

train of donkeys, decorated with flowers under his careful supervision. Upon Monte Amato, in the Casa del Prete, everything was in readiness for the arrival of the Padrona—and the Padrone. For this time his Padrona was not to be alone. And the train came in, thundering along by the sea, and he saw a brown, eager face looking out of a window—a face which at once had seemed familiar to him almost as if he had always known it in Sicily.

And the new and wonderful period of his boy's life began.

But it passed, and in the early morning he stood in the corner of the Campo Santo where Protestants were buried, and threw flowers from his father's terreno into an open grave.

And once more his Padrona was alone.

Far away from Sicily, from his "Paese," among the great woods of the Abetone he received for the first time into his untutored arms his Padroncina. His Padrone was gone from him for ever. But once more, as he would have expressed it to a Sicilian comrade, they were "in three." And still another period began.

And now that period was ended.

As Gaspare rowed slowly on towards the island, in his simple and yet shrewd way he was pondering on life, on its irresistible movement, on its changes, its alternations of grief and joy, loneliness and companionship. He was silently reviewing the combined fates of his Padrona and himself.

Behind him for a long while there was silence. But when the boat was abreast of the sloping gardens of Posilipo Artois spoke at last.

"Hermione!" he said.

"Yes," she answered.

"Do you remember that evening when I met you on the sea?"

"After I had been to Frisio's? Yes, I remember it."

"You had been reading what I wrote in the wonderful book."

"And I was wondering why you had written it."

"I had no special reason. I thought of that saying. I had to write something, so I wrote that. I wonder—I wonder now why long ago my conscience did not tell me plainly something. I wonder it did not tell me plainly what you were in my life, all you were."

"Have I—have I really been much?"

"I never knew how much till I thought of you permanently changed towards me, till I thought of you living, but with your affection permanently withdrawn from me. That night—you know——?"

"Yes, I know."

"At first I was not sure—I was afraid for a moment about