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## THE BROTHER AND SISTER. AN ITALIAN STORY.

"I never thought, count Fabian, to stand beneath your roof, and much less to approach you as a suitor. But that Supreme Power, to whose decrees we must all bend, has reduced me to such adversity as, if it be his will, may also visit you, notwithstanding the many friends that now surround you, and the sunshine of prosperity in which you bask. I stand here a banished man and a beggar. Nor do I repine at this my fate. Most willing am I that my right arm alone should create my fortunes; and, with the blessing of God, I hope so to direct my course, that we may yet meet upon more equal terms. In this hope, I turn my steps, not unwillingly, from this city; dear as its name is to my heart—and dear the associations which link its proud towers with the memory of my forefathers. I leave it a soldier of fortune; how I may return is written in the page where your unread destiny is traced as well as mine. But my care ends not with myself. My doing father bequeathed to me this child, my orphan sister, whom I have, until now, watched over with a parent's love. I should ill perform the part intrusted to me, were I to drag this tender blossom from its native bower into the highway of life. Lord Fabian, I can count no man my friend; for it would seem that your smiles have won the hearts of my fellow citizens from me; and death and exile have so dealt with my house, through the intervention of yours, that not one of my name exists within the walls of Sienna. To you alone can I intrust this precious charge. Will you accept it until called upon to render it back to me, her brother, or to the juster hands of our Creator, pure and untarnished as I now deliver her into your? I ask you to protect her helplessness, to guard her honor; will you—dare you accept a treasure, with the assurance of restoring it unsullied, unharmed?"

The deep expressive voice of the noble youth and his earnest eloquence enchanted the ears of the whole assembly; and when he ceased, Fabian, proud of the appeal, and nothing loth in the buoyant spirit of youth to undertake a charge which, thus proffered before his assembled kinsmen and friends, became an honor, answered readily—"I agree, and solemnly before Heaven accept your offer. I declare myself the guardian and protector of your sister; she shall dwell in safety beneath my kind mother's care, and if the saints permit your return, she shall be delivered back to you as spotless as she now is."

Lorenzo bowed his head; something choked his utterance as he thought that he was about to part for ever from his Flora; but he disdained to betray his weakness before his enemies. He took his sister's hand and gazed upon her slight girlish form with a look of earnest fondness, then murmuring a blessing over her, and kissing her brow, he again saluted count Fabian, and turning away with measured steps and lofty mien, left the hall. Flora, scarcely understanding what had passed, stood trembling and weeping under her veil. She yielded her passive hand to Fabian, who, leading her to his mother, said: "Madam, I ask of your goodness, and the maternal indulgence you have ever shown, to assist me in fulfilling my promise to yonder stripling, by taking under your gracious charge this young orphan."

"You command here, my son," said the countess, "and your will shall be obeyed." Then making a sign to one of her attendants, Flora was conducted from the hall to where, in solitude and silence, she wept over her brother's departure, and her own strange and humiliating position.

Flora thus became an inmate of the dwelling of her ancestral foes, and the ward of her most bitter enemy. Lorenzo was gone she knew not whither, and her only pleasure consisted in reflecting that she was obeying his behests. Her life was uniform and tranquil. Her occupation was working tapestry, in which she displayed taste and skill. Sometimes she had the more mortifying task imposed on her of waiting on the countess de Tolomei, who, having lost two brothers in the last contest with the Mancini, nourished a deep hatred towards the whole race, and never smiled on the luckless orphan. Flora submitted to every command imposed upon her. She was buoyed up by the reflection that her sufferings were imposed on her by Lorenzo; schooling herself in any moment of impatience by the idea that thus she shared his adversity. No murmur escaped her, though the pride and independence of her nature were often cruelly offended by the taunts and supercilious airs of her patroness or mistress, who was not a bad woman, but who thought it a virtue to ill-treat a Mancini. Often, indeed, she neither heard nor heeded these things. Her thoughts were far away, and grief for the loss of her brother's society weighed too heavily on her to allow her to spend more than a passing sigh on her personal injuries.

The countess was unkind and disdainful, but it was not thus with Flora's companions. They were amiable and affectionate girls, either of the bourgeois class, or daughters of dependants of the house of Tolomei. The

length of time which had elapsed since the overthrow of the Mancini, had crased from their young minds the bitter day of hatred, and it was impossible for them to live on terms of daily intercourse with the orphan daughter of this ill-fated race, and not to become strongly attached to her. She was wholly devoid of selfishness, and content to perform her daily tasks in inoffensive silence. She had no envy, no wish to shine, no desire of pleasure. She was nevertheless ever ready to sympathize with her companions, and glad to have it in her power to administer to their happiness. To help them in the manufacture of some piece of finery; to assist them in their work; and, perfectly prudent and reserved herself, to listen to all their sentimental adventures; to give her best advice, and to aid them in any difficulty, were the simple means she used to win their unsophisticated hearts. They called her an angel; they looked up to her as to a saint, and in their hearts respected her more than the countess herself. O! no only subject ever disturbed Flora's serene melancholy. The praises she perpetually heard lavished on count Fabian, her brother's too successful rival and oppressor, was an unendurable addition to her many griefs. Content with her own obscurity, her ambition, her pride, her aspiring thoughts were spent upon her brother. She hated count Fabian as Lorenzo's destroyer, and the cause of his unhappy and hazardous exile. His accomplishments she despised as painted vanities; his person she contemned as the opposite of his prototype. His blue eyes, clear and open as day; his fair complexion and light brown hair; his slight elegant person; his voice, whose tones in song won each listener's heart the tenderness and love; his wit, his perpetual flow of spirits, and unalterable good humor, were impertinences and frivolities to her who cherished with such dear worship the recollection of her serious, ardent, noble-hearted brother, whose soul was ever set on high thoughts, and devoted to acts of virtue and self-sacrifice; whose fortitude and affectionate courtesy seemed to her the crown and glory of manhood; how different from the trifling flippancy of the butterfly, Fabian! "Name an eagle," she would say, "and we raise our eyes to Heaven, there to behold a creature fashioned in Nature's bounty; but it is a degradation to waste one thought on the insect of a day." Some speech similar to this had been kindly reported to the young count's lady mother, who idolized her son as the ornament and delight of his age and country. She severely reprimanded the incautious Flora, who, for the first time, listened proudly and unyieldingly. From this period her situation grew more irksome; all she could do was to endeavor to withdraw herself entirely from observation, and to brood in deeper secrecy over the persecutions, while she lamented yet more feelingly the absence of her brother.

Two or three years thus flew away, and Flora grew from a childish looking girl of twelve into the bewitching beauty of fifteen. She unclosed like a flower, whose fairest petals are yet shut, but whose half-veiled loveliness is yet more attractive. It was at this time that an occasion of doing honor to a prince of France, who was passing on to Naples, the countess Tolomei and her son, with a bevy of friends and followers, went out to meet and to escort the royal traveller on his way. Assembled in the hall of the palace, and waiting for the arrival of some of their number, count Fabian went round his mother's circle, saying agreeable and merry things to all. Wherever his cheerful blue eyes lighted, their smiles were awakened, and each young heart beat with vanity at his harmless flatteries. After a gallant speech or two he espied Flora, retired behind her companions.

"What flower is this," he said, "playing at hide and seek with her beauty?" And then, struck with the modest sweetness of her aspect, her eyes cast down, and a rosy blush mantling over her cheek, he added, "What fair angel makes one of your company?"

"An angel indeed, my lord," exclaimed one of the younger girls, who dearly loved her best friend; "she is Flora Mancini."

"Mancini!" exclaimed Fabian, while his manner became at once respectful and kind: "are you the orphan daughter of Ugo—the sister of Lorenzo, committed by him to my care?" For since then, through her careful avoidance, Fabian had never even seen his fair ward. She bowed an assent to his questions, while her swelling heart denied her speech; and Fabian, going up to his mother, said, "Madam, I hope for our honor's sake this has not before happened. The adverse fortune of this young lady may render retirement and obscurity belittling; but it is not for us to turn into a menial, one sprung from the best blood in Italy. Let me entreat you not to permit this to occur again. How shall I redeem my pledged honor, or answer to her brother for this unworthy degradation?"

"Would you have me make a friend and a companion of a Mancini?" asked the countess, with raised colour.

"I ask you not, mother, to do aught displeasing to you," replied the young noble; "but Flora is my ward, not our servant."

permit her to retire; she will probably prefer the privacy of home, to making one among the festive crowd of her house's enemies. If not, let the choice be her's—Say, gentle one, will you go with us or retire?"

She did not speak, but raising her soft eyes, curtisied to him and to his mother, and quitted the room; so tacitly making her selection.

From this time Flora never quitted the more secluded apartments of the palace, nor again saw Fabian. She was unaware that he had been profuse in his eulogium on her beauty; but that while frequently expressing his interest in his ward, he rather avoided the dangerous power of her loveliness. She led rather a prison life, walking only in the palace garden when it was also deserted, but otherwise her time was at her own disposal, and no commands interfered with her freedom. Her labors were all spontaneous. The countess seldom even saw her, and she lived among this lady's attendants like a free boarder in a convent, who cannot quit the walls, but who is not subservient to the rules of the asylum. She was more busy than ever at her tapestry frame, because the countess prized her work; and thus she could in some degree repay the protection afforded her. She never mentioned Fabian, and always imposed silence on her companions when they spoke of him. But she did this in no disrespectful terms. "He is a generous enemy, I acknowledge," she would say, "but still he is my enemy, and while through him my brother is an exile and a wanderer upon earth, it is painful to me to hear his name."

After the lapse of many months spent in entire seclusion and tranquillity, a change occurred in the tenor of her life. The countess suddenly resolved to pass the Easter festival at Rome. Flora's companions were wild with joy at the prospect of the journey, the novelty, and the entertainment they promised themselves from this visit, and pitied the dignity of their friend, which prevented her from making one of their mistress's train; for it was soon understood that Flora was to be left behind; and she was informed that the interval of the lady's absence was to be passed by her in a villa belonging to the family situated in a sequestered nook among the neighboring Apennines.

The countess departed in pomp and pride on her so called pilgrimage to the sacred city, and at the same time Flora was conveyed to her rural retreat. The villa was inhabited only by the peasant and his family, who cultivated the farm, or podere, attached to it, and the old cassier or housekeeper. The cheerfulness and freedom of the country were delightful, and the entire solitude consonant to the habits of the meditative girl, and the intrusive prattle of her associates. Spring was opening with all the beauty which that season showers upon favored Italy; while blights and chilling rain usually characterize it in these northern lands. The almond and peach trees were in blossom; and the vine-dresser sang at his work, perched with his pruning knife among the trees. Blossoms and flowers, in laughing plenty, graced the soil; and the trees, swelling with buds ready to expand into leaves, seemed to feel the life that animated their dark old boughs. Flora was enchanted; the country labors interested her, and the hoarded experience of old Sandra was a treasure-house of wisdom and amusement. Her attention had hitherto been directed to giving the most vivid hues and truest imitation to her transcript with her needle of some picture given her as a model; but here was a novel occupation. She learned the history of the bees, watched the habits of the birds, and inquired into the culture of plants. Sandra was delighted with her new companion; and, though notorious for being cross, yet could wriggle her antique limbs into smiles for Flora.

To repay the kindness of her guardian and his mother, she still devoted much time to her needle. This occupation but engaged half her attention; and while she pursued it, she could give herself up to endless reverie on the subject of Lorenzo's fortunes. Three years had flown since he had left her; and, except a little gold cross brought to her by a pilgrim from Milan, but one month after his departure, she had received no tidings of him. Whether from Milan he had proceeded to France, Germany, or the Holy Land, she did not know; by turns her fancy led him to either of these places, and fashioned the course of events that might have befallen him. She figured to herself his toil-some journeys—his life in the camp—his achievements, and the honors showered on him by kings and nobles; her cheek glowed at the praises he received, and her eye kindled with delight as it imagined him standing with modest pride and an erect but gentle mien before them. Then the fair enthusiast paused; it crossed her recollection like a shadow, that if all had gone prosperously, he had returned to share his prosperity with her, and her faltering heart turned to sadder scenes to account for his protracted absence.

Sometimes, while thus employed, she brought her work into the trellised arbour of the garden, or, when it was too warm for the open air, she had a favorite shady win-

dow, which looked down a deep ravine into a majestic wood, whence the sound of falling water met her ears. One day, while she employed her fingers upon the spirited likeness of a hound which made a part of the hunting piece she was working for the countess, a sharp, wailing cry suddenly broke on her ear, followed by trampling of horses and the hurried steps and loud vociferations of men. They entered the villa on the opposite side from that which her window commanded; but the noise continuing, she rose to ask the reason, when Sandra burst into the room, crying, "O Madonna! he is dead! come and help him—he has been thrown from his horse, and he will never speak more." Flora, for an instant, could only think of her brother, as if expecting to see him stretched on his bier. She rushed past the old woman, down into the great hall, in which, lying on a rude litter of boughs, she beheld the inanimate body of count Fabian. He was surrounded by servants and peasants, who were all clasping their hands and tearing their hair, as, with frightful shrieks, they pressed round their lord, not one of them endeavoring to restore him to life. Flora's first impulse was to retire; but, casting a second glance on the livid brow of the young count, she saw his eyelids move, and the blood falling in quick drops on the pavement; she exclaimed, "He is not dead—he bleeds! hasten some of you for a leech!" And meanwhile she hurried to get some water, sprinkled it on his face, and, dispersing the group that hung over him and impeded the free air, the soft breeze playing on his forehead revived him, and he gave manifest tokens of life; so that when the physician arrived, he found that, though he was seriously and even dangerously hurt, every hope might be entertained of his recovery.

Flora undertook the office of his nurse, and fulfilled its duties with unwearied attention. She watched him by night and waited on him by day with that spirit of Christian humility and benevolence which animates a Sister of Charity as she tends the sick. For several days Fabian's soul seemed on the wing to quit its earthly abode; and the state of weakness that followed his insensibility was scarcely less alarming. At length, he recognized and acknowledged the care of Flora, but she alone possessed any power to calm and guide him during the state of irritability and fever that then ensued. Nothing except her presence controlled his impatience; before her he was so lamb-like, that she could scarcely have credited the accounts that others gave her of his violence, but that, whenever she returned, after leaving him for any time, she heard his voice far off in anger, and found him with flushed cheeks and flashing eyes, all which demonstrations subsided into meek acquiescence when she drew near.

In a few weeks he was able to quit his room; but the motion of his horse was forbidden him, and any noise or sudden sound drove him almost insane. So loud is an Italian's quietest movements, that Flora was obliged to prevent the approach of any except herself; and her soft voice and noiseless footsteps were the sweetest medicine she could administer to her patient. It was painful to her to be in perpetual attendance on Lorenzo's rival and foe, but she subdued her heart to her duty, and custom helped to reconcile her. As he grew better, she could not help remarking the intelligence of his countenance, and the kindness and cordiality of his manners. There was an unobtrusive and delicate attention and care in his intercourse with her that won her to be pleased. When he conversed, his discourse was full of entertainment and variety. His memory was well stored with numerous *fabliaux*, *novelle*, and romances, which he quickly discovered to be highly interesting to her, and so contrived to have one always ready from the exhausted stock he possessed. These romantic stories reminded her of the imaginary adventures she had invented, in solitude and silence, for her brother; and each tale of forcing countries had a peculiar charm, which animated her face as she listened, so that Fabian could have gone on for ever, only to mark the varying expression of her countenance as he proceeded. Yet she acknowledged these attractions in him as a Catholic nun may the specious virtues of a heretic; and, while he contrived each day to increase the pleasure she derived from his society, she satisfied her conscience with regard to her brother by cherishing in secret a little quiet stock of family hate, and by throwing over her manners, whenever she could recollect to do so, a cold and ceremonious tone, which she had the pleasure of seeing vexed him heartily.

Nearly two months had passed, and he was so well recovered, that Flora began to wonder that he did not return to Sienna, and of course to fulfil her duty by wishing that he should; and yet, while his cheek was sunk through past sickness, and his elastic step grown slow, she, as a nurse desirous of completing her good work, felt averse to his entering too soon on the scene of the busy town and its noisy pleasures. At length, two or three of his friends having come over to see him, he agreed to return with them to the city. A significant glance which they cast on

his young nurse probably determined him. He parted from her with a grave courtesy, and profusion of thanks, unlike his usual manner, and rode off without alighting to any probability of their meeting again.

She fancied that she was relieved from a burden when he went, and was surprised to find that her thoughts no longer spent themselves so spontaneously on her brother, and to feel that the occupation of a few weeks could unclutter her mind and dissipate her cherished reveries; thus, while she felt at variance from the absence of Fabian, she hated him the more for having, in addition to his other misdeeds, invaded the sanctuary of her dearest thoughts. She was beginning to conquer this listlessness, and to return with renewed zest to her usual occupations, when in about a week after his departure, Fabian suddenly returned. He came upon her as she was gathering flowers for the shrine of the Madonna; and on seeing him she blushed as rosy red as the roses she held. He looked infinitely worse in health than when he went; his wan cheeks and sunk eyes excited her concern; and her earnest and kind questions somewhat revived him. He kissed her hand, and continued to stand beside her as she finished her nosegay. Had any one seen the glad, fond look with which he regarded her as she busied herself among the flowers, even old Sandra might have prognosticated his entire recovery under her care.

Flora was totally unaware of the feelings that were excited in Fabian's heart, and the struggle he made to overcome a passion too sweet and too seductive, when awakened by so lovely a being, ever to be subdued. He had been struck with her some time ago, and avoided her. It was through his suggestion that she passed the period of the countess's pilgrimage in this secluded villa; nor had he thought of visiting her there; but, riding over one day to inquire concerning a foal rearing for him, his horse had thrown him, and caused him that injury which had made him so long the inmate of the same abode. Already prepared to admire her—her kindness, her gentleness, and her unwearied patience during his illness, easily conquered a heart most ready and yet most unwilling to yield. He had returned to Sienna resolved to forget her; but he came back assured that his life and death were in her hands.

[To be Continued.]

Much of the disease of London is attributed to the mal-practices of the bakers in the manufacturing of their bread. An expose has been made by one acquainted with the secrets of the trade, in which it is stated it is a common practice to mix pulverised pumice stone with the flour, and the estimated consumption of alum by them is 700,000 lbs per annum; enough in fact, to drain up the whole metropolis.

Horrible.—The New York Whig, of Tuesday relates the following most appalling outrage—

Last evening a man who keeps a sailor boarding house in Water street, and who had been absent from home during the day, returned to his family about 7 o'clock, and through a fit of insanity, or jealousy, upset the table and chairs, and knocked down his wife, who at the time held in her arms a child but a few weeks old. He then proceeded to break the decanters, and flung one at his wife as she lay stupefied on the ground. He then tore the infant from the breast of its mother, and after treating it in a barbarous manner for some time, seized it by the leg, and knocked its brains out against the walls of the house. We understand that he has been apprehended. It is said that he committed this rash deed in consequence of jealousy of his wife.

Free Trade.—The man is still alive and in vigorous health, who commenced a schooner of one hundred and twenty tons in the trade between New York and Liverpool, when that schooner was the only American vessel in that trade. In the year 1819 the ship *Stephanian* was built for the trade to Havre, measuring three hundred and fifteen tons.—This was thought to be an extravagant size, but now we see the ships launched for the Havre trade are seven hundred tons.—*N. Y. Jour. Com.*

Sore Oppression.—The benevolent Matthew Carey states the following fact:

"The Ladies will, I hope, pardon me for an observation which applies to some of them, but I hope to only a few. I have known a lady to expend a hundred dollars on a party; pay thirty or forty dollars for a bonnet, and fifty for a shawl; and yet make a hard bargain with the seamstress or washerwoman, who had to work at the needle or at the washing tub for thirteen or fourteen hours a day to make a bare livelihood for herself and a numerous family of small children." This is a sore oppression under the sun, and ought to be relieved by every honorable mind.—Let it be reformed altogether.

The philosopher Bacon said pleasantly of the king, who by himself pulled the hair off his head for sorrow, "Does this man think that baldness is a remedy for grief?"