

# Zanoni

By Edward Bulwer-Lytton

## DEDICATORY EPISTLE

First prefixed to the Edition of 1845

TO

JOHN GIBSON, R.A., SCULPTOR.

In looking round the wide and luminous circle of our great living Englishmen, to select one to whom I might fitly dedicate this work,—one who, in his life as in his genius, might illustrate the principle I have sought to convey; elevated by the ideal which he exalts, and serenely dwelling in a glorious existence with the images born of his imagination,—in looking round for some such man, my thoughts rested upon you. Afar from our turbulent cabals; from the ignoble jealousy and the sordid strife which degrade and acerbate the ambition of Genius,—in your Roman Home, you have lived amidst all that is loveliest and least perishable in the past, and contributed with the noblest aims, and in the purest spirit, to the mighty heirlooms of the future. Your youth has been devoted to toil, that your manhood may be consecrated to fame: a fame unsullied by one desire of gold. You have escaped the two worst perils that beset the artist in our time and land,—the debasing tendencies of commerce, and the angry rivalries of competition. You have not wrought your marble for the market,—you have not been tempted, by the praises which our vicious criticism has showered upon exaggeration and distortion, to lower your taste to the level of the hour; you have lived, and you have laboured, as if you had no rivals but in the dead,—no purchasers, save in judges of what is best. In the divine priesthood of the beautiful, you have sought only to increase her worshippers and enrich her temples. The pupil of Canova, you have inherited his excellences, while you have shunned his errors,—yours his delicacy, not his affectation. Your heart resembles him even more than your genius: you have the same noble enthusiasm for your sublime profession; the same lofty freedom from envy, and the spirit that depreciates; the same generous desire not to war with but to serve artists in your art; aiding, strengthening, advising, elevating the timidity of inexperience, and the vague aspirations of youth. By the intuition of a kindred mind, you have equalled the learning of Winckelman, and the plastic poetry of Goethe, in the intimate comprehension of the antique. Each work of yours, rightly studied, is in itself a CRITICISM, illustrating the sublime secrets of the Grecian Art, which, without the servility of plagiarism, you have contributed to revive amongst us; in you we behold its three great and long-undetected principles,—simplicity, calm, and concentration.

But your admiration of the Greeks has not led you to the bigotry of the mere antiquarian, nor made you less sensible of the unappreciated excellence of the mighty modern, worthy to be your countryman,—though till his statue is in the streets of our capital, we show ourselves not worthy of the glory he has shed upon our land. You have not suffered even your gratitude to Canova to blind you to the superiority of Flaxman. When we become sensible of our title-deeds to renown in that single name, we may look for an English public capable of real patronage to English Art,—and not till then.

I, artist in words, dedicate, then, to you, artist whose ideas speak in marble, this well-loved work of my matured manhood. I love it not the less because it has been little understood and superficially judged by the common herd: it was not meant for them. I love it not the more

because it has found enthusiastic favorers amongst the Few. My affection for my work is rooted in the solemn and pure delight which it gave me to conceive and to perform. If I had graven it on the rocks of a desert, this apparition of my own innermost mind, in its least-clouded moments, would have been to me as dear; and this ought, I believe, to be the sentiment with which he whose Art is born of faith in the truth and beauty of the principles he seeks to illustrate, should regard his work. Your serener existence, uniform and holy, my lot denies,--if my heart covets. But our true nature is in our thoughts, not our deeds: and therefore, in books--which ARE his thoughts--the author's character lies bare to the discerning eye. It is not in the life of cities,--in the turmoil and the crowd; it is in the still, the lonely, and more sacred life, which for some hours, under every sun, the student lives (his stolen retreat from the Agora to the Cave), that I feel there is between us the bond of that secret sympathy, that magnetic chain, which unites the everlasting brotherhood of whose being Zanoni is the type.

E.B.L. London, May, 1845.

## INTRODUCTION.

One of the peculiarities of Bulwer was his passion for occult studies. They had a charm for him early in life, and he pursued them with the earnestness which characterised his pursuit of other studies. He became absorbed in wizard lore; he equipped himself with magical implements,--with rods for transmitting influence, and crystal balls in which to discern coming scenes and persons; and communed with spiritualists and mediums. The fruit of these mystic studies is seen in "Zanoni" and "A strange Story," romances which were a labour of love to the author, and into which he threw all the power he possessed,--power re-enforced by multifarious reading and an instinctive appreciation of Oriental thought. These weird stories, in which the author has formulated his theory of magic, are of a wholly different type from his previous fictions, and, in place of the heroes and villains of every day life, we have beings that belong in part to another sphere, and that deal with mysterious and occult agencies. Once more the old forgotten lore of the Cabala is unfolded; the furnace of the alchemist, whose fires have been extinct for centuries, is lighted anew, and the lamp of the Rosicrucian re-illuminated. No other works of the author, contradictory as have been the opinions of them, have provoked such a diversity of criticism as these. To some persons they represent a temporary aberration of genius rather than any serious thought or definite purpose; while others regard them as surpassing in bold and original speculation, profound analysis of character, and thrilling interest, all of the author's other works. The truth, we believe, lies midway between these extremes. It is questionable whether the introduction into a novel of such subjects as are discussed in these romances be not an offence against good sense and good taste; but it is as unreasonable to deny the vigour and originality of their author's conceptions, as to deny that the execution is imperfect, and, at times, bungling and absurd.

It has been justly said that the present half century has witnessed the rise and triumphs of science, the extent and marvels of which even Bacon's fancy never conceived, simultaneously with superstitions grosser than any which Bacon's age believed. "The one is, in fact, the natural reaction from the other. The more science seeks to exclude the miraculous, and reduce all nature, animate and inanimate, to an invariable law of sequences, the more does the natural instinct of man rebel, and seek an outlet for those obstinate questionings, those 'blank misgivings

of a creature moving about in worlds not realised,' taking refuge in delusions as degrading as any of the so-called Dark Ages." It was the revolt from the chilling materialism of the age which inspired the mystic creations of "Zanoni" and "A Strange Story." Of these works, which support and supplement each other, one is the contemplation of our actual life through a spiritual medium, the other is designed to show that, without some gleams of the supernatural, man is not man, nor nature nature.

In "Zanoni" the author introduces us to two human beings who have achieved immortality: one, Mejnour, void of all passion or feeling, calm, benignant, bloodless, an intellect rather than a man; the other, Zanoni, the pupil of Mejnour, the representative of an ideal life in its utmost perfection, possessing eternal youth, absolute power, and absolute knowledge, and withal the fullest capacity to enjoy and to love, and, as a necessity of that love, to sorrow and despair. By his love for Viola Zanoni is compelled to descend from his exalted state, to lose his eternal calm, and to share in the cares and anxieties of humanity; and this degradation is completed by the birth of a child. Finally, he gives up the life which hangs on that of another, in order to save that other, the loving and beloved wife, who has delivered him from his solitude and isolation. Wife and child are mortal, and to outlive them and his love for them is impossible. But Mejnour, who is the impersonation of thought,--pure intellect without affection,--lives on.

Bulwer has himself justly characterised this work, in the Introduction, as a romance and not a romance, as a truth for those who can comprehend it, and an extravagance for those who cannot. The most careless or matter-of-fact reader must see that the work, like the enigmatical "Faust," deals in types and symbols; that the writer intends to suggest to the mind something more subtle and impalpable than that which is embodied to the senses. What that something is, hardly two persons will agree. The most obvious interpretation of the types is, that in Zanoni the author depicts to us humanity, perfected, sublimed, which lives not for self, but for others; in Mejnour, as we have before said, cold, passionless, self-sufficing intellect; in Glyndon, the young Englishman, the mingled strength and weakness of human nature; in the heartless, selfish artist, Nicot, icy, soulless atheism, believing nothing, hoping nothing, trusting and loving nothing; and in the beautiful, artless Viola, an exquisite creation, pure womanhood, loving, trusting and truthful. As a work of art the romance is one of great power. It is original in its conception, and pervaded by one central idea; but it would have been improved, we think, by a more sparing use of the supernatural. The inevitable effect of so much hackneyed diablerie--of such an accumulation of wonder upon wonder--is to deaden the impression they would naturally make upon us. In Hawthorne's tales we see with what ease a great imaginative artist can produce a deeper thrill by a far slighter use of the weird and the mysterious.

The chief interest of the story for the ordinary reader centres, not in its ghostly characters and improbable machinery, the scenes in Mejnour's chamber in the ruined castle among the Apennines, the colossal and appalling apparitions on Vesuvius, the hideous phantom with its burning eye that haunted Glyndon, but in the loves of Viola and the mysterious Zanoni, the blissful and the fearful scenes through which they pass, and their final destiny, when the hero of the story sacrifices his own "charmed life" to save hers, and the Immortal finds the only true immortality in death. Among the striking passages in the work are the pathetic sketch of the old violinist and composer, Pisani, with his sympathetic "barbiton" which moaned, groaned, growled, and laughed responsive to the feelings of its master; the description of Viola's and her father's triumph, when "The Siren," his masterpiece, is performed at the San Carlo in Naples; Glyndon's adventure at the Carnival in Naples; the death of his sister; the vivid pictures of the Reign of Terror in Paris, closing with the downfall of Robespierre and his satellites; and perhaps,

above all, the thrilling scene where Zanoni leaves Viola asleep in prison when his guards call him to execution, and she, unconscious of the terrible sacrifice, but awaking and missing him, has a vision of the procession to the guillotine, with Zanoni there, radiant in youth and beauty, followed by the sudden vanishing of the headsman,--the horror,--and the "Welcome" of her loved one to Heaven in a myriad of melodies from the choral hosts above.

"Zanoni" was originally published by Saunders and Otley, London, in three volumes 12mo., in 1842. A translation into French, made by M. Sheldon under the direction of P. Lorain, was published in Paris in the "Bibliotheque des Meilleurs Romans Etrangers."

W.M.

## PREFACE TO THE EDITION OF 1853.

As a work of imagination, "Zanoni" ranks, perhaps, amongst the highest of my prose fictions. In the Poem of "King Arthur," published many years afterwards, I have taken up an analogous design, in the contemplation of our positive life through a spiritual medium; and I have enforced, through a far wider development, and, I believe, with more complete and enduring success, that harmony between the external events which are all that the superficial behold on the surface of human affairs, and the subtle and intellectual agencies which in reality influence the conduct of individuals, and shape out the destinies of the world. As man has two lives,--that of action and that of thought,--so I conceive that work to be the truest representation of humanity which faithfully delineates both, and opens some elevating glimpse into the sublimest mysteries of our being, by establishing the inevitable union that exists between the plain things of the day, in which our earthly bodies perform their allotted part, and the latent, often uncultivated, often invisible, affinities of the soul with all the powers that eternally breathe and move throughout the Universe of Spirit.

I refer those who do me the honour to read "Zanoni" with more attention than is given to ordinary romance, to the Poem of "King Arthur," for suggestive conjecture into most of the regions of speculative research, affecting the higher and more important condition of our ultimate being, which have engaged the students of immaterial philosophy in my own age.

Affixed to the "Note" with which this work concludes, and which treats of the distinctions between type and allegory, the reader will find, from the pen of one of our most eminent living writers, an ingenious attempt to explain the interior or typical meanings of the work now before him.

## INTRODUCTION.

It is possible that among my readers there may be a few not unacquainted with an old-book shop, existing some years since in the neighbourhood of Covent Garden; I say a few, for certainly there was little enough to attract the many in those precious volumes which the labour of a life had accumulated on the dusty shelves of my old friend D--. There were to be found no popular treatises, no entertaining romances, no histories, no travels, no "Library for the People," no "Amusement for the Million." But there, perhaps, throughout all Europe, the curious might

discover the most notable collection, ever amassed by an enthusiast, of the works of alchemist, cabalist, and astrologer. The owner had lavished a fortune in the purchase of unsalable treasures. But old D-- did not desire to sell. It absolutely went to his heart when a customer entered his shop: he watched the movements of the presumptuous intruder with a vindictive glare; he fluttered around him with uneasy vigilance,--he frowned, he groaned, when profane hands dislodged his idols from their niches. If it were one of the favourite sultanas of his wizard harem that attracted you, and the price named were not sufficiently enormous, he would not unfrequently double the sum. Demur, and in brisk delight he snatched the venerable charmer from your hands; accede, and he became the picture of despair,--nor unfrequently, at the dead of night, would he knock at your door, and entreat you to sell him back, at your own terms, what you had so egregiously bought at his. A believer himself in his Averroes and Paracelsus, he was as loth as the philosophers he studied to communicate to the profane the learning he had collected.

It so chanced that some years ago, in my younger days, whether of authorship or life, I felt a desire to make myself acquainted with the true origin and tenets of the singular sect known by the name of Rosicrucians. Dissatisfied with the scanty and superficial accounts to be found in the works usually referred to on the subject, it struck me as possible that Mr. D--'s collection, which was rich, not only in black-letter, but in manuscripts, might contain some more accurate and authentic records of that famous brotherhood,--written, who knows? by one of their own order, and confirming by authority and detail the pretensions to wisdom and to virtue which Bringaret had arrogated to the successors of the Chaldean and Gymnosophist. Accordingly I repaired to what, doubtless, I ought to be ashamed to confess, was once one of my favourite haunts. But are there no errors and no fallacies, in the chronicles of our own day, as absurd as those of the alchemists of old? Our very newspapers may seem to our posterity as full of delusions as the books of the alchemists do to us; not but what the press is the air we breathe,--and uncommonly foggy the air is too!

On entering the shop, I was struck by the venerable appearance of a customer whom I had never seen there before. I was struck yet more by the respect with which he was treated by the disdainful collector. "Sir," cried the last, emphatically, as I was turning over the leaves of the catalogue,--"sir, you are the only man I have met, in five-and-forty years that I have spent in these researches, who is worthy to be my customer. How--where, in this frivolous age, could you have acquired a knowledge so profound? And this august fraternity, whose doctrines, hinted at by the earliest philosophers, are still a mystery to the latest; tell me if there really exists upon the earth any book, any manuscript, in which their discoveries, their tenets, are to be learned?"

At the words, "august fraternity," I need scarcely say that my attention had been at once aroused, and I listened eagerly for the stranger's reply.

"I do not think," said the old gentleman, "that the masters of the school have ever consigned, except by obscure hint and mystical parable, their real doctrines to the world. And I do not blame them for their discretion."

Here he paused, and seemed about to retire, when I said, somewhat abruptly, to the collector, "I see nothing, Mr. D--, in this catalogue which relates to the Rosicrucians!"

"The Rosicrucians!" repeated the old gentleman, and in his turn he surveyed me with deliberate surprise. "Who but a Rosicrucian could explain the Rosicrucian mysteries! And can you imagine that any members of that sect, the most jealous of all secret societies, would themselves lift the veil that hides the Isis of their wisdom from the world?"

“Aha!” thought I, “this, then, is ‘the august fraternity’ of which you spoke. Heaven be praised! I certainly have stumbled on one of the brotherhood.”

“But,” I said aloud, “if not in books, sir, where else am I to obtain information? Nowadays one can hazard nothing in print without authority, and one may scarcely quote Shakespeare without citing chapter and verse. This is the age of facts,—the age of facts, sir.”

“Well,” said the old gentleman, with a pleasant smile, “if we meet again, perhaps, at least, I may direct your researches to the proper source of intelligence.” And with that he buttoned his greatcoat, whistled to his dog, and departed.

It so happened that I did meet again with the old gentleman, exactly four days after our brief conversation in Mr. D--’s book-shop. I was riding leisurely towards Highgate, when, at the foot of its classic hill, I recognised the stranger; he was mounted on a black pony, and before him trotted his dog, which was black also.

If you meet the man whom you wish to know, on horseback, at the commencement of a long hill, where, unless he has borrowed a friend’s favourite hack, he cannot, in decent humanity to the brute creation, ride away from you, I apprehend that it is your own fault if you have not gone far in your object before you have gained the top. In short, so well did I succeed, that on reaching Highgate the old gentleman invited me to rest at his house, which was a little apart from the village; and an excellent house it was,—small, but commodious, with a large garden, and commanding from the windows such a prospect as Lucretius would recommend to philosophers: the spires and domes of London, on a clear day, distinctly visible; here the Retreat of the Hermit, and there the Mare Magnum of the world.

The walls of the principal rooms were embellished with pictures of extraordinary merit, and in that high school of art which is so little understood out of Italy. I was surprised to learn that they were all from the hand of the owner. My evident admiration pleased my new friend, and led to talk upon his part, which showed him no less elevated in his theories of art than an adept in the practice. Without fatiguing the reader with irrelevant criticism, it is necessary, perhaps, as elucidating much of the design and character of the work which these prefatory pages introduce, that I should briefly observe, that he insisted as much upon the connection of the arts, as a distinguished author has upon that of the sciences; that he held that in all works of imagination, whether expressed by words or by colours, the artist of the higher schools must make the broadest distinction between the real and the true,—in other words, between the imitation of actual life, and the exaltation of Nature into the Ideal.

“The one,” said he, “is the Dutch School, the other is the Greek.”

“Sir,” said I, “the Dutch is the most in fashion.”

“Yes, in painting, perhaps,” answered my host, “but in literature--”

“It was of literature I spoke. Our growing poets are all for simplicity and Betty Foy; and our critics hold it the highest praise of a work of imagination, to say that its characters are exact to common life, even in sculpture--”

“In sculpture! No, no! THERE the high ideal must at least be essential!”

“Pardon me; I fear you have not seen Souter Johnny and Tam O’Shanter.”

“Ah!” said the old gentleman, shaking his head, “I live very much out of the world, I see. I suppose Shakespeare has ceased to be admired?”

“On the contrary; people make the adoration of Shakespeare the excuse for attacking everybody else. But then our critics have discovered that Shakespeare is so REAL!”

“Real! The poet who has never once drawn a character to be met with in actual life,—who has never once descended to a passion that is false, or a personage who is real!”

I was about to reply very severely to this paradox, when I perceived that my companion was growing a little out of temper. And he who wishes to catch a Rosicrucian, must take care not to disturb the waters. I thought it better, therefore, to turn the conversation.

“Revenons a nos moutons,” said I; “you promised to enlighten my ignorance as to the Rosicrucians.”

“Well!” quoth he, rather sternly; “but for what purpose? Perhaps you desire only to enter the temple in order to ridicule the rites?”

“What do you take me for! Surely, were I so inclined, the fate of the Abbe de Villars is a sufficient warning to all men not to treat idly of the realms of the Salamander and the Sylph. Everybody knows how mysteriously that ingenious personage was deprived of his life, in revenge for the witty mockeries of his ‘Comte de Gabalis.’”

“Salamander and Sylph! I see that you fall into the vulgar error, and translate literally the allegorical language of the mystics.”

With that the old gentleman condescended to enter into a very interesting, and, as it seemed to me, a very erudite relation, of the tenets of the Rosicrucians, some of whom, he asserted, still existed, and still prosecuted, in august secrecy, their profound researches into natural science and occult philosophy.

“But this fraternity,” said he, “however respectable and virtuous,—virtuous I say, for no monastic order is more severe in the practice of moral precepts, or more ardent in Christian faith,—this fraternity is but a branch of others yet more transcendent in the powers they have obtained, and yet more illustrious in their origin. Are you acquainted with the Platonists?”

“I have occasionally lost my way in their labyrinth,” said I. “Faith, they are rather difficult gentlemen to understand.”

“Yet their knottiest problems have never yet been published. Their sublimest works are in manuscript, and constitute the initiatory learning, not only of the Rosicrucians, but of the nobler brotherhoods I have referred to. More solemn and sublime still is the knowledge to be gleaned from the elder Pythagoreans, and the immortal masterpieces of Apollonius.”

“Apollonius, the imposter of Tyanea! are his writings extant?”

“Imposter!” cried my host; “Apollonius an imposter!”

“I beg your pardon; I did not know he was a friend of yours; and if you vouch for his character, I will believe him to have been a very respectable man, who only spoke the truth when he boasted of his power to be in two places at the same time.”

“Is that so difficult?” said the old gentleman; “if so, you have never dreamed!”

Here ended our conversation; but from that time an acquaintance was formed between us which lasted till my venerable friend departed this life. Peace to his ashes! He was a person of singular habits and eccentric opinions; but the chief part of his time was occupied in acts of quiet and unostentatious goodness. He was an enthusiast in the duties of the Samaritan; and as his virtues were softened by the gentlest charity, so his hopes were based upon the devoutest belief. He never conversed upon his own origin and history, nor have I ever been able to penetrate the darkness in which they were concealed. He seemed to have seen much of the world, and to have been an eye-witness of the first French Revolution, a subject upon which he was equally eloquent and instructive. At the same time he did not regard the crimes of that stormy period with the philosophical leniency with which enlightened writers (their heads safe upon their shoulders) are, in the present day, inclined to treat the massacres of the past: he spoke not as a student who had read and reasoned, but as a man who had seen and suffered. The old gentleman seemed alone in the world; nor did I know that he had one relation, till his executor, a distant

cousin, residing abroad, informed me of the very handsome legacy which my poor friend had bequeathed me. This consisted, first, of a sum about which I think it best to be guarded, foreseeing the possibility of a new tax upon real and funded property; and, secondly, of certain precious manuscripts, to which the following volumes owe their existence.

I imagine I trace this latter bequest to a visit I paid the Sage, if so I may be permitted to call him, a few weeks before his death.

Although he read little of our modern literature, my friend, with the affable good-nature which belonged to him, graciously permitted me to consult him upon various literary undertakings meditated by the desultory ambition of a young and inexperienced student. And at that time I sought his advice upon a work of imagination, intended to depict the effects of enthusiasm upon different modifications of character. He listened to my conception, which was sufficiently trite and prosaic, with his usual patience; and then, thoughtfully turning to his bookshelves, took down an old volume, and read to me, first, in Greek, and secondly, in English, some extracts to the following effect:--

“Plato here expresses four kinds of mania, by which I desire to understand enthusiasm and the inspiration of the gods: Firstly, the musical; secondly, the telestic or mystic; thirdly, the prophetic; and fourthly, that which belongs to love.”

The author he quoted, after contending that there is something in the soul above intellect, and stating that there are in our nature distinct energies,--by the one of which we discover and seize, as it were, on sciences and theorems with almost intuitive rapidity, by another, through which high art is accomplished, like the statues of Phidias,--proceeded to state that “enthusiasm, in the true acceptation of the word, is, when that part of the soul which is above intellect is excited to the gods, and thence derives its inspiration.”

The author, then pursuing his comment upon Plato, observes, that “one of these manias may suffice (especially that which belongs to love) to lead back the soul to its first divinity and happiness; but that there is an intimate union with them all; and that the ordinary progress through which the soul ascends is, primarily, through the musical; next, through the telestic or mystic; thirdly, through the prophetic; and lastly, through the enthusiasm of love.”

While with a bewildered understanding and a reluctant attention I listened to these intricate sublimities, my adviser closed the volume, and said with complacency, “There is the motto for your book,--the thesis for your theme.”

“Davus sum, non Oedipus,” said I, shaking my head, discontentedly. “All this may be exceedingly fine, but, Heaven forgive me,--I don’t understand a word of it. The mysteries of your Rosicrucians, and your fraternities, are mere child’s play to the jargon of the Platonists.”

“Yet, not till you rightly understand this passage, can you understand the higher theories of the Rosicrucians, or of the still nobler fraternities you speak of with so much levity.”

“Oh, if that be the case, I give up in despair. Why not, since you are so well versed in the matter, take the motto for a book of your own?”

“But if I have already composed a book with that thesis for its theme, will you prepare it for the public?”

“With the greatest pleasure,” said I,--alas, too rashly!

“I shall hold you to your promise,” returned the old gentleman, “and when I am no more, you will receive the manuscripts. From what you say of the prevailing taste in literature, I cannot flatter you with the hope that you will gain much by the undertaking. And I tell you beforehand that you will find it not a little laborious.”

“Is your work a romance?”

“It is a romance, and it is not a romance. It is a truth for those who can comprehend it, and an extravagance for those who cannot.”

At last there arrived the manuscripts, with a brief note from my deceased friend, reminding me of my imprudent promise.

With mournful interest, and yet with eager impatience, I opened the packet and trimmed my lamp. Conceive my dismay when I found the whole written in an unintelligible cipher. I present the reader with a specimen:

(Several strange characters.)

and so on for nine hundred and forty mortal pages in foolscap. I could scarcely believe my eyes: in fact, I began to think the lamp burned singularly blue; and sundry misgivings as to the unhallowed nature of the characters I had so unwittingly opened upon, coupled with the strange hints and mystical language of the old gentleman, crept through my disordered imagination. Certainly, to say no worse of it, the whole thing looked UNCANNY! I was about, precipitately, to hurry the papers into my desk, with a pious determination to have nothing more to do with them, when my eye fell upon a book, neatly bound in blue morocco, and which, in my eagerness, I had hitherto overlooked. I opened this volume with great precaution, not knowing what might jump out, and--guess my delight--found that it contained a key or dictionary to the hieroglyphics. Not to weary the reader with an account of my labours, I am contented with saying that at last I imagined myself capable of construing the characters, and set to work in good earnest. Still it was no easy task, and two years elapsed before I had made much progress. I then, by way of experiment on the public, obtained the insertion of a few desultory chapters, in a periodical with which, for a few months, I had the honour to be connected. They appeared to excite more curiosity than I had presumed to anticipate; and I renewed, with better heart, my laborious undertaking. But now a new misfortune befell me: I found, as I proceeded, that the author had made two copies of his work, one much more elaborate and detailed than the other; I had stumbled upon the earlier copy, and had my whole task to remodel, and the chapters I had written to retranslate. I may say then, that, exclusive of intervals devoted to more pressing occupations, my unlucky promise cost me the toil of several years before I could bring it to adequate fulfilment. The task was the more difficult, since the style in the original is written in a kind of rhythmical prose, as if the author desired that in some degree his work should be regarded as one of poetical conception and design. To this it was not possible to do justice, and in the attempt I have doubtless very often need of the reader's indulgent consideration. My natural respect for the old gentleman's vagaries, with a muse of equivocal character, must be my only excuse whenever the language, without luxuriating into verse, borrows flowers scarcely natural to prose. Truth compels me also to confess, that, with all my pains, I am by no means sure that I have invariably given the true meaning of the cipher; nay, that here and there either a gap in the narrative, or the sudden assumption of a new cipher, to which no key was afforded, has obliged me to resort to interpolations of my own, no doubt easily discernible, but which, I flatter myself, are not inharmonious to the general design. This confession leads me to the sentence with which I shall conclude: If, reader, in this book there be anything that pleases you, it is certainly mine; but whenever you come to something you dislike,--lay the blame upon the old gentleman!

London, January, 1842.

N.B.--The notes appended to the text are sometimes by the author, sometimes by the editor. I have occasionally (but not always) marked the distinction; where, however, this is omitted, the ingenuity of the reader will be rarely at fault.

ZANONI.

BOOK I.  
THE MUSICIAN.

Due Fontane

Chi di diverso effeto hanno liquore!--Ariosto, Orland. Fur." Canto 1.7.

(Two Founts

That hold a draught of different effects.)

CHAPTER 1.I.

Vergina era

D' alta belta, ma sua belta non cura:

...

Di natura, d' amor, de' cieli amici

Le negligenze sue sono artifici.--Gerusal. Lib.," canto ii. xiv.-xviii.

(She was a virgin of a glorious beauty, but regarded not her beauty...Negligence itself is art in those favoured by Nature, by love, and by the heavens.)

At Naples, in the latter half of the last century, a worthy artist named Gaetano Pisani lived and flourished. He was a musician of great genius, but not of popular reputation; there was in all his compositions something capricious and fantastic which did not please the taste of the Dilettanti of Naples. He was fond of unfamiliar subjects into which he introduced airs and symphonies that excited a kind of terror in those who listened. The names of his pieces will probably suggest their nature. I find, for instance, among his MSS., these titles: "The Feast of the Harpies," "The Witches at Benevento," "The Descent of Orpheus into Hades," "The Evil Eye," "The Eumenides," and many others that evince a powerful imagination delighting in the fearful and supernatural, but often relieved by an airy and delicate fancy with passages of exquisite grace and beauty. It is true that in the selection of his subjects from ancient fable, Gaetano Pisani was much more faithful than his contemporaries to the remote origin and the early genius of Italian Opera.

That descendant, however effeminate, of the ancient union between Song and Drama, when, after long obscurity and dethronement, it regained a punier sceptre, though a gaudier purple, by the banks of the Etrurian Arno, or amidst the lagunes of Venice, had chosen all its primary inspirations from the unfamiliar and classic sources of heathen legend; and Pisani's "Descent of

Orpheus” was but a bolder, darker, and more scientific repetition of the “Euridice” which Jacopi Peri set to music at the august nuptials of Henry of Navarre and Mary of Medicis.<sup>1</sup> Still, as I have said, the style of the Neapolitan musician was not on the whole pleasing to ears grown nice and euphuistic in the more dulcet melodies of the day; and faults and extravagances easily discernible, and often to appearance wilful, served the critics for an excuse for their distaste. Fortunately, or the poor musician might have starved, he was not only a composer, but also an excellent practical performer, especially on the violin, and by that instrument he earned a decent subsistence as one of the orchestra at the Great Theatre of San Carlo. Here formal and appointed tasks necessarily kept his eccentric fancies in tolerable check, though it is recorded that no less than five times he had been deposed from his desk for having shocked the conosciuti, and thrown the whole band into confusion, by impromptu variations of so frantic and startling a nature that one might well have imagined that the harpies or witches who inspired his compositions had clawed hold of his instrument.

The impossibility, however, to find any one of equal excellence as a performer (that is to say, in his more lucid and orderly moments) had forced his reinstatement, and he had now, for the most part, reconciled himself to the narrow sphere of his appointed adagios or allegros. The audience, too, aware of his propensity, were quick to perceive the least deviation from the text; and if he wandered for a moment, which might also be detected by the eye as well as the ear, in some strange contortion of visage, and some ominous flourish of his bow, a gentle and admonitory murmur recalled the musician from his Elysium or his Tartarus to the sober regions of his desk. Then he would start as if from a dream, cast a hurried, frightened, apologetic glance around, and, with a crestfallen, humbled air, draw his rebellious instrument back to the beaten track of the glib monotony. But at home he would make himself amends for this reluctant drudgery. And there, grasping the unhappy violin with ferocious fingers, he would pour forth, often till the morning rose, strange, wild measures that would startle the early fisherman on the shore below with a superstitious awe, and make him cross himself as if mermaid or sprite had wailed no earthly music in his ear.

This man’s appearance was in keeping with the characteristics of his art. The features were noble and striking, but worn and haggard, with black, careless locks tangled into a maze of curls, and a fixed, speculative, dreamy stare in his large and hollow eyes. All his movements were peculiar, sudden, and abrupt, as the impulse seized him; and in gliding through the streets, or along the beach, he was heard laughing and talking to himself. Withal, he was a harmless, guileless, gentle creature, and would share his mite with any idle lazzaroni, whom he often paused to contemplate as they lay lazily basking in the sun. Yet was he thoroughly unsocial. He formed no friends, flattered no patrons, resorted to none of the merry-makings so dear to the children of music and the South. He and his art seemed alone suited to each other,--both quaint, primitive, unworldly, irregular. You could not separate the man from his music; it was himself. Without it he was nothing, a mere machine! WITH it, he was king over worlds of his own. Poor man, he had little enough in this! At a manufacturing town in England there is a gravestone on which the epitaph records “one Claudius Phillips, whose absolute contempt for riches, and inimitable performance on the violin, made him the admiration of all that knew him!” Logical conjunction of opposite eulogies! In proportion, O Genius, to thy contempt for riches will be thy performance on thy violin!

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<sup>1</sup> Orpheus was the favourite hero of early Italian Opera, or Lyrical Drama. The Orfeo of Angelo Politiano was produced in 1475. The Orfeo of Monteverde was performed at Venice in 1667.

Gaetano Pisani's talents as a composer had been chiefly exhibited in music appropriate to this his favourite instrument, of all unquestionably the most various and royal in its resources and power over the passions. As Shakespeare among poets is the Cremona among instruments. Nevertheless, he had composed other pieces of larger ambition and wider accomplishment, and chief of these, his precious, his unpurchased, his unpublished, his unublishable and imperishable opera of the "Siren." This great work had been the dream of his boyhood, the mistress of his manhood; in advancing age "it stood beside him like his youth." Vainly had he struggled to place it before the world. Even bland, unjealous Paisiello, Maestro di Capella, shook his gentle head when the musician favoured him with a specimen of one of his most thrilling scenas. And yet, Paisiello, though that music differs from all Durante taught thee to emulate, there may--but patience, Gaetano Pisani! bide thy time, and keep thy violin in tune!

Strange as it may appear to the fairer reader, this grotesque personage had yet formed those ties which ordinary mortals are apt to consider their especial monopoly,--he was married, and had one child. What is more strange yet, his wife was a daughter of quiet, sober, unfantastic England: she was much younger than himself; she was fair and gentle, with a sweet English face; she had married him from choice, and (will you believe it?) she yet loved him. How she came to marry him, or how this shy, unsocial, wayward creature ever ventured to propose, I can only explain by asking you to look round and explain first to ME how half the husbands and half the wives you meet ever found a mate! Yet, on reflection, this union was not so extraordinary after all. The girl was a natural child of parents too noble ever to own and claim her. She was brought into Italy to learn the art by which she was to live, for she had taste and voice; she was a dependant and harshly treated, and poor Pisani was her master, and his voice the only one she had heard from her cradle that seemed without one tone that could scorn or chide. And so--well, is the rest natural? Natural or not, they married. This young wife loved her husband; and young and gentle as she was, she might almost be said to be the protector of the two. From how many disgraces with the despots of San Carlo and the Conservatorio had her unknown officious mediation saved him! In how many ailments --for his frame was weak--had she nursed and tended him! Often, in the dark nights, she would wait at the theatre with her lantern to light him and her steady arm to lean on; otherwise, in his abstract reveries, who knows but the musician would have walked after his "Siren" into the sea! And then she would so patiently, perhaps (for in true love there is not always the finest taste) so DELIGHTEDLY, listen to those storms of eccentric and fitful melody, and steal him--whispering praises all the way --from the unwholesome night-watch to rest and sleep!

I said his music was a part of the man, and this gentle creature seemed a part of the music; it was, in fact, when she sat beside him that whatever was tender or fairy-like in his motley fantasia crept into the harmony as by stealth. Doubtless her presence acted on the music, and shaped and softened it; but, he, who never examined how or what his inspiration, knew it not. All that he knew was, that he loved and blessed her. He fancied he told her so twenty times a day; but he never did, for he was not of many words, even to his wife. His language was his music,--as hers, her cares! He was more communicative to his barbiton, as the learned Mersennus teaches us to call all the varieties of the great viol family. Certainly barbiton sounds better than fiddle; and barbiton let it be. He would talk to THAT by the hour together,--praise it, scold it, coax it, nay (for such is man, even the most guileless), he had been known to swear at it; but for that excess he was always penitentially remorseful. And the barbiton had a tongue of his own, could take his own part, and when HE also scolded, had much the best of it. He was a noble fellow, this Violin!--a Tyrolese, the handiwork of the illustrious Steiner. There was something mysterious in

his great age. How many hands, now dust, had awakened his strings ere he became the Robin Goodfellow and Familiar of Gaetano Pisani! His very case was venerable,--beautifully painted, it was said, by Caracci. An English collector had offered more for the case than Pisani had ever made by the violin. But Pisani, who cared not if he had inhabited a cabin himself, was proud of a palace for the barbiton. His barbiton, it was his elder child! He had another child, and now we must turn to her.

How shall I describe thee, Viola? Certainly the music had something to answer for in the advent of that young stranger. For both in her form and her character you might have traced a family likeness to that singular and spirit-like life of sound which night after night threw itself in airy and goblin sport over the starry seas...Beautiful she was, but of a very uncommon beauty,--a combination, a harmony of opposite attributes. Her hair of a gold richer and purer than that which is seen even in the North; but the eyes, of all the dark, tender, subduing light of more than Italian--almost of Oriental--splendour. The complexion exquisitely fair, but never the same,--vivid in one moment, pale the next. And with the complexion, the expression also varied; nothing now so sad, and nothing now so joyous.

I grieve to say that what we rightly entitle education was much neglected for their daughter by this singular pair. To be sure, neither of them had much knowledge to bestow; and knowledge was not then the fashion, as it is now. But accident or nature favoured young Viola. She learned, as of course, her mother's language with her father's. And she contrived soon to read and to write; and her mother, who, by the way, was a Roman Catholic, taught her betimes to pray. But then, to counteract all these acquisitions, the strange habits of Pisani, and the incessant watch and care which he required from his wife, often left the child alone with an old nurse, who, to be sure, loved her dearly, but who was in no way calculated to instruct her.

Dame Gionetta was every inch Italian and Neapolitan. Her youth had been all love, and her age was all superstition. She was garrulous, fond,--a gossip. Now she would prattle to the girl of cavaliers and princes at her feet, and now she would freeze her blood with tales and legends, perhaps as old as Greek or Etrurian fable, of demon and vampire,--of the dances round the great walnut-tree at Benevento, and the haunting spell of the Evil Eye. All this helped silently to weave charmed webs over Viola's imagination that afterthought and later years might labour vainly to dispel. And all this especially fitted her to hang, with a fearful joy, upon her father's music. Those visionary strains, ever struggling to translate into wild and broken sounds the language of unearthly beings, breathed around her from her birth. Thus you might have said that her whole mind was full of music; associations, memories, sensations of pleasure or pain,--all were mixed up inexplicably with those sounds that now delighted and now terrified; that greeted her when her eyes opened to the sun, and woke her trembling on her lonely couch in the darkness of the night. The legends and tales of Gionetta only served to make the child better understand the signification of those mysterious tones; they furnished her with words to the music. It was natural that the daughter of such a parent should soon evince some taste in his art. But this developed itself chiefly in the ear and the voice. She was yet a child when she sang divinely. A great Cardinal--great alike in the State and the Conservatorio --heard of her gifts, and sent for her. From that moment her fate was decided: she was to be the future glory of Naples, the prima donna of San Carlo.

The Cardinal insisted upon the accomplishment of his own predictions, and provided her with the most renowned masters. To inspire her with emulation, his Eminence took her one evening to his own box: it would be something to see the performance, something more to hear the applause lavished upon the glittering signoras she was hereafter to excel! Oh, how gloriously

that life of the stage, that fairy world of music and song, dawned upon her! It was the only world that seemed to correspond with her strange childish thoughts. It appeared to her as if, cast hitherto on a foreign shore, she was brought at last to see the forms and hear the language of her native land. Beautiful and true enthusiasm, rich with the promise of genius! Boy or man, thou wilt never be a poet, if thou hast not felt the ideal, the romance, the Calypso's isle that opened to thee when for the first time the magic curtain was drawn aside, and let in the world of poetry on the world of prose!

And now the initiation was begun. She was to read, to study, to depict by a gesture, a look, the passions she was to delineate on the boards; lessons dangerous, in truth, to some, but not to the pure enthusiasm that comes from art; for the mind that rightly conceives art is but a mirror which gives back what is cast on its surface faithfully only--while unsullied. She seized on nature and truth intuitively. Her recitations became full of unconscious power; her voice moved the heart to tears, or warmed it into generous rage. But this arose from that sympathy which genius ever has, even in its earliest innocence, with whatever feels, or aspires, or suffers.

It was no premature woman comprehending the love or the jealousy that the words expressed; her art was one of those strange secrets which the psychologists may unriddle to us if they please, and tell us why children of the simplest minds and the purest hearts are often so acute to distinguish, in the tales you tell them, or the songs you sing, the difference between the true art and the false, passion and jargon, Homer and Racine,--echoing back, from hearts that have not yet felt what they repeat, the melodious accents of the natural pathos. Apart from her studies, Viola was a simple, affectionate, but somewhat wayward child,--wayward, not in temper, for that was sweet and docile; but in her moods, which, as I before hinted, changed from sad to gay and gay to sad without an apparent cause. If cause there were, it must be traced to the early and mysterious influences I have referred to, when seeking to explain the effect produced on her imagination by those restless streams of sound that constantly played around it; for it is noticeable that to those who are much alive to the effects of music, airs and tunes often come back, in the commonest pursuits of life, to vex, as it were, and haunt them. The music, once admitted to the soul, becomes also a sort of spirit, and never dies. It wanders perturbedly through the halls and galleries of the memory, and is often heard again, distinct and living as when it first displaced the wavelets of the air. Now at times, then, these phantoms of sound floated back upon her fancy; if gay, to call a smile from every dimple; if mournful, to throw a shade upon her brow,--to make her cease from her childishmirth, and sit apart and muse.

Rightly, then, in a typical sense, might this fair creature, so airy in her shape, so harmonious in her beauty, so unfamiliar in her ways and thoughts,--rightly might she be called a daughter, less of the musician than the music, a being for whom you could imagine that some fate was reserved, less of actual life than the romance which, to eyes that can see, and hearts that can feel, glides ever along WITH the actual life, stream by stream, to the Dark Ocean.

And therefore it seemed not strange that Viola herself, even in childhood, and yet more as she bloomed into the sweet seriousness of virgin youth, should fancy her life ordained for a lot, whether of bliss or woe, that should accord with the romance and reverie which made the atmosphere she breathed. Frequently she would climb through the thickets that clothed the neighbouring grotto of Posilipo,--the mighty work of the old Cimmerians,--and, seated by the haunted Tomb of Virgil, indulge those visions, the subtle vagueness of which no poetry can render palpable and defined; for the Poet that surpasses all who ever sang, is the heart of dreaming youth! Frequently there, too, beside the threshold over which the vine-leaves clung, and facing that dark-blue, waveless sea, she would sit in the autumn noon or summer twilight,

and build her castles in the air. Who doth not do the same,--not in youth alone, but with the dimmed hopes of age! It is man's prerogative to dream, the common royalty of peasant and of king. But those day-dreams of hers were more habitual, distinct, and solemn than the greater part of us indulge. They seemed like the Orama of the Greeks,--prophets while phantasma.

## CHAPTER I.II.

Fu stupor, fu vaghezza, fu diletto!--Gerusal. Lib., cant. ii. xxi.  
(“Desire it was, ‘t was wonder, ‘t was delight.” Wiffen’s Translation.)

Now at last the education is accomplished! Viola is nearly sixteen. The Cardinal declares that the time is come when the new name must be inscribed in the Libro d’Oro,--the Golden Book set apart to the children of Art and Song. Yes, but in what character?--to whose genius is she to give embodiment and form? Ah, there is the secret! Rumours go abroad that the inexhaustible Paisiello, charmed with her performance of his “Nel cor piu non me sento,” and his “Io son Lindoro,” will produce some new masterpiece to introduce the debutante. Others insist upon it that her forte is the comic, and that Cimarosa is hard at work at another “Matrimonia Segreto.” But in the meanwhile there is a check in the diplomacy somewhere. The Cardinal is observed to be out of humour. He has said publicly,--and the words are portentous,--“The silly girl is as mad as her father; what she asks is preposterous!” Conference follows conference; the Cardinal talks to the poor child very solemnly in his closet,-- all in vain. Naples is distracted with curiosity and conjecture. The lecture ends in a quarrel, and Viola comes home sullen and pouting: she will not act,--she has renounced the engagement.

Pisani, too inexperienced to be aware of all the dangers of the stage, had been pleased at the notion that one, at least, of his name would add celebrity to his art. The girl’s perverseness displeased him. However, he said nothing,--he never scolded in words, but he took up the faithful barbiton. Oh, faithful barbiton, how horribly thou didst scold! It screeched, it gabbled, it moaned, it growled. And Viola’s eyes filled with tears, for she understood that language. She stole to her mother, and whispered in her ear; and when Pisani turned from his employment, lo! both mother and daughter were weeping. He looked at them with a wondering stare; and then, as if he felt he had been harsh, he flew again to his Familiar. And now you thought you heard the lullaby which a fairy might sing to some fretful changeling it had adopted and sought to soothe. Liquid, low, silvery, streamed the tones beneath the enchanted bow. The most stubborn grief would have paused to hear; and withal, at times, out came a wild, merry, ringing note, like a laugh, but not mortal laughter. It was one of his most successful airs from his beloved opera,--the Siren in the act of charming the waves and the winds to sleep. Heaven knows what next would have come, but his arm was arrested. Viola had thrown herself on his breast, and kissed him, with happy eyes that smiled through her sunny hair. At that very moment the door opened,--a message from the Cardinal. Viola must go to his Eminence at once. Her mother went with her. All was reconciled and settled; Viola had her way, and selected her own opera. O ye dull nations of the North, with your broils and debates,--your bustling lives of the Pnyx and the Agora!--you cannot guess what a stir throughout musical Naples was occasioned by the rumour of a new opera and a new singer. But whose the opera? No cabinet intrigue ever was so secret. Pisani came back one night from the theatre, evidently disturbed and irate. Woe to thine ears

hadst thou heard the barbiton that night! They had suspended him from his office,-- they feared that the new opera, and the first debut of his daughter as prima donna, would be too much for his nerves. And his variations, his diablerie of sirens and harpies, on such a night, made a hazard not to be contemplated without awe. To be set aside, and on the very night that his child, whose melody was but an emanation of his own, was to perform,--set aside for some new rival: it was too much for a musician's flesh and blood. For the first time he spoke in words upon the subject, and gravely asked--for that question the barbiton, eloquent as it was, could not express distinctly--what was to be the opera, and what the part? And Viola as gravely answered that she was pledged to the Cardinal not to reveal. Pisani said nothing, but disappeared with the violin; and presently they heard the Familiar from the house-top (whither, when thoroughly out of humour, the musician sometimes fled), whining and sighing as if its heart were broken.

The affections of Pisani were little visible on the surface. He was not one of those fond, caressing fathers whose children are ever playing round their knees; his mind and soul were so thoroughly in his art that domestic life glided by him, seemingly as if THAT were a dream, and the heart the substantial form and body of existence. Persons much cultivating an abstract study are often thus; mathematicians proverbially so. When his servant ran to the celebrated French philosopher, shrieking, "The house is on fire, sir!" "Go and tell my wife then, fool!" said the wise man, settling back to his problems; "do I ever meddle with domestic affairs?" But what are mathematics to music--music, that not only composes operas, but plays on the barbiton? Do you know what the illustrious Giardini said when the tyro asked how long it would take to learn to play on the violin? Hear, and despair, ye who would bend the bow to which that of Ulysses was a plaything, "Twelve hours a day for twenty years together!" Can a man, then, who plays the barbiton be always playing also with his little ones? No, Pisani; often, with the keen susceptibility of childhood, poor Viola had stolen from the room to weep at the thought that thou didst not love her. And yet, underneath this outward abstraction of the artist, the natural fondness flowed all the same; and as she grew up, the dreamer had understood the dreamer. And now, shut out from all fame himself; to be forbidden to hail even his daughter's fame!--and that daughter herself to be in the conspiracy against him! Sharper than the serpent's tooth was the ingratitude, and sharper than the serpent's tooth was the wail of the pitying barbiton!

The eventful hour is come. Viola is gone to the theatre,--her mother with her. The indignant musician remains at home. Gionetta bursts into the room: my Lord Cardinal's carriage is at the door,--the Padrone is sent for. He must lay aside his violin; he must put on his brocade coat and his lace ruffles. Here they are,--quick, quick! And quick rolls the gilded coach, and majestic sits the driver, and stately prance the steeds. Poor Pisani is lost in a mist of uncomfortable amaze. He arrives at the theatre; he descends at the great door; he turns round and round, and looks about him and about: he misses something,-- where is the violin? Alas! his soul, his voice, his self of self, is left behind! It is but an automaton that the lackeys conduct up the stairs, through the tier, into the Cardinal's box. But then, what bursts upon him! Does he dream? The first act is over (they did not send for him till success seemed no longer doubtful); the first act has decided all. He feels THAT by the electric sympathy which ever the one heart has at once with a vast audience. He feels it by the breathless stillness of that multitude; he feels it even by the lifted finger of the Cardinal. He sees his Viola on the stage, radiant in her robes and gems,-- he hears her voice thrilling through the single heart of the thousands! But the scene, the part, the music! It is his other child,--his immortal child; the spirit-infant of his soul; his darling of many years of patient obscurity and pining genius; his masterpiece; his opera of the Siren!

This, then, was the mystery that had so galled him,--this the cause of the quarrel with the Cardinal; this the secret not to be proclaimed till the success was won, and the daughter had united her father's triumph with her own! And there she stands, as all souls bow before her,--fairer than the very Siren he had called from the deeps of melody. Oh, long and sweet recompense of toil! Where is on earth the rapture like that which is known to genius when at last it bursts from its hidden cavern into light and fame!

He did not speak, he did not move; he stood transfixed, breathless, the tears rolling down his cheeks; only from time to time his hands still wandered about,--mechanically they sought for the faithful instrument, why was it not there to share his triumph?

At last the curtain fell; but on such a storm and diapason of applause! Up rose the audience as one man, as with one voice that dear name was shouted. She came on, trembling, pale, and in the whole crowd saw but her father's face. The audience followed those moistened eyes; they recognised with a thrill the daughter's impulse and her meaning. The good old Cardinal drew him gently forward. Wild musician, thy daughter has given thee back more than the life thou gavest!

"My poor violin!" said he, wiping his eyes, "they will never hiss thee again now!"

### CHAPTER I.III.

Fra si contrarie tempre in ghiaccio e in foco,  
In riso e in pianto, e fra paura e speme  
L'ingannatrice Donna--Gerusal. Lib.," cant. iv. xciv.

(Between such contrarious mixtures of ice and fire, laughter and tears,--fear and hope, the deceiving dame.)

Now notwithstanding the triumph both of the singer and the opera, there had been one moment in the first act, and, consequently, BEFORE the arrival of Pisani, when the scale seemed more than doubtful. It was in a chorus replete with all the peculiarities of the composer. And when the Maelstrom of Capricci whirled and foamed, and tore ear and sense through every variety of sound, the audience simultaneously recognised the hand of Pisani. A title had been given to the opera which had hitherto prevented all suspicion of its parentage; and the overture and opening, in which the music had been regular and sweet, had led the audience to fancy they detected the genius of their favourite Paisiello. Long accustomed to ridicule and almost to despise the pretensions of Pisani as a composer, they now felt as if they had been unduly cheated into the applause with which they had hailed the overture and the commencing scenas. An ominous buzz circulated round the house: the singers, the orchestra,--electrically sensitive to the impression of the audience,--grew, themselves, agitated and dismayed, and failed in the energy and precision which could alone carry off the grotesqueness of the music.

There are always in every theatre many rivals to a new author and a new performer,--a party impotent while all goes well, but a dangerous ambush the instant some accident throws into confusion the march of success. A hiss arose; it was partial, it is true, but the significant silence of all applause seemed to forebode the coming moment when the displeasure would grow contagious. It was the breath that stirred the impending avalanche. At that critical moment Viola, the Siren queen, emerged for the first time from her ocean cave. As she came forward to

the lamps, the novelty of her situation, the chilling apathy of the audience,-- which even the sight of so singular a beauty did not at the first arouse,--the whispers of the malignant singers on the stage, the glare of the lights, and more--far more than the rest--that recent hiss, which had reached her in her concealment, all froze up her faculties and suspended her voice. And, instead of the grand invocation into which she ought rapidly to have burst, the regal Siren, retransformed into the trembling girl, stood pale and mute before the stern, cold array of those countless eyes.

At that instant, and when consciousness itself seemed about to fail her, as she turned a timid beseeching glance around the still multitude, she perceived, in a box near the stage, a countenance which at once, and like magic, produced on her mind an effect never to be analysed nor forgotten. It was one that awakened an indistinct, haunting reminiscence, as if she had seen it in those day-dreams she had been so wont from infancy to indulge. She could not withdraw her gaze from that face, and as she gazed, the awe and coldness that had before seized her, vanished like a mist from before the sun.

In the dark splendour of the eyes that met her own there was indeed so much of gentle encouragement, of benign and compassionate admiration,--so much that warmed, and animated, and nerved,--that any one, actor or orator, who has ever observed the effect that a single earnest and kindly look in the crowd that is to be addressed and won, will produce upon his mind, may readily account for the sudden and inspiring influence which the eye and smile of the stranger exercised on the debutante.

And while yet she gazed, and the glow returned to her heart, the stranger half rose, as if to recall the audience to a sense of the courtesy due to one so fair and young; and the instant his voice gave the signal, the audience followed it by a burst of generous applause. For this stranger himself was a marked personage, and his recent arrival at Naples had divided with the new opera the gossip of the city. And then as the applause ceased, clear, full, and freed from every fetter, like a spirit from the clay, the Siren's voice poured forth its entrancing music. From that time Viola forgot the crowd, the hazard, the whole world,--except the fairy one over with she presided. It seemed that the stranger's presence only served still more to heighten that delusion, in which the artist sees no creation without the circle of his art, she felt as if that serene brow, and those brilliant eyes, inspired her with powers never known before: and, as if searching for a language to express the strange sensations occasioned by his presence, that presence itself whispered to her the melody and the song.

Only when all was over, and she saw her father and felt his joy, did this wild spell vanish before the sweeter one of the household and filial love. Yet again, as she turned from the stage, she looked back involuntarily, and the stranger's calm and half-melancholy smile sank into her heart,--to live there, to be recalled with confused memories, half of pleasure, and half of pain.

Pass over the congratulations of the good Cardinal-Virtuoso, astonished at finding himself and all Naples had been hitherto in the wrong on a subject of taste,--still more astonished at finding himself and all Naples combining to confess it; pass over the whispered ecstasies of admiration which buzzed in the singer's ear, as once more, in her modest veil and quiet dress, she escaped from the crowd of gallants that choked up every avenue behind the scenes; pass over the sweet embrace of father and child, returning through the starlit streets and along the deserted Chiaja in the Cardinal's carriage; never pause now to note the tears and ejaculations of the good, simple-hearted mother,--see them returned; see the well-known room, *venimus ad larem nostrum* (We come to our own house.); see old Gionetta bustling at the supper; and hear Pisani, as he rouses the barbiton from its case, communicating all that has happened to the intelligent Familiar; hark to the mother's merry, low, English laugh. Why, Viola, strange child, sittest thou apart, thy face

leaning on thy fair hands, thine eyes fixed on space? Up, rouse thee! Every dimple on the cheek of home must smile to-night. (“Ridete quidquid est domi cachinnorum.” Catull. “ad Sirm. Penin.”)

And a happy reunion it was round that humble table: a feast Lucullus might have envied in his Hall of Apollo, in the dried grapes, and the dainty sardines, and the luxurious polenta, and the old lacrima a present from the good Cardinal. The barbiton, placed on a chair--a tall, high-backed chair--beside the musician, seemed to take a part in the festive meal. Its honest varnished face glowed in the light of the lamp; and there was an impish, sly demureness in its very silence, as its master, between every mouthful, turned to talk to it of something he had forgotten to relate before. The good wife looked on affectionately, and could not eat for joy; but suddenly she rose, and placed on the artist's temples a laurel wreath, which she had woven beforehand in fond anticipation; and Viola, on the other side her brother, the barbiton, rearranged the chaplet, and, smoothing back her father's hair, whispered, “Caro Padre, you will not let HIM scold me again!”

Then poor Pisani, rather distracted between the two, and excited both by the lacrima and his triumph, turned to the younger child with so naive and grotesque a pride, “I don't know which to thank the most. You give me so much joy, child,--I am so proud of thee and myself. But he and I, poor fellow, have been so often unhappy together!”

Viola's sleep was broken,--that was natural. The intoxication of vanity and triumph, the happiness in the happiness she had caused, all this was better than sleep. But still from all this, again and again her thoughts flew to those haunting eyes, to that smile with which forever the memory of the triumph, of the happiness, was to be united. Her feelings, like her own character, were strange and peculiar. They were not those of a girl whose heart, for the first time reached through the eye, sighs its natural and native language of first love. It was not so much admiration, though the face that reflected itself on every wave of her restless fancies was of the rarest order of majesty and beauty; nor a pleased and enamoured recollection that the sight of this stranger had bequeathed: it was a human sentiment of gratitude and delight, mixed with something more mysterious, of fear and awe. Certainly she had seen before those features; but when and how? Only when her thoughts had sought to shape out her future, and when, in spite of all the attempts to vision forth a fate of flowers and sunshine, a dark and chill foreboding made her recoil back into her deepest self. It was a something found that had long been sought for by a thousand restless yearnings and vague desires, less of the heart than mind; not as when youth discovers the one to be beloved, but rather as when the student, long wandering after the clew to some truth in science, sees it glimmer dimly before him, to beckon, to recede, to allure, and to wane again. She fell at last into unquiet slumber, vexed by deformed, fleeting, shapeless phantoms; and, waking, as the sun, through a veil of hazy cloud, glinted with a sickly ray across the casement, she heard her father settled back betimes to his one pursuit, and calling forth from his Familiar a low mournful strain, like a dirge over the dead.

“And why,” she asked, when she descended to the room below,-- “why, my father, was your inspiration so sad, after the joy of last night?”

“I know not, child. I meant to be merry, and compose an air in honour of thee; but he is an obstinate fellow, this,--and he would have it so.”

#### CHAPTER 1.IV.

E cosi i pigri e timidi desiri  
Sprona.--Gerusal. Lib.," cant. iv. lxxxviii.  
(And thus the slow and timid passions urged.)

It was the custom of Pisani, except when the duties of his profession made special demand on his time, to devote a certain portion of the mid-day to sleep,--a habit not so much a luxury as a necessity to a man who slept very little during the night. In fact, whether to compose or to practice, the hours of noon were precisely those in which Pisani could not have been active if he would. His genius resembled those fountains full at dawn and evening, overflowing at night, and perfectly dry at the meridian. During this time, consecrated by her husband to repose, the signora generally stole out to make the purchases necessary for the little household, or to enjoy (as what woman does not?) a little relaxation in gossip with some of her own sex. And the day following this brilliant triumph, how many congratulations would she have to receive!

At these times it was Viola's habit to seat herself without the door of the house, under an awning which sheltered from the sun without obstructing the view; and there now, with the prompt-book on her knee, on which her eye roves listlessly from time to time, you may behold her, the vine-leaves clustering from their arching trellis over the door behind, and the lazy white-sailed boats skimming along the sea that stretched before.

As she thus sat, rather in reverie than thought, a man coming from the direction of Posilipo, with a slow step and downcast eyes, passed close by the house, and Viola, looking up abruptly, started in a kind of terror as she recognised the stranger. She uttered an involuntary exclamation, and the cavalier turning, saw, and paused.

He stood a moment or two between her and the sunlit ocean, contemplating in a silence too serious and gentle for the boldness of gallantry, the blushing face and the young slight form before him; at length he spoke.

"Are you happy, my child," he said, in almost a paternal tone, "at the career that lies before you? From sixteen to thirty, the music in the breath of applause is sweeter than all the music your voice can utter!"

"I know not," replied Viola, falteringly, but encouraged by the liquid softness of the accents that addressed her,--"I know not whether I am happy now, but I was last night. And I feel, too, Excellency, that I have you to thank, though, perhaps, you scarce know why!"

"You deceive yourself," said the cavalier, with a smile. "I am aware that I assisted to your merited success, and it is you who scarce know how. The WHY I will tell you: because I saw in your heart a nobler ambition than that of the woman's vanity; it was the daughter that interested me. Perhaps you would rather I should have admired the singer?"

"No; oh, no!"

"Well, I believe you. And now, since we have thus met, I will pause to counsel you. When next you go to the theatre, you will have at your feet all the young gallants of Naples. Poor infant! the flame that dazzles the eye can scorch the wing. Remember that the only homage that does not sully must be that which these gallants will not give thee. And whatever thy dreams of the future,--and I see, while I speak to thee, how wandering they are, and wild,--may only those be fulfilled which centre round the hearth of home."

He paused, as Viola's breast heaved beneath its robe. And with a burst of natural and innocent emotions, scarcely comprehending, though an Italian, the grave nature of his advice, she exclaimed,--

“Ah, Excellency, you cannot know how dear to me that home is already. And my father,--there would be no home, signor, without him!”

A deep and melancholy shade settled over the face of the cavalier. He looked up at the quiet house buried amidst the vine-leaves, and turned again to the vivid, animated face of the young actress.

“It is well,” said he. “A simple heart may be its own best guide, and so, go on, and prosper. Adieu, fair singer.”

“Adieu, Excellency; but,” and something she could not resist--an anxious, sickening feeling of fear and hope,--impelled her to the question, “I shall see you again, shall I not, at San Carlo?”

“Not, at least, for some time. I leave Naples to-day.”

“Indeed!” and Viola’s heart sank within her; the poetry of the stage was gone.

“And,” said the cavalier, turning back, and gently laying his hand on hers,--”and, perhaps, before we meet, you may have suffered: known the first sharp griefs of human life,--known how little what fame can gain, repays what the heart can lose; but be brave and yield not,--not even to what may seem the piety of sorrow. Observe yon tree in your neighbour’s garden. Look how it grows up, crooked and distorted. Some wind scattered the germ from which it sprang, in the clefts of the rock; choked up and walled round by crags and buildings, by Nature and man, its life has been one struggle for the light,--light which makes to that life the necessity and the principle: you see how it has writhed and twisted; how, meeting the barrier in one spot, it has laboured and worked, stem and branches, towards the clear skies at last. What has preserved it through each disfavour of birth and circumstances,--why are its leaves as green and fair as those of the vine behind you, which, with all its arms, can embrace the open sunshine? My child, because of the very instinct that impelled the struggle,--because the labour for the light won to the light at length. So with a gallant heart, through every adverse accident of sorrow and of fate to turn to the sun, to strive for the heaven; this it is that gives knowledge to the strong and happiness to the weak. Ere we meet again, you will turn sad and heavy eyes to those quiet boughs, and when you hear the birds sing from them, and see the sunshine come aslant from crag and housetop to be the playfellow of their leaves, learn the lesson that Nature teaches you, and strive through darkness to the light!”

As he spoke he moved on slowly, and left Viola wondering, silent, saddened with his dim prophecy of coming evil, and yet, through sadness, charmed. Involuntarily her eyes followed him,-- involuntarily she stretched forth her arms, as if by a gesture to call him back; she would have given worlds to have seen him turn,--to have heard once more his low, calm, silvery voice; to have felt again the light touch of his hand on hers. As moonlight that softens into beauty every angle on which it falls, seemed his presence,--as moonlight vanishes, and things assume their common aspect of the rugged and the mean, he receded from her eyes, and the outward scene was commonplace once more.

The stranger passed on, through that long and lovely road which reaches at last the palaces that face the public gardens, and conducts to the more populous quarters of the city.

A group of young, dissipated courtiers, loitering by the gateway of a house which was open for the favourite pastime of the day,-- the resort of the wealthier and more high-born gamblers,--made way for him, as with a courteous inclination he passed them by. “Per fede,” said one, “is not that the rich Zanoni, of whom the town talks?”

“Ay; they say his wealth is incalculable!”

“THEY say,--who are THEY?--what is the authority? He has not been many days at Naples, and I cannot yet find any one who knows aught of his birthplace, his parentage, or, what is more important, his estates!”

“That is true; but he arrived in a goodly vessel, which THEY SAY is his own. See,--no, you cannot see it here; but it rides yonder in the bay. The bankers he deals with speak with awe of the sums placed in their hands.”

“Whence came he?”

“From some seaport in the East. My valet learned from some of the sailors on the Mole that he had resided many years in the interior of India.”

“Ah, I am told that in India men pick up gold like pebbles, and that there are valleys where the birds build their nests with emeralds to attract the moths. Here comes our prince of gamblers, Cetoxa; be sure that he already must have made acquaintance with so wealthy a cavalier; he has that attraction to gold which the magnet has to steel. Well, Cetoxa, what fresh news of the ducats of Signor Zanoni?”

“Oh,” said Cetoxa, carelessly, “my friend--”

“Ha! ha! hear him; his friend--”

“Yes; my friend Zanoni is going to Rome for a short time; when he returns, he has promised me to fix a day to sup with me, and I will then introduce him to you, and to the best society of Naples! Diavolo! but he is a most agreeable and witty gentleman!”

“Pray tell us how you came so suddenly to be his friend.”

“My dear Belgioso, nothing more natural. He desired a box at San Carlo; but I need not tell you that the expectation of a new opera (ah, how superb it is,--that poor devil, Pisani; who would have thought it?) and a new singer (what a face,--what a voice!-- ah!) had engaged every corner of the house. I heard of Zanoni’s desire to honour the talent of Naples, and, with my usual courtesy to distinguished strangers, I sent to place my box at his disposal. He accepts it,--I wait on him between the acts; he is most charming; he invites me to supper. Cospetto, what a retinue! We sit late,--I tell him all the news of Naples; we grow bosom friends; he presses on me this diamond before we part,--is a trifle, he tells me: the jewellers value it at 5000 pistoles!--the merriest evening I have passed these ten years.”

The cavaliers crowded round to admire the diamond.

“Signor Count Cetoxa,” said one grave-looking sombre man, who had crossed himself two or three times during the Neapolitan’s narrative, “are you not aware of the strange reports about this person; and are you not afraid to receive from him a gift which may carry with it the most fatal consequences? Do you not know that he is said to be a sorcerer; to possess the mal-occhio; to--”

“Prithee, spare us your antiquated superstitions,” interrupted Cetoxa, contemptuously. “They are out of fashion; nothing now goes down but scepticism and philosophy. And what, after all, do these rumours, when sifted, amount to? They have no origin but this,--a silly old man of eighty-six, quite in his dotage, solemnly avers that he saw this same Zanoni seventy years ago (he himself, the narrator, then a mere boy) at Milan; when this very Zanoni, as you all see, is at least as young as you or I, Belgioso.”

“But that,” said the grave gentleman,--“THAT is the mystery. Old Avelli declares that Zanoni does not seem a day older than when they met at Milan. He says that even then at Milan--mark this-- where, though under another name, this Zanoni appeared in the same splendour, he was attended also by the same mystery. And that an old man THERE remembered to have seen him sixty years before, in Sweden.”

“Tush,” returned Cetoxa, “the same thing has been said of the quack Cagliostro,—mere fables. I will believe them when I see this diamond turn to a wisp of hay. For the rest,” he added gravely, “I consider this illustrious gentleman my friend; and a whisper against his honour and repute will in future be equivalent to an affront to myself.”

Cetoxa was a redoubted swordsman, and excelled in a peculiarly awkward manoeuvre, which he himself had added to the variations of the stoccata. The grave gentleman, however anxious for the spiritual weal of the count, had an equal regard for his own corporeal safety. He contented himself with a look of compassion, and, turning through the gateway, ascended the stairs to the gaming-tables.

“Ha, ha!” said Cetoxa, laughing, “our good Loredano is envious of my diamond. Gentlemen, you sup with me to-night. I assure you I never met a more delightful, sociable, entertaining person, than my dear friend the Signor Zanoni.”

#### CHAPTER I.V.

Quello Ippogifo, grande e strano augello

Lo porta via.—“Orlando Furioso,” c. vi. xviii.

(That hippogriff, great and marvellous bird, bears him away.)

And now, accompanying this mysterious Zanoni, am I compelled to bid a short farewell to Naples. Mount behind me,—mount on my hippogriff, reader; settle yourself at your ease. I bought the pillion the other day of a poet who loves his comfort; it has been newly stuffed for your special accommodation. So, so, we ascend! Look as we ride aloft,—look!—never fear, hippogriffs never stumble; and every hippogriff in Italy is warranted to carry elderly gentlemen,—look down on the gliding landscapes! There, near the ruins of the Oscan’s old Atella, rises Aversa, once the stronghold of the Norman; there gleam the columns of Capua, above the Vulturian Stream. Hail to ye, cornfields and vineyards famous for the old Falernian! Hail to ye, golden orange-groves of Mola di Gaeta! Hail to ye, sweet shrubs and wild flowers, omnis copia narium, that clothe the mountain-skirts of the silent Lautulae! Shall we rest at the Volscian Anxur,—the modern Terracina,—where the lofty rock stands like the giant that guards the last borders of the southern land of love? Away, away! and hold your breath as we flit above the Pontine Marshes. Dreary and desolate, their miasma is to the gardens we have passed what the rank commonplace of life is to the heart when it has left love behind.

Mournful Campagna, thou openest on us in majestic sadness. Rome, seven-hilled Rome! receive us as Memory receives the way-worn; receive us in silence, amidst ruins! Where is the traveller we pursue? Turn the hippogriff loose to graze: he loves the acanthus that wreathes round yon broken columns. Yes, that is the arch of Titus, the conqueror of Jerusalem,—that the Colosseum! Through one passed the triumph of the deified invader; in one fell the butchered gladiators. Monuments of murder, how poor the thoughts, how mean the memories ye awaken, compared with those that speak to the heart of man on the heights of Phyle, or by thy lone mound, grey Marathon! We stand amidst weeds and brambles and long waving herbage. Where we stand reigned Nero,—here were his tessellated floors; here,

“Mighty in the heaven, a second heaven,”

hung the vault of his ivory roofs; here, arch upon arch, pillar on pillar, glittered to the world the golden palace of its master,--the Golden House of Nero. How the lizard watches us with his bright, timorous eye! We disturb his reign. Gather that wild flower: the Golden House is vanished, but the wild flower may have kin to those which the stranger's hand scattered over the tyrant's grave; see, over this soil, the grave of Rome, Nature strews the wild flowers still!

In the midst of this desolation is an old building of the middle ages. Here dwells a singular recluse. In the season of the malaria the native peasant flies the rank vegetation round; but he, a stranger and a foreigner, no associates, no companions, except books and instruments of science. He is often seen wandering over the grass-grown hills, or sauntering through the streets of the new city, not with the absent brow and incurious air of students, but with observant piercing eyes that seem to dive into the hearts of the passers-by. An old man, but not infirm,--erect and stately, as if in his prime. None know whether he be rich or poor. He asks no charity, and he gives none,--he does no evil, and seems to confer no good. He is a man who appears to have no world beyond himself; but appearances are deceitful, and Science, as well as Benevolence, lives in the Universe. This abode, for the first time since thus occupied, a visitor enters. It is Zanoni.

You observe those two men seated together, conversing earnestly. Years long and many have flown away since they met last,--at least, bodily, and face to face. But if they are sages, thought can meet thought, and spirit spirit, though oceans divide the forms. Death itself divides not the wise. Thou meetest Plato when thine eyes moisten over the *Phaedo*. May Homer live with all men forever!

They converse; they confess to each other; they conjure up the past, and repeople it; but note how differently do such remembrances affect the two. On Zanoni's face, despite its habitual calm, the emotions change and go. HE has acted in the past he surveys; but not a trace of the humanity that participates in joy and sorrow can be detected on the passionless visage of his companion; the past, to him, as is now the present, has been but as Nature to the sage, the volume to the student,--a calm and spiritual life, a study, a contemplation.

From the past they turn to the future. Ah! at the close of the last century, the future seemed a thing tangible,--it was woven up in all men's fears and hopes of the present.

At the verge of that hundred years, Man, the ripest born of Time,

(“An des Jahrhunderts Neige, Der reifste Sohn der Zeit.” “Die Künstler.”)

stood as at the deathbed of the Old World, and beheld the New Orb, blood-red amidst cloud and vapour,--uncertain if a comet or a sun. Behold the icy and profound disdain on the brow of the old man,--the lofty yet touching sadness that darkens the glorious countenance of Zanoni. Is it that one views with contempt the struggle and its issue, and the other with awe or pity? Wisdom contemplating mankind leads but to the two results,--compassion or disdain. He who believes in other worlds can accustom himself to look on this as the naturalist on the revolutions of an ant-hill, or of a leaf. What is the Earth to Infinity,--what its duration to the Eternal? Oh, how much greater is the soul of one man than the vicissitudes of the whole globe! Child of heaven, and heir of immortality, how from some star hereafter wilt thou look back on the ant-hill and its commotions, from Clovis to Robespierre, from Noah to the Final Fire. The spirit that can contemplate, that lives only in the intellect, can ascend to its star, even from the midst of the burial-ground called Earth, and while the sarcophagus called Life immures in its clay the everlasting!

But thou, Zanoni,--thou hast refused to live ONLY in the intellect; thou hast not mortified the heart; thy pulse still beats with the sweet music of mortal passion; thy kind is to thee still something warmer than an abstraction,--thou wouldst look upon this Revolution in its cradle,

which the storms rock; thou wouldst see the world while its elements yet struggle through the chaos!

Go!

## CHAPTER 1.VI.

Precepteurs ignorans de ce faible univers.--Voltaire.

(Ignorant teachers of this weak world.)

Nous etions a table chez un de nos confreres a l'Academie,  
Grand Seigneur et homme d'esprit.--La Harpe.

(We supped with one of our confreres of the Academy,--a great nobleman and wit.)

One evening, at Paris, several months after the date of our last chapter, there was a reunion of some of the most eminent wits of the time, at the house of a personage distinguished alike by noble birth and liberal accomplishments. Nearly all present were of the views that were then the mode. For, as came afterwards a time when nothing was so unpopular as the people, so that was the time when nothing was so vulgar as aristocracy. The airiest fine gentleman and the haughtiest noble prated of equality, and lisped enlightenment.

Among the more remarkable guests were Condorcet, then in the prime of his reputation, the correspondent of the king of Prussia, the intimate of Voltaire, the member of half the academies of Europe,--noble by birth, polished in manners, republican in opinions. There, too, was the venerable Malesherbes, "l'amour et les delices de la Nation." (The idol and delight of the nation (so-called by his historian, Gaillard).) There Jean Silvain Bailly, the accomplished scholar,--the aspiring politician. It was one of those petits soupers for which the capital of all social pleasures was so renowned. The conversation, as might be expected, was literary and intellectual, enlivened by graceful pleasantry. Many of the ladies of that ancient and proud noblesse--for the noblesse yet existed, though its hours were already numbered--added to the charm of the society; and theirs were the boldest criticisms, and often the most liberal sentiments.

Vain labour for me--vain labour almost for the grave English language--to do justice to the sparkling paradoxes that flew from lip to lip. The favourite theme was the superiority of the moderns to the ancients. Condorcet on this head was eloquent, and to some, at least, of his audience, most convincing. That Voltaire was greater than Homer few there were disposed to deny. Keen was the ridicule lavished on the dull pedantry which finds everything ancient necessarily sublime.

"Yet," said the graceful Marquis de --, as the champagne danced to his glass, "more ridiculous still is the superstition that finds everything incomprehensible holy! But intelligence circulates, Condorcet; like water, it finds its level. My hairdresser said to me this morning, 'Though I am but a poor fellow, I believe as little as the finest gentleman!'" "Unquestionably, the great Revolution draws near to its final completion,--a pas de geant, as Montesquieu said of his own immortal work."

Then there rushed from all--wit and noble, courtier and republican--a confused chorus, harmonious only in its anticipation of the brilliant things to which "the great Revolution" was to give birth. Here Condorcet is more eloquent than before.

“Il faut absolument que la Superstition et le Fanatisme fassent place a la Philosophie. (It must necessarily happen that superstition and fanaticism give place to philosophy.) Kings persecute persons, priests opinion. Without kings, men must be safe; and without priests, minds must be free.”

“Ah,” murmured the marquis, “and as ce cher Diderot has so well sung,--

‘Et des boyaux du dernier pretre Serrez le cou du dernier roi.’” (And throttle the neck of the last king with the string from the bowels of the last priest.)

“And then,” resumed Condorcet,--”then commences the Age of Reason!--equality in instruction, equality in institutions, equality in wealth! The great impediments to knowledge are, first, the want of a common language; and next, the short duration of existence. But as to the first, when all men are brothers, why not a universal language? As to the second, the organic perfectibility of the vegetable world is undisputed, is Nature less powerful in the nobler existence of thinking man? The very destruction of the two most active causes of physical deterioration--here, luxurious wealth; there, abject penury,-- must necessarily prolong the general term of life. (See Condorcet’s posthumous work on the Progress of the Human Mind.-- Ed.) The art of medicine will then be honoured in the place of war, which is the art of murder: the noblest study of the acutest minds will be devoted to the discovery and arrest of the causes of disease. Life, I grant, cannot be made eternal; but it may be prolonged almost indefinitely. And as the meaner animal bequeaths its vigour to its offspring, so man shall transmit his improved organisation, mental and physical, to his sons. Oh, yes, to such a consummation does our age approach!”

The venerable Malesherbes sighed. Perhaps he feared the consummation might not come in time for him. The handsome Marquis de -- and the ladies, yet handsomer than he, looked conviction and delight.

But two men there were, seated next to each other, who joined not in the general talk: the one a stranger newly arrived in Paris, where his wealth, his person, and his accomplishments, had already made him remarked and courted; the other, an old man, somewhere about seventy,--the witty and virtuous, brave, and still light-hearted Cazotte, the author of “Le Diable Amoureux.”

These two conversed familiarly, and apart from the rest, and only by an occasional smile testified their attention to the general conversation.

“Yes,” said the stranger,--”yes, we have met before.”

“I thought I could not forget your countenance; yet I task in vain my recollections of the past.”

“I will assist you. Recall the time when, led by curiosity, or perhaps the nobler desire of knowledge, you sought initiation into the mysterious order of Martines de Pasqualis.”

(It is so recorded of Cazotte. Of Martines de Pasqualis little is known; even the country to which he belonged is matter of conjecture. Equally so the rites, ceremonies, and nature of the cabalistic order he established. St. Martin was a disciple of the school, and that, at least, is in its favour; for in spite of his mysticism, no man more beneficent, generous, pure, and virtuous than St. Martin adorned the last century. Above all, no man more distinguished himself from the herd of sceptical philosophers by the gallantry and fervour with which he combated materialism, and vindicated the necessity of faith amidst a chaos of unbelief. It may also be observed, that Cazotte, whatever else he learned of the brotherhood of Martines, learned nothing that diminished the excellence of his life and the sincerity of his religion. At once gentle and brave, he never ceased to oppose the excesses of the Revolution. To the last, unlike the Liberals of his time, he was a devout and sincere Christian. Before his execution, he demanded a pen and paper to write these words: “Ma femme, mes enfans, ne me pleurez pas; ne m’oubliez pas, mais

souvenez-vous surtout de ne jamais offenser Dieu.” (“My wife, my children, weep not for me; forget me not, but remember above everything never to offend God.)--Ed.)

“Ah, is it possible! You are one of that theurgic brotherhood?”

“Nay, I attended their ceremonies but to see how vainly they sought to revive the ancient marvels of the cabala.”

“Such studies please you? I have shaken off the influence they once had on my own imagination.”

“You have not shaken it off,” returned the stranger, bravely; “it is on you still,--on you at this hour; it beats in your heart; it kindles in your reason; it will speak in your tongue!”

And then, with a yet lower voice, the stranger continued to address him, to remind him of certain ceremonies and doctrines,-- to explain and enforce them by references to the actual experience and history of his listener, which Cazotte thrilled to find so familiar to a stranger.

Gradually the old man’s pleasing and benevolent countenance grew overcast, and he turned, from time to time, searching, curious, uneasy glances towards his companion.

The charming Duchesse de G-- archly pointed out to the lively guests the abstracted air and clouded brow of the poet; and Condorcet, who liked no one else to be remarked, when he himself was present, said to Cazotte, “Well, and what do YOU predict of the Revolution,--how, at least, will it affect us?”

At that question Cazotte started; his cheeks grew pale, large drops stood on his forehead; his lips writhed; his gay companions gazed on him in surprise.

“Speak!” whispered the stranger, laying his hand gently upon the arm of the old wit.

At that word Cazotte’s face grew locked and rigid, his eyes dwelt vacantly on space, and in a low, hollow voice, he thus answered

(The following prophecy (not unfamiliar, perhaps, to some of my readers), with some slight variations, and at greater length, in the text of the authority I am about to cite, is to be found in La Harpe’s posthumous works. The MS. is said to exist still in La Harpe’s handwriting, and the story is given on M. Petitot’s authority, volume i. page 62. It is not for me to enquire if there be doubts of its foundation on fact.--Ed.),--

“You ask how it will affect yourselves,--you, its most learned, and its least selfish agents. I will answer: you, Marquis de Condorcet, will die in prison, but not by the hand of the executioner. In the peaceful happiness of that day, the philosopher will carry about with him not the elixir but the poison.”

“My poor Cazotte,” said Condorcet, with his gentle smile, “what have prisons, executioners, and poison to do with an age of liberty and brotherhood?”

“It is in the names of Liberty and Brotherhood that the prisons will reek, and the headsman be glutted.”

“You are thinking of priestcraft, not philosophy, Cazotte,” said Champfort.

(Champfort, one of those men of letters who, though misled by the first fair show of the Revolution, refused to follow the baser men of action into its horrible excesses, lived to express the murderous philanthropy of its agents by the best bon mot of the time. Seeing written on the walls, “Fraternite ou la Mort,” he observed that the sentiment should be translated thus, “Sois mon frere, ou je te tue.” (“Be my brother, or I kill thee.”)) “And what of me?”

“You will open your own veins to escape the fraternity of Cain. Be comforted; the last drops will not follow the razor. For you, venerable Malesherbes; for you, Aimar Nicolai; for you, learned Bailly,--I see them dress the scaffold! And all the while, O great philosophers, your murderers will have no word but philosophy on their lips!”

The hush was complete and universal when the pupil of Voltaire-- the prince of the academic sceptics, hot La Harpe--cried with a sarcastic laugh, "Do not flatter me, O prophet, by exemption from the fate of my companions. Shall I have no part to play in this drama of your fantasies."

At this question, Cazotte's countenance lost its unnatural expression of awe and sternness; the sardonic humour most common to it came back and played in his brightening eyes.

"Yes, La Harpe, the most wonderful part of all! YOU will become--a Christian!"

This was too much for the audience that a moment before seemed grave and thoughtful, and they burst into an immoderate fit of laughter, while Cazotte, as if exhausted by his predictions, sank back in his chair, and breathed hard and heavily.

"Nay, said Madame de G--, "you who have predicted such grave things concerning us, must prophesy something also about yourself."

A convulsive tremor shook the involuntary prophet,--it passed, and left his countenance elevated by an expression of resignation and calm. "Madame," said he, after a long pause, "during the siege of Jerusalem, we are told by its historian that a man, for seven successive days, went round the ramparts, exclaiming, 'Woe to thee, Jerusalem,--woe to myself!'"

"Well, Cazotte, well?"

"And on the seventh day, while he thus spoke, a stone from the machines of the Romans dashed him into atoms!"

With these words, Cazotte rose; and the guests, awed in spite of themselves, shortly afterwards broke up and retired.

## CHAPTER 1.VII.

Qui donc t'a donne la mission s'annoncer au peuple que la divinite n'existe pas? Quel avantage trouves-tu a persuader a l'homme qu'une force aveugle preside a ses destinees et frappe au hasard le crime et la vertu?--Robespierre, "Discours," Mai 7, 1794.

(Who then invested you with the mission to announce to the people that there is no God? What advantage find you in persuading man that nothing but blind force presides over his destinies, and strikes haphazard both crime and virtue?)

It was some time before midnight when the stranger returned home. His apartments were situated in one of those vast abodes which may be called an epitome of Paris itself,--the cellars rented by mechanics, scarcely removed a step from paupers, often by outcasts and fugitives from the law, often by some daring writer, who, after scattering amongst the people doctrines the most subversive of order, or the most libellous on the characters of priest, minister, and king, retired amongst the rats, to escape the persecution that attends the virtuous; the ground-floor occupied by shops; the entresol by artists; the principal stories by nobles; and the garrets by journeymen or grisettes.

As the stranger passed up the stairs, a young man of a form and countenance singularly unprepossessing emerged from a door in the entresol, and brushed beside him. His glance was furtive, sinister, savage, and yet timorous; the man's face was of an ashen paleness, and the features worked convulsively. The stranger paused, and observed him with thoughtful looks, as he hurried down the stairs. While he thus stood, he heard a groan from the room which the young man had just quitted; the latter had pulled to the door with hasty vehemence, but some

fragment, probably of fuel, had prevented its closing, and it now stood slightly ajar; the stranger pushed it open and entered. He passed a small anteroom, meanly furnished, and stood in a bedchamber of meagre and sordid discomfort. Stretched on the bed, and writhing in pain, lay an old man; a single candle lit the room, and threw its feeble ray over the furrowed and death-like face of the sick person. No attendant was by; he seemed left alone, to breathe his last. "Water," he moaned feebly,--"water!--I parch,--I burn!" The intruder approached the bed, bent over him, and took his hand. "Oh, bless thee, Jean, bless thee!" said the sufferer; "hast thou brought back the physician already? Sir, I am poor, but I can pay you well. I would not die yet, for that young man's sake." And he sat upright in his bed, and fixed his dim eyes anxiously on his visitor.

"What are your symptoms, your disease?"

"Fire, fire, fire in the heart, the entrails: I burn!"

"How long is it since you have taken food?"

"Food! only this broth. There is the basin, all I have taken these six hours. I had scarce drunk it ere these pains began."

The stranger looked at the basin; some portion of the contents was yet left there.

"Who administered this to you?"

"Who? Jean! Who else should? I have no servant,--none! I am poor, very poor, sir. But no! you physicians do not care for the poor. I AM RICH! can you cure me?"

"Yes, if Heaven permit. Wait but a few moments."

The old man was fast sinking under the rapid effects of poison. The stranger repaired to his own apartments, and returned in a few moments with some preparation that had the instant result of an antidote. The pain ceased, the blue and livid colour receded from the lips; the old man fell into a profound sleep. The stranger drew the curtains round the bed, took up the light, and inspected the apartment. The walls of both rooms were hung with drawings of masterly excellence. A portfolio was filled with sketches of equal skill,--but these last were mostly subjects that appalled the eye and revolted the taste: they displayed the human figure in every variety of suffering,--the rack, the wheel, the gibbet; all that cruelty has invented to sharpen the pangs of death seemed yet more dreadful from the passionate gusto and earnest force of the designer. And some of the countenances of those thus delineated were sufficiently removed from the ideal to show that they were portraits; in a large, bold, irregular hand was written beneath these drawings, "The Future of the Aristocrats." In a corner of the room, and close by an old bureau, was a small bundle, over which, as if to hide it, a cloak was thrown carelessly. Several shelves were filled with books; these were almost entirely the works of the philosophers of the time,--the philosophers of the material school, especially the Encyclopedistes, whom Robespierre afterwards so singularly attacked when the coward deemed it unsafe to leave his reign without a God.

("Cette secte (les Encyclopedistes) propagea avec beaucoup de zele l'opinion du materialisme, qui prevalut parmi les grands et parmi les beaux esprits; on lui doit en partie cette espece de philosophie pratique qui, reduisant l'Egoisme en systeme regarde la societe humaine comme une guerre de ruse, le succes comme la regle du juste et de l'injuste, la probite comme une affaire de gout, ou de biensance, le monde comme le patrimoine des fripons adroits."--"Discours de Robespierre," Mai 7, 1794. (This sect (the Encyclopaedists) propagate with much zeal the doctrine of materialism, which prevails among the great and the wits; we owe to it partly that kind of practical philosophy which, reducing Egotism to a system, looks upon society as a war of cunning; success the rule of right and wrong, honesty as an affair of taste or decency: and the world as the patrimony of clever scoundrels.))

A volume lay on a table,--it was one of Voltaire, and the page was opened at his argumentative assertion of the existence of the Supreme Being. ("Histoire de Jenni.") The margin was covered with pencilled notes, in the stiff but tremulous hand of old age; all in attempt to refute or to ridicule the logic of the sage of Ferney: Voltaire did not go far enough for the annotator! The clock struck two, when the sound of steps was heard without. The stranger silently seated himself on the farther side of the bed, and its drapery screened him, as he sat, from the eyes of a man who now entered on tiptoe; it was the same person who had passed him on the stairs. The new-comer took up the candle and approached the bed. The old man's face was turned to the pillow; but he lay so still, and his breathing was so inaudible, that his sleep might well, by that hasty, shrinking, guilty glance, be mistaken for the repose of death. The new-comer drew back, and a grim smile passed over his face: he replaced the candle on the table, opened the bureau with a key which he took from his pocket, and loaded himself with several rouleaus of gold that he found in the drawers. At this time the old man began to wake. He stirred, he looked up; he turned his eyes towards the light now waning in its socket; he saw the robber at his work; he sat erect for an instant, as if transfixed, more even by astonishment than terror. At last he sprang from his bed.

"Just Heaven! do I dream! Thou--thou--thou, for whom I toiled and starved!--THOU!" The robber started; the gold fell from his hand, and rolled on the floor.

"What!" he said, "art thou not dead yet? Has the poison failed?"

"Poison, boy! Ah!" shrieked the old man, and covered his face with his hands; then, with sudden energy, he exclaimed, "Jean! Jean! recall that word. Rob, plunder me if thou wilt, but do not say thou couldst murder one who only lived for thee! There, there, take the gold; I hoarded it but for thee. Go! go!" and the old man, who in his passion had quitted his bed, fell at the feet of the foiled assassin, and writhed on the ground,--the mental agony more intolerable than that of the body, which he had so lately undergone. The robber looked at him with a hard disdain. "What have I ever done to thee, wretch?" cried the old man,-- "what but loved and cherished thee? Thou wert an orphan,--an outcast. I nurtured, nursed, adopted thee as my son. If men call me a miser, it was but that none might despise thee, my heir, because Nature has stunted and deformed thee, when I was no more. Thou wouldst have had all when I was dead. Couldst thou not spare me a few months or days,--nothing to thy youth, all that is left to my age? What have I done to thee?"

"Thou hast continued to live, and thou wouldst make no will."

"Mon Dieu! Mon Dieu!"

"TON DIEU! Thy God! Fool! Hast thou not told me, from my childhood, that there is NO God? Hast thou not fed me on philosophy? Hast thou not said, 'Be virtuous, be good, be just, for the sake of mankind: but there is no life after this life'? Mankind! why should I love mankind? Hideous and misshapen, mankind jeer at me as I pass the streets. What hast thou done to me? Thou hast taken away from me, who am the scoff of this world, the hopes of another! Is there no other life? Well, then, I want thy gold, that at least I may hasten to make the best of this!"

"Monster! Curses light on thy ingratitude, thy--"

"And who hears thy curses? Thou knowest there is no God! Mark me; I have prepared all to fly. See,--I have my passport; my horses wait without; relays are ordered. I have thy gold." (And the wretch, as he spoke, continued coldly to load his person with the rouleaus). "And now, if I spare thy life, how shall I be sure that thou wilt not inform against mine?" He advanced with a gloomy scowl and a menacing gesture as he spoke.

The old man's anger changed to fear. He cowered before the savage. "Let me live! let me live!--that--that--"

"That--what?"

"I may pardon thee! Yes, thou hast nothing to fear from me. I swear it!"

"Swear! But by whom and what, old man? I cannot believe thee, if thou believest not in any God! Ha, ha! behold the result of thy lessons."

Another moment and those murderous fingers would have strangled their prey. But between the assassin and his victim rose a form that seemed almost to both a visitor from the world that both denied,--stately with majestic strength, glorious with awful beauty.

The ruffian recoiled, looked, trembled, and then turned and fled from the chamber. The old man fell again to the ground insensible.

## CHAPTER 1.VIII.

To know how a bad man will act when in power, reverse all the doctrines he preaches when obscure.--S. Montague.

Antipathies also form a part of magic (falsely) so-called. Man naturally has the same instinct as the animals, which warns them involuntarily against the creatures that are hostile or fatal to their existence. But HE so often neglects it, that it becomes dormant. Not so the true cultivator of the Great Science, etc.-- Trismegistus the Fourth (a Rosicrucian).

When he again saw the old man the next day, the stranger found him calm, and surprisingly recovered from the scene and sufferings of the night. He expressed his gratitude to his preserver with tearful fervour, and stated that he had already sent for a relation who would make arrangements for his future safety and mode of life. "For I have money yet left," said the old man; "and henceforth have no motive to be a miser." He proceeded then briefly to relate the origin and circumstances of his connection with his intended murderer.

It seems that in earlier life he had quarrelled with his relations,--from a difference in opinions of belief. Rejecting all religion as a fable, he yet cultivated feelings that inclined him--for though his intellect was weak, his dispositions were good--to that false and exaggerated sensibility which its dupes so often mistake for benevolence. He had no children; he resolved to adopt an *enfant du peuple*. He resolved to educate this boy according to "reason." He selected an orphan of the lowest extraction, whose defects of person and constitution only yet the more moved his pity, and finally engrossed his affection. In this outcast he not only loved a son, he loved a theory! He brought him up most philosophically. Helvetius had proved to him that education can do all; and before he was eight years old, the little Jean's favourite expressions were, "*La lumiere et la vertu.*" (Light and virtue.) The boy showed talents, especially in art.

The protector sought for a master who was as free from "superstition" as himself, and selected the painter David. That person, as hideous as his pupil, and whose dispositions were as vicious as his professional abilities were undeniable, was certainly as free from "superstition" as the protector could desire. It was reserved for Robespierre hereafter to make the sanguinary painter believe in the *Etre Supreme*. The boy was early sensible of his ugliness, which was almost preternatural. His benefactor found it in vain to reconcile him to the malice of Nature by his

philosophical aphorisms; but when he pointed out to him that in this world money, like charity, covers a multitude of defects, the boy listened eagerly and was consoled. To save money for his protege,--for the only thing in the world he loved,--this became the patron's passion. Verily, he had met with his reward.

"But I am thankful he has escaped," said the old man, wiping his eyes. "Had he left me a beggar, I could never have accused him."

"No, for you are the author of his crimes."

"How! I, who never ceased to inculcate the beauty of virtue? Explain yourself."

"Alas! if thy pupil did not make this clear to thee last night from his own lips, an angel might come from heaven to preach to thee in vain."

The old man moved uneasily, and was about to reply, when the relative he had sent for--and who, a native of Nancy, happened to be at Paris at the time--entered the room. He was a man somewhat past thirty, and of a dry, saturnine, meagre countenance, restless eyes, and compressed lips. He listened, with many ejaculations of horror, to his relation's recital, and sought earnestly, but in vain, to induce him to give information against his protege.

"Tush, tush, Rene Dumas!" said the old man, "you are a lawyer. You are bred to regard human life with contempt. Let any man break a law, and you shout, 'Execute him!'"

"I!" cried Dumas, lifting up his hands and eyes: "venerable sage, how you misjudge me! I lament more than any one the severity of our code. I think the state never should take away life,--no, not even the life of a murderer. I agree with that young statesman,--Maximilien Robespierre,--that the executioner is the invention of the tyrant. My very attachment to our advancing revolution is, that it must sweep away this legal butchery."

The lawyer paused, out of breath. The stranger regarded him fixedly and turned pale.

"You change countenance, sir," said Dumas; "you do not agree with me."

"Pardon me, I was at that moment repressing a vague fear which seemed prophetic."

"And that--"

"Was that we should meet again, when your opinions on Death and the philosophy of Revolutions might be different."

"Never!"

"You enchant me, Cousin Rene," said the old man, who had listened to his relation with delight. "Ah, I see you have proper sentiments of justice and philanthropy. Why did I not seek to know you before? You admire the Revolution;--you, equally with me, detest the barbarity of kings and the fraud of priests?"

"Detest! How could I love mankind if I did not?"

"And," said the old man, hesitatingly, "you do not think, with this noble gentleman, that I erred in the precepts I instilled into that wretched man?"

"Erred! Was Socrates to blame if Alcibiades was an adulterer and a traitor?"

"You hear him, you hear him! But Socrates had also a Plato; henceforth you shall be a Plato to me. You hear him?" exclaimed the old man, turning to the stranger.

But the latter was at the threshold. Who shall argue with the most stubborn of all bigotries,--the fanaticism of unbelief?

"Are you going?" exclaimed Dumas, "and before I have thanked you, blessed you, for the life of this dear and venerable man? Oh, if ever I can repay you,--if ever you want the heart's blood of Rene Dumas!" Thus volubly delivering himself, he followed the stranger to the threshold of the second chamber, and there, gently detaining him, and after looking over his shoulder, to be sure that he was not heard by the owner, he whispered, "I ought to return to Nancy. One would

not lose one's time,--you don't think, sir, that that scoundrel took away ALL the old fool's money?"

"Was it thus Plato spoke of Socrates, Monsieur Dumas?"

"Ha, ha!--you are caustic. Well, you have a right. Sir, we shall meet again."

"AGAIN!" muttered the stranger, and his brow darkened. He hastened to his chamber; he passed the day and the night alone, and in studies, no matter of what nature,--they served to increase his gloom.

What could ever connect his fate with Rene Dumas, or the fugitive assassin? Why did the buoyant air of Paris seem to him heavy with the steams of blood; why did an instinct urge him to fly from those sparkling circles, from that focus of the world's awakened hopes, warning him from return?--he, whose lofty existence defied--but away these dreams and omens! He leaves France behind. Back, O Italy, to thy majestic wrecks! On the Alps his soul breathes the free air once more. Free air! Alas! let the world-healers exhaust their chemistry; man never shall be as free in the marketplace as on the mountain. But we, reader, we too escape from these scenes of false wisdom clothing godless crime. Away, once more

"In den heitern Regionen Wo die reinen Formen wohnen."

Away, to the loftier realm where the pure dwellers are. Unpolluted by the Actual, the Ideal lives only with Art and Beauty. Sweet Viola, by the shores of the blue Parthenope, by Virgil's tomb, and the Cimmerian cavern, we return to thee once more.

## CHAPTER 1.IX.

Che non vuol che 'l destrier piu vada in alto,  
Poi lo lega nel margine marino

A un verde mirto in mezzo un lauro E UN PINO.--"Orlando Furioso," c. vi. xxiii.

(As he did not wish that his charger (the hippogriff) should take any further excursions into the higher regions for the present, he bound him at the sea-shore to a green myrtle between a laurel and a pine.)

O Musician! art thou happy now? Thou art reinstated at thy stately desk,--thy faithful barbiton has its share in the triumph. It is thy masterpiece which fills thy ear; it is thy daughter who fills the scene,--the music, the actress, so united, that applause to one is applause to both. They make way for thee, at the orchestra,--they no longer jeer and wink, when, with a fierce fondness, thou dost caress thy Familiar, that plains, and wails, and chides, and growls, under thy remorseless hand. They understand now how irregular is ever the symmetry of real genius. The inequalities in its surface make the moon luminous to man. Giovanni Paisiello, Maestro di Capella, if thy gentle soul could know envy, thou must sicken to see thy Elfrida and thy Pirro laid aside, and all Naples turned fanatic to the Siren, at whose measures shook querulously thy gentle head! But thou, Paisiello, calm in the long prosperity of fame, knowest that the New will have its day, and comfortest thyself that the Elfrida and the Pirro will live forever. Perhaps a mistake, but it is by such mistakes that true genius conquers envy. "To be immortal," says Schiller, "live in the whole." To be superior to the hour, live in thy self-esteem. The audience now would give their ears for those variations and flights they were once wont to hiss. No!--Pisani has been two-thirds of a life at silent work on his masterpiece: there is nothing he can add to THAT, however he

might have sought to improve on the masterpieces of others. Is not this common? The least little critic, in reviewing some work of art, will say, "pity this, and pity that;" "this should have been altered,--that omitted." Yea, with his wiry fiddlestring will he creak out his accursed variations. But let him sit down and compose himself. He sees no improvement in variations THEN! Every man can control his fiddle when it is his own work with which its vagaries would play the devil.

And Viola is the idol, the theme of Naples. She is the spoiled sultana of the boards. To spoil her acting may be easy enough,-- shall they spoil her nature? No, I think not. There, at home, she is still good and simple; and there, under the awning by the doorway,--there she still sits, divinely musing. How often, crook-trunked tree, she looks to thy green boughs; how often, like thee, in her dreams, and fancies, does she struggle for the light,--not the light of the stage-lamps. Pooh, child! be contented with the lamps, even with the rush-lights. A farthing candle is more convenient for household purposes than the stars.

Weeks passed, and the stranger did not reappear; months had passed, and his prophecy of sorrow was not yet fulfilled. One evening Pisani was taken ill. His success had brought on the long-neglected composer pressing applications for concerti and sonata, adapted to his more peculiar science on the violin. He had been employed for some weeks, day and night, on a piece in which he hoped to excel himself. He took, as usual, one of those seemingly impracticable subjects which it was his pride to subject to the expressive powers of his art,--the terrible legend connected with the transformation of Philomel. The pantomime of sound opened with the gay merriment of a feast. The monarch of Thrace is at his banquet; a sudden discord brays through the joyous notes,--the string seems to screech with horror. The king learns the murder of his son by the hands of the avenging sisters. Swift rage the chords, through the passions of fear, of horror, of fury, and dismay. The father pursues the sisters. Hark! what changes the dread--the discord--into that long, silvery, mournful music? The transformation is completed; and Philomel, now the nightingale, pours from the myrtle-bough the full, liquid, subduing notes that are to tell evermore to the world the history of her woes and wrongs. Now, it was in the midst of this complicated and difficult attempt that the health of the over-tasked musician, excited alike by past triumph and new ambition, suddenly gave way. He was taken ill at night. The next morning the doctor pronounced that his disease was a malignant and infectious fever. His wife and Viola shared in their tender watch; but soon that task was left to the last alone. The Signora Pisani caught the infection, and in a few hours was even in a state more alarming than that of her husband. The Neapolitans, in common with the inhabitants of all warm climates, are apt to become selfish and brutal in their dread of infectious disorders. Gionetta herself pretended to be ill, to avoid the sick-chamber. The whole labour of love and sorrow fell on Viola. It was a terrible trial,--I am willing to hurry over the details. The wife died first!

One day, a little before sunset, Pisani woke partially recovered from the delirium which had preyed upon him, with few intervals, since the second day of the disease; and casting about him his dizzy and feeble eyes, he recognised Viola, and smiled. He faltered her name as he rose and stretched his arms. She fell upon his breast, and strove to suppress her tears.

"Thy mother?" he said. "Does she sleep?"

"She sleeps,--ah, yes!" and the tears gushed forth.

"I thought--eh! I know not WHAT I have thought. But do not weep: I shall be well now,--quite well. She will come to me when she wakes,--will she?"

Viola could not speak; but she busied herself in pouring forth an anodyne, which she had been directed to give the sufferer as soon as the delirium should cease. The doctor had told her, too, to send for him the instant so important a change should occur.

She went to the door and called to the woman who, during Gionetta's pretended illness, had been induced to supply her place; but the hireling answered not. She flew through the chambers to search for her in vain,--the hireling had caught Gionetta's fears, and vanished. What was to be done? The case was urgent,--the doctor had declared not a moment should be lost in obtaining his attendance; she must leave her father,--she must go herself! She crept back into the room,--the anodyne seemed already to have taken benign effect; the patient's eyes were closed, and he breathed regularly, as in sleep. She stole away, threw her veil over her face, and hurried from the house.

Now the anodyne had not produced the effect which it appeared to have done; instead of healthful sleep, it had brought on a kind of light-headed somnolence, in which the mind, preternaturally restless, wandered about its accustomed haunts, waking up its old familiar instincts and inclinations. It was not sleep,--it was not delirium; it was the dream-wakefulness which opium sometimes induces, when every nerve grows tremulously alive, and creates a corresponding activity in the frame, to which it gives a false and hectic vigour. Pisani missed something,--what, he scarcely knew; it was a combination of the two wants most essential to his mental life,--the voice of his wife, the touch of his Familiar. He rose,--he left his bed, he leisurely put on his old dressing-robe, in which he had been wont to compose. He smiled complacently as the associations connected with the garment came over his memory; he walked tremulously across the room, and entered the small cabinet next to his chamber, in which his wife had been accustomed more often to watch than sleep, when illness separated her from his side. The room was desolate and void. He looked round wistfully, and muttered to himself, and then proceeded regularly, and with a noiseless step, through the chambers of the silent house, one by one.

He came at last to that in which old Gionetta--faithful to her own safety, if nothing else--nursed herself, in the remotest corner of the house, from the danger of infection. As he glided in,--wan, emaciated, with an uneasy, anxious, searching look in his haggard eyes,--the old woman shrieked aloud, and fell at his feet. He bent over her, passed his thin hands along her averted face, shook his head, and said in a hollow voice,--

"I cannot find them; where are they?"

"Who, dear master? Oh, have compassion on yourself; they are not here. Blessed saints! this is terrible; he has touched me; I am dead!"

"Dead! who is dead? Is any one dead?"

"Ah! don't talk so; you must know it well: my poor mistress,-- she caught the fever from you; it is infectious enough to kill a whole city. San Gennaro protect me! My poor mistress, she is dead,--buried, too; and I, your faithful Gionetta, woe is me! Go, go--to--to bed again, dearest master,--go!"

The poor musician stood for one moment mute and unmoving, then a slight shiver ran through his frame; he turned and glided back, silent and spectre-like, as he had entered. He came into the room where he had been accustomed to compose,--where his wife, in her sweet patience, had so often sat by his side, and praised and flattered when the world had but jeered and scorned. In one corner he found the laurel-wreath she had placed on his brows that happy night of fame and triumph; and near it, half hid by her mantilla, lay in its case the neglected instrument.

Viola was not long gone: she had found the physician; she returned with him; and as they gained the threshold, they heard a strain of music from within,--a strain of piercing, heart-

rending anguish. It was not like some senseless instrument, mechanical in its obedience to a human hand,--it was as some spirit calling, in wail and agony from the forlorn shades, to the angels it beheld afar beyond the Eternal Gulf. They exchanged glances of dismay. They hurried into the house; they hastened into the room. Pisani turned, and his look, full of ghastly intelligence and stern command, awed them back. The black mantilla, the faded laurel-leaf, lay there before him. Viola's heart guessed all at a single glance; she sprung to his knees; she clasped them,-- "Father, father, I am left thee still!"

The wail ceased,--the note changed; with a confused association-- half of the man, half of the artist--the anguish, still a melody, was connected with sweeter sounds and thoughts. The nightingale had escaped the pursuit,--soft, airy, bird-like, thrilled the delicious notes a moment, and then died away. The instrument fell to the floor, and its chords snapped. You heard that sound through the silence. The artist looked on his kneeling child, and then on the broken chords..."Bury me by her side," he said, in a very calm, low voice; "and THAT by mine." And with these words his whole frame became rigid, as if turned to stone. The last change passed over his face. He fell to the ground, sudden and heavy. The chords THERE, too,--the chords of the human instrument were snapped asunder. As he fell, his robe brushed the laurel-wreath, and that fell also, near but not in reach of the dead man's nerveless hand.

Broken instrument, broken heart, withered laurel-wreath!--the setting sun through the vine-clad lattice streamed on all! So smiles the eternal Nature on the wrecks of all that make life glorious! And not a sun that sets not somewhere on the silenced music,--on the faded laurel!

## CHAPTER 1.X.

Che difesa miglior ch' usbergo e scudo,

E la santa innocenza al petto ignudo!--"Ger. Lib.," c. viii. xli.

(Better defence than shield or breastplate is holy innocence to the naked breast.)

And they buried the musician and his barbiton together, in the same coffin. That famous Steiner--primeval Titan of the great Tyrolese race--often hast thou sought to scale the heavens, and therefore must thou, like the meaner children of men, descend to the dismal Hades! Harder fate for thee than thy mortal master. For THY soul sleeps with thee in the coffin. And the music that belongs to HIS, separate from the instrument, ascends on high, to be heard often by a daughter's pious ears when the heaven is serene and the earth sad. For there is a sense of hearing that the vulgar know not. And the voices of the dead breathe soft and frequent to those who can unite the memory with the faith.

And now Viola is alone in the world,--alone in the home where loneliness had seemed from the cradle a thing that was not of nature. And at first the solitude and the stillness were insupportable. Have you, ye mourners, to whom these sibyl leaves, weird with many a dark enigma, shall be borne, have you not felt that when the death of some best-loved one has made the hearth desolate,--have you not felt as if the gloom of the altered home was too heavy for thought to bear?--you would leave it, though a palace, even for a cabin. And yet,--sad to say,--when you obey the impulse, when you fly from the walls, when in the strange place in which you seek your refuge nothing speaks to you of the lost, have ye not felt again a yearning for that very food to memory which was just before but bitterness and gall? Is it not almost impious and

profane to abandon that dear hearth to strangers? And the desertion of the home where your parents dwelt, and blessed you, upbraids your conscience as if you had sold their tombs.

Beautiful was the Etruscan superstition that the ancestors become the household gods. Deaf is the heart to which the Lares call from the desolate floors in vain. At first Viola had, in her intolerable anguish, gratefully welcomed the refuge which the house and family of a kindly neighbour, much attached to her father, and who was one of the orchestra that Pisani shall perplex no more, had proffered to the orphan. But the company of the unfamiliar in our grief, the consolation of the stranger, how it irritates the wound! And then, to hear elsewhere the name of father, mother, child,--as if death came alone to you,--to see elsewhere the calm regularity of those lives united in love and order, keeping account of happy hours, the unbroken timepiece of home, as if nowhere else the wheels were arrested, the chain shattered, the hands motionless, the chime still! No, the grave itself does not remind us of our loss like the company of those who have no loss to mourn. Go back to thy solitude, young orphan,--go back to thy home: the sorrow that meets thee on the threshold can greet thee, even in its sadness, like the smile upon the face of the dead. And there, from thy casement, and there, from without thy door, thou seest still the tree, solitary as thyself, and springing from the clefts of the rock, but forcing its way to light,--as, through all sorrow, while the seasons yet can renew the verdure and bloom of youth, strives the instinct of the human heart! Only when the sap is dried up, only when age comes on, does the sun shine in vain for man and for the tree.

Weeks and months--months sad and many--again passed, and Naples will not longer suffer its idol to seclude itself from homage. The world ever plucks us back from ourselves with a thousand arms. And again Viola's voice is heard upon the stage, which, mystically faithful to life, is in nought more faithful than this, that it is the appearances that fill the scene; and we pause not to ask of what realities they are the proxies. When the actor of Athens moved all hearts as he clasped the burial urn, and burst into broken sobs; how few, there, knew that it held the ashes of his son! Gold, as well as fame, was showered upon the young actress; but she still kept to her simple mode of life, to her lowly home, to the one servant whose faults, selfish as they were, Viola was too inexperienced to perceive. And it was Gionetta who had placed her when first born in her father's arms! She was surrounded by every snare, wooed by every solicitation that could beset her unguarded beauty and her dangerous calling. But her modest virtue passed unsullied through them all. It is true that she had been taught by lips now mute the maiden duties enjoined by honour and religion. And all love that spoke not of the altar only shocked and repelled her. But besides that, as grief and solitude ripened her heart, and made her tremble at times to think how deeply it could feel, her vague and early visions shaped themselves into an ideal of love. And till the ideal is found, how the shadow that it throws before it chills us to the actual! With that ideal, ever and ever, unconsciously, and with a certain awe and shrinking, came the shape and voice of the warning stranger. Nearly two years had passed since he had appeared at Naples. Nothing had been heard of him, save that his vessel had been directed, some months after his departure, to sail for Leghorn. By the gossips of Naples, his existence, supposed so extraordinary, was wellnigh forgotten; but the heart of Viola was more faithful. Often he glided through her dreams, and when the wind sighed through that fantastic tree, associated with his remembrance, she started with a tremor and a blush, as if she had heard him speak.

But amongst the train of her suitors was one to whom she listened more gently than to the rest; partly because, perhaps, he spoke in her mother's native tongue; partly because in his diffidence there was little to alarm and displease; partly because his rank, nearer to her own than that of

lordlier wooers, prevented his admiration from appearing insult; partly because he himself, eloquent and a dreamer, often uttered thoughts that were kindred to those buried deepest in her mind. She began to like, perhaps to love him, but as a sister loves; a sort of privileged familiarity sprung up between them. If in the Englishman's breast arose wild and unworthy hopes, he had not yet expressed them. Is there danger to thee here, lone Viola, or is the danger greater in thy unfound ideal?

And now, as the overture to some strange and wizard spectacle, closes this opening prelude. Wilt thou hear more? Come with thy faith prepared. I ask not the blinded eyes, but the awakened sense. As the enchanted Isle, remote from the homes of men,--

“Ove alcun legno Rado, o non mai va dalle nostre sponde,”-- “Ger.Lib.,” cant. xiv. 69.

(Where ship seldom or never comes from our coasts.)

is the space in the weary ocean of actual life to which the Muse or Sibyl (ancient in years, but ever young in aspect), offers thee no unhallowed sail,--

“Quinci ella in cima a una montagna ascende Disabitata, e d' ombre oscura e bruna; E par incanto a lei nevole rende Le spalle e i fianchi; e senza neve alcuna Gli lascia il capo verdeggiante e vago; E vi fonda un palagio appresso un lago.”

(There, she a mountain's lofty peak ascends, Unpeopled, shady, shagg'd with forests brown, Whose sides, by power of magic, half-way down She heaps with slippery ice and frost and snow, But sunshiny and verdant leaves the crown With orange-woods and myrtles,--speaks, and lo! Rich from the bordering lake a palace rises slow. Wiffin's “Translation.”