# A BARTERED HONOUR: A NOVEL. IN THREE VOLUMES, VOL. II

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A Bartered Honour: A Novel. In Three Volumes, Vol. II by Robert Harborough Sherard

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### ROBERT HARBOROUGH SHERARD

## A BARTERED HONOUR: A NOVEL. IN THREE VOLUMES, VOL. II



# WHISPERS.

A VOLUME OF LYRICAL POEMS,

BY

### ROBERT HARBOROUGH SHERARD.

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## A BARTERED HONOUR.

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IN THREE VOLUMES.

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### ROBERT HARBOROUGH SHERARD.

VOL. II.

Quae medicamenta non sanant, ferrum sanat, Quae ferrum non sanat, ignis sanat. Hippocaares.

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1883.

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## A BARTERED HONOUR.

### CHAPTER I.

JEALOUS? I DO NOT KNOW THAT WORD.

The pension where Charles now pitched his camp, was not exactly in Sorrento, but lay about a quarter of an hour's walk, through the winding lanes, from the village. It was most beautifully situated in the midst of gardens and orange trees and lemon-trees, pomegranate and myrtle bushes. The upper floors all led out on to different large terraces overhung with the drooping vine. The house had been an old monastery, and had, after the tyrannic dissolution of the brotherhood by an arbitrary king, been sold to the family of the people who then kept it. It was built round three sides of a quaint old square, in the middle of which was a well of great depth and most delicious coolness. The open side faced the gardens which sloped down to the ridge of the sea wall, the sea shore being approached by a flight of steps, tunnelled out in the rock, similar to those which led to the Villa Dresda. Apart from the great beauty of its position, the terms of the place were very much more within the reach of Charles' purse

than at the Villa Castiglione. He got a beautiful bedroom, opening on to the upper terrace, and full board for six and a half france a day.

Truly, Italy is the land for poets, thought Charles, as he sat on the terrace, the evening of his first day at Sorrento, and saw the sun go down behind Ischia. The whole sky seemed aflame with rosy light, which was reflected in the grey blue sea, from the distant horizon as far as to the line of dazzling foam that lapped the purple shores of Ischia and Procida. effect was truly marvellous. Colours of every kind lit up the sky. Clouds, purple, red, blue, green, clouds tinged at the borders of their snow white mantles with pink, orange, violet, and vellow, sailed slowly across the firmament like so many gorgeous fairies ushering Apollo to his rest, or welcoming the pale moon rising, accompanied by a few dim stars, behind the flaming cupola of Vesuvius. Then, as the light died out and the blush of evening gave place to the frowning darkness of night, and the moon reigned in the stead of the blazing sun, the scene discovered new beauties. The contrast of the sweet, soft, white light of the moon with the fierce, ominous, ruddy glare of Vesuvius; the reflection of both these lights in the restless sea, the gleam of the pale light on the shining leaves of the lemon trees, the rippling of the waves on the shingle, the last notes of the late cicalas, the nightingale beginning her chant, the wind rustling in the forest-clad mountains behind. the melodious song of some home-wending muleteer, the faint, far off serenade of returning fishermen, the endless combinations of beauty and music, each spot in the whole vast panorams full of infinite grace and suggestion, presented together a picture the impersonation of beauty.

A cheese-monger from Cheapside, standing where Charles was, would have felt inspired, would have learnt that there are things beyond Cheddar, beauties superior to Chester, and that Stilton is not, and should not be, the ultimate dim Thule of man's aspirations.

Though within a stone's throw of the Villa Dresda, Charles could never muster courage enough to call again. He lacked the courage. though he earnestly desired to see Euphrosyne. He would often start from the hotel with the intention of going to the Villa, would reach the iron gates of the Baroness's gardens, would stand wistfully looking through the bars, and still could never bring himself to enter. His nervousness never came upon him until he had first reached the gate, and often he would return a hundred yards or so, and bracing himself up make his way once more to the Villa, but his courage would then again fail him, and he would return, dejected, to his abode.

It was not till he had been over a week at Sorrento that he met Euphrosyne again. He was lying one morning, with a Homer in his hand, on a grassy bank by the side of the main road to Massa, lazily watching the dancing flight of some radiant dragon flies, skimming the dusty road.