

seats being on one side, there was a partition in the middle, not higher than the back of a sofa, with large seats like sofas on each side, on which the company sat in a row, with their backs to each other; in front was a high and large box for the coachman, and a footman behind. It was so light that I could distinguish the faces of every gentleman and lady as they passed; and there was something so unique in the exhibition, that, with the splendor of the court dresses, it seemed the climax of the brilliant scenes at Peterhoff. I followed them with my eyes till they were out of sight, gave one more look to the modest pillow on which old Peter reposed his care-worn head, and at about one o'clock in the morning left the garden. A frigate brilliantly illuminated was firing a salute, the flash of her guns lighting up the surface of the water, as I embarked on board the steam-boat. At two o'clock, the morning twilight was like that of day; at three o'clock, I was at my hotel, and probably at ten minutes past, asleep.—*From a Work just published.*

### DARKNESS.

DARKNESS, I love thee!—when the last faint beam  
Of day hath faded from the summer sky,  
How sweet to wander by some gentle stream,  
While all around Night's sable shadows lie,  
And catch the plashing of a distant oar;  
To hear faint voices borne upon the wind,  
And gaze far on, nor view the verdant shore,  
That boat, those voices, scarce have left behind!

Darkness, I love thee!—when the sudden swell  
Of music bursts on the enraptured ear,  
And chains the spirit with a mystic spell,  
Like sounds unearthly from some hallowed sphere;  
We turn to look upon a fair young brow,  
Shaded with sunny tresses; on a cheek  
Flush'd with deep feeling; and what meets us now?  
Sadness, and darkness, for the form we seek!

Darkness, I love thee!—when the lightning plays  
Through cloud-piled masses with a lurid glare,  
Flash following flash, in one bright liquid blaze,  
While peals of thunder shake the troubled air:  
And when, like infant on its mother's breast,  
Who sobs to sleep, its gust of passion o'er,  
The storm is gone, and winds and waves at rest,  
I love thee then as dearly as before!

Darkness, I love thee!—when the full heart thrills  
With untold rapture—power of utterance gone;  
Tear after tear, the downcast eyelid fills,  
Flush after flush comes mantling, and alone  
With one loved being, with whose destiny  
Ours is close link'd—no sight, no sound  
Breaks on the stillness; yet we feel an eye  
Beams on us, in whose life our own is bound!

Darkness, I love thee!—when the midnight hour  
Tells that thy reign too soon will pass away;  
When hearts are bared before that unseen Power,  
Too oft forgotten 'mid the light of day;  
And as the rushing memories come back,  
Of days, and hopes, and friends, I long  
To soar away to yon bright star-lit track,  
Whose glories, Darkness, round thy pathway throng!

### THE NUNS OF THE FRIULI.

'Hell has no fury, like a woman scorned!'

To those who have surveyed the Alps, rising in all their grandeur one above another, until their peaks are lost in the blue of heaven, the Friuli mountains appear as pigmies to a giant. Yet they possess a magnificence of scenery unexcelled even by their more towering brethren. Here are no wreaths of everlasting snow, nor rocks frowning in naked sublimity; but forests of unfading green crown their summits, and the ruins of many a feudal castle lie scattered amid their darkness. Here, too, Superstition has found a home, and the solemn bell of the convent is reverberated in a thousand echoes. Within its walls, crime has found a refuge, and hapless victims of avarice and ambition weep unheeded, perhaps forgotten, even by those for whom they mourned.

It was late on a dreary evening in the last days of March, that we came in sight of one of these convents, which was situated on a darkly-jutting point of a precipice that overhung the road, whence the eye is first gladly saluted with the bright and flowery plains of Italy, and of the Tagliamento, which glides in mazy wanderings around the base of the mountain, until its pure green waters seem lost in meadows of its own emerald hue. The towers rose proudly, as if in mockery of the fair scene beneath them; as if the Maker of All could not be worshipped amidst the lovely works of his own creation, but must hear the voice of prayer swell up from the rich perfume of altars, surrounded with the factitious pomps of man.

The day had been stormy, and the melting of the winter's snows had so swelled the mountain torrents, that our vetturino declined proceeding farther that night, and we determined to crave hospitality of the inmates of the holy dwelling above us. The road by which we gained the gates, wound circuitously among the rocks, and bore evidence that few visitors ever disturbed the pious meditations of the nuns within. After much difficulty, we

were admitted. The bare walls of the parlour, with its scanty and rough furniture, was quite unlike the luxurious decorations of the convents we had visited in the cities. The gentlemen of our party could not gain entrance, but were accommodated in the but of an old gardener, who appeared almost coeval with the walls of the convent. The portress who attended us, rarely spoke, and seemed fearful even of the sound of her own voice. On our expressing a desire to visit the chapel, and those parts of the interior to which strangers are usually admitted, the consent of the abbess was asked and obtained, and a lay sister ordered to conduct us. Fortunately, she did not prove as taciturn as the portress, but illustrated each chamber, with some legend of the olden time. An unnatural gloom pervaded the whole dwelling, and the spectre-like forms of the nuns, seen gliding in the distance, sent a cold shudder over us; and if their voices broke on the silence around, the sound issuing from beneath their dark hoods and veils was so unearthly, that it seemed we were gazing on the inhabitants of another world.

At last, we gained the chapel. It was simple in its decorations, and derived its greatest interest, in our minds, from the kneeling figures which were here and there discerned, and which might have been almost mistaken for marble, had not the wind occasionally moved the drapery which enshrouded them. A small arched door admitted us into the cemetery, and the fading twilight was just sufficient to enable us to see that the graves were destitute of all needless ornament. A simple stone alone marked out to their friends, if they possessed any who retained an interest in their fate, the spot of their last earthly rest. As we passed two apparently new mounds of earth, which marked a recent vacancy in that holy sisterhood, our guide involuntarily recoiled, and crossed herself with deep devotion. We stooped to read the names, but they gave us no clue to the emotion of our conductress; and when we turned to her for an explanation, she was engaged in fervent prayer. As we passed on, however, she rejoined us, and we ventured to comment, indirectly, upon the emotion she had exhibited. She was silent for some moments, but presently requested us to return to the parlor. Our curiosity was now so much excited, that we again renewed our inquiries concerning those seemingly mysterious graves, when she communicated to us the following story.

'The order to which this convent belongs, is unprecedentedly severe; but there were even here two nuns remarkable for the austerity of their lives. Their faces had seldom been seen, and when they were, the beholders regarded one with pity, but turned from the other as from an unholy sight. They were known by the names of Beatrice and Rosalia, and had both been resident here many years. Nothing was known of the causes which first induced them to renounce the world; and if curiosity had ever been awakened concerning them, it had long since slumbered. They held no communion together, and each regarded the other as a stranger; yet still it seemed as if a mysterious tie connected them, which neither could define; and they were oftener seen kneeling side by side, than any other two in the convent.

'On the attenuated form of the sister Rosalia, sorrow had stamped all the ravages which 'Time's effacing finger' usually accomplishes. The light of her eye was quenched, and the smile that had once beamed on her lip, was fled. Her cheek was deadly pale, and she looked as if waiting with anxiety for the time when she should 'be called hence.' But her habitual expression of grief was softened by a natural mildness, which appeared like a ray of sunshine upon a ruin; a remnant of that which once shed gladness on many a heart.

'Far different were the dark workings of the mind of Sister Beatrice. The remains of beauty, that had been dazzling, still retained their haughty character, and her dark eyes emitted glances which all her penances had failed to soften. The wreck of her charms seemed wrought by some sudden paroxysm of passion, like the bursting of a volcano, which destroys all within its reach. The repentance that is seated deep within the heart, she had not yet felt; and although she bowed without a murmur to penances from which a sterner form would have shrunk, and was ever ready to inflict more than was exacted, as though outward suffering could efface her crime, yet, placed once more in the world, her unsubdued spirit would probably have again accomplished its work of desolation.

'But the silence which had so long subsisted between these two sisters, was destined at last to be broken. Beatrice was found one morning lying on the pavement of the chapel, before the image of a saint, to whom she had been offering up her prayer for mercy and pardon. She was utterly senseless, and we conveyed her to her cell, where she soon recovered sufficiently to ask for Rosalia, and to desire to be left alone with her. My capacity of nurse rendered my presence necessary, lest some sudden attack should again overcome her, and I was permitted to remain; for it was apparent that her strength had so rapidly declined, she could not possibly survive much longer. Her voice was faint, yet she exerted herself to tell her tale of horror.

'Years have we dwelt here,' she began, 'yet scarcely has a word been uttered between us; but I have thought, when pray-

ing by thy side, that my spirit was absolved from half its sin. I now feel that I shall soon meet the reward due to my crimes; and an irresistible impulse compels me to unfold the cause of my misery. In vain have I confessed. The priest has no power to pardon. In vain have I lacerated my body. I cannot kill the undying worm!'

'Her voice now became more piercing; her eyes seemed bursting from their sockets, and wandering around her chamber, as if in pursuit of some object seen by herself alone.

'In sleep I see them!' she murmured; 'awake, they are still before me! Soon shall I be even as ye are! No! she shrieked, 'not as ye are, for ye were innocent, and are blessed, while I —'

'She paused, and turning toward Rosalia, continued: 'While I have strength, let me reveal to you my dark transgressions. Look! said she, throwing back her veil, and 'see if ye can discover the beauty that was once my boast!'

'Her dark eyes flashed proudly, as she spoke, but the light soon died away, and in the meagre form before us we could scarcely imagine that aught which was lovely had ever there its chosen seat.

'Many were the suitors that the fame of my wealth and beauty drew around me; but I listened to their love with haughty indifference, and felt a secret pride in the pangs they appeared to suffer. My insensibility to others' woes has been punished by my own. I too have loved—wildly, madly loved!'

'I was in Venice, surrounded by all that was noble and magnificent. Among those who came to see if report spoke true, was one whom no female eye could look upon and not remember. He seemed dazzled with my beauty, and I exerted myself to captivate him. Accustomed to homage, I deemed that I could command it. From him I never received it! In vain I tried the power of music. It could not melt him. The eloquence that had so often charmed others, he regarded with cold indifference. I rallied all my powers, but I could not win him. My accomplishments might have awakened his wonder, but they did not touch his heart. I grew silent and timid in his presence, and from being the delight of society, I became apparently indifferent to all around me. Alas! it was not indifference! Too great desire to please, had taken from me the power! My books were unopened, my harp untouched, and the chords, as they broke, sounded to my ear the presage of my own dark fate.'

'Driven almost to madness by the intensity of my suffering, I forgot for a moment the dignity of my sex. I knelt—yes,' she continued, a transient crimson flush suffusing her palid countenance; 'I knelt to him, and told him my shame. With a look of mingled pity and scorn, he turned away! Years have passed, yet the memory of THAT LOOK is deep in my heart!'

'I never saw him more. He became a suitor to another—one who was indeed lovely; yet in my pride I never dreamed that she could rival me. Can it be,' said I, 'that for her I am scorned, perhaps despised! And shall he, with all a lover's fond ardor,

'Drink the rich fragrance of her breath, and sip  
With tenderest touch the roses of her lip?

while I am cast off with contempt! The thought was bitterest agony.

'Who can paint my emotions, when every one around me spoke of their approaching nuptials? For whole days I was lost to myself and to all who watched beside me; and when I first returned to a sense of my misery, it was to burn with a fire that even now scorches my very heart and brain! Hatred toward all human kind, but above all toward her who had robbed me of all I prized, was my consuming passion. Even he, the loved one, did not escape. All my thoughts were directed to one object, and that was VENGEANCE! With a gasp that seemed her last, she added, 'And I have HAD it! The bridegroom and the bride sleep in the same cold grave!'

'No, not both!' shrieked Rosalia, 'for I am here! The cup was death to me alone!'

'Beatrice never recovered the shock of that moment, and Rosalia did not long survive the destroyer of her happiness. Two stones mark the spot where the victim and the murderess sleep side by side; and many are the prayers offered up by our holy sisterhood for their salvation.'

MAGNITUDE AND MINUTENESS.—The view of nature, which is the immediate object of sense, is very imperfect, and of a small extent; but by the assistance of art, and the help of our reason, is enlarged till it loses itself in an infinity on either hand. The immensity of things on the one side, and their minuteness on the other, carry them equally out of our reach, and conceal from us the far greater and more noble part of physical operations. As magnitude of every sort, abstractedly considered, is capable of being increased to infinity, and is also divisible without end; so we find that, in nature, the limits of the greatest and least dimensions of things are actually placed at an immense distance from each other. We can perceive no bounds of the vast expanse in which natural causes operate, and can fix no border or