

suspended about it attest—prayers said before it being supposed to have peculiar efficacy.

At daybreak on the morning after her meeting with Paolo, Carmina entered this church. Like all other churches in Catholic countries, it was open day and night, the entrance only closed by its great leathern curtain. Lights were burning here and there before the shrines; but, except that at an altar in the dim distance two or three drowsy priests were chanting portions of the service, Carmina seemed the only worshipper present. Going up to the Holy Madonna, she lighted her wax taper, placed among the other offerings the *voto* she had brought—two little silver hearts fastened together with a true-lover's knot and pierced through with an arrow, on which she had spent nearly all her small savings—and kneeling, commenced her petitions. Fond, foolish, child-like prayers they were, such as might have been offered to

“The fair humanities of old religion,”

on the shores of that lovely sea two thousand years ago. Prayers that Paolo might love her for ever, and always know how truly she loved him—prayers that as they could not be happy together on earth, they might be happy together in heaven—prayers that all the sorrow, all the pain allotted to both, should be given to her to bear, and joy and happiness be the portion of Paolo.

Having thus, in some degree, relieved her heart, Carmina rose, but she had yet another taper to burn, and other prayers to offer at the shrine of the Signor's patron saint, San Paolo. This shrine was near the entrance, and surrounded by an ornamental screen of wrought-iron work, which altogether concealed the worshipper within. Just as Carmina entered and knelt down, the great leathern curtain was raised, and a young man wearing a slouched hat, and with the lower part of his face much muffled by a cloak, came into the church. Looking round, and seeing no one but the droning priests in

the distance, he threw himself on a bench beside the screen within which Carmina was kneeling. Almost immediately after, the curtain was again drawn back, and a lady wrapped in a dark mantle, and her face covered with a thick veil, came in. On seeing her the young man jumped up, and springing to meet her, took her hand and raised it to his lips. Then he led her to the bench, where both sat down.

“Beautiful and gracious Giulia,” he said, “I have not even attempted to close my eyes since I saw you last night. I have been too much excited at the thoughts of the meeting you condescended to promise me; too much incensed at the treatment you have received from that insolent brigand, who ought never to have been permitted to touch your lovely hand, much less to call it his own. But you told me I might do you some service, and that has raised me to the seventh heaven! Tell me now what it is. You know well, most beautiful, most beloved, that I am your devoted slave.”

“Raffaello,” said the lady in a low slow voice, which yet had a harsh tuneless ring, perceptible through its refined and cultivated softness, “you can do me a great—the very greatest service. You can set me free from my bondage to this Paolo Marocchi, whom I will no longer call my husband. Ingrate! he deserves no mercy from me, and he shall find none!”

The Marchese Raffaello di Manzi, though well used to perilous adventures of gallantry, and as cool and self-possessed under all circumstances as an Italian noble ought to be, almost started at the fair Giulia's words. But he quickly recovered himself. Assassinations in Naples are not now such common events as they used to be, and bravos ready to poniard any one for a few scudi are scarcely to be found without some trouble, but there are still enough of the old traditions, and of the hot Italian blood remaining to make the idea not very alarming. If the Contessa desired to be released from the