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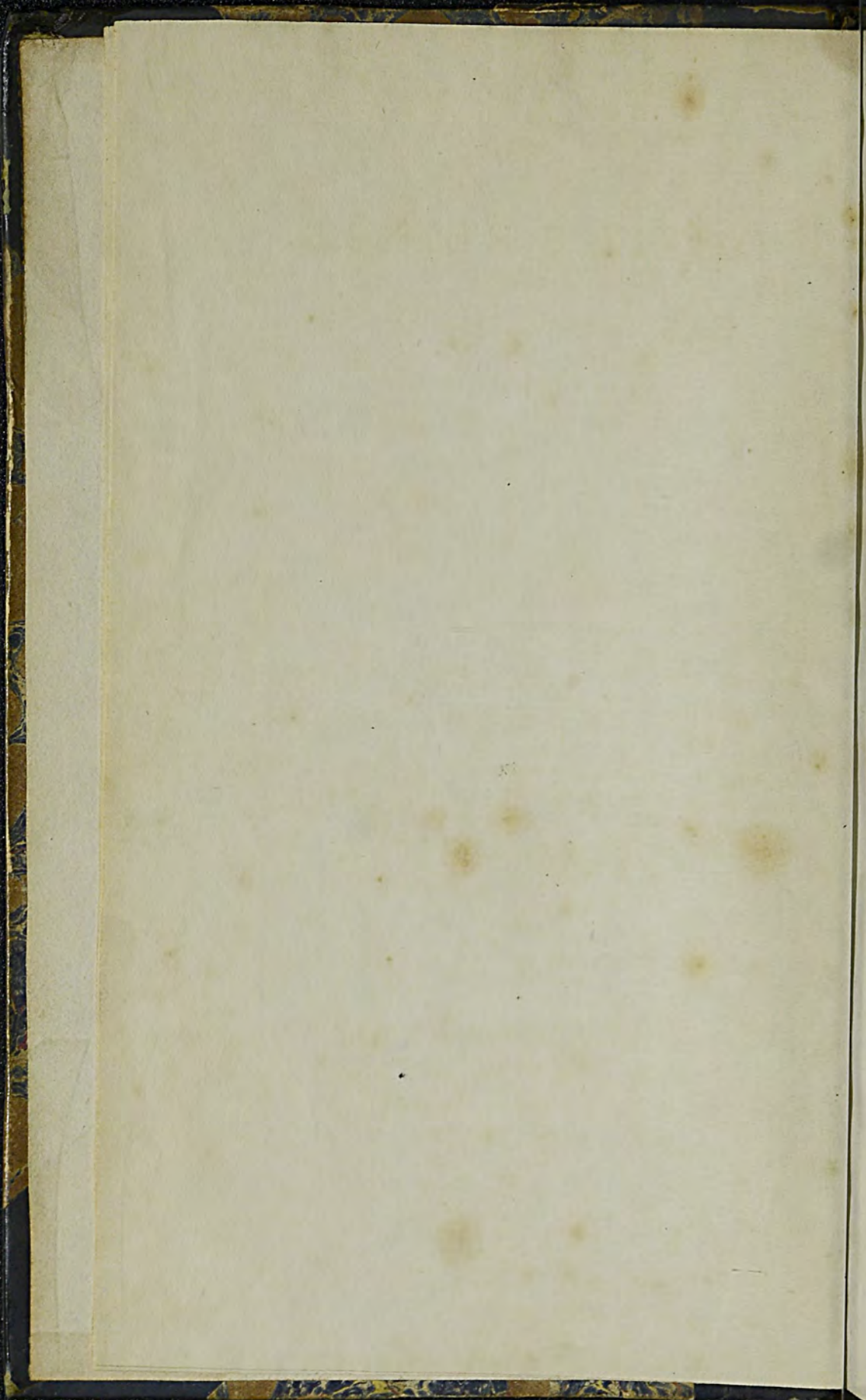


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THE
DEVIL'S ELIXIR.

FROM THE GERMAN OF

E T. A. HOFFMANN.

*In diesem Jahre wandelte auch der DEUVEL öffentlich auf den
Strassen von Berlin. —*

Hafit Microc. Berol. p. 1043.

In that yeare, the Deville was alsoe seene walking publiclie on
the streetes of Berline. —

VOL. II.

WILLIAM BLACKWOOD, EDINBURGH:
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MDCCCXXIV.

THE

DEATH'S RITUAL

H. T. A. HODGKINS

VOLUME II

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THE
DEVIL'S ELIXIR.

CHAPTER I.

WHO is there, over the wide world, who has not, at one period or another, in a more or less degree, felt the mysterious influences of love?—Whoever thou art, then, courteous reader, who shalt, after the lapse of years, turn over these papers, recall, I beseech you, to recollection that noontide interval of dazzling brightness—contemplate once more that beautiful image, which came, like an impersonization of the abstract spirit of love, from divine regions, to meet you.

At that time, it was through her,—through her alone, that thou seemed'st assured of thine own existence! Canst thou not yet remember, how the

rushing streams, the waving trees, and the balmy winds of evening, spoke to thee, in articulate and intelligible accents, of her, and of the prevailing passion which possessed thy whole heart and soul?—Canst thou yet behold how the flowers unfolded their bright beaming eyes, bearing to thine from her kisses and salutation?

Yet, suppose that she herself had actually come—that she vowed to be thine, and thine only—to live for thee alone—then didst thou fold her in thy embraces, and it seemed as if Heaven opened its eternal realms to receive you—as if thou could'st raise thyself with her above all the petty sorrows or enjoyments of this every-day and earthly sphere. Yet scarcely hadst thou formed such hopes ere she was lost! The bland illusion was broken. No longer could'st thou hear the music of her celestial voice; and only the sorrowful complaints of the despairing and forsaken lover sounded amid the desolate loneliness!

If then, reader, to me unknown!—if thou hast ever been persecuted by such a destiny, join, then, and sympathize with the grief of the penitent monk, who, recollecting still the sunny gleams of his youthful attachment, weeps on his hard couch,

and whose fearful groans reverberate, in the stillness of night, through the gloomy aisles of the convent!—But thou, too, in spirit to me related, doubtless wilt concur in my belief, that it is not till *after death*, that the mysterious gifts and enjoyments of this passion can be obtained and fulfilled! This truth is, indeed, announced to us by many a hollow prophesying voice, which rises on our ears from the immeasurable depths of eternity; and as in those rites, celebrated by our earliest ancestors, (the children of nature,) death appears also to us the high festival of love!

I have said before, that my leading object in these pages was rapid, concise narrative, without any attempt at description. But of my emotions on meeting Aurelia, that evening, in the palace, no words could, however skilfully laboured, convey any adequate impression. I was struck as if with a thundershock. My breast heaved—my heart beat convulsively—and every pulse and vein throbbed almost audibly.

“To *her!*—to *her!*”—It seemed as if an overpowering impulse would force me to thrust aside the contemptible mob of insipid worldlings—of every-day flatterers, scarcely possessed of one ra-

tional idea, by whom she was surrounded—to crush, like webs of gossamer, those despicable barriers, and snatch her to my arms, in all the wild frenzy of undisguised passion! Methought I could have exclaimed aloud—“What, unhappy girl, dost thou strive against? With that supernatural power, which has irresistibly and unalterably chained thee to me?—Am I not thy fate, and art thou not indeed mine for ever?”

Yet notwithstanding these emotions, I contrived, far better than formerly, at the Baron's castle, to conceal from the bystanders my agitation. Besides, the eyes of all were directed to Aurelia; and thus, in a circle of people, who to my concerns were perfectly indifferent, I contrived to move about, without being particularly remarked or spoken to, which to me would have been intolerable, as I could but see, hear, and think of her alone.

Let no one insist that a truly beautiful girl appears to most advantage in a homely household dress. On the contrary, the beauty of woman, like that of flowers in a parterre, is then most attractive and irresistible when they are arrayed in their fullest pomp and magnificence. Say, then,

oh lover ! to whom I have before addressed myself, when thou for the first time beholdest the empress of thy heart—who had before worn a simple garb, now attired with splendour and gleaming, the *cynosure* of a brilliant party—did not a new and nameless rapture vibrate through every nerve and vein? She would appear to you indeed so strange ! but this, joined to the knowledge that she was in reality *the same*, heightened the charms by which thy soul was wholly subjected. What unspeakable pleasure, if thou could'st, by stealth, seize and press her hand in the crowd, and say to thyself, she, who is here the magnet of all eyes, is mine by indissoluble bonds, and lives for me alone !

Thus I beheld Aurelia on that evening dressed with becoming splendour for her first introduction at court. Then the spirit of evil once more became powerful within me, and lifted up his internal voice, to which I now bent a willing ear—“ Seest thou not now, Medardus,” it began, “ how thou triumph'st over all the conditional laws and limitations of this life—how Destiny now submits herself to thy will, and only knots more firmly the threads which thou thyself hadst spun ?”

There were many other women at court who might well have passed for beautiful, but before the dazzling charms of Aurelia, they faded away into utter insignificance. A kind of inspiration now seemed to take possession of the most insipid and common-place characters. Even the old courtiers gave up their usual strain of unmeaning talk, and visibly exerted themselves, in order to appear to the best advantage in the eyes of the beautiful stranger.

Aurelia received all this homage with looks fixed on the ground, and with deep blushes; but now, when the Prince assembled the elder courtiers about himself, and many a handsome youth timidly and respectfully drew near her, she began, by degrees, to lose her embarrassment, and to seem more cheerful.

There was, in particular, a certain Major of the *garde d'honneur*, who succeeded in attracting a good deal of her attention, so that she at last appeared occupied with him in lively discourse. I knew this Major to be a decided favourite of the female sex; with a fine ear, he could catch even the very tone, sentiment, and voice of the person whom he addressed, so that

the deceived listener seemed to hear a miraculous anticipation of her own thoughts—a chord struck in perfect unison. I now stood not far from Aurelia, who appeared to take no notice of me. Many times I was on the point of going up to her, but, as if bound by iron fetters, I could not move from the spot on which I stood. The bitterness of envy and jealousy possessed my heart. At last, as I steadfastly gazed on Aurelia and her fortunate companion, methought that the Major's features were changed into those of Victorin !

As if actuated by some demon, I wholly lost all self-possession. In a convulsed tone of bitter scorn and mockery, I laughed aloud—"Ha, ha, ha !—Thou *revenant* !—Thou cursed libertine !" cried I, "has thy bed then, in the devil's abyss, been so downy, that, in frenzied passion, thou darrest aspire to the chosen paramour of the Monk ?"

I know not if I actually uttered these words, but I heard myself laugh, and started up as from a dream, when the old Court-Marshal, taking my arm, gently inquired, "What makes you so merry, Mr Leonard ?" An ice-cold shuddering passed over my whole frame.

Were not these the identical words of the

pious brother Cyrillus, when, at the time of my investiture, he remarked my sinful laughter?— Scarcely was I able to utter some incoherent nonsense in reply—I felt conscious that Aurelia was no longer near to me, but did not venture to look up to see what had become of her. Instinctively, I resolved to make my escape, and ran with my utmost speed through the illuminated apartments. Doubtless, my appearance was in the utmost degree disordered, for I remarked how every one cleared the way for me as if seized with horror and affright. At length, I arrived at the outer-door, and leapt headlong rather than ran down the broad marble staircase.

Henceforward I completely avoided the court; for to see Aurelia again, without betraying the mystery which it was my interest to conceal, seemed to me impossible. Abandoned to my own reveries, I ran through the fields and woods, thinking of her, and beholding her alone. My conviction always became more certain that some mysterious destiny bound up her fate indissolubly with mine, and that my pursuit of her, which had many times appeared to me as an unpardonable crime, was

but the fulfilment of an eternal and unalterable decree.

Thus encouraging myself, I laughed at the danger which now threatened me, if Aurelia should recognize in me the murderer of Hermogen! Besides, this appeared to me very improbable; and, meanwhile, the attentions of those fluttering youths who laboured to win for themselves the good graces of her who was altogether and exclusively mine, filled me with the utmost scorn and contempt for their endeavours.

“What,” said I, “are to me these Counts, Freyherrs, Chamberlains, and military officers, in their motley coats bedaubed with lace, and hung with orders? What are they more than gaudy impertinent insects, which, if they became troublesome, I could with one blow crush to annihilation?”

Reflecting on the chapel adventure of the Cistercian Convent, it seemed to me as if, robed in my capuchin tunic, I could step in among them with Aurelia, habited like a bride, in my arms, and that this proud and haughty Princess should be forced even to sanction the marriage, and prepare the bridal festival for that conquering and

triumphant monk, whom she now so much despised. Labouring with such thoughts, I frequently pronounced aloud, and unconsciously, the name of Aurelia; and, as before in the Capuchin Convent, laughed and howled like a madman!

But, ere long, this tempest was laid, and I began quietly to take counsel with myself in what manner I was now to act. Thus I was one morning gliding through the park, considering whether it would be prudent for me to attend another evening party at court, which had been announced to me, when some one touched me on the shoulder. It was the physician.

To my great surprise, after the usual salutations, he looked steadfastly in my face, took hold of my arm, and requested that I would allow him to feel my pulse. "What's the meaning of all this?" cried I, with some impatience.—"Nay," said he, "there is a sort of madness going about here, that seizes all at once upon honest Christian people, and makes them utter tremendous noises, though some will have it that the said noises are nothing more than very immoderate laughter. At the same time, this may be all a misconception; this devil of madness may be only a slight fever,

with heat in the blood; therefore I beg of you, sir, allow me to feel your pulse."

"I assure you, sir," said I, "that I am well, and by no means understand the drift of this discourse." The physician, however, had kept hold of my arm, and now taking out his watch, counted my pulse with great precision. His conduct, indeed, puzzled me completely, and I entreated of him to explain himself.

"Do you not know, then, Mr Leonard," replied he, "that your behaviour has lately brought the whole court into the utmost confusion and consternation? Since that time, the lady of the upper Chamberlain has been almost perpetually in hysterics; and the President of the Consistorial Court has been obliged to put off hearing the weightiest causes, because it was your pleasure to tramp with all your might upon his gouty toes; so that, now confined to his arm-chair, he sits at home roaring and cursing most notably. This happened when you were running out of the hall, after you had laughed in such a demoniacal tone without any perceptible reason, that all were seized with the utmost horror."

At that moment I thought of the Court-Marshal, and said that I indeed recollected having laughed in that sudden manner, but that my conduct surely could not have been attended by such consequences, as the Marshal had only asked me, with great coolness, “ Why I was so merry ?”

“ Nay, nay,” answered the physician, “ that will not prove much—The Marshal is such a *homo impavidus*, that the very devil himself could scarcely put him out of his way—He retained his ordinary placidity of manner, but the Consistorial President, on the other hand, was exceedingly disturbed in mind as well as in body, and maintained seriously, that none but the devil could have laughed in such a style.—But what is worst of all, our beautiful Aurelia was seized with such excessive terror, that all the efforts of the family to quiet her were in vain,—and she was soon obliged to retire, to the utter despair of the company. At the moment too, when you, Mr Leonard, so charmingly laughed, the Baroness Aurelia is said to have shrieked out the name, “ Hermogen !” Now what may be the meaning of all this ?—

You are generally a pleasant, lively, and prudent man, Mr Leonard, and I cannot regret having confided to you the story of Francesco, which, if all suggestions be true, must be to you particularly intelligible and instructive !”

During this discourse, the physician had continued to hold my arm, and to gaze steadfastly in my face. Tired of this restraint, I disengaged myself with some roughness—and answered—“ I really know not how to interpret all this discourse of yours, sir ; but I must confess, that when I saw the beautiful Aurelia surrounded by that tribe of conceited young gentry, a very bitter remembrance from my early life was called up in my mind ; and that, seized with a kind of angry scorn at the behaviour of such empty-brained coxcombs, I forgot in whose presence I was, and laughed aloud in a manner that would only have been warrantable when I was alone. I am truly sorry that I have unintentionally brought about so much mischief ; but I have done penance on that score, having for some time denied myself the pleasure of being at court. I hope that the Prince’s family and the Baroness Aurelia will excuse me.”

“ Alas ! dear Mr Leonard,” said the Doctor, “ one is indeed subject to strange attacks and varieties of mind, which we might yet easily resist, if we were but pure in heart, and quiet in conscience.”

“ Who is there,” said I vehemently, “ on this earthly sphere, that may boast of being so ?” — The physician suddenly changed his looks and tone. Mildly and seriously he said — “ Mr Leonard, you appear to me to be really and truly sick : your looks are pale and disordered — your eyes are sunk, and gleam with a strange kind of fire — your pulse, too, is feverish, and your voice sounds strangely. — Shall I prescribe something for you ?”

“ Poison !” answered I, in a kind of hollow whisper. — “ Ho, ho,” said the physician, “ does it stand thus with you ? — Nay, nay, instead of poison, rather the tranquillizing and sedative remedy of pleasant society, and moderate dissipation. It may, however, be; that” — (hesitating) — “ It is wonderful indeed, but ——”

“ I must beg of you, sir,” said I, now quite angry, “ not to torment me in that manner by your broken hints, but at once to speak out.”

“ Hold !” answered the Doctor. “ Not so fast, Mr Leonard—yonder comes the Princess—there are in this world the strangest delusions, and for my part, I feel almost a conviction that people have here built up an hypothesis which a few minutes’ explanation will dissolve into nothing. Yonder, as I said, comes the Princess with Aurelia.—Do you make use of this accidental rencontre. Offer your own excuses for your behaviour. Properly, indeed, your only crime is, that you have laughed—in an extraordinary tone it is true, and rather inopportunoely. But who can help it, if people with weak nerves have on that occasion chosen to be so absurdly terrified?—Adieu !”

The physician started away with that vivacity which to him was peculiar.—The Princess and Aurelia were coming down the walk to meet me. I trembled ; but with my whole strength laboured to regain composure, for after the mysterious discourse of the physician, I felt that it was my duty on the instant to defend my character. Resolutely, therefore, I went forward to meet them ; but no sooner had Aurelia fixed her eyes upon me than she became deadly pale, and to my utter

astonishment, with a suppressed scream, she fell down in a fainting fit, to the ground. I wished to assist her, but with looks of aversion and horror, the Princess then motioned me away, at the same time calling loudly for help!

CHAPTER II.

As if hunted by a thousand devils and furies, I ran away homewards through the park—I shut myself up in my lodgings, and gnashing my teeth with rage and despair, threw myself on the bed. Evening came, and then the dark hours of night, and I still lay there obstinately cherishing my grief. At last I heard the outer gate of the house open, and many voices murmuring and whispering confusedly together. Then there was a noise of heavy steps tottering and clattering up the staircase,—and with three hollow knocks on my door, I was commanded to rise and open it in the name of the magistracy. Without clearly comprehending the danger that awaited me, I yet felt an instinctive conviction that I was now for ever lost.

To save myself instantly by flight—This was my only thought, and I flew to the window, tearing open the lattice. This, however, availed me

nothing,—for before the house door, I saw a troop of armed men, one of whom directly observed me, and at the same moment, the door of my apartment was burst in—several men immediately stood around me, whom I recognized for officers of police, and who shewed me an order of the Justiciary Court for my immediate imprisonment. Any attempt at resistance would now have been in vain. They led me down stairs, and placed me in a carriage, which stood there ready to receive me, and which immediately drove off rapidly, through the streets.

When arrived at the place which seemed that of my destination, after being led through divers passages and corridors; also up staircases *that staircases were none*, but seemed (having no steps*) to be like the side of a mountain; I inquired “Where I was?” I received for answer, “In the prison of the upper castle.” In this place, according to information already received on the arrestment of others, I knew that dangerous and treasonable criminals were shut up during the time

* This is exemplified in the (old) royal palace at Berlin.

that their trial was going on, or was in preparation.

My apartment was comfortless and ghastly enough; but, in a little time, my bed and some other furniture were brought, and the gaoler asked if I wanted anything more. To get rid of him, I answered "No;" and at last was left alone. The receding steps through the long-sounding passages, with the opening and shutting of many doors, if I had not known it already, would have sufficiently made me aware that I was in one of the innermost prisons of the fortress.

It was to myself inconceivable, how, during a pretty long drive, I had remained quite quiet, nay, under a kind of stunning and stupefaction of the senses. I beheld all images that passed before me, as if they existed only in the half-effaced colours of a faded picture. Now, too, I did not resign myself to sleep, but to a kind of faint or swoon, paralysing the faculty of clear thought, and yet leaving me awake to the most horrible and fantastic apprehensions.

When I awoke in the bright light of the morning, I, for the first time, gradually took counsel with myself, and fully recollected all that had

happened, and whither I had been brought. As to the room wherein I lay, its inconvenience made less impression on me than it would have done upon another. The vaulted roof, and want of comfort, only reminded me of my cell in the Capuchin Convent; and the chamber would scarcely have appeared to me a prison, if it had not been that the small and only window was strongly barred with iron, and so high, that I could scarcely reach it with my upstretched hands, far less look out from it on the prospect.

Only a narrow sunbeam fell through this high loop-hole; and being anxious to examine the environs of my prison, I drew my bed to the wall under it; over this placed my table, and was just in the act of mounting up, when my gaoler stepped in and seemed very much surprised at my proceedings. He inquired roughly what I was about there; and on receiving for answer, that I only wished, for diversion, to look out at the window, he did not say a word; but, in significant silence, made the bed, the table, and chair, be taken away: after which, having set down my breakfast, he again disappeared.

After about an hour, he came back, accom-

panied by two other men, and led me through long passages, up stairs and down stairs, till I entered, at last, into an audience-hall of moderate dimensions, where one of the supreme judges awaited me. By his side sat a young man as secretary, to whom he afterwards dictated whatever information he got from me, in answer to his questions. I had to thank the influence of my former station at Court, and the respect with which I had long been treated by all ranks, for the politeness now shewn to me by this judge. However, I was convinced that it could only be suspicions, founded on Aurelia's extraordinary conduct, which had led to my arrestment.

The judge's first demand was, that I should give him a clear and concise account of my former life. Instead of answering directly to this, I begged to know whether I had not, in the first place, a right to know the cause of my sudden imprisonment. He told me that I should, in due time, have information of the crimes with which I was charged; but that, meanwhile, it was of the utmost importance that he should learn the exact course of my life up to that day when I first arrived at the *residenz*; and he must remind me

that, as the court possessed ample means to detect the slightest deviation from truth, I should be watchful for my own sake, to avoid any attempt at deception.

This admonishment of the judge (a little spare man, with red hair, staring eyes, and an absurdly croaking voice) was by no means lost upon me. I recollected that I had already ventured to give the name of my birth-place, and some account of my life, to one of the court ladies; and that the story which I had now to weave, must of necessity be such, as to harmonize with that which I had already promulgated. It was also requisite to avoid all marvellous and intricate adventures. Moreover, to lay the scene, as much as possible, in a country so distant, that inquiries into the reality of my references would be tedious and difficult. At that moment too, there came into my remembrance, a young Pole, with whom I had studied in the college at Königswald. I knew the circumstances of his life, and as the safest method now in my power, resolved to appropriate them as my own. Thus prepared, I set out as follows:—

“ My arrestment, no doubt, has arisen from

the imputation against me of some heavy crime. For a considerable period, I have lived here under the eye of the Prince, and all the town's-people, and during that time, have been guilty of no crime nor misdemeanour; consequently it must be some stranger lately arrived here who has accused me of a crime formerly committed; and as my conscience assures me that I am completely free from any such guilt, I can only account for what has occurred, by supposing that an unhappy personal resemblance betwixt myself and some person unknown, has led to the mistake.

“ However, it seems to me not a little severe, that on account of *suppositions* merely, (for here there can exist nothing more,) I should be thus thrown into prison, and brought like a criminal for examination. But why have I not been confronted at once with my rash, and perhaps malicious accuser? I doubt not that individual will be found at last to be some wicked impostor, or, at best, some misguided fool, who—”

“ Softly—softly, Mr Leonard,” croaked the judge. “ Correct yourself, otherwise your words may strike against some high personage; and, besides, I can assure you, that the individual by

whom you, Mr Leonard, have been recognized as —" (here he bit himself in the lip) "is in truth, neither rash nor foolish, but"—(hesitating) "and besides, we have unquestionable intelligence from ——— in the Thuringian mountains."

Here he named the residence of the Baron von F.; and I perceived immediately the dangers which threatened me. It was obvious that Aurelia had recognized in me the monk, whom she probably looked upon as the murderer of her brother. This monk, however, was Medardus, the preacher of the Capuchin Convent, and as such had been recognized by the Baron's steward Reinhold. The Abbess, however, knew that this Medardus was the son of Francesco, and thus, my resemblance to him, which had so long puzzled the Princess, must now probably have corroborated into certainty the suspicions which the sisters had, no doubt, by letter communicated to each other.

It was possible even, that intelligence had been received from the Capuchin Convent; that I had been carefully watched upon my journey; and that they had unequivocally identified my person with that of Medardus.

All these possibilities came crowding on my recollection, and forced me to perceive the whole hazard of my situation. The judge, while I was occupied in this reverie, still continued to talk on, which was very advantageous, for I had time to repeat to myself the almost unutterable name of the Polish town which I had assigned to the old lady at court as the place of my birth. Scarcely, then, had the judge again repeated his gruff demand, that I would concisely inform him as to my past course of life, than I once more began—

“ My proper name is Leonard Krczinski ; and I am the only son of a Polish nobleman, who had sold his property, and lived privately in the town of Kwiczciczwo.”—

“ How—what ?” said the judge, endeavouring in vain to pronounce after me either my name, or that of the town to which I had referred. The secretary had no notion how he was to set the words on paper ; I was obliged to write down both names myself, and then went on—

“ You perceive, sir, how difficult it is for a German tongue to imitate these words of my language, which are so overburdened with conso-

nants, and herein consists the reason why I have chosen to lay aside my surname altogether, and bear only my christian name of Leonard.

“ But this is, indeed, the only mystery or singularity which I have to unfold. The rest of my life is the simplest and most ordinary that could be imagined. My father, who was himself a man of good education, approved of my decided propensity to literature and the arts, and just before his death, had resolved on sending me to Cracow, to live there under the care of a clergyman related to him, by name Stanislaus Krczinski. After that event, being my father's sole heir, I was left the uncontrolled choice of my own actions. I therefore sold the small remnant that was left of a paternal property, called up some debts that were due to my father, and went with the pecuniary proceeds to Cracow, where I studied some years under the guardianship of my relation.

“ From thence I travelled to Dantzic and Königsberg; at last I was driven, as if by irresistible impulse, to make a journey towards the south. I trusted that the remainder of my small fortune would be sufficient to carry me through, and that I should at last obtain a fixed situation at some

university ; but in this town I had probably found my means exhausted, if it had not been that one night's luck at the Prince's pharo-table enabled me to live comfortably for some time, after which I intended to prosecute my journey into Italy.

“ As to anything truly remarkable or worthy of being related—no such adventure has ever occurred in my life. Yet perhaps, (here I recollected myself,) I ought not to say this, for I have at least one singular occurrence to record. It would have been quite easy for me to prove exactly the truth of all that I have now deposed, had not a very strange chance deprived me of my *portefeuille*, in which was contained my pass, my journal, and various letters, which would have supplied ample documents for that purpose.”

By this conclusion the judge was visibly surprised. It was evidently something unexpected ; he fixed his sharp staring eyes upon me, and then, in a tone somewhat ironical, requested me to explain what strange accident had thus unluckily put it out of my power to *prove* (as might have been hoped for) my assertions.

“ Some months ago,” said I, “ I was on my way hither by the road leading through the moun-

tains. The fine season of the year, and the romantic scenery, made me resolve to perform the journey on foot. One day, being much fatigued, I sat in the public room of an inn at a small village. I had there got some refreshments, and had drawn out a leaf from my pocket-book, in order to take a drawing of some old houses that had struck my fancy.

“ At this time there arrived at the inn a horseman, whose extraordinary dress and wild looks excited in me much astonishment. He came into the public room obviously striving with much vain effort to look cheerful and unconcerned, took his place opposite to me, and called for drink, casting on me from time to time dark and suspicious glances. The man seemed to me to be half mad, or something worse. I by no means liked such company, and therefore, merely to avoid him, stepped out into the court. Soon afterwards, the stranger also came out, paid the innkeeper, hastily bowed to me, and remounting his horse, rode off at a rapid pace.

“ Afterwards, as I was in the act of setting out myself, I remembered my *portefeuille*, which I had left on the table of the public room. I went

and found it lying where I had left it, and, in my hurry, believed all was right. It was not till the following day, that, wishing to refer to my pocket-book, I found the *portefeuille* was not mine, but had, in all probability, belonged to the stranger, who must have, by mistake, put up mine into his pocket, and left his own in its place.

“In the latter there was nothing but letters and cards, which to me were unintelligible, addressed to Count Victorin. This *portefeuille*, with the Count’s papers, will be found still among my effects. In mine, which was lost, I had, as before mentioned, my pass, my journal, and, as now occurs to me, even my baptism certificate, the production of which would at once have confirmed whatever regarding myself I have alleged.”

The judge here desired that I would give him an accurate description, from head to foot, of the stranger’s personal appearance. Accordingly, I patched up a skilful composition from the features and dress of the late Count Victorin, and of myself when on my flight from the Baron’s castle. To the judge’s cross-questioning as to all the minutest circumstances of this meeting, to which there almost seemed no end, I continued to an-

swer as quietly and decisively as possible, till at last the fiction that I had thus invented, rounded itself in such manner in my own mind, that I actually believed all that I had asserted, and ran no risk whatever of falling into contradictions.

Besides, there were other advantages; my first object indeed had only been to justify my possession of these letters of Count Victorin, which would be found in my *portefeuille*; but, by the method that I had chosen to fulfil this purpose, I had luckily raised up an imaginary personage, (one at least who no longer existed in reality,) who might hereafter, as need required, play the part either of the fugitive Medardus, or of the Count Victorin.

Afterwards, it occurred to me also that probably Euphemia's papers must have been examined; that among them there were no doubt letters paving the way for Victorin's plan of appearing as a monk at the castle, and that this would form a fresh nucleus of clouds sufficient to wrap the whole affair in impenetrable mystery.

Thus my internal fantasy continued to work, during the whole time of my examination; and there were always new methods suggesting them-

selves, by which I might avoid the risk of discovery; so that at last I believed myself secure against the very worst that could happen.

I now waited in hopes that the judge would have recourse to the criminal accusation which had been entered against me, and concluded that I had said quite enough as to the fortune and adventures of my own past life.

I was mistaken, however, for he seemed as willing to go on with his tiresome questions as if he had but just begun. Among other inquiries, he asked, "For what reason I had formed the wish of escaping out of prison?" I assured him that no such thought had ever entered my mind, and that I had only wished to look out through the window. The gaoler's testimony, however, as to the piled-up bed, chair, and table, seemed here much against me. At last, after a most tedious interview, the judge finally assured me, that if I attempted any prank of that sort again, I must, of necessity, be bound to the ground with iron chains.

CHAPTER III.

I WAS then led back to my prison. My bed, as before mentioned, had been removed, and a straw mattress in its stead laid on the ground. The table was firmly screwed down, and, in place of the chair, I found a very low wooden bench.

Many days passed over in dreary captivity, without any farther examination, and without the slightest variety. The time of a prisoner is seldom or never a blank ; it is filled up by horrible phantoms and distorted reveries, such as have often been described, though mine probably were of a new character. The detail of them, however, is not within the limits of my present undertaking ; I record only simple facts, in the manner of an obtuse old chronicler ; and if there be a colouring of imagination, it is not only unsought, but unwelcome and involuntary.

During these three days, I did not behold the

features of any living being, except the peevish face of an old sub-janitor, who brought my food, and in the evening lighted my lamp. Hitherto, I had felt like a warrior, who, in a mood of martial excitement, was determined, at all risks, to meet danger and fight his way to the last; but such passion had now time enough to decline entirely away.

I fell into a dark melancholy trance, during which all things became indifferent. Even the cherished vision of Aurelia had faded, or floated in dim colours before me. But unless I had been in body as much disordered as in mind, this state of apathy could not, of necessity, continue long. In a short time my spirit was again roused, only to feel in all its force the horrid influence of nausea and oppression, which the dense atmosphere of the prison had produced, and against which I vainly endeavoured to contend.

In the night I could no longer sleep. In the strange flickering shadows which the lamp-light threw upon the walls, myriads of distorted visages, one after another, or hundreds at a time, seemed to be grinning out upon me. To avoid this annoy-

ance, I extinguished my lamp, and drew the upper mattress over my head—but in vain! It was now dark, indeed, but the spectres were visible by their own light, like portraits painted on a dark ground, and I heard more frightfully the hollow moans and rattling chains of the prisoners, through the horrid stillness of the night.

Often did it seem to me as if I heard the dying groans of Hermogen and Euphemia. “Am I then guilty of your destruction? Was it not your own iniquity that brought you under the wrath of my avenging arm?” One night I had broken out furiously with these words, when, on the silence that for a moment succeeded, there distinctly and unequivocally arose a long deep-drawn sigh or groan, differing from the noises which had disturbed me before. The latter might have been imaginary—this was assuredly real, and the sound was reverberated through the vault. Driven to distraction, I howled out—“It is thou, Hermogen!—the hour of thy vengeance is come—there is for me no hope of rescue!”

* * * * *

It might be on the tenth night of my confine-

ment, when, half-fainting with terror, I lay stretched out on the cold floor of my prison. I distinctly heard on the ground directly under me a light, but very audible knocking, which was repeated at measured intervals. I listened attentively. The noise was continued, as if with the determination to attract attention, and occasionally I could distinguish a strange sound of laughter, that also seemed to come out of the earth.

I started from the floor, and threw myself on the straw couch ; but the beating continued, with the same detestable variety of laughter and groans. At last I heard a low, stammering, hoarse voice syllabically pronounce my name—" Me-dar-dus !—Me-dar-dus !"—My blood ran ice cold through every vein ; but with a vehement effort I gained courage enough to call out, " Who's there ?"—The laughter now became louder—the beating and groaning were renewed ; again the stammering demon addressed me—" Me-dar-dus !—Me-dar-dus !"

I rose from bed, and stamped on the floor. " Whoever thou art," cried I ; " man or devil, who art thus adding to the torments of an already miserable captive, step forth visibly before mine

eyes, that I may look on thee, or desist from this unmeaning persecution !” The beating was now right under my feet. “ He—he—he !—he—he—he !—Broth-er,—Broth-er ! Open the door !—I am here—am here ! Let us go hence to the wood—to the wood !”

Now, methought I recognised the voice as one that I had known before, but it was not then so broken and so stammering. Nay, with a chill shivering of horror, I almost began to think there was something in the accents that I now heard, resembling the tones of my own voice, and involuntarily, as if I wished to try whether this were really so, I stammered, in imitation, “ Me-dar-dus !—Me-dar-dus !”

Hereupon the laughter was renewed, but it now sounded scornful and malicious.—“ Broth-er,—Broth-er,” said the voice, “ do you know me again ?—Open the door—the—the door !—We shall go hence, to the wood—to the wood !” “ Poor insane wretch !” said I ; “ I cannot open the door for thee—I cannot enable thee to go forth into the pleasant woods, to hear the fresh rustling of the leaves, or breathe the fragrance of Heaven’s pure atmosphere. I am, as thou art, shut up, hopeless

and abandoned, within the gloomy walls of a prison."

To this address I was answered only by sobs and moans, as if from the bitterness of despairing grief; and the knocking became always more faint and indistinct, till at last it ceased altogether; and from exhaustion, I sunk into troubled slumber.

At length the morning light had broke in slanting gleams through the window; the locks and keys rattled, and the gaoler, whom I had not seen for many days, entered my room.

"Through the last night," said he, "we have heard all sorts of strange noises in your apartment, and loud speaking. What means this?"

"I am in the habit," answered I, "of talking loudly in my sleep, and even when awake I indulge in soliloquy. May not this much of liberty be granted me?"

"Probably," said the gaoler, "it is known to you, that every endeavour to escape, or to keep up conversation with any of your fellow-prisoners, will be interpreted to your disadvantage?" I declared that I had never formed any intentions of that kind; and after a few more surly remarks, he withdrew.

Some hours after this, I was again summoned, as before, to the hall of judgment. It was not, however, the judge by whom I had before been examined, but a very different personage, who now sat on the bench. He was a man apparently much younger in years, but far surpassing his predecessor in cleverness and versatility.

Laying aside all the formality of office, he left his place, came up to me in the friendliest manner, and invited me to take a chair.

Even at this moment his appearance is vividly present to my recollection. In constitution he seemed, for his time of life, to be much broken down; he was very bald, and wore spectacles. But in his whole demeanour there was so much of kindness and good-humour, that, on this account alone, I found it would be difficult for any one, but the most reckless and hardened of criminals, to resist his influence.

His questions were thrown out lightly, almost in the style of ordinary conversation, but they were well contrived, and so precisely couched, that it was impossible to avoid giving him decisive answers.

“ In the first place, I must ask you,” said he, “ whether all that you have before deponed is perfectly consistent with truth ; or, at least, whether many other circumstances may not have occurred to you as requisite to be told, in order to corroborate your former statement ?”

“ No,” said I. “ I have already freely communicated every circumstance which I could mention, or which it can be necessary to mention, as to the tenor of my simple and uniform life.”

“ Have you never associated much with clergymen, and with monks ?”

“ Yes—In Cracow, in Dantzic, Königsberg, Frauenberg. In the latter place especially, with two lay monks, who officiated there as priest and *capellan*.”

“ You did not state before that you were in Frauenberg ?”

“ Because I did not think it worth while to mention a short residence there of about eight days, on my way from Dantzic to Königsberg.”

“ So, you are a native of Kwieczwo ?”

This question the judge put in the Polish language, and in the most correct dialect, (all the while

looking quite unconcerned, as if his use of that language had been on the present occasion a matter of course.)

For a moment this overthrew all my self-possession. I rallied, however; tried to recollect what little Polish I had learned from my friend Krczinski, and made shift to answer—

“ On a small landed property of my father, near Kwicziczwo.”

“ What was the name of this estate ?”

“ Krczinzicswo—the family estate of my relations.”

“ For a native Pole, you do not pronounce your own language remarkably well. To say the truth, you speak it rather like a German—How is this ?”

“ For many years I have spoken nothing but German. Even while in Cracow, I had much intercourse with German students, who wished to learn from me our difficult language. Unawares, I may have accustomed myself to their accent, as one finds it very easy, when living in particular districts of the country, to adopt provincialisms.”

The judge here looked significantly on me. A slight smile passed over his features; and, turn-

ing to the secretary, he dictated to him something in a whisper, of which I could distinctly make out the words "visibly embarrassed." Hereupon I wished to say something farther, in excuse for my bad Polish, but the judge gave me no opportunity.

"Have you never been in Königswald, where there is a large Capuchin Convent?"

"Never."

"The way hither from Königsberg should have led you to that town."

"I took another road."

"Have you never been acquainted with a monk from the convent there?"

"Never."

On receiving this answer, the judge rung the bell, and in a low voice gave an order to the attending officer.

Soon afterwards, an opposite door opened, and how was my whole frame shaken, and my very heart withered by terror, when I beheld the old Brother Cyrillus! The judge asked,

"Do you know this man?"

"No. I have never seen him before."

It was now the monk's turn to speak. He came

nearer; looked at me stedfastly—then clasping his hands, while tears involuntarily burst from his eyes—“ Medardus !” cried he, “ Brother Medardus ! In God’s name, how comes it that I find you thus horribly changed ? How came you into this condition of abandoned and obdurate wickedness ? Brother Medardus, return into thyself—Confess !—Repent !—The patience and long-suffering of God are infinite.”

“ Can you then recognize this man,” said the judge, “ for the Monk Medardus from the Capuchin Convent in Königswald ?”

“ As I hope for Heaven’s mercy,” answered Cyrillus, “ it is impossible for me to think otherwise. I believe that this man, although he now appears in a lay dress, is that very Medardus, who lived under my care as a novice at the Capuchin Convent, and whom I attended at the altar on the day of his consecration. Yet Medardus had on his neck a scar, in the shape of a cross, on the left side, and if this man——”

“ You perceive,” interposed the judge, turning to me, “ that you are looked upon as a runaway monk from the town of Königswald, and you may

rightly conjecture that the real monk alluded to has been guilty of serious crimes. But this man has a particular mark on his neck, which, according to your own account, you cannot have. This, therefore, at once gives you the best opportunity to prove your innocence. Untie your neckcloth."

"There is no need of this," answered I. "It is already certain, that an exact personal resemblance exists between myself and the fugitive criminal, who is to me wholly unknown; for I do bear a slight scar on my throat, such as has been described."—"Remove your neckcloth," repeated the judge. I did so; and the scar left by the wound from the Abbess's diamond cross, which had never been effaced, was immediately perceived. Hereupon Cyrillus uttered a loud exclamation.—"It is—it is the same impression of the cross," he added.—"Medardus! oh Medardus! hast thou then renounced thy eternal weal?"—Weeping and half fainting, he sunk into a chair.

"What answers do you now make to the assertion of this venerable man?" said the judge.

For a moment I felt as if lifted up and inspired

by supernatural strength. It seemed as if the devil himself came and whispered to me.

“What power have these despicable weaklings over thee, who art yet strong and undaunted in spirit and in frame? Shall not Aurelia yet become thine?”

“This monk,” said I, with great vehemence, “who sits there fainting in his chair, is a fantastic, feeble-minded, drivelling dotard. In his absurd visions, he takes me for a runaway capuchin from his own convent, to whom, as it happens, I bear a personal resemblance.”

The judge had till now remained perfectly tranquil, without changing his looks, gesture, or tone. Now, however, his visage, for the first time, assumed a dark and lowering earnestness of expression. He rose, as if the better to observe me, and even the glare of his spectacles was intolerable to my feelings, so that I could not utter a word more of my intended defence. For a moment I lost all self-possession. Abandoned to rage and despair, I struck my clenched knuckles to my forehead, and, in a tone which must have sounded unearthly, almost shrieked out the name “Aurelia!”

“What do you mean by that, sir?” said the judge, in a voice which, though calm, had yet the effect of thunder, and reverberated through the vaulted roof of the audience-chamber.

“A dark and implacable destiny,” said I, “dooms me to an ignominious death. But I am innocent—I am wholly innocent of the crimes, whatever they may be, that are charged against me. Have compassion, therefore; and for the present, at least, let me go. I feel that madness begins to rage through my brain, and agitate every nerve: therefore, in mercy, let me go!”

The judge, who had resumed his seat, and become perfectly calm, dictated much to the secretary, of which I did not know the import. At last he read over to me a record, in which all his questions and my answers, with the evidence of Cyrillus, were faithfully set down. This record I was obliged to ratify by my own signature.

The judge then requested me, in a careless tone, to write for him, on separate slips of paper, something in Polish and in German. I did so, without being aware what object he had in view. He then immediately gave the German leaf to

Cyrillus, with the question, "Have these characters any resemblance to the hand-writing of your brother, Monk Medardus?"

"It is precisely his hand even to the most minute peculiarities," said Cyrillus; and turning to me, was about to speak; but a look of the judge admonished him to silence. The latter examined carefully the leaf which I had written in *Polis*. He then rose, quitted the bench, and came down to me.

"You are no Pole," said he, in a serious and decisive manner. "This writing is altogether incorrect, full of errors, both in grammar and spelling. No native Pole would write in that style, even if he were destitute of that education which you have enjoyed."

"I was born," said I, "in *Kwiciczwo*, and therefore am most certainly a Pole; but even were this not really the case, and if circumstances compelled me to conceal my true rank and name, yet it would by no means follow, in consequence of this, that I must turn out to be the Monk Medardus, who, as I understand, came from the Capuchin Convent in *Königswald*."

“ Alas ! Brother,” interposed Cyrillus, “ did not our excellent Prior send you to Rome, placing the fullest confidence in your fidelity, prudence, and pious conduct ; and is it thus that you requite him ? Brother Medardus, for God’s sake, do not any longer, in this blasphemous manner, deny the holy profession to which you belong.”

“ I beg of you not to interrupt us,” said the judge, and, turning again to me, proceeded—

“ It is my duty to observe to you, that the disinterested evidence of this reverend clergyman affords the strongest presumptions, that you are actually that runaway monk, for whom you have been arrested. At the same time, I ought not to conceal, that various other persons will be brought forward, who also insist that they have unequivocally recognised you for that individual. Among them is one, to whom your escape from the due punishment or coercion of the law would be attended by no little danger, at all events, by no little fear and apprehension. Besides, many things have been discovered in your own travelling equipage, which support the allegations against you.

“ Finally, sir, you may rely, that inquiries will

be set on foot as to your pretended family, on which account application is already made to the court at Posen. All these things I explain to you the more openly, because it belongs to my office to convince you how little I wish, by artifice, or any undue method, to extort from you the truth, which you wish to conceal, but which, at all events, will soon be brought to light. Prepare yourself, therefore, before-hand, as you best can. If you are really that criminal named Medardus the Capuchin, you may be assured that justice will soon penetrate through your deepest disguise; and you will learn, in due time, the precise crimes of which you are accused. If, on the other hand, you are Mr Leonard of Kwiciczwo, and only, by some extraordinary *lusus naturæ*, forced to resemble Medardus, you will be furnished, even by us, with clear and decisive proofs to support this identity.

“ You appeared at your first trial, in a very disordered state of mind; therefore I wished that you should be allowed sufficient time for mature reflection. After what has taken place to-day, you will again have ample store for meditation.”

“ Then,” said I, “ you look upon all that I have said to-day as utter falsehood? You behold in me only the runaway monk Medardus?”

To this I received merely a slight parting bow, with the words, “ Adieu, Herr von Krczinski;” and I was forthwith led back to my prison.

CHAPTER IV.

EVERY word uttered by this judge had penetrated to my very heart, and I was unable to subdue my vehement agitation. All the fictions that I had invented seemed to me utterly absurd and insipid. That the chief person who was to appear as my accuser, (and who was said to entertain such fears of me if left at liberty,) was Aurelia, I could have no doubt. How could I bear this, and how counteract her influence?

I considered afterwards what might have been suspicious among my travelling effects, and was much vexed by the recollection, that since my residence at the castle of the Baron von F——, I had retained in my *portefeuille*, a hair ring, on which Euphemia's name was enwoven, and which, perhaps, might be recognized by Aurelia. Besides, it had unfortunately occurred, that in the forest I had bound up Victorin's portmanteau with the knotted cord, which is part of the dress of our

order ; and this had still remained in my possession.

Tormented by these thoughts, I gave myself up for lost ; and unconscious what I did, paced backwards and forwards in despair, through my narrow chamber. Then it seemed as if there was a rushing and whispering in mine ears,—“Thou fool,” said a voice, “why should'st thou despair? Canst thou not think on Victorin?” Hereupon, in a loud voice, I called out—“Ha! the game is not lost!—Nay, it may yet be won!”

My heart beat, and my bosom heaved with new impulses. I had already thought, that among Euphemia's papers there must, of necessity, be found something which would point to Victorin's appearance at the castle as a monk. Resting on this assumption, (or probability,) I would, at my next examination, amplify on my former deposition as to the meeting with Victorin ; nay, why should I not also have met with the monk Medardus? I could plead knowledge, also, of those adventures at the castle which ended so frightfully, and repeat them as if they came to me by hearsay. With such stories I could interweave references to myself, and to my resemblance with both these people.

In order to attain my object, however, the most trifling circumstances must be maturely weighed. I resolved, therefore, that I would commit to writing the romance, by the incidents of which I was to be rescued. The gaoler supplied me with the requisite materials, and I laboured with great zeal till late in the night. In writing, my imagination was roused, until I almost actually believed whatever I had set down to be the truth; and I had in the closest manner spun together a web of falsehood, wherewith I expected completely to blind the eyes of the judge.

The prison-clock had struck twelve, when I again heard softly, and as if from a distance, the knocking which, on the preceding day, so much disturbed me. I had resolved that I would pay no attention to this noise; but it approached nearer, and became louder. There were again, at measured intervals, the same divertisements of knocking, laughing, and groaning. I struck my hand with great vehemence on the table—"Be quiet!" cried I—"Silence below there!" Thus I thought that I should banish my persecutor, and recover my composure, but in vain! On the contrary, there arose instantly a sound of shrill discordant laughter, and once more the same de-

testable voice—" *Brüd-er-lein!*—*Brüd-er-lein!**
Up to thee! Open the door! Open the door!"

Then right under me commenced a vehement rasping and scratching in the floor, accompanied by continuous groans and cachinnation. In vain did I try to write, and persuading myself that these were but illusions of the arch enemy, determined to hold them in contempt. The noise always became more intolerable, and was diversified occasionally by ponderous blows, so that I momentarily expected the gaolers to enter in alarm.

I had risen up, and was walking with the lamp in my hand, when suddenly I felt the floor shake beneath my tread. I stepped aside, and then saw, on the spot whereon I had stood, a stone lift itself out of the pavement, and sink again. The phenomenon was repeated, but at the second time I seized hold of the stone, and easily removed it from the flooring.

The aperture beneath was but narrow, and little or no light rose from the gulf. Suddenly, however, as I was gazing on it, a naked arm, emacia-

* Little brother. One of the German diminutives of familiarity or endearment.

ted, but muscular, with a knife, or dagger, in the hand, was stretched up towards me. Struck with the utmost horror, I recoiled from the sight. Then the stammering voice spoke from below—"Brother—broth-er Med-ar-dus is there—is there!—Take—take!—Break—break!—To the wood!—To the wood!"

Instantly all fear and apprehension were lost. I repeated to myself, "Take—take!—Break—break!" for I thought only of the assistance thus offered me, and of flight! Accordingly I seized the weapon, which the hand willingly resigned to me, and began zealously to clear away the mortar and rubbish from the opening that had been made.

The spectral prisoner below laboured also with might and main, till we had dislodged four or five large stones from the vault, and laid them aside. I had been occupied in this latter purpose, that is, in placing the large stones in a corner of my room, that they might not interrupt my work; when, on turning round, I perceived that my horrible assistant had raised his naked body as far as the middle, through the aperture that we had made. The full glare of the lamp fell on his pale features, which were no longer obscured as for-

merly, by long matted locks, or the overgrown grizzly beard, for these had been closely shaven. It could no longer be said that I was in vigorous health, while he was emaciated, for in that respect we were now alike. He glared on me with the grin, the ghastly laughter, of madness on his visage. At the first glance I RECOGNIZED MYSELF, and losing all consciousness and self-possession, fell in a deadly swoon on the pavement.

From this state of insensibility I was awoke by a violent pain in the arm. There was a clear light around me; the rattling of chains, and knocking of hammers, sounded through the vault. The gaoler and his assistants were occupied in loading me with irons. Besides handcuffs and ankle-fetters, I was, by means of a chain and an iron hoop, to be fastened to the wall.

“ Now,” said the gaoler, in a satisfied tone, when the workmen had finished, “ the gentleman will probably find it advisable to give over troubling us with his attempts to escape for the future !”

“ But what crimes, then,” said the blacksmith, in an under tone, “ has this obstreperous fellow committed ?”

“How?” said the gaoler, “dost thou not know that much, Jonathan? The whole town talks of nothing else. He is a cursed Capuchin monk, who has murdered three men. All has been fully proved. In a few days there is to be a grand gala; and among other diversions, the scaffold and the wheel will not fail to play their part!”

I heard no more, and my senses were again lost. I know not how long I remained in that state, from which I only painfully and with difficulty awoke. I was alone, and all was utter darkness; but, after some interval, faint gleams of daylight broke into the low deep vault, scarcely six feet square, into which I now, with the utmost horror, perceived that I had been removed from my former prison. I was tormented with extreme thirst, and grappled at the water-jug which stood near me. Cold and moist, it slipped out of my numbed hands before I had gained from it even one imperfect draught, and, with abhorrence, I saw a large overgrown toad crawl out of it as it lay on the floor. “Aurelia!” I groaned, in that feeling of nameless misery into which I was now sunk—“Aurelia!—and was it for this that I have been guilty of hypocrisy and abominable

falsehood in the court of justice—for this only, that I might protract, by a few hours, a life of torment and misery? What would'st thou," said I to myself, "delirious wretch, as thou art? Thou strivest after the possession of Aurelia, who could be thine only through an abominable and blasphemous crime; and however thou might'st disguise thyself from the world, she would infallibly recognize in thee the accursed murderer of Hermogen, and look on thee with detestation. Miserable deluded fool, where are now all thy high-flown projects, thy belief and confidence in thine own supernatural power, by which thou could'st guide thy destiny even as thou wilt? Thou art wholly unable and powerless to kill the worm of conscience, which gnaws on the heart's marrow, and thou wilt shamefully perish in hopeless grief, even if the arm of temporal justice should spare thee!"

Thus I complained aloud, but at the moment when I uttered these words, I felt a painful pressure on my breast, which seemed to proceed from some hard substance in my waistcoat pocket. I grappled with it accordingly, and drew out, to my

surprise, a small stiletto. Never had I worn any such implement since I had been in the prison. It must, of necessity, be the same which had been held up to me by my mysterious *double*. I recognized the glittering heft. It was the identical stiletto with which I had killed Hermogen, and which, for many weeks, I had been without!

Hereupon there arose in my mind an entire revolution. The inexplicable manner in which this weapon had been returned to me, seemed like a warning from supernatural agents. I had it in my power to escape at will from the ignominious death that awaited me. I had it in my power to die voluntarily for the sake of Aurelia. It seemed again as if there was a rushing and whispering of voices around me; and among them Aurelia's accents were clearly audible. I beheld her as when formerly she appeared to me in the church of the Capuchin Convent. "I love thee, indeed, Medardus," said she; "but hitherto thou understandest me not. In this world there is for us no hope of enjoyment; the true festival and solemnization of our love is—death." I now firmly resolved that I would demand a new audience—that I would confess to the judge, without the least reserve, the

whole history of my wanderings, after which I would, in obedience to the supposed warning, have recourse to suicide.

The gaoler now made his appearance, bringing me better food than usual, with the addition of a bottle of wine. "It is by the command of the Prince," said he, covering a table which his servant brought in after him. He then proceeded to unlock the chain by which I was bound to the wall.

Remaining firm in my determination, I took but little notice of this, and earnestly requested that he would communicate to the judge my wish for an audience that very afternoon, as I had much to disclose that lay heavy on my conscience. He promised to fulfil my commission, and retired.

Meanwhile, I waited in vain to be summoned to my trial. No one appeared until such time as it was quite dark, when the gaoler's servant entered and lighted my lamp as usual. Owing to the fixed resolution which I had adopted, I felt much more tranquil than before; and, as the night wore on, being greatly exhausted, I fell into a deep sleep.

My slumber was haunted, however, by a strange and very vivid dream. Methought I was led into

a high, gloomy, and vaulted hall, wherein I saw, ranged along the walls, on high-backed chairs, a double row of spectral figures, like clergymen, all habited in the black *talar*,* and before them was a table covered with red cloth. At their head sat a judge, and near him was a Dominican friar, in the full habit of his order.

“Thou art now,” said the judge, in a deep solemn voice, “given over to the spiritual court; forasmuch as thou, obstinate and criminal as thou art, hast attempted to deny thy real name, and the sacred profession to which thou belongest. Franciscus, or, according to thy conventual name, Medardus, answer, Dost thou plead guilty, or not guilty, to the crimes of which thou hast been accused?”

Hereupon I wished to confess all that I had done, which, in my own estimation, was sinful or blame-worthy. But, to my great horror, that which I uttered was not the thoughts that existed in my mind, and which I intended to deliver. On the contrary, instead of a sincere and repentant confession, I lost myself in wandering desultory

* Long black robe.

gibberish, which sounded even in my own ears quite unpardonable.

Then the Dominican rose up, and, with a frightful menacing look—"Away—to the rack with him," cried he, "the stiff-necked obdurate sinner—to the rack with him—he deserves no mercy!" The strange figures that were ranged along the wall rose up, stretched out their long skeleton arms towards me, and repeated, in a hoarse horrible unison—"Ay, ay!—to the rack with him—to the rack—to the rack!"

Instantly I drew out my stiletto and aimed it violently towards my heart, but, involuntarily, it slid upwards to my throat, and striking on that part wherein the diamond necklace of the Abbess had left the sign of the cross, the blade broke in pieces as if it were made of glass, and left me unwounded! Then the executioner seized me, removed me from the audience-hall, and dragged me down into a deep subterranean vault.

There, however, my persecutions did not cease. The man once more demanded of me whether I would not make a true confession? Accordingly, I again made an attempt to do so, but my thoughts and words, as before, were at variance. Deeply

repentant, torn equally by shame and remorse, I confessed all inwardly and in spirit ; but whatever my lips brought forth audibly, was confused, senseless, unconnected, and foreign from the dictates of my heart. Hereafter, upon a sign received from the Dominican, the executioner stripped me naked, and tied my wrists together behind my back. How he placed me afterwards, I know not, but I heard the creaking of screws and pulleys, and felt how my stretched joints cracked, and were ready to break asunder. In the agony of superhuman torture, I screamed loudly and awoke.

The pain in my hands and feet continued as if I had been really on the rack, but this proceeded from the heavy chains which I still carried ; yet, besides this, I found a strange pressure on my eye-lids, which, for some time, I was unable to lift up. At last, it seemed as if a weight were taken from my forehead, and I was able to raise myself on my couch.

Here my nightly visions once more stepped forth into reality, and I felt an ice-cold shivering through every vein. Motionless like a statue, with his arms folded, the monk—the Dominican whom I had seen in my dream—stood there, and

glared on me with his hollow black eyes. In that look, I at once recognized the expression of the horrible painter, and fell, half fainting, back upon my straw-bed.

Yet, perhaps, thought I to myself, all this was but a delusion of my senses, which had its origin from a dream. I mustered courage, therefore—but the monk was there! He stood, as the painter had ever done, calm and motionless, with his relentless dark eyes fixed upon me.

“Horrible man!” cried I, “Avaunt!—Away!—But no! Man thou art not. Thou art the devil himself, who labours to drag me into everlasting destruction!—Away!—I conjure thee, in the name of God, begone!”

“Poor, short-sighted fool!” answered the Dominican, “I am not the fiend who endeavours to bind thee with his iron fetters; who seeks to turn thy heart from those sacred duties to which thou hast, by Divine Providence, been appointed!—Medardus, poor insane wanderer! I have indeed appeared frightful to thee, even at those moments when thou should’st have recognized in me thy best friend—when thou wert tottering within a hair’s-breadth of being hurled into the eternal

gulf of destruction, I have appeared and warned thee; but my designs have ever been perverted and misunderstood. Rise up, and listen to what I would now say!"

The Dominican uttered this in a tone of deep melancholy and complaint. His looks, which I had before contemplated with such affright, were become relaxed and mild. My heart was roused by new and indescribable emotions. This painter, who had haunted me like a demon, now appeared to me almost like a special messenger of Providence, sent to console me in my extreme misery and despair.

I rose from my bed, and stepped towards him. It was no phantom! I touched his garments. I kneeled down involuntarily, and he laid his hand on my head as if to bless me. Then, in the brightest colouring of imagination, a long train of beautiful and cherished images rose on my mind. I was once more within the consecrated woods of the Holy Lime-Tree. I stood on the self-same spot of that favourite grove, where the strangely-dressed pilgrim brought to me the miraculous boy. From hence I wished to move onwards to the church, which I saw also right before me. There only it

appeared to me, that I might now, penitent and repentant, receive at last absolution of my heavy crimes. But I remained motionless ; my limbs were powerless, and I could scarcely retain the feeling of self-identity.—Then a hollow voice pronounced the words, “ The will suffices for the deed !”

The dream vanished. It was the painter who had spoken these words.

“ Incomprehensible being !” said I, “ was it then thou, who art here with me as a friend, who appeared leaning on the pillar on that unhappy morning in the Capuchin church at Königswald ? At night, in the trading town of Frankenburg ? And now——”

“ Stop there,” said the painter ; “ it was I indeed who have been at all times near to thee, in order, if possible, to rescue thee from destruction and disgrace ; but thy heart was hardened ; thy senses were perverted. The work to which thou wert chosen, must, for thine own weal and salvation, be fulfilled.”

“ Alas !” cried I, in a voice of despair, “ why, then, didst thou not withhold mine arm from that accursed deed, when Hermogen——”

“ That was not allowed me,” said the painter. “ Ask no farther. The attempt to resist the eternal decrees of Omnipotence is not only sinful, but hopeless presumption. Medardus, thou now drawest near to thy appointed goal—*To-morrow!*”

At these words I shuddered; for I thought that I completely understood the painter. I believed that he knew and approved my premeditated suicide. He now retreated towards the door of my prison.—“ When,” said I, with great earnestness, “ when shall I see you again ?” —“ AT THE GOAL,” said he, in a deep, solemn tone, that reverberated through the vault.—“ So then—*to-morrow?*” He would not answer. The door opened—turned silently on its hinges—and the painter had vanished.

* * * * *

CHAPTER V.

THE faint gleams of day-light had long since made their way through the gloom of my wretched prison, when at last the gaoler made his appearance with a train of attendants, who carefully and obsequiously took off the fetters from my wounded arms and ankles. They announced also that I should be very soon led up for a final audience in the judgment-hall.

The summons came accordingly. Deeply reserved, and wrapt up in my own thoughts, becoming always more and more accustomed to the idea of immediate death, I stepped into the audience-chamber. I had inwardly arranged my confession in such manner, that I had only a short story to tell, which would yet embrace every circumstance that was of importance.

To my astonishment, the judge, directly on my entrance, left the bench, and came to meet me.

I must have looked greatly emaciated and disfigured; for a cheerful smile, that had been at first on his countenance, changed itself obviously into an expression of the most painful sympathy and compassion. He shook hands, and made me take possession of a large arm-chair.

“Herr von Krczinski,” said he, in a solemn diplomatic tone, “I am happy in being able to announce to you some very agreeable intelligence. By the Prince’s commands, all proceedings against you are this day brought to an end. It appears that people have hitherto confounded you with another person; and of their mistaken accusations, your exact personal likeness to that individual must bear the blame. Your innocence is now established beyond the possibility of doubt. Mr Krczinski, *you are free!*”

A frightful giddiness now attacked me. The room, with all its furniture, seemed turning round. The figure of the judge was multiplied a thousand fold before mine eyes, and I fell into a swoon. When I awoke, the servants were rubbing my temples with eau de cologne; and I recovered so far, as to hear the judge read over a short *Protokoll*, stating that he had duly informed me of

the process being given up, and of my final release from prison. But some indescribable feelings arising from that last interview with the painter, repressed all joy in my bosom. It seemed to me as if now, when people believed me innocent, I should voluntarily make a full confession of my crimes, and then plunge the dagger into my heart.

I wished to speak; but the judge seemed to expect that I would retire, and I retreated towards the door. He came after me a few steps. "I have now," said he, in a low voice, "fulfilled my official duties, and may confess that, from the first time of our meeting, you interested me very much. Notwithstanding that appearances (as you must yourself allow) were so greatly against you, yet I sincerely wished that you might not turn out to be the horrible monster of wickedness for whom you had been stigmatized. I may now repeat to you, in confidence, my conviction, that you are no Pole: you were not born in Kwiciczwo: your name is not Leonard von Krczinski."

With composure and firmness I answered, "No."
—"Nor are you a monk," said the judge, casting his eyes on the ground, that he might not

seem to play the part of an inquisitor ; but by this question I was irresistibly agitated.—“ Listen, then,” said I, in a resolute tone, “ and I shall explain *all*.”—“ Nay, nay, be silent,” said the judge. “ What I surmised at first is, according to my present belief, wholly confirmed. I see that there is here some dark and deep mystery ; and that, by some inexplicable game of chances, your fate is involved with that of certain personages of our court. But it is no longer my vocation to make inquiries ; and I should look upon myself as a presumptuous intermeddler, if I wished to extort from you any of the real adventures of your life, of which the tenure has probably been very peculiar.

“ There is but one suggestion which I cannot help offering. Would it not be well if you were to tear yourself away from this *residenz*, where there is so much that is hostile to your mental repose ? After what has happened, it is almost impossible that your abode here can be agreeable to you.”

When the judge spoke in this manner, my mind again underwent an entire revolution. All the dark shadows that had gathered around me

were suddenly dissolved. The spirit of life once more, with all its enjoyments, vibrated through every nerve.—“ Aurelia ! Aurelia !—Should I leave this place and forsake her for ever !”

The judge looked on me with an expression of the greatest astonishment.—“ God forbid, Mr Leonard,” said he, “ that a very frightful apprehension, which has now risen up in my mind, should ever be fulfilled. But you know best the nature of your own plans. I shall say no more.”

The hypocritical calmness with which I now answered him, was a proof that my short-lived repentance was over and gone.—“ So then,” said I, “ you still look upon me as guilty ?”—“ Permit me, sir,” said the judge, “ to keep my present fears to myself. They are, I must confess, unsubstantiated by proof, and are perhaps the result of imaginary apprehensions. It has been in the most conclusive manner proved, that you are not the Monk Medardus ; for that very man is in his own person here among us, and has been recognized by the old Father Cyrillus, though the latter had been deceived at the trial, by the exactitude of your resemblance. Nay, this man does not deny that he is the Capuchin Medardus, for whom you

were arrested. Therefore everything has happened that could have been desired, in order to free you from that first imputation."

At that moment an attendant called the judge away, and thus the dialogue was interrupted at the very time when it began to be disagreeable to me. I betook myself forthwith to my old lodgings in the town, where I found my effects placed carefully in the same order in which I had left them. My papers had been put up in a sealed envelope. Only Victorin's *portefeuille* and the Capuchin's hair-rope were wanting. My suppositions as to the importance that would be attached to the latter article were therefore correct.

But a short time elapsed, when an equerry of the Prince made his appearance, with a card from the Sovereign, and the present of a very elegant box, set with diamonds. The card was in his usual familiar style. "There have been very severe measures taken against you, Mr Krczinski, but neither we ourselves, nor our court of justice, can rightly be blamed. You are inconceivably like in person to a very wicked and dangerous man. All now, however, has been cleared up to your advan-

tage. I send you a small token of my good will, and hope that we shall see you soon."

The good will of the Prince and his present were at this moment both indifferent to me. My long imprisonment had greatly enfeebled my bodily strength, and the extreme excitement which I had undergone, was followed by lassitude and relaxation. Thus I had sunk into a deep and dark melancholy, and looked on it as very fortunate when the physician came to visit me, and prescribed some remedies, which he judged absolutely requisite for the restoration of my health. He then, as usual, entered into conversation.

"Is it not," said he, "a most extraordinary chance, and concatenation of circumstances, that, at the very moment when every one felt himself convinced that you were that horrible monk, who had caused such misfortunes in the family of the Baron von F——, this monk should *himself* actually appear, and rescue you at once from the impending danger?"

"It would oblige me," said I, "if you would inform me of the minuter circumstances which led to my liberation; for as yet I have only heard ge-

nerally that the Capuchin Medardus, for whom I had been taken, had been found here and arrested."

"Nay, it is to be observed," answered the physician, "that he did not come hither of his own accord, but was brought in, bound with ropes, as a maniac, and delivered over to the police at the very time when you first came to the *residenz*. By the way, it just now occurs to me that, on a former occasion, when I was occupied in relating to you the wonderful events which had happened at our court, I was interrupted, just as I had got to the story of this abominable Medardus, the acknowledged son of Francesco, and his enormous crimes at the castle of the Baron von F——. I shall now take up the thread of my discourse exactly where it was then broken off.

"The sister of our reigning Princess, who, as you well know, is Abbess of a Cistercian monastery at Kreuzberg, once received very kindly, and took charge of a poor deserted woman, who, with her infant son, was travelling homeward, towards the south, from a pilgrimage to the Convent of the Holy Lime-Tree."

“The woman,” said I, “was Francesco’s widow, and the boy was Medardus.”

“Quite right,” answered the physician; “but how do you come to know this?”

“The events of this Medardus’s life,” said I, “have indeed become known to me in a manner the strangest and most incredible. I am aware of them even up to the period when he fled from the castle of the Baron von F——; and of every circumstance that happened there I have received minute information.”

“But how?” said the physician; “and from whom?”

“In a dream,” answered I; “(in a dream I have had the liveliest perception of all his sufferings and adventures.”

“You are in jest,” said the physician.

“By no means,” replied I. “It actually seems to me, as if I had in a vision become acquainted with the history of an unhappy man, who, like a mere plaything in the hands of dark powers,—a weed cast on the waves of a stormy sea, had been hurled hither and thither, and driven onward from crime to crime. In the Holzheimer forest, which is not far from hence; on my way hither, the pos-

tilion, one stormy night, drove out of the right track, and there, in the *forst-haus*——”

“ Ha ! now I understand you,” said the physician, “ there you met with the monk.”

“ So it is,” answered I ; “ but he was mad.”

“ He does not seem to be so now,” observed the physician. “ Even at that time, no doubt, he had lucid intervals, and told you his history.”

“ Not exactly,” said I. “ In the night, being unapprized of my arrival at the *forst-haus*, he came into my room. Perhaps it was on account of the extraordinary likeness existing betwixt us, that my appearance frightened him extremely. He probably looked upon me as his *double*, and believed that such an apparition of necessity announced his own death. Accordingly, he began to stammer out strange confessions, to which I listened for some time, till at last, being tired by a long journey, I fell asleep ; but the monk, not aware of this, continued to speak on. I dreamed, but know not where the reality ended and the dream began. So far as I can recollect, it appears to me that the monk maintained that it could not be he who had caused the death of the Baroness von F—— and

Hermogen, but that they had both been murdered by the Count Victorin."

"Strange, very strange!" said the physician. "But wherefore did you conceal this mysterious adventure at your trial?"

"How could I imagine," answered I, "that the judge would attach any importance to such a story? At best, it must have appeared to him a mere romance; and will any enlightened court of justice receive evidence which even borders on the visionary and supernatural?"

"At least," replied the physician, "you might have at once supposed that people were confounding you with this insane monk, and should have pointed out him as the real Capuchin Medardus?"

"Ay, forsooth," answered I; "and in the face of the venerable Father Cyrillus, (such, I believe, was his name,) an old dotard, who would absolutely have me, right or wrong, to be his Capuchin brother? Besides, it did not occur to me either that the insane monk was Medardus, or that the crime which he had confessed to me was the object of the present process. But the keeper of the *forst-haus* told me the monk had never

given up his name. How, then, did people here make the discovery?"

"In the simplest manner," said the physician. "The monk, as you know, had been a considerable time with the forester. Now and then, it seemed as if he were completely cured; but at last he broke out again into insanity so frightful, that the forester was obliged to send him hither, where he was shut up in the mad-house. There he sat night and day, with staring eyes, and motionless as a statue. He never uttered a word, and must be fed, as he never moved a hand. Various methods were tried to rouse him from this lethargy, but in vain; and his attendants were afraid to try severe measures, for fear of bringing back his outrageous madness.

"A few days ago, the forester's eldest son came to the *residenz*, and desired admittance into the mad-house, to see the monk, which, accordingly, was granted him. Quite shocked at the hopeless state in which he found the unhappy man, he was leaving the prison, just as Father Cyrillus, from the Capuchin Convent in Königswald, happened to be going past. He spoke to the latter, and beg-

ged of him to visit a poor unhappy brother, who was shut up here, as, perhaps, the conversation of one of his own order might be beneficial to the maniac.

“ To this Cyrillus agreed; but as soon as he saw the monk, he started back, with a loud exclamation—‘ Medardus !’ cried he; ‘ unhappy Medardus !’ And at that name the monk, who before scarcely shewed signs of life, began to open his eyes, and attend to what went forward. He even rose from his seat; but had scarcely done so, when, seemingly overpowered by his cruel malady, (of which he was himself not unconscious,) he uttered a strange hollow cry, and fell prostrate on the ground.

“ Cyrillus, accompanied by the forester’s son and others, went directly to the judge by whom you had been tried, and announced this new discovery. The judge went back with them to the prison, where they found the monk in a state of great weakness; but (judging by his conversation) not at all under the influence of delirium. He confessed that he was Medardus, from the Capuchin Convent in Königswald; and Cyrillus agreed on

his side, that your inconceivable resemblance to this Medardus had completely deceived him.

“ Now, however, he remarked many circumstances of language, tone, and gesture, in which Mr Leonard differed from the real Capuchin. What is most of all remarkable is, that they discovered on the neck of the madman the same mark, in the form of a cross, to which so much importance was attached at your trial. Several questions also were now put to the monk, as to the horrid incidents at the castle of the Baron von F——, to which the only answers they could then obtain were in broken exclamations. ‘ I am, indeed,’ said he, ‘ an accursed and abandoned criminal; but I repent deeply of all that I have done. Alas! I allowed myself to be cheated, by temptations of the devil, out of my own reason, and out of my immortal soul. Let my accusers but have some compassion on me, and allow me time—I shall confess all.’

“ The Prince being duly advised of what had happened, commanded that the proceedings against you should be brought to an end, and that you should be immediately released from prison. This

is the history of your liberation. The monk has been brought from the mad-house into one of the dungeons for criminals."

"And has he yet confessed all? Is he the murderer of Euphemia, Baroness von F——, and of Hermogen? How stands public belief with regard to the Count Victorin?"

"So far as I know," said the physician, "the trial of the monk was only to begin this day. As to Count Victorin, it appears that nothing farther must be said of him. Whatever connection those former events at our court may seem to have with the present, all is to remain in mystery and oblivion."

"But," said I, "how the catastrophe at the Baron's castle can be connected with these events at your Prince's court, I am unable to perceive."

"Properly," answered the physician, "I allude more to the *dramatis personæ* than to the incidents."

"I do not understand you," said I.

"Do you not remember," said the physician, "my relation of the circumstances attending the Duke's death?"

“Certainly,” answered I.

“Has it not then become clear to you,” resumed the doctor, “that Francesco entertained a criminal attachment towards the Italian Countess? That it was he who made his entrance secretly into the bridal chamber, and who poniarded the Duke? Victorin, as you know, was the offspring of that crime. He and Medardus, therefore, are sons of one father. Victorin has vanished from the world, without leaving a trace of his fate. All inquiries after him have been in vain.”

“The monk,” said I, “hurled him down into the Devil’s Abyss, amid the Thuringian mountains. Curses on the delirious fratricide!”

Softly, at the moment after I had pronounced these words, there came on my ears, from underneath the floor whereon we stood, the same measured knocking which I had heard in my dungeon. Whether this were imagination or reality, the effect on my feelings was the same. I could not contend against the horror which now seized me. The physician seemed neither to remark my agitation, nor the mysterious noise.

“What!” said he, “did the monk then confess to you that Victorin also fell by his hand?”

—“ Yes,” answered I. “ At least I drew this conclusion from various passages in his confused and broken confessions—connecting them also in my own mind with the sudden disappearance of Victorin. Woe—woe to the relentless fratricide !”

The knocking was now more powerful. There was again a moaning and sobbing. Methought a shrill laughter sounded through the air, and I heard the same stammering voice—“ Med-ar-dus—Med-ar-dus !—He—he—he—Help, help !—He—he—he—Help, help !”—I was amazed that the physician took no notice of this, but he quietly resumed.

“ An extraordinary degree of mystery seems to rest upon Francesco’s appearance at our court. It is highly probable that he also was related to our Prince’s house. This much, at least, is certain, that Euphemia, Baroness von F——, was the daughter——”

With a tremendous stroke, so that the bolts and hinges seemed broken into splinters, methought the door flew open, and I heard the voice of the spectre absolutely scream with laughter. I could not bear this any longer. “ Ho—ho—ho ! *Brii-*

derlein!" cried I. "Here am I—Here am I!—Come on—come on quickly, if thou would'st fight with me—Now the owl holds his wedding-feast, and we shall mount to the roof, and contend with each other. There the weathercock sings aloud, and he who knocks the other down, is king, and may drink blood!"

"How now?" cried the physician, starting up, and seizing me by the arm. "What the devil is all that? You are ill, Mr Leonard, dangerously ill. Away—away with you to bed!"

I continued, however, staring at the open door, momentarily expecting that it would open, and that my horrible *double* would enter *in propria persona*. Nothing appeared, however, and I soon recovered from the delirium and horror which had seized upon me.

The physician insisted that I was much worse than I supposed myself to be, and attributed all the mental derangement and wildness that I had betrayed, to the effects of my long imprisonment, and the agitation which, on account of my trial, I must have undergone.

I submissively used whatever sedative remedies he prescribed; but what most of all contributed

to my recovery was, that the horrible knocking was not heard any more, and that the intolerable *double* seemed to have forsaken me altogether.

* * * * *

CHAPTER VI.

THE delightful season of spring had now once more returned. Every morning the birds serenaded me at the window of my lodgings, which were in a garden-house, near a street called the Parterre, not far from the river. Doubtless, the year is never so delightful and interesting as when all things are yet undeveloped, and in their prime; when the gardener is yet going about, with his hatchet, and bill-hook, and large sheers, lopping the branches, though the flourishing boughs are already redolent of green buds, that give out their fresh odours in the warm sun. One says to himself—Let the gardener, or pruner, do his worst—let him remove every unprofitable branch, so that the daylight may fall into the most secret recesses, where the loves of a former year have been celebrated and are gone by, yet the trees will, ere long, be in their full luxuriance—all that he has

lopped away will soon be more than amply replaced.

It is the season of hope and bright anticipations. Every new flower that rises from the teeming earth, and every bright green leaf that breaks forth along the southern slope of the forest, calls forth responsive feelings of buoyancy and delight in the soul.

Thus it happened, that one morning the vernal sun darted his unclouded golden gleams into my chamber. Sweet odours of flowers streamed through the open window, for the wind was in the south-west. The birds, as usual, cheered me with their songs.

An irresistible longing urged me to go forth, and wander at will through the open country. Despising, therefore, the directions of my physician, I dressed, went down stairs, and betook myself, in the first place, to the Prince's park. There the trees and shrubs, rustling with their new-born green leaves, greeted the weakly convalescent. It seemed as if I had just awoke from a long and heavy dream; and deep sighs were the inexpressive tokens of rapture which I breathed forth,

amid the joyous carolling of birds, the humming of insects, and gladness of all nature.

Ay, life itself now appeared to me like a heavy and frightful dream, not only for the time lately passed, but through the whole interval since I had left the convent. I now found myself in a walk, shaded by dark platanus trees, which give out their green leaves very early in the year ; and gradually I became lost in reverie. Methought I was once more in the garden of the Capuchin Convent at Königswald. Out of the distant thickets rose already the well-known lofty crucifix, at which I had so often prayed with fervent devotion for strength to resist all temptation.

The cross seemed to me to be now that only goal, after which I ought to strive ; *there*, prostrate in the dust, to do penance for the sinful dreams in which I had indulged, for the guilty delusions into which I had been led by the Archfiend. I stepped forward, therefore, with my clasped hands lifted up, and with my eyes fixed upon the cross. Methought I heard the pious hymns of the monks borne upon the air ; but it was only the mysterious voice of the woods, where the wind

was up amid the yet dry branches and the verdant foliage.

Its influence was more than in my weakly condition I could yet bear. I was soon obliged to support myself against a tree, and even to lie down on the turf: yet I never lost sight of the cross, but collecting my whole strength, rose again, and tottered on. However, I could only reach a rustic moss-seat, in front of the consecrated thicket, where, like a weak old man, I sat languidly down, and in hollow groans tried to lighten the anguish of my oppressed heart.

How long I remained in this situation, I know not. But at last I heard a rustling, and the sounds of light steps on the walk. Instinctively, I knew whom I was to expect—AURELIA! Scarcely had I formed the thought, when, turning the corner of an opposite walk leading towards the seat, she stood visibly before me!

Description here fails me, nor indeed have I in this narrative often attempted to describe. Tears glistened in her heavenly blue eyes; but through those tears gleamed a kindling light of love, which was, perhaps, foreign to the saint-like character of Aurelia. This expression, however, reminded me

at once of that mysterious visitant of the confessional, whom in my cherished dreams I had so often beheld. Aurelia advanced towards me. She accepted my proffered hand. "Can you," said she in a low voice—"Can you ever forgive me?"

Then losing all self-possession, I threw myself on the ground before her. I seized her hand, and bathed it with my tears.—"Aurelia, Aurelia!" cried I, "for thy sake, gladly would I endure martyrdom!—I would die a thousand deaths!" I felt myself gently lifted up. It was Aurelia who raised me, and who afterwards sunk into my arms. I scarcely know how these moments passed. Probably our interview was short, for I remember only these words—"All my best hopes are now fulfilled—all the mysterious fears that have haunted me are at an end!—But see! we are observed." She quickly disengaged herself from my embrace, and I saw the Princess coming up one of the walks. Not wishing at present to venture an interview with one whom I had never dared to look on as a friend, I retired into the thicket, where I discovered that the object which I had mistaken for a crucifix, was only the grey withered stem of an old pollard willow.

From that moment, I no longer felt any effects of my severe illness, far less any influence of melancholy. The kiss of reconciliation which I had thus received from Aurelia, inspired me with new life; and it seemed as if, for the first time, I enjoyed the mysterious raptures of which even this our terrestrial existence is susceptible. For the first time, I knew the happiness of mutual love! I stood upon the highest pinnacle of worldly fortune, and my path must, from henceforth, lead downwards, in order to conduct me to that goal which the powers of darkness had seemed to mark out for my final destination.

It was a dream of happiness like this to which I alluded, when I before painted the delights of my first meeting again with Aurelia at the Prince's court. Then I addressed myself to thee, oh stranger! who may one day read these pages. I requested thee to recall the bright sunny days of thy first love, and to imagine that dark disappointment had annihilated every prospect painted for thee by the fairy hands of Hope—then would'st thou be able to sympathize with the unhappy monk, who, in his solitary prison, moaning over the remembrance of his early visions, lay the vic-

tim of despair. Yet once more I beg of you to recall that happy time—but now let there be no thought nor apprehension of disappointment—and I need not then attempt to describe to thee the supernatural light that was now shed on my path by my fortunate love. No gloomy thoughts had longer any influence over my mind ; I began even to entertain a firm conviction that I was not the reckless criminal who, at the Baron's castle, had killed Hermogen and Euphemia, but that it was actually the delirious monk whom I had met at the *forst-haus*, that had been the culprit.

All, therefore, that I had said to the physician appeared to me no longer the fiction of my own brain, but the true narrative of events which to myself remained mysterious and inexplicable. The Prince had received me with the utmost kindness as a valued friend, whom he had believed lost, and by whose unexpected return he had been greatly rejoiced. This conduct of the Sovereign naturally gave the tone to that of all my former acquaintances at court ; only the Princess seemed still to look upon me with coldness and reserve.

I had now the opportunity of daily meetings with Aurelia, nor did any one venture remarks on

our attachment. Many times our interviews were without witnesses; but on these occasions her saint-like purity, mildness, and timidity of character, which I could not but observe, inspired me with an involuntary awe and reverence. I felt that she placed in me implicit confidence, and with no one, not even with the nearest relation, could such meetings have been more safe.

* * * * *

For several days I had not seen Aurelia. She had gone with the Princess to a neighbouring summer-house in the forest. At last I could not bear her absence, but determined on a pedestrian excursion thither.

When I arrived, it was already late in the evening. The sun had declined in red effulgence in the west. The air was filled with the odoriferous breath of young leaves and flowers, and the woods resounded with the sweetest notes of unnumbered nightingales. The approach to the Princess's country-house was through a very long avenue of magnificent pine-trees, whose massy down-hanging branches swept the ground, wa-

ving in the balmy evening breeze with a mysterious murmur; and, notwithstanding all the enchantments of the hour and scene, methought I almost heard a warning voice pronounce the word, "Beware!" whereupon I only quickened my pace, and with a beating heart arrived at the garden-gate of the summer-house.

In the garden I met with one of the maids of honour, who pointed out to me the wing of the chateau in which were Aurelia's apartments, for I by no means wished to encounter the Princess. Softly I opened the door of the anti-room, from which the warm breath of flowers and exotic plants greeted me with their almost too-powerful fragrance. Remembrance was busy with her dim illusions. "Is not this," said I, "the *identical* chamber of Aurelia at the Baron's castle, where, on that fatal night——" Scarcely had I formed this idea, when methought a dark form reared itself up in gigantic height behind me, and, with terror that shook my inmost heart, I heard a voice pronounce the name, "Hermogen!"

Losing all self-possession, I tottered onwards. I intended to knock, but the door of the cabinet was ajar, and I saw Aurelia kneeling at a *tabou-*

rett, on which there was an open book, and above it a crucifix. I looked back trembling, to see if the spectre was yet there, but it was now vanished; then, in a tone of rapture, though not such as to alarm her, I called out, "Aurelia—Aurelia!" "Is it possible," said she, softly—"Leonard, my beloved, how came you hither?" She arose, and in the next moment was folded in my arms. Her luxuriant hair hung dishevelled over my head and shoulder. I felt her heart beat, and saw her eyes gleam with unwonted fire; but at that moment there was a noise behind us as if from the strong and powerful beating of wings. A moan like the death-cry of one mortally wounded, sounded through the chamber. "Hermogen!" cried Aurelia, and sunk fainting out of my arms. I placed her on the sofa, but, in a voice of horror, she cried to me, "Away—away! I command, I beseech you, begone!"

Scarcely knowing what I did, I left the room, and soon afterwards found myself, unawares, in the entrance-hall of the ground-floor, where I was met by the Princess. She looked at me gravely and haughtily. "Mr Leonard," said she, "I am indeed not a little surprised to find you here—

What means this intrusion?" By a violent effort, combating my distraction, I stammered out some incoherent apologies, by which I perceived, from the looks of the Princess, that she was by no means satisfied. On the contrary, I durst not venture to remain longer in the house, but, after a hasty obeisance, betook myself to the front-gate, and departed.

As I passed once more through the darkness amid the waving pine-trees, methought I no longer walked alone! On the contrary, it seemed to me as if some person ran all the way very near me, keeping time with my steps, and as if I heard a stammering voice, which pronounced the words, "Ev-er—ev-er am I with thee! Broth-er—broth-er Med-ar-dus! Go whither thou wilt, east, north, or south, I am ever with thee!"

Hereupon I paused and looked round me; I became convinced that this horrible *double*, by whom I was haunted, had his existence only in my own disturbed imagination. However, I could by no means get rid of the frightful image; he continued to run along by my side, and to speak with me at intervals, till at last it seemed to me as if I must actually enter into conversation, and

relate to him the recent adventures of my life. Accordingly, I confessed that I had just now been very foolish, and had allowed myself once more to be terrified by the insane Hermogen; however, that St Rosalia should now very soon be irrevocably mine, and that, for her sake only, I had become a monk, and received the investiture and consecration.

Then my detestable *double* laughed and groaned as he had before done, and stuttered out—“But lose no time—lose no time—Quick-ly, quick-ly!”

“Nay, have a little patience,” said I, “and all will go well. Only, the blow that I struck Hermogen has not been deep enough. He has got one of those damned protecting crosses in the throat, even as thou hast, and I have! But my stiletto, which thou hast preserved for me, is still sharp and bright!”—“He—he—he!—He—he—he!—Strike him well, then—strike him well!” Such were the accents of my infernal companion, amid the dark rushing of the pine-tree woods; nor did they end there. The same persecution accompanied me almost the whole way homeward into

town, until at last, the fresh morning wind cooled the burning fever of my brow, and a roseate splendour advancing in the east, announced the dawn of a new vernal day.

I had enjoyed only about two hours' broken rest at my lodgings, when I received a summons to attend the Prince. I betook myself immediately to the palace, where he received me very cordially.

"In truth, Mr Leonard," he began, "you have won my good opinion in the highest degree. I cannot conceal from you that my prepossessions in your favour have ripened into real friendship. I should be sorry to lose you, and would rejoice in contributing to your happiness. Besides, it is our duty to atone to you as much as possible, for all that you have been made to suffer among us. By the way, Mr Leonard, do you know what was the direct cause of the process against you—that is, who first accused you?"

"No, sire," answered I.

"Baroness Aurelia," said the Prince,—“you are astonished. Nay, it is very true, Baroness Aurelia, Mr Leonard, mistook you for a Capuchin.”—(He laughed heartily.)—“Now, if you are a Capuchin, you are certainly the politest and

best-favoured of that order that has ever fallen under my notice. Say, in truth, Mr Leonard, have you ever been a monk?"

"Sire," answered I, "I know not by what wicked fatality I am always to be transformed into a monk; but——"

"Well, well!" interrupted the Prince, "I am no inquisitor. It would be a serious disaster, however, if you were bound by any clerical vows. But to the point—Would you not like to have your revenge on Aurelia for the mischief that she has brought on you?"

"In what mortal's breast," said I, "would such a thought as that of revenge arise against the amiable Baroness?"

"Do you not love Aurelia?" said the Prince.

I was silent, but replied by an expressive gesture, laying my hand on my heart.

"I know it," resumed his highness. "You have loved this young lady since that moment when she, for the first time, made her appearance here with the Princess. Your affection is returned, and indeed with a fervour of which I scarcely believed the mild Aurelia to be capable. The Princess has told me all, and I know that she lives only for

you. Would you believe, that after your imprisonment, Aurelia gave herself up to a mood of utter despondency, and became at last so ill, that we entertained serious apprehensions for her life? She at that time looked upon you as the murderer of her brother, and her grief, therefore, appeared to us unaccountable; but the truth was, that even then she loved you.

“ Now, Mr Leonard, or Mr von Krczinski, (for you are by birth noble,) I shall fix you at the court in a manner that will be agreeable to you. You shall marry Aurelia, and in a few days we shall solemnize the betrothment. I myself will act in place of the bride's father. Meanwhile, adieu!” The Prince, in his usual abrupt manner, then left the audience-chamber.

CHAPTER VII.

AURELIA my wife!—the wife of a perjured and apostate monk! It may seem incredible that my mind could undergo so many changes; but it is nevertheless true, that though this idea had so long been cherished, and had been familiar to myself, yet now, when I for the first time heard it announced by another, it was attended by a clear perception of its unfitness, and the almost utter unfeasibility of its realization. No! said I to myself, the dark powers by whom my actions have been instigated, whatever else of evil they may have in store, cannot have resolved on this! I endeavoured to combat these fears, but in vain; and yet to determine on voluntary separation from Aurelia was impossible.

It was the idea of the marriage ceremony, which filled me with a degree of terror to myself inexplicable. I believed, indeed, that if the perjured

monk dared to kneel before the altar, making a mockery of sacred vows, then, of necessity, the figure of that spectral omnipresent painter, not with a demeanour mild and friendly as in the prison, but announcing vengeance and destruction, would appear—as at Francesco's marriage—to overwhelm me with disgrace and misery.

But then methought I heard, in a deep solemn tone, the words, “And yet must Aurelia be thine! Weak-minded fool! How durst thou think of changing that destiny which hangs over her and thee?” Scarcely were these words uttered, when another voice rose within me—“Down—down! throw thyself into the dust, thou blind wicked mortal! Never can she be thine!—It is the blessed St Rosalia herself, whom thou madly think'st to clasp in the embraces of terrestrial passion!”

Thus utterly at variance with myself, tost hither and thither by contending impulses, I had left the palace, and wandered through the park, in a state of such distraction, that, to arrive at any rational plan for my future conduct, was wholly impossible. Past and gone was now that happier mood, in which I had looked upon my whole former life, and especially on my adven-

tures at the Baron's castle, as a frightful dream ! On the contrary, I saw in myself only a base criminal, and hypocritical deceiver. All that I had said to the physician and the judge was only a collection of foolish and badly invented falsehoods, by no means inspired, as I had before persuaded myself, by any supernatural voice, but the offspring of my own feeble ingenuity.

Lost and wrapt up in these bitter reflections, I was hurrying through the streets towards my lodgings, when I was overtaken by one of the Prince's carriages, which immediately stopped. I heard my own name pronounced aloud, and saw that I was beckoned to by the physician, who alighted, and immediately took me with him to his apartments.

“What means all this ?” said he, “you violent unreasonable man ! You have thought proper, it seems, to make your appearance like a ghost to the Baroness Aurelia, in the gloom of night too, so suddenly, that the poor nervous young lady has been almost frightened out of her senses, and has been attacked by serious indisposition— Well, well,” (continued he, perceiving a change in my countenance,) “I must not frighten you. Her

illness has not lasted long. She has again been out walking, and will return to-morrow with the Princess into town. Of you, Mr Leonard, the Baroness has in confidence said much to me. She longs greatly to see you again, and to excuse herself; for she allows, that her conduct at your last visit, must have appeared to you both childish and silly."

When I reflected on what had really passed at the summer-house, I was at a loss how to interpret these expressions of Aurelia. The physician, however, gave me no time to brood over this, but indulged in his usual vein of loquacity. He gave me to understand, that he was perfectly aware of the Prince's views for my advancement in rank, and marriage with Aurelia. Hereupon reverting to her late fit of nervous irritability, he gave, wickedly enough, such a caricature (for he was an excellent mimic) of her conduct and expressions, when he had arrived express at the summer-house, contrasting these also, with the grave ceremonious *hauteur* of the Princess, that I was forced, even against my will, to laugh, (for the good humour of the physician was infectious,) and gradually re-

covered a degree of cheerfulness, which, but a few minutes before, I had supposed lost for ever.

“ Could the imagination of any man,” said the physician, “ have anticipated, when you came to our *residenz*, that so many wonderful events would, in so short a time, have taken place : First, the absurd misunderstanding which brought you as a criminal before the Justiciary Court— Then the truly enviable fortune which has acquired for you the special friendship and patronage of the Prince !”

“ His highness,” said I, “ no doubt treated me from the first with marked condescension and politeness. As to the advances that I have lately made in his good graces, I ascribe this to his recollection of the unjust prosecution by which I suffered, and which he is now desirous to atone for.”

“ The Prince’s favour,” said the physician, “ perhaps is not owing so much to this, as to another circumstance, which you, no doubt, can guess.”

“ I cannot,” answered I.

“ The people, it is true,” resumed the physician, “ continue to give you the same name

which you assumed on your first arrival. Every one knows, however, that you are by birth noble, as the intelligence which has been received from Poland confirms all that you had asserted !”

“ Admitting this intelligence to have been received,” said I, “ I know not why it should have any influence on my reception at court, since, at my first introduction there, I declared that I had no pretensions to any rank beyond that of a citizen *particulier*, and yet was treated by all with kindness, and even respect.”

To this the physician replied, by a harangue, which lasted nearly an hour, on the true principles which regulate the distinction of ranks ; and the lecture being delivered with his usual vivacity, had at least the beneficial effect of engaging my attention, and putting to flight the gloomy thoughts by which I had been overwhelmed. I could not but feel also a kind of triumph at the manner in which I had again seemed to rule over my own destiny, as by accidentally choosing the Polish name of Kwiciczwo in conversation with the old lady, on the evening of my first presentation at court, I had created for myself that patent

of nobility which induced the Prince to bestow on me the Baroness in marriage.

* * * * *

As soon as I ascertained that the Princess was returned to the palace, I hastened to Aurelia, and immediately obtained an interview. The desire to excuse herself for the needless and capricious agitation, to which she had given way on my last visit, gave a new tone to her voice and manner, and new expression to her eyes, so that her timidity being less, I could once more say to myself, "The prize will yet be thine!" Tears glistened in her beautiful eyes, and her tone was that of earnest and plaintive supplication.

Still haunted by the idea of my spectral *double*, I wished to learn from her explicitly what had been the real cause of her terror. "Aurelia," said I, "I conjure you by all the saints, tell me what horrible phantom was it that then appeared to you?" At this question she gazed at me with obvious astonishment—her looks became always more and more fixed, as if in deep thought—then suddenly started up as if to go, but stood irreso-

lute. At last, with both hands pressed on her eyes, she sobbed out—"No—no—no ;—It is not—it cannot be he !"—

Unconsciously she allowed me to support her to a chair, into which she sank down exhausted. "For God's sake, Aurelia, who is it that you mean?" cried I, though I had already dark anticipations of what was passing through her mind. "Alas !" said she, "my beloved friend, were I to confess to you the whole truth, would you not look on me as an insane visionary? A horrible phantom accompanies me through life, and mars, by its irresistible influence, every enjoyment, even at the times when I should otherwise be most happy. At our very first meeting, this frightful dream hovered, as if on dark wings, over me, spreading an ice-cold atmosphere of death around us, where there should have prevailed only a buoyant spirit of cheerfulness and hope.

"In like manner, when you came into my room at the Princess's country-house, the same evil power acquired its full dominion over me. But this persecution is not without its especial cause. Precisely in the same manner in which you entered my apartments, though at a later hour of

the night, an accursed monk of the Capuchin order once surprised me. Spare me the repetition of what then occurred. Suffice it, that he became the murderer of my brother ; and *now*, your features—your tone of voice—your figure—But no more—no more of this—let me be silent on that subject for ever, and forgive, if possible, my weakness in this betrayal !”

Aurelia reclined on the sofa on which I had placed her, and seemed unconscious of that freedom with which I now contemplated the exquisite contour of her shape, and the angelic beauty of her features. Once more—all better inspirations—all doubts and fears vanished from my mind—with a fiendlike scorn and contempt, I said in a low voice—“ Thou unhappy *fated* girl ! Thou bought and sold of Satan ! Thou, forsooth, believest that thou hast escaped from thine old enemy—from the Capuchin monk, who long ago would have led thee on to ruin and despair ! But *now*, thou art his bride ; and in unconscious mockery of the religion which thou cherishest, art doomed to kneel with him at the altar of the Most High !”

The powers of darkness had, for a time, ac-

quired over me supreme dominion. I exulted over Aurelia as my devoted prey, and began to think, like a professed libertine, that her destruction would form the noblest epoch in my life. Our present interview, however, was not suffered to be of long duration, for Aurelia was summoned to attend the Princess, and I was left alone. Her expressions in apologizing for her conduct at the Princess's *chateau*, had convinced me that there existed some mystery betwixt us, of the nature of which I was yet unaware, and which I had not the means of unravelling, for I perceived that there was no chance of inducing Aurelia to speak more explicitly on the subject.

Accident soon after revealed to me that which she had been so determined to conceal. One day I happened to be in the apartment of that officer of the court, whose business it was to take charge of the receipt and delivery of letters. He was suddenly called out, when Aurelia's waiting-maid came with a large packet, and placed it among others which were already on the table. A fleeting glance confirmed me that the handwriting was that of the Baroness, and I perceived that the superscription was to the Abbess of the

Cistercian Nunnery at Kreuzberg. With the rapidity of lightning the thought vibrated through me, that this packet would afford the key to many yet unexplored mysteries, and before the officer returned, I had retired, and taken with me Aurelia's letter—of which now follows a transcript—

* * * * *

CHAPTER VIII.

“BARONESS AURELIA VON F——, to the Abbess
of the Cistercian Convent at Kreuzberg :—

“ My dear kind Mother—How shall I find adequate words to announce to you that your daughter is fortunate and happy—that at length the horrid spectre is banished, whose terrific influence, blighting every flower, and clouding every sun-gleam, had, for a long interval, rendered her existence utterly wretched !

“ But now self-reproach falls heavy on my heart. When after my unhappy brother's death, and when my father perished from grief and disappointment, you received and supported me during my otherwise hopeless affliction, I ought then, not only to have confessed my sins, but to have acquainted you fully and explicitly with the strange and mysterious impressions, by which my tranquillity had been broken.

“ I was unwilling, however, to disturb you by a detail, which would have seemed rather like the fantastic illusions of a disordered imagination, than reality, and of which the malignant influence then admitted of no cure nor antidote. Circumstances are now changed, and I can freely write to you of that secret, which has so long been deeply concealed in my own breast. It seems to me, indeed, as if that mysterious power by whom I have been haunted, had mocked, like a demon, at my every prospect of happiness! I have been tost about hither and thither, as if on the waves of a stormy sea, and left ever and anon to perish without hope of rescue! Yet Heaven has almost miraculously assisted me, even at the moment when I was on the point of being irrecoverably lost.

“ In order to render my disclosures intelligible, I must look back to the period of my earliest recollections, for even at that time, the foundation was laid in my heart of those apprehensions which have since grown with my growth, and strengthened with my strength.

“ It happened when I was only about four years old, that one day, when the spring season was at its brightest and loveliest, I was busily engaged

with Hermogen at play in the castle gardens. Hermogen had run about supplying me with a thousand varieties of flowers, which he also assisted me to weave into garlands, with which I adorned myself, till being completely decked out like a fairy queen, and covered with flowers, I said, 'Now, let me go!—I must shew myself to my mother!'

"Hermogen, as you know, was older than I was, and exercised a kind of authority over his sister. At these words of mine, he started up, 'Stay here, Aurelia,' said he, in a commanding voice—'Thy mother is in her blue closet, and speaks with the devil!' I could not tell what my brother meant by this, but, quite overcome with terror, I began to weep bitterly—'Foolish Aurelia,' said Hermogen, 'wherefore weepest thou?—Your mother speaks every day with the devil. But let us keep out of his way, and he will do us no harm!' He spoke, and looked angrily, so that I was obliged to be silent.

"My mother was even then in very feeble health—she was attacked often by frightful convulsions, which left her in a state of deathlike weakness. This happened once in presence of Hermogen,

and myself. We were ordered out of the room, and I wept bitterly; but Hermogen only said, 'It is the devil that has done this to her!'

"Thus the belief was firmly impressed on my mind, that my mother every day held conversations with some frightful spectre, whom, even to look upon, would, to any one else, be death. (As to religious instructions, they were, of course, yet wholly beyond my comprehension.) One day, after rambling through the castle, I was horrified to find myself alone in the blue cabinet which had been alluded to by Hermogen.

"I should instantly have taken refuge in flight, but my mother came in with a deadly paleness on her countenance, and without observing me, (for I stood in a corner,) in a deep melancholy tone, she pronounced the name, 'Francesco—Francesco!' There was then a strange rustling and rattling behind the oak pannels of the wall. The boards began to move, and drew themselves asunder. I then saw a full-length portrait, so admirably painted, that it had all the animation of life, representing a man in a foreign dress, with a dark violet-coloured mantle.

“The figure and expressive countenance of this unknown, made on me an indescribable impression, which I never afterwards forgot. My admiration was such that I could no longer be silent, but uttered an exclamation of joy, which, for the first time, made my mother aware of my presence. Her temper, which was generally mild and equable, was now more ruffled than on any former occasion.—‘What would’st thou here, Aurelia?’ said she, in an angry tone; ‘who brought thee hither?’—‘They left me all alone,’ cried I, bursting into tears. ‘I know not how I came hither, and had no wish to be here!’

“Meanwhile the pannels were again put in motion, and the portrait disappeared.—‘Alas!’ said I, ‘the beautiful picture—Mother, dearest mother, why is it gone?’—The Baroness lifted me up in her arms, and caressed me.—‘Thou art my dear good child,’ said she; ‘but no one must see that picture, nor speak of its having been there. It is now gone, Aurelia, and will never come again!’

“Accordingly, as long as I remembered this warning, I intrusted to no one what I had observed in the mysterious blue cabinet. Only to Her-

mogen, I once said—‘ Dearest brother, it is not with the devil, as you supposed, that our mother speaks, but with a young handsome man. However, he is only a picture, and starts out of the wall when she calls for him.’—‘ The devil,’ answered Hermogen, with a fixed serious look, ‘ may look as he will,—so says our father confessor. But as to the Baroness, he dare no longer trouble her!’—Horror seized on me at these words, and I begged of Hermogen, that he never would speak of the devil again.

“ Soon after this we went to the *residenz*, and the picture *almost* vanished from my remembrance; nor did I think of it till after my mother’s death, when we came back to the country. The wing of the castle in which was that blue cabinet, remained uninhabited. Here had been my late mother’s favourite apartments; and my father could not enter them without suffering from the most painful recollections.

“ At last, after an interval of several years, it became necessary to order some repairs in that wing; and being now in my fourteenth year, restless and wild, I happened to come into the blue cabinet, just at the time when the workmen were

about to tear up the floor. When one of them was in the act of lifting a heavy table, which stood in the middle of the room, there was a strange noise heard behind the wall, the pannels burst asunder, and the portrait of the unknown again became visible.

“ On examination, they discovered a spring in the floor, which being pressed down, brought into motion certain machinery behind the wainscot, which was accordingly drawn aside, as already described, so as to exhibit the picture. Once more that extraordinary event of my childhood was brought vividly to my remembrance ; and, at the recollection of my beloved mother, tears started into my eyes. Yet I could not turn away my looks from the expressive and interesting features of the unknown, which were so admirably painted, that they seemed more like life and reality, than any work of art. Above all, his eyes were so animated, that their glance seemed to penetrate into my very soul.

Probably the workmen had sent word to my father, of the discovery which they had made ; for while I yet stood gazing on the unknown, he hastily entered the room. He had scarcely cast

a fleeting glance on the picture, when he appeared almost petrified by some mysterious emotion, and murmured to himself, in a deep tone, the name '*Francesco!*'—

“Then suddenly, as if awoke from a painful reverie, he turned round to the workmen, and, with a stern voice, commanded them, that they should directly tear the painting from the wall, roll it up, and give it in charge to Reinhold. I was greatly distressed by this order. It seemed to me as if I should never more behold that form, so heroic, noble, and interesting; who, in his foreign garb, appeared to me almost like some prince of the spiritual world! Yet an unconquerable timidity prevented me from requesting of my father, that he would not allow the portrait to be destroyed.

“In a few days, however, these impressions altogether vanished; nor did they recur till after a long interval. I was now carried away by the volatility and light-heartedness of youth. A thousand sports, of my own devising, every day engaged my attention; and my father often said, that Hermogen, at this time, had the quiet, timid manners of a well-behaved girl; while I, on the contrary, behaved like a wild romping boy!

“These characteristics, however, were soon to be changed. Hermogen was already past the years of adolescence, and began to devote his whole attention to his own professional pursuits as a young soldier. He thought only of hardening his frame to endure every possible fatigue—of parades and reviews—of military tactics—above all, of actual service in time of danger ; and in these views, his father (having determined on his son’s destination) wholly concurred.

“For my part, my whole existence now underwent a complete revolution, which I was then unable to interpret, and which I yet cannot adequately describe. The solitude in which I lived probably contributed to heighten every fantastic impression. If any new feeling arose within me, being wholly undiverted by any external influence, or by the usual dissipations of society to which others can have recourse, it naturally grew into excess. I became thoughtful, melancholy, nervous, and discontented. By night, I was visited by strange and unaccountable dreams ; and during the day, I was, by fits, extravagantly merry, or, on the slightest provocation, burst into a passion of tears.

“ My father observed these changes, which he ascribed to irritability of nerves, and called in a physician, who prescribed for me all sorts of remedies, without the slightest good effect. At this time—I know not myself how it could have happened—but one night the half-forgotten image of the unknown appeared before me, in colours so vivid and lively, that he was no longer a dead phantom on canvass, but a corporeal and living being, who gazed on me with an aspect of kindness and compassion.

“ ‘ Alas !’ cried I, ‘ must I then die ? What is it by which I am thus so unspeakably tormented ?’—‘ Thou lovest me, Aurelia,’ said the vision, ‘ and this is the cause of thy present illness and distraction. But canst thou dissolve the vows of one already devoted to heaven ?’ To my astonishment, I now perceived that the unknown wore the robes of a monk.

“ Summoning my whole strength, I endeavoured to break the spells with which the detestable dream had fettered my senses ; and, for the present moment, I succeeded in this ; but I could not prevent the same phantom from recurring to my ima-

gination, and persecuting me with tenfold power. I perceived only too well, that for me the mysteries of a first love were revealed,—that, with a passionate fervour, of which only the youthful heart is capable, I was attached to the nameless and visionary unknown ! My indisposition seemed, however, to have attained its crisis, and I became perceptibly better. My nervous irritability decreased, and I was able again to mix in society ; only the constant presence of that image, my fantastic love of a being who existed only in my own brain, rendered me so *distrante*, that I frequently gave absurd answers when questioned ; and being wholly wrapt up in my own reveries, must have appeared to others either an affected prude, or an unidea'd simpleton.

“ About this time, I had found, among other romances, in my brother's room, one containing the history of a monk, who, being overcome by temptations of the devil, renounced his vows, and fell in love with a young lady, who in consequence perished miserably. This I read with avidity, and though the lessons that it contained might have been expected to open my eyes to the dangers which I was drawing on myself, yet it had an effect

directly the reverse, by fixing my attention more and more on those visions which I ought to have banished for ever from my mind. Frequently I thought of Hermogen's words—'Thy mother speaks with the devil;' and began to think, that the unknown was, in truth, an agent of the Archfiend, employed to entice me to destruction. Yet I could not cease to love him; and when Reinhold came back, on one occasion, from a journey, and talked much of a certain Brother Medardus, whom he had heard preach in the town of Königswald, there arose within me an obscure dim apprehension, that the original of the beloved and yet dreaded vision might be that very Medardus; and this belief Reinhold's description of the preacher's features and person seemed amply to sanction. Thereafter, the wild dreams and internal conflicts by which I was persecuted, were increased tenfold. It happened that a monk (as was often the case) came to visit at my father's house; and this person chose, in a very diffuse lecture, to describe the manifold temptations of the devil, and the wretched delusions to which especially youthful minds were subjected, if they did not sufficiently resist his influence. My father seemed to approve of

this discourse, and I believed it was aimed particularly at me.—‘ Only unbounded trust and confidence,’ said the clergyman, ‘ not only in religion, but in her servants, and submissive obedience to their injunctions and advice, can afford hopes of rescue.’

“ Not long after this, I accompanied my father to the town of Königswald, whither he went to attend a law process which Reinhold had been unable to finish alone. We lived at the garden-house of the Graf van M——, which is close by the celebrated chapel of the Capuchin Convent ; and remembering the lecture which I had heard just before leaving home, I resolved not to lose that opportunity of fulfilling the sacred duty of confession.”

[Aurelia's letter is very long, and contains a recapitulation, in a diffuse rambling style, of events that are already known to the reader. In the first place, there is her interview with Medardus in the church, which has been described already in the first volume of these Memoirs. After this, it appears that Aurelia was seized by a long and dangerous illness, by which her passion for Medardus was, for a time, completely subdued and alienated.

To this change his vehement exhortation to her in the confessional had also contributed; but, for the future, she looked on the whole transaction as a dream, with which she had been visited, in order that her eyes should be opened to the errors into which she had, by a youthful imagination, been led.

Secondly, there is a full explanation of her conduct at the time when Medardus appeared at the castle of her father the Baron von F——. Though she at once recognized the former object of her affections, yet, with an unshaken perseverance, she persisted in her determination, on no occasion whatever to betray this recognition. Many times, however, she now underwent severe conflicts, on account of a transient recurrence of her not yet wholly conquered passion; but against these her mind was fortified by the constant presence and advice of Hermogen.

Thirdly, and lastly, comes a detail of recent circumstances which are already sufficiently intelligible. No sooner had Medardus, in consequence of Aurelia's representations, been thrown into prison, and, by the opinion of every one, already pre-

judged to the scaffold, than she became dreadfully agitated; and, although conscious that her conduct was but the fulfilment of imperious duty, and feeling the utmost abhorrence for him as a criminal, yet with these feelings was blended a share of compassion, so that she almost regretted what she had done. At this period, the discovery of the insane monk, in whom Cyrillus recognized the true Medardus—the proofs received from Posen, that the individual who had, in consequence of her accusations, been imprisoned, was a Polish nobleman, and never had been a monk—effected an entire revolution in her mind. Regret for the sufferings which she had so unwarrantably inflicted, led naturally to the revival of her early passion, which had now found a legitimate and innocent object.

She dwells with satisfaction on many attributes of character and demeanour, in which her beloved Leonard differs from, and contrasts with, the detestable monk, by whom her brother had been put to death. Only the adventure at the Princess's country-house had, for a time, broken in upon this confidence, and given rise to many harassing doubts and fears, with an oppressive feeling of

mystery, by which her mind is still clouded, and against which she earnestly entreats the prayers and maternal blessing of the Abbess for herself and her betrothed husband.]

* * * * *

CHAPTER IX.

REPEATEDLY, and with the greatest attention, I read over this letter of Aurelia, especially the latter pages, in which there was obviously displayed so much of true piety and confiding simplicity of heart, that, at our next meeting, I was unable to continue my addresses in the tone and manner in which I had before indulged. Aurelia remarked this change in my conduct; and, struck with remorse, I penitentially confessed to her my robbery of her letter addressed to the Lady Abbess—(which, however, I had duly sealed and forwarded)—excusing myself on the principle, that some mysterious and supernatural impulse had forced me to this deed, against which it was impossible to contend. I insisted also, that a similar influence, emanating from some high and inexplicable source, had already shadowed forth to me in visions some of the principal incidents in her life,

which the perusal of the letter, therefore, had only confirmed and realized.—“As a proof,” said I, “of the intellectual sympathy existing betwixt us, I could long ere now have informed you of a wonderful dream by which I was myself visited, in which you confessed to me your love; but methought I was transformed into a miserable monk, whose heart, instead of being rejoiced by such good fortune, was torn by remorse and self-reproach. I loved you, indeed, with the utmost fervour; but my love was mortal sin; for I had regularly taken the vows of a Capuchin; and you, Aurelia, were metamorphosed into the blessed St Rosalia.”

At these words Aurelia started up in affright. “For God’s sake, Leonard,” said she, “say no more! Our lives are mutually obscured by some frightful and impenetrable mystery; and the less we endeavour to break through the veil by which it is now wrapt in darkness, the better. Who knows what insupportable horrors may be therein concealed? Let us think no more of such frightful inquiries, but rely firmly on each other. That you have read my letter to the Abbess no doubt sur-

prises and vexes me. But what is done cannot be retrieved. As to its contents, I would willingly have imparted them to you *viva voce*, if I had known that it was to serve any good purpose, for no secrets dare exist betwixt us. But to say the truth, Leonard, it appears to me that you yourself struggle against the evil influence of much that is wrapt up in your own bosom, and which, on account of false shame, you do not allow to pass your lips. If possible, be for the future sincere! How much would your heart be lightened by a free confession, and as to our attachment, its bonds would thereby be strengthened tenfold!"

At these words of Aurelia, I felt in all its bitterness the torment of conscious deception and hypocrisy. I reflected with the keenest self-reproach, how, only a few moments before, I had voluntarily practised imposition against this pious simple-hearted girl; and an almost unconquerable impulse arose within me to confess to her *all*—even the worst that I could utter against myself, and yet methought I should not even then lose her affection!

"Aurelia! my guardian angel, who rescued me from——" I had thus even begun my confes-

sion, when the Princess abruptly entered the room, and produced an entire change, not only in my behaviour, but in my feelings. Her manner, as usual, was haughty and ceremonious. I met her with all the outward forms of respect, but internally with emotions of scorn and defiance. As the acknowledged bridegroom of Aurelia, she was now obliged to bear with me, and I boldly kept my place, though I perceived that her aversion to me was by no means abated. In truth, it was only when alone with Aurelia that I was now free from all wicked thoughts and impulses. At such moments, the beatitude of Heaven seemed to descend on me, and I began once more to wish anxiously for our marriage, in despite of every obstacle.

About this time it came to pass that a remarkable dream one night greatly disturbed my rest, by the recollection of which I continued for several days to be haunted. Methought the figure of my mother stood vividly before me, and when I wished to salute and welcome her, I perceived it was but an aerial phantom which assumed her features, and mocked my filial embrace. “To what purpose this absurd deception?” cried I, angrily—“Thou delusive shadow, what would’st thou here?”

Then methought my mother wept bitterly. The tears that she shed were changed into bright dazzling stars which floated through the air, and began to form a circle round my head ; but ever and anon, a black frightful hand, like that of a demon, with long claws, broke the circle as soon as it was nearly formed. “ Thou, whom I brought pure and sinless into the world,” said my mother, “ and whose infancy and youth I watched over with such care, hast thou lost all energy and self-command, that thou submittest, like a grovelling slave, to every enticement of Satan? Now, indeed, I can look into thine inmost heart, since the load of earthly existence, under which I have long struggled, is taken from my shoulders. Rouse thyself, Franciscus ! Resist the fiend that besets thee, and he will flee ! I shall once more adorn thee, as in early days, with ribbons and flowers, for St Bernard’s day is come, and thou shalt again be a pious and happy child !”

Now it seemed to me as if, in obedience to my mother’s admonition, I must once more begin singing one of the lovely anthems which I had learned in my youth, but frightful and indescribable noises overpowered my voice. My attempts at mu-

sic were like the howling of a wild beast ; and betwixt me and my phantom visitant there fell, rustling and undulating, the folds of a massy black veil, supported by the spectral arms of demons, with long hideous talons. Thus ended my dream.

Two days afterwards, I happened to meet in the park the chief judge of the criminal court, who came up to me in a very friendly manner, and entered into conversation.

“ Do you know,” said he, “ that the final issue of Medardus’s trial has again become very doubtful? Judgment of death had nearly been pronounced against him, indeed was all but carried into effect, when he again shewed symptoms of madness. The court received intelligence of the death of his mother. I made this known to him. Then he laughed aloud like a maniac, and in a tone which would have inspired the stoutest heart with horror—‘ The Duchess of Neuenburg !’ said he, (naming the wife of the late Duke, brother of our Sovereign,)—‘ She is long since dead. If this is all the intelligence you had to bring, the trouble might have been spared !’

“ In consequence of this paroxysm, the execution of the sentence is delayed, and a new medical

inquiry set on foot. However, it is generally believed that his madness is only pretended, and that his condemnation is therefore inevitable."

I afterwards obtained information of the day and hour of my mother's death, and found that these corresponded exactly with the time at which she had appeared to me in that remarkable vision.

* * * * *

The day which the Prince had appointed for our marriage was at last arrived; and the ceremony was to take place in the morning, at the altar of St Rosalia, in the church of a neighbouring convent, which (I know not for what reason) Aurelia preferred to the Prince's chapel. I passed the preceding night in watching and prayer.—Alas! I did not reflect that prayer under such circumstances, and cherishing such intentions in my heart, was only adding by blasphemy to my previous guilt.

When I went to Aurelia, she came, dressed in white, and wearing roses as her only ornament, to meet me. Never had she looked more beautiful;

but in the fashion of her dress, and in the flower wreaths that she had chosen, there was something that inspired me with strange and mysterious recollections, which I knew not how to define. At the same moment I remembered that the painting over the altar, at which the marriage ceremony was to take place, represented the martyrdom of St Rosalia, and that the saint was there dressed precisely as Aurelia now appeared, whereupon my whole frame was shaken with horrid and uncontrollable apprehensions, which it was hardly in my power to conceal.

We had no time for conversation, however. Scarcely had I saluted Aurelia, when a servant of the Prince announced that we were waited for by the wedding-party. She quickly drew on her gloves, and gave me her arm. Then one of her attendants remarked that some ringlets of her hair had fallen loose, and begged for a moment's delay. Aurelia seemed vexed at the interruption, but waited accordingly.

At that moment a hollow rumbling noise, and a tumult of voices on the street, attracted our attention. At Aurelia's request I hastened to the window. There, just before the palace, was a lei-

ter-wagen, which, on account of some obstacle, had stopped in the street. The car was surrounded by the executioners of justice; and within it, I perceived the horrible monk, who sat looking backwards, while before him was a capuchin, earnestly engaged in prayer. His countenance was deadly pale, and again disfigured by a grizzly beard, but the features of my detestable *double* were to me but too easily recognizable.

When the carriage, that had been for a short space interrupted by the crowd, began to roll on, he seemed awoke from his reverie, and turning up his staring spectral eyes towards me, instantly became animated. He laughed and howled aloud —“ *Brüd-er-lein—Brüd-er-lein!*” cried he.—“ Bride-groom!—Bride-groom!—Come quickly—come quickly.—Up—up to the roof of the house. There the owl holds his wedding-feast; the weather-cock sings aloud! There shall we contend together, and whoever casts the other down, is king, and may drink blood!”

The howling voice in which he uttered these words, the glare of his eyes, and the horrible writhings of his visage, that was like that of an animated corse, were more than, weakened as I was

by previous agitation, I was able to withstand. From that moment I lost all self-possession ; I became also utterly insane, and unconscious what I did ! At first I tried to speak calmly. “ Horrible wretch !” said I ; “ what mean’st thou ? What would’st thou from me ?”

Then I grinned, jabbered, and howled back to the madman ; and Aurelia, in an agony of terror, broke from her attendants, and ran up to me. With all her strength, she seized my arms, and endeavoured to draw me from the window. “ For God’s sake,” cried she, “ leave that horrible spectacle ; they are dragging Medardus, the murderer of my brother, to the scaffold. Leonard !—Leonard !”

Then all the demons of hell seemed awoke within me, and manifested, in its utmost extent, that power which they are allowed to exercise over an obdurate and unrepentant sinner. With reckless cruelty I repulsed Aurelia, who trembled, as if shook by convulsions, in every limb.—“ Ha—ha—ha !” I almost shrieked aloud—“ foolish, insane girl ! I myself, thy lover, thy chosen bridegroom, am the murderer of thy brother. ! Would’st thou by thy complaints bring down destruction from

heaven on thy sworn husband?—Ho—ho—ho!
I am king—I am king—and will drink blood!”

I drew out the stiletto—I struck at Aurelia, —blood streamed over my arm and hand, and she fell lifeless at my feet. I rushed down stairs, —forced my way through the crowd to the carriage—seized the monk by the collar, and with supernatural strength tore him from the car. Then I was arrested by the executioner; but with the stiletto in my hand, I defended myself so furiously, that I broke loose, and rushed into the thick of the mob, where, in a few moments, I found myself wounded by a stab in the side; but the people were struck with such terror, that I made my way through them as far as to the neighbouring wall of the park, which, by a frightful effort, I leapt over.

“Murder—murder!—Stop—stop the murderer!” I had fallen down, almost fainting, on the other side of the wall; but these outcries instantly gave me new strength. Some were knocking with great violence, in vain endeavours to break open one of the park gates, which, not being the regular entrance, was always kept closed. Others were striving to clamber over the wall, which I had

cleared by an incredible leap. I rose, and exerting my utmost speed, ran forward. I came, ere long, to a broad *fosse*, by which the park was separated from the adjoining forest. By another tremendous effort, I jumped over, and continued to run on through the wood, until at last I sank down, utterly exhausted, under a tree.

I know not how the time had passed, but it was already evening, and dark shadows reigned through the forest, when I came again to my recollection. My progress in running so far had passed over like an obscure dream. I recollect only the wind roaring amid the dense canopy of the trees, and that many times I mistook some old moss-grown pollard stem for an officer of justice, armed and ready to seize upon me!

When I awoke from the swoon and utter stupefaction into which I had fallen, my first impulse was merely to set out again, like a hunted wild beast, and fly, if possible, from my pursuers to the very end of the earth! As soon, however, as I was only past the frontiers of the Prince's dominions, I would certainly be safe from all immediate persecution.

I rose accordingly, but scarcely had I advanced

a few steps, when there was a violent rustling in the thicket; and from thence, in a state of the most vehement rage and excitement, sprung the monk, who, no doubt in consequence of the disturbance that I had raised, had contrived to make his escape from the guards and executioners.

In a paroxysm of madness he flew towards me, leaping through the bushes like a tiger, and finally sprung upon my shoulders, clasping his arms about my throat, so that I was almost suffocated. Under any other circumstances, I would have instantly freed myself from such an attack, but I was enfeebled to the last degree by the exertions I had undergone, and all that I could attempt was to render this feebleness subservient to my rescue. I fell down under his weight, and endeavoured to take advantage of that event. I rolled myself on the ground, and grappled with him; but in vain! I could not disengage myself, and my infernal double laughed scornfully. His abominable accents, "He—he—he!—He—he—he!" sounded amid the desolate loneliness of the woods.

During this contest, the moon broke, only for a moment, through the clouds, for the night was

gloomy and tempestuous. Then, as her silvery gleam slanted through the dark shade of the pine trees, I beheld, in all its horror, the deadly pale visage of my *second self*, with the same expression which had glared out upon me from the cart in which he had been dragged to execution. "He—he—he!—Broth-er, broth-er!—Ever, ever I am with thee!—Leave thee, leave thee never!—Cannot run as thou canst! Must carry—carry me! Come straight from the gallows—They would have nailed me to the wheel—He—he—he!—He—he—he!"

Thus the infernal spectre howled and laughed aloud as we lay on the ground; but ere the fleeting moonbeam had passed away, I was roused once more to furious rage. I sprang up like a bear in the embraces of a boa-constrictor, and ran with my utmost force against trees and fragments of rock, so that if I could not kill him, I might at least wound him in such manner that he would be under the necessity of letting me go. But in vain. He only laughed the more loudly and scornfully; and my personal sufferings were increased tenfold by my endeavours to end them.

I then strove with my whole remaining strength

to burst asunder his hands, which were firmly knotted round my throat, but the supernatural energies of the monster threatened me with strangulation. At last, after a furious conflict, he suddenly fell, as if lifeless, on the ground: and though scarcely able to breathe, I had run onwards for some yards, when again he sat upon my shoulders, laughing as before, and stammering out the same horrible words. Of new succeeded the same efforts of despairing rage! Of new I was freed! Then again locked in the embraces of this demoniacal spectre!

After this I lost all consciousness.—I am utterly unable to say distinctly how long I was persecuted by my relentless *double*. It seems to me as if my struggles must have continued at least during a whole month; and that during this long period I neither ate nor drank. I remember only *one* lucid interval. All the rest is utter darkness.

I had just succeeded in throwing off my *double*, when a clear gleam of sunlight brightened the woods, and with it a pleasant sound of bells rose on mine ear. I distinguished unequivocally the chimes of a convent, which rung for early mass. For a moment I rejoiced; but then the thought came

like annihilation upon me—" THOU HAST MURDERED AURELIA !" and once more losing all self-possession and recollection, I fell in despair upon the earth.

* * * * *

CHAPTER X.

METHOUGHT the air in which I breathed had a mildness and fragrance such as now I had never known ; but, as yet, I was labouring under the influence of a deep and morbid slumber. I felt a strange irritation, a shooting prickly pain in every vein and fibre, till it seemed as if my frame was split and divided an hundred fold, and every division thence arising assumed a peculiar and individual principle of life, while the head in vain strove to command the limbs, which, like unfaithful vassals, would not submit themselves to its dominion.

'Then, methought, each of these separated parts became a glittering fiery point, which began to turn itself round in a circle, till hundreds of them, whirling rapidly together, formed at last the appearance of a fixed ball of fire, which darted forth flames and coruscations. " These are my limbs

which are thus moving," said I to myself; "now I am for certain about to awake."

At that moment, when the fiery ball was turning round, I felt sudden and violent pain, and distinctly heard the sound of a clear chime of bells. "Away, away—Onward, onward!" cried I, believing myself still in the wood, and making a vehement effort to rise up, but I fell back powerless on my couch. Now, for the first time, I was restored to perfect consciousness, and saw, with great surprise, that I was no longer in the forest. In the dress of a Capuchin monk, I lay upon a well-stuffed mattress. The room was vaulted and lofty; a pair of rush-bottomed chairs, and a small table, stood beside my bed.

I concluded that my state of unconsciousness must have continued for a long time, and that, while in that unhappy situation, I must have been brought to some convent or other, where the monks were, by their rule, obliged to receive the sick. Probably my clothes had been torn, and they had been obliged, for the meanwhile, to supply me with a cowl. However this might be, there was no doubt that I had escaped from all imme-

diate danger. I was also free from pain, though very weak, therefore continued quite tranquil, having no doubt that my protectors would, in due time, look after their charge.

Accordingly, it was not long before I heard steps that seemed, from their sound, to approach through a long stone-floored gallery. My door opened, and I saw two men, of whom one had a lay dress, the other wore the habit of the brethren of charity. They came up to me in silence; the man in the lay dress fixed his eyes on me, and seemed much astonished. "I am again come to myself, sir," said I, in a weak voice. "Heaven be praised, who has restored to me my reason. But will you be so good as to inform me where I am, and how I have been brought hither?"

Without answering me, the physician (as I supposed him to be) turned to the clergyman, and said, in Italian, "This is indeed very extraordinary. His looks are, since our last visit, completely changed. His speech is quite clear, only weak. Some particular crisis must have taken place in his malady."

"For my part," said the monk; "I have no doubt that he is completely cured."

“Of that,” said the physician, “we cannot judge, until we have seen how he may conduct himself for the next few days. But do you not understand as much German as to speak with him?”

The monk answered in the negative.

“I understand and speak Italian,” interrupted I. “Tell me, then, I beseech you, where I am, and how I found my way hither?”

“Ha!” cried the physician, “our difficulties are then at an end. You find yourself, reverend sir, in a place where every possible precaution has been, and will be taken, for your perfect recovery. Three months ago you were brought hither in a very critical and dangerous situation; but, under our care and attention, you seem to have made great progress towards convalescence; and if we shall have the good fortune to complete your cure, you may then freely pursue your journey, for, as I have understood, you wish to go to Rome.”

“Did I come to you, then,” said I, “in this Capuchin dress which I now wear?”

“Truly you did so,” said the physician; “but give over, I pray you, this asking of questions, and do not disquiet yourself—everything shall, in

due time, be explained to your satisfaction. Our business at present is to attend to your bodily health."

He then felt my pulse, and the monk, who had for a moment disappeared, returned with a cup full of some liquid, which the physician desired me to drink, and then to tell him what I thought it was. I obeyed, and told him that what I had drunk seemed to me a strong and nourishing meat-broth. "Good—very good," said the monk, with a smile of satisfaction. They then left me alone, with a promise of returning in a short time.

Through the next three days, I was attended with the utmost skill and kindness by the brethren and the physician. I continued rapidly to improve, and at the end of that time was able to rise up, and, leaning on the monk's arm, to walk through the room. He led me to the window and opened the lattice. A delightfully warm and fragrant (but not sultry) air, such as till then I had never breathed, came in at the window. Without, I beheld an extensive garden, wherein all sorts of fruit-trees grew, and flourished in the highest luxuriance. There were also delightful arbours, bowers, and temples; while, even around the

window from which I looked, the grapes hung in rich massy clusters. Above all, however, it was with the clear cloudless blue of the sky that I was altogether enchanted. I could not find words to express my admiration.

“Where am I then?” cried I. “Have the blessed saints granted to a wretched sinner to dwell in their Elysium?”

The monk smiled contentedly at my raptures. “You are in Italy, brother,” said he.

“In Italy !” repeated I, with the utmost astonishment. I then urged the clergyman to explain to me more particularly how I could have found my way to such a distance. He referred me to the physician, who just then entered, and who at last informed me, that a strange man of most eccentric manners had brought me hither about three months ago, and begged that I might be taken into their house ; that, finally, I was in a regular hospital, which was taken charge of by the brethren of charity.

As I gradually gained more strength, I found that the monk and physician willingly entered into conversation with me on various subjects of literature and the arts. The latter, as if in order

to obtain information for himself, even requested me to write down many things which he afterwards read over in my presence; but I was puzzled by observing that, instead of praising what I had written on its own account, he only said, "Indeed?—This looks well!—I have not been deceived—Excellent—excellent!"

I was now allowed at certain hours to walk in the garden, where, however, I was greatly discomposed by the sight of strange spectral figures, who, as if quite unable to take care of themselves, were led about by the monks. Once, in particular, I was struck by the appearance of a tall haggard man, in a dingy yellow mantle, who was led by two of the brethren, one on each side, and in this manner met me as I was returning to the house. At every step, he made the most absurd gesticulations, as if he were about to commence a *pas seul*, at the same time whistling shrilly an accompaniment.

Astonished at this, I stood gazing on the man, but the monk by whom I was attended drew me suddenly away. "Come, come, dear brother Medardus!" said he, "that is no business of yours!"

“For God’s sake,” said I, “tell me how is it that you know anything of my name?”

The vehemence with which I put this question seemed to discompose my attendant. “For what reason,” said he, “should we not know your name? The man by whom you were brought hither, named you without hesitation, and you were accordingly entered in the list of the house—Medardus, brother of the Capuchin Convent at Königswald.”

Once more I felt the ice-cold shuddering of terror vibrate in every limb. But whoever was the unknown by whom I had been brought to the hospital, whether he were or were not initiated in the horrible mysteries of my life, he certainly had not cherished any evil intentions towards me, for I had been treated with the greatest care and tenderness, and was, besides, at liberty to go wherever I wished.

After this walk, I had returned to my chamber, and was leaning out at the open window inhaling the delightful fragrance of the air, which seemed to inspire me with new life and energy in every fibre, when I beheld in the garden a man coming up the middle walk, whom I thought that I had

seen before, but could not immediately recollect where.

He was a diminutive withered figure, had upon his head a small hat with a long peaked crown, and was dressed in a miserable weather-beaten surtout. In his gait, he rather danced than walked; nay, every now and then cut a caper right up into the air; and anon, started off to one side, as if he were possessed by the demon of St Vitus. Occasionally he made a full stop, and at one of these intervals, perceiving me at the window, he took off his high-peaked hat, and waved it in the air, then kissed his hand repeatedly, with an emphasis of gesticulation which at once confirmed and cleared up my recollection. There was but one individual in the world who could have practised these manœuvres, and that was Belcampo! He vanished, however, among the trees; but, not long afterwards, I heard a particular rap at the door, of which the style and manner immediately taught me whom I was to expect.

“Schönfeld!” said I, as he indeed made his appearance; “how, in the name of wonder, have you found your way hither?”

“ Ach—ach !” said he, twisting his face, as if he were about to weep—“ how should I have come hither otherwise than driven and hurled on wards as I was by that malignant and relentless destiny, which never fails to persecute every man of true genius. On account of a murder, I was obliged to fly from the rich and flourishing town of Frankenburg.”

“ On account of a murder !—What would'st thou say ?” interrupted I, with considerable agitation.

“ Ay, truly,” answered he—“ on account of a murder. I had, in a fit of wrath, immolated the left whisker of the youngest *Commerziensrath* in that free town, and had also dangerously wounded the right mustachio.”

“ Once more,” said I, “ I must beg of you to give up these absurd and unmeaning jokes, and to tell your story connectedly, otherwise you had better leave the room.”

“ Nay, dear brother Medardus,” he resumed, “ this is indeed unforeseen and unaccountable ; now that you are restored to health, you would send me from you in disgrace ; but, as long as you

were ill, you were glad to have me for a companion in your room, and to be always near to you."

"What does all this mean?" cried I, quite confounded; "and how have you got to the knowledge of my name Medardus?"

"Look," said he, with an ironical smile, "if you please, at the right-hand lappelle of your monk's cowl."

I did so, and became almost petrified with terror and astonishment, for I found the name "Medardus" embroidered thereupon; and, on more accurate inspection, I could discover also that this was the identical tunic which, on my flight from the castle of the Baron von F——, I had thrown into a hollow tree in the forest.

Schönfeld did not fail to remark my agitation, over which he seemed wickedly to triumph. With his fore-finger on his nose, and lifting himself on tiptoe, he looked stedfastly in my face. I remained speechless; then, in a low and pensive tone, he resumed—

"Your excellency, no doubt, wonders at the handsome dress which has been chosen for you. To say the truth, it seemed in every respect to fit and become you better than the nut-brown suit,

with plated buttons, which my wise friend Damon supplied for you. It was I, the banished, the despised and misunderstood Belcampo, who provided for you this dress, in order to cover your nakedness. Brother Medardus, you were then, indeed, but in a sorry plight, for, instead of great-coat, vest, pantaloons, English frock, &c. &c. you wore, in the simplest, and most unpretending manner, your own skin. As to a proper friseur, you thought as little of him as you did of a tailor, performing his functions with your own ten fingers, in a style which was by no means to be commended."

"Give over these disgusting follies," said I, much incensed; "Schönfeld—I insist on your being rational, otherwise I will hear no more!"

"Pietro Belcampo is my name," interrupted he, with great vehemence; "Ay, Pietro Belcampo; for we are now in Italy, and you must know, reverend sir, that I, simple as I here stand, impersonize that folly, which luckily has been present on every disastrous occasion, to assist your wisdom; and without which, you would have found yourself miserably deficient. It is from Folly alone that you have derived protection. By

this alone your boasted reason, which is unable to hold itself upright, but totters about like a drunk man or a child, has been supported, and instructed to find the right road home, that is to say, to the mad-house, where we are both happily arrived."

By these last words I was much agitated. I thought on the strange figures that I had seen, especially on the tall haggard man in the dingy yellow mantle, who had made such absurd gesticulations; and could entertain no doubt that Schönfeld had told me the truth. "Ay, dear brother Medardus," resumed Schönfeld, with solemn voice and gestures; "Folly is, indeed, on this earth, the true intellectual queen. Reason, on the other hand, is only a pitiful viceroy, who never troubles himself with what happens beyond his own narrow boundaries, who, from sheer *ennui*, indeed, makes his soldiers be exercised on the *parade-platz*, though the said soldiers afterwards, in time of danger, cannot fire a single volley in proper time. But Folly, the true queen of the people, marches in with kettle-drums and trumpets—Huzza! Huzza!—before and behind her, triumph and rejoicing! The

lieges straightway emancipate themselves from the constraint in which Reason would have held them, and will no longer stand or walk as their pedantic tutor would have them to do. At last he calls the roll, and complains,—‘Lo! Folly hath robbed me of my best recruits—hath driven them away—driven their wits a wool-gathering—ay, driven them mad.’ That is a play of words, dear brother Medardus, and such play is like a glowing pair of curling-irons in the hand of Folly, with which she can twist such a thought!”

“Desist, I once more entreat of you,” said I, “desist from this childish clatter of unmeaning words, and tell me concisely how you came hither, and what you know regarding the dress which I now wear!” Hereupon I seized him by both arms, and forced him into a chair, where he seemed to recollect himself, fixed his eyes stedfastly on the ground, and with a deep sigh resumed,—

“I have saved your life,” said he, “for the second time. It was I who enabled you to escape from the town of Frankenburg. It was I, too, who brought you hither.”

“But, in the name of Heaven,” said I, “where did you last find me?”

I had let him go, and he instantly bolted up—
“Ha, brother Medardus,” said he, “if I, weak and diminutive as I seem, had not contrived to bear you on my shoulders, your limbs would by this time, have lain the food of ravens on the wheel!”

I shuddered as if ready to faint, and sunk into a chair. At that moment my attendant monk entered the room. “How hast thou come hither? Who gave thee liberty now to enter this room?” said he, very angrily, to Belcampo.

“Alas! venerable father,” said the latter, in a supplicating tone, and pretending to burst into tears, “I could no longer resist the vehement impulse to visit my dearest friend, whom I had rescued from danger of death!”

I now recovered myself. “Tell me, brother,” said I to the monk, “did this man really bring me hither?”

The monk hesitated.

“I scarcely know,” said I, “in what sort of hospital I am now protected, but I can easily suppose that I have been in the most frightful of all conditions. You perceive, however, that I am

now quite well, and therefore, I may hear all which was before intentionally concealed from me, when you supposed that my nerves were yet too irritable."

CHAPTER XI.

“IT is, indeed, quite true,” said the monk, “this man brought you hither about three months and a half ago. He had, according to his own account, found you in the Lovanian forest, (which separates the dominions of the Prince of Laguria, from our district,) and had recognized you for the Capuchin Medardus from Königswald, who had before, on a journey to Rome, passed through a town where he then lived.

“When first brought among us, you were in a state of utter apathy. You walked when you were led, remained standing if one let you alone, and seated or laid yourself down according as you were put into the required position. Food and drink we were obliged to pour down your throat; as to words, you were able only to utter hollow unintelligible sounds, and your eyes appeared to stare, without the power of distinguishing any ob-

ject. Belcampo then never left you, but was your faithful attendant. After an interval of about a month, you fell into a state of outrageous madness, and we were obliged to place you in one of the cells appropriated for persons in that frightful malady. You were then like a ferocious wild beast; but I dare not describe your sufferings more minutely, as the picture might be too painful. After some weeks, your state of apathy again returned, and seemed more obstinate than ever, but at last, God be praised, you awoke from your stupefaction, into your present convalescence."

Schönfeld had, during this narrative of the monk, seated himself, as if in deep reflection, leaning his head on his hand. "Ay, truly," he resumed, "I know that I am sometimes little better than a self-conceited fool; but the air of the mad-house, destructive to reasonable people, has on me had a very beneficial influence. I begin to speculate on my own errors, which is no bad sign. If, generally speaking, I exist only through my own self-consciousness, it is only requisite that this consciousness should pull off the fool's motley coat, and I shall shew myself to the world, a very wise, rational gentleman. But, oh,

heavens ! is not a genial friseur, according to the principles of his character and profession, a privileged fool and coxcomb ? Such folly is, in truth, a protection from all madness ; and I can assure you, reverend sir, that in a north-west wind, I can distinguish very well between a church-tower and a lamp-post !”

“ If this be really the case,” said I, “ give us a proof of it now by a quiet rational narrative, how you discovered me in the wood, and brought me to this house.”

“ That shall immediately be done,” said Belcampo, “ though the reverend father on my right hand looks at me with a very suspicious aspect. You must know, then, that on the morning after your escape from Frankenburg, the foreign painter, with his collection of pictures, had also, in an inconceivable manner, vanished ; and although the disturbance that you had raised at first excited a good deal of notice, yet, in the stream of other events, and the bustle of the fair, it was ere long forgotten. It was not till after the murder at the castle of the Baron von F—— became generally talked of, and the magistracy of that district published handbills, offering a reward for the arrest

of Medardus, a Capuchin monk in Königswald, that people were reminded of the painter having indeed told the whole story, and recognized in you the said brother Medardus.

“ The landlord of the hotel wherein you had lodged, confirmed a supposition that had already got afloat, of my having been accessory to your flight. The people, therefore, fixed their attention on me, and would have thrown me into prison. Having long wished to quit for ever the miserable course of life that I had been dragging on, my resolution was, in consequence, very speedily adopted. I determined to go into Italy, where there are *Abbatés* with powdered wigs, and encouragement is yet afforded to an accomplished *friseur*. On my way thither I saw you in the *residenz* of the Prince von Rosenthurm. The people there talked of your marriage with the Baroness Aurelia, and of the condemnation and execution of the monk Medardus.

“ I had also an opportunity of seeing this criminal monk, and whatever his history might have been, I was convinced at once that you were the true Medardus. I placed myself in your way,

but you did not observe me, and I left the Prince's *residenz*, in order to follow out my own plans.

“After a long and fatiguing journey, I had taken up my night's rest at a small obscure hamlet. In the morning I rose very early, as was the custom of the inhabitants there, and prepared to continue my laborious progress through a forest, which lay in gloomy darkness before me. Just as the first gleams of the morning had begun to break through the clouds of the east, there was a rustling in the thickets, and a man, with his hair matted, and staring out in various directions, his beard, too, in the same disorder, but wearing an elegant modern suit of clothes, leaped past me !

“His looks were wild and outrageous, and I gazed after him with the greatest astonishment, but in a moment he had disappeared again in the thick of the tangled coppice, and I could see no more of him. I walked onwards, therefore ; but what words can express the horror that I felt, when right before me I saw a naked human figure stretched out flat upon the ground ! There seemed to me no doubt that a murder had been committed, and that the fugitive whom I had before seen was the murderer.

“ I knelt down beside the naked man, recognized at once your features, and perceived that you still breathed. Close beside you lay the Capuchin habit, which at this moment you are wearing. With much labour and stratagem I contrived to dress you in it, and to drag you along with me. At last you awoke out of your deep swoon, but you remained in that frightful state of apathy in which this reverend gentleman has described you.

“ It cost me no little exertion to get you dragged along, and consequently it was not till late in the evening that I was able to reach an ale-house, which was situated in the middle of the forest. Here I placed you upon a bench of turf at the door, where you lay as if utterly overcome and drunk with sleep. I then went into the house to procure you food and drink, and, found (as I suspected might be the case) a party of hussars, who, as the hostess informed me, were in pursuit of a monk, who, in an inconceivable manner, had escaped at the moment when, on account of his enormous crimes, preparations were making for his death on the scaffold.

“ It was to me an inexplicable mystery how you

could have escaped out of the *residenz* into the forest ; but the entire conviction that you were the Medardus whom they now sought after, made me exert myself to the utmost to rescue you from the danger which now hovered over you. Of course, I brought you away directly from the ale-house, in which undertaking I was favoured by the increasing darkness ; and thereafter choosing always the by-roads and most unfrequented tracks, I succeeded at last in conducting you over the frontiers.

“ Finally, after long and incredible wanderings, I came with you to this house, where the inhabitants received us both, as I declared that I was not willing to separate from you. Here I was convinced that you were perfectly secure, for by no means would the venerable fathers give up a sick person whom they had once received, to any criminal court.

“ In this very chamber, then, I faithfully attended and nursed you ; for as to your own five senses, you were indeed but very indifferently provided. Nor were the movements of your limbs to be commended. Neither Vestris nor Noverre

would have given you much encouragement, for your head hung down on your breast, and when any one wished you to stand upright, then you tumbled about like a capotted nine-pin or skittle. As to your celebrated eloquence, too, you fared still worse, for you were d——d *monosyllabic*, and in your lucid intervals, only said, ‘Hu—hu!’ and ‘Me—me!’ out of which expressions your thoughts and wishes were not to be very clearly divined: Indeed, it was to be supposed, that your rational faculties had become unfaithful to you, and were gone a-vagabondizing on their own private account.

“At last you became all of a sudden extravagantly merry, cut inordinate capers in the air, and roared aloud with sheer exuberance of delight, tearing your habit at the same time, in order, we supposed, to escape even from the smallest restraint. Your appetite was then——”

“Stop, stop, Schönfeld,” cried I, “give over this horrible and cruel raillery—you have already sufficiently informed me of the frightful situation into which I had fallen. Thanks and praise to the long-suffering and mercy of Heaven, and the

intercession of the saints, that I am now rescued!"

"Alas! reverend sir," resumed Schönfeld, "in what respect are you the better of all that you have gained, I mean of this peculiar attribute of the soul, which is called self-consciousness? Methinks it might well be compared to the cursed activity of a pettifogging toll-keeper, or excise-officer, at best, or a controller of customs, who has established his damnable *comptoir* in the brain, and upon the last indication of goods coming forth from hence, cries out 'Hey day! The export is forbidden. These wares must remain in the country.' The richest jewels, like contemptible grains of seed, remain stuck in the earth, and at last, all that rises above the surface are *runkelrüben*,* from an hundred thousand weight of which, perhaps a quarter of an ounce of bad sugar is afterwards extracted; and yet this pitiful export is, forsooth, to lay the foundation of trade with the glorious city of the New Jerusalem in the realms above, where all is magnificence and splendour.

* Beet-roots.

Oh, heavens! I would have given all my dearly bought powder *à la Marchalle*, or *à la Pompadour*, or *à la Reine de Golconde*,—would have cast it into the river, where it is deepest, if by transi-trade, I could have obtained from thence but a *quentlein* of the golden dust of the sun's rays, to dress the wigs of reverend professors, and men of learning, but in the first place, mine own! What do I say? If my excellent friend Damon, reverend sir, had, instead of the flea-coloured frock, contrived to hang about your shoulders one of those robes made of the morning light, in which the burgesses of the holy city walk to church, then, as to dignity and gentility, we should have come off very differently; but as the matter stood, the world held you for a common *glebæ adscriptus*, and the devil for your cousin-german!"

Schönfeld had risen up, and walked, or rather hopped, about the room, with vehement gesticulations, and twisting his features into incredible contortions. He was in the plenitude of his vein, kindling up one folly by another. I therefore seized him again by both arms. "Art thou resolved," said I, "to secure thyself a place in this hospital instead of me? Is it impossible for thee to talk

more than five minutes together without falling into these absurdities?"

"Is then all that I utter," said he, "so very foolish, when thus the spirit comes upon me?"

"That is precisely what renders your talk so intolerable," said I. "There is often good sense at the bottom of all this gibberish, but so abominably metamorphosed, that a thought, good in itself, is like a fine dress hung over with party-coloured rags. Like a drunk man, thou canst not proceed in a straight direction, but art everlastingly floundering away hither and thither. Thy conduct is never consistent or consecutive."

"What is conduct?" said Schönfeld, with a contemptuous smile—"What is conduct, most venerable Capuchin? Doth not that term imply the preconception in the mind of some fixed and certain object, for the attainment of which we shape and adapt our procedure? Are you, reverend sir, sure of your own object? Are you not rather afraid that you may have occasionally admitted too little alloy in your spirituous potations, and now, like a giddy tower-watcher, see two goals, without knowing the right one? Besides, sir, let it be forgiven to one of my profession, if he is apt,

perhaps too often, to have recourse to the humorous and the *outré*, in order to season the insipidity of this life, as we add Spanish pepper to cauliflower; without this, an artist of my vocation would be but a pitiful *dummkopf*,* who carries his privilege in his pocket, without ever daring to make use of it."

The monk had remained in the room, and had looked attentively at Belcampo and at me; but as we spoke German, he did not understand a single word. At last, he resolutely interrupted our dialogue. "Excuse me, gentlemen," said he, "if I put an end to a discourse from which it is impossible for either of you to derive any advantage. Your health, brother, is yet much too weak to bear with a conversation which probably awakens painful recollections as to your past life. Besides, you will have time enough to learn all that your friend has to inform you of, as when you leave our establishment, he will no doubt accompany you. Belcampo has a strange manner of speaking; and by his eloquence and gesticulations together, never

* Blockhead.

fails, when he tells a story, to bring every adventure vividly before the eyes of his listener. In Germany he must, I suppose, be looked on as mad. Here in Italy, he would be valued as a capital buffoon, and on the stage might make a fortune."

Schönfeld stared with all his might at the clergyman, then lifted himself on tiptoe, clasped his hands over his head, and called out in Italian, "Thou warning voice from the world of spirits—thou voice of omnipotent destiny! To me thou hast spoken at last through the organs of this reverend father. Belcampo—Belcampo! How could'st thou mistake so long thy true vocation? It is now resolved!" He then ran out of the room, and for that day I saw no more of him.

* * * * *

Next morning he made his appearance, equipt for a journey. "Dear Brother Medardus," said he, "you are now quite recovered; you do not any longer require my assistance. I therefore take my departure, in order to go, as the spirit moves me, into the world. Farewell, then! Yet permit

me that I exercise on you, for the last time, my art, although in my own estimation it has now become utterly contemptible.”

Hereupon he drew out his razors, comb, and scissars, and with a thousand grimaces, *more suo*, brought my hair and visage into proper order. At last he took his leave, with many tears; and as the man, notwithstanding his fidelity, had become very strange and mysterious, and knew more of my history than I could have wished, I was not sorry to find myself free from his tiresome conversation.

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The physician's remedies had been of great service to me; and as, by taking every day longer and longer walks, I had quite recovered my strength, I became convinced that I was able for the fatigues of a pedestrian journey, and resolved to leave a house, which, however suitable to the sick, was by no means a congenial abode for those who were in health.

The plan of going to Rome had been, without

any volition of my own, brought so far into execution. I had always been advancing farther towards the place of my destination, and resolved, therefore, that I would now persevere in the same course.

CHAPTER XII.

At last I had taken leave of the charitable brethren, and set out as a pilgrim on that high road, which I was told was the proper route to the great city. Notwithstanding that my health was now thoroughly reinstated, yet I was conscious of a strange apathy of mind, which threw a dark shade on every image, rendering the prospects before me grey, withered, and cloudy. Without even any clear remembrance of my past life, I was completely occupied by cares for the present moment. Towards evening, I always looked out anxiously for some place, (generally a convent or private house,) where I would be able to extort food and shelter for the night. I rejoiced not a little, when I met with persons sufficiently devout to fill my knapsack and wine-bottle, in return for which I mechanically repeated, according to monastic form, the customary blessings. In short, I had sunk in spi-

rit, as well as in outward observances, into an ordinary, stupid, and depraved mendicant friar.

At last, after many adventures, no one of which deserves particular commemoration, (for they were all of a similar character,) I came at last to a great Capuchin Convent, which, surrounded only by houses belonging to the establishment, and forming in itself a little town, is situated not far from Rome. This convent, though within itself large and populous, is, in other respects, lonely and insulated. The monks are by their rule obliged to receive others of the same order, and I imagined that I should live for some time with much comfort among them.

Accordingly I made up a story, such as I thought would sound favourably in their ears. I pretended that the convent to which I belonged in Germany had been recently broken up; that consequently I had been thrown on the wide world, and wished to be received into some other monastery, under the same laws.

With that hospitality and cheerfulness which are peculiar to the Italian clergy, they, in the first place, entertained me sumptuously, and the Prior formally said, that if no fulfilment of a sacred vow

obliged me to travel farther, I was welcome to remain there as long as I chose.

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It was now the hour of vespers. The monks went to their appointed places in the choir, and I walked into the church. I was deeply impressed by the bold and magnificent architecture of the great aisle—but, alas! my spirit could now no more be exalted by those raptures which in early days attended me in the church of the Holy Lime-Tree, to which this bore a marked and mysterious resemblance!

When I had completed my devotions at the high altar, I indulged myself in walking through the different subsidiary aisles, contemplating the paintings at various shrines, which, as usual, represented the martyrdoms of the saints, to whom they were severally consecrated. At last I was attracted by a small and retired chapel, where the altar was exquisitely illuminated by the beams of the now setting sun, that streamed in through the painted window.

I wished to examine the picture, and devoutly

making the sign of the cross, mounted up the marble steps. Oh, heaven! It was precisely the same, the fatal altar-piece of my own convent—the martyrdom of St Rosalia! Methought, however, the figure was yet more beautiful, more exquisitely attractive and seducing. It was Aurelia, in her fullest bloom of beauty, that I beheld; and my whole past life, which I had begun to forget, with all its wanderings and crimes—the murder of Euphemia, of Hermogen, and of Aurelia, revived on my recollection, as if concentrated instantaneously into one horrible thought, that penetrated my heart and brain, like a burning hot implement of torture.

I threw myself prostrate on the stone floor. I was convulsively shook and torn by my inward conflicts, as if I had been laid on the rack of the most cruel and relentless inquisition. Death would have been welcome—but, alas! death would not come to my relief! Hereupon I began to tear my garments, in the furious rage of despair. I howled in hopeless anguish, so that my voice resounded through the vaulted aisles of the church.

“I am cursed,” cried I aloud—“I am cursed for ever. There is for me no grace, no consolation

more—neither in this world nor in the next. To hell—to hell am I doomed! Sentence of eternal damnation has gone forth against me—an accursed and abandoned sinner!”

My cries of course alarmed the whole community. People came, lifted me up, and carried me from the altar of St Rosalia. The service was now over, and the monks assembled in the chapel. At their head was the Prior. He looked at me with an indescribable mildness and gravity of expression, which reminded me of Leonardus. He then advanced and took me by the hand, while to me it seemed as if some blessed saint, hovering in the air, held up the miserable sinner above the fiery and bottomless pool of destruction into which he was about to plunge.

“You are ill and feverish, brother,” said the Prior; “the fatigues of your long pilgrimage have been too great a trial of your strength, but we shall carry you safely into the sick ward of the convent, where you will be faithfully attended by our physician, and restored to health.”

I could not make any articulate answer to this address. I knelt before him in abject misery, and even kissed the hem of his garment. Deep-drawn

sighs, which I could not repress, betrayed the frightful condition of my soul. The monks again lifted me up, and brought me into the refectory, where they insisted on my accepting of some refreshments.

On a sign from the Prior, the brethren then retired, and I remained with him alone.

“ Brother,” he began, “ your conscience seems to be loaded with some heavy sins ; for nothing but repentance almost without hope, on account of some extraordinary crime, could have given rise to such conduct as you have this evening exhibited. Yet great and boundless are the mercy and long-suffering of God ; very powerful, too, is the intercession of the saints. Therefore, take courage ! You shall confess to me ; and when this duty is fulfilled, the consolations of the church shall not be wanting.”

These words in themselves were not remarkable ; but the tone and manner of the Prior made on me such an impression, that at this moment methought the mysterious pilgrim of the Holy Lime-Tree stood beside me, and as if he were the only being on the wide earth to whom I was bound to disclose the horrors of my life, and from

whom I must allow nothing to remain concealed. Still I was unable to speak. I could only prostrate myself again upon the earth before the old man.

“ I am now obliged,” said he, “ to return to the chapel. Should you resolve to follow my counsel, you will find me there.”

My determination was already fixed. As soon as I had, by a great effort, recovered some degree of composure, I hastened after the Prior, and found him waiting in the confessional. Acting according to the impulse of the moment, I began to speak, for the first time since a very long period, without the slightest attempt at disguise. On the contrary, I confessed all the adventures of my life, from first to last, without mitigating a single circumstance, which the severest censor could have suggested against me !

Horrible was the penance which the Prior now imposed upon me ! Forbid to appear again in the church—shut out like an alien from the society of the monks, I was henceforth confined to the charnel vaults of the convent—miserably prolonging my life by a stinted portion of tasteless roots and water, scourging myself with knotted ropes,

and mangling my flesh with various implements of martyrdom, which the ingenuity of demoniacal malevolence had *first* invented, lifting up my voice only in bitter accusations against myself, or in the most passionate and abject supplications for deliverance from that hell whose flames already seemed to burn within me!

But when my blood streamed from an hundred wounds—when pain, in a hundred scorpion stings, assailed me—and nature yielded at last, from inability to continue the conflict, so that I fell asleep like an exhausted child, even in despite of my torments—then the horrid imagery of dreams molested me with a new and involuntary martyrdom.

Methought I saw Euphemia, who came floating towards me in all the luxuriance of her beauty, and casting on me the most seductive glances. But I cried out aloud, “What would'st thou from me, thou accursed sinful woman? No! hell shall not triumph over the truly penitent!” Then methought her form, before so wanton and luxurious, shook and shivered. She threw aside her robes, and a horror, like that of annihilation, seized upon me; for I saw that her body was dried up into a skeleton, and through the ribs of the spectre I

saw not worms, but numberless serpents that twined and twisted within and without, thrusting out their heads and forked burning tongues towards me.

“Away!—begone!” cried I, in delirium; “thy serpents are stinging my already wounded flesh. They would fatten on my heart’s-blood,—but then—I should die—I should die—Death would release me from thy vengeance!”

“My serpents,” howled out the spectre, who now seemed like an infernal fury,—“my serpents may nourish themselves from thy heart’s-blood, but herein consists not thy torment, oh wretched sinner! Thy pain is within thine own bosom, and in vain hopest thou for release in death. Thy torment is the thought of thine own crimes, and this thought is eternal!”

Hereafter the figure of Hermogen, streaming with blood, rose up out of the dusky void, and Euphemia fled before him. He, too, staid not; but rushed past, with an hideous groan, and pointing to a wound in his throat, which had the form of the cross.

I now wished to pray; but my senses were lost and overcome in the confusion that ensued. At

first the whole air was animated, and filled with rustling and flapping of wings, and gibbering of unearthly voices. Then mortals, whom I had before known in the world, appeared metamorphosed into the most insane caricatures. Heads, with well-known features, came crawling about me on scarecrow legs, which grew out of their own ears. Strange winged monsters, too, which I knew not, and could not name, came floating through the air. Among these were ravens, and other birds, with human faces. But at last, these gave place to the Bishop's choir-master, at Königswald, with his sister. The latter wheeled herself about in a wild and furious *walz*, to which her brother supplied the music; but he kept all the while strumming on his own breast, which had become a violin.

Belcampo, whom I recognised, although he wore a hateful lizard's head, and sat upon a disgusting winged serpent, came driving up towards me. He wanted to comb my beard with a red-hot iron comb; but could not succeed in his attempt. The tumult always became wilder and wilder. More strange and indescribable were the figures, from the smallest beetle, dancing on large human feet,

up to the long drawn-out horse skeleton, with blazing eyes, and with his own hide made into a pillion, upon which sat a rider, with a gleaming owl's head. A gigantic bottomless beaker served for his coat of mail, and an inverted funnel was his helmet.

"Hell," cried a voice, "is in a mood of mirth, and triumphs!" Hereupon I heard myself laugh aloud; but the exertion of laughter tore my breast; my pain became more scorching, and my wounds bled more fiercely.

At last the rabble rout vanished, and there came forward the glorious form of a woman more beautiful than the fairest of the boasted Circassians on earth! She walked up towards me.—"Oh, heaven, it is Aurelia!"—"I live," said she; "I live, and I am now for ever thine!"

Then the raging fires of sinful passion once more arose within me. I flew to Aurelia, seized and embraced her with fervour. All weakness and exhaustion were utterly forgotten; but instead of her light and sylph-like form, methought I felt the weight and the torture of burning lead or iron laid on my breast. My visage and eyes, too, were scratched and wounded as if with rough bristles,

like a wool-dresser's comb; and Satan roared aloud, with thrilling laughter—"Now, *now* art thou wholly mine!"

With a shriek of terror I awoke, and anon my blood flowed anew in streams, from the strokes of the knotted whip, with which, in hopeless agony, I chastised myself. For the crime of that interview with Aurelia, though but in a dream, demanded double penance, and I was resolved to run the risk even of committing indirect suicide, rather than omit one iota of the prescribed inflictions.

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At last, the period appointed by the Prior for my seclusion in the vaults was over, and, by his express command, I was obliged to remove from thence, in order to finish the remainder of my penance in the convent, although my cell was yet to be separated from all the other brethren; for, by such gradations, I was at last to arrive at his permission to return to the church, and to the society of the monks.

But with the latter gradations of penance I was

not myself satisfied. I was enjoined only solitude and a daily use of the knotted rope ; but I steadfastly refused every better sort of food which was now offered to me ; and when at last allowed to enter the church, I lay for whole days on the cold marble floor, before the shrine of St Rosalia, and chastised myself in my cell in the most cruel and immoderate degree. By these outward sufferings, I thought that I should overcome the more fearful pains by which I was inwardly tormented, but in vain ! Those phantoms, the offspring of my own perturbed imagination, always returned, and I believed myself given up a helpless prey to Satan, who thus, for his own special divertisement, assailed me, and enticed me to commit those sins in *thought*, which in *deed* were no longer in my power.

The severe penance imposed upon me, and the unheard-of perseverance with which it was fulfilled, excited in the highest degree the attention of the monks. They contemplated me with a kind of reverential awe, and many times I heard whisperings among them—" He is indeed a saint !" This expression was to me unspeakably distressing, for it reminded me vividly of that moment in the

Capuchin Convent of Königswald, when, in my outrageous delirium, I had called out to the spectral painter, "I am the blessed St Anthony!"

The very last and concluding stage of the penance imposed by the Prior, had now passed away, yet I had never desisted from self-martyrdom. Nature seemed unable to bear up any longer against the violence which I inflicted. My eyes were dim and sunk in their sockets. My bleeding frame was become a mere skeleton, so that, when for hours I had lain on the marble floor, I was not able to raise myself till the monks came to assist me.

At last, the Prior one day sent for me to his consulting-room. "Brother," said he, "do you now feel, after the severe penance you have undergone, your mind soothed and lightened? Have the consolations of Heaven been poured upon you?"

In the hollow tone of despair, I answered him, "No!"

"Brother," he resumed, "when, after your confession of horrid crimes, I inflicted on you that severe penance, I satisfied the laws of the church, which demand that a malefactor whom the arm of justice has not reached, but who voluntarily con-

fesses his evil actions, should also, by his outward conduct, prove the *reality* of his repentance. Yet I believe, (and the best authorities are on my side,) that the most excruciating torments which the penitent can inflict on himself, do not, as soon as he himself grounds any confidence on these exercises, diminish, by one fraction, the amount of his guilt. To no human intellect is it given to explain how the omniscient and eternal Ruler measures and weighs the deeds of mankind; but lost for ever must that mortal be, who deludes himself with expectations of taking Heaven by storm, through the force of penitential infliction.

“ Moreover, the individual who believes that, by the fulfilment of such duties, the crimes of which he has been convicted are, of necessity, blotted out and atoned, proves, by this very belief, that his inward repentance has neither been true nor complete. But as for you, dear brother Medardus, you have yet experienced no consolation, and *this*, in my opinion, proves the truth of your conversion. Give up now, I command you, all chastisements—allow yourself better food, and no longer avoid the society of your brethren.

“ Learn, besides, that your extraordinary life,

with all its complicated involvements, is better known to me than it is even to yourself. A fatality from which you could not escape, gave to the devil a certain influence over you ; and, while you committed crimes which to your own nature were abhorrent, you were only his tool, or implement.

“ Dream not, however, that you are on this account less sinful in the eyes of Heaven, or of the church, for on you was bestowed ample power, if you had had the resolution to exert it, to conquer in a spirited battle the fiend who beset you. In what mortal heart has not this influence of our arch-enemy raged like a tempest, resisting every impulse of good ? But without this conflict, virtue could have no existence—For in what doth virtue consist, but in the triumph (after a hard-fought battle) of good over evil ?

“ But, as one source of consolation, I can inform you, that you have accused yourself of a crime wherein you have been guilty in intention, but not in effect. Aurelia yet lives. In your madness you probably wounded yourself, and it was your own blood that streamed over your hands. Aurelia still lives ;—this fact I have amply ascertained.”

Hereupon I fell on my knees, with my hands uplifted in fervent prayer, and burst into tears.

“ Know farther,” said the Prior, “ that the strange old painter, of whom, in your confession, you spoke so much, has, as long as I can remember, been an occasional visitor at our convent, and probably may, before long, again appear among us. Long ago he gave me a parchment book to take charge of, in which are numerous drawings, but more especially a kind of chronicle, to which, as often as he came hither, he always added a few lines or pages. He has not left me under any injunctions not to shew this book to any one whom its contents may interest, and, of course, I shall not hesitate to intrust it with you. Indeed, this now becomes my indispensable duty, and hence you will learn the wonderful entanglements of your own destiny, which at one time led you as if into a higher world of visions and miracles, and, at another, into the most ordinary and most depraved scenes of what is called the world.

“ It has been said that miracles have now wholly vanished from the earth ; but this is a doctrine which I, for one, am by no means inclined to accede to. Miracles, if by that name we under-

stand only that which we by no means can explain or account for, certainly have continued among us, though it is true, that by the observance of a few fixed and limited rules, our philosophers seem (in their own conceit at least) to give laws to nature; yet, nevertheless, there are phenomena every now and then recurring, which put all their boasted wisdom to shame, and which, in our obstinate stupidity, because they are not explainable, we therefore reject, as unworthy of belief.

“ In this manner we deny, among other things, the possibility of a spiritual apparition, inasmuch as it is impossible for an incorporeal figure to be mirrored on the surface of the human eye, which is corporeal, the absurd fallacy and sophism of which reasoning is obvious. To tell the truth, I look upon this ancient painter as one of those extraordinary apparitions, which put to the blush all ordinary rules and theories. I am doubtful even if his corporeal figure is such as we can properly call real. This much is certain, that no one here ever discovered in him the ordinary functions of life. He would neither eat, drink, nor sleep; nor did I ever observe him either writing or drawing, though it was obvious, notwithstanding, that in

the book, in which he only appeared to read, there were always more leaves written or painted on when he went away, than there had been before.

“ I should observe, also, that all which the book contains, appeared to me to be mere *griffonage*, or fantastic sketches of an insane artist, until you came to our convent. Then, for the first time, its pages came to be legible and intelligible, after you, dear brother Medardus, had confessed to me.

“ I dare not give utterance more particularly to my own suppositions, or apprehensions, regarding the real character of this old painter, and his relationship to you. You will yourself guess at the truth, or, more probably, it will develop itself in the clearest light before you, when you have attentively perused this book. Go then, take every proper method and precaution to restore your bodily, as well as mental energies, and, in a few days, if you feel yourself recovered, as I hope will be the case, you shall receive from me the mysterious volume, which, meanwhile, I retain, as you have not strength at present for the task of deciphering it.”

Henceforward, I was of course under the necessity of acting according to the injunctions of the Prior. I ate with the brethren at their public table, and omitted all chastisements, confining myself to fervent and prolonged prayer at the altars of the saints. Although my heart continued to bleed inwardly, and my mind was still much disturbed, yet at last those horrible phantoms and diabolical temptations by which I had been persecuted, came to an end. Often, when tired to death, I passed sleepless nights on my hard couch, there was around me a waving as if of seraphs' wings; and I beheld the lovely form of the living Aurelia, who, with her eyes full of tears and celestial compassion, bent down over me. She stretched out her hand, as if protectingly, and diffusing blessings over my head. Then my eyelids sank down, and a mild refreshing slumber poured new strength into my veins.

When the Prior observed that my mind and frame had once more regained some degree of healthy excitement, he again sent for me in private, and gave me the painter's parchment book, admonishing me to read it with attention in my own cell.

I opened the volume, and the first of its contents which struck my eye were drawings for those paintings which still exist in the Church of the Holy Lime-Tree, and which had, from earliest youth, possessed so mysterious an influence over my whole life. Formerly, the possession of this book would have agitated me almost to madness, from the degree of anxiety which it would have excited. Now, however, after the discipline which I had undergone, I was perfectly calm. Besides, there was scarcely any degree of mystery left which I had not by anticipation already developed. That which the painter had here, in a small scarcely-legible hand, set down, intermixed with sketches both in black lead and in colours, was but a distinct and clear delineation of my own dreams and apprehensions, brought out indeed with a degree of precision and accuracy of which I could not have been capable.

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CHAPTER XIII.

AFTER mature reflection, I have judged it superfluous to transcribe in this place the parchment book of the old and supernatural painter ; though I might be tempted to do so by the consideration, that no one else could ever be enabled to understand and follow out its intricate details, or even to decipher the hand-writing. He sets out by speaking of himself in the third, but afterwards, or towards the close of his narrative, uses the first personal pronoun.

He was the eldest son of a certain Prince Camillo di Rosoli, (who had in early life been distinguished for his bravery and military talents,) and had been sent by his father, at an early age, into the world, where, to the great surprise of his noble friends and relations, he devoted himself almost exclusively to the study of painting, under a celebrated master of that art in Rome. Here

he had already been for a considerable time, when his father, having been requested by the Republic of Genua to take the command of a powerful fleet against the Algerine corsairs, sent an abrupt and peremptory order for the young prince to return home. To this, Francesco, for that was his name, returned for answer, that a prince, surrounded by all the pomp and dignity incident to high rank, was, in his estimation, a mere cipher, in comparison with the character of an independent man of genius, whose wants were few, and who could supply these wants by the exercise of his art. A prince, he said, was, by the circumstances under which he lived, much more subdued and slavish than even the poorest artist:—for his own part, he knew well enough how to wield the pallet and pencils, but by no means the sceptre. Finally, that as to exploits in warfare, whether by sea or land, they were barbarous and abhorrent to his nature; whereas the creations of the painter were like reflections on canvass of the divine spirit, of which a share sometimes descends on favoured mortals.

Thus he sent back his father's messengers with contumely and disgrace, and the old prince, being

thereby violently incensed, dispatched other ambassadors, who had no better success; whereupon, they informed him, that, if he did not obey his father's orders, they were commissioned to say, that he would be disinherited, and never more permitted to assume that rank which he had now virtually, though not formally, resigned.

To these conditions Francesco made no objections whatever;—on the contrary, he gave up to his younger brother, in a regular charter, all claims on the family estates; and as the old prince soon after lost his life in battle, Zenobio succeeded to the government, and Francesco continued to live poorly enough on a small pension, which his brother voluntarily bestowed upon him.

Francesco was originally of a proud and overbearing temper; but his instructor in the art of painting, the celebrated Leonardo di Rovino, was one of the most pious and ingenious of men. Finding that his pupil had actually renounced the fortune and rank to which he had been born, he gave him such good counsel and example, that for some years Francesco behaved as a very obedient and faithful disciple, assisting his master in the completion of several great works, which were almost

wholly devoted to the illustration of the Christian miracles, and the glorious lives of the Saints.

After some time, however, it came to pass that Francesco raised himself to the rank of a master on his own account, and was engaged to paint many altar-pieces for churches, &c., in which Leonardo continued kindly to assist him, until at length, being very far advanced in years, he died.

Then like a fire long with difficulty suppressed, the native pride and insolence of Francesco's character again broke forth. He looked on himself as the greatest painter of his time, and joining with this notion of his own pre-eminence, the recollection of his hereditary rank, he assumed for himself the title of the Noble Painter. Of his once revered master, Leonardo, he now spoke with contempt, and invented for himself a new school of art, which was well adapted to attract the admiration of the multitude. He diligently studied the works of the ancient statuaries; among which, a certain renowned figure of Venus, above all others, engaged his attention; and henceforth no one could equal him in representing the luxurious seductions of the female form, which he always introduced naked, giving to his figures, by means

of dark shadows in the back ground, and a brilliance of colouring, which were particularly his own, the most magical effect of *alto rilievo*.

It happened that in the great city he fell into the society of a set of wild young men, most of them of high rank, who were delighted to have for their companion a man in birth equal to themselves, though, as an artist and man of genius, more interesting than men of mere fortune and family can generally pretend to be. Francesco was but too willing to attend their feasts and festivals, and was delighted by the praise with which they constantly fed his vanity, insisting, in particular, on the high advantages which he possessed over the artists of that age, by his preference of the ancient models, and his correctness as to drawing and anatomy.

Being all of them unable or unwilling to submit to any degree of restraint, and cherishing no other principle than that of yielding to the extravagance of youthful imagination, and the indulgence of their own passions, they formed a plan of renouncing altogether the Christian Religion, and adopting fantastically the creed and manners of the ancient Romans.

In this manner they for some time continued to lead a shameless and most dissolute life, in consequence of which, it happened that Francesco, neglecting the orders which were from time to time sent to him from convents and other religious institutions, fell into grievous distress for want of ready money. Added to this it so happened, that the salary usually allowed him by his brother Zenobio, was not paid at the regular time. He now recollected that the monks of a certain Capuchin convent had some months before offered a large sum for an altar piece, representing the martyrdom of St Rosalia, which commission he had, under the influence of his dissolute pleasures, and apostacy from the Christian faith, refused to execute. Now, however, he resolved to perform the work required of him, wholly for the sake of the reward with which it would be attended.

Accordingly he began, intending to paint the martyrdom of St Rosalia, in his usual glaring and seductive manner, modelling her form and features after those of the favourite Venus which has already been mentioned. In the pencil drawing which he made in the first place, he succeeded well enough, and the wicked young men,

his companions, were highly delighted with the notion of setting up a heathenish idol, instead of a real picture of a Christian saint, in the church.

But when Francesco came actually to paint, lo ! by some inexplicable influence, the work turned out very differently from what he had intended.— A more powerful inspiration overcame that of wicked deceit, and hatred to the Christian faith, by which he had been till then actuated. It seemed as if the countenance of an angel, from the realms of the blest, began to dawn on his perceptions, out of the dark clouds which he had laid for the ground-work on his canvass. Involuntarily a kind of religious terror took possession of his mind. He became fearful of offending the blessed martyr whom he was employed to represent, and around the body, which, according to the original design, he had painted naked, were at last thrown the elegant folds of a dark-red dress, with a sky-blue shawl or mantle.

The Capuchin monks had, in their letter to the painter, only expressed their wish for a portrait of St Rosalia, that is to say, for a single figure, and for this purpose had his drawing been prepared ; but now, led on by the workings of his

own creative spirit, he invented a grand historical design, and introduced many figures, grouped with great skill, and which blended very harmoniously with that of the principal personage. In short, Francesco's attention was wholly absorbed by this work, so that the shameful course of life which he had before led was completely broken of, or at least interrupted.

It came to pass, however, that he found himself quite unable to finish, according to his own notions, the countenance of the saint; and this disappointment tormented him so exceedingly, that he had no rest by night or by day. He no longer thought of having recourse to his favourite statue of Venus, but it seemed to him as if he beheld his old master Leonardo, who looked at him mournfully, and addressed him in these words—
“ Alas ! I would willingly assist you, but I dare not ! You must first renounce all your sinful and shameless propensities, and, in deep repentance and contrition, pray for the interposition of the saints, against whom you have so fearfully offended.”

The wicked young men, whose society had been long neglected by Francesco, once more

sought him out, and found him in his painting room, but wholly unemployed; for, in consequence of his mental anxiety, he had fallen sick, and was lying powerless and despairing on his couch. On the appearance of his friends he complained to them bitterly of his misfortune, and expressed his belief that some malignant demon had interfered to rob him of his former reputation, and would prevent him altogether from completing his picture of St Rosalia.

At this they all laughed aloud. "Ha, brother," cried one among them, "it is easy to perceive that solitude and fasting have been the demons that have brought this illness upon you. Come then, my friends, let us devote a libation of good old wine to Esculapius, and the benevolent Hygeia, in order that this feeble youth may again be restored!"

They sent immediately for Syracusan wine, which these fantastic young men drank out of antique-fashioned horns, and silver beakers, pouring forth, as they expressed it, their libations to Hygeia, before the unfinished picture. Afterwards, when they began to drink stoutly, and insisted on Francesco joining in their orgies, the

latter resolved positively not to taste a drop of their wine, and would take no share in their merriment; although they drank the health of his favourite goddess, and tried every stratagem to flatter his vanity, and engage his attention.

At last, one of them exclaimed, "Our *penseroso* comrade there is perhaps really sick, and cannot so easily be cured as we had supposed. Yet, methinks, he hath acted very wrongfully in refusing to taste the remedies that have been already prescribed for him. Be this as it may, seeing that he is so very ill, I shall directly go hence, and obtain for him the assistance of a learned physician." The youth then threw his mantle around him, girted on his sword, and marched out. Scarcely, however, had he got beyond the door, when he returned again.—"Look you now, comrades," he exclaimed, "I am myself the man who will effectually cure this poor despairing artist!"

He then put on, as well as he could, the character of an old ridiculous physician,—bent himself half double,—walked with his knees knocking together, and twisted his face into an hundred wrinkles,—so that, in truth, he looked like an hideous old man; and his companions, greatly di-

verted, cried out, " See what learned physiognomies the doctor cuts !"

The doctor went up to Francesco, and pretended to feel his pulse. Then, in a pompous rough voice, " Why, thou poor devil !" cried he, " what has brought it into thine addled brain to fall sick in this manner? Thy pulse beats regularly; what then is the matter with thee? Be that as it may, I must make haste to cure thy distemper, whether real or imaginary, and thou must submissively follow all my prescriptions; for in the state in which thou now art, thy Donna Venus will never be pleased with thee. It might be, however, that, if thy visage were less pale, and thy looks not so downcast, the Lady Rosalia herself would receive you kindly. Here, then, thou poor desponding shepherd ! sip up a little of that miraculous cordial which I always carry about with me. As you wish to paint portraits of saints and angels, my drink will probably be of especial service to you ; for it is wine from the celebrated cellar of St Anthony."

With these words, the pretended doctor had pulled out a small and oddly-shaped flask from underneath his mantle, from which flask he now drew the cork. Instantly there spread itself all

around, an extraordinary stupifying vapour, by which most of the youths were so confused and overcome, that, one by one, in the course of a few seconds, they all dropt in their chairs, closed their eyes, and fell asleep.

Francesco, meanwhile, as if tired of this mummery, and vexed to have been mocked and flouted at, snatched the bottle with violence from the doctor, intending at first to dash it against the wall. On the contrary, however, the odour attracted him so much, that he put it to his lips, and instantly swallowed a copious draught.

“ Much good may it do you !” said the doctor, who now assumed his former countenance and youthful demeanour. But, at that moment, the door opened, and the youth, who had before departed in order to bring a physician, reappeared *in propria persona*. His double, who must have been the devil, stepped forward, and made him a formal bow, whereat the whole party were so affrighted, that they all (having been awoke from sleep by the noise of his entrance) started up, ran away, and tumbled headlong down stairs.

Even like the raging of a volcano was now the tempest which arose within the heart and soul of

Francesco ! All the Heathen stories which he had before painted, revived once more, in tenfold force, on his imagination, and their *dramatis personæ* floated around him in forms as seductive, and colours as brilliant, as if they had been alive, and corporeally present.—“ But thou, my beloved goddess !” he exclaimed, addressing himself to the favourite Venus whom he had so often painted—“ thou must assume also life, and a tangible form, and become mine, otherwise I shall devote myself from henceforth to Pluto, and the subterranean powers of darkness !”

Then he beheld, according to his distempered phantasy, the animated figure of his admired statue, with an exquisite bloom on her complexion, standing right before the unfinished picture, and kindly nodding towards him.

Hereupon, seized with a sudden fit of inspiration, he started from his couch, ran to his *easel*, and began to paint at the head of St Rosalia ; for he thought that he would now be able to make an exact copy from the features of his Venus. It seemed to him, however, as if the firmest efforts of volition could not command his hand—as if, in spite of all his endeavours, the pencil glided

away from the unfinished countenance of Rosalia, to the profane figures by which the rest of the canvass was tenanted—and the heavenly aspect of the saint, unfinished as it was, and that came there he knew not how, always broke out more visibly and powerfully into view, till at last the eyes seemed to move, and look into his very soul. Finally, he was overcome with such agitation, that he dropped his pallet and pencils, and fell to the ground as if dead, in a state of utter despair and insensibility.

When, after a long interval, he awoke from his trance, and had with difficulty raised himself up, he did not venture to look at the picture, which had now become so terrific, but crawled, with his eyes fixed on the ground, towards the table, where he still found the doctor's extraordinary bottle of wine, out of which he indulged himself with a long and powerful draught.

Francesco was, by this means, completely restored and energized. New life and spirit vibrated through every limb and fibre of his frame. He mustered up courage enough to look at his picture; and, behold! it was now completed, even to the finest touches of the pencil which in his best

days he could have been able to bestow ! But what appeared most remarkable, was, that not the saintly countenance of Rosalia, but that of his old favourite Venus, now smiled with the most seductive expression and glances of love upon him.

Accordingly, Francesco, from that moment, became the victim of the most sinful and delirious passion. He thought of the Pagan statuary Pygmalion, whose history had supplied him with a subject for one of his former profane works, and like him, he implored the gods, that they would infuse life into the creations of his art. Very soon it appeared to him as if the principal figures in his picture began to move and to swell forward in *alto rilievo* ; but when he tried to clasp the phantom in his arms, he found that the dead, cold canvass still mocked at his embrace ! Thereupon he tore his hair, and behaved like one possessed by the devil.

CHAPTER XIV.

ALREADY two days and two nights had Francesco passed in a state of raging delirium. On the third day, when he, as if petrified, and motionless like a statue, was standing before the picture, the door of his chamber opened, and there was a rustling behind him as if of female garments. He turned round, and beheld a very beautiful woman, whom he recognized at once as the original of his picture.

His astonishment was now beyond all description when he beheld that form, which he had so long contemplated as a marble statue, living, breathing, and blooming, before him. Nay, he was seized with a kind of mysterious terror, when he looked from his beautiful visitant back to the picture, of which the resemblance was so accurate, that it appeared like the reflection of her features in a mirror.

He felt the fullest conviction, that this event was the effect of supernatural agency ; he could not utter a word, but, overcome by his fears, fell on his kness before the strange lady, whom he scarcely believed to be more than an aerial phantom.

This living Venus raised him up, however, and immediately proceeded to relate to him her own history.

She had seen Francesco at the time when he was yet a pupil in the school of Leonardo di Rovino. She was then but very young, but had conceived for him a passion so ardent, that it had never lost possession of her heart ; and at last she had determined on leaving her parents and friends, who resided in the country, and wandering away to find him in Rome, as an inward voice had told her that he loved her very much ; and that, merely from the force of that attachment, had been led to paint her portrait, which warning she now found to have been strictly true.

Francesco now believed all that she told him. He became persuaded that a secret mental sympathy existed between himself and this stranger, which had given rise to the passion by which he

had so long been haunted. He forgot the statue, and gave himself no trouble with inquiries as to how the resemblance betwixt it and his new visitor had been produced. Indeed such questions would have been very needless, as they admitted not of any satisfactory answer.

The consequence of this visit was the solemnization (not by Christian, but by heathen rites) of a marriage betwixt the strange woman and Francesco, which was attended by all his libertine friends and associates. As it was found that his bride had brought with her a casket filled with jewels and ready money, he immediately hired servants, and purchased a house, where they lived in great splendour and luxury for many months.

At the close of this period the paramour of Francesco gave birth to a son, which event was followed by her death, attended by circumstances so mysterious and horrible, that Francesco was obliged to fly from Rome, being accused of sorcery and witchcraft, also of divers other crimes peculiarly odious and abhorrent to the spirit and laws of the Christian religion. In consequence of all this, he was obliged to make his escape suddenly during the night, taking with him his child ;

and, as if endowed with supernatural energies, he made his way onwards to a wild and mountainous district of country, which he had before visited in his days of extravagance and pleasure, and where he knew that there was a cavern cut in the rock, in which he was now glad to take refuge with the child from a violent thunder storm.

As to the child, he could not have himself explained by what influence he was induced to bear it along with him; for, in truth, he only wished for its destruction. On being thrown on the hard floor of the cave, however, the infant, for the first time, uttered some fearful and melancholy cries, which penetrated to Francesco's heart; and hereupon, he, being moved with compassion, tried every method in his power for its preservation.

For this purpose, indeed, he was not well provided. At first he could only offer the child an orange to suck; but afterwards he recollected the doctor's extraordinary flask, of which the contents seemed inexhaustible, and which he had found on his departure, and brought with him. From this bottle he administered a few drops to the infant, who thereupon seemed miraculously strengthened and tranquillized; and he made for

it, as well as he could, a bed of heather and soft moss, protecting it from damp and cold with his mantle.

Hereafter, Francesco passed several weeks in the cavern, living like a penitent hermit; and, incredible as it may seem, the child lived also, being supplied with food from the contributions that his father received from pious and compassionate neighbours. But Francesco's mind, meanwhile, became quite wandering and irrational. He prayed, indeed, with great zeal, to the blessed saints, that they would intercede for him, a miserable sinner; for his heart was now wholly alienated from his profane and blasphemous errors. Above all, he preferred many supplications to St Rosalia.

Thus it happened, that the wretched man, one beautiful and serene evening, was prostrate on his knees, in the wilderness. He watched the receding sun, which, at last, was slowly lost in the water, leaving the western sky like a sea of red dazzling waves; and that ruddy light faded ere long into the sombre grey tints of evening, the forerunner of dark night. Then Francesco perceived in the atmosphere the roseate gleam of an extraordinary light, which at first he noticed only

as a strange phenomenon, because the sun had now departed. But the red light assumed a particular form, and floated always nearer and nearer to the penitent, till at last he recognized the figure of St Rosalia, kneeling on a bright cloud, and surrounded by angels. Then he heard a voice like that of soft and articulate music, which pronounced the words, "Forgive, oh Lord! this mortal, who, in his weakness, was not able to escape the deeply-laid snares, and resist the manifold temptations, of Satan!"

Hereupon lightnings quivered through that roseate cloud, and there was a deep and reverberating thunder-clap. A fearful voice answered the prayer of the saint,—“Oftentimes mortals have sinned and been forgiven; but what habitant of earth hath ever transgressed like this one? No HAPPINESS IN LIFE, NOR PEACE IN THE GRAVE, SHALL BE GRANTED TO HIM, SO LONG AS THE SINFUL RACE TO WHICH HE HATH GIVEN RISE, SHALL EXIST UPON THE EARTH!”

Francesco now sunk down, as if annihilated in the dust; for he thoroughly knew that his irrevocable doom had been pronounced; and that, by the most horrible destiny, he would now be driven,

like a second Ahasuerus, through the realms of life, without hope of enjoyment here, or confidence of salvation hereafter.

Of course, he now fled, without thinking of the child in the cave; for though he could not now wish for its existence, yet he dared not add to his already heavy crimes, by that of child-murder. He lived, being no longer able to paint, in extreme and abject misery. Many times it came into his mind, as if, for the glory of the Christian religion, he must yet execute extensive and magnificent works; and, consequently, he made out in his thoughts grand designs, both as to drawing and colouring, which should illustrate and represent the history of the blessed Virgin, and St Rosalia. But how could he begin those paintings, as he now did not possess a single *scudo* to supply himself with canvass and colours, and only supported himself by the small pittance of alms, which he received at the doors of churches?

Into the churches also, like other mendicants, he was allowed freely to enter; and thus it befell, that one bright and beautiful evening, though at a late hour, when the sun had gone down,

he sat staring on an opposite empty wall, and filled it in imagination with the paintings which his genius was yet fully competent to execute. While he sat thus absorbed in reverie, he saw two female figures, who, silently and with noiseless steps, approached him. Their countenances were veiled, so that he had no perception of their features; but, with a voice that rose on his ears like celestial music, one of them addressed to him the following admonition:—

“ In the remote land of East Prussia is the celebrated Convent of the Holy Lime-Tree, wherein Providence has vouchsafed to shew many miracles; but the magnificent chapel there erected is yet without any ornaments of painting. Go thither, then! Let the practice of your art as a painter become to you an exercise of devotion, and your now desponding soul will be refreshed with heavenly consolation!”

With these words, the two female figures melted away in a gleam of light, and left the air filled with the fragrance of roses and lilies. Francesco was convinced of the supernatural character of these visitants, and resolved that he would on the following day begin his pilgrimage. On that same

evening it happened, that a servant of Zenobio's, after much trouble, found him out, paid him two years' arrears of his allotted income, and invited him kindly to his brother's court.

* * * * *

Thus far the old painter had written of himself in the third person, which, in his later memoranda, he exchanges for the first. I consider it needless to transcribe his historical account of the various fortunes and intricate relationships of that illegitimate race which he had founded, and of which I am a descendant. No reader would take the trouble of following out a detail which could scarcely be understood, unless thrown into the form of a genealogical tree. Besides, the mind revolts from the contemplation of enormous and complicated guilt! Suffice it to say, that the child which had been left in the cave was accidentally found and preserved; that a small ivory cup, which, along with the bottle of the devil's elixir, was discovered at the same time, bore, for an inscription, the painter's name, Francesco, by which the boy was afterwards baptized.

Many years passed away, and, according to the curse which had been pronounced against him, the painter's life was miraculously prolonged, in order that, by unheard-of penitence, he might expiate his own crimes. Meanwhile, he beheld the powers of darkness unceasingly employed against him. The boy who had been found in the cave, and who was protected and educated, first in the palace of Count Filippo di Saverno, in Italy, afterwards in the Court of Prince Zenobio, had several children, among whom were two, a son and daughter, who especially inherited their father's wicked propensities, and yielded to the temptations of the devil.

The family afterwards branched out so widely, that the painter's book alone would supply materials for many volumes. To this family belonged the Princess von Rosenthurm, the Abbess of the Cistercian Convent, both the first and second Baroness von F——, and the Count Victorin, who, notwithstanding the mystery under which he had been reared and educated in Italy, I now ascertained to be my brother. After the horrible crimes which my father had perpetrated at the court of Rosenthurm, he was arrested in his flight

by an attack of severe illness, which detained him long at the house of a benevolent countryman, whose daughter (my mother) he afterwards married. For some time after this event, by his knowledge of literature and the arts, he contrived to obtain employment in the world, having assumed a fictitious name, and established himself under a principality where his person and features were wholly unknown. But sooner or later, sin is, even in this world, visited by punishment, and the just anger of the Almighty. My father was again attacked by sickness, so that the remnant of the once considerable legacy left him by his father, was wholly spent. He fell into the bitterest poverty, and was at the same time assailed by such horrors of conscience, that his life became a continued miserable penance.

At last Heaven, by means of an extraordinary vision, sent to him a gleam of consolation. He was warned that he should make a pilgrimage to the Convent of the Holy Lime-Tree in Prussia, and that the birth of a son should there announce to him the grace and forgiveness of Heaven.

* * * * *

The last words in the manuscript are as follows. More, indeed, seems to have been written, but in a scrawl half obliterated, and so faint that it could not be deciphered.

“ In the forest by which the Convent of the Lime-Tree is surrounded, I appeared to the melancholy mother as she wept over her lately born, and fatherless infant, and revived her almost annihilated spirit with words of consolation. Miraculously sometimes has the favour of Heaven seemed to be won for children who are born within the limits of a blest sanctuary. They have even been visited by supernatural and celestial visions, kindling up in their infant minds the fires of divine love, and the holiest aspirations. The mother has, in holy baptism, given to this child his father's name, Francesco, or, according to conventual language, Franciscus.

* * * * *

“ Wilt thou then, oh Franciscus ! prove to be that long-wished-for descendant, who, born on

consecrated ground, will atone, by the piety of his earthly pilgrimage, for the crimes that were heaped up by his ancestors? And wilt thou procure for the wretched penitent refuge in the grave?

“ I have taken such precautions, that the boy will remain for many years far from the world and its seductive delusions ; nay, I have resolved that he shall become a monk. This destination, the same blessed saint who poured divine consolation into my soul announced to his mother, and this event may, indeed, be the forerunner of divine grace, and forgiveness, which, with the splendour of the morning light, has at last beamed forth upon me, so that I seem, in my inward mind, to observe clearly, by anticipation, every event of the future.

“ Methinks I already behold this youth undergo the deadly strife with the fiends of darkness, who, with the most fearful weapons, press in upon him. He falls a victim to their infernal artifices, yet a beatified female elevates over his head the crown of victory. It is the blessed St Rosalia herself, by whom he is rescued. As often as the

mercy of Heaven allows it to me, I shall be near him in infancy, in youth, and in manhood, and will protect him to the utmost of my limited power."

CHAPTER XV.

THE fame of my sanctity had now spread in such a manner abroad, that when I allowed myself to be seen in the streets of Rome, there were passengers who begged me for a moment to speak with them, and then, with the humblest prostration, implored my blessing. No doubt, my severe penitence must excite attention, for I had renewed in their utmost extent all my devotional exercises; but even my strange appearance, my neglect of my dress, &c. might be enough to excite the imagination of the lively Italians, who are ready at all times to fix on any remarkable individual for the hero of a religious legend. Often, when unconscious of all that passed around me, I had thrown myself on the steps of an altar, I was awoke from my inward contemplation by the murmur of prayer, and groans of repentance, from

those who had collected around me, as if wishing to implore my saintly intercession with Heaven.

As in the Capuchin Convent, I frequently heard it called out in the streets behind me—"There goes the saint!" and such words never failed to strike like daggers to my heart. I wished, therefore, to leave Rome, and had made my arrangements for this purpose, when, to my utter astonishment, and indeed terror, the Prior of the Convent wherein I lodged, announced to me that the Pope had ordered me to appear before him.

Dark apprehensions arose within me, that perhaps the powers of hell were more than ever on the watch, and laboured by new stratagems to draw me into destruction. Meanwhile, I summoned up all my courage, and at an hour which was duly announced to me, repaired to the Vatican.

I was to have a private audience, and the Pope, who was still a handsome man, and looked as if he had been in the prime of life, received me sitting on a richly ornamented elbow-chair. Two very beautiful boys, in the dress of Sacristans, attended to serve him with iced water; and as the weather was very hot, they were constantly employed

in cooling the atmosphere with large fans made of herons' feathers.

I went up to his Holiness with the utmost humility, and paid to him the customary homage of kneeling. He fixed his eyes sharply on me, but instead of the grave severity, which, from a distance, seemed to me before to characterize his features, his looks displayed much good humour, and he welcomed me with a very agreeable smile.

His first inquiries were only common-place questions, as to whence I came, what had brought me to Rome, &c. He then rose from his chair, and assuming a more serious tone, "Brother Medardus," said he, "I have summoned you hither, because I had received extraordinary accounts of your piety. But wherefore do you perform your devotional exercises openly before the people, and in the most public churches? You probably wish to be looked on as a chosen saint, a pre-elect of Heaven, and to be worshipped by the fanatical mob. But inquire into thine own heart, whence this idea first arose, and by what means it has acquired such ascendancy. If your intentions are not pure before the eye of the Almighty, and before me, his appointed Viceroy, then, Brother Me-

dardus, your now flourishing sanctity will soon come to a shameful end."

These last words the Pope uttered in a deep powerful voice, and his eyes gleamed as if in anger. For the first time, since a very long period, I felt myself accused, without being guilty of the faults with which I was charged. On this account I was not only able to retain perfect composure, but even to answer him with some degree of fervour and eloquence.

"Heaven," said I, "has indeed granted to your Holiness to look into my inmost heart, which is loaded and oppressed with a weight of unspeakable crimes, of which my deep consciousness may perhaps prove the sincerity of my repentance. Far from my thoughts is any attempt at hypocrisy. I never had any ambition to influence the minds of the people; on the contrary, the attention which they direct to me is abhorrent to my feelings, and causes to me the utmost pain and regret. In support of what I have now said, will your Holiness grant to a wretched penitent an opportunity of relating the events of his life, that he may prove the sincerity of his contrition, and his

utter self-annihilation at the remembrance of the sins which he hath committed?"

On receiving permission, I accordingly went on to narrate, as concisely as I could, the whole circumstances and adventures of my life, only omitting names, which were of no consequence as to the facts that I related against myself. The Pope listened with the greatest attention, appearing always more and more interested. At last, by many extraordinary looks and gestures, he evinced the astonishment that I had excited.

"Your history, Brother Medardus," said he, "is, indeed, the most mysterious that I have ever heard. Do you then believe in the immediate, and *visible* agency of the devil?" I was about to answer, but he went on. "Do you believe that the wine which you stole from the relic-chamber, and drank, really impelled you to the crimes which you have committed?"

"Like a water distilled from pestilential herbs," said I, "it gave new strength to the seeds of vice and wickedness which lurked within me, till at length they burst from their concealment, and spread into luxuriant and multiplying growth!"

Upon this answer, the Pope seemed to sink into

reflection, and said, more as if communing with himself, than addressing me,—

“What if the same rules of nature by which corporeal life is usually governed, applied also to the mind? If every seed or scion must bring forth and perpetuate that which is like to itself? There are whole families of murderers, and of robbers. In such cases this was the hereditary sin, entailed on a race followed by some inexorable curse!”

“If he who is descended from a sinful ancestor,” said I, “must of necessity sin again, it follows from this doctrine, that there is no sin!”

“Nay,” said the Pope, “the Almighty created a gigantic power, who can yet tame and control the appetite for crime, which, like a furious wild beast, rages within us. This giant is named Conscience, and from his combat with the beast, arise our independence and volition. In the victory of the giant consists virtue; in the victory of the beast consists sin.” The Pope was silent a few moments. He then added in a milder voice, “Do you believe, Brother Medardus, that it is becoming for the Viceroy of Heaven, to reason thus with you on virtue and vice?”

“Your Holiness,” said I, “has condescended to allow the humblest of your servants to hear your opinions on this matter; and it well becomes the warrior to speak freely on that combat, whose dangers he has himself encountered, and in which he has long since obtained the palm of victory!”

“You have a favourable opinion of me, Brother,” said the Pope; “or do you look upon the Tiara, as the laurel crown, announcing my victory to the world?”

* * * * *

[*The Editor has here left out two or three pages of this conversation, as it seems irrelevant to the general tenure of the narrative.*]

Hereupon the Pope again rose from his chair. “Thou art an excellent orator, Brother Medardus,” said he, “and hast spoken after my own heart—we shall, as I perceive, understand one another better ere long than we now do. Remain at Rome. In a few days you will be promoted to the dignity of Prior of the Capuchin Convent, where a situation is now vacant, and afterwards, perhaps,

you will be chosen for my Father Confessor. Go then, behave yourself with more prudence in the churches, and think not of raising yourself to canonization. The calendar is already crowded!—Farewell!”

Our interview ended here, and by these last words of the Pope, I was not a little astonished, as indeed I had been by his whole behaviour throughout, which was completely at variance with the picture which I had previously drawn of him. I had imagined not only that he was a worthily appointed Vicegerent of Heaven on this earth, but that he was gifted with every virtue, and all mental energies. He had, on the contrary, falsely supposed that I was actuated by the base ambition of being looked on as a saint, and now wished to excite in my mind a desire for other temporal distinctions, which was, in truth, not less sinful.

Notwithstanding my perplexity and dissatisfaction, I was led to conform to what the Pope had enjoined, as to the intermission of my penitential exercises; and I wandered for some days idly through the streets of Rome, meditating chiefly on my past life, on the penitence which I had undergone, and the career which was yet before me.

On the last of these idle days, as I passed through the Spanish Square, there was a mob assembled round the stage of a puppet-player. My attention was at once attracted by the croaking voice of Pulcinello, and the laughter of the audience. The first act was ended as I came up—the curtain dropped, and the audience stood in anxious expectation of the second.

The little curtain again drew up. The youthful King David appeared with his sling and his sackful of pebbles. With the most ludicrous gestures, he proved that the monstrous giant should now be slain, and Israel rescued. Then there was heard a fearful hollow roaring and rustling under the stage, whereupon the giant mounted up, with a huge and most absurdly ill-proportioned head. How was I astonished, when, at my first glance of this giant's head, I recognized the features of my old friend Belcampo. Right under his head he had, by means of an ingenious apparatus, contrived to fit on a small body, conformable to those of the other puppets, while his own person was concealed by the stage drapery, which last served, at the same time, for the mantle of the giant. Go-

liah, with most hideous grimaces of visage and contortions of his dwarfish body, held a proud and threatening discourse, which King David only now and then interrupted by a shrill and contemptuous laughter.

The mob were diverted out of all measure, and I myself being wonderfully attracted by this new apparition of Belcampo, allowed myself to be carried away by the impression of the moment, and broke out into the unrestrained and hearty laughter of boyish delight. Alas, how often before was my laughter only the convulsive vibration of that internal torment which preyed upon my heart !

Hereafter, the combat with the giant was preceded by a long disputation, wherein King David demonstrated, with great erudition and eloquence, wherefore he must and would smite his frightful antagonist to death. Belcampo made all the muscles of his countenance writhe and play with the most inconceivable vivacity, indicating extreme rage. His gigantic arms stretched themselves out against the less than little David, who, meanwhile, saved himself by incredible leaps and bendings, vanishing altogether, and then coming into sight again

—now here, now there, even from the folds of the giant's own mantle. At last the pebble flew from David's sling against Goliah's head. He fell down lifeless, and the curtain dropped.

I laughed always more and more, excited not merely by the absurdity of Pulcinello, but by my previous recollection of Belcampo's grotesque genius. Probably I laughed too loud, for the people seemed to notice my conduct; and, when I turned round, there was a dignified Abbot standing near me.

“I rejoice, reverend sir,” said he, “to find that you have not altogether lost your relish for terrestrial enjoyments. After I had witnessed your most extraordinary penitence and devotion, I believed that it would be wholly impossible for you to be diverted with follies such as these.”

While the Abbot spoke thus, it seemed to me as if I ought to feel ashamed of my levity, but involuntarily I answered him in a way of which I directly afterwards repented. “Believe me, Signor *Abbate*,” said I, “the man who has once combated, like a stout swimmer, with the stormy waves of this changeful life, never loses altogether the

power of lifting up his head bravely from the dark flood !”

The Abbot looked at me with significant glances. “ Indeed !” said he, “ I know not which to praise most, the poetry or logic of your illustration. I believe that I now understand you completely, and admire you, reverend sir, from the bottom of my heart !”

“ I know not, for my part, Signor *Abbate*,” replied I, “ how a poor penitent monk can have excited your admiration.”

“ Excellent !” said the Abbot. “ You do not, most reverend father, run any risk of forgetting the part you have to play !—You are worthy to be the favourite of the Pope !”

“ His Holiness,” answered I, “ has indeed been pleased to honour me with an audience. I have done homage before him in the dust, as is becoming towards him, whom, on account of his tried virtues, Omnipotence has chosen for his vicegerent on earth.”

“ Well, then,” replied the Abbot, “ you, too, are no doubt a well-chosen vassal of the triple-crowned, and will nobly fulfil the duties required

of you. But, believe me, the present Pope is a jewel of virtue, compared to Alexander the Sixth, and you may perhaps have erred sadly in your reckoning. Go on with your part, however—What is well begun is half ended!—Farewell, most reverend father!”

With a laugh of unrepressed scorn, the Abbot started away, leaving me confounded and almost petrified at his conduct. When I connected his expressions with my own remarks on the Pope, I became convinced that the latter was by no means that conqueror deservedly crowned “after his combat with the beast,” such as I had supposed him to be; and, at the same time, I could no longer entertain any doubt that my penitential exercises must, to the majority of the public, have appeared but as a hypocritical and artificial system, adopted only to force myself into notice. Astonished and bitterly mortified, I returned home to my convent, and going into the church, had recourse to long and zealous prayer.

Then the scales seemed to fall from my hitherto blinded eyes, and I recognized at once the temptation of the powers of darkness, who had of

new endeavoured to involve me in their snares. Only rapid and instant flight could save me from destruction. And I determined with the first rays of the next morning to set out on my way.

CHAPTER XVI.

IT was already night when I heard the gate-bell of the convent forcibly rung. Soon after, the brother who officiated as porter, came into my cell and told me there was a strangely-dressed man without, who insisted on speaking with me. I went accordingly to the parlour. It was Belcampo, who, in his usual mad style, capered up to me, seized me by both arms, and drew me, with an air of great mystery, aside into a corner.

“Medardus,” said he, in a low and hurried tone, “you may make what arrangements you please for your own destruction; but Folly is once more come on the wings of the west wind to the rescue of your helpless wisdom. If there is but the slightest corner or thread of your habit remaining in sight, this arm will yet draw you back from out the yawning and bottomless abyss. Oh,

Medardus! remember and acknowledge once more the power of love and of friendship. Think on David and Jonathan, dearest Capuchin!"

"I have admired you as Goliah, no doubt," answered I; "but what can have brought you hither at this time, I have yet to learn."

"What brought me hither!" said Belcampo, with great fervour. "What else could have impelled me, but an unreasonable, a boundless attachment to a Capuchin, whose head I once set to rights (in more senses of these words than one) when it was in very formidable disorder; who threw about him his blood-red golden ducats, with lavish profusion; who had intercourse with abominable *revenants*; who, finally, after he had committed a few trifling murders, was about to marry the most beautiful woman in the world, with whom——"

"Stop—stop there!" cried I—"no more of this, thou cruel-hearted and reckless fool. Heavily have I already done penance for all with which thou hast now, in thy wicked humour, reproached me!"

"Ha! Brother Medardus," said Belcampo, "are the scars then so tender and sensitive of those wounds with which the powers of darkness assail-

ed you? This proves that your recovery is not yet perfect; so, then, I shall be as mild and quiet as a child—I shall tame the wildness of my fantasy—shall no more cut caprioles either mentally or corporeally—but only inform you, that as my attachment and friendship, chiefly on account of your sublime madness, which you call wisdom, are very great, I am determined to preserve your life as long as possible, and protect you from every danger that you bring upon yourself.

“Concealed in my puppet-show theatre, I have chanced to overhear a discourse relating to you. The Pope has determined to make you the Prior of one of the most distinguished Capuchin Convents, and also to appoint you his own Father Confessor. Fly, then, quickly—fly from Rome, for dagger and poison are already prepared for you. I know one bravo who has even now got his retaining fee for sending you in all haste to the other world. In a word, you have come in the way of a certain famous Dominican, who has hitherto been the Pope’s confessor. You are obnoxious to him and all his adherents; and, to conclude, to-morrow morning you must no longer be found within the walls of Rome!”

This new occurrence I was at no loss to connect in my mind with the expressions of the unknown *Abbate*. The two warnings were exactly in keeping with each other, and I stood so lost in thought, that I scarcely noticed the absurd conduct of Belcampo, who embraced me with great fervour, and then with hideous grimaces and contortions took his departure.

It might now be past midnight, when I heard the hollow rolling of a carriage over the pavement of the Court. Soon afterwards, I observed steps on the stone-stairs. There was a knocking at my door, which I opened, and beheld the Father Guardian of the Convent, who was followed by a man in disguise, masked, and carrying a torch in his hand.

“Brother Medardus,” said the guardian, “we are informed that a dying man desires your spiritual assistance, and the last unction. Do then what the rule enjoins. Follow this man, who will lead you to the person who requires your attendance.”

Hereupon, a cold shuddering ran through my limbs. The apprehension rose vividly within me, that they were leading me to my own death; yet I dared not refuse, but instantly rose, put on my

habit, and followed the stranger, who lighted me down stairs, opened the door of the carriage, and forced me to enter it.

In the carriage there were two other men, also disguised, who placed me betwixt them. I inquired whither I was to be led, and who it was that wished for my prayers and last services? No answer. In deep silence, we drove on through several streets. For some time, I believed, by the sound of the wheels, that we were already beyond the city walls; but again, I perceived that we came through an arched gate-way, and then drove once more over paved streets.

At last, the carriage stopped, and I felt that they immediately bound up my hands; and that a thick night-cap was drawn over my face, by which I was completely blinded. At this I expressed some dissatisfaction and anxiety.

“No evil shall befall you,” said a rough voice, “only you must be silent as to all that you see and hear, otherwise your death is inevitable.”

They now lifted me out of the carriage. There was a rattling of keys and locks. Then a gate opened that groaned heavily, and creaked on its rusty and unoiled hinges. We entered, and they

led me at first through long corridors, and at last down stairs deeper and deeper. The echoing sounds of our steps convinced me that we were in vaults, and the abominable and oppressive air proved that these vaults were destined for the reception of the dead.

At last we stood still. My hands were untied, and the cap taken from my head. I found myself in a large apartment, dimly lighted by a lamp hung from the ceiling.

There was a man in black robes, and wearing a mask, probably the same who had come for me to the Capuchin Convent. He stood next to me; and along the walls of the room, seated on two benches, I beheld many Dominican monks.

The horrible dream already narrated, which occurred to me in the prison at the *residenz* of the Prince von Rosenthurm, came back vividly on my remembrance. I held it for certain, that I was now to meet an immediate and cruel death; yet I remained silent, and only prayed inwardly, not for rescue from the danger that awaited me, but for a religious and sanctified end.

After some moments of gloomy silence and expectation, one of the monks came to me, and

said, with a hollow voice, "Medardus, we have here doomed to death a brother of your order. His sentence is this night to be carried into execution. From you he expects absolution and admonition in his last moments. Go, then, and fulfil what belongs to your office."

The mask in black robes, who stood near me, now took me by the arm, and led me from the audience-chamber through a narrow passage, into a small vaulted cell.

Here I found lying in a corner, on a straw-bed, a pale and emaciated spectre—properly speaking, a mere skeleton—half-clothed, or rather hung like a scarecrow, with rags. The mask placed the lamp which he had brought with him on a stone-table, in the middle of the vault, and retired.

I then approached nearer the wretched couch of the prisoner. My name had been announced, and with great difficulty he turned himself round towards me. I was confounded when I recognized the features of the venerable Cyrillus. A smile as of celestial beatitude came over his countenance, though I knew not wherefore he was thus rejoiced.

“So then,” said he, “the abominable ministers of hell, who dwell in this building, have for once not deceived me. Through them I learned that you, dear Brother Medardus, were in Rome; and as I expressed a great wish to speak with you, they promised me to bring you here at the hour of my death. That hour is now arrived, and they have not forgotten their contract.”

Hereupon, I kneeled down beside the venerable and pious old man. I conjured him, in the first place, to tell me, how it was possible that he could have been doomed by any society, calling themselves religious, either to imprisonment or death?

“No, no! dear Brother Medardus,” said Cyrrillus, “not till after I have confessed my manifold crimes, and, in the first place, those which I have through inadvertence committed against you; not till after you have, according to the holy institutes of our church, reconciled me with Heaven, dare I speak any farther as to my own earthly misery, and worldly cares. You already know, that I myself, as well as all the rest of our community, looked upon you as the most hardened and most unpardonable of sinners. According to our belief, you had, by a continued chain of errors,

heaped up the most enormous guilt on your head, so that we expelled you from our society. Yet your chief crime was but in yielding to the impulse of one fatal moment, in which the devil cast his noose round your neck, and dragged you away from the holy sanctuary, into the distractions of this sinful world.

“Then an abominable swindler, assuming your name, your dress, and, as if he were the devil incarnate, also your corporeal figure, committed those crimes, which had almost drawn upon you the shameful death of a murderer. It has indeed been proved against you, that you have on one occasion sinned, inasmuch as you wished to break your monastic vows; but that you are unstained by those enormities which were imputed to you, there can be no doubt. Return then to our convent, Medardus, where the brethren will receive him whom they believed for ever lost, with redoubled kindness and rejoicing.”

Here the old man, overcome by weakness, sank back, fainting on his couch; and resisting the excitement which his words had produced upon me, I remembered that my present duty was to

attend to Cyrillus only, and the welfare of his soul, which he had intrusted to my care. Therefore I laboured as well as I could, by friction, and raising him in the bed, to recover the unhappy prisoner from his insensibility.

At last he was restored, and went regularly through his confession; he, the pious and almost blameless old man, humbling himself before me, the depraved sinner! But when I absolved the self-accusing monk, whose only fault seemed to be that he had on many subjects *doubted*, and by these doubts had been driven hither and thither, it seemed to me as if, notwithstanding my own manifold offences, a divine spirit were kindled up within me—as if I were but the unworthy instrument, the corporeal organ, by which Omnipotence spoke temporally to souls not yet released from their temporal bondage.

“ Oh, Brother Medardus,” said Cyrillus, lifting his eyes full of devotion to Heaven, “ how have your words refreshed and strengthened me! Gladly shall I now go to meet death, which the traitors residing here have prepared for me. I fall a victim to that abominable treachery and

concealed wickedness, by which the throne of the Pope is now surrounded.—”

I heard hollow sounding steps, that always came nearer and nearer. Then keys rattled in the door-lock.

Cyrillus raised himself up with a violent and fearful effort.—“Return,” said he, “return, Medardus, to the happiness and security of our own convent. Leonardus is already informed as to all that has occurred; he knows in what manner I am now about to die. Conjure him to be silent as to this last event; for how soon, even without this, would death have claimed a weak and tottering old man! Farewell, my brother! Pray for the salvation of my soul! My spirit shall be with you, when, in our convent at Königswald, you read for me the prayers over the dead. Above all, I beseech you to be silent as to whatever you have witnessed here; for otherwise you will bring on yourself certain destruction, and involve our community in endless disputes.”

On this point I made him a solemn promise. The disguised men had come into the room. They lifted up the old monk out of bed, and, as

he had not strength enough to walk, dragged him through the corridor towards the vaulted hall, or audience-chamber, in which I had before been.

On a signal from the masks, I had followed the prisoner, and now found that the Dominicans had arranged themselves in a circle, within which they brought the old man, and then commanded him to kneel down upon a small heap of earth, which they had laid in the centre of the circle.

A crucifix was now placed by one of the masks in his hands, and he grasped it with great fervour. According to the duty of my office, I had also gone within the circle, and prayed aloud. Before I had ended, one of the Dominicans pulled me by the arm, and spoke to me aside. At that moment I observed a sword gleam in the hand of one of the masks; and in an instant, at a single blow, the head of Cyrillus was dissevered, and rolled down, streaming a torrent of blood, at my feet.

I could not endure the horror of this spectacle, but threw myself on the earth, in a state of half fainting and half consciousness. On my recovery, I found that I was in a small apartment fitted up like a cell. A Dominican came up to me.

“ You are terrified perhaps,” said he; “ yet,

brother, methinks you should rather rejoice to have beheld with your own eyes this perfect martyrdom. By that name, of course, it must be distinguished, if a brother of your convent undergoes the execution of his sentence; for, no doubt, you are, to a man, *all saints!*"

"We are not saints," replied I; "but we can at least say this much—Never was an innocent man within the walls of our convent murdered.—Let me now go! I have fulfilled my duty faithfully, and with self-satisfaction. The spirit of my departed brother, who is now in Heaven, will, as I trust, be near to me, if I should fall into the hands of accursed murderers!"

"I do not doubt," said the Dominican, "that your departed brother, Cyrillus, will, in such case, be able to assist you. Methinks, however, you ought not to call the judgment which has been executed against him, a murder. Cyrillus had committed enormous misdemeanours against the now reigning Vicegerent of the Almighty; and it was by his (I mean by the Pope's) express command, that your brother was condemned to death. But as he must have confessed all to you, it is needless to speak with you any farther on this

subject. Rather take, before you go, a little of this cordial for your bodily refreshment ; for you look quite pale, and much agitated.”

With these words, accompanied by a good-humoured smile, the Dominican handed to me a crystal cup, filled with a dark red-coloured and strongly fragrant wine, which, like champagne, foamed and mantled.

I scarce knew how to interpret the obscure apprehensions which were within me. Surely this was the self-same wine which had once before been presented to me by the Baroness Euphemia von F——, which I then luckily refused to taste ! I had no time for reflections, however ; for the monk was attentively watching me. Involuntarily, and without thought, I put up my left hand over my face, as if blinded by the glare of the lamp ; and with the other, lifting my glass, poured the wine into the wide sleeve of my habit.

The Dominican was effectually deceived.—“ Much good may it do you !” said he ; at the same time hastily opening the door, and making signs for my departure.

CHAPTER XVII.

I WAS again brought into the carriage, which, to my surprise, was now empty; and they drove me rapidly away. The terrors of the night—the violent excitement which I had undergone, and my grief for the unfortunate Cyrillus, combined to produce a deep gloomy reverie, in which I scarcely remembered where I was, or knew what was passing around me. When the carriage stopped, I took no notice; but from this trance I was awoke by two men, who lifted me (as if I had been unable to help myself) out of the carriage, and then threw me down, roughly enough, upon the ground.

The morning had already broke, and I found myself before the gate of my own convent, of which I immediately rang the bell. The porter was terrified at my pale and disordered aspect; and, of course, had announced his apprehensions to the

Prior, for, immediately after early mass, the latter came with anxious looks into my cell.

To his questions I only answered generally, that the death of the person whom I had been sent for to absolve had been very horrible, and that, consequently, I could not help being much agitated. The Prior was satisfied with this answer; but soon afterwards, from the insupportable torment which I felt in my left arm, I could not contain myself, but screamed out aloud.

The surgeon of the convent was sent for, and, meanwhile, the sleeve of my habit ripped open; but the cloth had already grown into my flesh, and the whole arm was found withered, and eaten away to the very bone, by a deleterious caustic.

“ I was to have drunk wine,” said I to the Prior, “ but allowed the contents of the glass to run thus into my sleeve.” I said no more, remembering the injunctions of Cyrillus to secrecy.

On the arrival of the physician, he declared that the wine had been impregnated with the most destructive and corrosive of all poisons; but by the remedies which he applied, my torment was lessened, at least, though by no means assuaged.

My recovery was slow and tedious; for it was considered doubtful whether the limb ought not to be amputated. I escaped that misfortune, however; but my arm remains to this hour withered and powerless.

“I am now perfectly aware,” said the Prior, one morning after I became convalescent, “of the peculiar circumstances by which you have lost the use of your arm. The pious Brother Cyrillus vanished in the most mysterious manner from our convent and from Rome; and you, dear Brother Medardus, will in the same manner be lost, if you do not immediately change your residence. During your illness, many suspicious inquiries were made after you, and had it not been for my watchfulness, and the faithful attachment of your brethren, probably you would not now have been in life.

“To me you appeared from the first an extraordinary man, under the influence of a destiny, whose final decrees are yet inscrutable; but however this may be, you have certainly, since your arrival in Rome, attracted far too much attention, to escape the animosity and watchfulness of cer-

tain people, who, no doubt, wish you to be removed out of their way. My advice is, therefore, that you should return home to your own country, and to your own convent. May all happiness, and, above all, the grace of God, be with you !”

Even without this admonition of the Prior, I should have clearly felt, that so long as I remained in Rome, my life must be in constant danger. To this painful thought, others were added. I was haunted still by the recollection of my numberless and enormous crimes ; then, above all, there was the immediate torment of my festering and withered arm. I could not value a life which was so useless and miserable, but, on the contrary, reverted frequently to the thoughts of suicide, which only the terror of committing a new crime prevented me from carrying into execution. But even without this, I might soon fall in the way of obtaining for myself a timely and welcome martyrdom, and whether this should occur at Rome or elsewhere was to me indifferent.

More and more, however, I accustomed myself to dwell on the thoughts of a speedy and violent death, to which, by my penitence, I considered

myself entitled. Methought I saw the figure of the monk Medardus, *of myself*, issuing from the gates of the convent, and passing along the road. Then there appeared behind him a dark and indefinable form, who stabbed him with a stiletto to the heart. A crowd immediately collected round the bloody corpse. "Medardus!" cried they; "the pious and blessed penitent Medardus is murdered!"

These words were spread and repeated hundred-fold through the streets; and the crowd always became more numerous, lamenting the loss of a saint so gifted and distinguished. Women kneeled down, and reverentially dipt their handkerchiefs in the blood which flowed from my wounds. In doing this, one of them remarked the scar of the cross on my neck, whereupon she exclaimed aloud—"He is indeed a martyr—a glorified saint! See here the impress of Heaven, which he has borne on his earthly frame!" Hereupon all the multitude threw themselves on their knees, and happy were those who could touch the mortal remains of the saint, or even the hem of his garment! Then a new impulse was given. There

was an opening made in the crowd. A bier was brought forward, ornamented with a profusion of flowers, and in triumphant march, with prayer, and the choral voice of divine music, the attendant youths carry on it the dead body of the saint onwards to the church of St Peter !

Thus my still wandering and deluded fantasy elaborated, in the most vivid colours, a picture, representing my own martyrdom. Without once apprehending how the deceitful demon of pride led me on, and by new methods laboured to ensure my destruction, I resolved, after my perfect recovery, to remain in Rome ; to continue the same penitential life which I had hitherto adopted, and then either to die in the full odour and splendour of sanctity, or else, being rescued by the Pope, to raise myself up to high dignities and power in the church.

My convalescence, as I have already mentioned, was very tedious, but the powerful energies of my constitution enabled me at first to bear up against the torture, and at last triumph over that abominable poison, which had not only destroyed one limb, but threatened, by sympathy, to

injure my whole vitals. The physician, however, had no doubts of my perfect restoration. Indeed, it was only at those moments of mental confusion which usually precede sleep, that I was liable still to feverish attacks and delirium.

In one of these paroxysms I was visited by an extraordinary dream, of which the circumstances were far too wild and confused to be faithfully described. Methought I again looked on my own dead body, but not as before in a public street of Rome. It was now laid in a lonely *berceau* walk of the convent at Königswald, where every object in the landscape came in vivid colours to my remembrance. Methought I was conscious of my own separate existence, as a self-subsisting idea, and then I ascended, as if borne up by my own buoyancy, from the realms of earth, and ere long found myself floating in a cloud of a beautiful roseate colour. There I beheld a magnificent array of wood-crowned mountains and rocky cliffs, gleaming in the morning sun, but far more beautiful than those of the earth. Anon, methought I stood at the lofty gate of a gorgeous palace, and wished to enter; but fearful bolts of lightning crossed and re-

crossed each other, like fiery lances, betwixt me and the entrance, till I was struck down into the bosom of a damp, obscure, and colourless cloud. As I fell down deeper and deeper, I again beheld the dead body, which raised itself up and stared upon me with ghastly, lustreless eyes, and howled out some accents of lamentation, like the north wind in a narrow ravine. Anon, methought the face of all nature became dead and withered. The flowers declined their heads, sank down, and faded away. The trees lost every leaf, and their dry branches rattled like the marrowless joints of a skeleton. I saw men and women too, no longer like living beings, but like pale, hideous spectres, and they threw themselves in despair on the earth, calling out, "Mercy! mercy! Is then the guilt of our crimes so enormous, that thou, oh Lord, givest unto our Arch-Enemy power to destroy, and render vain the sin-offering of our blood?"

I wished for annihilation, though, being a disembodied idea, this was impossible. Then methought I was, as if by an electrical shock, roused up from my sleep. The great clock of the convent struck twelve. "The dead raise themselves up,"

said a voice ; “ they rise out of their graves, and are gone to divine worship.” Accordingly, I began to pray. Then I heard a slight knocking at my door, and believed it was one of my brethren, who wished to come into the room, till, with unspeakable horror, I recognized the voice of my ghostly DOUBLE.—“ Broth-er—Broth-er !” said the voice—“ I am here—I am here !—Come with me—Come with me !”

I wished thereupon to start up from my couch, but a shuddering coldness had fettered every limb, and every attempted movement produced only a convulsive inward struggle. My only refuge was in prayer ; and I heard, in a strange manner, the audible effect of my own voice. Now it gradually triumphed over the renewed knocking and stammering of the spectre ; but at last all was confused and lost in the hum of ten thousand voices, as when the air is filled with myriads of insects. Anon this humming changed to articulate lamentations as before, and methought I was again wrapt in the dark cloud ; but suddenly there came over it a gleam of the most exquisite morning red. Through the dark vapours descended a tall and dignified form, on whose bosom a cross shone with

dazzling effulgence. The features were those of St Rosalia !

The lamentations were now turned to an exulting hymn of praise ; and from afar I beheld the landscape again blooming in all the luxuriance of spring. Only my own voice was now heard, lamenting—" Shall I then alone, of all these rejoicing inhabitants of earth, be given a prey to everlasting torments ?"—Then a change came over that beautiful phantom. Its awe-striking dignity was transformed into mild grace and beneficence, and a sweet smile was diffused over her features.

" AURELIA !" cried I aloud, and with that name I at last in reality awoke, and saw the clear morning light beaming into my cell.

By this introduction of Aurelia I clearly recognized the new endeavours of the restless powers of darkness against me ; and no sooner was this perception aroused, than I understood also the nature of those delusions by which I had been induced to remain in Rome. I hastened down to the church, and prayed with great fervour, leaving out, however, all bodily chastisements, having need of all the strength that I could muster for my long and fatiguing journey. Before the mid-day sun shot

down his perpendicular and insupportable beams, I was already far from Rome, taking precisely the same road by which I had come thither.

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CHAPTER XVIII.

I DETERMINED to avoid the *residenz* of the Prince ; not because I was afraid to be recognized and punished, but because I could not bear to look on the scene of my horrible offences. Moreover, should Aurelia still reside there, I felt that I had no certainty of avoiding new temptations ; and this apprehension, perhaps, proved, more than any other circumstance, the reality of my penitence and conversion. The conviction afforded me some consolation, that at least the diabolical spirit of pride was annihilated within me, and that I no longer wished to throw myself into danger, from a vain confidence in my own strength.

* * * * *

My long pilgrimage was without any incidents deserving of record. At last I had arrived amid

the well-known Thuringian mountains ; and one morning, through the dense vapours that lingered in a valley before me, I beheld a castle, which I instantly recognized to be that of the late Baron von F——. As I came nearer, alas ! how was the scene now changed from what it had been ! The walks and ornaments of the parks were become a wilderness of ruin and devastation. The shrubberies, parterres, and young plantations, were either torn up by the cattle, or converted into ploughed fields. The road on which I walked, after entering the path, was overgrown with moss and weeds ; and even the beautiful lawn before the mansion-house, that used to be so carefully kept, was now covered with a herd of cattle, and another of swine, that had rooted up all its verdure. The windows of the castle, too, were broken, and looked ghastly. The steps leading up to the principal entry were ruinous, and covered with lichens and grass that waved in the wind. Through the whole domain there seemed not to be one living being. All was neglected and lonely.

On passing through a dense thicket, which had once been my favourite walk, I heard an obscure

sound of moaning and lamentation. Then I perceived a grey-headed old man at some distance, who, though his countenance was turned towards me, did not seem in the least to notice my presence or approach. On the contrary, when I came almost close to him, he uttered, as if talking to himself in deep reverie, the words,—“ Dead—dead and gone,—all dead and gone, whom I once loved in this world. Oh, Aurelia! thou, too, the last, art dead to all sublunary enjoyments !”

I now recognized Reinhold, the old intendant, though grief had so much changed his appearance, that at first I knew not who he was. I had no wish to speak with any one, but now remained as if involuntarily rooted to the spot.

“ Aurelia dead !” cried I. “ No, no, old man, thou art misinformed. The power of the all-seeing and omniscient Judge protected her from the stiletto of the murderer !”

The old man started at these words as if he had been struck by lightning. “ Who is here ?” cried he, vehemently—“ Who is here?—Leopold! Leopold !” A boy now sprung out from the thicket, and on perceiving me, pronounced the customary salutation—“ *Laudetur Jesus Christus !*”—“ In

omnia sæcula sæculorum,” answered I. Then the old man raised himself up. “Leopold! Leopold!” said he, with great energy; “Who is among us? What is this man?”

Now, for the first time, I perceived that Reinhold was blind. The boy answered him. “A reverend monk, Herr Intendant; a monk of the Capuchin order.” Upon these words, it seemed as if the old man was seized by the utmost terror and abhorrence.

“Away—away!” cried he. “Boy, lead me from hence—To my room—to my room! Peter shall close all the doors, and keep watch.—Away—away!” With these words, he seemed to exert his utmost strength to escape from me, as from a furious wild beast. The boy looked at him and me alternately, as if quite confounded, and at a loss how to act; but the old man, instead of allowing himself to be led, forced on his attendant, and they soon disappeared through a gate, which, as I perceived, was immediately locked behind them.

I was much shocked at this adventure, and fled as quickly as I could from this place, the scene of my greatest crimes, which now appeared to me more abominable than ever. I soon afterwards

found myself in dense thickets of the forest, and but for the direction which the sun afforded, would not have known what path to choose, or whither to turn. I sank into a deep reverie, in which I almost lost all self-consciousness of what was immediately around me; till at last, being much fatigued, I laid myself down on a mossy couch, formed on the spreading roots of a wild oak tree, not far from which I saw a small artificially formed eminence, on which was planted a cross. Gazing on this, I soon fell into a profound sleep, and the bodily exertions that I had undergone were such, that I now slumbered without ever being visited by any of my former visions.

On awaking from my sleep, I was surprised to perceive an old countryman seated near me, who, as soon as he saw that I raised myself up, respectfully took off his cap.

“No doubt, reverend father,” said he, “you have travelled a far way, and are greatly fatigued, otherwise you would not have chosen *this* as your resting-place. Or it may be that you are an entire stranger, and know not the peculiar circumstances connected with this spot?”

I assured him, that being a stranger, a pilgrim

from the most distant parts of Italy, I could not possibly have any knowledge of the circumstances to which he alluded.

“ Well,” said the countryman, “ the warning which I wished to give you is particularly applicable to all brethren of your order ; for it is said that some years ago a Capuchin monk was murdered in this very part of the forest ; consequently, when I saw you sleeping on the grass, I determined to station myself here, and be ready to defend you from whatever danger you might be threatened with. Whether the story of your brother’s death at this place be true or false, this much is certain, that at the time alluded to, a Capuchin came as a passing guest to our village, and after staying all night, walked away in the morning, through these mountains. On that very day, a neighbour of mine going as usual to his work through the deep valley below what is called the ‘ Devil’s Ground,’ suddenly heard a piercing hideous cry, which continued for a few seconds, and then strangely died away in the air. He insists, (though to me this appears very improbable,) that at the same time when he heard the cry, he saw the form of a man shoot down from the jut-

ting-out point of rock above, into the bottomless abyss.

“ This evidence was so circumstantial, that all the village began to think it possible that the Capuchin who had left us that morning might really have fallen down from the cliff, and we tried every method in our power, without endangering our own lives, to find out his dead body in the chasm.

“ Our labour proved fruitless, however ; we laughed at the man who had put us to much trouble, and ridiculed him still more when he afterwards insisted, that in returning home at night, he had plainly seen the figure of a man rising out of the water.

“ This last must have indeed been mere imagination ; but afterwards we understood that the Capuchin, God knows wherefore, had been murdered by a man of rank, who had afterwards thrown down the body from that point of rock which we call the Devil's Chair.

“ That the murder must have been committed near the spot where we now are, I am fully persuaded ; for, as I was once sitting quietly after hard work, and looking at an old hollow oak-tree, methought I saw something like a corner of dark-

brown cloth hanging out, which excited my curiosity. Accordingly, when I went to the tree, I drew out of it, to my great surprise, a Capuchin tunic, quite fresh and new, which I therefore took home to my cottage. I perceived that one of the sleeves was stained with blood, and in one corner found embroidered, the name 'Medardus.'

"It occurred to me that it would be a pious and praise-worthy action if I sold the habit, and give the money that it would bring to our priest, requesting him to read prayers for the benefit of the poor murdered man. Consequently, I took the dress with me to town, but no old-clothesman would purchase it, and there was no Capuchin Convent in the place.

"At last there came up to me a man, who, by his dress, must have been a *chasseur*, or forester. He said that he was just then in want of such a garment, and gave at once the money that I had demanded for it. Returning home, I made our priest say several masses, and as I could not contrive to station a cross in the Devil's Abyss, I placed one here, as a memorial of the Capuchin's cruel fate.

"However, the deceased father must have had

not a few sins to answer for ; his ghost is said to wander about here still, and has been seen by divers people, so that the priest's labours have been of no great service in his behalf. Therefore, reverend father, I would earnestly entreat of you, when you have returned safe to your own convent, to read prayers now and then for the soul of your unfortunate brother, Medardus. Will you promise me this ?”

“ You are in a mistake, my good friend,” said I ; “ the Capuchin Medardus, who some years ago passed through your village, is not murdered ; there is no need of masses for him, since he still lives, and must by his own labours and repentance work out the salvation of his soul. I am myself this very Medardus.—Look here !”

With these words I threw open my tunic, and shewed him my name embroidered, as he had described, on the outside of the lapelle. Scarcely had the *bauer* looked at the name, when he grew deadly pale, and stared at me with every sign of the utmost horror. Then suddenly he started up, and without uttering a word, ran as if he had been pursued by fiends into the wood.

It was obvious that he took me for the ghost

of this murdered Medardus, and all endeavours would have failed to convince him of his error. The remoteness of the place, and the deep stillness, broken only by the roaring of the not far distant river, were well suited to awake in my mind the most horrible imagery. I thought once more of my detestable *double*, and infected almost with the terror of the countryman, I felt myself agitated to my inmost heart, and believed that the frightful spectre of my second self would start out from some dark thicket against me.

Summoning my utmost courage, I again stepped forward on my journey, but so much was I disturbed by the revived notion of my ghostly *double*, that not till after a considerable time had I leisure to recollect that the countryman's narrative had completely cleared up to me the mystery how the delirious monk had first got possession of the tunic, which, on our flight into Italy, he had left with me, and which I had recognized as unquestionably my own. The forester whom he had applied to for a new dress, had, of course, purchased it from the countryman in the market-town.

I was deeply impressed by the confused and

broken manner in which the *bauer* had told the fatal events of the Devil's Ground, for I thus perceived the intricate web—the concatenation of circumstances, in which the powers of darkness seemed to have done their utmost to produce that fearful exchange of characters betwixt myself and Victorin. The strange sight that had been seen by the *bauer*, too, of a man rising out of the abyss, which his companions believed only a vision, appeared to me of no little importance. I looked forward with confidence to an explanation of this also, though without knowing where it could be obtained.

CHAPTER XIX.

AFTER a few days more of restless walking, it was with a beating heart, and eyes swimming in tears, that I once more beheld the well-known towers of the Cistercian Monastery, and village of Heidebach. Anxious as I now am to wind up this long and painful narrative, I shall not pause to describe and analyze my feelings at thus visiting once more the scenes of my youth, which, in the yellow light of a still autumnal day, lay in all their wonted calmness and beauty before me.

I passed through the village, went up the hill, and came to the great square shaded by tall trees before the gate of the convent. Here, for some time, I paused, seating myself on a stone bench in a recess, reviving all my oldest and most cherished recollections, that came over my mind like shadows of a dream. Scarcely could I now believe that I was the same Francesco who had there

spent so many years with a heart unclouded by care, and to whom guilt and remorse were yet known only by name.

While thus occupied, I heard at some distance a swelling voice of melody—it was an anthem sung by male voices. A large crucifix became visible, and I found that a procession was coming up the hill. The monks walked in pairs, and at the first glance I recognized that they were my own brethren, and that the old Leonardus, supported by a young man whose name I did not know, was at their head. Without noticing me, they continued their anthem, and passed on through the convent gate.

They were followed by the Dominicans and Franciscans, also from the town of Königswald, and walking in the same order of procession. Then several coaches drove up, in which were the nuns of St Clare. From all this I perceived that some remarkable festival was now to be solemnized.

The church doors were opened, and I went in. People were adorning the altars, and especially the high altar, with flower garlands, and a sacristan gave directions for a great quantity of fresh roses, as the Abbess had particularly desired that they

should predominate. Having resolved that I would immediately request permission to join my brethren, I first strengthened myself by fervent prayer, after which I went into the convent, and inquired for the Prior Leonardus.

The porteress then led me into a hall, where the Prior was seated in an arm-chair, surrounded by his brethren. Agitated to the utmost degree, and indeed quite overpowered, I could not refrain from bursting into tears, and falling at his feet. "Medardus!" he exclaimed, and a murmur sounded immediately through the ranks of all the brethren. "Brother Medardus!" said they—"Brother Medardus, the long-lost, is returned!"

I was immediately lifted up from the prostration into which I had involuntarily sunk, and all the brethren, even those with whom I was before unacquainted, fervently embraced me.—"Thanks and everlasting praise," they exclaimed, "to the mercy and long-suffering of Heaven, that you have thus been rescued from the snares and temptations of that deceitful world. But relate, dearest brother—tell us your adventures—all that you have encountered!"

Thus there arose among them a murmur of confused and anxious inquiries ; but, meanwhile, the Prior rose up and made a sign for me to follow him privately into another room, which was regularly appropriated for his use when he visited the convent.

“ Medardus,” he began, “ you have in the most wicked manner broken your monastic vows, and deceived that faith which was reposed in you by all our community. Instead of fulfilling the commissions with which I intrusted you, you became a disgraceful fugitive, no one knows why, nor whither. On this account, I could order you to be imprisoned for life, or to be immured, and left to perish without food or drink, if I chose to act according to the severe laws of our order.”

“ Judge me, then, venerable father,” interrupted I—“ judge me according as the conventual law directs. I should resign with pleasure the burden of a miserable life ; for indeed I feel but too deeply that the severest penance to which I could subject myself, would to me bring no consolation.”

“ Recover yourself,” said Leonardus ; “ be composed and tranquil. I have now fulfilled my

duty in speaking to you as an abbot; but, as a friend and father, I have yet to address you, and to hear what you have to say in your own justification. In a wonderful manner you have been rescued at Rome, from the death with which you was threatened. To the disorders which prevail there, Cyrillus has been the only sacrifice."

"Is it possible, then," said I, "that you already know——"

"I know it all," answered the Prior; "I am aware, that you rendered spiritual assistance to the poor man in his last moments; and I have been informed of the stratagem of the Dominicans, who thought they had administered deadly poison in the wine which they offered you as a cordial drink. Had you swallowed but a single drop, it must have caused your death in a few minutes; of course you found some opportune method of evading this."

"Only look here," said I, and, rolling up the sleeve of my tunic, shewed the Prior my withered arm, which was like that of a skeleton; describing to him, at the same time, how I had suspected the fate that was intended me, and found means to pour all the liquor into my sleeve.

Leonardus started as he beheld this frightful spectacle, and muttered to himself—"Thou hast indeed done penance, as it was fitting, for thou hast committed many crimes.—But Cyrillus—the good and pious Cyrillus!"—

He paused, and I took this opportunity of remarking, that the precise cause of my brother's death, and the accusation which had been made against him, remained, up to that day, unknown to me.

"Perhaps you too," said the Prior, "would have shared the same fate, if, like him, you had stepped forward as a plenipotentiary of our convent. You already know, that the claim of our house, if admitted, and carried into effect, would almost annihilate the income of the Cardinal von ****; which income he at present draws without any right to its appropriation. This was the reason why the Cardinal suddenly made up a friendship with the Pope's father confessor, (with whom he had till then been at variance,) and thus acquired, in the Dominican, a powerful ally, whom he could employ against Cyrillus.

"The latter was introduced to the Pope, and received with particular favour; in such manner,

that he was admitted into the society of the dignitaries by whom his Holiness is surrounded, and enabled to appear as often as he chose at the Vatican. Cyrillus, of course, soon became painfully aware, how much the Vicegerent of God seeks and finds his kingdom in this world, and its pleasures,—how he is made subservient as the mere tool of a mob of hypocrites, who turn him hither and thither, as if vacillating between heaven and hell. Doubtless this seems inconsistent with the powerful talents and energetic spirit, of which he has, on various occasions, shewn himself possessed; but which they contrive, by the most abominable means, to pervert and to subdue.

“ Our pious brother Cyrillus, as might have been foreseen, was much distressed at all this, and found himself called on, by irresistible impulses, to avert, if possible, the misfortunes which might thus fall upon the church. Accordingly, as the spirit moved him, he took divers opportunities to rouse and agitate, by the most fervid eloquence, the heart of the Pope, and forcibly to disengage his soul from all terrestrial pleasures or ambition.

“ The Pope, as it usually happens to enfeebled minds, was, in truth, much affected by what Cy-

rillus had said ; and this was precisely the opportunity which his wicked ministers had watched for, in order to carry their plans into execution. With an air of great mystery and importance, they revealed to his Holiness their discovery of nothing less than a regular conspiracy against him, which was to deprive him of the triple crown. For this purpose, Cyrillus had been commissioned to deliver these private lectures, and induce the Pope to submit to some public act of penance, which would serve as a signal for the open out-break of the rebellion that was already organized among the cardinals.

“ Accordingly, on the next appearance of our zealous and excellent brother, the Pope imagined that, in his present discourse, he could detect many concealed and treacherous designs. Cyrillus, however, did not hesitate to persist in his attempts, assuring his Holiness, that he who did not wholly renounce the pleasures of this world, and humble his heart, even as the most submissive and self-accusing penitent, was wholly unfit to be the Vicegerent of God, and would bring a load of reproach and shame on the church, from which the latter should make itself free.

“ After one of these interviews, the iced-water which the Pope was in the habit of drinking, was found to have been poisoned. That Cyrillus was perfectly guiltless on that score, it is needless for me to make any assertion to you, who knew him. His Holiness, however, was convinced of his guilt; and the order for his imprisonment and execution in the Dominican Convent was the consequence.

“ The hatred of the Dominicans towards you, after the attention which you had received from the Pope, and his intentions openly expressed of raising the Capuchin penitent to high dignities, requires no explanation. You had thus become more dangerous, in their estimation, than Cyrillus had ever been; and they would have felt the less remorse at your destruction, as they doubted not that your penitential observances were the result of the basest hypocrisy, and a desire of temporal advancement.

“ With regard to my accurate knowledge of all that occurred to you in Rome, there is in this no mystery. I have a friend at the metropolis, who is thoroughly acquainted even with the most secret occurrences which take place in the Vatican,

and who faithfully informs me of them by letters, written in a cypher which has hitherto baffled all attempts at discovery.

“But on my side, there are many questions to be asked, of which the solution yet appears to me an inscrutable mystery. When you lived at the Capuchin Convent, near to Rome, of which the Prior is my near relation, I believed that your penitence was genuine, and from the heart. Yet, in the city, you must have been actuated by very different motives. Above all, why did you seek to gain the Pope's attention by an incredible and marvellous story? Why accuse yourself of crimes which you had never committed? Were you, then, ever at the castle of the Baron von F——?”

“Alas, venerable father!” said I, “that was indeed the scene of my most horrible crimes. Is it possible that, in your eyes also, I have appeared a liar and hypocrite?”

“Truly,” said the Prior, “now that I speak with, and see you, I am forced to believe that your repentance and self-inflicted sufferings have been sincere. Still there are difficulties, which I am wholly unable to clear up.

“Soon after your flight from the *residenz* of the

Prince von Rosenthurm, and after the monk, with whom Cyrillus had confounded you, had, as if by miracle, escaped, it was proved by the discovery of letters, and other concomitant testimony, that the Count Victorin, disguised as a monk, had been at the Baron's castle, and must have been the perpetrator of the crimes charged against you. Reinhold, his old steward, indeed, vehemently disputed this notion. But suddenly Victorin's *chasseur* made his appearance, and explained that his master had lived long concealed in the Thuringian forest; that he had allowed his beard to grow, and had said that he would take the first opportunity of providing himself with a Capuchin tunic, which he intended to wear for at least twelve months, in order to carry on certain adventures. Finally, he declared, that, after having been for some days absent from his master, on business, he had, on his return, found him completely disguised in a monk's dress, at which he was not surprised, as he, the day before, observed, at some distance, the figure of a Capuchin pilgrim in the forest, from whom he doubted not that his master had supplied himself with the masquerade attire. He insisted that he knew the Count far too well to have been

deceived, and, besides, had spoken with him frequently betwixt the period of that occurrence and his disappearance from the castle. This deposition of the *chasseur* completely invalidated the opinion of Reinhold ; but the utter vanishing of the Count, of whom not a single trace could be found, remained quite incomprehensible.

“ In the *residenz*, the Princess von Rosenthurm started the hypothesis, that the pretended Herr von Krezinki, from Kwiczienskwo, had been really the Count Victorin ; and was the more inclined to this belief, on account of the resemblance that she had found between this pretender and Francesco, of whose guilt no one now entertained any doubt. The story of the Prince's forester, describing a maniac, who had wandered about in this forest, and afterwards lived in his house, almost sanctioned the hypothesis. The madman had been recognized as Medardus. Victorin, in order to possess himself of his tunic, had cast him down into the abyss below the Devil's Chair. Here, by some chance or other, he had not been killed in the fall, but only wounded on the head. The pain of his wound, with hunger and thirst, made him delirious ; and he ran about, perhaps obtain-

ing a morsel of food now and then from some compassionate countryman, and half clothed with miserable rags, till he was kindly received into the house of the forester.

“Two things, however, remained here inexplicable, namely, how this Medardus could have run away to such a distance out of the mountains without being arrested, and how, even in his lucid intervals, he should confess to the judges and the physician crimes which he had never committed. Hereupon some individuals insisted that these lucid intervals were delusive—that he never had been free from his madness, and that as there are no limits to the varieties of that malady, it was possible that he had, by the force of his own perverted imagination, invented all the circumstances which he related, and that the belief of them was the one, fixed, and obstinate idea, (the characteristic of insanity,) which never left him.

“The judge of the criminal court, on the other hand, (whose wisdom was held in great reverence,) declared that the pretended Herr von Krczinski was not only no Pole, but also no count, and certainly not the Count Victorin. Moreover, that the monk assuredly was, and continued mad on every

occasion, on which account the Court had intended that his sentence should be that of constant imprisonment, in order that he might be prevented from committing more crimes ; but the Prince, who was much shocked by the calamities brought on the family of the Baron von F——, changed this decision into that of execution on the scaffold.

“ Such is the nature of mankind in this transitory life, that every impression, however vivid, loses, after a short time, almost all its influence, and fades away into pale and dusky colours. But now the notion that Aurelia's fugitive bridegroom had been Count Victorin, brought the story of the Italian Countess fresh into the remembrance of every one. Even those who before knew nothing of the matter, were informed by others who thought there was no longer any need for keeping the secret, and all agreed in considering it quite natural that the features of Medardus should resemble those of Victorin, as they had both been sons of one father.

“ The Prince at last determined that no farther attempt should be made to break the veil of mystery. He wished rather that all these unhappy involvements, which no one could be found to

unravel, should be allowed to rest, and be forgotten. Only Aurelia——”

“ Aurelia !” cried I, with vehemence, “ for God’s sake, reverend sir, tell me what has become of Aurelia ?”

* * * * *

[Some pages are here left out by the Editor.]

CHAPTER XX.

“ You are sincere, Medardus,” said the Prior ; “ your silence on this point is to me better than the most fervid eloquence. I felt the most perfect conviction that it was you only who had in the *residenz* played the part of a Polish nobleman, and wished to marry the Baroness Aurelia. Moreover, I had traced out pretty accurately your route. A strange man, by name Schönfeld, or Belcampo, who called himself a professor and an artist, called here, and gave me the wished-for intelligence. At one period I was indeed quite convinced that you had been the murderer of Hermodgen and Euphemia, on which account I entertained, if possible, the more horror at your plan of seizing and involving Aurelia in your own destruction.

“ I might indeed have arrested you, and perhaps it was my duty to have done so ; but, far

from considering myself as a minister of vengeance, I resigned you and your earthly conduct to the eternal decrees and guidance of Providence. That you were, in a manner, little less than miraculously preserved and carried through so many dangers, proved to me, that your destruction, so far as this life is concerned, was not yet resolved.

“ But now, it is most important for you to hear the circumstances by which I was afterwards led, and indeed forced to believe, that Count Victorin had actually appeared as the Capuchin, in the Thuringian mountains, at the castle of Baron von F——.

“ Some time ago, Brother Sebastian, our porter, was awoke from his sleep by an extraordinary noise of sobbing and groaning at the gate, which sounded like the voice of a man in the last agony.

“ The day had just dawned, and he immediately rose. On opening the outward gate, he found a man lying on the steps, half petrified with cold, and miserably exhausted. With great effort the stranger brought out the words, that he was Medardus, a monk who had fled from our monastery.

“ Sebastian was much alarmed, and immediately came to me with accounts of what had happen-

ed below. I summoned the brethren around me, and went to inquire into the matter. The stranger seemed to have fainted, whereupon we lifted him up, and brought him into the refectory. In spite of the horribly disfigured countenance of the man, we still thought that we could recognize your features. Indeed, several were of opinion that it was the change of dress, more than any other circumstance, which made a difference. The stranger had a long beard, like a monk, and wore a lay-habit, now much torn and destroyed, but which had at first been very handsome. He had silk stockings, a gold buckle still on one of his shoes, a white satin waistcoat——”

“ A chesnut-coloured coat,” interrupted I, “ of the finest cloth ; richly embroidered linen, and a plain gold ring upon his finger.”

“ Precisely so,” said Leonardus ; “ but, in God’s name, how could you know these particulars ?”

Alas ! it was the identical dress which I had worn on that fatal day of my marriage in the *residenz*. My horrible double again stood vividly before mine eyes. It was no longer the mere phantom of my own disturbed brain that had seemed

to follow me through the woods, but the real and substantial madman, or demon, by whom my strength had been overpowered, and who had at last robbed me of my clothes, in order to represent me in this manner at the convent. I begged of Leonardus, that, before asking any other questions, he would proceed with his narrative, from which, perhaps, a perfect explanation of the mysteries in which I had been involved would at last dawn upon me.

“After a trial of several days,” said Leonardus, “we began to perceive that the man was utterly and incurably mad; and, notwithstanding that his features resembled yours very closely, and he incessantly cried out, ‘I am Medardus, and have come home to do penance among you,’ we all concluded that this was but an obstinately fixed delusion of the maniac.

“To this change of opinion we were led by divers proofs. For example, we brought him into the church; where, as he endeavoured to imitate us in the usual devotional exercises, we perceived plainly that he had never before been in a convent. The question then always gained more and more influence over my mind—‘What if

this madman, who has, according to his own account, fled from the *residenz* of Rosenthurm, and escaped the punishment of the scaffold, were actually the Count Victorin ?

“ The story which the maniac had before told to the forester was already known to me, but I was almost of opinion with the judge at Rosenthurm, that the discovery and drinking out of the Devil's Elixir, his residence in a convent, where he was condemned to prison, and all the rest, might be mere visions, the offspring of his own malady, aided perhaps by some extraordinary magnetic influence of your mind over his—I was the more inclined to this notion, because the stranger had, in his paroxysms, often exclaimed that he was a Count, and a ruling sovereign. On the whole, I resolved, as he could have no claim on our care, to give him up to the hospital of St Gétreu, where it was not impossible that the skill and tenderness with which he would be treated, might at last effect his recovery, after which his rational confessions might clear away that load of uncertainty under which we laboured.

“ This resolution I had not time to put in practice. During the following night I was awake

by the great bell, which you know is rung whenever any one is taken dangerously ill and requires my assistance. On inquiry, I was informed that the stranger had asked for me so calmly and earnestly, that it was probable his madness had left him, and that he wished to confess. But, however this might be, his bodily weakness had so much increased, that it was scarcely possible for him to survive through the night.

“ ‘Forgive me, venerable father,’ said the stranger, after I had addressed to him a few words of pious admonition—‘forgive me, that I have hitherto attempted to deceive you—I am not Medardus, the monk who fled from your convent, but the Count Victorin. *Prince*, indeed, I should be called, since I derive my birth from princes. This I advise you to notice, with due respect, otherwise my anger may yet overtake you!’

“ ‘Even if you are a ruling prince,’ said I, ‘that circumstance, within our walls, and in your present condition, is not of any importance whatever; and it would, in my opinion, be much more suitable, and more for your own advantage, if you would now turn your thoughts altogether from such vain and terrestrial considerations.’

“ At these words he stared on me, and his senses seemed wandering ; but some strengthening drops having been administered, he revived, and began again to speak, though, to my great disappointment, in a style so wild and delirious, that his discourse scarce admits of repetition.

“ ‘ It seems to me,’ said he, ‘ as if I must soon die, and that before leaving this world I must lighten my heart by confession. I know, moreover, that you have power over me ; for, however you attempt to disguise yourself, I perceive very well that you are St Anthony, and you best know what misfortunes your infernal Elixirs have produced in this world. I had indeed grand designs in view when I first resolved to become a monk with a long beard, a shaven head, and a brown tunic tied with hair ropes. But, after long deliberation, it seemed to me as if my most secret thoughts played false with him to whom they owed their birth—as if they departed from me, and dressed themselves up in a cursed masquerade, representing MYSELF. I recognized the likeness—the identity—it was my *double*, and I was horrified.

“ ‘ This *double*, too, had superhuman strength,

and hurled me down from the black rocks, through the trees and bushes, into the abyss, where a snow-white radiant princess rose out of the foaming water to receive me. She took me in her arms and bathed my wounds, so that I no longer felt any pain. I had now indeed become a monk, but that infernal second-self proved stronger than I was, and drove me on in the paths of wickedness, till I was forced to murder the princess that had rescued me, along with her only brother. I was then thrown into prison; but you yourself, St Anthony, know better than I, in what manner, after I had drunk up your cursed Elixir, you brought me out, and carried me away through the air.

“ ‘The green forest king received me badly enough, although he knew very well that I was a prince, and therefore of equal rank; but my second-self interfered betwixt us, telling the king all sorts of calumnies against me, and insisted, that because we had committed these damnable crimes together, we must continue inseparable, and enjoy all things in partnership.

“ ‘This happened accordingly, but when the king wanted to cut off our heads, we ran away,

and on the road at last quarrelled and separated. I saw that this parasitical *double* had resolved on being perpetually nourished by my powerful spirit, though I had then not food enough for myself; and I therefore knocked him down, beat him soundly, and took from him his coat.'

“So far the ravings of the man had some resemblance, however distant and shadowy, to the truth; but afterwards he lost himself in the sheer absurdities of his malady, out of which not a word could be understood. About an hour afterwards, as the first bell was rung for early prayers, he started up with a hideous cry, then fell back on his couch, and, as we all believed, instantly expired.

“Accordingly, I made the body be removed into the dead-room, and gave orders, that, after the usual interval, he should be buried, not in the convent vaults, but in a spot of consecrated ground in our garden. But you may well imagine our utter astonishment, when, on returning to the dead-room, we found that the supposed lifeless body was no longer to be seen! All inquiries after him were in vain, and I was obliged to despair of gaining any farther information as to the strange in-

volvements that subsisted betwixt you and this man.

“No doubt, however, remained on my mind that he was Count Victorin. According to the story of the chasseur, he had murdered a Capuchin monk in the forest, and put on his tunic in order to carry on some intrigue in the castle. The crimes which he had thus begun, ended perhaps in a way that he did not expect—with the murder of the Baroness and of the young Baron Hermogen. Perhaps he was then mad, as Reinhold maintained, or became so upon his flight, being tormented by a reproving conscience. The dress which he wore, and the murder of the Capuchin, gave rise in his mind to the fixed delusion that he was a monk, and that his individuality was split into two hostile and contending powers.

“Only the period betwixt his flight from the Baron’s castle and that of his arrival at the forester’s house remains obscure. We know not how he could have lived all that time; nor is it conceivable how the story of his living in a convent, and being rescued from prison, had originated. Again, the time of his appearing to the forester will by no means answer with the date which Reinhold fixes

for Victorin's departure from the Thuringian mountains."

"Stop, stop, father," said I; "every hope of obtaining, notwithstanding the fearful load of my crimes, forgiveness through the mercy and long-suffering of Heaven, must perish in my soul, if I do not, with the deepest repentance and self-condemnation, relate to you all the circumstances of my life, as I have before narrated them in holy confession!"

When I now went through this detail, the Prior's astonishment increased beyond all bounds. At last he said, "I must believe all that you have told, Medardus, if it were for no other reason than that, while you spoke, I perceived in your tone and looks the most unequivocal proofs of sincere and heartfelt repentance. Who can explain, but, at the same time, who can deny or disprove, the extraordinary mental sympathy and connection that has thus subsisted between two brothers, sons of a wretched sinner, and themselves both acted on and misled by the powers of darkness?*

* According to the devil's assertion, if two individuals

“It is now certain that Victorin had rescued himself from the rocky abyss into which you had thrown him, (his fall probably having been broken by the water,) that he was the delirious monk whom the forester protected, who persecuted you as your *double*, and who died, or seemed to die, in our convent. He was an agent of our Arch-Enemy, placed in your way for the express purpose of misleading you from the path of virtue, or veiling from your sight that light of truth which otherwise might have dawned upon you. Or shall we look upon him not as Victorin, but as an incarnate demon, who, for his own hellish purposes, had availed himself of your unhappy brother's bodily frame ?

“Alas ! it is too true that the devil yet wanders restless and watchful through the earth, offering, as of yore, to unwary mortals, his deceitful Elixirs ! Who is there that has not, at one period or another, found some of these deadly drinks agreeable and seductive to his taste ? But such is the will of Heaven.

should drink out of the same flask, they would henceforth possess a wonderful reciprocity of thoughts and feelings, though mutually and unconsciously acting for the destruction of each other. See Vol. I. pp. 46, 68.—EDIT.

Man must be subjected to temptations ; and then, by the reproaches of his own conscience, being made aware of the dangers into which a moment of levity and relaxation has betrayed him, summon up strength and resolution to avoid such errors for the future. Thus, as the natural life of man is sometimes prolonged by poison, so the soul indirectly owes its final weal to the dark and destructive principle of evil.—Go now, Medardus, and join the brethren.”

I was about to retire, but the Prior called me back.—“ You have no doubt observed,” said he, “ the preparations for a great festival. The Baroness Aurelia is to-morrow to take the veil, and receives the conventual name of Rosalia !”

CHAPTER XXI.

THE agitation which I felt at these words was indeed indescribable. As if struck by a thunder-bolt, I had almost fallen to the ground, and could make no answer. Hereupon the Prior seemed greatly incensed.—“Go to your brethren!” said he, in a tone of sternness and anger;—and I tottered away, almost senseless, or totally unable to analyze my own sensations, to the refectory, where the monks were assembled.

Here I was assailed by a storm of anxious inquiries; but I was no longer able to utter a single word on the adventures of my own life. Only the bright and beaming form of Aurelia came vividly before mine eyes, and all other imagery of the past faded into obscurity. Under pretext of having devotional duties to perform, I left the brethren, and betook myself to the chapel, which lay at the further extremity of the extensive convent

garden. Here I wished to pray; but the slightest noise, even the light rustling of the wind among the faded leaves, made me start up, and broke every pious train of contemplation.

“It is she—I shall see her again!—Aurelia comes!”—In these words a voice seemed to address me, and my heart was at once agitated with fear and with rapture. It seemed to me as if indeed at some distance I heard the sounds of soft whispering voices. I started up, left the chapel, and, behold! there were two nuns walking through an *allée* of lime trees, and between them a person in the dress of a novice. Certainly that was Aurelia. My limbs were seized with a convulsive shuddering; my heart beat so violently, that I could hardly breathe; and I wished to go from the place; but, being unable to walk, I fell, not fainting, but overcome with the vehemence of my internal conflict, powerless to the ground. The nuns, and with them the novice, vanished into the thickets.

What a day and what a night I had to encounter! I strove to diversify the emotions under which I laboured, by a visit to the house in which my mother had lived; but, alas! it no longer

existed. The garden—the tower—the old castle—all were gone; and the ground on which they once stood had been converted, by a new proprietor, into a ploughed field. I was but slightly affected by this change, for my whole heart and soul were devoted to that one object. I wandered about repeating her name—“ Aurelia! Aurelia!” This distraction continued also through the long night. There was, for the time, no other thought—no other image, but hers, that could gain any influence over my attention.

As soon as the first beams of the morning had begun to break through the autumnal wreaths of white vapour that hovered in the valley, the convent bells rung to announce the festival of a nun's investiture and dedication. Soon afterwards, the brethren assembled in the great public hall, where, too, in a short time, the Abbess appeared, attended by two of her sisterhood.

Undescribable was the feeling which filled my heart, when I once more beheld her, who, towards my father, had been so deeply attached, and, after he had through his crimes broken off a union which promised him every happiness, had

yet transferred her unconquerable affection to his son.

That son she had endeavoured to rear up to a life of virtue and piety ; but, like his father, he heaped up crime on crime, so that every hope of the adoptive mother, who wished to find in the one consolation for the profligacy of the other, was annihilated.

With my head hung downwards, and eyes fixed on the ground, I listened to the discourse, wherein the Abbess once more formally announced to the assembled monks, Aurelia's entrance into the Cistercian Convent ; and begged of them to pray zealously at the decisive moment of the last vow, in order that the Arch-Fiend might not have any power at that time to torment the pious virgin, by his abominable delusions.—“ Heavy and severe,” said she, “ were the trials which this young woman had already to resist. There was no method of temptation which the great adversary of mankind did not employ, in order to lead her unawares into the commission of sins, from which she should awake when it was too late, as if from a hideous dream, to perish in shame and despair !

“ Yet Omnipotence protected this truly pious votary of the church ; and if on this day, too, the adversary should approach her, and once more aim at her destruction, her history now will be the more glorious. I request, then, your most zealous prayers—not that this chosen votary may be firm and unchanged in her resolve, for her mind has long been devoted wholly to Heaven ; but that no earthly misfortune may interrupt the solemn act of her investiture, or disturb her thoughts in that sacred act. I must confess that a mysterious timidity—an apprehension, has got possession of my mind, for which I am unable to account, but which I have no power of resisting.”

Hereupon it became clear and obvious, that the Abbess alluded to me alone, as that evil adversary—that destructive demon, who would probably interrupt the ceremony. She had heard of my arrival, and, being aware of my previous history, had imagined that I came with the fixed intention of committing some new crime to prevent Aurelia from taking the veil. The consciousness how groundless were these suspicions, and of the change which my mind had undergone, caused, for the moment, a sinful feeling of self-approba-

tion, which I ought to have repressed, but which, like other vices, obtained a victory before I was on my guard. The Abbess did not vouchsafe towards me a single look, or the slightest sign of recognition: Hereupon I felt once more that proud spirit of scorn and defiance, by which I had been formerly actuated towards the Princess in the *residenz*; and when the Abbess spoke these words, instead of wishing, as of yore, to humble myself before her in the dust, I could have walked up to her, and said:—

“ Wert thou then always so pure and elevated in soul, that the pleasures of terrestrial life never had for thee any attraction? When thou daily sawest my father, wert thou so well guarded by devotion, that sinful thoughts never entered into thy mind? Or, when adorned with the *infula* and crosier, in all thy conventual dignity, did his image never wake within thee a longing desire to return into the world? Hast thou contended with the dark powers as I have done? Or canst thou flatter thyself with having gained a true victory, if thou hast never been called into a severe combat? Deem not thyself so proudly elevated that thou canst despise him, who submitted indeed to

the most powerful of enemies, yet again raised himself up by deep repentance, and the severest penance."

The sudden and demoniacal change that I had undergone, must have been visible in my exterior looks and deportment; for the brother who was next to me, inquired, "What is the matter with you, Brother Medardus? Why do you cast such angry looks towards the truly sanctified Abbess?"

"Ay, indeed," answered I, almost audibly; "she may indeed be sanctified, for she carried her head always so high, that the contamination of profane life could not reach her; and yet, methinks, she appears to me at this moment less like a Christian saint than a pagan priestess, who, with the bloody knife in her hand, prepares to immolate before an idol her human victim!"

I know not how I came to pronounce these blasphemous words, which were out of the track of my previous ideas, but with them arose in my mind a multitude of the most horrible and distracting images, which seemed to unite and harmonize together, as if for the purpose of gaining more strength, and effectually obtaining the vic-

tory over any degree of rational self-possession I had left.

Aurelia was for ever to forsake and renounce this world!—She was to bind herself, as I had done, by a vow, that appeared to me only the invention of religious fanaticism, to renounce all earthly enjoyments! Old impressions, which I had believed for ever lost, revived on me with tenfold strength and influence. My attention was again wholly engrossed by the one idea, that Aurelia and the monk should yet be united, though it were but for a moment, and then perish together, a sacrifice to the subterranean powers of darkness. Nay, like a hideous spectre, like Satan himself, the thought of murder once more rose on my mind. I beheld myself with the bloody dagger in my hand!—Alas, poor blinded wretch! I did not perceive that at the moment when I had conceived such resentment against the Abbess for her supposed allusions, I was given up a prey to perhaps the severest trial to which the power of the devil had ever subjected me, and by which I was to be enticed to the most hideous crime of which I had yet even dreamed!

The brother to whom I had spoken looked at me terrified. "For the love of God, and all the saints," said he, "what words are you muttering there?" The Abbess was now about to leave the hall. On her retreat, her eyes accidentally encountered mine. I perceived that she immediately grew pale, that she tottered, and must lean on the attendant nuns. Methought also I could distinguish the words,—"Merciful Heaven, my worst fears then are confirmed!"

Soon after, she summoned the Prior Leonardus to a private audience; but, meanwhile, the bells were again rung, and with them was united the deep thundering notes of the organ. The consecration anthem was just begun, and was distinctly heard from the church, when the Prior returned into the hall. Now the monks of the different orders arranged themselves all in solemn processions, and advanced towards the church, which was now just as crowded as it used formerly to be at the anniversary of the blessed St Bernard. On the right side of the high altar, which was richly adorned with red and white roses, were elevated seats placed for the clergy opposite to the tribune, whereon the Bishop's *capelle* perform-

ed the music of the high mass, at which he himself was the officiating priest.

One of the monks with whom I had formerly been acquainted, and to whom probably Leonardus had given directions, called me to take my place next to him. I perceived that he watched even my slightest movements, and he insisted that I should pray without ceasing out of my Breviary.

The decisive moment was now drawing near. The nuns of St Clare assembled themselves within the small square, enclosed by an iron railing, before the high altar, while, through a private door from behind the altar, the Cisterians brought forward Aurelia.

A whispering rustled through the crowded church on her appearance; the organ was silent, and only the simple anthem of the nuns in the choir vibrated to the very heart of every listener. Till now, I had not ventured to lift up mine eyes, and on doing so, I trembled convulsively, so that my Breviary fell to the ground. I bent down to take it up, but a sudden giddiness seized me, and I should have fallen after my book, had not my watchful brother seized and held me back. "What

is the matter with you, Medardus?" said he—
"Resist the demon that besets you, and he will
flee!"

I made a violent effort to be tranquil, looked up again, and saw Aurelia kneeling at the high altar. Oh, heavens! her beauty of countenance, and symmetry of form, were more than ever dazzling and seductive! She was dressed, too, as a bride, precisely as she had been on that fatal day of our intended marriage, with wreaths of myrtle and roses twisted in her luxuriant and skilfully-plaited hair. The devotion—the solemnity and agitation of the moment, had heightened the bloom on her cheeks; and in her eyes, uplifted to heaven, lay an expression of desire, which, in another place, or on another occasion, might have been very differently interpreted.

What were those moments, after I had recognized Aurelia at the *residenz* of the Prince von Rosenthurm, compared to this? I said that my feelings then were indescribable, but my passions now raged and burned within me with a violence which I had never before known. Every vein and fibre in my frame was convulsed and swollen by

the vehemence of my conflict, and I grasped the reading-desk with such force, that the boards cracked and broke beneath the pressure.

Meanwhile, I prayed internally with great fervour—"Oh, merciful Heaven—Oh, ye blessed saints, intercede for me!—Let me not become mad!—only not mad!—Save me—save me from this hellish torment!—Save me from utter frenzy, otherwise I must commit the most horrible of crimes, and give up my soul to everlasting destruction!" Such were my inward aspirations, for I felt how every moment the evil spirit was acquiring more and more an ascendancy over me. It seemed to me as if Aurelia, too, had a share in the crime which I alone was committing, as if the vow that she was about to take was *not* to be the bride of Heaven, but to become *mine*! To rush up to the altar, to press her in my arms in one last delicious embrace, and then stab her to the heart—this impulse became almost irresistible. The demon raged more and more wildly in my heart—I was about to scream out, "Stop there, deluded fools!—Not a virgin, as you believe, pure and emancipated from earthly bonds and passion, but the devoted bride of the perjured monk, would

you consecrate to Heaven!" * * * * When I heard Aurelia's voice, however, as she began to pronounce the vow, then it seemed as if a mild gleam of moonlight broke through the dark and stormy clouds by which my reason had been obscured. By this pure light I detected all the artifices of my relentless adversary, whom I was thus, with tenfold vigour, enabled to resist. Every word uttered by Aurelia, like the encouraging voice of a guardian seraph, gave me new strength, and, after an arduous conflict, I was left victor. That black and hideous impulse to new crimes was put to flight, and with it every remains of sinful passion. Aurelia was again the pious votary of Heaven, whose prayer could rescue me from eternal remorse and destruction. Her vows were to me the source of consolation and of hope; I could look again without despair into the blue unclouded vaults of heaven! The monk who had watched over me, immediately perceived this change. "Thou hast bravely resisted the adversary, Medardus. This was perhaps the last and severest trial which has been destined for thee by the will of the Almighty!"

CHAPTER XXII

THE VOW was now pronounced, and during that part of the service consisting of question and response, sung by the nuns of St Clare, the veil was to be laid on Aurelia. Already they had taken the myrtles and roses from her head, and were in the act of cutting off her long and luxuriant locks, when an extraordinary tumult arose in the church. I remarked how the people who stood in the aisles were thrust and driven about. Many of them, too, were violently knocked down, and the disturbance made its way always nearer and nearer, till it arrived at the centre of the church, before which time I could not distinguish the cause.

With the most furious looks and gestures, striking with his clenched fists at all who stood in his way, and still pressing forward, there now appeared a half-naked man, with the rags of a Capuchin dress hung about his body! At the first

glance, I recognized my diabolical *double*; but already at the moment when, anticipating some horrible event, I was in the act of leaving the gallery to throw myself in his way, the horrible wretch had leaped over the railing of the altar. The terrified nuns shrieked and dispersed, but the Abbess undauntedly held Aurelia firmly clasped in her arms. "Ha, ha, ha!" screamed the madman in a thrilling tone, "would'st thou rob me of my Princess?—Ha, ha, ha!—The Princess is my bride, my bride!"

With these words he tore the fainting Aurelia from the Abbess, and with incredible quickness pulled out a stiletto, elevated it high over her head, and then plunged it into her heart, so that the blood sprung in torrents from the wound.—"Hurrah!—hurrah!" cried the maniac; "now have I won my bride—have won the Princess!" With these words he rushed through the private grating behind the altar, and disappeared.

The church-aisles and vaults reverberated with the deafening shrieks of the nuns, and outcries of the people.—"Murder!—Murder at the altar of the Lord!" cried they, crowding to the spot.

"Watch all the gates of the convent, that the

murderer may not escape !” cried Leonardus, in a loud voice ; and many accordingly left the church, seizing the staves and crosiers that had been used in the procession, and rushing after the monster through the aisles of the convent.

All was the transaction of a moment, and soon after, I was kneeling beside Aurelia, the nuns having, as well as they could, bound up her wound, while others assisted the now fainting Abbess.

“ *Sancta Rosalia, ora pro nobis !*” I heard these words spoken near me in a powerful and steadfast voice ; and all who yet remained in the church cried out, “ A miracle !—A miracle !—She is indeed a martyr ! *Sancta Rosalia, ora pro nobis !*”

I looked up, the old painter stood near, but with a mild earnestness on his features, precisely as when he had appeared to me in the prison. It seemed to me already as if every earthly tie was broken. I felt no pain at the fate of Aurelia, nor could I now experience any apprehension or horror from the apparition of the painter. It seemed, on the contrary, as if the mysterious nets, by which the powers of hell had so long held me en-

tangled, were now completely dissolved and broken.

“A miracle!—A miracle!” shouted again all the people. “Do you see the old man in the violet-coloured mantle? He has descended out of the picture over the high altar!—I saw it!”

“I too!”—“And I too!” cried many confused voices, till again all fell upon their knees, and the tumult subsided into the murmur of zealous prayer, interrupted occasionally by violent sobbing and weeping.

The Abbess at last awoke from her faint.—“Aurelia!” cried she, with the heart-rending tone of deep and violent grief,—“Aurelia, my child! my pious daughter! But why do I complain?—Almighty Heaven, it was thy resolve!”

A kind of bier, or couch, tied on hand-poles, was now brought, on which Aurelia was to be placed. When she was lifted up for this purpose, she opened her eyes, and seeing me beside her, “Medardus,” said she, “thou hast indeed submitted to the temptation of our adversary. But was I then pure from the contamination of sin, when I placed in my affection for thee all my hopes of earthly happiness? An immutable de-

cree of Providence had resolved that we should be the means of expiating the heavy crimes of our ancestors, and thus we were united by a bond of love, whose proper throne is beyond the stars, and the enjoyment of whose votaries partakes nothing in common with terrestrial pleasure.

“ But our watchful and cunning adversary succeeded but too well in concealing from us altogether this true interpretation of our attachment—nay, in such manner to delude and entice us, that we only construed and exemplified that which was in its nature heavenly and spiritual, by means earthly and corporeal.

“ Alas ! was it not I myself, who, in the confessional, betrayed to you my affection, which afterwards, instead of kindling within you the celestial flames of heavenly and everlasting love, degenerated into the fire of selfish and impure passion, which afterwards you endeavoured to quench by unheard-of and enormous crimes ? But, Medardus, be of good courage. The miserable maniac, whom our Arch-Adversary has deluded into the belief that he is transformed into thee, and must fulfil what thou hadst begun, is but the mere tool or implement of that higher Power,

through which the intentions of the latter are fulfilled. Soon, very soon——”

Here Aurelia, who had spoken the last words with her eyes closed, and a voice scarcely audible, fell again into a faint, yet death could not yet triumph over her. Indeed, all that she had said was but in fragments and single words, so broken and disjointed, that it was with much difficulty the sense could be collected, which I have above put together.

“ Has she confessed to you, reverend sir ?” said the nuns. “ Have you consoled her ?”——“ By no means,” said I ; “ she has indeed poured consolation on my mind, but I am unable to aid her !”

“ Happy art thou, Medardus ! Thy trials will soon be at an end, and I then am free !”

It was the painter who still stood near me, and who had spoken these last words. I went up to him, and began,—“ Forsake me not, then, thou wonderful and miraculous man, but remain ever with me !” I know not how my senses, when I wished to speak farther, became, in the strangest manner, confused and lost. I could not bring out a word, but fell into a state betwixt waking and

dreaming, out of which I was roused by loud shouts and outcries.

I now no longer saw the painter. My attention was directed only to a crowd of countrymen, citizens from the town, and soldiers, who had forced their way into the church, and insisted that it should be allowed them to search through every apartment of the convent, as the murderer certainly must be still within its walls. The Abbess, who was afraid of the disorders that would ensue, refused this; but, notwithstanding the influence of her high dignity, she could not appease the minds of the people. They reproached her, on the contrary, with a wish to conceal the murderer, because he was a monk, and, raging more violently, threatened to force for themselves that admittance which she had refused.

Leonardus then mounted the pulpit, and after a few words of admonishment, on the sin of profaning a sanctuary by such tumult, he assured them that the murderer was by no means a monk, but a madman, whom he himself had taken out of compassion into his convent, where he had, to all appearance, died; but, after being carried to the

dead-room, had unaccountably recovered from his supposed death, and escaped, taking with him an old tunic, which, at his earnest request, had been charitably lent to him during his stay in the monastery. If he were now concealed anywhere within these walls, it would be impossible for him, after the precautions that had been taken, to make his escape. The crowd were at last quieted, and permitted the removal of Aurelia.

It was found that the bier on which she was placed could not be carried through the wicket-door behind the altar. It was, therefore, brought in solemn procession through the aisle of the church, and across the court, into the convent. The Abbess, supported by two nuns, walked close behind the bier. Four Cistercian sisters carried over it a canopy, and all the rest followed,—then the brethren of the different orders, and lastly the people, who now behaved with the most respectful silence. The bier was covered with roses and myrtle wreaths; and thus the procession moved slowly on.

The sisters who belonged to the choir must have returned to their station; for as we reached the middle of the long and spacious aisle, deep

fearful tones of the organ sounded mournfully from above. Then, lo! as if awoken by those notes, Aurelia once more raised herself slowly up, and lifted her clasped hands in fervent prayer to Heaven. Again the people fell upon their knees, and called out, "*Sancta Rosalia, ora pro nobis!*" Thus was the vision realized, which, at my first meeting with Aurelia, I had announced, though then actuated only by base and devilish hypocrisy.

The bier was first set down in the great hall of the convent; and as the nuns and the brethren formed a circle, and prayed around her, she suddenly fell into the arms of the Abbess, with a long deep sigh. She was dead!

* * * * *

The multitude were still gathered round the gates, and when the bell announced to them the death of the consecrated virgin, all broke out into new lamentations. Many of them made a vow to remain in the village till after the funeral of Aurelia, and to devote that period to fasting and prayer. The rumour of this fearful event was ra-

pidly spread abroad, so that Aurelia's obsequies, which were solemnized four days thereafter, resembled one of the highest festivals of the church on the canonization of a saint. As formerly, on St Bernard's eve, the convent lawn was covered with a great crowd from the town of Königswald, and from all quarters; but there was no longer to be heard among them the wonted voice of mirth. Their time was spent in sighs and tears; and if a voice was raised aloud, it was but to utter execrations against the murderer, who had supernaturally vanished, nor could a trace of him be discovered.

Far deeper was the influence of these three days (which I spent mostly in the garden-chapel) on the weal of my soul, than my long laborious penitence in the Capuchin Convent of Rome. When I reflected on my past life, I perceived plainly how, although armed and protected from earliest youth with the best lessons of piety and virtue, I had yet, like a pusillanimous coward, yielded to Satan, whose aim was to foster and cherish the criminal race, from which I was sprung, so that its representatives might still be multiplied, and still fettered by bonds of vice and wickedness upon the earth. My sins were but trifling and venial when

“ *Voca me cum benedictis,*” it seemed to me as if I beheld, in the dazzling radiance of celestial light, Aurelia, who first looked down with an expression of saintly compassion upon me, and then lifting up her head, which was surrounded with a dazzling ring of stars, to the Almighty, preferred an ardent supplication for the deliverance of my soul ! At the words, “ *Ora supplex et acclinis cor contritum, quasi cinis,*” I sank down into the dust ; but how different now were my inward feelings of humility and submission, from that *passionate* self-condemnation, those cruel and violent penances, which I had formerly undergone at the Capuchin Convent !

Now, for the first time, my spirit was enabled to distinguish truth from falsehood, and by the new light, which was then shed around me, every temptation of the devil must, from henceforward, remain vain and ineffectual. It was not Aurelia's death, but the cruel and horrible manner in which it had occurred, by which I had been at first so deeply agitated. But how short was the interval, ere I perceived and recognized in its fullest extent, even in this event, the goodness and mercy of Heaven ! The martyrdom of the pious, the

tried, and absolved bride ! Had she then died for my sake ? No ! It was not till now, after she had been withdrawn from this world, that she appeared to me like a dazzling gleam, sent down from the realms of eternal love, to brighten the path of an unhappy sinner. Aurelia's death was, as she had before said, our marriage festival, the solemnization of that love, which, like a celestial essence, has its throne and dominion above the stars, and admits nought in common with grovelling and perishable earthly pleasures ! These thoughts indeed raised me above myself ; and accordingly these three days in the Cistercian Convent might truly be called the happiest of my life.

After the funeral obsequies, which took place on the fourth day, Leonardus was on the point of returning with the brethren home to his own convent. When their procession was ready to set out, the Abbess summoned me to a private audience. I found her alone, in her high vaulted parlour, the same room wherein I had my first introduction, and which then inspired me with such awe and terror. She was now in the greatest emotion, and tears burst involuntarily from her eyes.

“ Son Medardus ! ” said she, “ for I can again

address you thus, all now is known and explained to me, so that I have no questions to ask. You have at last survived the temptations by which, unhappy and worthy to be pitied, you were assailed and overtaken! Alas, Medardus, only she, *she* alone, who intercedes for us at the judgment throne of Heaven, is pure from sin. Did I not stand on the very brink of the abyss, when, with a heart given up to the allurements of earthly pleasure, I was on the point of selling myself to a murderer? And yet, son Medardus, and yet I have wept sinful tears in my lonely cell, when thinking of your father! Go then, in God's name. Every apprehension by which I have often been assailed, that in you I had reared and educated even the most wicked of the race, is banished from my soul. Farewell!"

* * * * *

Leonardus, who had no doubt revealed to the Abbess whatever circumstances of my life remained yet unknown to her, proved to me by his conduct that he also had forgiven me, and recommended me in his prayers to Heaven. The old

regulations of the conventual life remained unbroken, and I was allowed to take my place, on an equal footing with the brethren, as formerly.

One day the Prior desired to speak with me. "Brother Medardus," said he, "I should like still to impose upon you one act of penitence."—I humbly inquired wherein this was to consist. "I advise you," answered Leonardus, "to commit to paper a history of your life. In your manuscript do not leave out any incident—not only of those which are leading and important, but even such as are comparatively insignificant. Especially, detail at great length whatever happened to you in the varied scenes of the profane world. Your imagination will probably by this means carry you back into that life which you have now for ever renounced. All that was absurd or solemn, mirthful or horrible, will be once more vividly impressed on your senses; nay, it is possible, that you may for a moment look upon Aurelia, not as a nun and a martyr, but as she once appeared in the world. Yet if the Evil One has wholly lost his dominion over you; if you have indeed turned away your affections from all that is terrestrial, then you will hover, like a disen-

gaged spirit, as if on seraph's wings, above all these earthly remembrances, and the impression thus called up will vanish without leaving any trace behind."

I did as the Prior had commanded; and, alas! the consequences were such as he had desired me to expect. A tempest of conflicting emotions, of pain and pleasure, of desire and abhorrence, rose in my heart as I revived the circumstances of my life. Thou, to whom I have already addressed myself, who mayest one day read these pages, I spoke to thee more than once of the highest meridian sun-light of love, when Aurelia's image arose in all its celestial beauty on my soul. But there is a love far different from terrestrial passion, (which last generally works its own destruction.)—There is another and far different love, and in *this* may be truly found that meridian sun-light which I described, when, far removed above the influences of earthly desire, the beloved object, like a gleam from heaven, kindles in thy heart all the highest, the holiest, and most blissful inspirations which are shed down from the realms of the saints on poor mortals. By this thought have I been refreshed and comforted, when, on my remembrance

of the most seductive moments which this world bestowed on me, tears yet gushed from mine eyes, and wounds, long cicatrized, broke open and bled anew.

I know that probably in the hour of death the adversary will yet have power to torment me. But steadfastly, and with fervent longing, I wait for the moment which is to withdraw me from this life; for it is on that event that the fulfilment of all that Aurelia, all that the blessed St Rosalia, has promised to me, depends. Pray—pray for me, oh, ye beatified Virgin! in that dark hour, that the powers of hell, to which I have so often yielded, may not once more, and for the last time, conquer me, and tear me with him to the abyss of everlasting destruction!

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CHAPTER XXIII.

*Additions by Father Spiridion, Librarian of the
Capuchin Monastery at Königswald.*

IN the night of the 3d-4th September, in this year 17—, much that is worthy of being recorded has happened in our monastery. It might be about midnight, when, in the cell of Brother Medardus, which was next to mine, I overheard a strange noise of stammering and laughing, which continued for a considerable time; and at intervals I heard also obscure sounds of lamentation, sobbing, and groaning. It seemed to me as if I could distinguish the articulate accents of a most disagreeable broken voice, from which I involuntarily recoiled and shuddered, and which pronounced the words "*Brüd-er-lein! Brüd-er-lein!*—Come with me—Come with me.—The bride is here—The bride is here!"—I immediately started up, and

wished to inquire for Brother Medardus; but then there fell upon me an unaccountable and supernatural horror, so that my limbs shook and my jaws clattered, as if in the cold fit of an ague. Thereafter, I went not into the cell of Brother Medardus, but to the Prior, and, with some trouble, woke him from his sleep. The Prior was much alarmed by my description of what I had heard, and desired me to bring consecrated candles, and then we should both go to the assistance of Medardus. I did as he commanded me, lighted the candles at the lamp beside the image of the blessed Virgin in the aisle, and we went along the corridor, till we came near the cell. There Leonardus stood for some time, listening at the door; but the voice which I had described to him was no longer to be heard. On the contrary, we observed a pleasant silvery sound, as of the ringing of bells, and methought the air was filled with the fragrance of roses. Leonardus was about to enter, when the door opened, and lo! there stepped forth the form of a very tall man, with a long white beard, attired in a dark violet-coloured mantle. I was indescribably terrified, knowing well that this must be a supernatural apparition, for the convent

gates were all firmly locked, and it was impossible for any stranger, without my knowledge, to have gained admittance. Leonardus, however, looked at him boldly, though without uttering a word. "The hour of fulfilment is not far distant," said the figure, in a tone very hollow and solemn. With these words he vanished in the obscurity of the corridor, so that my fear was greatly increased, and I had almost let the candles fall out of my hand. The Prior, who, by his extreme piety and strength of faith, is wholly protected from any such fear of ghosts, took me by the arm. "Now," said he, "let us go, and speak with Brother Medardus." We entered accordingly, and found our brother, who for some time past had been in very weak health, already dying. He could no longer speak, and breathed with great difficulty. The Prior assisted him; and I went to ring the great bell, and awaken the brethren. "Rise up—rise up," cried I in a loud voice; "Brother Medardus is on the point of death." They all attended on the instant, so that not one of our number was wanting, and stood, with consecrated candles in their hands, round the couch of the dying man, every one feeling for him deep regret and com-

passion. Leonardus commanded that he should be laid on a bier, carried down to the church, and placed before the high altar, which was accordingly done. There, to our utter astonishment, he recovered, and began to speak. Leonardus, after confession and absolution had been regularly gone through, administered the last unction. Thereupon, while the Prior continued with the dying man, consoling and supporting him, we betook ourselves to the choir, and sang the usual dirge for the soul's weal of our departing brother. On the following day, namely, on the 5th September, 17—, exactly as the convent clock struck twelve, Brother Medardus expired in the arms of the Prior. We remarked that it was precisely on the same day, and at the same hour, in the preceding year, that the nun Rosalia, in a horrible manner, just after she had taken the vows, had been murdered.

At the funeral, during the requiem also, the following circumstance occurred. We perceived that the air was strongly perfumed by roses, and on looking round, saw, that to the celebrated picture of St Rosalia's martyrdom, painted by an old unknown Italian artist, (which was purchased for

a large sum by our convent, in Rome,) there was a large garland affixed, of the finest and freshest roses, which at this late season had become very rare. The porter said, that early in the morning a ragged, very miserable-looking beggar, unobserved by any of us, had climbed up to the picture, and hung on it this wreath. The same beggar made his appearance before the funeral was over, and forced his way among the brethren. We intended to order him away; but when Leonardus had sharply looked at, and seemed to recognize him, he was allowed, by the Prior's order, to remain. He was afterwards, by his earnest entreaty, received as a lay-monk into the convent, by the name of Brother Peter, as he had been in the world called Peter Schönfield; and we granted him this honoured name so much the more readily, as he was always very quiet and well-behaved, only now and then made strange grimaces, and laughed very absurdly, which, however, as it could not be called sinful, only served for our diversion. The Prior said, that Brother Peter's intellectual light was quenched and obscured by the vapours of folly, so that nothing in this world appeared to him without being strangely caricatured

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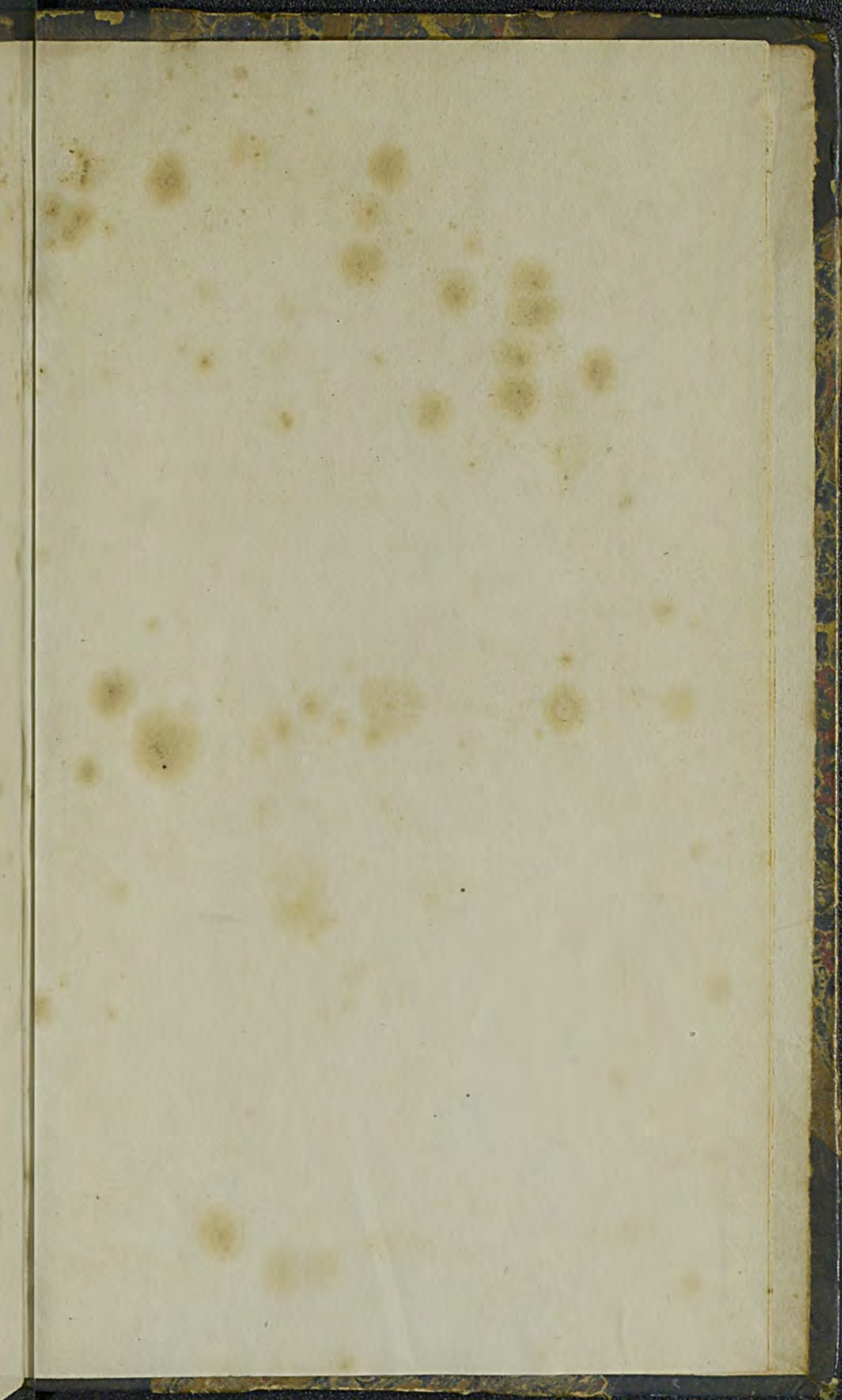
and metamorphosed. We scarcely understood what the learned Prior meant by these allusions, but perceived that he had known something of the former life of our lay-brother Peter, which induced him charitably to admit the poor man among us.

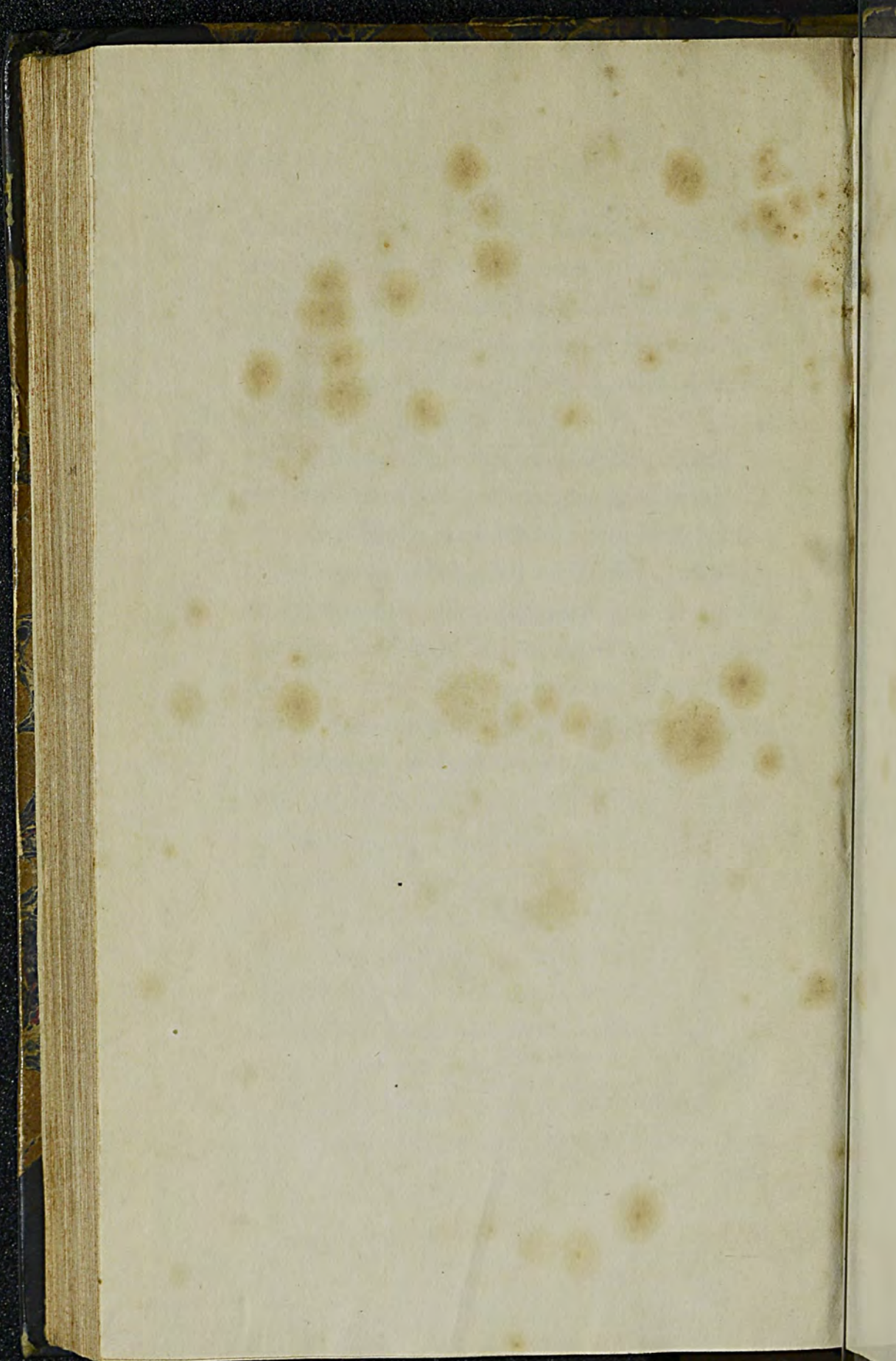
Thus to the manuscript, which is said to contain an account of our late brother's life, (but which I have not read,) I have added, not without labour, and all to the greater glory of God and our religion, this circumstantial history of his death. Peace to the soul of Medardus, and may the Almighty one day call him to a blessed resurrection, and receive him into the choir of the saints, for his death was indeed very pious !

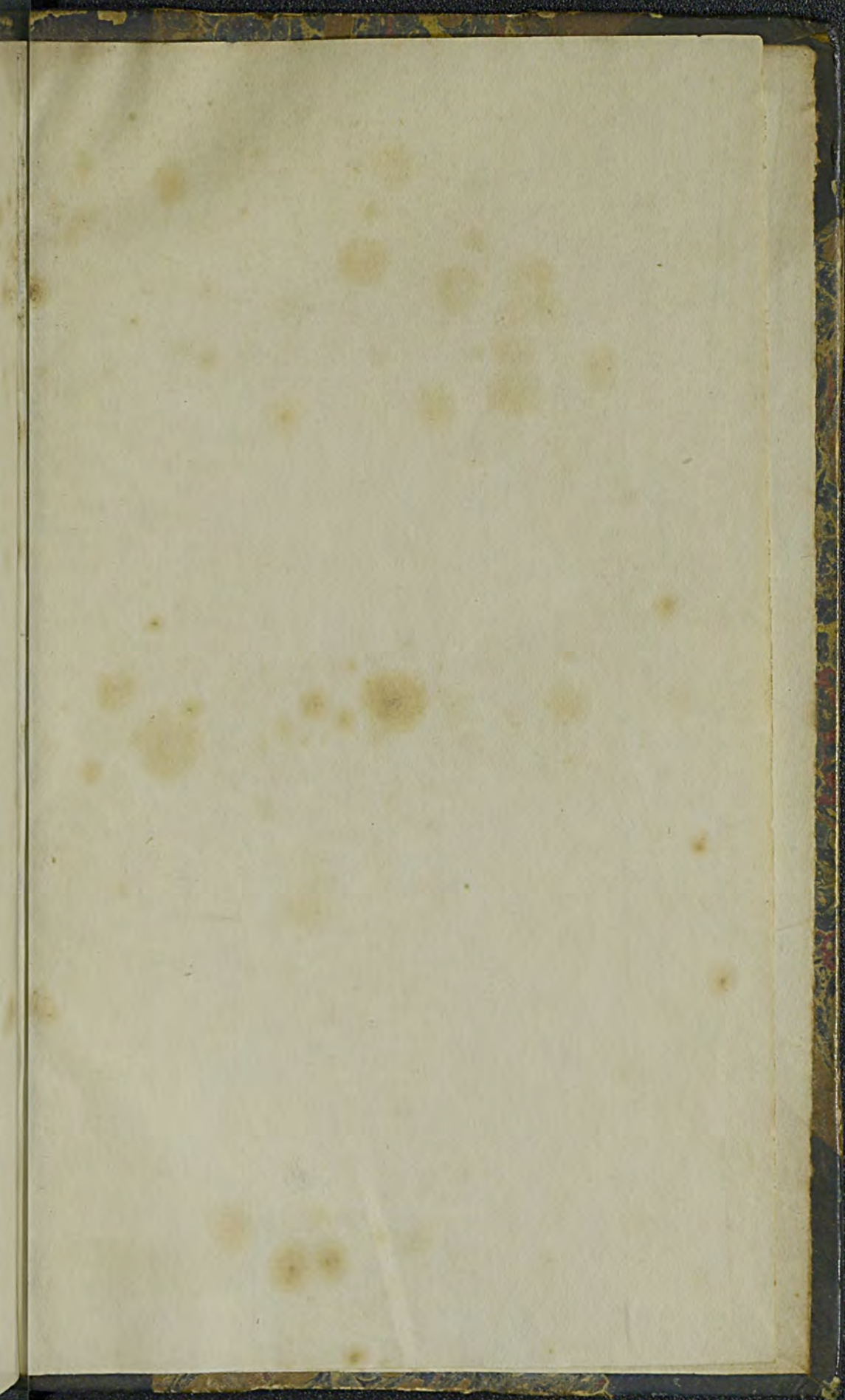
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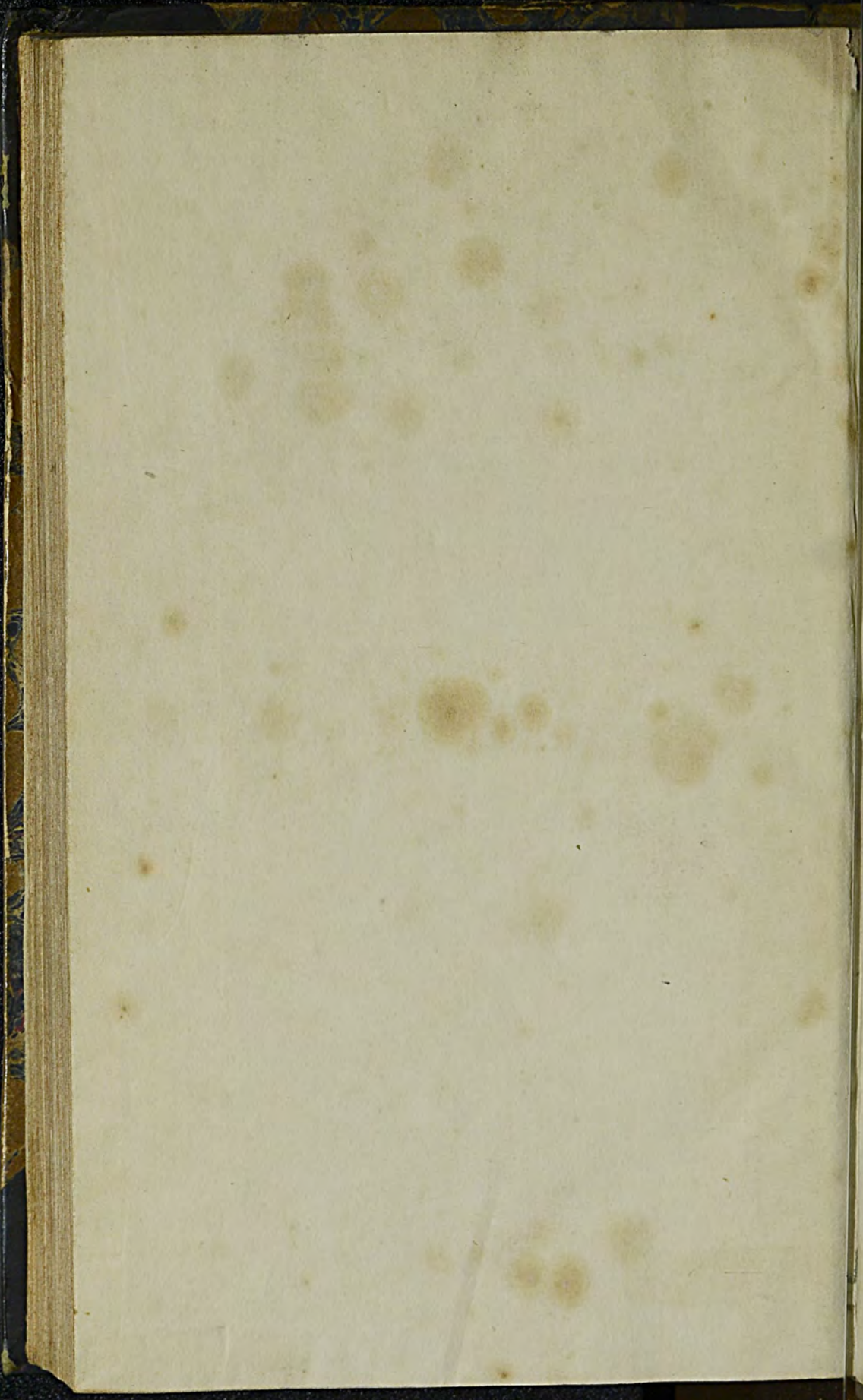
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