

as I loved, I strove in vain to wake an answering sentiment in the breast of Viola. Cautious and gentle as I was in my approaches, forcing my nature to appear so, she ever shrunk from me with fear; as she was wont to do in childhood, and I was frenzied to perceive, that the impressions, which in those early days, I had written on her soul, were far too deeply graven to be easily effaced. Yet each day I grew more earnest, and less guarded in my suit, till at last, no longer able to control the agony of my soul, I cast myself at her feet, and with passionate utterance, poured forth all its burning love.

"Trembling and pale, she fled from me, and days passed without my again beholding her. Like a maniac, I wandered among her favourite haunts. I loitered in the corridor, hovering around the door of her apartment, watching to behold her, but in vain. They told me she was ill, but I credited not the tale, and losing all self-control, I rushed into the presence of the Duke, and, regardless of consequences, boldly declared my passion, and demanded his sanction and support. He frowned darkly while I spoke, and listened with a haughty coldness, that stung me to the soul. Still he heard me without surprise, for the last few days had revealed to all, the secret which I had before so cautiously guarded; but he affected to believe my intellect disordered, and fearful, doubtless, of driving me to desperation, sought to evade a direct reply to my petition. But I peremptorily demanded it, when, chafed by my imperious manner, he calmly reproved my presumption, and told me that the Lady Viola was plighted to the Prince di Urbino, and that the nuptials were to be solemnized on the day when she attained her sixteenth year.

"I raved at this intelligence—I upbraided him for his former harshness to me—for his injustice towards one, in whose veins flowed the blood of his own race, and accused him of conniving, to debar me from gaining the affections of his daughter, or from attaining that station in the world, to which my father's rank entitled me. He heard my reproaches with indignant scorn, and set before me the baseness of my conduct, in repaying his boundless favours with such deep ingratitude. A foreign officer had been at the palace on the preceding day, from whom he had heard the history of some dark transactions at Vienna, in which I had played a conspicuous part. He repeated to me what he had learned, and I laughed mockingly at the detail,—and when he sternly rebuked my bold depravity, I cast upon him the blame of all my sins—on him, who, without a cause, and without the safeguard of a monitor or a friend, had turned me, in unformed boyhood, guideless upon a wide and wicked world, to become, without aid, the architect of my own character and fortunes.

He was greatly angered at my words, and heaped upon me language I could not endure, commanding

me forthwith to leave his presence, and never more to enter it. But, irritated to madness, I openly defied him, and swore, in despite of him, to win the hand of his daughter; and, thus as I stood bearding him in his own halls, his rage became uncontrollable; and, no doubt, fearing to trust himself longer in my presence, he rose and abruptly left the apartment. I knew well what would ensue, and waited not to be thrust from his door, but with curses on my lips and in my heart, I rushed from the palace, and plunged into the deepest solitude I could find, to brood over my wrongs, and mature some plan for future action.

"I had spies, who brought me daily reports from the palace, where all, apparently, went on as usual, till eight or ten days had elapsed, when I heard that a new guest was an inmate there, who, from the description of his person and retinue, I had no doubt was the betrothed lover of the Lady Viola. Subsequent rumours confirmed my suspicion—preparations, it was even said, were going on for the marriage, and when this was told me I forgot all caution—every consideration of personal safety, vanished before the agonizing dread of losing her for ever, and, resolved to see and judge for myself, I issued from my retreat, and avoiding the palace, entered the gardens by a private and unfrequented gate, that opened by a spring whose secret was familiar to me.

"It was near the hour when the Lady Viola was wont to loiter among its cool walks, and impatiently I counted the minutes till she should appear. I heard gay voices at a distance, and her silvery laugh mingling among them, fell upon my ear, and awakened wild tumults in my soul. Jealousy and rage convulsed it, each instant becoming more deadly and intense, fed by the dark and fearful thoughts that crowded fast upon me. I traversed the intricacies of the garden with impatient step, grinding my teeth and tearing out my hair, with maniac frenzy, when, in this moment of terrible excitement, low voices sounding near me, checked my step, and I paused behind a group of lime-trees, to observe who were approaching.

"The tones became more audible as I listened, and in a moment the folds of a white robe floated in sight—another, and Viola passed before me leaning on the arm of a noble looking stranger. It was the Prince di Urbino, her affianced lover; and when I marked the bright glow which flushed her cheek, as bending down, he poured his love tale in her ear, the fierce passion raging within me leaped forth like the forked and angry lightning from its dark portentous cloud, and, clutching a dagger from my breast, I sprung from my concealment, and stood erect before them.

"Wretch!" I said, addressing the astonished prince; "wretch! she, whom thou art seeking to win, is mine! yield her, or die!"