VENDETTA;

The Story of One Forgotten.

CHAPTER XVII-Continued.

And as I obeyed her request she encircle? the doll with one arm, while she still clung to me with the other, and added—

"To-to remembers you Papa; you know you brought him from Rome, and he is fond of you too, but not as ford as I am!" And her dark eyes glittered feverishly. Suddenly her glauce fell on Assunts, whose grey head was buried in her hands as she knelt.
"Assunta!"

The old woman looked up. Bambinetta !" she answered, and her aged

voice trembled
"Why are you crying?" inquired Stella with
an air of plaintive surprise. "Are you not glad

to see Papa?" Her words were interrupted by a sharp spasm of pain which convulsed her whole body, she gasped for breath,—sile was nearly sufforted. Assunts and I raised her up gently cated. and supported her against her pillows; the agony passed slowly, but left her little face white and rigid, while large drops of sweat gathered on her brow. I endeavored to soothe

her.
"Darling, you must not talk," I whispered imploringly; try to be very still—then the poor throat will not ache so much."

She looked at me wistfully. After a minute

or two she said gently—

"Kiss me then, and I will be quite good."

I kissed her fundly, and she closed her eyes.

Ten, twenty, thirty minutes passed and she did not stir. At the end of that time the doctor entered. He glanced at her, gave me a warn ing look, and remained standing quietly at the foot of the bed. Suddenly the child woke, and

"Are you in pain, my dear?" I softly asked.
"No," she answered in a tiny voice, so faint and far away that we held our breath to listen to it: "I am quite well now. Assunta dress me in my white frock again, now Papa is here. I knew he would come back." And she turned her eyes upon me with a look

of bright intelligence.
"Her brain wanders," said the doctor in a low pitying voice; "it will soon be over." Stella did not hear him; she turned and nestled in my arms, asking in a sort of babbling

"You did not go away because I was naughty -did you Papa?"
"No, darling!" I answered, hiding my face

in her curls. "Why do you have those ugly black things on?" she asked in the feeblest and most plain-tive tone imaginable, so weak that I myself could scarcely hear it; "has somebody hurt your eyes! Let me see your eyes!" I healtated. Dare I humor her in her fancy? I glanced up, The doctor's head again was turned away, As sunta was on her knees, her face buried in the bedclothes, praying to her sauts; quick as thought I sl pped my spectacles slightly down, and looked over them full at my little one. She uttered a soft cry of delight—"Papa! Papa!" and stretched out her arms, then a strong and terrible shudder shook her little frame. The doctor came closer,—I replaced my classes without my action being noticed, and we both bent anx ously over the suffering child. Her face paled and grew livid,—she made another effort to speak,—her beautiful eyes rolled upwards and became fixed, -she sighed,—and sank back on my shoulder dying
—d ad! My poor little one! A hard sob
stifled itself in my throat,—I clasped the small lifeless body close in my embrace, and my terrs fell hot and fast. There was a long silence in the room,—a deep, an awestruck, reverent silence, while the Angel of noiselessly entering and departing, gathered my little white rose for his Immortal

CHAPTER XVIII.

After some little time, the doctor's ganial voice, slightly tremulous from kindly emotion, roused me from my grief-stricken attitude.

"Monsieur, permit me to persuade you to me away. Poor little child! she is tree from come away. Her fancy that you were her father was a fortunate delusion for her. It made her last moments happy. Pray come with me, I can see this has been a shock to your feelings." Reverently I haid the fragile corpse back on the yet warm pillows. With a fond touch I stroked the flaxen head; I closed the dark, uphaps? Why? She was bound to have been turned, and glazing eyes, I kussed the waxen cheeks and hys, and folded the tiny hands in attitude of prayer. There was a grave smile on he young dead face, a smile of superior wis-As unta rose from her kness and laid her crucify on the little breast,-the tears were running down her worn and withered countenance. As she strove to wine them away with her apron, she raid tremblingly-

'It must be told to Madama." A frown came on the doctor's face. He was evidently a true Britisher, decisive in his opinions, and true Britisher, decisive them openly. "Yes," the said curtly, "Made should have been here." "Madama, as you call her

The littl angel did not once ask for her,'

murmured Assunta.
True!" he answered. And again there was silence. We stood round the small bed, looking at the empty casket that had held the lot flawless pearl of innocent childhood that had gone, according to a graceful superstition, to ornament the festal robes of the Madonna as she walked in all her majesty through heaven. A profound grief was at my heart,—mingled with a sense of mysterious and awful satisfaction. I felt, not as though I had lost my child, but had rather gained her to be more entirely mine than ever. She seemed nester to me, dead, than she had been when living. Who could say what her future might have been? She would have grown to womanhood, what then? What is the usual fate that falls to even the best women? Sorrow, pain and patty werry, unsatisfied longings, incom-pleted aims, the disappointment of an imperfect and fettered life-for say what you will to the contrary, women's inferiority to man, her phys cal weakness, her inability to accomplish any great thing for the welfare of the world in which she lives, will always make her more or less an object of pity. If good, she needs all the tenderness, support, and chivalrous guidance of her master, man-if bad, she merits what she receives, his pittless disdain and measureless From all dangers and griefs of the kind my Stella had escaped,—for her, sorrow no longer existed. I was glad of it, I thought, as I watched Assunta shutting the blinds close, as a signal to outsiders that death was in the house. At a sign from the doctor I followed him out of the room, on the stairs, he turned round abruptly, and asked-

"Will you tell the Countess?" "I would rather be excused," I replied deci-vely. "I am not at all in the humor for a

scenc."
"You think she will make a scene?" he said with an astonished uplifting of his eyebrows I daresay you are right, though. She is an excel-

By this time we had reached the foot of the She is very beautiful," I answered eva-

"Oh, very ! No'dou t of that!" And here a strange frown contracted the doctor's brow. For my own taste, I prefer an ugly woman

to such beauty."

And with those words he left me, disappear And with those words no net one, disappearing down the passage which led to Madama's boudoir. Left slone, I paced up and down the drawing room, gazing abstractedly on its costly drawing its many luxurious nick-nacks and elements most of which I had given to my wife gancies, most of which I had given to my wife. dittings, its many luxurious nick backs and elegancias most of which I had given to my wife
juring the first few months of our marriago. By
and by I heard the sound of violent hysterical
collaint, accompanied by the noises of hurrying
footsteps and the rapid whisking, about of
iemale garments. I a few moments the doctor
entered with an expression of sardonic anuse
ment on his face. "Yes," he said in
reply to my look of inquiry, hysterics, lace
handkerchiefs cau de Cologne, and attempts at

的在特别的人的一个公公

fainting. All very well done! I have assured the lady there is no lear of contagion, as under my orders everything will be disinfected. I shall go now. Oh, by the way, the Countess s that you will wait here a few minutes -she has a message for you-she will not detain you long. I should recommend you to get back to your hotel as soon as you can, and take some good wine. A rivedcroi! Anything I can do for you, pray command me!"

And with a cordial shake of the hand he left

me, and I heard the street door close behind him. Again I paced wearily up and down, wrapped in sorrowful musing. I did not hear a stealthy tread on the carpet behind me, so that when I turned round abruptly, I was startled to find myself face to face with old Giacomo, who held out a note to me on a silver salver, and who meanwhile peered at me with his earer eyes in so inquisitive a manner that felt

almost uneasy.
"And so the little angel is dead!" he murmured in a thin, quavering voice. "Dead!
Ay, that is a pity, a pity! But my master is not dead—no, no! I am not such an old fool as to believe that."

I paid no heed to his rambling talk, but read the message Nina had sent to me through him. "I am broken-hearted!" so ran the delicately enned lines. "Will you kindly telegraph my penned lines. dreadful loss to Signor Ferrari? I shall be so I looked up from the much obliged to you." I looked up from the perfumed missive and down at the old butler's wrinkled visage: he was a short man and much bent, and something in the downward glauce gave him evidently caught and riveted his

muttered something I could not hear.

"Tell your mistress," I said, speaking slowly and harshly, "that I will do as she wishes. That I am entirely at her service. Do you understand?" Yes, yes! I understand!" faltered Gia-

como nervously. "My master never thought me foelish—I could always understand him..." "Do you know, my friend," I observed in a purposely cold and cutting tone, "that I have heard somewhat too much about your master? The subject is tiresome to me! Were your master alive, he would say you were in your dotage! Take my message to the Countess at once.

The old man's face paled and his lips quivered,—he made an attempt to draw up his shrunken figure with a sort of dignity as he answered—

"Excellenza, my master would never speak categoria, my master would never speak

me so." Then his countenance fell, and he
muttered softly—"Though it is just—I am a
fool,—I am mistaken—quite mistaken—there
is no resemblance!—" After a little pause he
added humbly, "I will take your message, Excellenza." And stooping more than ever, he
hambled out of the room. My heart smote me shambled out of the room. My heart smote me as he disappeared; I had spoken very harshly t) the poor old fellow,—but I instinctively felt that it was necessary to do 80. His close and ceaseless examination of me, -his timidity when he approached me,—the strange tremors he experienced when I addressed him, were so many warnings to me to be on my guard with this devoted domestic. to be on my guard with this devoted domestra.
Were he, by some unforsten chance, to recognize me, my plans would all be should. I took my hat and left the house. As I crossed the upper terrace, I saw a small round object lying in the grass,—it was Stella's ball that she used to throw for Wyvis to catch and bring to her. I picked up the poor plaything tende ly and put it in my pocket-and glancing up once more at the darkened nursery windows Iswaved a kiss of farewell to my little one lying there in her last sleep. Then hercely controlling all the weaker and softer emotions that threatened to overwhelm me, I hurried away. On my road to the hotel I stopped at the teleoffice and despatched the news of Stella's death to Guido Ferrari in Rome. He would be surprised I thought, but certainly not grieved, the poor child had always been in his way. Would he come back to Naples to console the now childless widow? Not he !-- he would know well that she stood in very small need of consolation—and that she took Stella's death as she had taken mine,—as a blessing, and not a beravement. On reaching my own room, I gave hear of the death of Fabio's child. Had she orders to Vincenzo that I was not at home to lived, I confess her presence would have been a any one who might call,—and I passed the rest of of the day in absolute solitude. I had much to think of. The last frail tie between my wife and myself had been snapped saunder,—the child, the one innocent link in the long chain of falsehood and deception, no longer existed. Was I glad or sorry for this? I asked myself the question a hundred times; -and I admitted the truth, though I trembled to realize it. I

miserable; she was now happy?

The tragedy of her parents' lives could be enacted without embittering and darkening her young days; she was out of it all, and I re-joiced to know it. For I was absolutely reientless; had my Stella lived, not even for her sake would I have relaxed in one detail of my vengeance—nothing seemed to me so paramount as the necessity for restoring my own self-respect and damaged honor. In England know these things are managed by the Divorce Court. Lawyers are paid exorbitant less, and the names of the guilty and innocent are dragged through the revolting slums of the low London press. It may be an excellent method, but it does not tend to ele-vate a man in his own eyes, and it certainly does not do much to restore his lost dignity. It has one advantage, it enables the criminal parties to have their way without further interference, the wronged husband is set free, left out in the cold, and laughed at by those who wronged him. An admirable arrangement no doubt, but one that would not suit me. Chacun it son gout! It would be curious to know in matters of this kind whether livorced persons are really satisfied when they have got their divorce,—whether the amount of red tape and parchment expended in their red tape and parenment expended in their interest has done them good and really relieved their feelings. Whether, for instance, the betrayed husband is glad to have got rid of his untaithful wife by throwing her (with the full authority and permission of the law) into his rival's arms? I almost doubt it! I heard of a strange case in England once. A man, moving in good society, being more than suspicious of his wife's fidelity, divorced her—the law pronounced her guilty. Some years afterwards, be, being free, met her again, fell in love with her for the second time and married her her for the second time and re-married her. She was (naturally !) delighted at his making such a fool of himself,—for henceforth, whatever she chose to do, he could not reasonably complain without running the risk of being laughed at. So now the number and variety of her lovers is notorious in the particular circle where she moves, while he, poor wretch, is perforce tongue-tied, and dare not consider himself wronged. There is no more pitiable object in the world than such a man,—secretly derided and jeered at by his fellows, he occupies an almost worse position than that of a galley slave, while in his own esteem he has sunk so low that he dare not, even in secret, try to fathom the depth to which he has fallen. Some may assert that to be divorced is a social stigma. It used to be so perhaps, but society has grown very lenient nowadays. Divorced women hold their own in the best and most brilliant circles, and what is strange is that they are very generally

"Poor thing!" says Society, putting up its eyeglass to scan admiringly the beautiful heroine of the latest aristocratic scandal—"she had such a brute of a husband! No wonder she like! that dear Lord So-and-So! Very wrong of her of course, but she is so young! She was married at sixteen—quite a child!—could not have known her own mind!"

The hushand alluded to might have been

the best and most chivalrous of men,—anything but as but, as but, as the brute,"—yet he always as in suchif somehow, and gets no sympathy as And, by, the way, it is rather a notable fact that all the beautiful, famous or notorious women were "married at sixteen."

How is this managed? "I can account for it in Southern climates; where girls are full grown at sixteen and old as thirty; but I cannot un derstand its; being the case in England, where a "miss" of sixteen is a most objectionable and awkward inginue, without any of the "charms wherewith to charm," and whose conversation is always vapid and silly to the

those who are forced to listen to it. As for me, I believe in the old, old, apparently foolish legend of Adam and Eversin and the curse which followed it—the curse on man which is inevitably carried out to this day. God said,

(mark that because !) Because hearkened unto the voice of thy wife" (or thy woman, whoever she be), "and hast eaten of the tree of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it" (the tree or fruit being the evil surge:ted first to man by woman), "cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou est of it all the days of thy life!"

True enough! The curse is upon all who

trust woman too far—the sorrow up n all who are beguiled by her witching flatteries. who are beguned by her wholing hasteres.

Of what avail her poor excuse in the ancient story—" The serpent beguiled me and I did sat!" Had she never listened she could not have been beguiled. The weakness, the treachery, was in herself, and is there still. Through everything the bitterness of it runs. The woman tempts, the man yields, and the gate of Eden, the Eden of a clear conscience and an untrammelied soul, is shut upon them. For ever and ever the Divine denunciation reechoes like muttering thunder through the clouds of passing generations; for ever and ever we unconsciously carry it out in our lives to its full extent till the heart grows sick and the brain weary, and we long for the end of it all, which is Death—Death, that mysterious silence and darkness at which we sometimes shudder, wondering vaguely—Can it be worse than Life?

CHAPTER XIX,

More than ten days had passed since Stella's death. Her mother had asked me to see to the arrangements for the child's funeral, declaring herself too ill to attend to anything. I was glad enough to accede to her request, for I was thus able to avoid the Romani vault as a place of interment. I could not bear to think of the little cherished body being laid to moulder in that terrific place where I had endured such frantic horrors. Therefore, informing all whom it concerned that I acted under the Countessa's orders, I chose a pretty spot in the open ground of the cemetery, close to the tree where I had heard the nightingale singing in my hour of supreme misery and suffering. Here my little one was laid tenderly to rest in warm mother-earth, and I had sweet violets and primroses planted thickly all about the place, while on the simple white marble cross that marked the spot I had the words graved—"Una Stella svanita,"—a vanished star—adding the names of her parents and the date of her birth and death. Since all this had been done I had visited my wife several times She was always at home to me, though, of course, for decency's sake, in consequence of the child's derth, she denied herself to every body else. She looked lovelier than ever; the air of delicate languor she assumed suited her as perfectly as its fragile whiteness suits a liothouse lily. She knew the power of her own beauty most thoroughly, and employed it in arduous efforts to fascinate me. But I had changed my tactics; I paid very little heed to her, and never went to see her unlesshe asked me very pressingly to do so. Al All compliments and attention from me to her had ceased. She courted me, and I accepted her courtship in unresponsive silence. I played the part of a taciturn and reserved man, who preferred reading some ancient and abstruse treatise on metaphysics to even the charms of her society,—and often, when she urgently desired my company. I would sit in her drawng-room, turning over the leaves of a book and feigning to be absorbed in it, while she, from her velves fauteuil, would look at me with a pretty pensiveness made up half of respect, half of gentle admiration—a capitally acted facial expression, by-the-by, and one that would do credit to Sarah Bennhardt. We had both beard from Guido Ferrari; his letter to my wife 1 of course did not see; she had, how ever, told me he was "much shocked and dis-tressed to hear of Stella's death." The epistle he addressed to me had a different tale to tell. In it he wrote-"You can understand my dear Conte, that I am not much griered to hear of the death of Fabio's child. Had she perpetual reminder to me of things I prefer forget. She never liked me-she might have been a great source of trouble and inconvenience; so, on the whole, I am glad she is out of the way.

Further on in the letter he informed me—
"My uncle is at death's door, but though that door stands wide open for him, he cannot make up his mind to go in. His hesitation will not be allowed to last, so the doctors tell me,—at any rate I fervently hope I shall not be kept waiting too long otherwise I shall return to Naples and sacrifice my heritage, for I am restless and unhappy away from Nina, though I know she is safely guarded by your protecting care.'

I read this particular paragraph to my wife. watching her closely as I slowly enunciated the words contained in it, She listened, and a vivid blush crimsoned her cheeks—a blush of ndig-nation—and her brows contracted in the vexed frown I knew so well. Her lips parted in a half sweet, half chilly smile as she said quietly, "I owe you my thanks, Co. te, for showing me to what extent Signor Ferrari's impertment may reach. I am surprised at his writing to you in such a manner! The fact is, my late husband's attachment for him was so extreme. that he now presumes upon a supposed right his sister, and that he can tyrannise, as broth-re sometimes do ! I really regret I have been so patient with him,—I have allowed him too mu b liberty,'

True enough! I thought, and smiled bitterly I was now in the heat of the game,the moves must be played quickly-there was 'I think, madame." I said deliberately, as I

folded Guido's letter and replaced it in my pocket-book, "Signor Ferrari ardently aspires to be something more than a brother to you at no very distant date."

This creature showed no sign of embarrass ment-sae raised her eyes frankly to mine in apparent surprise-then she gave a little low laugh of diedain.

"Indeed!" she said. "Then I fear Signor Ferrari is doomed to have his aspirations disappointed! My dear Conte," and here she rose and swept softly across the room towards me with that graceful gliding step that somehow always reminded me of the approach of a panther, 'do you really mean to tell me that his audacity has reached such a height that really it is to absurd !—that he hopes to marry me?" And sinking into a chair near mine she looked at me in calm inquiry. Lost in amazement at the duplicity of the woman, I answered

"I believe so! He intimated as much to

She smiled scornfully. "I am too much honored! And did you. Conte, think for a moment that such an arrangement would meet with my approval?"

I was silent. My brain was confused,-1 found it difficult to meet with and confront such treachery as this. What! Had she no conscience? Were all the passionate empraces, the lingering kisses, the vows of ficelity, and words of caressing endearment as naugh? Were they all blotted from her memory as the writing on a slate is wiped out by a sponge! Almost I pitied Guido! His fate, in her hands, was evidenty to be the same as mine had been; yet after all, why should I be surprised? why should I pity? Had I not calculated it all? and it was not part

of my vengeance? "Tell me !" prrsued my wife's dulcat voice. breaking in upon my reflections, ''did you ever imagine Signor Ferrari's suit might meet with

avor at my hands? I must speak—the comedy had to be played out. So Tanswered bluntlyout. So I answered bluntly—"Madame, I certainly did think so. It seemed a natural concideron to draw from the course of events, "He is young, undeniably bardsome and on this under death will be

fairly wealthy, what more could you desire? besides, he was your busband's friend -- 2012. him?" she interrupted me with a decided ges-ture. "Even if I liked him sufficiently, which I do not (oh, miserable traitress), I would not

point of absolute exhaustion on the part of run the risk of what the world would say of such | She started from my arms with an exclamation marriage."
"How, madame? Pardon me if I fail to

comp ehend you." 'Do you not see, Conte?" she went on in a coaxing voice, as of one that begged to be be-lieved, "if I were to marry one that was known o have be n my husband's most intimate friend, society is so wicked-people would be sure to say that there had been something be-tween us before my husband's death—I know they would, and I could not endure such slander

"Murder will out," they say! Here was guilt partially declaring uself. A perfectly in nozent woman could not foresee so readily the cond mustion of society. Not having the know-ledge of evil she would be unable to calculate consequences The over-prudish woman betrays herself; the fine lady who virtuously shudders at the sight of a nucle statue or picture, announces a once to all whom it may concern, that there is something far coarser in the suggestions of her own ming than the work of art she condemns. Absolute purity has no fear of social slander; it knows its own value, and that it must conquer in the end. My wife-alse! that I should call her so-was innately vicious and false; yet how particular she was in her efforts s-cure the blind world's good opinion Poor old world! how exquisitely fooled, and how good-naturedly it accepts its fooling! But I had to answer the fair liar, whose net of graceful deceptions was now spread to entrap me; therefore I said with an effort at courtesy—
"No one would dare to slander you, Coun-

tessa, in my presence." She bowed and smiled prettily. "But," I went en; "if it is true that you have no liking for Signor Ferrari..."

is true!" she exclaimed with sudden emphasis. "He is rough and ill mannered; I have seen him the worse for wine; sometimes he is insufferable! I am afraid of him? I glanced at her quie:ly. Her face had paled,

and her hands, which were busied with some silken embroidery, trembled a little.

"In that case," I continued slowly, "though I am sorry for Ferrari, poor fellow! he will be immensely disappointed. I confess I am glad in other respects here were." in other respects, because-

"Because what?" she demanded eagerly.
"Why," I answered, feigning a little embarrassment, "because there will be more chance for other men who may seek to possess the hand of the accomplished and beautiful Countessa Komani.

She shook her fair head slightly. A transient expression of disappointment passed over her

"The 'other men' you speak of, Cente, are net likely to indulge in such an ambition," she said with a faint sigh; "more especially," and her eyes flashed indignantly, "since Signor Ferral thinks it his duty to mount guard over me. I suppose he wishes to keep me for himself-a most impertinent and foolish notion ! There is only one thing to do—I shall leave Naples before he returns."
"Why?" I asked.

She flushed deeply. "I wish to avoid him," she said after a little pause; "I tell you frankly, he has lately given me much cause for annuvatice. I will not be persecuted by his attentions; and as I before said to you, I am often afraid of him. Under your protection I know I am quite safe, but I cannot always

or two. vourself.

She started and half rose from her chair, her work dropped from her hands.
"What do you mean, Conte?" she faltered

half timidly, yet anxiously; "I do not understand 1 "I mean what I say," I continued in cool, bard tones, and stooping, I picked up her work and restored it to her; but pray do not excite

yourself! You say you cannot always enjoy

my protection; it seems to me that you can, by becoming my wife."
"Conte!" she stammered. I held up my

hand as a sign to her to be silent. "I am perfectly aware," I went on is business-like accents—"Of the disparity in years health or good looks to recommend me to you.

Trouble and bitter disappointment have made me what I am. But I have wealth which is almost inexhaustible.

I have position and influence—and besides these things"—and here I looked at her steadily, "I have an ardent desire to do justice to your admirable qualities, and to give you all you deserve. I have meither youth, to give a name to the feelings which possess me; I am only conscious of a very strong wish to become that you are actually are, you know you are!"

I stood before her in almost sombre silence. At last I said, "If you say so, Contessa, then it must be so. I have had no experience in affairs of the heart, as they are called, and I find it difficult to give a name to the feelings which possess me; I am only conscious of a very strong wish to become you the passionate adoration of a young man my blood is cold and my pulse is slow,—but

what I can do. I will!" Having spoken thus, I was silent, gazing at her intently. She paled and flushed alternately. and s emed for a moment lest in thought—then a sud'en smile of triumph curved her mouth, -ahe raised for large, levely eyes to mine, with a look of melting and wistful tenderness. She laid her needl-work gently down, and come c oso up to me-her ragrant breach fell warm on my che-k, -her strange gaze fascinated me,

and a sort of tremor shook my nerves.

"You mean," she said, with a tender pathoin her voice, "that you are willing to marry me but that you really do not love me.'

And almost appealing'y she laid her white hand on my shoulder,—her musical accents were I w and thrilling—she sighed faintly. I was silent,—battling violently with the foolish derire that had aprong up within me, the desire to draw this witching fragile thing to my heart, to cover hor lips with kisses, to startle her with the passion of my embraces! But I forced the mad impulse down, and stood mute. watched me, slowly she litted her hand from where it had rested, and passed it with a caressing touch through my hair.

"No, you do not really love me," she whispered—"but I will tell you the truth—I love you."

And she drew herself up to her full height

and smiled sgain as she uttered the lie. I knew it was a lie—but I seized the hand whose careeses stung me, and held it hard, as I an-: berews

"You love me? No, no-I cannot believe it

—it is impossib e !"— She laughed softly. "It is true though," she said emphatically, "the very first time I saw you I knew I should love you! I never even l.ked my husband, and though in some things you resemble him, you are quite different m others—and soperior to him in every way. Believe it or not as you like, you are the only man in all the world I have ever loved!"—

And she made the assertion unb'ushingly, with an air of conscious pride and virtue Half stupefied at her manner, I asked :-Then you will be my wife?"

"I will!" she answered, "and tell me—your name is Cesare, is it not?" "Yes," I said mechanically.
"Then, Cesare," she murmured tenderly.
"I will make you love me very much!"

And with a quick lithe movement of her supple figure, she nestled softly against me, and turned up her radiant glowing face.

I slipped my arms round her half-reclining figure, drew her gently backwards to the couch sue had left, and sat down beside her. "You really love me?" I asked almost fiercely. "Yes!"

"And I am the first man whom you have really cared for ?" "You never liked Ferrari?"

'Did he ever kiss you as I have done?" Gud! how the lies poured forth! a very cas-

cade of them! and they were all told with such, an air of truth! I marvelled at the ease and rapidity with which they glided off this fair woman's tongue, feeling somewhat the same sense of stupid astonishment a rustic exhibits when he sees for the first time a conjurertiraw-ling yards and yards of many-colored ribbon out of his mouth. I took on the little hand on which the wedding ring I had placed there was still worn, and quietly slipped upon the slip finger a circlet of magnificent rose-brilliants. I had long carried this trinket about with me in expectation of the moment that had now come,

of delight. "On, Cesare! how levely! How good you

are to me!" And leaving towards me, she kissed me, then resting against my shoulder, she held up her hand to admite the flash of the diamond in the light. Suddenly she said with some anxiety in

You will not tell Gaido? not yet?" 'No," I an wered; "I certainly will not tell him till he retures. Otherwise he would leave Rome at once, and we do not went him back just immediately, do we?" And I toyed with her rippling gold tresses half mechanically, while I wondered within myself at the rapid success of my scheme. She, in the meantime grew pensive and abstracted, and for a few mo-ments we were both silent. If she had known! I thought, if she could have imagined that she was encircled by the arm of her own husband, the man whom she had duped and wronged, the poor fool she had mockd at and dispised, whose life had been an obstruction in her path, whose death the had been glad of! Would she have smiled so sweetly! Would she have kissed me then?

She remained leaning against me in a repose ful attitude for some moments, ever and anon turning the ring I had given her round and round upon her finger. By and by she looked

up.
"You do me one favor?' she asked, coaxingly; "such a little thing—a trifle! but it would give me such pleasure?" "What is it?" I asked; "it is yot to com-

mand and I to obev. "Well, take off those dark glasses just for a minute. I want to see your eyes."

I rose from the sofa quickly and answered her

with some co doess. "Ask anything you like but that, mia bolla. The least light on my eyes gives me the most acute pain that irritates my nerves for hours afterwards. Be eatisfied with me as I am for the present, though I promise you your wish shall be gratified-"When?" she

she interrupted me eagerly. I stooged and kissed her hand. "On the evening of our marriage day," I an-

swered,
She blushed and turned away her head coquettishly.
"Ah! that is so long to wait!" she said, half

pettishly. "Not very long, I hope," I observed, with saning emphasis. "We are now in Novemmeaning emphasis. ber. May I ask you to make my suspense brief? to allow me to fix our wedding for the second month of the New Year?"

. Stella's But my recent widowhood! death!" . . . she objected faintly, pressing a perfumed handkerchief cently to her eyes.
"In February your husband will have been dead nearly six months" I said, decisively; "it is quite a sufficient period of mourning for one so young as yourself. And the loss of your child increases the lonliness of your situation, so in that it is natural, even necessary, that you should secure a protector as soon as possible. Society will not censure you, you may be sure; besides I shall know, how to silence any

A smile of conscious triumph parted her lips.
"It shall be as you wish," she said, demurely;
"Naples as one who "if you, who are known in Naples as one who is perfectly indifferent to women, like now to ure as an impatient lover, I shall no: object." And she gave me a quick glance of mischievous amusement from under the languid lids of her dreamy dank eyes. I saw it, but answered

gossip that eavors of impertinence.

stiffly—

'You are aware, Contessa, and I am also aware that I am not a 'lover' according to the accepted type, but that I am impatient I readi-

And why?" she asked. "Because," I replied, speaking slowly and emphatically; "I desire you to be mine and mine only, to have you absolutely in my possession, and to feel that no one can come between us, or to interfere with my wishes con cerning you.

She laughed gaily. "A la bonne heure! You are a lover without knowing it! Your dignity will not allow you to believe that you are ac-

oesides these things"—and here I looked at her steadily, "I have an ardent desire to do justice to your admirable qualities, and to give you all you deserve. If you think you could be happy with me, speak frankly, I cannot effer the second to give you destiny." And involuntarily I clenched my usual composure by degrees. Turning in the happy with me, speak frankly, I cannot effer the second to give your destiny. The second to give you destiny. The second to give you destiny. The second to give a name to the feelings which possess me; I am only conscious of a very strong wish to become the absolute master of your destiny. And involuntarily I clenched my usual composure by degrees. Turning in the second to give your destiny. The second the second to give your destiny. The second the second to give your destiny. The second the second the second to give your destiny. The second the second to give your destiny. The second the second the second to give you destiny. The second the se action, but she answere I the words with a grace ful bend of the head and a smile.

"I could not have a better fortune," she said,
"for I am sure my destiny will be all brightness and beauty with you to control and guide

"It will be what you deserve," I half muttered; then with an abrupt change of manner 'I will wish you good night, Contessa. It

grows late, and my state of health compels me She rose from her seat and gave me a compas sionate look.

"You are really a great sufferer then?" she inquired ten etly, "I am corry! But perhaps careful nursing will quite restore you. I shall be so proud if I can help you to secure better health."

"Rest and happiness will no doubt do much for me," I answered, "still I warn you, cara mia, that in acc-pting me as your hus-band you take a broken-down man—one whose whims are legion and whose chronic state of invalidism may in time prove to be a burden on your young life. Are you sure your decision is a wise one?"

"Quite sure!" she replied firmly. "Do I not love you! And you will not always be ailing—you look so strong."
"I am atrong to a certain extent," I said un-

consciously straightening myself as I stood.
"I have plenty of muscle as far as that goes, but my nervous system is completely diso gan ized. I—, why, what is the matter? Are you

For she had turned deathly pale, and her eyes looked startled and terrined. Thinking she would faint, I extended my arms to save from falling, but she put them aside with an alarmed yet appealing gesture.
"It is nothing," she murmured feebly,

sudden giddiness:—I thought—no matter what! Tell me are you not related to the Romanifamily? When you drew yourself up just now you were so like—like Fabis / I fanoied," and she shuddered, "that I saw his ghost!"

I supported her to a chair near the window, which I threw open for air, though the evening was cold.

You are fatigued and over-excited," I said calmly, "your nature is too imaginative. No; I am not related to the Romanis, though possibly I may have some of their mannerisms. Many men are alike in these things. But you must not give way to such fancies. Rest per feetly quiet, you will soon recover."

And pouring out a glass of water I handed it to her. She sipped it slowly, leaning back in the fauteuil where I had placed her, and in silence we both looked out on the November night. There was a moon, but she was veiled by driving clouds, which ever and anon swept asunder to show her gleaming pallidly white, like the restless spirit of a deceived and white, like the restless spirit of a deceived and murdered lady. A rising wind moaned dismally among the fading creepers and rustled the heavy branches of a giant cypress that stood on the lawn like a huge spectral mouther draped in black apparently waiting for a forest funeral. Now, and then a few big drops of rain fell—sudden that the other thanks the stood on the stood of the tears wrung as though by force from the black

heart of the sky... My wife shivered.

"Shut the window!" she said, glancing back
at me where I stood behind her chair." I am much better now. It was very silly I do not know what came over me, but for the moment Fielt afraid—horrivly afraid of you " Coupie a wolse. AN OFFENSIVE BREATH

ring of rose-brilliants; "It is no ; (10 late," I resumed, if if on

second thoughts you would rather not in me, you have only to say, so al shall accome tate with equalimity, and shall not bla

At this she seemed quite al rmed, and rish laid her hand pleading y on my arm.
"Surely you are no: offended?" she said. was not really afraid of you, you know-is was not really afraid of you, you know—it a stupid fancy—I cannot explain it. But I quite well now, and I am only too happy Why, I would not lose your love for all it world—you must believe me!"

And she touched my hand caressingly wither lips. I withdrew it gently, and stroked hair with an almost parental tenderness; then

said quietly—
If so, we are agreed, and all is well. 'me advise you to take a long night's rest; you nerves are weak and somewhat shaken. You wish me to keep our eogagement secret?" She thought for a mement, then auswi

musingly:

"For the present, perhaps, it would be been though," and she laughed, "it would be be lightful to see all the other women jealous as envious of my good fortune; Still, if the new were told to any of our friends—who knows! it might accidentally reach Guido, and—"I understand! You may rely upon my dieretion. Good night, Contessa!"

"You may call me Nina," she murmure decirion.

ly. "Nina, then," I said with some effort, lightly kissed her. "Good night!—may y dreams be of me!"

She responded to this with a gratified sm

She responded to this with a gratified smi and as I left the room she waved her hand in parting salute. My diamonds flashed on like a small circle of fire; the light shed through the rose-colored lamps that hung from the painted osiling fell full on her exquisite love ness, softening it into ethereal radience and de ercy, and when Istrodeforth from the house the night air heavy with the threatening glood coming tempest, the picture of that fair the and form flitted before me like a mirage,—if glitter of her hair flashed on my vision like. glitter of her hair massed on my vision is little snakes of fire,—her lips had left a score ing heat on mine. Distracted with the though that tortured me. I walked on and on for hom The storm broke at last; the rain poured I wandered on like a forsaken fugiting I seemed to be the only human being let al ve in a world of wrath and darkness. In waves breaking hurriedly on the thore, swirling showers that fellon my defenceless he—all these things were unfelt, unheard by me.

There are times in a man s life who mere physical feeling grows numb under the pressure of intense mental against the experience of some vila injustice, for gets for a little its narrow and poor house clay. Some such mood was upon me then I ame pase, for in the very act of walking I was almost unconscious of movement. An awful solitus seemed to encompass me—a silence of my me. swirling showers that fellon my defenceless he seemed to encompass me—a silence of my or creating. I fancied that even the angry e ments avoided me as I passed; that there we nothing, nothing in all the wide universe by myself and a dark brooding horror called Vergance. All suddenly, the mists of my misses. myself and a dark brooding horror called vergeance. All suddenly, the mists of my miscleared; I moved no longer in a deaf, blin stupor. A flash of lightning danced vivid before my eyes, followed by a crashing peal thunder; I saw to what end of a wild journ I had come! Those heavy gates,—that und fined stretch of land,—those ghostly glimms of motionless white like spectral mileston and the closure of the closure. I knew it all toower. emerging from the gloom—I knew it all too we it was the cemetery. I looked through their palisades with the feverish interest of one w palisades with the revenien interest of one we watches the stage curtain rise on the last see of a tragedy. The lightning sprang once me across the sky, and shewed me for a brief sees the distant marble outline of the Romani van There the drama began; where would it en Slowly, slowly there flitted into my though the face of my lost child—the roung serious stages. the face of my lost child—the young, send face as it had looked when the calm, pret naturally wice smile of Death had rested up it; and then a curious feeling of pity possess me—pity that her little body shot be lying stiffly out there, not in the van but under the wet sod, in such a relentle storm of rain. I wanted to take her " that cold couch, to carry her to some he where there should be light and heat a laughter,—to warm her to life again within arms; and as my brain played with these fool fancies, slow bot tears forced themselves into eyes and scalded my cheeks as they fell. The thick of the storm, this time with an assume step and a knowledge of where I was going. did not reach my hotel till past midnight; h this was not late for Naples, and the curior of the fat French hall-porter was not so me excited by the lateness of my arrival as by disorder of my apparel.
"Ah. heaven!" he cried; "that Monsie "Ah, heaven!" he cried; "that Monsi the distinguished should have been in suc

send for his carriage?" I cut short his exclamations by dropping f francs into his ever-ready hand, assuring that I had thoroughly enjoyed the novelty walk in bad weather, whereat he smiled and a gratulated me as much as he had just commis ated me. on reaching my own rooms, my ra Vincenzo stared at my dripping and dishere! condition, but was discreetly mute. He quid warm dressing-grown, and then brought agls
of mulled port wine, but performed these dus
with such an air of unbroken gravity that I's
inwardly amused while I admired the fellor reticence. When I was about to retire for a night, I tossed him a Napoleon. He eyed musingly and inquiringly; then he asked—
"Your Excellency desires to purchase so

storm all unprotected! Why did not Monni

thing?
"Your silence, my friend, that is all," Isi
with a laugh. "Understand me, Vincen
you will serve yourself and me best by ober
implicitly, and asking no questions. Fortun
in the carrent who, accustomed to see his man is the servant who, accustomed to see his madernia drunk every night, swears to all outsiders it be has never served so soher and discregentleman! This is your chara ter. Vinc -keep to it, and we shall not quarre!.' smiled gravely, and porketed my piece of without a word-like a true Tuscan as The sentimental servant, whose fine feel will not allow him to accept an extra "tip you may be sure, a humbug. I never bel you may be sure, a humbur. I never belief in such an one. Labor can also command its price, and what so labord in this age as to be honest? What difficult as to keep silence on other people affairs? Such herculean tasks deserve a ment! A valet who is generously bribe, addition to his wages, can be relied on; if the derpaid, all heaven and earth will not persist the total deserve the sure of the sure him to hold his tongue. Left alone at last, my sleeping chamber, I remained for someti before actually going to bed. I took off black spectacles which served me so well, a looked at myself in the mirror warms. some curiosity. I never permitted cenzo to enter my bedroom at night, or I was dressed in the morning, lest he a surprise me without these appendages were my chief disguise, for in such a case fancy even his studied composure would be given way. For, disburdened of smoke colo glasses, I appeared what I was, young a vigorous in spite of my white beard and had been worn and hage at first, had filled up and was health colored; while my eyes, the spokesmen of thoughts, were bright with the clean ness and filled the colored was bear and the colored with the colored was a specific or thoughts. of constitutional strength and physical being A. I wondered, as I stared mod at my own reflection, how it was that I did look ill. The mental suffering I continua underwent, mingled though it was with a ctain gloomy satisfaction, should surely help the more indelible traces on my countenant (To be Continued.)

"That was not complimentary, to your fittine issumest distressing, not only, to the perhaps and ifficed if he have any pride but to those whom her comes in contact. It is a delicate to be request. "Should I not insist upon an apology?" matter to speak of but it has parted not comply and played with her friends but lovers! Bad breath and castral inseparable. D. Bage's Catarrh Remedy of the worst case as about and joint testify.