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VOL. 4074.

A SPIRIT IN PRISON BY **ROBERT HICHENS.**

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. 2.

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BY

ROBERT HICHENS

AUTHOR OF "FLAMES," "THE GARDEN OF ALLAH,"
"THE CALL OF THE BLOOD," ETC.

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IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL. II

LEIPZIG

BERNHARD TAUCHNITZ

1908.

A SPIRIT IN PRISON

ROBERT HICHENS

AUTHOR OF "MARRIAGE," "THE GARDEN OF ALICE,"
"THE CALL OF THE BIRD," ETC.

COMPLETE EDITION

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL. II



LEIPZIG

BERNHARDT TAUCHNITZ

1904

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A SPIRIT IN PRISON.

CHAPTER I.

HERMIONE was very thankful that the Marchesino had gone. She felt that the lunch had been a failure, and was sorry. But she had done her best. Vere and the young man himself had frustrated her, she thought. It was a bore having to entertain anyone in the hot weather. As she went upstairs she said to herself that her guest's addio had been the final fiasco of an unfortunate morning. Evidently he knew something of Peppina and had been shocked to find the girl in the house. Emile had told her—Hermione—that she was an impulsive. Had she acted foolishly in taking Peppina? She had been governed in the matter by her heart, in which dwelt pity and a passion for justice. Surely the sense of compassion, the love of fair dealing could not lead one far astray. And yet, since Peppina had been on the island the peace of the life there had been lessened. Emile had become a little different, Vere too. And even Gaspare—was there not some change in him? She thought of Giulia's assertion that the disfigured girl had the evil eye.

She had laughed at the idea, and had spoken very seriously to Giulia, telling her that she was not to communicate her foolish suspicion to the other servants. But certainly the joy of their life in this House of the Sea was not what it had been. And even Vere had had forebodings with which Peppina had been connected. Perhaps the air of Italy, this clear, this radiant atmosphere, which seemed created to be the environment of happiness, contained some subtle poison that was working in them all, turning them from cool reason.

She thought of Emile, calling up before her his big frame, his powerful face with the steady eyes. And a wave of depression went over her, as she understood how very much she had relied on him since the death of Maurice. Without him she would indeed have been a derelict.

Again that bitter flood of curiosity welled up in her. She wondered where Vere was, but she did not go to the girl's room. Instead she went to her own sitting-room. Yesterday she had been restless. She had felt driven. To-day she felt even worse. But to-day she knew what yesterday she had not known—Vere's solitary occupation. Why had not Vere told her, confided in her? It was a very simple matter. The only reason why it now assumed an importance to her was because it had been so carefully concealed. Why had not Vere told her all about it, as she told her other little matters of their island life, freely, without even a thought of hesitation?

She sought the reason of this departure which was paining her. But at first she did not find it.

Perhaps Vere wanted to give her a surprise. For a moment her heart grew lighter. Vere might be preparing something to please or astonish her mother, and Emile

might be in the secret, might be assisting in some way. But no! Vere's mysterious occupation had been followed too long. And then Emile had not always known what it was. He had only known lately.

Those long reveries of Vere upon the sea, when she lay in the little boat in the shadow cast by the cliffs over the Saint's Pool—they were the prelude of work; imaginative, creative perhaps.

And Vere was not seventeen.

Hermione smiled to herself rather bitterly, thinking of the ignorance, of the inevitable folly of youth. The child, no doubt, had dreams of fame. What clever, what imaginative and energetic child has not such dreams at some period or other? How absurd we all are, thinking to climb to the stars almost as soon as we can see them!

And then the smile died away from Hermione's lips as the great tenderness of the mother within her was moved by the thought of the disappointments that come with greater knowledge of life. Vere would suffer when she learnt the truth, when she knew the meaning of failure.

Quite simply and naturally Hermione was including her child inevitably within the circle of her own disaster.

If Emile knew, why did he not tell Vere what he had told her mother?

But Emile had surely shown much greater interest in Vere just lately than ever before?

Was Emile helping Vere in what she was doing? But if he was, then he must believe in Vere's capacity to do something that was worth doing.

Hermione knew the almost terrible sincerity of Artois in the things of the intellect, his clear, unwavering judgment, his ruthless truthfulness. Nothing would ever turn him from that. Nothing, unless he——

Her face became suddenly scarlet, then pale. A monstrous idea had sprung up in her mind, an idea so monstrous that she strove to thrust it away violently, without even contemplating it. Why had Vere not told her? There must be some good and sufficient reason. Vehemently—to escape from that monstrous idea—she sought it. Why had everything else in her child been revealed to her, only this one thing been hidden from her?

She searched the past, Vere and herself in that past. And now, despite her emotion, her full intelligence was roused up and at work. And presently she remembered that Emile and Vere shared the knowledge of her own desire to create, and her utter failure to succeed in creation. Emile knew the whole naked truth of that. Vere did not. But Vere knew something. Could that mutual knowledge be the reason of this mutual secrecy? As women often do, Hermione had leaped into the very core of the heart of the truth, had leaped out of the void, guided by some strange instinct never alive in man. But as women very seldom do she shrank away from the place she had gained. Instead of triumphing she was afraid. She remembered how often her imagination had betrayed her, how it had created phantoms, had ruined for her the lagging hours. Again and again she had said to herself, "I will beware of it." Now she accused it of playing her false once more, of running wild. Sharply she pulled herself up. She was assuming things. That was her great fault, to assume that things were that which perhaps they were not.

How often Emile had told her not to trust her imagination! She would heed him now. She knew nothing. She did not even know for certain that Vere's

flush, Vere's abrupt hesitation at lunch, were a betrayal of the child's secret.

But that she would find out.

Again the fierce curiosity besieged and took possession of her. After all, she was a mother. A mother had rights. Surely she had a right to know what another knew of her child.

"I will ask Vere," she said to herself.

Once before she had said to herself that she would do that, and she had not done it. She had felt that to do it would be a humiliation. But now she was resolved to do it, for she knew more of her own condition and was more afraid of herself. She began to feel like one who has undergone a prolonged strain of work, who believes that it has not been too great and has been capably supported, and who suddenly is aware of a yielding, of a downward and outward movement, like a wide and spreading disintegration, in which brain, nerves, the whole body are involved.

Yet what had been the strain that she had been supporting, that now suddenly she began to feel too much? The strain of a loss. Time should have eased it. But had Time eased it, or only lengthened the period during which she had been forced to carry her load? People ought to get accustomed to things. She knew that it is supposed by many that the human body, the human mind, the human heart can get accustomed—by which is apparently meant can cease passionately and instinctively to strive to repel—can get accustomed to anything. Well, she could not. Never could she get accustomed to the loss of love, of man's love. The whole world might proclaim its proverbs. For her they had no truth. For her—and for how many other silent women!

And now suddenly she felt that for years she had been struggling, and that the struggle had told upon her far more than she had ever suspected. Nothing must be added to her burden, or she would sink down. The dust would cover her. She would be as nothing—or she would be as something terrible, nameless.

She must ask Vere, do what she had said to herself that she would not do. Unless she had the complete confidence of her child she could not continue to do without the cherishing love she had lost. She saw herself a cripple, something maimed. Hitherto she had been supported by blessed human crutches: by Vere, Emile, Gaspare. How heavily she had leaned upon them! She knew that now. How heavily she must still lean if she were to continue on her way. And a fierce, an almost savage something, desperate and therefore arbitrary, said within her:

“I will keep the little that I have: I will—I will.”

“The little! Had she said that? It was wicked of her to say that. But she had had the wonderful thing. She had held for a brief time the magic of the world within the hollow of her hands, within the shadow of her heart. And the others? Children slip from their parents’ lives into the arms of another love whose call means more to them than the voices of those who made them live. Friends drift away, scarcely knowing why, divided from each other by the innumerable channels that branch from the main stream of existence. Even a faithful servant cannot be more than a friend.

There is one thing that is great, whose greatness makes the smallness of all the other things. And so Hermione said, “the little that I have,” and there was truth in it. And there was as vital a truth in the fact of her whole

nature recognising that little's enormous value to her. Not for a moment did she underrate her possession. Indeed, she had to fight against the tendency to exaggeration. Her intellect said to her that, in being so deeply moved by such a thing as concealment from her by Vere of something innocent of which Emile knew, she was making a water drop into an ocean. Her intellect said that. But her heart said no.

And the voice of her intellect sank away like the frailest echo that ever raised its spectral imitation of a reality. And the voice of her heart rang out till it filled her world.

And so the argument was over.

She thought she heard a step below, and looked out of the window into the sunshine.

Gaspare was there. It was his hour of repose, and he was smoking a cigarette. He was dressed in white linen, without a coat, and had a white linen hat on his head. He stood near the house, apparently looking out to sea. And his pose was meditative. Hermione watched him. The sight of him reminded her of another question she wished to ask.

Gaspare had one hand in the pocket of his white trousers. With the other he held the cigarette. Hermione saw the wreaths of pale smoke curling up and evaporating in the shining, twinkling air, which seemed full of joyous, dancing atoms. But presently his hand forgot to do its work. The cigarette, only half smoked, went out, and he stood there as if plunged in profound thought. Hermione wondered what he was thinking about.

"Gaspare!"

She said it softly. Evidently he did not hear.

"Gaspare! Gaspare!"

Each time she spoke a little louder, but still he took no notice.

She leaned farther out and called:

"Gaspare!"

This time he heard and started violently, dropped the cigarette, then, without looking up, bent down slowly, recovered it, and turned round.

"Signora?"

The sun shone full on his upturned face, showing to Hermione the dogged look which sometimes came to it when anything startled him.

"I made you jump."

"No, Signora."

"But I did. What were you thinking about?"

"Nothing, Signora. Why are you not asleep?"

He spoke almost as if she injured him by being awake.

"I couldn't sleep to-day. What are you going to do this afternoon?"

"I don't know, Signora. Do you wish me to do anything for you?"

"Well——"

She had a wish to clear things up, to force her life, the lives of those few she cared for, out of mystery into a clear light. She had a desire to chastise thought by strong, bracing action.

"I rather want to send a note to Don Emilio."

"Sì, Signora."

His voice did not sound pleased.

"It is too hot to row all the way to Naples. Couldn't you go to the village and take the tram to the hotel—if I write the note?"

"If you like, Signora."

"Or would it be less bother to row as far as Mergellina, and take a tram or carriage from there?"

"I can do that, Signora."

He sounded a little more cheerful.

"I think I'll write the note, Gaspare, then. And you might take it some time—whenever you like. You might come and fetch it in five minutes."

"Very well, Signora."

He moved away and she went to her writing-table. She sat down, and slowly, with a good deal of hesitation and thought, she wrote part of a letter asking Emile to come to dine whenever he liked at the island. And now came the difficulty. She knew Emile did not want to meet the Marchesino there. Yet she was going to ask them to meet each other. She had told the Marchesino so. Should she tell Emile? Perhaps, if she did, he would refuse to come. But she could never lay even the smallest trap for a friend. So she wrote on, asking Emile to let her know the night he would come, as she had promised to invite the Marchesino to meet him.

"Be a good friend and do this for me," she ended, "even if it bores you. The Marchese lunched here alone with us to-day, and it was a fiasco. I think we were very inhospitable, and I want to wipe away the recollection of our dulness from his mind. Gaspare will bring me your answer."

At the bottom she wrote "Hermione." But just as she was going to seal the letter in its envelope she took it out, and added "Delarey" to her Christian name.

"Hermione Delarey." She looked at the words for a long time before she rang the bell for Gaspare.

When she gave him the letter, "Are you going by Mergellina?" she asked him.

"Sì, Signora."

He stood beside her for a moment, then, as she said nothing more, turned to go out.

"Gaspare, wait one minute," she said quickly.

"Sì, Signora."

"I meant to ask you last night, but—well, we spoke of other things, and it was so late. Have you ever noticed anything about that boy, Ruffo, anything at all, that surprised you?"

"Surprised me, Signora?"

"Surprised you, or reminded you of anything?"

"I don't know what you mean, Signora."

Gaspare's voice was hard and cold. He looked steadily at Hermione, as a man of strong character sometimes looks, when he wishes to turn his eyes away from the glance of another, but will not, because of his manhood.

Hermione hesitated to go on, but something drove her to be more explicit.

"Have you never noticed in Ruffo a likeness to—to your Padrone?" she said slowly.

"My Padrone!"

Gaspare's great eyes dropped before hers, and he stood looking on the floor. She saw a deep flush cover his brown skin.

"I am sure you have noticed it, Gaspare," she said. "I can see you have. Why did you not tell me?"

At that moment she felt angry with herself and almost angry with him. Had he noticed this strange, this subtle resemblance between the fisher-boy and the dead man at once, long before she had? Had he been swifter to see such a thing than she?

"What do you mean, Signora? What are you talking about?"

He looked ugly.

"How can a fisher-boy, a nothing from Mergellina, look like my Padrone?"

Now he lifted his eyes, and they were fierce—or so she thought.

"Signora, how can you say such a thing?"

"Gaspare!" she exclaimed, astonished at his sudden vehemence.

"Signora—scusi! But—but there will never be another like my Padrone."

He opened the door and went quickly out of the room, and when the door shut it was as if an iron door shut upon a furnace.

Hermione stood looking at this door. She drew a long breath.

"But he has seen it!" she said aloud. "He has seen it." And Emile?

Had she been a blind woman, she who had so loved the beauty that was dust? She thought of Vere and Ruffo standing together, so youthful, so happy in their simple, casual intercourse.

It was as if Vere had been mysteriously drawn to this boy because of his resemblance to the father she had never seen.

Vere! Little Vere!

Again the mother's tenderness welled up in Hermione's heart, this time sweeping away the reluctance to be humble.

"I will go to Vere now."

She went to the door, as she had gone to it the previous day. But this time she did not hesitate to open it. A strong impulse swept her along, and she came to her child's room eagerly.

"Vere!"

She knocked at the door.

"Vere! May I come in?"

She knocked again. There was no answer.

Then she opened the door and went in. Possibly Vere was sleeping. The mosquito net was drawn round the bed, but Hermione saw that her child was not behind it. Vere had gone out somewhere.

The mother went to the big window which looked out upon the sea. The green Venetian blind was drawn. She pushed up one of its flaps and bent to look through. Below, a little way out on the calm water, she saw Vere's boat rocking softly in obedience to the small movement that is never absent from the sea. The white awning was stretched above the stern seats, and under it lay Vere in her white linen dress, her small head, not protected by a hat, supported by a cushion. She lay quite still, one arm on the gunwale of the boat, the other against her side. Hermione could not see whether her eyes were shut or open.

The mother watched her for a long time through the blind.

How much of power was enclosed in that young figure that lay so still, so perfectly at ease, cradled on the great sea, warmed and cherished by the tempered fires of the sun! How much of power to lift up and to cast down, to be secret, to create sorrow, to be merciful! Wonderful, terrible human power!

The watching mother felt just then that she was in the hands of the child.

"Now it's the child's turn."

Surely Vere must be asleep. Such absolute stillness must mean the temporary withdrawal of consciousness.

Just as Hermione was thinking this, Vere's left hand moved. The girl lifted it up to her face, and gently and repeatedly rubbed her eyebrow.

Hermione dropped the flap of the blind. The little, oddly natural movement had suddenly made her feel that it was not right to be watching Vere when the child must suppose herself to be unobserved and quite alone with the sea.

As she came away from the window she glanced quickly round the room, and upon a small writing-table at the foot of the bed she saw a number of sheets of paper lying loose, with a piece of ribbon beside them. They had evidently been taken out of the writing-table drawer, which was partially open, and which, as Hermione could see, contained other sheets of a similar kind. Hermione looked, and then at once looked away. She passed the table and reached the door. When she was there she glanced again at the sheets of paper. They were covered with writing. They drew, they fascinated her eyes, and she stood still, with her hand resting on the door-handle. As a rule it would have seemed perfectly natural to her to read anything that Vere had left lying about, either in her own room or anywhere else. Until just lately her child had never had, or dreamed of having, any secret from her. Never had Vere received a letter that her mother had not seen. Secrets simply did not exist between them,—secrets, that is, of the child from the mother.

But it was not so now. And that was why those sheets of paper drew and held the mother's eyes.

She had, of course, a perfect right to read them. Or had she, she who had said to Vere, "Keep your secrets?" In those words had she not deliberately relinquished such



a right? She stood there thinking, recalling those words, debating within herself this question—and surely with much less than her usual great honesty.

Emile, she was sure, had read the writing upon those sheets of paper.

She did not know exactly why she was certain of this—but she was certain, absolutely certain. She remembered the long-ago days, when she had submitted to him similar sheets. What Emile had read surely she might read. Again that intense and bitter curiosity mingled with something else, a strange, new jealousy in which it was rooted. She felt as if Vere, this child whom she had loved and cared for, had done her a cruel wrong, had barred her out from the life in which she had always been till now the best loved, the most absolutely trusted dweller. Why should she not take that which she ought to have been given?

Again she was conscious of that painful, that piteous sensation of one who is yielding under a strain that has been too prolonged. Something surely collapsed within her, something of the part of her being that was moral. She was no longer a free woman in that moment. She was governed. Or so she felt, perhaps deceiving herself.

She went swiftly and softly over to the table and bent over the sheets.

At first she stood. Then she sat down. She took up the paper, handled it, held it close to her eyes.

Verses! Vere was writing verses. Of course! Everyone begins by being a poet. Hermione smiled, almost laughed aloud. Poor little Vere with her poor little secret! There was still that bitterness in the mother, that sense of wrong. But she read on and on. And her

face was very grave, even earnest. And presently she started and her hand shook.

She had come to a poem that was corrected in Vere's handwriting, and on the margin was written, "Monsieur Emile's idea."

So there had been a conference, and Emile was advising Vere.

Hermione's hand shook so violently that she could not go on reading for a moment, and she laid the paper down. She felt like one who has suddenly unmasked a conspiracy against herself. It was useless for her intellect to deny this conspiracy, for her heart proclaimed it.

Long ago Emile had told her frankly that it was in vain for her to waste her time in creative work, that she had not the necessary gift for it. And now he was secretly assisting her own child of sixteen—to do what he had told her, the mother, not to do. Why was he doing this?

Again the monstrous idea that she had forcibly dismissed from her mind that day returned to Hermione. There is one thing that sometimes blinds the most clear-sighted men, so that they cannot perceive truth.

But—Hermione again bent over the sheets of paper, this time seeking for a weapon against the idea which assailed her. On several pages she found emendations, excisions, on one a whole verse completely changed. And on the margins were pencilled "Monsieur Emile's suggestion," "Monsieur E.'s advice;" and once "These two lines invented by Monsieur Emile."

When had Vere and Emile had the opportunity for this long and secret discussion? On the day of the storm they had been together alone. They had had tea together alone. And on the night Emile dined on the

island they had been out in the boat together for a long time. All this must have been talked over then.

Yes.

She read on. Had Vere talent? Did her child possess what she had longed for, and had been denied? She strove to read critically, but she was too excited, too moved to do so. All necessary calm was gone. She was painfully upset. The words moved before her eyes, running upward in irregular lines that resemble creeping things, and she saw rings of light, yellow in the middle and edged with pale blue.

She pushed away the sheets of paper, got up and went again to the window. She must look at Vere once more, look at her with this new knowledge, look at her critically, with a piercing scrutiny. And she bent down as before, and moved a section of the blind, pushing it up.

There was no boat beneath her on the sea.

She dropped the blind sharply, and all the blood in her body seemed to make a simultaneous movement away from the region of the heart.

Vere was perhaps already in the house, running lightly up to the room. She would come in and find her mother there. She would guess what her mother had been doing.

Hermione did not hesitate. She crossed the room swiftly, opened the door and went out. She reached her own room without meeting Vere. But she had not been in it for more than a minute and a half when she heard Vere come upstairs, the sound of her door opened and shut.

Hermione cleared her throat. She felt the need of doing something physical. Then she pulled up her blinds and let the hot sun stream in upon her.

She felt dark just then—black.

In a moment she found that she was perspiring. The sun was fierce—that of course must be the reason. But she would not shut the sun out. She must have light around her, although there was none within her.

She was thankful she had escaped in time. If she had not, if Vere had run into the room and found her there she was sure she would have frightened her child by some strange outburst. She would have said or done something—she did not at all know what—that would perhaps have altered their relations irrevocably. For, in that moment, the sense of self-control, of being herself—so she put it—had been withdrawn from her.

She would regain it, no doubt. She was even now regaining it. Already she was able to say to herself that she was not seeing things in their true proportions, that some sudden crisis of the nerves, due perhaps to some purely physical cause, had plunged her into a folly of feeling from which she would soon escape entirely. She was by nature emotional and unguarded: therefore specially likely to be the victim in mind of any bodily ill.

And then she was not accustomed to be unwell. Her strength of body was remarkable. Very seldom had she felt weak.

She remembered one night, long ago in Sicily, when an awful bodily weakness had overtaken her. But that had been caused by dread. The mind had reacted upon the body. Now, she was sure of it, body had reacted on mind.

Yet she had not been ill.

She felt unequal to the battle of pros and cons that was raging within her.

"I'll be quiet," she thought. "I'll read."

And she took up a book.

She read steadily for an hour, understanding thoroughly all she read, and wondering how she had ever fancied she cared about reading. Then she laid the book down and looked at the clock. It was nearly four. Tea would perhaps refresh her. And after tea? She had loved the island, but to-day she felt almost as if it were a prison. What was there to be done? She found herself wondering for the first time how she had managed to "get through" week after week there. And in a moment her wonder made her realise the inward change in her, the distance that now divided her from Vere, the gulf that lay between them.

A day with a stranger may seem long, but a month with a friend how short! To live with Vere had been like living with a part of herself. But now what would it be like? and when Emile came, and they three were together?

When Hermione contemplated that reunion, she felt that it would be to her intolerable. And yet she desired it. For she wanted to know something, and she was certain that if she, Vere, and Emile could be together, without any fourth person, she would know it.

A little while ago, when she had longed for bracing action, she had resolved to ask Emile to meet the Marchesino. She had felt as if that meeting would clear the air, would drive out the faint mystery which seemed to be encompassing them about. The two men, formerly friends, were evidently in antagonism now. She wanted to restore things to their former footing, or to make the enmity come out into the open, to understand it thoroughly, and to know if she and Vere had any part in it. Her desire had been to throw open windows and let in light.

But now things were changed. She understood, she

knew more. And she wanted to be alone with Emile and with Vere. Then, perhaps, she would understand everything.

She said this to herself quite calmly. Her mood was changed. The fire had died down in her, and she felt almost sluggish, although still restless. The monstrous idea had come to her again. She did not vehemently repel it. By nature she was no doubt an impulsive. But now she meant to be a watcher. Before she took up her book and began to read she had been, perhaps, almost hysterical, had been plunged in a welter of emotion in which reason was drowned, had not been herself.

But now she felt that she was herself.

There was something that she wished to know, something that the knowledge she had gained in her child's room that day suggested as a possibility.

She regretted her note to Emile. Why had not she asked him to come alone, to-morrow, or even to-night—yes, to-night?

If she could only be with him and Vere for a few minutes to-night!

CHAPTER II.

WHEN Artois received Hermione's letter he asked who had brought it, and obtained from the waiter a fairly accurate description of Gaspare.

"Please ask him to come up," he said. "I want to speak to him."

Two or three minutes later there was a knock at the door and Gaspare walked in, with a large-eyed inquiring look.

"Good day, Gaspare. You've never seen my quarters before, I think," said Artois cordially.

"No, Signore. What a beautiful room!"

"You're not in a great hurry, are you?"

"No, Signore."

"Then smoke a cigar, and I'll write an answer to this letter."

"Thank you, Signore."

Artois gave him a cigar, and sat down to answer the letter, while Gaspare went out onto the balcony and stood looking at the bathers who were diving from the high wooden platform of the bath establishment over the way. When Artois had finished writing he joined Gaspare. He had a great wish that day to break down a reserve he had respected for many years, but he knew Gaspare's determined character, his power of obstinate, of dogged silence. Gaspare's will had been strong when he was a boy. The passing of the years had certainly not weakened it. Nevertheless, Artois was moved to make the attempt which he foresaw would probably end in failure.

He gave Gaspare the letter and said:

"Don't go for a moment. I want to have a little talk with you."

"Si, Signore."

Gaspare put the letter into the inner pocket of his jacket, and stood looking at Artois, holding the cigar in his left hand. In all these years Artois had never found out whether Gaspare liked him or not. He wished now that he knew.

"Gaspare," he said, "I think you know that I have a great regard for your Padrona."

"Si, Signore. I know it."

The words sounded rather cold.

"She has had a great deal of sorrow to bear."

"Sì, Signore."

"One does not wish that she should be disturbed in any way—that any fresh trouble should come into her life."

Gaspare's eyes were always fixed steadily upon Artois, who, as he spoke the last words, fancied he saw come into them an expression that was almost severely ironical. It vanished at once as Gaspare said:

"No, Signore."

Artois felt the iron of this faithful servant's impenetrable reserve, but he continued very quietly and composedly:

"You have always stood between the Padrona and trouble whenever you could. You always will—I am sure of that."

"Sì, Signore."

"Do you think there is any danger to the Signora's happiness here?"

"Here, Signore?"

Gaspare's emphasis seemed to imply where they were just then standing. Artois was surprised, then for a moment almost relieved. Apparently Gaspare had no thought in common with the strange, the perhaps fantastic thought that had been in his own mind.

"Here—no!" he said with a smile. "Only you and I are here, and we shall not make the Signora unhappy."

"Chi lo sa?" returned Gaspare.

And again that ironical expression was in his eyes.

"By here I meant here in Naples, where we all are—or on the island, for instance."

"Signore, in this life there is trouble for all."

"But some troubles, some disasters can be avoided."

"It's possible."

"Gaspare"—Artois looked at him steadily, searchingly even, and spoke very gravely—"I respect you for your discretion of many years. But if you know of any trouble, any danger that is near to the Signora, and against which I could help you to protect her, I hope you will trust me and tell me. I think you ought to do that."

"I don't know what you mean, Signore."

"Are you quite sure, Gaspare? Are you quite sure that no one comes to the island who might make the Signora very unhappy?"

Gaspare had dropped his eyes. Now he lifted them and looked Artois straight in the face.

"No, Signore, I am not sure of that," he said.

There was nothing rude in his voice, but there was something stern. Artois felt as if a strong, determined man stood in his path and blocked the way. But why? Surely they were at cross purposes. The working of Gaspare's mind was not clear to him.

After a moment of silence he said:

"What I mean is this. Do you think it would be a good thing if the Signora left the island?"

"Left the island, Signore?"

"Yes, and went away from Naples altogether."

"The Signorina would never let the Padrona go. The Signorina loves the island and my Padrona loves the Signorina."

"But the Signorina would not be selfish. If it was best for her mother to go——"

"The Signorina would not think it was best; she would never think it was best to leave the island."

"But what I want to know, Gaspare, is whether you

think it would be best for them to leave the island. That's what I want to know—and you haven't told me."

"I am a servant, Signore. I cannot tell such things."

"You are a servant,—yes. But you are also a friend. And I think nobody could tell better than you."

"I am sure the Signora will not leave the island till October, Signore. She says we are all to stay until the end of October."

"And now it's July."

"Sì, Signore. Now it's July."

In saying the last words Gaspare's voice sounded fatalistic, and Artois believed that he caught an echo of a deep-down thought of his own. With all his virtues Gaspare had an admixture of the spirit of the East that dwells also in Sicily, a spirit that sometimes, brooding over a nature however fine, prevents action, a spirit that says to a man, "This is ordained. This is destiny. This is to be."

"Gaspare," Artois said, strong in this conviction, "I have heard you say, 'è il destino.' But you know we can often get away from things if we are quick-witted."

"Some things, Signore."

"Most things, perhaps. Don't you trust me?"

"Signore!"

"Don't you think, after all these years, you can trust me?"

"Signore, I respect you as I respect my father."

"Well, Gaspare, remember this. The Signora has had trouble enough in her life. We must keep out any more."

"Signore, I shall always do what I can to spare my Padrona. Thank you for the cigar, Signore. I ought to go now. I have to go to Mergellina for the boat."

"To Mergellina!"

Again Artois looked at him searchingly.

"Sì, Signore; I left the boat at Mergellina. It is very hot to row all the way here."

"Yes. A rivederci, Gaspare. Perhaps I shall sail round to the island to-night after dinner. But I'm not sure. So you need not say I am coming."

"A rivederci, Signore."

When Gaspare had gone, Artois said to himself, "He does not trust me."

Artois was surprised to realise how hurt he felt at Gaspare's attitude towards him that day. Till now their mutual reserve had surely linked them together. Their silence had been a bond. But there was a change, and the bond seemed suddenly loosened.

"Damn the differences between the nations!" Artois thought. "How can we grasp the various points of view? How can even the cleverest of us read clearly in others of a different race from our own?"

He felt frustrated, as he had sometimes felt frustrated by Orientals. And he knew an anger of the brain as well as an anger of the heart. But this anger roused him, and he resolved to do something from which till now he had instinctively shrunk, strong-willed man though he was. If Gaspare would not help him he would act for himself. Possibly the suspicion, the fear that beset him was groundless. He had put it away from him more than once, had said that it was absurd, that his profession of an imaginative writer rendered him, perhaps, more liable to strange fancies than were other men, that it encouraged him to seek instinctively for drama, and that what a man instinctively and perpetually seeks he will often imagine that he has found. Now he would try to prove what was the truth.

He had written to Hermione saying that he would be

glad to dine with her on any evening that suited the Marchesino, that he had no engagements. Why she wished him to meet the Marchesino he did not know. No doubt she had some woman's reason. The one she gave was hardly enough, and he divined another beneath it. Certainly he did not love Doro on the island, but perhaps it was as well that they should meet there once, and get over their little antagonism, an antagonism that Artois thought of as almost childish. Life was not long enough for quarrels with boys like Doro. Artois had refused Hermione's invitation on the sea abruptly. He had felt irritated for the moment, because he had for the moment been unusually expansive, and her announcement that Doro was to be there had fallen upon him like a cold douche. And then he had been nervous, highly strung from overwork. Now he was calm, and could look at things as they were. And if he noticed anything leading him to suppose that the Marchesino was likely to try to abuse Hermione's hospitality he meant to have it out with him. He would speak plainly and explain the English point of view. Doro would no doubt attack him on the ground of his interview with Maria Fortunata. He did not care. Somehow his present preoccupation with Hermione's fate, increased by the visit of Gaspare, rendered his irritation against the Marchesino less keen than it had been. But he thought he would probably visit the island to-night—after another visit which he intended to pay. He could not start at once. He must give Gaspare time to take the boat and row off. For his first visit was to Mergellina.

After waiting an hour he started on foot, keeping along by the sea, as he did not wish to meet acquaintances and was likely to meet them in the Villa. As he drew near

to Mergellina he felt a great and growing reluctance to do what he had come to do, to make inquiries into a certain matter; and he believed that this reluctance, awake within him although perhaps he had scarcely been aware of it, had kept him inactive during many days. Yet he was not sure of this. He was not sure when a faint suspicion had first been born in his mind. Even now, he said to himself that what he meant to do, if explained to the ordinary man, would probably seem to him ridiculous, that the ordinary man would say, "What a wild idea! Your imagination runs riot." But he thought of certain subtle things which had seemed like indications, like shadowy pointing fingers; of a look in Gaspare's eyes when they had met his—a hard, defiant look that seemed shutting him out from something; of a look in another face one night under the moon; of some words spoken in a cave with a passion that had reached his heart; of two children strangely at ease in each other's society. And again the thought came to him, "Is not everything possible—even that?" All through his life he had sought truth with persistence, sometimes almost with cruelty, yet now he was conscious of timidity, almost of cowardice—as if he feared to seek it.

Long ago he had known a cowardice akin to this, in Sicily. Then he had been afraid, not for himself but for another. To-day again the protective instinct was alive in him. It was that instinct which made him afraid, but it was also that instinct which kept him to his first intention, which pushed him on to Mergellina. No safety can be in ignorance for a strong man. He must know. Then he can act.

When Artois reached Mergellina he looked about for Ruffo, but he could not see the boy. He had never in-

quired Ruffo's second name. He might make a guess at it. Should he? He looked at a group of fishermen who were talking loudly on the sand just beyond the low wall. One of them had a handsome face bronzed by the sun, frank hazel eyes, a mouth oddly sensitive for one of his class. His woollen shirt, wide open, showed a medal resting on his broad chest, one of those amulets that are said to protect the fishermen from the dangers of the sea. Artois resolved to ask this man the question he wished, yet feared to put to someone. Afterwards he wondered why he had picked out this man. Perhaps it was because he looked happy.

Artois caught the man's eye.

"You want a boat, Signore?"

With a quick movement the fellow was beside him on the other side of the wall.

"I'll take your boat—perhaps this evening."

"At what hour, Signore?"

"We'll see. But first perhaps you can tell me something."

"What is it?"

"You live here at Mergellina?"

"Sì, Signore."

"Do you know anyone called—called Buonavista?"

The eyes of Artois were fixed on the man's face.

"Buonavista—sì, signore."

"You do?"

"Ma sì, Signore," said the man, looking at Artois with a sudden flash of surprise. "The family Buonavista, I have known it all my life."

"The family? Oh, then there are many of them?"

The man laughed.

"Enrico Buonavista has made many children, and is

proud of it, I can tell you. He has ten—his father before him——”

“Then they are Neapolitans?”

“Neapolitans! No, Signore. They are from Mergellina.”

Artois smiled. The tension which had surprised the sailor had left his face.

“I understand. But there is no Sicilian here called Buonavista?”

“A Sicilian, Signore? I never heard of one. Are there Buonavista in Sicily?”

“I have met with the name there once. But perhaps you can tell me of a boy, one of the fishermen, called Ruffo.”

“Ruffo Scarla? You mean Ruffo Scarla, who fishes with Giuseppe—Mandano Giuseppe, Signore?”

“It may be. A young fellow, a Sicilian by birth, I believe.”

“Il Siciliano! Sì, Signore. We call him that, but he has never been in Sicily, and was born in America.”

“That’s the boy.”

“Do you want him, Signore? But he is not here to-day. He is at sea to-day.”

“I did want to speak to him.”

“But he is not a boatman, Signore. He does not go with the travellers. He is a fisherman.”

“Yes. Do you know his mother?”

“Sì, Signore.”

“What is her name?”

“Bernari, Signore. She is married to Antonio Bernari, who is in prison.”

“In prison? What’s he been doing?”

“He is always after the girls, Signore. And now he has put a knife into one.”

The man shrugged his shoulders.

"Diavolo! He is jealous. He has not been tried yet, perhaps he never will be. His wife has gone into Naples to-day to see him."

"Oh, she's away?"

"Sì, Signore."

"And her name, her Christian name? It's Maria, isn't it?"

"No, Signore, Maddalena—Maddalena Bernari."

Artois said nothing for a minute. Then he added:

"I suppose there are plenty of Maddalenas here in Mergellina?"

The man laughed.

"Sì, Signore. Marias and Maddalenas—you find them everywhere. Why, my own mamma is Maddalena, and my wife is Maria, and so is my sister."

"Exactly. And your name? I want it, so that when next I take a boat here I can ask for yours."

"Fabiano, Signore, Lari Fabiano, and my boat is the *Stella del Mare*."

"Thank you, Fabiano."

Artois put a lira into his hand.

"I shall take the 'Star of the Sea' very soon."

"This evening, Signore; it will be fine for sailing this evening."

"If not this evening, another day. A rivederci, Fabiano."

"A rivederci, Signore. Buon passeggio."

The man went back to his companions, and, as Artois walked on, began talking eagerly to them, and pointing after the stranger.

Artois did not know what he would do later on in the evening, but he had decided on the immediate future. He would walk up the hill to the village of Posilipo, then

turn down to the left, past the entrance to the Villa Rosebery, and go to the Antico Giuseppone, where he would dine by the waterside. It was quiet there, he knew; and he could have a cutlet and a zampaglione, a cup of coffee and a cigar, and sit and watch the night fall. And when it had fallen? Well, he would not be far from the island, nor very far from Naples, and he could decide then what to do.

He followed out this plan, and arrived at the Giuseppone at evening. As he came down the road between the big buildings near the waterside he saw in the distance a small group of boys and men lounging by the three or four boats that lie at the quay, and feared to find, perhaps, a bustle and noise of people round the corner at the ristorante. But when he turned the corner, and came to the little tables that were set out in the open air, he was glad to see only two men who were bending over their plates of fish soup. He glanced at them, almost without noticing them, so preoccupied was he with his thoughts, sat down at an adjoining table and ordered his simple meal. While it was being got ready he looked out over the sea.

The two men near him conversed occasionally in low voices. He paid no heed to them. Only when he had dined slowly and was sipping his black coffee did they attract his attention. He heard one of them say to the other in French,

“What am I to do? It would be terrible for me! How am I to prevent it from happening?”

His companion replied,

“I thought you had been wandering all the winter in the desert.”

“I have. What has that to do with it?”

"Have you not learnt its lesson?"

"What lesson?"

"The lesson of resignation, of obedience to the thing that must be."

Artois looked towards the last speaker and saw that he was an Oriental, and that he was very old. His companion was a young Frenchman.

"What do those do who have not learnt?" continued the Oriental. "They seek, do they not? They rebel, they fight, they try to avoid things, they try to bring things about. They lift up their hands to disperse the grains of the sand-storm. They lift up their voices to be heard by the wind from the South. They stretch forth their hands to gather the mirage into their bosom. They follow the drum that is beaten among the dunes. They are afraid of life because they know it has two kinds of gifts; and one they snatch at, and one they would refuse. And they are afraid still more of the door that all must enter, Sultan and Nomad—he who has washed himself and made the threefold pilgrimage, and he who is a leper and is eaten by flies. So it is. And nevertheless all that is to come must come, and all that is to go must go at the time appointed; just as the cloud falls and lifts at the time appointed, and the wind blows and fails, and Ramadan is here and is over."

As he ceased from speaking he got up from his chair, and, followed by the young Frenchman, he passed in front of Artois, went down to the waterside, stepped into a boat, and was rowed away into the gathering shadows of night.

Artois sat very still for a time. Then he, too, got into a boat and was rowed away across the calm water to the island.

He found Hermione sitting alone, without a lamp, on the terrace, meditating, perhaps, beneath the stars. When she saw him she got up quickly, and a strained look of excitement came into her face.

"You have come!"

"Yes. You—are you surprised? Did you wish to be alone?"

"No. Will you have some coffee?"

He shook his head.

"I dined at the Giuseppone. I had it there."

He glanced round.

"Are you looking for Vere? She is out on the cliff, I suppose. Shall we go to her?"

He was struck by her nervous uneasiness. And he thought of the words of the old Oriental, which had made upon him a profound impression, perhaps because they had seemed spoken, not to the young Frenchman, but in answer to unuttered thoughts of his own.

"Let us sit here for a minute," he said.

Hermione sat down again in silence. They talked for a little while about trifling things. And then Artois was moved to tell her of the conversation he had that evening overheard, to repeat to her, almost word for word, what the old Oriental had said. When he had finished Hermione was silent for a minute. Then she moved her chair and said, in an unsteady voice,

"I don't think I should ever learn the lesson of the desert. Perhaps only those who belong to it can learn from it."

"If it is so it is sad—for the others."

"Let us go and find Vere," she said.

"Are you sure she is on the cliff?" he asked, as they passed out by the front door.

"I think so. I am almost certain she is."

They went forward, and almost immediately heard a murmur of voices.

"Vere is with someone," said Artois.

"It must be Ruffo. It is Ruffo."

She stood still. Artois stood still beside her. The night was windless. Voices travelled through the dreaming silence.

"Don't be afraid. Sing it to me."

Vere's voice was speaking. Then a boy's voice rang out in the song of Mergellina. The obedient voice was soft and very young, though manly. And it sounded as if it sang only for one person, who was very near. Yet it was impersonal. It asked nothing from, it told nothing to, that person. Simply, and very naturally, it just gave to the night a very simple and a very natural song.

*"Oh, dolce luna bianca de l'Estate
Mi fugge il sonno accanto a la marina;
Mi destan le dolcissime serate
Gli occhi di Rosa e il mar di Mergellina."*

As Artois listened he felt as if he learnt what he had not been able to learn that day at Mergellina. Strange as this thing was—if indeed it was—he felt that it must be, that it was ordained to be, it and all that might follow from it. He even felt almost that Hermione must already know it, have divined it, as if, therefore, any effort to hide it from her must be fruitless, or even contemptible, as if indeed all effort to conceal truth of whatever kind was contemptible.

The words of the Oriental had sunk deep into his soul.

When the song was over he turned resolutely away. He felt that those children should not be disturbed.

Hermione hesitated for a moment. Then she fell in with his caprice. At the house door he bade her good-bye. She scarcely answered. And he left her standing there alone in the still night.

CHAPTER III.

HER unrest was greater than ever, and the desire that consumed her remained ungratified, although Emile had come to the island as if in obedience to her fierce mental summons. But she had not seen him even for a moment with Vere. Why had she let him go? When would he come again? She might ask him to come for a long day, or she might get Vere to ask him.

Vere must surely be longing to have a talk with her secret mentor, with her admirer and inspirer. And then Hermione remembered how often she had encouraged Emile, how they had discussed his work together, how he had claimed her sympathy in difficult moments, how by her enthusiasm she had even inspired him—so at least he had told her. And now he was fulfilling in her child's life an office akin to hers in his life.

The knowledge made her feel desolate, driven out. Yes, she felt as if this secret shared by child and friend had expelled her from their lives. Was that unreasonable? She wished to be reasonable, to be calm.

Calm! She thought of the old Oriental, and of his theory of resignation. Surely it was not for her, that theory. She was of different blood. She did not issue from the loins of the immutable East. And yet how much better it was to be resigned, to sit enthroned above the

chances of life, to have conquered fate by absolute submission to its decrees!

Why was her heart so youthful in her middle-aged body? Why did it still instinctively clamour for sympathy, like a child's? Why could she be so easily and so cruelly wounded? It was weak. It was contemptible. She hated herself. But she could only be the thing she at that moment hated.

Her surreptitious act of the afternoon seemed to have altered her irrevocably, to have twisted her out of shape,—yet she could not wish it undone, the knowledge gained by it withheld. She had needed to know what Emile knew, and chance had led her to learn it, as she had learnt it, with her eyes instead of from the lips of her child.

She wondered what Vere would have said if she had been asked to reveal the secret. She would never know that now. But there were other things that she felt she must know; why Vere had never told her—and something else.

Her act of that day had twisted her out of shape. She was awry, and she felt that she must continue to be as she was, that her fearless honesty was no longer needed by her, could no longer rightly serve her in the new circumstances that others had created for her. They had been secret. She could not be open. She was constrained to watch, to conceal—to be awry, in fact.

Yet she felt guilty even while she said this to herself, guilty and ashamed, and then doubtful. She doubted her new capacity to be furtive. She could watch, but she did not know whether she could watch without showing what she was doing. And Emile was terribly observant.

This thought, of his subtlety and her desire to con-

ceal, made her suddenly realise their altered relations with a vividness that frightened her. Where was the beautiful friendship that had been the comfort, the prop of her bereaved life? It seemed already to have sunk away into the past. She wondered what was in store for her, if there were new sorrows being forged for her in the cruel smithy of the great Ruler, sorrows that would hang like chains about her till she could go no farther. The Oriental had said: "What is to come will come, and what is to go will go, at the time appointed." And Vere had said she felt as if perhaps there was a cross that must be borne by someone on the island, by "one of us." Was she, Hermione, picked out to bear that cross? Surely God mistook the measure of her strength. If He had He would soon know how feeble she was. When Maurice had died, somehow she had endured it. She had staggered under the weight laid upon her, but she had upheld it. But now she was much older, and she felt as if suffering, instead of strengthening, had weakened her character, as if she had not much "fight" left in her.

"I don't believe I could endure another great sorrow," she said to herself. "I'm sure I couldn't."

Just then Vere came in to bid her good night.

"Good night, Vere," Hermione said.

She kissed the girl gently on the forehead, and the touch of the cool skin suddenly made her long to sob, and to say many things. She took her lips away.

"Emile has been here," she said.

"Monsieur Emile!"

Vere looked round.

"But——"

"He has gone."

"Gone! But I haven't seen him!"

Her voice sounded thoroughly surprised.

"He only stayed five minutes or so."

"Oh, Madre, I wish I had known."

There was a touch of reproach in Vere's tone, and there was something so transparently natural, so transparently innocent and girlish in her disappointment, that it told her mother something she was glad to know. Not that she had doubted it—but she was glad to know.

"We came to look for you."

"Well, but I was only on the cliff, where I always go. I was there having a little talk with Ruffo."

"I know."

"And you never called me, Madre!" Vere looked openly hurt. "Why didn't you?"

In truth Hermione hardly knew. Surely it had been Emile who had led her away from the singing voice of Ruffo.

"Ruffo was singing."

"A song about Mergellina. Did you hear it? I do like it and the way he sings it."

The annoyance had gone from her face at the thought of the song.

"And when he sings he looks so careless and gay. Did you listen?"

"Yes, for a moment, and then we went away. I think it was Emile who made me go. He didn't want to disturb you, I think."

"I understand."

Vere's face softened. Again Hermione felt a creeping jealousy at her heart. Vere had surely been annoyed with her, but now she knew that it was Emile who had not wished to disturb the *tête-à-tête* on the cliff she did not mind. She even looked as if she were almost touched.

Could the mother be wrong where the mere friend was right? She felt, when Vere spoke and her expression changed, the secret understanding from which she was excluded.

“What is the matter, Madre?”

“The matter! Nothing. Why?”

“You looked so odd for a minute. I thought——”

But she did not express what she had thought, for Hermione interrupted her by saying:

“We must get Emile to come for a long day. I wish you would write him a note to-morrow morning, Vere. Write for me and ask him to come on Thursday. I have a lot to do in the morning. Will you save me the trouble?” She tried to speak carelessly. “I’ve a long letter to send to Evelyn Townley,” she added.

“Of course, Madre. And I’ll tell Monsieur Emile all I think of him for neglecting us as he has. Ah! But I remember: he’s been working.”

“Yes, he’s been working; and one must forgive everything to the worker, mustn’t one?”

“To such a worker as Monsieur Emile is, yes. I do wish you’d let me read his books, Madre.”

For a moment Hermione hesitated, looking at her child.

“Why are you so anxious to read them all of a sudden?” she asked.

“Well, I’m growing up and—and I understand things I used not to understand.”

Her eyes fell for a moment before her mother’s, and there was a silence, in which the mother felt some truth withheld. Vere looked up again.

“And I want to appreciate Monsieur Emile properly—as you do, Madre. It seems almost ridiculous to know him so well, and not to know him really at all.”

"But you do know him really."

"I'm sure he puts most of his real self into his work."

Hermione remembered her conception of Emile Artois long ago, when she only knew him through two books; that she had believed him to be cruel, that she had thought her nature must be in opposition to his. Vere did not know that side of "Monsieur Emile."

"Vere, it is true you are growing up," she said, speaking rather slowly, as if to give herself time for something. "Perhaps I was wrong the other day in what I said. You may read Emile's books if you like."

"Madre!"

Vere's face flushed with eager pleasure.

"Thank you, Madre!"

She went up to bed radiant.

When she had gone Hermione stood where she was. She had just done a thing that was mean, or at least she had done a thing from a mean, a despicable motive. She knew it as the door shut behind her child, and she was frightened of herself. Never before had she been governed by so contemptible a feeling as that which had just prompted her. If Emile ever knew, or even suspected what it was, she felt that she could never look into his face again with clear, unfaltering eyes. What madness was upon her? What change was working within her? Revulsion came, and with it the desire to combat at once, strongly, the new, the hateful self which had frightened her.

She hastened after Vere and in a moment was knocking at the child's door.

"Who's there? Who is it?"

"Vere!" called the mother.

As she called she tried the door, and found it locked.

"Madre! It's you!"

"Yes. May I come in?"

"One tiny moment."

The voice within sounded surely a little startled and uneven, certainly not welcoming. There was a pause. Hermione heard the rustling of paper, then a drawer shut sharply.

Vere was hiding away her poems!

When Hermione understood that she felt the strong, good impulse suddenly shrivel within her, and a bitter jealousy take its place. Vere came to the door and opened it.

"Oh, come in, Madre. What is it?" she asked.

In her bright eyes there was the look of one unexpectedly disturbed. Hermione glanced quickly at the writing-table.

"You—you weren't writing my note to Monsieur Emile?" she said.

She stepped into the room. She wished she could force Vere to tell her about the poems, but without asking. She felt as if she could not continue in her present condition, excluded from Vere's confidence. Yet she knew now that she could never plead for it.

"No, Madre. I can do it to-morrow."

Vere looked and sounded surprised, and the mother felt more than ever like an intruder. Yet something dogged kept her there.

"Are you tired, Vere?" she asked.

"Not a bit."

"Then let us have a little talk."

"Of course."

Vere shut the door. Hermione knew by the way she shut it that she wanted to be alone, to go on with her

secret occupation. She came back slowly to her mother, who was sitting on a chair by the bedside. Hermione took her hand, and Vere pushed up the edge of the mosquito curtain and sat down on the bed.

"About those books of Emile's——" Hermione began.

"Oh, Madre, you're not going to—— But you've promised!"

"Yes."

"Then I may?"

"Why should you wish to read such books? They will probably make you sad, and—and they may even make you afraid of Emile."

"Afraid! Why?"

"I remember long ago, before I knew him, I had a very wrong conception of him, gained from his books."

"Oh, but I know him beforehand. That makes all the difference."

"A man like Emile has many sides."

"I think we all have, Madre. Don't you?"

Vere looked straight at her mother. Hermione felt that a moment had come in which, perhaps, she could force the telling of that truth which already she knew.

"I suppose so, Vere; but we need not surely keep any side hidden from those we love, those who are nearest to us."

Vere looked a little doubtful—even, for a moment, slightly confused.

"N—o?" she said.

She seemed to consider something. Then she added:

"But I think it depends. If something in us might give pain to anyone we love, I think we ought to try to hide that. I am sure we ought."

Hermione felt that each of them was thinking of the same thing, even speaking of it without mentioning it. But whereas she knew that Vere was doing so, Vere could not know that she was. So Vere was at a disadvantage. Vere's last words had opened the mother's eyes. What she had guessed was true. This secret of the poems was kept from her because of her own attempt to create and its failure. Abruptly she wondered if Vere and Emile had ever talked that failure over. At the mere thought of such a conversation her whole body tingled. She got up from her chair.

"Well, good night, Vere," she said.

And she left the room, leaving her child amazed.

Vere did not understand why her mother had come, nor why, having come, she abruptly went away. There was something the matter with her mother. She had felt that for some time. She was more conscious than ever of it now. Around her mother there was an atmosphere of uneasiness in which she felt herself involved. And she was vaguely conscious of the new distance between them, a distance daily growing wider. Now and then, lately, she had felt almost uncomfortable with her mother, in the sitting-room when she was saying good night, and just now when she sat on the bed. Youth is terribly quick to feel hostility, however subtle. The thought that her mother could be hostile to her had never entered Vere's head. Nevertheless the mother's faint and creeping hostility—for at times Hermione's feeling was really that, though she would doubtless have denied it even to herself—disagreeably affected the child.

"What can be the matter with Madre?" she thought.

She went over to the writing-table, where she had hastily shut up her poems on hearing the knock at the

door, but she did not take them out again. Instead she sat down and wrote the note to Monsieur Emile. As she wrote the sense of mystery, of uneasiness, departed from her, chased away, perhaps, by the memory of Monsieur Emile's kindness to her and warm encouragement, by the thought of having a long talk with him again, of showing him certain corrections and developments carried out by her since she had seen him. The sympathy of the big man meant a great deal to her, more even than he was aware of. It lifted up her eager young heart. It sent the blood coursing through her veins with a new and ardent strength. Hermione's enthusiasm had been inherited by Vere, and with it something else that gave it a peculiar vitality, a power of lasting—the secret consciousness of talent.

Now, as she wrote her letter, she forgot all her uneasiness, and her pen flew.

At last she signed her name—"Vere."

She was just going to put the letter into its envelope when something struck her, and she paused. Then she added:

"P.S.—Just now Madre gave me leave to read your books."

CHAPTER IV.

THE words of the old Oriental lingered in the mind of Artois. He was by nature more fatalistic than Hermione, and moreover he knew what she did not. Long ago he had striven against a fate. With the help of Gaspare he had conquered it—or so he had believed till now. But now he asked himself whether he had not only delayed

its coming. If his suspicion were well founded,—and since his last visit to the island he felt as if it must be,—then surely all he had done with Gaspare would be in vain at the last.

If his suspicion were well founded, then certain things are ordained. They have to happen for some reason, known only to the hidden Intelligence that fashions each man's character, that develops it in joy or grief, that makes it glad with feasting, or forces it to feed upon the bread of tears.

Did Gaspare know? If the truth were what Artois suspected, and Gaspare did know it, what would Gaspare do?

That was a problem which interested Artois intensely.

The Sicilian often said of a thing "È il Destino." Yet Artois believed that for his beloved Padrona he would fight to the death. He, Artois, would leave this fight against destiny to the Sicilian. For him the Oriental's philosophy; for him resignation to the inevitable, whatever it might be.

He said to himself that to do more than he had already done to ward off the assaults of truth would be impious. Perhaps he ought never to have done anything. Perhaps it would have been far better to have let the wave sweep over Hermione long ago. Perhaps even in that fight of his there had been secret selfishness, the desire that she should not know how by his cry from Africa her happy life had been destroyed. And perhaps he was to be punished some day for that.

He did not know. But he felt, after all these years, that if to that hermitage of the sea Fate had really found the way he must let things take their course. And it seemed to him as if the old Oriental had been mysteriously

appointed to come near him just at that moment, to make him feel that this was so. The Oriental had been like a messenger sent to him out of that East which he loved, which he had studied, but from which, perhaps, he had not learnt enough.

Vere's letter came. He read it with eagerness and pleasure till he came to the postscript. But that startled him. He knew Vere had never read his books. He thought her far too young to read them. Till lately he had had almost a contempt for those who write with one eye on "la jeune fille." Now he could conceive writing with a new pleasure something that Vere might read. But those books of his! Why had Hermione suddenly given that permission? He remembered Peppina. Vere must have told her mother of the scene with Peppina, and how her eyes had been opened to certain truths of life, how she had passed from girlhood to womanhood through that gate of knowledge. And Hermione must have thought that it was useless to strive to keep Vere back.

But did he wish Vere to read all that he had written?

On Thursday he went over to the island with mingled eagerness and reluctance. That little home in the sea, washed by blue waters, roofed by blue skies, sun-kissed and star-kissed by day and night, drew and repelled him. There was the graciousness of youth there, of youth and promise; but there was tragedy there, too, in the heart of Hermione, and in Peppina, typified by the cross upon her cheek. And does not like draw like?

For a moment he saw the little island with a great cloud above it. But when he landed and met Vere he felt the summer, and knew that the sky was clear.

Hermione was not on the island, Vere told him. She had left many apologies, and would be home for lunch.

She had had to go into Naples to see the dentist. A tooth had troubled her in the night. She had gone by tram. As Vere explained Artois had a moment of surprise, a moment of suspicion, even of vexation. But it passed when Vere said.

"I'm afraid poor Madre suffered a great deal. She looked dreadful this morning, as if she hadn't slept all night."

"Poveretta!" said Artois.

He looked earnestly at Vere. This was the first time they had met since the revelation of Peppina. What the Marchesino had seen Artois saw more plainly, felt more strongly than the young Neapolitan had felt. But he looked at Vere, too, in search of something else, thinking of Ruffo, trying to probe into the depth of human mysteries, to find the secret spring that carried child to child.

"What do you want, Monsieur Emile?"

"I want to know how the work goes," he answered, smiling.

She flushed a little.

"And I want to tell you something," he added. "My talk with you roused me up. Vere, you set me working as I have not worked for a long while."

A lively pleasure showed in her face.

"Is that really true? But then I must be careful, or you will never come to see us any more. You will always be shut up in the hotel writing."

They mounted the cliff together and, without question or reply, as by a mutual instinct, turned towards the seat that faced Ischia, clear to-day, yet romantic with the mystery of heat. When they had sat down Vere added:

"And besides, of course I know that it is Madre who

encourages you when you are depressed about your work. I have heard you say so often."

"Your mother has done a great deal for me," said Artois, seriously—"far more than she will ever know."

There was a sound of deep, surely of eternal feeling in his voice, which suddenly touched the girl to the quick.

"I like to hear you say that—like that," she said softly. "I think Madre does a great deal for us all."

If Hermione could have heard them her torn heart might perhaps have ceased to bleed. It had been difficult to her to do what she had done, to leave the island that morning. She had done it to discipline her nature, as Passionists scourge themselves by night before the altar. She had left Emile alone with Vere simply because she hated to do it.

The rising up of jealousy in her heart had frightened her. All night she had lain awake feeling this new and terrible emanation from her soul, conscious of this monster that lifted up its head and thrust it forth out of the darkness.

But one merit she had. She was frank with herself. She named the monster before she strove to fight it, to beat it back into the darkness from which it was emerging.

She was jealous, doubly jealous. The monopolising instinct of strong-natured and deeply affectionate women was fiercely alive in her. Always, no doubt, she had had it. Long ago, when first she was in Sicily alone, she had dreamed of a love in the South—far away from the world. When she married she had carried her Mercury to the exquisite isolation of Monte Amato. And when that love was taken from her, and her child came and was at the age of blossom, she had brought her child to this isle, this hermitage of the sea. Emile, too, her one great friend,

she had never wished to share him. She had never cared much to meet him in society. Her instinct was to have him to herself, to be with him alone in unfrequented places. She was greedy or she was timid. Which was it? Perhaps she lacked self-confidence, belief in her own attractive power. Life in the world is a fight. Women fight for their lovers, fight for their friends, with other women: those many women who are born thieves, who are never happy unless they are taking from their sisters the possessions those sisters care for most. Hermione could never have fought with other women for the love or the friendship of a man. Her instinct, perhaps, was to carry her treasure out of all danger into the wilderness.

Two treasures she had—Vere her child, Emile her friend. And now she was jealous of each with the other. And the enormous difference in their ages made her jealousy seem the more degrading. Nevertheless, she could not feel that it was unnatural. By a mutual act they had excluded her from their lives, had withdrawn from her their confidence while giving it to each other. And their reason for doing this—she was sure of it now—was her own failure to do something in the world of art.

She was jealous of Vere because of that confidence given to Emile, and of Emile because of his secret advice and help to Vere—advice and help which he had not given to the mother, because he had plainly seen that to do so would be useless.

And when she remembered this Hermione was jealous, too, of the talent Vere must have, a talent she had longed for, but which had been denied to her. For even if Emile . . . and then again came the most hateful suspicion of all—but Emile could not lie about the things of art.

Had they spoken together of her failure? Again and

again she asked herself the question. They must have spoken. They had spoken. She could almost hear their words, words of regret, or of pity. "We must not hurt her. We must keep it from her. We must temper the wind to the shorn lamb." The elderly man and the child had read together the secret of her suffering, had understood together the tragedy of her failure. To the extremes of life, youth and age, she had appeared an object of pity.

And then she thought of her dead husband's reverence of her intellect, boyish admiration of her mental gifts; and an agony of longing for his love swept over her again, and she felt that he was the only person who had been able to love her really, and that now he was gone there was no one.

At that moment she forgot Gaspare. Her sense of being abandoned, and of being humiliated, swept out many things from her memory. Only Maurice had loved her really. Only he had set her on high, where even the humblest woman longs to be set by someone. Only he had thought her better, braver, more worshipful, more lovable, than any other woman. Such love, without bringing conceit to the creature loved, gives power, creates much of what it believes in. The lack of any such love seems to withdraw the little power that there is.

Hermione, feeling in this humiliation of the imagination that she was less than nothing, clung desperately to the memory of him who had thought her much. The dividing years were gone. With a strange, a beautiful and terrible freshness, the days of her love came back. She saw Maurice's eyes looking at her with that simple, almost reverent admiration which she had smiled at and adored.

And she gripped her memory. She clung to it fever-

ishly as she had never clung to it before. She told herself that she would live in it as in a house of shelter. For there was the desolate wind outside.

And she thought much of Ruffo, and with a strange desire—to be with him, to search for the look she loved in him. For a moment with him she had seemed to see her Mercury in the flesh. She must watch for his return.

When the morning came she began her fight. She made her excuse, and left the morning free for Emile to be with Vere.

Two dreary hours she spent in Naples. The buzzing city affected her like a nightmare. Coming back through Mergellina she eagerly looked for Ruffo. But she did not see him. Nor had she seen him in the early morning, when she passed by the harbour where the yachts were lying in the sun.

Gaspare came with the boat to take her over from the nearest village to the island.

“Don Emilio has come?” she asked him, as she stepped into the boat.

“Sì, Signora. He has been on the island a long time.”

Gaspare sat down facing his Padrona and took the oars. As he rowed the boat out past the ruined “Palace of the Spirits,” he looked at Hermione, and it seemed to her that his eyes pitied her.

Could Gaspare see what she was feeling, her humiliation, her secret jealousy? She felt as if she were made of glass. But she returned his gaze almost sternly, and said:

“What’s the matter, Gaspare? Why do you look at me like that?”

“Signora!”

He seemed startled, and slightly reddened, then looked hurt and almost sulky.

"May I not look at you, Signora?" he asked rather defiantly. "Have I the evil eye?"

"No—no, Gaspare! Only—only you looked at me as if something were the matter. Do I look ill?"

She asked the question with a forced lightness, with a smile. He answered bluntly:

"Sì, Signora. You look very ill."

She put up her hand to her face instinctively, as if to feel whether his words were true.

"But I'm perfectly well," she said.

"You look very ill, Signora," he returned.

"I'm a little bit tired, perhaps."

He said no more, and rowed steadily on for awhile. But presently she found him looking gravely at her again.

"Signora," he began, "the Signorina loves the island."

"Yes, Gaspare."

"Do you love it?"

The question startled her. Had he read her thoughts in the last days?

"Don't you think I love it?" she asked.

"You go away from it very often, Signora."

"But I must occasionally go into Naples!" she protested.

"Sì, Signora."

"Well, but mustn't I?"

"Non lo so, Signora. Perhaps we have been here long enough. Perhaps we had better go away from here."

He spoke slowly, and with something less than his usual firmness, as if in his mind there was uncertainty, some indecision or some conflict of desires.

"Do you want to go away?" she said.

"It is not for me to want, Signora."

"I don't think the Signorina would like to go, Gaspare. She hates the idea of leaving the island."

"The Signorina is not everyone," he returned.

Habitually blunt as Gaspare was, Hermione had never before heard him speak of Vere like this, not with the least impertinence but with a certain roughness. To-day it did not hurt her. Nor, indeed, could it ever have hurt her, coming from one so proven as Gaspare. But to-day it even warmed her, for it made her feel that someone was thinking exclusively of her—was putting her first. She longed for some expression of affection from someone. She felt that she was starving for it. And this feeling made her say:

"How do you mean, Gaspare?"

"Signora, it is for you to say whether we shall go away or stay here."

"You—you put me first, Gaspare?"

She was ashamed of herself for saying it. But she had to say it.

"First, Signora? Of course you are first."

He looked genuinely surprised.

"Are you not the Padrona?" he added. "It is for you to command."

"Yes. But I don't quite mean that."

She stopped. But she had to go on.

"I mean, would you rather do what I wanted than what anyone else wanted?"

"Sì, Signora—much rather."

There was more in his voice than in his words.

"Thank you, Gaspare," she said.

"Signora," he said, "if you think we had better leave the island, let us leave it. Let us go away."

"Well, but I have never said I wished to go. I am——" she paused. "I have been very contented to be here."

"Va bene, Signora."

When they reached the island Hermione felt nervous, almost as if she were to meet strangers who were critical, who would appraise her and be ready to despise her. She told herself that she was mad to feel like that; but when she thought of Emile and Vere talking of her failure—of their secret combined action to keep from her the knowledge of the effort of the child—that seemed just then to her a successful rivalry concealed—she could not dismiss the feeling.

She dreaded to meet Emile and Vere.

"I wonder where they are," she said, as she got out. "Perhaps they are on the cliff, or out in the little boat. I'll go into the house."

"Signora, I will go to the seat and see if they are there."

"Oh, don't bother——" she began.

But he ran off, springing up the steps with a strong agility, like that of a boy.

She hurried after him and went into the house. After what he had said in the boat she wished to look at herself in the glass, to see if there was anything strange, or painful, anything that might rouse surprise, in her appearance. She gained her bedroom and went at once to the mirror.

Hermione was not by nature at all a self-conscious woman. She knew that she was plain, and had sometimes, very simply, regretted it. But she did not generally think about her appearance, and very seldom now wondered what others were thinking of it. When Maurice had been with her she had often indeed secretly compared her ugliness with his beauty. But a great love breeds many regrets as well as many joys. And that was long ago. It was years since she had looked at herself in the

glass with any keen feminine anxiety, any tremor of fear, or any cruel self-criticism. But now she stood for a long time before the glass, quite still, looking at her reflection with wide, almost with staring eyes.

It was true what Gaspare said. She saw that she was looking ill, very different from her usual strong self. There was not a thread of white in her thick hair, and this fact, combined with the eagerness of her expression, the strong vivacity and intelligence that normally shone in her eyes, deceived many people as to her age. But to-day her face was strained, haggard, and feverish. Under the brown tint that the sunrays had given to her complexion there seemed to lurk a sickly white, which was most markedly suggested at the corners of the mouth. The cheek-bones seemed unusually prominent. And the eyes held surely a depth of uneasiness, of—

Hermione approached her face to the mirror till it almost touched the glass. The reflected eyes drew hers. She gazed into them with a scrutiny into which she seemed to be pouring her whole force, both of soul and body. She was trying to look at her nature, to see its shape, its colour, its expression, so that she might judge of what it was capable—whether for good or evil. The eyes into which she looked both helped her and frustrated her. They told her much—too much. And yet they baffled her. When she would know all, they seemed to substitute themselves for that which she saw through them, and she found herself noticing their size, their prominence, the exact shade of their brown hue. And the quick human creature behind them was hidden from her.

But Gaspare was right. She did look ill. Emile would notice it directly.

She washed her face with cold water, then dried it

almost cruelly with a rough towel. Having done this she did not look again into the glass but went at once downstairs. As she came into the drawing-room she heard voices in the garden. She stood still and listened. They were the voices of Vere and Emile talking tirelessly. She could not hear what they said. Had she been able to hear it she would not have listened. She could only hear the sound made by their voices, that noise by which human beings strive to explain, or to conceal, what they really are. They were talking seriously. She heard no sounds of laughter. Vere was saying most. It seemed to Hermione that Vere never talked so much and so eagerly to her, with such a ceaseless vivacity. And there was surely an intimate sound in her voice, a sound of being warmly at ease, as if she spoke in an atmosphere of ardent sympathy.

Again the jealousy came in Hermione, acute, fierce and travelling: like a needle being moved steadily, point downwards, through a network of quivering nerves.

"Vere!" she called out. "Vere! Emile!"

Was her voice odd, startling?

They did not hear her. Emile was speaking now. She heard the deep, booming sound of his powerful voice, that seemed expressive of strength and will.

"Vere! Emile!"

As she called again she went towards the window. She felt passionately excited. The excitement had come suddenly to her when they had not heard her first call.

"Emile! Emile!" she repeated. "Emile!"

"Madre!"

"Hermione!"

Both voices sounded startled.

"What's the matter?"

Vere appeared at the window, looking frightened.

"Hermione, what is it?"

Emile was there beside her. And he, too, looked anxious, almost alarmed.

"I only wanted to let you know I had come back," said Hermione, crushing down her excitement, and forcing herself to smile.

"But why did you call like that?"

Vere spoke.

"Like what? What do you mean, *figlia mia*?"

"It sounded——"

She stopped and looked at Artois.

"It frightened me. And you, Monsieur Emile?"

"I, too, was afraid for a moment that something unpleasant had happened."

"You nervous people! Isn't it lunch-time?"

As they looked at her she felt they had been talking about her, about her failure. And she felt, too, as if they must be able to see in her eyes that she knew the secret Vere had wished to keep from her, and thought she did not know. Emile had given her a glance of intense scrutiny, and the eyes of her child still questioned her with a sort of bright and searching eagerness.

"You make me feel as if I were with detectives," she said, laughing, but uneasily. "There's really nothing the matter."

"And your tooth, Madre? Is it better?"

"Yes, quite well. I am perfectly well. Let us go in."

Hermione had said to herself that if she could see Emile and Vere together, without any third person, she would know something that she felt she must know. When she was with them she meant to be a watcher. And now her whole being was strung to attention. But

it seemed to her that for some reason they, too, were on the alert, and so were not quite natural. And she could not be sure of certain things unless the atmosphere was normal. So she said to herself now, though before she had had the inimitable confidence of woman in certain detective instincts claimed by the whole sex. At one moment the thing she feared—and her whole being recoiled from the thought of it with a shaking disgust—the thing she feared seemed to her fact. Then something occurred to make her distrust herself. And she felt that betraying imagination of hers at work, obscuring all issues, tricking her, punishing her.

And when the meal was over she did not know at all. And she felt as if she had perhaps been deliberately baffled—not of course by Vere, of whose attitude she was not, and never had been, doubtful, but by Emile.

When they got up from the table Vere said:

“I’m going to make the siesta.”

“You look remarkably wide awake, Vere,” Artois said, smiling.

“But I’m going to, because I’ve had you all to myself the whole morning. Now it’s Madre’s turn. Isn’t it, Madre?”

The girl’s remark showed her sense of their complete triple intimacy, but it emphasised to Hermione her own cruel sense of being in the wilderness. And she even felt vexed that it should be supposed she wanted Emile’s company. Nevertheless she restrained herself from making any disclaimer. Vere went upstairs and she and Artois went out and sat down under the trellis. But with the removal of Vere a protection and safety valve seemed to be removed, and neither Hermione nor Emile could for a moment continue the conversation. Again a sense of

humiliation, of being mindless, nothing, in the eyes of Artois came to Hermione, diminishing all her powers. She was never a conceited, but she had often been a self-reliant woman. Now she felt a humbleness such as she knew no one should ever feel,—a humbleness that was contemptible, that felt itself incapable, unworthy of notice. She tried to resist it, but when she thought of this man, her friend, talking over her failure with the child in whom he must surely believe, she could not. She felt "Vere can talk to Emile better than I can. She interests him more than I." And then her years seemed to gather round her and whip her. She shrank beneath the thongs of age, which had not even brought to her those gifts of the mind with which it often partially replaces the bodily gifts and graces it is so eager to remove.

"Hermione!"

"Yes, Emile."

She turned slowly in her chair, forcing herself to face him.

"Are you sure you are not feeling ill?"

"Quite sure. Did you have a pleasant morning with Vere?"

"Yes. Oh"—he sat forward in his chair—"she told me something that rather surprised me—that you had told her she might read my books."

"Well?"

Hermione's voice was rather hard.

"Well, I never meant them for 'la jeune fille.'"

"You consider Vere——?"

"Is she not?"

She felt he was condemning her secretly for her permission to Vere. What would he think if he knew her under-reason for giving it?"

"You don't wish Vere to read your books, then?"

"No. And I ventured to tell her so."

Hermione felt hot.

"What did she say?"

"She said she would not read them."

"Oh!"

She looked up and met his eyes, and was sure she read condemnation in them.

"After I had told Vere——" she began.

She was about to defend herself, to tell him how she had gone to Vere's room intending to withdraw the permission given; but suddenly she realised clearly that she, a mother, was being secretly taken to task by a man for her conduct to her child.

That was intolerable.

And Vere had yielded to Emile's prohibition, though she had eagerly resisted her mother's attempt to retreat from the promise made. That was more intolerable.

She sat still without saying anything. Her knees were trembling under her thin summer gown. Artois felt something of her agitation, perhaps, for he said, with a kind of hesitating diffidence, very rare in him:

"Of course, my friend, I would not interfere between you and Vere, only, as I was concerned, as they were my own writings that were in question——" He broke off. "You won't misunderstand my motives?" he concluded.

"Oh no."

He was more conscious that she was feeling something acutely.

"I feel that I perfectly understand why you gave the permission at this particular moment," he continued, anxious to excuse her to herself, and to himself.

"Why?" Hermione said sharply.

"Wasn't it because of Peppina?"

"Peppina?"

"Yes; didn't you——"

He looked into her face and saw at once that he had made a false step, that Vere had not told her mother of Peppina's outburst.

"Didn't I—what?"

He still looked at her.

"What?" she repeated. "What has Peppina to do with it?"

"Nothing. Only—don't you remember what you said to me about not keeping Vere in cotton-wool?"

She knew that he was deceiving her. A hopeless, desperate feeling of being in the dark rushed over her. What was friendship without complete sincerity? Nothing—less than nothing. She felt as if her whole body stiffened with a proud reserve to meet the reserve with which he treated her. And she felt as if her friend of years—the friend whose life she had perhaps saved in Africa, had turned in that moment into a stranger, or—or even into an enemy. For this furtive withdrawal from their beautiful and open intimacy was like an act of hostility. She was almost dazed for an instant. Then her brain worked with feverish activity. What had Emile meant? Her permission to Vere was connected in his mind with Peppina. He must know something about Vere and Peppina that she did not know. She looked at him, and her face, usually so sensitive, so receptive, so warmly benign when it was turned to his, was hard and cold.

"Emile," she said, "what was it you meant about Peppina? I think I have a right to know. I brought her into the house. Why should Peppina have anything to do with my giving Vere permission to read your books?"

Artois' instinct was not to tell what Vere had not told, and therefore had not wished to be known. Yet he hated to shuffle with Hermione. He chose a middle course.

"My friend," he said quietly, but with determination, "I made a mistake. I was following foolishly a wrong track. Let us say no more about it. But do not be angry with me about the books. I think my motive in speaking as I did to Vere was probably partly a selfish one. It is not only that I wish Vere to be as she is for as long a time as possible, but that I—well, don't think me a great coward if I say that I almost dread her discovery of all the cruel knowledge that is mine, and that I have, perhaps wrongly, brought to the attention of the world."

Hermione was amazed.

"You regret having written your books!" she said.

"I don't know—I don't know. But I think the happy confidence, the sweet respect of youth makes one regret a thousand things. Don't you, Hermione? Don't you think youth is often the most terrible tutor age can have?"

She thought of Ruffo singing, "Oh, dolce luna bianca de l'Estate"—and suddenly she felt that she could not stay any longer with Artois just then. She got up.

"I don't feel very well," she said.

Artois sprang up and came towards her with a face full of concern. But she drew back.

"I didn't sleep last night—and then going into Naples—— I'll go to my room and lie down. I'll keep quiet. Vere will look after you. I'll be down at tea."

She went away before he could say or do anything. For some time he was alone. Then Vere came. Hermione had not told her of this episode, and she had only come because she thought the pretended siesta had lasted long enough. When Artois told her about her mother she

wanted to run away at once, and see what was the matter, see if she could do something. But Artois stopped her.

"I should leave her to rest," he said. "I—I feel sure she wishes to be alone."

Vere was looking at him while he spoke, and her face caught the gravity of his, reflected it for a moment, then showed an uneasiness that deepened into fear. She laid her hand on his arm.

"Monsieur Emile, what is the matter with Madre?"

"Only a headache, I fancy. She did not sleep last night, and——"

"No, no: the real matter, Monsieur Emile."

"What do you mean, Vere?"

The girl looked excited. Her own words had revealed to her a feeling of which till then she had only been vaguely aware.

"Madre has seemed different lately," she said. "Been different. I am sure she has. What is it?"

As the girl spoke, and looked keenly at him with her bright, searching eyes, a thought came, like a flash, upon Artois, a thought that almost frightened him. He could not tell it to Vere, and almost immediately he thrust it away from his mind. But Vere had seen that something had come to him.

"You know what it is!" she said.

"I don't know."

"Monsieur Emile!"

Her voice was full of reproach.

"Vere, I am telling you the truth," he said earnestly. "If there is anything serious troubling your mother I do not know what it is. She has sorrows, of course. You know that."

"This is something fresh," the girl said. She thrust

forward her little chin decisively. "This is something new."

"It cannot be that," Artois said to himself. "It cannot be that."

To Vere he said, "Sleeplessness is terribly distressing."

"Well—but only one night."

"Perhaps there have been others."

In reply Vere said:

"Monsieur Emile, you remember this morning, when we were in the garden, and mother called?"

"Yes."

"D'you know, the way she called made me feel frightened?"

"We were so busy talking that the sudden sound startled us."

"No, it wasn't that."

"But when we came your mother was smiling—she was perfectly well. You let your imagination——"

"No, Monsieur Emile, indeed I don't."

He did not try any more to remove her impression. He saw that to do so would be quite useless.

"I should like to speak to Gaspare," Vere said, after a moment's thought.

"Gaspare! Why?"

"Perhaps you will laugh at me! But I often think Gaspare understands Madre better than any of us, Monsieur Emile."

"Gaspare has been with your mother a very long time."

"Yes, and in his way he is very clever. Haven't you noticed it?"

Artois did not answer this. But he said,

"Follow your instincts, Vere. I don't think they will often lead you wrong."

At tea-time Hermione came from her bedroom looking calm and smiling. There was something deliberate about her serenity, and her eyes were tired, but she said the little rest had done her good. Vere instinctively felt that her mother did not wish to be observed, or to have any fuss made about her condition, and Artois took Vere's cue. When tea was over Artois said:

"Well, I suppose I ought to be going."

"Oh, no," Hermione said. "We asked you for a long day. That means dinner."

The cordiality in her voice sounded determined, and therefore formal. Artois felt chilled. For a moment he looked at her doubtfully.

"Well, but, Hermione, you aren't feeling very well."

"I am much better now. Do stay. I shall rest, and Vere will take care of you."

It struck him for the first time that she was becoming very ready to substitute Vere for herself as his companion. He wondered if he had really offended or hurt her in any way. He even wondered for a moment whether she was not pleased at his spending the summer in Naples—whether, for some reason, she had wished, and still wished, to be alone with Vere.

"Perhaps Vere will get sick of looking after an—an old man," he said.

"You are not an old man, Monsieur Emile. Don't tout!"

"Tout?"

"Yes, for compliments about your youth. You meant me, you meant us both, to say how young you are."

She spoke gaily, laughingly, but she felt she was cleverly and secretly trying to smoothe things out, to cover up the difficulty that had intruded itself into their generally natural and simple relations.

"And your mother says nothing," said Artois, trying to fall in with her desire, and to restore their wonted liveliness. "Don't you look upon me as almost a boy, Hermione?"

"I think sometimes you seem wonderfully young," she said.

Her voice suggested that she wished to please him, but also that she meant what she said. Yet Artois had never felt his age more acutely than when she finished speaking.

"I am a poor companion for Vere," he said, almost bitterly. "She ought to be with friends of her own age."

"You mean that I am a poor companion for you, Monsieur Emile. I often feel how good you are to put up with me in the way you do."

The gaiety had gone from her now, and she spoke with an earnestness that seemed to him wonderfully gracious. He looked at her, and his eyes thanked her gently.

"Take Emile out in the boat, Vere," Hermione said, "while I read a book till dinner-time."

At that moment she longed for them to be gone. Vere looked at her mother, then said:

"Come along, Monsieur Emile. I'm sorry for you, but Madre wants rest."

She led the way out of the room.

Hermione was on the sofa. Before he followed Vere Artois went up to her and said:

"You are sure you won't come out with us, my friend? Perhaps the air on the sea would do you good?"

"No, thank you, Emile; I really think I had better stay quietly here."

"Very well."

He hesitated for a moment, then he went out and left her. But she had seen a question in his eyes.

When he had gone, Hermione took up a book, and read for a little while, always listening for the sound of oars. She was not sure Vere and Emile would go out in the boat, but she thought they would. If they came out to the open sea beyond the island it was possible that she might hear them. Presently, as she did not hear them, she got up. She wanted to satisfy herself that they were at sea. Going to the window she looked out. But she saw no boat, only the great plain of the radiant waters. They made her feel alone—why she did not know then. But it was really something of the same feeling which had come to her long ago during her first visit to Sicily. In the contemplation of beauty she knew the need of love, knew it with an intimacy that was cruel.

She came away from the window and went to the terrace. From there she could not see the boat. Finally she went to the small pavilion that overlooked the Saint's Pool. Leaning over the parapet, she perceived the little white boat just starting round the cliff towards the Grotto of Virgil. Vere was rowing. Hermione saw her thin figure, so impregnated with the narrow charm of youth, bending backwards and forwards to the oars, Emile's big form leaning against the cushions as if at ease. From the dipping oars came twinkling lines of light, that rayed out and spread like the opened sticks of a fan upon the sea. Hugging the shore the boat slipped out of sight.

"Suppose they had gone for ever—gone out of my life!"

Hermione said that to herself. She fancied she still could see the faint commotion in the water that told where the boat had passed. Now it was turning into the Grotto of Virgil. She felt sure of that. It was entering the shadows where she had shown to Emile not long ago the very depths of her heart.

How could she have done that? She grew hot as she thought of it. In her new and bitter reserve she hated to think of his possession that could never be taken from him, the knowledge of her hidden despair, her hidden need of love. And by that sensation of hatred of his knowledge she measured the gulf between them. When had come the very first narrow fissure she scarcely knew. But she knew how to-day the gulf had widened.

That permission of hers to Vere to read Emile's books! And Emile's authority governing her child, substituted surely for hers! The gulf had been made wider by her learning that episode; and the fact that secretly she felt her permission ought never to have been given caused her the more bitterness. Vere had yielded to Emile because he had been in the right. Instinctively her child had known which of the two with whom she had to deal was swayed by an evil mood, and which was thinking rightly, only for her.

Could Vere see into her mother's heart?

Hermione had a moment of panic. Then she laughed at her folly.

And she thought of Peppina, of that other secret which certainly existed, but which she had never suspected till that day.

The boat was gone, and she knew where. She went back into the house and rang the bell. Giulia came.

"Oh, Giulia," Hermione said, "will you please ask Peppina to come to my sitting-room. I want to speak to her for a moment."

"Sì, Signora."

Giulia looked at her Padrona, then added,

"Signora, I am sure I was right. I am sure that girl has the evil eye."

"Giulia, what nonsense! I have told you often that such ideas are silly. Peppina has no power to do us harm. Poor girl, we ought to pity her."

Giulia's fat face was very grave and quite unconvinced.

"Signora, since she is here the island is not the same. The Signorina is not the same, you are not the same, the French Signore is not the same. Even Gaspare is different. One cannot speak with him now. Trouble is with us all, Signora."

Hermione shook her head impatiently. But when Giulia was gone she thought of her words about Gaspare. Words, even the simplest, spoken just before some great moment of a life, some high triumph, or deep catastrophe, stick with resolution in the memory. Lucrezia had once said of Gaspare on the terrace before the Casa del Prete, "One cannot speak with him to-day." And she had added, "He is terrible to-day." That was on the evening of the night on which Maurice's dead body was found. Often since then Hermione had thought that Gaspare had seemed to have a prevision of the disaster that was approaching.

And now Giulia said of him, "One cannot speak with him now."

The same words. Was Gaspare as a stormy petrel?

There came a knock to the door of the sitting-room to which Hermione had gone to wait for the coming of Peppina.

"Come in."

The door opened and the disfigured girl entered, looking anxious.

"Come in, Peppina. It's all right. I only want to speak to you for a moment,"

Hermione spoke kindly, but Peppina still looked nervous.

"Sì, Signora," she murmured.

And she remained standing near the door, looking down.

"Peppina," Hermione said, "I'm going to ask you something, and I want you to tell me the truth, without being afraid."

"Sì, Signora."

"You remember, when I took you, I told you not to say anything to my daughter, the Signorina, about your past life, your aunt and—and all you had gone through. Have you said anything?"

Peppina looked more frightened.

"Signora," she began. "Madonna! It was not my fault, it was not my fault!"

She raised her voice, and began to gesticulate.

"Hush, Peppina! Now don't be afraid of me."

"You are my preserver, Signora! My Saint has forgotten me, but you——"

"I will not leave you to the streets. You must trust me. And now tell me—quietly—what have you told the Signorina?"

And presently Peppina was induced to be truthful, and Hermione knew of the outburst in the night, and that "the foreign Signore" had known of it from the moment of its happening.

"The Signorina was so kind, Signora, that I forgot. I told her all!—I told her all!—I told her——"

Once Peppina had begun to be truthful she could not stop. She recalled—or seemed to—the very words she had spoken to Vere, all the details of her narration.

"And the foreign Signore? Was he there too?" Hermione asked at the end.

"No, Signora. He went away. The Signorina told him to go away and leave us."

Hermione dismissed Peppina quietly.

"Please don't say anything about this conversation, Peppina," she said, as the agitated girl prepared to go. "Try to obey me this time, will you?"

She spoke very kindly but very firmly.

"May the Madonna take out my tongue if I speak, Signora!" Peppina raised her hand.

As she was going out Hermione stared at the cross upon her cheek.

CHAPTER V.

ARTOIS stayed to dine. The falling of night deepened Hermione's impression of the gulf which was now between them, and which she was sure he knew of. When darkness comes to intimacy it seems to make that intimacy more perfect. Now surely it caused reserve, restraint, to be more complete. The two secrets which Hermione now knew, but which were still cherished as secrets by Vere and Artois, stood up between the mother and her child and friend, inexorably dividing them.

Hermione was strung up to a sort of nervous strength that was full of determination. She had herself in hand, like a woman of the world who faces society with the resolution to deceive it. While Vere and Artois had been out in the boat she had schooled herself. She felt more competent to be the watcher of events. She even felt calmer, for knowledge increased almost always brings an under-current of increased tranquillity, because of the sense

of greater power that it produces in the mind. She looked better. She talked more easily.

When dinner was over they went as usual to the garden, and when they were there Hermione referred to the projected meeting with the Marchesino.

"I made a promise," she said. "I must keep it."

"Of course," said Artois. "But it seems to me that I am always being entertained, and that I am inhospitable—I do nothing in return. I have a proposal to make. Monday will be the sixteenth of July, the festa of the Madonna del Carmine, Santa Maria del Carmine. It is one of the prettiest of the year, they tell me. Why should not you and Vere come to dine at the Hotel, or in the Galleria, with me. I will ask Panacci to join us, and we will all go on afterwards to see the illuminations, and the fireworks, and the sending up of the fire-balloons. What do you say?"

"Would you like it, Vere?"

"Immensely, Madre."

She spoke quietly, but she looked pleased at the idea.

"Won't the crowd be very bad, though?" asked Hermione.

"I'll get tickets for the enclosure in the Piazza. We shall have seats there. And you can bring Gaspare, if you like. Then you will have three cavaliers."

"Yes, I should like Gaspare to come," said Hermione.

There was a sound of warmth in her hitherto rather cold voice when she said that.

"How you rely on Gaspare!" Artois said, almost as if with a momentary touch of vexation.

"Indeed I do," Hermione answered.

Their eyes met, surely almost with hostility.

"Madre knows how Gaspare adores her," said Vere

gently. "If there were any danger he'd never hesitate. He'd save Madre if he left every other human being in the world to perish miserably—including me."

"Vere!"

"You know quite well he would, Madre."

They talked a little more. Presently Vere seemed to be feeling restless. Artois noticed it and watched her. Once or twice she got up, without apparent reason. She pulled at the branches of the fig-trees. She gathered a flower. She moved away and leaned upon the wall. Finally, when her mother and Artois had fallen into conversation about some new book, she slipped very quietly away.

Hermione and Artois continued their conversation, though without much animation. At length, however, some remark of Hermione led Artois to speak of the book he was writing. Very often and very openly in days gone by she had discussed with him his work. Now, feeling the barrier between them, he fancied that perhaps it might be removed most easily by such another discussion. And this notion of his was not any proof of want of subtlety on his part. Without knowing why Hermione felt a lack of self-confidence, a distressing, an almost unnatural humbleness to-day. He partially divined the feeling. Possibly it sprang from their difference of opinion on the propriety of Vere's reading his books. He thought it might be so. And he wanted to oust Hermione gently from her low stool and to show her himself seated there. Filled with this idea he began to ask her advice about the task upon which he was engaged. He explained the progress he had made during the days when he was absent from the island and shut up perpetually in his room. She listened in perfect silence.

They were sitting near each other, but not close to-

gether, for Vere had been between them. It was dark under the fig-trees. They could see each other's faces but not quite clearly. There was a small breeze which made the trees move, and the leaves rustled faintly now and then, making a tiny noise which joined the furtive noise of the sea not far below them.

Artois talked on. As his thoughts became more concentrated upon his book he grew warmer. Having always had Hermione's eager, even enthusiastic sympathy and encouragement in his work, he believed himself to have them now. And in his manner, in his tone, even sometimes in his choice of words, he plainly showed that he assumed them. But presently, glancing across at Hermione, he was surprised by the expression on her face. It seemed to him as if a face of stone had suddenly looked bitterly satirical. He was so astonished that the words stopped upon his lips.

"Go on, Emile," she said: "I am listening."

The expression which had startled him was gone. Had it ever been? Perhaps he had been deceived by the darkness. Perhaps the moving leaves had thrown their little shadows across her features. He said to himself that it must be so—that his friend, Hermione, could never have looked like that. Yet he was chilled. And he remembered her passing by in the tram at Posilipo, and how he had stood for a moment and watched her, and seen upon her face a furtive look that he had never seen there before, and that had seemed to contradict her whole nature as he knew it.

Did he know it?

Never before had he asked himself this question. He asked it now. Was there living in Hermione someone

whom he did not know, with whom he had had no dealings, had exchanged no thoughts, had spoken no words?

"Go on, Emile," she said again.

But he could not. For once his brain was clouded and he felt confused. He had completely lost the thread of his thoughts.

"I can't," he said abruptly.

"Why not?"

"I've forgotten. I've not thoroughly worked the thing out. Another time. Besides—besides, I'm sure I bore you with my eternal talk about my work. You've been such a kind, such a sympathetic friend and encourager that——"

He broke off, thinking of that face. Was it possible that through all these years Hermione had been playing a part with him, had been pretending to admire his talent, to care for what he was doing, when really she had been bored by it? Had the whole thing been a weariness to her, endured perhaps because she liked him as a man? The thought cut him to the very quick, seared his self-respect, struck a blow at his pride which made it quiver, and struck surely also a blow at something else.

His life during all these years—what would it have been without Hermione's friendship? Was he to learn that now?

He looked at her. Now her face was almost as usual, only less animated than he had seen it.

"Your work could never bore me. You know it," she said.

The real Hermione sounded in her voice when she said that, for the eternal woman deep down in her had heard the sound almost of helplessness in his voice, had felt the leaning of his nature, strong though it was, on

her, and had responded instantly, inevitably, almost passionately. But then came the thought of his secret intercourse with Vere. She saw in the dark the words: "Monsieur Emile's idea." "Monsieur Emile's suggestion." She remembered how Artois had told her that she could never be an artist. And again the intensely bitter feeling of satire, that had set in her face the expression which had startled him, returned, twisting, warping her whole nature.

"I am to encourage you—you who have told me that I can do nothing!"

That was what she had been feeling. And, as by a search-light, she had seen surely for a moment the whole great and undying selfishness of man, exactly as it was. And she had seen surely, also, the ministering world of women gathered round about it, feeling it, lest it should fail and be no more. And she had seen herself among them!

"Where can Vere have gone to?" he said.

There had been a pause. Neither knew how long it had lasted.

"I should not wonder if she is on the cliff," said Hermione. "She often goes there at this hour. She goes to meet Ruffo."

The name switched the mind of Artois on to a new and profoundly interesting train of thought.

"Ruffo," he began slowly. "And you think it wise——"

He stopped. To-night he no longer dared frankly to speak all his mind to Hermione.

"I was at Mergellina the other day," he said. "And I saw Ruffo with his mother."

"Did you? What is she like?"

"Oh, like many middle-aged women of the South, rather broad and battered-looking, and probably much older in appearance than in years."

"Poor woman! She has been through a great deal."

Her voice was quite genuine now. And Artois said to himself that the faint suspicion he had had was ill founded.

"Do you know anything about her?"

"Oh yes. I had a talk with Ruffo the other night. And he told me several things."

Each time Hermione mentioned Ruffo's name it seemed to Artois that her voice softened, almost that she gave the word a caress. He longed to ask her something, but he was afraid to.

He would try not to interfere with Fate. But he would not hasten its coming—if it were coming. And he knew nothing. Perhaps the anxious suspicion which had taken up its abode in his mind, and which without definite reason seemed gradually changing into a conviction, was erroneous. Perhaps some day he would laugh at himself, and say to himself, "I was mad to dream of such a thing."

"Those women often have a bad time," he said.

"Few women do not, I sometimes think."

He said nothing, and she went on rather hastily, as if wishing to cover her last words.

"Ruffo told me something that I did not know about Peppina. His stepfather was the man who cut that cross on Peppina's face."

"Perdio!" said Artois.

He used the Italian exclamation at that moment quite naturally. Suddenly he wished more than ever before that Hermione had not taken Peppina to live on the island.

"Hermione," he said, "I wish you had not Peppina here."

"Still because of Vere?" she said.

And now she was looking at him steadily.

"I feel that she comes from another world, that she had better keep away from yours. I feel as if misfortune attended her."

"It is odd. Even the servants say she has the evil eye. But, if she has, it is too late now. Peppina has looked upon us all.

"Perhaps that old Eastern was right."—Artois could not help saying it.—"Perhaps all that is to be is ordained long beforehand. Do you think that, Hermione?"

"I have sometimes thought it, when I have been depressed. I have sometimes said to myself, 'È il destino!'"

She remembered at that moment her feeling on the day when she returned from the expedition with Vere to Capri—that perhaps she had returned to the island to confront some grievous fate. Had Artois such a thought, such a prevision? Suddenly she felt frightened, like a child when, at night, it passes the open door of a room that is dark.

She moved and got up from her chair. Like the child, when it rushes on and away, she felt in her panic the necessity of physical activity.

Artois followed her example. He was glad to move.

"Shall we go and see what Vere is doing?" he said.

"If you like. I feel sure she is with Ruffo."

They went towards the house. Artois felt a deep curiosity, which filled his whole being, to know what Hermione's exact feeling towards Ruffo was.

"Don't you think," he said, "that perhaps it is a little dangerous to allow Vere to be so much with a boy from Mergellina?"

"Oh no."

In her tone there was the calm of absolute certainty.

"Well, but we don't know so very much about him."

"Do you think two instincts could be at fault?"

"Two instincts?"

"Vere's and mine?"

"Perhaps not. Then your instinct——?"

He waited. He was passionately interested.

It seemed to him as if she had deliberately used that bluff expression to punish his almost mystical curiosity. Was she warding him off consciously?

They passed through the house and came out on its further side, but they did not go immediately to the cliff top. Both of them felt certain the two children must be there, and both of them, perhaps, were held back for a moment by a mutual desire not to disturb their innocent confidences. They stood upon the bridge, therefore, looking down into the dimness of the Pool. From the water silence seemed to float up to them, almost visibly, like a lovely, delicate mist—silence, and the tenderness of night, embracing their distresses.

The satire died out of Hermione's poor, tormented heart. And Artois for a moment forgot the terrible face half seen in the darkness of the trees.

"There is the boat. He is here."

Hermione spoke in a low voice, pointing to the shadowy form of a boat upon the Pool.

"Yes."

Artois gazed at the boat. Was it indeed a Fate that came by night to the island softly across the sea, ferried by the ignorant hands of men? He longed to know. And Hermione longed to know something, too, whether Artois had ever seen the strange likeness she had seen,

whether Maurice had ever seemed to gaze for a moment at him out of the eyes of Ruffo. But to-night she could not ask him that. They were too far away from each other. And because of the gulf between them her memory had suddenly become far more sacred, far more necessary to her even, than it had been before.

It had been a solace, a beautiful solace. But now it was much more than that—now it was surely her salvation.

As she felt that, a deep longing filled her heart to look again on Ruffo's face, to search again for the expression that sent back the years. But she wished to do that without witnesses, to be alone with the boy, as she had been alone with him that night upon the bridge. And suddenly she was impatient of Vere's intercourse with him. Vere could not know what that tender look meant, if it came. For she had never seen her father's face.

"Let us go to the cliff," Hermione said, moved by this new feeling of impatience.

She meant to interrupt the children, to get rid of Vere and Emile, and have Ruffo to herself for a moment. Just then she felt as if he were nearer, far nearer to her than they were; they who kept things from her, who spoke of her secretly, pitying her.

And again that evening she came into acute antagonism with her friend. For the instinct was still alive in him not to interrupt the children. The strange suspicion that had been born and that lived within him gathered strength, caused him to feel almost as if they might be upon holy ground, those two so full of youth, who talked together in the night; as if they knew mysteriously things that were hidden from their elders, from those wiser, yet far less full of the wisdom that is eternal, the wisdom of

instinct, than themselves. There is always something sacred about children. And he had never lost the sense of it amid the dust of his worldly knowledge. But about these children, about them or within them, there floated, perhaps, something that was mystic, something that was awful and must not be disturbed. Hermione did not feel it. How could she? He himself had withheld from her for many years the only knowledge that could have made her share his present feeling. He could tell her nothing. Yet he could not conceal his intense reluctance to go to that seat upon the cliff.

"But it's so delicious here," he said. "I love the Pool at night, don't you? Look at the Saint's light, how quietly it shines!"

She took her hands from the rail. His attempt at detention irritated her whole being. She looked at the light. On the night of the storm she had felt as if it shone exclusively for her. That feeling was dead. San Francesco watched, perhaps, over the fishermen. He did not watch over her.

And yet that night she, too, had made the sign of the cross when she knew that the light was shining.

She did not answer Artois's remark, and he continued, always for the children's sake, and for the sake of what he seemed to divine secretly at work in them:

"This Pool is a place apart, I think. The Saint has given his benediction to it."

He was speaking at random to keep Hermione there. And yet his words seemed chosen by someone for him to say.

"Surely good must come to the island over that waterway."

"You think so!"

Her stress upon the pronoun made him reply:

"Hermione, you do not think me the typical Frenchman of the century, who furiously denies over a glass of absinthe this existence of the Creator of the world?"

"No. But I scarcely thought you believed in the efficacy of a plaster Saint."

"Not of the plaster—no. But don't you think it possible that truth, emanating from certain regions and affecting the souls of men, might move them unconsciously to embody it in symbol? What if this Pool were blessed, and men, feeling that it was blessed, put San Francesco here with his visible benediction?"

He said to himself that he was playing with his imagination, as sometimes he played with words, half sensuously and half æsthetically; yet he felt to-night as if within him there was something that might believe far more than he had ever suspected it would be possible for him to believe.

And that, too, seemed to have come to him from the hidden children who were so near.

"I don't feel at all as if the Pool were blessed," said Hermione. She sighed.

"Let us go to the cliff," she said again, this time with a strong impatience.

He could not, of course, resist her desire, so they moved away, and mounted to the summit of the island.

The children were there. They could just see them in the darkness, Vere seated upon the wooden bench, Ruffo standing beside her. Their forms looked like shadows, but from the shadows voices came.

When he saw them Artois stood still. Hermione was going on. He put his hand upon her arm to stop her. She sent an almost sharp inquiry to him with her eyes

"Don't you think," he said, "don't you think it is a pity to disturb them?"

"Why?"

"They seem so happy together."

He glanced at her for sympathy, but she gave him none.

"Am I to have nothing?" she thought. And a passion of secret anger woke up in her. "Am I to have nothing at all? May I not even speak to this boy, in whom I have seen Maurice for a moment—because if I do I may disturb some childish gossip?"

Her eyes gave to Artois a fierce rebuke.

"I beg your pardon, Hermione," he said hastily. "Of course if you really want to talk to Ruffo——"

"I don't think Vere will mind," she said.

Her lips were actually trembling, but her voice was calm.

They walked forward.

When they were close to the children, they both saw there was a third figure on the cliff. Gaspare was at a little distance. Hermione could see the red point of his cigarette gleaming.

"Gaspare's there too," she said.

"Yes."

"Why is he there?" Artois thought.

And again there woke up in him an intense curiosity about Gaspare.

Ruffo had seen them, and now he took off his cap. And Vere turned her head and got up from the seat.

Neither the girl nor the boy gave any explanation of their being together. Evidently they did not think it necessary to do so. Hermione was the first to speak.

"Good evening, Ruffo," she said.

Artois noticed a peculiar kindness and gentleness in her voice when she spoke to the boy, a sound apart, that surely did not come into her voice even when it spoke to Vere.

“Good evening, Signora.” He stood with his cap in his hand. “I have been telling the Signorina what you have done for my poor mamma, Signora. I did not tell her before because I thought she knew. But she did not know.”

Vere was looking at her mother with a shining affection in her eyes.

At this moment Gaspare came up slowly, with a careless walk.

Artois watched him.

“About the little money, you mean?” said Hermione, rather hastily.

“Si, Signora. When I gave it to my poor mamma she cried again. But that was because you were so kind. And she said to me, ‘Ruffo, why should a strange lady be so kind to me? Why should a strange lady think about me?’ she said. ‘Ruffino,’ she said, ‘it must be Santa Maddalena who has sent her here to be good to me.’ My poor mamma!”

“The Signora does not want to be bothered with all this!” It was Gaspare who had spoken, roughly, and who now pushed in between Ruffo and those who were listening to his simple narrative.

Ruffo looked surprised, but submissive. Evidently he respected Gaspare, and the two understood each other. And though Gaspare’s words were harsh, his eyes, as they looked at Ruffo, seemed to contradict them. Nevertheless there was excitement, a strung-up look in his face.

“Gaspare!” said Vere.

Her eyes shot fire.

"Signorina?"

"Madre does like to hear what Ruffo has to say. Don't you, Madre?"

Gaspare looked unmoved. His whole face was full of a dogged obstinacy. Yet he did not forget himself. There was nothing rude in his manner as he said, before Hermione could reply:

"Signorina, the Signora does not know Ruffo's mother, so such things cannot interest her. Is it not so, Signora?"

Hermione was still governed by the desire to be alone for a little while with Ruffo, and the sensation of intense reserve—a reserve that seemed even partially physical—that she felt towards Artois made her dislike Ruffo's public exhibition of a gratitude that, expressed in private, would have been sweet to her. Instead, therefore, of agreeing with Vere, she said, in rather an off-hand way:

"It's all right, Ruffo. Thank you very much. But we must not keep Don Emilio listening to my supposed good deeds for ever. So that's enough."

Vere reddened. Evidently she felt snubbed. She said nothing, but she shot a glance of eager sympathy at Ruffo, who stood very simply looking at Hermione with a sort of manly deference, as if all that she said, or wished, must certainly be right. Then she moved quietly away, pressing her lips rather firmly together, and went slowly towards the house. After a moment's hesitation Artois followed her. Hermione remained by Ruffo, and Gaspare stayed doggedly with his Padrona.

Hermione wished he would go. She could not understand his exact feeling about the fisher-boy's odd little intimacy with them. Her instinct told her that secretly

he was fond of Ruffo. Yet sometimes he seemed to be hostile to him, to be suspicious of him, as of someone who might bring them harm. Or, perhaps, he felt it his duty to be on guard against all strangers who approached them. She knew well his fixed belief that she and Vere depended entirely on him, felt always perfectly safe when he was near. And she liked to have him near—but not just at this moment. Yet she did not feel that she could ask him to go.

“Thank you very much for your gratitude, Ruffo,” she said. “You mustn’t think——”

She glanced at Gaspare.

“I didn’t want to stop you,” she continued, trying to steer an even course. “But it’s a very little thing. I hope your mother is getting on pretty well. She must have courage.”

As she said the last sentence she thought it came that night oddly from her lips.

Gaspare moved as if he felt impatient, and suddenly Hermione knew an anger akin to Vere’s, an anger she had scarcely ever felt against Gaspare.

She did not show it at first, but went on with a sort of forced calmness and deliberation, a touch even perhaps of obstinacy that was meant for Gaspare.

“I am interested in your mother, you know, although I have not seen her. Tell me how she is.”

Gaspare opened his lips to speak, but something held him silent; and as he listened to Ruffo’s carefully detailed reply, delivered with the perfect naturalness of one sure of the genuine interest taken in his concerns by his auditors, his large eyes travelled from the face of the boy to the face of his Padrona with a deep and restless curiosity. He seemed to inquire something of Ruffo, something of

Hermione, and then, at the last, surely something of himself. But when Ruffo had finished he said brusquely:

"Signora, it is getting very late. Will not Don Emilio be going? He will want to say good-night, and I must help him with the boat."

"Run and see if Don Emilio is in a hurry, Gaspare. If he is I'll come."

Gaspare looked at her, hesitating.

"What's the matter?" she exclaimed, her secret irritation suddenly getting the upper hand in her nature. "Are you afraid that Ruffo will hurt me?"

"No, Signora."

As Vere had reddened, he reddened, and he looked with deep reproach at his Padrona. That look went to Hermione's heart; she thought, "Am I going to quarrel with the one true and absolutely loyal friend I have?" She remembered Vere's words in the garden about Gaspare's devotion to her, a devotion which she felt like a warmth round about her life.

"I'll come with you, Gaspare," she said, with a revulsion of feeling. "Good night, Ruffo."

"Good night, Signora."

"Perhaps we shall see you to-morrow."

She was just going to turn away when Ruffo bent down to kiss her hand. Since she had given charity to his mother it was evident that his feeling for her had changed. The Sicilian in him rose up to honour her like a Padrona.

"Signora," he said, letting go her hand, "Benedicite e buon riposo."

He was being a little whimsical, was showing to her and to Gaspare that he knew how to be a Sicilian. And now he looked from one to the other, to see how they

took the salutation: looked gently, confidentially, with a smile dawning in his eyes under the deference and the boyish affection and gratitude.

And again it seemed to Hermione for a moment that Maurice stood there before her in the night. Her impulse was to catch Gaspare's arm, to say to him, "Look! Don't you see your Padrone?"

She did not do this, but she did turn impulsively to Gaspare. And as she turned she saw tears start into his eyes. The blood rushed to his temples, his forehead. He put up his hand to his face.

"Signora," he said, "are you not coming?"

He cleared his throat violently. "I have taken a cold," he muttered.

He caught hold of his throat with his left hand, and again cleared his throat.

"Madre di Dio!"

He spoke very roughly.

But his roughness did not hurt Hermione; for suddenly she felt far less lonely and deserted. Gaspare had seen what she had seen—she knew it.

As they went back to the house it seemed to her that she and Gaspare talked together.

And yet they spoke no words.

CHAPTER VI.

NEITHER Artois nor the Marchesino visited the island during the days that elapsed before the Festa of the Madonna del Carmine. But Artois wrote to tell Hermione that the Marchesino had accepted his invitation, and that he hoped she and Vere would be at the Hôtel des

Étrangers punctually by eight o'clock on the night of the sixteenth. He wrote cordially, but a little formally, and did not add any gossip or any remarks about his work to the few sentences connected with the projected expedition. And Hermione replied as briefly to his note. Usually, when she wrote to Artois, her pen flew, and eager thoughts, born of the thought of him, floated into her mind. But this time it was not so. The energies of her mind in connection with his mind were surely failing. As she put the note into its envelope she had the feeling of one who had been trying to "make" conversation with an acquaintance, and who had not been successful, and she found herself almost dreading a talk with Emile.

Yet for years her talks with him had been her greatest pleasure, outside of her intercourse with Vere and her relations with Gaspare.

The change that had come over their friendship, like a mist over the sea, was subtle, yet startling in its completeness. She wondered if he saw and felt this mist as definitely as she did, if he regretted the fair prospect it had blotted out, if he marvelled at its coming.

He was so acute that he must be aware of the drooping of their intimacy. To what could he attribute it? And would he care to fight against the change?

She remembered the days when she had nursed him in Kairouan. She felt again the hot dry atmosphere. She heard the ceaseless buzzing of the flies. How pale his face had been, how weak his body! He had returned to the weakness of a child. He had depended upon her. That fact, that he had for a time utterly depended upon her, had forged a new link in their friendship, the strongest link of all. At least she had felt it to be so. For she was very much of a woman, and full of a secret motherliness.

But perhaps he had forgotten all that.

In these days she often felt as if she did not understand men at all, as if their natures were hidden from her, and perhaps, of necessity, from all women.

"We can't understand each other."

She often said that to herself, and partly to comfort herself a little. She did not want to be only one of a class of women from whom men's natures were hidden.

And yet it was not true.

For Maurice, at least, she had understood. She had not feared his gaieties, his boyish love of pleasure, his passion for the sun, his joy in the peasant life, his almost fierce happiness in the life of the body. She had feared nothing in him, because she had felt that she understood him thoroughly. She had read the gay innocence of his temperament rightly, and so she had never tried to hold him back from his pleasures, to keep him always with her, as many women would have done.

And she clung to the memory of her understanding of Maurice, as she faced the mist that had swept up softly and silently over that sea and sky which had been clear. He had been simple. There was something to dread in cleverness, in complexity. One got lost in a nature that was full of winding paths. Just then, and for the time, she forgot her love of, even her passion for, mental things. The beauty of the straight white road appealed to her. She saw it leading one onward to the glory of the sun.

Vere and she did not see very much of each other during those days. They met, of course, at meals, and often for a few minutes at other times. But it seemed as if each tacitly, and almost instinctively, sought to avoid any prolonged intercourse with the other. Hermione was a great deal in her sitting-room, reading, or pretending to

read. And Verè made several long expeditions upon the sea in the sailing-boat, with Gaspare and a boy from the nearest village, who was hired as an extra hand.

Hermione had a strange feeling of desertion sometimes, when the white sail of the boat faded on the blue, and she saw the empty sea. She would watch the boat go out, standing at a window and looking through the blinds. The sailor boy pulled at the oars. Vere was at the helm, Gaspare busy with the ropes. They passed quite close beneath her. She saw Vere's bright and eager face looking the way they were going, anticipating the voyage; Gaspare's brown hands moving swiftly and deftly. She saw the sail run up, the boat bend over. The oars were laid in their places now. The boat went faster through the water. The forms in it dwindled. Was that Vere's head, or Gaspare's? Who was that standing up? The fisher-boy? What were they now, they and the boat that held them? Only a white sail on the blue, going towards the sun.

And how deep was the silence that fell about the house, how deep and hollow! She saw her life then like a cavern that was empty. No waters flowed into it. No lights played in its recesses. No sounds echoed through it.

She looked up into the blue, and remembered her thought, that Maurice had been taken by the blue. Hark! Was there not in the air the thin sound of a reed flute playing a tarantella? She shut her eyes, and saw the grey rocks of Sicily. But the blue was too vast. Maurice was lost in it, lost to her for ever. And she gazed up into it again, with the effort to travel through it, to go on and on and on. And it seemed as if her soul ached from that journey.

The sail had dipped down below the horizon. She let fall the blind. She sat down in the silence.

Vere was greatly perplexed about her mother. One day in the boat she followed her instinct and spoke to Gaspare about her. Hermione and she between them had taught Gaspare some English. He understood it fairly well, and could speak it, though not correctly, and he was very proud of his knowledge. Because of the fisher-boy Vere said what she had to say slowly in English. Gaspare listened with the grave look of learning that betokened his secret sensation of being glorified by his capacities. But when he grasped the exact meaning of his Padroncina's words his expression changed. He shook his head vigorously.

"Not true!" he said. "Not true! No matter—there is not no matter with my Padrona."

"But, Gaspare——"

Vere protested, explained, strong in her conviction of the change in her mother.

But Gaspare would not have it. With energetic gestures he affirmed that his Padrona was just as usual. But Vere surprised a look in his eyes which told her he was watching her to see if he deceived her. Then she realised that for some reason of his own Gaspare did not wish her to know that he had seen the change, wished also to detach her observation from her mother.

She wondered why this was.

Her busy mind could not arrive at any conclusion in the matter, but she knew her mother was secretly sad. And she knew that she and her mother were no longer at ease with each other. This pained her, and the pain was beginning to increase. Sometimes she felt as if her mother disliked something in her, and did not choose to say so,

and was irritated by the silence that she kept. But what could it be? She searched among her doings carefully. Had she failed in any way in her conduct towards her mother? Had she been lacking in anything? Certainly she had not been lacking in love. And her knowledge of that seemed simply to exclude any possibility of serious shortcomings. And her mother?

Vere remembered how her mother had once longed to have a son, how she had felt certain she was going to have a son. Could it be that? Could her mother be dogged by that disappointment? She felt chilled to the heart at that idea. Her warm nature protested against it. The love she gave to her mother was so complete that it had always assumed the completeness of that which it was given in return. But it might be so, Vere supposed. It was possible. She pondered over this deeply, and when she was with her mother watched for signs that might confirm or dispel her fears. And thus she opposed to the mother's new watchfulness the watchfulness of the child. And Hermione noticed it, and wondered whether Vere had any suspicion of the surreptitious reading of her poems.

But that was scarcely possible.

Hermione had not said a word to Vere of her discovery that Peppina had done what she had been told not to do—related the story of her fate. Almost all delicate-minded mothers and daughters find certain subjects difficult, if not impossible of discussion, even when an apparent necessity of their discussion arrives in the course of life. The present reserve between Hermione and Vere rendered even the idea of any plain-speaking about the revelation of Peppina quite insupportable to the mother. She could only pretend to ignore that it had ever been

made. And this she did. But now that she knew of it she felt very acutely the difference it had made in Vere. That difference was owing to her own impulsive action. And Emile knew the whole truth. She understood now what he had been going to say about Peppina and Vere when they had talked about the books.

He did condemn her in his heart. He thought she was not a neglectful, but a mistaken mother. He thought her so impulsive as to be dangerous, perhaps, even to those she loved best. Almost she divined that curious desire of his to protect Vere against her. And yet without her impulsive nature he himself might long ago have died.

She could not help at this time dwelling secretly on one or two actions of hers, could not help saying to herself now and then: "I have been some good in the world. I am capable of unselfishness sometimes. I did leave my happiness for Emile's sake, because I had a great ideal of friendship and was determined to live up to it. My impulses are not always crazy and ridiculous."

She did this, she was obliged to do it, to prevent the feeling of impotence from overwhelming her. She had to do it to give herself strength to get up out of the dust. The human creature dares not say to itself, "You are nothing." And now Hermione, feeling the withdrawal from her of her friend, believing in the withdrawal from her of her child, spoke to herself, pleading her own cause to her own soul against invisible detractors.

One visitor the island had at this time. Each evening, when the darkness fell, the boat of Ruffo's employer glided into the Pool of San Francesco. And the boy always came ashore while his companions slept. Since Hermione had been charitable to his mother, and since

he had explained to her about his Patrigno and Peppina, he evidently had something of the ready feeling that springs up in Sicilians in whom real interest has been shown—the feeling of partly belonging to his benefactor. There is something dog-like in this feeling. And it is touching and attractive because of the animalism of its frankness and simplicity. And as the dog who has been kindly, tenderly treated has no hesitation in claiming attention with a paw, or in laying its muzzle upon the knee of its benefactor, so Ruffo had no hesitation in relating to Hermione all the little intimate incidents of his daily life, in crediting her with an active interest in his concerns. There was no conceit in this, only a very complete boyish simplicity.

Hermione found in this new attitude of Ruffo's a curious solace for the sudden loneliness of soul that had come upon her. Originally Ruffo's chief friendship had obviously been for Vere, but now Vere, seeing her mother's new and deep interest in the boy, gave way a little to it, yet without doing anything ostentatious, or showing any pique. Simply, she would stay in the garden, or on the terrace, later than usual, till after Ruffo was sure to be at the island, and let her mother stroll to the cliff top. Or, if she were there with him first, she would soon make an excuse to go away, and casually tell her mother that he was there alone, or with Gaspare. And all this was done so naturally that Hermione did not know it was deliberate, but merely fancied that perhaps Vere's first enthusiasm for the fisher-boy was wearing off, that it had been a child's sudden fancy, and that it was lightly passing away.

Vere rather wondered at her mother's liking for Ruffo, although she herself had found him so attractive, and had drawn her mother's attention to his handsome face and

bold, yet simple bearing. She wondered, because she felt in it something peculiar, a sort of heat and anxiety, a restlessness, a watchfulness; attributes which sprang from the observation of that resemblance to the dead man which drew her mother to Ruffo, but of which her mother had never spoken to her.

Nor did Hermione speak of it again to Gaspare. He had almost angrily denied it, but since the night of Artois' visit she knew that he had seen it, been startled, moved by it, almost as she had been.

She knew that quite well. Yet Gaspare puzzled her. He had become moody, nervous, and full of changes. She seemed to discern sometimes a latent excitement in him. His temper was uneven. Giulia had said that one could not speak with him. Since that day she had grumbled about him again, but discreetly, with a certain vagueness. For all the servants thoroughly appreciated his special position in the household as the "cameriere di confidenza" of the Padrona. One thing which drew Hermione's special attention was his extraordinary watchfulness of her. When they were together she frequently surprised him looking at her with a sort of penetrating and almost severe scrutiny which startled her. Once or twice, indeed, she showed that she was startled.

"What's the matter, Gaspare?" she said one day. "Do I look ill again?"

For she had remembered his looking at her in the boat.

"No, Signora," he answered this time, quickly. "You are not looking ill to-day."

And he moved off, as if anxious to avoid further questioning.

Another time she thought that there was something wrong with her dress, or her hair, and said so.

"Is there anything wrong with me?" she exclaimed. "What is it?" And she instinctively glanced down at her gown, and put up her hands to her head.

And this time he had turned it off with a laugh, and had said:

"Signora, you are like the Signorina! Once she told me I was—I was"—he shook his head—"I forget the word. But I am sure it was something that a man could never be. Per dio!"

And then he had gone off into a rambling conversation that had led Hermione's attention far away from the starting-point of their talk.

Vere, too, noticed the variations of his demeanour.

"Gaspare was very 'jumpy' to-day in the boat," she said one evening, after returning from a sail; "I wonder what's the matter with him. Do you think he can be in love, Madre?"

"I don't know. But he is *fidanzato*, Vere, with a girl in Marechiaro, you remember?"

"Yes, but that lasts for ever. When I speak of it he always says: 'There is plenty of time, Signorina. If one marries in a hurry one makes two faces ugly!' I should think the girl must be sick of waiting."

Hermione was sure that there was some very definite reason for Gaspare's curious behaviour, but she could not imagine what it was. That it was not anything to do with his health she had speedily ascertained. Any small discipline of Providence in the guise of a cold in the head, or a pain in the stomach, despatched him promptly to the depths. But he had told her that he was perfectly well and "made of iron," when she had questioned him on the subject.

She supposed time would elucidate the mystery, and

meanwhile she knew it was no use troubling about it. Years had taught her that when Gaspare chose to be silent not heaven nor earth could make him speak.

Although Vere could not know why Ruffo attracted her mother, Hermione knew that Gaspare must understand, at any rate partially, why she cared so much to be with him. During the days between the last visit of Artois, and the Festa of the Madonna del Carmine, her acquaintance with the boy had progressed so rapidly that sometimes she found herself wondering what the days had been like before she knew him, the evenings before his boat slipped into the Saint's Pool, and his light feet ran up from the water's edge to the cliff top. Possibly, had Ruffo come into her life when she was comparatively happy and at ease, she would never have drawn so closely to him, despite the resemblance that stirred her to the heart. But he came when she was feeling specially lonely and sad; and when he, too, was in trouble. Both wanted sympathy. Hermione gave Ruffo hers in full measure. She could not ask for his. But giving had always been her pleasure. It was her pleasure now. And she drew happiness from the obvious and growing affection of the boy. Perfectly natural at all times, he kept back little from the kind lady of the island. He told her the smallest details of his daily life, his simple hopes and fears, his friendships and quarrels, his relations with the other fishermen of Mergellina, his intentions in the present, his ambitions for the future. Some day he hoped to be the *Padrone* of a boat of his own. That seemed to be the ultimate aim of his life. Hermione smiled as she heard it, and saw his eyes shining with the excitement of anticipation. When he spoke the word "*Padrone*," his lithe form seemed to expand with authority and con-

scious pride. He squared his shoulders. He looked almost a man. The pleasures of command dressed all his person, as flags dress a ship on a festival day. He stood before Hermione a boy exuberant.

And she thought of Maurice bounding down the mountain side to the fishing, and rousing the night with his "Ciao, Ciao, Ciao, Morettina bella—Ciao!"

But Ruffo was sometimes reserved. Hermione could not make him speak of his father. All she knew of him was that he was dead. Sometimes she gave Ruffo good advice. She divined the dangers of Naples for a lad with the blood bounding in his veins, and she dwelt upon the pride of man's strength, and how he should be careful to preserve it, and not dissipate it before it came to maturity. She did not speak very plainly, but Ruffo understood, and answered her with the unconscious frankness that is characteristic of the people of the South. And at the end of his remarks he added:

"Don Gaspare has talked to me about that. Don Gaspare knows much, Signora."

He spoke with deep respect. Hermione was surprised by this little revelation. Was Gaspare secretly watching over this boy? Did he concern himself seriously with Ruffo's fate? She longed to question Gaspare. But she knew that to do so would be useless. Even with her Gaspare would only speak freely of things when he chose. At other times he was calmly mute. He wrapped himself in a cloud. She wondered whether he had ever given Ruffo any hints or instructions as to suitable conduct when with her.

Although Ruffo was so frank and garrulous about most things she noticed that if she began to speak of his mother, or his Patrigno, his manner changed, and he be-

came uncommunicative. Was this owing to Gaspare's rather rough rebuke upon the cliff before Artois and Vere? Or had Gaspare emphasised that by further directions when alone with Ruffo? She tried deftly to find out, but the boy baffled her. But perhaps he was delicate about money, unlike Neapolitans, and feared that if he talked too much of his mother the lady of the island would think he was "making misery," was hoping for another twenty francs. As to his Patrigno, the fact that Peppina was living on the island made that subject rather a difficult one. Nevertheless Hermione could not help suspecting that Gaspare had told the boy not to bother her with any family troubles.

She had not offered him money again. The giving of the twenty francs had been a sudden impulse to help a suffering woman, less because she was probably in poverty than because she was undoubtedly made unhappy by her husband. Since she had suffered at the hands of death Hermione felt very pitiful for women. She would gladly have gone to see Ruffo's mother, have striven to help her more both materially and morally. But as to a visit—Peppina seemed to bar the way. And as to more money help—she remembered Gaspare's warning. Perhaps he knew something of the mother that she did not know. Perhaps the mother was an objectionable, or even a wicked woman.

But when she looked at Ruffo she could not believe that. And then several times he had spoken with great affection of his mother.

She left things as they were, taking her cue from the boy in despite of her desire. And here, as in some other directions, she was secretly governed by Gaspare.

Only sometimes did she see in Ruffo's face the look

that had drawn her to him. The resemblance to Maurice was startling, but it was nearly always fleeting. She could not tell when it was coming nor retain it when it came. But she noticed that it was generally when Ruffo was moved by affection, by a sudden sympathy, by a warm and deferent impulse that the look came in him. And again she thought of the beautiful obedience that springs directly from love, of Mercury poised for flight to the gods, his mission happily accomplished.

She wondered if Artois had ever thought of it when he was with Ruffo. But she felt now that she could never ask him.

And indeed she cherished her knowledge, her recognition, as something almost sacred, silently shared with Gaspare.

To no one could that look mean what it meant to her. To no other heart could it make the same appeal.

And so in those few days between Hermione and the fisher-boy a firm friendship was established.

And to Hermione this friendship came like a small ray of brightly golden light, falling gently in a place that was very dark.

CHAPTER VII.

WHEN the Marchesino received the invitation of Artois to dine with him and the ladies from the island on the night of the Festa of the Madonna del Carmine he was again ill in bed with fever. But nevertheless he returned an immediate acceptance. Then he called in the family doctor, and violently demanded to be made well, "perfectly well," by the evening of the sixteenth. The doctor,

who guessed at once that some amorous adventure was on foot, promised to do his best, and so ingeniously plied his patient with drugs and potions that on the sixteenth Doro was out of bed, and busily doing gymnastics to test his strength for the coming campaign.

Artois's invitation had surprised him. He had lost all faith in his friend, and at first almost suspected an ambush. Emilio had not invited him out of love—that was certain. But perhaps the ladies of the island had desired his presence, his escort. He was a Neapolitan. He knew the ways of the city. That was probably the truth. They wanted him, and Emilio had been obliged to ask him.

He saw his opportunity. His fever, coming at such a time, had almost maddened him, and during the days of forced inaction the Panacci temper had been vigorously displayed in the home circle. As he lay in bed his imagination ran riot. The day and the night were filled with thoughts and dreams of Vere. And always Emilio was near her, presiding over her doings with a false imitation of the paternal manner.

But now at the last the Marchesino saw his opportunity to strike a blow at Emilio. Every year of his life since he was a child he had been to the festa in honour of the Madonna del Carmine. He knew the crowds that assembled under the prison walls, and beneath Nuvolo's tall belfry, the crowds that overflowed into the gaunt Square of the Mercato, and streamed down the avenues of fire into the narrow side streets. In those crowds it would be easy to get lost. Emilio, when he heard his friend's voice singing, had hidden with the Signorina in the darkness of a cave. He might be alone with the Signorina when he would. The English ladies trusted his white hairs. Or the English ladies did not

care for the *convenances*. Since he had found Peppina in the Casa del Mare the Marchesino did not know what to think of its Padrona. And now he was too reckless to care. He only knew that he was in love, and that circumstances so far had fought against him. He only knew that he had been tricked and that he meant to trick Emilio in return. His anxiety to revenge himself on Emilio was quite as keen as his desire to be alone with Vere. The natural devilry of his temperament, a boy's devilry, not really wicked, but compounded of sensuality, vanity, the passion for conquest, and the determination to hold his own against other males and to shine in his world's esteem, was augmented by abstinence from his usual life. The few days in the house seemed to him a lifetime already wasted. He meant to make up for it, and he did not care at whose expense, so long as some of the debt was paid by Emilio.

On the sixteenth he issued forth into life again in a mood that was dangerous. The fever that had abandoned his body was raging in his mind. He was in the temper which had governed his papa on the day of the slapping of Signora Merani's face in the Chiaia.

The Marchesino always thought a great deal about his personal appearance, but his toilet on the night of the sixteenth was unusually prolonged. On several matters connected with it he was undecided. Should he wear a waistcoat of white *piqué* or one of black silk? Should he put on a white tie, or a black? and what about rings?

He loved jewellery, as do most Neapolitans, both male and female, and had quantities of gaudy rings, studs, sleeve-links and waistcoat buttons. In his present mood he was inclined to adorn himself with as many of them as possible. But he was not sure whether the English

liked diamonds and rubies on a man. He hesitated long, made many changes, and looked many times in the glass. At last he decided on a black tie, a white waistcoat with pearl buttons, a pearl shirt-stud surrounded with diamonds, pearl and diamond sleeve-links, and only three rings—a gold snake, a seal ring, and a ring set with turquoises. This was a modest toilet, suited, surely, to the taste of the English, which he remembered to have heard of as sober.

He stood long before the mirror when he was ready, and had poured over his handkerchief a libation of "Rose d'amour."

Certainly he was a fine-looking fellow—his natural sincerity obliged him to acknowledge it. Possibly his nose stuck out too much to balance perfectly the low forehead and the rather square chin. Possibly his cheek-bones were too prominent. But what of that? Women always looked at a man's figure, his eyes, his teeth, his moustaches. And he had a splendid figure, enormous grey eyes, large and perfectly even white teeth between lips that were very full and very red, and blonde moustaches whose turned-up points were like a cry of victory.

He drew himself up from the hips, enlarged his eyes by opening them exaggeratedly, stretched his lips till his teeth were well exposed, and vehemently twisted the ends of his moustaches.

Yes, he was a very handsome fellow, and boyish-looking, too, but not too boyish.

It really was absurd of Emilio to think of cutting him out with a girl—Emilio, an old man, all beard and brains! As if any living woman really cared for brains! Impertinence, gaiety, agility, muscle—that was what women loved in men. And he had all they wanted.

He filled his case with cigarettes, slipped on a very smart fawn-coloured coat, cocked a small-brimmed black bowler hat over his left ear, picked up a pair of white gloves, and a cane surmounted by a bunch of golden grapes, and hurried downstairs, humming "Lili Kangy," the "canzonetta birichina" that was then the rage in Naples.

The dinner was to be at the Hôtel des Étrangers. On consideration, Artois had decided against the Galleria. He had thought of those who wander there, of Peppina's aunt, of certain others. And then he had thought of Vere. And his decision was quickly taken. When the Marchesino arrived Artois was alone in his sitting-room. The two men looked into each other's eyes as they met, and Artois saw at once that Doro was in a state of suppressed excitement and not in a gentle mood. Although Doro generally seemed full of good-humour, and readiness to please and to be pleased, he could look very cruel. And when, in rare moments, he did so, his face seemed almost to change its shape: the cheek-bones to become more salient, the nose sharper, the eyes catlike, the large, but well-shaped mouth venomous instead of passionate. He looked older and also commoner directly his insouciance departed from him, and one could divine a great deal of primitive savagery beneath his lively grace and boyish charm.

But to-night, directly he spoke to Artois, his natural humour seemed to return. He explained his illness, which accounted for his not having come as usual to see his friend, and drew a humorous picture of a Panacci in a bed surrounded by terror-stricken nurses.

"And you, Emilio, what have you been doing?" he concluded.

"Working," said Artois.

He pointed to his writing-table, on which lay a pile of manuscript.

The Marchesino glanced at it carelessly, but the two vertical lines suddenly appeared in his forehead just above the inside corners of his eyes.

"Work! work!" he said. "You make me feel quite guilty, amico mio. I live for happiness, for love. But you—you live for duty."

He put his arm through his friend's with a laugh, and drew him towards the balcony.

"Nevertheless," he added, "even you have your moments of pleasure, haven't you?"

He pressed Artois' arm gently, but in the touch of his fingers there was something that seemed to hint a longing to close them violently and cause a shudder of pain.

"Even you have moments when the brain goes to sleep and—and the body wakes up. Eh, Emilio? Isn't it true?"

"My dear Doro, when have I claimed to be unlike other men?"

"No, no! But you workers inspire reverence, you know. We, who do not work, we see your pale faces, your earnest eyes, and we think—mon Dieu! Emilio!—we think you are Saints. And then, if, by chance, one evening we go to the Galleria, and find it is not so, that you are like ourselves, we are glad."

He began to laugh.

"We are glad; we feel no longer at a disadvantage."

Again he pressed Artois's arm gently.

"But, amico mio, you are deceptive, you workers," he said. "You take us all in. We are children beside you, we who say all we feel, who show when we hate and

when we love. We are babies. If I ever want to become really birbante, I shall become a worker."

He spoke always lightly, laughingly; but Artois understood the malice at his heart, and hesitated for a moment whether to challenge it quietly and firmly, or whether laughingly to accept the sly imputations of secrecy, of hypocrisy, in a "not worth while" temper. If things developed—and Artois felt that they must with such a protagonist as the Marchesino—a situation might arise in which Doro's enmity must come out into the open and be dealt with drastically. Till then was it not best to ignore it, to fall in with his apparent frivolity? Before Artois could decide—for his natural temper and an under-sense of prudence and contempt pulled different ways—the Marchesino suddenly released his arm, leaned over the balcony rail, and looked eagerly down to the road. A carriage had just rattled up from the harbour of Santa Lucia only a few yards away.

"Ecco!" he exclaimed. "Ecco! But—but who is with them?"

"Only Gaspare," replied Artois.

"Gaspare! That servant who came to the Giuseppone? Oh, no doubt he has rowed the ladies over and will return to the boat?"

"No, I think not. I think the Signora will bring him to the Carmine."

"Why?" said the Marchesino sharply.

"Why not? He is a strong fellow and might be useful in a crowd."

"Are not we strong? Are not we useful?"

"My dear Doro, what's the matter?"

"Niente—niente!"

He tugged at his moustaches.

"Only I think the Signora might trust to us."

"Tell her so, if you like. Here she is."

At this moment the door opened and Hermione came in, followed by Vere.

As Artois went to welcome them he was aware of a strange mixture of sensations, which made these two dear and close friends, these intimates of his life, seem almost new. He was acutely conscious of the mist of which Hermione had thought. He wondered about her, as she about him. He saw again that face in the night under the trellis. He heard the voice that had called to him and Vere in the garden. And he knew that enmity, mysterious yet definite, might arise even between Hermione and him; that even they two—inexorably under the law that has made all human beings separate entities, and incapable of perfect fusion—might be victims of misunderstanding, of ignorance of the absolute truth of personality. Even now he was companioned by the sudden and horrible doubt which had attacked him in the garden, that perhaps she had been always playing a part when she had seemed to be deeply interested in his work, that perhaps there was within her someone whom he did not know, had never even caught a glimpse of until lately, once when she was in the tram going to the Scoglio di Frisio, and once the last time they had met. And yet this was the woman who had nursed him in Africa—and this was the woman against whose impulsive actions he had had the instinct to protect Vere—the Hermione Delarey whom he had known for so many years.

Never before had he looked at Hermione quite as he looked at her to-night. His sense of her strangeness woke up in him something that was ill at ease, doubtful, almost

even suspicious, but also something that was quivering with interest.

For years this woman had been to him "dear Hermione," "ma pauvre amie," comrade, sympathiser, nurse, mother of Vere.

Now—what else was she? A human creature with a heart and brain capable of mystery; a soul with room in it for secret things; a temple whose outside he had seen, but whose god, perhaps, he had never seen.

And Vere was involved in her mother's strangeness, and had her own strangeness too. Of that he had been conscious before to-night. For Vere was being formed. The plastic fingers were at work about her, moulding her into what she must be as a woman.

But Hermione! She had been a woman so long.

Perhaps, too, she was standing on the brink of a precipice. That suspicion, that fear, not to be banished by action, added to the curiosity, as about an unknown land, that she aroused.

And the new and vital sense of Hermione's strangeness which was alive in Artois was met by a feeling in her that was akin to it, only of the feminine sex.

Their eyes encountered like eyes that say, "What are you?"

After swift greeting they went downstairs to dine in the public room. As there were but few people in the house the large dining-room was not in use, and their table was laid in the small restaurant that looks out on the Marina, and was placed close to the window.

"At last we are repeating our *partie carrée* of the Giuseppone," said Artois, as they sat down.

He felt that as host he must release himself from subtleties and under-feelings, must stamp down his con-

sciousness of secret inquiries and of desires or hatreds half concealed. He spoke cheerfully, even conventionally.

"Yes, but without the storm," said Hermione, in the same tone. "There is no feeling of electricity in the air to-night."

Even while she spoke she felt as if she were telling a lie which was obvious to them all. And she could not help glancing hastily round. She met the large round eyes of the Marchesino, eyes without subtlety though often expressive.

"No, Signora," he said, smiling at her, rather obviously to captivate her by the sudden vision of his superlative teeth—"La Bruna is safe to-night."

"La Bruna?"

"The Madonna del Carmine."

They talked of the coming festa.

Vere was rather quiet, much less vehement in appearance and lively in manner than she had been at the Marchesino's dinner. Artois thought she looked definitely older than she had then, though even then she had played quite well the part of a little woman of the world. There was something subdued in her eyes to-night which touched him, because it made him imagine Vere sad. He wondered if she were still troubled about her mother, if she had fulfilled her intention and asked Gaspare what he thought. And he longed to ask her, to know what Gaspare had said. The remembrance of Gaspare made him say to Hermione:

"I gave orders that Gaspare was to have a meal here. Did they tell you?"

"Yes. He has gone to the servants' room."

The Marchesino's face changed.

"Your Gaspare seems indispensable, Signora," he said

to Hermione in his lightest, most boyish manner, a manner that the determination in his eyes contradicted rather crudely. "Do you take him everywhere, like a little dog?"

"I often take him—but not like a little dog, Marchese," Hermione said quietly.

"Signora, I did not mean—— Here, in Naples, we use that expression for anything, or anyone, we like to have always with us."

"I see. Well, call Gaspare a watch-dog if you like," she answered with a smile; "he watches over me carefully."

"A watch-dog, Signora! But do you like to be watched? Is it not unpleasant?"

He was speaking now to get rid of the impression his first remark had evidently made upon her.

"I think it depends how," she replied. "If Gaspare watches me it is only to protect me—I am sure of that."

"But, Signora, do you not trust Don Emilio—do you not trust me, to be your watch-dogs to-night at the festa?"

There was a little pressure in his voice, but he still preserved his light and boyish manner. And now he turned to Vere.

"Speak for us, Signorina! Tell the Signora that we will take care of her to-night, that there is no need of the faithful Gaspare."

Vere looked at him gravely. She had wondered a little why her mother had brought Gaspare, why at least she had not left him free till they returned to the boat at Santa Lucia. But her mother wanted him to come with them, and that was enough for her. She opened her lips, and Artois thought she was going to snub her companion. But perhaps she suddenly changed her mind, for she only said:

"Who would trust you, Marchese?"

She met his eyes with a sort of child's impertinence. She had abruptly become the Vere of the Scoglio di Frisio.

"Who would take you for a watch-dog?"

"Ma—Signorina!"

"As a seal—yes, you are all very well! But——"

The young man was immediately in the seventh Heaven. The Signorina remembered his feats in the water. All his self-confidence returned, all his former certainty that the Signorina was secretly devoted to him. His days of doubt and fury were forgotten. His jealousy of Emilio vanished in a cloud of happy contempt for the disabilities of age, and he began to talk to Vere with a vivacity that was truly Neapolitan. When the Marchesino was joyous he had charm, the charm that emanates from the bounding life that flows in the veins of youth. Even the Puritan feels, and fears, the grace that is Pagan. The Marchesino had a Pagan grace. And now it returned to him and fell about him like a garment, clothing body and soul. And Vere seemed to respond to it. She began to chatter, too. She talked half-serious nonsense. She bantered her gay companion lightly, flicking him with little whips of sarcasm that did not hurt, but only urged him on. The humour of a festa night began to flow from these two.

And again, instead of infecting Artois, it seemed to set him apart, to rebuke silently his gifts, his fame—to tell him that they were useless, that they could do nothing for him.

The Marchesino was not troubled with an intellect. Yet with what ease he found words to play with the words of Vere! His Latin vivacity seemed a perfect substitute for thought, for imagination, for every subtlety. He bubbled like champagne. And when champagne

winks and foams at the edge of the shining glass, do the young think of, or care for, the sober gravity, the lingering bouquet of claret, even if it be Château Margaux?

As Artois half listened to the young people, while he talked quietly with Hermione, playing the host with discretion, he felt the peculiar cruelty which ordains that the weapons of youth, even if taken up and used by age with vigour and competence, shall be only reeds in those hands whose lines tell of the life behind.

Yet how Vere and he had laughed together on the day of his return from Paris! One gust of such mutual laughter is worth how many days of earnest talk!

Vere was gleaming with fun to-night.

The waiters, as they went softly about the table, looked at her with kind eyes. Secretly they were enjoying her gaiety because it was so pretty. Her merriment was as airy as the flight of a bird.

The Marchesino was entranced. Did she care for that?

Artois wondered secretly, and was not sure. He had a theory that all women like to feel their power over men. Few men have not this theory. But there was in Vere something immensely independent, that seemed without sex, and that hinted at a reserve not vestal, but very pure; too pure, perhaps, to desire an empire which is founded certainly upon desire.

And the Marchesino was essentially and completely the young animal; not the heavy, sleek, and self-contented young animal that the northern countries breed, but the frolicsome, playful, fiery young animal that has been many times warmed by the sun.

Hermione felt that Artois's mood to-night echoed his mood at Frisio's, and suddenly she thought once more of the visitors' book and of what he had written there, surely

in a moment of almost heated impulse. And as she thought of it she was moved to speak of her thought. She had so many secret reserves from Emile now that this one she could dispense with.

"You remember that night when I met you on the sea?" she said to him.

He looked away from Vere and answered,

"Yes. What about it?"

"When I was at the Scoglio di Frisio I looked again over that wonderful visitors' book."

"Did you?"

"Yes. And I saw what you had written."

Their eyes met. She wondered if by the expression in hers he divined why she had made that expedition, moved by what expectation, by what curiosity. She could tell nothing by his face, which was calm and inscrutable.

After an instant's pause he said,

"Do you know from whom those words come?"

"No. Are they your own?"

"Victor Hugo's. Do you like them?"

But her eyes were asking him a question, and he saw it.

"What is it?" he said.

"Why did you write them?"

"I had to write something. You made me."

"Vere suggested it first."

He looked again at Vere, but only for a moment. She was laughing at something the Marchesino was saying.

"Did she?—Oh! Take some of that *salade à la Russe*. I gave the chef the recipe for it.—Did she?"

"Don't you remember?"

"Those words were in my head. I put them down."

"Are you fond of them?"

Her restless curiosity was still quite unsatisfied.

"I don't know. But one has puzzled about conscience. Hasn't one?"

He glanced at the Marchesino, who was bending forward to Vere, and illustrating something he was telling her by curious undulating gestures with both hands that suggested a flight.

"At least some of us have," he continued. "And some never have, and never will."

Hermione understood the comment on their fellow-guest.

"Do you think that saying explains it satisfactorily?" she said.

"I believe sometimes we know a great deal more than we know we know," he answered. "That sounds like some nonsense game with words, but it's the best way to put it. Conscience seems to speak out of the silence. But there may be someone in the prompter's box—our secret knowledge."

"But is it knowledge of ourselves, or of others?"

"Which do you think?"

"Of ourselves, I suppose. I think we generally know far less of others than we believe ourselves to know."

She expressed his thought of her earlier in the evening.

"Probably. And nevertheless we may know things of them that we are not aware we know—till after we have instinctively acted on our knowledge."

Their eyes met again. Hermione felt in that moment as if he knew why she had given Vere the permission to read his books.

But still she did not know whether he had written that sentence in the book at Frisio's carelessly, or prompted by some violent impulse to express a secret thought or feeling of the moment.

"Things good or evil?" she said slowly.

"Perhaps both."

The Marchesino burst into a laugh. He leaned back in his chair, shaking his head, and holding the table with his two hands. His white teeth gleamed.

"What is the joke?" asked Artois.

Vere turned her head.

"Oh, nothing. It's too silly. I can't imagine why the Marchesino is so much amused by it."

Artois felt shut out. But when Vere and he had laughed over the tea-table in a blessed community of happy foolishness who could have understood their mirth? He remembered how he had pitied the imagined outsider.

He turned again to Hermione, but such conversation as theirs, and indeed all serious conversation, now seemed to him heavy, portentous, almost ludicrous. The young alone knew how to deal with life, chasing it as a child chases a coloured air-ball, and when it would sink, and fail and be inert, sending it with a gay blow soaring once more towards the blue.

Perhaps Hermione had a similar thought, or perhaps she knew of it in him. At any rate, for a moment she had nothing to say. Nor had he. And so, tacitly excluded, as it seemed, from the merriment of the young ones, the two elders remained looking towards each other in silence, sunk in a joint exile.

Presently Artois began to fidget with his bread. He pulled out some of the crumb from his roll, and pressed it softly between his large fingers, and scattered the tiny fragments mechanically over the table-cloth near his plate. Hermione watched his moving hand. The Marchesino was talking now. He was telling Vere about a paper-

chase at Capodimonte, which had started from the Royal Palace. His vivacity, his excitement made a paper-chase seem one of the most brilliant and remarkable events in a brilliant and remarkable world. He had been the hare. And such a hare! Since hares were first created and placed in the Garden of Eden there had been none like unto him. He told of his cunning exploits.

The fingers of Artois moved faster. Hermione glanced at his face. Its massiveness looked heavy. The large eyes were fixed upon the table-cloth. His hand just then was more expressive. And as she glanced at it again something very pitiful awoke in her, something pitiful for him and for herself. She felt that very often lately she had misunderstood him—she had been confused about him. But now, in this moment, she understood him perfectly.

He pulled some more crumb out of his roll.

She was fascinated by his hand. Much as it had written it had never written more clearly on paper than it was writing now.

But suddenly she felt as if she could not look at it any more, as if it was intolerable to look at it. And she turned towards the open window.

“What is it?” Artois asked her. “Is there too much air for you?”

“Oh, no. It isn't that. I was only thinking what a quantity of people pass by, and wondering where they were all going, and what they were all thinking and hoping: I don't know why they should have come into my head just then. I suppose it will soon be time for us to start for the festa.”

“Yes. We'll have coffee in my sitting-room—when they are ready.” He looked again at Vere and the Marchesino.

"Have we all finished? I thought we would go and have coffee upstairs. What do you say, Vere?"

He spoke cheerfully.

"Yes; do let us."

They all got up. As Hermione and Vere moved towards the door Artois leaned out of the window for a moment.

"You needn't be afraid. There will be no storm to-night, Emilio!" said the Marchesino gaily, almost satirically.

"No—it's quite fine."

Artois drew in. "We ought to have a perfect evening," he added quietly.

CHAPTER VIII.

"How are we going to drive to the Carmine?" said Artois to Hermione, when she had taken her cloak and was ready to go down.

"We must have two carriages."

"Yes."

"Vere and I will go in one, with Gaspare on the box, and you and the Marchese can follow in the other."

"Signora," said the Marchesino, drawing on his white gloves, "you still do not trust us? You are still determined to take the watch-dog? It is cruel of you. It shows a great want of faith in Emilio and in me."

"Gaspare must come."

The Marchesino said no more, only shrugged his shoulders with an air of humorous resignation which hid a real chagrin. He knew how watchful a Sicilian can be, how unyielding in attention to his mistresses, if he thinks they need protection.

But perhaps this Gaspare was to be bribed.

Instinctively the Marchesino put his hand into his waistcoat pocket, and began to feel the money there.

Yes, there was a gold piece.

"Come, Panacci!"

Emilio's hand touched his shoulder, and he followed the ladies out of the room.

Emilio had called him "Panacci." That sounded almost like a declaration of war. Well, he was ready. At dinner his had been the triumph, and Emilio knew it. He meant his triumph to be a greater one before the evening was over. The reappearance of the gay child in Vere, grafted upon the comprehending woman whom he had seen looking out of her eyes on the day of his last visit to the island, had put the finishing touch to the amorous madness of the Marchesino. He deemed Vere an accomplished coquette. He believed that her cruelty on the night of his serenade, that her coldness and avoidance of him on the day of the lunch, were means devised to increase his ardour. She had been using Emilio merely as an instrument. He had been a weapon in her girlish hands. That was the suitable fate of the old—usefulness.

The Marchesino was in a fever of anticipation. Possibly Vere would play into his hands when they got to the festa. If not, he must manage things for himself. The Signora, of course, would make Emilio her escort. Vere would naturally fall to him, the Marchesino.

But there was the fifth—this Gaspare.

When they came out to the pavement the Marchesino cast a searching glance at the Sicilian, who was taking the cloaks, while the two carriages which had been summoned by the hotel porter were rattling up from the opposite side of the way. Gaspare had saluted him, but

did not look at him again. When Hermione and Vere were in the first carriage, Gaspare sprang onto the box as a matter of course. The Marchesino went to tell the coachman which way to drive to the Carmine. When he had finished he looked at Gaspare and said:

"There will be a big crowd. Take care the Signora does not get hurt in it."

He laid a slight emphasis on the word "Signora," and put his hand significantly into his waistcoat pocket.

Gaspare regarded him calmly.

"Va bene, Signor Marchese," he replied. "I will take care of the Signora and the Signorina."

The Marchesino turned away and jumped into the second carriage with Emilio, realising angrily that his gold piece would avail him nothing.

As they drove off Artois drew out some small square bits of paper.

"Here's your ticket for the enclosure," he said, giving one to the Marchesino.

"Grazie. But we must walk about. We must show the ladies the fun in the Mercato. It is very dull to stay all the evening in the enclosure."

"We will do whatever they like, of course."

"Keep close to the other carriage! Do you hear?" roared the Marchesino to the coachman.

The man jerked his head, cracked his whip, pulled at his horse's mouth. They shot forward at a tremendous pace, keeping close by the sea at first, then turning to the left up the hill towards the Piazza del Plebiscito. The Marchesino crossed his legs, folded his arms, and instinctively assumed the devil-may-care look characteristic of the young Neapolitan when driving through his city.

"Emilio," he said, after a moment, looking at Artois

out of the corners of his eyes without moving his head, "when I was at the island the other day do you know whom I saw in the house?"

"No."

"A girl of the town. A bad girl. You understand?"

"Do you mean a girl with a wounded cheek?"

"Yes. How can the Signora have her there?"

"The Signora knows all about her," said Artois drily.

"She thinks so!"

"What do you mean?"

"If the Signora really knew, could she take such a girl to live with the Signorina?"

The conversation was rapidly becoming insupportable to Artois.

"This is not our affair," he said.

"I do not say it is. But still, as I am a Neapolitan, I think it a pity that someone does not explain to the Signora how impossible——"

"Caro mio!" Artois exclaimed, unable to endure his companion's obvious inclination to pose as a protector of Vere's innocence, "English ladies do not care to be governed. They are not like your charming women. They are independent and do as they choose. You had much better not bother your head about what happens on the island. Very soon the Signora may be leaving it and going away from Naples."

"Davvero?"

The Marchesino turned right round in the little carriage, forgetting his pose.

"Davvero? No. I don't believe it. You play with me. You wish to frighten me."

"To frighten you! I don't understand what you mean. What can it matter to you? You scarcely know these ladies."

The Marchesino pursed his lips together. But he only said, "Sì, Sì." He did not mean to quarrel with Emilio yet. To do so might complicate matters with the ladies.

As they entered the Via del Popolo, and drew near to the Piazza di Masaniello, his excitement increased, stirred by the sight of the crowds of people, who were all streaming in the same direction past the iron rails of the port, beyond which, above the long and ghostly sheds that skirt the sea, rose the tapering masts of vessels lying at anchor. Plans buzzed in his head. He called upon all his shrewdness, all his trickiness of the South. He had little doubt of his capacity to out-manceuvre Emilio and the Signora. And if the Signorina were favourable to him he believed that he might even get the better of Gaspare, in whom he divined a watchful hostility. But would the Signorina help him? He could not tell. How can one ever tell what a girl will do at a given moment?

With a jerk the carriage drew up beneath the walls of the prison that frowns upon the Piazza di Masaniello, and the Marchesino roused himself to the battle and sprang out. The hum of the great crowd already assembled, the brilliance of the illuminations that lit up the houses, Nuvolo's tower, the façade of the Church of the Carmine, and the adjoining monastery, the loud music of the band that was stationed in the Kiosk before the enclosure, stirred his young blood. As he went quickly to help Hermione and Vere he shot a glance almost of contempt at the grey hairs of Emilio, who was getting out of the carriage slowly. Artois saw the glance and understood it. For a moment he stood still. Then he paid the coachman and moved on, encompassed by the masses of the people who were struggling gaily towards the centre of

the Square, intent upon seeing the big doll that was enthroned there dressed as Masaniello.

"We had better go into the enclosure. Don't you think so?" he said to Hermione.

"If you like. I am ready for anything."

"We can walk about afterwards. Perhaps the crush will be less when the fire-balloon has gone up."

The Marchesino said nothing, and they gained the enclosure, where rows of little chairs stood on the short grass that edges the side of the prison that looks upon the Piazza. Gaspare, who on such occasions was full of energy and singularly adroit, found them good places in a moment.

"Ecco, Signora! Ecco, Signorina!"

"Madre, may I stand on my chair?"

"Of course, Signorina. Look! Others are standing!"

Gaspare helped his Padroncina up, then took his place beside her, and stood like a sentinel. Artois had never liked him better than at that moment. Hermione, who looked rather tired, sat down on her chair. The loud music of the band, the lines of fire that brought the discoloured houses into sharp relief, and that showed her with a distinctness that was fanciful and lurid the moving faces of hundreds of strangers, the dull roar of voices, and the heat that flowed from the human bodies, seemed to mingle, to become concrete, to lie upon her spirit like a weight. Artois stood by her, leaning on his stick and watching the crowd with his steady eyes. The Marchesino was looking up at Vere, standing in a position that seemed to indicate a longing that she should rest her hand upon his shoulder.

"You will fall, Signorina!" he said. "Be careful. Let me——"

"I am quite safe."

But she dropped one hand to the shoulder of Gaspare. The Marchesino moved, almost as if he were about to go away. Then he lit a cigarette and spoke to Hermione. "You look tired, Signora. You feel the heat. It is much fresher outside, when one is walking. Here, under the prison walls, it is always like a furnace in summer. It is unwholesome. It puts one into a fever."

Hermione looked at him, and saw a red spot burning on each side of his face near his cheek-bones.

"Perhaps it would be better to walk," she said doubtfully.

Her inclination was for movement, for her fatigue was combined with a sensation of great restlessness.

"What do you say, Vere?" she added.

"Oh, I should love to go among the people and see everything," she answered eagerly.

The Marchesino's brow cleared.

"Let us go, Emilio! You hear what the Signorina says."

"Very well," said Artois.

His voice was reluctant, even cold. Vere glanced at him quickly.

"Would you rather stay here, Monsieur Emile?" she said.

"No, Vere, no. Let us go and see the fun."

He smiled at her.

"We must keep close together," he added, looking at the Marchesino. "The crowd is tremendous."

"But they are all in good humour," he answered carelessly. "We Neapolitans, we are very gay, that is true, but we do not forget our manners when we have a festa. There is nothing to fear. This is the best way out. We must cross the Mercato. The illuminations of the streets

beyond are always magnificent. The Signorina shall walk down paths of fire, but she shall not be burned."

He led the way with Vere, going in front to disarm the suspicion which he saw plainly lurking in Emilio's eyes. Artois followed with Hermione, and Gaspare came last. The exit from the enclosure was difficult, as many people were pouring in through the narrow opening, and others, massed together outside the wooden barrier, were gazing at the seated women within; but at length they reached the end of the Piazza, and caught a glimpse of the Masaniello doll, which faced a portrait of the Madonna del Carmine framed in fire. Beyond, to the right, above the heads of the excited multitude, rose the pale pink globe of the fire-balloon, and as for a moment they stood still to look at it the band struck up a sonorous march, the balloon moved sideways, swayed, heeled over slightly like a sailing yacht catching the breeze beyond the harbour bar, recovered itself, and lifted its blazing car above the gesticulating arms of the people. A long murmur followed it as it glided gently away, skirting the prodigious belfry with the apparent precaution of a living thing that longed for, and sought, the dim freedom of the sky. The children instinctively stretched out their arms to it. All faces were lifted towards the stars, as if a common aspiration at that moment infected the throng, a universal, though passing desire to be free of the earth, to mount, to travel, to be lost in the great spaces that encircle terrestrial things. At the doors of the trattorie the people, who had forsaken their snails, stood to gaze, many of them holding glasses of white wine in their hands. The spighe arrosto, the water melons, were for a moment forgotten on the stalls of their vendors, who ceased from shouting to the passers-by. There was a silence in which

was almost audible the human wish for wings. Presently the balloon, caught by some vagrant current of air, began to travel abruptly, and more swiftly, sideways, passing over the city towards its centre. At once the crowd moved in the same direction. Aspiration was gone. A violence of children took its place, and the instinct to follow where the blazing toy led. The silence was broken. People called and gesticulated, laughed and chattered. Then the balloon caught fire from the brazier beneath it. A mass of flames shot up. A roar broke from the crowd and it pressed more fiercely onward, each unit of it longing to see where the wreck would fall. Already the flames were sinking towards the city.

"Where are Vere and the Marchesino?"

Hermione had spoken. Artois, whose imagination had been fascinated by the instincts of the crowd, and whose intellect had been chained to watchfulness, during its strange excitement, looked sharply round.

"Vere—isn't she here?"

He saw at once that she was gone. But he saw, too, that Gaspare was no longer with them. The watch-dog had been more faithful than he.

"They must be close by," he added. "The sudden movement separated us, no doubt."

"Yes. Gaspare has vanished too!"

"With them," Artois said.

He spoke with an emphasis that was almost violent.

"But—you didn't see——" began Hermione.

"Don't you know Gaspare yet?" he asked.

Their eyes met. She was startled by the expression in his.

"You don't think——?" she began.

She broke off.

"I think Gaspare knows his Southerner," Artois replied. "We must look for them. They are certain to have gone with the crowd."

They followed the people into the Mercato. The burning balloon dropped down and disappeared.

"It has fallen into the Rettifilo!" cried a young man close to them.

"Macchè!" exclaimed his companion.

"I will bet you five lire——"

He gesticulated furiously.

"We shall never find them," Hermione said.

"We will try to find them."

His voice startled her now, as his eyes had startled her. A man in the crowd pressed against her roughly. Instinctively she caught hold of Artois's arm.

"Yes, you had better take it," he said.

"Oh, it was only——"

"No, take it."

And he drew her hand under his arm.

The number of people in the Mercato was immense, but it was possible to walk on steadily, though slowly. Now that the balloon had vanished the crowd had forgotten it, and was devoting itself eagerly to the pleasures of the fair. In the tall and barrack-like houses candles gleamed in honour of Masaniello. The streets that led away towards the city's heart were decorated with arches of little lamps, with columns and chains of lights, and the pedestrians passing through them looked strangely black in this great frame of fire. From the Piazza before the Carmine the first rocket rose, and, exploding, showered its golden rain upon the picture of the Virgin.

"Perhaps they have gone back into the Piazza."

Hermione spoke after a long silence, during which

they had searched in vain. Artois stood still and looked down at her. His face was very stern.

"We sha'n't find them," he said.

"In this crowd, of course, it is difficult, but——"

"We sha'n't find them."

"At any rate, Gaspare is with them."

"How do we know that?"

The expression in his face frightened her.

"But you said you were sure——"

"Panacci was too clever for us; he may have been too clever for Gaspare."

Hermione was silent for a moment. Then she said:

"You surely don't think the Marchese is wicked?"

"He is young, he is Neapolitan, and to-night he is mad. Vere has made him mad."

"But Vere was only gay at dinner as any child——"

"Don't think I am blaming Vere. If she has fascination, she cannot help it."

"What shall we do?"

"Will you let me put you into a cab? Will you wait in my room at the hotel until I come back with Vere? I can search for her better alone. I will find her—if she is here."

Their eyes met steadily as he finished speaking, and he saw, or thought he saw, in hers a creeping menace, as if she had the intention to attack, or to defy him.

"I am Vere's mother," she said.

"Let me take you to a cab, Hermione."

He spoke coldly, inexorably. This moment of enforced inactivity was a very difficult one for him. And the violence that was blazing within him made him fear that if Hermione did not yield to his wish he might lose his self-control.

"You can do nothing," he added.

Her eyes left his, her lips quivered. Then she said:
"Take me, then."

She did not look at him again until she was in a cab and Artois had told the driver to go to the Hotel Royal. Then she glanced at him with a strange expression of acute self-consciousness which he had never before seen on her face.

"You don't believe that—that there is any danger to Vere?" she said, in a low voice. "You cannot believe that."

"I don't know."

She leaned forward, and her face changed.

"Go and bring her back to me."

The cabman drove off, and Artois was lost in the crowd.

He never knew how long his search lasted, how long he heard the swish and the bang of rockets, the vehement music of the band, the cries and laughter of the people, the sound of footsteps as if a world were starting on some pilgrimage; how long he saw the dazzling avenues of fire stretching away into the city's heart; how long he looked at the faces of strangers, seeking Vere's face. He was excessively conscious of almost everything except of time. It might have been two hours later, or much less, when he felt a hand upon his arm, turned round, and saw Gaspare beside him.

"Where is the Signora?"

"Gone to the hotel. And the Signorina?"

Gaspare looked at Artois with a sort of heavy gloom, then looked down to the ground.

"You have lost her?"

"Si."

There was a dulness of fatalism in his voice.

Artois did not reproach him.

"Did you lose them when the balloon went up?" he asked.

"Macchè! It was not the balloon!" Gaspare said fiercely.

"What was it?"

Artois felt suddenly that Gaspare had some perfect excuse for his inattention.

"Someone spoke to me. When I—when I had finished the Signorina and that Signore were gone."

"Someone spoke to you. Who was it?"

"It was Ruffo."

Artois stared at Gaspare.

"Ruffo! Was he alone?"

"No, Signore."

"Who was with him?"

"His mother was with him."

"His mother? Did you speak to her?"

"Sì, Signore."

There was a silence between them. It was broken by a sound of bells.

"Signore, it is midnight."

Artois drew out his watch quickly. The hands pointed to twelve o'clock. The crowd was growing thinner, was surely melting away.

"We had better go to the hotel," Artois said. "Perhaps they are there. If they are not there——"

He did not finish the sentence. They found a cab and drove swiftly towards the Marina. All the time the little carriage rattled over the stony streets Artois expected Gaspare to speak to him, to tell him more, to tell him something tremendous. He felt as if the Sicilian were

beset by an imperious need to break a long reserve. But, if it were so, this reserve was too strong for its enemy. Gaspare's lips were closed. He did not say a word till the cabman drew up before the hotel.

As Artois got out he knew that he was terribly excited. The hall was almost dark, and the night concierge came from his little room on the right of the door to turn on the light and accompany Artois to the lift.

"There is a lady waiting in your room, Signore," he said.

Artois, who was walking quickly towards the lift, stopped. He looked at Gaspare.

"A lady!" he said.

"Shall I go back to the Piazza, Signore?"

He half turned towards the swing door.

"Wait a minute. Comè upstairs first and see the Signora."

The lift ascended. As Artois opened the door of his sitting-room he heard a woman's dress rustle, and Hermione stood before them.

"Vere?" she said.

She laid her hand on his arm.

"Gaspare!"

There was a sound of reproach in her voice. She took her hand away from Artois.

"Gaspare?" she repeated interrogatively.

"Signora!" he answered doggedly.

He did not lift his eyes to hers.

"You have lost the Signorina?"

"Sì, Signora."

He attempted no excuse, he expressed no regret.

"Gaspare!" Hermione said.

Suddenly Artois put his hand on Gaspare's shoulder. He said nothing, but his touch told the Sicilian much,—

told him how he was understood, how he was respected, by this man who had shared his silence.

"We thought they might be here," Artois said.

"They are not here."

Her voice was almost hard, almost rebuking. She was still standing in the door-space.

"I will go back and look again, Signora."

"Sì," she said.

She turned back into the room. Artois held out his hand to Gaspare:

"Signore?"

Gaspare looked surprised, hesitating, then moved. He took the outstretched hand, grasped it violently, and went away.

Artois shut the sitting-room door and went towards Hermione.

"You are staying?" she said.

By her intonation he could not tell whether she was glad or almost angrily astonished.

"They may come here immediately," he said. "I wish to see Panacci—when he comes."

She looked at him quickly.

"It must be an accident," she said. "I can't—I won't believe that—no one could hurt Vere."

He said nothing.

"No one could hurt Vere," she repeated.

He went out onto the balcony and stood there for two or three minutes, looking down at the sea and at the empty road. She did not follow him, but sat down upon the sofa near the writing-table. Presently he turned round.

"Gaspare has gone."

"It would have been better if he had never come!"

"Hermione," he said, "has it come to this, that I must defend Gaspare to you?"

"I think Gaspare might have kept with Vere, ought to have kept with Vere."

Artois felt a burning desire to make Hermione understand the Sicilian, but he only said gently:

"Some day, perhaps, you will know Gaspare's character better, you will understand all this."

"I can't understand it now. But—Oh, if Vere—— No, that's impossible, impossible!"

She spoke with intense vehemence.

"Some things cannot happen," she exclaimed, with a force, that seemed to be commanding destiny.

Artois said nothing. And his apparent calm seemed to punish her, almost as if he struck her with a whip.

"Why don't you speak?" she said.

She felt almost confused by his silence.

He went out again to the balcony, leaned on the railing and looked over. She felt that he was listening with his whole nature for the sound of wheels. She felt that she heard him listening, that she heard him demanding the sound. And as she looked at his dark figure, beyond which she saw the vagueness of night and some stars, she was conscious of the life in him as she had never been conscious of it before, she was conscious of all his manhood terribly awake.

That was for Vere.

A quarter of an hour went by. Artois remained always on the balcony, and scarcely moved. Hermione watched him, and tried to learn a lesson; tried to realise without bitterness and horror that in the heart of man everything has been planted, and that therefore nothing which grows there should cause too great amazement, too

great condemnation, or the absolute withdrawal of pity; tried to face something which must completely change her life, sweeping away more than mere illusions, sweeping away a long reverence which had been well founded, and which she had kept very secret in her heart, replacing its vital substance with a pale shadow of compassion. She watched him, and she listened for the sound of wheels, until at last she could bear it no longer.

“Emile, what are we to do? What can we do?” she said desperately.

“Hush!” he said.

He held up his hand. They both listened, and heard far off the noise of a carriage rapidly approaching. He looked over into the road. The carriage rattled up. She heard it stop, and saw him bend down. Then suddenly he drew himself up, turned and came into the room.

“They have come,” he said.

He went to the door and opened it, and stood by it. And his face was terrible.

CHAPTER IX.

Two minutes later there was the sound of steps coming quickly down the uncarpeted corridor, and Vere entered, followed, but not closely, by the Marchesino. Vere went up at once to her mother, without even glancing at Artois.

“I am so sorry, Madre,” she said quietly. “But—but it was not my fault.”

The Marchesino had paused near the door, as if doubtful of Vere’s intentions. Now he approached Hermione, pulling off his white gloves.

"Signora," he said, in a hard and steady voice, but smiling boyishly, "I fear I am the guilty one. When the balloon went up we were separated from you by the crowd, and could not find you again immediately. The Signorina wished to go back to the enclosure. Unfortunately I had lost the tickets, so that we should not have been re-admitted. Under these circumstances I thought the best thing was to show the Signorina the illuminations, and then to come straight back to the hotel. I hope you have not been distressed. The Signorina was of course perfectly safe with me."

"Thank you, Marchese," said Hermione coldly. "Emile, what are we to do about Gaspare?"

"Gaspare?" asked Vere.

"He has gone back to the Piazza to search for you again."

"Oh!"

She flushed, turned away and went up to the window. There she hesitated, and finally stepped out onto the balcony.

"You had better spend the night in the hotel," said Artois.

"But we have nothing!"

"The housemaid can find you what is necessary in the morning."

"As to our clothes—that doesn't matter. Perhaps it will be the best plan."

Artois rang the bell. They waited in silence till the night porter came.

"Can you give these two ladies rooms for the night?" said Artois. "It is too late for them to go home by boat, and their servant has not come back yet."

"Yes, sir. The ladies can have two very good rooms."

"Good night, Emile," said Hermione. "Good night, Marchese. Vere!"

Vere came in from the balcony.

"We are going to sleep here, Vere. Come!"

She went out.

"Good night, Monsieur Emile," Vere said to Artois, without looking at him.

She followed her mother without saying another word.

Artois looked after them as they went down the corridor, watched Vere's thin and girlish figure until she turned the corner near the staircase, walking slowly and, he thought, as if she were tired and depressed. During this moment he was trying to get hold of his own violence, to make sure of his self-control. When the sound of the footsteps had died completely away he drew back into the room and shut the door.

The Marchesino was standing near the window. When he saw the face of Artois he sat down in an armchair and put his hat on the floor.

"You don't mind if I stay for a few minutes, Emilio?" he said. "Have you anything to drink? I am thirsty after all this walking in the crowd."

Artois brought him some Nocera and lemons.

"Do you want brandy, whisky?"

"No, no. Grazie."

He poured out the Nocera gently, and began carefully to squeeze some lemon juice into it, holding the fruit lightly in his strong fingers, and watching the drops fall with a quiet attention.

"Where have you been to-night?"

The Marchesino looked up.

"In the Piazza di Masaniello."

"Where have you been?"

"I tell you—the Piazza, the Mercato, down one or two streets to see the illuminations. What's the matter, caro mio? Are you angry because we lost you in the crowd?"

"You intended to lose us in the crowd before we left the hotel to-night."

"Not at all, amico mio. Not at all."

His voice hardened again, the furrows appeared on his forehead.

"Now you are lying," said Artois.

The Marchesino got up and stood in front of Artois. The ugly, cat-like look had come into his face, changing it from its usual boyish impudence to a hardness that suggested age. At that moment he looked much older than he was.

"Be careful, Emilio!" he said. "I am Neapolitan, and I do not allow myself to be insulted."

His grey eyes contracted.

"You did not mean to get lost with the Signorina?" said Artois.

"One leaves such things to destiny."

"Destiny! Well, to-night it is your destiny to go out of the Signorina's life for ever."

"How dare you command me? How dare you speak for these ladies?"

Suddenly Artois went quite white and laid his hand on the Marchesino's arm.

"Where have you been? What have you been doing all this time?" he said.

Questions blazed in his eyes. His hand closed more firmly on the Marchesino.

"Where did you take that child? What did you say to her? What did you dare to say?"

"I! And you?" said the Marchesino sharply.

He threw out his hand towards the face of Artois. "And you—you!" he repeated.

"I?"

"Yes—you! What have you said to her? Where have you taken her? I at least am young. My blood speaks to me. I am natural, I am passionate. I know what I am, what I want; I show it; I say it; I am sincere. I—I am ready to go naked into the sun before the whole world, and say, 'There! There! This is Isidoro Panacci; and he is this—and this—and this! Like it or hate it—that does not matter! It is not his fault. He is like that. He is made like that. He is meant to be like that, and he is that—he is that!' Do you hear? That is what I am ready to do. But you—you——! Ah, Madonna! Ah, Madre benedetta!"

He threw up both his hands suddenly, looked at the ceiling and shook his head sharply from side to side. Then he slapped his hands gently and repeatedly against his knees, and a prim and almost venerable look came into his mobile face.

"The great worker! The man of intellect! The man who is above the follies of that little Isidoro Panacci, who loves a beautiful girl, and who is proud of loving her, and who shows that he loves her, that he wants her, that he wishes to take her! Stand still!"—he suddenly hissed out the words. "The man with the white hairs who might have had many children of his own, but who prefers to play papa—caro papa, Babbo bello!—to the child of another on a certain little island. Ah, buon Dio! The wonderful writer, respected and admired by all; by whose side the little Isidoro seems only a small boy from college, about whom nobody need bother! How he is loved, and

how he is trusted on the island! Nobody must come there but he and those whom he wishes. He is to order, to arrange all. The little Isidoro—he must not come there. He must not know the ladies. He is nothing; but he is wicked. He loves pleasure. He loves beautiful girls! Wicked, wicked Isidoro! Keep him out! Keep him away! But the great writer—with the white hairs—everything is allowed to him because he is Caro Papa. He may teach the Signorina. He may be alone with her. He may take her out at night in the boat.”—His cheeks were stained with red and his eyes glittered.—“And when the voice of that wicked little Isidoro is heard—Quick! quick! To the cave! Let us escape! Let us hide where it is dark, and he will never find us! Let us make him think we are at Nisida! Hush! the boat is passing. He is deceived! He will search all night till he is tired! Ah—ah—ah! That is good! And now back to the island—quick!—before he finds out!”—He thrust out his arm towards Artois.—“And that is my friend!” he exclaimed. “He who calls himself the friend of the little wicked Isidoro. P—f!”—He turned his head and spat onto the balcony.—“Gran Dio! And this white-haired Babbo! He steals into the Galleria at night to meet Maria Fortunata! He puts a girl of the town to live with the Signorina upon the island, to teach her——”

“Stop!” said Artois.

“I will not stop!” said the Marchesino furiously. “To teach the Signorina all the——”

Artois lifted his hand.

“Do you want me to strike you on the mouth?” he said.

“Strike me!”

Artois looked at him with a steadiness that seemed to pierce,

"Then—take care, Panacci. You are losing your head."

"And you have lost yours!" cried the Marchesino. "You, with your white hairs, you are mad. You are mad about the 'child.' You play papa, and all the time you are mad, and you think nobody sees it. But everyone sees it, everyone knows it. Everyone knows that you are madly in love with the Signorina."

Artois had stepped back.

"I—in love!" he said.

His voice was contemptuous, but his face had become flushed, and his hands suddenly clenched themselves.

"What! you play the hypocrite even with yourself! Ah, we Neapolitans, we may be shocking; but at least we are sincere! You do not know?—then I will tell you. You love the Signorina madly, and you hate me because you are jealous of me—because I am young and you are old. I know it; the Signora knows it; that Sicilian—Gaspare—he knows it! And now you—you know it!"

He suddenly flung himself down on the sofa that was behind him. Perspiration was running down his face, and even his hands were wet with it.

Artois said nothing, but stood where he was, looking at the Marchesino, as if he were waiting for something more which must inevitably come. The Marchesino took out his handkerchief, passed it several times quickly over his lips, then rolled it up into a ball and shut it up in his left hand.

"I am young and you are old," he said. "And that is all the matter. You hate me, not because you think I am wicked and might do the Signorina harm, but because I am young. You try to keep the Signorina from me because I am young. You do not dare to let her know what youth is, really, really to know, really, really

to feel. Because, if once she did know, if once she did feel, if she touched the fire"—he struck his hand down on his breast—"she would be carried away, she would be gone from you for ever. You think, 'Now she looks up to me! She reverences me! She admires me! She worships me as a great man!' And if once, only once she touched the fire—ah!"—he flung out both his arms with a wide gesture, opened his mouth, then shut it, showing his teeth like an animal.—"Away would go everything—everything. She would forget your talent, she would forget your fame, she would forget your thoughts, your books, she would forget you, do you hear?—all, all of you. She would remember only that you are old and she is young, and that, because of that, she is not for you. And then"—his voice dropped, became cold and serious and deadly, like the voice of one proclaiming a stark truth—"and then, if she understood you, what you feel, and what you wish, and how you think of her—she would hate you! How she would hate you!"

He stopped abruptly, staring at Artois, who said nothing.

"Is it not true?" he said.

He got up, taking his hat and stick from the floor.

"You do not know! Well—think! And you will know that it is true. A rivederci, Emilio!"

His manner had suddenly become almost calm. He turned away and went towards the door. When he reached it he added:

"To-morrow I shall ask the Signora to allow me to marry the Signorina."

Then he went out.

The gilt clock on the marble table beneath the mirror struck the half-hour after one. Artois looked at it and

at his watch, comparing them. The action was mechanical, and unaccompanied by any thought connected with it. When he put his watch back into his pocket he did not know whether its hands pointed to half-past one or not. He carried a light chair onto the balcony, and sat down there, crossing his legs, and leaning one arm on the rail.

"If she touched the fire"—those words of the Marchesino remained in the mind of Artois, why, he did not know. He saw before him a vision of a girl and of a flame. The flame aspired towards the girl, but the girl hesitated, drew back—then waited.

What had happened during the hours at the Festa? Artois did not know. The Marchesino had told him nothing, except that he—Artois—was madly in love with Vere. Monstrous absurdity! What trivial nonsense men talked in moments of anger, when they desired to wound!

And to-morrow the Marchesino would ask Vere to marry him. Of course Vere would refuse. She had no feeling for him. She would tell him so. He would be obliged to understand that for once he could not have his own way. He would go out of Vere's life, abruptly, as he had come into it.

He would go. That was certain. But others would come into Vere's life. Fire would spring up round about her, the fire of the love of men for a girl who has fire within her, the fire of the love of youth for youth.

Youth! Artois was not by nature a sentimentalist—and he was not a fool. He knew how to accept the inevitable things life cruelly brings to men, without futile struggling, without contemptible pretence. Quite calmly, quite serenely, he had accepted the snows of middle age. He had not secretly groaned or cursed, railed against destiny, striven to defy it by travesty, as do many men.

He had thought himself to be "above" all that—until lately. But now, as he thought of the fire, he was conscious of an immense sadness that had in it something of passion, of a regret that was, for a moment, desperate, bitter, that seared, that tortured, that was scarcely to be endured. It is terrible to realise that one is at a permanent disadvantage, which time can only increase. And just then Artois felt that there was nothing, that there could never be anything, to compensate any human being for the loss of youth.

He began to wonder about the people of the island. The Marchesino had spoken with a strange assurance. He had dared to say:

"You love the Signorina. I know it; the Signora knows it; Gaspare—he knows it. And now you—you know it."

Was it possible that his deep interest in Vere, his paternal delight in her talent, in her growing charm, in her grace and sweetness, could have been mistaken for something else, for the desire of man for woman? Vere had certainly never for a moment misunderstood him. That he knew as surely as he knew that he was alive. But Gaspare and—Hermione? He fell into deep thought, and presently he was shaken by an emotion that was partly disgust and partly anxiety. He got up from his chair and looked out into the night. The weather was exquisitely still, the sky absolutely clear. The sea was like the calm that dwells surely in the breast of God. Naples was sleeping in the silence. But he was terribly awake, and it began to seem to him as if he had, perhaps, slept lately, slept too long. He was a lover of truth, and believed himself to be a discerner of it. The Marchesino was but a thoughtless, passionate boy, headstrong, Pagan,

careless of intellect, and immensely physical. Yet it was possible that he had been enabled to see a truth which Artois had neither seen nor suspected. Artois began to believe it possible, as he remembered many details of the conduct of Hermione and of Gaspare in these last summer days. There had been something of condemnation sometimes in the Sicilian's eyes as they looked into his. He had wondered what it meant. Had it meant—that? And that night in the garden with Hermione——

With all his force and fixity of purpose he fastened his mind upon Hermione, letting Gaspare go.

If what the Marchesino had asserted were true—not that—but if Hermione had believed it to be true, much in her conduct that had puzzled Artois was made plain. Could she have thought that? Had she thought it? And if she had——? Always he was looking out to the stars, and to the ineffable calm of the sea. But now their piercing brightness, and its large repose, only threw into a sort of blatant relief in his mind its consciousness of the tumult of humanity. He saw Hermione involved in that tumult, and he saw himself. And Vere?

Was it possible that in certain circumstances Vere might hate him? It was strange that to-night Artois found himself for the first time considering the Marchesino seriously, not as a boy, but as a man who perhaps knew something of the world and of character better than he did. The Marchesino had said:

“If she understood you—how she would hate you.”

But surely Vere and he understood each other very well.

He looked out over the sea steadily, as he wished, as he meant, to look now at himself, into his own heart and nature, into his own life. Upon the sea, to the right and far off, a light was moving near the blackness of the

breakwater. It was the torch of a fisherman—one of those eyes of the South of which Artois had thought. His eyes became fascinated by it, and he watched it with intensity. Sometimes it was still. Then it travelled gently onward, coming towards him. Then it stopped again. Fire—the fire of youth. He thought of the torch as that; as youth with its hot strength, its beautiful eagerness, its intense desires, its spark-like hopes, moving without fear amid the dark mysteries of the world and of life; seeking treasure in the blackness, the treasure of an answering soul, of a completing nature, of the desired and desirous heart, seeking its complement of love—the other fire.

He looked far over the sea. But there was no other fire upon it.

And still the light came on.

And now he thought of it as Vere.

She was almost a child, but already her fire was being sought, longed for. And she knew it, and must be searching, too, perhaps without definite consciousness of what she was doing, instinctively. She was searching there in the blackness, and in her quest she was approaching him. But where he stood it was all dark. There was no flame lifting itself up that could draw her flame to it. The fire that was approaching would pass before him, would go on, exploring the night, would vanish away from his eyes. Elsewhere it would seek the fire it needed, the fire it would surely find at last.

And so it was. The torch came on, passed softly by, slipped from his sight beneath the bridge of Castel dell' Uovo.

When it had gone Artois felt strangely deserted and alone, strangely unreconciled with life. And he remembered his conversation with Hermione in Virgil's Grotto,

how he had spoken like one who scarcely needed love, having ambition and having work to do, and being no longer young.

To-night he felt that everyone needs love first—that all the other human needs come after that great necessity. He had thought himself a man full of self-knowledge, full of knowledge of others. But he had not known himself. Perhaps even now he did not know himself. Perhaps even now the real man was hiding somewhere, far down, shrinking away for fear of being known, for fear of being dragged up into the light.

He sought for this man, almost with violence.

A weariness lay beneath his violence to-night, a physical fatigue such as he sometimes felt after work. It had been produced, no doubt, by the secret anger he had so long controlled, the secret but intense curiosity which was not yet satisfied, and which still haunted him and tortured him. This curiosity he now strove to expel from his mind, telling himself that he had no right to it. He had wished to preserve Vere just as she was, to keep her from all outside influences. And now he asked the real man why he had wished it? Had it been merely the desire of the literary godfather to cherish a pretty and promising talent? Or had something of the jealous spirit so brutally proclaimed to him that night by the Marchesino really entered into the desire? This torturing curiosity to know what had happened at the Festa surely betrayed the existence of some such spirit.

He must get rid of it.

He began to walk slowly up and down the little balcony, turning every instant like a beast in its cage. It seemed to him that the real man had indeed lain in hiding, but that he was coming forth reluctantly into the light.

Possibly he had been drifting without knowing it towards some nameless folly. He was not sure. To-night he felt uncertain of himself and of everything, almost like an ignorant child facing the world. And he felt almost afraid of himself. Was it possible that he, holding within him so much of knowledge, so much of pride, could ever draw near to a crazy absurdity, a thing that the whole world would laugh at and despise? Had he drawn near to it? Was he near it now?

He thought of all his recent intercourse with Vere, going back mentally to the day in spring when he arrived in Naples. He followed the record day by day until he reached that afternoon when he had returned from Paris, when he came to the island to find Vere alone, when she read to him her poems. Very pitilessly, despite the excitement still raging within him, he examined that day, that night, recalling every incident, recalling every feeling the incidents of those hours had elicited from his heart. He remembered how vexed he had been when Hermione told him of the engagement for the evening. He remembered the moments after the dinner, his sensation of loneliness when he listened to the gay conversation of Vere and the Marchesino, his almost irritable anxiety when she had left the restaurant and gone out to the terrace in the darkness. He had felt angry with Panacci then. Had he not always felt angry with Panacci for intruding into the island life?

He followed the record of his intercourse with Vere until he reached the Festa of that night, until he reached the moment in which he was pacing the tiny balcony while the night wore on towards dawn.

That was the record of himself with Vere.

He began to think of Hermione. How had all this

that he had just been telling over in his mind affected her? What had she been thinking of it—feeling about it? And Gaspare?

Even now Artois did not understand himself, did not know whither his steps might have tended had not the brutality of the Marchesino roused him abruptly to this self-examination, this self-consideration. He did not fully understand himself, and he wondered very much how Hermione and the Sicilian had understood him—judged him.

Artois had a firm belief in the right instincts of sensitive but untutored natures, especially when linked with strong hearts capable of deep love and long fidelity. He did not think that Gaspare would easily misread the character or the desires of one whom he knew well. Hermione might. She was tremendously emotional and impulsive, and might be carried away into error. But there was a steadiness in Gaspare which was impressive, which could not be ignored.

Artois wondered very much what Gaspare had thought.

There was a tap at the door, and Gaspare came in, holding his soft hat in his hand, and looking tragic and very hot and tired.

“Oh, Gaspare!” said Artois, coming in from the balcony, “they have come back.”

“Lo so, Signore.”

“And they are sleeping here for the night.”

“Sì, Signore.”

Gaspare looked at him as if inquiring something of him.

“Sit down a minute,” said Artois, “and have something to drink. You must spend the night here, too. The porter will give you a bed.”

"Grazie, Signore."

Gaspare sat down by the table; and Artois gave him some Nocera and lemon-juice. He would not have brandy or whisky, though he would not have refused wine had it been offered to him.

"Where have you been?" Artois asked him.

"Signore, I have been all over the Piazza di Masaniello and the Mercato. I have been through all the streets near by. I have been down by the harbour. And the Signorina?"

He stared at Artois searchingly above his glass. His face was covered with perspiration.

"I only saw her for a moment. She went to bed almost immediately."

"And that Signore?"

"He has gone home."

Gaspare was silent for a minute. Then he said:

"If I had met that Signore"—he lifted his right hand, which was lying on the table, and moved it towards his belt.

He sighed, and again looked hard at Artois.

"It is better that I did not meet him," he said, with naïve conviction. "It is much better. The Signorina is not for him."

Artois was sitting opposite to him, with the table between them.

"The Signorina is not for him," repeated Gaspare, with a dogged emphasis.

His large eyes were full of a sort of cloudy rebuke and watchfulness. And as he met them Artois felt that he knew what Gaspare had thought. He longed to say, "You are wrong. It is not so. It was never so." But he only said:

"The Signor Marchese will know that to-morrow."

And as he spoke the words, he was conscious of an immense sensation of relief which startled him. He was too glad when he thought of the final dismissal of the Marchesino.

Gaspare nodded his head and put his glass to his lips. When he set it down again it was empty. He moved to get up, but Artois detained him.

"And so you met Ruffo to-night?" he said.

Gaspare's expression completely changed. Instead of the almost cruel watcher he became the one who felt that he was watched.

"Sì, Signore."

"Just when the balloon went up?"

"Sì, Signore. They were beside me in the crowd."

"Was he alone with his mother?"

"Sì, Signore. Quite alone."

"Gaspare, I have seen Ruffo's mother."

Gaspare looked startled.

"Truly, Signore?"

"Yes. I saw her with him one day at the Mergellina. She was crying."

"Perhaps she is unhappy. Her husband is in prison."

"Because of Peppina?"

"Sì."

"And to-night you spoke to her for the first time?"

Artois laid a strong emphasis on the final words.

"Signore, I had never met her with Ruffo before."

The two men looked steadily at each other. A question that could not be evaded, a question that would break like a hammer upon a mutual silence of years, was almost upon Artois's lips. Perhaps Gaspare saw it, for he got up with determination.

"I am going to bed now, Signore. I am tired. Buona notte, Signore."

He took up his hat and went out.

Artois had not asked his question. But he felt that it was answered.

Gaspare knew. And he knew.

And Hermione—did Fate intend that she should know?

CHAPTER X.

It was nearly dawn when Artois fell asleep. He did not wake till past ten o'clock. The servant who brought his breakfast handed him a note, and told him that the ladies of the island had just left the hotel with Gaspare. As Artois took the note he was conscious of a mingled feeling of relief and disappointment. This swift, almost hurried departure left him lonely—yet he could not have met Hermione and Vere happily in the light of morning. To-day he felt a self-consciousness that was unusual in him, and that the keen eyes of women could not surely fail to observe. He wanted a little time. He wanted to think quietly, calmly, to reach a decision that he had not reached at night.

Hermione and Vere had a very silent voyage. Gaspare's tragic humour cast a cloud about his mistresses. He had met them in the morning with a look of heavy, almost sullen scrutiny in his great eyes, which seemed to develop into a definite demand for information. But he asked nothing. He made no allusion to the night before. To Vere his manner was almost cold. When they were getting into the boat at Santa Lucia she said, with none of her usual simplicity and self-possession, but like one making an effort which was repugnant:

"I'm very sorry about last night, Gaspare."

"It doesn't matter, Signorina."

"Did you get back very late?"

"I don't know, Signorina. I did not look at the hour."

She looked away from him and out to sea.

"I am very sorry," she repeated.

And he again said:

"It doesn't matter, Signorina."

It was nearly noon when they drew near to the island. The weather was heavily hot, languidly hot even upon the water. There was a haze hanging over the world in which distant objects appeared like unsubstantial clouds, or dream things impregnated with a mystery that was mournful. The voice of a fisherman singing not far off came to them like the voice of a Fate, issuing from the ocean to tell them of the sadness that was the doom of men. Behind them Naples sank away into the vaporous distance. Vesuvius was almost blotted out, Capri an ethereal silhouette. And their little island, even when they approached it, did not look like the solid land on which they had made a home, but like the vague shell of some substance that had been destroyed, leaving its former abiding-place untenanted.

As they passed San Francesco Vere glanced at him, and Hermione saw a faint flush of red go over her face. Directly the boat touched the rock she stepped ashore and, without waiting for her mother, ran up the steps and disappeared towards the house. Gaspare looked after her, then stared at his Padrona.

"Is the Signorina ill?" he asked.

"No, Gaspare. But I think she is tired to-day and a little upset. We had better take no notice of it."

"Va bene, Signora."

He busied himself in making fast the boat, while Hermione followed Vere.

In the afternoon about five, when Hermione was sitting alone in her room writing some letters, Gaspare appeared with an angry and suspicious face.

"Signora," he said, "that Signore is here."

"What Signore? The Marchese?"

"Sì, Signora."

Gaspare was watching his Padrona's face, and suddenly his own face changed, lightened as he saw the look that had come into her eyes.

"I did not know whether you wished to see him——"

"Yes, Gaspare, I will see him. You can let him in. Wait a moment. Where is the Signorina?"

"Up in her room, Signora."

"You can tell her who is here, and ask her whether she wishes to have tea in her room or not."

"Sì, Signora."

Gaspare went out almost cheerfully. He felt that now he understood what his Padrona was feeling and what she meant to do. She meant to do in her way what he wanted to do in his. He ran down the steps to the water with vivacity, and his eyes were shining as he came to the Marchesino, who was standing at the edge of the sea looking almost feverishly excited, but determined.

"The Signora will see you, Signor Marchese."

The words hit the Marchesino like a blow. He stared at Gaspare for a moment almost stupidly, and hesitated. He felt as if this servant had told him something else.

"The Signora will see you," repeated Gaspare.

"Va bene," said the Marchesino.

He followed Gaspare slowly up the steps and into the drawing-room. It was empty. Gaspare placed a chair

for the Marchesino. And again the latter felt as if he had received a blow. He glanced round him and sat down, while Gaspare went away. For about five minutes he waited.

When he had arrived at the island he had been greatly excited. He had felt full of an energy that was feverish. Now, in this silence, in this pause during which patience was forced upon him, his excitement grew, became fierce, dominant. He knew from Gaspare's way of speaking, from his action, from his whole manner, that his fate had been secretly determined in that house, and that it was being rejoiced over. At first he sat looking at the floor. Then he got up, went to the window, came back, stood in the middle of the room and glanced about it. How pretty it was, with a prettiness that he was quite unaccustomed to. In his father's villa at Capodimonte there was little real comfort. And he knew nothing of the cosiness of English houses. As he looked at this room he felt, or thought he felt, Vere in it. He even made an effort scarcely natural to him, and tried to imagine a home with Vere as its mistress.

Then he began to listen. Perhaps Emilio was in the house. Perhaps Emilio was talking now to the Signora, was telling her what to do.

But he heard no sound of voices speaking.

No doubt Emilio had seen the Signora that morning in the hotel. No doubt there had been a consultation. And probably at this consultation his—the Marchesino's—fate had been decided.

By Emilio?

At that moment the Marchesino actively, even furiously, hated his former friend.

There was a little noise at the door, the Marchesino

turned swiftly and saw Hermione coming in. He looked eagerly behind her. But the door shut. She was alone. She did not give her hand to him. He bowed, trying to look calm.

"Good afternoon, Signora."

Hermione sat down. He followed her example.

"I don't know why you wish to see me, after yesterday, Marchese," she said quietly, looking at him with steady eyes.

"Signora, pardon me, but I should have thought that you would know."

"What is it?"

"Signora, I am here to ask the great honour of your daughter, the Signorina's hand in marriage. My father, to whom——"

But Hermione interrupted him.

"You will never marry my daughter, Marchese," she said.

A sudden red burnt in her cheeks, and she leant forward slightly, but very quickly, almost as if an impulse had come to her to push the Marchesino away from her.

"But, Signora, I assure you that my family——"

"It is quite useless to talk about it."

"But why, Signora?"

"My child is not for a man like you," Hermione said, emphasising the first word.

A dogged expression came into the Marchesino's face, a fighting look that was ugly and brutal, but that showed a certain force.

"I do not understand, Signora. I am like other men. What is the matter with me?"

He turned a little in his chair, so that he faced her more fully.

"What is the matter with me, Signora?" he repeated, slightly raising his voice.

"I don't think you would be able to understand if I tried to tell you."

"Why not? You think me stupid, then?"

An angry fire shone in his eyes.

"Oh no, you are not stupid."

"Then I shall understand."

Hermione hesitated. There was within her a hot impulse towards speech, towards the telling of this self-satisfied young Pagan her exact opinion of him. Yet was it worth while? He was going out of their lives. They would see no more of him.

"I don't think it is necessary for me to tell you," she said.

"Perhaps there is nothing to tell because there is nothing the matter with me."

His tone stung her.

"I beg your pardon, Marchese. I think there is a good deal to tell."

"All I say is, Signora, that I am like other men."

He thrust forward his strong under-jaw, showing his big white teeth.

"There I don't agree with you. I am thankful to say I know many men who would not behave as you behaved last night."

"But I have come to ask for the Signorina's hand!" he exclaimed.

"And you think—you dare to think that excuses your conduct!"

She spoke with a sudden and intense heat.

"Understand this, please, Marchese. If I gave my consent to your request, and sent for my daughter——"

"Sì! Sì!" he said, eagerly leaning forward in his chair.

"Do you suppose she would come near you?"

"Certainly."

"You think she would come near a man she will not even speak of?"

"What?"

"She won't speak of you. She has told me nothing about last night. That is why I know so much."

"She has not—the Signorina has—not——?"

He stopped. A smile went over his face. It was sufficiently obvious that he understood Vere's silence as merely a form of deceit, a coquettish girl's cold secret from her mother.

"Signora, give me permission to speak to your daughter, and you will see whether it is you—or I—who understands her best."

"Very well, Marchese."

Hermione rang the bell. It was answered by Gaspare.

"Gaspare," said Hermione, "please go to the Signorina, tell her the Signor Marchese is here, and wishes very much to see her before he goes."

Gaspare's face grew dark, and he hesitated by the door.

"Go, Gaspare, please."

He looked into his Padrona's face and went out as if reassured. Hermione and the Marchese sat in silence waiting for him to return. In a moment the door was reopened.

"Signora, I have told the Signorina."

"What did she say?"

Gaspare looked at the Marchese as he answered.

"Signora, the Signorina said to me, 'Please tell Madre that I cannot come to see the Signor Marchese.'"

"You can go, Gaspare."

He looked at the angry flush on the Marchesino's cheeks and went out.

"Good-bye, Marchese."

Hermione got up. The Marchesino followed her example. But he did not go. He stood still for a moment in silence. Then he lifted his head up with a jerk.

"Signora," he said, in a hard, uneven voice that betrayed the intensity of his excitement, "I see how it is. I understand perfectly what is happening here. You think me bad. Well, I am like other men, and I am not ashamed of it—not a bit. I am natural. I live according to my nature, and I do not come from your north, but from Naples—from Naples"—he threw out his arm, pointing at a window that looked towards the city. "If it is bad to have the blood hot in one's veins, and the fire hot in one's head and in one's heart—very well!—I am bad. And I do not care. I do not care a bit! But you think me stupid. Si, Signora, you think me a stupid boy. And I am not that. And I will show you."—He drew his fingers together, and bent towards her, slightly lowering his voice—"From the first, from the very first moment, I have seen, I have understood all that is happening here. From the first I have understood all that was against me——"

"Marchese——!"

"Signora, pardon me! You have spoken, the Signorina has spoken, and now it is for me to speak! It is my right. I come here with an honourable proposal, and therefore I say I have a right——"

He put his fingers inside his shirt collar, and pulled it fiercely out from his throat.

“È il vecchio!” he exclaimed with sudden passion. “È il maledetto vecchio!”

Hermione’s face changed. There had been in it a firm look, a calmness of strength. But now, at his last words, the strength seemed to shrink. It dwindled, it faded out of her, leaving her not collapsed, but cowering, like a woman who crouches down in a corner to avoid a blow.

“It is he! It is he! He will not allow it, and he is master here.”

“Marchese——”

“I say he is master—he is master—he has always been master here!”

He came a step towards Hermione, moving as a man sometimes moves instinctively when he is determined to make something absolutely clear to one who does not wish to understand.

“And you know it, and everyone knows it, everyone. When I was in the sea, when I saw the Signorina for the first time, I did not know who she was, where she lived, I did not know anything about her. I went to tell my friend about her—my friend, you understand, whom I trusted, to whom I told everything!—I went to him. I described the Signora, the Signorina, the boat to him. He knew who the ladies were, he knew directly. I saw it in his face, in his manner. But what did he say? That he did not know, that he knew nothing. I was not to come to the island. No one was to come to the island but he. So he meant. But I—I was sharper than he, I who am so stupid! I took him to fish by night. I brought him to the island. I made him introduce me to you, to

the Signorina. That night I made him. You remember? Well then—ever since that night all is changed between us. Ever since that night he is my enemy. Ever since that night he suspects me, he watches me, he hides from me, he hates me. Oh, he tries to conceal it. He is a hypocrite. But I, stupid as I am, I see it all. I see what he is, what he wants, I see all—all that is in his mind and heart. For this noble old man, so respected, with the white hairs and the great brain, what is he, what does he do? He goes at night to the Galleria. He consults with Maria Fortunata, she who is known to all Naples, she who is the aunt of that girl—that girl of the town and of the bad life, whom you have taken to be your servant here. You have taken her because he—he has told you to take her. He has put her here——”

“Marchese!”

“I say he has put her here that the Signorina——”

“Marchese, I forbid you to say that! It is not true.”

“It is true! It is true! Perhaps you are blind, perhaps you see nothing. I do not know. But I know that I am not blind. I love, and I see. I see, I have always seen that he—Emilio—loves the Signorina, that he loves her madly, that he wishes, that he means to keep her for himself. Did he not hide with her in the cave, in the Grotto of Virgil, that night when I came to serenade her on the sea? Yes, he took her, and he hid her, because he loves her. He loves her, he an old man! And he thinks—and he means——”

“Marchese——”

“He loves her, I say he loves her!”

“Marchese, I must ask you to go!”

“I say——”

“Marchese, I insist upon your going.”

She opened the door. She was very pale, but she looked calm. The crouching woman had vanished. She was mistress of herself.

"Gaspare!" she called, in a loud, sharp voice, that betrayed the inner excitement her appearance did not show.

"Signora," vociferated the Marchesino. "I say and I repeat—"

"Gaspare! Come here!"

"Signora!" cried a voice from below.

Gaspare came, running.

"The Signor Marchese is going, Gaspare. Go down with him to the boat, please."

The Marchesino grew scarlet. The hot blood rushed over his face, up to his forehead, to his hair. Even his hands became red in that moment.

"Good-bye, Marchese."

She went out, and left him standing with Gaspare.

"Signor Marchese, shall I take you to the boat?"

Gaspare's voice was quite respectful. The Marchesino made no answer, but stepped out into the passage and looked up to the staircase that led to the top floor of the house. He listened. He heard nothing.

"Is the French Signore here?" he said to Gaspare. "Do you hear me? Is he in this house?"

"No, Signore!"

The Marchesino again looked towards the staircase and hesitated. Then he turned and saw Gaspare standing in a watchful attitude, almost like one about to spring.

"Stay there!" he said loudly, making a violent, threatening gesture with his arm.

Gaspare stood where he was with a smile upon his face.

A moment later he heard the splash of oars in the sea, and knew that the Marchesino's boat was leaving the island.

He drew his lips together like one about to whistle.

The sound of the oars died away.

Then he began to whistle softly "La Ciocciara."

CHAPTER XI.

THE ghostly day sank into a ghostly night, that laid pale hands upon the island, holding it closely, softly, in a hypnotic grasp, bidding it surely rest, it and those who dwelt there, with all the dreaming hours. A mist hung over the sea, and the heat did not go with day, but stayed to greet the darkness and the strange, enormous silence that lay upon the waters. In the Casa del Mare the atmosphere was almost suffocating, although every window was wide open. The servants went about their duties leaden-footed, drooping, their Latin vivacity quenched as by a spell. Vere was mute. It seemed, since the episode of the Carmine, as if her normal spirit had been withdrawn, as if a dumb, evasive personality replaced it. The impression made upon Hermione was that the real Vere had sunk far down in her child, out of sight and hearing, out of reach, beyond pursuit, to a depth where none could follow, where the soul enjoyed the safety of utter isolation.

Hermione did not wish to pursue this anchorite. She did not wish to draw near to Vere that evening. To do so would have been impossible to her, even had Vere been willing to come to her. Since the brutal outburst of the Marchesino she, too, had felt the desire, the neces-

sity, of a desert place, where she could sit alone and realise the bareness of her world.

In that outburst of passion the Marchesino had gathered together and hurled at her beliefs that had surely been her own, but that she had striven to avoid, that she had beaten back as spectres and unreal, that she had even denied, tricking, or trying to trick, her terrible sense of truth. His brutality had made the delicacy in her crouch and sicken. It had been almost intolerable to her to see her friend, Emile, thus driven out into the open, like one naked, to be laughed at, condemned, held up, that the wild folly, the almost insane absurdity of his secret self might be seen and understood even by the blind, the determined in stupidity.

She had always had a great reverence for her friend, which had been mingled with her love for him, giving it its character. Was that reverence to be torn utterly away? Had it already been cast to the winds?

Poor Emile!

In the first moments after the departure of the Marchesino she pitied Emile intensely with all her heart of woman. If this thing were true how he must have suffered, how he must still be suffering—not only in his heart, but in his mind! His sense of pride, his self-respect, his passion for complete independence, his meticulous consciousness of the fitness of things, of what could be and of what was impossible—all must be lying in the dust. She could almost have wept for him then.

But another feeling succeeded this sense of pity, a sensation of outrage that grew within her and became almost ungovernable. She had her independence too, her pride, her self-respect. And now she saw them in dust that Emile had surely heaped about them. A storm of

almost hard anger shook her. She tasted an acrid bitterness that seemed to impregnate her, to turn the main-spring of her life to gall. She heard the violent voice of the young Neapolitan saying: "He is master, he is master, he has always been master here!" And she tried to look back over her life, and to see how things had been. And, shaken still by this storm of anger, she felt as if it were true, as if she had allowed Artois to take her life in his hands and to shape it according to his will, as if he had been governing her although she had not known it. He had been the dominant personality in their mutual friendship. His had been the calling voice, hers the obedient voice that answered. Only once had she risen to a strong act, an act that brought great change with it, and that he had been hostile to. That was when she had married Maurice.

And she had left Maurice for Artois. From Africa had come the calling, dominant voice. And even in her Garden of Paradise she had heard it. And even from her Garden of Paradise she had obeyed it. For the first time she saw that act of renunciation as the average man or woman would probably see it: as an extraordinary, Quixotic act, to be wondered at blankly, or, perhaps, to be almost angrily condemned. She stood away from her own impulsive, enthusiastic nature, and stared at it critically—as even her friends had often stared—and realised that it was unusual, perhaps extravagant, perhaps sometimes preposterous. This readiness to sacrifice—was it not rather slavish than regally loyal? This forgetfulness of personal joy, this burnt offering of personality—was it not contemptible? Could such actions bring into being the respect of others, the respect of any man? Had Emile respected her for rushing to Africa? Or had he, perhaps,

then and through all these years simply wondered how she could have done such a thing?

And Maurice—Maurice? Oh, what had he thought? How had he looked upon that action?

Often and often in lonely hours she had longed to go down into the grave, or to go up into the blue, to drag the body, the soul, the heart she loved back to her. She had been rent by a desire that had made her limbs shudder, or that had flushed her whole body with red, and set her temples beating. The longing of heart and flesh had been so vehement that it had seemed to her as if they must compel, or cease to be. Now, again, she desired to compel Maurice to come to her from his far distant place, but in order that she might make him understand what he had perhaps died misunderstanding; why she had left him to go to Artois, exactly how she had felt, how desperately sad to abandon the Garden of Paradise, how torn by fear lest the perfect days were for ever at an end, how intensely desirous to take him with her. Perhaps he had felt cruelly jealous! Perhaps that was why he had not offered to go with her at once. Yes, she believed that now. She saw her action, she saw her preceding decision as others had seen it, as no doubt Maurice had seen it, as perhaps even Artois had seen it. Why had she not more fully explained herself? Why had she instinctively felt that because her nature was as it was, and because she was bravely following it, everyone must understand her? Oh, to be completely understood! If she could call Maurice back for one moment, and just make him see her as she had been then: loyal to her friend, and through and through passionately loyal to him! If she could! If she could!

She had left Maurice, the one being who had utterly

belonged to her, to go to Artois. She had lost the few remaining days in which she could have been supremely happy. She had come back to have a few short hours devoid of calm, chilled sometimes by the strangeness that had intruded itself between her and Maurice, to have one kiss in which surely at last misunderstanding was lost and perfect love was found. And then—that “something” in the water! And then—the gulf.

In that gulf she had not been quite alone. The friend whom she had carried away from Africa and death had been with her. He had been closely in her life ever since. And now——

She heard the Marchesino's voice: “I see what he is, what he wants, I see all—all that is in his mind and heart. I see, I have always seen, that he loves the Signorina, that he loves her madly.”

Vere!

Hermione sickened. Emile and Vere in that relation!

The storm of anger was not spent yet. Would it ever be spent? Something within her, the something, perhaps, that felt rejected, strove to reject in its turn, did surely reject. Pride burnt in her like a fire that cruelly illumines night, shining upon the destruction it is compassing.

The terrible sense of outrage that gripped her soul and body—her body because Vere was bone of her bone, flesh of her flesh,—seemed to be forcibly changing her nature, as cruel hands, prompted by murder in a heart, change form, change beauty in the effort to destroy.

That evening Hermione felt herself being literally defaced by this sensation of outrage within her, a sensation which she was powerless to expel.

She found herself praying to God that Artois might

not come to the island that night. And yet, while she prayed, she felt that he was coming.

She dined with Vere, in almost complete silence—trying to love this dear child as she had always loved her, even in certain evil moments of an irresistible jealousy. But she felt immensely far from Vere, distant from her as one who does not love from one who loves; yet hideously near, too, like one caught in the tangle of an enforced intimacy rooted in a past which the present denies and rejects. Directly dinner was over they parted, driven by the mutual desire to be alone.

And then Hermione waited for that against which she had prayed.

Artois would come to the island that night. Useless to pray! He was coming. She felt that he was on the sea, environed by this strange mist that hung to-night over the waters. She felt that he was coming to Vere. She had gone to Africa to save him—in order that he might fall in love with her then unborn child.

Monstrosities, the monstrosities that are in life, deny them, beat them back, close our eyes to them as we will, rose up around her in the hot stillness. She felt haunted, terrified. She was forcibly changed, and now all the world was changing about her.

She must have relief. She could not sit there among spectres waiting for the sound of oars that would tell her Vere's lover had come to the island. How could she detach herself for a moment from this horror?

She thought of Ruffo.

As the thought came to her she got up and went out of the house.

Only when she was out of doors did she fully realise the strangeness of the night. The heat of it was flaccid.

The island seemed to swim in a fatigued and breathless atmosphere. The mist that hung about it was like the mist in a vapour-bath.

Below the vague sea lay like a thing exhausted, motionless, perhaps fainting in the dark. And in this heat and stillness there was no presage, no thrill, however subtle, of a coming change, of storm. Rather there was the deadness of eternity, as if this swoon would last for ever, neither developing into life, nor deepening into death.

Hermione had left the house feverishly, yearning to escape from her company of spectres, yearning to escape from the sensation of ruthless hands defacing her. As she passed the door-sill it was only with difficulty that she suppressed a cry of "Ruffo!" a cry for help. But when the night took her she no longer had any wish to disturb it by a sound. She was penetrated at once by an atmosphere of fatality. Her pace changed. She moved on slowly, almost furtively. She felt inclined to creep.

Would Ruffo be at the island to-night? Would Artois really come? It seemed unlikely, almost impossible. But if Ruffo were there, if Artois came, it would be fatality. That she was there was fatality.

She walked always slowly, always furtively, to the crest of the cliff.

She stood there. She listened.

Silence.

She felt as if she were quite alone on the island. She could scarcely believe that Vere, that Gaspare, that the servants were there—among them Peppina with her cross.

They said Peppina had the evil eye. Had she perhaps cast a spell to-night?

Hermione did not smile at such an imagination as she dismissed it.

She waited, and listened, but not actively, for she did not feel as if Ruffo could ever stand with her in the embrace of such a night, he, a boy, with bright hopes and eager longings, he the happy singer of the song of Mergelina.

And yet, when in a moment she found him standing by her side, she accepted his presence as a thing inevitable.

It had been meant, perhaps for centuries, that they two should stand together that night, speak together as now they were about to speak.

"Signora, buona sera."

"Buona sera, Ruffo."

"The Signorina is not here to-night?"

"I think she is in the house. I think she is tired to-night."

"The Signorina is tired after the Festa, Signora."

"You knew we were at the Festa, Ruffo?"

"Ma sì, Signora."

"Did we tell you we were going? I had forgotten."

"It was not that, Signora. But I saw the Signorina at the Festa. Did not Don Gaspare tell you?"

"Gaspare said nothing. Did he see you?"

She spoke languidly. Quickness had died out of her under the influence of the night. But already she felt a slight, yet decided, sense of relief, almost of peace. She drew that from Ruffo. And, standing very close to him, she watched his eager face, hoping to see presently in it the expression that she loved.

"Did he see you, Ruffo?"

"Ma sì, Signora. I was with my poor mamma."

"Your mother! I wish I had met her!"

"Sì, Signora. I was with my mamma in the Piazza

of Masaniello. We had been eating snails, Signora, and afterwards water-melon, and we had each had a glass of white wine. And I was feeling very happy, because my poor mamma had heard good news."

"What was that?"

"To-morrow my Patrigno is to be let out of prison."

"So soon! But I thought he had not been tried."

"No, Signora. But he is to be let out now. Perhaps he will be put back again. But now he is let out because——" he hesitated—"because—— well, Signora, he has rich friends, he has friends who are powerful for him. And so he is let out just now."

"I understand."

"Well, Signora, and after the white wine we were feeling happy, and we were going to see everything, the Madonna, and Masaniello, and the fireworks, and the fire-balloon. Did you see the fire-balloon, Signora?"

"Yes, Ruffo. It was very pretty."

His simple talk soothed her. He was so young, so happy, so free from the hideous complexities of life; no child of tragedy, but the son surely of a love that had been gay and utterly contented.

"Sì, Signora! Per dio, Signora, it was wonderful! It was just before the fire-balloon went up, Signora, that I saw the Signorina with the Neapolitan Signorino. And close behind them was Don Gaspare. I said to my mamma, 'Mamma, ecco the beautiful Signorina of the island!' My mamma was excited, Signora. She held onto my arm, and she said, 'Ruffino,' she said, 'show her to me. Where is she?' my mamma said, Signora. 'And is the Signora Madre with her?' Just then, Signora, the people moved, and all of a sudden there we were, my mamma and I, right in front of Don Gaspare."

Ruffo stopped, and Hermione saw a change, a gravity, come into his bright face.

"Well, Ruffo?" she said, wondering what was coming.

"I said to my mamma, Signora, 'Mamma, this is Don Gaspare of the island.' Signora, my mamma looked at Don Gaspare for a minute. Her face was quite funny. She looked white, Signora, my mamma looked white, almost like the man at the circus who comes in with the dog to make us laugh. And Don Gaspare, too, he looked——" Ruffo paused, then used a word beloved of Sicilians who wish to be impressive—"he looked mysterious, Signora. Don Gaspare looked mysterious."

"Mysterious? Gaspare?"

"Si, Signora, he did. And he looked almost white, too, but not like my mamma. And then my mamma said, 'Gaspare!' just like that, Signora, and put out her hand——so. And Don Gaspare's face got red and hot. And then for a minute they spoke together, Signora, and I could not hear what they said. For Don Gaspare stood with his back so that I should not hear. And then the balloon went sideways, and the people ran, and I did not see Don Gaspare any more. And after that, Signora, my mamma was crying all the time. And she would not tell me anything. I only heard her say, 'To think of its being Gaspare! To think of its being Gaspare on the island!' And when we got home she said to me, 'Ruffo,' she said, 'has Gaspare ever said you were like somebody?'—What is it, Signora?"

"Nothing, Ruffo. Go on."

"But——"

"Go on, Ruffo."

"'Has Gaspare ever said you were like somebody?' my mamma said."

"And you—what did you say?"

"I said, 'No,' Signora. And that is true. Don Gaspare has never said I was like somebody."

The boy had evidently finished what he had to say. He stood quietly by Hermione, waiting for her to speak in her turn. For a moment she said nothing. Then she put her hand on Ruffo's arm.

"Whom do you think your mother meant when she said 'somebody,' Ruffo?"

"Signora, I do not know."

"But surely—didn't you ask whom she meant?"

"No, Signora. I told my mamma Don Gaspare had never said that. She was crying. And so I did not say anything more."

Hermione still held his arm for a moment. Then her hand dropped down.

Ruffo was looking at her steadily with his bright and searching eyes.

"Signora, do you know what she meant?"

"I! How can I tell, Ruffo? I have never seen your mother. How can I know what she meant?"

"No, Signora."

Again there was a silence. Then Hermione said:

"I should like to see your mother, Ruffo."

"Si, Signora."

"I must see her."

Hermione said the last words in a low and withdrawn voice, like one speaking to herself. As she spoke she was gazing at the boy beside her, and in her eyes there was a mystery, a mystery almost like that of the night.

"Ruffo," she added, in a moment, "I want you to promise me something."

"Si, Signora."

"Don't speak to anyone about the little talk we have had to-night. Don't say anything, even to Gaspare."

"No, Signora."

For a short time they remained together, talking of other things. Hermione spoke only enough to encourage Ruffo. And always she was watching him. But to-night she did not see the look she longed for, the look that made Maurice stand before her. Only she discerned, or believed she discerned, a definite physical resemblance in the boy to the dead man, a certain resemblance of outline, a likeness surely in the poise of the head upon the strong, brave-looking neck, and in a trait that suggested ardour about the full, yet delicate lips. Why had she never noticed these things before? Had she been quite blind? Or was she now imaginative? Was she deceiving herself?

"Good night, Ruffo," she said at last.

He took off his cap and stood bareheaded.

"Good night, Signora."

He put back the cap on his dark hair with a free and graceful gesture.

Was not that, too, Maurice?

"A rivederci, Signora."

He was gone.

Hermione stood alone in the fatal night. She had forgotten Vere. She had forgotten Artois. The words of Ruffo had led her on another step in the journey it was ordained that she should make. She felt the under things. It seemed to her that she heard in the night the dull murmuring of the undercurrents, that carry through wayward, or terrible, channels the wind-driven barque of life. What could it mean, this encounter just described to her: this pain, this emotion of a woman, her strange question to her son? And Gaspare's agitation, his pallor, his

“mysterious” face, the colloquy that Ruffo was not allowed to hear!

What did it mean? That woman’s question—that question!

“What is it? What am I near?” Ruffo’s mother knew Gaspare, must have known him intimately in the past. When? Surely long ago in Sicily; for Ruffo was sixteen, and Hermione felt sure—knew, in fact—that till they came to the island Gaspare had never seen Ruffo.

That woman’s question!

Hermione went slowly to the bench and sat down by the edge of the cliff.

What could it possibly mean?

Could it mean that this woman, Ruffo’s mother, had once known Maurice, known him well enough to see in her son the resemblance to him?

But then——

Hermione, as sometimes happened, having reached truth instinctively and with a sure swiftess, turned to retreat from it. She had lost confidence in herself. She feared her own impulses. Now, abruptly, she told herself that this idea was wholly extravagant. Ruffo probably resembled someone else whom his mother and Gaspare knew. That was far more likely. That must be the truth.

But again she seemed to hear in the night the dull murmurings of those undercurrents. And many, many times she recurred mentally to that weeping woman’s question to her son—that question about Gaspare.

Gaspare—he had been strange, disturbed lately. Hermione had noticed it; so had the servants. There had been in the Casa del Mare an oppressive atmosphere created by the mentality of some of its inhabitants.

Even she, on that day when she had returned from

Capri, had felt a sensation of returning to meet some grievous fate.

She remembered Artois now, recalling his letter which she had found that day.

Gaspare and Artois—did they both suspect, or both know, something which they had been concealing from her?

Suddenly she began to feel frightened. Yet she did not form in her mind any definite conception of what such a mutual secret might be. She simply began to feel frightened, almost like a child.

She said to herself that this brooding night, with its dumbness, its heat, its vaporous mystery, was affecting her spirit. And she got up from the bench, and began to walk very slowly towards the house.

When she did this she suddenly felt sure that while she had been on the crest of the cliff Artois had arrived at the island, that he was now with Vere in the house. She knew that it was so.

And again there rushed upon her that sensation of outrage, of being defaced, and of approaching a dwelling in which things monstrous had taken up their abode.

She came to the bridge and paused by the rail. She felt a sort of horror of the Casa del Mare in which Artois was surely sitting—alone or with Vere? With Vere. For otherwise he would have come up to the cliff.

She leaned over the rail. She looked into the Pool. One boat was there just below her, the boat to which Ruffo belonged. Was there another? She glanced to the right. Yes; there lay by the rock a pleasure-boat from Naples.

Artois had come in that.

She looked again at the other boat, searching its shadowy blackness for the form of Ruffo. She longed

that he might be awake. She longed that he might sing, in his happy voice, of the happy summer nights, of the sweet white moons that light the Southern summer nights, of the bright eyes of Rosa, of the sea of Mergellina. But from the boat there rose no voice, and the mist hung heavily over the silent Pool.

Then Hermione lifted her eyes and looked across the Pool, seeking the little light of San Francesco. Only the darkness and the mist confronted her. She saw no light—and she trembled like one to whom the omens are hostile.

She trembled and hid her face for a moment. Then she turned and went up into the house.

CHAPTER XII.

WHEN Hermione reached the door of the Casa del Mare she did not go in immediately, but waited on the step. The door was open. There was a dim lamp burning in the little hall, which was scarcely more than a passage. She looked up and saw a light shining from the window of her sitting-room. She listened, there was no sound of voices.

They were not in there.

She was trying to crush down her sense of outrage, to feel calm before she entered the house.

Perhaps they had gone into the garden. The night was terribly hot. They would prefer to be out of doors. Vere loved the garden. Or they might be on the terrace.

She stepped into the hall, and went to the servants' staircase. Now she heard voices, a laugh.

"Giulia!" she called.

The voices stopped talking, but it was Gaspare who came in answer to her call. She looked down to him.

"Don't come up, Gaspare. Where is the Signorina?"

"The Signorina is on the terrace, Signora—with Don Emilio."

He looked up at her very seriously in the gloom. She thought of that meeting at the Festa, and longed to wring from Gaspare his secret.

"Don Emilio is here?"

"Sì, Signora."

"How long ago did he come?"

"About half an hour, I think, Signora."

"Why didn't you tell me?"

"Don Emilio told me not to bother you, Signora—that he would just sit and wait."

"I see. And the Signorina?"

"I did not tell her either. She was in the garden alone, but I have heard her talking on the terrace with the Signore. Are you ill, Signora?"

"No. All right, Gaspare!"

She moved away. His large, staring eyes followed her till she disappeared in the passage. The passage was not long, but it seemed to Hermione as if a multitude of impressions, of thoughts, of fears, of determinations, rushed through her heart and brain while she walked down it and into the room that opened to the terrace. This room was dark.

As she entered it she expected to hear the voices from outside. But she heard nothing.

They were not on the terrace, then!

She again stood still. Her heart was beating violently, and she felt violent all over, thrilling with violence like one on the edge of some outburst.

She looked towards the French window. Through its high space she saw the wan night outside, a sort of thin paleness resting against the blackness in which she was hidden. And as her eyes became accustomed to their environment she perceived that the pallor without was impinged upon by two shadowy darknesses. Very faint they were, scarcely relieved against the night, very still and dumb—two shadowy darknesses, Emile and Vere sitting together in silence.

When Hermione understood this she remained where she was, trying to subdue even her breathing. Why were they not talking? What did this mutual silence, this mutual immobility mean? She was only a few feet from them. Yet she could not hear a human sound, even the slightest. There was something unnatural, but also tremendously impressive to her in their silence. She felt as if it signified something unusual, something of high vitality. She felt as if it had succeeded some speech that was exceptional, and that had laid its spell, of joy or sorrow, upon both their spirits.

And she felt much more afraid, and also much more alone, than she would have felt had she found them talking.

Presently, as the silence continued, she moved softly back into the passage. She went down it a little way, then returned, walking briskly and loudly. In this action her secret violence was at play. When she came to the room she grasped the door-handle with a force that hurt her hand. She went in, shut the door sharply behind her, and without any pause came out upon the terrace.

“Emile!”

“Yes,” he said, getting up from his garden-chair quickly.

“Gaspere told me you were here.”

“I have been here about half an hour.”

She had not given him her hand. She did not give it.

"I didn't hear you talking to Vere, so I wondered—I almost thought——"

"That I had gone without seeing you? Oh, no. It isn't very late. You don't want to get rid of me at once?"

"Of course not."

His manner—or so it seemed to her—was strangely uneasy and formal, and she thought his face looked drawn, almost tortured. But the light was very dim. She could not be sure of that.

Vere had said nothing, had not moved from her seat.

There was a third chair. As Hermione took it, and drew it slightly forward, she looked towards Vere, and thought that she was sitting in a very strange position. In the darkness it seemed to the mother as if her child's body were almost crouching in its chair, as if the head were drooping, as if——

"Vere! Is anything the matter with you?"

Suddenly, as if struck sharply, Vere sprang up and passed into the darkness of the house, leaving a sound that was like a mingled exclamation and a sob behind her.

"Emile!"

.....
"Emile!"

"Hermione?"

"What is the matter with Vere? What have you been doing to Vere?"

"I?"

"Yes, you! No one else is here."

Hermione's violent, almost furious agitation was audible in her voice.

"I should never wish to hurt Vere—you know that."

His voice sounded as if he were deeply moved.

"I must—— Vere! Vere!"

She moved towards the house. But Artois stepped forward swiftly, laid a hand on her arm, and stopped her.

"No, leave Vere alone to-night!" he said.

"Why?"

"She wishes to be alone to-night."

"But I find her here with you."

There was a harsh bitterness of suspicion, of doubt, in her tone, that he ought surely to have resented. But he did not resent it.

"I was sitting on the terrace," he said gently. "Vere came in from the garden. Naturally she stayed to entertain me till you were here."

"And directly I come she rushes away into the house!"

"Perhaps there was—something may have occurred to upset her."

"What was it?"

Her voice was imperious.

"You must tell me what it was!" she said, as he was silent.

"Hermione, my friend, let us sit down. Let us at any rate be with each other as we always have been—till now."

He was almost pleading with her, but she did not feel her hardness melting. Nevertheless she sat down.

"Now tell me what it was."

"I don't think I can do that, Hermione."

"I am her mother. I have a right to know. I have a right to know everything about my child's life."

In those words, and in the way they were spoken, Hermione's bitter jealousy about the two secrets kept from her, but shared by Artois, rushed out into the light.

"I am sure there is nothing in Vere's life that might not be told to the whole world without shame; and yet there may be many things that an innocent girl would not care to tell to anyone."

"But if things are told they should be told to the mother. The mother comes first."

He said nothing.

"The mother comes first!" she repeated, almost fiercely. "And you ought to know it. You do know it."

"You do come first with Vere."

"If I did, Vere would confide in me rather than in anyone else."

As Hermione said this, all the long-contained bitterness caused by Vere's exclusion of her from the knowledge that had been freely given to Artois brimmed up suddenly in her heart, overflowed boundaries, seemed to inundate her whole being.

"I do not come first," she said.

Her voice trembled, almost broke.

"You know that I do not come first. You have just told me a lie."

"Hermione!"

His voice was startled.

"You know it perfectly well. You have known it for a long time."

Hot tears were in her eyes, were about to fall. With a crude gesture, almost like that of a man, she put up her hands to brush them away.

"You have known it, you have known it, but you try to keep me in the dark."

Suddenly she was horribly conscious of the darkness of the night in which they were together, of the darkness of the world,

"You love to keep me in the dark, in prison. It is cruel, it is wicked of you."

"But, Hermione——"

"Take care, Emile, take care—or I shall hate you for keeping me in the dark."

Her passionate words applied only to the later events in which Vere was concerned. But his mind rushed back to Sicily, and suddenly there came to his memory some words he had once read, he did not know when, or where:

"The spirit that resteth upon a lie is a spirit in prison."

As he remembered them he felt guilty, guilty before Hermione. He saw her as a spirit confined for years in a prison to which his action had condemned her. Yes, she was in the dark. She was in an airless place. She was deprived of the true liberty, that great freedom which is the accurate knowledge of the essential truths of our own individual lives. From his mind in that moment the cause of Hermione's outburst, Vere and her childish secrets, was driven out by a greater thing that came upon it like a strong and mighty wind—the memory of that lie, in which he had enclosed his friend's life for years, that lie on which her spirit had rested, on which it was resting still. And his sense of truth did not permit him to try to refute her accusation. Indeed, he was filled with a desire that nearly conquered him—there and then, brutally, nakedly, to pour forth to his friend all the truth, to say to her:

"You have a strong, fiery spirit, a spirit that hates the dark, that hates imprisonment, a spirit that can surely endure, like the eagle, to gaze steadfastly into the terrible glory of the sun. Then come out of the darkness,

come out of your prison. - I put you there—let me bring you forth. This is the truth—listen! hear it!—it is this—it is this—and—this!”

This desire nearly conquered him. Perhaps it would have conquered him, but for an occurrence that, simple though it was, changed the atmosphere in which their souls were immersed, brought in upon them another world with the feeling of other lives than their own.

The boat to which Ruffo belonged, going out of the Pool to the fishing, passed at this moment slowly upon the sea beneath the terrace, and from the misty darkness his happy voice came up to them in the song of Mergellina which he loved:

“Oh, dolce luna bianca de l’Estate
 Mi fugge il sonno accanto a la marina:
 Mi destan le dolcissime serate,
 Gli occhi di Rosa e il mar di Mergellina.”

Dark was the night, moonless, shrouded in the mist. But his boy’s heart defied it, laughed at the sorrowful truths of life, set the sweet white moon in the sky, covered the sea with her silver. Artois turned towards the song and stood still. But Hermione, as if physically compelled towards it, moved away down the terrace, following in the direction in which the boat was going.

As she passed Artois he saw tears running down her cheeks. And he said to himself:

“No, I cannot tell her; I can never tell her. If she is to be told, let Ruffo tell her. Let Ruffo make her understand. Let Ruffo lift her up from the lie on which I have made her rest, and lead her out of prison.”

As this thought came to him a deep tenderness towards Hermione flooded his heart. He stood where he was. Far off he still heard Ruffo’s voice drifting away

in the mist out to the great sea. And he saw the vague form of Hermione leaning down over the terrace wall, towards the sea, the song, and Ruffo.

How intensely strange, how mysterious, how subtle was the influence housed within the body of that singing boy, that fisher-boy, which, like an issuing fluid, or escaping vapour, or perfume, had stirred and attracted the childish heart of Vere, had summoned and now held fast the deep heart of Hermione.

Just then Artois felt as if in the night he was walking with the Eternities, as if that song, now fading away across the sea, came even from them. We do not die. For in that song to which Hermione bent down—the dead man lived when that boy's voice sang it. In that boat, now vanishing upon the sea, the dead man held an oar. In that warm young heart of Ruffo the dead man moved, and spoke—spoke to his child, Vere, whom he had never seen, spoke to his wife, Hermione, whom he had deceived, yet whom he had loved.

Then let him—let the dead man himself—speak out of that temple which he had created in a moment of lawless passion, out of that son whom he had made to live by the action which had brought upon him death.

Ruffo—all was in the hands of Ruffo, to whom Hermione, weeping, bent for consolation.

The song died away. Yet Hermione did not move, but still leant over the sea. She scarcely knew where she was. The soul of her, the suffering soul, was voyaging through the mist with Ruffo, was voyaging through the mist and through the night with—her Sicilian and all the perfect Past. It seemed to her at that moment that she had lost Vere in the dark, that she had lost Emile in the dark, that even Gaspere was drifting from her in

a mist of secrecy which he did not intend that she should penetrate.

There was only Ruffo left.

He had no secrets. He threw no darkness round him and those who loved him. In his happy innocent song was his happy innocent soul.

She listened, she leaned down, almost she stretched out her arms towards the sea. And in that moment she knew in her mind, and she felt in her heart, that Ruffo was very near to her, that he meant very much to her, even that she loved him.

CHAPTER XIII.

ARTOIS left the island that night without speaking to Hermione. He waited a long time. But she did not move to come to him. And he did not dare to go to her. He did not dare! In all their long friendship never before had his spirit bent before, or retreated as if in fear from, Hermione's. To-night he was conscious that in her fierce anger, and afterwards in her tears, she had emancipated herself from him. He was conscious of her force as he had never been conscious of it before. Something within him almost abdicated to her intensity. And at last he turned and went softly away from the terrace. He descended to the sea. He left the island.

Were they any longer friends?

As the boat gave itself to the mist he wondered. It had come to this, then—that he did not know whether Hermione and he were any longer friends. Almost imperceptibly, with movement so minute that it had seemed like immobility, they had been drifting apart through these

days and nights of the summer. And now abruptly the gulf appeared between them.

He felt just then that they could never more be friends, that their old happy camaraderie could never be re-established.

That they could ever be enemies was unthinkable. Even in Hermione's bitterness and anger Artois felt her deep affection. In her cry, "Take care, Emile, or I shall hate you for keeping me in the dark!" he heard only the hatred that is the other side of love.

But could they ever be comrades again? And if they could not, what could they be?

As the boat slipped on, under the Saint's light, which was burning although the mist had hidden it from Hermione's searching eyes, and out to the open sea, Artois heard again her fierce exclamation. It blended with Vere's sob. He looked up and saw the faint lights of the Casa del Mare fading from him in the night. And an immense sadness, mingled with an immense, but chaotic, longing invaded him. He felt horribly lonely, and he felt a strange, new desire for the nearness to him of life. He yearned to feel life close to him, pulsing with a rhythm to which the rhythm of his being answered. He yearned for that strange and exquisite satisfaction, compounded of mystery and wonder, and thrilling with something akin to pain, that is called forth in the human being who feels another human being centring all its highest faculties, its strongest powers, its deepest hopes in him. He desired intensely, as he had never desired before, true communion with another, that mingling of bodies, hearts, and spirits, that is the greatest proof of God to man.

The lights of the Casa del Mare were lost to his eyes

in the night. He looked for them still. He strained his eyes to see them. But the powerful night would not yield up its prey.

And now, in the darkness and with Hermione's last words ringing in his ears, he felt almost overwhelmed by the solitariness of his life in the world of lives.

That day, before he came to the island, he had met himself face to face like a man meeting his double. He had stripped himself bare. He had searched himself for the truth. Remembering all the Marchesino had said, he had demanded of his heart the truth, uncertain whether it would save or slay him. It had not slain him. When the colloquy was over he was still upright.

But he had realised as never before the delicate poise of human nature, set, without wings, on a peak with gulfs about it. Had he not looked in time, and with clear, steadfast eyes, might he not have fallen?

His affection for Vere was perfectly pure, was the love of a man without desire for a gracious and charming child. It still was that. He knew it for that by the wave of disgust that went over him when his imagination, prompted by the Marchesino's brutality, set pictures before him of himself in other relations with Vere. The real man in him recoiled so swiftly, so uncontrollably, that he was reassured as to his own condition. And yet he found much to condemn, something to be contemptuous of, something almost to weep over—that desire to establish a monopoly—that almost sickly regret for his vanished youth, that bitterness against the community to which all young things instinctively belong, whatever their differences of intellect, temperament, and feeling.

Could he have fallen?

Even now he did not absolutely know whether such a

decadence might have been possible to him or not. But that now it would not be possible he felt that he did know.

Age could never complete youth, and Vere must be complete. He had desired to make her gift for song complete. He could never desire to mutilate her life. Had he not said to himself one day, as his boat glided past the sloping gardens of Posilipo, "Vere must be happy."

Yet that evening he had made her unhappy.

He had come to the island from his self-examination strong in the determination to be really himself, no longer half self-deceived and so deceiving. He had gone out upon the terrace, and waited there. But when Vere had come to join him, he had not been able to be natural. In his desire to rehabilitate himself thoroughly and swiftly in his own opinion he must have been almost harsh to the child. She had approached him a little doubtfully. She had needed specially just then to be met with even more than the usual friendship. Artois had seen in her face, in her expressive eyes, a plea not for forgiveness—there was no need of that,—but for compassion, an appeal to him to ignore and yet to sympathise, that was exquisitely young and winning. But, because of his self-examination, and because he was feeling acutely, he had been abrupt, cold, changed in his manner. They had sat down together in the dark, and after some uneasy conversation, Vere, perhaps eager to make things easier between herself and "Monsieur Emile," had brought up the subject of her poems with a sort of anxious simplicity, and a touch of timidity that yet was confidential. And Artois, still recoiling secretly from that which might possibly have become a folly but could never have been anything more, had told Vere plainly and almost sternly

that she must go on her literary path unaided, unadvised by him.

"I was glad to advise you at the beginning, Vere," he had said finally; "but now I must leave you to yourself to work out your own salvation. You have talent. Trust it. Trust yourself. Do not lean on anyone, least of all on me."

"No, Monsieur Emile," she had answered.

Those were the last words exchanged between them before Hermione came and questioned Vere. And only when Vere slipped into the house, leaving that sound of pain behind her, did Artois realise how cruel he must have seemed in his desire quickly to set things right.

He realised that; but, subtle though he was, he did not understand the inmost and root-cause of Vere's loss of self-control.

Vere was feeling bitterly ashamed, had been bending under this sense of undeserved shame, ever since the Marchesino's stratagem on the preceding night. Although she was gay and fearless, she was exquisitely sensitive. Peppina's confession had roused her maidenhood to a theoretical knowledge of certain things in life, of certain cruel phases of man's selfishness and lust which, till then, she had never envisaged. The Marchesino's madness had carried her one step further. She had not actually looked into the abyss. But she had felt herself near to something that she hated even more than she feared it. And she had returned to the hotel full of a shrinking delicacy, not to be explained, intense as snow, which had made the meeting with her mother and Artois a torture to her; which had sealed her lips to silence that night, which had made her half apology to Gaspare in the morning a secret agony, which had even set a flush on her face when she

looked at San Francesco. The abrupt change in Monsieur Emile's demeanour towards her made her feel as if she were despised by him because she had been the victim of the Marchesino's trick. Or perhaps Monsieur Emile completely misunderstood her: perhaps he thought—perhaps he dared to think, that she had helped the Marchesino in his manœuvre.

Vere felt almost crucified, but was too proud to speak of the pain and bitterness within her. Only when her mother came out upon the terrace did she suddenly feel that she could bear no more.

That night, directly she was in her room, she locked her door. She was afraid that her mother might follow her, to ask what was the matter.

But Hermione did not come. She, too, wished to be alone that night. She, too, felt that she could not be looked at by searching eyes that night.

She did not know when Artois left the terrace. Long after Ruffo's song had died away she still leant over the sea, following his boat with her desirous heart. Artois, too, was on the sea. She did not know it. She was, almost desperately, seeking a refuge in the past. The present failed her. That was her feeling. Then she would cling to the past. And in that song, prompted now by her always eager imagination, she seemed to hear it. For she was almost fiercely, feverishly, beginning to find resemblances in Ruffo to Maurice. At first she had noticed none, although she had been strangely attracted by the boy. Then she had seen that look, fleeting but vivid, that seemed for a moment to bring Maurice before her. Then, on the cliff, she had discerned a likeness of line, a definite similarity of features.

And now—was not that voice like Maurice's? Had it

not his wonderful thrill of youth in it, that sound of the love of life, which wakes all the pulses of the body and stirs all the depths of the heart?

“Oh, dolce luna bianca de l’Estate——”

The voice upon the sea was singing always the song of Mergellina. But to Hermione it began to seem that the song was changing to another song, and that the voice that was dying away across the shrouded water was sinking into the shadows of a ravine upon a mountain side.

“Ciao, Ciao, Ciao,
Morettina bella, ciao——”

Maurice was going to the fishing under the sweet white moon of Sicily. And she—she was no longer leaning down from the terrace of the Casa del Mare, but from the terrace of the House of the Priest.

“Prima di partire
Un bacio ti voglio da!”

That kiss, which he had given her before he had gone away from her for ever! She seemed to feel it on her lips again, and she shut her eyes, giving herself up to a passion of the imagination.

When she opened them again she felt exhausted, and terribly alone. Maurice had gone down into the ravine. He was never coming back. Ruffo was taken by the mists and by the night. She lifted herself up from the balustrade and looked round, remembering suddenly that she had left Artois upon the terrace. He had disappeared silently, without a word of good-bye.

And now, seeing the deserted terrace, she recollected her fierce attack upon Artois, she remembered how she had stood in the black room watching the two darknesses outside, listening to their silence. And she remembered her conversation with Ruffo.

Actualities rushed back upon her memory. She felt as if she heard them coming like an army to the assault. Her brain was crowded with jostling thoughts, her heart with jostling feelings and with fears. She was like one trying to find a safe path through a black troop of threatening secrets. What had happened that night between Vere and Emile? Why had Vere fled? Why had she wept? And the previous night with the Marchesino—Vere had not spoken of it to her mother. Hermione had found it impossible to ask her child for any details. There was a secret too. And there were the two secrets, which now she knew, but which Vere and Artois thought were unknown to her still. And then—that mystery of which Ruffo had innocently spoken that night.

As Hermione, moving in imagination through the black and threatening troop, came to that last secret, she was again assailed by a curious, and horrible, sensation of apprehension. She again felt very little and very helpless, like a child.

She moved away from the balustrade and turned towards the house. Above, in her sitting-room, the light still shone. The other windows on this side of the Casa del Mare were dark. She felt that she must go to that light quickly, and she hastened in, went cautiously—though now almost panic-stricken—through the black room with the French windows, and came into the dimly lighted passage that led to the front door.

Gaspare was there, locking up. She came to him.

“Good night, Gaspare,” she said, stopping.

“Good night, Signora,” he answered, slightly turning his head, but not looking into her face.

Hermione turned to go upstairs. She went up two or three steps. She heard a bolt shot into its place

below her, and she stopped again. To-night she felt for the first time almost afraid of Gaspare. She trusted him as she had always trusted him—completely. Yet that trust was mingled with this new and dreadful sensation of fear, bred of her conviction that he held some secret from her in his breast. Indeed, it was her trust in Gaspare which made her fear so keen. As she stood on the staircase she knew that. If Gaspare kept things, kept anything from her, that at all concerned her life, it must be because he was faithfully trying to save her from some pain or misery.

But perhaps she was led away by her depression of to-night. Perhaps this mystery was her own creation, and he would be quite willing to explain, to clear it away with a word.

“Gaspare,” she said, “have you finished locking up?”

“Not quite, Signora. I have the front of the house to do.”

“Of course. Well, when you have finished come up to my room for a minute, will you?”

“Va bene, Signora.”

Was there reluctance in his voice? She thought there was. She went upstairs, and waited in her sitting-room. It seemed to her that Gaspare was a very long time locking up. She leaned out of the window that overlooked the terrace to hear if he was shutting the French windows. When she did so, she saw him faintly below, standing by the balustrade. She watched him, wondering what he was doing, till at last she could not be patient any longer.

“Gaspare!” she called out.

He started violently.

“I am coming, Signora.”

“I am waiting for you.”

"A moment, Signora!"

Yes, his voice was reluctant; but he went at once towards the house and disappeared. Directly afterwards she heard the windows being shut and barred, then a step coming rather slowly up the staircase.

"Che vuole, Signora?"

How many times she had heard that phrase from Gaspare's lips! How many times in reply she had expressed some simple desire! To-night she found a difficulty in answering that blunt question. There was so much that she wished, wanted—wide and terrible want filled her heart.

"Che vuole?" he repeated.

As she heard it a second time, suddenly Hermione knew that for the moment she was entirely dominated by Ruffo and that which concerned, which was connected with him. The fisher-boy had assumed an abrupt and vast importance in her life.

"Gaspare," she said, "you know me pretty well by this time, don't you?"

"Know you, Signora! Of course I know you!" He gazed at her—then added, "Who should know you, Signora, if I do not?"

"That is just what I mean, Gaspare. I wonder—I wonder——" She broke off. "Do you understand, Gaspare, how important you are to me, how necessary you are to me?"

An expressive look that was full of gentleness dawned in his big eyes.

"Sì, Signora, I understand."

"And I think you ought to understand my character by this time." She looked at him earnestly. "But I sometimes wonder—I mean lately—I sometimes wonder whether you do quite understand me."

"Why, Signora?"

"Do you know what I like best from the people who are near me, who live with me?"

"Si, Signora."

"What?"

"Affection, Signora. You like to be cared for, Signora."

She felt tears rising again in her eyes.

"Yes, I love affection. But—there's something else too. I love to be trusted. I'm not curious. I hate to pry into people's affairs. But I love to feel that I am trusted, that those I trust and care for would never keep me in the dark——"

She thought again of Emile and of the night and her outburst.

"The dark, Signora?"

"Don't you understand what I mean? When you are in the dark you can't see anything. You can't see the things you ought to see."

"You are not in the dark, Signora."

He spoke rather stupidly, and looked towards the lamp, as if he misunderstood her explanation. But she knew his quickness of mind too well to be deceived.

"Gaspere," she said, "I don't know whether you are going to be frank with me, but I am going to be frank with you. Sit down for a minute, and—please shut the door first."

He looked at her, looked down, hesitated, then went slowly to the door and shut it softly. Hermione was sitting on the sofa when he turned. He came back and stood beside her.

"Si, Signora?"

"I'd rather you sat too, Gaspere."

He took his seat on a hard chair. His face had

changed. Generally it was what is called "an open face." Now it looked the opposite to that. When she glanced at him, almost furtively, Hermione was once more assailed by fear. She began to speak quickly, with determination, to combat her fear.

"Gaspare, I may be wrong, but for some time I have felt now and then as if you and I were not quite as we used to be together, as if—— well, now and then it seems to me as if there was a wall, and I was on one side of the wall and you were on the other. I don't like that feeling, after having you with me so long. I don't like it, and I want to get rid of it."

She paused.

"Sì, Signora," he said in a low voice.

He was now looking at the floor. His arms were resting on his knees, and his hands hung down touching each other.

"It seems to me that—I never noticed this thing between us until—until Ruffo came to the island."

"Ruffo?"

"Yes, Gaspare, Ruffo."

She spoke with increasing energy and determination, still combating her still formless fear. And because of this interior combat her manner and voice were not quite natural, though she strove to keep them so, knowing well how swiftly a Sicilian will catch the infection of a strange mood, will be puzzled by it, be made obstinate, even dogged by it.

"I am sure that all this—— I mean that this has something to do with Ruffo."

Gaspare said nothing.

"I know you like Ruffo, Gaspare. I believe you like him very much. Don't you?"

"Signora, Ruffo has never done me any harm."

"Ruffo is very fond of you."

She saw Gaspare redden.

"He respects and admires you more than other people. I have noticed that."

Gaspare cleared his throat, but did not look up or make any remark.

"Both the Signorina and I like Ruffo, too. We feel—at least I feel—I feel as if he had become one of the family."

Gaspare looked up quickly, and his eyes were surely fierce.

"One of the family!" he exclaimed.

Hermione wondered if he were jealous.

"I don't mean that I put him with you, Gaspare. No—but he seems to me quite a friend. Tell me—do you know anything against Ruffo?"

"No, Signora."

It came very slowly from his lips.

"Absolutely nothing?"

"Signora, I don't know anything bad of Ruffo."

"I felt sure not. Don't you like his coming to the island?"

Gaspare's face was still flushed.

"Signora, it has nothing to do with me."

A sort of dull anger seemed to be creeping into his voice, an accent of defiance that he was trying to control. Hermione noticed it, and it brought her to a resolve that, till now, she had avoided. Her secret fear had prompted her to delay, to a gradual method of arriving at the truth. Now she sat forward, clasping her hands together hard and speaking quickly:

"Gaspare, I feel sure that you noticed long ago some-

thing very strange in Ruffo. Perhaps you noticed it almost at once. I believe you did. It is this. Ruffo has an extraordinary look in his face sometimes, a look of—of your dead Padrone. I didn't see it for some time, but I think you saw it directly. Did you? Did you, Gaspare?"

There was no answer. Gaspare only cleared his throat again more violently. Hermione waited for a minute. Then, understanding that he was not going to answer, she went on:

"You have seen it—we have both noticed it. Now I want to tell you something—something that happened to-night."

Gaspare started, looked up quickly, darted at his Padrona a searching glance of inquiry.

"What is it?" she said.

"Niente!"

He kept his eyes on her, staring with a tremendous directness that was essentially Southern. And she returned his gaze.

"I was with Ruffo this evening. We talked, and he told me that he met you at the Festa last night. He told me, too, that he was with his mother."

She waited, to give him a chance of speaking, of forestalling any question. But he only stared at her with dilated eyes.

"He told me that you knew his mother, and that his mother knew you."

"Why not?"

"Of course, there is no reason. What surprised me rather"—she was speaking more slowly now, and more unevenly—"was this——"

"Si?"

Gaspare's voice was loud. He lifted up his hands, and laid them heavily on his knees.

"Si?" he repeated.

"After you had spoken with her, she cried—Ruffo's mother cried, Gaspare. And she said, 'To think of its being Gaspare on the island!'"

"Is that all?"

"No."

A look that was surely a look of fear came into his face, rendering it new to Hermione. Never before had she seen such an expression—or had she once? Long ago, one night in Sicily?

"That isn't all. Ruffo took his mother home, and when they got home she said to him this: 'Has Gaspare ever said you were like somebody?'"

Gaspare said nothing.

"Did you hear, Gaspare?"

"Si, Signora."

"Gaspare, it seems to me"—Hermione was speaking now very slowly, like one shaping a thought in her mind while she spoke—"it seems to me strange that you and Ruffo's mother should have known each other so well long before Ruffo was born, and that she should cry because she met you at the Festa, and that—afterwards—she should ask Ruffo that."

"Strange?"

The fear that had been formless was increasing now in Hermione, and, surely, it was beginning at last to take a form, but as yet only a form that was vague and shadowy.

"Yes. I think it very strange. Did you"—an intense curiosity was alive in her now—"did you know Ruffo's mother in Sicily?"

"Signora, it does not matter where I knew her."

"Why should she say that?"

"What?"

“‘Has Gaspare ever said you were like somebody?’”

“I have never said Ruffo was like anybody!” Gaspare exclaimed, with sudden and intense violence. “May the Madonna let me die—may I die”—he held up his arms,—“may I die to-morrow if I have ever said Ruffo was like anybody.”

He got up from his chair. His face was red in patches, like the face of a man stricken with fever.

“Gaspare, I know that—but what could this woman have meant?”

“Madonna! How should I know! Signora, how can I tell what a woman like that means? Such women have no sense—they talk, they gossip—Ah, ah, ah, ah!”—he imitated the voice of a woman of the people.—“They are always on the doorstep, their tongues are always going. Dio mio! Who is to say what they mean, or what nonsense goes through their heads?”

Hermione got up and laid her hand heavily on his arm.

“I believe you know of whom Ruffo’s mother spoke, Gaspare. Tell me this—did Ruffo’s mother ever know your Padrone?”

She looked straight into his eyes. It seemed to her as if, for the first time, there came from them to her a look that had something in it of dislike. This look struck her to a terrible melancholy, yet she met it firmly, almost fiercely, with a glance that fought it, that strove to beat it back. And with a steady voice she repeated the question he had not answered.

“Did Ruffo’s mother ever know your Padrone?”

Gaspare moved his lips, passing his tongue over them. His eyes fell. He moved his arm, trying to shift it from his Padrona’s hand. Her fingers closed on it more tenaciously.

"Gaspare, I order you to tell me."

"Signora," he said, "such things are not in my service. I am here to work, not to answer questions."

He spoke quietly now, heavily, and moved his feet on the carpet.

"You disobey me?"

"Signora, I shall always obey all your orders as a servant."

"And as a friend, Gaspare, as a friend! You are my friend, aren't you?"

Her voice had suddenly changed, and in answer to it his face changed. He looked into her face, and his eyes were full of a lustrous softness, that was like a gentle and warm caress.

"Signora, you know what I am for you. Then leave me alone, Signora"—he spoke solemnly—"you ought to trust me, Signora, you ought to trust me."

"I do trust you. But you—do you trust me?"

"Sì, Signora."

"In everything?"

"Signora, I trust you; I have always trusted you."

"And my courage—do you trust that?"

He did not answer.

"I don't think you do, Gaspare."

Suddenly she felt that he was right not to trust it. Again she felt beset by fear, and as if she had nothing within her that was strong enough to stand up in further combat against the assaults of the world and of destiny. The desire to know all, to probe this mystery, abruptly left her, was replaced by an almost frantic wish to be always ignorant, if only that ignorance saved her from any fresh sorrow or terror.

"Never mind," she said. "You needn't answer. I

don't want—— What does it all matter? It's—it's all so long ago."

Having got hold of that phrase, she clung to it as if for comfort.

"It's all so long ago," she repeated. "Years and years ago. We've forgotten it. We've forgotten Sicily, Gaspare. Why should we think of it or trouble about it any more? Good night, Gaspare."

She smiled at him, but her face was drawn and looked old.

"Buona notte, Signora."

He did not smile, but gazed at her with earnest gentleness, and still with that lustrous look in his eyes, full of tenderness and protection.

"Buon riposo, Signora."

He went away, surely relieved to go. At the door he said again,

"Buon riposo."

The door was shut.

"Buon riposo!"

Hermione repeated the words to herself.

"Riposo!"

The very thought of repose was like the most bitter irony. She walked up and down the room. To-night there was no stability in her. She was shaken, lacerated mentally, by sharply changing moods, that rushed through her, one chasing another. Scarcely had Gaspare gone before she longed to call him back, to force him to speak, to explain everything to her. The fear that cringed was suddenly replaced by the fear that rushes forward blindly, intent only on getting rid of uncertainty even at the cost of death. Soldiers know that fear. It has given men to bayonet points.

Now it increased rapidly within Hermione. She was devoured by a terror that was acutely nervous, that gnawed her body as well as her soul.

Gaspare had known Ruffo's mother in Sicily. And Maurice—he had known Ruffo's mother. He must have known her. But when? How had he got to know her?

Hermione stood still.

"It must have been when I was in Africa!"

A hundred details of her husband's conduct, from the moment of his return from the fair till the last kiss he had given her before he went away down the side of Monte Amato, flashed through her mind. And each one seemed to burn her mind as a spark, touching flesh, burns the flesh.

"It was when I was in Africa!"

She went to the window, and leaned out into the night over the misty sea. Her lips moved. She was repeating to herself again and again:

"To-morrow I'll go to Mergellina! To-morrow I'll go to Mergellina!"

CHAPTER XIV.

HERMIONE did not sleep at all that night. When the dawn came she got up and looked out over the sea. The mist had vanished with the darkness. The vaporous heat was replaced by a delicate freshness that embraced the South as dew embraces a rose. On the as yet pale waters, full of varying shades of grey, slate-colour, ethereal mauve, very faint pink and white, were dotted many fishing-boats. Hermione looked at them with her tired eyes. Ruffo's boat was no doubt among them. There

was one only a few hundred yards beyond the rocks from which Vere sometimes bathed. Perhaps that was his.

Ruffo's boat! Ruffo!

She put her elbows on the sill of the window and rested her face in her hands.

Her eyes felt very dry, like sand she thought, and her mind felt dry too, as if insomnia were withering it up. She opened her lips to breathe in the salt freshness of the morning.

Upon Anacapri a woolly white cloud lay lightly. The distant coast, where dreams Sorrento, was becoming clearer every moment.

Often and often in the summer-time had Hermione been invaded by the radiant cheerfulness of the Bay of Naples. She knew no sea that had its special gift of magical gaiety and stirring hopefulness, its laughing Pagan appeal to all the light things of the soul. It woke even the weary heart to holiday when, in the summer, it glittered and danced in the sun, whispering or calling with a tender or bold vivacity along its lovely coast.

Out of this morning beauty, refined and exquisitely gentle, would rise presently that livelier Pagan spirit. It was not hers. She was no Pagan. But she had loved it, and she had, or thought she had, been able to understand it.

All that was long ago.

Now, as she leaned out, her soul felt old and haggard, and the contact with the youth and freshness of the morning emphasised its inability to be influenced any more by youthful wonders, by the graciousness and inspiration that are the gifts of dawn.

Was that Ruffo's boat?

Her mind was dwelling on Ruffo, but mechanically,

heavily, like a thing with feet of lead, unable to lift itself once it had dropped down upon a surface.

All the night her brain had been busy. Now it did not slumber, but it brooded, like the mist that had so lately left the sea. It brooded upon the thought of Ruffo.

The light grew. Over the mountains the sky spread scarlet banners. The sea took, with a quiet readiness that was happily submissive, its burnished gift of gold. The grey was lost in gold.

And Hermione watched, and drank in the delicate air, but caught nothing of the delicate spirit of the dawn.

Presently the boat that lay not far beyond the rocks moved. A little black figure stood up in it, swayed to and fro, plying tiny oars. The boat diminished. It was leaving the fishing ground. It was going towards Mergellina.

"To-day I am going to Mergellina."

Hermione said that to herself, as she watched the boat till it disappeared in the shining gold that was making a rapture of the sea. She said it, but the words seemed to have little meaning, the fact which they conveyed to be unimportant to her.

And she leaned out of the window, with a weary and inexpressive face, while the gold spread ever more widely over the sea, and the Pagan spirit surely stirred from its brief repose to greet the brilliant day.

Presently she became aware of a boat approaching the island from the direction of Mergellina. She saw it first when it was a long distance off, and watched it idly as it drew near. It looked black against the gold, till it was off the Villa Pantano. But then, or soon after, she saw that it was white. It was making straight for the island, propelled by vigorous arms.

Now she thought it looked like one of the island

boats. Could Vere have got up and gone out so early with Gaspare?

She drew back, lifted her face from her hands, and stood straight up against the curtain of the window. In a moment she heard the sound of the oars in the water, and saw that the boat was from the island, and that Gaspare was in it alone. He looked up, saw her, and raised his cap, but with a rather reluctant gesture that scarcely indicated satisfaction or a happy readiness to greet her. She hesitated, then called out to him.

"Good morning, Gaspare."

"Good morning, Signora."

"How early you are up!"

"And you too, Signora."

"Couldn't you sleep?"

"Signora, I never want much sleep."

"Where have you been?"

"I have been for a row, Signora."

He lifted his cap again and began to row in. The boat disappeared into the Saint's Pool.

"He has been to Mergellina."

The mind of Hermione was awake again. The sight of Gaspare had lifted those feet of lead. Once more she was in flight.

Arabs can often read the thoughts of those whom they know. In many Sicilians there is some Arab blood, and sometimes Hermione had felt that Gaspare knew well intentions of hers which she had never hinted to him. Now she was sure that in the night he had divined her determination to go to Mergellina, to see the mother of Ruffo, to ask her for the truth which Gaspare had refused to tell. He had divined this, and he had gone to Mergellina before her. Why?

She was fully roused now. She felt like one in a conflict. Was there, then, to be a battle between herself and Gaspare, a battle over this hidden truth?

Now she felt that it was vital to her to know this truth. Yet when her mind, or her tormented heart, was surely on the verge of its statement, was—or seemed to be—about to say to her, "Perhaps it is—that!" or "It is—that!" something within her, housed deep down in her, refused to listen, refused to hear, revolted from—what it did not acknowledge the existence of.

Paradox alone could hint the condition of her mind just then. She was in the thrall of fear, but, had she been questioned, would not have allowed that she was afraid.

Afterwards she never rightly knew what was the truth of her during this period of her life.

There was to be a conflict between her and Gaspare.

She came from the window, took a bath and dressed. When she had finished she looked in the glass. Her face was calm, but set and grim. She had not known she could look like that. She hated her face, her expression, and she came away from the glass feeling almost afraid of herself.

At breakfast she and Vere always met. The table was laid out of doors in the little garden or on the terrace if the weather was fine, in the dining-room if it was bad. This morning Hermione saw the glimmer of the white cloth near the fig-tree. She wondered if Vere was there, and longed to plead a headache and to have her coffee in her bedroom. Nevertheless she went down, resolved to govern herself.

In the garden she found Giulia smiling and putting down the silver coffee-pot in quite a bower of roses. Vere was not visible.

Hermione exchanged a good morning with Giulia and sat down. The servant's smiling face brought her a mingled feeling of relief and wonder. The pungent smell of the coffee, conquering the soft scent of the many roses, pinned her mind abruptly down to the simple realities and animal pleasures and necessities of life. She made a strong effort to be quite normal, to think of the moment, to live for it. The morning was fresh and lovely; the warmth of the sun, the tonic vivacity of the air from the sea, caressed and quickened her blood.

The minute garden was secluded. A world that seemed at peace, a world of rocks and waters far from the roar of traffic, the uneasy hum of men, lay around her.

Surely the moment was sweet, was peaceful. She would live in it.

Vere came slowly from the house, and at once Hermione's newly made and not yet carried out resolution crumbled into dust. She forgot the sun, the sea, the peaceful situation and all material things. She was confronted by the painful drama of the island life! Vere with her secrets, Emile with his, Gaspare fighting to keep her, his Padrona, still in mystery. And she was confronted by her own passions, those hosts of armed men that have their dwelling in every powerful nature.

Vere came up listlessly.

"Good morning, Madre," she said.

She kissed her mother's cheek with cold lips.

"What lovely roses!"

She smelt them and sat down in her place, facing the sea wall.

"Yes, aren't they?"

"And such a heavenly morning after the mist! What are we going to do to-day?"

Hermione gave her her coffee, and the little dry tap of a spoon on an eggshell was heard in the stillness of the garden.

"Well, I—I am going across to take the tram."

"Are you?"

"Yes."

"Naples again? I'm tired of Naples."

There was in her voice a sound that suggested rather hatred than lassitude.

"I don't know that I shall go as far as Naples. I am going to Mergellina."

"Oh!"

Vere did not ask her what she was going to do there. She showed no special interest, no curiosity.

"What will you do, Vere?"

"I don't know."

She glanced round. Hermione saw that her usually bright eyes were dull and lack-lustre.

"I don't know what I shall do."

She sighed, and began to eat her egg slowly, as if she had no appetite.

"Did you sleep well, Vere?"

"Not very well, Madre."

"Are you tired of the island?"

Vere looked up, as if startled.

"Oh, no! at least"—she paused—"No, I don't believe I could ever be really that. I love the island."

"What is it, then?"

"Sometimes—some days one doesn't know exactly what to do."

"Well, but you always seem occupied." Hermione spoke with slow meaning, not unkindly, but with a significance she hardly meant to put into her voice, yet could

not keep out of it. "You always manage to find something to do."

Suddenly Vere's eyes filled with tears. She bent down her head and went on eating. Again she heard Monsieur Emile's harsh words. They seemed to have changed her world. She felt despised. At that moment she hated the Marchesino with a fiery hatred.

Hermione was not able to put her arm round her child quickly, to ask her what was the matter, to kiss her tears away, or to bid them flow quietly, openly, while Vere rested against her, secure that the sorrow was understood, was shared. She could only pretend not to see, while she thought of the two shadows in the garden last night.

What could have happened between Emile and Vere? What had been said, done, to cause that cry of pain, those tears? Was it possible that Emile had let Vere see plainly his—his——? But here Hermione stopped. Not even in her own mind, for herself alone, could she summon up certain spectres.

She went on eating her breakfast, and pretending not to notice that Vere was troubled. Presently Vere spoke again:

"Would you like me to come with you to Mergellina, Madre?" she said.

Her voice was rather uneven, almost trembling.

"Oh, no, Vere!"

Hermione spoke hastily, abruptly, strongly conscious of the impossibility of taking Vere with her. Directly she had said the words she realised that they must have fallen on Vere like a blow. She realised this still more when she looked quickly up and saw that Vere's face was scarlet.

"I don't mean that I shouldn't like to have you with me, Vere," she added hurriedly. "But——"

"It's all right, Madre. Well, I've finished. I think I shall go out a little in my boat."

She went away, half humming, half singing the tune of the Mergellina song.

Hermione put down her cup. She had not finished her coffee, but she knew she could not finish it. Life seemed at that moment utterly intolerable to her. She felt desperate, as a nature does that is forced back upon itself by circumstances, that is forced to be, or to appear to be, traitor to itself. And in her desperation action presented itself to her as imperatively necessary—necessary as air is to one suffocating.

She got up. She would start at once for Mergellina. As she went upstairs she remembered that she did not know where Ruffo's mother lived, what she was like, even what her name was. The boy had always spoken of her as "Mia Mamma." They dwelt at Mergellina. That was all she knew.

She did not choose to ask Gaspare anything. She would go alone, and find out somehow for herself where Ruffo lived. She would ask the fishermen. Or perhaps she would come across Ruffo. Probably he had gone home by this time from the fishing.

Quickly, energetically she got ready.

Just before she left her room she saw Vere pass slowly by upon the sea, rowing a little way out alone, as she often did in the calm summer weather. Vere had a book, and almost directly she laid the oars in their places side by side, went into the stern, sat down under the awning, and began—apparently—to read. Hermione watched her for two or three minutes. She looked very lonely; and

moved by an impulse to try to erase the impression made on her by the abrupt exclamation at the breakfast table, the mother leaned out and hailed the child.

"Good-bye, Vere! I am just starting!" she cried out, trying to make her voice cheerful and ordinary.

Vere looked up for a second.

"Good-bye!"

She bent her head and returned to her book.

Hermione felt chilled.

She went down, and met Giulia in the passage.

"Giulia, is Gaspare anywhere about? I want to cross to the mainland. I am going to take the tram."

"Signora, are you going to Naples? Maria says——"

"I can't do any commissions, because I shall probably not go beyond Mergellina. Find Gaspare, will you?"

Giulia went away, and Hermione descended to the Saint's Pool. She waited there two or three minutes. Then Gaspare appeared above.

"You want the boat, Signora?"

"Yes, Gaspare."

He leaped down the steps and stood beside her.

"Where do you want to go?"

She hesitated. Then she looked him straight in the face and said:

"To Mergellina."

He met her eyes without flinching. His face was quite calm.

"Shall I row you there, Signora?"

"I meant to go to the village, and walk up and take the tram."

"As you like, Signora. But I can easily row you there."

"Aren't you tired, after being out so early this morning?"

"No Signora."

"Did you go far?"

"Not so very far, Signora."

Hermione hesitated. She knew Gaspare had been to Mergellina. She knew he had been to see Ruffo's mother. If that were so her journey would probably be in vain. In their conflict Gaspare had struck the first blow. Could anything be gained by her going?

Gaspare saw, and perhaps read accurately, her hesitation.

"It will get very hot to-day, Signora," he said carelessly.

His words decided Hermione. If obstacles were to be put in her way she would overleap them. At all costs she would emerge from the darkness in which she was walking. A heat of anger rushed over her. She felt as if Gaspare, and perhaps Artois, were treating her like a child.

"I must go to Mergellina, Gaspare," she said. "And I shall go by tram. Please row me to the village."

"Va bene, Signora," he answered.

He went to pull in the boat.

CHAPTER XV.

WHEN Hermione got out of the boat in the little harbour of the village on the mainland Gaspare said again:

"I could easily row you to Mergellina, Signora. I am not a bit tired."

She looked at him as he stood with his hand on the prow of the boat. His shirt sleeves were rolled up showing his strong arms. There was something brave, some-

thing "safe"—so she called it to herself,—in his whole appearance which had always appealed to her nature. How she longed at that moment to be quite at ease with him! Why would he not trust her completely? Perhaps in her glance just then she showed her thought, her desire. Gaspare's eyes fell before hers.

"I think I'll take the tram," she said, "unless——"

She was still looking at him, longing for him to speak. But he said nothing. At that moment a fisherman ran down the steps from the village and came over the sand to greet them.

"Good-bye, Gaspare," she said. "Don't wait, of course. Giovanni can row me back."

The fisherman smiled, but Gaspare said.

"I can come for you, Signora. You will not be very long, will you? You will be back for colazione?"

"Oh, yes, I suppose so."

"I will come for you, Signora."

Again she looked at him, and felt his deep loyalty to her, his strong and almost dog-like affection. And, feeling them, she was seized once more by fear. The thing Gaspare hid from her must be something terrible.

"Thank you, Gaspare."

"A rivederci, Signora."

Was there not a sound of pleading in his voice, a longing to retain her? She would not heed it. But she gave him a very gentle look as she turned to walk up the hill.

At the top, by the Trattoria del Giardinetto, she had to wait for several minutes before the tram came. She remembered her solitary dinner there on the evening when she had gone to the Scoglio di Frisio to look at the visitors' book. She had felt lonely then in the soft light

of the fading day. She felt far more lonely now in the brilliant sunshine of morning. And for an instant she saw herself travelling steadily along a straight road, from which she could not diverge. She passed milestone after milestone. And now, not far off, she saw in the distance a great darkness in which the road ended. And the darkness was the ultimate loneliness which can encompass on earth the human spirit.

The tram bell sounded. She lifted her head mechanically. A moment later she was rushing down towards Naples. Before the tram reached the harbour of Mergellina, on the hill opposite the Donn' Anna, Hermione got out. Something within her desired delay; there was plenty of time. She would walk a little way among the lively people who were streaming to the Stabilimenti to have their morning dip.

In the tram she had scarcely thought at all. She had given herself to the air, to speed, to vision. Now, at once, with physical action came an anxiety, a restlessness, that seemed to her very physical too. Her body felt ill, she thought, though she knew there was nothing the matter with her. All through her life her health had been robust. Never yet had she completely "broken down." She told herself that her body was perfectly well.

But she was afraid. That was the truth. And to feel fear was specially hateful to her, because she abhorred cowardice, and was inclined to despise all timidity as springing from weakness of character.

She dreaded reaching Mergellina. She dreaded seeing this woman, Ruffo's mother. And Ruffo? Did she dread seeing him?

She fought against her fear. Whatever might befall her she would remain herself, essentially separate from all

other beings and from events, secure of the tremendous solitude that is the property of every human being on earth.

"Pain, misery, horror, come from within, not from without." She said that to herself steadily. "I am free so long as I choose, so long as I have the courage to choose, to be free."

And saying that, and never once allowing her mind to state frankly any fear, she came down to the harbour of Mergellina.

The harbour and its environs looked immensely gay in the brilliant sunshine. Life was at play here, even at its busiest. The very workers sang as if their work were play. Boats went in and out on the water. Children paddled in the shallow sea, pushing hand-nets along the sand. From the rocks boys were bathing. Their shouts travelled to the road where the fishermen were talking with intensity, as they leaned against the wall hot with the splendid sun.

Hermione looked for Ruffo's face among all these sun-browned faces, for his bright eyes among all the sparkling eyes of these children of the sea.

But she could not see him. She walked along the wall slowly.

"Ruffo—Ruffo—Ruffo!"

She was summoning him with her mind.

Perhaps he was among those bathing boys. She looked across the harbour to the rocks, and saw the brown body of one shoot through the shining air and disappear with a splash into the sea.

Perhaps that boy was he—how far away from her loneliness, her sadness, and her dread!

She began to despair of finding him.

"Barca! Barca!"

She had reached the steps now near the Savoy Hotel. A happy-looking boatman, with hazel eyes and a sensitive mouth, hailed her from the water. It was Fabiano Lari, to whom Artois had once spoken, waiting for custom in his boat the *Stella del Mare*.

Hermione was attracted to the man, as Artois had been, and she resolved to find out from him, if possible, where Ruffo's mother lived. She went down the steps. The man immediately brought his boat right in.

"No," she said, "I don't want the boat."

Fabiano looked a little disappointed.

"I am looking for someone who lives here, a Sicilian boy, called Ruffo."

"Ruffo Scarla, Signora? The Sicilian?"

"That must be he. Do you know him?"

"Si, Signora, I know Ruffo very well. He was here this morning. But I don't know where he is now." He looked round. "He may have gone home, Signora."

"Do you know where he lives?"

"Si, Signora. It is near where I live. It's near the Grotto."

"Could you possibly leave your boat and take me there?"

"Si, Signora! A moment, Signora!"

Quickly he signed to a boy who was standing close by, watching them. The boy ran down to the boat. Fabiano spoke to him in dialect. He got into the boat, while Fabiano jumped ashore.

"Signora, I am ready. We go this way."

They walked along together.

Fabiano was as frank and simple as a child, and began at once to talk. Hermione was glad of that, still

more glad that he talked of himself, his family, the life and affairs of a boatman. She listened sympathetically, occasionally putting in a word, till suddenly Fabiano said:

“Antonio Bernari will be out to-day. I suppose you know that, Signora?”

“Antonio Bernari! Who is he? I never heard of him.”

Fabiano looked surprised.

“But he is Ruffo's Patrigno. He is the husband of Maddalena.”

Hermione stood still on the pavement. She did not know why for a moment. Her mind seemed to need a motionless body in which to work. It was surely groping after something, eagerly, feverishly, yet blindly.

Fabiano paused beside her.

“Signora,” he said, staring at her in surprise: “are you tired? Are you not well?”

“I'm quite well. But wait a minute. Yes, I do want to rest for a minute.”

She dared not move lest she should interfere with that mental search. Fabiano's words had sent her mind sharply to Sicily.

Maddalena!

She was sure she had known, or heard of, some girl in Sicily called Maddalena, some girl or some woman. She thought of the servant in the Casa del Prete, Lucrezia. Had she any sister, any relation called Maddalena? Or had Gaspare——?

Suddenly Hermione seemed to be on the little terrace above the ravine with Maurice and Artois. She seemed to feel the heat of noon in summer. Gaspare was there, too. She saw his sullen face. She saw him looking ugly. She heard him say:

"Salvatore and Maddalena, Signora."

Why had he said that? In answer to what question?

And then, in a flash, she remembered everything. It was she who had spoken first. She had asked him who lived in the house of the Sirens.

"Salvatore and Maddalena."

And afterwards—Maurice had said something. Her mind went in search, seized its prey.

"They're quite friends of ours. We saw them at the Fair only yesterday."

Maurice had said that. She could hear his voice saying it.

"I'm rested now."

She was speaking to Fabiano. They were walking on again among the chattering people. They had come to the wooden station where the tram lines converge.

"Is it this way?"

"Sì, Signora, quite near the Grotto. Take care, Signora."

"It's all right. Thank you."

They had crossed now, and were walking up the street that leads directly to the tunnel, whose mouth confronted them in the distance. Hermione felt as if they were going to enter it, were going to walk down it to that great darkness which seemed to wait for her, to beckon her. But presently Fabiano turned to the right and they came into a street leading up-hill, and stopped almost immediately before a tall house.

"Antonio and Maddalena live here, Signora."

"And Ruffo," she said, as if correcting him.

"Ruffo! Sì, Signora, of course."

Hermione looked at the house. It was evidently let out in rooms to people who were comparatively poor; not

very poor, not in any destitution, but who made a modest livelihood, and could pay their fourteen or fifteen lire a month for a lodging. She divined by its aspect that every room was occupied. For the building teemed with life, and echoed with the sound of calling, or screaming, voices. The inhabitants were surely all of them in a flurry of furious activity. Children were playing before and upon the doorstep, which was flanked by an open shop, whose interior revealed with a blatant sincerity a rummage of mysterious edibles, fruit, vegetables, strings of strange objects that looked poisonous, fungi and other delights. Above, from several windows, women leaned out, talking violently to each other. Two were holding babies, who testified their new-born sense of life by screaming shrilly. Across other window-spaces heads passed to and fro, denoting the continuous movement of those within. People in the street called to people in the house, and the latter shouted in answer, with that absolute lack of self-consciousness, and disregard of the opinions of others, which is the hall-mark of the true Neapolitan. From the corner came the rumble and the bell notes of the trams going to and coming from the tunnel that leads to Fuorigrotta. And from every direction rose the vehement street-calls of ambulant vendors of the necessaries of Neapolitan life.

"Ruffo lives here!" said Hermione.

She could hardly believe it. So unsuitable seemed such a dwelling to that bright-eyed child of the sea, whom she had always seen surrounded by the wide airs and the waters.

"Sì, Signora. They are on the third floor. Shall I take you up?"

Hermione hesitated. Should she go up alone?

"Please show me the way," she said, deciding.

Fabiano preceded her up a dirty stone staircase, dark and full of noises, till they came to the third floor.

"It is here, Signora!"

He knocked loudly on a door. It was opened very quickly, as if by someone who was on the watch, expectant of an arrival.

"Chi è?" cried a female voice.

And, almost simultaneously, a woman appeared with eyes that stared in inquiry.

By these eyes, their shape, and the long level brows above them, Hermione knew that this woman must be Ruffo's mother.

"Good morning, Donna Maddalena," said Fabiano heartily.

"Good morning," said the woman, directing her eyes with a strange and pertinacious scrutiny to Hermione, who stood behind him.

"I thought perhaps it was——"

She stopped. Behind, in the doorway, appeared the head of a young woman, covered with blue-black hair, then the questioning face of an old woman with a skin like yellow parchment.

"Don Antonio?"

She nodded, keeping her long, Arab eyes on Hermione.

"No. Are you expecting him so early?"

"He may come at any time. Chi lo sa?"

She shrugged her broad graceless shoulders.

"It isn't he! It isn't Antonio!" bleated a pale and disappointed voice, with a peculiarly irritating timbre.

It was the voice of the old woman, who now darted over Maddalena Bernari's shoulder a hostile glance at Hermione.

"Madonna Santissima!" baaed the woman with the blue-black hair. "Perhaps he will not be let out to-day!"

The old woman began to cry feebly, yet angrily.

"Courage, Madre Teresa!" said Fabiano. "Antonio will be here to-day for a certainty. Everyone knows it. His friends"—he raised a big brown hand significantly—"his friends have managed well for him."

"Sì! sì! It is true!" said the black-haired woman, nodding her large head, and gesticulating towards Madre Teresa. "He will be here to-day. Antonio will be here."

They all stared at Hermione, suddenly forgetting their personal and private affairs.

"Donna Maddalena," said Fabiano, "here is a Signora who knows Ruffo. I met her at the Mergellina, and she asked me to show her the way here."

"Ruffo is out," said Maddalena, always keeping her eyes on Hermione.

"May I come in and speak to you?" said Hermione.

Maddalena looked doubtful, yet curious.

"My son is in the sea, Signora. He is bathing at the Marina."

Hermione thought of the brown body she had seen falling through the shining air, of the gay splash as it entered the water.

"I know your son so well that I should like to know his mother," she said.

Fabiano by this time had moved aside, and the two women were confronting each other in the doorway. Behind Maddalena the two other women stared and listened with all their might, giving their whole attention to this unexpected scene.

"Are you the Signora of the island?" asked Maddalena.

"Yes, I am."

"Let the Signora in, Donna Maddalena," said Fabiano. "She is tired, and wants to rest."

Without saying anything Maddalena moved her broad body from the doorway, leaving enough space for Hermione to enter.

"Thank you," said Hermione to Fabiano, giving him a couple of lire.

"Grazie, Signora. I will wait downstairs to take you back."

He went off before she had time to tell him that was not necessary.

Hermione walked into Ruffo's home.

There were two rooms, one opening into the other. The latter was a kitchen, the former the sleeping-room. Hermione looked quickly round it, and her eyes fell at once upon a large green parrot, which was sitting at the end of the board on which, supported by trestles of iron, the huge bed of Maddalena and her husband was laid. At present this bed was rolled up, and in consequence towered to a considerable height. The parrot looked at Hermione coldly, with round, observant eyes whose pupils kept contracting and expanding with a monotonous regularity. She felt as if it had a soul that was frigidly ironic. Its pertinacious glance chilled and repelled her, and she fancied it was reflected in the faces of the women round her.

"Can I speak to you alone for a few minutes?" she asked Maddalena.

Maddalena turned to the two women and spoke to them loudly in dialect. They replied. The old woman spoke at great length. She seemed always angry, and always upon the verge of tears. Over her shoulders she wore a black shawl, and as she talked she kept fidgeting with it, pulling it first to one side, then to the other, or

dragging at it with her thin and crooked yellow fingers. The parrot watched her steadily. Her hideous voice played upon Hermione's nerves till they felt raw. At length, looking back, as she walked, with bloodshot eyes, she went into the kitchen followed by the young woman. They began talking together in sibilant whispers, like people conspiring.

After a moment of apparent hesitation Maddalena gave her visitor a chair.

"Thank you," Hermione said, taking it.

She looked round the room again. It was clean and well kept, but humbly furnished. Ruffo's bed was rolled up in a corner. On the walls were some shields of postcards and photographs, such as the poor Italians love, deftly enough arranged and fastened together by some mysterious not apparent means. Many of the postcards were American. Near two small flags, American and Italian, fastened crosswise above the head of the big bed, was a portrait of Maria Addolorata, under which burned a tiny light. A palm, blessed, and fashioned like a dagger with a cross for the hilt, was nailed above it, with a coral charm to protect the household against the evil eye. And a little to the right of it was a small object which Hermione saw and wondered at without understanding why it should be there, or what was its use—a "Fattura della Morte," death-charm, in the form of a green lemon pierced with many nails. This hung by a bit of string to a nail projecting from the wall.

From the death-charm Hermione turned her eyes to Maddalena.

She saw a woman who was surely not very much younger than herself, with a broad and spreading figure, wide hips, plump though small-boned arms, heavy shoulders.

The face—that, perhaps—yes, that, certainly, must have been once pretty. Very pretty? Hermione looked searchingly at it, until she saw Maddalena's eyes drop before hers suddenly, as if embarrassed. She must say something. But now that she was here she felt a difficulty in opening a conversation, an intense reluctance to speak to this woman into whose house she had almost forced her way. With the son she was strangely intimate. From the mother she felt separated by a gulf.

And that fear of hers?

She looked again round the room. Had that fear increased or diminished? Her eyes fell on Maria Addolorata, then on the "Fattura della Morte." She did not know why, but she was moved to speak about it.

"You have nice rooms here," she said.

"Sì, Signora."

Maddalena had rather a harsh voice. She spoke politely, but inexpressively.

"What a curious thing that is on the wall!"

"Signora?"

"It's a lemon, isn't it? With nails stuck through it?"

Maddalena's broad face grew a dusky red.

"That is nothing, Signora?" she said hastily.

She looked greatly disturbed, suddenly went over to the bed, unhooked the string from the nail, and put the death-charm into her pocket. As she came back she looked at Hermione with defiance in her eyes.

The gulf between them had widened.

From the kitchen came the persistent sound of whispering voices. The green parrot turned sideways on the board beyond the pile of rolled-up mattresses, and looked, with one round eye, steadfastly at Hermione.

An almost intolerable sensation of desertion swept over her. She felt as if everyone hated her.

"Would you mind shutting that door?" she said to Maddalena, pointing towards the kitchen.

The sound of whispers ceased. The women within were listening.

"Signora, we always keep it open."

"But I have something to say to you that I wish to say in private."

"Sì?"

The exclamation was suspicious. The voice sounded harsher than before. In the kitchen the silence seemed to increase, to thrill with anxious curiosity.

"Please shut that door."

It was like an order. Maddalena obeyed it, despite a cataract of words from the old woman that voiced indignant protest.

"And do sit down, won't you? I don't like to sit while you are standing."

"Signora, I——"

"Please do sit down."

Hermione's voice began to show her acute nervous agitation. Maddalena stared, then took another chair from its place against the wall, and sat down at some distance from Hermione. She folded her plump hands in her lap. Seated, she looked bigger, more graceless than before. But Hermione saw that she was not really middle-aged. Hard life and trouble doubtless had combined to destroy her youth and beauty early, to coarsen the outlines, to plant the many wrinkles that spread from the corners of her eyes and lips to her temples, and her heavy, dusky cheeks. She was now a typical woman of the people. Hermione tried to see her as a girl, long ago—years and years ago.

"I know your son, Ruffo, very well," she said. Maddalena's face softened.

"Sì, Signora. He has told me of you."

Suddenly she seemed to recollect something.

"I have never—— Signora, thank you for the money," she said.

The harshness was withdrawn from her voice as she spoke now, and in her abrupt gentleness she looked much younger than before. Hermione divined in that moment her vanished beauty. It seemed suddenly to be unveiled by her tenderness.

"I heard you were in trouble."

"Sì, Signora—great trouble."

Her eyes filled with tears, and her mouth worked. As if moved by an uncontrollable impulse, she thrust one hand into her dress, drew out the death-charm, and contemplated it, at the same time muttering some words that Hermione did not understand. Her face became full of hatred. Holding up the charm, and lifting her head, she exclaimed:

"Those who bring trouble shall have trouble!"

While she spoke she looked straight before her, and her voice became harsh again, seemed to proclaim to the world unalterable destiny.

"Yes," said Hermione, in a low voice.

Maddalena hid the death-charm once more with a movement that was surreptitious.

"Yes," Hermione said again, gazing into Maddalena's still beautiful eyes. "And you have trouble!"

Maddalena looked afraid, like an ignorant person whose tragic superstition is proved true by an assailing fact.

"Signora!"

"You have trouble in your house. Have you ever brought trouble to anyone? Have you?"

Maddalena stared at her with dilated eyes, but made no answer.

"Tell me something"—Hermione leaned forward. "You know my servant, Gaspare?"

Maddalena was silent.

"You know Gaspare. Did you know him in Sicily?"

"Sicily?"

Her face and her voice had become stupid.

"Sicily?" she repeated.

The parrot shifted on the board, lifted its left claw, and craned its head forward in the direction of the two women. The tram-bell sounded its reiterated appeal.

"Yes, in Sicily. You are a Sicilian?"

"Who says so?"

"Your son is a Sicilian. At the port they call him 'Il Siciliano.'"

"Do they?"

Her intellect seemed to be collapsing. She looked almost bovine.

Hermione's excitement began to be complicated by a feeling of hot anger.

"But don't you know it? You must know it!"

The parrot shuffled slowly along the board, coming nearer to them and bowing its head obsequiously. Hermione could not help watching its movements with a strained attention. Its presence distracted her. She had a longing to take it up and wring its neck. Yet she loved birds.

"You must know it!" she repeated, no longer looking at Maddalena.

"Sì?"

All ignorance and all stupidity were surely enshrined in that word thus said.

"Where did you know Gaspare?"

"Who says I know Gaspare?"

The way in which she pronounced his name revealed to Hermione a former intimacy between them.

"Ruffo says so."

The parrot was quite at the edge of the board now, listening apparently with cold intensity to every word that was being said. And Hermione felt that behind the kitchen door the two women were straining their ears to catch the conversation. Was the whole world listening? Was the whole world coldly, cruelly intent upon her painful effort to come out of darkness into—perhaps a greater darkness?

"Ruffo says so. Ruffo told me so."

"Boys say anything."

"Do you mean it is not true?"

Maddalena's face was now almost devoid of expression. She had set her knees wide apart and planted her hands on them.

"Do you mean that?" repeated Hermione.

"Boys——"

"I know it is true. You knew Gaspare in Sicily. You come from Marechiaro."

At the mention of the last word light broke into Maddalena's face.

"You are from Marechiaro. Have you ever seen me before? Do you remember me?"

Maddalena shook her head.

"And I—I don't remember you. But you are from Marechiaro. You must be."

Maddalena shook her head again.

"You are not?"

Hermione looked into the long Arab eyes, searching for a lie. She met a gaze that was steady but dull, almost like that of a sulky child, and for a moment she felt as if this woman was only a great child, heavy, ignorant, but solemnly determined, a child that had learnt its lesson and was bent on repeating it word for word.

"Did Gaspare come here early this morning to see you?" she asked, with sudden vehemence.

Maddalena was obviously startled. Her face flushed.

"Why should he come?" she said, almost angrily.

"That is what I want you to tell me."

Maddalena was silent. She shifted uneasily in her chair, which creaked under her weight, and twisted her full lips sideways. Her whole body looked half-sleepily apprehensive. The parrot watched her with supreme attention. Suddenly Hermione felt that she could no longer bear this struggle, that she could no longer continue in darkness, that she must have full light. The contemplation of this stolid ignorance—that yet knew how much!—confronting her like a featureless wall almost maddened her.

"Who are you?" she said. "What have you had to do with my life?"

Maddalena looked at her and looked away, bending her head sideways till her plump neck was like a thing deformed.

"What have you had to do with my life? What have you to do with it now? I want to know"—she stood up—"I must know. You must tell me! Do you hear?"—She bent down. She was standing almost over Maddalena—"You must tell me!"

There was again a silence, through which presently

the tram-bell sounded. Maddalena's face had become heavily expressionless, almost like a face of stone. And Hermione, looking down at this face, felt a moment of impotent despair, that was succeeded by a fierce, energetic impulse.

"Then——" she said; "then—I'll tell you!"

Maddalena looked up.

"Yes, I'll tell you."

Hermione paused. She had begun to tremble. She put one hand down to the back of the chair, grasping it tightly as if to steady herself.

"I'll tell you."

What? What was she going to tell?

That first evening in Sicily—just before they went in to bed—Maurice had looked down over the terrace wall to the sea. He had seen a light—far down by the sea.

It was the light in the House of the Sirens.

"You once lived in Sicily. You once lived in the Casa delle Sirene, beyond the old wall, beyond the inlet. You were there when we were in Sicily, when Gaspare was with us as our servant."

Maddalena's lips parted. Her mouth began to gape. It was obvious that she was afraid.

"You—you knew Gaspare. You knew—you knew my husband, the Signore of the Casa del Prete on Monte Amato. You knew him. Do you remember?"

Maddalena only stared up at her with a sort of heavy apprehension, sitting widely in her chair, with her feet apart and her hands always resting on her knees.

"It was in the summer-time——" She was again in Sicily. She was tracing out a story. It was almost as if she saw words and read them from a book. "There were no forestieri in Sicily. They had all gone. Only we were

there——” An expression so faint that it was like a fleeting shadow passed over Maddalena’s face, the fleeting shadow of something that denied—“Ah, yes! Till I went away, you mean! I went to Africa. Did you know it then? But before I went—before——” She was thinking, she was burrowing deep down into the past, stirring the heap of memories that lay like drifted leaves. “They used to go—at least they went once—down to the sea. One night they went to the fishing. And they slept out all night. They slept in the caves. Ah, you know that? You remember that night!”

The trembling that shook her body was reflected in her voice, which became tremulous. She heard the trambell ringing. She saw the green parrot listening on its board. And yet she was in Sicily, and saw the line of the coast between Messina and Cattaro, the Isle of the Sirens, the lake-like sea of the inlet between it and the shore.

“I see that you remember it. You saw them there. They—they didn’t tell me!”

As she said the last words she felt that she was entering the great darkness. Maurice and Gaspare—she had trusted them with all her nature. And they—had they failed her? Was that possible?

“They didn’t tell me,” she repeated piteously, speaking now only for herself and to her own soul. “They didn’t tell me!”

Maddalena shook her head like one in sympathy or agreement. But Hermione did not see the movement. She no longer saw Maddalena. She saw only herself, and those two, whom she had trusted so completely, and—who had not told her.

What had they not told her?

And then she was in Africa, beside the bed of Artois, ministering to him in the torrid heat, driving away the flies from his white face.

What had been done in the Garden of Paradise while she had been in exile?

She turned suddenly sick. Her body felt ashamed, defiled. A shutter seemed to be sharply drawn across her eyes, blotting out life. Her head was full of sea-like noises.

Presently, from among these noises, one detached itself, pushed itself, as it were, forward to attract forcibly her attention; the sound of a boy's voice.

"Signora! Signora!"

"Signora!"

A hand touched her, gripped her.

"Signora!"

The shutter was sharply drawn back from her eyes, and she saw Ruffo. He stood before her, gazing at her. His hair, wet from the sea, was plastered down upon his brown forehead—as *his* hair had been when, in the night, they drew him from the sea.

She saw Ruffo in that moment as if for the first time. And she knew. Ruffo had told her.

CHAPTER XVI.

HERMIONE was outside in the street, hearing the cries of the ambulant sellers, the calls of women and children, the tinkling bells and the rumble of the trams, and the voice of Fabiano Lari speaking—was it to her?

"Signora, did you see him?"

"Yes."

"He is glad to be out of prison. He is gay, but he looks wicked."

She did not understand what he meant. She walked on and came into the road that leads to the tunnel. She turned mechanically towards the tunnel, drawn by its darkness.

"But, Signora, this is not the way! This is the way to Fuorigrotta!"

"Oh!"

She went towards the sea. She was thinking of the green parrot, expanding and contracting the pupils of its round ironic eyes.

"Was Maddalena pleased to see him? Was Donna Teresa pleased?"

Hermione stood still.

"What are you talking about?"

"Signora! about Antonio Bernari, who has just come home from prison! Didn't you see him? But you were there—in the house!"

"Oh—yes, I saw him. A rivederci!"

"Ma——"

"A rivederci!"

She felt in her purse, found a coin and gave it to him. Then she walked on. She did not see him any more. She did not know what became of him.

Of course she had seen the return of Antonio Bernari. She remembered now. As Ruffo stood before her with the wet hair on his forehead there had come a shrill cry from the old woman in the kitchen: a cry that was hideous and yet almost beautiful, so full it was of joy. Then from the kitchen the two women had rushed in, gesticulating, ejaculating, their faces convulsed with excitement. They

had seized Maddalena, Ruffo. One of them—the old woman, she thought—had even clutched at Hermione's arm. The room had been full of cries,

“Ecco! Antonio!”

“Antonio is coming!”

“I have seen Antonio!”

“He is pale! He is white like death!”

“Mamma mia! But he is thin!”

“Ecco! Ecco! He comes! Here he is! Here is Antonio!”

And then the door had been opened, and on the sill a big, broad-shouldered man had appeared, followed by several other evil-looking, though smiling men. And all the women had hurried to them. There had been shrill cries, a babel of voices, a noise of kisses.

And Ruffo? Where had he been? What had he done?

Hermione only knew that she had heard a rough voice saying:

“Sangue del Diavolo! Let me alone! Give me a glass of wine! Basta! basta!”

And then she went out into the street, thinking of the green parrot and hearing the cries of the sellers, the trambells, and Fabiano's questioning voice.

Now she continued her walk towards the harbour of Mergellina alone. The thought of the green parrot obsessed her mind.

She saw it before her on its board, with the rolled-up bed towering behind it. Now it was motionless—only the pupils of its eyes moved. Now it lifted its claw, bowed its head, shuffled along the board to hear their conversation better.

She saw it with extreme distinctness, and now she saw also on the wall of the room near it the “Fattura

della Morte," the green lemon with the nails stuck through it—like nails driven into a cross.

Vaguely the word "crucifixion" went through her mind. Many people, many women, had surely been crucified since the greatest tragedy the world had ever known. What had they felt, they who were only human, they who could not see the face of the Father, who could—some of them, perhaps—only hope that there was a Father? What had they felt? Perhaps scarcely anything. Perhaps merely a sensation of numbness, as if their whole bodies, and their minds too, were under the influence of a great injection of cocaine. Her thoughts again returned to the parrot. She wondered where it had been bought, whether it had come with Antonio from America.

Presently she reached the tramway station and stood still. She had to go back to the "Trattoria del Giardinetto." She must take a tram here, one of those on which was written in big letters: "Capo di Posilipo." No, not that! That did not go far enough. The other one—what was written upon it? Something—Sette Settembre. She looked for the words, "Sette Settembre."

Tram after tram came up, paused, passed on. But she did not see those words on any of them. She began to think of the sea, of the brown body of the bathing boy which she had seen shoot through the air and disappear into the shining water before she had gone to that house where the green parrot was. She would go down to the sea, to the harbour.

She threaded her way across the broad space, going in and out among the trams and the waiting people. Then she went down a road not far from the Grand Hotel and came to the Marina.

There were boys bathing still from the breakwater of

the rocks. And still they were shouting. She stood by the wall and watched them, resting her hands on the stone.

How hot the stone was! Gaspare had been right. It was going to be a glorious day, one of the tremendous days of summer.

The nails driven through the green lemon like nails driven through a cross—Peppina—the cross cut on Peppina's cheek.

That broad-shouldered man who had come in at the door had cut that cross on Peppina's cheek.

Was it true that Peppina had the evil eye? Had it been a fatal day for the Casa del Mare when she had been allowed to cross its threshold? Vere had said something,—what was it?—about Peppina and her cross. Oh, yes! That Peppina's cross seemed like a sign, a warning come into the house on the island, that it seemed to say there is a cross to be borne by someone here, by one of us!

And the fishermen's sign of the cross under the light of San Francesco?

Surely there had been many warnings in her life. They had been given to her, but she had not heeded them.

She saw a brown body shoot through the air from the rocks and disappear into the shining sea. Was it Ruffo? With an effort she remembered that she had left Ruffo in the tall house, in the room where the green parrot was.

She walked on slowly till she came to the place where Artois had seen Ruffo with his mother. A number of tables was set out, but there were few people sitting at them. She felt tired. She crossed the road, went to a table and sat down. A waiter came up and asked her what she would have.

"Acqua fresca," she said.

He looked surprised.

"Oh—then wine, vermouth—anything!"

He looked more surprised.

"Will you have vermouth, Signora?"

"Yes, yes—vermouth."

He brought her vermouth and iced water. She mixed them together and drank. But she was not conscious of tasting anything. For a considerable time she sat there. People passed her. The trams rushed by. On several of them were printed the words she had looked for in vain at the station. But she did not notice them.

During this time she did not feel unhappy. Seldom had she felt calmer, more at rest, more able to be still. She had no desire to do anything. It seemed to her that she would be quite satisfied to sit where she was in the sun for ever.

While she sat there she was always thinking, but vaguely, slowly, lethargically. And her thoughts reiterated themselves, were like recurring fragments of dreams, and were curiously linked together. The green parrot she always connected with the death-charm, because the latter had once been green. Whenever the one presented itself to her mind it was immediately followed by the other. The shawl at which the old woman's yellow fingers had perpetually pulled led her mind to the thought of the tunnel, because she imagined that the latter must eventually end in blackness, and the shawl was black. She knew, of course, really that the tunnel was lit from end to end by electricity. But her mind arbitrarily put aside this knowledge. It did not belong to her strange mood, the mood of one drawing near to the verge either of some abominable collapse or of some terrible activity. Oc-

asionally she thought of Ruffo: but always as one of the brown boys bathing from the rocks beyond the harbour, shouting, laughing, triumphant in his glorious youth. And when the link was, as it were, just beginning to form itself from the thought-shape of youth to another thought-shape, her mind stopped short in that progress, recoiled, like a creature recoiling from a precipice it has not seen but has divined in the dark. She sipped the vermouth and the iced water, and stared at the drops chasing each other down the clouded glass. And for a time she was not conscious where she was, and heard none of the noises round about her.

“Quanno fa notte 'nterra Mergellina,
 Se sceta 'o mare e canta chiano, chiano,
 Si fa chiu doce st' aria d'a Marina,
 Pure 'e serene cantano 'a luntano.
 Quanno fa notte 'nterra Mergellina,
 E custa luna dint' 'essere e state
 Lo vularria durmi, ma nun e cosa;
 Me scetene d' 'o suonno 'e sti sarate,
 O' Mare, 'e Mergellina, e l'uocchie 'e Rosa!”

It was the song of Mergellina, sung at some distance off in dialect, by a tenor voice to the accompaniment of a piano-organ. Hermione ceased from gazing at the drops on the glass, looked up, listened.

The song came nearer. The tenor voice was hard, strident, sang lustily but inexpressively in the glaring sunshine. And the dialect made the song seem different, almost new. Its charm seemed to have evaporated. Yet she remembered vaguely that it had charmed her. She sought for the charm, striving feebly to recapture it.

“E custa luna dint' 'essere e state——”

The piano-organ hurt her, the hard voice hurt her. It sounded cruel and greedy. But the song—once it had

appealed to her. Once she had leaned down to hear it, she had leaned down over the misty sea, her soul had followed it out over the sea.

“Oh, dolce luna bianca de l’Estate
Mi fugge il sonno accanto a la Marina:
Mi destan le dolcissime serate
Gli occhi di Rosa e il mar di Mergellina.”

Those were the real words. And what voice had sung them?

And then, suddenly, her brain worked once more with its natural swiftness and vivacity, her imagination and her heart awaked. She was again alive. She saw the people. She heard the sounds about her. She felt the scorching heat of the sun. But in it she was conscious also of the opposite of day, of the opposite of heat. At that moment she had a double consciousness. For she felt the salt coolness of the night around the lonely island. And she heard not only the street-singer but Ruffo in his boat.

Ruffo—in his boat!

Suddenly she could not see anything. Her sight was drowned by tears. She got up at once. She felt for her purse, found it, opened it, felt for money, found some coins, laid them down on the table, and began to walk. She was driven by fear, the fear of falling down in the sun in the sight of all men, and crying, sobbing, with her face against the ground. She heard a shout. Someone gave her a violent push, thrusting her forward. She stumbled, recovered herself. A passer-by had saved her from a tram. She did not know it. She did not look at him or thank him. He went away, swearing at the English. Where was she going?

She must go home. She must go to the island. She must go to Vere, to Gaspare, to Emile—to her life.

Her body and soul revolted from the thought, her outraged body and her outraged soul, which were just beginning to feel their outrage, as flesh and nerves begin to feel pain after an operation when the effect of the anæsthetic gradually fades away.

She was walking up the hill and still crying.

She met a boy of the people, swarthy, with impudent black eyes, tangled hair, and a big, pouting mouth, above which a premature moustache showed like a smudge. He looked into her face and began to laugh. She saw his white teeth, and her tears rushed back to their sources. At once her eyes were dry. And, almost at once, she thought, her heart became hard as stone, and she felt self-control like iron within her.

That boy of the people should be the last human being to laugh at her.

She saw a tram stop. It went to the "Trattoria del Giardinetto." She got in, and sat down next to two thin English ladies, who held guide-books in their hands, and whose pointed features looked piteously inquiring.

"Excuse me, but do you know this neighbourhood?"

She was being addressed.

"Yes."

"That is fortunate—we do not. Perhaps you will kindly tell us something about it. Is it far to Bagnoli?"

"Not very far."

"And when you get there?"

"I beg your pardon!"

"When you get there, is there much to see?"

"Not so very much."

"Can one lunch there?"

"No doubt."

"Yes. But I mean, what sort of lunch? Can one

get anything clean and wholesome, such as you get in England?"

"It would be Italian food."

"Oh dear! Fanny, this lady says we can only get Italian food at Bagnoli!"

"Tcha! Tcha!"

"But perhaps—excuse me, but do you think we could get a good cup of tea there? We might manage with that—tea and some boiled eggs. Don't you think so, Fanny? Could we get a cup of——"

The tram stopped. Hermione had pulled the cord that made the bell sound. She paid and got down. The tram carried away the English ladies, their pointed features red with surprise and indignation.

Hermione again began to walk, but almost directly she saw a wandering carriage and hailed the driver.

"Carrozza!"

She got in.

"Put me down at the 'Trattoria del Giardinetto.'"

"Sì, Signora—But how much are you going to give me? I can't take you for less than——"

"Anything—five lire—drive on at once."

The man drove on, grinning.

Presently Hermione was walking through the short tunnel that leads to the path descending between vineyards to the sea. She must take a boat to the island. She must go back to the island. Where else could she go? If Vere had not been there she might—but Vere was there. It was inevitable. She must return to the island.

She stood still in the path, between the high banks.

Her body was demanding not to be forced by the will to go to the island.

"I must go back to the island."

She walked on very slowly till she could see the shining water over the sloping, vine-covered land. The sight of the water reminded her that Gaspare would be waiting for her on the sand below the village. When she remembered that she stopped again. Then she turned round, and began to walk back towards the highroad.

Gaspare was waiting. If she went down to the sand she would have to meet his great intent eyes, those watchful eyes full of questions. He would read her. He would see in a moment that—she knew. And he would see more than that! He would see that she was hating him. The hatred was only dawning, struggling up in her tangled heart. But it existed—it was there. And he would see that it was there.

She walked back till she reached the tunnel under the highroad. But she did not pass through it. She could not face the highroad with its traffic. Perhaps the English ladies would be coming back. Perhaps—— She turned again and presently sat down on a bank, and looked at the dry and wrinkled ground. Nobody went by. The lizards ran about near her feet. She sat there for over an hour, scarcely moving, with the sun beating upon her head.

Then she got up, and walked fast, and with a firm step, towards the village and the sea.

The village is only a tiny hamlet, ending in a small trattoria with a rough terrace above the sea, overlooking a strip of sand where a few boats lie. As Hermione came to the steps that lead down to the terrace she stood still and looked over the wall on her left. The boat from the island was at anchor there, floating motionless on the still water. Gaspare was not in it, but was lying stretched on his back on the sand, with his white linen hat over his face.

He lay like one dead.

She stood and watched him, as she might have watched the corpse of someone she had cared for, but who was gone from her for ever.

Perhaps he was not asleep, for, almost directly, he became aware of her observation, sat up, and uncovered his face, turning towards her and looking up. Already, and from this distance, she could see a fierce inquiry in his eyes.

She made a determined effort, and waved her hand.

Gaspare sprang to his feet, took out his watch, looked at it, then went and fetched the boat.

His action—the taking out of the watch—reminded Hermione of time. She looked at her watch. It was half-past two. On the island they lunched at half-past twelve. Gaspare must have been waiting for hours. What did it matter?

She made another determined effort, and went down the remaining steps to the beach.

Gaspare should not know that she knew. She was resolved upon that, concentrated upon that. Continually she saw in front of her the pouting mouth, the white teeth of the boy who had laughed at her in the street. There should be no more crying, no more visible despair. No one should see any difference in her. All the time that she had been sitting still in the sun upon the bank she had been fiercely schooling herself in an act new to her—the act of deception. She had not faced the truth that to-day she knew. She had not faced the ruin that its knowledge had made of all that had been sacred and lovely in her life. She had fastened her whole force fanatically upon that one idea, that one decision and the effort that was the corollary of it.

"There shall be no difference in me. No one is to know that anything has happened."

At that moment she was a fanatic. And she looked like one as she came down upon the sand.

"I'm afraid I'm rather late—Gaspare."

It was difficult to her to say his name. But she said it firmly.

"Signora, it is nearly three o'clock."

"Half-past two. No, I can get in all right."

He had put out his arm to help her into the boat. But she could not touch him. She knew that. She felt that she would rather die at the moment than touch, or be touched, by him.

"You might take away your arm."

He dropped his arm at once.

Had she already betrayed herself?

She got into the boat, and he pushed off.

Usually he sat when he was rowing, so that he might keep his face towards her. But to-day he stood up to row, turning his back to her. And this change of conduct made her say to herself again.

"Have I betrayed myself already?"

Fiercely she resolved to be and to do the impossible. It was the only chance. For Gaspare was difficult to deceive.

"Gaspare!" she said.

"Si, Signora," he replied, without turning his head.

"Can't you row sitting down?"

"If you like, Signora."

"We can talk better then."

"Va bene, Signora."

He turned round and sat down.

The boat was at this moment just off the "Palace of

the Spirits." Hermione saw its shattered walls, cruelly lit up by the blazing sun, its gaping window-spaces like eye-sockets, sightless, staring, horribly suggestive of ruin and despair.

She was like that. Gaspare was looking at her. Gaspare must know that she was like that.

But she was a fanatic, just then, and she smiled at him with a resolution that had in it something almost brutal, something the opposite of what she was, of the sum of her.

"I forgot the time. It is so lovely to-day. It was so gay at Mergellina.

"Sì?"

"I sat for a long time watching the boats, and the boys bathing, and listening to the music. They sang 'A Mergellina.'"

"Sì?"

She smiled again.

"And I went to visit Ruffo's mother."

Gaspare made no response. He looked down now as he plied his oars.

"She seems a nice woman. I—I daresay she was quite pretty once."

The voice that was speaking now was the voice of a fanatic.

"I am sure she must have been pretty."

"Chi lo sa?"

"If one looks carefully one can see the traces. But of course now——"

She stopped abruptly. It was impossible for her to go on. She was passionately trying to imagine what that spreading, graceless woman, with her fat hands resting on her knees set wide apart, was like once—was like

nearly seventeen years ago. Was she ever pretty, beautiful? Never could she have been intelligent—never, never. Then she must have been beautiful. For, otherwise—— Hermione's drawn face was flooded with scarlet.

"If—if it's easier to you to row standing up, Gaspare," she almost stammered, "never mind about sitting down."

"I think it is easier, Signora."

He got up, and once more turned his back upon her.

They did not speak again until they reached the island.

Hermione watched his strong body swinging to and fro with every stroke, and wondered if he felt the terrible change in her feeling for him, a change that a few hours ago she would have thought utterly impossible.

She wondered if Gaspare knew that she was hating him.

He was alive and, therefore, to be hated. For surely we cannot hate the dust!

CHAPTER XVII.

GASPARE did not offer to help Hermione out of the boat when they reached the island. He glanced at her face, met her eyes, looked away again immediately, and stood holding the boat while she got out. Even when she stumbled slightly he made no movement; but he turned and gazed after her as she went up the steps towards the house, and as he gazed his face worked, his lips muttered words, and his eyes, become almost ferocious in their tragic gloom, were clouded with moisture. Angrily he fastened the boat, angrily he laid by the oars. In everything he did there was violence. He put up his

hands to his eyes to rub the moisture that clouded them away. But it came again. And he swore under his breath. He looked once more towards the Casa del Mare. The figure of his Padrona had disappeared, but he remembered just how it had gone up the steps—leaning forward, moving very slowly. It had made him think of an early morning long ago, when he and his Padrona had followed a coffin down the narrow street of Marechiaro, and over the mountain path to the Campo Santo above the Ionian Sea. He shook his head, murmuring to himself. He was not swearing now. He shook his head again and again. Then he went away, and sat down under the shadow of the cliff, and let his hands drop down between his knees.

The look he had seen in his Padrona's eyes had made him feel terrible. His violent, faithful heart was tormented. He did not analyse—he only knew, he only felt. And he suffered horribly. How had his Padrona been able to look at him like that?

The moisture came thickly in his eyes now, and he no longer attempted to rub it away. He no longer thought of it.

Never had he imagined that his Padrona could look at him like that. Strong man though he was, he felt as a child might who is suddenly abandoned by its mother. He began to think now. He thought over all he had done to be faithful to his dead Padrone and to be faithful to the Padrona. During many, many years he had done all he could to be faithful to these two, the dead and the living. And at the end of this long service he received as a reward this glance of hatred.

Tears rolled down his sunburnt cheeks.

The injustice of it was like a barbed and poisoned

arrow in his heart. He was not able to understand what his Padrona was feeling, how, by what emotional pilgrimage, she had reached that look of hatred which she had cast upon him. If she had not returned, if she had done some deed of violence in the house of Maddalena, he could perhaps have comprehended it. But that she should come back, that she should smile, make him sit facing her, talk about Maddalena as she had talked, and then—then look at him like that!

His *amour-propre*, his long fidelity, his deep affection—all were outraged.

Vere came down the steps and found him there.

“Gaspare!”

He got up hastily when he heard her voice, rubbed his eyes and yawned.

“I was asleep, Signorina.”

She looked at him intently, and he saw tears in her eyes.

“Gaspare, what is the matter with Madre?”

“Signorina?”

“Oh, what is the matter?” She came a step nearer to him. “Gaspare, I’m frightened! I’m frightened!”

She laid her hand on his arm.

“Why, Signorina? Have you seen the Padrona?”

“No. But—but—I’ve heard—— What is it? What has happened? Where has Madre been all this time? Has she been in Naples?”

“Signorina, I don’t think so.”

“Where has she been?”

“I believe the Signora has been to Mergellina.”

Vere began to tremble.

“What can have happened there? What can have happened?”

She trembled in every limb. Her face had become white.

"Signorina, Signorina! Are you ill?"

"No—I don't know what to do—what I ought to do. I'm afraid to speak to the servants—they are making the siesta. Gaspare, come with me, and tell me what we ought to do. But—never say to anyone—never say—if you hear!"

"Signorina!"

He had caught her terror. His huge eyes looked awestruck.

"Come with me, Gaspare!"

Making an obvious and great effort, she controlled her body, turned and went before him to the house. She walked softly, and he imitated her. They almost crept upstairs till they reached the landing outside Hermione's bedroom door. There they stood for two or three minutes listening.

"Come away, Gaspare!"

Vere had whispered with lips that scarcely moved.

When they were in Hermione's sitting-room she caught hold of both his hands. She was a mere child now, a child craving for help.

"Oh, Gaspare, what are we to do? Oh—I'm—I'm frightened! I can't bear it!"

The door of the room was open.

"Shut it!" she said. "Shut it, then we sha'n't——"

He shut it.

"What can it be? what can it be?"

She looked at him, followed his eyes. He had stared towards the writing-table, then at the floor near it. On the table lay a quantity of fragments of broken glass, and a silver photograph-frame bent, almost broken. On the floor was scattered a litter of cardboard.

"She came in here! Madre was in here——"

She bent down to the carpet, picked up some of the bits of cardboard, turned them over, looked at them. Then she began to tremble again.

"It's father's photograph!"

She was now utterly terrified.

"Oh, Gaspare! Oh, Gaspare!"

She began to sob.

"Hush, Signorina! Hush!"

He spoke almost sternly, bent down, collected the fragments of cardboard from the floor and put them into his pocket.

"Father's photograph! She was in here—she came in here to do that! And she loves that photograph. She loves it!"

"Hush, Signorina! Don't, Signorina! don't!"

"We must do something! We must——"

He made her sit down. He stood by her.

"What shall we do, Gaspare? What shall we do?"

She looked up at him, demanding counsel. She put out her hands again, and touched his arm. His Padroncina—she at least still loved, still trusted him.

"Signorina," he said, "we can't do anything."

His voice was fatalistic.

"But—what is it? Is—is——"

A frightful question was trembling on her lips. She looked again at the fragments of cardboard in her hand, at the broken frame on the table.

"Can Madre be——"

She stopped. Her terror was increasing. She remembered many small mysteries in the recent conduct of her mother, many moments when she had been surprised, or made vaguely uneasy, by words or acts of her mother.

Monsieur Emile, too, he had wondered, and more than once. She knew that. And Gaspare—she was sure that he, also, had seen that change which now, abruptly, had thus terribly culminated. Once in the boat she had asked him what was the matter with her mother: and he had, almost angrily, denied that anything was the matter. But she had seen in his eyes that he was acting a part—that he wished to detach her observation from her mother.

Her trembling ceased. Her little fingers closed more tightly on his arm. Her eyes became imperious.

“Gaspare, you are to tell me. I can bear it. You know something about Madre.”

“Signorina——”

“Do you think I’m a coward? I was frightened—I am frightened, but I’m not really a coward, Gaspare. I can bear it. What is it you know?”

“Signorina, we can’t do anything.”

“Is it—— Does Monsieur Emile know what it is?”

He did not answer.

Suddenly she got up, went to the door, opened it, and listened. The horror came into her face again.

“I can’t bear it,” she said. “I—I shall have to go into the room.”

“No, Signorina. You are not to go in.”

“If the door isn’t locked I must——”

“It is locked.”

“You don’t know. You can’t know.”

“I know it is locked, Signorina.”

Vere put her hands to her eyes.

“It’s too dreadful! I didn’t know anyone—I have never heard——”

Gaspare went to her and shut the door resolutely.

“You are not to listen, Signorina. You are not to listen.”

He spoke no longer like a servant, but like a master. Vere's hands had dropped.

"I am going to send for Monsieur Emile," she said.

"Va bene, Signorina."

She went quickly to the writing-table, sat down, hesitated. Her eyes were riveted upon the photograph-frame.

"How could she? How could she?" she said, in a choked voice.

Gaspare took the frame away reverently, and put it against his breast, inside his shirt.

"I can't go to Don Emilio, Signorina. I cannot leave you."

"No, Gaspare. Don't leave me! Don't leave me!"

She was the terrified child again.

"Perhaps we can find a fisherman, Signorina."

"Yes, but don't— Wait for me, Gaspare!"

"I am not going, Signorina."

With feverish haste she took a pen and a sheet of paper, and wrote:

"DEAR MONSIEUR EMILE,

"Please come to the island *at once*. Something terrible has happened. I don't know what it is. But Madre is—— No, I can't put it. Oh, *do come*—please—please come!

"VERE.

"Come the *quickest* way."

When the paper was shut in an envelope and addressed she got up. Gaspare held out his hand.

"I will go and look for a fisherman, Signorina."

"But I must come with you. I must keep with you." She held on to his arm.

"I'm not a coward. But I can't—I can't——"

"Sì, Signorina! Sì, Signorina!"

He took her hand and held it. They went to the door. When he put out his other hand to open it Vere shivered.

"If we can't do anything let us go down quickly, Gaspare!"

"Sì, Signorina. We will go quickly."

He opened the door, and they went out.

In the Pool of the Saint there was no boat. They went to the crest of the island and looked out over the sea. Not far off, between the island and Nisida, there was a boat. Gaspare put his hands to his mouth and hailed her with all his might. The two men in her heard, and came towards the shore.

A few minutes later, with money in their pockets, and set but cheerful faces, they were rowing with all their strength in the direction of Naples.

That afternoon Artois, wishing to distract his thoughts, and quite unable to work, went up the hill to the Monastery of San Martino. He returned to the hotel towards sunset, feeling weary and depressed, companionless, too, in this gay summer world. Although he had never been deeply attached to the Marchesino he had liked him, been amused by him, grown accustomed to him. He missed the "Toledo incarnato." And as he walked along the Marina he felt for a moment almost inclined to go away from Naples. But the people of the island! Could he leave them just now? Could he leave Hermione so near to the hands of Fate, those hands which were surely stretched out towards her, which might grasp her at any moment, even to-night, and alter her life for ever? No, he knew he could not.

"There is a note for Monsieur!"

He took it from the hall porter.

"No, I'll walk upstairs."

He had seen that the lift was not below, and did not wish to wait for its descent. Vere's writing was on the envelope he held; but Vere's writing distorted, frantic, tragic. He knew before he opened the envelope that it must contain some dreadful statement or some wild appeal; and he hurried to his room, almost feeling the pain and fear of the writer burn through the paper to his hand.

"DEAR MONSIEUR EMILE,

"Please come to the island *at once*. Something terrible has happened. I don't know what it is. But Madre is—— No, I can't put it. Oh, *do come*—please—please come!

"VERE.

"Come the *quickest* way."

"Something terrible has happened." He knew at once what it was. The walls of the cell in which he had inclosed his friend had crumbled away. The spirit which for so long had rested upon a lie had been torn from its repose, had been scourged to its feet to face the fierce light of truth. How would it face the truth?

"But Madre is—— No, I can't put it."

That phrase struck a chill almost of horror to his soul. He stared at it for a moment trying to imagine—things. Then he tore the note up.

The quickest way to the island!

"I shall not be in to dinner to-night."

He was speaking to the waiter at the door of the Egyptian room. A minute later he was in the Via Chiatamone at the back of the hotel waiting for the tram. He must go by Posilipo to the Trattoria del Giardinetto, walk down to the village below, and take a boat from there to the island. That was the quickest way. The

tram bell sounded. Was he glad? As he watched the tram gliding towards him he was conscious of an almost terrible reluctance—a reluctance surely of fear—to go that night to the island.

But he must go.

The sun was setting when he got down before the Trattoria del Giardinetto. Three soldiers were sitting at a table outside on the dusty road, clinking their glasses of marsala together, and singing, "Piange Rosina! La Mamma ci domanda." Their brown faces looked vivid with the careless happiness of youth. As Artois went down from the road into the tunnel their lusty voices died away:

"Io ti voglio dare
Un soldato Bersagliere,
Io ti voglio dare
Un soldato Bersagliere.
Soldato Bersagliere
Io non lo voglio—no!
Io non lo voglio—no!"

Because his instinct was to walk slowly, to linger on the way, he walked very fast. The slanting light fell gently, delicately, over the opulent vineyards, where peasants were working in huge straw hats, over the still shining but now reposeful sea. In the sky there was a mystery of colour, very pure, very fragile, like the mystery of colour in a curving shell of the sea. The pomp and magnificence of sunset were in abeyance to-night, were laid aside. And the sun, like some spirit modestly radiant, slipped from this world of vineyards and of waters almost surreptitiously, yet shedding exquisite influences in his going.

And in the vineyards, as upon the dusty highroad, the people of the South were singing.

The sound of their warm voices, rising in the golden air towards the tender beauty of the virginal evening sky, moved Artois to a sudden longing for a universal brotherhood of happiness, for happy men on a happy earth, men knowing the truth and safe in their knowledge. And he longed, too, just then to give happiness. A strongly generous emotion stirred him, and went from him, like one of the slanting rays of light from the sun, towards the island, towards his friend, Hermione. His reluctance, his sense of fear, were lessened, nearly died away. His quickness of movement was no longer a fight against, but a fulfilment of desire.

Once she had helped him. Once she had even, perhaps, saved him from death. She had put aside her own happiness. She had shown the divine self-sacrifice of woman.

And now, after long years, life brought to him an hour which would prove him, prove him and show how far he was worthy of the friendship which had been shed, generously as the sunshine over these vineyards of the South, upon him and his life.

He came down to the sea and met the fisherman, Giovanni, upon the sand.

"Row me quickly to the island, Giovanni!" he said.

"Sì, Signore."

He ran to get the boat.

The light began to fail over the sea. They cleared the tiny harbour and set out on their voyage.

"The Signora has been here to-day, Signore," said Giovanni.

"Sì? When did she come?"

"This morning, with Gaspare, to take the tram to Mergellina."

"She went to Mergellina?"

"Sì, Signore. And she was gone a very long time. Gaspare was back for her at half-past eleven, and she did not come till nearly three. Gaspare was in a state, I can tell you. I have known him—for years I have known him—and never have I seen him as he was to-day."

"And the Signora? When she came did she look tired?"

"Signore, the Signora's face was like the face of one who has been looked on by the evil eye."

"Row quickly, Giovanni!"

"Sì, Signore."

The man talked no more.

When they came in sight of the island the last rays of the sun were striking upon the windows of the Casa del Mare.

The boat, urged by Giovanni's powerful arms, drew rapidly near to the land, and Artois, leaning forward with an instinct to help the rower, fixed his eyes upon these windows which, like swift jewels, focussed and gave back the light. While he watched them the sun sank. Its radiance was withdrawn. He saw no longer jewels, casements of magic, but only the windows of the familiar house; and then, presently, only the window of one room, Hermione's. His eyes were fixed on that as the boat drew nearer and nearer—were almost hypnotised by that. Where was Hermione? What was she doing? How was she? how would she be, now that—she knew? A terrible, but immensely tender, immensely pitiful curiosity, took possession of him, held him fast, body and soul. She knew, and she was in that house!

The boat was close in now, but had not yet turned into the Pool of San Francesco. Artois kept his eyes upon

the window for still a moment longer. He felt now, he knew, that Hermione was in the room beyond that window. As he gazed up from the sea he saw that the window was open. He saw behind the frame of it a white curtain stirring in the breeze. And then he saw something that chilled his blood, that seemed to drive it in an icy stream back to his heart, leaving his body for a moment numb.

He saw a figure come, with a wild falling movement, to the window—a white distorted face, utterly strange to him, look out—a hand lifted in a frantic gesture.

The gesture was followed by a crash.

The green Venetian blind had fallen, hiding the window, hiding the stranger's face.

"Who was that at the window, Signore?" asked Giovanni, staring at Artois with round and startled eyes.

And Artois answered, "It is difficult to see, Giovanni, now that the sun has gone down. It is getting dark so quickly."

"Sì, Signore, it is getting dark."

CHAPTER XVIII.

THERE was no one at the foot of the cliff. Artois got out of the boat and stood for a moment, hesitating whether to keep Giovanni or to dismiss him.

"I can stay, Signore," said the man. "You will want someone to row you back."

"No, Giovanni. I can get Gaspare to put me ashore. You had better be off."

"Va bene, Signore," he replied, looking disappointed.

The Signora of the Casa del Mare was always very

hospitable to such fishermen as she knew. Giovanni wanted to seek out Gaspare, to have a cigarette. But he obediently jumped into the boat and rowed off into the darkness, while Artois went up the steps towards the house.

A cold feeling of dread encompassed him. He still saw, imaginatively, that stranger at the window, that falling movement, that frantic gesture, the descending blind that brought to Hermione's bedroom a greater obscurity. And he remembered Hermione's face in the garden, half seen by him once in shadows, with surely a strange and terrible smile upon it, a smile that had made him wonder if he had ever really known her.

He came out on the plateau before the front door. The door was shut, but as he went to open it it was opened from within, and Gaspare stood before him in the twilight, with the dark passage for background.

Gaspare looked at Artois in silence.

"Gaspare," Artois said, "I came home from San Martino. I found a note from the Signorina begging me to come here at once."

"Lo so, Signore."

"I have come. What has—what is it? Where is the Signorina?"

Gaspare stood in the middle of the narrow doorway.

"The Signorina is in the garden."

"Waiting for me?"

"Si, Signore."

"Very well."

He moved to enter the house; but Gaspare stood still where he was.

"Signore," he said.

Artois stopped at the door sill.

"What is it?"

"What are you going to do here?"

At last Gaspare was frankly the watch-dog guarding the sacred house. His Padrona had cast upon him a look of hatred. Yet he was guarding the sacred house and her within it. Deep in the blood of him was the sense that, even hating him, she belonged to him and he to her.

And his Padroncina had trusted him, and clung to him that day.

"What are you going to do here?"

"If there is trouble here, I want to help."

"How can you help, Signore?"

"First tell me—there is great trouble?"

"Sì, Signore."

"And you know what it is? You know what caused it?"

"No one has told me."

"But you know what it is?"

"Sì, Signore."

"Does—— the Signorina doesn't know?"

"No, Signore."

He paused, then added:

"The Signorina is not to know what it is."

"You do not think I shall tell her?"

"Signore, how can I tell what you will do here? How can I tell what you are here?"

For a moment Artois felt deeply wounded, wounded to the quick. He had not supposed it was possible for anyone to hurt him so much with a few quiet words. Anger rose in him, an anger such as the furious attack of the Marchesino had never brought to the birth.

"You can say that!" he exclaimed. "You can say that, after Sicily!"

Gaspare's face changed, softened for an instant, then grew stern again.

"That was long ago, Signore. It was all different in Sicily!"

His eyes filled with tears, yet his face remained stern. But Artois was seized again, as when he walked in the golden air between the vineyards and heard the peasants singing, by an intense desire to bring happiness to the unhappy, specially and above all to one unhappy woman. To-night his intellect was subordinate to his heart, his pride of intellect was lost in feeling, in an emotion that the simplest might have understood and shared: the longing to be of use, to comfort, to pour balm into the terrible wound of one who had been his friend—such a friend as only a certain type of woman can be to a certain type of man.

"Gaspare," he said, "you and I—we helped the Signora once, we helped her in Sicily."

Gaspare looked away from him, and did not answer.

"Perhaps we can help her now. Perhaps only we can help her. Let me into the house, Gaspare. I shall do nothing here to make your Padrona sad."

Gaspare looked at him again, looked into his eyes, then moved aside, giving room for him to enter. As soon as he was in the passage Gaspare shut the door.

"I am sorry, Signore; the lamp is not lighted."

Artois felt at once an unusual atmosphere in the house, an atmosphere not of confusion but of mystery, of secret curiosity, of brooding apprehension. At the foot of the servants' staircase he heard a remote sound of whispering, which emphasised the otherwise complete silence of this familiar dwelling, suddenly become unfamiliar to him, unfamiliar and almost dreadful,

"I had better go into the garden."

"Sì, Signore."

Gaspare looked down the servants' staircase, and hissed sharply:

"Sh! S-s-sh!"

"The Signora——?" asked Artois, as Gaspare came to him softly.

"The Signora is always in her room. She is shut up in her room."

"I saw the Signora just now, at the window," Artois said, in an under-voice.

"You saw the Signora?"

Gaspare looked at him with sudden eagerness, mingled with a flaming anxiety.

"From the boat. She came to the window and let down the blind."

Gaspare did not ask anything. They went onto the terrace above the sea.

"I will tell the Signorina you have come, Signore."

"Sha'n't I go down?"

"I had better go and tell her."

He spoke with conviction. Artois did not dispute his judgment. He went away, always softly. Artois stood still on the terrace. The twilight was spreading itself over the sea, like a veil dropping over a face. The house was dark behind him. In that darkness Hermione was hidden, the Hermione who was a stranger to him, the Hermione into whose heart and soul he was no longer allowed to look. Upon Monte Amato at evening she had, very simply, showed to him the truth of her great sorrow.

Now—he saw the face at the window, the falling blind. Between then and now—what a gulf fixed!

Vere came from the garden followed by Gaspare. Her

eyes were wide with terror. The eyelids were red. She had been weeping. She almost ran to Artois, as a child runs to refuge. Never before had he felt so acutely the childishness that still lingered in this little Vere of the island—lingered unaffected, untouched by recent events. Thank God for that! In that moment the Marchesino was forgiven; and Artois—did he not perhaps also in that moment forgive himself?

“Oh, Monsieur Emile—I thought you wouldn’t come!”

There was the open reproach of a child in her voice. She seized his hand.

“Has Gaspare told you?” She turned her head towards Gaspare. “Something terrible has happened to Madre. Monsieur Emile, do you know what it is?”

She was looking at him with an intense scrutiny.

“Gaspare is hiding something from me——”

Gaspare stood there and said nothing.

“——Something that perhaps you know.”

Gaspare looked at Artois, and Artois felt now that the watch-dog trusted him. He returned the Sicilian’s glance, and Gaspare moved away, went to the rail of the terrace, and looked down over the sea.

“Do you know? Do you know anything—anything dreadful about Madre that you have never told me?”

“Vere, don’t be frightened.”

“Ah, but you haven’t been here! You weren’t here when——”

“What is it?”

Her terror infected him.

“Madre came back. She had been to Mergellina all alone. She was away such a long time. When she came back I was in my room. I didn’t know. I didn’t hear the boat. But my door was open, and presently I heard

someone come upstairs and go into the boudoir. It was Madre. I know her step. I know it was Madre!"

She reiterated her assertion, as if she anticipated that he was going to dispute it.

"She stayed in the boudoir only a very little while—only a few minutes. Oh, Monsieur Emile, but——"

"Vere! What do you mean? Did—— what happened there—in the boudoir?"

He was reading from her face.

"She went—Madre went in there to——"

She stopped and swallowed.

"Madre took father's photograph—the one on the writing-table—and tore it to pieces. And the frame—that was all bent and nearly broken. Father's photograph that she loves so much!"

Artois said nothing. At that moment it was as if he entered suddenly into Hermione's heart, and knew every feeling there.

"Monsieur Emile—is she—is Madre—ill?"

She began to tremble once more, as she had trembled when she came to fetch Gaspere from the nook of the cliff beside the Saint's Pool.

"Not as you mean, Vere."

"You are sure? You are certain?"

"Not in that way."

"But then I heard Madre come out and go to her bedroom. I didn't hear whether she locked the door. I only heard it shut. But Gaspere says he knows it is locked. Two or three minutes after the door was shut I heard—I heard——"

"Don't be afraid. Tell me—if I ought to know."

Those words voiced a deep and delicate reluctance which was beginning to invade him. Yet he wished to

help Vere, to release this child from the thrall of a terror which could only be conquered if it were expressed.

"Tell me," he added slowly.

"I heard Madre—Monsieur Emile, it was hardly crying!"

"Don't. You needn't tell me any more."

"Gaspere heard it too. It went on for a long, long time. We—Gaspere made the servants keep downstairs. And then—then it stopped. And we have heard nothing ever since. And I—I have been waiting for you to come, because Madre cares for you."

Artois put his hand down quickly upon Vere's right hand.

"I am glad you sent for me, Vere. I am glad you think that. Come and sit down on the bench."

He drew her down beside him. He felt that he was with a child whom he must comfort. Gaspere stood always looking down over the rail of the terrace to the sea.

"Vere!"

"Yes, Monsieur Emile."

"Your mother is not ill as you thought—feared. But—to-day—she has had, she must have had, a great shock."

"But at Mergellina?"

"Only that could account for what you have just told me."

"But I don't understand. She only went to Mergellina."

"Did you see her before she went there?"

"Yes."

"Was she as usual?"

"I don't think she was. I think Madre has been changing nearly all this summer. That is why I am so afraid. You know she has been changing."

He was silent. The difficulty of the situation was great. He did not know how to resolve it.

"You have seen the change, Monsieur Emile!"

He did not deny it. He did not know what to do or say. For of that change, although perhaps now he partly understood it, he could never speak to Vere or to anyone.

"It has made me so unhappy," Vere said, with a break in her voice.

And he had said to himself, "Vere must be happy!" At that moment he and his intellect seemed to him less than a handful of dust.

"But this change of to-day is different," he said slowly. "Your mother has had a dreadful shock."

"At Mergellina?"

"It must have been there."

"But what could it be? We scarcely ever go there. We don't know anyone there—oh, except Ruffo."

Her eyes, keen and bright with youth, even though they had been crying, were fixed upon his face while she was speaking, and she saw a sudden conscious look in his eyes, a movement of his lips—he drew them sharply together, as if seized by a spasm.

"Ruffo!" she repeated. "Has it something to do with Ruffo?"

There was a profound perplexity in her face, but the fear in it was less.

"Something to do with Ruffo?" she repeated.

Suddenly she moved, she got up. And all the fear had come back to her face, with something added to it, something intensely personal.

"Do you mean—is Ruffo dead?" she whispered.

A voice rose up from the sea, singing a sad little song. Vere turned towards the sea. All her body relaxed. The voice passed on. The sad little song passed under the cliff, to the Saint's Pool and the lee of the island.

"Ah, Monsieur Emile," she said. "Why don't you tell me?"

She swayed. He put his arm quickly behind her.

"No, no! It's all right. That was Ruffo!"

And she smiled.

At that moment Artois longed to tell her the truth. To do so would surely be to do something that was beautiful. But he dared not—he had no right.

A bell rang in the house, loudly, persistently, tearing its silence. Gaspare turned angrily from the rail, with an expression of apprehension on his face.

Giulia was summoning the household to dinner.

"Perhaps—perhaps Madre will come down," Vere whispered.

Gaspare passed them and went into the house quickly. They knew he had gone to see if his Padrona was coming. Moved by a mutual instinct they stayed where they were till he should come to them again.

For a long time they waited. He did not return.

"We had better go in, Vere. You must eat."

"I can't—unless she comes."

"You must try to eat."

He spoke to her as to a child.

"And perhaps—Gaspare may be with her, may be speaking with her. Let us go in."

They passed into the house, and went to the dining-room. The table was laid. The lamp was lit. Giulia stood by the sideboard looking anxious and subdued. She did not even smile when she saw Artois, who was her favourite.

"Where is Gaspare, Giulia?" said Artois.

"Upstairs, Signore. He came in and ran upstairs, and

he has not come down. Ah!"—she raised her hands—"the evil eye has looked upon this house! When that girl Peppina——"

"Be quiet!" Artois said sharply.

Giulia's round black eyes filled with tears, and her mouth opened in surprise.

He put his hand kindly on her arm.

"Never mind, Giulia mia! But it is foolish to talk like that. There is no reason why evil should come upon the Casa del Mare. Here is Gaspare!"

At this moment he entered, looking tragic.

"Go away, Giulia!" he said to her roughly.

"Ma——!"

"Go away!"

He put her out of the room without ceremony and shut the door.

"Signore!" he said to Artois, "I have been up to the Padrona's room. I have knocked on the door. I have spoken——"

"What did you say?"

"I did not say that you were here, Signore."

"Did you ask the Signora to come down?"

"I asked if she was coming down to dinner. I said the Signorina was waiting for her."

"Yes?"

"The Signora did not answer. There was no noise, and in the room there is no light!"

"Let me go!" Vere said breathlessly.

She was moving towards the door when Artois stopped her authoritatively.

"No, Vere—wait!"

"But someone must—I'm afraid——"

"Wait, Vere!"

He turned once more to Gaspare.

"Did you try the door, Gaspare?"

"Signore, I did. After I had spoken several times, and waited a long time, I tried the door softly. It is locked."

"You see!"

It was Vere speaking, still breathlessly.

"Let me go, Monsieur Emile. We can't let Madre stay like that, all alone in the dark. She must have food. We can't stay down here and leave her."

Artois hesitated. He thought of the stranger at the window, and he felt afraid. But he concealed his fear.

"Perhaps you had better go, Vere," he said, at length. "But if she does not answer don't try the door. Don't knock. Just speak. You will find the best words."

"Yes. I'll try—I'll try."

Gaspare opened the door. Giulia was sobbing outside. Her pride and dignity were lacerated by Gaspare's action.

"Giulia, never mind! Don't cry! Gaspare didn't mean——"

Before she had finished speaking the servant passionately seized her hand and kissed it. Vere released her hand very gently and went slowly up the stairs.

The instinct of Artois was to follow her. He longed to follow her, but he denied himself, and sat down by the dinner-table, on which the zuppa di pesce was smoking under the lamp. Giulia, trying to stifle her sobs, went away down the kitchen stairs, and Gaspare stood near the door. He touched his face with his hands, opened and shut his lips, then thrust his hands into his pockets, and stared first at Artois then at the floor. His cheeks and his forehead looked hot, as if he had just finished some difficult physical act. Artois did not glance at him.

In that moment both men, in their different ways, felt dreadfully, almost unbearably, self-conscious.

Presently Vere's step was heard again on the stairs, descending softly and slowly. She came in and went at once to Artois.

"Madre doesn't answer."

Artois got up.

"What ought we to do?"

Vere was whispering.

"Did you hear anything?"

"No."

Gaspare moved, took his hands violently out of his pockets, then thrust them in again.

Artois stood in silence. His face, generally so strong, so authoritative, showed his irresolution, and Vere, looking to him like a frightened child for guidance, felt her terror increase.

"Shall I go up again? I didn't knock. You told me not to. Shall I go and knock? Or shall Gaspare go again?"

She did not suggest that Artois should go himself. He noticed that, even in this moment of the confusion of his will.

"I think we had better leave her for a time," he said at last.

As he spoke he made an effort and recovered himself.

"We had better do nothing more. What can we do?"

He was looking at Gaspare.

Gaspare went out into the passage and called down the stairs.

"Giulia! Come up! The Signorina is going to dinner."

His defiant voice sounded startling in the silent house.

"We are to eat!"

"Yes, Vere. I shall stay. Presently your mother may come down. She feels that she must be alone. We have no right to try to force ourselves upon her."

"Do you think it is that? Are you telling me the truth? Are you?"

"If she does not come down presently I will go up. Don't be afraid. I will not leave you till she comes down."

Giulia returned wiping her eyes. When he saw her Gaspare disappeared. They knew he had gone to wait outside his Padrona's door.

The dinner passed almost in silence. Artois ate, and made Vere eat. Vere sat in her mother's place, with her back to the door. Artois was facing her. Often his eyes travelled to the door. Often, too, Vere turned her head. And in the silence both were listening for a step that did not come; Vere with a feverish eagerness, Artois with a mingling of longing and of dread. For he knew he dreaded to see Hermione that night. He knew that it would be terrible to him to meet her eyes, to speak to her, to touch her hand. And yet he longed for her to come. For he was companioned by a great and growing fear, which he must hide. And that act of secrecy, undertaken for Vere's sake, seemed to increase the thing he hid, till the shadow it had been began to take form, to grow in stature, to become dominating, imperious.

Giulia put some fruit on the table. The meal was over, and there had been no sound outside upon the stairs.

"Monsieur Emile, what are you going to do?"

"Go to the drawing-room, Vere. I will go out and see whether there is any light in your mother's window."

She obeyed him silently and went away. Then he took his hat and went out upon the terrace.

Gaspare had said that Hermione's room was dark.

Perhaps he had been mistaken. The key might have been so placed in the lock that he had been deceived. As Artois walked to a point from which he could see one of the windows of Hermione's bedroom, he knew that he longed to see a light there. If the window was dark the form of his fear would be more distinct. He reached the point, and looked up. There was no light.

He stood there for some time gazing at that darkness. He thought of the bent photograph frame, of the photograph that had been so loved torn into fragments, of the sound that was—hardly crying, and of the face he had seen for an instant as he drew near to the island. He ought to come to some decision, to take some action. Vere was depending upon him. But he felt as if he could do nothing. In answer to Vere's appeal he had hastened to the island. And now he was paralysed, he was utterly useless.

He felt as if he dared not do anything. Hermione, in her grief, had suddenly passed from him into a darkness that was sacred. What right had he to try to share it?

And yet—if that great shape of fear were not the body of a lie, but of the truth?

Never before had he felt so impotent, so utterly unworthy of his manhood.

He moved away, turned, came back and stood once more beneath the window. Ought he to go up to Hermione's door, to knock, to speak, to insist on admittance? And if there was no reply?—what ought he to do then? Break down the door?

He went into the house. Vere was sitting in the drawing-room looking at the door. She sprang up.

“Is there a light in Madre's room?”

“No.”

He saw, as he answered, that she caught his fear, that hers now had the same shape as his.

“Monsieur Emile, you—you don’t think——?”

Her voice faltered, her bright eyes became changed, dim, seemed to sink into her head.

“You must go to her room. Go to Madre, Monsieur Emile. Go! speak to her! Make her answer! Make her! make her!”

She put her hands on him. She pushed him frantically. He took her hands and held them tightly.

“I am going, Vere. Don’t be frightened!”

“But you are frightened! You are frightened!”

“I will speak to your mother. I will beg her to answer.”

“And if she doesn’t answer?”

“I will get into the room.”

He let go her hands and went towards the door. Just as he reached it there came from below in the house a loud, shrill cry. It was followed by an instant of silence, then by another cry, louder, nearer than before. And this time they could hear words:

“*La fattura della Morte! La fattura della Morte!*”

Running, stumbling feet sounded outside, and Peppina appeared at the door, her disfigured face convulsed with terror, her hand outstretched.

“Look!” she cried shrilly. “Look, Signorina! Look, Signore! *La fattura della Morte! la fattura della Morte!* It has been brought to the house to-night! It has been put in my room to-night!”

In her hand lay a green lemon pierced by many nails.

CHAPTER XIX.

"MONSIEUR EMILE, what is it?" exclaimed Vere.

The frightened servants were gone, half coaxed and half scolded into silence by Artois. He had taken the lemon from Peppina, and it lay now in his hand.

"It is what the people of Naples call a death-charm."

"A death-charm!"

In her eyes superstition dawned.

"Why do they call it that?"

"Because it is supposed to bring death to anyone—any enemy—near whom it is placed."

"Who can have put it in the house to-night?" Vere said. Her voice was low and trembling. "Who can have wished to bring death here to-night?"

"I don't know, Vere."

"And such a thing—could it bring death?"

"Vere! You can ask me!"

He spoke with an attempt at smiling irony, but his eyes held something of the awe, the cloudy apprehension that had gathered in hers.

"Where is your mind?" he added.

She answered: "Are you going to Madre's room, Monsieur Emile?"

He put the death-charm down quickly, as if it had burnt his hand.

"I am going now. Gaspare!"

At this moment Gaspare came into the room, with a face that was almost livid.

"Who is it that has brought a *fattura della morte* here?" he exclaimed.

His usually courageous eyes were full of superstitious fear.

"Signore, do you——"

He stopped. He had seen the death-charm lying on the little table covered with silver trifles. He approached it, made the sign of the cross, bent down his head and examined it closely, but did not touch it.

Artois and Vere watched him closely. He lifted up his head at last.

"I know who brought the *fattura della morte* here," he said solemnly. "I know."

"Who?" said Vere.

"It was Ruffo."

"Ruffo!"

Vere reddened. "Ruffo! He loves our house, and he loves us!"

"It is Ruffo, Signorina. It is Ruffo. He brought it, and it is he that must take it away. Do not touch it, Signorina. Do not touch it, Signore. Leave it where it is till Ruffo comes, till Ruffo takes it away."

He again made the sign of the cross, and drew back from the death-charm with a sort of mysterious caution.

"Signore," he said to Artois, "I will go down to the Saint's Pool. I will find Ruffo. I will bring him here. I will make him come here."

He was going out when Artois put a hand on his shoulder.

"And the Padrona?"

"Signore, she is always there, in her room, in the dark."

"And you have heard nothing?"

"Signore, I have heard the Padrona moving."

The hand of Artois dropped down. He was invaded by a sense of relief that was almost overwhelming.

"You are certain?"

"Sì, Signore. The Padrona is walking up and down the room. When Peppina screamed out I heard the Padrona move. And then I heard her walking up and down the room."

He looked again at the death-charm and went out. Vere stood for a moment. Then she, too, went suddenly away, and Artois heard her light footstep retreating from him towards the terrace.

He understood her silent and abrupt departure. His fear had been hers. His relief was hers, too, and she was moved to hide it. He was left alone with the death-charm.

He sat down by the table on which it lay among the bright toys of silver. Released from his great fear, released from his undertaking to force his way into the darkness of that room which had been silent, he seemed suddenly to regain his identity, to be put once more into possession of his normal character. He had gone out from it. He returned to it. The cloud of superstition, in which even he had been for a moment involved with Vere and with the servants, evaporated, and he was able to smile secretly at them and at himself. Yet while he smiled thus secretly, and while he looked at the lemon with its perforating nails, he realised his own smallness, helplessness, the smallness of every man, as he had never realised them before. And he realised also something, much, of what it would have meant to him, had the body of his fear been the body of a truth, not of a lie.

If death had really come into the Casa del Mare that night with the death-charm!

He stretched out his hand to the table, lifted the death-charm from among the silver ornaments, held it, kept it in his hand, which he laid upon his knee.

If Ruffo had carried death in his boy's hand over the sea to the island, had carried death to Hermione!

Artois tried to imagine that house without Hermione, his life without Hermione.

For a long time he sat, always holding the death-charm in his hand, always with his eyes fixed upon it, until at last in it, as in a magic mirror, among the scars of its burning, and among the nails that pierced it, as the woman who had fashioned it, and fired it, and muttered witch's words over it, longed to pierce the heart of her enemy, he saw scenes of the past, and shadowy, moving figures. He saw among the scars and among the nails Hermione and himself.

They were in Paris, at a table strewn with flowers. That was the first scene in the magic mirror of the *fattura della morte*, the scene in which they met for the first time. Hermione regarded him almost with timidity. And he looked at her doubtfully, because she had no beauty.

Then they were in another part of Paris, in his "Morocco slipper of a room," crammed with books, and dim with Oriental incense and tobacco smoke, his room red and yellow, tinted with the brilliant colours of the East. And he turned to her for sympathy, and he received it in full measure, pressed down and running over. He told her his thoughts, and he told her his feelings, his schemes, his struggles, his moments of exaltation, his depressions. Something, much indeed of him was hers, the egotistic part of a man that does really give, but that keeps back much, and that seeks much more than it gives. And what he sought she eagerly, generously gave, with both hands, never counting any cost. Always she was giving and always he was taking.

Then they were in London, in another room full of

books. He stood by a fire, and she was seated with a bundle of letters in her lap. And his heart was full of something that was like anger, and of a dull and smouldering jealousy. And hers was full of a new and wonderful beauty, a piercing joy.

He sighed deeply. He stirred. He looked up for a moment and listened.

But all the house was silent. And again he bent over the death-charm.

He stood by a door. Outside was the hum of traffic, inside a narrow room. And now in the magic mirror a third figure showed itself, a figure of youth incarnate, brave, passionate, thrilling with the joy of life. He watched it, how coldly, although he felt its charm, the rays of fire that came from it, as sunbeams come from the sun! And apprehension stirred within him. And presently in the night, by ebony waters, and by strange and wandering lights, and under unquiet stars, he told Hermione something of his fear.

Africa—and the hovering flies, and the dreadful feeling that death's hands were creeping about his body and trying to lay hold of it! A very lonely creature lay there in the mirror, with the faint shadow of a palm-leaf shifting and swaying upon the ghastly whiteness of its face—himself, in the most desolate hour of his life. As he gazed he was transported to the City of the Mosques. The years rolled back. He felt again all, or nearly all, that he had felt then of helplessness, abandonment, despair. It was frightful to go out thus alone, to be extinguished in the burning heat of Africa, and laid in that arid soil, where the vipers slid through the hot crevices of the earth, and the scorpions bred in the long days of the summer. Now

it was evening. He heard the call to prayer, that wailing, wonderful cry which saluted the sinking sun.

He remembered exactly how it had come into his ears through the half-opened window, the sensation of remoteness, of utter solitude, which it had conveyed to him. An Arab had passed under the window, singing in a withdrawn and drowsy voice a plaintive song of the East which had mingled with the call to prayer. And then he, Artois, being quite alone, had given way in his great pain and weakness. He remembered feeling the tears slipping over his cheeks, one following another, quickly, quickly. It had seemed as if they would never stop, as if there would always be tears to flow from those sources deep within his stricken body, his stricken soul.

He looked into the mirror. The door of the room was opened. A woman stood upon the threshold. The sick man turned upon his pillow. He gazed towards the woman. And his tears ceased. He was no longer alone. His friend had come from her garden of Paradise to draw him back to life.

In the magic mirror of the *fattura della morte* other scenes formed themselves, were clearly visible for a moment, then dispersed, dissolved,—till scenes of the island came, till the last scene in the mirror dawned faintly before his eyes.

He saw a dark room, and a woman more desolate than he had been when he lay alone with the shadow of the palm-tree shifting on his face, and heard the call to prayer. He saw Hermione in her room in the Casa del Mare that night, after she knew.

Suddenly he put his hand to his eyes.

Those were the first tears his eyes had known since that evening in Africa years and years ago.

He laid the death-charm down once more among the silver toys. But he still looked at it as he sat back now in his chair, waiting for Gaspare's return.

He gazed at the symbol of death. And he began to think how strangely appropriate was its presence that night in the Casa del Mare, how almost more than strange had been its bringing there by Ruffo—if indeed Ruffo had brought it, as Gaspare declared. For the little green lemon represented a heart pierced. And Ruffo, all ignorantly and unconsciously, had pierced the heart of Hermione.

Artois knew nothing of what had happened that day at Mergellina, but he divined that it was Ruffo who, without words, had told Hermione the truth. It must have been Ruffo, in whom the dead man lived again. And, going beyond the innocent boy, deep into the shadows where lies so much of truth, Artois saw the murdered man stirring from his sleep, unable to rest because of the lie that had been coiled around his memory, making it what it should not be. Perhaps only the dead know the true, the sacred passion for justice. Perhaps only they are indifferent to everything save truth, they who know the greatest truth of all.

And Artois saw Maurice Delarey, the gay, the full-blooded youth, grown stern in the halls of death, unable to be at peace until she who had most loved him knew him at last as he had been in life.

As no one else would tell Hermione the truth, the dead man himself, speaking through his son, the fruit of his sin, had told her the truth that day. He, too, had been perhaps a spirit in prison, through all these years since his death.

Artois saw him in freedom.

And at that moment Artois felt that in the world there was only one thing that was perfectly beautiful, and that thing was absolute truth. Its knowledge must make Hermione greater.

But now she was hanging on her cross.

If he could only comfort her!

As she had come to him in Africa he longed now to go to her. She had saved him from the death of the body. If only he could save her from another and more terrible death—the death of the spirit that believes and trusts in life!

He had been absorbed in thought and unconscious of time. Now he looked up, he was aware of things. He listened. Surely Gaspare had been away a long while. And Vere—where was she?

He had a strange desire to see Ruffo now. Something new and mystic had been born, or had for the first time made itself apparent, within him to-night. And he knew that to-night he would look at Ruffo as he had never looked at him before.

He got up and, leaving the death-charm lying on the table, went to the door. There he hesitated. Should he go to the terrace, to Vere? or should he go upstairs to that dark room and try to speak to his friend? Or should he go out to the cliff, to seek Gaspare and Ruffo?

Ruffo drew him. He had to go to the cliff.

He went out by the front door. At first he thought of descending at once by the steps to the Pool of San Francesco. But he changed his mind and went instead to the bridge.

He looked over into the Pool.

It was a very clear night. San Francesco's light was burning brightly. Very sincerely it was burning beneath

the blessing hands of the Saint. A ray of gold that came from it lay upon the darkness of the Pool, stealing through the night a little way, as if in an effort to touch the Casa del Mare.

In the Pool there was one boat. Artois saw no one by the sea edge, heard no voices there, and he turned towards the crest of the island, to the seat where Vere so often went at night, and where Hermione, too, had often sought out Ruffo.

Gaspare and Ruffo were near it. Almost directly he saw their forms, relieved against the dimness but not deep darkness of the night, and heard their voices talking. As he went towards them Gaspare was speaking vehemently. He threw up one arm in a strong, even an excited gesture, and was silent. Then Artois heard Ruffo say in a voice that, though respectful and almost deprecatory, was yet firm like a man's:

"I cannot take it away, Gaspare. When I go home my mamma will ask me if I have put it in the house."

"Dio mio!" cried Gaspare. "But you have put it in the house! Is it not there—is it not there now to bring death upon the Signora, upon the Signorina, upon us all?"

"It was made for Peppina. My mamma made it only against Peppina, because she has brought evil into our house. It will hurt only Peppina! It will kill only Peppina!"

He spoke now with a vehemence and passion almost equal to Gaspare's. Artois stood still. They did not see him. They were absorbed in their conversation.

"It will not hurt the Signora or the Signorina. The *fattura della morte*—it is to harm Peppina. Has she not done us injury? Has she not taken my Patrigno from my mamma? Has she not made him mad? Is it not

for her that he has been in prison, and that he has left my mamma without a soldo in the house? The Signora—she has been good to me and my mamma. It is she who sent my mamma money—twenty lire! I respect the Signora as I respect my mamma. Only to-day, only this very day she came to Mergellina, she came to see my mamma. And when she knew that my Patrigno was let out of prison, when I cried out at the door that he was coming, the Signora was so glad for us that she looked—she looked—Madre di Dio! she was all white, she was shaking—she was worse than my poor mamma. And when I came to her, and when I called out ‘Signora! Signora!’ you should have seen! She opened her eyes! She gave me such a look! And then my Patrigno came in at the door, and the Signora—she went away. I was going to follow her, but she put out her hand—so, to make me stay—she wanted me to stay with my mamma. And she went down the stairs all trembling because my Patrigno was let out of prison. Per dio! She has a good heart. She is an angel. For the Signora I would die. For the Signora I would do anything! I—— you say I would kill the Signora! Would I kill my mamma? Would I kill the Madonna? La Bruna—would I kill her? To me the Signora is as my mamma! I respect the Signora as I respect my mamma. Ecco!”

“The *fattura della morte* will bring evil on the house, it will bring death into the house.”

Gaspare spoke again, and his voice was dogged with superstition, but it was less vehement than before.

“Already—who knows what it has brought? Who knows what evil it has done? All the house is sad to-night, all the house is terrible to-night.”

“It is Peppina who has looked on the house with the

evil eye," said Ruffo. "It is Peppina who has brought trouble to the house."

There was a silence. Then Gaspare said:

"No, it is not Peppina."

As he spoke, Artois saw him stretch out his hand, but gently, towards Ruffo.

"Who is it, then?" said Ruffo.

Moved by an irresistible impulse to interpose, Artois called out:

"Gaspare!"

He saw the two figures start.

"Gaspare!" he repeated, coming up to them.

"Signore! What is it? Has the Signora——"

"I have not heard her. I have not seen her."

"Then what is it, Signore?"

"Good evening, Ruffo," Artois said, looking at the boy.

"Good evening, Signore."

Ruffo took off his cap. He was going to put it back on his dark hair, when Artois held his arm.

"Wait a minute, Ruffo!"

The boy looked surprised, but met fearlessly the eyes that were gazing into his.

"Va bene, Ruffo."

Artois released his arm, and Ruffo put on his cap.

"I heard you talking of the *fattura della morte*," Artois said.

Ruffo reddened slightly.

"Sì, Signore."

"Your mother made it?"

Ruffo did not answer. Gaspare stood by, watching and listening with deep, half-suspicious attention.

"I heard you say so."

"Sì, Signore. My mamma made it."

"And told you to bring it to the island and put it in the house to-night?"

"Sì, Signore."

"Are you quite sure it was to Peppina your mother wished to do evil?"

"Sì, Signore, quite sure. Peppina is a bad girl. She made my Patrigno mad. She brought trouble to our house."

"You love the Signora, don't you, Ruffo?"

His face changed and grew happier at once.

"Sì, Signore. I love the Signora and the Signorina."

He would not leave out Vere. Artois's heart warmed to him for that.

"Ruffo——"

While he had been on the crest of the island an idea had come to him. At first he had put it from him. Now, suddenly, he caressed it, he resolved to act on its prompting.

"Ruffo, the Signora is in the house."

"Sì, Signore."

"I don't think she is very well. I don't think she will leave the house to-night. Wouldn't you like to see her?"

"Signore, I always like to see the Signora."

"And I think she likes to see you. I know she does."

"Sì, Signore. The Signora is always glad when I come."

He spoke without conceit or vanity, with utterly sincere simplicity.

"Go to the house and ask to see her now—Gaspare will take you."

As he spoke he looked at Gaspare, and Gaspare understood.

"Come on, Ruffo!"

Gaspare's voice was rough, arbitrary, but the eyes that

he turned on Ruffo were full of the almost melting gentleness that Hermione had seen in them sometimes and that she had always loved.

"Come on, Ruffino!"

He walked away quickly, almost sternly, towards the house. And Ruffo followed him.

CHAPTER XX.

ARTOIS did not go with them. Once again he was governed by an imperious feeling that held him inactive, the feeling that it was not for him to approach Hermione—that others might draw near to her, but that he dared not. The sensation distressed and almost humiliated him. It came upon him like a punishment for sin, and as a man accepts a punishment which he is conscious of deserving Artois accepted it.

So now he waited alone on the crest of the island, looking towards the Casa del Mare.

What would be the result of this strange and daring embassy?

He was not long to be in doubt.

"Signore! Signore!"

Gaspere's voice was calling him from somewhere in the darkness.

"Signore!"

"I am coming."

There had been a thrill of emotion in the appeal sent out to him. He hurried towards the house. He crossed the bridge. When he was on it he heard the splash of oars below him in the pool, but he took no heed of it. What were the fishermen to him to-night? Before the house door he met Gaspere and Ruffo.

"What is it?"

"The Signora is not in her room, Signore."

"Not——? How do you know? Is the door open?"

"Sì, Signore. The Signora has gone! And the *fattura della morte* has gone."

"The *fattura della morte* has gone!" repeated Ruffo.

The repetition of the words struck a chill to the heart of Artois. Again he was beset by superstition. He caught it from these children of the South, who stared at him now with their grave and cloudy eyes.

"Perhaps one of the servants——" he began.

"No, Signore. I have asked them. And they would not dare to touch it."

"The Signorina?"

He shook his head.

"She is in the garden. She has been there all the time. She does not know——" he lowered his voice almost to a whisper—"she does not know about the Signora and the *fattura della morte*."

"We must not let her know——"

He stopped. Suddenly his ears seemed full of the sound of oars plashing in water. Yet he heard nothing.

"Gaspare," he said quickly, "have you looked everywhere for the Signora?"

"I have looked in the house, Signore. I have been on the terrace and to the Signorina in the garden. Then I came to tell you. I thought you should know about the Signora and the *fattura della morte*."

Artois felt that it was this fact of the disappearance of the death-charm which for the moment paralysed Gaspare's activities. What stirring of ancient superstition was in the Sicilian's heart he did not know, but he knew that now his own time of action was come. No longer

could he delegate to others the necessary deed. And with this knowledge his nature seemed to change. An ardour that was almost vehement with youth, and that was hard-fibred with manly strength and resolution, woke up in him.

Again his ears were full of the sound of oars in water.

"Ruffo," he said, "will you obey me?"

He laid his hand on the boy's shoulder.

"Sì, Signore."

"Go into the garden. Stay with the Signorina till I come."

"Sì, Signore."

"If it is a long time, if the Signorina is afraid, if she wants to do anything, you are to say that Don Emilio said she was not to be afraid, and that she was to wait."

"Sì, Signore."

The boy paused, looking steadily at Artois, then, seeing that he had finished, turned away and went softly into the house.

"Gaspare, come with me."

Gaspare said nothing, but followed him down to the foot of the cliff. One of the island boats was gone. When Gaspare saw that, he ran to pull in the other. He held out his arm to help Artois into the boat, then took the oars, standing up and looking before him into the night.

"Row towards the village, Gaspare."

"Sì, Signore."

At that moment Gaspare understood much of what was in Artois's mind. He relied upon Artois. He trusted him—and this fact, of Gaspare's trust and reliance upon him, added now to the feeling of ardour that had risen up in Artois, gave him courage, helped to banish completely that punishing sensation which had condemned

him to keep away from Hermione as one unworthy to approach her, to touch even the hem of her grief.

No need to tell Gaspare to row quickly. With all his strength he forced the boat along through the calm sea.

"Keep near the shore, Gaspare!"

"Sì, Signore."

Only the first quarter of the young moon was visible in the sky. It cast but a thin and distant glint of silver upon the waters. By the near shore the dimness of this hour was unbroken by any light, unstirred by any sound except the withdrawn and surreptitious murmur of the sea. The humped shapes of the low yellow rocks showed themselves faintly like shapes of beasts asleep. In the distance, lifted above the sea, two or three flames shone faintly. They were shed by lamps or candles set in the windows of the fishermen's cottages in the village.

Had Hermione gone to the village?

She might have left the island with some definite purpose, or moved by a blind impulse to get away and be alone. Artois could not tell. But she had taken the *fattura della morte*.

He wondered whether she knew its meaning, with what sinister intention it had been made. Something in the little worthless thing must have attracted her, have fascinated her, or she would not have taken it. In her distress of mind, in her desire for solitude, she would have hastened away and left it lying where it was.

Perhaps she had a purpose in leaving the island with the *fattura della morte*.

Her taking of it began to seem to Artois, as it had evidently seemed to Gaspare, a fact of profound significance. His imagination, working with an almost diseased rapidity and excitement, brought before him a

series of scenes in which the death-charm figured as symbol. In one of these there were two women—Hermione and Maddalena.

Hermione might have set out on some wild quest to Mergellina. He remembered the face at the window, and knew that to-night everything was possible.

“Row quickly, Gaspare!”

Gaspare bent almost furiously to the oars. Then sharply he turned his head.

“What is it?”

“I can see the boat! I can see the Signora!”

The words struggled out on a long breath that made his broad chest heave. Instinctively Artois put his hands on the gunwale of the boat on either side of him, moving as if to stand up.

“Take care, Signore!”

“I’d forgotten——” he leaned forward, searching the night. “Where is the Signora?”

“There—in front! She is rowing to the village. No, she has turned.”

He stopped rowing.

“The Signora has seen, or she has heard, and she is going in to shore.”

“But there are only the rocks.”

“The Signora is going into the Palazzo of the Spirits.”

“The Palazzo of the Spirits?” Artois repeated.

“Sì, Signore.”

Gaspare turned and looked again into the darkness.

“I cannot see the Signora any more.”

“Follow the Signora, Gaspare. If she has gone to the Palazzo of the Spirits row in there.”

“Sì, Signore.”

He drew the oars again strongly through the water.

Artois remembered a blinding storm that had crashed over a mountain village in Sicily long ago, a flash of lightning which had revealed to him the gaunt portal of a palace that seemed abandoned, a strip of black cloth, the words "*Lutto in famiglia.*" They had seemed to him prophetic words.

And now——?

In the darkness he saw another darkness, the strange and broken outline of the ruined palace by the sea, once, perhaps, the summer home of some wealthy Roman, now a mere shell visited in the lonely hours by the insatiate waves. Were Hermione and he to meet here? To-day he had thought of his friend as a spirit that had been long in prison. Now he came to the Palace of the Spirits to face her truth with his. The Palace of the Spirits! The name suggested the very nakedness of truth. Well, let it be so, let the truth stand there naked. Again, mingling with a certain awe, there rose up in him a strong ardour, a courage that was vehement, that longed at last to act. And it seemed to him suddenly that for many years, through all the years that divided Hermione and him from the Sicilian life, they had been held in leash, waiting for the moment of this encounter. Now the leash slackened. They were being freed. And for what?

Gaspare plunged his right oar into the sea alone. The boat swung round obediently, heading for the shore.

One of the faint lights that gleamed in the village was extinguished.

"Signore, the Signora has left the boat!"

"Si?"

"Madonna! She has let it go! She has left it to the sea!"

He backed water. A moment later the little boat in which Vere loved to go out alone grated against theirs.

"Madonna! To leave the boat like that!" exclaimed Gaspare, bending to catch the tow-rope. "The Signora is not safe to-night. The Signora's Saint will not look on her to-night."

"Put me ashore, Gaspare."

"Sì, Signore."

The boat passed before the façade of the palace.

Artois knew the palace well by day. This was the first time he had come to it by night. In daylight it was a small and picturesque ruin washed by the laughing sea, lonely but scarcely sad. Leaping from its dark and crumbling walls the fisher-boys often plunged into the depths below; or they lay upon the broad sills of the gaping window-spaces to dry themselves in the sun. Men came with rods and lines to fish from its deserted apartments, through which, when rough weather was at hand, the screaming sea-birds flew. The waves played frivolously enough in its recesses. And their voices were heard against the slimy and defiant stones calling to each other merrily, as perhaps once the voices of revellers long dead called in the happy hours of a vanished villeggiatura.

But the night wrought on it, in it, and about it change. Its solitude then became desolation, the darkness of its stones a blackness that was tragic, its ruin more than a suggestion, the decisive picture of despair.

At its base was a line of half-discovered window-spaces, the lower parts of which had become long since the prey of the waves. Above it were more window-spaces, fully visible, and flanking a high doorway, once, no doubt, connected with a staircase, but now giving upon mid-air. Formerly there had been another floor, but this had fallen into decay and disappeared, with the exception of one small and narrow chamber situated immediately

over the doorway. Isolated, for there was no means of approach to it, this chamber had something of the aspect of a low and sombre tower sluggishly lifting itself towards the sky. The palace was set upon rock and flanked by rocks. Round about it grass grew to the base of a high cliff at perhaps two hundred yards distance from it. And here and there grass and tufts of rank herbage pushed in its crevices, proclaiming the triumph of time to exulting winds and waters.

As Gaspare rowed in cautiously and gently to this deserted place, to which from the land no road, no foot-path led, he stared at the darkness of the palace with superstitious awe, then at the small, familiar boat, which followed in their wake because he held the tow-rope.

"Signore," he said, "I am afraid!"

"You—Gaspare!"

"I am afraid for the Signora. Why should she come here all alone with the *fattura della morte*? I am afraid for the Signora."

The boat touched the edge of the rock to the right of the palace.

"And where has the Signora gone, Signore? I cannot see her, and I cannot hear her."

He lifted up his hand. They listened. But they heard only the sucking murmur of the sea against the rocks perforated with little holes, and in distant, abandoned chambers of the palace.

"Where has the Signora gone?" Gaspare repeated in a whisper.

"I will find the Signora," said Artois.

He got up. Gaspare held his arm to assist him to the shore.

"Thank you."

He was on the rocks.

"Gaspare," he said, "wait here. Lie off the shore close by till I come back."

"Sì, Signore."

Artois hesitated, looking at Gaspare.

"I will persuade the Signora to come back with us," he said.

"Sì, Signore. You must persuade the poor Signora. The poor Signora is mad to-night. She gave me a look——" his eyes were clouded with moisture. "If the poor Signora had not been mad she could not have looked at me like that—at another, perhaps, but not at me."

It seemed as if at last his long reserve was breaking down. He put up his hand to his eyes.

"I did not think that my Padrona——"

He stopped. Artois remembered the face at the window. He grasped Gaspare's hand.

"The Signora does not understand," he said. "I will make the Signora understand."

"Sì, Signore, you must make the poor Signora understand."

Gaspare's hand held on to the hand of Artois, and in that clasp the immense reserve, that for so many years had divided, and united, these two men, seemed to melt like gold in a crucible of fire.

"I will make the Signora understand."

"And I will wait, Signore."

He pushed the boat off from the rocks. It floated away, with its sister boat, on the calm sea that kissed the palace walls. He gave his Padrona's fate into the hands of Artois. It was a tribute which had upon Artois a startling effect.

It was like a great resignation which conferred a great responsibility.

Always Gaspare had been very jealous, very proud of his position of authority as the confidential servant and protector of Hermione. And now suddenly, and very simply, he seemed to acknowledge his helplessness with Hermione—to rely implicitly upon the power of Artois.

Vere, too, in her way had performed a kindred action. She had summoned "Monsieur Emile" in her great trouble. She had put herself in his hands. And he—he had striven to delegate to others the burden he was meant to bear. He had sent Vere to Hermione. He had sent Gaspare to her. He had even sent Ruffo to her. Now he must go himself. Vere, Gaspare, Ruffo—they were all looking to him. But Gaspare's eyes were most expressive, held more of demand for him than the eyes of the girl and boy. For the past was gathered in Gaspare, spoke to him in Gaspare's voice, looked at him from Gaspare's eyes, and in Gaspare's soul waited surely to know how it would be redeemed.

He turned from the sea and looked towards the cliff. Now he had the palace on his left hand. On his right, not far off, was a high bluff going almost sheer into the sea. Nevertheless, access to the village was possible by the strip of rocks beneath it. Had Hermione gone to the village by the rocks? If she had, Gaspare's keen eyes would surely have seen her. Artois looked at the blank wall of the palace. This extended a little way, then turned at right angles. Just beyond the angle, in its shadow, there was a low and narrow doorway. Artois moved along the wall, reached this doorway, stood without it and listened.

The grass here grew right up to the stones of the ruin.

He had come almost without noise. Before him he saw blackness, the blackness of a passage extending from the orifice of the doorway to an interior chamber of the palace. He heard the peculiar sound of moving water that is beset and covered in by barriers of stone, a hollow and pugnacious murmur, as of something so determined that it would be capable of striving through eternity, yet of something that was wistful and even sad.

For an instant he yielded his spirit to this sound of eternal striving. Then he said,

“Hermione!”

No one answered.

“Hermione!”

He raised his voice. He almost called the name.

Still there was no answer. Yet the silence seemed to tell him that she was near.

He did not call again. He waited a moment, then he stepped into the passage.

The room to which it led was the central room, or hall, of the palace—a vaulted chamber, high and narrow, opening to the sea at one end by the great doorway already mentioned, to the land beneath the cliff by a smaller doorway at the other. The faint light from without, penetrating through these facing doorways, showed to Artois a sort of lesser darkness, towards which he walked slowly, feeling his way along the wall. When he reached the hall he again stood still, trying to get accustomed to the strange and eerie obscurity, to pierce it with his eyes.

Now to his left, evidently within the building, and not far from where he stood, he heard almost loudly the striving of the sea. He heard the entering wave push through some narrow opening, search round the walls for egress, lift itself in a vain effort to emerge, fall back baffled, re-

treat, murmuring discontent, only to be succeeded by another eager wave. And this startlingly living noise of water filled him with a sensation of acute anxiety, almost of active fear.

"Hermione!" he said once more.

It seemed to him that the voice of the water drowned his voice, that it was growing louder, was filling the palace with an uproar that was angry.

"Hermione! Hermione!"

He strove to dominate that uproar.

Now, far off, through the seaward opening, he saw a streak of silver lying like a thread upon the darkness of the sea. And, as he saw it, the voices of the waves within the palace seemed to sink suddenly away almost to silence. He did not know why, but the vision of that very distant radiance of the young and already setting moon seemed to restore to him abruptly the accuracy of his sense of hearing.

He again went forward a few steps, descending in the chamber towards the doorway by the worn remains of an almost effaced staircase. Reaching the bottom, he stood still once more. On either side of him he could faintly discern openings leading into other rooms. Perhaps Hermione, hearing him call, had retreated from him through one of them. A sort of horror of the situation came upon him, as he began thoroughly to realise the hatred, hatred of brain, of nerves, of heart, that was surely quivering in Hermione in this moment, that was driving her away into the darkness from sound and touch of life. Like a wounded animal she was creeping away from the hideous cruelty of men, creeping away from it and hating it. He remembered Gaspare's words about the look she had cast upon perhaps the most truly faithful of all her friends.

But—she did not know. And he, Artois, must tell her. He must make her see the exact truth of the years. He must win her back to reason.

Reason! As the word went through his mind it chilled him, like the passing of a thing coated with ice. He had been surely a reasonable man, and his reasonableness had led him to this hour. Suddenly he saw himself, as he had seen that palace door by lightning. He saw himself for an instant lit by a glare of fire. He looked, he stared upon himself.

And he shivered, as if he had drawn close to, as if he had stood by, a thing coated with ice.

And he dared to come here, to pursue such a woman as Hermione! He dared to think that he could have any power over her, that his ice could have any power over her fire! He dared to think that! For a moment all, and far more than all, his former feeling of unworthiness, of helplessness, of cowardice, rushed back upon him. Then, abruptly, there came upon him this thought—"Vere believes I have power over Hermione." And then followed the thought—"Gaspere believes that I have power over her." And the ice seemed to crack. He saw fissures in it. He saw it melting. He saw the "thing" it had covered appearing, being gradually revealed as—man.

"Vere believes in my power. Gaspere believes in my power. They are the nearest to Hermione. They know her best. Their instincts about her must be the strongest, the truest. Why do they believe in it? Why do they—why do they know—for they must, they do know, that I have this power, that I am the one to succeed where anyone else would fail? Why have they left Hermione in my hands to-night?"

The ice was gone. The lightning flash lit up a man

warm with the breath of life. From the gaunt door of the abandoned palace the strip of black cloth, the tragic words above it, dropped down and disappeared.

Suddenly Artois knew why Vere believed in his power, and why Gaspare believed in it—knew how their instincts had guided them, knew to what secret knowledge—perhaps not even consciously now their knowledge—they had travelled. And he remembered the words he had written in the book at Frisio's on the night of the storm:

“La conscience, c'est la quantité de science innée que nous avons en nous.”

He had written those words hurriedly, irritably, merely because he had to write something, and they chanced—he knew not why—to come into his mind as he took hold of the pen. And it was on that night, surely, that his conscience—his innate knowledge—began to betray him. Or—no—it was on that night that he began to defy it, to deny it, to endeavour to cast it out.

For surely he must have known, he had known, what Vere and Gaspare innately knew. Surely his conscience had not slept while theirs had been awake.

He did not know. It seemed to him as if he had not time to decide this now. Very rapidly his mind had worked, rushing surely through corridors of knowledge to gain an inner room. He had only stood at the foot of the crumbling staircase two or three minutes before he moved again decisively, called again decisively:

“Hermione! Hermione! I know you are here. I have come for you!”

He went to the right. On the left was the chamber which had been taken possession of by the sea. She could not have gone that way, unless—— he thought of the *fattura della morte*, and for a moment the super-

stitious horror returned upon him. But he banished it. That could not be. His heart was flooded by conviction that cruelty has an end, that the most relentless Fate fails at last in its pursuing, that the *fattura della morte*, if it brought death with it, brought a death that was not of the body, brought, perhaps, a beautiful death of something that had lived too long.

He banished fear, and he entered the chamber on the right. It was lit only by an opening looking to the sea. As he came into it he saw a tall thing—like a tall shadow—pass close to him and disappear. He saw that, and he heard the faint sound of material in movement.

There was then still another chamber on this side, and Hermione had passed into it. He followed her in silence, came to the doorway of it, looked, saw black darkness. There was no other opening, either to sea or land. In it Hermione had found what she sought—absolute blackness.

But he had found her. Here she could not escape him.

He stood in the doorway. He remembered Vere's trust in him. He remembered Gaspare's trust. He remembered that Gaspare was waiting in the boat for him—for them. He remembered the words of Gaspare:

“You must make the poor Signora understand.”

That was what he had to do: to make Hermione understand. And that surely he could do. Surely he had the power to do it now.

For he himself understood.

CHAPTER XXI.

“HERMIONE!”

Artois spoke to the void.

“Hermione, because I have followed you, because I

have come here, don't think that I am claiming any right. Don't think that I imagine, because I am your—because I am—I mean that it has not been easy to me to come. It has not been—it is not a simple thing to me to break in upon—upon——”

He had begun to speak with determination. He had said the very first words with energy, almost with a warm eagerness, as of one hurrying on to vital speech. But suddenly the energy faltered, the eagerness failed, the ring of naturalness died out of the voice. It was as if a gust of cold air had blown out a flame. He paused. Then he said, in a low voice:

“You hate me for coming.”

He stopped again. He stared at the void, at the blackness.

“You hate me for being here.”

As he said the last words the blackness before him surely gathered itself together, took a form, the form of a wave, towered up as a gigantic wave towers, rolled upon him to overwhelm him. So acute was his sensation of being attacked, of being in peril, that his body was governed by it and instinctively shrank, trying to make itself small that it might oppose as little resistance as possible to the oncoming foe.

For it seemed to him that the wave of blackness was the wave of Hermione's present hatred, that it came upon him, that it struck him, that it stunned and almost blinded him, then divided, rushing onwards he knew not where, unspent and unsatisfied.

He stood like a man startled and confused, striving to regain lost footing, to recover his normal condition.

“You hate me.”

Had he spoken the words or merely thought them?

He did not know. He was not conscious of speaking them, yet he seemed to hear them. He looked at the blackness. And again it surely moved. Again he surely saw it gathering itself together, and towering up as a wave towers.

His sensation was absolutely one of nightmare. And exactly as in a nightmare a man feels that he is no longer fully himself, has no longer the power to do any manly or effective thing, so Artois felt now.

It seemed to him that he was nothing, and yet that he was hated. He turned and looked behind him, moved by a fierce desire for relief. He had not the courage to persist in confronting that blackness which took a form, which came upon him, which would surely overwhelm him.

In the distance he saw a pallor, where the face of the night looked into the palace from the sea. And he heard the distant water. Still the little waves were entering the deserted chambers, only to seek an exit which they could never find. Their ceaseless determination was horrible to him, because it suggested to him the ceaseless determination of those other waves of black hatred, one following another, from some hidden centre of energy that was inexhaustible. As he listened the sound of the sea stole into his ears till his brain was full of it, till he felt as if into his brain, as into those deserted chambers, the waves were penetrating, the waves of the sea and those dark waves which gathered themselves together and flowed upon him from the void.

For a moment they possessed him. For a moment he was the prey of these two oceans.

Then he made a violent effort, released himself, and turned again to the chamber in which Hermione was hidden. He faced the blackness. He was able to do

that now. But he was not able to go on speaking to the woman who remained invisible, but whose influence he was so painfully conscious of. He was not able to speak to her because she was surely speaking to him, was communicating to him not only her feeling towards him, but also its reason, its basis, in that wordless language which is only used and comprehended by human beings in moments of crisis and intense emotion. That was what he felt, seemed to know.

He stood there, facing the blackness and listening, while she seemed to be telling him her woman's reasons for her present hatred of the man who had been for so long a time her closest friend.

And these reasons were not only the reasons born of a day's events, of the discovery of the lie on which her spirit had been resting. She did not say—her heart did not say only, "I hate you because you let me believe in that which never existed except in my imagination—my husband's complete love of me, complete faithfulness to me. I hate you because you enclosed me in the prison of a lie. I hate you because during all these years you have been a witness of my devotion to an idol, a graven image whose wooden grimace I mistook for the smile of the gods' happy messenger, because you have been a witness of my cult for the memory of one who betrayed my trust in him, who thought nothing of my gift to him, who put another in the sanctuary that should have been sacred to me, and who has poisoned the sources of the holy streams that flow into and feed the soul of a good woman."

If Hermione had silently told Artois reasons such as these for hating him she would have roused him to battle with her, to defend himself with some real hope of hold-

ing his own, even of eventual conquest. But other reasons, too, did they not come from her, creeping out of her brain, and heart, and soul into his, reasons against which he had no weapons, against which he could make no defence?

He had claimed to understand the psychology of women. He had believed he comprehended women well, Hermione best of all women. But these reasons, creeping out of her into him, set a ring of illuminating fire about his misconception. They told him that though perhaps he had known one Hermione in his friend, there were other Hermiones in her whom he had never really known. Once in the garden of the island by night he had seen, or fancied he had seen, a strange smile upon her face that betokened a secret bitterness; and for a moment he had been confused, and had faltered in his speech, and had felt as if he were sitting with a stranger who was hostile to him, or, if not actually hostile, was almost cruelly critical of him. Now that stranger silently spoke to him, silently told him many things.

She told him—that which few men ever know—something of what women specially want, specially need in life. And the catalogue of these needs seemed to him to be also the catalogue of her reasons for hating him at this moment.

“Women need—I needed,” she seemed to say, “not only a large and ample friendship, nobly condescending, a friendship like an announcement to citizens affixed to the wall of a market-place, and covering boldly all the principal circumstances and likely happenings of ordinary feminine life, but a friendship, an affection, very individual, very full of subtlety, not such as would suit, would fit comfortably women, but such as would suit, would fit

comfortably, would fit beautifully one individual woman—me.”

Ah, the “woman need” was flung away, like a stone thrown into the sea! It was the “I needed” that was held fast, that was shown to Artois now. And the “I” stood to Hermione for herself. But might it not have stood to the world for many a woman?

“I needed someone to whom I could be kind, for whom I could think, plan, hope, weave a fabric of ambitious dreams, look forward along the path that leads to glory. I needed someone for whom I could be unselfish, to whom I could often offer those small burnt sacrifices whose smoke women love to see ascending towards God, burnt sacrifices of small personal desires, small personal plans and intentions. I needed someone to need my encouragement, my admiration—frequently expressed—my perpetual sympathy hovering about him like a warm cloud of fragrant incense, my gentle criticism, leading him to efforts which would win from the world, and from me, more admiration of and wonder at his energy and genius. I needed someone to stir within me woman’s soft passion for forgiveness, woman’s delight in petting the child who has been naughty, but who puts the naughtiness aside and runs home to be good again. I needed someone to set upon a pedestal.

“These needs you fully satisfied.

“You gave me generously opportunities for kindness, for thoughtfulness, for impersonal ambition, for looking forward on your behalf; for unselfishness, for the sacrifice of my little personal desires, plans and intentions, for encouragement of you, for admiration of your abilities, for sympathy—even for gentle criticism leading you to efforts which won from me eventually a greater respect for your

powers and for secret forgiveness which ended in open petting. When I prepared the pedestal you were quite ready to mount it, and to remain upon it without any demonstration of fatigue.

“And so, many needs of mine you satisfied.

“But I had more needs, and far other needs than these.

“I needed not only to make many gifts, to satisfy my passion for generosity, but to have many gifts, and gifts of a special nature made in return to me. I needed to feel another often, if not perpetually and exclusively, intent on me. I needed to feel tenderness, watchful, quick, eager tenderness—not tenderness slow-footed and in blinkers—round about me.

“I needed a little blindness in my friend. That is true. But the blindness that I needed was not blindness to my little sacrifices but blindness to my little faults.

“To a woman there is such a world of difference between the two! I longed for my friend to see the smoke ascending from my small burnt offerings of self made for his sake. But I longed, too, for him not always to see with calm, clear eyes, my petty failings, my minute vanities, my inconsistencies, my incongruities, my frequent lack of reasoning power and logical sequence, my gusts of occasional injustice—ending nearly always in a rain of undue benefits,—my surely forgivable follies of sentiment, my irritabilities,—how often due to physical causes which no man could ever understand,—my blunders of the head,—of the heart I made but few, or none,—my weak depressions, struggled against but not always conquered, my perhaps childish anxieties, and apprehensions, my forebodings not invariably well founded, my fleeting absurdities of temper, of temperament, of manner or of word.

“But as definitely as my friend did not see my little sacrifices he saw my little faults, and he made me see that he saw them. Men are so free from the tender deceptions that women are compact of.

“And as I needed blindness in some directions in others I needed clear sight.

“I needed someone to see that my woman’s heart was not only the heart of a happy mother, to whom God had given an almost perfect child, but also the heart of a lover—not of a *grande amoureuse*, perhaps, but of a lover who had been deprived of the love that is the complement of woman’s, and who suffered perpetually in woman’s peculiar and terrible way because of that deprivation.

“I needed an understanding of my sacred hunger, a comprehension of my desolation, a realisation that my efforts to fill my time with work were as the efforts of a traveller in a forest to escape from the wolves whose voices he hears behind him. I needed the recognition of a simple truth,—that the thing one is passionately eager to give is nearly always the thing one is passionately eager to receive, and that when I poured forth sympathy upon others I was longing to have it poured forth upon me. I gave because secretly I realised the hunger I was sharing. And often, having satisfied your hunger, I was left to starve, no longer in company but entirely alone.

“I needed great things, perhaps, but I needed them expressed in little ways; and I needed little cares, little attentions, little thoughtfulnesses, little preventions, little, little absurd kindnesses, tendernesses, recognitions, forgivenesses. Perhaps, indeed, even more than anything magnificent or great I needed the so-called little things. It is not enough for a woman to know that a man would do for her something important, something even superb, if

the occasion for it arose. Such an occasion probably never would arise—and she cannot wait! She wants to be shown at every moment that someone is thinking kindly of her, is making little kind plots and plans for her, is wishing to ward off from her the chill winds, to keep from pricking her the thorns of the roses, to shut out from her the shadows of life and let in the sunbeams to her pathway.

“I needed the tender, passing touch to show me my secret grief was understood, and my inconsistency was pardoned. I needed the generous smile to prove to me that my greed for kindness, even when perhaps inopportune, was met in an ungrudging spirit. I needed now and then—I needed this sometimes terribly, more perhaps than any other thing—a sacrifice of self in my friend, in you, a sacrifice of some very small, very personal desire of yours, because it was not mine or because it was the opposite to mine. Never, never did my heart and my nature demand of yours any great sacrifice of self, such as mine could have made—such as mine once did make—for you. But it did demand, often—often it demanded, some small sacrifice: the giving up of some trifle, the resignation of some advantage, perhaps, that your man’s intellect gave you over my woman’s intellect, the abandoning of some argumentative position, or the not taking of it, the sweet pretence—scarcely a sin against the Holy Ghost of truth!—that I was a tiny bit more persuasive, or more clear-sighted, or more happy in some contention, or more just in some decision, than perhaps I really was. I needed to be shown your affection for me as I was ever ready, ever anxious, to show mine for you, in all the little ways that are the language of the heart and that fill a woman’s life with music.

"All this I needed. My nature cried out for it as instinctively as the nature of man cries out for God. But all this I needed generally in vain. You were not always a niggard. You were ready sometimes to give in your way. But were you ever ready to give in mine when you saw—and sometimes you must have seen, sometimes you did see—what mine was? I longed always to give you all you wanted in the way you wanted it. But you gave when you wished, and as you chose to give! I was often grateful. I was too often grateful. I was unduly grateful. Because I was giving, I was always giving far more than I received.

"But all that time I had something. All that time I had a memory that I counted sacred. All that time, like an idiot child, I was clasping in my hand a farthing, which I believed, which I stated, to be a shining piece of gold.

"You knew what it was. You knew it was a farthing! You knew—you knew!

"And now that the hour has come when I know too, can't you understand that I realise not only that that farthing is a farthing, but that all farthings are farthings? Can't you understand that I hate those who have given me farthings when my hands were stretched out for gold—my hands that were giving gold?

"Can't you understand? Can't you? Then I'll make you understand! I'll make you! I'll make you!"

Again the blackness gathered itself together, took a form, the form of a wave, towered up as a gigantic wave towers, rolled upon Artois to overwhelm him. He stood firm and received the shock. For he was beginning to understand. He was no longer confronting waves of hatred which were also waves of mystery.

He had thought that Hermione hated him, hated everyone just then, because of what Ruffo had silently told her that day at Mergellina. But as he stood there in the dark at the door of that black chamber, hearing the distant murmur of the sea about the palace walls, there were borne in upon him, as if in words she told him, all the reasons for present hatred of him which preceded the great reason of that day; reasons for hatred which sprang, perhaps, which surely must spring, from other reasons of love.

His mind was exaggerating, as minds do when the heart is intensely moved, yet it discerned much truth. And it was very strange, but his now acute consciousness of a personal hatred coming to him from out of the darkness of this almost secret chamber, and of its complex causes, causes which, nevertheless, would surely never have produced the effect he felt but for the startling crisis of that day, this acute consciousness of a personal and fierce hatred bred suddenly in Artois a new sensation of something that was not hatred, that was the reverse of hatred. Vere had once compared him to a sleepy lion. The lion was now awake.

"Hermione," he said, and now his voice was strong and unflinching, "I seem to have been listening to you all this time that I have been standing here. Surely I have been listening to you, hearing your thoughts. Don't you know it? Haven't you felt it? When I left the island, when I followed you, I thought I understood. I thought I understood what you were feeling, almost all that you were feeling. I know now how little I understood. I didn't realise how much there was to understand. You've been telling me. Haven't you, Hermione? Haven't you?"

He paused. But there was no answer.

"I am sure you have been telling me. We must get down to the truth at last. I thought—till now I have thought that I was more able to read the truth than most men. You must often have laughed—how you must have laughed—secretly at my pretensions. Only once—one night in the garden on the island—I think I saw you laughing. And even then I didn't understand. Mon Dieu!"

He was becoming fiercely concentrated now on what he was saying. He was losing all self-consciousness. He was even losing consciousness of the strange fact that he was addressing the void. It was as if he saw Hermione, so strongly did he feel her.

"Mon Dieu! It is as if I'd been blind all the time I have known you, blind to the truth of you and blinder still to my own truth. Perhaps I am blind now. I don't know. But, Hermione, I can see something. I do know something of you and of myself. I do know that even now there is a link between us. You want to deny it. You wouldn't acknowledge it. But it is there. We are not quite apart from one another. We can't be that. For there is something—there has always been something, since that night we met in Paris, at Madame Enthoven's"—he paused again, so vividly flashed the scene of that dinner in Paris upon his memory—"something to draw us together, something to hold us together, something strong. Don't deny it even now. Don't deny it. Can't I be of some help, even now? Don't say I am utterly useless because I have been so useless to you, so damnably useless in the past. I see all that, my wretched uselessness to you through all these years. I am seeing it now while I am speaking. All the time I'm seeing it. What you have deserved and what you have had!"

He stopped, then he said again:

“What you have deserved and what you have had from me! And from—— it was so—it was the same long ago, not here. But till to-day you didn’t know that. I was wrong. I must have been wrong, hideously wrong, but I didn’t want you ever to know that. It isn’t that I don’t love truth. You know I do. But I thought that lie was right. And it is only lately, this summer, that I have had any doubts. But I was wrong. I must have been wrong. It was intended that you should know. God, perhaps, intended it.”

He thought he heard a movement. But he was not quite sure. For there was always the noise of the sea in the deserted chambers of the palace.

“It seems to me now as if I had always been deceived, mistaken, blind with you, about you. I thought you need never know. I was mad enough to think that. But I was madder still, for I thought—I must have thought—that you could not bear to know, that you weren’t strong enough to endure the knowledge. But,”—he was digging deep now, searching for absolute truth: in this moment his natural passion for truth, in one direction repressed for many years deliberately and consciously, in other directions, perhaps, almost unconsciously frustrated, took entire possession of his being,—“But nothing should ever be allowed to stand in the way of truth. I believe that. I know it. I must, I will always act upon the knowledge from this moment. Never mind if it is bitter, cruel. Perhaps it is sometimes put into the world because of that. I’ve been a horrible *fainéant*, the last of *fainéants*. I protected you from the truth. With Gaspere I managed to do it. We never spoke of it—never. But I think each of us understood. And we acted together

for you in that. And I—it has often seemed to me that it was a fine thing to do, and that my motives in doing it were fine. But sometimes I have wondered whether they weren't selfish—whether, instead of protecting you, I wasn't only protecting myself. For it was all my fault. It all came about through me, through my weakness, my cursed weakness, my cursed weakness and whining for help.”—He grew scarlet in the dark, realising how his pride in his strength, his quiet assumption with Hermione that he was the stronger, must often have made her marvel, or almost weep.—“I called you away. I called you to Africa. And if I hadn't it would all have been different.”

“No, it would all have been the same.”

Artois started. Out of the darkness a voice, a low, cold, inexorable voice had spoken—had spoken absolute truth, correcting his lie:

“It would all have been the same!”

The woman's unerring instinct had penetrated much farther than the man's. He had been feeling the shell; she plucked out the kernel. He had been speaking of the outward facts, of the actions of the body; she spoke of the inward facts, of the actions of the soul. Her husband's sin against her was not his unfaithfulness, the unfaithfulness at the Fair, but the fact that all the time he had been with her, all the time she had been giving her whole self to him, all the time that she had been surrounding him with her love, he had retained in his soul the power to will to commit it. That he had been given an opportunity to sin was immaterial. What was material was that he had been capable of sinning.

Artois saw his lie. And he stood there silent, rebuked, waiting for the voice to speak again. But it did

not speak. And he felt as if Hermione were silently demanding that he should sound the deeper depths of truth, he who had always proclaimed to her his love of truth.

"Perhaps—yes, it would have been the same," he said. "But—but——" His intention was to say, "But we should not have known it." He checked himself. Even as they formed themselves in his mind the words seemed bending like some wretched, flabby reed.

"It would have been the same. But that makes no difference in my conduct. I was weak and called to you. You were strong and came to me. How strong you were! How strong it was of you to come!"

As if for the first time—and indeed it was for the first time—he really and thoroughly comprehended her self-sacrifice, the almost bizarre generosity of her implacably unselfish nature. He measured the force of her love, and the greatness of her sacrifice, by the depth of her disillusion; and he began to wonder, almost as a child wonders at things, how he had been able during all these years quite simply, with indeed the almost incredible simplicity of man, never to be shared by any woman, to assume and to feel, when with Hermione, that he was the dominant spirit of the two, that she was, very rightly and properly, and very happily for her, leaning comfortably upon his strength. And in his wonder he knew that the real dominance strikes its roots in the heart, not in the head.

"You were strong, then, and you were strong, you were wonderfully strong, when—afterwards. On Monte Amato—that evening—you were strong."

His mind went to that mountain summit. The eyes of his mind saw the evening calm on Etna, and then—something else, a small, fluttering fragment of white paper

at his feet among the stones. And, as if her mind read his, she spoke again, still in that low, cold, and inexorable voice.

"That piece of paper you found—what was it?"

"Hermione—Hermione—it was part of a letter of yours written in Africa, telling him that we were coming to Sicily, the day we were coming."

"It was that!"

The voice had suddenly changed. It struggled with a sob. It sank away in a sob. The sin—that she could speak of with a sound of calm. But all the woman in her was stricken by the thought of her happy letter treated like that, hated, denied, destroyed, and thrown to the winds.

"My letter! my letter!"

"Hermione!"

His heart spoke in his voice, and he made a step forward in the darkness.

"Don't!"

The voice had changed again, had become sharp, almost cutting. Like the lash of a whip it fell upon him. And he stopped at once. It seemed to him as if she had cried out, "If you dare to give me your pity I shall kill you!"

And he felt as if just then, for such a reason, she would be capable of such an action.

"I will not——" he almost faltered. "I am not—coming."

Never before had he been so completely dominated by any person, or by any fate, or by anything at all.

There was again a silence. Then he said,

"You are strong. I know you will be strong now. You can't go against your nature. I ought to have realised

that, as I have not realised it. I ought to have trusted to your strength long ago."

If he had known how weak she felt while she listened to him, how her whole being was secretly entreating to be supported, to be taken hold of tenderly, and guarded and cared for like a child! But he was a man. And at one moment he understood her and at another he did not.

"Gaspere and I—we wished to spare you. And perhaps I wished to spare myself. I think I did. I am sure I did. I am sure that was partly my reason. I was secretly ashamed of my cowardice, my weakness in Africa; and when I knew—no, when I guessed, for it was only that—what my appeal to you had caused—all it had caused——"

He paused. He was thinking of Maurice's death, which must have been a murder, which he was certain had been a murder.

"I hadn't——"

But the compelling voice from the darkness interrupted him.

"All?" it said.

He hesitated. Had she read his mind again?

"All?"

"The misery," he answered slowly. "The sorrow that has lain upon your life ever since."

"Did you mean that? Did you only mean that?"

"No."

"What did you mean?"

"I was thinking of his death," he replied.

He spoke very quietly. He was resolved to have no more subterfuges, whatever the coward or the tender friend, or—the something else that was more than the tender friend within him might prompt him to try to hide.

"I was thinking of his death."

"His death!"

Artois felt cold with apprehension, but he was determined to be sincere.

"I don't understand."

"Don't ask me any more, Hermione. I know nothing more."

"He was coming from the island. He slipped and fell into the sea."

"He fell into the sea."

There was a long silence between them, filled by the perpetual striving of the restless waves within the chambers of the palace. Then she said:

"Her father was on the island that night?"

"I think he was."

"Was it that? Was it that? Did Maurice make that atonement?"

Artois shuddered. Her voice was so strange, or sounded so strange in the dark. Did she wish to think, wish to be sure that her husband had been murdered? He heard the faint rustle of her dress. She had moved. Was she coming nearer? He heard her breathing, or thought he heard it. He longed to be certain. He longed to still the perpetual cry of the baffled sea.

"Then he was brave—at the last. I think he knew, I am sure he knew—when he went down to the sea. I am sure he knew—when he said good-bye."

Her voice was nearer to him. And again it had changed, utterly changed. And in the different sounds of her voice Artois seemed to see the different women who dwelt within her, to understand and to know them as he had never understood and known them before. This woman was pleading, as women will plead for a man

they have once loved, so long as they have voices, so long as they have hearts.

"Then that last time he didn't—no, he didn't go to—her."

The voice was almost a whisper, and Artois knew that she was speaking for herself—that she was telling herself that her husband's last action had been—not to creep to the woman, but to stand up and face the man.

"Was it her father?"

The voice was still almost a whisper.

"I think it was."

"Maurice paid then—he paid!"

"Yes. I am sure he paid."

"Gaspere knew. Gaspere knew—that night. He was afraid. He knew—but he didn't tell me. He has never told me."

"He loved his master."

"Gaspere loved Maurice more than he loved me."

By the way she said that Artois knew that Gaspere was forgiven. And a sort of passion of love for woman's love welled up in his heart. At that moment he almost worshipped Hermione for being unable, even in that moment, not to love Gaspere, because Gaspere had loved the dead man more than he loved her.

"But Gaspere loves you," he said.

"I don't believe in love. I don't want love any more."

Again the voice was transformed. It had become hollow and weary, without resonance, like the voice of someone very old. And Artois thought of Virgil's Grotto, of all they had said there, and of how the rock above them had broken into deep and sinister murmurings, as if to warn them, or rebuke.

And now, too, there were murmurings about them, but below them from the sea.

"Hermione, we must speak only the truth to-night."

"I am telling you the truth. You chose to follow me. You chose to hunt me—to hunt me when you knew it was necessary to me to be alone. It was brutal to do it. It was brutal. I had earned the right at least to one thing: I had earned the right to be alone. But you didn't care. You wouldn't respect my right. You hunted me as you might have hunted an animal. I tried to escape. I didn't go to the village. I turned in here. I hid here. But you saw me coming, and you chased me, and you caught me. I can't get away. You have driven me in here. And I can't get away from you. You won't even let me be alone."

"I dare not let you be alone to-night."

"Why not? What are you afraid of? What does it matter to you where I go or what I do? Don't say it matters! Don't dare to say that!"

Her voice was fierce now.

"It doesn't matter to anybody, except perhaps a little to Vere, and a very little to Gaspare. It never has really mattered to anybody. I thought it did once to someone. I thought I knew it did. But I was wrong. It didn't. It never mattered."

As she spoke an immense, a terrific feeling of desolation poured over her, as if from above, coming down upon her in the dark. It was like a flood that stiffened into ice upon her, making her body and her soul numb for a moment.

"I've never mattered to anyone."

She muttered the words to herself. As she did so, Artois seemed again to be looking into the magic mirror of the *fattura della morte*, to see the pale man, across whose face the shadow of a palm-leaf shifted, turning on his bed towards a woman who stood by an open door.

"You have always mattered to me," he said.

As he spoke there was in his voice that peculiar ring of utter sincerity which can no more be simulated, or mistaken, than the ringing music of sterling gold. But perhaps she was not in a condition to hear rightly, or perhaps something within her chose to deny, had a lust for denial because denial hurt her.

"To you least of all," she said. "Only yourself has ever really mattered to you."

In a sentence she summed up the long catalogue that had been given to him by her silence.

His whole body felt as if it reddened. His skin tingled with a sort of physical anger. His mature pride, that had grown always, as a strong man's natural pride does grow with the passing of the years, seemed to him instinctively to rush forward to return the blow that had been dealt it.

"That is not quite true," he said.

"It is true. I have always had copper and I have always wanted gold," she answered.

He controlled himself, to prove to himself that she lied, that he was not the eternal egoist she dubbed him. Sometimes he had been genuinely unselfish, sometimes—not often, perhaps, but sometimes—he had really sunk himself in her. She was not being quite just. But how could she be quite just to-night? And what did exact justice matter to-night? An almost reckless feeling overtook him, a desire to conquer at all costs in this struggle; to win her back, whether against her will or not, to her old self; to eliminate the shocking impression made upon her soul by the discovery of that day, to wipe it out utterly, to replace it with another; to revive within her that beautiful enthusiasm which had been as a light al-

ways shining for her and from her upon people, and events, and life; to make her understand, to prove to her that, after all allowance has been made for uncertainties and contradictions of fate, for the ironies, the paradoxes, the cruelties, the tragedies and the despairs of existence, the great broad fact emerges, that what the human being gives, in the long run the human being generally gets, and that she who persistently gives gold will surely at last receive it.

The thought of a lost Hermione struck to his heart a greater fear than had already that night the thought of a dead Hermione. And if she was changed she was lost.

The real, the beautiful Hermione—he must seize her, grip her, hold her fast before it was too late.

“Hermione,” he said, “I think you saved me from death. I am sure you did. Did you save me only to hate me?”

She made no reply.

“Do you remember that evening when you came into my room in Kairouan all covered with dust from your journey across the plains? I do. I remember it as if it had happened an hour ago instead of nearly seventeen years. I remember the strange feeling I had when I turned my head and saw you, a feeling that you and Africa would fight for me and that you would conquer. It had seemed to me that Africa meant to have me and would have me. Unless you came I felt certain of that. And I had thought about it all as I lay there in the stifling heat, till I almost felt the feverish earth enclosing me. I had loved Africa, but Africa seemed to me terrible then. I thought of only Arabs, always Arabs, walking above me on the surface of the ground when I was buried. And the thought made me shudder with horror. As if it

could have mattered! I was absurd! But one is often absurd when one is very ill. The child in one comes out then, I suppose. And I had wondered—how I had wondered—whether there was any chance of your coming! I hadn't actually asked you to come. I hadn't dared to do that. But it was the same thing almost. I had let you know—I had let you know. And I saw you come into my room all covered with dust. You had come so quickly—at once. Perhaps—perhaps sometimes you have thought I had forgotten that evening. I may be an egoist. I expect most men are egoists. And perhaps I am the egoist you say I am. Often one doesn't know what one is. But I have never forgotten that day, and that you were covered with dust. It was that—the dust—which seemed to make me realise that you had not lost a moment in coming, that you hadn't hesitated a moment as to whether you would come or not. You looked as if—almost as if you had run all the way to be in time to save my life—my wretched life. And you saved it. Did you save me to hate me?"

He waited for her to speak. But still she was silent. He heard no sound of her at all, and for a moment he almost wondered whether she had discovered that the chamber had some second outlet, whether she had not escaped while he had been speaking. But he looked round, and he saw only dense darkness. She must be there still, close to him, hearing everything he said, whether against her will or with it. He was being perfectly sincere, and he was feeling very deeply, with intensity. But out of his natural reserve now rose a fear—the fear that, perhaps, his voice, his speech, did not convey his sincerity to her. If she should mistake him! If she should fancy he was trying to play upon her

emotions in order to win her away from some desperate resolve? He longed to make her see what he was feeling, feel what he was feeling, be him and herself for one moment. And now the darkness began to distract him. He wanted light. He wanted to see Hermione, to see which of the women in her faced him, which was listening to him.

"Hermione," he said, "I want you—I want—it's hateful speaking like this, always in the darkness. Don't make me stay here. Don't make me feel all the time that I am holding you a prisoner. No, I can't—I won't bear that any more."

He moved suddenly from the doorway, back into the room behind him, in which there was a very little, very faint light. There he waited.

Almost immediately, the tall shadow which had disappeared into the darkness emerged from it, passed before him, and went into the central chamber of the palace. He followed it, and found Hermione standing by the great doorway that overlooked the sea. Hermione she was, no longer a shadow, but the definite darkness of a human form relieved against the clear, but now moonless night. She was waiting. Surely she was waiting for him. She might have escaped, but she stayed. She was willing, then, to hear what he had to say, all he had to say.

He stood still at a little distance from her. But in this hall the sound of the sea which came from the chamber on the left was much more distinct and disturbing than in the chamber where she had hidden. And he came nearer to her, till he was very near, almost close to her.

"If you hated me for—once, when we were standing on the terrace, you said, 'Take care—or I shall hate you

for keeping me in the dark.' If you hated me because of what I have done, with Gaspere, Hermione, I could bear it. I could bear it, because I think it would pass away. We did keep you in the dark. Now you know it. But you know our reason, and that it was a reason of very deep affection. And I think you would forgive us, I know you would forgive us in the end. But I understand it isn't only that——"

Suddenly he thought of Vere, of that perhaps dawning folly, so utterly dead now, so utterly dead that he could no longer tell whether it had ever even sluggishly stirred with life. He thought of Vere, and of the poems, and of the secret of Peppina's revelation. And he wondered whether the record he seemed to read in the silence had been a true record, or whether his imagination and his intellect of a psychologist, alert even in this hour of intense emotion, had been deceiving him. Hermione had seemed to be speaking to him. But had he really been only impersonating her? Had it been really himself that had spoken to himself? As this question arose in his mind he longed to make Hermione speak. Then he could be sure of all. He must clear away all misconception. Yet, even now, how could he speak of that episode with Vere?

"You say you have always wanted gold, and that you have never been given gold——"

"Yes."

He saw the dark figure near him lift its head. And he felt that Hermione had come out of the darkness with the intention of speaking the truth of what she felt. If she could not have spoken she would have stayed in the inner chamber, or she would have escaped altogether from the palace when he moved from the doorway. He

was sure that only if she spoke would she change. In her silence there was damnation for them both. But she meant to speak.

"I have been a fool. I see that now. But I think I have been suspecting it for some time—nearly all this summer."

He could hear by the sound of her voice that while she was speaking she was thinking deeply. Like him she was in search of absolute truth.

"It is only this summer that I have begun to see why people—you—have often smiled at my enthusiasms. No wonder you smiled! No wonder you laughed at me secretly!"

Her voice was hard and bitter.

"I never laughed at you, never—either secretly or openly!" he said, with a heat almost of anger.

"Oh yes, you did, as a person who can see clearly might laugh at a short-sighted person tumbling over all the little obstacles on a road. I was always tumbling over things—always—and you must always have been laughing. I have been a fool. Instead of growing up, my heart has remained a child—till now. That's what it is. Children who have been kindly treated think the world is all kindness. Because my friends were good to me, the world was good to me, I got into the habit of believing that I was lovable, and of loving in return. And I trusted people. I always thought they were giving me what I was giving them. That has been my great folly, the folly I'm punished for. I have been a credulous fool. I have thought that because I gave a thing with all my heart it was—it must be—given back to me. And yet I was surprised—I could scarcely believe it—when—when——"

He knew she was thinking of her beautiful wonder when Maurice had said he loved her.

"I could scarcely believe it! But, because I was a

fool, I got to believe it, and I have believed it till to-day—you have stood by, and watched me believing it, and laughed at me for believing it till to-day.”

“Hermione!”

“Yes, you mayn’t have meant to laugh, but you must have laughed. Your mind, your intellect must have laughed. Don’t say they haven’t. I wouldn’t believe you. And I know your mind—at any rate, I know that. Not your heart! I shall never pretend—I shall never think again for a moment that I know anything—anything at all—about a man’s heart. But I do know something about your mind. And I know the irony in it. What a subject I have presented to you all these years for the exercise of your ironic faculty! You ought to thank me! You ought to go on your knees and thank me and bless me for that!”

“Hermione!”

“Just now you talked of my coming into your room in Kairouan, all covered with dust. You asked me if I remembered it. Yes, I do. And I remember something you don’t—probably you don’t—remember. There was no looking-glass in your room.”

She stopped.

“No looking-glass!” he repeated, wondering.

“No, there was no looking-glass. And I remember when I came in I saw there wasn’t, and I was glad. Because I couldn’t look at myself and see how dreadful, and dishevelled, and hideous I was—how dirty even I was. My impulse was to go to a glass. And then I was glad I couldn’t. And I looked at your face. And I thought ‘he doesn’t care. He loves me, all dusty, and hideous, and horrid, as I am.’ And then I didn’t care either. I said to myself, ‘I look an object, and I don’t

mind a bit, because I see in his face that he loves me for myself, because he sees my heart, and——”

And suddenly in her voice there was a sharp, hissing catch, and she stopped short. For a full minute she was silent. And Artois did not speak. Nor did he move.

“I felt then, perhaps for the first time, ‘the outside doesn’t matter to real people.’ I felt that. I felt, ‘I’m real, and he is real, and—and Maurice is real.’ And though it is splendid to be beautiful, and beauty means so much, yet it doesn’t mean so much as I used to think. Real people get beyond it. And when once they have got beyond it then life begins! I remember thinking that, feeling that, and—just for a minute, loving my own ugliness. And then, suddenly, I wished there was a looking-glass in the room, that I might stand before it and see what an object I was, and then look into your face and see that it didn’t matter. And I even triumphed in my ugliness. ‘I have a husband who doesn’t mind,’ I thought. ‘And I have a friend who doesn’t mind. They love me, both of them, whatever I look like. It’s me—the woman inside—they love, because they know I care, and how I care for them.’ And that thought made me feel as if I could do anything for Maurice and anything for you: heroic things, or small, dreadful, necessary things; as if I could be the servant of, or sacrifice my life easily for, those who loved me so splendidly, who knew how to love so splendidly. And I was happy then even in sacrificing my happiness with Maurice. And I thanked God then for not having given me beauty.

“And I was a fool. But I didn’t find it out. And so I revelled in self-sacrifice. You don’t know, you could never understand, how I enjoyed doing the most menial things for you in your illness. Often you thanked me,

and often you seemed ashamed that I should do such things. And the doctor—that little Frenchman—apologised to me. And you both thought that doing so much in the frightful heat would make me ill. And I blessed the heat, and the flies, and everything that made what I did for you more difficult to do. Because the doing of what was more difficult, more trying, more fatiguing, needed more love. And my gratitude to you for your loving friendship, and for needing me more than anyone else, wanted to be tried to the uttermost. And I thought, too, ‘When I go back to Maurice, I shall be worth a little more, I shall be a little bit finer, and he’ll feel it. He’ll understand exactly what it was to me to leave him so soon, to leave—to leave what I thought of then as my Garden of Paradise. And he’ll love me more because I had the courage to leave it to try and save my friend. He’ll realise—he’ll realise——’ But men don’t! They don’t want to. Or they can’t. I’m sure—I’m positive now that men think less of women who are ready to sacrifice themselves than of women who wish to make slaves of them. I see that now. It’s the selfish women they admire, the women who take their own way, and insist on having all they want, not the women who love to serve them—not slavishly, but out of love. A selfish woman they can understand; but a woman who gives up something very precious to her they don’t understand. Maurice never understood my action in going to Africa. And you—I don’t believe you ever understood it. You must have wondered at my coming as much as he did at my going. You were glad I came at the moment. Oh yes, you were glad. I know that. But afterwards you must have wondered; you did wonder. You thought it Quixotic, odd. You said to yourself, ‘It was just like Hermione. How could she do it?’

How could she come to me if she really loved her husband?' And very likely my coming made you doubt my really loving Maurice. I am almost sure it did. I don't believe all these years you have ever understood what I felt about him, what his death meant to me, what life meant to me afterwards. I told—I tried to tell you in the cave—that day. But I don't think you really understood at all. And he—he didn't understand my love for him. But I suppose he didn't even want to. When I went away he simply forgot all about me. That was it. I wasn't there, and he forgot. I wasn't there, and another woman was there—and that was enough for him. And I daresay—now—it is enough for most men, perhaps for every man. And then I'd made another mistake. I was always making mistakes when my heart led me. And I'd made a mistake in thinking that real people get beyond looks, the outside—and that then life begins. They don't—at least real men don't. A woman may spend her heart's blood for a man through years, and for youthful charm and a face that is pretty, for the mere look in a pair of eyes, or the curve of a mouth, he'll almost forget that she's alive, even when she's there before him. He'll take the other woman's part against her instinctively, whichever is in the right. If both women do exactly the same thing a man will find that the pretty woman has performed a miracle, and the ugly woman made some preposterous mistake. That is how men are. That is how you are, I suppose, and that was Maurice, too. He forgot me for a peasant. But—she must have been pretty once. And I was always ugly!"

"Delarey loved you," Artois said, suddenly interrupting her in a strong, deep voice, a voice that rang with true conviction.

"He never loved me. Perhaps he thought he did. He must have thought so. And that first day—when we were coming up the mountain side——"

She stopped. She was seized, she was held fast in the grip of a memory so intense, so poignant, that she made, she could make, no effort to release herself. She heard the drowsy wail of the Ceramella dropping down the mountain side in the radiant heat of noon. She felt Maurice's warm hand. She remembered her words about the woman's need to love—"I wanted, I needed to love—Do men ever feel that? Women do often, nearly always I think." The Pastorale—it sounded in her ears. Or was it the sea that sounded, the sea in the abandoned chambers of the Palace of the Spirits? She listened. No, it was the Pastorale, that antique, simple, holy tune, that for her must always be connected with the thought of love, man's love for woman, and the Bambino's love for all the creatures of God. It flooded her heart, and beneath it sank down, like a drowning thing, for a moment the frightful bitterness that was alive in her heart to-night.

"Delarey loved you," Artois repeated. "He loved you on the first day in Sicily, and he loved you on the last."

"And—and the days between?"

Her voice spoke falteringly. In her voice there was a sound of pleading that struck into the very depths of his heart. The real Hermione was in that sound, the loving woman who needed love, who deserved a love as deep as that which she had given, as that which she surely still had to give.

"He loved you always, but he loved you in his way."

"In his way!" she repeated, with a sort of infinite, hopeless sadness.

"Yes, Hermione, in his way. Oh, we all have our ways, all our different ways of loving. But I don't believe a human being ever existed who had no way at all. Delarey's way was different from your way, so different that, now you know the truth of him, perhaps you can't believe he ever loved you. But he did! He was young, and he was hot-blooded—he was really of the South. And the sun got hold of him. And he betrayed you. But he repented. That last day he was stricken, not by physical fear, but by a tremendous shame at what he had done to you, and perhaps also by fear lest you should ever know it. I sat with him by the wall, and I felt, without at all fully understanding it, the drama in his soul. But now I understand it. I'm sure I understand it. And I think the depth of a shame is very often the exact measure of the depth of a love. Perhaps, indeed, there is no more exact measure."

Again he thought of the episode with Vere, and of his determination always from henceforth to be absolutely sincere with himself, and with those whom he really loved.

"I am sure there is no more exact measure. Hermione, it is very difficult, I think, to realise what any human being is, to judge anyone quite accurately. Some judge a nature by the distance it can sink, others by the distance it can rise. Which do you do? Do you judge Delarey by his act of faithlessness? And, if you do, how would you judge me?"

"You!"

There was a sound of wonder in her voice.

"Yes. You say I am an egoist. And this that I am saying will seem to you egoism. It is egoism, I suppose. But I want to know—I must know. How would you judge me? How do you judge me?"

She was silent.

"How are you judging me at this moment? Aren't you judging me by the distance I could fall, the distance, perhaps, you think I have fallen?"

He spoke slowly. He was delaying. For all the time he spoke he was secretly battling with his pride,—and his pride was a strong fighter. But to-night his passion for sincerity, his instinct that for Hermione—and for him too—salvation lay in their perfect, even in their cruel sincerity to themselves and to each other, was a strong fighter also. In it his pride met an antagonist that was worthy of it. And he went on.

"Are you judging me by this summer?"

He paused.

"Go on," she said.

He could not tell by her voice what she was feeling, thinking. Expression seemed to be withdrawn from it, perhaps deliberately.

"This summer something has come between us, a cloud has come between us. I scarcely know when I first noticed it, when it came. But I have felt it, and you have felt it."

"Yes."

"It might, perhaps, have arisen from the fact of my suspicion who Ruffo was, a suspicion that lately became a certainty. My suspicion, and latterly my knowledge, no doubt changed my manner—made me anxious, perhaps, uneasy, made me watchful, made me often seem very strange to you. That alone might have caused a difference in our relations. But I think there was something else."

"Yes, there was something else."

"And I think, I feel sure now, that it was something

to do with Vere. I was, I became deeply interested in Vere—interested in a new way. She was growing up. She was passing from childhood into girlhood. She was developing swiftly. That development fascinated me. Of course I had always been very fond of Vere. But this summer she meant more to me than she had meant. One day—it was the day I came back to the island after my visit to Paris——”

“Yes?”

He looked at her, trying to read what she was feeling in her face, but it was too dark for him to discern it.

“Vere made a confession to me. She told me she was working secretly, that she was writing poems. I asked her to show them to me. She did so. I found some talent in them, enough for me to feel justified in telling her to continue. Once, Hermione, you consulted me. Then my advice was different.”

“I know.”

“The remembrance of this, and Vere’s knowledge that you had suffered in not succeeding with work, prompted us to keep the matter of her attempts to write a secret for the time. It seems a trifle—all this, but looking back now, I feel that we were quite wrong in not telling you.”

“I found it out.”

“You knew?”

“I went to Vere’s room. The poems were on the table with your corrections. I read them.”

“We ought to have told you.”

“I oughtn’t to have read them, but I did.”

“A mother has the right——”

“Not a mother who has resigned her right to question her child. I had said to Vere, ‘Keep your secrets.’ So I had no right, and I did wrong in reading them.”

He felt that she was instinctively trying to match his sincerity with hers, and that fact helped him to continue.

"The knowledge of this budding talent of Vere's made me take a new interest in her, made me wish very much—at least I thought, I believed it was that, Hermione—that no disturbing influence should come into her life. Isidoro Panacci came—through me. Peppina came—through you. Hermione, on the night when Vere and I went out alone together in the boat Vere learnt the truth about Peppina and the life behind the shutter."

"I knew that too."

"You knew it?"

"Yes. I suspected something. You led me to suspect it."

"I remember——"

"I questioned Peppina. I made her tell me."

He said nothing for a moment. Then, with an effort, he said,

"You knew we had kept those two things from you, Vere and I?"

"Vere and you—yes."

Now, he understood almost all, or quite all, that had been strange to him in her recent conduct.

"Sometimes—have you almost hated us for keeping those two secrets?"

"I don't think I have ever hated Vere."

"But me?"

"Do you know why I told Vere she might read your books?"

"Why?"

"Because I thought they might make her feel differently towards you."

"Less—less kindly?"

"Yes."

She spoke very quietly, but he felt—he did not know why—that it had cost her very much to say what she had said.

“You wanted Vere to think badly of me!”

He was honouring her for the moral courage which enabled her to tell him. Yet he felt as if she had struck him. And so absolutely was he accustomed to delicate tenderness, and the most thoughtful, anxious kindness from her, that he suffered acutely, and from a double distress. The thing itself was cruel, and hurt him. But that Hermione had done it hurt him far more. He could hardly believe it. That by any road she could travel to such an action seemed incredible to him. He stood, realising it. And the bitter sharpness of his suffering made him understand something. In all its fulness he understood what Hermione's tenderness had been in his life for many, many years. And then—his mind seemed to take another step. “Why does a woman do such a thing as this?” he asked himself. “Why does such a woman as Hermione do such a thing?” And he knew what her suffering must have been, and how her heart must have been storm-tossed, before it was driven to succumb to such an impulse.

And he came quite close to her. And he felt a strange, sudden nearness to her that was no nearness of body.

“Hermione,” he said, “I could never judge your character by that action. Don't—don't judge mine by any cruelty of which I have been guilty during this summer. You have told me something that it was very difficult for you to tell. I have something to tell you. And it is—it is not easy to tell.”

“Tell it me.”

He looked at her. He was now quite close to her

and could see the outline of her face, but not the expression in her eyes.

“My interest in Vere increased. I believed it to be an interest aroused in me by the discovery of this talent in her. I believed the new fondness I felt for her to be a very natural fondness, caused by her charming confidence in me. Our little secret drew us together. And I understand now, Hermione, that it seemed to set you apart from us. I believe I understand all now, all the circumstances that have seemed strange to me this summer. I wanted Vere’s talent to develop naturally, unhindered, unaffected—I thought it was merely that!—and I became exigent, I even became jealous of all outside interference. On the night we dined at Frisio’s I felt strongly irritated at Panacci’s interest in Vere. And there were other moments——”

He looked at her again. She stood perfectly still. Her head was slightly bent and she seemed to be looking at the ground.

“And then came the night of the Carmine. Hermione, after you and Vere had gone to bed Panacci and I had a quarrel. He attacked me violently. He told me—he told me that I was in love with Vere, and that you, and even—even that Gaspare knew it. At the moment I think I laughed at him. I thought his accusation ridiculous. But when he had gone—and afterwards—I examined myself. I tried to know myself. I spent hours in self-examination, cruel self-examination. I did not spare myself. Believe that, Hermione! Believe that!”

“I do believe it.”

“And at the end I knew that it was not true. I was not, I had never been in love with Vere. When I thought of Vere and myself in such a relation my spirit recoiled,

Such a thing seemed to me monstrous. But though I knew that was not true, I knew also that I had been jealous of Vere, unjust to others because of Vere. I had been, perhaps, foolish, undignified. Perhaps—perhaps—for how can we be quite sure of ourselves, Hermione? how can we be certain of our own natures, our own conduct?—perhaps, if Panacci's coarse brutality had not waked up my whole being, I might have drifted on towards an affection for Vere that, in a man of my age, would have been absurd, have made me ridiculous in the eyes of others. I scarcely think so. But I want to be sincere. I would rather exaggerate than minimise my own shortcomings to you to-night. I scarcely believe it ever could have been so. But Panacci said it was so. And you—I don't know what you have thought——”

“What I have thought doesn't matter now.”

She spoke very quietly, but not with bitterness. She knew Artois. And even in that moment of emotion, and of a sort of strange exhaustion following upon emotion, she knew, as no other living person could have known, the effort it must have cost him to speak as he had just spoken.

“That, at any rate, is the exact truth.”

“I know it is.”

“I have thought myself clear-sighted, Hermione. I have studied others. Just lately I have been forced to study myself. It is as if—it seems to me as if events had conspired against my own crass ignorance of myself, as if a resolve had been come to by the Power that directs our destinies that I should know myself. I wish I dared to tell you more. I wish to-night I dared to tell you all that I have come to know. But I dare not, I dare not. You would not believe me. I could not even expect you to believe me.”

He stopped. Perhaps he hoped for a word that would deny his last observation. But it did not come to him. And he hesitated for what seemed to him a very long time, almost an eternity. He was beset by indecision, by an extraordinary deep modesty and consciousness of his own unworthiness that he had never before experienced, and also by a new and acute consciousness of the splendour of Hermione's nature, of the power of her heart, of the faithfulness and nobility of her temperament.

"All I can say, Hermione,"—he at length went on speaking, and in his voice sounded that strange modesty, a modesty that made his voice seem to her almost like a voice of hesitating youth,—“all that I dare to say to-night is this. I told you just now that we all have our different ways of loving. You have loved in your way. You have loved Delarey as your husband. And you have loved me as your friend. Delarey as your husband betrayed you. Only to-day you know it. I, as your friend—have I ever betrayed you? Do you believe—even now when you are ready to believe very much of evil—do you really believe that as a friend I could ever betray you?”

He moved, stood in front of her, lifted his hands and laid them on her shoulders.

“Do you believe that?”

“No.”

“You have loved us in your way. He is dead. But I am here to love you always in my way. Perhaps my way seems to you such a poor way—it must, it must—that it is hardly worth anything at all. But perhaps, now that I know so much of myself—and of you—” there was a slight break in his voice—“and of you, I shall be able to find a different, a better way. I don't know. To-night I doubt myself. I feel as if I were so unworthy.

But I may—I may be able to find a better way of loving you.”

Quite unconsciously his two hands, which still rested upon her shoulders, began to lean heavily upon them, to press them, to grip them till she suffered a physical discomfort that almost amounted to pain.

“I shall seek a better way—I shall seek it. And the only thing I ask you to-night is—that you will not forbid me to seek it.”

The pressure of his hands upon her shoulders was becoming almost unbearable. But she bore it. She bore it for she loved it. Perhaps that night no words could have quite convinced her of his desperate honesty of soul in that moment, perhaps no sound of his voice could have quite convinced her. But the unconsciously cruel pressure of his hands upon her convinced her absolutely. She felt as if it was his soul—the truth of his soul—which was grasping her—which was closing upon her. And she felt that only a thing that needed could grasp, could close like that.

And even in the midst of her chaos of misery and doubt she felt, she knew, that it was herself that was needed.

“I will not forbid you to seek it,” she said.

He sighed deeply. His hands dropped down from her. They stood for a moment quite still. Then he said, in a low voice:

“You took the *fattura della morte*?”

“Yes,” she answered. “It was in—in her room at Mergellina to-day.”

“Have you got it still?”

“Yes.”

She held out her right hand. He took the death-charm from her.

"She made it—the woman who wronged you, made it to bring death into the Casa del Mare."

"Not to me?"

"No, to Peppina. Has it not brought another death? or, at least, does it not typify another death to-night, the death of a great lie? I think it does. I look upon it as a symbol. But—but——?"

He looked at her. He was at the huge doorway of the Palace. The sea murmured below him. Hermione understood, and bent her head.

Then Artois threw the death-charm far away into the sea.

"Let me take you to the boat. Let me take you back to the island."

She did not answer him. But when he moved she followed him, till they came to the rocks, and saw floating on the dim water the two white boats.

"Gaspare!"

"Vengo!"

That cry—what did it recall to Hermione? Gaspare's cry from the inlet beneath the isle of the Sirens when he was bringing the body of Maurice from the sea. As she had trembled then, she began to tremble now. She felt exhausted, that she could bear no more, that she must rest, be guarded, cared for, protected, loved. The boat touched shore. Gaspare leaped out. He cast an eager, fiery look of scrutiny on his Padrona. She returned it. Then, suddenly, he seized her hand, bent down and kissed it.

She trembled more. He lifted his head, stared at her again. Then he took her up in his strong arms, as if she were a child, and carried her gently and carefully to the stern of the boat.

"Lei si riposi!" he whispered, as he set her down.

She shut her eyes, leaning back against the seat. She heard Artois get in, the boat pushed off, the splash of the oars. But she did not open her eyes, until presently an instinct told her there was something she must see. Then she looked.

The boat was passing under the blessing hand of San Francesco, under the light of the Saint, which was burning calmly and brightly.

Hermione moved. She bent down to the water, the *acqua benedetta*. She sprinkled it over the boat and made the sign of the cross. When they reached the island Artois got out. As she came on shore he said to her:

"Hermione, I left the—the two children together in the garden. Do you think—will you go to them for a moment? Or——"

"I will go," she answered.

She was no longer trembling. She followed him up the steps, walking slowly but firmly. They came to the house door. Gaspare had kept close behind them. At the door Artois stopped. He felt as if to-night he ought to go no farther.

Hermione looked at him and passed into the house. Gaspare, seeing that Artois did not follow her, hesitated, but Artois said to him:

"Go, Gaspare, go with your Padrona."

Then Gaspare went in, down the passage and out to the terrace.

Hermione was standing there.

"Do you think they are in the garden, Gaspare?" she said.

"Sì, Signora. Listen! I can hear them!"

He held up his hand. Not far away there was a sound of voices speaking together.

"Shall I go and tell them, Signora?"

After a moment Hermione said:

"Yes, Gaspare—go and tell them."

He went away, and she waited, leaning on the balustrade and looking down to the dim sea, from which only the night before Ruffo's voice had floated up to her, singing the song of Mergellina. Only the night before! And it seemed to her centuries ago.

"Madre!"

Vere spoke to her. Vere was beside her. But she gazed beyond her child to Ruffo, who stood with his cap in his hand, and his eyes, full of gentleness, looking at her for recognition.

"Ruffo!" she said.

Vere moved to let Ruffo pass. He came up and stood before Hermione.

"Ruffo!" she said again.

It seemed that she was going to say more. They waited for her to say something more. But she did not speak. She stood quite still for a moment looking at the boy. Then she put one hand on his shoulder, bent down and touched his forehead with her lips.

And in that kiss the dead man was forgiven.

EPILOGUE.

ON a radiant day of September in the following year, from the little harbour of Mergellina a white boat with a green line put off. It was rowed by Gaspare, who wore his festa suit, and it contained two people, a man and a woman, who had that morning been quietly married.

Another boat preceded theirs, going towards the island, but it was so far ahead of them that they could only see it as a moving dot upon the shining sea, when they rounded the breakwater and set their course for the point of land where lies the Antico Giuseppone.

Gaspare rowed standing up, with his back towards Hermione and Artois, and his great eyes staring steadily out to sea. He plied the oars mechanically. During the first few minutes of the voyage to the island his mind was far away. He was a boy in Sicily once more, waiting proudly upon his first, and indeed his only, Padrona in the Casa del Prete on Monte Amato. Then she was quite alone. He could see her sitting at evening upon the terrace with a book in her lap, gazing out across the ravine and the olive-covered mountain slopes to the waters that kissed the shore of the Sirens' Isle. He could see her, when night fell, going slowly up the steps into the lighted cottage, and turning on its threshold to wish him "Buon riposo."

Then there was an interval—and she came again. He was waiting at the station of Cattaro. Outside stood the little train of donkeys, decorated with flowers under

his careful supervision. Upon Monte Amato, in the Casa del Prete, everything was in readiness for the arrival of the Padrona—and the Padrone. For this time his Padrona was not to be alone. And the train came in, thundering along by the sea, and he saw a brown, eager face looking out of a window—a face which at once had seemed familiar to him almost as if he had always known it in Sicily.

And the new and wonderful period of his boy's life began.

But it passed, and in the early morning he stood in the corner of the Campo Santo where Protestants were buried, and threw flowers from his father's terreno into an open grave.

And once more his Padrona was alone.

Far away from Sicily, from his "Paese," among the great woods of the Abetone he received for the first time into his untutored arms his Padroncina. His Padrone was gone from him for ever. But once more, as he would have expressed it to a Sicilian comrade, they were "in three." And still another period began.

And now that period was ended.

As Gaspare rowed slowly on towards the island, in his simple and yet shrewd way he was pondering on life, on its irresistible movement, on its changes, its alternations of grief and joy, loneliness and companionship. He was silently reviewing the combined fates of his Padrona and himself.

Behind him for a long while there was silence. But when the boat was abreast of the sloping gardens of Posilipo Artois spoke at last.

"Hermione!" he said.

"Yes," she answered.

"Do you remember that evening when I met you on the sea?"

"After I had been to Frisio's? Yes, I remember it."

"You had been reading what I wrote in the wonderful book."

"And I was wondering why you had written it."

"I had no special reason. I thought of that saying. I had to write something, so I wrote that. I wonder—I wonder now why long ago my conscience did not tell me plainly something. I wonder it did not tell me plainly what you were in my life, all you were."

"Have I—have I really been much?"

"I never knew how much till I thought of you permanently changed towards me, till I thought of you living, but with your affection permanently withdrawn from me. That night—you know——?"

"Yes, I know."

"At first I was not sure—I was afraid for a moment about you. Vere and I were afraid, when your room was dark and we heard nothing. But even then I did not fully understand how much I needed you. I only understood that in the Palace of the Spirits, when—when you hated me——"

"I don't think I ever hated you."

"Hatred, you know, is the other side of love."

"Then perhaps I did. Yes—I did."

"How long my conscience was inactive, was useless to me! It needed a lesson, a terrible lesson. It needed a cruel blow to rouse it."

"And mine!" she answered, in a low voice.

"We shall make many mistakes, both of us," he said. "But I think, after that night, we can never for very long misunderstand each other. For that night we were sincere."

"Let us always be sincere."

"Sincerity is the rock on which one should build the house of life."

"Let us—you and I—let us build upon it our palace of the spirits."

Then they were silent again. They were silent until the boat passed the point, until in the distance the island appeared, even until the prow of the boat grated against the rock beneath the window of the Casa del Mare.

As Hermione got out Gaspare bent to kiss her hand. "Benedicite!" he murmured.

And, as she pressed his hand with both of hers, she answered:

"Benedicite!"

That night, not very late, but when darkness had fallen over the sea, Hermione said to Vere:

"I am going out for a little, Vere."

"Yes, Madre."

The child put her arms round her mother and kissed her. Hermione tenderly returned the kiss, looked at Artois, and went out.

She made her way to the brow of the island, and stood still for awhile, drinking in the soft wind that blew to her from Ischia. Then she descended to the bridge, and looked down into the Pool of San Francesco.

The Saint's light was burning steadily. She watched it for a moment, and, while she watched it, she presently heard beneath her a boy's voice singing softly the song of Mergellina:

"Oh, dolce luna bianca de l'Estate
Mi fugge il sonno accanto a la marina:
Mi destan le dolcissime serate,
Gli occhi dī Rosa e il mar di Mergellina."

The voice died away. There was a moment of silence. She clasped the rail with her hands, she leaned down over the Pool.

“Buona notte, Ruffino!” she said softly.

And the voice from the sea answered her:

“Buona notte, Signora. Buona notte e buon riposo.”

THE END.

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His Sake 2 v. — The Snare of the Fowling
2 v. — Found Wanting 2 v. — A Ward in
Chancery 1 v. — A Choice of Evils 2 v. —
A Fight with Fate 2 v. — A Winning
Hazard 1 v. — A Golden Autumn 1 v. —
Mrs. Crichton's Creditor 1 v. — Barbara,
Lady's Maid and Peeress 1 v. — The Cost
of Her Pride 2 v. — Brown, V. C. 1 v. —
Through Fire to Fortune 1 v. — A Missing
Hero 1 v. — The Yellow Fiend 1 v. —
Stronger than Love 2 v. — Kitty Costello 1 v.

Alice, Grand-Duchess of Hesse,
† 1878.

Letters to Her Majesty the Queen (with
Portrait). With a Memoir by H. R. H.
Princess Christian 2 v.

Alldrige, Lizzie.
By Love and Law 2 v. — The World she
awoke in 2 v.

Allen, Grant, † 1899.
The Woman who did 1 v.

"All for Greed," Author of
(Baroness de Bury).

All for Greed 1 v. — Love the Avenger
2 v.

Anstey, F. (Guthrie).

The Giant's Robe 2 v. — A Fallen Idol 1 v. — The Pariah 3 v. — The Talking Horse and other Tales 1 v. — Voices Populi (*First and Second Series*) 1 v. — The Brass Bottle 1 v. — A Bayard from Bengal 1 v. — Salted Almonds 1 v.

Argles, Mrs.: *vide* Mrs. Hungerford.

"Aristocrats, the," Author of: *vide* Gertrude Atherton.

Arnold, Sir Edwin, † 1904.

The Light of Asia (with Portrait) 1 v.

Arnold, Matthew, † 1888.

Essays in Criticism 2 v. — Essays in Criticism (*Second Series*) 1 v.

Atherton, Gertrude Franklin (Am.).

American Wives and English Husbands 1 v. — The Californians 1 v. — Patience Sparhawk and her Times 2 v. — Senator North 2 v. — The Doomswoman 1 v. — The Aristocrats 1 v. — The Splendid Idle Forties 1 v. — The Conqueror 2 v. — A Daughter of the Vine 1 v. — His Fortunate Grace, etc. 1 v. — The Valiant Runaways 1 v. — The Bell in the Fog, and Other Stories 1 v. — The Travelling Thirds (in Spain) 1 v. — Rezanov 1 v. — Ancestors 2 v.

Austen, Jane, † 1817.

Sense and Sensibility 1 v. — Mansfield Park 1 v. — Pride and Prejudice 1 v. — Northanger Abbey, and Persuasion 1 v. — Emma 1 v.

"Autobiography of Lutfullah,"

Author of: *vide* E. B. Eastwick.

Avebury, Lord: *vide* Sir John Lubbock.

Bagot, Richard.

A Roman Mystery 2 v. — Casting of Nets 2 v. — The Just and the Unjust 2 v. — Donna Diana 2 v. — Love's Proxy 1 v. — The Passport 2 v. — Temptation 2 v. — The Lakes of Northern Italy 1 v. — Anthony Cuthbert 2 v.

Baring-Gould, S.

Mehalah 1 v. — John Herring 2 v. — Court Royal 2 v.

Barker, Lady: *v.* Lady Broome.

Barrett, Frank.

The Smuggler's Secret 1 v. — Out of the Jaws of Death 2 v.

Barrie, J. M.

Sentimental Tommy 2 v. — Margaret Ogilvy 1 v. — Tommy and Grizel 2 v. — The Little White Bird 1 v.

"Bayle's Romance, Miss," Author of: *vide* W. Fraser Rae.

Baynes, Rev. Robert H.

Lyra Anglicana, Hymns and Sacred Songs 1 v.

Beaconsfield, Lord: *vide* Disraeli.

Beaumont, Averil (Mrs. Hunt).

Thornicroft's Model 2 v.

Bell, Currer (Charlotte Brontë—Mrs. Nicholls), † 1855.

Jane Eyre 2 v. — Shirley 2 v. — Vilette 2 v. — The Professor 1 v.

Bell, Ellis & Acton (Emily), † 1848, and Anne, † 1849, Brontë).

Wuthering Heights, and Agnes Grey 2 v.

Bellamy, Edward (Am.), † 1898.

Looking Backward 1 v.

Benedict, Frank Lee (Am.).

St. Simon's Niece 2 v.

Bennett, Arnold.

The Grand Babylon Hotel 1 v. — The Gates of Wrath 1 v. — A Great Man 1 v. — Sacred and Profane Love 1 v. — Whom God hath joined 1 v. — The Ghost 1 v. — The Grim Smile of the Five Towns 1 v. — Buried Alive 1 v.

Bennett, A. & Phillpotts, Eden: *vide* Eden Phillpotts.

Benson, E. F.

Dodo 1 v. — The Rubicon 1 v. — Scarlet and Hyssop 1 v. — The Book of Months 1 v. — The Relentless City 1 v. — Mammon & Co. 2 v. — The Challoners 1 v. — An Act in a Backwater 1 v. — The Image in the Sand 2 v. — The Angel of Pain 2 v. — Paul 2 v. — The House of Defence 2 v. — Sheaves 2 v.

Besant, Sir Walter, † 1901.

The Revolt of Man 1 v. — Dorothy Forster 2 v. — Children of Gibeon 2 v. — The World went very well then 2 v. — Katharine Regina 1 v. — Herr Paulus 2 v. — The Inner House 1 v. — The Bell of St. Paul's 2 v. — For Faith and Freedom 2 v. — Armored of Lyonesse 2 v. — Ver-

bona Camellia Stephanotis, etc. 1 v. — Beyond the Dreams of Avarice 2 v. — The Master Craftsman 2 v. — A Fountain Sealed 1 v. — The Orange Girl 2 v. — The Fourth Generation 1 v. — The Lady of Lynn 2 v.

Besant, Sir Walter, † 1901, &
James Rice, † 1882.

The Golden Butterfly 2 v. — Ready-Money Mortiboy 2 v. — By Celia's Arbour 2 v.

Betham-Edwards, M.

The Sylvestres 1 v. — Felicia 2 v. — Brother Gabriel 2 v. — Forestalled 1 v. — Exchange no Robbery, and other Novelles 1 v. — Disarmed 1 v. — Doctor Jacob 1 v. — Pearla 1 v. — Next of Kin Wanted 1 v. — The Parting of the Ways 1 v. — For One and the World 1 v. — The Romance of a French Parsonage 1 v. — France of To-day 1 v. — Two Aunts and a Nephew 1 v. — A Dream of Millions 1 v. — The Curb of Honour 1 v. — France of To-day (*Second Series*) 1 v. — A Romance of Dijon 1 v. — The Dream-Charlotte 1 v. — A Storm-Rent Sky 1 v. — Reminiscences 1 v. — The Lord of the Harvest 1 v. — Anglo-French Reminiscences, 1875—1899 1 v. — A Suffolk Courtship 1 v. — Mock Beggars' Hall 1 v. — East of Paris 1 v. — A Humble Lover 1 v. — Barham Brocklebank, M.D. 1 v. — Martha Rose, Teacher 1 v.

Bierce, Ambrose (Am.).
In the Midst of Life 1 v.

Birchenough, Mabel C.
Potsherds 1 v.

Bisland, E.: *v.* Rhoda Broughton.

Bismarck, Prince: *vide* Butler.
Vide also Wilhelm Görlach
(Collection of German Authors,
p. 29), and Whitman.

Black, William, † 1898.

A Daughter of Heth 2 v. — In Silk Attire 2 v. — The Strange Adventures of a Phaeton 2 v. — A Princess of Thule 2 v. — Kilmeny 1 v. — The Maid of Killeena, and other Stories 1 v. — Three Feathers 2 v. — Lady Silverdale's Sweetheart, and other Stories 1 v. — Madcap Violet 2 v. — Green Pastures and Piccadilly 2 v. — Macleod of Dare 2 v. — White Wings

2 v. — Sunrise 2 v. — The Beautiful Wretch 1 v. — Mr. Pisistratus Brown, M.P., in the Highlands; The Four Macnicols; The Pupil of Aurelius 1 v. — Shandon Bells (with Portrait) 2 v. — Judith Shakespeare 2 v. — The Wise Women of Inverness, etc. 1 v. — White Heather 2 v. — Sabina Zembra 2 v. — The Strange Adventures of a House-Boat 2 v. — In Far Lochaber 2 v. — The New Prince Fortunatus 2 v. — Stand Fast, Craig-Royston 1 2 v. — Donald Ross of Heimra 2 v. — The Magic Ink, and other Tales 1 v. — Wolfenberg 2 v. — The Handsome Humes 2 v. — Highland Cousins 2 v. — Briseis 2 v. — Wild Eelin 2 v.

"Black-Box Murder, the,"
Author of.

The Black-Box Murder 1 v.

Blackmore, Richard Doddridge,
† 1900.

Alice Lorraine 2 v. — Mary Anerley 3 v. — Christowell 2 v. — Tommy Upmore 2 v. — Perlycross 2 v.

"Blackwood."

Tales from "Blackwood" (*First Series*) 1 v. — Tales from "Blackwood" (*Second Series*) 1 v.

Blagden, Isa, † 1873.

The Woman I loved, and the Woman who loved me; A Tuscan Wedding 1 v.

Blessington, Countess of (Marguerite Gardiner), † 1849.

Meredith 1 v. — Strathern 2 v. — Memoirs of a Femme de Chambre 1 v. — Marmaduke Herbert 2 v. — Country Quarters (with Portrait) 2 v.

Bloomfield, Baroness.

Reminiscences of Court and Diplomatic Life (with the Portrait of Her Majesty the Queen) 2 v.

Boldrewood, Rolf.

Robbery under Arms 2 v. — Nevermore 2 v.

Braddon, Miss (Mrs. Maxwell).

Lady Audley's Secret 2 v. — Aurora Floyd 2 v. — Eleanor's Victory 2 v. — John Marchmont's Legacy 2 v. — Henry Dunbar 2 v. — The Doctor's Wife 2 v. — Only a Clod 2 v. — Sir Jasper's Tenant 2 v. — The Lady's Mile 2 v. — Rupert God-

win 2 v. — Dead-Sea Fruit 2 v. — Run to Earth 2 v. — Fenton's Quest 2 v. — The Lovels of Arden 2 v. — Strangers and Pilgrims 2 v. — Lucius Davoren 3 v. — Taken at the Flood 3 v. — Lost for Love 2 v. — A Strange World 2 v. — Hostages to Fortune 2 v. — Dead Men's Shoes 2 v. — Joshua Haggard's Daughter 2 v. — Weavers and Weft 1 v. — In Great Waters, and other Tales 1 v. — An Open Verdict 3 v. — Vixen 3 v. — The Cloven Foot 3 v. — The Story of Barbara 2 v. — Just as I am 2 v. — Asphodel 3 v. — Mount Royal 2 v. — The Golden Calf 2 v. — Flower and Weed 1 v. — Phantom Fortune 3 v. — Under the Red Flag 1 v. — Ishmael 3 v. — Wyllard's Weir 3 v. — One Thing Needful 2 v. — Cut by the County 1 v. — Like and Unlike 2 v. — The Fatal Three 2 v. — The Day will come 2 v. — One Life, One Love 2 v. — Gerard 2 v. — The Venetians 2 v. — All along the River 2 v. — Thou art the Man 2 v. — The Christmas Hirelings, etc. 1 v. — Sons of Fire 2 v. — London Pride 2 v. — Rough Justice 2 v. — In High Places 2 v. — His Darling Sin 1 v. — The Infidel 2 v. — The Conflict 2 v. — The Rose of Life 2 v. — Dead Love has Chains 1 v. — During Her Majesty's Pleasure 1 v.

Brassey, Lady, † 1887.

A Voyage in the "Sunbeam" 2 v. — Sunshine and Storm in the East 2 v. — In the Trades, the Tropics and the Roaring Forties 2 v.

"Bread-Winners, the," Author of (Am.).

The Bread-Winners 1 v.

Bret Harte: *vide* Harte.

Brock, Rev. William, † 1875.
Sir Henry Havelock, K. C. B. 1 v.

Brontë, Charlotte: *vide* Currer Bell.

Brontë, Emily & Anne: *vide* Ellis & Acton Bell.

Brooks, Shirley, † 1874.
The Silver Cord 3 v. — Sooner or Later 3 v.

Broome, Lady (Lady Barker).

Station Life in New Zealand 1 v. — Station Amusements in New Zealand 1 v. — A Year's Housekeeping in South

Africa 1 v. — Letters to Guy, and A Distant Shore—Rodrigues 1 v. — Colonial Memories 1 v.

Broughton, Rhoda.

Cometh up as a Flower 1 v. — Not wisely, but too well 2 v. — Red as a Rose is She 2 v. — Tales for Christmas Eve 1 v. — Nancy 2 v. — Joan 2 v. — Second Thoughts 2 v. — Belinda 2 v. — Doctor Cupid 2 v. — Alas! 2 v. — Mrs. Bligh 1 v. — A Beginner 1 v. — Scylla or Charybdis? 1 v. — Dear Faustina 1 v. — The Game and the Candle 1 v. — Foes in Law 1 v. — Lavinia 1 v.

Broughton, Rhoda, & Elizabeth Bisland.

A Widower Indeed 1 v.

Brown, John, † 1882.

Rab and his Friends, and other Papers 1 v.

Browning, Elizabeth Barrett, † 1861.

A Selection from her Poetry (with Portrait) 1 v. — Aurora Leigh 1 v.

Browning, Robert, † 1889.

Poetical Works (with Portrait) 4 v.

Bullen, Frank T.

The Cruise of the "Cachalot" 2 v.

Bulwer, Edward, Lord Lytton, † 1873.

Pelham (with Portrait) 1 v. — Eugene Aram 1 v. — Paul Clifford 1 v. — Zanoni 1 v. — The Last Days of Pompeii 1 v. — The Disowned 1 v. — Ernest Maltravers 1 v. — Alice 1 v. — Eva, and The Pilgrims of the Rhine 1 v. — Devereux 1 v. — Godolphin and Falkland 1 v. — Rienzi 1 v. — Night and Morning 1 v. — The Last of the Barons 2 v. — Athens 2 v. — The Poems and Ballads of Schiller 1 v. — Lucretia 2 v. — Harold 2 v. — King Arthur 2 v. — The New Timon, and St. Stephen's 1 v. — The Caxtons 2 v. — My Novel 4 v. — What will he do with it? 4 v. — Dramatic Works 2 v. — A Strange Story 2 v. — Caxtoniana 2 v. — The Lost Tales of Miletus 1 v. — Miscellaneous Prose Works 4 v. — Odes and Epodes of Horace 2 v. — Kenelm Chillingly 4 v. — The Coming Race 1 v. — The Parisians 4 v. — Pausanias, the Spartan 1 v.

- Bulwer, Henry Lytton (Lord Dalling), † 1872.
Historical Characters 2 v. — The Life of Viscount Palmerston 3 v.
- Bunyan, John, † 1688.
The Pilgrim's Progress 1 v.
- "Buried Alone," Author of (Charles Wood).
Buried Alone 1 v.
- Burnett, Mrs. Frances Hodgson (Am.).
Through one Administration 2 v. — Little Lord Fauntleroy 1 v. — Sara Crewe, and Editha's Burglar 1 v. — The Pretty Sister of José 1 v. — A Lady of Quality 2 v. — His Grace of Osmonde 2 v. — The Shuttle 2 v.
- Burney, Miss (Madame D'Arblay), † 1840.
Evelina 1 v.
- Burns, Robert, † 1796.
Poetical Works (with Portrait) 1 v.
- Burton, Richard F., † 1890.
A Pilgrimage to Mecca and Medina 3 v.
- Bury, Baroness de: *vide* "All for Greed."
- Butler, A. J.
Bismarck. His Reflections and Reminiscences. Translated from the great German edition, under the supervision of A. J. Butler. With two Portraits. 3 v.
- Buxton, Mrs. B. H., † 1881.
Jennie of "The Prince's," 2 v. — Won 2 v. — Great Grenfell Gardens 2 v. — Nell — on and off the Stage 2 v. — From the Wings 2 v.
- Byron, Lord, † 1824.
Poetical Works (with Portrait) 5 v.
- Caffyn, Mrs. Mannington (Iota).
A Yellow Aster 1 v. — Children of Circumstance 2 v. — Anne Mauleverer 2 v.
- Caine, Hall.
The Bondman 2 v. — The Manxman 2 v. — The Christian 2 v. — The Eternal City 3 v. — The Prodigal Son 2 v.
- Cameron, Verney Lovett.
Across Africa 2 v.
- Campbell Praed, Mrs.: *vide* Praed.
- Carey, Rosa Nouchette.
Not Like other Girls 2 v. — "But Men must Work" 1 v. — Sir Godfrey's Granddaughters 2 v. — The Old, Old Story 2 v. — Herb of Grace 2 v. — The Highway of Fate 2 v. — A Passage Perilous 2 v. — At the Moorings 2 v.
- Carlyle, Thomas, † 1881.
The French Revolution 3 v. — Frederick the Great 13 v. — Oliver Cromwell's Letters and Speeches 4 v. — The Life of Schiller 1 v.
- Carr, Alaric.
Treherne's Temptation 2 v.
- Castle, Agnes & Egerton.
The Star Dreamer 2 v. — Incomparable Bellairs 1 v. — Rose of the World 1 v. — French Nan 1 v. — "If Youth but knew!" 1 v. — My Merry Rockhurst 1 v. — Flower o' the Orange 1 v.
- Castle, Egerton.
Consequences 2 v. — "La Bella," and Others 1 v.
- Charles, Mrs. Elizabeth Rundle, † 1896: *vide* Author of "Chronicles of the Schönberg-Cotta Family."
- Charlesworth, Maria Louisa, † 1880.
Oliver of the Mill 1 v.
- Chesterton, G. K.
The Man who was Thursday 1 v.
- Cholmondeley, Mary.
Diana Tempest 2 v. — Red Pottage 2 v. — Moth and Rust 1 v. — Prisoners 2 v.
- Christian, Princess: *vide* Alice, Grand Duchess of Hesse.
- "Chronicles of the Schönberg-Cotta Family," Author of (Mrs. E. Rundle Charles), † 1896.
Chronicles of the Schönberg-Cotta Family 2 v. — The Draytons and the Davenants 2 v. — On Both Sides of the Sea 2 v. — Winifred Bertram 1 v. — Diary of Mrs. Kitty Trevelyan 1 v. —

The Victory of the Vanquished 1 v. —
The Cottage by the Cathedral and other
Parables 1 v. — Against the Stream 2 v.
— The Bertram Family 2 v. — Conquer-
ing and to Conquer 1 v. — Lapsed, but not
Lost 1 v.

Churchill, Winston (Am.).

Mr. Crewe's Career 2 v.

Clark, Alfred.

The Finding of Lot's Wife 1 v.

Clemens, Samuel L.: *v.* Twain.

Clifford, Mrs. W. K.

Love-Letters of a Worldly Woman 1 v.
— Aunt Anne 2 v. — The Last Touches, and
other Stories 1 v. — Mrs. Keith's Crime
1 v. — A Wild Proxy 1 v. — A Flash of
Summer 1 v. — A Woman Alone 1 v. —
Woodside Farm 1 v. — The Modern Way
1 v. — The Getting Well of Dorothy 1 v.

Clive, Mrs. Caroline, † 1873:
vide Author of "Paul Ferroll."

Cobbe, Frances Power, † 1904.
Re-Echoes 1 v.

Coleridge, C. R.

An English Squire 2 v.

Coleridge, M. E.

The King with two Faces 2 v.

Coleridge, Samuel Taylor,

† 1834.

Poems 1 v.

Collins, Charles Allston, † 1873.

A Cruise upon Wheels 2 v.

Collins, Mortimer, † 1876.

Sweet and Twenty 2 v. — A Fight with
Fortune 2 v.

Collins, Wilkie, † 1889.

After Dark 1 v. — Hide and Seek 2 v. —
A Plot in Private Life, etc. 1 v. — The
Woman in White 2 v. — Basil 1 v. — No
Name 3 v. — The Dead Secret, and other
Tales 2 v. — Antonina 2 v. — Armadale
3 v. — The Moonstone 2 v. — Man and
Wife 3 v. — Poor Miss Finch 2 v. — Miss
or Mrs.? 1 v. — The New Magdalen 2 v. —
The Frozen Deep 1 v. — The Law and the
Lady 2 v. — The Two Destinies 1 v. — My
Lady's Money, and Percy and the Prophet
1 v. — The Haunted Hotel 1 v. — The
Fallen Leaves 2 v. — Jezebel's Daughter
2 v. — The Black Robe 2 v. — Heart and
Science 2 v. — "I say No," 2 v. — The Evil
Genius 2 v. — The Guilty River, and The

Ghost's Touch 1 v. — The Legacy of Cain
2 v. — Blind Love 2 v.

"Cometh up as a Flower," Au-
thor of: *vide* Rhoda Brough-
ton.

Conrad, Joseph.

An Outcast of the Islands 2 v. — Tales
of Unrest 1 v. — The Secret Agent 1 v. —
A Set of Six 1 v.

Conway, Hugh (F. J. Fargus),

† 1885.

Called Back 1 v. — Bound Together
2 v. — Dark Days 1 v. — A Family Affair
2 v. — Living or Dead 2 v.

Cooper, James Fenimore (Am.),

† 1851.

The Spy (with Portrait) 1 v. — The Two
Admirals 1 v. — The Jack O'Lantern 1 v.

Cooper, Mrs.: *vide* Katharine
Saunders.

Corelli, Marie.

Vendetta! 2 v. — Thelma 2 v. — A
Romance of Two Worlds 2 v. — "Ardath"
3 v. — Wormwood. A Drama of Paris
2 v. — The Hired Baby, with other Stories
and Social Sketches 1 v. — Barabbas; A
Dream of the World's Tragedy 2 v. —
The Sorrows of Satan 2 v. — The Mighty
Atom 1 v. — The Murder of Delicia 1 v. —
Ziska 1 v. — Boy. A Sketch. 2 v. — The
Master-Christian 2 v. — "Temporal Power"
2 v. — God's Good Man 2 v. — Free
Opinions 1 v. — Treasure of Heaven (with
Portrait) 2 v. — Holy Orders 2 v.

Cotes, Mrs. Everard.

Those Delightful Americans 1 v. — Set in
Authority 1 v. — Cousin Cinderella 1 v.

"County, the," Author of.

The County 1 v.

Craik, George Lillie, † 1866.

A Manual of English Literature and of
the History of the English Language 2 v.

Craik, Mrs. (Miss Dinah M.

Mulock), † 1887.

John Halifax, Gentleman 2 v. — The
Head of the Family 2 v. — A Life for a
Life 2 v. — A Woman's Thoughts about
Women 1 v. — Agatha's Husband 1 v. —
Romantic Tales 1 v. — Domestic Stories
1 v. — Mistress and Maid 1 v. — The
Ogilvies 1 v. — Lord Erlinstoun 1 v. —
Christian's Mistake 1 v. — Bread upon

the Waters 1 v. — A Noble Life 1 v. — Olive 2 v. — Two Marriages 1 v. — Studies from Life 1 v. — Poems 1 v. — The Woman's Kingdom 2 v. — The Unkind Word, and other Stories 2 v. — A Brave Lady 2 v. — Hannah 2 v. — Fair France 1 v. — My Mother and I 1 v. — The Little Lame Prince 1 v. — Sermons out of Church 1 v. — The Laurel-Bush; Two little Tinkers 1 v. — A Legacy 2 v. — Young Mrs. Jardine 2 v. — His Little Mother, and other Tales and Sketches 1 v. — Plain Speaking 1 v. — Miss Tommy 1 v. — King Arthur 1 v.

Craik, Georgiana M. (Mrs. May).
Lost and Won 1 v. — Faith Unwin's Ordeal 1 v. — Leslie Tyrrell 1 v. — Winifred's Wooing, etc. 1 v. — Mildred 1 v. — Esther Hill's Secret 2 v. — Hero Trevelyan 1 v. — Without Kith or Kin 2 v. — Only a Butterfly 1 v. — Sylvia's Choice; Theresa 2 v. — Anne Warwick 1 v. — Dorcas 2 v. — Two Women 2 v.

Craik, Georgiana M., & M. C. Stirling.
Two Tales of Married Life (Hard to Bear, by Miss Craik; A True Man, by M. C. Stirling) 2 v.

Craven, Mrs. Augustus: *vide* Lady Fullerton.

Crawford, F. Marion (Am.).
Mr. Isaacs 1 v. — Doctor Claudius 1 v. — To Leeward 1 v. — A Roman Singer 1 v. — An American Politician 1 v. — Zoroaster 1 v. — A Tale of a Lonely Parish 2 v. — Saracinesca 2 v. — Marzio's Crucifix 1 v. — Paul Patoff 2 v. — With the Immortals 1 v. — Greifenstein 2 v. — Sant' Ilario 2 v. — A Cigarette-Maker's Romance 1 v. — Khaled 1 v. — The Witch of Prague 2 v. — The Three Fates 2 v. — Don Orsino 2 v. — The Children of the King 1 v. — Pietro Ghisleri 2 v. — Marion Darche 1 v. — Katharine Lauderdale 2 v. — The Ralstons 2 v. — Casa Braccio 2 v. — Adam Johnstone's Son 1 v. — Taquisara 2 v. — A Rose of Yesterday 1 v. — Corleone 2 v. — Via Crucis 2 v. — In the Palace of the King 2 v. — Marietta, a Maid of Venice 2 v. — Cecilia 2 v. — The Heart of Rome 2 v. — Whosoever Shall Offend... 2 v. — Soprano 2 v. — A Lady of Rome 2 v. — Arethusa 2 v. — The Primadonna 2 v.

Crockett, S. R.
The Raiders 2 v. — Cleg Kelly 2 v. — The Grey Man 2 v. — Love Idylls 1 v. — The Dark o' the Moon 2 v.

Croker, B. M.
Peggy of the Bartons 2 v. — The Happy Valley 1 v. — The Old Cantonment, with Other Stories of India and Elsewhere 1 v. — A Nine Days' Wonder 1 v. — The Youngest Miss Mowbray 1 v. — The Company's Servant 2 v. — The Cat's-Paw 1 v.

Cross, J. W.: *vide* George Eliot's Life.

Cudlip, Mrs. Pender: *vide* A. Thomas.

Cummins, Miss (Am.), † 1866.
The Lamplighter 1 v. — Mabel Vaughan 1 v. — El Fureidis 1 v. — Haunted Hearts 1 v.

Cushing, Paul.
The Blacksmith of Voe 2 v.

"Daily News."
War Correspondence, 1877, by Archibald Forbes and others 3 v.

Danby, Frank.
The Heart of a Child 2 v.

"Dark," Author of.
Dark 1 v.

Davis, Richard Harding (Am.).
Gallegher, etc. 1 v. — Van Bibber and Others 1 v. — Ranson's Folly 1 v.

De Foe, Daniel, † 1731.
Robinson Crusoe 1 v.

Deland, Margaret (Am.).
John Ward, Preacher 1 v.

De la Pasture, Mrs. Henry, *vide* Pasture.

"Democracy," Author of (Am.).
Democracy 1 v.

"Demos," Author of: *vide* George Gissing.

"Diary and Notes," Author of: *vide* Author of "Horace Templeton."

Dickens, Charles, † 1870.
The Pickwick Club (with Portrait) 2 v. — American Notes 1 v. — Oliver Twist 1 v. — Nicholas Nickleby 2 v. — Sketches 1 v. — Martin Chuzzlewit 2 v. — A Christmas Carol; The Chimes; The Cricket on the Hearth 1 v. — Master Humphrey's Clock

(Old Curiosity Shop; Barnaby Rudge, etc.) 3 v. — Pictures from Italy 1 v. — Dombey and Son 3 v. — David Copperfield 3 v. — Bleak House 4 v. — A Child's History of England (2 v. 80 M. 2, 70.) — Hard Times 1 v. — Little Dorrit (with Illustrations) 4 v. — The Battle of Life; The Haunted Man 1 v. — A Tale of two Cities 2 v. — Hunted Down; The Uncommercial Traveller 1 v. — Great Expectations 2 v. — Christmas Stories, etc. 1 v. — Our Mutual Friend (with Illustrations) 4 v. — Somebody's Luggage; Mrs. Lirriper's Lodgings; Mrs. Lirriper's Legacy 1 v. — Doctor Marigold's Prescriptions; Mugby Junction 1 v. — The Mystery of Edwin Drood (with Illustrations) 2 v. — The Mudfog Papers, 1 v. — The Letters of Charles Dickens, ed. by his Sister-in-law and his eldest Daughter 4 v. — *Vide* also Household Words, Novels and Tales, and John Forster.

Dickens, Charles, & Wilkie Collins.

No Thoroughfare; The Late Miss Holingford 1 v.

Disraeli, Benjamin, Lord Beaconsfield, † 1881.

Coningsby 1 v. — Sybil 1 v. — Contarini Fleming (with Portrait) 1 v. — Alroy 1 v. — Tancred 2 v. — Venetia 2 v. — Vivian Grey 2 v. — Henrietta Temple 1 v. — Lothair 2 v. — Endymion 2 v.

Dixon, Ella Hepworth.

The Story of a Modern Woman 1 v. — One Doubtful Hour 1 v.

Dixon, W. Hepworth, † 1879.

Personal History of Lord Bacon 1 v. — The Holy Land 2 v. — New America 2 v. — Spiritual Wives 2 v. — Her Majesty's Tower 4 v. — Free Russia 2 v. — History of two Queens 6 v. — White Conquest 2 v. — Diana, Lady Lyle 2 v.

Dixon, Jr., Thomas, (Am.).

The Leopard's Spots 2 v.

Dougall, L. (Am.).

Beggars All 2 v.

Dowie, Mémie Muriel.

A Girl in the Karpathians 1 v.

Doyle, Sir A. Conan.

The Sign of Four 1 v. — Micah Clarke 2 v. — The Captain of the Pole-Star, and other Tales 1 v. — The White Company 2 v. — A Study in Scarlet 1 v. — The

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† 1897.

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Bede 2 v. — The Mill on the Floss 2 v. —
Silas Marner 1 v. — Romola 2 v. — Felix
Holt 2 v. — Daniel Deronda 4 v. — The
Lifted Veil, and Brother Jacob 1 v. —
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1 v. — George Eliot's Life, edited by her
Husband, J. W. Cross 4 v.

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Garden," Author of.

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Anstruther 1 v.

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Spain 2 v. — The Red Cardinal 1 v. —
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1 v.

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— In Thoughtland and in Dreamland
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way.

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Fendall, Percy: *vide* F. C.
Philips.

Fenn, George Manville.
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Clerk of Portwick 2 v.

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Locke. — Thomas Gray (vol. 500, published
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Kismet 1 v. — Andromeda 2 v.
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Eight Days 2 v.

Forrester, Mrs.
Viva 2 v. — Rhona 2 v. — Roy and Viola 2 v. — My Lord and My Lady 2 v. — I have Lived and Loved 2 v. — June 2 v. — Omnia Vanitas 1 v. — Although he was a Lord, and other Tales 1 v. — Corisande, and other Tales 1 v. — Once Again 2 v. — Of the World, Worldly 1 v. — Dearest 2 v. — The Light of other Days 1 v. — Too Late Repented 1 v.

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James Payn.

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(Mrs. Alfred Laurence Felkin).
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Kate of Kate Hall 2 v.

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The Visits of Elizabeth 1 v. — The Reflections of Ambrosine 1 v. — The Vicissitudes of Evangeline 1 v. — Beyond the Rocks 1 v. — Three Weeks 1 v.
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Our Manifold Nature 1 v. — Babs the Impossible 2 v. — Emotional Moments 1 v.
- Grant, Miss.
Victor Lescar 2 v. — The Sun-Maid 2 v. — My Heart's in the Highlands 2 v. — Artiste 2 v. — Prince Hugo 2 v. — Cara Roma 2 v.
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- Grimwood, Ethel St. Clair.
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- Grohman, W. A. Baillie.
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- Guthrie, F. Anstey: *vide* Anstey.
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† 1876.
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- Habberton, John (Am.).
Helen's Babies & Other People's Children 1 v. — The Bowsham Puzzle 1 v. — One Tramp; Mrs. Mayburn's Twins 1 v.
- Haggard, H. Rider.
King Solomon's Mines 1 v. — She 2 v. — Jess 2 v. — Allan Quatermain 2 v. — The Witch's Head 2 v. — Maiwa's Revenge 1 v. — Mr. Meeson's Will 1 v. — Colonel Quaritch, V. C. 2 v. — Cleopatra 2 v. — Allan's Wife 1 v. — Beatrice 2 v. — Dawn 2 v. — Montezuma's Daughter 2 v. — The People of the Mist 2 v. — Joan Haste 2 v. — Heart of the World 2 v. — The Wizard 1 v. — Doctor Thorne 1 v. — Swallow 2 v. — Black Heart and White Heart, and Elissa 1 v. — Lysbeth 2 v. — A Winter Pilgrimage 2 v. — Pearl-Maiden 2 v. — Stella Fregelius 2 v. — The Brethren 2 v. — Ayesha. The Return of 'She' 2 v. — The Way of the Spirit 2 v. — Benita 1 v. — Fair Margaret 2 v.
- Haggard, H. Rider, & Andrew Lang.
The World's Desire 2 v.

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† 1894.

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"Not Easily Jealous."

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of the Native 2 v. — The Trumpet-
Major 2 v. — A Laodicean 2 v. — Two on a
Tower 2 v. — A Pair of Blue Eyes 2 v. —
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Ironies 1 v. — Jude the Obscure 2 v.

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1 v.

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and The Remittance Man 1 v. — The
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vide Lucas Malet.

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The Outcasts of Poker Flat, etc. —
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densed Novels; Civic and Character
Sketches; Poems) 2 v. — Idyls of the
Foothills 1 v. — Gabriel Conroy 2 v. —
Two Men of Sandy Bar 1 v. — Thankful
Blossom, and other Tales 1 v. — The
Story of a Mine 1 v. — Drift from Two
Shores 1 v. — An Heiress of Red Dog,
and other Sketches 1 v. — The Twins of
Table Mountain, and other Tales 1 v. —
Jeff Briggs's Love Story, and other Tales
1 v. — Flip, and other Stories 1 v. — On
the Frontier 1 v. — By Shore and Sedge
1 v. — Maruja 1 v. — Snow-bound at
Eagle's, and Devil's Ford 1 v. — The
Crusade of the "Excelsior" 1 v. — A

Millionaire of Rough-and-Ready, and
other Tales 1 v. — Captain Jim's Friend,
and the Argonauts of North Liberty 1 v.
— Cressy 1 v. — The Heritage of Dedlow
Marsh, and other Tales 1 v. — A Waif of
the Plains 1 v. — A Ward of the Golden
Gate 1 v. — A Sappho of Green Springs,
and other Tales 1 v. — A First Family of
Tasajara 1 v. — Colonel Starbottle's Client,
and some other People 1 v. — Susy 1 v. —
Sally Dows, etc. 1 v. — A Protégée of
Jack Hamlin's, etc. 1 v. — The Bell-
Ringer of Angel's, etc. 1 v. — Clarence
1 v. — In a Hollow of the Hills, and The
Devotion of Enriquez 1 v. — The Ancestors
of Peter Atherly, etc. 1 v. — Three Partners
1 v. — Tales of Trail and Town 1 v. —
Stories in Light and Shadow 1 v. — Mr.
Jack Hamlin's Mediation, and other Stories
1 v. — From Sand-Hill to Pine 1 v. —
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Trail 1 v. — Trent's Trust 1 v.

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W. Brock.

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† 1864.

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Hearn, Lafcadio, † 1906.

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ander.

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of: *vide* Charlotte M. Yonge.

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2 v.

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Hewlett, Maurice.

The Forest Lovers 1 v. — Little Novels
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Richard Yea-and-Nay 2 v. — New Can-
terbury Tales 1 v. — The Queen's Quair;
or, The Six Years' Tragedy 2 v. — Fond
Adventures 1 v. — The Fool Errant 2 v.
— The Stooeping Lady 1 v. — The Spanish
Jade 1 v.

Hichens, Robert.

Flames 2 v. — The Slave 2 v. — Felix 2 v.
— The Woman with the Fan 2 v. — The

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Sketches from my Life 1 v.

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Hoey, Mrs. Cashel.

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Holdsworth, Annie E.

The Years that the Locust hath Eaten 1 v. — The Gods Arrive 1 v. — The Valley of the Great Shadow 1 v. — Great Lowlands 1 v. — A Garden of Spinsters 1 v.

Holme Lee: *vide* Harriet Parr.

Holmes, Oliver Wendell (Am.),
† 1894.

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Hope, Anthony (Hawkins).

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Hopkins, Tighe.

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Hornung, Ernest William.

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† 1899.

One Summer 1 v. — Aunt Serena 1 v. — Guenn 2 v. — Tony, the Maid, etc. 1 v. — The Open Door 2 v.

Howard, Blanche Willis, † 1899,
& William Sharp, † 1905.

A Fellowe and His Wife 1 v.

Howells, William Dean (Am.).

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Hughes, Thomas, † 1898.

Tom Brown's School-Days 1 v.

Hungerford, Mrs. (Mrs. Argles),
† 1897.

Molly Bawn 2 v. — Mrs. Geoffrey 2 v. — Faith and Unfaith 2 v. — Portia 2 v. — Loÿs, Lord Berresford, and other Tales 1 v. — Her First Appearance, and other Tales 1 v. — Phyllis 2 v. — Rossmoyne 2 v. — Doris 2 v. — A Maiden all Forlorn, etc. 1 v. — A Passive Crime, and other Stories 1 v. — Green Pleasure and Grey Grief 2 v. — A Mental Struggle 2 v. — Her Week's Amusement, and Ugly Barrington 1 v. — Lady Brankmere 2 v. — Lady Valworth's Diamonds 1 v. — A Modern Circe 2 v. — Marvel 2 v. — The

Hon. Mrs. Vereker 1 v. — Under-Currents 2 v. — In Durance Vile, etc. 1 v. — A Troublesome Girl, and other Stories 1 v. — A Life's Remorse 2 v. — A Born Coquette 2 v. — The Duchess 1 v. — Lady Verner's Flight 1 v. — A Conquering Heroine, and "When in Doubt" 1 v. — Nora Creina 2 v. — A Mad Prank, and other Stories 1 v. — The Hoyden 2 v. — The Red House Mystery 1 v. — An Unsatisfactory Lover 1 v. — Peter's Wife 2 v. — The Three Graces 1 v. — A Tug of War 1 v. — The Professor's Experiment 2 v. — A Point of Conscience 2 v. — A Lonely Girl 1 v. — Lovice 1 v. — The Coming of Chloe 1 v.

Hunt, Mrs.: *vide* Averil Beaumont.

Hunt, Violet.

The Human Interest 1 v. — White Rose of the Weyan Leaf 2 v.

Hutten, Baroness von (Am.).

The Halo 1 v.

Ingelow, Jean, † 1897.

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Inglis, the Hon. Lady.

The Siege of Lucknow 1 v.

Ingram, John H.: *vide* E. A. Poe.

Iota: *vide* Mrs. Mannington Caffyn.

Irving, Washington (Am.), † 1859.

The Sketch Book (with Portrait) 1 v. — The Life of Mahomet 1 v. — Lives of the Successors of Mahomet 1 v. — Oliver Goldsmith 1 v. — Chronicles of Wolfert's Roost 1 v. — Life of George Washington 5 v.

Jackson, Mrs. Helen (H. H.) (Am.), † 1885.

Ramona 2 v.

Jacobs, W. W.

Many Cargoes 1 v. — The Skipper's Wooing, and The Brown Man's Servant 1 v. — Sea Urchins 1 v. — A Master of Craft 1 v. — Light Freights 1 v. — At Sun-
wich Port 1 v. — The Lady of the Barge 1 v. — Odd Craft 1 v. — Dialstone Lane 1 v. — Captains All 1 v. — Short Cruises 1 v.

James, Charles T. C.

Holy Wedlock 1 v.

James, G. P. R., † 1860.

Morley Ernstein (with Portrait) 1 v. — Forest Days 1 v. — The False Heir 1 v. — Arabella Stuart 1 v. — Rose d'Albret 1 v. — Arrah Neil 1 v. — Agincourt 1 v. — The Smuggler 1 v. — The Step-Mother 2 v. — Beauchamp 1 v. — Heidelberg 1 v. — The Gipsy 1 v. — The Castle of Ehrenstein 1 v. — Darnley 1 v. — Russell 2 v. — The Convict 2 v. — Sir Theodore Broughton 2 v.

James, Henry (Am.).

The American 2 v. — The Europeans 1 v. — Daisy Miller; An International Episode; Four Meetings 1 v. — Roderick Hudson 2 v. — The Madonna of the Future, etc. 1 v. — Eugene Pickering, etc. 1 v. — Confidence 1 v. — Washington Square, etc. 2 v. — The Portrait of a Lady 3 v. — Foreign Parts 1 v. — French Poets and Novelists 1 v. — The Siege of London; The Point of View; A Passionate Pilgrim 1 v. — Portraits of Places 1 v. — A Little Tour in France 1 v.

James, Winifred.

Bachelor Betty 1 v.

Jeaffreson, J. Cordy.

A Book about Doctors 2 v. — A Woman in spite of Herself 2 v. — The Real Lord Byron 3 v.

Jenkin, Mrs. Charles, † 1885.

"Who Breaks—Pays" 1 v. — Skirmishing 1 v. — Once and Again 2 v. — Two French Marriages 2 v. — Within an Ace 1 v. — Jupiter's Daughters 1 v.

Jenkins, Edward.

Ginx's Baby, his Birth and other Misfortunes; Lord Bantam 2 v.

"Jennie of 'The Prince's,'"

Author of: *vide* B. H. Buxton.

Jerome, K. Jerome.

The Idle Thoughts of an Idle Fellow 1 v. — Diary of a Pilgrimage, and Six Essays 1 v. — Novel Notes 1 v. — Sketches in Lavender, Blue and Green 1 v. — The Second Thoughts of an Idle Fellow 1 v. — Three Men on the Bummel 1 v. — Paul Kelver 2 v. — Tea-Table Talk 1 v. — Tommy and Co. 1 v. — Idle Ideas in 1905 1 v. — The Passing of the Third Floor Back 1 v. — The Angel and the Author—and Others 1 v.

Jerrold, Douglas, † 1857.

History of St. Giles and St. James 2 v. — Men of Character 2 v.

- "John Halifax, Gentleman,"
Author of: *vide* Mrs. Craik.
- Johnny Ludlow: *vide* Mrs. Henry Wood.
- Johnson, Samuel, † 1784.
Lives of the English Poets 2 v.
- Jolly, Emily.
Colonel Dacre 2 v.
- "Joshua Davidson," Author of:
vide Mrs. E. Lynn Linton.
- Kavanagh, Miss Julia, † 1877.
Nathalie 2 v. — Daisy Burns 2 v. — Grace Lee 2 v. — Rachel Gray 1 v. — Adèle 3 v. — A Summer and Winter in the Two Sicilies 2 v. — Seven Years, and other Tales 2 v. — French Women of Letters 1 v. — English Women of Letters 1 v. — Queen Mab 2 v. — Beatrice 2 v. — Sybil's Second Love 2 v. — Dora 2 v. — Silvia 2 v. — Bessie 2 v. — John Dorrien 3 v. — Two Lilies 2 v. — Forget-me-nots 2 v. — *vide* also Series for the Young, p. 29.
- Keary, Annie, † 1879.
Oldbury 2 v. — Castle Daly 2 v.
- Keeling, D'Esterre: *vide* Est-
terre.
- Kempis, Thomas a.
The Imitation of Christ. Translated from the Latin by W. Benham, B.D. 1 v.
- Kimball, Richard B. (Am.), †
Saint Leger 1 v. — Romance of Student Life Abroad 1 v. — Undercurrents 1 v. — Was he Successful? 1 v. — To-Day in New York 1 v.
- Kinglake, Alexander William,
† 1891.
Eothen 1 v. — The Invasion of the Crimea 14 v.
- Kingsley, Charles, † 1875.
Yeast 1 v. — Westward ho! 2 v. — Two Years ago 2 v. — Hypatia 2 v. — Alton Locke 1 v. — Hereward the Wake 2 v. — At Last 2 v. — His Letters and Memories of his Life, edited by his Wife 2 v.
- Kingsley, Henry, † 1876.
Ravenshoe 2 v. — Austin Elliot 1 v. — Geoffrey Hamlyn 2 v. — The Hillyars and the Burtons 2 v. — Leighton Court 1 v. — Valentin 1 v. — Oakshott Castle 1 v. — Reginald Hetherage 2 v. — The Grange Garden 2 v.
- Kinross, Albert.
An Opera and Lady Grasmere 1 v.
- Kipling, Rudyard.
Plain Tales from the Hills 1 v. — The Second Jungle Book 1 v. — The Seven Seas 1 v. — "Captains Courageous" 1 v. — The Day's Work 1 v. — A Fleet in Being 1 v. — Stalky & Co. 1 v. — From Sea to Sea 2 v. — The City of Dreadful Night 1 v. — Kim 1 v. — Just So Stories 1 v. — The Five Nations 1 v. — Traffics and Discoveries 1 v. — Puck of Pook's Hill 1 v.
- Laffan, May.
Flitters, Tatters, and the Counsellor, etc. 1 v.
- Lamb, Charles, † 1834.
The Essays of Elia and Eliana 1 v.
- Lang, Andrew: *vide* H. Rider Haggard.
- Langdon, Mary (Am.).
Ida May 1 v.
- "Last of the Cavaliers, the,"
Author of (Miss Piddington).
The Last of the Cavaliers 2 v. — The Gain of a Loss 2 v.
- Łaszowska, Mme de: *vide* E. Gerard.
- Laurence, George Alfred,
Author of: *vide* "Guy Livingstone."
- Lawless, the Hon. Emily.
Hurrish 1 v.
- "Leaves from the Journal of
our Life in the Highlands:"
vide Victoria R. I.
- Lee, Holme, † 1900: *vide* Harriet Parr.
- Lee, Vernon.
Pope Jacynth, etc. 1 v. — Genius Loci, and The Enchanted Woods 1 v. — Hortas Vitae, and Limbo 1 v.
- Le Fanu, J. S., † 1873.
Uncle Silas 2 v. — Guy Deverell 2 v.
- Lemon, Mark, † 1870.
Wait for the End 2 v. — Loved at Last 2 v. — Falkner Lyle 2 v. — Leyton Hall, and other Tales 2 v. — Golden Fetters 2 v.

"Letters of Her Mother to Elizabeth, the," Author of:
vide W. R. H. Trowbridge.

Lever, Charles, † 1872.

The O'Donoghue 1 v. — The Knight of Gwynne 3 v. — Arthur O'Leary 2 v. — Harry Lorrequer 2 v. — Charles O'Malley 3 v. — Tom Burke of "Ours" 3 v. — Jack Hinton 2 v. — The Daltons 4 v. — The Dodd Family Abroad 3 v. — The Martins of Cro' Martin 3 v. — The Fortunes of Glencore 2 v. — Roland Cashel 3 v. — Davenport Dunn 3 v. — Confessions of Con Cregan 2 v. — One of Them 2 v. — Maurice Tiernay 2 v. — Sir Jasper Carew 2 v. — Barrington 2 v. — A Day's Ride 2 v. — Luttrell of Arran 2 v. — Tony Butler 2 v. — Sir Brook Fossbrooke 2 v. — The Bramleighs of Bishop's Folly 2 v. — A Rent in a Cloud 1 v. — That Boy of Norcott's 1 v. — St. Patrick's Eve; Paul Gosslett's Confessions 1 v. — Lord Kilgobbin 2 v.

Levett-Yeats, S.

The Honour of Savelli 1 v. — The Chevalier d'Auriac 1 v. — The Traitor's Way 1 v. — The Lord Protector 1 v. — Orrain 1 v.

Lewes, G. H., † 1878.

Ranthorpe 1 v. — The Physiology of Common Life 2 v. — On Actors and the Art of Acting 1 v.

Linton, Mrs. E. Lynn, † 1898.

The true History of Joshua Davidson 1 v. — Patricia Kemball 2 v. — The Atonement of Leam Dundas 2 v. — The World well Lost 2 v. — Under which Lord? 2 v. — With a Silken Thread, and other Stories 1 v. — Todhunters' at Loan-in' Head, and other Stories 1 v. — "My Love!" 2 v. — The Girl of the Period, and other Social Essays 1 v. — Ione 2 v.

Lockhart, Laurence W. M.,
† 1882.

Mine is Thine 2 v.

Loftus, Lord Augustus.

Diplomatic Reminiscences 1837 - 1862 (with Portrait) 2 v.

Longard, Mme de: *vide* D. Gerard.

Longfellow, Henry Wadsworth (Am.), † 1882.

Poetical Works (with Portrait) 3 v. —

The Divine Comedy of Dante Alighieri 3 v. — The New-England Tragedies 1 v. — The Divine Tragedy 1 v. — Flower-de-Luce, and Three Books of Song 1 v. — The Masque of Pandora, and other Poems 1 v.

Lonsdale, Margaret.

Sister Dora (with a Portrait of Sister Dora) 1 v.

Lorimer, George Horace (Am.).

Letters from a Self-Made Merchant to his Son 1 v. — Old Gorgon Graham 1 v. — Jack Spurlock, Prodigal 1 v.

"Lost Battle, a," Author of.

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Lubbock, Sir John (Lord Avebury).

The Pleasures of Life 1 v. — The Beauties of Nature (with Illustrations) 1 v. — The Use of Life 1 v. — Scenery of Switzerland (with Illustrations) 2 v. — Essays and Addresses 1900-1903 1 v.

"Lutfullah": *vide* Eastwick.

Lyall, Edna, † 1903.

We Two 2 v. — Donovan 2 v. — In the Golden Days 2 v. — Knight-Errant 2 v. — Won by Waiting 2 v. — Wayfaring Men 2 v. — Hope the Hermit 2 v. — Doreen 2 v. — In Spite of All 2 v. — The Hinderers 1 v.

Lytton, Lord: *vide* E. Bulwer.

Lytton, Robert Lord (Owen Meredith), † 1891.

Poems 2 v. — Fables in Song 2 v.

Maartens, Maarten.

The Sin of Joost Avelingh 1 v. — An Old Maid's Love 2 v. — God's Fool 2 v. — The Greater Glory 2 v. — My Lady Nobody 2 v. — Her Memory 1 v. — Some Women I have known 1 v. — My Poor Relations 2 v. — Dorothea 2 v. — The Healers 2 v. — The Woman's Victory, and Other Stories 2 v. — The New Religion 2 v.

McAulay, Allan: *vide* Kate Douglas Wiggin.

Macaulay, Lord, Thomas Babington, † 1859.

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McCarthy, Justin.

The Waterdale Neighbours 2 v. — Dear Lady Disdain 2 v. — Miss Misanthrope 2 v. — A History of our Own Times 5 v. — Donna Quixote 2 v. — A Short History of our Own Times 2 v. — A History of the Four Georges. Vols. 1 & 2. — A History of our Own Times. Vols. 6 & 7 (supplemental). — A History of the Four Georges and of William IV. Vols. 3, 4 & 5 (supplemental). — A Short History of our Own Times. Vol. 3 (supplemental).

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Alec Forbes of Howglen 2 v. — Annals of a Quiet Neighbourhood 2 v. — David Elginbrod 2 v. — The Vicar's Daughter 2 v. — Malcolm 2 v. — St. George and St. Michael 2 v. — The Marquis of Lossie 2 v. — Sir Gibbie 2 v. — Mary Marston 2 v. — The Gifts of the Child Christ, and other Tales 1 v. — The Princess and Curdie 1 v.

Mackarness, Mrs., † 1881.

Sunbeam Stories 1 v. — A Peerless Wife 2 v. — A Mingled Yarn 2 v.

Mackay, Eric, † 1898.

Love Letters of a Violinist, and other Poems 1 v.

McKnight, Charles (Am.).

Old Fort Duquesne 2 v.

Maclaren, Ian, † 1907.

Beside the Bonnie Brier Bush 1 v. — The Days of Auld Langsyne 1 v. — His Majesty Baby 1 v.

Macleod, Fiona, † 1905.

Wind and Wave 1 v. — The Sunset of Old Tales 1 v.

Macleod, Norman, † 1872.

The Old Lieutenant and his Son 1 v.

**Macpherson, James, † 1796:
*vide Ossian.*****Macquoid, Mrs.**

Patty 2 v. — Miriam's Marriage 2 v. — Pictures across the Channel 2 v. — Too Soon 1 v. — My Story 2 v. — Diane 2 v. — Beside the River 2 v. — A Faithful Lover 2 v.

**"Mademoiselle Mori," Author
of (Miss Roberts).**

Mademoiselle Mori 2 v. — Denise 1 v. — Madame Fontenoy 1 v. — On the

Edge of the Storm 1 v. — The Atelier du Lys 2 v. — In the Olden Time 2 v.

Mahon, Lord: *vide Stanhope.***Maine, E. S.**

Scarscliff Rocks 2 v.

**Malet, Sir Edward, G.C.B.,
G.C.M.G.**

Shifting Scenes 1 v.

**Malet, Lucas (Mrs. Mary St.
Leger Harrison).**

Colonel Enderby's Wife 2 v. — The History of Sir Richard Calmady 3 v. — The Far Horizon 2 v.

Malmesbury, the Earl of, G.C.B.

Memoirs of an Ex-Minister 3 v.

Mann, Mary E.

A Winter's Tale 1 v. — The Cedar Star 1 v.

Mansfield, Robert Blachford.

The Log of the Water Lily 1 v.

Mark Twain: *vide Twain.***"Marmorne," Author of: *vide*
P. G. Hamerton.****Marryat, Capt., † 1848.**

Jacob Faithful (with Portrait) 1 v. — Percival Keene 1 v. — Peter Simple 1 v. — Japhet in Search of a Father 1 v. — Monsieur Violet 1 v. — The Settlers in Canada 1 v. — The Mission 1 v. — The Privateer's-Man 1 v. — The Children of the New-Forest 1 v. — Valerie 1 v. — Mr. Midshipman Easy 1 v. — The King's Own 1 v.

Marryat, Florence, † 1899.

Love's Conflict 2 v. — For Ever and Ever 2 v. — The Confessions of Gerald Estcourt 2 v. — Nelly Brooke 2 v. — Véronique 2 v. — Petronel 2 v. — Her Lord and Master 2 v. — The Prey of the Gods 1 v. — Life and Letters of Captain Marryat 1 v. — Mad Dumaresq 2 v. — No Intentions 2 v. — Fighting the Air 2 v. — A Star and a Heart; An Utter Impossibility 1 v. — The Poison of Asps, and other Stories 1 v. — A Lucky Disappointment, and other Stories 1 v. — "My own Child" 2 v. — Her Father's Name 2 v. — A Harvest of Wild Oats 2 v. — A Little Stepson 1 v. — Written in Fire 2 v. — Her World against a Lie 2 v. — A Broken Blossom 2 v. — The Root of all Evil 2 v. — The Fair-haired Alda 2 v. — With Cupid's Eyes 2 v. — My Sister the

Actress 2 v. — Phyllida 2 v. — How they loved Him 2 v. — Facing the Footlights (with Portrait) 2 v. — A Moment of Madness, and other Stories 1 v. — The Ghost of Charlotte Cray, and other Stories 1 v. — Peeress and Player 2 v. — Under the Lilies and Roses 2 v. — The Heart of Jane Warner 2 v. — The Heir Presumptive 2 v. — The Master Passion 2 v. — Spiders of Society 2 v. — Driven to Bay 2 v. — A Daughter of the Tropics 2 v. — Gentleman and Courtier 2 v. — On Circumstantial Evidence 2 v. — Mount Eden. A Romance 2 v. — Blindfold 2 v. — A Scarlet Sin 1 v. — A Bankrupt Heart 2 v. — The Spirit World 1 v. — The Beautiful Soul 1 v. — At Heart a Rake 2 v. — The Strange Transfiguration of Hannah Stubbs 1 v. — The Dream that Stayed 2 v. — A Passing Madness 1 v. — The Blood of the Vampire 1 v. — A Soul on Fire 1 v. — Iris the Avenger 1 v.

Marsh, Mrs. Anne (Caldwell),
† 1874.

Ravenscliffe 2 v. — Emilia Wyndham 2 v. — Castle Avon 2 v. — Aubrey 2 v. — The Heiress of Houghton 2 v. — Evelyn Marston 2 v. — The Rose of Ashurst 2 v.

Marshall, Mrs. Emma, † 1899.

Mrs. Mainwaring's Journal 1 v. — Benvenuta 1 v. — Lady Alice 1 v. — Dayspring 1 v. — Life's Aftermath 1 v. — In the East Country 1 v. — No. XIII; or, The Story of the Lost Vestal 1 v. — In Four Reigns 1 v. — On the Banks of the Ouse 1 v. — In the City of Flowers 1 v. — Alma 1 v. — Under Salisbury Spire 1 v. — The End Crowns All 1 v. — Winchester Meads 1 v. — Eventide Light 1 v. — Winifrede's Journal 1 v. — Bristol Bells 1 v. — In the Service of Rachel Lady Russell 1 v. — A Lily among Thorns 1 v. — Penshurst Castle 1 v. — Kensington Palace 1 v. — The White King's Daughter 1 v. — The Master of the Musicians 1 v. — An Escape from the Tower 1 v. — A Haunt of Ancient Peace 1 v. — Castle Meadow 1 v. — In the Choir of Westminster Abbey 1 v. — The Young Queen of Hearts 1 v. — Under the Dome of St. Paul's 1 v. — The Parson's Daughter 1 v.

Mason, A. E. W.

The Four Feathers 2 v. — Miranda of the Balcony 1 v. — The Courtship of Morrice Buckler 2 v. — The Truants 2 v. — The Watchers 1 v. — Running Water 1 v. — The Broken Road 1 v.

Mathers, Helen (Mrs. Henry Reeves).

"Cherry Ripe!" 2 v. — "Land o' the Leal" 1 v. — My Lady Green Sleeves 2 v. — As he comes up the Stair, etc. 1 v. — Sam's Sweetheart 2 v. — Eyre's Acquittal 2 v. — Found Out 1 v. — Murder or Manslaughter? 1 v. — The Fashion of this World (80 Pf.) — Blind Justice, and "Who, being dead, yet Speaketh" 1 v. — What the Glass Told, and A Study of a Woman 1 v. — Bam Wildfire 2 v. — Becky 2 v. — Cinders 1 v. — "Honey" 1 v. — Griff of Griffithscourt 1 v. — The New Lady Teazle, and Other Stories and Essays 1 v. — The Ferryman 1 v. — Tally Ho! 2 v. — Pigskin and Petticoat 2 v.

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The Balance of Military Power in Europe 1 v.

Maurier, George du, † 1896.

Trilby 2 v. — The Martian 2 v.

Maxwell, Mrs.: v. Miss Braddon.

Maxwell, W. B.

The Ragged Messenger 2 v. — The Guarded Flame 2 v.

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Melville, George J. Whyte,

† 1878.

Kate Coventry 1 v. — Holmby House 2 v. — Digby Grand 1 v. — Good for Nothing 2 v. — The Queen's Maries 2 v. — The Gladiators 2 v. — The Brookes of Bridlemere 2 v. — Cerise 2 v. — The Interpreter 2 v. — The White Rose 2 v. — M. or N. 1 v. — Contraband 1 v. — Sarchedon 2 v. — Uncle John 2 v. — Katerfelto 1 v. — Sister Louise 1 v. — Rosine 1 v. — Roys' Wife 2 v. — Black but Comely 2 v. — Riding Recollections 1 v.

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Meredith, Owen: *vide* Robert Lord Lytton.

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Merriman, Henry Seton, † 1903.

Young Mistley 1 v. — Prisoners and Captives 2 v. — From One Generation to Another 1 v. — With Edged Tools 2 v. — The Sowers 2 v. — Flotsam 1 v. — In Kedar's Tents 1 v. — Roden's Corner 1 v. — The Isle of Unrest 1 v. — The Velvet Glove 1 v. — The Vultures 1 v. — Barlasch of the Guard 1 v. — Tomaso's Fortune, and Other Stories 1 v. — The Last Hope 2 v.

Merriman, H. S., & S. G. Tallentyre.

The Money-Spinner, etc. 1 v.

Milne, James.

The Epistles of Atkins 1 v.

Milton, John, † 1674.

Poetical Works 1 v.

"Molly, Miss," Author of.

Geraldine Hawthorne 1 v.

"Molly Bawn," Author of: *vide* Mrs. Hungerford.**Montgomery, Florence.**

Misunderstood 1 v. — Thrown Together 2 v. — Thwarted 1 v. — Wild Mike 1 v. — Seaforth 2 v. — The Blue Veil 1 v. — Transformed 1 v. — The Fisherman's Daughter, etc. 1 v. — Colonel Norton 2 v. — Prejudged 1 v. — An Unshared Secret, and Other Tales 1 v.

Moore, Frank Frankfort.

"I Forbid the Banns" 2 v. — A Gray Eye or So 2 v. — One Fair Daughter 2 v. — They Call it Love 2 v. — The Jessamy Bride 1 v. — The Millionaires 1 v. — Nell Gwyn—Comedian 1 v. — A Damsel or Two 1 v. — Castle Omeragh 2 v. — Shipmates in Sunshine 2 v. — The Original Woman 1 v. — The White Causeway 1 v. — The Artful Miss Dill 1 v. — The Marriage Lease 1 v. — An Amateur Adventuress 1 v.

Moore, George.

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Morgan, Lady, † 1859.

Memoirs 3 v.

Morley, Henry, † 1894.

Of English Literature in the Reign of Victoria. With Facsimiles of the Signatures of Authors in the Tauchnitz Edition (v. 2000, published 1881) 1 v.

Morris, William.

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Morrison, Arthur.

Tales of Mean Streets 1 v. — A Child of the Jago 1 v. — To London Town 1 v. — Cunning Murrell 1 v. — The Hole in the Wall 1 v. — The Green Eye of Goona 1 v. — Divers Vanities 1 v.

Muirhead, James Fullarton.

The Land of Contrasts 1 v.

Mulock, Miss: *vide* Mrs. Craik.**Murray, David Christie.**

Rainbow Gold 2 v.

Murray, Grenville: *v.* Grenville.**"My Little Lady," Author of: *vide* E. Frances Poynter.****New Testament, the.**

The Authorised English Version, with Introduction and Various Readings from the three most celebrated Manuscripts of the Original Text, by Constantine Tischendorf (vol. 1000, published 1866) 1 v.

Newby, Mrs. C. J.

Common Sense 2 v.

Newman, Dr. J. H. (Cardinal Newman), † 1890.

Callista 1 v.

Nicholls, Mrs.: *vide* Curren Bell.**"Nina Balatka," Author of: *vide* Anthony Trollope.****"No Church," Author of (F. Robinson).**

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Noel, Lady Augusta.

From Generation to Generation 1 v. — Hithersea Mere 2 v.

Norris, Frank (Am.), † 1902.
The Octopus 2 v. — The Pit 2 v.

Norris, W. E.

My Friend Jim 1 v. — A Bachelor's Blunder 2 v. — Major and Minor 2 v. — The Rogue 2 v. — Miss Shafto 2 v. — Mrs. Fenton 1 v. — Misadventure 2 v. — Saint Ann's 1 v. — A Victim of Good Luck 1 v. — The Dancer in Yellow 1 v. — Clarissa Furiosa 2 v. — Marietta's Marriage 2 v. — The Fight for the Crown 1 v. — The Widower 1 v. — Giles Ingilby 1 v. — The Flower of the Flock 1 v. — His Own Father 1 v. — The Credit of the County 1 v. — Lord Leonard the Luckless 1 v. — Nature's Comedian 1 v. — Nigel's Vocation 1 v. — Barham of Beltana 1 v. — Harry and Ursula 1 v. — The Square Peg 1 v. — Pauline 1 v.

Norton, Hon. Mrs., † 1877.

Stuart of Dunleath 2 v. — Lost and Saved 2 v. — Old Sir Douglas 2 v.

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(Miss Iza Hardy).

Not Easily Jealous 2 v.

"Novels and Tales": *vide*

"Household Words."

O'Connor Eccles, Charlotte (Hal
Godfrey).

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— The Matrimonial Lottery 1 v.

Oldmeadow, Ernest.

Susan 1 v.

Oliphant, Laurence, † 1888.

Altiora Peto 2 v. — Masollam 2 v.

Oliphant, Mrs., † 1897.

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3 v. — The Ladies Lindores 3 v. — Hester 3 v. — The Wizard's Son 3 v. — A Country Gentleman and his Family 2 v. — Neighbours on the Green 1 v. — The Duke's Daughter 1 v. — The Fugitives 1 v. — Kirsteen 2 v. — Life of Laurence Oliphant and of Alice Oliphant, his Wife 2 v. — The Little Pilgrim in the Unseen 1 v. — The Heir Presumptive and the Heir Apparent 2 v. — The Sorceress 2 v. — Sir Robert's Fortune 2 v. — The Ways of Life 1 v. — Old Mr. Tredgold 2 v.

"One who has kept a Diary":
vide George W. E. Russell.

Osbourne, Lloyd (Am.).

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Ossian.

The Poems of Ossian. Translated by James Macpherson 1 v.

Ouida, † 1908.

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"Outcasts, the," Author of: *vide*
"Roy Tellet."

Parker, Sir Gilbert.

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- Parr, Harriet (Holme Lee),
 † 1900.
 Basil Godfrey's Caprice 2 v. — For Richer, for Poorer 2 v. — The Beautiful Miss Barrington 2 v. — Her Title of Honour 1 v. — Echoes of a Famous Year 1 v. — Katherine's Trial 1 v. — The Vicissitudes of Bessie Fairfax 2 v. — Ben Milner's Wooing 1 v. — Straightforward 2 v. — Mrs. Denys of Cote 2 v. — A Poor Squire 1 v.
- Parr, Mrs.
 Dorothy Fox 1 v. — The Prescotts of Pamphillon 2 v. — The Gosau Smithy, etc. 1 v. — Robin 2 v. — Loyalty George 2 v.
- Paston, George.
 A Study in Prejudices 1 v. — A Fair Deceiver 1 v.
- Pasture, Mrs. Henry de la.
 The Lonely Lady of Grosvenor Square 1 v. — The Grey Knight 1 v.
- Paul, Mrs.: *vide* Author of "Still Waters."
 "Paul Ferroll," Author of (Mrs. Caroline Clive), † 1873.
 Paul Ferroll 1 v. — Year after Year 1 v. — Why Paul Ferroll killed his Wife 1 v.
- Payn, James, † 1898.
 Found Dead 1 v. — Gwendoline's Harvest 1 v. — Like Father, like Son 2 v. — Not Wooded, but Won 2 v. — Cecil's Tryst 1 v. — A Woman's Vengeance 2 v. — Murphy's Master 1 v. — In the Heart of a Hill, and other Stories 1 v. — At Her Mercy 2 v. — The Best of Husbands 2 v. — Walter's Word 2 v. — Halves 2 v. — Fallen Fortunes 2 v. — What He cost Her 2 v. — By Proxy 2 v. — Less Black than we're Painted 2 v. — Under one Roof 2 v. — High Spirits 1 v. — High Spirits (*Second Series*) 1 v. — A Confidential Agent 2 v. — From Exile 2 v. — A Grape from a Thorn 2 v. — Some Private Views 1 v. — For Cash Only 2 v. — Kit: A Memory 2 v. — The Canon's Ward (with Portrait) 2 v. — Some Literary Recollections 1 v. — The Talk of the Town 1 v. — The Luck of the Darrells 2 v. — The Heir of the Ages 2 v. — Holiday Tasks 1 v. — Glow-Worm Tales (*First Series*) 1 v. — Glow-Worm Tales (*Second Series*) 1 v. — A Prince of the Blood 2 v. — The Mystery of Mirbridge 2 v. — The Burnt Million 2 v. — The Word and the Will 2 v. — Sunny Stories, and some Shady Ones 1 v. — A Modern Dick Whittington 2 v. — A Stumble on the Threshold 2 v. — A Trying Patient 1 v. — Gleams of Memory, and The Eavesdropper 1 v. — In Market Overt 1 v. — The Disappearance of George Driffell, and other Tales 1 v. — Another's Burden etc. 1 v. — The Backwater of Life, or Essays of a Literary Veteran 1 v.
- Peard, Frances Mary.
 One Year 2 v. — The Rose-Garden 1 v. — Unawares 1 v. — Thorpe Regis 1 v. — A Winter Story 1 v. — A Madrigal, and other Stories 1 v. — Cartouche 1 v. — Mother Molly 1 v. — Schloss and Town 2 v. — Contradictions 2 v. — Near Neighbours 1 v. — Alicia Tennant 1 v. — Madame's Granddaughter 1 v. — Donna Teresa 1 v. — Number One and Number Two 1 v. — The Ring from Jaipur 1 v.
- Pemberton, Max.
 The Impregnable City 1 v. — A Woman of Kronstadt 1 v. — The Phantom Army 1 v. — The Garden of Swords 1 v. — The Footsteps of a Throne 1 v. — Pro Patriâ 1 v. — The Giant's Gate 2 v. — I crown thee King 1 v. — The House under the Sea 1 v. — The Gold Wolf 1 v. — Doctor Xavier 1 v. — Red Morn 1 v. — Beatrice of Venice 2 v. — Mid the Thick Arrows 2 v. — My Sword for Lafayette 1 v. — The Lady Evelyn 1 v. — The Diamond Ship 1 v. — The Lodestar 1 v. — Wheels of Anarchy 1 v. — Love the Harvester 1 v.
- Percy, Bishop Thomas, † 1811.
 Reliques of Ancient English Poetry 3 v.
- Philips, F. C.
 As in a Looking Glass 1 v. — The Dean and his Daughter 1 v. — Lucy Smith 1 v. — A Lucky Young Woman 1 v. — Jack and Three Jills 1 v. — Little Mrs. Murray 1 v. — Young Mr. Ainslie's Courtship 1 v. — Social Vicissitudes 1 v. — Extenuating Circumstances, and A French Marriage 1 v. — More Social Vicissitudes 1 v. — Constance 2 v. — That Wicked Mad'moiselle, etc. 1 v. — A Doctor in Difficulties, etc. 1 v. — Black and White 1 v. — "One Never Knows" 2 v. — Of Course 1 v. — Miss Ormerod's Protégé 1 v. — My little Husband 1 v. — Mrs. Bouverie 1 v. — A Question of Colour, and other Stories 1 v. — A Devil in Nun's Veiling 1 v. — A Full Confession, and other Stories 1 v. — The Luckiest of Three 1 v. — Poor Little Bella 1 v. — Eliza Clarke, Governess, and Other Stories 1 v. — Marriage, etc. 1 v. — School-girls of To-day, etc. 1 v. — If Only, etc. 1 v. — An Unfortunate Blend 1 v. — A Barrister's Courtship 1 v.

Philips, F. C. & Percy Fendall.
A Daughter's Sacrifice 1 v. — Margaret
Byng 1 v.

Philips, F. C. & C. J. Wills.
The Fatal Phryne 1 v. — The Scudamores
1 v. — A Maiden Fair to See 1 v. — Sybil
Ross's Marriage 1 v.

Phillpotts, Eden.

Lying Prophets 2 v. — The Human Boy
1 v. — Sons of the Morning 2 v. — The
Good Red Earth 1 v. — The Striking Hours
1 v. — The Farm of the Dagger 1 v. —
The Golden Fetich 1 v. — The Whirlwind
2 v. — The Human Boy Again 1 v.

Phillpotts, E. & Arnold Bennett.
The Sinews of War 1 v. — The Statue 1 v.

Piddington, Miss: *vide* Author of
"The Last of the Cavaliers."

Poe, Edgar Allan (Am.), † 1849.
Poems and Essays, edited with a new
Memoir by John H. Ingram 1 v. — Tales,
edited by John H. Ingram 1 v.

Pope, Alexander, † 1744.
Select Poetical Works (with Portrait) 1 v.

Poynter, Miss E. Frances.
My Little Lady 2 v. — Ersilia 2 v. —
Among the Hills 1 v. — Madame de
Prenel 1 v.

Præd, Mrs. Campbell.
Zéro 1 v. — Affinities 1 v. — The Head
Station 2 v.

Prentiss, Mrs. E. (Am.), † 1878.
Stepping Heavenward 1 v.

Prince Consort, the, † 1861.
His Principal Speeches and Addresses
(with Portrait) 1 v.

Pryce, Richard.
Miss Maxwell's Affections 1 v. — The
Quiet Mrs. Fleming 1 v. — Time and the
Woman 1 v.

Pym, Hor. N.: *v.* Caroline Fox.
Queen, H. M. the: *vide* Victoria
R. I.

Quiller-Couch, A. T. ("Q").
Noughts and Crosses 1 v. — I Saw Three
Ships 1 v. — Dead Man's Rock 1 v. — Ia
and other Tales 1 v. — The Ship of Stars
1 v. — The Adventures of Harry Revel 1 v.
— Fort Amity 1 v. — Shakespeare's Christ-
mas, and Other Stories 1 v. — The Mayor
of Troy 1 v. — Merry-Garden, and Other
Stories 1 v.

Rae, W. Fraser, † 1905.
Westward by Rail 1 v. — Miss Bayle's
Romance 2 v. — The Business of Travel 1 v.

Raimond, C. E. (Miss Robins).
The Open Question 2 v. — The Magnetic
North 2 v. — A Dark Lantern 2 v. — The
Convert 2 v.

"Rajah's Heir, the," Author of.
The Rajah's Heir 2 v.

Reade, Charles, † 1884.
"It is never too late to mend" 2 v. —
"Love me little, love me long" 1 v. —
The Cloister and the Hearth 2 v. — Hard
Cash 3 v. — Put Yourself in his Place 2 v. —
A Terrible Temptation 2 v. — Peg Wof-
fington 1 v. — Christie Johnstone 1 v. —
A Simpleton 2 v. — The Wandering Heir
1 v. — A Woman-Hater 2 v. — Readiana
1 v. — Singleheart and Doubleface 1 v.

"Recommended to Mercy,"
Author of (Mrs. Houstoun).
"Recommended to Mercy" 2 v. — Zoe's
"Brand" 2 v.

Reeves, Mrs.: *v.* Helen Mathers.
Rhys, Grace.

Mary Dominic 1 v. — The Wooing of
Sheila 1 v.

Rice, James: *v.* Walter Besant.
Richards, Alfred Bate, † 1876.

So very Human 3 v.
Richardson, S., † 1761.

Clarissa Harlowe 4 v.
Riddell, Mrs. (F. G. Trafford).
George Geith of Fen Court 2 v. — Max-
well Drewitt 2 v. — The Race for Wealth
2 v. — Far above Rubies 2 v. — The Earl's
Promise 2 v. — Mortomley's Estate 2 v.

Ridge, W. Pett.
Name of Garland 1 v.

"Rita."
Souls 1 v. — The Jesters 1 v. — The Mas-
queraders 2 v. — Queer Lady Judas 2 v. —
Prince Charming 1 v. — The Pointing
Finger 1 v. — A Man of no Importance 1 v.
— The Millionaire Girl, and Other Stories
1 v.

Ritchie, Mrs. Anne Thackeray:
vide Miss Thackeray.

Roberts, Miss: *vide* Author of
"Mademoiselle Mori."

Robertson, Rev. Frederick W.,
† 1853.
Sermons 4 v.

- Robins, Miss: *vide* Raimond.
 Robinson, F.: *vide* Author of
 "No Church."
 Roosevelt, Theodore (Am.).
 Outdoor Pastimes of an American Hunter
 (with Portrait) 1 v.
 Ross, Charles H.
 The Pretty Widow 1 v. — A London
 Romance 2 v.
 Ross, Martin: *vide* Somerville.
 Rossetti, Dante Gabriel, † 1882.
 Poems 1 v. — Ballads and Sonnets 1 v.
 "Roy Tellet."
 The Outcasts 1 v. — A Draught of
 Lethe 1 v. — Pastor and Prelate 2 v.
 Ruffini, J., † 1881.
 Lavinia 2 v. — Doctor Antonio 1 v. —
 Lorenzo Benoni 1 v. — Vincenzo 2 v. —
 A Quiet Nook in the Jura 1 v. — The
 Paragrees on a Visit to Paris 1 v. —
 Carlino, and other Stories 1 v.
 Ruskin, John, † 1902.
 Sesame and Lilies 1 v. — The Stones of
 Venice (with Illustrations) 2 v. — Unto this
 Last and Munera Pulveris 1 v. — The Seven
 Lamps of Architecture (with 14 Illustrations)
 1 v. — Mornings in Florence 1 v.
 Russell, W. Clark.
 A Sailor's Sweetheart 2 v. — The "Lady
 Maud" 2 v. — A Sea Queen 2 v.
 Russell, George W. E.
 Collections and Recollections. By One
 who has kept a Diary 2 v. — A Londoner's
 Log-Book 1 v.
 Sala, George Augustus, † 1895.
 The Seven Sons of Mammon 2 v.
 Saunders, John.
 Israel Mort, Overman 2 v. — The Ship-
 owner's Daughter 2 v. — A Noble Wife 2 v.
 Saunders, Katherine (Mrs.
 Cooper).
 Joan Merryweather, and other Tales
 1 v. — Gideon's Rock, and other Tales
 1 v. — The High Mills 2 v. — Sebastian 1 v.
 Savage, Richard Henry (Am.),
 † 1903.
 My Official Wife 1 v. — The Little Lady
 of Lagunitas (with Portrait) 2 v. — Prince
 Schamyl's Wooing 1 v. — The Masked
 Venus 2 v. — Delilah of Harlem 2 v. — The
 Anarchist 2 v. — A Daughter of Judas
 1 v. — In the Old Chateau 1 v. — Miss
 Devereux of the Mariquita 2 v. — Checked
 Through 2 v. — A Modern Corsair 2 v. —
 In the Swim 2 v. — The White Lady of
 Khaminavatka 2 v. — In the House of His
 Friends 2 v. — The Mystery of a Shipyard 2 v.
 — A Monte Cristo in Khaki 1 v.
 Schreiner, Olive.
 Trooper Peter Halket of Mashona-
 land 1 v.
 Scott, Sir Walter, † 1832.
 Waverley (with Portrait) 1 v. — The
 Antiquary 1 v. — Ivanhoe 1 v. — Kenil-
 worth 1 v. — Quentin Durward 1 v. — Old
 Mortality 1 v. — Guy Mannerling 1 v. —
 Rob Roy 1 v. — The Pirate 1 v. — The
 Fortunes of Nigel 1 v. — The Black Dwarf;
 A Legend of Montrose 1 v. — The Bride
 of Lammermoor 1 v. — The Heart of Mid-
 Lothian 2 v. — The Monastery 1 v. — The
 Abbot 1 v. — Peveril of the Peak 2 v. —
 Poetical Works 2 v. — Woodstock 1 v. —
 The Fair Maid of Perth 1 v. — Anne of
 Geierstein 1 v.
 Seeley, Prof. J. R., M.A., † 1895.
 Life and Times of Stein (with a Portrait
 of Stein) 4 v. — The Expansion of Eng-
 land 1 v. — Goethe 1 v.
 Sewell, Elizabeth, † 1906.
 Amy Herbert 2 v. — Ursula 2 v. — A
 Glimpse of the World 2 v. — The Journal
 of a Home Life 2 v. — After Life 2 v. —
 The Experience of Life 2 v.
 Shakespeare, William, † 1616.
 Plays and Poems (with Portrait) (*Second
 Edition*) 7 v. — Doubtful Plays 1 v.
 Shakespeare's Plays may also be had in
 37 numbers, at # 0.30. each number.
 Sharp, William, † 1905: v. Miss
 Howard, Fiona Macleod and
 Swinburne.
 Shelley, Percy Bysshe, † 1822.
 A Selection from his Poems 1 v.
 Sheppard, Nathan (Am.), † 1888.
 Shut up in Paris 1 v.
 Sheridan, Richard Brinsley,
 † 1816.
 The Dramatic Works 1 v.
 Shorthouse, J. Henry.
 John Inglesant 2 v. — Blanche, Lady
 Falaise 1 v.
 Slatin Pasha, Rudolf C., C.B.
 Fire and Sword in the Sudan (with
 two Maps in Colours) 3 v.

- Smedley, F. E.: *vide* Author of "Frank Fairlegh."
- Smollett, Tobias, † 1771.
Roderick Random 1 v. — Humphry Clinker 1 v. — Peregrine Pickle 2 v.
- "Society in London," Author of. Society in London. By a Foreign Resident 1 v.
- Somerville, E. C., & Martin Ross.
Naboth's Vineyard 1 v. — All on the Irish Shore 1 v.
- "Spanish Brothers, the," Author of
The Spanish Brothers 2 v.
- Stanhope, Earl (Lord Mahon), † 1875.
The History of England 7 v. — Reign of Queen Anne 2 v.
- Steel, Flora Annic.
The Hosts of the Lord 2 v. — In the Guardianship of God 1 v.
- Stevens, G. W., † 1900.
From Capetown to Ladysmith 1 v.
- Sterne, Laurence, † 1768.
Tristram Shandy 1 v. — A Sentimental Journey (with Portrait) 1 v.
- Stevenson, Robert Louis, † 1894.
Treasure Island 1 v. — Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, and An Inland Voyage 1 v. — Kidnapped 1 v. — The Black Arrow 1 v. — The Master of Ballantrae 1 v. — The Merry Men, etc. 1 v. — Across the Plains, etc. 1 v. — Island Nights' Entertainments 1 v. — Catriona 1 v. — Weir of Hermiston 1 v. — St. Ives 2 v. — In the South Seas 2 v. — Tales and Fantasies 1 v.
- "Still Waters," Author of (Mrs. Paul).
Still Waters 1 v. — Dorothy 1 v. — De Cressy 1 v. — Uncle Ralph 1 v. — Maiden Sisters 1 v. — Martha Brown 1 v. — Vanessa 1 v.
- Stirling, M. C.: *vide* G. M. Craik.
- Stockton, Frank R. (Am.).
The House of Martha 1 v.
- "Story of a Penitent Soul, the," Author of.
The Story of a Penitent Soul 1 v.
- "Story of Elizabeth, the," Author of: *vide* Miss Thackeray.
- Stowe, Mrs. Harriet Beecher (Am.), † 1896.
Uncle Tom's Cabin (with Portrait) 2 v. — A Key to Uncle Tom's Cabin 2 v. — Dred 2 v. — The Minister's Wooing 1 v. — Old-town Folks 2 v.
- "Sunbeam Stories," Author of: *vide* Mrs. Mackarness.
- Swift, Jonathan (Dean Swift), † 1745.
Gulliver's Travels 1 v.
- Swinburne, Algernon Charles.
Atalanta in Calydon: and Lyrical Poems (edited, with an Introduction, by William Sharp) 1 v. — Love's Cross-Currents 1 v. — Chastelard and Mary Stuart 1 v.
- Symonds, John Addington, † 1893.
Sketches in Italy 1 v. — New Italian Sketches 1 v.
- Tallentyre, S. G.: *v.* H. S. Merri-man.
- Tasma.
Uncle Piper of Piper's Hill 2 v.
- Tautphoeus, Baroness, † 1893.
Cyrilla 2 v. — The Initials 2 v. — Quits 2 v. — At Odds 2 v.
- Taylor, Col. Meadows, † 1876.
Tara; a Mahratta Tale 3 v.
- Templeton: *vide* Author of "Horace Templeton."
- Tennyson, Alfred (Lord), † 1892.
Poetical Works 8 v. — Queen Mary 1 v. — Harold 1 v. — Becket; The Cup; The Falcon 1 v. — Locksley Hall, sixty Years after; The Promise of May; Tiresias and other Poems 1 v. — A Memoir. By His Son (with Portrait) 4 v.
- Testament, the New: *vide* New.
- Thackeray, William Makepeace, † 1863.
Vanity Fair 3 v. — Pendennis 3 v. — Miscellanies 8 v. — Henry Esmond 2 v. — The English Humourists of the Eighteenth Century 1 v. — The Newcomes 4 v. — The Virginians 4 v. — The Four Georges; Lovel the Widower 1 v. — The Adventures of Philip 2 v. — Denis Duval 1 v. —

Roundabout Papers 2 v. — Catherine 1 v. — The Irish Sketch Book 2 v. — The Paris Sketch Book (with Portrait) 2 v.

Thackeray, Miss (Mrs. Ritchie). The Story of Elizabeth 1 v. — The Village on the Cliff 1 v. — Old Kensington 2 v. — Bluebeard's Keys, and other Stories 1 v. — Five Old Friends 1 v. — Miss Angel 1 v. — Out of the World, and other Tales 1 v. — Fulham Lawn, and other Tales 1 v. — From an Island. A Story and some Essays 1 v. — Da Capo, and other Tales 1 v. — Madame de Sévigné; From a Stage Box; Miss Williamson's Divagations 1 v. — A Book of Sibyls 1 v. — Mrs. Dymond 2 v. — Chapters from some Memoirs 1 v.

Thomas a Kempis: *v.* Kempis.

Thomas, A. (Mrs. Pender Cudlip). Denis Donne 2 v. — On Guard 2 v. — Walter Goring 2 v. — Played Out 2 v. — Called to Account 2 v. — Only Herself 2 v. — A Narrow Escape 2 v.

Thomson, James, † 1748.
Poetical Works (with Portrait) 1 v.

"Thoth," Author of.

Thoth 1 v.

"Tim," Author of.

Tim 1 v.

Trafford, F. G.: *v.* Mrs. Riddell.

Trevelyan, Right Hon. Sir George Otto.

The Life and Letters of Lord Macaulay (with Portrait) 4 v. — Selections from the Writings of Lord Macaulay 2 v. — The American Revolution (with a Map) 2 v.

Trois-Etoiles, *vide* Grenville:
Murray.

Trollope, Anthony, † 1882.

Doctor Thorne 2 v. — The Bertrams 2 v. — The Warden 1 v. — Barchester Towers 2 v. — Castle Richmond 2 v. — The West Indies 1 v. — Framley Parsonage 2 v. — North America 3 v. — Orley Farm 3 v. — Rachel Ray 2 v. — The Small House at Allington 3 v. — Can you forgive her? 3 v. — The Belton Estate 2 v. — Nina Balatka 1 v. — The Last Chronicle of Barset 3 v. — The Claverings 2 v. — Phineas Finn 3 v. — He knew he was right 3 v. — The Vicar of Bullhampton 2 v. — Sir Harry Hotspur of Humblethwaite 1 v. — Ralph the Heir 2 v. — The Golden Lion of Granpere 1 v. — Australia and New Zealand 3 v. — Lady Anna 2 v. — Harry

Heathcote of Gangoil 1 v. — The Way we live now 4 v. — The Prime Minister 4 v. — The American Senator 3 v. — South Africa 2 v. — Is He Popenjoy? 3 v. — An Eye for an Eye 1 v. — John Caldgate 3 v. — Cousin Henry 1 v. — The Duke's Children 3 v. — Dr. Wortle's School 1 v. — Ayala's Angel 3 v. — The Fixed Period 1 v. — Marion Fay 2 v. — Kept in the Dark 1 v. — Frau Frohmann, and other Stories 1 v. — Alice Dugdale, and other Stories 1 v. — La Mère Bauche, and other Stories 1 v. — The Mistletoe Bough, and other Stories 1 v. — An Autobiography 1 v. — An Old Man's Love 1 v.

Trollope, T. Adolphus, † 1892.
The Garstangs of Garstang Grange 2 v. — A Siren 2 v.

Trowbridge, W. R. H.
The Letters of Her Mother to Elizabeth 1 v. — A Girl of the Multitude 1 v. — That Little Marquis of Brandenburg 1 v. — A Dazzling Reprobate 1 v.

Twain, Mark (Samuel L. Clemens) (Am.).

The Adventures of Tom Sawyer 1 v. — The Innocents Abroad; or, The New Pilgrims' Progress 2 v. — A Tramp Abroad 2 v. — "Roughing it" 1 v. — The Innocents at Home 1 v. — The Prince and the Pauper 2 v. — The Stolen White Elephant, etc. 1 v. — Life on the Mississippi 2 v. — Sketches (with Portrait) 1 v. — Huckleberry Finn 2 v. — Selections from American Humour 1 v. — A Yankee at the Court of King Arthur 2 v. — The American Claimant 1 v. — The \$ 1 000 000 Bank-Note and other new Stories 1 v. — Tom Sawyer Abroad 1 v. — Pudd'nhead Wilson 1 v. — Personal Recollections of Joan of Arc 2 v. — Tom Sawyer, Detective, and other Tales 1 v. — More Tramps Abroad 2 v. — The Man that corrupted Hadleyburg, etc. 2 v. — A Double-Barrelled Detective Story, etc. 1 v. — The \$ 30,000 Bequest, and Other Stories 1 v. — Christian Science 1 v.

"Two Cosmos, the," Author of.
The Two Cosmos 1 v.

Vachell, Horace Annesley.
Brothers 2 v. — The Face of Clay 1 v. — Her Son 1 v. — The Hill 1 v.

"Venus and Cupid," Author of.
Venus and Cupid 1 v.

"Véra," Author of.
Véra 1 v. — The Hôtel du Petit St.

Jean 1 v. — Blue Roses 2 v. — Within Sound of the Sea 2 v. — The Maritime Alps and their Seaboard 2 v. — Ninette 1 v.

Victoria R. I.

Leaves from the Journal of our Life in the Highlands from 1848 to 1861 1 v. — More Leaves, etc. from 1862 to 1882 1 v.

“Virginia,” Author of.

Virginia 1 v.

Vizetelly, Ernest Alfred.

With Zola in England 1 v.

Walford, L. B.

Mr. Smith 2 v. — Pauline 2 v. — Cousins 2 v. — Troublesome Daughters 2 v. — Leddy Marget 1 v.

Wallace, D. Mackenzie.

Russia 3 v.

Wallace, Lew. (Am.), † 1905.

Ben-Hur 2 v.

Warburton, Eliot, † 1852.

The Crescent and the Cross 2 v. — Darien 2 v.

Ward, Mrs. Humphry.

Robert Elsmere 3 v. — David Grieve 3 v. — Miss Bretherton 1 v. — Marcella 3 v. — Bessie Costrell 1 v. — Sir George Tressady 2 v. — Helbeck of Bannisdale 2 v. — Eleanor 2 v. — Lady Rose's Daughter 2 v. — The Marriage of William Ashe 2 v. — Fenwick's Career 2 v.

Warner, Susan *vide*: Wetherell.

Warren, Samuel, † 1877.

Diary of a late Physician 2 v. — Ten Thousand a-Year 3 v. — Now and Then 1 v. — The Lily and the Bee 1 v.

“Waterdale Neighbours, the,”

Author of: *v.* Justin McCarthy.

Watts-Dunton, Theodore.

Aylwin 2 v.

Wells, H. G.

The Stolen Bacillus, etc. 1 v. — The War of the Worlds 1 v. — The Invisible Man 1 v. — The Time Machine, and The Island of Doctor Moreau 1 v. — When the Sleeper Wakes 1 v. — Tales of Space and Time 1 v. — The Plattner Story, and Others 1 v. — Love and Mr. Lewisham 1 v. — The Wheels of Chance 1 v. — Anticipations 1 v. — The First Men in the Moon 1 v. — The Sea Lady 1 v. — Mankind in the Making 2 v. — Twelve Stories and a Dream 1 v. — The Food of the Gods 1 v. — A Modern Utopia 1 v. — Kipps 2 v. — In the Days of the Comet 1 v. — The Future in America 1 v. — New Worlds for Old 1 v.

Westbury, Hugh.

Acte 2 v.

Wetherell, Elizabeth (Susan

Warner) (Am.), † 1885.

The wide, wide World 1 v. — Queechy 2 v. — The Hills of the Shatemuc 2 v. — Say and Seal 2 v. — The Old Helmet 2 v.

Weyman, Stanley J.

The House of the Wolf 1 v. — The Story of Francis Cludde 2 v. — A Gentleman of France 2 v. — The Man in Black 1 v. — Under the Red Robe 1 v. — My Lady Rotha 2 v. — From the Memoirs of a Minister of France 1 v. — The Red Cockade 2 v. — Shrewsbury 2 v. — The Castle Inn 2 v. — Sophia 2 v. — Count Hannibal 2 v. — In Kings' Byways 1 v. — The Long Night 2 v. — The Abbess of Vlaye 2 v. — Starvecrow Farm 2 v. — Chippinge 2 v. — Laid up in Lavender 1 v.

Wharton, Edith (Am.).

The House of Mirth 2 v. — The Fruit of the Tree 2 v.

“Whim, a, and its Consequences,” Author of.

A Whim, and its Consequences 1 v.

Whitby, Beatrice.

The Awakening of Mary Fenwick 2 v. — In the Suntime of her Youth 2 v.

White, Percy.

Mr. Bailey-Martin 1 v. — The West End 2 v. — The New Christians 1 v. — Park Lane 2 v. — The Countess and The King's Diary 1 v. — The Triumph of Mrs. St. George 2 v. — A Millionaire's Daughter 1 v. — A Passionate Pilgrim 1 v. — The System 2 v. — The Patient Man 1 v. — Mr. John Strood 1 v. — The Eight Guests 2 v. — Mr. Strudge 1 v. — Love and the Poor Suitor 1 v.

White, Walter.

Holidays in Tyrol 1 v.

Whiteing, Richard.

The Island; or, An Adventure of a Person of Quality 1 v. — No. 5 John Street 1 v. — The Life of Paris 1 v. — The Yellow Van 1 v. — Ring in the New 1 v. — All Moonshine 1 v.

Whitman, Sidney.

Imperial Germany 1 v. — The Realm of the Habsburgs 1 v. — Teuton Studies 1 v. — Reminiscences of the King of Roumania, edited by Sidney Whitman 1 v. — Conversations with Prince Bismarck, edited by Sidney Whitman 1 v. — Life of the Emperor Frederick 2 v.

- "Who Breaks—Pays," Author of: *vide* Mrs. Jenkin.
- Whyte Melville, George J.: *vide* Melville.
- Wiggin, Kate Douglas (Am.). Timothy's Quest 1 v. — A Cathedral Courtship, and Penelope's English Experiences 1 v. — Penelope's Irish Experiences 1 v. — Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm 1 v. — The Affair at the Inn 1 v. (By K. D. Wiggin, M. & J. Findlater, and Allan McAulay.) — Rose o' the River 1 v. — New Chronicles of Rebecca 1 v.
- Wilde, Oscar. The Picture of Dorian Gray 1 v. — De Profundis and The Ballad of Reading Gaol 1 v.
- Wilkins, Mary E. (Am.). Pembroke 1 v. — Madelon 1 v. — Jerome 2 v. — Silence, and other Stories 1 v. — The Love of Parson Lord, etc. 1 v.
- Williamson, C. N. & A. M. The Lightning Conductor 1 v.
- Wills, C. J., *vide* F. C. Philips.
- Winter, Mrs. J. S. Regimental Legends 1 v.
- Wood, Charles: *vide* Author of "Buried Alone."
- Wood, H. F. The Passenger from Scotland Yard 1 v.
- Wood, Mrs. Henry (Johnny Ludlow), † 1887. East Lynne 3 v. — The Channings 2 v. — Mrs. Halliburton's Troubles 2 v. — Verner's Pride 3 v. — The Shadow of Ashlydyat 3 v. — Trevlyn Hold 2 v. — Lord Oakburn's Daughters 2 v. — Oswald Cray 2 v. — Mildred Arkell 2 v. — St. Martin's Eve 2 v. — Elster's Folly 2 v. — Lady Adelaide's Oath 2 v. — Orville College 1 v. — A Life's Secret 1 v. — The Red Court Farm 2 v. — Anne Hereford 2 v. — Roland Yorke 2 v. — George Canterbury's Will 2 v. — Bessy Rane 2 v. — Dene Hollow 2 v. — The Foggy Night at Offord; Martyn Ware's Temptation; The Night-Walk over the Mill Stream 1 v. — Within the Maze 2 v. — The Master of Greylands 2 v. — Johnny Ludlow 2 v. — Told in the Twilight 2 v. — Adam Grainger 1 v. — Edina 2 v. — Pomeroy Abbey 2 v. — Court Netherleigh 2 v. — (The following by Johnny Ludlow): Lost in the Post, and Other Tales 1 v. — A Tale of Sin, and Other Tales 1 v. — Aune, and Other Tales 1 v. —
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