

month since, this letter seemed to me like the last testimony of her dying interest and affection: and remorse and grief, such as I had never known before, almost subdued my reason.

"Why, now, should I visit that dwelling which she had gladdened with her presence, and which her death had left desolate and dreary? There was no one left in its stately halls to give me the greeting of a kindly welcome, for the Duke, I knew, reciprocated my feelings of deepest hate, and the young Viola had ever been to me an object of dislike. Her innocent childhood had failed to win me, for I viewed in her the cause which brought blight to many of my fondest hopes, and I had ever repelled her with a harshness, from which, in her childish timidity she shrunk with fear.

"As I had carried away with me no pleasant remembrance of her, I thought of meeting her again with repugnance; but a desire, natural I believe to every heart, to re-visit the haunts of my happy childhood, and weep upon the grave of my benefactress, decided me: and once again, after so long and eventful an absence, I found myself approaching the lordly palace of the Duke, which, to my excited imagination, seemed in its dark and solitary grandeur, to frown at my return. I had left it an unformed youth, full of ardent hopes and aspirations, yet writhing beneath a feeling of wounded pride, of injured right, which I longed for power to avenge. I returned to it in manhood, weary and heart-worn, unsatisfied with all I had attained, humiliated by all I had become—my better feelings wasted, and the baser triumphing over all of noble that was inherent in my soul. And for the sin and the evil that had darkened my life, I cast the blame, whether justly or not, at the door of the haughty relative, who, by his cruel coldness, had made me feel the bitter degradation of my birth, with an oppressive sense that would have crushed me to the dust, but for the proud spirit that rose in rebellion against it.

"The Duke received me with more courtesy than I had anticipated, but without a shadow of warmth; and I, in return, evinced a self-possession and marble coldness, equal to his own. He seemed, however, startled by the change in my person, and I saw him turn one agitated glance towards a portrait of my father that hung in the apartment. I was, in fact, its living counterpart, and I gloried in shewing him that, if my father's blood mingled in my veins with that from an impurer source, it yet betrayed in outward form, no touch of my degeneracy; for, amid the long line of portraits that graced his princely gallery, there could not one be found, that bore more deeply stamped on every lineament the impress of nobility. Time had dealt kindly by him since we parted,—leaving the tall and stately form erect, and the proud step firm, but indurating the stern features, and deepening the lines of

haughty passion, on the bald and lofty brow. He spoke of my career, and expressed satisfaction at all that had brightened it, and although its darkest points had not been revealed to him, he had heard enough to draw down upon me his displeasure and rebuke.

"We were still in earnest colloquy, when a door, opening upon the terrace, was flung back, and with the voice of song upon her lips, and rose buds wreathed in her hair, and clustering upon her bosom, the young Viola bounded in, and cast herself with fond abandonment upon her father's breast. He whispered in her ear, as tenderly he returned her caress, when, blushing, she withdrew from his arms, and turned towards me with an air of mingled timidity and aversion.

"Gulio, dost thou remember thy young play-fellow—or in the years of thy absence, hath she grown beyond thy knowledge?" said the Duke.

"I sprang to her side, for, as if by some miraculous power, the very sight of her beauty had wrought an instant change in every feeling of my soul. With a trembling hand I clasped her small fingers, and my tongue clove to the roof of my mouth in the powerless agony with which I strove to address her. Could she be the same—the same being whom I had remembered only as the usurper of my privileges, and looked forward to beholding again without an emotion of joy? I was not prepared to meet the change that had come over her—to see the pale and shrinking child, whom I had quitted with indifference, blossomed into the most glowing and exquisite womanhood, that fancy ever pictured.

"But it is useless to discourse to thee, who hast felt it, of her peerless beauty. I, too, bowed before its might, yielding myself resistlessly to the passion she inspired, compared with which, all that had before agitated and swayed my soul, were but as the passing thunder burst, to the fearful crash of the earthquake that rends the mountains, and shakes the solid globe to its centre. I had purposed only a brief sojourn at the palace; but, day after day passed on, and still I lingered there, unable to depart. The Duke seemed not disturbed at my presence; on the contrary, my striking resemblance, both in manner and appearance, to my father, were often the subject of his pleasurable remark and emotion, and as my feelings towards his daughter were carefully veiled from his observation, he evinced a desire to regard me as one returned after long wanderings, to his home. There was, too, one bond of sympathy between us, in the discourse we held concerning his lamented lady, and this seemed to draw me nearer to him, and place me on my former footing in the household.

"Thus time sped on, and while to outward eyes I wore a look of calm and quiet happiness, volcanic