

at last, they were to be true friends — comrades in the tasks and difficulties of life. Without words, her heart promised it — to him and Felicia.

As they left the room, she pointed, smiling, to the drawings.

"So you were the elderly solicitor, with a taste for art, I used to see in my dreams!"

His eyes lit up boyishly.

"I had to keep them here, for fear you'd find out. Now, we'll hang them properly."

It was Victoria who broke the news to Netta Melrose. She, a little wasted ghost among her pillows, received it calmly, yet with a certain bitterness mingled in the calm. What did the money matter to her? And what had she to do with this English world, and this young lord Felicia was to marry? Far within, she hungered, on the threshold of death, as she had hungered twenty years before, for the Italian sun, and the old Italian streets, with the deep eaves and the sculptured doorways, and the smells of leather and macaroni. Her father had loved them, and she had loved her father; all the more passionately the more the world disowned him. She sat in spirit beside his crushed and miserable old age, finding her only comfort in the memory of how his feeble hands had clung to her, how she had worked and starved for him.

Yet, when Felicia came to her, she cried and blessed her. And Felicia, softened by happiness, knelt down beside her, and begged and prayed her to get well. To please them all, Netta made her nurse do her hair, and put on a white jacket which Victoria had embroidered for her. And when Tatham came in to see her, she would have