

you are once more free, may I not hope that the fairest reward earth can bestow will be mine?"

"You may hope and expect everything," said Giulia, extending her hand.

"*Mia adorata!*" said Raffaello, pressing it to his lips.

"Now, then, *addio, caro amico,*" said Giulia, rising. "My maid Fanchette waits outside; give us time to get out of sight before you leave the church."

Lingeringly drawing away the hand which Raffaello had retained, she moved with soft gliding grace to the door. Raffaello raised the great curtain, and with a parting "*addio!*" she passed through the opening, and disappeared.

As she vanished the young man's face changed, and its expression of impassioned devotion was succeeded by one strangely bitter and sarcastic.

"The hard-hearted little traitress!" he muttered, pulling at his moustache vehemently. "She is as false and cruel as Circe herself, or any other woman-monster. Of course, I was not ignorant that she had a tolerable spice of the devil in her composition, but this seems rather too much of a good thing. Say what she will, I know she had a *grande caprice* for him when she married him, and if she likes me better to-day, she might like some one else better the day after we were married: then I should become an incumbrance, to be got rid of in my turn. But she is gloriously, angelically beautiful, and I must have her at any price. Though, after all, it might be better to have a wife without the demoniac element. She might not be so *piquante*, but she would certainly be safer."

Then with a shrug of his shoulders, he, too, left the church.

All this time Carmina had remained hidden by the screen, silent and motionless, hearing through the openings in the iron-work all that passed, between Giulia and the young Marchese. No words could express all she had felt as she listened. Her horror

at their wickedness, her dread lest their schemes should succeed, and her passionate hope that she might be able to warn and save Paolo. Surely Madonna had purposely revealed their vile plot to her, and would in some way or other enable her to defeat it. She had often seen the villa where Paolo lived, and once on a holiday she had wandered with Ninetta to the beach below it, and seen Paolo's boat with the one white sail lying at the landing—fancying, as she read with wistful eyes the name painted on the prow—*La Bella Donna*—that it was so called in honour of the beautiful lady his wife. Her first thought now was, that she would wait among the rocks near the landing till she saw his boat come in, and warn him of his danger; but the next moment it occurred to her that he would probably have no plan of escape ready, and the least delay or indecision might be fatal. Then, like a flash of inspiration, came the thought of Jacopo's felucca. If Jacopo would have his felucca near, Paolo could get on board, and Jacopo could take him to some place of safety. She would go to Jacopo and tell him all, and surely he would save the Signor, as he had saved him once before.

She came to this decision while she was yet on her knees; before the Marchese had left the church. As soon as she knew that he was gone, she followed, her feet winged with the swiftest of all sandals, Love and Hope, and hastened back to Naples. On the road she passed the Marchese, wrapped in his dark mantle, and as he turned at the sound of her rapid feet and caught sight of her face, always so beautiful, and expressive of every emotion, and now pale, excited, rapt, like one inspired, he said to himself: "*Cielo!* what a beauty! But how strangely she looked at me. *Santissima!* I hope she has not the evil eye!" and he made the sign which the Italians consider powerful to ward off the malicious influence they so much dread. He little knew the shudder of horror and fear with which Carmina had passed