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CARMINA.

A STORY IN FOUR PARTS.

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I.

THERE is a little bay or creek on the Calabrian shore of the Mediterranean Sea, which, from its peculiar situation, is scarcely ever visited by travellers or tourists, yet, perhaps, there is not in all Italy a lovelier spot, or one that the poet might more fitly designate as "*un pezzo di Cielo caduto in terra*,"—a piece of heaven fallen to earth. Rocks of the most picturesque forms and most brilliant hues—red, yellow, purple and green—and often broken into lovely little caverns and grottoes, are grouped about the shore, and among them the broad-leaved fig, the aloe, the cactus, rosemary, lavender, myrtle, and the golden cistus, grow in richest profusion. Higher and higher rise the great mountains behind, till they fade into purple clouds on the edge of the horizon. Far away towards Sicily spreads the beautiful sea, serene, unruffled, smiling—a mirror in which the azure heaven above may

see itself reflected. The chirp of the cicada at noon, and the lizard basking in the hot sunshine; the sweet sad cry of the aziola and the fire-flies gleaming through the myrtle hedges in the scented twilight, are the only sights and sounds that break the summer stillness. It would be easy to fancy that nature had made the spot thus lonely and inaccessible, that its beauty might remain for ever unprofaned by mortal eye.

But in spite of the silence and solitude of the place, a few years ago some signs of human life and habitation might be seen about it. In a tiny natural basin among the rocks, into which the sea flowed by a narrow opening, a small skiff was made fast and a steep path, looking very much as if it had been made by goat, led from thence to a little platform or terrace, lying, as it were, at the very feet of the mountains, on which was a rude stone cottage, shaded by a huge and ancient fig tree. On a certain evening, at that