

eret the chief. The entrance to the Catacombs is in a deserted vineyard, and is overgrown by huge aloes: rooted in stones and sharp rocks, they lift their thorny leaves above the opening, and conceal it effectually. A solitary fig-tree that grows near renders the spot easily recognisable by those already acquainted with the secret. The Catacombs themselves were wide winding caves, the burial place of the dead of past ages. Piles of human bones, white and bleached by time were piled along the rocky sides of these caverns. In one of these walks, whilst they were friends, Giorgio had shown the place to Marietta. In those days he feared not to entrust his mysterious way of life to her, although in all common concerns she was wild and untractable, yet in all that touched the interest of those few whom she loved Marietta was silent and reserved as Epicharis herself. The menaces Giorgio let fall in his visit on the preceding forenoon had excited her highest alarm and she determined at any risk, to learn the extent of the danger that hung over the stranger. After waiting in vain for Idalie's return till the close of evening, she had hastened to Capo di Monte, entered the catacombs alone, and, concealed behind a pile of bones, had awaited the arrival of the confederates. They assembled at midnight.

Their first object of conversation was the stranger. Giorgio acquainted them with his history, which he told them had been communicated to him that very morning by a Russian lady of high consequence, who had likewise charged him with the business he had to unfold to them. He described Ladislas as a fugitive, unprotected by any government; he bore about his person certain papers which had been found in the palace of Warsaw, and were the confidential communications of the Russian Autocrat to his brother the Viceroy of Poland, and were of such a nature as to rouse all Europe in arms against their writer. These papers had been entrusted to Ladislas, whose intention was to proceed to Paris, and publish them there. Private business, however of the greatest importance had forced him to visit Naples before going to Paris. The Russian government