

THE PEOPLE

They were always about the great lovers—Francesca and Paolo, Dante and Beatrice, even Alfred de Musset and poor John Kents, with the skull cap which burnt his brain. To-day it was Roma's favourite poem:

"Teach me, only teach, Love!
As I ought
I will speak thy speech, Love,
Think thy thought . . ."

His right hand held the book. His left was between Roma's hands, lying blue-veined in her lap. She was looking out on the sunlit city as if taking a last farewell of it. He stopped to stroke her glossy black hair and she reached up to his lips and kissed them. Then she closed her eyes to listen. His voice rose and swelled with the ocean of his love, and he felt as if he were pouring his life into her frail body.

"Meet, if thou require it,
Both demands,
Laying flesh and spirit
In thy hands."

Her blanched lips moved. She took a deep breath and made a faint cry. He rose softly, and bent over her with a trembling heart. Her breathing seemed to have ceased. Had sleep overtaken her? Or had the tender flame expired?

"Roma!"

She opened her eyes and smiled.

"Not yet, dear—soon," she said.

THE END

The illustrations in this book are from scenes of the play as produced by Messrs. LIEBLER & COMPANY, and photographed by Mr. BYRON.