

BOOK II.
ART, LOVE, AND WONDER.

Diversi aspetti in un confusi e misti.--“Ger. Lib,” cant. iv. 7.
(Different appearances, confused and mixt in one.)

CHAPTER 2.I.

Centauri, e Sfingi, e pallide Gorgoni.--“Ger. Lib.,” c. iv. v.
(Centauri and Sphinxes and pallid Gorgons.)

One moonlit night, in the Gardens at Naples, some four or five gentleman were seated under a tree, drinking their sherbet, and listening, in the intervals of conversation, to the music which enlivened that gay and favourite resort of an indolent population. One of this little party was a young Englishman, who had been the life of the whole group, but who, for the last few moments, had sunk into a gloomy and abstracted reverie. One of his countrymen observed this sudden gloom, and, tapping him on the back, said, “What ails you, Glyndon? Are you ill? You have grown quite pale,--you tremble. Is it a sudden chill? You had better go home: these Italian nights are often dangerous to our English constitutions.”

“No, I am well now; it was a passing shudder. I cannot account for it myself.”

A man, apparently of about thirty years of age, and of a mien and countenance strikingly superior to those around him, turned abruptly, and looked steadfastly at Glyndon.

“I think I understand what you mean,” said he; “and perhaps,” he added, with a grave smile, “I could explain it better than yourself.” Here, turning to the others, he added, “You must often have felt, gentlemen, each and all of you, especially when sitting alone at night, a strange and unaccountable sensation of coldness and awe creep over you; your blood curdles, and the heart stands still; the limbs shiver; the hair bristles; you are afraid to look up, to turn your eyes to the darker corners of the room; you have a horrible fancy that something unearthly is at hand; presently the whole spell, if I may so call it, passes away, and you are ready to laugh at your own weakness. Have you not often felt what I have thus imperfectly described?--if so, you can understand what our young friend has just experienced, even amidst the delights of this magical scene, and amidst the balmy whispers of a July night.”

“Sir,” replied Glyndon, evidently much surprised, “you have defined exactly the nature of that shudder which came over me. But how could my manner be so faithful an index to my impressions?”

“I know the signs of the visitation,” returned the stranger, gravely; “they are not to be mistaken by one of my experience.”

All the gentleman present then declared that they could comprehend, and had felt, what the stranger had described.

“According to one of our national superstitions,” said Mervale, the Englishman who had first addressed Glyndon, “the moment you so feel your blood creep, and your hair stand on end, some one is walking over the spot which shall be your grave.”

“There are in all lands different superstitions to account for so common an occurrence,” replied the stranger: “one sect among the Arabians holds that at that instant God is deciding the hour

either of your death, or of some one dear to you. The African savage, whose imagination is darkened by the hideous rites of his gloomy idolatry, believes that the Evil Spirit is pulling you towards him by the hair: so do the Grotesque and the Terrible mingle with each other.”

“It is evidently a mere physical accident,—a derangement of the stomach, a chill of the blood,” said a young Neapolitan, with whom Glyndon had formed a slight acquaintance.

“Then why is it always coupled in all nations with some superstitious presentiment or terror,—some connection between the material frame and the supposed world without us? For my part, I think—”

“Ay, what do you think, sir?” asked Glyndon, curiously.

“I think,” continued the stranger, “that it is the repugnance and horror with which our more human elements recoil from something, indeed, invisible, but antipathetic to our own nature; and from a knowledge of which we are happily secured by the imperfection of our senses.”

“You are a believer in spirits, then?” said Mervale, with an incredulous smile.

“Nay, it was not precisely of spirits that I spoke; but there may be forms of matter as invisible and impalpable to us as the animalculae in the air we breathe,—in the water that plays in yonder basin. Such beings may have passions and powers like our own—as the animalculae to which I have compared them. The monster that lives and dies in a drop of water—carnivorous, insatiable, subsisting on the creatures minuter than himself—is not less deadly in his wrath, less ferocious in his nature, than the tiger of the desert. There may be things around us that would be dangerous and hostile to men, if Providence had not placed a wall between them and us, merely by different modifications of matter.”

“And think you that wall never can be removed?” asked young Glyndon, abruptly. “Are the traditions of sorcerer and wizard, universal and immemorial as they are, merely fables?”

“Perhaps yes,—perhaps no,” answered the stranger, indifferently. “But who, in an age in which the reason has chosen its proper bounds, would be mad enough to break the partition that divides him from the boa and the lion,—to repine at and rebel against the law which confines the shark to the great deep? Enough of these idle speculations.”

Here the stranger rose, summoned the attendant, paid for his sherbet, and, bowing slightly to the company, soon disappeared among the trees.

“Who is that gentleman?” asked Glyndon, eagerly.

The rest looked at each other, without replying, for some moments.

“I never saw him before,” said Mervale, at last.

“Nor I.”

“Nor I.”

“I know him well,” said the Neapolitan, who was, indeed, the Count Cetoxa. “If you remember, it was as my companion that he joined you. He visited Naples about two years ago, and has recently returned; he is very rich,—indeed, enormously so. A most agreeable person. I am sorry to hear him talk so strangely to-night; it serves to encourage the various foolish reports that are circulated concerning him.”

“And surely,” said another Neapolitan, “the circumstance that occurred but the other day, so well known to yourself, Cetoxa, justifies the reports you pretend to deprecate.”

“Myself and my countryman,” said Glyndon, “mix so little in Neapolitan society, that we lose much that appears well worthy of lively interest. May I enquire what are the reports, and what is the circumstance you refer to?”

“As to the reports, gentlemen,” said Cetoxa, courteously, addressing himself to the two Englishmen, “it may suffice to observe, that they attribute to the Signor Zanoni certain qualities

which everybody desires for himself, but damns any one else for possessing. The incident Signor Belgioso alludes to, illustrates these qualities, and is, I must own, somewhat startling. You probably play, gentlemen?" (Here Cetoxa paused; and as both Englishmen had occasionally staked a few scudi at the public gaming-tables, they bowed assent to the conjecture.) Cetoxa continued. "Well, then, not many days since, and on the very day that Zaroni returned to Naples, it so happened that I had been playing pretty high, and had lost considerably. I rose from the table, resolved no longer to tempt fortune, when I suddenly perceived Zaroni, whose acquaintance I had before made (and who, I may say, was under some slight obligation to me), standing by, a spectator. Ere I could express my gratification at this unexpected recognition, he laid his hand on my arm. 'You have lost much,' said he; 'more than you can afford. For my part, I dislike play; yet I wish to have some interest in what is going on. Will you play this sum for me? the risk is mine,--the half profits yours.' I was startled, as you may suppose, at such an address; but Zaroni had an air and tone with him it was impossible to resist; besides, I was burning to recover my losses, and should not have risen had I had any money left about me. I told him I would accept his offer, provided we shared the risk as well as profits. 'As you will,' said he, smiling; 'we need have no scruple, for you will be sure to win.' I sat down; Zaroni stood behind me; my luck rose,--I invariably won. In fact, I rose from the table a rich man."

"There can be no foul play at the public tables, especially when foul play would make against the bank?" This question was put by Glyndon.

"Certainly not," replied the count. "But our good fortune was, indeed, marvellous,--so extraordinary that a Sicilian (the Sicilians are all ill-bred, bad-tempered fellows) grew angry and insolent. 'Sir,' said he, turning to my new friend, 'you have no business to stand so near to the table. I do not understand this; you have not acted fairly.' Zaroni replied, with great composure, that he had done nothing against the rules,--that he was very sorry that one man could not win without another man losing; and that he could not act unfairly, even if disposed to do so. The Sicilian took the stranger's mildness for apprehension, and blustered more loudly. In fact, he rose from the table, and confronted Zaroni in a manner that, to say the least of it, was provoking to any gentleman who has some quickness of temper, or some skill with the small-sword."

"And," interrupted Belgioso, "the most singular part of the whole to me was, that this Zaroni, who stood opposite to where I sat, and whose face I distinctly saw, made no remark, showed no resentment. He fixed his eyes steadfastly on the Sicilian; never shall I forget that look! it is impossible to describe it,--it froze the blood in my veins. The Sicilian staggered back as if struck. I saw him tremble; he sank on the bench. And then--"

"Yes, then," said Cetoxa, "to my infinite surprise, our gentleman, thus disarmed by a look from Zaroni, turned his whole anger upon me, THE -- but perhaps you do not know, gentlemen, that I have some repute with my weapon?"

"The best swordsman in Italy," said Belgioso.

"Before I could guess why or wherefore," resumed Cetoxa, "I found myself in the garden behind the house, with Ughelli (that was the Sicilian's name) facing me, and five or six gentlemen, the witnesses of the duel about to take place, around. Zaroni beckoned me aside. 'This man will fall,' said he. 'When he is on the ground, go to him, and ask whether he will be buried by the side of his father in the church of San Gennaro?' 'Do you then know his family?' I asked with great surprise. Zaroni made me no answer, and the next moment I was engaged with the Sicilian. To do him justice, his imbrogliato was magnificent, and a swifter lounge never crossed a sword; nevertheless," added Cetoxa, with a pleasing modesty, "he was run through the body. I went up to him; he could scarcely speak. 'Have you any request to make,--any affairs to

settle?' He shook his head. 'Where would you wish to be interred?' He pointed towards the Sicilian coast. 'What!' said I, in surprise, 'NOT by the side of your father, in the church of San Gennaro?' As I spoke, his face altered terribly; he uttered a piercing shriek,--the blood gushed from his mouth, and he fell dead. The most strange part of the story is to come. We buried him in the church of San Gennaro. In doing so, we took up his father's coffin; the lid came off in moving it, and the skeleton was visible. In the hollow of the skull we found a very slender wire of sharp steel; this caused surprise and inquiry. The father, who was rich and a miser, had died suddenly, and been buried in haste, owing, it was said, to the heat of the weather. Suspicion once awakened, the examination became minute. The old man's servant was questioned, and at last confessed that the son had murdered the sire. The contrivance was ingenious: the wire was so slender that it pierced to the brain, and drew but one drop of blood, which the grey hairs concealed. The accomplice will be executed."

"And Zanoni,--did he give evidence, did he account for--"

"No," interrupted the count: "he declared that he had by accident visited the church that morning; that he had observed the tombstone of the Count Ughelli; that his guide had told him the count's son was in Naples,--a spendthrift and a gambler. While we were at play, he had heard the count mentioned by name at the table; and when the challenge was given and accepted, it had occurred to him to name the place of burial, by an instinct which he either could not or would not account for."

"A very lame story," said Mervale.

"Yes! but we Italians are superstitious,--the alleged instinct was regarded by many as the whisper of Providence. The next day the stranger became an object of universal interest and curiosity. His wealth, his manner of living, his extraordinary personal beauty, have assisted also to make him the rage; besides, I have had the pleasure in introducing so eminent a person to our gayest cavaliers and our fairest ladies."

"A most interesting narrative," said Mervale, rising. "Come, Glyndon; shall we seek our hotel? It is almost daylight. Adieu, signor!"

"What think you of this story?" said Glyndon, as the young men walked homeward.

"Why, it is very clear that this Zanoni is some imposter,--some clever rogue; and the Neapolitan shares the booty, and puffs him off with all the hackneyed charlatanism of the marvellous. An unknown adventurer gets into society by being made an object of awe and curiosity; he is more than ordinarily handsome, and the women are quite content to receive him without any other recommendation than his own face and Cetoxa's fables."

"I cannot agree with you. Cetoxa, though a gambler and a rake, is a nobleman of birth and high repute for courage and honour. Besides, this stranger, with his noble presence and lofty air,--so calm, so unobtrusive,--has nothing in common with the forward garrulity of an imposter."

"My dear Glyndon, pardon me; but you have not yet acquired any knowledge of the world! The stranger makes the best of a fine person, and his grand air is but a trick of the trade. But to change the subject,--how advances the love affair?"

"Oh, Viola could not see me to-day."

"You must not marry her. What would they all say at home?"

"Let us enjoy the present," said Glyndon, with vivacity; "we are young, rich, good-looking; let us not think of to-morrow."

"Bravo, Glyndon! Here we are at the hotel. Sleep sound, and don't dream of Signor Zanoni."

CHAPTER 2.II.

Prende, giovine audace e impaziente,
L'occasione offerta avidamente.--"Ger. Lib.," c. vi. xxix.
(Take, youth, bold and impatient, the offered occasion eagerly.)

Clarence Glyndon was a young man of fortune, not large, but easy and independent. His parents were dead, and his nearest relation was an only sister, left in England under the care of her aunt, and many years younger than himself. Early in life he had evinced considerable promise in the art of painting, and rather from enthusiasm than any pecuniary necessity for a profession, he determined to devote himself to a career in which the English artist generally commences with rapture and historical composition, to conclude with avaricious calculation and portraits of Alderman Simpkins. Glyndon was supposed by his friends to possess no inconsiderable genius; but it was of a rash and presumptuous order. He was averse from continuous and steady labour, and his ambition rather sought to gather the fruit than to plant the tree. In common with many artists in their youth, he was fond of pleasure and excitement, yielding with little forethought to whatever impressed his fancy or appealed to his passions. He had travelled through the more celebrated cities of Europe, with the avowed purpose and sincere resolution of studying the divine masterpieces of his art. But in each, pleasure had too often allured him from ambition, and living beauty distracted his worship from the senseless canvas. Brave, adventurous, vain, restless, inquisitive, he was ever involved in wild projects and pleasant dangers,--the creature of impulse and the slave of imagination.

It was then the period when a feverish spirit of change was working its way to that hideous mockery of human aspirations, the Revolution of France; and from the chaos into which were already jarring the sanctities of the World's Venerable Belief, arose many shapeless and unformed chimeras. Need I remind the reader that, while that was the day for polished scepticism and affected wisdom, it was the day also for the most egregious credulity and the most mystical superstitions,--the day in which magnetism and magic found converts amongst the disciples of Diderot; when prophecies were current in every mouth; when the salon of a philosophical deist was converted into an Heraclea, in which necromancy professed to conjure up the shadows of the dead; when the Crosier and the Book were ridiculed, and Mesmer and Cagliostro were believed. In that Heliacal Rising, heralding the new sun before which all vapours were to vanish, stalked from their graves in the feudal ages all the phantoms that had flitted before the eyes of Paracelsus and Agrippa. Dazzled by the dawn of the Revolution, Glyndon was yet more attracted by its strange accompaniments; and natural it was with him, as with others, that the fancy which ran riot amidst the hopes of a social Utopia, should grasp with avidity all that promised, out of the dusty tracks of the beaten science, the bold discoveries of some marvellous Elysium.

In his travels he had listened with vivid interest, at least, if not with implicit belief, to the wonders told of each more renowned Ghost-seer, and his mind was therefore prepared for the impression which the mysterious Zanoni at first sight had produced upon it.

There might be another cause for this disposition to credulity. A remote ancestor of Glyndon's on the mother's side, had achieved no inconsiderable reputation as a philosopher and alchemist. Strange stories were afloat concerning this wise progenitor. He was said to have lived to an age far exceeding the allotted boundaries of mortal existence, and to have preserved to the last the

appearance of middle life. He had died at length, it was supposed, of grief for the sudden death of a great-grandchild, the only creature he had ever appeared to love. The works of this philosopher, though rare, were extant, and found in the library of Glyndon's home. Their Platonic mysticism, their bold assertions, the high promises that might be detected through their figurative and typical phraseology, had early made a deep impression on the young imagination of Clarence Glyndon. His parents, not alive to the consequences of encouraging fancies which the very enlightenment of the age appeared to them sufficient to prevent or dispel, were fond, in the long winter nights, of conversing on the traditional history of this distinguished progenitor. And Clarence thrilled with a fearful pleasure when his mother playfully detected a striking likeness between the features of the young heir and the faded portrait of the alchemist that overhung their mantelpiece, and was the boast of their household and the admiration of their friends,--the child is, indeed, more often than we think for, "the father of the man."

I have said that Glyndon was fond of pleasure. Facile, as genius ever must be, to cheerful impression, his careless artist-life, ere artist-life settles down to labour, had wandered from flower to flower. He had enjoyed, almost to the reaction of satiety, the gay revelries of Naples, when he fell in love with the face and voice of Viola Pisani. But his love, like his ambition, was vague and desultory. It did not satisfy his whole heart and fill up his whole nature; not from want of strong and noble passions, but because his mind was not yet matured and settled enough for their development. As there is one season for the blossom, another for the fruit; so it is not till the bloom of fancy begins to fade, that the heart ripens to the passions that the bloom precedes and foretells. Joyous alike at his lonely easel or amidst his boon companions, he had not yet known enough of sorrow to love deeply. For man must be disappointed with the lesser things of life before he can comprehend the full value of the greatest. It is the shallow sensualists of France, who, in their salon-language, call love "a folly,"--love, better understood, is wisdom. Besides, the world was too much with Clarence Glyndon. His ambition of art was associated with the applause and estimation of that miserable minority of the surface that we call the Public.

Like those who deceive, he was ever fearful of being himself the dupe. He distrusted the sweet innocence of Viola. He could not venture the hazard of seriously proposing marriage to an Italian actress; but the modest dignity of the girl, and something good and generous in his own nature, had hitherto made him shrink from any more worldly but less honourable designs. Thus the familiarity between them seemed rather that of kindness and regard than passion. He attended the theatre; he stole behind the scenes to converse with her; he filled his portfolio with countless sketches of a beauty that charmed him as an artist as well as lover; and day after day he floated on through a changing sea of doubt and irresolution, of affection and distrust. The last, indeed, constantly sustained against his better reason by the sober admonitions of Mervale, a matter-of-fact man!

The day following that eve on which this section of my story opens, Glyndon was riding alone by the shores of the Neapolitan sea, on the other side of the Cavern of Posilipo. It was past noon; the sun had lost its early fervour, and a cool breeze sprung up voluptuously from the sparkling sea. Bending over a fragment of stone near the roadside, he perceived the form of a man; and when he approached, he recognised Zanoni.

The Englishman saluted him courteously. "Have you discovered some antique?" said he, with a smile; "they are common as pebbles on this road."

“No,” replied Zanoni; “it was but one of those antiques that have their date, indeed, from the beginning of the world, but which Nature eternally withers and renews.” So saying, he showed Glyndon a small herb with a pale-blue flower, and then placed it carefully in his bosom.

“You are an herbalist?”

“I am.”

“It is, I am told, a study full of interest.”

“To those who understand it, doubtless.”

“Is the knowledge, then, so rare?”

“Rare! The deeper knowledge is perhaps rather, among the arts, LOST to the modern philosophy of commonplace and surface! Do you imagine there was no foundation for those traditions which come dimly down from remoter ages,—as shells now found on the mountain-tops inform us where the seas have been? What was the old Colchian magic, but the minute study of Nature in her lowliest works? What the fable of Medea, but a proof of the powers that may be extracted from the germ and leaf? The most gifted of all the Priestcrafts, the mysterious sisterhoods of Cuth, concerning whose incantations Learning vainly bewilders itself amidst the maze of legends, sought in the meanest herbs what, perhaps, the Babylonian Sages explored in vain amidst the loftiest stars. Tradition yet tells you that there existed a race (“Plut. Symp.” l. 5. c. 7.) who could slay their enemies from afar, without weapon, without movement. The herb that ye tread on may have deadlier powers than your engineers can give to their mightiest instruments of war. Can you guess that to these Italian shores, to the old Circean Promontory, came the Wise from the farthest East, to search for plants and simples which your Pharmacists of the Counter would fling from them as weeds? The first herbalists—the master chemists of the world—were the tribe that the ancient reverence called by the name of Titans. (Syncellus, page 14.—“Chemistry the Invention of the Giants.”) I remember once, by the Hebrus, in the reign of — But this talk,” said Zanoni, checking himself abruptly, and with a cold smile, “serves only to waste your time and my own.” He paused, looked steadily at Glyndon, and continued, “Young man, think you that vague curiosity will supply the place of earnest labour? I read your heart. You wish to know me, and not this humble herb: but pass on; your desire cannot be satisfied.”

“You have not the politeness of your countrymen,” said Glyndon, somewhat discomposed. “Suppose I were desirous to cultivate your acquaintance, why should you reject my advances?”

“I reject no man’s advances,” answered Zanoni; “I must know them if they so desire; but ME, in return, they can never comprehend. If you ask my acquaintance, it is yours; but I would warn you to shun me.”

“And why are you, then, so dangerous?”

“On this earth, men are often, without their own agency, fated to be dangerous to others. If I were to predict your fortune by the vain calculations of the astrologer, I should tell you, in their despicable jargon, that my planet sat darkly in your house of life. Cross me not, if you can avoid it. I warn you now for the first time and last.”

“You despise the astrologers, yet you utter a jargon as mysterious as theirs. I neither gamble nor quarrel; why, then, should I fear you?”

“As you will; I have done.”

“Let me speak frankly,—your conversation last night interested and perplexed me.”

“I know it: minds like yours are attracted by mystery.”

Glyndon was piqued at these words, though in the tone in which they were spoken there was no contempt.

“I see you do not consider me worthy of your friendship. Be it so. Good-day!”

Zanoni coldly replied to the salutation; and as the Englishman rode on, returned to his botanical employment.

The same night, Glyndon went, as usual, to the theatre. He was standing behind the scenes watching Viola, who was on the stage in one of her most brilliant parts. The house resounded with applause. Glyndon was transported with a young man's passion and a young man's pride: "This glorious creature," thought he, "may yet be mine."

He felt, while thus wrapped in delicious reverie, a slight touch upon his shoulder; he turned, and beheld Zanoni. "You are in danger," said the latter. "Do not walk home to-night; or if you do, go not alone."

Before Glyndon recovered from his surprise, Zanoni disappeared; and when the Englishman saw him again, he was in the box of one of the Neapolitan nobles, where Glyndon could not follow him.

Viola now left the stage, and Glyndon accosted her with an unaccustomed warmth of gallantry. But Viola, contrary to her gentle habit, turned with an evident impatience from the address of her lover. Taking aside Gionetta, who was her constant attendant at the theatre, she said, in an earnest whisper,--

"Oh, Gionetta! He is here again!--the stranger of whom I spoke to thee!--and again, he alone, of the whole theatre, withholds from me his applause."

"Which is he, my darling?" said the old woman, with fondness in her voice. "He must indeed be dull--not worth a thought."

The actress drew Gionetta nearer to the stage, and pointed out to her a man in one of the boxes, conspicuous amongst all else by the simplicity of his dress, and the extraordinary beauty of his features.

"Not worth a thought, Gionetta!" repeated Viola,--"Not worth a thought! Alas, not to think of him, seems the absence of thought itself!"

The prompter summoned the Signora Pisani. "Find out his name, Gionetta," said she, moving slowly to the stage, and passing by Glyndon, who gazed at her with a look of sorrowful reproach.

The scene on which the actress now entered was that of the final catastrophe, wherein all her remarkable powers of voice and art were pre-eminently called forth. The house hung on every word with breathless worship; but the eyes of Viola sought only those of one calm and unmoved spectator; she exerted herself as if inspired. Zanoni listened, and observed her with an attentive gaze, but no approval escaped his lips; no emotion changed the expression of his cold and half-disdainful aspect. Viola, who was in the character of one who loved, but without return, never felt so acutely the part she played. Her tears were truthful; her passion that of nature: it was almost too terrible to behold. She was borne from the stage exhausted and insensible, amidst such a tempest of admiring rapture as Continental audiences alone can raise. The crowd stood up, handkerchiefs waved, garlands and flowers were thrown on the stage,--men wiped their eyes, and women sobbed aloud.

"By heavens!" said a Neapolitan of great rank, "She has fired me beyond endurance. To-night--this very night--she shall be mine! You have arranged all, Mascari?"

"All, signor. And the young Englishman?"

"The presuming barbarian! As I before told thee, let him bleed for his folly. I will have no rival."

"But an Englishman! There is always a search after the bodies of the English."

"Fool! is not the sea deep enough, or the earth secret enough, to hide one dead man? Our ruffians are silent as the grave itself; and I!--who would dare to suspect, to arraign the Prince di -

-? See to it,--this night. I trust him to you. Robbers murder him, you understand,--the country swarms with them; plunder and strip him, the better to favour such report. Take three men; the rest shall be my escort.”

Mascari shrugged his shoulders, and bowed submissively.

The streets of Naples were not then so safe as now, and carriages were both less expensive and more necessary. The vehicle which was regularly engaged by the young actress was not to be found. Gionetta, too aware of the beauty of her mistress and the number of her admirers to contemplate without alarm the idea of their return on foot, communicated her distress to Glyndon, and he besought Viola, who recovered but slowly, to accept his own carriage. Perhaps before that night she would not have rejected so slight a service. Now, for some reason or other, she refused. Glyndon, offended, was retiring sullenly, when Gionetta stopped him. “Stay, signor,” said she, coaxingly: “the dear signora is not well,--do not be angry with her; I will make her accept your offer.”

Glyndon stayed, and after a few moments spent in expostulation on the part of Gionetta, and resistance on that of Viola, the offer was accepted. Gionetta and her charge entered the carriage, and Glyndon was left at the door of the theatre to return home on foot. The mysterious warning of Zanoni then suddenly occurred to him; he had forgotten it in the interest of his lover’s quarrel with Viola. He thought it now advisable to guard against danger foretold by lips so mysterious. He looked round for some one he knew: the theatre was disgorging its crowds; they hustled, and jostled, and pressed upon him; but he recognised no familiar countenance. While pausing irresolute, he heard Mervale’s voice calling on him, and, to his great relief, discovered his friend making his way through the throng.

“I have secured you,” said he, “a place in the Count Cetoxa’s carriage. Come along, he is waiting for us.”

“How kind in you! how did you find me out?”

“I met Zanoni in the passage,--’Your friend is at the door of the theatre,’ said he; ‘do not let him go home on foot to-night; the streets of Naples are not always safe.’ I immediately remembered that some of the Calabrian bravos had been busy within the city the last few weeks, and suddenly meeting Cetoxa--but here he is.”

Further explanation was forbidden, for they now joined the count. As Glyndon entered the carriage and drew up the glass, he saw four men standing apart by the pavement, who seemed to eye him with attention.

“Cospetto!” cried one; “that is the Englishman!” Glyndon imperfectly heard the exclamation as the carriage drove on. He reached home in safety.

The familiar and endearing intimacy which always exists in Italy between the nurse and the child she has reared, and which the “Romeo and Juliet” of Shakespeare in no way exaggerates, could not but be drawn yet closer than usual, in a situation so friendless as that of the orphan-actress. In all that concerned the weaknesses of the heart, Gionetta had large experience; and when, three nights before, Viola, on returning from the theatre, had wept bitterly, the nurse had succeeded in extracting from her a confession that she had seen one,--not seen for two weary and eventful years,--but never forgotten, and who, alas! had not evinced the slightest recognition of herself. Gionetta could not comprehend all the vague and innocent emotions that swelled this sorrow; but she resolved them all, with her plain, blunt understanding, to the one sentiment of love. And here, she was well fitted to sympathise and console. Confidante to Viola’s entire and deep heart she never could be,--for that heart never could have words for all its secrets. But such

confidence as she could obtain, she was ready to repay by the most unreprieving pity and the most ready service.

“Have you discovered who he is?” asked Viola, as she was now alone in the carriage with Gionetta.

“Yes; he is the celebrated Signor Zanoni, about whom all the great ladies have gone mad. They say he is so rich!--oh! so much richer than any of the Inglesi!--not but what the Signor Glyndon--”

“Cease!” interrupted the young actress. “Zanoni! Speak of the Englishman no more.”

The carriage was now entering that more lonely and remote part of the city in which Viola’s house was situated, when it suddenly stopped.

Gionetta, in alarm, thrust her head out of the window, and perceived, by the pale light of the moon, that the driver, torn from his seat, was already pinioned in the arms of two men; the next moment the door was opened violently, and a tall figure, masked and mantled, appeared.

“Fear not, fairest Pisani,” said he, gently; “no ill shall befall you.” As he spoke, he wound his arm round the form of the fair actress, and endeavoured to lift her from the carriage. But Gionetta was no ordinary ally,--she thrust back the assailant with a force that astonished him, and followed the shock by a volley of the most energetic reprobation.

The mask drew back, and composed his disordered mantle.

“By the body of Bacchus!” said he, half laughing, “she is well protected. Here, Luigi, Giovanni! seize the hag!--quick!--why loiter ye?”

The mask retired from the door, and another and yet taller form presented itself. “Be calm, Viola Pisani,” said he, in a low voice; “with me you are indeed safe!” He lifted his mask as he spoke, and showed the noble features of Zanoni.

“Be calm, be hushed,--I can save you.” He vanished, leaving Viola lost in surprise, agitation, and delight. There were, in all, nine masks: two were engaged with the driver; one stood at the head of the carriage-horses; a fourth guarded the well-trained steeds of the party; three others (besides Zanoni and the one who had first accosted Viola) stood apart by a carriage drawn to the side of the road. To these three Zanoni motioned; they advanced; he pointed towards the first mask, who was in fact the Prince di --, and to his unspeakable astonishment the prince was suddenly seized from behind.

“Treason!” he cried. “Treason among my own men! What means this?”

“Place him in his carriage! If he resist, his blood be on his own head!” said Zanoni, calmly.

He approached the men who had detained the coachman.

“You are outnumbered and outwitted,” said he; “join your lord; you are three men,--we six, armed to the teeth. Thank our mercy that we spare your lives. Go!”

The men gave way, dismayed. The driver remounted.

“Cut the traces of their carriage and the bridles of their horses,” said Zanoni, as he entered the vehicle containing Viola, which now drove on rapidly, leaving the discomfited ravisher in a state of rage and stupor impossible to describe.

“Allow me to explain this mystery to you,” said Zanoni. “I discovered the plot against you,--no matter how; I frustrated it thus: The head of this design is a nobleman, who has long persecuted you in vain. He and two of his creatures watched you from the entrance of the theatre, having directed six others to await him on the spot where you were attacked; myself and five of my servants supplied their place, and were mistaken for his own followers. I had previously ridden alone to the spot where the men were waiting, and informed them that their

master would not require their services that night. They believed me, and accordingly dispersed. I then joined my own band, whom I had left in the rear; you know all. We are at your door.”

CHAPTER 2.III.

When most I wink, then do mine eyes best see,
For all the day they view things unrespected;
But when I sleep, in dreams they look on thee,
And, darkly bright, are bright in dark directed.--Shakespeare.

Zanoni followed the young Neapolitan into her house; Gionetta vanished,--they were left alone.

Alone, in that room so often filled, in the old happy days, with the wild melodies of Pisani; and now, as she saw this mysterious, haunting, yet beautiful and stately stranger, standing on the very spot where she had sat at her father's feet, thrilled and spellbound,--she almost thought, in her fantastic way of personifying her own airy notions, that that spiritual Music had taken shape and life, and stood before her glorious in the image it assumed. She was unconscious all the while of her own loveliness. She had thrown aside her hood and veil; her hair, somewhat disordered, fell over the ivory neck which the dress partially displayed; and as her dark eyes swam with grateful tears, and her cheek flushed with its late excitement, the god of light and music himself never, amidst his Arcadian valleys, wooed, in his mortal guise, maiden or nymph more fair.

Zanoni gazed at her with a look in which admiration seemed not unmingled with compassion. He muttered a few words to himself, and then addressed her aloud.

“Viola, I have saved you from a great peril; not from dishonour only, but perhaps from death. The Prince di --, under a weak despot and a venal administration, is a man above the law. He is capable of every crime; but amongst his passions he has such prudence as belongs to ambition; if you were not to reconcile yourself to your shame, you would never enter the world again to tell your tale. The ravisher has no heart for repentance, but he has a hand that can murder. I have saved you, Viola. Perhaps you would ask me wherefore?” Zanoni paused, and smiled mournfully, as he added, “You will not wrong me by the thought that he who has preserved is not less selfish than he who would have injured. Orphan, I do not speak to you in the language of your wooers; enough that I know pity, and am not ungrateful for affection. Why blush, why tremble at the word? I read your heart while I speak, and I see not one thought that should give you shame. I say not that you love me yet; happily, the fancy may be roused long before the heart is touched. But it has been my fate to fascinate your eye, to influence your imagination. It is to warn you against what could bring you but sorrow, as I warned you once to prepare for sorrow itself, that I am now your guest. The Englishman, Glyndon, loves thee well,--better, perhaps, than I can ever love; if not worthy of thee, yet, he has but to know thee more to deserve thee better. He may wed thee, he may bear thee to his own free and happy land,--the land of thy mother's kin. Forget me; teach thyself to return and deserve his love; and I tell thee that thou wilt be honoured and be happy.”

Viola listened with silent, inexpressible emotion, and burning blushes, to this strange address, and when he had concluded, she covered her face with her hands, and wept. And yet, much as

his words were calculated to humble or irritate, to produce indignation or excite shame, those were not the feelings with which her eyes streamed and her heart swelled. The woman at that moment was lost in the child; and AS a child, with all its exacting, craving, yet innocent desire to be loved, weeps in unrebuking sadness when its affection is thrown austere back upon itself,--so, without anger and without shame, wept Viola.

Zanoni contemplated her thus, as her graceful head, shadowed by its redundant tresses, bent before him; and after a moment's pause he drew near to her, and said, in a voice of the most soothing sweetness, and with a half smile upon his lip,--

“Do you remember, when I told you to struggle for the light, that I pointed for example to the resolute and earnest tree? I did not tell you, fair child, to take example by the moth, that would soar to the star, but falls scorched beside the lamp. Come, I will talk to thee. This Englishman--”

Viola drew herself away, and wept yet more passionately.

“This Englishman is of thine own years, not far above thine own rank. Thou mayst share his thoughts in life,--thou mayst sleep beside him in the same grave in death! And I--but THAT view of the future should concern us not. Look into thy heart, and thou wilt see that till again my shadow crossed thy path, there had grown up for this thine equal a pure and calm affection that would have ripened into love. Hast thou never pictured to thyself a home in which thy partner was thy young wooer?”

“Never!” said Viola, with sudden energy,--“never but to feel that such was not the fate ordained me. And, oh!” she continued, rising suddenly, and, putting aside the tresses that veiled her face, she fixed her eyes upon the questioner,--“and, oh! whoever thou art that thus wouldst read my soul and shape my future, do not mistake the sentiment that, that--” she faltered an instant, and went on with downcast eyes,--“that has fascinated my thoughts to thee. Do not think that I could nourish a love unsought and unreturned. It is not love that I feel for thee, stranger. Why should I? Thou hast never spoken to me but to admonish,--and now, to wound!” Again she paused, again her voice faltered; the tears trembled on her eyelids; she brushed them away and resumed. “No, not love,--if that be love which I have heard and read of, and sought to simulate on the stage,--but a more solemn, fearful, and, it seems to me, almost preternatural attraction, which makes me associate thee, waking or dreaming, with images that at once charm and awe. Thinkest thou, if it were love, that I could speak to thee thus; that,” she raised her looks suddenly to his, “mine eyes could thus search and confront thine own? Stranger, I ask but at times to see, to hear thee! Stranger, talk not to me of others. Forewarn, rebuke, bruise my heart, reject the not unworthy gratitude it offers thee, if thou wilt, but come not always to me as an omen of grief and trouble. Sometimes have I seen thee in my dreams surrounded by shapes of glory and light; thy looks radiant with a celestial joy which they wear not now. Stranger, thou hast saved me, and I thank and bless thee! Is that also a homage thou wouldst reject?” With these words, she crossed her arms meekly on her bosom, and inclined lowly before him. Nor did her humility seem unwomanly or abject, nor that of mistress to lover, of slave to master, but rather of a child to its guardian, of a neophyte of the old religion to her priest. Zanoni's brow was melancholy and thoughtful. He looked at her with a strange expression of kindness, of sorrow, yet of tender affection, in his eyes; but his lips were stern, and his voice cold, as he replied,--

“Do you know what you ask, Viola? Do you guess the danger to yourself--perhaps to both of us--which you court? Do you know that my life, separated from the turbulent herd of men, is one worship of the Beautiful, from which I seek to banish what the Beautiful inspires in most? As a calamity, I shun what to man seems the fairest fate,--the love of the daughters of earth. At

present I can warn and save thee from many evils; if I saw more of thee, would the power still be mine? You understand me not. What I am about to add, it will be easier to comprehend. I bid thee banish from thy heart all thought of me, but as one whom the Future cries aloud to thee to avoid. Glyndon, if thou acceptest his homage, will love thee till the tomb closes upon both. I, too," he added with emotion,--"I, too, might love thee!"

"You!" cried Viola, with the vehemence of a sudden impulse of delight, of rapture, which she could not suppress; but the instant after, she would have given worlds to recall the exclamation.

"Yes, Viola, I might love thee; but in that love what sorrow and what change! The flower gives perfume to the rock on whose heart it grows. A little while, and the flower is dead; but the rock still endures,--the snow at its breast, the sunshine on its summit. Pause,--think well. Danger besets thee yet. For some days thou shalt be safe from thy remorseless persecutor; but the hour soon comes when thy only security will be in flight. If the Englishman love thee worthily, thy honour will be dear to him as his own; if not, there are yet other lands where love will be truer, and virtue less in danger from fraud and force. Farewell; my own destiny I cannot foresee except through cloud and shadow. I know, at least, that we shall meet again; but learn ere then, sweet flower, that there are more genial resting-places than the rock."

He turned as he spoke, and gained the outer door where Gionetta discreetly stood. Zanoni lightly laid his hand on her arm. With the gay accent of a jesting cavalier, he said,-- "The Signor Glyndon woos your mistress; he may wed her. I know your love for her. Disabuse her of any caprice for me. I am a bird ever on the wing."

He dropped a purse into Gionetta's hand as he spoke, and was gone.

CHAPTER 2.IV.

Les Intelligences Celestes se font voir, et se communiquent plus volontiers, dans le silence et dans la tranquillite de la solitude. On aura donc une petite chambre ou un cabinet secret, etc.-- "Les Clavicules de Rabbi Salomon," chapter 3; traduites exactement du texte Hebreu par M. Pierre Morissoneau, Professeur des Langues Orientales, et Sectateur de la Philosophie des Sages Cabalistes. (Manuscript Translation.)

(The Celestial Intelligences exhibit and explain themselves most freely in silence and the tranquillity of solitude. One will have then a little chamber, or a secret cabinet, etc.)

The palace retained by Zanoni was in one of the less frequented quarters of the city. It still stands, now ruined and dismantled, a monument of the splendour of a chivalry long since vanished from Naples, with the lordly races of the Norman and the Spaniard.

As he entered the rooms reserved for his private hours, two Indians, in the dress of their country, received him at the threshold with the grave salutations of the East. They had accompanied him from the far lands in which, according to rumour, he had for many years fixed his home. But they could communicate nothing to gratify curiosity or justify suspicion. They spoke no language but their own. With the exception of these two his princely retinue was composed of the native hirelings of the city, whom his lavish but imperious generosity made the implicit creatures of his will. In his house, and in his habits, so far as they were seen, there was nothing to account for the rumours which were circulated abroad. He was not, as we are told of Albertus Magnus or the great Leonardo da Vinci, served by airy forms; and no brazen image, the

invention of magic mechanism, communicated to him the influences of the stars. None of the apparatus of the alchemist--the crucible and the metals--gave solemnity to his chambers, or accounted for his wealth; nor did he even seem to interest himself in those serener studies which might be supposed to colour his peculiar conversation with abstract notions, and often with recondite learning. No books spoke to him in his solitude; and if ever he had drawn from them his knowledge, it seemed now that the only page he read was the wide one of Nature, and that a capacious and startling memory supplied the rest. Yet was there one exception to what in all else seemed customary and commonplace, and which, according to the authority we have prefixed to this chapter, might indicate the follower of the occult sciences. Whether at Rome or Naples, or, in fact, wherever his abode, he selected one room remote from the rest of the house, which was fastened by a lock scarcely larger than the seal of a ring, yet which sufficed to baffle the most cunning instruments of the locksmith: at least, one of his servants, prompted by irresistible curiosity, had made the attempt in vain; and though he had fancied it was tried in the most favourable time for secrecy,--not a soul near, in the dead of night, Zanoni himself absent from home,--yet his superstition, or his conscience, told him the reason why the next day the Major Domo quietly dismissed him. He compensated himself for this misfortune by spreading his own story, with a thousand amusing exaggerations. He declared that, as he approached the door, invisible hands seemed to pluck him away; and that when he touched the lock, he was struck, as by a palsy, to the ground. One surgeon, who heard the tale, observed, to the distaste of the wonder-mongers, that possibly Zanoni made a dexterous use of electricity. Howbeit, this room, once so secured, was never entered save by Zanoni himself.

The solemn voice of Time, from the neighbouring church at last aroused the lord of the palace from the deep and motionless reverie, rather resembling a trance than thought, in which his mind was absorbed.

“It is one more sand out of the mighty hour-glass,” said he, murmuringly, “and yet time neither adds to, nor steals from, an atom in the Infinite! Soul of mine, the luminous, the Augoeides (Augoeides,--a word favoured by the mystical Platonists, sphaira psuches augoeides, otan mete ekteinetai epi ti, mete eso suntreche mete sunizane, alla photi lampetai, o ten aletheian opa ten panton, kai ten en aute.--Marc. Ant., lib. 2.--The sense of which beautiful sentence of the old philosophy, which, as Bayle well observes, in his article on Cornelius Agrippa, the modern Quietists have (however impotently) sought to imitate, is to the effect that “the sphere of the soul is luminous when nothing external has contact with the soul itself; but when lit by its own light, it sees the truth of all things and the truth centred in itself.”), why descendest thou from thy sphere,--why from the eternal, starlike, and passionless Serene, shrinkest thou back to the mists of the dark sarcophagus? How long, too austere taught that companionship with the things that die brings with it but sorrow in its sweetness, hast thou dwelt contented with thy majestic solitude?”

As he thus murmured, one of the earliest birds that salute the dawn broke into sudden song from amidst the orange-trees in the garden below his casement; and as suddenly, song answered song; the mate, awakened at the note, gave back its happy answer to the bird. He listened; and not the soul he had questioned, but the heart replied. He rose, and with restless strides paced the narrow floor. “Away from this world!” he exclaimed at length, with an impatient tone. “Can no time loosen its fatal ties? As the attraction that holds the earth in space, is the attraction that fixes the soul to earth. Away from the dark grey planet! Break, ye fetters: arise, ye wings!”

He passed through the silent galleries, and up the lofty stairs, and entered the secret chamber.

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CHAPTER 2.V.

I and my fellows

Are ministers of Fate.--“The Tempest.”

The next day Glyndon bent his steps towards Zanoni's palace. The young man's imagination, naturally inflammable, was singularly excited by the little he had seen and heard of this strange being,--a spell, he could neither master nor account for, attracted him towards the stranger. Zanoni's power seemed mysterious and great, his motives kindly and benevolent, yet his manners chilling and repellent. Why at one moment reject Glyndon's acquaintance, at another save him from danger? How had Zanoni thus acquired the knowledge of enemies unknown to Glyndon himself? His interest was deeply roused, his gratitude appealed to; he resolved to make another effort to conciliate the ungracious herbalist.

The signor was at home, and Glyndon was admitted into a lofty saloon, where in a few moments Zanoni joined him.

“I am come to thank you for your warning last night,” said he, “and to entreat you to complete my obligation by informing me of the quarter to which I may look for enmity and peril.”

“You are a gallant,” said Zanoni, with a smile, and in the English language, “and do you know so little of the South as not to be aware that gallants have always rivals?”

“Are you serious?” said Glyndon, colouring.

“Most serious. You love Viola Pisani; you have for rival one of the most powerful and relentless of the Neapolitan princes. Your danger is indeed great.”

“But pardon me!--how came it known to you?”

“I give no account of myself to mortal man,” replied Zanoni, haughtily; “and to me it matters nothing whether you regard or scorn my warning.”

“Well, if I may not question you, be it so; but at least advise me what to do.”

“Would you follow my advice?”

“Why not?”

“Because you are constitutionally brave; you are fond of excitement and mystery; you like to be the hero of a romance. Were I to advise you to leave Naples, would you do so while Naples contains a foe to confront or a mistress to pursue?”

“You are right,” said the young Englishman, with energy. “No! and you cannot reproach me for such a resolution.”

“But there is another course left to you: do you love Viola Pisani truly and fervently?--if so, marry her, and take a bride to your native land.”

“Nay,” answered Glyndon, embarrassed; “Viola is not of my rank. Her profession, too, is--in short, I am enslaved by her beauty, but I cannot wed her.”

Zanoni frowned.

“Your love, then, is but selfish lust, and I advise you to your own happiness no more. Young man, Destiny is less inexorable than it appears. The resources of the great Ruler of the Universe are not so scanty and so stern as to deny to men the divine privilege of Free Will; all of us can carve out our own way, and God can make our very contradictions harmonise with His solemn ends. You have before you an option. Honourable and generous love may even now work out

your happiness, and effect your escape; a frantic and selfish passion will but lead you to misery and doom.”

“Do you pretend, then, to read the future?”

“I have said all that it pleases me to utter.”

“While you assume the moralist to me, Signor Zanoni,” said Glyndon, with a smile, “are you yourself so indifferent to youth and beauty as to act the stoic to its allurements?”

“If it were necessary that practice square with precept,” said Zanoni, with a bitter smile, “our monitors would be but few. The conduct of the individual can affect but a small circle beyond himself; the permanent good or evil that he works to others lies rather in the sentiments he can diffuse. His acts are limited and momentary; his sentiments may pervade the universe, and inspire generations till the day of doom. All our virtues, all our laws, are drawn from books and maxims, which ARE sentiments, not from deeds. In conduct, Julian had the virtues of a Christian, and Constantine the vices of a Pagan. The sentiments of Julian reconverted thousands to Paganism; those of Constantine helped, under Heaven’s will, to bow to Christianity the nations of the earth. In conduct, the humblest fisherman on yonder sea, who believes in the miracles of San Gennaro, may be a better man than Luther; to the sentiments of Luther the mind of modern Europe is indebted for the noblest revolution it has known. Our opinions, young Englishman, are the angel part of us; our acts, the earthly.”

“You have reflected deeply for an Italian,” said Glyndon.

“Who told you that I was an Italian?”

“Are you not? And yet, when I hear you speak my own language as a native, I--”

“Tush!” interrupted Zanoni, impatiently turning away. Then, after a pause, he resumed in a mild voice, “Glyndon, do you renounce Viola Pisani? Will you take some days to consider what I have said?”

“Renounce her,--never!”

“Then you will marry her?”

“Impossible!”

“Be it so; she will then renounce you. I tell you that you have rivals.”

“Yes; the Prince di --; but I do not fear him.”

“You have another whom you will fear more.”

“And who is he?”

“Myself.”

Glyndon turned pale, and started from his seat.

“You, Signor Zanoni!--you,--and you dare to tell me so?”

“Dare! Alas! there are times when I wish that I could fear.”

These arrogant words were not uttered arrogantly, but in a tone of the most mournful dejection. Glyndon was enraged, confounded, and yet awed. However, he had a brave English heart within his breast, and he recovered himself quickly.

“Signor,” said he, calmly, “I am not to be duped by these solemn phrases and these mystical assumptions. You may have powers which I cannot comprehend or emulate, or you may be but a keen imposter.”

“Well, proceed!”

“I mean, then,” continued Glyndon, resolutely, though somewhat disconcerted,--“I mean you to understand, that, though I am not to be persuaded or compelled by a stranger to marry Viola Pisani, I am not the less determined never tamely to yield her to another.”

Zanoni looked gravely at the young man, whose sparkling eyes and heightened colour testified the spirit to support his words, and replied, "So bold! well; it becomes you. But take my advice; wait yet nine days, and tell me then if you will marry the fairest and the purest creature that ever crossed your path."

"But if you love her, why--why--"

"Why am I anxious that she should wed another?--to save her from myself! Listen to me. That girl, humble and uneducated though she be, has in her the seeds of the most lofty qualities and virtues. She can be all to the man she loves,--all that man can desire in wife. Her soul, developed by affection, will elevate your own; it will influence your fortunes, exalt your destiny; you will become a great and a prosperous man. If, on the contrary, she fall to me, I know not what may be her lot; but I know that there is an ordeal which few can pass, and which hitherto no woman has survived."

As Zanoni spoke, his face became colourless, and there was something in his voice that froze the warm blood of the listener.

"What is this mystery which surrounds you?" exclaimed Glyndon, unable to repress his emotion. "Are you, in truth, different from other men? Have you passed the boundary of lawful knowledge? Are you, as some declare, a sorcerer, or only a--"

"Hush!" interrupted Zanoni, gently, and with a smile of singular but melancholy sweetness; "have you earned the right to ask me these questions? Though Italy still boast an Inquisition, its power is rivelled as a leaf which the first wind shall scatter. The days of torture and persecution are over; and a man may live as he pleases, and talk as it suits him, without fear of the stake and the rack. Since I can defy persecution, pardon me if I do not yield to curiosity."

Glyndon blushed, and rose. In spite of his love for Viola, and his natural terror of such a rival, he felt himself irresistibly drawn towards the very man he had most cause to suspect and dread. He held out his hand to Zanoni, saying, "Well, then, if we are to be rivals, our swords must settle our rights; till then I would fain be friends."

"Friends! You know not what you ask."

"Enigmas again!"

"Enigmas!" cried Zanoni, passionately; "ay! can you dare to solve them? Not till then could I give you my right hand, and call you friend."

"I could dare everything and all things for the attainment of superhuman wisdom," said Glyndon, and his countenance was lighted up with wild and intense enthusiasm.

Zanoni observed him in thoughtful silence.

"The seeds of the ancestor live in the son," he muttered; "he may--yet--" He broke off abruptly; then, speaking aloud, "Go, Glyndon," said he; "we shall meet again, but I will not ask your answer till the hour presses for decision."

CHAPTER 2.VI.

'Tis certain that this man has an estate of fifty thousand livres, and seems to be a person of very great accomplishments. But, then, if he's a wizard, are wizards so devoutly given as this man seems to be? In short, I could make neither head nor tail on't--The Count de Gabalis, Translation affixed to the second edition of the "Rape of the Lock."

Of all the weaknesses which little men rail against, there is none that they are more apt to ridicule than the tendency to believe. And of all the signs of a corrupt heart and a feeble head, the tendency of incredulity is the surest.

Real philosophy seeks rather to solve than to deny. While we hear, every day, the small pretenders to science talk of the absurdities of alchemy and the dream of the Philosopher's Stone, a more erudite knowledge is aware that by alchemists the greatest discoveries in science have been made, and much which still seems abstruse, had we the key to the mystic phraseology they were compelled to adopt, might open the way to yet more noble acquisitions. The Philosopher's Stone itself has seemed no visionary chimera to some of the soundest chemists that even the present century has produced. (Mr. Disraeli, in his "Curiosities of Literature" (article "Alchem"), after quoting the sanguine judgments of modern chemists as to the transmutation of metals, observes of one yet greater and more recent than those to which Glyndon's thoughts could have referred, "Sir Humphry Davy told me that he did not consider this undiscovered art as impossible; but should it ever be discovered, it would certainly be useless.") Man cannot contradict the Laws of Nature. But are all the laws of Nature yet discovered?

"Give me a proof of your art," says the rational inquirer. "When I have seen the effect, I will endeavour, with you, to ascertain the causes."

Somewhat to the above effect were the first thoughts of Clarence Glyndon on quitting Zanoni. But Clarence Glyndon was no "rational inquirer." The more vague and mysterious the language of Zanoni, the more it imposed upon him. A proof would have been something tangible, with which he would have sought to grapple. And it would have only disappointed his curiosity to find the supernatural reduced to Nature. He endeavoured in vain, at some moments rousing himself from credulity to the scepticism he deprecated, to reconcile what he had heard with the probable motives and designs of an imposter. Unlike Mesmer and Cagliostro, Zanoni, whatever his pretensions, did not make them a source of profit; nor was Glyndon's position or rank in life sufficient to render any influence obtained over his mind, subservient to schemes, whether of avarice or ambition. Yet, ever and anon, with the suspicion of worldly knowledge, he strove to persuade himself that Zanoni had at least some sinister object in inducing him to what his English pride and manner of thought considered a derogatory marriage with the poor actress. Might not Viola and the Mystic be in league with each other? Might not all this jargon of prophecy and menace be but artifices to dupe him?

He felt an unjust resentment towards Viola at having secured such an ally. But with that resentment was mingled a natural jealousy. Zanoni threatened him with rivalry. Zanoni, who, whatever his character or his arts, possessed at least all the external attributes that dazzle and command. Impatient of his own doubts, he plunged into the society of such acquaintances as he had made at Naples--chiefly artists, like himself, men of letters, and the rich commercialists, who were already vying with the splendour, though debarred from the privileges, of the nobles. From these he heard much of Zanoni, already with them, as with the idler classes, an object of curiosity and speculation.

He had noticed, as a thing remarkable, that Zanoni had conversed with him in English, and with a command of the language so complete that he might have passed for a native. On the other hand, in Italian, Zanoni was equally at ease. Glyndon found that it was the same in languages less usually learned by foreigners. A painter from Sweden, who had conversed with him, was positive that he was a Swede; and a merchant from Constantinople, who had sold some of his goods to Zanoni, professed his conviction that none but a Turk, or at least a native of the East, could have so thoroughly mastered the soft Oriental intonations. Yet in all these languages,

when they came to compare their several recollections, there was a slight, scarce perceptible distinction, not in pronunciation, nor even accent, but in the key and chime, as it were, of the voice, between himself and a native. This faculty was one which Glyndon called to mind, that sect, whose tenets and powers have never been more than most partially explored, the Rosicrucians, especially arrogated. He remembered to have heard in Germany of the work of John Bringeret (Printed in 1615.), asserting that all the languages of the earth were known to the genuine Brotherhood of the Rosy Cross. Did Zanoni belong to this mystical Fraternity, who, in an earlier age, boasted of secrets of which the Philosopher's Stone was but the least; who considered themselves the heirs of all that the Chaldeans, the Magi, the Gymnosophists, and the Platonists had taught; and who differed from all the darker Sons of Magic in the virtue of their lives, the purity of their doctrines, and their insisting, as the foundation of all wisdom, on the subjugation of the senses, and the intensity of Religious Faith?--a glorious sect, if they lied not! And, in truth, if Zanoni had powers beyond the race of worldly sages, they seemed not unworthily exercised. The little known of his life was in his favour. Some acts, not of indiscriminate, but judicious generosity and beneficence, were recorded; in repeating which, still, however, the narrators shook their heads, and expressed surprise how a stranger should have possessed so minute a knowledge of the quiet and obscure distresses he had relieved. Two or three sick persons, when abandoned by their physicians, he had visited, and conferred with alone. They had recovered: they ascribed to him their recovery; yet they could not tell by what medicines they had been healed. They could only depose that he came, conversed with them, and they were cured; it usually, however, happened that a deep sleep had preceded the recovery.

Another circumstance was also beginning to be remarked, and spoke yet more in his commendation. Those with whom he principally associated--the gay, the dissipated, the thoughtless, the sinners and publicans of the more polished world--all appeared rapidly, yet insensibly to themselves, to awaken to purer thoughts and more regulated lives. Even Cetoxa, the prince of gallants, duellists, and gamesters, was no longer the same man since the night of the singular events which he had related to Glyndon. The first trace of his reform was in his retirement from the gaming-houses; the next was his reconciliation with an hereditary enemy of his house, whom it had been his constant object for the last six years to entangle in such a quarrel as might call forth his inimitable manoeuvre of the *stoccata*. Nor when Cetoxa and his young companions were heard to speak of Zanoni, did it seem that this change had been brought about by any sober lectures or admonitions. They all described Zanoni as a man keenly alive to enjoyment: of manners the reverse of formal,--not precisely gay, but equable, serene, and cheerful; ever ready to listen to the talk of others, however idle, or to charm all ears with an inexhaustible fund of brilliant anecdote and worldly experience. All manners, all nations, all grades of men, seemed familiar to him. He was reserved only if allusion were ever ventured to his birth or history.

The more general opinion of his origin certainly seemed the more plausible. His riches, his familiarity with the languages of the East, his residence in India, a certain gravity which never deserted his most cheerful and familiar hours, the lustrous darkness of his eyes and hair, and even the peculiarities of his shape, in the delicate smallness of the hands, and the Arab-like turn of the stately head, appeared to fix him as belonging to one at least of the Oriental races. And a dabbler in the Eastern tongues even sought to reduce the simple name of Zanoni, which a century before had been borne by an inoffensive naturalist of Bologna (The author of two works on botany and rare plants.), to the radicals of the extinct language. Zan was unquestionably the Chaldean appellation for the sun. Even the Greeks, who mutilated every Oriental name, had

retained the right one in this case, as the Cretan inscription on the tomb of Zeus (Ode megas keitai Zan.--"Cyril contra Julian." (Here lies great Jove.)) significantly showed. As to the rest, the Zan, or Zaun, was, with the Sidonians, no uncommon prefix to On. Adonis was but another name for Zanonas, whose worship in Sidon Hesychius records. To this profound and unanswerable derivation Mervale listened with great attention, and observed that he now ventured to announce an erudite discovery he himself had long since made,--namely, that the numerous family of Smiths in England were undoubtedly the ancient priests of the Phrygian Apollo. "For," said he, "was not Apollo's surname, in Phrygia, Smintheus? How clear all the ensuing corruptions of the august name,--Smintheus, Smitheus, Smithe, Smith! And even now, I may remark that the more ancient branches of that illustrious family, unconsciously anxious to approximate at least by a letter nearer to the true title, take a pious pleasure in writing their names Smith_e_!"

The philologist was much struck with this discovery, and begged Mervale's permission to note it down as an illustration suitable to a work he was about to publish on the origin of languages, to be called "Babel," and published in three quartos by subscription.

CHAPTER 2.VII.

Learn to be poor in spirit, my son, if you would penetrate that sacred night which environs truth. Learn of the Sages to allow to the Devils no power in Nature, since the fatal stone has shut 'em up in the depth of the abyss. Learn of the Philosophers always to look for natural causes in all extraordinary events; and when such natural causes are wanting, recur to God.--The Count de Gabalis.

All these additions to his knowledge of Zanoni, picked up in the various lounging-places and resorts that he frequented, were unsatisfactory to Glyndon. That night Viola did not perform at the theatre; and the next day, still disturbed by bewildered fancies, and averse to the sober and sarcastic companionship of Mervale, Glyndon sauntered musingly into the public gardens, and paused under the very tree under which he had first heard the voice that had exercised upon his mind so singular an influence. The gardens were deserted. He threw himself on one of the seats placed beneath the shade; and again, in the midst of his reverie, the same cold shudder came over him which Zanoni had so distinctly defined, and to which he had ascribed so extraordinary a cause.

He roused himself with a sudden effort, and started to see, seated next him, a figure hideous enough to have personated one of the malignant beings of whom Zanoni had spoken. It was a small man, dressed in a fashion strikingly at variance with the elaborate costume of the day: an affectation of homeliness and poverty approaching to squalor, in the loose trousers, coarse as a ship's sail; in the rough jacket, which appeared rent wilfully into holes; and the black, ragged, tangled locks that streamed from their confinement under a woollen cap, accorded but ill with other details which spoke of comparative wealth. The shirt, open at the throat, was fastened by a brooch of gaudy stones; and two pendent massive gold chains announced the foppery of two watches.

The man's figure, if not absolutely deformed, was yet marvellously ill-favoured; his shoulders high and square; his chest flattened, as if crushed in; his gloveless hands were knotted at the joints, and, large, bony, and muscular, dangled from lean, emaciated wrists, as if not belonging to

them. His features had the painful distortion sometimes seen in the countenance of a cripple,-- large, exaggerated, with the nose nearly touching the chin; the eyes small, but glowing with a cunning fire as they dwelt on Glyndon; and the mouth was twisted into a grin that displayed rows of jagged, black, broken teeth. Yet over this frightful face there still played a kind of disagreeable intelligence, an expression at once astute and bold; and as Glyndon, recovering from the first impression, looked again at his neighbour, he blushed at his own dismay, and recognised a French artist, with whom he had formed an acquaintance, and who was possessed of no inconsiderable talents in his calling.

Indeed, it was to be remarked that this creature, whose externals were so deserted by the Graces, particularly delighted in designs aspiring to majesty and grandeur. Though his colouring was hard and shallow, as was that generally of the French school at the time, his DRAWINGS were admirable for symmetry, simple elegance, and classic vigour; at the same time they unquestionably wanted ideal grace. He was fond of selecting subjects from Roman history, rather than from the copious world of Grecian beauty, or those still more sublime stories of scriptural record from which Raphael and Michael Angelo borrowed their inspirations. His grandeur was that not of gods and saints, but mortals. His delineation of beauty was that which the eye cannot blame and the soul does not acknowledge. In a word, as it was said of Dionysius, he was an Anthropographos, or Painter of Men. It was also a notable contradiction in this person, who was addicted to the most extravagant excesses in every passion, whether of hate or love, implacable in revenge, and insatiable in debauch, that he was in the habit of uttering the most beautiful sentiments of exalted purity and genial philanthropy. The world was not good enough for him; he was, to use the expressive German phrase, A WORLD-BETTERER! Nevertheless, his sarcastic lip often seemed to mock the sentiments he uttered, as if it sought to insinuate that he was above even the world he would construct.

Finally, this painter was in close correspondence with the Republicans of Paris, and was held to be one of those missionaries whom, from the earliest period of the Revolution, the regenerators of mankind were pleased to despatch to the various states yet shackled, whether by actual tyranny or wholesome laws. Certainly, as the historian of Italy (Botta.) has observed, there was no city in Italy where these new doctrines would be received with greater favour than Naples, partly from the lively temper of the people, principally because the most hateful feudal privileges, however partially curtailed some years before by the great minister, Tanucci, still presented so many daily and practical evils as to make change wear a more substantial charm than the mere and meretricious bloom on the cheek of the harlot, Novelty. This man, whom I will call Jean Nicot, was, therefore, an oracle among the younger and bolder spirits of Naples; and before Glyndon had met Zaroni, the former had not been among the least dazzled by the eloquent aspirations of the hideous philanthropist.

“It is so long since we have met, cher confrere,” said Nicot, drawing his seat nearer to Glyndon’s, “that you cannot be surprised that I see you with delight, and even take the liberty to intrude on your meditations.

“They were of no agreeable nature,” said Glyndon; “and never was intrusion more welcome.”

“You will be charmed to hear,” said Nicot, drawing several letters from his bosom, “that the good work proceeds with marvellous rapidity. Mirabeau, indeed, is no more; but, mort Diable! the French people are now a Mirabeau themselves.” With this remark, Monsieur Nicot proceeded to read and to comment upon several animated and interesting passages in his correspondence, in which the word virtue was introduced twenty-seven times, and God not once. And then, warmed by the cheering prospects thus opened to him, he began to indulge in those

anticipations of the future, the outline of which we have already seen in the eloquent extravagance of Condorcet. All the old virtues were dethroned for a new Pantheon: patriotism was a narrow sentiment; philanthropy was to be its successor. No love that did not embrace all mankind, as warm for Indus and the Pole as for the hearth of home, was worthy the breast of a generous man. Opinion was to be free as air; and in order to make it so, it was necessary to exterminate all those whose opinions were not the same as Mons. Jean Nicot's. Much of this amused, much revolted Glyndon; but when the painter turned to dwell upon a science that all should comprehend, and the results of which all should enjoy,--a science that, springing from the soil of equal institutions and equal mental cultivation, should give to all the races of men wealth without labour, and a life longer than the Patriarchs', without care,--then Glyndon listened with interest and admiration, not unmixed with awe. "Observe," said Nicot, "how much that we now cherish as a virtue will then be rejected as meanness. Our oppressors, for instance, preach to us of the excellence of gratitude. Gratitude, the confession of inferiority! What so hateful to a noble spirit as the humiliating sense of obligation? But where there is equality there can be no means for power thus to enslave merit. The benefactor and the client will alike cease, and--"

"And in the mean time," said a low voice, at hand,--"in the mean time, Jean Nicot?" The two artists started, and Glyndon recognised Zanoni.

He gazed with a brow of unusual sternness on Nicot, who, lumped together as he sat, looked up at him askew, and with an expression of fear and dismay upon his distorted countenance.

Ho, ho! Messire Jean Nicot, thou who fearest neither God nor Devil, why fearest thou the eye of a man?

"It is not the first time I have been a witness to your opinions on the infirmity of gratitude," said Zanoni.

Nicot suppressed an exclamation, and, after gloomily surveying Zanoni with an eye villanous and sinister, but full of hate impotent and unutterable, said, "I know you not,--what would you of me?"

"Your absence. Leave us!"

Nicot sprang forward a step, with hands clenched, and showing his teeth from ear to ear, like a wild beast incensed. Zanoni stood motionless, and smiled at him in scorn. Nicot halted abruptly, as if fixed and fascinated by the look, shivered from head to foot, and sullenly, and with a visible effort, as if impelled by a power not his own, turned away.

Glyndon's eyes followed him in surprise.

"And what know you of this man?" said Zanoni.

"I know him as one like myself,--a follower of art."

"Of ART! Do not so profane that glorious word. What Nature is to God, art should be to man,--a sublime, beneficent, genial, and warm creation. That wretch may be a PAINTER, not an ARTIST."

"And pardon me if I ask what YOU know of one you thus disparage?"

"I know thus much, that you are beneath my care if it be necessary to warn you against him; his own lips show the hideousness of his heart. Why should I tell you of the crimes he has committed? He SPEAKS crime!"

"You do not seem, Signor Zanoni, to be one of the admirers of the dawning Revolution. Perhaps you are prejudiced against the man because you dislike the opinions?"

"What opinions?"

Glyndon paused, somewhat puzzled to define; but at length he said, "Nay, I must wrong you; for you, of all men, I suppose, cannot discredit the doctrine that preaches the infinite improvement of the human species."

"You are right; the few in every age improve the many; the many now may be as wise as the few were; but improvement is at a standstill, if you tell me that the many now are as wise as the few ARE."

"I comprehend you; you will not allow the law of universal equality!"

"Law! If the whole world conspired to enforce the falsehood they could not make it LAW. Level all conditions to-day, and you only smooth away all obstacles to tyranny to-morrow. A nation that aspires to EQUALITY is unfit for FREEDOM. Throughout all creation, from the archangel to the worm, from Olympus to the pebble, from the radiant and completed planet to the nebula that hardens through ages of mist and slime into the habitable world, the first law of Nature is inequality."

"Harsh doctrine, if applied to states. Are the cruel disparities of life never to be removed?"

"Disparities of the PHYSICAL life? Oh, let us hope so. But disparities of the INTELLECTUAL and the MORAL, never! Universal equality of intelligence, of mind, of genius, of virtue!--no teacher left to the world! no men wiser, better than others,-- were it not an impossible condition, WHAT A HOPELESS PROSPECT FOR HUMANITY! No, while the world lasts, the sun will gild the mountain-top before it shines upon the plain. Diffuse all the knowledge the earth contains equally over all mankind to-day, and some men will be wiser than the rest to-morrow. And THIS is not a harsh, but a loving law,--the REAL law of improvement; the wiser the few in one generation, the wiser will be the multitude the next!"

As Zanoni thus spoke, they moved on through the smiling gardens, and the beautiful bay lay sparkling in the noontide. A gentle breeze just cooled the sunbeam, and stirred the ocean; and in the inexpressible clearness of the atmosphere there was something that rejoiced the senses. The very soul seemed to grow lighter and purer in that lucid air.

"And these men, to commence their era of improvement and equality, are jealous even of the Creator. They would deny an intelligence,--a God!" said Zanoni, as if involuntarily. "Are you an artist, and, looking on the world, can you listen to such a dogma? Between God and genius there is a necessary link,-- there is almost a correspondent language. Well said the Pythagorean (Sextus, the Pythagorean.), 'A good intellect is the chorus of divinity.'"

Struck and touched with these sentiments, which he little expected to fall from one to whom he ascribed those powers which the superstitions of childhood ascribe to the darker agencies, Glyndon said: "And yet you have confessed that your life, separated from that of others, is one that man should dread to share. Is there, then, a connection between magic and religion?"

"Magic! And what is magic! When the traveller beholds in Persia the ruins of palaces and temples, the ignorant inhabitants inform him they were the work of magicians. What is beyond their own power, the vulgar cannot comprehend to be lawfully in the power of others. But if by magic you mean a perpetual research amongst all that is more latent and obscure in Nature, I answer, I profess that magic, and that he who does so comes but nearer to the fountain of all belief. Knowest thou not that magic was taught in the schools of old? But how, and by whom? As the last and most solemn lesson, by the Priests who ministered to the Temple. (Psellus de Daemon (MS.)) And you, who would be a painter, is not there a magic also in that art you would advance? Must you not, after long study of the Beautiful that has been, seize upon new and airy combinations of a beauty that is to be? See you not that the grander art, whether of poet or of

painter, ever seeking for the TRUE, abhors the REAL; that you must seize Nature as her master, not lackey her as her slave?

You demand mastery over the past, a conception of the future. Has not the art that is truly noble for its domain the future and the past? You would conjure the invisible beings to your charm; and what is painting but the fixing into substance the Invisible? Are you discontented with this world? This world was never meant for genius! To exist, it must create another. What magician can do more; nay, what science can do as much? There are two avenues from the little passions and the drear calamities of earth; both lead to heaven and away from hell,--art and science. But art is more godlike than science; science discovers, art creates. You have faculties that may command art; be contented with your lot. The astronomer who catalogues the stars cannot add one atom to the universe; the poet can call a universe from the atom; the chemist may heal with his drugs the infirmities of the human form; the painter, or the sculptor, fixes into everlasting youth forms divine, which no disease can ravage, and no years impair. Renounce those wandering fancies that lead you now to myself, and now to yon orator of the human race; to us two, who are the antipodes of each other! Your pencil is your wand; your canvas may raise Utopias fairer than Condorcet dreams of. I press not yet for your decision; but what man of genius ever asked more to cheer his path to the grave than love and glory?"

"But," said Glyndon, fixing his eyes earnestly on Zanoni, "if there be a power to baffle the grave itself--"

Zanoni's brow darkened. "And were this so," he said, after a pause, "would it be so sweet a lot to outlive all you loved, and to recoil from every human tie? Perhaps the fairest immortality on earth is that of a noble name."

"You do not answer me,--you equivocate. I have read of the long lives far beyond the date common experience assigns to man," persisted Glyndon, "which some of the alchemists enjoyed. Is the golden elixir but a fable?"

"If not, and these men discovered it, they died, because they refused to live! There may be a mournful warning in your conjecture. Turn once more to the easel and the canvas!"

So saying, Zanoni waved his hand, and, with downcast eyes and a slow step, bent his way back into the city.

CHAPTER 2.VIII.

The Goddess Wisdom.

To some she is the goddess great;
To some the milch cow of the field;
Their care is but to calculate
What butter she will yield.--From Schiller.

This last conversation with Zanoni left upon the mind of Glyndon a tranquillising and salutary effect.

From the confused mists of his fancy glittered forth again those happy, golden schemes which part from the young ambition of art, to play in the air, to illumine the space like rays that kindle from the sun. And with these projects mingled also the vision of a love purer and serener than his life yet had known. His mind went back into that fair childhood of genius, when the

forbidden fruit is not yet tasted, and we know of no land beyond the Eden which is gladdened by an Eve. Insensibly before him there rose the scenes of a home, with his art sufficing for all excitement, and Viola's love circling occupation with happiness and content; and in the midst of these fantasies of a future that might be at his command, he was recalled to the present by the clear, strong voice of Mervale, the man of common-sense.

Whoever has studied the lives of persons in whom the imagination is stronger than the will, who suspect their own knowledge of actual life, and are aware of their facility to impressions, will have observed the influence which a homely, vigorous, worldly understanding obtains over such natures. It was thus with Glyndon. His friend had often extricated him from danger, and saved him from the consequences of imprudence; and there was something in Mervale's voice alone that damped his enthusiasm, and often made him yet more ashamed of noble impulses than weak conduct. For Mervale, though a downright honest man, could not sympathise with the extravagance of generosity any more than with that of presumption and credulity. He walked the straight line of life, and felt an equal contempt for the man who wandered up the hill-sides, no matter whether to chase a butterfly, or to catch a prospect of the ocean.

"I will tell you your thoughts, Clarence," said Mervale, laughing, "though I am no Zanoni. I know them by the moisture of your eyes, and the half-smile on your lips. You are musing upon that fair perdition,--the little singer of San Carlo."

The little singer of San Carlo! Glyndon coloured as he answered,--

"Would you speak thus of her if she were my wife?"

"No! for then any contempt I might venture to feel would be for yourself. One may dislike the duper, but it is the dupe that one despises."

"Are you sure that I should be the dupe in such a union? Where can I find one so lovely and so innocent,--where one whose virtue has been tried by such temptation? Does even a single breath of slander sully the name of Viola Pisani?"

"I know not all the gossip of Naples, and therefore cannot answer; but I know this, that in England no one would believe that a young Englishman, of good fortune and respectable birth, who marries a singer from the theatre of Naples, has not been lamentably taken in. I would save you from a fall of position so irretrievable. Think how many mortifications you will be subjected to; how many young men will visit at your house,--and how many young wives will as carefully avoid it."

"I can choose my own career, to which commonplace society is not essential. I can owe the respect of the world to my art, and not to the accidents of birth and fortune."

"That is, you still persist in your second folly,--the absurd ambition of daubing canvas. Heaven forbid I should say anything against the laudable industry of one who follows such a profession for the sake of subsistence; but with means and connections that will raise you in life, why voluntarily sink into a mere artist? As an accomplishment in leisure moments, it is all very well in its way; but as the occupation of existence, it is a frenzy."

"Artists have been the friends of princes."

"Very rarely so, I fancy, in sober England. There in the great centre of political aristocracy, what men respect is the practical, not the ideal. Just suffer me to draw two pictures of my own. Clarence Glyndon returns to England; he marries a lady of fortune equal to his own, of friends and parentage that advance rational ambition. Clarence Glyndon, thus a wealthy and respectable man, of good talents, of bustling energies then concentrated, enters into practical life. He has a house at which he can receive those whose acquaintance is both advantage and honour; he has leisure which he can devote to useful studies; his reputation, built on a solid base, grows in

men's mouths. He attaches himself to a party; he enters political life; and new connections serve to promote his objects. At the age of five-and-forty, what, in all probability, may Clarence Glyndon be? Since you are ambitious I leave that question for you to decide! Now turn to the other picture. Clarence Glyndon returns to England with a wife who can bring him no money, unless he lets her out on the stage; so handsome, that every one asks who she is, and every one hears,--the celebrated singer, Pisani. Clarence Glyndon shuts himself up to grind colours and paint pictures in the grand historical school, which nobody buys. There is even a prejudice against him, as not having studied in the Academy,--as being an amateur. Who is Mr. Clarence Glyndon? Oh, the celebrated Pisani's husband! What else? Oh, he exhibits those large pictures! Poor man! they have merit in their way; but Teniers and Watteau are more convenient, and almost as cheap. Clarence Glyndon, with an easy fortune while single, has a large family which his fortune, unaided by marriage, can just rear up to callings more plebeian than his own. He retires into the country, to save and to paint; he grows slovenly and discontented; 'the world does not appreciate him,' he says, and he runs away from the world. At the age of forty-five what will be Clarence Glyndon? Your ambition shall decide that question also!"

"If all men were as worldly as you," said Glyndon, rising, "there would never have been an artist or a poet!"

"Perhaps we should do just as well without them," answered Mervale. "Is it not time to think of dinner? The mullets here are remarkably fine!"

CHAPTER 2.IX.

Wollt ihr hoch auf ihren Flugeln schweben,
 Werft die Angst des Irdischen von euch!
 Flihet aus dem engen dumpfen Leben
 In des Ideales Reich!--"Das Ideal und das Leben."
 (Wouldst thou soar heavenward on its joyous wing?
 Cast off the earthly burden of the Real;
 High from this cramped and dungeoned being, spring
 Into the realm of the Ideal.)

As some injudicious master lowers and vitiates the taste of the student by fixing his attention to what he falsely calls the Natural, but which, in reality, is the Commonplace, and understands not that beauty in art is created by what Raphael so well describes,--namely, THE IDEA OF BEAUTY IN THE PAINTER'S OWN MIND; and that in every art, whether its plastic expression be found in words or marble, colours or sounds, the servile imitation of Nature is the work of journeymen and tyros,--so in conduct the man of the world vitiates and lowers the bold enthusiasm of loftier natures by the perpetual reduction of whatever is generous and trustful to all that is trite and coarse. A great German poet has well defined the distinction between discretion and the larger wisdom. In the last there is a certain rashness which the first disdains,--

"The purblind see but the receding shore, Not that to which the bold wave wafts them o'er."

Yet in this logic of the prudent and the worldly there is often a reasoning unanswerable of its kind.

You must have a feeling,--a faith in whatever is self-sacrificing and divine, whether in religion or in art, in glory or in love; or Common-sense will reason you out of the sacrifice, and a syllogism will debase the Divine to an article in the market.

Every true critic in art, from Aristotle and Pliny, from Winkelman and Vasari to Reynolds and Fuseli, has sought to instruct the painter that Nature is not to be copied, but EXALTED; that the loftiest order of art, selecting only the loftiest combinations, is the perpetual struggle of Humanity to approach the gods. The great painter, as the great author, embodies what is POSSIBLE to MAN, it is true, but what is not COMMON to MANKIND. There is truth in Hamlet; in Macbeth, and his witches; in Desdemona; in Othello; in Prospero, and in Caliban; there is truth in the cartoons of Raphael; there is truth in the Apollo, the Antinous, and the Laocoon. But you do not meet the originals of the words, the cartoons, or the marble, in Oxford Street or St. James's. All these, to return to Raphael, are the creatures of the idea in the artist's mind. This idea is not inborn, it has come from an intense study. But that study has been of the ideal that can be raised from the positive and the actual into grandeur and beauty. The commonest model becomes full of exquisite suggestions to him who has formed this idea; a Venus of flesh and blood would be vulgarised by the imitation of him who has not.

When asked where he got his models, Guido summoned a common porter from his calling, and drew from a mean original a head of surpassing beauty. It resembled the porter, but idealised the porter to the hero. It was true, but it was not real. There are critics who will tell you that the Boor of Teniers is more true to Nature than the Porter of Guido! The commonplace public scarcely understand the idealising principle, even in art; for high art is an acquired taste.

But to come to my comparison. Still less is the kindred principle comprehended in conduct. And the advice of worldly prudence would as often deter from the risks of virtue as from the punishments of vice; yet in conduct, as in art, there is an idea of the great and beautiful, by which men should exalt the hackneyed and the trite of life. Now Glyndon felt the sober prudence of Mervale's reasonings; he recoiled from the probable picture placed before him, in his devotion to the one master-talent he possessed, and the one master-passion that, rightly directed, might purify his whole being as a strong wind purifies the air.

But though he could not bring himself to decide in the teeth of so rational a judgment, neither could he resolve at once to abandon the pursuit of Viola. Fearful of being influenced by Zanoni's counsels and his own heart, he had for the last two days shunned an interview with the young actress. But after a night following his last conversation with Zanoni, and that we have just recorded with Mervale,--a night coloured by dreams so distinct as to seem prophetic, dreams that appeared so to shape his future according to the hints of Zanoni that he could have fancied Zanoni himself had sent them from the house of sleep to haunt his pillow,--he resolved once more to seek Viola; and though without a definite or distinct object, he yielded himself up to the impulse of his heart.

CHAPTER 2.X.

O sollecito dubbio e fredda tema

Che pensando l'accresci.

Tasso, Canzone vi.

(O anxious doubt and chilling fear that grows by thinking.)

She was seated outside her door,--the young actress! The sea before her in that heavenly bay seemed literally to sleep in the arms of the shore; while, to the right, not far off, rose the dark and tangled crags to which the traveller of to-day is duly brought to gaze on the tomb of Virgil, or compare with the cavern of Posilipo the archway of Highgate Hill. There were a few fisherman loitering by the cliffs, on which their nets were hung to dry; and at a distance the sound of some rustic pipe (more common at that day than at this), mingled now and then with the bells of the lazy mules, broke the voluptuous silence,--the silence of declining noon on the shores of Naples; never, till you have enjoyed it, never, till you have felt its enervating but delicious charm, believe that you can comprehend all the meaning of the *Dolce far niente* (The pleasure of doing nothing.); and when that luxury has been known, when you have breathed that atmosphere of fairy-land, then you will no longer wonder why the heart ripens into fruit so sudden and so rich beneath the rosy skies and the glorious sunshine of the South.

The eyes of the actress were fixed on the broad blue deep beyond. In the unwonted negligence of her dress might be traced the abstraction of her mind. Her beautiful hair was gathered up loosely, and partially bandaged by a kerchief whose purple colour served to deepen the golden hue of her tresses. A stray curl escaped and fell down the graceful neck. A loose morning-robe, girded by a sash, left the breeze. That came ever and anon from the sea, to die upon the bust half disclosed; and the tiny slipper, that Cinderella might have worn, seemed a world too wide for the tiny foot which it scarcely covered. It might be the heat of the day that deepened the soft bloom of the cheeks, and gave an unwonted languor to the large, dark eyes. In all the pomp of her stage attire,--in all the flush of excitement before the intoxicating lamps,--never had Viola looked so lovely.

By the side of the actress, and filling up the threshold,--stood Gionetta, with her arms thrust to the elbow in two huge pockets on either side of her gown.

"But I assure you," said the nurse, in that sharp, quick, ear-splitting tone in which the old women of the South are more than a match for those of the North,--"but I assure you, my darling, that there is not a finer cavalier in all Naples, nor a more beautiful, than this *Inglese*; and I am told that all these *Ingesi* are much richer than they seem. Though they have no trees in their country, poor people! and instead of twenty-four they have only twelve hours to the day, yet I hear that they shoe their horses with *scudi*; and since they cannot (the poor heretics!) turn grapes into wine, for they have no grapes, they turn gold into physic, and take a glass or two of *pistoles* whenever they are troubled with the colic. But you don't hear me, little pupil of my eyes,--you don't hear me!"

"And these things are whispered of *Zanoni*!" said Viola, half to herself, and unheeding Gionetta's eulogies on Glyndon and the English.

"Blessed *Maria*! do not talk of this terrible *Zanoni*. You may be sure that his beautiful face, like his yet more beautiful *pistoles*, is only witchcraft. I look at the money he gave me the other night, every quarter of an hour, to see whether it has not turned into pebbles."

"Do you then really believe," said Viola, with timid earnestness, "that sorcery still exists?"

"Believe! Do I believe in the blessed *San Gennaro*? How do you think he cured old *Filippo* the fisherman, when the doctor gave him up? How do you think he has managed himself to live at least these three hundred years? How do you think he fascinates every one to his bidding with a look, as the vampires do?"

"Ah, is this only witchcraft? It is like it,--it must be!" murmured Viola, turning very pale. Gionetta herself was scarcely more superstitious than the daughter of the musician. And her very

innocence, chilled at the strangeness of virgin passion, might well ascribe to magic what hearts more experienced would have resolved to love.

“And then, why has this great Prince di -- been so terrified by him? Why has he ceased to persecute us? Why has he been so quiet and still? Is there no sorcery in all that?”

“Think you, then,” said Viola, with sweet inconsistency, “that I owe that happiness and safety to his protection? Oh, let me so believe! Be silent, Gionetta! Why have I only thee and my own terrors to consult? O beautiful sun!” and the girl pressed her hand to her heart with wild energy; “thou lightest every spot but this. Go, Gionetta! leave me alone,--leave me!”

“And indeed it is time I should leave you; for the polenta will be spoiled, and you have eat nothing all day. If you don’t eat you will lose your beauty, my darling, and then nobody will care for you. Nobody cares for us when we grow ugly,--I know that; and then you must, like old Gionetta, get some Viola of your own to spoil. I’ll go and see to the polenta.”

“Since I have known this man,” said the girl, half aloud,--“since his dark eyes have haunted me, I am no longer the same. I long to escape from myself,--to glide with the sunbeam over the hill-tops; to become something that is not of earth. Phantoms float before me at night; and a fluttering, like the wing of a bird, within my heart, seems as if the spirit were terrified, and would break its cage.”

While murmuring these incoherent rhapsodies, a step that she did not hear approached the actress, and a light hand touched her arm.

“Viola!--bellissima!--Viola!”

She turned, and saw Glyndon. The sight of his fair young face calmed her at once. His presence gave her pleasure.

“Viola,” said the Englishman, taking her hand, and drawing her again to the bench from which she had risen, as he seated himself beside her, “you shall hear me speak! You must know already that I love thee! It has not been pity or admiration alone that has led me ever and ever to thy dear side; reasons there may have been why I have not spoken, save by my eyes, before; but this day--I know not how it is--I feel a more sustained and settled courage to address thee, and learn the happiest or the worst. I have rivals, I know,--rivals who are more powerful than the poor artist; are they also more favoured?”

Viola blushed faintly; but her countenance was grave and distressed. Looking down, and marking some hieroglyphical figures in the dust with the point of her slipper, she said, with some hesitation, and a vain attempt to be gay, “Signor, whoever wastes his thoughts on an actress must submit to have rivals. It is our unhappy destiny not to be sacred even to ourselves.”

“But you do not love this destiny, glittering though it seem; your heart is not in the vocation which your gifts adorn.”

“Ah, no!” said the actress, her eyes filling with tears. “Once I loved to be the priestess of song and music; now I feel only that it is a miserable lot to be slave to a multitude.”

“Fly, then, with me,” said the artist, passionately; “quit forever the calling that divides that heart I would have all my own. Share my fate now and forever,--my pride, my delight, my ideal! Thou shalt inspire my canvas and my song; thy beauty shall be made at once holy and renowned. In the galleries of princes, crowds shall gather round the effigy of a Venus or a Saint, and a whisper shall break forth, ‘It is Viola Pisani!’ Ah! Viola, I adore thee; tell me that I do not worship in vain.”

“Thou art good and fair,” said Viola, gazing on her lover, as he pressed nearer to her, and clasped her hand in his; “but what should I give thee in return?”

“Love, love,--only love!”

“A sister’s love?”

“Ah, speak not with such cruel coldness!”

“It is all I have for thee. Listen to me, signor: when I look on your face, when I hear your voice, a certain serene and tranquil calm creeps over and lulls thoughts,—oh, how feverish, how wild! When thou art gone, the day seems a shade more dark; but the shadow soon flies. I miss thee not; I think not of thee: no, I love thee not; and I will give myself only where I love.”

“But I would teach thee to love me; fear it not. Nay, such love as thou describest, in our tranquil climates, is the love of innocence and youth.”

“Of innocence!” said Viola. “Is it so? Perhaps—” She paused, and added, with an effort, “Foreigner! and wouldst thou wed the orphan? Ah, THOU at least art generous! It is not the innocence thou wouldst destroy!”

Glyndon drew back, conscience-stricken.

“No, it may not be!” she said, rising, but not conscious of the thoughts, half of shame, half suspicion, that passed through the mind of her lover. “Leave me, and forget me. You do not understand, you could not comprehend, the nature of her whom you think to love. From my childhood upward, I have felt as if I were marked out for some strange and preternatural doom; as if I were singled from my kind. This feeling (and, oh! at times it is one of delirious and vague delight, at others of the darkest gloom) deepens within me day by day. It is like the shadow of twilight, spreading slowly and solemnly around. My hour approaches: a little while, and it will be night!”

As she spoke, Glyndon listened with visible emotion and perturbation. “Viola!” he exclaimed, as she ceased, “your words more than ever enchain me to you. As you feel, I feel. I, too, have been ever haunted with a chill and unearthly foreboding. Amidst the crowds of men I have felt alone. In all my pleasures, my toils, my pursuits, a warning voice has murmured in my ear, ‘Time has a dark mystery in store for thy manhood.’ When you spoke, it was as the voice of my own soul.”

Viola gazed upon him in wonder and fear. Her countenance was as white as marble; and those features, so divine in their rare symmetry, might have served the Greek with a study for the Pythoness, when, from the mystic cavern and the bubbling spring, she first hears the voice of the inspiring god. Gradually the rigour and tension of that wonderful face relaxed, the colour returned, the pulse beat: the heart animated the frame.

“Tell me,” she said, turning partially aside,—“tell me, have you seen—do you know—a stranger in this city,—one of whom wild stories are afloat?”

“You speak of Zanoni? I have seen him: I know him,—and you? Ah, he, too, would be my rival!—he, too, would bear thee from me!”

“You err,” said Viola, hastily, and with a deep sigh; “he pleads for you: he informed me of your love; he besought me not—not to reject it.”

“Strange being! incomprehensible enigma! Why did you name him?”

“Why! ah, I would have asked whether, when you first saw him, the foreboding, the instinct, of which you spoke, came on you more fearfully, more intelligibly than before; whether you felt at once repelled from him, yet attracted towards him; whether you felt,” and the actress spoke with hurried animation, “that with HIM was connected the secret of your life?”

“All this I felt,” answered Glyndon, in a trembling voice, “the first time I was in his presence. Though all around me was gay, —music, amidst lamp-lit trees, light converse near, and heaven without a cloud above,—my knees knocked together, my hair bristled, and my blood curdled like ice. Since then he has divided my thoughts with thee.”

“No more, no more!” said Viola, in a stifled tone; “there must be the hand of fate in this. I can speak to you no more now. Farewell!” She sprung past him into the house, and closed the door. Glyndon did not follow her, nor, strange as it may seem, was he so inclined. The thought and recollection of that moonlit hour in the gardens, of the strange address of Zanoni, froze up all human passion. Viola herself, if not forgotten, shrunk back like a shadow into the recesses of his breast. He shivered as he stepped into the sunlight, and musingly retraced his steps into the more populous parts of that liveliest of Italian cities.