

Thou hushest like a chord unto its close,  
 Thou ceapest as the Amen to a vow.

Sacred the passion-flower of thy fame.  
 To thee, obedient, "Write," the Angel saith.  
 Proudly life's holiest hopes preserve thy name,  
 Thou poet of the people's Christian faith.  
 Master of song! Our idler verse shall burn  
 With shame before thee, Beauty dedicate!  
 Prophet of God! We write upon thine urn,  
*Who, being Genius, held it consecrate:*

To starving spirits, needing heavenly bread, —  
 The bond or free, with wrong or right at strife;  
 To quiet tears of mourners comforted  
 By music set unto eternal life.  
 These are thine ushers at the Silent Gate;  
 To these appealing, thee we give in trust.  
 Glad heart! Forgive unto us, desolate,  
 The sob with which we leave thy sacred dust!  
*Elizabeth Stuart Phelps.*

## DON ORSINO.<sup>1</sup>

### XXV.

At this time Count Spicea received a letter from Maria Consuelo, written from Nice, and bearing a postmark more recent than the date which headed the page, — a fact which proved that the writer had either taken an unusually long time in the composition, or had withheld the missive several days before finally dispatching it.

MY FATHER, — I write to inform you of certain things which have recently taken place and which it is important that you should know, and of which I should have the right to require an explanation, if I chose to ask it. Having been the author of my life, you have made yourself also the author of all my unhappiness and of all my trouble. I

have never understood the cause of your intense hatred for me, but I have felt its consequences, even at a great distance from you, and you know well enough that I return it with all my heart. Moreover, I have made up my mind that I will not be made to suffer by you any longer. I tell you so quite frankly. This is a declaration of war, and I will act upon it immediately.

You are no doubt aware that Don Orsino Saracinesca has for a long time been among my intimate friends. I will not discuss the question whether I did well to admit him to my intimacy or not. That, at least, does not concern you. Even admitting your power to exercise the most complete tyranny over me in other ways, I am, and have always been, free to choose my own acquaintances, and I am able to defend

<sup>1</sup> Copyright, 1891, by Macmillan & Co.

myself better than most women, and as well as any. I will be just, too. I do not mean to reproach you with the consequences of what I do; but I will not spare you where the results of your action towards me are concerned.

Don Orsino made love to me last spring. I loved him from the first. I can hear your cruel laugh and see your contemptuous face, as I write. But the information is necessary, and I can bear your scorn because this is the last opportunity for such diversion which I shall afford you, and because I mean that you shall pay dearly for it. I loved Don Orsino, and I love him still. You, of course, have never loved. You have hated, however, and perhaps one passion may be the measure of another. It is in my case, I can assure you; for the better I love, the better I learn to hate you.

Last Thursday Don Orsino asked me to be his wife. I had known for some time that he loved me, and I knew that he would speak of it before long. The day was sultry at first, and then there was a thunderstorm. My nerves were unstrung, and I lost my head. I told him that I loved him. That does not concern you. I told him also, however, that I had given a solemn promise to my dying husband, and I had still the strength to say that I would not marry again. I meant to gain time, I longed to be alone. I knew that I should yield, but I would not yield blindly. Thank God, I was strong. I am like you in that, though happily not in any other way. You ask me why I should even think of yielding. I answer that I love Don Orsino better than I loved the man you murdered. There is nothing humiliating in that, and I make the confession without reserve. I love him better, and therefore, being human, I would have broken my promise and married him, had marriage been possible. But it is not, as you know. It is one thing to turn to the priest, as he stands by a dying man, and

to say, Pronounce us man and wife, and give us a blessing, for the sake of this man's rest. The priest knew that we were both free, and took the responsibility upon himself; knowing also that the act could have no consequences in fact, whatever it might prove to be in theory. It is quite another matter to be legally married to Don Orsino Saracinesca, in the face of a strong opposition. But I went home that evening believing that it could be done, and that the opposition would vanish. I believed because I loved. I love still, but what I learned that night has killed my belief in an impossible happiness.

I need not tell you all that passed between me and Lucrezia Ferris. How she knew of what had happened I cannot tell. She must have followed us to the apartment I was furnishing, and she must have overheard what we said, or seen enough to convince her. She is a spy. I suppose that is the reason why she is imposed upon me, and always has been, since I can remember, — since I was born, she says. I found her waiting to dress me, as usual, and as usual I did not speak to her. She spoke first. "You will not marry Don Orsino Saracinesca," she said, facing me with her bad eyes. I could have struck her, but I would not. I asked her what she meant. She told me that she knew what I was doing, and asked me whether I was aware that I needed documents in order to be married to a beggar in Rome, and whether I supposed that the Saracinesca would be inclined to overlook the absence of such papers, or could pass a law of their own abolishing the necessity for them, or, finally, whether they would accept such certificates of my origin as she could produce. She showed me a package. She had nothing better to offer me, she said, but such as she had she heartily placed at my disposal. I took the papers. I was prepared for a shock, but not for the blow I received.

You know what I read: the certificate

of my birth as the daughter of Lucrezia Ferris, unmarried, by Count Spicca, who acknowledged the child as his; the certificate of your marriage with Lucrezia Ferris, dated, strangely enough, a fortnight after my birth; and further, a document legitimizing me as the lawful daughter of you two. All these documents are from Monte Carlo. You will understand why I am in Nice. Yes, they are all genuine, every one of them, as I have had no difficulty in ascertaining. So I am the daughter of Lucrezia Ferris, born out of wedlock, and subsequently whitewashed into a sort of legitimacy? And Lucrezia Ferris is lawfully the Countess Spicca. Lucrezia Ferris, the cowardly spy-woman who more than half controls my life, the lying, thieving servant (she robs me at every turn), the common, half-educated Italian creature, — she is my mother; she is that radiant being of whom you sometimes speak with tears in your eyes; she is that angel of whom I remind you; she is that sweet influence that softened and brightened your lonely life for a brief space some three and twenty years ago! She has changed since then.

And this is the mystery of my birth which you have concealed from me, and which it was at any moment in the power of my vile mother to reveal. You cannot deny the fact, I suppose, especially since I have taken the trouble to search the registers and verify each separate document.

I gave them all back to her, for I shall never need them. The woman — I mean my mother — was quite right. I shall not marry Don Orsino Saracinesca. You have lied to me throughout my life. You have always told me that my mother was dead, and that I need not be ashamed of my birth, though you wished it kept a secret. So far, I have obeyed you. In that respect, and only in that, I will continue to act according to your wishes. I am not called upon to proclaim to the world and my

acquaintance that I am the daughter of my own servant, and that you were kind enough to marry your estimable mistress after my birth, in order to confer upon me what you dignify by the name of legitimacy. No. That is not necessary. If it could hurt you to proclaim it, I would do so in the most public way I could find. But it is folly to suppose that you could be made to suffer by so simple a process.

Are you aware, my father, that you have ruined all my life from the first? Being so bad, you must be intelligent, and you must realize what you have done, even if you have done it out of pure love of evil. You pretended to be kind to me, until I was old enough to feel all the pain you had in store for me. But even then, after you had taken the trouble to marry my mother, why did you give me another name? Was that necessary? I suppose it was. I did not understand then why my older companions looked askance at me in the convent, nor why the nuns sometimes whispered together and looked at me. They knew, perhaps, that no such name as mine existed. Since I was your daughter, why did I not bear your name when I was a little girl? You were ashamed to let it be known that you were married, seeing what sort of wife you had taken, and you found yourself in a dilemma. If you had acknowledged me as your daughter in Austria, your friends in Rome would soon have found out my existence — and the existence of your wife. You were very cautious in those days, but you seem to have grown careless of late, or you would not have left those papers in the care of the Countess Spicca, my maid — and my mother. I have heard that very bad men soon reach their second childhood and act foolishly. It is quite true.

Then, later, when you saw that I loved and was loved, and was to be happy, you came between my love and me. You appeared in your own charac-

ter, as a liar, a slanderer, and a traitor. I loved a man who was brave, honorable, faithful; reckless, perhaps, and wild, as such men are, but devoted and true. You came between us. You told me that he was false, cowardly, an adventurer of the worst kind. Because I would not believe you, and would have married him in spite of you, you killed him. Was it cowardly of him to face the first swordsman in Europe? They told me that he was not afraid of you, the men who saw it, and that he fought you like a lion, as he was. And the provocation, too! He never struck me. He was showing me what he meant by a term in fencing; the silver knife he held grazed my cheek because I was startled and moved. But you meant to kill him, and you chose to say that he had struck me. Did you ever hear a harsh word from his lips during those months of waiting? When you had done your work you fled, like the murderer you were and are. But I escaped from the woman who says she is my mother, — and is, — and I went to him, and found him living, and married him. You used to tell me that he was an adventurer, and little better than a beggar. Yet he left me a large fortune. It is as well that he provided for me, since you have succeeded in losing most of your own money at play, — doubtless to insure my not profiting by it at your death. Not that you will die; men of your kind outlive their victims, because they kill them.

And now, when you saw — for you did see it — when you saw and knew that Orsino Saracinesca and I loved each other, you broke my life a second time. You might so easily have gone to him, or have come to me, at the first, with the truth. You knew that I should never forgive you for what you had done already. A little more could have made matters no worse then. You knew that Don Orsino would have thanked you as a friend for the warning. Instead — I refuse to believe you in your dotage, after all — you

make that woman spy upon me until the great moment is come; you give her the weapons, and you bid her strike when the blow will be most excruciating. You are not a man. You are Satan. I parted twice from the man I love. He would not let me go, and he came back and tried to keep me. I do not know how I escaped. God helped me. He is so brave and noble that if he had held those accursed papers in his hands and known all the truth he would not have given me up. He would have brought a stain on his great name and shame upon his great house for my sake. He is not like you. I parted from him twice. I know all that I can suffer, and I hate you for each individual suffering, great and small.

I have dismissed my mother from my service. How that would sound in Rome! I have given her as much money as she can expect, and I have got rid of her. She said that she would not go, that she should write to you, and many other things. I told her that if she attempted to stay I should go to the authorities, prove that she was my mother, provide for her, if the law required it, and have her forcibly turned out of my house by the aid of the same law. I am of age, married, independent, and I cannot be obliged to entertain my mother either in the character of a servant or as a visitor. I suppose she has a right to a lodging under your roof. I hope she will take advantage of it, as I advised her. She took the money and went away, cursing me. I think that if she had ever, in all my life, shown the smallest affection for me; even at the last, when she declared herself my mother, if she had shown a spark of motherly feeling, of tenderness, of anything human, I could have accepted her and tolerated her, half-peasant woman as she is, spy as she has been, and cheat and thief. But she stood before me with the most perfect indifference, watching my surprise with those bad eyes of hers. I wonder why I have borne her presence

so long. I suppose it had never struck me that I could get rid of her in spite of you, if I chose. By the bye, I sent for a notary when I paid her, and I got a legal receipt signed with her legal name, Lucrezia Spicca, *nata* Ferris. The document formally releases me from all further claims. I hope you will understand that you have no power whatsoever to impose her upon me again, though I confess that I am expecting your next move with interest. I suppose that you have not done with me yet, and have some new means of torment in reserve. Satan is rarely idle long.

And now I have done. If you were not the villain you are, I should expect you to go to the man whose happiness I have endangered, if not destroyed. I should expect you to tell Don Orsino Saracinesca enough of the truth to make him understand my action. But I know you far too well to imagine that you would willingly take from my life one thorn of the many you have planted in it. I will write to Don Orsino myself. I think you need not fear him, — I am sorry that you need not. But I shall not tell him more than is necessary. You will remember, I hope, that such discretion as I may show is not shown out of consideration for you, but out of forethought for my own welfare. I have, unfortunately, no means of preventing you from writing to me, but you may be sure that your letters will never be read, so that you will do as well to spare yourself the trouble of composing them.

MARIA CONSUELO D'ARANJUEZ.

Spicca received this letter early in the morning, and at midday he still sat in his chair, holding it in his hand. His face was very white, his head hung forward upon his breast, his thin fingers were stiffened upon the thin paper. Only the hardly perceptible rise and fall of the chest showed that he still breathed.

The clocks had already struck twelve when his old servant entered the room, a

being thin, wizened, gray and noiseless as the ghost of a greyhound. He stood still a moment before his master, expecting that he would look up, then bent anxiously over him and felt his hands.

Spicca slowly raised his sunken eyes.

"It will pass, Santi, — it will pass," he said feebly.

Then he began to fold up the sheets slowly and with difficulty, but very neatly, as men of extraordinary skill with their hands do everything. Santi looked at him doubtfully, and then got a glass and a bottle of cordial from a small carved press in the corner. Spicca drank the liqueur slowly, and set the glass steadily upon the table.

"Bad news, Signor Conte?" asked the servant anxiously, and in a way which betrayed at once the kindly relations existing between the two.

"Very bad news," Spicca answered sadly, and shaking his head.

Santi sighed, restored the bottle to the press, and took up the glass, as though he were about to leave the room. But he still lingered near the table, glancing uneasily at his master as though he had something to say, but was hesitating to begin.

"What is it, Santi?" asked the count.

"I beg your pardon, Signor Conte, you have had bad news. If you will allow me to speak, there are several small economies which could still be managed without too much inconveniencing you. Pardon the liberty, Signor Conte."

"I know, I know. But it is not money, this time. I wish it were."

Santi's expression immediately lost much of its anxiety. He had shared his master's fallen fortunes, and knew better than he what he meant by a few more small economies, as he called them.

"God be praised, Signor Conte," he said solemnly. "May I serve the breakfast?"

"I have no appetite, Santi. Go yourself and eat."

"A little something?" Santi spoke

in a coaxing way. "I have prepared a little mixed fry, with toast, as you like it, Signor Conte, and the salad is good to-day; ham and figs are also in the house. Let me lay the cloth; when you see, you will eat. And just one egg beaten up with a glass of red wine, to begin with; that will dispose the stomach."

Spicca shook his head again, but Santi paid no attention to the refusal, and went about preparing the meal. When it was ready, the old man suffered himself to be persuaded, and ate a little. He was in reality stronger than he looked, and an extraordinary nervous energy still lurked beneath the appearance of a feebleness amounting almost to decrepitude. The little nourishment he took sufficed to restore the balance, and when he rose from the table he was outwardly almost himself again. When a man has suffered great moral pain for years, he bears a new shock, even the worst, better than one who is hard hit in the midst of a placid and long habitual happiness. The soul can be taught to bear trouble as the great self-mortifiers of an earlier time taught their bodies to bear scourging. The process is painful, but hardening.

"I feel better, Santi," said Spicca. "Your breakfast has done me good. You are an excellent doctor."

He turned away and took out his pocket-book, not over-well garnished. He found a ten-franc note. Then he looked round and spoke in a gentle, kindly tone.

"Santi, this trouble has nothing to do with money. You need a new pair of shoes, I am sure. Do you think that ten francs is enough?"

Santi bowed respectfully and took the money.

"A thousand thanks, Signor Conte."

Santi was a strange man, from the heart of the Abruzzi. He pocketed the note; but that night, when he had undressed his master and was arranging the things on the dressing-table, the ten-franc note found its way back into the

black pocket-book. Spicca never counted, and never knew.

He did not write to Maria Consuelo, for he was well aware that, in her present state of mind, she would undoubtedly burn his letter unopened, as she had said she would. Late in the day he went out, walked for an hour, entered the club and read the papers, and at last betook himself to the restaurant where Orsino dined when his people were out of town.

In due time Orsino appeared, looking pale and ill-tempered. He caught sight of Spicca, and went at once to the table where he sat.

"I have had a letter," said the young man. "I must speak to you. If you do not object, we will dine together."

"By all means. There is nothing like a thoroughly bad dinner to promote ill feeling."

Orsino glanced at the old man in momentary surprise; but he knew his ways tolerably well, and was familiar with the chronic acidity of his speech.

"You probably guess who has written to me?" Orsino resumed. "It was natural, perhaps, that she should have something to say, but what she actually says is more than I was prepared to hear."

Spicca's eyes grew less dull, and he turned an inquiring glance on his companion.

"When I tell you that in this letter Madame d'Aranjuez has confided to me the true story of her origin, I have probably said enough," continued the young man.

"You have said too much or too little," Spicca answered in an almost indiffer-ent tone.

"How so?"

"Unless you tell me just what she has told you, or show me the letter, I cannot possibly judge of the truth of the tale."

Orsino raised his head angrily.

"Do you mean me to doubt that Madame d'Aranjuez speaks the truth?" he asked.

"Calm yourself. Whatever Madame



d'Aranjuez has written to you she believes to be true; but she may have been herself deceived."

"In spite of documents, public registers" —

"Ah! Then she has told you about those certificates?"

"That and a great deal more which concerns you."

"Precisely. A great deal more. I know all about the registers, as you may easily suppose, seeing that they concern two somewhat important acts in my own life, and that I was very careful to have those acts properly recorded, beyond the possibility of denial, — beyond the possibility of denial," he repeated very slowly and emphatically. "Do you understand that?"

"It would not enter the mind of a sane person to doubt such evidence," answered Orsino rather scornfully.

"No, I suppose not. As you do not, therefore, come to me for confirmation of what is already undeniable, I cannot understand why you come to me at all in this matter, unless you do so on account of other things which Madame d'Aranjuez has written you, and of which you have so far kept me in ignorance."

Spicca spoke in a formal manner and in cold tones, drawing up his bent figure a little. A waiter came to the table, and both men ordered their dinner. The interruption rather favored the development of a hostile feeling between them than otherwise.

"I will explain my reasons for coming to find you here," said Orsino, when they were again alone.

"So far as I am concerned, no explanation is necessary. I am content not to understand. Moreover, this is a public place, in which we have accidentally met and dined together before."

"I did not come here by accident," answered Orsino, "and I did not come in order to give explanations, but to ask for one."

"Ah?" Spicca eyed him coolly.

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"Yes. I wish to know why you have hated your daughter all her life, why you persecute her in every way, why you" —

"Will you kindly stop?"

The old man's voice grew suddenly clear and incisive, and Orsino broke off in the middle of his sentence. A moment's pause followed.

"I requested you to stop speaking," Spicca resumed, "because you were unconsciously making statements which have no foundation whatever in fact. Observe that I say 'unconsciously.' You are completely mistaken. I do not hate Madame d'Aranjuez. I love her with all my heart and soul. I do not persecute her in every way, nor in any way. On the contrary, her happiness is the only object of such life as I still have to live, and I have little but that life left to give her. I am in earnest, Orsino."

"I see you are. That makes what you say all the more surprising."

"No doubt it does. Madame d'Aranjuez has just written to you, and you have her letter in your pocket. She has told you in that letter a number of facts in her own life as she sees them, and you look at them as she does. It is natural. To her and to you I appear to be a monster of evil, a hideous incarnation of cruelty, — a devil, in short. Did she call me a devil in her letter?"

"She did."

"Precisely. She has also written to me, informing me that I am Satan. There is a directness in the statement and a general disregard of probability which are not without charm. Nevertheless, I am Spicca, and not Beelzebub, her assurances to the contrary notwithstanding. You see how views may differ. You know much of her life, but you know nothing of mine, nor is it my intention to tell you anything about myself. But I will tell you this much: If I could do anything to mend matters, I would. If I could make it possible for you to marry Madame d'Aranjuez, being what you are and fenced in as you

are, I would. If I could tell you all the rest of the truth, which she does not know nor dream of, I would. I am bound by a very solemn promise of secrecy, — by something more than a promise, in fact. Yet, if I could do good to her by breaking oaths, betraying confidence, and trampling on the deepest obligations which can bind a man, I would. But that good cannot be done any more. That is all I can tell you."

"It is little enough. You could and you can tell the whole truth, as you call it, to Madame d'Aranjuez. I should advise you to do so, instead of embittering her life at every turn."

"I have not asked for your advice, Orsino. That she is unhappy I know. That she hates me is clear. She would not be the happier for hating me less, since nothing else would be changed. She need not think of me, if the subject is disagreeable. In all other respects she is perfectly free. She is young, rich, and at liberty to go where she pleases and to do what she likes. So long as I am alive I shall watch over her" —

"And destroy every chance of happiness which presents itself," interrupted Orsino.

"I gave you some idea, the other night, of the happiness she might have enjoyed with the deceased Aranjuez. If I made a mistake in regard to what I saw him do, — I admit the possibility of an error, — I was nevertheless quite right in ridding her of the man. I have atoned for the mistake, if we call it so, in a way of which you do not dream, nor she either. The good remains, for Aranjuez is buried."

"You speak of secret atonement. I was not aware that you ever suffered from remorse."

"Nor I," answered Spicca dryly.

"Then what do you mean?"

"You are questioning me, and I have warned you that I will tell you nothing about myself. You will confer a great favor upon me by not insisting."

"Are you threatening me again?"

"I am not doing anything of the kind. I never threaten any one. I could kill you as easily as I killed Aranjuez, old and decrepit as I look, and I should be perfectly indifferent to the opprobrium of killing so young a man; though I think that, looking at us two, many people might suppose the advantage to be on your side rather than on mine. But young men nowadays do not learn to handle arms. Short of laying violent hands upon me, you will find it quite impossible to provoke me. I am almost old enough to be your grandfather, and I understand you very well. You love Madame d'Aranjuez. She knows that to marry you would be to bring about such a quarrel with your family as might ruin half your life, and she has the rare courage to tell you so and to refuse your offer. You think that I can do something to help you, and you are incensed because I am powerless, and furious because I object to your leaving Rome in the same train with her against her will. You are more furious still to-day, because you have adopted her belief that I am a monster of iniquity. Observe that, apart from hindering you from a great piece of folly, the other day, I have never interfered. I do not interfere now. As I said then, follow her if you please, persuade her to marry you if you can, quarrel with all your family if you like. It is nothing to me. Publish the banns of your marriage on the doors of the Capitol, and declare to the whole world that Madame d'Aranjuez, the future Princess Saracinesca, is the daughter of Count Spicca and Lucrezia Ferris, his lawful wife. There will be a little talk, but it will not hurt me. People have kept their marriages a secret for a whole lifetime before now. I do not care what you do, nor what the whole tribe of the Saracinesca may do, provided that none of you do harm to Maria Consuelo, nor bring needless suffering upon her. If any of you do that, I will kill you. That,



at least, is a threat, if you like. Good-night."

Thereupon Spicca rose suddenly from his seat, leaving his dinner unfinished, and went out.

## XXVI.

Orsino did not leave Rome, after all. He was not in reality prevented from doing so by the necessity of attending to his business, for he might assuredly have absented himself for a week or two, at almost any time before the new year, without incurring any especial danger. From time to time, at ever-increasing intervals, he felt strongly impelled to re-join Maria Consuelo in Paris, where she had ultimately determined to spend the autumn and winter; but the impulse always lacked just the measure of strength which would have made it a resolution. When he thought of his many hesitations, he did not understand himself, and he fell in his own estimation, so that he became by degrees more silent and melancholy of disposition than had originally been natural with him.

He had much time for reflection, and he constantly brooded over the situation in which he found himself. The question seemed to be whether he loved Maria Consuelo or not, since he was able to display such apparent indifference to her absence. In reality he also doubted whether he was loved by her, and the one uncertainty was fully as great as the other.

He went over all that had passed. The position had never been an easy one, and the letter which Maria Consuelo had written to him after her departure had not made it easier. It had contained the revelations concerning her birth, together with many references to Spicca's continued cruelty, plentifully supported by statements of facts. She had then distinctly told Orsino that she would never marry him, under any circumstances whatever, declaring that if

he followed her she would not even see him. She would not ruin his life and plunge him into a lifelong quarrel with his family, she said; and she added that she would certainly not expose herself to such treatment as she would undoubtedly receive at the hands of the Saracinesca, if she married Orsino without his parents' consent.

A man does not easily believe that he is deprived of what he most desires exclusively for his own good and welfare, and the last sentence quoted wounded Orsino deeply. He believed himself ready to incur the displeasure of all his people for Maria Consuelo's sake, and he said in his heart that, if she loved him, she should be ready to bear as much as he. The language in which she expressed herself, too, was cold, and almost incisive.

Unlike Spicca, Orsino answered this letter, writing in an argumentative strain, bringing the best reasons he could find to bear against those she alleged, and at last reproaching her with not being willing to suffer for his sake a tenth part of what he would endure for her. But he announced his intention of joining her before long, and expressed the certainty that she would receive him.

To this Maria Consuelo made no reply for some time. When she wrote at last, it was to say that she had carefully considered her decision, and saw no good cause for changing it. To Orsino her tone seemed colder and more distant than ever. The fact that the pages were blotted here and there, and that the handwriting was unsteady, was probably to be referred to her carelessness. He brooded over his misfortune, thought more than once of making a desperate effort to win back her love, and remained in Rome. After a long interval he wrote to her again. This time he produced an epistle which, under the circumstances, might have appeared almost ridiculous. It was full of indifferent gossip about society; it contained

a few sarcastic remarks about his own approaching failure, with some rather youthfully cynical observations on the instability of things in general, and the hollowness of all aspirations whatsoever.

He received no answer, and duly repented the flippant tone he had taken. He would have been greatly surprised could he have learned that this last letter was destined to produce a greater effect upon his life than all he had written before it.

In the mean while, his father, who had heard of the increasing troubles in the world of business, wrote him in a constant strain of warning, to which Orsino paid little attention. His mother's letters, too, betrayed her anxiety, but expressed what his father's did not, to wit, the most boundless confidence in his power to extricate himself honorably from all difficulties, together with the assurance that if worse came to worst she was always ready to help him.

Suddenly and without warning, old Saracinesca returned from his wanderings. He had taken the trouble to keep the family informed of his movements by his secretary during two or three months, and had then temporarily allowed them to lose sight of him, thereby causing them considerable anxiety, though an occasional paragraph in a newspaper reassured them from time to time. Then, on a certain afternoon in November, he appeared, alone and in a cab, as though he had been out for a stroll.

"Well, my boy, are you ruined yet?" he inquired, entering Orsino's room without ceremony.

The young man started from his seat and took the old gentleman's rough hand with an exclamation of surprise.

"Yes, you may well look at me," laughed the prince. "I have grown ten years younger. And you?" He pushed his grandson into the light and scrutinized his face fiercely. "And you are ten years older," he concluded in a discontented tone.

"I did not know it," answered Orsino, with an attempt at a laugh.

"You have been at some mischief. I know it. I can see it."

He dropped the young fellow's arm, shook his head, and began to move about the room. Then he came back, all at once, and looked up into Orsino's face from beneath his bushy eyebrows.

"Out with it; I mean to know!" he said roughly, but not unkindly. "Have you lost money? Are you ill? Are you in love?"

Orsino would certainly have resented the first and the last questions, if not all three, had they been put to him by his father. There was something in the old prince's nature, something warmer and more human, which appealed to his own. Sant' Ilario was, and always had been, outwardly cold, somewhat measured in his speech, undemonstrative, — a man not easily moved to much expression or to real sympathy except by love, but capable, under that influence, of going to great lengths. And Orsino, though in some respects resembling his mother rather than his father, was not unlike the latter, with a larger measure of ambition and less real pride. It was probably the latter characteristic which made him feel the need of sympathy in a way his father had never felt it and could never understand it, and he was thereby drawn more closely to his mother and to his grandfather than to Sant' Ilario.

Old Saracinesca evidently meant to be answered, as he stood there gazing into Orsino's eyes.

"A great deal has happened since you went away," said Orsino, half wishing that he could tell everything. "In the first place, business is in a very bad state, and I am anxious."

"Dirty work, business," grumbled Saracinesca. "I always told you so. Then you have lost money, you young idiot! I thought so. Did you think you were any better than Montevarchi?"

I hope you have kept your name out of the market, at all events. What in the name of Heaven made you put your hand to such filth! Come, how much do you want? We will whitewash you, and you shall start to-morrow and go round the world."

"But I am not in actual need of money at all" —

"Then what the devil are you in need of?"

"An improvement in business, and the assurance that I shall not ultimately be bankrupt."

"If money is not an assurance that you will not be bankrupt, I should like to learn what is. All this is nonsense. Tell me the truth, my boy, — you are in love. That is the trouble."

Orsino shrugged his shoulders.

• "I have been in love some time," he answered.

"Young? Old? Marriageable? Married? Out with it, I say!"

"I should rather talk about business. I think it is all over now."

"Just like your father, — always full of secrets! As if I did not know all about it! You are in love with that Madame d'Aranjuez."

Orsino turned a little pale.

"Please do not call her 'that' Madame d'Aranjuez," he said gravely.

"Eh? What? Are you so sensitive about her?"

"Yes."

"You are? Very well; I like that. What about her?"

"What a question!"

"I mean, is she indifferent, cold, in love with some one else?"

"Not that I am aware. She has refused to marry me, and has left Rome, — that is all."

"Refused to marry you!" cried old Saracinesca, in boundless astonishment. "My dear boy, you must be out of your mind! The thing is impossible. You are the best match in Rome. Madame d'Aranjuez refuse you! Absolutely in-

credible, not to be believed for a moment. You are dreaming. A widow — without much fortune — the relict of some curious adventurer — a woman looking for a fortune — a woman" —

"Stop!" cried Orsino savagely.

"Oh, yes, I forgot. You are sensitive. Well, well, I meant nothing against her, except that she must be insane, if what you tell me is true. But I am glad of it, my boy, very glad. She is no match for you, Orsino. I confess, I wish you would marry at once, — I should like to see my great-grandchildren, — but not Madame d'Aranjuez. A widow, too."

"My father married a widow."

"When you find a widow like your mother, and ten years younger than yourself, marry her, if you can. But not Madame d'Aranjuez, — older than you by several years."

"A few years."

"Is that all? It is too much, though. And who is Madame d'Aranjuez? Everybody was asking the question last winter. I suppose she had a name before she married; and since you have been trying to make her your wife, you must know all about her. Who was she?"

Orsino hesitated.

"You see!" cried the old prince. "It is not all right. There is a secret, — there is something wrong about her family, or about her entrance into the world. She knows perfectly well that we would never receive her, and has concealed it all from you" —

"She has not concealed it. She has told me the exact truth; but I shall not repeat it to you."

"All the stronger proof that everything is not right. You are well out of it, my boy, — exceedingly well out of it. I congratulate you."

"I should rather not be congratulated."

"As you please. I am sorry for you, if you are unhappy. Try and forget all about it. How is your mother?"

At any other time Orsino would have laughed at the characteristic abruptness.

"Perfectly well, I believe. I have not seen her all summer," he answered gravely.

"Not been to Saracinesca all summer! No wonder you look ill. Telegraph to them that I have come back, and let us get the family together as soon as possible. Do you think I mean to spend six months alone in your company, especially when you are away all day at that wretched office of yours? Be quick about it, — telegraph at once."

"Very well. But please do not repeat anything of what I have told you to my father or my mother. That is the only thing I have to ask."

"Am I a parrot? I never talk to them of your affairs."

"Thanks. I am grateful."

"To Heaven because your grandfather is not a parakeet! No doubt. You have good cause. And look here, Orsino" — The old man took Orsino's arm and held it firmly, speaking in a lower tone. "Do not make an ass of yourself, my boy, especially in business. But if you do, — and you probably will, you know, — just come to me, without speaking to any one else. I will see what can be done without noise. There — take that, and forget all about your troubles, and get a little more color into your face."

"You are too good to me," said Orsino, grasping the old prince's hand. For once he was really moved.

"Nonsense. Go and send that telegram at once. I do not want to be kept waiting a week for a sight of my family."

With a deep, good-humored laugh he pushed Orsino out of the door in front of him, and went off to his own quarters.

In due time the family returned from Saracinesca, and the gloomy old palace waked to life again. Corona and her

husband were both struck by the change in Orsino's appearance, which indeed contrasted strongly with their own, refreshed and strengthened as they were by the keen mountain air, the endless out-of-door life, the manifold occupations of people deeply interested in the welfare of those around them, and supremely conscious of their own power to produce good results in their own way. When they all came back, Orsino himself felt how jaded and worn he was as compared with them.

Before twelve hours had gone by he found himself alone with his mother. Strange to say, he had not looked forward to the interview with pleasure. The bond of sympathy which had so closely united the two during the spring seemed weakened, and Orsino would, if possible, have put off the renewal of intimate converse which he knew to be inevitable. But that could not be done.

It would not be hard to find reasons for his wishing to avoid his mother. Formerly his daily tale had been one of success, of hope, of ever-increasing confidence. Now he had nothing to tell of but danger and anxiety for the future, and he was not without a suspicion that she would strongly disapprove of his allowing himself to be kept afloat by Del Ferice's personal influence, and perhaps by his personal aid. It was hard to begin daily intercourse on a basis of things so different from that which had appeared solid and safe when they had last talked together. Orsino had learned to bear his own troubles bravely, too, and there was something which he associated with weakness in the idea of asking sympathy for them now. He would rather have been left alone.

Deep down, too, was the consciousness of all that had happened between himself and Maria Consuelo since his mother's departure, — another suffering, another and distinctly different misfortune, to be borne better in silence than under

question even of the most affectionate kind. His grandfather had indeed guessed at both truths, and had taxed him with them at once, but that was quite another matter. He knew that the old gentleman would never refer again to what he had learned, and he appreciated the generous offer of help, of which he would never avail himself, in a way in which he could not appreciate an assistance even more lovingly proffered, perhaps, but which must be asked for by a confession of his own failure.

On the other hand, he was incapable of distorting the facts in any way so as to make his mother believe him more successful than he actually was. There was nothing dishonest, possibly, in pretending to be hopeful when he really had little hope, but he could not have represented the condition of the business otherwise than as it really stood.

The interview was a long one, and Corona's dark face grew grave, if not despondent, as he explained to her one point after another, taking especial care to elucidate all that bore upon his relations with Del Ferice. It was most important that his mother should understand how he was placed, and how Del Ferice's continued advances of money were not to be regarded in the light of a personal favor, but as a speculation in which Ugo would probably get the best of the bargain. Orsino knew how sensitive his mother would be on such a point, and dreaded the moment when she should begin to think that he was laying himself under obligations beyond the strict limits of business.

Corona leaned back in her low seat and covered her eyes with one hand for a moment, in deep thought. Orsino waited anxiously for her to speak.

"My dear," she said at last, "you make it very clear, and I understand you perfectly. Nevertheless, it seems to me that your position is not very dignified, considering who you are, and what Del

Ferice is. Do you not think so yourself?"

Orsino flushed a little. She had not put the point as he had expected, and her words told upon him.

"When I entered business, I put my dignity in my pocket," he answered, with a forced laugh. "There cannot be much of it in business, at the best."

His mother's black eyes seemed to grow blacker, and the delicate nostril quivered a little.

"If that is true, I wish you had never meddled in these affairs," she said proudly. "But you talked differently last spring, and you made me see it all in another way. You made me feel, on the contrary, that in doing something for yourself, in showing that you were able to accomplish something, in asserting your independence, you were making yourself more worthy of respect; and I have respected you accordingly."

"Exactly," answered Orsino, catching at the old argument. "That is just what I wished to do. What I said a moment since was in the way of a generality. Business means a struggle for money, I suppose, and that in itself is not dignified. But it is not dishonorable. After all, the end may justify the means."

"I hate that saying!" exclaimed Corona hotly. "I wish you were free of the whole affair."

"So do I, with all my heart!"

A short silence followed.

"If I had known all this three months ago," Corona resumed, "I should have taken the money and given it to you to clear yourself. I thought you were succeeding, and I have used all the funds I could gather to buy the Montevarchi's property between us and Affile, and in planting eucalyptus-trees in that low land of mine where the people have suffered so much from fever. I have nothing at my disposal unless I borrow. Why did you not tell me the truth in the summer, Orsino? Why have you

let me imagine that you were prospering all along, when you have been and are at the point of failure? It is too bad" —

She broke off suddenly, and clasped her hands together on her knee.

"It is only lately that business has gone so badly," said Orsino.

"It was all wrong from the beginning! I should never have encouraged you. Your father was right, as he always is, — and now you must tell him so."

But Orsino refused to go to his father, except in the last extremity. He represented that it was better and more dignified, since Corona insisted upon the point of dignity, to fight the battle alone so long as there was a chance of winning. His mother, on the other hand, maintained that he should free himself at once and at any cost. A few months earlier he could easily have persuaded her that he was right; but she seemed changed since he had parted from her, and he fancied that his father's influence had been at work with her. This he resented bitterly. It must be remembered, too, that he had begun the interview with a preconceived prejudice, expecting it to turn out badly, so that he was the more ready to allow matters to take an unfavorable turn.

The result was not a decided break in his relations with his mother, but a state of things more irritating than any open difference could have been. From that time Corona discouraged him, and never ceased to advise him to go to his father and ask frankly for enough money to clear him outright. Orsino, on his part, obstinately refused to apply to any one for help so long as Del Ferice continued to advance him money.

In those months which followed, there were few indeed who did not suffer in the almost universal financial cataclysm. All that Contini and others, older and wiser than he, had predicted took place, and more also. The banks refused discount

even upon the best paper, saying with justice that they were obliged to hold their funds in reserve at such a time. The work stopped almost everywhere. It was impossible to raise money. Thousands upon thousands of workmen who had come from great distances during the past two or three years were suddenly thrown out of work, penniless in the streets, and many of them burdened with wives and children. There were one or two small riots, and there was much demonstration; but, on the whole, the poor masons behaved very well. The government and the municipality did what they could, — what governments and municipalities can do, when hampered at every turn by the most complicated and ill-considered machinery of administration ever invented in any country. The starving workmen were by slow degrees got out of the city, and sent back to starve, out of sight, in their native places. The emigration was enormous in all directions.

The dismal ruins of that new city which was to have been built, and which never reached completion, are visible everywhere. Houses seven stories high, abandoned within a month of completion, rise, uninhabited and uninhabitable, out of a rank growth of weeds, amidst heaps of rubbish, staring down at the broad, desolate streets where the vigorous grass pushes its way up through the loose stones of the unrolled metaling. Amidst heavy low walls which were to have been the ground stories of palaces a few ragged children play in the sun, a lean donkey crops the thistles, or, if near to a few occupied dwellings, a wine-seller makes a booth of straw and chestnut boughs, and dispenses a poisonous sour drink to those who will buy. But that is only in the warm months. The winter winds blow the wretched booth to pieces and increase the desolation. Further on, tall façades rise suddenly up, the blue sky gleaming through their windows, the green moss already growing



upon their naked stones and bricks. The Barberini of the future, if any should arise, will not need to despoil the Colosseum to quarry material for their palaces. If, as the old pasquinade had it, the Barberini did what the Barbarians did not, how much worse than Barbarians have these modern civilizers done!

The distress was very great in the early months of 1889. The satisfaction which many of the new men would have felt at the ruin of great old families was effectually neutralized by their own financial destruction. Princes, bankers, contractors, and master masons went down together in the general bankruptcy. Ugo Del Ferice survived, and with him Andrea Contini and Company, and doubtless other small firms which he protected for his own ends. San Giacinto, calm, far-seeing and keen as an eagle, surveyed the chaos from the height of his magnificent fortune, unmoved and immovable, awaiting the lowest ebb of the tide. The Saracinesca looked on, hampered a little by the sudden fall in rents and other sources of their income, but still superior to events, though secretly anxious about Orsino's affairs, and daily expecting that he must fail.

And Orsino himself had changed, as was natural enough. He was learning to seem what he was not; and those who have learned that lesson know how it influences the real man, whom no one can judge but himself. So long as there had been one person in his life with whom he could live in perfect sympathy, he had given himself little trouble about his outward behavior. So long as he had felt that, come what might, his mother was on his side, he had not thought it worth his while not to be natural with every one, according to his humor. He was wrong, no doubt, in fancying that Corona had deserted him. But he had already suffered a loss in Maria Consuelo, which had at the time seemed the greatest conceivable; and the pain he had suffered then, together with

the deep though unacknowledged wound to his vanity, had predisposed him to believe that he was destined to be friendless. The consequence was that a very slight break in the perfect understanding which had so long existed between him and his mother had produced serious results. He now felt that he was completely alone, and, like most lonely men of sound character, he acquired the habit of keeping his troubles entirely to himself, while affecting an almost unnaturally quiet and equable manner with those about him. On the whole, he found that his life was easier when he lived it on this principle. He found that he was more careful in his actions since he had a part to sustain, and that his opinion carried more weight since he expressed it more cautiously and seemed less liable to fluctuations of mood and temper. The change in his character was more apparent than real, perhaps, as changes in character generally are when not in the way of logical development; but the constant thought of appearances reacts upon the inner nature in the end, and much which at first is only put on becomes a habit next, and ends by taking the place of an impulse.

Orsino was aware that his chief pre-occupation was identical with that which absorbed his mother's thoughts. He wished to free himself from the business in which he was so deeply involved, and which still prospered so strangely in spite of the general ruin. But here the community of ideas ended. He wished to free himself in his own way, without humiliating himself by going to his father for help. Meanwhile, too, Sant' Ilario himself had his doubts concerning his own judgment. It was inconceivable to him that Del Ferice could be losing money to oblige Orsino; and if he had desired to ruin him, he could have done so with ease a hundred times in the past months. It might be, he said to himself, that Orsino had, after all, a surprising genius for affairs, and

had weathered the storm in the face of tremendous difficulties. Orsino saw the belief growing in his father's mind, and the certainty that it was there did not dispose him to throw up the fight and acknowledge himself beaten.

The Saracinesca were one of the very few Roman families in which there is a tradition in favor of non-interference with the action of children already of age. The consequence was that, although the old prince and Giovanni and his wife all felt considerable anxiety, they did nothing to hamper Orsino's action beyond an occasionally repeated warning to be careful. That his occupation was distasteful to them they did not conceal; but he met their expressions of opinion with perfect equanimity and outward good humor, even when his mother, once his staunch ally, openly advised him to give up business and travel for a year. Their prejudice was certainly not unnatural, and had been strengthened by the perusal of the unsavory details published by the papers at each new bankruptcy during the year. But they found Orsino now always the same, always quiet, good-humored, and firm in his projects.

Andrea Contini had not been very exact in his calculation of the date at which the last door and the last window would be placed in the last of the houses which he and Orsino had undertaken to build. The disturbance in business might account for the delay. At all events, it was late in April of the following year before the work was completed. Then Orsino went to Del Ferice.

"Of course," he said, maintaining the appearance of calm which had now become habitual with him, "I cannot expect to pay what I owe the bank unless I can effect a sale of these buildings. You have known that all along, as well as I. The question is, can they be sold?"

"You have no applicant, then?" Del Ferice looked grave and somewhat surprised.

"No. We have received no offer."

"You owe the bank a very large sum on these buildings, Don Orsino."

"Secured by mortgages on them," answered the young man quietly, but preparing for trouble.

"Just so, — secured by mortgages. But if the bank should foreclose within the next few months, and if the buildings do not realize the amount secured, Contini and Company are liable for the difference."

"I know that."

"And the market is very bad, Don Orsino, and shows no signs of improvement."

"On the other hand, the houses are finished, habitable, and can be let immediately."

"They are certainly finished. You must be aware that the bank has continued to advance the sums necessary for two reasons: first, because an expensive but habitable dwelling is better than a cheap one with no roof; second, because in doing business with Andrea Contini and Company we have been dealing with the only really honest and economical firm in Rome."

Orsino smiled vaguely, but said nothing. He had not much faith in Del Ferice's flattery.

"But that," continued the latter, "does not dispense us from the necessity of realizing what is owing to us, — I mean the bank, — either in money or in an equivalent. Or in an equivalent," he repeated thoughtfully, rolling a big silver pencil-case backward and forward upon the table, under his fat white hand.

"Evidently," assented Orsino. "Unfortunately, at the present time there seems to be no equivalent for ready money."

"No, no, perhaps not," said Ugo, apparently becoming more and more absorbed in his own thoughts. "And yet," he added, after a little pause, "an arrangement may be possible. The houses certainly possess advantages over much

of this wretched property which is thrown upon the market. The position is good and the work is good. Your work is very good, Don Orsino. You know that better than I. Yes, the houses have advantages, I admit. The bank has a great deal of waste masonry on its hands, Don Orsino, — more than I like to think of.”

“Unfortunately, again, the time for improving such property is gone by.”

“‘It is never too late to mend,’ says the proverb,” retorted Del Ferice, with a smile. “I have a proposition to make. I will state it clearly. If it is not to our mutual advantage, I think neither of us will lose so much by it as we should lose in other ways. It is simply this: we will cry quits. You have a small account current with the bank, and you must sacrifice the credit balance. It is not much, I find, — about thirty-five thousand.”

“That was chiefly the profit on the first contract,” observed Orsino.

“Precisely. It will help to cover the bank’s loss on this. It will help, because, when I say we will cry quits, I mean that you shall receive an equivalent for your houses; a nominal equivalent, of course, which the bank nominally takes back as payment of the mortgages.”

“That is not very clear,” said Orsino. “I do not understand you.”

“No,” laughed Del Ferice, “I admit that it is not. It represents rather my own view of the transaction than the practical side. But I will explain myself beyond the possibility of mistake. The bank takes the houses and your cash balance and cancels the mortgages. You are then released from all debt and all obligation upon the old contract. But the bank makes one condition which is important. You must buy from the bank, on mortgage of course, certain unfinished buildings which it now owns; and you, Andrea Contini and Company, must take a contract to complete them

within a given time, — the bank advancing you money, as before, upon notes of hand, secured by subsequent and successive mortgages.”

Orsino was silent. He saw that if he accepted, Del Ferice was receiving the work of a whole year and more without allowing the smallest profit to the workers, besides absorbing the profits of a previous successfully executed contract, and besides taking it for granted that the existing mortgages only just covered the value of the buildings. If, as was probable, Del Ferice had means of either selling or letting the houses, he would make an enormous profit. He saw, too, that if he accepted now, he must, in all likelihood, be driven to accept similar conditions on a future occasion, and that he would be binding Andrea Contini and himself to work, and to work hard, for nothing, and perhaps during years. But he saw also that the only alternative was an appeal to his father, or bankruptcy, which ultimately meant the same thing. Del Ferice spoke again.

“Whether you agree or whether you prefer a foreclosure, we shall both lose. But we should lose more by the latter course. In the interests of the bank, I trust that you will accept. You see how frankly I speak about it, — in the interests of the bank. But then, I need not remind you that it would hardly be fair to let us lose heavily, when you can make the loss relatively a slight one, considering how the bank has behaved to you, and to you alone, throughout this fatal year.”

“I will give you an answer to-morrow,” said Orsino.

He thought of poor Contini, who would find that he had worked for nothing during a whole year. But it would be easy for Orsino to give Contini a sum of money out of his private resources. Anything was better than giving up the struggle and applying to his father.

*F. Marion Crawford.*

## SOCIOLOGY IN THE HIGHER EDUCATION OF WOMEN.

THE recent and rapid development of the higher education of women is one of the remarkable changes of our generation. Colleges less than twenty years old now count their students far into the hundreds, while they reject almost as many candidates as they receive. Their graduates can already be found in nearly every country town, and are numerous enough in cities to form associations of their own.

This movement has a profound interest for the student of society. It raises questions like these: What proportions is it yet to take on? What are all these women going to do? What will be the ultimate effect upon the sex and upon society? How shall its results be made most beneficial? Is the higher education of women to continue along its present line of development? If not, then in what direction is the change likely to lead us? Are there any indications now that will reward our attention?

On some of these points there is little need of concern. Things are taking their own course. Many college-trained women are teaching for a time or permanently. Our secondary schools are thereby gaining better teachers. Young women of inferior training, and even young men, are compelled to give place to the better educated college women. In this way, the schools, if we leave out of the account the question of the advantage of the employment of both sexes in the work of instruction, have profited by the higher education of women.

There are, however, limits to work of this sort, and to the opportunities in libraries, literary work, and medicine. There remain marriage and the life of the home and of society, which will absorb the larger part of educated women as a matter of course. For it is inevitable that most educated women of all

classes will become wives and mothers as surely as most educated men will marry and become fathers of children. If it were otherwise, the enthusiastic advocate of the higher education would join every true friend of humanity in lamenting the condition of things. And, on the whole, the entrance into society of a large number of educated women must be a very great advantage. Home life, too, ought to be the gainer from the movement.

But it is to other phases of our subject that attention should be directed. The bearing of education on the mere occupations of women, though important, is, after all, of secondary concern. The education of either sex that ends in fitting one for a trade or a profession or vocation of any sort, without doing more, is sadly defective. If it does not, even while it is practical in immediate object, make the subject of it more of a man or more of a woman, it is little less than a failure. We are accustomed to say, also, that the education of the schools is a success just in proportion as it brings out the inner resources and powers of the student, and gives them such impulse and direction that the work of education is continued through life, no matter where one is put or what he is called upon to do. Results of this kind are signs of the highest order of educational work; for such training makes life a continuous process of self-discovery and self-development.

All this is of course familiar truth among educators of experience, but my reference to it will lead the way to some principles that directly concern our study of the subject before us. If education, looking at its effect upon the student, be the projection into life of the work of self-discovery and self-development, certain important consequences follow.