

Another guest, a young man with the wine-cup at his very lips, flung aside the ruby poison, fell on his knees, and sobbed ; others fainted ; one drew his sword upon the artist, calling him a devil who could so torment them ; one by one, all departed from the banquet hall and Camillo was left alone. He was very pale, and his hand trembled as he again let fall the veil over the Face of Christ.

With the earliest dawn on the next day, Camillo was on horseback and away to visit Padre Antonio, for he did not on this occasion send for the father to come to him.

Arrived at the priest's house, he made a general confession of all his sins that he could remember.—“ You cannot doubt, my father, that I am sincerely penitent,” said the artist ; is there any compulsion upon me to make more than this confession ?”—“ None,” said Padre Antonio “ none, unless it be the Face of Christ.”

“ Aye” returned Camillo, “ I am a free agent ; and as such, in gratitude to the God who has broken my bargain with Satan, I vow henceforth to forsake my ill ways and evil companions, and to live righteously from this day forward.”

—“The Lord give thee grace so to do”, said Father Antonio.

“But at the same time, my father”, pursued the painter, “you must admit that there are some excuses for me. I inherited evil tendencies ; I was badly brought up ; my friends have betrayed me ; mine own wife was false to me and my children are rebellions and undutiful.”

—“That is most true,” said Padre Antonio.—“But I forgive them, I forgive them all freely,” said Camillo. I cannot, of course, take them back to my heart and home, for they are undeserving ; but I have no hard thoughts of them, father.”—“I trust not, my son Camillo,” replied the father.

—“And in truth, though I am grievous sinner, other men have done worse,” continued the artist. “ See what I have made of myself. You remember me when I was a ragged little artist's model ; look at me now. And I have never, though under a compact with Satan, committed aught that men call crime. I have lived a life of pleasure, but have I harmed any man ?