discovered fact of his wife's ugliness; nor could he imagine any position more utterly humiliating for a man of Giuliano's caliber and instincts than to feel that his rival knew how fully he had been duped. Piero's own love, every succeeding day proved more absolutely, had survived a discovery that could scarcely but be the death of Giuliano's.

So, gloomily, in the deepening twilight, Piero stalked along.

"Son épine ou sa rose."
The line remained a veritable presence. The twittering of the birds beyond the high wall that confined the narrow lane, already grew fainter at the drowsy hour; while the only half-heard calls of laborers bringing back their oxen to the barns; the cool soughing of the wind; the purple quiet of the air,—all brought to his heart a longing that had never been so urgent as now. The deadening dusk still called to mind the fact that he should be returning to the theater; but still he dallied on. There was at the foot of this hill a little stream, with an old Roman arch still spanning its gliding waters; he would just reach that, and then he would retrace his steps.

"Son épine ou sa rose."

"Yes," he whispered articulately, as if to give some uttered statement to which he could oppose himself; "it was the thorn and not the rose I plucked for my love; always the thorn,—always the thorn. And now it pierces my own heart; I plucked a thorn for her, and now fling myself upon it."

Suddenly a low cry smote upon his languid ear; a splash,—and then a shriek! At once he sprang forward, and leaped from the bridge upon the low margin of the water. A faint, yellow gleam in the water rose to the surface,—rose, and betrayed itself a streaming mass of tawny hair. Before it could sink a second time Piero threw himself into the water, seized the trailing locks, and with the strong strokes of an habitual swimmer brought back to land the lifeless body of a woman.

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"Leona!" he cried, when she at last opened her eyes.

"Piero!" she softly uttered, as if with love; then she remembered, and raising herself to a sitting posture, notwithstanding her extreme weakness, she cried "O Piero! O Piero!" and buried her face in her hands. In Piero's anxious haste to recover her from the drowning swoon in which she had lain, her robe, light and loose this warm night, had slipped away from her shoulder, and the wild, glowing mass of hair hung heavy over her smoothly rounded arm and neck.

A glorious joy bounded up in Piero's heart! He had been mistaken; it was some one else he had seen on that horrible night! Leona was beautiful, though he had not believed it; his love had outlived the necessity for her being beautiful, but welcomed now none the less warmly the grateful fact that she was so. Unattacked yet, in this supreme moment of joy, by the accusing thought that she was another's bride, Piero flung himself down before her, and, lifting her head with both hands, cried:—

"Leona! Leona! I love you!"

It was not immediately, but after a moment, that she whispered, "And yet you made me marry Giuliano!" in doubt betwixt this proof that he did not love her, and the joy of telling her he did.

"Oh! but I hated him!" burst out Piero, appalled now at the terrible inadequacy of such a statement as proof of what he wished to prove.

"You hated him! you hated him!" she wailed, though still allowing her head to rest upon his hands and his lips to press her cheek; then, like an overwhelming tide, the realization of what his words meant—must mean—for her, rushed over her. She gasped, and made a feeble movement, which, nevertheless, was powerful enough to throw him off; she took a step, and raising her eyes, was for an instant unable to conceal the glow of love that had till now been so deeply veiled, even to herself. But it was in the full knowledge of the inevitable approach of revulsion from love to hate,—in the first