began to know his shame. Anger rose in his heart at Leona; that she should have fooled him so completely made him blush with mortification and disappointment; and his flashing hatred for Giuliano, which had begun in fear lest Leona should be lost to himself, grew harder and brighter now that he thought he knew Leona's real nature.

Just at the moment when the hiss arose from the spectators, a wild idea of vengeance and satisfaction was conceived in the brain of Piero. What revenge could be worse than to bring about a marriage betwixt Giuliano and the hag who called herself Leona? Think of the rage and fatal disappointment in the new husband when he should discover what Piero had barely escaped—a declaration of love, by discovering to-night. And then, Giuliano should know that Piero had brought about the marriage, with all knowledge of the horror of the bride beforehand, in revenge for Giuliano's insults! What hell for a husband worse than that?

More merciless, because they knew with what rapt ardor their hero could take the lover's part, the audience gave vent to jeers and laughter at the coolness of Piero; and to make bad matters worse, Giuliano now entered, and cast upon the distracted man a glance of deriding exultation. It was more than Piero could bear. Forget his position, his love, his future, his revenge, he fled from the stage; and, pursued even here by the harsh sounds from the audience, sought some brief respite from the fierce burning of his passions by swallowing glass after glass of wine in a retreat frequented by actors near the stage-entrance of the theater.

Half calmed at last, by the fumes of the liquor, from his first overmastering agony of pain, his mind returned with more dire certainty to his scheme of revenge on Giuliano.

Little by little, as he sat there buried in his consciousness of revengeful desire, torn by brief emotions that succeeded one another with ever more disastrous intensity, his brain, stimulated by the turbulence of his heart, worked onward to a completed scheme of satisfaction. Word by word, sentence by sentence, he beheld his plan written in fiery characters upon the scorched page of his spirit. No fear, he said to himself, with a harsh calmness that stung him even at the moment as if it had been ashes on a blistered burn—no fear that such characters would be soon effaced. Not till his soul had yielded to the consuming flames of hell, could those fiery letters become indistinguishable.

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"'Puisqu'ici toute chose
donne toujours
son épine ou sa rose
A ses amours.'"

Piero sung sorrowfully as he loitered along the road at dusk; he must be back in time for the performance, but as yet there was no hurry.

"'Son épine ou sa rose,'"—that line of Hugo's haunted him. A wave of weakening regret flowed over him that he should have accomplished the ruin of his life's happiness. Long ere this, almost before he had finally succeeded in bringing about the marriage of Leona and Giuliano, he had begun to repent of his fixed desire; but it was his heart that had begun to relent,—his brain still held with grim tenacity to its purpose. Many a time had Piero, when simulating love for Leona, felt again an almost intolerable twinge of jealousy, even though he was bending all his powers to get Giuliano to be successful with her. With unremitting determination he seized all circumstances, and bent them to his will; while he was growing more conscious every day that his love for Leona was not dead,—had only received a frightful shock, which, nevertheless, it had survived. Many a time he barely had been deterred from throwing himself helplessly at Leona's feet, and begging her to have mercy upon his quivering heart; but the thought of Giuliano would come to his mind, and with a perversity so strange as at times almost to make Piero believe himself insane, the thought of perfect vengeance persisted in suggesting itself only in the old form. It was impossible for Piero to think his rival's love so pure, so deep, so unselfish, so spiritual, as not to be horribly, fatally shocked at the suddenly