

taken to the house of one of his officers, and kept there till after the execution of her husband.

The end of this catastrophe was now at hand. Already the great bell of the city was tolling. The hour at length arrived, and Jeronimo was led forth. He was desired to add any thing which he had to say, without loss of time. He satisfied himself with the declaration of his innocence, and with recommending his soul to his Maker, then knelt down to receive the destined blow; but scarcely was he on his knees, before the whole crowd was thrown into motion by one of the marshals of justice rushing forward and exclaiming to stop the execution. The marshal at length made his way to the scaffold, and delivered a paper, with which he was charged, to the presiding officer. The officer, upon reading it, immediately stayed the further progress of the execution, and Jeronimo was led back to his prison. "What is all this?" exclaimed the crowd. "Have the friends of Jeronimo at length raised a sum of money which our just judge have required of them? and is his punishment thus bought off? Happy inhabitants of Padua, where the rich is to be able to commit any crime with impunity!"

It is time, however, to inform the reader of the true cause. Jeronimo was scarcely led to execution, when a magistrate of the city demanded access to the president, and immediately laid before him the confession of a prisoner who had died under a fever the preceding night. The wretched malefactor had acknowledged that he was one of a party of coiners, who had carried on the trade of making false money to a very great extent; that Jeronimo's clerk was at the head of the gang; that all the false money was delivered to this clerk, who immediately exchanged it for good money from his master's coffers, to all of which he had private keys, and in which coffers, on the apprehension of Jeronimo, he had deposited the instruments of coining, lest they should be found in his own possession. The confession terminated with enumerating such of the gang as were yet living, and pointing out their places of asylum and concealment.

The execution of Jeronimo, as had been related, was in its actual operation. The first step of the president, therefore, was to hurry one of the officers to stop its progress, and in the same moment to send off two or three detachments of the city guard to seize the accused parties before they should learn from public report the death of their comrade. The guards executed their purpose successfully; the malefactors were all taken and brought to the tribunal the same evening. The result was, that one of them became evidence against his comrades, and thus confirmed the truth of the confession, and the innocence of Jeronimo.

The president, in order to make all possible atonement, ordered a public meeting of all the citizens of Padua to be summoned on the following day. Jeronimo was then produced, upon which the president, descending from his tribunal, took him by the hand, and led him up to a seat by the side of him, on the bench of justice: the crier then proclaimed silence; upon which the president rose, and read the confession of the malefactor who died in the prison, and the transactions of the others, concluding the whole by declaring the innocence of Jeronimo, and restoring him to his credit, his fortune, and the good opinion of his fellow-citizens.

Thus ended the misfortunes of a man who had provoked the chastisement of Heaven by his vanity and self-glory.—The course of Providence is uniform in all ages of the world: when blessings are contemned, they are withdrawn—when the man unduly elevates himself, the moment of his humiliation is at hand.

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The Persian author Saadi tells a story of three sages—a Greek, an Indian, and a Persian—who, in the presence of the Persian monarch, debated this question—Of all evils incident to humanity, which is the greatest? The Grecian declared, "Old age oppressed with poverty;" the Indian answered "Pain with impatience;" while the Persian, bowing low, made answer, "The greatest evil, O King, that I can conceive is the couch of death without one good deed of life to light the darksome way!"