

reign in undisputed sovereignty. And now, mark her unstable fancy, a new haughty charms it; and she weeps at the slightest allusion to that noble lover, whose name she hath inwrought in many a tasteful trifle designed for his acceptance."

"But that was ere she knew her heart could be awakened to any deeper emotion than the transient rapture of a childish joy," said Guiseppe: "before —"

"Aye! thou wouldst say, before she knew thee," again interposed the countess, with a heightened colour; "before thy homed words—thy burning glances—thy untiring homage, surprised her soul, and made her feel how sweet it was to move another thus—to be herself the object of such deep devotion!"

"And with a heart so tender, and a soul so true," replied Guiseppe, "this knowledge gained, will fix her roving thoughts, and bind her young affections in chains that only death can rupture. While still a child, each glittering toy could charm her, but as the opening bud expands, beneath the genial influence of the sun, into the full and perfect flower, so hath the magic power of love, developed in her soul capacities and feelings, that have changed, as in a moment, the feeble, unformed child, into the tender and the conscious woman, on the fulfilment of whose newborn hopes depends her future weal or woe."

"Name only woe with the fulfilment of hopes so fond and foolish," said the countess, bitterly: "for novice as she is in the school of poverty and trial, believest thou her love will brave unshrinkingly, the breath of cold adversity—that she, born to affluence, and from her cradle nurtured in luxury—she, whose future path, strewn with roses, opens smilingly before her, that she is one cheerfully to share the changes of a life thine—to wait and watch with anxious heart, while thou dost carve thy yet uncertain fortunes, and then, perchance, be doomed to weep that thou hast toiled in vain, and reaped only coldness and neglect, where thou shouldst have won reward? Oh, no, no! be not deceived! Thou art trusting thy affections to a frail bark which will perish in the first wintry storm that assails it; choose rather a stately vessel which has braved angry seas, and yet withstood their fury, in which to freight the precious treasure of thy love, and whether the breeze be prosperous or adverse, it will sail steadily onward, true to the guiding compass which directs its course. I speak to thee in riddles, yet thou canst read them if thou wilt."

And all too plainly could he read them, but with evasive answer, he replied:

"Lady, the frailest bark often rides out the

ocean storm in safety, when the gallant vessel, furred to battle with its shocks, is wrecked amid the breakers."

"But thou shalt not try so rash an experiment!" passionately exclaimed the countess, vexed beyond her power of concealment, by the tenacious and unreserved expression of his love for Janthé. No, thou shalt not, I repeat; nor canst thou if thou would. Listen, and I will tell thee why. Deemest thou the proud Bishop of Padua will, at thy asking, bestow on thee the fair niece, for whom he covets greatness and splendour? On thee, a nameless stranger—a youth destitute of fortune and of birth! It were preposterous in thee to plead such a suit to the haughty churchman, in whose veins flows no drop of plebeian blood, and who, if his ambition will it, may command the alliance of kings. I warn thee to beware how thou dost provoke his wrath by the mention of a thought so bold. Relinquish it, I charge thee. And so thou hast," she continued, fixing on him, with a searching glance, her keen and piercing eye; "but yet thou hast another purpose, and I read it in thy downcast look. Speak! speak but one word to say if thou wouldst dare, aye, dare," she repeated, in tones hoarse with emotion, "to think of flight!—with her!"

"Lady, I beseech thee —," began Guiseppe, entreatingly, but with passionate word and gesture she broke in on his reply.

"Yes, yes, I see it all! and she —. Oh, God! Aye, she hath wound herself into that heart—that only heart where I desired to dwell," and with frenzied action she sank upon the ground and wept."

Guiseppe stood paralyzed, shocked, grieved, wounded by this wild and passionate confession, yet filled with pity for the sufferings he had caused. But wishing it to appear that he supposed her agitated by the fear only of his intended elopement, he said, bending gently towards her:

"Calm thyself. I pray thee, madam, the Lady Janthé is safe, and if —"

"Safe!" she reiterated, raising her head from her clasped hands, and looking up with her dark tearful eyes into his face. "Aye, safe in thy heart, Guiseppe! but thinkest thou the childish love of that fond girl can satisfy the deep and passionate cravings of a soul like thine? Oh, no! thou art misled by her innocence and beauty; but she is not formed to make thy happiness, nor canst thou constitute hers. Say then that thou wilt no more pursue her with thy love—that thou wilt not baptize her with misery, by seeking to link her fate with thine."

"God forbid!" said Guiseppe, fervently, "that I should be the source of sorrow to that guiltless heart, or stamp the lines of care upon that