

But Mr. Trefalden broke in with a fierce oath, and bade the man hold his peace and bring the brandy instantly.

Then he poured out a half a tumblerful, drank it recklessly, flung a napoleon on the table, and rushed out again into the storm.

He was now utterly beside himself—his brain reeling, his blood on fire, his whole frame throbbing with fever and fury. The landlord of the Lion d'Or, thankful to be rid of him, shut and barred the door and went straightway up to bed, resolved not to admit him again under any circumstances. In the mean while he seemed to have lost sight of his determination to walk to Bordeaux, and went raving and gesticulating up and down the village, where all, except himself, were sleeping quietly.

Thus pacing to and fro like a caged beast, he suddenly became aware of the approach of a travelling-carriage. On it came, thundering through the one straggling street of Drouay, with flaming lamps, steaming horses, splash and clatter of wheels, and the loud cracking of the postilion's whip. He ran to meet it—he shouted—he implored to be taken up—he would pay any price only to stand upon the step, if they would let him! But the postilion took him for a beggar, and shook his whip at him; and the travellers inside, cut off from him by windows opaque with damp, and deafened by the rattle of their own wheels and the pelting of the rain upon the carriage roof, neither saw nor heard him. Still he ran beside it, panting and shouting—tried to clutch at the traces, but, receiving a savage lash across the hands, fell back and made a desperate effort to spring up behind. But all in vain. He missed his hold; and the carriage swept on, and left him there despairing.

Still, still he ran, fated, irresponsible, headlong—now stumbling among the sharp flints in the road—now getting up with hands all cut and bleeding—now pausing to take breath—now fancying he could still hear the retreating wheels; and so, drenched, giddy, breathless, his hat gone, his face and clothes disfigured with mud and rain, rushing blindly on again!

Each moment the storm increased and the wind rose higher, till at last it culminated in a terrific hurricane. Then the thunder came up in heavy peals, the lightning burst over the plain in rapid flashes, and the wind tore up the vines by the roots and whirled them wildly away, with all their vintage promise, towards the sea. Yet still, urged forward by that fierce thirst which blood alone could slake, with murder in his heart and madness in his brain, William Trefalden ran—fell—struggled to his feet—staggered on again—fell again—and so for miles and miles!

Next morning early, when the storm-clouds were drifting off raggedly towards the west with now and then a gleam of uncertain sunshine between, a party of peasant folk coming up from the way of Medoc found the body of a man lying face downwards in a pool by the roadside. His clothes, face, and hands were torn and blood-stained. He had a watch upon his person, and in his waistcoat-pocket a porte-monnaie full of bank-notes and napoleons. No letter, no card, no token by which it might be possible to identify him, could be discovered upon the body. His very linen was unmarked.

The honest country-folk laid this nameless corpse across one of their mules, and brought it charitably into the dead-house at Bordeaux. Having lain there unclaimed for forty-eight hours, it was buried in the new cemetery beyond the walls, with a small black cross at the head of the grave, on which the only inscription was a row of numerals. His watch, his money, and his clothes were awarded by the *préfet* to the poor of the parish in which the body was found.

EPITOME.

The world knows the Italian story by heart. How Garibaldi entered Naples; how, at Della Catena, he saluted Victor-Emmanuel as King of Italy; how he sheathed his sword when the great work was so far done, and went back to his solitude at Caprera, are facts which need no recapitulation. Had one man lived but a few months—nay, a few weeks—longer, the tale might perchance have ended differently. Where

we now read Florence we might have read Rome; for "Regno d'Italia" on printed stamp and minted coin, a word of broader significance and more antique glory. But the ideal Republic died with Giulio Colonna, and was buried in his grave.

In the mean while, Olimpia's life became a blank. Her father had been the very light of her inner world. Bred in his political faith, trained in his employ, accustomed to look up to him, to work with him, to share his most secret councils, his wildest hopes, his fears, his errors, and even his personal dangers, she seemed to lose the half of her own soul when he was snatched from her. Then came the sudden change of programme—a change to her so bewildering, so unworthy, so fatal! Mistrusting Sardinia, and scorning the very name of a monarchical Italy, Olimpia conceived that her father's memory was insulted in this compromise, and so, in the bitterness of her resentment and grief, withdrew herself altogether from the work in which her life had been spent. Avoiding all with whom she had laboured and acted in time past, and keeping up no more than the merest thread of intercourse with even those whom she used to call her friends, she then made her home at Chiswick, in the quiet house to which Saxon had conducted her on the evening of their arrival in London. Here she lived solitary and apart, cherishing her sorrow, mourning the great scheme unachieved, and learning that hard lesson of patience which all enthusiasts have to learn in this world sooner or later.

Not thus Lord Castletowers. Too English, too unprejudiced, and it may be added too sensible, to attach paramount importance to the mere shibboleth of a party, he welcomed the settlement of Italian affairs with a heartiness that he would perhaps scarcely have ventured to express very loudly in the presence of Colonna's daughter. Where she refused to recognise any vital difference between a monarchical government and a pure despotism, he was far-sighted enough to look forward to that free and prosperous future which most thinking men now prophesy for the kingdom of Italy, nor was he slow to perceive that there might be hope for himself in the turn that matters had taken. The Italian question thus far solved, Italy would no longer need so much support from her well-wishers. With a liberal monarch at the head of the nation, a parliament to vote supplies, and an army to defend the national territory, the whole system of patriotic black-mail levying must necessarily collapse. Olimpia would therefore no longer feel herself bound to sacrifice her hand to "one who could do more for Italy" than himself. So the Earl loved and hoped on, and wisely bided his time.

Wisely, too, he applied himself in the mean while to the improvement of his own worldly position. Occupying his friend Saxon's vacant chambers in St. James's-street, he devoted himself to his parliamentary duties with a zeal that drew upon him the attention of one or two very noble and influential personages. Having made a couple of really brilliant speeches during the spring session of 1861, and happened to be upon the spot when a man of ability and tact was needed at a moment's notice, he had the good fortune to be entrusted with a somewhat delicate and difficult mission to one of those petty German potentates who make up for very small territories by gigantic pretensions, and balance a vast amount of pride against a scanty revenue.

The Earl, as a matter of course, acquitted himself perfectly, and began thenceforth to be talked of among his elders as "a rising man." Then the Duke of Doncaster smiled graciously upon him, and several of the cabinet ministers fell into the way of asking him to their political dinners; and the end of it all was, that just before the setting in of the long vacation, Gerrase Leopold Wynnelyffe, Earl of Castletowers, found himself inducted one morning into a very neat little vacancy in the Perquisite Office, where the work was light and the salary heavy, and the chance of promotion considerable. Then, and not till then, he ventured to renew his suit to Olimpia Colonna.

The moment was favourable. A year of mourn-

ing had passed over her head, and the intense solitude of heart which had been at first her only solace now began to weigh painfully upon her. She had had time to think of many things—time to live down some errors and outlive some hopes—time also to remember how long and well the Earl had loved her; how worthy he was of all the love that she could give him in return; how he had shed his blood for her Italy; and with what devotion he had performed the last sad duties of a son towards her father's wishes. Besides all this, her occupation was gone. She could no longer immolate herself for Italy, for the simple reason that Italy was satisfied to rest awhile upon her present gains, and preferred being left to settle her own affairs in a quiet constitutional way. The disaster at Aspromonte convinced Miss Colonna of this truth, and of the stability of the new régime. And over and above all these considerations, Olimpia loved the Earl. She had loved him all along—even when she refused him; and now, after a whole year of sorrow, she loved him better than before. So she accepted him—accepted him very frankly and simply, as a true woman should, and promised to be his wife before the ending of the year.

Secure in the consciousness of her splendid birth, Olimpia never dreamed for one moment that Lady Castletowers could be other than content and happy in this new alliance of their houses. That the proud Alethea Holme-Pierrepont would in this solitary instance have been prepared to sacrifice blood for gold—nay, would have actually welcomed a Miss Hatherton with her two hundred and fifty thousand pounds more gladly than a portionless Colonna, was a possibility that could by no chance enter within the sphere of her calculations. So when Lady Castletowers came over to see her the next day in her humble suburban home, and kissed her on both cheeks, and said all the pretty and gracious things that the mother of her betrothed husband was bound, under the circumstances, to say, Olimpia accepted it all in perfect faith, nor guessed what a bitter disappointment lay hidden beneath that varnish of smiles and embraces. The Earl, having himself borne the brunt of her ladyship's displeasure, was, it need scarcely be said, careful to keep the secret very close indeed.

In the mean while, Saxon Trefalden had gone back to Switzerland; and there, despite the urgent remonstrances of those dear friends who missed his little dinners and his inexhaustible cheques, books, persistently remained. In vain did the Erechtheum lift up its voice in despair; in vain did Blackwall lament and Richmond refuse to be comforted, and Italian prima donnas sigh for banquets and bracelets gone by. The boyish, laughing, lavish millionaire was fairly gone, and declined to come back again. The Syrens might sing; but Odysseus only stopped his ears, and sailed by unheeding.

The Earl alone knew that he was married; but even the Earl knew no more. He felt it to be somewhat hard that his friend should neither have invited him to his wedding, nor have taken him in any way into his confidence upon so important a matter. He could not but be conscious, too, that there was something strange and secret about the whole proceeding. Who had he married? Was the bride pretty or plain? Rich or poor? Dark or fair? Gentle or simple? What was her age? Her name? her rank? her nation?

In reply to the first announcement of his friend's marriage, the Earl had ventured delicately to hint at two or three of these inquiries; but as Saxon limited his rejoinder to the fact that his wife was "an angel," Lord Castletowers naturally felt that the statement was hardly so explicit as it might have been.

On all other points Saxon was frank and communicative as ever. He laid his every project before his friend as unreservedly in his letters as if they two had been sitting face to face over the fire in the smoking-room at Castletowers, or leaning side by side in the moonlight over the taffrail of the *Albula*. They were delightful letters, filled to overflowing with all kinds of general detail: now telling of the new chateau which was already in progress; now of the bridge just built at Ortenstein, or the road to be