the rest to-morrow; settle with Solder, and then write out the prospectus. You look in upon me in the evening, and we'll revise it together. Now, by your leave, let's have in the Welsh rabbit and another tumbler to drink success and prosperity to the Glenmutchkin Railway."

I confess that, when I rose on the morrow, with a slight headache and a tongue indifferently parched, I recalled to memory, not without perturbation of conscience, and some internal qualms, the conversation of the previous evening. I felt relieved, however, after two spoonfuls of carbonate of soda, and a glance at the newspaper, wherein I perceived the announcement of no less than four other schemes equally preposterous with our own. But, after all, what right had I to assume that the Glenmutchkin project would prove an ultimate failure? I had not a scrap of statistical information that might entitle me to form such an opinion. At any rate, Parliament, by substituting the Board of Trade as an initiating body of inquiry, had created a responsible tribunal, and freed us from the chance of obloquy. I saw before me a vision of six months' steady gambling, at manifest advantage, in the shares, before a report could possibly be pronounced, or our proceedings be in any way overhauled. Of course I attended that evening punctually at my friend M'Corkindale's. Bob was in high feather; for Sawley no sooner heard of the principles upon which the railway was to be conducted, and his own nomination as a director, than he gave in his adhesion, and promised his unflinching support to the uttermost. The Prospectus ran as follows:--

"DIRECT GLENMUTCHKIN RAILWAY. IN 12,000 SHARES OF £20 EACH. DEPOSIT £1 PER SHARE

Provisional Committee."
"The necessity of a direct line of Railway communication through the fertile and populous district known as the VALLEY of GLENMUTCHKIN, has been long felt and universally acknowledged. Independently of the surpassing grandeur of its mountain scenery, which shall immediately be referred to, and other considerations of even greater importance, GLENMUTCHKIN is known to the capitalist as the most important BREEDING STATION in the Highlands of Scotland, and indeed as the great emporium from which the southern markets are supplied. It has been calculated by a most eminent authority, that every acre in the strath is capable of rearing twenty head of cattle; and, as has been ascertained after a careful admeasurement, that there are not less than TWO HUNDRED THOUSAND improvable acres immediately contiguous to the proposed line of Railway, it may confidently be assumed that the number of cattle to be conveyed along the line will amount to FOUR MILLIONS annually, which, at the lowest estimate, would yield a revenue larger, in proportion to the capital subscribed, than that of any Railway as yet completed within the United Kingdom. From this estimate the traffic in Sheep and Goats, with which the mountains are literally covered, has been carefully excluded, it having been found quite impossible (from its extent) to compute the actual revenue to be drawn from that most important branch. It may, however, be roughly assumed as from seventeen to nineteen per cent upon the whole, after deduction of the working expenses.

"The population of Glenmutchkin is extremely dense. Its situation on the west coast has afforded it the means of direct communication with America, of which for many years the inhabitants have actively availed themselves. Indeed, the amount of exportation of live stock from this part of the Highlands to the Western continent, has more than once attracted the attention of Parliament. The Manufactures are large and comprehensive, and include the most famous distilleries in the world. The Minerals are most abundant, and amongst these may be reckoned quartz, porphyry, felspar, malachite, manganese, and basalt.

"At the foot of the valley, and close to the sea, lies the important village known as the CLACHAN of INVERSTARVE. It is supposed by various eminent antiquaries to have been the capital of the Picts, and, amongst the busy inroads of commercial prosperity, it still retains some interesting traces of its former grandeur. There is a large fishing station here, to which vessels from every nation resort, and the demand for foreign produce is daily and steadily increasing.

"As a sporting country Glenmutchkin is unrivalled; but it is by the tourists that its beauties will most greedily be sought. These consist of every combination which plastic nature can afford--cliffs of unusual magnitude and grandeur--waterfalls only second to the sublime cascades of Norway--woods,
which the bark is a remarkable valuable commodity. It need scarcely be added, to rouse the enthusiasm inseparable from this glorious glen, that here, in 1745, Prince Charles Edward Stuart, then in the zenith of his hopes, was joined by the brave Sir Grugar M'Grugar at the head of his devoted clan.

"The Railway will be twelve miles long, and can be completed within six months after the Act of Parliament is obtained. The gradients are easy, and the curves obtuse. There are no viaducts of any importance, and only four tunnels along the whole length of the line. The shortest of these does not exceed a mile and a half.

"In conclusion, the projectors of this Railway beg to state that they have determined, as a principle, to set their face AGAINST ALL SUNDAY TRAVELLING WHATSOEVER, and to oppose EVERY BILL which may hereafter be brought into Parliament, unless it shall contain a clause to that effect. It is also their intention to take up the cause of the poor and neglected STOKER, for whose accommodation, and social, moral, religious, and intellectual improvement, a large stock of evangelical tracts will speedily be required. Tenders of these, in quantities of not less than 12,000, may be sent in to the Interim Secretary. Shares must be applied for within ten days from the present date.

"By order of the Provisional Committee, "ROBT. M'CORKINDALE, Secretary."

"There!" said Bob, slapping down the prospectus on the table, with as much triumph as if it had been the original of Magna Charta--"What do you think of that? If it doesn't do the business effectually, I shall submit to be called a Dutchman. That last touch about the stoker will bring us in the subscriptions of the old ladies by the score."

"Very masterly, indeed," said I. "But who the deuce is Mhic-Mhac-vich-Induibh?"

"A bona fide chief, I assure you, though a little reduced: I picked him up upon the Broomielaw. His grandfather had an island somewhere to the west of the Hebrides; but it is not laid down in the maps."

"And the Captain of M'Alcohol?"

"A crack distiller."

"And the Factor for Glentumblers?"

"His principal customer. But, bless you, my dear St Mirrens! don't bother yourself any more about the committee. They are as respectable a set--on paper at least--as you would wish to see of a summer's morning, and the beauty of it is that they will give us no manner of trouble. Now about the allocation. You and I must restrict ourselves to a couple of thousand shares a-piece. That's only a third of the whole, but it won't do to be greedy."

"But, Bob, consider! Where on earth are we to find the money to pay up the deposits?"
"Can you, the principal director of the Glenmutchkin Railway, ask me, the secretary, such a question? Don't you know that any of the banks will give us tick to the amount 'of half the deposits.' All that is settled already, and you can get your two thousand pounds whenever you please merely for the signing of a bill. Sawley must get a thousand according to stipulation--Jobson, Heckles, and Grabbie, at least five hundred a-piece, and another five hundred, I should think, will exhaust the remaining means of the committee. So that, out of our whole stock, there remain just five thousand shares to be allocated to the speculative and evangelical public. My eyes! won't there be a scramble for them!"

Next day our prospectus appeared in the newspapers. It was read, canvassed, and generally approved of. During the afternoon, I took an opportunity of looking into the Tontine, and whilst under shelter of the Glasgow Herald, my ears were solaced with such ejaculations as the following:--

"I say, Jimsy, hae ye seen this grand new prospectus for a railway tae Glenmutchkin?"

"Ay--it looks no that ill. The Hieland lairds are pitting their best fit foremost. Will ye apply for shares?"

"I think I'll tak' twa hundred. Wha's Sir Polloxfen Tremens?"

"He'll be yin o' the Ayrshire folk. He used to rin horses at the Paisley races."

("The devil he did!" thought I.)

"D'ye ken ony o' the directors, Jimsy?"

"I ken Sawley fine. Ye may depend on't, it's a gude thing if he's in't, for he's a howkin' body."

"Then it's sure to gae up. What prem. d'ye think it will bring?"

"Twa pund a share, and maybe mair."

"'Od, I'll apply for three hundred!"

"Heaven bless you, my dear countrymen!" thought I as I sallied forth to refresh myself with a basin of soup, "do but maintain this liberal and patriotic feeling--this thirst for national improvement, internal communication, and premiums--a short while longer, and I know whose fortune will be made."

On the following morning my breakfast-table was covered with shoals of letters, from fellows whom I scarcely ever had spoken to--or who, to use a franker phraseology, had scarcely ever condescended to speak to me--entreating my influence as a director to obtain them shares in the new undertaking. I never bore malice in my life, so I chalked them down, without favouritism, for a certain proportion. Whilst engaged in this charitable work, the door flew open, and M'Corkindale, looking utterly haggard with excitement, rushed in.
"You may buy an estate whenever you please, Dunshunner," cried he, "the world's gone perfectly mad! I have been to Blazes the broker, and he tells me that the whole amount of the stock has been subscribed for four times over already, and he has not yet got in the returns from Edinburgh and Liverpool!"

"Are they good names though, Bob--sure cards--none of your M'Closkies, and M'Alcohols?"

"The first names in the city, I assure you, and most of them holders for investment. I wouldn't take ten millions for their capital."

"Then the sooner we close the list the better."

"I think so too. I suspect a rival company will be out before long. Blazes says the shares are selling already conditionally on allotment, at seven-and-sixpence premium."

"The deuce they are! I say, Bob, since we have the cards in our hands, would it not be wise to favour them with a few hundreds at that rate? A bird in the hand, you know, is worth two in the bush, eh?"

"I know no such maxim in political economy," replied the secretary. "Are you mad, Dunshunner? How are the shares ever to go up, if it gets wind that the directors are selling already? Our business just now, is to bull the line, not to bear it; and if you will trust me, I shall show them such an operation on the ascending scale, as the Stock Exchange has not witnessed for this long and many a day. Then, to-morrow, I shall advertise in the papers that the committee, having received applications for ten times the amount of stock, have been compelled, unwillingly, to close the lists. That will be a slap in the face to the dilatory gentlemen, and send up the shares like wildfire."

Bob was right. No sooner did the advertisement appear, than a simultaneous groan was uttered by some hundreds of disappointed speculators, who with unwonted and unnecessary caution had been anxious to see their way a little before committing themselves to our splendid enterprise. In consequence, they rushed into the market, with intense anxiety to make what terms they could at the earliest stage, and the seven-and-sixpence premium was doubled in the course of a forenoon.

The allocation passed over very peaceably. Sawley, Heckles, Jobson, Grabbie, and the Captain of M'Alcohol, besides myself, attended, and took part in the business. We were also threatened with the presence of the M'Closkie and Vich-Induibh; but M'Corkindale, entertaining some reasonable doubts as to the effect which their corporeal appearance might have upon the representatives of the dissenting interest, had taken the precaution to get them snugly housed in a tavern, where an unbounded supply of gratuitous Ferintosh deprived us of the benefit of their experience. We, however, allotted them twenty shares a-piece. Sir Polloxfen Tremens sent a handsome, though rather illegible letter of apology, dated from an island in Lochlomond, where he was said to be detained on particular business.

Mr Sawley, who officiated as our chairman, was kind enough, before parting, to pass a very flattering eulogium upon the excellence and candour of all the preliminary arrangements. It would now, he said,
go forth to the public that this line was not, like some others he could mention, a mere bubble, emanating from the stank of private interest, but a solid, lasting superstructure, based upon the principles of sound return for capital, and serious evangelical truth (hear, hear). The time was fast approaching, when the gravestone, with the words "HIC OBIIT" chiselled upon it, would be placed at the head of all the other lines which rejected the grand opportunity of conveying education to the stoker. The stoker, in his (Mr Sawley's) opinion, had a right to ask the all-important question, "Am I not a man and a brother?" (Cheers). Much had been said and written lately about a work called *Tracts for the Times*. With the opinions contained in that publication he was not conversant, as it was conducted by persons of another community from that to which he (Mr Sawley) had the privilege to belong. But he hoped very soon, under the auspices of the Glenmutchkin Railway Company, to see a new periodical established, under the title of *Tracts for the Trains*. He never for a moment would relax his efforts to knock a nail into the coffin, which, he might say, was already made, and measured, and cloth-covered for the reception of all establishments; and with these sentiments, and the conviction that the shares must rise, could it be doubted that he would remain a fast friend to the interests of this Company for ever? (Much cheering.)

After having delivered this address, Mr Sawley affectionately squeezed the hands of his brother directors, and departed, leaving several of us much overcome. As, however, M'Corkindale had told me that every one of Sawley's shares had been disposed of in the market the day before, I felt less compunction at having refused to allow that excellent man an extra thousand beyond the amount he had applied for, notwithstanding of his broadest hints, and even private entreaties.

"Confound the greedy hypocrite!" said Bob; "does he think we shall let him Burke the line for nothing? No--no! I let him go to the brokers and buy his shares back, if he thinks they are likely to rise. I'll be bound he has made a cool five hundred out of them already."

On the day which succeeded the allocation, the following entry appeared in the Glasgow share-lists. "Direct Glenmutchkin Railway 15s. 15s. 6d. 15s. 6d. 16s. 15s. 6d. 16s. 6d. 16s. 6d. 16s. 17s. 18s. 18s. 19s. 6d. 21s. 21s. 22s. 6d. 24s. 25s. 6d. 27s. 29s. 29s. 6d. 30s. 31s. pm."

"They might go higher, and they ought to go higher," said Bob musingly; "but there's not much more stock to come and go upon, and these two share-sharks, Jobson and Grabbie, I know, will be in the market to-morrow. We must not let them have the whip-hand of us. I think upon the whole, Dunshunner, though it's letting them go dog cheap, that we ought to sell half our shares at the present premium, whilst there is a certainty of getting it."

"Why not sell the whole? I'm sure I have no objections to part with every stiver of the scrip on such terms."

"Perhaps," said Bob, "upon general principles you may be right; but then remember that we have a vested interest in the line."

"Vested interest be hanged!"
"That's very well—at the same time it is no use to kill your salmon in a hurry. The bulls have done their work pretty well for us, and we ought to keep something on hand for the bears; they are snuffing at it already. I could almost swear that some of those fellows who have sold to-day are working for a time-bargain."

We accordingly got rid of a couple of thousand shares, the proceeds of which not only enabled us to discharge the deposit loan, but left us a material surplus. Under these circumstances, a two-handed banquet was proposed and unanimously carried, the commencement of which I distinctly remember, but am rather dubious as to the end. So many stories have lately been circulated to the prejudice of railway directors, that I think it my duty to state that this entertainment was scrupulously defrayed by ourselves, and not carried to account, either of the preliminary survey, or the expenses of the provisional committee.

Nothing effects so great a metamorphosis in the bearing of the outer man, as a sudden change of fortune. The anemone of the garden differs scarcely more from its unpretending prototype of the woods, than Robert M'Corkindale, Esq., Secretary and Projector of the Glenmutchkin Railway, differed from Bob M'Corkindale, the seedy frequenter of "The Crow." In the days of yore, men eyed the surtout--napless at the velvet collar, and preternaturally white at the seams--which Bob vouchsafed to wear, with looks of dim suspicion, as if some faint reminiscence, similar to that which is said to recall the memory of a former state of existence, suggested to them a notion that the garment had once been their own. Indeed, his whole appearance was then wonderfully second-hand. Now he had cast his slough. A most undeniable Taglioni, with trimmings just bordering upon frogs, gave dignity to his demeanour and twofold amplitude to his chest. The horn eyeglass was exchanged for one of purest gold, the dingy high-lows for well-waxed Wellingtons, the Paisley fogle for the fabric of the China loom. Moreover, he walked with a swagger, and affected in common conversation a peculiar dialect which he opined to be the purest English, but which no one--except a bagman--could be reasonably expected to understand. His pockets were invariably crammed with share-lists; and he quoted, if he did not comprehend, the money article from the *Times*. This sort of assumption, though very ludicrous in itself, goes down wonderfully. Bob gradually became a sort of authority, and his opinions got quoted on 'Change. He was no ass, notwithstanding his peculiarities, and made good use of his opportunity.

For myself, I bore my new dignities with an air of modest meekness. A certain degree of starchness is indispensable for a railway director, if he means to go forward in his high calling and prosper; he must abandon all juvenile eccentricities, and aim at the appearance of a decided enemy to free trade in the article of Wild Oats. Accordingly, as the first step towards respectability, I eschewed coloured waistcoats, and gave out that I was a marrying man. No man under forty, unless he is a positive idiot, will stand forth as a XXXX theoretical bachelor. It is all nonsense to say that there is anything unpleasant in being courted. Attention, whether from male or female, tickles the vanity; and although I have a reasonable, and, I hope, not unwholesome regard for the gratification of my other appetites, I confess that this same vanity is by far the most poignant of the whole. I therefore surrendered myself freely to the soft allurements thrown in my way by such matronly denizens of Glasgow as were possessed of stock in the shape of marriageable daughters; and walked the more readily into their toils, because every party, though nominally for the purposes of tea, wound up with a hot supper, and
something hotter still by way of assisting the digestion.

I don't know whether it was my determined conduct at the allocation, my territorial title, or a most exaggerated idea of my circumstances, that worked upon the mind of Mr Sawley. Possibly it was a combination of the three; but sure enough few days had elapsed before I received a formal card of invitation to a tea and serious conversation. Now serious conversation is a sort of thing that I never shone in, possibly because my early studies were framed in a different direction; but as I really was unwilling to offend the respectable coffin-maker, and as I found that the Captain of M'Alcohol—a decided trump in his way—had also received a summons, I notified my acceptance.

M'Alcohol and I went together. The Captain, an enormous brawny Celt, with superhuman whiskers, and a shock of the fieriest hair, had figged himself out, *more majorum*, in the full Highland costume. I never saw Rob Roy on the stage look half so dignified or ferocious. He glittered from head to foot, with dirk, pistol, and skean-dhu, and at least a hundred-weight of cairngorms cast a prismatic glory around his person. I felt quite abashed beside him.

We were ushered into Mr Sawley's drawing-room. Round the walls, and at considerable distances from each other, were seated about a dozen characters, male and female, all of them dressed in sable, and wearing countenances of woe. Sawley advanced, and wrung me by the hand with so piteous an expression of visage, that I could not help thinking some awful catastrophe had just befallen his family.

"You are welcome, Mr Dunshunner—welcome to my humble tabernacle. Let me present you to Mrs Sawley"—and a lady, who seemed to have bathed in the Yellow Sea, rose from her seat, and favoured me with a profound curtsy.

"My daughter—Miss Selina Sawley."

I felt in my brain the scorching glance of the two darkest eyes it ever was my fortune to behold, as the beauteous Selina looked up from the perusal of her handkerchief hem. It was a pity that the other features were not corresponding; for the nose was flat, and the mouth of such dimensions, that a Harlequin might have jumped down it with impunity—but the eyes were splendid.

In obedience to a sign from the hostess, I sank into a chair beside Selina; and not knowing exactly what to say, hazarded some observation about the weather.

"Yes, it is indeed a suggestive season. How deeply, Mr Dunshunner, we ought to feel the pensive progress of autumn towards a soft and premature decay! I always think, about this time of the year, that nature is falling into a consumption!"

"To be sure, ma'am," said I, rather taken aback by this style of colloquy, "the trees are looking devilishly hectic."
"Ah, you have remarked that too! Strange! it was but yesterday that I was wandering through Kelvin Grove, and as the phantom breeze brought down the withered foliage from the spray, I thought how probable it was that they might ere long rustle over young and glowing hearts deposited prematurely in the tomb!"

This, which struck me as a very passable imitation of Dickens's pathetic writings, was a poser. In default of language, I looked Miss Sawley straight in the face, and attempted a substitute for a sigh. I was rewarded with a tender glance.

"Ah!" said she, "I see you are a congenial spirit. How delightful, and yet how rare it is to meet with any one who thinks in unison with yourself! Do you ever walk in the Necropolis, Mr Dunshunner? It is my favourite haunt of a morning. There we can wean ourselves, as it were, from life, and, beneath the melancholy yew and cypress, anticipate the setting star. How often there have I seen the procession—the funeral of some very, very little child"

"Selina, my love," said Mrs Sawley, "have the kindness to ring for the cookies."

I, as in duty bound, started up to save the fair enthusiast the trouble, and was not sorry to observe my seat immediately occupied by a very cadaverous gentleman, who was evidently jealous of the progress I was rapidly making. Sawley, with an air of great mystery, informed me that this was a Mr Dalgleish of Raxmathrapple, the representative of an ancient Scottish family who claimed an important heritable office. The name, I thought, was familiar to me, but there was something in the appearance of Mr Dalgleish which, notwithstanding the smiles of Miss Selina, rendered a rivalship in that quarter utterly out of the question.

I hate injustice, so let me do due honour in description to the Sawley banquet. The tea-urn most literally corresponded to its name. The table was decked out with divers platters, containing seed-cakes cut into rhomboids, almond biscuits, and ratafia drops. Also, on the sideboard, there were two salvers, each of which contained a congregation of glasses, filled with port and sherry. The former fluid, as I afterwards ascertained, was of the kind advertised as "curious," and proffered for sale at the reasonable rate of sixteen shillings per dozen. The banquet, on the whole, was rather peculiar than enticing; and, for the life of me, I could not divest myself of the idea that the selfsame viands had figured, not long before, as funeral refreshments at a dirgie. No such suspicion seemed to cross the mind of M'Alcohol, who hitherto had remained uneasily surveying his nails in a corner, but at the first symptom of food started forwards, and was in the act of making a clean sweep of the china, when Sawley proposed the singular preliminary of a hymn.

The hymn was accordingly sung. I am thankful to say it was such a one as I never heard before, or expect to hear again; and unless it was composed by the Reverend Saunders Peden in an hour of paroxysm on the moors, I cannot conjecture the author. After this original symphony, tea was discussed, and after tea, to my amazement, more hot brandy-and-water than I ever remember to have seen circulated at the most convivial party. Of course this effected a radical change in the spirits and conversation of the circle. It was again my lot to be placed by the side of the fascinating Selina, whose
sentimentality gradually thawed away beneath the influence of sundry sips, which she accepted with a delicate reluctance. This time Dalgleish of Raxmathrapple had not the remotest chance. M'Alcohol got furious, sang Gaelic songs, and even delivered a sermon in genuine Erse, without incurring a rebuke; whilst, for my own part, I must needs confess that I waxed unnecessarily amorous, and the last thing I recollect was the pressure of Mr Sawley's hand at the door, as he denominated me his dear boy, and hoped I would soon come back and visit Mrs Sawley and Selina. The recollection of these passages next morning was the surest antidote to my return.

Three weeks had elapsed, and still the Glenmutchkin Railway shares were at a premium, though rather lower than when we sold. Our engineer, Watty Solder, returned from his first survey of the line, along with an assistant who really appeared to have some remote glimmerings of the science and practice of mensuration. It seemed, from a verbal report, that the line was actually practicable; and the survey would have been completed in a very short time--"If," according to the account of Solder, "there had been ae hoos in the glen. But ever sin' the distillery stoppit--and that was twa year last Martinmas--there wasna a hole whaur a Christian could lay his head, muckle less get white sugar to his toddy, forbye the change-house at the clachan; and the auld luckie that keepit it was sair forfochten wi' the palsy, and maist in the dead-thraws. There was naebody else living within twal miles o' the line, barring a taxman, a lamiter, and a bauldie."

We had some difficulty in preventing Mr Solder from making this report open and patent to the public, which premature disclosure might have interfered materially with the preparation of our traffic tables, not to mention the marketable value of the shares. We therefore kept him steadily at work out of Glasgow, upon a very liberal allowance, to which, apparently, he did not object.

"Dunshunner," said M'Corkindale to me one day, "I suspect that there is something going on about our railway more than we are aware of. Have you observed that the shares are preternaturally high just now?"

"So much the better. Let's sell."

"I did so this morning--both yours and mine, at two pounds ten shillings premium."

"The deuce you did! Then we're out of the whole concern."

"Not quite. If my suspicions are correct, there's a good deal more money yet to be got from the speculation. Somebody has been bulling the stock without orders; and, as they can have no information which we are not perfectly up to, depend upon it, it is done for a purpose. I suspect Sawley and his friends. They have never been quite happy since the allocation; and I caught him yesterday pumping our broker in the back shop. We'll see in a day or two. If they are beginning a bearing operation, I know how to catch them."

And, in effect, the bearing operation commenced. Next day, heavy sales were effected for delivery in three weeks; and the stock, as if water-logged, began to sink. The same thing continued for the
following two days, until the premium became nearly nominal. In the mean time, Bob and I, in conjunction with two leading capitalists whom we let into the secret, bought up steadily every share that was offered; and at the end of a fortnight we found that we had purchased rather more than double the amount of the whole original stock. Sawley and his disciples, who, as M'Corkindale suspected, were at the bottom of the whole transaction, having beared to their heart's content, now came into the market to purchase, in order to redeem their engagements. The following extracts from the weekly share-lists will show the result of their endeavours to regain their lost position:--


GLENMUTCHKIN RAIL., £1 paid, 1-1/8 | 2-1/4 | 4-3/8 | 7-1/2 | 10-3/4 | 15-3/8 | 17,

and Monday was the day of delivery.

I have no means of knowing in what frame of mind Mr Sawley spent the Sunday, or whether he had recourse for mental consolation to Peden; but on Monday morning he presented himself at my door in full funeral costume, with about a quarter of a mile of crape swathed round his hat, black gloves, and a countenance infinitely more doleful than if he had been attending the interment of his beloved wife.

"Walk in, Mr Sawley," said I cheerfully. "What a long time it is since I have had the pleasure of seeing you--too long indeed for brother directors. How are Mrs Sawley and Miss Selina--won't you take a cup of coffee?"

"Grass, sir, grass!" said Mr Sawley, with a sigh like the groan of a furnace-bellows. "We are all flowers of the oven--weak, erring creatures, every one of us. Ah! Mr Dunshunner! you have been a great stranger at Lykewake Terrace!"

"Take a muffin, Mr Sawley. Anything new in the railway world?"

"Ah, my dear sir--my good Mr Augustus Reginald--I wanted to have some serious conversation with you on that very point. I am afraid there is something far wrong indeed in the present state of our stock."

"Why, to be sure it is high; but that, you know, is a token of the public confidence in the line. After all, the rise is nothing compared to that of several English railways; and individually, I suppose, neither of us have any reason to complain."

"I don't like it," said Sawley, watching me over the margin of his coffee-cup. "I don't like it. It savours too much of gambling for a man of my habits. Selina, who is a sensible girl, has serious qualms on the subject."

"Then why not get out of it? I have no objection to run the risk, and if you like to transact with me, I will pay you ready money for every share you have at the present market price."
Sawley writhed uneasily in his chair.

"Will you sell me five hundred, Mr Sawley? Say the word and it is a bargain."

"A time bargain?" quavered the coffin-maker.

"No. Money down, and scrip handed over."

"I--I can't. The fact is, my dear young friend, I have sold all my stock already!"

"Then permit me to ask, Mr Sawley, what possible objection you can have to the present aspect of affairs? You do not surely suppose that we are going to issue new shares and bring down the market, simply because you have realised at a handsome premium?"

"A handsome premium! O Lord!" moaned Sawley.

"Why, what did you get for them?"

"Four, three, and two and a half."

"A very considerable profit indeed," said I; "and you ought to be abundantly thankful. We shall talk this matter over at another time, Mr Sawley, but just now I must beg you to excuse me. I have a particular engagement this morning with my broker--rather a heavy transaction to settle--and so"

"It's no use beating about the bush any longer," said Mr Sawley in an excited tone, at the same time dashing down his crape-covered castor on the floor. "Did you ever see a ruined man with a large family? Look at me, Mr Dunshunner--I'm one, and you've done it!"

"Mr Sawley! are you in your senses?"

"That depends on circumstances. Haven't you been buying stock lately?"

"I am glad to say I have--two thousand Glenmutchkins, I think, and this is the day of delivery."

"Well, then--can't you see how the matter stands? It was I who sold them!"

"Well!"

"Mother of Moses, sir! don't you see I'm ruined?"

"By no means--but you must not swear. I pay over the money for your scrip, and you pocket a premium. It seems to me a very simple transaction."
"But I tell you I haven't got the scrip!" cried Sawley, gnashing his teeth, whilst the cold beads of perspiration gathered largely on his brow.

"That is very unfortunate! Have you lost it?"

"No!--the devil tempted me, and I oversold!"

There was a very long pause, during which I assumed an aspect of serious and dignified rebuke.

"Is it possible?" said I in a low tone, after the manner of Kean's offended fathers. "What! you, Mr Sawley--the stoker's friend--the enemy of gambling--the father of Selina--condescend to so equivocal a transaction? You amaze me! But I never was the man to press heavily on a friend"--here Sawley brightened up--"your secret is safe with me, and it shall be your own fault if it reaches the ears of the Session. Pay me over the difference at the present market price, and I release you of your obligation."

"Then I'm in the Gazette, that's all," said Sawley doggedly, "and a wife and nine beautiful babes upon the parish! I had hoped other things from you, Mr Dunshunner--I thought you and Selina"--

"Nonsense, man! Nobody goes into the Gazette just now--it will be time enough when the general crash comes. Out with your cheque-book, and write me an order for four-and-twenty thousand. Confound fractions! in these days one can afford to be liberal."

"I haven't got it," said Sawley. "You have no idea how bad our trade has been of late, for nobody seems to think of dying. I have not sold a gross of coffins this fortnight. But I'll tell you what--I'll give you five thousand down in cash, and ten thousand in shares--further I can't go."

"Now, Mr Sawley," said I, "I may be blamed by worldly-minded persons for what I am going to do; but I am a man of principle, and feel deeply for the situation of your amiable wife and family. I bear no malice, though it is quite clear that you intended to make me the sufferer. Pay me fifteen thousand over the counter, and we cry quits for ever."

"Won't you take Camlachie Cemetery shares? They are sure to go up."

"No!"

"Twelve Hundred Cowcaddens' Water, with an issue of new stock next week?"

"Not if they disseminated the Ganges!"

"A thousand Ramshorn Gas--four per cent guaranteed until the act?"

"Not if they promised twenty, and melted down the sun in their retort!"
"Blawweary Iron? Best spec. going."

"No, I tell you once for all! If you don't like my offer--and it is an uncommonly liberal one--say so, and I'll expose you this afternoon upon 'Change."

"Well, then--there's a cheque. But may the"----

"Stop, sir! Any such profane expressions, and I shall insist upon the original bargain. So, then--now we're quits. I wish you a very good-morning, Mr Sawley, and better luck next time. Pray remember me to your amiable family."

The door had hardly closed upon the discomfited coffin-maker, and I was still in the preliminary steps of an extempore *pas seul*, intended as the outward demonstration of exceeding inward joy, when Bob M'Corkindale entered. I told him the result of the morning's conference.

"You have let him off too easily," said the Political Economist. "Had I been his creditor, I certainly should have sacked the shares into the bargain. There is nothing like rigid dealing between man and man."

"I am contented with moderate profits," said I; "besides, the image of Selina overcame me. How goes it with Jobson and Grabbie?"

"Jobson has paid, and Grabbie compounded. Heckles--may he die an evil death!--has repudiated, become a lame duck, and waddled; but no doubt his estate will pay a dividend."

"So, then, we are clear of the whole Glenmutchkin business, and at a handsome profit."

"A fair interest for the outlay of capital--nothing more. But I'm not quite done with the concern yet."

"How so? not another bearing operation?"

"No; that cock would hardly fight. But you forget that I am secretary to the company, and have a small account against them for services already rendered. I must do what I can to carry the bill through Parliament; and, as you have now sold your whole shares, I advise you to resign from the direction, go down straight to Glenmutchkin, and qualify yourself for a witness. We shall give you five guineas a-day, and pay all your expenses."

"Not a bad notion. But what has become of M'Closkie, and the other fellow with the jaw-breaking name?"

"Vich-Induibh? I have looked after their interests, as in duty bound, sold their shares at a large premium, and despatched them to their native hills on annuities."
"And Sir Polloxfen?"

"Died yesterday of spontaneous combustion."

As the company seemed breaking up, I thought I could not do better than take M'Corkindale's hint, and accordingly betook myself to Glenmutchkin, along with the Captain of M'Alcohol, and we quartered ourselves upon the Factor for Glentumblers. We found Watty Solder very shakey, and his assistant also lapsing into habits of painful inebriety. We saw little of them except of an evening, for we shot and fished the whole day, and made ourselves remarkably comfortable. By singular good-luck, the plans and sections were lodged in time, and the Board of Trade very handsomely reported in our favour, with a recommendation of what they were pleased to call "the Glenmutchkin system," and a hope that it might generally be carried out. What this system was, I never clearly understood; but, of course, none of us had any objections. This circumstance gave an additional impetus to the shares, and they once more went up. I was, however, too cautious to plunge a second time into Charybdis, but M'Corkindale did, and again emerged with plunder.

When the time came for the parliamentary contest, we all emigrated to London. I still recollect, with lively satisfaction, the many pleasant days we spent in the metropolis at the company's expense. There were just a neat fifty of us, and we occupied the whole of an hotel. The discussion before the committee was long and formidable. We were opposed by four other companies who patronised lines, of which the nearest was at least a hundred miles distant from Glenmutchkin; but as they founded their opposition upon dissent from "the Glenmutchkin system" generally, the committee allowed them to be heard. We fought for three weeks a most desperate battle, and might in the end have been victorious, had not our last antagonist, at the very close of his case, pointed out no less than seventy-three fatal errors in the parliamentary plan deposited by the unfortunate Solder. Why this was not done earlier, I never exactly understood; it may be, that our opponents, with gentlemanly consideration, were unwilling to curtail our sojourn in London--and their own. The drama was now finally closed, and after all preliminary expenses were paid, sixpence per share was returned to the holders upon surrender of their scrip.

Such is an accurate history of the Origin, Rise, Progress, and Fall of the Direct Glenmutchkin Railway. It contains a deep moral, if anybody has sense enough to see it; if not, I have a new project in my eye for next session, of which timely notice shall be given.

VANDERDECKEN'S MESSAGE HOME; OR, THE TENACITY OF NATURAL AFFECTION.

[MAGA. MAY 1821.]

Our ship, after touching at the Cape, went out again, and soon losing sight of the Table Mountain, began to be assailed by the impetuous attacks of the sea, which is well known to be more formidable there than in most parts of the known ocean. The day had grown dull and hazy, and the breeze, which had formerly blown fresh, now sometimes subsided almost entirely, and then recovering its strength, for a short time, and changing its direction, blew with temporary violence, and died away again, as if exercising a melancholy caprice. A heavy swell began to come from the south-east. Our sails flapped
against the masts, and the ship rolled from side to side, as heavily as if she had been water-logged. There was so little wind that she would not steer.

At two P.M. we had a squall, accompanied by thunder and rain. The seamen, growing restless, looked anxiously ahead. They said we would have a dirty night of it, and that it would not be worth while to turn into their hammocks. As the second mate was describing a gale he had encountered off Cape Race, Newfoundland, we were suddenly taken all aback, and the blast came upon us furiously. We continued to scud under a double-reefed mainsail and fore-topsail till dusk; but, as the sea ran high, the captain thought it safest to bring her to. The watch on deck consisted of four men, one of whom was appointed to keep a look-out ahead, for the weather was so hazy that we could not see two cables' length from the bows. This man, whose name was Tom Willis, went frequently to the bows, as if to observe something; and when the others called to him, inquiring what he was looking at, he would give no definite answer. They therefore went also to the bows, and appeared startled, and at first said nothing. But presently one of them cried, "William, go call the watch."

The seamen, having been asleep in their hammocks, murmured at this unseasonable summons, and called to know how it looked upon deck. To which Tom Willis replied, "Come up and see. What we are minding is not on deck, but ahead."

On hearing this, they ran up without putting on their jackets, and when they came to the bows there was a whispering.

One of them asked, "Where is she? I do not see her." To which another replied, "The last flash of lightning showed there was not a reef in one of her sails; but we, who know her history, know that all her canvass will never carry her into port."

By this time, the talking of the seamen had brought some of the passengers on deck. They could see nothing, however, for the ship was surrounded by thick darkness, and by the noise of the dashing waters, and the seamen evaded the questions that were put to them.

At this juncture the chaplain came on deck. He was a man of grave and modest demeanour, and was much liked among the seamen, who called him Gentle George. He overheard one of the men asking another, "If he had ever seen the Flying Dutchman before, and if he knew the story about her?" To which the other replied, "I have heard of her beating about in these seas. What is the reason she never reaches port?"

The first speaker replied, "They give different reasons for it, but my story is this: She was an Amsterdam vessel, and sailed from that port seventy years ago. Her master's name was Vanderdecken. He was a stanch seaman, and would have his own way, in spite of the devil. For all that, never a sailor under him had reason to complain; though how it is on board with them now, nobody knows;--the story is this, that in doubling the Cape, they were a long day trying to weather the Table Bay, which we saw this morning. However, the wind headed them, and went against them more and more, and Vanderdecken walked the deck, swearing at the wind. Just after sunset, a vessel spoke him, asking if he
did not mean to go into the bay that night. Vanderdecken replied, 'May I be eternally d--d if I do, though I should beat about here till the day of judgment!' And to be sure, Vanderdecken never did go into that bay; for it is believed that he continues to beat about in these seas still, and will do so long enough. This vessel is never seen but with foul weather along with her."

To which another replied, "We must keep clear of her. They say that her captain mans his jolly boat, when a vessel comes in sight, and tries hard to get alongside, to put letters on board, but no good comes to them who have communication with him."

Tom Willis said, "There is such a sea between us at present, as should keep us safe from such visits."

To which the other answered: "We cannot trust to that, if Vanderdecken sends out his men."

Some of this conversation having been overheard by the passengers, there was a commotion among them. In the mean time, the noise of the waves against the vessel could scarcely be distinguished from the sounds of the distant thunder. The wind had extinguished the light in the binnacle, where the compass was, and no one could tell which way the ship's head lay. The passengers were afraid to ask questions, lest they should augment the secret sensation of fear which chilled every heart, or learn any more than they already knew. For while they attributed their agitation of mind to the state of the weather, it was sufficiently perceptible that their alarms also arose from a cause which they did not acknowledge.

The lamp at the binnacle being relighted, they perceived that the ship lay closer to the wind than she had hitherto done, and the spirits of the passengers were somewhat revived.

Nevertheless, neither the tempestuous state of the atmosphere nor the thunder had ceased, and soon a vivid flash of lightning showed the waves tumbling around us, and, in the distance, the Flying Dutchman scudding furiously before the wind, under a press of canvass. The sight was but momentary, but it was sufficient to remove all doubt from the minds of the passengers. One of the men cried aloud, "There she goes, topgallants and all."

The chaplain had brought up his prayer-book, in order that he might draw from thence something to fortify and tranquillise the minds of the rest. Therefore, taking his seat near the binnacle, so that the light shone upon the white leaves of the book, he, in a solemn tone, read out the service for those distressed at sea. The sailors stood round with folded arms, and looked as if they thought it would be of little use. But this served to occupy the attention of those on deck for a while.

In the mean time the flashes of lightning, becoming less vivid, showed nothing else, far or near, but the billows weltering round the vessel. The sailors seemed to think that they had not yet seen the worst, but confined their remarks and prognostications to their own circle.

At this time, the captain, who had hitherto remained in his berth, came on deck, and, with a gay and unconcerned air, inquired what was the cause of the general dread. He said he thought they had already
seen the worst of the weather, and wondered that his men had raised such a hubbub about a capful of wind. Mention being made of the Flying Dutchman, the captain laughed. He said, "he would like very much to see any vessel carrying topgallant-sails in such a night, for it would be a sight worth looking at." The chaplain, taking him by one of the buttons of his coat, drew him aside, and appeared to enter into serious conversation with him.

While they were talking together, the captain was heard to say, "Let us look to our own ship, and not mind such things;" and accordingly, he sent a man aloft, to see if all was right about the fore-topsail yard, which was chafing the mast with a loud noise.

It was Tom Willis who went up; and when he came down, he said that all was tight, and that he hoped it would soon get clearer; and that they would see no more of what they were most afraid of.

The captain and first mate were heard laughing loudly together, while the chaplain observed, that it would be better to repress such unseasonable gaiety. The second mate, a native of Scotland, whose name was Duncan Saunderson, having attended one of the University classes at Aberdeen, thought himself too wise to believe all that the sailors said, and took part with the captain. He jestingly told Tom Willis to borrow his grandam's spectacles the next time he was sent to keep a look-out ahead. Tom walked sulkily away, muttering, that he would nevertheless trust to his own eyes till morning, and accordingly took his station at the bow, and appeared to watch as attentively as before.

The sound of talking soon ceased, for many returned to their berths, and we heard nothing but the clanking of the ropes upon the masts, and the bursting of the billows ahead, as the vessel successively took the seas.

But after a considerable interval of darkness, gleams of lightning began to reappear. Tom Willis suddenly called out, "Vanderdecken, again! Vanderdecken, again! I see them letting down a boat."

All who were on deck ran to the bows. The next flash of lightning shone far and wide over the raging sea, and showed us not only the Flying Dutchman at a distance, but also a boat coming from her with four men. The boat was within two cables' length of our ship's side.

The man who first saw her ran to the captain, and asked whether they should hail her or not. The captain, walking about in great agitation, made no reply. The first mate cried, "Who's going to heave a rope to that boat?" The men looked at each other without offering to do anything. The boat had come very near the chains, when Tom Willis called out, "What do you want? or what devil has blown you here in such weather?" A piercing voice from the boat replied in English, "We want to speak with your captain." The captain took no notice of this, and Vanderdecken's boat having come close alongside, one of the men came upon deck, and appeared like a fatigued and weatherbeaten seaman, holding some letters in his hand.

Our sailors all drew back. The chaplain, however, looking steadfastly upon him, went forward a few steps, and asked, "What is the purpose of this visit?"
The stranger replied, "We have long been kept here by foul weather, and Vanderdecken wishes to send these letters to his friends in Europe."

Our captain now came forward, and said as firmly as he could, "I wish Vanderdecken would put his letters on board of any other vessel rather than mine."

The stranger replied, "We have tried many a ship, but most of them refuse our letters."

Upon which, Tom Willis muttered, "It will be best for us if we do the same, for they say there is sometimes a sinking weight in your paper."

The stranger took no notice of this, but asked where we were from. On being told that we were from Portsmouth, he said, as if with strong feeling, "Would that you had rather been from Amsterdam. Oh that we saw it again!—We must see our friends again." When he uttered these words, the men who were in the boat below wrung their hands, and cried in a piercing tone, in Dutch, "Oh that we saw it again! We have been long here beating about: but we must see our friends again."

The chaplain asked the stranger, "How long have you been at sea?"

He replied, "We have lost our count; for our almanac was blown overboard. Our ship, you see, is there still; so why should you ask how long we have been at sea; for Vanderdecken only wishes to write home and comfort his friends."

To which the chaplain replied, "Your letters, I fear, would be of no use in Amsterdam, even if they were delivered, for the persons to whom they are addressed are probably no longer to be found there, except under very ancient green turf in the churchyard."

The unwelcome stranger then wrung his hands and appeared to weep, and replied: "It is impossible. We cannot believe you. We have been long driving about here, but country nor relations cannot be so easily forgotten. There is not a raindrop in the air but feels itself kindred to all the rest, and they fall back into the sea to meet with each other again. How then can kindred blood be made to forget where it came from? Even our bodies are part of the ground of Holland; and Vanderdecken says, if he once were come to Amsterdam, he would rather be changed into a stone post, well fixed into the ground, than leave it again, if that were to die elsewhere. But in the mean time, we only ask you to take these letters."

The chaplain, looking at him with astonishment, said, "This is the insanity of natural affection, which rebels against all measures of time and distance."

The stranger continued, "Here is a letter from our second mate, to his dear and only remaining friend, his uncle, the merchant who lives in the second house on Stuncken Yacht Quay."

He held forth the letter, but no one would approach to take it.
Tom Willis raised his voice and said, "One of our men, here, says that he was in Amsterdam last summer, and he knows for certain that the street called Stuncken Yacht Quay was pulled down sixty years ago, and now there is only a large church at that place."

The man from the Flying Dutchman said: "It is impossible, we cannot believe you. Here is another letter from myself, in which I have sent a bank-note to my dear sister, to buy some gallant lace, to make her a high head-dress."

Tom Willis hearing this said: "It is most likely that her head now lies under a tombstone, which will outlast all the changes of the fashion. But on what house is your bank-note?"

The stranger replied, "On the house of Vanderbrucker and Company."

The man, of whom Tom Willis had spoken, said: "I guess there will now be some discount upon it, for that banking-house was gone to destruction forty years ago; and Vanderbrucker was afterwards amissing.--But to remember these things is like raking up the bottom of an old canal."

The stranger called out passionately: "It is impossible--We cannot believe it! It is cruel to say such things to people in our condition. There is a letter from our captain himself, to his much-beloved and faithful wife, whom he left at a pleasant summer dwelling, on the border of the Haarlemer Mer. She promised to have the house beautifully painted and gilded before he came back, and to get a new set of looking-glasses for the principal chamber, that she might see as many images of Vanderdecken as if she had six husbands at once."

The man replied, "There has been time enough for her to have had six husbands since then; but were she alive still, there is no fear that Vanderdecken would ever get home to disturb her."

On hearing this the stranger again shed tears, and said, if they would not take the letters, he would leave them; and looking around he offered the parcel to the captain, chaplain, and to the rest of the crew successively, but each drew back as it was offered, and put his hands behind his back. He then laid the letters upon the deck, and placed upon them a piece of iron, which was lying near, to prevent them from being blown away. Having done this, he swung himself over the gangway, and went into the boat.

We heard the others speak to him, but the rise of a sudden squall prevented us from distinguishing his reply. The boat was seen to quit the ship's side, and in a few moments there were no more traces of her than if she had never been there. The sailors rubbed their eyes, as if doubting what they had witnessed, but the parcel still lay upon deck, and proved the reality of all that had passed.

Duncan Saunderson, the Scotch mate, asked the captain if he should take them up, and put them in the letter-bag? Receiving no reply, he would have lifted them if it had not been for Tom Willis, who pulled him back, saying that nobody should touch them.
In the mean time the captain went down to the cabin, and the chaplain, having followed him, found him at his bottle-case, pouring out a large dram of brandy. The captain, although somewhat disconcerted, immediately offered the glass to him, saying, "Here, Charters, is what is good in a cold night." The chaplain declined drinking anything, and the captain having swallowed the bumper, they both returned to the deck, where they found the seamen giving their opinions concerning what should be done with the letters. Tom Willis proposed to pick them up on a harpoon, and throw it overboard.

Another speaker said, "I have always heard it asserted that it is neither safe to accept them voluntarily, nor when they are left to throw them out of the ship."

"Let no one touch them," said the carpenter. "The way to do with the letters from the Flying Dutchman is, to case them upon deck, so that, if he sends back for them, they are still there to give him."

The carpenter went to fetch his tools. During his absence, the ship gave so violent a pitch that the piece of iron slid off the letters, and they were whirled overboard by the wind, like birds of evil omen whirring through the air. There was a cry of joy among the sailors, and they ascribed the favourable change which soon took place in the weather, to our having got quit of Vanderdecken. We soon got under weigh again. The night watch being set, the rest of the crew retired to their berths.

THE FLOATING BEACON.

[MAGA. OCTOBER 1821.]

One dark and stormy night we were on a voyage from Bergen to Christiansand in a small sloop. Our captain suspected that he had approached too near the Norwegian coast, though he could not discern any land, and the wind blew with such violence that we were in momentary dread of being driven upon a lee-shore. We had endeavoured, for more than an hour, to keep our vessel away; but our efforts proved unavailing, and we soon found that we could scarcely hold our own. A clouded sky, a hazy atmosphere, and irregular showers of sleety rain, combined to deepen the obscurity of night, and nothing whatever was visible, except the sparkling of the distant waves, when their tops happened to break into a wreath of foam. The sea ran very high, and sometimes broke over the deck so furiously that the men were obliged to hold by the rigging, lest they should be carried away. Our captain was a person of timid and irresolute character, and the dangers that environed us made him gradually lose confidence in himself. He often gave orders, and countermanded them in the same moment, all the while taking small quantities of ardent spirits at intervals. Fear and intoxication soon stupified him completely, and the crew ceased to consult him, or to pay any respect to his authority, in so far as regarded the management of the vessel.

About midnight our mainsail was split, and shortly after we found that the sloop had sprung a leak. We had before shipped a good deal of water through the hatches, and the quantity that now entered from below was so great that we thought she would go down every moment. Our only chance of escape lay in our boat, which was immediately lowered. After we had all got on board of her, except the captain, who stood leaning against the mast, we called to him, requesting that he would follow us without delay.
"How dare you quit the sloop without my permission?" cried he, staggering forwards. "This is not fit weather to go a-fishing. Come back--back with you all!"--"No, no," returned one of the crew; "we don't want to be sent to the bottom for your obstinacy. Bear a hand there, or we'll leave you behind."--"Captain, you are drunk," said another; "you cannot take care of yourself. You must obey us now."--"Silence! mutinous villain!" answered the captain. "What are you all afraid of? This is a fine breeze--Up mainsail, and steer her right in the wind's eye."

The sea knocked the boat so violently and constantly against the side of the sloop, that we feared the former would be injured or upset if we did not immediately row away; but, anxious as we were to preserve our lives, we could not reconcile ourselves to the idea of abandoning the captain, who grew more obstinate the more we attempted to persuade him to accompany us. At length one of the crew leaped on board the sloop, and having seized hold of him, tried to drag him along by force; but he struggled resolutely, and soon freed himself from the grasp of the seaman, who immediately resumed his place among us, and urged that we should not any longer risk our lives for the sake of a drunkard and a madman. Most of the party declared they were of the same opinion, and began to push off the boat; but I entreated them to make one effort more to induce their infatuated commander to accompany us. At that moment he came up from the cabin, to which he had descended a little time before, and we immediately perceived that he was more under the influence of ardent spirits than ever. He abused us all in the grossest terms, and threatened his crew with severe punishment, if they did not come on board, and return to their duty. His manner was so violent that no one seemed willing to attempt to constrain him to come on board the boat; and after vainly representing the absurdity of his conduct; and the danger of his situation, we bid him farewell, and rowed away.

The sea ran so high, and had such a terrific appearance, that I almost wished myself in the sloop again. The crew plied the oars in silence, and we heard nothing but the hissing of the enormous billows as they gently rose up, and slowly subsided again, without breaking. At intervals our boat was elevated far above the surface of the ocean, and remained for a few moments trembling upon the pinnacle of a surge, from which it would quietly descend into a gulf so deep and awful that we often thought the dense black mass of waters which formed its sides were on the point of over-arching us, and bursting upon our heads. We glided with regular undulations from one billow to another; but every time we sank into the trough of the sea my heart died within me, for I felt as if we were going lower down than we had ever done before, and clung instinctively to the board on which I sat.

Notwithstanding my terrors, I frequently looked towards the sloop. The fragments of her mainsail, which remained attached to the yard, and fluttered in the wind, enabled us to discern exactly where she lay, and showed, by their motion, that she pitched about in a terrible manner. We occasionally heard the voice of her unfortunate commander, calling to us in tones of frantic derision, and by turns vociferating curses and blasphemous oaths, and singing sea-songs with a wild and frightful energy. I sometimes almost wished that the crew would make another effort to save him, but next moment the principle of self-preservation repressed all feelings of humanity, and I endeavoured, by closing my ears, to banish the idea of his sufferings from my mind.
After a little time the shivering canvass disappeared, and we heard a tumultuous roaring and bursting of billows, and saw an unusual sparkling of the sea about a quarter of a mile from us. One of the sailors cried out that the sloop was now on her beam ends, and that the noise to which we listened was that of the waves breaking over her. We could sometimes perceive a large black mass heaving itself up irregularly among the flashing surges, and then disappearing for a few moments, and knew but too well that it was the hull of the vessel. At intervals a shrill and agonised voice uttered some exclamations, but we could not distinguish what they were, and then a long-drawn shriek came across the ocean, which suddenly grew more furiously agitated near the spot where the sloop lay, and in a few moments she sank down, and a black wave formed itself out of the waters that had engulfed her, and swelled gloomily into a magnitude greater than that of the surrounding billows.

The seamen dropped their oars, as if by one impulse, and looked expressively at each other, without speaking a word. Awful XXXX forebodings of a fate similar to that of the captain appeared to chill every heart, and to repress the energy that had hitherto excited us to make unremitting exertions for our common safety. While we were in this state of hopeless inaction, the man at the helm called out that he saw a light ahead. We all strained our eyes to discern it, but at the moment the boat was sinking down between two immense waves, one of which closed the prospect, and we remained in breathless anxiety till a rising surge elevated us above the level of the surrounding ocean. A light like a dazzling star then suddenly flashed upon our view, and joyful exclamations burst from every mouth. "That," cried one of the crew, "must be the floating beacon which our captain was looking out for this afternoon. If we can but gain it, we'll be safe enough yet." This intelligence cheered us all, and the men began to ply the oars with redoubled vigour, while I employed myself in baling out the water that sometimes rushed over the gunnel of the boat.

An hour's hard rowing brought us so near the lighthouse that we almost ceased to apprehend any further danger; but it was suddenly obscured from our view, and at the same time a confused roaring and dashing commenced at a little distance, and rapidly increased in loudness. We soon perceived a tremendous billow rolling towards us. Its top, part of which had already broke, overhung the base, as if unwilling to burst until we were within the reach of its violence. The man who steered the boat brought her head to the sea, but all to no purpose, for the water rushed furiously over us, and we were completely immersed. I felt the boat swept from under me, and was left struggling and groping about in hopeless desperation for something to catch hold of. When nearly exhausted, I received a severe blow on the side from a small cask of water which the sea had forced against me. I immediately twined my arms round it, and, after recovering myself a little, began to look for the boat, and to call to my companions; but I could not discover any vestige of them, or of their vessel. However, I still had a faint hope that they were in existence, and that the intervention of the billows concealed them from my view. I continued to shout as loud as possible, for the sound of my own voice in some measure relieved me from the feeling of awful and heart-chilling loneliness which my situation inspired; but not even an echo responded to my cries, and, convinced that my comrades had all perished, I ceased looking for them, and pushed towards the beacon in the best manner I could. A long series of fatiguing exertions brought me close to the side of the vessel which contained it, and I called out loudly, in hopes that those on board might hear me and come to my assistance; but no one appearing, I waited patiently till a wave raised me on a level with the chains, and then caught hold of them, and succeeded in getting on board.
As I did not see any person on deck, I went forwards to the skylight, and looked down. Two men were seated below at a table; and a lamp, which was suspended above them, being swung backwards and forwards by the rolling of the vessel, threw its light upon their faces alternately. One seemed agitated with passion, and the other surveyed him with a scornful look. They both talked very loudly, and used threatening gestures, but the sea made so much noise that I could not distinguish what was said. After a little time they started up, and seemed to be on the point of closing and wrestling together, when a woman rushed through a small door and prevented them. I beat upon deck with my feet at the same time, and the attention of the whole party was soon transferred to the noise. One of the men immediately came up the cabin stairs, but stopped short on seeing me, as if irresolute whether to advance or hasten below again. I approached him, and told my story in a few words, but instead of making any reply, he went down to the cabin, and began to relate to the others what he had seen. I soon followed him, and easily found my way into the apartment where they all were. They appeared to feel mingled sensations of fear and astonishment at my presence, and it was some time before any of them entered into conversation with me, or afforded those comforts which I stood so much in need of.

After I had refreshed myself with food, and been provided with a change of clothing, I went upon deck, and surveyed the singular asylum in which Providence had enabled me to take refuge from the fury of the storm. It did not exceed thirty feet long, and was very strongly built, and completely decked over, except at the entrance to the cabin. It had a thick mast at midships, with a large lantern, containing several burners and reflectors, on the top of it; and this could be lowered and hoisted up again as often as required, by means of ropes and pulleys. The vessel was firmly moored upon an extensive sand-bank, the beacon being intended to warn seamen to avoid a part of the ocean where many lives and vessels had been lost in consequence of the latter running aground. The accommodations below decks were narrow, and of an inferior description; however, I gladly retired to the berth that was allotted me by my entertainers, and fatigue and the rocking of billows combined to lull me into a quiet and dreamless sleep.

Next morning, one of the men, whose name was Angerstoff, came to my bedside, and called me to breakfast in a surly and imperious manner. Others looked coldly and distrustfully when I joined them, and I saw that they regarded me as an intruder and an unwelcome guest. The meal passed without almost any conversation, and I went upon deck whenever it was over. The tempest of the preceding night had in a great measure abated, but the sea still ran very high, and a black mist hovered over it, through which the Norwegian coast, lying at eleven miles distance, could be dimly seen. I looked in vain for some remains of the sloop or boat. Not a bird enlivened the heaving expanse of waters, and I turned shuddering from the dreary scene, and asked Morvalden, the youngest of the men, when he thought I had any chance of getting ashore. "Not very soon, I'm afraid," returned he. "We are visited once a-month by people from yonder land, who are appointed to bring us supply of provisions and other necessaries. They were here only six days ago, so you may count how long it will be before they return. Fishing-boats sometimes pass us during fine weather, but we won't have much of that this moon at least."
No intelligence could have been more depressing to me than this. The idea of spending perhaps three weeks in such a place was almost insupportable, and the more so, as I could not hasten my deliverance by any exertions of my own, but would be obliged to remain, in a state of inactive suspense, till good fortune, or the regular course of events, afforded me the means of getting ashore. Neither Angerstoff nor Morvalden seemed to sympathise with my distress, or even to care that I should have it in my power to leave the vessel, except in so far as my departure would free them from the expense of supporting me. They returned indistinct and repulsive answers to all the questions I asked, and appeared anxious to avoid having the least communication with me. During the greater part of the forenoon, they employed themselves in trimming the lamps and cleaning the reflectors, but never conversed any. I easily perceived that a mutual animosity existed between them, but was unable to discover the cause of it. Morvalden seemed to fear Angerstoff, and at the same time to feel a deep resentment towards him, which he did not dare to express. Angerstoff apparently was aware of this, for he behaved to his companion with the undisguised fierceness of determined hate, and openly thwarted him in everything.

Marietta, the female on board, was the wife of Morvalden. She remained chiefly below decks, and attended to the domestic concerns of the vessel. She was rather good-looking, but so reserved and forbidding in her manners that she formed no desirable acquisition to our party, already so heartless and unsociable in its character.

When night approached, after the lapse of a wearisome and monotonous day, I went on deck to see the beacon lighted, and continued walking backwards and forwards till a late hour. I watched the lantern, as it swung from side to side, and flashed upon different portions of the sea alternately, and sometimes fancied I saw men struggling among the billows that tumbled around, and at other times imagined I could discern the white sail of an approaching vessel. Human voices seemed to mingle with the noise of the bursting waves, and I often listened intently, almost in the expectation of hearing articulate sounds. My mind grew sombre as the scene itself, and strange and fearful ideas obtruded themselves in rapid succession. It was dreadful to be chained in the middle of the deep--to be the continual sport of the quietless billows--to be shunned as a fatal thing by those who traversed the solitary ocean. Though within sight of the shore, our situation was more dreary than if we had been sailing a thousand miles from it. We felt not the pleasure of moving forwards, nor the hope of reaching port, nor the delights arising from favourable breezes and genial weather. When a billow drove us to one side, we were tossed back again by another; our imprisonment had no variety or definite termination; and the calm and the tempest were alike uninteresting to us. I felt as if my fate had already become linked with that of those who were on board the vessel. My hopes of being again permitted to mingle with mankind died away, and I anticipated long years of gloom and despair in the company of these repulsive persons into whose hands fate had unexpectedly consigned me.

Angerstoff and Morvalden tended the beacon alternately during the night. The latter had the watch while I remained upon deck. His appearance and manner indicated much perturbation of mind, and he paced hurriedly from side to side, sometimes muttering to himself, and sometimes stopping suddenly to look through the skylight, as if anxious to discover what was going on below. He would then gaze intently upon the heavens, and next moment take out his watch, and contemplate the motions of its hands. I did not offer to disturb these reveries, and thought myself altogether unobserved by him, till he
suddenly advanced to the spot where I stood, and said, in a loud whisper, "There's a villain below—a desperate villain—this is true—he is capable of anything—and the woman is as bad as him." I asked what proof he had of all this. "Oh, I know it," returned he; "that wretch Angerstoff, whom I once thought my friend, has gained my wife's affections. She has been faithless to me—yes, she has. They both wish I were out of the way. Perhaps they are now planning my destruction. What can I do? It is very terrible to be shut up in such narrow limits with those who hate me, and to have no means of escaping, or defending myself from their infernal machinations."—"Why do you not leave the beacon," inquired I, "and abandon your companion and guilty wife?"—"Ah, that is impossible," answered Morvalden; "if I went on shore I would forfeit my liberty. I live here that I may escape the vengeance of the law, which I once outraged for the sake of her who has now withdrawn her love from me. What ingratitude! Mine is indeed a terrible fate, but I must bear it. And shall I never again wander through the green fields, and climb the rocks that encircle my native place? Are the weary dashings of the sea, and the moanings of the wind, to fill my ears continually, all the while telling me that I am an exile?—a hopeless despairing exile. But it won't last long," cried he, catching hold of my arm; "they will murder me!—I am sure of it—I never go to sleep without dreaming that Angerstoff has pushed me overboard."

"Your lonely situation and inactive life dispose you to give way to these chimeras," said I; "you must endeavour to resist them. Perhaps things aren't so bad as you suppose."—"This is not a lonely situation," replied Morvalden, in a solemn tone. "Perhaps you will have proof of what I say before you leave us. Many vessels used to be lost here, and a few are wrecked still; and the skeletons and corpses of those who have perished lie all over the sand-bank. Sometimes, at midnight, I have seen crowds of human figures moving backwards and forwards upon the surface of the ocean, almost as far as the eye could reach. I neither knew who they were, nor what they did there. When watching the lantern alone, I often hear a number of voices talking together, as it were, under the waves; and I twice caught the very words they uttered, but I cannot repeat them— they dwell incessantly in my memory, but my tongue refuses to pronounce them, or to explain to others what they meant."

"Do not let your senses be imposed upon by a distempered imagination," said I; "there is no reality in the things you have told XXXX me."—"Perhaps my mind occasionally wanders a little, for it has a heavy burden upon it," returned Morvalden. "I have been guilty of a dreadful crime. Many that now lie in the deep below us might start up and accuse me of what I am just going to reveal to you. One stormy night, shortly after I began to take charge of this beacon, while watching on deck, I fell into a profound sleep. I know not how long it continued, but I was awakened by horrible shouts and cries. I started up, and instantly perceived that all the lamps in the lantern were extinguished. It was very dark, and the sea raged furiously; but notwithstanding all this, I observed a ship aground on the bank, a little way from me, her sails fluttering in the wind, and the waves breaking over her with violence. Half frantic with horror, I ran down to the cabin for a taper, and lighted the lamps as fast as possible. The lantern, when hoisted to the top of the mast, threw a vivid glare on the surrounding ocean, and showed me the vessel disappearing among the billows. Hundreds of people lay gasping in the water near her. Men, women, and children writhed together in agonising struggles, and uttered soul-harrowing cries; and their countenances, as they gradually stiffened under the hand of death, were all turned towards me with glassy stare, while the lurid expression of their glistening eyes upbraided me with having been the cause of their untimely end. Never shall I forget these looks. They haunt me wherever I am—asleep and
awake—night and day. I have kept this tale of horror secret till now, and do not know if I shall ever have courage to relate it again. The masts of the vessel projected above the surface of the sea for several months after she was lost, as if to keep me in recollection of the night in which so many human creatures perished, in consequence of my neglect and carelessness. Would to God I had no memory! I sometimes think I am getting mad. The past and present are equally dreadful to me; and I dare not anticipate the future."

I felt a sort of superstitious dread steal over me, while Morvalden related his story, and we continued walking the deck in silence till the period of his watch expired. I then went below, and took refuge in my berths, though I was but little inclined for sleep. The gloomy ideas and dark forebodings expressed by Morvalden weighed heavily upon my mind, without my knowing why; and my situation, which had at first seemed only dreary and depressing, began to have something indefinitely terrible in its aspect.

Next day, when Morvalden proceeded as usual to put the beacon in order, he called upon Angerstoff to come and assist him, which the latter peremptorily refused. Morvalden then went down to the cabin, where his companion was, and requested to know why his orders were not obeyed. "Because I hate trouble," replied Angerstoff. "I am master here," said Morvalden, "and have been intrusted with the direction of everything. Do not attempt to trifle with me."—"Trifle with you!" exclaimed Angerstoff, looking contumulously. "No, no, I am no triler; and I advise you to walk up-stairs again, lest I prove this to your cost." "Why, husband," cried Marietta, "I believe there are no bounds to your laziness. You make this young man toil from morning to night, and take advantage of his good nature in the most shameful manner."—"Peace, infamous woman!" said Morvalden; "I know very well why you stand up in his defence; but I'll put a stop to the intimacy that exists between you. Go to your room instantly! You are my wife, and shall obey me." "Is this usage to be borne?" exclaimed Marietta. "No one step forward to protect me from his violence?" "Insolent fellow!" cried Angerstoff, "don't presume to insult my mistress."—"Mistress!" repeated Morvalden. "This to my face!" and struck him a severe blow. Angerstoff sprung forward, with the intention of returning it, but I got between them, and prevented him. Marietta then began to shed tears, and applauded the generosity her paramour had evinced in sparing her husband, who immediately went upon deck, without speaking a word, and hurriedly resumed the work that had engaged his attention previous to the quarrel.

Neither of the two men seemed at all disposed for a reconciliation, and they had no intercourse during the whole day, except angry and revengeful looks. I frequently observed Marietta in deep consultation with Angerstoff, and easily perceived that the subject of debate had some relation to her injured husband, whose manner evinced much alarm and anxiety, although he endeavoured to look calm and cheerful. He did not make his appearance at meals, but spent all his time upon deck. Whenever Angerstoff accidentally passed him, he shrank back with an expression of dread, and intuitively, as it were, caught hold of a rope, or any other object to which he could cling. The day proved a wretched and fearful one to me, for I momentarily expected that some terrible affray would occur on board, and that I would be implicated in it. I gazed upon the surrounding sea almost without intermission, ardently hoping that some boat might approach near enough to afford me an opportunity of quitting the horrid and dangerous abode in which I was imprisoned.
It was Angerstoff's watch on deck till midnight; and as I did not wish to have any communication with him, I remained below. At twelve o'clock Morvalden got up and relieved him, and he came down to the cabin, and soon after retired to his berth. Believing, from this arrangement, that they had no hostile intentions, I lay down in bed with composure, and fell asleep. It was not long before a noise overhead awakened me. I started up, and listened intently. The sound appeared to be that of two persons scuffling together, for a succession of irregular footsteps beat the deck, and I could hear violent blows given at intervals. I got out of my berth, and entered the cabin, where I found Marietta standing alone, with a lamp in her hand. "Do you hear that?" cried I.--"Hear what?" returned she; "I have had a dreadful dream--I am all trembling." "Is Angerstoff below?" demanded I.--"No--Yes, I mean," said Marietta. "Why do you ask that? He went up-stairs." "Your husband and he are fighting. We must part them instantly."--"How can that be?" answered Marietta; "Angerstoff is asleep." "Asleep! Didn't you say he went up-stairs?"--"I don't know," returned she; "I am hardly awake yet--Let us listen for a moment."

Everything was still for a few seconds; then a voice shrieked out, "Ah! that knife! you are murdering me! Draw it out! No help! Are you done? Now--now--now!" A heavy body fell suddenly along the deck, and some words were spoken in a faint tone, but the roaring of the sea prevented me from hearing what they were.

I rushed up the cabin stairs, and tried to push open the folding-doors at the head of them, but they resisted my utmost efforts. I knocked violently and repeatedly to no purpose. "Some one is killed," cried I. "The person who barred these doors on the outside is guilty."--"I know nothing of that," returned Marietta. "We can't be of any use now.--Come here again!--how dreadfully quiet it is. My God!--a drop of blood has fallen through the skylight.--What faces are yon looking down upon us?--But this lamp is going out.--We must be going through the water at a terrible rate--how it rushes past us!--I am getting dizzy.--Do you hear these bells ringing? and strange voices----"

The cabin doors were suddenly burst open, and Angerstoff next moment appeared before us, crying out, "Morvalden has fallen overboard. Throw a rope to him!--He will be drowned." His hands and dress were marked with blood, and he had a frightful look of horror and confusion. "You are a murderer!" exclaimed I, almost involuntarily.--"How do you know that?" said he, staggering back; "I'm sure you never saw--" "Hush, hush," cried Marietta to him; "are you mad? Speak again!--What frightens you?--Why don't you run and help Morvalden?" "Has XXXX anything happened to him?" inquired Angerstoff, with a gaze of consternation.--"You told us he had fallen overboard," returned Marietta; "must my husband perish?"--"Give me some water to wash my hands," said Angerstoff, growing deadly pale, and catching hold of the table for support.

I now hastened upon deck, but Morvalden was not there. I then went to the side of the vessel, and put my hands on the gunwale, while I leaned over, and looked downwards. On taking them off, I found them marked with blood. I grew sick at heart, and began to identify myself with Angerstoff the murderer. The sea, the beacon, and the sky, appeared of a sanguine hue; and I thought I heard the dying exclamations of Morvalden sounding a hundred fathom below me, and echoing through the caverns of the deep. I advanced to the cabin door, intending to descend the stairs, but found that some one had fastened it firmly on the inside. I felt convinced that I was intentionally shut out, and a cold shuddering
pervaded my frame. I covered my face with my hands, not daring to look around; for it seemed as if I
was excluded from the company of the living, and doomed to be the associate of the spirits of drowned
and murdered men. After a little time I began to walk hastily backwards and forwards; but the light of
the lantern happened to flash on a stream of blood that ran along the deck, and I could not summon up
resolution to pass the spot where it was a second time. The sky looked black and threatening--the sea
had a fierceness in its sound and motions--and the wind swept over its bosom with melancholy sighs.
Everything was sombre and ominous; and I looked in vain for some object that would, by its soothing
aspect, remove the dark impressions which crowded upon my mind.

While standing near the bows of the vessel, I saw a hand and arm rise slowly behind the stern, and
wave from side to side. I started back as far as I could go in horrible affright, and looked again,
expecting to behold the entire spectral figure of which I supposed they formed a part. But nothing more
was visible. I struck my eyes till the light flashed from them, in hopes that my senses had been imposed
upon by distempered vision. However, it was in vain, for the hand still motioned me to advance, and I
rushed forwards with wild desperation, and caught hold of it. I was pulled along a little way
notwithstanding the resistance I made, and soon discovered a man stretched along the stern-cable, and
clinging to it in a convulsive manner. It was Morvalden. He raised his head feebly, and said something,
but I could only distinguish the words "murdered--overboard--reached this rope--terrible death."--I
stretched out my arms to support him, but at that moment the vessel plunged violently, and he was
shaken off the cable, and dropped among the waves. He floated for an instant, and then disappeared
under the keel.

I seized the first rope I could find, and threw one end of it over the stern, and likewise flung some
planks into the sea, thinking that the unfortunate Morvalden might still retain strength enough to catch
hold of them if they came within his reach. I continued on the watch for a considerable time, but at last
abandoned all hopes of saving him, and made another attempt to get down to the cabin. The doors were
now unfastened, and I opened them without any difficulty. The first thing I saw on going below, was
Angerstoff stretched along the floor, and fast asleep. His torpid look, flushed countenance, and uneasy
respiration, convinced me that he had taken a large quantity of ardent spirits. Marietta was in her own
apartment. Even the presence of a murderer appeared less terrible than the frightful solitariness of the
deck, and I lay down upon a bench determining to spend the remainder of the night there. The lamp that
hung from the roof soon went out, and left me in total darkness. Imagination began to conjure up a
thousand appalling forms, and the voice of Angerstoff, speaking in his sleep, filled my ears at
intervals--"Hoist up the beacon!--the lamps won't burn--horrible!--they contain blood instead of oil. Is
that a boat coming?--Yes, yes, I hear the oars. Damnation!--why is that corpse so long of sinking?--if it
doesn't go down soon they'll find me out. How terribly the wind blows!--we are driving ashore--See!
see! Morvalden is swimming after us--how he writhes in the water!" Marietta now rushed from her
room, with a light in her hand, and seizing Angerstoff by the arm, tried to awake him. He soon rose up
with chattering teeth and shivering limbs, and was on the point of speaking, but she prevented him, and
he staggered away to his berth, and lay down in it.

Next morning, when I went upon deck, after a short and perturbed sleep, I found Marietta dashing water
over it, that she might efface all vestige of the transactions of the preceding night. Angerstoff did not
make his appearance till noon, and his looks were ghastly and agonised. He seemed stupified with horror, and sometimes entirely lost all perception of the things around him for a considerable time. He suddenly came close up to me, and demanded, with a bold air, but quivering voice, what I had meant by calling him a murderer?--"Why, that you are one," replied I, after a pause.

"Beware what you say," returned he fiercely,--"you cannot escape my power now--I tell you, sir, Morvalden fell overboard."--"Whence, then, came that blood that covered the deck?" inquired I. He grew pale, and then cried, "You lie--you lie infernally--there was none!"--"I saw it," said I--"I saw Morvalden himself--long after midnight. He was clinging to the stern-cable, and said"--"Ha, ha, ha--devils!--curses!" exclaimed Angerstoff--"Did you hear me dreaming?--I was mad last night--Come, come, come!--We shall tend the beacon together--Let us make friends, and don't be afraid, for you'll find me a good fellow in the end." He now forcibly shook hands with me, and then hurried down to the cabin.

In the afternoon, while sitting on deck, I discerned a boat far off, but I determined to conceal this from Angerstoff and Marietta, lest they should use some means to prevent its approach. I walked carelessly about, casting a glance upon the sea occasionally, and meditating how I could best take advantage of the means of deliverance which I had in prospect. After the lapse of an hour, the boat was not more than half a mile distant from us, but she suddenly changed her course, and bore away towards the shore. I immediately shouted, and waved a handkerchief over my head, as signals for her to return. Angerstoff rushed from the cabin, and seized my arm, threatening at the same time to push me overboard if I attempted to hail her again. I disengaged myself from his grasp, and dashed him violently from me. The noise brought Marietta upon deck, who immediately perceived the cause of the affray, and cried, "Does the wretch mean to make his escape? For Godsake, prevent the possibility of that!"--"Yes, yes," returned Angerstoff; "he never shall leave the vessel--He had as well take care, lest I do to him what I did to--" "To Morvalden, I suppose you mean," said I.--"Well, well, speak it out," replied he ferociously; "there is no one here to listen to your damnable falsehoods, and I'll not be fool enough to give you an opportunity of uttering them elsewhere. I'll strangle you the next time you tell these lies about--" "Come," interrupted Marietta, "don't be uneasy--the boat will soon be far enough away--If he wants to give you the slip, he must leap overboard."

I was irritated and disappointed beyond measure at the failure of the plan of escape I had formed, but thought it most prudent to conceal my feelings. I now perceived the rashness and bad consequences of my bold assertions respecting the murder of Morvalden; for Angerstoff evidently thought that his personal safety, and even his life, would be endangered, if I ever found an opportunity of accusing and giving evidence against him. All my motions were now watched with double vigilance. Marietta and her paramour kept upon deck by turns during the whole day, and the latter looked over the surrounding ocean, through a glass, at intervals, to discover if any boat or vessel was approaching us. He often muttered threats as he walked past me, and, more than once, seemed waiting for an opportunity to push me overboard. Marietta and he frequently whispered together, and I always imagined I heard my name mentioned in the course of these conversations.
I now felt completely miserable, being satisfied that Angerstoff was bent upon my destruction. I wandered, in a state of fearful circumspection, from one part of the vessel to the other, not knowing how to secure myself from his designs. Every time he approached me, my heart palpitated dreadfully; and when night came on, I was agonised with terror, and could not remain in one spot, but hurried backwards and forwards between the cabin and the deck, looking wildly from side to side, and momentarily expecting to feel a cold knife entering my vitals. My forehead began to burn, and my eyes dazzled; I became acutely sensitive, and the slightest murmur, or the faintest breath of wind, set my whole frame in a state of uncontrollable vibration. At first, I sometimes thought of throwing myself into the sea; but I soon acquired such an intense feeling of existence, that the mere idea of death was horrible to me.

Shortly after midnight I lay down in my berth, almost exhausted by the harrowing emotions that had careered through my mind during the past day. I felt a strong desire to sleep, yet dared not indulge myself; soul and body seemed at war. Every noise excited my imagination, and scarcely a minute passed, in the course of which I did not start up and look around. Angerstoff paced the deck overhead, and when the sound of his footsteps accidentally ceased at any time, I grew deadly sick at heart, expecting that he was silently coming to murder me. At length I thought I heard some one near my bed--I sprang from it, and, having seized a bar of iron that lay on the floor, rushed into the cabin. I found Angerstoff there, who started back when he saw me, and said, "What is the matter? Did you think that--I want you to watch the beacon, that I may have some rest. Follow me upon deck, and I will give you directions about it." I hesitated a moment, and then went up the gangway stairs behind him. We walked forward to the mast together, and he showed how I was to lower the lantern when any of the lamps happened to go out, and biding me beware of sleep, returned to the cabin. Most of my fears forsook me the moment he disappeared. I felt nearly as happy as if I had been set at liberty, and, for a time, forgot that my situation had anything painful or alarming connected with it. Angerstoff resumed his station in about three hours, and I again took refuge in my berth, where I enjoyed a short but undisturbed slumber.

Next day while I was walking the deck, and anxiously surveying the expanse of ocean around, Angerstoff requested me to come down to the cabin. I obeyed his summons, and found him there. He gave me a book, saying it was very entertaining, and would serve to amuse me during my idle hours; and then went above, shutting the doors carefully behind him. I was struck with his behaviour, but felt no alarm, for Marietta sat at work near me, apparently unconscious of what had passed. I began to peruse the volume I held in my hand, and found it so interesting that I paid little attention to anything else, till the dashing of oars struck my ear. I sprang from my chair, with the intention of hastening upon deck, but Marietta stopped me, saying, "It is of no use--the gangway doors are fastened."

Notwithstanding this information, I made an attempt to open them, but could not succeed. I was now convinced, by the percussion against the vessel, that a boat lay alongside, and I heard a strange voice addressing Angerstoff. Fired with the idea of deliverance, I leaped upon a table which stood in the middle of the cabin, and tried to push off the skylight, but was suddenly stunned by a violent blow on the back of my head. I staggered back and looked round. Marietta stood close behind me, brandishing an axe, as if in the act of repeating the stroke. Her face was flushed with rage, and, having seized my arm, she cried, "Come down instantly, accursed villain! I know you want to betray us, but may we all
go to the bottom if you find a chance of doing so." I struggled to free myself from her grasp, but, being in a state of dizziness and confusion, I was unable to effect this, and she soon pulled me to the ground. At that moment, Angerstoff hurriedly entered the cabin, exclaiming, "What noise is this? Oh, just as I expected! Has that devil—that spy—been trying to get above boards? Why haven't I the heart to despatch him at once? But there's no time now. The people are waiting—Marietta, come and lend a hand." They now forced me down upon the floor, and bound me to an iron ring that was fixed in it. This being done, Angerstoff directed his female accomplice to prevent me from speaking, and went upon deck again.

While in this state of bondage, I heard distinctly all that passed without. Some one asked Angerstoff how Morvalden did.—"Well, quite well," replied the former; "but he's below, and so sick that he can't see any person." "Strange enough," said the first speaker, laughing. "Is he ill and in good health at the same time? he had as well be overboard as in that condition."—"Overboard!" repeated Angerstoff, "what!—how do you mean?—all false!—but listen to me,—Are there any news stirring ashore?"—"Why," said the stranger, "the chief talk there just now is about a curious thing that happened this morning. A dead man was found upon the beach, and they suspect, from the wounds on his body, that he hasn't got fair play. They are making a great noise about it, and Government means to send out a boat, with an officer on board, who is to visit all the shipping round this, that he may ascertain if any of them has lost a man lately. 'Tis a dark business; but they'll get to the bottom of it, I warrant ye.—Why, you look as pale as if you knew more about this matter than you choose to tell."—"No, no, no," returned Angerstoff; "I never hear of a murder but I think of a friend of mine who—-but I won't detain you, for the sea is getting up—we'll have a blowy night, I'm afraid." "So you don't want any fish to-day?" cried the stranger, "then I'll be off—Good morning, good morning. I suppose you'll have the Government boat alongside by-and-by." I now heard the sound of oars, and supposed, from the conversation having ceased, that the fishermen had departed. Angerstoff came down to the cabin soon after, and released me without speaking a word.

Marietta then approached him, and, taking hold of his arm, said, "Do you believe what that man has told you?"—"Yes, by the eternal hell!" cried he, vehemently; "I suspect I will find the truth of it soon enough." "My God!" exclaimed she, "what is to become of us?—-How dreadful! We are chained here, and cannot escape."—"Escape what?" interrupted Angerstoff;—"girl, you have lost your senses. Why should we fear the officers of justice? Keep a guard over your tongue." "Oh," returned Marietta, "I talk without thinking, or understanding my own words; but come upon deck, and let me speak with you there." They now went up the gangway stairs together, and continued in deep conversation for some time.

Angerstoff gradually became more agitated as the day advanced. He watched upon deck almost without intermission, and seemed irresolute what to do, sometimes sitting down composedly, and at other times hurrying backwards and forwards, with clenched hands and bloodless cheeks. The wind blew pretty fresh from the shore, and there was a heavy swell; and I supposed, from the anxious looks with which he contemplated the sky, that he hoped the threatening aspect of the weather would prevent the government boat from putting out to sea. He kept his glass constantly in his hand, and surveyed the ocean through it in all directions.
At length he suddenly dashed the instrument away, and exclaimed, "God help us! they are coming now!" Marietta, on hearing this, ran wildly towards him, and put her hands in his, but he pushed her to one side, and began to pace the deck, apparently in deep thought. After a little time, he started, and cried, "I have it now!--It's the only plan--I'll manage the business--yes, yes--I'll cut the cables, and off we'll go--that's settled!" He then seized an axe, and first divided the hawser at the bows, and afterwards the one attached to the stern.

The vessel immediately began to drift away, and having no sails or helm to steady her, rolled with such violence that I was dashed from side to side several times. She often swung over so much that I thought she would not regain the upright position, and Angerstoff all the while unconsciously strengthened this belief, by exclaiming, "She will capsize! shift the ballast, or we must go to the bottom!" In the midst of this, I kept my station upon deck, intently watching the boat, which was still several miles distant. I waited in fearful expectation, thinking that every new wave against which we were impelled would burst upon our vessel and overwhelm us, while our pursuers were too far off to afford any assistance. The idea of perishing when on the point of being saved was inexpressibly agonising.

As the day advanced, the hopes I had entertained of the boat making up with us gradually diminished. The wind blew violently, and we drifted along at a rapid rate, and the weather grew so hazy that our pursuers soon became quite indistinguishable. Marietta and Angerstoff appeared to be stupified with terror. They stood motionless, holding firmly by the bulwarks of the vessel; and though the waves frequently broke over the deck, and rushed down the gangway, they did not offer to shut the companion door, which would have remained open had I not closed it. The tempest, gloom, and danger that thickened around us, neither elicited from them any expressions of mutual regard, nor seemed to produce the slightest sympathetic emotion in their bosoms. They gazed sternly at each other and at me, and every time the vessel rolled, clung with convulsive eagerness to whatever lay within their reach.

About sunset our attention was attracted by a dreadful roaring, which evidently did not proceed from the waves around us; but the atmosphere being very hazy, we were unable to ascertain the cause of it for a long time. At length we distinguished a range of high cliffs, against which the sea beat with terrible fury. Whenever the surge broke upon them, large jets of foam started up to a great height, and flashed angrily over their black and rugged surfaces, while the wind moaned and whistled with fearful caprice among the projecting points of rock. A dense mist covered the upper part of the cliffs, and prevented us from seeing if there were any houses upon their summits, though this point appeared of little importance, for we drifted towards the shore so fast that immediate death seemed inevitable.

We soon felt our vessel bound twice against the sand, and in a little time after a heavy sea carried her up the beach, where she remained imbedded and hard aground. During the ebb of the waves there was not more than two feet of water round her bows. I immediately perceived this, and watching a favourable opportunity, swung myself down to the beach by means of part of the cable that projected through the hawse-hole. I began to run towards the cliffs the moment my feet touched the ground, and Angerstoff attempted to follow me, that he might prevent my escape; but, while in the act of descending from the vessel, the sea flowed in with such violence that he was obliged to spring on board again to save himself from being overwhelmed by its waters.
I hurried on and began to climb up the rocks, which were very steep and slippery; but I soon grew breathless from fatigue, and found it necessary to stop. It was now almost dark, and when I looked around, I neither saw anything distinctly, nor could form the least idea how far I had still to ascend before I reached the top of the cliffs. I knew not which way to turn my steps, and remained irresolute, till the barking of a dog faintly struck my ear. I joyfully followed the sound, and, after an hour of perilous exertion, discovered a light at some distance, which I soon found to proceed from the window of a small hut.

After I had knocked repeatedly, the door was opened by an old man, with a lamp in his hand. He started back on seeing me, for my dress was wet and disordered, my face and hands had been wounded while scrambling among the rocks, and fatigue and terror had given me a wan and agitated look. I entered the house, the inmates of which were a woman and a boy, and having seated myself near the fire, related to my host all that had occurred on board the floating beacon, and then requested him to accompany me down to the beach, that we might search for Angerstoff and Marietta. "No, no," cried he; "that is impossible. Hear how the storm rages! Worlds would not induce me to have any communication with murderers. It would be impious to attempt it on such a night as this. The Almighty is surely punishing them now! Come here and look out."

I followed him to the door, but the moment he opened it the wind extinguished the lamp. Total darkness prevailed without, and a chaos of rushing, bursting, and moaning sounds swelled upon the ear with irregular loudness. The blast swept round the hut in violent eddying, and we felt the chilly spray of the sea driving upon our faces at intervals. I shuddered, and the old man closed the door, and then resumed his seat near the fire.

My entertainer made a bed for me upon the floor, but the noise of the tempest, and the anxiety I felt about the fate of Angerstoff and Marietta, kept me awake the greater part of the night. Soon after dawn my host accompanied me down to the beach. We found the wreck of the floating beacon, but were unable to discover any traces of the guilty pair whom I had left on board of it.

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COLONNA THE PAINTER. A TALE OF ITALY AND THE ARTS.

[MAGA. SEPTEMBER 1829.]

[The following "Tale of Italy and the Arts" was submitted in MS. to the late Mr Coleridge, who signified his approval by giving to the writer, as an appropriate heading, two then unpublished stanzas from his admirable translation of Goethe's Song of Mignon in "Wilhelm Meister," beginning "Kennst du das Land?"]

Know'st thou the Land where the pale Citrons blow, And Golden Fruits through dark green foliage glow? O soft the breeze that breathes from that blue sky! Still stand the Myrtles and the Laurels high. Know'st thou it well? O thither, Friend! Thither with thee, Beloved! would I wend.
Know'st thou the House? On Columns rests its Height; Shines the Saloon; the Chambers glisten bright; And Marble Figures stand and look at me-- Ah, thou poor Child! what have they done to thee! Know'st thou it well? O thither, Friend! Thither with thee, Protector! would I wend.

S. T. COLERIDGE, from GOETHE.

INTRODUCTION.

After the fall of Napoleon had given peace to Europe, and insipidity to a soldier's life, I returned with my regiment to B----, and too soon discovered that the lounging habits and quiet security of parade and garrison service were miserable substitutes for the high and stirring excitement of the bivouac, the skirmish, and the battle. I found myself gradually sinking into a state of mental atrophy, perilous alike to physical and moral health; and, after a fruitless struggle of some months with these morbid longings for old habits and associations, I determined to quit the army, and to realise the favourite daydream of my early youth--a walk through Italy; hoping, by two years of travel and incessant intercourse with men and books, to gain a fresh hold upon life and happiness, and to repair, in some measure, those deficiencies in my education, which the premature adoption of a military life had necessarily involved.

Pausing a few days at Vienna, I formed a friendly intimacy with a young and intelligent Venetian, of the ancient senatorial house of F----; and, on my return through Venice, after a rewarding and delightful residence of two years in various parts of Italy, I met my Vienna friend in one of the taverns of St Mark's. After a cordial greeting, he told me that he was obliged to leave Venice on the ensuing day, to take possession of an estate and villa in Lombardy, bequeathed to him by a deceased relative. The gardens, he added, covered the slope of a woody hill, which commanded a wide view over the classic shores and environs of the Lake of Garda; and the mansion, although time-worn and ruinous, contained some fine old paintings, and a store of old books and manuscripts which had not seen the light for ages. I had already experienced the keen delight of exploring the mines of literary wealth contained in the old libraries of Italy, and I did not hesitate to accept the cordial invitation to accompany him which closed this alluring description of his Lombard villa.

We left Venice the following morning, and, proceeding by easy journeys through Padua and Verona, we reached the villa on the evening of the third day, and installed ourselves in the least decayed apartments of the ruinous but still imposing and spacious mansion. On the ensuing day I rose early, and hastened to examine some large fresco paintings in the saloon, which had powerfully excited my curiosity during a cursory view by lamp-light. They were admirably designed, and, from the recurrence in all of the remarkable form and features of a young man of great personal beauty, they were evidently a connected series; but, with the exception of two, the colouring and details were nearly obliterated by time and the humid air from the contiguous lake. Upon scrolls beneath the two least injured paintings were the inscriptions of *La Scoperta* and *La Vendetta*; and the incidents delineated in them were so powerfully drawn, and so full of dramatic expression, that a novelist of moderate ingenuity would readily have constructed from them an effective romance. The picture subscribed *La Scoperta* represented the interior of an elegant saloon decorated in Italian taste with pictures, busts, and candelabra. In the foreground was seated a young artist in the plain garb rendered familiar to modern
eyes by the portraits of Raphael and other painters of the sixteenth century; a short cloak and doublet of black cloth, and tight black pantaloons of woven silk. The form and features of this youth were eminently noble. His countenance beamed with dignity and power, and his tall figure displayed a classic symmetry and grandeur which forcibly reminded me of that magnificent statue, the reposing Discobolus. Before him were an easel and canvass, on which was distinguishable the roughly sketched likeness of a robust and middle-aged man sitting opposite to him in the middle-ground of the picture, and richly attired in a Spanish mantle of velvet. His sleeves were slashed and embroidered in the fashion of the period, and his belt and dagger glittered with adornments of gold and jewels; while his golden spurs, and the steel corselet which covered his ample chest, indicated a soldier of distinguished rank. In the background stood a tall and handsome youth leaning with folded arms against the window-niche. He was attired in the splendid costume of the Venetian nobles, as represented in the portraits of Titian and Paul Veronese, and his dark eyes were fixed upon the painter and his model with an expression of intense and wondering solicitude. And truly the impassioned looks and attitudes of the individuals before him were well adapted to excite sympathy and astonishment. The young artist sat erect, his tall figure somewhat thrown back, and his right hand, holding the pencil, was resting on the elbow of his chair; while from his glowing and dilated features, intense hatred and mortal defiance blazed out upon the man whose portrait he had begun to paint. In the delineation of the broad and knitted brow, the eagle-fierceness of the full and brilliant eye, and the stern compression of the lips, the unknown artist had been wonderfully successful, and not less so in the display of very opposite emotions in the harsh and repulsive lineaments of the personage sitting for his portrait. The wild expression of every feature indicated that he had suddenly made some strange and startling discovery. His face was of a livid and deadly yellow; his small and deep-set eyes were fixed in the wide stare of terror upon the artist; and his person was half raised from his seat, while his hands convulsively clutched the elbows of the chair. In short, his look and gesture were those of a man who, while unconscious of danger, had suddenly roused a sleeping lion.

The companion picture, called La Vendetta, portrayed a widely different scene and circumstance. The locality was a deep ravine, the shelving sides of which were thickly covered with trees; and the background of this woody hollow was blocked up to a considerable height by the leafy branches of recently hewn timber. In the right foreground were two horses, saddled and bridled, and at their feet the bleeding corpses of two men, clothed in splendid Greek costume. On the left of the painting appeared the young Venetian nobleman before described: he was on horseback, and watching, with looks of deep interest and excitement, the issue of a mortal combat between the two prominent figures in La Scoperta. But here the younger man was no longer in the plain and unassuming garb of an artist. He was attired in a richly embroidered vest of scarlet and gold; white pantaloons of woven silk displayed advantageously the full and perfect contour of his limbs; while a short mantello of dark-blue velvet fell gracefully from his shoulders, and a glossy feather in his Spanish hat waved over his fine features, which told an eloquent tale of triumph and of gratified revenge.

His antagonist, a man of large and muscular proportions, was apparelled as in the other picture, excepting that he had no mantle, and was cased in back and breast armour of scaled steel. He had been just disarmed; his sword, of formidable length, had flown above his head; while a naked dagger lay on the ground under his left hand, which hung lifeless by his side, and from a gaping wound in the wrist
issued a stream of blood.

The sword-point of the young painter was buried in the throat of his mailed opponent, whose livid hue and rayless eyeballs already indicated that his wound was mortal.

I was intently gazing upon these mysterious pictures when my friend entered the saloon, and in reply to my eager inquiries, informed me that the series of paintings around us portrayed some romantic family incidents which had occurred in the sixteenth century; and that these frescos had been designed by an able amateur artist, who was indeed the hero of this romance of Italian life, and after whom this apartment was still called the Saloon of Colonna. The late proprietor of the villa, he continued, had mentioned some years since the discovery of a manuscript in the library, which gave a detailed account of the incidents on these pictured walls, and which, if we could find it, would well reward the trouble of perusal.

My curiosity received a fresh impulse from this intelligence. Telling my friend that I would investigate his books while he visited his tenants, I proceeded after breakfast to the library; and, after some hours of fruitless search, I discovered, in a mass of worm-eaten manuscripts, an untitled, but apparently connected narrative, which forcibly arrested my attention by the romantic charm of the incidents, the energy of the language, and the spirited criticisms on fine art with which it was interwoven. The hero of the tale was an ardent and imaginative Italian; at once a painter and an improvisatore; a man of powerful and expansive intellect; and glowing with intense enthusiasm for classic and ancient lore, and for the beautiful in art and nature. The diction of this manuscript was, like the man it portrayed, lofty and impassioned; and, when describing the rich landscapes of Italy, or the wonders of human art which adorn that favoured region, it occasionally rose into a sustained harmony, a rhythmical beauty and balance, of which no modern language but that of Italy is susceptible. Dipping at random through its pages, I saw with delight the name of Colonna; and, ere long, discovered an animated description of the singular scene portrayed in La Scoperta.

On my friend's return in the evening, I held up the manuscript in triumph as he approached; and, after a repast in the Colonna saloon, F----i, who, although a Venetian, could read his native tongue with Roman purity of accent, opened at my request the time-stained volume, and read as follows.
CHAPTER I.

On a bright May morning, in the year 1575, my gondola was gliding under the guns of a Turkish frigate in the harbour of Venice, when she fired a broadside in compliment to the Doge's marriage with the Adriatic. The rolling of the stately vessel gave a sudden impulse to the light vehicle in which I was then standing to obtain a better view of the festivities around me; the unexpected and stunning report deprived me for a moment of self-possession and balance, and I was precipitated into the water. The encumbrance of a cloak rendered swimming impracticable, and, after some vain attempts to remain on the surface, I went down. When restored to consciousness, I found myself in the gondola, supported by a young man, whose dripping garments told me that I had been saved from untimely death by his courage and promptitude. "Our bath has been a cold one," said he, addressing me with a friendly and cheering smile. Too much exhausted to reply, I could only grasp his hand with silent and expressive fervour. This incident deprived the festival of all attraction; and, soon as I had regained sufficient strength, the young stranger proposed that we should return to the city for a change of dress. Still weak and exhausted, I gladly assented to his proposal, and we left the Bucentoro escorted by a thousand vessels, and saluted by the thunders of innumerable cannon, proceeding to the open sea to celebrate the high espousals.

My companion left me at the portal of my father's palace. He refused to enter it, nor would he reveal his name and residence; but he embraced me cordially, and promised an early visit. During the remainder of the day, I could not for a moment banish the image of my unknown benefactor from my memory. It was obvious, from his accent, that he was no Venetian. His language was the purest Tuscan, and conveyed in a voice rich, deep, and impassioned, beyond any in my experience. He was attired in the dark and homely garb of a student in painting; but he was in the full bloom of youth, and his tall figure was cast in the finest mould of manlike beauty. His raven locks clustered round a lofty and capacious brow; his full dark eyes sparkled with intelligence and fire; while his fresh and finely-compressed lips indicated habits of decision and refinement, and gave a nameless charm to all he uttered. His deportment was noble and commanding; his step bounding and elastic; and there was an impressive and startling vehemence, a fervour and impetuosity in every look and gesture, which made me regard him as one of a new and almost supernatural order of beings. My heart swelled with an aching and uncontrollable impatience to see him again, which quickened every pulse to feverish rapidity; my senses, however, were still confused and giddy with long immersion in the water, and I endeavoured to recruit my exhausted powers by repose. The evening found me more tranquil, and I wandered forth to view the regatta on the grand canal. These boat-races greatly contribute to form the skill and energy which distinguish the Venetian mariners. Strength, dexterity, and ardour, are indispensable to success in contending for the prizes; and the eager competition of the candidates imparts an intense interest to these festivities, which require only a Pindar to elevate them into classical importance. The entire surface of the spacious canal was foaming with the dash of oars, and resounding with the exuberant gaiety of the Venetians; while the tapestried balconies of the surrounding palaces were crowded with all the beauty and chivalry of Venice; and the glittering windows reflected the rays of the setting sun upon happy faces innumerable.
Proceeding to the place of St Mark, I paced in a contemplative mood over its surface until the day closed, and the night-breeze diffused a delicious coolness. I looked into several of the taverns under the arcades to observe the company assembled, and fancied that I discerned in one of them the generous youth who had rescued me from such imminent danger. Availing myself of Venetian privilege, I entered without unmasking, and found my conjecture verified. This tavern was the habitual resort of the artists resident in Venice, and the assembled individuals appeared to be engaged in vehement controversy.

Paul Veronese was addressing them as I entered. "Who," said he, "is most competent to pass judgment upon a work of art? Certainly the man who has accurately observed the appearances of nature, and who can determine the limits of art. I despise the dotards who contend that a man of taste and intellect must have been a dauber of canvass, before he can decide upon the merits of a picture. The ludicrous certificate of approval which the German horse-dealers chalked upon the bronze horses of St Mark's, outweighed, in my estimation, a volume of professional cant. Trained to a sound knowledge of their trade in the studs of Germany, they felt and understood all the excellence of these magnificent works of art. They recognised at once the noble character of the animal, and even distinguished the peculiar attributes of each individual horse. The superlative excellence of their heads, and the fiery impatience of control which they exhibit, cannot be understood or conveyed by mere perseverance in drawing. No painter, who resides in the interior, can understand the merits of a sea-piece; nor can the devout Fra Bartolomeo criticise a Venus of our venerable Titian so well as any despot of the East who owns a seraglio."

"True," replied another artist, whose full round tones and rich emphasis bespoke him a Roman; "but taste is not intuitive; nor can it be attained by merely studying the appearances of nature and the theories of art. We must also explore the rich treasures of painting which adorn and dignify our beautiful Italy. It is not enough, however, to study a single specimen of each great master; we must patiently and repeatedly examine his progressive improvements and his various styles. By perseverance in this process, a young artist will beneficially exercise his eye and his judgment, and will readily distinguish the best pictures in a collection. Any degree of discipline short of this will be inadequate to raise him above the level of the mob, which followed in procession the Madonna of Cimabue, and lauded it as the ne plus ultra of art because they had never seen anything better."

The young stranger now addressed them with much animation: "I presume not to decide," said he, "how far the last speaker is correct in his opinions. The incessant noise on the piazza precludes any deliberate consideration of the subject; but so far as I could collect the subject of Maestro Paul's opinion, I understood him to insist upon the necessity of knowing the limits of art. I trust he will pardon so young an artist for uttering sentiments at variance with his own; and that I shall not lose ground in his esteem if I contend that every object in art is material, and that ideal forms and models of excellence are absurdities. An Aspasia and a Phryne, youthful and lovely, maybe elevated into a Pallas and a Venus by an able and imaginative painter, whose excited fancy will readily improve upon his models, and invest each feature, form, and attitude, with classical and appropriate expression. But an ideal and perfectly beautiful woman, destitute of every attribute arising from climate and national peculiarities, is a phantom of the brain. And yet how many common-place artists, who have consumed the most valuable
portion of their lives in drawing from plaster-casts, call these insufferably vacant faces and forms
genuine art, and affect to look down upon the master-spirits who have immortalised themselves by
matchless portraits of the great men and beautiful women of their own times!”

The parties soon after separated, and Paul Veronese left the tavern, accompanied by the stranger. I
followed, and observed them walking round the piazza, and pausing occasionally to listen to the
melodious barcarolos, and sportive sallies of the gay Venetians. At the entrance of the Merceria the
youth saluted and left his companion, and I promptly availed myself of the opportunity to unmask and
approach him. He immediately recognised me, and expressed himself gratified to observe that my
accident had been unattended with evil consequence. I repeated warmly my acknowledgments, and
assured him of my ardent wish to prove my gratitude by rendering him any service in my power. He
appeared, however, rather disconcerted than pleased by these professions, and exclaimed with some
vehemence, ”What have I done for you that I would not readily have attempted for the lowest of human
beings? How many a wretch throws himself from a precipice into the deep to bring up a paltry coin! I
have been taught to think that exaggerated praise for the performance of a mere act of duty has a
tendency to promote vanity and cowardice; and I predict the decay of true heroism and public spirit
from the growing practice of commemorating trivial events and trivial men by statues, columns, and
inscriptions."

"You may disclaim all merit," I replied; "but I cannot forget that, to save the life of a stranger, you
bounded from the lofty bulwark of a frigate. I maintain that there is something god-like in the man who
hazards his life with such generous promptitude; and I think you cannot but admit that gratitude is the
strongest and most agreeable tie which binds society together. Surely, then, if the fervent and
enthusiastic expression of it be a failing, it is an amiable one."

He took my hand and gave me a look of cordial sympathy, but said nothing in reply. I warmly urged
him to pass the evening with me; he assented, and we proceeded in a gondola up the grand canal to my
abode. During supper the conversation was gay and spirited, but confined to generalities; and it was not
until we were released from the presence of menials that our ideas flowed with unrestrained freedom
and confidence. The government and state-policy of Venice were passed in review; and my guest
lauded the wisdom of the senate in having embraced the first opportunity of concluding with honour the
arduous struggle they had maintained against the formidable power of Turkey. He rejoiced that the
Doge could again espouse the Adriatic sea-nymph with all the accustomed display of pomp and power,
and remarked how essential to the safety and independence of Venice was the uninterrupted annual
celebration of a festival which fostered the pride and courage of the people.

"Our ancient bride," I replied, "has of late exhibited some ominous symptoms of caprice and
inconstancy. The ceremony should have taken place two days since, but the wild goddess was restive
and untameable, and insulted the old Doge, her destined spouse, by rolling the bodies of a dozen
drowned wretches up the grand canal to the stairs of his palace. Pope Alexander III., who exercised
some influence over the capricious fair one, is unfortunately no more; and Columbus, the hero of whom
Genoa proved herself so unworthy, has explored and subdued for the princes of Castile the genuine
Amphitrite, in comparison with whom the bride of Venice is a mere nymph."
"The destinies of Venice," he observed, with a touch of sarcasm in his manner, "must be accomplished. She has reached, and probably passed, the climax of her political greatness. Other nations, in the vigour of youth, and possessing greater local advantages, have commenced their maritime career, and this proud republic must submit to decline and fall, as mightier states have done before her. Already I perceive symptoms of unsoundness in her political institutions, of declining energy and shallow policy in the conduct of her wars and negotiations. If you could not preserve by resolute defence the Isle of Cyprus, which has owned your sway for a century, you might have saved it by the easy and obvious expedient of allowing the Sultan to receive at a cheaper rate his annual supply of its delicious wines, and by refusing to shelter in the harbour of Famaugusta the Christian corsairs who capture the beauties destined for the seraglio. The sweet island of Love is now lost for ever to the state of Venice, and its incomparable wines become every year more rare and costly throughout Italy."

The keen edge of his remarks touched me sensibly, and wounded all my pride of birth and country. This revulsion of feeling did not escape the quick perceptions of my guest: the recollection that he was speaking thus unguardedly to the son of a Venetian senator seemed to flash upon him, and he closed the discussion by remarking, with a smile, that we were in Venice, that Venetian walls possessed the faculty of hearing, and that there would be discretion in a change of subject. I briefly assented to the necessity of being guarded in the vicinity of Venetian domestics, who were occasionally agents of the police; and, after a pause of recollection, he resumed.

"It is time," said he, "that I should speak of myself and of my object in Venice. I am a native of Florence, and a painter. Wearied and disgusted with the skeletons of Florentine art, I came here to study the flesh and blood of the Venetian school. The works of Titian realise everything which is valuable and essential in the art of painting, and the student who does not pursue the track of this great master will never attain high rank as a painter. In Venice, the public voice has supreme jurisdiction in matters of taste and fine art, and the artists collectively exercise little influence on public opinion. Titian fascinates all amateurs, and every artist admits his incomparable excellence in the great essential of painting, which is truth of colouring."

"I am still too much a novice in the theories of your beautiful art," I replied, "to contend this point with you; but you will pardon me if I suggest the probability that you are disgusted with the severity of the Tuscan school. Your abhorrence of the yoke you have escaped from impels you to the other extreme, and your admiration of Venetian art is heightened by contrasting the flesh and blood of Titian with the bones and sinews of Michael Angelo. Nevertheless, I will hazard a prediction, that instead of abandoning for ever the sound principles of the Florentine school, you will eventually resume and abide by them. Our graceful Titian is the prince of colourists, but it must be admitted that his drawing seldom rises above mediocrity."

"You must excuse me," he retorted with a smile, "if I doubt whether your position can be maintained. I infer from the tendency of your remarks that you consider drawing of primary importance. I admit that drawing is essential to give truth and symmetry of proportion, and is therefore a necessary evil; but a finished picture represents the surfaces of things: surfaces are distinguishable only by colouring, and therefore I maintain that colouring is the real object--the alpha and omega--of art. To class drawing
above painting, is to prefer the scaffold to the building--the rude and early stages to the full and rich maturity of art. What are the sharp and vigorous lines of Michael Angelo but dreams and shadows, compared with the pure and exquisite vitality of a head by Titian? Any beardless tyro may, by plodding industry, produce a drawing as accurate, if not as free, as the off-hand sketches of Raffaelle; but to delineate real life with its exquisitely blended tints and demi-tints; its tender outlines, and evanescent shades of character and expression,--to accomplish all this by lines and angles is impossible. It requires the magic aid of colouring, controlled by that deep and rare perception of the beautiful, that wondrous harmony of intellect and feeling, which is the immediate gift of heaven, and the proudest, highest attribute of man."

"I am by no means insensible to the charms of the Venetian school," I rejoined; "and I admit, in many respects, the force of your reasoning. It is, however, a question with me, whether the enthusiastic disciples of Titian are not in danger of pursuing the material and perishable, rather than the intellectual and permanent in painting. The glorious colouring of this great master will fade under the action of time and humidity, and betray his deficiencies in drawing; whereas the moral grandeur of Michael Angelo's frescos, which derive no aid from colour, will endure as long as the walls which they adorn. I would gladly hear you contest this point with the Roman artist who addressed Maestro Paul this evening at the tavern. I feel too much my own deficiency in technical phrase and knowledge to vindicate my opinions successfully."

"That Roman," said he, "is an intellectual and accomplished man, but he wants a painter's eye, and should rather have devoted his time and talents to literature. He has, however, pursued the fine arts professionally, and he is eloquent and resolute in the defence of his opinions: but the nature which he has studied is destitute of life and colouring; it exists only in marble and plaster, and he would rather copy the single and motionless attitude of an antique statue, than study the fine forms and eloquent features with which Italy abounds. He is, in short, a sedentary idler, who will not take the trouble to read the great book of nature, and would rather fire at a wooden eagle on a pole, than pursue the kingly bird amidst the wild scenery of the Apennines. He assumed the unwarrantable liberty of severely censuring Paul Veronese's grand picture of the 'Nuptials of Cana,' in the presence of that noble artist. He objected to the insignificant appearance of Jesus and his disciples, and to their position at the table in the middle-ground of the picture. The painter introduced them into this great work because their presence was indispensable; but he avoided giving them any prominent position, conceiving it impossible for any human artist to convey an adequate personification of our glorious Redeemer. Moreover, they were but accessory to his real object, which was to represent the busy crowd of guests, the banquet, and the architecture. In these respects the artist has been eminently successful. The painting abounds with harmony, and the incidents are told with all the life and spirit of a Spanish novel. The most prominent figures are musicians at a table in the foreground, performing a concert upon elegant instruments. Paul Veronese is leading with grace and spirit on the violin; Titian, the great ruler of harmony, is performing on the violoncello; Bassano and Tintorett, upon other instruments. They are painted with wonderful truth of character and expression; they are magnificently attired; and their personal appearance is eminently noble and dignified. Around the bride's table are assembled the most distinguished personages of the present age; all admirable portraits, and abounding with dramatic expression. The atmosphere in the background is clear and transparent, and exhibits in sharp and
brilliant relief the Palladian magnificence of the architecture; while the busy foreground is enriched with a gorgeous display of vases and other materials of the banquet, adorned with chasings of splendid and classical design. The light throughout the foreground and middle distance is wonderfully natural, and clearly develops the numerous groups and figures comprehended in this colossal work. What man of sense and feeling can behold this wondrous achievement of human art, and not long to feast his eyes upon it for ever?

"This fastidious Roman expressed also his annoyance at the inaccuracy of the costume, in Paul's fine picture of the 'Family of Darius presented to Alexander,' and lamented that so admirable a work should have been blemished by this gross anachronism. You are, doubtless, well acquainted with a painting which belongs to a branch of your family. It may be truly called the triumph of colouring; and certainly more harmony, splendour, and loveliness, never met together in one picture. To these merits must be added the truth of character which prevails in all the heads, most of which are portraits. Forget for a moment that the incident is borrowed from ancient story; imagine it the victory of a hero of the sixteenth century, and the painting becomes, in all respects, a masterpiece. The architecture, in the background, gives a tone to the whole; but it required the delicate outlines and the exquisite perception of harmonious colouring which distinguish Paul Veronese, to give relief and contrast to the figures and draperies on so light a ground. The pyramidal group, formed by an old man and four female figures, is superlatively lovely; the countenances wonderfully expressive, and sparkling with animation. The head of Alexander is beautiful, but deficient in masculine firmness, and more adapted to charm the softer sex than to awe the world; while the nobler features of Parmenia exhibit a strength of character finely contrasted with the more feminine graces of the royal conqueror, and his yellow drapery is admirably folded and coloured. How exquisitely finished, too, is the long and beautifully braided flaxen hair of the Persian Princesses! And what a host of figures in this noble picture, most of them the size of life, as in the 'Nuptials of Cana!' Certainly, this painting is nearly unrivalled in close fidelity to nature; and in the truth and splendour of its colouring, it yields only to that triumphant specimen of Venetian art in the Scuola della Carità, Titian's 'Presentation of the Virgin in the Temple.' These two pictures will long maintain their glorious supremacy, and will probably never be surpassed. This painter's violation of costume is, in fact, only a defect in the eyes of antiquarians. The great mass of society overlook it, and care only for what gratifies the eye and the imagination. Nevertheless I would recommend to artists generally the avoidance of subjects borrowed from ancient history. It is far easier to excel in the folds and colourings of modern drapery, than to delineate the light garb and native elegance of Grecian forms. Nor could any painters, but those who lived in the times of Pericles and Aspasia, do justice to those most classical and graceful of all subjects. Oh! how I burn with impatient ardour to behold the storied isles and continent of Greece! Their ancient splendour is no more, but their pure and temperate clime still develops the noblest specimens of the human race."

"Had our acquaintance commenced some years sooner," said I, interrupting him, "I could have gratified your wish. I accompanied my father, who went to Greece on a mission from the republic, and I remained three years on the classic soil of Homer and Sophocles. I was too young to make the most of my opportunities, but I succeeded in my attempts to master the modern language, and at the same time greatly improved my knowledge of ancient Greek."
At these words my companion started impetuously from his chair, and strained me in a vehement embrace.

"Oh! rare and fortunate incident!" he exclaimed; "you are the companion I have so long and vainly sought. A man so distinguished by nobility of mind and person, and yet so young, it has never been my good fortune to meet with. You will, you must be, the chosen friend of my soul!"

I could not but suspect that some mystery was involved in this abrupt and somewhat premature tender of his friendship; but I returned his embrace with grateful ardour. It was impossible to resist the contagion of his impassioned and headlong feelings. I trembled with emotion, and vainly endeavoured to express in connected language how greatly I valued his good opinion. It was midnight when he left me, promising a long and early visit on the succeeding day.

I retired to bed in a state of excitement which banished sleep. To subdue the vivid impression made upon me by the events of the day and evening was impossible. I had, perhaps too unwarily, given a pledge of fervent and enduring friendship to a man whose name and connections were a mystery, and of whose character and previous life my ignorance was absolute: but the singular charm of his language and deportment was even enhanced by the obscurity which enveloped him, and I yielded unresistingly to the spell in which he had bound me.

I had never yet beheld the man whose tastes and pursuits assimilated so entirely with my own. He was, however, incomparably my superior in natural and acquired advantages. He possessed more variety, more fulness and accuracy of knowledge, and he displayed a vigour and opulence of language which often rose with the occasion into the lofty and impassioned eloquence of poetry. His soul was more expansive and liberal than mine, but at the same time more uncontrolled, rash, and intemperate. He had doubtless those defects, which, in Italy, often accompany an ardent and impetuous character; and, under strong provocation, he would not hesitate probably to inflict an unsparing and formidable revenge: but surely a generous heart and a commanding intellect will redeem many failings, and even palliate those desperate alternatives to which men of noble nature and of pure intention are sometimes impelled by the defects of our social institutions.
CHAPTER II.

At an early hour on the following morning I heard the emphatic tread of the young painter in the corridor. In a moment he entered my apartment, and his appearance renewed in some degree my emotion. "Our feelings had too much of lyric riot in them last night," said he, smiling; "such excitement is exhausting, and cannot be long sustained without approximation to fever. I shall never learn moderation in my attachments, but I am resolved to lower the expression of them to a more temperate standard; and with this object I will, if agreeable to you, endeavour to create occupation for our intellects as well as our feelings."

He then inquired if I had practised drawing, and to what extent. I told him that I had been in the habit of sketching the fine lake and mountain scenery of Lombardy; but that my ambition was to draw the human figure from living models, which I regarded as the only avenue by which any degree of excellence could be attained.

"If you will accept of my assistance," he replied, "we can immediately commence a course of elementary studies of the human figure; after which," added he sportively, "you may employ me as a model. In return for my instructions in painting, you must promote my ardent wish to attain a competent knowledge of modern Greek. I have a sacred duty to perform in one of the Greek islands, and shall proceed there in the ensuing autumn."

"We cannot effectually realise your suggestion," I rejoined, "unless we abandon for a while the riot and revelry of Venice. My father is at present in Dalmatia, and I am pledged to pass the summer in the country with my excellent and respected mother, who is preparing for departure, and will probably quit Venice at the close of the present week. The villa we inhabit during the summer heats is in the most charming district of Lombardy, and near the spot where the rapid Mincio receives the pure waters of the lake of Garda. You must accompany me to this earthly paradise, where we can enjoy the cool breezes from the lake and mountains, and explore the bright scenery of its classic shores and the peninsula of Sirmio, sung in glowing verse by Catullus. There we can repose under the dark umbrage of orange and myrtle groves, drink deep of the beauties of Pindar, and bind our temples with wreaths of laurel. But I have not yet introduced you to my mother. She is aware that a stranger saved me from a watery death in the harbour, and will welcome gratefully the preserver of her only son. She has a fine taste for pictures, and is an enthusiastic admirer of beautiful Madonnas. If you will paint one for her private chapel, and subdue in some measure the impetuous ardour of your deportment in her presence, she will receive and cherish you as a son."

While thus addressing him, I perceived a sudden contraction of his fine features, indicative of strong internal emotion, the mystery of which was not developed for a considerable period after this conversation. At length he approached me, and, with a look of intense interest, inquired how near my father's villa was to Peschiera on the lake of Garda. "Within a league of it," I replied. Again he paced the apartment in silent abstraction, when suddenly his eagle-eye was lighted up with more than its wonted fire, and he exclaimed with animation, "Agreed! I will accompany you to Lombardy, and should I prove acceptable to your mother as a guest, I will paint a Madonna for her chapel. On my
discretion, and my respect for her habits and feelings, you may rely."

On the succeeding day I introduced him to my mother. The elegant freedom of his address, and the spirit and originality of his conversation, made an immediate and favourable impression upon my beloved parent; and she afterwards acknowledged to me that, independently of his noble exterior, and his powerful claim upon her gratitude, she had never been so strongly prepossessed. It was on this occasion that he named himself Colonna. Since his refusal to reveal his name on the first day of our acquaintance, I had never repeated the inquiry. Subsequently, however, I discovered that this appellation had been assumed under circumstances of a disastrous and compulsory nature. After his interview with my mother, I accompanied him to his abode, where I was gratified with a view of the paintings and sketches which he had executed in Venice. His figures were fresh and masterly; his colouring had all the brilliant glow of the Venetian painters; while his bold and beautiful designs betrayed, as I had anticipated, the accurate drawing of the Tuscan school. His studies were from the antique, and from Italian life: naked figures, or with little drapery; female heads abounding with expression and loveliness; arms and legs, backs and busts; naked boys, bathing, running, and wrestling. He intimated that he had never yet painted for emolument, nor for the gratification of others; and added, carelessly, "what farther concerns me shall be revealed to you in our hours of leisure by the lake of Garda."

On the appointed morning we quitted Venice. Our bark issued from the grand canal at an early hour, glided silently over the smooth surface of the laguna, and approached the entrance of the Brenta. The sun was rising in veiled and purple majesty through the soft mists of a summer morning, and the towers and churches of Venice appeared floating in thin vapour. Colonna ascended the deck, and, folding his arms, gazed with evident emotion on the "City of Palaces," until it disappeared behind a bank of fog. His chest heaved with some powerful sympathy, and, for a moment, tears suffused his eyes and veiled their brightness. His manner implied, I thought, some painful recollections, or a presentiment that he should never behold Venice again. To me our departure was a source of relief and enjoyment. In the winter season Venice is a cheerful and desirable abode, because the population is dense, and the local peculiarities contribute greatly to promote public and private festivity: but, during the heats of summer and the exhalations of autumn, no place is more offensive and pestilential.

At Padua we separated from my mother, who proceeded with her domestics by the direct road to Peschiera, while Colonna and I made a deviation to Vicenza, whither we journeyed on foot; a mode of travelling the most favourable to colloquial enjoyment, and to an accurate and comprehensive view of the country. We found the numerous edifices of Palladio in Vicenza and its vicinity in many respects unworthy of that noble architect; many of them are indeed remodelled fronts of old houses, in which the pure taste of the artist was warped by the want of capability in the original elevations. The palaces built after his designs are deficient in extent and variety, and may be termed experimental models, rather than effective illustrations, of his chaste and classical conceptions. In his triumphal arch at the entrance of the Campo Marzo we found much to admire, and not less in his beautiful bridge which spans the Bacchiglione. How bold, and light, and elegant the arch, like the daring leap of a youthful amazon! And how cheerful the open balustrade, through which the clear and sparkling waters are seen rolling their rapid course to the adjacent city!
It is in Venice that the fine genius of Palladio develops all its supremacy. The Cornaro palace on the grand canal, and the unfinished convent of La Carità, are splendid efforts of pure taste in design and decoration; and as perfect in execution and finish as if cast in a mould. His churches too, especially that glorious edifice, Al Redentore—how simple in design, and yet how beautifully effective and harmonious in proportion and outline!

We proceeded on the following morning to Verona, which excited a stronger interest than Vicenza by its classical associations and striking position on the river Adige, a lively daughter of the Alps. Rushing from her mountain bed, she urges her rapid and devious course through the city, dividing it into two portions, connected by the bridge of Scaliger. This fine edifice rises on bold arches, wider, and more heroic, and more scientific, than that of the Rialto, the wonder of Venice, which is indeed no bridge, but a huge and inconvenient staircase.

Pursuing as we journeyed onward the subject of architecture, I commented on the insignificant appearance of the temples of Pantheism, when compared with the majestic cathedrals for which the Christian world is indebted to the barbarians of the middle ages.

"The Greeks and Romans," observed Colonna, "erected a temple to each individual of their numerous deities. These buildings were consequently of limited extent, and their columns of corresponding proportions. The citizens sacrificed singly to the gods, or attended public festivals, comprehending large masses of the people; in which event the officiating priest or priestess entered the temple, and the assembled votaries were grouped without. In our churches, on the contrary, the population of a city is often congregated for hours; and how magnificently adapted for this object is the vast and solemn interior of a Gothic cathedral, in which the voice of the priest reverberates like thunder, and the chorus of the people rises like a mountain-gust, praising the great Father of all, and rousing the affrighted conscience of the infidel; while the mighty organ, the tyrant of music, rages like a hurricane, and rolls his deep floods of sound in sublime accompaniment! How grand were the conceptions of the rational barbarians, to whom Europe is indebted for these vast and noble structures! And how immeasurably they surpass, for all meditative and devotional objects, the modern application of Greek and Roman temples, on an enlarged scale, to the purposes of Christian worship! Had any necessity existed to borrow designs from these sources, we should rather have modelled our churches from their theatres, the plan of which is admirably fitted for oratorical purposes, and for the accommodation of numbers."

We accomplished the last portion of our journey during a night of superlative beauty. A brilliant and nearly full moon glided with us through long avenues of lofty elms, linked together by the clustering tendrils of vines, festooned from tree to tree, and at this season prodigal of foliage. The coruscations of distant lightning shot through the clear darkness of Italian night; the moon and evening star, and Sirius and Orion, soared above us in pure ether, and seemed to approach our sphere like guardian spirits. The cool breezes which usher in the dawn now began to whisper through the foliage; a light vapour arose in the east; and the soft radiance of the first sunbeams faintly illumined the horizon as we arrived at our destination. Here the romantic lake of Garda lay expanded before us; its broad surface ruffled by the mountain breeze, and gleaming like silver in the moonlight. The waves were heaving in broken and foaming masses, and reverberated along the rocky shores, finely illustrating the accuracy of Virgil's
I retired immediately to rest, not having slept for the preceding twenty-four hours; while Colonna preferred a morning walk, and wandered out to view the environs. In the course of the day we completed our domestic arrangements. My friend occupied a saloon on the north side of the villa, which commanded an extensive prospect, a light favourable for painting, and private egress into the open country; an accommodation which he requested, that his rambling and irregular habits might occasion no inconvenience to the other inmates of the mansion.

After a few days had been devoted to excursions upon and around the lake, and over the picturesque hills as far as Brescia, we commenced a more useful and methodical distribution of our time. Colonna began and completed the sketch of a Madonna for my mother, that he might work upon it at his leisure; and we read together the Greek poets and historians: nor did I forget to avail myself of my friend's proffered assistance to improve my knowledge of drawing and design. Under his masterly guidance I persevered in drawing geometrical figures until I could trace them with quickness, freedom, and accuracy. He then annoyed me for a brief interval with skeletons and anatomical subjects, directing my attention to the articulation of the joints and the insertion of the muscles; after which I proceeded to copy his fine studies of human limbs, both round and muscular, and in the various attitudes of action and repose. Finally, I began to sketch from living models, and was pursuing my object with ardour and success, when a tragical event severed me for a considerable period from my beloved tutor and friend.

It had been arranged between us that each should, in his habits, be perfectly uncontrolled, and independent of the other. Our excursions were alternately separate, and in company, and Colonna was often absent from the villa for one or more days and nights, without exciting observation or surprise.

He delighted in ranging over the green pastures of Lombardy, hedged in by lofty trees, festooned with vines, and irrigated by transparent streams innumerable. The young Tuscan had never before seen nature in a garb so lovely and inviting; he wandered through the picturesque villages which margin or overhang the lake of Garda, sojourned with the peasantry, and sketched their figures and costume. From these rambles he would often return at sunset over the lake in a small bark, crowned like a youthful Bacchus with vine leaves and ivy, and singing wild Dithirambics to his guitar, while the surrounding villagers, by whom he was idolised, followed him in their boats with shouts of joy and festivity.

During the cool nights which, in this hilly region, temper the sickly heat of an Italian summer, we often wandered along the breezy shores of our classic Benacus, or sought refreshment in its dark blue waters. Colonna was an adept in the delightful exercise of swimming, and his instructions soon imparted to me requisite skill and self-possession. We plunged from the marble terraces of the villa into the delicious element, cleaving its moonlit waves, and sporting over its wide surface like water-gods.

The Madonna for my mother was finished in August. The artist had selected the incident of the flight into Egypt, and the mother of Jesus was reposing in deep shade, under the giant arms and dense foliage
of a maple tree. In the middle distance, a few ilex and cypress trees were effectively and naturally distributed. The background was mountain scenery; and from a lofty cliff a river was precipitated, in a bold and picturesque fall. The waters rebounded from the gulf below in silver spray, and flowed through a verdant level into a tranquil and beautiful lake. The most romantic features of the wilderness around the lake of Garda were faithfully and beautifully introduced; and the brilliant rays of a sun approaching the horizon, threw a flood of gold over rock, and wood, and water. The Madonna was a young and lovely woman, giving nourishment to her first-born son, and bending over her pleasing task with delighted attention. The head of the Virgin was after a sketch from life, but developed and elevated in character, and invested with a breathing tenderness, a hallowed innocence and purity of expression, which at once thrilled and saddened the beholder. The boy was a model of infantine beauty; he supported himself with one little hand on his mother's breast, which was partially veiled with red drapery, and he had raised his cherub head and glossy curls from the sweet fount of life, to look with bright and earnest gaze upon the glowing landscape. The luxuriant brown hair of the Madonna was confined in a net, from which a few locks had strayed over her brow and cheek; and her blue mantle flowed with modest grace over her fine person, revealing, through its light and well-distributed folds, the graceful and easy position of the limbs. The eyes of both were radiantly bright, and in the large, well-opened orbs of the infant Saviour, the painter had introduced a something never seen in life--a premature and pathetic seriousness, awfully indicative of his high and hallowed destiny. Above the stately plane-tree were soaring three angels of more than Grecian beauty; and their features, in which a sacred innocence of look was blended with feminine grace and softness, reminded me powerfully of that exquisite design in Raffaello's pictorial Bible--the "three angels before Abraham's threshold."

My mother was inexpressibly delighted with this valuable token of his regard, and her affection for the highly-gifted painter became truly maternal.

About this period I remarked a mysterious change in the looks and habits of Colonna. His prompt and flowing language gave place to a moody and oppressive silence; his deportment was occasionally more abrupt and impassioned; and his eloquent features betrayed some hidden source of grief and perplexity. The increased duration and frequency of his rambles from the villa excited at length my attention and remonstrance. In justification, he pleaded, as before, that he was a man of itinerant habits, and too mercurial in temperament to remain long in any place. This explanation had now, however, ceased to be satisfactory. Our intercourse was obviously less cordial and incessant. He had of late rarely sought my society in his excursions, and this circumstance, in connection with his altered look and manner, made me suspect some change in his feelings towards me. I determined to solve a mystery so painful and embarrassing, and succeeded ere long in obtaining his confession, during a still and beautiful night, a large portion of which we passed together in a myrtle arbour, which crowned a cool eminence in the

CHAPTER II.
villa gardens. We had passed some hours in this delicious solitude, enjoying the pure night-breeze, and admiring the soft and silver tints diffused by an Italian moon over the lake and landscape. Our spirits were elevated by wine, and song, and conversation; and our hearts communed together, and expanded into more than usual freedom and confidence. I described to him the fair objects of several fleeting attachments, and acknowledged that my experience of female excellence had never yet realised the expectations I had formed. "I anticipated from you, however," I continued, "some illustrations of that wayward thing, the human heart. A youth so ardent in feeling, and so adorned by nature and education, must necessarily have had no limited experience of the tender passion; and surely some of the beautiful heads in your portfolio have been sketched from life, and con amore."

"I do not willingly," he replied, "enter upon acknowledgments of this nature. They tend to excite feelings of envy, and sometimes expose the warmest friendship to a severe test. We have now, however, enjoyed abundant opportunity to study the lights, and shades, and inmost recesses of our respective characters, and as you have made me your father-confessor, I shall no longer hesitate to repose in you a responsive and unbounded confidence. Know, then, that I love, with all the enthusiasm of a first passion, the most beautiful woman of her time--that she is the only daughter of the proudest senator in Venice--that she is no stranger to your family, and now resides within a league of us. Her name is Laura Foscari; and she is, alas! the destined and unwilling bride of the opulent Ercole Barozzo, governor of Candia."

At this unexpected intelligence, I almost started on my feet with astonishment. My consternation was too great for utterance, and I listened with breathless and eager attention.

"We became acquainted," he continued, "by a singular accident. I had long admired her as the most lovely woman in Venice. Her head has all the beauty of a fine antique, lighted up by dark eyes of radiant lustre, and heightened by a smile of magic power and sweetness. I have more than once sketched her unrivalled features when she was kneeling at church, and her fine eyes were upraised in devotional rapture. In public places, and at mass, I had frequently seen her, and our eyes had so often met, that she could not but learn from mine how fervently I admired her. My endeavours to obtain an introduction as an artist to her father and brothers had been unsuccessful, and at length I was indebted to a fortunate incident for an opportunity of conversing with her unobserved. One evening, near the close of the last Carnival, I saw her enter with her friends the place of St Mark, near the new church of San Geminiano. She wore only a half-mask, and her graceful mien and fine person could not be disguised. My mask and domino were similar to those of her youngest brother, who resembled me also somewhat in person. The imperfect light and the confusion of the assembled crowd separated her from her party; and while endeavouring to rejoin them, she approached me, mistook me for her brother, put her arm within mine, and with charming vivacity, whispered in my ear some comments on the motley groups around us. You will readily conjecture that I promptly availed myself of the brief and golden opportunity. I glanced rapidly around, and finding that we were unobserved, I partially raised my mask. She had so often observed me gazing upon her with undisguised and rapturous admiration, that she recognised me at once, and tacitly acknowledged it by a blush which suffused every visible feature with crimson. In glowing and beautiful confusion she attempted to withdraw her arm, but I retained it firmly, and in low but emphatic tones, I told her that I had long loved her with sincerity and ardour; that I could
fairly boast of constancy and discretion, of education and refinement; that no man so well understood her value, or would encounter and endure so much to win her affections. All this and more I poured into her ear with rapid and glowing diction, and with the impassioned gesture which is natural to me. Timid and irresolute, she accompanied me some paces, paused, and in trembling emotion again attempted to withdraw her arm, but was still urged forward by my impetuosity. At length, by a sudden effort, she escaped; but, as she quitted, whispered with bewitching hesitation and timidity--"To-morrow morning, at Santi Giovanni e Paolo." Soon as these words fell on my delighted ear, I plunged into the crowd of masks, in token of my discretion and prompt obedience to her will. The emotion excited by this early and unexpected proof of sympathy was so rapturous and overwhelming, that I abandoned myself to all the extravagance of sudden bliss. I flew on wings of ecstasy along the streets, bounded over the stairs of the Rialto, and reached my abode in a state of mind bordering on delirium. During that interminable but delicious night I neither sought nor wished for repose. I felt as if I had never known sleep--as if I should never sleep again; and, when my waking dreams occasionally yielded to brief and agitated slumber, my excited feelings called up a flitting train of images not less vivid and enchanting.

"Long before the commencement of the early mass, I had reached the church indicated by the beauteous Laura. I was the first to enter it, and I waited her arrival with an impatience which no words can describe. Never had the celebration of the mass appeared to me so wearisome and monotonous; and, in hopes to subdue in some measure the wild agitation which chafed me, I withdrew the curtain which veiled Titian's divine picture of Pietro Martire, in which the saint lies wounded and dying before his assassin. The companion of the prostrate Pietro is endeavouring to escape a similar fate; and two angels, whose features are not Italian but Greek, are soaring amidst the foliage, environed with a heavenly lustre, which throws its bright effulgence over the foreground of the immense landscape. What a masterpiece! How full of animation and contrast! What rich and lively local tints in the slender and graceful stems of the lofty chestnuts, which are painted the size of nature! And how naturally the glorious landscape fades into the blue and distant mountains! The half-naked murderer has all the ferocity of a mountain bandit, in figure, attitude, and menace; while the wounded saint exhibits in his pale and collapsed features the dying agony of a good man, blended with a consciousness that he has achieved the rewarding glories of martyrdom.

"But no masterpiece could allay the glowing tumults of my soul, and again I paced the church with feverish impatience. At length the peerless Laura entered, and, alas, poor Titian! the charms of thy creative pencil withered as she approached--the vivid splendours of thy colouring faded before the paramount beauties of nature! She was attired in the picturesque garb and head-dress of Venice; her veil was raised; and her fine countenance, radiant with beauty and intelligence, imparted life, dignity, and lustre to every surrounding object.

"She was accompanied by her mother, and after prostration before the altar, they retired to their devotions in the body of the church. I stood in a position which enabled me to observe every look and gesture, and it did not escape me that Laura, while kneeling, cast a look of supplication towards heaven, and sighed deeply. She soon became conscious of my presence; and rising, she took a chair, and fixed upon me a look so deeply penetrative, so fraught with tender meaning, and yet so timidly, so truly modest, that every chord of feeling in my frame was thrilled with sudden transport. To uninterested
observers her deportment was tranquil, but ere long I could discern tokens of deep and anxious thought clouding her lovely face. Her lips quivered as if in sympathy with some inward feeling of doubt and apprehension, which at length subsided, and her angelic features were suddenly irradiated with a tender and enchanting smile. She then read for some time in her book, and marked a place in it with a card, to which, by an expressive glance, she directed my attention. The mass was concluded, the congregation quit the church, and I availed myself of the crowded portal to approach and take the card, which she conveyed to me unperceived. I hastened from the spot, and seized the first opportunity to read these words—'Two hours after midnight, at the postern near the canal.' The card said no more; but, to a lover, it spoke volumes.

"These magic words, and the enchantress who had penned them, absorbed every thought and feeling throughout the never-ending day. In the evening, I passed and repassed the Foscari palace, until the shape and position of every door and window were engraven on my memory. I provided myself with weapons, ordered my gondolier to hold himself in readiness, and at midnight I proceeded to the Piazza near Maria Formosa. Enveloped in my mantle, I traversed the pavement with feverish impetuosity for two hours, which appeared like ages. The course of nature seemed to stagnate, and the constellations to pause in their career, as if in mockery of my feelings. I walked with increased rapidity, and even vaulted into the air with childish eagerness as if to grasp the heavenly bodies, and accelerate their lingering progress. At length the last quarter struck. I hastened through the silent and deserted streets, and strode over the bridges with a bound as vehement as if I would have spurned them from under me. I soon arrived at the appointed postern, and waited, all eye and ear, in a contiguous angle of the wall. Ere long the door was gently opened, and I heard the music of an angel's voice, bidding me enter with noiseless steps, and beware of rousing her brothers, whose violence would endanger my life. In obedient silence I followed her up a dark staircase into a saloon adjoining the grand canal, and dimly lighted by a single lamp. The enchanting Laura was attired in a white robe of elegant simplicity, well fitted to display the perfect symmetry and luxuriant fulness of her incomparable shape. Her head was uncovered, and her waving tresses floated in rich profusion over her shoulders and bosom. Thus unadorned, her beauty was so dazzling and celestial, that I could have knelt and worshipped her as the Aphrodite of the Adriatic Paphos. I gazed upon her until I became giddy with admiration and rapture. Yielding to an irresistible impulse, I lost all discretion—folded the lovely creature in my embrace—and impressed a fervent kiss upon her coral lips.

"Unhand me, daring youth!' she exclaimed, her fine features flashing with indignant eloquence as she repulsed me. 'Remember that I am Foscari's daughter, and do me the justice to believe, that I have not unadvisedly received you at an hour so unseemly. I was impelled to this step not only by the regard due to your personal safety, but by my implicit confidence in the honour of a cavalier. Think not, rash youth! that a Foscari would condescend, like Bianca Capello, to an obscure stranger. I know that you are not what you would seem. I know that 'Colonna the painter' is but the outward shell which hides the pearl and pride of the Florentine nobility. I have a friend in Venice who is in confidential intercourse by letter with your aunt Veronica, and from her I heard in secrecy that the study of painting was not your primary object in Venice, but assumed only to mask some more important purpose.'
"Mortified by the indiscretion of my aunt, and sensible of the fatal consequences it might involve, I soon recovered some degree of self-control, and apologised to the still offended Laura for the inconsiderate freedom in which I had indulged. I then disclosed to her some particulars of my previous history, and expressed, in ardent and grateful terms my sense of the flattering distinction conferred upon me by the loveliest woman in Venice.

"'Ah, Montalto!' she replied, with glowing cheeks, and a look of enchanting tenderness, 'you know not the dreadful risk to which my wish to become better acquainted with your merits exposes me. I am watched with jealous and unceasing vigilance by an ambitious father, whose sole object is the aggrandisement of his sons; and to the accomplishment of this purpose he will not hesitate to sacrifice an only and affectionate daughter. Destined to become the unwilling bride of heartless opulence, or to the living sepulture of a convent, and formed, by an affectionate mother, for every social and domestic relation, there have been moments when I wished it had pleased Heaven to cast my lot in free and humble mediocrity. My affections were then unappropriated----'

"She paused in blushing and beautiful embarrassment, but soon resumed:--'It would be affectation to deny that they are no longer so. I must have been more than woman to have remarked, without some responsive feeling, the obvious regard----' Here she paused anew, the rose of sweet confusion dyed her cheek more deeply than before, and after a momentary struggle, she continued, with averted looks: 'The heroic cast and expression of your features, and the unembarrassed ease and elegance of your deportment, bore the genuine stamp of nobility by descent and education. The instinctive discrimination peculiar to woman is often more accurate in its conclusions than the boasted experience of man. Appearances taught me to suspect, that your homely garb and professional pursuit were a delusion; and I heard with more pleasure than surprise that my conjecture was well-founded.'

"Such, my Angelo! was the ingenuous and flattering avowal of the transcendent Laura Foscari, the pride of Venice, and paragon of her sex. No words can portray the boundless gratitude and affection with which she inspired me; nor will I attempt to describe the enchanting grace and varied intelligence of her conversation during the brief and delightful hour I remained with her. Too soon the breezes which announce the dawn shook the windows of the saloon; a luminous streak bordered the eastern sky; and Laura, starting suddenly from her chair, bade me begone.

"Thus terminated my first interview with this high-minded and incomparable woman. To-morrow, should no obstacle intervene, I will resume my narrative, and, at the same time, impart to you some particulars of my family and early life."

We then returned to the villa, and separated for the night.
CHAPTER III.

If the opening of Colonna's confession had excited surprise and emotion, the incidents detailed in his interesting narrative were a fertile source of anxiety and dismay. The veil of mystery was indeed raised, but the scene disclosed was haunted by menacing appearances; and I looked forward to the future with indescribable solicitude. The vehemence of Colonna's passions was alarming, and his impetuosity would too probably betray him into formidable peril. After mature consideration, however, I determined to rest my hopes of a happy termination to these difficulties upon his clear intellect, and his noble and generous heart. I mentally renewed my vow of everlasting friendship, and pledged myself to assist and defend him to the uttermost, under all circumstances of difficulty and peril.

On the following day we were surprised by an unwelcome visit from the brothers and destined husband of Laura. She had previously accompanied her mother more than once in a morning visit to our villa; but I had never surmised sympathy, nor even acquaintance, between her and Colonna, so skilfully did they preserve appearances. When he spoke of her, it was invariably in the language of an artist. He admired the rare and absolute symmetry of her face and form, in which she surpassed every woman he had seen. He even remarked, with well-assumed professional enthusiasm, how much it was to be regretted that her rank and education precluded the possibility of her benefiting the arts as a model. He deemed the proportions of her figure as admirable as those of the Grecian Venus at Florence; and her head, arms, and hands as greatly superior. On farther retrospection, I recollected to have observed a richer glow on the cheek of Laura, whenever the lute of Colonna vibrated from the villa-gardens; or, when his thrilling and seductive voice sang some tender aria to the guitar.

The younger Foscari was fascinated by the appearance and conversation of Colonna, and expressed a wish to see his paintings. The party proceeded to his saloon, and readily acknowledged his fine taste, and evident promise of high excellence. Barozzo alone, a man of large stature, of haughty deportment, and of a repulsive and sinister aspect, assumed the critic; and betrayed, by his uncouth remarks, an utter ignorance of fine art. Colonna, however, with admirable self-possession, preserved the unassuming deportment of a young artist, ambitious of patronage; spoke of the extreme difficulty of attaining excellence in his profession, and gravely complimented Barozzo upon the accuracy of his judgment. The haughty senator was gratified and won by an admission so flattering to his pride; and condescended to request that Colonna would paint the portraits of his bride and himself. The young painter bit his lip as he bowed his acknowledgments; but expressed his high sense of the honour conferred, and his conviction that the portraits, if successful, would powerfully recommend him to the nobles of Venice, and prove a certain avenue to fame and fortune. It was agreed that, on an early day, Colonna should proceed with the requisite materials to the villa Foscari, and commence the portrait of Laura; after which, the cavaliers mounted their horses, and returned home.

To prevent a similar interruption on the succeeding day from any other quarter, I agreed with Colonna to rise with the sun, and proceed over the lake into the mountains, with provisions for the day. We met at early dawn; and the birds were caroling their morning hymn, as, with expanded sail, our bark bounded lightly across the lake. Ere long we saw the god of day peeping with golden brow above the ridge of Monte Baldo; then, majestically advancing over the mountains near Verona, he poured a flood
of bright and glowing beauty over the immense landscape. The water was partially concealed by the vapours of morning, and mists of purple hue floated like regal canopies above the cliffs, while a light breeze, rippling the centre of the lake, dispersed its tranquil slumber, and roused it into life and beauty. The peninsula of Sirmio lay basking in sunny radiance before us; and the mountains beyond displayed the grandeur of their immeasurable outline, varied by prominent and rugged masses, which were piled up in chaos like Ossa on Pelion. The eastern sky was robed in vapours of rosy tint; light clouds of pearly lustre floated in tranquil beauty through the heavens; and the Alpine eagles were careering in joyous and sweeping circles amid the pure ether.

Certainly the lake of Garda displays a rare combination of the beautiful and sublime. The shores abound in the wild and majestic, in variety and beauty of local tints, and picturesque vicissitudes of light and shade; while the olive-crowned Sirmio, like the island-realm of a Calypso, reposes in regal pride upon the waters, and seems to hold in vassalage the opposite shores and amphitheatre of mountains.

There have been some days in my existence which will ever be dear to my memory, and this was one of them. It was a cool and delicious morning in the beginning of October; my senses were refreshed with sleep; I was awake to the calm and holy influences of nature; and I anticipated the promised narrative of Colonna's early life with a lively interest, which imparted new zest to every feeling, and new beauty to the glowing landscape. It was still early when we landed under the cliff, and availed ourselves of the dewy freshness of the morning to ascend a rugged path, which conducted us to a sequestered grove of beech and chestnut. From a crevice in the base of a rock, feathered with flowering creepers, issued a limpid spring, which, after dispensing coolness and verdure to the grove, rolled onward with mild and soothing murmurs to the lower levels. Plunging our wine-flasks into the pure element where it burst into life from the parent rock, we extended ourselves on the soft grass, and dismissed our boatmen, with orders to return at sunset. I then reminded Colonna of his promise to reveal to me some particulars of his early fortunes; and after a pause, during which his features were slightly convulsed, as if by painful recollections, he thus began:

"I am the sole survivor of one of the most illustrious families in Florence. My father was Leone di Montalto; and my mother was of the persecuted and noble race of the Albizi. They are both deceased; and I remain a solitary mourner, their first and only child. My mother died the day after my birth, and my father grieved for her long and sincerely; but the lapse of years, and frequent absences from Florence in the naval service of the state, healed his wounded spirit; and in an evil hour he became deeply enamoured of Isabella, third daughter of Cosmo de' Medici, the tyrant of unhappy Florence. She was the wife of Paul Orsini, the Roman, who, without any formal repudiation, had abandoned her, and resided entirely in Rome. This extraordinary woman was distinguished throughout Italy for personal beauty and rare intellectual accomplishment. Her conversation not only sparkled with wit, grace, and vivacity, but was full of knowledge and originality; and her great natural powers had been so highly cultivated, that she conversed with fluency in French, Spanish, and even in Latin. She performed with skill on various instruments--sang like a Siren, and was an admirable improvisatrice. Thus highly gifted and adorned by nature and education, she was the idol of Cosmo, and ruled his court like a presiding goddess. Her time and her affections being unoccupied, she did not discourage the attentions of my
father, who was one of the most elegant and accomplished men of his time, and blended the grace of a courtier with the free and gallant bearing of a distinguished commander. The dormant sensibilities of Isabella were soon awakened by the enthusiastic fervour of his attachment; and their secret intelligence had subsisted some time, when it was discovered by the jealous and vindictive Cosmo. My unfortunate parent was immediately arrested and imprisoned, but effected his escape, fled to Venice, and from thence to the Levant. His estates were confiscated under the pretext of treasonable practices; and I found a refuge and a home under the roof of my widowed aunt, Veronica Della Torre.

"The heartless and meretricious Isabella relinquished my father without a sigh, or a struggle to save him, and consoled herself with court-pageantry, and a succession of new lovers, many of whom were sacrificed by her cunning and ruthless father. As a selfish voluptuary, and the destroyer of his country's liberty, Cosmo has been compared with Augustus; but in gratuitous and deliberate cruelty, he far surpasses his prototype.

"I was indebted to neglect and accident for the best of all XXXX educations. My father loved and cherished me; but his domestic calamity, his frequent absences from Florence, and, subsequently, his pursuit of Isabella, interfered with the customary course of education, and saved me from the despotism of a regular tutor, and from the debasing tyranny, the selfish and vulgar profligacy, of those institutions of monkery called public academies.

"It was surely the intention of Providence that the faculties of early life should not be strained by labours hostile to the healthful growth of mind and body, and that the heart, the senses, and the principles should alone be tutored in the first ten years of life. And yet how egregiously has the folly of the creature perverted the benevolent purpose of the Creator! With thoughtless, heartless indifference he commits his tender offspring to the crushing tyranny of pedants and task-masters, who rack and stupify the imperfect brain by vain attempts to convey dead languages through a dead medium, and inflict upon their helpless pupils the occult mysteries of grammar, which is the philosophy of language, and intelligible only to ripened faculties. Ask the youth who has toiled in prostration of spirit through the joyless years of school existence in the preparatory seminaries of Italy—bid him look back upon his tedious pilgrimage, and weigh the scanty knowledge he has won against the abundant miseries he has endured from the harsh discipline of monkish tutors, and the selfish brutality of senior class-fellows! His pride may prompt him to deny, but in honesty and fairness he must admit, that the established system of education is radically vicious; that his attainments are meagre and superficial; that his knowledge of the world is selfishness and cunning; and that, to rise above the herd of slaves and dunces, he must give himself a second and widely different education; more liberal, comprehensive, and practical.

"It was my happier fate to enjoy, until the age of ten, unbounded liberty. I associated with boys of my own age, selecting for frequent intercourse those most distinguished by strength of body, resource of mind, and a lofty and determined spirit. I disdained to be outdone in feats of bodily activity, and persevered with inflexible ardour until I surpassed all my competitors in running, wrestling, and swimming, and in every species of juvenile and daring exploit.
"From my aunt, who was an accomplished and high-minded woman, I learned to read and write, and gained with ease and pleasure a more than elementary knowledge of history; and when I had attained the age of twelve, my father, who was an able and distinguished commander, took me for three years on board his galley, in frequent cruises against the Corsairs. These voyages had a powerful and salutary influence upon my habits and character; the daily contemplation of the world of waters expanded and exalted my imagination; while the enlightened converse and daily instructions of my noble father, the regular discipline observed on board the galley, and occasional exposure to danger in tempests or in contact with an enemy, induced energy and concentration of thought, decision and promptitude in action, contempt of fatigue and hardship, and a degree of self-possession which no common dangers could either daunt or disconcert.

"At the age of fifteen I returned to Florence, abandoned all boyish pursuits, and commenced a more regular and elaborate course of education. I had accumulated a store of ideas and associations which enabled me to apply my faculties with facility to every desirable attainment. The transition from material objects to the world of spirits is natural and easy. I had already investigated with deep interest the histories of Greece and Rome; I now studied with ardour and success the languages of those high-minded nations; and, ere long, perused with insatiable delight the pages of those master-spirits whose glorious names blaze like constellations through the dark night of antiquity.

"My early and ruling passion for the liberal arts, and especially for painting and architecture, induced me to seek the instructions of Giorgio Vasari. As an artist he had never produced an original design, but he was an able teacher; and, notwithstanding his prejudices, he was unquestionably a man of refined taste and extensive knowledge. The garrulous old painter was delighted with the glow of my enthusiasm, and failed not to fan the flame with abundant encouragement.

"My indulgent father was induced, by the exuberant praises of Vasari, to permit my devotion of some hours daily to his instructions; but the year before his imprisonment and flight, he took the precaution to introduce me to a literary circle, eminent for clearness of intellect, and a sound and liberal philosophy. Intercourse with men of this class modified, in a considerable degree, my habits and opinions; but it could not for a moment weaken my devotion to that sublime art which has ennobled modern Italy, and raised it from prostration and contempt to moral dignity and grandeur.

"Several years elapsed after my father's escape, without bringing us any intelligence of his fate. This mysterious silence was a source of intense anxiety. Florence was hateful to me, and my impatience to rejoin my beloved parent became at length too vehement to be controlled any longer by the remonstrances of my aunt. I keenly felt all the injustice exercised by the tyrannous and reckless Cosmo against my family, and my departure was accelerated by the intimation from a friend at court that my proceedings were watched by the secret agents of the usurper, and that any unguarded expression of political discontent, would be the signal of my incarceration, and, too probably, of banishment or death. I quitted Florence unobserved, changed my name, and proceeded to Venice, intending, while I pursued my inquiries after my father, to study the works of Titian, and to avail myself of the instructions of Tintoret and Paul Veronese. The latter honoured me with his friendship, and the venerable Titian encouraged me to visit him. I succeeded in my endeavours to cheer, with poetry and music, the
declining spirits of the benevolent old man. He became attached to me, and finding that I had a painter's eye, he imparted to me some invaluable secrets of his art, a compliment the more gratifying and important, because it opened to me a source of honourable and independent provision, in case my paternal estate should never be restored to me.

"Last autumn I received intelligence from Florence that my father had entered the service of your republic on his arrival in the Levant, and had received the appointment of captain in the garrison of Candia, under General Malatesta, a Florentine, whose son had been assassinated by order of Cosmo, on the discovery of an intrigue between this youth and his eldest daughter, Maria de' Medici. Nor did the hapless female escape the vengeance of her cruel parent. Her death was premature, and attended with circumstances which amounted to the clearest evidence that she was poisoned by her monstrous and unnatural parent. I had completed my preparations for departure, and waited only a change of wind to sail for Candia, when I received from my aunt the heart-rending communication that my father had shared the fate of young Malatesta, and been assassinated some years since, at the instigation of the ferocious Cosmo. This intelligence fell upon my soul like a thunderbolt. The wound which my beloved father's disappearance had inflicted on my happiness opened anew, and my lacerated heart bled at every core. I vowed implacable hatred and deadly vengeance against the prime mover and every subordinate agent in this atrocious murder of my noble parent. He was a great and admirable man, and I shall never cease to venerate his memory, and lament his untimely death. For many months, life was an intolerable burden to me, and I endured existence only in the hope of avenging him. The cruel instigator, Cosmo, was, alas! equally beyond the reach of my personal defiance and of my dagger. Hedged round by guards and minions, and compelled by his infirmities to seclude himself within the recesses of his palace, every attempt to approach him would have been vain, and my youthful and unenjoyed existence would have been sacrificed without an equivalent. Nor have I yet been able to trace the agents of his bloody will; but my investigations have been vigilant and unceasing, and revenge, although delayed, is ripening over their heads."

Here the noble youth was checked in his narrative by a sudden burst of agony, which defied all disguise and control. Tears rolled in rapid succession down his cheeks, and his manly chest heaved with the audible sobs of bitter and deeply-seated anguish. Springing hastily from the turf, he threw himself on the margin of the stream, and immersed his face in its pure waters, to cool the fever of his burning cheeks. Surely there is no sorrow like the sorrow of a resolute and high-minded man. The sobs of woman in affliction awake our tenderest sympathies, but they do not shake our souls like the audible anguish of man. To see the iron frame of such a being as Colonna heaving with loud and convulsive agony, was so truly appalling, that no time will erase the deep impression from my memory.

I respected his grief too much to interrupt it by premature attempts at consolation; but when he arose, I embraced him in silent sympathy, and endeavoured to direct the current of his thoughts from the bitter past to a brighter future. I spoke of the advanced age and broken constitution of the licentious Cosmo, and inferred, from the mild and amiable character of his son, a speedy restoration to rank and property. I dwelt upon his own pre-eminence in strength of mind, and in every natural and acquired advantage; and I predicted that, in defiance of adverse circumstances, he would, by his own unassisted efforts, accomplish a high and brilliant destiny. I proposed to obtain for him, through my father's influence, a..."
naval command in the service of Venice, or a powerful recommendation to the valiant Genoese, Giovanni Doria.

He thanked me, with a look full of eloquent meaning, but made no comment on my proposal. After a brief pause, he subdued his emotion, and exclaimed, with a melancholy smile,--"Happy Venetians and Genoese! Your liberties have not been basely destroyed by an individual family, as those of Tuscany by the Medici. Your glorious republics adorn the east and west of Italy with splendid achievements, while Florence, once the pride and glory of our country, lies prostrate in mourning and in slavery, betrayed and manacled by her unnatural sons!"

I availed myself of this apostrophe to make some comments upon the history of these distinguished republics, and insensibly drew Colonna into a discussion which was prolonged until the increasing heat made us sensible of the want of refreshment. The sun had reached the meridian, and the centre of the lake below, still fretted by the mountain breeze, was seething and glittering in the sunbeams, like a huge cauldron of melted silver, while the smooth and crystal surface near its shores reflected, like a mirror, projecting and receding cliffs of every form and elevation, crowned with venerable trees, and fringed with gay varieties of vegetable ornament. The timid and transparent lizards darted playfully around us, and golden beetles buzzed on heavy wings in the foliage above, while the light grasshoppers chirped their multitudinous chorus of delight, and myriads of gay and glittering insects held their jubilee in the burning atmosphere. Amidst this universal carnival of nature, we reclined in deep shade, soothed by the tinkling music of the stream, and enjoying the dewy freshness which exhaled from its translucent waters. The inspiring juice of the Cyprus grape, and a light repast, rapidly recruited the strength and spirits of Colonna. Bounding vigorously from the green turf, he gazed with delight through the aged stems upon the bright landscape, and exclaimed, with glowing enthusiasm,--"All-bounteous Providence! Creator of the glorious sun and teeming earth! how supremely blest were thy creatures, did they not embitter so much good by crime and folly!"

After a brief pause of rapturous contemplation, we resumed our wine-flasks, our cheerfulness rose into exhilaration, and we reposed like sylvan deities in the green shade, enjoying the elasticity and freshness of youthful existence, forgetful of the past and regardless of the future. But this daydream was too delightful to last. I recollected that I had not heard the sequel of Colonna's adventures in Venice, and I broke the spell by whispering in his ear the name of "Laura."

"Alas!" he replied, with visible emotion, "I fear this incomparable woman will never be mine, unless miracle or magic should interpose to vanquish the many obstacles to our union. Our interviews in Venice were attended with such imminent hazard of discovery, as to render them brief and of rare occurrence. My adored Laura was in the morning of life, and with the creative imagination of early youth, she cherished sanguine hopes that the death of the infirm Cosmo would, ere long, enable me to resume rank and property, and to demand her openly of her father. Until then, my resources were merely adequate to my personal support, being limited to a small maternal estate, left under the friendly guardianship of my aunt."
"Nevertheless, plans of elopement were frequently discussed, and I vehemently urged her to become
mine, and to accompany me to Greece, from whence, after I had accomplished a momentous object, we
could embark for Marseilles, and proceed to Paris, where my skill as a painter, in addition to my
maternal estate, would preserve us from indigence. As she did not peremptorily forbid me to expect her
consent to this scheme, I ventured to build upon it; but when my preparations for flight were completed,
her resolution failed, and I discovered, in the deeply-rooted attachment of Laura to her mother, an
insuperable obstacle to the accomplishment of my purpose. For this kind and indulgent parent her
affection was all but idolatrous; and when she told me, with tearful eyes and throbbing bosom, that her
beloved mother was in precarious health, that she was entirely dependent on her only daughter for
earthly happiness, and that the loss of that daughter would destroy her, I must have been dead to every
generous and disinterested feeling had I not complied with her earnest entreaty, that we should await a
more favourable course of events.

"Meanwhile the distinguished beauty and numberless graces of Laura attracted many suitors. Some of
these were not ineligible, and one of them especially, young Contarini--whose passion for her was
ardent, almost to frenzy--was a man of noble qualities, of prepossessing exterior, and of equal rank, but,
as you well know, too moderately endowed with the gifts of fortune. Every proposal was, however,
promptly rejected by the ambitious Foscari, who, like a cold and calculating trader, measured the merits
of each suitor by the extent of his possessions. At length, after the conclusion of the war with Turkey in
the spring, arrived from Greece the governor of Candia, Ercole Barozzo, whose splendid establishment
and lavish expenditure attracted universal attention. His originally large possessions had been swelled
into princely opulence by clandestine traffic with the enemy, and by every species of cruelty and
exaction. His wife and two infant sons had fallen victims to the plague in the Levant; and being
desirous of children to inherit his vast possessions, he surveyed the fair daughters of Venice, and was
quickly fascinated by the superlative beauty of Laura Foscari, who shone unrivalled in a city
distinguished for the beauty of the softer sex. Barozzo was not a suitor to be rejected by her sordid
father; and, without any appeal to his daughter's inclinations, her hand was promised to a man of more
than twice her age, forbidding in his exterior, coarse and revolting in his manners, and utterly destitute
of redeeming qualities. I had determined, before my acquaintance with you commenced, to make
occasional visits during the summer to Peschiera, and I hesitated to accept your proposal, from an
apprehension that it would impede my interviews with Laura. On farther consideration, however, I
perceived that my abode under your roof would not be incompatible with nocturnal visits to the Villa
Foscari, and I became your guest. My interviews with Laura have been more frequent in this quiet and
rural district, than in the narrow streets and numerous obstacles of Venice. The wide extent of her
father's garden enables me to scale the wall unperceived, and to reach a garden saloon communicating
by a covered trellise walk with the villa. Laura's abhorrence of the presuming and insolent Barozzo has
proved a powerful auxiliary to my renewed entreaties that she would fly with me from the miseries
which menace her, and I have recently succeeded in obtaining her reluctant consent to accompany me
to Genoa, and from thence to Greece. A fortnight hence is appointed for the celebration of her marriage
to the wretch who basely woos her, with a consciousness of her unqualified antipathy to his person and
character. If the strong attachment of Laura to her mother does not again baffle my hopes, we shall
effect our escape three days before the one appointed for her marriage with Barozzo; but I can discern
too well, through her invincible dejection, that she is still balancing the dreadful alternatives of a
Such was the tale of Colonna's brief, but trying and calamitous career. Deeply as I lamented his approaching departure, I felt too much interested in his success to withhold my active co-operation, and I pledged myself to promote his views as far as I could, without openly compromising myself with the Foscari family; but I entreated him to relinquish his design of painting the portraits of Laura and Barozzo, from an apprehension that a lover so fervent and demonstrative would, in some unguarded moment, excite suspicion, and frustrate the accomplishment of his ultimate views. He thanked me for the ready zeal with which I had entered into his feelings, and assured me that he had no intention of proceeding beyond the outlines of the governor's portrait; but that, as a lover and an artist, he could not deny himself the gratification of portraying the matchless form and features of the woman he adored.

The day was declining when we quitted our cool retreat to ascend the mountain behind us, and inhale the pure breezes which played around its summit. We gazed with long and lingering delight upon the bright landscapes of Lombardy, as they glowed beneath us in the parting sunbeams, and the shades of night were fast falling around us when we crossed the lake on our return to the villa.
CHAPTER IV.

Early on the following morning, the younger brother of Laura called to request the promised attendance of Colonna at the Villa Foscari, and I determined to accompany him, hoping, by my presence, to remind the young painter of the necessity of exercising a vigilant control over his feelings. The precaution was, however, unnecessary. He sustained, with singular self-mastery, the demeanour of an artist and a stranger; and appeared, while sketching the form and features of his lovely mistress, to have no other object than to seize the most important and characteristic peculiarities of his model. He requested that she would occasionally walk round the saloon, and freely indulge in familiar converse with her friends, as if no artist were present. His object was, he added, to accomplish, not a tame and lifeless copy, but a portrait, stamped with those peculiar attributes and graces which are best elicited by a free and unconstrained movement of limb and feature.

Thus admirably did he mask the lover, and assume the look and language of an artist ambitious to recommend himself to opulent employers.

The sensitive and unhappy Laura had less command over her feelings, and I could occasionally observe a furtive glance beaming from her dark and humid eye upon the elegant painter; but when she addressed him, it was with the air and language of condescension to one whose services might be purchased; thus endeavouring to disguise the strong and almost irrepressible emotion which quivered beneath the surface.

Her mother never quitted her during the sitting; Barozzo and the Foscari visited the saloon occasionally; and I remained to control the lover, and, at the same time, to improve myself by observing the artist. The fine lineaments of Laura were too deeply engraven on the heart of Colonna to render frequent sittings essential; and, in compliance with my remonstrances, he abridged them as much as possible. After the second sitting he told her that he should not again require her presence until he had completed the portrait, when some finishing detail might be requisite. He devoted a large portion of the five following days to a task so soothing to his feelings; and, on the morning of the sixth day, astonished the assembled family by producing a highly-finished and admirable resemblance.

The charming subject of his portrait was painted the size of life, and attired in a light morning robe of green silk. The full and elegant symmetry of her form was indicated through the graceful folds, which fell around her like the richest sculpture. She stood in a contemplative attitude, leaning, like some heavenly muse, upon a golden tripod of chaste and classical design. High intelligence adorned with its imperishable beauty her fair and lofty forehead. Her large dark eyes, which beamed through their long fringes with soft and melting lustre, were gazing as if into futurity, and their tender and eloquent expression went to the soul of the observer. The finely moulded oval of her cheek glowed with the roseate hues of life, and the pearly lustre of the neck and arms was surpassed only by the clear and brilliant fairness of the lovely original, while in the beautifully curved lips, Colonna had introduced a slight compression, indicative of that heroic firmness in the character of Laura, which had not escaped his penetration, but did not, until a later period, fully develop itself.
The scene was a garden saloon, and through an open window an extensive view over the lake of Garda arrested with magic power the eye of every beholder. Sirmio appeared like a woody island in the middle distance, and beyond the lake rose an amphitheatre of mountains, surmounted by the distant summits of the Tyrolese Alps. There was in this admirable portrait all the charm and witchery of life. It possessed much of the dignity, and ease, and harmonious colouring of Titian; and the exquisite blending and management of the tints betrayed the favourite pupil of Paul Veronese, whom indeed he surpassed in the natural folding and classical distribution of draperies, and fully equalled in the force of light and shade, which makes the portraits of that able master appear to stand out from the canvass.

The next day was devoted to the finishing of some details in the portrait of Laura; and on the succeeding morning I accompanied Colonna to the apartment of Barozzo, who was desirous that his portrait should be completed before his marriage. The artist fixed upon the haughty governor that firm gaze of his dark and piercing eye, and proceeded to pencil the outlines of his stern and massive features. After the lapse of a few minutes, he remarked to Barozzo, that he had never seen a countenance, the character of which he found so difficult to trace to its primitive elements. "The lineaments of mature age," he continued, "are hard and inflexible, and when the eloquent play and pliancy of youthful feelings have left the features, it is impossible, without frequent intercourse, to detect the peculiarities and secret recesses of character with sufficient accuracy to give force and truth to a portrait." He conceived that to accomplish the perfect delineation of a man of middle age and of distinguished rank, a painter should not only share his society, but know the history of his life, and study the lights and shades of his character. It was thus that Raffaelle succeeded in conveying to the portraits of Julius II., Leo X., and their Cardinals, such intellectual dignity, such truth and grandeur of expression. He doubted, nevertheless, whether any artist could achieve a perfect portrait of a man of high station if he did not rise above his employer, not only in imaginative power, but in strength of mind and penetration into character.

The riveted and searching looks, which from time to time accompanied this singular and equivocal strain of compliment, appeared greatly to perplex and annoy the haughty Barozzo. His tawny visage was dyed with the dusky red of some strong inward emotion, which I was eager but unable to interpret. This suffusion was soon succeeded by an ashy paleness, and suddenly he quitted his chair and walked to the window.

During this ominous and unaccountable interruption, I gave Colonna a warning glance. He composed his excited features into tranquillity; and after a long pause, of which I endeavoured to disguise the embarrassment by some comments on the Venetian school of painting, Barozzo returned from the window and resumed his seat. Colonna seized his pencil, and proceeded to sketch the outline of the governor's figure, during which process I observed in his looks nothing beyond the earnest gaze of a portrait-painter. For some time Barozzo avoided the encounter; but at length, as if controlled by some secret and irresistible fascination, his eyes again met those of the young artist. The effect of this collision was mysterious and startling. The brilliant orbs of Colonna gradually assumed a stern and indignant expression, and darted their searching beams upon the governor, as if to pierce the inmost recesses of his soul. The dull grey eyes of the again agitated Barozzo quailed and fell under this intolerable scrutiny; his sallow visage was suffused with a ghastly yellow; again he glanced in terror at
the artist, and then half rose from his chair in undisguised consternation. Controlling, however, with sudden effort his agitation, he resumed his seat, and, with averted looks and seeming indifference, inquired if Colonna had resided long in Venice. The painter filled his brush, and answered carelessly, that he had lived there a few months.

"Your accent is Tuscan," continued Barozzo. "Are you a native of Florence?"

"I am," replied the painter, seemingly intent upon his employment.

"Do your parents reside there?" resumed the other, with rising emphasis.

"Parents!" exclaimed Colonna, with a keen glance at the inquisitive governor; "I have none! They are dead!"

"Who and what was your father?" demanded Barozzo imperiously.

This inquiry and its peremptory tone exhausted the patience of Colonna. Dashing the paint out of his brush, he fixed a look of startling fierceness on Barozzo, and answered, with marked and bitter emphasis,—"He was a sword-cutler, and made excellent blades."

At this critical moment Laura entered the room with her mother to observe the progress of Barozzo's portrait. Casting a hasty glance at the imperfect sketch, she remarked that it did not at all realise her expectations. The painter replied, that he should have succeeded better if he had enjoyed the honour of a longer acquaintance with the governor. "It is immaterial," exclaimed Barozzo, who had fully regained his self-possession. "We shall ere long become better known to each other, and you may finish my portrait at Venice in the course of the ensuing winter."

"As your excellency pleases," replied Colonna, and removed the canvass from the easel. The ladies now quitted the saloon with the governor; and, soon as the door was closed, the artist defaced the ill-fated portrait with a blow of his fist, packed up his drawing materials for removal, and accompanied me home.

Conceiving that the portentous agitation of Barozzo had grown out of some incipient feelings of jealousy and suspicion, I remonstrated with Colonna, during our walk, on the gratuitous imprudence of his deportment, and pointed out the personal danger he had incurred by thus taunting a man so powerful and irritable as the governor of Candia. I urged him to accelerate his flight, and, meanwhile, never to leave the villa unarmed.

In reply, however, he expressed his conviction that the sudden change of countenance and colour in Barozzo did not originate in jealousy, and that a man so imperious and overbearing would have betrayed this spirit-stirring passion in a manner widely different. "No, Pisani!" he continued, in a voice quivering with emotion; "my suspicions go farther. The springs of this man's actions lie deep, and a prophetic spirit tells me that he is not innocent of my noble father's murder. Until this morning, he
deigned not to bestow more than a superficial glance upon the features of an obscure artist in homely apparel, but when our eyes met, in keen and unavoidable collision, the resemblance I bear to my deceased parent flashed upon his guilty soul; and from his sudden and uncontrollable emotion, I cannot but infer his participation in the crimes of Cosmo. Inference, you will say, is no proof; but it gives me a clue which I will track until I reach conviction. It is the intention of Laura, who cannot resolve to quit her mother, to retard for a considerable period the celebration of her marriage, by feigned paroxysms of indisposition. I will avail myself of this delay to bring home to Barozzo the evidence of his guilt, and defy him to mortal combat; or, should he shrink from it, I will treat him as a savage and noxious animal, and hunt him to death."

I could not but admit that there was some ground for the suspicions of Colonna; but, from an apprehension of rousing his whirlwind passions into premature activity, I concealed from him my knowledge that, before the departure of Barozzo for Candia, he had passed some weeks at Florence, where his congenial disposition had powerfully recommended him to the good graces of Cosmo. They were in habits of daily intercourse, and Barozzo was not the man who would, from honourable feeling, decline to forward the murderous views of the implacable ruler of Tuscany.

From this eventful day Colonna was an altered man. Revenge became the ruling passion of his soul; and while he awaited with gnawing impatience the long-expected letters from his friends in Florence and Candia, he seemed to find no relief from the feverish rage which fired his blood, and wasted his fine form, but in the bodily fatigue of daily and nightly rambles in the mountains.

It was the design of Laura to assume the appearance of sudden and violent illness on the day before her intended marriage, and to sustain the deception, by occasional relapses, for months, or even years, should the governor's patience endure so long. But the probability was, that a man, advancing towards the autumn of life, and determined to marry, would rather recede from his engagement and seek another mate, than run the risk of such indefinite delay. The spirit and address of Laura Foscari were fully equal to the deep game she had determined to play. She purposed to assist the deception by staining her fair face with an artificial and sickly hue; and she found an effective auxiliary in her mother, who thought the brutal Barozzo utterly unworthy to win and wear so bright a jewel as her angelic daughter. These expedients were, however, rendered unnecessary by the bloody catastrophes which were now at hand.

Three days before the appointed celebration of the marriage, I was reading, near midnight, in my chamber, when Colonna entered, with vehement and hasty strides. His large eyes glittered with terrific energy; his forehead streamed with perspiration; his dress and hair were in wild disorder, and his hands were dyed with blood. He said not a word, but paced the apartment for some time with rapidity. His deportment was that of a man whose rage had risen above his control, and overwhelmed all power of articulation. I awaited in silent and wondering sympathy the termination of emotions so tempestuous. At length, seating himself opposite to me, he struck the table vehemently with his clenched hand, and after some vain attempts to speak, exclaimed, in hoarse and hurried tones, which gave an appalling force to his expressions--"Pisani! all doubt is at an end--I have this night obtained conclusive evidence of Barozzo's guilt. I have sworn to avenge my noble father's wrongs in the traitor's blood--and to-morrow he must face me in fair combat, or feel my dagger in his craven heart. The alternative will
hinge upon your friendly agency—but of that hereafter.—About three hours since I reached the heights beyond the lake. Exhausted with a long and toilsome ramble, I threw myself beneath our favourite beech, and was soon lulled by the rippling waters into brief and agitated slumber. My sleep was haunted by a succession of fearful forms and painful incidents, which at length assumed a shape distinctly and horribly significant. Methought I lay upon the summit of a cliff, close to the sloping brink, and gazed into a gulf too deep and dark for human eye to fathom. Suddenly the immense void was illumined by sheets of vivid lightning—a monstrous peal of thunder broke upon my ear—and a colossal form, lengthened and scaly as a serpent, rose like the demon of the storm, approached the edge of the precipice, and brought his horrid visage to the level of mine. Again the lightning flashed, and I distinguished the assassin features of Barozzo, expanded into horrible and revolting magnitude. Eyes, lurid and menacing as meteors, glared upon me with a malignant scowl, and huge lips, parted in a fiendish grin, disclosed an array of fangs, pointed and glittering as poniards. He extended two gaunt and bony hands, stained, methought, with my father's blood, and tried to seize and drag me into the gulf. While writhing to escape the monster's grasp the thunder again rolled through the abyss; the cliff beneath me reeled from its foundations, the brink began to crumble, and my destruction appeared inevitable—when, suddenly, the strains of sweet and solemn music floated round me—the demon vanished, and I beheld the pale phantom of my murdered father, extending towards me his protecting arms. At this moment of intense excitement, the spell which bound me was dissolved—I awoke, and saw by the brilliant moonlight a tall figure, enveloped in a mantle, approaching me in stealthy silence. Gazing more intently, I discovered a dagger in his grasp. In an instant I was on my feet—the figure rushed forward, but ere he could reach me, I stood behind the tree, and thus gained time to level a pistol at his head. Seeing me thus prepared, the villain retreated hastily, but escaped not the bullet, which my unerring weapon buried in his back. He reeled and fell; and his life-blood was ebbing fast, when I stooped to examine his features. Raising the slouched hat which concealed his face, I immediately recognised a handsome Greek, attached to the retinue of Barozzo. I had occasionally seen this man in a tavern at Peschiera. His demeanour was fierce and repulsive, but my eagerness to learn some particulars of my father's untimely death in Candia prompted me to cultivate his acquaintance, and I played with him the game of Morra, forgave his losses, and paid for his wine. Whether the remembrance of this kindness excited his compunction, or whether he wished to atone for his past offences, I know not, but he thus addressed me in broken accents:

"Son of Montalto! a just retribution has overtaken me. My necessities sold me to the savage Barozzo. He hired the dagger which pierced thy noble father, and the same weapon would have destroyed thee had not thy better fortune interposed. Listen to the counsel of a dying man. Beware of Barozzo! He has a long grasp, and will not spare thy young life. Fly, without delay, or thy destruction is inevitable!"

"Here his voice failed him; a convulsive tremor shook his frame; he became motionless, and apparently lifeless. But Greeks are cunning to a proverb, and as it was of vital moment to conceal from the governor the failure of his murderous design, I struck the assassin's dagger deep into his heart, and rolled him down the slope of a contiguous ravine. I now recollected that Barozzo had twenty Greek bloodhounds carousing in the taverns of Peschiera, and thinking it too probable that he had commissioned more than one of them to hunt me down, I crossed the lake, to devise with you the means to detach this demon from his myrmidons, and force him into single combat. I have bound
myself, by all that is most sacred, to destroy him, or to perish in the attempt; and should no fair and open avenue to vengeance offer, I will stab him at Foscari's table, or even rend him limb from limb at Laura's feet. And now, my Angelo! I conjure you by our bond of friendship, by every generous feeling in your nature, to lend me that aid, without which I shall be driven to the desperate and ignoble alternative of assassination. You know well that it would be in vain to summon the governor of Candia to a personal encounter. He is a veteran soldier of established reputation, and he knows that he need not fight to maintain it; nor will a man who has reached the summit of opulence and distinction descend from his vantage-ground, and risk the loss of so much earthly good in mortal combat with the proscribed and desperate son of Montalto."

To this tale of visionary and real horrors, heightened and dramatised by the indignant eloquence of Colonna, I listened with intense interest, and my abhorrence of the monstrous cruelty of Barozzo swelled into active sympathy and a firm resolve to second, at all hazards, the just vengeance of this noble and deeply-injured youth. I felt also the necessity of immediate interference to save his life. The governor was evidently fearful of the retribution so justly due to his unparalleled atrocity, and he had, moreover, been galled to the quick by the taunting deportment of the young artist while sitting for his portrait. He would soon suspect the failure of his first attempt upon the life of Colonna, and would inevitably follow up his base design by employing the numerous daggers in his pay. The hatred of the young Florentine was deadly and implacable, and his determination to sacrifice this mortal foe of his family spurned all control, and raged like a tempest; but his impetuosity would prevent the accomplishment of his object, and too probably betray him into the toils of his cool and crafty enemy, who never quitted the Villa Foscari without one or more well-armed attendants. From an affectation, too, of military display, or probably from a consciousness that he had many personal enemies, the governor wore at all times a corselet of scaled armour, composed of the light, well-tempered Spanish steel, which resists the point of sword or dagger. Had I wished to save the life of this lawless pander to the cruelty of Cosmo, I saw no expedient which would not expose my valued friend to imminent and deadly peril; and could I for a moment hesitate between the chivalrous, the princely Colonna, so unrivalled in form and feature, so elevated and pure in sentiment, so eminently fitted, by his high intelligence, his glowing diction, and his kindling, all-impelling energies, to rouse a better, higher, nobler spirit, in all who came within the sphere of his activity—could I pause an instant between this first of nature's nobles and the base Barozzo, who, inaccessible to pity, and fortified against all compunction by years of crime, had, unprovoked, and with the malice of a demon, destroyed the best and bravest of the sons of Florence?

With prompt and ardent enthusiasm, I assured him of my devotion to his cause, and unfolded to him a stratagem, which my knowledge of the surrounding country, and of the habits of Barozzo, had readily suggested. During the frequent absence of Colonna, I had occasionally joined the governor in his equestrian excursions, and, from neighbourly feeling to the senator Foscari, had escorted his guest to the most picturesque scenery of this romantic district. His rides were daily, and at the same hour. I proposed to join him as usual, and to lead him into a narrow and unfrequented defile in the mountains, which rise from the lake about three leagues from Peschiera. Colonna might there await and force him into personal encounter, while I would act as umpire, and prevent any interference from the Greek escort of the wary chieftain. At this proposal Colonna eagerly approached, and embraced me with
grateful rapture. His dark eye kindled with its wonted fire; his pallid cheeks were flushed; the settled
gloom, which had so long clouded his fine features, vanished like mists before the sun, and was
succeeded by a radiant and exulting energy, eloquently expressive of his conviction that the hope on
which he had lived so long--the hope of just revenge--would now be realised.

I urged him to seek, in immediate repose, the restoration of his exhausted strength, and undertook to
provide him with a managed horse, armour, and weapons, which should place him upon a level with his
mailed and well-mounted antagonist. Horse and armour, however, he promptly declined. He would find
an expedient, he said, to compel Barozzo to fight him foot to foot, and he pledged himself to find a way
with a good weapon through the scaly corselet of his serpent foe. He requested only a straight
two-edged sword, of well-tried temper; and a woodman's axe, the purpose of which he did not explain.
He then left me, to plunge into the lake, and to find in its pure and bracing waters that refreshment
which, he said, it would be a vain attempt to obtain in sleep, while I proceeded to my father's armoury,
and selected from the numerous weapons which adorned it, a long and powerful two-edged blade,
which he had brought from the Levant. This sword was black from hilt to point, and destitute of
ornament, except some golden hieroglyphics near the guard; but I knew that it had stood the brunt of
several stirring campaigns, without material injury to its admirable edge and temper.

After a short and unrefreshing slumber, I arose with the sun, and hastened, with the sword and
woodman's axe, to the saloon of Colonna. His garb was usually plain, almost to homeliness, and chosen
probably with a view to the better concealment of his rank; but for this day of vengeance he had donned
the princely costume of the Tuscan nobles. A rich vest of embroidered scarlet, and pantaloons of woven
silk, were closely fitted to his noble person, which, I have said before, was fashioned in the choicest
mould of manly beauty, and now, so worthily adorned, displayed in all its high perfection that faultless
union of symmetry and strength, so rarely seen in life; equalling, indeed, the Vatican Antinous in
classic elegance of form, but far surpassing that fine statue in stature and heroic character of look and
bearing. A mantle of the richest velvet hung from his well-formed shoulders, while a nodding plume
adorned his Spanish hat and shaded his dark eyes, which lighted up as they beheld me with bright and
eager flashes of impatience.

"Thou art indeed the 'pearl and pride of Florence,' my Colonna!" I exclaimed, in irrepressible
admiration, applying, as I approached him, the poetical simile of his Laura.

Regardless of the compliment, he grasped the unpretending weapon I held out to him, and plucked it
from the scabbard. Tracing at a glance its Oriental pedigree, he doubled the strong blade with ease, until
the point touched and rebounded from the guard, and then severed with its unyielding edge an iron nail
projecting from the wall. "This plain old weapon," said he, with an exulting smile, "is worth a
dukedom. "Twill pierce a panoply of Milan steel, and I pledge myself to make it search the vitals of this
ruffian governor. But these are words, Pisani; and words, the Roman proverb says, are feminine, while
deeds alone are masculine. Farewell, then, till we meet in the defile. It is essential to my purpose that I
reach the ground some hours before Barozzo."
He then embraced me cordially, concealed the axe beneath his mantle, and departed for the mountains, intending to cross the lake to a point not distant from the scene of action. At an early hour I mounted my horse, and rode towards the Villa Foscari. In the vicinity of Peschiera I descried the governor proceeding on his daily morning excursion to the mountains. I had hitherto rarely seen him with more than one attendant, but he was now closely followed by two well-mounted Greeks of lofty stature, attired in the gorgeous costume of the Levant, and armed with scimitar and dagger. The square and athletic person of their chief was arrayed in the splendid garb of a military commander of distinguished rank. His ample chest was covered with a corselet of light scale-armour, which yielded to every motion of his frame, and was partially concealed by a broad sash, and a capacious velvet mantle. A sword of unusual length hung from his belt, whence also projected the handle of a poniard, which blazed with jewels of great lustre and value. At the age of forty-two, Barozzo was still in the full vigour of manhood; and the martial ease and energy of his movements indicated that he would find full occupation for the quick eye and unrivalled skill of the comparatively unarmed Colonna.

The governor saluted me as usual, and after some remarks upon the beauty of the surrounding scenery, he carelessly inquired where my friend the painter was. I replied, that he was gone up the lake in his bark, and described him as an itinerant personage, who delighted in ranging over the Brescian mountains, where he passed a considerable portion of his time in sketching, and was but an occasional inmate of my father's villa. The governor made no comment, and resumed his observations on the wild mountain scenery to which we were approaching. I inquired if he had yet discovered in his rides a defile of singular and romantic beauty, the avenue to which, from the main-road, was concealed by a grove of beech. He replied in the negative, and assented to my proposal that we should explore it. A ride of two hours brought us to the secluded entrance of this picturesque ravine, and we descended into its deep and silent recesses. The road was stony, rugged, and unfrequented; and, except at intervals, admitted only two horsemen abreast. The mountains on each side rose with bold abruptness, and their mossy surfaces were dotted with perennial oaks and lofty beeches, which threw their arched and interwoven branches across the chasm, and intercepted agreeably the glare and heat of the morning sun. We had proceeded about a league along this still and dusky hollow, when we distinguished the sound of a woodman's axe, and the sharp report of its echo from the opposite cliffs. We soon reached the spot above which the labourer was employed; but the profusion of foliage and underwood entirely screened the person of the woodman, whose axe continued to descend with unabated energy. We had advanced about a hundred paces beyond this point, when our course was arrested by a groaning and mighty crash, succeeded by a stunning shock, which shook the ravine like an earthquake, and was re-echoed in deep, long mutterings by the adjacent rocks. Tranquillising our startled coursers, we looked around and beheld a colossal beech, lying in the narrow pathway, which it filled up like a rampart. The Greeks, who had loitered to discern, if possible, the person of the vigorous woodman, were intercepted by the fallen giant of the mountain, but had escaped injury, as we could perceive them in their saddles through the foliage.

Startled by the ominous appearance of this incident, the governor immediately rode back, and bade his attendants dismount and lead their horses over a sheep-path which rose on the mountain slope, above the level of the fallen tree, while he would ride on slowly until they rejoined him. Execrating the peasant who had thus annoyed him, he turned his courser's head, and we proceeded at a slow pace to
the now contiguous spot which I had described to Colonna as best suited to his purpose. Here the base
of an enormous cliff projected like a rampart into the defile, and sloped abruptly into two right angles,
connected by a level line of nearly perpendicular rock, which rose in castellated grandeur to a towering
height. The numerous crevices and hollows were fringed with dazzling heath-flowers and luxuriant
creepers, between which the bare black surface of the rock frowned on the passing gazer like the ruined
stronghold of some mountain robber. We now turned the first angle of the cliff, looking upward as we
rode at the majestic front of this singular work of nature. Still gazing, we had proceeded about fifty
paces, and the governor was remarking, that the level and lofty summit would make a commanding
military station, when suddenly our coursers halted, and looking down we saw before us the tall and
kingly figure of Colonna, standing like an apparition in the pathway. His right hand rested on his
unsheathed sword, and his attitude was that of careless and assured composure; but in his gathered
brow, and in the boding glitter of his eye, I could discern the deadly purpose of the forest lion, about to
spring upon his prey, and fully confident in his own powers and resources. At this sudden encounter of
Montalto's son, who seemed to start with spectral abruptness from the ground beneath us, Barozzo
shook in his saddle as if he had seen an accusing spirit. For a moment the blood left his face, his breath
shortened, and his chest heaved with strong internal emotion, but his iron features soon regained their
wonted character of intrepidity. He then darted upon me a keen look of inquiry and suspicion; before,
however, he had time to speak, Colonna was upon him. Rapidly advancing, he seized the bridle of his
horse, and thus addressed him:--"Barozzo! the measure of thy crimes is full, and retribution is at hand!
Colonna the painter is no more, but the son of Montalto has escaped thy dagger, and demands
atonement for his father's blood. Dismount, assassin! and defend thy worthless life!"

The deep and startling grandeur of Colonna's voice, and the implacable hostility which flashed from his
fierce eyeballs, shook the firm sinews of the guilty governor, and again his swarthy lineaments were
blanched with terror. By a sudden and powerful effort, however, he regained self-mastery, and
gathering into his grim features all the pride and insolence of his soul, he darted upon his youthful
enemy a sneer of contempt. "Presuming vagrant!" he shouted, in accents hoarse with wrath, "dare to
impede my progress, and my retinue, which is at hand, shall scatter thy limbs on the highway!"

Still firmly grasping the bridle, Colonna eyed him for a moment with quiet scorn, and then he
smiled--briefly indeed, but with a stinging mockery, a hot and withering scorn of eye and lip, that
seared the haughty chieftain to the brain. Writhing with sudden frenzy, he spurred his mettled charger,
and endeavoured to ride down his opponent; but the generous animal, true to the instincts of a nature
nobler than his master's, refused to advance, and plunged and demi-volted with a violence which would
have unseated a less experienced rider. At this moment, the heavy trampling of approaching horses
rolled in doubling echoes through the ravine. Encouraged by the welcome sound, Barozzo attempted to
draw his sword, but before the plunging of his horse would allow him to reach the hilt, the vigilant
Colonna smote him on the cheek with his sheathed weapon. Then relinquishing the bridle, and stepping
lightly sideways, he struck the horse's flank, and the startled animal, straining every sinew, bounded
away like a ball, and quickly disappeared round the second angle of the cliff, followed by the loud
laugh of the exulting Colonna, whose fierce ha! ha! re-echoed through the rocky hollow like a
trumpet-call. Meanwhile the Greeks, who had turned the first angle in time to behold the termination of
the struggle, drew their sabres, and pushing their horses into a gallop, rushed down upon us like
infuriated tigers. Anticipating their attack, I was not unprepared to aid my gallant friend in this emergency; but all assistance was superfluous to one so fertile in resources. He turned with graceful promptitude upon the savage Cretans, and before their powerful steeds could measure the short intervening distance, his sword was firmly set between his teeth, and two pistols appeared with magical abruptness in his grasp. Levelled by an eye which never failed, these weapons lodged a bullet in the breast of each approaching Greek. The colossal riders reeled in their saddles; their sabres quivered in their weakened grasp, and reclining for support upon the necks of their startled horses, they successively passed us, and turned the angle beyond which their chief had disappeared. Colonna now threw down his pistols, and exclaimed exultingly, "Now is the crowning hour, my Angelo! follow me, and you shall find the scaly monster of my dream caught in a trap from which no human power can free him."

I rode by his side in wondering anticipation, and when we had passed the angle, I beheld a scene which still remains engraven on my memory. The defile here expanded into an irregular oval, the extremity of which was blocked up by a dense and impervious mass of young beech and poplar, rising above thrice the height of a tall man, and levelled that morning by the ponderous axe of the indefatigable Colonna. The courser of Barozzo had plunged deep into the leafy labyrinth, and the unhorsed governor, entangled by his velvet drapery, was endeavouring to extricate himself from the forked and intersecting branches, while the horses of the Greeks stood panting in the shade, near the bleeding bodies of their fallen masters, and the noble brutes snorted with horror, and shook in every joint, as with lowered necks and flaming eyes, they snuffed the blood of the expiring wretches.

As we approached the governor, he succeeded in releasing himself by cutting his rich mantle into shreds with his dagger. Stepping out of his leafy toils, he stood before us like a wild beast caught in a hunter's trap, foaming, furious, and breathless, but evidently dismayed by the sudden and irreparable loss of his armed followers. Divested of the drapery which had served the double purpose of concealment and display, we observed that he was accoutred in back and breast proof armour, of the light steel scales I have before described. He looked the very serpent of Colonna's dream, and the malignant scowl of his small and snaky eyes gave singular force to the resemblance. His generous enemy allowed him time to recover from the fatigue of disentangling himself, and then approached him. "Barozzo!" said he, "last night I shot thy cowardly assassin. In dying penitence he called himself thy agent in the murder of my noble parent, and bade me shun the daggers of thy savage Cretans. But Montalto's son would risk a thousand lives to gain his just revenge, and again he warns thee to defend thy life. Pisani shall be umpire of the combat, and his time-honoured name is pledge enough that no foul play is meant thee."

The governor, who had now recovered breath and self-possession, folded his arms, and met the stern defiance of his youthful foe with a look of contemptuous indifference. Not deigning a reply, he addressed himself to me in tones of angry expostulation, and expressed his indignant surprise that a son of the Senator Pisani should thus lend himself to the designs of a young vagrant, who was destined to grace the benches of a galley. My reply was anticipated by the fiery Colonna, whose sword flashed with lightning quickness from the scabbard, while his haughty lip curled up with unutterable scorn.
"Remorseless villain!" he shouted, in a voice of appalling wrath, "I know a venom yet shall sting thy recreant spirit into action. Know, Ercole Barozzo! that Foscari's daughter was wooed and won by me--plighted her troth to me--long ere she saw thy truculent and yellow visage. Nay, more, she would ere this have fled with me from Lombardy, had not higher duties staid our mutual purpose."

The governor, although a renowned and fearless soldier in earlier life, had betrayed a terror on the first view of Colonna, and a reluctance to engage with him in single-handed conflict, which I had referred to the depressing action of a diseased conscience, or to the increased love of life generated by his prosperous condition; but a taunt like this was beyond all human endurance; it stung him to the very soul, and roused his lazy valour into life and fury. His sinews stiffened with rage, and his widely-opened eyes glared upon Colonna like those of a tigress at bay, while his teeth remained firmly clenched, and inaudible maledictions quivered on his working lips. Tearing his formidable sword from its sheath, he rushed like one delirious upon his adversary, and their blades met with a clash which told the deadly rancour of the combatants.

I now witnessed a conflict unparalleled for intense and eager thirst of blood. It was truly the death-grapple of the lion and the serpent. The noble and generous Colonna, pursuing his just revenge, and trusting, like the kingly animal, to native strength and courage, sought no unfair advantage; while the crafty Barozzo, huge in body, tortuous in mind, and scaled with impenetrable steel, well personified the reptile of Colonna's vision. Although a practised and wary swordsman, he did not wield his weapon like Colonna, who, with equal skill in stratagem and feint, was unrivalled in that lightning-quickness and ready sympathy of eye and hand, for which the Italians are pre-eminent amongst the swordsmen of Europe; but the courage and self-possession of the governor had been exercised in frequent conflicts with the Moslem; his sinews were strung with martial toil and daily exercise; and his well-mailed person presented so little vulnerable surface as greatly to protract and facilitate his defence. He soon learned, however, to respect the formidable skill and untiring arm of his young opponent, whose weapon played with a motion so rapid and incessant, that he seemed to parry and thrust at the same instant; and had not the large and powerful hand of Barozzo retained a firm grasp of his hilt, he would have been disarmed at the first onset. After a few passes, Colonna's point struck the centre of the governor's corselet with a force which made the scales sink deep beneath the pressure, but the tempered steel resisted this and many other well-directed hits. The conflict proceeded with unabated fierceness, and for a period which would have utterly exhausted men of ordinary lungs and sinews, when Barozzo, finding all his lunges ineffective, and fearing premature exhaustion, endeavoured to sustain and collect his powers by remaining on the defensive; but it was now too late. His sword was irrecoverably entangled in the whirlwind involutions of Colonna's weapon--his hold began to relax--and he saw the moment rapidly approaching when he should be disarmed, and at the mercy of an unappeasable foe.[A] Despairing of success, thirsting for revenge, and regardless of the laws of fair and open combat, he suddenly drew his long dagger, dropped on one knee, and made a thrust which would have proved fatal to a less vigilant adversary. But Colonna had anticipated the possibility of this base attempt from one so destitute of all chivalrous feeling, and his quick eye observed and met the movement. Stepping lightly back, he whirled his keen-edged blade with a force which cut deep into Barozzo's wrist. The dagger dropped from his palsied grasp, and, at the same instant, his sword flew above his head. Colonna, having disarmed his treacherous enemy while still kneeling, disdained to follow up his advantage, and
coolly said to him, "That trick was worthy of you, governor! but your murderous game is nearly up. Resume your sword, and clutch the guard more firmly, or in three passes more you will be food for vultures!"

[Footnote A: When a student in Germany, the writer had twelve months' drill in fencing from a French emigrant, and saw a fencing-match à l'outrance between that equivocal personage the Chevalier d'Eon--then an elderly man or woman--with a young and vigorous fencing-master, an emigrant nobleman, who, like Colonna, by rapid involutions, so entangled the foil of the Chevalier, that he was at length quite exhausted, and unable to ward off the incessant attacks of his adversary. He recollects, too, a curious fact, that the Chevalier, when fencing, emitted, whenever he lunged out, a succession of sounds from the throat, which he can only compare with the short grunts of a frightened pig.--April 1858.]

Barozzo, who had started from the ground, and now stood foaming at the mouth like a chafed panther, said nothing in reply, but seized his sword, and rushed upon his generous adversary with desperate but unavailing ferocity. I could now perceive that Colonna pressed him more hotly than before, and that his point no longer sought the corselet, but the throat of Barozzo, where indeed alone he was mortally vulnerable, and where, ere long, the death-stroke reached him. A few passes had been exchanged without a hit, when suddenly Barozzo's sword again flew from his grasp, and long before it reached the ground, Colonna's point was buried in his throat. The thrust was mortal. The steel had severed the duct of life; the hot blood bubbled out in streams; and the huge Barozzo staggered, reeled, and fell upon his back. A bloody froth now gathered round his lips, which worked with agony and rage; the life-blood ebbed apace, and soon the trunk and limbs of the colossal chieftain were stiffened in death. But even in death the dominant passions of his soul were strongly written in his livid features. His glazed and sunken eyes still glared with fiend-like malice on his conqueror, and every lineament was inwrought with reckless and insatiable ferocity.

Colonna gazed a while in solemn and impressive silence upon the foe he had destroyed. His broad forehead darkened with deep thought, and his eyes saddened with painful recollections of the beloved parent whose untimely death he had so well avenged. Soon, however, his noble features brightened with a fervent look of blended filial piety and exultation. He wiped his reeking blade upon the remnants of Barozzo's mantle, and we retraced our steps. Colonna ascended a sheep-path, and crossed the mountain to regain his boat, while I returned by a circuitous road to the villa, leaving the governor of Candia and his retinue to the vultures of the Apennine, which, with unerring ken, had espied the dead Greeks, and were already sailing in wide eddies high above the scene of blood.

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Here my friend, who had with difficulty pursued his way through the mouldy pages of the decayed manuscript, was compelled to make a final pause. The long action of time and damp had nearly obliterated the remainder of the narrative, and glimpses only of romantic perils by sea and land were occasionally discernible. We were obliged to suspend all farther gratification of our curiosity until our return to Venice, where we hoped by a chemical process to succeed in restoring to a more legible tint
The mighty sun had just gone down into the chambers of the deep; The ocean birds had upward flown, each in his cave to sleep.

And silent was the island shore, and breathless all the broad red sea, and motionless beside the door our solitary tree.

Our only tree, our ancient palm, whose shadow sleeps our door beside. Partook the universal calm, when Buonaparte died.

An ancient man, a stately man, came forth beneath the spreading tree, his silent thoughts I could not scan, his tears I needs must see.

A trembling hand had partly cover'd the old man's weeping countenance, yet something o'er his sorrow hover'd that spake of war and France;

Something that spake of other days, when trumpets pierced the kindling air, and the keen eye could firmly gaze through battle's crimson glare.

Said I, perchance this faded hand, when life beat high, and hope was young, by Lodi's wave--on Syria's sand--the bolt of death hath flung.

Young Buonaparte's battle-cry perchance hath kindled this old cheek; it is no shame that he should sigh,--his heart is like to break.

He hath been with him, young and old; he climb'd with him the Alpine snow; he heard the cannon when they roll'd along the silver Po.

His soul was as a sword, to leap at his accustom'd leader's word; I love to see the old man weep,--he knew no other lord.

As if it were but yesternight, this man remembers dark Eylau,--his dreams are of the Eagle's flight, victorious long ago.

The memories of worser time are all as shadows unto him; fresh stands the picture of his prime,--the later trace is dim.
I enter'd, and I saw him lie Within the chamber, all alone, I drew near very solemnly To dead Napoleon.

He was not shrouded in a shroud, He lay not like the vulgar dead, Yet all of haughty, stern, and proud From his pale brow was fled.

He had put harness on to die, The eagle-star shone on his breast, His sword lay bare his pillow nigh,-- The sword he liked the best.

But calm--most calm was all his face, A solemn smile was on his lips, His eyes were closed in pensive grace-- A most serene eclipse!

You would have said some sainted sprite Had left its passionless abode,-- Some man, whose prayer at morn and night Had duly risen to God.

What thoughts had calm'd his dying breast (For calm he died) cannot be known; Nor would I wound a warrior's rest-- Farewell, Napoleon!

No sculptured pile our hands shall rear; Thy simple sod the stream shall lave. The native Holly's leaf severe Shall grace and guard thy grave.

The Eagle stooping from the sky Shall fold his wing and rest him here, And sunwards gaze with glowing eye From Buonaparte's bier.

A LEGEND OF GIBRALTAR.

BY COLONEL E. B. HAMLEY.

[MAGA. NOVEMBER 1851.]
CHAPTER I.

The Governor's residence at Gibraltar was, in days of Spanish domination, a religious house, and still retains the name of the Convent. Two sides of a long quadrangular gallery, traversing the interior of the building, are hung with portraits of officers present at the great siege in 1779-83, executed in a style which proves that Pre-Raphaelite painters existed in those days. One of these portraits represents my grandfather. To judge from a painting of him by Sir Joshua, and a small miniature likeness, both still in possession of the family, he must have been rather a good-looking old gentleman, with an affable, soldier-like air, and very respectable features. The portrait at the Convent is doubtless a strong likeness, but by no means so flattering; it represents him much as he might have appeared in life, if looked at through a cheap opera-glass. A full inch has been abstracted from his forehead and added to his chin; the bold nose has become a great promontory in the midst of the level countenance; the eyes have gained in ferocity what they have lost in speculation, and would, indeed, go far to convey a disagreeable impression of my ancestor's character, but for the inflexible smile of the mouth. Altogether, the grimness of the air, the buckram rigidity of figure, and the uncompromising hardness of his shirt-frill and the curls of his wig, are such as are to be met with in few works of art, besides the figure-heads of vessels and the sign-boards of country inns.

However, my grandfather is no worse off than his compeers. Not far from this one is another larger painting, representing a council of officers held during the siege, where, notwithstanding the gravity of the occasion and the imminence of the danger, not a single face in the intrepid assembly wears the slightest expression of anxiety or fear, or, indeed, of anything else; and though my progenitor, in addition to the graces of the other portrait, is here depicted with a squint, yet he is by no means the most ill-looking individual present. But the illustrious governor, Eliott, has suffered more than anybody at the hands of the artist. Besides figuring in the production aforesaid, a statue of him stands in the Alameda, carved in some sort of wood, unluckily for him, of a durable nature. The features are of a very elevated cast, especially the nose; the little legs seem by no means equal to the task of sustaining the enormous cocked-hat; and the bearing is so excessively military, that it has been found necessary to prop the great commander from behind to prevent him from falling backwards.

My grandfather, John Flinders, joined the garrison of Gibraltar as a major of infantry a few years before the siege. He was then forty-seven years of age, and up to that time had remained one of the most determined old bachelors that ever existed. Not that he ever declaimed against matrimony in the style of some of our young moderns, who fancy themselves too strong-minded to marry; the truth being that they remain single, either because they have not been gifted by nature with tastes sufficiently strong to like one woman better than another, or else, because no woman ever took the trouble to lay siege to them. My grandfather had never married, simply, I believe, because matrimony had never entered his head. He seldom ventured, of his own choice, into ladies' society, but, when he did, no man was more emphatically gallant to the sex. One after one, he saw his old friends abandoning the irresponsible ease of bachelorhood for the cares of wedded life; but while he duly congratulated them on their felicity, and officiated as godfather to their progeny, he never seemed to anticipate a similar destiny for himself. All his habits showed that he had been too long accustomed to single harness to go cleverly as one of a pair. He had particular hours of rising and going to bed; of riding out and returning; of settling himself
down for the evening to a book and pipe, which the presence of a helpmate would have materially
deranged. And therefore, without holding any Malthusian tenets, without pitying his Benedick
acquaintances, or entertaining a thought of the sex which would have been in the least degree
derogatory to the character of a De Coverley, his castles in the air were never tenanted by any of his
own posterity.

It was fortunate for my grandfather that in his time people did not suffer so much as now from that
chronic inflammation of the conscience, which renders them perfectly miserable unless they are
engaged in some tangible pursuit--"improving their minds," or "adding to the general stock of
information." A more useless, contented person never existed. He never made even a show of
employing himself profitably, and never complained of weariness in maintaining the monotonous
jog-trot of his simple daily life. He read a good deal, certainly, but it was not to improve his mind, only
to amuse himself. Strong-minded books, to stimulate his thinking faculties, would have had no charms
for him; he would as soon have thought of getting galvanised for the pleasure of looking at his muscles.
And I don't know whether it was not just as well. In systematically cultivating his mind, he would
merely have been laying a top-dressing on a thin soil--manuring where there would never have been a
crop--and some pleasant old weeds would have been pulled up in the process. A green thistly common,
even though a goose could hardly find sustenance there, is nature still, which can hardly be said of a
patch of earth covered with guano.

So my grandfather went on enjoying himself without remorse after his own fashion, and never troubled
himself to think--an operation that would have been inconvenient to himself, and productive of no great
results to the world. He transplanted his English habits to Gibraltar; and, after being two years there,
knew nothing more of Spain or Spaniards than the view of the Andaluçian hills from the Rock, and a
short constitutional daily ride along the beach beyond the Spanish lines, to promote appetite and
digestion, afforded him. And so he might have continued to vegetate during the remainder of his service
there, but for a new acquaintance that he made about this time.

Frank Owen, commonly called Garry Owen by his familiars, was one of those joyous spirits whose
pleasant faces and engaging manners serve as a perpetual act of indemnity for all breaches of decorum,
and trespasses over social and conventional fences, committed by them in the gaiety of their hearts. In
reproving his many derelictions of military duty, the grim colonel of the regiment would insensibly
exchange his habitual tone of severe displeasure for one of mild remonstrance--influenced, probably,
quite as much, in secret, by the popularity of the unrepentant offender, as by any personal regard for
him. Captain Hedgehog, who had shot a man through the heart for corking his face one night when he
was drunk, and all contact with whose detonating points of honour was as carefully avoided by his
acquaintance as if they had been the wires of a spring-gun, sustained Garry's reckless personalities with
a sort of warning growl utterly thrown away upon the imperturbable wag, who would still persist, in the
innocence of his heart, in playing round the den of this military cockatrice. And three months after his
arrival in Gibraltar, being one day detected by a fierce old Spanish lady in the very act of kissing her
daughter behind the little señorita's great painted fan, his good-humoured impudence converted the
impending storm into a mild drizzle of reproof, ending in his complete restoration to favour.
This youth had brought with him from England a letter from his mother, a widow lady, an old friend of my grandfather, who had some thirty years before held with her a juvenile flirtation. It recommended to his protection her son Frank, about to join the regiment as an ensign, pathetically enlarging on the various excellencies, domestic and religious, which shone forth conspicuously in the youth's character, and of the comfort of contemplating and superintending which she was about to be deprived. In fact, it had led my grandfather to expect a youth of extreme docility and modesty, requiring a protector rather to embolden than to restrain him. After in vain attempting to espy in his young acquaintance any of the characteristics ascribed to him in his mother's letter, the Major, naturally good-natured and accessible to his youthful comrades, very soon suffered himself to be influenced by the good-humour, vigorous vitality, and careless cleverness of the Ensign, to an extent that caused him sometimes to wonder secretly at his own transformation. His retired habits were broken in upon, one after the other, till he had scarcely a secluded hour in his sixteen waking ones to enjoy alone his book and his pipe. His peaceful quarters, silent in general as a monk's cell, would now be invaded at all sorts of hours by the jovial Garry, followed by the admiring satellites who usually revolved around him; and the Major, with a sound between a groan and a chuckle, would close his well-beloved volume to listen to the facetious details of, and sometimes to participate in, the ungenial freaks of the humorous subaltern. Once he had actually consented, at about the hour he usually went to bed, to accompany the youth to a Carnival ball--one of a series of entertainments at which the Catholic youth of the city are wont to indemnify themselves for the mortifications of Lent, and where masks, dominoes, and fancy dresses lend their aid to defeat the vigilance of the lynx-eyed duennas and mammas who look anxiously on, perfectly aware, in general, that their own watchfulness is more to be relied on for nipping in the bud an indiscreet amour, than any innate iciness of temperament or austere propriety in the objects of their care. Not only did the Major mingle in the scene, but he actually, about midnight, found himself figuring in a cotillon with a well-developed señorita of thirteen years, whose glances and deportment showed a precocious proficiency in the arts of flirtation. At this ball Garry had become enamoured beyond all former passions (and they were numerous and inconstant, in general, as if he had been a Grand Turk) of one of his partners, a young Spanish lady. Her graceful figure and motions in the dance had at first captivated him--and when, after dancing with her himself, his eloquent entreaties, delivered in indifferent Spanish, had prevailed on her to lift her mask for one coy moment, the vision of eyes and eyebrows (the common beauties of a Spanish countenance), and the clear rosy complexion, a much more rare perfection, then revealed, had accomplished the utter subjugation of his errant fancy. She had vanished from the ball silently and irremediably, as a houri of Paradise from the awakening eyes of an opium-eating Pasha; and all his attempts to trace her, continued unceasingly for a couple of months afterwards, had proved in vain.

One morning my grandfather was seated at breakfast in the verandah of his quarters, situated high up the rock above the town. Below him lay the roofs, terraced and balconied, and populous with cats, for whose convenience the little flat stone squares at the top of most of the houses appeared to have been devised. Tall towers, called mirandas, shot up at intervals, from whose summits the half-baked inhabitants, pent within close walls and streets, might catch refreshing glimpses of the blue sea and the hills of Spain--conveniences destined soon afterwards to be ruined by the enemy's fire, or pulled down to avoid attracting it, and never rebuilt. Beyond the white sunny ridge of the line wall came the sharp edge of the bay, rising in high perspective to the purple coast of Spain opposite, which was sprinkled
with buildings white as the sails that dotted the water. My grandfather was in a state of great sensual enjoyment, sniffing up the odour of the large geranium-bushes that grew in clumps in the little garden in front, and the roses that twined thickly round the trellis of the vine-roofed verandah; sipping thick creamy Spanish chocolate between the mouthfuls of red mullet, broiled in white paper, the flavour of which he was diligently comparing with that of some specimens of the same fish which he remembered to have eaten in his youth in Devonshire; and glancing sideways over the cup at an open volume of Shakespeare, leaned slopingly on the edge of a plate of black figs bursting with ripeness, like trunk-hose slashed with crimson. The Major was none of your skimming readers, who glance through a work of art as if it were a newspaper--measure, weigh it, and deliver a critical opinion on it, before the more reverential student has extricated himself from the toils of the first act or opening chapter: not he; he read every word, and affixed a meaning, right or wrong, to all the hard, obsolete ones. The dramatic fitness of the characters was not to be questioned by him, any more than that of the authentic personages of history. He would reason on their acts and proceedings as on those of his own intimate acquaintances. He never could account for Hamlet's madness otherwise than by supposing the Prince must have, some time or other, got an ugly rap on the head--let fall, perhaps, when a baby, by a gin-drinking nurse--producing, as in some persons he had himself from time to time been acquainted with, a temporary aberration of the wits; a piece of original criticism that has not occurred to any of the other commentators on this much-discussed point. Of Iago he has recorded an opinion in an old note-book still extant, where his observations appear in indifferent orthography, and ink yellow with age, that he was a cursed scoundrel--an opinion delivered with all the emphasis of an original detector of crime, anxious that full though tardy justice should be done to the delinquent's memory. But his great favourite was Falstaff: "A wonderful clever fellow, sir," he would say, "and no more a coward than you or I, sir."

My grandfather proceeded slowly with his meal, holding the cup to his lips with one hand and turning a leaf with the other--an operation which he was delaying till a great mosquito-hawk (a beautiful brown moth mottled like a pheasant), that had settled on the page, should think proper to take flight. He had lately come from a parade, as was evidenced by his regimental leather breeches and laced red waistcoat; but a chintz dressing-gown and a pair of yellow Moorish slippers softened down the warlike tone of these garments to one more congenial with his peaceable and festive pursuits. Presently the garden door opened, and a well-known step ascended to the verandah. Frank Owen, dressed in a cool Spanish costume, advanced, and, stopping three paces from the Major, took off his tufted sombrero and made a low bow.

"You are the picture, my dear sir," he said, "of serene enjoyment slightly tinged with sensuality. But how long, may I ask, have you taken to breakfasting on spiders?"--pointing, as he took a chair opposite the Major, at an immense red-spotted one that had dropt from the ceiling on the morsel my grandfather was in the act of conveying to his mouth.

The Major tenderly removed the insect by a leg.

"Tis the worst of these al-fresco meals, Frank," said he. "Yesterday I cut a green lizard in two that had got on my plate, mistaking him for a bit of salad--being, as usual, more intent on my book than my
food--and had very near swallowed the tail-half of the unfortunate animal."

"There are worse things than lizards in the world," quoth Garry. "Ants, I should say, were certainly less wholesome"--and he directed the Major's attention to a long black line of those interesting creatures issuing from a hole in the pavement, passing in an unbroken series up my ancestor's left leg, the foot of which rested on the ground, then traversing the cloth, and terminating at the loaf, the object of their expedition.

"Bless me," said the Major, as he rose and shook his breeches gently free from the marauders, "I must be more careful, or I shall chance to do myself a mischief. But they're worse at night. I've been obliged to leave off reading here in the evenings, for it went to my heart to see the moths scorching their pretty gauzy wings in the candle till the wicks were half-choked with them."

"Do you know, Major," said Owen, gravely, "that either this insect diet, or the sedentary life you lead, is making you quite fat, and utterly destroying the symmetry of your figure? In another week there will be one unbroken line of rotundity from your chin to your knees."

My grandfather glanced downward at his waistcoat. "No, my boy, no," said he; "if there had been any difference, I should have known it by my clothes. I don't think I've gained a pound this twelvemonth."

"More than a stone," quoth Garry. "We all remarked it on parade to-day--and remarked it with sorrow. Now, look you, a sea voyage is the very thing to restore your true proportions, and I propose that we shall take a short one together."

"A sea voyage!" quoth my grandfather; "the boy is mad! Not if all the wonders seen by Sinbad the Sailor lay within a day's sail. Did I not suffer enough coming here from England? I don't think," said my grandfather with considerable pathos, "that my digestion has ever been quite right to this day."

"'Sick of a calm,' eh?--Like your friend Mistress Tearsheet," said the youngster. "But I've settled it all, and count on you. Look here," he continued, drawing from his pocket a large printed bill, and unfolding it before my ancestor. At the top appeared in large capitals the words, "Plaza de Toros;" and underneath was a woodcut representing a bull, gazing, with his tail in the air, and an approving smile on his countenance, on the matadore about to transfix him. Then followed a glowing account in Spanish of the delights of a great bull-fight shortly to take place at Cadiz, setting forth the ferocity of the bulls, the number of horses that might be expected to die in the arena, and the fame of the picadores and espadas who were then and there to exhibit.

The Major shook his head--the captivating prospectus had no charms for him: he had not, as I have before said, an inquiring mind, and habit was so strong in him, that a change was like the dislocation of a joint. The Ensign proceeded to paint the delights of the excursion in the brightest colours he could command. They were to go to Cadiz in a boat which he had lately bought; she was a capital sailor--there was a half-deck forward, under which the Major might sleep as comfortably as in his own bed--a cooking apparatus (and here, as he expatiated on the grills and stews and devils that were to be
cooked and eaten, with the additional stimulus to appetite afforded by sea air, there was a spark of relenting in my grandfather's eye. "You shall return," said the tempter, "with a digestion so completely renovated, that my name shall rise to your tongue at each meal as a grace before meat, and a thanksgiving after it; and as to sea-sickness, why, this Levantar will take us there in twelve hours, so smoothly that you may balance a straw upon your nose the whole way." Finally, the cunning Ensign laid before him an application for leave already made out, and only awaiting his signature.

My grandfather made some feeble objections, which Owen pooh-poohed in his usual off-hand fashion. There was no standing against the youngster's strong will, and at five o'clock that same evening the Major found himself proceeding through the town towards the Waterport for embarkation, by no means fully reconciled to the abandonment of his beloved Lares. My luckless grandfather! did no presentiment warn you of a consequence then hanging in the clouds, that was to change utterly for you the untroubled aspect of those household gods?

Owen had attired himself for the trip in a half-nautical costume--a shirt of light-blue flannel, fastened at the collar with a smart bandana, a blue jacket, loose duck trousers, and a montero cap, which costume became the puppy well enough. He seemed of this opinion himself, as he walked gaily along beside the Major: so did the black-eyed occupants of many houses on each side, who peeped forth smilingly from behind their green lattices, sometimes nodding, and kissing their hands--for the Ensign had an incredible acquaintance with the budding and full-blown portion of the population of Gibraltar. The Major had stuck to his buckskins, (which stuck to him in return), over which he had drawn a pair of jack-boots, and wore his red-laced coat and regimental hat--for in those days that passion for mufti, now so prevalent in the army, did not exist. Whenever he caught sight of any of the greetings bestowed from the windows, he would take off his laced hat, and, fixing his eyes on the tittering señorita, who generally let fall the lattice with a slam, would make her a low bow--and, after each of these acts of courtesy, my grandfather walked on more elated than before.

They passed the drawbridge at Waterport, and, struggling through the crowd of Turks, Jews, infidels, and heretics, who usually throng the quay, entered a shore-boat that was to row them out to where Owen's vessel--the *Fair Unknown*, as he had christened her, in memory of his unforgotten partner at the Carnival ball--lay moored. In her they found a sailor who was to accompany them on their voyage--a noted contrabandista, called Francisco, whose friendship Owen had lately acquired, and who acted as his lieutenant on his marine excursions. The boat was a neat affair--a small cutter, smartly painted, well found, and capable of holding several persons comfortably; and Francisco was a ruddy, portly, dark-skinned, large-whiskered son of the sea, the picture of good-humour. My grandfather stept in, in his jack-boots. There was much settling of carpet-bags and stowing of provisions in the lockers, and then they hoisted sail, and glided smoothly out from among the shipping into the bay.

The breeze was light and fair, and they went on, as Frank had promised, pleasantly enough. My grandfather for the first time surveyed the scene of his two years' residence from the sea. The grey old rock looked mellow in the evening light, as an elderly gentleman over his wine--the window-panes glanced ruddily, the walls gleamed whitely, and the trees were tinted with a yellower green; behind, in the eastern sky, floated one single purple cloud. As the objects became confused in the distance, the
sharp rugged outline of the rock assumed the appearance that has caused the Spaniards to call it El Cuerpo--the appearance of a vast human body laid out on its back, and covered with a winding-sheet, like a dead Titan on his funeral pile--the head towards Spain, the chest arched at Middle Hill, the legs rising gently upward to the knees at O'Hara's Tower, and then sloping down till the feet rest on Europa. The sun went down as they rounded Cabrita Point, and the breeze, freshening, took them swiftly along under the huge hills that rise abruptly upward from the Spanish coast. Then Francisco, lighting a charcoal fire, placed thereon, in a frying-pan, tender steaks thickly strewn with sliced tomatoes and onions, from whence arose a steam that brought tears of gratitude and delight into my grandfather's eyes. He anxiously watched the cooking--even threw out slight suggestions, such as another pinch of pepper, an additional onion, a slight dash of cayenne, and the like; and then, settling a plate firmly on the knees of his jack-boots, with a piece of bread and a cup by his side, and a knife and fork pointing upwards in his hands like lightning-conductors, gazed cheerfully around him. And when Francisco, rising from his knees, where he had been blowing the charcoal fire, removed the hissing pan towards my grandfather's plate, transferring to it a liberal portion of the contents, the good man, gazing on the white and red streaks of vegetable relieved by the brown background of steak, and the whole picture swimming in a juicy atmosphere of gravy, felt sentiments of positive friendship towards that lawless individual, and, filling a bumper of Xerez, drank success to the voyage.

Three times was my grandfather's plate replenished from the thrice-filled pan. Afterwards he dallied a little with a cold pie, followed by a bit of cheese for digestion. Then, folding his hands across his stomach, he expressed his sincere opinion, that he had never tasted anything so good as that steak; and when Owen placed in his hand a smoking can of grog, he looked on the young man with a truly paternal eye. He talked complacently and benevolently, as men do who have dined well--praised the weather, the boat, the scene--and wondered where a man was going who rode slowly along a mountain-path above them, within hail, following him, in imagination, to his home, in a sort of dreamy contentment. After a second can he began to grow drowsy, and, just aware that Owen said the breeze was still freshening, retired to the soft mattress spread for him under the half-deck, and replacing his cocked-hat by a red nightcap, slept till morning.

It was broad daylight when he woke, conscious that for an hour or two past he had been sleeping most uneasily. There was a violent swinging motion, a rushing of wind and of water, that confused him extremely; and, forgetting where he was, he nearly fractured his skull by rising suddenly into a sitting posture. Steadying himself on his hands, in the posture of the Dying Gladiator, he slewed himself round on the pivot of his stern, and protruded his powdered head, like an old beaver, out of his hole. Owen and Francisco were sitting in a pool of water, trying to shelter themselves under the weather-side of the boat--dripping wet, and breakfasting on cold potatoes and fragments of meat left from last night's meal. My grandfather did not like the appearance of things at all. Rent in twain by horrible qualms, he inquired feebly of Owen if they were near Cadiz? Frank, in reply, shook his head, and said they were at anchor. Then my grandfather, making a vigorous effort, emerged completely from his place of repose, and, rising to his feet, looked over the gunwale. The scene he beheld was in dreary contrast to that of the evening before. Ridges of white foam were all around--ahead was a long low line of sandy coast, terminating in a point of rock whereon stood a lighthouse; and to leeward the bay was enclosed by steep hills. Over the low coast-line the wind blew with steady violence. A bright sun rather increased the
dreariness of the prospect, which was suddenly closed to my grandfather by a shower of spray, that blinded him, and drenched him to the skin, converting his jack-boots into buckets. The wind had increased to a gale during the night, and they had been forced to take precarious shelter in the harbour of Tarifa. The Major did not venture on a second peep, but sat, dismal and sea-sick, the whole morning, trying to shelter himself as he best could. Once, a man came down to the beach, and gesticulated like a scaramouch, screaming also at the same time; but what his gestures and screams signified nobody on board could tell. At length, as the gale did not moderate, while their position increased in discomfort, and was also becoming precarious (for one of their anchors was gone, and great fears were entertained for the other), Owen and Francisco decided to weigh, and stand in for the shore, trusting to the smuggler's seamanship for a safe run. The Major, in spite of his sickness, stood up and pulled gallantly at the cable, the wind blowing his pigtails and skirts perpendicularly out from his person. "Heaf!" screamed Francisco from the bows; "Heave!" echoed Owen; and as the words flew past him on the gale, my grandfather's exertions were prodigious. At last, after tremendous tugging, the anchor came up. The jib was hoisted with a reef in it, Owen holding the sheet, while the smuggler ran aft and took the helm. They bent over to the gale, till the Major stood almost perpendicularly on the lee gunwale, with his back against the weather-side, and ran in till he thought they were going to bump ashore; then tacking, they stood up along the coast, close to the wind, till Francisco gave the word. Owen let go the sheet, and the jib fluttered loosely out as they ran through a narrow passage into smooth water behind the sea-wall, and made fast to a flight of steps.

Presently some functionary appertaining to the harbour appeared, and with him an emissary from the Governor of the place, who, aware of their plight, had civilly sent to offer assistance. The messenger was the same man who had made signals to them from the beach in the morning; and he seemed to think it advisable that they should wait on the Governor in person, saying that he was always disposed to be civil to British officers. This advice they resolved to act upon at once, before it should grow dark, foreseeing that, in case of their detention from bad weather in Tarifa, the Governor might prove a potent auxiliary. The Major would have wished to make some little alterations in his toilette, after his late disasters; but, after trying in vain to pull off his jack-boots, which clung to him like his skin, he was obliged to abandon the idea, and contented himself with standing on his head to let the water run out of them. As they advanced along the causeway leading to the town (the point where they landed is connected with the town by a long narrow sandy isthmus), the gale swept over them volumes of sand, which, sticking on my grandfather's wet uniform, gave him somewhat the appearance of a brick-wall partially rough-cast. His beard was of two days' growth--his hair-powder was converted into green paste by the sea-water--and his whole appearance was travel-stained and deplorable. Nevertheless his dignity by no means forsook him as they traversed the narrow alleys of the ancient town of Tarifa on their way to the approaching interview.

His excellency Don Pablo Dotto, a wonderfully fat little man, received them very courteously. He was a Spaniard of the old school, and returned the stately greeting of my grandfather, and the easy one of the Ensign, with such a profusion of bows, that for the space of a minute they saw little more of his person than the shining baldness on the top of his head. Then they were presented to his wife, a good-natured, motherly sort of old lady, who seemed to compassionately them much. But, while Owen was explaining to her the object of their trip, and its disastrous interruption, he suddenly stopped, open-mouthed, and
blushing violently, with his gaze directed towards the open door of a neighbouring apartment. There he beheld advancing towards him, the Beauty of the Carnival ball.

The Governor's lady named her as "her daughter, the Señorita Juana." Spite of the different dress and circumstances, she too recognised Frank, and coloured slightly as she came forward to receive his greeting. The Ensign, an impudent scamp enough in general, was, however, the more confused of the two; and his embarrassed salutation was entirely thrown into the shade by the magnificence of my grandfather's bow. However, he presently recovered his assurance, and explained to the elder lady how he had previously enjoyed the pleasure (with a great stress upon the word) of making her daughter's acquaintance. Then he recounted to Juana the manner in which they had been driven in here, when on their way to Cadiz to see the bull-fight.

"We also are going to ride thither to-morrow," said the Señorita, softly.

"Ah, then, we shall meet there," said Frank, who presently after was seized with a fit of absence, and made incoherent replies. He was considering how they might travel together, and had almost resolved to offer to take the whole family to Cadiz in his boat—a proposal that would probably have somewhat astonished the little Governor, especially if he had seen the dimensions of the craft thus destined to accommodate himself and retinue. But Garry was an adept in manoeuvring, and marched skilfully upon the point he had in view. He drew such a pathetic picture of the hardships they had endured on the voyage—their probable detention here for most of their short leave—their friendless condition, and their desire to see something of the country—that the little Governor was in a manner impelled (fancying all the time that the impulse sprung altogether from his own native benevolence) to desire that the two forlorn Englishmen would travel to Cadiz under his escort. So it being settled entirely to Garry's satisfaction that they were to start next morning at break of day on horseback—an arrangement which my grandfather's total ignorance of Spanish prevented him from knowing anything about—they retired to the principal fonda, where the Major speedily forgot, over a tolerable dinner, the toils and perils of the voyage.
CHAPTER II.

Daybreak the next morning found them issuing forth from the ancient city of Tarifa on a couple of respectable-looking hacks, hired from the innkeeper. Frank had, with his accustomed generalship, managed to secure a position at the off-rein of the Señorita Juana, who was mounted on a beautiful little white barb. Under her side-saddle, of green velvet studded with gilt nails, was a Moorish saddle-cloth, striped with vivid red and white, and fringed deeply. From the throat-lash of the bridle hung a long tassel, as an artificial auxiliary to the barb's tail in the task of keeping the flies off; further assisted by a tuft of white horse-hair attached to the butt of her whip. She wore a looped hat and white plume, a riding-skirt, and an embroidered jacket of blue cloth, fastened, as was the wrought bosom of her chemise, with small gold buttons. Frank could not keep his eyes off her, now riding off to the further side of the road to take in at once the whole of the beauteous vision, now coming close up to study it in its delightful details.

In front of the pair rode the little Governor, side by side with a Spaniard of about thirty, the long-betrothed lover of Juana—so long, in fact, that he did not trouble himself to secure his authority in a territory so undeniably his own, but smoked his cigar as coolly as if there were no good-looking Englishman within fifty miles of his mistress. He wore garments of the Spanish cut, made of nankeen—the jacket frogged with silver cords, tagged with little silver XXXX fishes—the latter appended, perhaps, as suitable companions to the frogs. A hundred yards ahead was an escort of four horse-soldiers with carbines on their thighs, their steel accoutrements flashing ruddily in the level sunlight. Behind Frank came Major Flinders, clean shaved, and with jack-boots and regimental coat restored to something like their pristine splendour: by his side rode another lady, the Señorita Carlota, Juana's aunt, somewhere about thirty years old, plump and merry, her upper lip fringed at the corners with a line of dark down, quite decided enough for a cornet of eighteen to be proud of—a feminine embellishment too common for remark in these southern regions, and, in the opinion of some connoisseurs, rather enhancing the beauty of the fair wearers. She talked incessantly, at first, to my grandfather, who did not understand a word she said, but whose native politeness prompted him to say, "Si, Señorita," to everything—sometimes laying at the same moment his hand on his heart, and bowing with considerable grace. Behind this pair came another interesting couple—viz. two servants on mules, with great saddle-bags stuffed to extreme corpulence with provisions.

It was a glorious morning—a gentle breeze sweeping on their faces as they mounted the hills, but dying into silence in the deep valleys, fresh, and glistening with dew. Sometimes they rode along a rocky common, yellowed with a flowering shrub like furze—sometimes through unfenced fields—sometimes along broad plains, where patches of blossoming beans made the air rich with scent, and along which they galloped full speed, the Governor standing high in the stirrups of his demi-pique, the Señorita's white barb arching his neck till his muzzle touched his chest under the pressure of the long bit, and my grandfather prancing somewhat uneasily on his hard-mouthed Spanish entero, whose nose was, for the most part, projected horizontally in the air. The Major was not a first-rate seat—he rode with a long stirrup, his heel well down, his leg straight, and slanting a little forward, body upright, and elbows back, as may be seen in the plates to ancient works on equitation—a posture imposing enough, but not safe across country: galloping deranged it materially, for the steed was hard-mouthed, and required a long,
strong pull, with the body back, and a good purchase on the stirrups. The animal had a most voracious appetite, quite overcoming his sense of what was due to his rider; and, on seeing a tuft of juicy grass, down went his nose, drawing my grandfather, by means of the tight reins, well over the pummel. On these occasions, the Major, feeling resistance to be in vain, would sit looking easily about him, feigning to be absorbed in admiration of the prospect—which was all very well, where there was a prospect to look at, but wore a less plausible appearance when the animal paused in a hollow between two hedges, or ran his nose into a barn-door. But whenever this happened, Carlota, instead of half-smothering a laugh, as a mischievous English girl would, ten to one, have done, sat most patiently till the Major and his steed came to an understanding, and would greet him, as they moved on again, with a good-natured smile, that won her, each time, a higher place in his estimation.

Thus they proceeded till the sun rose high in the heavens, when, on reaching a grove on the edge of one of the plains, they halted under a huge cork-tree, near which ran a rivulet. The cavalcade dismounted—the horses were tethered, the mules disburthened of the saddle-bags, and the contents displayed under the tree; horse-cloths and cloaks were spread around on the ground, and a fire of dry sticks was lit on the edge of the stream with such marvellous celerity that, before my grandfather had time to take more than a hasty survey of the eatables, after seating himself on the root of a tree, a cup of steaming chocolate was placed in his hand.

"Confess, Major," said Garry, speaking with his mouth full of sausage, "that a man may lose some of the pleasures of existence by leading the life of a hermit. Don't you feel grateful to me for dragging you out of your cobweb to such a pleasant place as this?"

"'Tis an excellent breakfast," said my grandfather, who had just assisted the Señorita Carlota to a slice of turkey's breast, and himself to an entire leg and thigh—dividing with her, at the same time, a crisp white loaf, having a handle like a teapot or smoothing-iron—"and my appetite is really very good. I should be perfectly easy if I could only understand the remarks of this very agreeable lady, and make suitable replies."

"Let me interpret your sentiments," said Garry; "and though I may not succeed in conveying them in their original force and poetry, yet they shall lose as little as possible in transmission. Just try me—what would you wish to say?"

"Why, really," said my grandfather, pondering, "I had a great many things to say as we came along, but they've gone out of my head. Do you think she ever read Shakespeare?"

"Not a chance of it," said Owen.

Here the Señorita laughingly appealed to Frank to know what my grandfather was saying about her.

"Ah," quoth my grandfather, quoting his friend Shakespeare--
"'I understand thy looks--the pretty Spanish Which thou pourest down from these swelling heavens I am not perfect in----'"

"She's an extremely agreeable woman, Frank, I'll be sworn, if one only understood her," quoth my grandfather, casting on her a glance full of gallantry.

The Ensign was not so entirely occupied in prosecuting his own love affair as to be insensible to the facilities afforded him for amusing himself at the Major's expense. Accordingly, he made a speech in Spanish to Carlota, purporting to be a faithful translation of my grandfather's, but teeming, in fact, with the most romantic expressions of chivalrous admiration, as was apparent from the frequent recurrence of the words "ojos" (eyes), "corazon" (heart), and the like amatory currency.

"There, Major," said the interpreter, as he finished; "I've told her what you said of her."

The Major endorsed the compliments by laying his hand upon his heart, and bowing with a tender air. Whereupon Carlota, laughing, and blushing a deeper red, made her acknowledgments.

"She says," quoth Frank, "that she knew the English before to be a gallant nation; but that if all the caballéros (that's gentlemen) of that favoured race are equal to the present specimen, her own countrymen must be thrown entirely into the shade."

"Delightful!" cried my grandfather; but it is doubtful whether this expression of pleasure was called forth by the sentiments attributed to the Señorita, or by the crisp succulent tenderness of a mouthful of sucking-pig which was at that moment spreading itself over his palate.

Following up his idea, the mischievous Ensign continued to diversify the graver pursuit of prosecuting his own suit with Juana, by impressing Carlota and the Major with the idea that each was disposed to think favourably of the other. In this he was tolerably successful--the speeches he made to Carlota, supposed to originate with my grandfather, had a very genuine warmth about them, being, in fact, very often identical with those he had just been making, under immediate inspiration, to his own divinity; while as for the Major, it would have been an insult to the simplicity of that worthy man's nature to exert any great ingenuity in deceiving him; it would have been like setting a trap for a snail. So they journeyed on, highly pleased with each other, and occasionally, in the absence of their faithful interpreter, conversed by means of smiles and courteous gesticulations, till my grandfather felt entirely at his ease, and was almost sorry when, on the evening of the second day, they got to Cadiz.
A whole city full of people condensed into one broad amphitheatre, all bearing a national resemblance to each other in countenance and costume, all apparently animated by the same spirit—for nothing could be more unanimous than the applause which greeted a favourite smilingly crossing the arena, the abuse which overwhelmed an object offensive to the eye of the many-headed, or the ridicule which descended in a joyous uproarious flood on the hapless individual in whose appearance, dress, or manner, anything was detected calculated to appeal to the highly sensitive risible faculty of a Spanish assembly;—a gay and picturesque mixture of colours, waving and tossing like a garden in a breeze, as the masses of white mantillas, heads black as coal, decorated with flowers and green leaves, red sashes, tufted sombreros, and yellow gaiters, with here and there a blue-and-white soldier standing stiffly up, were agitated by each new emotion—such was the scene that met the eyes of our travellers on entering the bull-ring at Cadiz before the sport commenced.

My grandfather had made his entry in spectacles—appendages highly provocative of the public mirth—and had looked wonderingly for a minute or two through the obnoxious glasses on a sea of faces upturned, sideturned, and downturned, all looking at him, and all shouting some indistinguishable chorus; while the men beat time, each with the long, forked, painted stick, without which no Spaniard possessing sentiments of propriety ever comes to a bull-fight, in a manner most embarrassing to a somewhat bashful stranger, till their attention was luckily diverted to an unhappy man in a white hat, in derision of whom they immediately sang a song, the burden of which was "El del sombrero blanco," (he of the white hat), the multitude conducting itself throughout like one man.

My grandfather and his friends occupied a distinguished position in a box high above the multitude, and near that of the alcalde. The Señorita Juana looked more lovely than ever in a white dress, over which flowed a white gauzy mantilla, giving a kind of misty indistinctness to the wavy outlines of her figure, and the warm tint of her neck and arms. From her masses of black hair peeped one spot of vivid white, a rosebud; and a green plummy leaf, a favourite ornament with Spanish girls, drooped, bending, and soft as a feather, on one side of her gold-and-tortoiseshell comb. The Major sat beside Carlota, who, naturally frank, and looking upon him now as an old acquaintance, would tap his arm most bewitchingly with her fan when she wanted to direct his attention to any object of interest. So the Major sat by her, all gallantry and smiles, gazing about him with wonder through the double gold eyeglass, which still, in spite of the late expression of popular feeling, bestrid his nose. He looked with the interest of a child at everything—at the faces and dresses around him, distinct in their proximity, and at those, confused in their details by distance, on the opposite side of the arena. He shared in the distress of an unfortunate person (a contractor for bulls, who had palmed some bad ones on the public) who tried, as he walked conspicuously across the ring, to smile off a torrent of popular execration about as successfully as a lady might attempt to ward off Niagara with her parasol, and who was, as it were, washed out at an opposite door, drenched and sodden with jeers. And when the folding-gates were opened, and the gay procession entered, my grandfather gazed on it with delight, and shouted "Bravo!" as enthusiastically as if he had been an habitual frequenter of bull-rings from his earliest youth. First came the espadas or matadores, their hair clubbed behind like a woman's, dressed in bright-coloured jackets, and breeches seamed with broad silver lace, white stockings, shoes fastened with immense
rosettes, and having their waists girt with silk sashes, bearing on their arms the blood-coloured cloaks that were to lure the bull upon the sword-point. Next followed the chulos, similarly attired; then the picadores, riding stiffly, with padded legs, on their doomed steeds; and mules, whose office it was to drag off the dead bulls and horses, harnessed three abreast as in classic chariots, and almost hidden under a mass of gay housings, closed the procession. Marching across the middle of the ring to the alcalde's box, they requested permission to begin, and, it being granted, the picadores stationed themselves at equal distances from each other round the circumference of the arena. Then, at a signal from the alcalde, two trumpeters in scarlet, behind him, stood up and sounded—a man, standing with his hand ready on a bolt in a door underneath, drew it, and pulled the door swiftly back, shutting himself into a niche, as the dark space thus opened was filled by the formidable figure of a bull, who, with glancing horns and tail erect, bounded out, and, looking around during one fierce brief pause, made straight at the first picador. The cavalier, standing straight in his stirrups, his lance tucked firmly under his arm, fixed the point fairly in the shoulder of the brute, who, never pausing for that, straightway upset man and horse. Then my grandfather might be seen stretching far over the front of his box, his eyes staring on the prostrate picador, and his hands clenched above his head, while he shouted, "By the Lord, sir, he'll be killed!" And when a chulo, darting alongside, waved his cloak before the bull's eyes and lured him away, the Major, drawing a long breath, turned to a calm Spaniard beside him, and said, "By heaven, sir, 'twas the mercy of Providence!"—but the Spaniard, taking his cigar from his mouth, and expelling the smoke through his nostrils, merely said, "Bien está" ('tis very well.) Meanwhile, the bull (who, like his predecessor in the china-shop, seemed to have it all his own way) had run his horn into the heart of a second horse, and the picador, perceiving from the shivering of the wounded creature that the hurt was mortal, dismounted in all haste, while the horse, giving one long, blundering stagger, fell over and died, and was immediately stript of his accoutrements. This my grandfather didn't like at all; but, seeing no kindred disgust in the faces round him, he nerved himself, considering that it was a soldier's business to look on wounds and death. He even beheld, with tolerable firmness, the spectacle of a horse dashing blindfold and riderless, and mad with fear and pain, against the barrier—rebounding whence to the earth with a broken shoulder, it was forced again on its three legs, and led stumbling from the ring. But when he saw another horse raised to its feet, and, all ript open as it was, spurred to a second assault, the Major, who hadn't the heart himself to hurt a fly, could stand it no longer, but, feeling unwell, retired precipitately from the scene. On reaching the door, he wrote over the same, with a bit of chalk, part of the speech of Henry V., "the royal imp of fame," to his soldiers at Agincourt:—

"He that hath not stomach for the fight, Let him depart----"

to the great astonishment of the two Spanish sentries, who gazed on the words as if they contained a magical spell.

Frank sat till it was over—"played out the play." Not that he saw much of the fight, however; he had eyes and speech for nothing but Juana, and was able to indulge his penchant without interruption, as the little Governor took great interest in the fight, and the lover with the silver fishes was a connoisseur in the sport, and laid bets on the number of horses that each particular bull would kill with great accuracy. So the Ensign had it all his own way, and, being by no means the sort of person to throw away this or any other opportunity with which fortune might favour him, got on quite as well, probably, as you or I
might have done in his place.

Leaving Cadiz next morning, they resumed the order of march they had adopted in coming--Don Pablo riding, as before, in front with the knight of the silver fishes, discussing with him the incidents of the bull-ring. The old gentleman, though very courteous when addressing the two Englishmen, had but little to say to them--neither did he trouble himself to talk much to the ladies; and when he did, a sharp expression would sometimes slip out, convincing Owen that he was something of a domestic tyrant in private--a character by no means inconsistent with the blandest demeanour in public. The Ensign was at great pains to encourage the Major to be gracious to Carlota. "Get a little more tropical in your looks, Major," he would say; "these Spanish ladies are not accustomed to frigid glances. She's desperately in love with you--pity she can't express what she feels; and she mightn't like to trust an interpreter with her sentiments."

"Pooh, nonsense, boy," said the Major, colouring with pleasure, "she doesn't care for an old fellow like me."

"Doesn't she?--see what her eyes say--that's what I call ocular demonstration," quoth the Ensign. "If you don't return it, you're a stock, a stone." Then he would say something to Carlota, causing her eyes to sparkle, and canter on to rejoin Juana.

It was genial summer-time with Carlota--she had passed the age of maiden diffidence, without having attained that of soured and faded spinsterhood. She had a sort of jovial confidence in herself, and an easy demeanour towards the male sex, such as is seen in widows. These supposed advances of the Major were accordingly met by her rather more than half-way. None but the Major was permitted to assist her into the saddle, or to receive her plump form descending from it. None but the Major was beckoned to her rein when the path was broken and perilous, or caught on his protecting arm the pressure of her outstretched hand, when her steed stumbled over the loose pebbles. None was repaid for a slight courtesy by so many warm, confiding smiles as he. These, following fast one on another, began to penetrate the rusty casing of the Major's heart. On his own ground--that is, in his own quarters--he could have given battle, successfully, to a score of such insidious enemies: his books, his flowers, his pipe, his slippers, and a hundred other Penates would have encircled him; but here, with all his strong palisading of habit torn up and scattered, all his wonted trains of ideas upset and routed by the novelty of situation and scenery, he lay totally defenceless, and open to attack. The circumstance of himself and Carlota being ignorant of each other's language, far from being an obstacle to their mutual good-will, rather favoured its progress. In company with an Englishwoman, in similar circumstances, my grandfather would have considered himself bound to entertain her with his conversation, and, perhaps, have spoiled all by trying to make himself agreeable--it would have been a tax on the patience of both: but being absolved from any such duty in the present instance, he could without awkwardness ride onward in full and silent communion with his own thoughts, and enjoy the pleasure of being smiled upon without being at any pains to earn it.

His note-book, containing an account of the expedition, which I have seen--and whence, indeed, the greater part of this chronicle is gathered--exhibits, at this period of the journey, sufficient proof that the
Major enjoyed this new state of being extremely, and felt his intellect, his heart, and his stomach all stimulated at once.

"Spain," says my grandfather, in a compendious descriptive sentence, "is a country of garlicky odours, of dirty contentment, of XXXX overburthened donkeys, and of excellent pork; but a fine air in the hills, and the country much sweeter than the towns. The people don't seem to know what comfort is, or cleanliness, but are nevertheless very contented in their ignorance. My saddle is bad, I think, for I dismounted very sore to-day. The Señorita mighty pleasant and gracious. I entertain a great regard for her--no doubt a sensible woman, as well as a handsome. A pig to-day at breakfast, the best I have tasted in Spain."

The desultory style of the composition of these notes prevents me from quoting largely from them. Statistics, incidents of travel, philosophic reflections, and the state of his digestive organs, are all chronicled indiscriminately. But, from the above mixture of sentiments, it will be perceived that the Major's admiration for Carlota was of a sober nature, by no means ardent or Quixotic, and pretty much on a par with his passion for pig.

This was far from being the case with Garry, who became more and more enamoured every hour. The Spanish lover continued to conduct himself as if he had been married to Juana for twenty years, never troubling himself to be particularly agreeable or attentive, for which obliging conduct Garry felt very grateful to him. The Major had been too long accustomed to witness Owen's philanderings to see anything peculiar in the present case, till his attention was attracted by a little incident he accidentally witnessed. After the last halt they made before reaching Tarifa, Garry was, as usual, at hand, to assist Juana to her saddle. Her horse was fastened in a thicket of oleanders, whose flowers and leaves formed a screen such as Cupid himself might have planted. Garry seized the charming opportunity to offer to re-tie the ribbons of her hat, which was very considerate; for, to tie them herself, she would have been obliged to take off her gloves, which would have been a great trouble. Having done so, still retaining his hold of the strings, he glanced quickly around, and then drew her blooming face towards his own till their lips met--for which piece of impudence he only suffered the slight penalty of a gentle tap with her whip. My grandfather discreetly and modestly withdrew his eyes, but he was not the only observer. He of the silver fishes was regarding them with a fixed look from among some neighbouring trees, where he had tethered his horse. Probably the Spaniard, with all his indifference, thought this was carrying matters a little too far, for, after conversing a moment with the Governor, he took his place at Juana's side, and did not again quit it till they arrived at Tarifa. Then both he and the Governor took leave of our travellers with a cold civility, defying all Garry's attempts to thaw it, and seeming to forbid all prospect of a speedy renewal of the acquaintance.
CHAPTER IV.

At the inn, that night, the Major betook himself to rest early, that he might be ready to start for Gibraltar betimes in the morning, for on the following day their leave was to expire.

He had slept soundly for several hours, when he was awoke by Owen, who entered with a candle in his hand. The Major sat up in bed and rubbed his eyes.

"Time's up, my boy, eh?" said he, with a cavernous yawn. "I should have liked another hour of it, but it can't be helped," (preparing to turn out).

"I didn't want to spoil your rest last night," said Owen, seating himself on the edge of the bed, "so I said nothing about a mishap that has occurred. That smuggling villain, Francisco, took advantage of our absence to fetch a contraband cargo in the boat from Gibraltar, and has been caught in attempting to run it here."

"God bless me," said my grandfather, "who would have thought it!--and he such a capital cook! But what's to be done? where's the boat?"

"The boat is, for the present, confiscated," said Garry; "but I daresay the Governor would let us have it in the morning, on explaining, and would perhaps release Francisco, with the loss of his cargo; but--but--in fact, Major, I don't want the Governor to know anything about our departure."

My grandfather stared at him, awaiting further explanation.

"Juana looked pale last night," said the Ensign after a pause.

The Major did not dispute the fact, though he could not, for the life of him, see what the state of Juana's complexion had to do with the subject.

"She never liked that dingy Spanish lover of hers," said the Ensign, "and her father intends she shall marry him in a month. 'Twould make her miserable for life."

"Dear me," said my grandfather, "how do you know that?"

"She told me so. You see," said Owen, shading the candle with his hand, so that my grandfather couldn't see his face, and speaking hurriedly, "I didn't intend we should start alone--in fact--that is--Juana has agreed to fly with me to Gibraltar."

"Agreed!--fly!"--gasped my grandsire: "what an extraordinary young fellow!"

"She's waiting for us now," resumed Garry, gathering courage after the first plunge into the subject; "we ought to be off before daylight. Oblige me, my dear sir" (smiling irresistibly), "by getting up
"And how are we to get away," asked my grandfather, "supposing this insane scheme of yours to be attempted?"

"I've bribed the sentry at Francisco's place of durance," returned the Ensign. "We shall get out of the town the instant the gates are opened; and the boat is tied to the steps, as before, only under the charge of a sentry whom we can easily evade. Every guarda costa in the place was sent out last night to blockade a noted smuggler who has taken refuge in Tangier; so, once out, we are safe from pursuit: I found it all out after you had gone to bed."

The disposition of Major Flinders, as the reader knows, was the reverse of enterprising--he wouldn't have given a straw to be concerned in the finest adventure that ever happened in romance. He paused with one stocking on, inclined, like the little woman whose garments had been curtailed by the licentious shears of the pedlar, to doubt his own identity, and wondering if it could be really he, John Flinders, to whom such a proposition was broached, requiring him to assist in invading the peace of a family. As soon as he recovered his powers of speech, of which astonishment had for a moment deprived him, he began earnestly to dissuade the Ensign from the enterprise; but Owen knew his man too well, and had too much youthful vivacity of will to allow much time for remonstrance.

"Look you, Major," said he, "I'm positive I can't live without Juana. I'll make a bold stroke for a wife. The thing's settled--no going back now for me; and I shall go through with it with or without you. But you're not the man, I'm sure, to desert a fellow in extremity, at a time, too, when the advantages of your experience and coolness are so peculiarly needed. 'Call you that backing of your friends?'"

The compliment, or the quotation, or both, softened the Major. "Would it were night, Hal, and all well," said he, half mechanically following the Falstaffian train of ideas Owen had artfully conjured up, and at the same time drawing on the breeches which that astute youth obsequiously handed to him.

It was still dark when they issued forth into the narrow and dingy streets of Tarifa. My grandfather, totally unaccustomed to visit the glimpses of the moon in this adventurous fashion, was full of strange fears--heard as many imaginary suspicious noises and voices as Bunyan's Pilgrim in the dark valley--and once or twice stopt abruptly and grasped Owen's arm, while he pointed to a spy dogging them in the distant gloom, who turned out to be a door-post. But Owen was now in his element; no tom-cat in Tarifa was more familiar with housetops and balconies at the witching hour than he, and he stepped gaily on. Presently they were challenged by a sentry, to whom Owen promptly advanced and slipped into his itching palm a doubloon, when the trustworthy warrior immediately turned upon his heel, and, walking to the extremity of his post, looked with great vigilance in the opposite direction.

Owen advanced to a grated window and tapped. Immediately the burly face of Francisco showed itself thereat, his white teeth glancing merrily in a glimmer of moonshine. A bar, previously filed through, was removed from the window, and Owen, taking him by the collar to assist his egress, drew him through as far as the third button of his waistcoat, where he stuck for a moment; but the substance was
elastic, and a lusty tug landed him in the middle of the narrow street. Receiving Frank's instructions
given in a hurried whisper, to go at once to where the boat lay, and cast her off, ready to shove off on
the instant, he nodded and disappeared in the darkness, while Owen and the Major made for the
Governor's house.

Arrived near it, Owen gave a low whistle--a peculiar one, that my grandfather remembered to have
heard him practising to Juana on the previous day--when, to the unutterable surprise of the Major, two
veiled figures appeared on the balcony.

"Why, Owen, boy, d'ye see!" quoth the Major, stuttering with anxiety, "who can the other be?--her
maid, eh?"--indistinct stage recollections of intriguing waiting-women dawning on him.

"Ahem!--why, you see, Major," whispered Owen, "she wouldn't come alone--couldn't manage it at all,
in fact, without the knowledge of her aunt, who sleeps in the next room; so I persuaded Carlota to come
too, and gave her a sort of half promise that you would take care of her." Here, wishing to cut short a
rather awkward explanation, he ran under the balcony--one of the ladies dropped a cord--and Owen
producing from under his coat a rope ladder, (he had sat up all night making it), attached it, and, as soon
as it was drawn up, ascended, motioning to my astounded grandfather to keep it steady below. The
Major, after a moment's desperate half-resolve to make a hasty retreat from the perilous incidents which
seemed momentarily to thicken round him, and leave his reckless friend to his fate, yielded to the force
of circumstances, and did what was required of him. Then Owen lifted the ladies, one after the other,
over the railing of the balcony, and they swiftly descended. First came Juana, who, scarcely touching
the Major's offered hand, lit on the pavement like gossamer; then Carlota descended, and making, in her
trepidation, a false step near the bottom, came so heavily on the Major, that they rolled together on the
stones. By the time they were on their feet again, Owen had slipped down the ladder, and, taking Juana
under his arm, set off rapidly towards the bay.

If anything could have added to the Major's discomfiture and embarrassment, it would have been the
pressure of Carlota's arm on his, as she hung confidingly on him--a pressure not proceeding from her
weight only, but active, and with a meaning in it; but he was in that state of mental numbness from the
successive shocks of astonishment, that, as with a soldier after the first two dozen, any additional
laceration passed unheeded. He was embarked in an adventure of which he could by no means see the
end; all was strange and dark in the foreground of his future; and if he had been at that moment tried,
cast, and condemned for an imaginary crime, he would have been too apathetic to say anything in arrest
of judgment.

With the silence and swiftness of a forlorn hope, they passed through the town and along the sandy
causeway. The succession of white rolling waves on their left, where extended the full breadth of the
Straits, while the bay on their right was almost smooth, showed the wind to be still against them; but it
was now so moderate that they might safely beat up for the Rock. Arrived at the head of the stairs
leading to the water, they paused in the angle of the wall to reconnoitre. Francisco was lying coiled up
in the head of the boat, his hand on the rope, ready to cast her loose, and the boat-hook projecting over
the bow. Above them, and behind the wall, at a little distance, they could hear the measured tread of the
sentry, and catch the gleam of his bayonet as he turned upon his walk: a few vigorous shoves would carry them outside the sea-wall and beyond his ken. All depended on their silence; and like two stealthy cats did Owen and Juana descend to the boat--the Major and Carlota watching the success of their attempt with protruded necks. Cautiously did Owen stride from the last stair to the deck--cautiously did he transfer Juana to the bark, and guide her aft. The Major was just preparing to follow, when a noise from the boat startled him: Juana had upset an unlucky wine-jar which Francisco had left there. The sentry put his head over the wall, and challenged; Francisco, starting up, shoved hastily off; the sentry fired his piece, his bullet shattering the wine-jar that had caused the mischief. Juana screamed, Owen swore in English, and Francisco surpassed him in Spanish. There was no time to return or wait for the other pair, for the guard was alarmed by the sentry's shot, and their accoutrements might be heard rattling near at hand, as they turned hastily out. Before they reached the wall, however, the boat had disappeared.

Major Flinders watched it till it was out of sight, and, at first, experienced a feeling of despair at being thus deprived of the aid of Garry's boldness and promptitude, and left to his own resources. Presently, however, a gleam of comfort dawned upon him--perhaps Carlota would now abandon the enterprise, and he should thus, at any rate, be freed from the embarrassment her presence occasioned him. In this hope he was shortly undeceived. To have added the shame of failure and exposure to her present disappointment, while an opening to persevere still remained, did not suit that lady's ardent spirit; and whether it was that the unscrupulous Garry had really represented the Major as very much in love, or whether such an impression resulted from her own lively imagination, she certainly thought her companion would be as much chagrined at such a denouement as herself. She displayed a prompt decision in this emergency, being, indeed, as remarkable for presence as the Major was for absence of mind. Taking the Major's arm, she caused him swiftly to retrace his steps with her to the inn where he had slept. As they retreated, they heard the boom of a gun behind them, fired, doubtless, from the Point, at the Fair Unknown. At Carlota's orders, a couple of horses, one with a side-saddle, were speedily at the inn-door; they mounted, and, before the sun was yet risen, had issued forth from the gate of Tarifa, on the road to Gibraltar.

The Major rode beside her like a man in a dream--in fact, he was partly asleep, having been deprived of a large portion of his natural and accustomed rest, and partly bewildered. A few days before he had been the most methodical, unromantic, not to say humdrum, old bachelor in his Majesty's service; and here he was, how or why he did not well know, galloping away at daybreak with a foreign lady, of whose existence he had been ignorant a week before, with the prospect of being apprehended by her relatives for her abduction, and incarcerated by the Government for assisting in the escape of a smuggler. When at length roused to complete consciousness by the rapidity of their motion, he positively groaned in anguish of spirit, and vowed internally that, once within the shelter of his own quiet quarters, nothing on earth should again tempt him forth on such harum-scarum expeditions.

It was near noon when they reached Algeciras, where they stopped to breakfast, both of them rather exhausted with fatigue and hunger. This town stands just opposite Gibraltar, across the bay--the road they had come by forms the base of a triangle, of which Cabrita Point is the apex, the bay washing one side of the projecting coast, the Straits the other. The Major was reserved and embarrassed; there was a
tenderness about Carlota's manner that frightened him out of his usual gallantry, and, to avoid meeting her glance, he looked steadily out of the window at the rock of Gibraltar, casting wistful glances at the spot where his quarters lay hidden in a little clump of foliage. Immediately after the meal he quitted the room, on pretence of looking after the horses. He determined to protract their stay in Algeçiras till late in the afternoon, that they might enter Gibraltar in the dusk, and thus avoid awkward meetings with equestrian parties from the garrison, who would then be hastening homewards, in order to be in before gun-fire, when the gates are shut.

On returning, still out of temper, to the room where he had left Carlota, he found her, quite overcome with fatigue, asleep on the sofa. Her head was thrown a little back on the cushion; her lips were just parted, and she looked in her sleep like a weary child. The Major approached on tiptoe, and stood regarding her. His ill-humour melted fast into pity. He thought of all her kindness to him, and, by a sudden soft-hearted impulse, took gently one of her hands projecting over the side of the sofa. Carlota opened her eyes, and squeezed the hand that held hers; whereupon the Major suddenly quitted his hold, and, retreating with great discomposure to the window, did not venture to look at her again till it was time to resume their journey.

At a little distance from Algeçiras is the river Palmones, called by the English the Second River. This was crossed by a floating bridge, pulled from shore to shore by a ferryman warping on a rope extended across. They had just reached the opposite bank of the stream, when Carlota noticed two horsemen galloping fast along the road they had just traversed. A second glance showed them to be Don Pablo and the lover of Juana. The first inquiries of the Governor had led him to suppose that all had escaped in the boat, and it was not till some time after that he had learned the true state of affairs.

The fugitives now hastened on in earnest, and roused their horses to a steady gallop, never pausing till they reached the Guadaranque, or First River, about a mile nearer Gibraltar than the other, and furnished with a similar bridge. The delay of the pursuers at the former ferry had thrown them far in rear; and my grandfather, inspired by the imminence of the peril, now conceived a bright idea--the brightest, probably, that ever flashed upon him--by executing which they might effectually distance their pursuers. Dropping his glove at a little distance from the shore, he sent the ferryman to fetch it, and then pushed off (Carlota having already embarked), and warped the bridge to the opposite bank, heedless of the frantic gesticulations of the proprietor, who screamed furiously after them to stop. When he reached the opposite side, he took out his pocket-knife and deliberately cut the rope. Having thus, as it were, blown up the communication in his rear, my grandfather, without the loss of his baggage, continued his retreat to the fortress; while the little Governor, who galloped up just as they were disappearing, was, like Lord Ullin, left lamenting.

The sun was already declining, and threw their shadows far before them on the sands, as they rode along the beach close to the water. The bay at this inner extremity makes a great circular sweep--radii drawn from the rock to different distant points of the arc would be almost equal; and for half an hour they continued to see Gibraltar at nearly the same distance to the right and in front of them, holding itself aloof most provokingly. Twilight descended as they passed the Spanish lines and entered on the Neutral Ground. The Major glanced anxiously at his watch--in a few minutes the gun from Middle Hill
would give the signal for shutting the gates, and doom them irretrievably to return into Spain for the
night. For the first time in his life Major Flinders really punished his horse, lifting the tired beast along
with whip and rein. Carlota's kept easily beside him under her lighter weight, and they rapidly neared
the barrier. Just as they passed it, a stream of flame shot from the rock, illuminating objects like a flash of
lightning;--then came the heavy report of the gun--another minute and the drawbridge at Landport
would be lifted; but they were upon it. They dashed across somewhat in the style of Marmion quitting
Douglas's castle, "just as it trembled on the rise," and were safe in Gibraltar.
CHAPTER V.

After life's fitful fever, the Major did not sleep well. He had left Carlota comfortably established at the inn; and he now lay nervously thinking how his embarrassment with regard to her was to terminate, especially if Owen did not shortly make his appearance. Then he was worried by doubts as to the fate of the Fair Unknown and her passengers. They might have been recaptured, as escaped smugglers, by a guarda costa—they might be detained in the Straits by adverse winds or calms—they might have run ashore into some bay, and come on overland. This last supposition haunted him most pertinaciously, and he resolved to go up the rock as soon as it should be daylight, to look out for them along the road from Spain. He lay tossing restlessly till the morning gun gave the signal of the approach of dawn, and before the echoes died away he had his breeches on.

Night was at odds with morning when my grandfather, with a telescope under his arm, sallied forth and began the ascent. Silence was over the rock, except an occasional sighing of a remnant of night wind that had lost itself among the crags. At first, the only clear outline visible was that of the rugged edge of the rock above against the colourless sky; but as he toiled up the steep zigzag path, the day kept pace with him—each moment threw a broader light on the scene—blots of shadow became bushes or deep fissures, and new shapes of stone glided into view. The only symptoms of animal life that he beheld were a rabbit that fled silently to his hole, and a great white vulture that, startled from his perch on a grey crag, sailed slowly upward on his black-tipped wings, circling higher and higher, till his breast was crimsoned by the yet unrisen sun.

The path led diagonally to the summit; and, turning a sharp level corner, my grandfather looked perpendicularly down on the Mediterranean, whose lazy waves, sending up a gentle murmur, rippled far below him. On his left, also steep down below him, was the Neutral Ground, level as the sea itself, extending northward into sandy plains, abruptly crossed by tumbled heaps of brown mountains. A reddening of the sky showed that the sun was at hand; and presently the glowing disk came swiftly up from behind the eastern hills; the pale earth shared in the ruddiness of the sky, and a long rosy gleam swept gradually over the breadth of the grey sea, like an unwilling smile spreading itself from a man's lips to his eyes and forehead.

Conspicuous on the highest point in the landscape stood my grandfather, panting with his exertions as he wiped his forehead. After standing for a moment, bronzed in front like a smith at the furnace, face to face with the sun, he turned and swept with his telescope the road into Spain. Early peasants, microscopic as ants, were bringing their fruits and vegetables into the fortress—a laden mule or two advanced along the beach over which the Major had last night galloped—but nothing resembling what he sought was in sight. Then turning completely round, with his face to the path he had just ascended, he gave a long look towards the Straits; and as he did so, the wind, which had shifted to the south-west towards morning, blew gently on his face. A sail or two was discernible in the distance, outward bound, but nothing resembling the cutter. As the Major looked, a signal was made from Cabrita, and directly two feluccas left their station at Algeçiras, and swooped out, like two white birds, as if to intercept some bark yet hidden by the Point. Again my grandfather looked out to the Strait, and presently a small white sail came in sight near Cabrita. For a quarter of an hour he stood steadily, with levelled telescope,
and then he was almost sure—yes, he could swear—that he saw the small English ensign relieved against
the sail; and above, at the masthead, the yellow-striped flag that Francisco hoisted before as the mark of
a yacht. It was the Fair Unknown—and my grandfather at once comprehended that the pursuers, whom
he had escaped the night before, had, on returning to Algeciras, made arrangements for her capture as
soon as she should appear.

The breeze was on her beam, and much fresher with her than farther in the bay, so that the feluccas
steered slantingly across her course as she made for the rock. They held on thus, the pursuers and
pursued, till within a mile of each other, when the cutter suddenly altered her course to one nearly
parallel with that of the feluccas. The latter, however, now gained fast upon her, and presently a puff of
smoke from the bow of the foremost was followed by the report of a gun. My grandfather could look no
longer through his glass, for his hand shook like a reed, but began, with huge strides, more resembling
those of a kangaroo than a quiet middle-aged gentleman, to descend the rock. Breathless, he reached his
quarters, had his horse saddled and brought out, and galloped off towards Europa.

Europa Point is at the southern extremity of the rock, and commands at once the entrance of the bay and
the passage of the Straits. The road to it from the north, where the Major was quartered, affords, for the
most part, a view of the bay. Many an anxious glance did he cast, as he sped along, at the state of affairs
on the water. The feluccas fired several shots, but all seemed to fall wide, and were probably intended
only to frighten the chase, out of consideration for her fair freight. Still, however, the English colours
floated, and still the cutter held her course.

Some artillermen and an officer were assembled at the Point as the Major galloped up.

"Can't you fire at 'em?" said he, as he drew up beside the battery.

"Too far off," said the Lieutenant, rising from the parapet on which he was leaning, and showing a
drowsy unshaven countenance; "we should only frighten them."

"By heavens!" said my grandfather, "tis horrible. I shall see the boy taken before my eyes!"

"Boy!" quoth the Lieutenant, wondering what particular interest the Major could take in the smuggler.
"What boy?"

"Why, Owen of ours—he's running away with a Spanish lady."

"The devil!" cried the Lieutenant, jumping down. "What, Garry Owen!—we must try a long shot. Pull
those quoins out" (to a gunner). "Corporal, lay that gun; a dollar if you hit the felucca. I'll try a shot
with this one." So saying, he laid the thirty-two pounder next him with great care.

"Fire!" said he, jumping on the parapet to see the effect of the shot. At the second rebound it splashed
under the bows of the leading felucca, which still held on. She was now scarcely three hundred yards
from the cutter.
"Why, d--n their impudence!" muttered the Lieutenant, on seeing his warning pass unheeded, "they won't take a hint. Corporal, let drive at 'em."

The Corporal earned his dollar. The shot went through the side of the felucca, on board of which all was presently confusion; in a few minutes it was apparent she was sinking. The other, abandoning the chase, went to the assistance of her consort, lifting the crew out, some of whom were evidently hurt.

"A blessed shot!" cried my grandfather, giving the lucky Corporal a bit of gold; "but I'm glad they're picking up the crew."

The cutter instantly stood in for the harbour, and half an hour afterwards the Major bade his young friend and Juana welcome to Gibraltar.

Carlota was beside herself with joy at seeing the wanderers safe. She first cast herself upon Juana, and cried over her; then embraced the Ensign, who made no scruple of kissing her; lastly, threw herself tenderly upon the Major, who gazed over her head as it lay on his shoulder with a dismayed expression, moving his arms uneasily, as if he didn't know what he was expected to do with them. Every moment it was becoming clearer to him that he was a compromised man, no longer his own property. On his way through the streets that morning he had passed a knot of officers, one of whom he overheard describing "Old Flinders" as "a sly old boy," for that he "had run away with a devilish handsome Spaniard--who would have thought it?" "Ay, who indeed!" groaned the Major, internally. But the seal was put to his doom by the Colonel, who, when he went to report himself, slapped him on the shoulder, and congratulated him on his happiness. "Fine woman, I hear, Flinders--didn't give you credit for such spirit--hope you'll be happy together." The Major, muttering an inarticulate denial, hastily retreated, and from that moment surrendered himself to his fate an unresisting victim.

About dusk that night, Owen came to him.

"By heavens!" the Ensign began, throwing himself into a chair, "I'm the most unlucky scoundrel! Nothing goes right with me. I promised myself that this should be my wedding-night--and here I am, as forlorn a bachelor as ever."

"What has gone wrong?" inquired my grandfather, removing his pipe from his mouth.

"I pressed her with all my eloquence," said Owen; "reminded her of her promise to marry me the day we should arrive here--of the necessity of caring for her reputation, after leaving her father's house and coming here under my protection" (here my grandfather winced;) "talked, in fact, like an angel who had been bred a special pleader--yet it was all of no use."

"Deliberating about marriage!" said the Major, "after leaving her father and lover for you! What gnat can she be straining at, after swallowing a camel of such magnitude?"
"A piece of female Quixotry," returned Owen. "She says she can't think of such selfishness as being comfortably married herself, while Carlota is so unhappy, and her fate so unsettled." Here he made a significant pause; but my grandfather was immovably silent, only glancing nervously at him, and smoking very hard.

"In fact, she protests she won't hear of marrying me, till you have settled when you will marry Carlota."

"Marry Carlota!" gasped the Major in an agonised whisper.

"Why, you don't mean to say you're not going to marry her!" exclaimed the Ensign, throwing a vast quantity of surprise into his expressive countenance.

"Why--why, what should I marry her for?" stammered the Major.

"Oh, Lord!" said Garry, "here will be pleasant news for her! Curse me if I break it to her."

"But really now, Frank," the Major repeated--"marriage, you know--why, I never thought of such a thing."

"You're the only person that hasn't, then," rejoined Owen. "Why, what can the garrison think, after the way you smuggled her in; what can she herself think, after all your attentions?"

"Attentions, my dear boy;--the merest civility."

"Oh,--ah! 'twas civility, I suppose, to squeeze her hand in the inn at Algeçiras, in the way she told Juana of--and heaven knows what else you may have done during the flight. Juana is outrageous against you--actually called you a vile deceiver; but Carlota's feeling is more of sorrow than of anger. She is persuaded that nothing but your ignorance of Spanish has prevented your tongue from confirming what your looks have so faithfully promised. I was really quite affected to-day at the appealing look she cast on me after you left the room; she evidently expected me to communicate her destiny."

My grandfather smoked hard.

"Lots of fellows would give their ears for such a wife," pursued the Ensign. "Lovelace, the Governor's aide-de-camp, bribed the waiter of the hotel to lend him his apron to-day, at dinner, that he might come in and look at her--swears she's a splendid woman, and that he'd run away with such another to-morrow."

Still my grandfather smoked hard, but said nothing, though there was a slight gleam of pride in his countenance.

"Poor thing!" sighed Garry. "All her prospects blighted for ever. Swears she never can love another."
At this my grandfather's eyes grew moist, and he coughed as if he had swallowed some tobacco-smoke.

"And as for me, to have Juana at my lips, as it were, and yet not mine--for she's as inflexible as if she'd been born a Mede or Persian--to know that you are coming between me and happiness as surely as if you were an inexorable father or a cruel guardian--worse, indeed; for those might be evaded. Major, major, have you no compassion!--two days of this will drive me crazy."

The Major changed his pipe from his right hand to his left, and, stretching the former across the table, sympathetically pressed that of the Ensign.

"Do, Major," quoth Garry, changing his flank movement for a direct attack--"do consent to make yourself and me happy; do empower me to negotiate for our all going to church to-morrow." (My grandfather gave a little jump in his chair at this, as if he were sitting on a pin.) "I'll manage it all, you shan't have the least trouble in the matter."

My grandfather spoke not.

"Silence gives consent," said the Ensign, rising. "Come, now, if you don't forbid me, I'll depart on my embassy at once; you needn't speak, I'll spare your blushes. I see this delay has only been from modesty, or perhaps a little ruse on your part. Once, twice, thrice--I go." And he vanished.

The Major remained in his chair, in the same posture. His pipe was smoked out, but he continued to suck absently at the empty tube. His bewilderment and perturbation were so great that, though he sat up till two in the morning, during which time he smoked eleven pipes, and increased the two glasses of grog with which he was accustomed to prepare for his pillow to four, he was still, when he went to bed, as agitated as ever.

In this state of mind he went to the altar, for next day a double ceremony was performed, making Owen happy with Juana, and giving Carlota a husband and me a grandfather. The Major was more like a proxy than a principal in the affair; for Owen, taking the entire management upon himself, left him little more to do than to make the necessary responses.

Carlota made a very good-tempered, quiet, inobtrusive helpmate, and continued to be fond of her spouse even after he was a grey-headed colonel. My grandfather, though credulous in most matters, could with difficulty be brought to consider himself married. He would sometimes seem to forget the circumstance for a whole day together, till it came to be forced on his recollection at bed-time. And when, about a year after his marriage, a new-born female Flinders (now my venerable aunt) was brought one morning by the nurse for his inspection and approval, he gazed at it with a puzzled air, and could not be convinced that he was actually in the presence of his own flesh and blood, till he had touched the cheek of his first-born with the point of his tobacco-pipe, removed from his mouth for that purpose, making on the infant's countenance a small indentation.
The little Governor, Don Pablo, was subsequently induced to forgive his relatives, and frequent visits and attentions were interchanged, till the commencement of the siege put a stop to all intercourse between Gibraltar and Spain.

I have often, on a summer's evening, sat looking across the bay at a gorgeous sunset, and retracing in imagination the incidents I have related. My grandfather's establishment was broken up during the siege by the enemy's shells, but a similar one now stands on what I think must have been the site of it. The world has changed since then; but Spain is no land of change; and, looking on the imperishable outline of the Andaluçian hills, unaltered, probably, since a time to which the period of my tale is but as yesterday, it is easy for me to "daff aside" the noisy world without, and, dropping quietly behind the age, to picture to myself my old-fashioned grandfather issuing forth from yonder white-walled town of Algeçiras with his future bride.

THE IRON SHROUD.

BY WILLIAM MUDFORD.

[MAGA. AUGUST 1830.]

The castle of the Prince of Tolfi was built on the summit of the towering and precipitous rock of Scylla, and commanded a magnificent view of Sicily in all its grandeur. Here, during the wars of the middle ages, when the fertile plains of Italy were devastated by hostile factions, those prisoners were confined, for whose ransom a costly price was demanded. Here, too, in a dungeon, excavated deep in the solid rock, the miserable victim was immured, whom revenge pursued,—the dark, fierce, and unpitying revenge of an Italian heart.

VIVENZIO--the noble and the generous, the fearless in battle, and the pride of Naples in her sunny hours of peace--the young, the brave, the proud Vivenzio, fell beneath this subtle and remorseless spirit. He was the prisoner of Tolfi, and he languished in that rock-encircled dungeon, which stood alone, and whose portals never opened twice upon a living captive.

It had the semblance of a vast cage, for the roof, and floor, and sides, were of iron, solidly wrought, and sparsely constructed. High above there ran a range of seven grated windows, guarded with massy bars of the same metal, which admitted light and air. Save these, and the tall folding-doors beneath them which occupied the centre, no chink, or chasm, or projection, broke the smooth black surface of the walls. An iron bedstead, littered with straw, stood in one corner; and beside it, a vessel with water, and a coarse dish filled with coarser food.

Even the intrepid soul of Vivenzio shrunk with dismay as he entered this abode, and heard the ponderous doors triple-locked by the silent ruffians who conducted him to it. Their silence seemed prophetic of his fate, of the living grave that had been prepared for him. His menaces and his entreaties, his indignant appeals for justice, and his impatient questioning of their intentions, were alike vain. They listened, but spoke not. Fit ministers of a crime that should have no tongue!
How dismal was the sound of their retiring steps! And, as their faint echoes died along the winding passages, a fearful presage grew within him, that never more the face, or voice, or tread, of man, would greet his senses. He had seen human beings for the last time! And he had looked his last upon the bright sky, and upon the smiling earth, and upon a beautiful world he loved, and whose minion he had been! Here he was to end his life—a life he had just begun to revel in! And by what means? By secret poison? or by murderous assault? No—for then it had been needless to bring him thither. Famine perhaps—a thousand deaths in one! It was terrible to think of it; but it was yet more terrible to picture long, long years of captivity, in a solitude so appalling, a loneliness so dreary, that thought, for want of fellowship, would lose itself in madness, or stagnate into idiocy.

He could not hope to escape, unless he had the power, with his bare hands, of rending asunder the solid iron walls of his prison. He could not hope for liberty from the relenting mercies of his enemy. His instant death, under any form of refined cruelty, was not the object of Tolfi, for he might have inflicted it, and he had not. It was too evident, therefore, he was reserved for some premeditated scheme of subtle vengeance; and what vengeance could transcend in fiendish malice, either the slow death of famine, or the still slower one of solitary incarceration, till the last lingering spark of life expired, or till reason fled, and nothing should remain to perish but the brute functions of the body?

It was evening when Vivenzio entered his dungeon, and the approaching shades of night wrapped it in total darkness, as he paced up and down, revolving in his mind these horrible forebodings. No tolling bell from the castle, or from any neighbouring church or convent, struck upon his ear to tell how the hours passed. Frequently he would stop and listen for some sound that might betoken the vicinity of man; but the solitude of the desert, the silence of the tomb, are not so still and deep as the oppressive desolation by which he was encompassed. His heart sank within him, and he threw himself dejectedly down upon his couch of straw. Here sleep gradually obliterated the consciousness of misery, and bland dreams wafted his delighted spirit to scenes which were once glowing realities for him, in whose ravishing illusions he soon lost the remembrance that he was Tolfi’s prisoner.

When he awoke, it was daylight; but how long he had slept he knew not. It might be early morning, or it might be sultry noon, for he could measure time by no other note of its progress than light and darkness. He had been so happy in his sleep, amid friends who loved him, and the sweeter endearments of those who loved him as friends could not, that in the first moments of waking, his startled mind seemed to admit the knowledge of his situation, as if it had burst upon it for the first time, fresh in all its appalling horrors. He gazed round with an air of doubt and amazement, and took up a handful of the straw upon which he lay, as though he would ask himself what it meant. But memory, too faithful to her office, soon unveiled the melancholy past, while reason, shuddering at the task, flashed before his eyes the tremendous future. The contrast overpowered him. He remained for some time lamenting, like a truth, the bright visions that had vanished; and recoiling from the present, which clung to him as a poisoned garment.

When he grew more calm, he surveyed his gloomy dungeon. Alas! the stronger light of day only served to confirm what the gloomy indistinctness of the preceding evening had partially disclosed, the utter impossibility of escape. As, however, his eyes wandered round and round, and from place to place, he
noticed two circumstances which excited his surprise and curiosity. The one, he thought, might be fancy; but the other was positive. His pitcher of water, and the dish which contained his food, had been removed from his side while he slept, and now stood near the door. Were he even inclined to doubt this, by supposing he had mistaken the spot where he saw them over-night, he could not, for the pitcher now in his dungeon was neither of the same form nor colour as the other, while the food was changed for some other of better quality. He had been visited, therefore, during the night. But how had the person obtained entrance? Could he have slept so soundly, that the unlocking and opening of those ponderous portals were effected without waking him? He would have said this was not possible, but that in doing so, he must admit a greater difficulty, an entrance by other means, of which he was convinced there existed none. It was not intended, then, that he should be left to perish from hunger. But the secret and mysterious mode of supplying him with food, seemed to indicate he was to have no opportunity of communicating with a human being.

The other circumstance which had attracted his notice, was the disappearance, as he believed, of one of the seven grated windows that ran along the top of his prison. He felt confident that he had observed and counted them; for he was rather surprised at their number, and there was something peculiar in their form, as well as in the manner of their arrangement, at unequal distances. It was so much easier, however, to suppose he was mistaken, than that a portion of the solid iron, which formed the walls, could have escaped from its position, that he soon dismissed the thought from his mind.

Vivenzio partook of the food that was before him, without apprehension. It might be poisoned; but if it were he knew he could not escape death, should such be the design of Tolfi, and the quickest death would be the speediest release.

The day passed wearily and gloomily; though not without a faint hope that, by keeping watch at night, he might observe when the person came again to bring him food, which he supposed he would do in the same way as before. The mere thought of being approached by a living creature, and the opportunity it might present of learning the doom prepared, or preparing, for him, imparted some comfort. Besides, if he came alone, might he not in a furious onset overpower him? Or he might be accessible to pity, or the influence of such munificent rewards as he could bestow, if once more at liberty and master of himself. Say he were armed. The worst that could befall, if not bribe, nor prayers, nor force prevailed, was a friendly blow, which, though dealt in a damned cause, might work a desired end. There was no chance so desperate, but it looked lovely in Vivenzio's eyes, compared with the idea of being totally abandoned.

The night came, and Vivenzio watched. Morning came, and Vivenzio was confounded! He must have slumbered without knowing it. Sleep must have stolen over him when exhausted by fatigue, and in that interval of feverish repose, he had been baffled: for there stood his replenished pitcher of water, and there his day's meal! Nor was this all. Casting his looks towards the windows of his dungeon, he counted but FIVE! _Here_ was no deception; and he was now convinced there had been none the day before. But what did all this portend? Into what strange and mysterious den had he been cast? He gazed till his eyes ached; he could discover nothing to explain the mystery. That it was so, he knew. Why it was so, he racked his imagination in vain to conjecture. He examined the doors. A simple circumstance
convinced him they had not been opened.

A wisp of straw, which he had carelessly thrown against them the preceding day, as he paced to and fro, remained where he had cast it, though it must have been displaced by the slightest motion of either of the doors. This was evidence that could not be disputed; and it followed there must be some secret machinery in the walls by which a person could enter. He inspected them closely. They appeared to him one solid and compact mass of iron; or joined, if joined they were, with such nice art, that no mark of division was perceptible. Again and again he surveyed them--and the floor--and the roof--and that range of visionary windows, as he was now almost tempted to consider them: he could discover nothing, absolutely nothing, to relieve his doubts or satisfy his curiosity. Sometimes he fancied that altogether the dungeon had a more contracted appearance--that it looked smaller; but this he ascribed to fancy, and the impression naturally produced upon his mind by the undeniable disappearance of two of the windows.

With intense anxiety, Vivenzio looked forward to the return of night; and as it approached, he resolved that no treacherous sleep should again betray him. Instead of seeking his bed of straw, he continued to walk up and down his dungeon till daylight, straining his eyes in every direction through the darkness, to watch for any appearances that might explain these mysteries. While thus engaged, and as nearly as he could judge (by the time that afterwards elapsed before the morning came in), about two o'clock, there was a slight tremulous motion of the floors. He stooped. The motion lasted nearly a minute; but it was so extremely gentle, that he almost doubted whether it was real, or only imaginary. He listened. Not a sound could be heard. Presently, however, he felt a rush of cold air blow upon him; and dashing towards the quarter whence it seemed to proceed, he stumbled over something which he judged to be the water ewer. The rush of cold air was no longer perceptible; and as Vivenzio stretched out his hands, he found himself close to the walls. He remained motionless for a considerable time; but nothing occurred during the remainder of the night to excite his attention, though he continued to watch with unabated vigilance.

The first approaches of the morning were visible through the grated windows, breaking, with faint divisions of light, the darkness that still pervaded every other part, long before Vivenzio was enabled to distinguish any object in his dungeon. Instinctively and fearfully he turned his eyes, hot and inflamed with watching, towards them. There were FOUR! He could see only four: but it might be that some intervening object prevented the fifth from becoming perceptible; and he waited impatiently to ascertain if it were so. As the light strengthened, however, and penetrated every corner of the cell, other objects of amazement struck his sight. On the ground lay the broken fragments of the pitcher he had used the day before, and at a small distance from them, nearer to the wall, stood the one he had noticed the first night. It was filled with water, and beside it was his food. He was now certain that, by some mechanical contrivance, an opening was obtained through the iron wall, and that through this opening the current of air had found entrance. But how noiseless! For had a feather almost waved at the time, he must have heard it. Again he examined that part of the wall; but both to sight and touch it appeared one even and uniform surface, while to repeated and violent blows there was no reverberating sound indicative of hollowness.
This perplexing mystery had for a time withdrawn his thoughts from the windows; but now, directing
his eyes again towards them, he saw that the fifth had disappeared in the same manner as the preceding
two, without the least distinguishable alteration of external appearances. The remaining four looked as
the seven had originally looked; that is, occupying, at irregular distances, the top of the wall on that side
of the dungeon. The tall folding-door, too, still seemed to stand beneath, in the centre of these four, as it
had at first stood in the centre of the seven. But he could no longer doubt, what, on the preceding day,
he fancied might be the effect of visual deception. The dungeon was smaller. The roof had
lowered—and the opposite ends had contracted the intermediate distance by a space equal, he thought,
to that over which the three windows had extended. He was bewildered in vain imaginings to account
for these things. Some frightful purpose—some devilish torture of mind or body—some unheard-of
device for producing exquisite misery, lurked, he was sure, in what had taken place.

Oppressed with this belief, and distracted more by the dreadful uncertainty of whatever fate impended,
than he could be dismayed, he thought, by the knowledge of the worst, he sat ruminating, hour after
hour, yielding his fears in succession to every haggard fancy. At last a horrible suspicion flashed
suddenly across his mind, and he started up with a frantic air. "Yes!" he exclaimed, looking wildly
round his dungeon, and shuddering as he spoke—"Yes! it must be so! I see it!—I feel the maddening
truth like scorching flames upon my brain! Eternal God!—support me! it must be so!—Yes, yes, that is
to be my fate! Yon roof will descend!—these walls will hem me round—and slowly, slowly, crush me in
their iron arms! Lord God! look down upon me, and in mercy strike me with instant death! Oh,
fiend—oh, devil—is this your revenge?"

He dashed himself upon the ground in agony;—tears burst from him, and the sweat stood in large drops
upon his face—he sobbed aloud—he tore his hair—he rolled about like one suffering intolerable anguish
of body, and would have bitten the iron floor beneath him; he breathed fearful curses upon Tolfi, and
the next moment passionate prayers to heaven for immediate death. Then the violence of his grief
became exhausted, and he lay still, weeping as a child would weep. The twilight of departing day shed
its gloom around him ere he arose from that posture of utter and hopeless sorrow. He had taken no
food. Not one drop of water had cooled the fever of his parched lips. Sleep had not visited his eyes for
six-and-thirty hours. He was faint with hunger; weary with watching, and with the excess of his
emotions. He tasted of his food; he drank with avidity of the water; and reeling like a drunken man to
his straw, cast himself upon it to brood again over the appalling image that had fastened itself upon his
almost frenzied thoughts.

He slept. But his slumbers were not tranquil. He resisted, as long as he could, their approach; and when,
at last, enfeebled nature yielded to their influence, he found no oblivion from his cares. Terrible dreams
haunted him—ghastly visions harrowed up his imagination—he shouted and screamed, as if he already
felt the dungeon's ponderous roof descending on him—he breathed hard and thick, as though writhing
between its iron walls. Then would he spring up—stare wildly about him—stretch forth his hands, to be
sure he yet had space enough to live—and, muttering some incoherent words, sink down again, to pass
through the same fierce vicissitudes of delirious sleep.

CHAPTER V.
The morning of the fourth day dawned upon Vivenzio. But it was high noon before his mind shook off its stupefying effects, or he awoke to a full consciousness of his situation. And what a fixed energy of despair sat upon his pale features, as he cast his eyes upwards, and gazed upon the THREE windows that now alone remained! The three!--there were no more!--and they seemed to number his own allotted days. Slowly and calmly he next surveyed the top and sides, and comprehended all the meaning of the diminished height of the former, as well as of the gradual approximation of the latter. The contracted dimensions of his mysterious prison were now too gross and palpable to be the juggle of his heated imagination. Still lost in wonder at the means, Vivenzio could put no cheat upon his reason, as to the end. By what horrible ingenuity it was contrived, that walls, and roof, and windows, should thus silently and imperceptibly, without noise, and without motion almost, fold, as it were, within each other, he knew not. He only knew they did so; and he vainly strove to persuade himself it was the intention of the contriver, to rack the miserable wretch who might be immured there with anticipation, merely, of a fate, from which, in the very crisis of his agony, he was to be reprieved.

Gladly would he have clung even to this possibility, if his heart would have let him; but he felt a dreadful assurance of its fallacy. And what matchless inhumanity it was to doom the sufferer to such lingering torments--to lead him day by day to so appalling a death, unsupported by the consolations of religion, unvisited by any human being, abandoned to himself, deserted of all, and denied even the sad privilege of knowing that his cruel destiny would awaken pity! Alone he was to perish!--alone he was to wait a slow coming torture, whose most exquisite pangs would be inflicted by that very solitude and that tardy coming!

"It is not death I fear," he exclaimed, "but the death I must prepare for! Methinks, too, I could meet even that--all horrible and revolting as it is--if it might overtake me now. But where shall I find fortitude to tarry till it come? How can I outlive the three long days and nights I have to live? There is no power within me to bid the hideous spectre hence--none to make it familiar to my thoughts; or myself, patient of its errand. My thoughts, rather, will flee from me, and I grow mad in looking at it. Oh! for a deep sleep to fall upon me! That so, in death's likeness, I might embrace death itself, and drink no more of the cup that is presented to me, than my fainting spirit has already tasted!"

In the midst of these lamentations, Vivenzio noticed that his accustomed meal, with the pitcher of water, had been conveyed, as before, into his dungeon. But this circumstance no longer excited his surprise. His mind was overwhelmed with others of a far greater magnitude. It suggested, however, a feeble hope of deliverance; and there is no hope so feeble as not to yield some support to a heart bending under despair. He resolved to watch, during the ensuing night, for the signs he had before observed; and should he again feel the gentle, tremulous motion of the floor, or the current of air, to seize that moment for giving audible expression to his misery. Some person must be near him, and within reach of his voice, at the instant when his food was supplied; some one, perhaps, susceptible of pity. Or if not, to be told even that his apprehensions were just, and that his fate was to be what he foreboded, would be preferable to a suspense which hung upon the possibility of his worst fears being visionary.
The night came; and as the hour approached when Vivenzio imagined he might expect the signs, he stood fixed and silent as a statue. He feared to breathe, almost, lest he might lose any sound which would warn him of their coming. While thus listening, with every faculty of mind and body strained to an agony of attention, it occurred to him he should be more sensible of the motion, probably, if he stretched himself along the iron floor. He accordingly laid himself softly down, and had not been long in that position when—yes—he was certain of it—the floor moved under him! He sprang up, and in a voice suffocated nearly with emotion, called aloud. He paused—the motion ceased—he felt no stream of air—all was hushed—no voice answered to his—he burst into tears, and as he sank to the ground, in renewed anguish, exclaimed—"Oh, my God! my God! You alone have power to save me now, or strengthen me for the trial you permit."

Another morning dawned upon the wretched captive, and the fatal index of his doom met his eyes. Two windows!—and two days—and all would be over! Fresh food—fresh water! The mysterious visit had been paid, though he had implored it in vain. But how awfully was his prayer answered in what he now saw! The roof of the dungeon was within a foot of his head. The two ends were so near, that in six paces he trod the space between them. Vivenzio shuddered as he gazed, and as his steps traversed the narrowed area. But his feelings no longer vented themselves in frantic wailings. With folded arms, and clenched teeth, with eyes that were bloodshot from much watching, and fixed with a vacant glare upon the ground, with a hard quick breathing, and a hurried walk, he strode backwards and forwards in silent musing for several hours. What mind shall conceive, what tongue utter, or what pen describe the dark and terrible character of his thoughts? Like the fate that moulded them, they had no similitude in the wide range of this world's agony for man. Suddenly he stopped, and his eyes were riveted upon that part of the wall which was over his bed of straw. Words are inscribed there! A human language, traced by a human hand! He rushes towards them; but his blood freezes as he reads:—

"I, Ludovico Sforza, tempted by the gold of the Prince of Tolfi, spent three years in contriving and executing this accursed triumph of my art. When it was completed, the perfidious Tolfi, more devil than man, who conducted me hither one morning, to be witness, as he said, of its perfection, doomed me to be the first victim of my own pernicious skill; lest, as he declared, I should divulge the secret, or repeat the effort of my ingenuity. May God pardon him, as I hope he will me, that ministered to his unhallowed purpose! Miserable wretch, whoe'er thou art, that readest these lines, fall on thy knees, and invoke, as I have done, His sustaining mercy, who alone can nerve thee to meet the vengeance of Tolfi, armed with this tremendous engine which, in a few hours, must crush you, as it will the needy wretch who made it."

A deep groan burst from Vivenzio. He stood, like one transfixed, with dilated eyes, expanded nostrils, and quivering lips, gazing at this fatal inscription. It was as if a voice from the sepulchre had sounded in his ears, "Prepare!" Hope forsook him. There was his sentence, recorded in those dismal words. The future stood unveiled before him, ghastly and appalling. His brain already feels the descending horror—his bones seem to crack and crumble in the mighty grasp of the iron walls! Unknowing what it is he does, he fumbles in his garment for some weapon of self-destruction. He clenches his throat in his convulsive gripe, as though he would strangle himself at once. He stares upon the walls, and his warring spirit demands, "Will they not anticipate their office if I dash my head against them?" An
hysterical laugh chokes him as he exclaims, "Why should I? He was but a man who died first in their fierce embrace; and I should be less than man not to do as much!"

The evening sun was descending, and Vivenzio beheld its golden beams streaming through one of the windows. What a thrill of joy shot through his soul at the sight! It was a precious link, that united him, for the moment, with the world beyond. There was ecstasy in the thought. As he gazed, long and earnestly, it seemed as if the windows had lowered sufficiently for him to reach them. With one bound he was beneath them—with one wild spring he clung to the bars. Whether it was so contrived, purposely to madden with delight the wretch who looked, he knew not; but, at the extremity of a long vista, cut through the solid rocks, the ocean, the sky, the setting sun, olive groves, shady walks, and, in the farthest distance, delicious glimpses of magnificent Sicily, burst upon his sight. How exquisite was the cool breeze as it swept across his cheek, loaded with fragrance! He inhaled it as though it were the breath of continued life. And there was a freshness in the landscape, and in the rippling of the calm green sea, that fell upon his withering heart like dew upon the parched earth. How he gazed, and panted, and still clung to his hold! sometimes hanging by one hand, sometimes by the other, and then grasping the bars with both, as loth to quit the smiling paradise outstretched before him; till exhausted, and his hands swollen and benumbed, he dropped helpless down, and lay stunned for a considerable time by the fall.

When he recovered, the glorious vision had vanished. He was in darkness. He doubted whether it was not a dream that had passed before his sleeping fancy; but gradually his scattered thoughts returned, and with them came remembrance. Yes! he had looked once again upon the gorgeous splendour of nature! Once again his eyes had trembled beneath their veiled lids, at the sun's radiance, and sought repose in the soft verdue of the olive-tree, or the gentle swell of undulating waves. Oh, that he were a mariner, exposed upon those waves to the worst fury of storm and tempest; or a very wretch, loathsome with disease, plague-stricken, and his body one leprous contagion from crown to sole, hunted forth to gasp out the remnant of infectious life beneath those verdant trees, so he might shun the destiny upon whose edge he tottered!

Vain thoughts like these would steal over his mind from time to time, in spite of himself; but they scarcely moved it from that stupor into which it had sunk, and which kept him, during the whole night, like one who had been drugged with opium. He was equally insensible to the calls of hunger and of thirst, though the third day was now commencing since even a drop of water had passed his lips. He remained on the ground, sometimes sitting, sometimes lying; at intervals, sleeping heavily; and when not sleeping, silently brooding over what was to come, or talking aloud, in disordered speech, of his wrongs, of his friends, of his home, and of those he loved, with a confused mingling of all.

In this pitiable condition, the sixth and last morning dawned upon Vivenzio, if dawn it might be called—the dim, obscure light which faintly struggled through the ONE SOLITARY window of his dungeon. He could hardly be said to notice the melancholy token. And yet he did notice it; for as he raised his eyes and saw the portentous sign, there was a slight convulsive distortion of his countenance. But what did attract his notice, and at the sight of which his agitation was excessive, was the change his iron bed had undergone. It was a bed no longer. It stood before him, the visible semblance of a funeral
couch or bier! When he beheld this, he started from the ground; and, in raising himself, suddenly struck his head against the roof, which was now so low that he could no longer stand upright. "God's will be done!" was all he said, as he crouched his body, and placed his hand upon the bier; for such it was. The iron bedstead had been so contrived, by the mechanical art of Ludovico Sforza, that as the advancing walls came in contact with its head and feet, a pressure was produced upon concealed springs, which, when made to play, set in motion a very simple though ingeniously-contrived machinery, that effected the transformation. The object was, of course, to heighten, in the closing scene of this horrible drama, all the feelings of despair and anguish, which the preceding ones had aroused. For the same reason, the last window was so made as to admit only a shadowy kind of gloom rather than light, that the wretched captive might be surrounded, as it were, with every seeming preparation for approaching death.

Vivenzio seated himself on his bier. Then he knelt and prayed fervently; and sometimes tears would gush from him. The air seemed thick, and he breathed with difficulty; or it might be that he fancied it was so, from the hot and narrow limits of his dungeon, which were now so diminished that he could neither stand up nor lie down at his full length. But his wasted spirits and oppressed mind no longer struggled within him. He was past hope, and fear shook him no more. Happy if thus revenge had struck its final blow; for he would have fallen beneath it almost unconscious of a pang. But such a lethargy of the soul, after such an excitement of its fiercest passions, had entered into the diabolical calculations of Tolfi; and the fell artificer of his designs had imagined a counteracting device.

The tolling of an enormous bell struck upon the ears of Vivenzio! He started. It beat but once. The sound was so close and stunning, that it seemed to shatter his very brain, while it echoed through the rocky passages like reverberating peals of thunder. This was followed by a sudden crash of the roof and walls, as if they were about to fall upon and close around him at once. Vivenzio screamed, and instinctively spread forth his arms, as though he had a giant's strength to hold them back. They had moved nearer to him, and were now motionless. Vivenzio looked up, and saw the roof almost touching his head, even as he sat cowering beneath it; and he felt that a farther contraction of but a few inches only must commence the frightful operation. Roused as he had been, he now gasped for breath. His body shook violently—he was bent nearly double. His hands rested upon either wall, and his feet were drawn under him to avoid the pressure in front. Thus he remained for more than an hour, when that deafening bell beat again, and again there came the crash of horrid death. But the concussion was now so great that it struck Vivenzio down. As he lay gathered up in lessened bulk, the bell beat loud and frequent—crash succeeded crash—and on, and on, and on came the mysterious engine of death, till Vivenzio's smothered groans were heard no more! He was horribly crushed by the ponderous roof and collapsing sides—and the flattened bier was his Iron Shroud.

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