

The image shows a long, perspective view of a Gothic-style stone hallway. The ceiling is a complex ribbed vault with intricate carvings. The floor is made of large, dark stone tiles. The walls are lined with columns and arches. At the far end of the hallway, there is a bright light source, possibly a window or an open doorway, creating a strong contrast with the dark interior. The overall atmosphere is one of grandeur and historical significance.

M. G. Lewis

The Monk

M. G. LEWIS

THE MONK



A ROMANCE





LONDON · NEW YORK · TORONTO · SAO PAULO · MOSCOW
PARIS · MADRID · BERLIN · ROME · MEXICO CITY · MUMBAI · SEOUL · DOHA
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New Edition

Published by Fractal Press
www.fractal-press.co.uk

This Edition first published in 2016
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ISBN: 9781911495611

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PREFACE

IMITATION OF HORACE Ep. 20.—B. 1.

Methinks, Oh! vain ill-judging Book,
I see thee cast a wishful look,
Where reputations won and lost are
In famous row called Paternoster.
Incensed to find your precious olio
Buried in unexplored port-folio,
You scorn the prudent lock and key,
And pant well bound and gilt to see
Your Volume in the window set
Of Stockdale, Hookham, or Debrett.

Go then, and pass that dangerous bourn
Whence never Book can back return:
And when you find, condemned, despised,
Neglected, blamed, and criticised,
Abuse from All who read you fall,
(If haply you be read at all
Sorely will you your folly sigh at,
And wish for me, and home, and quiet.

Assuming now a conjuror's office, I
Thus on your future Fortune prophesy:—
Soon as your novelty is o'er,
And you are young and new no more,
In some dark dirty corner thrown,
Mouldy with damps, with cobwebs strown,
Your leaves shall be the Book-worm's prey;
Or sent to Chandler-Shop away,
And doomed to suffer public scandal,
Shall line the trunk, or wrap the candle!

But should you meet with approbation,

And some one find an inclination
To ask, by natural transition
Respecting me and my condition;
That I am one, the enquirer teach,
Nor very poor, nor very rich;
Of passions strong, of hasty nature,
Of graceless form and dwarfish stature;
By few approved, and few approving;
Extreme in hating and in loving;
 Abhorring all whom I dislike,
Adoring who my fancy strike;
In forming judgements never long,
And for the most part judging wrong;
In friendship firm, but still believing
Others are treacherous and deceiving,
And thinking in the present aera
That Friendship is a pure chimaera:
More passionate no creature living,
Proud, obstinate, and unforgiving,
But yet for those who kindness show,
Ready through fire and smoke to go.

 Again, should it be asked your page,
‘Pray, what may be the author’s age?’
Your faults, no doubt, will make it clear,
I scarce have seen my twentieth year,
Which passed, kind Reader, on my word,
While England’s Throne held George the Third.

 Now then your venturous course pursue:
Go, my delight! Dear Book, adieu!
Hague,
Oct. 28, 1794. M. G. L.

VOLUME I

CHAPTER I

—Lord Angelo is precise;
Stands at a guard with envy; Scarce confesses
That his blood flows, or that his appetite
Is more to bread than stone.
Measure for Measure.

Scarcely had the Abbey Bell tolled for five minutes, and already was the Church of the Capuchins thronged with Auditors. Do not encourage the idea that the Crowd was assembled either from motives of piety or thirst of information. But very few were influenced by those reasons; and in a city where superstition reigns with such despotic sway as in Madrid, to seek for true devotion would be a fruitless attempt. The Audience now assembled in the Capuchin Church was collected by various causes, but all of them were foreign to the ostensible motive. The Women came to show themselves, the Men to see the Women: Some were attracted by curiosity to hear an Orator so celebrated; Some came because they had no better means of employing their time till the play began; Some, from being assured that it would be impossible to find places in the Church; and one half of Madrid was brought thither by expecting to meet the other half. The only persons truly anxious to hear the Preacher were a few antiquated devotees, and half a dozen rival Orators, determined to find fault with and ridicule the discourse. As to the remainder of the Audience, the Sermon might have been omitted altogether, certainly without their being disappointed, and very probably without their perceiving the omission.

Whatever was the occasion, it is at least certain that the Capuchin Church had never witnessed a more numerous assembly. Every corner was filled, every seat was occupied. The very Statues which ornamented the long aisles were pressed into the service. Boys suspended themselves upon the wings of Cherubims; St. Francis and St. Mark bore each a spectator on his shoulders; and St. Agatha found herself under the necessity of carrying double. The consequence was, that in spite of all their hurry and expedition, our two newcomers, on entering the Church, looked round in vain for places.

However, the old Woman continued to move forwards. In vain were exclamations of displeasure vented against her from all sides: In vain was She addressed with—'I assure you, Segnora, there are no places here.'—'I beg, Segnora, that you will not crowd me so intolerably!'—'Segnora, you cannot pass this way. Bless me! How can people be so troublesome!'—The old Woman was obstinate, and on She went. By dint of perseverance and two brawny arms She made a passage through the Crowd, and managed to bustle herself into the very body of the Church, at no great distance from the Pulpit. Her companion had followed her with timidity and in silence, profiting by the exertions of her conductress.

'Holy Virgin!' exclaimed the old Woman in a tone of disappointment, while She threw a glance of enquiry round her; 'Holy Virgin! What heat! What a Crowd! I wonder what can be the meaning of all this. I believe we must return: There is no such thing as a seat to be had, and nobody seems kind enough to accommodate us with theirs.'

This broad hint attracted the notice of two Cavaliers, who occupied stools on the right hand, and were leaning their backs against the seventh column from the Pulpit. Both were young, and richly habited. Hearing this appeal to their politeness pronounced in a female voice, they interrupted their conversation to look at the speaker. She had thrown up her veil in order to take a clearer look round the Cathedral. Her hair was red, and She squinted. The Cavaliers turned round, and renewed their

conversation.

‘By all means,’ replied the old Woman’s companion; ‘By all means, Leonella, let us return home immediately; The heat is excessive, and I am terrified at such a crowd.’

These words were pronounced in a tone of unexampled sweetness. The Cavaliers again broke off their discourse, but for this time they were not contented with looking up: Both started involuntarily from their seats, and turned themselves towards the Speaker.

The voice came from a female, the delicacy and elegance of whose figure inspired the Youths with the most lively curiosity to view the face to which it belonged. This satisfaction was denied them. Her features were hidden by a thick veil; But struggling through the crowd had deranged it sufficiently to discover a neck which for symmetry and beauty might have vied with the Medicean Venus. It was of the most dazzling whiteness, and received additional charms from being shaded by the tresses of her long fair hair, which descended in ringlets to her waist. Her figure was rather below than above the middle size: It was light and airy as that of an Hamadryad. Her bosom was carefully veiled. Her dress was white; it was fastened by a blue sash, and just permitted to peep out from under it a little foot of the most delicate proportions. A chaplet of large grains hung upon her arm, and her face was covered with a veil of thick black gauze. Such was the female, to whom the youngest of the Cavaliers now offered his seat, while the other thought it necessary to pay the same attention to her companion.

The old Lady with many expressions of gratitude, but without much difficulty, accepted the offer, and seated herself: The young one followed her example, but made no other compliment than a simple and graceful reverence. Don Lorenzo (such was the Cavalier’s name, whose seat She had accepted) placed himself near her; But first He whispered a few words in his Friend’s ear, who immediately took the hint, and endeavoured to draw off the old Woman’s attention from her lovely charge.

‘You are doubtless lately arrived at Madrid,’ said Lorenzo to his fair Neighbour; ‘It is impossible that such charms should have long remained unobserved; and had not this been your first public appearance, the envy of the Women and adoration of the Men would have rendered you already sufficiently remarkable.’

He paused, in expectation of an answer. As his speech did not absolutely require one, the Lady did not open her lips: After a few moments He resumed his discourse:

‘Am I wrong in supposing you to be a Stranger to Madrid?’

The Lady hesitated; and at last, in so low a voice as to be scarcely intelligible, She made shift to answer,—‘No, Segnor.’

‘Do you intend making a stay of any length?’

‘Yes, Segnor.’

‘I should esteem myself fortunate, were it in my power to contribute to making your abode agreeable. I am well known at Madrid, and my Family has some interest at Court. If I can be of any service, you cannot honour or oblige me more than by permitting me to be of use to you.’—‘Surely,’ said He to himself, ‘She cannot answer that by a monosyllable; now She must say something to me.’

Lorenzo was deceived, for the Lady answered only by a bow.

By this time He had discovered that his Neighbour was not very conversible; But whether her silence proceeded from pride, discretion, timidity, or idiotism, He was still unable to decide.

After a pause of some minutes—‘It is certainly from your being a Stranger,’ said He, ‘and as yet unacquainted with our customs, that you continue to wear your veil. Permit me to remove it.’

At the same time He advanced his hand towards the Gauze: The Lady raised hers to prevent him.

‘I never unveil in public, Segnor.’

‘And where is the harm, I pray you?’ interrupted her Companion somewhat sharply; ‘Do not you see that the other Ladies have all laid their veils aside, to do honour no doubt to the holy place in which we are? I have taken off mine already; and surely if I expose my features to general observation, you have no cause to put yourself in such a wonderful alarm! Blessed Maria! Here is a fuss and a bustle about a chit’s face! Come, come, Child! Uncover it; I warrant you that nobody will run away with it from you—’

‘Dear aunt, it is not the custom in Murcia.’

‘Murcia, indeed! Holy St. Barbara, what does that signify? You are always putting me in mind of that villainous Province. If it is the custom in Madrid, that is all that we ought to mind, and therefore I desire you to take off your veil immediately. Obey me this moment Antonia, for you know that I cannot bear contradiction—’

Her niece was silent, but made no further opposition to Don Lorenzo’s efforts, who, armed with the Aunt’s sanction hastened to remove the Gauze. What a Seraph’s head presented itself to his admiration! Yet it was rather bewitching than beautiful; It was not so lovely from regularity of features as from sweetness and sensibility of Countenance. The several parts of her face considered separately, many of them were far from handsome; but when examined together, the whole was adorable. Her skin though fair was not entirely without freckles; Her eyes were not very large, nor their lashes particularly long. But then her lips were of the most rosy freshness; Her fair and undulating hair, confined by a simple ribband, poured itself below her waist in a profusion of ringlets; Her throat was full and beautiful in the extreme; Her hand and arm were formed with the most perfect symmetry; Her mild blue eyes seemed an heaven of sweetness, and the crystal in which they moved sparkled with all the brilliance of Diamonds: She appeared to be scarcely fifteen; An arch smile, playing round her mouth, declared her to be possessed

of liveliness, which excess of timidity at present repress; She looked round her with a bashful glance; and whenever her eyes accidentally met Lorenzo's, She dropt them hastily upon her Rosary; Her cheek was immediately suffused with blushes, and She began to tell her beads; though her manner evidently showed that She knew not what She was about.

Lorenzo gazed upon her with mingled surprise and admiration; but the Aunt thought it necessary to apologize for Antonia's mauvaise honte.

'Tis a young Creature,' said She, 'who is totally ignorant of the world. She has been brought up in an old Castle in Murcia; with no other Society than her Mother's, who, God help her! has no more sense, good Soul, than is necessary to carry her Soup to her mouth. Yet She is my own Sister, both by Father and Mother.'

'And has so little sense?' said Don Christoval with feigned astonishment; 'How very Extraordinary!'

'Very true, Segnor; Is it not strange? However, such is the fact; and yet only to see the luck of some people! A young Nobleman, of the very first quality, took it into his head that Elvira had some pretensions to Beauty—As to pretensions, in truth, She had always enough of THEM; But as to Beauty....! If I had only taken half the pains to set myself off which She did....! But this is neither here nor there. As I was saying, Segnor, a young Nobleman fell in love with her, and married her unknown to his Father. Their union remained a secret near three years, But at last it came to the ears of the old Marquis, who, as you may well suppose, was not much pleased with the intelligence. Away He posted in all haste to Cordova, determined to seize Elvira, and send her away to some place or other, where She would never be heard of more. Holy St. Paul! How He stormed on finding that She had escaped him, had joined her Husband, and that they had embarked together for the Indies. He swore at us all, as if the Evil Spirit had possessed him; He threw my Father into prison, as honest a painstaking Shoe-maker as any in Cordova; and when He went away, He had the cruelty to take from us my Sister's little Boy, then scarcely two years old, and whom in the

abruptness of her flight, She had been obliged to leave behind her. I suppose, that the poor little Wretch met with bitter bad treatment from him, for in a few months after, we received intelligence of his death.'

'Why, this was a most terrible old Fellow, Signora!'

'Oh! shocking! and a Man so totally devoid of taste! Why, would you believe it, Segnor? When I attempted to pacify him, He cursed me for a Witch, and wished that to punish the Count, my Sister might become as ugly as myself! Ugly indeed! I like him for that.'

'Ridiculous', cried Don Christoval; 'Doubtless the Count would have thought himself fortunate, had he been permitted to exchange the one Sister for the other.'

'Oh! Christ! Segnor, you are really too polite. However, I am heartily glad that the Conde was of a different way of thinking. A mighty pretty piece of business, to be sure, Elvira has made of it! After broiling and stewing in the Indies for thirteen long years, her Husband dies, and She returns to Spain, without an House to hide her head, or money to procure her one! This Antonia was then but an Infant, and her only remaining Child. She found that her Father-in-Law had married again, that he was irreconcilable to the Conde, and that his second Wife had produced him a Son, who is reported to be a very fine young Man. The old Marquis refused to see my Sister or her Child; But sent her word that on condition of never hearing any more of her, He would assign her a small pension, and She might live in an old Castle which He possessed in Murcia; This had been the favourite habitation of his eldest Son; But since his flight from Spain, the old Marquis could not bear the place, but let it fall to ruin and confusion—My Sister accepted the proposal; She retired to Murcia, and has remained there till within the last Month.'

'And what brings her now to Madrid?' enquired Don Lorenzo, whom admiration of the young Antonia compelled to take a lively interest in the talkative old Woman's narration.

‘Alas! Segnor, her Father-in-Law being lately dead, the Steward of his Murcian Estates has refused to pay her pension any longer.

With the design of supplicating his Son to renew it, She is now come to Madrid; But I doubt, that She might have saved herself the trouble! You young Noblemen have always enough to do with your money, and are not very often disposed to throw it away upon old Women. I advised my Sister to send Antonia with her petition; But She would not hear of such a thing. She is so obstinate! Well! She will find herself the worse for not following my counsels: the Girl has a good pretty face, and possibly might have done much.’

‘Ah! Segnora,’ interrupted Don Christoval, counterfeiting a passionate air; ‘If a pretty face will do the business, why has not your Sister recourse to you?’

‘Oh! Jesus! my Lord, I swear you quite overpower me with your gallantry! But I promise you that I am too well aware of the danger of such Expeditions to trust myself in a young Nobleman’s power! No, no; I have as yet preserved my reputation without blemish or reproach, and I always knew how to keep the Men at a proper distance.’

‘Of that, Segnora, I have not the least doubt. But permit me to ask you; Have you then any aversion to Matrimony?’

‘That is an home question. I cannot but confess, that if an amiable Cavalier was to present himself...’

Here She intended to throw a tender and significant look upon Don Christoval; But, as She unluckily happened to squint most abominably, the glance fell directly upon his Companion: Lorenzo took the compliment to himself, and answered it by a profound bow.

‘May I enquire,’ said He, ‘the name of the Marquis?’

‘The Marquis de las Cisternas.’

‘I know him intimately well. He is not at present in Madrid, but is expected here daily. He is one of the best of Men; and if the lovely Antonia will permit me to be her Advocate with him, I doubt not my being able to make a favourable report of her cause.’

Antonia raised her blue eyes, and silently thanked him for the offer by a smile of inexpressible sweetness. Leonella’s satisfaction was much more loud and audible: Indeed, as her Niece was generally silent in her company, She thought it incumbent upon her to talk enough for both: This She managed without difficulty, for She very seldom found herself deficient in words.

‘Oh! Segnor!’ She cried; ‘You will lay our whole family under the most signal obligations! I accept your offer with all possible gratitude, and return you a thousand thanks for the generosity of your proposal. Antonia, why do not you speak, Child? While the Cavalier says all sorts of civil things to you, you sit like a Statue, and never utter a syllable of thanks, either bad, good, or indifferent!’

‘My dear Aunt, I am very sensible that....’

‘Fye, Niece! How often have I told you, that you never should interrupt a Person who is speaking! When did you ever know me do such a thing? Are these your Murcian manners? Mercy on me! I shall never be able to make this Girl any thing like a Person of good breeding. But pray, Segnor,’ She continued, addressing herself to Don Christoval, ‘inform me, why such a Crowd is assembled today in this Cathedral?’

‘Can you possibly be ignorant, that Ambrosio, Abbot of this Monastery, pronounces a Sermon in this Church every Thursday? All Madrid rings with his praises. As yet He has preached but thrice; But all who have heard him are so delighted with his eloquence, that it is as difficult to obtain a place at Church, as at the first representation of a new Comedy. His fame certainly must have reached your ears—’

‘Alas! Segnor, till yesterday I never had the good fortune to see Madrid; and at Cordova we are so little informed of what is passing in the rest of the world, that the name of Ambrosio has never been mentioned in its precincts.’

‘You will find it in every one’s mouth at Madrid. He seems to have fascinated the Inhabitants; and not having attended his Sermons myself, I am astonished at the Enthusiasm which He has excited. The adoration paid him both by Young and Old, by Man and Woman is unexampled. The Grandees load him with presents; Their Wives refuse to have any other Confessor, and he is known through all the city by the name of the “Man of Holiness”.’

‘Undoubtedly, Segnor, He is of noble origin—’

‘That point still remains undecided. The late Superior of the Capuchins found him while yet an Infant at the Abbey door. All attempts to discover who had left him there were vain, and the Child himself could give no account of his Parents. He was educated in the Monastery, where He has remained ever since. He early showed a strong inclination for study and retirement, and as soon as He was of a proper age, He pronounced his vows. No one has ever appeared to claim him, or clear up the mystery which conceals his birth; and the Monks, who find their account in the favour which is shewn to their establishment from respect to him, have not hesitated to publish that He is a present to them from the Virgin. In truth the singular austerity of his life gives some countenance to the report. He is now thirty years old, every hour of which period has been passed in study, total seclusion from the world, and mortification of the flesh. Till these last three weeks, when He was chosen superior of the Society to which He belongs, He had never been on the outside of the Abbey walls: Even now He never quits them except on Thursdays, when He delivers a discourse in this Cathedral which all Madrid assembles to hear. His knowledge is said to be the most profound, his eloquence the most persuasive. In the whole course of his life He has never been known to transgress a single rule of his order; The smallest stain is not to be discovered upon his character; and He is reported to be so strict an observer of Chastity, that He

knows not in what consists the difference of Man and Woman. The common People therefore esteem him to be a Saint.'

'Does that make a Saint?' enquired Antonia; 'Bless me! Then am I one?'

'Holy St. Barbara!' exclaimed Leonella; 'What a question! Fye, Child, Fye! These are not fit subjects for young Women to handle. You should not seem to remember that there is such a thing as a Man in the world, and you ought to imagine every body to be of the same sex with yourself. I should like to see you give people to understand, that you know that a Man has no breasts, and no hips, and no ...'

Luckily for Antonia's ignorance which her Aunt's lecture would soon have dispelled, an universal murmur through the Church announced the Preacher's arrival. Donna Leonella rose from her seat to take a better view of him, and Antonia followed her example.

He was a Man of noble port and commanding presence. His stature was lofty, and his features uncommonly handsome. His Nose was aquiline, his eyes large black and sparkling, and his dark brows almost joined together. His complexion was of a deep but clear Brown; Study and watching had entirely deprived his cheek of colour. Tranquillity reigned upon his smooth unwrinkled forehead; and Content, expressed upon every feature, seemed to announce the Man equally unacquainted with cares and crimes. He bowed himself with humility to the audience: Still there was a certain severity in his look and manner that inspired universal awe, and few could sustain the glance of his eye at once fiery and penetrating. Such was Ambrosio, Abbot of the Capuchins, and surnamed, 'The Man of Holiness'.

Antonia, while She gazed upon him eagerly, felt a pleasure fluttering in her bosom which till then had been unknown to her, and for which She in vain endeavoured to account. She waited with impatience till the Sermon should begin; and when at length the Friar spoke, the sound of his voice seemed to penetrate into her very soul. Though no other of the Spectators felt

such violent sensations as did the young Antonia, yet every one listened with interest and emotion. They who were insensible to Religion's merits, were still enchanted with Ambrosio's oratory. All found their attention irresistibly attracted while He spoke, and the most profound silence reigned through the crowded Aisles.

Even Lorenzo could not resist the charm: He forgot that Antonia was seated near him, and listened to the Preacher with undivided attention.

In language nervous, clear, and simple, the Monk expatiated on the beauties of Religion. He explained some abstruse parts of the sacred writings in a style that carried with it universal conviction. His voice at once distinct and deep was fraught with all the terrors of the Tempest, while He inveighed against the vices of humanity, and described the punishments reserved for them in a future state. Every Hearer looked back upon his past offences, and trembled: The Thunder seemed to roll, whose bolt was destined to crush him, and the abyss of eternal destruction to open before his feet. But when Ambrosio, changing his theme, spoke of the excellence of an unsullied conscience, of the glorious prospect which Eternity presented to the Soul untainted with reproach, and of the recompense which awaited it in the regions of everlasting glory, His Auditors felt their scattered spirits insensibly return. They threw themselves with confidence upon the mercy of their Judge; They hung with delight upon the consoling words of the Preacher; and while his full voice swelled into melody, They were transported to those happy regions which He painted to their imaginations in colours so brilliant and glowing.

The discourse was of considerable length; Yet when it concluded, the Audience grieved that it had not lasted longer. Though the Monk had ceased to speak, enthusiastic silence still prevailed through the Church: At length the charm gradually dissolving, the general admiration was expressed in audible terms. As Ambrosio descended from the Pulpit, His Auditors crowded round him, loaded him with blessings, threw themselves at his feet, and kissed the hem of his Garment. He passed

on slowly with his hands crossed devoutly upon his bosom, to the door opening into the Abbey Chapel, at which his Monks waited to receive him. He ascended the Steps, and then turning towards his Followers, addressed to them a few words of gratitude, and exhortation. While He spoke, his Rosary, composed of large grains of amber, fell from his hand, and dropped among the surrounding multitude. It was seized eagerly, and immediately divided amidst the Spectators. Whoever became possessor of a Bead, preserved it as a sacred relique; and had it been the Chaplet of thrice-blessed St. Francis himself, it could not have been disputed with greater vivacity. The Abbot, smiling at their eagerness, pronounced his benediction, and quitted the Church, while humility dwelt upon every feature. Dwelt She also in his heart?

Antonia's eyes followed him with anxiety. As the Door closed after him, it seemed to her as had she lost some one essential to her happiness. A tear stole in silence down her cheek.

'He is separated from the world!' said She to herself; 'Perhaps, I shall never see him more!'

As she wiped away the tear, Lorenzo observed her action.

'Are you satisfied with our Orator?' said He; 'Or do you think that Madrid overrates his talents?'

Antonia's heart was so filled with admiration for the Monk, that She eagerly seized the opportunity of speaking of him: Besides, as She now no longer considered Lorenzo as an absolute Stranger, She was less embarrassed by her excessive timidity.

'Oh! He far exceeds all my expectations,' answered She; 'Till this moment I had no idea of the powers of eloquence. But when He spoke, his voice inspired me with such interest, such esteem, I might almost say such affection for him, that I am myself astonished at the acuteness of my feelings.'

Lorenzo smiled at the strength of her expressions.

‘You are young and just entering into life,’ said He; ‘Your heart, new to the world and full of warmth and sensibility, receives its first impressions with eagerness. Artless yourself, you suspect not others of deceit; and viewing the world through the medium of your own truth and innocence, you fancy all who surround you to deserve your confidence and esteem. What pity, that these gay visions must soon be dissipated! What pity, that you must soon discover the baseness of mankind, and guard against your fellow-creatures as against your Foes!’

‘Alas! Segnor,’ replied Antonia; ‘The misfortunes of my Parents have already placed before me but too many sad examples of the perfidy of the world! Yet surely in the present instance the warmth of sympathy cannot have deceived me.’

‘In the present instance, I allow that it has not. Ambrosio’s character is perfectly without reproach; and a Man who has passed the whole of his life within the walls of a Convent cannot have found the opportunity to be guilty, even were He possessed of the inclination. But now, when, obliged by the duties of his situation, He must enter occasionally into the world, and be thrown into the way of temptation, it is now that it behoves him to show the brilliance of his virtue. The trial is dangerous; He is just at that period of life when the passions are most vigorous, unbridled, and despotic; His established reputation will mark him out to Seduction as an illustrious Victim; Novelty will give additional charms to the allurements of pleasure; and even the Talents with which Nature has endowed him will contribute to his ruin, by facilitating the means of obtaining his object. Very few would return victorious from a contest so severe.’

‘Ah! surely Ambrosio will be one of those few.’

‘Of that I have myself no doubt: By all accounts He is an exception to mankind in general, and Envy would seek in vain for a blot upon his character.’

‘Segnor, you delight me by this assurance! It encourages me to indulge my prepossession in his favour; and you know not with what pain I should have repressed the sentiment! Ah! dearest

Aunt, entreat my Mother to choose him for our Confessor.'

'I entreat her?' replied Leonella; 'I promise you that I shall do no such thing. I do not like this same Ambrosio in the least; He has a look of severity about him that made me tremble from head to foot: Were He my Confessor, I should never have the courage to avow one half of my peccadilloes, and then I should be in a rare condition! I never saw such a stern-looking Mortal, and hope that I never shall see such another. His description of the Devil, God bless us! almost terrified me out of my wits, and when He spoke about Sinners He seemed as if He was ready to eat them.'

'You are right, Segnora,' answered Don Christoval; 'Too great severity is said to be Ambrosio's only fault. Exempted himself from human failings, He is not sufficiently indulgent to those of others; and though strictly just and disinterested in his decisions, his government of the Monks has already shown some proofs of his inflexibility. But the crowd is nearly dissipated: Will you permit us to attend you home?'

'Oh! Christ! Segnor,' exclaimed Leonella affecting to blush; 'I would not suffer such a thing for the Universe! If I came home attended by so gallant a Cavalier, My Sister is so scrupulous that She would read me an hour's lecture, and I should never hear the last of it. Besides, I rather wish you not to make your proposals just at present.'

'My proposals? I assure you, Segnora....'

'Oh! Segnor, I believe that your assurances of impatience are all very true; But really I must desire a little respite. It would not be quite so delicate in me to accept your hand at first sight.'

'Accept my hand? As I hope to live and breathe....'

'Oh! dear Segnor, press me no further, if you love me! I shall consider your obedience as a proof of your affection; You shall hear from me tomorrow, and so farewell. But pray, Cavaliers, may I not enquire your names?'

‘My Friend’s,’ replied Lorenzo, ‘is the Conde d’Ossorio, and mine Lorenzo de Medina.’

“Tis sufficient. Well, Don Lorenzo, I shall acquaint my Sister with your obliging offer, and let you know the result with all expedition. Where may I send to you?”

‘I am always to be found at the Medina Palace.’

‘You may depend upon hearing from me. Farewell, Cavaliers. Signor Conde, let me entreat you to moderate the excessive ardour of your passion: However, to prove to you that I am not displeased with you, and prevent your abandoning yourself to despair, receive this mark of my affection, and sometimes bestow a thought upon the absent Leonella.’

As She said this, She extended a lean and wrinkled hand; which her supposed Admirer kissed with such sorry grace and constraint so evident, that Lorenzo with difficulty repressed his inclination to laugh. Leonella then hastened to quit the Church; The lovely Antonia followed her in silence; but when She reached the Porch, She turned involuntarily, and cast back her eyes towards Lorenzo. He bowed to her, as bidding her farewell; She returned the compliment, and hastily withdrew.

‘So, Lorenzo!’ said Don Christoval as soon as they were alone, ‘You have procured me an agreeable Intrigue! To favour your designs upon Antonia, I obligingly make a few civil speeches which mean nothing to the Aunt, and at the end of an hour I find myself upon the brink of Matrimony! How will you reward me for having suffered so grievously for your sake? What can repay me for having kissed the leathern paw of that confounded old Witch? Diavolo! She has left such a scent upon my lips that I shall smell of garlick for this month to come! As I pass along the Prado, I shall be taken for a walking Omelet, or some large Onion running to seed!’

‘I confess, my poor Count,’ replied Lorenzo, ‘that your service has been attended with danger; Yet am I so far from supposing it

be past all endurance that I shall probably solicit you to carry on your amours still further.'

'From that petition I conclude that the little Antonia has made some impression upon you.'

'I cannot express to you how much I am charmed with her. Since my Father's death, My Uncle the Duke de Medina, has signified to me his wishes to see me married; I have till now eluded his hints, and refused to understand them; But what I have seen this Evening....'

'Well? What have you seen this Evening? Why surely, Don Lorenzo, You cannot be mad enough to think of making a Wife out of this Grand-daughter of "as honest a painstaking Shoemaker as any in Cordova"?''

'You forget, that She is also the Grand-daughter of the late Marquis de las Cisternas; But without disputing about birth and titles, I must assure you, that I never beheld a Woman so interesting as Antonia.'

'Very possibly; But you cannot mean to marry her?'

'Why not, my dear Conde? I shall have wealth enough for both of us, and you know that my Uncle thinks liberally upon the subject.'

From what I have seen of Raymond de las Cisternas, I am certain that he will readily acknowledge Antonia for his Niece. Her birth therefore will be no objection to my offering her my hand. I should be a Villain could I think of her on any other terms than marriage; and in truth She seems possessed of every quality requisite to make me happy in a Wife. Young, lovely, gentle, sensible....'

'Sensible? Why, She said nothing but "Yes," and "No".'

'She did not say much more, I must confess—But then She always said "Yes," or "No," in the right place.'

‘Did She so? Oh! your most obedient! That is using a right Lover’s argument, and I dare dispute no longer with so profound a Casuist. Suppose we adjourn to the Comedy?’

‘It is out of my power. I only arrived last night at Madrid, and have not yet had an opportunity of seeing my Sister; You know that her Convent is in this Street, and I was going thither when the Crowd which I saw thronging into this Church excited my curiosity to know what was the matter. I shall now pursue my first intention, and probably pass the Evening with my Sister at the Parlour grate.’

‘Your Sister in a Convent, say you? Oh! very true, I had forgotten. And how does Donna Agnes? I am amazed, Don Lorenzo, how you could possibly think of immuring so charming a Girl within the walls of a Cloister!’

‘I think of it, Don Christoval? How can you suspect me of such barbarity? You are conscious that She took the veil by her own desire, and that particular circumstances made her wish for a seclusion from the World. I used every means in my power to induce her to change her resolution; The endeavour was fruitless, and I lost a Sister!’

‘The luckier fellow you; I think, Lorenzo, you were a considerable gainer by that loss: If I remember right, Donna Agnes had a portion of ten thousand pistoles, half of which reverted to your Lordship. By St. Jago! I wish that I had fifty Sisters in the same predicament. I should consent to losing them every soul without much heart-burning—’

‘How, Conde?’ said Lorenzo in an angry voice; ‘Do you suppose me base enough to have influenced my Sister’s retirement? Do you suppose that the despicable wish to make myself Master of her fortune could....’

‘Admirable! Courage, Don Lorenzo! Now the Man is all in a blaze. God grant that Antonia may soften that fiery temper, or we shall certainly cut each other’s throat before the Month

is over! However, to prevent such a tragical Catastrophe for the present, I shall make a retreat, and leave you Master of the field. Farewell, my Knight of Mount Aetna! Moderate that inflammable disposition, and remember that whenever it is necessary to make love to yonder Harridan, you may reckon upon my services.'

He said, and darted out of the Cathedral.

'How wild-brained!' said Lorenzo; 'With so excellent an heart, what pity that He possesses so little solidity of judgment!'

The night was now fast advancing. The Lamps were not yet lighted. The faint beams of the rising Moon scarcely could pierce through the gothic obscurity of the Church. Lorenzo found himself unable to quit the Spot. The void left in his bosom by Antonia's absence, and his Sister's sacrifice which Don Christoval had just recalled to his imagination, created that melancholy of mind which accorded but too well with the religious gloom surrounding him. He was still leaning against the seventh column from the Pulpit. A soft and cooling air breathed along the solitary Aisles: The Moonbeams darting into the Church through painted windows tinged the fretted roofs and massy pillars with a thousand various tints of light and colours:

Universal silence prevailed around, only interrupted by the occasional closing of Doors in the adjoining Abbey.

The calm of the hour and solitude of the place contributed to nourish Lorenzo's disposition to melancholy. He threw himself upon a seat which stood near him, and abandoned himself to the delusions of his fancy. He thought of his union with Antonia; He thought of the obstacles which might oppose his wishes; and a thousand changing visions floated before his fancy, sad 'tis true, but not unpleasing. Sleep insensibly stole over him, and the tranquil solemnity of his mind when awake for a while continued to influence his slumbers.

He still fancied himself to be in the Church of the Capuchins; but it was no longer dark and solitary. Multitudes of silver Lamps

shed splendour from the vaulted Roof; Accompanied by the captivating chaunt of distant choristers, the Organ's melody swelled through the Church; The Altar seemed decorated as for some distinguished feast; It was surrounded by a brilliant Company; and near it stood Antonia arrayed in bridal white, and blushing with all the charms of Virgin Modesty.

Half hoping, half fearing, Lorenzo gazed upon the scene before him. Suddenly the door leading to the Abbey unclosed, and He saw, attended by a long train of Monks, the Preacher advance to whom He had just listened with so much admiration. He drew near Antonia.

'And where is the Bridegroom?' said the imaginary Friar.

Antonia seemed to look round the Church with anxiety. Involuntarily the Youth advanced a few steps from his concealment. She saw him; The blush of pleasure glowed upon her cheek; With a graceful motion of her hand She beckoned to him to advance. He disobeyed not the command; He flew towards her, and threw himself at her feet.

She retreated for a moment; Then gazing upon him with unutterable delight;—'Yes!' She exclaimed, 'My Bridegroom! My destined Bridegroom!' She said, and hastened to throw herself into his arms; But before He had time to receive her, an Unknown rushed between them. His form was gigantic; His complexion was swarthy, His eyes fierce and terrible; his Mouth breathed out volumes of fire; and on his forehead was written in legible characters—'Pride! Lust! Inhumanity!'

Antonia shrieked. The Monster clasped her in his arms, and springing with her upon the Altar, tortured her with his odious caresses. She endeavoured in vain to escape from his embrace. Lorenzo flew to her succour, but ere He had time to reach her, a loud burst of thunder was heard. Instantly the Cathedral seemed crumbling into pieces; The Monks betook themselves to flight, shrieking fearfully; The Lamps were extinguished, the Altar sank down, and in its place appeared an abyss vomiting forth clouds of flame. Uttering a loud and terrible cry the

Monster plunged into the Gulph, and in his fall attempted to drag Antonia with him. He strove in vain. Animated by supernatural powers She disengaged herself from his embrace; But her white Robe was left in his possession. Instantly a wing of brilliant splendour spread itself from either of Antonia's arms. She darted upwards, and while ascending cried to Lorenzo,

'Friend! we shall meet above!'

At the same moment the Roof of the Cathedral opened; Harmonious voices pealed along the Vaults; and the glory into which Antonia was received was composed of rays of such dazzling brightness, that Lorenzo was unable to sustain the gaze. His sight failed, and He sank upon the ground.

When He woke, He found himself extended upon the pavement of the Church: It was Illuminated, and the chaunt of Hymns sounded from a distance. For a while Lorenzo could not persuade himself that what He had just witnessed had been a dream, so strong an impression had it made upon his fancy. A little recollection convinced him of its fallacy: The Lamps had been lighted during his sleep, and the music which he heard was occasioned by the Monks, who were celebrating their Vespers in the Abbey Chapel.

Lorenzo rose, and prepared to bend his steps towards his Sister's Convent. His mind fully occupied by the singularity of his dream, He already drew near the Porch, when his attention was attracted by perceiving a Shadow moving upon the opposite wall. He looked curiously round, and soon descried a Man wrapped up in his Cloak, who seemed carefully examining whether his actions were observed. Very few people are exempt from the influence of curiosity. The Unknown seemed anxious to conceal his business in the Cathedral, and it was this very circumstance, which made Lorenzo wish to discover what He was about.

Our Hero was conscious that He had no right to pry into the secrets of this unknown Cavalier.

'I will go,' said Lorenzo. And Lorenzo stayed, where He was.

The shadow thrown by the Column, effectually concealed him from the Stranger, who continued to advance with caution. At length He drew a letter from beneath his cloak, and hastily placed it beneath a Colossal Statue of St. Francis. Then retiring with precipitation, He concealed himself in a part of the Church at a considerable distance from that in which the Image stood.

'So!' said Lorenzo to himself; 'This is only some foolish love affair. I believe, I may as well be gone, for I can do no good in it.'

In truth till that moment it never came into his head that He could do any good in it; But He thought it necessary to make some little excuse to himself for having indulged his curiosity. He now made a second attempt to retire from the Church: For this time He gained the Porch without meeting with any impediment; But it was destined that He should pay it another visit that night. As He descended the steps leading into the Street, a Cavalier rushed against him with such violence, that Both were nearly overturned by the concussion. Lorenzo put his hand to his sword.

'How now, Segnor?' said He; 'What mean you by this rudeness?'

'Ha! Is it you, Medina?' replied the Newcomer, whom Lorenzo by his voice now recognized for Don Christoval; 'You are the luckiest Fellow in the Universe, not to have left the Church before my return. In, in! my dear Lad! They will be here immediately!'

'Who will be here?'

'The old Hen and all her pretty little Chickens! In, I say, and then you shall know the whole History.'

Lorenzo followed him into the Cathedral, and they concealed themselves behind the Statue of St. Francis.

‘And now,’ said our Hero, ‘may I take the liberty of asking, what is the meaning of all this haste and rapture?’

‘Oh! Lorenzo, we shall see such a glorious sight! The Prioress of St. Clare and her whole train of Nuns are coming hither. You are to know, that the pious Father Ambrosio (The Lord reward him for it!) will upon no account move out of his own precincts: It being absolutely necessary for every fashionable Convent to have him for its Confessor, the Nuns are in consequence obliged to visit him at the Abbey; since when the Mountain will not come to Mahomet, Mahomet must needs go to the Mountain. Now the Prioress of St. Clare, the better to escape the gaze of such impure eyes as belong to yourself and your humble Servant, thinks proper to bring her holy flock to confession in the Dusk: She is to be admitted into the Abbey Chapel by yon private door. The Porteress of St. Clare, who is a worthy old Soul and a particular Friend of mine, has just assured me of their being here in a few moments. There is news for you, you Rogue! We shall see some of the prettiest faces in Madrid!’

‘In truth, Christoval, we shall do no such thing. The Nuns are always veiled.’

‘No! No! I know better. On entering a place of worship, they ever take off their veils from respect to the Saint to whom ‘tis dedicated. But Hark! They are coming! Silence, silence! Observe, and be convinced.’

‘Good!’ said Lorenzo to himself; ‘I may possibly discover to whom the vows are addressed of this mysterious Stranger.’

Scarcely had Don Christoval ceased to speak, when the Domina of St. Clare appeared, followed by a long procession of Nuns. Each upon entering the Church took off her veil. The Prioress crossed her hands upon her bosom, and made a profound reverence as She passed the Statue of St. Francis, the Patron of this Cathedral. The Nuns followed her example, and several moved onwards without having satisfied Lorenzo’s curiosity. He almost began to despair of seeing the mystery cleared up, when in paying her respects to St. Francis, one of the Nuns

happened to drop her Rosary. As She stooped to pick it up, the light flashed full upon her face. At the same moment She dexterously removed the letter from beneath the Image, placed it in her bosom, and hastened to resume her rank in the procession.

‘Ha!’ said Christoval in a low voice; ‘Here we have some little Intrigue, no doubt.’

‘Agnes, by heaven!’ cried Lorenzo.

‘What, your Sister? Diavolo! Then somebody, I suppose, will have to pay for our peeping.’

‘And shall pay for it without delay,’ replied the incensed Brother.

The pious procession had now entered the Abbey; The Door was already closed upon it. The Unknown immediately quitted his concealment and hastened to leave the Church: Ere He could effect his intention, He descried Medina stationed in his passage. The Stranger hastily retreated, and drew his Hat over his eyes.

‘Attempt not to fly me!’ exclaimed Lorenzo; ‘I will know who you are, and what were the contents of that Letter.’

‘Of that Letter?’ repeated the Unknown. ‘And by what title do you ask the question?’

‘By a title of which I am now ashamed; But it becomes not you to question me. Either reply circumstantially to my demands, or answer me with your Sword.’

‘The latter method will be the shortest,’ rejoined the Other, drawing his Rapier; ‘Come on, Segnor Bravo! I am ready!’

Burning with rage, Lorenzo hastened to the attack: The Antagonists had already exchanged several passes before Christoval, who at that moment had more sense than either of them, could throw himself between their weapons.

‘Hold! Hold! Medina!’ He exclaimed; ‘Remember the consequences of shedding blood on consecrated ground!’

The Stranger immediately dropped his Sword.

‘Medina?’ He cried; ‘Great God, is it possible! Lorenzo, have you quite forgotten Raymond de las Cisternas?’

Lorenzo’s astonishment increased with every succeeding moment. Raymond advanced towards him, but with a look of suspicion He drew back his hand, which the Other was preparing to take.

‘You here, Marquis? What is the meaning of all this? You engaged in a clandestine correspondence with my Sister, whose affections....’

‘Have ever been, and still are mine. But this is no fit place for an explanation. Accompany me to my Hotel, and you shall know every thing. Who is that with you?’

‘One whom I believe you to have seen before,’ replied Don Christoval, ‘though probably not at Church.’

‘The Conde d’Ossorio?’

‘Exactly so, Marquis.’

‘I have no objection to entrusting you with my secret, for I am sure that I may depend upon your silence.’

‘Then your opinion of me is better than my own, and therefore I must beg leave to decline your confidence. Do you go your own way, and I shall go mine. Marquis, where are you to be found?’

‘As usual, at the Hotel de las Cisternas; But remember, that I am incognito, and that if you wish to see me, you must ask for Alphonso d’Alvarada.’

‘Good! Good! Farewell, Cavaliers!’ said Don Christoval, and instantly departed.

‘You, Marquis,’ said Lorenzo in the accent of surprise; ‘You, Alphonso d’Alvarada?’

‘Even so, Lorenzo: But unless you have already heard my story from your Sister, I have much to relate that will astonish you. Follow me, therefore, to my Hotel without delay.’

At this moment the Porter of the Capuchins entered the Cathedral to lock up the doors for the night. The two Noblemen instantly withdrew, and hastened with all speed to the Palace de las Cisternas.

‘Well, Antonia!’ said the Aunt, as soon as She had quitted the Church; ‘What think you of our Gallants? Don Lorenzo really seems a very obliging good sort of young Man: He paid you some attention, and nobody knows what may come of it. But as to Don Christoval, I protest to you, He is the very Phoenix of politeness. So gallant! so well-bred! So sensible, and so pathetic! Well! If ever Man can prevail upon me to break my vow never to marry, it will be that Don Christoval. You see, Niece, that every thing turns out exactly as I told you: The very moment that I produced myself in Madrid, I knew that I should be surrounded by Admirers. When I took off my veil, did you see, Antonia, what an effect the action had upon the Conde? And when I presented him my hand, did you observe the air of passion with which He kissed it? If ever I witnessed real love, I then saw it impressed upon Don Christoval’s countenance!’

Now Antonia had observed the air, with which Don Christoval had kissed this same hand; But as She drew conclusions from it somewhat different from her Aunt’s, She was wise enough to hold her tongue. As this is the only instance known of a Woman’s ever having done so, it was judged worthy to be recorded here.

The old Lady continued her discourse to Antonia in the same strain, till they gained the Street in which was their Lodging.

Here a Crowd collected before their door permitted them not to approach it; and placing themselves on the opposite side of the Street, they endeavoured to make out what had drawn all these people together. After some minutes the Crowd formed itself into a Circle; And now Antonia perceived in the midst of it a Woman of extraordinary height, who whirled herself repeatedly round and round, using all sorts of extravagant gestures. Her dress was composed of shreds of various-coloured silks and Linens fantastically arranged, yet not entirely without taste. Her head was covered with a kind of Turban, ornamented with vine leaves and wild flowers. She seemed much sun-burnt, and her complexion was of a deep olive: Her eyes looked fiery and strange; and in her hand She bore a long black Rod, with which She at intervals traced a variety of singular figures upon the ground, round about which She danced in all the eccentric attitudes of folly and delirium. Suddenly She broke off her dance, whirled herself round thrice with rapidity, and after a moment's pause She sang the following Ballad.

THE GYPSY'S SONG

Come, cross my hand! My art surpasses
All that did ever Mortal know;
Come, Maidens, come! My magic glasses
Your future Husband's form can show:
For 'tis to me the power is given
Unclosed the book of Fate to see;
To read the fixed resolves of heaven,
And dive into futurity.
I guide the pale Moon's silver waggon;
The winds in magic bonds I hold;
I charm to sleep the crimson Dragon,
Who loves to watch o'er buried gold:
Fenced round with spells, unhurt I venture
Their sabbath strange where Witches keep;
Fearless the Sorcerer's circle enter,
And woundless tread on snakes asleep.
Lo! Here are charms of mighty power!
This makes secure an Husband's truth
And this composed at midnight hour
Will force to love the coldest Youth:

If any Maid too much has granted,
Her loss this Philtre will repair;
This blooms a cheek where red is wanted,
And this will make a brown girl fair!
Then silent hear, while I discover
What I in Fortune's mirror view;
And each, when many a year is over,
Shall own the Gypsy's sayings true.

'Dear Aunt!' said Antonia when the Stranger had finished, 'Is She not mad?'

'Mad? Not She, Child; She is only wicked. She is a Gypsy, a sort of Vagabond, whose sole occupation is to run about the country telling lyes, and pilfering from those who come by their money honestly. Out upon such Vermin! If I were King of Spain, every one of them should be burnt alive who was found in my dominions after the next three weeks.'

These words were pronounced so audibly that they reached the Gypsy's ears. She immediately pierced through the Crowd and made towards the Ladies. She saluted them thrice in the Eastern fashion, and then addressed herself to Antonia.

THE GYPSY

'Lady! gentle Lady! Know,
I your future fate can show;
Give your hand, and do not fear;
Lady! gentle Lady! hear!'

'Dearest Aunt!' said Antonia, 'Indulge me this once! Let me have my fortune told me!'

'Nonsense, Child! She will tell you nothing but falsehoods.'

'No matter; Let me at least hear what She has to say. Do, my dear Aunt! Oblige me, I beseech you!'

'Well, well! Antonia, since you are so bent upon the thing, ... Here, good Woman, you shall see the hands of both of us. There

is money for you, and now let me hear my fortune.'

As She said this, She drew off her glove, and presented her hand; The Gypsy looked at it for a moment, and then made this reply.

THE GYPSY

'Your fortune? You are now so old,
Good Dame, that 'tis already told:
Yet for your money, in a trice
I will repay you in advice.
Astonished at your childish vanity,
Your Friends all tax you with insanity,
And grieve to see you use your art
To catch some youthful Lover's heart.
Believe me, Dame, when all is done,
Your age will still be fifty one;
And Men will rarely take an hint
Of love, from two grey eyes that squint.
Take then my counsels; Lay aside
Your paint and patches, lust and pride,
And on the Poor those sums bestow,
Which now are spent on useless show.
Think on your Maker, not a Suitor;
Think on your past faults, not on future;
And think Time's Scythe will quickly mow
The few red hairs, which deck your brow.

The audience rang with laughter during the Gypsy's address; and—'fifty one,'—'squinting eyes,' 'red hair,'—'paint and patches,' &c. were bandied from mouth to mouth. Leonella was almost choked with passion, and loaded her malicious Adviser with the bitterest reproaches. The swarthy Prophetess for some time listened to her with a contemptuous smile: at length She made her a short answer, and then turned to Antonia.

THE GYPSY

'Peace, Lady! What I said was true;

And now, my lovely Maid, to you;
Give me your hand, and let me see
Your future doom, and heaven's decree.'

In imitation of Leonella, Antonia drew off her glove, and presented her white hand to the Gypsy, who having gazed upon it for some time with a mingled expression of pity and astonishment, pronounced her Oracle in the following words.

THE GYPSY

'Jesus! what a palm is there!
Chaste, and gentle, young and fair,
Perfect mind and form possessing,
You would be some good Man's blessing:
But Alas! This line discovers,
That destruction o'er you hovers;
Lustful Man and crafty Devil
Will combine to work your evil;
And from earth by sorrows driven,
Soon your Soul must speed to heaven.
Yet your sufferings to delay,
Well remember what I say.
When you One more virtuous see
Than belongs to Man to be,
One, whose self no crimes assailing,
Pities not his Neighbour's Failing,
Call the Gypsy's words to mind:
Though He seem so good and kind,
Fair Exteriors oft will hide
Hearts, that swell with lust and pride!
Lovely Maid, with tears I leave you!
Let not my prediction grieve you;
Rather with submission bending
Calmly wait distress impending,
And expect eternal bliss
In a better world than this.

Having said this, the Gypsy again whirled herself round thrice, and then hastened out of the Street with frantic gesture. The Crowd followed her; and Elvira's door being now unembarrassed Leonella entered the House out of honour with the Gypsy,

with her Niece, and with the People; In short with every body, but herself and her charming Cavalier. The Gypsy's predictions had also considerably affected Antonia; But the impression soon wore off, and in a few hours She had forgotten the adventure as totally as had it never taken place.

CHAPTER II

Forse se tu gustassi una sol volta
La millesima parte delle gioje,
Che gusta un cor amato riamando,
Diresti ripentita sospirando,
Perduto e tutto il tempo
Che in amar non si sponde.

Tasso.

Hadst Thou but tasted once the thousandth part
Of joys, which bless the loved and loving heart,
Your words repentant and your sighs would prove,
Lost is the time which is not past in love.

The monks having attended their Abbot to the door of his Cell, He dismissed them with an air of conscious superiority in which Humility's semblance combated with the reality of pride.

He was no sooner alone, than He gave free loose to the indulgence of his vanity. When He remembered the Enthusiasm which his discourse had excited, his heart swelled with rapture, and his imagination presented him with splendid visions of aggrandizement. He looked round him with exultation, and Pride told him loudly that He was superior to the rest of his fellow-Creatures.

'Who,' thought He; 'Who but myself has passed the ordeal of Youth, yet sees no single stain upon his conscience? Who else has subdued the violence of strong passions and an impetuous temperament, and submitted even from the dawn of life to voluntary retirement? I seek for such a Man in vain. I see no one

but myself possessed of such resolution. Religion cannot boast Ambrosio's equal! How powerful an effect did my discourse produce upon its Auditors! How they crowded round me! How they loaded me with benedictions, and pronounced me the sole uncorrupted Pillar of the Church! What then now is left for me to do? Nothing, but to watch as carefully over the conduct of my Brothers as I have hitherto watched over my own. Yet hold! May I not be tempted from those paths which till now I have pursued without one moment's wandering? Am I not a Man, whose nature is frail, and prone to error? I must now abandon the solitude of my retreat; The fairest and noblest Dames of Madrid continually present themselves at the Abbey, and will use no other Confessor.

I must accustom my eyes to Objects of temptation, and expose myself to the seduction of luxury and desire. Should I meet in that world which I am constrained to enter some lovely Female, lovely ... as you, Madona....!'

As He said this, He fixed his eyes upon a picture of the Virgin, which was suspended opposite to him: This for two years had been the Object of his increasing wonder and adoration. He paused, and gazed upon it with delight.

'What Beauty in that countenance!' He continued after a silence of some minutes; 'How graceful is the turn of that head! What sweetness, yet what majesty in her divine eyes! How softly her cheek reclines upon her hand! Can the Rose vie with the blush of that cheek? Can the Lily rival the whiteness of that hand? Oh! if such a Creature existed, and existed but for me! Were I permitted to twine round my fingers those golden ringlets, and press with my lips the treasures of that snowy bosom! Gracious God, should I then resist the temptation? Should I not barter for a single embrace the reward of my sufferings for thirty years? Should I not abandon.... Fool that I am! Whither do I suffer my admiration of this picture to hurry me? Away, impure ideas! Let me remember that Woman is for ever lost to me. Never was Mortal formed so perfect as this picture. But even did such exist, the trial might be too mighty for a common virtue, but Ambrosio's is proof against temptation. Temptation,