

A

ROMANCE OF CAUCASIAN CAPTIVITY:

OR, THE

FEDERATI OF ITALY.

BY

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THE FEDERATI OF ITALY.

CHAPTER I.

A NATURAL CONSEQUENCE. — DREAMS AND FORESHADOWINGS. — IN SOCIETY. — A LOVER. — A MARRIAGE.

RATHLEEN MCGREGOR was in her chamber alone; and, though not sufficiently composed to contemplate any thing with the prospect of a rational solution, she attempted to review the strange, the startling, the tragic events of the day: and, oh! how willingly she would have flung to the flames all her rich robes, and the costly gems that girded her beautiful throat and dimpled arms and gleamed in her tiara, could she have had near her a kind and loving mother into whose ear and heart she might pour the burden of her deeply-sorrowing soul! She would have given even her fair right hand, her wilderness of tresses, or one of her dainty feet, could she have gone back to repose on the gentle counsel and discreet teachings of a mother; but Fate had ordered it otherwise.

Now, bowed down, with no one to lift her up, she was treading closely on the confines of that deep despair which ends in madness. The air seemed stifling; and she thought some deadly specter was sucking away her breath. She rushed to the window; opened it; and was about to scream for help: but the cool evening breeze fanned her burning temples; the calm stars soothed her with their placid smiles; and the whole heavens in the fullness of their harmony hushed the wild throbbings of her brain.

Amid the perfume of flowers which came up from the garden below, Kathleen, weary with wrestling with trouble, sank down to sleep. To sleep did I say?—to wrestle on, rather, with the weird phantoms that gathered their dusky drapery about her dreams; to tear from her eyes the web they, spider-like, were weaving over them; to evade the net in which they would entangle her trembling step; and to find a pathway up the hill of peace out of the dark, demon-girt, and dreadful gorge down which in sullen silence they were still urging her forward. When morning dawned, she was exhausted, fainting. She then threw herself upon her bed; and, when she again fell asleep, it was to enrobe herself in yet more dismal chimeras.

Now she embarks on an inviting stream, lighted with a ruddy glow, which she thinks is the morning's: she becomes bewildered on finding that the last rays of the setting sun have thus deceived her, and that night is rapidly approaching. Now she tries to reach the banks: but, as she nears them, her little skiff is speedily repelled by the whirling eddies;

and though she sees a figure walking there with hand extended to help her, and she eagerly strives, again and again, to grasp it, she ever, ever fails, and so floats on unsuccored. While darkness deepens, and the form upon the shore grows fainter, and her white arms gleam upon the night, as she still stretches them out for help, she hears the roar of the distant cataract. With a wild scream that is taken up by the hills, and re-echoed from cliff to cliff, she throws herself into the hurrying wave, and sinks slowly, slowly, slowly down among the long grass, the shells, and the slimy rocks.

Kathleen's screams brought to her chamber-door her doting father, whose loud knocks and loving voice both aroused and comforted her. That morning, on her account, breakfast was delayed to a very late hour; and when she came down stairs, though she attempted cheerfulness, and essayed to smother her sorrows, all could see in her face, in her red and swollen eyes, the evidences of much suffering.

Days and nights, weeks even, passed; but to Kathleen they brought no relief: on the contrary, she became taciturn, absent-minded; neglected her pet flowers, her piano; sang no more her favorite airs; and was altogether changed. Her father saw this with much anguish of mind, and began to think that she really loved Mr. Duband, though he was so unworthy of her; that it was a great pity some one of Nature's noblemen who could appreciate her had not assailed her heart; that now, being of the same age as her sainted mother when she was married, it was his duty to take her into society, and not keep her thus hived

up among those desolate hills. Mr. McGregor, therefore, at once proposed to his daughter a jaunt to Paris, or to one of the large cities nearer home. She accepted the offer with no little degree of interest; and in a few days they were ready and *en route*.

Wherever Mr. McGregor and his daughter presented themselves, they were the subject of universal attention; Mr. McGregor for his superior urbanity and intellectual qualifications, and Kathleen for that gorgeousness of beauty which had no peer. To the latter, this excitement was momentarily agreeable; and she seemed to grow more and more brilliant as throng after throng courted her presence: but she was too beautiful for promiscuous society. The gay Cræsus, the light-headed lord, the demi-fool, and the fop were ready to throw their worthless hearts at her feet. She stood, however, as it were, in a temple apart; and to that fane none but the truly good and great should have ever been admitted. As it was, knowing little of the world, and having no maternal mentor at her side, she was swayed and tossed like a tempest-bent reed in the whirlwind of adulation. I need not say how re-action followed, and how, when alone, she sank back among the *débris* and wreck and somber footmarks of other memories..

Kathleen's life had been nearly monotonous; and, till recently, she had enjoyed almost alone, and like the fragrant flowers of her garden, the inbreathing of God's bounties; growing, like her favorite native plants, in simple, unguarded loveliness and purity, and, like the lilies of the valley and birds of the air, tak-

ing no thought for the morrow; for her heavenly Father, she doubted not, would be a sufficient shield and protector. In all this we can see how little fitted she was to cope with the world's great faults and follies.

Fortunately, perhaps, for the young lady, Mr. McGregor's health (and another circumstance which Kathleen's pride imperatively demanded she should conceal from the world) restored them, after a few months' absence, to their own quiet mansion, where, with the exception of one rather protracted and somewhat mysterious sojourn in London, and an occasional visit to some distant relatives in Edinburgh, Kathleen passed a number of years in deep seclusion.

It was on one of these journeys just referred to that Kathleen McGregor encountered a gentleman, a foreigner, who particularly, and for a wonder, attracted her attention and admiration. In his appearance he was all she could have pictured to herself of the noble and manly; but that which most interested her was an expression in his face of profound, unconquerable melancholy. He descended from the stage-coach at the station whence she was departing (she choosing then to travel by stages and alone), quietly handed her in, and took a seat upon the outside. At the next station, there being a vacancy in the vehicle, he resumed his former place; but no smile, no word, moved a muscle of his classic lips. Reaching the metropolis, he got down at a hotel, gracefully saluting all as he did so; and, if Kathleen's beauty had made any impression on him, she was not aware of it. Still there was an impalpable something — an angel's

fingers, perchance — playing on the chords of her heart, which told her they would meet again.

As Kathleen conjectured, so it proved ; but it was at a grave, — a bad omen, she thought ; and she had had reason for believing in omens and dreams, and was to have still more, — the grave of a noble Italian patriot and exile, over whose remains the stranger had come to pronounce a eulogy. Yes, one of Italy's most loved and loving children had been invited to come and speak those touching words for freedom and his beloved country, which he who had just departed this life, and about whose last resting-place a few great souls were gathered, had often proclaimed in and for the benefit of his own intralred land, and for which he had been honored with expatriation.

Count Fiesco Felisquetto was on this occasion even more than eloquent. Kathleen, understanding Italian, found the tears flowing unbidden from her beautiful eyes as she looked up into the speaker's face and drank in his glowing language.

Had fate, or blind and baffling chance, brought her to this spot at this time ? The "Acropolis," the city and citadel of the dead, was indeed her favorite resort ; for it now suited her mood of mind, her more than melancholy habitude : and, being there, the handsome speaker, the living theme, the dead hero, the exalted patriotism of the Italians, all served to enchain her.

Count Fiesco saw her now for the second time, and loved her ; for he felt that she loved the fairest portion of God's great earth, — Italia : and, as he descended from the steps on which he had been standing to

He spoke, he, in deep, rich, yet tremulous tones, thanked her for her sympathy.

On his return to the hotel, the count soon ascertained who the fair stranger was, and on the same day sought and obtained an interview. She was the first lady he had conversed with, either in England or Scotland, who spoke Italian with any degree of fluency or elegance; and while this, and her admiration of Italy, which she had imbibed with Tasso as read to her by her father, coupled with more of that feminine grace and a seeming divinity such as was scarcely ever before vouchsafed to any earthly being, drew him irresistibly toward her, and made him assume almost at once and without question that she was to be his wife, he appeared to regard her, generally, as rather an ideal than a real image; fancying her sometimes, perhaps, the personification of the poetry of his own sunny Liguria; always so mixing her up in his reflections, his recollections, his studies, and waking and sleeping reveries, with *la libert  d'Italia*, that he had no consciousness of the moment when he passed from the thought of one to the other. Was it he who stood upon the shore, beckoning to the floating fay in the skiff, and stretching out his hand to grasp and guide and save it? Had he seen the vision verified, or rather its ending, he would have said to himself, "There slumber my life and the soul of Italy." There was much in the vision yet to be fulfilled.

In Fiesco, Kathleen recognized the stately figure of her dream, and ere long settled it with herself, that, however unworthy she might be of him, — to mingle her simple thoughts with his lofty aspirations, to

claim partnership with so pure and exalted a character, — he was, of necessity, to be more or less linked with her future destiny. Still there was a mighty reason why she should decline, a delicacy of soul that compelled her to refuse, the first offer of his hand.

Count Fiesco went back to London; and so frank, guileless, outspoken, was his nature, that all could see that some new and brilliant flower had been added to the wreath he was ever poetically weaving for his native land. He had not given up Kathleen. One day, dining with a distinguished person from Scotland, the conversation naturally turned in that direction; and the host was not long in discovering his predilection for one of Scotia's daughters. The gentleman had heard something concerning the beautiful daughter of Mr. McGregor, — of her brilliant *entrée* into society, and subsequent seclusion; of her betrothal, and non-fulfillment of the nuptials. What could be made of it?

Fiesco caught at the idea, that, as Miss McGregor (we will still call her Miss) had been betrothed, she felt she had, conventionally at least, no heart to bestow upon another; and he revered her the more, if possible, for that delicacy of sentiment which had induced her to decline his offer. He therefore resolved to return at once to Scotland, and so press his suit that no refusal could be made. The very next day, — impulsive and enthusiastic as he was in all his undertakings, — he started for the Highlands.

We will not do Kathleen the injustice to say that she was either surprised or sorry to see the count again, or that she disguised her real feelings: still,

when he took her hand, an involuntary shudder passed over her, and she would have withdrawn herself, and in solitude poured out the tears that were suffusing both her eyes and her heart. But he did not release his hold, and, while the gentle struggle continued, told her that he knew all, and that nothing in the world should induce him to resign her. If, with redoubled beating of heart, she had listened to his words at the "Acropolis," what now must have been her emotions when his voice was attuned to the melody of love! She listened, yet asked him in charity to desist, as she was not worthy of such homage, — still hoping he would continue. She listened with unbounded admiration, yet would assent to nothing till he had promised to forgive *each one of and all the faults and follies of her past life, however reprehensible they might be.*

Not long after this interview, Fiesco hired a retired cottage not many miles from London, and soon took with him there, after a strictly private wedding, his beloved Kathleen. Mr. McGregor had urged them to reside with him at the old homestead; but as he had now nearly regained his health, and as his daughter wished to forget, if possible, some old associations, they begged him to allow them to have their own humble habitation. Indeed, the young wife longed for entire seclusion with her husband: she, in fact, did not dare to trust herself in society; for she was confident there would be, at least, almost inevitably aroused in Fiesco's breast the demon jealousy. She would be happy in the retirement she sought. In the gay world, — she had fluttered in it for a brief

period, — she knew not what might betide her: she felt her entire unfitness for it.

For months, Fiesco never left his home an hour; seeming also not only to wish to forget the past, or that there was any thing else to live for save his beautiful wife, but to imagine, that, if he once passed without the gates of his paradise, flaming swords might be set there to prevent his return. By and by, however, he was recalled to Italy in the interest of the Federati; and Kathleen accompanied him.

CHAPTER II.

**KATHLEEN AGAIN. — A NEIGHBOR. — DANGEROUS PLAYMATES.
— NEAR MARRIAGE. — CHANGE OF SCENE. — SOBROW.**

BUT why was this marriage, just consummated, so very private? Why was it that Kathleen had lived for so many years utterly out of the world, as it were? Was it because she was surrounded by every luxury that wealth could afford, and had every known wish gratified? There were other and potent reasons; but, in honor, we must not reveal them all. When she first comes before us to enter on that career which opens to her the page of her future destiny, she is an elegant, well-developed, highly-accomplished young lady. Her misfortunes, if we may call them so, might all be traced to the fact, that, in early life, death had cruelly bereft her of her mother; and hence she had grown up with, perhaps, less of that nice discernment and those delicate discriminations in social ethics — with less prudery, the knowing ones would say — than she would have imperceptibly acquired from constant maternal solicitude and example. As it was, she had been educated

principally by her father, who, averse himself to society, had also been her chief companion. But, while he instilled into her mind the beauty and value of knowledge, he unwittingly implanted there an unconquerable pride, which, wholly unbeknown to its delicate recipient, might, in her own circle of life, have slept as a latent folly, but which, in an unfavorable moment, turned upon her, and stung her like a scorpion.

As a linguist, Mr. McGregor had taught his daughter many languages. As a scientific man, a naturalist, he had imbued her with a love of living flowers and dead rocks, of motionless hills and moving planets, of tiny insects and towering trees; and in these, with a sincere and genuine worship of their Creator, "she lived and moved, and had her being."

Occasionally, distant relatives came and passed some little time at the McGregor mansion; but as they invariably talked of persons and things — of "lords and the races, of balls and watering-places" — of which Kathleen knew nothing, and cared, if possible, less, their presence afforded her little pleasure, and their departure opened no new founts of sorrow.

Of neighbors there was one — a small, dark-browed bachelor, some years since from India, by the name of Duband — who often came over to have a talk with Mr. McGregor, and, if very pleasant, a saunter with the daughter to some of the many beautiful spots in the vicinity, whence the scenery was altogether enchanting. During these strolls, Mr. Duband learned the tastes of his companion, and, either from an immediately-acquired or a native appreciation of them, joined

his own to her enthusiasm, and soon won more or less of her admiration and respectful attention. But was that all? Had she examined her heart, she would have found that neither his eloquent words, nor his tender and glowing thoughts, had ever descended into that sanctuary; that they rested only as bright pictures upon her brain; that not an extra flutter or palpitation of any kind could she have recalled, but simply some highly-tinted imageries threading her memory.

Mr. McGregor liked Mr. Duband as a neighbor, though of him he knew very little; being possessed of that rare virtue of minding almost exclusively his own affairs. He certainly had never thought of him as a son-in-law: still, if Mr. Duband had proposed it, he could not have found any valid grounds of objection, except in a sort of vague conviction that he was not, could not possibly be, the man his daughter would select for a husband, — a life-companion whom she could honor and cheerfully obey, but, more than all, could *love*.

The family was indeed a happy, united one; and Mr. McGregor had not contemplated breaking it up. He and his daughter would have made a paradise anywhere. Then there was an aged aunt, who from time immemorial, as Miss McGregor might have said, superintended the affairs of the household. An old butler too, who would have lost his wits at any material change in existing things, was an abiding genius in his department. A young man, Joseph, younger brother of a stipendiary curate of the parish, had also, till recently, been a sort of general servant, though

somewhat privileged on account of said relationship. One or two more inferior and less permanent domestics completed, with the exception of a big dog, the list of members of the old homestead.

The big dog and Joseph were Kathleen McGregor's earliest playmates. She called one as she would the other, sent them equally on her important errands, and made them romp or lie down at her feet together, as caprice or fancy dictated. Joseph was tractable like the dog; but, as he was ambitious and studious, he ere long, in some respects, gained the advantage, though Kathleen did not seem to discover it.

Joseph, as has been said, was studious. Night and day, when not under Kathleen's orders, he was poring over books furnished him by his brother the curate, and others from Mr. McGregor's library, to which he had access with only slight restrictions.

Kathleen, as she grew up and became versed in botany, often had need of Joseph's services in the garden and conservatory: the boy, hence, without effort, was acquiring a knowledge of flowers, their various names and habits, and something of their country if exotics. This soon led him into further researches in the botanical works with which the library was well supplied. After a few years, Kathleen, as it were unconsciously, was asking him for information regarding rare plants when she found her own memory at fault, or about those of which she, in fact, had no knowledge at all.

Joseph was finally obtaining the reputation of being an able botanist; and Mr. McGregor himself was not above consulting him. Hardly had he passed the

age of twenty, however, ere he began to feel an unbounded superiority, and to cherish views and designs for the future, which, had they been known to his old master and young mistress, would have shocked them beyond measure.

“Lofty schemes and practicable,” said Joseph to himself one day, when considerably inflated; “but can they be carried out, and I remain where and what I am? I opine not. People are often so fastidious about name, occupation, and the like, that they will favor a villainous military man, a lawyer, a professor, or a sleek-faced minister (even if a hypocrite), and spurn an honest tradesman or mechanic. This I know too well, — must not forget it, — all important in the line of progress that I have marked out for my ambitious self.”

Joseph resolved to seek his fortune elsewhere, though he had many fears, that, in the mean time, the most dearly cherished of his plans might be frustrated by Mr. Holoway Duband, whom he intensely hated, — hated because, in the first place, Mr. Duband had always treated him as a menial; secondly, because he was a rival; thirdly, because he knew, or had the very strongest reasons for believing, that this aspirant for the hand of Miss McGregor was a villain of the deepest dye, — a fact which he expected ere long to be able to prove. But would this proof come in time? Here lay the danger. In delay was the grave of all his hopes.

The curate, Joseph's brother, having once been spurned, and his offerings at the shrine of this fair but haughty damsel treated with contempt, he insti-

tuted some inquiries concerning Mr. Duband as soon as he heard of his attentions at the McGregor mansion. Knowing, from words dropped here and there, that this man had resided in a certain part of India, he wrote to a British officer of that district; and having, by good luck, hit upon the right party, he immediately received the following information:—

“A certain M. de Band, a very short, thick-set, English-looking fellow, with a French name (probably assumed), was for a number of years a merchant or banker in the city of Calcutta, where he had managed, through return-shipments intrusted to him as agent for a rich native India house, to accumulate in his hands a large fortune. He then suddenly disappeared, leaving an old man almost impoverished, and his two sons, who, though they swore vengeance, were prevented, partly by their religion, but more by the decrepitude of their father, from leaving the country to pursue the thieving foreigner.”

M. de Band returned home, and concealed himself for several years in a small village in France; then passed over into Scotland, and purchased the large estate adjoining Mr. McGregor's: and, had it not been for the secret desire which the curate had to humble the haughty Kathleen, Mr. Duband, as he was now called, might have lived and died there with his ill-gotten wealth, and nobody would have been the wiser. The curate's pique, however, led to a revelation that aroused anew the ire of the Hindoo brothers, who, having been urged by their dying father—the poor man sent to his grave by the loss of his hard-earned fortune—to hunt, pursue, and per-

secute to the end, his murderer, sailed at once for England, bidding adieu to religion and friends, and becoming, as it were, outcasts among their own people to fulfill the last wish of their most revered, almost worshiped sire. As soon as they reached London, they wrote, through an agent, to Scotland; and, as they did not doubt that Mr. Duband was the person sought, informed the curate that they would immediately come on to identify the villain, and take such measures as would make him restore to them their fortune, or spend the rest of his days in a criminal's cell.

Joseph, as we have seen, had made up his mind to change his place and career; and as the curate approved of this, having large faith in his brother's talents, he was soon enabled to obtain for him in an institution of no great reputation in a neighboring town a situation as teacher of botany, with the title of professor.

When Joseph announced his good fortune to his master and mistress, they were both pleased. Mr. McGregor congratulated him, and told him he must not fail to report himself occasionally at the mansion. Miss Kathleen, on his departure, which took place immediately after he had expressed his determination to go, gave him her hand warmly, and assured him she should ever take an interest in his welfare.

What interpretation Joseph put upon the words of the young lady need not be told: he certainly was not depressed by them; and his native vanity was in its usual fine feather. He left the McGregors decidedly elated, and flattered himself that his plans were progressing in the most promising manner.

Months rolled quietly away. Joseph occasionally made his appearance at the McGregors', where he was received as professor; all seeming determined to forget that he had been a servant in the family. A few days subsequent to one of these visits, the postman handed him a delicate, sweetly-perfumed note, with the address in the handwriting of Miss McGregor. This thrilled him with a nervous joy wholly inexpressible. Trembling, he opened the little missive; but when he read, that, on the following afternoon, the adored one was to wed Mr. Duband, to whom, for a considerable while, she had been betrothed, his grief, rage, and mortification knew no bounds. He scanned each word to see if he could discern any apparent tremulousness in the penning; but every line was drawn with a provoking, tantalizing smoothness, which indicated the utmost calmness and the use of a seemingly pulseless instrument.

Now, of what avail his sorrow or his anger? The Hindoo brothers had not arrived, though momentarily expected; and, if not present to actually confront his rival, where was the hope that his poor word, his doubts, his suspicions, would now receive a moment's consideration? If he should even cause by his accusations any delay in the wedding, and those accusations prove false or unfounded, to what depth of degradation would he not be hurled? Miss McGregor, according to her own confession, had for a long time been pledged to Mr. Duband; and she doubtless considered herself at that moment all his, his very wife, and would no more brook interference than would Duband himself.

When Mr. McGregor at first contemplated the affair of this marriage, — Mr. Duband's offer of his hand, heart, and fortune to Kathleen, — he did not approve of it; but the gentleman from time to time pressed the subject upon him, till he finally, but reluctantly, gave his consent. Miss McGregor had no heart in it, but assented to become Mrs. Duband because her father had agreed thus to dispose of her. She must marry some one, she supposed; and, as she had never loved, she knew no choice: still, both she and her father, if they had interrogated their own breasts, would have found a yearning therein that something might yet transpire to avert the anticipated union.

The fatal afternoon finally arrived, and with it Mr. Duband, the curate, and his brother Joseph, now almost distracted by approaching events. Kathleen, deadly pale, languid, painfully silent, awaited the dread hour of sacrifice; and, if she had been led to the altar by her big Newfoundland dog, she would hardly have recognized any impropriety in the proceedings. Her usual haughtiness had utterly vanished, and she seemed to be bowing to a crushing fate; crouching even, as it were, for shelter; bending like a tender plant before a merciless blast, and fearing to lift her head, or look out upon the storm, lest its portentous aspect, its cruel fierceness, might smite her to the earth.

As soon as Mr. Duband entered, he took his betrothed by the hand, and proceeded unceremoniously to the private chapel; fearing, it would seem, that delay might be dangerous. The curate, the Professor

Joseph, the father, the aunt, the butler, and the rest of the household, followed with evident astonishment and dissatisfaction. Arriving at the altar, the curate retarded the proceedings as far as he possibly could consistently; then, urged by a word, and the pleading looks and pallid countenance of his brother, he drew a letter from his pocket, saying, "Before we enter upon this solemn ceremony, in which the contracting parties are to take the most sacred oath possible before God and man, — an oath to cherish and to love each other, — I beg permission to read a letter received two days since from London; and, though it may not apply to the gentleman present, it is, nevertheless, obligatory upon me, as an upholder of the just, the right, the good, to lay it before you for consideration: —

"REVEREND AND DEAR SIR, — Investigations pursued now unremittingly for nearly two years in the interest of the Rahmohan brothers have convinced us all that the Mr. Duband referred to in your note is no other than the M. de Band, formerly of Calcutta, the robber and murderer" —

Here the letter was dashed upon the floor by Mr. Duband, who, furious, and foaming with rage, would have killed the curate on the spot: but at that very instant a long white scarf was thrown over and rapidly twisted around the head and face of the villain; and he was dragged, blinded, smothered, speechless, and almost unresisting, from the chapel and the house, followed by all present but three. The stealthy step of the Hindoo brothers had brought them to the apartment, unobserved except by the porter; and their

quick and peculiar action had secured their prey, and removed it almost as noiselessly.

Kathleen knelt at the altar. She knew, or perchance she dreamed, that something dreadful was transpiring; but perchance she dreamed. Joseph then sought the listless, the long-coveted hand, and the curate proceeded; and, ere the bewildered company had returned (never for a moment suspecting the ruse to which Joseph and the curate had resorted), the haughty Miss McGregor was the wife of her former servant, — the aspiring, loving, but self-deluded Joseph.

When Kathleen was brought back to the parlor, she knew not, and indeed she seemed not to care, whether she had wedded Joseph or a Pharaoh, Mr. Duband or the dog: she felt that some ignominious deed had been done; that a deep and sullen grave had been opened for her young hopes, and that an iron mask had been fastened over her tenderest affections. Mr. McGregor now saw her seated on the sofa with Joseph; and his expression was one of astonishment, not being aware of their new relationship. Still all felt a sense of relief when they remembered what an escape the young lady had had; and they were more or less grateful to the curate for the timely act by which he had saved the family from a dreadful misfortune. The curate, on his part, contented now with himself, and with the able, striking, and judicious manner in which he had brought about the *dénoûment*, and inwardly chuckling at his triumph over the once proud beauty, sat himself down to converse with the father and the aunt about the goodness of God in enabling the

young lady to flee the talons, the cruel embrace, of a demon incarnate, whose history he then unfolded. In all, however, that he related, he kept on the largest, the most exaggerated side of the truth, in order to lessen the enormity of his own nefarious trick, and shield himself from the storm which he thought must sooner or later burst upon him.

After a while, Joseph proposed to his fair partner, resplendent in her bridal attire, a stroll in the garden. The suggestion was favorably received; for Kathleen felt that the cool air, the fragrance of flowers, the sight of things so dear and tranquilizing, would serve to soothe and deaden, perhaps, those painful, ay, almost distracting perturbations, of which she was suffering momentary paroxysms.

Among flowers, the professor was a pleasing companion; and on the way, as they walked, he culled for his beautiful bride such buds and blossoms as would in their silent language express his gratitude, his joy, his hopes: but their eloquence was unheeded; and in dumb show the fragrant gems trembled in her all-too-feeble grasp. Thus the two strolled on far away into a shady and secluded glen, and sat down by a murmuring stream that sent its silvery notes up among the sighing trees filled here and there with the sweet melody of the robins' evening song. It was the very sanctuary and haunt of Nature's solemn harmony and of Lethean loveliness; and every thing seemed bathed in an Elysian atmosphere. Here, as the passionate eloquence of the enthusiastic botanist was in harmony with the thoughts and sentiments now re-awakened in Kathleen's soul, and as her anguish of

mind had made dormant her lifelong aspirations and resolves, she, for a moment, felt no upbraidings, no repugnance, when Joseph threw his arms around her, and breathed upon her lips the delirium of his love. Passively, unconsciously as it were (for she still seemed to be bowed down, burdened, crushed almost, by her sorrows), she allowed him to press her wildly to his breast, and linger over that world of happiness he had so long coveted. Was not Kathleen indeed Joseph's wife? — all his?

This phase of Kathleen's existence, however, in which she had been floating as in a dream, was suddenly changed. A shudder of chilling disgust, of seeming sacred horror, ran through all her frame like a flame of fire. Joseph, she now distinctly remembered, was only a *servant*: so, flinging him from her, she started to her feet, and with a fervor born of agony and despair, which a full sense of her present humble position awakened, she hurled upon him those bitter, bitter denunciations which none but the basest of creatures could endure and live.

“Am I then yours?” she said scornfully, — “your wife? Do you think you have thus bound me? The first was an attempted marriage through villainy, — thus much I recall of it, — but God relieved me of Duband: *your* victory was achieved by fraud. You and your revengeful brother having in my lethargic passiveness, during those dreadful moments of which I am only now fully conscious, triumphed over me, you made me your wife, — your wife to hate, to spurn, to detest you; ay, even every hair of your head! *You, you, I say!*” — and she grew frantic with

the idea that from the tree of knowledge she had plucked the bitterest fruit the serpent of deceit could have placed in her untutored and unguarded way, her paradise of innocence, of guilelessness, and heavenly trust, — “you, scorpion, fiend, wretch! having availed yourself of my weakness when shame and indignation smothered every lofty womanly sentiment in which I had taken pride, and made my brain dizzy and oblivious, — you blindfolded the eyes of my incautious soul with a hasty mummery of marriage, and led me thus into this worse than death.” Turning then aside, and dashing away her blinding tears, she said, “Oh, how I loathe myself! How vile, oh, how vile, seem these selfish, these low-born creatures! But he shall not triumph, at least, further. I will not be, and I will not be *called*, his wife, if all the horrors of the rack and the fires of the Inquisition be brought to compel me to it. Creep ye,” she said, again addressing Joseph, “creep into a hole no bigger than a toad’s! There should be your home, there your abiding-place; and your fair partner, instead of me, — oh, disgust! — should be some courteous beetle, groveling like yourself, bringing you such dainty food as my good gardener turns up with his spade, and such as natures just like yours must ever crave. I go; but do not follow me, or I will turn and crush you with my heel!”

Kathleen could say no more, and would have fallen to the earth, had she not grasped a friendly limb, that, with a hundred others, stretched out its leafy arm toward her. Joseph, however, did not observe her faltering step, or he would have sprung to her relief:

his face was buried in his hands ; and he was crouching, silent, dumb, and only wishing himself dead.

“ Am I, then, so weak ? ” said Kathleen to herself, as, with a desperate struggle, she rallied all her physical and mental forces, and started to retrace her way. Hardly had she advanced a rod ere she thought she heard footsteps behind her : then she fled precipitately, as if some demon were pursuing, nor halted till within her house and her chamber, where she locked herself in.

If Joseph's ambition had lifted him to the top of a high ladder, his fall was commensurate to his elevation. If he had, for a brief period, felt that his former humble position was wholly lost in the splendors of his present one, his mistake was to him the more bitter and fatal. If for a moment he had triumphed, if for a moment he knew and felt that Kathleen was his wife, his awakening to a sense of the contempt, the disgust, the very loathing, she now had for him, fell like an avalanche upon his reeling brain, and he lay groveling on the ground like a crushed viper.

Through the whole long night, his despairing groans, and imprecations on himself, cumbered the air ; and, when morning came, he was more mad than sane, little knowing or caring where he was, or what was to become of him. When the sun rose and began to illumine the slopes of the glen, one ray of light seemed streaming into the valley of his sorrow. Could he not fly far hence, and forget the object of his love and ambition ? Could he not find in religion that solace nothing else on earth could give ?

These thoughts, ere long, began to take a tangible shape, — a form that had a rational beauty and consistency; and, tearing a leaf from his pocket-herbarium, he wrote a few words to “Miss McGregor,” stating that he should immediately leave the country; and bade her adieu for ever. This he carried as near the mansion as he dared approach, and left it in one of the favorite walks of its mistress. He put no name to the missive; so that, should it be found by Mr. McGregor, or any other person for whom it was not intended, it would be attributed to Mr. Duband: it would, at any rate, reach Kathleen. Asking God, then, to bless and protect her, he turned away to gain his home, and make immediate preparations for a long journey; saying to himself as he went, and prophetically as we have seen, “Kathleen, the angel, will at least be free; and when the dust of time has covered up my name, and I am dead, — dead to *her*, at least, I must, I shall, I will be, — she can wed some noble being worthy of her beautiful self; one she will passionately love as she is capable of loving; one who, with station, and wealth of learning, like her own, will know how to make her vastly happy.” This Kathleen could not hear; but this she *felt*, when, after weary, suffering, saddening years had dragged their leaden hours away, she met and wedded the gentlemanly Fiesco.‡

CHAPTER III.

OTHER IMPORTANT EVENTS. — THE ENGLISH DRIVEN FROM CORUNNA. — A HIGHWAYMAN TURNED PRIEST. — A CRUEL SACRIFICE.



WHILE in the cool North these rather “under-the-rose,” mixed, and somewhat mysterious events were being unrolled from the wheel of Fortune, — events or histories no more mysterious, startling, or *outré*, than thousands of families in every country would exhibit if unveiled, — there were others, not less perplexing nor melancholy, developing in the sunny South, which will have much to do with the darker features of our narrative.

In the year 1809, while war was being carried on in Spain, the English were driven out of Corunna. Immediately preceding their retreat, on a bold and beautiful headland overlooking the sea, they buried

“At dead of night, with lanterns dimly burning,”

their lamented chieftain, the gallant Sir John Moore.

On that eventful night, when the heavens seemed

draped in double darkness, and were momentarily made doubly dark by flashes of artillery, whose muttered thunder, mingled with that of the clouds, boomed through the sultry air from the summits of the engirding hills, and every cliff and gorge flung forth a mournful echo, a man who had cunningly assumed, and vilely, treacherously obtained, the office of a priest, sat alone in a dingy room, talking for a while to himself.

“ Yes, it must amount to millions ! ” said he, “ ay, many millions ! And for what has it been hoarded ? For whom has this vast treasure been accumulating ? In the vaults of the church, *our* church, so called (and he laughed sardonically), it lies in piles. Why has it been wrung from the people drop by drop, like their life-blood, and then left a useless, corroded mass, which, were it properly employed, would yield a revenue sufficient to feed all the beggars in the whole kingdom of Spain ? Those who have had it in keeping year after year, century after century, doubtless felt, as I have often, that they were vastly rich. Fools ! They laid their bones by it at last, as poor as the poorest in the land. Shall I stupidly follow their example ? Who, within the last two hundred years, has counted the gold, the jewels, the precious stones, that were torn from the accursed Jews, the murderers of our Lord, and buried beneath our holy shrine ? No one knows, no one can place his hand, even, upon the record of our wealth. Those who did know something of it have long since turned to dust. The dead do not reveal secrets. Should I longer hesitate ? But I must not act without the advice of Manuella, the faithful and good

Manuella. I will go and consult Manuella." The padre (we must even so call him) was, however, not a man who would follow the advice of others. He had already made up his mind what to do.

In another chamber, separated from that of the padre's by a long, gloomy corridor, such as is found only in the old, heavy, somber houses of Old Spain, sat a small, fragile-looking woman, holding a little girl in her lap, and striving to be grateful and happy. She was delicately robed; and in her rich glossy hair she had placed, as she was wont, a single flower of white jasmin. This trivial ornament had come to be invested in her eyes and thoughts with a peculiar sacredness; for she daily dedicated one of these little girlish souvenirs (it was his first gift) to a lover whom she never mentioned but in her prayers, and nevermore expected to see. I say, she was striving to be grateful and happy. And why not? Early left an orphan, her father and only brother perishing in one of those bloody revolutions which so often desolated the land, it would naturally be supposed she would only be too glad to find under the wing of the Church that security no other place could give.

Manuella sat in the darkest corner of the room, pressing now and then convulsively to her heart the little girl she was holding, and, amid all her efforts at contentment, trembling with an intensity of fear no words could express; for from moment to moment she heard the dread crashings of the bombs and balls that were being hurled into the devoted town.

The padre entered, and she rose respectfully from her chair; but he motioned her to be seated again.

Manuella, however, remained standing in accordance with the custom of the country when one is in the presence of a superior, till he ordered her to resume her sitting. But seeing that there was a strange gravity in his air, and an anxious sternness in his expression to which she was wholly unaccustomed, she for an instant disobeyed him. When the padre took a seat, she sank back into her own with a painful dread of some great calamity which she was as sure was about to fall upon her head as if she had seen it written with a finger of fire upon every wall of her chamber.

The heart reads too readily its doom. It feels the approach of its destiny, when, in the far-distant horizon, there rises a cloud no bigger than one's hand. It hears in the gentlest whispering of the winds the voice of the tempest that is to shatter it to atoms. In the very lull and hush that precede the earthquake and the whirlwind, it has its strange presentiments: it is almost certain that the scathing lightning, the dust, the terrors, and the tumult of desolation, are only for a moment withheld that they may gather more potency, more fearful force, then do their dreadful work utterly, utterly.

"I think, Manuella," said the *soi-disant* padre, "it is time for us to quit this horrid place. All my brethren and all the women and children left the town as soon as the firing commenced. They were prudent; for if, remaining here, they should escape the bombs on one side, they would doubtless fall into the hands of the French or English on the other: and Heaven knows there could be but little choice;

for these shoulder-strapped foreigners have proved themselves, in war, far more barbarous than any of the barbarians with whom they have fought. Exasperated by the loss of their leader, whom they are now bearing to his last resting-place, the English will spare neither person nor property. Though I might be safe, you would not ; and certainly, if they dream that there is a single dollar within the four walls of our church, our San Miguel, there is to them no sacredness about it that will serve to save it."

"But can we not trust our treasures and ourselves in the keeping of the blessed Virgin?" said Manuella. "I have faith in her. I have faith that she can avert from us every ill: indeed, as soon as I felt insecure, I went to her and prayed. I prayed, too, not only for myself, but" — Here her voice was choked; the tears came to her eyes: she bowed her head, and for a moment was in deep embarrassment.

"Perhaps it was for me," said the padre, as if he would assist her in her confession; forgetting one whom she doubtless remembered.

"If you will forgive me, good father, I will say that I did also pray for you and little Manuellita; and for your sake, for your safety and hers, I placed on the finger of the silver statue of our blessed Mary the precious ring my mother gave me, my only dower" — then, hesitating, added, "that remained to me." And she again hung her head, and was silent.

Manuella, though she had been for a number of years under the roof of the padre, had never before made such a bold confession: still, so long as she considered him a representative of God on earth, it was

a part of her religion to try to love him. He, however, full of his great scheme, cared now little for that unselfish devotion of which she had given him the most unquestionable proofs.

“Do you really believe, then,” said the padre, “that your supplications, and your presents to the silver Virgin, will secure for us all the protection we need?”

“My good father,” responded Manuella, “can you doubt it? Oh! I should be wretched if I did not believe it. I should have no hope of heaven, no, not one ray of hope, if I doubted the influence and power of the blessed Mary, who, as a woman, knows how easy it is for us to sin.”

“Thus you have been taught, it is true,” said the padre; “thus I myself have taught you: but we shall know more by and by. In the mean time, as you have manifested your extreme devotion to me by remaining here in the midst of danger, let me see if it will endure a test, which, for a time, may look like sacrilege.”

“You know, kind padre,” replied Manuella with a tremulous voice, “that I am ready to lay down my life for yours. I am prepared to endure any hardship, any suffering, any privation, you may in your wisdom and goodness see fit to put upon me.”

Manuella was not, however, prepared for that revelation of character which her spiritual father (so esteemed) was soon to make; nor was she prepared to aid him in any sacrilegious plot which his brain might be contemplating. To die was easy; but to pillage a church, to steal an article from the silver Virgin, would stain her soul with such indelible blackness, that all which the wide, wide world could give would be no

adequate compensation. Nor had she, in her simplicity, ever thought that she could lose her protector, or her respect for him. She had been living in a vague dream; one half being of another world, the other of inexplicable realities. Between her devotion to the Virgin, to her priestly protector, and to the little girl, she had passed years even; but night and day and time and events were strangely commingled in her memory. Destiny seemed to have written her fate with a reed quivering in the wind.

In respect to the padre, the Church had amused and entertained him for a while; but when he knew all her resources, all the elements of her power, and had become master of her great game, he felt that she did not go far enough, or in the right direction, to suit *his* particular, individual ambition. He could not brook the idea of being a single nail in the structure of a great temple: he wished to be a pillar of the universe. The time had now come, when, by a bold stroke in keeping with his earlier life and profession, he could place himself on an eminence which would command the envy and admiration of all his fellow-men.

“I do not wish to put any burden upon you, Manuella,” said the padre. “Of hardships and sufferings you need have none, if you will aid me in my present plans. I will, in fact, leave you rich,—so rich, there is not a lady in all Spain who will not do you homage.”

“Leave me?” cried the poor woman through a gush of tears that fell like scalding rain-drops on the head of the little girl, whom she now folded closer

and closer to her bosom, — “leave me?” She heard no other words than these which she had repeated: the tale of wealth was lost upon the air.

“It is necessary, Manuella; but if you assist me, and take an oath to guard the secret left with you, no princess in the kingdom shall wear more costly jewels. Indeed, you *must* assist me, and you *must* take the oath.”

“Forgive me, father,” sobbed Manuella, “forgive this agony of heart. Bid me do what you will, I will obey you; and I now solemnly swear to keep any secret you may in your kindness intrust me with.”

“You are a good girl,” replied the padre. “Now to our work.”

At this moment, the artillery thundered more heavily than ever; the gloom of the chamber in which our speakers were was occasionally pierced by lurid flashes of light; the heavens became more deeply overcast, if possible, than before; and the muffled drum rolled out its melancholy tones from the heights where the soldiers were burying their dead.

“It is a fit hour,” muttered the padre to himself, as he rose to pace the room and find words with which to soothe the sufferings of the devoted, the doomed Manuella, and prove to her that what he was about to do was the will of Heaven. Time, however, flew; precious moments passed: but no excuse for his conduct could his tongue utter.

“Take the lamp, and follow me,” said he at last. The young woman, now more pale than ever, instantly rose, placed upon the floor the child she had been holding, took the light, and obeyed the stern command.

In Spain, as well as in Italy, the convents, the dwellings of the priests, and the prisons are sometimes joined to a church or other edifice by a bridge thrown across the street, on a level with the balconies of the second story. The padre's house was thus connected with the Church San Miguel: so he had but to cross the bridge, open a heavy wooden door, and descend a flight of steps, to stand behind the altar; but, to reach the treasures which lay beneath it, there was still another short descent, and another door.

The padre crossed the bridge, and descended the first long flight of stone steps, without much trepidation; but, when he reached the foot of that sacred plate where he had so often stood and invoked curses on the heads of the enemies of the Holy Mother Church, a cold chill came over him, his teeth chattered, his limbs trembled, and he was as pale as his trembling companion. With what impenetrable gloom, too, every corner and niche and archway was now filled! How the very columns appeared like black giants towering over the marble aisles! The cold draped figure of San Miguel in the transept appeared to wave its hand, as if to say, "Away!" The muffled drums had now ceased beating; but the torches of the soldiery flashed through the stained windows, and for an instant made every effigy thereon seem to glare like some red demon armed with avenging thunderbolts.

The padre was dumb and motionless like one petrified. Manuella thought that God had smitten him for some dreadful deed he was about to commit; and

she was on the point of flying. A shout, however, from without, brought him to his senses; and he exclaimed, "They are coming to rob our church! hasten!" The noise had, indeed, given him courage; and his assertion, that others were coming to do what he planned to do himself, strangely relieved his conscience of a portion of its insufferable burden. Like a madman, he sprang down the remaining steps. The ponderous keys at his belt clattered against the great bolts and bars of the vault, and the door flew open.

"Take this, Manuella; take this, Manuella; take this," the padre went on repeating, as he threw up to her sack after sack of gold and priceless jewels on the floor above. "Gather them now quickly," he continued. "Hasten, hurry with them to my library." With breathless anxiety he urged her forward.

Manuella, stupefied, obeyed instinctively, and hastened off with the load she had gathered. In a moment she had returned, and was again loaded as before. Again and again the journey was repeated; but the treasures seemed inexhaustible. Had the good creature felt for a moment that she was really aiding in robbing the Holy Church, it would not have been necessary for the padre to kill her: she would have died herself of fright. But the dreadful work went on at the mid hour of night, and she was, as it were, in a revery.

Suddenly a frightful crash was heard; and the whole building was shaken to its very depths. To the padre, it seemed as if the floor and foundations were giving way beneath some mighty weight.

“Was death, then, so near him in the moment of triumph?” he asked himself. In an instant he had escaped from the vault, and was about to fly from the place so full of horrors, when his eye fell upon the silver Virgin. Here was a new temptation. His cupidity overcame his fears. The image, he knew, was hollow, and nearly full of gems and of diamond trinkets of inestimable value, — offerings of the wealthy for centuries. With a bound he wrested it from the altar, and then, staggering under its weight, rushed up the remaining steps. Ere, however, he had reached their summit, Manuella was clinging to the skirts of his priestly robe. She had seen such things carried off as appeared to her worthless in the house of God; but when sacrilegious hands were laid upon the Holy Mother of Immanuel, the ever-blessed Mary, the Virgin whom she had loved and worshiped from infancy, her very reason would have forsaken her had she not striven to prevent the unpardonable profanation.

At that moment, out of the gloom of one of the aisles came a sudden exclamation, “Manuella!”

To the padre the voice seemed to have issued from the statue of San Miguel that had already waved him away. A death-like shudder ran over his frame; and he groaned out to be unhanded. Manuella would not, could not, slacken her grasp. Did the thieving villain know who it was? Perhaps not. Perhaps he thought that one of the lurid figures of the stained windows had come down to grapple with him for the prize of Mammon. Had it been Satan himself who now held him, he could not have been in greater trep-

idation. He no longer valued what he had so eagerly sought. His sole thought was escape. Desperate, maddened, he raised the silver image above his head, and was about to dash it down, when a cry of horror and the sound of hurrying feet — of a multitude of spies, he thought — reached his ears. Did he dream? Was it a torturing nightmare? Lights flashed again about the chancel and over the marble pavement. The silver image had fallen; and the padre saw it strike the poor young woman, whose mangled figure, with but one faint groan, rolled with the worshiped Virgin down the blood-stained steps.

As a thief indeed, perhaps a murderer, he fled over the bridge, bolting and double-bolting the door behind him, and regained his apartments. There, however, he could not stay: in an hour the *alguazil* might knock for admittance. Concealing under his robes all the wealth he could, he passed at once into the street by a back entrance, hurried to the nearest suburbs, and thence into one of those gloomy gorges which open up through the cliffs that encircle the town. Here he found a place in which to secrete his treasures; then he retraced his steps.

The padre approached his home with a caution equaled only by his fears. When he was quite certain no one lurked about the place, he entered, and secreting, as before, as much as it was possible for him to carry, returned to his rocky retreat. At daylight he had transported all his ill-gotten gains, and made his plans for the immediate future. These involved the necessity of his returning again to town, purchasing a couple of mules, and some garments with which he could disguise himself if necessary.

At the earliest possible moment, the fugitive had secured, though at a rather dear rate, two just such strong animals as were requisite, with huge panniers, for his merchandise, and was *en route* for some of those far-off mountain-passes of the Asturias or the Pyrenees, which, from time immemorial, have been nearly inaccessible to any but revolutionists and banditti.

But the padre's fear and caution and haste were all unnecessary. No one living cared for his possessions. In the morning, the great eastern door and tower-gate were found unfastened and ajar; and as a massive statue that stood by a window was now lying upon the floor, broken in pieces, it was supposed that a shell had reached there from the bombarding batteries, and produced the mischief. If the evidences of a robbery were brought to light, it was at once attributed to the English, who were known to have committed some depredations in that neighborhood on their return, that very night, from the burial of their late chieftain. We have reason to know, however, that the discomfited and retreating soldiers of Sir John Moore were, in this instance, unjustly suspected; that no missile from the enemy's guns had penetrated the church, but that the statue had been thrown down by a person who had gained admittance to the sanctuary by the window before which it stood; that the person who thus gained admittance had recognized Manuella as she crossed the bridge on that fatal night, holding the light so that it fell full upon her pallid features; that this same person came not with any evil intent, but with strange, conflicting feelings of

harrowing suspicion, tender interest, questionable sympathy, hatred, revenge ; that he who had thus felt and suffered passed not out by the way he came, but by the great eastern tower-gate ; that when morning dawned, though the roar of artillery had ceased, and all its deadly work been done, there was a deadly strife and tumult in this stranger's heart, a grief and a joy that nearly quenched within it the flame of life.

The visible world had again put on its brightest garments ; the deeds of the night were laid away in the dark caverns of the memory.

CHAPTER IV.

THE APOLLO OF THE ARENA. — A BULL-FIGHT. — AN APPARITION. — THE QUEEN. — JEALOUSY AND INJUSTICE.



WHO was the stranger whose apparition was so unexpected in the Church San Miguel? No other than Don Antonio Gusman, the Apollo of the arena, — the most agile, graceful, daring *matador* (or bull-killer) in the whole of Spain. He was the son of a nobleman, and highly educated, but had been drawn to the arena, partly, perhaps, by his vanity, but principally from sheer love of excitement.

Not a long time previous to his appearance at Corunna, there had been announced in the capital an extraordinary bull-fight, in which Don Antonio was honored with a command from the queen to appear. For some years, he had been as one lost to himself and the world. No offers of money, no tokens of friendship, no inducements, could be held out to him, sufficient to bring him to that field where he had aforetime won such wondrous rounds of applause.

He walked the streets as one seeking some lost treasure. He had no hours for sleep, and some said he never slept. He appeared at the coffee-houses, where, though rallied by his old companions, no smile, no jest, reminded them of what he *had* been, — not only a gallant bull-fighter and swordsman, but one of the jolliest and happiest of the gay society of Madrid. And, what was more, — what by millions would have been deemed the greatest good man could aspire to on earth, — he had the name of being one of the queen's favorites; ay, of being once seized, late one night, for having in his possession a golden key bearing the royal arms; but that nothing came of it.

His companions respected his sorrow. In this there was a delicacy which he truly deserved; for there had been betrothed to him a fair Andalusian child, who, after spending a couple of years in the convent where her mother had placed her to complete her education, was to be his wife.

The two years of waiting dragged themselves slowly enough away. The mother, in the mean time, had returned home, and died; and, when he applied at the convent for his Manuella, he was informed that the night previous she had left the sacred inclosure, and had not returned.

There are some blows, which, like whirlwinds, lift one from the earth to dash him down again. Don Antonio could not realize at once the whole truth, but was exalted into such a fervor of love, that he swore to seek no repose, no joy, till he had found the wedded child of his heart. Weeks, months, passed; but no dove of peace returned to the window of his

widowed sanctuary, where the cold effigy alone of his lost fair one lay enshrined. Despondency now seized upon him ; and he became almost a shadow, a wreck, on the bright and promising shores of early manhood.

When the queen ordered him to the arena, his friends were overjoyed ; not only because they would witness again his wonderful dexterity, the inimitable nonchalance with which he performed his most thrilling exploits, the suppleness of his assaults, the god-like dignity with which he stood and dared the dangers that beset him, but because they felt, that in the excitement of the hour, amid the shouts that would welcome him, he might possibly throw off, and overcome for all time, his habitual gloom and painful taciturnity.

Don Antonio could hardly bring himself to believe that he must obey the mandate ; that he was to act a part where his heart was not, — forget for an hour his Manuella. The day, too, on which he was to appear, was an unfortunate one, — the anniversary of that appointed for his wedding ; and perhaps the queen knew it.

The morning finally came, bright and beautiful ; and all the world was abroad. The amphitheater was crowded from the front to the rear circle, there being only one vast tier of seats as in Rome's Coliseum. The queen early made her appearance, and the house rose in acknowledgment and nominal respect. Then there passed through the throng many a stale jest and story, and many comments on her age, and, equivocally, on her personal charms ; but we need not here

repeat them. Suffice it to say, that in her hair, which was held by a diamond tiara, nestled the deepest of crimson and yellow flowers to soften the tone of her complexion; that through almost invisible black lace gleamed a mass of bust and shoulders that was truly royal; that her arms too, massive and white, wielded a fan in graceful commendation, command, or censure, and even in juvenile coquetry, when our transient hero appeared, and made his obeisance to her, and then to the rest of the audience.

Was there a blush upon the queen's cheeks when the handsome Don Antonio entered? Perhaps so: we must not scrutinize too deeply. Perhaps they were deeply powdered; and we can not here go beyond the surface and appearances.

The arena was spacious, perfectly level, and sufficiently hard to secure good footing. The wall or wooden barrier around it was just high enough to protect those seated behind it from the most enraged of the *toros* (or bulls), yet low enough for those endangered on horseback to throw themselves over it. Those on foot were provided with seemingly frail yet safe asylums behind broad and substantial planks well fixed in the ground in various places, — just far enough from the barrier to allow them the space required.

This last contrivance was the most provoking thing the *toro* encountered. When pursuing his hated antagonist, he found himself suddenly arrested by it; then he would retreat, and with more frightful fury plunge upon it again, striving to dash it in pieces, and thus unmask his adversary, place him at his mercy, perhaps, or bring him to a fair fight.

The trumpeter stood near the queen's box, and, by her orders, gave the various signals necessary for timing the duration of each portion of the programme. When a *toro* had been teased sufficiently, had defended himself bravely, and had put in jeopardy the lives of the actors, a certain number of well-understood notes were sounded; and he was immediately killed by one of the several modes practiced in such sports. When the animal was dead, or nearly so, other notes signified that he should be dragged away; and at a furious speed it was done by horses brought in for the purpose, and instantly hitched to the carcass.

For this exhibition, as the queen was to be present, eight of the finest bulls had been selected, and among them one of great beauty, for the special benefit of Don Antonio. He was called the *saltador*, as he was fond of leaping, and, it was supposed, would put Antonio's skill to the fullest test.

El saltador, and all the others, in fact, had been for some time kept in a dark room, and lashed into the greatest rage by scientific tormentors; and, when an avenue was discovered by which they could escape, they were not long in availing themselves of it. In this sport, only one at a time, however, is permitted to pass; and no person who has not seen it can conceive of the wild and truly fearful bewilderment with which the tortured beast bursts into the broad light, and halts in the center of the glittering amphitheater. Rushing from his dark prison, he finds himself all at once in the bright gleam of day, surrounded by a towering wall of human beings, — a living wall, whose first great shout makes his whole frame quiver; and

he stops, as if by a lightning-stroke, with haunches depressed, with fore-feet advanced, with shoulders heaving upward, breast and nostrils expanded, head erect, defiant, and eyes glaring with terror.

The spectators seemed to know intuitively about the time when the performance should begin; and silence reigned for a moment through the vast throng. The trumpet then sounded; the door of the prison flew open; and "*toro* No. 1" bounded to the center of the arena. He was not only greeted with the usual shout, but with two barbed sticks, hung with tinkling tin and rattling paper, which were thrust into his neck as he passed the portal. These he attempted to throw off; but the barbs held them fast; and, at every toss and shake of the head, the rattling was renewed, and the fright and pain increased.

Hardly any time was allowed him to contemplate his new and strange position, ere a man in tight garments, gayly trimmed, and setting off his figure to good advantage, approached most cautiously with a crimson flag. The *toro* granted him but a moment to regain his hiding-place. Dashing at and hotly pursuing him, shelter was absolutely necessary; the pursurer giving to the hated barrier, the safety-plank, a thundering blow that shook the very ground. Several *matadors* then issued from other quarters, with their provoking flags, to draw the beast away. They soon succeeded, but found it prudent to be extremely wary; for the impetuosity of his assaults was more than marvelous.

In the mean time, a horseman entered, but was immediately galloping hither and thither for his life:

and though he succeeded, with a long dull lance applied to the bull's neck, in turning him several times, the latter at last accomplished his object, and buried his horns deep between the horse's ribs; the rider escaping by leaping over the parapet.

After many other unimportant feints, and some feats of daring, the trumpet sounded for the *toro's* death. A sharp lance was then placed with its haft against the wall, and the point so elevated, that, when the more thoroughly-aroused creature plunged at the *matador* who held it, the poor beast received it in his breast, and fell dead upon the spot. In another moment he was dragged out of sight.

Six others were killed in various ways in less than an hour.

Finally the note of command was again given, and the eighth *el saltador* came leaping into the circle; and Don Antonio, in costly and glittering garb, unheralded, and as by enchantment, was there to confront him.

The *habitués* of the amphitheater hardly knew which of the two to admire the most.

Don Antonio saluted the queen, and she returned the salutation by a motion of her fan. The arena now rang with shouts; but he seemed to possess only a portion of his ancient fire, and entered languidly upon his work. As, however, the struggle advanced, the comeliness, wild bounds, and graceful boldness, of his opponent, warmed him into a new life, and, as it were, out of himself; and he surpassed all previous efforts. So many, indeed, were his daring feats, — so many that served to display his faultless mold and

manner, — that the queen lingered over the order for the death.

At last the bugle sounded, and Don Antonio stood with his gleaming sword poised to receive the last, most dangerous of all the assaults, and give the last and most perilous thrust of all, in the various modes by which these scenes are closed. His sword was poised; but his eye had caught the eager, loving look, and rested on the face, of his long-lost Manuella. Like a statue he stood while *el saltador* rushed upon him, and bowed his horns to give or receive the final blow. The house was thrilled with fear. The queen rose in her box, and the audience *en masse* arose also. The *toro* paused: the moving multitude seemed to paralyze him; and the toss he gave his head, though fierce, was as if he wished rather to shake from his vision the affrighting throng than destroy his adversary. Antonio, however, fell; and Manuella was borne senseless away.

Don Antonio had been pierced in the side; but there was yet time, perhaps, to save him: so every *matador* flew to the ring to draw the wild beast off. The red flags, however, the barbed darts, the cries of dismay, and shouts, no longer moved him. In an instant, he had recovered from his bewilderment. His eyeballs glared: his enemy was prostrate before him: he poised himself for a deadly thrust.

“Antonio!” exclaimed the queen, forgetting herself; but the bugle-notes, a second time sounding for “the death,” drowned her voice. They broke shrilly over the din, and had the effect of arousing the other actors in the scene; one of whom, by a quick blow

with a stiletto, finished the struggle. *El saltador* plunged forward, and fell; and the prince of *matadors* was again deeply gored.

The queen ordered her attending physician to hasten to the wounded man, have him conveyed to the palace, and give him all the relief his skill could command. In this generous proceeding her Majesty was governed by conflicting sentiments: our own will lead us to believe that humanity was the dominant one. She had known of Don Antonio's betrothal, and had not approved of it. She also knew the padre, and had, perchance, something to do with that nefarious act, the clandestine disappearance of Manuella.

Though much enfeebled by loss of blood, Don Antonio was in danger of succumbing rather to re-action, after the great excitement he had been under, than directly from the wounds which he had received. Quiet and palliatives were chiefly resorted to; became the essentials, in fact, when the second stage of his malady was reached, and delirium ensued.

It was during these latter paroxysms, when railing against the queen, that the favorite, Godoy, made his appearance, and sought to drive him from the palace; for when this prince and the queen stood by his bedside, and he was evidently dreaming of Manuella, the former would thrust in her Majesty's name. This at once aroused his ire; and it was then that he burst forth with a flood of debasing, humbling, deprecating words, that sent the blood in anger up to the very tiara on the royal brow.

What could she now do? Had she not thwarted the only scheme of life dear to him? She tauntingly

told him as much ; and that at Corunna perhaps, or some other distant port, he might possibly find that young school-girl trifle of his heart.

Godoy had accomplished his object : and, as soon as Antonio was able to walk, he found himself alone, but free ; free to search again for his Manuella ; free to hate the queen, and curse her in his thoughts.

Of her Majesty and Manuel Godoy history has made a painful record, which time does neither soften nor efface ; but of Don Antonio it is silent.

CHAPTER V.

THE SEARCH.—THE DISCOVERY.—THE LOSS AGAIN.

DON ANTONIO traced his Manuella to Corunna, as the queen suggested he might; but there, again, every thing was shrouded in mystery.

“Some astute, some wily, crafty being,” he said to himself, “must have something to do with this cruel robbery, or it could not possibly be kept so secret. Not a nook or corner of the town, or hardly a habitation, but has been subjected to my scrutiny. Alas! I fear that I am seeking a ray of light that has already ended in darkness.”

He could not but remember, however, that appealing yet confiding, loving look which Manuella gave him when the arena swam before his eyes, and all was obliterated to mind or sight save the vision of his beloved.

“Why did I not perish then,” he repeated again and again to himself, “while that angelic face beamed upon my soul? Am I doomed to wander thus for

ever in this deep charnel-house of deadly doubts and famishing hope? God grant me, rather, oblivion!"

One densely-obscure and stormy night, — it was near midnight; a record has already been made of it, — he was returning from the hospital, where he had been giving some much-needed aid to the wounded soldiers, when he saw a tall, dark figure emerge from a small door opening on a bridge that spanned the narrow thoroughfare, like the "Bridge of Sighs" in Venice, and connected a priest's dwelling and a convent with a church. Following the tall figure was a female, carrying a lantern or candle, which threw the light full upon her face.

"Manuella!" exclaimed Antonio, stretching his trembling hands upwards as if to receive her into his arms. But his voice did not reach her; and in a moment her slight form was lost in the shadows of the heavy walls of the opposite doorway. Could he be mistaken in the person? Hardly, since her image was framed into every convolution of his brain. Yet wishing to be more sure if possible, and ascertain the object of this strange nocturnal tramp, he hastened to the front-entrances, but found them fastened, — probably as a precaution against the soldiery. He next proceeded to the southern side of the building, where, by climbing to the top of a high wall, he could reach one of the windows. This he succeeded in doing, after much delay, and overcoming many difficulties; but, to gain the inside, he was obliged to break the glass, and even the sash. Here the roar of the thunder befriended him; and the noise he had necessarily made, no one overheard. When

nearly within, he found his way obstructed by a massive statue of stone. He pushed it from its lofty pedestal; and it fell with a startling crash upon the paved floor. Immediately he was in a position to command a view of the whole interior: the sabbleness of night, however, filled it, save in a single spot near the distant chancel. There he perceived a faint glimmer of light; but it suddenly disappeared as if in the midst of a momentary struggle. What followed filled him with horror, and riveted him to the spot. He heard the shuffling of feet, mingled with tones that seemed full of tears, of supplications, of agony; then, as a bright electric spark illumined every portion of the spacious temple, he saw the tall, lean figure standing high up on the steps by which he had descended, lifting above his head a silver statue of the Virgin, which gleamed in the lightning's flash. A faint scream, a heavy fall, and darkness followed.

Antonio himself would have fallen fainting to the earth had he not grasped some object near him. Trembling, unnerved, unmanned, he succeeded with much difficulty in obtaining safe footing below: thence groping his way, directed mainly in his course by what appeared to him the faint moans of a dying person, he reached the rear of the altar to find there his dying Manuella.

Inquiringly he pronounced the name of his beloved. She instantly recognized his voice, and clung to him as if drowning: indeed, it would seem that she thought herself engulfed; for she whispered to him to save her from the deep waters into which she

was sinking. He clasped her in his arms, and, by the aid of frequent flashes of lightning, made his way to the font; carrying her, as if she were a mere child, pressed to his bosom, where for years she should have nestled. There he bathed her temples, and washed away the blood that gushed at each breath from her mouth, and lay in crimson lines, like strings of coral, round her fair neck.

Manuella felt that her moments were numbered. Choking, yet eager to tell him all ere it was too late, she, by slow stages of speech, or rather whisperings, revealed the perfidy of those who had pretended to be friends,—who had assured her of his marriage with another, and that starvation, misery, and damnation awaited her refusal of the home offered her. Then she pronounced two names that went hissing down into his heart; then that of a child, Manuella, whom he promised to obtain if possible, and protect as his own.

To Antonio's mind, the idea of vengeance would come in time: now he had only one thought, one longing; and that was, that his Manuella might live. But he hoped against conviction; for he saw that she was swiftly floating away beyond the confines of time. The fairy form of the gentle and loving creature that now lay in his warm embrace would, on the morrow, be resting in the cold lap of earth, in a humble grave, because she was poor and friendless. Those soft lips, that were breathing out the treasures of a heart worth worlds on worlds, would, ere half of that heart's dream of love had been told, be motionless; would soon close like a flower upon its per-

fume when the frost chills it, and no more wear the halo of those smiles that first enslaved him. Those sad and mournful eyes, whose eloquence now thrilled him for the last time as the electric fire lighted up the temple, would ere long open only on the immortal hills, where he hoped he might soon rejoin her.

Kneeling on one knee, the other supporting the arm which held closer and closer to his breast that frail, sinking form, Antonio looked upward, and fervently prayed unto the great God of mercy ; prayed in bewildering agony, that, in the infinitude of Heaven's goodness, the gentle Manuella might be spared to him, if but for a few short days. Humbly, then, he promised to walk ; even with bleeding feet pursue the path of truth and rectitude ; praising for ever the Bestower of such a blessing.

How soon this cry of despair proved futile ! Even while he spoke, the voice of his betrothed grew fainter : and only at long intervals words passed her ensanguined lips ; but they were all love, pure, priceless, eternal. And she was dying, happy with him because life had been wretchedness without him. She was dying : so for an instant she raised her hands heavenward, and the angels seemed to have taken hold of them ; but she withdrew them, and threw her arms about his neck, for she would take him with her. And so she entered into eternity.

Antonio, though he knew her to be dead, still clung to her ; alternately kissing her forehead, her hair, her cheeks, her lips ; pressing her to his bosom, lavishing upon her every endearing epithet, and calling upon God for support and comfort.

The dawn of day was approaching ere he had considered how he should dispose of the body. At last he said, "I will lay it upon the steps of the altar; and there, to me, in that sacred spot, she will be buried. The priests will find her in the morning; and on so fair and gentle a form they can not but invoke Heaven's blessing, and will not, can not, fail to give it decent sepulture. I love her too madly, too deeply, to endure those last sad scenes; and I must remember her only as I last shall see her, — sleeping in white by the altar of God."

Many, many times, Antonio tore himself away from his dear idol, and went to the door, resolved to depart; but as often returned to imprint another kiss upon her cold, pale brow, and once more say, "Adieu, dear, dear Manuella!" Finally, by a mighty effort which seemed like the knell of every earthly joy, he passed the portal which separated him for ever on earth from his soul's bride, and rushed like one bewildered, insane, into the great careless, unheeding hive of human existence, leaving her sleeping in white by the altar of God.

Early that morning, Manuella's body was found by some kind-hearted priests; and after a few hasty religious ceremonies, — hasty, and void of pomp, for there was no money with which to fee the officiating, — it was with decent form and gravity interred; for, as Don Antonio had said, no one could have touched so delicate a casket, and not have felt that it once enshrined a pure and gentle spirit.

Of the manner of her death there was little question, as they were then suffering the rigors of war.

It was supposed that some of the English soldiers, in attempting to rob the church, had first misused, and then murdered her. It was also inferred, when the statue was found prostrate and the window broken, that a ball from some gun on the heights had done the mischief. Other marks of disorder were attributed to similar causes ; and all, save the disappearance of one who had been for a time one of the most influential and active of the priesthood, received but casual remark or consideration.

The padre's place was soon filled by another ; and, as no one then had any particular reason for recalling the former to memory, he had, in a brief space of time, ceased to be spoken or thought of. Whether he had returned to his former home (where it was, was forgotten) to spend the remainder of his years in quietness, away from the din and dangers of siege and battle, or retreated to the mountains, where it was possible he might have perished, had been the subject of a day's talk only, and then for ever dropped.

There was one, however, as soon as he could collect his thoughts, and act with some degree of rationality, sought the home of the padre, not to accuse him of murder, — in Spain accuse a priest of murder ! it would soon have involved the life of the accuser, — but on a more peaceful mission. Finding the house deserted and in disorder, as if hastily abandoned, he was overwhelmed with a new sorrow ; but when he learned, by further inquiries in the town, that a man resembling the padre had purchased there some mules, he inferred at once what had become of him and the little Manuellita, and started for the mountains in pursuit.

Don Antonio mistook the route ; and the farther he went in his direction, the farther he was from the padre's : still he did not falter, for he felt that he had a sacred mission to fulfill ; and, if a ray of human hope or joy struggled athwart his somber memories, it was from the welcome feeling that his mission was Manuella's.

CHAPTER VI.

MANNERS AND CUSTOMS.—THE FRENCH OCCUPY GENOA.—
A NEW REIGN OF SENTIMENT.—RISE OF THE FEDERATI.



IN the south side of Strada Balbi, in the old but ever-lovely city of Genoa, a short distance above the king's palace, and near the public square called Aqua Verdi, stands a massive marble edifice, built in the elaborate Italian style. It has a grand stairway in the center, and at the terminus of each flight of steps a broad hall, which gives access to independent suites of rooms on the right and left respectively. At one time within the limits of our story, it was occupied, *à la Française*, by several families, parts of families, and isolated individuals, some holding high rank in the army, but with limited incomes, and noblemen no more felicitous in this world's goods. As we have, however, very little to do with any but the apartments on the right, at the head of the first flight of stairs, — and not much even with those, — no trap-doors for ghosts need be elaborated here; though, as a colonel had his quarters

in the building, and the troops to obtain the standard deposited with him daily halted there as they went from Aqua Verdi to the "parade" just without the walls of the city, the circumstance may have had some influence, immediate or remote, on the character of a gentle occupant of said apartments. Indeed, none of the officers were ignorant of certain attractions in that region; and few, in promenading Strada Balbi, failed to go on its north side, and cast anxious looks at the large windows in said marble edifice, where a glimpse of an angelic face and form sometimes, though at rare intervals, rewarded them for their trouble. So great, in fact, seemed the witchery thitherward, that the king himself never passed the mysterious — shall we say Cupid's? — temple without looking up: and it was said he had been seen in several instances even to kiss his aged but royal hand to a certain figure gracing the view; then to sit more erect in his saddle, and spur his horse, in a slightly agitated manner, into a more lively gait; for his Majesty rode gracefully, and hence often made short excursions about the town on horseback.

That the officers of the Italian army, in their idle moods, should have been sauntering on the northern walk of Strada Balbi, — sometimes going up as far as Aqua Verdi, then returning, but always on the same side of the street, — is not at all astounding; but when the king so far departed from his usual royal reserve and *hauteur* as to publicly acknowledge the power of beauty, and that, too, of one who had hardly as yet been recognized in influential circles, and who was still only known to many as "the Beautiful Unknown," —

when the king so openly confessed that there was yet a tender spot in his royal heart as to allow his royal hand to send up a kiss to the fair stranger, it gave rise to numerous surmises, countless conjectures, and an occasional joke at his expense; though, in truth, the latitude then allowed to every one in the sphere of intrigue invested the affair with no more seriousness than would have been inwoven in the most trivial of domestic difficulties.

To have before you at once some of the lights and shadows which fall through the stained historic windows of the period which you are here invited to contemplate, it is only necessary to remember that it is mostly embraced in the first seven years subsequent to the re-establishment in Italy of the house of Savoy, — the restoration (in 1814) of its ancient dominions to Victor Emanuel and his ecclesiastical advisers.

Napoleon had poured his resistless legions over the Alps, and sent them like a whirlwind upon the palpitating plains of Lombardy. Like a portentous cloud, he had hung for a while over those sunny savannas, and the lightning of his artillery had scathed and burdened them with a momentary barrenness; but above the storm was seen the bow of promise held by the imperial eagle, then stretching its wings from the Atlantic to the Adriatic. French troops had occupied Genoa. With them had come that buoyancy of spirit, and that philosophic view of life, which discard all useless sorrow, all palsyng gloom, all ascetic creeds, and all piety that brings not cheerfulness to its possessor. By scores could be counted the beggars who drank of the soldier's cup. Hundreds of poor

children shared his rations. "God loves a cheerful giver:" the French soldier must have had, then, one smile laid up for him in heaven.

The Italian of that day had a lofty, chivalric spirit. He was also highly honorable; that is, if it be true, that, "in love as well as in war, all stratagems are honorable." But there was too great haughtiness in his chivalry, and too much of painful earnestness in the affairs of the heart. When the French came, Cupid's wings gained breath as well as airiness. His quiver was now of gleaming silver, and his arrows were deeply tipped with gold.

"I can not understand," said an Italian nobleman to the French general, Massena, "how such changes have been wrought in the short space of six months. I left Genoa under an oppressive shadow: I find her, to-day, basking in the serenest sunshine. The streets were nearly deserted; and those who walked them were silent, and seemed afraid of their neighbors: now every *strada* and *stradella* is thronged with a gay, gossiping, happy people. At the time of my departure, every one looked askance at a passing priest: to-day I see the gowned gentleman mix with the merry promenaders, and I hear his jolly laugh and his lively jests ring out with those of the liveliest of them. Our women, though studious to please, neglecting nothing in the dainty repertory of the toilet, assumed a coyness which begot a deference that was both cold and heartless: at this moment they appear like other beings. Their frank and friendly manners add a becoming charm to the coquetry of dress; and they welcome one now with a warm pressure of the

hand that goes straight to the very core of our tenderest sensibilities. If they have become more vain, they are, I must allow, more alluring. They are now not only studious to please, but they are ambitious to conquer. That melancholy gentleness which they once affected has given place to an ingenuous confidence, and an open, unrestrained expression of sentiment, that is wholly admirable. Am I to thank you, my good Massena, for this splendid metamorphosis?"

"Ah! *mon bon* duke," said the general, "we try to make those around us happy by being happy ourselves. It is true that we came with hostile arms into your country; but, when those were laid aside, every hostile feeling was cast off with them: and, if those whom we are among do not fraternize with us, it is not because we do not cherish for them every kindly wish of which the human heart is capable."

"You must be aware by this time," replied the duke, "that our people have fully understood and appreciated your friendly sentiments; and I can almost believe, that if circumstances take you and your gallant men hence, as they have brought you hither, the Genoese will hardly know which of the two to do, — lament your departure, or rejoice over the restoration of the ancient republic."

This compliment found its way into the saloons of the gay capital, and was everywhere repeated. The French remembered it when they were driven thence by the English and Austrians, and when they subsequently returned: and the Italians had cause to remember it at a later period; for, after a few years, little or nothing remained of that high-toned spirit

and that chivalric hospitality which had signalized the times at which we are glancing; though from that very freedom of thought and action so vehemently lauded and admired there doubtless came a score of ~~those~~ evils which run like threads of mourning through the tangled web we have before us. Indeed, after the Restoration, a new order of things was organized. From the camp to the court, from the court into all the ramifications of society, there went a boldness of intrigue that gained in its progress neither prudence nor circumspection nor reserve. Every act of the government, however important, wise, or trivial, seemed to have its origin in some individual scheming for personal ends and aims; but each act found an opposing element not less nefarious, not less cunningly devised, not less deceitful. Every diplomatist about the king, every foreign minister, entered more or less into the curious and underhand speculations of the day; and any man or woman who could be turned into a tool for carrying on any plot was courted, caressed, flattered, and even raised, if necessary, to power and princely affluence.

Under all, outcropping at rare intervals, sometimes presenting a bold front, then hiding itself from observation, was the subtile influence of the Church. Here, in fact, it was thought by the malcontents, was the intangible soul, the real source, of many of those oppressive measures which hung so heavily around the neck of the poorer classes, — burdens they thought to shake off amid the fearful throes of a revolution; for, after Napoleon had stretched out his conquering arm over the empires of Europe, a new life had been

infused into the people: their long-dormant energies were awakened; and they began to have a keener perception of the value of individual thought, feeling, and existence. They began, at last, to be aware, that to them, as well as to kings and priests, belonged inalienable rights and powers and high prerogatives, which, if not conceded, might, by the higher laws of humanity and human progress, be wrested by force from the hands of their oppressors.

Sardinia, embracing then the old republic of Genoa, was filled with enthusiasm for a while, and revelled in an exalted dream of liberty; so that, when the house of Savoy was restored, and the old *régime* returned, oppression seemed doubly oppressive, and freedom of speech and of action trebly precious. The disciples of Loyola were re-admitted; and the institutions of learning were placed under their care. A rigorous and callous censorship of the press was established. A royal edict prohibited any one learning to read or write who had not property to the amount of fifteen hundred *lire* (about four hundred dollars), or any one studying in a university who had not as much more in the funds. But this was not all: the works of the very best European writers were excluded from the kingdom. Translations of Wieland, Schiller, Goethe, were among the condemned. Every salutary law, every good regulation, which had been in force during the period of the French domination, was now annulled, and those that were distasteful to the multitude, and offensively arbitrary, in many instances, introduced in their stead. Hence arose the society called THE FEDERATI.

It was composed of the friends of the constitutional system and the enemies of the ultramontanists. They proceeded rapidly in their organization ; and, as Austria was soon to be engaged in an expedition against Naples, they had every reason to expect a favorable issue to their well-laid plans.

The Federati, in their grand scheme, looked to no less a person for a leader than the Prince de Carignan, who, combining a bold and liberal spirit with a manly and generous heart, was deemed the most worthy of their confidence. The next to whom they turned for support was the son of Count Felisquetto, il Signor Fiesco, the most noble-looking man in the kingdom ; a man as brave, as truthful, as sincere and earnest, as he was patriotic ; a man who sympathized deeply with the oppressed poor, and had no higher ambition than to lay down his life for them. But the Federati had much to contend with. Spies of distinction were everywhere. They occasionally took upon themselves the most menial offices, when, by thus doing, they could get into suspected families, and learn the secrets thereof. They became servants to some whom they were ruling with a rod of iron.

The inquisitorial spirit that lurked around every household became intolerable. When political topics were the subject of conversation, each one breathed an atmosphere of distrust. A shadow had fallen upon every hearthstone. There was a stifling of many generous impulses : they were sent back into the deep chambers of the heart, and there weighed in the balance, and, if found wanting in that judicious weight which the evil times required, reposed there

for ever, and came no more up to the light. In the realm of sentiment alone were outspoken thoughts, wide-winged and buoyant. Here careless grace and dainty-footed passion walked the roseate round of hours; here the soul sauntered in its slipshod ease, sipping the sweet narcotics of mild and mirthful delusions, — its guests were like the pale, faint images that float through the dreams of the opium-eater; here the lethargies of love lulled the Argus-eyed spies, and Cupid with his drawn bow was sentinel and moat and drawbridge enough; here sapphire-studded gates swung in the portals of fancy; and here rich, voluptuous couches were spread for tender sensibility; here pearls lay couched in golden-lipped negation.

CHAPTER VII.

**MINISTERIAL. — DIPLOMACY. — A FEELER. — INTRIGUE. —
WHAT MAY NOT MONEY DO ?**

ANOTHER promoter of the oppressions the people were suffering at this period, when Count Fiesco was called back to Sardinia, — a power behind both the church and the throne, — was the prime-minister, Gonzalvo. This man for a long time had gradually been gaining influence and power, not only by his superior talents, and support given to the Church or Jesuit party, but by a liberal expenditure of his immense wealth, and by a zealous, unscrupulous opposition to the Federati.

One day, a splendid carriage, drawn by four horses, was seen moving slowly along the beautiful *riviera* of Genoa. The occupants were the aforesaid prime-minister, and Prince Metternich, who was seated on his right. The prince, though much the minister's junior in years, was his senior in diplomacy and tact ; was, indeed, in astuteness, in quickness of perception and comprehension, surpassed by none at the Sardinian court. He was of medium hight, and

good figure ; and his manners were distinguished and impressive. His speech was the evident emanation of well-digested thought. His words did not flow rapidly ; nor were they musical and rich like his companion's, but were carefully selected, and almost always disguising his real sentiments.

Gonzalvo never for a moment felt quite safe in his company ; though he courted him for his influence, as he did every one who could aid him in any of his schemes. He knew that Metternich was too shrewd for him, and that Austria looked to the said prince, their ambassador, for the recovery of the province of Liguria.

The prince could not sound Signor Gonzalvo upon any subject of national importance, lest he should betray his own interest therein : so he resolved to give himself, as one who had just arrived in the country, to the charming scenery around him. The blue waters of the Mediterranean lay on his left : on his right were terraced grounds, burdened with the fruitful vine that here and there climbed a towering parapet, or festooned some old convent-wall ; then there were green slopes and orange-groves ; then abrupt cliffs and steep hills, crowned with a fortress or a saintly chapel ; then opening valleys, which revealed to his admiring gaze dainty dwellings, villettas, and cottages that might rightfully vie for a place in a poet's dream of paradise. The air, too, was loaded with the fragrance of the rose, the orange, the jasmine, — a fragrance often wafted far out on the sea ; and he who had no sorrows sighing in his heart could hardly have failed here of being happy.

After proceeding a few miles in the direction of Cogoletto (the birthplace, it is said, of Columbus), they came in sight of a magnificent mansion, where Nature and Art were combined to make the most bewitching of terrestrial abodes.

“Whose may that be?” said the prince, turning from some observations about the unrivaled beauty of the road.

“That,” said Gonzalvo, “was built for the duchess, — the empress I might well term her; for she swayed all hearts by her imperial blandishments, — the fair Duchess of Liguria, who, by a morganatic marriage with our sovereign, placed, as you know, in his hands, that desirable province. Still, since her death, he seems to value it but lightly, and, I doubt not, would bestow it on the first fair dame whom he wished particularly to honor.”

The prince slightly colored, but made no reply.

“You are doubtless conversant, signor ambassador, with all the circumstances connected with that complicated affair.”

“I have heard it occasionally alluded to,” replied the prince carelessly.

Gonzalvo was aware that his companion was not ignorant of any one feature of the case; but, as a good opportunity now presented itself, he considered it best to express his own, and consequently the government's, views of it. He therefore continued: —

“An old treaty may possibly have fallen under your eye, prince, stipulating, that, should certain conditions be unfulfilled, that province should revert to the Sar-

dinian crown; or, if its duke or duchess so willed (thus we construe the instrument), be transferred under specific guaranties to any other friendly power. The esteemed duchess, as we have seen, persecuted on all sides, and naturally wishing to avoid constant and costly litigation, found shelter for herself and her territory in the bosom of our beloved king."

"I have been informed," replied the prince, "that owing to the peculiar structure of a certain defective treaty, and the fact that said province (strategetically valuable to both of us) once pertained to the house of Savoy, your sovereign now lays claim to it, and even threatens war if we seek to exercise any further jurisdiction over it. I doubt not, however, my good and astute signor, that you and my humble self will be able to arrange it; at least, to our own individual satisfaction."

By this last remark, the prince intended to put forth what is called a "feeler." Gonzalvo saw it, but evaded the point by simply saying he trusted so; hoping thus to drive the ambassador to more explicit declarations.

"There is often more honor won," resumed the prince carelessly, "in diplomacy than in war; and while the one costs no lives, though sometimes a little of what is harmlessly termed 'pride,' the other generally costs many lives and a great deal of pride. Decorations, too, are often bestowed for a little stroke of policy: in war, one oftener loses his head than gains the order of the Golden Fleece."

Here was what Gonzalvo was looking for. Here, if he chose so to take it, was as plain a declaration

of what he might win by a certain amiability of conduct as he could desire. Still his duty and his official position forbade his recognizing in it any but a general applicability to the subject. He thoroughly understood its import, however, and resolved, without hesitation, to act accordingly; and from that moment he was pledged to the interests of Austria.

“Nothing is more true,” replied Gonzalvo after a moment’s pause; “and he must have a bad heart, and be an imbecile too, who would not prefer peace with a slight sacrifice of pride — of territory even, were the title questionable — to the dread uncertainties of war.”

“I should infer,” said the prince, without apparently regarding the minister’s last remark, “from a parenthetical expression of yours, that you construe the instrument we have referred to in such a manner as to leave to the owner, or rather ruler, of said province, the paramount right to transfer it to whomsoever he or she pleases, — that is, to any friendly power, — under specific guaranties.”

“That has been, of necessity, our construction,” replied the minister.

“Then, if the king sees fit to bestow it on any individual, native or foreign, or any *chère amie*, — for instance, on his minister or his lackey, — the favored individual could betray the confidence reposed in him or her, and the coveted territory might again pertain to Austria.

“Such, I have said,” replied Gonzalvo, “has been the nature of our interpretation. I am aware, however, that it has no precedent; that no nation on earth, without precisely such contingencies and ante-

cedents, could have reasonably granted any such license to its subjects."

The Austrian ambassador agreed entirely with the prime-minister; and as he, the prince, had gained two points which would hereafter serve him, he had no desire to continue the conversation relative to the province in question. The two then remained for a while silent, hardly regarding the magnificent scenery environing them. Cogoletto was finally reached, and the house of Columbus examined with much interest by both parties. The carriage was then directed homeward, and the prince took up a new subject.

"Though I have been here but a few days, I have heard, jestingly it is true, that the king has had his aged heart recently touched by some dainty enchantress in the Strada Balbi. How is it?"

"It is even so, I believe," replied Gonzalvo; "for everybody is in love with her."

"She is married, then, I presume, or everybody would not see her," said the prince.

"Yes: but there has, of late, been some suspicion thrown upon the legality of her marriage, — if marriage at all; though, up to this moment, her reputation is immaculate. She loves her husband, too, with an ardor which brings on him the envy of all."

"Who is the fortunate owner of this rare creature?"

"The Count Fiesco Felisquetto, the handsomest man in Genoa, and the greatest enemy our government has," replied the minister.

"Is it the Signor Fiesco lately from England," inquired the prince, "and the person I have heard spoken of as leader of the Federati?"

“The very same,” said Gonzalvo, “and so much loved by the people, that we feel it to be almost imprudent to act even on the defensive.”

“But do you not see,” responded the prince quickly, “how you can strike a blow that will reach the very foundations of his happiness, and thus either bring him into your power, or drive him out of the kingdom? For what man is there, who, having once loved a ‘false fair one,’ can be so insensible as to dwell where he must be to her a living, a constant reproach, or, being himself deemed the offending and ungracious party, bear from his enemies such curses and such cruel censure as no other cause could elicit?”

“I know to what you refer, my good prince,” responded Gonzalvo. “I have heretofore put such considerations aside: still it may not be so difficult a matter as has been imagined; for there is already one Signora Spinosa here, a very wealthy woman, who has, from envy and jealousy, sown some discord in that direction, and awaits an opportunity to do more. Signor Fiesco’s frequent absence also, his meetings with the Federati (whose rendezvous are distant), may be turned against him in the ears of the interested.”

“Do you not think that gold too, or a duchess’s sovereignty, or something of that nature, would aid you materially in a direct application of your suit?” said the ambassador significantly.

“She is a woman, my good prince,” was the reply.

“And may be bought, perhaps,” responded the ambassador.

“Not with money; no!” said Gonzalvo. “Her

feelings must first be enlisted. She must either love or hate, or be impelled by some motive of revenge, or ” — and he seemed here to be rather musing with himself than addressing his companion — “by one other sentiment, which it is almost cruel to contemplate, — shame.”

It now occurred to Gonzalvo to have an immediate interview with the British ambassador, Sir James Fitzlace, and lay before him some information recently brought here from England, — some news respecting a marriage in Scotland, to which our fair Signora Fiesco Felisquetto, the beauty of Strada Balbi, had been a party; not because he cared — no, not he! — whether the lady had ever been married or not, but solely because he conjectured, that if the ambassador from her own country should, by questions or otherwise, acquaint her with his knowledge or suspicion (which might do as well) of her equivocal position, she would feel herself so humiliated, that she might be more disposed than at present to listen to any proposition that would elevate her to a rank which could not fail to command the highest respect, — to a place so near the throne, perchance, that the most audacious would not dare assail it; knowing, also, that Sir James always favored the king’s policy, and was a bitter opponent of the revolutionists, the Federati; and that, if he could see any honorable way by which he could overthrow the one and aid the other, nothing would please him better. To strike a blow, then, at one of their leaders, their favorite, and be able to do it with an apparent interest in the welfare of another, placed the whole affair in such a favorable light, that he could

not fail to be easily persuaded to take an active part in it.

As they neared the city, each one revolving in his own mind an independent scheme emanating from the conversation that had somewhat strangely yet opportunely grown out of a glimpse of the *château* of the late Duchess of Liguria, their carriage struck a poor man who was drying his net by the roadside, threw him down, and considerably bruised him.

“Curses on these detestable vagabonds!” exclaimed Gonzalvo. “They are ever in the way, and never of service to any one but Satan himself; readily aiding in his machinations, or concocting some Machiavelian movement to overturn the government.” (This was one of those little straws which show whence the wind of the revolution blew.)

“Are you much hurt?” asked the prince, stopping the carriage.

“Not much,” said the fisherman, — “not much for a poor man, sir.”

“I hope this will give you a warning,” resumed Gonzalvo, “to keep clear of our highways. Your place is in the water; for, when you are on dry land, you are as likely to hang your nets on a palace-door as on a boat-hook; and you would rather hang me than do either. However, I will send a man to care for you.”

“Don’t trouble yourself,” said the fisherman; “I can crawl home if I have but one foot: and I don’t want to owe you any gratitude.”

Gonzalvo ordered the coachman to drive on, leaving the wounded man to crawl home alone. This he did, muttering to himself, —

“’Tis all right! Boppo needed this one stroke more to make his desire for vengeance full. Is it not enough that we toil the long day, and sometimes the long night through, to gain our simple food and scanty clothing, going often without either, so that we may be able to repair our nets and keep our boats afloat? No, we must be taxed anew. This same man, under the pretext of replenishing an impoverished treasury, impoverishes the people; keeping them starving, that they may be humble; keeping them humble, that they may not rebel. This miscreant, suspecting treachery in all, fore-entraps them when within the bounds of possibility. But this oppression and these extortionists can not last always. The Federati awake.”

The poor fisherman, ere long, reached his humble abode. Gonzalvo had set down the prince whence he took him, and returned to his own palace.

CHAPTER VIII.

DECEIVED. — MISUNDERSTANDING. — A SACRIFICE. — A SEVERE BLOW. — HOPES REVIVED.

GONZALVO had not dared to inform Prince Metternich how he had already arranged his plans to insnare and ruin Fiesco. He had not dared even to hint at the nature of his intrigues, because they would show a baseness of character which the very lowest of human beings must despise. For years he had been an active, zealous foe of the Federati, in order to ingratiate himself with the king and the royal party. No person's reputation was sacred in his eyes: the welfare and happiness of the most innocent were as a shuttlecock in his hands, and made to succumb to his wily machinations. Aware of the original design of the wealthy Spinosa and of Count Felisquetto the elder to unite the title of the one and the riches of the other in Fiesco, the count's son, by a marriage of the latter with the Spinosa daughter, Gonzalvo saw what new aid and assistance this might be to the Federati, and resolved to thwart it.

The Spinsosa had, besides a house in town, a magnificent country-seat, a *villetta*, in one of the several beautiful valleys or alpine passes that lead up through the lesser mountains that engird the city of Genoa. Hither young Fiesco was often invited, — invited to spend days and weeks, — invited as one who was to become one of the family; though of this supposition he had not been advised, nor entertained even a suspicion.

Fiesco went to the Spinsosa's because he received there a hearty welcome, and was as if at home. He went when he wanted to be rid of the heat and dust and turmoil of the town, and when he wanted to be alone. It was a quiet retreat for him; and if, in any place, he ever wrought out any bold schemes for his loved fraternity, it was there: for though the youthful, wealthy, accomplished Signorina Spinsosa was ever near him like his shadow, following him in his garden-walks, seating herself beside him in the grove, meeting him in the avenues of the wood, he had not felt sufficient interest in her to have the current of his thoughts deranged by her presence. Far otherwise was it with the signorina. Her mother had given her to understand that Fiesco was her betrothed: besides, she loved him with an ardor that absorbed every other feeling. She hardly had a thought, a wish, a dream, that was not in some way coupled with her idol, the handsome, fascinating Fiesco.

But, if Fiesco did not love La Signorina Spinsosa, he did not love any one else; and yet his admirers might be reckoned by the hundred. He could not, however, feel wholly indifferent to the young lady in whose

company he often found himself, and who was ever striving to amuse, to entertain him, to make him happy. He probably regarded her as a kind sister, a devoted, generous friend. She, at least, never annoyed him; and if, when away, she crossed his memory, it was rather, perhaps, like the fitful gleam of the fire-fly striking the eye at night than the steady light that beams on the love-enraptured soul.

One day, Count Felisquetto rallied his son on the subject of his marriage. Fiesco made no objection to the proposition; had apparently never given it a thought: but when his father stated who was to be the bride, and that it was time to name the day for his wedding, he stood for a moment as if petrified. The old man, overwhelmed with astonishment, — having taken it for granted that his son had always comprehended his wishes and designs in this matter, — entered into conversation with him, for the first time, concerning it.

“Why this trepidation, my son?” said the father. “Is this union distasteful to you?”

“Even so, father,” replied Fiesco with a tremulous voice.

“How can it be possible? The lady is young and handsome; and she brings with her a magnificent dower.”

“I care nothing for riches,” said Fiesco, “except such as can be stored in the brain, or can be found in a love of one’s country.”

“The Federati, though the noblest band of patriots the world has ever seen, have absorbed too much of your heart, I fear, my son,” replied the still more astonished father.

“I am wedded to them for life,” resumed Fiesco abstractedly.

“Would you have me infer, then,” said the old count in a grieved and desponding tone, “that the hope of adding untold wealth to your title I must abandon? that I must give up the great satisfaction of seeing you respectably settled? that I must go to my grave, feeling that the last request I ever made to my son, my only son, was unheeded?”

“No, father,” replied Fiesco: “my filial affection, thank Heaven! does not forsake me yet. I am ready for any sacrifice you may demand of me; and none, be assured, could be greater than that to which I am now prepared to bow.”

“How is this? Do you love another, then?”

“I love only my country,” said Fiesco with enthusiasm; his large, dark, beautiful eyes brightening as his thoughts ran along the train of plans laid down, and soon to be set in motion, by the Federati.

“Do you not see,” replied the father, “how, by the treasures you will have at your command, you can be of double service to your fraternity; in other words, to your beloved Italy?”

“We need only hearts and heads, not money,” responded Fiesco.

“Do you wish, then, that this marriage should not take place?” inquired the father, almost doubting his own senses.

“With all my soul,” replied the son.

“But I have pledged my word: would you have me break it?” said the old man with a look of despair.

“No, father,” said Fiesco: “still, were it possible, I would avoid this marriage.”

“And ruin the reputation, and blast the hopes, of the young and confiding girl?”

“What do you mean?” said Fiesco, fixing a stern and steady look upon his aged parent.

“Have you not for a long time been constantly with her, — constantly a guest at her house?” asked the father. “Have you not spent days and nights under her father’s roof? been seen riding and walking with her alone in the forest? This, you know, is admissible neither in this country, nor in Spain, nor even in France. You have inherited with your English education many liberal views, I am aware; but you must well know that a young lady here must conform to the conventional rules of the society in which she moves, or she soon ceases to be a member of it.”

“We have indeed ridden, walked, and sat together alone, it is true,” said Fiesco, “but only as a brother and sister might have done.”

“The world is censorious, my child. The day in which you cease visiting the Spinosa villetta, that day La Signorina will be looked upon as tainted, and have pointed at her the finger of distrust, if not of scorn.”

“I have run blindfolded into a snare,” said Fiesco to himself, “and I must suffer the consequences.” A deathly palor overspread his face; his whole frame was shaken by his masterly struggle for obedience to his loved father’s behest; while his noble head was bowed by the giant hand of despair. So young, and yet despairing! so full of strength, yet trembling like a leaf! Great hearts have double joy or double sorrow.

In a few moments, Fiesco recovered his self-possession, and in a clear, audible tone said, “It is well,

father : you may name the day." Hearing no reply, he raised his head, and found himself alone. His father had noiselessly passed out of the chamber to hide his own grief, — the grief he felt at seeing the wretchedness of his only, his dearly-beloved son, whose happiness was his happiness, whose sorrow was his sorrow.

"Have I been dreaming?" said the young man to himself. "Is it not a horrid reality that my father commands me to give my hand where the heart must be withheld? O God! didst thou not in thine infinite goodness create for me a mate, — a soul that can love like mine, and whose every pulsation would be in unison with mine own? Oh! let me at least believe so, if thou wouldst have me adore thy wisdom and justice and mercy; for how else can I reconcile with the universal law of conformity, and adaptation of all things, those gentle gifts of Nature, those endowments and high social qualifications, which make of inestimable value the sentiments of intimate friendship, and cause us to feel, at the touch, the sight, at the very sound of the voice, of a loved one, that inexplicable, inexpressibly-sweet beatitude nothing else in the wide world can conjure up or create?"

Fiesco had made up his mind firmly; and he now awaited his father to tell him so. He had made up his mind to resign himself to his fate with an air of content that he knew would be pleasing to his beloved sire; but, while he waited, he could not but shudder at the desolate, the damning path that lay before him. He was to wed, and swear to love; yet he could not love: he was to assume and maintain

an air of confidence ; yet he was not to allow to escape from his own keeping one single, real, valuable emotion of his heart.

When weary of waiting, Fiesco went in search of his father. Aware that the old gentleman spent most of his time in the library, he naturally sought him there. He knocked gently and with the timidity of a child ; but, receiving no response, he quietly opened the door, and went in. His father was seated in his arm-chair, leaning his head upon the desk before him. A suspicion flashed through Fiesco's mind that all was not right. Rushing forward, clasping him in his arms, raising him up, was but the work of a moment. On his son's bosom now lay the old man's head. There were tears on his cheek ; but he was dead. Great and sudden grief, coupled with a tendency to apoplèxy, had thus hurried the worthy, the estimable Count Felisquetto into the realm of eternal dreams.

When Apelles could not paint the depth of sorrow which he wished to represent in the face of one of his figures, he covered the head with a veil. Let us throw a veil over the inexpressible anguish which now wrung every fiber in Fiesco's soul, and nearly laid him in the grave with his loved sire.

Time, it is said, though not truthfully, heals the deepest wounds. Time, however, did much for Fiesco,—more than he had anticipated. The appointment of the wedding-day, which he had no anxiety to hasten, was at least delayed. Yet, after all, when he had decided to make a wife of the rich, young Spinosa, he did not see any thing so very disagreeable in it: in fact, he sometimes regarded it with a degree

of satisfaction that astonished even himself. He remembered the pleasant days he had spent in her society, and how watchful and eager she had ever been to make each of his visits to the villetta more agreeable than the preceding. He could now pick up those little incidents, and recall those gentle chidings and sisterly caresses which were once carelessly cast aside like faded flowers: and he had not wholly forgotten her burning gaze and gladsome smile, when, alone in their rambles, he had returned the warm pressure of her hand; nor that hour of twilight, when, in a girlish mood, she pillowed his head on her fair bosom, called him her baby, and, with her soft arms about his neck, rocked him or hushed him to sleep.

CHAPTER IX.

IMPORTANT CHANGES. — CRUEL DECEPTIONS. — MIDNIGHT MARRIAGE. — FLIGHT. — RETURN.



SUDDENLY the admired, the splendid young Fiesco Felisquetto had ceased to grace, of an evening, the walks of Aqua Sola. He was also absent from the various social circles of the hospitable city of which he was ever the pride and ornament. For several months, no one knew whither he had fled, except a few of the Federati; and they, probably, did not know the real cause of his departure. They were aware, however, that, in all places, he would seek to aid their cause. Conjectures, indeed, of every kind were everywhere rife concerning the disappearance of the young count; and these were generally, directly or indirectly, associated with La Signorina Spinoza. It was not long before the most extraordinary stories were circulated, and gained credence, respecting the young lady herself; and they did not lose any thing of probability as she gradually withdrew herself from society, and finally ceased entirely to appear in public.

But why this mystery? And it may be asked, Why are such mysterious things always occurring in every community? They often arise from remote and unsuspected sources; the real instigators never appearing in the foreground, if at all. There are natural mischief-makers in all circles of society, — harpies who gloat over the secrets of a fireside, which, as firebrands, they toss wherever they can start the flames of discontent, hatred, or jealousy.

Fiesco had made no movement unbeknown to Gonzalvo; and when it was positively decided that the wedding was soon to take place, and the large Spinoza fortune (and the Spinozas, by favoring the Federati, were equally obnoxious to the intriguing Gonzalvo) was to pass into the hands of one who had determined to overthrow the royal party, Gonzalvo began to work. The death of the old Count Felisquetto favored his plans. For weeks, the overwhelming grief experienced by Fiesco at the loss of his father prevented his giving a thought to any thing else. La Signorina Spinoza came in for her share of neglect. Gonzalvo had well-paid, secret agents, who, assuming the garb of priest or monk, had access at all times to all houses. One of the latter he now sent to inform the young lady, in the most secret manner possible, — throwing around his mission all the importance and mystery he could command, — that Fiesco had discovered a will in which he was disinherited, and threatened with the everlasting curses of his father, if he married into the Spinoza family; that, in fact, he had given up the idea.

“A heart of stone,” said the monk, when he

returned from his cruel errand, and related to Gonzalvo all that had passed at the interview, — “a heart of stone would have melted under her tears, her groans, and the wild agony in which she invoked Heaven to cool the hot lava in her brain, and save her from delirium. Throwing herself at my feet, she seized my girdle, and, with fearful fervor, pleaded with me to give her hope that my report might not be true; that there might be some mistake; that Fiesco still loved her; that her adored Fiesco would not abandon her; that he would come and kill her, that she might die in his arms; that he would not cast her off, and make her a reproach in the world; that I would swear to her to see him, and tell him of her undying love, and that she would never live without him.”

Gonzalvo received the news with apparent satisfaction, and wished to know what assurances the monk had given her.

“That the whole thing might be managed, perhaps, by a secret marriage,” replied he.

Gonzalvo nodded assent, but inquired if he had enjoined secrecy.

“The most profound,” said the monk. “I told her, that, if ever Fiesco visited her again (which he might not do), she must receive him as if nothing had happened; as if she reposed entire confidence in him; as if, though their wedding-day might be postponed for a while, she felt sure of his affections, and that, by and by, he would be all hers; that, above all things, no allusion should be made to his father’s will; that she should yield temporarily to any of Fiesco’s sug-

gestions, sympathize with him in his sad bereavement, but leave the arrangement of the marriage and the setting-aside of the force of the will entirely in my hands. She assented to every thing, and promised sacredly to abide by my advice, and follow implicitly each and all of my instructions. She did not, as I feared she would, demand to know what were the advantages, what the necessity, and what the final result, of this secret marriage : had she done so, I do not now see how I could have replied to her."

On the morning of the day when this conversation transpired, Gonzalvo had heard of the arrest, for smuggling, of a man known to be in the service of the Federati ; and he determined to make use of him if possible, and add a new link to the bonds of that hated fraternity, — such a link as some of its friends would be very glad to sever. He therefore hurried away to the criminal bureau, where, after giving its chief some insight into his schemes, he obtained the necessary order to liberate the prisoner. The latter, however, for his freedom, was to consent to be blindly his tool for a single night.

Gonzalvo found his victim — a finely-made, stalwart personage — in a dark, loathsome cell, and brought him out to the light and the fresh air ; but, when the smuggler saw his liberator, instead of expressing gratitude, his eyes stared wildly, and his fingers worked nervously as if he would clutch and strangle him.

"I suppose I am to be punished," said he, "guilty or not guilty, because I am not rich, and have none to defend me."

"Not of necessity," replied Gonzalvo.

“How can I escape, when not one of my craft ever did, after getting into the jaws of those sharks who follow us on the land as well as on the water? A fine, to make us poorer if possible; the galleys, to make us earn money for the State; the prison, to make us love your government, — these are the paternal mercies to which we are daily treated.”

“You speak as if you had seen better days, and were above your profession. Are you married?”

“I am not,” replied the smuggler with tremulous voice and downcast look.

“And why not?”

“I am too poor, perhaps. I have not much to spare after supporting myself.”

“If you could marry and get a rich wife and your pardon at the same time, would you do so?”

“Indeed I would!” exclaimed the man with an energy that left no doubt regarding his will. “But the woman must be respectable, and I commit no crime by the act.”

“Very particular all at once about crime!” responded Gonzalvo. “But come: pledge me your word on this sacred book (and he drew from his pocket a small breviary bearing a golden clasp and cross) that you will obey me in all things not criminal this night; and, before to-morrow morning, you shall be the husband of one of the greatest heiresses and one of the loveliest ladies in the city of Genoa. But you must also as sacredly pledge me your word, and solemnly swear, that you will not avail yourself of the privileges the church and the civil law will thus give you, until you receive from me, or other proper authority, permission to do so.

“What, then, am I to gain by this fishing in the dark?” asked the man.

“At least your freedom,” replied Gonzalvo.

“That is something.”

“And you can then say that *one* of you vagabonds *has* escaped the fine, the galleys, and the prison of which you were speaking so eloquently a moment ago, and which you all richly deserve.”

The smuggler gnashed his teeth, but no longer hesitated. He placed his hand upon the book, and solemnly swore to all that had been proposed. He then kissed the cross.

Gonzalvo having shown to the keeper of the prison the “pass” he had obtained for the prisoner, both sallied forth together, and proceeded to the Monastery of San Antonio, which adjoins the church of the same name. Here the liberated man was properly clothed and cared for, and ordered to await further instructions.

Soon after these proceedings were over, one of Gonzalvo’s myrmidons — one Massard — was conversing with Fiesco.

“Are you aware,” said he to the young count, “that La Signorina Spinosa is about to marry?”

“No! In the name of Heaven, who?”

“No one knows: only it is a stranger.”

“Is it noised abroad? Is it known?”

“It is the common talk of the town.”

“By heavens! I should as soon have thought of my poor father returning from the grave.”

“Many have marveled; for it was generally supposed that you yourself were the fortunate possessor

of her young heart, as well as, prospectively, her immense fortune," replied Massard with a searching look; for he wished to know how severe a blow he was striking by the news he brought.

"A marriage there, it is true, had been planned by my good father," said Fiesco, with no little dejection in his look and tone of voice. "But man proposes, and God disposes, according to a common aphorism: in other words, we are subject to an inexorable fate, and move onward in the strait and narrow path laid out by it, exactly as if walking between two adamantine walls reaching the clouds. Man is the slave of his hereditary qualities, education, and circumstances. We condemn one for stealing, another for fraud, and another for murder; but if we had been born and reared as, and finally drawn under the same influences, they were, we should have acted precisely as they did."

"Heaven may clothe us with grace and mercy," said Massard; "and then we may march unsullied through this tainted, sinful world."

"To clothe one with grace and mercy, and not another," responded Fiesco, "would be showing partiality. Accepting your horn of the dilemma or mine, we are not free agents."

"We are the children of God," replied Massard, with an air of humble resignation and evasive solemnity.

"The creatures of circumstances, you might as well say; for, as an example, how could I have foreseen and averted the machinations of the *intrigante*, who, doubtless for money, seeks the hand of the

young lady Spinosa?" Here Fiesco heaved a sigh as of regret, and for a few moments remained lost in communion with his own thoughts; occasionally ejaculating, "'Tis not possible! She loved me too dearly! It may be a false rumor! But woman, woman! — oh, how like moonshine upon the waters! glorious in its placidity, flickering, unstable at the first breath! But why need I care? I confessed I did not love her."

Massard waited till Fiesco had ceased talking to himself; then said, "Perhaps, count, you may think the report which I bring you is an idle tale of the town; but if you will honor me with your confidence, and put yourself under my guidance this evening, — say, half an hour before midnight, — I will undertake to give you sufficient evidence that the young lady is as false to you as she is hasty and imprudent."

Fiesco colored deeply. For an instant, but only for an instant, the world's tauntings were allowed to taint his reflections: then he said calmly, as he rose and extended his hand to his visitor, "I will be at your service. To-night, at half-past eleven, I shall await you here."

Massard returned to the monastery, and reported progress to Gonzalvo, who had now nothing to do but inform La Signorina Spinosa, that, to consummate the sacrament of the desired marriage, she must be at the Church of San Antonio that night at twelve. This hour was chosen because then the members of the Spinosa household would be asleep, and hence enable her to leave unobserved: besides, at midnight, the streets themselves being free from the idle curi-

ous, she could visit the church without molestation. Thus none but the loving couple and the officiating priests could know any thing of the secret nuptials.

In due time, — that same evening, — the young lady received from the person who had told her that falsehood respecting the will of the late Count Felisquetto all necessary information concerning the arrangements that had been made for her wedding. Full of fear silver-lined with joy, full of tremulous weakness, yet giant-like in hope, she listened, and resolved to go forward. Under any other circumstances, she would have recoiled instinctively from such steps: now, however, her very life seemed to hang upon them. Could she give up her soul's idol? Would she not bear reproach, shame, contumely, for a time, ay, for ever, rather than feel that the bright dreams of her whole existence had vanished, never more to re-appear?

A little before midnight, a sedan-chair was at the garden-gate of the Spinosa villetta. It had hardly arrived before a lithe figure stepped into it, and was borne rapidly away to the Church of San Antonio, where, at the transept-door, three men were anxiously waiting. La Signorina Spinosa alighted from the sedan, and by a gloved hand was led at once to the altar, on which were burning in dim significance two lofty candles, that only served to make the gloom of the vast edifice more gloomy. But the young lady saw nothing, heard nothing but the beatings of her own heart. Was she not at Fiesco's side, soon to be his? Was not that bliss enough to absorb every other feeling, thought, emotion? The ceremony

went on; but, ere the priest said "Amen," these words struck upon her ear, or she dreamed: "May it ever be thus with the friends of the Federati!"

Conducted to the sedan by her husband, Madame — received from him a kiss, and the next moment was on her way back to the mansion she had so lately left, innocent, trusting, happy, ignorant of the depth of the terrible gulf into which she had just thrown herself.

"Are you satisfied?" said Gonzalvo to the smuggler.

"That kiss," replied the man, "would have been enough to satisfy the sultan himself."

"Go, then, where you please: but make no mention of this affair till you receive permission to do so from high authority; otherwise you may find yourself in the jaws of those sharks you so sarcastically referred to a while ago, and who may not think the galleys any too good for you."

The smuggler was glad to escape thus easily; resolving in his own mind, through fear of the consequences, never to utter a word concerning that night's mysterious affair, till, by some good fortune, his obligation to secrecy should be removed.

I have said that three men were anxiously waiting the arrival of La Signorina; but they were not all who were present at the nuptials. Standing in the nave, in the shadow of a column, Fiesco saw the young lady enter; saw one who, he doubted not, was his affianced; saw enough to convince him that what the monk Massard had said was true; and, as soon as the ceremony at the altar was over, hastened to his

home, and prepared every thing for an immediate departure from the country. The next day he was on his way to England: hence the absence noted in the first part of this chapter, which had created so much talk in all the fashionable circles of the city; and hence his appearance in London and Edinburgh.

Immediately after the flight of Fiesco, the supposed monk, who had been so instrumental in directing the movements of the deluded Spinosa, appeared before her with a tale no less harrowing to her feelings than the story concerning "the will."

"We fear," said he, "that, in the marriage which has just taken place, we have all been grossly deceived. We have some reason to suspect that young Fiesco, wishing to avoid these bonds, bribed some one to take his place: for, the moment the ceremony was over, he was seen to escape by a side-door; while the person to whom you were married, though he tried to avoid observation, was thought to resemble a poor smuggler who consorts with the fishermen and Federati.

"Holy Virgin! Mother of God!" exclaimed the poor young creature, "what am I to do? What, what will become of me? Poor me! lost me!" And she stretched her bloodless hands toward heaven; then buried her face in them, and stood convulsed from head to foot.

"Keep every thing a secret within your own breast," said the monk with impressive energy.

"Holy Mother of God!" she again uttered almost with a shriek; then reeling, and with a groan as from a broken heart, she fell upon the floor like a corpse.

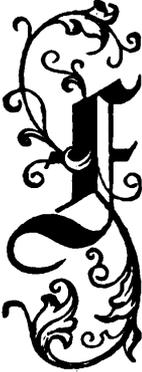
The monk rang the bell, and a servant immediately answered it.

“Your mistress has fainted,” said he to the maid, then, amid the bustle and confusion that ensued, left the house.

In a preceding chapter, we have seen how that Fiesco, after having resided for some time in England, became enamoured of the beautiful Kathleen McGregor, married, and finally brought her with him to Genoa; and to Genoa we now return after our digression, — a digression involving a number of years.

CHAPTER X.

DANGER AND DARING. — A WRECK. — AFTER THE RESCUE. —
TWO NEW HEROINES. — LITTLE WORDS AND GREAT RE-
SULTS.

OR some days, in Genoa, little or nothing transpired in fashionable *coteries*, or, synonymously, in the world of intrigue; for there had descended upon the city a cold, chilly rain, the borders of a storm that was raging along the coasts from Eastern Spain to Western Italy. One afternoon during this dismal period, a man on the "lookout" on the summit of the lanterna descried a brigantine beating up the bay. Her captain was evidently using every exertion, pressing all possible sail, to gain a point so far to the windward as would make his entrance within the "mole" a matter of certainty. But the quick eye of the observer — an old sailor who for many years had known all the relative bearings in the offing, whence he could predict exactly, with specific winds, where any ordinary vessel would reach — saw that this effort would be a failure: he therefore called to a well-known fisherman, Boppo, who was mending his net

at the base of the tower, and informed him of the fact.

To no one could he have more judiciously appealed ; for to great courage and intrepidity Boppo added a heart full of humanity, and touched to the quick when a fellow-creature's life was in danger. When, then, the brigantine neared the harbor, and the watchman discovered that she was drifting helpless, as if the crew had given up hope, and were, it might be, preparing to abandon her, he announced this also to Boppo, and that he saw two females there clinging to each other for mutual comfort and support. But it was useless for the fisherman to attempt the rescue alone ; and not one of his companions would risk themselves in the breakers outside the "mole." At this juncture the smuggler appeared, almost out of breath, and hurriedly recounted to Boppo what he had seen from his cottage on the hillside, and besought him to take his boat, and aid him in an attempt to save the imperiled lives.

"You, a landsman," said Boppo, "dare risk your life on the other side of that breakwater while these old sea-dogs here will not stir an inch?"

"Something strangely impels me to this," replied the smuggler. "I have no fear : you may rely on my strength and courage. I feel as if I could almost take the very ship upon my shoulders, and bring it into port. Come, let us go ; let us make haste : we *must* save them. My life may be in the balance : but there are feeble hands stretched out to me there ; and cries go up from lips, that, were they those of my own child, could not more thrill me with their mysterious power and tenderness.

“ Amid the howlings of this storm, do you pretend to say you heard their cries ? ” said Boppo. “ My ears are very sharp ; yet I can not even hear the tolling of the ship’s bell, which now must be sounding her knell as she tumbles hither and thither.”

“ Yes ; above all this roaring of the waves and the moaning of the winds, one voice reaches me,” replied the smuggler. “ I can not say that it strikes upon my ear like the thunders of the waters or the screamings of the blast ; but it comes to me rather like a cry we hear in dreams, — like some voiceless thought that now and then startles us like a shriek of despair.”

Boppo looked at the speaker, and wondered if he were sane ; but as he had for some time known him as a faithful, fearless man, he did not hesitate to embark with him.

So eager, then, was the new-comer to be on the way, that it seemed as if he was near upsetting the boat as he leaped into it : but there was really little danger ; for it was one of those light whale-boat-like skiffs that float on the billows like a cork. “ And now give me the oars,” said he with trembling ardor, “ and you take the helm. Guide her into whatever danger you please, so that we save those poor helpless creatures.”

With a strength, with a fervor, with a precision and boldness, that astonished his companion, he swept the boat out into the foaming sea, over which came now the solemn tones of the bell of the doomed ship as she rolled masterless, nearer and nearer, soon to lie stranded on the outer borders of a reef of rocks.

The oarsman’s back was toward the thrilling scene : only Boppo could see what was transpiring, and that

only at intervals; for the spray was constantly flung over them, and he was thus often blinded. Still he would from moment to moment relieve the terrible anxiety of the smuggler by telling him of the progress of events.

“In less than fifteen minutes,” said he as they came in full sight of the vessel, “she will be on that treacherous reef. Perhaps they do not know it: they have not lowered the boats. Now I think they see us. They are working at the quarter-boat. God be praised! They have yet ten minutes. I see a child or a woman on the taffrail waving a handkerchief.” The tears coursed down the cheeks of the smuggler. “There are two boats: they are embarking. A man — a woman — another woman — another man — two more! And now they push off! But, O God! that boat can not live.” The tears rolled more rapidly down the rower’s cheeks; but he uttered not a word. “The boat is swamped! But pull hard: we can save them! Starboard oar, steady now, steady! in a minute I can save one.” And he had hardly said this ere he sprang forward, grasped, and drew into the skiff, a young girl with a fairy-like, beautiful form, enveloped in the dantiest of garments. “A sylphide saved,” said Boppo; “and now for another.” And in a moment more he had rescued a second one, still more youthful and delicate; then two men who had reached, and were clinging to, the side of his little craft; but the fifth and sixth had gone down. The other boat of the brigantine had drifted far to leeward; had entered the breakers; and all on board had perished.

“Larboard now, and steady before the wind,” said Boppo; “for our perils are not over. We can not weather the storm and gain the windward mole: we must trust ourselves now to God, and try the nearest shore. Steady now, steady!”

The old fisherman knew well every niche and crevice among the rocks; and he steered his boat for a point, which, though seeming the most dangerous of all as it breasted the storm, and sent the spray high into the air, sheltered a shallow creek, and less dangerous landing-place than any other within reach.

Onward the little skiff was swept; was plunged downward, as if about to be buried in the deep; then tossed like the froth upon the curling summit of the wave; now submerged to the very gunwale, the prow hidden from sight; then trembling and halting before the more swiftly-rushing, foaming, and hissing sea that towered above them in the rear. Onward they were hurled, the rescued trying to comfort each other. La Sylphide, as all would ever call and think of her, held in her wet lap the head of the frailer-looking girl, wiped away her tears, and whispered to her words of hope and cheer; and while the young sufferer lay there pale, almost as nearly dead as alive, her fine features in relief on the dark, dripping drapery of the one who was, to her at least, an angel of mercy and love, the smuggler sat gazing at her as if entranced; as if he had seen some specter rise from the deep. His eyes were almost starting from their sockets; his muscles grew larger as he strained them at the oars, and the perspiration rolled from his forehead: and as the little craft leaped the last breaker, and her prow

struck, he caught the slight creature by the dress, held her aloft as he might have held an infant, and, with one of those bold and astonishing bounds few dare undertake, reached safe footing upon a rock. But he had not abandoned his companions, now thrown into the water by the shock and the efforts of each one to escape. More grateful than ever, and not less eager to help, he plunged in after them, seized the remaining fair one, and, by almost superhuman efforts, regained the landing; but, ere he could entirely extricate her, the boat was dashed up, caught the foot of the gentle Sylphide, and crushed it. Boppo was almost at home in the water, and, while thinking of or caring little for himself, struggled manfully to assist and save the others, as well as his beloved skiff. He came out at last with his boat; but he was so exhausted, that, when he found all were safe, he sank upon the sand, utterly helpless.

Many fishermen were now gathered upon the beach, offering their services to the sufferers. Their old friend, elaborately bathed with brandy, and with no small portion of it administered internally, was soon fully restored. A sail was then prepared like a stretcher, or cot; and La Sylphide was carefully placed on it, and borne by four stalwart men up to Boppo's house. By her side walked her loving companion, who, now able to go afoot, held her all the way by the hand, and tried, in turn, by words of tenderness, sympathy, and affection, to lessen the anguish arising from the maimed limb.

All were welcomed to the old fisherman's home; but, as quarters there were limited, the men were

obliged to repair to their consul. All were grateful; but, amid their gratitude and joy, there was cause for sorrow. The seamen had been bereft of some of their companions. La Sylphide had lost all her wardrobe and money, and, by her crushed foot, the means of obtaining more, — means by which she had thus far won an honest and golden way through the world; for, considering her youth, she had been more lauded than any other *danseuse* that ever appeared upon the stage, and, in the hour of her great triumphs, could have borne off, had she desired it, the hand and heart of a prince.

Who, you doubtless would like to know, was the young girl that seemed so dear to the Sylphide? One night in Madrid, when the latter was returning from the theater where she had electrified the audience, received a crown of jewels and a heavy purse of gold, and felt rich, she found upon the doorstep of her hotel a poor hungry creature of about her own age, but smaller and more delicate, apparently from sheer destitution. One look at her, as the lamplight fell upon her pale, thin features, was enough to rouse all the tender sensibilities of our heroine's nature; and instead of spurning her as an outcast, a worthless, useless excrescence upon society's fair proportions, she stopped and questioned her concerning her history and circumstances, and found a jewel buried in rubbish. She at once took the wanderer to her rooms, fed her, ordered her a bath, and clothed her; and then, even at that late hour, could not bear to lose her in sleep till she had gone over again the recital of her life of woe. Finally she was placed in a nice bed,

and assured that she had now a sister, who would henceforth watch over her. With the voice of prayer lingering in her ears, she soon closed her eyes, for once, in her short career, happy, and in the deepest slumber forgot that she had ever been miserable.

At a late hour in the morning, when the young girl awoke, she found her new friend, still in full dress, reading at her bedside. "What!" said she, starting up, "have you been sitting here all night to watch so poor a creature as I am?" And she threw her arms around the kind watcher's neck, and in tears sobbed out her gratitude.

"Yes; for the excitement of the evening's triumph, and the pleasure I had in contemplating my new-found treasure, arranging plans for your future career, — building castles in the air, perhaps, — deprived me of all wish to sleep. I thought and planned, and then read Sappho, and then planned anew; and, as all seemed bright and cheerful, I could not but associate you and my authoress together, and so longed to call you Sappho if you had no objections. Thus, laying aside your other name, you might soon be enabled to think and feel, with me, that this is the real beginning of your life."

"Any thing that pleases you," said the young girl; "for I have nothing but my desire to be good, and serve you, with which to express my sense of your great kindness, — kindness of which I have known nothing, and of which I had ceased to think, as if it had no name or place in the sum of wealth, or archives of humanity."

A few days after this, when La Sylphide had com-

pleted a most successful engagement, — the queen herself having acknowledged the power of her charms, her merits as an *artiste*, her great tact and circumspection for one so young, — she appeared before the British consul to have her passport countersigned for Italy, and get another for her companion. The first was a straightforward matter of business: but the latter — as the subject of it was Spanish — involved several considerations; some of considerable importance, he discovered, as her history was unraveled. La Sylphide too, in the course of the interview, had related much concerning herself; somewhat in order to explain why she had taken such an interest in her new-found friend. This awakened in her behalf more solicitude than she had anticipated; and the consul requested that she would be the bearer of a letter to the British ambassador near the court of Sardinia. He then finally arranged it to have Sappho appear on her passport as her sister; La Sylphide solemnly affirming that she had thus adopted her: and so, more than happy, she set out for Malaga, whence she sailed in that ill-fated brigantine whose wreck has just been described.

CHAPTER XI.

FRIENDLY ATTENTIONS. — A NEW HOME. — A NEW OCCUPATION. — SOUL-SEARCHINGS. — SMUGGLER'S ARTIFICE. — RARE NATURES.



WHEN the smuggler had assisted in safely depositing La Sylphide and her companion at Boppo's, he hastened away for professional aid. In a few moments he returned with a noted surgeon, who evidently felt chagrined at being called to so humble a habitation: but when that lovely foot, all crushed, was shown him, his heart was enlisted; and with the utmost skill, and all possible gentleness, he performed the necessary operations, arranging and bandaging the beautiful limb with a delicacy and tact that did honor to his high profession. He also, without knowing why, became deeply interested in his young patient (as was every one, indeed, who entered her presence): and, when he took his leave, he kindly said to her, "I place myself at your command; think of me as your friend." The first surgeon in Italy at the command of the poor, penniless Sylphide!

But however fascinating and delicate might be the foot, however gracefully turned and exquisitely modeled the limb, there was no hope that they could be so restored as to enable their possessor ever again to appear on the boards of a theater. The surgeon only gave her the assurance that their fair form and proportions would be preserved: their elasticity, he considered, must be sacrificed.

What was now to become of our young heroine? She seemed to care but little for herself: for her adopted sister she entertained a solicitude that evinced the overflowing goodness of her heart. This self-sacrificing disposition was that, in fact, which went far toward obtaining for her everywhere, in high and low society, the warmest welcome. The smuggler saw and felt her anxiety: but he could not at once separate the two friends; and La Sylphide was not yet able to be removed. He, however, assured them that his home should be their home, his purse their purse, while a single scudo remained in it: indeed, he obtained a promise, not being so poor as the old fisherman, that, as soon as possible, they would come to reside with him, where his aged housekeeper would be to them both friend and mother. In the meantime, nothing was neglected to make them contented. He visited them daily, bringing fresh fruit and delicious wine, and every thing that Boppo's generosity had overlooked. After a couple of weeks they were taken to his house, where purer air, finer scenery, and very many of the real comforts of home, awaited them.

The smuggler, for reasons best known to himself,

lived just outside the walls of the town, not far from the shore, on the rather precipitous slope of the acclivity, whose summit, so picturesquely crowned by a fortress, is the admiration of all who approach the city from the sea. The view from his cottage was extensive, commanding for many miles the coast, and leagues off on the blue Mediterranean. This last fact was especially important to him ; for, with a particularly fine telescope, he was notified of the approach of those vessels in whose cargo he had some pecuniary interest. Such craft could lie well out during the light of day, and at night run in shore at such specific places as were convenient for landing and transporting merchandise to his quarters. Smuggling, he knew, was not legitimate business ; but it suited his present restless mood and daring disposition, and enabled him to assist those whom the government was oppressing. This was his excuse ; and, could there be any excuse for such clandestine work, it certainly, in this case, must be regarded with all charity.

The smuggler's interest in his fair guests did not diminish, but rather increased. Toward one of them at least, as she was enabled partially to recall some scenes in her childhood, his feelings developed into an interest so purely paternal, that life itself would have been but meager guerdon to secure her lasting beatitude. He now also began to follow out that intangible yet silvery-seeming thread, woven into our being, which links us with the immortals ; the clew to those unfathomed and all-potent influences which drove him, in the face of death, over the tempestuous sea, to succor the distressed. He delved into the

depths of the soul to hunt up its spontaneous impulses, and found there, he believed, the echoes from shrines in the far-off fields of Elysium, before which the incense of pure hearts had been offered up on earth.

The smuggler, as we have seen, was bold, generous, humane, thoughtful ; but circumstances had thrown him into a sphere where he had to act a part unsuited to his nature. His profession had grown out of unstudied events ; but he availed himself of its various resources, turning every thing to the best account, to aid the oppressed, and take an active part with the Federati. His cottage was one of the rendezvouses of the disaffected : the finest spirits of the land met under his roof. His garden was large and highly cultivated, and served him two purposes, — an academic grove that sometimes might vie with the ancient Athenian ; whilst its abundant harvest of grapes, turned into most excellent wine, enabled him to make ample and successful defense against official charges, to which he was occasionally subject, of smuggling that article. He, indeed, disposed of a vast quantity of the juice of the grape : whence it came I need not say. Some that he obtained was sold in another shop, in town, within and near the walls. Had this also belonged to the smuggler, it might have excited still more suspicions ; but it was in charge of another, and he was equally devoted to the cause of freedom. How he obtained so much wine as it was thought he sold, was always a wonder to the *octroi* tax-collector, and caused many a search. The secret lay deep under ground ; for the smuggler had dug a passage-way from the cellar of his

own cottage, under the foundations of the city walls, to the cellar of the shop within the city. The entrance to each was most carefully and ingeniously concealed, and then further hidden by a heavy tier of old dusty casks, which looked as if they had not been touched for half a century. They were, indeed, as seldom removed as possible, and then with the utmost circumspection, and at such an hour of the night as would render interruption wholly improbable.

The two young girls under the smuggler's roof grew apace in the favor of all who knew them; and it was but a short time before the Federati found them both useful and important auxiliaries. Sappho soon took entire charge of the smuggler's establishment; and La Sylphide became a vender of the favorite tiny little fish of Genoa, the *djankete*. She had in this been opposed by her foster-father till her resolution was fixed and her reasons given. She felt herself poor now; and, though able to walk as well as ever, she had, as the surgeon supposed, so lost the elasticity of her ankle, that a further appearance as a *danseuse* was out of the question. Too self-relying, and too regardful of the interests of others to live upon their bounty, she accepted the first means offered her to obtain her own livelihood. She was self-relying, as I have said, because circumstances had thrown her, when a mere child, upon the pitiless world; and with naturally noble impulses and principles, which made her resolve from the first to be both just and good, she had been esteemed, caressed, beloved, and blessed. Now, under Boppo's especial encouragement, she saw an easy and simple way by

which she could secure an independent subsistence; though — and it was her only source of sorrow — it drew her much away from her adopted sister, and finally caused her to reside almost wholly under the old fisherman's roof.

There was another incentive to this step: by going into every part of the city, and almost every house where she knew she would be welcome, she was sure of being of no little service to the Federati; obtaining for them the most important information, that would otherwise escape them. Not that she would be a mere spy; that was not the intent: she wished to be of service to that poor and oppressed class of men that once had such high renown in Galilee. Humanity beckoned; and it was one of the generous, self-sacrificing impulses of her nature that sent her forward as on a great errand of mercy.

There are some natures which seem to be absorbents of human sympathy. They are like the choice flowers, which exhale a delicious perfume while they draw from the surrounding earth and air the elements of life. When once we look upon them, we find them nestled in our hearts like love-birds in some favorite haunt. However morose we may be, however many neuralgic or gouty pains may cause us to fasten our doors against mortality in general, the bolts are withdrawn at the approach of these favored ones; for, as if angel-winged, they bring joy to our midst.

Thus La Sylphide walked her daily rounds. Those who did not want any thing from her little silvery-laden basket often invited her in, and bought, for the mere pleasure of contemplating the exquisite grace of her

manners, her ever-varying yet ever-lovely expression, her powers of conversation, or the beauty of her hand or foot. When she called at the Doria Palace, she was invariably sent to the parlor by the princess's orders; when at the Palace Balbo, the countess always descended to have a chat with her. Indeed, the most refined and cultivated ladies felt happier for having seen her; and, though they could not but acknowledge her superiority in almost every thing, they rather loved than indulged any feelings of jealousy or envy. Strange to say, if either courted the society of the other, the rich and titled were the ones who sought the poor *pescatora*; giving her such positive assurances that their doors were always open to her, that she, unannounced, ascended the marble stairways of the nobility, and ranged their halls and saloons with as much freedom as if they had been her own.

Sappho, at home, was quiet, industrious, seldom loquacious, and went the round of her duties with noiseless step, and with a touching humility which seemed the offspring of her early misfortunes, or to arise in a foreshadowing of coming events.

CHAPTER XII.

IMPORTANT ARRIVAL. — NEW LOVERS. — LA SYLPHIDE DESCRIBED. — A CIRCASSIAN. — ORIENTAL CUSTOMS.



ONE bright and balmy day, seeming more bright and welcome when contrasted with the stormy weather that had been desolating the coast, a Turkish man-of-war entered the port of Genoa, bringing the Turkish ambassador and suite.

After a salute had been fired from the ship and replied to from the fort, and the usual round and routine of documental and official formalities had dragged themselves slowly along to an end, a little boat shot out from the western side of the harbor, swept along its smooth waters, and gracefully "rounded to" at the foot of the steps of said man-of-war. The strong arm that had impelled it there at once handed out the light, lithe figure of La Sylphide. In a moment, with basket in hand, she was at the gangway, where, on account of her peculiarly picturesque appearance, her modest mien and graceful manners, she was, without delay, courteously welcomed by the officer of the deck.

“Where are you from?” said the little *pescatora* in French, as she sat down the nicest little basket of the smallest, nicest fish which the sea produces.

“From Constantinople,” replied the officer in the language in which he had been addressed.

“A long voyage; and you must, probably, be in want of some of the tiny fish for which this bay is so celebrated.”

“We would buy them if we did not want them,” said the officer, smiling.

The *pescatora* acknowledged the kind remark by a gentle courtesy.

“But we do want them very much,” he continued; “and we are obliged to you for bringing them on board. But tell me how you, a little Italian fish-girl, came to speak French so fluently: are you French?”

“I once resided in France,” replied the interrogated, with some apparent diffidence.

“Well, I will not push that subject. You are certainly too pretty to be a mere hawker of fish.”

“I like it; I like to be abroad in the world,” said she. “While at home, I am associated with an honest and industrious people whom I sincerely love.”

“That is all very well,” replied the officer; “but Nature evidently designed you for something higher.”

While this conversation was going on, the Turkish ambassador, and his secretary Haffed, approached.

“She is finely chiseled,” said the secretary.

“Finely.”

“That short petticoat reveals the exquisite mold of her ankles and feet, which even her coarse stockings and heavy shoes can not disguise,” continued

Haffed ; “ while her close-fitting jacket displays a vigorous and faultless form worthy of a sultana.”

“ Faultless.”

“ And, by Allah, what eyes ! ” exclaimed the young man as the *pescatora* lifted them full upon him after the little embarrassment with the officer.

The ambassador did not reply to this ; for he did not see the fire, the glow, the tremulous flash, that played in those rich, full orbs, then went straight to Haffed’s heart.

Haffed had everywhere been admired and loved. Love had been so lavished upon him, he had not regarded it any more than the common sunshine that came every day to warm his handsome person : now, strange to say, in this young vender of fish he saw a being whose love he coveted. The girl before him was, indeed, something new, something *naïve* : could it have been this which made him fancy he loved ? Her costume — her short red petticoat, blue jacket, and white *pezzato* — was picturesque ; but in his own country he had been accustomed to see, in this respect, all that is attractive and fascinating, as well as unrivaled forms and dazzling beauty. What, then, gave him here a feverish anxiety to know more of the young stranger ? If he had asked himself the question, he would have been wholly unable to answer it. “ I only know,” said he, “ that, while I gaze at her, she draws to herself my very soul as the sun draws water from the sea.”

La Pescatora was of medium hight, and about sixteen years of age ; but her short dress, in the style which obtains in Southern Europe with the

peasantry and the poor generally, made her appear much smaller than she really was. A certain artlessness of manner, too, aided not a little in giving the impression that she was a mere child: when, however, one entered fully into conversation with her, it was soon apparent that she was gifted with extraordinary qualities, possessed a knowledge of human nature seldom equaled, and had an insight into the affairs of the country that would have done credit to a high civil functionary. And no one prized her beyond her deserts. Fortune had apparently been unkind to her in her early days; yet it was this very thing that had given her strength of mind, confidence in herself, and a perfect introspection of the structure of society, the machinery by which it was moved, and the laws that regulated its progress. Now, called into every house by her occupation, welcomed everywhere, she knew all that was passing within the four walls of the city, and hence, to the Federati, was a most powerful auxiliary, and had their entire confidence and support. Their cause, too, lay as near her heart as any thing in the wide world; for she had been much with, had been succored, saved, housed, clothed by, and had learned to love, the oppressed poor.

Huffed might well covet such a jewel; but he knew, as yet, little of her accomplishments or multifarious charms. She had a splendid mass of hair concealed under her *pezzato*, — a delicate scarf worn over the head, — which, while it served to protect, in part, her face from the sun, gave a mischievous expression to every look. Her handsome mouth and snowy

teeth were also nearly always half hid by the long ends of the same head-dress, which she held between her rosy, gladsome lips. Her jaunty jacket formed a fine bordering to her faultless throat. Wide, open sleeves gave occasional glimpses of strong, well-rounded arms and dimpled elbows. Her hands, evidently diminutive, though they had known hard work, were incased in gloves made of a peculiarly-dressed skin, which preserved them from every thing that could mar their sweetness or delicacy.

Haffed had no words that could express the strange, the novel feelings that now agitated him. He attempted several times to address her; but there was a choking in his throat which made every essay unavailable. At last, when she had received the money for her *djanketi*, and was about to leave the ship, he rushed to the gangway, and by an extraordinary effort was enabled to say, —

“Your name, if you please, dear girl?”

“Marzetta,” was the quick reply, but uttered in a tone of doubt and fear, — a hasty, half-smothered answer, which came as if she, perhaps, should not give it, yet was loath not to have him know it.

In another moment Marzetta was borne away in her swift little skiff, while Haffed stood watching her till he fancied he saw her safely landed.

“What will Lindahara say?” said the ambassador, laughing, as Haffed turned with moistened eyes to the quarter-deck.

“Why should she say any thing?” replied the secretary in a rather pettish tone.

“Lindahara, you know, has been afraid to have

you look at any human being but herself: she thinks her love and friendship are enough for you."

"My sister is naturally jealous," said Haffed: "still I can not allow her to interfere too far in my affairs."

"You owe her much," replied the ambassador.

"Every thing, I may say: yet she can not control the current of the heart; for life might then become a burden. I love that little girl."

"I have sometimes seen that you have greatly disturbed your sister by your vagaries: as she is my favorite, I have endeavored to make it appear that all was as she wished."

Haffed cast down his eyes, bewildered; and he felt the blood mounting to his cheeks. What did the ambassador mean?

"Here she comes," continued he, much to his secretary's relief. "Go and assist her: she will not allow any other one to do any thing for her when you are near."

Haffed hurried to the tall figure of "the favorite," just emerging from the cabin-door; but she motioned him away with an angry gesture, and with feeble step, aiding herself by any thing within reach, gained the side of the ship, where, on the railing, she leaned her head and hid her face, as if to weep unnoticed.

During the whole voyage, Lindahara had not previously been on deck; but, having overheard the last words Haffed had uttered to the ambassador, she hastened out to learn the cause, and catch a glimpse, if possible, of the creature who had given rise to them. Seeing no one, she felt both glad and ashamed, while her heart found relief through her tears.

Lindahara, the Circassian, whose fame for beauty had spread from the Caspian to the Bosphorus, was nervous, and hence had to be excused. She had cooped herself up in a small deck-stateroom with her servant; had taken no exercise; had had no garden-walks, no flowers, no perfume of roses except from her otto-bottle; and, not being able to lay aside at once her former habits of life, had not shown herself to any on board save her black Abdasa, Haffed, and his master. Now she appeared entirely enveloped in her long blue cotton plaid cloak or mantle, with no loophole but for her eyes and the toes of her yellow boots. If, however, this outer robe had been removed, every beholder would have been dazzled by the costly magnificence of her costume, and filled with unbounded admiration of its Oriental graces and its faultless adaptedness to her gorgeous figure. But Lindahara lived, and adorned her queenly person, for one being only.

The ambassador worshiped the fair Circassian in his own way; but, in accordance with Turkish ethics and etiquette, could not consider her his equal, or hardly as a companion even, during his most lonely and unoccupied hours. His dog — if such an animal were allowed about him — might lie at his feet; so might Lindahara, and perhaps rest her head on his knees, that he might dally with her flowing hair: but to sit by him as might a Western wife, put her white arms about his neck, and call him all her own, would have admitted her into a social sphere not countenanced in Oriental homes, — a sphere that would have seemed to him as unnatural and incon-

sistent as is the reverse to our Occidental ideas of a domestic paradise.

New and strange scenes now lay on every hand; but the dejected Lindahara did not heed them. Had she lifted her eyes to the terraced hills that overlook the gay city of "Genoa la superba," she would have been gladdened by scenery hardly less enchanting than that which engirded her girlhood's home, — by a variety of views not unlike those she had more recently contemplated on the banks of the Bosphorus; but the castellated heights, the vine-clad slopes, the valleys, villettas, convents, city turrets, ancient walls, or the nearer throng of vessels decorated with their various flags, all failed to arouse the attention or enliven the drooping spirits of this Oriental beauty.

While Lindahara was thus listlessly brooding over her real or imaginary sorrows, with her head still bowed upon the bulwarks, Haffed approached as near as custom and proper deference dictated, and in a low tone of voice, which was always soft and full of tenderness, said, —

"Are you ill, Lindahara?"

If an electric wire had been laid along the railing into the hands and bosom of the fair sufferer, an electric shock sent through it would not have reached her with more speed or effect than did the words of Haffed. She started nervously, trembled like a leaf, then clung to the shrouds near by for support.

"Call Abdasa, if you please," said she faintly.

Haffed clapped his hands twice, and a black slave, or servant, came hurrying out of the cabin as fast as her muffling would allow, and went at once to her

mistress. Having received an order, she went back, but soon returned with some smelling-drops. She then assisted "the favorite" to her state-room.

"Our long voyage, and the close confinement to which my sister has subjected herself, have much enfeebled her," said Haffed carelessly to the ambassador, who, in the course of his promenade along the deck, had come near enough to his secretary to be joined by him as he turned from the two retreating figures.

"She will soon recover when we are off the ship," replied the ambassador; "at least, if you are as attentive to her whims and caprices as formerly. But you must not let the spoiled beauty know that you have a thought or look for any one else, — if such should be the case," he said laughingly, — "nor fail to see her once a day; now particularly, as she will be bereft of many of the amusements with which I was enabled to supply her at Constantinople."

Haffed gave assent by his silence. The wishes of the ambassador were to him, in fact, commands which he would not have dared disobey. In this instance he had no contrary will, and made up his mind to conform strictly to his master's injunctions, however far his heart might possibly wander from Lindahara. He could love her as a sister, ay, even as a fond and faithful friend who had been willing to sacrifice every thing for him; while he could never be blind to her inimitable charms: but when he remembered the little *pescatora*, that gleam of the soul that came welling up in her eyes like the flames of Vesuvius from a sea of fire, all else had to him a seeming insipidity of which he could not divest it.

During the afternoon of the day of their arrival, the ambassador and his suite disembarked, and proceeded at once to the palace in Strada Nuova recently occupied by the former representative of the Turkish government near the court of Sardinia.

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CHAPTER XIII.

HOME-TALK. — A CONFESSION. — MISGIVINGS. — COMPLIMENTS. — NEW HOPES. — LA SYLPHIDE.



WHEN Marzetta left the ship and entered the boat, she was unusually taciturn and grave; but, seeing that her companion noticed it, she burst into a sweet girlish laugh.

“First sad, then gay,” said he.

“Yes, my good Boppo: such is life.

We are oftentimes depressed over a world of fiction of our own hearts' conjuring, but are buoyant with hope amid the real gloom of stern misfortunes. We hang our harps upon the willow, and sit down by gladsome streams which our own tears make bitter.”

“Were not a part of your remark true, my dear child,” said the fisherman, “how miserable should we be, who, by our daily toil, only gain enough for our actual necessities, and have from time to time a portion of that, even, wrung from us by our detested government! — wrung from us, I doubt not, to fill the coffers of that vile Gonzalvo, who one day, sooner or

later, will depart, leaving only the skeleton out of which he has drawn the soul."

"Sunshine follows the cloud-shadow, you know, Boppo: so will brighter days follow these of your suffering and gloom."

"The Federati are gaining ground, it is true," was his reply: "and I doubt not, if our nets are strong enough, extended enough, and well buoyed, we shall make a haul that will astonish the caught and the uncaught; for we have men at our tackle who have as much adroitness as strength, as much good judgment as energy."

"We are indeed gaining ground," said Marzetta with brightening countenance; "for the wise heads who rule us are not aware, that, the more they grind down the people, the stronger the people become. Every stone they take from what supports the working-man undermines their own temple. The Gallego, whom they call the smuggler, and who, though reputed poor, is rich, hints broadly at knowledge he possesses, which will by and by make Gonzalvo tremble."

"What can it be?"

"I do not know; but it has something remote in its origin, and will be like a stiletto in the side of our prime-minister."

"The Gallego is active, bright; he has seen much of the world; is of few words: and, if he has only hinted at a thing, you may be sure there is much behind it. But why were you so sad when you returned to the boat a moment ago? Did any thing happen on board to disturb you? You know that our fraternity is bound, to a man, to shield you from every insult."

“Nothing, my good Boppo,” replied Marzetta, laughing again.

“You acted strangely, looked strangely: you seemed as troubled as one of your little *djanketi* just out of the water.”

“To tell you the truth, I think I must have been caught in that net at which I have always laughed. I am in love.”

“It is not strange,” replied the fisherman, “since so many are in love with you. It has always been a wonder with us that none of our own bright, sun-browned, black-haired young men could win you, or even so much as a smile that would open to them the door of hope.”

“No: I have never, till now, dreamed of such a thing. I have been persecuted with what is called love; but I felt none for those who professed so much for me, except such as I have for you and my good friend the smuggler.”

“Now, who has been the fortunate captor?” said Boppo with a tender, fatherly interest. “Is it one of our own country, of our honest craft? or some gaudy stranger, who, like the dolphin, glitters in the sunlight, wearing all his gold outside?”

“I do not know.”

“Not know whom you have fallen in love with?”

“No. Simply a youth in strange costume, with long, light locks such as angels are sometimes painted with, — curls clustering round an uncollared neck sculptured as a Juno’s ought to be; a slender youth, yet agile and strong, as I could see at a glance; a fair-faced young man, made up, it would seem, of the

gleaming snow and sunshine of the Caucasus; a glorious creature, with brow and eyes that look as if borrowed from the very heavens towards which I shall dream they must be ever turned. For who," she continued thoughtfully, as if communing with herself alone, — "who, with such a look, could be less than divine?" Here the gentle narrator began again to laugh; but this at once was softened into a sigh, and for a moment she forgot where she was.

Boppo gazed at the young girl with a look of compassion and solicitude; for he felt sure she had suddenly lost her reason. It did not escape Marzetta's notice, and she smilingly said, —

"Do not have any anxiety about me further than that which, in the kindness of your heart, you have ever had. My first love is my adopted sister, and this my adopted country; my second, you, the smuggler, and the Federati, which seem inseparable; my third, myself and the sunny-eyed stranger" —

"Which you hope also to be inseparable," interrupted Boppo jestingly.

"Even so, if the Fates will it," said Marzetta artlessly, looking over into the water.

"Yet you do not know who or what he is?"

"I am sure of what he is, else my knowledge of human nature is, for once, greatly at fault; but who he is, I cannot say."

"For once, you may be greatly deceived," said Boppo in a tone of much sadness.

"You have no reason to distrust my discretion even in the affairs of the heart, my good foster-father," replied Marzetta, laying her hand affectionately on Boppo's shoulder.

“All have, and with good reason, perfect confidence in your judgment and discretion in all ordinary matters; but you have often seen in the Piazza Verdi Paulo’s statue of Cupid with bandaged eyes.”

“I know what you mean. ‘Love is proverbially blind;’ but, my dear friend, not of necessity indiscreet. I am aware that it is as natural to magnify the virtues of those we worship as the faults of those whom we dislike; but a mind properly trained and balanced does not discover virtues and defects where none exist. We have a standard of our own; we have the scales, the gage, the compasses, in our own brain; and by these the stature of our idols must be made out. Truth may hide itself in a deep well; but some instincts catch it on the mountain-top.”

“True, true, angelic girl. Forgive an ignorant fisherman for presuming to question the prudence, the wisdom, of any of your acts,” said Boppo with much true gentleness and humility. “You know with what fatherly solicitude, with what a yearning heart, I ever watch over you. You know, too, how all our craft — and I may almost say, all the Federati — hold me responsible for your safety and happiness. You must forgive me, then, for any even uncalled-for anxiety which I may manifest in your behalf.”

“Please do not talk thus to me, my good and kind friend,” said Marzetta. “I have nothing, can have nothing, to forgive, when I know that all that is said and done is dictated by a noble, generous nature, and by a love of the Federati; for your poor garments are no covering to your heart, while the sacrifices you have made for our noble cause — my adopted coun-

try's — have, among the oppressed, exalted you above kings."

"If the people think so highly of me, what must they think of you, Marzetta? We were nearly inactive, languishing under our burdens; but, when you came among us, you infused a new spirit into our society. One cried out, 'She is our Joan of Arc!' Another said, 'No, she has not, and never had, a peer.' I heard the Prince de Carignano himself say so."

"They owe it all to you, Boppo; for I could have done nothing, had you not seconded my plans, protected me, sheltered me, and been to me as a father."

"I strive only to do my duty; and God be praised if in that the Federati are aided! — But here we are at the shore. Did you make any agreement about supplying the ship while in port?"

"Yes, Boppo. They want some of our *djanketi* every morning; and I promised to carry them on board." Seeing, as she looked up, a smile playing over the features of her companion, Marzetta dropped her head as if caught in some thought she had wished to conceal, but in an instant rallied, and said, "He will not be there; he is with the Turkish ambassador; and I have already made up my mind that he shall aid our cause."

"In what way can it possibly be? you little sylphide?"

"I do not know; yet I have a presentiment that it will be so."

"You are full of hope: it is well you are so. The

Turkish representatives have, thus far, ever been favoring our oppressors. But this love — will it not dampen your ardor in our cause? and will you not soon get weary and disgusted with your present life and your humble associates?”

“Never, while one of the Federati is persecuted or oppressed. And you know my early days were those of toil, and my dear friends were the children of toil. It was, as I have often told you, in the deep mines, where I literally spent years, that I gained the strength, the muscular vigor, which enabled me to endure so much subsequently in my wanderings, and is now daily called into action. It was there, too, I learned to despise the pride and arrogance of riches, the heartlessness of place and power, the meanness and unscrupulousness of ambition. It was there I learned to love the confiding good, the humble poor, the laborer who earned his bread, slept soundly, and trusted in God.”

“Perhaps what every one would have thought a great misfortune may have been a downright blessing,” said Boppo. “Had you been reared in the luxurious home, where it has been hinted to you you were born, the chagrin and sorrows of a Spinoso might have overtaken you, your wealth proved only a curse, a bait for harpies, and your position only a stronghold for the claws of the envious. ‘Blessed are the poor.’ Then, again, to that long underground life you are doubtless indebted for some of those attractions which make you mistress of all hearts; for instance, that strange pallor which gives such wonderful distinction to your dark eyes and hair. But don’t let your old loving father make you vain.”

Marzetta had a peculiar delicacy of complexion, which, though far from indicating bad health, led one to suppose her possessed of a less robust constitution than was really the case. It was a whiteness so unnatural, that many called it unearthly: it had a transparent moonlight tone, that gave, as Boppo said, wonderful distinction to her deep blue eyes and dark auburn hair, and caused some to regard her with a kind of awe as they would a being just alighted from the skies.

Our little sylphide was, then, as remarkable for her beauty as for her versatile and exceptional life,—a life full of lessons invaluable in after-years. So absorbed had she been, however, in the cause of the Federati, more particularly during the later months of her residence in Genoa, that she had been unconscious of the admiration she had elicited till she saw Haffed.

When Marzetta landed from the boat, and passed up the steps to the Strada de la Marina, it was pleasing to see all the fishermen along the way doff their red, stocking-like caps. Arrived at Boppo's house, a short distance hence on the same street, she prepared another basket of the tiny fish, and went to her other customers.

CHAPTER XIV.

DEEPER DECEPTIONS. — MORE INTRIGUES. — A GOOD FRIAR.
— GOOD COUNSEL. — A SURPRISE. — HOPES AND FEARS.
— DEPARTURES.

PA SPINOSA, after that midnight marriage with the stranger, suffered intolerable anguish, and was brought to the very verge of the grave: but, as soon as she began to recover, the latent fire of the Spinosas — inherited, it was said, from an old heroic ancestor — burst forth; and, if she had had the whole human race by the throat, she would have strangled it. To Fiesco Felisquetto, whom she considered as having been her betrothed, she was bitterly inimical, and ready to commit almost any crime that would destroy him; particularly after his return to Genoa with his new-found prize. She would be another Borgia.

“Nothing would please me better,” said she, addressing the prime-minister, who had called early that day, made some startling suggestions, and was now seated on a rich lounge by the side of the speaker; “for there is nothing I will not undertake to do to

humiliate and ruin so vile a creature as that same Fiesco. I say and I mean it, I will make any sacrifice in the world to crush him, and drive hence my hated rival."

"My terms might involve much," said Gonzalvo, with a smile intended to conceal the asperity of his mission.

"Call me reckless of consequences if you will," continued the lady ("and my hasty marriage might well justify you in it): I am so determined, so fixed, in this purpose, here is my hand as a pledge." She placed then her taper fingers in the grasp of the minister's, but turned away her head to hide a blush mantling her faded cheeks at the thought, that, in the state of society then dominant, the act might convey a false impression, and, to one less imbibed by the world's treachery, might have been more embarrassing still.

"I thank you for this little gift," said the minister as he pressed the thin, delicate hand to his lips, — "more prized, unlike most gifts, for its being diminutive; and, were your soul's best wishes and desires in it, I am free to own this would be literally the white mark on my life's dark page."

"I beg," responded the lady, "that you will refrain from compliments in such serious moments as these." And to her they seemed all-important, and fraught with momentous consequences; while, to the other colloquist, they were burdened only with trivialities, which, in careless security, he trundled into the murky marshes of discord that spread their fetid and fatal miasm in all the region where he walked.

“In the first place,” resumed the minister, still holding the little hand, “I am aware that this Count Fiesco is associated with a gang of low fellows, whose designs are to assassinate all now in power, up to the very king himself; create a state of unparalleled anarchy, and, in the midst of it, seize upon the reins of government in the name of the people, open the gates of their Utopia, and rush to a republic.”

“Well, then, what you want, I suppose, is to prove this against him, is it not?” interrupted the lady, her eyes flashing fire in her eagerness to begin the work of discovery.

“This is not only to be proved against him by some measures, laudable or otherwise,” said Gonzalvo, “but La Signora Kathleen’s confidence in his honor must be destroyed at the same time: for should any thing be ascertained, even beyond cavil, implicating him in as diabolical a plot as was ever hatched in the brain of a regicide, it would avail nothing so long as he has that fair wife of his to plead for him with his Majesty; for it is a truth, that, by her beauty and talents, she has captivated our aged king, who presents her from time to time with such rare jewels as might well excite the jealousy of the royal consort herself, were not his true virtues, his earnest piety, his unbounded goodness and benevolence, known and appreciated.”

“The jade!” exclaimed La Spinosa. “How dare she act so! A stranger, a foreigner, to thus intrude and throw her pert self into our very politics, is monstrous: it shows an impertinence and impudence that is wholly unbearable, and exhibits a character entirely

at variance with that delicacy which belongs to her sex." And the speaker grew pale and red by turns, and gnashed her teeth, as she went through this tirade. The designing words of her visitor had had their desired effect. He had presented to her view, at this as well as at other interviews, a woman infinitely her superior in every thing that renders her charming to the other sex.

"We have sufficient evidence," the minister went on to say, pleased with the excitement he had created, "that Signor Fiesco is in constant intercourse with those known to be hostile to the government, and receives at his house a fisherman called Boppo, who has great influence with his craft, and is our active and bitter enemy. But this is not enough for our purpose. It must be shown to his *cara sposa* Kathleen that he is in the habit of meeting some female clandestinely, and that it is publicly known. Now, it will be necessary for you to represent this person, and, to allay all suspicion in his mind, claim to be of a secret independent sect belonging to the higher nobility, whose position in society, and relations with the government, render the utmost precaution necessary, and compel you, for the present, to remain *incognito*."

"But suppose he should recognize my voice, and tear the mask from me, what then could I do?" said the lady.

"Even then," replied the minister, "a part of the plan will have succeeded; for this secret interview will be known to his wife. I shall give her cause to suspect; and suspicion, with a woman, is half conviction: she will indeed be apprised of the meeting, and

will be upon the watch. Should it be discovered who you are, it will influence the Federati against him; for they are cognizant of your hatred of their fraternity. As for the rest, we will devise some new plan to entrap him. The main thing now will be, after what has been suggested, to conceal your own designs, and draw forth his. Ascertain the time when his party intend to make their first great outbreak. Go in the garb of the sisterhood: that, with a veil and the obscurity of the place of meeting, will render you quite safe."

"But tell me quickly," said the lady with no little trepidation and earnestness, "where this meeting is to take place; for Friar Jos, as we call him, is now crossing the street, and will in a moment be here."

"This evening, at eleven o'clock," replied the minister, "on the steps beneath the arch at Aqua Sola. It is near the ambassador's, you know, where the ball is to be, and where we must all appear. Pass in a hired *portantino* the Strada Nuova, and allow your handkerchief to hang from the window. He will be apprised of the nature of the signal, and will closely follow you to the appointed spot."

"The blessing of good deeds and charitable designs be your consolation, my friends!" said the friar as he entered the saloon of La Spinosa barefooted and unannounced; "for good deeds carry their own sweet burden of content along with them, and charitable designs are recorded in heaven to gather luster till you go to claim your reward."

"You are ever speaking good things and doing charitable acts, and so you are everywhere welcome,"

said the lady with some effort. "Be seated here near us, and let us hear the news in the religious and the suffering world."

"To stand before you better becomes my humble calling," replied the friar; "while those luxurious seats might make me desire the comforts I long since renounced. As to the truly religious world, it is full of beauty, harmony, peace, concord, love. The world of suffering has its comforts too, and its benefits, and is vastly instructive. One, to be really good, or to be impelled irresistibly to goodness, should be often in it; for one sees there the results of crime, of folly, of dissipation, and the involuntary and sterner sorrow brought about by the machinations of the wicked, the intrigues of rivals, of the ambitious and the envious."

The lady hung her head, and made no reply. Gonzalvo coughed lightly once or twice, and then said, —

"I see, my dear fellow, that you are a shrewd observer of human nature, and would make an excellent officer of police; but, upon my faith, I do not know how people are going to be so much bettered by looking on the miseries of others. From time immemorial, nearly an equal sum of joy and sorrow, piety and poverty, has stalked over the earth, and humanity has continued about the same: in fact, this very diversity of character and circumstances, and their consequences, seem to have been as much the design of the Author of all things as the difference in animals, plants, and minerals."

The friar had seen much of society in all its phases, and was indeed, as the minister remarked, a shrewd observer. It did not therefore escape him, that what

he had said about intrigue had an effect that revealed to him the cause of that early meeting which he had just interrupted; and he resolved to watch the parties. Their hatred of the Federati had long been known to him.

“I can not admit,” resumed the friar, “that the Almighty ever designed that man should suffer, except through his own negligence and follies. This throws him upon his own resources, and teaches him not only to improve himself for his own good, but for the benefit of posterity. God everywhere sowed the seeds of perfection: whatever does not attain to that is negative good, and not positive evil. If you neglect the trees of your garden, or thwart them in their progress, they will fall far short of that perfection they might attain if highly cultivated; and minds expanding around you will show the same result under similar treatment. Great wrong may be done by neglect as well as by positive action; and some have much to answer for under both of these heads.”

“Would you have us, my good father,” said the lady, “go into the purlieus and hospitals of the city to hunt up misery?”

“There are some,” replied the friar, “who should see with their own eyes the misery they inflict, and particularly that which they have the power to remedy. Such sights tend to knock off the sharp angles of our loftier position, oil, perchance, the long-rusted hinges of charity, chasten down the austerity of station, and hang around our selfish natures the rose-tinted tapestry of a benevolent sympathy.”

The minister sat gnashing his teeth, for he was

quite sure the friar intended to be personal ; but, ere he had time to make suitable reply, a young girl came laughing into the room, and with graceful salutation, but without waiting for any formal welcome on the part of the hostess, exclaimed, —

“ Oh ! I've such nice compliments for you all as will make you think you have been sculptured by Michael Angelo himself. One of the fish-women — such talkative and queer people you know they always are — asked me at the gate who the man was up here whose head was like a turret, whose face had so many shadows on it, and who looked like Satan seeking souls. In my way, I described to her the minister ; and she said it was he, and that he must look sharp to his trade. The friar, she continued, is a good soul, but not what he seems. He was made for a man, but has become a monkey. The lady is ugly enough and bad, but would improve in better society, where she ought to be. And then she wanted to know what the minister came here for, and what he talked about. I told her that the last remark I heard him make was, that he intended to hang all the fish-women to the cap of the sea-wall.”

“ O my child ! ” exclaimed the minister, “ why did you say that ? Those people hate me enough already ; and that speech will fly across the gulf to every hut on this coast, and will be believed by nine in ten ; and Heaven knows what may be the result. Which way did she go ? I will follow her at once.”

“ Oh ! you can not catch her,” replied the girl ; “ for, when she had found out all I had to say about you, she hurried off as though she intended some day to

pickle your ears. I watched her till she turned into the North Stradella; and she is probably, by this time, riding a broomstick round the summit of the lanterna!"

"For the first time, my charming little waif," said La Spinosa, "I hear you talk idly."

"I can not help it," replied the girl, "when I see so powerful a person as Signor Gonzalvo disturbed by the compliments of a crazy fish-woman, and even wishing to follow her. I must at least say that it pays his company but a poor compliment." And, courtesying very low, she would have retired; but La Spinosa detained her a moment by saying (with intent to repay the friar for some of his late remarks), —

"My good father here" — alluding to the friar — "has been almost trembling with delight as he gazed at you, my sylph. Indeed, you must not look at him again with those large eyes of yours, or you may turn him from his vows. But he has turned pale now, and so I will dismiss you."

With strange embarrassment the friar resumed the conversation, and addressed the minister.

"You confess, sir, that these poor people hate you. Now, if you wish to begin to overcome that feeling, I can offer you an opportunity."

"To assist some of those *perros* (dogs), I suppose," said Gonzalvo contemptuously. "No! they must first amend, become friendly toward the government, ere I can use them leniently."

"They are weak, and can hardly be the aggressors," replied the friar. "Be that as it may, you can give me a few scudi for the destitute family of a fish-

erman just departed this life, and some more to reward a brave man for a brave act, — the man who so fearlessly risked his life in that terrible storm some time since, when the Spanish brigantine was wrecked, and from which he saved, by most heroic efforts, that inimitable creature who was just here, and a poor girl from Malaga. The latter is a most gentle and loving creature, and a devout Catholic, — so much so, that she requested me to present this, which she has always worn, and prizes above pearls, to the Holy Mother.”

The friar here drew from a fold of his long, coarse brown robe, tucked beneath his girdle, a small picture of the Virgin, and was about to pass it to the lady, when the minister eagerly grasped it, and with a trembling hand scanned it closely.

“Pardon me,” said he: “my mother used to wear one like this, — almost exactly like it, — I could almost say the very same. Excuse me, therefore, for being curious about this person. Where do you say she is? how old? how does she look?”

“She lives,” replied the friar, “with the so-called smuggler, just outside the western gate. She is about fourteen, fifteen, or sixteen years of age, and looks like a lily loitering in the shade.”

As soon as Gonzalvo found out what he wished to know, he assumed an air of indifference, and simply said the bawble had reminded him of his mother, whom he had dearly loved; then changed the subject.

During the latter part of the conversation, La Sylphide had re-entered the room, impelled by a strange curiosity she could not resist. Was her friend Sappho

in danger? She had at once that conviction, and resolved to hasten home and warn her; but of what? She knew not; yet she felt sure something was going wrong. She had, however, before her, her usual rounds, which would bring her near night; but then she would surely go to her beloved Sappho. She had at that moment forgotten another engagement for that same evening.

The friar took and replaced "the bawble," as the minister had called it, in the fold of his dress, and held out his hand for the scudi.

The minister seemed remarkably generous, as though some pleasant memories had just been revived; and gave the friar a handful of money.

"I thank you in the name of the poor," said the recipient. "Here will be something for both." Then he continued, as if talking to himself: "Poor Bennito! he will be welcomed by the fishermen of Galilee, who now hang their nets on the banks of the stream that flows hard by the city of God; for there they will have some mimic means by which to recall their earthly tasks, and will give glad greeting to every good man of the craft. Bennito's boat is anchored safely there;" and he pointed heavenward.

Gonzalvo now took his leave with studied coolness, and the friar soon followed him. Marzetta lingered a while to tell La Spinosa some of her feelings, fears, and great love for Sappho. She then drew her *pezzato* more closely about her face, descended the marble stairs, replaced her gloves, took up her little basket, and was soon lost in the stradellas of the town.

CHAPTER XV.

DIABOLISM. — THE APPROACHING BALL. — HOW MARZETTA WAS INVITED. — CONCEALED FATE. — SAPPHO LOST.

HEN Gonzalvo left the mansion of La Spinoso, he walked to Madame Felisquetto's, with his old plans well developed in his mind. But he had now a new scheme, — a most important one, — and a new and strange sensation in his breast, that Marzetta perhaps, or the picture, had awakened.

He found the lady at home, and at once proceeded, in a carefully-digested, straightforward, adroit manner, to unfold to her the infidelity of her husband, sending his falsehoods to burrow in the unsuspecting soul of his fair listener like so many scorpions; for they came with the force of apparent truth, which her own eyes, he assured her, might make doubly appalling if she desired that more perfect evidence.

Kathleen had not intended to be at the ball that evening; but now she resolved to go: and, as the ambassador's palace was on Aqua Sola, she would

only be obliged to walk a few steps to command a view of the place of meeting. The minister would give her his arm; and they could saunter out into the cool walks of the public square without eliciting any particular attention. And was not the minister friendly? She knew he did not like Fiesco: but for her he expressed the strongest sympathy, admiration, devotion; was, indeed, willing — at least he said so — to make any sacrifice to secure her happiness. He, however, saw with actual pleasure the deep lines of agony her suspicion and dread were furrowing on her brow; and, that they should not lose force and permanency, he related to her the story of her husband's betrothal to La Spinosa, and final abandonment and flight.

If one could see that fabulous creature, Satan, enter and sow discord in Paradise, he could understand the difference between Kathleen's home before the minister came and that which he left. That calm, that noble, that superb beauty lay like a white withered rose flung into the dust at the roadside. In tears, her face buried in the cushions of the lounge, she passed moments, perhaps hours, of torture, and found herself alone when she started up as from some horrid dream. The thought of Fiesco's inconstancy had never previously entered her brain: hence this sudden development had come with the more crushing effect. Now walking her room in wild bewilderment; now throwing herself upon the bed, the divan, the floor; now stretching forth her arms as if he were present, and she pleading with him to have mercy upon her; now clasping her brows,

feeling that every word she had listened to from Gonzalvo was hammering out her very brains; now almost screaming from a sense of his treachery, *that she perhaps deserved*; now gasping at the hope that he might yet be true, — minutes were like hours, and the hours almost never-ending, as she looked forward to her husband's return. By and by she began to collect and arrange her scattered thoughts, so that she might properly present herself to him when he came, if he should come: and then she must be at the rendezvous; for uncertainty was worse than conviction, even if death followed close upon its inception.

But Fiesco did not return till late that night, for he had been all day with the Federati in a distant haunt; and it was soon after he entered the city that he was informed of the importance of meeting the disguised lady beneath the arch at Aqua Sola. And now, full of renewed enthusiasm and love of country, he was pleased to think that this event betokened a growing disaffection among the higher classes; and he waited with no little anxiety for the passage of the *portantino*, with the handkerchief hanging from the window.

The ball, that evening, was at the British ambassador's, in honor of the new Turkish ambassador. So crowded were the saloons, it was about as difficult to tell who were the honored guests on that occasion as who were not. Marzetta was there. What! that tramp? that dazzling little fish-girl? that ever-winning sylphide? Yes; and we must here learn how it happened.

The brigantine so unfortunately wrecked in the outer harbor of Genoa was doubtless an old vessel, as she soon went to pieces. Her cargo, consisting of Malaga wines and fruit, was, on the following day, strewed along the beach. Among other things found that had floated ashore was a trunk containing the jewels and some of the most costly dresses of the sylphide, and a letter to the British ambassador, Sir James Bond. This letter was at once sent to his Excellency; and, by virtue of its contents, he required that the said trunk and all it contained should be delivered over to him. These he dispatched to Marzetta as soon as her residence could be ascertained. One thing, however, was missing, — the diary of the young lady. It passed, unbeknown to its owner, into the hands of the prime-minister.

When the ambassador restored to La Sylphide her valuable articles, he sent his carriage and secretary, with a polite note, requesting an interview. She had no objections to granting it, provided Boppo could accompany her. The secretary was not authorized to refuse such a request: so, after the old fisherman had donned his best blue pantaloons, jacket, and red sash, and taken his cap under his arm, they all started together. On their arrival at the palace, the ambassador was a little astonished at seeing Marzetta's friend; but there was so much goodness and noble honesty in his face, that he commanded the respect of the Englishman. When seated in the reception-room, Sir James desired a private talk with the pretty young stranger on a subject of some importance; but she declined, saying that Boppo was one of her

foster-fathers, and she wished him to hear all, know all. She was, indeed, indebted to him for her life: what could she desire him not to know?

The ambassador then, with a few preliminary remarks which rather disapproved of her resolution, went on to relate some circumstances of her life that quite astonished her; and, leading her back by an unbroken chain of events,—but all founded on the supposition of her being the one who had designedly been lost by her own mother,—enabled her to recall many things which had, with her, passed into oblivion, or become only as faint memories of dreams. It brought to light what was important, perhaps, for her to know; but it added nothing to her happiness, and only showed that his Excellency was somewhat master of her future destiny. That he was, however, truly interested in her welfare, he manifested by offering her a home in his own family: indeed, he so urged it upon her, and expressed such a sincere desire to have her future welfare placed beyond the apparent caprices of fortune, that he quite won both her confidence and friendship. To Boppo he expressed his admiration of the heroic conduct and generosity he had displayed; and assured him, also, that when it was possible for him, in his official capacity, to speak or act for the benefit of the craft, he would most assuredly do so,—if it should be for his interest, he might, like most diplomats, have added. Before Marzetta's departure, he made her promise to be at his next grand ball, which he was about to give in honor of the Turkish ambassador who had recently arrived. Sir James's carriage would be sent for her.

When La Sylphide accepted the invitation to the ball, had she not some faint idea she might meet there the young Turkish secretary whom she had first seen on board ship? We will not try from the flutterings of young hearts to gather up the causes: they are numerous, fleeting often, lights from the fire-fly's wing o' nights, sun-glimpses on the sward beneath the moving foliage of a forest; or, if deep, then like the sparkling drops that come up from the stone-headed arrow of the Indian as it sinks into the dark waters of a haunted lake.

The invitation to the ball seemed to throw a momentary glow of pleasurable thoughts over the shadow that had fallen on Marzetta's spirits; and she returned home somewhat elated. Of the many courtly attentions, however, of which she had, from time to time, been the recipient, she was never proud. When in France, more than one ambassador's carriage was seen at her door; in Spain, the queen's equipage lingered before her hotel; before Boppo's humble dwelling, the gay *vettura* of the first surgeon in Italy had daily stood; and now that of the British ambassador set her down at the same place. Marzetta had, indeed, a humble heart with lofty purposes, — a guileless heart detesting falsehood and hypocrisy, and, above all, the heartless flattery of courts and "high society:" we can hence surmise, that, at Sir James's ball, she expected something besides all this.

The night of the ball was an eventful one in many respects. To several, it concealed in the shadow of its hours the hand of a cruel destiny. Sappho's was involved. She had not been warned; for fate was

against it. When Marzetta entered the ambassador's carriage at Boppo's, she requested his Excellency's secretary to drive to the smuggler's, as she had not had time to go there at an earlier hour. The secretary put his head out of the window, and gave some directions; but they were either misunderstood, or were not in accordance with her wishes; and, in a short time, she found herself at the ambassador's palace. There, though greatly depressed by the mishap, she saw she must forego till the morrow her intended warning. Would it be too late? Alas! too late.

That same afternoon, the smuggler went out in his boat to meet a friend, who, as master of a smuggling craft, was then hovering on the borders of the offing. Attempting to return, he encountered a strong head wind, against which there was long and tiresome beating to regain the shore. Finally, weary with this, as it grew dark, his companion took the helm, and he laid himself down to sleep. The gale increased, and swept piteously along the waste of waters. As midnight approached, he heard that same wild plaintive shriek that had so startled him on the morning of the shipwreck. Above the howling of the storm and the dash of the sea, that same tender voice, in the agony of despair, broke upon his slumbers. He started up, and would have leaped overboard had not his companion caught and thoroughly awakened him: then, even, he could hardly be restrained, so laggard was the boat. He longed to swim to the land, and rush to the rescue as he had done before; for was not Sappho again in distress, and crying to him for help? He had now no doubt of the warning, and that, when he

reached his home, he would find either Sappho dead, or that some great misfortune had befallen her.

When the smuggler did reach home, his old house-keeper came out with weeping eyes, and with such sorrow in her heart that she could not explain what had happened.

“Tell me, then,” said he: “is she dead?”

Adding astonishment to her grief, she could still less reply. The smuggler bowed his head upon his hands, and the tears came trickling through his fingers. Finally the old woman took him by the arm, and led him to a seat: then, sitting down at his side, she related, between sobs and hysterical chokings, how Sappho, she thought, had been standing at the gate near the street, or had been enticed thither, when she was seized by some one, and hurried off; for a shriek came from that quarter; and, when she reached there, no Sappho was to be found.

The smuggler felt another death in his heart, a coldness, a chill, that was allied to the grave. Search he knew would be unavailing for the moment. Still he was almost sure he could go at once, and place his hand upon the villain who had robbed him of his adopted child; but it would come to nothing, further than to frustrate some of the plans of the Federati: he therefore wept on in silence, and thought to bide his time.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE BALL AGAIN.—NEW AND OLD BELLES.—SUSPICIONS CONFIRMED.—FLIRTATIONS.—JEALOUSY.—A FRIEND.



IGNORA KATHLEEN FELISQUETTO was received at the door by the British ambassador himself: and, as she entered the ball-room, a murmur of admiration ran through the assembly; but she heard nothing, and cared little for any thing save that which was uppermost in her mind, — the rendezvous.

The Austrian ambassador was there with schemes of his own, which, before leaving home, he had repeated to himself in this wise: —

“I must take La Napolitana with me to-night; for no one of the genus *homo*, wearing male attire, has ever been known to resist her charms. She may not be, she is probably not, so beautiful as some who will be there; but she has a brilliancy of wit, and a *naïveté*, a piquancy, and impressiveness of manner, that never fail to conquer. Il Signor Fiesco Felisquetto must see her and love her; and thus, in two ways, she will serve

me. Madame, his *cara sposa*, will be jealous, and hence the sooner be brought to terms. The district in dispute will doubtless be hers through the king's friendship, and the unbounded admiration he is said to have for her; and she will be easily induced to transfer it to my government, at least at her death. But possibly this husband of hers may not come. I imagine, however, that he will, for fear his absence might excite suspicion on the part of those in power. Yes, he will come; and he must be introduced to the inimitable Napolitana."

La Spinosa was there: but she came late; for, after her meeting with the chief of the Federati, she was obliged to return home and change her costume. She came late, also, because she had lingered long with Fiesco; her old love returning at times, and making her, as she clung to his arm, almost confess to him who she was. She came attired in a magnificent dress afloat in costly lace, wearing all the family jewels arranged in the most becoming manner possible, though slightly *bizarre*, in keeping with her state of mind. "Indeed, having little beauty now," she confessed to herself, "I must depend entirely on my toilet. It is true, my shoulders are rather too bare, my neck somewhat *décolleté*: still, they are plump; and my corsage so reveals, yet hides them, that no one can say they are not fascinating. A few years ago, I should have been shocked at such exposure: now I would have Fiesco, though I hate him, think me vastly charming, and regret he did not marry me instead of that made-up Scotch or English vixen he now has, and who, I think, will lead him yet a pretty life; for, from hints thrown

out, she is no better than she should be. Besides, how is she, so wholly unaccustomed to such things, to withstand the gross and lavish flattery with which every one here will assail her, and the intrigues with which she will be beset for political purposes? Fiesco will rue the day he abandoned me! Oh, how I hate him!”

Count Fiesco Felisquetto also came late, and, as he did not intend to join in the dance, remained in an adjoining chamber, where some friends were gathered, playing chess. He came, as had been surmised, to disarm suspicion, and show that he was not afraid while he publicly avowed his opinions. He had been there but a short time, however, before the Austrian ambassador was informed of his presence, and at once brought and presented to him La Napolitana, the Countess Bruno, — a title obtained by a morganatic marriage with a prince (lately deceased) of the house of Hapsburg.

“I avail myself of this favorable opportunity,” said the ambassador, “to present to you the Countess de” —

“No, no!” said the lady, looking pleadingly up to him. “You promised me, that, if I would appear here with you, that title should not pass your lips; and now, on the very first occasion, you would break your word, and cast a gloom upon my spirits which the gayety of this brilliant assembly could not dispel.”

“Pardon me, dear lady!” replied the ambassador. “I did but intend to do you justice, and associate with your name the title that is justly yours; but,

since you consent to have it laid aside, — desire it, even, — I will submit, though I do it reluctantly. Allow me now,” continued he, addressing the count, “to present Signora Isabella la Napolitana. We call her the *rayon diplomatique*: for, from the time she entered our capital, she was the very genius of the empire; and so diffuse and cheering was the influence she exerted, that there was not one who did not regret the melancholy event which deprived society of its chief ornament.”

The lady again looked pleadingly up to him, but said nothing.

“You pay me a high compliment, prince,” said Fiesco, “in thinking me worthy of her notice.”

“She has often heard of you, and longed to know you,” replied the ambassador: “so you may lay aside your reserve, and consider yourselves as old friends; for I know you both, and am sure you will be pleased with each other. To prove how sincere my words are, I shall now leave her to your care; and you will soon discover what a treasure I resign to please my worthy friend Count Fiesco. But beware: I have told you of her powers to charm.” And, laughing, he hurried away to set in train another intrigue.

Fiesco offered the lady his arm; and, ere he had time to pay her those compliments he felt she really merited, she had entered on a topic vastly welcome to him, — the Federati and Italy, a never-wearying theme, which caused him to listen and talk he knew not how long, but till the guests had nearly all departed.

Kathleen had been there, and gone. As the hour

of eleven approached, she had taken Gonzalvo's arm, and strolled into the beautiful walks of Aqua Sola. When the clock in the old tower of Santa Crochata struck the appointed time, she stood near the head of the stairs that led down under the arch of the piazza, and in a few moments saw there, by the light which streamed up from the street below, the expected *portantino* and the tall form of her Fiesco. She saw also the masked lady dismount, take the gentleman's arm, and move at once out of sight.

No uninspired artist could have painted that picture of dismay, of despair, of hopeless abandonment, which Kathleen now represented as she clung to the pet for support. The minister, seeing that she was convinced, was satisfied; then all his efforts were put forth to allay her sorrow. He appealed to her pride, and entered largely upon the admiration the king, his royal master, had for her; and he thence opened up a way through which she could reach a splendor and power the noblest might envy, coupling this with vague expressions about something in the past.

Gonzalvo had succeeded; he had produced the desired effect, — arousing in the overburdened bosom of Kathleen a spirit of defiance that made her resolve to return to the ball and try and play a part, however revolting it might be to her finer sense of what was just and womanly. She did return; and the Austrian ambassador was one of the first to compliment her on her “supreme loveliness,” heightened by her great pallor and the agitation of the hour, “reminding him of a gorgeous white cloud rolling its billows along a

stormy horizon, its beauty and brilliancy enhanced by the sober-tinted background."

Madame Felisquetto could not be wholly insensible to the very marked attention and admiration lavished upon her on every hand; but thunderbolts came now and then, and she reeled with giddiness. "Count Fiesco is devoted to that lady," she heard some one (it was La Spinosa) near her say; and that was the first notice she had had of his presence. "It is not the first time the leader of the Federati has been seen with that lovely stranger," said another, and with the same design. Kathleen finally left her husband and La Napolitana together, and returned home.

Marzetta was also at the ball, as has been said; and though the marvelous fitness and picturesqueness of her costume, and her strange supernal whiteness (making her almost a miniature image, if not an exact likeness, of Madame Fiesco as we last saw her), though her varied charms, her peculiar airs, and the grace with which she seemed to weave her rounded snowy arms even into her most trivial talk, drew around her, wherever she went, a crowd of admirers, she was quite monopolized by two persons, — two as unlike as light and darkness, and each intensely jealous.

Can we for a moment suppose that the dark, stern, intriguing, ambitious, soulless Gonzalvo, a man very far advanced in life, could be in love? Even so, and with this same little sylphide, — deeply in love, though it seems like profanation to call his passion by that sacred name. It could only remind one of a priceless pearl thrown into a fiend's cal-

dron, had there been the slightest reciprocity of feeling.

Gonzalvo had seen Marzetta as the charming young fish-girl, and resolved to possess her. He had read, too, the "journal" or "diary" found in the trunk that floated ashore from the wreck; and, believing that it belonged to this wonderful specimen of Eve's daughters (perhaps to Sappho), he thought it important to have her under his own eye. The prime-minister was actuated here by two motives: one was generally enough to make him unscrupulous respecting the means by which he secured his ends. He could not, however, devote all his time to Marzetta: he had many other things to attend to. This left her to Haffed, the young secretary of the Turkish ambassador, who had discovered and sought an introduction to her soon after her arrival. And they danced together; Marzetta danced with no other: they danced whenever there was an opportunity; and they were very happy. Did Haffed know that this was the fish-girl who had so fascinated him on board the ship? He did not; yet he thought the resemblance so great, that he could not have told one from the other: indeed, he was several times on the point of asking her if she was not the person who brought the delicious little *djanketi* out to the Turkish man-of-war a few days before. But it was an impulsive, thoughtless intent, which was as soon restrained by the idea that it might be rude, if not actually insulting. Still, how could he love and possess two? He certainly must love this one, and he truly loved the other. He had not two souls for both, yet both possessed his soul. It was a dilemma

to him inexplicable, and from which he saw no way of escape. Marzetta supposed that Haffed recognized her as the one he saw on the ship, and so floated joyously through the short hours of that evening which had been so fruitful of sorrow to others, more especially to her beloved Sappho.

There was still another at the ball who felt a deep interest in the proceedings of some already mentioned: it was the luscious Lindahara. She came closely veiled, and stood most of the time within, but near the door of, a little boudoir that commanded a view of the ball-room. Very few saw her, and none knew how much they lost in not seeing her, — not seeing her as she would have appeared with her long silken mantle, that enveloped her from head to foot, laid aside. Like a lovely vision of the early morning, a beauteous image that seems to expand, yet melt away into the golden dawning, was Lindahara. She reminded one of the finer figures of Isis and Cleopatra on the Egyptian temples.

Lindahara's expression was usually calm, thoughtful, dignified: this night her eyes burned with an intense vivacity, and there was a restlessness in her manner that told of some mighty passion within. She saw that Haffed gave himself entirely to Marzetta; and in her she had quickly recognized the fish-girl of the ship, whom she had heard him describe. She was jealous; and her jealousy was not diminished when the Turkish ambassador said to her on their way home, "That young girl is stealing away your brother's love."

As Marzetta descended the steps to enter her car-

riage, she met the friar. "What, you here!" she exclaimed, extending to him her hand: "I thought at this late hour our good father would be shut up in the capucini."

"I have been about these grounds all the evening," replied he in a low voice; "for I feared something might happen to you. I suspected the prime-minister." He handed her into the carriage, gave her God's blessing, and at once disappeared. Marzetta was too much surprised at what the friar had said to collect her thoughts for any questions.

CHAPTER XVII.

MORE VILLAINY. — THINKING ALOUD. — A SURPRISE. — A WARNING. — DOUBTFUL CHARITY. — A MOAN FROM PRISON.



ONZALVO and the Austrian ambassador, having brought Madame Kathleen Fiesco's mind to the state they desired, found little difficulty afterward in molding it as they willed. The former almost daily sought an interview with the lady, and not only induced her to entertain the king's proposition — a palace and the title of duchess, with the important princely possessions connected with it — as an expression of his admiration of her personally, but more particularly, it was understood, for her political influence and knowledge as one closely allied to the Federati, and for the secrets she might divulge for the benefit of the kingdom; but he further persuaded her to solemnly obligate herself to bring all her influence to bear upon the voluntary (and even involuntary, if necessary) surrender of Marzetta to him to become his wife, *nolens volens*. La Spinosa had already pledged her word to the same

effect. Kathleen would have gone mad, however, had she known what she was really doing.

Gonzalvo did not offer himself to Marzetta merely as an elderly gentleman loving her much, or as prime-minister with great power in his hands: he added the tempting bait of a very beautiful country-seat on one of the most picturesque slopes of the hills that overlook the city; and he considered himself pretty sure of success, except when he thought of the way in which the girl had clung to Haffed on the evening of the ball. Later, when his hopes began to wane, he obtained possession of Boppo's favorite child, and caused the father to be informed that he might any time have his boy in exchange for his adopted daughter. This ruse failed, as we shall see; but the villain, nevertheless, had a cruel triumph over that poor but nobly patriotic family.

Boppo loved his child with all the warmth and naturalness of a kind-hearted father: but he cautioned Marzetta to beware of Gonzalvo, to be constantly on the watch, and guard her words and actions with ceaseless vigilance; for, like the smuggler, he felt that events and schemes were culminating, and that restitution and better times were fast approaching.

One day, Gonzalvo sat alone in his private study, lost in thought, and talking aloud to himself. The room he occupied was one that had formerly been used for the better class of prisoners, — political offenders principally, — and was connected with underground cells, dungeons, and passages of unknown extent: I say, of unknown extent; because, of late years, it had ceased to be a prison (in name at least), the large pala-

tial building having been converted into a dwelling at the minister's own particular desire. The stone walls of the apartments were covered with somber tapestry, representing some scene of the "Inferno" of Dante. The windows were heavily grated; and, altogether, the place looked like a fit abode for its present occupant, who now, supposing that he had, as usual, fastened the door behind him, expressed unguardedly his reflections: —

“Either our power or the Federati's must soon come to an end. All my schemes have been successful thus far; and, by one or two more bold strokes, I put the whole thing upon a sure basis. The kingdom totters now between a republic and a despotism: we shall see which triumphs. But after all, so long as that bewitching little sylphide is not mine, I am half a fool. Her soft, pleading, musical voice ever haunts my ear: her smile, her dimpled arms, her coquettish airs, so constantly rise before my vision, that I hardly see any thing beyond. And what is life without love? Wealth and power have failed to make me happy: they have occupied my head at the expense of my heart. One who constantly steels himself against gentle impressions, — the simple love of the beautiful, for instance, — for fear of 'losing the main chance' or of being called romantic, ere long ceases to be a God-sent soul, and becomes only a higher order of brute, though still tenacious of the title of man and gentleman. I know that I have become one of the worst of the latter class, and now, perhaps too late, see my folly. I have filled my pockets with gold, my hands with authority; yet my soul is empty. But that little

bundle of dimples and dainty prettinesses could win me back. I would be her slave, and she would teach me the arts of love. But Haffed may stand in the way. He is easily destroyed. Fiesco I consider about disposed of. That little telltale who came so near ruining me, but for my good luck, is safe. Marzetta now must be mine, or " —

"An evil resolve, prompted by the Devil!" said a voice behind him; for the friar had glided into the room barefooted, noiselessly, and had overheard Gonzalvo's declarations.

The minister sprang to his feet, but in an instant was so perfectly self-possessed, that no one would have thought him the least disturbed; and he re-seated himself.

"Ever near, my good father," said he. "I must call you father; for who could counsel more wisely, sagely, than you? And who could feel a more parental solicitude for my soul's well-being than your kind self? Perhaps I should call you a good angel sent to deter me from doing evil."

"Thank Heaven if it may be so!" replied the friar.

"I, too, may thank Heaven sometimes, but not always," said Gonzalvo. "For instance, knowing my purpose now to possess that girl called Marzetta, you would probably turn me from it: but in this case I will not be turned; for my happiness depends upon it. Tell me, though, how it is that you appear before me when least expected; how it is, when my doors are closed, and I feel myself alone, you are often at my elbow, having entered as noiselessly as the wind, and apparently by the same crevices."

“By the privileges of our order, by the sacredness of our mission, all times and all places, you are well aware, are alike appropriate. No doors are closed against us; for our presence never betokens evil: all doors are open to us; for our coming heralds good. We go noiselessly because we walk unsandaled over God’s holy ground; and we are often where least expected, because we often know where we are most needed. What, also, is very important, as in this instance, we discover such valuable secrets as enable us to render services almost if not wholly divine.”

“Every word you utter,” replied Gonzalvo, “is without a mask. I appreciate, I admire, your goodness; and I only wonder I do not feel your presence even when I do not see you.”

“It may be so sometimes,” said the friar. “Last night, you thought and spoke of me in the council-chamber.”

“Indeed!” exclaimed Gonzalvo, much astonished. “And I suppose you thought me quite in earnest in my remarks?” And he feigned a laugh.

“Why not, Sir Minister?” said the friar. “If you think me a meddler, a trespasser, a dangerous person, I do not blame you. You did not call in question my motives or my loyalty: I therefore forgive you.”

“But will you not explain to me,” resumed the minister, “why you take such an interest in the Federati, — an interest opposed to mine?”

“Not in the Federati as a party,” responded the friar. “I seek the well-being of all. But there is one in whom I take an unaccountable interest, unaccountable even to myself; and, should your evil machina-

tions bring harm to her, the whole curse of the Church and of Heaven itself shall be invoked upon you. Beware, Signor Gonzalvo, how you act! You have already much to answer for." (A slight shudder passed over the frame of the prime-minister; but the friar did not notice it). "Last night, Padre Brabet passed away from this world; and on his death-bed he revealed to me many secrets, and among them your hand in that Spinosa marriage."

"And did he tell you the name of the person to whom she was married?" asked Gonzalvo with much earnestness.

"He did," replied the friar; "and I again caution you to beware."

"Yet you will give me no particular reasons," responded the minister, bowing his head upon the table, "why your warnings are to be heeded, and my desires set aside."

Gonzalvo waited a few moments for a reply, but, receiving none, turned, and found himself alone.

"Always thus with this good, strange, earnest man," said the minister. "I think, too, he loves me, notwithstanding the vast difference in our characters, and would do almost any thing to serve me; but he knows not how little I care for the denunciations of the old woman of Rome."

A palor came over Gonzalvo's cheek as he uttered these last words; and he turned suddenly as though he heard a voice saying to him again, "Beware!" so powerful was the hold upon his mind of his early education.

"I must appear," resumed Gonzalvo, "to yield to

him in every thing, while I try to make use of him for the purpose in which he would thwart me. I will present to his chapel a new Madonna, — an exquisite picture Madame Kathleen Felisquetto is just finishing of herself. ‘Profanation!’ some would exclaim. Somewhat farcical, I must admit: still, it is so perfectly Madonna-like and beautiful, that it will please everybody; and Madame Fiesco will give it to me for the asking. This will make the friar more firmly my friend; and, as he has access and great influence everywhere, I may yet make a good tool of him. Marzetta must and shall be mine in spite of him if he opposes me, — in spite of every obstacle.” And Gonzalvo struck his fist upon the table, which made an echo in the vaults and cells below and around him, which came back to his ear with a dying groan, — the last faint murmur of another victim.

Gonzalvo, trembling, and with a cold perspiration starting from every pore, seized his hat, rushed from the apartment, double-locked the door behind him, and hastened out into the busy world, into busy scenes and satanic schemes, for forgetfulness or oblivion.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE SERPENT AGAIN. — REFLECTIONS ON LOVE. — MORE TRAPS. — AMBITION VERSUS LOVE. — WINTER AND SPRING. — A SURPRISE.



HE favor of the king being obtained, any one's path was thenceforth apparently strewed with flowers. Every one became at once, as by a magic touch, the favored's obedient servant. How smiles sprang to the lip at his approach! How purse-strings were loosened at half a wish! Lookers-on saw only the sunshine that fell about him, and could not fancy how, like a vast hollow globe of stone, there could be deep, cold shadows within.

Kathleen sat alone through the long hour of an anticipated arrival; and, however or wherever the warm light might have been diffused as she felt herself rolling on toward the sun of a new world, — new to her in its every aspect, — she was conscious only of the interior gloom and darkness the darkest sepulchral cavern might envy.

Hardly had she become aware of an announcement

by the servant, ere there stood before her the meager form of the prime-minister. She uttered a faint scream, and buried her face in her hands.

“I beg your pardon, madam,” said the visitor; “but I hope my presence is not so distasteful to you as your movements would indicate. Shall I retire?”

“Be seated, sir,” said she, rising, and saluting him with great respect, though it was evident it was one of her first lessons in a heartless service; “be seated, I pray you, and excuse my momentary, unwonted nervousness.”

The minister could well excuse her; for he saw the dove entangling its tender feet in the toils, whence escape was utterly hopeless. As it was, however, a part of the onward movement of his own plans, he had nothing to regret, and every thing to make him satisfied with himself.

“At your side, with your permission,” replied the minister, gracefully motioning her to be reseated.

Kathleen sank back upon the lounge; but she could not, for her life, utter another word; and those resolves which had so lately been firmly fixed in her mind seemed now to be escaping through every nerve of her trembling limbs.

Gonzalvo saw her great embarrassment, but entered at once upon a topic which he was well aware must now especially engross her attention.

“I have just been favored,” said he, “by an interview with the British ambassador; and I learn from him, that, in a recent conversation had with you, you seemed disposed to favor our plans in their full extent.”

“Yes, Signor Gonzalvo, I have lately seen Sir James,” said Kathleen in a slow, measured tone, the result of an effort to suppress the sobs that seemed determined to get the mastery, while the blood was alternately rushing to and retreating from her cheeks, and swelling the veins all over her marble-like brow ; “and he represented some features of my past life to me in such colors, and with such apparent interest in my future career, that I could not well refuse at least an acknowledgment of a disposition to assent to his prudential measures, and admit his valid conclusions. Still, his remarks rested principally on what he had heard ; and he was very far from counseling me to take another step that was not strictly in accordance with his own high sense of social rectitude and propriety.”

“Sir James was right,” said Gonzalvo. “Being of your own country, it would be hardly possible for him to advise you, except for your own welfare. It is, indeed, our aim to elevate you politically and morally to a position that will be wholly unassailable.”

Gonzalvo took a liberty here which Sir James’s remarks did not warrant. He built upon a basis not strictly laid down by the British ambassador ; but the lady did not perceive it, and so the assumption of the prime-minister had undue weight, — wearing the semblance of a moral garb society then might recognize, but which was, in reality, flimsy and unsubstantial.

“So I wish to believe,” said Kathleen in reply to the minister’s last remark ; “and, could I know it to

be true, — what he surmises respecting my husband, — the last tie that binds me to the past would be already severed.”

“Can you doubt it?” asked Gonzalvo.

“I doubt every thing,” responded Kathleen sadly.

“The ambassador would not have even suspected, had he not been quite sure,” was the ready and artful reply.

“I have lately felt, it is true,” said Kathleen, “that my last hope had been taken from me; and when it really, and with full conviction, first flashed upon me, the lightning itself could not have more suddenly struck me to the earth. For days, they told me, — it might have been years, for aught I knew, — there seemed to be nothing but night in my heart, and fire in my brain. I had not a wish, not a desire. The world was like a vast voiceless sea, and I a dead carcass afloat upon it. When consciousness returned, it was the dumb ocean disturbed, sending its cold waves dashing and gurgling up through my cavernous skull; and its dread roar is still here,” said she, pressing both hands upon her throbbing temples.

A shudder passed along Kathleen’s beautiful frame, as if the chill of that heart-wreck still lingered in her veins: a vision, at least, of the tempest, swept over her memory. The blood forsook her hands, and they were like ice; and her nails began to assume a livid hue: but by an iron will she rallied for another struggle with fate, and in a moment was ready to talk, to listen, to scheme, to bury her affections anew, and look calmly on the sepulture.

“I can well believe all you say,” said the minister;

“but I can not believe that he who plots to overturn his own government, ruin his own country, butcher his king, was ever worthy of so much love as you have bestowed upon him.”

“Yes: but love is not a handmaid of the will; and, if there is a fatality in any thing on earth, it seems to manifest itself in the waywardness of the heart’s fancies. Love flies from your too-anxious, eager grasp like quicksilver, which still can all be imperceptibly absorbed. It is the thistle-down of caprice wafted through beds of flowers, yet alights, perchance, on some rugged crag. It is, methinks, a bird of paradise, consorting, it may be, with a crow; or, more truthfully, the desert mirage toward which the thirsty traveler hastens, and finds but sand. It is the delicate reed one hangs her life upon,—a reed that will surely break, and wound the hand that grasps it. It is the food of the hungering heart; but it poisons unto death.”

“You draw a sad picture, countess,” responded the minister.

“Even as I have known it, seen it, felt it,” said Kathleen, with a sigh that struggled forth against all efforts to suppress it.

“And do you believe that such is the experience of every one?” asked the minister, with an earnestness that betokened a peculiar interest in what might be the reply.

“All!” was the lady’s solemn response.

“Do you not think that a creature like Marzetta, whose perfections every one is lauding, could love and be loved eternally without diminution or change?”

“Where universality of adulation prevails, the more likely is the recipient to be captivated by some unknown adventurer, some swarthy Arab, some romantic vagabond,” said Kathleen, with no little irony in the tone of her voice; “for, when admiration becomes redundant, it palls upon the mind, and forces it to seek an idol for itself that is not commonplace. It comprehends easily what is laid barefaced before it, and chooses mystery; for in mystery the young fancy roams unwearied. Indeed, it must be enabled to invest the object of its attachment with a halo not visible to every passer-by; shroud it in a sanctity into which a kind of Jacob’s ladder descends, down and up which angel thoughts and longings are ever trooping.”

“Do you think Marzetta can be one of that kind?” asked the minister, with the same anxiety he had previously manifested.

“I know nothing of her: I never saw her but once, — at the ball. But I think it likely she would as soon be enchanted with and marry the long-haired German fiddler who was there, as she would Prince Esterhazy; and elope with the former sooner than the latter.”

“Is there any danger of it?” the minister still more eagerly asked.

“Danger of what? — the elopement, or the marriage?”

“Of either,” replied the minister with embarrassment, seeing that the lady was disposed to be somewhat facetious.

“You know what I have said of love,” was Kathleen’s evasive answer.

Madame Felisquetto, like most women — thank God, not all! — who approach the age of forty, had come to the conclusion that love is a delusion, the mirage of the desert of life; and what she herself had suffered for it confirmed rather than dissipated the idea. She could recall to mind almost as perfectly as if they were events of the previous day the various scenes about the fair home of her childhood, — the valley near her father's house, where, as she sat under the wide-spreading branches of an elm, she had listened to the tinkling waters that were hurrying over a pebbly bed to gain the meadow beyond; the flowery walks, groves, and towering rocks; the first robin that whistled out its morning notes in the apple-tree by the garden-gate; the gorgeous clouds that hung over the purpling hills which bounded the view westward as night folded its shadowy wings around them: but where, thus imprinted upon her brain, could she find the picture of her love? Did such a thing, such a sentiment, such a passion, ever really exist? Was it not a perfect hallucination? With all its gentle emotions annihilated, she had, oh! sadly, sadly, lost the power to discern the intensity of its spirituality, or to recall its delicate perfume, its rapturous reveries, its oblivious charms: she could not go back, and gather up, one by one, the golden threads that made the web — now all unraveled — of her early affections.

How difficult it would be for the student to re-feel or analyze those emotions with which he once seized new truths as they welled up from the pages over which he was poring! The treasure may be his; but that wealth of joy in its absorption which held him,

perchance, for unwearied days and nights, chained to his book, only revisits him as the ghost of some dream.

Who has not seen some rude stone, that was perhaps thickly incased in crude earth, revealing in its center, when broken, crystals of surpassing beauty? Love is the crystallization, in the deep recesses of the soul, of the tenderest emotions God has allowed us to absorb from the outer world; and though all may be more or less incrustated with the sordid, the mundane, the earthy, in the roll of years, the great future will make glow again in the brightness of its purer atmosphere those delicate forms within.

The brilliant tintings of the picture of Kathleen's early life — marred but by a single fault — were all there; but the light was wanting to reveal them. They were covered now by the dust of new and bitter experiences, new aspirations, and the somber shadows of ambition, and perhaps of revenge.

Gonzalvo was poring over what Madame Fiesco had said about love, trying to pick some consolation out of it for himself in relation to *La Sylphide*, when he was interrupted by being asked how lately he had seen his Majesty.

“When I came here, I came from his presence,” said the minister.

Kathleen waited for him to proceed. Gonzalvo, however, supposing that he could best discover the drift of her thoughts by allowing her to ask questions, remained silent.

“Did he again refer to me?” said she after a moment's pause.

“In the most enthusiastic manner,” replied the

minister ; “ but, by sounding him carefully, I have reason to suppose that he will not move a step forward till I can insure him the support of three of the most influential of the ambassadors, — the Russian, the English, the Turkish.”

“ And you will do that ? ” said Kathleen, with no little anxiety depicted in her face ; for, since she had lost what was most dear to her, she began to covet what was dear to others, — power.

“ That will depend on yourself, countess,” was the cool response.

“ If on me, you know I have already promised to obey you in all things.”

“ Well, then, it is probable your wishes will be gratified,” said Gonzalvo, but with some hesitation, arising from a consciousness of his own villainy (putting these schemes upon her shoulders instead of his own), or from fear, that as he approached his victim, and his chances of success were doubled, all might yet escape him. “ The king,” he continued, “ admires you as the finest woman in the realm ; while I am dying to possess that little fish-girl, the beautiful sylphide, Marzetta the divine.”

“ Divine, you say ; yet what do you really intend, Sir Minister, to make of her ? ” responded Kathleen, with an emotion which seemed to indicate that there still lingered some of her late noble instincts, some saintly tenderness, in her seared heart.

“ Not less than what you are, nor more than you will be in name,” answered Gonzalvo, knowing well the force of the words he was using, and considering, that, the sooner he broke down any false barrier there

might be between him and his unfortunate listener, the better. The words, "in name," were too mollient: he uttered them between his teeth that she might not hear them. Madame Fiesco Felisquetto, the still beautiful Kathleen, cast on him a look of scorn and indignation; but in a moment, recalling her true position, and remembering what she had promised the minister, and how he held, as it were, her future destiny in his hands, she humbly replied, that her misfortunes claimed some respectful consideration, and that she was disposed to do all she could to contribute to his happiness.

"Pardon me if I wounded your feelings," said Gonzalvo; "but to view things in a false light is never the proper way to arrive at a just conclusion concerning them. However innocently the lily might be tarnished, it would be just as difficult to remove the blemish as if it had willfully bowed itself to the dust. No one, however, questions the purity of the diamonds in the regal coronal. Need I be more explicit?"

Kathleen placed a handkerchief to her eyes, and Gonzalvo was aware that she was weeping; but, so hardened had he become, that a sigh, or sign of sorrow, swept by him like the thistle-down.

"We understand each other now, I think," resumed Gonzalvo after a short pause. "I will see that the ambassadors countenance the rendition or transference of the disputed territory. Now let us talk of Marzetta, the paltry fish-girl, without wealth, rank, title, birth, or any thing in the world to commend her to my attention but her simple girlish charms. To

be sure, they are enough to drive one mad: still it is no reason why she should refuse the hand and heart of the prime-minister. Indeed, a little hussy like that, if she don't know enough to look after her own interests, should be compelled to do it; and that is the point to which I wish now to come. I wish you to see her, and tell her that she knows not with what wealth in gold, what riches in love, I will encircle all her hours; with what gentleness I will guard her steps; with what consideration I will treat her caprices; with what watchfulness I will wait upon her wishes; with what cheerful life I will fill her home; with what tender care I will treat her in times of trial: but, if she turns a deaf ear to all that, then you must be instrumental in placing her in my power."

"Would you have her without love?" said Kathleen with a shudder.

"Yes: if she should become a serpent, and sting me to the heart, I nevertheless feel that she must nestle in this bosom. But it will not be so. She will learn to love me. Plead, then, the cause I could not plead myself; for her transcendent beauty would inthrall my tongue, and blind the very eyes that would devour her. Plead with her for me, and I will be your slave."

Gonzalvo threw himself upon his knees, took the unresisting hand of the still weeping Kathleen, and was about to press it to his lips, a forestallment of his gratitude, when the door opened, and Fiesco Felisquetto entered.

Gonzalvo rose as quickly as possible to his feet, and,

with all the suavity and grace he could command, explained to Signor Fiesco the cause of his equivocal position. Kathleen remained motionless.

Did Fiesco believe every thing, or nothing? Abroad, he had just begun to hear the first whisperings of the tempest that was soon to burst over his head, and smite him to the earth. I may say, he did not believe nor disbelieve. He seemed to be waiting the development of events, — to stand as it were still, and, without anxiety, invoke the coming storm.

When Fiesco had heard Gonzalvo through, he gracefully saluted him, and retired. Madame Fiesco wept on, having no new hope to stay her, and escaping no one footprint in the path of sorrow.

Gonzalvo, somewhat mortified at what had just transpired, — more particularly mortified because it was to Fiesco he had been obliged to confess his weakness, while his enemy had an opportunity of treating him with silent contempt, — soon took his leave; but it was in such a humble manner, that Kathleen felt she had now in reality a slave rather than a master.

CHAPTER XIX.

AT HOME. — A BEAUTIFUL PICTURE. — HOPE DEFERRED. —
FORTUNATE AND MISERABLE. — GOOD FRIENDS.



THE parlor which the prime-minister had just left was one of the suite in Strada Balbi at the head of the first flight of marble stairs to the right. Though small, it was richly carpeted, and otherwise furnished in a manner which unmistakably evinced that its mistress was endowed with superior taste, and had no little wealth at her command. Fine old Italian pictures garnished the walls. The most comfortable of easy-chairs, here and there, invited one to a seat. Luxurious lounges, strewed with tasseled cushions, suggested repose, tranquillity, and perhaps laziness. Before a harp stood one of the little golden chairs of Chiaveri. On an easel in front of the heavily-draped window, arranged so as to have the light fall full upon it, was a picture of Mary Magdalen, — the one Gonzalvo proposed to call a Madonna, and to present to the convent of the Capucini. The eyes were upturned, and, though beautifully serene, were suffused with tears. The hair

hung in wavy masses about angelic shoulders. The features were fine-lined, and of exquisite mold and symmetry. The throat was round and large, formed of faultless curves, and with light and shade so delicately blended, that it itself suggested prayers and tears, and sweet delicious hope. The lips were slightly apart, as if the last word they had uttered — “Forgiveness” — still lingered on them; and it was not difficult to fancy their breathings still audible.

Kathleen had just finished this almost divine work, and, having thrown aside her brush and pallet, had seated herself in a distant corner to contemplate it. With eyes streaming with tears, she was gazing at a perfect portrait of herself. She then hid her face in her hands, and sobbed aloud: it was the last of the woman in her heart; it was that breaking-up of the fountains which leads to death or indifference. Tenderness, human sympathy, love, were henceforth to be only things of the memory. She had imparted to the picture all that she felt she had ever been of softness, sweetness, and gentleness; all on which she had once prided herself of feminine, self-sacrificing devotion. She was now changed, and she knew it. She was changed by her own mighty will, warped by circumstances over which she had no control, and by the powerful influence of those, who, on one side, were interested friends, on the other unscrupulous enemies. She was now shedding the last tears of regret, of shame, of wounded pride, of tender womanly yearnings; and, if angels ever weep when our better impulses cease to vibrate, — to weep at the departure of perfect saintly purity in sentiment (till then Kath-

leen's soul in all its longings and aspirations had been spotless), — they wept when that last sigh, bursting through chaotic masses of accumulated anguish, went up to be recorded on the great page of the heart's history in the archives of the omnipresent *I Am*. The painting Kathleen had just finished represented this moment, — her own beatific beauty taking a farewell of heaven.

Kathleen Felisquetto's face was still buried in her hands: but she saw a flame pass by her, while on her brow she felt a gentle breeze as if fanned by some seraph wing; then all was dark and still. The uncanceled page came next, clear, imperishable: she dashed away her tears, and it had also passed away.

The picture, to Kathleen, had been a sort of diary. In every mood, for months she had been sitting before the easel, — the mirror behind it reflecting her elegant proportions, her queenly grace, — and there made a record of her sorrows as they appeared framed in her beauty. Occasionally, loving to contemplate her own bewildering loveliness, she gratified a pardonable vanity, perhaps, when she sought to place it on canvas, and thus cheat all future time of wrinkles and decay. Her first sketch represented contemplation; but, as her own heart was wrung, she changed the expression to one pleading for forgiveness. At last, when her final resolve had been taken, — the pitcher broken at the fountain, pouring out every remaining drop of the sweet waters of affection that were soon to be lost in the all-absorbing, wide, arid wastes of venality, of intrigue, of corruption, — she

gave to it its last touches, then threw away her brush and her heart into the great, desolate future.

Kathleen paced the room, then cast herself upon a lounge; but a moment after, as if tired of sitting, went to the window, put aside the silken folds of the curtain, and looked out on the idle, indifferent throng, — a throng she looked on, but did not see: for she was gazing at an inward world, where all was weariness; into a chamber dark and dreary, hung with somber drapery, with a serpent coiled upon the hearthstone. She turned away as if disgusted with the sight, and seated herself at the harp. Oh, what flexible, what transparent fingers! What arms of dazzling whiteness! what witchery in their mold, their movements, their dainty dimpled plumpness! She struck the chords, and every note seemed bathed in tears: but to her own ears they were silent; she heard no sounds save those from her own heart-strings. Why should she play, then, when the instrument would give forth no tones? She would not. She went again to the window, then to the lounge.

An hour might have passed; but to Kathleen it seemed an age: she was awaiting a message from the king. Time calculated by the hasty click of the wheels of hilarity, and the solemn swing of the pendulum of sorrow, is a very different thing; and now, while she expected one who was to affix the seal to her rashness, the wheels of her watch seemed frozen and motionless.

Presently a carriage stopped before her door; and immediately the king's private secretary was announced. "I have the honor," said he as he saluted

Madame Fiesco with a very low bow, "to bring you, by his Majesty's orders, this document, entitling you to have, hold, and possess as your own, the Province of Liguria, with all the rights, titles, and privileges it has ever conferred on its possessor. I am also further commanded by his Majesty to inform you that the château will be in readiness to receive its mistress, the duchess, on the morrow."

Kathleen received the documents with a grace that it was thought would soon be a distinguishing feature in the royal palace; and the secretary, with another profound salutation, took his leave.

While the secretary was pronouncing the last words, which he addressed to the lady, Signor Fiesco entered, the door having been left open.

"Its mistress, the duchess, on the morrow!" he repeated as the secretary passed him with a respectful bow. Kathleen raised her open hand to Fiesco, the palm outward; which was to say, "Be silent!" She then turned contemptuously on her heel, passed into her boudoir, and locked the door behind her.

Fiesco stood in mute astonishment: it was the first rebuff he had ever received from his adored wife. Must there not be some mistake? If she had heretofore manifested any coldness or indifference, or even taunted him with infidelity, he had himself been so blameless, and at the same time so much occupied with the affairs of the Federati, that he had passed it unnoticed. And it was well that he had not time, even now, to dwell upon what might have been fatal to him, since his love for his wife was of that exalted kind which brooks no shadow of suspicion.

Hardly had Fiesco entered on his revery respecting Kathleen's conduct, ere Boppo was announced; and no man, rich or poor, could have been more welcome.

"You have had the kindness, Signor Fiesco," said he, "to allow me to call on you whenever I choose; but you know I would not come unless I had something of importance to tell you."

"Boppo, my good friend, you are always welcome," said Fiesco, taking him by the hand.

"Thank you, Signor Felisquetto. I have come now to say that there are rumors about town that leading members of our party are soon to be arrested. You know who would hence be included. What is more, Marzetta is threatened; but she is so fearless, so much of a fatalist, that my warnings are of no avail. I want you to see her and warn her."

"You are ever kind and watchful," replied Fiesco; "and, if the rest of the Federati were equally so, we might ourselves soon strike for liberty, and not wait further complications."

"If I might now be so bold, there is one thing I wish I could persuade you to do," said Boppo, — "conceal yourself for a day or two at the smuggler's, seeing Marzetta on your way."

"You are very kind; but do you think danger so imminent, so threatening?"

"Perhaps even more so than we apprehend," said Boppo. "There is one — it may not be well to mention names — who knows that deep plottings are going on at La Spinoso's; and that Gonzalvo has sworn to possess Marzetta, not only because he is desperately in love with her, but for the purpose of injuring our

cause, wringing from her all possible information to turn to account against us.”

“That reminds me of a plot on the night of the ball, prepared expressly, I doubt not, to obtain some of our important secrets. But I was on my guard. I was advised, by a man whom I know pretty well to be in Gonzalvo’s interest, to meet a noble lady at Aqua Sola, as she had some valuable information to communicate to me. I discovered at once the falsehood of the assertion by questioning the *incognita*. It was evident, however, that she wished to ascertain what day we had appointed for our general uprising: this was doubtless done so as to get the advantage of us. I imparted to her as little information as possible. It also occurred to me that I recognized the voice, the form, the manner, the style, of proposing questions, — a style peculiar to La Spinosa. Besides, she trembled and hesitated; and I believe, had I not designedly broken the silence at one time, she would have confessed to me who she was, and sought again my friendship.”

“Might it not have been well to secure her on our side, since she is now so great an enemy?” said Boppo.

“She is not to be trusted, as I know by experience. Then, again, I thought there might be some other hidden design in it all, as she acted strangely, and not as one intent on a single object.”

“I think you are right: at what hour was it?”

“Near eleven, and at the foot of the stairs under the arch at the garden.”

“Exactly the time when the friar, who had, during

the evening, watched Gonzalvo's movements as well as he could, saw your wife saunter out on the minister's arm, proceed directly to the head of the stairs, and there wait a while apparently for the arrival of some one. Presently Madame Fiesco became terribly agitated; leaned on the parapet for support; and it was some time before she sufficiently recovered to return to the ball."

"By heavens! I think I see the Devil's hand in this also. It is another of Gonzalvo's plots, and perhaps has already succeeded. Did she not turn upon me in disgust?" he said to himself. "No, no, Boppo! I will not believe that my wife can be so easily duped. In a day or two, when things are more tranquil, I will make it my special business to sift this matter, and learn from Kathleen herself how far the evil intent of the prime-minister had consummation. In the mean time, I will take your advice except for a single evening."

"Do so, I pray you," said Boppo, with deep interest in the welfare of his friend; "and I shall be truly grateful."

"It is I who should be grateful," responded Fiesco; "and I am grateful for the interest you and your comrades have ever taken in me."

Boppo grasped Fiesco's hand, and, almost in tears, bade him farewell.

CHAPTER XX.

GONZALVO ELATED WITHOUT CAUSE. — ROUNDABOUT WAYS.
— WHITE MICE. — MORE SACRIFICES.



IN his way home from Madame Fiesco's, the prime-minister encountered a bright little boy, who was exhibiting some white mice. Ordinarily, the minister would have kicked such a fellow sooner than listen to a word from him: but on this occasion he was in very good humor, arising chiefly from the thought that his future prospects respecting Marzetta were of the most flattering nature; though, had he asked himself why, he could have given no satisfactory answer. He so ardently desired to possess the sylphide, that remote possibilities were transformed into probabilities, and these reduced almost to a certainty.

Gonzalvo was in good spirits; and when the boy looked up at him, opened his box, and said, "A penny, if you please," he stopped.

"What do you want a penny for, my little lad?" said Gonzalvo.

"For my mice, sir," responded the boy.

“Hang your mice!” said Gonzalvo.

“No, sir! I could not do that; for I love them very much: besides, I get a good and honest living by them; and, when my father was sick, I earned enough to support mother.”

“Indeed! Who is your mother?” asked the minister.

“My mother is Boppo; my father, the fisherman Boppo.”

“How many children has she?”

“Five, sir; and all younger than myself.”

“A fishwoman, and five young ones!” muttered the minister between his teeth. “Oh! these fishwomen are like rabbits; and, if they do not breed pests, they breed pestilent fellows that contrive to keep the kingdom in a broil: yet, if they are poor, they expect the government to take care of them, make laws to protect and support them. I hate the dirty race! But this boy interests me. Perhaps I can make good use of him. He is Boppo’s, and Boppo is Marzetta’s adopted father;” and he pondered this as he went along, taking the boy along with him by promises of pay.

“But why did you address me instead of others, whom you passed without a word?” continued Gonzalvo.

“Because you are so ugly-looking,” replied the boy innocently; “for I heard some one say that homely people are the most charitable.”

“A fine compliment you pay me, youngster,” said the minister; “and I think I could return it with interest. But never mind: our reckoning will come

by and by. Handsome people, however, are the ones who can afford to be generous."

The boy, beginning to fear he should get a whipping instead of coppers, was about to excuse himself, and run away; when Gonzalvo took him by the hand, and said, "Come home with me: I will find you something better to do than exhibiting rats."

"They are not rats, sir, if you please," replied the boy with offended dignity.

"Nuisances, then, if you like that better, Master Monkey."

"They are not nuisances, either, but mice, sir, if you please; and I am not Master Monkey, but Master Michel."

"To the Devil with your quibbles! Come along!"

"Shall I be allowed to keep my mice?" asked Michel in a half-frightened, half-whimpering tone.

"Yes; keep and eat them if you choose," replied Gonzalvo somewhat testily.

The boy grew more timid, and, ere he reached the minister's home, was ready to burst into tears.

"There," said Gonzalvo on entering his studio, "keep this room clean, dust the table every morning, lay up the papers when I am out, be always near when I want you to run of errands, and never go out without my permission, and I will give you as much again as you get for your mice. How much do you get?"

"Twenty pennies a day," replied the boy, trembling from head to foot; for he felt that his liberty was gone, and he began to suspect that he was in the hands of the one of whom he had always heard such terrible things.

“ But go home first and get washed, and bring your father here, that he may see how well off you are,” said Gonzalvo.

“ Yes, sir,” replied the boy in great happiness, and, seizing his mice, was about to go.

“ You had better leave your mice, and then I shall be more sure of seeing you again,” resumed the minister. “ Finally, it will be safer to keep you here altogether. I will send a note to your father.”

Gonzalvo dispatched a note to Boppo, requesting his presence. Not long after, the messenger returned with Boppo himself, who had little doubt but that he was to be detained as a prisoner on some false pretext or other.

“ What is your name ? ” asked Gonzalvo, addressing the elderly-looking person who now stood trembling before him ; for the space that in Italy separates the laboring-classes from the officials is so great, that the former regard the latter almost as gods, or, at least, as holding over them the hand of life or death.

“ Boppo, sir,” was the reply. But Boppo did not dare, or rather he did not wish, to look up and encounter the gaze of his hated foe.

“ Boppo ! ” repeated Gonzalvo, the word hissing through his teeth as if he would like to bite him.

“ At your service,” said the fisherman.

“ This nest of vipers,” said Gonzalvo to himself, “ must be broken up. I will, however, play the friend, and by chaining the young hawks, as the saying is, may keep the old ones within reach.”

“ How old are you ? ” inquired Gonzalvo.

“ Fifty-five, sir,” replied Boppo.

“One would think you older than that,” said Gonzalvo.

“Very likely,” responded the fisherman; “for hard labor night and day, many severe colds I get from being out in bad weather (and you know, sir, we must be on the water, rain or shine), little food, — and sometimes for days, when the weather is bad, almost none at all, — these things make one grow old very fast: yet thank God, and the blessed St. Thomas, who was a fisherman, I can do as good a day’s work as any of my craft.”

“And as much mischief,” said Gonzalvo again to himself; then, addressing Boppo with apparent tenderness, inquired how many children he had.

“Five, at your service, sir.”

“Five! No wonder you are poor,” replied the minister. “And now, since you place them at my service, I think I can put them in good situations, and thus relieve you of the burden of their maintenance. This, the eldest, will remain in my office as a kind hostage for Marzetta, as my note informed you: do you understand? The others will have better care than they can receive at home, and have, at least, less pernicious doctrines instilled into them.”

This last remark Gonzalvo uttered with a forced smile, in order to allay somewhat the anxiety he saw depicted in Boppo’s face.

Boppo would have stammered out some excuse: but Gonzalvo cut him short in this respect by saying that he need not express any gratitude, for it was all done with cheerfulness, and with a desire to relieve

the good mother ; that it was, in fact, a whim of his, a wish ; and hence the poor fisherman was to understand that his wish was law, a command not to be disobeyed.

Boppo, however, felt sure the mother would not part with her children so easily, and particularly with the youngest : so he mustered courage enough to say that he felt very grateful for any generosity the minister might show, but did not think his wife would be willing to part with them all ; no, not little Christina, her pet, if she knew she should starve to death while nourishing it ; but perhaps she would let Pedro and Maria and Sancta go.

“ Very well,” replied the minister ; “ let the three come : bring them at once.” He here dismissed Boppo with a formal bow.

Michel was now quite contented, as he believed he should soon have his brother and sisters all there in the office with him ; but Gonzalvo had already be-thought him of an old crone in the mountains, where he felt sure the children would be safe, — safely out of the way. Michel, in the mean time, had turned to his mice, and was congratulating them on the nice little bits of comfort he should be able to obtain for them. His father, however, with heavy heart, with a multitude of inexplicable misgivings, went back to his humble home, and communicated to his wife the substance of the interview.

The poor woman listened at first with an air of incredulity, then with silent wonder ; but, when her husband came to speak of taking away her children, she burst into tears, and would not be comforted.

“It is useless to cry,” said Boppo. “There is, just now, no remedy but to do as he wills.”

“He can not tear them from me!” said the mother.

“Only too easily,” replied Boppo, his head sinking on his breast, as if he himself were overwhelmed with despair. The thought now came to him, that perhaps Marzetta might aid them through the influence of the British ambassador; but he did not dare to give his wife that hope.

“Could we not hide them, carry them off, kill them?” sobbed the poor woman, almost distracted; for she evidently felt that death would be preferable to any uncertainty regarding the fate of her loved little ones.

“We could not hide them unless we hide ourselves,” said the husband; “and we are too poor to do that. To kill them would put the dear ones out of sight for ever, and beyond hope; while, if they live, they may yet be a comfort to us, for God can protect them.”

“Thanks to the blessed Virgin that you reminded me of that!” responded the mother. “God can protect them. I will put my trust in him.”

“I have just been thinking,” said Boppo, “that there may be a providence even in this apparent inhumanity. I have been thinking, that perhaps, by being near the minister, Michel, if not the others, may learn something that will be of importance to the Federati.”

“It is a foolish thought,” said the wife; “for he who is known to be the most cunning and cautious man in the kingdom — and, had he not been so, he

would never have been prime-minister — will let no word slip his teeth that he would wish to get back. No, no! Our children may be spared by the interposition of the blessed Mary, before whose picture a new candle shall be lighted every evening; but their days will be full of wretchedness.”

“ Might it not be so, too, if they remained with us ? ” said Boppo, trying to assuage the poor mother’s grief by an air of resignation.

“ It might be so,” replied his wife; “ but we could share it with them.”

“ That would be a great consolation,” answered Boppo; “ but, if God decrees it otherwise, should we complain ? ”

“ No, we should not: but then it is so hard for a mother to part with her children! — so hard to give them the last look, the last kiss, the last farewell! ” She could not proceed for her sobs and tears. “ But go,” she finally said, — “ go, take the three, and leave me my little lone treasure, our little pet.” And she gathered them about her for the last time, held them to her bosom again and again, and gave them for the hundredth time the last kiss; then, while her eyes were blinded with tears so that she could not see them depart, they went away, — out of her sight for ever.

CHAPTER XXI.

DECEIVED. — MARZETTA AND LINDAHARA. — IMPORTANT CONFABULATIONS. — MARZETTA AND YERMOLOFFSKI. — SPINOSA AND GONZALVO.



IT would seem that every thing and every body played into the hands of the prime-minister just as he wished; or, in other words, his plans were so well arranged, none of them could miscarry. If Madame Kathleen Felisquetto favored the king's designs respecting the Federati, that is, accepted for her friendship — so it would appear to the censorious world, though erroneously — large landed property and a high position, she could doubtless be induced by other bribes to secure the former to Austria, and thus obtain for him the decoration of "The Golden Fleece." Then she was to aid him in getting Marzetta; while the picture was to be a powerful lever in gaining over the friar. La Spinosa had assisted him in his plans, as he desired. One whom he much feared lest she should betray him had been silenced in a long sleep; and a "diary," that gave some valuable outlines of a thrilling his-

tory, had fallen by astounding good luck into his hands, instead of those of the British ambassador. Fiesco too, he felt, was in a great degree in his power, or, at least, so far ruined or overwhelmed by his great misfortune, that he would leave the country and the scene of his shame ; while the most influential of that large and powerful class, the fishermen, was held in check by the rendition of his children. Could he desire more ? Yes, Marzetta ; and for Marzetta and her love he would resign every thing else.

It was only occasionally, after the ball, Haffed saw any thing of his new-found goddess ; for she had intentionally, that evening, evaded the inquiry which he several times made concerning her residence ; and she had been ill. One day, passing near the Turkish ambassador's palace, Marzetta stopped to sell some *djanketi*. All the household happened to be absent except Lindahara, who at once recognized her as the young girl she had seen dancing so much with Haffed at the British ambassador's ; and now, full of jealousy and curiosity, she invited her in. The fair Circassian knew but little of either French or Italian ; but, under circumstances like the present, it was not difficult to make herself fully understood. She at first overwhelmed the astonished little vender of fish with tantalizing questions and innuendoes ; then became deeply interested in her as she unraveled her history. In turn, Lindahara had much to say of herself, and imparted to her eager listener a world of information respecting Haffed, which was to her of the utmost importance, — important as a mighty lever which she

could use in behalf of the Federati, and personally as involving, perhaps, her entire future happiness. The beautiful Circassian finally concluded by telling Marzetta how much she loved Haffed, and how it would be the cause of her death if another should tear him from her. Throwing herself upon her knees before the now weeping sylphide, Lindahara, in all the burning words she could command, pleaded with her to resign that adorable, that worshiped youth. She took Marzetta's hands in her own, covered them with kisses and tears, and begged of her to give up Haffed. She would not rise from her knees, she would not cease weeping and pleading, till she had promised to try and overcome her love for the young secretary.

Hardly ever had life seemed more somber to Marzetta than it did when she left the palace of the Turkish ambassador. Her perfect submission, however, to what seemed to be the will of Heaven; her trust in the goodness of God; her faith in the ultimate success of her plans, eventuating in her own happiness; her sanguine temperament, in fact, and her naturally gentle, confiding, loving, hopeful disposition, — all combined to sustain her through another of the great trials of life: I say, another of the great trials; for she was but just recovering from the almost fatal shock which was given to her delicately-attuned system when she heard of the loss of Sappho.

All that day, and all the next, Marzetta attempted to keep her word with Lindahara, and forget Haffed: but, the more she strove, the more she loved him; the more she tried to forget him, the more deeply he was nestled in her heart. Lindahara had, however,

thrown out some hints that rendered her at times exceedingly wretched, and made her regret that she had not accepted the offer of the British ambassador, and taken up her residence in his palace. The fair Circassian had hinted, that, owing to Haffed's high birth and station, he would not think of marrying a homeless fish-girl. Still, out of this depth, through her hopeful spirit, she saw, though it might be but faintly in the distance, a pathway of light, of joy, and of triumph.

Marzetta could not endure the idea that birth and station had any thing to do with love. "If I am not worthy of him as I am," she thought to herself, "how could a princely birth make me so? No: if I have any pride, it is to be noble in a humble walk of life; for if there are falsehood, treachery, deceit, they exist rather with those who wear the escutcheons of lofty names than with the lowly. I am therefore resolved to remain as I am, and rather make him descend to my position to obtain me than raise myself to his to obtain him."

Marzetta, in her humble position, now had in her keeping a number of powerful cords that were to be woven into the net the Federati were about spreading for their final entrapments. One day she proceeded to the palace of the Russian ambassador, and solicited an interview with the ambassadress, the Princess Yermoloffski. The princess sent for her to her private apartment, and was astonished to find under such an unfashionable though picturesque garb a creature so highly gifted in all things that render the gentler sex masters of the world; but she was still more aston-

ished, and her astonishment increased till she threw herself almost petrified at Marzetta's feet, as she proceeded in her strange and mysterious unfoldings of what seemed a strange and mysterious destiny.

Before Marzetta left, she obtained from the princess two most sacred promises: one, that she and her husband would aid, as far as possible, the cause of the Federati; the other, that they would not oppose, but rather use their entire and most potent influence in promoting, a marriage between her and the one she loved, whoever it might be.

When Marzetta took her leave of Madame Yermoloffski, you would rather have thought the former to be the powerful princess, and the latter some humble suitor for some humble office: for the ambassadress, loth to part with her, still held her by the hand; then embraced her with warmth, with tenderness, with tears; then put back her *pezzato*, and kissed again and again her beautiful white forehead; and finally, receiving a promise that she would daily come to the palace when possible, bade her an affectionate adieu.

Marzetta proceeded then to the town mansion of La Spinosa, and sought a private interview with its mistress. The lady soon came down, elegantly dressed, being about to take a morning drive.

"Ever welcome, my little sylphide," said she. "But you come late to-day; for I was just going to call at the prime-minister's to give him some information I have recently received concerning the Federati."

"Perhaps you will not go," said Marzetta; "for I have something to tell you that you will consider of more importance."

“Is it any thing serious?” asked Spinosa laughingly; “for you look as grave as a little mouse.”

“Sit down, please, and you shall hear me. You doubtless readily recall in your life’s history a dark and fatal night when you were wed to a stranger.”

La Spinosa put her trembling hand upon the arm of the speaker, as if she would say to her, “Stop! I dare not, I wish not, to recall it.”

“I know the name of your husband,” resumed Marzetta.

“For Heaven’s sake, do not reveal it to me!” exclaimed the listener; “for I have been told he is a low fisherman.”

“As noble a man as walks God’s divine earth,” responded Marzetta. “Of no mean birth, though humble occupation (which is not wholly his own fault), he has, for truth, disinterested daring, goodness, generosity, fidelity, a love, indeed, for all that is honorable and just, few superiors among mankind. And now I will inform you, that if you will aid the Federati (whom I know you hate, but ere long will learn to love), and they succeed in their plans, your husband shall hold one of the highest offices in the gift of the new republic; but, should they fail, he may be guillotined, and your name be thus henceforth associated with that infamous and cruel fate of his which you might have averted.”

“But how can I aid a party headed by one who so vilely betrayed me?” said La Spinosa, trembling with excitement.

“The whole story is false, my beloved lady,” replied Marzetta. “Count Fiesco Felisquetto had pledged

himself to his father to marry you. The prime-minister, knowing this, and fearing the union of your great wealth with the leader of the party opposed to the government, himself planned that vile plot into which you were betrayed."

"Oh, for Heaven's sake assure me that this is true!" exclaimed the lady as the tears burst forth in a flood from her hitherto parched and glaring eyes.

"As true as there is a just God above us," responded Marzetta.

"Then he still loves me, and Gonzalvo is a fiend?" said La Spinosa inquiringly between her sobs.

"That the prime-minister is the greatest villain that walks the earth, we are soon to prove," replied Marzetta. "Regarding Count Fiesco, I know little or nothing but what I have told you. I have heard that he loved you dearly, and that he fled to England to hide the grief your sudden and unexpected marriage caused him."

The lady ordered her carriage to be put up; and, laying aside the costly robes she was never again to resume, went to her room and to her bed.

Hatred of her betrothed, and desire for revenge, had acted on La Spinosa as powerful nerve-stimulants, and sustained her through an age of suffering: now, having these withdrawn, and feeling that Fiesco still loved her, her soul seemed to sink back into those happy seasons when they were together at her country-seat, and she became literally a child again. The record on her brain for the last few years seemed to have been written as on some decaying parchment, which the fever of her new joys and sorrows was

scorching and rolling up, and laying aside, or obliterating for ever. So violent and harrowing were these new revelations, that her reason became unsettled; and thus she lay for days. By and by she rallied, partially recovered, and was able to go abroad; then she resumed the dresses she wore at the age of sixteen, and often walked in the garden, expecting and waiting for her lover, as in former, happier times. But Fiesco did not come. She would then retire to her boudoir, write some incoherent note, call up a servant, and dispatch it in great haste. These love-mis-sives, however, did not leave the mansion; for her physician had warned the inmates of their mistress's condition.

Months rolled thus wearily away. La Spinosa was like the splinter of a fair jewel. She grew weaker in body, but stronger and clearer in intellect. Then she requested the good Friar Jos to come and see her, expressing a wish to bequeath her vast property to the Church and to his monastery. The friar, for several reasons, turned her thoughts toward Marzetta, considering that in no other person's hands would her wealth be so judiciously used.

La Spinosa seemed to feel a new joy at the friar's suggestion, and without delay ordered a document to be made, transferring at once to her young friend one half of the entire property held in her own right, including the beautiful country-seat which had recently become hers, and which she had occupied when she was first in love. She then signed "a will," giving the remainder of her estate, at her death, to her ever-adored Fiesco, forgetting her recent hatred, jeal-

ousy, and envy, and wrapping her soul in a new corrosant flame that suffering seemed to hallow as she approached the holy altar whence it emanated.

Soon after this transient convalescence, La Spinosa fell back into her former weak state of mind, and so remained for a number of years. During this latter period, one might have seen occasionally walking the streets, attended by a footman, a small, pale, emaciated figure, wearing about her person in a grotesque manner large quantities of dried leaves, and sprigs of flowers of bouquets that had been given her in her girlhood by her lost lover.

No person who did not know Marzetta intimately could imagine the grief this sad event caused her. When she first revealed to La Spinosa the perfidy of Gonzalvo, and witnessed the effect; when the lady ordered her carriage back, and her maid up to unrobe her, — Marzetta did her utmost to allay the agitation she had unintentionally caused. She might have expected a storm; but she beheld almost a wreck without it. She expressed the deepest sympathy for the fair, misused sufferer; and the latter saw and felt the sincerity with which she spoke and acted, and in a few short moments loved her as a sister.

When Marzetta left the Spinosa mansion, she went directly to the palace of the prime-minister to beard him in his den. Had she no fear, when she had been so often warned to guard herself against him? She possessed a power, in the secrets of his villainy, which she was confident would make of him a coward. As she entered his office, Gonzalvo rose, sent his secre-

tary away, and with his blandest smile and extended hand advanced to meet her, saying, —

“To what am I indebted for this great pleasure of seeing you here?”

Marzetta drew back as from a scorpion. “I understand, sir,” said she, “that you are seeking to entrap me as you have others, and have hired menials to aid you in your dastardly designs. Allow me, sir, to tell you that I come here to show you that I not only do not fear you, but that you shall obey me. One who was to befriend you is now your bitterest enemy; and the other will, ere long, become so. Two persons besides myself are cognizant of those great crimes you once committed, and the knowledge of which you have so long been able to keep from the world. They, as well as the British ambassador, are my guardians; and, if a wave of my hair should be ruffled by your cowardly hands, they will publish your deeds, by the combined aid of the Federati, from every housetop in the city. Besides, you are to issue an order at once for the liberation of Boppo’s children, or the same fate awaits you which I have just announced.”

The minister stood aghast at these astounding revelations; and whether to seize her at once, intimidate her, or treat her with deceptive courtesy, were questions which, in no accord with his usual quickness of perception and resolve, he could not for a moment decide. Presently the idea of gaining time came to him as all-important; and he therefore, with the most earnest protestations, assured her that some malevolent person had grossly misrepresented him and his designs; assured her that nothing would

afford him so much happiness as making her happy by the rendition of Boppo's children, or by any other means in his power.

“And, now, is there any thing more I can do to convince you that I am not that wretch you have been taught to think me?” said Gonzalvo. “Indeed, my desire to possess you, the offer I made of that beautiful villetta upon the hill, should convince you rather of my love and boundless admiration than of my desire to injure you. And may I not appeal to your own superior sense and judgment if this is not apparent, rather than the reverse? Marzetta, I have loved you, do love you, with an intensity of which you have no conception; and here on my knees I swear solemnly to be ever tenderly your slave, and shield you from all harm, if you will consent to be mine.” And Gonzalvo knelt before her either in true or feigned devotion.

“Sooner, sir,” replied Marzetta indignantly, “would I walk the fiery rounds of the Inquisition (of which you know considerable) than willingly bear the taint of your touch.”

Gonzalvo rose, his eyes flashing fire, and, seizing her by both her wrists, began to drag her toward the opposite side of the room, where, behind the tapestry, opened the doors to the underground cells.

“What!” exclaimed Marzetta with more dignity than fear, “would you injure Manuellita?”*

“Manuellita!” stammered Gonzalvo, turning paler

* This is the diminutive of Manuella, and is applied to a child thus named.

than death, and releasing his hold, — “Manuellita is dead !”

“Manuellita is not dead ! Manuellita lives !” said Marzetta, with a firm, determined air that carried conviction with it.

“My God, my God !” groaned out the minister, “am I such a wretch ?” And, hiding his face behind his trembling hands, he again sank on his knees as if to implore La Sylphide’s pardon ; for intentional crime discovered made him feel more guilty than real guilt undiscovered.

Marzetta, availing herself of this respite, hastened from the room, but with more disgust and hatred than timidity. The ruse, if it can be so called, which she had adopted, was from a sudden impulse arising in the instant of danger, and seemed prompted by a desire rather to let him know that she was conversant with a most important part of his history than from any intent to deceive him by an implied falsehood.

Gonzalvo heard the door close on him before he recovered from his stupefaction. His first impulse then was to rush after, seize, and drag her back, and at once make sure of his victim ; but his second thought warned him. By rashness he might reveal, to his secretary (whom he somewhat distrusted) or others, a diabolical feature of his character, and thus give his enemies warning ; whereas, by slow and cautious action, he considered that success would be inevitable.

CHAPTER XXII.

KATHLEEN'S ENTRANCE ON HER NEW CAREER. — IMPORTANT INFORMATION COME TOO LATE. — MARZETTA CAUGHT.



GONZALVO saw that there must be no delay; that he must act at once, or all was lost: he therefore cast about him for the best means by which he could secretly arrest Marzetta and Fiesco. Being aware of a supper that was to be given at La Napolitana's, and that Fiesco had accepted an invitation to be present (and this was the evening to which the latter made exception when he promised to follow Boppo's advice), he, Gonzalvo, resolved to entrap him on his return, and hurry him away to one of the palace dungeons. Kathleen had agreed, unrestrictedly, to aid the minister in securing Marzetta. In regard to the manner in which it should be done, it was to depend on his will, and not on her caprices. Kathleen should get the little fish-girl to her house, and entice her, if possible, to accept his offers: if she would not accept, then, by some trick, get her into a carriage, and have her driven to his den.

During the morning, Madame Fiesco had been pre-

paring to move to her new home, and bid adieu to old associations. She had often gone to the window, and, with a richly-jeweled hand, put aside the silken curtains, and looked out on a cloudless sky, — a calm, blue sky, that was far, very far, from symbolizing the perturbations in her own breast; then she had turned hastily away, saying to herself, “What business have I to gaze thitherward? My resolves were calmly made, and my eyes are henceforth to be on the earth, with no retrospects.”

Splendidly, beautifully attired, our Kathleen was thus whiling away the time, and awaiting the hour for her usual drive on Aqua Sòla, when Gonzalvo was announced.

“Forgive me, charming duchess,” said he, “for intruding on you so often; but circumstances have transpired which make it necessary to have Marzetta in my power this very night, either through your persuasive eloquence, bribe, or stratagem.”

“I have said,” replied the lady, “that I am willing to aid you: command me as you will.” She could not, however, though she knew not why, save herself from an involuntary shudder, and a sickness and faintness at heart, that obliged her to be seated before she had extended the courtesy of a seat to the minister himself.

“I propose, then, that you send your footman immediately with a note to Marzetta, saying that you wish to see her, for some one has informed you of the place where Sappho is secreted, and that you are able to give her directions that will lead to a secret interview with the lost loved one. When once here, you

can secure her entire confidence by asserting that your information is from Friar Jos. She is not aware that you do not know him. I will have a carriage at the rear-gate at nine o'clock precisely, with my trusty servant Pietro inside disguised as an old woman. Engaged by her (him) in conversation about her beloved Sappho, she will not notice the route taken; and, if she does, it will excite no suspicion. Ere she is aware of it, she will be at the postern-wicket of my domicile, and, in a moment more, so well, safely, securely, in my power, that no force can rescue her."

"This, then," said Kathleen with no little bitterness, "is the first step I must take in the career of treachery and deceit upon which I have entered."

"Not unless you do it as willingly as I have served you," was the tart reply.

"I will, I will go forward," said she, with a kind of suffocating sense of the deep duplicity with which she was about to act, — "I will go forward, even if it leads to the grave." She spoke prophetically.

"Adieu, then, my fair duchess!" said Gonzalvo, bending, and kissing her delicate treasure of a hand. "I suppose we shall see you on the drive this evening?"

"Perhaps, till nine o'clock precisely," was Kathleen's reply, accenting the last words to remind him of her bitter, humiliating appointment.

As soon as the minister had taken his leave, the new duchess dispatched a note as directed, with orders to her footman not to return till he had seen La Sylphide. Marzetta, however, having been on an important mission to La Napolitana, was not found till late in the afternoon.

When the castellated heights of the Marquis de Nero threw a shadow over Aqua Sola, that fashionable promenade and drive was thronged with the *élite* of the city, who had come to enjoy the fragrance of its flowery walks, the exquisite music that enlivened the hour, and the charming scenery that begirts the piazza. Madame Felisquetto was there, and though, as has been hinted, no longer young, had lost nothing of that pristine splendor of her charms, which, seventeen years previously, had maddened the young botanist, and bewildered the fashionable world of Edinburgh: indeed, years had added a luscious maturity to her multitudinous attractions; and no one questioned the king's good taste in bidding a high price for such a gem, — a price such as an amateur, a Cræsus in wealth, pays for a bird of paradise to adorn a gilded cage which he happens to have hanging idly in his portico.

Ere long the Turkish ambassador entered, mounted on a fine Arabian steed; and, meeting with Gonzalvo, he at once exclaimed, "Tell me, my dear sir, who that white dove is in yonder carriage, — that angel reposing there like a sunlit cloud."

"That lady in the beautiful carriage lined with white satin? — that Juno-like creature, looking as if afloat on the froth of the sea?"

"That same dazzling jewel."

"No other than the new-made duchess, our good king's favorite, designed by the Federati to be the first dictatress of the republic. But that band of malcontents has been foiled by me; and their leader will to-night be in my power."

“ You have already begun to act, then ? ”

“ To strike, you might say,” replied Gonzalvo.

“ You yourself will be foiled,” was the response, which greatly astonished the prime-minister.

“ What! have you, too, entered the league against us? A short time ago, I spoke with the Russian ambassador, and he did not hesitate to plead in favor of our opponents. The British envoy, Sir James, also, this morning counseled delay; and it has even been said that the Austrian ambassador, influenced by a beautiful lynx in sheep's clothing, — *La Napolitana*, — is seeking the friendship of *Il Signor Fiesco*, the leader of the gang. But all that will soon cease; for Prince Metternich will find that the one he really wishes to influence is now no other than the king's *chère amie*, the lady yonder.

Here these gentlemen were obliged to move on a little distance to make room for a double line of carriages then approaching; and, as they halted, they saw the Duchess of Liguria drive away.

“ That is very odd,” said Gonzalvo.

“ What? ” asked the ambassador.

“ That the duchess should take herself off in the midst of this inimitable serenata, *Il sogno di Scipione*.”

“ Believe me,” said the Turk, “ I think that friar yonder spoke to her as he passed. He drew near the carriage, and I saw the lady bend forward; but the friar did not stop, and, if he did speak to her, it was most covertly done.”

“ Ay, they do those things to perfection,” responded Gonzalvo; “ and, if he had only said ‘ Beware!’ it would have been sufficient to send her out

of paradise, so completely are these women under the thumbs of their confessors."

"Is he her confessor, then?"

"No: on the contrary, I am quite sure he never before spoke to the lady; though he could not fail to recognize her from her resemblance to the Madonna I have just given him."

"A Madonna?" said the ambassador with a laugh.

"Even so," replied Gonzalvo; but as the Spanish minister, the Chevalier Bardaxi, then joined them, there was no time to relate its history.

"Your obedient servant," said the chevalier. "I bring you stirring news."

"Indeed!" said Gonzalvo, somewhat agitated.

"We learn by this evening's mail that the Austrians are to march in and take forcible possession of Liguria. We also have rumors in town of a contemplated rise of the Federati for the purpose (if nothing else) of liberating a certain young lady supposed to be unjustly imprisoned by the government; and, further, that the prime-minister's daughter (I only speak of rumors, Signor Gonzalvo) is the very leader of the Federati."

Gonzalvo turned as pale as his dark visage would allow, clinched his teeth, and, for a moment, knew not what to reply. At last, with an attempt to be caustic, he said, "*A buen hambre no hay pan duro*" ("To the hungry there is no hard bread"). "You doubtless know the proverb; and, as you have been so poorly entertained of late, even this news is not unacceptable."

After a few moments of desultory conversation, the party separated.

The new duchess, when she quitted Aqua Sola, little dreamed that she should never return to it again. Reaching home, she learned that a note of great importance had just been left there, and that one of her servants had taken it, and gone out in search of her. There was no alternative but to remain quiet till the missive was brought back. In the mean time, Marzetta came, and, being informed — as previously planned — that the Friar Jos had communicated the news concerning Sappho, was easily induced to enter the carriage, and be driven — she knew not where.

Soon after Marzetta's departure, the important note came to Kathleen's hands. She did not recognize the writing; nor, when she read it, could she believe that she any longer existed in a real world, but in a world of fiction. She pored over the lines, and shed scalding tears: she re-read them, till tears ceased to flow; for a fever of the brain burned them up. Then a physician was sent for; but, when he had learned the cause of her malady, he felt the uselessness of his mission, and bade the servants seek for spiritual counselors only. The note had mentioned Friar Jos; but Kathleen, for days, would not allow him to be sent for. At last, when it seemed that her end was approaching, she solicited his presence.

When Gonzalvo left the public square, he went directly to his mansion to await the arrival of La Sylphide; and, though moments seemed to him like hours, it was in reality but a short time before his victim

came. Dismounting at the postern-gate, and being tenderly conducted in by the old lady, she had no suspicion of her real position till confronted by the minister himself. But, even then, her trust in a higher Power did not for a moment forsake her. She looked steadily at her persecutor, and cowed him by her expression of scorn and contempt; and, when he again pleaded his unconquerable love as an excuse for his treachery, she made him writhe like a serpent in a furnace by her sarcasms, and by spreading before him her knowledge of his criminal career from his earliest years to that very hour.

“Finally,” said Gonzalvo, “since neither my love, nor my offers of wealth, can tame you into submission to my will, let us see what effect one of our dungeons may have.”

“Place me where you will,” said Marzetta defiantly: “I shall be found, or your palace will be razed to its foundations.”

Gonzalvo then threw his strong arms around her, and bore her, unresisting, to an iron door behind the tapestry. In a moment it was unlocked, and she thrust down several steps upon a cold stone floor.

Marzetta felt herself utterly powerless for the moment, and uttered no cry. She had an abiding conviction that Fate had not done with her: still, when she heard the key turned upon her, a sense of her desolate condition fell like a thunderbolt upon her trembling, sensitive heart, and she sank to the earth as if paralyzed.

“Now,” said Gonzalvo to himself as he closed the door upon the damp and chilly atmosphere of the

gloomy prison, "I ought to breathe freely again ; but, alas ! there is something oppressive, if not actually stifling, in the air about me : still I must await the report of my emissaries concerning the arrest of Fiesco." But here began his *rôle* of disappointments.

When Friar Jos left the public square, he went to his convent. There, throwing himself upon his knees before the Madonna which had recently been given him, he poured out in tears and prayers the sorrows of a deeply-troubled soul. After a while, he arose refreshed and comforted ; for he knew, that, for weary years, he had devoted himself humbly to the service of God. Since the one great fraud of which he had been guilty, — seemingly an age past, — he had walked barefoot over his Maker's earth, and sought, by deeds of charity and hungering for holiness, to wipe the stain from his overburdened conscience. He arose refreshed, and went with Heaven's benediction to find the sure clew to the entangled threads of that mysterious tissue of events which had so recently been brought before him.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE TRAPPER ENTRAPPED. — THE POETRY OF SCENIC REPRESENTATIONS. — MORE WORTH AND LOVELINESS THAN WAS SURMISED. — FIESCO'S FLIGHT.

HE Countess Napolitana had gained much at the ball; but she had also lost much: she had lost confidence in her ability to pursue her designs on Fiesco Felisquetto without becoming too deeply interested in him herself. She had invited him to visit her at her villetta out of town, on the sunny slopes where Lord Byron lived; and he had accepted the invitation. But whether it would produce a better effect upon his mind to receive him in the midst of a gay assembly, or alone in one of the arbors where he could join her at tea, was a question she long pondered without coming to any decision. Finally she concluded it should be with a brilliant party, before which she would give some scenic representations in imitation of Lady Hamilton, which could not fail to attract and impress, if not win.

Ah, how acute and subtile are the reasonings of woman! Her mind, delicate, like her structure and

constitution, receives its impressions from the dominant characteristics of truth, which the false strive to conceal by various striking and prominent subterfuges that often allure and fix the attention, and deceive the more plodding, deeper-seeking, of the sterner sex. Woman may sometimes be misguided by the earnest protestations of the bad, yet never without her misgivings. Her loving heart may occasionally lead her into a labyrinth of error; but her quick perceptions of right and wrong, her electric judgment, will first warn her of it.

La Napolitana had discovered under the calm exterior of Signor Fiesco an intense love of the beautiful, whether in Nature or Art; and that, over all he looked upon, he threw a poetic halo, softening and subduing his own natural enthusiasm, that would otherwise have burst forth in rapturous exclamations at every lovely form, at every ray of sunshine that fell among flowers. He was, in fact, a being after her own ideal of perfection. He was sufficiently advanced in life to have a mature judgment; while every pulsation of his heart was the echo of some noble and abiding sentiment. Those transitory scintillations of affection which young souls are so constantly sending abroad, but which, like the dove from the window of the ark, return for a resting-place, had long been with him embodied in a deep affection for Kathleen.

Giving La Napolitana credit for that discernment which I have accorded to the sex generally, it might be asked, What did she expect to gain in the execution of the plans she had proposed to herself to carry out in behalf of the Austrian ambassador? Under ordi-

nary circumstances, nothing ; but, owing to the peculiar state of Fiesco's mind, she had little doubt he would contribute essentially (he had unwittingly already done much on the night of the ball) toward the completion of Prince Metternich's schemes. But now the die had in reality been cast ; and Fate, it would seem, had set its seal upon its victims. La Napolitana could then act independently ; do as her own kind nature dictated, without detriment to others' plans except Gonzalvo's : and for the prime-minister she had neither respect nor esteem.

The divertisement which La Napolitana had decided upon had benevolence in one of its aspects : for to have allowed Fiesco to float away, without succor, on that sea of doubt where he had cast himself, would have brought him to a speedy wreck ; and she wished now to make some atonement for the part she had been induced to take against him in the interests of another. If she could do herself justice by showing him her true character, and her high appreciation of his, it would be her duty and her pleasure to do so.

The villetta which the countess had taken for the season, was, as has been said, on the sunny hillside of Il Paradiso, where Byron was writing his " Vision of Judgment," commanding a view of the beautiful Gulf of Genoa, and sending the eye along either *riviera* till the blue mists of the distance drank in alike the cliff, the castle, and the cottage. On the right hand, intercepted by a narrow valley, through which, in the season of melting snows, runs a roaring stream, was the walled city, climbing up its terraced

acclivities, and holding within its grasp a whole volume of enchanting scenery.

At an early hour, the grounds about the villetta of La Napolitana were thronged by the guests invited to her histrionic *soirée*. Fiesco was the last to arrive, somewhat to the chagrin of the hostess: but he had been loitering along, poring over his troublous position and that of the Federati, and questioning himself concerning the object of his present visit; occasionally stopping with half a resolution to turn back. Remembering, however, his promise, and being impelled onward by an influence that seemed mysterious even to himself; wishing also, in a degree, to divest his mind of those harrowing incentives to retrospective views of some of the elements of discord that seemed breaking around him, — he wound his way out of the eastern gate of the city, and, with a step more tardy even than he had imagined, reached the charming abode of his friend the countess.

“My dear sir,” said the Austrian ambassador, who had descended to the gate to meet him, “how happens it you come on foot? How happens it, also, that you bring not that princess of princesses, your consort?”

“I reached here without thinking how I came,” said Fiesco. “As regards madame, she is otherwise occupied than considering the happiness of her best friends;” and here he turned his head aside, pressed his hand over his eyes as if to warn back a tear, and walked on slowly and silently up the avenue.

Prince Metternich, seeing that he had touched upon a wrong chord, hastened to change the subject by saying, “Though we all envy you this *Aricia*, few

more adorn our circle than the fair lady who has this evening assembled us. The festival is one we may consider projected in honor of our own divinities; though, from the innumerable perfections of which she is the possessor, we shall have little time to think of any other than the performer herself."

"She is indeed a woman of perilous charms," said Fiesco thoughtfully.

"Charming she is indeed," said the ambassador; "and when you come to know the goodness of her heart, to see the aureola of gentleness that ever encircles her, she will haunt your waking and sleeping dreams without that thought which one of your words conveys."

"Still I think this new meteor will be dangerous in our quiet hemisphere," replied Fiesco in a tone that betokened an effort to be cheerful.

"Not to one of your known calm temperament," said the prince; "for I think every Genoese can swear that they never saw you elated by any beauty that ever walked your fair city. But, ah! there she is, looking this way. How beautifully her position is chosen! The deep green leaves of the trellised vine beyond form a dark background, and show distinctly the outlines of her dainty form; while the delicacy of the drapery in which she has developed it gives her the semblance of a fairy just about to float away on the waves of the air. She sees you now, and is coming to welcome you; and, if she does it not with the grace of a divinity, then I have misjudged her."

"Though tardy in your coming, my good Signor Fiesco," said the lady, "you see that I give you no

tardy greeting; and here is my hand, and a portion of my warm heart in it, to assure you of a warm and hearty welcome."

Fiesco bowed, and kissed the hand that had been so generously proffered, and with all sincerity replied, —

"So absorbed were my thoughts, many of them in this place and its fair mistress, that they impelled me here upon my feet, not allowing room for a consideration of any other mode by which I could more expeditiously make the journey."

"It is a bold excuse, sir," said the lady; "yet my vanity prompts me to credit it. But come, let us go in: I have to dress — though this is hardly strictly speaking — for the entertainment of my noble guests; and, though loth to leave you, I do it in the hope of being more attractive in other characters than my own. Is not that an honest confession?" And away she ran as they reached the door, and disappeared through the ether of the long gallery like one of Ossian's ghosts.

When the guests had been apprised of the lady's return to the house, they all assembled in the grand saloon. This apartment had been furnished in costly style, with a raised platform at the end, and with appropriate paintings and decorations. A thin gauze screen in front gave a hazy appearance to the whole, — beautifully adapted, at least, to the first scene that was to enchant the spectators.

In a short space of time, muffled music was heard in the distance; and a heavy curtain that had separated the audience from the stage began slowly to descend from the top. When it had nearly reached

the floor, unveiling most of the scenery, "Venus rising from the sea" filled the beholder with breathless wonder and admiration. Could that be the work of Praxiteles? Could Phidias have fashioned such a form? It came from the hands of a greater Master; and man might well admire, and bow down and worship its matchless perfections. But it was not form alone that claimed attention: where shadows lay, it

"Seemed as if the light had fallen off,
So polished was its surface."

Her right arm, as if to break the waves in her ascending course, was curved above her brow, on which a diamond star sent out its rays of varying light. Her left, at her side, gathered in its taper fingers, with all the charm the truest modesty could prompt, a long, rich, wavy mass of hair, all dripping from the briny deep.

A moment only was allowed to the silent assembly; then the thick curtain was lifted, shutting from view this world of beauty.

The next scene was Diana asleep after the fatigues of the chase. She lay on a green bank. In her left hand she still grasped the bow; while her right was being lapped by a tame gazelle, that seemed to recognize the little bestower of many a kind caress.

She next appeared as Helen, then as the daughter of Levi, and finally in the bewitching shawl-dance invented by Lady Hamilton, and at that time in vogue throughout Italy.

Prince Scorci, who had seen the original of this last at the court of Naples, proclaimed the Countess

Napolitana unapproachable in grace and beauty ; and no one of the large assembly, either male or female, was disposed to question the justness of his decision.

Ere the expressions of admiration had died away on the lips of her guests, the lady presented herself in their midst, elegantly, chastely attired, and, taking the arm of the Austrian ambassador, led the way to the supper-table.

Fiesco Felisquetto, like all the others, was greatly pleased with the evening's entertainment ; and when, after supper, he had the pleasure of a *tête-à-tête* with the hostess, he did not fail to express his unqualified admiration. La Napolitana, however, was more won by the manly character, lofty sentiments, truthful nature, and perhaps melancholy, of her companion, than he by her glittering attractions or varied accomplishments ; and, if she ever loved any one, she felt, were he free, she could love him. What was more, she was prepared to prove, that, if one woman had betrayed him, there was another who would save him. Instead of wishing him to swerve for a moment from his high career, she longed to see him occupy the place of trust and power to which his worth and talents entitled him. She regretted, as has been said, any influence she may have had over the conduct of his wife ; and she thought the prince would also, if he knew the man whom he had tried to injure, — in all political honesty, he would say, — or, in other words, had incidentally injured, while attempting lawfully to serve his own government.

Yes : La Napolitana was now prepared to say to him, “ Go ; and may Heaven's blessings rest upon you !

go, trusting in the right; and, in God's own good time, you will be restored to us." She then revealed to him Gonzalvo's plot to arrest him that night on his way home, and probably thrust him into some of the dungeons under his palace, whence none were known to escape.

Fiesco manifested little astonishment (since Kathleen's estrangement, nothing seemed to astonish him); for it appeared to be a part of the great avalanche that was already crushing him. He calmly thanked the lady for such an unequivocal token of her friendship, and begged her to forgive him for his depression of spirits in her presence.

"It is not for myself alone, I assure you, my dear countess," said he, "that I am thus bowed down. The cause of the Federati, I fear, is lost; and my beloved country must still wear the yoke of merciless, unscrupulous tyrants. There is, it is true, a galling chain about my heart; and this news sinks it deeper: for I am persuaded that Kathleen has betrayed me, adding double bitterness to the cup she had already forced upon me. But whither shall I fly? O Italy, Italy! my native, my adored land! how gladly I would shed for thee my last drop of blood if in it I could read thy freedom!"

"Do not be discouraged, my dear friend," said the countess; "for I now pledge you my word that henceforth the cause of the Federati shall be my cause; that Prince Metternich shall aid it with his masterly diplomatic abilities; and that you shall find on your return—for you must, for a brief period, fly the country—a far better state of things than you now

dream of. I have seen Marzetta this very afternoon ; and she informs me of the friendship of Russia, which your party has just gained and that Gonzalvo must soon fall."

"God be praised ! But," said he thoughtfully and to himself, "Kathleen is no longer mine !"

"Forgive me," said the countess, awakening him from his reverie : "may I not send a trusty servant to town to obtain for you a boat, so that you can join some vessel outward bound, outside of the harbor ?"

"Yes, my kind friend : send to Boppo in Strada de la Marina, and tell him to be ready to take me early to-morrow morning, and place me on board the first ship that may leave the port.

The necessary orders were given ; and, early on the following morning, Boppo's boat conveyed Fiesco to a vessel that happened to be sailing for Constantinople.

CHAPTER XXIV.

ON BOARD SHIP.—MADDENING REFLECTIONS.—SUFFERINGS AND RECOVERY OF FIESCO.—A FRIEND AND BROTHER FOUND.

FIESCO fortunately found himself among friends,—on board an Italian vessel, where his name was as much revered as is Garibaldi's throughout Italy at the present day; but he was in no mood to enjoy any thing, and he sat himself apart to contemplate the roll of the wheel of Fortune. Italy, her past, present, and future, her ingratitude toward one who had been her most devoted partisan, hovered with raven wings over his reveries. Then came the broken mirror of his soul's *sekos*, that had in its perfectness reflected the deeper fascinations of his heart: all its images were now distorted. He understood well the character of Gonzalvo, and would have given worlds to know if his own arrest and incarceration had been planned by that villain alone; but he could not divest himself of the conviction that Kathleen had something to do with it: this was the harrowing thought that haunted him like the night-

mare, and horrid and grotesque figures sprang in taunting and threatening attitudes from the conception. If he could have been convinced that the wily prime-minister was the sole mover in this affair, he could have lain quietly down beneath the pale moon on the hard deck of his floating home, and slept soundly; for he had passed the day in maddening retrospections, and night had come. But recent events about his own household were now combined, and poured into his soul the hot lava of jealousy, — the agony of a doubt of the fidelity of his adored wife. He had no clew to the machinations of Gonzalvo, to the motives that were actuating him in this particular case; and hence, in his reflections, he wandered afar, and into deeper and deeper labyrinths of doubt and error. Had not Boppo, too, — the honest, right-judging Boppo, — whispered in his ear at parting, “Beware of one most dear to you! Do not return till you hear from me. Above all, beware of the one from whom you might expect the most perfect fidelity; beware of Madame Felisquetto, your too much worshiped Kathleen!”

The captain of the vessel, not unmindful of the gloomy mood into which his unexpected but not unwelcome passenger had allowed himself to fall, several times approached him for the purposes of conversation, or offering any or all the comforts the ship afforded; but Fiesco had instinctively turned his head away as if he would be let alone. Provisions had also been sent to him by the captain's orders; but he refused every thing. Later, he began talking aloud to himself, and gesticulating as if alone in his own chamber: —

“ Oh, how long has my love of this dear one blinded me to every thing but her perfections! O inimitable, priceless jewel! what sacrifice would I not have made to retain all thy love? What have I done to merit this cruel blow? What have I not done to prove my fidelity? O Kathleen, Kathleen! could you have known how your last kiss on my lips, your last words in my heart, seemed to waft me along through the hours of sleep as if afloat on the pinions of the angel of peace, you would never have put that heel of iron upon my poor brain. Had you, some day when I held you by the hand, and was gazing into those once-loving eyes, thrust the steel into my heart, I would then have blessed you; for I should have been near enough to tell you of my love, even while I was dying: but this cruel stab in the dark, this turning from me, even while I leaned upon you, in my country's hour of gloom, is more than cruel, — the double agony of death enveloping poor trembling, sickened, shrieking life, — a vulture tearing at the vitals in all their living vitality. But, O God! be kind to her, and let me perish.” Here he sprang forward, either, it would seem, to throw himself overboard, or because of some passing vision which made him think that Kathleen was in danger, and he would try and save her; but, hitting his foot against a bolt in the deck, he fell heavily, striking his head upon the taffrail. The blow was a fearful one. Deep shadows gathered about him. He thought it was death; and he was happy. He was, at least, helpless and insensible; and, when carried below by the officer of the deck, it was supposed the vital spark had fled.

The sun rose bright and clear over the blue waters of the Mediterranean, and Fiesco slept.

“How is our patient?” inquired the captain of his mate when that morning he came up to relieve the night-watch.

“He breathes heavily,” said the officer; “as if there was congestion of the brain: and I believe, when he wakes, he will know as little as he did when we carried him below last night; for there was not an hour when he did not rave like a maniac, and call on some one to come and take the scorpion out of his heart, and drive away the toad that was burrowing in the sockets of his eyes. The name he spoke sounded like Kathleen; and is, probably, that of a lost sister or a cruel fair one. I wish she could have been here to comfort the poor fellow: for it makes one feel heartsick to see how he moans for her; seeming to love her so much, that no other thought occupies his bewildered brain.”

“We must take good care of him,” said the captain; “for he has a big soul, is generous as a tar, and loves the people as himself.”

“You know him, then?” said the mate.

“Perhaps I may say so, though he does not recognize me. A year ago, the Federati held a meeting in the forest which overhangs the northern passes into Liguria. I was there, and do not forget the stirring appeal he made in behalf of the oppressed of our down-trodden country, and his account of the death in Scotland of one of our exiled patriots.”

“For his political opinions, then,” said the mate, “he has doubtless been obliged to fly.”

“ There is no doubt of it ; for the Church party is now triumphant. But what astonishes me is, that he has been betrayed ; for each one of the party is sworn to sustain his comrades ; while a betrayer is to deem himself justly punished, if, for his treachery, a knife be sent to his heart. I speak this freely now ; for, before we shall see that fair land again, a blow will have been struck that will make the kingdom totter ; and Gonzalvo at least will no longer be prime-minister.”

“ The blow may be struck,” replied the young officer, “ and the people may rise : but the result may not be so quickly known as you imagine ; at least, no permanent good result. For, though the Liberal party may be at first successful, it can not maintain itself for any length of time against the combined despotism of Europe, the shrewd intelligence of the sons of Ignace de Loyola, or even the armies of Austria alone : yes, Austria alone ; for, if all the others should fail, — England’s treachery being added, — she would be ready to launch her whole force against the noble cause.”

“ In part, you are right,” said the captain ; “ but, could the people for once attain the position their enemies now occupy, no power less than that which the Grand Master of the universe wields could dislodge them. They would be infinitely more secure than royalty can ever be with its bolstering bayonets.”

“ But the difficulty first to be encountered,” replied the mate, “ is no mean one. A king overthrown now-a-days is but an aroused nest of political and

religious hornets, who will plot and plan, build and undermine, reconstruct and redemolish, re-arrange, reform, revise, turn and return, sapping the foundations of every social structure down to every household till their aim is accomplished, and their servant, their idol royalty, is again on its pedestal. Still, what matters it? Is not a republic a house of brawlers divided against itself? When one can with impunity traduce his neighbor's character, ruin him, and rise upon those ruins to power; when one can falsify a party, buy votes for a villain, waste his life in a struggle for office, and oust the good by trickery or something worse, — what is there in it to admire?"

"The freedom to write, speak, think, as one wills, is a great boon," replied the captain.

"If temperately used," said the mate. "I love my country with my whole soul; but I have no hope for her permanent prosperity under a republican form of government."

"But by G—d!" exclaimed the captain in a profane burst of enthusiasm, "we will found a republic, and it shall last!"

"Ay, that we will!" shouted a voice in his ear; for Fiesco had stolen up from his stateroom unobserved, and had overheard the earnest words of the master. "That is what we want, and will have!" he continued. "Let us go now!" and he rushed to the gangway as if to throw himself overboard. It was evident that he had not yet recovered from the effects of the blow of the previous day, and that his noble mind still wandered. Both the captain and mate were strong, active men; and with a bound they

reached and secured him, and, after a momentary struggle, conveyed him safely to the cabin and to his bed.

“I knew it would be so,” said Fiesco after he had been placed in his berth, and a watchman stationed to see that he did no harm to himself, — “I knew it would be so the moment I started to come to thy aid, O my unhappy country! Kathleen’s spies chained me to this rock, where my heart is torn by vultures, and my sword-arm tied above my head. If she would only let me sleep out the long nights of my country’s sufferings, I would again bless her; but she will neither let me sleep, nor aid me in the redemption of my people. That gentle hand I have so often held is now raised to repel me. The same sweet foot that I have kissed in adoration now recedes at my approach. The fair form that I would clasp in delirious joy becomes but air in my longing arms, — a vision impalpable, yet with a heavy tread upon my brain, which crushes its thought-chamber; and that which I was going to say lies buried in the ruins. It was something you, Kathleen, would love to recall, — of days gone by; perhaps of our second meeting, of our glad wedding-day, when you and Italy girded my heart with one fragrant garland, and the sweet-voiced nightingale sang in the arbor of our hopes. But will you not step lightly? Though your feet are tiny, they bear heavily here.” And, raising his hand to his forehead, he tore away the bandage, while his fingers seemed to bury themselves in the deep gash there made the preceding day. He then started up, and listened as if he heard some well-known voice,

and, stretching out his hands, grasped at something, and said, "It is all thick mist and darkness here: shout again, and I will follow the sound. Give me, now, that little hand, and I will lift you up, and bear you away to a place of safety. You know in your hour of gloom I would not forsake you. But, oh! my burden grows heavy: help! She dies before we can reach the light!" Fiesco here sank back on his pillow, and wept and moaned as if suffering unutterable anguish. Had he a vision of Kathleen's grief, and the gulf of wretchedness into which she was sinking? It would seem even so: and he had striven to save her by bringing her to the light of the truth; unveiling to her the deceptions of Gonzalvo and the falsehoods of those who surrounded her; showing how pure had been his own affections, and how perfectly selfish, and even fiendish, those who plotted against him.

Fiesco at last fell asleep, to the great joy of the captain, who for hours had watched and tended him like a brother; and when he again awoke he was calm, though extremely sad over the memory of the scenes he had passed through in his delirious stage, regarding them as realities: indeed, they were only too real.

During the remainder of the voyage, the captain devoted every spare moment to his patient. He read to him, and enlivened him with cheerful stories, and made the weeks fly rapidly away. The keystone of the royal-arch of friendship was thus cemented between them, and in after-years was not forgotten.

Fiesco was not without friends at Constantinople;

and his heart was greatly cheered by the good news regarding Italy which the first mail brought him. But he had yet to endure another blow, — sad, terrible, almost fatal.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE LIBERAL CAUSE GAINS NEW SUPPORTERS. — THE PRINCESS DEJECTED. — THE OUTBREAK BEGUN. — HAFFED WOUNDED. — GONZALVO FLIES.



MARZETTA, on the morning of the day in which she was arrested, had called by request on the British ambassador, who communicated to her some more important facts concerning her birth and relatives, which filled her with renewed enthusiasm and joy ; for though said facts were both strength and weakness, and might develop claims of an embarrassing nature to several parties, she saw in them only further means of being useful to the Federati.

During that interview, Sir James learned also much about Signor Gonzalvo of which he had never entertained the least suspicion ; and hence pledged his word to La Sylphide, that, as far as his influence went, he would positively thwart the prime-minister's schemes.

When Marzetta left the British ambassador's palace, she went to that of the Austrian ; but, not finding

the prince at home, she proceeded to the villetta of La Napolitana. There she made the same revelations concerning Gonzalvo she had made to Sir James, and gave information about the minister's designs on Fiesco, which led, as we have seen, to his escape. Before she took her leave of the amiable countess, she obtained a promise of her influence, — and it was not little, — as she had from Sir James himself: for La Sylphide now possessed the means of showing conclusively that Gonzalvo could no longer aid Prince Metternich, even if, for his treachery, he won a princely decoration; but that she herself, perhaps, could eventually restore to Austria the Ligurian territory. The information she received about Gonzalvo's plan to arrest Signor Fiesco was from the minister's private secretary, who had fallen in love with her — her daring as well as her beauty — when she came up and bearded the fierce brute in his lair; for the secretary, having overheard the orders given, hastened away the moment the minister left his office, and hunted up La Sylphide with a perseverance none but a lover would have exercised.

It was late when Marzetta returned to town; and, as it was only then she received Kathleen's note requesting her to be at Fiesco's residence at nine o'clock precisely, she found herself obliged to forego one or two more visits, — one in particular which she had intended to make to the Princess Yermoloffski.

The princess had then, for a day or so, been expecting Marzetta, and, as she did not come, began to fear that the hopes which the little fish-girl had awakened might not be realized: still she had kept her own promises faithfully, and induced her husband to

agree to oppose the measures of Gonzalvo: the evidence of it appeared in the prime-minister's own confession to the Turkish ambassador at their recent meeting in the piazza of Aqua Sola.

The princess waited another day with great impatience: on the third she set out in search of La Sylphide. She traced her to La Napolitana's; but, after she left la villetta, nothing further of her proceedings could be ascertained. Great anxiety, however, was everywhere manifested on her account; and Madame Yermoloffski was more than ever convinced that this young creature had qualities and powers of a vastly higher order than those for which she, even, had given her credit. Madame Kathleen Felisquetto was too ill to see any one; and hence the last clew to Marzetta's wanderings on that day left every thing in a mysterious obscurity.

The princess reached home early in the evening, much dejected; but, about an hour after, she was enlivened by the presence of young Haffed, who came to bring the prince some important news. Haffed was ever welcome: he had the *entrée* of the palace, and was made to feel as much at home there as at the Turkish ambassador's. He came and went as he pleased; and, when he threw himself upon the lounge, it was the princess's great pleasure to seat herself beside him, entangle her fingers in his flaxen locks, gaze into his large blue eyes, and tell him, that, if her son still lived, he would be just about his age, and, she hoped, of his good qualities and personal beauty. The princess, indeed, almost loved him; but Haffed's soul was with Marzetta wherever

she might be, and he little regarded the admiration of Madame Yermoloffski.

“Do you think they will find her?” said Haffed abruptly.

“Find who?” said the princess, somewhat astonished.

“Why, La Sylphide!” replied Haffed, supposing the princess had divined the drift of his thoughts.

“Doubtless they will. But why have you an interest in that little fish-girl? I did not suppose you had ever heard of her.”

“All Genoa, almost all Europe, has heard of her. I have just learned that she has, in earlier days, walked with the higher classes of society, and been honored, ere now, with the friendship of queens, dukes, and princesses; and her manners indicate it.”

“I fancied so myself,” said Lady Yermoloffski; “for no one can wear the charm and grace pertaining to a refined life who has always herded with the ignorant and poor. But what news do you bring?”

“That the government fears an outbreak of the people. The Federati are gathering in large bodies, aroused by the report that this same little fish-girl has been kidnapped, and confined in one of the dungeons of the prime-minister’s palace; for that was the common prison for all political offenders, and has, it is said, vast underground cells, and passages leading to various parts of the town, for the more ready and less-suspected way of securing there those whom the king or his myrmidons wished to be rid of.”

“Who is their leader?”

“Count Fiesco Felisquetto, one of God’s noblemen.”

“The very one,” said the princess, “whom La Napolitana told me was to be arrested night before last, but escaped.”

“Then their plans are all frustrated; for, though fearless and determined, they are a class who can not act without a leader.” And Haffed felt, that, if he had but their confidence, he would readily offer himself.

“Marzetta, at any rate, must be liberated,” said the princess firmly. “We will demand it of the minister.”

“The minister will know nothing of it, — not he! He will appear as ignorant of the whole affair as he has of the disappearance of one Sappho, — Marzetta’s dearly-loved friend, and reported to be Gonzalvo’s daughter.”

“Gonzalvo’s daughter!” exclaimed Lady Yermoloffski; “and he would murder her? Monstrous! It can not be!”

“There are developments going on,” replied Haffed, “that will astound the world. I have just seen a fisherman by the name of Boppo, who has told me of things I dare not repeat to you, lest you should regard us all as demons incarnate.”

“Haffed, do you not already know too well my high appreciation of you, though of a different nation and religion from myself, to suppose for a moment that I could consider you capable of any act not worthy of that noble intellect and those superior endowments which you have from your Creator?” And the princess took his delicate hand in one of hers, put back his hair from his marble-like forehead with the other, and looked earnestly and lovingly into his beautiful face.

“I thank you for the kind and friendly manner in which you have received and treated me since I have been in this noble city.”

“That sounds very cold,” said the princess; “but let it pass. Your thoughts are with another.”

“Yes: I was just resolving to go and join the faithful Federati, and be their leader, if they do not find a better.”

“No, Haffed, you must not go!” ejaculated the princess, seizing him by both his hands. “Let me act towards you as would your own fond mother were she here, and throw myself between you and death or horrid ghastly wounds.”

“I have never known a mother’s love and care,” said Haffed in a melancholy tone of voice; “but, as regards death and wounds, we are taught in the Caucasus to seek rather than avoid them, when there is an enemy in the way, or a just cause to be espoused.”

“You are a chivalric race,” responded the princess; “and I think, if your people would yield, our emperor would do them ample justice.”

“They will never yield,” said Haffed somewhat haughtily.

“The Turks befriend you, I know, and sustain you for political reasons,” replied the lady; “but, if they should be subdued by Russia, what further resources have you?”

“Those which Heaven will afford us!” ejaculated the young man, his eyes flashing, and growing dark and wild.

“You are a noble youth; and, if my boy lives, I hope and pray that he may be like you,” said the princess,

with deep sadness in both voice and look, while tears crept one by one down her delicate cheeks.

As Haffed all his life had been accustomed to praise and admiration, he did not think of replying: his thoughts, in fact, had turned to Marzetta. Just then, the hoarse murmur of an angry crowd came up through the palace-windows, and from out it were heard occasionally the words "Death" and "Minister." Haffed could no longer resist the temptation: so, seizing his tasseled fez, he rushed out ere the princess could prevent him, and descended the marble stairs to join the moving throng.

In a few moments, a volley of musketry was heard; and from its regularity, or rather unity, Madame Yermoloffski knew that the king's troops were firing upon the people. She gave an involuntary scream, and started up, but, fainting, fell into the arms of her husband, who, fearing the tumult in the street might alarm her, had hastened from the bureau, or office, and arrived just in time to save his ever-grieving but loving wife from some serious bruises. His tender care soon restored her; and his words of consolation gave her unexpected repose and tranquillity. She told him of her interest in young Haffed, inexplicable to herself, unless, as she said, it arose from a feeling that he must be like their own lost boy. The prince confessed the same, and said that Haffed had won his affection and esteem from the very day of his arrival in Genoa.

The people moved on *en masse* like hungry wolves, growling defiance to the government, and death to the prime-minister; and when they reached the Strada

de la Marina, a broad street in the lower part of the town, where most of the fishermen lived, they found an equally infuriated body, who had been listening to the revelations which Boppo and the smuggler had to make to them. These tales flew swiftly from one to another; and each resolved in his heart that Gonzalvo should die. They had not time, however, to act before another volley was poured into their midst, and many died on the spot. Haffed received a ball in his leg, and fell where he stood. He blessed God then, and ever after, that it was so.

The people, too brave, too deeply devoted to the cause in which they were engaged, to be intimidated even by the fatal fire of the soldiery, rushed upon and disarmed them, then hurried on towards the palace of the minister.

Gonzalvo had relied on his well-disciplined troops; but, when he saw the mob approaching, he knew that his fate was sealed if he did not at once escape. Loading, then, his pockets with gold, he descended into an underground passage (securing well the doors behind him) which led into the interior of a fort on the heights above, where he felt sure he would be safe: but there, to his chagrin, when he arrived, he was not long in discovering that none could be trusted; that all were as ready to strangle as to protect him; and that there remained nothing for him to do but quit the country he had so long impoverished and enslaved.

In the mean time, the Federati had sacked his palace. Every window was broken, and every door therein unhinged save the massive iron ones of the vaults,

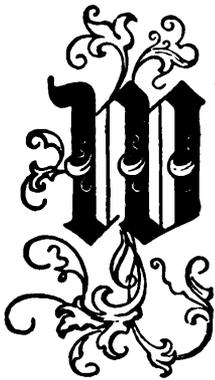
which resisted all appliances ; but no Gonzalvo could be found. They next proceeded to the Jesuit college in the Strada Nuove, and sacked that also, driving its inmates on board a ship in the harbor, with the intention of sinking them all there together.*

Having no leader save their enthusiasm, the Liberals knew not what further to do. The dastardly creature they sought had fled ; and Fiesco, whom they would make prime-minister, was not there to receive their support : so some returned to their homes, others to the Strada de la Marina to await further developments, keep the revolutionary fire of their comrades aglow, and adopt measures for the discovery of the hiding-place of their hated foe.

* This scene was repeated in 1848, while the writer was in Genoa.

CHAPTER XXVI.

A FEARFUL DISCOVERY. — GROPING IN THE DARK. — HOPES REVIVED. — GOOD FORTUNE FROM MISFORTUNE. — ALMOST A MIRACLE. — SAPPHO'S FATE SOLVED. — LOVERS APART.



WHEN Marzetta attempted to rise from the cold stone floor on which she had sunk down when thrust by Gonzalvo into one of the cells, or, perchance, into one of the long-forgotten avenues of the old prison-house, her hand fell upon a piece of satin. She grasped it eagerly, trembling with emotion, and found it heavily embroidered, — embroidered in the corners with a bouquet of flowers, on the sides with a wreath of oak-leaves ; and, as her fingers proceeded in the examination, she was more and more convinced that it was an apron she herself had wrought, and had presented to Sappho on the morning when she so happily clothed her with her own garments in Madrid. Then, as fast as the sweet associations came gathering about her heart, — a thousand times faster than I can record them, — there also flashed upon her the

truthfulness of Madame Felisquetto's assertion, that she was to go where Sappho was. Then her fingers ran on to awaken her adopted and dearly-beloved sister, her tender and loving thoughts running on in eager advance ; and, when they reached her shoulder, they gently shook her, then passed to the face, and found it cold in death. Then a shriek, wild and maniacal, rang through the engirding cells ; then another, and still another, and yet others still more shrill and piercing, till every room and crevice and corridor were filled with one long echo of despair. Still she could not cease ; for she seemed to think her wail of woe might shiver the rocks above, and open a way of escape or relief. But no human voice responded to the agonizing cry ; and only the clank of a chain in a neighboring dungeon came to her relief. Then, upon her knees, her head bowed down into her very lap, she poured out her unavailing sobs and tears. Must she, then, give up the hope of restoring Sappho, even though dead, once more to the light ? of gazing again on those gentle features, so inviting to love and life ? Her very heart seemed breaking with that silent thought and the grief it evoked. This she could not endure ; and again the massive walls rang with her cries for help. The same clanking chain was all the response.

“ Did I bring you here only to perish thus, dear, dear sister ? ” said Marzetta, as she sought the clay-cold hand of her beloved Sappho and kissed it. “ When I took you from the bleak wayside steps, and warmed and fed you, did I dream that it was to plunge you into a colder and deadlier atmosphere,

and then to close your eyes in death for want of food? O my God! where is the mercy I so much need? O Heaven! breathe into Sappho's ear the cravings of my soul for pardon; for her gentle soul will listen and forgive. Father, bless and save her; bless me also; for thou alone knowest the purity of all my motives."

Marzetta kissed again the stiffened hand of her beloved friend, then passed her own once more over the face of the departed, and smoothed her forehead, feeling that Sappho must know who it was, would recognize her, and come to life. When she withdrew her hand, it fell upon a coral cross. She broke it from its chain, kissed it, and placed it in her bosom. She then rose to her feet with a strange energy, that despair, perhaps, gave, or that pertained to an abiding faith in a destiny that was not complete. Still she was suffocating with her sense of loneliness; and she could not but cry aloud again for help. Placing, then, her ear to the wall, she heard once more, and perhaps more faintly, the clank of a chain. "Was it of some one confined there," she asked herself, "who was dumb, who had lost his voice from long lack of speech with his fellow-creatures? Had he a mother who had wept and passed sleepless nights because ignorant of his fate? How she might bless God that she did not know it!" Marzetta thought of Madame Yermoloffski. She then groped about the prison, and discovered that it was a passage, only a few feet in width, with a door open, opposite to the one by which she had been thrust in. Moving with the utmost caution, she passed through it,

descended a single step, and found herself on bare ground. Immediately came the thought, that with her hands she could dig down and under the walls, and thus escape; but the earth proved to be almost flinty hard, and little yielding to her tender fingers. She groped on, gradually descending; but the air was so chill and damp, that her teeth chattered, and her limbs trembled; for her delicate garments were but poor protection in such an atmosphere: still she groped on, examining by touch every foot of the wall on either hand. How long she continued this she knew not; but finally, exhausted, she sank down to rest, and fell asleep. Of the length of time she slept she had no idea; but, on awakening, she was benumbed by cold, and almost perishing with hunger. She now resumed as well as she could her progress down the tunnel, till she finally heard the rumbling of carriages overhead, and the sound of the sea also in the direction she was going. But the way was evidently growing narrower, and in some places had become so choked up, that it was difficult for her to pass. Still, bending low in one place, on her hands and knees in another, scarcely ever erect in any, she pursued her way, till, again cruelly exhausted, again faint from hunger, and nearly frozen, she fell to the ground, and was soon oblivious of all misfortunes, and, it may be, dreaming of paradise. When once more awake, she was too ill to make much progress. A little distance on, too, she found the way entirely choked up; but it appeared to be with loose earth, still, in her feeble state, little success could she expect in any attempt at digging. The task, however, was begun; but the

blood oozed from her finger-ends. She wept bitterly, and prayed for more strength. She then lay in the small cavity she had dug at the top of the embankment or barrier; and her face was near the roof of the passage. Presently she heard the murmur of many voices, and a rumbling sound as of many feet passing overhead; then the report of fire-arms. "O God!" she cried, "might not some one, can not some one, hear poor dying Marzetta? — poor dying Marzetta! poor dying Marzetta!"

A cry, a shout, — "I hear! courage!" — strikes upon her ear.

"Once more!" the same voice says.

"Poor Marzetta is dying!"

"No, poor Marzetta! Haffed hears! Haffed is wounded; but Haffed will come! Courage!" Marzetta heard no more, but fainted from the fullness of her heart, from feebleness, from hope, fear, and love.

But how? where? Haffed struggled to rise, to go; but his fractured leg prevented him. He looked about him for help. At that moment the smuggler fortunately discovered him, and ran to pick him up.

"Do not move me hence one inch, my good friend," said Haffed, "till I have marked the spot; for Marzetta cries to me from beneath it."

"Marzetta! My dear sir, you must be mad."

"No! By the living God! I heard her voice. Do, for Heaven's sake, aid me in saving her!"

The smuggler considered for a moment, and said with hopeful animation, "You may be right. A passage, now choked with sand, led up from the sea-beach to the prison. I found it in digging a way

from my cellar, just outside the walls, to this wine-shop before which I am now standing. Indeed, she may be there, — escaped from his clutches. Praise be to God if it prove so !”

“Amen !” said Haffed. “But haste you : go to the passage at once, and leave me here lying on the ground to encourage her with the news that friends are seeking her.”

Haffed lay upon the ground, heedless of a wound that was still bleeding furiously ; and occasionally, when no one was near, he would cry out, “Courage ! friends come !” Then he would sometimes hear a faint moan that made the tears gush from his eyes, and hush his voice with sobs.

The smuggler ran into the wine-shop before which they had been conversing, descended to the cellar, hauled down a double tier of old casks, removed a little earth, opened a trap-door, descended a few steps, then rushed along, crying out, “Marzetta, Marzetta !” He had hardly proceeded ten steps, ere a moan, as of one dying, reached his ears. He stopped, and found that he was before the old passage he had himself filled up. He sprang toward it, and like a tiger tore away the loose earth with his hands, shouting all the time, “I come, Marzetta ! Courage ! I am near you ! You shall be saved !” Occasionally he thought he could distinguish a faint sound of hope. This gave him the strength of a Hercules ; and he struggled on with only his hands, clutching dirt and stones, and hurling them behind him, plunging forward as if to devour the barrier, while huge drops of perspiration rolled down his face.

By and by he imagined he heard breathing as of one asleep, then the soft moan of a child resigning itself to slumber for the night. He had, however, no time to listen, but tugged at the huge pile, till, oh joy! he touched a delicate hand still warm with life. He grasped it firmly, and did not resign it, lest the gentle one should lose hope, and die in the moment of release. He grasped it firmly with one hand, and worked with the other till he could draw the body through the aperture. Oh, how full of inexpressible bliss was that little period of time!

“Saved, saved!” he then shouted; and Haffed heard the joyful sound, but was now too faint and feeble himself to move, and soon became insensible.

The smuggler did not return by the way he went; for the shop above was full of men, and there was no apartment in which to conceal his precious burden: so he hurried off in the other direction, and, before many minutes had elapsed, placed her on a nice couch in the quiet room of his own good house keeper, and began that round of gentle and untiring efforts which soon restored the delirious rescued one to herself again.

What struggles, however, the poor young girl appeared to be passing through, when her mind, which had been engulfed in the dark waters of despair, was rising up to the clear light of reason, and perceptions of friendship and love! She often pronounced the name of Sappho; then, with distorted face and clinched fingers, seemed to be striving to drag her up above the boundaries of a dreadful death or dire despondency; then she appeared to be clasping her

in her arms, and sinking with her, with a shriek of horror, into the depths of a bottomless abyss. When she had nearly, if not fully, regained all her intellectual powers, she asked for a coral cross, as if to assure herself she had not been dreaming. The old housekeeper brought it to her, saying that she had found it in her bosom when undressing her.

“Did you not recognize it?” said Marzetta, pressing it to her lips.

“I knew that I had seen it before; but I could not say where,” replied the aged dame. “But now — bless me! now I remember, it was our poor lost darling’s” — But so overcome was she, that she could not utter the name, but buried her face in her apron.

The smuggler, turning as he stood at the foot of the bed, discovered the subject of Marzetta’s inquiry. He slowly stretched out his hand as tears gathered in his eyes, took the cross, and, kissing it warmly, said, —

“She too, then, is dead!”

“You have divined rightly,” responded Marzetta with trembling lips.

“You found her dying, or dead?”

“Dead! in the dungeon I came through. Dying alone of cold and starvation, — her meager hands, her thin cheeks, telling the dreadful tale.” And here a new outburst of grief checked further explanation.

“God’s will be done!” said the smuggler solemnly. “Heaven knows, I would have given my life to save hers; but all efforts now are useless. I feel, however, almost sure that the murderer will not escape the spies of the Federati, and that he will yet be brought to justice.

“ But good heavens ! ” continued he, “ while I have been faithful to one, I have cruelly neglected another ; and he, too, the very youth to whom we are indebted for our little sylphide’s salvation ! I will go now, and endeavor by all possible means, if not too late, to atone for my seeming heartlessness.”

Marzetta was not anxious to detain him : she had, in fact, been on the point of asking him to go and learn all the particulars concerning the young man’s wound, of which he had thus far said little or nothing, leaving her to infer that it was not serious ; but she felt a sort of delicacy about it, though she willingly acknowledged to herself, that, had it not been for him, she must have miserably perished.

The smuggler did now, indeed, hurry away with all speed and anxiety, and made inquiries concerning Haffed in the neighborhood where he had left him. Learning nothing satisfactory there, he proceeded to the palace of the Turkish ambassador, where he found the youthful hero safe, and had the pleasure of informing him of Marzetta’s favorable condition, and hopes of speedy recovery. Haffed was, of course, grateful and overjoyed ; and Marzetta was no less so, when the smuggler, returning, brought back to her the glad news that her lover was doing well. But, if he repeated the conversation once, he probably did a dozen times ; for the young girl put her questions in so many and in such diverse forms, that a repetition of what had been said was inevitable. She then pored over every word, examined it in all its significations, and extracted from it every particle of sweets it contained.

“Did Haffed say he thought of me when he fell?”

“Yes: his first thought was of you.”

“When he fainted, did he still think of me?”

“Yes: his thoughts appear to have been altogether about you.”

“Had he no mother, no sister, to give one thought to?”

“He spoke as though no other earthly being entered his brain.”

“It is strange Lindahara did not engross his mind. Did he not mention her?”

“He did not; though she was evidently his nurse, but went out when I came.”

“Did he look after her, ask her to stay, or call her back?”

“He did not, but rather seemed glad that we were left alone to talk about you.”

Thus Marzetta questioned and was answered by the patient smuggler, and grew happier at every new revelation.

It appears that it was long after midnight ere the janizary of the Turkish ambassador, who went out in search of Haffed, discovered him lying on the ground where he fell when wounded by the king's soldiers. With the assistance of some fishermen, he bore him to his home; and it was a week or so before he was able to leave his bed.

If two or three or four were grieved by this sad mishap to Haffed, there was one who was made intensely happy by it. Lindahara had him now all to herself. She would allow no other to dress his wound, prepare his medicines, or bring him even a

cup of water. Night and day she tended him, watched and fanned him while asleep, hung over him when awake, and almost anticipated every wish or whim that swayed him from hour to hour.

Could Haffed be indifferent to such unwearied attentions? to one of such luscious beauty as constantly hovered about him, courting back his wayward thoughts, seeking to make him talk of herself and their childhood-home, instead of dreaming of a little Christian elf that had floated, and was still floating, like a butterfly before his troubled vision? Alas! by what sane method, by what logical rules, are human affections governed? If for a moment he threw his arms about her beautiful neck, kissed her, and called her a masterpiece of loveliness, he had not half the heart in it he had when he kissed the border of the scarf that floated from Marzetta's shoulders on the night of the ball, or would have had in kneeling where her dainty feet had trod. Such are the freaks and fallacies of love!

One day, when Haffed persisted in talking of Marzetta, Lindahara wept bitterly, and bathed his hand, which she held in her own, with kisses and tears. At last she told him that Marzetta, on a certain morning, had promised sacredly to try and forget him, and give him up entirely, if she would use her influence with the ambassador in obtaining his adherence to the cause of the Federati.

Haffed turned his head, and looked at her with the utmost wonder and incredulity. Lindahara was frightened at what she had done, and trembled lest she had sacrificed his love for ever.

Unexpectedly to himself, if not to the beautiful Circassian, Haffed had for her at that moment — and perhaps for the first time — a feeling of the tenderest sympathy. He, however, regretted that she loved him; but he could no longer wound the feelings of one whose heart beat solely for him. He drew her towards him, and promised her solemnly, that, though fate might compel him to marry another, even by Christian contract, he would always love her as a dear, dear sister.

“To the decrees of Fate all the faithful must bow,” said Lindahara, with an air of humble submissiveness such as few exhibit save the faithful Mohammedan; and she clasped her white arms about him, and wept again like a weary child. But she had, in reality, been comforted by the words and acts of her beloved; and her tears were now rather of joy than sorrow.

Haffed meant all he said; but his thoughts instinctively turned to Marzetta; and he was more anxious than ever to be well, that he might learn from her own lips how far she had kept her promise made to a rival, the favorite slave, the Circassian beauty, his adopted sister. Time, however, to him, dragged his leaden limbs along, and seemed hatefully decrepit; while, to his fair nurse, days and weeks flew with terrifying rapidity: and, as hours brightened around Haffed, shadows fell more heavily upon her, till at last a sort of perpetual night enveloped all her reveries.

In the mean time, the Princess Yermoloffski had been sick at heart. For nearly the whole of the first day following the *émeute*, in such a disturbed state

was every thing throughout the city, that she saw nothing of Haffed, and heard not a word concerning the marvelous Marzetta. Toward evening, a messenger brought her the news that Haffed had been wounded, but was out of all danger ; that Marzetta had been rescued, but was still very ill at the smuggler's. With characteristic kindness, she ordered her carriage, and drove at once to see La Sylphide, to offer her all the comfort and consolation in her power, and a home at her own palace ; but she found that the poor girl did not yet fully recognize her, though there seemed to pass over her countenance a pleasant smile whenever the name Yermoloffski was mentioned : it was also evident that she once attempted to put out her hand to welcome the friendly visitor, but let it fall in forgetfulness and sleep.

CHAPTER XXVII.

KATHLEEN ILL WHILE MARZETTA IS INCARCERATED. — SHE SUSPECTS MARZETTA TO BE NEARLY RELATED TO HER. — JOSEPH ANNOUNCES HIMSELF. — MOURNING FOR SINS. — JOY IN THE MOMENT OF DISSOLUTION.



WHILE a struggle for life was going on in one of the dark, sunless, underground galleries of the old prison-house, there was another in a light, gorgeously-draped apartment in the marble palace in Strada Balbi, "at the head of the first flight of stairs, to the right;" but it was no less sunless and bitter. A downy couch, with rich pink satin and costly lace curtains looped back with golden cords and tassels, was no opiate to the perturbed, disquieted spirit of its fair occupant; for she was wrestling with a secret grief which she dare not, could not, reveal to any one (save on a death-bed to a confessor), and with sorrows of which the world was already cognizant. Estates, titles, power, she would now joyfully forego if she could but recall Fiesco and Marzetta, return to the quiet cottage she inhabited in England when first married, and shut out the rest

of all earth's creatures. But it was now too late: the fiat had gone forth. The great pen of destiny had given the final period to her earthly career; and death, judgment, and eternity alone awaited her.

But who in all that gay "city of palaces" could have been so conversant with her history as to be able to throw such a deadly shaft into her soul's sanctuary? The note she had received on that fatal evening bore the weighty signature of Sir James, the British ambassador; and though it was couched in friendly and respectful terms, and left room for doubt, and a possible way of escape from the conclusions at which he had arrived, there was so much truth, so much circumstantial evidence adduced to sustain them, that acquiescence was nearly inevitable.

It would appear, to one not knowing all the merits and demerits of the case, that Sir James had shown an unwarrantable cruelty by an explanation of affairs that might have been left in obscurity; but such was not the fact. It was an onerous, ungrateful task: but it was due to the lady herself, and still more to another, — to Marzetta, whose claims could not in justice be overlooked; while a third, and even government itself, had an interest of no little moment to be consulted. If the blow should prove fatal to one, it might be the salvation of another not less worthy, and certainly not less innocent. Certain infamous schemes planned by the prime-minister might also be frustrated (one assuredly would have been if the ambassador's note had reached Kathleen in due season); for Sir James had obtained, in his own peculiar way, very important information respecting Gonzalvo's intentions.

The portrait which the friar received from Gonzalvo had caused him to make some inquiries that had led to astounding results. He had occasion to consult the British ambassador concerning it, and the latter, in turn, to consult the friar about that and many other things. Other minor threads were gradually drawn into the gathering work, till the web was complete in the hands of Sir James.

Friar Jos had walked humbly, and worked diligently in the fields of his great Master; but he now seemed still more humble, and felt that there lay before him new and important tasks and obligations such as he had never dreamed would devolve upon him: he therefore earnestly implored guidance, wisdom, and support from above, that he might do his duty faithfully. Beloved and trusted by all who knew him, his labors were thus rendered more easy and agreeable. Children clung to him wherever he visited; and there was but one person in the whole town who feared him: that was the prime-minister.

Hardly had Friar Jos recovered from the first shock the ambassador's declarations had caused him, ere he was summoned to the bedside of the dying Kathleen. Did she know, or for a moment imagine, who he was? His name and deeds were familiar to her; but she had possibly never seen him in Genoa but once, — on the evening when he had been told by Sir James to warn her to hasten home. Indeed, however familiar she might have been with his face and general appearance, when, as the young botanist, she spurned him, and made him resolve thenceforth to be a religious recluse, slight was the probability, that in the shaved crown,

the long, coarse, brown robe, and the unsandaled feet, would any resemblance ever be observed. On his part, though he had often heard of the leader of the Federati and also of the "beautiful unknown," he had never by any chance met them; nor had any thing transpired or come to his ears, till his late interview with the British ambassador, that could associate either of them with his native land, or suggest that the interesting stranger which the distinguished Italian had recently brought to that city might possibly have been known to him in years long gone by. When, therefore, he was called upon to visit Madame Felisquetto on a bed of sickness, it was with such conflicting emotions as he had never before experienced. Sir James's words were still in his ear; the truths Sir James had brought to light were twining about his heart.

Kathleen had a vigorous constitution; and hence the fever took a more decided hold upon her, running an active career in a few days, inducing delirium, and bringing her to the borders of the grave. In those moments of mental aberration, she would rave of an innocent yet maddening indiscretion; of a demoniac sylvan or satyr that haunted the wood and walks of her father's estate; of a beautiful star that burned on her breast for a moment, and then went out; then of a blissful dream, — becoming blind, and walking with bare feet over a flowery mead, guided by the gentle hand of one who loved her; then embarking, losing her self-control, and finally perishing down among the long grass, the shells, and slimy stones. When returning from these to a seeming conscious-

ness of her real condition, she had a conviction that she had justly been abandoned by all the world: hence her mind remained overburdened with gloom, and all her words were breathings of despondency.

The friar finally came, as he had been requested to do; and, when he entered the sick-room, it was with the look and air of one who wished he could, by God's decree, sink into the earth. He, however, approached the bed, and, humbly kneeling, took the hand that had been left uncovered; but Kathleen buried her face in the pillow, and sobbed audibly. The friar then, with great solemnity and heartfelt reverence, asked God to bless and comfort the sufferer, and sustain her till she had made her peace with Heaven and was prepared to yield up joyfully her spirit to a just and good Creator. With an eloquence, a pathos, a touching sincerity, such as she had never before heard, his soul was lifted to the pure Fountain of life and light, till it would seem as if the very angels must weep were his supplications unanswered.

Kathleen felt greatly comforted, and said, "I did well to send for you; though I thought I should not dare to look upon one so holy. I had heard of your great piety, goodness, benevolence; and I longed to confess my sins to you, and learn what I must do to be saved: but I feared, I feared being despised; I feared you could give me no hope of heaven."

"Sister, — allow me thus to call you in this solemn hour of sorrow, — no child of mortality ever walked this earth with a purer or more guileless heart than yours. I have known you from childhood; and the only sin with which you feel your conscience burdened rests upon my head."

“Joseph!” gasped Kathleen, burying her face more deeply in the pillow.

“Even so, and for seventeen long years, — morning, noon, and night, — I have prayed for your happiness and prosperity; and, by a life devoted to doing good, I have striven to obliterate the shame of the follies of my youth.”

“Joseph, our relative positions are now changed,” said Kathleen as soon as she was sufficiently composed; “and it is for you now to spurn and despise me.”

“Heaven forbid!” responded the friar.

“But, Joseph, you do not know what a dreadful, fiendish act I have been guilty of within the last few days. You can not divine how a creature whose heart you have ever deemed so pure and sinless could stain it with a crime that hardly has any parallel in the annals of infamy. I told a cruel, perhaps a murderous falsehood, to surrender an innocent child, a lovely, harmless girl, to a base villain, because he had aided me in my worldly schemes; and yet, while I look at it in all its blackness, and even believe what Sir James imagines to be the truth, my eyeballs burn in my head, but refuse to shed a tear.”

“Who may the child be?” asked the friar in intense trepidation.

“No other than the guileless little fish-girl, whom everybody seems to love, and who, Sir James says, is probably my” —

“Marzetta?” exclaimed the friar. “O my God, my God!” and he bowed his manly head upon the bed, while his soul was torn with unutterable an-

guish. After a while, he bent over Kathleen, and whispered in her ear, "Our child! — the one you hid from yourself and the world because you hated our marriage!"

"Can Heaven have any mercy on such a wretch?" groaned the poor woman; and she fell at once into one of her fits of raving, and went over again the bitter memories of her life.

The friar now called in the servants, and sent for a physician. In the mean time, all the usual remedies were applied to allay her sufferings. By and by she became calm; and, finding the friar near her bed, she asked him to pray for her again, — pray that she might be spared to make some reparation for her great guilt. "But," she continued, "my hours are numbered; for this struggle can not long continue." Kathleen was now, indeed, so utterly exhausted, it would appear, that, with another paroxysm, she must pass into the world of spirits.

"Perhaps she lives, perhaps Heaven will protect so angelic a creature," said the friar, talking to himself. Then, addressing Kathleen, he continued: —

"You spoke of reparation. I know of nothing you can now do for her, if alive, but to bestow upon her any estate or title you may have at your command; but be assured they can add nothing to that genuine worth for which she is everywhere esteemed. She may make use of them to aid a noble cause; but that will be all for which she will prize them."

"Heaven be praised if I can do aught to make her think of me with some degree of affection, or at least charitably, and not with utter abhorrence! Hasten

for a notary instantly," said she, addressing a servant: "bring him at once, and have all the legal forms duly observed, that my dear child may know that in death I did love her, though in life I had been false to her, and perhaps fatally cruel, to save my vanity. Hasten; for my strength and reason are fast deserting me. Heaven spare me a while! Heaven spare poor Marzetta!"

The servant addressed hurried away. In half an hour he returned with a notary and his clerk, who at once proceeded to make such disposition of Madame Fiesco's new acquisitions in favor of La Sylphide as the friar desired. When all was completed in due form, the necessary signatures and seals appended, the sick woman appeared to enjoy a momentary gleam of pleasure, and said faintly, —

"If I could thus divest my mind of its burden of guilt, how calmly, cheerfully, could I resign my poor deluded spirit to God who gave it!"

"Repenting, and asking forgiveness," said the friar, "is all that now remains for you to do."

"Never till Fiesco proved false to me did I ever dream of or wish ill to any human being. If I erred in my less mature years, it was from a want of proper education, of judicious knowledge, or of native strength of character. What I have since done has been, alas! with too much knowledge, with forethought and determination; but to this I was driven by the cruel treachery and neglect of my adored husband, whose worshiping slave I willingly was. Indeed, my faith and love were all so pure and unsuspecting, that the shaft he threw came home with double force."

As she now appeared much exhausted, Joseph urged her to devote herself to preparations for the great future.

“ I must tell you all,” said she ; and here she narrated the events of the evening of the ball.

“ How supremely fiendish have been his schemes ! ” exclaimed the friar.

“ Fiesco once loved me,” said the deluded woman with quivering lip.

“ I meant Gonzalvo,” replied the friar. “ Fiesco — that noble soul ! — always loved, always will love you, and fondly cherish your memory to the latest day of his life.”

“ How can you say that ? ” said Kathleen, striving to raise herself on her elbow as if she would get up and go to her beloved husband.

“ Gonzalvo poisoned your mind against him, and prepared that harmless interview under the arch of Aqua Sola to substantiate his falsehoods. I have heard this from La Spinosa, — the very lady you saw there, — since she learned that it was this same prime-minister who betrayed her into a private marriage with a man whom she had never seen.”

“ *O Dios mio!* ” — “ My God, my God ! ” — groaned out the poor dying Kathleen. “ Another blow upon this poor heart ! ” and she fell back in a swoon, with all the appearance of death. When she awoke again, it was only to rave about her lost Fiesco and her child, and strive to rise to go to them ; exclaiming with such anguish in her tones that she was coming to throw herself at their feet, that a heart of adamant would have been melted by them.

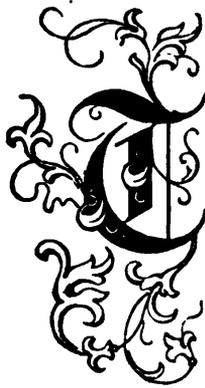
The friar did not for a moment quit the poor maniac's bedside, and, when there were any intervals of returning reason, soothed and comforted her with all the consolations his religion, his faith, hope, and charity, could command. He particularly dwelt upon the goodness of her Creator. He assured her that God would regard the character of her heart, the motives influencing her conduct, rather than abstract actions. This was consolation indeed; for she was sure her heart had ever been loving, kind, generous in its every impulse, and that no evil act had in any instance received its support, — not even when she abandoned her child to strangers, nor when, driven by Fiesco's supposed misconduct, she had taken some devious steps for revenge, and to gain a lofty and secure position over one that was made to appear more than equivocal.

“Marzetta is saved!” shouted a hasty messenger.

Kathleen threw her clasped hands heavenward; and, as a sweet smile passed over her face, she herself passed away over the boundary of the unknown world.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

NEW HOPE FOR THE LIBERALS. — DIPLOMATIC COURTESY. —
BY WHOM, AND WHY, MARZETTA WAS LOVED. — GONZALVO
IN A QUANDARY. — A GREAT MISTAKE THAT CAN NOT BE
RECTIFIED. — THE KING A MOURNER FOR KATHLEEN



THE British ambassador, for some new favor desired of Austria, or for other reasons best known to himself, had recently been disposed to aid Prince Metternich in his schemes for the acquisition of Liguria: he therefore requested the friar to see, when visiting the duchess, Madame Felisquetto, that a will was made, which, in case of her demise, would secure to Marzetta the newly-acquired estate. (We have just seen that the wish was complied with.) Marzetta, he knew, would be influenced by his counsels, especially if he could assure her of his support of the cause of the Liberal party; and hence he was enabled almost positively to state to the Austrian, that the long-disputed territory, this shuttle-cock between the two nations, should revert to his government.

This position of things brought both Sir James

and Prince Metternich more or less under Marzetta's thumb, notwithstanding any control either of them might imagine he possessed over her.

Through the influence of wives or favorites, — for thus affairs were then directed, — several more of the ambassadors had previously given in their adhesion to Marzetta's plans; and now, as all had been made aware of Gonzalvo's perfidy, they were the more ready to put in practice what had received their approval. The Russian ambassador was particularly zealous, and brought to a council of these foreign representatives information (obtained he did not say how, but by Madame Yermoloffski from Marzetta herself) which caused them to address a petition to the king, praying for the recall of Signor Fiesco Felisquetto, and that he might be made prime-minister.

Aside from all national and individual interests which might in general be actuating these worthy personages, there was one thing of which they all felt sure, and which was presented prominently to his Majesty; viz., that the tranquillity of the kingdom depended on a compliance with their prayer.

The king had the good sense to see that the ambassadors were right; and, though he was strenuously opposed by the clergy, they were silenced when they became thoroughly conversant with the real character of Gonzalvo; for it was the Church party that had placed and kept him in power against the wishes and better judgment of Victor Emanuel I. When, however, they saw that public opposition was no longer commendable, or rather available, they ac-

quiesced with a good grace, apparently, and concluded among themselves to bide their time.

As soon as it was known in town that Madame Felisquetto had departed this life, the Austrian ambassador went to call on the new and youthful duchess, the ever gentle sylphide, in the humble cottage of the smuggler ; and, though she was too ill to receive such visitors, she caused him to be assured, that as soon as he could secure the return of Signor Fiesco, and his appointment to the office made vacant by the flight of Gonzalvo, she would resign to him all right and title to the property which had been the cause of so much ill feeling, contention, and scandal. She felt, that, by doing this, she gave up only a very small personal advantage for the good of many ; for, if Fiesco could be made prime-minister, how different would be the condition of all classes, but more especially the poor !

It was not long after the departure of Prince Metternich from the smuggler's before Sir James alighted at the same humble abode. He learned what had been told to the preceding visitor, and was satisfied that all would be well if (and he found it to his interest to have it so) Prince Metternich could obtain Liguria, and Fiesco could be prime-minister.

None were more deeply interested in the health and prosperity of La Sylphide, none more ardently desired the fulfilment of her wishes, — so far as known to them, — than the Prince and Princess Yermoloffski. Daily their carriage was at the smuggler's door, and many were the delicacies it brought to the gentle invalid.

Semi-daily messages came from the Turkish ambassador's palace ; for there were two there also who had deep but opposite and conflicting interests in the little fish-girl. Could Haffed for a moment think of losing her ? Could Lindahara give up Haffed to another ? So long as he did not suffer much, the fair Circassian hoped he would remain for ever where he was, and she alone for ever attending him. But convalescence would come ; short walks would follow ; then longer and longer, till some days hardly found him at home at all. Lindahara was then sure he passed the time with the little elf of whom he had so often dreamed, and talked, thus dreaming, while ill and under her care ; and she became so melancholy and miserable, that the ambassador began to fear that she was dying of consumption.

La Spinosa in her heart loved La Sylphide ; but in her brain the fairy creature was associated with her misfortunes, and hence, at times, was regarded with suspicion. When, however, the whole villainy of Gonzalvo had been unmasked before her, coupled with an account of the wicked imprisonment and almost miraculous escape of the young girl, her affections were strongly fixed upon her. Now she was constantly sending her notes of condolence, of congratulation, of sisterly sympathy ; and occasionally, when desiring to be particularly *empressée*, would inclose a portion of some old dried bouquet, that, when fragrant and fresh, had been sent to her by Fiesco.

The friar had no sooner left the death-bed of Kathleen, which had been a solemn consolation to him in one of its aspects, but terribly harrowing, humiliating,

and saddening in another, than he set about a searching investigation of all the circumstances that pertained to Marzetta's disappearance; for he had not believed the announcement that had so happily come to smooth the dying pillow of his friend in youth, for an hour his wife. Ere long, the glad tidings reached him, from one whose veracity he could not doubt, that La Sylphide had indeed been rescued, saved. In the ecstasy of his joy, he turned to hasten back to impart to Kathleen the blissful certainty, when he suddenly recollected that she was dead. He reeled, and would have fallen upon the walk, had not a passer-by, who had all reverence for the monastic garb, sustained him. How could he appropriate to himself, support, and enjoy alone, all this beatitude, with no Kathleen to share it? — Kathleen, who would have given worlds to look on that sweet face once more.

When sufficiently recovered, the friar went to his convent; and there through the livelong night, beneath the beautiful picture of the Magdalen, he knelt, and bowed his head to the earth, praying and weeping, and pleading for Heaven's mercy on his own soul and Kathleen's. Was she happy now? This was a question that overwhelmed him with solicitude. At times, his own spirit seemed lifted up with sweet assurance that hers had found a peaceful resting-place whence she could look down and see the purity of his heart, and the good he aimed at in all his actions; then he thought it possible that she had not really repented, or regretted those acts of her life which hung so heavily over her in the last days of her existence. At such moments, one would have thought him bor-

dering on insanity, and that the silver cord of life could not long remain unbroken. He was indeed wrestling with Heaven for a blessing, — that comfort which the good feel when the angel-spheres seem open to their inner vision.

Whatever might betide the friar, whatever good or bad fortune might accrue to him, he was unalterably fixed in his determination to serve God. In this he felt it would be both his duty and pleasure to protect, support, and comfort the beloved, the good Marzetta, whenever opportunity might offer, so long as life was spared him by his heavenly Father. But he was now more than ever conscious that he was doomed to bear a secret thorn in his side, a coal of fire upon his brain. His vows compelled him to appear before men more perfect than he really was. It was the chain he loathed. It ate into his flesh; yet he was forced to hug it to his bosom, and lie down with it at night: the rust he tried to fret off with his tears.

La Napolitana was interested in Marzetta's welfare, in part, on account of the prince, her good friend and protector. She also was fond of her for the piquant vivacity of her manners and conversation, as well as for her *naïve* and earnest espousal of the cause of the poor, the lowly, the oppressed, in opposition to the powerful, lordly priesthood, and minor tools of the government. And her interest in the little fish-girl did not cease when she, Marzetta, passed into a somewhat different sphere of action; for her gentle sincerity, truthfulness, active benevolence, never forsook her.

The Turkish ambassador did not overlook the little

heroine of the day; for Lindahara often mentioned her, and persuaded him to espouse the side of the Federati, partly on her account. The arguments used may not have been politically potent; but, as there was nothing to be gained by an adherence to the opposition, an easy assent was obtained for the Liberals.

The reason why the beautiful Circassian was active in this matter had its origin, principally, in her own imprudence; for she told Marzetta, on that day when she confessed her love for Haffed, of their true relationship. This gave her rival the mastery; for, if Marzetta should take offence at the ambassador's partiality for the priestly rule, she might reveal to him the secret she had obtained, and thus cause him to lose the favorable consideration with which he had ever regarded her, and bring her, perhaps, to a state of degradation that would be wholly unendurable. It was, therefore, of vital importance that La Sylphide should remain on friendly terms, and feel assured that all possible influence was being used with Mustafa Bey to secure his opposition to the Gonzalvo reign.

Boppo loved Marzetta as his own child; and, when he learned that she had been kidnapped, it was he who aroused the people to action, drove the prime-minister from office, and the Jesuits from their colleges. But his knowledge and influence were not sufficient to enable him to take advantage of the momentary ascendancy gained; and all had to fall back on a disorganized state of affairs, and wait and hope for good out of the perturbed elements (worse could

not come), — wait and hope for good emanating from the influence of higher powers, acted upon by one of the mildest and humblest of the gentler sex.

Gonzalvo loved Marzetta as much as he was capable of loving any one : but his heart had been doubly incrustated with selfishness ; it distilled cruelty rather than gentleness. His arteries throbbed with ambition ; his veins were gorged with mendacity ; his nerves tingled with cupidity.

Thus we see that there was hardly a prominent personage who was not either the devoted friend or loving slave of our little foreign heroine.

Of Gonzalvo, Marzetta had learned much from two different sources. One was the gentle, dove-like Sappho, who seemed to have lived with the wing of night ever hovering over her. The other is yet to speak for himself, in tones that will tear away the mask of falsehood and deception behind which the arch-traitor had so long duped the public.

Gonzalvo knew that Marzetta had a clew to those secrets which it was absolutely necessary for him should remain undivulged ; but how she became possessed of them was to him the profoundest mystery. He was, indeed, morally certain that no eye but God's had witnessed his atrocious crimes : no other could have discovered the sources whence, or followed the devious ways by which, he had obtained influence, place, and power. But he who descends into the murky valley of crime knows not what eye pierces its shadows ; what ears the deep chinks in the rocks may develop ; what fingers lie in the brambles and scrawny twigs that hang from the cliffs, and beset the path ; what Cerberus dogs his steps.

If it had been discovered, and he knew it, that he was a villain, and he could have kept his place, it would have troubled him but little. He would have braved the whole world together, and laughed at it, had he retained the power to wring its neck; but, when both power and a good name sank beneath the execrations of an enraged people, he felt it keenly, and began to reap the minimum portion of that reward he so richly merited.

When he seized upon Marzetta, it was his last desperate throw to sustain himself where he was. It was desperate; for he had been assured by her that others besides herself were cognizant of his infamous character, and that any injury to her at his hands would bring upon his head the unstinted wrath of the Federati. He, however, considered it possible, that, in her threats, there might be more bravado than fixed intent founded on positive knowledge. He thought, that, by securing her, he would at least remove a powerful witness and a bitter enemy should charges of a serious nature ever be brought against him. Again: he feared, that, when he silenced the innocent and harmless Sappho, he had crushed the wrong flower; for he remembered Marzetta's exclamation, made in a moment of peril, "Manuellita lives!" "One more victim then," he said to himself, "and I am, perhaps, safe. One more? Pshaw! should a score stand between me and my reputation? What would Prince Metternich say at such cowardice? Does not he as well as all other able diplomatists look only at the end to be attained, regardless of the means? Would not our amiable and most worthy sovereign

declare war, and sacrifice a hundred thousand of his subjects, rather than have his honor touched? And, when he has been on the point of doing so with Austria, have I not set up barriers against it, and thus saved these men, and all the misery their loss would have entailed upon widows and orphans? Why, then, may I not sacrifice one or two, or even three, and yet feel that the balance is largely in my favor?"

Thus Gonzalvo, with this specious reasoning, strove to ease his not over-tender conscience. Thus he argued with himself both before and after he had determined to rid society of that little pest (to him), that he might lie down calmly at night, and fear no thunderings at his chamber-door of either the executioner, or of the angry and undeceived Genoese. When, however, he had accomplished his object, as he thought, so far as Marzetta was concerned, he discovered his great mistake, and would have given his right hand could he have retraced that one fatal step. How he now strode his room, while harrowing, depressing thoughts furrowed his face! How he now clinched his thin and nervous fingers into his bristling hair, and cursed his mental imbecility! It was all too late. "Irrevocable, irrevocable!" he would mutter to himself; then, after a pause, would exclaim, "In shame and disgrace to depart from my place of power is preposterous! To fly before those plebeians whom I have hated and trampled upon is doubly degrading! Thus to end the *rôle* of my ambition is damnable!"

Gonzalvo, however, no longer thought of place and

power when he heard the hostile murmur of the citizens, as, like the sea lashed into a foam, they came surging up around the palace-gate. Life became dearer to him than all else. His coward heart sank within him; and in rags, on his knees, burrowing like a toad, he would thus, if necessary, have made his escape to prolong his despicable existence.

The king, as soon as he heard the first sound of the outbreak, fled to his capital, Turino, leaving affairs in the hands of his ministers and the military; and he was careful not to return till he was well assured that all danger had passed. His astonishment, however, was great, when from time to time couriers announced to him the developments made concerning the administration of Gonzalvo; and he only wondered that his subjects had endured him so long. When he was apprised of the death and unostentatious burial of Madame Fiesco, he was profoundly moved. He went to his private library and shut himself in, and for days refused admittance to any one but his confessor. Of Marzetta he heard unlimited laudations, and was, in fact, not a little anxious to see one who was represented as the most lovable, amiable, beautiful of her sex, and at the same time controlling, and, almost like a Joan of Arc, leading the opposition; possessing by her wonderful talents inimitable grace and accomplishments, and a power over all the foreign ministers which made them perfectly her instruments in the support of the cause of the Federati.

CHAPTER XXIX.

A NEW VIEW OF LIFE. — LOVERS. — NEW RELATIONS. — A
CIRCASSIAN SLAVE. — IMPORTANT FACTS REVEALED.

AS soon as Marzetta had recovered sufficiently to receive visitors, she wished to see Haffed, to whom she was pleased to consider herself indebted for her life.

The first meeting of these two lovers was one which imparted the intensest joy to both. Words were hardly necessary. The young man entered the room with all that deference which true affection inspires, approached the object of his soul's longings with eager yet timid haste, extended one hand to grasp hers, and raised the other as if he would clasp and hold her to his bosom. Marzetta received him with her usual unstudied grace and simplicity of manner, adding the expression of undisguised love and gratitude with which her heart was overflowing. She placed her own delicate hand in his, laid her head upon his breast, and shed the first tears of unalloyed, unstinted, inexpressible happiness of her whole life. In a few

moments she seated him at her side, but seemed to fear that this was not all reality.

“Why,” she asked herself, “should the finer fibers of our being ever cease to vibrate to such tender emotions? Perchance they may be those which are designed to link us solely with the angels. Too delicate, perhaps, for the rough handlings of crude humanity, they are only momentarily vouchsafed to give us a foretaste of heaven.”

When one is young and gentle and guileless, how sunny and winning is every look! how sinless every thought! how quick and tender are the sympathies! how pure all the longings! how peaceful is every aspiration! how unsullied every expression! How soothing, too, is the solicitude of youth! how confiding the trust! how full of faith the future! Could any thing be more in harmony with heaven? And where but there could all these sensitive strings find fitting termination and agreement? Whoever maintains this union — the strings all bright and trembling — is justly called angelic. But, alas! these gentle cords of love and harmony are too soon, too often, laid aside to rest, to rust, to be forgotten, while new ones, linked with sordid earth, invite the touch, enchain the ear, intrall the mind, indurate the soul, enslave the affections.

Marzetta was entering upon a new phase of her existence. Every thing seemed more sacred, pure, and lovely than heretofore: and she would fain have put the shoes from off her feet; for she felt that she now stood on holy ground, at the very portals of the sacred sanctuary of the Highest. Nor did any flaming sword

forbid an entrance. Her beatitude, however, being complete, she lingered where she was.

“Blessed are the pure in heart.” Haffed had found a veritable angel on the earth, and her presence sanctified all that surrounded her. His first wish was that he might possess her; the second, that he might be worthy of her, for he had inherited a nobleness of character that would have done honor to the imperial household itself.

Though Marzetta had learned from the smuggler all the important facts regarding the rising of the Liberals, and their success in part, — in part, as they had driven Gonzalvo from power, — she nevertheless wished to hear all the details of the affair from Haffed, and more especially all that concerned his own exploits, his wounds, his sufferings, his escape, his recovery.

Haffed was only too happy to comply: but when he drew near to that scene where he lay bleeding upon the ground, and heard that moan of despair which came up from the caverned earth beneath, his voice was choked; the shock, the delirium, of that hour, seemed to return upon him; and Marzetta permitted him to rest his marble-like brow upon her polished shoulder, and cease the recital.

It was now Marzetta's turn to go over the story of her betrayal (but, thank Heaven! her high estimate of human nature was not destroyed by knowing that Madame Fiesco had been cognizant of the crime), her inhuman incarceration, her lonely agony in her long struggle for life, and her thrill of joy and immediate unconsciousness when she heard Haffed's voice pro-

claiming that she should be saved. She thought, in that moment of bliss, that she had gone to a better world, and that he was coming to her.

Hours, that seemed but dreamy moments, thus passed away ; but the sweeter and more precious they were, the more Haffed regretted that he had ever experienced them. He bemoaned his fate, and grieved that he had ever been born ; for he began now to be fully conscious of his real position, — that of *esclavage*, or servitude, — which he felt was incompatible with the career a union with the beautiful Christian would necessitate.

Haffed, like Lindahara, had been purchased. He was brought from a Caucasian home, a hamlet of the mountains ; the venerable Mustafa Bey, in the natural benevolence of his character, having paid a large sum for one, to secure the happiness of the other. Could Haffed obtain his master's consent to marry ? and, if so, in what relationship to him would his new bride stand ? Must she become Mustafa's servant also ?

These thoughts came pouring like icy water over Haffed's heart, and a death-like chill seemed shivering all his nerves. Marzetta, wondering, looked up at him, and felt a shadow fall upon her spirits as the melancholy expression of his beautiful face set there its impress.

“Do I offend you in any thing ?” said she ; and there dropped from her wreath of bliss the first sweet flower.

“In nothing save that you are too perfect for this impure world,” replied Haffed.

“‘To the pure, all things are pure,’” responded Marzetta.

“Those words still more confirm me in my belief,” said Haffed.

“Because there are many, who from misfortune, from irreligious birth, bad education, and worse circumstances, walk waywardly, and see no God or good in the things around them, is it reasonable that none should appreciate them, and try and grow in humble loveliness like the daisies in our meadows?”

“Not that. But, when one sees an angel trail its wings in the dust, may he not, should he not, grieve over it?” was Haffed’s reply.

“When it stoops to raise the low and groveling, and can shake its pinions white again, let us joy in its mission,” said Marzetta with a smile, as she thought how sweet it was to do good. “But why,” continued she, “this tone of despondency?”

“I dare not tell you,” responded Haffed. “I can only say that I have walked thus far blindfolded, as it were; loving you madly, wildly, passionately, but never, till now, seriously contemplating the consequences.”

“Look at the lilies of the field: think you they take thought for the morrow? Who cares for them? May you not equally trust in Him?”

“More of a true believer, more of a true fatalist, than even we of the high school of fatalism,” said Haffed.

“If we can not rest in our faith, where should we look for repose?” replied Marzetta.

“The immaculate dewdrop, in its bright and laugh-

ing loveliness, confides itself to the sun's rays, and is absorbed, as your sweet thoughts are into the infinitude of heaven's perfections ; but there are creatures that creep into the earth at the approach of light, as many men, because their deeds are evil. You have now no perception of any barrier between your pure aspirations and divine anticipations ; but, were you to walk with me the path of life, far away you might be led from those templed hills to which your soul now looks, till not even their domes and pinnacles could be discerned in the hazy distance."

"But would you not come with me?" said Marzetta with an ingenuousness that seemed angel-winged. "And, if it be that we wander in earth-paths for a time, need it be so far away, that sounds of celestial harmony, the perfume of paradise, the rays of God's love, can not reach us?"

"My very first step, dear Marzetta," replied Haffed, "would be one of falsehood, deception, ingratitude;" and for a while he pressed his hands upon his forehead, and closed his eyes as if to shut out the light of the truth, while his heart was torn with the conflict between love and duty. Could he, indeed, honorably leave one to whom he not only belonged by right of purchase, but more by the fatherly interest Mustafa Bey had always exhibited in his welfare? Situated as he was, could he marry, and yet avoid the nominal, at least, enslavement of his wife? — subject her to the caprice of a master as he had been subjected? Besides, there was in the eyes of the European a degradation in his position, to which he dared not, could not, think of bringing so delicate, so divinely-endowed

a creature as La Sylphide ; though he knew, that, in the Ottoman Empire, no avenue to greatness was closed against him, and that by genuine worth he might yet himself become the sultan's prime-minister.

Marzetta was wholly unable to witness, unmoved, such sorrow ; but she was ever as hopeful and trusting as she was truthful and loving. "Come," said she, "confide in me as in a sister : tell me the cause of your grief." And her tearful eyes, looking up into his, pleaded eloquently her cause.

"I was a fool, or was mad, to fall in love with you," said Haffed. "What could I have expected from my position, my religion ? Giving up my life for you, as I would fain do if you desired it, would not be possessing you : possessing you without my freedom, both religious and civil, might be even worse than death itself. Of this I did not dream when I sought the first interview with you on board the ship ; when, all that evening at the ball, I pleaded my undying, my unconquerable love for you ; or when, at casual interviews, and in my various notes and messages to you, I have tendered the homage of my whole heart, — all that reverential worship which comes next to that which I owe to Allah, my Creator." And here the warm, trembling hand which he had just taken in his own was pressed passionately to his lips, and its taper fingers were bedewed with tears.

"Was it madness to love one thus who thus loved you ?" said Marzetta, gazing still with her mild, humid eyes into his pallid face.

"Were I worthy of you," responded Haffed, "had

I been born in a Christian land, it might not have been ; but, as I am, I had no right to seek for a companion so far removed from me in all things that make life valuable. Lindahara, or such as she, should have been my choice. Then there would have existed no conflict of faith, of nationality, of social position. Mustafa Bey would have given us his benediction (had our antecedents and true relationship been known to and approved of by him) ; and we should have each remained still his happy *eulgies*, or submissive servants."

"O Haffed ! why did you mention that peerless Circassian ? I tremble for fear you have already pledged yourself to her. Tell me quickly, truly : if my life is valuable to you, tell me if you are thus pledged." And her expression of agonizing doubt made Haffed doubly wretched. "I am not jealous of her," she continued : "no ; I rather love her, because she is so ingenuous and lovely. I pity her because she loves you, while she thinks your affections are bestowed on me. How should I feel to see you daily walk before me, and know that I held no place in your heart ? Besides, I promised her I would try and forget you. I did try ; but, the more I strove to shut you out from my memory, the frailer grew the barriers which I erected, till at last, amid their ruin, I found myself hopelessly insnared. She will, I trust, forgive me. You must also forgive ; for I see my doubt has wounded you. I will not again do you such injustice. I will be ever to Lindahara as a sister, and you must still be as a brother."

"Why do you say as a brother ?" inquired Haffed in a tone at once eager and sad.

“When Lindahara, in that moment of delirium almost, confessed to me how wildly fervid her passion was for you, she was compelled to tell me you were not her brother; and, more, she intrusted to me a mighty secret; and mighty it has been in my hands, and is still so. But I fear she has done me an injustice. I fear she has thought me ungenerous enough to betray her had she not acted vigorously in our behalf. It is true, I pressed this upon her in requital for the promise I had made concerning you; for while I longed to see her happy, and to remove that load which burdened her brain almost, as I have said, to madness, I wished thousands of the oppressed poor to be happy also. The cause of the Federati was dear to me: only one object on earth was dearer.” And Marzetta here timidly turned her gaze from her lover’s, leaned her head upon his shoulder, and for an instant was closely pressed to his wildly-throbbing breast.

“Forgive me,” said Haffed, suddenly starting up. “Why should I plunge deeper into this abyss, knowing, too, that I am dragging you with me? Farewell! If I have power to endure this, courage to pass through the fiery ordeal,” (and he lifted his hands to heaven, and prayed, “God give me strength to sacrifice myself, and not this dear idol of my soul!”) “oh! I shall strive to be worthy of your love, and, though far from you, to live in the thought that this sweet dream, this heavenly episode in our existence, will sometimes kindly revisit your memory.”

“Must I, then, again dishonor you with a doubt, dear Haffed? Is Lindahara to shut out from my soul

all those rays of happiness in which it has basked since the first day I saw you?" And, leaning forward, she grasped his hand in both of hers, not only to prevent his departure, but, by their warm and earnest pressure, to tell him of her sincerity and devotion. "Must I, then, believe," continued she, "that that fair Circassian is to possess the one to whom I owe my life, — a life priceless with him, but valueless without him? Must this heart then, lately so full of unutterable bliss, be henceforth curtained round with night, and wear the garb of mourning? O Haffed! speak to me. Thus humbly I plead with you." And she fell upon her knees beside him; then, fainting, upon the floor.

Marzetta had misjudged her strength: she was too ill to endure that terrible conflict. Haffed gently, lovingly raised and placed her upon a sofa; then, by dint of fanning, by cold water applied to her temples, by the aid of smelling-drops found on the table, he restored her to consciousness: but she no longer seemed the buoyant, hopeful creature he had found her.

"Marzetta!" he exclaimed, "dear Marzetta! do you not know me?" But Marzetta's eyes were turned towards heaven, while her lips moved as in prayer. "Dearest!" continued Haffed, "say only that you hear me, and I will explain all, all, to you!"

Marzetta looked at him mournfully, but made no reply.

"Haffed speaks to you, sweet angel! Haffed loves no one but you! Haffed is not pledged to Lindahara! But, O God! Haffed is a slave: that is

his only crime ; the sole, the only cause of his resolve to give you up."

Marzetta smiled faintly on him, but again became unconscious, and thus remained till medical aid could be summoned.

As Lindahara had watched over Haffed, so Haffed now watched over Marzetta. Never but once, till she was well, did he leave the smuggler's cottage : then it was only to obtain permission from Mustafa Bey to remain away from home.

During the relapse of the fair sylphide, and more particularly in the hours of unquiet sleep at night, she talked about her imprisonment in the cold, dark dungeon, and that Haffed would not come to save her. At such times, Haffed could not repress his tears ; and he would beg of the old housekeeper, who watched there with him, to be permitted to awake her, that he might tell her he was really there to die with or to save her. When fully awakened, finding Haffed bending over her, Marzetta would regard him with a look of ineffable sweetness, and then, as if consciously happy, repose for a while in enviable calmness.

The doctor required that the utmost tranquillity should prevail in Marzetta's apartment. All exciting subjects were, consequently, strictly avoided. Haffed, for a number of days, did little else than hold one of the hands of the meek and patient sufferer, to give her the constant assurance of his presence and unceasing sympathy. One lovely evening, however, when the vine-clad slopes of the beautiful city, its walls, domes, convents, and cottages, were all

bathed in a flood of golden light from a gorgeous Italian sunset, Marzetta gently drew her lover nearer to her, and with a low and tremulous voice, as if still fearful that all was not real, asked him if the sole reason for abandoning her, as he contemplated doing, was that which he had given when believing her life imperiled; and, on being assured in the most solemn and earnest manner that it was Allah's truth, she repeated some facts obtained from Lindahara, that were as astounding to him as would have been the resurrection of the dead, but filled him with unspeakable joy and gratitude.

"Haffed," she continued, "this is only a part of the good news I have to tell you; but you must now pledge me your word that not a syllable of it shall pass your lips till my consent is given. What is gladness to you will by and by be doubly enhanced by participants whom you will learn to prize next to, if not even more than, your own poor Marzetta. I, too, shall have a share in that pleasure. I must, however, wait till I am entirely well before I can begin the task of unraveling this mystery; for, though I seek the happiness of those who deserve it, I would with equal solicitude strive to avoid making unhappy those who do not deserve it."

"To my boundless love and adoration," said Haffed, "I have now to add the sentiment of gratitude; for, if you have felt indebted to me (though accidentally) for your life, how much greater is my obligation to you for lifting into light my soul's entombment!"

Haffed now longed for the speedy restoration to health of his betrothed ; but Marzetta was too happy as she was to wish time away, and almost preferred remaining ill, if Haffed could thus continue so near and so dear to her.

CHAPTER XXX.

MARZETTA SHOWS ONE OF THE SOURCES OF POWER SHE HAS EXERCISED. — THE PRINCESS YERMOLOFFSKI ALMOST REWARDED FOR YEARS OF ANGUISH.

AS soon as Marzetta had sufficiently recovered her strength so as to be abroad with safety, she called on the Princess Yermoloffski, — first to express her gratitude for the many courtesies and civilities extended to her while ill, for aiding in obtaining the order for the recall of Signor Fiesco, and the assurance from the king that he should be the next prime-minister ; secondly, to keep her promise with the princess, — that promise which had made the latter her most humble yet loving servant, and on the issue of which the princess's life seemed hanging. But, as Marzetta had said, though she sought the happiness of some, she wished to be equally solicitous about the unhappiness of others ; and here now lay the difficulty of her task. Nothing could be accomplished without revealing to the Turkish ambassador the fact that there was no consanguinity between Haffed and Lindahara. If of

this deception which had been practiced upon him he should be imprudently informed, he would doubtless at once cause the extreme humiliation, if not something worse, of the fair, the petted Circassian. Marzetta had therefore to exact, though with great reluctance, a pledge from Madame Yermoloffski, and in behalf of her husband also, that there should be no revelation made to Mustafa Bey concerning this strange affair till they had received from him his sacred word that he would in no wise injure or degrade the beautiful favorite on account of any thing they might communicate to him.

Prince Yermoloffski was a man of great influence and popularity among the diplomats and representatives at the Sardinian court; and the princess could with much confidence calculate on his success with the Turkish ambassador. Should he fail, however, the princess herself would sue, even on her knees, if necessary; and she knew the gentlemanly character of Mustafa Bey too well to believe that she should sue in vain.

When every thing had been so arranged that our little heroine felt confident that she was going to do a great deal of good, and but little harm, — cause a vast amount of happiness, and not much sorrow comparatively, — she went over the main features of an event, which, at the time, was in part chronicled in the Russian journals in this wise: —

“Prince Yermoloffski, having been sent by the Emperor of Russia to take command of the army of the Caucasus, proceeded on his long and uninteresting journey as far as Vladicaucasse without accident or

incident worth recording. Thence, however, across the mountains to Tiflis (which is to serve as the future capital of New Russia), the route, being one of countless difficulties and dangers, was not likely to be traversed entirely adventureless by the most wary and prudent. The road, the great military road, has just received its last and final touch in the way of completion; and, though millions of rubles have been expended on it, it is but a succession of break-neck acclivities and declivities, wild passes overhung with towering rocks, and aerial ways running along the edges of unparapeted ravines whose depths can hardly be penetrated by the naked eye. To free this from marauding natives, Cossacks are constantly kept upon it, going from station to station, well armed and watchful; but there is seldom a moment, night or day, when some of the Circassians are not overlooking it from the peaks above, or prowling along its borders, concealed either by rock or wood.

“Schamyl is now the leader of the Caucasian brigands, and is considered the boldest and most intrepid of those bold and hardy mountaineers; and when informed by spies that the commander-in-chief of the Russian forces, and his family, were on their way to Tiflis, he gathered a strong band of the Letzghini and others, and awaited the approach of the enemy.

“The prince, his lovely wife and child, and numerous attendants, moved forward under a strong escort, and in two days had reached the heart of the Caucasus; and not having seen, thus far, one single inhabitant of the country, concluded that their reported hostility and treachery had been greatly exaggerated,

and that there was, in reality, little or no danger to be apprehended from them. The consequence was, that, when the carriage that followed the prince and his wife lagged behind, no further notice was taken of it. In one of these moments, however, when the Russian forces were divided, and scattered along the route, Schamyl, who with his fierce warriors was hovering like a vulture about his prey, ordered an attack; and, had the cliffs on either hand descended upon the travelers, they would not have been more astonished or more taken by surprise. The prince's forces rallied around him, however, and, after a hard and bloody struggle, beat off the assailants; but when they, the Russians, returned to aid those in the rear, hardly one of them was found alive: what was more, the carriage containing the prince's only child was empty; at least, it had been rifled of every thing save the dead body of the child's nurse.

“ No pursuit was undertaken or ordered. The Russian horses could not climb the rugged, precipitous paths up which the Circassians readily escaped: could they have done so, they never would have returned. Decimated as the escort had been, the only safety for those who remained was in flight: hence every thing that could encumber them was thrown away; and at a fearful speed they descended the southern slopes of the Caucasus, nor thought of sleep nor repose till they reached the Georgian town of Tiflis.

“ It was only after the princess had entered her new home that she was apprised of her loss; that her darling boy was a prisoner, hopelessly a prisoner, among the terrible Letzghini.

“Those alone who have had stolen from them their first-born, their only and dearly-beloved child, can know the quenchless sorrow which now fills the young mother's heart. She has no voice, no words, for her grief; but at all hours, in all places, the tears are rolling down her cheeks. Oftentimes, during the long, dark hours of night, she will start up, thinking that she hears her little boy calling her: she listens a while; then, remembering he is far away, bursts into tears, and again buries her sleepless eyes in the pillow, again to start up, and again to return desolate-hearted as before.

“Let us not linger over the gloom that drapes every nook and corner of the princess's trans-Caucasian habitation. Suffice it to say, that the event just narrated has led to several fearful combats with the mountaineers; for it was one of those blows which prompts the sufferer to brave all perils, seek danger, and even covet death; and Prince Yermoloffski has suffered by this bereavement little less than his youthful wife.

“The Circassians, like the Arabs, undertake no regular warfare. They seek to make a sudden and unexpected attack, but as suddenly retreat when meeting with much opposition. When they descended upon the prince's escort, killed a number, terrified the rest, took some arms and powder and one valuable captive, it was an expedition of the most gratifying nature, and one that would for months and months be the subject of conversation in every mountain-hamlet from the Black Sea to the Caspian.”

Marzetta then related to the princess what she

had obtained more particularly from Lindahara herself.

The little Yermoloffski was carried far into the interior, — to an almost inaccessible *dachra*, or village, there to be reared by his captor, who was his undisputed master, and who named him Haffed Euldje, — Haffed the Christian slave. At the earliest possible period, he was made to do all the menial service of the household except such as devolved upon the women; but he was also taught to manage a horse, the bow and arrow, and the Circassian knife, and finally allowed to follow his master in his various expeditions against the enemy.

Though Haffed had great native ability, and succeeded admirably in all that he undertook, he was rather distinguished for equestrian grace than the daring which usually characterizes the mountain cavalier; was rather noted for the mischief done with his large, tender blue eyes than with his *yataghan*, or *mkheula*; rather admired for his long flaxen curls than for his strength at the bow-string. He became, in fact, a sort of pet slave, and an immense favorite with all the dames and damsels of the *dachra*.

Sixteen years had passed away in captivity, and Haffed had now arrived at the age of eighteen: and, as his master was often receiving strange hints (though from envious and interested parties) of a scandalous nature concerning him, — sometimes, he surmised, pertaining to his own household, — he resolved to get rid of him; to send him to Constantinople, and sell him. When this was noised abroad, there were many gentle cheeks in the village bedewed with tears. Some

of the young women in an indirect way sought the price demanded for the beautiful youth, — thinking, perhaps, that some fairy would have compassion on them, and drop the sum slyly into their laps; but no fairy came, and Haffed could not be retained among them.

At this juncture of affairs, Lindahara, the fame of whose charms and transcendent loveliness had extended over the whole country, contrived the following plan to secure him, in a measure, to herself; and when it is known that the first step she was to take in the affair was not an unusual one,* and when her marvelous beauty is considered, it will be understood on what proper and reasonable grounds she based her hopes of success. She resolved to go at once to Constantinople, and sell herself to the highest bidder (if she liked him), with this stipulation, — whoever wanted her should agree to buy Haffed at the price his master asked for him; and she would require this on the plea that Haffed was her brother.

Lindahara had no sooner arranged her mode of proceeding than she began to act. She went to Haffed's master, and told him that she was going to Stamboul (Constantinople); and that, if he would retain his *euldje*, his Christian slave, till he heard from her, she would get for him the sum demanded. This was all readily agreed to. She then obtained the youth's ear; and, if his master was willing to part with him for a large sum, he was no less willing to go, particularly when there was such a good prospect of his

* See the author's *Circassia*; or, *A Tour to the Caucasus*.

being of the same household as the beautiful Lindahara.

Lindahara *madjour*, the orphan, hastened to the seacoast, and, taking the first *sandâle* that offered itself, sailed away to Stamboul. When recovered from the effects of the voyage, she arrayed herself in the picturesque costume of her country, and proceeded to the slave-market.

“That is too costly a jewel,” said one, as he cast his eyes over the exquisitely-molded Circassian, — “too costly a jewel for a man who has only a thousand piasters to spend for a new wife.”

“She is for the sultan,” said a second; “for who but he is rich enough to purchase such a pearl?”

“Even the sultan’s treasury may be light for her,” replied a bystander who overheard the last remark. “Such a bird of paradise must indeed have a golden cage placed in a costly bower; and then there must be many attendants to see that it does not get away, or ruffle its fine feathers, or fret itself against the bars of its prison. The sultan’s treasury, however, is said to be empty; but his minister’s is full.”

Lindahara wondered greatly at what she thought was neglect on the part of purchasers: still she noticed that men, women, and children paused to gaze, and to turn again and again to catch still another glimpse of her ere they moved out of sight. At last, a highly-respectable, venerable-looking man, who had a very distinguished air and a mild expression of face, approached her deferentially, and in a delicate and courteous manner inquired of her concerning her history, her reasons for leaving her coun-

try, and the like. Learning with no little pleasure, it would seem, mingled with admiration, the terms on which she held herself for sale, — the simple redemption of her brother, — he, with all prudent haste, completed the bargain.

Mustafa Bey was immensely rich: so the price asked for a good youth whom he could make his perpetual secretary was of little moment, even if somewhat exorbitant. As the agreement included the beautiful sister, whom he really needed for a house-keeper, fortune seemed favorable; and he felt sure that so much loveliness would hardly have been vouchsafed to a casket that held no precious gem.

Lindahara was indeed truly noble, humane, benevolent, good. Nature to her had been prodigal of charms; and she, in turn, was generous to a fault, — self-sacrificing even to her sandals. In deceiving her purchaser, she had no wish to injure him, no thought of doing him a wrong: her sole idea was that she could benefit Haffed, be near and watch over him should he be ill; her heart beckoning that way with all its force. Had she, however, studied duplicity, none would have wondered, since it was, by example at least, a part of the education of the Circassians, who were obliged to practice every species of cunning, of strategy, of deceit, to maintain themselves against the Russians.

When all the terms had been arranged to Lindahara's satisfaction, Mustafa Bey sent an attendant to fetch a carriage; assuring her that she should be at liberty to leave him if he failed to obtain her brother. For the latter he agreed to dispatch an agent at once;

and he doubted not, that, within the space of a month, Haffed would be with her.

Ere long, at the entrance to the slave-mart, Mustafa's carriage drew up. It was occupied principally by a very fat Ethiopian dame, richly dressed, and lightly veiled. Mustafa Bey informed the fair Circassian that the equipage was hers, and the dusky beauty within her servant. He then instructed the fat lady in what light the new-comer was to be regarded, — that she was to have the finest apartment in his palace; that she was to go and come as she pleased; and that the entire household was to be subject to her orders if she so willed it.

It was difficult to say how far these instructions were in accord with the feelings of the Ethiopian; for the master's wishes were as agreeable commands, and to submit to them with an air of pleasurable interest was the surest way both to obtain and secure his affection and esteem.

Lindahara found within the palace every thing pertaining to Moslem magnificence; but the very humane nature of its owner had made of it a miniature menagerie. The lame, the poor, the blind, strange animals, as well as men, women, and children, were supported there by his munificence. This seemed, in part, to compensate the absence of children of his own, and the loss of several favorite housekeepers. Now, in fact, the sole object of his life appeared to be to render happy every thing he looked upon. Allah had blessed him with riches; but he knew they were not his to keep. He was Allah's servant, — a truly humble, devout, good man.

The winds favored Mustafa's *sandâle*, and fortune his agent; and, in less than three weeks, Haffed was safe in Constantinople. But Haffed did not come alone. Half a dozen girls of the village left home and embarked with him to seek their fortunes also in the mart of Stamboul,—the voluntary and favorite resort, the El Dorado, of Circassian belles.

Not long after the events just mentioned, Mustafa Bey was appointed, by the sultan, ambassador to the court of Sardinia. He was about to leave Lindahara charged with the care of his household, and take Haffed along with him; but he soon learned that the former would be wretched without the latter, and so he naturally consented to take them both.

Haffed became, almost immediately, a great favorite; for he was exceedingly tractable and courteous, and aided his new master in the minor burdens of the diplomatic station as if he had been born to them. Little did the youth, however, dream, when he went on board the man-of-war and sailed for Genoa, of the singular fortune, the strange developments, the inexpressible joy, that awaited him there.

The Princess Yermoloffski had no words with which to thank and bless the beloved Marzetta. When the recital was ended, she fell on the young girl's neck, and sobbed as if her very heart would break. All that she could say was, "Haffed is *my* boy, my lost baby, my long-lost son!"

Would the happy mother, could the happy mother, refuse her assent to a union of these two?—refuse to aid, encourage, favor, a marriage between Marzetta and the one she so ardently loved, and by

whom she was unlimitedly adored? Had the question arisen when she was only a little fish-girl, the wandering waif, the homeless sylphide, the princess, perhaps, might have hesitated, though her kind, good heart would not; but now Marzetta was not only the Duchesse de Liguria, and rich, but the savior, as it were, of her long-lost child.

Marzetta's whole ambition and desire was simply to be the wife of Haffed: all else was absorbed in that one aspiration. Riches, titles, power, a name, were to her but senseless baubles, sin-enticing clogs, worthless, soulless burdens; but Haffed's love was priceless. For Haffed's love she would sacrifice life itself, because, without it, life would be but one long, gloomy death,—death wearing the habiliments of earthly vitality, with no one ray of that celestial light which her fair spirit might find, would find, in heaven.

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE FLIGHT AND THE FATAL SNARE. — RECAPITULATION OF
CRIMES. — CONSUMMATIONS DEVOUTLY DESIRED.

WHEN Gonzalvo fled from his palace, and found his way, as has been said, by an underground passage, to a fort on the hights, where as little loyalty was manifested as in the city itself, he resolved to quit the kingdom. The resolution was easy, but its execution somewhat difficult, if not nearly impossible; for the Federati had their friends on the watch in every pass of the neighboring mountains, on all the routes of the "diligences," and along the seacoast. Gonzalvo thought this to be probable, and hence concluded that it was best to remain concealed for a number of days, till the excitement of the outbreak had subsided; then assume the guise of some poor mendicant, friar, or fisherman, and so pass unchallenged and unnoticed. Accordingly, after procuring some food, he returned to his subterranean shelter, and spent there three days and nights, tortured in mind and body. On the fourth day he again appeared in the fort, and hired a

soldier to go and purchase for him some old worn garb of a laborer. In this he was soon arrayed, and immediately started for the harbor, intending to take a boat to Chiavery, a village on the coast to the eastward, and thus at once place himself beyond the points held under surveillance by his enemies. He made application to several boatmen; but, as the distance was great, they declined his tempting offers. At last he met with one who seemed somewhat eager to accommodate him. He did not, however, let this disturb him, lest it might arouse some suspicion. The man simply asked a delay of some ten or fifteen minutes till he could go and call his shipmate. Gonzalvo granted the request; but when finally he found himself seated in the boat, and began to scrutinize his companions, he was not a little troubled by the conviction that he had seen them before, and that they possibly recognized him. He, however, maintained all the serenity and cheerfulness possible, and fabricated a foolish story — a story about his having been a fisherman in the region of Nice, while his relatives at Chiavery were rich, influential, and the like — in order to secure their most respectful obedience, as well as change the current of their thoughts should they happen to be at all suspicious about their passenger. Shadows, however, thick and somber, fell around him as he proceeded: he was conscious that the sword of Damocles was suspended over his head.

Gonzalvo's features were so prominent and marked, that any ordinary observer who had seen them once would be at less loss to recall them than he would his own, or the physiognomy of his dog; and some

years previous the smuggler had had occasion to have them pretty deeply impressed on both heart and brain, while Boppo knew him nearly as well as the house he lived in.

When they were well outside of the "mole," and near "the rocks," where the brig from Malaga had been wrecked, the smuggler, who sat facing Gonzalvo, was so lost in and swayed by saddening memories, that he could scarcely refrain from tears: but in a moment, as he looked up and saw the arch-fiend before him, his fingers clutched the oars, as they ached to clutch the throat so near them; and his eyes glared and swelled in their sockets till he was the personification of delirium. Boppo saw the anguish of mind under which his friend was suffering, and in the old language, Genoese, calmed him by words of consolation, and urged him to remember that their hour of revenge was near, and that he must not mar it by too precipitate action.

Boppo's words were timely; for the smuggler was at that instant about to spring forward, and hurl his hated foe into the gulf.

Gonzalvo became more and more uneasy as the moments flew away, as the boat was swept past the fatal rocks, as the water deepened and grew darker beneath them: indeed, he saw, as he watched eagerly every movement, that there was something dreadful to be feared from the very ones of whom he had sought safety. Concealed about his person he had as much gold as he could well carry, and he thought of proffering that for secure convoy; but he deemed the action premature, considering it probable that his own excited mind enhanced the evils to be dreaded.

Finally the smuggler brought himself under sufficient control to speak to his adversary with that calmness and dignity which made his words the more forcible and poignant:—

“The rolling years at last, Gonzalvo,” said he, “sum up the total of a great debt.”

Gonzalvo started, turned pale, looked wildly at him, but said nothing.

“‘The rocks,’ which we have just passed, though now silent,” continued the smuggler, “have spoken some sweet though melancholy words to me, but damning truths concerning you.”

“What can you mean?” said Gonzalvo. “As I was never here before in my life, what have those rocks, or any other, to do with me?”

“That the dead tell no tales,” replied the smuggler, “is an aphorism that long since lost its potency.”

Gonzalvo trembled from head to foot, turned paler, if possible, than before, and opened his mouth, essaying to speak; but both his tongue and his jaws refused to act, and he remained silent, staring wildly at the speaker. Did he begin so soon to read his doom? It would appear so.

“To convince you that I am speaking the truth,” continued the smuggler, “it may be well to turn back to the record of your earlier days, when you robbed me of Manuella.”

“Manuella!” groaned out Gonzalvo, pressing his trembling hand upon his forehead; but soon recollecting that he was, as it were, assenting to what had been said, he uttered a falsehood by adding, “It was my mother’s name.”

“Manuella,” resumed the smuggler, “was my betrothed, and dearer to me than life. The evening previous to the day on which she was to leave the convent, and become mine by the sacred bonds of marriage, you took her to yourself, and afterward, by the queen’s connivance or orders, proceeded with her to La Corunna, where you murdered her.”

“Murdered her?” shouted Gonzalvo, starting up, and shaking his fist at the narrator. “It is false!”

“Some time passed away before I discovered you. One night, when returning from the care of some wounded soldiers, I saw her crossing the bridge with you, from your dwelling to the Church of San Miguel. The light which she carried fell full upon her face, and I at once recognized her. I passed to the other side of the building, and, after much difficulty, scaled the wall, and entered by breaking a window, and overturning a statue that obstructed my way. The falling of this stone image, doubtless, alarmed you; for you appeared at once to attempt to escape up the steps by which you had descended. What Manuella did, I know not; but a vivid flash of lightning at that moment revealed to me the gleaming silver statue that from your hands descended and crushed my poor innocent girl.”

The smuggler’s voice trembled as he uttered these words, and tears filled his eyes. Gonzalvo fell back upon his seat, convinced that he was lost. Seeing, however, that this injured man had a tender spot in his heart, he resolved to throw himself upon his mercy; but the smuggler would not listen to him, but bade him hear the story to the end.

“I sprang forward, and clasped her in my arms. She was not dead: she knew my voice. Oh, what joy hovered around our agony! She lived long enough to tell me of her constant love for me; that she had in every way been deluded, deceived; that there was a little Manuellita, — in mercy let me call it her sister, — whom she wished me to care for (I promised it; Heaven denied me, but for a short period, that privilege); that her hope of heaven lay in the purity of her heart: and thus she died, with angels hovering about her. So I left her forgiven of the Virgin whose statue she had striven to save from desecration, forgiven of God, — I left her on the steps of the altar, sure that so gentle a creature would receive a gentle burial.”

The smuggler had ceased rowing during this recital; he had forgotten where he was; and the boat had drifted into deeper, darker water, which Gonzalvo felt was emblematic of his fate. Might not gold, however, save him? It had thus far in life been his club of Hercules, with which he had shivered every barrier that opposed him; and he now dragged forth one by one his hidden sacks of pelf, and proffered them all in exchange for his life.

“Put it back,” said the smuggler with a shudder: “it is stained with the blood of the one who was so dear to me. Put it all back: it will make you sink deeper!”

Gonzalvo started to clutch him as if he would then and there make the final struggle for his life; but the strong arm of Boppo, who sat behind him, fastened him to his seat.

“But that is not all,” resumed the smuggler, recovering his wandering thoughts. “In your flight, after having robbed the church, little Manuella was left in the mountains to be forgotten, or perish; but in that your fiendish intent failed. She lived a destitute but Christian life, the very ravens seeming to care for her, till the angelic Marzetta found her, and gave her the first happy home she had ever known.

“For some reason or other, her kind protector chose to call her Sappho; and by that name we knew and loved her. The diary which Marzetta kept fell into your hands; and hence, aided by the trinket shown you by the friar, by her face (the image of Manuella’s), and by her age, you guessed who Sappho was. You seized her, and she perished in one of your dungeons; and this cross, which you must also have seen, and which must have confirmed you in your belief, revealed to me, at least, the certainty of her person and parentage.” And here he drew forth the coral ornament found on Sappho’s neck; but Gonzalvo did not dare to look on it. “Remains there, then, a doubt of who it was you murdered? But, thank God! one other whom you sought to destroy, and who had learned from me your history,—for I had dogged your steps, and become a peddler and a smuggler that I might the better track and find you,—is now safe. Marzetta, the dear sylphide, the little, ever-beloved fish-girl, escaped, as it were, by a miracle, and is now happy under my humble roof.”

Gonzalvo’s hopes disappeared beneath this accumulating load of infamy.

“But your soul was not black enough from your first great crime,” continued the smuggler. “Wishing to injure the noble Fiesco, and, through him, the just cause of the Federati, you did not hesitate to strike a blow at the happiness of an innocent, unoffending girl; while I, to escape a long, unjust, cruel imprisonment, was induced to aid you. La Spinosa, alas! my poor wife, I hear, is now hopelessly insane. It has also been ascertained through her that you planned her meeting with Signor Fiesco for the sole purpose of making his wife jealous; thus furthering the scheme of securing her for the king’s party. When Madame Felisquetto had been apprised of your villainy, your atrocious wickedness, and of her husband’s constancy, who Marzetta was, and be-thought herself that she had assisted you in kidnapping her whom to protect and cherish should have been her chief joy and duty, she fell ill, and is now rapidly sinking into a premature grave.

“This, Sir Minister, is not all the villainy you contemplated; but it is all you well executed. The hour of retribution in this world has now sounded, and you may prepare for death. Manuella’s spirit is hovering over me, and her smiles cheer me in the execution of this solemn act. Load yourself now with your gold, and let it aid you in sinking, as it assisted you in rising.”

Gonzalvo appeared to have lost all his strength through the terrible fear that had seized him; and, though he essayed to obey, his hands failed to lift a single bag of the gold that lay before him.

“I will help you,” said the smuggler. “Don

Antonio, the matador of Madrid, whose Manuella you murdered, will help you." And Don Antonio did help, and loaded him; then took him in his arms, and threw him into the sea.

A terrible groan escaped from the old man's quivering lips: it might have been a curse. His eyes looked like expiring coals of fire as they glared at the smuggler; and the lids refused to close over them. Thus, with face upturned, with a spasmodic clutch at something which he hoped to find to save him, he sank and sank; and bubbles long came up from the depths to which he had gone down in his too late but lasting sleep.

Only to Boppo (who revealed it on his death-bed) and the smuggler was the fate of Gonzalvo known; and it was a satisfaction to them to their latest breath that they had rid the world of such a monster.

Signor Fiesco had been but a short time at Constantinople, and had hardly recovered from his illness on board ship, ere he was again prostrated by the news of Kathleen's death. The melancholy event was made doubly bitter to him by the sad details pertaining to it. He learned how she had been deceived by Gonzalvo, and he felt that he had done her much injustice. This weighed heavily upon his spirits: and, though he considered it possible that he had some just grounds of complaint, he could not but recall his asseveration to her before they were married, "that he would forgive every thing in her past life;" that, indeed, it was only when he had made this solemn promise that she consented to be his.

It was well for this gifted patriot that he was not long allowed to brood over his sorrows. Soon came the glad and stirring announcement of the revolution in Sardinia, the fall of the Gonzalvo ministry, and his own recall, with friendly expressions from Victor Emanuel himself.

As soon as his health would permit, Fiesco hastened back to his own beloved country, and was at once proclaimed prime-minister; and no administration was ever more just, or more justly admired by the honest and patriotic, than Count Fiesco Felisquetto's.

Boppo was at once placed in a good office, — was made master of the port.

Don Antonio was made superintendent of the revenues. Of noble birth (as stated in the fourth chapter), and recently put in possession of a large estate by the demise of his father, he felt, that, as his position was now equal to La Spinosa's, he could reasonably claim his bride; and, if he had not the happiness to see her restored in that degree which rendered her again a brilliant member of society, he had the satisfaction of watching over her, and contributing daily to her comfort, — making up, by unwearied efforts, by tender solicitude, by gentleness and affection, for some of that sorrow, of which, in part, he had undesignedly been the cause.

Marzetta was married to the one she so fondly loved, and in spite of her unwelcome birth, and hard fate through all her girlhood, became a princess of the noble house of Yermoloffski.

When Haffed returned to Russia with his wor-

shipped sylphide, he took her father, Joseph the friar, along with them.

After a couple of years, Count Fiesco found a devoted wife in La Napolitana, and retired to private life.

The Federati, though revered by the multitude, soon ceased to exist as a united body. The Church party was again triumphant; and calmness, like the morning light which follows the receding storm, settled on the fair face of the beloved, the beautiful but slumbering Italy.

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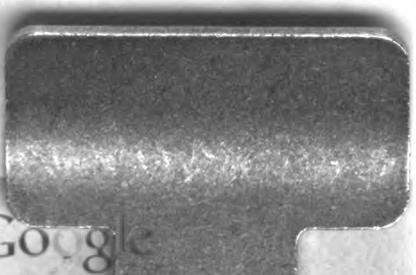
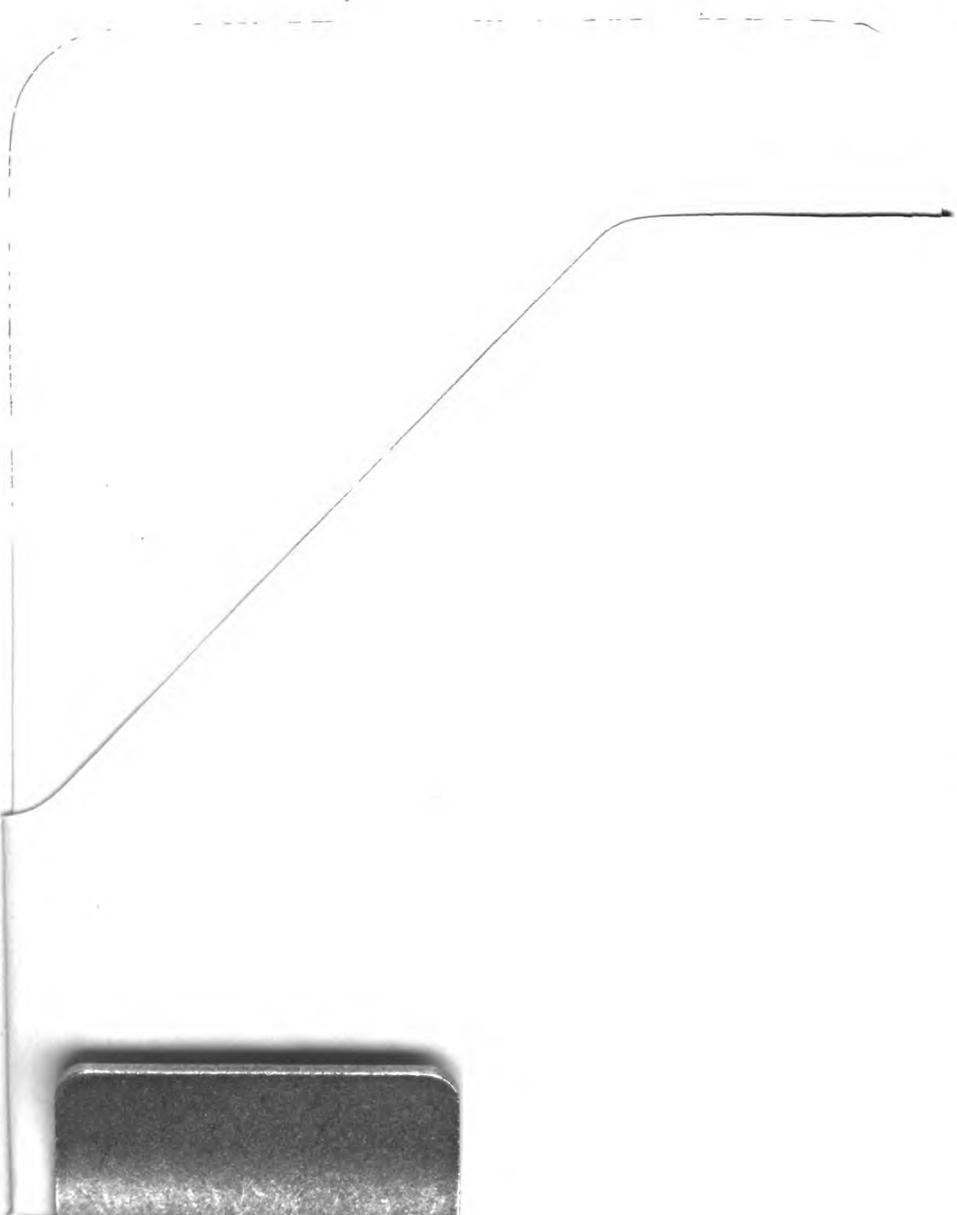
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