

kindness was still shewn me, the same care lavished on my comfort and instruction ; but it was plain to see that the hearts of the parents, bound up in the life of their child, no longer poured themselves out upon me. I was still an object of their bounty, but had ceased to be a recipient of their profound love. Bitterly I felt the change, and the innocent being who unconsciously usurped my rights, for such I had learned to feel them, became the object of my deep and bitter hate. Her birth had crushed bright hopes, and proud aspirings, long nurtured by the knowledge of my affinity to the Duke, and the consciousness, that I was the sole living descendant of his ancient house ; and, although the vain babbling of a priest had not entitled me to inherit its honours, yet none could take from me the right to bear its noble name.

"Hitherto I had been called Gufo Lorenzani ; it was the name of my father, but I had not been permitted to add to it, that of Du Conti, belonging to his family. Boy as I was, I now demanded permission to assume it, and was denied ; and stung to the quick, I complained loudly of my guardian's injustice, and boldly avowed my purpose, the moment I was freed from his authority, to claim, and prove to the world my right to bear it. I met only with stern displeasure and rebuke, for my arrogance, nor from that hour did I ever regain the place I had before held in the Duke's affections.

"He treated me with studied coldness and severity, as if to impress upon me the vast distance existing between us, till my proud spirit shrank from its dependence upon one, whom I was beginning to hate, and the bitter feelings which wrought within me, often upon the slightest provocation, burst forth, into wild and ungovernable passion, or shewed themselves in fits of sullen gloom and silence. The Duchess loved me—truly, I believe,—and with gentle sweetness she strove to reason and persuade me from these moods. Long and patiently she bore with me ; but her lord, chafed by my imperious temper, and angered by the proud insolence of the beardless boy, whom his compassion had fostered, withdrew from me the last gleam of his favour, and rendered my once peaceful home so distasteful, that I voluntarily quitted it, and entered as a page the household of the Prince del Cossiano.

"In his service, new scenes opened to me—gaiety and splendour reigned throughout his establishment, the more dazzling to my senses, as in contrast to the grave and stately magnificence which I had been accustomed to behold in the palace of the Duke. But though a lover of pleasure, fond to excess of the dance, the banquet, and the chase, the prince was brave and chivalrous, loving the tented field for its dangers and excitements, and making arms a pastime, by lending voluntary aid to foreign princes, whenever he could do so consistently with his duty

to his country. I had been two years in his household, and during that time had maintained no intercourse with my noble relatives, nor, as the prince resided in Florence, had I seen any individual of the family since I quitted it. I had become a favourite with my new lord, for I possessed personal accomplishments, boldness, and a talent for intrigue which was often of service to him, and I was admitted to a post very near his person, and entrusted with much of his confidence.

"I possessed also, great ardour for military achievements, and when he proposed with a thousand followers, marching to aid the King of Naples in quelling a revolt that had broken out in his dominions, I was enrolled among the number destined to accompany him, and, burning with a passionate desire to add new glory by my deeds, to the name, which in spite of menace and prohibition, I had dared proclaim as my own, I mingled with the armed train, buoyant with hope and joy.

"A new life seemed now to dawn upon me, a new world to open gloriously around me, whose constantly changing scenes, full of splendour, novelty, and excitement, were so consonant to my nature, that for the first time in my brief but stormy life, stormy with the tempest of inward passion, I tasted the intoxication of unalloyed happiness. There I found unceasing action for my restlessness, and my fierce ambition was fed with a constant stimulus, that urged it on to higher and nobler aspirations than it had ever known before. I wanted not courage, nor need I say that it gained me distinction and reward. I courted posts of danger, and astonished the bravest by my acts of desperate valour. In short, I won the distinction which I coveted ; I was crowned with wealth and honour by the sovereign whom I had signally served, and I gloried in the anticipation of my triumph, when even the proud Duke du Conti should be forced to accord praise to my deeds, and confess my right to bear the lofty name, around which, notwithstanding my father's sin, they had cast a new and lasting splendour.

"We remained long in Naples, after our arms had aided in restoring its quiescence. Its splendid gaities were congenial to the prince's tastes, nor was I averse to the delight which every where allured me. I plunged recklessly into every excess, I rioted in pleasure till I wearied of it, and it seemed to me that satiety was written on all its enticing joys. I was roused from this state of apathy, by a new impulse. The prince had become enamoured of a beautiful actress, and I was on one occasion, the medium of communication between them. She was a bright, passionate creature—an improvisatrice, with a soul as fervid as her genius. I saw her, and loved her to madness, and I was not one to avoid her, because another deemed her his