

the saloons were closely shut, and their silken and gilded splendour seemed consigned to silence and repose. If it had been an enchanted scene in fairy-land, there could not have been a greater absence of any sight or sound of human life or occupation.

But, after a while, a swift little sail-boat ran up to a landing-place on the beach, and a young man, jumping out, made the boat fast, and entered the garden. He was a fine looking, handsome young fellow, plainly dressed, but with an air and carriage at once manly and refined; and at a first glance he might have been taken for the fortunate prince of the story, coming to break the spell under which the sleeping beauty lay. But a second look would not have confirmed the illusion, for his brow was heavily clouded, there was neither warmth nor softness in the fire of his dark eyes, and he looked a disappointed, embittered, unhappy man. But two years before he had been very different. Then he was full of hope, and spirit; an ardent, enthusiastic patriot, freely risking his life in his country's cause; an impassioned eager lover, pledging his heart and faith to a simple peasant girl on the wild Calabrian shore. For this grave, dark-browed, moody man was Paolo Marocchi.

Passing through the gardens, he climbed the marble steps to the terrace, and uttered an angry exclamation on seeing the blinds all closed. Opening a glass door he entered one of the saloons, which, contrasted with the fresh air and sunshine without, seemed so dark and close that he hastily threw open the windows. The light suddenly pouring in showed a room magnificently furnished, with amber satin hangings and coverings, the most luxurious couches and ottomans, and a profusion of expensive toys and glittering ornaments—all reflected in the superb mirrors hanging on the walls.

"*Cielo?*" he muttered, "how I hate all this gaudy, unwholesome splendour. The meanest hut, with a deal-table and chair, would be better; for there one might feel

one's self a man, but this gilded luxury is only fit for an Oriental slave."

From the saloon he passed into a magnificent hall, lined with pictures and statues, and mounting a grand marble staircase, passed through an anteroom, and knocked at a richly pannelled door. He did not wait for admission, but turning the handle, which moved without a sound, the door opened noiselessly, and he entered.

He was now in a lady's boudoir, hung with pale pink silk, with coverings of pink silk on the sofas and fauteuils. An Eastern carpet with a white ground, on which a pattern of pink roses, looking like natural flowers, was woven, covered the floor; mirrors and paintings of flowers and birds hung on the walls; cabinets of buhl and of inlaid and painted wood, and tables of enamel and marqueterie, were placed here and there; and little services of china, of rare beauty and value, the most exquisite fans, richly painted screens, tiny clocks of ormolu and alabaster, not one of which told the hour, and numberless articles of ornament and luxury, were crowded wherever space could be found for them.

An open door led to a dressing-room beyond, with hangings and furniture to match those of the boudoir, and Paolo saw that the curtains were drawn and the room lighted by a dozen wax candles in the silver-gilt candelabra on the dressing-table. In the midst of this blaze of light, a lady was standing, contemplating the reflection of her face and figure in a magnificent Psyche glass.

She was a beautiful woman of two or three and twenty; her figure exquisitely formed, and her small head and throat set with matchless grace on her lovely shoulders. Her complexion was of the clearest and purest fairness, her features delicately and beautifully formed, and full of mobile expression. An acute observer might, perhaps, have detected, underlying all that radiant, sparkling loveliness, a nature cold and hard, false and shallow; but this was only when her face was caught in perfect