

BOOK VII.

THE REIGN OF TERROR.

Orrida maesta nei fero aspetto
Terroro accresce, e piu superbo il rende;
Rosseggian gli occhi, e di veneno infetto
Come infausta cometa, il guardo splende,
Gil involve il mento, e sull 'irsuto petto
Ispida efoita la gran barbe scende;

E IN GUISA DE VORAGINE PROFONDA

SAPRE LA BOCCA A' ATRO SANGUE IMMONDA.--(Ger. Lib., Cant. iv. 7.)

A horrible majesty in the fierce aspect increases its terror, and renders it more superb. Red glow the eyes, and the aspect infected, like a baleful comet, with envenomed influences, glares around. A vast beard covers the chin--and, rough and thick, descends over the shaggy breast.--And like a profound gulf expand the jaws, foul with black gore.

CHAPTER 7.I.

Qui suis-je, moi qu'on accuse? Un esclave de la Liberte, un martyr vivant de la Republique.--"Discours de Robespierre, 8 Thermidor."
(Who am I,--_I_ whom they accuse? A slave of Liberty,--a living martyr for the Republic.)

It roars,--The River of Hell, whose first outbreak was chanted as the gush of a channel to Elysium. How burst into blossoming hopes fair hearts that had nourished themselves on the diamond dew of the rosy dawn, when Liberty came from the dark ocean, and the arms of decrepit Thralldom--Aurora from the bed of Tithon! Hopes! ye have ripened into fruit, and the fruit is gore and ashes! Beautiful Roland, eloquent Vergniaud, visionary Condorcet, high-hearted Malesherbes!--wits, philosophers, statesmen, patriots, dreamers! behold the millennium for which ye dared and laboured!

I invoke the ghosts! Saturn hath devoured his children ("La Revolution est comme Saturne, elle devorera tous ses enfans."-- Vergniaud.), and lives alone,--I his true name of Moloch!

It is the Reign of Terror, with Robespierre the king. The struggles between the boa and the lion are past: the boa has consumed the lion, and is heavy with the gorge,--Danton has fallen, and Camille Desmoulins. Danton had said before his death, "The poltroon Robespierre,--I alone could have saved him." From that hour, indeed, the blood of the dead giant clouded the craft of "Maximilien the Incorruptible," as at last, amidst the din of the roused Convention, it choked his voice. (Le sang de Danton t'etouffe!" (the blood of Danton chokes thee!) said Garnier de l'Aube, when on the fatal 9th of Thermidor, Robespierre gasped feebly forth, "Pour la derniere fois, President des Assassins, je te demande la parole." (For the last time, President of Assassins,

I demand to speak.)) If, after that last sacrifice, essential, perhaps, to his safety, Robespierre had proclaimed the close of the Reign of Terror, and acted upon the mercy which Danton had begun to preach, he might have lived and died a monarch. But the prisons continued to reek,--the glaive to fall; and Robespierre perceived not that his mobs were glutted to satiety with death, and the strongest excitement a chief could give would be a return from devils into men.

We are transported to a room in the house of Citizen Dupleix, the menuisier, in the month of July, 1794; or, in the calendar of the Revolutionists, it was the Thermidor of the Second Year of the Republic, One and Indivisible! Though the room was small, it was furnished and decorated with a minute and careful effort at elegance and refinement. It seemed, indeed, the desire of the owner to avoid at once what was mean and rude, and what was luxurious and voluptuous. It was a trim, orderly, precise grace that shaped the classic chairs, arranged the ample draperies, sank the frameless mirrors into the wall, placed bust and bronze on their pedestals, and filled up the niches here and there with well-bound books, filed regularly in their appointed ranks. An observer would have said, "This man wishes to imply to you,--I am not rich; I am not ostentatious; I am not luxurious; I am no indolent Sybarite, with couches of down, and pictures that provoke the sense; I am no haughty noble, with spacious halls, and galleries that awe the echo. But so much the greater is my merit if I disdain these excesses of the ease or the pride, since I love the elegant, and have a taste! Others may be simple and honest, from the very coarseness of their habits; if I, with so much refinement and delicacy, am simple and honest,--reflect, and admire me!"

On the walls of this chamber hung many portraits, most of them represented but one face; on the formal pedestals were grouped many busts, most of them sculptured but one head. In that small chamber Egotism sat supreme, and made the Arts its looking-glasses. Erect in a chair, before a large table spread with letters, sat the original of bust and canvas, the owner of the apartment. He was alone, yet he sat erect, formal, stiff, precise, as if in his very home he was not at ease. His dress was in harmony with his posture and his chamber; it affected a neatness of its own,--foreign both to the sumptuous fashions of the deposed nobles, and the filthy ruggedness of the sans-culottes. Frizzled and coiffe, not a hair was out of order, not a speck lodged on the sleek surface of the blue coat, not a wrinkle crumpled the snowy vest, with its under-relief of delicate pink. At the first glance, you might have seen in that face nothing but the ill-favoured features of a sickly countenance; at a second glance, you would have perceived that it had a power, a character of its own. The forehead, though low and compressed, was not without that appearance of thought and intelligence which, it may be observed, that breadth between the eyebrows almost invariably gives; the lips were firm and tightly drawn together, yet ever and anon they trembled, and writhed restlessly. The eyes, sullen and gloomy, were yet piercing, and full of a concentrated vigour that did not seem supported by the thin, feeble frame, or the green lividness of the hues, which told of anxiety and disease.

Such was Maximilien Robespierre; such the chamber over the menuisier's shop, whence issued the edicts that launched armies on their career of glory, and ordained an artificial conduit to carry off the blood that deluged the metropolis of the most martial people in the globe! Such was the man who had resigned a judicial appointment (the early object of his ambition) rather than violate his philanthropical principles by subscribing to the death of a single fellow-creature; such was the virgin enemy to capital punishments; and such, Butcher-Dictator now, was the man whose pure and rigid manners, whose incorruptible honesty, whose hatred of the excesses that tempt to love and wine, would, had he died five years earlier, have left him the model for prudent fathers and careful citizens to place before their sons. Such was the man who seemed to have no

vice, till circumstance, that hotbed, brought forth the two which, in ordinary times, lie ever the deepest and most latent in a man's heart,--Cowardice and Envy. To one of these sources is to be traced every murder that master-fiend committed. His cowardice was of a peculiar and strange sort; for it was accompanied with the most unscrupulous and determined WILL,--a will that Napoleon revered; a will of iron, and yet nerves of aspen. Mentally, he was a hero,--physically, a dastard. When the veriest shadow of danger threatened his person, the frame cowered, but the will swept the danger to the slaughter-house. So there he sat, bolt upright,-- his small, lean fingers clenched convulsively; his sullen eyes straining into space, their whites yellowed with streaks of corrupt blood; his ears literally moving to and fro, like the ignobler animals', to catch every sound,--a Dionysius in his cave; but his posture decorous and collected, and every formal hair in its frizzled place.

"Yes, yes," he said in a muttered tone, "I hear them; my good Jacobins are at their post on the stairs. Pity they swear so! I have a law against oaths,--the manners of the poor and virtuous people must be reformed. When all is safe, an example or two amongst those good Jacobins would make effect. Faithful fellows, how they love me! Hum!--what an oath was that!--they need not swear so loud,--upon the very staircase, too! It detracts from my reputation. Ha! steps!"

The soliloquist glanced at the opposite mirror, and took up a volume; he seemed absorbed in its contents, as a tall fellow, a bludgeon in his hand, a girdle adorned with pistols round his waist, opened the door, and announced two visitors. The one was a young man, said to resemble Robespierre in person, but of a far more decided and resolute expression of countenance. He entered first, and, looking over the volume in Robespierre's hand, for the latter seemed still intent on his lecture, exclaimed,--

"What! Rousseau's Heloise? A love-tale!"

"Dear Payan, it is not the love,--it is the philosophy that charms me. What noble sentiments!--what ardour of virtue! If Jean Jacques had but lived to see this day!"

While the Dictator thus commented on his favourite author, whom in his orations he laboured hard to imitate, the second visitor was wheeled into the room in a chair. This man was also in what, to most, is the prime of life,--namely, about thirty-eight; but he was literally dead in the lower limbs: crippled, paralytic, distorted, he was yet, as the time soon came to tell him,--a Hercules in Crime! But the sweetest of human smiles dwelt upon his lips; a beauty almost angelic characterised his features ("Figure d'ange," says one of his contemporaries, in describing Couthon. The address, drawn up most probably by Payan (Thermidor 9), after the arrest of Robespierre, thus mentions his crippled colleague: "Couthon, ce citoyen vertueux, QUI N'A QUE LE COEUR ET LA TETE DE VIVANS, mais qui les a brulants de patriotisme" (Couthon, that virtuous citizen, who has but the head and the heart of the living, yet possesses these all on flame with patriotism.)); an inexpressible aspect of kindness, and the resignation of suffering but cheerful benignity, stole into the hearts of those who for the first time beheld him. With the most caressing, silver, flute-like voice, Citizen Couthon saluted the admirer of Jean Jacques.

"Nay,--do not say that it is not the LOVE that attracts thee; it IS the love! but not the gross, sensual attachment of man for woman. No! the sublime affection for the whole human race, and indeed, for all that lives!"

And Citizen Couthon, bending down, fondled the little spaniel that he invariably carried in his bosom, even to the Convention, as a vent for the exuberant sensibilities which overflowed his affectionate heart. (This tenderness for some pet animal was by no means peculiar to Couthon; it seems rather a common fashion with the gentle butchers of the Revolution. M. George Duval

informs us ("Souvenirs de la Terreur," volume iii page 183) that Chaumette had an aviary, to which he devoted his harmless leisure; the murderous Fournier carried on his shoulders a pretty little squirrel, attached by a silver chain; Panis bestowed the superfluity of his affections upon two gold pheasants; and Marat, who would not abate one of the three hundred thousand heads he demanded, REARED DOVES! Apropos of the spaniel of Couthon, Duval gives us an amusing anecdote of Sergent, not one of the least relentless agents of the massacre of September. A lady came to implore his protection for one of her relations confined in the Abbaye. He scarcely deigned to speak to her. As she retired in despair, she trod by accident on the paw of his favourite spaniel. Sergent, turning round, enraged and furious, exclaimed, "MADAM, HAVE YOU NO HUMANITY?")

"Yes, for all that lives," repeated Robespierre, tenderly. "Good Couthon,--poor Couthon! Ah, the malice of men!--how we are misrepresented! To be calumniated as the executioners of our colleagues! Ah, it is THAT which pierces the heart! To be an object of terror to the enemies of our country,--THAT is noble; but to be an object of terror to the good, the patriotic, to those one loves and reveres,--THAT is the most terrible of human tortures at least, to a susceptible and honest heart!" (Not to fatigue the reader with annotations, I may here observe that nearly every sentiment ascribed in the text to Robespierre is to be found expressed in his various discourses.)

"How I love to hear him!" ejaculated Couthon.

"Hem!" said Payan, with some impatience. "But now to business!"

"Ah, to business!" said Robespierre, with a sinister glance from his bloodshot eyes.

"The time has come," said Payan, "when the safety of the Republic demands a complete concentration of its power. These brawlers of the Comite du Salut Public can only destroy; they cannot construct. They hated you, Maximilien, from the moment you attempted to replace anarchy by institutions. How they mock at the festival which proclaimed the acknowledgment of a Supreme Being: they would have no ruler, even in heaven! Your clear and vigorous intellect saw that, having wrecked an old world, it became necessary to shape a new one. The first step towards construction must be to destroy the destroyers. While we deliberate, your enemies act. Better this very night to attack the handful of gendarmes that guard them, than to confront the battalions they may raise to-morrow."

"No," said Robespierre, who recoiled before the determined spirit of Payan; "I have a better and safer plan. This is the 6th of Thermidor; on the 10th--on the 10th, the Convention go in a body to the Fete Decadaire. A mob shall form; the canonniers, the troops of Henriot, the young pupils de l'Ecole de Mars, shall mix in the crowd. Easy, then, to strike the conspirators whom we shall designate to our agents. On the same day, too, Fouquier and Dumas shall not rest; and a sufficient number of 'the suspect' to maintain salutary awe, and keep up the revolutionary excitement, shall perish by the glaive of the law. The 10th shall be the great day of action. Payan, of these last culprits, have you prepared a list?"

"It is here," returned Payan, laconically, presenting a paper.

Robespierre glanced over it rapidly. "Collot d'Herbois!--good! Barrere!--ay, it was Barrere who said, 'Let us strike: the dead alone never return.' ("Frappons! il n'y a que les morts qui ne revient pas."--Barrere.) Vadier, the savage jester!--good--good! Vadier of the Mountain. He has called me 'Mahomet!' Scelerat! blasphemer!"

"Mahomet is coming to the Mountain," said Couthon, with his silvery accent, as he caressed his spaniel.

"But how is this? I do not see the name of Tallien? Tallien,--I hate that man; that is," said Robespierre, correcting himself with the hypocrisy or self-deceit which those who formed the

council of this phrase-monger exhibited habitually, even among themselves,--"that is, Virtue and our Country hate him! There is no man in the whole Convention who inspires me with the same horror as Tallien. Couthon, I see a thousand Dantons where Tallien sits!"

"Tallien has the only head that belongs to this deformed body," said Payan, whose ferocity and crime, like those of St. Just, were not unaccompanied by talents of no common order. "Were it not better to draw away the head, to win, to buy him, for the time, and dispose of him better when left alone? He may hate YOU, but he loves MONEY!"

"No," said Robespierre, writing down the name of Jean Lambert Tallien, with a slow hand that shaped each letter with stern distinctness; "that one head IS MY NECESSITY!"

"I have a SMALL list here," said Couthon, sweetly,--"a VERY small list. You are dealing with the Mountain; it is necessary to make a few examples in the Plain. These moderates are as straws which follow the wind. They turned against us yesterday in the Convention. A little terror will correct the weathercocks. Poor creatures! I owe them no ill-will; I could weep for them. But before all, la chere patrie!"

The terrible glance of Robespierre devoured the list which the man of sensibility submitted to him. "Ah, these are well chosen; men not of mark enough to be regretted, which is the best policy with the relics of that party; some foreigners too,--yes, THEY have no parents in Paris. These wives and parents are beginning to plead against us. Their complaints demoralise the guillotine!"

"Couthon is right," said Payan; "MY list contains those whom it will be safer to despatch en masse in the crowd assembled at the Fete. HIS list selects those whom we may prudently consign to the law. Shall it not be signed at once?"

"It IS signed," said Robespierre, formally replacing his pen upon the inkstand. "Now to more important matters. These deaths will create no excitement; but Collot d'Herbois, Bourdon De l'Oise, Tallien," the last name Robespierre gasped as he pronounced, "THEY are the heads of parties. This is life or death to us as well as them."

"Their heads are the footstools to your curule chair," said Payan, in a half whisper. "There is no danger if we are bold. Judges, juries, all have been your selection. You seize with one hand the army, with the other, the law. Your voice yet commands the people--"

"The poor and virtuous people," murmured Robespierre.

"And even," continued Payan, "if our design at the Fete fail us, we must not shrink from the resources still at our command. Reflect! Henriot, the general of the Parisian army, furnishes you with troops to arrest; the Jacobin Club with a public to approve; inexorable Dumas with judges who never acquit. We must be bold!"

"And we ARE bold," exclaimed Robespierre, with sudden passion, and striking his hand on the table as he rose, with his crest erect, as a serpent in the act to strike. "In seeing the multitude of vices that the revolutionary torrent mingles with civic virtues, I tremble to be sullied in the eyes of posterity by the impure neighbourhood of these perverse men who thrust themselves among the sincere defenders of humanity. What!--they think to divide the country like a booty! I thank them for their hatred to all that is virtuous and worthy! These men,"--and he grasped the list of Payan in his hand,--"these!--not WE--have drawn the line of demarcation between themselves and the lovers of France!"

"True, we must reign alone!" muttered Payan; "in other words, the state needs unity of will;" working, with his strong practical mind, the corollary from the logic of his word-compelling colleague.

“I will go to the Convention,” continued Robespierre. “I have absented myself too long,--lest I might seem to overawe the Republic that I have created. Away with such scruples! I will prepare the people! I will blast the traitors with a look!”

He spoke with the terrible firmness of the orator that had never failed,--of the moral will that marched like a warrior on the cannon. At that instant he was interrupted; a letter was brought to him: he opened it,--his face fell, he shook from limb to limb; it was one of the anonymous warnings by which the hate and revenge of those yet left alive to threaten tortured the death-giver.

“Thou art smeared,” ran the lines, “with the best blood of France. Read thy sentence! I await the hour when the people shall knell thee to the doomsman. If my hope deceive me, if deferred too long,--hearken, read! This hand, which thine eyes shall search in vain to discover, shall pierce thy heart. I see thee every day,--I am with thee every day. At each hour my arm rises against thy breast. Wretch! live yet awhile, though but for few and miserable days--live to think of me; sleep to dream of me! Thy terror and thy thought of me are the heralds of thy doom. Adieu! this day itself I go forth to riot on thy fears!” (See “Papiers inedites trouves chez Robespierre,” etc., volume ii. page 155. (No. lx.))

“Your lists are not full enough!” said the tyrant, with a hollow voice, as the paper dropped from his trembling hand. “Give them to me!--give them to me! Think again, think again! Barrere is right--right! ‘Frappons! il n’y a que les morts qui ne revient pas!’”

CHAPTER 7.II.

La haine, dans ces lieux, n’a qu’un glaive assassin.

Elle marche dans l’ombre.--La Harpe, “Jeanne de Naples,” Act iv. sc. 1.

(Hate, in these regions, has but the sword of the assassin. She moves in the shade.)

While such the designs and fears of Maximilien Robespierre, common danger, common hatred, whatever was yet left of mercy or of virtue in the agents of the Revolution, served to unite strange opposites in hostility to the universal death-dealer. There was, indeed, an actual conspiracy at work against him among men little less bespattered than himself with innocent blood. But that conspiracy would have been idle of itself, despite the abilities of Tallien and Barras (the only men whom it comprised, worthy, by foresight and energy, the names of “leaders”). The sure and destroying elements that gathered round the tyrant were Time and Nature; the one, which he no longer suited; the other, which he had outraged and stirred up in the human breast. The most atrocious party of the Revolution, the followers of Hebert, gone to his last account, the butcher-atheists, who, in desecrating heaven and earth, still arrogated inviolable sanctity to themselves, were equally enraged at the execution of their filthy chief, and the proclamation of a Supreme Being. The populace, brutal as it had been, started as from a dream of blood, when their huge idol, Danton, no longer filled the stage of terror, rendering crime popular by that combination of careless frankness and eloquent energy which endears their heroes to the herd. The glaive of the guillotine had turned against THEMSELVES. They had yelled and shouted, and sung and danced, when the venerable age, or the gallant youth, of aristocracy or letters, passed by their streets in the dismal tumbrils; but they shut up their shops, and murmured to each other, when their own order was invaded, and tailors and cobblers, and

journeymen and labourers, were huddled off to the embraces of the "Holy Mother Guillotine," with as little ceremony as if they had been the Montmorencies or the La Tremouilles, the Malesherbes or the Lavoisiers. "At this time," said Couthon, justly, "Les ombres de Danton, d'Hebert, de Chaumette, se promenant parmi nous!" (The shades of Danton, Hebert, and Chaumette walk amongst us.)

Among those who had shared the doctrines, and who now dreaded the fate of the atheist Hebert, was the painter, Jean Nicot. Mortified and enraged to find that, by the death of his patron, his career was closed; and that, in the zenith of the Revolution for which he had laboured, he was lurking in caves and cellars, more poor, more obscure, more despicable than he had been at the commencement,--not daring to exercise even his art, and fearful every hour that his name would swell the lists of the condemned, --he was naturally one of the bitterest enemies of Robespierre and his government. He held secret meetings with Collot d'Herbois, who was animated by the same spirit; and with the creeping and furtive craft that characterised his abilities, he contrived, undetected, to disseminate tracts and invectives against the Dictator, and to prepare, amidst "the poor and virtuous people," the train for the grand explosion. But still so firm to the eyes, even of profounder politicians than Jean Nicot, appeared the sullen power of the incorruptible Maximilien; so timorous was the movement against him,--that Nicot, in common with many others, placed his hopes rather in the dagger of the assassin than the revolt of the multitude. But Nicot, though not actually a coward, shrunk himself from braving the fate of the martyr; he had sense enough to see that, though all parties might rejoice in the assassination, all parties would probably concur in beheading the assassin. He had not the virtue to become a Brutus. His object was to inspire a proxy-Brutus; and in the centre of that inflammable population this was no improbable hope.

Amongst those loudest and sternest against the reign of blood; amongst those most disenchanted of the Revolution; amongst those most appalled by its excesses,--was, as might be expected, the Englishman, Clarence Glyndon. The wit and accomplishments, the uncertain virtues that had lighted with fitful gleams the mind of Camille Desmoulins, had fascinated Glyndon more than the qualities of any other agent in the Revolution. And when (for Camille Desmoulins had a heart, which seemed dead or dormant in most of his contemporaries) that vivid child of genius and of error, shocked at the massacre of the Girondins, and repentant of his own efforts against them, began to rouse the serpent malice of Robespierre by new doctrines of mercy and toleration, Glyndon espoused his views with his whole strength and soul. Camille Desmoulins perished, and Glyndon, hopeless at once of his own life and the cause of humanity, from that time sought only the occasion of flight from the devouring Golgotha. He had two lives to heed besides his own; for them he trembled, and for them he schemed and plotted the means of escape. Though Glyndon hated the principles, the party (None were more opposed to the Hebertists than Camille Desmoulins and his friends. It is curious and amusing to see these leaders of the mob, calling the mob "the people" one day, and the "canaille" the next, according as it suits them. "I know," says Camille, "that they (the Hebertists) have all the canaille with them."--(Ils ont toute la canaille pour eux.)), and the vices of Nicot, he yet extended to the painter's penury the means of subsistence; and Jean Nicot, in return, designed to exalt Glyndon to that very immortality of a Brutus from which he modestly recoiled himself. He founded his designs on the physical courage, on the wild and unsettled fancies of the English artist, and on the vehement hate and indignant loathing with which he openly regarded the government of Maximilien.

At the same hour, on the same day in July, in which Robespierre conferred (as we have seen) with his allies, two persons were seated in a small room in one of the streets leading out of the Rue St. Honore; the one, a man, appeared listening impatiently, and with a sullen brow, to his companion, a woman of singular beauty, but with a bold and reckless expression, and her face as she spoke was animated by the passions of a half-savage and vehement nature.

“Englishman,” said the woman, “beware!--you know that, whether in flight or at the place of death, I would brave all to be by your side,--you know THAT! Speak!”

“Well, Fillide; did I ever doubt your fidelity?”

“Doubt it you cannot,-- betray it you may. You tell me that in flight you must have a companion besides myself, and that companion is a female. It shall not be!”

“Shall not!”

“It shall not!” repeated Fillide, firmly, and folding her arms across her breast. Before Glyndon could reply, a slight knock at the door was heard, and Nicot opened the latch and entered.

Fillide sank into her chair, and, leaning her face on her hands, appeared unheeding of the intruder and the conversation that ensued.

“I cannot bid thee good-day, Glyndon,” said Nicot, as in his sans-culotte fashion he strode towards the artist, his ragged hat on his head, his hands in his pockets, and the beard of a week’s growth upon his chin,--“I cannot bid thee good-day; for while the tyrant lives, evil is every sun that sheds its beams on France.”

“It is true; what then? We have sown the wind, we must reap the whirlwind.”

“And yet,” said Nicot, apparently not heeding the reply, and as if musingly to himself, “it is strange to think that the butcher is as mortal as the butchered; that his life hangs on as slight a thread; that between the cuticle and the heart there is as short a passage,--that, in short, one blow can free France and redeem mankind!”

Glyndon surveyed the speaker with a careless and haughty scorn, and made no answer.

“And,” proceeded Nicot, “I have sometimes looked round for the man born for this destiny, and whenever I have done so, my steps have led me hither!”

“Should they not rather have led thee to the side of Maximilien Robespierre?” said Glyndon, with a sneer.

“No,” returned Nicot, coldly,--“no; for I am a ‘suspect:’ I could not mix with his train; I could not approach within a hundred yards of his person, but I should be seized; YOU, as yet, are safe. Hear me!”--and his voice became earnest and expressive,--“hear me! There seems danger in this action; there is none. I have been with Collot d’Herbois and Billaud-Varennes; they will hold him harmless who strikes the blow; the populace would run to thy support; the Convention would hail thee as their deliverer, the--”

“Hold, man! How darest thou couple my name with the act of an assassin? Let the tocsin sound from yonder tower, to a war between Humanity and the Tyrant, and I will not be the last in the field; but liberty never yet acknowledged a defender in a felon.”

There was something so brave and noble in Glyndon’s voice, mien, and manner, as he thus spoke, that Nicot at once was silenced; at once he saw that he had misjudged the man.

“No,” said Fillide, lifting her face from her hands,--“no! your friend has a wiser scheme in preparation; he would leave you wolves to mangle each other. He is right; but--”

“Flight!” exclaimed Nicot; “is it possible? Flight; how?--when? --by what means? All France begirt with spies and guards! Flight! would to Heaven it were in our power!”

“Dost thou, too, desire to escape the blessed Revolution?”

“Desire! Oh!” cried Nicot, suddenly, and, falling down, he clasped Glyndon’s knees,--”oh, save me with thyself! My life is a torture; every moment the guillotine frowns before me. I know that my hours are numbered; I know that the tyrant waits but his time to write my name in his inexorable list; I know that Rene Dumas, the judge who never pardons, has, from the first, resolved upon my death. Oh, Glyndon, by our old friendship, by our common art, by thy loyal English faith and good English heart, let me share thy flight!”

“If thou wilt, so be it.”

“Thanks!--my whole life shall thank thee. But how hast thou prepared the means, the passports, the disguise, the--”

“I will tell thee. Thou knowest C--, of the Convention,--he has power, and he is covetous. ‘Qu’on me meprise, pourvu que je dine’ (Let them despise me, provided that I dine.), said he, when reproached for his avarice.”

“Well?”

“By the help of this sturdy republican, who has friends enough in the Comite, I have obtained the means necessary for flight; I have purchased them. For a consideration I can procure thy passport also.”

“Thy riches, then, are not in assignats?”

“No; I have gold enough for us all.”

And here Glyndon, beckoning Nicot into the next room, first briefly and rapidly detailed to him the plan proposed, and the disguises to be assumed conformably to the passports, and then added, “In return for the service I render thee, grant me one favour, which I think is in thy power. Thou rememberest Viola Pisani?”

“Ah,--remember, yes!--and the lover with whom she fled.”

“And FROM whom she is a fugitive now.”

“Indeed--what!--I understand. Sacre bleu! but you are a lucky fellow, cher confrere.”

“Silence, man! with thy eternal prate of brotherhood and virtue, thou seemest never to believe in one kindly action, or one virtuous thought!”

Nicot bit his lip, and replied sullenly, “Experience is a great undeceiver. Humph! What service can I do thee with regard to the Italian?”

“I have been accessory to her arrival in this city of snares and pitfalls. I cannot leave her alone amidst dangers from which neither innocence nor obscurity is a safeguard. In your blessed Republic, a good and unsuspected citizen, who casts a desire on any woman, maid or wife, has but to say, ‘Be mine, or I denounce you!’ In a word, Viola must share our flight.”

“What so easy? I see your passports provide for her.”

“What so easy? What so difficult? This Fillide--would that I had never seen her!--would that I had never enslaved my soul to my senses! The love of an uneducated, violent, unprincipled woman, opens with a heaven, to merge in a hell! She is jealous as all the Furies; she will not hear of a female companion; and when once she sees the beauty of Viola!--I tremble to think of it. She is capable of any excess in the storm of her passions.”

“Aha, I know what such women are! My wife, Beatrice Sacchini, whom I took from Naples, when I failed with this very Viola, divorced me when my money failed, and, as the mistress of a judge, passes me in her carriage while I crawl through the streets. Plague on her!--but patience, patience! such is the lot of virtue. Would I were Robespierre for a day!”

“Cease these tirades!” exclaimed Glyndon, impatiently; “and to the point. What would you advise?”

“Leave your Fillide behind.”

“Leave her to her own ignorance; leave her unprotected even by the mind; leave her in the Saturnalia of Rape and Murder? No! I have sinned against her once. But come what may, I will not so basely desert one who, with all her errors, trusted her fate to my love.”

“You deserted her at Marseilles.”

“True; but I left her in safety, and I did not then believe her love to be so deep and faithful. I left her gold, and I imagined she would be easily consoled; but since THEN WE HAVE KNOWN DANGER TOGETHER! And now to leave her alone to that danger which she would never have incurred but for devotion to me!--no, that is impossible. A project occurs to me. Canst thou not say that thou hast a sister, a relative, or a benefactress, whom thou wouldst save? Can we not--till we have left France--make Fillide believe that Viola is one in whom THOU only art interested; and whom, for thy sake only, I permit to share in our escape?”

“Ha, well thought of!--certainly!”

“I will then appear to yield to Fillide’s wishes, and resign the project, which she so resents, of saving the innocent object of her frantic jealousy. You, meanwhile, shall yourself entreat Fillide to intercede with me to extend the means of escape to--”

“To a lady (she knows I have no sister) who has aided me in my distress. Yes, I will manage all, never fear. One word more,-- what has become of that Zanoni?”

“Talk not of him,--I know not.”

“Does he love this girl still?”

“It would seem so. She is his wife, the mother of his infant, who is with her.”

“Wife!--mother! He loves her. Aha! And why--”

“No questions now. I will go and prepare Viola for the flight; you, meanwhile, return to Fillide.”

“But the address of the Neapolitan? It is necessary I should know, lest Fillide inquire.”

“Rue M-- T--, No. 27. Adieu.”

Glyndon seized his hat and hastened from the house.

Nicot, left alone, seemed for a few moments buried in thought. “Oho,” he muttered to himself, “can I not turn all this to my account? Can I not avenge myself on thee, Zanoni, as I have so often sworn,--through thy wife and child? Can I not possess myself of thy gold, thy passports, and thy Fillide, hot Englishman, who wouldst humble me with thy loathed benefits, and who hast chucked me thine alms as to a beggar? And Fillide, I love her: and thy gold, I love THAT more! Puppets, I move your strings!”

He passed slowly into the chamber where Fillide yet sat, with gloomy thought on her brow and tears standing in her dark eyes. She looked up eagerly as the door opened, and turned from the rugged face of Nicot with an impatient movement of disappointment.

“Glyndon,” said the painter, drawing a chair to Fillide’s, “has left me to enliven your solitude, fair Italian. He is not jealous of the ugly Nicot!--ha, ha!--yet Nicot loved thee well once, when his fortunes were more fair. But enough of such past follies.”

“Your friend, then, has left the house. Whither? Ah, you look away; you falter,--you cannot meet my eyes! Speak! I implore, I command thee, speak!”

“Enfant! And what dost thou fear?”

“FEAR!--yes, alas, I fear!” said the Italian; and her whole frame seemed to shrink into itself as she fell once more back into her seat.

Then, after a pause, she tossed the long hair from her eyes, and, starting up abruptly, paced the room with disordered strides. At length she stopped opposite to Nicot, laid her hand on his arm, drew him towards an escritoire, which she unlocked, and, opening a well, pointed to the gold that

lay within, and said, "Thou art poor,--thou lovest money; take what thou wilt, but undeceive me. Who is this woman whom thy friend visits,--and does he love her?"

Nicot's eyes sparkled, and his hands opened and clenched, and clenched and opened, as he gazed upon the coins. But reluctantly resisting the impulse, he said, with an affected bitterness, "Thinkest thou to bribe me?--if so, it cannot be with gold. But what if he does love a rival; what if he betrays thee; what if, wearied by thy jealousies, he designs in his flight to leave thee behind,--would such knowledge make thee happier?"

"Yes!" exclaimed the Italian, fiercely; "yes, for it would be happiness to hate and to be avenged! Oh, thou knowest not how sweet is hatred to those who have really loved!"

"But wilt thou swear, if I reveal to thee the secret, that thou wilt not betray me,--that thou wilt not fall, as women do, into weak tears and fond reproaches, when thy betrayer returns?"

"Tears, reproaches! Revenge hides itself in smiles!"

"Thou art a brave creature!" said Nicot, almost admiringly. "One condition more: thy lover designs to fly with his new love, to leave thee to thy fate; if I prove this to thee, and if I give thee revenge against thy rival, wilt thou fly with me? I love thee!--I will wed thee!"

Fillide's eyes flashed fire; she looked at him with unutterable disdain, and was silent.

Nicot felt he had gone too far; and with that knowledge of the evil part of our nature which his own heart and association with crime had taught him, he resolved to trust the rest to the passions of the Italian, when raised to the height to which he was prepared to lead them.

"Pardon me," he said; "my love made me too presumptuous; and yet it is only that love,--my sympathy for thee, beautiful and betrayed, that can induce me to wrong, with my revelations, one whom I have regarded as a brother. I can depend upon thine oath to conceal all from Glyndon?"

"On my oath and my wrongs and my mountain blood!"

"Enough! get thy hat and mantle, and follow me."

As Fillide left the room, Nicot's eyes again rested on the gold; it was much,--much more than he had dared to hope for; and as he peered into the well and opened the drawers, he perceived a packet of letters in the well-known hand of Camille Desmoulins. He seized--he opened the packet; his looks brightened as he glanced over a few sentences. "This would give fifty Glyndons to the guillotine!" he muttered, and thrust the packet into his bosom.

O artist!--O haunted one!--O erring genius!--behold the two worst foes,--the False Ideal that knows no God, and the False Love that burns from the corruption of the senses, and takes no lustre from the soul!

CHAPTER 7.III.

Liebe sonnt das Reich der Nacht. "Der Triumph der Liebe."
(Love illumines the realm of Night.)

Letter from Zanoni to Mejnour.
Paris.

Dost thou remember in the old time, when the Beautiful yet dwelt in Greece, how we two, in the vast Athenian Theatre, witnessed the birth of Words as undying as ourselves? Dost thou remember the thrill of terror that ran through that mighty audience, when the wild Cassandra burst from her awful silence to shriek to her relentless god! How ghastly, at the entrance of the

House of Atreus, about to become her tomb, rang out her exclamations of foreboding woe: "Dwelling abhorred of heaven!--human shamble- house and floor blood-bespattered!" (Aesch. "Agam." 1098.) Dost thou remember how, amidst the breathless awe of those assembled thousands, I drew close to thee, and whispered, "Verily, no prophet like the poet! This scene of fabled horror comes to me as a dream, shadowing forth some likeness in my own remoter future!" As I enter this slaughter-house that scene returns to me, and I hearken to the voice of Cassandra ringing in my ears. A solemn and warning dread gathers round me, as if I too were come to find a grave, and "the Net of Hades" had already entangled me in its web! What dark treasure-houses of vicissitude and woe are our memories become! What our lives, but the chronicles of unrelenting death! It seems to me as yesterday when I stood in the streets of this city of the Gaul, as they shone with plumed chivalry, and the air rustled with silken braveries. Young Louis, the monarch and the lover, was victor of the Tournament at the Carousel; and all France felt herself splendid in the splendour of her gorgeous chief! Now there is neither throne nor altar; and what is in their stead? I see it yonder--the GUILLOTINE! It is dismal to stand amidst the ruins of mouldering cities, to startle the serpent and the lizard amidst the wrecks of Persepolis and Thebes; but more dismal still to stand as I--the stranger from Empires that have ceased to be-- stand now amidst the yet ghastlier ruins of Law and Order, the shattering of mankind themselves! Yet here, even here, Love, the Beautifier, that hath led my steps, can walk with unshrinking hope through the wilderness of Death. Strange is the passion that makes a world in itself, that individualises the One amidst the Multitude; that, through all the changes of my solemn life, yet survives, though ambition and hate and anger are dead; the one solitary angel, hovering over a universe of tombs on its two tremulous and human wings,--Hope and Fear!

How is it, Mejnour, that, as my diviner art abandoned me,--as, in my search for Viola, I was aided but by the ordinary instincts of the merest mortal,--how is it that I have never desponded, that I have felt in every difficulty the prevailing prescience that we should meet at last? So cruelly was every vestige of her flight concealed from me,--so suddenly, so secretly had she fled, that all the spies, all the authorities of Venice, could give me no clew. All Italy I searched in vain! Her young home at Naples!-- how still, in its humble chambers, there seemed to linger the fragrance of her presence! All the sublimest secrets of our lore failed me,--failed to bring her soul visible to mine; yet morning and night, thou lone and childless one, morning and night, detached from myself, I can commune with my child! There in that most blessed, typical, and mysterious of all relations, Nature herself appears to supply what Science would refuse. Space cannot separate the father's watchful soul from the cradle of his first-born! I know not of its resting-place and home,--my visions picture not the land,--only the small and tender life to which all space is as yet the heritage! For to the infant, before reason dawns,--before man's bad passions can dim the essence that it takes from the element it hath left, there is no peculiar country, no native city, and no mortal language. Its soul as yet is the denizen of all airs and of every world; and in space its soul meets with mine,--the child communes with the father! Cruel and forsaking one,--thou for whom I left the wisdom of the spheres; thou whose fatal dower has been the weakness and terrors of humanity,--couldst thou think that young soul less safe on earth because I would lead it ever more up to heaven! Didst thou think that I could have wronged mine own? Didst thou not know that in its serenest eyes the life that I gave it spoke to warn, to upbraid the mother who would bind it to the darkness and pangs of the prison-house of clay? Didst thou not feel that it was I who, permitted by the Heavens, shielded it from suffering and

disease? And in its wondrous beauty, I blessed the holy medium through which, at last, my spirit might confer with thine!

And how have I tracked them hither? I learned that thy pupil had been at Venice. I could not trace the young and gentle neophyte of Parthenope in the description of the haggard and savage visitor who had come to Viola before she fled; but when I would have summoned his IDEA before me, it refused to obey; and I knew then that his fate had become entwined with Viola's. I have tracked him, then, to this Lazar House. I arrived but yesterday; I have not yet discovered him.

...

I have just returned from their courts of justice,--dens where tigers arraign their prey. I find not whom I would seek. They are saved as yet; but I recognise in the crimes of mortals the dark wisdom of the Everlasting. Mejnour, I see here, for the first time, how majestic and beauteous a thing is death! Of what sublime virtues we robbed ourselves, when, in the thirst for virtue, we attained the art by which we can refuse to die! When in some happy clime, where to breathe is to enjoy, the charnel-house swallows up the young and fair; when in the noble pursuit of knowledge, Death comes to the student, and shuts out the enchanted land which was opening to his gaze,--how natural for us to desire to live; how natural to make perpetual life the first object of research! But here, from my tower of time, looking over the darksome past, and into the starry future, I learn how great hearts feel what sweetness and glory there is to die for the things they love! I saw a father sacrificing himself for his son; he was subjected to charges which a word of his could dispel,--he was mistaken for his boy. With what joy he seized the error, confessed the noble crimes of valour and fidelity which the son had indeed committed, and went to the doom, exulting that his death saved the life he had given, not in vain! I saw women, young, delicate, in the bloom of their beauty; they had vowed themselves to the cloister. Hands smeared with the blood of saints opened the gate that had shut them from the world, and bade them go forth, forget their vows, forswear the Divine one these demons would depose, find lovers and helpmates, and be free. And some of these young hearts had loved, and even, though in struggles, loved yet. Did they forswear the vow? Did they abandon the faith? Did even love allure them? Mejnour, with one voice, they preferred to die. And whence comes this courage?--because such HEARTS LIVE IN SOME MORE ABSTRACT AND HOLIER LIFE THAN THEIR OWN. BUT TO LIVE FOREVER UPON THIS EARTH IS TO LIVE IN NOTHING DIVINER THAN OURSELVES. Yes, even amidst this gory butchery, God, the Ever-living, vindicates to man the sanctity of His servant, Death!

...

Again I have seen thee in spirit; I have seen and blessed thee, my sweet child! Dost thou not know me also in thy dreams? Dost thou not feel the beating of my heart through the veil of thy rosy slumbers? Dost thou not hear the wings of the brighter beings that I yet can conjure around thee, to watch, to nourish, and to save? And when the spell fades at thy waking, when thine eyes open to the day, will they not look round for me, and ask thy mother, with their mute eloquence, "Why she has robbed thee of a father?"

Woman, dost thou not repent thee? Flying from imaginary fears, hast thou not come to the very lair of terror, where Danger sits visible and incarnate? Oh, if we could but meet, wouldst thou not fall upon the bosom thou hast so wronged, and feel, poor wanderer amidst the storms, as if thou hadst regained the shelter? Mejnour, still my researches fail me. I mingle with all men, even their judges and their spies, but I cannot yet gain the clew. I know that she is here. I know it by an instinct; the breath of my child seems warmer and more familiar.

They peer at me with venomous looks, as I pass through their streets. With a glance I disarm their malice, and fascinate the basilisks. Everywhere I see the track and scent the presence of the Ghostly One that dwells on the Threshold, and whose victims are the souls that would ASPIRE, and can only FEAR. I see its dim shapelessness going before the men of blood, and marshalling their way. Robespierre passed me with his furtive step. Those eyes of horror were gnawing into his heart. I looked down upon their senate; the grim Phantom sat cowering on its floor. It hath taken up its abode in the city of Dread. And what in truth are these would-be builders of a new world? Like the students who have vainly struggled after our supreme science, they have attempted what is beyond their power; they have passed from this solid earth of usages and forms into the land of shadow, and its loathsome keeper has seized them as its prey. I looked into the tyrant's shuddering soul, as it trembled past me. There, amidst the ruins of a thousand systems which aimed at virtue, sat Crime, and shivered at its desolation. Yet this man is the only Thinker, the only Aspirant, amongst them all. He still looks for a future of peace and mercy, to begin,--ay! at what date? When he has swept away every foe. Fool! new foes spring from every drop of blood. Led by the eyes of the Unutterable, he is walking to his doom.

O Viola, thy innocence protects thee! Thou whom the sweet humanities of love shut out even from the dreams of aerial and spiritual beauty, making thy heart a universe of visions fairer than the wanderer over the rosy Hesperus can survey,--shall not the same pure affection encompass thee, even here, with a charmed atmosphere, and terror itself fall harmless on a life too innocent for wisdom?

CHAPTER 7.IV.

Ombra piu che di notte, in cui di luce
Raggio misto non e;

...

Ne piu il palagio appar, ne piu le sue
Vestigia; ne dir puossi--egli qui fue.--“Ger. Lib., canto xvi.-lxix.

(Darkness greater than of night, in which not a ray of light is mixed;...The palace appears no more: not even a vestige,--nor can one say that it has been.)

The clubs are noisy with clamorous frenzy; the leaders are grim with schemes. Black Henriot flies here and there, muttering to his armed troops, “Robespierre, your beloved, is in danger!” Robespierre stalks perturbed, his list of victims swelling every hour. Tallien, the Macduff to the doomed Macbeth, is whispering courage to his pale conspirators. Along the streets heavily roll the tumbrils. The shops are closed,--the people are gorged with gore, and will lap no more. And night after night, to the eighty theatres flock the children of the Revolution, to laugh at the quips of comedy, and weep gentle tears over imaginary woes!

In a small chamber, in the heart of the city, sits the mother, watching over her child. It is quiet, happy noon; the sunlight, broken by the tall roofs in the narrow street, comes yet through the open casement, the impartial playfellow of the air, gleesome alike in temple and prison, hall and hovel; as golden and as blithe, whether it laugh over the first hour of life, or quiver in its gay delight on the terror and agony of the last! The child, where it lay at the feet of Viola, stretched

out its dimpled hands as if to clasp the dancing motes that revelled in the beam. The mother turned her eyes from the glory; it saddened her yet more. She turned and sighed.

Is this the same Viola who bloomed fairer than their own Idalia under the skies of Greece? How changed! How pale and worn! She sat listlessly, her arms dropping on her knee; the smile that was habitual to her lips was gone. A heavy, dull despondency, as if the life of life were no more, seemed to weigh down her youth, and make it weary of that happy sun! In truth, her existence had languished away since it had wandered, as some melancholy stream, from the source that fed it. The sudden enthusiasm of fear or superstition that had almost, as if still in the unconscious movements of a dream, led her to fly from Zanoni, had ceased from the day which dawned upon her in a foreign land. Then--there-- she felt that in the smile she had evermore abandoned lived her life. She did not repent,--she would not have recalled the impulse that winged her flight. Though the enthusiasm was gone, the superstition yet remained; she still believed she had saved her child from that dark and guilty sorcery, concerning which the traditions of all lands are prodigal, but in none do they find such credulity, or excite such dread, as in the South of Italy. This impression was confirmed by the mysterious conversations of Glyndon, and by her own perception of the fearful change that had passed over one who represented himself as the victim of the enchanters. She did not, therefore, repent; but her very volition seemed gone.

On their arrival at Paris, Viola saw her companion--the faithful wife--no more. Ere three weeks were passed, husband and wife had ceased to live.

And now, for the first time, the drudgeries of this hard earth claimed the beautiful Neapolitan. In that profession, giving voice and shape to poetry and song, in which her first years were passed, there is, while it lasts, an excitement in the art that lifts it from the labour of a calling. Hovering between two lives, the Real and Ideal, dwells the life of music and the stage. But that life was lost evermore to the idol of the eyes and ears of Naples. Lifted to the higher realm of passionate love, it seemed as if the fictitious genius which represents the thoughts of others was merged in the genius that grows all thought itself. It had been the worst infidelity to the Lost, to have descended again to live on the applause of others. And so-- for she would not accept alms from Glyndon--so, by the commonest arts, the humblest industry which the sex knows, alone and unseen, she who had slept on the breast of Zanoni found a shelter for their child. As when, in the noble verse prefixed to this chapter, Armida herself has destroyed her enchanted palace,--not a vestige of that bower, raised of old by Poetry and Love, remained to say, "It had been!"

And the child avenged the father; it bloomed, it thrived,--it waxed strong in the light of life. But still it seemed haunted and preserved by some other being than her own. In its sleep there was that slumber, so deep and rigid, which a thunderbolt could not have disturbed; and in such sleep often it moved its arms, as to embrace the air: often its lips stirred with murmured sounds of indistinct affection,--NOT FOR HER; and all the while upon its cheeks a hue of such celestial bloom, upon its lips a smile of such mysterious joy! Then, when it waked, its eyes did not turn first to HER,--wistful, earnest, wandering, they roved around, to fix on her pale face, at last, in mute sorrow and reproach.

Never had Viola felt before how mighty was her love for Zanoni; how thought, feeling, heart, soul, life,--all lay crushed and dormant in the icy absence to which she had doomed herself! She heard not the roar without, she felt not one amidst those stormy millions,--worlds of excitement labouring through every hour. Only when Glyndon, haggard, wan, and spectre-like, glided in, day after day, to visit her, did the fair daughter of the careless South know how heavy and

universal was the Death-Air that girt her round. Sublime in her passive unconsciousness,--her mechanic life,--she sat, and feared not, in the den of the Beasts of Prey.

The door of the room opened abruptly, and Glyndon entered. His manner was more agitated than usual.

“Is it you, Clarence?” she said in her soft, languid tones. “You are before the hour I expected you.”

“Who can count on his hours at Paris?” returned Glyndon, with a frightful smile. “Is it not enough that I am here! Your apathy in the midst of these sorrows appalls me. You say calmly, ‘Farewell;’ calmly you bid me, ‘Welcome!’--as if in every corner there was not a spy, and as if with every day there was not a massacre!”

“Pardon me! But in these walls lies my world. I can hardly credit all the tales you tell me. Everything here, save THAT,” and she pointed to the infant, “seems already so lifeless, that in the tomb itself one could scarcely less heed the crimes that are done without.”

Glyndon paused for a few moments, and gazed with strange and mingled feelings upon that face and form, still so young, and yet so invested with that saddest of all repose,--when the heart feels old.

“O Viola,” said he, at last, and in a voice of suppressed passion, “was it thus I ever thought to see you,--ever thought to feel for you, when we two first met in the gay haunts of Naples? Ah, why then did you refuse my love; or why was mine not worthy of you? Nay, shrink not!--let me touch your hand. No passion so sweet as that youthful love can return to me again. I feel for you but as a brother for some younger and lonely sister. With you, in your presence, sad though it be, I seem to breathe back the purer air of my early life. Here alone, except in scenes of turbulence and tempest, the Phantom ceases to pursue me. I forget even the Death that stalks behind, and haunts me as my shadow. But better days may be in store for us yet. Viola, I at last begin dimly to perceive how to baffle and subdue the Phantom that has cursed my life,--it is to brave, and defy it. In sin and in riot, as I have told thee, it haunts me not. But I comprehend now what Mejnour said in his dark apothegms, ‘that I should dread the spectre most WHEN UNSEEN.’ In virtuous and calm resolution it appears,--ay, I behold it now; there, there, with its livid eyes!”--and the drops fell from his brow. “But it shall no longer daunt me from that resolution. I face it, and it gradually darkens back into the shade.” He paused, and his eyes dwelt with a terrible exultation upon the sunlit space; then, with a heavy and deep-drawn breath, he resumed, “Viola, I have found the means of escape. We will leave this city. In some other land we will endeavour to comfort each other, and forget the past.”

“No,” said Viola, calmly; “I have no further wish to stir, till I am born hence to the last resting-place. I dreamed of him last night, Clarence!--dreamed of him for the first time since we parted; and, do not mock me, methought that he forgave the deserter, and called me ‘Wife.’ That dream hallows the room. Perhaps it will visit me again before I die.”

“Talk not of him,--of the demi-fiend!” cried Glyndon, fiercely, and stamping his foot. “Thank the Heavens for any fate that hath rescued thee from him!”

“Hush!” said Viola, gravely. And as she was about to proceed, her eye fell upon the child. It was standing in the very centre of that slanting column of light which the sun poured into the chamber; and the rays seemed to surround it as a halo, and settled, crown-like, on the gold of its shining hair. In its small shape, so exquisitely modelled, in its large, steady, tranquil eyes, there was something that awed, while it charmed the mother’s pride. It gazed on Glyndon as he spoke, with a look which almost might have seemed disdain, and which Viola, at least, interpreted as a defence of the Absent, stronger than her own lips could frame.

Glyndon broke the pause.

“Thou wouldst stay, for what? To betray a mother’s duty! If any evil happen to thee here, what becomes of thine infant? Shall it be brought up an orphan, in a country that has desecrated thy religion, and where human charity exists no more? Ah, weep, and clasp it to thy bosom; but tears do not protect and save.”

“Thou hast conquered, my friend, I will fly with thee.”

“To-morrow night, then, be prepared. I will bring thee the necessary disguises.”

And Glyndon then proceeded to sketch rapidly the outline of the path they were to take, and the story they were to tell. Viola listened, but scarcely comprehended; he pressed her hand to his heart and departed.

CHAPTER 7.V.

Van seco pur anco

Sdegno ed Amor, quasi due Veltri al fianco.--“Ger. Lib.” cant. xx. cxvii.

(There went with him still Disdain and Love, like two greyhounds side by side.)

Glyndon did not perceive, as he hurried from the house, two forms crouching by the angle of the wall. He saw still the spectre gliding by his side; but he beheld not the yet more poisonous eyes of human envy and woman’s jealousy that glared on his retreating footsteps.

Nicot advanced to the house; Fillide followed him in silence. The painter, an old sans-culotte, knew well what language to assume to the porter. He beckoned the latter from his lodge, “How is this, citizen? Thou harbourest a ‘suspect.’”

“Citizen, you terrify me!--if so, name him.”

“It is not a man; a refugee, an Italian woman, lodges here.”

“Yes, au troisieme,--the door to the left. But what of her?--she cannot be dangerous, poor child!”

“Citizen, beware! Dost thou dare to pity her?”

“I? No, no, indeed. But--”

“Speak the truth! Who visits her?”

“No one but an Englishman.”

“That is it,--an Englishman, a spy of Pitt and Coburg.”

“Just Heaven! is it possible?”

“How, citizen! dost thou speak of Heaven? Thou must be an aristocrat!”

“No, indeed; it was but an old bad habit, and escaped me unawares.”

“How often does the Englishman visit her?”

“Daily.”

Fillide uttered an exclamation.

She never stirs out,” said the porter. “Her sole occupations are in work, and care of her infant.”

“Her infant!”

Fillide made a bound forward. Nicot in vain endeavoured to arrest her. She sprang up the stairs; she paused not till she was before the door indicated by the porter; it stood ajar, she entered, she stood at the threshold, and beheld that face, still so lovely! The sight of so much beauty left her hopeless. And the child, over whom the mother bent!--she who had never been a

mother!--she uttered no sound; the furies were at work within her breast. Viola turned, and saw her, and, terrified by the strange apparition, with features that expressed the deadliest hate and scorn and vengeance, uttered a cry, and snatched the child to her bosom. The Italian laughed aloud,--turned, descended, and, gaining the spot where Nicot still conversed with the frightened porter drew him from the house. When they were in the open street, she halted abruptly, and said, "Avenge me, and name thy price!"

"My price, sweet one! is but permission to love thee. Thou wilt fly with me to-morrow night; thou wilt possess thyself of the passports and the plan."

"And they--"

"Shall, before then, find their asylum in the Conciergerie. The guillotine shall requite thy wrongs."

"Do this, and I am satisfied," said Fillide, firmly.

And they spoke no more till they regained the house. But when she there, looking up to the dull building, saw the windows of the room which the belief of Glyndon's love had once made a paradise, the tiger relented at the heart; something of the woman gushed back upon her nature, dark and savage as it was. She pressed the arm on which she leaned convulsively, and exclaimed, "No, no! not him! denounce her,--let her perish; but I have slept on HIS bosom,--not HIM!"

"It shall be as thou wilt," said Nicot, with a devil's sneer; "but he must be arrested for the moment. No harm shall happen to him, for no accuser shall appear. But her,--thou wilt not relent for her?"

Fillide turned upon him her eyes, and their dark glance was sufficient answer.

CHAPTER 7.VI.

In poppa quella

Che guidar gli dovea, fatal Donsella.--"Ger. Lib." cant. xv. 3.

(By the prow was the fatal lady ordained to be the guide.)

The Italian did not overrate that craft of simulation proverbial with her country and her sex. Not a word, not a look, that day revealed to Glyndon the deadly change that had converted devotion into hate. He himself, indeed, absorbed in his own schemes, and in reflections on his own strange destiny, was no nice observer. But her manner, milder and more subdued than usual, produced a softening effect upon his meditations towards the evening; and he then began to converse with her on the certain hope of escape, and on the future that would await them in less unhallowed lands.

"And thy fair friend," said Fillide, with an averted eye and a false smile, "who was to be our companion?--thou hast resigned her, Nicot tells me, in favour of one in whom he is interested. Is it so?"

"He told thee this!" returned Glyndon, evasively. "Well! does the change content thee?"

"Traitor!" muttered Fillide; and she rose suddenly, approached him, parted the long hair from his forehead caressingly, and pressed her lips convulsively on his brow.

"This were too fair a head for the doomsman," said she, with a slight laugh, and, turning away, appeared occupied in preparations for their departure.

The next morning, when he rose, Glyndon did not see the Italian; she was absent from the house when he left it. It was necessary that he should once more visit C-- before his final Departure, not only to arrange for Nicot's participation in the flight, but lest any suspicion should have arisen to thwart or endanger the plan he had adopted. C--, though not one of the immediate coterie of Robespierre, and indeed secretly hostile to him, had possessed the art of keeping well with each faction as it rose to power. Sprung from the dregs of the populace, he had, nevertheless, the grace and vivacity so often found impartially amongst every class in France. He had contrived to enrich himself--none knew how--in the course of his rapid career. He became, indeed, ultimately one of the wealthiest proprietors of Paris, and at that time kept a splendid and hospitable mansion. He was one of those whom, from various reasons, Robespierre deigned to favour; and he had often saved the proscribed and suspected, by procuring them passports under disguised names, and advising their method of escape. But C-- was a man who took this trouble only for the rich. "The incorruptible Maximilien," who did not want the tyrant's faculty of penetration, probably saw through all his manoeuvres, and the avarice which he cloaked beneath his charity. But it was noticeable that Robespierre frequently seemed to wink at--nay, partially to encourage--such vice in men whom he meant hereafter to destroy, as would tend to lower them in the public estimation, and to contrast with his own austere and unassailable integrity and PURISM. And, doubtless, he often grimly smiled in his sleeve at the sumptuous mansion and the griping covetousness of the worthy Citizen C--.

To this personage, then, Glyndon musingly bent his way. It was true, as he had darkly said to Viola, that in proportion as he had resisted the spectre, its terrors had lost their influence. The time had come at last, when, seeing crime and vice in all their hideousness, and in so vast a theatre, he had found that in vice and crime there are deadlier horrors than in the eyes of a phantom-fear. His native nobleness began to return to him. As he passed the streets, he revolved in his mind projects of future repentance and reformation. He even meditated, as a just return for Fillide's devotion, the sacrifice of all the reasonings of his birth and education. He would repair whatever errors he had committed against her, by the self-immolation of marriage with one little congenial with himself. He who had once revolted from marriage with the noble and gentle Viola!--he had learned in that world of wrong to know that right is right, and that Heaven did not make the one sex to be the victim of the other. The young visions of the Beautiful and the Good rose once more before him; and along the dark ocean of his mind lay the smile of reawakening virtue, as a path of moonlight. Never, perhaps, had the condition of his soul been so elevated and unselfish.

In the meanwhile Jean Nicot, equally absorbed in dreams of the future, and already in his own mind laying out to the best advantage the gold of the friend he was about to betray, took his way to the house honoured by the residence of Robespierre. He had no intention to comply with the relenting prayer of Fillide, that the life of Glyndon should be spared. He thought with Barrere, "Il n'y a que les morts qui ne revient pas." In all men who have devoted themselves to any study, or any art, with sufficient pains to attain a certain degree of excellence, there must be a fund of energy immeasurably above that of the ordinary herd. Usually this energy is concentrated on the objects of their professional ambition, and leaves them, therefore, apathetic to the other pursuits of men. But where those objects are denied, where the stream has not its legitimate vent, the energy, irritated and aroused, possesses the whole being, and if not wasted on desultory schemes, or if not purified by conscience and principle, becomes a dangerous and destructive element in the social system, through which it wanders in riot and disorder. Hence, in all wise monarchies,--nay, in all well-constituted states,--the peculiar care with which channels

are opened for every art and every science; hence the honour paid to their cultivators by subtle and thoughtful statesmen, who, perhaps, for themselves, see nothing in a picture but coloured canvas,-- nothing in a problem but an ingenious puzzle. No state is ever more in danger than when the talent that should be consecrated to peace has no occupation but political intrigue or personal advancement. Talent unhonoured is talent at war with men. And here it is noticeable, that the class of actors having been the most degraded by the public opinion of the old regime, their very dust deprived of Christian burial, no men (with certain exceptions in the company especially favoured by the Court) were more relentless and revengeful among the scourges of the Revolution. In the savage Collot d'Herbois, mauvais comedien, were embodied the wrongs and the vengeance of a class.

Now the energy of Jean Nicot had never been sufficiently directed to the art he professed. Even in his earliest youth, the political disquisitions of his master, David, had distracted him from the more tedious labours of the easel. The defects of his person had embittered his mind; the atheism of his benefactor had deadened his conscience. For one great excellence of religion--above all, the Religion of the Cross--is, that it raises PATIENCE first into a virtue, and next into a hope. Take away the doctrine of another life, of requital hereafter, of the smile of a Father upon our sufferings and trials in our ordeal here, and what becomes of patience? But without patience, what is man?-- and what a people? Without patience, art never can be high; without patience, liberty never can be perfected. By wild throes, and impetuous, aimless struggles, Intellect seeks to soar from Penury, and a nation to struggle into Freedom. And woe, thus unfortified, guideless, and unending,--woe to both!

Nicot was a villain as a boy. In most criminals, however abandoned, there are touches of humanity,--relics of virtue; and the true delineator of mankind often incurs the taunt of bad hearts and dull minds, for showing that even the worst alloy has some particles of gold, and even the best that come stamped from the mint of Nature have some adulteration of the dross. But there are exceptions, though few, to the general rule,-- exceptions, when the conscience lies utterly dead, and when good or bad are things indifferent but as means to some selfish end. So was it with the protege of the atheist. Envy and hate filled up his whole being, and the consciousness of superior talent only made him curse the more all who passed him in the sunlight with a fairer form or happier fortunes. But, monster though he was, when his murderous fingers gripped the throat of his benefactor, Time, and that ferment of all evil passions--the Reign of Blood-- had made in the deep hell of his heart a deeper still. Unable to exercise his calling (for even had he dared to make his name prominent, revolutions are no season for painters; and no man-- no! not the richest and proudest magnate of the land, has so great an interest in peace and order, has so high and essential a stake in the well being of society, as the poet and the artist), his whole intellect, ever restless and unguided, was left to ponder over the images of guilt most congenial to it. He had no future but in this life; and how in this life had the men of power around him, the great wrestlers for dominion, thriven? All that was good, pure, unselfish,--whether among Royalists or Republicans,--swept to the shambles, and the deathsmen left alone in the pomp and purple of their victims! Nobler paupers than Jean Nicot would despair; and Poverty would rise in its ghastly multitudes to cut the throat of Wealth, and then gash itself limb by limb, if Patience, the Angel of the Poor, sat not by its side, pointing with solemn finger to the life to come! And now, as Nicot neared the house of the Dictator, he began to meditate a reversal of his plans of the previous day: not that he faltered in his resolution to denounce Glyndon, and Viola would necessarily share his fate, as a companion and accomplice,--no, THERE he was resolved! for he hated both (to say nothing of his old but never-to-be-forgotten grudge against Zanoni).

Viola had scorned him, Glyndon had served, and the thought of gratitude was as intolerable to him as the memory of insult. But why, now, should he fly from France?--he could possess himself of Glyndon's gold; he doubted not that he could so master Fillide by her wrath and jealousy that he could command her acquiescence in all he proposed. The papers he had purloined--Desmoulins' correspondence with Glyndon--while it insured the fate of the latter, might be eminently serviceable to Robespierre, might induce the tyrant to forget his own old liaisons with Hebert, and enlist him among the allies and tools of the King of Terror. Hopes of advancement, of wealth, of a career, again rose before him. This correspondence, dated shortly before Camille Desmoulins' death, was written with that careless and daring imprudence which characterised the spoiled child of Danton. It spoke openly of designs against Robespierre; it named confederates whom the tyrant desired only a popular pretext to crush. It was a new instrument of death in the hands of the Death-compeller. What greater gift could he bestow on Maximilien the Incorruptible?

Nursing these thoughts, he arrived at last before the door of Citizen Duplex. Around the threshold were grouped, in admired confusion, some eight or ten sturdy Jacobins, the voluntary body-guard of Robespierre,--tall fellows, well armed, and insolent with the power that reflects power, mingled with women, young and fair, and gayly dressed, who had come, upon the rumour that Maximilien had had an attack of bile, to inquire tenderly of his health; for Robespierre, strange though it seem, was the idol of the sex!

Through this cortege stationed without the door, and reaching up the stairs to the landing-place,--for Robespierre's apartments were not spacious enough to afford sufficient antechamber for levees so numerous and miscellaneous,--Nicot forced his way; and far from friendly or flattering were the expressions that regaled his ears.

"Aha, le joli Polichinelle!" said a comely matron, whose robe his obtrusive and angular elbows cruelly discomposed. "But how could one expect gallantry from such a scarecrow!"

"Citizen, I beg to advise thee (The courteous use of the plural was proscribed at Paris. The Societies Populaires had decided that whoever used it should be prosecuted as suspect et adulateur! At the door of the public administrations and popular societies was written up, "Ici on s'honore du Citoyen, et on se tutoye"!!! ("Here they respect the title of Citizen, and they 'thee' and 'thou' one another.") Take away Murder from the French Revolution and it becomes the greatest farce ever played before the angels!) that thou art treading on my feet. I beg thy pardon, but now I look at thine, I see the hall is not wide enough for them."

"Ho! Citizen Nicot," cried a Jacobin, shouldering his formidable bludgeon, "and what brings thee hither?--thinkest thou that Hebert's crimes are forgotten already? Off, sport of Nature! and thank the Etre Supreme that he made thee insignificant enough to be forgiven."

"A pretty face to look out of the National Window" (The Guillotine.), said the woman whose robe the painter had ruffled.

"Citizens," said Nicot, white with passion, but constraining himself so that his words seemed to come from grinded teeth, "I have the honour to inform you that I seek the Representant upon business of the utmost importance to the public and himself; and," he added slowly and malignantly, glaring round, "I call all good citizens to be my witnesses when I shall complain to Robespierre of the reception bestowed on me by some amongst you."

There was in the man's look and his tone of voice so much of deep and concentrated malignity, that the idlers drew back, and as the remembrance of the sudden ups and downs of revolutionary life occurred to them, several voices were lifted to assure the squalid and ragged painter that nothing was farther from their thoughts than to offer affront to a citizen whose very appearance

proved him to be an exemplary sans-culotte. Nicot received these apologies in sullen silence, and, folding his arms, leaned against the wall, waiting in grim patience for his admission.

The loiterers talked to each other in separate knots of two and three; and through the general hum rang the clear, loud, careless whistle of the tall Jacobin who stood guard by the stairs. Next to Nicot, an old woman and a young virgin were muttering in earnest whispers, and the atheist painter chuckled inly to overhear their discourse.

“I assure thee, my dear,” said the crone, with a mysterious shake of head, “that the divine Catherine Theot, whom the impious now persecute, is really inspired. There can be no doubt that the elect, of whom Dom Gerle and the virtuous Robespierre are destined to be the two grand prophets, will enjoy eternal life here, and exterminate all their enemies. There is no doubt of it,--not the least!”

“How delightful!” said the girl; “ce cher Robespierre!--he does not look very long-lived either!”

“The greater the miracle,” said the old woman. “I am just eighty-one, and I don’t feel a day older since Catherine Theot promised me I should be one of the elect!”

Here the women were jostled aside by some newcomers, who talked loud and eagerly.

“Yes,” cried a brawny man, whose garb denoted him to be a butcher, with bare arms, and a cap of liberty on his head; “I am come to warn Robespierre. They lay a snare for him; they offer him the Palais National. ‘On ne peut etre ami du peuple et habiter un palais.’” (“No one can be a friend of the people, and dwell in a palace.”--“Papiers inedits trouves chez Robespierre,” etc., volume ii. page 132.)

“No, indeed,” answered a cordonnier; “I like him best in his little lodging with the menuisier: it looks like one of US.”

Another rush of the crowd, and a new group were thrown forward in the vicinity of Nicot. And these men gabbled and chattered faster and louder than the rest.

“But my plan is--”

“Au diable with YOUR plan! I tell you MY scheme is--”

“Nonsense!” cried a third. “When Robespierre understands MY new method of making gunpowder, the enemies of France shall--”

“Bah! who fears foreign enemies?” interrupted a fourth; “the enemies to be feared are at home. MY new guillotine takes off fifty heads at a time!”

“But MY new Constitution!” exclaimed a fifth.

“MY new Religion, citizen!” murmured, complacently, a sixth.

“Sacre mille tonnerres, silence!” roared forth one of the Jacobin guard.

And the crowd suddenly parted as a fierce-looking man, buttoned up to the chin, his sword rattling by his side, his spurs clinking at his heel, descended the stairs,--his cheeks swollen and purple with intemperance, his eyes dead and savage as a vulture’s. There was a still pause, as all, with pale cheeks, made way for the relentless Henriot. (Or H_a_nriot. It is singular how undetermined are not only the characters of the French Revolution, but even the spelling of their names. With the historians it is Vergniau_d_,--with the journalists of the time it is Vorgniau_x_. With one authority it is Robespierre,-- with another Robe_r_spierre.) Scarce had this gruff and iron minion of the tyrant stalked through the throng, than a new movement of respect and agitation and fear swayed the increasing crowd, as there glided in, with the noiselessness of a shadow, a smiling, sober citizen, plainly but neatly clad, with a downcast humble eye. A milder, meeker face no pastoral poet could assign to Corydon or Thyrsis,--why did the crowd shrink and hold their breath? As the ferret in a burrow crept that slight form amongst the larger and rougher

creatures that huddled and pressed back on each other as he passed. A wink of his stealthy eye, and the huge Jacobins left the passage clear, without sound or question. On he went to the apartment of the tyrant, and thither will we follow him.

CHAPTER 7.VII.

Constitutum est, ut quisquis eum HOMINEM dixisset fuisse, capitalem penderet poenam.--St. Augustine, "Of the God Serapis," l. 18, "de Civ. Dei," c. 5.) (It was decreed, that whoso should say that he had been a MAN, should suffer the punishment of a capital offence.)

Robespierre was reclining languidly in his fauteuil, his cadaverous countenance more jaded and fatigued than usual. He to whom Catherine Theot assured immortal life, looked, indeed, like a man at death's door. On the table before him was a dish heaped with oranges, with the juice of which it is said that he could alone assuage the acrid bile that overflowed his system; and an old woman, richly dressed (she had been a Marquise in the old regime) was employed in peeling the Hesperian fruits for the sick Dragon, with delicate fingers covered with jewels. I have before said that Robespierre was the idol of the women. Strange certainly!--but then they were French women! The old Marquise, who, like Catherine Theot, called him "son," really seemed to love him piously and disinterestedly as a mother; and as she peeled the oranges, and heaped on him the most caressing and soothing expressions, the livid ghost of a smile fluttered about his meagre lips. At a distance, Payan and Couthon, seated at another table, were writing rapidly, and occasionally pausing from their work to consult with each other in brief whispers.

Suddenly one of the Jacobins opened the door, and, approaching Robespierre, whispered to him the name of Guerin. (See for the espionage on which Guerin was employed, "Les Papiers inedit," etc., volume i. page 366, No. xxviii.) At that word the sick man started up, as if new life were in the sound.

"My kind friend," he said to the Marquise, "forgive me; I must dispense with thy tender cares. France demands me. I am never ill when I can serve my country!"

The old Marquise lifted up her eyes to heaven and murmured, "Quel ange!"

Robespierre waved his hand impatiently; and the old woman, with a sigh, patted his pale cheek, kissed his forehead, and submissively withdrew. The next moment, the smiling, sober man we have before described, stood, bending low, before the tyrant. And well might Robespierre welcome one of the subtlest agents of his power,--one on whom he relied more than the clubs of his Jacobins, the tongues of his orators, the bayonets of his armies; Guerin, the most renowned of his ecouteurs,--the searching, prying, universal, omnipresent spy, who glided like a sunbeam through chink and crevice, and brought to him intelligence not only of the deeds, but the hearts of men!

"Well, citizen, well!--and what of Tallien?"

"This morning, early, two minutes after eight, he went out."

"So early?--hem!"

"He passed Rue des Quatre Fils, Rue de Temple, Rue de la Reunion, au Marais, Rue Martin; nothing observable, except that--" "That what?"

"He amused himself at a stall in bargaining for some books."

“Bargaining for books! Aha, the charlatan!--he would cloak the intrigant under the savant! Well!”

“At last, in the Rue des Fosses Montmartre, an individual in a blue surtout (unknown) accosted him. They walked together about the street some minutes, and were joined by Legendre.”

“Legendre! approach, Payan! Legendre, thou hearest!”

“I went into a fruit-stall, and hired two little girls to go and play at ball within hearing. They heard Legendre say, ‘I believe his power is wearing itself out.’ And Tallien answered, ‘And HIMSELF too. I would not give three months’ purchase for his life.’ I do not know, citizen, if they meant THEE?”

“Nor I, citizen,” answered Robespierre, with a fell smile, succeeded by an expression of gloomy thought. “Ha!” he muttered; “I am young yet,--in the prime of life. I commit no excess. No; my constitution is sound, sound. Anything farther of Tallien?”

“Yes. The woman whom he loves--Teresa de Fontenai--who lies in prison, still continues to correspond with him; to urge him to save her by thy destruction: this my listeners overheard. His servant is the messenger between the prisoner and himself.”

“So! The servant shall be seized in the open streets of Paris. The Reign of Terror is not over yet. With the letters found on him, if such their context, I will pluck Tallien from his benches in the Convention.”

Robespierre rose, and after walking a few moments to and fro the room in thought, opened the door and summoned one of the Jacobins without. To him he gave his orders for the watch and arrest of Tallien’s servant, and then threw himself again into his chair. As the Jacobin departed, Guerin whispered,--

“Is not that the Citizen Aristides?”

“Yes; a faithful fellow, if he would wash himself, and not swear so much.”

“Didst thou not guillotine his brother?”

“But Aristides denounced him.”

“Nevertheless, are such men safe about thy person?”

“Humph! that is true.” And Robespierre, drawing out his pocket- book, wrote a memorandum in it, replaced it in his vest, and resumed,--

“What else of Tallien?”

“Nothing more. He and Legendre, with the unknown, walked to the Jardin Egalite, and there parted. I saw Tallien to his house. But I have other news. Thou badest me watch for those who threaten thee in secret letters.”

“Guerin! hast thou detected them? Hast thou--hast thou--”

And the tyrant, as he spoke, opened and shut both his hands, as if already grasping the lives of the writers, and one of those convulsive grimaces that seemed like an epileptic affection, to which he was subject, distorted his features.

“Citizen, I think I have found one. Thou must know that amongst those most disaffected is the painter Nicot.”

“Stay, stay!” said Robespierre, opening a manuscript book, bound in red morocco (for Robespierre was neat and precise, even in his death-lists), and turning to an alphabetical index,--”Nicot!--I have him,--atheist, sans-culotte (I hate slovens), friend of Hebert! Aha! N.B.--Rene Dumas knows of his early career and crimes. Proceed!”

“This Nicot has been suspected of diffusing tracts and pamphlets against thyself and the Comite. Yesterday evening, when he was out, his porter admitted me into his apartment, Rue Beau Repaire. With my master-key I opened his desk and escritoire. I found herein a drawing of

thysself at the guillotine; and underneath was written, 'Bourreau de ton pays, lis l'arret de ton chatiment!' (Executioner of thy country, read the decree of thy punishment!) I compared the words with the fragments of the various letters thou gavest me: the handwriting tallies with one. See, I tore off the writing."

Robespierre looked, smiled, and, as if his vengeance were already satisfied, threw himself on his chair. "It is well! I feared it was a more powerful enemy. This man must be arrested at once."

"And he waits below. I brushed by him as I ascended the stairs."

"Does he so?--admit!--nay,--hold! hold! Guerin, withdraw into the inner chamber till I summon thee again. Dear Payan, see that this Nicot conceals no weapons."

Payan, who was as brave as Robespierre was pusillanimous, repressed the smile of disdain that quivered on his lips a moment, and left the room.

Meanwhile Robespierre, with his head buried in his bosom, seemed plunged in deep thought. "Life is a melancholy thing, Couthon!" said he, suddenly.

"Begging your pardon, I think death worse," answered the philanthropist, gently.

Robespierre made no rejoinder, but took from his portefeuille that singular letter, which was found afterwards amongst his papers, and is marked LXI. in the published collection. ("Papiers inedit, etc., volume ii. page 156.)

"Without doubt," it began, "you are uneasy at not having earlier received news from me. Be not alarmed; you know that I ought only to reply by our ordinary courier; and as he has been interrupted, dans sa derniere course, that is the cause of my delay. When you receive this, employ all diligence to fly a theatre where you are about to appear and disappear for the last time. It were idle to recall to you all the reasons that expose you to peril. The last step that should place you sur le sofa de la presidence, but brings you to the scaffold; and the mob will spit on your face as it has spat on those whom you have judged. Since, then, you have accumulated here a sufficient treasure for existence, I await you with great impatience, to laugh with you at the part you have played in the troubles of a nation as credulous as it is avid of novelties. Take your part according to our arrangements,--all is prepared. I conclude,-- our courier waits. I expect your reply."

Musingly and slowly the Dictator devoured the contents of this epistle. "No," he said to himself,--"no; he who has tasted power can no longer enjoy repose. Yet, Danton, Danton! thou wert right; better to be a poor fisherman than to govern men." ("Il vaudrait mieux," said Danton, in his dungeon, "etre un pauvre pecheur que de gouverner les hommes.")

The door opened, and Payan reappeared and whispered Robespierre, "All is safe! See the man."

The Dictator, satisfied, summoned his attendant Jacobin to conduct Nicot to his presence. The painter entered with a fearless expression in his deformed features, and stood erect before Robespierre, who scanned him with a sidelong eye.

It is remarkable that most of the principal actors of the Revolution were singularly hideous in appearance,--from the colossal ugliness of Mirabeau and Danton, or the villanous ferocity in the countenances of David and Simon, to the filthy squalor of Marat, the sinister and bilious meanness of the Dictator's features. But Robespierre, who was said to resemble a cat, had also a cat's cleanness; and his prim and dainty dress, his shaven smoothness, the womanly whiteness of his lean hands, made yet more remarkable the disorderly ruffianism that characterised the attire and mien of the painter-sans-culotte.

“And so, citizen,” said Robespierre, mildly, “thou wouldst speak with me? I know thy merits and civism have been overlooked too long. Thou wouldst ask some suitable provision in the state? Scruple not--say on!”

“Virtuous Robespierre, toi qui eclaires l’univers (Thou who enlightenest the world.), I come not to ask a favour, but to render service to the state. I have discovered a correspondence that lays open a conspiracy of which many of the actors are yet unsuspected.” And he placed the papers on the table. Robespierre seized, and ran his eye over them rapidly and eagerly.

“Good!--good!” he muttered to himself: “this is all I wanted. Barrere, Legendre! I have them! Camille Desmoulins was but their dupe. I loved him once; I never loved them! Citizen Nicot, I thank thee. I observe these letters are addressed to an Englishman. What Frenchman but must distrust these English wolves in sheep’s clothing! France wants no longer citizens of the world; that farce ended with Anarcharsis Clootz. I beg pardon, Citizen Nicot; but Clootz and Hebert were **THY** friends.”

“Nay,” said Nicot, apologetically, “we are all liable to be deceived. I ceased to honour them whom thou didst declare against; for I disown my own senses rather than thy justice.”

“Yes, I pretend to justice; that **IS** the virtue I affect,” said Robespierre, meekly; and with his feline propensities he enjoyed, even in that critical hour of vast schemes, of imminent danger, of meditated revenge, the pleasure of playing with a solitary victim. (The most detestable anecdote of this peculiar hypocrisy in Robespierre is that in which he is recorded to have tenderly pressed the hand of his old school-friend, Camille Desmoulins, the day that he signed the warrant for his arrest.) “And my justice shall no longer be blind to thy services, good Nicot. Thou knowest this Glyndon?”

“Yes, well,--intimately. He **WAS** my friend, but I would give up my brother if he were one of the ‘indulgents.’ I am not ashamed to say that I have received favours from this man.”

“Aha!--and thou dost honestly hold the doctrine that where a man threatens my life all personal favours are to be forgotten?”

“All!”

“Good citizen!--kind Nicot!--oblige me by writing the address of this Glyndon.”

Nicot stooped to the table; and suddenly when the pen was in his hand, a thought flashed across him, and he paused, embarrassed and confused.

“Write on, **KIND** Nicot!”

The painter slowly obeyed.

“Who are the other familiars of Glyndon?”

“It was on that point I was about to speak to thee, Representant,” said Nicot. “He visits daily a woman, a foreigner, who knows all his secrets; she affects to be poor, and to support her child by industry. But she is the wife of an Italian of immense wealth, and there is no doubt that she has moneys which are spent in corrupting the citizens. She should be seized and arrested.”

“Write down her name also.”

“But no time is to be lost; for I know that both have a design to escape from Paris this very night.”

“Our government is prompt, good Nicot,--never fear. Humph!-- humph!” and Robespierre took the paper on which Nicot had written, and stooping over it--for he was near-sighted--added, smilingly, “Dost thou always write the same hand, citizen? This seems almost like a disguised character.”

“I should not like them to know who denounced them, Representant.”

“Good! good! Thy virtue shall be rewarded, trust me. Salut et fraternite!”

Robespierre half rose as he spoke, and Nicot withdrew.

“Ho, there!--without!” cried the Dictator, ringing his bell; and as the ready Jacobin attended the summons, “Follow that man, Jean Nicot. The instant he has cleared the house seize him. At once to the Conciergerie with him. Stay!--nothing against the law; there is thy warrant. The public accuser shall have my instruction. Away!--quick!”

The Jacobin vanished. All trace of illness, of infirmity, had gone from the valetudinarian; he stood erect on the floor, his face twitching convulsively, and his arms folded. “Ho! Guerin!” the spy reappeared--“take these addresses! Within an hour this Englishman and his woman must be in prison; their revelations will aid me against worthier foes. They shall die: they shall perish with the rest on the 10th,--the third day from this. There!” and he wrote hastily,--“there, also, is thy warrant! Off!

“And now, Couthon, Payan, we will dally no longer with Tallien and his crew. I have information that the Convention will NOT attend the Fete on the 10th. We must trust only to the sword of the law. I must compose my thoughts,--prepare my harangue. To-morrow, I will reappear at the Convention; to-morrow, bold St. Just joins us, fresh from our victorious armies; to-morrow, from the tribune, I will dart the thunderbolt on the masked enemies of France; to-morrow, I will demand, in the face of the country, the heads of the conspirators.”

CHAPTER 7.VIII.

Le glaive est contre toi tourne de toutes parties.--La Harpe, “Jeanne de Naples,” Act iv. sc. 4.
(The sword is raised against you on all sides.)

In the mean time Glyndon, after an audience of some length with C--, in which the final preparations were arranged, sanguine of safety, and foreseeing no obstacle to escape, bent his way back to Fillide. Suddenly, in the midst of his cheerful thoughts, he fancied he heard a voice too well and too terribly recognised, hissing in his ear, “What! thou wouldst defy and escape me! thou wouldst go back to virtue and content. It is in vain,--it is too late. No, I will not haunt thee; HUMAN footsteps, no less inexorable, dog thee now. Me thou shalt not see again till in the dungeon, at midnight, before thy doom! Behold--”

And Glyndon, mechanically turning his head, saw, close behind him, the stealthy figure of a man whom he had observed before, but with little heed, pass and repass him, as he quitted the house of Citizen C--. Instantly and instinctively he knew that he was watched,--that he was pursued. The street he was in was obscure and deserted, for the day was oppressively sultry, and it was the hour when few were abroad, either on business or pleasure. Bold as he was, an icy chill shot through his heart, he knew too well the tremendous system that then reigned in Paris not to be aware of his danger. As the sight of the first plague-boil to the victim of the pestilence, was the first sight of the shadowy spy to that of the Revolution: the watch, the arrest, the trial, the guillotine,--these made the regular and rapid steps of the monster that the anarchists called Law! He breathed hard, he heard distinctly the loud beating of his heart. And so he paused, still and motionless, gazing upon the shadow that halted also behind him.

Presently, the absence of all allies to the spy, the solitude of the streets, reanimated his courage; he made a step towards his pursuer, who retreated as he advanced. “Citizen, thou followest me,” he said. “Thy business?”

“Surely,” answered the man, with a deprecating smile, “the streets are broad enough for both? Thou art not so bad a republican as to arrogate all Paris to thyself!”

“Go on first, then. I make way for thee.”

The man bowed, doffed his hat politely, and passed forward. The next moment Glyndon plunged into a winding lane, and fled fast through a labyrinth of streets, passages, and alleys. By degrees he composed himself, and, looking behind, imagined that he had baffled the pursuer; he then, by a circuitous route, bent his way once more to his home. As he emerged into one of the broader streets, a passenger, wrapped in a mantle, brushing so quickly by him that he did not observe his countenance, whispered, “Clarence Glyndon, you are dogged,—follow me!” and the stranger walked quickly before him. Clarence turned, and sickened once more to see at his heels, with the same servile smile on his face, the pursuer he fancied he had escaped. He forgot the injunction of the stranger to follow him, and perceiving a crowd gathered close at hand, round a caricature-shop, dived amidst them, and, gaining another street, altered the direction he had before taken, and, after a long and breathless course, gained without once more seeing the spy, a distant quartier of the city.

Here, indeed, all seemed so serene and fair that his artist eye, even in that imminent hour, rested with pleasure on the scene. It was a comparatively broad space, formed by one of the noble quays. The Seine flowed majestically along, with boats and craft resting on its surface. The sun gild a thousand spires and domes, and gleamed on the white palaces of a fallen chivalry. Here fatigued and panting, he paused an instant, and a cooler air from the river fanned his brow. “Awhile, at least, I am safe here,” he murmured; and as he spoke, some thirty paces behind him, he beheld the spy. He stood rooted to the spot; wearied and spent as he was, escape seemed no longer possible,—the river on one side (no bridge at hand), and the long row of mansions closing up the other. As he halted, he heard laughter and obscene songs from a house a little in his rear, between himself and the spy. It was a cafe fearfully known in that quarter. Hither often resorted the black troop of Henriot,—the minions and huissiers of Robespierre. The spy, then, had hunted the victim within the jaws of the hounds. The man slowly advanced, and, pausing before the open window of the cafe, put his head through the aperture, as to address and summon forth its armed inmates.

At that very instant, and while the spy’s head was thus turned from him, standing in the half-open gateway of the house immediately before him, he perceived the stranger who had warned; the figure, scarcely distinguishable through the mantle that wrapped it, motioned to him to enter. He sprang noiselessly through the friendly opening: the door closed; breathlessly he followed the stranger up a flight of broad stairs and through a suite of empty rooms, until, having gained a small cabinet, his conductor doffed the large hat and the long mantle that had hitherto concealed his shape and features, and Glyndon beheld Zanoni!

CHAPTER 7.IX.

Think not my magic wonders wrought by aid
Of Stygian angels summoned up from hell;
Scorned and accursed be those who have essayed
Her gloomy Dives and Afrites to compel.
But by perception of the secret powers
Of mineral springs in Nature’s inmost cell,
Of herbs in curtain
of her greenest bowers,
And of the moving stars o’er mountain tops and towers.—Wiffen’s
“Translation of Tasso,” cant. xiv. xliii.

“You are safe here, young Englishman!” said Zanoni, motioning Glyndon to a seat. “Fortunate for you that I come on your track at last!”

“Far happier had it been if we had never met! Yet even in these last hours of my fate, I rejoice to look once more on the face of that ominous and mysterious being to whom I can ascribe all the sufferings I have known. Here, then, thou shalt not palter with or elude me. Here, before we part, thou shalt unravel to me the dark enigma, if not of thy life, of my own!”

“Hast thou suffered? Poor neophyte!” said Zanoni, pityingly. “Yes; I see it on thy brow. But wherefore wouldst thou blame me? Did I not warn thee against the whispers of thy spirit; did I not warn thee to forbear? Did I not tell thee that the ordeal was one of awful hazard and tremendous fears,--nay, did I not offer to resign to thee the heart that was mighty enough, while mine, Glyndon, to content me? Was it not thine own daring and resolute choice to brave the initiation! Of thine own free will didst thou make Mejnour thy master, and his lore thy study!”

“But whence came the irresistible desires of that wild and unholy knowledge? I knew them not till thine evil eye fell upon me, and I was drawn into the magic atmosphere of thy being!”

“Thou errest!--the desires were in thee; and, whether in one direction or the other, would have forced their way! Man! thou askest me the enigma of thy fate and my own! Look round all being, is there not mystery everywhere? Can thine eye trace the ripening of the grain beneath the earth? In the moral and the physical world alike, lie dark portents, far more wondrous than the powers thou wouldst ascribe to me!”

“Dost thou disown those powers; dost thou confess thyself an imposter?--or wilt thou dare to tell me that thou art indeed sold to the Evil one,--a magician whose familiar has haunted me night and day?”

“It matters not what I am,” returned Zanoni; “it matters only whether I can aid thee to exorcise thy dismal phantom, and return once more to the wholesome air of this common life. Something, however, will I tell thee, not to vindicate myself, but the Heaven and the Nature that thy doubts malign.”

Zanoni paused a moment, and resumed with a slight smile,--

“In thy younger days thou hast doubtless read with delight the great Christian poet, whose muse, like the morning it celebrated, came to earth, ‘crowned with flowers culled in Paradise.’ (‘L’aurea testa Di rose colte in Paradiso infiora.’ Tasso, “Ger. Lib.” iv. l.) “No spirit was more imbued with the knightly superstitions of the time; and surely the Poet of Jerusalem hath sufficiently, to satisfy even the Inquisitor he consulted, execrated all the practitioners of the unlawful spells invoked,--

‘Per isforzar Cocito o Flegetonte.’ (To constrain Cocytus or Phlegethon.)

But in his sorrows and his wrongs, in the prison of his madhouse, know you not that Tasso himself found his solace, his escape, in the recognition of a holy and spiritual Theurgia,--of a magic that could summon the Angel, or the Good Genius, not the Fiend? And do you not remember how he, deeply versed as he was for his age, in the mysteries of the nobler Platonism, which hints at the secrets of all the starry brotherhoods, from the Chaldean to the later Rosicrucian, discriminates in his lovely verse, between the black art of Ismeno and the glorious lore of the Enchanter who counsels and guides upon their errand the champions of the Holy Land? HIS, not the charms wrought by the aid of the Stygian Rebels (See this remarkable passage, which does indeed not unfaithfully represent the doctrine of the Pythagorean and the Platonist, in Tasso, cant. xiv. stanzas xli. to xlvi. (“Ger. Lib.”) They are beautifully translated by Wiffen.), but the perception of the secret powers of the fountain and the herb,-- the Arcana of

the unknown nature and the various motions of the stars. His, the holy haunts of Lebanon and Carmel,--beneath his feet he saw the clouds, the snows, the hues of Iris, the generations of the rains and dews. Did the Christian Hermit who converted that Enchanter (no fabulous being, but the type of all spirit that would aspire through Nature up to God) command him to lay aside these sublime studies, 'Le solite arte e l' uso mio'? No! but to cherish and direct them to worthy ends. And in this grand conception of the poet lies the secret of the true Theurgia, which startles your ignorance in a more learned day with puerile apprehensions, and the nightmares of a sick man's dreams."

Again Zanoni paused, and again resumed:--

"In ages far remote,--of a civilisation far different from that which now merges the individual in the state,--there existed men of ardent minds, and an intense desire of knowledge. In the mighty and solemn kingdoms in which they dwelt, there were no turbulent and earthly channels to work off the fever of their minds. Set in the antique mould of casts through which no intellect could pierce, no valour could force its way, the thirst for wisdom alone reigned in the hearts of those who received its study as a heritage from sire to son. Hence, even in your imperfect records of the progress of human knowledge, you find that, in the earliest ages, Philosophy descended not to the business and homes of men. It dwelt amidst the wonders of the loftier creation; it sought to analyse the formation of matter,-- the essentials of the prevailing soul; to read the mysteries of the starry orbs; to dive into those depths of Nature in which Zoroaster is said by the schoolmen first to have discovered the arts which your ignorance classes under the name of magic. In such an age, then, arose some men, who, amidst the vanities and delusions of their class, imagined that they detected gleams of a brighter and steadier lore. They fancied an affinity existing among all the works of Nature, and that in the lowliest lay the secret attraction that might conduct them upward to the loftiest. (Agreeably, it would seem, to the notion of Iamblichus and Plotinus, that the universe is as an animal; so that there is sympathy and communication between one part and the other; in the smallest part may be the subtlest nerve. And hence the universal magnetism of Nature. But man contemplates the universe as an animalcule would an elephant. The animalcule, seeing scarcely the tip of the hoof, would be incapable of comprehending that the trunk belonged to the same creature,--that the effect produced upon one extremity would be felt in an instant by the other.) Centuries passed, and lives were wasted in these discoveries; but step after step was chronicled and marked, and became the guide to the few who alone had the hereditary privilege to track their path.

At last from this dimness upon some eyes the light broke; but think not, young visionary, that to those who nursed unholy thoughts, over whom the Origin of Evil held a sway, that dawning was vouchsafed. It could be given then, as now, only to the purest ecstasies of imagination and intellect, undistracted by the cares of a vulgar life, or the appetites of the common clay. Far from descending to the assistance of a fiend, theirs was but the august ambition to approach nearer to the Fount of Good; the more they emancipated themselves from this limbo of the planets, the more they were penetrated by the splendour and beneficence of God. And if they sought, and at last discovered, how to the eye of the Spirit all the subtler modifications of being and of matter might be made apparent; if they discovered how, for the wings of the Spirit, all space might be annihilated, and while the body stood heavy and solid here, as a deserted tomb, the freed IDEA might wander from star to star,--if such discoveries became in truth their own, the sublimest luxury of their knowledge was but this, to wonder, to venerate, and adore! For, as one not unlearned in these high matters has expressed it, 'There is a principle of the soul superior to all external nature, and through this principle we are capable of surpassing the order and systems of

the world, and participating the immortal life and the energy of the Sublime Celestials. When the soul is elevated to natures above itself, it deserts the order to which it is awhile compelled, and by a religious magnetism is attracted to another and a loftier, with which it blends and mingles.’ (From Iamblichus, “On the Mysteries,” c. 7, sect. 7.) Grant, then, that such beings found at last the secret to arrest death; to fascinate danger and the foe; to walk the revolutions of the earth unharmed,--think you that this life could teach them other desire than to yearn the more for the Immortal, and to fit their intellect the better for the higher being to which they might, when Time and Death exist no longer, be transferred? Away with your gloomy fantasies of sorcerer and demon!--the soul can aspire only to the light; and even the error of our lofty knowledge was but the forgetfulness of the weakness, the passions, and the bonds which the death we so vainly conquered only can purge away!”

This address was so different from what Glyndon had anticipated, that he remained for some moments speechless, and at length faltered out,--

“But why, then, to me--”

“Why,” added Zanoni,--“why to thee have been only the penance and the terror,--the Threshold and the Phantom? Vain man! look to the commonest elements of the common learning. Can every tyro at his mere wish and will become the master; can the student, when he has bought his Euclid, become a Newton; can the youth whom the Muses haunt, say, ‘I will equal Homer;’ yea, can yon pale tyrant, with all the parchment laws of a hundred system-shapers, and the pikes of his dauntless multitude, carve, at his will, a constitution not more vicious than the one which the madness of a mob could overthrow? When, in that far time to which I have referred, the student aspired to the heights to which thou wouldst have sprung at a single bound, he was trained from his very cradle to the career he was to run. The internal and the outward nature were made clear to his eyes, year after year, as they opened on the day. He was not admitted to the practical initiation till not one earthly wish chained that sublimest faculty which you call the IMAGINATION, one carnal desire clouded the penetrative essence that you call the INTELLECT. And even then, and at the best, how few attained to the last mystery! Happier inasmuch as they attained the earlier to the holy glories for which Death is the heavenliest gate.”

Zanoni paused, and a shade of thought and sorrow darkened his celestial beauty.

“And are there, indeed, others, besides thee and Mejnour, who lay claim to thine attributes, and have attained to thy secrets?”

“Others there have been before us, but we two now are alone on earth.”

“Imposter, thou betrayest thyself! If they could conquer Death, why live they not yet?” (Glyndon appears to forget that Mejnour had before answered the very question which his doubts here a second time suggest.)

“Child of a day!” answered Zanoni, mournfully, “have I not told thee the error of our knowledge was the forgetfulness of the desires and passions which the spirit never can wholly and permanently conquer while this matter cloaks it? Canst thou think that it is no sorrow, either to reject all human ties, all friendship, and all love, or to see, day after day, friendship and love wither from our life, as blossoms from the stem? Canst thou wonder how, with the power to live while the world shall last, ere even our ordinary date be finished we yet may prefer to die? Wonder rather that there are two who have clung so faithfully to earth! Me, I confess, that earth can enamour yet. Attaining to the last secret while youth was in its bloom, youth still colours all around me with its own luxuriant beauty; to me, yet, to breathe is to enjoy. The freshness has not faded from the face of Nature, and not an herb in which I cannot discover a new charm,--an undetected wonder.

As with my youth, so with Mejnour's age: he will tell you that life to him is but a power to examine; and not till he has exhausted all the marvels which the Creator has sown on earth, would he desire new habitations for the renewed Spirit to explore. We are the types of the two essences of what is imperishable,--'ART, that enjoys; and SCIENCE, that contemplates!' And now, that thou mayest be contented that the secrets are not vouchsafed to thee, learn that so utterly must the idea detach itself from what makes up the occupation and excitement of men; so must it be void of whatever would covet, or love, or hate,--that for the ambitious man, for the lover, the hater, the power avails not. And I, at last, bound and blinded by the most common of household ties; I, darkened and helpless, adjure thee, the baffled and discontented,--I adjure thee to direct, to guide me; where are they? Oh, tell me,--speak! My wife,--my child? Silent!--oh, thou knowest now that I am no sorcerer, no enemy. I cannot give thee what thy faculties deny, -- I cannot achieve what the passionless Mejnour failed to accomplish; but I can give thee the next-best boon, perhaps the fairest,--I can reconcile thee to the daily world, and place peace between thy conscience and thyself."

"Wilt thou promise?"

"By their sweet lives, I promise!"

Glyndon looked and believed. He whispered the address to the house whither his fatal step already had brought woe and doom.

"Bless thee for this," exclaimed Zanoni, passionately, "and thou shalt be blessed! What! couldst thou not perceive that at the entrance to all the grander worlds dwell the race that intimidate and awe? Who in thy daily world ever left the old regions of Custom and Prescription, and felt not the first seizure of the shapeless and nameless Fear? Everywhere around thee where men aspire and labour, though they see it not,--in the closet of the sage, in the council of the demagogue, in the camp of the warrior,--everywhere cowers and darkens the Unutterable Horror. But there, where thou hast ventured, alone is the Phantom VISIBLE; and never will it cease to haunt, till thou canst pass to the Infinite, as the seraph; or return to the Familiar, as a child! But answer me this: when, seeking to adhere to some calm resolve of virtue, the Phantom hath stalked suddenly to thy side; when its voice hath whispered thee despair; when its ghastly eyes would scare thee back to those scenes of earthly craft or riotous excitement from which, as it leaves thee to worse foes to the soul, its presence is ever absent,--hast thou never bravely resisted the spectre and thine own horror; hast thou never said, 'Come what may, to Virtue I will cling?'"

"Alas!" answered Glyndon, "only of late have I dared to do so."

"And thou hast felt then that the Phantom grew more dim and its power more faint?"

"It is true."

"Rejoice, then!--thou hast overcome the true terror and mystery of the ordeal. Resolve is the first success. Rejoice, for the exorcism is sure! Thou art not of those who, denying a life to come, are the victims of the Inexorable Horror. Oh, when shall men learn, at last, that if the Great Religion inculcates so rigidly the necessity of FAITH, it is not alone that FAITH leads to the world to be; but that without faith there is no excellence in this,--faith in something wiser, happier, diviner, than we see on earth!--the artist calls it the Ideal,--the priest, Faith. The Ideal and Faith are one and the same. Return, O wanderer, return! Feel what beauty and holiness dwell in the Customary and the Old. Back to thy gateway glide, thou Horror! and calm, on the childlike heart, smile again, O azure Heaven, with thy night and thy morning star but as one, though under its double name of Memory and Hope!"

As he thus spoke, Zanoni laid his hand gently on the burning temples of his excited and wondering listener; and presently a sort of trance came over him: he imagined that he was returned to the home of his infancy; that he was in the small chamber where, over his early slumbers, his mother had watched and prayed. There it was,--visible, palpable, solitary, unaltered. In the recess, the homely bed; on the walls, the shelves filled with holy books; the very easel on which he had first sought to call the ideal to the canvas, dust-covered, broken, in the corner. Below the window lay the old churchyard: he saw it green in the distance, the sun glancing through the yew-trees; he saw the tomb where father and mother lay united, and the spire pointing up to heaven, the symbol of the hopes of those who consigned the ashes to the dust; in his ear rang the bells, pealing, as on a Sabbath day. Far fled all the visions of anxiety and awe that had haunted and convulsed; youth, boyhood, childhood came back to him with innocent desires and hopes; he thought he fell upon his knees to pray. He woke,--he woke in delicious tears, he felt that the Phantom was fled forever. He looked round,--Zanoni was gone. On the table lay these lines, the ink yet wet:--

“I will find ways and means for thy escape. At nightfall, as the clock strikes nine, a boat shall wait thee on the river before this house; the boatman will guide thee to a retreat where thou mayst rest in safety till the Reign of Terror, which nears its close, be past. Think no more of the sensual love that lured, and wellnigh lost thee. It betrayed, and would have destroyed. Thou wilt regain thy land in safety,--long years yet spared to thee to muse over the past, and to redeem it. For thy future, be thy dream thy guide, and thy tears thy baptism.”

The Englishman obeyed the injunctions of the letter, and found their truth.

CHAPTER 7.X.

Quid mirare meas tot in uno corpore formas?--Propert.
(Why wonder that I have so many forms in a single body?)

Zanoni to Mejnour.

...

“She is in one of their prisons,--their inexorable prisons. It is Robespierre’s order,--I have tracked the cause to Glyndon. This, then, made that terrible connection between their fates which I could not unravel, but which (till severed as it now is) wrapped Glyndon himself in the same cloud that concealed her. In prison,--in prison!--it is the gate of the grave! Her trial, and the inevitable execution that follows such trial, is the third day from this. The tyrant has fixed all his schemes of slaughter for the 10th of Thermidor. While the deaths of the unoffending strike awe to the city, his satellites are to massacre his foes. There is but one hope left,--that the Power which now dooms the doomer, may render me an instrument to expedite his fall. But two days left,--two days! In all my wealth of time I see but two days; all beyond,--darkness, solitude. I may save her yet. The tyrant shall fall the day before that which he has set apart for slaughter! For the first time I mix among the broils and stratagems of men, and my mind leaps up from my despair, armed and eager for the contest.”

...

A crowd had gathered round the Rue St. Honore; a young man was just arrested by the order of Robespierre. He was known to be in the service of Tallien, that hostile leader in the Convention, whom the tyrant had hitherto trembled to attack. This incident had therefore produced a greater

excitement than a circumstance so customary as an arrest in the Reign of Terror might be supposed to create. Amongst the crowd were many friends of Tallien, many foes to the tyrant, many weary of beholding the tiger dragging victim after victim to its den. Hoarse, foreboding murmurs were heard; fierce eyes glared upon the officers as they seized their prisoner; and though they did not yet dare openly to resist, those in the rear pressed on those behind, and encumbered the path of the captive and his captors. The young man struggled hard for escape, and, by a violent effort, at last wrenched himself from the grasp. The crowd made way, and closed round to protect him, as he dived and darted through their ranks; but suddenly the trampling of horses was heard at hand,--the savage Henriot and his troop were bearing down upon the mob. The crowd gave way in alarm, and the prisoner was again seized by one of the partisans of the Dictator. At that moment a voice whispered the prisoner, "Thou hast a letter which, if found on thee, ruins thy last hope. Give it to me! I will bear it to Tallien." The prisoner turned in amaze, read something that encouraged him in the eyes of the stranger who thus accosted him. The troop were now on the spot; the Jacobin who had seized the prisoner released hold of him for a moment to escape the hoofs of the horses: in that moment the opportunity was found,--the stranger had disappeared.

...

At the house of Tallien the principal foes of the tyrant were assembled. Common danger made common fellowship. All factions laid aside their feuds for the hour to unite against the formidable man who was marching over all factions to his gory throne. There was bold Lecointre, the declared enemy; there, creeping Barrere, who would reconcile all extremes, the hero of the cowards; Barras, calm and collected; Collet d'Herbois, breathing wrath and vengeance, and seeing not that the crimes of Robespierre alone sheltered his own.

The council was agitated and irresolute. The awe which the uniform success and the prodigious energy of Robespierre excited still held the greater part under its control. Tallien, whom the tyrant most feared, and who alone could give head and substance and direction to so many contradictory passions, was too sullied by the memory of his own cruelties not to feel embarrassed by his position as the champion of mercy. "It is true," he said, after an animating harangue from Lecointre, "that the Usurper menaces us all. But he is still so beloved by his mobs,--still so supported by his Jacobins: better delay open hostilities till the hour is more ripe. To attempt and not succeed is to give us, bound hand and foot, to the guillotine. Every day his power must decline. Procrastination is our best ally--" While yet speaking, and while yet producing the effect of water on the fire, it was announced that a stranger demanded to see him instantly on business that brooked no delay.

"I am not at leisure," said the orator, impatiently. The servant placed a note on the table. Tallien opened it, and found these words in pencil, "From the prison of Teresa de Fontenai." He turned pale, started up, and hastened to the anteroom, where he beheld a face entirely strange to him.

"Hope of France!" said the visitor to him, and the very sound of his voice went straight to the heart,--"your servant is arrested in the streets. I have saved your life, and that of your wife who will be. I bring to you this letter from Teresa de Fontenai."

Tallien, with a trembling hand, opened the letter, and read,--

"Am I forever to implore you in vain? Again and again I say, 'Lose not an hour if you value my life and your own.' My trial and death are fixed the third day from this,--the 10th Thermidor. Strike while it is yet time,--strike the monster!--you have two days yet. If you fail,--if you procrastinate,--see me for the last time as I pass your windows to the guillotine!"

“Her trial will give proof against you,” said the stranger. “Her death is the herald of your own. Fear not the populace,--the populace would have rescued your servant. Fear not Robespierre, -- he gives himself to your hands. To-morrow he comes to the Convention,--to-morrow you must cast the last throw for his head or your own.”

“To-morrow he comes to the Convention! And who are you that know so well what is concealed from me?”

“A man like you, who would save the woman he loves.”

Before Tallien could recover his surprise, the visitor was gone.

Back went the Avenger to his conclave an altered man. “I have heard tidings,--no matter what,” he cried,--“that have changed my purpose. On the 10th we are destined to the guillotine. I revoke my counsel for delay. Robespierre comes to the Convention to-morrow; THERE we must confront and crush him. From the Mountain shall frown against him the grim shade of Danton,--from the Plain shall rise, in their bloody cerements, the spectres of Vergniaud and Condorcet. Frappons!”

“Frappons!” cried even Barrere, startled into energy by the new daring of his colleague,--”frappons! il n’y a que les morts qui ne reviennent pas.”

It was observable (and the fact may be found in one of the memoirs of the time) that, during that day and night (the 7th Thermidor), a stranger to all the previous events of that stormy time was seen in various parts of the city,--in the cafes, the clubs, the haunts of the various factions; that, to the astonishment and dismay of his hearers, he talked aloud of the crimes of Robespierre, and predicted his coming fall; and, as he spoke, he stirred up the hearts of men, he loosed the bonds of their fear,--he inflamed them with unwonted rage and daring. But what surprised them most was, that no voice replied, no hand was lifted against him, no minion, even of the tyrant, cried, “Arrest the traitor.” In that impunity men read, as in a book, that the populace had deserted the man of blood.

Once only a fierce, brawny Jacobin sprang up from the table at which he sat, drinking deep, and, approaching the stranger, said, “I seize thee, in the name of the Republic.”

“Citizen Aristides,” answered the stranger, in a whisper, “go to the lodgings of Robespierre,-- he is from home; and in the left pocket of the vest which he cast off not an hour since thou wilt find a paper; when thou hast read that, return. I will await thee; and if thou wouldst then seize me, I will go without a struggle. Look round on those lowering brows; touch me NOW, and thou wilt be torn to pieces.”

The Jacobin felt as if compelled to obey against his will. He went forth muttering; he returned,--the stranger was still there. “Mille tonnerres,” he said to him, “I thank thee; the poltroon had my name in his list for the guillotine.”

With that the Jacobin Aristides sprang upon the table and shouted, “Death to the Tyrant!”

CHAPTER 7.XI.

Le lendemain, 8 Thermidor, Robespierre se decida a prononcer son fameux discours.--Thiers, “Hist. de la Revolution.”

(The next day, 8th Thermidor, Robespierre resolved to deliver his celebrated discourse.)

The morning rose,--the 8th of Thermidor (July 26). Robespierre has gone to the Convention. He has gone with his laboured speech; he has gone with his phrases of philanthropy and virtue; he has gone to single out his prey. All his agents are prepared for his reception; the fierce St. Just has arrived from the armies to second his courage and inflame his wrath. His ominous apparition prepares the audience for the crisis. "Citizens!" screeched the shrill voice of Robespierre "others have placed before you flattering pictures; I come to announce to you useful truths.

...

And they attribute to me,--to me alone!--whatever of harsh or evil is committed: it is Robespierre who wishes it; it is Robespierre who ordains it. Is there a new tax?--it is Robespierre who ruins you. They call me tyrant!--and why? Because I have acquired some influence; but how?--in speaking truth; and who pretends that truth is to be without force in the mouths of the Representatives of the French people? Doubtless, truth has its power, its rage, its despotism, its accents, touching, terrible, which resound in the pure heart as in the guilty conscience; and which Falsehood can no more imitate than Salmoneus could forge the thunderbolts of Heaven. What am I whom they accuse? A slave of liberty,--a living martyr of the Republic; the victim as the enemy of crime! All ruffianism affronts me, and actions legitimate in others are crimes in me. It is enough to know me to be calumniated. It is in my very zeal that they discover my guilt. Take from me my conscience, and I should be the most miserable of men!"

He paused; and Couthon wiped his eyes, and St. Just murmured applause as with stern looks he gazed on the rebellious Mountain; and there was a dead, mournful, and chilling silence through the audience. The touching sentiment woke no echo.

The orator cast his eyes around. Ho! he will soon arouse that apathy. He proceeds, he praises, he pities himself no more. He denounces,--he accuses. Overflooded with his venom, he vomits it forth on all. At home, abroad, finances, war,--on all! Shriller and sharper rose his voice,--

"A conspiracy exists against the public liberty. It owes its strength to a criminal coalition in the very bosom of the Convention; it has accomplices in the bosom of the Committee of Public Safety...What is the remedy to this evil? To punish the traitors; to purify this committee; to crush all factions by the weight of the National Authority; to raise upon their ruins the power of Liberty and Justice. Such are the principles of that Reform. Must I be ambitious to profess them?--then the principles are proscribed, and Tyranny reigns amongst us! For what can you object to a man who is in the right, and has at least this knowledge,--he knows how to die for his native land! I am made to combat crime, and not to govern it. The time, alas! is not yet arrived when men of worth can serve with impunity their country. So long as the knaves rule, the defenders of liberty will be only the proscribed."

For two hours, through that cold and gloomy audience, shrilled the Death-speech. In silence it began, in silence closed. The enemies of the orator were afraid to express resentment; they knew not yet the exact balance of power. His partisans were afraid to approve; they knew not whom of their own friends and relations the accusations were designed to single forth. "Take care!" whispered each to each; "it is thou whom he threatens." But silent though the audience, it was, at the first, wellnigh subdued. There was still about this terrible man the spell of an overmastering will. Always--though not what is called a great orator--resolute, and sovereign in the use of words; words seemed as things when uttered by one who with a nod moved the troops of Henriot, and influenced the judgment of Rene Dumas, grim President of the Tribunal. Lecointre of Versailles rose, and there was an anxious movement of attention; for Lecointre was one of the fiercest foes of the tyrant. What was the dismay of the Tallien faction; what the complacent

smile of Couthon,--when Lecointre demanded only that the oration should be printed! All seemed paralyzed. At length Bourdon de l'Oise, whose name was doubly marked in the black list of the Dictator, stalked to the tribune, and moved the bold counter-resolution, that the speech should be referred to the two committees whom that very speech accused. Still no applause from the conspirators; they sat torpid as frozen men. The shrinking Barrere, ever on the prudent side, looked round before he rose. He rises, and sides with Lecointre! Then Couthon seized the occasion, and from his seat (a privilege permitted only to the paralytic philanthropist) (M. Thiers in his History, volume iv. page 79, makes a curious blunder: he says, "Couthon s'elance a la tribune." (Couthon darted towards the tribune.) Poor Couthon! whose half body was dead, and who was always wheeled in his chair into the Convention, and spoke sitting.), and with his melodious voice sought to convert the crisis into a triumph.

He demanded, not only that the harangue should be printed, but sent to all the communes and all the armies. It was necessary to soothe a wronged and ulcerated heart. Deputies, the most faithful, had been accused of shedding blood. "Ah! if HE had contributed to the death of one innocent man, he should immolate himself with grief." Beautiful tenderness!--and while he spoke, he fondled the spaniel in his bosom. Bravo, Couthon! Robespierre triumphs! The reign of Terror shall endure! The old submission settles dovelike back in the assembly! They vote the printing of the Death-speech, and its transmission to all the municipalities. From the benches of the Mountain, Tallien, alarmed, dismayed, impatient, and indignant, cast his gaze where sat the strangers admitted to hear the debates; and suddenly he met the eyes of the Unknown who had brought to him the letter from Teresa de Fontenai the preceding day. The eyes fascinated him as he gazed. In aftertimes he often said that their regard, fixed, earnest, half-reproachful, and yet cheering and triumphant, filled him with new life and courage. They spoke to his heart as the trumpet speaks to the war-horse. He moved from his seat; he whispered with his allies: the spirit he had drawn in was contagious; the men whom Robespierre especially had denounced, and who saw the sword over their heads, woke from their torpid trance. Vadier, Cambon, Billaud-Varennes, Panis, Amar, rose at once,--all at once demanded speech. Vadier is first heard, the rest succeed. It burst forth, the Mountain, with its fires and consuming lava; flood upon flood they rush, a legion of Ciceros upon the startled Catiline! Robespierre falters, hesitates,--would qualify, retract. They gather new courage from his new fears; they interrupt him; they drown his voice; they demand the reversal of the motion. Amar moves again that the speech be referred to the Committees, to the Committees,--to his enemies! Confusion and noise and clamour! Robespierre wraps himself in silent and superb disdain. Pale, defeated, but not yet destroyed, he stands,--a storm in the midst of storm!

The motion is carried. All men foresee in that defeat the Dictator's downfall. A solitary cry rose from the galleries; it was caught up; it circled through the hall, the audience: "A bas le tyrant! Vive la republique!" (Down with the tyrant! Hurrah for the republic!)

CHAPTER 7.XII.

Aupres d'un corps aussi avili que la Convention, il restait des chances pour que Robespierre sortit vainqueur de cette lutte.--Lacretelle, volume xii. (Amongst a body so debased as the Convention, there still remained some chances that Robespierre would come off victor in the struggle.)

As Robespierre left the hall, there was a dead and ominous silence in the crowd without. The herd, in every country, side with success; and the rats run from the falling tower. But Robespierre, who wanted courage, never wanted pride, and the last often supplied the place of the first; thoughtfully, and with an impenetrable brow, he passed through the throng, leaning on St. Just, Payan and his brother following him.

As they got into the open space, Robespierre abruptly broke the silence.

“How many heads were to fall upon the tenth?”

“Eighty,” replied Payan.

“Ah, we must not tarry so long; a day may lose an empire: terrorism must serve us yet!”

He was silent a few moments, and his eyes roved suspiciously through the street.

“St. Just,” he said abruptly, “they have not found this Englishman whose revelations, or whose trial, would have crushed the Amars and the Talliens. No, no! my Jacobins themselves are growing dull and blind. But they have seized a woman,—only a woman!”

“A woman’s hand stabbed Marat,” said St. Just. Robespierre stopped short, and breathed hard.

“St. Just,” said he, “when this peril is past, we will found the Reign of Peace. There shall be homes and gardens set apart for the old. David is already designing the porticos. Virtuous men shall be appointed to instruct the young. All vice and disorder shall be NOT exterminated—no, no! only banished! We must not die yet. Posterity cannot judge us till our work is done. We have recalled L’Etre Supreme; we must now remodel this corrupted world. All shall be love and brotherhood; and—ho! Simon! Simon!--hold! Your pencil, St. Just!” And Robespierre wrote hastily. “This to Citizen President Dumas. Go with it quick, Simon. These eighty heads must fall TO-MORROW,—TO-MORROW, Simon. Dumas will advance their trial a day. I will write to Fouquier-Tinville, the public accuser. We meet at the Jacobins to-night, Simon; there we will denounce the Convention itself; there we will rally round us the last friends of liberty and France.”

A shout was heard in the distance behind, “Vive la republique!”

The tyrant’s eye shot a vindictive gleam. “The republic!--faugh! We did not destroy the throne of a thousand years for that canaille!”

THE TRIAL, THE EXECUTION, OF THE VICTIMS IS ADVANCED A DAY! By the aid of the mysterious intelligence that had guided and animated him hitherto, Zanoni learned that his arts had been in vain. He knew that Viola was safe, if she could but survive an hour the life of the tyrant. He knew that Robespierre’s hours were numbered; that the 10th of Thermidor, on which he had originally designed the execution of his last victims, would see himself at the scaffold. Zanoni had toiled, had schemed for the fall of the Butcher and his reign. To what end? A single word from the tyrant had baffled the result of all. The execution of Viola is advanced a day. Vain seer, who wouldst make thyself the instrument of the Eternal, the very dangers that now beset the tyrant but expedite the doom of his victims! To-morrow, eighty heads, and hers whose pillow has been thy heart! To-morrow! and Maximilien is safe to-night!

CHAPTER 7.XIII.

Erde mag zuruck in Erde stauben;
Fliegt der Geist doch aus dem morschen Haus.

Seine Asche mag der Sturmwind treiben,
Sein Leben dauert ewig aus!--Elegie.

(Earth may crumble back into earth; the Spirit will still escape from its frail tenement. The wind of the storm may scatter his ashes; his being endures forever.)

To-morrow!--and it is already twilight. One after one, the gentle stars come smiling through the heaven. The Seine, in its slow waters, yet trembles with the last kiss of the rosy day; and still in the blue sky gleams the spire of Notre Dame; and still in the blue sky looms the guillotine by the Barriere du Trone. Turn to that time-worn building, once the church and the convent of the Freres-Precheurs, known by the then holy name of Jacobins; there the new Jacobins hold their club. There, in that oblong hall, once the library of the peaceful monks, assemble the idolaters of St. Robespierre. Two immense tribunes, raised at either end, contain the lees and dregs of the atrocious populace,--the majority of that audience consisting of the furies of the guillotine (furies de guillotine). In the midst of the hall are the bureau and chair of the president,--the chair long preserved by the piety of the monks as the relic of St. Thomas Aquinas! Above this seat scowls the harsh bust of Brutus. An iron lamp and two branches scatter over the vast room a murky, fuliginous ray, beneath the light of which the fierce faces of that Pandemonium seem more grim and haggard. There, from the orator's tribune, shrieks the shrill wrath of Robespierre!

Meanwhile all is chaos, disorder, half daring and half cowardice, in the Committee of his foes. Rumours fly from street to street, from haunt to haunt, from house to house. The swallows flit low, and the cattle group together before the storm. And above this roar of the lives and things of the little hour, alone in his chamber stood he on whose starry youth--symbol of the imperishable bloom of the calm Ideal amidst the mouldering Actual--the clouds of ages had rolled in vain.

All those exertions which ordinary wit and courage could suggest had been tried in vain. All such exertions WERE in vain, where, in that Saturnalia of death, a life was the object. Nothing but the fall of Robespierre could have saved his victims; now, too late, that fall would only serve to avenge.

Once more, in that last agony of excitement and despair, the seer had plunged into solitude, to invoke again the aid or counsel of those mysterious intermediates between earth and heaven who had renounced the intercourse of the spirit when subjected to the common bondage of the mortal. In the intense desire and anguish of his heart, perhaps, lay a power not yet called forth; for who has not felt that the sharpness of extreme grief cuts and grinds away many of those strongest bonds of infirmity and doubt which bind down the souls of men to the cabined darkness of the hour; and that from the cloud and thunderstorm often swoops the Olympian eagle that can ravish us aloft!

And the invocation was heard,--the bondage of sense was rent away from the visual mind. He looked, and saw,--no, not the being he had called, with its limbs of light and unutterably tranquil smile--not his familiar, Adon-Ai, the Son of Glory and the Star, but the Evil Omen, the dark Chimera, the implacable Foe, with exultation and malice burning in its hell-lit eyes. The Spectre, no longer cowering and retreating into shadow, rose before him, gigantic and erect; the face, whose veil no mortal hand had ever raised, was still concealed, but the form was more distinct, corporeal, and cast from it, as an atmosphere, horror and rage and awe. As an iceberg, the breath of that presence froze the air; as a cloud, it filled the chamber and blackened the stars from heaven.

“Lo!” said its voice, “I am here once more. Thou hast robbed me of a meaner prey. Now exorcise THYSELF from my power! Thy life has left thee, to live in the heart of a daughter of the charnel and the worm. In that life I come to thee with my inexorable tread. Thou art returned to the Threshold,--thou, whose steps have trodden the verges of the Infinite! And as the goblin of its fantasy seizes on a child in the dark,--mighty one, who wouldst conquer Death,--I seize on thee!”

“Back to thy thralldom, slave! If thou art come to the voice that called thee not, it is again not to command, but to obey! Thou, from whose whisper I gained the boons of the lives lovelier and dearer than my own; thou--I command thee, not by spell and charm, but by the force of a soul mightier than the malice of thy being,--thou serve me yet, and speak again the secret that can rescue the lives thou hast, by permission of the Universal Master, permitted me to retain awhile in the temple of the clay!”

Brighter and more devouringly burned the glare from those lurid eyes; more visible and colossal yet rose the dilating shape; a yet fiercer and more disdainful hate spoke in the voice that answered, “Didst thou think that my boon would be other than thy curse? Happy for thee hadst thou mourned over the deaths which come by the gentle hand of Nature,--hadst thou never known how the name of mother consecrates the face of Beauty, and never, bending over thy first-born, felt the imperishable sweetness of a father’s love! They are saved, for what?--the mother, for the death of violence and shame and blood, for the doomsman’s hand to put aside that shining hair which has entangled thy bridegroom kisses; the child, first and last of thine offspring, in whom thou didst hope to found a race that should hear with thee the music of celestial harps, and float, by the side of thy familiar, Adon-Ai, through the azure rivers of joy,--the child, to live on a few days as a fungus in a burial-vault, a thing of the loathsome dungeon, dying of cruelty and neglect and famine. Ha! ha! thou who wouldst baffle Death, learn how the deathless die if they dare to love the mortal. Now, Chaldean, behold my boons! Now I seize and wrap thee with the pestilence of my presence; now, evermore, till thy long race is run, mine eyes shall glow into thy brain, and mine arms shall clasp thee, when thou wouldst take the wings of the Morning and flee from the embrace of Night!”

“I tell thee, no! And again I compel thee, speak and answer to the lord who can command his slave. I know, though my lore fails me, and the reeds on which I leaned pierce my side,--I know yet that it is written that the life of which I question can be saved from the headsman. Thou wrappst her future in the darkness of thy shadow, but thou canst not shape it. Thou mayest foreshow the antidote; thou canst not effect the bane. From thee I wring the secret, though it torture thee to name it. I approach thee, --I look dauntless into thine eyes. The soul that loves can dare all things. Shadow, I defy thee, and compel!”

The spectre waned and recoiled. Like a vapour that lessens as the sun pierces and pervades it, the form shrank cowering and dwarfed in the dimmer distance, and through the casement again rushed the stars.

“Yes,” said the Voice, with a faint and hollow accent, “thou CANST save her from the headsman; for it is written, that sacrifice can save. Ha! ha!” And the shape again suddenly dilated into the gloom of its giant stature, and its ghastly laugh exulted, as if the Foe, a moment baffled, had regained its might. “Ha! ha!--thou canst save her life, if thou wilt sacrifice thine own! Is it for this thou hast lived on through crumbling empires and countless generations of thy race? At last shall Death reclaim thee? Wouldst thou save her?--DIE FOR HER! Fall, O stately column, over which stars yet unformed may gleam, --fall, that the herb at thy base may drink a few hours longer the sunlight and the dews! Silent! Art thou ready for the sacrifice? See, the

moon moves up through heaven. Beautiful and wise one, wilt thou bid her smile to-morrow on thy headless clay?"

"Back! for my soul, in answering thee from depths where thou canst not hear it, has regained its glory; and I hear the wings of Adon-Ai gliding musical through the air."

He spoke; and, with a low shriek of baffled rage and hate, the Thing was gone, and through the room rushed, luminous and sudden, the Presence of silvery light.

As the heavenly visitor stood in the atmosphere of his own lustre, and looked upon the face of the Theurgist with an aspect of ineffable tenderness and love, all space seemed lighted from his smile. Along the blue air without, from that chamber in which his wings had halted, to the farthest star in the azure distance, it seemed as if the track of his flight were visible, by a lengthened splendour in the air, like the column of moonlight on the sea. Like the flower that diffuses perfume as the very breath of its life, so the emanation of that presence was joy. Over the world, as a million times swifter than light, than electricity, the Son of Glory had sped his way to the side of love, his wings had scattered delight as the morning scatters dew. For that brief moment, Poverty had ceased to mourn, Disease fled from its prey, and Hope breathed a dream of Heaven into the darkness of Despair.

"Thou art right," said the melodious Voice. "Thy courage has restored thy power. Once more, in the haunts of earth, thy soul charms me to thy side. Wiser now, in the moment when thou comprehendest Death, than when thy unfettered spirit learned the solemn mystery of Life; the human affections that thrall'd and humbled thee awhile bring to thee, in these last hours of thy mortality, the sublimest heritage of thy race,--the eternity that commences from the grave."

"O Adon-Ai," said the Chaldean, as, circumfused in the splendour of the visitant, a glory more radiant than human beauty settled round his form, and seemed already to belong to the eternity of which the Bright One spoke, "as men, before they die, see and comprehend the enigmas hidden from them before (The greatest poet, and one of the noblest thinkers, of the last age, said, on his deathbed, "Many things obscure to me before, now clear up, and become visible."--See the "Life of Schiller."), so in this hour, when the sacrifice of self to another brings the course of ages to its goal, I see the littleness of Life, compared to the majesty of Death; but oh, Divine Consoler, even here, even in thy presence, the affections that inspire me, sadden. To leave behind me in this bad world, unaided, unprotected, those for whom I die! the wife! the child!--oh, speak comfort to me in this!"

"And what," said the visitor, with a slight accent of reproof in the tone of celestial pity,--"what, with all thy wisdom and thy starry secrets, with all thy empire of the past, and thy visions of the future; what art thou to the All-Directing and Omniscient? Canst thou yet imagine that thy presence on earth can give to the hearts thou lovest the shelter which the humblest take from the wings of the Presence that lives in heaven? Fear not thou for their future. Whether thou live or die, their future is the care of the Most High! In the dungeon and on the scaffold looks everlasting the Eye of HIM, tenderer than thou to love, wiser than thou to guide, mightier than thou to save!"

Zanoni bowed his head; and when he looked up again, the last shadow had left his brow. The visitor was gone; but still the glory of his presence seemed to shine upon the spot, still the solitary air seemed to murmur with tremulous delight. And thus ever shall it be with those who have once, detaching themselves utterly from life, received the visit of the Angel FAITH. Solitude and space retain the splendour, and it settles like a halo round their graves.

CHAPTER 7.XIV.

Dann zur Blumenflor der Sterne
Aufgeschauet liebewarm,
Fass' ihn freundlich Arm in Arm
Trag' ihn in die blaue Ferne.--Uhland, "An den Tod."
(Then towards the Garden of the Star
Lift up thine aspect warm with love,
And, friendlike link'd through space afar,
Mount with him, arm in arm, above.)

He stood upon the lofty balcony that overlooked the quiet city. Though afar, the fiercest passions of men were at work on the web of strife and doom, all that gave itself to his view was calm and still in the rays of the summer moon, for his soul was wrapped from man and man's narrow sphere, and only the serener glories of creation were present to the vision of the seer. There he stood, alone and thoughtful, to take the last farewell of the wondrous life that he had known.

Coursing through the fields of space, he beheld the gossamer shapes, whose choral joys his spirit had so often shared. There, group upon group, they circled in the starry silence multiform in the unimaginable beauty of a being fed by ambrosial dews and serenest light. In his trance, all the universe stretched visible beyond; in the green valleys afar, he saw the dances of the fairies; in the bowels of the mountains, he beheld the race that breathe the lurid air of the volcanoes, and hide from the light of heaven; on every leaf in the numberless forests, in every drop of the unmeasured seas, he surveyed its separate and swarming world; far up, in the farthest blue, he saw orb upon orb ripening into shape, and planets starting from the central fire, to run their day of ten thousand years. For everywhere in creation is the breath of the Creator, and in every spot where the breath breathes is life! And alone, in the distance, the lonely man beheld his Magian brother. There, at work with his numbers and his Cabala, amidst the wrecks of Rome, passionless and calm, sat in his cell the mystic Mejnour,--living on, living ever while the world lasts, indifferent whether his knowledge produces weal or woe; a mechanical agent of a more tender and a wiser will, that guides every spring to its inscrutable designs. Living on,--living ever,--as science that cares alone for knowledge, and halts not to consider how knowledge advances happiness; how Human Improvement, rushing through civilisation, crushes in its march all who cannot grapple to its wheels ("You colonise the lands of the savage with the Anglo-Saxon,--you civilise that portion of THE EARTH; but is the SAVAGE civilised? He is exterminated! You accumulate machinery,--you increase the total of wealth; but what becomes of the labour you displace? One generation is sacrificed to the next. You diffuse knowledge,--and the world seems to grow brighter; but Discontent at Poverty replaces Ignorance, happy with its crust. Every improvement, every advancement in civilisation, injures some, to benefit others, and either cherishes the want of to-day, or prepares the revolution of to-morrow."--Stephen Montague.); ever, with its Cabala and its number, lives on to change, in its bloodless movements, the face of the habitable world!

And, "Oh, farewell to life!" murmured the glorious dreamer. "Sweet, O life! hast thou been to me. How fathomless thy joys,-- how rapturously has my soul bounded forth upon the upward paths! To him who forever renews his youth in the clear fount of Nature, how exquisite is the mere happiness TO BE! Farewell, ye lamps of heaven, and ye million tribes, the Populace of

Air. Not a mote in the beam, not an herb on the mountain, not a pebble on the shore, not a seed far-blown into the wilderness, but contributed to the lore that sought in all the true principle of life, the Beautiful, the Joyous, the Immortal. To others, a land, a city, a hearth, has been a home; MY home has been wherever the intellect could pierce, or the spirit could breathe the air."

He paused, and through the immeasurable space his eyes and his heart, penetrating the dismal dungeon, rested on his child. He saw it slumbering in the arms of the pale mother, and HIS soul spoke to the sleeping soul. "Forgive me, if my desire was sin; I dreamed to have reared and nurtured thee to the divinest destinies my visions could foresee. Betimes, as the mortal part was strengthened against disease, to have purified the spiritual from every sin; to have led thee, heaven upon heaven, through the holy ecstasies which make up the existence of the orders that dwell on high; to have formed, from thy sublime affections, the pure and ever-living communication between thy mother and myself. The dream was but a dream--it is no more! In sight myself of the grave, I feel, at last, that through the portals of the grave lies the true initiation into the holy and the wise. Beyond those portals I await ye both, beloved pilgrims!"

From his numbers and his Cabala, in his cell, amidst the wrecks of Rome, Mejnour, startled, looked up, and through the spirit, felt that the spirit of his distant friend addressed him.

"Fare thee well forever upon this earth! Thy last companion forsakes thy side. Thine age survives the youth of all; and the Final Day shall find thee still the contemplator of our tombs. I go with my free will into the land of darkness; but new suns and systems blaze around us from the grave. I go where the souls of those for whom I resign the clay shall be my co-mates through eternal youth. At last I recognise the true ordeal and the real victory. Mejnour, cast down thy elixir; lay by thy load of years! Wherever the soul can wander, the Eternal Soul of all things protects it still!"

CHAPTER 7.XV.

*Il ne veut plus perdre un moment d'une nuit si precieuse.--Lacretelle, tom. xii.
(They would not lose another moment of so precious a night.)*

It was late that night, and Rene-Francois Dumas, President of the Revolutionary Tribunal, had re-entered his cabinet, on his return from the Jacobin Club. With him were two men who might be said to represent, the one the moral, the other the physical force of the Reign of Terror: Fouquier-Tinville, the Public Accuser, and Francois Henriot, the General of the Parisian National Guard. This formidable triumvirate were assembled to debate on the proceedings of the next day; and the three sister-witches over their hellish caldron were scarcely animated by a more fiend-like spirit, or engaged in more execrable designs, than these three heroes of the Revolution in their premeditated massacre of the morrow.

Dumas was but little altered in appearance since, in the earlier part of this narrative, he was presented to the reader, except that his manner was somewhat more short and severe, and his eye yet more restless. But he seemed almost a superior being by the side of his associates. Rene Dumas, born of respectable parents, and well educated, despite his ferocity, was not without a certain refinement, which perhaps rendered him the more acceptable to the precise and formal Robespierre. (Dumas was a beau in his way. His gala-dress was a BLOOD-RED COAT, with the finest ruffles.) But Henriot had been a lackey, a thief, a spy of the police; he had drunk the

blood of Madame de Lamballe, and had risen to his present rank for no quality but his ruffianism; and Fouquier-Tinville, the son of a provincial agriculturist, and afterwards a clerk at the Bureau of the Police, was little less base in his manners, and yet more, from a certain loathsome buffoonery, revolting in his speech,--bull-headed, with black, sleek hair, with a narrow and livid forehead, with small eyes, that twinkled with a sinister malice; strongly and coarsely built, he looked what he was, the audacious bully of a lawless and relentless Bar.

Dumas trimmed the candles, and bent over the list of the victims for the morrow.

"It is a long catalogue," said the president; "eighty trials for one day! And Robespierre's orders to despatch the whole fournee are unequivocal."

"Pooh!" said Fouquier, with a coarse, loud laugh; "we must try them en masse. I know how to deal with our jury. 'Je pense, citoyens, que vous etes convaincus du crime des accuses?' (I think, citizens, that you are convinced of the crime of the accused.) Ha! ha!--the longer the list, the shorter the work."

"Oh, yes," growled out Henriot, with an oath,--as usual, half- drunk, and lolling on his chair, with his spurred heels on the table,--"little Tinville is the man for despatch."

"Citizen Henriot," said Dumas, gravely, "permit me to request thee to select another footstool; and for the rest, let me warn thee that to-morrow is a critical and important day; one that will decide the fate of France."

"A fig for little France! Vive le Vertueux Robespierre, la Colonne de la Republique! (Long life to the virtuous Robespierre, the pillar of the Republic!) Plague on this talking; it is dry work. Hast thou no eau de vie in that little cupboard?"

Dumas and Fouquier exchanged looks of disgust. Dumas shrugged his shoulders, and replied,-

"It is to guard thee against eau de vie, Citizen General Henriot, that I have requested thee to meet me here. Listen if thou canst!"

"Oh, talk away! thy metier is to talk, mine to fight and to drink."

"To-morrow, I tell thee then, the populace will be abroad; all factions will be astir. It is probable enough that they will even seek to arrest our tumbrils on their way to the guillotine. Have thy men armed and ready; keep the streets clear; cut down without mercy whomsoever may obstruct the ways."

"I understand," said Henriot, striking his sword so loudly that Dumas half-started at the clank,--"Black Henriot is no 'Indulgent.'"

"Look to it, then, citizen,--look to it! And hark thee," he added, with a grave and sombre brow, "if thou wouldst keep thine own head on thy shoulders, beware of the eau de vie."

"My own head!--sacre mille tonnerres! Dost thou threaten the general of the Parisian army?"

Dumas, like Robespierre, a precise atrabilious, and arrogant man, was about to retort, when the craftier Tinville laid his hand on his arm, and, turning to the general, said, "My dear Henriot, thy dauntless republicanism, which is too ready to give offence, must learn to take a reprimand from the representative of Republican Law. Seriously, mon cher, thou must be sober for the next three or four days; after the crisis is over, thou and I will drink a bottle together. Come, Dumas relax thine austerity, and shake hands with our friend. No quarrels amongst ourselves!"

Dumas hesitated, and extended his hand, which the ruffian clasped; and, maudlin tears succeeding his ferocity, he half- sobbed, half-hiccoughed forth his protestations of civism and his promises of sobriety.

"Well, we depend on thee, mon general," said Dumas; "and now, since we shall all have need of vigour for to-morrow, go home and sleep soundly."

“Yes, I forgive thee, Dumas,--I forgive thee. I am not vindictive,--I! but still, if a man threatens me; if a man insults me--” and, with the quick changes of intoxication, again his eyes gleamed fire through their fowl tears. With some difficulty Fouquier succeeded at last in soothing the brute, and leading him from the chamber. But still, as some wild beast disappointed of a prey, he growled and snarled as his heavy tread descended the stairs. A tall trooper, mounted, was leading Henriot’s horse to and fro the streets; and as the general waited at the porch till his attendant turned, a stranger stationed by the wall accosted him:

“General Henriot, I have desired to speak with thee. Next to Robespierre, thou art, or shouldst be, the most powerful man in France.”

“Hem!--yes, I ought to be. What then?--every man has not his deserts!”

“Hist!” said the stranger; “thy pay is scarcely suitable to thy rank and thy wants.”

“That is true.”

“Even in a revolution, a man takes care of his fortunes!”

“Diable! speak out, citizen.”

“I have a thousand pieces of gold with me,--they are thine, if thou wilt grant me one small favour.”

“Citizen, I grant it!” said Henriot, waving his hand majestically. “Is it to denounce some rascal who has offended thee?”

“No; it is simply this: write these words to President Dumas, ‘Admit the bearer to thy presence; and, if thou canst, grant him the request he will make to thee, it will be an inestimable obligation to Francois Henriot.’” The stranger, as he spoke, placed pencil and tablets in the shaking hands of the soldier.

“And where is the gold?”

“Here.”

With some difficulty, Henriot scrawled the words dictated to him, clutched the gold, mounted his horse, and was gone.

Meanwhile Fouquier, when he had closed the door upon Henriot, said sharply, “How canst thou be so mad as to incense that brigand? Knowest thou not that our laws are nothing without the physical force of the National Guard, and that he is their leader?”

“I know this, that Robespierre must have been mad to place that drunkard at their head; and mark my words, Fouquier, if the struggle come, it is that man’s incapacity and cowardice that will destroy us. Yes, thou mayst live thyself to accuse thy beloved Robespierre, and to perish in his fall.”

“For all that, we must keep well with Henriot till we can find the occasion to seize and behead him. To be safe, we must fawn on those who are still in power; and fawn the more, the more we would depose them. Do not think this Henriot, when he wakes to-morrow, will forget thy threats. He is the most revengeful of human beings. Thou must send and soothe him in the morning!”

“Right,” said Dumas, convinced. “I was too hasty; and now I think we have nothing further to do, since we have arranged to make short work with our fournee of to-morrow. I see in the list a knave I have long marked out, though his crime once procured me a legacy,--Nicot, the Hebertist.”

“And young Andre Chenier, the poet? Ah, I forgot; we be headed HIM to-day! Revolutionary virtue is at its acme. His own brother abandoned him.” (His brother is said, indeed, to have contributed to the condemnation of this virtuous and illustrious person. He was heard to cry aloud, “Si mon frere est coupable, qu’il perisse” (If my brother be culpable, let him die). This

brother, Marie-Joseph, also a poet, and the author of "Charles IX.," so celebrated in the earlier days of the Revolution, enjoyed, of course, according to the wonted justice of the world, a triumphant career, and was proclaimed in the Champ de Mars "le premier de poetes Francais," a title due to his murdered brother.)

"There is a foreigner,--an Italian woman in the list; but I can find no charge made out against her."

"All the same we must execute her for the sake of the round number; eighty sounds better than seventy-nine!"

Here a huissier brought a paper on which was written the request of Henriot.

"Ah! this is fortunate," said Tinville, to whom Dumas chucked the scroll,--"grant the prayer by all means; so at least that it does not lessen our bead-roll. But I will do Henriot the justice to say that he never asks to let off, but to put on. Good-night! I am worn out--my escort waits below. Only on such an occasion would I venture forth in the streets at night." (During the latter part of the Reign of Terror, Fouquier rarely stirred out at night, and never without an escort. In the Reign of Terror those most terrified were its kings.) And Fouquier, with a long yawn, quitted the room.

"Admit the bearer!" said Dumas, who, withered and dried, as lawyers in practice mostly are, seemed to require as little sleep as his parchments.

The stranger entered.

"Rene-Francois Dumas," said he, seating himself opposite to the president, and markedly adopting the plural, as if in contempt of the revolutionary jargon, "amidst the excitement and occupations of your later life, I know not if you can remember that we have met before?"

The judge scanned the features of his visitor, and a pale blush settled on his sallow cheeks, "Yes, citizen, I remember!"

"And you recall the words I then uttered! You spoke tenderly and philanthropically of your horror of capital executions; you exulted in the approaching Revolution as the termination of all sanguinary punishments; you quoted reverently the saying of Maximilien Robespierre, the rising statesman, 'The executioner is the invention of the tyrant;' and I replied, that while you spoke, a foreboding seized me that we should meet again when your ideas of death and the philosophy of revolutions might be changed! Was I right, Citizen Rene-Francois Dumas, President of the Revolutionary Tribunal?"

"Pooh!" said Dumas, with some confusion on his brazen brow, "I spoke then as men speak who have not acted. Revolutions are not made with rose-water! But truce to the gossip of the long-ago. I remember, also, that thou didst then save the life of my relation, and it will please thee to learn that his intended murderer will be guillotined to-morrow."

"That concerns yourself,--your justice or your revenge. Permit me the egotism to remind you that you then promised that if ever a day should come when you could serve me, your life--yes, the phrase was, 'your heart's blood'--was at my bidding. Think not, austere judge, that I come to ask a boon that can affect yourself,--I come but to ask a day's respite for another!"

"Citizen, it is impossible! I have the order of Robespierre that not one less than the total on my list must undergo their trial for to-morrow. As for the verdict, that rests with the jury!"

"I do not ask you to diminish the catalogue. Listen still! In your death-roll there is the name of an Italian woman whose youth, whose beauty, and whose freedom not only from every crime, but every tangible charge, will excite only compassion, and not terror. Even YOU would tremble to pronounce her sentence. It will be dangerous on a day when the populace will be

excited, when your tumbrils may be arrested, to expose youth and innocence and beauty to the pity and courage of a revolted crowd.”

Dumas looked up and shrunk from the eye of the stranger.

“I do not deny, citizen, that there is reason in what thou urgest. But my orders are positive.”

“Positive only as to the number of the victims. I offer you a substitute for this one. I offer you the head of a man who knows all of the very conspiracy which now threatens Robespierre and yourself, and compared with one clew to which, you would think even eighty ordinary lives a cheap purchase.”

“That alters the case,” said Dumas, eagerly; “if thou canst do this, on my own responsibility I will postpone the trial of the Italian. Now name the proxy!”

“You behold him!”

“Thou!” exclaimed Dumas, while a fear he could not conceal betrayed itself through his surprise. “Thou!--and thou comest to me alone at night, to offer thyself to justice. Ha!--this is a snare. Tremble, fool!--thou art in my power, and I can have BOTH!”

“You can,” said the stranger, with a calm smile of disdain; “but my life is valueless without my revelations. Sit still, I command you,--hear me!” and the light in those dauntless eyes spell-bound and awed the judge. “You will remove me to the Conciergerie,--you will fix my trial, under the name of Zanoni, amidst your fournee of to-morrow. If I do not satisfy you by my speech, you hold the woman I die to save as your hostage. It is but the reprieve for her of a single day that I demand. The day following the morrow I shall be dust, and you may wreak your vengeance on the life that remains. Tush! judge and condemner of thousands, do you hesitate,--do you imagine that the man who voluntarily offers himself to death will be daunted into uttering one syllable at your Bar against his will? Have you not had experience enough of the inflexibility of pride and courage? President, I place before you the ink and implements! Write to the jailer a reprieve of one day for the woman whose life can avail you nothing, and I will bear the order to my own prison: I, who can now tell this much as an earnest of what I can communicate,--while I speak, your own name, judge, is in a list of death. I can tell you by whose hand it is written down; I can tell you in what quarter to look for danger; I can tell you from what cloud, in this lurid atmosphere, hangs the storm that shall burst on Robespierre and his reign!”

Dumas grew pale; and his eyes vainly sought to escape the magnetic gaze that overpowered and mastered him. Mechanically, and as if under an agency not his own, he wrote while the stranger dictated.

“Well,” he said then, forcing a smile to his lips, “I promised I would serve you; see, I am faithful to my word. I suppose that you are one of those fools of feeling,--those professors of anti-revolutionary virtue, of whom I have seen not a few before my Bar. Faugh! it sickens me to see those who make a merit of incivism, and perish to save some bad patriot, because it is a son, or a father, or a wife, or a daughter, who is saved.”

“I AM one of those fools of feeling,” said the stranger, rising. “You have divined aright.”

“And wilt thou not, in return for my mercy, utter to-night the revelations thou wouldst proclaim to-morrow? Come; and perhaps thou too--nay, the woman also--may receive, not reprieve, but pardon.”

“Before your tribunal, and there alone! Nor will I deceive you, president. My information may avail you not; and even while I show the cloud, the bolt may fall.”

“Tush! prophet, look to thyself! Go, madman, go. I know too well the contumacious obstinacy of the class to which I suspect thou belongest, to waste further words. Diable! but ye

grow so accustomed to look on death, that ye forget the respect ye owe to it. Since thou offerest me thy head, I accept it. To-morrow thou mayst repent; it will be too late.”

“Ay, too late, president!” echoed the calm visitor.

“But, remember, it is not pardon, it is but a day’s reprieve, I have promised to this woman. According as thou dost satisfy me to-morrow, she lives or dies. I am frank, citizen; thy ghost shall not haunt me for want of faith.”

“It is but a day that I have asked; the rest I leave to justice and to Heaven. Your huissiers wait below.”

CHAPTER 7.XVI.

Und den Mordstahl seh’ ich blinken;

Und das Morderauge gluhn!--“Kassandra.”

(And I see the steel of Murder glitter, And the eye of Murder glow.)

Viola was in the prison that opened not but for those already condemned before adjudged. Since her exile from Zanoni, her very intellect had seemed paralysed. All that beautiful exuberance of fancy which, if not the fruit of genius, seemed its blossoms; all that gush of exquisite thought which Zanoni had justly told her flowed with mysteries and subtleties ever new to him, the wise one,--all were gone, annihilated; the blossom withered, the fount dried up. From something almost above womanhood, she seemed listlessly to sink into something below childhood. With the inspirer the inspirations had ceased; and, in deserting love, genius also was left behind.

She scarcely comprehended why she had been thus torn from her home and the mechanism of her dull tasks. She scarcely knew what meant those kindly groups, that, struck with her exceeding loveliness, had gathered round her in the prison, with mournful looks, but with words of comfort. She, who had hitherto been taught to abhor those whom Law condemns for crime, was amazed to hear that beings thus compassionate and tender, with cloudless and lofty brows, with gallant and gentle mien, were criminals for whom Law had no punishment short of death. But they, the savages, gaunt and menacing, who had dragged her from her home, who had attempted to snatch from her the infant while she clasped it in her arms, and laughed fierce scorn at her mute, quivering lips,--THEY were the chosen citizens, the men of virtue, the favourites of Power, the ministers of Law! Such thy black caprices, O thou, the ever-shifting and calumnious,--Human Judgment!

A squalid, and yet a gay world, did the prison-houses of that day present. There, as in the sepulchre to which they led, all ranks were cast with an even-handed scorn. And yet there, the reverence that comes from great emotions restored Nature’s first and imperishable, and most lovely, and most noble Law,--THE INEQUALITY BETWEEN MAN AND MAN! There, place was given by the prisoners, whether royalists or sans-culottes, to Age, to Learning, to Renown, to Beauty; and Strength, with its own inborn chivalry, raised into rank the helpless and the weak. The iron sinews and the Herculean shoulders made way for the woman and the child; and the graces of Humanity, lost elsewhere, sought their refuge in the abode of Terror.

“And wherefore, my child, do they bring thee hither?” asked an old, grey-haired priest.

“I cannot guess.”

“Ah, if you know not your offence, fear the worst!”

“And my child?”--for the infant was still suffered to rest upon her bosom.

“Alas, young mother, they will suffer thy child to live.”

“And for this,--an orphan in the dungeon!” murmured the accusing heart of Viola,--”have I reserved his offspring! Zanoni, even in thought, ask not--ask not what I have done with the child I bore thee!”

Night came; the crowd rushed to the grate to hear the muster- roll. (Called, in the mocking jargon of the day, “The Evening Gazette.”) Her name was with the doomed. And the old priest, better prepared to die, but reserved from the death-list, laid his hands on her head, and blessed her while he wept. She heard, and wondered; but she did not weep. With downcast eyes, with arms folded on her bosom, she bent submissively to the call. But now another name was uttered; and a man, who had pushed rudely past her to gaze or to listen, shrieked out a howl of despair and rage. She turned, and their eyes met. Through the distance of time she recognised that hideous aspect. Nicot’s face settled back into its devilish sneer. “At least, gentle Neapolitan, the guillotine will unite us. Oh, we shall sleep well our wedding- night!” And, with a laugh, he strode away through the crowd, and vanished into his lair.

...

She was placed in her gloomy cell, to await the morrow. But the child was still spared her; and she thought it seemed as if conscious of the awful present. In their way to the prison it had not moaned or wept. It had looked with its clear eyes, unshrinking, on the gleaming pikes and savage brows of the huissiers. And now, alone in the dungeon, it put its arms round her neck, and murmured its indistinct sounds, low and sweet as some unknown language of consolation and of heaven. And of heaven it was!--for, at the murmur, the terror melted from her soul; upward, from the dungeon and the death,--upward, where the happy cherubim chant the mercy of the All-loving, whispered that cherub’s voice. She fell upon her knees and prayed. The despoilers of all that beautifies and hallows life had desecrated the altar, and denied the God!--they had removed from the last hour of their victims the Priest, the Scripture, and the Cross! But Faith builds in the dungeon and the lazar-house its sublimest shrines; and up, through roofs of stone, that shut out the eye of Heaven, ascends the ladder where the angels glide to and fro,--
PRAYER.

And there, in the very cell beside her own, the atheist Nicot sits stolid amidst the darkness, and hugs the thought of Danton, that death is nothingness. (“Ma demeure sera bientot LE NEANT” (My abode will soon be nothingness), said Danton before his judges.) His, no spectacle of an appalled and perturbed conscience! Remorse is the echo of a lost virtue, and virtue he never knew. Had he to live again, he would live the same. But more terrible than the death-bed of a believing and despairing sinner that blank gloom of apathy,--that contemplation of the worm and the rat of the charnel-house; that grim and loathsome NOTHINGNESS which, for his eye, falls like a pall over the universe of life. Still, staring into space, gnawing his livid lip, he looks upon the darkness, convinced that darkness is forever and forever!

...

Place, there! place! Room yet in your crowded cells. Another has come to the slaughter-house.

As the jailer, lamp in hand, ushered in the stranger, the latter touched him and whispered. The stranger drew a jewel from his finger. Diantre, how the diamond flashed in the ray of the lamp! Value each head of your eighty at a thousand francs, and the jewel is more worth than all! The jailer paused, and the diamond laughed in his dazzled eyes. O thou Cerberus, thou hast mastered all else that seems human in that fell employ! Thou hast no pity, no love, and no remorse. But

Avarice survives the rest, and the foul heart's master-serpent swallows up the tribe. Ha! ha! crafty stranger, thou hast conquered! They tread the gloomy corridor; they arrive at the door where the jailer has placed the fatal mark, now to be erased, for the prisoner within is to be reprieved a day. The key grates in the lock; the door yawns,-- the stranger takes the lamp and enters.

CHAPTER 7.XVII.
The Seventeenth and Last.

Cosi vince Goffredo!--"Ger. Lib." cant. xx.-xliv.
(Thus conquered Godfrey.)

And Viola was in prayer. She heard not the opening of the door; she saw not the dark shadow that fell along the floor. HIS power, HIS arts were gone; but the mystery and the spell known to HER simple heart did not desert her in the hours of trial and despair. When Science falls as a firework from the sky it would invade; when Genius withers as a flower in the breath of the icy charnel,--the hope of a child-like soul wraps the air in light, and the innocence of unquestioning Belief covers the grave with blossoms.

In the farthest corner of the cell she knelt; and the infant, as if to imitate what it could not comprehend, bent its little limbs, and bowed its smiling face, and knelt with her also, by her side.

He stood and gazed upon them as the light of the lamp fell calmly on their forms. It fell over those clouds of golden hair, dishevelled, parted, thrown back from the rapt, candid brow; the dark eyes raised on high, where, through the human tears, a light as from above was mirrored; the hands clasped, the lips apart, the form all animate and holy with the sad serenity of innocence and the touching humility of woman. And he heard her voice, though it scarcely left her lips: the low voice that the heart speaks,--loud enough for God to hear!

"And if never more to see him, O Father! Canst Thou not make the love that will not die, minister, even beyond the grave, to his earthly fate? Canst Thou not yet permit it, as a living spirit, to hover over him,--a spirit fairer than all his science can conjure? Oh, whatever lot be ordained to either, grant--even though a thousand ages may roll between us--grant, when at last purified and regenerate, and fitted for the transport of such reunion--grant that we may meet once more! And for his child,-- it kneels to Thee from the dungeon floor! To-morrow, and whose breast shall cradle it; whose hand shall feed; whose lips shall pray for its weal below and its soul hereafter!" She paused,-- her voice choked with sobs.

"Thou Viola!--thou, thyself. He whom thou hast deserted is here to preserve the mother to the child!"

She started!--those accents, tremulous as her own! She started to her feet!--he was there,--in all the pride of his unwaning youth and superhuman beauty; there, in the house of dread, and in the hour of travail; there, image and personation of the love that can pierce the Valley of the Shadow, and can glide, the unscathed wanderer from the heaven, through the roaring abyss of hell!

With a cry never, perhaps, heard before in that gloomy vault,--a cry of delight and rapture, she sprang forward, and fell at his feet.

He bent down to raise her; but she slid from his arms. He called her by the familiar epithets of the old endearment, and she only answered him by sobs. Wildly, passionately, she kissed his hands, the hem of his garment, but voice was gone.

“Look up, look up!--I am here,--I am here to save thee! Wilt thou deny to me thy sweet face? Truant, wouldst thou fly me still?”

“Fly thee!” she said, at last, and in a broken voice; “oh, if my thoughts wronged thee,--oh, if my dream, that awful dream, deceived,--kneel down with me, and pray for our child!” Then springing to her feet with a sudden impulse, she caught up the infant, and, placing it in his arms, sobbed forth, with deprecating and humble tones, “Not for my sake,--not for mine, did I abandon thee, but--”

“Hush!” said Zanoni; “I know all the thoughts that thy confused and struggling senses can scarcely analyse themselves. And see how, with a look, thy child answers them!”

And in truth the face of that strange infant seemed radiant with its silent and unfathomable joy. It seemed as if it recognised the father; it clung--it forced itself to his breast, and there, nestling, turned its bright, clear eyes upon Viola, and smiled.

“Pray for my child!” said Zanoni, mournfully. “The thoughts of souls that would aspire as mine are All PRAYER!” And, seating himself by her side, he began to reveal to her some of the holier secrets of his lofty being. He spoke of the sublime and intense faith from which alone the diviner knowledge can arise,--the faith which, seeing the immortal everywhere, purifies and exalts the mortal that beholds, the glorious ambition that dwells not in the cabals and crimes of earth, but amidst those solemn wonders that speak not of men, but of God; of that power to abstract the soul from the clay which gives to the eye of the soul its subtle vision, and to the soul’s wing the unlimited realm; of that pure, severe, and daring initiation from which the mind emerges, as from death, into clear perceptions of its kindred with the Father-Principles of life and light, so that in its own sense of the Beautiful it finds its joy; in the serenity of its will, its power; in its sympathy with the youthfulness of the Infinite Creation, of which itself is an essence and a part, the secrets that embalm the very clay which they consecrate, and renew the strength of life with the ambrosia of mysterious and celestial sleep. And while he spoke, Viola listened, breathless. If she could not comprehend, she no longer dared to distrust. She felt that in that enthusiasm, self-deceiving or not, no fiend could lurk; and by an intuition, rather than an effort of the reason, she saw before her, like a starry ocean, the depth and mysterious beauty of the soul which her fears had wronged. Yet, when he said (concluding his strange confessions) that to this life WITHIN life and ABOVE life he had dreamed to raise her own, the fear of humanity crept over her, and he read in her silence how vain, with all his science, would the dream have been.

But now, as he closed, and, leaning on his breast, she felt the clasp of his protecting arms,--when, in one holy kiss, the past was forgiven and the present lost,--then there returned to her the sweet and warm hopes of the natural life, of the loving woman. He was come to save her! She asked not how,--she believed it without a question. They should be at last again united. They would fly far from those scenes of violence and blood. Their happy Ionian isle, their fearless solitudes, would once more receive them. She laughed, with a child’s joy, as this picture rose up amidst the gloom of the dungeon. Her mind, faithful to its sweet, simple instincts, refused to receive the lofty images that flitted confusedly by it, and settled back to its human visions, yet more baseless, of the earthly happiness and the tranquil home.

“Talk not now to me, beloved,--talk not more now to me of the past! Thou art here,--thou wilt save me; we shall live yet the common happy life, that life with thee is happiness and glory enough to me. Traverse, if thou wilt, in thy pride of soul, the universe; thy heart again is the universe to mine. I thought but now that I was prepared to die; I see thee, touch thee, and again I know how beautiful a thing is life! See through the grate the stars are fading from the sky; the morrow will soon be here,--The MORROW which will open the prison doors! Thou sayest thou

canst save me,--I will not doubt it now. Oh, let us dwell no more in cities! I never doubted thee in our lovely isle; no dreams haunted me there, except dreams of joy and beauty; and thine eyes made yet more beautiful and joyous the world in waking. To-morrow!--why do you not smile? To-morrow, love! is not TO-MORROW a blessed word! Cruel! you would punish me still, that you will not share my joy. Aha! see our little one, how it laughs to my eyes! I will talk to THAT. Child, thy father is come back!"

And taking the infant in her arms, and seating herself at a little distance, she rocked it to and fro on her bosom, and prattled to it, and kissed it between every word, and laughed and wept by fits, as ever and anon she cast over her shoulder her playful, mirthful glance upon the father to whom those fading stars smiled sadly their last farewell. How beautiful she seemed as she thus sat, unconscious of the future! Still half a child herself, her child laughing to her laughter,--two soft triflers on the brink of the grave! Over her throat, as she bent, fell, like a golden cloud, her redundant hair; it covered her treasure like a veil of light, and the child's little hands put it aside from time to time, to smile through the parted tresses, and then to cover its face and peep and smile again. It were cruel to damp that joy, more cruel still to share it.

"Viola," said Zanoni, at last, "dost thou remember that, seated by the cave on the moonlit beach, in our bridal isle, thou once didst ask me for this amulet?--the charm of a superstition long vanished from the world, with the creed to which it belonged. It is the last relic of my native land, and my mother, on her deathbed, placed it round my neck. I told thee then I would give it thee on that day WHEN THE LAWS OF OUR BEING SHOULD BECOME THE SAME."

"I remember it well."

"To-morrow it shall be thine!"

"Ah, that dear to-morrow!" And, gently laying down her child,-- for it slept now,--she threw herself on his breast, and pointed to the dawn that began greyly to creep along the skies.

There, in those horror-breathing walls, the day-star looked through the dismal bars upon those three beings, in whom were concentrated whatever is most tender in human ties; whatever is most mysterious in the combinations of the human mind; the sleeping Innocence; the trustful Affection, that, contented with a touch, a breath, can foresee no sorrow; the weary Science that, traversing all the secrets of creation, comes at last to Death for their solution, and still clings, as it nears the threshold, to the breast of Love. Thus, within, THE WITHIN,--a dungeon; without, the WITHOUT,--stately with marts and halls, with palaces and temples; Revenge and Terror, at their dark schemes and counter-schemes; to and fro, upon the tide of the shifting passions, reeled the destinies of men and nations; and hard at hand that day-star, waning into space, looked with impartial eye on the church tower and the guillotine. Up springs the blithesome morn. In yon gardens the birds renew their familiar song. The fishes are sporting through the freshening waters of the Seine. The gladness of divine nature, the roar and dissonance of mortal life, awake again: the trader unbars his windows; the flower-girls troop gayly to their haunts; busy feet are tramping to the daily drudgeries that revolutions which strike down kings and kaisars, leave the same Cain's heritage to the boor; the wagons groan and reel to the mart; Tyranny, up betimes, holds its pallid levee; Conspiracy, that hath not slept, hears the clock, and whispers to its own heart, "The hour draws near." A group gather, eager-eyed, round the purlieu of the Convention Hall; to-day decides the sovereignty of France,--about the courts of the Tribunal their customary hum and stir. No matter what the hazard of the die, or who the ruler, this day eighty heads shall fall!

...

And she slept so sweetly. Wearied out with joy, secure in the presence of the eyes regained, she had laughed and wept herself to sleep; and still in that slumber there seemed a happy consciousness that the loved was by,--the lost was found. For she smiled and murmured to herself, and breathed his name often, and stretched out her arms, and sighed if they touched him not. He gazed upon her as he stood apart,--with what emotions it were vain to say. She would wake no more to him; she could not know how dearly the safety of that sleep was purchased. That morrow she had so yearned for,--it had come at last. HOW WOULD SHE GREET THE EVE? Amidst all the exquisite hopes with which love and youth contemplate the future, her eyes had closed. Those hopes still lent their iris-colours to her dreams. She would wake to live! Tomorrow, and the Reign of Terror was no more; the prison gates would be opened,--she would go forth, with their child, into that summer-world of light. And HE?--he turned, and his eye fell upon the child; it was broad awake, and that clear, serious, thoughtful look which it mostly wore, watched him with a solemn steadiness. He bent over and kissed its lips.

"Never more," he murmured, "O heritor of love and grief,--never more wilt thou see me in thy visions; never more will the light of those eyes be fed by celestial commune; never more can my soul guard from thy pillow the trouble and the disease. Not such as I would have vainly shaped it, must be thy lot. In common with thy race, it must be thine to suffer, to struggle, and to err. But mild be thy human trials, and strong be thy spirit to love and to believe! And thus, as I gaze upon thee,--thus may my nature breathe into thine its last and most intense desire; may my love for thy mother pass to thee, and in thy looks may she hear my spirit comfort and console her. Hark! they come! Yes! I await ye both beyond the grave!"

The door slowly opened; the jailer appeared, and through the aperture rushed, at the same instant, a ray of sunlight: it streamed over the fair, hushed face of the happy sleeper,--it played like a smile upon the lips of the child that, still, mute, and steadfast, watched the movements of its father. At that moment Viola muttered in her sleep, "The day is come,--the gates are open! Give me thy hand; we will go forth! To sea, to sea! How the sunshine plays upon the waters!--to home, beloved one, to home again!"

"Citizen, thine hour is come!"

"Hist! she sleeps! A moment! There, it is done! thank Heaven!-- and STILL she sleeps!" He would not kiss, lest he should awaken her, but gently placed round her neck the amulet that would speak to her, hereafter, the farewell,--and promise, in that farewell, reunion! He is at the threshold,--he turns again, and again. The door closes! He is gone forever!

She woke at last,--she gazed round. "Zanoni, it is day!" No answer but the low wail of her child. Merciful Heaven! was it then all a dream? She tossed back the long tresses that must veil her sight; she felt the amulet on her bosom,--it was NO dream! "O God! and he is gone!" She sprang to the door,-- she shrieked aloud. The jailer comes. "My husband, my child's father?"

"He is gone before thee, woman!"

"Whither? Speak--speak!"

"To the guillotine!"--and the black door closed again.

It closed upon the senseless! As a lightning-flash, Zanoni's words, his sadness, the true meaning of his mystic gift, the very sacrifice he made for her, all became distinct for a moment to her mind,--and then darkness swept on it like a storm, yet darkness which had its light. And while she sat there, mute, rigid, voiceless, as congealed to stone, A VISION, like a wind, glided over the deeps within,--the grim court, the judge, the jury, the accuser; and amidst the victims the one dauntless and radiant form.

"Thou knowest the danger to the State,--confess!"

“I know; and I keep my promise. Judge, I reveal thy doom! I know that the Anarchy thou callest a State expires with the setting of this sun. Hark, to the tramp without; hark to the roar of voices! Room there, ye dead!--room in hell for Robespierre and his crew!”

They hurry into the court,--the hasty and pale messengers; there is confusion and fear and dismay! “Off with the conspirator, and to-morrow the woman thou wouldst have saved shall die!”

“To-morrow, president, the steel falls on THEE!”

On, through the crowded and roaring streets, on moves the Procession of Death. Ha, brave people! thou art aroused at last. They shall not die! Death is dethroned!--Robespierre has fallen!--they rush to the rescue! Hideous in the tumbril, by the side of Zanoni, raved and gesticulated that form which, in his prophetic dreams, he had seen his companion at the place of death. “Save us!--save us!” howled the atheist Nicot. “On, brave populace! we SHALL be saved!” And through the crowd, her dark hair streaming wild, her eyes flashing fire, pressed a female form, “My Clarence!” she shrieked, in the soft Southern language native to the ears of Viola; “butcher! what hast thou done with Clarence?” Her eyes roved over the eager faces of the prisoners; she saw not the one she sought. “Thank Heaven!--thank Heaven! I am not thy murderess!”

Nearer and nearer press the populace,--another moment, and the deathsman is defrauded. O Zanoni! why still upon THY brow the resignation that speaks no hope? Tramp! tramp! through the streets dash the armed troop; faithful to his orders, Black Henriot leads them on. Tramp! tramp! over the craven and scattered crowd! Here, flying in disorder,--there, trampled in the mire, the shrieking rescuers! And amidst them, stricken by the sabres of the guard, her long hair blood-bedabbled, lies the Italian woman; and still upon her writhing lips sits joy, as they murmur, “Clarence! I have not destroyed thee!”

On to the Barriere du Trone. It frowns dark in the air,--the giant instrument of murder! One after one to the glaive,-- another and another and another! Mercy! O mercy! Is the bridge between the sun and the shades so brief,--brief as a sigh? There, there,--HIS turn has come. “Die not yet; leave me not behind; hear me--hear me!” shrieked the inspired sleeper. “What! and thou smilest still!” They smiled,--those pale lips,--and WITH the smile, the place of doom, the headsman, the horror vanished. With that smile, all space seemed suffused in eternal sunshine. Up from the earth he rose; he hovered over her,--a thing not of matter, an IDEA of joy and light! Behind, Heaven opened, deep after deep; and the Hosts of Beauty were seen, rank upon rank, afar; and “Welcome!” in a myriad melodies, broke from your choral multitude, ye People of the Skies,--“welcome! O purified by sacrifice, and immortal only through the grave,--this it is to die.” And radiant amidst the radiant, the IMAGE stretched forth its arms, and murmured to the sleeper: “Companion of Eternity!--THIS it is to die!”

...

“Ho! wherefore do they make us signs from the house-tops? Wherefore gather the crowds through the street? Why sounds the bell? Why shrieks the tocsin? Hark to the guns!--the armed clash! Fellow-captives, is there hope for us at last?”

So gasp out the prisoners, each to each. Day wanes--evening closes; still they press their white faces to the bars, and still from window and from house-top they see the smiles of friends,-- the waving signals! “Hurrah!” at last,--“Hurrah! Robespierre is fallen! The Reign of Terror is no more! God hath permitted us to live!”

Yes; cast thine eyes into the hall where the tyrant and his conclave hearkened to the roar without! Fulfilling the prophecy of Dumas, Henriot, drunk with blood and alcohol, reels within, and chucks his gory sabre on the floor. “All is lost!”

“Wretch! thy cowardice hath destroyed us!” yelled the fierce Coffinhal, as he hurled the coward from the window.

Calm as despair stands the stern St. Just; the palsied Couthon crawls, grovelling, beneath table; a shot,--an explosion! Robespierre would destroy himself! The trembling hand has mangled, and failed to kill! The clock of the Hotel de Ville strikes the third hour. Through the battered door, along the gloomy passages, into the Death-hall, burst the crowd. Mangled, livid, blood-stained, speechless but not unconscious, sits haughty yet, in his seat erect, the Master-Murderer! Around him they throng; they hoot,--they execrate, their faces gleaming in the tossing torches! HE, and not the starry Magian, the REAL Sorcerer! And round HIS last hours gather the Fiends he raised!

They drag him forth! Open thy gates, inexorable prison! The Conciergerie receives its prey! Never a word again on earth spoke Maximilien Robespierre! Pour forth thy thousands, and tens of thousands, emancipated Paris! To the Place de la Revolution rolls the tumbril of the King of Terror,--St. Just, Dumas, Couthon, his companions to the grave! A woman--a childless woman, with hoary hair--springs to his side, “Thy death makes me drunk with joy!” He opened his bloodshot eyes,--”Descend to hell with the curses of wives and mothers!”

The headsman wrench the rag from the shattered jaw; a shriek, and the crowd laugh, and the axe descends amidst the shout of the countless thousands, and blackness rushes on thy soul, Maximilien Robespierre! So ended the Reign of Terror.

...

Daylight in the prison. From cell to cell they hurry with the news,--crowd upon crowd; the joyous captives mingled with the very jailers, who, for fear, would fain seem joyous too; they stream through the dens and alleys of the grim house they will shortly leave. They burst into a cell, forgotten since the previous morning. They found there a young female, sitting upon her wretched bed; her arms crossed upon her bosom, her face raised upward; the eyes unclosed, and a smile of more than serenity--of bliss--upon her lips. Even in the riot of their joy, they drew back in astonishment and awe. Never had they seen life so beautiful; and as they crept nearer, and with noiseless feet, they saw that the lips breathed not, that the repose was of marble, that the beauty and the ecstasy were of death. They gathered round in silence; and lo! at her feet there was a young infant, who, wakened by their tread, looked at them steadfastly, and with its rosy fingers played with its dead mother's robe. An orphan there in a dungeon vault!

“Poor one!” said a female (herself a parent), “and they say the father fell yesterday; and now the mother! Alone in the world, what can be its fate?”

The infant smiled fearlessly on the crowd, as the woman spoke thus. And the old priest, who stood amongst them, said gently, “Woman, see! the orphan smiles! THE FATHERLESS ARE THE CARE OF GOD!”

NOTE.

The curiosity which Zanoni has excited among those who think it worth while to dive into the subtler meanings they believe it intended to convey, may excuse me in adding a few words, not in explanation of its mysteries, but upon the principles which permit them. Zanoni is not, as some have supposed, an allegory; but beneath the narrative it relates, TYPICAL meanings are concealed. It is to be regarded in two characters, distinct yet harmonious,--1st, that of the simple and objective fiction, in which (once granting the license of the author to select a subject which is, or appears to be, preternatural) the reader judges the writer by the usual canons,--namely, by the consistency of his characters under such admitted circumstances, the interest of his story, and

the coherence of his plot; of the work regarded in this view, it is not my intention to say anything, whether in exposition of the design, or in defence of the execution. No typical meanings (which, in plain terms are but moral suggestions, more or less numerous, more or less subtle) can afford just excuse to a writer of fiction, for the errors he should avoid in the most ordinary novel. We have no right to expect the most ingenious reader to search for the inner meaning, if the obvious course of the narrative be tedious and displeasing. It is, on the contrary, in proportion as we are satisfied with the objective sense of a work of imagination, that we are inclined to search into its depths for the more secret intentions of the author. Were we not so divinely charmed with "Faust," and "Hamlet," and "Prometheus," so ardently carried on by the interest of the story told to the common understanding, we should trouble ourselves little with the types in each which all of us can detect,--none of us can elucidate; none elucidate, for the essence of type is mystery. We behold the figure, we cannot lift the veil. The author himself is not called upon to explain what he designed. An allegory is a personation of distinct and definite things,--virtues or qualities,--and the key can be given easily; but a writer who conveys typical meanings, may express them in myriads. He cannot disentangle all the hues which commingle into the light he seeks to cast upon truth; and therefore the great masters of this enchanted soil,--Fairyland of Fairyland, Poetry imbedded beneath Poetry,--wisely leave to each mind to guess at such truths as best please or instruct it. To have asked Goethe to explain the "Faust" would have entailed as complex and puzzling an answer as to have asked Mephistopheles to explain what is beneath the earth we tread on. The stores beneath may differ for every passenger; each step may require a new description; and what is treasure to the geologist may be rubbish to the miner. Six worlds may lie under a sod, but to the common eye they are but six layers of stone.

Art in itself, if not necessarily typical, is essentially a suggester of something subtler than that which it embodies to the sense. What Pliny tells us of a great painter of old, is true of most great painters; "their works express something beyond the works,"--"more felt than understood." This belongs to the concentration of intellect which high art demands, and which, of all the arts, sculpture best illustrates. Take Thorwaldsen's Statue of Mercury,--it is but a single figure, yet it tells to those conversant with mythology a whole legend. The god has removed the pipe from his lips, because he has already lulled to sleep the Argus, whom you do not see. He is pressing his heel against his sword, because the moment is come when he may slay his victim. Apply the principle of this noble concentration of art to the moral writer: he, too, gives to your eye but a single figure; yet each attitude, each expression, may refer to events and truths you must have the learning to remember, the acuteness to penetrate, or the imagination to conjecture. But to a classical judge of sculpture, would not the exquisite pleasure of discovering the all not told in Thorwaldsen's masterpiece be destroyed if the artist had engraved in detail his meaning at the base of the statue? Is it not the same with the typical sense which the artist in words conveys? The pleasure of divining art in each is the noble exercise of all by whom art is worthily regarded.

We of the humbler race not unreasonably shelter ourselves under the authority of the masters, on whom the world's judgment is pronounced; and great names are cited, not with the arrogance of equals, but with the humility of inferiors.

The author of Zanoni gives, then, no key to mysteries, be they trivial or important, which may be found in the secret chambers by those who lift the tapestry from the wall; but out of the many solutions of the main enigma--if enigma, indeed, there be--which have been sent to him, he ventures to select the one which he subjoins, from the ingenuity and thought which it displays, and from respect for the distinguished writer (one of the most eminent our time has produced) who deemed him worthy of an honour he is proud to display. He leaves it to the reader to agree

with, or dissent from the explanation. “A hundred men,” says the old Platonist, “may read the book by the help of the same lamp, yet all may differ on the text, for the lamp only lights the characters,--the mind must divine the meaning.” The object of a parable is not that of a problem; it does not seek to convince, but to suggest. It takes the thought below the surface of the understanding to the deeper intelligence which the world rarely tasks. It is not sunlight on the water; it is a hymn chanted to the nymph who hearkens and awakes below.

...

“ZANONI EXPLAINED. BY--.”

MEJNOUR:--Contemplation of the Actual,--SCIENCE. Always old, and must last as long as the Actual. Less fallible than Idealism, but less practically potent, from its ignorance of the human heart.

ZANONI:--Contemplation of the Ideal,--IDEALISM. Always necessarily sympathetic: lives by enjoyment; and is therefore typified by eternal youth. (“I do not understand the making Idealism less undying (on this scene of existence) than Science.”--Commentator. Because, granting the above premises, Idealism is more subjected than Science to the Affections, or to Instinct, because the Affections, sooner or later, force Idealism into the Actual, and in the Actual its immortality departs. The only absolutely Actual portion of the work is found in the concluding scenes that depict the Reign of Terror. The introduction of this part was objected to by some as out of keeping with the fanciful portions that preceded it. But if the writer of the solution has rightly shown or suggested the intention of the author, the most strongly and rudely actual scene of the age in which the story is cast was the necessary and harmonious completion of the whole. The excesses and crimes of Humanity are the grave of the Ideal.-- Author.) Idealism is the potent Interpreter and Prophet of the Real; but its powers are impaired in proportion to their exposure to human passion.

VIOLA:--Human INSTINCT. (Hardly worthy to be called LOVE, as Love would not forsake its object at the bidding of Superstition.) Resorts, first in its aspiration after the Ideal, to tinsel shows; then relinquishes these for a higher love; but is still, from the conditions of its nature, inadequate to this, and liable to suspicion and mistrust. Its greatest force (Maternal Instinct) has power to penetrate some secrets, to trace some movements of the Ideal, but, too feeble to command them, yields to Superstition, sees sin where there is none, while committing sin, under a false guidance; weakly seeking refuge amidst the very tumults of the warring passions of the Actual, while deserting the serene Ideal,--pining, nevertheless, in the absence of the Ideal, and expiring (not perishing, but becoming transmuted) in the aspiration after having the laws of the two natures reconciled.

(It might best suit popular apprehension to call these three the Understanding, the Imagination, and the Heart.)

CHILD:--NEW-BORN INSTINCT, while trained and informed by Idealism, promises a preter-human result by its early, incommunicable vigilance and intelligence, but is compelled, by inevitable orphanhood, and the one-half of the laws of its existence, to lapse into ordinary conditions.

AIDON-AI:--FAITH, which manifests its splendour, and delivers its oracles, and imparts its marvels, only to the higher moods of the soul, and whose directed antagonism is with Fear; so that those who employ the resources of Fear must dispense with those of Faith. Yet aspiration holds open a way of restoration, and may summon Faith, even when the cry issues from beneath the yoke of fear.

DWELLER OF THE THRESHOLD:--FEAR (or HORROR), from whose ghastliness men are protected by the opacity of the region of Prescription and Custom. The moment this protection is relinquished, and the human spirit pierces the cloud, and enters alone on the unexplored regions of Nature, this Natural Horror haunts it, and is to be successfully encountered only by defiance,-- by aspiration towards, and reliance on, the Former and Director of Nature, whose Messenger and Instrument of reassurance is Faith.

MERVALE:--CONVENTIONALISM.

NICOT:--Base, grovelling, malignant PASSION.

GLYNDON:--UNSUSTAINED ASPIRATION: Would follow Instinct, but is deterred by Conventionalism, is overawed by Idealism, yet attracted, and transiently inspired, but has not steadiness for the initiatory contemplation of the Actual. He conjoins its snatched privileges with a besetting sensualism, and suffers at once from the horror of the one and the disgust of the other, involving the innocent in the fatal conflict of his spirit. When on the point of perishing, he is rescued by Idealism, and, unable to rise to that species of existence, is grateful to be replunged into the region of the Familiar, and takes up his rest henceforth in Custom. (Mirror of Young Manhood.)

...

ARGUMENT.

Human Existence subject to, and exempt from, ordinary conditions (Sickness, Poverty, Ignorance, Death).

SCIENCE is ever striving to carry the most gifted beyond ordinary conditions,--the result being as many victims as efforts, and the striver being finally left a solitary,--for his object is unsuitable to the natures he has to deal with.

The pursuit of the Ideal involves so much emotion as to render the Idealist vulnerable by human passion, however long and well guarded, still vulnerable,--liable, at last, to a union with Instinct. Passion obscures both Insight and Forecast. All effort to elevate Instinct to Idealism is abortive, the laws of their being not coinciding (in the early stage of the existence of the one). Instinct is either alarmed, and takes refuge in Superstition or Custom, or is left helpless to human charity, or given over to providential care.

Idealism, stripped of its insight and forecast, loses its serenity, becomes subject once more to the horror from which it had escaped, and by accepting its aids, forfeits the higher help of Faith; aspiration, however, remaining still possible, and, thereby, slow restoration; and also, SOMETHING BETTER.

Summoned by aspiration, Faith extorts from Fear itself the saving truth to which Science continues blind, and which Idealism itself hails as its crowning acquisition,--the inestimable PROOF wrought out by all labours and all conflicts.

Pending the elaboration of this proof,

CONVENTIONALISM plods on, safe and complacent;

SELFISH PASSION perishes, grovelling and hopeless;

INSTINCT sleeps, in order to a loftier waking; and

IDEALISM learns, as its ultimate lesson, that self-sacrifice is true redemption; that the region beyond the grave is the fitting one for exemption from mortal conditions; and that Death is the everlasting portal, indicated by the finger of God,--the broad avenue through which man does not issue solitary and stealthy into the region of Free Existence, but enters triumphant, hailed by a hierarchy of immortal natures.

The result is (in other words), THAT THE UNIVERSAL HUMAN LOT IS, AFTER ALL, THAT OF THE HIGHEST PRIVILEGE.