

had fought against her in this matter, and had been aided by Gaspare.

There had been a subtle understanding, never expressed, between the boy and him.

Artois had played upon her intellect, had appealed, too, to her mother's heart.

He had not urged her to try to forget, but he had urged her not morbidly to remember, not to cherish and to foster the memory of the tragedy which had broken her life. To go back to that tiny home, solitary in its beautiful situation, in the changed circumstances which were hers, would be, he told her, to court and to summon sorrow. He was even cruel to be kind. When Hermione combated his view, assuring him that to her Monte Amato was like a sacred place, a place hallowed by memories of happiness, he recalled the despair in which that happiness had ended. With all the force at his command, and it was great, he drew the picture of the life that would be in comparison with the life that had been. And he told her finally that what she wished to do was morbid, was unworthy of her strength of character, was even wicked now that she was a mother. He brought before her mind those widows who make a cult of their dead. Would she be one of them? Would she steep a little child in such an atmosphere of memories, casting a young and tender mind backward into a cruel past instead of leading it forward into a joyous present? Maurice had been the very soul of happiness. Vere must be linked with the sunbeams. With his utmost subtlety Artois described and traced the effect upon a tiny and sensitive child of a mother's influence, whether for good or evil, until Hermione, who had a deep reverence for his knowledge of all phases of human nature, at last, almost in despite of the truth within her, of the interior voice which said to her, "With you and Vere it would not be so," caught alarm from his apparent alarm, drew distrust of herself from his apparent distrust of her.

Gaspare, too, played his part. When Hermione spoke to him of returning to the priest's house, almost wildly, and with the hot energy that bursts so readily up in Sicilians, he begged her not to go back to the *maledetta casa* in which his Padrone's dead body had lain. As he spoke a genuine fear of the cottage came upon him. All the latent superstition that dwells in the contadino was stirred as dust by a wind. In clouds it flew up about his mind. Fear looked out of his great eyes. Dread was eloquent in his gestures. And he, too, referred to the child, to the *povera piccola bambina*. It would cast ill-luck on the child to bring her up in a chamber of death. Her saint would forsake her. She too would die. The boy worked