

# LILY WHITE:

A ROMANCE.

BY

EDWARD GOODWIN.

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## DEDICATION.

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Mrs. Burchet King,

LAWRENCE COUNTY, ALABAMA.

MY DEAR MOTHER:—As a feeble mark of my high regard and unchanging love, permit me to inscribe your name upon the first page of this humble story. If my book can claim no other merit, it can boast at least *one* name that would honor and adorn the most brilliant literary achievement.

In hours of gloom and despondency your kind and cheering words have stimulated me to renew my labors; and when others judged me harshly, your approving smiles awoke me to a newer zeal. It is not on the first leaf of a Romance that your character must be written; but allow me to say that all those ennobling virtues that add a lustre to the name of woman are yours, and a long and useful life attests the fact.

EDWARD GOODWIN.

March 1, 1858.

# LILY WHITE.

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## CHAPTER I.

Here, while I roved, a heedless boy,  
Here, while through paths of peace I ran,  
My feet were vexed with puny snares,  
My bosom stung with insect cares;  
But ah! what light and little things  
Are childhood's woes!—they break no rest:  
Like dew-drops on the skylark's wings,  
While slumbering in his grassy nest,  
Gone in a moment, when he springs  
To meet the morn with open breast;  
As o'er the eastern hills her banners glow,  
And veiled in mist the valley sleeps below.

MONTGOMERY.

EUGENE SAUNDERS was a noble lad. Even at an early age he exhibited a strong desire to mingle in every scene where trial of skill or exhibition of strength was called for; he loved dearly to follow in the chase, and, by the time he reached his fifteenth year, not a youth of his neighborhood could excel him in throwing the stone, in leaping, or in the race. He was an expert and daring swimmer. He would frequently climb to summits whose dizzy heights would cause even a spectator at their base to draw back in fear. It was, indeed,

a glorious sight to behold that manly boy when his soul was in the chase. Over hills, over rivers, through dells and dingles, he would rush, like the swift-footed deer which he pursued. No obstacle, however great, could discourage him; no danger, however imminent, could thwart him. He was not distinguished for great size, being rather under than over the general standard; but he was so well formed, and carried himself in such a noble and dignified manner, that one would forget the defect. In personal appearance he was decidedly handsome. His eyes were dark hazel, and beamed with light and brilliancy. When engaged in quiet conversation they were soft and mild in their expression, but when he grew excited they sparkled as if his soul were on fire. His nose was of the Grecian cast; his mouth, well formed and large; his brow, high, noble, and expanding; and his complexion as fair and rosy as that of a maiden of sweet sixteen. In his disposition he was kind and generous; but, from the twinkle of his eye and the compression of his lips, you could see that, when insulted or enraged, Eugene Saunders would prove a terrible foe. He was blessed with loving and religious parents. Mrs. Saunders, his mother, was one of those dear, kind-hearted creatures, who seem to be sent by Providence upon our earth as a guardian angel. His father was an intelligent man, industrious and frugal, and by these means had not only amassed enough wealth to provide against the wintry time of life, but enough to justify one for saying that he was rich. Albert Saunders was not a brilliant man.

Among his acquaintances he was held in high estima-

tion for his honesty, industry, justice, and truth. From these cardinal points nothing could swerve him.

Right well, indeed, had these noble and praiseworthy characteristics served him. He saw his son, the hope of his declining years, growing by degrees to manhood, educated and refined; and witnessed all his property rapidly increasing in value.

Albert Saunders was a happy and contented man. He had long been a resident of Madison county, Alabama, and was highly regarded for those admirable traits which seldom fail to awaken friendship and inspire respect. Although he resided within two hours' ride of the beautiful little city of Huntsville, yet he seldom was a visitor to its shady streets, and never unless business demanded his attention.

He was never better satisfied than when amid the quietude of his own country home, surrounded by everything that could bring a blessing or add a charm to life. In his engagements he was punctual; and in all his business transactions no man could say that Albert Saunders was other than an honest man. By the advice and through the influence of such parents, Eugene could not fail to profit. His father encouraged him in his fondness for manly sport; and often, in the spring-time, would he accompany his son through the dense forest to the sparkling stream, in which sported the fine speckled trout. On such occasions Eugene's young and ardent heart bounded with joy and gladness. He loved to wander forth and breathe the pure, invigorating air of morning; to look upon the tall, green grass, glittering with dew-drops, and waving to the gentle zephyr; to scent the rich aroma of flowers; to listen to the melody



of birds, caroling their sweetest songs; to the murmur of bees, and to the hum of insects; and to watch the roseate and purple clouds, piling themselves in beauteous and fantastic shapes along the eastern sky. Of all the sports of the field none was dearer to him than that of fishing. With a tapering and slender rod, it was his delight to cast the fly

"Just in the dubious point where with the pool  
Is mixed the trembling stream, or where it boils  
Around the stone, or from the hollow'd bank  
Reverted, plays in undulating flow,"

and with eager eyes to watch the bobbing cork, dancing through the tiny waves and through the yeasty foam. How the blood would rush in a crimson tide to his brow as he beheld the red and yellow cork tremble for a moment, and then slowly disappear beneath the boiling waves! How he rejoiced when he drew from its native stream a fine spotted trout, and saw the crystal drops falling in sparkling showers from its silvery scales! These were happy hours!

But, alas! inscrutable are the ways of Providence; for in less than three years from the period of all this happiness, the angel of death visited that quiet family circle and laid low those dear old people. Typhoid fever, in its most malignant form, entered that home, and almost ere Eugene was aware, first the one and then the other of his beloved and honored parents were deposited in the cold and silent grave.

Young, ardent, and inexperienced, Eugene was left alone to battle against enemies, and to breast, single-handed, the rude shocks of fortune, as he journeyed on

through this selfish world. He was overwhelmed at his great loss. In the flush of the morning of life he had never thought of death, only as a monster at a great distance; still less had he dreamed that it would fall thus suddenly and unexpectedly upon those whom he loved best. Alas! what may not a day bring forth! Who can lift the curtain of the far distant future, and read its awful mysteries? Who can tell but that the heavens, which now are smiling above us, may, in a few brief hours, be filled with "dun, electric clouds," and darkened by the gloomy presence of the overshadowing storm-cloud? So silently and imperceptibly does Time steal his dreadful march upon us, that we fail to note the ravages, until the demon has laid his icy fingers upon all we hold most dear. His parents had been growing old, but Eugene had not perceived that their forms were bending forward, as if to peep into the grave, and that their hair was daily whitening for a glorious immortality. Loud and long did he mourn their loss. Often and oft did he visit those graves, and fondly linger about that sacred spot,—sometimes when the sunbeams were glancing through the leaves, dappling the ground with silvery streaks, and when the merry birds were pouring forth their sweetest notes in every wood and grove,—and sometimes when the trembling twilight had vanished into the deeper shades of night, and a myriad of stars were shedding a tremulous light from their burning thrones in the azure sky.

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Years passed away. Eugene Saunders entered college; graduated with the first distinction of his class; returned home and became sole heir of his father's vast

estate. Caught by the fair and wonderful stories descriptive of the great West, he sold his plantation in Madison county, and removed to the Mississippi Bottom. Time had already written sad changes upon the heart of Eugene, and had tinged his naturally gay and ardent disposition with melancholy. He had studied human nature, and was not satisfied with the result of those studies. He had seen, even thus early in life, how false is man; how deceitful in all his dealings with his fellow-man; how sensuality had become another name for virtue; how honor was covered beneath a veil of lying and deceit; how meanness stalked abroad unchecked, if it was only clad in gaudy trimmings; and how true, heartfelt, old-fashioned religion had been transformed into sycophancy and hypocrisy.

He looked back upon the past, and beheld, outspread, a beauteous vision of peace, happiness, and religion; and he compared what he knew of that vision with what he now saw stalking before him. In his youth he thought the world would be like the green fields and flowery glens through which he daily wandered, chasing the gorgeous butterfly, or plucking the beautiful flowers from the mossy bank or mountain-side. His parents he had taken as standards by which to judge mankind,—hence his sad disappointment when brought in contact with the busy world.

In disposition Eugene was as sensitive as the sensitive-plant. He loved his friends with devotion. But, notwithstanding the naturally lively nature of Eugene, he preferred to live in the vast forest of the Mississippi Bottom than to face the glare and glitter of city-life. Yet he was not a hermit. His summers were spent in

travelling, and visiting the most celebrated watering-places; and his winters were usually passed in some of the Southern cities. He was fond of the bear-hunt, and the autumns were devoted to that exciting and dangerous sport. He loved music, and was himself no mean performer; and to all these may be added his unconquerable desire for knowledge. Often, after having followed the hounds for a whole day, would he consume the night, until the "wee sma'" hours, in poring over the pages of his favorite authors.

It was impossible that a young man of Eugene's temperament could pass through life without experiencing the influence which fair woman never fails to produce upon the hearts of the ardent and enthusiastic. In his various wanderings to fashionable resorts he had, time and again, met with beautiful creatures whom he thought he could love. But while he attempted to reason himself under the sway of that tender passion, he generally found himself high and dry upon the shore of single-blessedness. He had many courtships and flirtations; but somehow he escaped the matrimonial altar, and every day of his life was growing more careless concerning that important step. His education, accomplishments, affable manners, and handsome appearance rendered him a great favorite with the softer sex. He had studied the nature of woman with the same zeal that prompted the ancient alchymist to bend over his crucible at the silent hour of midnight; and he understood the impulses of the female heart so well, *that, had he tried, Eugene Saunders would have been a dangerous man in society.*

## CHAPTER II.

Lightly he dreamt as youth will dream,  
Of sport by thicket, or by stream,  
Of hawk, of hound, of ring, of glove,  
Or lighter yet—of lady's love.

SCOTT'S MARMION.

IN the winter of 18—, Eugene Saunders found himself in the city of New Orleans. On a windy, blustering night, early in the month of December, he was walking alone, at a late hour, those silent and dreary streets. The bustle of the city had died away; the vast throng of busy thousands, who, only a few hours previous, were crowding the thoroughfares, and rushing on—on—on, had now disappeared. Some of that mighty multitude had retired to splendid mansions, and were reposing softly amid luxuriance and magnificence; others had crept into dismal hovels, and were shivering over dying embers,—surrounded by want, disease, and death; and others still had sought those *dark retreats* where no ray of hope ever gleams, where virtue is a stranger, and where vice, in a thousand hideous forms, reigns supreme!

Eugene, that evening, had gone to the theatre, and having accompanied a friend home, after the performance, had spent the night so pleasantly that he little heeded the rapid flight of the hours. He was now hurrying to the St. Charles. The wind blew in fitful gusts down the streets, so that, at times, it was with difficulty he could stem the raging current. Near one of the

lamp-lights he paused to consult his watch, and, by chance, having cast his eyes upon the ground, espied something lying at his feet. He picked it up, and was surprised to find a *lady's slipper* in his possession. Little did he then think what a potent spell that small incident would exert over his future career! Without very close inspection, he placed it in his bosom, and strode forward to his room. But all the way thither his thoughts ran upon the slipper. How came it there? This question he frequently asked himself, and each time found himself no wiser than at first.

His servant, every moment expecting his arrival, had kept a comfortable fire glowing in the grate. Eugene called for his gown and easy-chair, and seating himself before the genial fire, proceeded, more through curiosity than otherwise, to examine the treasure he had found. He withdrew it from his bosom, and, turning it over and over again, gazed upon it as if it had been a gem from the ocean. It was wrought of satin, and was beautifully adorned with an Iris, embroidered upon the instep. It was so small, so delicate, he was sure that its owner was a beautiful and fairy-like creature, with bright, golden tresses, possessing a form sylph-like and transcendent in perfection, a voice soft and low,—like that far off melody which we sometimes hear in pleasant dreams; and eyes blue and sparkling, into whose mysterious depths one might lose his very soul. He was certain of it.

Then again he thought he was mistaken. "For," said he, musingly, "may-be it has, this very night, encased a foot which, years ago, strayed from the path of rectitude, and for long weary months of sorrow and

sin has pressed the pathway of shame and degradation." He passed an hour in such speculations, and, being wearied with the excitement of the day, and the incident and conjectures of the night, undressed himself and sought repose. After tossing awhile upon his couch, he slept. Many were the dreams Eugene Saunders had that night.

He dreamed of his boyhood's hours, and thought that he was again chasing the spotted fawn over the hills and through the valleys; of the beautiful flowers that used to grow upon the margin of the babbling stream; of his classmates, who were now far away, battling with the world; of his childhood's home, amid the grand old forest trees, and of its thousand sacred and hallowed associations. Then came the image of his dear departed parents—his mother, with her same quiet manner and serene countenance, and his father, with his goodness and benevolence. Another vision glided through his dreams.

He saw a virgin, clad in snowy garments, approaching him, while he was reclining, at twilight, in a beauteous glen, "fit for the faerie's feet." In her hand was a wicker-basket, which seemed to contain flowers. She came near, and beckoned him to follow, pointing away over the hills, and scattering, at the same time, the contents of the basket upon the ground. He attempted to follow, but found the earth so bestrewn with briars and thorns that he could proceed only with great difficulty; but he had not gone far when he saw the virgin tossing upon his pathway the most beautiful flowers, which filled the air with fragrance. Eugene awoke; but the vision haunted his waking hours. "Can this," said he, "be

prophetic of my future life? Will my pathway lie through difficulties and sorrows, and may I look beyond the gloom to days of joy and gladness, and to a haven of repose?" Aye! many fair fabrics have arisen in dreams, both by day and by night, which have melted away when breathed upon by the rude breath of adversity, or when touched by the billows of time!

This, like all such dreams, which haunt the pillows of the young and ardent, was soon forgotten amid other scenes. But not so was that little slipper! The more Eugene thought upon it the more deeply was he impressed. He had created for it a fair creature, and he fully believed she was everything a man could desire. What now had become of his stern philosophy? What strange beings we are, and what slight circumstances will sometimes warp our natures, and lead us on through the tangled brakes of life, as if under the influence of destiny! Eugene Saunders had courted and flirted with many a young lady, had come under the power of many softly beaming eyes, and yet he had escaped. But he was now fairly conquered, and that too by a little slipper, and the thoughts it had created. Perhaps the reason was that the image which that slipper awoke was above the standard which exists in nature.

We shall see.

## CHAPTER III.

That melancholy,  
 Though ending in distraction, should work  
 So far upon a man as to compel him  
 To court a thing that hath nor sense nor being,  
 Is unto me a miracle.

MASSINGER'S DUKE OF MILAN.

Home is the sphere of harmony and peace,  
 The spot where angels find a resting-place,  
 When, bearing blessings, they descend on earth.  
 MRS. HALE.

EUGENE grew weary of the city. He had tried, but alas! how vain the effort! to smother the thoughts that crowded his mind, and to check the feelings that were waging a terrible war against his peace and happiness. He had paced the streets, at midnight, with anxious step and fevered brow, when the city was wrapt in silence; he had joined the busy crowd, when day had brought its glare and glitter; he had mingled in the vain pomp and extravagance of fashionable life, where smiles often hide an aching heart and flattery lingers upon the honeyed lips of hypocrisy; and he had entered the dance, and, amid the smiles of beauty, the beaming of lovely eyes, and the dizzy whirl, tried to quell the storm that was raging within his own bosom. But the more he strove the deeper became the passion. He made inquiries concerning the owner of the little treasure which he had found; he even went so far as to

advertise; yet no fair being came forward to claim the property. He at length concluded to return to his quiet home, over whose door-sill, he flattered himself, not even a female image would dare to cross. Consequently, toward the last of December Eugene Saunders found himself seated beside his own bachelor fireside.

Eugene's plantation was situated some four miles from the great "father of waters," on Flower Lake, which is one of the most magnificent in the South-west. His dwelling was a neat, white cottage. The yard undulated to the brink of the lake, just leaving sufficient room for a gravel-walk on either side of the gate. The negro cabins were several hundred yards back, in the forest.

Eugene had fitted up his parlor with great elegance, and from its tidy appearance one might have supposed that it possessed a fair mistress, who daily superintended its arrangements. Into this room Eugene seldom went, unless to exhibit it to some of his bachelor friends. In the left wing of the cottage was his study, and within this quiet retreat he passed his hours, when not engaged in the sports of the season or in the affairs of his plantation. Here was his library, containing many choice volumes. From the wall was suspended his game-bag, his curiously wrought powder-flask and horn, while above them rested, in its rack, Sharp's rifle. From the window could be had a full view of the lake, stretching away two miles in width, and three in length. Eugene had but two attendants about his house—Uncle Ben, and Aunt Lucy. These old and faithful servants had watched over his wayward steps in infancy, and now were the sole guardians of his household interests. In the rear

of the building was the garden, which old Ben kept in a high state of cultivation.

About ten feet from the gateway was erected a good wharf, to which was moored his fishing and sailing boats. Even his dogs were well cared for, and were kept in neat kennels.

Eugene could not have found a more productive plantation, nor a more beautiful home, in the South. The forest was filled with game, from the skulking hare to the ferocious bear; and the lake abounded in a variety of the finest fish. It was just the home for such a nature as that of Eugene Saunders.

#### CHAPTER IV.

Expect not more from servants than is just;  
Reward them well, if they observe their trust,  
Nor with them cruelty or pride invade;  
Since God and nature them our brothers made.

DENHAM.

In the last chapter we left Eugene seated in his study. A brisk fire was roaring up the chimney; and Aunt Lucy was bustling about in a great hurry, preparing his supper, for Eugene had come upon the old woman rather unexpectedly, and, as he had arrived late from the river, she feared he was hungry.

"Well, 'pon my soul, Massa Eugene," said Lucy, as she rushed hither and thither, "I'se mighty glad to see you. I'se bin lookin' for you ebbery nite for I don't

know how long, and here you done come and cotch me 'dout anyting for you to eat."

"Never mind that, Aunt Lucy," said Eugene. I am so pleased to see you looking so well that I can afford to wait on you awhile for my supper. Have you been quite well since I saw you?"

"Mighty well, massa, cept a slight tech of the rhu-matics in my hip. But it didn't last long. Massa, I 'gin to think you done run clean away, and forgot all 'bout your old niggers."

"No, Lucy, I have often thought of you, and no matter how long I might stay away from home I would never forget you."

"Now, Massa Eugene, what make you talk dat foolishness, makin' dis ole nigger cry so for nothin'. I know, my young massa, you could not forget ole Lucy—'case I'se always been a faithful servant; and although my skin is black, yet my heart is *white*, and I loves young massa like my own chile."

"I know you do, Aunt Lucy; and now, as you have prepared me something to eat, I will try to do justice to your supper."

After supper all the servants came from the "Quarter" to inquire after young massa's health, and to receive the presents which Eugene never failed to bring them, when he was long absent from home. These little kindnesses had won for him the love of all his slaves, and each vied with the other in trying to please their young master. On his plantation was happiness and contentment. All his slaves were bountifully fed, comfortably clad, and well treated. Frequently, after the labor of the day was finished, would they assemble

by torch-light, old and young, and, with no cares to press upon their hearts, dance joyfully to the merry music of the rude banjo.

On such occasions all mingled in the evening's amusement. Their hearty laughs rang out so clear and loud, that even the distant hills echoed back their glee. Each one exerted himself to the utmost in the dance; and as their dusky forms moved rapidly to and fro in the flickering light the scene was truly picturesque. Jest succeeded jest, and song followed song, until first one and then another sought repose, leaving the enthusiastic musician still striking away vigorously on the familiar song,—

"Fool my massa seven years,  
And overseer too.

*Tank-a-lank, tink-a-link,  
Tank-a-doodle-doo."*

Here was to be seen none of that misery and wretchedness, that cruel treatment and inhuman conduct, that *modern fanatics* represent as existing on almost every Southern plantation. The Southern farmer has been insulted and outraged by the foulest and blackest slanders that could be fabricated by the meanest malignity. These slanders have been hurled from the sacred desk in language that shames the lowest blackguardism; have been clad in all the gorgeous drapery of romance; and have been circulated by orators and statesmen. We do not deny that some mistreat and abuse their slaves; nor do we hesitate to assert that such conduct is always scorned—even loathed, by the truly noble-hearted and chivalrous Southern planter.

But we deem it the basest injustice against a brave, generous, and magnanimous people,—who never yet turned a deaf ear to the cry of distress or the pleadings of misfortune, who are ever foremost, when the shrill clarion calls to arms, and who are ever found amid the rattle of musketry and the roar of cannon, where the tide of battle rages the fiercest. That a few isolated cases should be selected, and those greatly exaggerated, to prove that the Southern planter is a tyrant, a despot, a social pest, a moral incubus, and a devil incarnate; and that too by individuals whose only aim is self-aggrandizement, and whose loftiest aspiration is centered in corrupt sordedness!

After the servants received their tokens of remembrance they returned quietly to their cabins. But Eugene was not alone, for Uncle Ben remained behind, and drew his stool into the adjacent corner to have a social conversation with his young master. Eugene understood the old man's nature, and humored his whims. But Uncle Ben manifested something of uneasiness in Eugene's presence, and did not seem to enter into the enjoyment, which all exhibited on this occasion. But this really was not the case. Uncle Ben was pleased to see Eugene; but having been familiar with him from infancy, he immediately noted the paleness of his young master's cheek so soon as he beheld him, and had said to his wife, Lucy—"Someting matter wid Massa Eugene."

Eugene soon discovered his servant's backwardness, and said to him,—“Why, Uncle Ben, you do not seem glad to see me. What is the matter with you? Has anything serious happened?”



"Law, massa, how you say dat when I'se been dreamin' 'bout you eber so many nights, since you been away? I 'gin to think you was never gwine to come back agin. It grieves dis old nigger's heart to see young massa so pale. I knows someting been troublin' you. You can't hide it from me. I'se watched over you too long for dat, massa. Have you been sick?"

This question was asked with so much earnestness and anxiety, that Eugene saw at once that the old negro's shyness had arisen from his care of himself, and wishing to learn all that had happened during his absence, determined to settle that matter.

"No," said he, "I have not been sick, Uncle Ben. I have been exposing myself, too much, in going to theatres, parties, and in indulging in many irregularities. These things have paled my cheeks. But under Aunt Lucy's kind treatment I will soon be as strong and vigorous as ever. So now come, tell me all that has transpired in my absence."

Uncle Ben began to brighten up so soon as Eugene made this explanation; and when he made mention of Lucy, the old man changed his solemn visage into a broad grin.

"Well, 'fore God, massa, dis ole fool thought you was mighty bad off, somehow or nudder. Mighty glad 'taint so. I'se got heap to tell you—more than I can norate to nite."

"How does my horse, Hercules, come on, Uncle Ben? Have you attended to him well?"

"Phew! Herc'les is fat and slick, massa. I have rub him down ebbery day since you been gone, and he's got so devlish, don't 'spect massa ken ride him."

"Why, what will he do?" asked Eugene.

"Kick and bite. Now what you tink he done to me tother day? I was stoopin' down curryin' his hind legs, when de rascal cotch me by de seat ob of my breeches, and dis nigger thought his *end* was nigh at hand."

"How did you manage to escape unhurt, Ben?"

"He shuck me some, and den turned me loose. He done no harm 'cept to make Lucy put powerful big patch on my breeches."

"Has any person called to see me?" asked Eugene.

"Bless your soul, massa, yes!"

"Who?" asked Eugene.

"A gemman and lady—a mighty sweet lady, and good, too."

"What! a lady and gentleman! You are surely joking, old man."

"Fack, Massa Eugene; and although you told me and Lucy not to let anybody come into de house, yet we could not help it—the young lady was pleasant, talked so lovely, and asked Lucy so many question 'bout ebbery ting, dat we could'nt refuse de house."

"Come, Ben, tell me all about the young lady—how she came—who came with her—and what brought her here?"

"She come 'long wid her step-fadder, who wanted to buy Mr. ——'s land. Dey got loss comin' from de landin' through de marshes, and you know, massa, you tole me and my ole 'oman never to turn anybody dat was loss from your door. I knowd dat if we had drov dat nice young lady out into de swamp 'mong de bars you'd a cussed dese niggers."



"That I would, Uncle Ben. You did exactly right. But did they stay all night?"

"To be certainly dey did; and de young lady asked Lucy lots ob questions 'bout young massa, while I was convershun wid de genl'man. She wanted to know how old you was, and if you desired a wife. You know, massa, how young gals talk when dar aint no man 'bout."

"I hope, Ben, Aunt Lucy spoke a good word for me to the young lady, and treated her very kindly?"

"Yes, massa, dat she did; and let her sleep in your curtain bed."

"The devil she did!"

"Ain't no harm in dat, is dar?"

"No, none in the world, Ben."

"Lucy mighty proud dat nite. She talk heap to young miss 'bout you."

"Well, Ben, I am glad Aunt Lucy treated the young lady politely; but come, tell me something about the gentleman, if you can draw your attention from the girl. What kind of a man was he?"

"I don't like to talk 'bout dat man, massa."

"Why not, Ben? Did he insult you?"

"No, massa, he b'have hisself berry well; but he too proud and pompous for dis nigger."

"Did you hear them say where they were from, and where bound?"

"Yes, massa, I heard de young lady she was from Orleans; and listened to her reading in de paper, which she took out ob her pocket, 'bout somebody findin' her shoe."

"What is that you say?"

Eugene started as if a bolt from the heavens had

descended upon him, and manifested such curiosity and excitement, on hearing this news, that Uncle Ben was frightened almost out of his senses. But wishing to hear more, Eugene addressed the old man calmly, and inquired further into the matter; for he remembered having advertised the slipper in the Delta, as the means not only of restoring the property, but also of seeing the owner of his treasure.

"I hope I have not frightened you, Uncle Ben; but the truth is, I have become so nervous of late, and what you have been telling is so strange, that you must not be surprised at my actions."

"Dis nigger gwine to hush his mouf, if talkin' 'bout dat nice gal is to be de means of throwin' young massa into connipshuns."

"Stop, for God's sake, and tell me all she said about the slipper."

"Why, massa, when she read dat in de paper, she laffed a good hearty laff, and said 'twas strange ting for anybody to be printin' 'bout a little shoe she lost gwine from de show one nite."

Eugene was now satisfied that the owner of that slipper, upon which he had devoted so many of his thoughts, had been in his own house. He soon found an opportunity for dismissing his faithful servant, after having learned from him that she was on her way to the North. Long did Eugene sit and muse over what he had heard from Uncle Ben. While he had been trying to forget the image that was haunting his dreams, the dear creature herself had been flitting through his own home! While he was pursuing a faint and glimmering shadow, the real object had passed within his own portals, and had pressed his own couch! In this there was some-

thing strange and mysterious, which he could not solve. He was not a believer in Destiny, yet he felt that a secret influence was urging him on, and that his future peace depended upon these incidents. At times it seemed that he was in pursuit of a shadow that might, perchance, lead him far from the pathway of duty, involve him in dangers, and, at least, prove a curse, rather than a blessing. Then he would soothe his feelings by asking himself if all the prominent actions of life were not, more or less, visionary. "Is not this fact clearly exhibited," he would ask himself, "on every page of the world's history? Did not Alexander follow a mere shadow, when he sought to conquer the world? Did not Bonaparte pursue a mere phantom when he attempted to revolutionize Europe? Do not all those who strive after wealth, power, and fame, waste their lives in the pursuit of shadows as fleeting as those that sweep the landscape on a summer's day? Am I not then justifiable in seeking after that—call it what you may—which seems so indissolubly connected with my future peace and happiness? Men may laugh at me, and may even call me mad; but I care not; my mind is made up, and I will pursue this phantom, which has bound my thoughts with an iron band."

These, and many such as these, were the thoughts that filled the mind of Eugene Saunders, as he sat alone in his cottage home by the flickering fire of his hearthstone. At the conclusion of the above soliloquy he arose from his seat and paced the room several times in a hurried manner. Finally he approached his writing-table, and addressed a short letter to an old friend and college chum, who resided in New York. What that letter contained it does not now behoove us to declare.

## CHAPTER V.

Oh how these leaden-footed, limping minutes  
Lag and creep beneath my lashing wish;  
When fiery expectation mounts the time—  
Time is a spiritless and jaded steed,  
That staggers 'neath his rider.

DAMON AND PYTHIAS.

The sails were filled, and fair the light wind blew,  
As glad to waft him from his native home;  
And fast the white rocks faded from his view,  
And soon were lost in circumambient foam:  
And then, it may be, of his wish to roam  
Repented he; but in his bosom slept  
*The silent thought*, nor from his lips did come  
One word of wail, while others sate and wept,  
And to the reckless gales unmanly moaning kept.

BYRON'S CHILDE HAROLD.

TIME hangs heavily upon the minds of those who look forward with anxiety to the accomplishment of a desired end. It matters not how trivial the object may be, still the feeling is the same, only in a less intense degree. This feeling of suspense we all have experienced at some period of our lives. It prompts the soldier to desire the hour to arrive when he shall listen to the cannon's loud roar, and mingle in the fierce strife for victory or death. It causes the sailor to hail with satisfaction the first low wail of the dreadful storm that has been for hours lurking on the horizon, and may, perhaps, wreck his gallant vessel.

"Uncertainty!

Fell demon of our fears! The human soul  
That can support despair, supports not thee."

Thus it was with Eugene Saunders. Three weeks elapsed from the time he wrote to his friend in New York, and for several days he had been anxiously expecting an answer. But still no letter came. Uncle Ben had been sent every day to the post-office, and every day Eugene Saunders had been disappointed. During those three weeks Eugene was as restless as the waves of the ocean. He could not rest satisfied in one place—he must be in motion. His favorite authors could no longer delight him, and he threw them aside in disgust. He sought comfort from his musical instruments, but they failed to soothe his anxious thoughts. He sometimes attempted to reason with himself upon the folly of thus giving way to a passion that affected him so seriously, and might injure him in the eyes of the world. But with every argument stronger grew his determination to find, if possible, the owner of that little slipper.

He strolled forth into the deepest depths of the forests. He spread the sails of his beautiful "Faery Queen," and, without once applying the rudder, let it drift whithersoever the zephyrs chose to waft it. He walked his room at night, for hours, singing snatches from old songs that he had learned in youth, and frequently kept his room for a day at a time.

These altered actions did not fail to awaken the fears of Uncle Ben and Aunt Lucy. They even feared that Eugene was mad—not that he was ill-natured and crabbed to them, but because his conduct was so strange, and differed so much from what it was previous to his ab-

sence. Ponto—Eugene's favorite Russian setter—was unnoticed. It is true he still occupied his usual corner by the fireside, but no fond caresses were now lavished upon him. It is true he still followed his master on his wanderings into the silent woods, with many a kind look and loving whine, but the most he received in return for those expressions of an abiding friendship was a gentle pat, occasionally, upon his head, and the words "Poor Ponto—poor Ponto."

Thus the hours passed away. Eugene had sent Uncle Ben to the post-office after dinner, and had determined to while away the time until his return by sailing upon the lake. The evening was bright and balmy. The sun shone beautifully, and the surface of the lake was broken into a myriad of tiny waves by the wind, and sparkled brightly in the sunbeams. As usual, he submitted his vessel to the elements, and, in a short time, it was dancing gracefully over the little billows toward the southern shore. Eugene little heeded the rapidity with which his vessel skimmed the waves. Aye, thought he, life is like these waves; for see how they pursue each other, until they exhaust their power upon the distant shore!

"For men are like the waves that roll along the mighty deep,  
That lift their heads awhile and frown, and then are lulled to sleep;  
While other billows swelling come, amid the foam and spray,  
And as we view the furrowing track sink down—and where are they?  
And ever thus the waves shall roll, like those but now gone past,  
The offspring of the depths beneath, the children of the last;  
And ever thus shall men arise, and be like those that be,  
And a man no more be missed on land, than a man is missed on sea."

Eugene spent several hours in visiting different por-

tions of the lake, and finally shifted his sails, and returned to the wharf just as the sun was sinking to his rest, tinging and fringing the western clouds with gorgeous colors.

Uncle Ben had returned from the post-office, and deposited in Eugene's hands the long-expected answer. With anxiety manifested upon his countenance he tore the seal and devoured its contents. He read it over and over again, and, as he turned into his cottage, said,—  
 "It is even so; again has the shadow flitted before me, and lies along my pathway. I will pursue it, at least as far as New York, and, if I do not find the substance, I will drown disappointment amid the pomp and splendor of the Old World. Why should I not? I have nobody but these two old servants to care for me, and my wealth is sufficient for such a course."

Eugene was one of those determined men who, when once resolved to perform an act, nothing could turn him from his resolution. So soon as supper was over he startled Uncle Ben and Aunt Lucy by ordering them to prepare his clothes, that he might leave early the next morning. He was not in the habit of informing his domestics where he was going, or how long he would be absent, yet he constantly kept his overseer advised, by letters, as to his movements.

Having sent for his overseer, he laid before him his plans,—informed him how he wished him to treat his negroes in his absence, what disposition to make of his different crops, and many other things of importance. Next morning Eugene departed at an early hour for the river, and was not disappointed in finding a vessel bound for Memphis. He engaged his passage, and was soon gliding up the great Father of Waters.

## CHAPTER VI.

Italia! O Italia! thou who hast  
 The fatal gift of beauty, which became  
 A funeral dower of present, woes and past,  
 On thy sweet brow is sorrow ploughed by shame,  
 And annals graved in characters of flame.  
 Oh God! that thou wert in thy nakedness  
 Less lovely or more powerful, and couldst claim  
 Thy right, and awe the robbers back who press  
 To shed thy blood, and drink the tears of thy distress.

CHILDE HAROLD.

SEVERAL months have passed away. During this time Eugene Saunders saw much of the world. He had paused amid the smoke and fog of the great English metropolis; had lingered amid the gayeties and brilliancies of Paris; had sailed upon the blue waters of the Mediterranean, and had stood awe-stricken amid the pomp and glory of mighty Rome. He had cooled his temples in the waters of the "far-famed fountain of Egeria;" and had strolled, at soft even-tide, through the olive-groves that crown the hills above the Temple of Bacchus. He had walked the streets of Rome when the city was locked in slumber, communicating with the master spirits of bygone days. The very name of Italy possessed a charm for him. He acknowledged an influence, sacred and holy, in her translucent atmosphere, in her flowery landscapes, in her beautiful vineyards, and in her serene blue sky. He felt a binding spell in every ruined arch, in every broken column, in every

colossal statue, in every fallen temple, and in every sparkling fountain. He did not look upon Italy as a land filled with a lazy and indolent set of *maccaroni-eaters*, trampled in the dust by the iron heel of Papal power; but he viewed it through the vista of ages, and, in imagination, saw it towering in beauty and perfection, and in glory and grandeur, under the sway of the Cæsars. He loved it because it had been the abode of orators, statesmen, philosophers, warriors, and poets. Here were spots immortalized by the transcendent genius of Virgil and of Horace; and here were porticoes, temples, and palaces, through which had echoed the eloquence of a Cicero. To him a halo of undying glory seemed to linger over those scenes. Through those lovely vineyards once strayed the Roman maiden; beneath those shades gathered her philosophers; and through those groves strolled her poets.

Since his arrival in Italy Eugene Saunders had greatly improved in spirits; and though he wore that little slipper about his person as a talisman, yet his philosophy, returning with his better health, was beginning to cool the glow of sentiment which first thrilled his soul. He would sometimes wonder how it was that such a slight incident could have wrought such an influence over his mind. Eugene was now in Florence, that beautiful and gay city, which Bayard Taylor terms the gem of Italy. He was so much delighted with the splendid statuary and paintings which adorned the Tribune, and the number of his countrymen whom he met there, that he resolved to spend some time in Florence. Moreover, he had formed the acquaintance of a young American artist, and, finding in him a congenial spirit,

determined to spend some time with his friend. This young man's name was Frank Morton. He was two years younger than Eugene. Possessing an amiable and gentle disposition, and being a man of high culture, he had not only won the esteem and respect of Eugene Saunders, but also of those whom he came near. He was an enthusiast in his profession, but manifested none of those eccentricities, and that spirit of melancholy which belongs more or less to enthusiasm.

Frank Morton and Eugene Saunders were seldom apart. Often, at night, when the moon rode high, in her blushing beauty, fringing the white clouds with a silvery lining, softening the landscape into loveliness, and touching the domes, minarets, and palaces with her smiles, until they were all a-glow with a mild splendor, would they walk forth, arm-in-arm, to enjoy the balmy zephyr, to admire the dreamy landscape, or to talk of their native land, lying afar o'er the deep blue sea, with its gigantic rivers flowing through beauteous vales; with its fountains, sparkling and bright, murmuring softly through orange-groves; with its birds of every hue and color, pouring forth their richest melody in the grand old forests; with its hills and mountains towering grandly up, amid scenes of peace, prosperity, and love; and with its majestic institutions, which have cast their shadows over the whole world, and have named it, truly, "The land of the *free* and the home of the brave."

It was just such a night as we have attempted feebly to describe, that Eugene and Frank strolled slowly toward the beautiful Arno, that flows like a silvery thread through orange-groves. At one time they would pause to admire some noble structure, suffused with a radiant

flood of moon-beams; at another, to listen to the echo of their own foot-falls, dying gently amid graceful columns and splendid porticoes; and at another, to catch more distinctly the "melting murmurs" as they floated away from the fairy-like fingers of some dark-eyed Italian maiden,—filling the air with music divinely sweet! The night, the music, the starry firmament, the moon, the city,—and all, too, beneath those soft Italian skies,—made it seem like an enchanted land.

This beautiful balmy evening had induced many a fair Italian lady to walk forth to enjoy the moonlight scene. Hence Eugene and Frank frequently passed many a handsome maiden, in her walk toward the Arno. Ever and anon they would pause before some lovely statue, to admire its beauty and perfection. Thus they moved slowly along, conversing gayly upon whatever entered their minds. They had not proceeded far when they met a man clad in the robe of the holy church. He was a tall, pale-faced, handsome Italian. Frank Morton, giving the way, saluted him thus:—

"Beautiful evening, Father Bernardo!"

"Most lovely," he replied; "and almost sufficient to influence even a member of the holy order to forsake his vows and join the company of the gay crowd who nightly promenade this lovely city."

During these remarks Eugene had moved several steps on the way. Frank soon came up, and the conversation naturally turned upon the priest. Eugene said to Frank,—

"You seem to know this priest well."

"I have met him frequently. He is a man of profound learning, speaks several languages fluently, and

is, in fact, a second Mezzofanti. But, withal, he is a man of dark intrigues and violent temper. He is desperately in love with the Countess Simonetta Pitti, who is said to look upon his addresses, though paid in secret, with disgust. She is as beautiful as the dream of poets, and descended from that wealthy citizen who erected yonder splendid Palazzo Pitti, which you see before us, gilded by the moon-beams. She is the most fascinating creature living, sings like a seraph, and is possessed of great wealth. She is the belle of Florence, and many are the suitors that crowd around her, some worshiping at the shrine of beauty, others at the shrine of mammon. Would you like to make her acquaintance? if so, you can have that pleasure to-morrow evening, inasmuch as there will be a grand banquet at the Palazzo Vecchio. I am proud to say that the beautiful Countess owns me as a friend, and it will afford me a gratification to introduce you; but, Eugene, you must guard your heart, or you will have no further use for that maiden's slipper, which you told me about last night."

"By Jove!" answered Eugene, "I'll take you up; and I will do my prettiest to make that fellow Bernardo, whom we just now passed, forget to count his beads and to perform his accustomed ablutions in holy water."

Thus the two friends walked on, passing the time in pleasant conversation, until they arrived at a point where the lovely Arno glided into view, like a glittering mass of burnished silver. Oh, it was a beautiful sight! In the distance the Apennines lifted their purple summits toward the sky; and nearer, in the perspective, was an amphitheatre of gently rising hills; while before them flowed the Arno, bathed in a flood of silvery rays.

For a moment these two young men stood as if chained to the spot.

\* \* \* \* \*

Several hours passed away, and Eugene and Frank were reminded of the lateness of the hour from the deep-toned bell of a neighboring convent, tolling out the solemn hour of twelve. They hastened back to their rooms, and were soon locked in slumbers sweet.

## CHAPTER VII.

Here, the way leads o'er tessellated floors  
Or mats of Cairo, through long corridors,  
Where, ranged in cassolets and silver urns  
Sweet wood of aloe or of sandal burns;  
And here, at once, the glittering saloon  
Bursts on his sight, boundless and bright as noon,  
Where, in the midst, reflecting back the rays  
In broken rainbows, a fresh fountain plays  
High as the enamelled cupola, which towers  
All rich with arabesques of gold and flowers;  
And the mosaic floor beneath shines through  
The sprinkling of that fountain's silvery dew,  
Like the wet, glistening shells, of every dye,  
That on the margin of the Red Sea lie.

MOORE.

ACCORDING to appointment, the following night, Eugene Saunders entered the magnificent Palazzo Vecchio. On being ushered into the palace he was almost blinded by the brilliancy of glittering lamps, the blaze of dazzling diamonds, and the splendor of jewels, flashing from the arms and bosoms of many maidens. Huge chandeliers, suspended by golden chains, poured forth floods of light, illuminating every nook and corner of this gorgeous building; and investing the whole scene with a magnificence unparalleled in the glorious days of the Augustan age.

Here was a fair maiden, surrounded by a number of enraptured youths, charming them by song, accompanied with a rich-toned guitar. Thus was the company



broken into little groups, some loitering in the full blaze of the lamps; others, pausing before some splendid statue, to admire its perfections; and others promenading through the long corridors, enjoying the balminess of the evening air, and listening to the musical splashing of fountains, that cast their sparkling waters into the beautiful moonlight.

Frank Morton was already there, and, beholding Eugene, hastened to greet him.

"Well, Eugene," said he, "it is all right. I have seen the Countess, and she is anxious to form your acquaintance. She has had a glimpse of you while on some of your strolls beside the Arno, and is quite anxious to ascertain if so nice looking a young man will bear closer inspection. Therefore you may prepare all your eloquence for this occasion."

With this Frank hurried him through the crowd to a distant portion of the palace. Eugene had no time to answer. It was with no little excitement that he approached this beautiful Italian.

She was gracefully reclining against a marble column, where the light fell with a softened splendor, and was engaged in conversation with an acquaintance. Eugene thought he had never before beheld so much beauty, so much grace, and so much womanly perfection. Her black glossy hair was interwreathed with sparkling brilliants, and gems of great costliness; her brow was full and broad; her cheeks were tinged with the "pale pearly pink of sea-shells," and her dark lustrous eyes made Simonetta Pitti a charming creature.

After the usual courtesies of introduction, Simonetta addressed Eugene in her rich, musical language.

"Signore, you have not long been a resident of Florence?"

"Only a few weeks," replied Eugene; "but even in this short time I have become so much attached to your soft Italian skies, your sparkling fountains, your vine-clad hills, and your beautiful landscapes, that I have not raised the courage to break the spell that binds me."

"I am happy to hear that you are so much pleased with Florence. Our city offers much to the stranger. Here lie the trophies of departed greatness and grandeur. In our halls hang the paintings of master spirits; in our groves are statues which have become the admiration of the world; and our palaces, in the beauty and magnificence of architecture, are unsurpassed."

They spoke of Petrarca, Dante, and Brocciolini; of the Venus di Medici, and the works of Titian. Eugene was never more eloquent in his life. How could he be otherwise with those dark expressive eyes bent in kindness upon him, and with that rounded form inclined toward him that she might catch every accent that fell from his lip.

From her palace she had several times seen Eugene walking on the river's bank, and his graceful mien had already interested her. A nearer acquaintance did not diminish, but, on the contrary, had rather increased that interest.

Eugene offered Simonetta his arm for a promenade, and led her through the crowd into the gardens. The moon was shining brightly upon the scene, and many a couple were already taking advantage of the pleasant breeze, the beautiful moonlight, and the lovely citron-



groves, to whisper forth their souls' deepest adoration and love. By taking a graveled walk that led to a fountain at the extremity of the garden, Eugene avoided the gay company of promenaders. He knew too much of the nature of woman to fail to make himself agreeable. According to the customs of his own country, he complimented her, with great delicacy, upon her beauty, her intelligence, and her grace; and had received, in return, first an almost imperceptible pressure upon the arm, and then a gentle sigh, that tells too often what the heart would keep forever hid in its darkest depths.

Like all young unmarried people of opposite sex, they soon introduced the subject—love. Eugene described for her that golden chain which holds in thralldom so many victims, as being

“Formed of three chords, in mystic union twined;  
The first by beauty's rosy fingers wove,  
The next by pity, and the third by love.”

At length, being wearied, they sought a summer-house, and, seating themselves upon a rough bench, continued a conversation which to both parties was very agreeable.

Simonetta's long absence had created no little sensation within the palace. The whisper had, time and again, echoed through the crowd—“Where is the Countess of Pitti?” Many a lover was burning with anxiety to claim her fair hand in the dance, or to breathe his wooings into her ear.

The maidens thought it strange that one so proud, so gay, and so haughty, should tamely yield herself to

the sway of a foreigner, while some of the matrons shook their wise heads, as if to insinuate that it was not altogether proper and chaste for a young girl to remain in the night air with a young man, under the influence of the full moon. Still the mirth arose, the music floated through the long passages and corridors, and on went the merry dance.

Let us now return to Eugene and his fair partner. They had not long been seated thus when they heard a step approaching, and, turning, beheld a form clad in the cowl and robe of the church, drawing near them. The form, so disguised that his features could not be discerned, paused opposite the fair girl, and, in a voice hoarse with emotion, thus addressed her:—

“A pleasant night, my daughter! You seem to enjoy the soft moonlight and the balmy air. Doubtless you have found a confessor to whom you can unburden your soul more freely than to a father of the Holy Church of Rome. Remember, that Rome has many eyes and many ears—*lest you have cause to repent when it is too late.*”

As quick as lightning Eugene leaped to his feet, and, confronting the priest, with a livid cheek and flashing eye, said:—

“What do you mean, sir, by thus unceremoniously intruding yourself upon us, and casting your foul and ungentlemanly insinuations against me? Know you, sir, that I am from a land where every man is a king, and I demand, yea, I will have an explanation, else the whole of Rome cannot save you from what you deserve.”

“Ha! ha! ha!” laughed the priest, seemingly un-

moved; but his cowering form exhibited evident signs of fear.

"Answer me, you croaking craven, or, by heaven, I'll tear that mask from your face and write my vengeance on your brow. How dare you insult a man, and pour your vile cantings into the ear of a maiden in that man's presence? Answer—answer, I say."

"Young man, *beware*. Your temper is rash and may lead you into error——"

"Hush! thou prating fool,—give me no lecture from your Romish faith. Go talk to those whom you, and such as you, have ground into poverty, woe, and ignorance; go cant to those whose pathway to hell you have strewn with flowers."

Bernardo, the priest, had taken a step back, and had secretly drawn a dagger, which, glancing in the moonlight, Eugene detected, and as quick as thought drew from his bosom a repeater, and placed its muzzle against the breast of the enraged Italian.

"Move," said Eugene, "but your little finger, and the Church of Rome will have one scoundrel less, and hell another victim. You have, cowardlike, taken advantage of your garb to insult not only me, but this maiden; and stir but an inch, and you try the truth of those doctrines which wrong your fellow man and insult high Heaven."

Bernardo, though a fierce man and violent, yet he was unused to such boldness, both of language and manner, and he read in the eye and cheek of his adversary a firm determination to execute every threat which he had made. Moreover, he felt that Eugene was his

match, and that cold muzzle resting against his bosom was anything but pleasant. What would have been the result of this situation between the belligerent parties cannot now be known.

With a faint scream Simonetta swooned and fell to the earth from fear. In an instant these two men, who had stood face to face as deadly enemies, rushed to her relief. Eugene chafed her temples, while Bernardo, being familiar with the grounds, flew like an arrow to the fountain for water. In a short time Simonetta slowly recovered. When Bernardo saw signs of returning consciousness, he took advantage of Eugene's joy, and departing, was soon lost from view in the orange grove. The Countess soon recovered sufficient strength, and Eugene led her back to the brilliant throng. As they were slowly retracing their steps, Simonetta said to him,—

"Oh! how could you talk so harshly to Father Bernardo? If you knew his fierce temper and his power, you would not have ventured so far. I tremble for your safety."

"Have no fears for me, my fair maiden; but take warning from a stranger—*guard yourself*. Deeper motives direct the actions of this priest than religious principles, and, pardon me, when I tell you the holy father loves the fair Countess of Pitti."

"Oh! signore," said the Countess, "you can never imagine what——"

She trembled like an aspen and ceased, as if what she was about to utter was sacrilegious. By this time they had reached the court, and Eugene led the Countess to a seat. As he was taking his leave she asked him, in

a low whisper, if he would not call to see her at her palace. He did not hesitate to promise, and in a few moments was lost in the gay crowd. He soon found his friend Frank, and narrated to him all that had happened in the garden. Many were the glances that were cast toward the Countess of Pitti on her return, and her troubled looks and the palor of her cheeks did not fail to excite the curiosity of those who either loved or envied her.

The night was growing late, and one by one the crowd departed to their homes, to dream over the intrigues and disappointments of the evening. Simonetta, having summoned her attendants, was among the first to take her leave.

The lamps which a few hours ago lit the palace with an indescribable radiance, now burned dim—flickered wildly—and expired, leaving the Palazzo Vecchio to the darkness and silence of the solemn night.

## CHAPTER VIII.

Thus lived—thus died she; never more on her  
Shall sorrow light, or shame. She was not made  
Through years or moons the inner weight to bear  
Which colder hearts endure till they are laid  
By age in earth. BYRON.

Heaven opens on my eyes! my ears  
With sounds seraphic ring:  
Lend, lend your wings! I mount! I fly!  
O grave! where is thy victory?  
O death! where is thy sting? POPE.

It now behooves us, kind reader, to introduce to your acquaintance other characters, who are destined to act no unimportant parts in the following pages. Col. James Lanier was a man of five-and-fifty years, but his course in life gave him the appearance of greater age. He inherited great wealth, and in his early manhood rushed from one vice to another, until he had at length plunged into the darkest depths of dissipation.

His father died when he was quite a youth, and, like most young men of wealth, he soon gained the ascendancy over a kind-hearted and indulgent mother, and without one check upon his rash and impetuous nature, he was not long in forming habits which, by degrees, lead one into vices from which there is no escape.

Among his vicious habits may be mentioned, as most prominent, his indomitable desire for the card-table. With a wounded and bleeding heart his fond mother saw her darling son, the hope of her declining years,

sinking down—down—down beneath the potent and malignant influence of this vice. But death came, and removed her hence, ere she knew to what a fearful extent her son had gone. Oh! who can enumerate the awful, fatal consequences of this passion? How many a frail, gentle creature, has listened, in the agony of dark despair, to the bitter cryings of her helpless little children, deprived of their sustenance by this accursed love of the gaming table! How many a noble youth, whose morning of life bid fair to bring a glorious noon, with its beauty and brilliancy, has changed that noon into a gloomy midnight of woe and sorrow and death, and has transformed the evening of his existence into a black, unmitigated hell! When once within the magic influence of the card-table, there is no remedy, no relief, for it entwines about its victim a chain of adamant which nothing but death can unbind, and throws over him a spell which leads to an eternal doom. Like the serpent of a southern clime, it encircles its victim with its spiral folds, and though he sees the scarlet mouth, the fiery, forked tongue, and feels its cold, cold breath upon his cheek, yet is he held a willing captive by those glittering folds and glaring eyes. It beckons its votary on a pathway which leads, through beauteous visions of love, wealth, and happiness, down to the river of death; but alas! beyond the surging and dismal waters there gleams no ray of light; and the dreadful hereafter is arched by no beautiful bow of promise, spanning its murky depths; and with unavailing shrieks and prayers the poor deluded wretch is engulfed in the hissing waves of ruin and despair! It blackens with a midnight gloom the present, while it gilds with golden gleams the

future. Afar off he beholds the Goddess of Fortune, with unbounded wealth flowing from her horn of plenty, but on approaching he finds that fortune has fled, and in her stead gaunt famine, poverty, and death, meet him; and each, in turn, mock him with jeers and demoniac laughter. This vice kindles the eye with an unnatural fire, and withers the soul with an unholy flame. With icy fingers it traces care upon the brow, palor upon the cheek, and sorrow upon the heart. It bends the form, ruins the affections, and blights the mind. Ever fitting—never present—it enchants but to destroy, and destroys without a hope in God.

With pleasing manners, and a naturally quick though uncultivated mind, James Lanier was enabled to maintain a respectable position in fashionable society. He fell in love with a young widow, Aurelia White, and, the feeling being mutual, Mrs. White soon became Mrs. Lanier. Aurelia's first husband was a kind-hearted, clever man, and though she lived with him but a short twelve months, yet she cherished him in her memory as a treasure, and often wept over his demise.

The pledge of that short union was a beautiful, bright-eyed little girl. Few children, indeed, possessed a more lovely disposition than Lily White. Mrs. White brought no splendid fortune to her new spouse; but what is of still greater importance, she conferred upon him a love pure and refined, and a heart that could sympathize with him in the darkness of affliction, and rejoice with him in the sunny hours of success. It requires a profounder philosophy than we are master of to analyze the reasons that influence individuals of such opposite tastes, feelings, sympathies, and dispo-

sitions, to unite their destinies in the holy bonds of matrimony. But such is the fact. Never did two persons differ more widely than James Lanier and Aurelia White. With him association had polished his manners, but had left his heart uncultivated. She was one of those soft, gentle creatures, whose eyes beamed with kindness, and whose soul was filled with compassion. He was fiery and impetuous, and when once there arose a prejudice in his mind, no argument, no reason, no kindness could blot it from his bosom. With all his vices clinging about him, James Lanier respected public opinion, and like many other young men, for awhile succeeded in concealing his fondness for gaming. Many of his friends hoped that his union with Aurelia would check his onward career. To a certain extent it produced a wholesome influence over him. After marriage, Aurelia was not long in discovering his character, and through gentleness and kind persuasions she influenced him to sunder his associations by moving from Mississippi to Texas. Their home was most beautiful. Away—away extended the broad prairies, which, when breathed upon by the zephyrs, were like the ocean. In the spring-time they were one mighty expanse of flower and perfume.

\* \* \* \* \*

In a year James Lanier found himself, one beautiful morning in early spring, a—father. A sunbeam had fallen athwart his pathway, a bright wing had flitted through his home, and a little angel—"of such is the kingdom of heaven"—was given unto them. Oh! there is an indescribable joy, mingled with a vague fear, when the announcement is for the first time made that you are

a father. *Father!*—*Mother!*—these are sacred and holy names, and, amid all the fierce and fiery storms of passions, the rage and fury of the great battle of life, they fall upon the ear, soothing and consoling and cheering us amid the roar of tempests and the wreck of hopes! James Lanier hoped for a boy, but God in his wisdom gave him a girl. Lily's soul overflowed with delight at having a little sister. She would sometimes almost smother the little innocent with caresses, and for days talked of nothing else. Her toys and dolls were all for the baby, and nothing that she possessed was too good or too fine for her infant sister. Lily seemed a new child. She was never happier than when she could play with its little red feet, and sing to it some childish song. She would weary her mother with many questions. "When did little sister come? who brought her? and how?" And when informed that a kind-hearted old lady had found her in a hollow tree in the great forest, her eyes resembled two miniature moons, so wide were they opened in wonder and amazement.

Years flew by, and time had wrought many changes in that western home. Lily White and her sister Fanny had grown apace, and were now in the rosy hours of maidenhood. In their whole lives they had never been separated. They had often and oft knelt by their fond mother's knee, and together had lisped their evening prayers, and then had slept and dreamed, locked in each other's warm embrace. Together had they chased, in glee, the gaudy butterfly, and had plucked the beautiful flowers; and in later years, hand in hand, had sauntered forth to talk of hope and friends and love. They often rode, on the pleasant evenings, over the

flowery prairie, and, throwing their long hair about their rounded shoulders in a shower of beauty, would gallop for miles over the green grassy plain. Those, indeed, were happy days, unclouded by a single care and undimmed by a single sorrow; and often, in after life, did they rise up before the mind of Lily in frightful contrast to what she then was suffering. Indeed, it is true that the brightest morning sometimes brings the darkest evening! In our sunniest hours we should look for the darkness that lies ahead, and when in the midst of life we should not forget that death steals on with the stealth of a tiger, and that his black pall may even now be dropping its shadow over us! A winning smile may conceal a purpose as black as hell; the rose has its thorn; the velvet grass is the lurking place for the deadly serpent; *and danger may come from a point of all the least suspected.*

Lily White and Fanny Lanier, though they loved each other as sisters never loved before, yet they were as unlike in disposition and appearance as two half-sisters well could be. Lily was mild as a soft May evening, and in her whole disposition greatly resembled her mother; Fanny was a gay, wild child of nature, resembling a bright June morning, with its glittering dews and rosy clouds, and inherited the impulse and sprightliness of her father. Lily was of fair complexion, and the rosy hue of health touched her cheeks with loveliness; Fanny was a dark brunette, and when these two maidens were together it afforded a curious problem to determine which was the prettier.

These sisters were educated at Georgetown, in the District of Columbia. They had been absent several

years, and Lily, leaving her sister to complete her education, returned home only to find her joy turned into a bitter cup of gall. Lily was not long in discovering that her mother was wasting away, and fading like a flower. The cough, the uneasiness, the unnatural brilliancy of the eye, and the hectic glow upon the cheek, all indicated the presence of that awful disease, which comes creeping, like a serpent, upon the victim which it has charmed. Oh! bitter, bitter were the tears which she shed on making that sad discovery. In the silent watches of the solemn night would she lift her voice in prayer, beseeching a rich throne of Grace to avert the hand of death. For hours she would toss upon her pillow, and

“—— the dappled gray coursers of the morn  
Beat up the light with their bright silver hoofs,”

and found her eyes still unclosed in slumber.

Day by day Mrs. Lanier wasted away. Not a murmur escaped her lip. While at home Col. Lanier was seemingly kind, but he was absent much of his time in travelling, or in New Orleans. Mrs. Lanier was meek and patient. She glided, like a spirit, from room to room, in the discharge of her household duties. Like a guardian angel, Lily ever hovered about her mother. No word had ever escaped either the daughter or mother on the subject which was disturbing the peace of the former and was haunting the cheek of the latter.

One beautiful evening in September, Lily and her mother were sitting on the steps of the front portico. The evening was mild and balmy. From the distant gulf the breeze came laden with health and vigor, and, as twilight deepened, one by one the stars, in silver

sandals, stepped forth upon the azure sky and twinkled in their beauty. By degrees the prairie, swelling gently away toward the far-off horizon, was overspread with a dreamy haziness. It was an hour to soften the most rugged nature, and to melt the soul into a gushing fountain of tears. It was an hour to cause the bad man to pause and reflect, and to make the good man better.

"Mother," said Lily, "are you not afraid to sit in the night air, with the wind blowing so freshly upon you?"

"No, my child," replied her mother, "I am better now, and this scene is so serene and beautiful that I cannot forego the temptation to enjoy it."

"Well, my mother, let me bring you your shawl."

With this the dear good girl tripped swiftly away to minister to the comforts of her mother. She was not long absent, but on her return she found her mother wiping her eyes and trying to conceal her tears.

"What is the matter, mother? Tell me why you weep;" and throwing her arms about her neck Lily wept herself, as if her heart would break.

"I was thinking, my child, as you tripped away just now to serve your mother, that you would not have that pleasure long; for, my daughter, there is that within which tells me I am rapidly passing away." Mrs. Lanier folded Lily to her heart.

"Oh! do not talk thus, my mother dear. You will break my poor heart—you will—you will."

"Come, come, Lily, let's calm ourselves, and with Christian fortitude talk of the future. I have seen but too plainly, from your care-worn brow and anxious coun-

tenance, that you have made the discovery that I am not long for this world. My child, I know that I am dying—dying just as you see yonder star on the eastern sky closing its twinkling eye and fading softly and gently into the bosom of the heavens before the up-rising moon."

"Oh! my mother dear," cried Lily, "you can never—never know how much I have wept and prayed, when I saw you, day by day, trembling like a spirit in our midst, and knew that I should ere long see that spirit pluming itself for a flight to a brighter and happier world. I know you will *there* be free from pain and care, mother; but oh! what will become of your orphan Lily, when left alone in this cold and selfish world, without a mother's advice and a mother's love?"

Lily's heart seemed nigh to bursting, and a soul of steel would have been softened could it have beheld that sobbing girl folding that dying mother to her bosom, and hiding that pale face in her own golden tresses.

"Remember, Lily, my child, that this affliction is from the hands of 'Him who doeth all things well,' and that we owe all our blessings to his bounty. 'He tempers the wind to the shorn lamb,' and not a sparrow falls to the earth without his knowledge. Trust, my child, in Him, and when your mother sleeps in death, He will be your friend and father, guiding your feeble footsteps aright, and blessing your life with peace and happiness."

By this time the full round moon appeared above the horizon, drowning with her radiance many a trembling star, and, like a fair enchantress, changed that gray mist into a transparent, silvery veil. As the mellow



moon-beams fell upon the face of Mrs. Lanier, she seemed a creature from the spirit-land—so fair, so pale, and so like unto marble were her features.

"Weep no more for me," continued she, "for I feel, my child, that my inheritance is far beyond those dimly burning worlds, 'where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest.' Death has no terrors for me; and as the hour of my departure arrives I trust I can say, 'O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?' It is true, it sometimes grieves me to think I cannot live to see my darling children happy in life and adorning society with their examples."

"I have tried again and again, mother," said Lily, "to overcome my grief, but with every effort it comes upon me like an angry wave. Let me weep, my mother, for it brings relief to my poor breaking heart. I could not help it if I wished, for you have been a good kind mother unto me all the days of my erring life, and now my tears are all that I can offer you."

"I humbly tried to discharge my duties to my children to the best of my feeble abilities. I have taught you how to pray, how vain is all the pomp of this poor paltry world, how fleeting and uncertain is life, how hopes decay and beauties wither, how disappointments come and dim the eye and blanch the cheeks; and have pointed out to you the bleeding form of our Saviour upon the cross of Calvary, pouring out his warm life's blood that we might not die but have eternal life. If, my child, I have failed in aught a doating mother should perform, forgive me, as I pray to be forgiven."

Lily bowed her head upon her mother's lap and gave full vent to her feelings. At length she said:—

"You have been more than a mother to sister and myself. You have been unto as an angel, my mother; and while this heart shall throb will I cherish you in my most sacred remembrance. But tell me, mother, when you go hence will you be my guardian spirit? Will you be near me in my slumbers, and whisper to me in my dreams? Will you hover over me when I plant the beautiful violets on your grave, and will you come to me when I walk forth in the silent woods?"

"My Lily," said the mother, "who can unveil the mysteries that shroud the silent world beyond the tomb? But if it be permitted the dead to return to the living, I will linger on your pathway like a ray of light; I will steal softly to you,

'The viewless spirit of a lovely sound,  
A living voice, a breathing harmony,'

and warn you of danger and guard you in your virtue."

"Oh! a thousand, thousand thanks for these kind words! I will never forget them. I can now bear more calmly the fate that awaits me. I will often, mother, believe that I hear your voice in the low murmuring streams, in the gentle melody of birds, and in the humming of insects. I shall fancy that when the soothing zephyr fans my brow it is your angel wings, and that the aroma of the flowers is the perfume of your breath. I shall watch the starry vault and imagine that you are looking down upon your Lily from yon tremulous star, hanging just above the horizon."

Mrs. Lanier and her daughter both felt relieved after the ice was broken, and now calmly talked together. She



did not forget Fanny, though away. She talked of her much, and said:—

“When I am gone, you, Lily, must be a mother unto Fanny; kindly throw about her those gentle restraints which bind without giving offence.”

Lily promised, and, the night growing chilly, they withdrew from the portico and retired for the evening.

From that night Mrs. Lanier rapidly declined. She complained frequently of severe headaches, and of increasing pain of the side. By the time the chilling winds of bleak November began to blow she seldom left her room. Reclining in a huge arm-chair, she was wheeled from point to point.

Lily would scarcely leave her mother's side long enough to satisfy her appetite. She would sing for her, and read to her from the Bible such passages as she loved to hear. In January Mrs. Lanier was so low that Fanny was ordered home to see her mother die. It was thought she would not live to see her absent daughter, but the stern disease relaxed his grasp, and she revived so that she could even sit alone upon her couch, supported by pillows.

A few weeks passed away, and Fanny was at home: not with the light heart of the maiden, for her spirit was overclouded by a dark wing.

The gentle spring came, with its birds and grass and flowers. It was hoped by the physician that its balmy breath would revive the drooping flower. But not so. One beautiful evening the daughters and mother were together in her room. Mrs. Lanier was reclining, as usual, in her easy chair; Fanny was engaged with her needle on some delicate garment, and Lily was reading

aloud those promises of Holy Writ which illumine the pathway to the grave.

“Is the sun most down, my dears?” she said, in a voice low and feeble.

“Yes, mother,” replied Fanny; “and will you not let me wheel you to the window, that you may see how grand and gorgeous is his setting?”

“Yes, my child, I wish to look upon his broad disk once more, for I feel that it will be the last opportunity I shall have on earth.”

Those kind and loving daughters slowly and gently brought their mother to the open casement.

The pale and emaciated sufferer fixed a long and ardent gaze upon the red round sun. A few thin vapory clouds, lying along the horizon, were flooded with a golden glory. The broad expanse of prairie, over which streamed his dying rays, was never more magnificent.

Lily and Fanny were standing behind her chair, with tears streaming down their cheeks. Oh! that scene was worthy of a great painter's pencil, and was one over which even an angel might have wept! Slowly sank the sun, and when he finally disappeared, a large, bright tear went trickling down the wan cheek of Mrs. Lanier.

“Oh! my dear children, I pray God that my exit may be as gentle and serene as that which we just have seen. And may the good which I have done linger behind me, like those streaks of purple, shooting up the sky,—only more permanent in their effect.”

At deep twilight Col. Lanier returned from an engagement, which had claimed his absence, and Fanny, meeting him at the front door, threw her arms about

his neck, and, between her sobbings, informed him that she feared her mother was dying. Though he was every day expecting the crisis to arrive, yet he manifested excitement and alarm. He hastened to his wife's room, followed by Fanny, and stood trembling like an aspen when he beheld the altered expression of his wife. She was sleeping, and her loud, uneven breathing told them that at every pulsation her life was ebbing away.

Col. Lanier softly placed a chair by the bed, and, seating himself, bent his eyes upon his sleeping wife.

In the breast of that bold, worldly man, was raging a mighty tempest. There were struggling up from the secret chambers of his heart the kindlier feelings of his stubborn nature, which for many a long year had slumbered in repose.

In an instant stalked before him the past sixteen years. There was the gilded altar, in the dim, quiet church, at which he and that pale form were made one flesh—the thousand tender words and sweet endearments of that kind creature—his own sad neglects and harsh upbraidings,—and now before him she lay in the valley of the shadow of Death, with his clammy fingers already laid heavy upon her. His conscience smote him, and bending his face upon the bed he hid it from the view of his children.

A gentle tap upon the door, and Lily, upon tip-toe, opened, and welcomed the physician, who had in the mean time been summoned.

He approached the bedside of Mrs. Lanier, and, bowing to the Colonel, laid his hand upon hers and felt her pulse. He quietly turned to the fireplace, where Lily was preparing some mild potation, and inquired

when her mother had been taken worse, and other things of a like nature.

"How long, doctor," said Lily, "do you think mother can survive?"

The doctor was one of those kind-hearted, candid men, and answered—without any hesitation—"She may survive until morning, but you may prepare yourself for her death at any moment. If her sleep does not refresh her she will soon be free from suffering." A struggle of the dying woman soon brought them to her bedside. The physician took her by the hand and asked how she felt.

"I am better now," said she. He had to bend his ear close to his patient to catch her words.

"Oh!" she continued, "I have had such a sweet, sweet sleep, and such pleasant dreams, and have heard such rich, low music. Doctor, how came you here, and why are you all standing about my bed? Oh! yes, yes; I feel it now, I am dying; where is Col. Lanier?"

Col. Lanier caught his wife to his bosom, and impressed upon her cheek a kiss. She found just sufficient strength to throw her withered arms about his neck, and, after recovering from the exertion which it required, addressed him in these words:—

"James, sixteen years ago, to-morrow night, I first became your wife,—and since that time you best know how I have discharged the duties and relations which our union brought. You little think, dear husband, how many prayers I have sent trembling to the God of love on your behalf. To-morrow night, I will be sleeping in the tomb; will you come often, James, to my grave, and will you remember me? I cannot see you now, James,

my sight is fading fast; but, oh! my husband, will you meet me in that happy land, far above the skies, where pain is not and friends are parted nevermore? For my sake, James, protect my Lily, for she will soon be an orphan child, and shield her from the tempest's blast, and from the bitter world. I know your father's heart needs no caution as to Fanny——"

She seemed as if she would add something more, but the exertion which this conversation produced exhausted her strength, and for a long time she lay with her eyes closed, as if she might be dead.

Col. Lanier paced the room in sorrow and regret. In a short time Mrs. Lanier opened her eyes and called her children to her bedside.

"Speak to me," said she, "and once more let me hear your voices, for I cannot see you now."

Each in turn addressed their mother, and begged her blessing ere she died.

She kissed each of them, and bade them be kind and affectionate to one another; and again exhorted them to meet her in heaven.

At length her voice failed; she slowly closed her eyes, a gentle shudder rushed, like electricity, along her limbs, and just as the old family clock struck the solemn and impressive hour of one, her spirit winged its flight toward that distant shore for which it had so often yearned.

No dreadful shrieks were uttered there—only deep-drawn sighs, and now and then a suppressed groan; for day by day were they expecting what they just had seen. It is indeed a solemn thing to stand beside the death-bed of those whom we have loved.

But oh! what a triumph it is to die the Christian's death, as did the good Aurelia Lanier! It is a victory, greater, by far, than has ever been achieved upon bloody battle-fields, amid the roar and tumult of contending armies. The poet's laurel may wither and die—the bold achievements of the warrior may soon be lost amid revolutions and counter-revolutions—the most daring flight of human intellect may be touched by the cheerless waves of oblivion,—but the Christian dying in the firm faith of a Saviour's love, and with the glory of a new and brighter world streaming upon the fading vision, is a victory the like of which cannot be found in all the pomp and glitter of earthly magnificence. Such a death unhinges the subtlest philosophy of the atheist and sends him cowering into a deeper gloom than he has ever known, for it unveils the truth—

"So boldly, plainly, perfectly distinct,  
That none the meaning can mistake or doubt,"

\* \* \* \* \*

Time—relentless time—pauses not in his ever-onward career. In his hurrying march he touches empires, and they moulder into dust; with his icy breath the fairest creations of man wither and pass away; and yet he rushes on, leaving in his wake broken hopes and mouldering cities, black disappointments and shivered columns, buried in one common mass beneath his restless tread. But anon, amid the gloom and desolation, beautiful flowers spring forth and shed their rich aroma on the balmy air. Thus it was with Lily and her sister Fanny. Their hearts were sorely grieved, and at times no ray of light appeared to cheer them on their way.

But the human heart cannot always mourn; and, ere long, one by one new hopes arose and clustered round their souls, like flowers round a tomb. In a short time Fanny, accompanied by her father, returned to school, leaving Lily with a female friend, whose service had been employed to attend to the household duties. She planted flowers upon her mother's grave, and morning and evening watered them with her tears.

Col. Lanier returned home in the course of the spring, and during the remainder of the year seldom left his plantation, except to ride occasionally to the neighboring town for letters and the news.

In his intercourse with Lily he was kind and gentle, and sometimes would fix his eyes upon her in such a strange manner that she frequently felt the crimson starting to her cheeks. Toward the close of summer, just as the leaves began to grow red and the distant forest was one variegated scene, letters came from Fanny, announcing her ill-health. Col. Lanier determined to take Lily and go on to see his daughter. So, early in November, they set out for New Orleans. Here they spent several days. Lily, returning from the theatre on that eventful night with which the reader is acquainted, by some mischance dropped her slipper, which Eugene in a few hours picked up. On reaching Georgetown, they found Fanny's health somewhat improved, but yet she was very feeble and delicate. The physicians advised the Colonel to spend the winter in Europe, thinking that change of scene and climate would restore the fair sufferer.

Col. Lanier, after some deliberation, finally concluded to take the advice of the physicians, and began to make

his preparations. Before he could possibly set sail it was essential to hear from New Orleans, hence he determined to await his letters in New York. Consequently, in company with Lily and Fanny, he soon arrived at that metropolis.

They set sail, arrived safely in London, spent some time in the rural districts of England, visited France, and, according to the directions of Fanny's physicians, sought Venice as their winter quarters.

At this time Eugene was sailing upon his lake or strolling into the silent forest, and, as the reader remembers, was daily expecting an answer from his friend. Thus we see that life is a strange mystery, for Eugene in a few weeks after followed the owner of the slipper, as if directed by the hand of destiny.

There are many things which happen every day and every month that we cannot solve, only by saying that Providence willed it thus; and there the matter ends.

## CHAPTER IX.

It never was a prosperous world  
 Since priests have interfered with temporal matters;  
 The custom of their ancestors they slight,  
 And change their shirts of hair for robes of gold;  
 Thus luxury and interest rule the church,  
 While piety and conscience dwell in caves.

BANCROFT'S FALL OF MORTIMER.

Do you—dare you  
 Taunt me with my deformity?

BYRON.

WITH the very name of Italy a thousand fond associations crowd upon the mind. It is a land of heroes, and stands flooded with eternal glory! Rome! Rome! eternal Rome! what a mighty change has time wrought upon thy greatness and power! Like a mighty giant, the Roman Empire marched victorious to the Rhine and Danube, to the great Western Ocean, to the Euphrates; and her power was even felt upon the burning sands of the Syrian desert.

Her temples, palaces, and porticoes glittered gorgeously in the sunbeams, and were hallowed by the eloquence of her orators; her groves were sacred, and through their shady depths strolled her poets and philosophers. Every stream had its associations; and, from her bountiful hand, Ceres spread the earth with plenty and happiness.

Rome was then free, mighty, magnificent! She now

stands hoary with age, her power gone, her temples, many of them, sunken beneath the rushing waves of time, her palaces deserted, and her monuments crumbled into dust. Her ancient glory and grandeur still live, but they live only on the historic page, and breathe only in her works of genius. The proud mistress of the world, intoxicated by her victories and power, rushed into luxury and licentiousness; and, alas! what has been the bitter result? Those fair groves and sacred fields, over which Virgil has thrown a halo of everlasting glory, are wrapped in the black and dismal folds of a hoary superstition, which charms but to blight, and entices but to destroy. Where once assembled thousands, rejoicing in the full sunlight of freedom, now crouch a wretched peasantry, down-trodden by the iron heel of Roman Catholicism. Where once echoed the thrilling eloquence of a Cicero, now is heard the lamentations of the miserable, uttered in the agony of despair. Where once arose splendid temples to the gods, now reign silence and desolation. The Coliseum still stands, with the changes of centuries written upon its ivied turrets, but no longer echoes the proud and elastic step of the Roman. The fountains still throw their sparkling jets into the warm sunshine, but their merry music is a mockery of that foul and blasting pollution which has ruined this fair land. Mars and Minerva have fallen from their pedestals, and Venus has forsaken her shrine! Where once dwelt the might of genius, now lingers the "Mystery of Mysteries;" where once breathed the spirit of true poetry, now rests a blighting curse. The Pantheon, with its poetic mythology, has been changed for the Vatican, whence thunder the edicts of the Pope; freedom

has been transformed into tyranny; the manly gown, into the robe and cowl of the priest; and the beauty of Italy has been blackened by the Inquisition. The Church of Rome, seated amid the magnificence of centuries, and surrounded by the trophies of many a well-fought battle-field, exults in the ruin it has brought and in the misery it has created. Its presence is more dreadful than fire, pestilence, or the sword. With its venerable superstition and imposing ritual, Catholicism sows the seeds of poverty, ignorance, and death. It awes by its splendor and utterly destroys by its power. It elevates the cross; but, instead of leading the follower into the flowery vales of peace, that lie beyond the Jordan of death, it conducts into regions of poverty and degradation in this world, and throws no ray of light beyond the blackness of the next. It crushes the truth of the Bible beneath its wheel, and enforces its edicts and mandates by the rack, the torture, and the trap-door.

Oh! if the veil could be torn from the horrid front of this "Mother of Harlots," what vice, what suffering, what cruelty, what infamy would be revealed! Enter the palace of the Pope. All is art, elegance, and magnificence. But, ah! descend into those gloomy, dismal, subterranean labyrinths, that lead to dungeons that have never known a ray of sunlight, and what do you behold? You start! It makes your heart grow sick, and you feel as if you would suffocate! Hark!—hush! Hearest thou that low, sad groan? It is from a poor unfortunate wretch who is dying of hunger. Here you behold one buried to his chin in wet lime; there another, placed in binding fetters, with a cold and cruel

drop of water forever falling every minute upon the same spot on his head, until it is wearing away the skull. Oh! awful, awful, awful death! Hark again! Another shriek bursts forth and rings through those dreadful passages! Approach nearer. See, see! with smiles that might play upon the face of devils, those holy fathers have bound their victim naked upon the rack. With red-hot irons they are searing his flesh; his limbs are drawn to their utmost tension; they tear his nails from his fingers and toes; they run melted lead into his eyes, and slowly, one by one, pluck his limbs from his body.

Under ground, and deeper still, are other apartments. Here are confined, in eternal gloom, those whose locks have whitened in a prison-home. In Italy, such is Catholicism! No wonder then, that such a blight, and so much want and degradation, find a home where religion is an unholy imposition, and where the brilliancy of the outward appearance stands forth in such frightful contrast to the blackness and corruption that lie within. The history of the world has proven this to be too true. Ireland, Spain, and Mexico are examples. How can it be otherwise? In Italy, not only is the Bible rejected by the Catholics, but, until within two centuries, the great national bard Dante was suppressed on account of his liberal views.

The annals of history afford the example of no country which has been more shattered by internal broils, revolutions, and misrule, than Italy. The Roman Empire sunk by means of its own weight; and the final blow was given by a Sicilian barbarian, (Odoacer,) who, with an army of foreign mercenaries at his heels, exe-

cuted Orestes, the patrician, and compelled Augustulus to lay aside his diadem. Since that time, Italy has been the scene of revolution and counter-revolution, and no Republic has experienced greater convulsions than Florence. During the Pontificate of Gregory the First, in the beginning of the seventh century, papal power first took a firm and decided hold in Italy; and since that period Catholicism has been marching on and on with the strides of a giant, subverting truth, virtue, and morality, wherever found, and tracing its history in deeds of the darkest cast and in crimes that "smell to heaven." And even in 1849 the Inquisition existed in Rome, and its influence was felt throughout Italy. Not only had many of the peasantry, for the privileges which it brought, united themselves to the Inquisition, but even many of the nobles were found within its ranks. Those who held themselves aloof, were watched by this many-eyed argus, and upon the least provocation were thrown into filthy dungeons and tortured without mercy. Among the number who fell beneath the stroke of this cruel and powerful engine was Lorenzino Pitti, the father of Simonetta. Among his friends, he was a man of liberal views and great influence. But he had sympathized too strongly with the unfortunate Medici, and this rankled in the bosom of Catholicism, until he was finally arrested and incarcerated within the walls of a prison. His wealth, however, was not confiscated, because Bernardo, the holy father, had interfered in its behalf, having one eye fixed upon the daughter and the other upon the Pitti estate.

It is true, by the laws of his Church, he could enjoy neither the one nor the other; but to a daring priest

like Bernardo, no depth of iniquity was too profound for his bold reach.

With true sorrow, Simonetta and her mother mourned the death of the father and husband. They believed that he was long dead. Since he appeared before the great and august tribunal, neither of them had heard of him; and as it was no unusual circumstance for the victim never again to make his appearance, they soon despaired of ever seeing him on earth. But on the very night while Eugene was confronting Bernardo in the presence of Simonetta, her father was wasting away his life in that city, confined in a cold and dreary dungeon, emaciated and dying from ill-treatment and long confinement. Such is the Roman Catholic Church, and such is the policy of its priesthood; and to that church and to that priesthood belonged Bernardo.

"He was a man

Who stole the livery of the court of heaven  
To serve the devil in; in virtue's guise  
Devoured the widow's house and orphan's bread,  
In holy phrase transacted villainies  
That common sinners durst not meddle with."

Eugene Saunders was much pleased with the fair and beautiful Simonetta; but further than a warm admiration of her beauty, elegance, and accomplishments were concerned, he was not interested. Although Simonetta had been caressed and flattered since her first entrance into society, yet she had never before been so deeply interested. Eugene's conduct toward Bernardo on the night of the banquet had, at first, so conflicted with her religious feelings, that she scarcely knew in what light to



view him. But when she remembered his gentleness toward her, his lofty speech and manly bearing toward the priest, his coolness and determination, she admired his gallantry and bravery. She had often read of the honor, daring, and noble-heartedness of the Americans, and that evening she had the opportunity of witnessing that true courage which has achieved a thousand brilliant victories and has written the name of America in undying characters on the highest pinnacle of fame! It is the nature of woman to be captivated and charmed by noble deeds of daring, and this characteristic stands prominently forth when contrasted with her mildness, gentleness, and patience. Simonetta did not pause and consider what would be the consequence of yielding her heart to a stranger. She felt the impulse and obeyed its dictates. She for a moment stood upon the precipice, and then leaped into the raging whirlpool. To the warmth and impetuosity of her nature she united great pride, hence she concealed, only as a woman can conceal, her heart.

Eugene became a frequent visitor at the palace of Pitti. He was fond of music, and would sit enraptured by the rich voice of the Countess as she would throw her soul into some favorite piece from Tasso. They often walked forth into the garden that belonged to the palace, and for hours talked of poetry, painting, and the ancient glory of Florence. Eugene could not help admiring the noble enthusiasm she sometimes manifested when speaking of her beloved country.

One evening, while they were thus strolling through the garden, the Countess said to him,—

“Signore, tell me something of your own country.

Are your skies as blue, your mountains as high, your rivers as bright, and your groves as beautiful, as here in Italy?”

“You have asked me a question,” said he, “which I fear I cannot answer without some degree of prejudice. Like all true Americans, I love my country, and never better than when away from its beautiful shores and seeing the misery and want that exist elsewhere. But I will answer you in the language of one of our poets:—

‘We have wealth of land and streams,  
And clouds float o’er its breast, like dreams,  
And hills stand sentry, and the sun  
Looks kindly all its haunts upon.’”

It would but weary the reader to repeat all those young and ardent beings said; suffice it, however, to say, that Eugene dwelt in glowing terms upon his native land. He told her that it reached in boundaries far

“————— toward the setting sun;  
Around it hills in giant sentry stand,  
And nowhere else God bid such rivers run  
From out the hollow of his awful hand;  
And prairies lift their inland surges grand  
Against its woods, whose dim, mysterious choir  
Send answer on to tones that wake the strand  
Of lakes o’er which the eagle’s pinions tire,  
While yet their waves blaze on beneath his eye of fire.”

When Bernardo left the gardens of the Palace Vecchio, on the evening of the brilliant fête, he did not seek his couch, but, taking a circuitous route, which led through narrow and gloomy streets, arrived at length in front of a wretched dwelling, which bespoke misery and



poverty within its dingy walls. He paused and glanced cautiously around him. His features were pale and rigid, and his whole form trembled with emotion. For awhile he seemed to hesitate, but in a few moments he approached the door and rapped several times. He applied his ear to the key-hole, and, after listening for a few seconds, muttered to himself,—

“Ha! I have aroused the old bear from his den!”

“Who wishes me at this late hour of the night?” growled a deep voice from within.

“One,” replied Bernardo,” who has a reason for his conduct.”

By this time the door was opened and the moonbeams fell upon the inmate of this hovel. In size, he was a dwarf. His shoulders were broad, and his head seemed twice too large for his body. In fact, he was a hideous creature. Time had traced many wrinkles upon his brow, and with cunning his black eyes twinkled. He was clad in coarse garments, and on his head was a cap of woolen. High above his head he held a dimly burning taper.

“Is it you, Father Bernardo?” said the dwarf. Crossing himself devoutly, he bade the priest enter.

Bernardo followed his companion to a little dingy ante-room, in which was a rude pallet and a rough table, with a few other mean articles of furniture, in keeping with the scene. The dwarf set the taper upon the table and offered the priest a seat.

“Well, Uglino,” said Bernardo, “have you executed my orders?”

“I have, holy father. I saw him fettered in the lowest dungeon, and ——”

“Speak low,” interrupted the priest, “for even walls have ears.”

“And informed him,” continued Uglino, almost in a hiss, “the conditions upon which he could regain his liberty.”

“What said he to that?” eagerly demanded Bernardo.

He called for the tortures, and said that he would suffer a thousand deaths rather than purchase his freedom by selling his daughter to your embrace.”

“Said he thus? I have seen many a stubborn nature softened by the rack. My vengeance is now ready to fall upon his head. Uglino.”

“Holy father, I attend,” answered the dwarf.

“Think you can keep a secret?”

“I have preserved many a one for the holy father. Do you doubt me? If I choose to repeat them I could run over a list that would make the blood curdle in the veins of honest men! Do you remember the ——”

“Hold your tongue, thou babbler, and forget not that you are in the presence of your father confessor.”

“I keep that ever in view, father, and crave your pardon.”

While Uglino said this, his black eyes glittered like those of the serpent. Bernardo, seeing his pent-up rage, drew his robe closer to his form.

“I pardon you,” said he. “Uglino, I love the beautiful Simonetta Pitti, and this very night, even this very hour, I was abused and disgraced by an American in her presence. Ay! Uglino, I was insulted by a youth and a Protestant. Ha! he heaped epithets upon the

holy Catholic Church, and even dared to threaten the life of a priest."

"The heretic deserves ——" and before Ugolino could complete his sentence; Bernardo, with clenched teeth, said,—

"Death!—death! That's the object of this late visit!"

"Ha! you wish to find an assassin!" said Ugolino.

"I do," answered Bernardo. "He has crossed my path just at the time when the bird was almost in my net, and I will count the glittering dust down to any man who will rid me of this rival. He has cursed the Church of Rome, and it is a duty we owe the Virgin Mary, to offer him as a sacrifice to her shrine."

Bernardo drew from beneath his robe a purse of coin and emptied it upon the table.

"I understand," said the dwarf; "that money is for me. But, father, though I have been guilty of many sins, yet I have never imbued my hands in blood."

"Do you refuse to obey your confessor?"

Ugolino's eye again sparkled, and a smile of triumph lit his features.

"I'll do it, father."

"Then swear by the holy cross that you will, if detected, never reveal the name of Bernardo, upon pain of excommunication. Do you swear?"

"I swear."

"Give me your hand," said Bernardo.

Oh! it was a fearful sight to behold those two men in that dim and dirty hovel, their features rendered more ghastly by that flickering taper, plotting murder and death!

"But who is the man I must mur——" said Ugolino.

"Hush! An American—a Protestant—one who has insulted the lion in his den—the Church of Rome in Italy," answered Bernardo.

"His name, and where is he to be found? Where there are so many Americans, how can I distinguish your rival?"

"By his noble bearing. Ay, Ugolino, he carries himself like a king, and even dares to pronounce himself one. His name is Eugene Saunders, and he is frequently to be seen in company with Frank Morton. You must watch your opportunity. I trust to your shrewdness. Remember whom you serve."

With this Father Bernardo bade Ugolino good night, who followed him to the door and watched him until his form was lost in the distance. Once more the dwarf sought the ante-room, and once more placed the flickering taper upon the table. A ghastly smile lit his features, and again his eyes flashed with passion.

"Ha! ha! ha! This is Christianity. There was a time when I was a devout and pious Catholic; when I counted my rosary; when I prayed to the Virgin Mary and performed all my sacred duties. But since I met *that* man I almost doubt the existence of a God. Ha! ha! what mockery! what rottenness! How he prates of the Virgin Mary! I am old and ugly. Men turn away their heads when they meet me, and even the dogs bark at me upon the highways. Can I keep a secret? Can Ugolino keep a secret? Ay! can he? Ha! ha! he has one locked within this breast that would damn the peace of Bernardo. I'll keep it, too, until I work my revenge. Babblor! babblor! He has

led me into the pathway of sin and destruction. It was his influence that destroyed my only son. He little thinks what a volcano is slumbering in the bosom of Uglino. And he wants me to commit murder—murder; and cast the coin upon the table. I'll place it in my coffer, where I have stowed away enough to buy this Bernardo to any crime."

Having finished this soliloquy, Uglino sought his hard bed, and was soon reposing in slumber.

It was night in Florence. The streets were silent, and a hush, as if of the tomb, was over the city. The moon-beams fell brightly upon many a marble column, and gilded with brilliancy many a towering dome. Many a beautiful Italian maiden, who only a few hours ago was threading the dance, was now folded sweetly in sleep, and many a bosom swelling with tumultuous passion was calmed by soft repose.

Again the sun rushed up in the sky; flushed the east with crimson, and touched the domes and minarets with golden glories; and once again man rushed forth to wage his puny war in the great struggle of life. Uglino at an early hour of the morning was abroad in the streets. He walked on seemingly unconscious whither his footsteps bore him. But Uglino knew well his mission, and his quick eye noted every stranger whom he met. Some paused and regarded him with astonishment, while others shrank from him as if his presence were a pestilence. All that day he was abroad; and as the shades of the evening began to gather, he sought his humble home in that gloomy street.

\* \* \* \*

After tea of the same evening, Simonetta Pitti walked

forth into the garden and sought her usual seat in her favorite summer-house. For awhile her fingers wandered softly over the strings of her guitar, when at length, tuning her voice, its melody floated away and trembled sweetly on the evening air. It was an hour for love. A dark form glided like a serpent into the doorway. Simonetta was not one of those who give vent to their fear or astonishment in shrieks. She would have fled, but Father Bernardo caught her by the arm and gently forced her to the seat. She trembled like a beautiful flower when rudely touched by the passing gale, and shrank from his touch as if she had been stung by the fang of an adder.

"Why, holy father, do you break in upon a lady's retreat?" indignantly said Simonetta.

"Because I love my daughter," said Bernardo; "and I also ask why are your evening and morning prayers neglected, and why do you shun the confessional? Have you not heard the chime of the vesper bells?"

"Father Bernardo, I have heard the chime of the bells, have counted my beads, and have offered my prayers to the Holy Virgin Mary."

"Why, my child," said Bernardo, "do you look so coldly upon me? Am I not your father confessor? Have you not often laid open to me the secrets of your young heart? Oh! Simonetta, I am consumed by a maddening love. Why, oh! why will you spurn me with your coldness and your scorn?"

Bernardo could not restrain his fiery nature, and, yielding to his ardent feelings, he cast himself at the feet of Simonetta.

"Father Bernardo, arise. You have often taught me that we should bow only to the Virgin Mary, and in the worship of our holy religion. You have, as my confessor, taught me to speak the truth to you, and in conformity to that lesson I now declare that I do not love you, and unless you wish my hate you will retire."

At this bold reproof, Bernardo felt ashamed and mortified. Anger took the place of mildness, and, stung to resentment, he regained his feet.

"Ah! proud girl, you know not against whom you contend. Unless you repent of your harsh words, you shall feel the strong arm of Bernardo, and it shall fall with a crushing weight upon you and yours."

"Father, why do you threaten a poor, defenceless girl, whose only transgression is that she does not return a love which would bring to her naught but shame, sorrow, and a broken heart. I know your power, but, in the consciousness of right, I fear you not."

"Grant me but the boon I crave, and with you I will seek an asylum in some distant land, and in peace and tranquillity we will spend our days."

"Oh! never, never," said Simonetta, with flashing eye. "I cannot yield my hand, unless my heart goes with it. I do not—cannot love you; and do not urge me more."

"Indeed, you seem," said Bernardo, "to have caught some of the spirit that belongs to that insolent American. I see it all. Ere you met Eugene Saunders you would not have talked thus boldly to your priest. But know that I will teach him a lesson for his boldness and impertinence. And remember, haughty girl, that you are responsible for any fate that befalls him."

"Why, Father Bernardo, do you add insult to injury? Do not longer detain me, else I will expose you by my shrieks—let me go."

Bernardo had taken Simonetta by the arm to prevent her flight, for with all his fury he was nevertheless prudent in everything that regarded his own standing and influence as a priest.

"Listen but one moment," continued he; "is there nothing that will induce you to consent? I did hope to spare you, for with one word I can make the blood run cold to your heart, and blanch your rosy cheeks. Would you save your father?"

"My father is no more," said Simonetta.

"Ha! you think so, do you? Then know, proud woman, that your father is alive even now, and awaits but your word to release him from a loathsome dungeon, in which he has lingered for years. It rests with you to save that father, or this night to seal his doom! What sayest thou now?"

"That I will never disgrace the ancient and honorable house of Pitti, much less will I purchase even my father's freedom with my own infamy and shame."

"Then, indeed, the die is cast. Think of what I have said, and repent. We will meet again. Good night."

As soon as the priest left the bower Simonetta ran to her room, and, throwing herself upon her couch, wept bitterly.

"Oh!" said she, "why am I so persecuted and haunted by this man? And oh! my poor, poor father is even at this moment suffering in a dismal dungeon, and is at the mercy of that cruel wretch Bernardo."

Maybe, too, he will this night suffer a horrid death, and yet by a word I can save him. What shall I do? Would my poor father accept such an offering? In battle he was ever amid the foremost, and he was as generous as he was brave. Would he live when that life is bought by the shame of his daughter? To him death would be sweeter by far than to know that a stain rested upon his honor."

After calming her feelings she arose and penned a few hurried lines. She summoned her servant and ordered her to deliver the note according to directions.

Let us now turn our attention once more to Eugene Saunders. He had been spending the evening with Frank Morton, and had not long been seated in his own room at the hotel when he heard a gentle tap at his window. He at first doubted, but in a few moments it was repeated somewhat louder and longer. He approached the window and saw a female form, closely veiled, standing in the shadow of the building. He raised the sash and inquired the cause of this visit. The disguised form made no reply, but threw a paper into the room and then hastily withdrew. Eugene quickly broke the seal and read as follows:—

"Signore,

"Your life is in danger. Take timely warning from a stranger, and fly—fly, and do not cease your flight until you are beyond the power of the Church of Rome! May the Virgin Mary guard you,

"Addio—addio—

"MERCY."

Eugene was a brave man. He had never known what it was to fear, and would face death in any form rather

than leave a taint upon his fair name or a blot upon his honor. But there was something in the mysterious manner in which that warning reached him, and in the silence of the deep still night, that agitated him more than usual. He was far from his native land, in a strange city; had brought upon himself the odium of one of the most powerful priests of the Roman Catholic Church, and here was a warning advising him of danger which might come upon him at an unexpected moment. Eugene soon determined upon his course of conduct. He drew from his trunk two Derenger's, beautifully mounted with silver, and with great care loaded them.

"I will," said he, "at least be prepared to meet this secret danger as becomes a man and an American. 'Thrice is he armed who hath his quarrel just,' and I will teach this Bernardo and

————— all the band  
He brings to aid his murderous hand,'

that I am not to be frightened by idle warnings and paper billets."

While he was thus soliloquizing a man of low stature had been knocking at his door; but Eugene was so absorbed in thought that he had not heard the raps. It was Ugolino, the dwarf. With the softness of the cat he had slipped along the streets, and Eugene's room being on the ground-floor, he had reached it unobserved. He knocked several times, and, gaining no response, was daring enough to enter. The reader must imagine Eugene's horror when, having changed his position, this unearthly apparition stood before him! If he trembled would you pronounce him a coward? Would you not

have screamed in terror? Instinctively, and as quick as the lightning's flash, Eugene leveled his pistol at his head and pulled the trigger; the cap bursted with a keen report! It was but the work of an instant, and he presented the other full upon his adversary! Uglino stood motionless as a marble statue, and his distorted features gave no evidence of uneasiness, much less of fear.

"In the name of God," said Eugene, still holding his deadly weapon upon him, "who are you? what are you? and what brings you here?"

"I am Uglino, the dwarf; a man like yourself, and one whom, it seems, you would murder because God has blighted his form."

"Are you here through mistake, or is your business with me?"

"Uglino never enters except where business leads."

"Name, then, your business," said Eugene.

"Not while you endanger my life," answered the dwarf.

"Can you guarantee mine if I give you the advantage?"

"My mission is one of peace, and not of blood."

"How am I to know that?"

"By what I reveal."

"Then I comply," said Eugene; "but, sir, the least suspicious movement on your part will send a ball through your heart."

"I have sufficient reasons," said Uglino, "to believe you."

"Then guard your actions, for I would not have your blood upon my head. But enough, come forward and be seated."

Uglino, in his peculiar rolling gait, did as Eugene directed.

"To what am I indebted for this visit?" asked Eugene.

"To my wish to thwart a villain, and to serve you," answered the dwarf.

"How? in what way?"

"By saving your life."

"What sayest thou—explain thyself?"

"Knowest thou Bernardo the priest?" asked Uglino.

"I do, sir, and doubt not his holiness will remember me."

"Then hear," said Uglino. "Bernardo regards you as his foe—his deadly foe."

"I am already advised of that fact," broke in Eugene.

"He is plotting against your life," continued Uglino. "Young man, I am not the wretch my form would seem to indicate, and though I have been led deeply into error under the influence of superstition and the guidance of an arch fiend, yet my eyes have been opened, and I see that I am regarded merely as a tool in the hands of the wicked and the mean. I was once happy and contented—contented though the withering hand of God is upon me; but through the blighting influence of Bernardo, that demon in flesh and blood, a shadow has been cast athwart my life. Oh! sir, he tore my darling boy from my bosom for an unguarded speech of mine, and I have never seen him since. From that time I have never known a kind word, a gentle look, nor a sympathizing friend. No soft hand soothes me in affliction, and I am alone in this world. Last night the tempter again



crossed my path, and with gold, shining gold, purchased my oath to bathe my hands in human blood. Then it was I renewed my vow to thwart the scoundrel and to seek my revenge. Yes, I swore to take your life. Bernardo doubts me not, and is confident that I will execute his bloody design. This, young man, is the object of a visit which came near costing me my life."

"How," said Eugene, "can I thank you, sir? You have my gratitude—my deepest gratitude."

"You owe me no debt of gratitude. It was not so much my love for you, young man, as it was my hatred for Bernardo, that has prompted my actions."

"It matters not," said Eugene, "what prompted you, so that you have warned me of my danger. I am thankful, and deeply sympathize with you in your misfortunes, and my heart and hand are ready to serve you in your trials. Did Bernardo mention to you the name of Simonetta Pitti?"

"He did," answered the dwarf; "he loves her, but oh! such love! Ha! ha! Bernardo love! It would, like a simoon, blast and wither every fair hope; it would blight the heart, and clothe the soul in a deeper gloom than a starless midnight. Ah! that man's deeds, could they be revealed, would darken the beauty of Christianity, and before them virtue, modesty, and piety would shrink abashed. I know his secrets, his comings and his goings. I am the keeper of the prisons, and could unfold a tale that would startle human nature. Bernardo means no good to Simonetta Pitti. She thinks her father dead: last night I saw him chained, like a felon, in a dungeon, where no sunbeam ever gleamed. Through the father he intends to work upon

the daughter. I trust this to your honor; tell it, and you betray one who, at least, has done you no harm."

"You need have no fears of my betraying you," said Eugene. "I am touched by what you have told me, and believe that you are an ill-used man. From my heart I pity that old man whom you say is confined in that dark and dismal dungeon; and I also pity you, my friend, for the loss of your darling child. Oh! sir, if I could but see those gloomy prisons, and especially Simonetta's father, and offer him my sympathy, it would be to me a very great pleasure."

These kind words opened in old Uglino's heart a fountain which sorrow, neglect, and sin, had almost dried up and destroyed. Many a weary day and many a dreary year had flown away since he had known a kind word. To him life was one dark day, without a smile to cheer or a ray of hope to gladden its gathering gloom. In his wisdom God had touched his form, and sorrow had made his heart what it was. It is a sad, sad lot, to be alone in this world, without friends, without comfort, and without sympathy, and ever conscious that our presence brings naught but pain, disgust, and loathing. Neglect with its icy hand drives many a man into the whirlpool of dissipation, and wrecks many a noble soul upon the barren shore of despair. The proudest intellects fall beneath its influence. The poet's laurel-wreath may be glowing in beauty while his heart may be darkened by sorrow. Neglect dims the eye of the orator and destroys the power of a voice that once could thrill thousands by its divine melody. It withers the vigor and loveliness of manhood, crushes the proudest aspirations, blights like the frosts of winter all the beau-



teous flowers of the heart, and hastens its victims to a grave not half so black as the darkness that reigns within his own bosom.

Ugolino had been neglected. In his soul no lovely flowers sprang forth; but, on the contrary, everything that was fair and beautiful shrank from his touch. When Eugene finished his sentence, Ugolino's eyes sparkled, but under different emotions than usual.

The image of his lost boy was before him reaching out his young arms through the mist of tears that was gathering before the father, and tender words had fallen upon his ear and awoke afresh the sweet memories of other days.

Why it is that some men seem to carry with them a spell, by which all are naturally drawn to them in kindness and love, is a mystery which philosophers have not solved; but the fact is undeniably true. We all have felt its influence. We all have met with persons whom we have regarded with distrust from the first sight; and, on the contrary, we have mingled with others whom we have instantly looked upon with respect. To this latter class belonged Eugene Saunders.

For some minutes Eugene and Ugolino sat facing each other in silence, and a strange and striking contrast they presented. Eugene was young, vigorous, and handsome; Ugolino, old, ugly, and deformed; but a bond of amity had already united their better natures.

"It shall be as you wish," said Ugolino, breaking the silence; "you shall be gratified, though Ugolino suffers for the deed."

"What do you mean?" asked Eugene.

"You expressed a desire to visit the dungeon in which Lorenzino Pitti is confined," answered the dwarf.

"I did," said Eugene.

"Then meet me," said Ugolino, "to-morrow night, beneath the shadow of the middle bridge of the Arno. But, young man, there is danger in the attempt, for if we are discovered we may never see the light of another day."

"I will risk the danger," said Eugene. "At what hour shall I meet you?"

"When the convent bell strikes one," answered the dwarf.

Ugolino departed, and Eugene was left alone.

Although the night was far advanced, yet he sought not his pillow, but throwing himself into his chair meditated upon the events of the evening. He thought upon the note he had received, and the mysterious manner of its delivery. At moments he felt grateful to Ugolino; at the next, he almost doubted his sincerity, and would persuade himself that all the dwarf had told him was an artful fabrication, to throw him off his guard and to entice him into danger. The longer he dwelt upon it, the more he doubted. Why did he appoint the brink of the river as the place of meeting, and that, too, at the hour of *one*. Eugene did not like the appearance of things. Ugolino might be true, but he knew what a potent influence the priesthood exerted over the peasantry, and how artful they were in their designs, and how unscrupulous in their actions, and it made him restless and uneasy. With all these thoughts crowding upon him, and with a fevered and disturbed mind, he finally sought his couch. In a few moments an indistinct glimmering vision of all his previous life passed before him in review,

and as he sunk still deeper into sleep he saw the features of Uglino peering out from the darkness. It was late the next morning before Eugene awoke. What he had heard and seen on the previous night seemed now the offspring of a troubled dream. During the greater part of the day he kept his room, and consumed the time in writing to his friends at home.

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Again it was night in Florence. The deep-toned convent bell struck the hour of twelve, and its mellow tones trembled on the air and awoke the echoes amid the distant hills.

Eugene Saunders was alone in his room. Like a caged lion he paced to and fro. His trusty pistols were lying upon the table. Now he paused and examined them, and again walked his room. At length the hour slowly passed away, and Eugene set forth to meet Uglino the dwarf, beneath the shadow of the middle bridge that spans the beautiful Arno. The wind was from the south, and the scattered clouds flew rapidly overhead, while ever and anon there came a flash of lightning, followed by the low rumbling of distant thunder. At one moment the moon hid her smiling face behind some angry cloud; at the next she flooded all the scene with light from her silver urn. No human form, save Eugene's, darkened the streets. In the pride and vigor of manhood, he pursued his course toward the Arno. He approached the shadow of the bridge with caution, mingled with some degree of excitement. As he passed by a huge stone which had been cast aside in the erection of the bridge, he heard a rustle, and, lo! Uglino stood by his side!

"You are here," said the dwarf, in a whisper.

"I never break my word," answered Eugene.

"I saw," said Uglino, "that you started when you beheld me. You need not doubt me, young man; Uglino never deceived but one man, and that one, Bernardo."

"I must confess," replied Eugene, "that the appointment of this place, upon consideration, did not please me much; but I was determined to test your fidelity."

"I did not select this point without a reason. I am watched with an eagle's eye, and by selecting the most out-of-the-way place I could the better avoid the possibility of detection. But, sir, the night grows apace, and unless we hasten yonder cloud will overtake us in its wrath. I have provided for the occasion. See! here is the robe and cowl of a priest, which you must adopt."

Eugene, without hesitation, put on the garments, and being completely disguised was examined by the dwarf.

"That will do," he said. "If Bernardo himself should meet you he would think you were his ghost, so much do you resemble him. Now let us go."

With this they hastened away to the execution of their dangerous experiment. Eugene followed close upon the heels of Uglino. They had not proceeded far when Uglino paused, and, turning upon his companion, said:—

"Now remember, young man, that all depends upon caution and prudence. Speak not above your breath, and follow me."

By this time Eugene could scarcely see the form of

Uglino, but amid the darkness he *felt* that those two glittering eyes were fixed upon him. The whole heavens were now overcast, and in quick succession came flash on flash and peal on peal. At one moment the distant mountains were all aglow as if on fire, and at the next were wrapt in gloom. Now a zig-zag chain like a fiery serpent darted along the bosom of the storm-cloud, and disappearing left only a quivering glimmer of its brilliant track athwart the sky. Before them loomed up the grand old prison-walls, and its dim outlines, seen through the darkness, seemed of gigantic proportions. Through a small gate they cautiously entered the outer court. They approached a lofty archway, and Uglino taking from his girdle a huge bunch of keys applied one to the lock. The door swung open. They moved a few paces within and were enveloped in a darkness like that of the tomb. Uglino whispered to Eugene to pause, and in an instant a blue flame cast its lurid glare over the scene. Holding his dark lantern Uglino walked in front, and seemed quite familiar with the location. From within they could hear the storm, now at its height, raging in its fury. With each heavy peal of thunder that gigantic structure trembled to its foundation. Passing on, they came to a narrow passage that led to the other extremity of the building. Uglino paused, and, bending his head forward, listened for some moments, and then, applying another key to a heavy door, ushered Eugene into a dismal labyrinth. Making about a dozen steps, Uglino once more paused.

"Now," said the dwarf, in a whisper, "I shall need your assistance."

He touched what Eugene considered a panel in the wall, and a sound issued forth like the click-click of a gun when suddenly cocked.

"Now push," said Uglino.

The panel, yielding to the force of those two men, swung open, exhibiting to Eugene a large and splendid room adorned and decorated with great taste and magnificence. Splendid paintings hung from the walls, and the fresco-work was most gorgeous seen by the glimmering light of the dwarf's lamp. Eugene thought he had never before beheld such an imposing scene.

Uglino drew near to one of those paintings, which hung lower than the rest, and touching a secret spring it glided suddenly back, revealing a midnight darkness within; and when Eugene saw the dwarf lean forward and flash his lamp around he felt a feeling of awe and dread steal over him.

"Come, come," said Uglino, "we must descend. Look down, and see if you can proceed!"

As Eugene leaned his body through the arched aperture Uglino turned his lamp in such a manner as to throw the light down in the direction in which Eugene bent his eyes. Far below—down, down, down—all was blackness, and Eugene drew back, pale and trembling, as if his soul had perished with that look.

"If you would see the prisons you must descend," said Uglino.

"Is there no way to avoid this chasm?" asked Eugene.

"None," Uglino responded.

"Then I am ready."

They crept through the aperture and began the de-

scent. Ugolino was closely followed by Eugene. The stairway was almost perpendicular. On reaching the bottom Eugene found himself in a narrow passage about eight feet wide. On either side were doors lined with iron and bolted through and through.

When we would portray the horrors that burst upon Eugene Saunders in those dismal dungeons, language fails and fancy falters. He had often read of the cruelties of the Romish Church: how the victim was tortured, how the skin was torn from the flesh, the flesh from the bones, and the bones left to moulder on the damp floor; how virgins were deprived by force of that which to them is dearer than life, and how the strong man wasted away beneath heavy chains and long confinement; but, like many others, he attributed much of such stories to religious prejudice or to a spirit of persecution. This night opened to his eyes those horrid truths that blacken the name of Catholicism and make it the dreaded machine of power in every country where it exists. Eugene Saunders was one of those men who in the heat of battle would have stood in the foremost ranks, and who, with sympathy in his heart but with no tear in his eye, would have laid his fallen comrade beneath the rich loam "to sleep his last sleep;"

"For fame is there to say who bleeds,  
And honor's eye on daring deeds;"

but to look upon cold-blooded murder,—committed deep down beneath the earth, where no groan, no cry for mercy, and no wail of despair could reach the upper air; to behold the form of beauty chained naked to the cold, cold stone; to see old age with hoary locks groaning

from want and hunger; to contemplate human suffering in every shape and degree that ingenuity could produce; to hear the stifled sigh, the half-uttered prayer, the deep-drawn groan, the piercing shriek, mingled with awful oaths and the fearful clanking of chains,—paled the cheek of Eugene and sent the blood to his heart.

We tremble over the revelations of Gavazzi, and the very soul grows sick over the licentious villainies of the priesthood narrated by Anthony Gavin; but what Eugene Saunders that night saw surpasses anything related by those high authorities. They passed from cell to cell. Here were bones from which the flesh had long since fallen into decay still bearing the heavy manacles; here was the strong man lying upon his back, with his limbs stretched in unnatural positions, chained to the floor; in this cell the poor victim was dying, in that one death had already claimed its prey; in this cell was a mass of corruption, in that one a poor creature deprived of his legs.

"Hide it up, hide it up; draw the decent curtain:  
Hence! curious fool, and pry not on corruption."

At length they reached another cell, before which they stopped, and, Ugolino having opened the ponderous door, they entered. Eugene heard the clanking of chains, and, aided by the dim light of the lamp, beheld a sight that made his blood run cold. On a pallet of straw in the farthest corner of the dungeon was an aged man, his white locks streaming over his shoulders and his countenance pale from suffering and imprisonment. He was in a half-recumbent position. Oh! it was a cold, cheerless, dismal place! A rough table, a wooden-

bottom chair, and an earthen vessel to hold water for the old man, were all the articles of furniture belonging to the cell. Though the old man's frame had once been robust yet it was now shriveled and emaciated, and upon every feature was stamped the mark of despair and desperation.

"Why do you now interrupt me?" the old man said. "Is it not enough to bind me here in chains, without coming to heap insult on injury and wrong on wrong? Ha! ha! Bernardo—thou dog, thou carping hypocrite; priest without a conscience and villain without a principle, what would you now? Bring your rack, bring your machines of torture; I am ready, ready; you have done your worst!"

"We come upon an errand of mercy," said Eugene.

"Mercy! mercy! Pratest thou of mercy who hast never known aught but revenge? I ask not thy mercy. Give me back my liberty, the long years of suffering and woe I have passed within this horrid hole. Restore to me the health you have destroyed, the reputation you have soiled, and the hopes you have blasted. Bring activity to these limbs, change these locks that have whitened in this cold and dreary place, and give me back my wife, my child. Oh! Bernardo, thou canst not; then prate no more of mercy."

"These are bold words," Eugene said.

"Ay! but not half so bold as the vile principle which brings you here at this late hour. Not satisfied with the ruin which you have already wrought, you would now blight the flower of my house and leave behind naught but shame and sorrow. Oh! vile man, leave me, leave me to the darkness and despair."

"Old man, will you not listen?" asked Eugene.

"Already have I listened too long to your cantings. Once for all hear me. I am prepared to die, for never, never, so help me God, will I accept my liberty at the price of innocence and virtue."

Ugolino had withdrawn to the corner of the prison, while Eugene remained standing, during this conversation, near the humble bed of the aged prisoner, who, in his excitement, had raised himself to a sitting posture.

Having removed the cowl Eugene stood before the old man.

"Ha! a stranger!" said he, in astonishment. "What brings you here?"

"Hearing of your misfortunes and sufferings through my friend Ugolino, I prevailed upon him to conduct me hither that I might offer to you the sympathy of a stranger, and that I might inform you that your daughter——"

"You know her, then?" interrupted the old man.

"I do," continued Eugene; "and have reason to believe that she has been instrumental in saving my life; therefore I was determined to brave all dangers in order to minister to the ease and comfort of her father."

"From the manner in which you speak Italian I judge you to be a foreigner."

"I am an American, and have incurred the hostility of Bernardo the priest."

"Young man, you are rash. You brave the lion in his den. If Bernardo is your enemy you have a serpent on your pathway, so beware. Oh! it makes my soul glad to learn that my noble, generous, and beautiful Simonetta is well. When last I saw her she was a

merry child, and many has been the time that she has encircled this old neck with her delicate arms and poured warm and burning kisses upon these withered cheeks. I loved that child; to me she was everything; but in an evil hour, and by an evil man, I was torn from her loving embrace and plunged into chains and this gloomy prison. Ah! sir, often, while lying here cold and sick, with no fire to warm these aching limbs, with no smiles to light my breaking heart, with no sympathy to make life's ending sweet, have I longed to see her sylph-like form bending in kindness and love over my decaying body, to listen to her gentle words and to feel her soft hand pressed in tenderness upon my burning brow. I *have* seen her in my dreams as she looked long, long ago, but she is a woman now, and my heart tells me she is fair and beautiful. She little dreams her father is still living in agony and chains. Oh! good, kind sir, you are a guardian angel, sent by God to the distressed and broken-hearted. Fly, oh! fly to my daughter, and tell her that her father's dying words were, beware of Bernardo."

The old man could bear no more. He heavily sunk upon his bed of straw. He moved not a limb, and laid so still and silent that Eugene and Uglino rushed to him, and, to their astonishment, discovered that he was dead. Death is ever a solemn thing, meet it as we may; but here in this lonely cell, amid the fumes of dampness, corruption, and filth; amid iron bolts, cold and cheerless walls, and the clanking of chains, it was fearful to behold. That form lay there a stiff cold thing of clay, bound in the chains of man and fettered in the shackles of the grim monster death! Feeble man bound the

body, but the deathless spirit, unchecked by prison walls and galling fetters, had ascended to the throne of Him who judgeth the just and the unjust. Bernardo might apply the tortures now, for the God of justice had removed the soul, and nothing was left but what was food for the cruel worms!

Eugene and the dwarf gazed in silence upon the form before them, until at length Uglino said,—

"Well, it is all over now, and another victim has escaped that black-hearted man. We can do no more here; let us depart."

They left the body lying as it had fallen, and retraced their steps to the open air. The storm had to a great extent abated, and the moon was riding high above the turrets of the prison. Eugene bade Uglino good-night, and each, to avoid detection, took a different route and sought his respective home: Uglino to meditate revenge against Bernardo, and Eugene to think over the miseries he had seen.

The next morning Eugene visited his friend Frank Morton, whom he found busy with his pencil, and to whom he related all that had occurred on the previous evening.

"It is somewhat strange," said Frank, "that here I have been for two long years and have been totally ignorant that beneath the smooth surface of society there exist so much misery and tyranny. Can it be possible that you have been within those awful walls and have beheld with your own eyes what you have narrated?"

"It is as true as I am alive," replied Eugene; "but come, tell me what I am to do. If I remain here I must either kill or be killed."



"I shall be sorry to part with you, Eugene, but I think it prudent that you should leave Florence for awhile."

Having consumed the morning in pleasant conversation, Eugene returned to his room to make preparations for his departure. After tea he resolved to pay one more visit to Simonetta Pitti and bid her farewell. He found her low-spirited and sorrowful, and with traces of tears upon her cheeks. He spoke to her in a light and jesting manner, but the more he strove to restore her to gayety and smiles the deeper seemed the gloom that settled over her noble brow, and it was quite evident to Eugene that some deep and gnawing sorrow was working at her heart.

"Oh! signore," she said, after some moments of silence, in which she appeared to be striving with her feelings for victory, "you cannot imagine what I have suffered since I saw you last."

"What is there," asked Eugene, "to mar the peace and happiness of one so good and pure?"

We deem it of very little importance to narrate all that passed between Eugene and Simonetta during this conversation. We will mention, however, that she informed Eugene how Bernardo had threatened her with the death of her father, how he had uttered bitter words against Eugene himself, and how she had suffered from them both. Eugene, in turn, told her that her father was no more, that he had seen his eyes closed in death, that his dying words to her were—"beware of Bernardo."

Upon hearing of her father's death Simonetta was sorely grieved. She had never mentioned the subject

to her mother, for she feared that by so doing she might awaken new hopes only to be blighted, and open afresh wounds long since healed and almost forgotten. From her heart she thanked Eugene for his kindness and disinterested friendship, and when she learned that he was going to leave Florence, perhaps never to return, she could no longer restrain her warm nature, but cast herself upon his manly bosom and, like a child, wept. What feelings must have swept through his breast when he beheld those dark eyes bathed in tears upturned to his, and felt her breath, sweet as the perfume of flowers, upon his cheek! It was a spell from which he felt that he must extricate himself. He gently led her to the window and begged her not to think of him, a wanderer in a strange land, surrounded by enemies, and over whose pathway hovered naught but misfortune and sorrow. He promised never to forget her, and bade her an affectionate farewell. When Eugene left the parlor Simonetta buried her face in her hands and gave vent to her feelings in tears. The moon had just arisen, and Simonetta, watching the retreating form of Eugene, saw him turn once more towards his favorite stroll along the Arno.

The banks of the river were lined with beautiful olive-groves, and Eugene had not proceeded far when he thought he beheld a dark object moving in the distance. He paused to satisfy himself, and, thinking that he was mistaken, renewed his walk in the same direction in which he saw the object. About sixty yards ahead of him was a thick cluster of olives, and by the time Eugene reached this point he was so absorbed in thought that he was unmindful of everything about him. He



was moving slowly along, with his head down, when he heard a rustle among the leaves, and, lo! a man leaped forth upon him like a tiger from the jungle, and his dagger gleamed brightly in the moonlight. Eugene darted forward like an arrow and escaped the blow. His antagonist rushed fiercely upon him to renew the stroke, and wounded Eugene slightly in the arm. In an instant Eugene leveled his pistol at his foe and fired. Its clear report rung out on the still night-air, and Bernardo the priest fell with a groan to the earth. It seemed to Eugene that the sound of that pistol-shot would never die away. It rolled along the smooth surface of the river and was echoed back from the distant hills. Then the dogs awoke and made the night hideous with their yells and howls.

Simónetta was still standing by the window when the pistol was fired, and, when the report reached her ears, fled in terror to her room, for something whispered to her that death was near the palace gate.

Eugene coolly replaced his weapon, and knowing that the sound of fire-arms was so unusual in the city, and fearing that he might be detected by persons coming to investigate the cause, hastened from the scene and sought the room of Frank Morton.

They deemed immediate flight both wise and prudent, and Frank despatched his servant to Eugene's room for his trunk. In three hours all the necessary arrangements were made, Eugene having that day fortunately purchased him a horse. Frank's servant was to meet him without the city, therefore, having packed what clothes he wanted, he bade Frank farewell and took his departure from Florence, with sorrow in his heart and blood upon his hand.

## CHAPTER X.

There is a glorious city in the sea.  
The sea is in the broad the narrow streets,  
Ebbing and flowing; and the salt sea-weed  
Clings to the marble of her palaces.  
No track of men—no footsteps to and fro  
Lead to her gates. The path lies o'er the sea,  
Invisible; and from the land we went,  
As to a floating city—steering in,  
And gliding up her streets as in a dream,  
So smoothly, silently—by many a dome  
Mosque-like, and many a stately portico,  
The statues ranged along an azure sky;  
By many a pile in more than Eastern splendor,  
Of old the residence of merchant kings;  
The fronts of some, though time had shattered them,  
Still glowing with the richest hues of art,  
As though the wealth within them had run o'er.

ROGERS.

BEFORE entering into the details of this chapter it may not be amiss to present a few remarks upon Venice and its location, that the reader may comprehend more clearly the incidents mentioned in the following pages. The origin of the Venetian Republic must be dated before the beginning of modern history. Its downfall fills the darkest pages of the later annalists. The Venetian power was located at Venice, and, from its geographical position, long maintained its supremacy and integrity not only against the powerful attacks of the Slavonians, but also against the piratical encroachments of the Saracens, the Normans, and the Greeks. Venice is

situated on the Adriatic, and anciently consisted of four small towns—Grado, Caorlo, Malamocco, and Pales-trina. The zeal and bravery of a distinguished citizen, Angelo Participazio, aroused his countrymen to arms, and by this means repelled the forces of Pepin, which had subjugated Malamocco. His fellow-citizens, grateful for his noble daring and brilliant achievements, elevated him to the ducal throne, and during the eighteen years of his successful reign those four towns were united into one town, called Venice. It was during his prosperous sway that the body of St. Mark was brought from Alexandria and deposited within the palace. The lion of St. Mark soon became the national ensign, and was emblazoned on the Venetian standard. The sixty islets surrounding the Rialto were united by bridges, the canals were deepened, and Venice became the proud and haughty mistress of the sea. From the period when Alaric, at the head of his Gothic hordes, struck terror throughout the whole of Italy, Venice was filled with a hardy and industrious people.

"She was a maiden city, bright and free;  
No guile seduced—no force could violate;  
And when she took unto herself a mate,  
She must espouse the everlasting sea."

But with all her pride and wealth, her beauty and magnificence, her power and influence, she yielded to the sad mutations of time, and her historic page is blackened by the foulest deeds and the darkest crimes that could disgrace the annals of a republic. Every canal has a history full of death, every palace has been stained by human blood. Citizens, old and young, noble

and ignoble, disappeared, and none dared whisper forth their doubts, lest they should be borne to the ears of the dreaded "Ten." Under their potent sway the most lovely city of the earth was draped in gloom, and every individual, whether masked or unmasked, was fearful that even his thoughts would condemn him. To appear before that secret council was worse than death. The accuser never faced the accused. There was no revision to their decree.

The palace of St. Mark is connected with the prisons by the "Bridge of Sighs." Over this fatal bridge the culprit was dragged, to be immured in a dungeon beneath the water if in winter, or beneath the leaded roof if in summer-time. Upon the splendid square of St. Mark the citizens met to celebrate their festivals. Few, however, attended on these occasions without a mask, and this ancient custom prevails at the present day. The tyranny and cruelty of her rulers struck a fatal blow to the city and to the republic. The beauty of the former still lingers, and we sigh over its departed greatness; but the glory and grandeur of the latter has grown dim amid the fierce revolutions of ages.

It is indeed a gorgeous sight to behold those splendid temples and palaces, stained and tinged by the lapse of ages, rising from the water and casting their shadows over its surface. It is indeed a beautiful sight to watch the graceful movements of the swiftly-gliding gondolas, and it is delightful to listen to the song of the gondolier rejoicing on his way.

It was to this lovely city, whose history is flooded with the spirit of romance and the legends of love and woe, that we accompanied Col. Lanier and his daughters

Fanny and Lily. They had been in Venice but a few days, when the young ladies were introduced, by Col. Lanier, to a gentleman whom the Colonel called his particular friend. He was an Englishman—his name was Captain Henry Harris. He was somewhat advanced in life—being somewhere between thirty-eight or forty. He was a large man, with a marked tendency to corpulency. His hair was black and straight, and, being kept well oiled, hung in strings about his brow. His face was red, and his eyes large and prominent. It was evident that the Captain was one of those who had practiced no self-denial in the indulgence of his appetite and gratification of his desires. His manners were polished, and his mind was stored with information picked up while mingling with London society, or associating with those who frequent the principal cities of Europe. Captain Harris, in fine, was out and out a man of the world. He had knocked along thus far in life without obtaining a wife, and it was now understood that he would adopt any means and yield to any policy which would be likely to bring him that essential requisite to his wishes and comfort. Col. Lanier was highly pleased with his new acquaintance, and admired him as much for the elegance of his manners as he did for his dexterity at cards. These two men, though their dispositions ran parallel in the main, yet in many of their minor traits greatly differed. Col. Lanier was ardent and impetuous; Captain Harris, phlegmatic and deliberate. The least exciting cause would materially disturb the equanimity of the Colonel; while amid the greatest tumult and confusion the Captain was unmoved. The Colonel exhibited his wrath in high-sounding words;

the Captain, when most enraged, could smile as sweetly as when fortune turned his cards. It was his policy never to be thrown off his guard, and he found that this resolution had conducted him triumphantly through many a scene of danger and of risk. His conversation was low and soft, and those who knew him not regarded him as the paragon of virtue and propriety. This, then, was the man whom Col. Lanier introduced, as his particular friend, to his daughters Lily White and Fanny.

Lily and Fanny had just returned from an evening's sail upon the water, and were seated in their room beside a window that overlooked the grand canal, while away in the distance could be seen the crested billows of the Adriatic rolling on, to break in sparkling foam upon the distant shores of Dalmatia. They had taken this position to enjoy the healthful breeze that floated from the sea; to listen to the splashings of oars and the merry songs of the gondoliers that came wafted up from the canal.

"Well, sister Lily, I am really jealous of you for monopolizing this evening all the attention of Captain Harris. When in your company he does not seem to know that I am near."

This was said in a playful manner by the wild and jovial Fanny.

"I was not aware, until now," said Lily, "that what you say is true; but granting that it is, it speaks slightly for the Captain's politeness, still less for his taste."

"Come, sister," said Fanny, "none of your folly here; but tell me, do you not think the Captain a very entertaining man? He is so gallant and noble in his

bearing, and seems so much at home under all circumstances, that I am sure he has seen much of good society."

"Why, Fanny, from the warmth with which you praise the Captain, one might have reason to suspect you of being in love. You asked me what I thought of the Captain? I will answer you. I regard him as a gentleman who has seen much of the world, both good and bad. I must confess, and yet I know not why, nor how it is, that I am not much pleased with the Captain."

"How can you speak thus," said Fanny, "when you see how father looks upon him, and how polite he is to us?"

"I may be in error, Fanny, in my judgment of this stranger, whom we have known only a few days; but we will see what development a longer acquaintance will bring forth."

We should ere this have mentioned that Fanny's health had greatly improved, and it was hoped by her sister Lily, that a few more weeks would restore her to her usual health and cheerfulness.

Col. Lanier spared neither pains nor expense in ministering to the comfort and enjoyment of his daughters. During the day he seldom left them, and seemed to linger with delight in their company. He was with them on the canals, and accompanied them to the opera and ridottos. The Captain had become almost one of the party. It was evident that Fanny's quick perception had read Captain Harris's motives, and every day showed still more clearly that he was pleased with her sister Lily. By meeting his advances with formality

and sometimes even coldness, Lily kept him at a proper distance. The more she had seen the less was she pleased with him. There was that in the twinkle of his eye that told plainly that all was not right in his heart. Lily had seen of late that Col. Lanier was more frequently absent from his room at night. She knew too well the disposition of Col. Lanier, and his fondness for gaming, and she had but little doubt that Captain Harris was his partner at the card-table. Whenever she permitted herself to think upon it she was troubled and perplexed. But how could she, a poor, feeble girl, accomplish anything by her interference, when her mother's tears, prayers, and sufferings, had failed to work a reformation. It was even as Lily White suspected. Col. Lanier had first met Captain Harris at a gambling saloon. The Captain eagerly cultivated the acquaintance of a man who he flattered himself could be drained of all his money; and on finding him in possession of two lovely daughters, he was determined to play a bold game. His thorough knowledge of human nature soon influenced him to adopt the means most likely to insure the end of his designs. Like a skillful huntsman he spread his net, and day by day rejoiced in his heart in beholding his victim entering unawares into its folds.

Captain Harris had taken a room in the same hotel, and hither every night, after Lily and Fanny had retired, the Colonel went to indulge in that passion which had, to a considerable extent, blighted his fortune and sowed about him the seeds of sorrow and misfortune.

Lily spent the mornings in studying the Italian language, and the evenings in visiting either the opera

or canals. When the weather was unsuited for rowing, Lily and her sister visited the opera; but when it was fair and beautiful, a gondola was chartered, and they went forth in company with the Colonel to enjoy a ride upon the water.

A few evenings after Lily and Fanny held the conversation relating to Captain Harris, they were abroad on the canals with that worthy gentleman and Col. Lanier. The evening was serene and beautiful; the canals were thronged with many gondolas freighted with gay and finely-dressed ladies. Lily was charmed with the scene; and though she had several times been abroad in the watery streets, yet she thought she had never seen the canals more charming and delightful than they appeared on this occasion. They directed the gondolier to conduct them through the main canal, and thence through the one leading beneath the "Bridge of Sighs." The scene was indeed magnificent. On either side rose up toward the skies those gigantic structures whose foundations were deep beneath the water, whose turrets and towering battlements had braved the rage of many a furious storm and successfully withstood the ravages of ages, and exhibited the lapse of time only in a dinginess that overspread their marble fronts. Here were palaces once occupied by those merchant-princes whose wealth and influence had been felt and acknowledged throughout the Venetian Republic. On this side towered a church whose grand Gothic architecture cast a melancholy splendor over the scene. Now they glided gracefully beneath some one of those numerous bridges that span the canals, and then floated on to the music of the guitar and the musical dip

of the gondolier's oar. Before them loomed up the towers and domes of the Palace of St. Mark. There, too, was the fatal "Bridge of Sighs," over whose lofty archway have been led the victims of those cruel times when Venice boasted of her liberty purchased at the price of the blood of her own citizens.

Lily was seated in the prow of the gondola, and, leaning forward, was watching the foam-bells as they danced rapidly away. Fanny had several times cautioned her not to lean too far over the side of the vessel. But Lily did not heed the advice of her sister, either because she did not hear, or else because she preferred to indulge in that reckless kind of sport. The gondola which bore them had reached a crossing, and was darting forward with the swiftness of an arrow, when it was forcibly struck by another vessel meeting it at right angles.

It struck the gondola about four feet from the prow—and, partly from her position and partly from the force of the stroke, Lily White was thrown overboard; while the other gondola was sent quivering back, throwing the gondolier forward upon the deck. Fanny screamed in affright; Col. Lanier was bewildered, and the valiant Captain summoned the gondolier to leap forth and rescue Lily. In an instant, a manly form plunged into the waves, and in another moment Lily, dripping with water, was rescued from death. Having regained his own gondola, the young man apologized for his share of the untimely accident, and cautioned his rower to be more particular in the future how he dashed upon such precious cargoes. Upon finding the young man to be her countryman, Lily said,—

"I am thankful to you for saving my life, for though



our gondola carries a gallant Captain, yet it seems he was going to let me drown rather than soil his dress."

At this a laugh was raised against the Captain which he did not relish; but he felt keenly the playful rebuke, and was compelled to laugh with the others.

"I was," said he, "just preparing for the leap, when I saw this young gentleman plunge into the water, and I thought it might lead to a contention between us as to who should rescue you; and while we might have been debating who owned the preference, all three of us might be drowned; hence I deemed it prudent to yield in favor of the stranger."

"I thank you, sir," said the stranger, "inasmuch as it has afforded me the opportunity to save the life of one who, if I mistake not, was born beneath other skies."

"Again, Miss, permit me to beg pardon for endangering your life and interrupting the pleasure of your evening's ride."

"It is granted, I assure you," said Lily; "and I will ever be under a debt of gratitude for the ready and manly manner which you manifested in rescuing me."

"Can you, sir," said he to Col. Lanier, "give me directions to the residence of the American Consul? I am a stranger in the city, and am from a vessel which has just cast its anchor."

The proper directions were given, and, saluting each other, the two gondolas separated; one to return to the hotel that Lily might change her garments, the other to seek the flag-stone of the American Consul's building.

The reader, doubtless, has surmised the young stranger, who thus gallantly and bravely plunged into the

water to rescue Lily White, to be Eugene Saunders. It was even so; he had safely reached Ravenna on the Adriatic, and having disposed of his horse for a fair price, sent back Frank's servant with a letter of thanks to him for his kindness and friendship, and inquiring whether Bernardo was dead or merely wounded. Finding a vessel just ready to sail for Venice, he engaged his passage, and determined to seek an asylum for awhile within the Venetian Republic. He bore letters of introduction to the American Consul; and the object of his visit when the accident mentioned above occurred was to deliver those letters and to inform the Consul of his difficulties, and to ask his aid and protection.

Eugene thought he had never seen a more beautiful creature than her for whom he had risked his own life. She appeared to him a second Venus from the waves, and her soft, musical voice, and quiet, pleasing manners, produced a strange sensation in his breast which he had never before experienced.

Somehow or other when he sought his pillow that night, his mind reverted to that little slipper which, amid the exciting scenes through which he had recently passed, had been consigned to his trunk and seldom claimed his thoughts. Then came freshly and most vividly to his mind the dream which he had on the night when first he found the slipper, in which he beheld the maiden with the golden tresses and serenely beaming eye. Ah! thought he, how much of that dream has proved true! Then came before him the image of Uglino and the fearful contest with Bernardo the priest. Eugene did not forget Uncle Ben, with his honest, smiling face, nor Aunt Lucy, with all her kind-

ness and goodness beaming in her countenance. By no means: for the gentle splashings of the oars from the gondolas passing and repassing fell upon his ear, awakening remembrances of his far distant home, with its quietude and rural beauties, and its lake stretching away in perfect loveliness.

The moon-beams straying into his apartment, cast a soft and mellow radiance over every nook and corner of its dimensions. Eugene was strangely impressed with the solemnity of the hour, and was confident that a new leaf was about to be turned in the history of his life. But whether it would be a dark and gloomy page, like the one on which were traced those horrid deeds enacted in that very city during the bloody and tempestuous reign of the mysterious "Ten," he could not divine. The gloominess of the hour, with its shadows and silence, seemed to him to argue no good fortune; but the cheerfulness of the moon-beams playing upon the floor aided, to some extent, in softening the melancholy which by degrees came stealing over him. To Eugene it seemed that Fate was impelling him on for some direct and special purpose; but what that purpose was, to him was a sealed mystery. He had been in Italy only a few short months, and in that brief space of time he had not only incurred the displeasure of the Church of Rome, but his own life had been endangered by a secret and deadly foe. Incidents, strange and unexpected, met him at every turn, and go where he would he could not escape them. He had not been in Venice more than an hour, when he rescued a beautiful creature from death, and now he was burning with a desire to know more of her than he was willing to confess. With

thoughts such as these floating through his mind, Eugene went to sleep and dreamed that he was a valiant and noble knight, armed with sword and lance, and clad in shining steel, fighting in the sacred cause of love and liberty.

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## CHAPTER XI.

The dearest friend to me, the kindest man,  
The best conditioned, and unwearied spirit  
In doing courtesies; and one in whom  
The ancient Roman honor more appears,  
Than any that draws breath in Italy.

MERCHANT OF VENICE.

ON awaking the next morning, the first thing that claimed Eugene's thoughts was the young lady whom he had rescued on the previous evening from a watery grave. He felt a strong desire to call upon her and inquire concerning her health; but then there were difficulties to be surmounted before that could be accomplished of which he had not at first thought. He was a stranger in Venice, and possessed no knowledge of the maiden's residence; moreover, he was fully aware that his unfortunate affray with Bernardo would soon reach the priesthood of Venice, and that no small price would be offered for his capture, all of which suggested the necessity of great care and prudence.

Eugene bore letters of introduction to Castruccio Castracini, a merchant of considerable wealth and influence,



who held Americans in special favor and guarded their interest with zeal and fidelity. Eugene's first care, therefore, was to seek this gentleman, present his letters, and deposit with him what means he did not expect immediately to use. Dressing himself, he chartered a gondola, and sought the sumptuous palace of Castruccio. He was ushered into a splendid room by a handsome Italian girl, to await the approach of the merchant. The palace of Castruccio was situated upon one of the back canals, and commanded one of the most lovely sites in Venice. From this point any portion of the city could be visited either on foot or in a gondola. The palace was built of marble, and bore every appearance of great antiquity. Eugene did not have to wait long for the merchant, for he had scarcely time to admire the splendor of the room, decorated with magnificent paintings, ere Castruccio entered.

"This, I presume, is Castruccio Castracini, the hospitable merchant of Venice?" said Eugene.

"Si, Signore," answered the merchant.

"My name is Eugene Saunders, and I bear letters to you from friends in Florence," said Eugene.

When Eugene mentioned his name, Castruccio seemed somewhat startled, and his dark eyes rested upon him while he was engaged in searching his pockets for the letters. Castruccio was a man of middle age. His complexion was a rich olive, his hair as dark as the raven's wing, and his eyes soft in their expression and sparkling with animation. Having received the letters from Eugene, he slowly and carefully read them over several times.

"I am pleased to make your acquaintance, sir," said

Castruccio, "and will be most happy to advance your interest or enhance your pleasure while you remain in Venice. You may command me at any time, and you will find me unmindful neither of the friends who recommended you, nor forgetful of my duties to a stranger visiting our beautiful city."

"From my heart I thank you, sir, and must say that I am entirely undeserving the high honor which your kindness and generosity would heap upon me," said Eugene.

"It seems to me that I have heard your name before," said the merchant; "let me see; but impossible, it cannot be. Ah! sir, I remember now;" and taking from his pocket a paper, read, to Eugene's wonder and amazement, an exact description of his person, dress, and manners, with the charge of having not only outraged the Holy Church of Rome, but also of having taken the life of one of its highest functionaries. The article concluded with a binding injunction upon every true and faithful Catholic, upon pain of excommunication, to arrest the heretic and murderer, and to assist in restoring him to justice. Eugene knew not what to do, and was meditating the chances of escape, or whether it would not be better to inform the merchant of the whole affair, and throw himself upon his honor and mercy.

"Are you not the same person mentioned in this document?" said Castruccio.

"I am, sir; and will you be so kind as to inform me by what means you came in possession of that instrument? I am myself directly from Florence, and sped hither as rapidly as the wind and tide could bear me."

"Have you yet to learn," said the merchant, "that the Church of Rome has many ways and means by and through which to convey information, and that a man whose business extends to Rome itself is early sought out to assist in giving information? This letter was handed to me this morning early, and was despatched from Florence by a vessel procured for that purpose. Since you have confessed the affair, will you inform me concerning the particulars?"

Eugene straightway narrated to the merchant everything that had transpired in Florence: how he had been openly insulted by Bernardo; how that black-hearted priest had employed an assassin to take his life; how he had escaped through the timely warning and friendship of Ugolino; how Bernardo had imprisoned Lorenzino Pitti; how he was persecuting the fair Simonetta, and how he had even attempted his life on that eventful night when he was under the painful necessity of acting on the defensive against the bloody-minded priest. Even in recounting the trials and difficulties through which he had passed, Eugene's soul grew warm; his bosom swelled with honest indignation; his eyes flashed, and a glow of crimson mantled his brow.

"I have," continued Eugene, "throughout this whole affair been guided by the purest motives and influenced by the most honorable feelings. In my own native land we are unused to such outrageous and detestable crimes, and, like a man, I have merely shielded a defenceless maiden, a countrywoman of yours, sir, from the unholy advances of a black-hearted villain and an unprincipled scoundrel, who, if possible, would have blighted the honor of the maid and destroyed my own life. I

now, sir, have spoken the truth, and throw myself upon your honor, as a man recommended to me as one in whom I might place confidence."

Castruccio had listened to Eugene's story with interest, and several times manifested considerable emotion.

"Signore, I believe you speak the truth, and you shall have no reason to doubt my will to serve you. I am no Catholic, and though from policy I wage no war against them, yet I know full well that what you say is not only true in your own case, but in many others I could mention. I admire your spirit and generosity, and if you had murdered the whole Church of Rome, it shall not prevent me from assisting you, as you have aided one of our own Italian maidens."

"I thank you, sir, and will endeavor so to demean myself that you shall have no good reason to regret having aided one who needs an adviser in his difficulties, and who is able to pay you for whatever trouble he may cause."

"Talk not of pay, young man; if I can afford you any service, the gratification arising therefrom will more than recompense me."

"Is it not likely," said Eugene, "that there will be spies employed to search me out and deliver me into the hands of the Inquisition?"

"I have no doubt," answered the merchant, "that every Roman Catholic in Venice would recognize you could they meet you unmasked. And it is essential to your safety that you keep your room by day, and when you go forth by night see that you are well disguised."

Just as Castruccio had finished the sentence, the same

charming Italian girl who had announced Eugene entered the room and informed them that a stranger claimed a hearing.

"What kind of a man does he appear, Rosetta?" asked the merchant.

"I cannot tell you, since he is masqued and wears a robe."

"Ha! a robe! Quick, sir, follow me."

The merchant opened a small closet-door, and before Eugene had time to collect his thoughts and overcome his surprise he heard Castruccio lock the door and bid Rosetta direct the stranger to enter.

Eugene's present abode was anything but comfortable. It seemed to him that the dust of ages had accumulated there amid the castaway papers, books, and other useless articles. It was dark as night, and some time elapsed before Eugene could get his breath with comfort.

The stranger entered with slow, sedate, and dignified tread, which bespoke at once cunning, hypocrisy, and avarice. He approached the table at which Castruccio was busily engaged in writing, and saluted him with—

"Good morning, Signore Castruccio."

"Father Pietro," said the merchant; "but before I can have any further words with you, you must unmask. I never transact business otherwise than openly and face to face."

Father Pietro removed the mask, exhibiting a pale, cadaverous countenance, on which ever lingered a hypocritical sneer, doubtless intended for a smile.

"To what fortunate circumstance am I indebted for a visit from Father Pietro?"

"To an unfortunate circumstance," responded the priest.

"How so?" demanded the merchant.

"The sad news has reached me that Father Bernardo, of Florence, was murdered a few evenings ago by a heretic."

"Ah! what sayest thou?" eagerly inquired Castruccio, as if he had never heard of the event before.

"And it is thought the perpetrator of the crime is now here."

Eugene, who was so situated that he could distinctly hear every word that passed between them, trembled when the priest emphasized the word here.

"What meanest thou? Does the holy father insinuate that Castruccio's palace is the harbor for one who has dared to lift his hand in harm against a priest of Rome?"

"By no means, my son; I merely intended to say here in Venice," said the priest.

"How did this misfortune occur?" asked the merchant.

"My informant states that Father Bernardo, as was his custom, was promenading by moonlight along the beautiful banks of the Arno, meditating doubtless upon his holy duties and communing with his own soul that he might the better be prepared to discharge the high and important trusts reposed in him by our Father who art in Rome, when he was suddenly and violently accosted by a young American and shot."

On hearing this vile slander upon his bravery and honor Eugene felt the blood mount to his temples, and his first impulse was to burst the door of his retreat and confront the slanderer with the lie; but, checking his

anger, he determined to hear what more the *holy father* would say upon the subject.

"The crime is indeed a great one," said the merchant. "But what proof have you that it is a young American who is guilty, if the deed was committed at night by the lonely brink of the Arno?"

This, evidently, was a question which Pietro was not expecting, and it was some time before he answered. Finally he said:—

"You know, my child, that Rome has many eyes, and it does not become me as an officiating priest to divulge the ways and means by which we read things which to others are wrapt in eternal gloom."

"You speak the truth, holy father."

"This," continued the priest, "is a grievous injury, and is but an exposition of the views and feelings which rage in the breasts of many in America, to crush out the spirit of Catholicism. Ha! ha! ha! how vain the attempt! When once the Church of Rome gets foothold you might as well undertake to check the waves of the ocean, or to stop the sun in mid-heaven, as to curb the onward march of her victorious career. Like the Nile, whose sources are yet undiscovered, it overturns every opposing difficulty, and, overflowing the land, causes a new, healthy, and productive soil to be deposited, which, under proper management and cultivation, enriches the whole land. But, my son, there is a difference between America and Italy. Here a holy father cannot be killed with impunity. Knowing you to be a friend to the Holy Church I have called to obtain your influence to aid in ferreting out the criminal if he can be found in Venice."

"Father Pietro, you know how much business rests on my hands, but Castruccio is ever ready to lend a hand *when* the laws of humanity have been violated."

The priest seemed satisfied with this answer. Castruccio accompanied him to the door, and when he was satisfied that he was gone opened the closet-door and bade Eugene come forth. Eugene, glad once more to inhale the pure air, stepped forth, covered with dust and cobwebs. So completely was he disguised that Castruccio could scarcely refrain from laughter.

"I am sorry," said the merchant, "to have been under the necessity of thrusting you into that dusty place; but it is better to bear a little dust than the chains of an Inquisition, for the one can be easily brushed off, the other cannot be got rid of so readily. I see from your looks that you are wearied from your confinement."

Castruccio rang a bell, and a servant soon answering the signal was ordered to bring wine and other refreshments. These in a few minutes were spread before them, and Eugene soon recovered from the effects of the closet. He expressed his great surprise how it was possible that men claiming for themselves the name of holy father, and the weighty responsibility of men's souls resting upon their consciences, could thus warp the truth and fabricate a foul and damning slander, in order to gratify a revenge which never should belong to the character of a good man, a Christian, or a church.

Eugene and Castruccio passed the morning together; the former telling of his native land, the latter giving a history of his various investments. They grew, in that short morning, to be mutual friends. Castruccio admired Eugene for his modesty, intelligence, and frank-

ness; and Eugene was favorably impressed with the placid smiles, the quiet manner of conversation, and the benevolent expression of Castruccio's face.

Every arrangement was planned for the safety and protection of Eugene.

"Now, remember," said the merchant, "do not hesitate to call upon me for assistance whenever you may need my services."

"I shall certainly not forget that I have a friend so true and noble in Venice," answered Eugene.

"Call upon me often," said the merchant, as Eugene was departing.

"I will avail myself of that pleasure; and now, sir, I again thank you for what you have done in my behalf this morning, and believe me that you have the warmest feelings of a stranger's heart for your peace, happiness, and prosperity."

With this they shook hands, and Eugene departed for his room. This was at a time of day when not many persons were abroad in the streets or on the canals. Consequently, Eugene run little risk of detection in returning to his hotel unmasked. Eugene consumed the rest of the day in writing to his absent friends. Among his letters was one to Frank Morton, which ran as follows:—

VENICE, May, 18—

MR. FRANK MORTON:

My dear friend:—Since I shook your honest hand it is impossible for me to describe my feelings. Doubtless, Caorlo has informed you ere this of the particulars of our journey as far as Ravenna.

When I saw the spires and domes of Venice gilded by the rays of an evening sun, I flattered myself that I would find beneath the power of Austria a safe retreat from those scenes of excitement and danger through which I have recently passed. But, alas! it seems that my unlucky star is in the ascendant, and though there is an occasional gleam of hope breaking in upon my soul, yet soon all again is wrapt in gloom. This is the second day of my residence in Venice, and I am as well known to the priesthood of this city as if they had been acquainted with me for years. How think you, Frank, they have it here relative to my unfortunate affair with Bernardo? That I broke in upon his pious meditations while he was enjoying his peaceful walk upon the bank of the Arno, and murdered him! Now is this not too much for a man to bear? But how can justice be procured in this land, blighted by the power of Rome, where every man is under the influence of a priest whose heart is as black as the principles he inculcates, and whose motives are as impure and unholy as the religion he pretends to teach? Here I am, a free-born son of America, a prisoner in my own room, unable to stir except under a close disguise, and not even then until the shades of night have settled on the world. My pathway is beset with enemies whose power is rivaled only by their meanness, and whose cunning is equaled only by their hypocrisy.

How it will result God only knows. I am forced into the current of events by some mysterious power, and come what will I am resolved to face every danger and overcome every difficulty, else perish in the attempt. Often and oft I have wished that I was again by the

broad and quiet hearthstone of my own distant home, which, even as I pen these lines, rises before my mind,

———"Like an oasis in the desert,  
Star of light, spangling the dreary dark of this world's night,"

where, undisturbed by enemies and uninterrupted by passion, I could pursue at pleasure those studies which are congenial to my taste, and follow those inclinations which conduce to my peace and happiness. I am heartily tired of the pomp and splendor of the old world, and long once more to sail upon my own beautiful lake, to follow my faithful dogs through tangle and brake, to gaze upon the serene and lovely skies of my own native land, and to feel that beneath the "stars and stripes" my life and property are safe from mortal foe. Do not attribute this desire to an unmanly spirit unless you wish to wrong me, for I say it with modesty, yet with firmness, that I never yet feared an open, manly foe; but to be hunted like a beast of prey by a pack of cowardly knaves who have the power in their own hands, and with the foul suspicion of murder resting on one's head, is galling to the feelings of a brave man.

But, my friend, amid all my misfortunes I have reason to write myself a lucky fellow, for only yesterday evening, within an hour after my arrival, it was my good fortune to rescue from a watery grave a lovely maiden, and one, too, of my own country. I have seen nothing of her since except in my mind's eye, where she has dwelt like a fairy, giving new impulse to my nature and spanning the gloom which surrounds me with a beautiful bow of promise, which, alas! may be dissolved by the first adverse wind and vanish to be seen nevermore.

But I find I am growing sentimental, and, asking your pardon for thus long trifling with your precious time, must close this desultory epistle.

Letters for me you will please direct to Castruccio Castracini; and do not forget to remember me to the beautiful and noble-hearted Simonetta, and to Uglino, the dwarf, should you perchance meet him in your rambles.

I have not the language with which to thank you for your kindness to me, and now believe me that I shall ever remain,

Your friend,

EUGENE SAUNDERS.

To FRANCIS MORTON,

Florence, Italy.

## CHAPTER XII.

No thought within her bosom stirs,  
But wakes some feeling dark and dread;  
God keep thee from a doom like hers,  
Of living when the hopes are dead.

PHOEBE CAREY.

IF Eugene was haunted by the image of Lily White, she was no less under the influence of that strange and indescribable feeling which sooner or later visits the bosom of every individual. She was completely captivated by the manliness and bravery of her preserver, and since that unfortunate event of the canal he had



not only been in her thoughts during her waking hours, but had even been present in her dreams.

A few hours later, on the same evening that Lily had returned to her room dripping with water, found her and Fanny Lanier seated upon the balcony that overhung the Grand Canal. This was their favorite retreat, because here they could, unobserved, notice everything that was passing below, and could enjoy to a better advantage the sea-breeze that floated from the far-off shores. Moreover, they could here converse freely together upon all those little incidents which contribute largely in the making up of the perfect happiness of the softer sex.

"Sister Lily," said Fanny, "what is the matter with you, this evening? I never saw you so dull in all my life, for here have we been sitting for full half an hour and you have spoken scarcely a word. Come, if you don't rouse yourself I shall accuse you of grieving after your heart, which you lost this evening!"

"Pshaw! Fanny, how idly you talk! Must one's tongue be always going to avoid the imputation of being in love?"

"Lily, dear, you know the gentlemen say when a woman's tongue is silent there is mischief afloat."

"I was only admiring the scene which now lies before us, Fanny. See how beautifully and brightly the dome of yonder palace glitters in the moonlight! Is it not magnificent? And behold, how softly those shadows fall athwart the canal! Hark! hear you not the music borne to us by the gentle zephyrs from yonder approaching gondola?"

"Oh! how happy," said Fanny, "must these Vene-

tian maidens be, and how joyfully must be their lives, passed beneath such charming skies and amid such beauty and splendor as we now, at one sight, enjoy!"

By this time the gondola which Lily and Fanny had seen in the distance glided rapidly by, exhibiting a skillful gondolier. The gondola was of the same dark color that belongs to all, but upon its deck was spread a tent or awning of silk, which fluttered gaily in the evening breeze, while in front of this were seated several maidens playing upon guitars and accompanied by the rich and mellow voices of two Italian gentlemen. The music was divinely sweet, and long after the airy vessel had disappeared it seemed to linger upon the water.

"Ah! Fanny, many a lovely scene has been the arena of revolting deeds, and many a maiden has poured forth the sweetest melody while her heart was nigh to breaking from sorrow and unrequited love."

This sentence was uttered by Lily partly in answer to what Fanny had said, and partly from what she had just seen.

"The next thing I expect to hear from you," answered Fanny, "is, that you intend to enter a convent with the view of taking the veil."

"Sister Fanny, if you love me you will not jest with me when my heart is sorely grieved."

Fanny, although light in disposition, was yet possessed of a warm and loving heart. Therefore, no sooner did she behold Lily's real state of mind than she threw her arms about her neck and wiped the tears from her sister's cheek.

"Forgive me, forgive me, sister dear, if in my folly



and reckless manner I have wounded you. But tell me, Lily, what is it that is thus grieving you?"

Fanny knew not what she asked. For had Lily deemed it prudent to inform her it would have shocked her young and tender nature, and would have sent the blood gushing to her heart. Fanny had never seen her sister so much depressed, and, when Lily avoided her importunities to make known the real cause of her sorrow, did everything in her power to soothe her troubled feelings.

The dejection of Lily White arose not from imaginary, but real causes. But a short time had elapsed after her mother's death ere she had reason to believe that at no distant period she would be compelled to forsake her sister, in order to shield herself from the encroachments of one upon whom misfortune had thrown her for advice, protection, and support. She felt that she was an orphan child, without wealth and friends, and with only the love of Fanny to soothe her in misfortune and cheer her amid sorrows and trials. Her womanly heart soon made her acquainted with the dangers she would encounter and the difficulties she would pass; but never had she breathed her fears to Fanny, and had kept them locked within the secret chambers of her own bosom. She now saw plainly that the storm which had been brewing would soon burst forth, and she trembled for her safety whenever she beheld fresh signs of its approach. Often, while Fanny would be absent from her room, would she sit and weep, and upon bended knee pray God to avert the hand that was raised against her happiness. Just ground indeed did Lily have for fear.

Col. Lanier, from his youth, had never known what it was to be thwarted in his views or plans; and having been so long under the entire dominion and control of those baser feelings which mar human nature and entail many a bitter curse upon mankind, his heart was now hardened against every call of kindness, and was steeled against every generous impulse.

Mrs. Lanier had not been many months reposing in her narrow home, and long ere the grass grew green upon her grave, when the thought crept stealthily and by degrees into his mind of one day making Lily White his wife. At first he endeavored to wage a puny war against that thought, but the exertion had within itself the influence to kindle into a flame what had hitherto existed only as a spark.

His conscience sometimes raised its feeble and plaintive cry against the indulgence of a passion which outraged every noble and honorable principle, violated every sacred feeling, and utterly destroyed the sanctity of a trust reposed in him by nature and love; but when he beheld the beauty and grace of Lily, witnessed the meekness and amiability of her disposition, and listened to her soft and silvery tones ringing in his ear, that "still small voice" was silenced, and his soul was kindled with a desire akin to that which first he felt for her mother when in the vigor and warmth of youth.

Since his arrival in Venice he had yielded entire sway to his propensity for gaming, and in his associate Captain Harris, had found one who was in various respects his superior. Col. Lanier had seen too much of the world not to have noticed that Captain Harris was interested in Lily White, and doubtless this had influenced

him to hasten toward the accomplishment of that design which had long filled his mind, but which till now he had not possessed the hardihood to prosecute. Accordingly, a few hours previous to the time when the sisters were seated on the balcony had afforded him an opportunity to make known to Lily his wish.

Fanny was out, enjoying her accustomed evening ride, in company with the Captain, Lily remaining in-doors to finish a garment upon which she was engaged, when Col. Lanier unexpectedly entered the apartment and confronted the trembling girl. To poor Lily it was a moment of horror, for the altered conduct of her guardian had awakened fears which haunted her day and night.

It is quite impossible to describe the feelings of Lily when the real object of the visit was made known. Col. Lanier was himself much confused, and with considerable embarrassment stammered forth something of an apology for interrupting her in the pursuance of her labor.

He informed her how much he had regarded her since she was a prattling infant, how he had loved her as his own child, how tenderly he had guarded her interest and cherished her as he would have done a beautiful flower. Like a shrewd diplomatist he told, in a sympathizing tone, of her condition in life, delicately hinted at the great debt of gratitude she was under to him, and finally concluded by asking Lily if she could not find it in her heart to reciprocate a love pure and undefiled.

"Remember, Lily, my kindness to you throughout your past life, and let not the difference in our age be urged as a barrier to the dearest object of my life, for you have every reason to know that I would be as indul-

gent as a husband as I have been as a father. Many a maiden younger than yourself has happily wedded a man older than myself."

While Col. Lanier was addressing Lily she sat pale and silent, with her eyes bent in grief and shame upon the floor. When he had finished the blood mounted in a crimson tide to her brow and cheeks, and giving vent to her feelings in tears, she said:—

"Oh! sir, you know not what a wound you have inflicted upon my heart! Col. Lanier—for I can never, *will* never again call you by the holy and sacred name of father—deem me not incapable of ever forgetting the kindness which you have shown me, nor ungrateful for the interest you have exhibited toward me and mine. Could I cease to remember these I should be forgetful of myself; but all your kindness and sympathy cannot outweigh the sorrow which you now bring upon a weak and defenceless orphan child. Would you boast of those favors as a price which is to purchase my happiness and love? Oh! sir, I have looked upon you as a father; and as such have confided in you. By the proposition you have made, you not only insult me, but the memory of my sainted mother. Go, sir; leave me; I loathe you as I do a viper, and can never more respect the man who can violate every principle of honor and trample under foot the feelings of one who has been to him a daughter, and even wrong the memory of the dear departed."

When Lily finished she trembled with excitement, and had unconsciously risen from her seat. Her eyes sparkled with indignation, and her heaving bosom indicated the raging of a storm within which no language could portray.

Col. Lanier was for once daunted. He did not expect the affair to take such a serious issue. He looked upon Lily as one of the mildest-tempered creatures living, and was therefore astonished when she turned upon him with so much vigor, truth, and spirit. He was prepared to expect a flood of tears; but on beholding the flashing eye and agitated frame of Lily he was as much surprised as if a magazine had exploded about his ears. Being ignorant himself of those lofty and noble feelings which belong to a delicate and refined mind, he had no idea that they existed in any other nature. To him love was another name for speculation. He flattered himself that any repugnance Lily might have at first to such a union could easily be overcome by kindness and promises of wealth and station. He had never analyzed the difference between true love and warm desire; between that holy flame which mantles the cheek with rosy hues, lights the eye with a heavenly gleam, and fills the soul with exstastic joy, and that feeling which writes dishonor upon the maiden's brow, stamps sorrow upon her heart, and opens for her an early grave, cold, dismal, and cheerless! Of the gentle and happy influence of the former he was ignorant; with the wild and turbulent character of the latter he was well acquainted. Finally, Col. Lanier gained sufficient mastery over his feelings to reply.

"Indeed, Lily, you talk like a child; as if I had done you a great wrong instead of a great honor. Is it an outrage that I should proffer you my love and make you the sharer of my wealth and influence?"

"Col. Lanier," replied Lily, "I will hear no more

upon this unpleasant subject. You will oblige me, sir, by leaving me."

"What!" said he, "am I to be repulsed, insulted, and ordered from the presence of a girl whom I have raised? Know, Lily White, with whom you have to deal! I am not to be thwarted in my desire, and I will for once exert that authority which rests in me. You shall obey."

"Sir," said Lily, "have you forgotten the promise which you made to my poor mother upon her solemn deathbed, that you would be my protector; that you would shield me from the rude winds of adversity and guard me from evil all the days of my life? Have you forgotten that promise? Would you now, here, far from the friends of my youth, in a strange city, raise against my happiness the hand that should protect me? It cannot be; you must be under some magic influence. I will not believe that you, who have been so kind to me, can desire to mar my peace of mind and break in upon the tranquillity of my life."

"I have not," said Col. Lanier, "forgotten that promise, and the union I propose will the better enable me to fulfill that vow. I have in no manner violated the trust reposed in me. I have protected you through your girlhood, and now that you are a woman I offer to be your guardian through life. What say you now, Lily?"

"That I will never," said she, "become your wife. Rather than call you husband, I would lead a lonely life and drag out the remnant of my days in poverty and want. I am a poor, delicate girl, I know; but my trust is in Him who careth for the widow and the

orphan, and He will build up my strength and enable me to overcome all difficulties and triumph over all my enemies. I have ever been obedient to you, but before I will obey you in this I will cast myself into the canal and let my body be drifted to the sea, a prey to the monsters of the deep; and unless you wish to drive me mad, you will never mention this subject again."

"Lily White, hear me once for all. I am not to be trifled with in this foolish manner. Choose you, therefore, between two evils. You either marry me, or forthwith enter a convent."

"Neither the one nor the other will I do. I intend to confer my hand upon one whom I can honor and love, and, as a Protestant, I will never submit to the confessional, genuflexions, and mockeries of the Romish faith."

\* \* \* \* \*

This conversation, so harrowing to the soul of Lily, was interrupted by the merry voice of Fanny below. Col. Lanier hurriedly left the room, and Lily had barely time to master her feelings, when Fanny entered.

Is it strange, then, that Lily did not wish to make her sister acquainted with the cause of her suffering; when by so doing she would mortify her and injure her father in her eyes?

Lily suppressed her feelings by degrees, and changing the subject of their conversation spoke of their past lives: how joyous and happy they were when walking together on those calm and balmy evenings, gazing out upon the broad and majestic prairie, or galloping in glee over its smooth and flowery surface. Those days, alas! had flown, while in their stead remained only the fond

and cherished remembrance of those hours which, amid the darkest storms of life, would ever glow as bright beacon-lights, that no sorrow could dim and no misfortune extinguish.

"Oh!" said Lily, "how I long once more to behold the sun go down as on that evening when our mother died; to inhale the breeze from the distant gulf, laden with the aroma of flowers; to listen to the song of birds, and the low, sweet murmur of bees; to watch the clouds floating up from the far-off horizon; to caress honest Charley, my pony, and to kneel once again by our mother's grave! But, sister Fanny, something whispers to me this will never be, but that clouds of gloom and sorrow will gather over me, and that my pathway will be amid strangers, darkness, and misfortune."

"Sister Lily, you are not well. I am fearful that your mind is somewhat wrong, else how could you talk as you just have done."

"Have no fears of that, my dearest sister," said Lily; "you know that many have often been impressed with the approach of calamity, and even death itself,—and they both have come. Life is yet a great mystery, sealed from human wisdom and science. Some there are who seemed to have been gifted with prophetic power, which enabled them to gaze into the future and unravel only as much of that mystery as related to themselves. I do not say that I am one of those, but this I *know*, my kind, sweet sister, that a dark wing is hovering over me, and even now its shadow is on my heart."

"Lily, do not talk thus; but come, let us retire to our room: rest and sleep may restore your peace

and spirits. You are so good and kind to everything, that I am sure nothing can come to you but what will bring you joy and perfect happiness."

"But ere we go, tell me, Fanny, if any misfortune should arise which will be the means of separating us, will you remember your poor sister Lily, and often pray for her? Will you, my gentle sister, forgive wherein she has erred, and cherish whatever of good she has done?"

"How can you ask such questions, Lily? You know how dearly I love you, and I could not if I would forget your kindness and your love. Give yourself no more trouble, Lily; you will be better to-morrow, and then we will laugh and sing as we have often done before."

With this Fanny kissed the noble and beautiful brow of her troubled sister, and they left the balcony; Fanny to her maiden dreams, and Lily, in the silence of the midnight hour, to think upon all that day had revealed and to meditate upon those trials which were beginning to becloud the future of her life.

\* \* \* \* \*

It is now time we should return to Eugene Saunders, whom we left seated in his room inditing letters to his absent friends. He had not been long engaged when a little incident occurred which served to interrupt his pleasant duties. He was seated quietly by his table when his attention was drawn to a cautious rapping at the door of an adjoining room. At first it was so low and indistinct that he thought it was at his own door, but listening more attentively he soon discovered his mistake. To a man situated as Eugene was the slightest cause was sufficient to arouse his suspicion and to place

him upon the defensive. The raps which he heard were not those of a man whose business was correct and proper, but of one who wished to be cautious, prudent, and secret. Instinctively this thought flashed through Eugene's mind, and at once influenced him to ascertain the cause, if possible, of this sly manœuvre.

The space of about six feet separated his door from that at which the individual stood, and silently approaching his door he cautiously peeped through the key-hole. By this time the one opposite opened and Eugene distinctly heard the person who opened the door say:—

"Is it you, Father Pietro? I had almost given you up. Walk in and have a seat."

Eugene thought he recognized the features of Col. Lanier, but was not certain, only having seen him once, and then, as the reader doubtless remembers, under peculiar and exciting circumstances.

"Well," said he to himself, "what can be the meaning of this visit. Wherever lurks a priest there is sure to be foul work on hand, and inasmuch as they watch me, I suppose tit for tat is fair. I'll see what is to pay."

Thus soliloquizing he slowly opened his door and crept silently to the one adjacent, and, placing his ear at the key-hole, listened to what was passing within.

A table was drawn to a convenient place in the room of Col. Lanier, on which was placed a decanter of sparkling wine and two glasses. The Colonel graciously greeted Father Pietro, and seemed anxious to gain his good will.

After a few common-place remarks, Father Pietro said,—

"I received your note this evening, and you see I am

punctual to the hour therein named. I left the confessional to serve you, and hope it may be within my power to benefit you either in a spiritual or temporal point of view."

As he said this his eye glanced at the sparkling wine which stood within his reach.

Col. Lanier saw the motion of the priest's eyes, and asked him to take a glass, saying,—

"It will do you good, father, after your walk."

Father Pietro did not need a second invitation, but filling a glass to the brim turned its sparkling contents off as if he was used to the operation.

"Father Pietro," said Col. Lanier, "I have sent for you to consult with you upon a matter of the highest importance to my peace and happiness. But it is a subject for no other ears save your's and mine. Do you understand, father?"

"I have transacted too much business of this kind not to comprehend your meaning. But before I can make any promise I must hear what the affair is concerning which you wish to bind me to secrecy."

"It concerns a refractory ward and myself only," said Col. Lanier.

"Oh! you wish to bring her to terms, do you?" answered the priest.

"I do, and to accomplish this end I am willing to pay you handsomely for any service you may be kind enough to render."

At this practical suggestion the father's eye sparkled, and a smile lit his ghastly face.

"My ward," continued Col. Lanier, "is a young lady whom I have raised; and, to make a long matter short,

I am foolish enough to have my affections set upon her hand, and she has been still more foolish peremptorily to scorn my offer and to spurn me from her presence. I am bound by a promise to protect and guard her, and I have offered her the means of that support and protection. I informed her that she might choose between myself and a convent. Holy father, join me in a glass of wine."

They emptied their glasses, and Pietro answered,—

"What said she to that?"

"That neither would she do."

"I am afraid," said the priest, "while you have cared for her temporal you have neglected her spiritual wants. She needs, sir, a spiritual adviser, to direct her in the path of rectitude and to teach her submission and obedience."

"That was the reason I sent for you, holy father; to know, in case she would not accept my proposition, whether or not you would take charge of her and teach her the way she should go. The wine is mild, holy father, join me again."

Already Pietro's face was a little flushed from his previous potations, but he quaffed again as if that was his first drink.

"As a holy priest of Rome I never shrink from duties, however unpleasant."

"Think you can accomplish my object?" said Col. Lanier.

"We seldom fail when we have the proper incentives to action. To accomplish the desired result you must grant us discretionary powers. Pious examples may avail nothing in her case, and unless you are willing to



place her under our authority the scheme will likely prove a failure."

"To make her my wife," said Col. Lanier, "is the dearest object of my life, and I am willing, holy father, to leave this matter to your guidance and godly counsel."

Pietro, judging from his looks, was delighted with this arrangement, for, doubtless, he was pleased to have another victim within his power upon whom he might exercise his authority and upon whom he might practice his diabolical designs.

It was agreed between them, over another potation of wine, that unless Lily White agreed to Col. Lanier's proposition she should in two nights from that time be conducted to the convent over which Father Pietro had the supervision and control.

During this conversation Eugene had been a listener at the door, and not a word had escaped his eager ear. He was indignant, and felt every feeling of his young and generous nature rise up against the calm diplomacy of those two men, who thus were deliberately plotting against the peace and happiness of a defenceless girl.

The holy father was now evidently under the influence of wine, for his conversation was broken and incoherent, and he had to a considerable extent put aside that mock gravity and dignity which savored so much of the dissembling hypocrite and cunning priest.

Some time was consumed in making suitable arrangements for the execution of their foul plan, which was to rob a kind-hearted and noble maiden of liberty. At length Father Pietro rose to depart. Col. Lanier opened the door for his exit, and had returned to bring

his candle to light the tipsy priest down stairs, which commenced the descent about two steps from the door. But ere he could return Pietro met with an accident which came near costing him his life.

When Eugene saw Pietro step without the door he could not forego the temptation to teach the hypocrite a lesson, and striking him with all his force sent him tumbling down the stairway, crying aloud for help. In an instant Eugene was within his room. Col. Lanier rushed after the priest, thinking that the holy father had made an unlucky blunder, and, being already topheavy from his frequent libations, had fallen down the steps. Several servants, aroused by the sound of something heavy rolling down the stairway, and hearing the cry of "help! help!" rushed to the scene.

"Oh! my head, my head!" said the priest.

"What is the matter, sir?" demanded Col. Lanier.

"What is the matter!" said Pietro; "why did you knock me down the steps?"

"I, sir? you are mistaken; you are stunned from your fall. You will be better directly."

"Somebody struck me on the head. Oh! my side, my side!"

They conducted Pietro into an adjoining room, and after some further care and attention it was discovered that he was worse frightened than hurt. It is enough, that the holy father had to be conveyed to his room; but whether this precaution arose from the stroke upon his reverend head or from another cause, must ever remain wrapt in mystery. We will only mention, for the sake of the curious, that nobody who saw Pietro credited his story of having received a blow.



"Well," said Eugene, after entering his room, "I have given him part payment in advance. "I am still in his debt for the manner in which he slandered me to-day while I was in that dusty closet of Castruccio's. Maybe I will be even with him yet. I guessed right: there is foul work on foot between those men. I will, if it comes within my power, thwart their plans and save an innocent girl from an unworthy wretch."

### CHAPTER XIII.

Assembling in St. Mark's,  
All nations met as on enchanted ground.

ROGERS.

THE morning following the incidents mentioned in the preceding chapter, was bright, serene, and beautiful. The sun shone forth in all his splendor. Eugene, notwithstanding the lateness of the hour at which he had retired, was up by the time the risen sun had flushed the waters of the Lagoon and tinged the bronzed horses upon the Palace of St. Mark. He walked forth upon the balcony to catch the fresh, invigorating sea-breeze, and to watch the snowy sails in the distance, rising and falling upon the restless billows.

Even at this early hour many gondolas were gliding along the canals in various directions. The gondoliers seemed inspired with a new zeal, and with joy and glee poured forth their songs. Eugene, while he stood gazing down upon the scene, thought he had never before

beheld one so fair and transcendently beautiful: the towers and domes sparkling in the morning sun; the Gothic architecture with its solemn grandeur; the Rialto gracefully spanning the canal; the sails of the distant vessels on the heaving bosom of the Adriatic; the gliding of the gondolas, and the floating clouds purpled and beautified by the first golden blush of morning, presented a magnificent view. Eugene stood charmed—enchanted. He had stood upon the Fiesole,

"Whence Galileo's glass by night observed  
The phases of the moon;"

had lingered in the poetic vale of the Arno; had paused amid scenes immortalized by the pencil of the painter and the pen of the poet; and had beheld spots dignified by the tread of genius and the tramp of victorious armies! He had lifted his admiring eyes to the proud and glittering dome of St. Peter's Church, flashing, like burnished silver, in the evening sun, and had seen it blazing in splendor, illuminated by "four thousand four hundred lamps," until every statue upon that noble structure glowed with beauty and brilliancy. But all those scenes of loveliness and grandeur did not so chain his soul as the one upon which he that morning bent his eyes. In it there was so much of nature's glorious perfection, mingled with an air of Oriental splendor, that it held him captivated—spell-bound.

That was a gala-day in Venice, and the festival was to be concluded at night by a splendid and brilliant fête upon the grand square of St. Mark. Eugene had heard much of those sumptuous and brilliant festivities, hence he resolved to attend. After breakfast he set out to

pay a visit to his friend Castruccio, to whom he intended to report all that had transpired on the previous night, and to ask his advice relative to a matter which he considered of vital importance both to himself and others.

Eugene was not met at the door by the charming Rosetta, but found in her place a tall waiter, who ushered him into the same room he had occupied on the previous day. Castruccio, with a pleasant smile and kind words, welcomed Eugene.

"I am delighted to see you this morning, Signore Saunders! Hope you have been well since we parted, and that you have entirely recovered from your brief imprisonment yesterday?"

"I am sound again, I thank you," said Eugene; "but doubtless that is more than the individual can say who caused my confinement."

"What!" said Castruccio, somewhat alarmed, "you do not mean to say that you have seen Pietro since you left my roof?"

"I have," answered Eugene.

"And have had a difficulty with him?" eagerly asked the merchant.

"No, sir, not exactly that; but the opportunity presented itself, and remembering his foul slanders against my honor and bravery, I let him feel the force of this strong right arm, which sent the drunken hypocrite down a flight of steps crying loudly for help."

"Explain yourself," said the merchant.

Eugene did as requested, and informed Castruccio of all the events which were narrated in the last chapter. When he finished, Castruccio laughed heartily at the droll humor with which Eugene portrayed the fall of

the drunken priest, and the consternation which was created throughout the hotel.

"Well," said Castruccio, "that is worth a considerable sum. I am glad you served him thus: it is no more than he deserved."

"It was not," said Eugene, "strictly speaking, a mark of bravery to strike a man in the dark; but I could not help it; the inclination came over me in an instant, and before I had time to reason upon the policy and morality of the action, down went the priest."

"You served him right," said the merchant; "but if this affair gets upon the wind, it will augment your dangers and difficulties."

"Has Rosetta returned?" inquired Castruccio of the waiter, who, at that moment, passed through the room.

"She has not, signore," answered the waiter.

"She tarries late upon the canals," said the merchant; "this is a day of festivity, and my daughter, in company with a friend, went forth to mingle with the gay crowd upon the water. To-night there will be a grand masquerade upon the Square of St. Mark, to celebrate the approach of Easter Sunday; will you attend?"

"I desire to be present, but, where all go masked, how am I to know friend from foe?"

"That can be readily arranged," said the merchant; "my daughter and myself will wear a blue badge upon our shoulders."

"And I," said Eugene, "will dress in the character of a cavalier."

Having spent a pleasant hour, Eugene summoned a gondola, and was soon gliding on in the direction of

the Rialto. The canals were crowded with gondolas bearing various devices. Some were covered with flowers, others gorgeously adorned with silken trimmings. Eugene, as he mingled with that vast concourse, could not help reverting to those days in the history of the Venetian Republic when such a scene as that which now was before him was rife with bloodshed and destruction. All now was gay and joyous. The trading saloons exhibited their most brilliant and dazzling wares; the shops blazed with jewels and diamonds; banners floated gracefully from balconies and domes, and fluttered their silken folds in the morning breeze; the bridges were thronged with admiring thousands; handkerchiefs waved from windows, music floated on the air, and the hum of many voices mingled in one mighty concert. At one moment Eugene would meet a gondola filled with lively maidens; at the next, another bearing some proud and haughty Austrian soldier, his glittering sword and epaulettes presenting a striking contrast to everything around. Amid this vast and brilliant scene Eugene passed the morning, and it was considerably beyond noon when he regained his room.

The day passed slowly away. To many an anxious individual the sun seemed to stand still in the heavens, and even to those less interested the hours moved slowly. At length, however, the king of day sunk to rest amid a bank of crimson and golden clouds which borrowed their gorgeous hues from his dying rays. It was such an evening as we might imagine first hovered over Paradise! A few fleecy clouds were scattered overhead, while the bank, toward sunset, was every moment chang-

ing in form and color. Eugene gazed upon those clouds until his fancy caught their glow. Now they would heave themselves aloft in varied and fantastic forms, until a splendid city lay in majestic beauty along the western sky. That was indeed, a faëry city! Its temples were of gold, its streets of silver; and its gates of pearl.

"Was it a reflection," thought Eugene, "of that new Jerusalem, that city not made with hands, eternal in the heavens?"

Now that city blazed as if in conflagration, and melted from the sky!

"Thus," thought he, "do our brightest hopes and our fondest aspirations fade away."

The breeze died away, while the gentle zephyr would not have ruffled the down upon the oriole's breast. Through a rift in the clouds the sun once more darted his last dying ray upon the world, as if in token of a tender farewell and a promise of his return, and Venice was flooded with a mild splendor that cannot be truthfully described. For an instant, the spires, domes, minarets, and steeples of temples, palaces, churches, and convents, caught the glow, and reflected the brilliancy from their summits to the waves below. Here a splendid church, hoary with antiquity, stood forth in bold relief, its marble columns suffused with a flood of light; there loomed up a palace, whose history has been written in blood, casting its gloomy shadow athwart the water. Just as the beautiful twilight,

"That dim uncertain weather,  
Where gloom and glory meet together,"

settled over Venice, every bell in the city sent forth its

rich mellow chime in honor of the approaching festivity. Long did the silvery chime of those bells linger on the air!

Eugene dressed himself as a cavalier, and patiently awaited the hour of his departure. Other thoughts save an idle curiosity were animating his bosom. The image of the fair young girl whom he had rescued from a watery grave was haunting his mind, and he hoped an opportunity would present itself for him to renew an acquaintance which had its beginning under such un auspicious circumstances. Moreover, he had some misgivings that this beautiful girl was the person against whom those two men were plotting on the previous night.

Through the deep and gathering twilight he saw the coming and going of gondolas, and finally set out himself to the festival upon the square of St. Mark.

When Eugene arrived, the amusements of the evening had commenced. The scene that flashed upon him, as he passed through the lofty arches of the palace into the open square, was one of unrivaled splendor! Lights streamed from every window and balcony and flooded the whole court with dazzling brilliancy. As Eugene stepped from beneath the grand Gothic archway that led to the square, he paused in wonder and amazement to contemplate the scene that met his view. At first he was almost blinded by the glare and glitter of the lights, but by degrees his eyes became accustomed to the brilliancy, and he for a moment elevated his mask that he might the better enjoy the noble prospect.

Groups of masks were scattered here and there, some engaged in animated conversation, others promenading slowly backward and forward, occasionally pausing

before some one of the booths to admire the articles therein exposed for sale. Eugene was struck with the number of characteristic representations that passed and repassed before him. Here was a gipsy in a broad-brimmed hat, with a basket of flowers upon her arm; there proudly marched a knight, his armor glittering in the light and his haughty manner proclaiming him to belong to the days of Louis XII. The bold robber mingled freely with the crowd, and passed sir knight without awakening his ire or causing him to elevate his lance. Here was the Turk, the Jew, and the Armenian. Near the spot where Eugene stood a group had halted which particularly claimed his interest and attention. It consisted of four individuals, two ladies and two gentlemen. One of the ladies represented the beautiful and unfortunate Mary, Queen of Scots, the other was appropriately dressed as her attendant. The queen was clad in a black velvet robe, beautifully trimmed, over which flowed a veil almost reaching to the ground. So well did the dejected manner and dress represent the unfortunate Mary, that Eugene, for a moment, almost believed that he saw before him the unhappy Queen of Scotland. The gentlemen who attended them were closely masked. After a short pause the four moved slowly on, and as they passed Eugene he heard the queen say,—

"Yonder cavalier seems lost in this brilliant throng."

"He is arousing his courage," said her female attendant, "to enter the arena in order to win the smiles of some fair lady."

"Ah!" thought Eugene, "how truly have you spoken. I must indeed present a gloomy aspect, if

those ladies can read my heart through a close disguise."

He bent his eyes in the direction where he had last seen the retreating form of the queen, but she was no longer to be seen, and Eugene was once more left to his own thoughts and reflections. As he paused there the whole history of that gorgeous square rose up before him.

He thought of the period when the vigorous and heroic Henry Dandolo, acting Doge, assembled the citizens of Venice to the number of ten thousand on that spacious square, to listen to the proposition of the Crusaders for the deliverance of the Holy Sepulchre; of that time when the enraged citizens convened on that very spot, and, by one unanimous shout, proclaimed Jacopo Tiepolo, Doge of Venice, in opposition to the Council, who held its meeting in the palace and were even then balloting for the election of Pietro Gradenigo.

"This very place," thought Eugene, "which is now all joy, splendor, and brilliancy, has been from time to time, through the lapse of ages, the arena not only of mirth and festivity, but also of riot, confusion, and death. Here did Gradenigo, having collected the nobles and those who were friendly to the Republic, thwart those bold and daring conspirators headed by Boemund Tiepolo; and here, too, were suspended on gibbets the bodies of strangers from France and Spain, in 1618.

"And what deeds of horror," thought he, elevating his eyes to the windows of the palace, now blazing with lamps, "have been committed within these walls! The groans of thousands have been heard within this palace,

and if these dumb stones could speak they could unfold a tale over which humanity would mourn. Here the dreaded Council of Ten issued their powerful decrees, which no prayers, no tears, no power, could overcome. Here it was that the old Doge Foscari was compelled to sit in judgment upon his only surviving son, Jacopo, who had been dragged before that august tribunal to gratify the hatred of that body and to embitter the few remaining days of his father. Oh! what must have been the struggle of that old man, when he beheld the stay and support of his declining years, and the only survivor of his house, stretched upon the rack and subjected to every species of cruelty that human ingenuity could discover or invent! How the blood must have rushed to his heart when he listened to the groans and beheld the agonized features, and saw great drops of cold sweat trickling from the brow of his only boy! How every feeling of sympathy must have been aroused, when he beheld the limbs quiver, the eyes roll back, the muscles of the face convulsed, and the head of the poor victim fall to one side! How hope must have died within that father's bosom when the cry was raised, 'stand back! stand back! water! water! let not the victim die on our hands!' Here it was that that aged man, his heart broken with sorrows, his locks white in the service of his country, his form bending under the weight of years, leaning upon his staff, stepped forth upon this square, and, as the great bell tolled the election of his successor, fell dead of a broken heart. Within the prison-walls belonging to this palace was cast Francesco de Carrara, together with his two valiant sons, all three of whom were strangled by the fearful string."

These things passed through Eugene's mind more rapidly than we have related them; and while thus meditating upon the past history of the Square of St. Mark and its palace, he was aroused by a gentle touch upon the arm. Eugene turned suddenly upon the person who had thus unceremoniously interrupted his meditations, and saw before him a young man clad in velvet. His countenance was only half-masked. He had upon his head a black cap, surmounted by a snow-white plume. Eugene could see the lower part of the youth's countenance, and from the well-formed mouth and delicate round chin he argued that the young man possessed no small amount of beauty. His form was round and plump, and, with the exception of a slight awkwardness of manner, he presented the appearance of one whose duty might be to wait upon some noble lady and to assist in bearing her train.

"Sir cavalier," said the youth, "you seem to hold yourself aloof from the gayeties of the evening, and to be lost in your own sad thoughts. Will you step this way? I have a message for you."

Eugene followed the young man into the shadow of the archway, and inquired,—

"From whom does the message come, and who does it concern?"

"The message will explain itself, sir; I know my duty better than to prate idly to a stranger."

The youth drew from his pocket and handed to Eugene a note, which ran as follows:—

"Know, sir, that there are eyes in this throng that can read a face beneath a mask. I know you, and send

this as a warning; your worst enemy is in Venice—perhaps even here—*beware!* A look, a word, a gesture, may betray you into evil hands. Seek not to ascertain from whom this comes, for you will never know. It is sufficient that the writer is your friend, *and would dare be more* if God had not willed it otherwise.

"FRIENDSHIP."

With no little emotion Eugene read this note, and having finished it raised his eyes to ask the page several questions that pressed upon his mind. But he was nowhere to be seen. Like a spirit he had glided away beneath those solemn arches. Eugene's first impulse was to pursue the page and ascertain, if possible, the author of the note, but he soon abandoned that attempt as vain and fruitless. Placing the warning in his pocket he once more entered the brilliant Square of St. Mark and mingled with the crowd. By this time the dance had begun and many were enjoying that innocent amusement. Eugene was in hopes of again seeing the mask of Mary Queen of Scots.

He was slowly passing through the crowd when he heard some one whisper his name, and, turning, beheld a Roman Senator with a blue badge upon his shoulder.

"Noble cavalier, I am glad to meet you. I have been looking for you an hour, and was beginning to think you had failed to come."

"I arrived late, and have been standing within the shadow of yonder arch looking upon this scene."

"That conduct," said the senator, "does not become a gay cavalier, and you must amuse yourself. Yonder sits my daughter; come, let me give you an introduction."



Castruccio left Eugene in company with Rosetta, while he wandered to another part of the square. Rosetta was dressed in the character of Diana. She wore a short blue tunic, extending just below the knee. It was ornamented with silver spangles, representing the moon and stars. Her small delicate feet were incased in beautiful sandals, trimmed with golden brilliants. In her hand was a bow, while at her back hung a quiver filled with arrows. She possessed all the modesty and simplicity that beautify the character of the chaste goddess of the woods. Rosetta was one of those beings that gladden everything they come near. Her laugh was so hearty without being boisterous, her smile so sweet, and her look so arch, that she was an outrageous little coquette without knowing the nature of such a thing.

"Brave sir," said Diana, raising her soft black eyes to Eugene's, while an arch smile dimpled her cheek, "how dare you approach the queen of the forest without the proper acknowledgment? Do you not fear the bow in my hand and the quiver at my back?"

"I think, fair Diana," answered Eugene, "that a cavalier has more to fear from the dimple upon thy rosy cheek and the glance of thy dark eye, than from the twang of your bow or the darting of an arrow."

"Oh! sir cavalier," said Diana, "be cautious how you talk such nonsense, doubtless picked up long ago at the court of Charles the First. Perhaps you have forgotten that once upon a time I converted Acteon into a stag, who was devoured by his own hounds."

"And I pray you to remember the flames of Alpheus," said Eugene.

"I yield," said Diana, "to the wit of the courtier."

"A truce, my pretty queen," said Eugene, "to this idle sparring. Inasmuch as I am a stranger to scenes like this, I must beg of you to be my guide and counselor."

Eugene offered her his arm, and they sought the other side of the square. They were seated upon a settee looking at the dancers and admiring the different characters, when Castruccio again joined them. Eugene was delighted to see Mary Queen of Scots mingling in the dance. There was that same manner of sadness and dejection that Eugene had previously noticed.

"Who," said he to Rosetta, "is yonder graceful lady who represents the unfortunate Mary of Scotland?"

"I am not certain," said she; "but it was whispered to me to-night that her name is Miss White, the step-daughter of Col. Lanier, a countryman of your own. And the lady near her is her half-sister. Why, sir, what makes you start so at the mention of that name?"

"Your father," said he, "can best answer your question at his leisure."

Eugene's eye grew bright. A new and beautiful hope sprung up in his heart, a star had arisen on his gloomy pathway. Oh! if we could bare the human heart and view the mighty conflicts that are raging there, the harp of the poet would be unstrung, and no longer would he touch its strings in praise of Marathon or Waterloo! There are times when the rattle of musketry and the roar of cannon are drowned in the beautiful songs of peace; when the bloody field blooms with flowers and brightens with golden grain; when the shrill clarion is laid aside for the shepherd's pastoral pipe; when the shining blade is converted into the peaceful plough-



share; and when hostile armies rest from the tumults of war and enjoy the sweets of repose! But not so that inner world. The human heart is an arena upon which, every hour and every day, are waged those terrible battles that dim the eye, whiten the locks, blanch the cheeks, and bend the form of man. Passion wars with passion. Hope erects its palace adorned with a thousand beauties, but envy and malice and sorrow trample its graceful columns into the dust, and despair drapes its ruins with a black and dismal pall. Love for awhile exerts its sacred influence and brightens the soul with its celestial glow, but that "green-eyed monster" jealousy enters and extinguishes forever the holy flame. We must ask your pardon, kind reader, for having thus briefly turned aside from the thread of our story.

Eugene determined to keep a strict watch upon the form of Mary Queen of Scots. The dancers paused a moment for the changing of partners, and, asking Rosetta to excuse him, he hastened to the side of the queen.

"Will the fair Queen of Scotland," said he, "accept as a partner in the dance one who would willingly break a lance in her cause or plunge into the waves to save her life?"

"I hope, sir," said Mary, "that you will have no opportunity either for the one or the other. But, sir, how am I to know that your professions are true? The Queen of Scotland stands greatly in need of a friend so good and reliable!"

"By what is in the past and by what is in the future. In me you will find a friend as true as George Douglass of old," said Eugene.

Lily White extended her hand to him. He felt a

thrill of joy when that soft white hand rested confidently in his, and for a moment forgot his own trials in the bliss which he then experienced.

Lily, from what Eugene had said, believed that she was in the company of the person who had saved her life. But she was not positive, and even if she had been she was ignorant of his name. He led her apart from the gay dancers, and sought the shadow of a tall column surmounted by the statue of a saint.

"If I mistake not," said he, "the character you have assumed is in keeping with your feelings."

"You are not mistaken, sir," said she; "the unfortunate Mary, at no period of her life, stood more in need of aid than the one who now stands before you. But, sir, how do you know so much of my situation and state of mind when you are an entire stranger?"

"We have no time for explanation. I see your attendant searching for you. Remember what I say; you are in danger, your liberty is threatened. This night you enter a convent unless you avoid it. Be firm, be true to the noble resolution you have taken, and believe me that in me you will find one who will protect and guard you."

When this warning fell upon her ear Lily White trembled, and her sister Fanny came forward just in time to change her thoughts, and led her to a distant part of the square, where Col. Lanier was awaiting her arrival.

Eugene anxiously watched her retreating form, and for several minutes stood in a state of abstraction. He was aroused by the conversation of two individuals who had sought refuge on the opposite side of the column.

"You came upon me like a ghost. I thought you

were dead, and have held mass and prayed for the peace of your soul. In the name of the Virgin Mary, how came you here?"

"My own inclination," said the individual addressed, "prompted me, and a good vessel brought me hither. My injury was not serious. The ball, grazing my head, stunned me for awhile. But tell me, Pietro, have you heard nothing of the heretic who has raised his voice against the Church of Rome and lifted his arm against the life of a priest?"

"Nothing, Father Bernardo," said Pietro; "and I doubt very much if he came to Venice. We have kept a strict watch out by day and by night, but have gained no word of him. I called upon Castruccio Castracini, who promised his aid, and if he had been in the city Castruccio would have found it out."

"Well, we will see," said Bernardo; "if he is here *I* will search him out. He cannot escape *me*. I have a spy upon his track who is equal to a bloodhound."

"Who is that?" demanded Pietro.

"Ugolino, the dwarf," answered Bernardo.

"Does he belong to our faith?"

"He was born a Catholic," said Bernardo, "and would sell his all in defence of the church. He is true to me, and will exert himself in my behalf. If I am fortunate enough to meet this insolent American, I will settle old scores with him. But, Pietro, that fellow is a brave man, and he who trifles with him runs a risk."

"I will soon have an American in my hands," said Pietro.

"How so?" asked Bernardo.

"There is an old gentleman here who desires to make

his ward his wife. The girl, like a stubborn heretic as she is, positively refuses the old gentleman's gentle proposition; consequently he wishes me to teach her submission and obedience."

"No better teacher could be found," said Bernardo.

"I appreciate the compliment, and flatter myself that I can bring the girl to terms," said Pietro.

"You will have a fine time in breaking this young heretic to the collar, and I almost envy you the task. The old man, however, had better keep a sharp look out, else he will miss the game."

Thus did those two holy men make a jovial matter of a step that was to rob Lily of her liberty and subject her to the control and influence of a man whose garb bespoke the minister of God, but whose actions and conversation indicated the hypocrite and sensualist. Better, by far, for Lily had she died in the purity and innocence of childhood! Better, by far, had she been the daughter of some poor but honest parent, who would have loved and protected her from the evils that lay along the pathway of her life.

It pained Eugene to the heart to hear those men speaking in this light manner of Lily White. His first impulse was to unmask himself and confront the villains, and tell them who and what they were. But, after some deliberation, he checked his indignation, knowing that by giving way to his feelings he would involve the maiden in other and more serious dangers. He left the column by which he had been standing, and again mingled with the crowd.

The night was growing late, and the heavens were by this time overcast with clouds, and the heated atmo-

sphere indicated rain. After a pleasant evening's revel the maskers were leaving the square in groups. Some lingered behind, as if unwilling to quit a scene where joy and mirth had held undisputed sway. Finally the broad square was deserted, and the silence of night brooded there; the four bronze horses that had led the van in so many brilliant triumphs stood upon their lofty pedestals clad in gloom; and the countenance of the saint upon that marble column wore a sad and mournful expression.

The night commenced in joy, but, alas! who can tell what sorrows may arise to dim the eye and blight the hopes ere the morrow's sun shall gild the graceful Campanilè of Orivolo?

Eugene Saunders was walking slowly along the narrow and slippery street that led to his hotel, when he was made conscious that some one was by his side. Upon casting his eyes in the direction of the sound, lo! a hideous creature was within his reach.

"Who is it," said he, "that follows by my side?"

"One whom you have met before," said the person.

"Art friend or foe?" said Eugene.

"Judge the present by the past," the form replied.

By this time Eugene had sufficiently recovered from his surprise to remember what he had heard from Bernardo.

"Uglino, is it you?" he asked.

"Who else has the form and shape of a demon with the feelings and pride of a man?" said the dwarf.

"I am glad to see you, Uglino; but tell me, are you still my friend? I have this night heard that you would search me out with the certainty of a bloodhound."

"Uglino has seen too much of the priesthood not to disguise his real feelings and adopt a policy which will insure his success. But come, young man, follow me, and I will satisfy you. The open street is not the proper place for such deliberations."

"Whither do you lead me?" asked Eugene.

"Where you will be unharmed," replied the dwarf.

Eugene followed the dwarf; and we must leave them wending their way along that dark and narrow street, to turn our attention to other actions, which the reader will find detailed in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER XIV.

I fly like a bird of the air,  
In search of a home and a rest;  
A balm for the sickness of care;  
A bliss for a bosom unblest.

BYRON.

DURING the whole of Lily White's life she had never, until now, known what trouble was. It is true, in the joyous days of girlhood, she had endured the petty trials and sufferings incident to that period of life. It is true, she beheld her mother, whom she loved with true devotion, daily fade away and sink into the silent tomb; but within her bosom was the consoling hope that her beloved parent was in heaven, and that one day she would meet her there to be parted never, nevermore. But until now she had never been called upon to exert her-

self in combatting those fearful dangers which lay ahead of her; she had never known what it was to be left alone in a cold and selfish world, to struggle single-handed against cunning, malice, and deceit; and she had never felt that she was a friendless girl, and that she was compelled to rely solely upon the energies of her delicate nature. She had long been watching the gathering storm that was to overwhelm her, and had been preparing to meet its shock with heroic courage and Christian fortitude. Beyond the present, to her all was darkness. Life stretched away a dreary waste. No beautiful ray of hope enlivened her pathway. No strong arm was extended for her protection. It is true a stranger had encouraged her; but, perhaps, she thought, that stranger was an enemy. But though she was weak and feeble in herself, yet her trust was in Him who stilleth the storm and quieteth the raging of the billows. She confided in His holy promises, and believed that He would deliver her from the difficulties that surrounded her.

When she left the Square of St. Mark, she felt that a great change was soon to come over her life. She was prepared to face the fury of the storm. She was sorely grieved at the thought of leaving her sister Fanny, perhaps never again to see her on earth; but she had firmly resolved to face every danger and to make every sacrifice, rather than submit to the proposition of her guardian.

On their arrival at their rooms, Col. Lanier sought an interview with Lily. Fanny, being wearied from the exercise and excitement of the evening, went to her couch, leaving Lily White and Col. Lanier alone in the

little parlor which had been engaged for the young ladies.

They sat in silence for several moments; Col. Lanier hesitating how he should renew a subject so unpleasant to his ward, and Lily trembling at the thought of what must be the consequences of this interview. Finally he said,—

“Well, Lily, have you determined what course you intend to pursue in relation to the subject about which we last conversed?”

“I have, sir,” said the trembling Lily.

“I hope, then,” continued he, “that your decision is favorable to my peace and happiness. I have now given you full and ample time to think upon my proposition.”

“I neither asked nor desired time to think upon a subject that outrages my feelings and does violence to my respect and honor.”

“You then,” said he, “deliberately refuse obedience to my authority?”

“I do, sir, and scorn you for thus insulting a defenceless orphan girl, the child of her whom you once called wife. I will die before I submit to your wishes in this affair. You may send me to prison, but you can never change my purpose.”

In a fit of passion Col. Lanier walked the room. His bosom heaved, his frame trembled, and his eyes flashed with anger and disappointment. At length he paused before Lily.

“Once more hear me, insolent girl. Long and ardently have I loved you. Upon your hand I have set my soul, and I will not be thwarted. You *shall* be my wife. I will bend your stubborn nature; this night you

shall enter a convent, there to be taught submission and obedience."

Lily burst into tears, and Col. Lanier left the room. Her heart was almost broken, and the poor afflicted maiden sobbed aloud in despair. She was fully conscious of her lonely situation. She knew that she must flee or be imprisoned against her will. Oh! it was indeed a bitter, trying hour to that frail and gentle girl! A thousand dangers rose up before her. She was penniless, far from her dear native land, and in a strange city, without friends to advise or one consoling thought to cheer her amid the darkness of the hour and the dangers that surrounded her. Her whole life passed rapidly before her mind, and the innocence, tranquillity, and joy of her early years presented a striking contrast to what she then was suffering. But she was determined. She arose from her seat and went to her room. Her sister was sleeping sweetly, and a beautiful smile playing on her rosy lips told plainly that her dreams were pleasant. Having secured all the articles of clothing that necessity demanded, she next indited a note to her sister, in which she informed her that her safety had compelled her to fly for protection; that she must think of her often, and remember her in her prayers; that she must guard herself from evil; that she must never forget the time when they romped in maiden glee on the green hill-side, and that she must meet her in heaven. Lily placed this note where Fanny could not fail to see it.

She humbly knelt beside the bed on which her sister slept, and poured forth her soul in prayer. Never did a more earnest invocation go trembling to the throne of

grace, never did a poor child of clay stand more in need of assistance from on high! Here, in this silent room, in the stillness of the solemn night, knelt this maiden, sending forth a petition to her heavenly Father for grace by means of which she might bear her troubles and overcome her difficulties. Here was a scene which should cause the sinner to pause and reflect, and which teaches the most exalted philosophy a lesson. Around this young creature had gathered the black and dismal storm-cloud of adversity, and naught but darkness hovered over her life-journey; but she knew that above the hills, and above the clouds, and above the stars, was one in whom she might confide, and who could lead her entangled footsteps into "paths of peace," and into sunny scenes of joy and contentment. She thought of the many martyrs who had endured the rack and suffered death for the sake of correct principles, and from their heroism she took courage to persevere in the pathway of duty and honor. It was, indeed, a stern necessity. Lily impressed a fond and burning kiss upon the forehead of her sweetly sleeping sister, and upon her pillow dropped a tear of sorrow and regret. Ah! how many lonely hours, and dreary months, and weary years may pass away ere Lily again may look upon that sister's brow! How many tears may flow, and how many fond and cherished hopes may be blasted by that separation! The brilliancy of that eye may be gone, the bloom upon that cheek may be faded, and those raven-like locks, now luxuriantly falling over the snowy drapery of her couch, may be white from sorrows and the march of relentless time. Who can tell? God in his goodness and wisdom has hung a veil over the mysteries of the

future, and man with all his boasted experience and knowledge must meekly confess his ignorance of what the morrow may bring forth. He may turn the telescope upon the heavens and read the distances and magnitudes of those orbs that tremble on the dark robe of night, or he may turn the microscope and note the dancing of a mote or the beings of a drop of water,—but no power of science can calculate the future.

Lily paused at the door and cast a lingering look upon the scene where she had spent so many pleasant hours, and which she was now about to leave in the darkness and solemnity of the night. To her every article of furniture was familiar, and now that she was about to depart, never perhaps to look upon that room again, everything in it was tenfold more dear than she thought inanimate objects could ever be. The tears fell thick and fast, and, closing the door, she hastened with noiseless tread along the dark passage to the steps that led to the street below. That was a fearful struggle for one so pure, so noble, and so good! But the worst was over, and, pale and trembling, Lily stood upon the pavement to collect herself for the difficulties she must meet. The heavens were overcast with clouds; but occasionally the wind changed those floating masses, and ever and anon revealed through some newly made rift a silvery orb dancing in glee on the azure sky. Far away Lily saw one, bright and beautiful, trembling in its loveliness just above the rolling billows.

Straightway her mind was filled with the golden memories of that evening when she and her sainted mother sat on the steps of the portico and talked of the future and of death. So vividly did the memory of that night

come upon her that it seemed but yesterday. She remembered all that transpired upon that eventful occasion: how soft and musical was the voice of that dying mother; how calmly she regarded death, and how sweetly she conversed of heaven; how she promised to be her guardian angel, guiding her feeble footsteps and shielding her from the tempest's blast and from the raging storm. If ever Lily needed a guardian angel, it was now. She was weak in herself, but strong in the belief of the blessed promises of the Bible. The God of the universe had said that he would be a father to the fatherless, and she doubted not his holy word. Though she now stood a frail, fair girl, under a frowning firmament, surrounded by dangers and exposed to the ridicule and insults of the unfeeling, yet she was confident that if He willed it she would be delivered from all these sorrows and tribulations.

Thrice blessed be the promises of the Bible! They illuminate the dark and gloomy pathway of the million of earth's inhabitants; they cast a glow of comfort about the hearthstone of the humble hut amid the mountains, and brighten the palaces of the great amid the flowers of the vales; they throw a brilliant ray athwart the pillow of the dying, and shed a halo of glory over the graves of the departed: amid all the fierce and fiery conflicts of passions they nerve the arm in the cause of truth and justice; they calm the restless soul of man into stillness, and flood his heart with a glorious light from above! Here it is that the poor man, over whose brow the furrows of age are gathering, and who labors from sunrise to gloaming, may grow rich in prospect of a diamond-lit crown more sparkling than the



sun, more dazzling than a universe; here it is that we may look when friends forsake and enemies crowd around us, when bright hopes are crushed and beauteous visions fade, when the pomp and splendor of earth are lost in the dark night of despair, and when the surging and roaring billows of the Jordan of death swell in wrath above us! The student may roam through all the labyrinths of ancient lore and modern wisdom; he may, in imagination, sit beneath the Berna and listen to the eloquence of Demosthenes, or he may be entranced by the honeyed words of a Cicero; yet he will find that there is a something indescribable *within his bosom* which all the learning of antiquity cannot satisfy and which naught but the Bible can supply. When David strings the lyre, the harp of Homer is hushed into silence and the lute of Anacreon is unstrung; the Iliad grows dim, and the Odyssey ceases to glow in the presence of divine inspiration! And when Solomon tunes his voice, the melody of Horace is drowned and the Grecian Anthology withers and dies.

It was to these promises that Lily White now turned. The wind blew rapidly from the south, and gathering her mantle more closely about her she rushed along that narrow street, neither heeding the darkness of the night, the dangers of the way, nor the direction of her footsteps. It was enough for that afflicted maiden to know that she was flying from the influence of a man whom she greatly feared. Ever and anon she paused and looked back, to ascertain whether or not she was pursued. All was silence, save the murmuring of the waves as they broke against the walls, and the distant cry of some belated gondolier seeking the moorings of

his flagstone. At such moments Lily felt her heart almost die within her bosom. What should she do? She knew no one to whom she could apply for aid. Those who have stood at night in the strange streets of a strange city, with huge and gigantic edifices looming up on every side, adding a deeper gloom to the scene, can fully sympathize with Lily White in her present lonely and desolate condition.

Again she hastened on her course. In the distance she saw some one approaching. Hope sprung up afresh in her bosom. She gave the way, and the individual was about to pass by without heeding her, but just as he was opposite he discovered her. His first impression was that the figure before him was one of those unfortunate beings who disgrace the sacred name of woman; but when he beheld the timid and shrinking attitude of Lily, this impression was changed.

"Whither, lady, do your footsteps lead you at this late hour of the night? It is not proper that one of your modest mein should thus expose yourself in these lonely streets."

"Oh! kind sir," said Lily White, "I am a poor unfortunate girl, and I am here to avoid a fate which to me is worse than death."

"It must, indeed," said the man, "be a sad fate that drives you forth to face a night in these streets where the bravest men tread with caution."

"Oh! sir, I am worn and weary; will you protect me? All I ask is this night's shelter; grant me but this, and may Heaven shower the richest blessings upon your head. Oh! good, kind sir, you know not what I have this night endured. If you have a daughter, think



of her being exposed as you now behold me, and forget not what would be your feelings if some kind hand should protect her even for a few short hours."

"Tell me, lady, what has induced you to take this step; confide in me, and you shall not want a friend."

She informed the individual of the cause of her flight. She told him of the threat that had been made against her liberty. The stranger listened unmoved to her story, and, when she had finished, said,—

"Why, young lady, do you object so seriously to wed this man whom you have named?"

"Because," said Lily, "by so doing I should wrong every feeling of my nature, and outrage the memory of my mother. I do not, cannot love Col. Lanier, and I am determined never to offer myself as a sacrifice upon the altar of matrimony."

"Well, you seem to be a brave-hearted young lady," said the stranger; "and if you will share the hospitality of my abode you are welcome. Come, the night-wind blows freshly from the sea, and the hours are rapidly passing away."

Taking the hand of Lily he led her on in the direction she had started. She felt somewhat relieved, yet a vague feeling of fear crept over her. There was something so unfeeling and chilling in the manner of her companion, that Lily knew not whether to regard him as her friend or foe. By this time they reached the Square of St. Mark, now silent and deserted, and, crossing over to the canal, they found a gondola awaiting them. The gondolier had fallen asleep, and it required several hearty shakes before Lily's conductor could rouse him from his slumbers. On awaking he did not

appear surprised at beholding Lily, but immediately shoved his vessel from the pavement, and like an arrow it glided away.

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While we leave Lily White, at one moment floating beneath some gracefully spanning bridge and at the next darting forward into the shadow of some gigantic and solemn structure, let us follow Eugene, whom we left in company with Uglino, the dwarf.

They had proceeded in silence to a considerable distance, each bent upon his own thoughts. At length, on arriving at an humble dwelling, Uglino invited Eugene to enter. A faint light glimmered in the grate, which enabled him to notice the appearance and condition of the room, and he was agreeably surprised to find it neat and comfortable. A plain substantial table stood in one corner, while a low cot occupied another.

Uglino offered Eugene a seat, and at a convenient distance placed one for himself, and began interrogating him in relation to his flight from Florence.

Eugene narrated all the prominent events that had transpired since they last parted. In turn Uglino informed him that great excitement prevailed in Florence on the night of his departure. That a priest of the Holy Church should be thus violently treated, and that too at the hands of a Protestant, the Catholics regarded as an unpardonable crime. Even the more quiet citizens, not knowing the reasons that prompted this violence, were incensed at the bold and daring offender. So soon as it was rumored abroad that a holy father had been shot, the whole city was searched, every accessible building was ransacked, the surrounding country was

examined, and notices were despatched in various directions for the apprehension of the criminal. On ascertaining that the wound was not likely to prove serious, the ball having merely grazed the head of the priest, those who were not directly interested in church matters relapsed once more into the same quiet and peaceful channel from whence they were aroused. But not so Bernardo. He felt that he had been insulted, thwarted. The raging and consuming fires of jealousy were tormenting his soul. He longed for revenge, and no labor, no cunning, no expense, was too much nor too great for the accomplishment of his daring designs. His bosom was a furious volcano, heaving, restless, and burning, and ready at any time to burst forth, spreading ruin and destruction. He firmly believed that Simonetta loved Eugene Saunders, and rejoiced in her heart that the young American had come off victorious and that he was the injured party. To his fiery and furious nature this was more galling than the damage he had received.

"Ah! I wish you could have seen how his eyes glared with malice and glittered with revenge as he laid upon his couch the next day," said the dwarf; "Oh! sir, it did my old soul good to witness his rage and disappointment. I know it was wrong to rejoice in the suffering and sorrow of a fellow-being; but I had seen so much of Bernardo, had beheld him so many times play the sycophant and hypocrite, clad in the dalmatica of the church; had seen so much of his cunning and cruelty, and had felt his ruthless fang fastened in my own heart, that I could not pity him. Ha! ha! ha! how bitterly he reproached me for not having faithfully fulfilled my vow!"

"Did he suspect," said Eugene, "the true state of the case?"

"No, no," answered Ugolino; "he thinks I am too far bowed down beneath the yoke of Catholicism to refuse to do his mandates."

"What became of Simonetta?" inquired Eugene. "Is she safe? Has Bernardo given over his base and unhallowed persecution?"

"She disappeared from Florence, together with her mother, and nothing has been heard of them since. Bernardo hopes that she has fled thither. Ah! old Ugolino's eyes can read what to others remains a mystery. Simonetta is safe, sir, and is even now in Venice."

"How know you that?" said Eugene.

"I am not mistaken. With these eyes this night I saw her upon the Square of St. Mark, mingling with that gay and brilliant throng."

"In whose company was the maiden?" asked Eugene.

"She was conversing with a brave cavalier, and that cavalier was yourself."

"What! Simonetta Pitti in conversation with me? You are mistaken, my friend. I have not seen her since the unfortunate night that I was forced to leave Florence."

"Have you forgotten the young page who led you beneath the archway and placed in your hand a note?"

From the tenor of the note, and the whole manner of the page, Eugene was now clearly satisfied that Ugolino was not mistaken, and wondered how he could have been so stupid as not to have known it before.

"Where, think you," said Eugene, "does she dwell?"

"I do not know; but before the morrow's sun reddens the western hills I will be able to inform you."

"Do so, my good friend," said Eugene, "and let me know immediately. See has twice proved herself my friend, and I would be recreant to every noble principle did I suffer any harm to come upon her without exerting myself in her behalf."

"In this affair, as in all others, you must be prudent and cautious," said the dwarf.

"What would be the consequences should I fall into the clutches of Bernardo?" demanded Eugene.

"Worse than death. He would torment you in a thousand ways! He would torture your flesh until you would pray for death, and yet he would not let you die! Ah! sir, if you had seen what I have witnessed, it would blanch your cheek, send a tremor through every nerve, and make your very heart grow sick."

The night by this time was far advanced, and, after some general conversation and some arrangements for the future, Eugene bade Uglino good night.

## CHAPTER XV.

What bliss is born of sorrow!

'Tis never sent in vain;

The heavenly Surgeon maims to save,

He gives no useless pain.

'Tis he—'tis he—I know him now,

I know him by his pallid brow;

I know him by the evil eye

That aids his envious treachery.

BYRON'S GIAOUR.

It is now time that we should follow Lily White, who we left gliding away in company with a stranger. On flew the graceful craft, dashing the foam-bells from its prow. Huge palaces rose up through the darkness, on either side of the canal, and were soon lost in the distance. After turning into a narrow canal the gondolier ceased rowing, and the light vessel moved slowly toward a grand and towering building, which seemed to Lily to have faced the fury of many a storm and to have withstood the raging of many a wintry blast. No genial lights gleamed from the windows. It stood silent and solemn, and as she lifted her eyes to its high campanile a shudder ran over her frame. The gondola neared the steps that led to the entrance of that gigantic pile, and Lily's conductor gently assisted her to ascend; and having knocked, the door in a few moments was thrown open by a female somewhat advanced in years.

"I have long been expecting you, Father Pietro,"

she said; "I began to think that some accident had happened, or that the young lady had consented. Walk into this room, miss; it is ready for your reception, and we will leave nothing undone which can increase your happiness."

"I am much obliged to you, madam," said Lily; "but will you be good enough to inform me where I am, and to whose kindness I am indebted for these favors? I thought my visit was entirely accidental, but it seems, from what I have seen and heard, that I am an expected guest. How is this?"

"Why, my dear miss, this is the Convent of St. Mary, and for this warm reception you are indebted to our hospitality and to the kind consideration of your guardian, Col. Lanier," said the mother.

To portray truthfully the feelings of Lily when this announcement was made would be an impossibility. Despair was pictured upon her ghastly features. Throwing herself into an adjacent chair and burying her face in her hands, she wept aloud. While thus giving vent to her troubled feelings, Father Pietro and the pious mother of St. Mary were silent, doubtless awaiting to ascertain the result of Lily's tears.

"Was it for this," said the sobbing girl, "that I have endured so much and ventured forth to brave the dangers of the night in an unknown city? Oh! sir," said she, "appealing to Pietro, you promised that you would be my friend if I would confide in you."

"And have I not been your friend? Have I not rescued you from the streets, given you shelter and my protection?"

"I had rather be alone in the dark and dreary streets,

than to be confined against my will in this cold and cruel manner."

"My daughter," said Pietro, in a calm and soothing tone, "do not thus give way to your excited feelings. You have it in your power to quit these walls in the morning."

"But, oh! at what a price!" said Lily.

"Your guardian," continued the priest, pretending not to have heard the remark of Lily White, "deemed it prudent to place you under our supervision and control, and we sincerely hope to be the means of doing you good both in a temporal and spiritual point of view."

Pietro bent his dark eyes upon the maiden to see what effect this speech would have upon his victim.

"You have imprisoned me without my knowledge or consent. Col. Lanier had no authority to consign me to your care, and I will never, never submit to this cruel treatment. Does he hope to win my heart by depriving me of liberty? He will be mistaken. I would suffer a thousand deaths rather than consent to marry him. I feel and know that the same God who forsook not those brave defenders of Christianity when all the cruelties of Roman Catholicism were brought against them, will raise up friends for my protection and preservation. He has promised it in his Holy Word, and I no more doubt the truth of those promises than I do that of my own existence. You have deceived me, sir," said she, turning full upon the priest, "and I now declare that I will never listen to your advice, nor hearken to your dogmas. I am convinced that you are a tool in the hands of one who should never have stooped to this vile and disgraceful conduct."

"Well, my daughter," said Pietro, "you are laboring under the influence of prejudice; hence we will say no more at present upon this subject. It is late; the mother will conduct you to your room; good night."

Pietro withdrew, and the mother led Lily up a flight of steps and through a long passage to a small apartment, which had been previously prepared for her reception. Mother Augustine, after a few words of comfort, placed the lamp upon the table and retired, hoping that the morning would find her in better spirits.

As soon as Lily was left alone she again gave vent to her feelings in tears. She walked her small and cheerless room, wringing her hands, in despair.

"Oh! it seems, said she, "that good fortune has deserted me. The more I strive against these sorrows the deeper am I involved. Oh! my poor heart, it will break. What will become of me?"

These were not idle and unmeaning words. Lily White knew too much of Catholicism to be ignorant with whom she had to contend. She was familiar with the hypocrisy, cunning, and cruelty, of this mighty church, and she was aware that no means were too cruel and wicked to insure the ends of its designs. She was conscious that the historic page is darkened by the foul deeds of Popish cruelty and persecution; that the most tragic and dreadful scenes ever witnessed on earth were committed by this engine of power; that its pathway to wealth and glory has been bedewed with the tears of thousands and with the sacred blood of millions. She thought of the groans that had gone up from the dark and dismal depths of slimy dungeons, and of the piteous wails for mercy which fell upon ears

accustomed to such cries, and upon hearts as cold as ice and as hard as adamant. She forgot not those hellish machines of torture which serve to enforce the will of this holy order. With such thoughts as these passing rapidly through her mind, Lily sought her couch. The huge iron-tongue bell of many a church and convent rung out *one—two—three*; and the waves dashing and breaking against the walls of St. Mary, lulled her to repose.

Poor Lily White! God knows we pity you from the depths of our hearts! You are too good, too pure, and too beautiful, thus to endure the raging fury of a storm that would crush a sterner disposition and bend a more rugged nature. Life, indeed, is made up of joy and sorrow, shade and sunshine. To-day we linger amid scenes of beauty and love; to-morrow we meet with sickness, sorrow, and death! To-day all is bright and beautiful; to-morrow adversity wraps us in gloom, cheerless, rayless, and dismal! To-day the sweetest flowers deck the brow; to-morrow they shed their fragrance over a stiffened corpse! Hope, as rosy as dewy morn, springs up within the heart and is blighted; beautiful visions arise and are transformed into hideous realities; magnificent undertakings result in splendid failures; the most gigantic achievements of intellect are doomed to decay; gladness ends in sorrow, health in sickness, and life in death.

"Pallida mors æquo pede pulsat pauperum tabernas  
Regumque turres."

Trust in Him, fair girl, who alone hath power to save

you; and who can tell but that ere long the darkness may vanish, that beautiful flowers may adorn your path, that the birds may sing their most dulcet measures for your delight, and that all the black and ominous clouds may be driven from your horizon, leaving it calm, lovely, and serene?

"If this world we inhabit—this waking and sleeping,  
Were really life's sum, its beginning and end,  
Existence itself would be scarcely worth keeping,  
And *all* little worth that to nothing must tend.  
But God's living Scripture lies star-writ before us;  
There's comfort mid sorrow—as many may find:  
While the wing of eternity is hovering o'er us,  
Let's bear with misfortune, and still never mind.

"If life were absorbed in receiving and paying,  
In getting and spending—and thus to the close;  
If Faith never came, its bright future displaying,  
One could weep life away and be glad to repose.  
But the spirit of Faith, like an angel ascending,  
The shadow of years, like a dream, leaves behind;  
Life's troubles and trials and tears have an ending,  
'Tis but for a time—never mind—never mind."

\* \* \* \* \*

What has become of Simonetta Pitti, the beautiful, dark-eyed, generous Italian maiden? Has she sought some beauteous glen far amid the mountains, where the flowers bloom perpetually, where the brilliant dew-drops linger till noon-tide in its shady depths, where sparkling streams dance in glee over glittering pebbles and golden sands, where the industrious bee murmurs all the day long, and where no cruel persecutor interrupts the peace

and perfect happiness of her life? Does she stroll forth to meet the sun, peeping over the distant hills,—

"——— effulgent, from amid the flush  
Of broken clouds, gay shifting to his beam;"

or to deck her long raven tresses with newly-opened wild flowers, or to bathe her gracefully tapering limbs in some crystal fountain, gushing from the cool recesses of an over-hanging cliff? Does she wander forth at soft even-tide, when the birds sing low and sweet, when the zephyrs are playing gently with "the many twinkling leaves" of the grand old forest-trees, when the mists up-rising from the faëry glen are mantling the mountain's brow with a silvery veil, when the shepherd's pipe is heard far away amid the pastoral hills, when a myriad of sparkling fire-flies are dashing like tiny meteors through the dark green foliage? Or is her home a neat white cottage, with luxuriant vines clustering in festoons about the casement? No, alas! no. This picture is too bright and joyous to be real. Do you see that single ray of light that comes gleaming through the gloom of night? There, in an humble dwelling, situated in a remote part of Venice,—the "Ocean Queen,"—was seated the Italian girl. By her side was an aged female, listening in breathless anxiety to the words of Simonetta. This was Lucretia, the mother of Simonetta. The room presented no appearance of the splendor and magnificence that characterized the Palace of Pitti. The furniture was plain and simple, but was arranged with care and precision. On leaving Florence they brought with them but two servants—a male, whose duty it was to provide all things necessary for their wants and comfort, and a



female, to attend upon her fair young mistress. This female servant was the same who threw into Eugene's window the note warning him of danger and advising him to fly for safety.

Before they bade farewell to the ancient and honored Pitti Palace, Simonetta unbosomed herself to her mother, and informed her how she had been insulted and persecuted by Bernardo; how he had threatened; how her father had been cruelly incarcerated in a dungeon; how his death had occurred, and how wretched and miserable she was amid all these tribulations. Her mother was a proud, though kind-hearted woman. She remembered the time when the name of Pitti was respected and honored throughout the Republic of Florence; when her palace was the home of the distinguished men of the age—poets, painters, and philosophers; when her tables groaned beneath the weight of viands brought from all quarters of the earth; and when guests were treated with

“—wines in old jars stamped with the seals  
Of kings whose bones are dust.”

Such were the fond recollections of the mother, of those days of splendor and glory, when her house, boasting a long line of renowned ancestors, was at the zenith of its power. She could not bear the thought of having her darling and noble daughter, the pride and solace of her declining years, insulted and tormented by a priest, although she herself was a zealous and obedient Catholic. Hence she determined to quit her palace, leave her wealth, and seek an asylum of safety beyond the reach of a foe so cruel, hard-hearted, and unprinci-

pled as Bernardo. She saw that the splendor and power of her family was wasting away never again to blaze forth, and she resolved to be an exile from the “land of her fathers.” Accordingly, she, in company with her daughter and those faithful servants, secretly left Florence, where they had spent so many years of happiness and contentment.

Doubtless, Simonetta, in hopes of once more meeting with Eugene Saunders, influenced her mother to direct her flight toward Venice.

“My daughter, said Lucretia, in answer to some previous remark of Simonetta, “you must be mistaken.”

“No, mother, I am not deceived. I have heard that voice too often, not only at the confessional but elsewhere, and I have beheld those dark and sparkling eyes too frequently fixed upon me, to be mistaken. No, mother, it was Bernardo!”

“Impossible, my child! Father Bernardo could not have regained sufficient strength to be so soon in Venice.”

“Oh! my mother, you do not know Father Bernardo. Sometimes I am almost convinced that he can be in two places at one and the same time—that he possesses the power of ubiquity. Where you least expect him, lo! there he stands with his pale countenance fixed upon you! Oh! he can glide like a ghost, and haunt one's footsteps like an evil spirit! Although I was disguised as a page yet he knew me, mother—I know he did; for wherever I turned there he was, like a blood-hound, on my track. I fled, but he followed, and it was with difficulty that I at last made my escape.”



"You have not escaped!" said a deep, stern voice, close beside Simonetta.

She turned her head in the direction whence the voice came, and, screaming, rushed to her mother and fell prostrate at her feet, begging her to save and protect her daughter. It was Bernardo, the holy father.

"Why is it, my daughter," said he, "that the presence of your priest and confessor should thus excite and alarm you? If I am that evil spirit, that gliding ghost which you represent me, you should not be surprised at seeing me at any moment. Did I not tell you that the Church of Rome had many eyes? Simonetta Pitti, you cannot escape me! My vigilance would search you out though you should seek other and distant climes. I would travel over plains, mountains, seas, and burning deserts; I would endure the rigors of winter and the scorching heats of summer; I would suffer the pangs of hunger and the cravings of thirst; I would face disease in all its hideous and loathsome forms; I would cause an ocean of tears and wade through rivers of blood, rather than you should escape me! A professed Catholic, you shun your confessor and follow a heretic! You offer prayers to the Holy Virgin Mary, yet sin against her pious teachings! You count your beads, while your thoughts are straying to a stranger's name! You have sinned against every sacred principle of that holy religion in which you have been nurtured from your infancy! You have abused your spiritual adviser, and have scorned him from your presence as you would a viper!"

During this speech Simonetta had recovered to some

extent from the surprise and alarm caused by the mysterious appearance of Bernardo.

"I am somewhat astonished," continued he, addressing Lucretia, "that you have sanctioned the conduct of your daughter in this open disobedience to the authority of her priest."

"Pardon me, pardon me, Father Bernardo," said Lucretia, extending her hands in supplication toward him. It seemed that all the influence of Popery was instantly exerted over her. For the first time it appeared to her that she had violated the mandates of the Church, and had sinned against one who had long been her spiritual adviser and mediator. She had gone astray so far as to forget that a priest was infallible; that her soul, after death, could be doomed by him to the sombre shades of Purgatory, or damned in the hissing fires of the deepest hell! She now saw that she had erred, nay, that she had sinned, not against her God, but against her priest! In following the simple maxim, that "self-preservation is the first law of nature," she had incurred the wrath of her Church and was guilty of a heinous crime. Bernardo, the canting hypocrite, the fawning sycophant, the cunning knave, and the licentious villain, now that he stood before her, vanished, and the holy officer and priest filled her with reverential awe.

Simonetta, seeing her mother so deeply impressed with religious feelings, and being herself a firm believer in the doctrines of Catholicism, and fearing the fury of Bernardo, yielded to the importunities of Lucretia, and bowed before the priest as if he had been a saint from on high.

What a picture of religious worship! What an out-

rage against high Heaven! It was, indeed, a solemn and imposing scene to witness those two females: one advanced in life and showing the footprints of time on her brow, the other young, ardent, and beautiful, kneeling in faith before this bold, bad man, whose best motive was to blight and whose holiest aim was to ruin. As he gazed upon Simonetta, with her dark lustrous eyes upturned for his forgiveness, a smile of triumph lit up his pale features, and lingered for a moment on his lip. He drew from his bosom a golden cross and presented it to the lips of each in turn, and then extended it so that it could be in full view.

"I rejoice," said he, "to see that you humble yourselves and repent of your transgressions. Remember before whom you bow, and speak accordingly. If you hope for my forgiveness and intercession, you must freely unbosom yourselves to me. Trust in me. First answer the questions I shall ask you," said he to Lucretia.

"Do you believe in the Holy Roman Catholic Church? Answer truthfully, if you hope for my forgiveness."

"I do," said Lucretia.

"Do you believe in the infallibility of the priesthood?"

"I do," she said, after some hesitation, during which time a dark and gloomy frown gathered upon the brow of Bernardo.

"Do you trust in the Holy Virgin Mary?"

"I do, father."

"Do you believe in the seven sacraments?"

"I do."

"Do you believe in transubstantiation?"

"I do."

"Do you pray to the saints, angels, and holy evangelists?"

"I do, father."

"Do you regard all persons holding a faith different from that taught in our religion as heretics and accursed?"

"I do."

"Do you doubt that I, as your priest, have the power and authority to absolve you from sin?"

"I do not, holy father."

"Have you taught Simonetta to shun me and avoid the confessional?"

"Only so far, father, as our flight from Florence may be considered in that light."

"If you heartily repent of your errors," said he, "and promise to be obedient and punctual in the discharge of all your duties, which are laid down in our ancient religion, I forgive you."

"I repent and promise, father."

"Then receive this Agnus Dei," said he; "arise, and sin no more. Retire to the adjoining room, and leave this penitent to my care and godly counsel."

Lucretia did as Bernardo directed; and as she disappeared Simonetta anxiously turned her eyes in the direction of the door. A palor spread over her cheeks; her breathing became thick and fast; a tremor ran over her frame when she found herself alone with the most daring of men and the bitterest of enemies. Bernardo proceeded to ask the same questions which he put to her mother, and which we think unnecessary to repeat.

"Now," said he, fixing his glittering eyes upon Simonetta, who with clasped hands bowed before him, "as

you hope for peace and happiness during life, and rest for your soul after death, answer the questions which I shall ask you, ever remembering that you cannot deceive me. Do you love Eugene Saunders?"

The tears gushed to Simonetta's eyes, and a rich crimson glow mantled her brow which only a moment before was deadly pale. She seemed to have lost the power of speech, and her chin rested upon her round and heaving bosom. If Eugene had asked that question how different would have been her feelings; but coming as it did from a selfish heart, and dictated for a selfish purpose, caused her to pause and reflect. She was wavering between maidenly modesty and religious awe, between prudence and a solemn duty. Bernardo was too profoundly skilled in all the various shades of human nature, and all the wondrous workings of the human heart, not to have discovered the reason of this silence and embarrassment. Wishing to throw the balance in his own favor, he said,—

"By all the saints, I command you to speak, else arise and be numbered among the condemned and accursed!"

When Simonetta heard this she elevated her eyes, now radiant and sparkling with determination, and said,—

"Yes, father, I do love Eugene Saunders, with the purest, holiest, and deepest love of a woman's heart! I respect him for his virtues, and for his manly courage and noble generosity I love him."

"Ha! I thought as much, and find I am not mistaken! Would that your tongue had been paralyzed as you made that declaration!"

"Oh! father, do not curse me when I kneel for your

forgiveness. Did you not command me to speak the truth, and, like a devout Catholic, have I not obeyed your words?"

"Why do you give away to this feeling, my daughter, when by so doing you sin against every precept of our religion?"

"You know, father, that we cannot always overcome our feelings. I am aware that my love is fruitless; that Eugene Saunders will never return it. I have struggled against the flame, but in vain."

"Eugene Saunders," said Bernardo, "is a foreigner and a heretic, and is undeserving your love. Banish him, my daughter, from your thoughts, as one who has outraged the Church of Rome, and trifled with your feelings. Have you not seen him since your arrival in Venice, even this night, upon the Square of St. Mark?"

"I have, father."

"Did you have any conversation with him?"

"I passed a few words with him, but he knew not who it was that addressed him."

"You knew, then," asked Bernardo, "that Eugene Saunders was here, ere you left Florence?"

"I did, holy father. But forgive me, if I refuse to inform you by what means I learned that fact."

"What! do my ears deceive me? Do you positively refuse to unbosom yourself to your confessor? You know not what you say. Think of a dreary dungeon, or of being bound by the cord of excommunication. Will you speak? will you inform me who gave you that information?"

"Father, it was Ugolino, and he learned it from Frank Morton, the American artist."

Bernardo started as if stung by an adder. His cheeks were blanched to the whiteness of marble. His eyes sparkled, and his form quivered with the most violent emotion; he took two or three rapid strides across the small room, muttering to himself, and then paused in front of Simonetta, who, being weary of a kneeling posture, had seated herself upon the floor.

"What! is it possible, that Uglino, a professed Catholic, and one in whom I placed unbounded confidence, has proved a traitor? The hoary scoundrel," said the enraged priest elevating his voice, "I will crush his life out of his vile carcass! I will tear him asunder! I will confront him with his outrageous villainies, and grind him into the dust with my heel! Like an avalanche, my wrath shall descend upon him! Like an enraged and hungry lion I will crouch upon his pathway, and, springing upon him, I will rend his heart-strings asunder, and bathe my feverish hands in the warm tide of his ebbing blood! Ah! how I will mock him as the fearful death-struggle convulses his frame, and how I will exult when he cries in vain for mercy! His body shall be cast upon the highway, a prey for the beasts of the field and the vultures of the air!"

Though the Italian maiden had often seen Bernardo under the influence of his fierce and ungovernable temper, yet she had never before beheld him so far carried away as he now appeared to be. She feared to speak, lest the tide of his wrath might be turned against her.

"And you," said he, turning upon her, "have leagued with the rest against me. Remember, girl, that the vigor and pride of your house has departed, and that you are now more than ever in my power. You need not strug-

gle against your fate, you shall be to me as a wife. Remember what I say; my eye shall be upon your actions."

Bernardo glided quickly from the room and was soon in the open air, his bosom filled with the raging and consuming fire of jealousy, envy, and disappointment.

## CHAPTER XVI.

Alone in the dark, alone on the wave,  
To buffet the storm alone,—  
To struggle aghast at the watery grave,  
To struggle, and feel there is none to save,—  
God shield thee, helpless one!

MRS. E. OAKES SMITH.

THE morning after the incidents narrated in the previous chapter, Fanny Lanier awoke at an early hour. On opening her eyes she was astonished to find that portion of the bed untouched that was usually occupied by her sister. She arose, and having hastily dressed herself, went into the little parlor where she had left Lily on the previous night. But Lily was nowhere to be seen. Fanny became alarmed and called aloud her name. No answer came. Going back to her sleeping apartment, she discovered the note which her sister had written in sorrow and tears, when about to fly forth into the dark and dangerous streets of Venice. As she read those lines, blotted and dimmed with tears, and knew that her dear sister, whom she loved so well, and in whom she confided as in a mother, had fled, and was perhaps suf-

fering from grief and want, or, what was worse, had thrown herself into the canal and was drowned, a feeling of suffocation crept over her. Having finished the note, she screamed aloud and fell senseless upon the floor. In a moment great excitement prevailed throughout the hotel. Col. Lanier heard the scream, and his conscience smote him! It immediately flashed upon him that Lily had destroyed herself, and that Fanny had just discovered that sad event. Like a guilty wretch he trembled, knowing not whether he should fly or seek the cause of this untimely disturbance.

On the previous night Pietro had been summoned to his room and had failed to come. The reader knows the reason, but as yet Col. Lanier was in ignorance of the cause. While he was deliberating in his mind what course was most prudent on his part, a large crowd had gathered in and about the room in which Fanny was lying in a swoon. Captain Harris was supporting her head; some were engaged in rubbing her hands and arms, and others were administering restoratives. Col. Lanier entered.

"In the name of God," said he, "what does all this mean? What is the matter? Will no one answer? What! is my daughter dead?"

"This, Colonel," said Harris, handing him Lily's note, "will explain it all."

With a trembling hand Col. Lanier took the note and eagerly read its contents. For an instant he seemed struggling between disappointment and anger. He was evidently relieved that Lily's note did not in any manner implicate him. He remembered that she had threatened to destroy herself by leaping into the canal,

and he feared that his actions on the previous night had determined her course.

Beneath the active treatment of kind friends, Fanny soon showed signs of returning life, and in a few moments was able to sit up without assistance.

"What has happened?" said she, when she awoke to consciousness; "why is this great crowd collected in my room? Where is sister Lily?"

With that question came back the sad and solemn conviction that her sister had gone she knew not whither. On seeing her father, she cried,—

"Oh! my dear father, our good, kind Lily, has fled from us. I fear that she has thrown herself into the canal. Have it searched, my father, in every direction. Search every corner of Venice. Oh! Captain Harris, fly to her rescue, fly! I fear that Lily's mind was not right; for several days her actions have been strange and her language wild."

"It shall be done," said Captain Harris; and Col. Lanier having placed Fanny in the care of several kind-hearted females who had been drawn thither by the noise, went forth to institute a search after poor Lily White. The crowd that had collected about the door followed them down the steps to the canal. Captain Harris found a handkerchief, which Lily had lost on the evening before, lying on the pavement. On one corner was her name. Those who were pressing immediately after Col. Lanier and Captain Harris, seeing the handkerchief, and overhearing what was said by them, repeated it to those behind, until soon the murmur grew into the cry,—

"She is drowned! she is drowned!"

It is astonishing with what wonderful rapidity any sudden accident or misfortune spreads. It is whispered from ear to ear, and lingers upon the lips of every passer-by, until it seems borne along upon the wings of the wind. If it be of a startling or terrific nature, the mechanic drops his hammer, the blacksmith quits his forge, even bare-headed and with his leather apron on; the lawyer lays aside his papers, the student his books, and all rush along in one common mass either to lend assistance or to gratify an idle curiosity. Who has not heard at night, when everything was still, the fearful, startling cry—*fire! fire! fire!*—and who has not seen, in a few moments after that wild cry broke the silence of the night, many a ghastly face upturned upon some noble structure wrapt in furious flames? All was now bustle and confusion. Gondolas sped hither and thither, and so swiftly did the rumor fly that a lady had been drowned in the Grand Canal, that in less than half an hour the whole water was crowded with vessels. The balconies on either side of the water was filled with ladies, and the crowd gathered so rapidly that it became necessary, before the search could be conducted with any system or certainty, to stretch ropes from side to side to prevent any, except Col. Lanier, Captain Harris, and others who intended to assist, from coming within the space which was supposed to contain the body of Lily White. To effect these things required some time. Finally everything was ready and the search commenced. Now the voices of that multitude grew into confusion. Those behind pressed forward to see what was going on in front; while those in front, held tightly by the strong cables, cried aloud in vengeance to those

in the rear. Those who could not see the operators cried out, from time to time,—

“Have they found her? Have they found her?”

Some fell overboard and were picked up dripping wet. Some swore, others raved.

Still the search went on. In the centre of the canal was the gondola of Col. Lanier.

“See! see!” said a voice in the crowd, “Father Pietro wishes to speak with the old gentleman!”

The priest was standing on the steps, and beckoned to Col. Lanier to approach. So soon as the Colonel saw Pietro his countenance brightened, and with two strokes of his oar he was by his side.

“I wonder,” said another voice, “what business they can have together just at this particular time?”

“Oh!” said a third, “he wants the holy father to say mass for the poor girl’s soul.”

“They seem to be in earnest conversation,” said the first who had spoken.

“They are differing about the price,” said the second.

“I’ll warrant Father Pietro will make him pay well for his services,” said the third.

“That he will,” was the reply.

Col. Lanier returned once more to his former position with a gleam of satisfaction playing upon his countenance, while the priest kept his position upon the steps.

“The old gentleman seems to feel better, since consulting with a priest,” said one.

“That he does,” echoed another; “though I am a good Catholic, yet I venture to declare that there is a perfect understanding between them.”

Many such remarks as these were made by persons



in that crowd. In that vast assembly was one who had been a silent spectator of all that had transpired. Though silent, yet he was not unfeeling. At first he feared that Lily White was drowned; but so soon as he saw Pietro beckon to Col. Lanier, and witnessed his satisfied and triumphant air, he was convinced that Lily was not dead. This individual was masked, and was seated near the extended ropes. He appeared young and athletic, and there was that in his whole appearance that betokened him a man of undaunted courage. He saw that the crowd was imposed upon; that while they were dragging the canal for Lily, she was inclosed within the convent walls; that all efforts served but to consume time and to endanger life. He could no longer restrain his indignation nor smother his enraged feelings. He stood erect in his gondola and waved his hand to gain attention. Those in the rear seeing the motion and thinking that it was to let them know that the body had been found, raised a shout that echoed far and near.

"Silence! silence!" shouted one, "the mask wishes to speak."

"Let's hear what he has to say," said another.

"Hush! hark! he speaks," said still another.

The individual elevated his clear, manly voice, and said,—

"Venetians! I admire the interest you manifest on this occasion; but you have left your workshops this morning to be deceived. The body of the maiden does not lie in the canal. Ask that man," said he, pointing to Col. Lanier, "and he can tell you, if he will, what has become of her. See! how he turns pale and cowers

from your gaze! Lily White is not dead, but even now lives!"

This was spoken in Italian; and though Col. Lanier did not understand a word of that language, yet he knew, from the tone and looks of the speaker, and the manner in which the crowd regarded him, that he was exposed.

"Let's drown the old sinner in the canal," shouted at once a dozen men.

"Hurrah for the masque!" others cried.

"Down, down with the deceiver!" now came from all parts of the crowd. The ropes which had served to keep them back were cut in pieces, and several gondolas were making for the one containing Col. Lanier. Pietro perceiving what would be the result if the tide was not instantly checked, addressed them thus:—

"Ho! my children! listen to the voice of your priest. What would you do? Injure this good man, because one, who dares not show his face, has thrown out some dark insinuations against him. Pause! reflect, ere you commit a sin from which even your priest cannot absolve you. I myself do not believe that the body of the maiden is to be found in this canal; not, however, from anything this man has said, but because it has been sufficiently examined to induce that conviction. Therefore, by all the patron saints, I command you to desist from violence. Disperse in peace, and seek your workshops and your homes."

"The father speaks rightly," said one who had been most forward a moment before.

"I did not view the matter in that light," replied another.

The crowd taking the priest at his word, soon dispersed. Col. Lanier returned to the room to offer to his daughter Fanny what consolation his guilty conscience would permit. Captain Harris sought the sparkling wine-cup to drown his sorrow for the loss of Lily White, and Eugene Saunders, who was the masked speaker, went to the Palace of Castruccio.

## CHAPTER XVII.

To hell allegiance! vows, to the blackest devil.  
Conscience and grace, to the profoundest pit!  
I dare damnation; to this point I stand—  
That both the worlds I give to negligence,  
Let come what comes: only I'll be revenged.

SHAKESPEARE—HAMLET.

IN some of the preceding pages we have seen what a powerful influence Roman Catholicism exerts over its votaries. By prejudice it blinds, by cruelty it intimidates, by hypocrisy it deceives, and by power it awes. When once invested with authority, all must obey its mandates or suffer the application of the rack and torture, and undergo outrages that insult the name of religion and disgrace the annals of history. By its influence the virtuous are enticed into the withering folds of vice and immorality, and are plunged unawares into the darkest depths of crime and shame. For the plain, simple, and beautiful precepts of the Bible, it has substituted a hoary superstition; and instead of a public

altar, it has a private confessional. Cruelty has taken the place of mercy, vice of virtue, and a priest of our Lord Jesus Christ!

Catholicism stands, a magnificent structure, erected upon a fallen empire, and cemented by the blood of millions. Like a huge serpent, it slowly coils itself about a province or nation, and soon every vestige of former grandeur and glory has departed. For awhile it slumbers, but it never dies. Or like an enraged lion, it rushes from its place of concealment, grapples with its foe, and, while the world stands aghast, its roar of victory shakes thrones and empires. While Protestants are waging war upon each other on some trivial tenet of faith, the Roman Church remains a unit in sentiment, and it stands forth a grand and gigantic power, perfect in all its parts, and ready to be wielded at any moment at the will and by the direction of the Pope. Hence it has withstood the devastating march of time, the decay of nations, and the wreck of empires. The same zeal and enthusiasm exist within its ranks that gave it success in past ages; the same industry marks its history that overcame difficulties and gained the power in the reign of Henry IV., who "*found it necessary to choose between his religion and his crown*;" the same mystery that charmed the devotee during the supremacy of Innocent III., lingers still, and exerts its subtle influence; and the same superstition that shrouded Catholicism in the infancy of the Venetian Republic, mantles the cathedral of the church and wraps the palace of the Pope. Though it has witnessed the downfall of nations and kingdoms, and has beheld generation after generation pass from the field of action, yet it possesses, at this

very day, the youthful energy and fire that first kindled Italy and Spain into a burning flame. Though it has the form of old age, yet it has the power and vigor of early manhood. With the lapse of ages it has gathered experience, until now no human policy exhibits so much perfection, so much foresight, and so much wisdom.

This, then, is the mighty engine of power against which Protestantism must contend. This, then, is the enemy against which every freeman, of whatever party or policy, must raise his warning voice. Slow in its actions, it is sure in its results, and it never strikes a blow without injuring the cause of Christianity and the onward progress of civil liberty. That there have lived and still live brave and noble-hearted Roman Catholics, men who have poured out their blood and spent their lives in the cause of liberty, no one who knows anything of history will deny. But one man, or a thousand men, must not be taken as a representation of the Roman Church. A brave army may contain many craven hearts, and still be victorious. A base church may contain many Christian hearts, and still triumph over every principle of law and justice, virtue and honor, Christianity and humanity. Perhaps in no part of the world do all the vices of Catholicism stand forth so glaringly as in Italy. Being under the sway of such men as Bernardo, Italy, with its classic vales, its beautiful skies, its gleaming lakes, its purple hills, its genial climate, its lovely cities, has become a jest and by-word among the nations of the earth.

When Bernardo left the dwelling of Simonetta Pitti, he pursued his way through the narrow streets muttering vengeance against Uglino. Fortunate was it that

the object of his wrath was not in his humble dwelling when the dark-minded priest entered with the full determination of visiting upon him his pent-up wrath. Bernardo looked anxiously about the room, as if in hopes of seeing the dwarf concealed in some corner. But he was disappointed.

"Never mind," said he, "I will meet him yet. He shall not escape my wrath. The base villain, thus coolly and deliberately to betray me! As a friend I confided in him; like a demon he has abused my confidence, and, so help me Heaven, I will crush the viper's heart from his foul carcass and give it to the waves."

The next day found Bernardo in a feverish state of excitement. During the day he kept his room, and permitted no one to enter. He was preparing his mind for the committing of a crime which required a skillful arm and great caution in its execution. He was brooding over the wrong, that he might, under the cover of night, carry out his threat against his former tool Uglino. He knew his adversary, and feared him. He had, time and again, felt the power of that glittering eye, and had as often quailed beneath its flashing glance. Time and again he had felt that arm against which he must now contend. He was aware that Uglino knew enough of his past history to expose him to the contempt of all honest men, and even enough to endanger his life should he unbosom himself. He was aware that a single false step might precipitate him from a high and honorable position to the lowest depths of shame and degradation. He was aware that he was treading upon a slumbering volcano, that might in an instant burst forth and utterly destroy him. Notwithstanding all this he yielded to his

fierce and fiery temper, and preferred to face the possibility of destruction rather than that Uglino should pass unmolested. Like a wild and savage beast he walked his room, meditating ruin and death. With impatience he awaited the cover of night, because his deed was evil. His dark eye gleamed with malignity, and his countenance exhibited a deeper palor, arising in part from fear and in part from anger. Than Bernardo a darker-hearted man never lived. To his cunning he united cruelty, and with his cowardice he combined enough of the dare-devil to give to his actions the appearance of great valor. He waged a perpetual war against those softer feelings of the heart that should especially distinguish the minister of Christ, and effectually smothered every tender and gentle emotion that marks the distinction between the man and the brute. No other feeling but jealousy could have thus thrown the cunning priest and heartless knave off his guard. But Simonetta, upon bended knees, had confessed her love for Eugene Saunders, and that confession, like a poisoned arrow, now rankled in his heart and awoke the slumbering demon.

Who can estimate the happiness that has been destroyed by jealousy? It has wrung bitter tears from many eyes, and has sent burning curses from many lips; it bestrews the pathway to the grave with briars and thorns, and over the darkness of the tomb casts a deeper gloom; it banishes contentment from the family fire-side, robs home of its joys, steals the roses from the cheeks, brilliancy from the eye, and stamps sorrow upon the heart; it poisons the bliss of courtship, and transforms the joys of wedded love into a hell on earth.

It was night, and Uglino sat alone in his room, ignorant of the storm that was gathering around him. He knew not that Bernardo was on his track, scenting for his very life-blood. A tap upon his door announced the presence of a visitor. Uglino, starting from his chair, opened the door, and Father Bernardo entered. The dwarf made the sign of the cross and bade the priest welcome. He was not many moments in making the discovery that something was wrong with Bernardo. He noted the paleness of his cheek and the fire that sparkled in his eye.

"I am glad," said Uglino, offering him a chair, "to see you, father; but not with that frown upon your brow. Has anything happened to disturb you, father?"

"Uglino, why ask that question? Let your own guilty conscience answer. I am not here to be trifled with, but have come to demand satisfaction for a wrong as black as midnight. As a devout Catholic I confided in you, but you have deceived me and betrayed me to my worst enemy. Uglino, you false-hearted hypocrite, tell me, did you not know that Eugene Saunders was in Venice ere we spread our sails to be wafted hither? and have you not seen and conversed with the heretic since our arrival? Ha! I see it in your shrinking form and averted eye! Come, monster, speak the truth, and do not add falsehood to your crime."

When Bernardo finished he had arisen from his chair, and his form towered aloft, trembling in every limb.

"Bernardo," said Uglino, "if I am false-hearted, you have made me so; if I have acted wrong, it is because I followed in the footsteps of my holy confessor; if I am that mean and abject creature that

your words imply, it is because I have listened to the teachings of a hypocrite, and have yielded to the sway of a polluted villain. Bernardo, hear me; I do not regard you as my priest, but as my inferior in everything that is honest and correct. Do you think you can intimidate me by harsh words and idle vauntings? I have faced danger in too many forms, and have heard too many empty threats, to fear either the one or the other. *I know you, Bernardo, better than you know yourself.* Henceforth look upon me as your worst foe, and remember, that when old Uglino strikes the blow it is more deadly than the serpent's fang. Ah! who cowers now? Come, thou foul fiend, clad in the robe of the church, tell me, what has become of Lorenzo Pitti? Is his death not upon your head? Tell me, what has become of that maiden who, years ago, you ruined and then abandoned to the contempt of the world? Where is the child—your child, sir—that poor girl bore in shame and sorrow? Let the rolling waves of the Arno tell. Where, wretch, is my own darling boy, whom you tore from my bosom years ago to gratify the malice of your black heart, which has never known one touch of sympathy nor felt one pang of regret? Can I forget these wrongs and own you my priest and call you friend? No—no—no, Bernardo—I have followed on your pathway like an evil spirit; I have sanctioned the committing of crime, and have advised you to do wrong, that I might see you entangled in a web from which there could be no escape, and that I might, at last, exult in your complete and utter ruin. Ha! you have committed crimes which, were they known, would cause humanity to raise a howl that would startle the beasts of the forests and

the fowls of the air. Men would spurn you from their pathway and heap curses on your head. You love Simonetta Pitti. That love will be turned to sorrow, and you shall see between you and that maiden a yawning chasm over which you cannot pass. Hark ye, Bernardo! the sands in the hour-glass are almost exhausted, and the days of your life are numbered!"

"Hush, thou croaking villain," said Bernardo. "Have you forgotten that I stand here as a priest of the Holy Catholic Church, and that I am your confessor?"

"There was a time," replied Uglino, "when I remembered all these things; but so long as the church contains a priest so base will I refuse obedience to its mandates."

"You are bound, sir," answered the priest, "and you cannot refuse. You are held by a power that never yet ceased to exert its influence. But come, you have not yet given me satisfaction; have you seen Eugene Saunders since you have been in Venice?"

"I will not answer. If I have betrayed you, I will not again commit the same sin."

"Uglino, forget not that you are a member of the Church of Rome, and remember the penalty you incur by refusing to give any information that would advance the church, either temporally or spiritually."

"I have seen too much of the implements of torture, and have witnessed too much human suffering, to forget where I stand and against whom I contend. But, Bernardo, if death in its most hideous and revolting form was now before me, I would not gratify you."

"Then, sir, hear your doom, which I, Bernardo, your authorized priest and confessor, pronounce against you:

'By the authority of God Almighty, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and the undefiled Virgin Mary, mother and patroness of our Saviour, and of all celestial virtues, angels, archangels, thrones, dominions, powers, cherubims, and seraphims; and of all the holy patriarchs, prophets, and of all the Apostles and Evangelists, of the holy innocents, who, in the sight of the Holy Lamb, are found worthy to sing the new song of the holy martyrs, and holy confessors, and of all the holy virgins, and of all saints, together with the holy elect of God, may you, Uglino, be damned. I excommunicate and anathematize you, and from the threshold of the Holy Church of God Almighty I sequester you, that you may be tormented, disposed, and be delivered over, with Athan and Abiram, and with those who say unto the Lord, Depart from us, we desire none of thy ways; as a fire is quenched with water, so let your light be put out for evermore, unless it shall repent you and make satisfaction. Amen. May the Father who creates man, curse you! May the Son who suffered for us, curse you! May the Holy Ghost who suffered for us in baptism, curse you! May the holy cross, which Christ for our salvation, triumphing over his enemies, ascended, curse you! May the holy and eternal Virgin Mary, mother of God, curse you! May St. Michael, the advocate of the holy souls, curse you! May all the angels, principalities, and powers, and all heavenly armies, curse you! May the praiseworthy multitude of patriarchs and prophets curse you! May St. John the precursor, and St. John the Baptist, and St. Peter, and St. Paul, and St. Andrew, and all other of Christ's Apostles together, curse you! And may the rest of our disciples, and

evangelists, who by their preaching converted the universe, and the holy and wonderful company of martyrs and confessors, who by their holy works are found pleasing to God Almighty, curse you! May the holy choir of the holy virgins, who for the honor of Christ have despised the things of this world, damn you! May all the saints, from the beginning of the world to everlasting ages who are found to be beloved of God, damn you! May you be damned wherever you be, whether in the house, or in the stable, the garden, or the field, or the highways; or in the woods, or in the water, or in the church; may you be damned in living and in dying! May you be cursed in eating or in drinking, in being hungry, in being thirsty, in sleeping, in slumbering and in sitting, in living, in working, in resting, and blood-letting! May you be cursed in all the faculties of your body! May you be cursed inwardly and outwardly! May you be cursed in your brains and in your temples, in your eyebrows, in your cheeks, in your jaw-bones, in your nostrils, in your teeth and grinders, in your lips, in your throat, in your shoulders, and in your fingers! May you be damned in your mouth, in your breast, in your heart, and in your stomach! May you be cursed in your veins, in your groins, in your thighs, and in your hips, and your knees, your legs, your feet, and toe-nails! May you be cursed in all the joints and articulation of your members; from the crown of your head to the sole of your feet may there be no soundness! May all who speak to you be damned eternally in the hottest fires of a never-ending hell! May the Son of the living God, with all the glory of his majesty, curse you! And may heaven, with all



the power therein, rise up against and damn you, unless you repent and make satisfaction! Amen. So be it. Be it so. *Amen.*' '\*

While Bernardo was uttering this awful and fearful curse, Ugolino never once averted his piercing eyes from the countenance of the priest nor altered the position of his body. He stood firm as a rock, nor did he exhibit one sign of regret.

"Ha! ha! you have now done your worst," said Ugolino. "What think you I care for your curses, falling as they do from the lips of a sinful wretch who has wronged every sacred principle of the Holy Catholic Church; who has never cast one ray of hope over the heart of a dying man; who has sowed ruin and death, instead of gladness and sunshine; who has violated the chastity of maidens, without one feeling of remorse; and who has wrung bitter tears from widows and orphans. Go to, thou basest of God's living creatures; go prate your vile curses to those who know you not, and, in their ignorance, call you holy father. Beware, Bernardo, that the anathema you have invoked upon me falls not upon your own vile head. I could whisper one little sentence into your ear that would cause you to fall prostrate upon the earth in agony and shame!"

"You lie, monster in human shape," said Bernardo; and suddenly leaping upon the dwarf, sent him reeling

\* This Bull of excommunication was issued some years ago, against a priest at Philadelphia, and was produced by the Rev. Alexander Campbell, during the celebrated debate between him and Bishop Purcell, of Cincinnati. It is here quoted almost verbatim, upon the authority of Mr. Campbell.

to the floor. The contest was fierce and vigorous. Bernardo had the advantage in activity, but Ugolino was a giant in strength. Neither spoke a word. Now Ugolino has the advantage, and victory seems at hand; now the tide of battle changes, and we tremble for the life of Ugolino. See! see! Bernardo's dagger gleams in the light and descends with lightning speed upon the breast of Ugolino. Behold how the dwarf writhes beneath the stroke! Look! Ugolino has him by the arm, has thrown him from his position, and has his long bony fingers about his throat! Bernardo's eyes roll back, and his face is black from strangulation.

"Mercy! mercy! mercy!" he faintly gasped, as Ugolino tightened his grasp.

"Ha! villain! you cry for mercy who have never yet shown it to a human being. Cry to the saints and angels in whose names you curse, but call not upon Ugolino."

A strong arm was laid upon the dwarf, and he was torn from the struggling form of the almost strangled priest, and, confronting the person who had interfered, was astonished to behold Eugene Saunders standing before him.

"Why, Ugolino, what means all this?" Eugene asked.

Before Ugolino could answer, Bernardo, having recovered, rushed again upon his adversary.

"Hold, sir!" said Eugene, in a commanding voice, and stepped between the combatants. "What! do I behold Bernardo the priest? Have patience, sir, and remember the Arno, where last we met."

Bernardo, when he beheld Eugene Saunders, whom he

regarded with so much fear and hatred, quailed before his manly form and commanding voice.

"Bernardo," continued Eugene, "I am ignorant of the cause of this affray, hence I have nothing to say further than that no blood shall be shed in my presence. But, sir, I am aware that you came hither to wreak your vengeance on me. Now, sir, hear me once for all; you I do not fear; but if you ever again cross my pathway I will take your life. Leave this house, sir, and never let me see your form again. Not a word, sir; I will hear nothing from you. One insolent or angry expression and your Italian dagger will no more be of service to you, for I will send a ball hissing through your heart. I am no vain boaster; hence, quit this room, for your very presence is loathsome."

Bernardo cast a scowl of hatred upon Eugene and Uglino, and, muttering curses upon them both, left the room.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

His breast with wounds unnumbered riven,  
His back to earth, his face to heaven,  
Fallen Hassan lies—his unclosed eye  
Yet lowering on his enemy,  
As if the hour that sealed his fate,  
Surviving, left his quenchless hate.

BYRON'S GIAOUR.

She shook  
The holy water from her heavenly eyes,  
And then retired, to deal with grief alone.

SHAKSPEARE.

MISERY and death lie about us on every hand. While some are mingling in gay and festive scenes, others are pining away in gloom and sorrow. Man, restless man, carries that within his own bosom which drives him onward, whether it be amid joy or sorrow, pleasure or sadness. Before him is the great, busy, and dazzling arena of life upon which he *must* act his part whether for weal or woe. If he shrink from his duties, however stern they may be, he should be branded with the name of coward, and spurned from the society of the true and noble-hearted. In this fierce and fiery struggle of life how many sink by the wayside, a prey to every calamity and to those devouring influences that mar the beauty and perfection of human nature! Life is truly a chequered scene. The road to wealth and honor is rugged

and almost inaccessible, studded with brambles and thorns, and surrounded by every danger that can arise, every responsibility that can impede, every fear that can check, and every difficulty that can alarm. He who would reach the summit, must be possessed of iron nerves and undaunted courage.

On every side lie concealed envy, malice, hatred, and selfishness, against which he must combat who would gain success. The summit is in full view, but to reach its beauteous and glittering height, how much labor, how much strife, and how much bravery is essential!

On the contrary, the road to shame and degradation is straight and level, carpeted with the brightest and sweetest flowers, and adorned with every beauty that can entice, with every comfort that can allure, with every scene that can charm, and with every delight that can fascinate. Gay and beautiful women lend their charms to entice him on; lovely flowers hang in glittering, gorgeous festoons over his pathway; voluptuous music swells upon the ear; wine sparkles in curiously wrought cups, and rejoicings and festivity herald him on his way to certain destruction. The end is never seen until reached. Then, alas! the poor victim struggles in vain against those passions which luxury has pampered, which indulgence has fostered, and which habit has matured. Too late he discovers his error, and with fruitless efforts attempts to sever the shackles which pleasures have woven and which vice has cast about him.

Instead of a substance, he finds that he has been pursuing a shadow; instead of joy, he has tasted the cup of sorrow; and instead of that beauty and perfection

which he expected to behold, naught meets his view but deceit, bigotry, and deformity. He finds that

“—— pleasures are like poppies spread;  
You seize the flower, its bloom is shed;  
Or like the snow-falls in the river,  
A moment white—then melts forever;  
Or like the borealis race,  
That flit ere you can point the place;  
Or like the rainbow's lovely form  
Evanishing amid the storm.”

Thus it was with Col. James Lanier. By pursuing the proper course there was no station in life to which he might not have aspired; but in youth and early manhood he had been led away by the allurements of vice, and had gone on and on from one stage to another, until he was so deeply involved and so completely bound, that we behold him planning against the happiness of his ward, and leaguings with Catholicism to effect his wicked designs. Col. Lanier offered what consolation there was in his power to his sorrowing and afflicted daughter. He made the impression upon her that Lily's mind was touched with insanity; that, laboring under an imaginary wrong, she had perhaps ended her life. It was not difficult to make this impression upon Fanny, because she herself had almost come to the conclusion that Lily's mind was not right ere she fled.

Every day Col. Lanier met Father Pietro and made inquiries concerning his success in bending the stubborn disposition of his ward, and every day had been disappointed. He grew impatient; he became as restless as a caged beast; he flew to the gaming-table to banish time, and to drown the pleadings of conscience that rebuked him for his wickedness and hard-heartedness; he

quaffed the sparkling wine until his eye grew unsteady and his form reeled from intoxication; a burning flame seemed to be consuming his very soul; for him there was no rest; to consummate his dearest wish was ever uppermost in his thoughts. To effect this, now that he had brooded over it for so many days and months, and had taken the initiatory steps, he was willing to march over every opposition and to overcome every difficulty.

"What news do you bring this evening, Father Pietro?" said Col. Lanier, as the former threw himself into an adjacent chair. "Does she manifest any signs of repentance? Will she listen to your counsels, and think you she will ever consent to become my wife?"

"I have had to deal with many individuals during my life," said Pietro, with a pious look; "but I have never yet met with one so hard to manage. To induce her to change her mind I have exhausted every mild means that I possess, but she turns a deaf ear to every argument, and with scorn spurns me from her presence. She even refuses me admittance to her room, and frequently for a whole day will not taste food of any kind. At times she is calm and contented; at others she sobs and weeps as if her heart would break. If she ever becomes your wife you will have to break her stubborn disposition. It can be done; I can do it if you will give me the authority. Within our convent are the means; give me but the word, and you shall find her as loving as a lamb and as gentle as the dove. So far we have been playing a child's game; if you wish to triumph, yield the girl to my management, and you shall soon clasp her to your bosom and fondly call her wife."

"Think you, Father Pietro, she can never be induced to consent without resorting to harsh means?"

"Never, Col. Lanier."

"By heaven! I will conquer. I give you full authority to use what means you deem proper to bring this ward of mine to terms. I did hope it could be accomplished without harshness or violence; but if it cannot, then she must bear the consequences. Mind, however, Pietro, that you do not injure the girl. Whatever you do, let it be done with mildness and calmness."

"I will look well to that, Col. Lanier."

"The moment she consents to become my wife, fly to me with the joyous tidings. I will hold myself in readiness to hasten to her side before she changes her purpose. When once she is mine, then I will care for nothing else in this wide world. Pietro, if you are successful in this matter, great shall be your reward."

This conversation will serve to show the situation of Lily White, and the condition of affairs at this juncture. What if Fanny knew the reality, that her sister was imprisoned by her father's will; that she was suffering in a convent; that a cunning and cold-hearted priest had been vested with authority to force her to yield her hand without her heart, and that she herself had been imposed upon and deceived by a parent in whom she trusted and confided! Under these circumstances, what would be her feelings? Since the morning on which the canal had been searched, Fanny mourned her sister as dead. When the sad intelligence was announced to her that the body could not be found, she wrung her hands and wept aloud.

Fanny never knew before how fondly she loved her

sister. She had often and oft answered some mild reproof or gentle advice with peevishness, sometimes with anger. Now that Lily was gone, all this she distinctly remembered, and, when she recalled some angry look or ill-natured reply, tears flowed from her eyes and sorrow filled her heart.

Often and oft would she walk forth upon the balcony and linger where she and Lily held their last confidential conversation, and tried to cherish afresh every word of her lost Lily, and to recall every look and gesture. On the soft and balmy evenings she went forth upon the canals. But how different now the scene! What before seemed to her youthful and ardent mind a scene of splendor and magnificence, had now lost all charms to her. Her eye rested on splendid marble palaces, glittering domes, and ancient cathedrals; but these neither awaked her admiration nor called forth her enthusiastic praise. She was living over again those by-gone days, when she and Lily were innocent little girls, playing with their dolls, or romping joyfully in the warm sunshine, or nestling fondly by a loving mother's knee, listening to some beautiful story suited to their age, or lisping their evening prayers. Memory was busy with the scenes of the "long ago." There was the long, shady avenue, with the grand old forest-trees interlocked above, through which she and Lily loved to wander on the beautiful autumnal evenings! There, too, was the sunny slope where they sat for hours reading some charming story of faëry or genii; and there was the quiet dell, fragrant with wild-flowers, where they had often lingered, inhaling the rich aroma and listening to the sweet songs of birds. There was the grave of her

sainted mother, which she and Lily had bedewed with their warmest tears.

Now that she thought that Lily was no more, a thousand things that she had long forgotten came thronging to her mind, some to melt her soul to tears, and others to shed over her troubled heart a consolation that nothing else could produce. She loved to sit alone in her room, where she could, unseen, indulge her thoughts and give vent to her sorrows. Here many things reminded her of Lily, for every article of furniture was kept just in the order her sister had left it.

"Oh!" she would say, "if I were only satisfied as to the fate of my darling sister, I would be better contented. If I could only have pillowed her head upon my bosom, smoothed back her silken tresses, and caught the last feeble accents that fell from her trembling lips, what a load of sorrow would have been lifted from my aching heart! But to think that perhaps she died struggling with the angry waves, and calling in vain upon her sister's name! This is harrowing to my soul. Oh! maybe Lily is not dead; maybe she still lives, and that once again I may fold her to this bosom, cover her cheeks with warm and fervent kisses, and bathe her brow with tears of love, joy, and gratitude!"

Thus did Fanny Lanier often soliloquize. In the solemn watches of the midnight hour she prayed her Heavenly Father to restore her sister if she still lived. Fanny now saw but little of her father, owing to her desire to be alone, and to the fact that Col. Lanier was a constant visitor at the gambling saloon.

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On the evening after Col. Lanier and Father Pietro

held the conversation narrated in this chapter, a deed was enacted that paled many cheeks and caused a shudder of horror to run over many who had long been used to look upon crime in its most revolting and hideous forms. Col. Lanier and Captain Harris had been for several hours locked within a room. Suddenly a wild cry of horror rang throughout the hotel, and was followed by groans and a heavy weight falling upon the floor. A general rush was made for the room whence the noise came. On reaching the door, those in advance drew back in fear, and stood aghast with horror. Before them was a spectacle that caused the blood to curdle in the veins. Upon the floor, weltering in his warm and flowing blood, lay Col. Lanier, dead; his throat cut from ear to ear. He who had committed the deed was nowhere to be seen. Doubtless when he saw that the blow was fatal, he fled like a guilty wretch. Upon the table were several empty bottles and a pack of cards, scattered hither and thither as if thrown down in haste and anger. Great confusion and excitement prevailed. In vain was the hotel searched for the cruel murderer. With the stain of blood upon his hands, and with a guilty conscience to drive him on, Captain Harris had fled.

When the mournful intelligence was announced to Fanny, she was almost frantic with grief. She rushed to the apartment in which her murdered father lay, fell weeping upon his bosom, and refused to be removed. She had lost her sister Lily, and now her only protector, her father, was no more. How true is the adage that misfortunes never come alone! They follow each other like the billows of the restless ocean! At length it became necessary to inform Fanny that it was proper

for her to retire, in order that she might the better soften her mournings and conquer her grief. Reluctantly she sought her own chamber.

"What will become of me—what will become of me, now that Lily is away and my poor father has been murdered? Oh! who in this wide world will care for me, a poor orphan girl in a strange land, without a single friend upon whom I can rely and in whom I can confide," said Fanny, when she reached her room.

"I will be that friend; have no fears for your safety," said one, who had, unobserved, followed Fanny from the bedside of her father; "we were both born beneath the same blue skies and beneath the star-spangled banner, and I should view myself as an unfeeling wretch, did I refuse to protect and comfort a maiden of my own native land."

"Oh! kind sir," said Fanny, her heart melting to overflowing by the generous and enthusiastic words which greeted her ear from a stranger's lips, "receive a thousand thanks for your nobleness and generosity. Are you not the same good gentleman who rescued my sister from the waves?"

"I am. Come, permit a stranger to offer you consolation. Calm your troubled feelings; think of what I have said, and remember you have a friend who will never forsake you; and now good-night."



## CHAPTER XIX.

Look, from the turbid south  
 What floods of flame in rich diffusion burst,  
 Frequent and furious; darting through the dark  
 And broken ridges of a thousand clouds,  
 Piled hill on hill; and hark! the thunder, roused,  
 Groans in long roaring through the distant gloom.  
 MALLET'S MUSTAPHA.

It is impossible to contemplate the outrageous cruelties of Roman Catholicism without feeling a shudder of horror creeping over us. From the earliest period of its origin it has been characterized by every kind of barbarity. Lust, avarice, and cruelty, are its distinguishing characteristics, and have been since the organization of the church.

These features were prominent during the supremacy of Innocent III., during the terrible reign of the Inquisitors of Spain and Portugal, and will ever remain concomitant parts of Catholicism so long as the Pope holds the power and there exists an infallible priesthood to carry out his royal edicts.

When Father Pietro left Col. Lanier a smile of triumph lit his pious countenance. He now had the power in his own hands. Without fear he could now indulge those fierce passions which never fail to conquer or to kill. He could now bring into subjection a young female who scorned the dogmas of Catholicism and refused to comply with a demand that would compromise her peace and destroy her happiness.

Pietro and Mother Augustine were not pleased with the bold and independent spirit with which Lily White repulsed every attempt to approach her upon the doctrines of the Roman Church, hence they had their own private reasons for wishing to claim an authority over her person. Mother Augustine, more than once, had called her a hard-hearted and unfeeling heretic, and had given the daughters of the convent to understand that whoever was found holding communication with Lily should be severely punished for the crime. Spies were ordered to watch all her movements, that she might not make her escape nor hold communication with any person from without.

Father Pietro informed Col. Lanier that Lily frequently refused to taste food and water. This was not the truth. He had manufactured that story for his own base and false designs. For, by the order of Pietro, Mother Augustine withheld those things that were absolutely necessary for the preservation of health and for the continuation of life. They sought to impair her health, that they might bend her will. They desired to subdue her noble spirit, that rose above their corrupt and sordid power, in order to accomplish their hellish designs. Father Pietro cared not whether or no Lily became the wife of Col. Lanier, but he did feel interested to make her bow the knee to the Virgin Mary, and to acknowledge him as her confessor.

In this, however, he was mistaken. What he regarded as stubbornness in Lily was only a firm and unshaken reliance on the promises of our Saviour, and a faith in the doctrines of the Bible that no suffering, however severe, could change, and no cruelty, however malign-

nant, could corrupt. Long ago, while bowing by the knee of a pious but now sainted mother, had she received lessons of morality and religion which she never could forget. There she had learned those prayers which many and many a time, when sorrows had pressed her heart and fevers had scorched her brow, had banished those troubles, and had converted the bed of sickness into a heaven of perfect bliss. By experience she knew the power and influence of that religion which she professed, and of those doctrines in which she confided. She had stood by the death-bed of her darling and angelic mother, and had beheld her triumphing gloriously over death, hell, and the grave; she had witnessed the smile of joy and peace that touched her countenance with the beauty of heaven; she had listened to her soft, sweet voice, already tuned for that harmonious choir above; and had seen her eye, while losing sight of the splendors of this world, brightening beautifully by the opening vision of that grand and gorgeous kingdom "not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." She knew that her mother's intercessor was not a priest of Rome, but our Lord Jesus Christ. She was aware that her death had given the lie to many of the cardinal doctrines of Roman Catholicism.

Lily had not forgotten the songs that she had learned during her infancy, and now, in the loneliness of her room, would they come floating back to her mind, awaking afresh sweet memories of by-gone days, and filling her soul with transports of joy. Though she was soothed and comforted by the beautiful and cheering promises of the Scriptures, yet it was natural that one so young, so ardent, and so joyous, should yearn for the

social relations of life, and desire again to feel the soothing zephyrs fan her cheeks, to watch the golden sunsets, to admire the beautiful landscapes, to tread, unchecked and unwatched, the flowery pathway, and to enjoy the murmur of bees and the melody of birds.

She sometimes thought with gratitude upon the brave and noble gentleman, who to save her life, periled his own; and who warned her, on the Square of St. Mark, against the dangers that threatened her safety and happiness. She cherished the hope that he had not forgotten her. Something whispered to her heart that he felt an interest in her destiny. Perhaps she read her own breast and found there an echo to that sentiment. Lily did not despond, nor did she despair. She felt that He who visited and saved the exile on the rock of Patmos, would not forsake her; that he would stand by her in the sixth trouble, and would not leave her in the seventh.

She often bowed humbly before His throne of grace, and invoked aid to enable her to withstand the arm of persecution and to bear with meekness and long-suffering the sorrows that might come upon her.

Father Pietro was delayed on his return from the interview with Col. Lanier, and did not reach the convent until an hour after night-fall. Mother Augustine met him at the door and led him into a room, where he found Bernardo and two monks awaiting his arrival.

"What news do you bring?" asked Bernardo, ere Pietro had time to salute the company and seat himself.

"We have the matter in our own hands," answered Pietro, with a smile of satisfaction playing on his face.

"Blessed be all the saints," said Mother Augustine.

"She is a proud and insolent heretic, and should be made to feel our displeasure. I have warned her against her boldness and rashness, but she heeded not my instructions, neither did she hearken to my good counsels."

"Bernardo, if you could have seen the manner in which I worked the old man," said Pietro, "I know you would have applauded my skill. The old gentleman is in love, and you have not forgotten, Bernardo, that love is a blind god? 'Oh!' said he, when I informed him that he should triumph, 'fly to me with the joyful news, and great shall be your reward!' I will get the reward, then let him find his wife!"

"I applaud your wisdom, and sanction your course," said Bernardo. "We cannot be too particular with American heretics. In Italy they are corrupting the Church, and notwithstanding the flattering accounts that our brethren forward to our beloved and much-honored Pope, yet if all the enemies to our holy religion are like those we have seen here, I am afraid their hopes are too sanguine, and that their brilliant anticipations will never be realized. What think you, only last night I was attacked by a professed Catholic, in whom I placed unbounded confidence, and narrowly escaped with my life!"

"What! by a Catholic?" asked Pietro.

"May he be damned!" said all present, in one voice.

"Who," said Pietro, "was this Catholic, that has outraged the Church by daring to raise his hand against the authority of a priest?"

"Ugolino, the dwarf!" answered Bernardo.

"Let's call the hoary villain before us, and put him to

the rack until he confesses his sin and makes suitable atonement," suggested Pietro.

"With him," continued Bernardo, "was the man who came near taking my life in Florence."

"Ha! you astonish me! What! is Eugene Saunders in Venice? Bernardo, you must be mistaken; my spies have made no report to that effect," said Pietro.

"Perhaps he has corrupted your spies as he did mine. I brought Ugolino with me as my bosom friend, and as one upon whom I might rely as an experienced detector; but I find that ere I left Florence this traitor knew that Eugene Saunders was in Venice, and held a conversation with him on the Square of St. Mark the very evening of our arrival."

"Well," said Pietro, "we have one at least in our power; and now, Mother Augustine, if you will bring us some refreshments we will all consult together, in order to see what is the best course to be adopted in her case."

\* \* \* \* \*

We must now, for a short time, leave these holy individuals, in order to follow the history of others, in whom, perhaps, the reader may not have lost all interest. While these holy fathers were holding a consultation relative to a weak and defenceless orphan girl, whose only sin was in being a Protestant and whose only transgression was in being an American, Ugolino the dwarf was seated in his room, busily engaged in assorting a huge bunch of keys and in polishing them for use; he seemed absorbed in his occupation; he worked as if a precious life hung upon the result; his keen eagle eye glowed with anxiety and excitement. At length his task was com-

pleted. He paced his little room rapidly several times, and finally opened the door and peered forth into the gathering darkness of the night.

"Ugh! how dark it is; and the clouds roll up and pile themselves aloft for a regular storm! So much the better. Old Uglino, like the cat, sees better by night than by day."

While the dwarf thus stood gazing out into the darkness a brilliant and dazzling flash of lightning illuminated for a moment many a towering minaret and dome, and then again all was gloom and blackness. Away on the far-distant horizon was heard a low, sullen growl, as if a hungry lion had arisen from his lair among the mountains, and, growing louder and louder, it strode on athwart the sombre sky, until at length it burst, in one wild, deafening peal, over the city of Venice, shaking the proudest palaces to their deep foundations, and striking terror to the hearts of the timid and the superstitious.

The light dip of an oar fell upon the acute ear of Uglino, and, closing the door, he returned to his seat. In a short time three distinct raps were given from without, and Uglino answered by three from within, when, without further ceremony, two men, closely masked, entered, clad in large coats to protect them from the approaching storm. One held in his hand a dark-lantern, while the other drew from beneath his garment a box containing weapons.

"Unmask," said Uglino, "and let's prepare for duty."

Having obeyed the command, Eugene Saunders and Castruccio Castracini stood revealed.

"Uglino, is everything in readiness?" eagerly inquired Eugene.

"Everything!" answered the dwarf, in his usual laconic manner.

"Hear how the wind bellows and the thunder rolls; it is as dark as a wolf's mouth!" said Castruccio.

"So much the better," said Eugene, "since we have to deal with the spirits of darkness. Come, let's prepare ourselves and hasten to the scene of action, before the storm bursts in full force upon us. Here, Uglino, is a good weapon, that never yet refused fire in the hand of a brave man like yourself. Castruccio, take this pair of Colt's repeaters; if the occasion demands aim well, and the cruel villains will quail before their deadly muzzles. I will keep these darling little bull-dogs, my trusty Derangers, whose bark is terrible, and whose bite is certain death. I came to Italy a peaceable visitor, but since my arrival I have been followed by the sleuth-hounds of Catholicism, and have been compelled to conceal myself that I might escape their vengeance. To-night I go on an errand of mercy; let those who oppose me *beware!* Uglino, I trust in your prudence, valor, and fidelity."

"Give me your hand, signore," said the dwarf; "let this be the token of my fidelity; future actions must test my courage. Remember, that this night's work may bring our necks to the block, but your nobleness and generosity have won the affection of Uglino, and, rather than forsake you, I would face death in a thousand forms."

"I thank you, Uglino," said Eugene; "come, let's be away."

They saw that every thing was prepared, resumed

their masks, and, extinguishing the lamp, sought the gondola.

The night was dark and fearful; the winds raved, the lightnings played, the thunder came peal on peal, and the waters dashed and hissed against their slender craft! Every vivid flash revealed the gathering fury of the storm, and every thunder-peal told that the terrible storm-king was on his dreadful march!

"He comes! dread Brama shakes the sunless sky  
With murmuring wrath, and thunders from on high!  
Heaven's fiery horse, beneath his warrior form,  
Paws the light clouds and gallops on the storm!  
Wide waves his flickering sword, his bright arms glow  
Like summer suns, and light the world below!  
Earth, and her trembling isles in ocean's bed  
Are shook; and nature rocks beneath his tread!"

Now the whole heavens seemed on fire; now everything was wrapped in the deepest gloom; now all was silence—the awful silence of the tomb; now a clamor and confusion filled earth and sky, as if a myriad of mighty demons were waging a bloody war. The waves raised their voice, and from the sky were answered back with a moan and groan that drowned their puny wails. With every electric glow Venice stood revealed, with her thousand spires and cupolas bathed in unearthly grandeur, and in an instant was invisible, as though she had never been. God have mercy upon the mariner who is this night afar on the raging sea! God comfort the wife whose husband is this night to face the surging billows! God cheer the maiden, whose lover this night stands upon the quivering vessel's deck, for ere the morrow's sun shall kiss the swelling waves his manly form will be

cold in death, the rank sea-weed his winding sheet, and the coral-groves his final resting-place! Nevermore will that fond wife hear the tender accents of her long-absent husband, and his little bare-footed children, as they gather the pearly sea-shells on the sandy beach, will look in vain for their father's craft. Nevermore will that gentle maiden listen to the impassioned tale of love from her sailor-boy's lips, and she will watch at even-tide in vain for the flowing pennant and the snowy sails. His spirit is safely moored in a haven of eternal repose, where waves shall hiss not and tempests shall never rise.

Through the darkness of the night and the raging of the storm that gondola glided on, with muffled oar. Calm and silent sat those three men of iron nerves and noble hearts. Castruccio occasionally addressed the gondolier, to instruct him as to the proper course. Eugene urged him to his utmost skill. They were not long in reaching the scene of action. Before them loomed up a grand old structure, hoary with the lapse of ages; but it could be seen only by the lightning's vivid flash. No ray of light gleamed from crevice or window to tell that the building was inhabited. The gondola paused about its length from the flag-stone.

"Now, Michael," said Castruccio to his gondolier, "hold yourself in readiness for instant flight when we return."

"Si, signore," Michael said.

"Hold a moment," said Eugene, in a whisper; "let every man understand his duty. Uglino, instruct us."

"Be silent, be prudent, be cautious; do nothing in haste; let circumstances develop the rest; follow me."

One bold sweep of the oar brought the vessel to the steps. Uglino, Eugene, and Castruccio leaped out and pushed the gondola into the centre of the canal.

"Now strike a match, that I may find the lock," said the dwarf.

Castruccio made several attempts, but in vain, on account of the fury of the storm.

"Hold!" whispered Uglino; "that flash served me well. Now for my keys."

One by one the keys he tried. In breathless anxiety Eugene stood. To him it seemed that hours flew by while Uglino was testing his keys; and when the dwarf, after many fruitless trials, informed him that none of them would answer, he felt his heart sink within his bosom.

"Curse the lock," said he, "what is to be done? Would to God I had the power, I would tear this door from its iron hinges."

"Hush! hark! I hear some one walking within," said Uglino.

"I fear that we have been discovered," said Castruccio.

"I hope to God we have been," answered Eugene, "and that they will open this door to satisfy themselves."

"Silence!" hissed Uglino. "Lend me a silk handkerchief."

"Here is mine," said Castruccio.

"Now it matters not what noise I make, do you remain perfectly quiet until I give the signal."

Eugene and Castruccio could not see what Uglino did, but in a few moments he gave a quick and sudden jerk,

and the lock, yielding, sent forth a sound like the report of a pistol, and echoed through the passage within, and for a moment startled those fierce and cruel religionists who were engaged in their foul and unchristian persecution. Motionless Uglino sat, and moved not a muscle of his body. With no other means than a silk handkerchief he had caused the ponderous bolt to yield, and he now awaited to ascertain whether or not the inmates had been aroused by the loud report. Still the storm raged in its might. The little gondola, protected from the fury of the blasts by the gigantic structures that towered aloft on either side of the canal, gracefully gave way to the regular swell of the waves, and with every flash the gondolier could be seen, still motionless, like a marble statue.

"Now," whispered Uglino, "is the time for prudence. Step softly, like the Bengal tiger when creeping upon its prey; step slowly, like the African lion when stealing upon its foe; keep your eye steady, like the American panther when following the belated traveler; scent the air, like the proud eagle when he circles the plain,—and victory is ours. Ha! I will let those know who sanction such perfidy and hypocrisy, that there is power elsewhere as well as in the hands of a priest."

"We are ready to follow you," said Eugene.

Softly Uglino opened the broad, heavy door, like one who understood well his business, and one by one those daring men entered. They knew that the convents generally were guarded by men, who, to serve the Pope, would face any danger, it mattered not how terrible. Uglino paused a moment, and whispered to Eugene and Castruccio to await with patience his return. For a con-



siderable time the dwarf was absent, and Eugene began to fear for his safety. No sound broke the silence of the hour, save the howl of the tempest without.

Just as Eugene and Castruccio were about to change their positions, Uglino glided like a spirit to their sides.

"Hasten, hasten!" said he, "for the fiends are already at their unholy work!"

"What meanest thou, Uglino?" asked Eugene, with great eagerness and excitement.

"When I left you," answered the dwarf, "I crept through the darkness until I reached a flight of winding stairs that led to a subterranean vault. Here I saw a ray of light streaming through a key-hole. I approached, and, looking through, beheld Father Pietro, clad in his dalmatica, seated on a judgment-seat, surrounded by two monks, Father Bernardo, and an aged female. Before Pietro was a trembling girl, who, from her dress and complexion, was born beneath other skies, and is doubtless the maiden whom we seek."

"For God's sake let's hasten," said Eugene, "ere the ungodly wretches do her some harm. On, Uglino, on! I feel my soul on fire; the blood leaps in an angry tide through my veins; I will rescue her, else leave my body as a token of defeat. On, Uglino, on!"

"Silence, young man," whispered Uglino; "I have crept through the gloom of dungeons too often to be induced to act with unbecoming zeal. By caution, calmness, and promptness, we may conquer. Our policy is to surprise the priests, and, before they are aware, seize the young girl and rush for the gondola; once upon the canal and amid the tempest's roar, we are safe. Eugene Saunders, if you feel an interest in the

maiden, commit not murder; shed not blood unless in the defence of your life."

"How are we to surprise them?" asked Castruccio.

"Eugene Saunders will rush upon Bernardo and dash him to the floor. You, Castruccio, will silence one of the monks, both, if possible; and I will deal with Father Pietro."

These preliminary arrangements having been made, they silently descended the winding stairway, and, guided by the glimmering ray of light, approached the door, which, upon examination, was found to be standing ajar. They paused a moment to reconnoitre and adjust their weapons for instant use. Everything being ready, at a given signal from Uglino Eugene Saunders burst open the door, and, like an arrow from a well-strung bow, rushed upon Bernardo, crying aloud—"the hour of vengeance has arrived!" With one mighty stroke from his youthful and powerful arm he laid Bernardo along the floor; and, as quick as thought, seized the maiden in his arms and rushed for the door.

Castruccio knocked one of the monks down, and the other, through fear, fled into an adjoining room; while Uglino met with equal success in overcoming Pietro. At first, Lily White knew not whether to regard Eugene as friend or foe; and so much was she alarmed and astonished by the sudden entrance of those desperate men, that, when Eugene clasped her to his bosom and fled, she swooned from fear. In an instant they reached the door, Castruccio and Uglino remaining behind to guard Eugene and his precious burden, whom he bore with all care and tenderness.

When Pietro and Bernardo recovered their feet, they

stood silent with amazement. Mother Augustine still lay upon the floor, where she had fallen either in a swoon or by some accident. By this time Eugene had deposited Lily in the gondola; and Uglino and Castruccio having entered, they shoved off, and were soon gliding from the convent walls of St. Mary. The fresh air restored Lily to consciousness, yet she had not sufficiently recovered to comprehend her situation.

"What, in the name of the Holy Virgin, has happened?" said Bernardo.

"Surely the devil was in our midst. Did you see that huge monster who struck me with his great hoofs?" said Pietro.

"I verily believe they came through the roof of the house. Pietro, did you not hear the maiden say that God would raise up friends for her protection?" asked Bernardo.

"Where is the maiden, Lily White?" inquired Pietro.

By this time he had recovered fully from the blows which Uglino had inflicted upon him with his "hoofs," and straightway raised the alarm by ringing a bell. In the mean time, Mother Augustine had partly recovered, and, seeing Pietro and Bernardo standing by, all covered with blood, screamed aloud, calling upon them to spare her life.

Soon the whole convent, alarmed by the ringing of the bell and the screaming of Mother Augustine, was in confusion and excitement. Every one asked questions, which no one could answer. In fact, the attack had been so sudden and unexpected that the priests knew about as much as the rest, save that Lily White had dis-

appeared and that their devoted heads bore the impression of some hard knocks.

Through the darkness of the night and the fierceness of the storm on flew the gondola containing Lily White. Eugene drew her fondly to his throbbing heart, as if she had been an infant bereft of its mother. To protect her from the rain, which now was falling in torrents, he folded his overcoat about her. Lily knew, by the gentleness with which she was treated, that she was in the hands of kind friends.

So suddenly had she been seized and borne from the convent walls, that she did not have the opportunity to note the appearance of her deliverers, and, having reached the gondola, the darkness of the night forbade all attempts to ascertain who they were. Her heart, however, whispered to her that her deliverer was young, daring, and generous; that he had risked his own life once before for her safety, and that now, God in his goodness and wisdom had sent him again, as the means of fulfilling his own word and of restoring her to her sister Fanny. She offered no resistance to Eugene's loving embrace. She felt that his was a manly and noble heart, and that she might pillow her head upon his generous bosom without fear and without impropriety. Now that victory had been achieved, Uglino sat in silence, and took no part in the good-humored remarks that occasionally passed between Eugene and Castruccio.

"Kind friends, whither do you bear me?" said Lily.

"To the hospitable mansion of Castruccio Castracini," answered Eugene, delighted to hear once more the musical voice of Lily, "who is your friend, and is even now in this vessel."

"He has the gratitude of one who has been deeply wronged, and who has suffered much."

"My lady," said Castruccio, "I know your wrongs, and deeply sympathize with you."

Lily cared not for the raging storm and the drenching rain, now that she was free. She felt that a new era was about to be opened in the history of her life; that the clouds which had gathered about her were to be banished by the sun of peace and prosperity; that all her tears would be repaid with smiles; all her sorrows would be turned to joy; and that love would crown her future years with blissfulness.

## CHAPTER XX.

If we must pray,  
Rear in the street bright altars to the gods;  
Let virgins' hands adorn the sacrifice;  
And not a gray-beard forging priest come here,  
To pry into the bowels of their victim,  
And with their dotage mad the gaping world.

LEE'S ŒDIPUS.

Dark and unearthly is the scowl  
That glares beneath his dusky cowl;  
The flash of that dilating eye  
Reveals too much of times gone by.

BYRON.

It is a solemn thing to witness the downfall of a splendid republic. The patriot and scholar, beholding the ignorance and degradation that now reign in Italy, once the garden-spot of learning and genius, feel their

hearts grow sad, and are ready to weep over the fate of a fallen empire that has done so much for the march of intellect and the general advancement of knowledge. Rome was once the proud and majestic metropolis of a magnificent empire! Through its splendid streets once strolled such men as Horace and the Cæsars. From its gigantic gateways issued those brave armies that went forth to bear aloft the Roman standard amid the tide of battle and the flush of victory. The forum resounded with the burning eloquence of such men as Cicero; every grove was sacred; and the world still acknowledges the beauty and elegance of her poets. The ashes of Pompey the Great still rest beneath its "gray stone tower," but no longer does the spirit that animated him to noble deeds of glory dwell about the scene. The statue of Jupiter, upon which the ancient Roman loved to look with pride and admiration, has been converted by Papal power into the image of St. Peter, before which now crouch in superstitious awe an ignorant and down-trodden peasantry.

What has produced this mighty change is a question well worthy the attention of the patriot, the philanthropist, and the Christian. Why is it that Italy, possessing the loveliest climate on the globe, rejoicing in

"An ampler ether,—a diviner air,"

and pointing, as she does, to the monuments of her past glory and renown, remains plunged in ignorance and superstition, in misery and despair, while the whole world is making such rapid strides in the arts and sciences, and in everything that pertains to the advancement of civil and religious liberty? Why is it

that those beauteous groves, made sacred by a thousand fond associations; those lovely and impressive scenes hallowed by the touch of poetic inspiration; those sparkling fountains, chastened by the presence of beauty; and those gorgeous palaces, rendered immortal by the hand of genius, are now clad in mourning and draped in gloom? Why is it that instead of the sound of the cymbal, is heard the cry of the poor; instead of the melody of the lyre, the wail of the afflicted; instead of the proud tramp of victorious armies, led on by martial music, the sobs of thousands in deep distress; and instead of eloquence kindled in the holy cause of freedom, may now be caught the words—“*Ho fame! muoro della fame! non m'abandonate?*”—“*I am hungry! I am dying with hunger! do not abandon me?*” Why is it that the noble bearing of the Roman has been exchanged for the swaggering gait of the modern Italian? Why is it that the manly *toga* has been changed for filth and rags; the sign of want and beggary? How does it happen that in the same land, beneath the same blue skies where once the maidens decked their beauteous tresses with gems and brilliants that rivaled the first golden blush of morning, and adorned themselves with fabrics from India and the distant islands of the sea, may now be seen dark-haired virgins, just ripening into conscious womanhood, with disheveled locks, and with bosoms heaving with the spring-tide of unholy love; and who, for a handful of paltry coins, will exhibit those perfections which should be forever hid from mortal view?

Will the lapse of a few hundred years answer these questions? Will the natural decay of kingdoms and

empires solve them? Is the tendency of man and society downward? No, none of these. But the truth is to be found in the fact that where once floated triumphantly the Roman Eagle, is now out-spread the raven wing of Roman Catholicism, which casts a shadow of gloom over those monuments of ancient glory and renown. Where once arose the voice of a mighty people are now heard the cruel mandates of a Pope, which strike terror to the heart and fill the land with ignorance, superstition, and woe.

“*Submit, recant, and be saved; persist, and be damned,*” has been the death-knell not only to Italy, but to the Mexican Isthmus, Peru, Portugal, and Spain; and the same decree will ere long be heard in thunder-tones echoing through other lands! Protestants should wage no war against the virtues of the Catholic Church,—and it has virtues,—but should raise the warning voice against its vices, and offer heartfelt prayers for the amelioration of its blind votaries. Because its vicious tenets are such as lead to misery, ruin, and death, and bind with fetters which no reason can strike off and which no power can rend asunder. Give the Roman Church the absolute power, and earth would soon be clad in mourning and wrapt in a dismal darkness. The light of learning would be forever extinguished; the spirit of liberty would be lost in the deep, dark midnight of ignorance; the red arm of might would triumph over right; the flag of war would be unfurled to the breeze; the bloody car of tyranny would roll over the necks of the people; pestilence would ride upon the wind; famine, with fiery, sunken eyes, and long, lean arms, would stalk in the goary wake of war; altars

would be robbed of their beauty; tears would flow like rivers; crime would fear no penalty; like a volcano, she would rend the earth with mutterings, and fill the sky with the smoke of her wrath! Ecclesiastical power, no matter what may be its principles and what its pretensions, is ever to be dreaded by a free and independent people. The fact is the same, whether it be applied to Romanism, Presbyterianism, Baptism, or vigorous Methodism! Let Italy, and Spain, and Peru, and Portugal, and Mexico be remembered. Over their sad and mournful history the patriot, philanthropist, and Christian mingle their tears.

But in Italy, the land of song and the scene of our story, is there no patriotism? Has the fire of freedom died upon the altar? No; a spark still glows, and a noble spirit animates the bosom of a few; but, alas! what can a few accomplish when opposed by a potent adversary whose policy has ever been to blight, if possible; to crush, if necessary; and to destroy utterly, rather than suffer defeat? Bernardo, the learned man, the cunning knave, and cruel priest, is a sample of the means by which the Roman Church advances its interest and maintains its power.

The wheel of fortune is never still; it never ceases its rotation; and with every revolution some change is wrought that is doomed to tell upon the destiny of individuals and of society. The man who, to-day, is almost ready to clutch the dazzling bauble fame, finds that it has been dissolved by the passing zephyr; the poet who, to-day, dreams of an immortal name, to-morrow is disappointed; and the politician who, to-day, fondly looks forward to distinction, to-morrow finds that, by an im-

prudent or a wrong policy, he must drag out his days a private citizen. Thus the world moves on. But to our story.

"This is a sad business," said Father Pietro, a few days after the abduction of Lily White, as he nervously paced his room, holding in his hand a letter which he occasionally paused to read again, as if he had been mistaken in its meaning. "Ah! this is a sad business. I wish his Holiness had ordered some one else to perform it."

Saying this he rang a bell, and a woman answering the call, he informed her that he desired to speak with Father Bernardo. Since the affray on the night of Lily's rescue, from the effects of the bruises and the wound, Bernardo had not left the Convent of St. Mary. In a few moments he entered. Though his cheeks were whiter than usual, yet his eyes were as dark and sparkling as ever.

"What business have you with me? What would you say?" asked Bernardo.

"That which, Bernardo, I would rather leave unsaid. By this morning's mail I received a letter from Rome, under the seal of His Holiness the Pope—blessed be his holy name!—in which he, having taken offence at you for leaving your post of duty at Florence without his knowledge or consent, has made it my solemn task to inform you that you have been excommunicated from the priesthood of the most Holy Catholic Church, and, from this time henceforth and for evermore, you are forbidden to assume the sacred responsibilities of priest and confessor."

When Bernardo heard this solemn sentence pro-

nounced against him he was overcome with rage and disappointment. His knees trembled, his bosom heaved, his eye was lit with a fierce light, and his cheeks, always pale, were now as white as the cold marble.

"Hell and fury!" said he, with clenched hands; "let them curse, let them disgrace me! They know my power, they have felt my influence; hence those cardinals wish to destroy me while they can claim authority. By all the powers of hell——"

"Hold, hold, Bernardo!" said Pietro; "you forget against whom you lift your voice."

"Look! look upon me, Pietro, and behold what I am! Do you see these cheeks? they have grown pale in the service of the Church! Do you behold these eyes? they have become thus sunken by long and faithfully watching the interests of the Church! See this emaciated form! It has been reduced by toil in behalf of that Pope who now repays all my zeal, all my long years of labor, by an eternal disgrace. Why have I committed crimes from which other men shrank? That I might please the Pope! Why have I given my soul to hell? That I might one day wear a cardinal's cap!"

Bernardo took from his bosom a splendidly carved cross, and, throwing it upon the floor, trampled it beneath his feet. In amazement, Pietro started back.

"Bernardo, are you mad?" said the astonished Pietro.

"Go ask the fiends of the deepest hell! Thus I trample upon the authority of the Holy Church," said he, pressing his foot upon the cross, "and thus I scorn the power of the Pope," said he, tearing asunder the long flowing robe in which he was clothed.

Like a raving maniac he tore his garments and tossed the tattered pieces from him in wild disorder. The foam stood upon his lips, and the muscles of his body worked like vipers striving to be free.

"Calm yourself, Bernardo," said Pietro, "and meet the Pope's decree with manly courage. You are a brave man, and one who was never known to shrink from any danger; why now give vent to feelings which you cannot gratify, and beat the air with idle and unmeaning words? Come, Bernardo, receive my blessing—'*Benedictio Domini sit vobiscum*,'" said Pietro, piously crossing himself.

"Give me no blessings! Curse me, curse me, Pietro, that I may be damned! Ha! one consolation is yet left! Simonetta Pitti shall, *shall* be mine! In the warm light of her beautiful dark eyes I will bathe my very soul in bliss, and upon her snowy and rounded bosom I will pillow my wearied head! I will sip sweet nectar from her rosy lips. I have borne too much, have suffered too long, and have toiled too hard to lose everything; her smiles shall yet light Bernardo to glory, though the pathway lie through blood and over graves! Hell, with all its hissing, howling demons, shall not prevent me. Through the gloom of night *she* has been the star that guided me. In sickness, when my blood bounded through my veins like a wild river of fire, and my brain reeled from excitement, the thoughts of her calmed that tide and restored me again to health. This night she shall be mine, else this dagger shall wed us both to the grim monster death!"

"Bernardo, your words betoken the madman. Suppose that harm comes to the girl, think you not that



friends will rise up to revenge any wrong that may be inflicted upon her?"

"The grave levels all distinctions, and hushes forever the mutterings of complaint," said Bernardo.

"Not so," said Pietro; "by a wrong step your name may be covered with shame, and all good men may recall your actions with regret and loathing."

"Now that I am disgraced, I care not for the opinions of men. There was a time when I crouched to gain their approbation; but, Pietro, that day is passed. Come, let's end these idle words. Go, seek your confessional, and listen to stories of crime; I will work out my success, be it in a good or evil cause."

With this Bernardo left Pietro's room, his heart filled with anger and bitterness. Pietro secretly rejoiced in his soul that Bernardo was no longer a priest of the Church of Rome!

\* \* \* \* \*

A beautiful hope had sprung up in the heart of Simonetta Pitti. Like a new being she walked the earth in beauty! Upon her even the stars seemed to beam with a brighter effulgence! Within her virgin heart had arisen a lovely altar, dedicated to love. In visiting the trading saloons upon the Square of St. Mark she had accidentally met a young Austrian soldier, who, being struck with her graceful form and matchless beauty, sought her out and won her heart. The name of this fortunate man was Leopold Haldenberg. No more of his history can be given than that, at an early age, he entered the Austrian service, and, by his honesty, his noble and dignified bearing, and his daring bravery, had won distinguished honors. Relative to his early years

he was silent. It seemed that a mystery hung over that period of his life, and no one who knew Leopold Haldenberg dared to press their questions to too great a length. He had been stationed in Venice for the purpose of commanding the forces collected there, and, also, to superintend the interests of the government in every respect.

This, indeed, was a high and honorable position for one so young to hold; but, so far, he had conducted himself in such a manner as to reflect honor upon his own name and to claim respect for the soldiery under his command. In the camp he was as generous as he was brave in the field. In times of peace his heart was easily melted by the tale of sorrow, and a comrade in arms never called upon Leopold Haldenberg in vain.

He was all that a soldier should be. In council he was wise, in the discharge of duty prompt, in the execution of discipline just, generous in all his actions, and in the fiercest conflict of battle his sword gleamed in the foremost ranks, and his clarion voice, ringing loud and clear above the tumult of strife, could be heard urging his men on to victory or to death!

But, as we have already mentioned, there hung over the early history of this young soldier a mystery which the eye of curiosity could not penetrate; for though he commanded the Austrian forces, and though his name suggested an Austrian descent, yet his raven locks and darkly-flashing eye told too plainly that his origin was Italian.

Hitherto Leopold had exerted all his energies to carve out for himself a name. To accomplish this one great object of his life, all his powers of body and mind had

been directed. In the hottest conflict, where the cannon roared the loudest and where balls whizzed the thickest, this thought haunted his soul and nerved him to still greater deeds of daring. But a brighter light beamed athwart his pathway. It stole into his heart and warmed it with a new desire.

On a lovely evening, just as the roseate hues were fading from the western sky and the melancholy twilight was settling softly over city, valley, and mountain, Leopold Haldenberg and Simonetta Pitti strolled slowly, arm in arm, through the flower-garden of Simonetta's new home. It was the hour for love! Away in the dim distance the Julian Alps reared their towering summits to the evening clouds, and in the gentle twilight resembled huge pillars of the world. In another direction the billowy Adriatic stretched its sparkling waters, whitened here and there by a snowy sail, fluttering in the evening breeze; while nearer still uprose many a proud dome and graceful campanil , all aglow with the mild splendor of the twilight hour. The song of the distant gondolier came wafted in cooling zephyrs to this loving and happy pair, and the silvery chime of many a convent bell, calling to vespers, floated musically over Venice—the fair “Ocean Queen.”

“Hark! my Leopold, to the chime of the vesper bells!” said the beautiful Simonetta, her dark eyes beaming with the pure and holy flame of love, and her cheeks glowing with a “pearly pink” that told of a sacred feeling burning at her heart.

“Come, my dark-eyed beauty, let's hasten to yonder fragrant bower, where we may place our dearest hopes for the future upon the altar of love,” said Leopold, as

he bent his ardent gaze upon the lovely girl that hung gently upon his arm like a beauteous flower.

“Ah! Simonetta,” continued he, as they wended their way toward the bower, “since I first met you upon the Square of St. Mark I have become a new and better man. Ere that, I had striven for a name, and found it; but there was within my breast that which was not yet satisfied. Everything for which my soul panted in my wildest moments of ambition has been gratified in thy approving smiles, and my heart has now no other wish than to merit the love which you have so recently conferred on me.”

“Leopold,” answered the blushing girl, “such declarations doubtless have made some fair Austrian maiden's heart leap with joy. I have listened to too many tales of love to credit all I hear.”

“I swear by mine honor, which is dearer to me than life, and by the heavens now glowing above us, that I but speak the truth when I say that earth hath no brighter jewel than thou; and I shall never be happier nor prouder than when beneath the soft influence of thy loving eyes.”

“Fie upon thee, Leopold! Thou a soldier and talk thus; as if life were a gala-day and not a stern reality, with joys mingled with sorrows and sunshine darkened by gloom!”

“Yes, Simonetta, I dare to talk thus, and am willing to maintain the truthfulness of my assertion with this strong right arm against the man, be he whom he may, who is bold enough to gainsay it. I have drank too deeply of life's sorrows, have seen too much of its woes, have felt too much of its anguish, and have listened to

too many groans, to be ignorant of what you say. But, my dearest girl, there is a time for joy and sorrow; would you have this hour, set apart for love, overshadowed by one dark hint at misfortune. With you by my side, life has not a terror for me; for the gloomiest hour would be changed into sunshine by one of your loving glances."

They had now reached the bower. Around them hung in clustering festoons the sweetest flowers. Seating themselves upon a rustic seat this young and happy pair talked of the past, and painted the future in all the gorgeous hues of romance.

Simonetta informed Leopold of her past life: how she had been insulted by her confessor; how, like an evil spirit, he had followed on her pathway; and how he had threatened her with a compulsory marriage. She also spoke to him of Eugene Saunders, and candidly made known the fact that at first she thought she loved him, but on a close analysis of her feelings she found that what she considered love was only admiration, mingled with profound respect.

"What!" said he, "is it possible that you have suffered thus at the hands of a man who calls himself holy father? Give me his name, Simonetta, that I may hunt him down, and with these hands scourge him as his insolence and hypocrisy deserve. I will follow him to the remotest corner of the globe, and having found him, I will chastise him until he falls upon the earth begging for that mercy which he has not shown."

"Oh! Leopold!" said the trembling maiden, "do not talk thus; you know not against whom you make such threats."

"If he is in the shape of man, I will execute them upon him. What! Simonetta, think you that I who have stood in the foremost rank of battle, and met the most powerful enemy hand to hand, fear to face a craven priest who has dared to torment and insult a defenceless maiden? By all the powers of earth I will teach the villain a lesson that he will remember upon his dying bed! But come, my sweet girl, give the name of this daring priest."

"I fear, my Leopold, that your haste will involve you in difficulties."

"To seek for dangers and difficulties has been my business from boyhood," said he.

"But, Leopold, you have sought them for your country's good. I would not endanger your life for any suffering I have felt, or any wrong I have sustained."

"The man," said Leopold, "who would not resent the wrongs of his lady-love, would flee in time of danger, and upon bended knees would purchase from the enemy his pardon at the expense of his country. If it should cost me my life, it will be sweet to know that I have offered it up in a glorious cause, and that there would be one at least who would cherish the name of the soldier, and over his grave shed a tear of sympathy. Tell me, Simonetta, would you not?"

She threw herself upon the manly bosom of the soldier, and, weeping, said,—

"Oh! Leopold, do not talk of death; it casts a shadow over my soul. I have promised to become your wife; then be satisfied to resent my wrongs for the future, and think not of the past. Father Bernardo—"

"What sayest thou?" said Leopold, starting as if an

adder had stung him to the heart. "Call that name again," continued he, in a half-abstracted mood, as if he was trying to recall the past; "call that name again; for it brings back upon my mind a dim and shadowy vision of other days, and the memory of wrongs that remain yet unavenged."

"Oh! tell me, tell me, Leopold, what can be the matter with you? Why is it that the name of Father Bernardo makes you start thus, and talk as though you were mad?" said she, her lustrous eyes upturned to his, sparkling with the mingled feelings of alarm and love."

"Simonetta," said he, "the story is a long one. For the present, know that Bernardo's name has been often by another told to me. I learned that his influence made me a homeless wanderer in my early youth. By all the gods, I will be avenged! You intimated that he was in Venice. I will search him out and pay him this double debt. Farewell, my dearest girl! let this kiss, impressed with the holiest feelings of a sacred love, be the pure token of our speedy union."

Ere Simonetta could remonstrate, Leopold Haldenberg was gone. She buried her face in her lap and wept.

## CHAPTER XXI.

It was a cavern dark and dreary,  
Where the Furies might be thought to dwell.

ANON.

Let us trace them;  
She cannot be fled afar.

BYRON'S SARDANAPALUS.

AFTER the interview with Pietro, Bernardo returned to his room to meditate upon what had happened and to plan means for the accomplishment of his wicked designs. As soon as night mantled the earth with gloom, he threw a robe about his form, and, departing, turned his footsteps toward the Square of St. Mark.

Now that he was excommunicated from the priesthood, he gave free scope to his unbridled passions. For years he had watched the budding beauties of the Italian maiden; and now that she stood within his reach like a full-blown rose, his very soul was on fire to possess a flower so fair and beautiful. Time and again, Simonetta, with scorn, had repulsed his advances; but in the fierceness of his fiery temper he had registered a vow that this night he would triumph, else his dagger should wed them both to the grim monster death. None who knew Bernardo doubted that he would fail to execute his threat. Already he had crossed the rubicon of crime, and now that he had lost all hopes of preferment in the Church, no act was too daring that would enable him to gratify his unholy desires.

With his robe drawn closely about him, Bernardo was

walking rapidly toward the Square of St. Mark, and was just passing the ancient Church of Orivolo, when a man stepped forth from the shadow cast by this antique structure, and laid his hand boldly upon the shoulder of the disgraced priest. Bernardo started back at this bold interruption, and gazed fiercely upon the man who had thus dared to accost him so unceremoniously.

He was a stoutly-built, square-shouldered man, and his finely-rounded limbs intimated clearly that to great bodily strength he united wonderful activity. Over his shoulders was carelessly thrown a black velvet cloak, edged with gold lace, and clasped at the throat with a splendid brooch of immense value. This garment was cut after the fashion of the ancient Roman *toga*, and could be worn either as a coat or as a cloak, at the wish of the wearer. Upon his head was a cap of the same material, drawn to one side and confined by a silver anchor. A hunter's horn, bound with silver, and suspended by a polished chain of steel, hung by his side. From beneath his dark velvet mantle gleamed the handle of a dagger.

"Whither do you journey so rapidly, Bernardo?" said the stranger, in a tone of voice that indicated more of mockery than of reverence.

"Show me your right, sir, to make such a demand, ere you ask the question," answered Bernardo.

"Here is my authority," said the stranger, producing from his pocket a paper and handing it to the priest.

Bernardo stepped without the shadow of the building, and, holding the scrip of paper to the moonbeams, read its contents.

"Ah!" said he, when he had finished, "is it possi-

ble! Why, Alberto, I thought you had fled to some distant island of the sea, and that you were reveling amid the olive-groves of a more southern clime. Come, give me your hand. To tell the truth, of all the men of my acquaintance I had rather, this night, see Alberto."

"When Bernardo passes a compliment, his own self-interest is at stake. Know you, sir, that I am no monk, to be standing here in idle conversation, when every moment may cost me my life. Tell me, are you ready to comply with the demand made in that paper?"

"I am willing to do more than that," said Bernardo; "you have done me good service in years gone by, and if you will lend me your assistance to-night, I will double the amount."

"Before I can comply with your request, I must first know its nature; for, though men regard me as an outlaw, yet I will engage in no undertaking, however profitable, unless it accords with my views of correct principles," said Alberto.

"This," said Bernardo, lifting his eyes to the towering building, "is the renowned Church of Orivolo. Years ago the most beauteous maidens of the Venetian Republic were assembled here for marriage, when the brave and manly Istrians rushed in, captured the fair prizes, and hastened from the church."

"Yes," answered Alberto; "but, if I have not forgotten my history, the maidens were recaptured, and the bold Istrian pirates put to flight."

"Ay, Alberto; but they have rendered their names immortal; and this noble structure, now bathed in the soft moonlight, borrows its interest from that scene, enacted here near the foundation of this Republic."

"What, Bernardo, have the Istrians to do with our present business? If you have any proposition to make that comes within my province, speak. I have no time to stand here listening to figurative language, when my graceful Isabelle, the mistress of the sea, is pressing upon her cables and longs once more to kiss the rolling billows with her bright keel."

"There is in this city," said Bernardo, "a maiden whom I have long loved with passionate devotion. She has scorned me from her presence. I have sworn to make her my wife this night, and nothing but death shall thwart me in my aim! Alberto, if you will lend me your assistance, name your price, and the glittering gold shall clank at your feet. I have amassed wealth; secure to me this triumph, and you shall be satisfied."

"How do you propose that I shall act?" said Alberto.

"As your own experience may suggest," replied Bernardo.

"My experience runs not in that direction. I have had to deal with man, not woman. But I accept your terms."

"I thank you from my heart," Bernardo said; "at ten o'clock meet me upon the Square of St. Mark. If the maiden will not consent, do you rush in, seize upon her person and bear her to your vessel; the rest can easily be managed," said Bernardo.

"I will meet you with three of my most faithful men, and if the girl is stubborn I will conduct her to my cave. It would be unsafe to place her on board the vessel."

"It matters not where she is deposited, so that she is mine," said Bernardo.

After a few more words had been exchanged between them they separated, each taking a different direction.

When their footsteps ceased to ring upon the pavement, a dark form glided from a niche within the wall.

"Ah! the outrageous villain! If the Church of Rome has ears, I will teach Bernardo that there is one, at least, who can keep pace with him. He shall see that I have not forgotten him! He shall yet fall, else I will perish! I will follow on his pathway; I will hunt him from place to place; I will haunt him in his dying hour! This night I will thwart him in his base design! When I forget the wrongs that Bernardo has heaped upon me, may I forget myself. But I must away to the rescue!"

Ugolino darted away with greater rapidity than one would suppose could have belonged to a figure so marred by nature. He paused not to regard the magnificent edifices about him; he stopped not to notice the gondolas that sped hither and thither in the beautiful moonlight; he slackened not his gait to listen to the soft and dulcet notes of the guitar that floated on the air. On he hastened, bent upon his urgent business.

He sought the hotel, ascended a flight of steps, and knocked at a door. It opened, and Eugene Saunders kindly welcomed Ugolino to a seat. The dwarf's eyes sparkled with that same indescribable fire that caused Bernardo to draw his robe more closely about him on the evening he sought to hire him to assassinate Eugene Saunders.

"Has not Ugolino offered you his services," said the dwarf, "on more than one occasion?"

"You have, my friend," said Eugene, not knowing



what could be the meaning of Uglino's language; "and I owe you a debt of gratitude which I would to God was in my power to repay."

"This night," said Uglino, "you can render me a service. I know I have but to mention the object, in order to procure your aid."

"You may count me your friend in any undertaking that claims your attention, Uglino. When the American maiden was in prison, your sagacity and bravery saved her. For that one generous deed you shall have my aid, even though it should cost me my life."

"Young man, listen. A short time ago I overheard Bernardo plotting with Alberto, the daring pirate of the Mediterranean, to overcome Simonetta Pitti. They stood within the shadow of the Church of Orivolo, while I was concealed in a niche close by, and could hear every word that passed between these daring wretches."

"Uglino," said Eugene, "you astonish me!"

"To-night, at ten," continued Uglino, "they meet upon the Square of St. Mark."

"So soon as that!" said Eugene, examining his watch; "we must hasten, it is now nine. What say you, Uglino, to the dispatching of a note to Leopold Haldenberg, the commander of the Austrian forces. He is said to be brave and generous, and will not refuse to lend his aid in a matter where duty calls and gallantry claims his service."

"I have no objection," answered Uglino.

Accordingly, Eugene dispatched a note to the quarters of Leopold Haldenberg, claiming an interview with him immediately on urgent business. Uglino hastened to inform Castruccio Castracini, leaving Eugene to

break the intelligence to Leopold. In the course of a few minutes Leopold Haldenberg entered the apartment of Eugene Saunders.

When Eugene related to the young soldier what he had learned from Uglino, he was surprised at the influence the information exerted upon him. With flashing eye and heaving bosom he leaped to his feet, and darted for the door, muttering curses upon the head of Bernardo. As quick as lightning, Eugene intercepted his flight, and prevailed upon him to be quiet for a moment.

"Ah! sir, there is a demon slumbering in this breast, and it shall vent its burning rage upon this priest. All that I have suffered in life has been caused by him. That, sir, I could have borne; but when he attempts to carry out his vile designs against her who is dearer to me than life, I will hunt him to the end of the earth. If he should stand upon the summit of Vesuvius and leap into its blazing depths, rather than he should escape me I would follow him, and amid the subterranean and sulphurous fires I would wreak my vengeance on the hypocrite. Come, come, let's hasten! To me every moment is an age; every pulsation of this heart an eternity! My men are ready and await below."

Eugene was struck with the bold and fearless manner of Leopold. In him he saw a man who was to be feared, dreaded. In his appearance there was something so noble and commanding, his language was so lofty, and his eye flashed with such brilliancy, that Eugene gazed upon him with admiration.

"Sir," said Eugene, "I sympathize with you in your present state of feeling. The young lady who is this

night in danger has twice saved my life, and I would storm an army of a thousand men, face the waves of the ocean or the flames of destruction, rather than harm should fall upon her head. This Bernardo, too, is my deadliest foe; but, sir, I need not tell you, a brave and prudent soldier, that our only means of success depend upon prudence and caution."

"Signore Saunders, you are right," said Leopold.

Ugolino and Castruccio entered. Soon all the necessary arrangements were made, and these brave and intrepid men set out to thwart those bold and daring wretches who were plotting the abduction of Simonetta Pitti. Leopold Haldenberg urged his men to their utmost speed. Upon every moment hung the destiny of that fair being who had plighted her hand to him, and whose safety was dearer to him than earthly fame. His happiness was at stake. With a heaving bosom and flashing eye he hastened on. In a few moments they stood before the humble dwelling of Lucretia Pitti. Everything was still and silent. A faint light glimmered through the window. Eugene Saunders approached the door and rapped. No answer came, no voice bade them enter. Cautiously, for fear of giving alarm, Eugene opened the door, and one by one they entered. A sight of horror burst upon their vision. Lying upon the floor, covered with blood, were the forms of the female servant, and Lucretia, the mother of Simonetta!

As this dreadful spectacle met their view all drew back in horror! The blood still spouted warm and free from the throat of Lucretia, and flowed in a red and fiery stream along the floor! When Leopold beheld

this scene of blood his knees trembled, his face grew pale as death, his form reeled, and, if Eugene had not supported him, he would have fallen. In an instant he aroused himself, and again the demon awoke in his breast.

"The foul fiends," said he, "have triumphed. Let us assist the living, the dead are beyond all pain. I swear by the blood that flows along this floor, and by the injuries that have been done upon the living, that I will have my revenge. Whether they be upon the land or upon the sea, upon the mountain or the plain, in the city or in the field, they shall not escape. Come, come, let's away; even now the vile hell-hounds may be at their work of shame; even now my darling girl may be raising her plaintive voice for mercy, or may be calling upon the name of Leopold Haldenberg for assistance! And by all the gods she shall have it!"

"My friend," said Ugolino, "govern your feelings, and for a moment be silent. Who among these men is acquainted with the mountains?"

"I am," answered a soldier.

"Do you know," asked Ugolino, "of any cavern near enough to this city in which the men who have done this deed could find a harbor?"

"I do, sir," said the soldier; "four miles distant is a cave into which nothing but the devil himself would venture."

"Can you lead us thither?" asked the dwarf.

"I can, sir."

Leopold, having formed his men in order, enjoined upon each one to preserve the strictest silence. At length the word of command was given, and this small

but determined body of men filed away toward the mountains. The night was dark, but clear, and a myriad of bright and beautiful stars gemmed the skies. On the left stretched the sea, its bosom reflecting in wonderful perfection the starry firmament—distinctly could they hear the waves dashing and breaking upon the beach; and behind them gleamed a thousand lights, some flashing from palace windows, others twinkling from the dwellings of the poor and humble; on the right rose in majestic grandeur the mountains, their shadows softened down by the shades of night, and their rugged and jagged crags lost amid the general gloom.

Silently these noble men journeyed on, each bent upon his own thoughts. Naught broke the silence of the night save the tramp, tramp, tramp, of the advancing soldiers, and the beating of the waves along the beach. Ever and anon came the low but distinct command,—

“On, men, on; on, soldiers, on!”

Away in the distance a fiery red rocket darted toward the sky with a lurid glare. For a moment it paused on its flaming way, and then burst into a thousand beautiful and brilliant lights, flashing here and there until the very heavens seemed on fire!

“Ha!” said Uglino, “that is the pirates’ signal from the mountains; and I am deceived if it will not be answered from the sea.”

Scarcely had the words fallen from his lips, when afar out upon the heaving sea a beautiful red light ascended slowly for a short time and then hung motionless in the air. It could with difficulty be distinguished from a star, except that it was more red and rose and fell with the swelling waves. Again another rocket hurtled through

the air, for a moment illuminating the mountains, and then, high above their lofty summits, darting in many a zigzag line, faded from the sky.

“There!” said Eugene Saunders, “the signal is answered, and, doubtless, by this time the vessel is striking for the shore.”

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While we leave Eugene’s party advancing to the rescue of Simonetta, let us follow Bernardo to the Pirates’ Cave. But how shall we attempt to describe that awful cavern? In what language shall we portray the feelings of that unfortunate girl, who had seen her mother cruelly murdered before her eyes, when she found herself completely in the power of Bernardo, and surrounded by a wild and ferocious band of pirates who respected neither the laws of man nor feared those of God?

The entrance to the cavern was beneath a huge and jutting mass of irregular rock, and was just of sufficient size for one man to enter at a time. Unless by accident, no one would ever suppose that an entrance could here be found to the subterranean depths of the mountain.

Within this dismal den a large lamp hung suspended from the arch, and over the whole scene cast an unearthly gleam. Far in the interior a fire blazed, seated around which were some dozen or more men, clad in sailors’ jackets, and armed with long, keen daggers. An awful, grinning skull and two cross-bones were fastened to the walls. These were the fearful, fatal insignia of Alberto, and their image fluttered wildly in many a driving blast not only on the Adriatic but on the blue bosom of the Mediterranean.

From the dull, gray walls, also hung cutlasses, swords,

pikes, knives of every form, pistols, and heavy guns. Scattered here and there were boxes and bales, containing the plunder that had fallen into the hands of this fierce gang, and which had been deposited in this cave as a place of safety, into which they thought no one possessed the hardihood to venture. The flickering fire-light falling faintly upon the harsh features of those pirates presented a scene of horror upon which even the bravest could not look without feeling the blood creep back upon the heart.

Their eyes flashed with passion, and their coarse features, distorted by crime, told plainly that no sympathy dwelt in their bosoms, and that the cry for mercy fell unheeded upon their ears. They were indulging freely in the use of ardent spirits, which they drank from flasks, and frequently replenished from a large cask.

"Here," said one, raising the sparkling flagon to his lips, "is to the health of our darling Isabelle! May she ever ride the billows like a sea-gull, and may her bright keel ever cleave the waters, whether in facing the storm, in meeting the enemy, or in fleeing from the foe!"

"Hurrah! hurrah! for the mistress of the deep!" shouted many voices in concert.

"Here," said another, "is to the free rovers of the sea! May our banner ever send terror to the hearts of those who dare give us opposition!"

"Hurrah! hurrah! for the free rovers of the sea!" again echoed the voices of that lawless band.

"You may toast as much as you please," said a dark-visaged man, whose head was sprinkled with white, "but I like not this night's work. That priest's visit bodes

us no good. I cannot, messmates, tell you why it is, but something whispers me that our gallant ship will never again spread her sails to the breeze."

"By the beard of Mufti, Roberto, you are as drunk as hell, or else you have turned granny, and we must vote you unfit to carry a sword or to reef a sail! What dreams did you have last night?"

"Messmates," said Roberto, "you need not jest with me. For twenty-five years my home has been upon the sea, and during that time I have seen as much blood spilled as would float our Isabelle. Who ever knew Roberto to flinch when danger came? At midnight I have stood upon the quivering masts, when the lightnings flashed, the thunders rolled, the winds raved, and the billows reared in wrath! I have stood upon the deck amid the fiercest conflicts, when human blood flowed in streams beneath my feet; and let the man show himself who dares deny that Roberto's sword added to that crimson tide. Hand to hand I have met the foe on the land and on the sea. But, messmates, last night I had a dream. I thought that we were off the coast of Dalmatia, and that, beneath a bright and silvery moon, our noble little queen dashed the sparkling foam-bells from her prow and sped thither on her course. Twelve bells had sounded, when a cry of horror broke the stillness of the night. I have heard many a death-scream, and have listened to the roar of many a cannon; but nothing before ever fell upon my ear so loud, so shrill, so piercing, as that midnight wail! It was not repeated, messmates; there was no need of it; for ere it died away every man of us was upon our feet, and, lo! alongside of our vessel floated the dreadful 'phantom

ship! In an instant our Isabelle was wrapped in flames, when, what was wonderful, from the smoke and fire issued a hideous form that seemed blighted by the hand of God, if there is such a being. We fled into the sea; but instead of water we found only blood! The moon was extinguished, and the stars had faded from the sky! I awoke; cold drops of sweat were standing on my brow!"

"Roberto, said one, "if I did not know you I would say that you are mad. But I myself like not this affair. Wherever there is a woman you may look out for squalls. Nevertheless, blow me, messmates, but she is a pretty lass, even in her tears. Whether it be priest or pirate, it is a bold game!"

"Some heart-sick lover," said another, "when he finds his sweetheart gone, will bellow forth his grief to the moon."

Thus did those bold men pass the time, in jesting, drinking, singing coarse and vulgar songs, and in rending the air with bitter, burning oaths.

In a small room, formed in the solid rock, were seated Alberto the pirate and Bernardo the priest. A silver lamp furnished them with light. With a smile of triumph on his lip, Bernardo was counting down the coin that purchased this new act of villainy.

"There!" said he, as the last glittering piece fell tinkling upon the pirate's table, "she is now mine! Let the Roman Church go to hell with its gigantic follies! Congratulate me, Alberto, that I will soon be reveling in that paradise for which my soul has so often burned. Bernardo wants no other heaven than that which now is his. My heart is overjoyed. Beneath

the deep blue sky of Ceylon, and amid its olive-groves, I will teach my little antelope that the lion's paw is as soft as velvet, when the fangs are hid by love. In the warmth and ardor of my affections she will bloom forever a lovely and beautiful flower. For every tear she has shed I will cause a smile; every harsh word that I have spoken I will repay with accents of love; upon her snowy bosom I will pillow my head, and lose my soul in a bliss compared with which heaven is hell! I will live a new life, which not even a sigh shall disturb, which not even a sorrow shall dim. My table shall groan with delicacies, with spices,—

"——— such as scent

The sea-air for a thousand leagues;  
Incense of gums of Afric, sweeter than the  
Lip of Cupid, moist with Cythærea's kiss,  
Or Hebe's, sprinkled by the cup of Jove;  
Fruits from all climes, within the signs that  
Bound the sun's march, ripening on their branches, brought  
In vessels moulded of transparent earth."

Amid flowers and fountains, the bright and the beautiful, the rich low melody of bees, and the soft music of lutes, we will spend our days. Her couch shall be of roses, and I her guardian angel! I will envy the star that kisses her brow with its gentle beam, and will be jealous of the zephyrs that shall sport amid her glossy tresses. My present bliss, Alberto, drowns the agony of suspense, hushes the cryings of conscience, banishes the spectres that haunt me, and brightens the gloom of the past. How long ere we shall be upon the vessel that is to wing us to that home of which I have been speaking?"

When Bernardo finished his frame towered to its full height, his breast swelled, and his cheeks glowed with passionate love.

"In an hour," said the pirate, "we can be upon the wave; but, Bernardo, have you forgotten that I am to wed you ere we sail? Doff that robe and clothe yourself as becomes a happy bridegroom."

Alberto touched a silver bell, and a page, gaily clad, entered and awaited the commands of his captain.

"Boy," said he, "tell Roberto it is my order that he shall send a rocket from the mountain-top toward the sky; and hark ye, lad, tell him to await until the proper signal is answered from the sea."

The page bowed and left the room. When he had delivered the captain's order, and Roberto arose to depart, one of his companions said,—

"If you see a goat, Roberto, do not mistake it for a ghost; or if you should hear an owl, do not give a false alarm."

While Bernardo was preparing himself to greet his bride, Alberto was busy in the erection of an altar in the entrance of the cavern. It was made by bringing together several of the boxes that lay about the walls, and placing them one upon another. Over these was thrown a velvet covering. In absence of the Koran or the Bible, Alberto laid upon the altar the skull and cross-bones, together with his naked sword. This fatal altar, before which the good and noble Simonetta was to stand, and in a mock marriage be united to Bernardo, was erected beneath the dull and flickering lamp that hung in the centre of the cave. Its dim, uncertain light, falling upon this scene of mockery, gave to every-

thing around a solemn and unearthly shade. Alberto, with his heavy beard, and pistols in his belt; the sailors, with their savage brows, begrimed with smoke and flushed with wine; the human skull and whitened bones; the drawn sword and dimly-burning lamp, made it a scene fearful to behold!

"Well, my happy bridegroom!" said Alberto, after all his arrangements had been made, "are you ready for the leap? If so, let us hasten, for Roberto brings the news that my Isabelle has raised her anchor and is bearing for the shore. Help me on with this d—d black robe of yours, and I will show you a priest who is every inch a man. I will let your antelope see how nicely I can unite you in the holy bonds of wedlock. Well, Bernardo, after all, there is but little difference between a pirate and a priest. The priest, clad in the robes of the Church, and sanctioned by the authority of the State, robs with a tear in his eye and a prayer on his lip; but the bold pirate unfurls his bloody banner to the breeze, and, waving it aloft, goes forth on the high seas and does his work with a gleam of vengeance in his eye, a dagger in his hand, and a curse on his lip. The victim of the priest never knows that danger is near until he finds himself a hungry beggar, or is lodged in a dismal dungeon; but whoever beholds the waving banner of the pirate, knows that wherever it streams danger and death are near. The priest goes about, with downcast eyes and long-drawn sighs, seeking whom he may devour; the pirate, thank God! looks every man, be he friend or foe, full in the face, and with a light heart sings to the stars, as he glides on the heaving sea, beneath their gentle beams. How do you like the two, Bernardo?



will you not turn pirate? But come, I know you are in no humor to argue the case with me, and I am in a hurry, for I feel devilish mean in this cursed mourning-gown of yours!"

Arm in arm they sought Simonetta's room, which was similar to the one from which they had just issued. Her long black hair hung in disheveled masses about her shoulders, and swept the ground as she knelt before a rude image of the Holy Virgin, which by chance had found entrance there. The rosy hues of health had faded from her cheeks, and a death-like palor had gathered on her brow. So pale and lovely was she now, that indeed she seemed a spirit from that distant world that lies beyond the tomb.

"My daughter," said Alberto, in the canting tone of the cunning priesthood, "I am glad to find you kneeling at your prayers; for let me tell you that nothing is more proper and becoming than to approach the matrimonial altar with the mind and heart softened and subdued by communings with the saints. But, my pretty lass, arise; I have a duty to perform."

"Oh! spare me, spare me!" cried the unfortunate girl; "you murdered my mother, and even that I can bear; but to be forced to marry against my will and against my love is more than I can stand. Pity me," said she, throwing herself at Bernardo's feet; "pity me, I pray. Do not force me to a union with you, when it will bring only pain and shame. Seek some other maiden, whose love for you will be as ardent as that which you waste on me."

Bernardo could no longer restrain his glowing feelings, but seizing the trembling, kneeling girl, he caught

her to his bosom and covered her cheek and brow with many a burning kiss.

"Hold! hold! Bernardo," said the pirate, checking the fiery priest; "you forget that it is not lawful for you to taste that bliss until you have paid the marriage fee! Come, curb your ardor and treasure your kisses until I, your priest, give you leave to revel in those joys. Come forth, I say, with your lovely bride to the holy altar, and I will make you one!"

Bernardo, taking Simonetta by the hand, led her forth, to face that gloomy altar, with its skull, and bones, and sword. Alberto stood opposite to Bernardo and his unwilling bride, while his men, through curiosity, arranged themselves in a group behind their commander. Among them was Roberto, the narrator of the dream. Now that resistance was in vain, and her fate was about to be sealed forever, Simonetta stood firm as a beautiful statue fresh from the sculptor's hand. Her eye had in it a dim and dreamy lustre, as if she was reading the far-away events of the future. She heeded not the grinning skull and naked sword; she heeded not the priest with his dark and flowing robe. From her impending fate she shrunk not, but her form was erect and graceful as in bygone days.

At length Alberto said,—

"Be it known to all present, that it is my will that this couple, who now stand before this altar, are here to be made bone of one bone and flesh of one flesh. If any there be who know of any just cause why they should not become man and wife, by this skull, and by these bones, and by this naked sword, I command him

or them to speak, or forever hereafter to hold their peace."

"In the name of the only true God, I come to offer my objections," said a deep, sepulchral voice.

"The dream! the dream! Roberto's dream!" said Alberto's men, flying through fear into the darkness of the cave. Alberto turned his eye in the direction whence the unearthly voice came, and in the shadow of a projecting rock stood motionless a form that caused even that daring pirate to fly in terror. In an instant more, Bernardo lay stretched upon the earth, and Simonetta was clasped in the strong and giant grasp of Uglino, the dwarf, who bore her in triumph to the open air. Alberto soon recovered from his fright, and when his men heard his clarion voice, commanding them to arm themselves and hasten to the rescue, instinctively they caught their weapons from the walls and followed their commander to the entrance of the cave. Like a mighty tide they rushed along, muttering curses of vengeance against the foe.

Some bore torches, which they waved in wrath above their heads. Sabres flashed and cold steel glittered in the light. They paused not at the entrance, but rushed in one stern and solid phalanx into the open air.

The clear, silvery voice of Leopold Haldenberg rang out upon the still night—

"Fire, men, and at them with your swords!"

A bright and vivid flame ran along the Austrian line, and when the deafening roar died away many a dismal groan and many a bitter curse was heard.

Now the battle was hand to hand. Steel met steel,

and the clang of arms in deadly combat awoke the silent hills.

"Then more fierce  
The conflict grew; the din of arms, the yell  
Of savage rage, the shriek of agony,  
The groan of death, commingled in one sound  
Of undistinguished horrors."

Where the tide of battle raged the fiercest, there was Eugene Saunders. Hand to hand he met the foe. More than one fell beneath his well-aimed blows. Fighting thus—every man for himself—Eugene, in pursuing an enemy, was suddenly confronted by Alberto. With a savage growl, like that of an angry tiger, the pirate rushed upon him. With a masterly hand Eugene parried his blows, and, watching an opportunity, by a dexterous movement disarmed his foe. Eugene struck him over the head with his heavy sword and Alberto bit the dust. From his dress, Eugene knew that he was the leader of the gang, and determined to secure him as a prize. Taking out his handkerchief he tied Alberto's hands, and an Austrian soldier passing by, Eugene gave the pirate into his charge, with strict injunctions not to let him escape.

"If he does," said the soldier, "he will go without a head."

Castruccio fought long and well, and his goary blade bore token of good work. The battle was over and the victory gained. Only two of the pirates were captured, Alberto and Roberto; the rest were either slain or had fled into the mountains.

"Where is that craven priest, Bernardo?" asked Leopold.

No one had seen him. The torches, now almost ex-

tinguished, were rekindled, and Leopold, Castruccio, and Eugene went into the cave to search for the priest. They examined every nook and corner, but nowhere could he be found. Eugene was in pursuit of him when met by Alberto. Bernardo had escaped. Several of the Austrian soldiers were severely wounded, and two had been killed. These were placed upon litters constructed upon the ground, and borne upon the shoulders of the other men. Leopold, having left a strong and active guard to watch the cave, and having firmly bound the pirates, gave orders to return to the city.

Simonetta, who had been by Ugolino conducted apart, during the affray, to prevent any accident, was most tenderly borne along. They had not proceeded far, when a bright flame flashed forth upon the sea, illuminating earth and heaven.

"My dream has proved true," sullenly growled Roberto; "the Isabelle is on fire."

Sure enough she was; and there she lay upon the waves, a mass of vivid flames.

"I bless the hand," said Alberto, "that touched the match. It is well that she should burn, when her master's hands are bound."

Now the flames had reached the sails, and so brilliant were they that for miles away the sea had a glow like that of blood. *Boom! boom! boom!* came the roar of cannon; and in an instant was heard a crash like a mighty earthquake, and the Isabelle, the Queen of the Sea, was blown into the air, while ten thousand blazing fragments fell hissing into the waves; and again "darkness was upon the deep."

Roberto's dream came true!

## CHAPTER XXII.

Love is life's end,—an end, but never ending;  
 All joys, all sweets, all happiness awarding;  
 Love is life's wealth, (ne'er spent, but ever spending;)  
 More rich by giving, taking by discarding;  
 Love's life's reward,—rewarding in rewarding;  
 Then from thy wretched heart fond care remove;  
 Ah! shouldst thou live but once love's sweets to prove,  
 Thou wilt not love to live, unless thou live to love.

SPENCER'S BRITAIN'S IDA.

If joys never came to relieve our sorrows and brighten our life-journey, existence could scarcely be borne. But amid our darkest hours, when the heart is clad in gloom, hope draws near, and revives the drooping spirits and cheers us on our way.

There are times in the history of every man and woman, whether high or low, when afflictions and misfortunes wrap the soul in sadness, hush the merry laugh and dim the sparkling eye. Perhaps some young and gentle mother has bent in tears over her first-born darling boy, and has listened with an almost broken heart to his last dying groans. But though her heart's idol had gone—gone like a beautiful flower, gone like a lovely sunbeam, yet even she has a consolation left. His sweet, merry voice, his wild, ringing laugh, his beaming, sparkling eyes, his light footsteps and pleasant ways, will ever be remembered by that doating mother with delight and true affection! She knows that he is a beautiful angel now, and that his spirit is radiant with

glory and floats in light and loveliness. She clothed him in silken flannels, placed him in a little coffin lined with white satin and trimmed with black ribbon, and buried him in her garden amid the birds and the flowers. A fine rose-bush—his favorite—marks the head of his tiny grave, and in the bright and joyous spring-time it will cast its blossoms and shed its fragrance over that little “mountain-peak of a new and distant world.” It will be a pleasure to that fond, young mother, when the spring comes, and the grass is green, and the birds sing, and the sunbeams are soft and loving, to deck his grave with the sweetest flowers and to water them with her freshest tears. She knows that with him, *“all will be right in the morning.”*

Thus amid our gloomiest hours and saddest bereavements some pleasure lingers still, and hope, like a beautiful angel, bids us look aloft. Sorrows chasten the heart, soften the affections, and open a sympathy with every living thing. From the dark and angry storm-clouds descend the showers that refresh and invigorate the parching fields, that cause the drooping harvests to grow green in the warm sunshine, and that make the little flowers lift their heads in joy.

We have seen how poor Lily suffered, and the dangers through which Simonetta passed. Let us now, for awhile, draw the curtain over those dark scenes of strife and intrigue, and turn to those with which every human being has a common sympathy. Let us, for a time, forget the dreary dungeon, with its horrid machines of torture; the pirates’ cave, with its skull and fatal altar; the pale countenance and dark frown of Bernardo, and linger amid a scene of love, hope, and bliss.

On the morning after the events detailed in the last chapter, Simonetta Pitti lay upon her couch in the magnificent and sumptuous palace of Castruccio Castracini. The room in which the maiden lay was one of the most splendid in the palace, and was adorned with every beauty that art could furnish or good taste supply. A dim, dreamy splendor, that cannot be described, brooded there. From the walls hung paintings of master-spirits; and the light, stealing softly through embroidered pink curtains, cast over the whole scene a rich mellow glow that heightened the effect and made those pictures seem ready to start into real life. Upon a soft and downy couch, hung round with flowing curtains, reposed Simonetta, as if in a trance. Her cheeks were pale as death; her long, dark, silken tresses fell in beauteous showers over her pillow, and her breathing was like that of one in a sweet and refreshing slumber.

From the time Ugolino grasped her in his manly arms, in the pirates’ gloomy cave, she had never uttered a groan, nor had she spoken a word. Sometimes she heaved a deep-drawn sigh, that told of her mighty heart-struggle, and of all that she had suffered in that awful place. So still and silent did she rest that one might have supposed at the first glance that her spirit had winged its flight beyond the trembling stars.

Beside her couch sat Lily White, her beautiful features now touched with an expression of sadness, and her eyes softened by a feeling of sympathy. Her hand held that of the Italian maiden, and occasionally she would stroke it gently, with the hope of sending the blood in a more healthful tide to the lovely patient’s heart. Lily had heard from Eugene’s lips of Simon-

etta's kindness and friendship toward him, and straightway in her bosom rose up and flourished those soft and gentle feelings that find a home nowhere save in a woman's heart. It mattered not with Lily that this stricken maiden was born beneath the warm and sunny skies of Italy, and spoke a language different from her own: a common link had united their souls, and suffering had made their lives alike. Lily's mother slept her last long sleep beneath the rich loam of a far-distant land, and Simonetta's mother was now cold and stiff in death. Lily had been imprisoned by her guardian's will in gloomy convent walls, and Simonetta, by the cruel Bernardo, had been borne to the pirates' dismal cave. The same kind hands and noble hearts that had rescued the one had also rescued the other. They were now both orphan girls, and this drew Lily toward Simonetta more than any other thought.

Sometimes, when we behold this great struggle of life; when we see man giving way to passions that mar the joys of friends and home; when we witness the bigotry, deceit, and selfishness of human nature; when we view the restlessness and discontent of mankind; when we know that misery, woe, and death are everywhere about us, from the fullness of our souls we are almost ready to exclaim, with Burns,—

"That man was made to mourn."

But, on the contrary, when we see the eye beaming with sympathy; when we feel the strong grasp of the hand of true friends; and when we witness exhibitions of kindness such as have characterized the actions of Si-

monetta, Uglino, and Lily White, we feel disposed to contest the ground with the great Scottish bard.

While Lily was thus seated by the bedside of Simonetta, Fanny Lanier and Rosetta, arm in arm, on tip-toe entered the apartment.

"How does she seem now, sister Lily?" asked Fanny.

"Hush! speak low, Fanny; you know the doctor said that Simonetta must not be disturbed. I think she is better: her breathing is more natural, and the color is stealing by degrees to her cheeks."

"Oh! said the enthusiastic Rosetta, forgetting Lily's caution, "is she not beautiful! No wonder that Signore Haldenberg came near going mad this morning, after breakfast, when informed that she was no better. Fanny, would you mind being found in a cave," continued Rosetta, with an arch smile playing on her face, "if some nice young man would come to your rescue, and then, when you fainted, should weep for you as if you were a child?"

"Ah! Rosetta," said Fanny, in a whisper, "there is no such good luck for us. I do not know the reason, do you? I am certain we are as handsome as sister Lily or Simonetta. Suppose, the next time we go out upon the canal in company with a young man, that one of us shall tumble overboard, and let him pick us up, half drowned." Fanny looked at Lily with a meaning smile.

"Never," said Rosetta, "will I go thus far, because I know the cowardly fellow would let me drown rather than soil his clothes."

Thus did these maidens talk and jest.

Leopold Haldenberg, in company with Eugene, Castuccio, Uglino, and some of his chosen men, returned

the next morning to the scene of the last night's battle, in order to examine more carefully Alberto's den and to divide the spoils among his soldiers.

Alberto and Roberto had been safely lodged in prison to await their trial, and to receive the sentence that was certain to be pronounced against them.

When the news of the previous night's adventure and its results were spread abroad, great indignation prevailed against Bernardo; and many flocked to the prison in hopes of beholding the man whose daring deeds had so long spread a terror among the trading vessels bound with rich and precious cargoes to the islands of the sea. Many demanded his immediate execution. Words of the highest praise and warmest commendation were heaped upon Leopold Haldenberg for his rescue of the maiden and capture of the pirate. Every lady in Venice, through a very natural curiosity, desired to see the young lady who had passed through such dangers and sufferings. Simonetta's mother was buried with all the honors that were due her position in life.

Every day Leopold Haldenberg called to inquire concerning the health of Simonetta Pitti. Eugene Saunders, too, was a frequent visitor; and Ugolino, also, came. Day by day Lily White lingered near the couch of the pale Italian; and day by day the ties of friendship grew stronger between those fair young creatures. With sisterly tenderness Lily ministered to all her wants, and never became weary in her attentions. Fanny and Rosetta, too, were kind, and Castruccio spared neither pains nor expense in order to make them all happy and contented while beneath his roof. He was one of those kind-hearted men who was fond of company, espe-

cially such as was suitable for his daughter. Several years previous to the events which we are now relating, he had lost his wife, and in Rosetta were now centered all his hopes and happiness. To see her smile was his delight, to see a cloud gather upon her brow cast a shadow over his own.

One beautiful evening Lily White and Simonetta were alone. The sunbeams glanced softly through the tall windows and through the crimson curtains, and bathed the whole apartment in a flood of mellow light. Lily had just finished braiding the fair patient's long black hair, when Simonetta, bursting into tears, said,—

"Oh! my guardian angel, how shall I ever repay you for all the care and kindness you have shown to me? You have been by my bedside day and night, and I have given you a great deal of trouble. Let these tears," continued she, throwing her arms about Lily's neck, "tell you of my gratitude. They are all that I can offer you."

"Simonetta, how can you talk in that idle manner? You owe me no debt of gratitude. My love for you prompted me to do the little I have done. Come, Simonetta, dry these tears. There! I never saw a more lovely creature in my life. You look as though you never had an hour's sickness. It is time your toilet was made; or have you forgotten that you promised Mr. Haldenberg that you would grant him the privilege of seeing you this evening?"

This question brought the blood in a crimson tide to the cheeks of Simonetta, who straightway arose and commenced preparing herself for the parlor. Lily lent every assistance that was in her power, and soon no



flower of the valley was more lovely than the dark-eyed Italian maiden.

"Now," said Lily, as the last bow was arranged, "you are ready for the parlor."

With their arms intertwined about each other's waist, these maidens sought the reception-room.

Those, indeed, were happy, blissful days. To Lily White Castruccio's hospitable palace was a paradise. Hitherto her virgin heart had been tried in the bitter school of adversity and suffering; but here, amid the beauties of art, and surrounded by kind friends, a new and beautiful hope had tinged her life with joy.

She looked back upon the past, which seemed to her a dim and troubled dream, while the future stretched away a sweet and joyous scene. Love had touched her heart, and she lived and moved in the smiles of Eugene Saunders. To her he was everything; she lived in a new world; she loved to walk through those splendid rooms, and gaze upon the paintings which Eugene admired, and to cull his favorite flowers. To Lily everything seemed changed. The waves that broke against the palace walls seemed more bright and sparkling; the stars that lit the deep blue dome of night appeared nearer to the earth; the magnificent sunsets, now, oh how grand and glowing! and Venice itself was ten thousand times more dear.

Every day was she and the other girls abroad on the canals.

Eugene Saunders and Leopold Haldenberg were their constant attendants. At night they assembled in the parlor, and passed the hours most pleasantly. Sometimes Ugolino was present.

One evening they were all thus assembled. Eugene had led Lily apart to the window and was engaged in a low and earnest conversation. The reader may guess the engrossing subject. Fanny and Rosetta were teasing Castruccio, and Simonetta was touching her guitar for Leopold, who sat as if charmed by the melting melody. Ugolino entered the room. Fanny and Rosetta ran to greet him, and, one taking his right hand and the other the left, led him to a seat.

"Oh! Ugolino, I am so glad to see you," said Rosetta.

"And so am I," echoed Fanny.

All present warmly welcomed Ugolino, and Castruccio at once engaged him in conversation. Soon a servant entering announced supper, and all sought the sumptuous table, to partake of Castruccio's hospitality. After tea a shade of sadness rested on the brow of Leopold Haldenberg, which Simonetta did not fail to notice. She attempted to banish it by singing to him his favorite songs. He arose and walked forth into the balcony, and was standing leaning against one of the tall columns, and appeared lost in some deep and absorbing thought, when some one touched him gently on the arm.

"Pardon me, Leopold," said the sweet and musical voice of Simonetta, "for thus interrupting your thoughts; but I could not stay away when I knew that some sorrow was clouding your brow. What is the matter? Tell me, Leopold, for you know that I am happy only when you smile, and a shadow upon your brow throws a gloom over my own heart. Are you angry with me? Have I said or done anything that has marred your bliss?"

"No, my sweet girl," said Leopold, drawing her to

his heart, "I am not angry with you, nor will I ever be. Neither have you said a word which my heart has not treasured as if it were a gem."

"Why then look so sad, my Leopold, and come forth into the dark as if you would shun those who love you best?"

"Recently, Simonetta, strange visions cross my mind. It seems as if the veil which has hung over my infancy and early years was being drawn aside. What my suspicions are, Simonetta, as dearly as I love you, I cannot now let you know. The time may come when all will be bright and clear. Ha! look!" said he, endeavoring to change the theme; "see you that brilliant meteor that darts along the sky, leaving in its wake a long line of sparkling splendor?"

"Oh! yes," said Simonetta; "is it not most beautiful? See, now it is fading away; and thus all beauty dies."

"You are mistaken, Simonetta; beauty never dies. The flower may fade and its fragrance pass away, but again, when the warm sunshine kisses the earth in love, will it bud, bloom, and blossom, and fill the air with its perfume. Are the songs of birds beautiful? When the wintry winds blow bleak and cold, and the driving snow falls fast, those songs are hushed, and the warblers gone to other and warmer climes; but when the spring-time comes, and the grass is green, again we hear their melody in every bush and tree. Are the stars that beam above us beautiful? They are and will ever be, though they close their eyes in slumbers sweet when the king of day appears; yet, when he sinks to rest wrapped in his clouds of golden glory, those stars again gleam forth on

high, and light the splendid dome of night. Think you, Simonetta, your beauty will ever die? No—never, never. In the dim twilight of our lives will you be to me as you are this night,—my flower, my bird, my star; and when you fade from earth, away again in heaven will you bloom afresh, where bliss is for evermore."

"Leopold," said the blushing girl, "you flatter me."

"Think you, Simonetta, that a love so deep, so fondly true as that which thrills my heart, could stoop so low as to win by flattery? But come, Lily is calling you; let us go within."

\* \* \* \* \*

We must hasten with our story; already have we detained the kind and indulgent reader too long. Several days passed away. Twilight was gathering over Venice, and many a noble palace and towering dome was softened into a mild and dreamy splendor. A few thin clouds were glowing in the west, and so calm, so still was everything, that we can only "say of things they be."

Seated by a window that looked forth toward the sea, were Eugene Saunders and Lily White. To them the hour was sacred; to them the future stretched away, a lovely and beautiful landscape, adorned with flowers and decked with evergreens.

"My Lily, I am happy now. Life has now its aims, and with you as my polar star I can face every danger and triumph over every obstacle. Hitherto I have been like a vessel without a chart or rudder, drifting along the sea of life, at the mercy of wind and wave. With these hands will I toil for you, and upon this bosom shall you rest."

"I fear, Eugene," said the artless Lily White, "that

I shall fail to bring that happiness which you have just described. Remember, that I am a plain and simple girl, untaught in the ways of the world."

"Since the evening I rescued you from the canal your image has been engraven on my heart. From that hour I loved you with a pure and holy love. Do you know, Lily, that ere I sailed for Italy I saw you in my dreams just as you now appear?"

"Did you expect to find me in a foreign land?" said Lily, with a smile; "come, tell me, Eugene, why you left your native land; you have promised that you would. You have several times hinted that it was a strange and foolish fancy."

"I will comply, if you will promise not to laugh at me. Last winter I was in New Orleans, when a little incident occurred that unhinged all my philosophy and came near running me mad. I was returning to my room one windy, blustrous night, when, pausing before a lamp-light to examine my watch, I espied a lady's slipper lying at my feet. I placed it in my bosom and hastened on. My imagination painted a beauteous creature for that slipper. It is strange to say it, yet it is true, my soul was in a flame to ascertain the owner, but in vain. I returned to my home, and what was my surprise when I learned that the mistress of that slipper had been in my own house and had pressed my own couch. From my servants I learned that she was journeying toward the North. I wrote to a friend who resides in New York, to ascertain if such a lady was visiting that city. Three weeks passed away, and at length his answer came. He had been absent from home; hence the delay. He could give me no in-

formation, and I determined to drown my disappointment in new and distant scenes. Here," said Eugene, taking from his bosom the little slipper, "is the talisman that has been the means of bringing us together."

"It is mine! it is mine!" said Lily, with delight; "I know it by the Iris-flower that is wrought upon the instep, and the emblem of that flower is—'*I have a message for you;*' so you see it has proved true."

Lily caught the slipper to her heart as if it were a friend, and Eugene's soul was filled with joy and happiness, that after all his trials and difficulties he had found the real owner of the gem.

"Do you not see, Lily, that God has willed our love, and in all we both have suffered, his mercy has been shown? In this circumstance we see what a little incident can influence our actions and shape our lives. The finding of this slipper, Lily, was indeed a trivial matter; but the strange and indescribable feelings which it produced are mysteries that cannot be solved, unless we refer them to the wisdom and omniscience of God. In the lonely walk, in the busy crowd, in the exciting dance and whirling waltz, that slipper haunted me. I had withstood the charms of many lovely and beautiful women; and then to be conquered by an event so small, I must confess came near driving me mad. In vain did I reason; in vain did I fly. By the lovely Arno; amid the glitter and pomp of palaces; amid the dazzling and brilliant splendors of Europe's proudest and noblest cities, was my bosom rent with a feeling of despair, not, however, entirely bereft of hope. Driven hither and thither, I thought that fortune had deserted

me, and I was almost ready to call in question the justice of Jehovah, when, lo! I find that she who had fairly won my heart is the beautiful owner of the talisman."

Eugene was right. It was the power and wisdom of God. How many times do we hear men say, when referring to any strange and mysterious affair, "it was accident, it was accident!" Is it accident that the great glittering concave, studded with myriads and myriads of dazzling worlds, stretches its beautiful blue above us, upheld by no stupendous pillars? Is it accident that the sun daily flushes the east and tinges the west with his golden glories? Is it accident that spring comes with its softly floating clouds, its grass, and its beautiful flowers; that summer, and autumn, and winter, and each in turn bless the earth with plenty? Was it accident, long ago, when Christ, in the form of man, said to the troubled waters of Gallilee—Peace! be still! when, lo! straightway the sea

"Smoothed down each shining wrinkle,"

and stilled "the snow-maned steed?" Was it accident that the Red Sea parted its hissing and roaring waters, thereby permitting the Israelites to pass over dry-shod; and then, with a furious and maddening surge, rolled its liquid walls together, inclosing Pharaoh and his armed hosts in a watery grave? Was it accident that the ravens fed Elijah, and that Daniel passed harmless through the lion's den? Some may say that these things were, and are, ruled by known philosophical causes. But after the subtlest reasonings from cause to effect, man, puny man, must crouch humbly before the

power, wisdom, and omniscience of Him who struck light from darkness and awoke a world from chaos! It is His will that the smallest events shall frequently lead to the mightiest results.

"A spark is a molecule of matter, yet may it kindle the world:  
Vast is the mighty ocean, but drops have made it vast."

The magnetic needle, six inches long, directs the splendid ocean-steamer over the billows and through the dark and dangerous storm to a safe and tranquil haven. The falling of an apple led to the discovery of universal gravitation; the hissing of the tea-kettle to the knowledge of steam; and now, as if by magic, every glen echoes the shrill scream of the steam-pipe, and every mountain gorge trembles with the thunder of its power. The little mouse may sever the cable that confines the Numidian lion. Everything we behold, from the morning dew-drop that glitters like a diamond on the bending floweret, and the tiny mote that dances in the evening sunray, to the myriad beings of a drop of water, has its influence.

"There is use in the poisoned air that swelleth the pods of the laburnum;

Design in the venom'd thorns that sentinel the leaves of the nettle;  
A final cause for the aromatic gum that congealeth the moss round a rose;

A reason for each blade of grass that reareth its small spire."

Eugene Saunders and Lily White were happy in each other's love. As they sat by the window gazing out upon the gathering gloom, and watching the stars as they came forth upon the skies, they talked of the future and its pleasures as lovers only can portray. Lily, with the

window curtains falling in graceful folds about her delicate form, was more beautiful than Eugene had ever before seen her. She had promised that in three weeks she would become his wife. Is it therefore to be wondered that his manly brow was all aglow; that his bosom heaved with the gentlest and tenderest emotions, and that his eye was lit with splendor?

"I care not, Lily," said he, "how rapidly the hours may glide away. I desire once more to be on the billowy Atlantic, and to feel and know that with every surge of the vessel I shall be drawing nearer to my own dear native shore. In my Western home how happy will I be, with your smiles to cheer, your kind words to soothe, and your love to bless my life! Together, Lily, my love, we will wander through the grand and silent forest, or, seated upon the sandy beach, we will watch the glowing sunset and admire the waves breaking in sparkling silvery spray at our very feet. With our souls full of love, how pleasant will it be to listen to the murmur of bees, the songs of birds, and the hum of insects! Everything will have a new and beautiful charm for me. The flowers, the waves, the birds, the clouds, the skies, the stars, the trees, the mountains, and every living thing will be more dear to me. What if sorrows shall for a moment becloud my brow, one fond look into the sunny, smiling depths of your loving eyes, will banish grief and make me dream of heaven. If my heart is pained, one sweet smile from your rosy lips will cause me to forget all earthly cares and persuade me that a bright-winged angel is by my side. If the world is harsh and bitter, one kind word from you will wrap my soul in a bliss akin to that which the angels feel."

"Eugene," said Lily, "I am surprised to hear you talk in this wild and impassioned manner. I have thought that you were superior to other men, that the higher, holier, and purer was your love, the more subdued would be your feelings. I am undeserving such warm declarations of love, and you alarm me when you speak as you just have done. Eugene, my life shall be devoted to your pleasure and happiness; your every wish, if possible, shall be anticipated, and my whole heart shall be yours and only yours; but, Eugene, remember that human nature has its imperfections, that I am neither a flower nor a star, but a poor faulty child of clay, whom when you know better you will love less. I am proud of your love, and value it as the noblest treasure that was ever laid at a woman's feet. Need I inform you that it has tinged my soul with a beauteous light, just as yonder floating cloud is now brightened by the rising moon, or as those distant waves you see gleaming and glowing on the sea?"

What language can portray the perfect bliss that filled the hearts of those young lovers? Have *you* not experienced the same? Have you forgotten the time when you felt as Eugene Saunders did? Do you not remember when you whispered the tale of your burning love into the ear of her whom you now fondly treasure as the wife of your bosom and as the mother of your children? Maybe it has been a long time ago, when, on some beautiful moonlight night, you led your loved one into the flower-garden and swore by all the stars and the glittering moon, that you loved her as woman was never loved before. And have you forgotten how your heart leaped with joy when the fair young being in the

rosy hours of maidenhood hid her glowing cheeks with her little soft and snowy hand, and with her dimpled chin resting upon her bosom, said, with smiles and tears, that she would be yours? Maybe, too, you are even now that ardent lover, and only last night, or at furthest last month, knelt at some fair girl's feet, and in language full of love sought her to become your wife. If so, you can pardon the enthusiasm of Eugene Saunders and Lily White.

Courtship, however, does not always end in joy. It has its pleasures, it is true; but how many times has it brought tears, and woe, and bitter anguish, that no pen can portray, no language describe! It is often the highway to a *crime* that brings disgrace and infamy, and stamps upon the maiden's brow a stain which no time can wipe out, and upon her heart a blight which the tears of ages cannot wash away. *Listen to what we say.* When the heart of the maiden is involved, she is too apt to grant to her lover such little favors as the pressure of the hand, the putting of the arm gently about the waist, and, too frequently, the warm and fervent kiss. *These are joys that belong to wedded life.* If any bright-eyed and happy girl shall honor these pages with a glance, will she be warned by one whom she may never see, that the soft, low whisper of love may linger on the lips of a demon; that the gentle sigh may come from a heart as black as hell; that the tender embrace may be leading her to a home of woe and shame, and that the burning kiss may be ripening her soul for a dark and awful crime? Remember that every lover is not true; that the villain's words are sweet; that the serpent's deadly coil is amid the velvet grass! Forget not that

the heart of youth is warm and fiery, and when enkindled by love requires a constant watch; and that though love itself is touched with the purity of heaven, yet is it mingled with the fires of hell!

"The sweetest joy, the wildest woe is love;  
The taint of earth, the odor of the skies  
Is in it."

Who would wish to call that maiden wife whose hand has been pressed by every passing suitor, and whose lips have been offered to every ardent lover?

"While passions glow, the heart, like heated steel,  
Takes each impression and is worked at pleasure."

When the heart is once guilty the outposts are then taken, and the citadel remains only to be stormed!

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## CHAPTER XXIII.

"Oh! what a sign it is of evil life,  
When death's approach is seen so terrible!"

SHAKESPEARE—HENRY VI.

THE world is full of wickedness. Every day we behold the weak oppressed by the strong; and every day we witness scenes that send the blood bounding back upon the heart. Search the history of crime, and you will find that man does not become wicked and degraded in a day, in a month, or in a year. The most daring and outrageous deeds that have ever been committed by man, required long years of perseverance in vice to harden the heart and conscience of the perpetrator.



The first lie that fell from the lip of the timid school-boy, sending the blood in a crimson and tingling tide to his brow, was the beginning of a life of crime that ended in a prison or on the scaffold. The first oath that came hissing from the mouth of that noble youth, seared his soul, and his death was full of woe and horror. The burglar, who steals softly along the silent streets at midnight, was once a merry, innocent boy. The assassin, who crouches, panther-like, in the pathway of his enemy, was once a mild and gentle youth. The bold robber, whose blade gleams on the highway, once knelt at a fond mother's knee and lisped his evening prayer; and the cold-hearted seducer, whose lip wears a smile while his heart is wrapped in blackness, once sported in glee on the sunny hill-side, with his sisters, whom he loved.

Vice, in every form, blights the beauty of life and clips the wings of genius. We have seen the noblest intellects dimmed by the sparkling wine-cup; we have seen giant minds grow mad and raving from the sting of the "serpent of the still." Byron, the great erratic son of poesy, has somewhere said, in substance, that we are half deity and half devil. Influenced by passions, and driven on by ambition, we too often forget that "thou, God, seest me." Let the youth remember, when in the solitude of the forest or amid the darkness of night, this one short sentence,—*"thou, God, seest me."* Purity is strength, and virtue carries with it its own reward. Vice, sooner or later, meets with its just penalty.

Alexander the Great, after having deluged the earth with blood and trampled beneath his victorious chariot-wheels thousands of his fellow-beings, drank himself to death. Napoleon Bonaparte, whose brilliant victories

and splendid achievements shook Europe to its centre, ended his life a miserable exile. Marat, whose cruel pen signed the death-warrant of so many noble and gifted men, died in his bath by a dagger wielded by the delicate arm of Charlotte Corday de Armont, the beautiful maiden of Normandy.

Bernardo the priest had not always been a hard-hearted villain. There was a time when his heart was opened to the call of mercy, when his eye was filled with tears of compassion, and when his mind was bent upon noble deeds and brilliant achievements. But turning a deaf ear to the pleadings of conscience, he had advanced from one step to another until we now behold him uniting in his nature more of the demon than of man. Nature bestowed upon him a brilliant mind; his fiery passions made him a fiend.

Night had spread her mantle over the world. Not a star glimmered in the sky; not a breath of wind stirred the dark and heavy masses of clouds that shut out the splendor of those myriads of beautiful worlds that light the heavens with radiance. The waves of the blue Adriatic were still and silent, and there was no gleaming of waters to be seen. A thousand lights beaming from windows told only that Venice was inhabited. It seemed that nature was clad in mourning—so dark, so solemn, and so still was everything. It was one of those nights when we imagine the Furies are abroad; it was one of those nights when burglars steal along the streets, when the assassin crouches by the wayside, and when evil-doers seek the open air. It was just such a night as that in which we pray God we may never die.

In the most remote and filthy part of Venice a pale

and sickly ray of light gleamed from the shattered window of a rude and dilapidated hovel. Upon a couch of straw lay a man, his form withered almost to a skeleton, who tossed from side to side like the billows of the restless sea. Now his long bony fingers clutched in wrath and vengeance the covering that concealed the lower portion of his form; now he raised his hands above his head and groaned aloud in the very agony of dark despair. His cheeks were as pale as the cold marble; his long dark locks streamed in wild disorder over his ample brow, and his bosom heaved with tumultuous emotions. His dark eyes glowed with a strange and unearthly splendor; now they flashed forth fire and sparkled like those of the lion in the jungle, now they glared wildly and furiously like those of an enraged tiger.

This was Father Bernardo, the priest; and Uglino had spoken with truth when he said, on a former occasion, that the hours of his life were numbered. Having escaped the soldiers of Leopold Haldenberg on the eventful night at the Pirates' Cave, he had stolen into the suburbs of Venice, and had found lodgings in this miserable abode.

In his time he had overcome many difficulties, and had triumphed over many enemies; but having been recently excommunicated from the priesthood, and having been thwarted in the dearest object of his life, he was now pining away from disappointment, and was stretched upon his dying bed. His proud heart could stand no more. A fever had seized upon his body, and his blood flowed like a fiery stream through his veins.

A dim light flickered on the hearthstone, and in the corner crouched a miserable looking female. She swung

herself to and fro, all the while muttering a strange humming sound. Ever and anon she cast a quick glance toward the bed on which Bernardo lay; ever and anon she arose and approached his humble couch.

"Back, back, fiend! touch me not with thine unhallowed hand!" said the raving priest, as she drew near the couch.

"You now call me fiend; but there was a time when you lavished upon me words as soft and low as ever fell from a lover's lips."

"Begone! begone! reproach me not with the past. Come near me, wretch, that I may tear out your heart-strings. Away! away! get thee gone from my sight. Ha! I see the waves of the Arno rising before my vision, and there, yes, there is my child, which you—no, not you—drowned, years ago! Hark! hear you not his cries! see you not his up-lifted hands! Begone, begone, I say!"

Thus Bernardo raved. The female whom he addressed quailed not before his furious glance; she stood erect, and, without one sign of pity, regarded the dying man.

"Hush, man," said she, in a shrill and discordant voice; "think not of the past, but look to the future, and make your peace with that God against whom you have so often sinned."

"To hell! to hell! there is no God! Life is a farce, and death a never-ending sleep! See there! Oh, my God, see *there*! Behold you not that demon, standing there ready to devour me? Look! Oh! tear this serpent from my breast before he wraps my form in his slimy, glittering folds! God have mercy upon me, I pray!"

When Bernardo finished speaking great drops of sweat stood upon his brow, the white foam issued in a frothy stream from his mouth, his eyes glared wildly, and his once proud and stately form quivered in every muscle.

The hour of retribution had arrived. And thus will it ever come upon those who neglect to lay hold of the promises of the Bible. For a time we may escape, but sooner or later death will arrive; the loftiest intellect, as well as the most inferior, must face the great monster; there is no escape.

Man is a strange being, wonderfully and fearfully made. He knows that he must die, that life is a brittle thread which may in an instant break, that the grave is his final resting-place, yet he rushes on amid the exciting scenes of this world, indulging in excesses that blight the mind and ruin the body, battling for wealth and distinction, when he is aware that his life may end in a moment, and that then he must either sink into a burning hell or soar aloft into a glorious heaven.

What, after all, are pleasures? Like the roses of summer they wither and die. What is fame but an empty bauble? Will earthly honors weigh with the loss of an immortal soul? Tiberius Claudius Nero clutched the glittering, dazzling bauble, and tasted every joy that his sensual appetite could conceive, yet he died a miserable death. Herod Agrippa, the mighty Tetrarch, was surrounded by the glitter of earthly grandeur and magnificence; thousands crowded about his brilliant throne and even worshiped him as God! "Yet," says one, "in the very ecstasy of those sensations his countenance became ghastly, his lips writhed,

his eyes beheld with unutterable dismay the omen of dissolution—the visible phantom of an avenging Nemesis. He staggered from his throne, crying aloud in the extremity of his anguish; *a sudden corruption had seized upon his body—he was being devoured by worms.*"

The stormy eloquence of Gabriel de Mirabeau, which had so many times sent a thrill of joy and admiration throughout France, and which had elevated him to the first place in the affections of the people, was hushed forever in death, and his last words were—"Sprinkle me with perfumes, crown me with flowers, that thus I may enter upon eternal sleep."

How much better is it to lead the life of the truly pious and humble Christian, so that, when the hour of departure arrives, there may be no awful struggle like that which Nero made; that there may be no dismal shriek like that which the Tetrarch gave; that there may be no doubts like those which fell from the lips of the dying Mirabeau; and that there may be no feelings of remorse like those which harrowed the soul of the priest Bernardo! Instead of trusting to the show and splendor of earth for happiness, how much better is it to rely confidently upon the words of the Bible, which, if false, will make man purer, higher, and holier; and if true, will in the end crown him not alone with flowers, but with eternal bliss!

Examine its pages; contrast the Bible with the feeble record of man. Man is the author of the one, the other is the work of Him "who sowed the skies with stars," hollowed out the ocean, lifted up the "starry hills," garnitured the mountains with loveliness, and filled the earth with gold and silver, rubies and gems, pearls and

diamonds. The one is a history of the past; the other, in its majestic sweep, embraces the past, the present, and the future. The one describes the cities of the earth—Rome with her St. Peter's, Athens with her Parthenon, and Nineveh with her catacombs; the other not only describes the cities of the earth, but also mentions one whose streets are gold, whose gates are brilliant pearls, and whose walls are jasper, amethyst, and chrysoprase. The one tells of the Ganges and its benighted worshipers; the other informs us of a river of eternal life, flowing from the brilliant throne of God, upon whose banks flourish the eternal amaranth, and about the waters of which are assembled angels bearing aloft harps and lutes and palms! From the one we learn that the dreadful Upas of Java is death to the touch; from the other we ascertain the existence of the Tree of Life, beneath the wide-spreading branches of which may recline, in peace and harmony, all the thronging millions of earth's inhabitants. In the pages of the one we read of the daring of a Joan of Arc, and are charmed by the beauty and brilliancy of a Cleopatra; in those of the other we are introduced to the pious, humble Mary, the mother of Christ, and the model of women.

It was a solemn sight to behold that bold, bad man, stretched upon his bed of pain. No ray of light gleamed upon him from above; wrapped in his own unbelief he was descending into the dark and dismal waters of the Jordan of death. No kind and gentle hand smoothed his dying pillow; his vile actions had shut him out from every sympathizing friend. Alone, neglected, and despised, in a cold, damp hovel, and on a dark, gloomy

night, Bernardo the priest was entering into the valley of the shadow of death.

A low tap upon the door announced the presence of a visitor. In a loud and commanding tone of voice the female said,—

"Come in."

Ugolino and Leopold Haldenberg entered. When Bernardo saw the form of the dwarf he groaned aloud in agony; his form quivered, and the bed shook beneath him.

"Ha! Bernardo," said Ugolino, "did I not tell you that I would haunt you in your dying hour? I am here to fulfill my vow."

"Away! away! let me die in peace! Ugolino, help me! help me!" said the dying man.

"Call upon the saints for aid, but ask not help from me."

"Avaunt, monster! come not near me then. Villain, you have brought me to this; you have ruined me. Power, wealth, and happiness were within my reach, and would have soon been mine, had you not interfered and thwarted me. I will meet you again; in the hissing fires of the hottest hell I will meet you and greet you with my wails," said the priest.

By this time the wind had risen, and howled mournfully around that dreary hovel. The rain fell in pattering drops upon the roof.

"Listen, Bernardo," said the dwarf; "God in his vengeance comes; I have sought you out to tell you who and what you are. Hear, Bernardo, ere you die. Have you forgotten Lorenzo Pitti, whom you confined for long years in a dungeon's gloom, and whom your cruelty and

revenge destroyed? That man, sir, was your father! Ha! you start! You are an illegitimate child; here is the proof," said he, holding the papers before the priest's staring eyes, "signed by your mother on her dying bed. You killed your father, and if it had not been for me you would have forced your half-sister into an unholy marriage with yourself. Did I not tell you that a chasm would open between you and Simonetta Pitti? You murdered your father's lawful wife, and drowned your own child in the Arno. Now tell me, thou sinful wretch, what has become of my own dear boy? Speak, that hell may be less hot for thee; speak, that I may fly to him and clasp him to my heart!"

Bernardo concealed his face beneath the covering while Uglino was running over the list of his fearful crimes. Leopold Haldenberg stood bewildered with amazement at the awful scene before him; he forgot that he had sworn direful vengeance against Bernardo; he had accidentally met Uglino, and had been invited to accompany him. Neither of them had paid any particular attention to the daring Amazon, who, on their entrance, had slid into the corner and partially hid her features with her handkerchief.

"Bernardo," said the dwarf, "hast thou heard me? Tell me, wretch, where I may find my son. Does he still live, or has he too fallen beneath your malignant cruelty?"

The priest, being aroused by the loud and commanding voice of Uglino, sprang to a sitting posture, his eyes glittering with a fearful light.

"Ask that woman who crouches yonder. Speak, and tell this monster what you know, ere he devours me; speak, I say."

In an instant Uglino was by her side. A long keen dagger gleamed above her heart, and the giant-like grasp of the dwarf was laid upon her arm.

"Where is my child? tell me, or this moment is your last; I am desperate; do not tempt me."

When Leopold Haldenberg caught a full view of the upturned features of the female, he became as pale as death, and, seizing Uglino by the arm, said,—

"Hold! Uglino, hold! this woman is my mother!"

"Pardon me! pardon me!" she cried, throwing herself upon her knees. "Oh! Leopold, I am not your mother; I have deceived you. That base man, who now lies there upon his dying bed, blighted my life long years ago, and prepared my soul for a dark and awful crime. I was not always what you now behold, a miserable outcast, without friends, without a home, and without a name. Before I met Bernardo I was pure and happy; but since then I have been a homeless wanderer, shunned and loathed. My mother was a devoted Catholic, and entirely under the influence of that priest, and she from day to day taught me that a priest was not like another man. Through Bernardo's influence I destroyed my boy; I was suspected of the deed, and to shield me from punishment he brought me another child. I nurtured him as if he had been my own; he was a fine and noble lad. At length, being unable to support him, I placed him out as an apprentice, and then fled to other scenes. Years passed away; I once more returned; once again I saw the child; he had grown to manhood, and was a proud and noble soldier. I threw myself upon his bosom and wept, and prayed for his forgiveness; he knew not then what I meant; I was proud of him and told him a

falsehood,—that I was his mother; he did not doubt me. Only three days ago did I learn who his parents were; because, at the time the infant was placed in my hands, Bernardo hurried me from Florence, and gave me no time to ask him any questions. Until within a few days past I have not seen Bernardo; by chance he came into this dreary place and found me here; he was sick and weary. I gave him my humble couch, for though he had deeply wronged me yet I remembered that he was the father of my child. I did not pity him; I could not, for sin had hardened my heart; but I had not forgotten the past, and thought of my murdered child. To-day, Bernardo told me that Leopold Haldenberg was the son of Uglino the dwarf!"

"My son!" "My father!" burst from their lips, and each folded the other to his heart in a warm and loving embrace. Like an infant, Leopold wept. Uglino, too, wiped the tear-drops from his own withered cheeks. Since he had before wept, long years of sorrow and neglect had passed away. Alone had he been in this cold world; alone had he battled his way through life. Often and oft had he tried in vain to weep, in order to soften the sorrow that was gnawing at his heart. The fountain had become dry; he could not weep.

"My son, my noble son, I bless God that you have been restored to me. I thank God that you are brave and generous; that you come to me crowned with glory. Through long years of sorrow have I mourned your loss. God has answered my prayers."

"Where, my father," said Leopold, "is my mother? I will fly to her and cover her cheeks with my loving kisses."

With tears streaming from his eyes Uglino lifted his hand aloft, and, pointing above, said,—

"My son, she is in heaven. In giving birth to you she died, and——"

Uglino could go no further; his soul was full, and, burying his face in his hands, he wept aloud. His heart was melted with the sweet memory of other years; his soul was touched with the beauteous vision of those happy days. How truly has the poet spoken!—

"Columbia's flattened head, and China's crumpled feet,—  
The civilized tapering waist, and the pendulous ears of the savage,—  
The swollen throat among the mountains, and an ebon skin beneath  
the tropics,—  
Shall all be reckoned beauty, and for weighty cause."

What if Uglino's features were not regular? His heart was naturally good and true. Some of the greatest and noblest men of earth have been marred by nature. Lord Byron had a deformed foot, yet

"O'er the harp, from earliest years beloved,  
He threw his fingers hurriedly, and tones  
Of melancholy beauty died away  
Upon its strings of sweetness."

John Wilkes was hideously ugly; Mirabeau was marked with smallpox; Beethoven, the great musician, was deaf, yet with what power could he touch the keys! Sir Walter Scott,—who by his mighty genius has hal-  
lowed every glen and brae and green savanna of his native land, and has hung a bright halo of eternal glory over those "soft, silent, hills," that will never grow dim,—was lame; Homer, too, was blind; the heavy hand of God was upon John Milton, and he could con-



temple neither the snows of winter, the flowers of spring, the beauties of summer, nor the glories of autumn: he could behold neither the hills adorned with loveliness, nor the mountains clad in sunshine; enveloped in a dismal night of gloom, he could trace neither the fiery lightnings nor watch the arching rainbow, nor behold the canopy above him decked with the beautiful stars; but through the deep darkness of this world's night the eye of faith led him far above the glittering concave to the eternal throne of light, and, seizing the buried harp of ages, he strung it with his own immortal hand,—he sung, and all the nations of the earth stood entranced.

A deep groan drew Ugolino and Leopold to the sick man's couch. He was gradually sinking, and his breathing was thick and fast: he no longer recognized Ugolino.

"Hush!" said he; "hear you not those demons flapping their heavy wings? See! how their eyes glare upon me! Oh! I am lost! I am lost! I am lost!"

Leopold Haldenberg was overcome; he felt a sympathy for the suffering wretch. Approaching nearer to the bedside, he asked,—

"Bernardo, shall I call a priest, that you may confess ere you die?"

"Who prates to me of priest? Oh! it is too late! too late! Already I hear the wails of the doomed; already I hear the shrieks of the damned! They howl my name; even now they beckon to me. Oh! too late! too late! Oh!——"

A convulsive shudder ran over Bernardo's frame, and giving a wild and fearful scream, his spirit fled into that silent world. Bernardo, the cunning priest, the heart-

less knave, and the tormenting villain, was no more! To him the last long night had come, dark, dismal, and rayless! No sun will ever again dispel the gloom. Through countless ages must he suffer; through a never-ending eternity will his wails mingle with those of the damned! Sternly to the last did he struggle with the grim monster, and even death itself could not dim the lustre of his flashing eyes. Fiercely to the last did he combat that fate which no earthly power can turn aside; and now he lay wrapped in death, his features distorted by suffering, and his eyes fixed upon vacancy with a meaningless glare.

Reader, have you forgotten the good Aurelia White? Do you remember how she died? Contrast the death-scene of that pious, humble Christian, with this of the daring priest of Rome, and select you between the two.

Ugolino and Leopold assisted Leonora, the female, in preparing the body for burial. As Leopold Haldenberg departed, in order to send some of his men to guard the dead body of the priest, he placed a purse of gold into the hands of Leonora.

When Simonetta learned the incidents narrated in this chapter, her heart was filled with grief. She shed tears of sympathy for Bernardo, that his life had been so full of sin, and that his death had been so full of woe.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

The wars are over ;  
 The spring is come ;  
 The bride and her lover  
 Have sought their home.  
 They are happy, we rejoice,  
 Let their hearts have an echo in every voice !  
 BYRON'S DEFORMED TRANSFORMED.

And like some low and mournful spell,  
 To whisper but one word—farewell !  
 PARK BENJAMIN.

ON one of those transcendently beautiful evenings that can be seen nowhere except in Italy, the canals were thronged with gondolas. As the last lingering rays of the setting sun fell upon the rich and splendid dresses of the maidens, upon the gay and dazzling uniform of soldiers, upon the flaunting banners, and upon those magnificent palaces, it was, indeed, a fairy-like scene. Music swelled on high and mingled with the merry ringing laugh of beautiful girls, whose hearts were pure and happy. The waves, ruffled by the gentle breeze, sparkled like a sea of brilliants, and the snowy sails rising and falling with the graceful swells, seemed to dance with joy and glee. The far-distant Alps were suffused with an indescribable splendor, and the whole scene looked as if it might be fresh from the Creator's hand.

"It was an evening bright and still  
 As ever blushed on wave or bower,  
 Smiling from heaven, as if naught ill  
 Could happen in so sweet an hour."

It was the bridal evening of Lily White and Simonetta Pitti! Brilliant lamps shed a dazzling splendor throughout the gorgeous palace of Castruccio Castracini. Every room blazed with the glitter of sparkling chandeliers, and the light, streaming over marble statues and upon splendid paintings, carried the beholder back to the days of Oriental grandeur. What skill in the arrangement of everything! What taste was exhibited; what unbounded wealth displayed!

Castruccio, with a genial and pleasant smile playing upon his countenance, hastened from room to room, giving a kind and gentle word to every one he met. With that dignity which ever characterizes the man of sense, he welcomed his guests. With smoothness and regularity everything went on. Each servant understood the duty assigned to him or her; hence there was no jarring and discord.

Rosetta and Fanny were above stairs, assisting in preparing Lily and Simonetta for the bridal altar. They were to be dressed alike with this exception: Simonetta's raven locks were to be trimmed with orange-blossoms, and Lily's with a sparkling set of costly diamonds, the bridal gift of Eugene Saunders. A beautiful necklace of glowing pearls adorned the snowy bosom of the lovely Italian. At one moment Lily's cheeks were rosy, like the clouds when softly kissed by the gentle beams of the rising sun; at the next they were as white as the lovely

lilies of the vale. Now a sweet smile dimpled her cheeks; and now the tears streamed from her radiant eyes.

"Oh! sister Lily," said Fanny, "why do you weep, when you know how ugly it makes you look? For my life I cannot see why you cry; I am certain, if I were in your place, I could do nothing but laugh and dance. Come, let me wipe these tears from your face, and then give me one sweet kiss ere you go."

Frank Morton had arrived from Florence; he came on purpose to wait upon Eugene Saunders. He was still the same dignified, accomplished man. In looking into the clear and sparkling depths of his deep blue eye, you could see that genius was dwelling there; and in listening to his calm, quiet manner of conversation, you knew at once that that genius was directed in the proper channel.

By this time the guests had assembled, and never did a more brilliant company meet to honor a marriage ceremony. Some were already engaged in earnest conversation; some were loitering leisurely through the long and brilliantly illuminated corridors, while others paused in admiration before some splendid painting executed by one of the ancient masters. The room in which the marriage was to take place was the most magnificent in the palace. At one extremity was erected an altar covered with white satin and sprinkled over with the freshest flowers. On it was a large cross of pearl, inlaid with sparkling gems, and the Holy Bible, opened at the Book of Ruth.

The sweet dreams of youth were about to be realized!

A low murmur, like the hum of bees in the spring-time, floated from room to room. The whisper passed from lip to lip—"they come, the brides come to the altar." The soft rustle of silken dresses drew the attention of the crowd who were promenading in the passage to the stairway. The sylph-like form of Lily White, leaning upon the arm of Eugene Saunders, glided like an angel into view; next in order came Leopold and Simonetta, her eyes rivaling in beauty and brilliancy the pearls that sparkled on her bosom; following these were Frank Morton and Fanny Lanier. An arch smile dimpled Fanny's rosy cheeks, and happiness beamed from her sparkling eyes; so light and so ethereal was her step that she seemed to float in loveliness by the side of the manly and noble artist. Marcello Silvio, a partner of Castuccio, and Rosetta, brought up the rear of this happy and interesting group.

From the confiding manner in which Rosetta looked up into the face of Marcello Silvio, we would not be surprised if a feeling stronger than friendship had found a place in her young and tender heart.

It was agreed that Eugene and Lily should be united first in the holy bonds of wedded bliss. With a firm and manly step Eugene approached the altar, supporting his trembling and blushing bride. A reverend man of God, clad in a plain suit of black cloth, stepped behind the altar, and in a few simple words made them man and wife. He was an American minister, and was on his way to Palestine, to visit those sacred scenes about which cluster so many hallowed associations, and where our Saviour bled and died for the redemption of the world. How still and solemn was everything when that aged

man, with his snowy locks falling about his shoulders, raised his voice and said,—

“My children, you are now bone of one bone and flesh of one flesh. Henceforth you are to live in the light of each other’s love. Remember, that life is mingled with joys and sorrows, with sunshine and shadows. With each other share those joys, and each assist the other in bearing those sorrows. My son,” said the old man, “take this maiden to thy heart; nourish her as a tender flower; let thy bosom cherish no secret which thy lip refuses to impart to her; in afflictions soothe her, and she will crown your life with happiness. My daughter,” continued he, addressing Lily, “have patience with thy husband; be not hasty in thy speech. If thy husband errs, rebuke him with a smile of love, and do not mingle bitter words with thy tears. Be ever willing to say with Ruth—‘Entreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee; for whither thou goest I will go, and where thou lodgest I will lodge; thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God; where thou diest will I die, and there will I be buried.’ May heaven pour its richest blessings upon your heads, and when called hence may you be reunited in that better land, where sorrows never come and where parting will be no more!”

With a zeal amounting to eloquence the aged minister pronounced these words, and many an eye that a moment before was bright with merry glances, was now dimmed with a sparkling tear.

Eugene Saunders led his bride aside, and Leopold, with Simonetta, approached the bridal altar, and by a good and pious priest of their own religion were made

one flesh. Simonetta Pitti became Simonetta Urceolo, which was the real name of Leopold. The name Haldenberg had been given him by Leonora.

Again the hum of voices arose, merry laughter filled the rooms, music rang aloud, warm congratulations passed, eyes met eyes in friendly glances. It was the hour for rejoicings!

Lily White was happy! With her life’s sorrows were passed, and beyond the present no shadows gathered.

But amid that gay and joyous throng there was one whose heart was running over with joy. Uglino the dwarf, too, was happy! A smile of love lit his countenance. His son had been restored to his loving embrace, with his laurels green about him, and united to one whom he loved to own as a daughter. His dark eyes still glowed, not with the fire of revenge but with happiness and love.

Eugene Saunders, after his marriage, tarried several days in Venice. Finally the hour of departure arrived, and with many kind words Eugene bade the noble and generous Castruccio farewell. From his heart he thanked him for the kindness and generosity shown to himself and Lily during their stay in Venice. When Lily and Fanny bade Rosetta and her father good-by, no words were spoken.

“The heart feels most when the lips move not,  
And the sigh speaks the gentle farewell.”

In an hour more Eugene and his beautiful bride, Frank Morton and Fanny Lanier, were on the blue waves of the rolling Adriatic; and as Eugene beheld the

domes and minarets of the "Ocean Queen" sparkling in the morning sun, sink behind the distant billows, he heaved a sigh and wiped a tear from his eye when the thought passed through his mind that he was leaving dear friends who had stood by him through all his trying difficulties and sorrows, and that perhaps he should never see them again on earth.

A shadow of melancholy darkened the beautiful brow of Lily White. Like a sister she loved Rosetta, and no change, however stern, and no suffering, however great, could ever efface from her mind and heart the kind and fatherly treatment she had received from Castruccio Castracini. With the poet could she say,—

"A truer, nobler, trustier heart,  
More loving or more loyal, never beat  
Within a human breast."

But did Eugene forget Uglino—his best, fondest, truest friend? He did not. They folded each other to their hearts. Once again Uglino wept.

"Uglino, how can I thank you for all that you have done for me? I cannot reward you, for generosity such as your's never meets with its due on earth; but it will be given in heaven."

"Talk not of the past, young man. When you were in danger I informed you, when in sorrow I ministered unto you, and for those deeds God in his goodness and wisdom has given me back my darling boy and has added a noble daughter. May you be happy. Sometimes think of old Uglino, and remember that if God gave him a blighted form he also gave him a feeling heart."

Oh! the splendors of the ocean by moonlight! What pen can claim the inspiration to portray it, what genius has sufficient power to present it as it exists in nature! It was in full view of its rolling billows, and in full hearing of its mighty roar, that the stammering Demosthenes prepared himself to sway the Grecian Forum; the wild music of its roar often thrilled the soul of Byron, and grasping his rejected lute filled the world with wonder and admiration.

Long that night did Frank Morton and Fanny Lanier stroll on the vessel's deck, watching the stars and talking of their beauty, and gazing at the foam-bells that sparkled in the moonlight. And they talked of love; and Fanny promised him that when his residence abroad grew dull she would brighten and adorn for him a lovely home in the far-distant West.

We must now wind our story to a close. Leopold resigned his station in the Austrian army, and went with his lovely bride to Florence, and in a few months the ancient Pitti Palace was the same magnificent home as in days gone by, beautified by wealth and blessed with love. Leopold and Simonetta lived happily together, and in after years it was Uglino's greatest delight to gather his little grand-children about his knees and to teach them useful lessons.

Rosetta married Marcello Silvio, and never did a man have a sweeter, nicer, and livelier little wife. She always met him with a smile after the business of the day was over, and every morning, as he left for his counting-room, she cheered him to his work by holding up to him two cherry lips for a loving kiss.

Castruccio continued through life the same generous,

noble man. By his honesty and perseverance his business flourished and his wealth increased.

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Four years have passed away. From the pomp and splendor of the Old World we must now lead you, gentle reader, to a home in the Western wilds. From the magnificence of palaces we must transport you to a land more lovely than that which

“—— the prophet viewed  
When on the sacred mount he stood,  
And saw below, transcendent shine,  
The streams and groves of Palestine.”

It was a bright morning in spring. The bees were humming amid the blossoms, the birds were caroling their sweetest songs in every grove, the peach-trees were crowned with blooms and filled the air with fragrance. See that beautiful cottage-home nestling amid the

“—— white empurple shower  
Of mingled blossoms,”

while in front a broad lake gleams in the morning sun like a huge mirror!

That cottage is the home of Eugene Saunders, and that is Flower Lake. On a sunny hill-side is seated an aged negro engaged in rigging his nets, while by his side are sporting in glee a bright little boy of three years, and a sister whose golden ringlets have been kissed by the gentle beams of two summer suns.

These are the happy little children of Eugene Saunders and Lily White. They were never happier than when out in the open air with old Uncle Ben.

Often and oft did Eugene and Lily, when the wintry winds howled around their happy home, and when the snow-wreaths hung in glittering, gorgeous festoons from the leafless trees, talk of the past, and live over again the time spent beneath Italy's soft skies. Often and oft, when the spring came, would they stroll forth into the solitudes of the grand old forest, and recall the troubles that marred their past years, and contrast those days with their present bliss. Many and many a time, when sailing on the quiet lake on those grand autumnal evenings, did they speak of Leopold and Simonetta, of Castruccio and Rosetta, nor did they forget Ugolino. Once every year, in the spring-time, did they visit Fanny, who now, as Mrs. Morton, lived in Texas, and occupied the home in which their mother died.

Often, as the twilight settled over the broad prairie, would Lily and Fanny seek their mother's grave and water it with their freshest tears. They were both happy in their wedded life. Farewell!

THE END.