

## ZANONI.

BY SIR E. L. BULWER.

THIS book is less designed to amuse than to set its reader thinking—to what amount of good purpose must much depend upon the readers themselves. The author would characterise it as a truth for those who comprehend it,—and an extravagance for those who do not. But we may add that, whether its whole drift is or is not perceived, it has qualities which cannot fail of instant appreciation. It is an eloquent and thoughtful book—beyond question.

The hero, Zanoni, is a man who, by the union of patient study and sublime daring, with the highest ideal reverence of knowledge, has achieved the secret of living as long as it may please him to live. When the story opens—in Naples, at the eve of the first French Revolution—he has already seen and survived every change upon the earth since the time when it was trodden by the Magians. But though youth and beauty are yet his own, and with these the still fresh desire and power to enjoy this long continuance of life, it is clear that some great want intercepts the right gathering in of the harvest of these immortal gifts. In this respect he contrasts with the sole other sharer of the Grand Secret, who figures in the story,—Mejnour,—by whom, in right of the mastery it gave him, perpetual age and contemplation had been selected, as, by Zanoni, perpetual youth and enjoyment. Between these two extraordinary beings, and aspiring to gain, through their means, access to their mysteries and power, stands Glyndon, a young English painter,—in whose fate they had become interested. It will in some sort illustrate the author's purpose in this wayward, eloquent, striking fiction—if we mention the fate of these its chief actors.

Glyndon fails to achieve the secret. He passes—in many scenes of deep interest and various terror—through a portion of

its frightful ordeal, but fails for want of Faith. But even in the failure is a success achieved. In the course of his struggles, the veil is torn from the false ideal he had worshipped, the false love he had enjoyed, and his endeavour for the divine, though unsuccessful, has shown him a truth which makes the human more enjoyable. With faith and virtue the Old and Customary will keep their beauty still: and he to whom it is not permitted to pass as a seraph to the Infinite, may yet find himself able to return to the Familiar as a child.

Of Mejnour the beginning and the ending are the same. He is throughout a passionless abstraction; existing neither for good nor evil; influencing nothing around him, and therefore himself unchanged. The last page closes on him as the first opened. And so lives on, in its sublime indifference, the Mejnour of the world—the Science that contemplates, in distinction to the Art that enjoys; the science that cares for knowledge only, and never stoops to consider how knowledge may be made subservient to happiness.

Upon the fate of Zanoni the greatest care and power of the author are lavished, of course. Here, we only state the result. In the action of the want to which reference has been made, as intercepting his enjoyment of immortality, it is made to appear that the highest order of intellect and imagination can only act beneficially on the earth by union with the spirit of love. It is this which can alone expand and lift them into the true everlasting; in its delight giving birth to poetry, in its wonder to philosophy, in its gratitude to religion, and by the harmony of the three in one when at their loftiest aspects, winging its way to the very gates of heaven. With this knowledge comes another to Zanoni. He discovers that what, in the pride of knowledge,