

When earthly scenes are closing,
 Shall find a place of rest,
 And leave this lowly solitude
 Forgotten—undeplored.

This volume will be popular among a large class of devotional people, and might reasonably be so among all; but we suspect that there are still larger bodies to whom its unity and intellectuality will form no recommendation, however aided by religious fervour and poetical feeling,—partisans to whom the “issues” of all finely touched spirits are but *splendida peccata*, if they pronounce not their *shibboleth*, and echo not their *slang*.
 Q.

THE NEAPOLITAN BANDIT*.

WHEN I was at Naples some years since, I was much struck by the following relation, which I believe to be in every respect authentic. It contains some interesting traits of the generosity, humanity, and fearless temper of our English Naval Officers; and offers, at the same time, a casual specimen of the native ferocity, and cool disregard in shedding human blood, which characterises the Italian Bandit.

A party of Englishmen, consisting of some travellers and the principal officers of two frigates then lying off Naples, were dining at the house of the English Minister. In the course of the evening, a conversation was started on the subject of the frequent robberies which, at that period, were continually taking place in the Neapolitan territory, and on the confines between that and the Roman states. This conversation naturally led to a discussion on the character of the famous Bandit-chief Gregorio, who had recently distinguished himself by uncommon acts of depredation, displaying at the same time occasional traits of courage, generosity, and devotedness, which were well worthy of a better cause.

The most attentive listener to this exciting conversation was Captain D——, who commanded one of the frigates already mentioned. There are some chords of common sympathy which belong to the brave of every class; and their vibration was, on this occasion, powerfully awakened in the mind of Captain D——, by the relation of the extraordinary facts to which he had so attentively listened. He could not refrain from expressing the strongest desire to behold the Bandit Gregorio; and this overpowering wish was even less manifested by the form of words which he used, than by the expression of energy and an eagerness to gratify his curiosity, which was depicted on his countenance.

Some days had elapsed since the conversation to which I have alluded took place, when Captain D——, accompanied by a friend, was taking his evening ride in the direction of Capo di Monte. Having ascended that eminence, they had left their carriage, and walked forward to some distance. Although deeply engaged in conversation, they could not help observing two men, who were partly loitering about,

* Our word Bandit is derived from the Italian *bandito*, or more properly from the verb *bandire*, to proscribe. The plural, Banditti, is a corruption of the Italian plural, *banditi*.

and partly pursuing the track which they had taken. The dress of these men was similar to that worn by the lawless marauders who infest this territory, but their countenances and manner betrayed nothing like an evil intention—there rather appeared a desire on their part to attract the notice of the English gentlemen: for what purpose, could not possibly be divined.

They at length succeeded in commencing a conversation, which soon led, probably from design, to the mention of the frequent robberies which had lately been committed, even in the very neighbourhood of the capital, and to the subject of the banditti who, in spite of the increased activity of Gens d'armes and police-officers, had established and maintained their abode in the wild fastnesses which divide the Neapolitan and Roman states. The Englishmen enquired of the strangers what was their occupation. They replied, without any reserve, that they were robbers, declaring at the same time that they fearlessly avowed themselves as such to English officers, from whom they could not have the slightest apprehension of treachery. But these men had an object in view; and as it was now growing dark, and they were already nearly within sight of the carriage, no time was to be lost. One of them therefore, with some hesitation, observed to Captain D— that he was aware that the latter had, a few evenings since, at the table of the English minister, expressed an earnest desire to see the famous bandit-chief Gregorio. Continuing to address himself to Captain D— “I am the friend of Gregorio,” he said, “he is my leader; and if you will assure me that your wish proceeded from a strong and worthy feeling, and not from a momentary impulse of light curiosity, I will answer for its gratification.” Captain D— was greatly surprised by this sudden and unexpected appeal. He however instantly declared that he desired most fervently to see Gregorio, and that he was ready to encounter both trouble and risk, could he thereby hope to realise such a desire. The stranger assured him that its accomplishment depended upon himself, and that if he would confide in him, and act with honour and courage, he would ensure to him an interview with his chief. Captain D— continuing to express his readiness to comply with any terms that might be proposed, the stranger directed him to repair on the following evening to a spot, which he most particularly described, a few miles without the city, in the direction of Pausilipo—“You will,” he said, “come to a grass-field, at the extremity of which is a wood; in this field you will observe a woman dressed as a peasant, two children will be playing near her. So soon as this woman sees you arrive, she will quit the field, and enter into the wood. Follow her, and your curiosity will be gratified. But let no one accompany you, and let the present interview remain a secret; or, to your regret, you will lose your labour, and the present opportunity will never be renewed.” The interview between the two Englishmen and the robbers now ended. Captain D— and his friend returned to Naples, with a fixed determination on the mind of the former to pursue this interesting adventure. Towards dusk, on the following evening, he arrived at the spot which had been so accurately described. He saw the peasant in the grass-field, and the two children were playing near her. On his approach the peasant quitted the field, and entered the wood. Captain D— followed. They proceeded

till they reached a small hut, which having entered, the female closed the door of a room, into which she had led the Captain—and he remained, for a few minutes, alone. Suddenly the door was opened—and a tall athletic figure, in the bandit-costume, stood before him. “I am Gregorio!” he said, “whom your desire to see has brought hither. Your wish is realised, and your confidence is not misplaced.” A conversation of some length ensued, which, for the sake of brevity, I pass over. Before they parted, the robber confessed to Captain D— that he had purposely contrived an interview with him, from the hope which he had conceived of obtaining his assistance in carrying into effect a project, of which the success was of vital importance to him. “I am weary,” he said, “of my present mode of life, which, besides being naturally full of danger and harassing in the extreme, is, at the present moment, rendered infinitely more so to me by the very critical situation in which I am personally placed. Great rewards are offered for my apprehension—extraordinary measures have been of late adopted, of which I am, in fact, the principal object. My safest retreats have been discovered, and many among my followers are of doubtful faith. They may be allured by hopes of indemnity, or dazzled by the amount of the reward which awaits their treachery. Under the pressure of these circumstances, I have meditated an escape from this country, and I implore you to afford me your assistance.”

Captain D— offered his services, and would, as readily, have pledged his honour for the maintenance of inviolable secrecy; but the frank and confiding character of these brave men, which had so advantageously developed itself during the brief course of these events, rendered on either side such a request or such an assurance equally superfluous.

It happened fortunately for the success of Gregorio's project, that Captain D— was about to sail in a few days for Malta; it was agreed upon, therefore, that on the third evening from the present, Gregorio should meet Captain D— and some of his officers, at the hour of midnight, at Santa Lucia, where the Captain would order his boat to be in readiness to convey them on board the frigate, having in the meantime prepared every thing for setting sail immediately for Malta. The appointed evening came; Gregorio was punctual; Captain D— and his friends found him at Santa Lucia, and they were proceeding towards the beach where the frigate's boat awaited them, but, to their great surprise and consternation, they no sooner came within view of the boat, than they beheld at the same time that a sentinel was posted close to the spot where she lay. This was an embarrassment they were far from expecting; although as the ministers both of the police and of the custom-house were, at that time, continually on the alert, the circumstance was more unlucky than strange. What was to be done! Gregorio was neither wanting in presence of mind, nor in resources against such contingences; he immediately offered to approach the sentinel, and to stab him to the heart. Such summary proceedings were not, however, to the taste of Englishmen, and Gregorio was withheld from executing his purpose. Fortunately the exigency of the moment had, in the meantime, suggested to Captain D— a stratagem which, as practised on the simplicity of the sentinel, was as effectual as it was ridiculous. Making a motion to his friends

to keep back, Captain D— approached the sentinel, and putting a piece of money into his hand, informed him with an air of mystery that he had a tender connection with a lady who resided at a palace nearly opposite his post, that she had consented to come off with him on that evening, and that he was about to convey her on board his ship. He pointed out particularly to the sentinel the lady's window, and desired him to approach, and to throw against it some pebbles, which was the signal agreed upon between them. He directed the sentinel, as soon as the lady appeared, to conduct her to the boat, which he pointed out, and concluded with promising him a further reward for his trouble. The sentinel believed the story, and he felt the ducat which Captain D— pressed upon his hand; he left his post, and whilst he was aiming pebbles at the imaginary lady's window, the boat pushed off, and reached the ship in safety.

A short time after their arrival at Malta, Gregorio requested a further favour of his deliverer. His slender funds were exhausted, and he purposed supplying his wants by drawing a bill upon a Neapolitan nobleman, whose name was familiar to Captain D—. He also wished to devote a part of the proceeds to the necessities of his wife, whom, with two small children, he had felt himself under the necessity of leaving in the neighbourhood of Naples. Captain D— expressed his surprise at the connection which appeared to exist between the nobleman and the robber; but Gregorio merely smiled, and assured his friend that the bill would be punctually honoured. With the assistance of a merchant with whom he was acquainted, Captain D— remitted the bill to Naples, and, in the meantime, supplied Gregorio with a small sum to meet his present wants. The bill was immediately accepted, and honourably discharged; and the balance which remained, after deducting the sum directed to be paid to his wife, was transmitted to Malta for the use of Gregorio.

GIANNI.

CONVERSATIONS OF THE DEAD.—No. V.

Scene.—THE AMARANTHINE BOWER of MILTON, in ELYSIUM.

Interlocutors.—SOCRATES, MILTON.

M. I AM much gratified by this visit, Socrates; and will confess to you, that I have long felt a poet's anxiety to know what the first of philosophers thinks of my *Paradise Lost*. I suppose you have seen it?

S. Of course I have; the God of Letters is too proud of them not to let the spirits of the Great Epics have free egress into these regions of bliss.

M. And what is your opinion then—may I enquire?

S. That you have converted a silly legend to a very fine poem. The beauties you have displayed in that work, I love; I am delighted with its wildnesses; I admire its sublimities; but—could you not have infused into it a little more morality?

M. More morality!—Have you considered the time when and the circumstances under which, I wrote?

S. I have; and they form *some* apology. But you enquired what *I thought of the Poem*. Did you expect me to dissemble what I thought, in deference to times and circumstances?