

merchant's offer. Giulia had inspired him four years before with a boyish love, and it had steadily increased until he felt that, however great his success in life as Messer Polani's partner, his happiness would be incomplete unless shared by Giulia

Polani cut short his words by saying :

"My dear boy, I am as pleased that this should be so as you are; I now feel that I have indeed gained a son and secured the happiness of my daughter. Go in to her now; you will find her in the embroidery room. I told her that I should speak to you this evening, and she is doubtless in a tremble as to the result, for she told me frankly that although she loved you she feared you only regarded her with the affection of a brother, and she implored me above all not to give you a hint of her feelings towards you until I was convinced that you really loved her."

Two months later the marriage of Francis Hammond and Giulia Polani took place. There were great festivities, and the merchant spent a considerable sum in giving a feast on the occasion to all the poor of Venice.

Maria told Francis in confidence that she had always made up her mind that he would marry Giulia.

"The child was silly enough to fall in love with you from the first, Francisco, and I was sure that you in your dull English fashion cared for her. My father confided to me long since that he hoped it would come about."

Francis Hammond lived for many years with his wife in Venice, paying occasional visits to England. He was joined soon after his marriage by his brother, who, after serving for some years in the business, entered it as a partner, when Messer