

and he sprang from his position, exclaiming with almost frantic violence :

"Blanche, listen to me, you shall, I swear you shall," but even as he spoke, the door opened, and Lord Orford entered.

"Why, where is the Marchesa?" he exclaimed, looking round. "The servants told me I would find her here; but Fitz-Clarence, man, in Heaven's name, what ails you? You look as white and spirit-like as Hamlet's ghost. Has our beautiful Italian enchantress been weaving some unholy spell around you?"

"Cease your folly, Orford, but lead me home quickly," returned Fitz-Clarence, in a low, unsteady voice.

The young nobleman glanced again earnestly in the egotist's pale, troubled face, and then with a consideration the latter never would have displayed under similar circumstances for himself, gave him his arm, and with some careless, common-place remark, passed out.

And where was Bianca di Colonna, meanwhile? Did gratified pride and revenge, bring all the happiness the troubled delight she had anticipated? Alas, no! When did they ever satisfy heart like hers? Alone in that regal room, she sat, her dark hair thrust back from her throbbing temples, her small hands clasped till every blue vein stood out apparent.

"Yes," she murmured, her pale lip quivering as she spoke: "I have punished the traitor, I have retaliated on him some few of the many agonizing pangs he so ruthlessly inflicted on myself, but am I the happier for it? Has it filled the aching, dreary void within my breast—has it cancelled the past with its bitter, haunting reminiscences, its undying sorrow—has it restored to me the freshness of feeling, the trusting confidence he, the cruel, false dissembler robbed me of? Alas, no! It has not, it never will. And Adrian," she murmured, after a short pause, with a convulsive sob: "Adrian, the warm hearted, noble lover of my girlhood. Adrian, whose pure, devoted affection, I daringly spurned, whom my mad infatuation for a worthless rival, condemned to an exile, perhaps, a grave in a foreign land. Oh! Clarence, Clarence, I could have forgiven thee for all the misery, the wretchedness thou did'st cause myself, but not for the wrong thou did'st him."

Long, Bianca di Colonna wept, and when her passionate sorrow had exhausted itself, she turned to seek the mournful consolation she ever found in the study of the simple picture which we have already noted as forming so strange a contrast to the glorious *chefs d'œuvres* of Italian art around

it. That painting was a boyish gift of Adrian's, and faithfully she had preserved it through change of clime and scene, finding a sad resemblance between their mutual fate, and the desolate gloom that hung around the outward bound ship; fancying, too, that so must the vessel have looked that bore him for the last time from England's shores, unblest, unprayed for by any loving or friendly heart.

The fashionable world of Naples were electrified by hearing the following day, that the handsome *Signor Inglese*, the supposed lover of their idolized Marchesa, had left Naples for ever, the result of the lady's unqualified rejection of his suit. Lord Orford, too, it was rumored, had made a similar offer to Linda di Rimini, but the latter for reply had only opened her large eyes still larger, and asked him, wonderingly, "if he had never heard that she was affianced to her kinsman, the Prince di Mentoni."

The intelligence fully confirmed, the Neapolitan's rejoiced with even more than their customary enthusiasm over the certainty of retaining Bianca di Colonna among them, and never had music resounded oftener through the aristocratic halls of Naples, or glittering crowds thronged its palaces. The remembrance of Fitz-Clarence, however, soon passed away, and Linda di Rimini, happily forgetful of Lord Orford, soon gave her hand to her young betrothed. Six months sped their course. The Marchesa di Colonna, calm, stately as ever, pursued her olden course, unchanged, mingled in the revels of the gay, gathered around her the great and gifted, continued still the boast of her adopted city, but a change had been gradually stealing over her, a change which all slow to perceive, were at length fain to notice. Her step was stately as ever, but its buoyant elasticity was gone; the rose of her cheek had grown more faint and delicate; and the look of dreamy sadness, which, in the previous years of Italian career, had only shadowed her sweet face at rare intervals, was now its constant expression.

It was first whispered, then openly averred, that she was pining for the foreign lover, whose suit, pride and national prejudices had induced her to reject, and there were hearts noble enough to regret, notwithstanding their distaste for Fitz-Clarence, and attachment to herself, that she had not left them as the Englishman's bride, instead of remaining to pine and perish, day by day, among them. Public report and rumor, however, wronged Bianca di Colonna. Fitz-Clarence, the traitor, the hypocrite, the false egotist, retained no place in that high heart, but his coming, and his stay, had brought back the eventful past too