

forcibly on her, had reminded her too vividly of early days and scenes almost forgotten, of joys and sorrows which had passed like a fiery simoom over her soul. The monotonous tranquillity she had enjoyed in her adopted land was now dispelled forever, and replaced by a weary feeling of home sickness, a fevered desire to behold again the pleasant fields, the hawthorn hedges, among which her childish steps had wandered. There were now times, when she turned with impatience, almost loathing, from the fragrant orange groves, the bright glowing vegetation of the South; times, when she closed her eyes, to shut out the marble domes, the stately palaces around her, longing with a heart-sickening hopelessness, to behold again, if only for a moment, even the bleakest, wildest moor of her own Northern home. Oh! Bianca di Colonna, gifted, superior as she was, could not live without human sympathy or affection; and the homage that surrounded her, was now, at best, but a cold, empty mockery. A great grief, too, a grief, though perhaps, unacknowledged to herself, the greatest of all, was the haunting remembrance of Adrian Woodville. She thought of him, an exile in a foreign land, isolated, lonely like herself, and she sighed—she thought of him, the centre of a happy home, surrounded by the endearing ties of wife and children, and she sighed still deeper. The truth was, the childish love which had grown up in her heart for the companion of her young years, and which Fitz-Clarence's arts and spells, had for a time, diverted so entirely, so engrossingly to himself, had returned to its early object, and Adrian Woodville was now beloved, as he had once so eagerly, yet vainly desired to be.

CHAPTER XII.

I DEEM'D that time, I deem'd that pride,
Had quench'd at length my boyish flame;
Nor knew, till seated by thy side,
My heart in all, save hope the same.

BYRON.

ONE evening that the Marchesa had yielded even more entirely than usual to the mournful thoughts that now formed her constant companions, her friend, the Duke di Rimini entered.

"Why, Bianca," he kindly exclaimed: "Why are you not abroad in the gardens to-day? This dull, darkened room is enough to inspire melancholy thoughts, and you look very pale, *amica mia*. I fear your solitary reflections are not as pleasant as your friends would wish."

"I miss Linda, sadly," replied the Marchesa, her faint color deepening: "When she was with me, I had no time for lonely musings."

"Well, you must have her again, my child, if you think her companionship would do you good. Mentoni will willingly spare his little wife to us for a few weeks, for your sake, but I have a message for you. Raselli desires his respectful courtesies to the Marchesa di Colonna, and solicits the privilege of introducing to her, a friend of his."

"Be it as he wishes," rejoined the lady, listlessly. "I like not new faces and acquaintances, but Raselli is a good friend, and must not be refused. Have you seen his *protégé* yet?"

"No, he is a foreigner. 'Tis poor Raselli's weakness always to run after the latter. Some say he is a German, others assert that he is from England."

"From England!" repeated the Marchesa, with a slight shudder; "Then, I want not to see or know him."

"Perhaps you are right, my child," rejoined the Duke, fixing his kind, earnest eyes upon her face. "In meeting Fitz-Clarence, you saw and knew one Englishman too many for your happiness."

"You mistake me, Rimini," she rejoined, coloring, as she spoke: "No thoughts or affections of mine are lavished on him, but, with regard to this stranger, tell Raselli that I will be engaged for two or three days, and cannot possibly receive any visitors."

"You will meet him though, *figlia*, at Raselli's to-morrow night. Of course, you go."

"Well, I think not," she rejoined, with a weary sigh. "The very anticipation of it, fatigues me."

The Duke slightly sighed, too.

"Ah! *mia povera*, I fear, Linda with all her gaiety, will never be able to make you what you once were, but listen, *carissima*, to my counsel, and attend this ball to-morrow night. You have refused many, of late, and Naples wonders and conjectures the cause. The wounded bird does well to cover with its wings, the arrow that is preying on its vitals."

The burning blush that mounted to the lady's cheek, was his only reply, and anxious to spare her confusion, he rose, saying as he pressed her hand in parting:

"I will meet you, then, to-morrow night, at Raselli's!"

"Yes, perhaps 'tis as well," rejoined Bianca; "and tell the Count he can introduce his friend to me then."

With a heavy heart, the Marchesa submitted to the attentions of her tire-woman the following night, and as the latter adjusted the glittering tiara of diamonds, she wondered much, how any brow could look so sad beneath such jewels. The