

that somebody would tell me her story some day, and I'd like to hear it."

"Her story! Poor soul, she had dozens," answered the old man, picking a rose from the wall near him, and sniffing at it.

"But her real one? Every one must have a *real* story."

"Well, yes. Years ago, when she was living with her husband, a little snuffy *avvocato* in Sicily, she did something wrong. Then she ran away from her husband, and from the other man too, and went on the stage. She had no influence, she was not pretty, and for years no one heard of her. She has told me, and I believe her, that during those years her life was irreproachable. At last, suddenly, she became famous. And when she came to London the first time, she met a man, a friend of mine. They fell in love with each other. Tremendously. It was like," he went on thoughtfully, forgetting that he was speaking to a child of eighteen, "a race; as if each of them wished to love more than the other. He found out that there was nothing known against her, and—he was a man of higher rank than I—wanted to marry her. Then she told him. Told him of the old days in Sicily. You understand?" He broke off, looking sharply at his hearer who sat quite motionless, listening to him.

"Yes, I understand."

"Well, he didn't marry her, of course. That was all. *H'm!* It's a sad story. I, personally, always respected her for telling him."

Pam rested one elbow on her knee, and her chin in her hand, looked up at him. "Whose was the child?" she asked. "The little girl who died?"

"Oh, that was his, my friend's. I didn't know she had died."

"Yes. And then what happened afterwards, Grandfather?"

"*H'm!* Well, you see, my friend married later. Had to have an heir, of course, and then she, Ravaglia, went to pieces. It was a great pity."

"Yes. It was a great pity. Grandfather, you wrote to ask her to—to go away from me? That time in Aix."