

The **thousand injuries** of **Fortunato** I had borne as I best could, but when he **ventured upon insult**, I vowed **revenge**. You, who so well know the **nature** of my soul, will not **suppose**, **however**, that I gave **utterance** to a threat. At length I would be **avenged**; this was a point **definitely settled** — but the **very definitiveness** with which it was **resolved**, **precluded** the **idea** of risk. I must not **only punish**, but **punish with impunity**. A wrong is **unredressed** when **retribution overtakes** its **redresser**. It is **equally unredressed** when the **avenger fails to make himself** felt as such to him who has done the wrong.

It must be **understood** that **neither** by word nor **deed** had I **given Fortunato** cause to doubt my good will. I **continued**, as was my wont, to smile in his face, and he did not **perceive** that my smile now was at the thought of his **immolation**.

He had a **weak point** — this **Fortunato** — **although** in **other regards** he was a man to be **respected** and **even feared**. He **prided himself** on his **connoisseurship** in wine. Few **Italians** have the true **virtuoso spirit**. For the most part their **enthusiasm** is **adopted** to suit the time and **opportunity** — to **practice imposture upon** the **British** and **Austrian millionaires**. In **painting** and **gemmary**, **Fortunato**, like his **countrymen**, was a quack — but in the **matter of old wines** he was **sincere**. In this **respect** I did not **differ** from him **materially**: I was **skillful** in the **Italian vintages myself**, and bought **largely whenever** I could.