CONSUELO

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TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH

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IN FOUR VOLUMES

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CONSUELO.

CHAPTER I.

It was not to the Venetian embassy, but to the house of the ambassador, that Porpora took Consuelo. Signora Corner was a beautiful creature, passionately fond of music, whose only pleasure and pretension was to assemble at her house in small parties the artists and dilettanti whom she could attract there without compromising by too great ostentation Monsignor Corner's diplomatic dignity. When Consuelo appeared, there was a moment of surprise and doubt, then a shout of joy and of cordiality as soon as they were sure that it was really the Zingarella, the marvel of the preceding year at San-Samuel. Wilhelmina, who had seen her as a child, coming to her house behind Porpora, carrying his books and following him like a little dog, had become much cooler towards her when she had seen her receiving such applause and homage in the drawing-rooms of the nobility, and winning such triumphs upon the stage. It is not that she was spiteful, or that she condescended to be jealous of a girl who had so long been considered frightfully ugly; but Wilhelmina liked to play the fine lady, like
all who are not so. She had sung the great airs with Porpora (who, treating her talent as an amateur's, had allowed her to try everything), while poor Consuelo was still studying that famous sheet of pasteboard upon which the master had summed up his whole method of singing, and to which he confined his serious pupils for five or six years. Wilhelmina, therefore, did not imagine that she could have any other feeling for the Zingarella than a benevolent interest. But because she had long ago given her sugar-plums, or handed her a picture-book to keep her from wearying herself in the ante-chamber, she concluded that she had been one of the most efficient protectors of this young talent. She had therefore thought it very extraordinary and unseemly that Consuelo, when she sprang in an instant to the pinnacle of triumph, had not shown herself humble, attentive and filled with gratitude towards her. She had expected that when she had small reunions of chosen spirits, Consuelo would graciously and gratuitously supply the evening's entertainment, by singing for her and with her as often and as long as she desired, and that she could present her to her friends, assuming the credit of having aided her in her debut and in some sense formed her musical intelligence. But matters had turned out differently. Porpora, who cared much more to raise his pupil Consuelo to the rank in the hierarchy of art which belonged to her than to please his protectress Wilhelmina, had laughed in his sleeve at her pretensions, and had forbidden Consuelo to ac-
cept the invitations, somewhat too familiar at first and then somewhat too imperious, of the ambassadress "by the left hand." He had been able to find a thousand excuses for not bringing her with him, and Wilhelmina had consequently taken a violent dislike to the debutante, even saying that she was not handsome enough ever to have had incontestable success; that her voice, which was indeed agreeable in a drawing-room, lacked sonority in the theatre; that she did not fulfil upon the stage all the promise of her youth; and other spiteful remarks of the same kind familiar to all times and all countries.

But soon the enthusiastic clamor of the public had stifled these little insinuations, and Wilhelmina, who prided herself on being a good judge, a learned pupil of Porpora and a generous being, had not dared to carry on this underhand war against the most brilliant pupil of the maestro and the idol of society. She had joined her voice to those of the true dilettanti to extol Consuelo, and if she had still depreciated her a little because of the pride and ambition which she had shown in not placing her voice at the disposition of my lady the ambassadress, it was only in a whisper, and in the ears of a chosen few, that my lady the ambassadress allowed herself to blame her for it.

Now, when she saw Consuelo coming to her in her modest toilet of the old days, and when Porpora presented her officially, as he had never done before, Wilhelmina, vain and frivolous as she was, forgave everything, and assumed a role of generous dignity.
Kissing the Zingarella on both cheeks, she said to herself,—

"She is ruined; she has committed some folly, or lost her voice, perhaps, for we have heard nothing of her for a long time. She is at our mercy. This is the moment to pity her, to protect her and to prove or profit by her talents."

Consuelo appeared so gentle and conciliating that Wilhelmina, not finding that tone of haughty prosperity that she had imagined in her at Venice, felt quite at her ease and loaded her with courtesies. Some Italians, friends of the ambassador, who happened to be there, united with her in overwhelming Consuelo with praise and questions, which she eluded adroitly and playfully. But suddenly her face became serious, and a certain emotion displayed itself upon it, as she saw, among the group of Germans who were looking at her curiously from the other end of the room, a face which had already annoyed her elsewhere. It was the unknown, the canon's friend, who had examined and questioned her so closely three days before, in the house of the curate of the village where she had sung mass with Joseph Haydn. This unknown was again examining her with extreme curiosity, and it was easy to see that he was asking his neighbors concerning her. Wilhelmina noticed Consuelo's pre-occupation.

"Are you looking at Herr Holzbauer?" she said.

"Do you know him?"

"I do not know him," replied Consuelo, "and I do not know whether it is he at whom I am looking."
“He is on the right of the console,” said the ambassador. “He is the director of the court theatre, and his wife is its leading prima donna. He abuses his position,” she added in an undertone, “by regaling the court and the city with his operas, which are not worth a farthing. Would you like to know him? He is a very polite man.”

“A thousand thanks, signora,” replied Consuelo. “I am of too little importance here to be presented to such a personage, and I am sure in advance that he will not engage me for his theatre.”

“Why not, my love? Has your beautiful voice, which had not its equal in Italy, suffered by your residence in Bohemia? for you have lived all this time in Bohemia, they say, in the coldest and dreariest country in the world. It is very bad for the throat, and I am not surprised that you felt its effects. But that is nothing; your voice will return beneath our beautiful sun in Venice.”

Consuelo, seeing that Wilhelmina was in great haste to assert the deterioration of her voice, refrained from contradicting this opinion, especially as the ambassador had herself made both question and answer. She cared nothing for this charitable supposition, but rather for the antipathy which she expected to find in Holzbauer because of a somewhat rude and frank reply which she had made concerning his music at the breakfast in the rectory. The court maestro would not fail to avenge himself by telling in what costume and in what company he had met her on
the highways, and Consuelo was afraid that this adventure, if it reached Porpora's ears, would prejudice him against her, and especially against poor Joseph.

The event was quite different. Holzbauer did not say a word about the adventure, for reasons which will be explained farther on, and far from showing the slightest animosity towards Consuelo, he approached her, and looked at her with a playful slyness which revealed only good-will. She pretended not to understand him. She would have feared to ask him for secrecy, and whatever might be the results of their meeting, she was too proud not to await them calmly.

Her attention was drawn from this incident by the face of an old man with a hard and haughty look, who nevertheless showed cordiality in conversing with Porpora, who, true to his bad temper, hardly spoke to him, and was perpetually endeavoring to find a pretext to get rid of him.

"That is an illustrious master, Buononcini," said Wilhelmina, who was not sorry to recapitulate to Consuelo the list of celebrities who decorated her drawing-room. "He has just returned from Paris, where he played himself the violoncello part in one of his motets before the king. You know that it is he who created a sensation so long in London, and who, after an obstinate theatrical war with Handel, ended by vanquishing him in opera."

"Do not say that, signora," said Porpora, who had
escaped from Buononcini, and who had heard Wilhelmina's last words as he came towards her. "Oh, do not utter such a blasphemy! No one has vanquished Handel, no one will do it. I know my Handel, and you do not know him yet. He is the first of us all, and I confess it, though I also had the audacity to struggle against him in the days of my foolish youth. I was crushed; it had to be so; it was just. Buononcini, more fortunate, but not more modest nor more able than I, triumphed in the eyes of fools and in the ears of barbarians. But do not believe those who tell you of this triumph; it will be an eternal cause of ridicule to my brother Buononcini, and England will blush some day for having preferred his operas to those of such a genius, such a giant, as Handel. Fashion, bad taste, the favorable situation of a theatre, a clique, intrigues, and, more than all, the prodigious talent of the singers whom Buononcini had for interpreters, gained the victory in appearance. But Handel has taken a formidable revenge in sacred music. As for Signor Buononcini, I do not think much of him, I do not care for thieves, and I say that he pilfered his success in opera just as honestly as in cantata."

Porpora was alluding to a scandalous theft which had set the whole musical world in a flurry: Buononcini had attributed to himself in England the glory of a composition which Lotti had made thirty years before, and which he had succeeded in proving his own in the clearest fashion, after a long discussion
with the brazen maestro. Wilhelmina tried to defend Buononcini, and this contradiction having inflamed Porpora's bile, he cried, without caring whether Buononcini heard him, —

"I tell you, I assert to you that Handel is superior, even in opera, to all the men of the past and present. I will prove it to you at once. Consuelo, sit down at the piano and sing us the air which I will tell you."

"I am dying with eagerness to hear the admirable Porporina," said Wilhelmina, "but I beg you not to have her make her debut here, in the presence of Buononcini and Holzbauer, in Handel's music. They might not feel flattered by such a choice" —

"I believe you!" said Porpora, "it is their living condemnation, their death-warrant."

"Well, in that case, let her sing something of your own, master."

"You know, no doubt, that that would excite the envy of no one. But I wish her to sing Handel; I wish it!"

"Master, do not oblige me to sing to-day," said Consuelo. "I have just finished a long journey" —

"Certainly; it would be to trespass on her kindness, and I will not ask her for anything. Before such judges as are here, and especially Herr Holzbauer, who directs the imperial theatre, you must not compromise your pupil; take care of that."

"Compromise her! what are you thinking of?" said Porpora brusquely, shrinking his shoulders. "I heard
her this morning, and I know whether she risks compromising herself before your Germans."

This discussion was fortunately interrupted by the arrival of a new guest. Every one made haste to welcome him, and Consuelo, who had seen and heard in Venice during her childhood this thin man with an effeminate face, rude manners and the bearing of a bully, whom she now saw aged, faded, uglier, ridiculously curled and dressed with the bad taste of a superannuated Celadon, recognized instantly, so vividly did she recollect him, the incomparable, the inimitable sopranist Majorano, called Caffarelli, or rather Caffariello, as he is termed everywhere but in France.

It would be impossible to find a more impertinent coxcomb than this good Caffariello. The women had spoiled him by their worship; the applause of the public had turned his head. He had been so handsome, or, to speak more properly, so pretty in his youth, that he had made his debut in Italy in women's roles; but now that he was drawing near his fiftieth year (he even appeared much older than his age, like most sopranists) it was impossible to imagine him as Dido or Galatea without having a great desire to laugh. To atone for the oddity of his appearance, he assumed the manners of a bully, and was perpetually shouting in his clear and sweet voice, without being able to change its character. Yet there was a good side to all this affectation and exuberance of vanity. Caffariello felt the superiority of his talent
too strongly to be amiable; he felt the dignity of his position as an artist too clearly to be a courtier. He held his own rashly and haughtily with the most important personages, even with sovereigns, and for that reason he was not liked by vulgar flatterers, who were condemned by his impertinence. The true friends of art forgave him everything for the sake of his genius as a singer; and in spite of all the cowardice with which he was reproached as a man, people were obliged to acknowledge that there were in his life traits of courage and generosity as an artist.

It was not wilfully and deliberately that he had shown negligence and a sort of ingratitude towards Porpora. He recollected well enough having studied with him eight years, and having learned from him all that he knew; but he recollected still more the day when his master had said to him, "Now I have nothing more to teach you. Go, my son, you are the first singer in the world!" And from that day, Caffariello, who was really (after Farinelli) the first singer in the world, had ceased to take an interest in anything but himself. "Since I am the first," he said to himself, "apparently I am the only one. The world was created for me; heaven has given genius to poets and composers only to enable Caffariello to sing. Porpora was the first singing-teacher in the world only because he was to form Caffariello. Now, Porpora's work is finished, his mission is accomplished, and it is enough for the glory, the happiness and the immortality of Porpora that Caffariello lives and sings."
Caffariello had lived and sung, he was rich and triumphant, Porpora was poor and abandoned; but Caffariello was entirely unconcerned, and said to himself that he had gained quite enough gold and fame for his master to be well repaid for having ushered into the world such a prodigy as he.
CHAPTER II.

Caffariello saluted the assembly very slightly as he came in, but he went and kissed Wilhelmina's hand tenderly and respectfully, after which he accosted his director Holzbauer with patronizing affability, and shook the hand of his master Porpora with careless familiarity. Divided between the indignation caused by his manners, and the necessity of keeping well with him (for by asking for an opera from the master for the theatre, and by assuming the principal role, Caffariello might repair his fortunes), Porpora began to compliment him and to question him about his triumphs in France in a tone of mockery too delicate for his vanity not to be deceived by it.

"France!" said Caffariello; "do not speak to me of France. It is the country of small music, small musicians, small amateurs and small nobles. Fancy a creature like Louis XV., who sent me by one of his first gentlemen, after hearing me in half a dozen of the Concerts Spirituels, — guess what? A mean snuff-box!"

"But of gold, and set with valuable diamonds, no doubt?" said Porpora, ostentatiously drawing out his own, which was only of olive wood.

"Oh, of course!" replied the soprano; "but see the impertinence! No portrait! A simple snuff-box
o me, as if I needed a box to take snuff from! Pah, what royal vulgarity! I was disgusted at it!"

"And I hope," said Porpora, filling his sarcastic nose with tobacco, "that you gave this little king a good lesson."

"I did not fail to, Corpo di Dio! 'Sir,' said I to the first gentleman, as I opened a drawer before his dazzled eyes, 'there are thirty snuff-boxes, the meanest of which is worth thirty times as much as that you offer me; and you see, besides, that other sovereigns have not disdained to honor me with their miniatures. Tell that to the king, your master. Caffariello is not in need of snuff-boxes, thank God!'

"Sangue di Bacco! The king must have felt very sheepish!"

"Wait! that is not all. The gentleman had the insolence to reply to me that, in regard to strangers, his majesty gave his portrait only to ambassadors."

"Oh, ho, the booby! And what did you reply to that?"

"'Listen, sir,' I said, 'know that you could not make one Caffariello out of all the ambassadors in the world.'"

"Admirable reply! Ah, how I recognize my Caffariello there! And you did not accept his snuff-box?"

"No, egad!" replied Caffariello, drawing from his pocket, in his preoccupation, a gold snuff-box set with diamonds.

"It is not this one, by any chance?" said Porpora,
looking at the box indifferently. "But tell me, did you see our young Princess of Saxony there,—she whom I taught to play the clavichord in Dresden when the Queen of Poland, her mother, honored me with her protection? She was an amiable little princess."

"Marie-Josephine?"

"Yes, the Dauphiness of France."

"Certainly, I saw her, intimately! She is a very good woman. Ah, what a good woman! Upon my honor, we are the best friends in the world. See! she gave me that." And he showed an enormous diamond which he had upon his finger.

"But they say that she shouted with laughter at your reply to the king about his present."

"Certainly, she thought that I had replied very well, and that the king, her father-in-law, had behaved like a snob."

"And she really told you that?"

"She gave me to understand it; and she presented me with a passport, signed by the king himself."

Every one who heard this dialogue turned away to laugh in his sleeve. Buononcini, in recounting Caffariello's exploits in France, had told, an hour before, how the dauphiness, in handing him this passport, made illustrious by the king's signature, had caused him to remark that it was available for only ten days, which was clearly equivalent to an order to leave the kingdom as quickly as possible.

Caffariello, fearing that they would perhaps question
him about this circumstance, changed the conversation.

"Well, maestro," said he to Porpora, "have you formed many pupils in Venice of late? Have you produced any of whom you have hope?"

"Do not speak to me of it!" replied Porpora. "Since you, heaven has been niggardly and my school unfruitful. When God had created man, he rested. Since Porpora has created Caffariello, he has folded his arms and been bored."

"Good master," replied Caffariello, charmed with the compliment, which he accepted as wholly sincere, "you are too indulgent to me. But yet you had some pupils who gave promise, when I saw you at the Scuola dei Mendicanti. You had already formed little Corilla, who was liked by the public. A beautiful creature, upon my word!"

"A beautiful creature, but nothing more."

"Nothing more, really?" said Herr Holzbauer, whose ear was ever on the watch.

"Nothing more, I tell you," replied Porpora authoritatively.

"It is well to know that," said Holzbauer, speaking in his ear. "She arrived here last evening, quite ill, from what I hear; and yet this morning I received propositions from her to join the court theatre."

"She is not what you need," replied Porpora. "Your wife sings ten times — better than she!" He had nearly said — less badly; but he was able to catch himself in time.
"Thank you for your advice," said the director.

"What! no other pupil than Corilla?" Caffariello resumed. "Is Venice run dry? I should like to go there next spring with Tesi."

"Why do you not?"

"Because Tesi is infatuated with Dresden. Can I not find a cat to mew in Venice? I am not very particular myself, and neither is the public, when there is a singer of my quality to carry the whole opera. A pretty voice, teachable and intelligent, will answer for the duets. Ah, by the way, maestro, what have you done with a little blackamoor that you had there?"

"I have taught a number of blackamoors."

"Oh, this one had a prodigious voice, and I recollect that I told you as I listened to her, 'There is a little fright who will do great things.' I even amused myself by singing her something. Poor child! she cried from admiration."

"Ah, ha!" said Porpora, looking at Consuelo, who became as red as the master's nose.

"What the devil was her name? It was a strange name — come, you must recollect, maestro; she was as ugly as a fiend."

"It was I," replied Consuelo, who frankly and good-naturedly put aside her embarrassment, to come forward and salute Caffariello gayly and respectfully.

Caffariello was not disconcerted by so little.

"You?" he said quickly, taking her hand. "You lie; for you are a very handsome girl, and she of whom I speak" —
"Oh, it is certainly I!" returned Consuelo.
"Look at me well. You must know me. I am the same Consuelo."

"Consuelo! yes, that was her infernal name. But I do not recognize you at all, and I am afraid that they have changed you. My child, if, in acquiring beauty, you have lost the voice and talent of which you gave promise, you would have done better to remain ugly."

"I want you to hear her," said Porpora, who was burning to exhibit his pupil before Holzbauer. He pushed Consuelo to the clavichord, somewhat against her will; for it was long since she had faced a cultivated audience, and she was not at all prepared to sing that evening.

"You are hoaxing me," said Caffariello. "She is not the one I saw in Venice."

"You will see," replied Porpora.

"Really, master, it is a cruelty to make me sing when I have still fifty leagues of dust in my throat," said Consuelo timidly.

"No matter, sing!" replied the maestro.

"Do not be afraid of me, my child," said Caffariello. "I know how indulgent I must be, and to drive away your fear, I will sing with you, if you like."

"On that condition, I will consent," she replied, "and the pleasure which I shall have in hearing you will keep me from thinking of myself."

"What can we sing together?" said Caffariello to Porpora. "Do you choose a duet."
"Choose one yourself," replied the master. "There is nothing which she cannot sing with you."

"Well, then, something of yours, for I should like to give you pleasure to-day, maestro; and besides, I know that Signora Wilhelmina has all your music, bound and gilded with oriental luxury."

"Yes," grumbled Porpora, between his teeth; "my works are better dressed than I am."

Caffariello looked through the books and chose a duet from the "Eumene," an opera which the master had written at Rome for Farinelli. He sang the first solo with a breadth, perfection and masterly manner which caused all his absurdities to be forgotten in a moment, leaving room only for admiration and enthusiasm. Consuelo felt animated and enlivened by all the power of this extraordinary man, and she sang the woman's solo in her turn better, perhaps, than she had ever sung in her life. Caffariello did not wait till she had ended to interrupt her with explosions of applause.

"Ah, my dear!" he cried repeatedly, "now I recognize you. You are undoubtedly the marvellous child whom I remarked in Venice; but now, my daughter, you are a prodigy. It is Caffariello who says it."

Wilhelmina was a little surprised and somewhat disconcerted to find Consuelo more powerful than in Venice. In spite of the pleasure of having the Vienna debut of such a talent in her drawing-room, she could not, without a certain annoyance and chagrin, see her-
self reduced to never daring to sing for her visitors after such an artist. Nevertheless, she displayed her admiration very noisily. Holzbauer, still smiling, but fearing that he would not find enough money in his coffers to pay such a talent, preserved, amid these praises, a diplomatic reserve; Buononcini declared that Consuelo surpassed Madame Hasse and Madame Cuzzoni. The ambassador became so transported that Wilhelmina was frightened, especially when she saw him take a large sapphire from his finger and place it on that of Consuelo, who did not dare either to refuse or to accept. They asked frantically to have the duo over again, but the door opened and the lackey, with respectful solemnity, announced Count Hoditz. Every one rose with that movement of instinctive respect which is paid, not to the most illustrious or the most worthy, but to the richest.

"I certainly am unlucky," thought Consuelo, "to meet here at the outset, and without having had time to speak to them, two persons who saw me on my journey with Joseph, and who have no doubt received a false idea of my morals and my relations to him. Never mind, good and honest Joseph; at the cost of all calumnies to which our friendship may give rise, I will never disown it, either in my heart or my words."

Count Hoditz, covered with gold and embroideries, advanced towards Wilhelmina, and, from the manner in which he kissed her hand, Consuelo understood the difference between such a mistress of a house, and the haughty, patrician dames whom she had seen in
Venice. People were more gallant, more amiable, more gay, in Wilhelmina’s house; but they spoke more rapidly, they walked less lightly, crossed their legs higher, turned their backs to the fireplace; in short, they were different men from what they were in the official world. They seemed to enjoy themselves more in this unconstraint; but there was at bottom something offensive and contemptuous, which Consuelo felt at once, although this something was almost imperceptible, masked as it was by the habits of the great world and the consideration which they owed the ambassador.

Count Hoditz was remarkable above them all for this fine shade of freedom which, far from offending Wilhelmina, appeared to her only a greater homage. Consuelo suffered from it only for the sake of this poor creature whose satisfied vanity appeared contemptible to her. She was not annoyed for herself; a Zingarella, she laid claim to nothing, and not exacting even a glance, she cared little whether the salutations made her were two or three inches higher or lower. “I have come here to ply my trade as a singer,” she thought, “and so long as they commend me when I have finished, I ask only to remain unnoticed in a corner; but this woman, who mingles her vanity with her love (if, indeed, she mingles any love with so much vanity), how she would blush if she saw the contempt and irony concealed beneath such gallant and complimentary manners!”

They made her sing again; they praised her to the
skies, and she literally shared the honors of the evening with Caffariello. At every moment she expected to be addressed by Count Hoditz, and to be obliged to support the fire of some sarcastic compliment. But, strange to say, Count Hoditz did not come near the clavichord, towards which she kept herself turned, that he might not see her features; and when he had inquired her name and her age he appeared never to have heard of her. The fact is, that he had not received the note which Consuelo had sent him by the deserter's wife. He was, moreover, very near-sighted; and as it was not fashionable then to use an eyeglass in a drawing-room, he could see but indistinctly the pale face of the cantatrice. It may, perhaps, seem surprising that, music-lover as he prided himself on being, he had not the curiosity to take a nearer view of so remarkable a virtuoso; but it must be remembered that the Moravian lord cared only for his own music, his own method and his own singers. Great talents aroused no interest or sympathy in him; he loved to depreciate their exactions and their pretensions in his own esteem. And when he was told that Faustina Bordoni earned fifty thousand francs a year in London, and Farinelli a hundred and fifty thousand, he shrugged his shoulders, and said that he had in his theatre at Roswald, in Moravia, at a salary of five hundred francs a year, singers formed by him who were worth Farinelli, Bordoni, and Signor Caffariello into the bargain.

The fine airs of Caffariello were especially distaste-
ful and insupportable to him, because in his own sphere Count Hoditz had the same weaknesses and the same absurdities. Boasters may be displeasing to modest and sensitive people, but it is other boasters especially that they fill with aversion and disgust. Every vain man detests those who are like him, and scoffs at the vice in them which he displays in himself. While they were listening to Caffariello's singing, nobody thought of the fortune and the dilettantism of Count Hoditz. While Caffariello was uttering his boasts, Count Hoditz could find no opportunity for his; in short, they were in each other's way. No room was large enough, no audience attentive enough, to entertain and content two men, eaten up by so much "approbative ness," to use the phrenological language of our own day.

A third reason prevented Count Hoditz from recognizing the Bertoni of Passau; this was that he had hardly looked at him there, and would have had great difficulty in recognizing him, transformed as he now was. He had seen a little girl, "well enough made," as they then said, in speaking of a passable person; he had heard a pretty voice, fresh and flexible; he had recognized a teachable intelligence; he had not felt or divined anything more, and he needed nothing more for his Roswald theatre. Being rich, he was accustomed to buy everything that suited him without too careful examination or parsimonious bargaining.

He had wished to buy Consuelo's talent and person as we buy a knife at Châtellerault or glassware in
Venice. The bargain had not been concluded, and as he had never had a moment's love for her, he never had a moment's regret. Mortification had somewhat disturbed his awakening at Passau; but people who have great self-esteem do not suffer long from a check of this sort. They forget quickly; does not the world belong to them, especially when they are rich? "One adventure lost, a hundred found!" said the noble count to himself. He whispered to Wilhelmina during the last piece which Consuelo sang, and seeing that Porpora cast furious glances at him, he soon went out, without having had any pleasure among these pedantic and ill-bred musicians.
CHAPTER III.

Consuelo’s first impulse, when she returned to her chamber, was to write to Albert; but she soon perceived that this was not so easy as she had imagined. In a first draft she was beginning to relate to him all the incidents of her journey, when she was seized with the fear of exciting him too greatly by the picture of her fatigues and dangers which she was laying before his eyes. She remembered the sort of delirious fury which had taken possession of him when she had told him in the cavern of the perils which she had braved in order to reach him. She destroyed this letter, therefore, and thinking that so profound a mind and so impressionable an organization would need the manifestation of a ruling idea and a single sentiment, she resolved to spare him all disturbing details, and to express to him, in a few words, nothing but plighted love and sworn fidelity. But these few words could not be vague; if they were not completely affirmative, they would give cause for frightful anguish and dread. How could she affirm that she had at last recognized in herself the existence of that absolute love and unshakable resolution which Albert needed to enable him to exist while waiting for her? Consuelo’s sincerity and honor could not bend to a half truth. When she strictly questioned her heart and her con-
science, she found in them the strength and calmness given by the victory won over Anzoleto. She found also in respect to love and passion, the most complete indifference towards every man but Albert; but the sort of love and serious enthusiasm which she felt for him was still the same sentiment which she had felt when with him. It was not enough that the memory of Anzoleto should be driven out, that he himself should be absent, for Count Albert to become the object of a violent passion in the heart of this young girl. It was not her fault that she could not remember without terror the mental disease of poor Albert, the sad solemnity of the Castle of the Giants, the aristocratic dislikes of the canoness, the murder of Zdenko, the dismal grotto of the Schreckenstein,—in short, all that strange and sombre life which she had dreamed, as it were, in Bohemia; for after having breathed the free air of vagabondage upon the peaks of the Boehmerwald, and finding herself surrounded by music, now that she was with Porpora, she could think of Bohemia only as a nightmare. Although she had resisted the brutal artistic aphorisms of Porpora, she found herself back in an existence so appropriate to her education, her faculties and her habits of mind, that she could no longer conceive of the possibility of transforming herself into the mistress of Reisenburg.

What could she tell Albert, then? What more could she promise and affirm to him? Had she not the same irresolution, the same fright, as on her de-
parture from the castle? If she had taken refuge in Vienna rather than anywhere else, it was because there she was under the protection of the only legitimate authority which she could recognize. Porpora was her benefactor, her father, her support and her master in the most religious acceptation of that word. By his side, she no longer felt herself an orphan, and she no longer believed that she had the right to dispose of herself according to the inspiration of her heart or her reason alone. Now Porpora condemned, ridiculed and energetically rejected the idea of a marriage which he regarded as the destruction of a genius, the immolation of a great future to the fancies of a romantic devotion. At Reisenburg, also, there was a generous, noble and tender old man, who was offering himself to Consuelo as a father; but can one change fathers according to the needs of the situation? When Porpora said "no," could Consuelo accept Count Christian's "yes?"

This neither could nor should be, and it was necessary to wait for what Porpora should decide when he had made a better examination of facts and feelings. But, while awaiting this confirmation or reversal of his judgment, what could she say to the unfortunate Albert to cause him to be patient and hopeful? To reveal Porpora's first outburst of dissatisfaction would be to overthrow all Albert's security; to conceal it would be to deceive him, and Consuelo did not wish to dissemble. Had the life of this noble young man depended upon a lie, Consuelo would not have uttered
it. There are beings whom one respects too much to deceive them, even for their own salvation.

Consequently, she began twenty letters without being able to make up her mind to continue one of them. In whatever way she put it, at the third word she always made a rash assertion or expressed a doubt which might have disastrous effects. She went to bed, overwhelmed by fatigue, grief and anxiety, and suffered for a long while from cold and sleeplessness, without being able to form any resolution, or any clear conception of her future and her fate. She finally went to sleep, and remained in bed until Porpora, who was a very early riser, had gone out about his business. She found Haydn occupied, as on the day before, in brushing the clothes and arranging the furniture of his new master.

"Come, lovely sleeper," he cried, when at last he saw his friend appear, "I die of ennui, sadness, and, above all, fear, when I do not see you, like a guardian angel, between this terrible professor and me. It seems to me that he is always about to discover my intentions, to baffle our designs and shut me up in his old clavichord to die of harmonious suffocation. He makes my hair stand on end, does your Porpora, and I cannot convince myself that he is not an old Italian devil, the Satan of that country being notoriously much more wicked and wily than ours."

"Do not be uneasy, my friend," replied Consuelo; "our master is only unfortunate; he is not bad. Let
us begin by making every effort to give him a little happiness, and we will see him grow gentler and return to his true character. In my childhood he was cordial and playful; he was quoted for the wit and brightness of his repartees; then he had success, friends and hope. If you had only known him at the time when they sang his 'Polifemo' at the San Mose theatre, when he took me on the stage with him and placed me in the wings, where I could see the supernumeraries and the head of the giant! How beautiful and terrible it all seemed to me from my little corner! Crouching behind a pasteboard rock, or hanging from a ladder, I hardly dared to breathe; and, in spite of myself, with my head and my little arms, I imitated all the gestures and motions which the actors made. And when the master was called upon the stage and obliged, by the shouts of the audience, to go before the curtain seven times, it appeared to me that he was a god; for he was handsome from pride and exaltation at that moment. Alas! he is not very old yet, and how changed, how broken he is! Come, Joseph, let us set to work, that when he returns he may find his poor lodging a little more pleasant than when he left it. In the first place, I will look over his clothes, to see what he lacks."

"It will take a good while to find out what he lacks, but it will be easy to see what he has," replied Joseph, "for I know no wardrobe except my own which is poorer and in worse condition."

"Well, I will supply yours, also, for I am in your
debt, Joseph; you fed and clothed me through our whole journey. Let us attend to Porpora first. Open that wardrobe. What! Only one coat,—that which he wore to the ambassador’s last night?"

"Alas, yes! a maroon coat with cut-steel buttons, and not very fresh at that. The other, which is pitifully worn and shabby, he put on to go out. As for his dressing-gown, I do not know whether it ever existed, but I have been looking for it in vain for an hour."

Consuelo and Joseph, having searched everywhere, discovered that Porpora’s dressing-gown was a chimera of their imaginations, as likewise his top-coat and his muff. On counting his shirts, they found only three, in rags; his cuffs were in ruins, and so with everything else.

"Joseph," said Consuelo, "here is a handsome ring which was given me last evening in payment of my singing. I do not wish to sell it, for that might attract attention and disgust the giver with my cupidity. But I can pawn it, and borrow on it what money we need. Keller is honest and intelligent; he will know the value of this ring, and he can certainly find some usurer who will advance me a good sum upon it. Go and attend to it and hurry back.

"It can be quickly done," replied Joseph. "There is a kind of Israelitish jeweller in Keller’s house, and as the latter is the factotum in affairs of this sort for more than one fine lady, he will get you the money in an hour. But I wish nothing for myself, Consuelo, do you understand? You yourself stand in great need
of dresses, for your whole wardrobe made the journey on my shoulder, and you may be obliged to appear to-morrow, or even to-night, perhaps, in a gown somewhat less shabby than this."

"We will settle our accounts by and by, and as I choose, Beppo. As I did not refuse your services, I have the right to insist that you do not refuse mine. Come, hurry to Keller!"

An hour later Haydn returned with Keller and fifteen hundred florins. Consuelo having explained her intentions, Keller went out and soon returned with a tailor whom he knew, a clever and expeditious man, who, having taken the measure of Porpora’s coat and the other articles of his apparel, agreed to provide in a few days two complete suits and a wadded dressing-gown, as well as linen and the other necessary articles of his toilet, which he undertook to order from sempstresses whom he could recommend.

"Now," said Consuelo, when the tailor had gone, "I must have the utmost secrecy about all this. My master is as proud as he is poor, and he would certainly throw my poor gifts out of the window if he only suspected that they came from me."

"How will you manage, signora," said Joseph, "to make him put on the new clothes and give up the old without noticing it?"

"Oh, I know him, and I assure you that he will never observe it. I know how to arrange that."

"And now, signora," said Joseph, who had the good taste, except when alone with her, to speak very
ceremoniously to his friend, that he might not give a false opinion of the nature of their friendship, "will you not think of yourself also? You brought almost nothing with you from Bohemia, and besides, your clothes are not in the fashion of this country."

"I was near forgetting that important affair! This good Herr Keller must be my adviser and guide."

"Oh, certainly!" replied Keller. "I understand that sort of thing perfectly, and if I do not have you dressed in the best of taste you may call me ignorant and presumptuous."

"I leave it all to you, my good Keller; only, I must tell you, as a general direction, that I prefer simplicity, and that striking garments and glaring colors do not suit either my habitual pallor or my quiet tastes."

"You do me injustice, signora, by thinking that I need this warning. Does not my trade teach me the colors which suit different faces, and do I not see in yours what will be becoming to you? Make yourself easy; you will be satisfied with me, and you will soon be able to appear at court, if you please, without ceasing to be as modest and simple as you are now. To beautify the face and not to change it is the whole art of the hair-dresser and the costumer."

"One word more in your ear, my dear Herr Keller," said Consuelo, leading the hair-dresser apart from Joseph. "You will also have Master Haydn fitted out from head to foot, and with the remainder of the money you will present your daughter for me
with a handsome silk gown for the day of her marriage with him. I hope that it will not be delayed very long; for if I have a success here I may be useful to our friend and help him to become known. He has talent, and a great deal of it, you may be sure of that."

"Has he really, signora? I am glad of what you tell me; I always suspected it. What am I saying? I was sure of it, the first time that I noticed him, a little choir-boy in the singing-school."

"He is a noble fellow," replied Consuelo, "and you will be repaid by his gratitude and honesty for what you have done for him; for you, too, Keller, are a worthy and noble-hearted man, I know it well. Now tell us," she added, returning with Keller to Joseph, "whether you have already done what we agreed upon in regard to Joseph's protectors. The idea was yours; have you put it into execution?"

"Yes, indeed, I have, signora," replied Keller. "To say and to do are all one with your servant. When I went to attend to my customers this morning, I first warned my lord, the Venetian ambassador (I have not the honor of dressing his hair, but I arrange his secretary's), then the Abbe Metastasio, whom I shave every morning, and Mademoiselle Marianna Martines, his ward, whose head is also in my charge. They live in my house; that is, I live in their house—never mind! Then I saw several other persons who likewise know Joseph's face, and whom there is danger of his meeting here. Those who are not my cus-
tomers I approached on one pretext or another: 'I heard that your excellency was seeking for bear's-grease, and I hasten to bring you some which I can guarantee. I offer it gratis as a sample, and only ask your custom for this article if you are satisfied with it.' Or else, 'Here is a prayer-book which was left at St. Stephen's last Sunday; and as I dress the cathedral's hair (that is, the hair of the dignitaries of the cathedral), I have been directed to ask your excellency if this book does not belong to you.' It was an old volume, bound in gilded leather, and stamped with the coat of arms, which I took from the stall of one of the canons, knowing that nobody would claim it. At last, when I had succeeded in gaining a hearing on one pretext or another, I would begin to gossip with the coolness and wit which are tolerated in people of my profession. I would say, for instance, 'I have heard a great deal about your lordship from a skilful musician, who is a friend of mine, Joseph Haydn; it was that which emboldened me to present myself at your lordship's respectable mansion.' — 'What, little Joseph!' they would say; 'a charming talent, a young man of great promise.' — 'Ah, really!' I would reply, delighted to come to the point. 'Your lordship must be amused at the singular but fortunate experience which he is just having.' — 'What is it? I have heard nothing of it.' — 'Oh, nothing could be more comical, and at the same time more interesting! He has become a valet.' — 'What! a valet, he? Oh, what a degradation, what a misfortune for such a
talent! Is he so very poor? I will help him.' — 'That is not the trouble, my lord,' I would reply; 'it is the love of art which has caused him to take this singular resolution. He was determined at any cost to have lessons from the illustrious Maestro Porpora'— 'Ah, yes! I know about that, and Porpora refused to hear or receive him. He is a very ill-natured and morose man of genius.'— 'He is a great man, a noble-hearted man,' I would reply, in accordance with the wishes of Signora Consuelo, who desires not to have her master laughed at or blamed in all this. 'Be sure,' I would add, 'that he will soon recognize little Haydn's great ability, and will give him his best care; but not to irritate him in his melancholy, and to gain a footing in his house without arousing his suspicions, Joseph could find no more ingenious device than to become his servant, and to pretend the most complete ignorance of music.'— 'The idea is touching, charming,' they would reply, quite moved; 'but he must make haste and secure Porpora's favor before he is recognized and pointed out to him as a remarkable artist, for young Haydn is already loved and protected by some people who are themselves visitors at Porpora's house.'— 'These persons,' I would then say in an insinuating tone, 'are too generous, too noble, not to keep Joseph's secret as long as it may be necessary, and not to dissemble a little with Porpora, that he may preserve his confidence.'— 'Oh, it will not be I who betrays the good, the skilful musician Joseph! You may give him my word for that;
and I will forbid my servants to allow any imprudent word to escape within reach of the ears of the master.' Then they would send me away with a little present, or an order for bear's-grease; and as for the secretary of the embassy, he took a lively interest in the adventure, and promised to tell it to Monsignor Corner at his breakfast, so that he, who is especially fond of Joseph, may be the first to be on his guard with Porpora. So my diplomatic mission is ended. Are you satisfied, signora?"

"If I were a queen, I would make you an ambassador at once," replied Consuelo. "But I see my master in the street, coming home. Hurry away, dear Keller, that he may not see you."

"Why should I go away, signora? I will begin to dress your hair, and he will think that you sent for the nearest hair-dresser by your valet Joseph."

"He has a hundred times more wit than we," said Consuelo to Joseph, and she yielded her black hair to the hands of Keller, while Joseph resumed his brush and his apron, and Porpora came heavily up the stairs, humming a phrase of his future opera.
CHAPTER IV.

As he was naturally very absent-minded, Porpora, when he kissed the brow of his adopted daughter, did not even notice Keller, who was at work on her hair, but began to seek in his music for the manuscript of the phrase which was running in his head. When he saw his papers, which were usually scattered over the clavichord in incomparable confusion, arranged in symmetrical piles, he awoke from his abstraction and cried,—

"Miserable rascal! He has dared to touch my manuscripts! That is the way with all servants. When they pile things up they think they are arranging them. I was a wise man to take one! This is the beginning of my misfortunes!"

"Pardon me, master," replied Consuelo; "your music was in chaos."

"I knew my way in that chaos! I could get up at night and pick up in the dark any passage of my opera. Now I know nothing,—I am lost; it will take me a month to find everything again!"

"No, master, you will find your way at once. Besides, it is I who did it, and although the pages were not numbered, I believe that I have placed every leaf in its place. See! I am sure that you will read more easily in the book that I have made of
it than in all these loose leaves which a gust of wind might carry out of the window."

"A gust of wind! Do you take my room for the Fusine Lagoon?"

"If not a gust of wind, the draught from a duster or a broom."

"What does he want to sweep and dust my room for? I have lived in it for a fortnight, and I have let no one go into it."

"So I observed," thought Joseph.

"Well, master, you must allow me to change this habit. It is unhealthy to sleep in a room which is not cleaned and aired every day. I will undertake to restore the disorder which you like when Beppo has swept and arranged the room."

"Beppo, Beppo? Who is that? I don’t know any Beppo."

"He is Beppo," said Consuelo, pointing to Joseph. "His name was so hard to pronounce that your ears would have been wounded by it. I gave him the first Venetian name which came into my head. Beppo is good; it is short, and it can be sung."

"As you like," said Porpora, who was becoming milder as he turned over the leaves of his opera, and found it faultlessly collected and sewn into a single book.

"Confess, master," said Consuelo, seeing him smile, "that it is more convenient in that form."

"Ah, you always insist on being right," replied the master; "you will be obstinate all your life."
"Master, have you breakfasted?" said Consuelo, whom Keller had just set at liberty.

"Have you breakfasted yourself?" replied Porpora, with a mixture of impatience and solicitude.

"I have breakfasted. And you, master?"

"And this boy, this—Beppo; has he eaten anything?"

"He has breakfasted. And you, master?"

"And you, master! And you, master! Go to the devil with your questions! What business is it of yours?"

"Master, you have not breakfasted."

"Ah, I see that the devil has come into my house! She will give me no peace now! Come here and sing me this phrase. Attention, if you please."

Consuelo went up to the clavichord and sang the phrase, while Keller, who was a thorough dilettante, stood at the other end of the room, comb in hand and open-mouthed. The maestro, who was not satisfied with his phrase, made her repeat it thirty times, now making her accentuate certain notes, now certain others, seeking the shade which he desired with a persistence which could be equalled only by the patience and submissiveness of Consuelo. During this time, Joseph, at a sign from her, had gone to fetch the chocolate which she had prepared while Keller was about his errands. He brought it, and, guessing his friend's wishes, placed it quietly upon the clavichord, without attracting the attention of the master, who took it mechanically a moment later,
poured it into the cup, and swallowed it with an excellent appetite. A second cup was brought, and swallowed in the same way, with a reënforcement of bread and butter; and Consuelo, who was in a teasing mood, said to him, when she saw him eat with pleasure,—

"I knew, master, that you had not breakfasted."

"It is true," he replied good-naturedly. "I must have forgotten it. It often happens to me when I am composing, and I only notice it during the day, when I have cramps and spasms in my stomach."

"And then you drink brandy, master?"

"Who told you that, little fool?"

"I found the bottle."

"Well, what business is it of yours? Are you going to forbid me brandy?"

"Yes, I will forbid it. You drank very little in Venice, and you felt well."

"That is true," said Porpora sadly. "It seemed to me that everything went badly there, and that here it would be better. Yet everything is going from bad to worse with me. Fortune, health, ideas,—everything!" And he leaned his head on his hands.

"Do you wish me to tell you why you find difficulty in working here?" replied Consuelo, who wished to distract his mind, by these trifles, from the feeling of discouragement which had taken possession of him. "It is because you have not your good Venetian coffee, which gives so much strength and gayety. You wish to excite yourself, after the manner
of the Germans, with beer and liquors, and it does not suit you.”

“Ah, true again! My good Venetian coffee! It was an inexhaustible source of bon-mots and fine ideas. It was genius, it was wit, which ran in my veins with a gentle heat. All that one drinks here makes one mournful or mad.”

“Well, master, take your coffee.”

“Coffee? Here? I do not want it. It is too much trouble. It needs fire, a servant, dishes which are washed, clattered, broken with a discordant noise in the midst of an harmonic combination. No, I will have none of it! My bottle, on the floor, between my legs; it is more convenient and quicker.”

“But that can be broken too. I broke it this morning, putting it in the cupboard.”

“You have broken my bottle! I do not know, you little fright, why I do not break my cane over your shoulders!”

“Bah! you have been telling me that for fifteen years, and you have never given me even a fillip. I am not in the least afraid.”

“Chatterer! Will you sing? Will you help me out with this accursed phrase? I will wager that you do not know it yet, you are so absent-minded this morning.”

“You will see whether I do not know it by heart,” said Consuelo, closing the book abruptly.

She sang it as she understood it; that is to say, differently from Porpora. Knowing his humor,
although she had understood at the first reading that he had become involved in the expression of his idea, and that by laboring at it he had distorted the sentiment, she would not allow herself to give him advice. He would have rejected it from a spirit of contradiction; but by singing him this phrase in the proper manner, while pretending to commit an error of memory, she was sure that he would be struck. He had hardly heard it, when he sprang from his chair, clapping his hands and crying,—

"That is it! That is it! That is what I wanted and could not find! How the devil did it come to you?"

"Is it not as you wrote it, or is it chance? Yes, it is your phrase."

"No, it is yours, you little cheat!" cried Porpora, who was candor itself, and who, in spite of his diseased and immoderate love of glory, would never from vanity have claimed anything not his own; "it is you who found it. Repeat it to me. It is good, and I will use it."

Consuelo repeated it several times, and Porpora wrote it down from her dictation. Then he pressed his pupil to his heart, saying,—

"You are the devil! I always thought that you were the devil!"

Porpora, delighted at having his phrase after a whole morning of profitless worry and musical torment, sought mechanically on the ground for the neck of his bottle, and not finding it, began to feel about
on the clavichord, and swallowed carelessly what he found there. It was exquisite coffee, which Consuelo had skilfully and patiently prepared at the same time as the chocolate, and which Joseph had just brought, burning hot, at a new sign from his friend.

"Oh, nectar of the gods! Oh, friend of musicians!" cried Porpora when he tasted it; "who is the angel, who is the fairy, who brought thee from Venice beneath her wing?"

"It was the devil," replied Consuelo.

"You are an angel and a fairy, my poor child," said Porpora gently, as he leaned his head upon his hand. "I see that you love me, that you take care of me, that you wish to make me happy! Even this honest fellow, who takes an interest in my fate," he added, seeing Joseph, who, erect upon the threshold of the door, was looking at him with moist and glittering eyes. "Ah, my poor children, you wish to soften a very deplorable lot! You know not what you do! I am doomed to wretchedness, and a few days of sympathy and happiness will make me feel more acutely the horror of my destiny when these happy days have flown."

"I will never leave you; I will always be your daughter and your servant," said Consuelo, throwing her arms about his neck.

Porpora buried his bald head in his music-book, and burst into tears. Consuelo and Joseph wept also, and Keller, who had remained from his love of music, and who, to excuse his presence, was arranging the
master's periwig in the ante-chamber, seeing through the open door the respectable and harrowing picture of his grief, Consuelo's filial piety and the devotion which was beginning to stir Joseph's heart for the illustrious old man, dropped his comb, and taking Porpora's wig for a handkerchief, raised it to his eyes, plunged as he was in a noble absent-mindedness.

Consuelo was kept in the house for several days by a cold. She had braved, during her long and adventurous journey, all the inclemency of the weather, all the changes of autumn,—now hot, now cold and rainy, according to the localities through which she passed. Lightly clad, with a straw hat, with no cloak nor change of raiment when she was wet, she had not, nevertheless, had the slightest hoarseness. But hardly was she shut up in this dark, damp and ill-aired lodging of Porpora's, when she felt cold and illness paralyze her energy and her voice. Porpora was greatly annoyed at this occurrence. He knew that it was necessary to hasten if he would obtain an engagement for his pupil at the Italian opera; for Madame Tesi, who had wished to go to Dresden, seemed to be hesitating, tempted by the urging of Caffariello and the brilliant propositions of Holzbauer, anxious to attach so famous a singer to the imperial theatre. Corilla, moreover, who was still in bed from the effects of her confinement, was making the friends whom she had found in Vienna intrigue with the directors, and declared that she could make her debut within a week if they needed her. Porpora ardently desired that
Consuelo should be engaged, both for her own sake and for the sake of the opera which he hoped to have accepted along with her.

Consuelo, for her part, did not know what to decide. If she accepted an engagement, she would postpone the moment of her possible union with Albert; it would fill the Rudolstadtts with dread and consternation, for they certainly did not expect her to return to the stage. It would be, in their opinion, to renounce the honor of belonging to them, and to signify to the young count that she preferred glory and liberty to him. On the other hand, if she refused this engagement, she would destroy Porpora's last hope; she would show him, in her turn, that ingratitude which had occasioned the despair and the misfortunes of his life; she would stab him to the heart. Consuelo, frightened at finding herself in this dilemma, and seeing that she must inflict a fatal blow, whichever course she chose, sank into a dreary melancholy. Her robust constitution preserved her from a serious indisposition, but during these few days of anguish and dread, suffering from feverish chills and a painful languor, crouching over a scanty fire, and dragging herself from one room to another, busy about the affairs of the household, she wished and mournfully hoped that a serious illness would come to free her from the duties and the anxieties of her situation.

Porpora's humor, which had brightened for a short space, grew lowering, quarrelsome and unjust when he saw Consuelo, the source of his hope and the seat of
his strength, become suddenly prostrate and irresolute. Instead of sustaining her and reviving her by enthusiasm and tenderness, he displayed an unhealthy impatience which gave the finishing touch to her consternation. By turns weak and violent, the tender but irascible old man, devoured by that same spleen which was soon to consume Jean-Jacques Rousseau, saw enemies, persecutors and ingrates on every side, without perceiving that his suspicions, his outbursts and his injustice provoked and inspired to some extent the evil intentions and acts with which he charged them.

The first impulse of those whom he wounded in this way was to consider him mad; the second, to regard him as wicked and spiteful; the third, to leave him, to avoid him and to avenge themselves upon him. Between cowardly compliance and bitter misanthropy, there is a mean which Porpora did not know, and which he never attained.

Consuelo, after some useless efforts, seeing that he was less disposed than ever to allow her love and marriage, resigned herself to avoiding discussions which more and more imbittered the prejudices of her unfortunate master. She never pronounced Albert's name, and held herself ready to sign any engagement which Porpora might impose upon her. When she was alone with Joseph, she found some comfort in opening her heart to him.

"What a strange destiny is mine!" she would often say to him. "Heaven has given me faculties and a soul for art, the need of liberty, the love of a proud
and chaste independence; but at the same time, in-
stead of giving me that cold and savage selfishness
which supplies artists with the strength necessary to
make their way through the difficulties and seductions
of life, the divine will has placed in my breast a
tender and sensitive heart which beats only for others,
and which lives only in affection and devotion. Thus,
torn by two conflicting forces, my life is wasted and
my object always missed. If I am born to devote
myself to others, let God take from my head poetry,
the love of art and the instinct of liberty, which make
a torture and an agony of that devotion. If I am born
for art and liberty, let him take from my heart pity,
friendship, solicitude and the fear of causing suffering,
which will always poison my triumphs and trammel
my career.”

“If I dared to advise you, my poor Consuelo,”
replied Haydn, “it would be to listen to the voice of
your genius and to stifle that of your heart. But I
know you well now, and I know that you could not
do it.”

“No, I cannot do it, Joseph, and it seems to me
that I never shall be able to do it. But observe my
misfortune, observe the complication of my strange
and unhappy lot! Even in the path of devotion I am
so hindered and drawn in opposite directions that I
cannot go whither my heart urges me without breaking
this heart, which would like to do good with the left
hand as with the right. If I devote myself to one, I
abandon the other, and leave him to perish. I have
an adopted husband whose wife I cannot be without killing my adopted father; and reciprocally, if I fulfil my duty as a daughter, I kill my husband. It is written that a woman shall leave her father and mother and cleave to her husband; but I am, in reality, neither wife nor daughter. The law has made no decision for me, society has not been concerned about my lot. My heart must choose. The passion of a man does not govern him, and in the dilemma in which I am, the passion of duty and devotion cannot enlighten my choice. Albert and Porpora are equally unhappy, equally threatened with the loss of reason or life. I am as necessary to one as to the other. I must sacrifice one of them.

"Why so? If you married the count, would not Porpora live with you? You would thus save him from poverty, you would revive him by your care and you would fulfil both of your duties at once."

"If it could be so, I swear to you, Joseph, that I would renounce art and liberty; but you do not know Porpora. It is glory of which he is greedy, not ease and comfort; he suffers without knowing for what. Besides, always dreaming of triumphs and the admiration of men, he would not stoop to accept their pity. You may be sure that his distress is in great part the result of his carelessness and pride. If he would speak a word, he has still friends who would come to his assistance; but, besides that he has never noticed whether his pocket was full or empty (you see that
he is equally ignorant in regard to his stomach), he would rather die of hunger, shut up in his room, than seek the alms of a dinner from his best friend. He would think he was disgracing music if he allowed it to be suspected that Porpora needed anything besides his genius, his clavichord and his pen. Consequently, the ambassador and his mistress, who love and venerate him, do not in the least suspect his destitution. When they see him dwelling in a sombre and dilapidated room, they think it is because he loves darkness and disorder. Has he not told them himself that he could not compose amid other surroundings? I know better; I have seen him climb upon the roofs in Venice to gain inspiration from the sound of the sea and the sight of the sky. If they receive him with his dirty clothes, his shabby periwig and his shoes in holes, they think they are obliging him. 'He loves dirt,' they say; 'it is a failing of old men and artists. His rags are agreeable to him. He could not walk in new shoes.' He asserts it himself; but in my childhood I saw him clean, neat, always perfumed, shaven and coquettishly shaking the lace of his cuffs over the keyboard of the organ or the clavichord; it was because in those days he could be thus without owing anything to any one. Never would Porpora consent to live idle and unknown in the depths of Bohemia at the cost of his friends. He would not remain there three months without cursing and abusing everybody, believing that they were plotting his ruin, and that his enemies had had him imprisoned to prevent his publishing his
works and having them performed. He would go off some fine morning, shaking off the dust from his feet, and he would come back to his garret, his worm-eaten clavichord, his fatal bottle and his dear manuscripts."

"Do you see no possibility of taking your Count Albert to Vienna, or Venice, or Dresden, or Prague,—to some musical city, in a word? Being rich, you could settle down anywhere, surround yourselves with musicians, cultivate art in a certain fashion, and leave an open field for Porpora's ambition, without ceasing to watch over him."

"How can you ask such a question, after all that I have told you about Albert's health and character? How could he, who cannot bear the face of a stranger, endure this crowd of knaves and fools which is called society? And what irony, what aversion, what contempt, would not the world bestow upon that holy fanatic, who can understand neither its laws, morals nor customs! It would be as dangerous to attempt that as what I am now trying, in endeavoring to make him forget me."

"Be sure that every ill would appear lighter to him than your absence. If he loves you truly, he will bear everything, and if he does not love you enough to endure and accept everything, he will forget you."

"And therefore I am waiting, without deciding anything. Give me courage, Beppo, and stay near me, that I may have at least one heart to which I can
consue my sorrows, and which I can ask to seek hope with me.”

“Be easy, sister,” said Joseph; “if I am happy enough to give you this slight consolation, I will brave Porpora’s outbursts patiently; I will even allow him to beat me, if that will take his mind from tormenting and afflicting you.”

While chatting with Joseph in this way, Consuelo worked ceaselessly, sometimes to prepare their common repasts, sometimes to repair Porpora’s raiment. Little by little she introduced into the apartment the furniture which her master needed. A good arm-chair, roomy and well padded, replaced the one of straw upon which he reposed his worn and aged limbs; and when he had enjoyed in it the pleasure of a siesta, he was astonished, and asked with a frown how he came to have this comfortable seat.

“It was the mistress of the house who sent it up here,” replied Consuelo; “it was an old thing which was in her way, and I consented to place it in this corner until she wanted it again.”

Porpora’s mattresses were changed, and he made no comment upon the excellence of his bed except to say that he had been able to sleep again within the last few nights. Consuelo replied that he ought to attribute this improvement to his coffee and to his abstinence from brandy. One morning, Porpora, having put on an excellent dressing-gown, asked Joseph with a thoughtful air where he had found it. Joseph,
who had his cue, replied that he had found it at the bottom of an old trunk which he was arranging.

"I did not think that I had brought it with me," replied Porpora; "yet it is the same one I had in Venice; it is the same color, at least."

"What other could it be?" replied Consuelo, who had been careful to match the color of the defunct Venetian dressing-gown.

"Well, I thought it more worn than that," said the maestro, looking at the elbows.

"I should think so! I have put in new sleeves."

"With what?"

"With a piece of the lining."

"Ah, women are astonishing for putting everything to use!"

When the new coat was introduced, and Porpora had worn it for two days, he was astonished to find it so fresh, though it was the same color as the other. The buttons, which were very handsome, especially aroused his suspicions.

"This is not my coat," said he grumblingly.

"I told Beppo to take it to a cleaner," replied Consuelo; "you stained it last night. They have pressed it, and that is why it seems new to you.

"I tell you that it is not mine!" cried the master in a rage. "They changed it at the cleaner's. Your Beppo is an imbecile."

"They did not change it; I made a mark in it."

"And those buttons! Do you think you can make me swallow those buttons?"
"I changed the trimming and sewed it on myself. The old was entirely ruined."

"It amuses you to say that! It was quite presentable. What a folly! Am I a Celadon, to bedizen myself in this way, and buy a trimming which cost twelve sequins at least?"

"It did not cost twelve florins. I bought it at a bargain."

"Even that is too much," murmured the master.

All the pieces of his costume were given him in the same fashion, by the aid of adroit fibs which made Joseph and Consuelo laugh like two children. Some articles passed unperceived, thanks to Porpora's preoccupation. The lace and the linen slipped discreetly into his wardrobe, little by little, and when he appeared to look at them attentively, Consuelo assumed the honor of having carefully mended them. To make it appear likely, she repaired some of his old clothes beneath his eyes, and put them away with the others.

"Here," cried Porpora one day, snatching from her hands a cravat which she was mending, "enough of this trifling! An artist ought not to be a housekeeper, and I do not wish to see you all day bent double in this way, with a needle in your hand. Lock up all this, or I will throw it in the fire! And I do not wish to see you at the fire, cooking, and breathing the vapor of the charcoal. Do you wish to lose your voice? Do you wish to be a scullion? Do you wish to have me damned?"
"Heaven forbid!" replied Consuelo; "but your clothes are in good order now, and my voice has come back."

"Good!" said the master. "In that case, you shall sing to-morrow for the Countess Hoditz, Dowager Margravine of Baireuth."
CHAPTER V.

The Dowager Margravine of Baireuth, widow of the Margrave George William, born Princess of Saxe-Weisenfeld, and by her last marriage Countess Hoditz, "had been as beautiful as an angel," it was said. "But she was so changed that it was necessary to study her face to discover the ruins of her charms. She was tall, and seemed to have had a handsome figure; her face was very long, as was also her nose, which disfigured her greatly, for it had been frozen, which gave it a most unpleasant color, like a beet; her eyes, accustomed to laying down the law, were large, well shaped and brown, but so sunken that their vivacity was greatly diminished; for lack of natural eyebrows she wore false ones, very thick, and black as ink; her mouth, though large, was well shaped and pleasing; her teeth, white as ivory, were well planted; her complexion, though smooth, was yellowish, leaden and flabby; she had a good, but somewhat affected, manner. She was the Lais of her age. She pleased only by her face; for as to wit, she had not a shade of it."

If you think this portrait drawn by a rather cruel and cynical hand, do not blame me, dear reader. It is word for word the writing of a princess who was famous for her misfortunes, her domestic virtues, her
pride and her spitefulness,—Princess Wilhelmina of Prussia, the sister of Frederick the Great, married to the hereditary prince of the margraviate of Baireuth, the nephew of our Countess Hoditz. She had the sharpest tongue that royal blood ever produced. But her portraits are, as a general thing, drawn with a masterly hand, and it is difficult, in reading them, not to believe them exact.

When Consuelo, with her hair dressed by Keller, and clad, thanks to his care and zeal, with an elegant simplicity, was introduced into the margravine's drawing-room by Porpora, she went behind the clavichord, which had been placed diagonally in a corner, so as not to be in the way. No one had yet arrived, so punctual was Porpora, and the servants were still lighting the candles. The maestro sat down to try the clavichord, and had hardly struck a few chords upon it when a very beautiful lady entered and came towards him with affable grace. As Porpora saluted her with the greatest respect, and called her princess, Consuelo took her for the margravine, and kissed her hand, according to the usage. This cold and colorless hand pressed that of the young girl with a cordiality which is rarely met with among the great, and which immediately won Consuelo's heart. The princess appeared about thirty years of age. Her figure was elegant without being correct; one could even detect a certain crookedness which seemed the result of great physical suffering. Her face was admirable, but frightfully pale, and the expression of a profound sorrow
had prematurely worn and faded it. Her toilet was exquisite, but simple and modest even to severity. An air of goodness, of sadness and of timid modesty overspread this beautiful person, and the sound of her voice had in it something humble and touching by which Consuelo felt moved. Before our heroine had time to understand that this was not the margravine, that lady herself appeared. She was then more than fifty years old; and if the portrait which stands at the head of this chapter, and which was made ten years before, was somewhat exaggerated then, it certainly was not at the time when Consuelo saw her. It even required some good-will to perceive that Countess Hoditz had been one of the beauties of Germany, although she was painted and decked with the most learned coquetry. The stoutness of age had overrun outlines concerning which the margravine persisted in deceiving herself strangely; for her bare neck and shoulders challenged the gaze with a pride which ancient sculpture alone may assume. Her hair was dressed with flowers, diamonds and feathers, like that of a young woman, and her dress was covered with jewels.

"Mamma," said the princess, who had been the cause of Consuelo's error, "this is the young person of whom Maestro Porpora told us, and who will give us the pleasure of listening to the music of his new opera."

"That is no reason," said the margravine, looking Consuelo from head to foot, "why you should hold
her hand in this way. Go and sit down by the clavichord, young lady; I am glad to see you, and you will sing when the company is assembled. Master Porpora, I salute you. I ask your pardon for leaving you. I see that something is lacking in my toilet. Daughter, talk a little to Master Porpora. He is a man of talent, whom I esteem."

Having said this in a voice rougher than that of a soldier, the fat margravine turned heavily on her heel and returned to her apartment.

She had hardly disappeared when the princess, her daughter, went to Consuelo, and took her hand again with delicate and touching considerateness, as if to say that she protested against her mother's impertinence, and then began a conversation with her and Porpora, and displayed an interest in them full of grace and simplicity. Consuelo was still more touched by this kindness when, several other persons having come in, she observed in the customary manner of the princess a coldness and reserve, timid and at the same time haughty, which she had evidently laid aside exception-ally for the maestro and herself.

When the drawing-room was nearly full, Count Hoditz, who had dined from home, came in in full dress, and, as if he had been a stranger in his own house, went respectfully to kiss the hand and inquire for the health of his noble spouse. The margravine affected to be in very delicate health. She was half reclining upon her chair, incessantly inhaling from a bottle for the vapors, and receiving the salutations with an air which
she thought languishing, but which was only disdainful; in short, she was so completely ridiculous that Consuelo, who had at first felt irritated and outraged by her insolence, ended by being inwardly amused, and promised herself a hearty laugh when she should draw her portrait for Beppo.

The princess had drawn near the clavichord, and was losing no opportunity to give Consuelo either a word or a smile, when her mother was not observing her. This situation enabled Consuelo to witness a little domestic scene which gave her the key to the relations of the household. Count Hoditz approached his step-daughter, took her hand, raised it to his lips and held it there for a few seconds with a very expressive look. The princess withdrew her hand, and spoke a few words to him with cold respect. The count did not listen to them, but, continuing to look passionately at her, said,—

"What, my lovely angel! still sad, still austere, still unapproachable? One would say that you wished to become a nun."

"It is very possible that it may end in that," replied the princess in an undertone. "The world has not treated me in a manner to inspire me with great love for its pleasures."

"The world would adore you and be at your feet if you did not affect, by your severity, to hold it at a distance; and as for the cloister, could you bear the horror of it at your age, and beautiful as you are?"

"At a happier age, and beautiful as I no longer am,
I bore the horror of a more rigorous captivity; have you forgotten it? But do not speak to me any longer, count; mamma is looking at you."

Instantly the count, as if moved by a spring, left his step-daughter, and went to Consuelo, whom he saluted gravely; then, having addressed some words to her in regard to music in general, he opened the book which Porpora had laid upon the clavichord, and, pretending to seek in it something which he wished her to explain to him, he leaned over the rack and spoke to her as follows, in a low voice:—

"I saw the deserter yesterday morning, and his wife gave me a note. I ask the lovely Consuelo to forget a certain meeting, and in return for her silence, I will forget a certain Joseph, whom I have just seen in my ante-chamber."

"This certain Joseph," replied Consuelo, whom the discovery of the conjugal jealousy and constraint had rendered very easy concerning the results of the Passau adventure, "is an artist of talent who will not remain long in ante-chambers. He is my brother, my comrade and my friend. I have no reason to blush for my feelings in regard to him, and I have nothing to ask of your lordship's generosity, save a little indulgence for my voice, and a little protection for Joseph's future debut in his musical career."

"My interest is assured to the aforesaid Joseph, as my admiration already is to your beautiful voice; but I flatter myself that a certain jest on my part was never taken seriously."
"I was never so conceited, my lord count, and besides, I know that a woman never has reason to pride herself on being made the subject of a jest of that sort."

"That is sufficient, signora," said the count, of whom the dowager never lost sight, and who was in haste to converse with some one else, that he might not give offence; "the celebrated Consuelo must know how to pardon something for the sake of the merriment of a journey, and she can count for the future on the respect and devotion of Count Hoditz."

He replaced the book upon the clavichord, and went to receive obsequiously a personage who had just been pompously announced. It was a little man whom one would have taken for a woman in disguise, so rosy, curled, bedizened, delicate, pretty and perfumed was he; it was he of whom Maria Theresa said that she would like to set him in a ring; it was also he of whom she said that she had made him a diplomat, being unable to make him anything better. It was the plenipotentiary of Austria, the prime minister, the favorite, they even said the lover, of the empress; it was no less than the celebrated Kaunitz, that statesman who held in his white hand, ornamented with rings of a thousand colors, all the delicate threads of European diplomacy.

He appeared to be listening gravely to the grave persons who approached him to speak on grave subjects. But suddenly he broke off to ask Count Hoditz,
"Who is it that I see there by the clavichord? Is it the girl of whom they told me, Porpora's protege? That poor devil Porpora! I should like to do something for him, but he is so exacting and eccentric that all the artists fear or hate him. When one speaks of him, it is as if one showed them the head of Medusa. He tells one that he sings false, another that his music is worth nothing, a third that he owes his success to intrigue. And with this barbarous frankness he expects them to listen to him and do him justice! The devil! We do not live in the woods. Frankness is no longer the fashion, and men are not led by the truth. She is not bad, the little girl; I like her face well enough. She is quite young, is she not? They say that she had a success in Venice. Porpora must bring her to me to-morrow."

"He wishes," said the princess, "that you should have the empress hear her, and I hope that you will not refuse him this favor. I ask it on my own account."

"There is nothing so easy as to have the empress hear her, and it is sufficient that your highness desires it for me to hasten to arrange it. But there is some one more powerful at the theatre than the empress. It is Madame Tesi; and even though her majesty were to take this girl under her protection, I doubt if her engagement would be signed without Madame Tesi's supreme approbation."

"They say that it is you, count, who spoil these ladies so horribly, and that they would not have so much power were it not for your indulgence."
"What would you have, princess? Every one is master in his own house. Her majesty understands perfectly that if she were to interfere by an imperial decree in the affairs of the opera, the opera would be in confusion. Now, her majesty wishes the opera to run smoothly. What is to be done if the prima donna has a cold on the day when she ought to make her debut, or if the tenor, instead of throwing himself into the bass's arms in a scene of reconciliation, boxes his ears? We have enough trouble as it is in satisfying Signor Caffariello's caprices. We are happy now that Madame Tesi and Madame Holzbauer live peaceably together. If an apple of discord is thrown on our stage, affairs will be in a worse state than ever."

"But a third woman is absolutely necessary," said the Venetian ambassador, who was a warm supporter of Porpora and his pupil; "and here is an admirable one who offers herself" —

"If she is admirable, so much the worse for her. She will inspire jealousy in Madame Tesi, who is admirable and wishes to be alone in that. She will enrage Madame Holzbauer, who wishes to be admirable also" —

"And who is not," returned the ambassador.

"She is very well born; she is of excellent family," replied Count Kaunitz ironically.

"She cannot sing two roles at the same time. She must allow the mezzo-soprano to sing her part in the operas."
"We have a Corilla who offers herself, and who is certainly the most beautiful creature in the world.".

"Has your excellency already seen her?"

"I saw her the very day she arrived. But I have not heard her. She was ill."

"You will hear this one, and you will not hesitate to give her the preference."

"It is possible. I even confess that her face, though less beautiful than Corilla's, seems to me more agreeable. Her expression is sweet and modest. But my preference will be of no use to her, the poor child! She will have to please Madame Tesi, without displeasing Madame Holzbauer; and thus far, in spite of the tender affection which unites these ladies, whoever has been approved by one has always had the fate to be vigorously opposed by the other."

"This is a grave crisis, and a most serious affair," said the princess somewhat sarcastically, when she saw the importance which the two statesmen lent to these stage intrigues. "Our poor little protege is in the balance with Corilla, and I will wager that it is Signor Caffariello who will cast his sword into one of the scales."

When Consuelo had sung, there was only one voice to declare that since Madame Hasse, nothing like her had been heard; and Count Kaunitz, approaching her, said with a solemn air,—

"Signora, you sing better than Madame Tesi; but this must be in confidence between us all, for if such a judgment were to pass the door you would be lost,
and you would not appear in Vienna this year, at any rate. Therefore, be prudent, very prudent," he added, lowering his voice and sitting down beside her. "You have to contend against great obstacles, and you will win only by great adroitness."

Thereupon, entering upon the thousand ramifications of theatrical intrigue, and acquainting her minutely with all the petty passions of the troupe, the great Kaunitz made a complete treatise on diplomacy as practised behind the footlights.

Consuelo listened to him with her great eyes wide open with astonishment, and when he had finished, as he had said repeatedly in his talk with her, "My last opera—the opera which I produced last month," she thought she had mistaken his name when she heard it announced, and that this person who was so skilled in the mysteries of stage life must be a director of the opera, or a fashionable maestro. She therefore became at her ease with him, and spoke to him as she would have done to a member of her profession. This unconstraint made her more simple and more sprightly than respect for the all-powerful minister would have allowed her to be, and Count Kaunitz thought her charming. He hardly spoke to any one but her for an hour. The margravine was greatly scandalized by such a breach of the proprieties. She hated the liberty of the great courts, accustomed as she was to the solemn formalities of the small ones. But she could not play the margravine; she was one no longer. She was tolerated and
well enough treated by the empress, because she had abjured the Lutheran faith to become a Catholic. By this act of hypocrisy, pardon could be gained for all misalliances, even for all crimes, at the court of Austria; and Maria Theresa followed in this respect the example of her father and mother, by receiving whoever wished to escape the rebuffs and contempt of Protestant Germany by taking refuge in the bosom of the Roman Church. But princess and Catholic though she was, the margravine was nothing in Vienna, and Count Kaunitz was everything.

As soon as Consuelo had sung her third air, Porpora, who knew the customs, made a sign to her, took up his music, and went out with her by a little side door without disturbing by her departure the noble persons who had been graciously pleased to open their ears to her divine accents.

"All is well," he said, rubbing his hands when they were in the street. "Kaunitz is an old fool who knows how to manage, and can help you greatly."

"And who is Kaunitz? I did not see him," said Consuelo.

"You did not see him, blockhead? He talked to you more than an hour."

"You do not mean the little man in the silver and rose waistcoat, who told me so much gossip that I thought I was listening to an old box-opener?"

"It is he himself. What is there astonishing?"

"I think it very astonishing," said Consuelo, "and he is not at all my idea of a statesman."
"That is because you do not see how states are controlled. If you did, you would think it surprising that statesmen were not all old gossips. Come, no more of that, and let us ply our trade amid this masquerade."

"Alas, master!" said the young girl, who had become thoughtful as she traversed the vast esplanade of the rampart to go towards the suburb where their modest dwelling was situated, "I was just wondering what our calling is to become among these cold or lying masks."

"What do you expect it to become?" returned Porpora, in his rough and dry tone; "it cannot become this or that. Fortunate or unfortunate, triumphant or disdained, it remains what it is, the most beautiful, the noblest calling in the world."

"Oh, yes!" said Consuelo, retarding her master's rapid pace, and taking his arm, "I understand that the nobility and dignity of our art cannot be debased or exalted at the will of the frivolous caprice or the bad taste which governs the world; but why do we allow our persons to be degraded? Why do we expose them to the disdain of the profane, or to their encouragement, which is sometimes even more humiliating? If art is sacred, are not we so likewise,—we, its priests and levites? Why do we not live in our garrets, happy in understanding and feeling music? What have we to do in those drawing-rooms where they whisper as they listen to us, where they applaud us while they think of something else,
and where they would blush to consider us as human beings a moment after we had ceased parading as players?"

"What! what!" growled Porpora, stopping and striking his cane upon the pavement, "what foolish vanity and false ideas have we in our head to-day? Who are we, and what need have we of being anything but players? They call us thus from contempt! What matters it if we are players by taste, by vocation and by the election of heaven, as they are great lords by chance, by necessity or by the election of fools? Bah! players? Not every one can be a player. Let them try, and we will see how they come out of it, these lackeys who think themselves so fine! Let the Dowager Margravine of Baireuth put on the tragic mantle, bind her ugly, fat leg in a buskin and make three steps upon the stage; we should see a pretty princess! And what do you suppose she did in her little court of Erlangen, in the days when she fancied she was reigning? She tried to pose as a queen, and she wore herself out striving to play a part beyond her powers. She was born to be a vivandiere, and by a strange mistake nature made a princess of her. Consequently she deserved to be roundly hissed when she played the role of princess preposterously. And you, foolish child, God made you a queen; he placed upon your brow a diadem of beauty, wisdom and strength. If you were set in the midst of a free, intelligent and sensible people (I will suppose that such a one could exist), you would be
queen at once, because you would have only to show yourself and sing to prove that you are a queen by divine right. But this is not the case. The world wags otherwise. It is as it is; what can you do about it? Chance, caprice, error and folly govern it. What can we change in it? The masters are deformed, filthy, foolish and ignorant for the most part. Here we are; we must kill ourselves or keep pace with it. Therefore, not being monarchs, we are artists, and we still reign. We sing the language of heaven, which is withheld from vulgar mortals; we array ourselves as kings and great men, we go upon the stage, we seat ourselves upon a mock throne, we perform a farce, we are players! Corpo di Dio! The world sees all this, and understands not a word of it. It does not see that we are the true powers of the earth, and that our reign is the only real one, while their reign and power, activity and majesty, are a parody at which the angels laugh above, and which the people hate and curse below. And the greatest princes in the world come to look at us, to take lessons in our school, and admiring us as the models of true grandeur, strive to resemble us when they pose before their subjects. Bah! the world is upside-down; they feel it clearly enough, those who govern, and if they do not distinctly comprehend it, if they do not acknowledge it, it is easy to see, from the contempt which they affect for our persons and our calling, that they experience an instinctive jealousy of our real superiority. Oh, when I am at the theatre, I see clearly!
The spirit of music unseals my eyes, and I behold behind the footlights a real court, real heroes, honest inspiration; while the true players, the vile strollers, are those who display themselves on velvet chairs in the boxes. The world is a comedy, that much is certain; and that is why I said to you just now,—Let us, my noble daughter, pass gravely through this wretched masquerade which is called the world."

"A pest on the imbecile!" cried the master, pushing away Joseph, who, eager to hear his words, had insensibly approached so close as to jostle him; "he is walking on my feet, and covering me with resin from his torch! Would you not think that he understands what we are talking about, and wishes to honor us with his approbation?"

"Come on my left, Beppo," said the young girl, making him a sign. "You annoy the master by your awkwardness." Then addressing Porpora, she said,—

"All that you say is, indeed, a noble madness, my friend, but it does not answer my thought, and the intoxication of pride does not mitigate the most trifling wound of the heart. It is little odds to me that I am a queen without a kingdom. The more I see of the great, the more their lot fills me with compassion"—

"Well, is not that what I said to you?"

"Yes, but it is not what I asked you. They love display and domination. There is their folly and their misfortune. But why, if we are greater and better and wiser than they, do we try to rival them,
pride against pride, royalty against royalty? If we possess more solid advantages, if we enjoy more desirable and more precious treasures, what is the use of the petty strife which we wage with them, and which, by placing our value and our strength at the mercy of their caprices, lowers us to their level?"

"The dignity, the holiness of art demand it," cried the master. "They have made a battle-ground of the world, and a martyrdom of our lives. We must fight, we must shed our blood at every pore, to prove to them, though we die in the effort, though we succumb beneath their hisses and their contempt, that we are gods, or legitimate kings at the least, and that they are vile mortals, brazen and cowardly usurpers."

"Oh, my master, how you hate them!" said Consuelo, shuddering with surprise and fright; "and yet you bend before them, you flatter them, you make use of them, and you go out of the back door of the drawing-room, after having respectfully served them with two or three dishes of your genius!"

"Yes, yes," replied the master, rubbing his hands with a bitter laugh, "I mock at them, I salute their diamonds and their cordons, I crush them with three chords of my own making, and I turn my back upon them, glad to go away in haste, to be rid of their stupid faces!"

"So," said Consuelo, "the apostleship of art is a combat?"

"Yes, it is a combat; honor to the brave!"

"It is a mockery of fools?"
"Yes, it is a mockery; honor to the man of wit who can make it savage!"

"It is a concentrated anger, a never-ceasing rage?"

"Yes, it is an anger and a rage; honor to the strong man who never wearies and never pardons!"

"And it is nothing more?"

"It is nothing more in this life. The glory of a crown seldom comes to true genius save after death."

"It is nothing more in this life? Master, are you quite sure?"

"I have told you so."

"In that case, it is very little," said Consuelo, sighing and raising her eyes to the brilliant stars in the pure, profound heavens.

"It is very little? You dare to say, cowardly heart, that it is very little?" cried Porpora, stopping again, and roughly shaking his pupil's arm, while Joseph, appalled, let fall his torch.

"Yes, I say that it is very little," replied Consuelo calmly and firmly. "I told you so at Venice in a circumstance of my life which was cruel and decisive. I have not changed my opinion. My heart is not made for fighting, and it could never bear the burden of hatred and anger; there is not a corner in my soul where rancor and revenge could find a lodging. Pass, evil passions, burning fevers, pass far from me! If I can possess glory and genius only on condition of yielding up my breast to you, then farewell glory and genius forever! Go crown other brows and fire
other breasts; you will not have even a regret from me!"

Joseph expected to see Porpora break out in one of those terrible yet comic rages which prolonged contradiction aroused in him. He already had hold of Consuelo's arm to pull her away from the master, and save her from one of those furious gestures with which he often threatened her, but which never brought forth anything save a smile or a tear. It was with this outburst as with all the others; Porpora stamped his foot, gave a low growl, like an old lion in his cage, and clenched his fist, shaking it vehemently towards heaven; then suddenly he dropped his arm, heaved a deep sigh, hung his head upon his breast and maintained an obstinate silence until he reached the house. Consuelo's generous serenity, her vigorous honesty, had filled him with involuntary respect. Perhaps they caused bitter self-reflection; but he did not confess it, and he was too old, too sour and too hardened in his artistic pride to change. Only, as Consuelo gave him her good-night kiss, he looked at her with a profoundly sad expression, and said to her in a smothered voice,—

"So it is all over! You are no longer an artist because the Margravine of Baireuth is an old jade, and Count Kaunitz an old gossip!"

"No, master, I did not say that," said Consuelo laughing. "I shall be able to accept the impertinences and absurdities of society gayly enough; I shall need neither hatred nor contempt for that, only
my good conscience and my good-humor. I am still an artist, and I alway shall be one. I believe in another aim, another end for art than a rivalry of pride and a vengeance of degradation. I have another motive, and it will sustain me.”

“What, what?” cried Porpora, laying upon the table of the ante-chamber his candle, which Joseph had just given him. “I wish to know what it is.”

“My motive is to make art understood and loved without making the person of the artist feared or hated.”

“Youthful dreams!” said Porpora, shrugging his shoulders. “I had them myself.”

“Well, if it is a dream,” replied Consuelo, “the triumph of pride is a dream also. As between the two, I prefer my own. Besides, I have another motive, master—the desire to obey and please you.”

“I do not believe a word of it, not a word!” cried Porpora, taking up his candle crossly and turning his back; but when his hand was on the lock of his door, he came back and kissed Consuelo, who was waiting smilingly for this return of tenderness.

In the kitchen, which was next to Consuelo’s room, there was a staircase which led to a sort of terrace six feet square at the back of the roof. It was there that she dried Porpora’s cravats and cuffs when she had washed them. Here also she would sometimes go to chat with Beppo when the master went to sleep too early for her to wish to retire herself. Not being able to do anything in her own room, which was too narrow
and low to contain a table, and fearing to awaken her old friend if she sat in the ante-chamber, she would go up on the terrace, sometimes to dream alone as she looked at the stars, sometimes to relate to her comrade in service and devotion the little incidents of the day. That evening they had a thousand things to say to each other. Consuelo wrapped herself up in a cloak, pulling the hood over her head so as not to take cold, and went to join Beppo, who was waiting for her impatiently. These midnight conversations reminded her of the interviews of her childhood with Anzoletto. She had not the moon of Venice, the picturesque roofs of Venice, the nights burning with love and hope; but she had the German night, colder and more dreamy, and the German moon, more misty and more severe. In short, it was friendship, with its charms and its blessings, without the thrills and dangers of passion.

When Consuelo had told all that had interested, wounded or amused her at the margravine’s, then it came Joseph’s turn to speak; he said,—

“You saw only the envelopes and the blazoned seals of these court secrets; but as lackeys are accustomed to read their master’s letters, it was in the ante-chamber that I learned the contents of the lives of these great people. I will not tell you half the stories of which the dowager margravine is the subject. You would shudder with horror and disgust. Ah, if the people of the world knew how their servants speak of them! If, from these fine parlors where they display themselves with such dignity, they
could hear what is said of their morals and their characters on the other side of the partition! When Porpora was explaining to us just now on the rampart his theory of war and hatred against the rulers of the earth, he was not truly dignified. Bitterness led his judgment astray. Ah, you were right in telling him that he lowered himself to the level of the nobles by pretending to crush them beneath his contempt! He had not heard the conversation of the lackeys in the ante-chamber; if he had, he would have understood that personal pride and contempt for others, concealed beneath the appearance of respect and the forms of submission, are characteristic of base and perverse souls. Porpora was very fine, very original, very powerful just now, when he struck the pavement with his cane and said, 'Courage, hatred, bitter irony, eternal revenge!' But your wisdom was finer than his rage, and I was the more struck by it because I had just seen lackeys, oppressed dastards, depraved slaves, who likewise said with sullen and deep rage, 'Revenge, craft, perfidy, eternal injury and eternal hatred for the masters who think themselves our superiors, and whose baseness we betray!' I had never been a lackey, Consuelo; but since I am one, after the fashion in which you were a boy during our journey, I have made reflections on the duties of my present condition, as you see."

"You have done wisely, Beppo. Life is a great riddle, and we must not allow the smallest fact to pass without commenting on it and understanding it. We will have guessed just so much more of it."
CHAPTER VI.

A few days later, Porpora having bestirred himself and intrigued greatly after his fashion,—that is, by threatening, grumbling or scoffing at everybody,—Consuelo was conducted to the imperial chapel by Master Reutter (young Haydn's former master and enemy), where she sang before Maria Theresa the part of Judith in the oratorio "Betulia Liberata," the poem being by Metastasio and the music by this same Reutter. Consuelo was magnificent, and Maria Theresa deigned to be satisfied with her. When the sacred concert was ended, Consuelo was invited with the other singers (Caffariello was of the number) into one of the halls of the palace, to partake of a collation presided over by Reutter. She was hardly seated between this master and Porpora, when a sound, at once rapid and dignified, coming from a neighboring gallery, thrilled all the guests but Caffariello and Consuelo, who were engaged in an animated discussion concerning the time of a chorus, which one of them would have liked faster, the other slower. "There is no one but the master himself who can settle the matter," said Consuelo, turning towards Reutter. But she found neither Reutter on her right nor Porpora on her left. Every one had risen from the table, and was ranged in line, with an expression of profound
reverence. Consuelo found herself face to face with a woman some thirty years of age, handsome from the freshness and vigor of her countenance, clad in black (the chapel costume) and accompanied by seven children, one of whom she held by the hand. That one was the heir to the throne, the young Kaiser, Joseph II., and the handsome woman with the easy manner and the affable but imposing expression was Maria Theresa.

"Ecco la Giuditta?" asked the empress of Reuter. "I am greatly pleased with you, my child," she added, scanning Consuelo from head to foot; "you gave me real pleasure, and I have never appreciated more completely the sublimity of the lines of our admirable poet than in your melodious mouth. You pronounce perfectly, and it is to that I attach more importance than to anything else. How old are you, signora? You are a Venetian? A pupil of the celebrated Porpora, whom I am glad to see here? You wish to enter the court theatre? You are fitted to shine there, and Count Kaunitz protects you."

Having thus questioned Consuelo, without waiting for her replies, and looking by turns at Metastasio and Kaunitz, who accompanied her, Maria Theresa made a sign to one of her chamberlains, who presented a sufficiently rich bracelet to Consuelo. Before the latter thought of thanking the empress, she had already passed through the room and withdrawn from the singer's sight the splendor of the imperial brow. She went away with her covey of princes and archduch-
esses, addressing a complimentary and gracious word to each of the musicians as she passed them, and leaving behind her a sort of luminous trail in all these eyes, dazzled by her glory and power.

Caffariello was the only one who preserved, or pretended to preserve, his self-possession. He resumed his discussion precisely where he had left it off; and Consuelo, putting her bracelet in her pocket without thinking of looking at it, began to dispute with him, to the great astonishment and scandal of the other musicians, who, overcome by the fascination of the imperial apparition, could not imagine how any one could think of anything else for the rest of the day. It is unnecessary to say that Porpora alone was in his heart an exception, both instinctively and deliberately, to this enthusiastic prostration. He knew how to bend fittingly before sovereigns; but in his heart he despised and derided their slaves. Reutter, when questioned by Caffariello about the proper movement of the chorus under discussion, compressed his lips with a hypocritical air; and after allowing himself to be interrogated several times, replied at last with a very cold manner,—

"I confess, sir, that I was not listening to your conversation. When Maria Theresa is before my eyes I forget the whole world, and long after she has disappeared, I remain under the influence of an emotion which does not allow me to think of myself."

"Signora Porporina does not seem overwhelmed by the signal honor which she has just procured us," said
Holzbauer, who was there, and whose servility was somewhat more restrained than that of Reutter. "It seems a simple matter for you, signora, to converse with crowned heads."

"I have never conversed with any crowned heads," tranquilly replied Consuelo, who did not understand the maliciousness of Holzbauer's insinuations; "and her majesty did not accord me that favor, for she seemed, from the manner in which she questioned me, to forbid me the honor or spare me the trouble of replying to her."

"Perhaps you desired to have a conversation with the empress?" said Porpora in a sarcastic tone.

"I never desired it," said Consuelo naïvely.

"The young lady is apparently more indifferent than ambitious," said Reutter in an icy tone.

"Master Reutter," said Consuelo, confidently and frankly, "are you dissatisfied with the way in which I sang your music?"

Reutter acknowledged that no one had ever sung it better, even in the reign of the "august and ever-to-be-regretted" Charles VI.

"In that case," said Consuelo, "do not reproach me with my indifference. I have the ambition to satisfy my masters, and to do my work well. What other could I have? What other would not be ridiculous and out of place on my part?"

"You are too modest, signora," replied Holzbauer. "There is no ambition too vast for such a talent as yours."
"I accept that as a compliment full of gallantry," said Consuelo; "but I shall not believe that I have satisfied you at all until you ask me to sing at the court theatre."

Holzbauer, caught in the trap in spite of his prudence, was seized with a fit of coughing to save himself from replying, and extricated himself with a courteous and respectful bow. Then, leading back the conversation to its first subject, he said,—

"You really possess unexampled calmness and disinterestedness. You have not even looked at the handsome bracelet with which her majesty presented you."

"Ah, true!" said Consuelo, taking it from her pocket and passing it to her neighbors, who were curious to see it and estimate its value. "It will serve to buy wood for my master's stove if I have no engagement this winter," she thought; "a very small pension would be far more useful to us than ornaments and trinkets."

"What a heavenly beauty is her majesty!" said Reutter with a sanctified sigh, as he cast a hard, sidelong glance at Consuelo.

"Yes, she seemed to me very beautiful," replied the young girl, who could not understand Porpora's nudges.

"She seemed to you?" said Reutter. "You are hard to please."

"I had hardly time to get a glance at her, she passed so quickly."
"But her dazzling intellect, that genius which is revealed in every syllable which comes from her lips!"
"I had hardly time to hear her, she said so little."
"Really, signora, you are made of bronze or of diamond. I do not know what would be sufficient to move you."
"I was greatly moved when I sang your Judith," replied Consuelo, who could be sarcastic on occasion, and who was beginning to understand the ill-will of the Viennese masters towards her.
"This girl has wit beneath her simple air," said Holzbauer in an undertone to Reutter.
"It is Porpora's school," replied the other; "contempt and sarcasm."
"If we do not take care, the old recitative and the osservato style will overwhelm us more completely even than in the past," said Holzbauer; "but be easy, I have the means to prevent this spawn of Porpora from raising her voice."

When they rose from table, Caffariello said in Consuelo's ear,—
"You see, my child, these people are all utter canaille. You will have trouble in accomplishing anything here. They are all against you. They would all be against me if they dared."
"What have we done to them?" asked Consuelo in astonishment.
"We are pupils of the greatest singing-teacher in the world. They and their creatures are our natural
enemies. They will prejudice Maria Theresa against you, and everything that you have said here will be repeated to her with malicious comments. They will say that you did not consider her handsome, and that you thought her present mean. I know all their underhand devices. But take courage, I will protect you against every one, and I think that the opinion of Caffariello in musical matters is well worth that of Maria Theresa."

"Between the spitefulness of some and the folly of others, I am finely compromised!" thought Consuelo, as she went away. "O Porpora!" she said in her heart, "I will do my best to return to the stage. O Albert! I hope that I shall not succeed."

The next day Porpora, having business in the city which would occupy him for the whole day, and seeing Consuelo somewhat pale, advised her to make an excursion outside of the city to the "Spinnerin am Kreutz" with Keller's wife, who had offered to accompany her whenever she wished. As soon as the master had gone out, the young girl said to Haydn,—

"Beppo, run quickly and hire a little carriage, and we will go to see Angèle and thank the canon. We promised to do it earlier, but my cold will serve for an excuse."

"And in what costume will you present yourself to the canon?" said Beppo.

"In this," she replied. "The canon must know and accept me in my true shape."
“Excellent canon! I shall be delighted to see him!”

“And I also.”

“Poor, good canon! I grieve to think”—

“What?”

“That his head will be altogether turned.”

“Why so? Am I a goddess? I did not know it.”

“Consuelo, remember that he was three-fourths mad when we left him.”

“And I tell you that it will be enough for him to know that I am a woman, and to see me as I am, for him to recover control of his will and become once more what God made him, a reasonable being.”

“It is true that dress has some effect. Thus, when I saw you here transformed into a young lady, after being accustomed for a fortnight to treating you as a boy, I felt a strange fright, a curious constraint, for which I could not account; and it is certain that if I had allowed myself to fall in love with you during the journey—but you will say that I am talking nonsense.”

“Certainly, Joseph, you are talking nonsense; and what is more, you are wasting time in chattering. We have ten leagues to make in going to the priory and returning. It is eight o'clock in the morning, and we must be back at seven this evening for the master's supper.”

Three hours later Beppo and his companion alighted at the gate of the priory. It was a fine day; the canon was gazing at his flowers with a melancholy air.
When he saw Joseph, he uttered a cry of joy and sprang to meet him; but he stopped stupefied when he recognized his dear Bertoni in the dress of a woman.

"Bertoni, my beloved child," he cried, with holy simplicity, "what means this masquerade, and why have you come disguised in this way? This is not the carnival" —

"My venerated friend," said Consuelo, kissing his hand, "your reverence must pardon me for having deceived you. I have never been a boy; Bertoni never existed, and when I had the happiness of knowing you, I was really disguised."

"We thought," said Joseph, who feared to see the canon's amazement turn to anger, "that your reverence never was a dupe to our innocent imposition. This disguise was not designed to deceive you; it was a necessity imposed by circumstances, and we always supposed that you had the generosity and the delicacy to lend yourself to it."

"You thought so?" said the canon, amazed and frightened; "and you, Bertoni,—I mean young lady, —you thought so also?"

"No, canon," replied Consuelo, "I never thought so for a moment. I saw perfectly that your reverence had no suspicion of the truth."

"And you do me justice," said the canon, in a somewhat severe but profoundly sad tone. "I cannot compound with the truth, and if I had suspected your sex, I should not have continued, as I did, to
urge you to remain with me. There has indeed been, in the neighboring village, and even among my own people, a vague rumor, a suspicion which caused me to smile, so obstinately mistaken was I concerning you. It was said that one of the two little musicians who sang mass on the feast of the patron saint was a woman in disguise. And then they said that this story was a spiteful invention of the shoemaker Gottlieb to frighten and pain the curate. In fact, I myself contradicted the rumor authoritatively. You see that I was completely your dupe, and one could not have been more so."

"There has been a great misunderstanding," said Consuelo, with the assurance of dignity, "but no one has been a dupe, canon. I do not think that I departed for a moment from the respect which was due you, or from the proprieties imposed by honesty. I was on the highway at night, with no resting-place, worn out with fatigue and hunger after a long journey on foot. You would not have refused hospitality to a beggar. You granted it to me in the name of music, and I paid you in music. If I did not go away in spite of you the next morning, it was because of unforeseen circumstances which dictated to me a duty above all others. My enemy, my rival, my persecutor, fell from the skies at your door, and, deprived of care and aid, had a right to my aid and care. Your reverence will recollect the rest; you know that if I profited by your kindness, it was not on my own account. You know also that I went
away as soon as my duty was accomplished; and if I have come back to-day to thank you for the goodness with which you loaded me, it is because honesty made it my duty to undeceive you myself, and to give you the explanations necessary for the dignity of both of us."

"There is in all this," said the canon, half won over, "something mysterious and very extraordinary. You say that the unhappy creature whose child I adopted is your enemy, your rival. Who are you yourself, Bertoni? Pardon me if that name always comes to my lips, and tell me what I must call you in future."

"I am called Porporina. I am a pupil of Porpora, and a singer. I belong to the theatre."

"Ah, very good!" said the canon, with a deep sigh. "I ought to have guessed it from the manner in which you played your part; and as for your prodigious talent in music, I can no longer be astonished at it. May I ask if Signor Beppo is your brother — or your husband?"

"Neither. He is my brother in heart, — nothing but my brother, canon; and if my soul had not felt itself as chaste as your own, I should not have sullied with my presence the sacredness of your dwelling."

Consuelo had, in telling the truth, an irresistible accent, to the power of which the canon submitted, as pure and upright souls always submit to that of sincerity. He felt as if relieved from an enormous weight; and as he walked slowly between his two young proteges, he questioned Consuelo with a gentle-
ness and a return of sympathetic affection which he forgot little by little to combat in himself. She told him rapidly and without naming any one the principal circumstances of her life,—her betrothal to Anzoleto at her mother's deathbed, his infidelity, Corilla's hatred, the outrageous designs of Zustiniani, Porpora's advice, the departure from Venice, the attachment which Albert had formed for her, the offers of the Rudolstadt family, her own hesitations and scruples, her flight from the Castle of the Giants, her meeting with Joseph Haydn, her journey, her fright and compassion at Corilla's confinement, her gratitude for the protection extended by the canon to Anzoleto's child; finally, her return to Vienna, and even the interview which she had had the day before with Maria Theresa. Joseph had never known until then the whole of Consuelo's story; she had never spoken to him of Anzoleto, and the few words which she had just said of her past affection for this wretch did not strike him very forcibly; but her generosity towards Corilla, and her anxiety for the child, caused him so deep an impression that he turned away to conceal his tears. The canon did not restrain his own. Consuelo's narrative, concise, energetic and sincere, produced the same effect upon him as if he had read a beautiful romance; indeed, he never had read a romance, and this was the first experience that introduced him to the vivid emotions of the lives of others. He had sat down upon a bench to hear the better, and when the young girl had finished, he cried,—
"If all this is true, as I believe, as it seems to me that I feel in my heart, by the will of heaven, you are a holy maiden. You are St. Cecilia returned to earth! I confess frankly that I have never had any prejudice against the stage," he added, after a moment's silence and reflection, "and you prove to me that one can earn one's salvation there as well as elsewhere. Certainly, if you continue as pure and generous as you have thus far been, you will have deserved heaven, my dear Bertoni. I tell you what I think, my dear Porporina."

"Now, canon," said Consuelo rising, "tell me about Angèle before I take leave of your reverence."

"Angèle is well, and is growing finely," replied the canon. "The gardener's wife takes the greatest care of her, and I see her continually being carried about in my garden. She will grow up beneath my eyes, among my flowers, like one flower more, and when the time has come to make a Christian soul of her, I will not fail to cultivate her. You may trust me for that, my children. What I have promised in the face of heaven, I will keep religiously. It seems that her mother will not dispute this care with me, for although she is in Vienna, she has not once sent to ask news of her child."

"She may have done it indirectly, and without your knowing it," replied Consuelo; "I cannot believe that a mother could be so indifferent as that. But Corilla is intriguing for an engagement at the court theatre. She knows that her majesty is very strict,
and does not accord her protection to persons of blemished reputations. It is to her interest to conceal her faults, at least until her engagement is signed. Let us keep her secret for her."

"And yet she is your rival!" cried Joseph; "and they say that she will win through her intrigues, that she is already slandering you, that she has represented you as Count Zustiniani's mistress. They spoke of it at the embassy, Keller told me so. They were indignant at it; but they were afraid she would persuade Count Kaunitz, who listens readily to stories of this sort, and who cannot say enough for Corilla's beauty"—

"She said that?" said Consuelo, blushing with indignation; then she added calmly, "It must needs have been so; I should have expected it."

"But only a word is necessary to expose her calumnies," returned Joseph, "and I will say it. I will say that"—

"You will say nothing, Beppo; it would be a cowardice and a barbarity. You will say nothing, either, canon; and if I wished to speak, you would prevent me, would you not?"

"Angelic soul!" cried the canon. "But consider that this secret cannot be one very long. It needs but a word from the servants and peasants who witnessed and may report the facts, for it to be known within a fortnight that the chaste Corilla was delivered here of a fatherless child, which she abandoned into the bargain."
"Within a fortnight Corilla or I will be engaged. I should not like to gain the victory over her by an act of vengeance. Until then, Beppo, be silent, or I will withdraw my esteem and friendship from you. And now, farewell, canon. Tell me that you pardon me, give me once more your fatherly hand, and I will withdraw before your servants see me in this dress."

"My servants may say what they like, and my benefice may go to the devil, if heaven so wills. I have just received an inheritance which gives me courage to brave all the thunders of the ordinary. Therefore, my children, do not take me for a saint; I am tired of obedience and constraint; I wish to live honestly and without silly fears. Since I no longer have the spectre of Bridget at my side, and especially since I find myself possessed of an independent fortune, I feel brave as a lion. And now come and breakfast with me; we will baptize Angèle afterwards, and then we will have music until dinner time. André, Joseph!" he cried to his servants, as he led the young people into the priory, "come and see Signor Bertoni metamorphosed into a lady. You would never have expected that? Nor I, either. Well, never mind your surprise; make haste and serve breakfast."

The repast was delicious, and the young folks saw that if a great change had taken place in the canon's mind, it was not an abandonment of the habit of good living which had caused it. Afterwards the child was
taken to the priory chapel. The canon put on his cassock and surplice and performed the ceremony. Consuelo and Joseph filled the offices of godmother and godfather, and the name of Angèle was bestowed upon the little girl. The rest of the afternoon was devoted to music, and then came the farewells. The canon grieved that he could not keep his friends to dinner; but he yielded to their reasons, and consoled himself with the idea of seeing them in Vienna, whither he was soon to go, to spend part of the winter. While the carriage was getting ready, he took them into the hothouse, to show them several new plants with which he had enriched his collection. The darkness was coming on, but the canon, whose sense of smell was very acute, had made but a few steps beneath the roof of his transparent palace, when he cried,—

"I perceive an extraordinary perfume here! Can it be that my gladiolus has flowered? No; that is not the odor of my gladiolus. The strelitzia has no perfume, and the aroma of the cyclamens is less pure and penetrating. What has happened here? If my volkameria were not dead, alas! I should think that it was its odor which I am breathing. Poor plant! I must not think of it again!"

But suddenly the canon uttered a cry of surprise and admiration, as he saw rising before him in a box the most magnificent volkameria that he had ever seen in his life, all covered with its bunches of little white roses lined with pink, the sweet perfume of
which filled the greenhouse, and overcame all common odors about it.

"Is it a miracle? Whence comes this foretaste of paradise, this flower from the garden of Beatrice?" he cried in a poetic rapture.

"We brought it in our carriage with all possible care," replied Consuelo; "allow us to offer it to you in reparation for a frightful imprecation which fell from my mouth one day, and which I shall always repent."

"Oh, my dear child! what a gift, and with what delicacy it is bestowed!" said the canon, deeply touched. "Oh, beloved volkameria! you shall have an especial name, such as I am wont to give to the most splendid specimens in my collection. You shall be called Bertoni, to consecrate the memory of a being who exists no longer, and whom I loved with a father's heart."

"Good father," said Consuelo, pressing his hand, "you must become accustomed to loving your daughters as much as your sons. Angèle is not a boy" —

"And Porporina is my daughter also," said the canon. "Yes, my daughter — yes, yes, my daughter!" he repeated, looking alternately at Consuelo and the volkameria-Bertoni with tearful eyes.

At six o'clock, Joseph and Consuelo had returned to the house. The carriage had set them down at the entrance to the suburb, and nothing betrayed their innocent escapade. Only, Porpora was astonished that Consuelo had not a better appetite after a walk in
the beautiful country about the capital. The canon's breakfast had perhaps made Consuelo somewhat dainty that day. But the open air and the drive gave her an excellent sleep, and the next day she felt in better voice and more courageous than she had been since she arrived at Vienna.
CHAPTER VII.

In her uncertainty regarding her future, Consuelo, believing that she was perhaps finding an excuse or an explanation of the indecision of her heart, at last decided to write to Count Christian of Rudolstadt, to inform him of her position towards Porpora, of his efforts to cause her to return to the stage, and of the hope which she still cherished of seeing him fail. She spoke to him frankly, explaining to him all the gratitude, devotion and submission that she owed to her old master, and, confiding to him the fears which she felt in regard to Albert, begged him earnestly to dictate to her the letter which she ought to send to the latter to maintain him in a condition of calmness and confidence. She ended by saying: "I have asked your lordships for time to question myself and decide. I am resolved to keep my word, and I can swear before God that I feel the strength to close my heart and mind to all opposing fancies, as to every new love. And yet, if I return to the stage, I take a step which is apparently an infraction of my promises, a formal renunciation of the hope of keeping them. Your lordship must judge me, or rather judge of the fate which directs and the duty which governs me. I see no means of avoiding them without crime. I expect from you advice superior to my own
reason; but can it be contrary to that of my conscience?"

When this letter was sealed and intrusted to Joseph to send off, Consuelo felt more tranquil, as always happens in a painful situation when one has found means to gain time and to put off the fatal moment. She therefore prepared to pay with Porpora what he considered an important and decisive visit to the very famous and much-praised imperial poet, the Abbe Metastasio.

This illustrious person was then about fifty years of age. His face was handsome, his manner gracious, his conversation charming, and Consuelo would have felt a lively sympathy for him if she had not had the following conversation with Porpora as she went towards the house which was inhabited, on different stories, by the imperial poet and the barber Keller.

"Consuelo (it was Porpora who spoke), you will see a man of good appearance, with a black and flashing eye, a brilliant complexion and a fresh and smiling mouth, but who positively insists that he is the victim of a slow, painful and dangerous disease,—a man who eats, sleeps, works and grows stout like any one else, but who pretends that he is a prey to insomnia, want of appetite, exhaustion and consumption. Do not have the stupidity, when he complains to you of all his ills, to say that they do not appear, that he looks extremely well, or to utter any other platitude of the sort; for he wishes to be pitied, to cause anxiety and to be mourned before his time. Neither must you
have the imprudence to speak to him of death or any dead person; he is afraid of death and does not wish to die. But still, do not be so clumsy as to say, when you take leave of him, 'I hope that your precious health will soon be better!' for he wishes people to think him dying; and if he could persuade others that he is dead, he would be greatly pleased, so long as he did not believe so himself."

"That is a very silly mania for a great man," replied Consuelo. "What must I say to him, since I cannot speak of getting well or dying?"

"You must speak of his illness, ask him a thousand questions, listen to all the details of his suffering and his discomfort, and in conclusion tell him that he does not take enough care of himself, that he forgets himself, that he never spares himself, that he works too much. In this way we will dispose him in our favor."

"Yet are we not going to ask him to write a poem for you to set to music that I may sing it? How can we advise him not to write, and at the same time beg him to write for us as quickly as possible?"

"All that will come out right in the conversation; it is only necessary to say things at the proper time."

The master wished his pupil to know how to make herself agreeable to the poet; but his natural causticity not allowing him to conceal the absurdities of others, he himself committed the mistake of preparing Consuelo for a clear-sighted examination and that sort of secret contempt which makes us unamiable and
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unsympathetic to those who need to be flattered and admired without reserve. Incapable of fawning and deceit, it pained her to hear Porpora sympathizing with the poet’s sufferings, and mocking him cruelly beneath the appearance of a sincere commiseration for his imaginary ills. She blushed several times, and could only preserve an awkward silence, in spite of her master's signs to second him.

Consuelo's reputation was beginning to spread in Vienna. She had sung in several houses, and her admission to the imperial theatre was a question which caused some excitement in musical circles.

Metastasio was all-powerful; if Consuelo gained his regard by skilfully flattering his vanity, he might charge Porpora with the task of setting to music his "Attilio Regolo," which he had kept in his drawer for several years. It was therefore very necessary for the pupil to plead for the master, for the master did not at all please the imperial poet. It was not for nothing that Metastasio was an Italian. Italians are not readily deceived about each other. He had too much acuteness and penetration not to know that Porpora had a very moderate admiration for his dramatic genius, and that, right or wrong, he had more than once rudely censured his timid character, his selfishness, and his false sensibility. Consuelo's icy reserve, and the small interest which she appeared to take in his illness, did not seem to him what they really were,—the constraint of respectful pity. He saw almost an insult in it, and if he had not been a
slave to politeness and good-breeding, he would have refused positively to hear her sing; he consented, however, after some affectation, objecting the excitement of his nerves and his fear of being agitated. He had heard Consuelo sing his oratorio, “Judith,” but he needed to form an idea of her in the dramatic style, and Porpora insisted strongly.

“But what can I do? How shall I sing,” said Consuelo, in a low voice, “if I am to take care not to agitate him?”

“You must agitate him, on the contrary,” replied the master in the same tone. “He likes to be aroused from his torpor, for when he is deeply moved, he feels in the mood to write.”

Consuelo sang an air from “Achille in Scyro,” Metastasio’s best dramatic work, which was set to music by Caldara in 1736, and performed at the wedding of Maria Theresa. Metastasio was as greatly struck by her voice and method as when he first heard her; but he was resolved to shut himself up in the same cold and constrained silence which she had preserved during his relation of his ills. He did not succeed; for the worthy man was an artist before all else, and when a noble interpreter awakens in the soul of a poet the accents of his muse and the memories of his triumphs, no rancor can last.

Metastasio endeavored to defend himself against this all-powerful charm. He coughed frequently, moved about on his chair like a man distracted by suffering, and then, suddenly recalled to memories
more touching than those of his glory, he hid his face in his hands, and began to sob. Porpora, hidden behind his chair, signed to Consuelo not to spare him, and rubbed his hands together with a sarcastic expression.

These tears, which were abundant and sincere, quickly reconciled the young girl to the cowardly abbe. As soon as she had finished her air, she approached him to kiss his hand and to say, this time with a sincerity which carried conviction, —

"Alas, sir, how proud and happy should I be to have moved you thus, if I did not feel remorse for it! The fear of having harmed you poisons my joy!"

"Ah, my dear child!" cried the abbe, wholly won over, "you cannot know the happiness and the pain you have given me. Never until now have I heard a woman's voice which recalled to me that of my dear Marianna! And you recalled it to me so vividly, as well as her manner and expression, that I thought I was listening to her herself! Ah, you have broken my heart!" and he began to sob again.

"His excellency is speaking of a very illustrious person, whom you should always take as a model, the celebrated and incomparable Marianna Bulgarini," said Porpora to his pupil.

"The Romanina?" cried Consuelo; "ah! I heard her in my childhood in Venice; it is my first great memory, and I shall never forget it."

"I see that you have heard her, and that she left an ineffaceable impression upon you," replied Metas-
tasio. "Ah, my child! imitate her in everything,—in her acting as in her singing, in her goodness as in her greatness, in her strength as in her devotion. Ah, how beautiful she was when she represented the divine Venus, in the first opera which I wrote at Rome! It was to her that I owed my first triumph."

"And it was to your excellency that she owed her greatest successes," said Porpora.

"It is true that each of us contributed to the other's fortune. But I never was able to do enough to repay her. Never did such affection, such heroic perseverance and such delicate tenderness dwell in the soul of a mortal. Angel of my life, I shall weep for thee eternally, and I only long to join thee!"

Here the abbe wept again. Consuelo was deeply moved, and Porpora pretended to be; but in spite of himself, his expression remained ironical and disdainful. Consuelo observed it, and resolved to reproach him for this distrust or insensibility. As for Metastasio, he saw only the effect which he wished to produce, to touch the good Consuelo, and arouse her admiration. He was of the true race of poets; that is, he wept more readily before others than in the privacy of his chamber, and never felt his affections or his sorrows so acutely as when he related them eloquently. Carried away by the occasion, he told Consuelo of that part of his youth in which Romanina played so prominent a role, the services which that generous friend rendered him, the care which she took of his old parents, the maternal sacrifice which she
accomplished in separating from him and sending him to Vienna to make his fortune; and when he had reached the scene of their farewell, when he had told, in the most carefully chosen and tender language the way in which his dear Marianna, heart-broken and her breast heaving with sobs, had exhorted him to abandon her and to think only of himself, he cried, —

"Ah, if she had only divined the future which awaited me far from her, if she had foreseen the pain, the struggles, the terrors, the anguish, the reverses, and even the fearful disease which were to be my lot here, she would have spared herself as well as me so frightful a sacrifice! Alas, little did I think that our farewell was eternal, that we were never to meet again upon earth!"

"What! you never met again?" said Consuelo, whose eyes were wet with tears, for Metastasio's words had an extraordinary charm; "she never came to Vienna?"

"Never!" cried the abbe, with an air of the deepest dejection.

"After such devotion, she had not the courage to come here and join you?" said Consuelo, at whom Porpora was vainly casting terrible glances.

Metastasio did not reply; he seemed buried in his thoughts.

"But she may still come," continued Consuelo, "and she certainly will. This happy event will restore your health."
The abbe turned pale and made a gesture of terror. The maestro coughed with all his might, and Consuelo, recollecting that Romanina had been dead for ten years, perceived the frightful blunder which she had committed in recalling the idea of death to this friend who, as he said, only longed to join his beloved in the tomb. She bit her lips, and soon withdrew with her master, who carried away from the visit only vague promises and civil speeches, as usual.

"What have you done, scatterbrains?" said he to Consuelo, when they were outside.

"A very stupid thing, I see now. I forgot that Romanina was no longer alive; but do you believe, master, that this man, so loving and so bereaved, is as much attached to life as it pleases you to say? I imagine, on the contrary, that the regret at losing his friend is the only cause of his illness, and that if some superstitious terror makes him dread the last hour, he is none the less horribly and sincerely weary of living."

"Child!" said Porpora, "one is never tired of living when one is rich, honored, flattered and in good health; and when one has never had other cares and other passions than these, he lies and plays a comedy when he curses life."

"Do not say that he never had any other passions. He loved Marianna, and I now understand why he gave this beloved name to his god-daughter and niece, Marianna Martines"—

Consuelo nearly added, "Joseph's pupil," but stopped suddenly.
“Go on,” said Porpora, “his god-daughter, his niece, or his daughter.”

“They say so; but what do I care?”

“That would prove at least that the dear abbe consoled himself quickly enough for the absence of his beloved. But when you asked him (may the devil take your stupidity!) why his dear Marianna had not come to join him, he did not answer you, and I will reply in his place. It is quite true that Romanina rendered him the greatest services which a man can accept from a woman. She fed him well, lodged him, clad him, aided and supported him upon every occasion; she helped him greatly to be appointed poeta cesareo. She made herself the servant, the friend, the sick-nurse, the benefactress of his old parents. All that is true. Marianna had a noble heart; I knew her well. But what is also true is, that she was ardently desirous of joining him, by obtaining admission to the court theatre. And what is still more true is that the abbe did not in the least wish it, and never permitted it. Of course letters passed between them, the tenderest in the world. I have no doubt that those of the poet were masterpieces. They will be printed; he knew it well. But while he told his beloved friend that he was sighing for the day of their reunion, and was laboring ceaselessly to cause this happy day to shine upon their existence, the old fox was arranging matters so that the unwelcome cantatrice could not break in upon his illustrious and lucrative love affair with another Marianna (that name is a lucky one in his life),
the noble and all-powerful Countess of Althan, the favorite of the last Kaiser, with whom, they say, there has been a secret marriage. Consequently, it seems to me in very bad taste to tear his hair about this poor Romanina, whom he allowed to die of sorrow while he was making madrigals in the arms of the ladies of the court."

"You criticise and judge all this with cruel cynicism, dear master," said Consuelo sadly.

"I speak as does all the world; I invent nothing. It is the voice of the public which proclaims all this. Bah! all the actors are not on the stage; it is an old proverb."

"The public is not always the best informed, and in any event, it is never the most charitable. Do you know, master, I cannot believe that a man of so much talent can be nothing more than an actor upon the stage. I saw him weep real tears, and even though he had to reproach himself with having forgotten his first Marianna too quickly, his remorse could only add to the sincerity of his present regret. I prefer to think him weak rather than base in all this. They made him an abbe, they loaded him with benefits; the court is sanctimonious, and his liaison with an actress would have created a great scandal. He did not exactly wish to deceive and desert Romanina; he was afraid, he hesitated, he gained time, she died"—

"And he thanked Providence for it," added the pitiless master. "And now our empress sends him boxes and rings with her cipher in brilliants, pens of
lapis-lazuli with laurels in brilliants, jars of massive gold-filled with Spanish tobacco, seals made of a single large brilliant; and all this glitters so brightly that the poet's eyes are always bathed in tears."

"And can all this console him for having broken Romanina's heart?"

"Very likely not. But the desire for these things induced him to do it."

"What a pitiful vanity! As for me, I could hardly keep from laughing when he showed us his golden chandelier, with the ingenious device which the empress had engraved upon it, 'Perche possa risparmiare i suoi occhi!'

"That is, indeed, extremely delicate, and it made him cry out with emphasis, 'Affetuosa espressione valutabile più assai dell' oro!' Oh, the poor man!"

"Oh, the unfortunate man!" said Consuelo with a sigh. And she went in very sad, for she had involuntarily made a terrible comparison between the situation of Metastasio towards Marianna and her own towards Albert. "To wait and die!" she said to herself; "is this the fate of those who love passionately? To cause others to wait and die! Is that the destiny of those who pursue the chimera of glory?"

"What are you dreaming about?" said the master. "It seems to me that everything is going well enough, and that in spite of your stupidity you won Metastasio."

"The conquest of a weak heart is a poor one," she replied, "and I do not believe that the man who
lacked courage to gain Marianna admission to the imperial theatre will find much for me."

"Metastasio governs the empress in matters of art."

"Metastasio will never advise the empress in matters of art anything but what she seems to desire, and it is useless to talk of her majesty's favorites and counsellors. I saw Maria Theresa's features, and I tell you, master, that Maria Theresa is too politic to have lovers, too absolute to have friends."

"Well," said Porpora thoughtfully, "you must win the empress herself; you must sing in her apartments some morning and have her speak and talk to you. They say that she cares only for virtuous people. If she has that eagle glance with which they credit her, she will judge you and prefer you. I will make every effort to have her see you in private."
CHAPTER VIII.

One morning while Joseph was polishing the floor of Porpora's ante-chamber, he forgot that the partition was thin and the maestro's sleep light, and allowed himself to hum mechanically a musical phrase which came into his head, and which he accompanied rhythmically with the movement of his brush on the floor. Porpora, annoyed at being wakened so early, tossed about on his bed, tried to go to sleep again, and finally, haunted by this fine, fresh voice which sang accurately and easily a graceful and well-constructed phrase, put on his dressing-gown and went to look through the key-hole, half charmed by what he heard, and half enraged at the artist who had the impertinence to come and compose in his house before he rose. But what a surprise! It was Beppo who was singing and dreaming and working out his idea as, with a preoccupied air, he went about his household duties.

"What are you singing there?" cried the master in tones of thunder as he threw open the door.

Joseph, dazed like a man suddenly awakened, was on the point of throwing away the broom and brush and flying from the house; but if he had long since given up all hope of becoming Porpora's pupil, he still thought himself very fortunate in hearing Consuelo study with the master, and in receiving the lessons of
this generous friend in secret, when the old man was absent. For nothing in the world, therefore, would he have been driven away, and he made haste to lie, to quiet Porpora's suspicions.

"What am I singing?" he said, with a terrified expression; "alas, master, I do not know!"

"Can any one sing what he does not know? You lie!"

"I assure you, master, that I do not know what I was singing. You frightened me so that I have already forgotten. I know very well that I was greatly to blame for singing near your room. I am absent-minded; I thought myself alone, far from here, and I said to myself, Now you can sing; no one is here to say, 'Be silent, you fool; you are singing false; you never can learn music.'"

"Who told you that you sang false?"

"Everybody."

"And I tell you that you do not sing false," cried the master angrily. "Who tried to teach you music?"

"Master Reutter, whom my friend Keller shaves, and who drove me from the cantorei, saying that I should never be anything but an ass."

Joseph already knew enough about the master's antipathies to know that he thought little of Reutter, and he had even counted upon the latter to get him into Porpora's good graces, in case his old master should speak ill of him to the Italian. But Reutter, in the few visits which he had paid to the maestro,
had not deigned to recognize his former pupil in the ante-chamber.

"Master Reutter is an ass himself," murmured Porpora between his teeth; "but that is not the question," he continued aloud. "I wish you to tell me when you heard this phrase," and he sang that which he had heard from Joseph ten times in succession.

"Ah, that!" said Haydn, who was beginning to augur somewhat better regarding the master's intentions, but who did not yet trust them wholly; "that is something which I heard the signora sing."

"Consuelo, my daughter? I do not know it. So then, you listen at doors?"

"Oh, no, sir! but music goes from room to room, and one hears in spite of himself."

"I do not like to be served by people who have so much memory, and go about singing our unpublished ideas in the street. You will pack up your things to-day, and to-night you can look for another situation."

This sentence fell like a thunderbolt upon poor Joseph, and he went to weep in the kitchen, where Consuelo soon came to hear the story of his misadventure, and to reassure him by promising to arrange his difficulty.

"What, master," said she to Porpora, as she took him his coffee, "are you going to send away this poor fellow, who is industrious and faithful, because he happened to sing in tune for the first time in his life?"
"I tell you that this lad is a schemer and an impudent liar; that he has been sent here by some enemy who wishes to learn the secret of my compositions, and appropriate them before they have seen the light. I would wager that the rascal already knows my new opera by heart, and that he copies my manuscript when my back is turned. How often have I been betrayed in this way! How many of my ideas have I not recognized in those pretty operas which attracted all Venice, while they yawned at mine, and said, 'This dotard Porpora gives us for new, motives which are hummed on every corner!' I tell you, the fool betrayed himself this morning; he sang a phrase which certainly belongs to no one but Meinherr Hasse, and which I have recollected very well. I will write it down; and to revenge myself, I will put it in my new opera, to repay him the trick which he has so often served me."

"Beware, master! Perhaps that phrase is not unpublished. You do not know all the contemporary music by heart."

"But I have heard it all, and I tell you that it is too remarkable a phrase not to have struck me."

"Many thanks, then, master; I am proud of the compliment, for the phrase is mine."

This was not the truth, for the phrase in question had really bloomed that morning in Haydn's brain; but she had her cue, and had already learned it by heart, so as not to be taken unawares by the sus-
Consuelo. Porpora did not fail to ask her for it. She sang it at once, and pretended that the day before she had tried to set to music, to please Abbe Metastasio, the first lines of his pretty pastoral:

Già riede la primavera,
Col suo fiorito aspetto;
Già il grato zeffiretto
Scherza fra l'erbe e i fior.
Tornan le frondi agli alberi,
L'herbette al prato tornano,
Sol non ritorna a me
La pace del mio cor.  

"I had sung my first phrase a number of times," she continued, "when I heard Master Beppo in the ante-chamber, repeating it all wrong, like a very canary bird. This made me impatient, and I begged him to stop; but an hour later he was humming it on the staircase, so disfigured that it took away all desire to continue my air."

"And how comes it that he sings it so well to-day? What happened while he was asleep?"

"I will explain that, master. I remarked that the lad had a fine and, indeed, a true voice, but that he sang false from lack of ear, reasoning and memory.

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1 Now smiling spring returning,
   Her flowering face displays;
   While 'midst the opening blossoms
   The gentle zephyr strays,
   The trees their leaves recover,
   The fields in green are drest,
   But peace, alas! will never
   Revive my weary breast.
I amused myself by making him place his voice and sing a scale after your method, to see if it would succeed, even with a poor musical organization."

"It must succeed with every organization," cried Porpora. "There is no such thing as a false voice, and a practised ear will never"

"That is what I said to myself," interrupted Consuelo, who was in haste to gain her point, "and it happened so. I succeeded, by the system of your first lesson, in making this blockhead understand what Reutter and all the Germans could never have given him an idea of. After that, I sang him my phrase, and for the first time he understood it exactly. He was able to sing it at once; and he was so astonished, so amazed, that he has not been able to close his eyes all night. It was a revelation to him. 'Oh, signora!' he said to me, 'if I had only been taught in this way, I might perhaps have learned as well as another. But I confess that I have never been able to understand anything that they taught at the cantorei at St. Stephen's.'"

"Then he has really been at the cantorei?"

"And he was shamefully driven away; you have only to speak of him to Master Reutter! He will tell you that Beppo is a scamp, and that you can do nothing with him in music."

"Here, you! Come here!" cried Porpora to Beppo, who was weeping behind the door. "Come and stand beside me; I wish to see if you understood the lesson which you took yesterday."
Then the sarcastic master began to teach Joseph the elements of music in the diffuse, pedantic and involved manner which he ironically ascribed to the German masters.

If Joseph, who knew too much not to understand these elements in spite of the care which Porpora took to render them obscure, had allowed his intelligence to be seen, he would have been lost. But he was acute enough not to fall into the trap, and he resolutely displayed a stupidity which, after a trial long persevered in by the master, reassured the old man completely.

"I see that you are very dull," said he, arising and continuing a feint by which the two others were not deceived. "Go back to your broom, and try not to sing any more, if you wish to remain in my house."

But two hours later, spurred by the love of a profession which he had neglected after practising it so long without a rival, and unable to resist any further, Porpora once more became a singing teacher, and called Joseph back. He explained to him the same principles, but this time with that clearness and that powerful and profound logic which classifies and gives the reason for everything; in short, with that incredible simplicity which belongs only to men of genius.

This time Haydn saw that he might appear to understand, and Porpora was delighted with his triumph. Although the master was instructing him in things which he had studied for a long while, and
which he knew as well as possible, this lesson was interesting and useful to him, for it showed him how to teach; and as during the hours when Porpora did not need him he still went to give lessons in the city, that he might not lose his few pupils, he resolved to profit by this excellent demonstration without delay.

"Ah, master!" said he to Porpora, continuing his assumption of simplicity after the lesson was over; "I like that music better than the other, and I think I could learn it. But as for that of this morning, I would rather go back to the cantorei than attempt it."

"And yet it is the same that they taught you at the cantorei. Are there two kinds of music, you fool? There is only one kind of music, as there is only one God."

"Oh, I beg your pardon, sir! there is Master Reutter's music, which bores me, and yours, which does not."

"That is a great honor to me, Master Beppo," said Porpora laughing, and by no means displeased by the compliment.

From that day Haydn received lessons from Porpora, and they soon reached the study of the Italian method of singing, and the fundamental ideas of lyric composition. This was what the noble youth had longed for so ardently and sought so courageously. He made such rapid progress that the master was charmed, surprised and sometimes frightened. When Consuelo saw his old distrust reviving, she would point out to her young friend how he must act in
order to banish it. A little stupidity, a feigned inattention, were sometimes necessary to awaken in Porpora the genius and passion for teaching, as is always the case with great faculties, which are made more forcible and vigorous by obstacles. Joseph was often obliged to assume laziness and carelessness to obtain, by pretending to take them regretfully, these precious lessons which he dreaded to see neglected. The pleasure of contradicting and the desire of conquering, would then excite the teasing and quarrelsome temper of the old singing teacher, and never did Joseph receive better instruction than that which was wrung, clear, eloquent and passionate, from the anger and irony of the master.

While Porpora's house was the theatre of these occurrences, so frivolous in appearance, but the results of which played so important a part in the history of art, since the genius of one of the most fertile and celebrated composers of the last century there received its development and sanction, events with a more immediate influence on Consuelo's life were going on without. Corilla, more active in asserting her own interests and more skilful in pushing them, was gaining ground every day, and, being perfectly recovered from her confinement, was already discussing the terms of her engagement at the court theatre. A robust singer, but an indifferent musician, she was far more satisfactory than Consuelo to the director and his wife. They felt that the learned Porporina would look critically, if only in her secret thoughts,
upon the operas of Master Holzbauer and the talent of his wife. They also knew that great artists, badly supported and compelled to interpret poor ideas, do not, overwhelmed as they are by the violence done to their taste and conscience, always preserve that mechanical ardor and confident spirit which mediocrities maintain in the interpretation of the worst compositions, and amid the painful cacophony of works half learned and half understood by their comrades.

Even when, thanks to miracles of will and energy, they succeed in triumphing over their role and their surroundings, their envious companions are not grateful to them, while the composer divines their inward suffering, and is always afraid of seeing this factitious inspiration cool suddenly and endanger his success. The public itself, astonished and troubled without knowing why, feels the monstrous anomaly of a genius enslaved by a vulgar idea, struggling beneath the heavy chains which load it, and it is almost with a sigh that it applauds its valiant efforts. Holzbauer was quite conscious, for his own part, of the small liking which Consuelo had for his music. She had been so unfortunate as to reveal it to him one day when, disguised as a boy and thinking that she was addressing one of those persons whom one meets on a journey for the first and last time in one's life, she had spoken frankly, little suspecting that her fate as an artist would soon be for some time in the hands of the canon's unknown friend. Holzbauer had not forgotten it, and wounded to the bottom of his heart,
he had sworn, beneath a calm, reserved and courteous air, to bar her career. But as he did not wish Porpora and his pupil, and what he called their coterie, to be able to accuse him of a mean vengeance and a childish sensitiveness, he had told no one but his wife of his meeting with Consuelo and the adventure at the rectory breakfast. This meeting did not seem to have impressed the director in the least; he appeared to have forgotten the features of the little Bertoni, and not to suspect at all that the strolling singer and Porporina were one and the same person. Consuelo was at a loss to account for his conduct in this respect.

"I must have been very perfectly disguised on my journey," she said in confidence to Beppo, "and the arrangement of my hair must have changed my face greatly, for this man, who looked at me there with such clear and penetrating eyes, not to recognize me now."

"Count Hoditz did not know you, either, when he met you at the ambassador's," replied Joseph, "and perhaps if he had not received your note he would never have recognized you."

"Yes, but Count Hoditz has such a vague and haughty manner of looking at people that he really does not see them. I am sure that he would not have suspected my sex at Passau if Baron Trenck had not informed him of it; whereas Holzbauer, when he first saw me here, and each time since that he has met me, has looked at me with that same scrutinizing and
curious expression which I noticed at the rectory. From what motive does he generously keep silent concerning an adventure which might have the most disagreeable consequences for my reputation if he chose to put an evil interpretation upon it, and which might even embroil me with my master, since he thinks that I came to Vienna comfortably, quietly and without romantic adventures? For this same Holzbauer secretly depreciates my voice and my method, and does everything to avoid being forced to engage me. He hates me, and works against me, and yet, having in his hands more effective arms against me, he does not use them! I cannot understand it."

The reason was soon made clear to Consuelo; but before reading what happened to her, it must be remembered that a numerous and powerful clique was working against her, that Corilla was beautiful, that the prime minister Kaunitz saw a great deal of her, that he loved to dabble in these stage intrigues, and that Maria Theresa, as a recreation from her graver labors, liked to hear him chatter about such affairs, mocking inwardly the littleness of that great mind, and taking for her own part a certain interest in this gossip which showed her in little, but with absolute fidelity, a reproduction of the picture then presented by the three most important courts in Europe, governed by intrigues of women,—her own, that of the Czarina and that of Madame de Pompadour.
CHAPTER IX.

As everyone knows, Maria Theresa gave audience once a week to whoever wished to speak to her,—a paternally hypocritical custom, which her son, Joseph II., always observed religiously, and which is still in force at the Court of Austria. Besides this, Maria Theresa readily accorded special audiences to those who wished to enter her service. Never was a sovereign more easy of access.

Porpora had at last obtained that musical audience in which the empress, having a near view of Consuelo's honest face, might perhaps take a marked liking to her. This was what the master hoped, at least. Knowing her majesty's strictness in regard to good morals and respectability of life, he believed that she would surely be struck by the air of truth and modesty which shone from Consuelo's whole person. They were ushered into an apartment where a clavichord had been placed, and where the empress arrived half an hour after them. She had been receiving some persons of distinction, and was still in court dress, as she is shown upon the sequins stamped with her likeness,—in a brocade gown and the imperial mantle, with the crown on her head and a little Hungarian sabre at her side. She was really handsome in this costume,—not imposing and of an
ideal nobility, as it was the affectation of her courtiers to describe her, but fresh, good-natured, with an open and happy expression and an air of confidence and boldness. She was really the King Maria Theresa whom the Hungarian magnates, sword in hand, had proclaimed enthusiastically; but she was, at first sight, a good king rather than a great king. She had no coquetry, and the familiarity of her manners revealed a calm soul, devoid of feminine astuteness. When one looked at her for a long while, and especially when she questioned any one persistently, one could see keenness and even a cold craft upon this smiling and affable face. But it was a masculine craft, an imperial craft, if you like; it was never gallantry.

"I will hear your pupil in a little while," she said to Porpora; "I know already that she has great knowledge and a magnificent voice, and I have not forgotten the pleasure which she gave me in the oratorio 'Betulia Liberata.' But I wish first to speak a little with her in private. I have several questions to ask her, and as I count on her frankness, I hope to be able to grant the protection which she asks."

Porpora hastened to go out, reading in her majesty's eyes a wish to be altogether alone with Consuelo. He retired to a neighboring gallery, where he was extremely cold; for the court, ruined by the expenses of the war, was governed with great economy, and the character of Maria Theresa seconded in this respect the necessities of her position.

When she found herself face to face with the daugh-
ter and mother of Cæsars, the heroine of Germany and the greatest woman then in Europe, Consuelo yet felt neither troubled nor timid. Whether the unconcern of an artist made her indifferent to the armed pomp which glittered about Maria Theresa, even in her costume, or whether her noble and frank soul felt itself the equal of any moral greatness, she waited in a calm attitude and with perfect serenity of mind until it should please her majesty to question her.

The empress sat down upon a sofa, pulled a little at her jewelled baldrick, which hurt her white, round shoulder, and began thus:—

"I repeat, my child, that I think a great deal of your talent, and I have no doubt that you have studied well, and have intelligence in your profession; but you must have heard that in my eyes talent is nothing without good conduct, and that I value a pure heart more highly than a great genius."

Consuelo listened to this exordium, but it did not seem to her a reason for praising herself; and as, moreover, she felt a mortal repugnance to boasting of the virtues which she practised so simply, she waited in silence until the empress should question her more directly concerning her principles and her purposes. Yet it was the moment to pay the sovereign a well-turned compliment upon her angelic piety, her sublime virtues and the impossibility of behaving badly with her example before one.

Poor Consuelo never thought of profiting by the occasion. Delicate souls fear to insult a great char-
acter by giving it vulgar praise; but sovereigns, if they are not the dupes of this coarse incense, are at any rate so much in the habit of breathing it that they exact it as a simple act of submission and etiquette. Maria Theresa was astonished at the young girl's silence, and assuming a less gentle tone and a less encouraging air, she continued,—

"Now, I know, my dear child, that your conduct is somewhat loose, and that, without being married, you live here in strange intimacy with a young man of your own profession whose name I do not now remember"—

"I can only reply one thing to your imperial majesty," replied Consuelo at last, stung by the injustice of this rude accusation; "it is that I have never committed a single fault the memory of which can prevent my supporting your majesty's look with humble pride and grateful joy."

Maria Theresa was struck by the haughty and strong expression which Consuelo's face assumed at that moment. Five or six years earlier she would no doubt have observed it with pleasure and sympathy; but Maria Theresa was already a queen to the very bottom of her heart, and the employment of her power had given her a kind of intoxication which impelled her to bend and break everything before her. Maria Theresa wished to be the only strong being who breathed in her dominions, both as sovereign and as woman. She was, therefore, offended by the proud smile and frank look of this child who was but a worm
to her, and with whom she had thought to amuse herself for a moment, as with a slave whom one causes to talk from curiosity.

"I asked you, signora, the name of that young man who lives with you at Master Porpora's," she went on in an icy tone, "and you have not replied to me."

"His name is Joseph Haydn," replied Consuelo, without being disturbed.

"Well, he entered Porpora's service for love of you, in the character of valet, and Master Porpora is ignorant of the true motives of this young man's conduct, while you encourage them,—you who are not ignorant of them."

"I have been calumniated to your majesty. This young man has never cared for me (Consuelo believed that she spoke truth), and I even know that his affection is bestowed elsewhere. If there has been a little deceit towards my respectable master, the motives have been innocent, and perhaps praiseworthy. Love of art alone induced Joseph to enter Porpora's service; and since your majesty deigns to judge the conduct of the least of her servants, as I think it impossible that anything can escape her clear-sighted justice, I am sure that she will acknowledge my sincerity when she condescends to judge my cause."

Maria Theresa was too acute not to recognize the accent of truth. She had not yet lost all the heroism of her youth, although she was already on that fatal decline, absolute power, which leads to the extinction of faith in the most generous souls.
"My child, I believe you speak truly, and your appearance is chaste; but I see in you a great pride and a distrust of my maternal goodness which makes me fear that I can do nothing for you."

"If it is with Maria Theresa's maternal goodness that I have to do," replied Consuelo, touched by this expression, the triteness of which she did not understand, "I am ready to kneel before her and implore her; but if"

"Go on, my child," said Maria Theresa, who, without being conscious of it, would have liked to bring this strange person to her knees; "tell all your thought."

"If it is with the imperial justice of your majesty, having nothing to confess, and as a pure breath does not sully the air which the gods themselves breathe, I feel all the pride necessary to be worthy of your majesty's protection."

"Porporina," said the empress, "you are an intelligent girl, and your originality, which might be offensive to another, does not displease me. I have already told you that I think you frank, and yet I know that you have something to confess to me. Why do you hesitate? You love Joseph Haydn, and your relations are pure, I am willing to believe it. But you love him, since only for the pleasure of seeing him oftener (let us even suppose that it is only from anxiety for his progress in music with Porpora) you recklessly risk your reputation, which is the most sacred, the most important thing in the lives of us
women. But you fear, perhaps, that your master, your adopted father, will not consent to your union with a poor and obscure artist. Perhaps, also,—for I wish to believe all your assertions,—the young man has bestowed his affections elsewhere, and you, being proud, as I see that you are, conceal your inclination, and sacrifice your good name generously, without gaining any personal satisfaction from it. Well, my dear child, in your place, if I had the opportunity which now presents itself, and which may never occur again, I would open my heart to my sovereign and say to her: 'You who have all power and wish only what is good, I intrust my fate to you; remove all obstacles. By a word you can change the disposition of my guardian and of him I love; you can make me happy, rehabilitate me in public esteem and place me in a position sufficiently honorable for me to dare to aspire to enter the service of the court.' That is the confidence which you ought to have in the maternal interest of Maria Theresa, and I am sorry that you have not understood it.”

"I understand very well," said Consuelo to herself, "that by a strange caprice, the despotism of a spoiled child, you, the great queen, wish the Zingarella to embrace your knees, because it seems to you that her knees do not bend before you, and it is an unexampled phenomenon. Well, you will not have that amusement, unless you prove to me that you clearly deserve my homage."

She had made these reflections, and others besides,
while Maria Theresa was lecturing her. She had said to herself that she was staking Porpora's fortune on a cast of the dice, on a fancy of the empress, and that it was well worth while to humble herself a little for the sake of her master's future. But she did not wish to humble herself in vain. She did not wish to play a part with a crowned head, who was certainly as expert in that respect as she was. She would wait until Maria Theresa made herself really great in her eyes, that she might be sincere herself in bowing before her.

When the empress had finished her homily, Consuelo replied: —

"I will answer all that your majesty has deigned to say to me if she orders me."

"Yes, speak, speak!" said the empress, irritated by this impassible self-possession.

"I will say to your majesty that your mouth is the first to tell me that my reputation is compromised by Joseph Haydn's presence in my master's house. I thought myself of too little importance to incur the criticisms of the public, and if any one had told me, as I came to the imperial palace, that the empress herself judged and condemned my position, I should have thought I dreamed."

Maria Theresa interrupted her. She thought she detected irony in this reflection of Consuelo's.

"You must not be astonished," she said, in a somewhat emphatic tone, "that I am concerned about the smallest details in the lives of the beings for whom I am responsible to God."
"One may be astonished at what one admires," replied Consuelo adroitly; "and if great things are the simplest, they are at any rate rare enough to surprise us at first sight."

"You must understand, moreover," went on the empress, "the especial concern which I have for you and for all the artists with whom I love to ornament my court. The stage is, in every country, a school for scandal, an abyss of vileness. I have the intention, praiseworthy certainly, if not realizable, of restoring before men, and of purifying before God, the class of actors which is the object of blind contempt and even of the religious proscription of some nations. While in France the Church closes the doors against them, I wish the Church here to take them to her bosom. I have never admitted to my Italian theatre, my French comedy, or my national theatre, any one but persons of proved morality or those resolved in good faith to reform their conduct. You must know that I see that my actors are married, and that I even hold their children at the baptismal font, being resolved to encourage by every possible favor the legitimacy of births and the faithfulness of married couples."

"If we had known that," thought Consuelo, "we would have begged her majesty to be Angèle's godmother in my place."

"Your majesty sows that she may reap," she replied aloud; "and if I had a fault upon my conscience, I should be glad to find in her a confessor as pitiful as God himself. But" —
“Go on with what you were about to say a moment ago,” returned Maria Theresa haughtily.

“I was about to say,” Consuelo resumed, “that being ignorant that I was blamed in connection with Joseph Haydn’s residence in the house in which I dwell, I had not shown great devotion to him in exposing myself to it.”

“I understand,” said the empress; “you deny everything.”

“How can I confess what is not true?” said Consuelo. “I have no inclination for my master's pupil, nor any desire to marry him; and if it were otherwise,” she thought, “I would not accept his love upon an imperial decree.”

“Then you wish to remain unmarried?” said the empress rising. “Well, I declare to you that it is not a position which offers me all the necessary guarantees on the point of honor. It is unseemly, moreover, for a young person to appear in certain roles and represent certain passions when she has not the sanction of marriage and the protection of a husband. It depended only upon you to win the day over your rival, Madame Corilla, of whom I heard much good, but who does not pronounce Italian nearly so well as you. But Madame Corilla is married and the mother of a family, which places her in a better situation in my eyes than that in which you persist in remaining.”

“Married!” poor Consuelo could not help murmuring between her teeth, amazed to see what a
virtuous person the very virtuous and clear-sighted empress preferred to her.

“Yes, married,” replied the empress, in a positive tone, and somewhat irritated at this doubt concerning her protege. “She recently gave birth to a child whom she placed in the care of a respectable and laborious clergyman, Canon ———, that he might give it a Christian education; and no doubt that worthy man would not have undertaken such a task if he had not been sure that the mother had a right to all his esteem.”

“No doubt,” replied the young girl, consoled, in the midst of her indignation, by seeing that the canon was approved instead of being censured for this adoption, into which she had forced him.

“This is how history is written, and this is how kings are enlightened,” she said to herself when the empress had gone out of the room with great dignity, and making her a slight bend of the head for a salutation. “Well, at the bottom of the worst things there is always some good, and the errors of men have sometimes a good result. They will not take his good priory away from the canon, and Angèle will be left with him; Corilla will be converted if the empress takes it in hand; and I did not get upon my knees before a woman who is no better than I.”

“Well!” cried Porpora in a smothered voice, as he stood shivering in the gallery, and wringing his hands from fear and hope; “I hope we have won.”

“We have lost, on the contrary, my good master.”
"How calmly you say that! May the devil take you!"

"You must not say that here, master! The devil is in very bad odor at this court. When we have passed the last door of the palace, I will tell you all."

"Well, what is it?" said Porpora impatiently, as soon as they were on the rampart.

"Do you recollect, master, what we said about the great minister Kaunitz as we left the margravine's mansion?"

"We said that he was an old gossip. Well, has he been against us?"

"Without any doubt; and now I say to you that her majesty the empress, Queen of Hungary, is a gossip too."
CHAPTER X.

Consuelo related to Porpora only what it was necessary for him to know of Maria Theresa's motives in the sort of disgrace into which our heroine had fallen. The rest would have grieved and annoyed the master, and perhaps irritated him against Haydn without doing any good. Nor did she wish to tell her young friend what she concealed from Porpora. She justly despised these vague accusations which she knew had been forged for the empress' ear by two or three personal enemies, and which had not at all circulated among the public. The ambassador, Corner, to whom she thought it best to confide everything, agreed with her in this; and, to prevent malice from seizing on these embryo calumnies, he arranged matters wisely and liberally. He induced Porpora to bring Consuelo to live in his hotel, and Haydn entered the service of the embassy, and was admitted to the table of the private secretaries. In this way the old master escaped from the cares of poverty, Joseph continued to render Porpora certain personal services which enabled him to be much with the master and to take his lessons, and Consuelo was sheltered from malignant suggestions.

In spite of these precautions, Corilla was engaged at the imperial theatre in place of Consuelo, who had
not been able to please Maria Theresa. This great queen, while amusing herself with the stage intrigues which Kaunitz and Metastasio half related to her with delightful wit, wished to play the part of a crowned providence among all these knights of the buskin, who, in her presence, assumed the roles of repentant sinners or converted demons. It is needless to say that among these hypocrites, who received small salaries and little presents for their hypocrisy, were found neither Caffariello nor Farinelli, Tesi nor Madame Hasse, nor any of the great artists whom Vienna possessed in turn, and whose fame and talent gained pardon for many things. But the minor parts were sought by persons resolved to flatter this devout and moral fancy of her majesty’s; and her majesty, who brought her spirit of political intrigue to bear upon everything, made the marriages and conversions of her actors a subject of pot-house diplomacy. In Favart’s “Memoirs”—that interesting romance which actually occurred behind the scenes—may be read the difficulty which he experienced in sending to Vienna actresses and opera-singers whom they had ordered from him. They wanted them cheap, and what was more, as virtuous as Vestals. I believe that this witty purveyor of Maria Theresa, after seeking through all Paris, could not find a single one, which speaks rather for the frankness than for the virtue of our operatic maidens.

Maria Theresa wished to give to the amusement which she took in all this an edifying pretext, worthy of the beneficent dignity of her character. Monarchs
are ever posing, and great monarchs more, perhaps, than others. Porpora was fond of saying so, and he was not mistaken. The great empress, a zealous Catholic and an exemplary mother of a family, had no repugnance to conversing with a prostitute, to catechising her, to provoking her strange confidences, that she might have the glory of leading a repentant Magdalen to the feet of the Saviour. Her majesty's privy purse, placed between vice and contrition, made these miracles of grace numerous and infallible. Therefore, Corilla, weeping and prostrate, if not in person (I doubt whether she could have bent her savage pride to this comedy), at least by power of attorney to Count Kaunitz, who guaranteed her new virtue, must inevitably win the day over a young girl, decided, haughty and strong, as was the immaculate Consuelo. Maria Theresa cared only, in her dramatic proteges, for virtues to the authorship of which she could lay claim. Virtues which had grown or been preserved by themselves did not greatly interest her; she did not believe in them, as her own virtue should have caused her to do. Moreover, Consuelo's attitude had irritated her; she thought her strong-minded and argumentative. It was too much pride and presumption on the part of a little Bohemian to wish to be estimable and virtuous without the assistance of the empress. When Count Kaunitz, who pretended to be very impartial while he depreciated one to the advantage of the other, asked her majesty whether she had granted Consuelo's request, Maria Theresa replied, "I
was not satisfied with her principles; do not speak to me of her again." And all was said. The voice, the face and even the name of Porporina were completely forgotten.

A single word had been necessary and at the same time sufficient to explain to Porpora the cause of her disgrace. Consuelo had been obliged to tell him that her position as a single woman seemed inadmissible to the empress. "And Corilla?" cried Porpora, when he heard of her admission. "As far as I could understand or guess from her majesty's words, Corilla passes here for a widow."

"Oh, three times, ten times, a hundred times a widow, indeed!" replied Porpora, with a bitter laugh. "But what will they say when they know the truth, and when they see her proceed to new and numberless widowhoods? And this child that I have been told of, which she left near Vienna with a canon; this child which she wished to present to Count Zustiniani, and which Count Zustiniani advised her to recommend to the paternal affection of Anzoleto?" — "She will laugh at all that with her comrades; she will narrate it, according to her custom, in cynical language; she will chuckle, in the privacy of her chamber, over the fine trick that she has played upon the empress." — "But if the empress learns the truth?" — "The empress will not learn it. Sovereigns are surrounded, I fancy, by ears which serve as ante-chambers to their own. Many things remain outside, and nothing enters the sanctuary of the imperial ear but what the porters allow to
pass."—"Besides," added Porpora, "Corilla will always have the resource of going to confession, and it will be Count Kaunitz who sees that she performs her penance."

The poor maestro gave vent to his ill-humor in bitter jests, but he was profoundly chagrined. He lost hope of securing the performance of the opera which he had ready, and all the more because he had written it to a libretto which was not by Metastasio, who had a monopoly of the court poetry. He was not without some suspicion of the small pains which Consuelo had taken to win the good graces of the sovereign, and he could not help showing her his anger. To crown these misfortunes, the Venetian ambassador had the imprudence, one day when he saw him burning with joy and pride at the rapid development which Joseph Haydn's musical intelligence was showing under his instruction, to tell him the whole truth about this young man, and to show him his pretty instrumental compositions, which were beginning to be known and admired by amateurs. The master cried out that he had been deceived, and fell into a fearful rage. Fortunately, he did not suspect that Consuelo was the accomplice of this stratagem, and Signor Corner, seeing the storm that he had aroused, hastened to ward off his suspicions from this quarter by a good lie. But he could not prevent Joseph from being banished for several days from the master's chamber; and it required all the ascendancy which his protection and his services gave him over
the latter to restore the pupil to favor. Porpora bore him a grudge for a long while, and they even say that he took pleasure in making him buy his lessons by the humiliation of a service longer and more minute than was necessary, since the ambassador's lackeys were at his disposal. Haydn did not rebel, and, by force of gentleness, patience and devotion, always encouraged and exhorted by the good Consuelo, and always studious and attentive, he succeeded in disarming his rough master, and in receiving from him all that he could and wished to learn.

But Haydn's genius tended in another direction from that in which he had thus far worked, and the future father of the symphony confided to Consuelo his ideas concerning orchestral scores, developed to gigantic proportions. Those gigantic proportions, which seem to us now so simple and modest, might have passed, a hundred years ago, for the Utopia of a madman as readily as for the revelation to genius of a new era. Joseph still distrusted himself, and it was not without terror that he confessed to Consuelo the ambition which tormented him. Consuelo was also a little frightened by it at first. Until that time, the instrumental part had had but a secondary role, or, when it was separated from the human voice, its methods were not complicated. Still, there was so much calmness and gentle perseverance in her young associate, he showed in all his conduct and opinions so real a modesty and so coldly conscientious a search for truth, that Consuelo, unable to consider him rash,
decided to believe him wise and to encourage him in his projects. It was at this time that Haydn composed a serenade for three instruments, which, with two of his friends, he went about performing beneath the windows of the dilettanti whose attention he wished to call to his works. He began with Porpora, who, without knowing the names of the author and players, went to his window, listened with pleasure and applauded unreservedly. This time the ambassador, who was also listening and in the secret, was upon his guard and did not betray the young composer. Porpora did not like pupils, while taking his singing lessons, to allow themselves to be distracted by other thoughts.

Porpora received at this time a letter from the excellent contralto Hubert, that one of his pupils, who was called Porporino, was attached to the service of Frederick the Great. This eminent artist was not, like the master's other pupils, so infatuated with his own merit that he forgot all that he owed him. Porporino had received from him a kind talent which he had never sought to modify, and with which he had always been successful; it was to sing in a broad, pure style, without creating ornaments, and without departing from the wholesome traditions of his teacher. He was especially admirable in adagios. Porpora had, therefore, a preference for him which he had great trouble in concealing in the presence of the fanatical admirers of Farinelli and Caffariello. He admitted that the facility, the brilliancy and the flexibility of these great virtuosos were more dazzling,
and would more swiftly delight an audience enamoured of marvellous difficulties; but he said to himself that his Porporino never made concessions to poor taste, and that people never tired of listening to him, although he always sang in the same manner. It seems that Prussia did, in fact, never tire of him, for he was successful there during his whole musical career, and died there at an advanced age, after a residence of more than forty years.

Hubert’s letter told Porpora that his music was greatly liked at Berlin, and that if he would come there Porporino would engage to have his new compositions received and performed. He urged him strongly to leave Vienna, where the artists were continually victims to the intrigues of cabals, and to recruit for the court of Prussia a distinguished cantatrice who could sing the maestro’s operas with him. He gave high praise to the enlightened taste of his king, and the honorable protection which he extended to musicians. “If this plan pleases you,” he said in finishing his letter, “write me your demands at once, and within three months I will guarantee to obtain conditions for you which will at least secure you a peaceful existence. As for glory, my dear master, you only need to write, and we will sing in such a way as to make you appreciated; and I hope that the fame of it will reach Dresden.”

This last phrase caused Porpora to prick up his ears like an old war-horse. It was an allusion to the triumphs which Hasse and his singers were winning at
the court of Saxony. The idea of counterbalancing
the glory of his rival in the north of Germany pleased
the master so much, and he felt at that moment such
disgust for Vienna, the Viennese, and their court, that
he replied without hesitation to Porporino, authorizing
him to make proposals for him at Berlin. He wrote
his ultimatum, and made it as modest as possible, to
avoid a failure. He spoke to Hubert of Porporina
with the highest praise, saying that she was his sister
in education, genius and heart, as she was in name,
and urged him to arrange her engagement on the best
possible conditions. All this was done without con-
sulting Consuelo, who was informed of this new reso-
lution after the departure of the letter.

The poor child was frightened at the mere
name of Prussia, and that of the great Frederick
causéd her to shudder. Since the adventure of the
deserter, she had thought of this much-praised mon-
arch only as an ogre and a vampire. Porpora scolded
her for the little joy which she showed at the idea of
this new engagement; and as she could not tell him
the story of Karl and the exploits of Herr Mayer, she
hung her head and submitted to the lecture.

When she reflected, however, she found in this
project some relief from her position. Her return
to the theatre would be postponed, since the affair
might fall through, and in any case Porporino asked
for three months to settle it. Meanwhile, she could
dream of Count Albert's love, and find the resolution
to return it. Whether she ultimately accepted the
possibility of a union with him, or felt unable to decide upon it, she could at any rate keep honestly and frankly the engagement which she had taken to think of it without distraction or constraint.

She resolved to defer announcing this news to her friends at Reisenburg until Count Christian had replied to her first letter; but this reply never came, and Consuelo was beginning to believe that old Rudolstadt had given up all idea of this misalliance, and was endeavoring to induce Albert to renounce it, when Keller furtively slipped into her hand a little letter, written in these terms:—

You promised to write to me; you have done it indirectly by telling my father of the embarrassment of your present situation. I see that you are fulfilling a duty from which I should think it a crime to withdraw you, although my good father is frightened for my sake at the consequences of your obedience to Porpora. As for me, Consuelo, I am frightened at nothing thus far, since you explain to my father your regret and dread of the course which you are urged to follow; this is a sufficient proof to me that you do not intend lightly to sentence me to eternal despair. No, you will not break your word, you will try to love me! What care I where you are, what your employment, what rank glory or prejudice assigns you, or what obstacles keep you from me, if I can hope and you can tell me to hope! I suffer much, no doubt, but I can suffer still more, without failing, so long as you have not extinguished in me the spark of hope.

I am waiting; I know how to wait! Do not fear to frighten me by taking time to reply to me; do not reply to me under the influence of a fear or pity to which I do not wish to owe any consideration. Weigh my fate in your heart and my soul in your own, and when the moment has come, when you are sure
of yourself, whether you are in the cell of a nun or on the stage of a theatre, tell me never to trouble you or to come to you, and I will be at your feet or silent forever, as you will.

ALBERT.

"Oh, noble Albert!" cried Consuelo, raising this paper to her lips, "I feel that I love you! It would be impossible not to love you, and I will not hesitate to tell you so. I wish to recompense with my promise the constancy and devotion of your love."

She began to write at once; but Porpora's voice caused her hastily to conceal in her breast both Albert's letter and the reply which she had begun. During her whole day she did not find an instant's leisure and quiet. It seemed as if the acute old man had guessed her desire to be alone, and had set deliberately about thwarting her. When night came Consuelo felt more calm, and understood that so grave a determination required a longer trial of her own feelings. It would not do to expose Albert to the fatal effects of a change of mind on her part. She read the young count's letter a hundred times, and saw that he was as much afraid of a hasty promise as of the pain of a refusal. She resolved to think over her reply for several days; Albert himself seemed to exact it.

The life which Consuelo was then leading at the embassy was very quiet and orderly. To avoid scandal, Corner had the delicacy never to visit her in her apartments, or to invite her, even though accompanied by Porpora, into his own. He met her only at Madame
Wilhelmina's, where he could speak to her without compromising her, and where she obligingly sang in small companies. Joseph was also invited there to take part in the music. Caffariello came there often, Count Hoditz sometimes and Metastasio rarely. All three deplored Consuelo's failure, but no one of them had had the courage or perseverance to fight for her. Porpora was indignant, and had great difficulty in concealing it. Consuelo endeavored to calm him, and to persuade him to accept men with their faults and their weaknesses. She urged him to work, and thanks to her, he recovered from time to time a few rays of hope and enthusiasm. She only encouraged him in the irritation which prevented him from taking her into society to sing. Happy at being forgotten by the great, whom she had seen with fright and repulsion, she devoted herself to serious study, to sweet reveries, cultivated the now calm and holy friendship of the good Haydn, and said to herself every day, as she took care of the old professor, that if nature had not made her for a life without emotion and movement, it had made her still less for the emotions of vanity and the activity of ambition. She had dreamed, she still dreamed in spite of herself, of livelier joys of the heart and of more extended and acute intellectual pleasures; but as the world of art which she had imagined so pure, sympathetic and noble appeared to her eyes only under a terrible aspect, she preferred an obscure and retired life, gentler affections and a laborious solitude.
Consuelo had no new reflections to make concerning the offer of the Rudolstadtts. She could not conceive any doubt of their generosity, of the unalterable purity of the love of the son, of the indulgent tenderness of the father. She needed no longer to consult her reason or her conscience. Both spoke in favor of Albert. She had triumphed this time over the memory of Anzoleto without an effort. A victory over love gives strength for every other. She no longer feared temptation; she felt safe from every fascination. But with all that, passion did not speak strongly for Albert in her soul. She had still to question her heart, at the bottom of which a mysterious calm received the idea of an absorbing love. Seated at her window, the innocent child would often watch the young towns-people passing. Bold students, noble lords, melancholy artists and gay cavaliers were all the objects of a chastely and seriously childish scrutiny on her part. "Come," she said to herself, "is my heart fanciful and frivolous? Am I capable of loving suddenly, madly and irresistibly at first sight, as many of my companions at the scuola boasted or confessed to each other that they did? Is love a magic lightning-stroke which stuns our being and turns us violently away from our sworn affections or our peaceful ignorance? Is there among these men who sometimes raise their eyes to my window a glance which disturbs and fascinates me? Does this one, with his fine figure and proud bearing, seem to me more noble or handsomer than Albert? Does
this other, with his beautiful hair and elegant costume, drive away the picture of my betrothed? Should I like to be that richly dressed lady whom I see passing there in her carriage, with a superb gentleman who holds her fan and hands her her gloves? Is there anything in all that which causes me to tremble, to blush, to palpitate or to dream? No, no, really! Speak, my heart! I consult you and give you free rein. I hardly know you, alas! I have had so little time to care for you since I was born. I had not accustomed you to being thwarted. I allowed you to rule my life, without considering the prudence of your impulses. You were broken, my poor heart, and now that conscience controls you, you no longer dare to live, you can no longer reply. Speak! Awake and choose! What, still silent? You will not tell me what you wish?—No. You do not want Anzoleto?—Oh, no! Then you are calling Albert? It seems to me that you say yes.” And Consuelo would leave her window every day with a fresh smile on her lips and a clear and gentle fire in her eyes.

After a month, she replied to Albert with a cool head, very slowly, and almost feeling her pulse at every letter which she wrote.

“I love nothing but you, and I am almost sure that I love you. Now let me contemplate the possibility of our union. Think of it yourself; let us between us find a way to afflict neither your father nor my master, and not to become selfish in becoming happy.”
She joined to this note a short letter to Count Christian, in which she told him of the quiet life which she was leading, and of the respite which Porpora's new plans afforded her. She asked him to find means to disarm Porpora, and to inform her of them in a month. A month would still remain to prepare the master, before the Berlin affair was settled.

Consuelo, having sealed these two notes, placed them on her table and went to sleep. A delicious calmness had entered her soul, and not for a long while had she enjoyed so deep and agreeable a sleep. She awoke late, and hastened to rise to see Keller, who had promised to come for her letter at eight o'clock. It was nine, and as she dressed with great haste, Consuelo was frightened to see that the letter was no longer where she had placed it. She sought it everywhere in vain. She went out to see if Keller was not waiting for her in the ante-chamber. Neither Keller nor Joseph was there, and as she was returning to her own room to seek it still further, Porpora came in and looked at her severely.

"What are you looking for?" he said.
"A sheet of music that I have mislaid."
"That is not true; you are looking for a letter."
"Master" —
"Be silent, Consuelo! You do not know how to lie yet; never learn."
"Master, what have you done with this letter?"
"I gave it to Keller."
“Why did you give it to him, master?”

“Because he came for it. You told him to do so yesterday. You cannot dissemble, Consuelo, or else my ears are sharper than you think.”

“Well,” said Consuelo resolutely, “what have you done with my letter?”

“I have told you; why do you ask me again? I thought it very unseemly for a young girl, virtuous as you are, and, I presume, wish to be always, to give her letters secretly to her hairdresser. To prevent this man from having a bad idea of you, I calmly handed him your letter, and charged him for you to send it off. He will not think, at any rate, that you are hiding a guilty secret from your adopted father.”

“Master, you are right, you have done well. Pardon me.”

“I pardon you; let us say no more about it.”

“And— you read my letter?” said Consuelo, with a timid and coaxing air.

“What do you take me for?” replied Porpora, in a terrible tone.

“Forgive me for all this,” said Consuelo, kneeling before him, and trying to take his hand; “let me open my heart to you” —

“Not a word more!” replied the master, pushing her away, and going into his own room, the door of which he slammed noisily behind him.

Consuelo hoped that when this first storm had blown over she could quiet him and have a decisive explanation with him. She felt strong enough to tell
him her whole mind, and she flattered herself that she would in this way hasten the accomplishment of her projects; but he refused any explanation, and his resolution was unshakable on this point. In other respects he was as friendly as usual, and from that day had even more brightness in his wit and courage in his heart. Consuelo augured well from this, and waited confidently for her reply from Reisenburg.

Porpora had told the truth; he had burned Consuelo's letters without reading them. But he had kept the envelope, and had substituted a letter of his own to Count Christian. He thought that by this bold expedient he had saved his pupil, and preserved old Rudolstadt from a sacrifice above his strength. He believed that he had performed towards him the duty of a faithful friend, and towards Consuelo that of a strong and wise father. He did not see that he might be giving Count Albert his death-blow. He hardly knew him. He felt sure that Consuelo had exaggerated, and that this young man was neither so much in love nor so ill as she imagined. In short, he believed, like all old men, that love is short-lived, and that sorrow never kills.
CHAPTER XI.

While awaiting an answer which was never to come, since Porpora had burned her letter, Consuelo continued the studious and calm life which she had adopted. Her presence attracted to Madame Wilhelmina's drawing-room some very distinguished persons whom she had great pleasure in often meeting there, among them Baron Frederick von Trenck, for whom she took a great liking. He had the delicacy not to approach her as an old acquaintance the first time that he saw her again, but to be presented to her, after she had sung, as a profound admirer of what he had just heard. When she saw this handsome and generous young man, who had saved her so bravely from Mayer and his band, Consuelo's impulse was to hold out her hand. The baron, who did not wish her to commit an imprudence from gratitude towards him, quickly took her hand respectfully, as if to lead her to a chair, and pressed it gently to thank her. She learned afterwards from Joseph, of whom Trenck took music lessons, that he never failed to ask after her with interest, and to speak of her with admiration; but that, from a feeling of most exquisite discretion, he had never put the smallest question to him on the motive of her disguise, on the reason of their adven-
turous journey, or on the nature of the feelings which they might have had, or might still have, for each other.

"I do not know what he thinks," added Joseph, "but I assure you that there is no woman of whom he speaks with more esteem and respect than of you."

"In that case, my friend," said Consuelo, "I authorize you to tell him all our story, and all mine, if you like, without naming the Rudolstadt's, of course. I need to be esteemed unreservedly by this man to whom we owe our lives, and who has behaved so nobly to us in every respect."

A few weeks later, Baron von Trenck, having scarcely finished his mission, was recalled suddenly by Frederick, and came to the embassy one morning to bid a hasty farewell to Signor Corner. Consuelo, who was just going out, met him under the portico. As they were alone there, he went to her and took her hand, which he kissed tenderly.

"Allow me to express," he said to her, "for the first and perhaps for the last time, the sentiments toward you with which my heart is filled; I did not need Beppo's story to respect you thoroughly. There are faces which never deceive, and I wanted only a glance to feel and divine in you a great intelligence and a noble heart. If I had known at Passau that our dear Joseph was so little on his guard, I would have protected you against Count Hoditz's advances, which I foresaw only too well, though I did my best to make him understand that he was dealing with the
wrong person, and would make himself ridiculous. However, that good Hoditz has told me himself how you made sport of him, and he is very grateful to you for keeping his secret. I shall never forget the romantic adventure which gained me the happiness of knowing you, and though I have to pay for it with my fortune and my life, I shall still esteem it one of the happiest days of my existence.”

“Do you believe, baron,” said Consuelo, “that it can have such results?”

“I hope not, but everything is possible at the court of Prussia.”

“You make me very much afraid of Prussia, and yet, baron, it is possible that I may have the pleasure of seeing you there. There is some likelihood of my being engaged for Berlin.”

“Really?” cried Trenck, whose face lit up with a sudden joy; “well, God send that this project be realized! I can be useful to you at Berlin, and you must count on me as on a brother. Yes, I love you like a brother, Consuelo, and if I had been free, I might not perhaps have been able to defend myself against a stronger sentiment. But you are not free, either, and sacred eternal ties will not allow me to envy the happy gentleman who is trying to win your hand. Whoever he is, madam, be sure that he will find a friend in me if he wishes, and if he ever needs me, a champion against the prejudices of the world. Alas, Consuelo! there is in my life also a terrible barrier which rises between the object of my love and me; but he whom
you love is a man and can break down the barriers; while the woman I love, who is of a higher rank than mine, has neither the power, the right, the strength nor the liberty to raise me to it."

"Then I can do nothing for her nor for you?" said Consuelo. "For the first time in my life, I regret the impotence of my poor condition."

"Who knows?" cried the baron. "You may perhaps be able to do more than you think, if not to unite us, at least to diminish sometimes the horror of our separation. Would you have the courage to brave danger for us?"

"As gladly as you risked your life to save me."

"Very well, I count on you. Remember this promise, Consuelo. I may perhaps recall it to you suddenly" —

"At whatever hour of my life it may be, I shall not have forgotten it," replied she, holding out her hand.

"Well," said he, "give me a sign, a token of little value, which I can restore to you when necessary; for I have a presentiment that great trouble is awaiting me, and there may be circumstances in which my signature or even my seal would compromise her and you."

"Would you like this music book, which I was going to take to some one from my master? I can get another, and I will make a mark in this so that I can know it on occasion."

"Why not? A music book is indeed the easiest
thing to send without arousing suspicion. But that it may serve me several times, I will separate the leaves. Make a sign on every page."

Consuelo, leaning on the balustrade, wrote the name Bertoni on every leaf of the book. The baron rolled it up and carried it away, after swearing eternal friendship for our heroine.

Just at this time Madame Tesi fell ill, and there was great danger that the performances at the imperial theatre would have to be suspended, for she filled the most important roles. If worst came to worst, Corilla could replace her. She had been successful with both court and city. Her beauty and coquetry had turned the heads of all these good German gentlemen, and they never thought of being critical about her rather worn voice and somewhat epileptic acting. Everything was lovely in so lovely a woman. Her snowy shoulders delivered admirable sounds, her round and voluptuous arms always sang true, and her superb poses performed with ease the greatest vocal feats. In spite of the musical purism on which they prided themselves there, they submitted, like the Venetians, to the fascination of a languishing look, and Madame Corilla prepared, in her boudoir, many persons to admire her enthusiastically upon the stage.

She offered herself boldly, therefore, to sing Madame Tesi's roles in her absence; but the difficulty was in replacing Corilla herself in the parts which she had heretofore sung. Madame Holzbauer's fluty
voice did not permit her to think of it, and it was therefore necessary to accept Consuelo, or to get along with a very weak singer. Porpora worked like a demon. Metastasio, horribly dissatisfied with Corilla's Lombard pronunciation, and indignant at the efforts which she made to eclipse the other roles (contrary to the spirit of the poem, and in spite of the situation), no longer concealed his dislike for her and his preference for the conscientious and intelligent Porporina. Caffariello, who was paying court to Madame Tesi (who already detested Corilla cordially for having dared to dispute her effects and the sceptre of beauty with her), cried out boldly for Consuelo's admission. Holzbauer, anxious to sustain the honor of his theatre, but frightened at the ascendency which Porpora would soon gain if he had only one foot upon the stage, did not know which way to turn. Consuelo's good behavior had gained her enough partisans to render it difficult to impose longer upon the empress. As a consequence of all these motives, proposals were made to Consuelo. By making them mean, it was hoped that she would refuse them. Porpora accepted them at once, and, as usual, without consulting her. One fine morning Consuelo found herself engaged for six performances, and without being able to avoid them, or understanding why, after waiting six weeks, she received no news from Rudolstadt, she was dragged by Porpora to the rehearsal of Metastasio's "Antigono," set to music by Hasse.
Consuelo had already studied her part with Porpora. No doubt it was a great trial for the latter to have to teach her the music of his rival, the most ungrateful of his pupils, the enemy whom he most hated; but, besides that it was necessary to undergo this to open the door to his own compositions, Porpora was too upright an artist not to bring all his care and zeal to this study. Consuelo seconded him so generously that he was at once delighted and distressed. In spite of herself, the poor child thought Hasse magnificent, and she felt more deeply the tender and passionate songs of the Saxon than the grandeur, sometimes a little cold and naked, of her own master. Accustomed, in studying the works of other composers with him, to give herself up to her enthusiasm, she now felt obliged to contain herself, seeing the sadness of his face and the dejectedness of his revery after the lesson. When she went upon the stage to rehearse with Caffariello and Corilla, although she knew her part thoroughly, she felt so agitated that she could hardly open the scene of Ismene with Berenice, which begins with these words:—

"No; tutto, o Berenice
Tu non apri il tuo cor."  

To which Corilla replied with these:—

"... E ti par poco
Quel che sai de' miei casi?"  

---

1 "No, Berenice, you do not open your heart frankly."
2 "Does what you know of my adventures seem little to you?"
At this point, Corilla was interrupted by a great burst of laughter from Caffariello; and turning towards him with eyes flashing with anger, she asked,—

“What do you find so amusing in that?”

“You said it very well, my fat Berenice,” replied Caffariello, laughing still louder, “no one could say it with more sincerity.”

“The words amuse you?” said Holzbauer, who would not have been sorry to repeat to Metastasio the sopranist’s jokes about his verses.”

“The words are beautiful,” dryly replied Caffariello, who knew his ground thoroughly; “but their application on this occasion is so perfect that I cannot help laughing.”

And he held his sides, repeating to Porpora,—

“E ti par poco
Quel che sai di tanti casi?”

Corilla, seeing what a scathing commentary upon her morals was conveyed in these words, and trembling with rage, hatred and fear, almost rushed upon Consuelo to disfigure her; but the Zingarella’s face was so calm and gentle that she did not dare. Besides, as the faint light of the theatre fell upon her rival’s features, she stopped, struck by odd reminiscences and strange terrors. She had never seen her by daylight nor so closely at Venice. Amid the pains of childbirth, she had confusedly seen the little Zingaro Bertoni assisting her, and she had been unable to understand his devotion. At that moment she was
CONSUELO.

trying to collect her memories, and not succeeding in it, she remained under the influence of an anxiety and discomfort which troubled her during the whole rehearsal. The manner in which Porporina sang her part added not a little to her ill-humor, and the presence of Porpora, her former master, who, like a severe judge, listened to her in silence and with an almost contemptuous air, became little by little a real torture to her. Holzbauer was not less mortified when the maestro declared that he was giving the movements all wrong; and it was necessary to believe him, for he had been present at the rehearsals which Hasse himself had conducted at Dresden when the opera was produced. Their need of good advice caused ill-will to yield and silenced irritation. Porpora conducted the whole rehearsal, taught every one his part, and even corrected Caffariello, who pretended to listen to him respectfully, to give him more weight with the others. Caffariello was only anxious to wound Madame Tesi’s impertinent rival, and he stopped at nothing that day to have this pleasure, not even at an act of modesty and submission. It is thus with artists as with diplomats, on the stage as in the council-room of sovereigns, that the most beautiful and the ugliest things have hidden causes which are infinitely small and frivolous.

When she returned home after the rehearsal, Consuelo found Joseph filled with a mysterious joy; and when they were alone, he told her that the good canon had arrived in Vienna, and that his first care had been
to send for his dear Beppo and give him an excellent breakfast, asking him a thousand tender questions about his dear Bertoni. They had already decided upon the means by which he should make Porpora's acquaintance, that they might see each other openly and without concealment. The next day the canon was introduced as a protector of Joseph Haydn, a great admirer of the maestro, and desirous of thanking him for the lessons he had given his young friend. Consuelo appeared to meet him for the first time, and that evening the master and the two pupils were given a friendly dinner at the canon's house. Unless he had assumed a stoicism on which not even the greatest musicians of that time prided themselves greatly, it would have been difficult for Porpora not to take a sudden liking for this good canon, who kept such an excellent table and who had such a just appreciation of his compositions. They had music after dinner, and from that time saw one another almost every day.

Consuelo found a distraction in this from the anxiety which she was beginning to feel because of Albert's silence. The canon had a cheerful mind, pure yet broad, delicate in many respects, just and enlightened in others. He was an excellent friend and a perfectly amiable man. His company animated and strengthened the master, whose humor became gentler, in consequence of which Consuelo's life grew more agreeable.

One day when there was no rehearsal (it was two
days before the performance of "Antigono"), Porpora having gone to the country with a fellow musician, the canon proposed to his young friends a descent upon the priory, to surprise those of his servants whom he had left there, and to see for himself, by falling upon them like a bomb-shell, whether the gardener's wife took good care of Angèle, and whether her husband did not neglect the volkameria. The canon's carriage was loaded with pasties and bottles (for they could not make an excursion of four leagues without becoming hungry), and they arrived at the benefice after having made a slight detour and left the carriage a little distance off, the better to accomplish the surprise.

The volkameria was perfectly well; it was warm, and its roots were moist. It had ceased to bloom with the return of the cold weather, but its pretty leaves curled crisply upon its slender stems. The greenhouse was in good order, and the blue chrysanthemums, braving the winter, seemed to laugh behind the glass. Angèle, hanging at the nurse's breast, began to laugh too, when they played with her; but the canon said very wisely that they must not abuse this good-nature, because forced laughter, provoked too often in these little creatures, develops a nervous temperament in them.

They were talking together pleasantly in the gardener's pretty cottage; the canon, wrapped in a furred great-coat, was toasting his shins before a huge fire of dried roots and pine cones; Joseph was playing with
the gardener's pretty children; and Consuelo, seated in the middle of the room, was holding Angèle in her arms and looking at her with a mixture of tenderness and sorrow. It seemed to her that this child belonged to her more than to any one else, and that a mysterious fatality connected the destiny of this little being with her own, when the door opened suddenly and Corilla appeared before her, like a vision called up by her melancholy revery.

For the first time since her confinement Corilla had felt, if not a glow of love, at least a touch of maternal remorse, and had come to see her child in secret. She knew that the canon was living in Vienna; arriving half an hour after him and not seeing even the tracks of his carriage at the gate (since he had made a detour before entering), she came stealthily through the gardens without seeing any one, and to the house where Angèle was at nurse, for she had not failed to learn something about her. She had laughed a great deal at the embarrassment and the Christian resignation of the canon, but she was ignorant of the part which Consuelo had taken in the adventure. It was, therefore, with surprise mingled with dread and consternation that she saw her rival in this spot; and not knowing, not daring to guess, what child she held in her arms, she nearly turned upon her heel and fled. But Consuelo, who had pressed the child to her breast by an instinctive movement as a partridge covers its chicks with its wings when a hawk comes near; Consuelo, who was at the theatre, and who could on the
morrow throw a different light upon the comedy which Corilla had all along been describing in her own way; Consuelo, who was looking at her with a mixture of fright and consternation,—held her fascinated in the middle of the room.

But Corilla was too consummate an actress to lose her wits and her tongue very long. Her tactics were to forestall humiliation by insult, and, to get her hand in, she began by this apostrophe, spoken in the Venetian dialect, in a light but bitter tone.

"Per Dio! my poor Zingarella, is this house a foundling hospital? Have you come here to find or leave your own? I see that we run the same risks and have the same luck. No doubt our two children have the same father, since our adventures date from the same period in Venice, and I was sorry for your sake to see that it was not to join you, as we thought, that the handsome Anzoleto deserted us in the middle of his engagement last season."

"Madam," replied Consuelo, pale but calm, "if I had the happiness of being a mother (for it is always a happiness to one who knows how to feel it), my child would not be here."

"Ah, I understand!" replied the other, with a smouldering fire in her eyes, "it would have been brought up at the Zustiniani villa. But you have not had the misfortune—or so you pretend—to be Anzoleto's mistress. They say that Joseph Haydn, your master's pupil, comforted you for all your misfortunes, and no doubt the child which you are holding"—
"Is your own, signorina," cried Joseph, who now understood the dialect very well, and who came forward between Consuelo and Corilla with an expression which caused the latter to draw back. "It is Joseph Haydn who certifies to it, for he was present when you brought it into the world."

Joseph's face, which Corilla had not seen since that unlucky day, immediately recalled to her all the circumstances which she had tried in vain to recollect, and she at last saw the Zingaro Bertoni in the features of the Zingarella Consuelo. She uttered a cry of surprise, and for a moment shame and anger strove in her breast. But soon bitterness returned to her heart and insult to her tongue.

"Upon my word, children," she said, with an outrageously patronizing air, "I did not know you. You were both very charming when I met you on your adventures, and Consuelo was a really pretty boy in her disguise. So it is in this holy house, between the fat canon and little Joseph, that she has devoutly passed her time since she left Venice? Come, Zingarella, do not trouble yourself, my child. We know each other's secrets, and the empress, who wishes to know everything, will know nothing about either of us."

"Even if I had a secret," replied Consuelo coldly, "you have only learned it to-day; and I knew yours when I talked with the empress for an hour, three days before your engagement was signed, Corilla."

"And you spoke ill of me to her?" cried Corilla, flushing with anger.
“If I had told her what I knew of you, you would not have been engaged. Since you are, I apparently did not choose to profit by the occasion.”

“And why did you not do it? You must be very stupid!” returned Corilla, with a frankness in perversity delightful to behold.

Consuelo and Joseph could not help smiling as they looked at each other; Joseph’s smile was full of contempt for Corilla; that of Consuelo was angelic, and raised towards heaven.

“Yes, madam,” she replied with crushing sweetness, “I am as you say, and I do very well.”

“Not too well, my poor child, since I am engaged and you are not!” replied Corilla, puzzled and somewhat thoughtful; “they told me in Venice that you had no wit, and could never manage your affairs. It is the only true thing that Anzoleto told me about you. But what can be done? It is not my fault if you are in this position. In your place I should have said what I knew about Corilla; I should have proclaimed myself a virgin, a saint. The empress would have believed it,—she is not hard to persuade,—and I should have supplanted all my rivals. But you did not do it. It is strange, and I am sorry that you know so little how to take care of yourself.”

This was too much; contempt overcame indignation, and Consuelo and Joseph burst into a laugh. Corilla, feeling what she considered her rival’s weakness, began to lose the aggressive bitterness with which she had at first armed herself, became at her ease,
drew up a chair to the fire, and prepared tranquilly to continue the conversation, that she might study the strength and weakness of her adversaries. At that moment she found herself face to face with the canon, whom she had not yet seen, because, guided by his instinct of clerical prudence, he had made a sign to the stout gardener's wife and her two children to stand before him until he could understand what was going on.
CHAPTER XII.

After the insinuation which she had made a few moments before concerning Consuelo's relations with the fat canon, the sight of him produced upon Corilla somewhat the effect of the head of Medusa. But she felt reassured when she remembered that she had spoken Venetian, and saluted him in German with that mixture of boldness and embarrassment which always characterizes the look and expression of women of loose life. The canon, ordinarily so polite and gracious in his hospitality, did not rise or reply to her salutation. Corilla, who had inquired carefully about him in Vienna, had heard that he was excessively well bred, a great lover of music and incapable of austerely reproving a woman, and especially a cantatrice. She had resolved to go to see him and fascinate him, that she might prevent his saying anything to her disadvantage. But if she had in these matters the kind of cleverness which Consuelo lacked, she had also that indifference and uncertainty in her habits which belong to vice, to laziness and — although there would seem to be no connection between them — to uncleanness. All three are united in the life of coarse natures. Indolence of body and mind neutralizes the effects of perfidy, and Corilla, who had every instinct for intrigue, rarely had the energy to carry
one through. She had therefore postponed her visit to the canon from day to day, and when she found him so cold and severe, she began to be visibly disappointed.

Then, endeavoring to recover her position by a bold stroke, she said to Consuelo, who was still holding Angèle in her arms,—

"Well, why do you not let me kiss my daughter, and lay her at the canon's feet, to" —

"Dame Corilla," said the canon, in the same dry and coldly sarcastic tone in which he had formerly said "Dame Bridget." "do me the pleasure to let that child alone."

Then, speaking in Italian with great elegance, though somewhat too slowly, he went on as follows, without removing his cap from his head: —

"I have been listening to you for a quarter of an hour, and, although I am not very familiar with your patois, I have understood enough to be able to assure you that you are altogether the most brazen hussy I have ever met. Still, I believe that you are more stupid than spiteful, and more cowardly than dangerous. You have no understanding of what is beautiful, and it would be lost time to try to make you comprehend it. I have only one thing to say to you: this young girl, this virgin, this saint, as you just called her in mockery, — you contaminate her by speaking to her; therefore, speak to her no more. As for this child, which was born of you, you blight it by touching it; therefore, do not touch it. A child is a sacred being;
Consuelo told me so, and I understand it. It is by the intercession and persuasion of this same Consuelo that I ventured to take charge of your daughter, without fearing lest the perverse instincts which she may inherit from you should some day make me repent it. We said to ourselves that divine goodness gives to every creature the power of knowing and practising the right, and we have resolved to teach her what is good, and to make it pleasant and easy for her. With you, it would be altogether otherwise. You will therefore, from to-day, cease to consider this child as your own. You abandoned it; you yielded it up and gave it, and it no longer belongs to you. You left a sum of money to pay us for its education—

He made a sign to the gardener's wife, who, at his direction, had a few moments before taken from the wardrobe a sealed bag, the same which Corilla had sent to the canon with her child, and which had not been opened. He took it and threw it at Corilla's feet, adding,—

"We have no use for it, and we do not want it. Now, I beg you to go out of my house and never to set foot in it again, upon any pretext whatever. Upon these conditions, and upon the further one that you never open your mouth in regard to the circumstances which have compelled us to have dealings with you, we promise absolute silence upon all that concerns you. But if you do otherwise, I warn you that I have more means than you think of conveying the truth to her majesty, and that you may see your theatrical
crown and the applause of your admirers suddenly changed to a residence of several years in a convent for fallen women."

Having said this, the canon rose, made a sign to the nurse to take the child, and to Consuelo to withdraw with Joseph to the end of the room. Then he pointed to the door, and Corilla, terrified, pale and trembling, went out convulsively and as if lost, without knowing where she went and without comprehending what was going on about her.

The canon had been filled, during this sort of imprecation, with an honest indignation which, little by little, made him strangely imposing. Consuelo and Joseph had never seen him thus. The habit of authority which a priest never loses, and also the attitude of royal command which belongs to the blood, and which betrayed at that moment the bastard of Augustus II., endowed the canon with an irresistible majesty. Corilla, to whom no man had ever spoken thus in the austere calmness of truth, felt more terrified than she had ever been by her furious lovers in their outbursts of revenge and contempt. An Italian and superstitious, she was really afraid of this churchman and his anathema, and she fled appalled through the garden while the canon, exhausted by this effort so contrary to his habits of benevolence and kindliness, fell back upon his chair, pale and almost fainting.

While she hastened to his help, Consuelo involuntarily watched the agitated and unsteady course of poor Corilla. She saw her stumble at the end of an
alley and fall upon the grass, either because she had made a false step in her distress, or because she had not the strength to support herself. Carried away by her kind heart, and thinking the lesson more cruel than she would have had the courage to make it, she left the canon to Joseph's care, and hastened to her rival, who had a violent nervous attack. Not being able to quiet her, and not daring to take her back to the priory, she could only keep her from rolling upon the ground, and from wounding her hands with the gravel.

Corilla was like one mad for a few moments, but when she recognized the person who was caring for her and endeavoring to console her, she grew calm and became of a livid pallor. Her drawn lips maintained a painful silence, and her glassy eyes remained fixed upon the ground. She allowed herself, however, to be led to her carriage, which was waiting at the gate, and got in, assisted by her rival, without saying a word.

"Do you feel very badly?" said Consuelo, frightened by the change in her face. "Let me go with you a little way; I will come back on foot."

Corilla's only reply was to push her away roughly, and then she looked at her a moment with an impene-trable expression. Suddenly, bursting into tears, she hid her face in one hand, while with the other she motioned to her coachman to go on, and lowered the blind of the carriage between herself and her generous enemy.

The next day, at the hour of the last rehearsal of
"Antigono," Consuelo was at her post, waiting for Corilla, who sent her servant to say that she would arrive in half an hour. Caffariello wished her at the devil, said that he was not at the orders of such a creature, and that he would not wait for her, and pretended to leave. Madame Tesi, pale and ill, had wished to be present at the rehearsal to amuse herself at the expense of Corilla; they had brought a sofa for her, and reclining upon it behind that first wing, which is painted like a curtain, and called, in stage language, the "harlequin’s mantle," she calmed her friend and persisted in waiting for Corilla, thinking that it was from fear of her that she hesitated to appear.

At last Corilla arrived, more pale and languishing than Madame Tesi herself, who began to recover her color and strength when she saw her successor in this condition. Instead of taking off her cloak and hat with the sweeping gestures which she usually employed, she sank upon a gilded throne at the back of the stage, and said to Holzbauer in a faint voice,—

"I assure you, director, that I am horribly ill, that I have no voice, that I have passed a dreadful night, and that for all these reasons it is impossible for me to rehearse to-day and sing to-morrow unless I resume the role of Ismene, and give that of Berenice to some one else."

"What are you thinking of, madam?" cried Holzbauer thunderstruck. "Do you wish to be excused on the eve of a performance, and when the court has fixed the hour? It is impossible; I cannot consent to it."
“You will have to consent to it,” she replied, resuming her natural voice, which was not sweet. “I am engaged for the second roles, and nothing in my contract compels me to sing the first. It was a desire to be obliging which induced me to accept them when Signora Tesi became indisposed, that the pleasure of the court might not be interrupted. Now I am too ill to keep my promise, and you cannot make me change my resolution.”

“My dear friend, they will make you sing by order,” said Caffariello, “and you will sing badly, for which we were prepared. It is a little misfortune to add to all those which you have undergone in your life through your own fault, but it is too late to repent of it. You should have reflected a little sooner. You placed too great reliance on your strength. You will make a fiasco, but that is of no consequence to the rest of us. I will sing so that they will forget that the role of Berenice exists. Porporina, too, in her little role of Ismene, will indemnify the public, and everybody will be satisfied except you. It will be a lesson by which you will or will not profit another time.”

“You are greatly mistaken in regard to my motives for refusing,” replied Corilla boldly. “If I were not ill, I should perhaps sing the part as well as another; but as I cannot sing it, there is some one here who will sing it better than it has yet been sung in Vienna, and that not later than to-morrow. Thus the performance will not be delayed, and I shall have the
pleasure of resuming my part of Ismene, which does not tire me."

"Then you expect," said Holzbauer with surprise, "that Madame Tesi will be well enough to sing tomorrow?"

"I know very well that Madame Tesi will not be able to sing for a long while," replied Corilla in a loud voice, so that from the throne on which she was seated she could be heard by Tesi, lying on her sofa a dozen steps from her; "see how changed she is! Her face is frightful! But I tell you that you have a perfect Berenice, incomparable, superior to us all; and here she is," she added, rising, and taking Consuelo by the hand to lead her into the anxious and excited group which had formed about her.

"I?" cried Consuelo, who thought she was dreaming.

"You!" cried Corilla, pushing her upon the throne with a convulsive gesture. "Now you are queen, Porporina; now you are in the first rank; it is I who placed you there; I owed it to you. Do not forget that."

In his distress, Holzbauer, on the verge of failing in his duty, and of being, perhaps, obliged to resign, could not refuse this unexpected assistance. He had seen clearly enough, from the way in which Consuelo sang Ismene, that she could sing Berenice admirably. In spite of his dislike for her and for Porpora, he could have but one fear at that moment, and this was that she would not accept the role.
She did indeed excuse herself from it very seriously; and cordially pressing Corilla's hands, she begged her, in a low voice, not to make her a sacrifice which gave her so little pride, while in the eyes of her rival it was the most terrible of expiations and the most frightful humiliation she could impose upon herself. Corilla remained unshaken in her resolution. Madame Tesi, frightened at the serious rivalry which threatened her, would have been glad to try her voice and resume her part, though she died afterwards, for she was seriously ill; but she did not dare. It was not permissible at the court theatre to have those caprices to which the good-natured sovereign of our days, the public, has learned to submit so patiently. The court was awaiting something new in the role of Berenice; it had been announced, and the empress expected it.

"Come, make up your mind," said Cassariello. "This is the first sensible thing Corilla has ever done in her life; let us take advantage of it."

"But I do not know the part. I have not studied it, and I cannot learn it by to-morrow."

"You have heard it, therefore you know it, and you will sing it to-morrow," cried Porpora, finally, in a voice of thunder. "Come, make no faces, and stop this discussion. We have wasted more than an hour in chattering. Director, let the violins begin, and you, Berenice, go on the stage. No book! Drop that book! When you have rehearsed three times you ought to know all the parts by heart. I tell you that you know it!"
"No, tutto, O Berenice," sang Corilla, become Ismene again, "Tu non apri il tuo cor."

"And now," thought this woman, who judged Consuelo's pride by her own, "all that she knows of my adventures will indeed seem to her but a trifle."

Consuelo, whose prodigious memory and triumphant facility Porpora well knew, did in fact sing the part, words and music, without the least hesitation. Madame Tesi was so struck by her acting and singing that she felt much worse, and was carried home after the rehearsal of the first act. The next day Consuelo had to prepare her dress, arrange the "points" of her role and go over it all carefully before five o'clock in the afternoon. Her success was so complete that the empress said as she went out, "That is an admirable young girl. I must absolutely arrange a marriage for her; I will think about it."

The next day they began the rehearsal of Metastasio's "Zenobia," set to music by Predieri. Corilla still insisted on yielding the principal role to Consuelo. Madame Holzbauer sang the second, and as she was a better musician than Corilla, this opera was much more carefully studied than the other. Metastasio was delighted to see his poetry, neglected and forgotten during the war, recover favor and create a sensation at Vienna. He almost ceased to think of his ills, and, urged by the kindness of Maria Theresa, and called upon by the duties of his office to write new lyric dramas, he was preparing himself, by reading Greek tragedies and Latin classics, to produce one of
those masterpieces which the Italians of Vienna and the Germans of Italy ranked coolly above the tragedies of Corneille, Racine, Shakespeare, Calderon,—above everything, in a word.

It is not in the middle of this story, already so long and so loaded with details, that we will trespass upon the reader's patience, long since worn out, perhaps, to tell what we think of Metastasio's genius. It makes little difference to him. We will, therefore, only repeat to him what Consuelo whispered about it to Joseph.

"My poor Beppo, you cannot imagine the difficulty which I have in playing those roles which are considered so sublime and so pathetic. It is true that the words are well arranged, and that they come trippingly from the tongue when they are sung; but when one thinks of the character in whose mouth they are put, one does not know which way to look, I will not say for the emotion, but for the gravity to pronounce them. What a strange conventionality it is which arranges antiquity after the fashion of our own time, and brings upon the stage intrigues, passions and morals which would be well placed, perhaps, in the memoirs of the Margravine of Baireuth, Baron von Trenck or the Princess of Culmbach, but which are absurd nonsense on the part of Rhadamistus, Berenice or Arsinoe. When I was convalescent at the Castle of the Giants, Count Albert often read to me to make me sleepy; but I never went to sleep, and listened with all my ears. He read me the tragedies of Sophocles,
Æschylus or Euripides, and he read them in Spanish, slowly, but clearly and without hesitation, although it was a Greek text that he had before his eyes. He was so familiar with ancient and modern languages that one would have said that he was reading an admirably written translation. He endeavored to make it so faithful, he said, that I might understand, in the scrupulous exactness of his interpretation, the genius of the Greeks in all its simplicity. What grandeur and imagery! What poetry and sobriety! What lofty figures, pure and strong characters, powerful situations, deep and real sorrows, and terrible and harrowing pictures he showed me! Still weak, and with my imagination still under the influence of the violent emotions which had caused my illness, I was so overcome by what I heard that I fancied myself, as I listened to him, Antigone, Clytemnestra, Medea or Electra, and imagined that I was myself playing these bloody and mournful dramas, not upon a stage before the glare of the footlights, but in frightful wastes, at the entrance to yawning caverns, amid the columns of ancient porticos or beside cold hearthstones, where they wept for the dead and conspired against the living. I heard the pitiful chorus of the Trojan women and of the Dardanian captives. The Eumenides danced around me,—to what strange rhythms and infernal modulations! I cannot think of it without a recollection of pleasure and terror which still makes me shudder. Never shall I have upon the stage, in the realization of my dreams, the same
emotions and the same power which I then felt stirring in my heart and brain. It was then that I felt myself a tragedian for the first time, and that I conceived types for which no artist gave me the model. It was then that I understood the drama, the tragic effect, the poetry of the stage; and as Albert read, I improvised in my mind a melody in which I fancied myself following and singing all that I heard. I sometimes surprised myself in the attitude and with the expression of the characters who were speaking through him, and he would often stop, frightened, thinking he saw Andromache or Ariadne appear before him. Oh, I learned and understood more in a month of that reading than in a whole lifetime employed in repeating Metastasio's dramas! and if the composers had not endowed the music with the sentiment and truthfulness in which the action is lacking, I believe that I should sink beneath the disgust which I feel in making the Grand Duchess Zenobia converse with the Landgravine Egle, and in hearing Field-marshal Rhadamistus quarrel with Count Zopyrus. Oh, all that is false, Beppo, terribly false! false as our costumes, the blond periwig of Caffariello Tiridates, or the pompadour undress of Madame Holzbauer in an Armenian pastoral; false as the pink-silk calves of Prince Demetrius, or that scenery, which resembles Asia as much as Abbe Metastasio is like old Homer."

"What you say to me," replied Haydn, "explains to me why, when I consider the necessity of writing operas for the theatre, if I ever attain to that, I am
conscious of more hope and inspiration when I think of composing oratorios. In these, where the puerile artifices of the stage are not always giving the lie to the truth of the sentiment, in this symphonic setting, where all is music, where soul speaks to soul through the ear and not the eye, it seems to me that a composer can develop all his inspiration, and carry the imaginations of his hearers into a truly elevated sphere."

As they talked in this way, Consuelo and Joseph were walking up and down beside a great back scene which was to represent the river Araxes that evening, and which, in the half light of the theatre, was only an enormous strip of indigo spreading among great blots of ochre, intended to represent the Caucasus mountains. These back scenes, ready for the performance, are placed one behind the other, in such a way as to be lifted by rolling round a cylinder. In the spaces between them the actors walk about during the performance, and the supernumeraries doze or exchange pinches of snuff, seated or lying in the dust, under the drops of oil which fall heavily from the rickety lamps. During the day the actors walk up and down these narrow, dark alleys, repeating their parts or talking about their affairs, and sometimes listening to the little confidences or the profound machinations of others talking close to them without seeing them, behind an arm of the sea or a public place.

Fortunately, Metastasio was not on the other side of the Araxes while the inexperienced Consuelo was pouring out her artistic indignation to Haydn. The
rehearsal began. It was the second of "Zenobia," and it went so well that the musicians of the orchestra applauded, as their custom is, by beating their bows upon the backs of their fiddles. Prederi's music was charming, and Porpora conducted it with more enthusiasm than he had been able to bring to that of Hasse. The part of Tiridates was one of Caffariello's triumphs, and he was far from complaining because, while they dressed him like a ferocious Parthian warrior, they made him coo like Celadon and speak like Clitandre. Consuelo, if she thought her role false and unnatural in the mouth of a heroine of antiquity, at least found in it a woman's character agreeably drawn. It even presented some likeness to the frame of mind in which she had been between Albert and Anzoleto; and, altogether forgetting the "local color," as we call it now-a-days, to think only of the human sentiments, she discovered that she was sublime in the air, the words of which had so often been in her heart:—

"Voi leggete in ogni core;
Voi sapete, o giusti Dei,
Se son puri i voti miei,
Se innocente è la pietà."

At that moment she had the consciousness of a true emotion and a deserved triumph. She did not need a look from Caffariello, who was not restrained that day by the presence of Madame Tesi, and who sincerely admired her, to confirm what she already felt,—the certainty of producing an irresistible effect upon
any public and under any possible circumstances, with this splendid air. She therefore felt at once reconciled to her role, the opera, her comrades, herself,—to the stage, in a word; and in spite of all the imprecations against her calling which she had uttered an hour before, she could not defend herself against one of those inward thrills, so profound, sudden and powerful that it is impossible for any one who is not an artist in some way to understand what ages of labor, disappointment and suffering they can repay in a moment.
CHAPTER XIII.

As Porpora's pupil and still half his servant, Haydn, who was eager to hear music and to study, even from a material point of view, the construction of operas, obtained leave to go behind the scenes when Consuelo sang. He had noticed for a couple of days that Porpora, who had at first been somewhat ill-disposed to admit him to the stage of the theatre, gave his permission with an air of good-humor, even before he ventured to ask. This was because a new idea had come into the professor's head. Maria Theresa, in conversation with the Venetian ambassador, had reverted to her fixed idea of "matrimoniomania," as Consuelo called it. She had told him that she would be glad to see this great singer take up her residence at Vienna by marrying the young musician, her master's pupil. She had inquired about Haydn from the ambassador himself, who gave an excellent report of him, saying that he showed great musical ability, and was above all a good Catholic; and her majesty had therefore urged him to arrange this marriage, promising to make suitable provision for the young couple. The idea had pleased Signor Corner, who was sincerely attached to Haydn, and already gave him an allowance of seventy-two francs a month, to enable him to continue his studies freely. He had spoken enthusiastically of it
to Porpora, who, after much hesitation and resistance (he would have preferred his pupil to live without love or marriage), had allowed himself to be persuaded, fearing that she might persist in her idea of withdrawing from the stage to marry a gentleman. To deal a heavy blow, the ambassador had shown him Haydn's compositions, and had told him that the serenade for three instruments, with which he had been so much pleased, was written by Beppo. Porpora had admitted that it showed the germ of a great talent, that he might give it the right direction and teach him how to write for the voice; finally, that the situation of a singer married to a composer might be a very advantageous one. The extreme youth of the couple and their slender resources would compel Haydn to work without any other hope than ambition, and Consuelo would also be tied to the stage. The master yielded. He had no more received a reply from Reisenburg than Consuelo. This silence caused him to fear some resistance to his views, or some rash act on the part of the young count. "If I could marry Consuelo to another," he thought, "or even betroth her, I should have nothing more to fear in that direction."

The difficulty was to bring Consuelo to this resolution. To urge her to it would inspire her with the idea of resisting. With his Neapolitan acuteness, he said to himself that the force of events must bring about a change in the young girl's mind. She felt a friendship for Beppo, and Beppo, although he had overcome the love in his heart, showed so much zeal,
admiration and devotion towards her that Porpora could readily imagine him violently enamoured of her. He thought that by not putting any restraint on his relations with her, he would afford him an opportunity to win her favor; that by enlightening him at the proper time upon the empress's designs and his own approval, he would inspire him with eloquence and persuasiveness. He ceased altogether to abuse and disparage him and gave free scope to their brotherly affection, flattering himself that matters would progress more rapidly than if he openly interfered.

Porpora, by not sufficiently doubting his success, committed a great fault. He exposed Consuelo's reputation to slander, for Joseph only needed to be seen with her twice in succession behind the scenes for all the theatrical tribe to proclaim her liaison with that young man, and poor Consuelo, confiding and without foresight, like all upright and chaste souls, never anticipated the danger or guarded against it. Consequently, from the time of this rehearsal of "Zenobia," all eyes were opened and all tongues let loose. In every wing, behind every scene, between actors, chorus singers and employes of all sorts, there were malicious and playful remarks, severe or good-natured, concerning the scandal of this budding intrigue or the frankness of this happy union.

Consuelo, absorbed by her part and her artistic emotion, neither saw, heard nor suspected anything. Joseph, dreaming and occupied by the opera which they were singing and by that which he was meditat-
ing in his musical soul, did indeed hear a few stray words, but without understanding them, so far was he from such vain hopes. When he overheard an equivocal remark or a sarcastic observation as he walked about, he would raise his head, look around him, seek for the object of this satire, and not finding him, as he was entirely indifferent to conversation of this sort, he would return to his meditation.

Between the acts of the opera, comic interludes were often given, and that day they were rehearsing the "Impressario delle Canarie," a collection of very bright and droll little scenes by Metastasio. Corilla, who filled the role of an exacting, imperious and capricious prima donna, was strikingly natural, and the success which she usually had in this trifle consoled her a little for the sacrifice of her great role of Zenobia. While they were rehearsing the last scene of the interlude, Consuelo, somewhat overcome by the emotion of her part, went behind the back scene, between the "terrible valley full of mountains and precipices" which formed the first scene, and that good river Araxes, bordered by "most agreeable mountains," which was to appear at the third scene, to rest the eyes of the "sensitive" spectator. She was walking rather swiftly to and fro when Joseph brought her fan which she had left upon the prompter's box, and which she was glad to have. The instinct of his heart and the intentional preoccupation of Porpora mechanically drew Joseph towards his friend; the habit of trustfulness and the need of confiding in
him always caused Consuelo to receive him joyfully. This double impulse of a sympathy at which the angels in heaven would not have blushed, fate had resolved to make the signal and the cause of strange misfortunes. We know very well that the readers of our novels, who are always eager for excitement, wish for nothing but blood and thunder; but we must ask them to have a little patience.

"Well, my friend," said Joseph, coming smiling up to Consuelo and holding out his hand, "it seems to me that you are not so dissatisfied with the drama of our illustrious abbe, and that you found in your prayer aria an open window by which the demon of genius which possesses you could wing his flight for once."

"Then you think I sang it well?"

"Do you not see that my eyes are red?"

"Ah, yes! you have been crying. That is good; so much the better! I am very glad that I made you cry."

"As if it were the first time! But you are becoming such an artist as Porpora wishes you to be, my good Consuelo. The fever of success is lighted in you. When you sang in the paths of the Boehmerwald you saw me weeping and you wept yourself, touched by the beauty of your own singing. Now it is another thing; you laugh with pleasure and you thrill with pride when you see the tears you cause to flow. Come, courage, my Consuelo! Now you are a prima donna in all the strength of the word."
“Do not say that, my friend. I shall never be like her,” and she pointed to Corilla, who was singing on the stage at the other side of the back scene.

“Do not misunderstand me,” replied Joseph; “I mean that the god of inspiration has conquered you. In vain have your cold reason, your austere philosophy and the memory of Reisenburg striven against the spirit of the Pythoness. At last it has filled you and is overflowing. Confess that you are choking with pleasure; I can feel your arm trembling in my own, your face is animated, and I have never seen you with the look which you have now. No, you were not more agitated or inspired when Count Albert read you the Greek tragedies.”

“Ah, how you pain me!” cried Consuelo, turning suddenly pale, and withdrawing her arm from that of Joseph. “Why do you pronounce that name here? It is a sacred name, which ought not to be heard in this temple of folly. It is a terrible name, which, like a peal of thunder, drives back into night all the illusions and all the phantoms of my golden dreams.”

“Well, Consuelo, do you wish me to tell you the truth?” resumed Haydn, after a moment’s silence; “you can never make up your mind to marry that man.”

“Hush, hush, I promised!”

“Well, if you keep your promise you will never be happy with him. You, leave the theatre and give up an artist’s career? It is too late by an hour. You
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have tasted a joy the memory of which would constitute the torment of your whole life."

"You frighten me, Beppo! Why do you say such things to me to-day?"

"I do not know; I say them in spite of myself. Your fever has passed into my brain, and it seems to me that when we return home I shall write something sublime. It will be some platitude; but never mind, I am full of genius for the moment."

"How gay and tranquil you are! I, in the midst of this fever of joy and pride of which you speak, feel a strange pain, and wish to laugh and cry at the same time."

"You are suffering, I am sure of that; you must suffer. At the moment when you feel your power revealing itself, a painful thought seizes and chills you."

"Yes, it is true; what does that mean?"

"It means that you are an artist, and that you have imposed upon yourself the cruel duty, abominable to yourself and to God, of renouncing art."

"Yesterday it did not seem so, but to-day it does. My nerves are out of order, and I see that this excitement is terrible and hurtful. I had always desired its allurement and power. I had always gone upon the stage with calmness, with conscientious and modest attention. Now I can no longer control myself, and if I had to appear upon the boards now, it seems to me that I should commit sublime follies or wretched extravagances. The reins of my
will have slipped from my grasp; I hope that it will not be so to-morrow, for this emotion partakes of the nature of both delirium and agony."

"Poor friend! I fear that it will always be so henceforth, or rather, I hope it; for you will be really great only under the influence of this emotion. I have heard it said by all the musicians and actors to whom I have spoken, that without this delirium or this emotion, they could accomplish nothing; and that instead of growing calmer with age, they always become more impressionable at each embrace of their demon."

"It is a great mystery," said Consuelo with a sigh. "It does not seem to me that vanity, jealousy of others, or a base love of triumph can have taken possession of me so suddenly, and changed my whole nature in a night. No! I assure you that when I sang this prayer of Zenobia and this duet with Tirisdates, in which Caffariello's vigor and passion carried me along like a whirlwind, I thought neither of the public, my rivals nor myself. I was Zenobia. I thought of the immortal gods of Olympus with a wholly Christian ardor, and I burned with such a love for that good Caffariello that after the ritornello I could not look at him without laughing. All this is strange, and I am beginning to believe that, as the dramatic act is a perpetual falsehood, God punishes us by inflicting on us the madness of believing in it ourselves, and of regarding seriously what we do to produce an illusion upon others. No! Man may
not abuse all the passions and emotions of real life to make a sport of them. God would have us keep our souls pure and healthy for true affections and useful deeds, and when we thwart his wishes he punishes us and makes us mad."

"God! The will of God! There lies the mystery, Consuelo. Who can fathom God's designs for us? Would he give us, from the very cradle, these instincts, these desires for a certain art which we can never stifle, if he did not mean us to use them when we are called upon to do so? Why, as a child, did I not care for the sports of my little comrades? Why, as soon as I was my own master, did I labor at music with a perseverance which nothing could discourage and an assiduity which would have killed any other child of my age? Rest wearied me, labor gave me life. It was so with you, Consuelo. You have told me so a hundred times, and when one of us was telling of his life, the other seemed to be hearing the story of his own. No, the hand of God is in everything, and every faculty, every inclination, is his work, even though we do not know its end. You were born an artist, therefore you must be one; and whoever hinders you will kill you or give you a life worse than the tomb."

"Ah, Beppo," cried Consuelo, appalled and almost distracted, "I know what you would do, if you were really my friend!"

"What, dear Consuelo? Does not my life belong to you?"
“You would kill me to-morrow as soon as the curtain falls, after I have been a real artist, really inspired, for the first and the last time in my life.”

“Ah!” said Joseph, with mournful gayety, “I would rather kill Count Albert or myself.”

At this moment Consuelo raised her eyes to the opening between the scenes just opposite her, and glanced at it in a melancholy revery. The stage of a great theatre, seen by daylight, is something so different to what it appears lighted up and from the auditorium, that it is impossible to form an idea of it unless one has seen it. Nothing could be more dreary, nothing more sombre and frightful, than this interior, dark, deserted and silent. If a human figure were to appear distinctly in the boxes, closed like tombs, it would seem a spectre, and the boldest actor would recoil from it frightened. The faint, wan light which comes from several skylights placed in the roof at the back of the stage, falls slantingly over scaffoldings, grayish rags and dusty boards. On the stage, the eye, deprived of the advantage of perspective, is astonished at the narrow space in which so many persons and passions must act, simulating majestic movements, imposing masses, uncontrollable outbursts, which will seem such to the spectators, and which are studied and measured to an inch, that they may not become confused and entangled, or break against the scenery. But if the stage seems small and mean, the height of the structure intended to shelter so much scenery and machinery appears im-
mense, freed from all those canvasses painted like clouds, cornices or verdant branches which cut it off at a certain height to the eye of the spectator. In its real disproportion, this elevation has an austere look; and if one fancies himself in a cell when he looks at the stage, when he looks at the roof he fancies himself in a gothic church, but an unfinished or a ruined one, for everything in it is dim, shapeless, fantastic and incoherent. Ladders hanging without symmetry, according to the needs of the machinist, cut off as if accidentally, and leading without apparent motive to other ladders which cannot be distinguished in the confusion of these colorless details; piles of boards, oddly carved; scenery seen from behind, the outline of which conveys no idea to the mind; ropes intertwined like hieroglyphs; nameless rubbish, pulleys and wheels, which seem prepared for an unknown torture,—all this resembles those dreams which we make before awaking, and in which we see incomprehensible things, while making vain efforts to know where we are. All is vague, uncertain and ready to fall apart. One sees a man working tranquilly on these beams who seems borne by cobwebs; he may appear a sailor, climbing the rigging of a vessel, and, just as readily, a gigantic rat gnawing worm-eaten timbers. One hears words which come from he knows not where. They are pronounced ninety feet above him, and the strange sonority of the echoes concealed in all the corners of this fantastic dome brings them to his ear, distinct or confused, as he
makes a step forward or to one side, which changes the acoustic effect. A frightful noise shakes the scaffolding, and dies away in prolonged rumblings. Is the roof falling in? Has one of those frail galleries given way, carrying the poor workmen in its ruins? No, it is a fireman sneezing or a cat chasing a mouse amid the precipices of this hanging labyrinth. Before you are accustomed to all these sights and sounds, you are afraid; you do not know what the matter is, or against what unexpected apparitions you must summon up your courage. You understand nothing, and that which one cannot distinguish by sight or thought, that which is uncertain and unknown, always alarms the senses. The most reasonable thing which one can fancy when he enters such a chaos for the first time is that he is about to be present at some mad sabbath in the laboratory of a mysterious alchemy.¹

¹ And yet, as everything has a beauty for the eye which knows how to see, this theatrical limbo has one which strikes the imagination far more than all the mock glories of the lighted and ordered stage at the hour of performance. I have often asked myself in what this beauty consisted, and how it would be possible to describe it, if I wished to convey the secret of it to the soul of another. "What!" you will say, "can external objects, without color, form, order or light, put on an aspect which speaks to the eyes and the imagination?" A painter only could reply, "Yes, I understand." He would remember Rembrandt's "Philosopher in Meditation," that great room lost in the shadows, those endless stairways which turn one knows not how; those vague lights which shine and disappear, one knows not why, in different parts of the picture; this whole scene, uncertain yet clear at the same time; this powerful color bestowed upon a subject, which after all is painted only in light and dark brown; this magic of the chiaroscuro; this disposition of light thrown adroitly upon the most insignificant objects—a chair, a jug, a copper vessel,—and how, suddenly, these objects, which did not deserve to be looked at, still less painted, become so interesting, so beautiful in their way, that one cannot turn his
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Consuelo therefore allowed her gaze to wander absently over this singular edifice, and the poetry of this disorder appeared to her for the first time. At each extremity of the passage formed by the two back scenes opened a black and deep recess, through which figures passed from time to time like shadows. Suddenly she saw one of these figures stop as if to wait for her, and she thought she saw a gesture calling her.

"Is it Porpora?" she asked Joseph.

"No," said he; "but it is no doubt some one come to tell you that they are ready to rehearse the third act."

Consuelo quickened her steps, and went towards this person, whose features she could not distinguish, because he had retreated to the wall; but when she

eyes away from them. They have received life, they exist and are worthy to exist, because the artist has touched them with his wand, because he has fixed upon them a bit of sunlight, because he has been able to spread between himself and them a transparent, mysterious veil, the air which we see and breathe, and into which we fancy we enter when we penetrate in imagination into the depths of his canvas. Well, if we find one of his pictures in real nature, though it be composed of even meaner objects yet—of broken boards, faded rags or a smoked-stained wall; if a faint light dimly throws its enchantment over it, if chiaro-oscuro exercises that essential art which is in effect, in position, in the harmony of all things which exist, without man's needing to put it there, man can find it, and enjoys it, admires it and takes pleasure in it as a conquest which he has just made.

It is almost impossible to explain in words these mysteries which the stroke of a great master's pencil translates intelligibly to every eye. When we see the interiors of Rembrandt, of Teniers, of Gerard Douw, the coarsest eye will recollect the reality which, nevertheless, had never struck him as poetic. To see this reality poetically, and to make a Rembrandt picture of it in the mind, one needs only to be endowed with a feeling for the picturesque which belongs to many organ.
was but a few paces from him, and about to speak to him, he slipped quickly behind the scenes, and reached the back of the stage.

"That person seems to have been watching us," said Joseph.

"And to be running away from us," added Consuelo, struck by the haste with which the mysterious individual had avoided her look. "I do not know why, but he frightens me."

She returned to the stage, and rehearsed the last act, towards the end of which she again felt the enthusiasm which had transported her. When she wished to put on her cloak and go home, she had to look for it, dazzled by a sudden brightness; they had just opened a skylight above her head, and a ray of the sun fell obliquely before her. The contrast of this
brilliant light with the darkness of surrounding objects half blinded her for a moment, and she made two or three steps at random, when suddenly she saw beside her the same person in the black cloak who had puzzled her before. She saw him indistinctly, but she seemed to recognize him. She uttered a cry and sprang towards him, but he had already disappeared, and she searched for him with her eyes in vain.

"What is the matter?" said Joseph, handing her her cloak; "did you run against a scene? Are you hurt?"

"No," she said, "but I saw Count Albert."

"Count Albert here! Are you sure? Is it possible?"

"It is possible; it is certain," said Consuelo, drawing him away.

She began to look behind the scenes, running about and going into every corner. Joseph assisted her in this search, though convinced that she was mistaken, while Porpora called her impatiently to take her home. Consuelo could find no one who in the least reminded her of Albert; and when, obliged to go out with her master, she saw every one pass who had been upon the stage at the same time with her, she observed several cloaks very like that which had struck her.

"Never mind," she murmured to Joseph, who pointed this out to her, "I saw him; he was there!"

"It was a hallucination," replied Joseph. "If it had really been Count Albert, he would have spoken
to you, and you say that twice he fled at your approach."

"I do not say that it was really he, as you say, Joseph. I believe now that it was a vision. Some misfortune must have happened to him. Oh, I should like to go away at once, to fly to Bohemia! I am sure that he is in danger, that he is waiting for me and calling me!"

"I see that, among other ill turns he has done you, he has infected you with his madness, my poor Consuelo. The excitement produced by your singing has predisposed you to these fancies. Come to yourself, I beg of you, and be sure that if Count Albert is in Vienna, you will see him alive in his own person before the end of the day."

This hope revived Consuelo. She hastened forward with Beppo, leaving behind her old Porpora, who was not dissatisfied that she should forget him in the warmth of her conversation with Haydn. But Consuelo was thinking no more of Joseph than of the master. She hurried and arrived all out of breath, hastened to her apartment, and found no one there. Joseph inquired of the servants whether any one had called upon her during her absence. No one had come, no one came. Consuelo waited in vain all day. During the evening, and far into the night, she looked out of the window at every belated wayfarer who passed through the street. She seemed to be always seeing some one come towards her door and stop. But this some one would pass by, one singing,
another with an old man's cough, and be lost in the darkness. Consuelo, convinced that she had dreamed, went to bed, and the next day, this impression having vanished, she confessed to Joseph that she had not really distinguished any of the features of the person in question. His noble appearance, the fashion of his cloak and the way he wore it, a pale complexion, something dark beneath the face, which might be either a beard or the shadow of a hat, deeply marked by the odd light of the theatre,—these vague resemblances, rapidly grasped by her imagination, had sufficed to persuade her that she saw Albert.

"If such a man as you have often described to me had been upon the stage," said Joseph, "there were enough people walking about for his careless dress, his long beard and his black hair to have attracted attention. But I have inquired everywhere, even of the doorkeepers, who admit nobody to the interior without knowing or seeing his authority, and no one saw any stranger in the theatre on that day."

"Well, I must have dreamed. I was moved, beside myself. I thought of Albert; his image passed through my mind. Some one was there before my eyes, and I took him for Albert. Has my head become so weak? It is certain that I cried out from the bottom of my heart, and that something very extraordinary and absurd took place in me."

"Think no more of it. Do not weary yourself with chimeras. Read over your role and think of this evening."
CHAPTER XIV.

During the day Consuelo saw from her window a very strange troop defiling towards the place. They were square-built men, robust, bronzed, with long mustaches, bare legs, cross-gartered as with the antique cothurni, their heads covered with pointed bonnets, their belt supplied with four pistols, their arms and necks naked, an Albanian carbine in their hands, the whole set off by a scarlet mantle.

"Is it a masquerade?" asked Consuelo of the canon, who had come to visit her; "this is not the carnival, I believe."

"Look well at those men," replied the canon, "for we shall not see them again in a long while, if it pleases God to continue the reign of Maria Theresa. See how curiously the people are scanning them, though with a certain disgust or fright! Vienna saw them arrive in her time of anguish and distress, and then she received them more joyfully than to-day, ashamed and horrified as she is to owe them her safety."

"Are they the Slav robbers of whom they told me so much in Bohemia, and who did such harm?"

"Yes; they are the remains of those hordes of Croat slaves and bandits whom the famous Baron Francis von Trenck, the cousin of your friend Baron
Frederick von Trenck, freed and enslaved with incredible boldness and skill, to make of them almost regular troops in the service of Maria Theresa. See, there he is, that frightful hero, that Trenck with the burnt jaws, as our soldiers call him; that famous partisan, the most wily, intrepid and necessary during the sad years of warfare which have just passed; the greatest boaster and pillager of his age, assuredly, but also the bravest, the most robust, the most active, the most fabulously rash man of modern times. It is he, Trenck the Pandour, with his ravenous wolves, a sanguinary pack of which he is the savage shepherd."

Francis von Trenck was even taller than his Prussian cousin. He was nearly six feet five. His scarlet cloak, fastened at his throat by a clasp of rubies, opened on his breast to display a whole museum of Turkish arms, mounted with jewels, of which his girdle was the arsenal. Pistols, curved sabres and cutlasses,—nothing was wanting to give him the appearance of a most expeditious and determined slayer of men. In place of an aigrette, he wore in his cap a little scythe with four sharp blades, which fell upon his forehead. His appearance was horrible. The explosion of a barrel of powder, by disfiguring him, had put the finishing touch to his diabolical look.

1 Having descended into a cellar at the pillage of a Bohemian town, and in the hope of being the first to discover some casks of gold of whose existence he had been informed, he hurriedly placed a light close to one of these precious casks—but it was powder that it contained. The explosion blew down part of the roof upon him, and they drew him from the ruins at the point of death, with his body furrowed with horrible burns, and his face covered with deep and indelible wounds.
"One could not look at him without a shudder," say all the memoirs of the time.

"Is this that monster, that enemy of humanity?" said Consuelo, turning away her eyes with horror.

"Bohemia will long remember his passage,—towns burned and plundered, old men and children cut to pieces, women outraged, the country exhausted by contributions, the crops destroyed, the flocks butchered when they could not be carried off,—everywhere ruin, desolation, murder and conflagration. Poor Bohemia! the eternal scene of every struggle, the theatre of every tragedy!"

"Yes, poor Bohemia, the victim of every fury, the arena of every combat!" replied the canon. "Francis von Trenck reproduced there the savage excesses of the time of John Ziska. Unconquered like him, he never gave quarter; and the terror of his name was so great that his advance-guard has taken towns by assault, when he himself was four miles off fighting with other enemies. It can be said of him, as of Attila, that the grass never grows where his horse has trod. The conquered will curse him till the fourth generation."

Trenck disappeared in the distance, but for a long while Consuelo and the canon watched the passing of his magnificent horses, richly caparisoned, led by his gigantic Croat hussars.

"What you see is only a small fraction of his wealth," said the canon. "Mules and wagons laden with arms, pictures, precious stones and ingots of gold
and silver continually cover the roads which lead to his estates in Slavonia. He has buried treasures there which might furnish the ransom of three kings. He eats from gold plate which he captured from the King of Prussia at Sorau, when he nearly captured the king himself. Some say that he missed him by a quarter of an hour; others assert that he held him prisoner in his hands, and that he dearly sold him his liberty. Patience! It may be that Trenck the Pandour will not long enjoy his glory and riches. They say that a criminal prosecution is threatening him, and that the most terrible accusations are hanging over his head; that the empress is greatly afraid of him; in short, that his Croats, who, contrary to their custom, have not given themselves their own discharge, are to be incorporated into the regular troops, and kept in hand after the Prussian fashion. As for him,—I have a poor idea of the compliments and rewards which await him at court."

"They saved the crown of Austria, according to what is said."

"That is certain. From the frontiers of Turkey to those of France they have spread terror, and have won the best-defended places and the most desperate battles. Always the first in attacking the front of an army, the head of a bridge or a breach in a fortress, they have compelled our greatest generals to admiration and our enemies to flight. The French everywhere recoiled before them, and the great Frederick turned pale, like a simple mortal, they say, at their
war-cry. There is no river so rapid, no forest so impenetrable, no swamp so impassable, no rock so steep, no hail of balls nor torrent of flames so furious, that they have not passed through it at all hours of the night, and at the most inclement seasons. Yes, truly, they saved the crown of Maria Theresa more than all the old tactics of our generals and all the stratagems of our diplomats."

"In that case their crime will go unpunished, and their robberies be hallowed."

"Perhaps they will be too much punished, on the contrary."

"People do not rid themselves of servants who have done so well."

"Excuse me," said the canon ironically, "when one has no more use for them" —

"But were they not permitted to commit all their excesses on the territories of the empire and its allies?"

"No doubt; everything was permitted them, because they were necessary."

"And now?"

"And now that they are so no longer, they are reproached for all that was permitted to them."

"And Maria Theresa's great soul?"

"They profaned churches."

"I understand. Trenck is lost, canon."

"Hush! That is only whispered."

"Did you see the Pandours?" said Joseph, coming in out of breath.
"With very little pleasure," replied Consuelo.
"Well, did you not recognize them?"
"It is the first time I ever saw them."
"No, Consuelo, it is not the first time you have seen those faces. We met some of them in the Boehmerwald."
"None that I recollect, thank heaven!"
"Have you forgotten a hut where we passed the night amid the fodder, and where we discovered suddenly that ten or a dozen men were asleep around us?"
Consuelo recollected the adventure in the hut, and the meeting with those savage persons whom she, as well as Joseph, had mistaken for smugglers. Other emotions, which she had neither shared nor suspected, had forever graven all the circumstances of that stormy night on Joseph's memory.
"Well," he said, "those supposed smugglers, who did not perceive our presence and who went out of the hut before daylight, bearing bags and heavy bundles, were Pandours; they had the arms, the faces, the mustaches and the cloaks which I have just seen passing, and Providence spared us, without our knowing it, the most fatal meeting that we could have had on our journey."
"Without any doubt," said the canon, to whom Joseph had often related all the details of this journey, "these honest fellows had discharged themselves, as is their custom when their pockets are full, and were on their way to the frontier, to return to their own
country by a long circuit, rather than to carry their booty across the territory of the empire, where they always fear to have to give an account of it. They rob and murder each other all the way, and it is the strongest who returns to his forests and his caverns, laden with the shares of his comrades."

The hour of performance came to distract Consuelo from her sombre thoughts of Trenck's Pandours, and she went to the theatre. She had no room in which to dress. Until then Madame Tesi had lent her her own; but this evening Madame Tesi, who was greatly irritated at her success, and already her sworn enemy, had carried off the key, and the prima donna of the evening found herself greatly embarrassed to know where to take refuge. These little treacheries are common in the theatre. They irritate and annoy a rival whose powers one is anxious to paralyze. She loses time in asking for a room, and fears that she may not find one. Time passes, and her comrades say to her as they pass, "What, not dressed? They are going to begin." At last, after many requests and much running about, by dint of anger and threats she succeeds in obtaining a room in which she finds nothing that she needs. If the dressmakers have been bribed, the costume is not ready or fits badly. The dressmakers are at the orders of every one but the victim of this little torture. The bell rings, the call-boy (the "butta-fuori") cries in his shrill voice through the corridors, "Signore e signori, si va cominciari!" terrible words which the debutante hears
with a mortal chill. She is not ready; she hurries, breaks her laces, tears her ruffles, puts on her mantle awry, and her crown will fall at the first step she takes upon the stage. Panting, indignant, nervous, with eyes full of tears, she must appear with a heavenly smile; she must sing with a pure, fresh, and true voice, when her throat is contracted and her heart ready to break. Ah, the crowns of flowers which rain upon the stage in a moment of triumph have, on their reverse, thousands of thorns!

Happily for Consuelo, she met Corilla, who said to her as she took her hand, "Come into my room. Tesi has tried the same trick on you that she played me at first. But I will come to your rescue, if only to enrage her. It will be a revenge, at least. At the rate at which you are going, Porporina, I am likely to see you pass before me, wherever I have the misfortune to meet you. Then you will no doubt forget the way in which I am behaving here, and remember only the injury I have done you."

"The injury you have done me, Corilla?" said Consuelo, going into her rival's dressing-room and beginning her toilet behind a screen, while the German dressers divided their attention between the two cantatrices, who could converse in Venetian without being understood. "Really, I do not know what injury you have done me. I do not recollect it."

"Is that true?" replied the other. "Have you so completely forgotten little Zoto?"

"I was free and at liberty to forget him, and I
have done it," said Consuelo, fastening her regal cothurnus with that courage and clearness of mind which the professional habit gives at certain moments. Then she made a brilliant roulade, not to forget to keep herself in voice. Corilla replied by another roulade; then she stopped to say to the maid,—

"Young woman, you are lacing me too tight. Do you think you are dressing a Nuremburg doll? These Germans," she continued in the dialect, "do not know what shoulders are. They would make us as square as their dowagers. Porporina, do not let them bundle you up to the ears as they did the last time; it was absurd."

"Ah! as for that, my dear, it is the empress's order. These ladies know it, and I do not care to rebel for so little."

"So little! Our shoulders, so little!"

"I do not say that for you, who have the handsomest figure in the world; but for me"—

"Hypocrite!" said Corilla with a sigh, "you are ten years younger than I, and my shoulders will soon have to live upon their reputation."

"It is you who are a hypocrite," replied Consuelo, horribly wearied by this sort of conversation; and to interrupt it she began, while still dressing her hair, to make runs and fioriture.

"Keep still!" suddenly exclaimed Corilla, who was listening to her in spite of herself; "you plunge a thousand daggers into my throat. Ah! I would gladly give you all my lovers, for I should be very sure to
find others; but I can never rival your voice and method. Be still, for I should like to strangle you!"

Consuelo, who saw that Corilla was only half in jest, and that this mocking flattery concealed a real pain, took the hint; but after a moment Corilla said,—

"How do you make that ornament?"

"Would you like to make it? I will give it to you," replied Consuelo laughing, with her admirable good-nature. "Here, I will teach it to you. Sing it somewhere in your role this evening. I will think of another."

"It will be another still more difficult. I shall gain nothing by it."

"Well, I will not make any at all. Porpora is not fond of them, and it will be one less reproach for him to utter this evening. Here, this is my ornament."

Taking from her pocket a line of music written upon a scrap of paper, she handed it over the screen to Corilla, who at once began to study it. Consuelo assisted her, sang it to her several times, and at last taught it to her. Their toilets were all the time progressing.

But before Consuelo had put on her gown, Corilla impetuously thrust the screen aside and came in to kiss her, in thanks for sacrificing her ornament. It was not a very sincere feeling of gratitude which impelled her to this demonstration. There was mingled with it a perfidous desire to see her rival's
figure in her corset, that she might discover the secret of some imperfection. But Consuelo wore no corset. Her waist, slender as a reed, and her chaste and noble figure borrowed nothing from art. She fathomed Corilla’s intention, and smiled.

“You may examine my person and penetrate my heart,” she thought, “you will find nothing false.”

“Zingarella,” said Corilla, resuming, in spite of herself, her unfriendly air and bitter tone, “do you no longer love Anzoleto at all?”

“Not at all,” replied Consuelo, laughing.

“And did he love you a great deal?”

“Not at all,” said Consuelo, with the same indifference and the same expression of conviction and sincerity.

“That is what he told me,” cried Corilla, fixing on her her blue eyes, clear and burning, hoping to surprise a regret and reopen a wound in her rival’s past.

Consuelo did not pride herself on her acuteness, but she had that which belongs to frank souls, so strong when opposed to craft. She felt the blow, and accepted it tranquilly. She no longer loved Anzoleto, and she never suffered from wounded self-love; she therefore left Corilla this little triumph of vanity.

“He told the truth,” she said; “he did not love me.”

“But you, did you not love him?” asked the other, more astonished than satisfied by this concession.

Consuelo felt that she could not be only half frank. Corilla wished to win a victory, she must be satisfied.
"I loved him greatly," she replied.
"And you confess it? You have no pride, poor child."
"I had enough to cure myself."
"That is to say that you were philosophical enough to console yourself with some one else. Tell me with whom, Porporina. It cannot be with that little Haydn, who has not a penny to bless himself."
"That would be no reason. But I have never consoled myself with any one in the manner you mean."
"Ah, I know! I forgot that you pretended. Do not say such things, my dear, you will get yourself laughed at."
"Therefore I will not say them unless I am questioned, and I shall not allow every one to question me. It is a liberty which I have permitted you to take, Corilla; do not abuse it, if you are not my enemy."
"You are a mask!" cried Corilla; "you have a deep wit, though you affect simplicity. You have so much, that I almost believe you as pure as I was at twelve years old. Yet that is impossible. Ah, how clever you are, Zingarella! You can make men believe whatever you like."
"I shall not make them believe anything, for I shall not allow them to take enough interest in my affairs to question me."
"That would be wiser; they always take advantage of our confessions, and have no sooner obtained them than they humiliate us with their reproaches. I see
that you know how to manage. You do well not to wish to inspire passions; in that way you will have no trouble and no storms; you can act freely without deceiving any one. By conducting one's self frankly, one finds more lovers and makes a fortune more quickly. But one needs more courage for that than I have; no one must please you, and you must not care to be loved by any one, for those dangerous delights of love can only be enjoyed by means of falsehoods and precautions. I admire you, Zingarella! Yes, I am filled with respect at seeing you, so young, conquer love; for the most fatal thing to our repose and our voice, to the lasting of our beauty, to our fortune and success, is love, is it not? Oh, yes, I know it by experience! If I had always been able to confine myself to cold gallantry, I should not have suffered so much, I should not have lost two thousand sequins and two notes from the top of my voice. But — you see how I am humbling myself before you — I am a poor creature, born unlucky. I always, in the midst of my finest affairs, have done something foolish which has ruined everything. I have allowed myself to fall in love with some poor devil, and farewell fortune! Once I might have married Zustiniani; yes, I might. He adored me, though I could not bear him; I was the mistress of his fate. That miserable Anzoleto pleased me, and I lost my position. Come, you will give me advice, you will be my friend, will you not? You will save me from the weaknesses of my heart and the impulses of my head? And, to begin with, I must
confess to you that for a week I have had an inclination for a man whose favor is waning singularly and who may soon be more dangerous than useful at court,—a man who has millions, but who may find himself ruined in a twinkling. Yes, I must cut loose from him before he drags me down in his fall. Come! The devil wishes to give me the lie, for here he comes; I hear him, and I feel the fire of jealousy burning in my cheeks. Close your screen, Porporina, and do not move; I do not wish him to see you."

Consuelo made haste to carefully close her screen. She had no need of the warning to cause her not to desire to be examined by Corilla’s lovers. A man’s voice, clear and true enough, though no longer fresh, was humming in the corridor. There was a knock at the door for form’s sake, and some one came in without waiting for a reply.

"What a horrible trade!" thought Consuelo. "No, I shall not allow myself to be seduced by the fascinations of the stage. The inside of the theatre is too filthy."

She hid in her corner, ashamed to find herself in such company, appalled and indignant at the way in which Corilla had understood her, and looking for the first time into that abyss of corruption of which she had conceived no idea.
CHAPTER XV.

While hastily finishing her toilet, in fear of being surprised, she heard the following dialogue in Italian:

"What are you doing here? I forbade you to come to my dressing-room. The empress prohibits us, under the severest penalties, from receiving any men here but our comrades, and even then there must be some urgent necessity from the business of the theatre. Just see to what you expose me! I cannot understand how the police of the theatre is so neglectful."

"There is no police for people who pay well, my beauty. It is only niggards who meet with resistance or betrayal on their road. Come, receive me a little better, or by the devil's body, I shall not come back!"

"It is the greatest pleasure you could do me. So go! Well, are you not going?"

"You seem to wish it so sincerely that I am staying to spite you."

"I warn you that I shall send for the stage-manager to rid me of you."

"Let him come if he is weary of living. I am willing."

"But are you mad? I tell you that you are com-
promising me,—that you are causing me to break a
rule recently introduced by her majesty, and that you
are exposing me to a heavy fine, and perhaps to being
discharged."

"I will undertake to pay the fine to your director
with a cane. As to your discharge, I ask nothing
better; I will take you to my estates, where we will
lead a merry life."

"I, go with such a brute as you? Never! Come,
let us go out together, since you will not leave me
here alone."

"Alone? Alone, my charmer? I must make sure
of that before I leave you. That screen takes up a
great deal of space in so small a room. It seems to
me that I should be doing you a service to push it
back against the wall by a good kick."

"Stop, sir, stop! A lady is dressing there. Do
you wish to kill or wound a woman, you wretch?"

"A woman? Ah, that is different! But I wish to
be sure that she does not wear a sword."

The screen began to move. Consuelo, who was
entirely dressed, threw her cloak on her shoulders, and
while the stranger was opening the first leaf of the
screen, tried to open the last one, that she might slip
out by the door, which was only a couple of steps off.
But Corilla, who saw her movement, stopped her,
saying,—

"Stay there, Porporina; if he did not find you, he
might think it a man who was escaping, and kill me."

Consuelo was frightened, and resolved to show her-
self; but Corilla, who was clinging to the screen between her and her lover, still prevented her. Per-
haps she hoped that by exciting his jealousy she might kindle in him enough passion for him not to notice the touching grace of her rival.

"If a lady is there, let her reply to me," he said laughing. "Madam, are you dressed? Can one present you his homage?"

"Be good enough, sir," said Consuelo, at a sign from Corilla, "to keep your homage for some one else, and excuse me from receiving it. I am not visible."

"Which means that now is the best time to look at you," said Corilla's lover, pretending to open the screen.

"Take care what you do," said Corilla with a forced laugh; "suppose instead of a shepherdess in undress you find a respectable duenna?"

"The devil! But no! Her voice is too fresh for her to be more than twenty years old, and if she were not pretty you would already have shown her to me."

The screen was very tall, and in spite of his great height the stranger could not look over it without throwing down Corilla's dresses, which were lying on the chairs; besides, since he no longer feared that a man was there, the sport amused him.

"Madam," he cried, "if you are old and ugly, I will respect your refuge; but if you are young and handsome, do not allow yourself to be calumniated by Corilla."
Consuelo did not reply.

"Ah, upon my word!" cried the stranger, after waiting a moment, "I will not be your dupe. If you were old or ill-favored, you would not admit it so calmly; it is because you are an angel that you are indifferent to my doubts. In either case, I must see you, for either you are a prodigy of beauty, able to cause fear to the beautiful Corilla, or you are a clever enough woman to confess your ugliness, and I shall be glad to see, for the first time in my life, an ugly woman with no pretensions."

He took Corilla's arm with two fingers only, and bent it like a straw. She gave a great cry, and pretended that he hurt her; he took no notice of it, and opening the leaf of the screen revealed to Consuelo's looks the horrible face of Baron Francis von Trenck. A rich and elegant court dress had replaced his fierce war costume; but from his gigantic size and the large blotches of reddish brown which covered his swarthy face, it was impossible not to recognize at once the bold and pitiless chief of the Pandours. Consuelo could not restrain a cry of fright, and, turning pale, fell upon a chair.

"Do not be afraid of me, madam," said the baron, placing one knee upon the ground, "and pardon me for the boldness which it is impossible, while I look at you, to regret as I ought. But allow me to believe that it was from pity for me (knowing that I could not see you without adoring you) that you refused to show yourself. Do not pain me by making me think that
I frighten you. I am sufficiently ugly, I admit; but if war has made a sort of monster out of a handsome fellow enough, it has not made me any worse for that."

"Any worse? No doubt that was impossible."

"Hilloa!" replied the baron, "you are a very shy child, and your nurse must have told you vampire stories about me, as all the old women of this country do. But the young ones are more just to me. They know that if I am a little rough in my ways with the enemies of my country, I am very easy to tame when they take the trouble."

And, leaning towards the mirror in which Consuelo was pretending to look at herself, he fixed upon her that look, at once ferocious and voluptuous, which had fascinated Corilla. Consuelo saw that she could only get rid of him by irritating him, and she said to him,—

"It is not fear, baron, that I feel for you, but disgust and aversion. You love to kill, and I am not afraid of death; but I hate bloodthirsty natures, and I know yours. I have come from Bohemia, and I saw there the trace of your steps."

The baron's face changed, and he said, shrugging his shoulders and turning towards Corilla,—

"What devil is this? The Baroness Lestock, who fired a pistol in my face in a skirmish, was not more fierce against me! Can I have crushed her lover in galloping over some heath? Come, pretty one, calm yourself; I only wished to jest with you. Since you are so crabbed, I bid you good-evening. I deserved
as much for allowing myself to be diverted a moment from my divine Corilla."

"Your divine Corilla," replied the latter, "cares very little about your diversions, and begs you to withdraw; for the director will make his rounds in a moment, and unless you wish to create a disturbance" —

"I will go," said the baron; "I do not wish to afflict you, or deprive the public of the freshness of your voice by causing you to weep. I will wait for you with my carriage after the performance. Is it agreed?"

He kissed her, willing or no, before Consuelo, and went out.

Corilla at once flung herself upon her companion's neck to thank her for having so successfully repelled the baron's advances. Consuelo turned away her head; the handsome Corilla, still sullied by the kiss of that man, caused her almost as much disgust as he did.

"How can you be jealous of so repulsive a being?" asked she.

"Zingarella, you know nothing about it," replied Corilla smiling. "The baron pleases women of higher rank and a grander reputation for virtue than I. His figure is superb, and his face, though spoiled by scars, has charms which you would not resist if he took it into his head to make you think him handsome."

"Ah, Corilla! it is not his face which repels me the most. His nature is more hideous still. Do you not know that his heart is that of a tiger?"
"That is what turned my head," replied Corilla quickly. "It is hardly worth while to listen to the compliments of all these effeminate creatures; but to bind a tiger, to tame a lion of the desert and lead him about in a leash; to make him sigh, weep, roar, and tremble, whose look puts whole armies to flight, and who cuts off with a blow of his sabre the head of an ox like the head of a poppy,—that is a more acute pleasure than any I have known. Anzoleto had a little of that; I loved him for his wickedness, but the baron is worse. The other might have beaten his mistress, this one might kill her. Oh, I love him the more for it!"

"Poor Corilla!" said Consuelo, looking at her with profound pity.

"You pity me for this love, and you are right; but you would be still more right if you envied me. Yet I prefer that you should pity me rather than strive to take him away from me."

"You may be easy," said Consuelo.

"Signora, si va cominciare!" cried the call-boy at the door.

"Begin!" cried a stentorian voice on the floor above, occupied by the chorus-singers.

"Begin!" replied another voice, mournful and smothered, at the foot of a stairway which led to the stage; and the last syllable, passing like an echo from wing to wing, died away as it reached the prompter, who translated it to the conductor of the orchestra by knocking three times upon the floor. The conductor,
in turn, rapped upon his desk with his bow, and after that moment of concentration and preparation which precedes the opening of a performance, the overture began and imposed silence upon boxes and pit alike.

From the first act of "Zenobia," Consuelo produced that complete, irresistible effect which Haydn had predicted the afternoon before. The greatest artists do not triumph every day upon the stage; even supposing that their strength never had moments of failure, all parts and all situations are not suited to the development of their most brilliant faculties. It was the first time that Consuelo had found a role and situations in which she could be herself, and reveal herself in all her candor, strength, tenderness and purity, without making an effort to identify herself with an unfamiliar character. She could forget this terrible labor and abandon herself to the emotion of the moment, and be inspired suddenly by pathetic and profound feelings which she had not had time to study, but which were revealed to her by the magnetism of a sympathetic audience. She experienced an unspeakable pleasure in this; and, as she had felt at the rehearsal and honestly said to Joseph, it was not her triumph with the public which intoxicated her with joy, but the happiness of succeeding in revealing herself, the victorious certainty of having for a moment attained the ideal in her art. This time she knew that she had displayed all her power, and, almost deaf to the clamors of the crowd, she applauded herself in the secrecy of her conscience.
After the first act, she remained in the wings to listen to the interlude, in which Corilla was charming, and to encourage her by sincere praise. But after the second act, she felt the need of resting for an instant, and went back to her dressing-room. Porpora, who was busy elsewhere, did not go with her, and Joseph, who by a secret effect of the imperial protection had been admitted among the violins in the orchestra, naturally remained in his place.

Consuelo went alone, therefore, to Corilla’s room, took a glass of water, and threw herself down for a moment upon the sofa. But suddenly the memory of the Pandour Trenck came to frighten her, and she ran to lock the door. Yet there seemed little likelihood that he would trouble her. He had gone into the house when the curtain rose, and Consuelo had seen him in the balcony, among her most enthusiastic admirers. He had a passionate love of music; born and bred in Italy, he spoke its language as harmoniously as a true Italian, sang pleasantly, and “if he had been born with no other resources, might have made his fortune on the stage,” if his biographers are to be believed.

But what terror fell upon Consuelo when, as she turned to the sofa again, she saw the fatal screen shake and open to give passage to the accursed Pandour!

She sprang towards the door, but Trenck was there before her, and placing his back against it, said with a frightful smile,—
"Be a little calm, my charmer! Since you share this room with Corilla, you must be accustomed to seeing her lover here, and you must know that he has a duplicate key in his pocket. You have come to cast yourself into the cavern of the lion,—oh, do not scream! No one will come. They know Trenck's presence of mind, the strength of his arm, and how little he cares for the life of fools. If they allow him to come here, in spite of the imperial decree, it is that there is not, apparently, among all your jack-puddings, a man bold enough to look him in the face. Come, why do you turn pale and tremble? Are you so little sure of yourself that you cannot listen to three words without losing your head? Or are you afraid that I am a man to outrage you? These are old wives' tales, my child. Trenck is not so bad as they say, and it is to convince you of it that he wishes to talk with you a moment."

"Sir, I will not listen to you until you open that door," said Consuelo, calling up all her resolution. "On that condition I consent to hear you speak. But if you persist in keeping me shut up here, I shall think that this brave, strong man is not sure of himself, and is afraid of the jack-puddings, my comrades."

"Ah, you are right!" said Trenck, opening wide the door, "and if you are not afraid of catching cold, I would rather have the air than stifle in the musk with which Corilla fills this little room. You do me a service."
As he said this, he came back and took both of Consuelo's hands, forced her to sit down upon the sofa, and knelt at her feet, without releasing her hands, which she could not remove without beginning a childish struggle, perhaps fatal to her honor; for the baron seemed to await and provoke a resistance which would awaken his brutal instincts and cause him to lose all scruple and respect. Consuelo understood this, and resigned herself to the shame of a doubtful position. But a tear which she could not keep back rolled slowly down her pale and sad cheek. The baron saw it, and instead of being touched and disarmed, allowed a fierce and cruel joy to gleam from his bloody eyelids, torn by the explosion.

"You are very unjust to me," he said, with a voice the caressing sweetness of which betrayed a hypocritical satisfaction. "You hate me without knowing me, and you do not wish to listen to my justification. But I will not resign myself foolishly to your aversion. An hour ago I did not care for it, but since I have heard the divine Porporina, since I have come to adore her, I know that I must live for her, or die by her hand."

"Spare yourself this ridiculous comedy," said the indignant Consuelo.

"Comedy?" interrupted the baron. "See," he said, drawing from his pocket a loaded pistol, which he cocked and handed to her, "you will keep this weapon in one of your fair hands, and if I offend you in spite of myself in speaking to you, if I continue to be odious to you, kill me, if you see fit. As for this
other hand, I am resolved to hold it until you allow me to kiss it. But I wish to owe this favor only to your goodness, and you will see me ask for it and wait for it patiently beneath the muzzle of that deadly weapon, which you can turn against me when my prayers become unbearable to you."

Trenck did in fact place the pistol in Consuelo's right hand, and forcibly retained her left, remaining at her feet with the confidence of an incomparable conceit. Consuelo felt strong from that moment, and placing the pistol so that she could use it at the first danger, she said with a smile,—

"You can speak, I am listening to you."

As she said this, she thought that she heard steps in the corridor and saw the shadow of some person before her door. But this shadow quickly disappeared, either because the person had gone away again or because Consuelo's fright was imaginary. In her present situation, and having nothing to fear but a scandal, she was more afraid than desirous of the approach of any indifferent or friendly person; if she kept silence, the baron, surprised at her feet, with the open door, could not fail to appear on shamelessly intimate terms with her; if she screamed, if she called for help, the baron would certainly kill the first person who entered. Fifty adventures of this sort adorned the story of his private life, and the victims of his passions were not, on this account, considered less weak or less dishonored. In this frightful dilemma, Consuelo could only hope for a
prompt explanation, and that by her own courage she might bring Trenck to reason without there being any witness to criticise and interpret this strange scene in his own way.

He understood her thoughts in a measure, and closed the door partly, but not entirely.

"Really, madam," he said, "it would be a folly to expose you to the spiteful tongues of those who pass, and this quarrel must be ended between ourselves. Listen to me; I see your fears, and I understand the scruples of your friendship for Corilla. Your honor, your reputation for integrity, are dearer to me than the precious moments in which I can see you without witnesses. I know well that this panther, with whom I was in love an hour ago, would accuse you of treason if she surprised me at your feet. She will not have that pleasure. I have counted the moments; she will amuse the public with her simpering for ten minutes longer. I have therefore time to tell you that if I did love her, I now remember her no more than the first apple that I plucked; therefore, do not fear that you are taking from her a heart which no longer belongs to her, and from which nothing henceforth can ever efface your image. You alone, madam, reign over me, and can dispose of my life. Why do you hesitate? You have a lover, they say; I will rid you of him with a wave of my hand. You are watched by a morose and jealous old guardian; I will carry you off from under his eyes. You are thwarted at the theatre by a thousand intrigues; the public
adores you, it is true, but the public is an ungrateful creature that will abandon you at your first sore throat. I am immensely rich, and I can make a princess of you, almost a queen, in a wild country, but where I can build you, in the twinkling of an eye, palaces and theatres handsomer and larger than those of the court of Vienna. If you need a public, with the stroke of my wand I will bring one from the ground, as devoted, submissive and faithful as that of Vienna is the contrary. I am not handsome, I know; but the scars which decorate my face are more noble and glorious than the paint which covers the pale cheeks of your actors. I am hard to my slaves and implacable to my enemies, but I am gentle to my good servants, and those whom I love live in happiness, glory and wealth. Finally, I am sometimes violent; they have told you the truth. One is not brave and strong as I am, without loving to make use of his strength when vengeance and pride call. But a pure, timid, gentle and charming woman like you can control my strength, enchain my will, and keep me under her feet like a child. Only try; trust yourself to me secretly for a while, and when you know me you will see that you can place your future in my hands and go with me to Slavonia. You smile! You think this name too much like slavery. It is I, dear Porporina, who will be your slave. Look at me, and accustom yourself to the ugliness which your love can turn to beauty. Speak the word, and you will see that the red eyes of Trenck the Austrian can shed
tears of love and joy as well as the handsome eyes of Trenck the Prussian, that dear cousin whom I love, although we have fought in opposing ranks, and to whom, they say, you have not been indifferent. But that Trenck is a boy; and he who speaks to you, though still young (he is only thirty-four, in spite of his blasted face, which declares him twice that), has passed the age of caprices, and will assure you long years of happiness. Speak, speak! say yes, and you will see that passion can transfigure me and make a radiant Jupiter of Trenck with the burnt jaws. You do not reply; does a touching modesty still make you hesitate? Well, say nothing, let me kiss your hand, and I shall go away full of confidence and happiness. See if I am such a brute, such a tiger as they represent me! I ask only an innocent favor, and I ask it on my knees,—I, who, with a breath, could overthrow you and know, in spite of your hatred, a pleasure of which the gods might be jealous."

Consuelo was examining with surprise this frightful man who seduced so many women. She studied this fascination which, in fact, would have been irresistible in spite of his ugliness, if his face had been that of a good man, animated by the passion of a man of heart; but it was only the ugliness of an unbridled voluptuary, and his passion was only the quixotism of an impertinent presumption.

"Have you finished, baron?" she asked calmly.

But suddenly she blushed and paled, as she saw
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a handful of great brilliants, enormous pearls and priceless rubies which the Slav despot had thrown in her lap. She rose suddenly and threw upon the ground all these jewels which Corilla would pick up.

"Trenck," she said, with all the force of contempt and indignation, "you are the vilest of cowards in spite of all your bravery. You have only fought against lambs and fawns, and you have slaughtered them without pity. If a real man had turned against you, you would have skulked off like the fierce and cowardly wolf that you are. Your glorious scars! I know that you received them in a cellar, where you were seeking the gold of the conquered among their corpses. Your palace and your little kingdom were bought with the blood of a noble people, upon whom despotism imposes such a countryman as you, with the mite torn from the widow and orphan, with the gold of treason, with the pillage of the churches in which you pretend to kneel and count your beads (for you are a bigot, in addition to your other fine qualities). Your cousin, Trenck the Prussian, whom you love so dearly, you betrayed, and tried to have assassinated. These women whose glory and happiness you made, you violated after butchering their husbands and fathers. This love which you have improvised for me is the caprice of a libertine. This chivalrous submission, by which you placed your life in my hands, is the vanity of a fool who thinks himself irresistible, and this trifling favor which you ask would be a pollution that I could wash away only by
suicide. That is my last word, Pandour with the burnt jaws! Out of my sight! Hence! For if you do not release my hand, which you have been freezing in your own for a quarter of an hour, I will rid the world of a scoundrel by blowing out your brains!"

"Is that your last word, daughter of hell?" cried Trenck; "well, woe to you! For the pistol which I have disdained to knock from your trembling hand is loaded only with powder; a little burn more or less does not frighten him who is proof against fire. Discharge this pistol — make a noise! It is all that I wish! I shall be glad to have witnesses of my victory, for now nothing can save you from my embraces, and you have kindled in me by your folly flames which you might have subdued with a little prudence."

As he said this Trenck seized Consuelo in his arms; but at the same moment the door opened; a man whose face was entirely concealed by a piece of black crape tied behind his head stretched out his hand upon the Pandour, made him bend and shake like a reed beaten by the wind, and hurled him roughly to the ground. It was the affair of an instant. Trenck, stunned at first, rose, and with wild eyes, foaming mouth and drawn sword rushed upon his enemy, who had reached the door and seemed to fly.

Consuelo sprang to the threshold, thinking that she recognized in this masked man the lofty figure and strong arm of Count Albert. She saw him retire to the end of the corridor, where a very steep, winding stair led down to the street. There he stopped, waited
for Trenck, stooped quickly while the baron’s sword struck the wall above his head, and catching him about the body threw him over his shoulder headlong down the stair. Consuelo heard the giant rolling, and wished to run to her rescuer, calling Albert, but he had disappeared before she had the strength to make three steps. A frightful silence reigned in the stairway.

“Five minutes, signora,” said the call-boy, as he came out of the stair from the stage which led to the same landing. “How does this door come to be open?” he added, looking at the door of the stair-case down which Trenck had been thrown; “really your excellency is in danger of catching cold in this corridor.”

He closed the door, which he locked, as was his duty, and Consuelo, more dead than alive, returned to her dressing-room, threw out of the window the pistol which lay upon the sofa, kicked under the furniture Trenck’s jewels, which were glittering on the carpet, and went upon the stage, where she found Corilla, still flushed and out of breath from the triumph which she had just won in the interlude.
In spite of the convulsive agitation which had seized upon Consuelo, she surpassed herself in the third act. She was not prepared for this, she no longer expected it; she went upon the stage with the desperate determination to fail with honor if she should find herself suddenly deprived of voice and power in the midst of a courageous struggle. She was not afraid; a thousand hisses would have been nothing compared with the danger and shame from which she had just escaped by an almost miraculous intervention. Another miracle followed the first; Consuelo's good genius seemed to be watching over her. She had more voice than ever before; she sang in a more masterly fashion, and acted with more energy and passion than she had ever displayed. Her whole being was excited to its highest power; it seemed to her that she would break at every moment, like an overstrained cord; but this feverish exaltation transported her into a fantastic sphere; she performed as in a dream, and was astonished to find in it the strength of reality.

And besides, a thought of happiness revived her whenever she feared to fail. Albert was no doubt there. He had, at least, been in Vienna since the day before. He was watching her, following all her
movements, protecting her; for to whom else could she attribute the unexpected aid she had just received, and the almost supernatural strength which a man would need to overthrow Francis von Trenck, the Slav Hercules? And if, from one of those oddities of which his character afforded but too many instances, he refused to speak to her; if he seemed to wish to avoid her glance, — it was none the less evident that he still loved her ardently, since he guarded her with such care, and protected her with such energy.

"Well," thought Consuelo, "since God does not allow my strength to desert me, I wish Albert to see me fine in my role, and in the corner of the building from which he is now no doubt watching me, to enjoy a triumph which I owe neither to cabal nor to charlatanism."

Still preserving the spirit of her part, she sought him with her eyes, but could not discover him; and when she went behind the scenes she continued to seek him there, but with as little success. Where could he be? Where was he concealed? Had he killed the Pandour instantly, when he threw him downstairs? Was he obliged to fly from pursuit? Would he come and ask Porpora for a refuge? Would she find him this time when she returned to the embassy? These perplexities disappeared as soon as she returned to the stage; then she forgot, as if by a magic effect, all the details of her real life, to feel only a vague expectation, mingled with enthusiasm, fright, gratitude and hope. And all these were in her role,
and were revealed in accents admirably tender and true.

She was recalled after the close, and the empress was the first to throw her, from her box, a bouquet, to which was attached a fairly valuable present. The court and the town followed the sovereign's example, sending her a rain of flowers. Amid these fragrant palms Consuelo saw a green branch fall at her feet, and her eyes became fixed upon it involuntarily. As soon as the curtain was lowered for the last time, she picked it up. It was a branch of cypress. Then all the crowns of triumph disappeared from her mind, leaving, to be considered and pondered over, only this funereal emblem, a sign of grief and dread, the expression, perhaps, of a last farewell. A mortal chill followed the fever of emotion, an insurmountable terror raised a cloud before her eyes. Her limbs gave way, and they bore her fainting to the carriage of the Venetian ambassador, where Porpora strove in vain to get a word from her. Her lips were icy, and her frozen hand held, beneath her cloak, the branch of cypress, which seemed to have been blown to her by the breath of death.

When she went down the staircase of the theatre she had seen no traces of blood, and in the confusion of coming out, few persons had noticed them. But while she was returning to the embassy, absorbed in her sombre thoughts, a painful scene was occurring with closed doors in the green-room. A little before the end of the performance, the theatre employés, on
opening all the doors, had found Trenck insensible at the bottom of the staircase, and bathed in his blood. They had carried him into one of the artist's rooms, and to avoid noise and confusion had quietly notified the director, the theatre physician and the police, that they might come and verify the facts. The public and the troupe, therefore, left the house and the stage without learning of the occurrence, while the professionals, the imperial officers and a few compassionate persons endeavored to revive and question the Pandour. Corilla, who was waiting for his carriage, and had several times sent her maid to ask for him, became impatient and out of temper, and ventured to come down herself, at the risk of going home on foot. She met Holzbauer, who took her to the green-room, where she found Trenck with his head split open, and his body so painful from bruises that he could not move. She filled the air with her groans and lamentations. Holzbauer sent away all needless witnesses, and closed the doors. The cantatrice, being questioned, could neither say nor surmise anything to clear up the matter. At last, Trenck partly recovered his senses and declared that, having come into the interior of the theatre without permission, to have a nearer view of the dancers, he wished to go out hastily before the end, but that, not knowing his way in this labyrinth, his foot had slipped on the first step of this accursed staircase; he had fallen and had rolled all the way to the bottom. They accepted this explanation, and he was taken home, where
Corilla went and nursed him with a zeal which lost her the favor of Prince Kaunitz, and consequently the good-will of her majesty; but she bravely sacrificed them, and Trenck, whose iron frame had resisted more trying ordeals, got off with a week's stiffness and another scar on his head. He boasted of his misadventure to nobody, and vowed to make Consuelo pay dearly for it. He would no doubt have done so, if an order of arrest had not withdrawn him suddenly from Corilla's devotion, to cast him into the military prison, hardly recovered from his fall, and still shaking with fever.¹ That of which a faint public rumor had warned the canon was beginning to happen. The wealth of the Pandour had excited an ardent, inextinguishable thirst in influential men and skilful creatures of the empress. He was the memorable victim to it. Accused of all the crimes which he had committed, and all those ascribed to him by the people interested in his ruin, he began to endure the delays and vexations, the impudent perjuries and refined injustice, of a long and scandalous trial. Stingy, in spite of his ostentation, and proud, in spite of his vices, he was not willing to pay for the zeal of his protectors, or buy the consciences of his judges. We will leave him for the present in prison, where, having committed some violence, he

¹ Historical truth compels us to explain by what bravado Trenck provoked this inhuman treatment. On the day of his arrival in Vienna he had been placed under arrest in his own house by the imperial order. Nevertheless, he appeared at the opera that same evening, and in an intermission wished to throw Count Gossau into the pit.
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had the grief to be chained by the foot. Shame and infamy! it was the same foot which had been torn by the bursting of a shell in one of his most brilliant actions. He had submitted to the scarification of the gangrened bone, and, scarcely recovered, had mounted his horse to return to duty with heroic firmness. They fastened an iron ring and a heavy chain over this frightful scar. The wound reopened, and he endured new tortures, not to serve Maria Theresa, but because he had served her too well. The great queen, who had not been sorry to see him grind and rend that unhappy and dangerous Bohemia, an insecure bulwark against the enemy because of its ancient national hatred, "the king," Maria Theresa, who, no longer needing the crimes of Trenck and the excesses of his Pandours to seat her firmly upon her throne, began to think them monstrous and unpardonable, was supposed to be ignorant of this barbarous treatment. In the same way, the great Frederick was supposed to know nothing about the sixty-eight pounds of irons which, a little later, tortured the other Baron von Trenck, his handsome page, his brilliant aide-de-camp, the saviour and friend of our Consuelo. All the flatterers who have lightly transmitted to us the account of these abominable persecutions have laid the blame of them upon subordinate officers, to cleanse the memory of their sovereigns; but these sovereigns, so ill-informed concerning the abuses of their prisons, knew so well, on the contrary, what went on in them, that Frederick the Great made, himself, the design for the irons
which Trenck the Prussian wore for nine years in his sepulchre at Magdeburg; and if Maria Theresa did not exactly give orders for Trenck the Austrian, her valiant Pandour, to be chained by his wounded foot, she was always deaf to his complaints, and inaccessible to his appeals. Besides, in the shameful orgie which her servants made with the wealth of the victim, she was well enough able to take the lion’s share, and refuse justice to his heirs.

Let us return to Consuelo, for it is the duty of a novelist to pass rapidly over details which are purely historical. Still, it seems impossible to absolutely separate the adventures of our heroine from the events which occurred in her day and beneath her eyes. When she learned of the Pandour’s misfortunes, she thought no longer of the outrage with which he had threatened her, and, heartily disgusted by the injustice of his fate, she assisted Gorilla in supplying him with money at a moment when he was refused means to lighten the rigors of his captivity. Gorilla, who was even more prompt in spending money than in gaining it, happened to find her funds exhausted when a messenger from her lover came to her secretly, to ask her for the necessary sum. Consuelo was the only person to whom this woman, impelled by an instinct of confidence and esteem, dared to have recourse. She immediately sold the gift which the empress had thrown her upon the stage at the end of "Zenobia," and gave the proceeds to her comrade, commending her for not abandoning the unfortunate Pandour in his
distress. The zeal and courage which Corilla displayed in serving Trenck as long as it was possible restored to Consuelo a sort of esteem for this creature, corrupted but not perverse, who still had good impulses of the heart and bursts of disinterested generosity.

"Let us prostrate ourselves before the work of God," she said to Joseph, who would sometimes reproach her for being too cordial with this Corilla. "The human soul always preserves in its errors something good and great, in which one finds with respect and joy that sacred impress which is like the seal of heaven. Wherever there is much to pity, there is much to pardon; and where there is anything to pardon, be sure, good Joseph, that there is something to love. This poor Corilla, who lives after the manner of the beasts, sometimes displays traits worthy of an angel. No, I feel that I must become accustomed, if I remain an artist, to seeing without horror or anger the pitiful vileness in which the lives of lost women are passed, between the desire for good and the appetite for evil, between intoxication and remorse. And even, I confess to you, it appears to me that the role of a sister of charity is better for the health of my virtue than a purer and gentler life, more glorious and agreeable relations, or the calmness of strong, happy and respected beings. I know that my heart is like the paradise of the tender Jesus, where there is joy over one sinner that repenteth more than over ninety-and-nine just persons which need no
repentance. I feel made to compassionate, pity, aid and console. It seems to me that the name my mother gave me in baptism imposes on me this duty and this destiny. I have no other name, Beppo. Society has not charged me with the pride of a family name to support; and if, in the eyes of the world, I debase myself by seeking a few grains of pure gold in the mire of the evil lives of others, I have no account to render to the world. I am Consuelo, nothing more; and it is enough for the daughter of Rosmunda; for Rosmunda was a poor woman of whom they spoke worse even than of Corilla, and such as she was, it was my duty to love her, and I was able to do it. She was not respected like Maria Theresa, but she would not have caused Trenck to be fastened by the foot, to make him die in torture and to seize his wealth. Corilla would not have done it either; and yet, instead of beating others for her, this Trenck, whom she succors in his misfortunes, has often beaten her. Joseph, Joseph! God is a greater monarch than any of ours, and perhaps, since in his palace Magdalen has a duchess' place beside the spotless Virgin, Corilla may have precedence of Maria Theresa in that court. As for me, in these days which I have to pass upon earth, I confess that if I had to leave guilty and unhappy souls, and sit down at the feet of the just in moral prosperity, I should feel that I was no longer on the road to heaven. Oh, the noble Albert understood it as I do, and he would never blame me for being good to Corilla!"
When Consuelo said this to her friend Beppo, a fortnight had passed since the evening of "Zenobia" and Baron Trenck's adventure. The six performances for which she had been engaged had taken place. Madame Tesi had returned to the theatre. The empress was working underhand upon Porpora through the Venetian ambassador, and still made Consuelo's marriage with Haydn the condition of her permanent engagement at the theatre, after the expiration of that of Madame Tesi. Joseph was ignorant of this; Consuelo suspected nothing. She thought only of Albert, who had not reappeared, and from whom she received no news. She formed a thousand conjectures and contrary decisions. Her perplexities and the shock of her emotions made her somewhat ill. She had kept her room since she had left the theatre, and was continuously gazing at the branch of cypress, which seemed to her to have been taken from some tomb in the Schreckenstein cavern.

Beppo, the only friend to whom she could open her heart, had at first wished to remove her idea that Albert had come to Vienna. But when she had shown him the branch of cypress, he pondered deeply over all this mystery, and ended by believing in the young count's share in the adventure with Trenck.

"Listen!" he said. "I think I understand what has happened. Albert did in fact come to Vienna. He saw you, listened to you, observed all your actions and followed all your steps. The day when we were talking on the stage beside the scene of the Araxes,
he may have been on the other side of this canvas, and have heard the regrets which I expressed at seeing you removed from the theatre at the dawn of your career. You yourself uttered some exclamations which may have made him think that you preferred the glory of your profession to the solemn sadness of his love. The next day he saw you enter Corilla's room, or, perhaps, since he was on the watch there, he saw the Pandour go in a few minutes before. The time he took in rescuing you would almost prove that he thought you there of your own will, and it must therefore be after he yielded to the temptation of listening at the door that he understood the urgency of his intervention."

"Very good," said Consuelo; "but why act so mysteriously? Why hide his face with crape?"

"You know how suspicious the Austrian police is. He may have been the subject of unfavorable reports to the court; he may have had political reasons for concealing himself; perhaps his face was not unknown to Trenck. Who knows whether, during the late war, he did not see him, dare him, threaten him? Whether he did not make him loose his hold when he had his hand on some innocent victim? Count Albert may have performed obscurely great deeds of courage and humanity in his country, when they thought him asleep in his Schreckenstein cavern; and if he did perform them, it is certain that he would never have thought of telling you of them, for, according to you, he is the most humble and modest of
men. He therefore acted wisely in not chastising the Pandour with his face exposed; for if the empress now punishes the Pandour for having devastated his dear Bohemia, be sure that she is not, for that reason, any the more disposed to leave unpunished an act of open resistance in the past on the part of a Bohemian."

"What you say is very true, Joseph, and gives me food for thought. A thousand anxieties now arise in me. Albert may have been recognized and arrested, and it may have remained as unknown to the public as Trenck's fall in the stairway. Alas! perhaps he is at this moment in the Arsenal prison, in a cell beside Trenck's! And it is for me that he incurred this misfortune!"

"Reassure yourself; I do not believe that. Count Albert probably left Vienna at once, and you will soon receive a letter from him, dated Reisenburg."

"Do you feel sure of it, Joseph?"

"Yes, I do; but if you wish me to tell you all my thoughts, I believe that this letter will be wholly different from what you expect. I am convinced that, far from obtaining from a generous friendship the sacrifice which you wished to make him of your artistic career, he has already resolved to forego this marriage, and will soon restore you your liberty. If he is intelligent, noble and just, as you say, he must feel a scruple about withdrawing you from the theatre, which you love passionately — do not deny it! I have seen it clearly, and he must have observed and understood
it as well as I, when he listened to 'Zenobia.' He will, therefore, refuse a sacrifice beyond your strength, and I shall esteem him little if he does not do it."

"But read his last letter again! See, here it is! Does he not tell me that he will love me as much on the stage as in society or in a convent? Might he not mean to marry me and leave me free?"

"To say and to do, to think and to be, are very different matters. In a dream of passion everything seems possible; but when the reality suddenly strikes our eyes, we return, terrified, to our old ideas. I cannot believe that a man of quality would not be unwilling to see his wife exposed to the caprices and insults of an audience. When he set foot behind the scenes, certainly for the first time in his life, the count had, in Trenck's conduct towards you, a sad example of the misfortunes and dangers of your life in a theatre. He must have gone home in despair, it is true, but cured of his passion and freed from his delusions. Forgive me if I speak to you thus, Consuelo, my sister. It is my duty; for Count Albert's abandonment is a blessing for you. You will feel it by and by, although your eyes are now filled with tears. Be just towards your betrothed, instead of being humiliated by his changing. When he said to you that he felt no repugnance to the theatre, he was forming an ideal which crumbled at the first touch. He comprehended then that he must cause you misery by withdrawing you from it, or consummate his own by following you there."
"You are right, Joseph. I feel that what you say is true; but let me weep. It is not the humiliation of being disdained and abandoned which wrings my heart; it is regret for an ideal which I had formed of love and its power, as Albert had formed an ideal of my life on the stage. He has understood that I could not keep myself worthy of him (at least in the opinion of men) while pursuing that career. And I am compelled to perceive that love is not strong enough to conquer all obstacles and renounce all prejudices."

"Be just, Consuelo, and do not ask more than you have been able to give. You did not love strongly enough to renounce your art without hesitation and unhappiness; do not take it ill that Count Albert was not able to break with the world without dread and consternation."

"But, whatever may have been my secret sorrow (I confess it to you now), I was resolved to sacrifice everything to him; and he, on the contrary," —

"Remember that the passion was his, not yours. He asked with ardor; you consented with an effort. He saw that you were about to sacrifice yourself; he felt, not only that he had the right to rid you of a love which you had not provoked, and the necessity for which your soul did not recognize, but even that he was obliged by his conscience to do so."

This reasonable conclusion convinced Consuelo of Albert's wisdom and generosity. She was afraid that if she abandoned herself to grief she would be yield-
ing to the suggestions of wounded pride, and, accepting Joseph's hypothesis, she submitted and became calm. But, by a peculiarity common to the human heart, she no sooner found herself free to indulge her taste for the stage, than she felt frightened by her isolation amid all this corruption, and appalled by the future of weariness and strife which opened before her. The stage is a fierce battle-field; when one is on it he is excited, and all other emotions of life seem pale and cold beside those which it arouses; but when one has left it, broken by fatigue, he is terrified at having gone through this fiery ordeal, and the desire which takes him back to it is mingled with dread. I imagine that an acrobat is the type of this painful, arduous and dangerous life. He must feel a terrible nervous pleasure on his ropes and ladders, upon which he performs prodigies beyond human strength; but when he has come down victorious, he must feel faint at the idea of mounting again, and of once more grasping death and triumph,—a spectre with two faces which perpetually hovers over his head.

Then the Castle of the Giants, and even the Rock of Terror, that nightmare of all her slumbers, appeared to Consuelo, through the veil of exile, like a lost paradise, the abode of a peace and purity forever august and noble in her memory. She fastened the branch of cypress, the last souvenir of the Hussite grotto, to the feet of her mother's crucifix, and combining these two emblems of Catholicism and heresy, she raised
her heart towards the idea of the only, eternal and true religion. She drew thence a feeling of resignation to her present ills, and of faith in God's designs for Albert, and for all men, good and bad, among whom she must henceforth move, alone and without a guide.
CHAPTER XVII.

One morning Porpora called her into his room earlier than was his custom. His face was radiant; he held a large letter in one hand and his spectacles in the other. Consuelo started, and trembled in all her members, fancying that at last it was the reply from Reisenburg. But she was soon undeceived; it was a letter from Hubert, — Porporino. This celebrated singer announced that all the master's conditions for Consuelo's engagement had been accepted, and enclosed the contract, signed by Baron Pölnitz, director of the royal theatre at Berlin, and awaiting only Consuelo's signature. With this was a very affectionate and respectful letter from the same baron, inviting Porpora to come and compete for the direction of the chapel of the King of Prussia by the production and execution of as many new operas and fugues as he chose to supply. Porporino was delighted at soon being able to sing, as he had longed, with a "sister in Porpora," and strenuously urged the master to leave Vienna for Sans-Souci, the delightful abode of Frederick the Great.

This letter gave Porpora great joy, and yet filled him with uncertainty. It seemed to him that fortune was beginning to unbend her face, so long frowning for him, and that on two sides the favor of monarchs
(then so necessary for the development of artists) offered him a happy prospect. Frederick called him to Berlin; in Vienna, Maria Theresa caused fine promises to be made to him. In either case, Consuelo must be the instrument of his success,—in Berlin, by showing his productions to the greatest advantage; in Vienna, by marrying Joseph Haydn.

The moment had therefore come to place his fate in the hands of his adopted daughter. He proposed to her marriage or departure, whichever she chose; and under the circumstances he displayed much less warmth in offering her the heart and hand of Beppo than he would have done even the day before. He was a little weary of Vienna, and the idea of seeing himself appreciated and feted by the enemy pleased him as a small vengeance, the probable effect of which upon the court of Austria he somewhat exaggerated. Besides, everything considered, as Consuelo had not spoken to him for some time of Albert, whom she seemed to have given up, he preferred her not to marry at all.

Consuelo soon put an end to his uncertainty by declaring that she would never marry Joseph Haydn for a number of reasons, the first of which was that he had never sought her in marriage, being engaged to Anna Keller, the daughter of his benefactor.

"In that case, there is no room to hesitate. Here is your contract with Berlin. Sign it, and let us get ready to leave; for there is no hope for us here unless you submit to the 'matrimonionmania' of the empress.
That is the price of her protection, and a decisive refusal on your part will render us blacker in her eyes than all the devils."

"My dear master," replied Consuelo, with more firmness than she had ever before shown to Porpora, "I am ready to obey you as soon as my conscience is set at rest on a point of capital importance. Certain engagements of affection and esteem bound me to the lord of Rudolstadt. I will not conceal from you that in spite of your incredulity, your reproaches and your mockery, I have persisted, during the three months that we have been here, in preserving myself free from any engagement which might interfere with this marriage. But, after a decisive letter which I wrote six weeks ago, and which passed through your hands, certain things have occurred which cause me to believe that the Rudolstadt family has renounced me. Every day which goes by confirms me in the impression that my word is released, and that I am free to consecrate to you freely my devotion and my labor. You see that I accept this destiny without regret or hesitation. Still, from the letter which I wrote, I cannot have my mind at rest if I obtain no reply. I am expecting it every day; it cannot be long. Permit me not to sign the engagement with Berlin until after I have received " —

"Oh, my poor child!" said Porpora, who, at the first words of his pupil, had planted his batteries, long since prepared, "I received the reply of which you speak more than a month ago " —

"And you did not show it to me;" cried Consuelo,
"you left me in such uncertainty! Master, you are very odd! How can I have confidence in you if you deceive me in this way?"

"In what have I deceived you? The letter was addressed to me, and I was enjoined not to show it to you until I saw that you were cured of your mad love, and disposed to listen to reason and propriety."

"Are those the terms which they employed?" said Consuelo, flushing. "It is impossible that Count Albert or Count Christian should have spoken thus of so calm, so reserved, so proud a friendship as mine."

"The terms are of no importance," said Porpora; "these people of society always use fine language; it is for us to understand it. This much is certain,—that the old count was not anxious to have a daughter-in-law on the stage, and that when he knew you had reappeared at the opera here, he induced his son to renounce the degradation of such a marriage. The good Albert accepted the situation, and they free you from your promise. I am glad to see that you are not angry. Everything is for the best, then, and we are off for Prussia."

"Master, show me this letter, and I will sign the contract immediately afterwards."

"This letter, this letter? Why do you wish to see it? It will give you pain. There are certain follies which we must know how to pardon in others and in ourselves. Forget it all."

"One cannot forget by a single act of the will," replied Consuelo; "reflection aids us and causes en-
lighten us. If I am rejected by the Rudolstadts with contempt, I shall quickly be consoled; if I am restored to liberty with esteem and affection, I shall be consoled in another way with less effort. Show me the letter; what do you fear, since in any event I shall obey you?"

"Very well, I will show it to you," said the wily old master, opening his secretary and pretending to look in it for the letter.

He opened all the drawers and moved all his papers, but the letter, which had never existed, naturally could not be found. He pretended to become impatient; Consuelo became impatient in earnest. She took part in the search herself; he allowed her to do as she chose. She upset all the drawers, overturned all the papers. The letter could not be found. Porpora endeavored to recollect it, and improvised a polite and decisive version. Consuelo could not suspect her master of so sustained a dissimulation. It must be believed, for the honor of the old maestro, that he did not acquit himself very well; but it required little to convince so honest a mind as Consuelo's. She ended by believing that the letter had served to light Porpora's pipe in a moment of absent-mindedness; and after having gone back to her room to say a prayer and swear on the cypress eternal friendship to Count Albert, come what might, she quietly returned to sign an engagement of two months with the Berlin theatre, to be entered upon at the close of that which had just begun. This gave more time than necessary for the
preparations for departure for the journey. When Porpora saw the ink fresh upon the paper, he kissed his pupil, and greeted her solemnly with the title of artist.

"This is your confirmation day," he said, "and if it were in my power to make you take vows, I would dictate to you that of forever renouncing love and marriage; for now you are a priestess of the god of harmony, and as the muses are virgins, she who consecrates herself to Apollo should take the oath of the vestals."

"I ought not to take an oath never to marry," replied Consuelo, "though it seems to me now that nothing could be easier than to promise and keep it. But I might change my mind, and then I should have to repent an engagement which I could not break."

"Then you are a slave to your word, are you? Yes, it seems to me that you are different in that respect from the rest of humanity, and that if you had ever in your life made a solemn promise, you would have kept it."

"Master, I think that I have already given proof of that, for ever since I have existed, I have been under the control of some vow. My mother gave me both precept and example of this sort of religion, which she carried to fanaticism. When we were travelling together she was wont to say to me, as we drew near a large town, 'Consuelita, if I do well here, I call you to witness that I vow to go barefooted to pray for two hours in the chapel which has the greatest reputation for sanctity in the neighborhood.' And
when she had done what she called well, the poor soul! that is, when she had earned a few crowns with her songs, we never failed to accomplish our pilgrimage, no matter what the weather, or how far off the fashionable chapel. It was not a very enlightened or sublime devotion, but at any rate, I considered these vows sacred; and when my mother, on her deathbed, made me swear never to belong to Anzoleto except in legitimate marriage, she knew well that she could die easy through faith in my word. Later on, I also promised Count Albert never to think of another than him, and to employ all the powers of my heart in loving him as he wished. I did not break my vow, and if he did not now free me from it, I could easily have remained faithful to him all my life."

"Never mind your Count Albert, of whom you must no longer think; and since you must be under the control of some vow, tell me by what one you are going to bind yourself to me?"

"Oh, master, trust to my reason, my good conduct and my devotion to you! Do not ask me for an oath, for it is a frightful yoke which one lays upon one's self. The fear of breaking it takes away the pleasure of thinking and doing right."

"I am not to be satisfied with such evasions," replied old Porpora, with an expression half severe, half playful; "I see that you have made vows for everybody but me. I say nothing of that which your mother exacted. It brought you good luck, my poor
child! Without it you would no doubt have fallen into the snares of that infamous Anzoleto. But since after that you could make, without love and from pure goodness of heart, such grave promises to that Rudolstadt, who was only a stranger to you, I should think it very wrong if on such a day as this,—the happy and memorable day when you are restored to liberty and betrothed to the god of art,—you had not the least little vow to make for your old teacher, your best friend."

"Oh, yes, my best friend and benefactor, my support and my father!" cried Consuelo, throwing herself impulsively into the arms of Porpora, who was so sparing of tender words that only two or three times in her life had he shown her openly his paternal love. "I can surely, without fear or hesitation, vow to devote myself to your happiness and glory so long as I have a breath of life."

"My happiness is glory, Consuelo, you know it," said Porpora, pressing her to his heart. "I can imagine none else. I am not one of those old German shopkeepers who dream of no other happiness than to have their little girl beside them to fill their pipes and knead their cakes. I require neither slippers nor gruel, thank God! and when I no longer need anything else, I shall not allow you to devote your life to me, as you already do with too much zeal. No, that is not the devotion I demand, you know it well; what I expect is that you shall be frankly an artist. Do you promise to be one? to combat this
languor, this irresolution, this sort of disgust, which I saw beginning here? not to listen to the pretty speeches of these fine lords who seek wives on the stage, some because they think they can make good housekeepers of them, and drop them as soon as they see that they have a vocation; others, because they are ruined, and the pleasure of recovering a carriage and a good table at the cost of their lucrative better halves causes them to overlook the dishonor attaching in their own rank to marriages of this kind? Come, will you promise me also not to let your head be turned by some little tenor with a thick voice and curly hair, like that rascal Anzoleto, who will never have any merit but in his calves or success but by his impudence?"

"I promise, I swear all that solemnly," replied Consuelo, laughing good-naturedly at Porpora's exhortations, which were a little sharp in spite of himself, but to which she was perfectly accustomed. "And I will do more," she added, resuming her serious tone; "I swear that you will never have to complain of a day's ingratitude in my life."

"Ah, that! I do not ask so much!" replied he in a bitter tone; "it is more than human nature admits of. When you are famous in all the countries of Europe, you will have vanities, ambitions, vices of the heart which no great singer has been able to resist. You will want success at any price. You will not be satisfied to conquer it patiently, or to risk it to remain faithful either to friendship or to devotion to what is
really beautiful. You will submit to the yoke of fashion as they all do; in every city you will sing the music in favor, without regard to the bad taste of the public or the court. In short, you will make your way and be great in spite of that, since there is no other way to be great in the eyes of the multitude. If only you do not forget to choose well and to sing well when you have to undergo the judgment of a small assembly of old heads like myself, and if, before the great Handel and old Bach, you do honor to Porpora's method and to yourself, that is all that I ask or hope of you. You see that I am not a selfish father, as some of your flatterers no doubt accuse me of being. I ask you nothing which is not for your own success and glory."

"And I care for nothing which is for my personal advantage," replied Consuelo, touched and grieved. "I may allow myself to be carried away in the midst of a success by an involuntary intoxication; but I cannot think calmly of constructing a whole life of triumph to crown myself with it with my own hands. I wish to have glory for you, my master; in spite of your incredulity, I wish to show you that it is for you alone that Consuelo labors and travels; and to prove to you at once that you have calumniated her, since you believe in her vows, I make you this one to prove to you what I say."

"And on what will you swear it?" said Porpora, with an affectionate smile in which there was still a trace of mistrust.
“On the white hair, on the sacred head, of Porpora,” said Consuelo, taking his white head between her hands fervently and kissing its brow.

They were interrupted by Count Hoditz, whom a tall footman came to announce. This lackey, while asking leave for his master to present his respects to Porpora and his pupil, looked at the latter with an air of attention, embarrassment and doubt which surprised Consuelo, although she could not recollect where she had seen this good but somewhat odd face. The count was admitted, and presented his request in the most courteous terms. He was about to set out for his manor of Roswald, in Moravia, and wishing to render this visit agreeable to the margravine, he was preparing a magnificent festival to surprise her upon her arrival. He consequently proposed to Consuelo to go and sing three successive evenings at Roswald, and he begged Porpora to accompany him to aid in directing the concerts, spectacles and serenades to which he designed treating the margravine.

Porpora pleaded the engagement which they had just signed, and the necessity of their being in Berlin on a fixed day. The count wished to see the engagement, and as Porpora had always found him well disposed, he gave him the small pleasure of being taken into their confidence in this affair, of commenting on the contract, of playing the expert and giving advice; after which Hoditz insisted on his request, showing that they had more time than they needed to satisfy it without missing their appointment.
“You can finish your preparations in three days,” said he, “and go to Berlin by way of Moravia.”

It was not the shortest road, but instead of going slowly through Bohemia, a country recently devastated by war, and with an ill-served post, Porpora and his pupil would go swiftly and comfortably to Roswald in a carriage which, together with the relays, the count placed at their disposal; that is to say, he assumed the trouble and expense. He further undertook to forward them in the same way from Roswald to Pardubitz, if they wished to descend the Elbe to Dresden, or to Chrudim if they wished to pass through Prague. The conveniences which he offered them would, in fact, shorten the time of their journey, and the round sum which he gave in addition would enable them to make the remainder more agreeably. Porpora accepted, in spite of the little grimace which Consuelo made to dissuade him. The bargain was concluded, and the departure arranged for the last day of the week.

When, after having respectfully kissed her hand, Hoditz had left her alone with her master, she reproached Porpora for allowing himself to be so easily persuaded. Although she no longer feared the count’s impertinence, she still felt a little resentment against him, and was not pleased at going to his house. She did not wish to relate the Passau adventure to her master, but she reminded him of his own jokes about the count’s musical inventions.

“Do you not see,” she said, “that I shall be con-
demned to sing his music, and that you will be obliged to conduct seriously cantatas, and perhaps even operas, of his manufacture? Is it thus that you make me keep my vow to remain faithful to the worship of the beautiful?"

"Bah!" replied Porpora with a laugh, "I shall not do it as gravely as you think; I intend, on the contrary, to amuse myself with it hugely, without having the patrician maestro in the least suspect it. To perform these things seriously, and before a respectable public, would indeed be a blasphemy and a shame; but it is permissible to amuse one's self, and an artist would be very unfortunate if, in earning his living, he had not a right to laugh at those from whom he earns it. Besides, you will see there your Princess of Culmbach, whom you like, and who is charming. She will laugh with us, though she laughs little, at her father-in-law's music.

It was necessary to submit, pack the trunks, and make the necessary purchases and the last farewells. Joseph was in despair. Still, a piece of good fortune, a great artistic happiness, had just come to him, and was some compensation, or at least a forced distraction, from the grief of this separation. As he had played his serenade beneath the window of the excellent pantomimist, Bernadone, the famous harlequin of the Kärnthner-Thor Theatre, this amiable and intelligent artist had been filled with surprise and interest. He had called Joseph up, and had asked him who was the composer of this pretty and original trio. He
was astonished at his youth and his talent. He had intrusted Haydn on the spot with the libretto of a ballet called "The Devil on Two Sticks," the music for which he was beginning to write. He was working on the tempest which gave him so much trouble, and the recollection of which still caused the good man to laugh when he was eighty years old. Consuelo endeavored to divert him from his sadness by talking to him of his tempest, which Bernadone wished terrible, and which Beppo, who had never seen the sea, could not succeed in painting. Consuelo described to him the Adriatic in a storm, and sang him the moan of the waves, not without laughing with him at these effects of imitative harmony, to be aided on the stage by that of a blue cloth shaken from one wing to the another.

"Listen," said Porpora, to relieve him of his perplexities, "you might work a hundred years with the finest instruments in the world and the most exact knowledge of the noises of wind and wave, and you could not reproduce the sublime harmony of nature. That is not the province of music. She goes childishly astray when she runs after feats of ingenuity and tricks of sound. She is greater than that; emotion is her kingdom. Her object is to inspire it, as her cause is to be inspired by it. Therefore, think of the feelings of a man in torment; imagine a frightful, magnificent, terrible spectacle, an imminent danger; place yourself, a musician — that is, a human voice, a human wail, a living, throbbing soul — amid
CONSUELO.

this distress, disorder and terror; express your anguish, and the audience, intelligent or not, will share it. It will fancy that it beholds the sea, hears the creaking of the vessel, the cries of the sailors, the despair of the passengers. What would you say of a poet, who, to describe a battle, told you in verse that the cannon went 'boum, boum,' and the drums 'rat-a-tat?' It would be imitative harmony more exact than splendid figures; but it would not be poetry. Painting itself, that preeminently descriptive art, is not an art of servile imitation. The artist might paint in vain the dark green of the sea, the black sky of the storm and the shattered hull of the ship. If he has not the feeling to reproduce the horror and the poetry of the scene, his painting will be without color, though it were as brilliant as the sign of a beer shop. Therefore, young man, allow yourself to be moved by the idea of a great disaster, and in this way you will move others by it."

He was still paternally repeating these exhortations to him while the carriage, ready in the courtyard of the embassy, was loading with the luggage. Joseph listened attentively to his counsels, drinking them in at the source, so to speak; but when Consuelo, in her furred hood and cloak, came and threw herself upon his neck, he turned pale, smothered a cry, and unable to resolve to see her set out, fled and hid his sobs in Keller's back shop. Metastasio took a friendship for him, perfected him in Italian, and compensated him somewhat by his good advice and generous
services for Porpora's absence; but Joseph was long sad and unhappy before he could accustom himself to that of Consuelo.

Our heroine, though also sad, and regretting so faithful and amiable a friend, felt her courage, her ardor and the poetry of her feelings revive as she made her way into the mountains of Moravia. A new sun was rising upon her life. Freed from every bond or influence unconnected with her art, it seemed to her that she owed herself to it wholly. Porpora, restored to hope and the playfulness of his youth, excited her by eloquent declamations; and the noble girl, without ceasing to love Albert and Joseph like brothers whom she was to meet again in the bosom of God, felt light as the lark which rises singing towards heaven on the morning of a fair day.
CHAPTER XVIII.

At the second relay Consuelo had recognized, in the servant who accompanied them, and who, seated on the box of the carriage, paid the guides and scolded the postilions for their slowness, the same lackey who had announced Count Hoditz on the day when he had come to propose to them the excursion to Roswald. This tall and powerful fellow, who was always looking at her stealthily, and who seemed divided between the desire and the fear of speaking to her, at last attracted her attention; and one morning, while she was breakfasting in a lonely inn at the foot of the mountains, Porpora having gone for a walk in search of some musical theme, while waiting for the horses to rest, she turned towards this servant as he was handing her coffee, and looked at him with a somewhat severe and irritated air. But he assumed such a piteous expression that she could not restrain a burst of laughter. The April sun was shining upon the snow which still crowned the mountains, and our young traveller felt in a good humor.

"Alas!" said the mysterious lackey at last, "does not your ladyship deign to recognize me? I should have known you anywhere, though you were disguised as a Turk or a Prussian corporal; and yet I never saw you but for an instant,—but what an instant!"
As he said this, he laid upon the table the salver which he was bringing her; and approaching Consuelo, he gravely made a sign of the cross, knelt and kissed the floor at her feet.

"Ah!" cried Consuelo, "Karl, the deserter, is it not?"

"Yes, signora," replied Karl, kissing the hand which she extended to him; "at least I have been told that I must call you so, though I have never understood very well whether you were a gentleman or a lady."

"Really? Why are you uncertain?"

"It is because I saw you as a boy, and that since then, although I recognize you perfectly, you have become as much like a young girl as you formerly were like a boy. But that makes no difference; you have done me services which I shall never forget. You might order me to throw myself from the top of that peak, and if it could give you pleasure, I would not refuse to do it."

"I ask you nothing, good Karl, but to be happy and enjoy your liberty; for you are free, and I imagine that you love life now."

"Free, yes," said Karl, "but happy! — I have lost my poor wife."

Consuelo's eyes filled, by a sympathetic impulse.

"Ah!" he went on, shaking his red mustache, from which the tears dripped like rain from a hedge, "she suffered too much, the poor soul! The grief of seeing me carried off a second time by the Prussians, a long journey on foot when she was very ill, then the
joy of seeing me again,—all that caused a reaction, and she died a week after her arrival in Vienna where I was seeking her, and where, thanks to your note, she found me by the aid of Count Hoditz. That generous lord sent her aid and his own physician, but it was of no use; she was weary of life, you see, and she went to rest in the good Lord's heaven."

"And your daughter?" said Consuelo, endeavoring to suggest to him some consoling idea.

"My daughter?" said he, with a sombre and somewhat wild air, "the King of Prussia killed her too."

"How killed? What do you mean?"

"Is it not the King of Prussia who killed the mother by causing her all this ill? Well, the child followed the mother. From the night when, after seeing me covered with blood, bound and borne off by the recruiters, they both lay for dead upon the road, the child had been continually shaking with a violent fever; the fatigue and trials of the journey finished them. When you met them on a bridge at the entrance to some Austrian village, they had eaten nothing for two days. You gave them money, told them that I was alive, did everything in your power to console and cure them,—they told me all that,—but it was too late. They only grew worse when we were reunited, and at the moment when we might have been happy, they were borne to the cemetery. The earth was hardly settled over my wife's body when we had to open it again to receive my child; and now, thanks to the King of Prussia, Karl is alone in the world."
"No, my poor Karl, you are not abandoned; you still have friends who take an interest in your misfortunes and in your good heart."

"I know it. Yes, there are honest folk, and you are one of them. But what do I need now that I have neither wife, child, nor country? For I shall never be safe in my own; my mountain is too well known to those villains who have already come to seek me there twice. As soon as I found myself alone, I asked if we were at war, or soon would be. I had only one idea; it was to serve against Prussia, that I might kill as many Prussians as possible. Ah! St. Wenceslas, the patron of Bohemia, would have guided my arm; and I am very sure that not a ball from my gun would have been wasted. I said to myself, 'Perhaps Providence will allow me to meet the King of Prussia in some defile,' — and then, though he were armored like the Archangel Michael, and though I had to follow him like a wolf on the scent — But I learned that peace was assured for a long time; and then, no longer caring for anything, I went to my lord, Count Hoditz, to thank him, and to beg him not to present me to the empress, as he had intended. I wished to kill myself; but he was so good to me, and his step-daughter, the Princess of Culmbach, to whom they had secretly related my story, spoke such beautiful words to me concerning my duty as a Christian, that I consented to live and enter their service, where, really, I am too well fed and treated for the little work I have to do."
"Now tell me, my dear Karl," said Consuelo wiping her eyes, "how you were able to recognize me."

"Did you not come one evening to sing at the house of my new mistress, the margravine? I saw you pass, all in white, and I knew you at once, although you had become a young lady. The truth is, you see, that I do not recollect much about the places through which I have passed, or the names of the people I have met; but as for faces, I never forget them. I began to make the sign of the cross when I saw a lad who followed you, and whom I recognized as Joseph; and instead of being your master, as he was at the time of my rescue (for he was better dressed then than you), he had become your servant, and remained in the antechamber. He did not recognize me, and as the count had forbidden me to say a word to any one about what had happened to me (I never knew or asked why), I did not speak to that good Joseph, though I longed to fall upon his neck. He went into another room almost immediately. I had orders not to leave that in which I was, and a faithful servant can only obey. But when every one had gone, the count's valet said to me, 'Karl, you did not speak to Porpora's little servant, although you recognized him, and you did well. The count will be pleased with you. As for the young lady who sang this evening'—'Oh, I knew her also!' I cried, 'but I said nothing.'—'Well,' he added, 'you were right in that also. The count
does not wish it known that she travelled with him to Passau.—'That is none of my business,' I replied, 'but may I ask you how she rescued me from the hands of the Prussians?' Then Henry told me how the affair happened (for he was there); how you ran after the count's carriage, and how, when you no longer had anything to fear for yourselves, you insisted on their coming to save me. You said something about it to my poor wife, and she told it to me; for she died commending you to God and saying to me, 'They are poor children, who appear almost as unfortunate as we; yet they gave me all that they had, and wept as if we had been their own flesh and blood.' Therefore when I saw Master Joseph in your service, having been directed to take him some money from the count, for whom he had played the violin another evening, I put some ducats in the paper, the first that I earned in this house. He never knew it, and did not recognize me; but if we return to Vienna, I will arrange it so that he shall never be straitened so long as I can earn anything.'

"Joseph is no longer in my service, my good Karl; he is my friend. He is not in want; he is a musician, and can easily make his living. Do not rob yourself for him."

"As for you, signora," said Karl, "I cannot do much for you, since you are a great actress, it seems; but if ever you should need a servant, and could not pay him, call upon Karl, and count on him. He will serve you for nothing, and be happy to work for you."
"I am well enough repaid by your gratitude, my friend. I wish nothing more."

"Here is Master Porpora coming back. Recollect, signora, that I have not the honor to know you otherwise than as a servant placed at your orders by my master."

The next day our travellers, having risen early, reached the castle of Roswald about noon. It was situated in an elevated region, on the side of the finest mountains of Moravia, and so well sheltered from cold winds that spring had already appeared there, while for half a league around it was still winter. Although the season was prematurely fine, the highways were still nearly impassable. But Count Hoditz, who stopped at nothing, and for whom the impossible was a jest, had already arrived and had a hundred laborers at work smoothing the road over which the majestic equipage of his noble spouse was to roll on the morrow. It would perhaps have been more husbandly and more useful to travel with her; but it was not so important to save her from breaking her arms and legs on the road as to give her a fete; and, dead or alive, she must have a splendid entertainment on taking possession of the palace of Roswald.

The count hardly allowed our travellers time to change their toilets, and had a very handsome dinner served them in a rocky and mossy grotto which was agreeably heated by an enormous stove, skilfully concealed by false rocks. At first sight this spot ap-
peared enchanting to Consuelo. The view which one saw from the opening was really magnificent. Nature had done everything for Roswald. A varied and picturesque landscape, forests of green trees, abundant springs, admirable views and immense meadows would seem, with a comfortable dwelling, to be enough to constitute an ideal country-seat. But Consuelo soon observed the odd devices by which the count had succeeded in spoiling this sublime nature. The grotto would have been charming without the glass, which made it an unseasonable dining-room. As the honeysuckle and convolvulus were as yet only budding, the woodwork of the doors and windows had been concealed by artificial flowers and leaves. The shells and stalactites, somewhat injured by the winter, revealed the plaster and mastic which fastened them to the walls of the rock, and the heat of the stove, condensing a remains of humidity collected at the roof, caused a black and unwholesome rain, which the count would not perceive, to fall upon the heads of his guests. Porpora became angry at it, and two or three times put his hand to his hat, but without daring to clap it on his head, as he was dying to do. He above all feared that Consuelo would take cold, and ate hastily, pretending a lively impatience to see the music which he was to conduct on the morrow.

"What are you anxious about, dear maestro?" said the count, who was a great eater, and who loved to detail at length the history of the acquisition or the
construction, under his own direction, of all the rich and curious pieces of his table service; "able and finished musicians like you need only a moment to prepare. My music is simple and natural. I am not one of those pedantic composers who endeavor to astonish by learned and odd harmonic combinations. In the country, simple and pastoral music is needed. I care only for pure and easy airs; this is also the taste of the margravine. All will go well, you will see. Besides, we are losing no time. While we are breakfasting here, my major-domo is preparing everything according to my orders, and we shall find the choirs at their different stations, and all the musicians at their posts."

As he said this, word was brought that two foreign officers, travelling through the country, asked leave to enter and pay their respects to the count, and to visit, with his leave, the palace and gardens of Roswald. The count was accustomed to calls of this kind, and nothing gave him more pleasure than to be himself the guide of the curious through the delights of his residence.

"Let them come in; they are welcome!" he cried. "Set places for them and bring them here."

A few moments later the two officers were introduced. They wore the Prussian uniform. He who walked first, and behind whom his companion seemed determined to conceal himself entirely, was small, and with a rather sour face. His nose, long, heavy and without nobleness, added to the disagreeable effect
of his vulgar mouth and his retreating, or rather absent, chin. His somewhat bent shoulders gave an oldish air to his figure, which had an awkward look in the clumsy coat invented by Frederick. Yet this man was forty years of age at most. His bearing was bold, and when he took off the poor hat which covered his face to the bridge of his nose, he showed what there was handsome in his head,—a firm forehead, intelligent and thoughtful; mobile brows, and eyes of extraordinary clearness and animation. His look transformed him, like those rays of the sun which suddenly color and beautify the dreariest and least poetic landscapes. He seemed to grow a whole head taller when his eyes shone in his pale, thin and suspicious face.

Count Hoditz received them with an hospitality more cordial than ceremonious, and without losing time in long compliments, had two places set for them, and caused them to be served with the choicest dishes with truly patriarchal kindness; for Hoditz was the best of men, and his vanity, instead of corrupting his heart, caused him to overflow with confidence and generosity. Slavery was still in force on his estate, and all the marvels of Roswald had been constructed at little cost by his serfs; but he covered the yoke of his subjects with flowers and feasting. He made them forget the necessary by lavishing upon them the superfluous, and convinced that pleasure is happiness, he caused them to amuse themselves so much that they never thought of being free.
The Prussian officer (for there really was but one; the other seemed only his shadow) appeared at first a little astonished, perhaps a little offended, at the count's lack of ceremony, and he had assumed a somewhat reserved politeness, when the count said to him, —

"Captain, I beg you to be at your ease, and to do here as if you were at home. I know that you must be accustomed to the rigid severity of the great Frederick's army, which I think admirable in its place; but here you are in the country, and if one does not amuse one's self in the country, why does he come here? I see that you are well-bred and well-mannered persons. You are certainly not officers of the King of Prussia without having given proofs of military learning and distinguished bravery. I therefore consider you guests whose presence honors my house; pray make use of it without hesitation, and remain as long as you find it agreeable."

The officer immediately accepted the situation like a sensible man, and after thanking his host in the same tone, began to devote himself to the champagne, which nevertheless did not cause him to lose an atom of his self-possession, and to attack an excellent pate, concerning which he made and asked gastronomic questions which gave but a poor idea of him to the abstemious Consuelo. She was nevertheless struck by the fire of his look; but this fire astonished without charming her. She found in it something haughty, searching and distrustful, which did not appeal to her heart.
While breakfasting, the officer informed the count that he was named Baron von Kreutz; that he was a native of Silesia, whither he had just been sent for remounts for the cavalry; that being at Neisse, he had not been able to resist the desire to see the famous palace and gardens of Roswald; that consequently he had crossed the frontier that morning with his lieutenant, not without profiting by the opportunity to make some purchases of horses. He even offered the count to visit his stables, if he had any animals to sell. He was travelling on horseback, and would return that evening.

"I cannot allow you to leave so soon," said the count; "I have no horses to sell you at present. I have not even enough for the improvements which I wish to make in my gardens. But I hope to make a better bargain by enjoying your society as long as possible."

"But we heard, when we arrived, that you were hourly expecting Countess Hoditz, and as we do not wish to be a burden to you, we will retire as soon as we hear of her arrival."

"I only expect the Countess Margravine to-morrow," replied the count; "she will arrive here with her daughter, the Princess of Culmbach. For you are no doubt aware, gentlemen, that I have had the honor to make a noble alliance" —

"With the Dowager Margravine, of Baireuth," said Baron von Kreutz, somewhat abruptly, and without appearing as much dazzled by this title as the count expected.
"She is the aunt of the King of Prussia!" he added, with some emphasis.

"Yes, yes, I know," returned the Prussian officer, taking a large pinch of snuff.

"And, as she is an admirably gracious and affable lady," continued the count, "I have no doubt that she will have infinite pleasure in receiving and entertaining brave servants of the king, her nephew."

"We should be very sensible of so great an honor," said the baron smiling; "but we shall not have time to enjoy it. Our duty calls us imperatively to our post, and we take leave of your excellency this evening. Meanwhile, we should be very happy to admire this beautiful residence. The king, our master, has not one which can be compared to it."

This compliment recovered for the Prussian all the Moravian lord's good-will. They rose from table. Porpora, who cared less for the walk than for the rehearsal, wished to be excused from it.

"Not at all," said the count; "we shall have the walk and the rehearsal at the same time; you will see, master."

He offered his arm to Consuelo, and, going in advance, said,—

"Pardon me, gentlemen, if I take possession of the only lady now here; it is the right of the lord of the manor. Have the goodness to follow me; I will be your guide."

"May I venture to ask you, sir," said the Baron von Kreutz, speaking to Porpora for the first time, "who that amiable lady is?"
"Sir," replied Porpora, who was out of temper, "I am an Italian; I understand German badly and French still worse."

The baron, who had, until then, always spoken French to the count, according to the custom of that time with fashionable people, repeated his question in Italian.

"That amiable lady, who has not yet spoken a word in your presence," said Porpora, dryly, "is neither margravine, dowager, princess, baroness nor countess; she is an Italian singer who possesses a certain talent."

"I am all the more desirous of becoming acquainted with her and knowing her name," replied the baron, smiling at the maestro's curtness.

"She is Porporina, my pupil," said Porpora.

"She is a very accomplished person, they say," replied the other, "and impatiently awaited at Berlin. Since she is your pupil, I see that it is to the illustrious Master Porpora that I have the honor of speaking."

"At your service," said Porpora, in a reserved tone, returning to his head the hat which he had just lifted in reply to Baron von Kreutz's low bow.

The latter, seeing him so uncommunicative, allowed him to advance and remained behind with his lieutenant. Porpora, who had eyes even in the back of his head, saw that they were laughing together as they looked at him and spoke of him in their language. He was all the more ill-disposed to them, and did not even glance at them during the whole walk.
CHAPTER XIX.

They descended a steep incline, at the bottom of which they found a miniature river, which had been a limpid, turbulent brook; but as it was necessary to make it navigable, the count had levelled its bed, diminished its fall, neatly trimmed its banks and clouded its clear waters by recent labors. The workmen were still busy removing from it a few rocks which had been carried there during the winter, giving it some remaining expression which they were in haste to remove. A gondola was awaiting the party, a real gondola which the count had brought from Venice, and which caused Consuelo’s heart to beat as it recalled to her a thousand sweet and bitter memories. They embarked; the gondoliers also were real Venetians, speaking their dialect; they had been brought with the boat, as in our day negroes are brought with a giraffe. Count Hoditz, who had travelled a great deal, fancied that he spoke all languages; but although he did it with great confidence, and gave his orders in a loud voice and an emphatic tone to the gondoliers, they would have had difficulty in understanding him if Consuelo had not served as interpreter. They were commanded to sing the songs of Tasso; but the poor wretches, hoarse from the northern cold, confused and out of their element, gave the Prussians a poor
example of their skill. Consuelo was obliged to prompt them at every verse, and to promise to rehearse with them the selection which they were to sing on the morrow for the margravine.

When they had rowed for a quarter of an hour in a space which they could have crossed in three minutes, but where the poor brook had been tortured into a thousand deceptive windings, they reached the open sea. It was a moderately large sheet of water upon which they debouched between clumps of cypress and firs, and the unexpected view of it was really agreeable. But they had not time to admire it. They were obliged to embark upon a miniature ship, from which nothing was wanting; masts, sails, and ropes, it was a perfect model of a vessel with all its rigging, and which the excessive number of sailors and passengers came near sinking. Porpora was cold in it. The carpets were very damp, and I believe that in spite of the careful examination which the count had made of everything upon his arrival the day before, the ship leaked badly. Nobody was comfortable in it except the count who, thanks to his position, never cared for the little annoyances attaching to his pleasures, and Consuelo, who was beginning to be greatly amused by the folly of her host. A fleet proportioned to this flag-ship came to place itself under his orders, and performed manoeuvres which the count, armed with a speaking-trumpet and erect upon the quarter-deck, directed very seriously, becoming angry when matters did not go to suit him, and causing them to
begin the rehearsal over again. Finally they sailed in line of battle to the sound of an abominably false brass band, which completely exasperated Porpora.

"I can forgive being frozen and catching cold, but to have one's ears flayed in this way is too much!"

"Make sail for the Peloponnesus!" cried the count, and they all scudded toward a shore crowned with small buildings imitating Greek temples and ancient tombs.

They sailed towards a little harbor concealed by rocks, and when a few yards off were received by a discharge of shots. Two men fell dead upon the deck, and a very light cabin-boy, who was in the rigging, uttered a great cry, let himself slide skilfully down, and rolled into the midst of the company, screaming that he was wounded, and holding his hands to his head, which was supposed to be shattered by a ball.

"Here," said the count to Consuelo, "I need you for a little rehearsal with my crew. Will you have the goodness to impersonate the margravine for a moment, and command this dying boy, as well as those two dead men, who, by the way, fell very awkwardly, to arise, be cured instantly, take their arms and defend her highness against the insolent pirates concealed in this ambuscade?"

Consuelo hastened to assume the role of the margravine, and played it with much more nobleness and natural grace than Madame Hoditz would have done. The dead and dying rose to their knees and kissed her
hand. At this point they were enjoined by the count not really to touch with their vassal mouths the noble hand of her highness, but to kiss their own hands, pretending to place their lips to hers. Then the dead and dying rushed to arms with great demonstrations of enthusiasm; the little mountebank who played the role of cabin-boy climbed up his mast again like a cat and fired a light carbine at the band of pirates. The squadron closed about the new Cleopatra, and the little cannons made a frightful noise.

Consuelo, warned by the count, who did not wish to cause her a serious fright, had not been deceived by the somewhat odd commencement of this comedy. But the two Prussian officers, to whom he had not considered it necessary to extend the same courtesy, seeing two men fall at the first fire, had pressed together, turning pale. He who said nothing had seemed afraid for his captain, and the emotion of the latter had not escaped the calmly scrutinizing eye of Consuelo. It was not fear, however, which she saw upon his face, but, on the contrary, a kind of indignation, of anger, even, as if the jest had offended him personally, and had appeared to him an insult to his dignity as a Prussian and an officer. Hoditz paid no attention to it, and when the combat was at its height, the captain and his lieutenant shouted with laughter, and took the joke in excellent part. They even drew their swords and fought with the air, thus sharing in the scene.

The pirates, embarked in light boats, clad in Greek
costumes and armed with musketoons and pistols loaded with powder, had come out of their pretty little reefs, and were fighting like lions. They were allowed to come alongside, when they were killed in numbers, that the good margravine might have the pleasure of resuscitating them. The only cruelty committed was to cause some of them to fall into the sea. The water of the basin was very cold, and Consuelo pitied them, until she saw that they enjoyed it, and took pride in showing their mountain companions that they were good swimmers.

When Cleopatra’s fleet (for the ship which was to carry the margravine really bore that pompous name) had been victorious, it led the pirate flotilla captive in its train, and went away to the sound of triumphant music (fit to raise the devil, Porpora said) to explore the shores of Greece. They next drew near an unknown isle, on which they saw earthen huts and exotic trees extremely well acclimated or imitated; for one could never tell what to believe in this respect, the true and the false being mingled everywhere. To the banks of this isle pirogues were moored. The aborigines of the country sprang into them with very savage cries and came to meet the fleet, bearing strange flowers and fruits recently cut in the hot-houses of the residence. These savages were rough, tattooed, hairy, more like devils than men. The costumes were not too appropriate. Some were crowned with feathers, like Peruvians, others bundled up in furs, like Esquimaux; but these
things were not too closely criticised; so long as they were sufficiently ugly and shaggy, they were taken for cannibals at the very least.

These good people made many faces, and their chief, who was a sort of giant, with a false beard which fell to his waist, delivered an address which Count Hoditz had taken the trouble to compose himself in the tongue of the savages. It was a collection of sonorous and guttural syllables, flung together to represent a grotesque and barbarous jargon.

The count, having caused the savage to recite his tirade without a fault, undertook himself to translate this fine harangue to Consuelo, who was still playing the part of the margravine in the absence of the genuine one.

"This speech means, madam," he said, imitating the salaams of the savage king, "that these cannibals, whose custom it is to devour all strangers who land upon their isle, suddenly touched and tamed by the magic effect of your charms, have come to lay at your feet the homage of their ferocity, and to offer you the royalty of this unknown country. Deign to land upon it without fear, and although it is barren and uncultivated, marvels of civilization will spring up under your feet."

They landed on the isle amid the songs and dances of the young savages. Strange animals, supposed to be ferocious, and lay-figures, which knelt suddenly by means of a spring, greeted Consuelo upon the shore. Then, with the aid of cords, the newly planted trees
and bushes fell, the rocks of card-board crumbled, and one saw little houses, decorated with flowers and leaves; shepherdesses leading real flocks (Hoditz had no lack of them); villagers dressed in the latest fashion at the opera, though not very clean when seen near by; even tame goats and does came to pay homage to the new sovereign.

"It is here," said the count to Consuelo, "that you will have a role to play before her highness tomorrow. You will be provided with the costume of a pagan goddess, covered with flowers and ribbons, and you will wait in this grotto; the margravine will enter, and you will sing the cantata which I have in my pocket, to make over to her your rights as a divinity, since there can be only one goddess where she deigns to appear."

"Let us see the cantata," said Consuelo, taking the manuscript of which Hoditz was the composer.

It was not very difficult to read and sing this simple ballad at sight; words and music were all of a piece. It was only necessary to learn it by heart. Two violins, a harp and a flute concealed in the depths of the cavern accompanied her all wrong. Porpora made them repeat it, and in a quarter of an hour everything went well. It was not the only role which Consuelo had to take during the fete, nor the only cantata that Hoditz had in his pocket. Happily, his compositions were short; it would not do to weary her highness with too much music.

They sailed from the savage islands and landed
upon a Chinese shore; imitation porcelain towers, kiosques, stunted gardens, little bridges, junks and tea plantations,—nothing was lacking. The mandarins and learned men, well enough dressed, came to make a Chinese address to the margravine; and Consuelo, who, during the trip, was to change her costume in the hold of one of the ships and appear as a mandarin's daughter, was to sing some Chinese verses and music, also of Count Hoditz's manufacture:—

"Ping, pang, tiong,
Hi, hang, hong."

Such was the refrain, which was supposed to mean, thanks to the power of abbreviation possessed by this marvellous language,—

"Beauteous margravine, great princess, idol of all hearts, reign forever over your happy husband and your merry empire of Roswald in Moravia."

On leaving China, they entered very rich palanquins, and on the shoulders of Chinese and savage slaves ascended a little mountain, upon the summit of which they found the city of Lilliput. Houses, forests, lakes, mountains,—all reached only to the knee or the ankle, and it was necessary to stoop in order to see, inside the houses, the furniture and household articles, which were in proportion to everything else. Marionettes danced upon the public place to the sound of "mirlitons," jew's-harps, and tambourines. The persons who worked them and who produced this Lilliputian music were beneath the earth, in cellars constructed especially for the purpose.
When they descended from the mountains of Lilliput, they found a desert a hundred yards across, covered with enormous rocks and sturdy trees, left to their natural growth. It was the only spot which the count had not mutilated and spoiled. He had been content to leave it as he had found it.

"I was troubled for a long while," he said to his guests, "to tell how to employ this steep gorge. I did not know how to rid it of these masses of rocks, nor what arrangement to give these superb but disorderly trees. Suddenly it occurred to me to call this place a desert, chaos; and I thought that the contrast would not be disagreeable, especially as on leaving these horrors of nature one returns to terraces admirably ordered and decorated. To complete the illusion, you will see what a happy invention I have placed here."

As he said this, the count went round a large rock which stood in the way (for of course he had constructed a trim gravel-path through this horrible desert), and Consuelo found herself at the entrance to an hermitage hewn in the rock and surmounted by a great wooden cross. The anchorite of the Thebais came out of it; he was a good peasant whose long, white, false beard contrasted with a fresh face, decked with the colors of youth. He delivered a fine sermon, the barbarisms of which his master corrected, gave his benediction, and offered roots and milk to Consuelo in a wooden bowl.

"I think your hermit somewhat young," said Baron
von Kreutz; "you might have placed a real old man here."

"It would not have pleased the margravine," said Hoditz, simply. "She says, very properly, that old age is not enlivening, and that at a fete one must see none but young actors."

I will spare the reader the rest of the promenade. There would be no end to it if I were to describe the different countries, the druidical altars, the Indian pagodas, the covered roads and canals, the virgin forests, grottos in which they saw the mysteries of the Passion carved in the rock, artificial caverns with ballrooms, Elysian fields, cascades, naiads, serenades and the six thousand jets of water which Porpora afterwards averred that he had been obliged to "swallow." There were a thousand other attractions, the details of which have been transmitted to us with admiration by the memoirs of the time,—a half-dark grotto into which you ran, and at the end of which a mirror, by reflecting your figure in an uncertain light, must inevitably cause you a great fright; a convent in which you were forced, under pain of forever losing your liberty, to pronounce vows of eternal submission to the margravine and adoration of her; a raining tree which, by means of a pump concealed in its branches, drenched you with ink, blood or rose-water, as they wished to please or annoy you; a thousand secrets, in short, charming, ingenious and, above all, costly, which Porpora had the brutality to think unsupportable, stupid and scandalous. Night alone put an end to this promenade.
around the world, in which, sometimes on horseback, sometimes in a litter, on donkeys, in carriages, or in boats, they had travelled some three leagues.

Hardened against cold and fatigue, the two Prussian officers, while laughing at what was too childish in the amusements and surprises of Roswald, had not been so much struck as Consuelo by the absurdity of this marvellous residence. She was a child of nature, born in the country, accustomed from the time her eyes first opened to look at the works of God through neither a gauze curtain nor a spyglass; but Baron von Kreutz, though he was not precisely an ordinary member of that aristocracy accustomed to the fashionable draperies and ornaments, was a man of his own time and rank. He did not dislike grottos, hermitages and symbols. In short, he was good-naturedly amused, showed much intelligence in conversation and said to his acolyte, who respectfully pitied him when they entered the dining-room for the weariness of such an infliction, —

"I, bored? Not in the least. I have taken exercise, gained an appetite, seen a thousand follies and rested from serious matters. I have lost neither my time nor my trouble."

They were surprised to find in the dining-room only a circle of chairs about an empty space. The count, having begged his guests to be seated, ordered his lackeys to serve supper.

"Alas, my lord!" replied the one whose duty it was to reply, "we had nothing worthy of being
offered so honorable a company, and we have not even set the table.”

“This is pleasant!” cried the amphitryon, with feigned anger; and when this comedy had lasted a few minutes, he said, “Very well; since men refuse us supper, I invoke hell, and command Pluto to send me one worthy of my guests.”

As he said this, he stamped thrice, and the floor sliding apart, they saw fragrant flames blaze up; then, to the sound of joyous and strange music, a magnificently served table took its place beneath the elbows of the guests.

“That is not bad,” said the count, raising the cloth, and speaking under the table. “Only, I am greatly astonished since Master Pluto knows very well that there is no water in my house to drink, that he has not sent me a single jug of it.”

“Count Hoditz,” replied, from the depths of the abyss, a hoarse voice, worthy of Tartarus, “water is very scarce in hell; nearly all our rivers are dry since the eyes of her highness the margravine have burned to the very bowels of the earth; still, if you insist, we will send a Danaid to the banks of the Styx to see if she can find any.”

“Let her make haste,” replied the count, “and be careful to give her a cask without a hole in it.”

At the same instant there sprang from a jasper bowl in the centre of the table a jet of spring-water, which during all the supper fell upon itself like a sheaf of diamonds in the light of the candles. The epergne
CONSUELO.

was a masterpiece of richness and bad taste, and the water of the Styx and the infernal supper furnished the count with materials for a thousand puns, allusions and cock-and-bull stories which were poor enough, but which they pardoned because of his childish simplicity. The excellent repast served by young satyrs and more or less charming nymphs greatly enlivened Baron von Kreutz. He paid but scant attention, however, to the fair slaves of his amphitryon; these poor peasant girls were at once the servants, mistresses, chorus-singers and actresses of their lord. He was their teacher of deportment, dancing, singing and declamation. Consuelo had had an example at Passau of his manner of dealing with them, and when she thought of the glorious lot which he then offered her, she could not help admiring the coolness with which he now treated her, without being either surprised or embarrassed by her contempt. She knew very well that on the morrow matters would change with the arrival of the margravine; that she would dine in her room with her master, and not have the honor of being admitted to her highness's table. She was but little disturbed by it, although she was ignorant of a circumstance which would have amused her greatly at that moment; namely, that she was supping with an infinitely more illustrious person, who would for nothing in the world have supped on the morrow with the margravine.

Baron von Kreutz, smiling somewhat coldly at the appearance of the nymphs of the household, bestowed
a little more attention upon Consuelo when, after inducing her to break her silence, he led her to speak of music. He was a cultivated and passionate lover of that divine art; at least, he spoke of it with a superiority which, no less than the supper and the warmth of the apartment, mollified Porpora's crabbed temper.

"It would be a blessing," he said at last to the baron who, without naming him, had been delicately praising his style, "if the king whom we are going to try to amuse were as good a judge as you."

"They say," said the baron, "that my sovereign is sufficiently enlightened on this subject, and that he is really fond of the fine arts."

"Are you very sure, baron?" replied the maestro, who could never converse without contradicting everybody about everything. "I hardly dare hope it. Kings are always first in everything to their subjects; but it often happens that their subjects know more than they do."

"In war, as in science and engineering, the King of Prussia knows more than any of us," said the lieutenant zealously; "and as for music, it is very certain" —

"That you know nothing about it, nor I either," interrupted Captain von Kreutz, dryly; "Master Porpora must himself judge in this respect."

"As for me," went on the master, "royal dignity has never intimidated me in the matter of music; and when I had the honor of giving lessons to the Electoral Princess of Saxony, I did not pass over her false notes more than those of any one else."
"What?" said the baron, looking at his companion with a sarcastic expression, "do crowned heads ever play false notes?"

"Just like simple mortals, sir," replied Porpora. "Still, I ought to say that the electoral princess did not make them long with me, and that she had a rare intelligence to second me."

"So you would pardon our Fritz a few false notes, if he had the impertinence to make them?"

"On condition that he corrected himself of the fault."

"But you would not scold him?" said Count Hoditz laughing.

"Certainly I would," replied the old professor, whom a little champagne rendered communicative and boastful.

Consuelo had been duly warned by the canon that Prussia was a great police department, in which the least words, pronounced in a whisper at the frontier, reached Frederick's study in a few moments, by a series of mysterious and faithful echoes; and that one must never say to a Prussian, especially an officer, "How do you do?" without weighing every syllable, and turning, as they say to little children, one's tongue seven times in his mouth. She was therefore not pleased to see her master give way to his sarcastic humor, and endeavored to repair his imprudence by a little policy.

"Even if the King of Prussia were not the first musician of his time," she said, "he might disdain
an art which is certainly very useless compared with the others which he knows."

But she was ignorant that Frederick was not less proud of being a great flutist than of being a great captain and a great philosopher. Baron von Kreutz declared that his majesty had considered music an art worthy to be studied, and that he had probably devoted serious attention and labor to it.

"Bah!" said Porpora, who was becoming more and more animated, "attention and labor can reveal nothing in art to those on whom heaven has not bestowed innate talent. The genius of music is not within reach of every fortune, and it is easier to win battles and pension men of letters than to steal the sacred fire from the muses. Baron Frederick von Trenck told us that his Prussian majesty, when he lost the time, blamed his courtiers; but it will not be so with me."

"Baron Frederick von Trenck said that?" replied Baron von Kreutz, whose eyes glittered with sudden and impetuous anger. "Well," he said, calming himself quickly by an effort of will, and speaking in a tone of indifference, "the poor devil must have lost the desire to jest, for he is shut up in the fortress of Glatz for the rest of his days."

"Really?" cried Porpora; "what has he done?"

"That is a State secret," replied the baron; "but there is every reason to believe that he has betrayed his master's confidence."

"Yes," added the lieutenant, "by selling to Austria
the plans of the fortifications of Prussia, his fatherland."

"Oh, it is impossible!" said Consuelo, who had turned pale, and who, though more and more watchful over her countenance and words, still could not restrain this exclamation of pain.

"It is impossible and it is false!" cried Porpora indignantly; "those who made the King of Prussia believe it lied in their throats!"

"I presume that you do not mean to give us the lie indirectly?" said the lieutenant, turning pale in his turn.

"It would need a very awkward susceptibility to take it thus," replied Baron von Kreutz, casting a hard and imperious glance at his companion. "What affair is it of yours, and what difference does it make to us that Master Porpora shows such warmth in his friendship for this young man?"

"Yes, I would show it, even in the presence of the king himself," said Porpora. "I would say to the king that they have deceived him, that it is very wrong of him to believe it, that Frederick von Trenck is a worthy, noble young man, incapable of an infamy."

"I think, my master," interrupted Consuelo, whom the face of the captain rendered more and more uneasy, "that you would be fasting when you had the honor to approach the King of Prussia; and I know you too well not to be sure that you would speak to him of nothing foreign to music" —

"The young lady seems to me very prudent," said
the baron; "yet it appears that she was very intimate in Vienna with this same young Baron von Trenck."

"I, sir?" replied Consuelo, with admirably acted indifference. "I hardly knew him."

"But," returned the baron with a penetrating look, "suppose the king were to ask you, by some strange chance, what you thought of this treason?"

"Baron," said Consuelo, meeting his inquisitorial look with great calmness and modesty, "I should reply to him that I do not believe in the treason of any one, not being able to understand what it is to betray."

"That is a noble speech, signora," said the baron, whose face cleared suddenly, "and you said it with the accent of a noble soul."

He changed the subject, and charmed them all by the grace and power of his mind. During the rest of the supper, he had, when speaking to Consuelo, an expression of goodness and confidence which she had not before observed in him.
CHAPTER XX.

At the end of the dessert, a spectre, clad all in white and veiled, came to seek the guests, saying to them, "Follow me!" Consuelo, still condemned to the role of the margravine for the rehearsal of this new scene, rose first, and, followed by the others, mounted the great staircase of the castle, the door to which opened at the back of the dining-room. The spectre which led them opened another large door at the top of this staircase, and they found themselves in the darkness of a long antique corridor, at the end of which only could they see a faint light. They went in that direction accompanied by slow, solemn and mysterious music, which was supposed to be performed by inhabitants of the invisible world.

"Egad!" said Porpora, ironically, but in an enthusiastic tone, "the count refuses us nothing! We have heard to-day Turkish, nautical, savage, Chinese, Lilliputian and all sorts of extraordinary music; but here is that which surpasses them all, and it can well be said that it is music of another world."

"And this is not all!" replied the count, enchanted with this praise.

"One may expect anything from your excellency," said Baron von Kreutz, with the same irony as the professor; "yet after this, I really do not know what we can hope more extraordinary."
At the end of the corridor the spectre struck a kind of gong which gave forth a mournful sound, and a large curtain parted and displayed the theatre, lighted and decorated as it would be on the morrow.

The curtain rose; the scene represented nothing more nor less than Olympus. The goddesses were striving for the heart of the shepherd Paris, and the contest of the three principal divinities formed the substance of the piece. It was written in Italian, which caused Porpora to say in an undertone to Consuelo,—

"The savage, Chinese, and Lilliputian tongues were nothing; now we have Iroquois."

Words and music were both the count's workmanship. The actors and actresses were well worthy of their roles. After half an hour of metaphors and fanciful conceits concerning the absence of a divinity more charming and more powerful than all the others, who disdained to contest for the prize of beauty, Paris having decided to make Venus triumph, she took the apple and descending from the stage by a set of steps, came to lay it at the feet of the margravine, declaring herself unworthy to keep it, and apologizing for having striven for it in her presence. It was Consuelo who was to play this role of Venus, and as it was the most important,—because she had to sing an elaborate cavatina at the end,—Count Hoditz, who did not dare to intrust the rehearsal of it to any of his choristers, resolved to fill it himself, as much to carry the affair through as to enable Consuelo to per-
ceive the spirit, the intention, the delicate points and the beauties of the part. He was so grotesque while playing Venus and singing with emphasis the platitudes, stolen from all the most fashionable operas and badly stitched together, of which he had made his so-called score, that no one could remain serious. He was too much occupied in scolding his troupe, and too much excited by the divine expression which he gave his acting and singing, to notice the smiles of the audience. They applauded him boisterously, and Porpora, who had taken the head of the orchestra, stealthily stopping his ears from time to time, declared that everything was sublime,—poem, score, voices, instruments, and the provisional Venus above all.

It was arranged that he and Consuelo should attentively study this masterpiece that evening and the next morning. It was neither long nor difficult to learn, and they undertook to be worthy of the piece and the company the next evening. Then they visited the ball-room, which was not yet ready, because the dances were only to take place two days later, the fête being designed to last two whole days, and to offer an uninterrupted series of varied amusements.

It was ten o'clock at night. The weather was clear and the moon magnificent. The Prussian officers had persisted in crossing the frontier that evening, alleging that their orders did not allow them to pass the night in a foreign country. The count was obliged to yield, and having given directions for their horses
to be prepared, he carried them off to drink the stirrup cup; that is to say, to partake of coffee and excellent liqueurs in an elegant boudoir, whither Consuelo did not see fit to accompany them. She therefore took leave of them, and having cautioned Porpora in an undertone to keep a little more on his guard than he had done during supper, she started to go to her room, which was in another wing of the castle.

But she soon lost her way in the windings of this vast labyrinth, and found herself in a kind of cloister, where a gust of wind extinguished her candle. Fearing to go more and more astray, and to fall through one of the trap-doors with which the count had filled the manor, she resolved to grope her way back until she reached the lighted part of the building. In the confusion of the great preparations for the festival, the comfort of this rich dwelling had been entirely neglected. There were nymphs, ghosts, gods, hermits, sport and laughter, but not a servant from whom to procure a candle, not a being in his sober senses of whom to obtain a direction.

She saw, however, a person coming towards her who seemed to be walking carefully, and purposely gliding along in the shadows, which did not inspire her with the confidence to call out and name herself, the less because the heavy step and loud breathing were those of a man. She went on somewhat disturbed, edging along the wall, when she heard a door open not far from her, and the moonlight, entering
through it, fell upon the tall figure and brilliant costume of Karl. She hastened to call him.

"Is it you, signora?" he said in a troubled voice.

"Ah! for hours I have been seeking an instant to speak to you, and I have found it too late, perhaps."

"What do you wish to say to me, good Karl, and why this agitation which I see?"

"Come out of the corridor, signora; I will speak to you in some entirely lonely spot, where I hope no one will be able to hear us."

Consuelo followed Karl, and found herself on the terrace formed by a turret which joined the side of the building.

"Signora," said the deserter cautiously (having come that morning to Roswald for the first time, he hardly knew the inmates better than Consuelo), "have you said anything to-day which can expose you to the dislike or distrust of the King of Prussia, and of which you would repent in Berlin, if the king were actually informed of it?"

"No, Karl; I have said nothing of the sort. I know that it is dangerous to converse with any Prussian whom one does not know, and, so far as I am concerned, I watched all my words."

"Ah! I am relieved to hear that; I was very uneasy. I approached you two or three times on the ship, when you were sailing on the lake. I was one of the pirates who pretended to board, but I was disguised, and you did not know me. It was in vain that I looked at you and made signs to you; you paid
no attention, and I could not get a word with you. This officer was always beside you. As long as you were on the lake, he never left you by a foot. One would have said that he divined that you were his talisman, and that he hid behind you, in case a ball should have slipped accidentally into one of our harmless guns."

"What do you mean, Karl? I cannot understand you. Who is this officer? I do not know him."

"I have no need to tell you. You will soon know him, since you are going to Berlin."

"Why keep it secret from me now?"

"It is a terrible secret, and I need to keep it an hour longer."

"You seem singularly agitated, Karl; what is going on within you?"

"Oh, great things! Hell is burning in my heart!"

"Hell! One would think that you had evil designs."

"Perhaps!"

"In that case, I wish you to speak; you have no right to be silent with me, Karl. You promised me a devotion and submission without bounds."

"Ah, signora, why do you speak thus? It is true that I owe you more than life, for you did what was needful to preserve my wife and child for me; but they were condemned, they perished,—and their death must be avenged!"

"Karl, in the name of your wife and child, who are praying for you in heaven, I command you to speak."
You are thinking of some mad action; you wish to be revenged? The sight of these Prussians puts you beside yourself?"

"It drives me mad; it makes me furious. But no, I am calm. I am a good man. It is heaven, signora, not hell, which impels me. Come! the hour draws near. Farewell, signora; it is probable that I shall never see you again, and I ask you, since you are to pass through Prague, to pay for a mass for me in the chapel of St. John Nepomuck, one of the greatest patrons of Bohemia."

"Karl, you shall speak, you shall confess the criminal ideas which are tormenting you, or I will never pray for you, but call down upon you, on the contrary, the curse of your wife and your little girl, who are angels in the bosom of the merciful Jesus. How do you expect to be pardoned in heaven if you do not pardon upon earth? I see that you have a carbine under your cloak, and that you are lying in wait here for these Prussians."

"No, not here," said Karl, doubtful and trembling. "I do not wish to shed blood in my master's house, nor beneath your eyes, my good, holy maiden; but down below there is a hollow road in the mountain which I know well already, for I was there this morning when they came through it. I was there by accident, however. I was not armed, and besides, I did not recognize him at once. But in a few moments he will return that way, and I shall be there. I can quickly reach it by the path through the park, and I
shall be ahead of him, though he is well mounted. And as you say, signora, I have a carbine,—a good carbine,—and in it there is a good ball for his heart. It has been there for some time; for I was not jesting when I lay in ambush, disguised as a pirate. I thought the occasion a good one, and I aimed at him a dozen times; but you were there, always there, and I did not fire. But soon you will not be there; he will not be able to hide behind you like a coward—for he is a coward, I know it. I saw him grow pale and turn his back to the enemy one day when he was making us advance furiously against my compatriots, my brothers, the Bohemians. Ah, what a horror! For I am a Bohemian in blood and heart, and these never change. But if I am a poor Bohemian peasant, who learned in my forest only how to handle an axe, he made of me a Prussian soldier, and, thanks to his corporals, I know how to aim straight with a gun."

"Karl, Karl, be silent; you are mad! You do not know this man, I am certain. He is called Baron von Kreutz; I am sure that you did not know his name, and mistook him for some one else. He is not a recruiter; he has done you no harm."

"No, signora, he is not Baron von Kreutz, and I know him well. I have seen him at parade more than a hundred times. He is the grand recruiter, the grand master of the robbers of men and destroyers of families; he is the great scourge of Bohemia; he is my enemy. He is the enemy of our church, our religion and all our saints; it is he who profaned, by
his sacrilegious laughter, the statue of St. John Nepomuck, on the bridge of Prague. It is he who stole from the castle at Prague the drum made of the skin of John Ziska, who was a great warrior in his day, and whose skin was the safeguard, defence and honor of the country. Oh, no! I am not mistaken, and I know the man well! Besides, St. Wenceslas appeared to me just now as I was saying my prayers in the chapel; I saw him as I see you, signora, and he said to me: 'It is he; strike him to the heart!' I had sworn it to the Holy Virgin on the tomb of my wife, and I must keep my oath. Ah, see, signora! there is his horse coming to the steps; it is what I was waiting for. I must go to my post. Pray for me, for sooner or later I shall pay for this with my life; but it matters little, if God saves my soul.'

"Karl!" cried Consuelo, animated by extraordinary strength, "I thought you generous, tender and pious; but I see that you are impious, a coward and a villain. Whoever this man may be whom you wish to assassinate, I forbid you to follow him or to do him any harm. It is the devil who took the form of a saint to lead you astray, and God allowed you to fall into this snare to punish you for making a sacrilegious oath upon the tomb of your wife. You are cowardly and ungrateful, I tell you, for you do not remember that your master, Count Hoditz, who has loaded you with benefits, will be accused of your crime, and will pay for it with his head,—he, so good, so kind, so tender towards you. Go hide yourself in some cellar,
for you are not worthy to see the day, Karl. Do penance for having such a thought! Look! I see your wife at this moment, weeping beside you, and endeavoring to restrain your good angel, who is ready to abandon you to the spirit of evil."

"My wife! my wife!" cried Karl, distracted and conquered. "I do not see her. My wife, if you are there, speak to me, let me see you once more and die!"

"You cannot see her. Crime is in your heart and darkness upon your eyes. Fall upon your knees, Karl; you may yet gain pardon. Give me that gun, which fouls your hands, and pray."

As she said this, Consuelo took the carbine, which was not withheld from her, and hastened to remove it from Karl's sight, while he fell upon his knees and burst into tears. She left the terrace to conceal this weapon hastily in some other spot. She was exhausted by the effort which she had just made to control the imagination of the fanatic by calling up the chimeras which governed it. Time pressed, and it was not the moment to give him a course of more earthly and rational philosophy. She had said what came into her mind, inspired perhaps by something sympathetic in the excitement of the unfortunate creature, whom she wished to save at every cost from an act of madness, and whom she loaded with a feigned indignation, while pitying him for a derangement which he could not control.

She was in haste to remove the fatal carbine, that
she might return to him and keep him upon the terrace until the Prussians were far away, when, on opening the little door which led from the terrace to the corridor, she found herself face to face with Baron von Kreutz. He had been to his room for his cloak and pistols. Consuelo had only time to drop the gun behind her, in the angle formed by the door, and to spring into the corridor, closing the door between Karl and herself. She feared that if he saw his enemy, the sight might reawaken all his fury.

The haste of this motion and the agitation which compelled her to lean against the door, as if she had feared to faint, did not escape the observing eye of Baron von Kreutz. He carried a torch, and stopped before her, smiling. His face was perfectly calm, but Consuelo thought she saw that his hand shook and caused the light to tremble very perceptibly. These circumstances, together with the certainty which she acquired a little later that a window of the room in which the baron had left his cloak opened upon the terrace, afterwards caused Consuelo to think that the two Prussians had not missed a word of her conversation with Karl. Still, the baron greeted her courteously and calmly; and as the horror of the situation caused her to forget to reply to his greeting and deprived her of strength to say a word, Kreutz, having examined her for a moment, with eyes which expressed more interest than surprise, said to her in a gentle voice, as he took her hand,—

"Come, my child, collect yourself. You seem
greatly agitated. We frightened you by passing suddenly before this door just as you opened it; but we are your servants and your friends. I hope that we shall meet in Berlin, and perhaps we may be able to be useful to you there."

The baron drew Consuelo's hand somewhat towards him as if, on a first impulse, he had thought of raising it to his lips. But he only pressed it lightly, bowed again and went off, followed by his lieutenant, who did not even see Consuelo, so disturbed and agitated was he. This bearing confirmed the young girl in the opinion that he knew of the danger by which his superior officer had been threatened.

But who could this man be, the responsibility for whom weighed so heavily upon the head of another, and whose destruction had seemed to Karl so complete and intoxicating a vengeance? Consuelo returned to the terrace to draw his secret from him, while still continuing to watch him; but she found him fainting, and not being able to help this colossus to rise, she went down and called other servants to go to his aid.

"Ah, it is nothing!" said they, starting for the spot to which she directed them; "he drank a little too much mead this evening, and we will carry him to bed."

Consuelo would have liked to return with them, for she was afraid that Karl might betray himself on reviving; but she was prevented by Count Hoditz, who came by, and made her take his arm, rejoicing
that she had not yet retired, and that he could give her a new spectacle. She had to follow him to the front steps, and there she saw in the air, on one of the hills of the park, in the very quarter which Karl had pointed out as the direction of his expedition, a great arch of light, on which letters in colored glass could be confusedly distinguished.

"That is a handsome illumination," said she, with an absent air.

"It is a delicate compliment, a discreet and respectful farewell to the guest who is leaving us," he replied. "In a quarter of an hour he will pass the foot of that hill through a hollow road which we cannot see from here, and where he will find this triumphal arch raised over his head as if by enchantment."

"Count," said Consuelo, coming out of her reverie, "who, pray, is this person who has just left us?"

"You will know by and by, my child."

"If I must not ask, I will be silent, count; but I suspect that his name is not Baron von Kreutz."

"I was not his dupe for an instant," said the count, who was not quite truthful in this respect. "I know that it is his fancy, and that he is offended when one does not appear to take him for what he declares himself. You saw that I treated him like a simple officer, and yet"

The count was dying to speak; but the proprieties forbade him to pronounce a name apparently so sacred. He took a middle course, and handed his opera-glass to Consuelo, saying, —
"See how well this improvised arch has succeeded. It is nearly half a mile off, and I will wager that with my glass, which is excellent, you can read what is written on it. The letters are twenty feet high, although they seem to you imperceptible. Still, look carefully"—

Consuelo looked, and easily read this inscription, which revealed the secret of the comedy:

"LONG LIVE FREDERICK THE GREAT."

"Ah, count!" said she, greatly troubled, "it is dangerous for such a person to travel thus, and still more so to receive him."

"I do not understand you," said the count; "we are at peace; no one would dream now of injuring him upon the soil of the empire, and no one can think it unpatriotic to receive such a guest honorably."

Consuelo was busy with her thoughts. Hoditz recalled her to herself by saying that he had an humble request to make her; that he was afraid of trespassing upon her good-nature, but that the matter was so important that he was obliged to trouble her. After much circumlocution, he said, with a grave and mysterious air,—

"I wish you would have the kindness to assume the role of the spectre."

"What spectre?" said Consuelo, who was thinking only of Frederick and the events of the evening.
"The spectre which comes at dessert to call the margravine and her guests, to lead them through the corridor of Tartarus, where I have placed the field of the dead, and to conduct them to the theatre, where Olympus is to receive them. Venus does not appear upon the stage immediately, and you will have time to take off, behind the scenes, the spectre's shroud, under which you will have on the brilliant costume of the Mother of Love, composed of rose-colored satin, with bows of silver, very small hoops, and hair without powder, but with pearls, feathers and roses,—a very modest costume, but extremely bewitching, as you will see. Come, you will consent to play the spectre; for it is necessary to walk with great dignity, and not one of my little actresses would dare to say to her highness, in a tone at once imperious and respectful, 'Follow me!' It is a very difficult speech to deliver, and I have thought that a person of genius could make a great deal of it. What do you think?"

"The speech is admirable, and I will play the spectre with all my heart," replied Consuelo laughing.

"Ah, you are an angel, an angel indeed!" cried the count, kissing her hand.

But alas! this fete, this brilliant fete, this dream which the count had cherished all the winter, and which had caused him to make three trips to Moravia to prepare for the realization of it; this day, so long awaited, was to vanish in smoke, like the serious and terrible vengeance of Karl. The next day, towards noon, all was ready. The people of Roswald were
under arms; the nymphs, the genii, the savages, the dwarfs, the giants, the mandarins and the spectres were awaiting, shivering at their posts, the moment to begin their evolutions; the steep road was cleared of snow and strewn with moss and violets; the guests, collected from the neighboring castles, and even from distant towns, formed a respectable escort for the amphitryon, when, alas! a thunder-stroke came to overthrow everything. A courier, riding at full speed, announced that the margravine's carriage had upset in a ditch, that two of her highness's ribs were broken, and that she was obliged to stop at Olmütz, where the count was requested to join her. The crowd dispersed. The count, followed by Karl, who had recovered his reason, mounted his best horse and set out in haste, after speaking a few words to his major-domo.

The Pleasures, Brooks, Hours and Rivers went off to resume their furred boots and woollen frocks, and returned to their labor in the fields, along with the Chinese, druids, pirates and anthropophagi. The guests got into their carriages again, and the berlin which had brought Porpora and his pupil was once more placed at their disposal. The major-domo, in accordance with the orders which he had received, brought them the sum agreed upon, and forced them to accept it, although they had only half earned it. They set out for Prague the same day, the maestro enchanted to be rid of the cosmopolitan music and polyglot cantatas of his host; and Consuelo, looking
towards Silesia, grieved at turning her back upon the captive of Glatz, without hope of rescuing him from his unhappy fate.

Baron von Kreutz, who had spent the night at a village not far from the Moravian frontier, left it that same evening in a large travelling carriage, escorted by his mounted pages and by the berlin of his suite, containing his clerks and his travelling treasury. As he drew near the town of Neisse, he said to his lieutenant, or rather his aide-de-camp, Baron von Buddenbrock,—and it may be observed that, dissatisfied with his awkwardness on the day before, he then spoke to him for the first time since he had left Roswald,—

"What was that illumination which I saw from a distance on a hill at the foot of which we were to have passed as we went from Count Hoditz's park?"

"Sire," replied the trembling Buddenbrock, "I did not see any illumination."

"You were wrong. A man who accompanies me should see everything."

"Your majesty should pardon the terrible anxiety caused me by the resolution of a villain"—

"You do not know what you are talking about. This man was a fanatic, a wretched Catholic devotee, exasperated by the sermons which the Bohemian priests preached against me during the war; besides, he was driven to extremities by some personal misfortune. He must be a peasant who has been carried off for my army,—one of those deserters whom we sometimes recapture in spite of their fine precautions."
"Your majesty may rest assured that to-morrow this one will be recaptured and brought before him."

"Have you given orders that he is to be taken from Count Hoditz?"

"Not yet, sire; but as soon as I arrive at Neisse I will send four able and determined men for him."

"I forbid it. On the contrary, you will learn about this man; and if his family fell victims to the war, as his disjointed expressions seemed to indicate, you will see that he is paid the sum of a thousand rix-dollars, and you will have him pointed out to the recruiters of Silesia, that they may always leave him alone. You understand me? He is named Karl, is very tall, a Bohemian, and in the service of Count Hoditz; that is enough for it to be easy to find him, and to learn his family name and his position."

"Your majesty shall be obeyed."

"I hope so. What do you think of this old musician?"

"Porpora? He seems to me foolish, conceited and with a very crabbed temper."

"And I tell you that he is a very superior man in his art, full of wit and a very amusing irony. When he and his pupil reach the frontier of Prussia, you will send a good carriage to meet him."

"Yes, sire."

"And you will cause him to enter it alone, — alone, do you understand? with great courtesy."

"Yes, sire."

"And then?"
"Then your majesty wishes him brought to Berlin?"

"You have no common sense to-day! I wish him taken to Dresden, and from there to Prague, if he likes, and in the same way to Vienna, if such is his desire, all at my expense. Since I have taken so honorable a man from his occupation, I must return him to the place from which I took him without its costing him anything. But I do not wish him to set foot in my dominions. He has too much wit for us."

"What does your majesty command in regard to the cantatrice?"

"She is to be taken under escort, willing or unwilling, to Sans-Souci, and given an apartment in the palace."

"In the palace, sire?"

"Well, are you become deaf? The Barberini's apartment."

"And what are we to do with the Barberini, sire?"

"She is no longer in Berlin. She has gone. Did you not know it?"

"No, sire."

"What do you know? And as soon as this girl has arrived, I am to be notified, at whatever hour of the day or night it may be. Do you hear? These are the orders which you will have inscribed in register No. 1 of the clerk of my treasure,—the compensation to Karl, the dismissal of Porpora, the succession of Barberini's honors and profits to Porporina. Here we are at the gate of the town. Recover your good humor, Buddenbrock, and try to be a little less stupid when I take a fancy to travel incognito with you."
CHAPTER XXI.

When Porpora and Consuelo reached Prague at night-fall the cold was biting. The moon illumined this old city, which revealed in its appearance the religious and warlike character of its history. Our travellers entered it by the gate called Rosthor, and, passing through the portion which is on the right bank of the Moldau, arrived at the middle of the bridge without hinderance. But there the carriage stopped short with a violent jolt.

"Good heaven!" cried the postilion, "my horse has fallen in front of the statue! A bad omen! May St. John Nepomuck assist us!"

Consuelo, seeing that one of the wheelers was entangled in his traces, and that it would take the postilions some time to raise him and rearrange the harness, which had been broken by the fall, suggested to Porpora to get out, that they might warm themselves somewhat by walking. The master having assented, Consuelo went to the parapet, to see in what sort of spot they were. Two distinct cities compose Prague, one of which, called "the new" was built by the Emperor Charles IV. in 1348; the other is more ancient. From the point where Consuelo was, they seemed two black mountains of stone, from the highest points of which rose the slender
spires of ancient edifices and the dark embrasures of the fortifications. The Moldau flowed black and rapid beneath this bridge, so severe in its architecture and the theatre of so many tragic events in the history of Bohemia, while the moon lighted with its pale rays the head of the venerated statue. Consuelo looked at this figure of the saintly doctor, which seemed to cast a melancholy gaze upon the waves. The legend of St. Neponuck is beautiful and his name venerable to whoever esteems independence and loyalty. He was the confessor of the Empress Jane, and when he refused to betray the secret of her confession, the drunkard Wenceslas, who wished to know the thoughts of his wife, and was unable to learn anything from the illustrious doctor, caused him to be drowned beneath the bridge of Prague. Tradition relates that at the moment he disappeared under the water, five stars shone over the scarce-closed gulf, as if the martyr had allowed his crown to float for a moment upon the waves. In memory of this miracle, five stars of metal were let into the stone of the balustrade at the very spot from which Nepomuck was thrown.

Rosmunda, who was very religious, had preserved a tender memory of the legend of St. John Nepomuck; and in the enumeration of the saints whom she caused the pure mouth of her child to invoke every evening, she never forgot him, the special patron of travellers, of people in danger, and above all the preserver of a good reputation. As the poor dream of wealth, so the Zingara, as she grew older, formed
an ideal of this treasure which she had cared little
to guard during her youth. In consequence of this
reaction, Consuelo had been brought up with ideas of
exquisite purity. She recollected then the prayer
which she had formerly addressed to the apostle of
sincerity; and, impressed by the sight of the spot
which witnessed his tragic end, she knelt instinctively
among the devotees who still, at that period, paid
assiduous court to the image of the saint at all hours
of the day and night. They were poor women, pil-
grims, old beggars, perhaps some zingari also, chil-
dren of the mandolin and owners of the highway.
Their piety did not absorb them so much that they
forgot to hold out their hands to her. She gave
them alms liberally, happy to remember the time
when she was neither better shod nor prouder than
they. Her generosity touched them so much that
they consulted together in a low voice and charged
one of themselves to tell her that they would sing
one of the ancient hymns of the service of the blessed
Nepomuck, that the saint might avert the evil omen
as a result of which she was stopped upon the bridge.
The music and the words were, according to them,
of the time of Wenceslas the drunkard.

"Suscipe quas dedimus, Johannes beate,
Tibi preces supplices, noster advocate;
Fieri, dum vivimus, ne sinas infames,
Et nostras post obitum coelis infer manes."

Porpora, who took pleasure in listening to them,
judged that their hymn was hardly more than a cent-
CONSUELO.

ury old; but he heard a second which seemed to him a malediction addressed to Wenceslas by his contemporaries, and which began as follows:—

"Saevus, piger imperator,
Malorum clarus patrator.

Although the crimes of Wenceslas were not of great importance, it seemed that the poor Bohemians took an eternal pleasure in cursing, in the person of this tyrant, the abhorred title "imperator," which had become for them the synonyme of a stranger.

An Austrian sentinel guarded the gate at either extremity of the bridge. Their orders compelled them to march continually from the gate to the middle of the structure; there they met before the statue, turned their backs upon each other, and resumed their impassable promenade. They heard the hymns, but as they were not as learned in Church Latin as the Prague worshippers, they no doubt imagined that they were listening to a canticle in honor of Francis of Lorraine, the husband of Maria Theresa.

As she listened to these simple hymns by moonlight, in one of the most poetic spots in the world, Consuelo was filled with melancholy. Her journey had been happy and cheerful, so far, and by a natural reaction she suddenly became sad. The postilion, who was repairing his harness with German slowness, repeated at every exclamation of impatience, "This is a bad omen," so that Consuelo's imagination was at last impressed by it. Every painful emotion, every
prolonged revery, recalled to her the memory of Albert. She recollected at that moment that one evening he, hearing the canoness invoke aloud in her prayer St. Nepomuck, the guardian of good reputations, had said to her, "It is all very well for you, aunt, who have taken the precaution to assure your own by an exemplary life; but I have often seen persons soiled with vice calling the miracles of this saint to their aid, that they might the better conceal their secret iniquities from their fellow-men. It is thus that your devout practices serve as often for a cloak to gross hypocrisy as for an aid to innocence." At that moment, Consuelo fancied she heard Albert's voice sounding in the evening breeze and the dark waves of the Moldau. She asked herself what he would think of her, whom he considered already perverted, perhaps, if he saw her kneeling before this Catholic image, and she was rising, half frightened, when Porpora said to her,—

"Come, let us get in; everything is repaired."

She followed him, and was preparing to enter the carriage, when a heavy rider, mounted on a still heavier horse, stopped short, dismounted and approached her, to look at her with a tranquil curiosity which appeared to her very impertinent.

"What are you doing here, sir?" said Porpora, thrusting him back. "One does not look so closely at ladies. It may be the custom at Prague, but I am not disposed to submit to it."

The large man showed his face from behind his furs, and still holding his horse by the bridle, replied
to Porpora in Bohemian, without perceiving that the latter did not at all understand him. But Consuelo, struck by the voice of this person, and leaning forward to look at his face in the moonlight, cried, as she passed between him and Porpora, "Is it you, Baron Rudolstadt?"

"Yes, it is I, signora!" replied Baron Frederick, "it is I, the brother of Christian, the uncle of Albert; oh, it is I, and it is you, too!" he added, heaving a deep sigh.

Consuelo was struck by his sad air and the coldness of his greeting. He who had always prided himself on his chivalrous gallantry towards her, did not kiss her hand, did not even think of touching his fur cap to bow to her; he only repeated, as he looked at her with an amazed, not to say an appalled, air, "It is you! really, it is you!"

"Give me news of Reisenburg!" said the agitated Consuelo.

"I will, signora; I long to do so."

"Well, baron, speak; tell me of Count Christian, of the canoness, of"—

"Oh, yes, I will tell you!" replied Frederick, becoming more and more stupefied and almost out of his mind.

"And Count Albert!" said Consuelo, frightened by his expression.

"Oh, yes, Albert! alas! yes, I wish to tell you of him."

But he did not speak, and through all the young
girl's questions remained almost as silent and motionless as the statue of Nepomuck.

Porpora began to become impatient. It was cold, and he was anxious to reach a comfortable resting-place. Besides, this meeting, which might make a great impression upon Consuelo, annoyed him considerably.

"Baron," he said, "we will have the honor of paying our respects to you to-morrow. But allow us now to go to sup and warm ourselves. We need that more than compliments," he added between his teeth, as he sprang into the carriage into which he had just thrust Consuelo, willing or unwilling.

"But, my friend," said she, anxiously, "let me learn" —

"Leave me in peace," he answered roughly; "this man is an idiot, if he is not drunk; and we might spend the night on the bridge, without his being delivered of a sensible word."

Consuelo was suffering from frightful anxiety.

"You are pitiless," she said, as the carriage passed off the bridge and entered the old town. "A moment more and I should have learned what interests me more than anything else in the world" —

"Hello! Are we still at it? Will this Albert always run in your head? You would have had a pleasant family, cheerful and well-bred, to judge by that great boor, whose cap is sealed to his head, apparently; for he did not do you the grace to raise it when he saw you."
"It is a family of which you formerly thought so well that you sent me into it as into a harbor of refuge, recommending me to be all respect and love for those who composed it."

"As to the latter point, you obeyed me but too well, I see."

Consuelo was about to reply, but she paused when she saw the baron, mounted and apparently determined to follow the carriage. When she alighted, she found the old nobleman at the door, offering her his hand, and politely doing the honors of his house; for it was thither, and not to the inn, that he had ordered the postilion to drive them. Porpora tried in vain to refuse his hospitality; he insisted, and Consuelo, who was burning with frightful apprehensions, hastened to accept and to go with him into the hall, where a great fire and a good supper were awaiting them.

"You see, signora," said the baron, pointing to the table, set for three persons, "I was awaiting you."

"That surprises me greatly," said Consuelo; "we gave notice of our arrival to no one, and we even expected, two days ago, not to reach here until the day after to-morrow."

"It does not surprise you more than me," said the baron with a dejected air.

"But Baroness Amelia?" asked Consuelo, ashamed of not having thought sooner of her former pupil.

A cloud covered the baron's brow; his crimson complexion, deepened by the cold, became suddenly
so pale that Consuelo was terrified; but he answered, with a kind of calmness,—

"My daughter is in Saxony with some of her kinsfolk. She will be very sorry not to have seen you."

"And the other members of your family, baron," continued Consuelo, "may I not know"—

"Yes, you shall know everything," replied Frederick, "you shall know everything. Eat, signora; you must need it."

"I cannot eat unless you relieve my anxiety. Baron, in the name of heaven, you have not to mourn the loss of any one?"

"No one is dead," replied the baron, in as mournful a voice as if he had announced the extinction of his entire family.

He began to carve the joints with as solemn a deliberation as at Reisenburg. Consuelo had not the courage to question him further. The supper appeared to her mortally long. Porpora, who was less anxious than hungry, endeavored to converse with his host. The baron strove, for his part, to reply to him courteously, and even to question him concerning his affairs and his projects; but he was evidently far too much preoccupied for this. His replies were not always appropriate, and he repeated questions a moment after receiving an answer to them. He still helped himself to large portions, and allowed his glass and plate to be filled; but it was the result of habit. He neither ate nor drank, and, dropping his
fork upon the carpet and fixing his eyes upon the cloth, he gave way to a deplorable depression. Consuelo examined him carefully, and saw that he was not drunk. She wondered whether this sudden decay was the result of misfortune, disease or old age. At last, after two hours of this torture, the baron, seeing the meal ended, signed to his servants to withdraw; and after seeking for a long while in his pockets with a wandering look, he drew forth an open letter, which he handed to Consuelo. It was from the canoness, and contained what follows:—

"We are lost; there is no hope, brother! Dr. Supperville has at last arrived from Baireuth, and after sparing us for several days, has declared to me that we must put the affairs of the family in order, because in a week, perhaps, Albert will be no more. Christian, to whom I have not the courage to communicate this sentence, still hopes, but faintly. His dejection terrifies me, and I do not know whether the loss of my nephew is the only blow which threatens us. Frederick, we are lost! Can you and I survive such a disaster? As for me, I do not know. May God's will be done! That is all I can say; but I do not feel the strength not to sink under it. Come to us, brother, and strive to bring us courage, if any has remained to you after your own sorrow, which is also ours, and which crowns the misfortunes of a family which one would think accursed! What crimes have we committed to deserve such an expiation? May God preserve me from lacking faith and submission;
but truly there are moments when I say to myself that it is too much.

"Come, my brother, for we need you and long for you; but do not leave Prague before the eleventh of the month. I have to charge you with a strange commission; I believe I must be mad to lend myself to it, but I no longer understand anything in our existence, and conform blindly to Albert's wishes. The eleventh, at seven o'clock in the evening, be on the bridge at Prague, at the foot of the statue. You will stop the first carriage which passes, and take home with you the person you see in it. If this person can leave for Reisenburg that very evening, Albert will perhaps be saved; at any rate, he will hold fast to eternal life, though I do not know what he means by that. But the revelations which for the last week he has had of events utterly unexpected by any of us have been realized in so incomprehensible a manner that I can no longer doubt; he has the gift of prophecy or the perception of hidden things. He called me to his bedside this evening, and in that faint voice which he now has, and which one must guess rather than hear, he told me to send you the words which I have faithfully repeated. Therefore, be at the foot of the statue at seven o'clock on the eleventh, and bring here immediately whomever you find there in a carriage."

As she finished, Consuelo, as pale as the baron himself, rose suddenly; then she fell back upon her chair, and remained for some moments with her arms
stiff and her teeth clenched. But she quickly recovered her strength, rose again and said to the baron, who had fallen anew into his stupor,—

"Well, baron, is your carriage ready? I am; let us go."

The baron rose mechanically and went out. He had had the strength to think of everything beforehand. The carriage was ready, the horses were waiting in the courtyard; but he acted as does an automaton upon the pressure of a spring, and without Consuelo he would not have thought of departure.

Hardly had he left the room when Porpora seized the letter and read it rapidly. He, in turn, became pale, could not utter a word and walked before the stove in frightful uneasiness. The maestro had to reproach himself for what had happened. He had not foreseen it; but he said to himself that he should have done so; and, a prey to remorse and terror, feeling his reason, moreover, confounded by the singular power of divination which had revealed to the invalid the means of seeing Consuelo once more, he thought it all a strange and frightful dream.

Still, as no mind could be more positive than his in certain respects, and no will more persistent, he soon thought of the possible results of this sudden resolution which Consuelo had formed. He moved about a great deal, struck his brow with his hand and the floor with his heels, snapped his fingers,
counted, pondered, collected his courage, and, braving the explosion, said to Consuelo, shaking her to attract her attention,—

"You wish to go there, and I consent, but I shall go with you. You wish to see Albert; you may give him the finishing stroke, but we cannot draw back; we must go. We can spare two days. We were to have spent them at Dresden; now we will not stop there at all. If we are not at the Prussian frontier on the eighteenth we break our engagements. The theatre opens on the twenty-fifth; if you are not ready, I shall be obliged to pay a considerable fine. I have not half the necessary sum, and in Prussia whoever does not pay goes to prison. Once in prison, you are forgotten; you are left there ten, twenty years; you die there of grief or old age, as you choose. That is the fate which awaits me if you forget that we must leave Reisenburg on the fourteenth, by five o'clock in the morning at latest."

"Be easy, master," replied Consuelo, with the energy of resolution, "I had already thought of all that. Do not make me suffer at Reisenburg, that is all I ask of you. We will leave on the fourteenth, at five o'clock in the morning."

"You must swear it."

"I swear it!" replied she, shrugging her shoulders impatiently. "When it is a question of your life and liberty, I cannot imagine why you need an oath from me."
The baron returned at that moment, followed by an old, devoted and intelligent servant, who wrapped him like a child in his fur pelisse, and dragged him to his carriage. They drove rapidly to Beraum, and reached Pilsen at daybreak.
CHAPTER XXII.

From Pilsen to Tauss, although they drove as fast as possible, they were obliged to lose a great deal of time in the frightful roads, through forests almost impassable and frequented by bad characters, so that the passage through them was attended by dangers of more than one sort. At last, after having made a little more than a league an hour, they arrived about midnight at the Castle of the Giants. Never had Consuelo made a more fatiguing and mournful journey. Baron Frederick seemed ready to fall into a paralysis, so indolent and gouty had he become. It was not a year since Consuelo had seen him robust as an athlete; but this iron frame was not animated by a strong will. He had never obeyed anything but his instincts, and at the first blow of an unexpected misfortune he was broken. The pity which Consuelo felt for him increased her anxiety. "Is it thus that I shall find them all at Reisenburg?" she thought.

The bridge was lowered, the gates open and servants waited in the courtyard with torches. No one of the three travellers thought of observing it, or felt the strength to ask a question of the servants. Porpora, seeing that the baron could hardly walk, took him by the arm to aid him, while Consuelo sprang rapidly up the steps. At the top she found the
canoness, who, without losing time in greeting her, seized her arm, saying, "Come, time passes; Albert is impatient. He has counted the hours and minutes exactly; he announced that you were entering the court, and a second later we heard the rolling of your carriage. He never doubted your arrival, but he said that if any accident delayed you, it would be too late. Come, signora, and in the name of heaven do not resist any of his fancies, do not thwart any of his desires. Promise all that he asks, pretend to love him. Lie, alas! if need be. Albert is condemned; he is at his last hour. Try to lighten his agony; it is all we ask of you."

As she said this, Wenceslawa drew Consuelo towards the great drawing-room.

"Is he up? Is he not confined to his room?" asked Consuelo hastily.

"He does not get up any more, for he no longer goes to bed. For thirty days he has been seated in a chair in the drawing-room, and does not wish to be disturbed to be taken elsewhere. The physician declares that he must not be thwarted in this respect, because it would kill him to move him. Take courage, signora, for you are about to see a frightful spectacle."

The canoness opened the door of the drawing-room, adding, "Go to him, do not be afraid of surprising him. He is waiting for you; he saw you coming more than two leagues off."

Consuelo sprang towards her pale betrothed, who was indeed seated in a great arm-chair beside the
hearth. He was no longer a man, but a ghost. His face, still handsome, in spite of the ravages of disease, had become motionless as marble. There was not a smile upon his lips, not a flash of joy in his eye. The physician, who held his arm and felt his pulse, as in the scene of "Stratonice," let it fall gently, and looked at the canoness with an expression which meant, "It is too late." Consuelo was upon her knees beside Albert, who looked at her fixedly and said nothing. At last he succeeded in making with his finger a sign to the canoness, who had learnt to divine all his intentions. She took his arms, which he had no longer the strength to raise, and placed them upon Consuelo's shoulders; then she placed the head of the latter upon Albert's breast, and, as the voice of the dying man was almost extinct, he pronounced these few words in her ear, "I am happy."

He held the head of his beloved against his breast for a couple of minutes, while his lips were pressed to her black hair. Then he looked at his aunt, and by imperceptible motions caused her to understand that he desired her and his father to give the same kiss to his betrothed.

"Oh, with all my heart!" said the canoness, pressing her warmly in her arms. Then she raised her to lead her to Count Christian, whom Consuelo had not yet observed.

Seated opposite his son, at the other side of the hearth, the old count seemed almost as feeble and faded. He could still rise, however, and take a few
steps about the drawing-room, but it was necessary to carry him nightly to his bed, which he had caused to be placed in an adjoining room. At that moment, he held his brother's hand in one of his own, and Porpora's in the other. He dropped them to embrace Consuelo fervently several times. The almoner of the castle came in turn to greet her, to please Albert. He was also a spectre, in spite of his stoutness, which had only increased; his pallor was livid. The indolence of a careless life had weakened him too much for him to be able to bear the sorrow of others. The canoness preserved energy for them all. Her face was blotched, and her eyes burned with a feverish light. Albert alone seemed calm. He had the serenity of a noble death upon his brow, and his physical prostration brought no failure of the mental powers. He was grave, but not overwhelmed, like his father and uncle.

Amid all these persons, ravaged by disease or grief, the calmness and health of the physician showed in strong contrast. Supperville was a Frenchman who had been formerly attached to Frederick, when he was only prince-royal. One of the first to feel the despotic and suspicious character which lay dormant in the prince, he had come to live at Baireuth, and to devote himself to the service of Sophia Wilhelmina, of Prussia, the sister of Frederick. Ambitious and jealous, Supperville had all the qualities of a courtier. He was a physician of very moderate ability, in spite of the reputation which he had
acquired at this little court, but he was a man of the world, a penetrating observer and a sufficiently intelligent judge of the moral causes of disease. He had strongly urged the canoness to satisfy all the desires of her nephew, and he had hoped for something from the return of her for whom Albert was dying. But it was in vain that he had questioned his pulse and his face. Since Consuelo's arrival, he repeated to himself that it was too late, and began to think of withdrawing, that he might no longer witness scenes which it was not in his power to avert.

He nevertheless resolved to interfere in the material affairs of the family, either to serve some personal interest or to satisfy his habitual taste for intrigue; and seeing that no one, of all these appalled persons, thought of making the most of the minutes, he drew Consuelo into the recess of a window to whisper to her, in French, as follows: —

"Signora, a doctor is a confessor. I therefore soon learned the secret of the passion which is leading this young man to the grave. As a physician, accustomed to examine everything and not to believe readily in suspensions of the laws of the physical world, I declare to you that I cannot believe in the strange visions and ecstatic revelations of the young count. In what concerns you, at least, it seems very simple to attribute them to secret communications which he has had with you concerning your journey to Prague and your arrival here." And as Consuelo made a negative gesture, he continued, "I do not
question you, signora, and my suppositions ought not to offend you. You should rather give me your confidence, and regard me as entirely devoted to your interests."

"I do not understand you, sir," replied Consuelo, with a frankness which did not convince the court physician.

"You shall understand me, signora," he said coolly. "The family of the young count have opposed your marriage to him with all their power until now. But at last their resistance is at an end. Albert is going to die, and it being his wish to leave you a fortune, they will not oppose a religious ceremony, which will assure it to you permanently."

"What do I care for Albert's fortune?" said Consuelo in amazement. "What has that to do with the state in which I find him? I have not come here to do business, sir; I have come to try to save him. Is there no hope of it?"

"None. This disease, which is wholly mental, is one of those which disconcert all our plans and resist all the efforts of science. It is a month since the young count, after a disappearance of a fortnight which no one here has been able to explain to me, returned to his family, smitten with a sudden and incurable malady. All the functions of life were already suspended. For thirty days he has not been able to swallow any sort of food; and it is one of those phenomena of which the exceptional organizations of deranged persons alone offer examples, that
he has been able to sustain life thus far upon a few drops of water daily and a few minutes of sleep at night. As you see, all the vital forces are exhausted in him. After two days more, at the most, he will have ceased to suffer. Summon your courage, therefore; do not lose your head. I am here to support you and to strike a blow in your favor.”

Consuelo was still looking at him with astonishment when the canoness, prompted by a sign from the invalid, came to interrupt them and to conduct the doctor to Albert.

Albert, having made him draw close to him, spoke in his ear longer than his condition of weakness seemed to render possible. Supperville reddened and paled, and the canoness, who was watching them anxiously, burned to learn what desire Albert was expressing.

“Doctor,” said Albert, “I heard all that you said to that young girl.” Supperville, who had spoken at the other end of the great drawing-room as low as his patient was now speaking to him, was startled, and his positive ideas about the impossibility of supernatural faculties were so upset that he thought he should go mad. “Doctor,” continued the dying man, “you do not comprehend her nature, and you endanger my plans by alarming her pride. She understands none of your ideas about money. She has never wished either my title or my fortune; she has no love for me. She will only yield to pity. Speak to her heart. I am nearer my end than you think. Do not lose
time. I cannot live happy hereafter if I do not bear into the night of rest the title of her husband."

"But what do you mean by your last words?" said Supperville, trying to analyze his patient's madness.

"You cannot understand them," said Albert with an effort, "but she will. Confine yourself to repeating them faithfully."

"Really, count," said Supperville, raising his voice a little, "I see that I cannot interpret your thoughts clearly; you have now more strength to speak than you have had for a week, and I think it a favorable sign. Speak to her yourself; a word from you will convince her more than all I can say. Here she is beside you; let her take my place and listen to you."

As Supperville did indeed have no comprehension of what he thought he understood, and, as he believed, moreover, that he had said enough to Consuelo to insure her gratitude, in case she was aiming at the fortune, he withdrew, after Albert had said to him further,—

"Remember what you promised me; the time has come. Speak to my relatives; make them consent without hesitation. The time is short."

Albert was so fatigued by the effort which he had just made, that he leaned his brow against that of Consuelo when she had come close to him, and rested there for some moments, as if ready to expire. His white lips became bluish, and Porpora, frightened, thought that he had just breathed his last sigh. Mean-
while, Supperville had collected Count Christian, the baron, the canoness and the chaplain, at the other side of the fireplace, and was speaking to them earnestly. The chaplain alone made an objection, timid in appearance, but which summed up all the persistence of a priest.

"If your lordships exact it," he said, "I will lend my ministry to this marriage; but Count Albert, not being in a state of grace, must first make his peace with the church by confession and extreme unction."

"Extreme unction!" said the canoness, with a smothered groan; "have we come to that, great God?"

"We have come to that, indeed," replied Supperville, who, as a man of the world and a Voltairean philosopher, detested the face and the objections of the almoner; "yes, we have come to that without remission, if the chaplain insists upon this point, and is determined to torment the invalid by the mournful preparations for the last offices."

"And do you think," said Count Christian, divided between his religion and his fatherly love, "that a more cheerful ceremony, one more in accordance with his wishes, may restore him to life."

"I can answer for nothing," replied Supperville, "but I venture to say that I hope much from it. Your lordship formerly consented to this marriage"—

"I have always consented to it; I never opposed it," said the count, purposely raising his voice; "it is Master Porpora, the guardian of this young girl, who
wrote me for her that he could not consent to it, and that she herself had renounced it. Alas! it was my son's death blow," he added, lowering his voice.

"You hear what my father says," murmured Albert in Consuelo's ear; "but you must feel no remorse for it. I believed that you had abandoned me, and I allowed myself to be stricken by despair; but within a week I have recovered my reason, which they call my madness; I have read in hearts at a distance as others read in open letters. I saw at once the past, the present and the future. I knew at last that you had been faithful to your oath, Consuelo; that you had done your best to love me; that you had loved me really for a few hours. But we were both deceived. Pardon your master as I pardon him!"

Consuelo looked at Porpora, who could not hear Albert's words, but who, at those of Count Christian, had become troubled, and was walking up and down before the fireplace in great agitation. She looked at him with an air of solemn reproach, and the master understood it so well that he beat his brow with mute violence. Albert signed to Consuelo to bring Porpora to him, and to aid him to hold out his hand to the old master. Porpora raised that icy hand to his lips and burst into tears. His conscience reproached him with homicide, but his repentance absolved him.

Albert made another sign that he wished to hear what his relatives were replying to Supperville, and he heard it, though Porpora and Consuelo, kneeling beside him, could not catch a word.
The chaplain was writhing under the bitter irony of the doctor; the canoness was seeking, by a mixture of superstition and tolerance, of Christian charity and maternal love, to reconcile ideas which are irreconcilable in the Catholic religion. The discussion only turned upon a point of form; namely, that the chaplain thought he ought not to administer the sacrament of marriage to a heretic unless he at least promised to profess the Catholic faith immediately afterwards. Supperville did not stick at a falsehood, affirming that Count Albert had promised him to believe and profess anything they chose after the ceremony. But the chaplain was not deceived. At last, Count Christian, having one of those moments of tranquil firmness and simple, manly logic by which, after much irresolution and weakness, he had always settled all domestic discussions, ended the dispute.

"Chaplain," said he, "there is no ecclesiastical law which expressly forbids you to marry a Catholic to a schismatic. The Church tolerates these marriages. Consider Consuelo orthodox and my son a heretic, and marry them at once. Confession and betrothal are not obligatory, you know, and in certain urgent cases they may be dispensed with. A favorable change in Albert's condition may result from this marriage, and when he is cured, we will think about converting him."

The chaplain had never resisted old Christian's will; it was, for him, a law superior to the pope's in matters of conscience. It only remained to convince
Consuelo. Albert alone thought of it, and drawing her close to him, he succeeded, without the aid of any one, in placing his arms, as light as reeds, about the neck of his well-beloved.

"Consuelo," he said, "I can read in your soul now; you would like to give your life to revive mine. That is not possible; but you can, by a simple act of will, save my eternal life. I am about to leave you for a little while, and then I shall come back upon earth by the manifestation of a new birth. I shall return accursed and despairing, if you abandon me now, at my last hour. The crimes of John Ziska are not sufficiently expiated; and you alone, my sister Wanda, can accomplish the act of purification of that phase of my life. We are brother and sister; to become lovers, death must pass once more between us. But we must become husband and wife by oath; that I may be born again calm, strong and free, like other men, from the memory of my past existences, which has constituted my torture and my punishment through so many ages, consent to pronounce this oath. It will not bind you to me in this life, which I am about to leave in a moment, but it will reunite us in eternity. It will be a seal which will enable us to recognize each other when the shadows of death have effaced the clearness of our memories. Consent! It is a Catholic ceremony which will be performed, and I accept it, because it is the only one which can legitimate, in the minds of men, the possession which we take of one another. I must bear this sanction
to the tomb. Marriage without the consent of the family is not a complete marriage in my eyes. In other respects, I care little for the form of the oath. Ours will be indissoluble in our hearts as it is sacred in our intentions."

"I consent!" cried Consuelo, pressing her lips to the cold and gloomy brow of her husband.

These words were heard by every one.

"Very well, let us hasten," said Supperville. He resolutely hurried the chaplain, who called the servants, and made haste to prepare everything for the ceremony. The count, somewhat revived, came to sit down beside his son and Consuelo. The good canoness came to thank our heroine for consenting, and almost knelt before her to kiss her hands. Baron Frederick wept silently without appearing to understand what was going on. In a twinkling, an altar was erected before the fireplace in the great drawing-room. The servants were dismissed; they thought that only extreme unction was to be administered, and that the condition of the invalid would not allow many people in the room. Porpora and Supperville were the witnesses. Albert suddenly recovered enough voice to pronounce the decisive "yes," and all the formulas of engagement, in a clear and sonorous voice. The family conceived a lively hope of cure. Hardly had the chaplain recited the last prayer over the heads of the newly married couple, when Albert arose, cast himself into the arms of his father, embraced with the same precipitancy and an extraordi-
nary strength his aunt, his uncle and Porpora; then he sat down upon his chair, and pressed Consuelo against his breast, saying,—

"I am saved!"

"It is the last effort of life; it is a final convulsion," said Supperville to Porpora; he had consulted the pulse and the face of the patient several times during the ceremony.

Albert opened his arms, stretched them out and let them fall upon his knees. Old Cynabre, who, during his whole illness, had not ceased to sleep at his feet, raised his head and uttered three mournful howls. Albert's look was fixed upon Consuelo; his mouth remained half open, as if to speak to her. A faint color had tinged his cheeks; soon that peculiar tint, that indefinable, indescribable shade, which passes slowly from the brow to the lips, spread over him like a white veil. For a minute, his face assumed different expressions, each more serious than the last, of contemplation and resignation, until it became fixed in a final look of august calmness and severe placidity.

The terrified silence which rested upon the attentive and throbbing family was interrupted by the voice of the physician, who pronounced, with mournful solemnity, that sentence without appeal,—

"It is death."
CHAPTER XXIII.

Count Christian fell back in his chair, as if struck by lightning; the canoness, with convulsive sobs, threw herself upon Albert as if she hoped to revive him once more by her caresses; Baron Frederick pronounced words without sense or connection, which had the character of tranquil derangement. Supperville approached Consuelo, whose energetic immobility frightened him more than the violent emotion of the others.

"Do not trouble yourself about me, sir," she said; "nor you either, my friend," she replied to Porpora, who bestowed all his anxiety upon her at first.

"Take away these unfortunate relatives. Care for them, think only of them; I will remain here. The dead need but respect and prayers."

The count and baron allowed themselves to be led away without resistance. The canoness, cold and stiff as a corpse, was borne to her apartment, where Supperville accompanied her to care for her. Porpora, no longer knowing where he was, went out and strode up and down the garden like a madman. He was stifling. His feelings were imprisoned, so to speak, in a cuirass of hardness more apparent than real, but of which he had acquired the physical habit. Scenes of mourning and terror excited his susceptible
imagination, and he wandered for a long while in the moonlight, pursued by sinister voices which sang in his ears a frightful "Dies Irae."

Consuelo therefore remained alone with Albert; for hardly had the chaplain begun to recite the prayers of the office for the dead when he fell fainting, and it was necessary to carry him away likewise. The poor man had insisted in joining the canoness in sitting up with Albert during the whole of his illness, and he was at the end of his strength. The Countess of Rudolstadt, kneeling beside the body of her husband, with his icy hands in hers, and her head leaning against that heart which beat no longer, fell into a profound revery. That which Consuelo felt at this supreme moment was not exactly grief; at least it was not that grief of regret and distraction which accompanies the loss of beings necessary to our happiness at every instant. Her affection for Albert had not had that character of intimacy, and his death did not leave an evident void in her existence. Our despair at losing those whom we love springs often from secret causes of self-love and of cowardice in the presence of new duties which their absence creates for us. A part of this grief is legitimate, the rest is not, and should be fought against, although it is equally natural. But nothing of all this could be mingled with Consuelo's solemn sadness. Albert's existence was foreign to hers in every respect save one alone,—the need of respect, admiration and sympathy which he had satisfied in her.
She had accepted life without him, she had even renounced all evidence of an affection which only two days before she still thought she had lost. She had nothing left but the need and the desire to remain faithful to a sacred memory. Albert had been already dead for her; he was scarcely more so now, or perhaps he was even less in certain respects; for Consuelo, long excited by intercourse with this superior mind, had since then come, in her dreamy meditations, to adopt Albert's poetic beliefs concerning the transmission of souls. This belief had found a strong foundation in her instinctive hatred of the idea of God’s vengeance upon man after death, and in her Christian faith in the eternity of the life of the soul. Albert living, but prejudiced against her by appearances, faithless to love or preyed upon by suspicion, would have appeared to her as enveloped in a veil and transported into a new existence, incomplete as compared to that which he had wished to devote to sublime love and unshakable confidence. Albert with his faith and enthusiasm restored, and breathing his last sigh upon her breast—was he annihilated for her? Did he not live in all the plenitude of life after passing through that triumphal arch of a noble death, which leads either to a mysterious temporary repose or to an immediate reawakening in a purer and happier sphere? To die combating one's weakness, and to be born again endowed with strength; to die forgiving the wicked, and to be born again under the influence and protection of generous hearts; to die
torn by sincere remorse, and to be born again absolved and purified, with the instincts of virtue,—are not these divine recompenses? Consuelo, initiated by Albert's teaching into those doctrines which had their source in the Hussitism of old Bohemia and the mysterious sects of former ages (which were connected with serious interpretations of the very idea of Christ and his forerunners)—Consuelo, sweetly if not learnedly convinced that the soul of her husband had not suddenly separated from her own to go and forget her in an inaccessible part of a fantastic empyrean, mingled with this new notion something of the superstitious memories of her youth. She had believed in ghosts as the children of the people believe in them; in dreams, she had more than once seen the spectre of her mother approaching her, to protect and preserve her. It was already a kind of belief in the eternal union of the souls of the dead with the world of the living; for this superstition of simple races seems to have remained in all times as a protest against the absolute departure of the human essence for the heaven or hell of religious legislators.

Consuelo, therefore, lying upon the breast of this corpse, did not imagine that it was dead, or understand the horror of the word, the spectacle or the idea. It did not seem to her that intellectual life could vanish so quickly, and that this brain and heart, forever deprived of the power of manifesting themselves, could be already completely extinguished.

"No," she thought, "the divine spark hesitates
still, perhaps, to lose itself in the bosom of God, who will take it to send it back to universal life under a new human form. There is perhaps a kind of mysterious, unknown life in this breast, scarcely yet cold; and besides, wherever Albert's soul may be, it sees, understands and knows what is now happening beside its cast-off covering. It is perhaps seeking in my love food for its new activity, and in my faith a strength of impulse to go and seek in God the seed of resurrection."

Filled with these vague thoughts, she continued to love Albert, to open her heart to him, to give him her devotion, to renew to him the oath of faithfulness which she had just taken in the name of God and his family; to treat him, in short, in her ideas and sentiments, not like a dead man for whom one weeps because about to part from him forever, but like a living man, whose slumber one respects, while awaiting his smile on awaking.

When Porpora recovered his reason, he recollected with terror the position in which he had left Consuelo and hastened to her. He was surprised to find her as calm as if watching by the bedside of a friend. He wished to speak to her, and urge her to go and rest. "Speak no useless words before this sleeping angel," she replied. "Go and rest, good master; I am resting here."

"Then you wish to kill yourself?" said Porpora, with a sort of despair.

"No, my friend, I shall live. I shall fulfil my
duties towards him and you; but I shall not leave him to-night for a moment."

As nothing was ever done in the house without an order from the canoness, and as a superstitious terror concerning Albert reigned in the minds of all the servants, no one, during that whole night, ventured to come near the room in which Consuelo remained alone with Albert. Porpora and the physician came and went between the rooms of the count, the canoness and the chaplain. From time to time they would come to inform Consuelo of the condition of these unfortunates and to make sure of her own. They were at a loss to understand such courage.

At last, towards morning, everything was still. A sleep of exhaustion overcame all the power of grief. The physician, overwhelmed by fatigue, retired; Porpora fell asleep on a chair, his head leaning against the side of Count Christian’s bed. Consuelo alone felt no need of forgetting her situation. Lost in her thoughts, by turns praying with fervor or dreaming with enthusiasm, her only faithful companion in her silent watch was the mournful Cynabre, who from time to time looked at his master, licked his hand, swept with his tail the ashes on the hearth, and then, accustomed to no longer receiving caresses from his feeble hand, lay down again resignedly with his head upon his sluggish paws.

When the sun, rising behind the trees of the garden, came to throw a purplish light upon Albert’s brow, Consuelo was aroused from her meditation by the
canoness. The count could not leave his bed; but Baron Frederick came mechanically to pray, with his sister and the chaplain, before the altar, and then they spoke of going on with the shrouding of Albert. The canoness, recovering strength for these material duties, sent for her women and old Hans. It was then that the physician and Porpora insisted that Consuelo should go and take some rest, and she assented, after having passed by the bed of Count Christian, who looked at her without seeming to see her. One could not tell whether he was asleep or awake; his eyes were open, his breathing calm and his face without expression.

When Consuelo awakened after a few hours she went down to the drawing-room, and her heart was frightfully wrung at finding it empty. Albert had been placed upon a bier of state and borne into the chapel. His chair was empty on the spot where Consuelo had seen him the day before. It was all that remained of him in this place which had been the centre of the life of the family during so many bitter days. Even his dog was no longer there; the spring sun lighted up the dreary wainscot, and the blackbirds whistled in the garden with insolent gayety.

Consuelo went quietly into the next room, the door of which stood ajar. Count Christian was still in bed, insensible, apparently, to the loss which had just befallen him. His sister, transferring to him all the care which she had bestowed upon Albert, was tending him vigilantly. The baron, with a stupid air, was gazing
at the logs burning in the fireplace; only tears, which fell silently upon his cheeks without his thinking of wiping them away, showed that he had not had the happiness to lose memory.

Consuelo approached the canoness to kiss her hand; but this hand was withdrawn with insurmountable aversion. The poor Wenceslawa saw in this young girl the bane and destroyer of her nephew. She had had a horror of their projected marriage at first, and had opposed it with all her power; and then, when she had seen that in spite of absence it was impossible to make Albert renounce it, that his health, his reason and his life depended on it, she had wished and hastened it with an ardor as great as the distaste and repulsion which she had shown in the first place. Porpora's refusal, the exclusive passion for the stage which he had not hesitated to attribute to Consuelo; in short, all the officious and fatal falsehoods with which he had filled several letters to Count Christian, without ever mentioning those which Consuelo had written and he had suppressed, had caused the greatest grief to the old man and the bitterest indignation to the canoness. She had come to hate and despise Consuelo, being able to pardon her, she said, for having deranged Albert's reason by this fatal love, but not for having impudently betrayed him. She was ignorant that the true murderer of Albert was Porpora. Consuelo, who read her thoughts, could have justified herself; but she preferred to assume all the reproach, rather than to accuse her master and to cause him to
lose the esteem and affection of the family. Besides, she comprehended that if Wenceslawa had the day before been able to cast aside all her repugnance and resentment by an effort of maternal love, she must feel them again, now that the sacrifice had been performed unavailingly. Every look of this poor aunt seemed to say to her, "You caused our child to perish; you could not restore him to life, and now nothing is left us but the disgrace of your alliance."

This silent declaration of war hastened the resolution which she had taken to relieve the canoness as far as possible of this last misfortune.

"May I implore your ladyship," she said submissively, "to appoint an hour for a private interview with me? I must depart to-morrow before daybreak, and I cannot leave here without communicating to you my respectful intentions."

"Your intentions! but I guess them," replied the canoness bitterly. "Be easy, signora; everything will be in order, and the rights which the law gives you will be scrupulously respected."

"I see that, on the contrary, you do not understand me at all, madam," said Consuelo; "I am therefore most eager" —

"Well, since I must drink of this cup also," said the canoness rising, "let it be at once, while I still feel the courage for it. Come with me, signora. My elder brother seems to be sleeping. M. Supperville, who has consented to devote his care to him for a day longer, will replace me for half an hour."
She rang and sent for the doctor, and then, turning to the baron, said,—

"Brother, your care is useless, since Christian has not recovered the consciousness of his misfortunes. Perhaps this may never occur, happily for him, unhappily for us. Perhaps this prostration is the beginning of death. I have no one left in the world but you, brother; take care of your health, which is but too much affected by this mournful inaction into which you have fallen. You were accustomed to fresh air and exercise; go for a little walk, and take a gun with you; the gamekeeper will follow you with his dogs. I know that it will not make you forget your sorrow; but at least you will feel better physically, I am certain of it. Do it for me, Frederick; it is the order of the physician and the prayer of your sister; do not refuse me. It is the greatest consolation which you could give me now, since the last hope of my sad old age is in you."

The baron hesitated, but yielded at last. His servants took him away, and he allowed himself to be led out-doors like a child. The physician examined Count Christian, who gave no sign of consciousness, although he replied to his questions, and seemed to recognize every one with an air of sweetness and indifference.

"The fever is not very high," said Supperville in an undertone to the canoness; "if it does not increase this evening, it may not amount to much."

Wenceslawa, somewhat reassured, intrusted to him
the care of her brother, and led Consuelo into a large chamber, richly decorated in an antique style, which our heroine had never before entered. It contained a great state bed, the curtains of which had not been moved for more than twenty years. It was that in which Wanda von Prachalitz, Albert's mother, had breathed her last sigh, and this chamber was hers.

"It is here," said the canoness, with a solemn air, after closing the door, "that we found Albert, thirty-two days ago to-day, after a disappearance of a fortnight. From that moment he did not reënter it; he never left the chair in which he died."

The dry words of this necrological bulletin were spoken in a bitter tone which plunged so many needles into poor Consuelo's heart.

Then the canoness took from her girdle her inseparable bunch of keys, walked to a large cabinet of carved oak, and opened both doors of it. Consuelo saw a mountain of jewels tarnished by time, of odd form, antique for the most part, and set with diamonds and precious stones of considerable value.

"There," said the canoness, "are the family jewels which my sister-in-law, Count Christian's wife, possessed before her marriage; here, farther on, are those of my grandmother, which my brothers and I presented to her; here, finally, are those which her husband bought her. All these belonged to her son Albert, and belong now to you, as his widow. Take them away, and do not fear that any one here will ever quarrel with you for these riches, for which we do not care, and
for which we have no further use. As for the titles of the property which my nephew inherited from his mother, they will be placed in your hands within an hour. All is in order, as I told you, and as for those of his paternal inheritance, you may not have to wait long for them, alas! These were Albert’s last wishes; my word seemed to him as good as a will.”

“Madam,” said Consuelo, closing the cabinet with a gesture of disgust, “I should have torn up the will, and I beg of you to be discharged of your word. I have no more use than you for all these riches. It seems to me that my life would be forever tarnished by their possession. If Albert left them to me, it was no doubt with the idea that, in accordance with his wishes and his habits, I would give them to the poor. I should be a bad distributor of these noble alms; I have neither the administrative ability nor the knowledge necessary to make a really worthy use of them. It is to you, madam, who unite to these qualities a Christian soul as generous as that of Albert, that it belongs to employ this inheritance in works of charity. I convey all my rights to you, if it is true that I have any, of which I am, and always wish to remain, ignorant. I ask but one favor of your kindness,—that of never insulting my pride by renewing such offers.”

The canoness changed countenance. Compelled to esteem, but unable to resolve to admire, she endeavored to insist.

“What do you wish to do?” she said, looking fixedly at Consuelo; “you have no fortune.”
"I beg your pardon, madam; I am rich enough. I have simple tastes and the love of work."
"Then you intend to resume what you call your work?"
"I am compelled to, madam, and for reasons in which my conscience has no room to choose, in spite of the prostration which I feel."
"And you will not support in some other way your new rank in the world?"
"What rank, madam?"
"That which befits Albert's widow."
"I shall never forget, madam, that I am the widow of the noble Albert, and my conduct will be worthy of the husband I have lost."
"And yet the Countess of Rudolstadt is about to return to the stage!"
"There is no other Countess of Rudolstadt than yourself, canoness, and there will be no other after you except Baroness Amelia, your niece."
"Is it in mockery that you speak to me of her, signora?" cried the canoness, upon whom the name of Amelia appeared to have the effect of a burn.
"Why do you ask me that, madam?" replied Consuelo, with a frankness which could leave no doubt in Wenceslawa's mind. "In the name of heaven, tell me why I have not seen the young baroness here? Is she, too, dead, my God?"
"No," said the canoness bitterly; "would to heaven that she were! Let us not speak of her; there is no question of her."
"I am compelled, however, to remind you of something of which I had not yet thought, madam. It is that she is the sole and legitimate heiress of the wealth and titles of your family. This should set your conscience at rest concerning the deposit which Albert intrusted to you, since the laws do not allow you to dispose of it in my favor."

"Nothing can deprive you of your rights to dower and to a title which Albert placed at your disposal."

"Nothing can deprive me of the right of renouncing them, and I do renounce them. Albert knew that I did not wish to be either rich or a countess."

"But the world will not allow you to renounce them."

"The world, madam! Well, that is just what I wished to speak to you about. The world would not comprehend Albert's affection or the condescension of his family towards a poor girl like me. It would make of it a reproach to his memory and a blot upon your life. It would be to me a cause of ridicule and perhaps of shame; for, I repeat it, the world could never comprehend what has happened here among us. The world must always be ignorant of it, madam, as your servants are ignorant; for my master and the physician, the only confidants and stranger witnesses of this secret marriage, have not yet revealed it, and will not reveal it. I will answer for the one, and you can and should insure the silence of the other. Therefore, live in peace as regards this point, madam. It depends only upon you to carry this secret to the tomb,
and never, by my act, shall the Baroness Amelia suspect that I have the honor to be her cousin. Therefore forget Count Albert's last hour; it is for me to remember it, to bless him and to be silent. You have enough tears to shed without my adding the grief and mortification of ever recalling to you my existence as the widow of your admirable nephew."

"Consuelo, my daughter!" cried the canoness, sobbing, "remain with us! You have a great heart and a great mind. Do not leave us!"

"It would be the wish of this heart, which is wholly devoted to you," replied Consuelo, receiving her caresses with warmth, "but I could not do it without having our secret betrayed or guessed, which amounts to the same thing, and I know that the honor of the family is dearer to you than life. Allow me to render you the only service in my power by tearing myself from your arms without delay or hesitation."

The tears which the canoness shed at the end of this scene relieved her of the frightful weight which oppressed her. They were the first which she had been able to shed since the death of her nephew. She accepted Consuelo's sacrifice, and the confidence which she placed in her resolution proved that at last she appreciated this noble character. She left her to go and inform the chaplain and to explain to Supperville and Porpora the necessity of keeping silence forever.
CONCLUSION.

Consuelo, finding herself alone, spent the day in wandering about the castle, the garden and the neighborhood, that she might see once more all the spots which recalled to her Albert's love. She even allowed herself to be drawn by her pious fervor as far as the Schreckenstein, and sat down upon a stone in this frightful desert which Albert had so long filled with his bitter sorrows. She soon departed, finding that her courage failed and her imagination became disturbed, and fancying that she heard a faint groan come from the depths of the rock. She dared not confess to herself that she heard it distinctly. Albert and Zdenko were no more, and this illusion, therefore, could be only diseased and baleful. Consuelo hastened to escape from it.

As she drew near the castle at nightfall, she saw Baron Frederick, who, little by little, had steadied himself on his legs and was reviving under the gratification of his favorite passion. The gamekeepers who accompanied him flushed the game, to excite in him the desire to bring it down. He still aimed straight, and picked up his birds with a sigh.

"This one will live and be consoled," thought the young widow.

The canoness supped, or pretended to sup, in her
brother's room. The chaplain, who had risen to go and pray in the chapel beside Albert, tried to come to the table. But he had a fever, and became ill at the first mouthful. At this, the doctor somewhat lost his temper. He was hungry, and, being compelled to let his soup grow cold to conduct the chaplain to his chamber, he could not control this exclamation,—

"These people have neither strength nor courage! There are only two men here, the canoness and the signora."

He soon returned, resolved not to trouble himself about the poor priest's illness, and gave, like the baron, a hearty reception to the supper. Porpora, acutely affected, although he did not show it, could not open his mouth to eat or to speak. Consuelo thought only of the last meal which she had eaten at this table with Albert and Anzoleto.

She and her master then made their preparations for departure. The horses were ordered for four o'clock in the morning. Porpora did not wish to go to bed; but he yielded to the prayers and remonstrances of his adopted daughter, who feared to see him also fall ill, and who, to persuade him, pretended that she likewise was going to rest.

Before separating, they went to Count Christian's room. He was sleeping peaceably, and Supperville, who was eager to leave this dreary dwelling, asserted that he had no more fever.

"Is that certain, sir?" asked Consuelo privately, frightened at his haste.
"I swear it," he replied. "He is saved for this time, but I must warn you that he will not last long. With persons of his age, sorrow is not felt very acutely at the moment; but the weariness of solitude carries them off a little later; they draw back, so to speak, to leap the better. Therefore, be on your guard; for you have renounced your rights seriously, I presume."

"Very seriously, I assure you, sir," said Consuelo, "and I am astonished that you cannot believe in so simple a thing."

"You will allow me to doubt it until the death of your father-in-law, madam. Meanwhile, you have committed a great mistake in not taking possession of the jewels and title-deeds. Never mind; you have your reasons, which I cannot understand, and I believe that so calm a person as you will not act unadvisedly. I have given my word of honor to keep the family secret, and I shall wait until you discharge me of it. My testimony will be useful to you at the proper time, and you can count on it. You will always find me at Baireuth, if God gives me life, and in that hope I kiss your hands, countess."

Superville took leave of the canoness, answered for the life of the invalid, wrote a last prescription, received a large sum which seemed to him small in comparison with that which he had hoped to obtain from Consuelo for having served her interests, and departed from the castle at ten o'clock, leaving our heroine astounded and indignant at his worldliness.

The baron retired feeling much better than the day
before, and the canoness had a bed placed for herself near that of Christian. Two women watched in this room, two men in the chaplain's, and old Hans beside the baron.

"Happily," thought Consuelo, "poverty does not add to their misfortunes by privations and loneliness. But who is watching with Albert, during this mournful night which he has to pass beneath the chapel roof? It shall be I, since this is my second and last wedding night."

She waited till everything was silent and deserted in the castle, after which, when midnight had sounded, she lit a little lamp and went to the chapel.

At the end of the cloister which led to it she found two of the castle servants, who were at first frightened by her approach, and who afterwards confessed to her why they were there. They had been charged to watch their quarter of the night beside the count's body, but fear had kept them from remaining there, and they preferred to watch and pray at the door.

"What fear?" asked Consuelo, wounded to see that already so generous a master inspired no other feelings in his servants.

"What would you have, signora?" said one of these men, who little suspected Count Albert's widow in her; "our young lord had singular dealings and acquaintances with the world of spirits. He conversed with the dead and discovered hidden things; he never went to church; he ate with Zingari; in short, one cannot tell what may happen to those who spend to-
night in the chapel. We would not stay there, though it cost us our lives. Look at Cynabre! He is not allowed to go into the holy place, and he has spent the whole day lying before the door, without eating, moving or making a sound. He knows that his master is there, and that he is dead. But since midnight struck he has been restless, scratching at the door and whining as if he felt that his master was not alone and at peace there."

"You are poor fools!" replied Consuelo indignantly. "If your hearts were warmer your heads would not be so weak." And she entered the chapel, to the great surprise of the timid watchers.

She had not seen Albert during the day. She knew that he was surrounded by all the trappings of the Catholic Church, and she would have feared, by joining in its practices, which he had always rejected, to wound his soul, which still lived in her own. She had waited for this moment; and, prepared for the gloomy appearance which that religion gave to his surroundings, she stood beside his catafalque and looked at him without terror. She would have believed that she outraged these dear and sacred remains by a sentiment which would be so cruel to the dead if they could see it. And how can we know that their minds, freed from their bodies, do not see it and feel a bitter pain at it? The fear of the dead is an abominable weakness; it is the most common and barbarous of profanations. Mothers do not know what it is.

Albert was lying upon a bed of brocade, escutch-
eoned on the four corners with the arms of the family. His head lay upon a cushion of black velvet, bestrewn with silver tears, and a shroud of the same material was draped about him like a curtain. A triple row of candles lighted his pale face, which remained so calm, pure and manly that one would have said that he was sleeping peacefully. They had clad the last of the Rudolstadts, in accordance with a family custom, in the antique dress of his ancestors. His count's coronet was upon his head, a sword by his side, the shield beneath his feet and a crucifix upon his breast. With his long hair and black beard, he exactly resembled the ancient worthies whose statues, stretched upon their tombs, lay around him. The pavement was strewn with flowers, and perfumes burned slowly in silver censers at the four corners of his mortuary couch.

For three hours Consuelo prayed for her husband and gazed at him in his sublime repose. Death, though it had spread a duller tint over his features, had altered them so little that she several times forgot, while admiring his beauty, that he had ceased to live. She even imagined that she heard the sound of his breathing, and when she left him for a moment to renew the perfume in the censers and the lights in the candlesticks, it seemed to her that she heard a slight rustling and saw a faint undulation in the curtains and drapery. She returned to him at once, but, after questioning his icy mouth and his motionless heart, she renounced her mad and fleeting hopes.
When the clock struck three, Consuelo rose and placed upon the lips of her husband her first and last kiss of love.

"Farewell, Albert," she said aloud, carried away by religious exaltation; "you can now read in my heart without uncertainty. There are no more clouds between us, and you know how much I love you. You know that if I leave your sacred dust in the hands of a family which will come to-morrow to gaze upon you without weakness, I do not therefore abandon your immortal memory and the recollection of your imperishable love. You know that it is not a forgetful widow, but a faithful wife who departs from your dwelling, and who will ever bear you in her heart. Albert, as you said, death passes between us, and separates us in appearance only to reunite us in eternity. Constant to the faith which you taught me, certain that you have deserved the love and blessing of your God, I cannot weep for you, and nothing will present you to my mind under the false and impious image of death. You were right, Albert; there is no death. I feel it in my heart, since I love you more than ever."

As Consuelo finished these words, the curtains behind the catafalque trembled perceptibly, and, opening suddenly, presented to her eyes the pale face of Zdenko. She was frightened at first, accustomed as she was to regard him as her most mortal enemy. But he had a gentle expression in his eyes, and stretching out to her over the bed of death a rough
hand which she did not hesitate to press in her own, he said, smiling,—

"Let us make peace over this bed of rest, my poor girl. You are a good child of God, and Albert is pleased with you. Oh, he is happy now, he is sleeping so well, our good Albert! I have forgiven him, you see. I came back to see him when I learned that he was asleep, and now I shall never leave him. To-morrow I shall take him to the grotto, and we will speak again of Consuelo, 'Consulo de mi alma!' Go to rest, my child; Albert is not alone. Zdenko is here, ever here. He needs nothing; he is so happy with his friend! Misfortune is averted, evil is destroyed, death is conquered. The thrice happy day has dawned. May he who has been wronged salute you!"

Consuelo could no longer bear the childish joy of the poor idiot. She bade him a tender farewell, and when she opened the door of the chapel, she allowed Cynabre to rush to his old friend, whom he had not ceased to scent and to call.

"Poor Cynabre! Come, I will hide you here under your master's bed," said Zdenko, caressing him with as much tenderness as if he had been a child. "Come, come, Cynabre! Now we are all three together once more, and we will never again be separated."

Consuelo went to awaken Porpora. She then entered Count Christian's room on tiptoe, and passed between his bed and that of the canoness.

"Is it you, my daughter?" said the old man,
without showing any surprise. "I am very glad to see you. Do not awaken my sister, who is sleeping well, thank God! and go and do the same; I am quite easy. My son is saved, and I shall soon be cured."

Consuelo kissed his white hair and wrinkled hands, and concealed from him the tears which might have destroyed his illusion. She did not dare to kiss the canoness, who was at last sleeping for the first time in thirty nights. "God has placed a limit to sorrow," she thought; "it is its very excess. May these unfortunates long remain under the wholesome oppression of fatigue!"

Half an hour later, Consuelo, whose heart was broken at leaving these noble old people, passed out with Porpora over the drawbridge of the Castle of the Giants, without remembering that this formidable manor, in which so many moats and gates enclosed such riches and suffering, had become the property of the Countess of Rudolstadt.

FINIS.

Note. — Those of our readers who are tired of following Consuelo through so many perils and adventures, may now rest. Those, less numerous, no doubt, who still feel some courage, will learn in a forthcoming romance the continuation of her wanderings, and what became of Count Albert after his death.