"You are frank, at all events," said Orsino, turning from the window and facing his father.

"Most of us are in this house," answered Sant' Ilario. "That will make it all the harder for you to deal with the scoundrels who call themselves men of business."

"I mean to try this, father," said the young man. "I will go and see San Giacinto, as you suggest, and I will ask his opinion. But if he discourages me I will try my luck all the same. I cannot lead this life any longer. I want an occupation and I will make one for myself."

"It is not an occupation that you want, Orsino. It is another excitement. That is all. If you want an occupation, study, learn something, find out what work means. Or go to Saracinesca and build houses for the peasants—you will do no harm there, at all events. Go and drain that land in Lombardy—I can do nothing with it and would sell it if I could. But that is not what you want. You want an excitement for the hours of the morning. Very well. You will probably find more of it than you like. Try it, that is all I have to say."

Like many very just men Giovanni could state a case with alarming unfairness when thoroughly convinced that he was right. Orsino stood still for a moment and then walked towards the door without another word. His father called him back.

"What is it?" asked Orsino coldly.

Sant' Ilario held out his hand with a kindly look in his eyes.

"I do not want you to think that I am angry, my boy. There is to be no ill feeling between us about this."

"None whatever," said the young man, though without much alacrity, as he shook hands with his father. "I see you are not angry. You do not understand me, that is all."

He went out, more disappointed with the result of the interview than he had expected, though he had not looked forward to receiving any encouragement. He had known very well what his father's views were but

he had not foreseen that he would be so much irritated by the expression of them. His determination hardened and he resolved that nothing should hinder him. But he was both willing and ready to consult San Giacinto, and went to the latter's house immediately on leaving Sant' Ilario's study.

As for Giovanni, he was dimly conscious that he had made a mistake, though he did not care to acknowledge it. He was a good horseman and he was aware that he would have used a very different method with a restive colt. But few men are wise enough to see that there is only one universal principle to follow in the exertion of strength, moral or physical; and instead of seeking analogies out of actions familiar to them as a means of accomplishing the unfamiliar, they try to discover new theories of motion at every turn and are led farther and farther from the right line by their own desire to reach the end quickly.

"At all events," thought Sant' Ilario, "the boy's new hobby will take him to places where he is not likely to meet that woman."

And with this discourteous reflection upon Madame d'Aranjuez he consoled himself. He did not think it necessary to tell Corona of Orsino's intentions, simply because he did not believe that they would lead to anything serious, and there was no use in disturbing her unnecessarily with visions of future annoyance. If Orsino chose to speak of it to her, he was at liberty to do so.

CHAPTER X.

Orsino went directly to San Giacinto's house, and found him in the room which he used for working and in which he received the many persons whom he was often obliged to see on business. The giant was alone and was seated behind a broad polished table, occupied in writing.

Orsino was struck by the extremely orderly arrangement of everything he saw. Papers were tied together in bundles of exactly like shape, which lay in two lines of mathematical precision. The big inkstand was just in the middle of the rows and a paper-cutter, a pen-rack and an erasing knife lay side by side in front of it. The walls were lined with low book-cases of a heavy and severe type, filled principally with documents neatly filed in volumes and marked on the back in San Giacinto's clear handwriting. The only object of beauty in the room was a full-length portrait of Flavia by a great artist, which hung above the fireplace. The rigid symmetry of everything was made imposing by the size of the objects—the table was larger than ordinary tables, the easy-chairs were deeper, broader and lower than common, the inkstand was bigger, even the penholder in San Giacinto's fingers was longer and thicker than any Orsino had ever seen. And yet the latter felt that there was no affectation about all this. The man to whom these things belonged and who used them daily was himself created on a scale larger than other men.

Though he was older than Sant' Ilario and was, in fact, not far from sixty years of age San Giacinto might easily have passed for less than fifty. There was hardly a grey thread in his short, thick, black hair, and he was still as lean and strong, and almost as active, as he had been thirty years earlier. The large features were perhaps a little more bony and the eyes somewhat deeper than they had been, but these changes lent an air of dignity rather than of age to the face.

He rose to meet Orsino and then made him sit down beside the table. The young man suddenly felt an unaccountable sense of inferiority and hesitated as to how he should begin.

"I suppose you want to consult me about something," said San Giacinto quietly.

"Yes. I want to ask your advice, if you will give it to me—about a matter of business."

"Willingly. What is it?"

Orsino was silent for a moment and stared at the wall. He was conscious that the very small sum of which he could dispose must seem even smaller in the eyes of such a man, but this did not disturb him. He was oppressed by San Giacinto's personality and prepared himself to speak as though he had been a student undergoing oral examination. He stated his case plainly, when he at last spoke. He was of age and he looked forward with dread to an idle life. All careers were closed to him. He had fifteen thousand francs in his pocket. Could San Giacinto help him to occupy himself by investing the sum in a building speculation? Was the sum sufficient as a beginning? Those were the questions.

San Giacinto did not laugh as Sant' Ilario had done. He listened very attentively to the end and then deliberately offered Orsino a cigar and lit one himself, before he delivered his answer.

"You are asking the same question which is put to me very often," he said at last. "I wish I could give you any encouragement. I cannot."

Orsino's face fell, for the reply was categorical. He drew back a little in his chair, but said nothing.

"That is my answer," continued San Giacinto thoughtfully, "but when one says 'no' to another the subject is not necessarily exhausted. On the contrary, in such a case as this I cannot let you go without giving you my reasons. I do not care to give my views to the public, but such as they are, you are welcome to them. The time is past. That is why I advise you to have nothing to do with any speculation of this kind. That is the best of all reasons."

"But you yourself are still engaged in this business," objected Orsino.

"Not so deeply as you fancy. I have sold almost everything which I do not consider a certainty, and am selling what little I still have as fast as I can. In speculation there are only two important moments—the

moment to buy and the moment to sell. In my opinion this is the time to sell, and I do not think that the time for buying will come again without a crisis."

"But everything is in such a flourishing state——"

"No doubt it is—to-day. But no one can tell what state business will be in next week, nor even to-morrow."

"There is Del Ferice——"

"No doubt, and a score like him," answered San Giacinto, looking quietly at Orsino. "Del Ferice is a banker, and I am a speculator, as you wish to be. His position is different from ours. It is better to leave him out of the question. Let us look at the matter logically. You wish to speculate——"

"Excuse me," said Orsino, interrupting him. "I want to try what I can do in business."

"You wish to risk money, in one way or another. You therefore wish one or more of three things—money for its own sake, excitement or occupation. I can hardly suppose that you want money. Eliminate that. Excitement is not a legitimate aim, and you can get it more safely in other ways. Therefore you want occupation."

"That is precisely what I said at the beginning," observed Orsino with a shade of irritation.

"Yes. But I like to reach my conclusions in my own way. You are then a young man in search of an occupation. Speculation, and what you propose is nothing else, is no more an occupation than playing at the public lottery and much less one than playing at baccarat. There at least you are responsible for your own mistakes and in decent society you are safe from the machinations of dishonest people. That would matter less if the chances were in your favour, as they might have been a year ago and as they were in mine from the beginning. They are against you now, because it is too late, and they are against me. I would as soon buy a piece of land on credit at the present moment, as give

the whole sum in cash to the first man I met in the street."

"Yet there is Montevarchi who still buys——"

"Montevarchi is not worth the paper on which he signs his name," said San Giacinto calmly.

Orsino uttered an exclamation of surprise and incredulity.

"You may tell him so, if you please," answered the giant with perfect indifference. "If you tell any one what I have said, please to tell him first, that is all. He will not believe you. But in six months he will know it, I fancy, as well as I know it now. He might have doubled his fortune, but he was and is totally ignorant of business. He thought it enough to invest all he could lay hands on and that the returns would be sure. He has invested forty millions and owns property which he believes to be worth sixty, but which will not bring ten in six months, and those remaining ten millions he owes on all manner of paper, on mortgages on his original property, in a dozen ways which he has forgotten himself."

"I do not see how that is possible!" exclaimed Orsino.

"I am a plain man, Orsino, and I am your cousin. You may take it for granted that I am right. Do not forget that I was brought up in a hand-to-hand struggle for fortune such as you cannot dream of. When I was your age I was a practical man of business, and I had taught myself, and it was all on such a small scale that a mistake of a hundred francs made the difference between profit and loss. I dislike details, but I have been a man of detail all my life, by force of circumstances. Successful business implies the comprehension of details. It is tedious work, and if you mean to try it you must begin at the beginning. You ought to do so. There is an enormous business before you, with considerable capabilities in it. If I were in your place, I would take what fell naturally to my lot."

"What is that?"

"Farming. They call it agriculture in parliament, because they do not know what farming means. The men who think that Italy can live without farmers are fools. We are not a manufacturing people any more than we are a business people. The best dictator for us would be a practical farmer, a ploughman like Cincinnatus. Nobody who has not tried to raise wheat on an Italian mountain-side knows the great difficulties or the great possibilities of our country. Do you know that bad as our farming is, and absurd as is our system of land taxation, we are food exporters, to a small extent? The beginning is there. Take my advice, be a farmer. Manage one of the big estates you have amongst you for five or six years. You will not do much good to the land in that time, but you will learn what land really means. Then go into parliament and tell people facts. That is an occupation and a career as well, which cannot be said of speculation in building lots, large or small. If you have any ready money keep it in government bonds until you have a chance of buying something worth keeping."

Orsino went away disappointed and annoyed. San Giacinto's talk about farming seemed very dull to him. To bury himself for half a dozen years in the country in order to learn the rotation of crops and the principles of land draining did not present itself as an attractive career. If San Giacinto thought farming the great profession of the future, why did he not try it himself? Orsino dismissed the idea rather indignantly, and his determination to try his luck became stronger by the opposition it met. Moreover he had expected very different language from San Giacinto, whose sober view jarred on Orsino's enthusiastic impulse.

But he now found himself in considerable difficulty. He was ignorant even of the first steps to be taken, and knew no one to whom he could apply for information. There was Prince Montevarchi indeed, who though he was San Giacinto's brother-in-law, seemed by the latter's

account to have got into trouble. He did not understand how San Giacinto could allow his wife's brother to ruin himself without lending him a helping hand, but San Giacinto was not the kind of man of whom people ask indiscreet questions, and Orsino had heard that the two men were not on the best of terms. Possibly good advice had been offered and refused. Such affairs generally end in a breach of friendship. However that might be, Orsino would not go to Montevarchi.

He wandered aimlessly about the streets, and the money seemed to burn in his pocket, though he had carefully deposited it in a place of safety at home. Again and again Del Ferice's story of the carpenter and his two companions recurred to his mind. He wondered how they had set about beginning, and he wished he could ask Del Ferice himself. He could not go to the man's house, but he might possibly meet him at Maria Consuelo's. He was surprised to find that he had almost forgotten her in his anxiety to become a man of business. It was too early to call yet, and in order to kill the time he went home, got a horse from the stables and rode out into the country for a couple of hours.

At half-past five o'clock he entered the familiar little sitting-room in the hotel. Madame d'Aranjuez was alone, cutting a new book with the jewelled knife which continued to be the only object of the kind visible in the room. She smiled as Orsino entered, and she laid aside the volume as he sat down in his accustomed place.

"I thought you were not coming," she said.

"Why?"

"You always come at five. It is half-past to-day."

Orsino looked at his watch.

"Do you notice whether I come or not?" he asked.

Maria Consuelo glanced at his face, and laughed.

"What have you been doing to-day?" she asked. "That is much more interesting."

"Is it? I am afraid not. I have been listening to those disagreeable things which are called truths by the

people who say them. I have listened to two lectures delivered by two very intelligent men for my especial benefit. It seems to me that as soon as I make a good resolution it becomes the duty of sensible people to demonstrate that I am a fool."

"You are not in a good humour. Tell me all about it."

"And weary you with my grievances? No. Is Del Ferice coming this afternoon?"

"How can I tell? He does not come often."

"I thought he came almost every day," said Orsino gloomily.

He was disappointed, but Maria Consuelo did not understand what was the matter. She leaned forward in her low seat, her chin resting upon one hand, and her tawny eyes fixed on Orsino's.

"Tell me, my friend—are you unhappy? Can I do anything? Will you tell me?"

It was not easy to resist the appeal. Though the two had grown intimate of late, there had hitherto always been something cold and reserved behind her outwardly friendly manner. To-day she seemed suddenly willing to be different. Her easy, graceful attitude, her soft voice full of promised sympathy, above all the look in her strange eyes revealed a side of her character which Orsino had not suspected and which affected him in a way he could not have described.

Without hesitation he told her his story, from beginning to end, simply, without comment and without any of the cutting phrases which came so readily to his tongue on most occasions. She listened very thoughtfully to the end.

"Those things are not misfortunes," she said. "But they may be the beginnings of unhappiness. To be unhappy is worse than any misfortune. What right has your father to laugh at you? Because he never needed to do anything for himself, he thinks it absurd that his son should dislike the lazy life that is prepared for him. It is not reasonable—it is not kind!"

"Yet he means to be both, I suppose," said Orsino bitterly.

"Oh, of course! People always mean to be the soul of logic and the paragon of charity! Especially where their own children are concerned."

Maria Consuelo added the last words with more feeling than seemed justified by her sympathy for Orsino's woes. The moment was perhaps favourable for asking a leading question about herself, and her answer might have thrown light on her problematic past. But Orsino was too busy with his own troubles to think of that, and the opportunity slipped by and was lost.

"You know now why I want to see Del Ferice," he said. "I cannot go to his house. My only chance of talking to him lies here."

"And that is what brings you? You are very flattering!"

"Do not be unjust! We all look forward to meeting our friends in heaven."

"Very pretty. I forgive you. But I am afraid that you will not meet Del Ferice. I do not think he has left the Chambers yet. There was to be a debate this afternoon in which he had to speak."

"Does he make speeches?"

"Very good ones. I have heard him."

"I have never been inside the Chambers," observed Orsino.

"You are not very patriotic. You might go there and ask for Del Ferice. You could see him without going to his house—without compromising your dignity."

"Why do you laugh?"

"Because it all seems to me so absurd. You know that you are perfectly free to go and see him when and where you will. There is nothing to prevent you. He is the one man of all others whose advice you need. He has an unexceptional position in the world—no doubt he has done strange things, but so have dozens of people whom you know—his present reputation is excellent,

I say. And yet, because some twenty years ago, when you were a child, he held one opinion and your father held another, you are interdicted from crossing his threshold! If you can shake hands with him here, you can take his hand in his own house. Is not that true?"

"Theoretically, I daresay, but not in practice. You see it yourself. You have chosen one side from the first, and all the people on the other side know it. As a foreigner, you are not bound to either, and you can know everybody in time, if you please. Society is not so prejudiced as to object to that. But because you begin with the Del Ferice in a very uncompromising way, it would take a long time for you to know the Montevarchi, for instance."

"Who told you that I was a foreigner?" asked Maria Consuelo, rather abruptly.

"You yourself——"

"That is good authority!" She laughed. "I do not remember—ah! because I do not speak Italian? You mean that? One may forget one's own language, or for that matter one may never have learned it."

"Are you Italian, then, Madame?" asked Orsino, surprised that she should lead the conversation so directly to a point which he had supposed must be reached by a series of tactful approaches.

"Who knows? I am sure I do not. My father was Italian. Does that constitute nationality?"

"Yes. But the woman takes the nationality of her husband, I believe," said Orsino, anxious to hear more.

"Ah yes—poor Aranjuez!" Maria Consuelo's voice suddenly took that sleepy tone which Orsino had heard more than once. Her eyelids drooped a little and she lazily opened and shut her hand, and spread out the fingers and looked at them.

But Orsino was not satisfied to let the conversation drop at this point, and after a moment's pause he put a decisive question.

"And was Monsieur d'Aranjuez also Italian?" he asked.

"What does it matter?" she asked in the same indolent tone. "Yes, since you ask me, he was Italian, poor man."

Orsino was more and more puzzled. That the name did not exist in Italy he was almost convinced. He thought of the story of the Signor Aragno, who had fallen overboard in the south seas, and then he was suddenly aware that he could not believe in anything of the sort. Maria Consuelo did not betray a shade of emotion, either, at the mention of her deceased husband. She seemed absorbed in the contemplation of her hands. Orsino had not been rebuked for his curiosity and would have asked another question if he had known how to frame it. An awkward silence followed. Maria Consuelo raised her eyes slowly and looked thoughtfully into Orsino's face.

"I see," she said at last. "You are curious. I do not know whether you have any right to be—have you?"

"I wish I had!" exclaimed Orsino thoughtlessly.

Again she looked at him in silence for some moments.

"I have not known you long enough," she said. "And if I had known you longer, perhaps it would not be different. Are other people curious, too? Do they talk about me?"

"The people I know do—but they do not know you. They see your name in the papers, as a beautiful Spanish princess. Yet everybody is aware that there is no Spanish nobleman of your name. Of course they are curious. They invent stories about you, which I deny. If I knew more, it would be easier."

"Why do you take the trouble to deny such things?"

She asked the question with a change of manner. Once more she leaned forward and her face softened wonderfully as she looked at him.

"Can you not guess?" he asked.

He was conscious of a very unusual emotion, not at all in harmony with the imaginary character he had chosen for himself, and which he generally maintained

with considerable success. Maria Consuelo was one person when she leaned back in her chair, laughing or idly listening to his talk, or repulsing the insignificant declarations of devotion which were not even meant to be taken altogether in earnest. She was pretty then, attractive, graceful, feminine, a little artificial, perhaps, and Orsino felt that he was free to like her or not, as he pleased, but that he pleased to like her for the present. She was quite another woman to-day, as she bent forward, her tawny eyes growing darker and more mysterious every moment, her auburn hair casting wonderful shadows upon her broad pale forehead, her lips not closed as usual, but slightly parted, her fragrant breath just stirring the quiet air Orsino breathed. Her features might be irregular. It did not matter. She was beautiful for the moment with a kind of beauty Orsino had never seen, and which produced a sudden and overwhelming effect upon him.

"Do you not know?" he asked again, and his voice trembled unexpectedly.

"Thank you," she said softly and she touched his hand almost caressingly.

But when he would have taken it, she drew back instantly and was once more the woman whom he saw every day, careless, indifferent, pretty.

"Why do you change so quickly?" he asked in a low voice, bending towards her. "Why do you snatch your hand away? Are you afraid of me?"

"Why should I be afraid? Are you dangerous?"

"You are. You may be fatal, for all I know."

"How foolish!" she exclaimed, with a quick glance.

"You are Madame d'Aranjuez, now," he answered. "We had better change the subject."

"What do you mean?"

"A moment ago you were Consuelo," he said boldly.

"Have I given you any right to say that?"

"A little."

"I am sorry. I will be more careful. I am sure I

cannot imagine why you should think of me at all, unless when you are talking to me, and then I do not wish to be called by my Christian name. I assure you, you are never anything in my thoughts but His Excellency Prince Orsino Saracinesca—with as many titles after that as may belong to you."

"I have none," said Orsino.

Her speech irritated him strongly, and the illusion which had been so powerful a few moments earlier all but disappeared.

"Then you advise me to go and find Del Ferice at Monte Citorio," he observed.

"If you like." She laughed. "There is no mistaking your intention when you mean to change the subject," she added.

"You made it sufficiently clear that the other was disagreeable to you."

"I did not mean to do so."

"Then in heaven's name, what do you mean, Madame?" he asked, suddenly losing his head in his extreme annoyance.

Maria Consuelo raised her eyebrows in surprise.

"Why are you so angry?" she asked. "Do you know that it is very rude to speak like that?"

"I cannot help it. What have I done to-day that you should torment me as you do?"

"I? I torment you? My dear friend, you are quite mad."

"I know I am. You make me so."

"Will you tell me how? What have I done? What have I said? You Romans are certainly the most extraordinary people. It is impossible to please you. If one laughs, you become tragic. If one is serious, you grow gay! I wish I understood you better."

"You will end by making it impossible for me to understand myself," said Orsino. "You say that I am changeable. Then what are you?"

"Very much the same to-day as yesterday," said Maria

Consuelo calmly. "And I do not suppose that I shall be very different to-morrow."

"At least I will take my chance of finding that you are mistaken," said Orsino, rising suddenly, and standing before her.

"Are you going?" she asked, as though she were surprised.

"Since I cannot please you."

"Since you will not."

"I do not know how."

"Be yourself—the same that you always are. You are affecting to be some one else, to-day."

"I fancy it is the other way," answered Orsino, with more truth than he really owned to himself.

"Then I prefer the affectation to the reality."

"As you will, Madame. Good evening."

He crossed the room to go out. She called him back.

"Don Orsino!"

He turned sharply round.

"Madame?"

Seeing that he did not move, she rose and went to him. He looked down into her face and saw that it was changed again.

"Are you really angry?" she asked. There was something girlish in the way she asked the question, and, for a moment, in her whole manner.

Orsino could not help smiling. But he said nothing.

"No, you are not," she continued. "I can see it. Do you know? I am very glad. It was foolish of me to tease you. You will forgive me? This once?"

"If you will give me warning the next time." He found that he was looking into her eyes.

"What is the use of warning?" she asked.

They were very close together, and there was a moment's silence. Suddenly Orsino forgot everything and bent down, clasping her in his arms and kissing her again and again. It was brutal, rough, senseless, but he could not help it.

Maria Consuelo uttered a short, sharp cry, more of surprise, perhaps, than of horror. To Orsino's amazement and confusion her voice was immediately answered by another, which was that of the dark and usually silent maid, whom he had seen once or twice. The woman ran into the room, terrified by the cry she had heard.

"Madame felt faint in crossing the room, and was falling when I caught her," said Orsino, with a coolness that did him credit.

And, in fact, Maria Consuelo closed her eyes as he let her sink into the nearest chair. The maid fell on her knees beside her mistress and began chafing her hands.

"The poor Signora!" she exclaimed. "She should never be left alone! She has not been herself since the poor Signore died. You had better leave us, sir—I will put her to bed when she revives. It often happens—pray do not be anxious!"

Orsino picked up his hat and left the room.

"Oh—it often happens, does it?" he said to himself as he closed the door softly behind him and walked down the corridor of the hotel.

He was more amazed at his own boldness than he cared to own. He had not supposed that scenes of this description produced themselves so very unexpectedly, and, as it were, without any fixed intention on the part of the chief actor. He remembered that he had been very angry with Madame d'Aranjuez, that she had spoken half a dozen words, and that he had felt an irresistible impulse to kiss her. He had done so, and he thought with considerable trepidation of their next meeting. She had screamed, which showed that she was outraged by his boldness. It was doubtful whether she would receive him again. The best thing to be done, he thought, was to write her a very humble letter of apology, explaining his conduct as best he could. This did not accord very well with his principles, but he had already transgressed them in being so excessively hasty. Her eyes had certainly been provoking in the extreme,

and it had been impossible to resist the expression on her lips. But at all events, he should have begun by kissing her hand, which she would certainly not have withdrawn again—then he might have put his arm round her and drawn her head to his shoulder. These were preliminaries in the matter of kissing which it was undoubtedly right to observe, and he had culpably neglected them. He had been abominably brutal, and he ought to apologise. Nevertheless, he would not have forfeited the recollection of that moment for all the other recollections of his life, and he knew it. As he walked along the street he felt a wild exhilaration such as he had never known before. He owned gladly to himself that he loved Maria Consuelo, and resolutely thrust away the idea that his boyish vanity was pleased by the snatching of a kiss.

Whatever the real nature of his delight might be it was for the time so sincere that he even forgot to light a cigarette in order to think over the circumstances.

Walking rapidly up the Corso he came to the Piazza Colonna, and the glare of the electric light somehow recalled him to himself.

"Great speech of the Honourable Del Ferice!" yelled a newsboy in his ear. "Ministerial crisis! Horrible murder of a grocer!"

Orsino mechanically turned to the right in the direction of the Chambers. Del Ferice had probably gone home, since his speech was already in print. But fate had ordained otherwise. Del Ferice had corrected his proofs on the spot and had lingered to talk with his friends before going home. Not that it mattered much, for Orsino could have found him as well on the following day. His brougham was standing in front of the great entrance and he himself was shaking hands with a tall man under the light of the lamps. Orsino went up to him.

"Could you spare me a quarter of an hour?" asked the young man in a voice constrained by excitement. He

felt that he was embarked at last upon his great enterprise.

Del Ferice looked up in some astonishment. He had reason to dread the quarrelsome disposition of the Saracinesca as a family, and he wondered what Orsino wanted.

"Certainly, certainly, Don Orsino," he answered, with a particularly bland smile. "Shall we drive, or at least sit in my carriage? I am a little fatigued with my exertions to-day."

The tall man bowed and strolled away, biting the end of an unlit cigar.

"It is a matter of business," said Orsino, before entering the carriage. "Can you help me to try my luck—in a very small way—in one of the building enterprises you manage?"

"Of course I can, and will," answered Del Ferice, more and more astonished. "After you, my dear Don Orsino, after you," he repeated, pushing the young man into the brougham. "Quiet streets—till I stop you," he said to the footman, as he himself got in.

CHAPTER XI.

Del Ferice was surprised beyond measure at Orsino's request, and was not guilty of any profoundly nefarious intention when he so readily acceded to it. His own character made him choose as a rule to refuse nothing that was asked of him, though his promises were not always fulfilled afterwards. To express his own willingness to help those who asked, was of course not the same as asserting his power to give assistance when the time should come. In the present case he did not even make up his mind which of two courses he would ultimately pursue. Orsino came to him with a small sum of ready