

The Ladies' Garland.

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THE REPOSITORY.

THE FORSAKEN.

A TALE OF ITALIAN HISTORY.

BY MISS EMMA ROBERTS.

Amid the numberless memorials which the fair and stately city of Florence contains in its ancient feuds, the fierce and cruel struggle of its nobles for power, and the personal quarrels whence sprang its most furious civil wars—one lonely grave-stone, lost amid the surrounding splendours of art, exists, though seldom noticed by the traveller, putting forth its silent and disregarded claim to the attention lavished upon monuments, unpossessed of half the interests attached to this frail tablet. The unsculptured marble covers the ashes of one whose sorrows and wrongs first kindled the flame of deadly warfare between the Ghibelline and Guelph factions, which rendered the chief of the Tuscan states a scene of hatred and dissension. While all Italy was distracted by the contest between the Emperor and the Pope, Florence, though joining the league against the former, was blessed with comparative tranquility; the supporters of either party lived within their walls at peace with each other; but an insult offered to the daughter of a noble family, plunged the whole population into strife and bloodshed. The mouldering grave of Altea Uberti, half hidden in the long rank grass which overshadows it—blackening under the influence of time with its scarcely legible inscription, yet inspires mingled feelings of tenderness and melancholy to those who derive a pensive pleasure in dwelling upon the recollection of the storied dead. Once the fairest, the proudest beauty of Florence, all eyes paid homage to the charms of its loveliest daughter; every lip was loud in its tribute of admiration, and many fond and faithful hearts were laid in lowly offering at her feet. The young, the gay, and the gallant, crowded in Altea's train, standing behind the lattice-work of the richly carved balcony. The troop of cavaliers who daily passed along on their route to the tilt-yard, made a longer pause, and bent with more courteous reverence before the front of

the Uberti palace than they deigned to bestow upon any other of the splendid residences of the Florence nobility, though many were the dark eyes, and many the fair forms which the crowded windows boasted; and, conscious of her beauty, vain of the flattering distinctions which she continually received, and buoyant with youthful hope, the happiest auguries of the future destiny of one so favored by nature and by fortune, blessed her waking dreams. Sought in marriage by the noblest families in the city, Altea exercised the privilege accorded to beauty, and became somewhat fastidious in her choice; but if she vacillated between the merits of the chief of the Cornari, or the heir of Delie Torre, she hesitated no longer when Guido Buondelmonti professed himself her admirer. Gay and graceful in the dance, ever the victor in the lists and at the ring, and bearing on his brow a wreath won in bloody strife upon the plains of Lombardy, he was exalted by general acclamation above all his youthful cotemporaries, and, like Altea, became the idol of one sex, and the envy of the other. How gaily and how rapidly flew the hours, when, seated side by side, the lovers whispered tender tales into each other's raptured ears, striking the minstrel string in praise of those charms and accomplishments which formed the universal theme. All radiant with smiles, happiness beamed round the angelic countenance of Altea, like a halo; the half-starved beggar in the streets blessed the glad beauty as she passed along, his sunken eye beaming with an unwonted ray at the sight of so much happy loveliness. The whole city rejoiced in her felicity; for if some taint of earth had marred the brightness of her perfections, before she had learned to live for the sole purpose of pleasing one treasured object, the excess of her affection for Buondelmonti had purified her character from its dross; she grew meek and gentle, cultivating each feminine grace with all the ardor prompted by a pure attachment: the charms too proudly displayed to attract the wondering multitude, were now only prized as the chain which bound her love.—The sun-lit eyes of Altea were suddenly overclouded; and tears coursed each other down those pale cheeks, so lately dimpled with delight. Buondelmonti, the spoiled child of fortune, no longer checked his caroling steed at the gate of the Uberti palace—but, fascinated by the charms of some new beauty, rode on, tossing his white plume on high, and laughing scornfully as he passed the residence of the woman he had abandoned. Altea's tears fell unheeded; she possessed kinsmen who surveyed her altered countenance with looks in which pity contended with anger. The unhappy girl

read the feeling which those around strove to repress in her presence; and drying her eyes, and struggling to obtain the command of features convulsed with internal agony, appeared again at the open lattice: but she could not deceive the penetrating eyes of those who hung upon every look, by the outward show of tranquillity; and her brothers prepared to avenge the injury she had sustained; they watched for the white palfrey of the perjured lover, as he rode through the city, unarmed, and in his gala dress to the bridal feast, and rushing from behind the portal where they had so often stood to welcome him as their guest, they dragged their enemy from his horse, and plunging their daggers in his body, deluged the pavement with his life blood. Altea, from the balcony above saw the commencement of the savage scene; she rushed to the street too late to prevent the outrage: but her fate was linked with that of Buondelmonti—and throwing herself upon his yet warm corpse, she breathed out the last sigh of a broken heart, and lived not to witness the calamities her kinsmen's weapons entailed upon Florence. The Guelph took up arms to revenge the murder of Buondelmonti; the Ghibellines, headed by the Uberti, retaliated by fresh aggressions; and, during the space of three and thirty years, the relentless strife continued in the massacre of both parties. The Ghibellines at length prevailing, drove the opposite faction from the city; but were in turn expelled by the triumphant Guelphs, and were never afterwards able to regain their ancient power and influence.

THE SYBIL'S SPELL.

CLARA was a well educated and intelligent girl, but romantic to an extreme. In her ideas of honour, of friendship, of love, she was an enthusiast, but in her observance of them she was faithful and sincere. She was one of those sensitive creatures that seem born like sweet but transient flowers, which shed their fragrance and perish in their youth. To a heart like Clara's, love could not long be a stranger, nor could it be a passive inmate in her breast. Her whole soul was fixed on one object. Her wishes, thoughts, and actions, seemed to have but one origin; but her lover died, and her happiness died with him. By degrees she grew more calm, but a settled melancholy hung upon her heart, and her spirit was utterly broken. Col. M——, when on the point of leaving Spain, suggested to her father that change of scene might in some degree divert her thoughts from the dangerous channel which they had taken, and proposed that she should accompany his own family, to all of whom she was very much attached. The offer was accepted, and she came to England. The noise and gaiety of London, however, ill accorded with her wounded feelings, and she felt gratified at accompanying her friends into Lincolnshire. As the an-