

"Nonsense! Were there no lovely English girls? no good English girls? Emily is ten times lovelier."

"You know what you said."

"I said it to please you."

"Charlotte!"

"Yes, I did,—at least, in a great measure. It is easy enough to call a pretty girl an angel; and as for my promise to love your wife, of course I expected you would choose a wife suitable to your religion and your birth. Suppose you selected some outlandish dress,—an Italian brigand's, for instance,—what would the neighbouring gentlemen think of you? It would be an insult to their national costume, and they would do right to resent it. Well, being who and what you are, you have no right to bring an Italian woman into Seat-Sandal. It is an insult to every woman in the county, and they will make you feel it."

"I shall not give them the opportunity. Beatrice cannot live in this beastly climate."

"The climate is wrong also? Naturally. It would follow the religion and the woman. Harry Sandal, I wish I had died, ere my ears had heard such a shame and sorrow for my father and mother! Where are you going to live, then?"

"In Florence. It is the birthplace of Beatrice, the city associated with all her triumphs."

"God have mercy, Harry! Her triumphs! Is she, then, an actress?"

"She is a singer,—a wonderful singer; one to whom the world has listened with breathless delight."

"A singing woman! And you have married her! It is an outrage on your ancestors, and on your parents and sisters."

"I will not hear you speak in that way, Charlotte. Of course I married her. My sin against the Sandals and society is, that I married her."

"No, sir; you know better. Your sin is in having anything whatever to do with her. You might have thought of another woman besides Beatrice. Is a sin against a mother a less sin than one against a foreign woman? A mother is something sacred. To wound her heart is to throw a stone at her. You have committed a sort of sacrilege. And you are married! No entreaties can prevent, and no repentance can avail. Oh, what a sorrow to darken all the rest of father's and mother's days! What right have you to spoil their lives, in order to give yourself a little pleasure? O Harry! I never knew that you were selfish before."

"I deserve all you say, Charley, but I loved Beatrice so much."

"Are you sure, even of that excuse? Why did you not come home, and speak to me before it was too late? Why come at all?"

"Because I want to talk to you about money. I have sold out."

"Sold out? Is there any more bad news? Do you know what father paid for your commission? Do you know how it hampered him to do it? that, in fact, he has never been quite easy about ready money since?"